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Movement, Dance, Metaphor:

Strategies in Musical Performance and Interpretation

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Declaration

I, Zhu Sun, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

This research stems from an initial fascination with narrative ballets choreographed to existing classical music. This thesis explores how metaphors — both linguistic and embodied—can serve as a powerful tool for building individual interpretations of piano repertoire, aligning with personal cognitive schemata.

This thesis documents a process of uncovering theoretical frameworks that explain the relationship between music, movement, and narrative, extending this understanding to the use of metaphor in the interpretation, memorisation, and performance of piano works. Central to this approach are two types of metaphor — linguistic and embodied — which emerge from an understanding of dance and musical narrativity and are employed throughout the research to deepen musical engagement. The concept of 'performing-as' — Inspired by Peacocke's 'experiencing-as' — is introduced as a way of integrating these metaphors into performance practice.

The research employs autoethnography, phenomenology, and practice-as-research methodologies to interrogate the role of metaphor in musical interpretation. Through these approaches, the thesis investigates the interpretative processes of an actively performing pianist, both in solo practice and in collaborative creative projects. This inquiry contributes to broader aesthetic and cognitive debates—including the "performative turn" in musicology—by offering new perspectives on the intersection of musical performance, embodiment, and interpretation.

The Creative Portfolio comprises performances that apply metaphor-based interpretation in diverse contexts, including solo piano works and collaborations with dancers. The creative projects begin with experimental applications of metaphor to shorter pieces, gradually expanding to large-scale repertoire that integrates both narrative structures and dance-inspired movement. By demonstrating how metaphor shapes musical interpretation, this research contributes to interdisciplinary discussions in cognitive science, phenomenology, and music aesthetics, positioning metaphor as a central mechanism within the artistic process.

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Introduction

This practice-as-research project was inspired by certain narrative ballets that have been historically choreographed utilising existing Western classical music.

The written component to the thesis documents the process of discovering just such an interpretative strategy, utilising metaphors to understand, memorise and interpret piano pieces. This is shown to be especially useful for professional pianists who are tackling large-form repertoire. The two types of metaphors employed are narrative and embodied. Following Mieke Bal's notion of "traveling concepts",[1] I treat narrative not as a fixed definition but as a flexible idea that adapts across disciplines and practices, allowing me to navigate divergent approaches that share common phenomenological roots including embodied metaphor, dance and music narrativity and cross-genre dance choreography.

Practice-as-Research was employed because my own pianistic practices form the main subject of this research. A combination of Autoethnography and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis strategies were also utilised, both to collect and evaluate relevant data by means of a combination of recording and personal diarising, tracking thoughts, feelings, observations and interactions. The research therefore interrogates a contemporary approach to piano playing and learning with applications to music education more broadly. While the above form the main methodologies that I follow to conduct the research, chapter 2 in the text engages with various theories from phenomenology, cognitive science and aesthetics, which form the theoretical background that I built the practical interpretative strategy on.

 The submitted Creative Portfolio includes videos of my piano practice and performance accompanied by commentaries that demonstrate the impacts of metaphors on my playing. A chronology exists within the project, commencing with experiments on shorter pieces which- over time- expand to more

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1 Bal, Mieke. Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

large-scale forms, combining narrative- and movement-based metaphors within potential interpretative strategies.

In this research, I aim to find an interpretative strategy which solves some problems that I and other pianists and scholars have already identified; for example, those concerning the interpretation of structure, phrase, technique and practice efficiency. Some of the questions posed in this research are:

1. How do both linguistic and embodied metaphors have applications to musical performance and the interpretation of musical scores?
2. What underlying theoretical ideas explain the efficacy of such an approach?
3. How can embodied metaphors and cross-modal cognition expand the range and novelty of a pianist's interpretative possibilities?
4. How can a pianist with little training in dance or movement practices generate appropriate embodied metaphors within their own personal practice?
5. What do interdisciplinary collaborations teach us about how we can utilise dance, movement and embodied metaphors to enhance musical interpretation?
6. How can we measure the success of the resulting method?

As a consequence of deriving answers to these questions, I have generated new knowledge that contributes to the literature on music performance, piano pedagogy and musicological theories such as the 'performative turn'.

This thesis makes frequent use of the words feeling, emotion, and affect. My use of the three words follows the definitions provided by Eric Shouse. "A feeling is a sensation that has been checked against previous experiences and labelled. It is personal and biographical...An emotion is the projection/display of a feeling...An affect is a non-conscious experience of intensity."[2]

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2 Shouse, Eric. Feeling, Emotion, Affect. M/C Journal 8 (6), 2005.https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj.2443.

Chapter 1: Literature review

1.1 Metaphor, Music, Dance

One of the central concepts in this research is metaphor. I draw on two main types: *linguistic metaphor* — which I frequently refer to as *narrative* — and *embodied metaphor*, associated with *movement*. My conception of metaphor is primarily informed by phenomenological models developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, particularly their work on conceptual metaphor theory in *Metaphors We Live By,*[3] which differs significantly from literary or semiotic approaches such as those proposed by Roland Barthes in *Elements of Semiology.*[4] Phenomenological metaphors are grounded in shared spatial, temporal, and qualitative experiences of the world, rather than being encoded in language. Although such metaphors often manifest linguistically, they are not "coded" in the semiotic sense employed by Barthes. In fact, literary metaphors frequently have their origins in phenomenological metaphors, which operate at a pre-linguistic or subconscious level and arise from perceived or structural similarities between experiences. According to Lakoff and Johnson, the most common types of similarity include:

1. Functional similarity – We use them in similar ways. For example, both time and labour can be measured in units and exchanged for profit, leading to phrases such as "time is money" and the term human resource.

2. Cognitive similarity – We process them in similar ways. For example, both food and ideas can be internalised to empower us, so we digest ideas just as we digest food, leading to expressions like "food for thought".

3. Experiential similarity – We experience them (or aspects of them) in a similar sequence. For instance, love can involve confrontation, much like a battle, so we use phrases such as "they are having a fight" or "he won her over".

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3 Lakoff, George and Johnson, Maxim. "The Creation of Similarity" from *Metaphors we live by*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press,2003).

4 Barthes, Roland. *Elements of Semiology*. Translated by Richard Howard. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1968).

4. Spatial similarity – They share a common spatial orientation. When we add more of something to a container, the level rises, so we metaphorically raise our hands when we want more of something, such as when asking for more water.

This explains why metaphors are not universal but are shaped by cultural and personal experiences. However, Lakoff and Johnson argue that the most fundamental metaphors formed from infancy are spatial, as all bodily actions influence our orientation in space, even during sleep. Consequently, metaphors derived from bodily experiences are the most fundamental and often operate at an unconscious level, thus being least influenced by cultural background and individual life experience.

Huib Schippers highlights that the effectiveness of metaphor depends on the receiver's schemata — the framework of knowledge and experience that shapes one's understanding.[5] Younger learners, in particular, may struggle with verbal descriptions due to their limited life experience and vocabulary, making it difficult for them to articulate perceptions with precision. This pedagogical challenge is one reason I chose to move away from a literary or semiotic approach to metaphor. Feedback from my own students suggests that describing musical perception in physical or movement-based terms often feels more intuitive. The phenomenological basis for such embodied metaphors lies in what Daniel Stern terms *vitality affects* — the foundational forms of expressive meaning that are present even in newborns. I will explore this concept further in Chapter 2, in conjunction with the theory of *experiencing-as*.

Having clarified my intended approach to the central element of this research—metaphor—I will devote the remainder of Section 1.1 to exploring the theoretical foundations surrounding this concept. This includes an examination of the contexts and mechanisms through which music and dance operate as metaphors for one another, the role of mirror neurons in forming cross-modal associations, and the theoretical frameworks that integrate the three key elements of this thesis: music, narrative, and movement.

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5 Schippers, Huib. *As if a little bird is sitting on your finger...: Metaphor as a key instrument in training professional musicians.* International Journal of Music Education, issue

24, no. 3, (2006), 209–217.

1.1.1 Music heard by dancers

Research on the relationship between music and dance is relatively scarce within the literature, especially given the obvious rhythmical and gestural commonalities between the two idioms, as modes of human expression and meaning. Working at the intersection of these two disciplines however is Stephanie Jordan, who is one of the significant researchers in the field known as 'choreomusicology'. Her book *Moving Music* provides insightful details on how choreography in dance reflects and reciprocates different attributions of musical materials.[6] In the volume, she identified various ways in which choreographers have approached pre-composed music when creating dance. As an example, Frederick Ashton always sourced music that reflected imaginary and image-based content relating to narrative contexts within his ballets. George Balanchine paid more attention to the rhythmic aspects inherent within the musical material, while Isadora Duncan considered the most important match between music and dance to be a sense of *Geist,* or 'spirit'.

Jordan also discusses how dancers perceive music differently, depending on the choreographic technique being utilised. She compared the way Balanchine's dancers counted beats with that of Ashton's dancers, particularly Margot Fonteyn. When Fonteyn danced, she internalised the counting of beats and was highly attuned to the music's inner phrasing, such that she: "... could usually measure the requisite movements, and slightly space them out or compress them according to the orchestra in particular occasions."[7] What Fonteyn was capable of, in effect, was maintaining a sense of the overall musical phrasal structure by projecting ahead of what was currently being played—something that, as we will see later, is a valuable mindset for musicians to adopt when performing. Over the course of this research project, I developed a deeper understanding of the relationship between this sense of overview and musical phrasing through my work as an accompanist at the Royal Ballet. When playing for dance exercises, the default phrase length is almost always a regular eight-count phrase, which significantly influences the way I shape dynamics, especially when there is a strong sense of an

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6 Jordan, Stephanie. Moving Music. (London: Dance Books,2000),94.

7 ibid.

approaching conclusion. This idea is further explored in my own research as a pianist in Chapter 3.

Music has—on the contrary—not always been the primary source of choreographic ideas and inspiration. Rather, it has gained increasing importance over time due to its co-evolution with dance and movement practices. Inger Damsholt, for instance, outlines the evolving relationship between music and dance in her thesis.[8] Historically, music has shifted its reciprocal relationship with dance: from serving as a simple rhythmic accompaniment, to providing underlying stresses decorated by melodic lines; to mimetic reflection or "mickey-mousing" of movement material; and, by the twentieth century, to choreographers experimenting in more complex ways with counterpoint and syncopation between music and bodily movement.[9]

While there are many ways for music and choreography to reflect and reciprocate one another, Solveig Aasen argues that the true alignment between the two lies in what she calls a redefined sense of "movement"[10]—namely, the precise qualitative dynamics inherent in embodied execution. I will discuss this theory in more detail in Section 2.1.2, in relation to my concept of metaphorically *performing-as*.

The co-existence of dance and music has been explored not only by dance professionals but also by practising musicians. The Dalcroze Eurhythmics method, developed by Swiss musician Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, promotes the idea that music can be felt, understood, and externalised through bodily movement by musicians.

1.1.2 Dance seen by musicians

Although "eurhythmics" literally means 'good rhythm', Dalcroze redefined the term to encompass not only the acquisition of precise rhythm but also a bodily way of feeling music, thereby enhancing one's capacity to express it organically. He described *plastique animée*, a more advanced aspect of

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8 Damsholt, Inger. Choreomusical Discourse: The Relationship Between Music and Dance. (Ph.D diss., University of Copenhagen, 1999) .

9 Minors, Julia Helen. Music, Dance and Translation. Part II. (Bloomsbury Publishing,2023).

10 Aasen, Solveig. Crossmodal Aesthetics: How Music and Dance Can Match. The Philosophical Quarterly, Volume 71,(Issue 2, 2020), 223—240.

Eurhythmics, as the physical externalisation of a perceived image.[11] Over time, he came to realise that people experience emotion through the body, particularly via muscular tension—for example, muscles tend to contract when we feel anxiety or anger. He also noted that emotional expression often follows similar physical patterns; dislike, for instance, is commonly conveyed by frowning, which involves the contraction of facial muscles.

However, to suggest that emotions can be reduced to a series of muscular contractions is an oversimplification. Antonio and Hanna Damasio[12] have challenged such assumptions in neuroscience, including the idea that the connection between body and mind operates only in one direction—from the body to the brain. Indeed, from my own experience as a pianist, conveying musical dynamics is far more complex than a matter of simple muscular tension. At times, intensity and volume are produced through a seemingly paradoxical state: a loud climactic sound cannot be achieved by contraction alone. Rather, it requires a full release of arm and upper torso weight into the keyboard, while the fingertip remains nimble.

Contained within Dalcroze's idea of Eurhythmics, the score depicts some effects of sound potentially waiting to be embodied by musicians, like the act of painting or the photography of live events. How we experience the inherent dynamics within static depictions is explained by phenomenologist Jonathan Clark.[13] He explains that we perceive visual images in two ways – both kinetically and kinaesthetically. Kinetics is concerned with the lines and shapes within movement that can be visually perceived. A kinaesthetic sense follows when the perceivers empathise and project the feeling of that kinetics into their own body. This explains the mental mechanisms that enable viewers of a static depiction of a specific moment to have an emotional response, as if the painting or picture is "live". The viewer perceives the static moment and empathises with the subject, and the rest of the event relating to this moment is ideationally an augmentation to it. This imagination would certainly include movements of the body, which contributes to the inherent qualitative dynamic that is felt; we therefore "feel" emotions derived from static visual information. What is noteworthy is that this tension can be felt both kinetically and

11 Sadler, Michael Ernest. The Eurhythmics of Jaques–Dalcroze. (Great Britain: Small Maynard and Company, 1915).

12 Damasio, Antonio and Damasio, Hanna. Minding the Body. Daedalus Vol. 135, No. 3, On Body in Mind (Summer, 2006), 15–22.

13 Clark, Jonathan. Image Consciousness, Movement Consciousness. Midwest Studies in Philosophy 44(1), 2019, 48–69.

kinaesthetically, i.e., something can be very still (kinaesthetically), but very intense (kinetically), and vice versa. So, tension is on a spectrum rather than being simply oppositional.

I do not intend to expand on this theory in my research; however, I do agree with the idea that music can be felt, understood, and communicated through bodily movement, as other musicians have already used bodily movement as a tool to understand musical gestures. In research conducted by Jane W. Davidson and Jorge S. Correia,[14] the authors explored the embodiment of music through an artist's work in the practice room and on stage. They recorded the method used by a flautist to prepare a piece: firstly, dividing the musical paragraph into phrases; then interpreting the phrases with bodily movements without the instrument; and lastly, bringing out the same characteristics of the body movements in playing. This finding aligns with B.H. Repp's research,[15] which shows that pianists play noticeably differently under the influence of not only different kinds of movements, but also of linguistic metaphors. When talking about performance, Davidson and Correia suggest that meaningful performance lies in "becoming" — when the mental metaphorical projection becomes so embodied in the performer that the bodily pattern of the metaphor reaches the performer's concrete physical experience. One of the key outcomes of my research is that I have developed a way in which pianists can achieve this "becoming" through the use of linguistic and bodily metaphors.

To suggest that music can be played metaphorically — in this case, as if it is a dance — implies that we cannot avoid the centuries-old debate concerning "pure" or "absolute music". Some musicians and scholars in this context claim that "absolute music" should remain "pure" and be conceived abstractly, in order to avoid attributing "meaning" to it — a representative case being Brahms' public opposition to Liszt's *Symphonic Poems.*[16]

There are many more contemporary scholarly opinions on the matter about narrativity in music.

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14 Davidson, Jane W. and Correia, Jorge S. Meaningful Musical Performance: A Bodily Experience. (Research Studies in Music Education, 2001). 17,70.

15 Repp, Bruno H. Music as motion: a synopsis of Alexander Truslit's. Gestaltung und Bewegung in der Musik, Psychology of Music, no. 21 (1993) 48–73.

16 Swafford, Jane. Johannes Brahms : a biography. (New York : Alfred A. Knopf 1997).

Whilst Carolyn Abbate expresses scepticism about the narrative potential of instrumental music, she maintains that narrativity requires specific features, such as the presence of a narrator, agency, and past-tense discourse.[17] In contrast, Werner Wolf offers a more flexible and functional model, proposing that narrative in music exists along a spectrum rather than as a binary category, depending on the number and nature of narrative features present. In the case of absolute instrumental music, these may include temporal progression, transformation of musical material, formal structure, and developmental arcs.[18] Wolf's recipient-based model intersects with Peter Dayan's neuroscientific research on how the brain continuously forms predictions and expectations, offering a cognitive basis for how listeners track and interpret unfolding musical sequences over time.[19] Marie-Laure Ryan's concept of "narrativity as a cognitive construct" further extends Wolf's position by emphasising that narrative is not solely embedded in the musical material but is also actively constructed in the mind of the perceiver.[20] More recently, Helen Julia Minors adopts a similar position, advocating for an understanding of musical narrativity as both a phenomenological and cognitive phenomenon.[21] This perspective most closely aligns with my intended use of narrative in this thesis: as a means of supporting understanding and coherent interpretation of abstract, non-programmatic music. Crucially, in the context of this research, narrative is treated as a mental process and thus resists the imposition of definitive meaning.

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17 Abbate, Carolyn Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 19–22.

18 Wolf, Werner The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999),chapter 2.

19 Peter, Dayan and Abbott, Laurence F. . Theoretical Neuroscience: Computational and Mathematical Modeling of Neural Systems. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).

20 Ryan, Marie–Laure. Avatars of Story (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 8.

21 Minors, Helen Julia. "Music and Narrative: Where Narrative Theory and Music Cognition Meet." Music Theory Online 24, no. 2 (2018).

https://doi.org/10.30535/mto.24.2.3.

Anthony Newcomb posited musical narrativity from the audience's point of view. Nineteenth-century audiences predominantly heard music as a "composed novel",[22] and that "the temporal aspect of the perceiver's activity as he proceeds through the unrolling series lies at the core of narrativity"[23] Although my study targets performers rather than audiences, something similar still applies, because we are perceiving and/or recollecting the music that we play — before, during, and even after performance. What is interesting about Newcomb's comment, however, are the words "perceiver's activity". This implies that a perceiver is not merely passively receiving what is presented but may be actively involved in interpreting the music, thus forming a narrative internally as a type of associated "affordance"[24] of the music itself.

Thus, as performers, one additional step is required of us: to translate the concrete material formed by the imagination as perceived, into the sound we produce. This points towards the idea of "encoding" and "decoding" — concepts drawn from the reception theory of Stuart Hall.[25] Hall argues that the "sender", for example a television programme, "encodes" meaning within a message; however, the receiver — or televisual audience — may alter the meaning of the message in association with their social and cultural context. In this sense, therefore, both parties take part in the meaning-making of a message. The difference in my research is that the pianist is both a decoder and an encoder: the message encoded by the composer is first decoded by listening to the music and reading the score, made sense of in a metaphorical way, and then re-encoded in the performance.

Having examined various perspectives on how dancers and musicians perceive each other's art forms, the discussion now turns to choreomusicology to explore how these disciplines have interacted and collaborated throughout the 20th and 21st centuries.

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22 Newcombe, Anthony. *Schumann and Late Eighteenth–Century Narrative Strategies.*19th–Century Music Vol. 11, no. 2 164–174.(California: University of California Press,1987),

23 Ibid.

24 Clark, Eric. *Ways of Listening: An Ecological Approach to the Perception of Musical Meaning.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

25 Hall , Stuart. *Encoding and Decoding in the television discourse.* Discussion Paper. (Birmingham: University of Birmingha, 1973).

1.1.3 Choreomusicology

The term music visualisation originates with early American modern dance pioneers Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn (Denishawn), and was later developed by their student Doris Humphrey. According to the Denishawn approach, music visualisation should ideally remain entirely abstract, with dance serving as a translation of compositional elements into bodily action. Choreographer Mark Morris employed this technique in his setting of Mozart's Fugue in C minor for Two Pianos, K. 426. However, his work received criticism from scholars such as Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker, who remarked: "...the audience found this hilarious... The dance was too exact an inscription of the music... [the correspondence between music and dance] had become laughably absolute".[26] One example of this "exact inscription" is Morris's visualisation of a trill by having a seated dancer lift and shake her feet.

Despite such criticism, Morris's close attention to musical structure has been praised by several collaborators. Conductor Jane Glover, for instance, recounted an anecdote from a colleague about Morris's choreography in V, noting: "This is like watching an analysis class... there is sonata form, described for you." In his treatment of returns within sonata form, Morris may either repeat earlier material or introduce variations — through new spatial arrangements, alternative casting, or additional movement layers — subtly masking the emphatic return and creating a sense of continuing progression rather than closure. This approach to sonata structure has also informed my own interpretative practice. In the Chopin Project, it shaped my performance of the first movement in ways that introduced fresh interpretative ideas. These will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.3.

Musical-structural visualisation within dance can also be found in the work of other choreographers, such as Fedor Lopukhov, who asserted that dance could mirror the sonata form by varying and combining different enchaînements throughout a dance work, analogous to motifs within music. However, it is important to note that the accompanying music is not always in sonata form, and what Lopukhov referred to as "sonata form" corresponds

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26 Carolyn Abbate & Roger Parker. Dismembering Mozart. (Cambridge Opera Journal, 2/2, 1990), pp.187.

more closely to the "exposition-development-reprise" structure.[27] Lopukhov's desire to establish musical equivalence in dance—what he termed "symphonic ballet"—reflects early twentieth-century views of music as an autonomous driving force imbued with inherent motion, distinct from narrative-driven ballets. From the 1930s onward, many choreographers sought to reverse this process, inviting composers to create music after the choreography was complete or even developing the dance and music independently. A prominent example of this working method is the collaboration between choreographer Merce Cunningham and composer John Cage. Interestingly, this approach aligns with the Denishawn school's advocacy for abstraction in dance: "We are not, in these dances and music, saying something. We are simple-minded enough to think that if we are saying something, we would use words. We are rather doing something. The meaning of what we do is determined by each one who sees and hears it".[28]

Up to this point in the chapter, we have observed a tendency among twentieth-century choreographers to explore varying levels of intimacy with music, all aiming for an abstract outcome. This contrasts with earlier dance forms, particularly ballet, which often conveyed a clear narrative. However, is it truly possible for music or dance to be entirely devoid of meaning? I align myself with the perspective of Suzanne Farrell, the celebrated dancer of George Balanchine, who testified: "Moving with music is not an intellectual feat. It is an emotional, physical, sensual response to a given moment of time".[29] From a musician's point of view, I also resonate with Erik Satie's claim—and see the potential of this research—when he states: "Music cannot reach us as sound alone, it has to affect us as something more than music, in a way that we can only describe by analogy with language or with images".[30]

By the end of this chapter, it becomes evident that a shared debate persists within both music and dance regarding the extent to which each art form can be understood as abstract or as capable of narrative expression. The following

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27 Lopukhov, Fedor & Offord, Dorinda & Jordan, Stephanie. Writings On Ballet And Music. (Bibliovault OAI Repository, the University of Chicago Press, 2004). 50.

10.2307/4147314.

28 John Cage, program notes for a 1956 Merce Cunningham Dance Company performance.

29 Farrell, Suzanne. Holding on to the Air. (Gainsville: University Press of Florida, 1990).

30 Dayan, Peter. Art as Music, Music as Poetry, Poetry as Art, from Whistler to Stravinsky and Beyond (1st ed.). (London: Routledge, 2011).

section will clarify the concept of "narrativity" as it applies to both music and dance within the context of this thesis.

1.1.4 Musical and Dance Narrativity

Smilen Savov argues that dance is unique among the arts in its use of sign language to convey "words." The most straightforward example is balletic miming, which encodes specific words or concepts; however, only those familiar with the meanings of these mimetic gestures can decode them. For instance, in Swan Lake Act 1, a mimed conversation between the prince and Odette includes gestures such as placing both hands on the left chest to signify "love," placing one hand on the left chest and extending the other towards the sky to indicate "swear," and pointing to the ring finger to mean "marry." As choreographic aesthetics and ideologies evolved, many artists moved away from this pantomime approach to storytelling, as exemplified in the work of Kenneth MacMillan. Savov highlights MacMillan's *The Invitation* as a prime example of choreography that prioritises storytelling through expressive body gestures rather than explicit miming. I particularly value MacMillan's ballet for this reason, as it captures "real" human interactions rather than merely mimetic acting. David McNeill explains that body gestures are not only displays of meaning but also actively participate in the construction of meaning.[31] Thus, we might say that human gestures generate semiotic meaning and possess narrative power when organised in a coherent sequence.

While dance productions provide at least visual cues—often supplemented by stage sets, props, costumes, and printed synopses to reinforce their narrative function—the question of whether music should be considered narrative remains a point of contention. Music semiologist Jean-Jacques Nattiez's observation in his 1990 paper on music narrativity best captures my point of view: there is "a clear ontological difference between literary narrative and musical 'narrative'... I recognize returns, expectations, and resolutions, but of what, I do not know."[32] It seems that, for him, the temporality of music and its syntactical dimension (the structure of a phrase) 'tells' a kind of musical narrative. He is not alone here: Russell Millard suggests that "it is the sense of

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31 McNeil, David. Language and Gesture (Language Culture and Cognition). (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

32 Nattiez, Jean–Jacques. Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music? Transl. by Katharine Ellis. (Journal of the Royal Musical Association 115/2, 1990), pp 240—257.

correspondence between the sequential arrangement of musical elements and the succession of events in a plot that suggests the possibility of musical narrativity."[33] Similar ideas can be found in the work of Fred Maus: "(Musical narrative)... shares only rather general descriptions (for instance, trying to return to a position of stability) with everyday actions."[34] Like Nattiez, both Millard and Maus argue that music's narrative capacity lies in its temporality and the unfolding of structural, tonal, and harmonic developments. They provide a framework in which the perceiver may 'fill in' a plot with their own imagination, interpreting sound as a form of "storytelling." As Maus puts it, "this [music narration] usually involves the mapping of something extramusical onto the musical structure."[35]

These perspectives support my view that narrative can serve as a valuable structural reference in music. Both music and narrative share temporality and structural development as principal modes of expression, making their metaphorical connection not only plausible but artistically meaningful.

So far, we can see that music and dance each relate to narrative in their own distinct ways. But how do all three areas merge or combine, and why would this combination assist in enhancing musical interpretation through the method I am using?

Choreographer and director of over thirty-five dance productions, Elizabeth Hayes, explains that dance is an expressive art; however, it differs from choreography because, as she states: "The ultimate goal in choreography is to create dance that objectifies thoughts, feelings, or mental images..." In other words, dance improvisation can express various fleeting feelings or thoughts within the mind of the dancer, but choreography involves "fixing" this illusion into a concrete and temporally stable product. She goes on to say: "... (incorporating narrative into choreography) would enable the viewer to make sense of the performance as a whole, as opposed to a disconnected sequence."

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33 Millard, Russell. Telling Tales: A Survey of Narratological Approaches to Music. Current Musicology, no. 103 (September 2018.). https://doi.org/10.7916/cm.v0i103.5381.

34 Maus, Fred E. Music as Narrative. (Indiana Theory Review 12: 1—34, 1991).

35 ibid.

Notice here how the words "whole" and "disconnected sequence" closely reflect words used to describe problems in musical interpretation in section 1.2.1, where I mention these aspects that I and other musicians have identified and which I aim to address in my research. I believe Hayes's view on the difference between dance and choreography parallels my own view regarding musical learning (and sight-reading) and performance. This strengthens my confidence that a combined use of choreography and narrative can help resolve certain aesthetic challenges—particularly those related to coherence and structural thinking in music interpretation.

So far, there seems to be an underlying distinction between what we mean by "narrative" in a literary sense and "narrative" in the context of music and/or dance. What compels scholars to specify "musical narrative" or "dance narrative" rather than simply "narrative" when referring to it? Regarding the nature of narrative, narratologist Professor Seymour Chatman posits a distinction between a "what" and a "way." "The *what* of narrative," he maintains, "is what I call its 'story'; the *way*, I call its 'discourse'."

What is the "story" in a narrative? A useful definition may be found in one of the many folk tales that Vladimir Propp analysed in the development of his narrative theory. Propp examined the structural elements in 100 Russian folk tales and identified essential features that provide these stories with coherence and a sense of progression. In other words, a "story" consists of multiple functioning plot points that advance the development of events in a narrative—it provides structure.

What, then, is "discourse," or the "way" of the narrative? According to Anthony Newcomb, if a theme in a sonata is a plot point (i.e., "story"), then its reprise in a different key constitutes a form of "discourse," as the theme is "presented" to the audience in an altered form. In fact, in his article on narrative archetypes in Mahler's Ninth Symphony, Newcomb identifies an abundance of "discourse" compared to the relatively rarer use of "story." This is hardly surprising, given what I have quoted from Wagner elsewhere in this thesis, and from music theorist Byron Almén, who states: "Music can display narrative activity without being limited to specific characters and settings."

This idea also aligns with the view of Eero Tarasti, who believes that music tells stories about transcendental, abstract ideas. I agree that in most cases, the narrativity of non-programmatic music appears predominantly as "discourse"—unless the perceiver actively empathises in order to generate

their own plot. This process of empathising to construct narrative meaning, which I call the "reversed emoting process," is a central theory in my research and will be discussed in Section 1.1.6.

That being said, in the same article, Tarasti also argues that music communicates through semiotic languages, and its audience, being "the signified," are expected to decode the "signs"—in a musical way, though. "Musical meanings are not lexicographic but always depend on the context in which they appear." It is important to acknowledge that Tarasti is somewhat vague about what qualifies as "signs." In my experience as a pianist, while it is easy to experience derivative feelings in response to music, developing these into a coherent structure requires a constructive analysis of the piece in question. I propose that what Tarasti refers to as "context" can be understood as the compositional language in which the music is written.

For example, in tonal music, this may include key, harmony, form, and rhythm; in atonal music, it could involve the calculated configurations underpinning the composition; while in jazz and other folk genres, it may encompass a range of elements that shape the musical "signs." Therefore, it is possible to develop a "plot" type narrative in music based on discourse, but this process depends on the listener's familiarity with the musical language in which they are operating. Within the context of this research, this is not inherently problematic, as my method is designed for musicians with sufficient understanding of their musical language. The discussion of Tarasti's idea of musical "signs" also connects to a later debate in Section 2.1.1, where I examine Peter Kivy's response to the concept of "experiencing-as" and the conditions under which he considers it valid.

1.1.5 Mirror Neurons

Stravinsky famously held the opinion that music does not express anything.[36] Choreomusicologist Lawrence Zbikowski, in a 2017 article, expresses opposition to this view. While he agrees that music does not express the same kinds of meanings as language, he maintains that it nonetheless conveys something important. He proposes that music functions as a sonic analogue for dynamic qualities that human beings naturally experience, and that the relationship between music and dance lies in the human brain's capacity for

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36 Dayan, Peter. Art as Music, Music as Poetry, Poetry as Art, from Whistler to Stravinsky and Beyond (1st ed.). (London: Routledge 2011).

analogical thinking. Numerous neuroscience studies have shown that such analogical thinking is supported by the operation of "mirror neurons."

Istvan Molnár-Szakács and Katie Overy's research has shown that mirror neurons are primarily active in the domain between the observation and execution of movement. Additionally, Marc Bangert et al.[37] found that when trained pianists listened to piano music, there was significantly more neural activity within the motor areas of the brain compared to non-musicians. Employing the neuroscientific findings of Molnár-Szakács and Overy to explain this phenomenon reveals how the mirror neuron system facilitates the activation of a similar or equivalent motor network when one listens to music. Therefore, whether pianist or non-pianist, the motor area of the brain is stimulated during music listening. However, because a pianist's body is trained to execute specific movements in response to particular sounds, their perception is more embodied than that of a non-pianist, resulting in greater activation of mirror neurons.

This thesis has been experimentally supported by Calvo-Merino et al.[38] Their study of brain activity and motor skills demonstrated that more mirror neurons were activated when dancers listened to the music of a repertoire they had personally performed, compared to music from unfamiliar dances. One inference from this result is that hearing the music of a well-known dance induces greater motor cortex activity than hearing an unfamiliar one.

Further support for this thesis comes from a cognitive science study by Smiley et al.[39] Contrary to earlier assumptions in classical cognitive science, which posited that multisensory information is processed separately by each sensory modality, their research located multisensory integration occurring at the initial stage of perceptual processing. They found that a region of the auditory cortex previously shown to receive both somatosensory and auditory input is also

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37 Bagnert, Marc, Peschel, Thomas, Schlaug, Gottfried, Rott, Michael, Drescher, Dieter Hinriches, Hermann Heinze, Hands–Joschen and Altenmüller, Eckart. Shared

Networks for Auditory and Motor Processing in Professional Pianists: Evidence from fMRI Conjunction. (Neuroimage, 30/3, 2006),pp 917–26.

38 Calvo–Merino, Beatriz, Glaser Daniel E., Grezes Julie, Passingham, Richard E. and Haggard, Patrick. Action Observation and Acquired Motor Skills: An fMRI study with

Expert Dancers. (Cerebral Cortex, 15/8, 2005), pp 1243–9.

39 Smiley, John F., Hackettt, Troy A., Ulbert, Istvam, Karmas, George, Lakatos, Peter, Javitt Daniel C., Schroeder, Charles E. Multisensory Covergence in Auditory Cortex, l.

Cortical Connections of the Caudal Superior Temporal Plane in Macaque Monkeys.(Journal of Comparative Neurology, 502/6,2007) pp.894–923.

responsive to visual stimuli. This suggests that brain activities enabled by mirror neurons are initiated rapidly—within the perceptual process itself—before any higher-order analogical or analytical processing takes place.

The scientific examples discussed above demonstrate that the entanglement between music and dance is deeply embedded in the way our brains function, making it "natural" for us to experience music in an embodied manner. However, these examples of mirror neuron activity only illustrate their functioning in isolated moments, and we currently lack data on neural activity over extended periods or within broader contexts of music or dance appreciation. As a result, mirror neuron activity may appear more as fragmented moments of "empathy".[40] This raises a key question: how can we embody music in a coherent and continuous manner throughout the unfolding of a musical work?

This is where my theorisation of the Reversed Emoting Process becomes useful. By employing this process, I am able to connect these fragmented moments of empathy in a structured and meaningful way. Consequently, what might otherwise remain a series of affective responses can instead form a coherent narrative arc, whereby narrative "discourse" is transformed into narrative "plot".

1.1.6 Emoting and the Reversed Emoting Process

In *A Philosophy of Emoting*, Jeanne Deslandes embarked on a profound inquiry into the mechanisms through which literature engenders emotive responses within its readers, employing a phenomenological route, which she called "emoting".[41] This research intersects with Antonio Damasio's concept of "secondary emotions".[42] Unlike primary emotions, which Damasio argues are inherent to human physiology, secondary emotions are acquired through experience and enacted voluntarily. In this context, Deslandes introduces the term "emoter" to describe how secondary emotions are triggered by external

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40 Gallese V. The roots of empathy: the shared manifold hypothesis and the neural basis of intersubjectivity. (Psychopathology, 36(4), 2003).pp 171—180.

https://doi.org/10.1159/000072786

41 Deslandes, Jean. *Narrative Emotion: Feeling, Form and Function*. (Journal of Narrative Theory, vol. 34, no. 3, fall 2004), 335–372.

42 Damasio, Antonio. *Descartes' Error : Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*. (New York : Harper Collins, 2000)

stimuli, such as artworks, with literature being a key example in her thesis. She explains that the emoter perceives the emotions conveyed by these stimuli through a process of "sameness of ascription",[43] a concept akin to the phenomenological idea of "empathy." The emoter identifies with the emotions expressed in others' narratives, driven by an empathic resonance rooted in their own life experiences, which echoes Gregory Currie's claim that "The feeling of pity is the feeling one has when one thinks pitying thoughts, just as we say the sensation of redness is the sensation we have when we see red things".[44]

Similarly, when an emoter engages with a virtual creation — such as a character in literature—they also apply the principle of "sameness of ascription." In the case of abstract artworks, such as music in this study, the absence of a concrete character requires the emoter to use their own imaginative faculties, with the "sameness" reflected within the emoter themselves. In other words, the emotional response triggered by an artwork in the observer depends on their ability to recall personal experiences and empathise with the artistic creation.

In chapter 3, where I attempt to use narrative and movement to facilitate, as stated within my research questions musical interpretative range and novelty, I will reverse the process of emoting by Deslandes to create concrete narratives from abstract music. A parallel comparison of this can be seen below, given in a sequential and heuristic sense:

The "Emoting" process:

1. Perceive the virtual characterisation;

2. Apply similarity and empathy to this characterisation;

3. The perceiver feels affects and/or feelings resulting from this perception of characterisation;

Reversed emoting process:

1. The music brings out certain emotions and/or affects, which will not be entirely subjective, possessing an intersectional qualitative nature when used

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43 Ricoeur, Paul. *Soi–même comme un autre*. (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1990), 49–52.

44 Currie, Gregory. *The Nature of Fiction*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 191.

in conjunction with a certain level of understanding of music theory; which then affords a 'reversed' empathy,

2. These affects are then related to a more concrete experience;

3. From that experience, the pianist can create a virtual character to carry out the remainder of the narrative, in accordance with the affordances of the music itself.

This is a system I devised as a response to the previously sketched account of narrative theories within the context of music and dance. In the above sections of chapter 1.1, I provided some theoretical background as to how I envisage these practical experiments can be actualised and carried out, but before that I will outline some methodologies that have been useful and have directed the work within the research project.

1.2 Qualitative Research Methodologies

As Robin Nelson emphasises in his book: "Practice-as-Research is not one methodology but a methodological framework within which diverse methods might be deployed".[45] This chapter first explores key scholarly perspectives on how artistic practice can be theorised as a form of knowledge within the framework of Practice-as-Research. It then introduces the two research methodologies employed in this study to collect and analyse data—autoethnography and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)—both of which have been utilised in prior research concerning the experiences of professional musicians. The practical component of this research culminates in the Chopin Project, presented in Chapter 3.4.

1.2.1 Artistic Practice as Research

Nelson provides a framework in which tacit knowledge, and experience gained from professional practice may be integrated into an academic research, which he called turning "liquid knowledge" into "hard facts".[46] Within corresponding

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[45] Robin Nelson, Practice as Research in the Arts (and Beyond), 2nd ed. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), chapter 3.

[46] Ibid.

research literature, many scholars define more specifically the relationship and boundaries between normative modes of research and artistic practice.

Linda Candy[47] posits an alternative approach to distinguishing between practice-led and practice-based artistic research. The former concerns how the research element results in operational significance for the practice component; the latter positions practice as an original part of the investigation itself, wherein the contribution to knowledge is demonstrated through a creative portfolio, such as a performance or exhibition. In other words, the practice component in a practice-based research project plays a vital role in shaping the research outcome, rather than being a mere result of it. By this definition, my doctoral work constitutes a practice-based research project, as the outcome emerged through a practice informed by prior research. This aligns with Koskinen's assertion that the practice component must be treated as structured work, shaped and guided by the research element.[48] As Michael Biggs argues, the creative component of Artistic Practice as Research (APaR) should be self-explanatory, in that it "be presented as part of the answer to research questions"[49] A similar notion can be found in Christopher Frayling's writing: "... (research) is the practical kind of exploration where the end product is an artefact which embodies the formative thoughts that led to its making."[50] Following these stipulations, I narrated my video submission of artistic work in a way that reflects the internal logic of my research process and serves to offer practical solutions to my main research questions. Artistic researcher Anthony Gritten points out that: "(artistic research) maintains more than a passing interest in self-documentation, and since it invests much of its energy not just into self-reflection per se but also into understanding how self-reflection might be both a process and product, often seeking to turn the one into the other in a

47 Candy, Linda. *Practice based research: A guide. Creative & Cognition Studios*, (Sydney: University of Technology,2006). p.1

48 Koskinen, Inkeri. *Throwing the baby out or taking practice seriously.* In N. Nimkulrat & T. O'Riley (Eds.) *Reflections and connections: On the relationship between production and academic research.* (Helsinki: University of Art and Design,2009). p. 11–17

49 Biggs, Michael. *Editorial: the foundations of practice–based research.* (Working Papers in Art and Design, 1, 2000). Retrieved December 3, 2011.

50 Frayling, Christopher. *Research in art and design.* (Royal College of Art Research Papers, 1993). p. 1–5.

never-ending spiralling motion"[51] This observation highlights the significant role of self-documentation and its analysis in APaR. As he later puts it :"the secret of APaR lies in the manner in which critical thought operates."[52] The researcher must be receptive enough to encounter each moment as a lived experience rather than merely a process of data collection, and must be willing to acknowledge the singularity of events.

Indeed, the interplay between movement and music in my major creative work—The Chopin Project—unfolded in ways I had never anticipated, shaped by the particular choreographer and specific group of dancers involved. It was one of many possible realisations of the project, guided not only by the contingencies of collaboration but also by the knowledge of existing research I had acquired beforehand. Therefore, it is vital to allow events to emerge organically, and to adopt appropriate methodologies for documenting and evaluating outcomes so that these outcomes may be repeated, replicated, or disseminated.

I will outline the evaluation methodologies in the following sections. For now, however, I turn to a discussion of specific problems within musical practice that I aim to address through the course of this research.

Firstly, there is the mechanical problem of how to move one's body and fingers to produce different tone qualities, or simply to get around the keyboard, which I call piano technique problems. As fundamental as technique is to play the piano, it is not about straining finger exercises and building muscles, but rather learning to "coordinate the human body in creating musical sound".[53] While technical coordination has not posed a significant challenge in my own playing, it has been a key focus in my teaching, where I have found metaphor to be particularly useful. Employing metaphors in this context has heightened my awareness of the relationship between specific techniques and their corresponding sound effects—connections that have now become second nature.

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51 Gritten, Anthony. *Determination and Negotiation in Artistic Practice as Research in Music, from book Artistic Practice as Research in Music: Theory, Criticism, Practic.*

(Surrey: Ashgate publishing, 2020), p.73–90.

52 ibid.

53 Sandor, Gyorgy. *On Piano Playing: Motion, Sound and Expression.*(Belmont: Wadworth/Thomas Learning, 1995), 16.

Secondly, in my experience as a performer, challenges often arise when there is no clear structural overview of a piece. One of the most common issues is a lack of confidence when playing from memory, which can contribute to stage fright and, ultimately, memory slips. Another key challenge is maintaining a sense of the overall scope of a composition, ensuring that individual moments are understood in relation to the broader musical structure. Both problems are my targets to tackle through the use of metaphors.

Finally, the most difficult aspect is to interpret and communicate one's interpretative intentions. To maintain one's interpretation coherent during a sustained long performance, a pianist should already have surpassed the previous two problems (technical and structural), before thinking about interpretative matters such as phrasing, harmonic colours and balance. This personal observation is also supported by Schippers "qualities which distinguish elite performers from others appear to lie largely beyond cognition and technique, in the intangible realms of expression".[54] Patricia Holmes' interpretation of this opinion, which I agree with, is that "so many of the cognitive and motor demands of the task have become automatic (during practice), enabling focus on the wider demands – for the musician, this means a more global artistic perspective".[55]

My initial intention for the research was to devise a metaphorical tool to help pianists develop an awareness of the overall structure of the pieces they play, especially pieces of extended length. This was because my observation as a pianist studying in a conservatoire environment was that pianists often spend most practice time playing targeted small sections of music to resolve specific problems. However, this can easily turn into a reiterated finger workout, as Lucas Debargue also pointed out in an interview regarding practice.[56] While it is essential, this practice makes running through the entire piece difficult, because of a lack of sustained awareness of what is happening in a few bars' time and having both the hands (technical demands) and the mind (interpretation) ready in advance. This problem is more noticeable at the

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54 Schippers, *As if a little bird is sitting on your finger...: Metaphor as a key instrument in training professional musicians*, 3.

55 Holmes, Patricia. and Holmes, Christopher. *The performer's experience: A case for using qualitative (phenomenological) methodologies in music performance research.*

Sage: Musicae Scientiae, issue 17 no.1, (2013),72—85.

56 Lucas Debague interview: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvlZciOnaB4

linking moments between musical passages. It has also been identified by Neuhaus: "I have in my time known excellent virtuosi pianists who had marvellous hands, but did not have what we term a feeling of entity and who were consequentially incapable of playing a single big work (for example, concertos or a Beethoven or Chopin sonata) satisfactorily from the point of view of form - in their rendering any big composition is split into a number of more or less enchanting moments..."[57]

When trying to clarify what he meant by a sense of entity, Neuhaus explained "Time-Rhythm, with capital letters, where the unit for measuring the rhythm of the music is not the bar, the phrase, the period or the movement, but the composition as a whole, where the musical work and its rhythm are almost identical."[58]

Neuhaus explains this concept by giving examples from the pianist Sviatoslav Richter and Mozart. He commented on Richter's playing "one feels clearly that the whole work, even if it is gigantic proportions, lies before him like an immense landscape, revealed to a single glance from the eagle's flight."[59] He gave the recollection from Mozart about his own compositional work. Sometimes he would reach a state in which he seemed to be able to hear his symphony from the beginning to the end at once, simultaneously, in a single instant.[60] I agree that a consistent rhythm and pulse are very important for the sense of entity. My interpretation of this quote is that a consistent musical expression derived from an understanding of musical structure is fundamental to successful interpretation. I think both of Neuhaus' examples are about knowing and anticipating the overview of a big work, rather than living the present passage in performance. My intention for the research is to find a more efficient and sophisticated approach towards a sense of overview and structuring practice to aid in a more unified and consistent performance outcome.

APaR (Artistic Practice as Research) is the overarching research methodology selected for this study, providing a framework through which new knowledge can be generated via creative practice. Within this framework,

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57 Neuhaus, Henrich. *The Art of Piano Playing*. Trans: K.A. Leibvitch. (Amersham:Kahn&Averill, 1973),48

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.,49

60 Ibid,49.   However, Neuhaus did not give his source for this anecdote.

autoethnography and phenomenology are employed in combination, as they facilitate not only the collection but also the analysis of data in a manner that allows the research to "unfold".[61] As Darla Crispin asserts, in artistic research it is not only what is discovered that matters, but how it is discovered. In the following section, I will outline my adaptation of both methodologies as they are applied in this thesis.

1.2.2 Autoethnography and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

The primary focus of this research is my own experience in devising and employing an interpretative strategy; consequently, autoethnography is an appropriate methodology for examining this personal experience. As Jayne Pitard explains: "[autoethnography] describes and systematically analyses (graphy) personal experience (auto) to understand cultural experience (ethno)."[62] This approach provided the space for introspective reflection, as Carolyn Ellis emphasises: "autoethnography allows for the self to be simultaneously subject and object, creating a space where personal experience becomes a site of inquiry, reflection, and cultural commentary."[63] Another significant aspect of my research involves collaborative work, which generated data from other participants. Therefore, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is an appropriate methodology for this component, as it shares methodological elements and tools with autoethnography but additionally offers a trajectory for understanding the experiences of others. Together, these two methodologies facilitate a comprehensive study of the qualitative experiences within this research. I will employ selected autoethnographic and IPA methods to achieve the self-reflection, subjectivity, and contextualisation required for this study.

For the principal creative project in my portfolio—*The Chopin Project*—I kept a journal throughout the creative process, which later formed the basis for a

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61   Darla Crispin. *Artistic Research as a Process of Unfolding.* (Norwegian Academy of Music, 3, 2019) https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/503395/503396

62   Pitard, Jayne. *Autoethnography as a Phenomenological Tool: Connecting the Personal to the Cultural.* (Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences, 2017). pp 1–17

63   Ellis, Carolyn. *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography.* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004).

series of reflective memos included in the final submission. Qualitative researcher Norman Denzin explains that: "Field notes and journals serve as the bridge between lived experience and analytical understanding, anchoring the researcher's observations in the context of cultural practice."[64] This aligns with Paul John Eakin's understanding of memo writing: "Memo writing is an act of remembering and constructing; it allows musicians and researchers to create a narrative of their artistic journey and identity."[65] Both journal keeping and memo writing are established tools within autoethnographic methodology, used to document and analyse reflective personal experience. The distinction between them lies primarily in tone and purpose: journals tend to capture immediate thoughts and emotions in a more informal and spontaneous manner, while memos are more structured, analytical reflections on the significance of those experiences and their affective dimensions.

The journals were written immediately after each rehearsal session, serving as a means of capturing events, thoughts, and feelings as they occurred, without initial analysis—simply a record of experience. These entries were revised throughout the rehearsal period as new ideas emerged, sometimes reshaping or overriding earlier reflections. Once the project was completed, I revisited and analysed all the journal entries in relation to the final performance outcome. This retrospective examination allowed me to evaluate the effectiveness of specific actions and decisions. The resulting material was then integrated into the thesis in a more reflective and analytical form, with the content categorised according to functional themes relevant to the research.

The tools used to gather information from other participants comprised a combination of dialogical engagement, drawn from autoethnographic practice, and semi-structured interviews, in line with Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). A more dialogical approach was adopted when I was actively involved in the creative process, as this method enables the researcher to participate in meaning-making — a necessary aspect when the researcher is also a creative contributor. By contrast, when collecting data from the Schumann and Chopin groups discussed in Chapter 3.3, I opted for semi-structured interviews. This format allowed for a degree of researcher detachment, thereby reducing the potential influence on participants'

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64   Denzin, Norman K. *Interpretive Autoethnography*. 2nd ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2014).

65   Eakin, Paul John. *How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).

responses and facilitating the collection of more authentic data. As Smith, Flowers, and Larkin note: "The semi-structured interview allows researchers to balance a set of guiding questions with the freedom to explore emerging themes deeply, fostering a collaborative space where participants' voices shape the research trajectory."[66]

On the other hand, IPA is a qualitative research method used to examine lived human experiences as communicated through personal testimony. Its phenomenological underpinning lies in its commitment to a close and detailed exploration of participants' subjective experiences. These experiences are studied through the researcher's interpretative analysis of recorded material, such as written accounts or audio recordings. Semi-structured interviews are a widely employed method of data collection in IPA. Indeed, Jonathan A. Smith has argued that it is nearly impossible to capture the richness of participants' narratives without audio recordings of their testimonies.[67] Although the primary focus of my research is my own experience, several collaborative projects involving other participants have informed the broader investigation. While autoethnography was used to analyse my own experience, certain techniques from IPA were employed to interpret the experiences of others, thereby enriching the data gathered from these additional creative projects. Below is a table outlining the methodologies employed across the various creative projects presented in Chapter 3. The questions listed in the first column do not correspond directly to the overarching research questions introduced in the Introduction chapter; rather, they represent the specific aims of each individual project within Chapter 3.

Question tackled	methodologies used	In chapter…
Does narrative line give interpretative cues?	video-based reflexive inquiry	3.1.1
Does the blueprint of the narrative approach work on someone else other than myself?	reflexive inquiry, phenomenological video analysis, dialogical engagement	3.2

66 Smith, Jonathan A., Paul Flowers, and Michael Larkin. *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method, and Research*. (London: SAGE Publications,2009).

67 Ibid.

Is my interpretative strategy going to work firstly on a smaller scale? (This was the first time embodied metaphor got involved)	phenomenological video and audio analysis, semi-structured interview	3.3
Ways in which linguistic and embodied metaphors work together to convey music?	journal writing, memo writing, phenomenological video analysis, dialogical engagement.	3.4

By employing autoethnographic and phenomenological tools to collect data in response to the questions outlined above, I subsequently applied the method of eidetic reduction to analyse the material and evaluate the usefulness of narrative and movement in musical interpretation. A summary of findings related to narrative function is presented in Appendix 1. Most of the projects and corresponding data pertain to my own practice, with the exception of the raw journal material for Chapter 3.4, which includes extensive exchanges between the choreographer and myself. This was part of an effort to explore how choreographic thinking and movement dynamics can be embodied and exercised by a musician. Our discussions primarily centred on how he perceived musical dynamics, how these were reflected within our respective art forms, and how he organically adapted movement dynamics in response to musical expression. Analytical findings from Chapter 3.4, generated through phenomenological reduction, are included in Appendix 2.

To conclude, as this research primarily investigates my own experience, supported by insights into the experiences of others, a combined methodological approach of autoethnography and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was adopted. The following section will examine existing research on musicians' experiences that have employed similar methodologies.

1.2.3 Existing research on professional musicians' experiences

There have been numerous research projects on music performers' experiences carried out using IPA, semi-structured interviews, and hermeneutics. A few particularly notable texts I have read include Holmes' study, where she explores the role of mental imagery in playing music;[68] Jane W. Davidson's work, which examines the appropriate musical embodiment that mimics physical objects or bodily movements in musicians' practice sessions and performance;[69]and Rosalind Ridout's research on the ways Dalcroze Eurhythmics helps professional musicians in learning contemporary composition[70] — all of which investigate the mental activities of musicians. This indicates that IPA is particularly suitable for my research.

Holmes studied existing literature and carefully designed questions in her targeted areas before interviewing two soloists for their reflective insights on practice in the following areas: cognitive processes, encoding imagery and emotion, memorisation, and understanding of structure. Several recurring themes emerged from the interviews, revealing a considerable presence of imagination in the interviewees' practice, including practical details of how they executed metaphors in their playing and rehearsal. By conducting semi-structured interviews, further insights emerged, such as:

"...the cellist also identified emotional elements . . . not just emotional cues, but all sorts of feelings . . . a range of experiences – like telling a story – they are the trigger for the whole performance...adding that ideally, in a performance, most of the 'triggers' (cues) will have become automatic and you're not thinking about the notes and the technique, it's just a pure act of communication."[71]

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68 Holmes, *Imagination in practice: a study of the integrated roles of interpretation, imagery and technique in the learning and memorisation processes of two experienced solo performers*, 217—235.

69 Davidson, Jane W. and Correia, Jorge S. *Meaningful Musical Performance: A Bodily Experience*. (Research Studies in Music Education, volume 17, no.1, 2001),70.

70 Ridout, Rosalind. *Three Flute Players' Lived Experiences of Dalcroze Eurhythmics in Preparing Contemporary Music for Performance*. (Frontiers in Education, volume 5, 2020)

71 Holmes, *Imagination in practice: a study of the integrated roles of interpretation, imagery and technique in the learning and memorisation processes of two experienced solo performers*, 217—235.

She concluded at the end of her research that semi-structured interviews and IPA were appropriate for studying musicians due to "the richness of the data and the emergence of strong and consistent themes."[72]

Ridout's research also involved multiple musicians, and she categorised the topics into three main areas: bodily influence on playing, understanding of the score, and communicative interpretation. She summarised these aspects using information collected during semi-structured interviews with each flautist. In this article, she also provided the background and personal situations of each player, which gave context and revealed a more complete picture of each musician and the deeper influence that Dalcroze Eurhythmics had on them beyond the learning of the pieces.

Davidson's research focused on a single subject, so she categorised her interview results in terms of practice, performance, and audience reaction. In the interview, the flautist shared his metaphorical practice method: firstly, divide the musical paragraph into phrases; then interpret the phrases with bodily movements without the instrument; and finally, bring out the same characteristics of the body movements in his playing. This points to the idea of vitality affects. Davidson also noted that the presence of an audience made the performance different from rehearsal. This supports my suspicion that the same metaphor may influence the player differently in practice and performance, due to nerves and heightened sensory awareness.

Using phenomenological reduction, Holmes identified universal patterns in how musicians integrate interpretation, imagery, and technique in their personal practice; Ridout observed common effects of Dalcroze training across different performers; and Davidson found shared mental processes among musicians engaged in meaning-making during performance. Through the use of semi-structured interviews and eidetic reduction, as grounded in the work of Edmund Husserl,[73] these researchers bracketed external theoretical assumptions, allowing participants' subjective experiences to guide the data

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72 Ibid.

73 Husserl, Edmund. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: First Book.* Translated by F. Kersten, Martinus Nijhoff, 1982.

analysis. Such studies support the application of phenomenology in my own research by demonstrating that embodied, subjective experiences can be systematically examined through identifying recurring experiential elements—what phenomenologists refer to as invariant components. A chart illustrating how data from my creative projects revealed these intersectional results in response to my overarching research question can be found in Appendix 1. More detailed accounts of the data collection process and a breakdown of the analytical stages will be provided in Chapter 3.

So far, the first part of Chapter 1 has demonstrated that existing ideas in dance and music aesthetics allow me to form a more holistic and structural mindset. The second part has provided the methodological groundings of APaR, autoethnography, and IPA, which enable the gathering of information from the creative process, evaluating it through reflective techniques, and theorising any emergent findings. At this juncture, the context in which some of the theoretical backgrounds that inspired my research trajectory will be introduced in the next chapter.

Chapter 2:   From Experiencing-as to Performing-as

2.1   Experiencing-as

In Chapter 1, I introduced the mechanism of metaphors, the interrelationship between music and dance, and the respective narrative theories underpinning each discipline. I also examined the role of mirror neurons as a biological mechanism that supports these theoretical frameworks.

Chapter 2 shifts focus to the concept of experiencing-as and its theoretical foundation in vitality affects—both of which have significantly shaped the trajectory of my creative practice. These concepts provide a lens through which the three central elements of this research—linguistic metaphor, embodied metaphor, and music—interact.

At its core, the perceptual phenomenon of experiencing-as is underpinned by the qualitative dynamics shared by art forms such as music and dance. The mechanism that enables this phenomenon to unfold is vitality affects, which serves as the foundational process behind the fluid integration of these artistic and cognitive modalities.

2.1.1 Defining "Experiencing-as"?

Richard Wagner once claimed that what music expresses is not a particular person's feelings—such as love, passion, or longing—in a specific context. Instead, it expresses the feelings of love, passion, or longing themselves.[74] This idea is elaborated by Christopher Peacocke, who introduces the notion of *experiencing-as*, which draws on a metaphorical relationship between an artistic object and its perceptual image.[75]

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74 Wagner, Richard. *Pilgrimage to Beethoven and Other Essays*. (U of Nebraska Press, 1994), 81.

75   Peacocke, Christopher. *The Perception of Music: Sources of Significance*. British Journal of Aesthetics, issue 49, no. 3, 257–275. (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

2009), 257.

In his article, Peacocke identifies three types of perceptual experiences. The third type involves metaphorically experiencing something as something else. To illustrate this, he presents the example of Zurbarán's painting of four pots, which some viewers might perceive as four people. In this case, the pots are not merely objects but take on human-like qualities, potentially evoking an emotional response. While this particular metaphor may not inherently carry affective weight, other metaphors possess a stronger emotional resonance.

For instance, Peacocke offers another example: the painting *Solitary Tree* by C. D. Friedrich. In this painting, the tree is perceived as sad due to its isolation from its surroundings. Unlike the pots, which function as a metaphor for something concrete (i.e., human figures), the tree operates as a metaphor for an emotional state—loneliness itself. Peacocke argues that such metaphorical perception arises from a resemblance in the perceiver's experience: if we associate isolation with sadness, then a tree standing apart from its surroundings may be perceived as melancholic. He asserts: "An experienced metaphor can be produced only if the essential characteristics of the mental states involved in the appreciation of the metaphorical contents are the same in perception of objects or events in the other medium."[76]

Essentially, Peacocke's argument suggests that one can only experience a metaphor if one has previously encountered the corresponding mental state. This is because: "...these ways of representing are made available to a subject by his having a cognitional capacity for the emotion..."[77]

However, Peacocke makes an important distinction between perceptual metaphors and represented imagination. In the case of Zurbarán's pots, the emotional connotations emerge only when a viewer actively interprets them as human figures. The emotional resonance, therefore, arises from a representational process within the observer's imagination rather than from direct perception. By contrast, in Solitary Tree, the emotional presence is immediately perceptible without requiring prior mental representation. Peacocke summarises this distinction: "Representation concerning the

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76 Ibid, 274.

77 Ibid, 270.

metaphorically represented domain may be copied to what underlies perceptual experience." [78]

This distinction is also applicable to music. When we listen to music—even if it is not programme music—certain feelings will arise unexpectedly. We may even be reminded of past experiences and feel as though the music is telling a story we have heard or lived through. In this case, the music enables a perceptual metaphor to form in the listener's mind. On the other hand, when listening to programme music, we match the inherent narration to the composed programme, and the affective response generated from this mental activity falls into the category of represented imagination.

This leads us to an important question raised by Peter Kivy in response to Peacocke's paper. In his 2009 paper,[79] Kivy acknowledged Peacocke's successful account of the metaphorical perception of music—or rather, experiencing-as. However, he raised a significant question: are all instances of experiencing-as equally valid? If not, what criteria determine whether a particular interpretation is justifiable? While these questions are not fully resolved in the paper, we might infer Kivy's stance from his broader body of work. Although he does not object to perceiving dynamic qualities in music, he has consistently maintained that such interpretations must be grounded in the music's structural and stylistic features—such as form, phrasing, tonality, and harmony. This position is clearly evident in both his 1984 monograph,[80] Sound and Semblance, and his 2002 work,[81] Introduction to a Philosophy of Music.

From a performer's perspective, I find Kivy's argument persuasive, as it corresponds with how I intend to apply and extend Peacocke's theory in this thesis—a trajectory that will become more evident in Chapter 3. The following section introduces a key underlying phenomenon that enables experiencing-as: the concept of vitality affects. I will now explain what this is and why it plays a crucial role in my research.

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78 Ibid, 268.

79 Kivey, Peter. The Other Shoe: Some Thoughts for Christopher Peacocke.(British Journal of Aesthetics, Volume 49, Issue 3, 2009)

80 Kivey, Peter. Sound and Semblance:Reflections on Musical Representation.(Princeton University Press, 1984)

81 Kivy, Peter. Introduction to a philosophy of music. (New York: Clarendon Press, 2002).

2.1.2 Vitality Affects

The association our brains form between perception and our own bodily movement is what Daniel Stern refers to as vitality affect.[82] Vitality affects are fundamentally the qualities of feeling that are too elusive to be described within the usual lexicon and are better captured in dynamic and kinetic terms—words such as surging, fading away, fleeting, explosive, crescendo, decrescendo."[83] These affects are also present across all sensory modalities, allowing vision, hearing, smell, and touch to be interlinked through their shared vitality affects. I have extended this concept to performing-as, because the same principles have already been applied to other art forms such as literature and acting.

As established by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, the essence of metaphor lies in drawing associations between different domains by their shared features. Since Stern acknowledges that an affective quality is not confined to a single sensory modality, we can infer that different sensory experiences can be linked through their common qualities. Therefore, this can be seen as the primary type of metaphor our brains are capable of forming."[84]

This concept aligns with Peacocke's assertion that metaphors are not necessarily linguistic but are often verbalised simply as a means of communicating them to others. I propose that if these vitality affects (or, effectively, other types of metaphors) are not originally intended for verbal expression, then in musical interpretation, we should be able to translate our metaphorical hearing directly into metaphorical playing. Peacocke's article also suggests that metaphors can shape not only perception but also cognition and imagination:

"A representation concerning the metaphorically represented domain may be copied to what underlies perceptual experience; it may be copied to what underlies an imagining; or may be copied to what underlies a thought. Different

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82 Stern, Daniel N, The Interpersonal World of the Infant.(London: Routledge, 1985)

83 Sheets–Johnston, *The Primacy of Movement*, 136.

84 Lakoff & Johnson, "The Creation of Similarity" from *Metaphors we live by*.

kinds of mental states or events may all have metaphorical content, but there is a common structure here to underlie all such cases."[85]

In other words, Peacocke argues that metaphorical representation is just as possible in thought and imagination as it is in perception. In the next section, I will present examples that illustrate why I believe the "common structure" that Peacocke refers to may be grounded in vitality affects.

Vitality affects are deeply embedded in music; they exist even in the most fundamental musical concepts. For example, the right-hand side of the piano keyboard is high or up, and the left-hand side is low or down, because the further the keys are on the right-hand side, the higher the frequency the pitches produce. Thus, "up" is a metaphorical vitality affect of high frequency. We also use vitality affects to describe the effort one applies to executing sounds. For instance, loud playing is often referred to as powerful, while quiet playing may be described as light (as a feather), since reducing volume requires less physical pressure on the keys or bow.

In an essay on cross-modal aesthetics regarding the "matchness" of music and dance, Solveig Aasen argues that dynamic quality may be the underlying factor that creates this correspondence—an idea she refers to as movement. However, I find this term too ambiguous in this context. Unintentionally, she employs vitality affects to explain her concept: "One may practice ending a tone as if it is fading away, cut short, put softly aside, etc. Similarly, dancers may practice how to land from a jump softly, how to lift one's arm as if it were a feather, or how to end a leg movement with accent, as if one were a robot..."[86] This demonstrates how vitality affects permeate artistic understanding across genres.

Stern's fundamental concept of vitality affects is rooted in body movements and our perception of the external world, implying that underlying every perception is the change in relation between the body and the space it occupies. I propose that this concept extends beyond physical movement to encompass mental and imaginative processes, playing a crucial role in how musicians engage with imagery during performance. Specifically, I argue that

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85 Peacocke, Christopher. *The Perception of Music: Sources of Significance*. British Journal of Aesthetics, issue 49, no. 3, (2009),268.

86 Ibid,234.

the dynamic quality inherent in both music and dance holds the key to how the imaginative aspect of dance can significantly enhance our interpretations of music. To illustrate this, I will now present a personal account of a cross-modal experience involving music and dance to contextualise my argument.

The Liszt Sonata is an intricately structured work, characterised by three primary motifs that continuously intertwine, alongside abrupt shifts that pose interpretative challenges. For example, between bars 363 and 413, the three motifs are introduced sequentially. This motive starting in bar 363 (Fig.2.1), which I will name as motive 1 for convenient reference, begins with a chordal accompaniment marked *mezzo forte*, yet within just four bars, it builds to *forte con passione*. This dynamic persists for another four bars without further indications, before transitioning into a *crescendo* leading to *rinforz*.

Figure 2.1: Bars 363-370 from Liszt Piano Sonata in B minor.

After a brief wind-down of four bars, the same procedure and musical material are repeated from bar 376. However, this time, instead of descending from the climax, it crescendos into Motive 2 starting at bar 385.

Figure 2.2: Bars 376-384 from Liszt Piano Sonata in B minor.

Following bar 385, motive 2 takes over the musical development, and six *fortissimi* are written over the next 12 bars, yet the pianist is further expected to play even louder following those 12 bars of fortissimo, before releasing into Motive 3, which has a gentle (*dolce*) and flowing character—a dramatic change in dynamics in just one bar! This presents a challenge for pianists to make such a drastic shift in sound convincing. Therefore, it's crucial to understand what the expressive markings are conveying beyond just the volume.

Figure 2.3: Bars 385-400 from Liszt Piano Sonata in B minor.

In the ballet Marguerite and Armand, this section in the music aligns perfectly with the narrative and choreography. It begins with Marguerite weeping on one side of the stage, while Armand, unaware that his father has just asked Marguerite to leave him, stands on the other. The thick musical texture of Motive 1 here creates a grave mood, while the beautiful melodic line hints at the tenderness of love.

The dancers perform ballet movements such as arabesque and penché, which are relatively still, but their bodies appear stretched. Motive 2 features movement across the stage with runs and jumps that gradually build up to larger leaps, such as jetés. The male dancer lifts the female dancer into the air, enabling her to jump even higher in a highly demanding movement. Finally, in the loudest musical climax, Marguerite runs and throws herself into Armand's arms. He catches her in the air, and they spiral into several continuous turns, visually amplifying the extreme passion expressed in the music. As the intensity subsides, they gradually slow down. In Motive 3, they stop twirling, still tightly embracing, their posture conveying both serenity and deep emotion.

It's important to note that dance movements do not have to mirror the music exactly. They can be intentionally contrasted to support the music in conveying a certain meaning. For instance, bars 105–113 mark a local climax with the introduction of a chordal motif, which is paired with a completely still moment in the choreography, where the two dancers stand and gaze at each other. This moment captures the intense attraction between the two characters at the moment of their first meeting. The musical amplitude corresponds to the intensity of their attraction, while the dancers remain motionless, symbolising the initial overwhelming reaction of falling in love.

Figure 2.4: Bars 105-110 from Liszt Piano Sonata in B minor.

Figure 2.5: Equivalent section as fig.2.4 in Ballet *Maguerite and Armand*

Though I am physically unable to perform the choreography due to the complexity of the movements, I have still perceived and, more importantly, empathised with them. This allows me to play the music in a way that conveys the feeling of a strenuous movement, or a serene one, depending on the musical passage. I achieve this not merely by adjusting the volume, but by working with tone quality, balance, and timing to alter the intensity (or what I will refer to in this thesis as dynamic quality) of the sound I produce. Thus, I believe it is possible to extend Peacocke's concept of experiencing-as to playing-as and ultimately to performing-as, contributing to a more coherent interpretation of piano pieces. I am confident in this possibility, especially since artists from other disciplines have already adopted similar approaches, as I will demonstrate with the following examples.

2.2 Performing-as

2.2.1 Extending Experiencing-as to Performing-as in music

The concept of performing-as is my extension of Peacocke's "experiencing-as". If a piece of music can be experienced as another thing—its metaphor—through their shared vitality affects, then it should also be possible to perform the music with a matching vitality affect to its metaphor. The practical framework for generating linguistic metaphors for the music was discussed in in Chapter 1.1.6, and the embodiment will be experimented with in Chapter 3. I think performing-as is possible also because this practice has a long history in various art forms such as acting, dance, and literature. It also exists informally among musicians who take inspiration from other artistic disciplines.

I will now provide examples of metaphorical manifestation across various art disciplines, which I will refer to as "performing-as". The commonality in different forms of performing-as across various art disciplines is that they share the same underlying dynamic quality across different sensory modalities.

In his article *Image Consciousness, Movement Consciousness*,[87] Jonathan Clark discussed the underlying similarity in the philosophical aesthetics in dance and painting. He thinks that dance can trigger feelings in its perceiver through the perceiver's ability to empathise with their own kinaesthetic experience in response to the visual effects of the dancers' bodies. When it comes to appreciating painting, there is just one additional step—mentally animating the static temporal moments. Clark argues that the combination of the static visual image and the mental animation evokes an empathetic response in the viewer.

In his article, "affect attunement" refers to the idea that if two art forms elicit a similar empathetic response, they are connected in our minds through their shared dynamic—in other words, through their common vitality affect. For instance, if a sequence of dance movements and a painting both evoke the same empathetic response, we might say that the dance reminds us of the painting, or even that the dance is performed as if it were the painting.

2.2.2 Performing-as in other art forms

As early as 1856, the Realist writer Gustave Flaubert embarked on a ground-breaking literary endeavour with his most renowned work, *Madame Bovary*. In this novel, Flaubert sought to immerse himself imaginatively in the lives of his characters. In stark contrast, his contemporary Émile Zola, a Naturalist writer, approached the psychological intricacies of his characters in a more analytical manner, employing scientific methodologies and a deep exploration of human realities. This Naturalist approach drew a thought-provoking critique from the actor Konstantin Stanislavski, who remarked to a theatre ensemble that Naturalism in art is a method that

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87 Clark, Jonathan O.Image Consciousness, Movement Consciousness.(Midwest Studies In Philosophy, Volume 44, Issue 1, 2019) p. 48–69

primarily selects the typical aspects of life. He conveyed, "If, at times, we adopt a naturalistic approach in our stage work, it only indicates that we have yet to acquire a sufficient understanding to delve into the historical and social essence of events and characters."[88]

Although Stanislavski did not explicitly classify himself as a Realist actor, his approach to acting bore striking resemblance to Flaubert's method, as both aimed to live the imaginative lives of their characters. This approach largely stemmed from the teachings of his mentor, Professor Tortsov. Tortsov's instruction on imagination revolved around three core principles:

1. A purpose is needed for every action taken (imagine actively, not passively).

2. The imagination needs to be real, possible, logical and sequential.

3. (the imaginary) "I" needs to be placed at the centre of the imagination, and "I" should not be able to see oneself, but only the surrounding things and respond to them.[89]

Tortsov's concept of "imagination" essentially meant the creation of hypothetical experiences. Given that actors typically work with plots predefined by scripts, they perceive and react to the sequence of events as if they were the characters themselves. Stanislavski's innovative method exerted such a profound influence that today, most actors draw upon it to some extent, whether consciously or unconsciously. Notably, David Mamet, a renowned American playwright and film director, offered unconventional advice to aspiring actors in his provocative book *True and False*. He argued that actors should refrain from injecting their own emotions into their performances to manipulate the audience's reactions. Instead, they should immerse themselves so thoroughly in their characters that they can determine the character's actions as if they were the characters themselves.[90] In essence, it is about understanding the character's actions, which can authentically convey the character's inner world to the audience, rather than attempting to influence the audience with the actor's own emotions.

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88 Benedetti, Jane. Stanislavski: An introduction. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 17.

89 Stanislavski, Konstantin. "Chapter 4" from An Actor's Work.Trans: Jean Benedetti (London: Routledge,2008).

90 Mamet, David. True and False: Hersey and Common Sense for the Actor. (London: Faber and Faber, 1998).

The concept of "performing-as" is a pervasive and vital element within the realm of dance. Dancers often employ this approach, either embodying a specific emotion or character or channelling another art form, which frequently takes the form of the music accompanying the dance. Stephanie Jordan's account highlights the diverse ways in which "performing-as" manifests in dance. For instance, Isadora Duncan preferred to dance as if she embodied the very spirit (Geist) of the music itself.[91]

On the other hand, Fyodor Lopukhov advocated for dancers to interpret the musical movement directly. He contended that music with soaring qualities should be matched with expansive movements, such as en dehors (a stage positioning that opens toward the audience), while music in a minor key should correspond to en dedans (the opposite of en dehors) movements.[92]

In the case of the influential British choreographer Frederick Ashton, many of his creations featured a strong narrative element. He consistently sought music that evoked imagery consistent with the story being told. This alignment between the narrative and musical elements was crucial to his creative process. As a personal anecdote, during my time at the Royal Ballet, I frequently received guidance to convey the plot of the production through my piano accompaniment, "the story on the stage is in your music." I was often told. These diverse approaches, encompassing emotional embodiment, interpretations of musical movement, and alignment of music with narrative, all exemplify the concept of "performing-as" in dance.

In the realm of music, the practice of metaphorically performing something as something else has received comparatively less attention than in other artistic disciplines. Notably, during the nineteenth century, there was a prevailing approach to music where audiences often perceived a piece of music as if it were a "composed novel".[93] While discussions of metaphor and narrativity in music have historically revolved around the audience's perspective, these concepts have also found application in musical pedagogy. Heinrich Neuhaus, a renowned figure in twentieth-century piano pedagogy whose tutelage nurtured the talents of pianists like Emil Giles and Sviatoslav Richter,

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91 Jordan, Moving Music,16.

92 Ibid,48.

93 Ibid,12.

emphasised the importance of "...developing a student's imagination by the use of apt metaphor, poetic similes, by analogy of natural phenomena or events in life, particularly spiritual, emotional life."[94]

It is essential to acknowledge that music is inherently more abstract than literature, dance, or theatre, providing performers with greater interpretative freedom. This abstract nature necessitates thoughtful consideration when employing metaphors in teaching. Neuhaus's perspective on music's relationship with metaphor is intriguing, he asserts "Please remember that I never *illustrate* music, i.e. in the case in point I do not say that the music represents the flower, it can symbolise it, and call forth in imagination the image of a flower."[95]

Neuhaus's approach allows for a range of interpretations, recognising that individuals may perceive music differently and respond to it based on their own experiences. Neuhaus's use of metaphor is aimed at evoking specific emotions or affects within the student. It encourages the student to not merely visualise an image of, for example, a blooming flower while playing, but to recall and embody the emotional response elicited by witnessing a flower in full bloom. The student then translates this emotion into their musical performance, giving the music emotional depth and expressive connection. This approach highlights the profound role that metaphor and imaginative associations can play in forming meaningful interpretations and expressions of music.

The common thread that underlies the various "performing-as" approaches in music and dance, as discussed above, is the use of metaphor. Metaphor, in its essence, is about forging connections between dissimilar elements through their underlying similarities. However, it's important to recognise that each person's sense of similarity among dissimilar elements can vary widely. Therefore, it's noteworthy that I am positioning myself as the focal point of the research, drawing from my experiences as a pianist employing various methodologies within Artistic Research as Practice. This approach acknowledges the nuanced and individualistic nature of metaphorical connections in music and dance, shedding light on how these connections manifest in my personal journey as a musician and educator. Having presented Neuhaus's account of narrative "performing-as" in music, I will now

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94 Neuhaus, *The Art of Piano* Playing, 20.

95 Ibid.,26.

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explore how vitality affects can enable bodily movements to function as metaphors for music.

2.2.3 Lived Metaphor

I believe it is possible to make someone's playing more than a mere replication of the printed score, by the imaginative bodily movements generated as a metaphor, enabled by vitality affects, because of Stern's acknowledgement of affective qualities' existence across sensory modalities. For example, we may say the phrase "it looks a bit sorry for itself" when we see a droopy flower - this phrase includes a vitality affect, because here the droopiness is not only a physical orientation, but it also imposes an affect on the viewers of the flower.

However, Maxine Sheets-Johnson has added to this the assertion that affective qualities are not only related to movements, but also the way one movement is carried forward to the next —she gives the example of facial expressions being not a static appearance of the face, but rather the way facial muscles move when executing the expression.[96] For instance, smiles can be perceived to reflect different psychological activities when executed at different speeds. She commented that what Stern called "vitality affects" are purely dynamic aspects of movements, rather than the dynamic quality between the movements.[97]

I agree that what musicians can take from dance is not only the quality of static gestures but also how dance movements are put into a routine. In the ballet *Manon*, similar dance moves are choreographed at different points of the story —when the young girl Manon was in love, when she is seducing rich men for money, and when another prostitute is dancing with her drunken lover. The same movements theoretically should have the same dynamic; however, they convey such different characters and stories when dancers execute them in different manners—it might just be a different Épaulement, which is a twist of the shoulder in relation to the rest of the body, however there is more expression in that turn. As Brooke Moore, a faculty member for BalletMet's trainee program says "Think of épaulement as the punctuation at the end of a sentence. The head and the eyes are the exclamation point!"[98]

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96 Sheets–Johnston, Maxine. The Primacy of Movement. (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company,2011), 136.

97 Ibid.

98 Rizzuto, Rachel. The Six Épaulement Mistakes Your Teacher Is Tired of Seeing. (Online: Dance Magazine, 2019)

In trying to encourage a student to embody a sound quality in her playing of Chopin Nocturne, I found myself saying "Chopin sank into the sofa" rather than "He sits on the sofa". This caused the student to release the tension and sink more of her arm weight into the keyboard unintentionally. How could such a slight change of words affect the student's playing on multiple levels? It is the effect of the student imagining, empathising and embodying herself to Chopin's movement. As this mental activity has been widely used by actors and writers, where "performative turn" originated.

Sometimes arts are metaphors for things in real life situations, other times our day-to-day experience can be the metaphor for the arts.[99] As explained by writers such as Goffman[100] and Burke,[101] the "performative turn" is an artistic and sociological movement, which ties life and arts closely as one entity. This movement has also been referred to by music scholars such as Nicholas Cook in his book *Beyond the Score*,[102] which I will discuss in more details below. My intention in writing this thesis is not to favour either perspective, but rather to address a gap in musical literature by researching a metaphorical approach, thus proposing a strategy for performers to be more aware of how they wish to interpret a piece. This intention intersects with the origins of the performative turn, and I hope this thesis can be a useful addition to the literature on the performative turn, specifically regarding music performance.

2.3 The Performative Turn and my research

As previously discussed within this thesis, the "performative turn" represents a significant shift that encompasses both sociological and artistic dimensions. This chapter now examines its impact on music performance studies. This transformative shift initially originated in theatrical studies as a response to the perceived dominance of textual meaning over stage performance. Its influence subsequently extended to the relationship between musicology and music performance, manifesting in three distinct directions: historically informed practice (HIP), analytically informed performance and close listening to

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99 Lakoff and Johnson, "The Creation of Similarity" from *Metaphors we live by*.

100 Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. (New York: Doubleday&Company, 1959).

101 Burke, Kenneth. *A Grammar of Motives*. (California: University of California Press, 1945).

102 Cook, Nicolas. *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

recorded performances. Each of these approaches aims to bridge the gap between musicological analysis and live music performance. However, they also bring about challenges and raise questions.

While much could be said about HIP and close listening, this thesis focuses on analytically informed performance, which is of greater relevance to my research.

Wallace Berry, a proponent of the analytically informed practice, asserted in his seminal work that "analysis can be illuminated by the inflexion of an edifying performance."[103] The words "illuminated" and "edifying" are particularly intriguing, because Berry is implying that the score inherently contains meaning, awaiting elucidation by the performers. Therefore, despite his criticism of the one-way system implied by the phrase "page-to-stage", Berry's work ultimately regards musical performance as an articulation of the score's inherent significance. It is undeniable that performing composed music requires a close study of the score, and a degree of analysis is indispensable during the process of score interpretation. However, some of Berry's assertions carry the risk of misleading readers into believing that a comprehensive understanding of the score alone suffices for exceptional performance. This inclination toward score analysis could potentially elevate musicology over performance study.

Of the three branches of the performative turn, analytically informed performance invites particularly rich and controversial discourse. Central to this discussion is the question of analysis' role in live performance—an issue captured in Benjamin Britten's oft-cited remark from Leon Stein's Structure and Style: "In performance, the analysis must be forgotten."[104] As a performer, I would argue that entirely setting aside analysis in performance is unrealistic. I deliberately select sections that benefit from analytical insights and internalise them during practice. Nevertheless, the limitations of analysis must be acknowledged—it can be time-consuming, and focusing on isolated segments may disrupt the performer's overall cognitive and emotional coherence.

John Rink, in his review of Berry's work, observes: "Developing the theoretical and analytical faculties of performers is an eminently worthwhile pedagogical

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103   Berry, Wallace. *Musical Structure and Performance*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

104 Stein, Leon. S*tructure and Style*. (Evanston:Summy–Birchard Company,1962), 8.

goal, but it is unlikely that such acquired expertise will influence their thinking in the heat of action."[105]

This resonates with my own experience. While concepts like harmonic function or motivic transformation deepen our understanding of a work's construction, they do not necessarily aid the performer to construct meaning. Rink also distinguishes between the types of analysis conducted by performers versus musicologists. This divide is exemplified in studies such as Chaffin and Imreh's research on music memorisation, as well as Jennifer Tong's mention of Alfred Brendel's analysis of Beethoven in her paper about the relationship between performance and analysis.[106]

Moreover, Rink notes Berry's inconsistent use of terminology, particularly the notion of the performer's "living image" of a piece. For example, Berry writes: "Pitch, dynamics and other articulation markings appear in these 'thematic essences', which approximate the 'derived' (or 'living') image of a piece in a performer's mind while being played."[107] Yet, he contradicts himself by stating that "the vital illusion of spontaneity can be attained only if the analytical comprehension of structure is assimilated to a submerged level of consciousness" Additionally, he suggests that "what the piece is 'about,' its scope of potential utterance, its expressive message and character," lies "beyond the understanding of objective materials of structure."[108]

These statements reflect an inconsistent use of the term "performance." I propose in this thesis a practical resolution grounded in the experience of performers.

In music literature, the term "performance" typically carries two meanings. On one hand, it refers to the act of performing—to realise the notated score through physical execution. This use often fosters a technique-oriented approach to practice. On the other hand, "performance" can denote the resulting outcome of such an act—the sonic and perceptual experience generated by the performer. These dual meanings give rise to two different

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105   Rink, John. *Reviewed work(s): Musical Structure and Performance by Wallace Berry.* (Music Analysis, Vol.9 No.3, Oct 1990) ,319–339.

106 Tong, Chee Yee Jennifer. *Separate discourses: A Study of Performance and Analysis.* (PhD diss., University of Southampton, 1994).

107 Berry, Wallace. *Musical Structure and Performance.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

108 Ibid.

kinds of practice: one driven by the mechanics of faithfully enacting the score, and the other focused on achieving a particular sound or affect, inferred from the score but shaped by the performer's interpretive intention.

For example, my students might see a forte marking and simply press the keys more forcefully. When asked why, they respond, "Because the score says it's loud." This represents a rudimentary understanding of "to perform." However, if I label the piece "angry dinosaur" or "fat elephant," they still play loudly, but their intention shifts—they aim to embody a character or evoke a specific imagery. Even with limited technical knowledge, this change in intention alters the sound quality. This is what I call performance led by sound.

Philip Auslander critiques Berry's view as still treating performance as the product of a text — that is, what I refer to as "to perform."   Auslander argues that the essence of performance is "to perform an identity in a social realm."[109] This brings to mind a moment in the documentary Bloody Daughter, where Martha Argerich is asked by her daughter, "Do you think you played differently when you were pregnant?" Argerich laughs and replies, "I played a bit slower, haha! I almost cried when I heard a sample of the recording of Gaspard de la nuit I made when you were in my belly — I sounded nothing seductive or demonic. Like a pregnant housewife!" In this comment, Argerich refers to both the verb "to perform" and the noun "performance," because the self-reflective comment of "I played a bit slower" is her action (to perform), which resulted in a perceptual outcome of sounding "Like a pregnant housewife!"(performance). This example illustrates the need to distinguish between these two concepts within performance studies. The former is a causation and the latter is an outcome.

Clarifying this distinction—between "to perform" (the act of execution) and "performance" (the perceptual outcome) — helps avoid contradictions such as those found in Berry's work. It also supports the view that music does not reside solely in the score; rather, the score is a notated representation of sound. Thus, a performance-based study that uses analysis to enhance the act of performing becomes not only possible but fruitful. In this model, "performance"—as sound production and perceptual communication — is the

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109   Auslander, Philip. (2006). Musical Personae. (The Drama Review, vol.50 no.1, Spring 2006), 100–119.

primary goal. From there, one works backwards: identifying the techniques that generate the desired sound, and the score elements that imply a particular perceptual structure.

Music can indeed move between page and stage, and betwee feeling and analysis. It is in the interplay between notation and sound, execution and perception, that the true depth of musical meaning emerges. My research follows this interplay closely, seeking to enrich our understanding of how musicians navigate this delicate relationship and bring written music to life.

In Chapter 3, I detail the creative projects I designed in line with these methodologies. These projects are presented in chronological order. Chapters 3.1 to 3.3 document my early experimental work addressing specific challenges in piano playing. Chapter 3.4 marks a significant milestone, representing the culmination of these experiments in a performance presented at a festival.

Chapter 3: Metaphor in artistic practice

In this chapter, I will outline several practice projects: they are arranged in a chronological order and they were conducted in this order for the purpose of building up the necessary practical knowledge from a preliminary familiar practice to more experimental and innovative later ones. I provide a chart below to give precise dates, locations, collaborators attributions, as well as the rationale for each project.

Project piece	Date	Location&portfolio no.	Collaborators	Purpose
Chopin Nocturne Op.27 No.2	June 2021	KCC practice room Video 1 in portfolio	N/A	To test the viability of generating linguistic metaphors using "reversed emoting".
Chopin Concerto Op.11 Movt.3	Sept.2021	Goodenough College Video 2 in portfolio	Goodensemble	To test if linguistic metaphors provide assistance in memorisation.
Chopin Nocturne Op.48 No.1	Sept.2021	Online Video 3 in portfolio	My student Z	The results were positive in the above two projects so I wanted to test usability/transference to another individual.
CoLab Chopin Nocturne Op.9 No.1 & Schumann Kinderzenen selections	Feb.2022	Laban building studio 6 Video 4&5 in portfolio	Phoebe Lu, Ben Manson, Eera Gupta, Yui Wu, Hannah Frazer, Roxanne Mehrabzadeh	After the success of another user being able to apply the linguistic metaphor, I wanted to try using it to inspire bodily metaphors as well.
Chopin Sonata Op.58	June-Oct. 2022	Chancellor's Hall, UCL Video 6,7,8,9,10 in portfolio	Noé Engelbeen, Maelle Le Pallec, Lydia Ayllon, Hanaë Salavy, Emma Poyer	The culmination and embodiment of the use of both linguistic and bodily metaphors.

3.1.1 Narrative structure in Chopin's Nocturne Op. 27, No.2

In my initial foray into experimentation, I endeavoured to apply the reversed emoting process to a relatively concise musical composition spanning 77 bars. The central focus of this investigation was the issue of unity, as I have earlier quoted from Neuhaus, who said that a poorly structured performance is "a collection of more or less enchanting moments."[110]

The composition unfolds in three distinct sections, divided by the recurring opening theme. It is imperative to approach each of these sections with a nuanced yet cohesive interpretation in order to render the piece as a unified whole. The challenge of the piece lies in Chopin's deliberate variations of expressive markings, juxtaposed against the consistent underlying texture, melody, and harmony. A compelling example of this is the parallelism between bars 15–16 and 55–56, as well as the variation in expressive markings for the recurring opening theme—both of which I will discuss in more detail shortly after introducing my narrative chart, as these concepts are better explained within the narrative structure I devised.

To delineate differences in musical expression, I employed the narrative thread as a primary metaphor. For more specific definitions of dynamics at certain moments in the story, I used bodily movement as a complementary metaphor. However, the use of this complementary metaphor was measured, given my early stage of research and limited knowledge of body movement at the time. Over the course of the three-year research period, my collaboration with contemporary and ballet dancers, as well as the choreographer in the Dancing Chopin project, significantly expanded my understanding of bodily movements and choreography. Importantly, the narrative itself inherently suggests emotional implications, and the movements employed to convey the narrative carry associated dynamics. The confluence of music and bodily movement forms a holistic medium for storytelling through qualitative dynamics. While a comprehensive exploration of the scientific underpinnings of this interplay falls outside the scope of this research, it is crucial to acknowledge the intrinsic correlation between emotion and physical response

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110 Neuhaus, *The Art of Piano Playing*, 48.

on a dynamic level. This approach responds to John Rink's concept of the "intensity curve."[111]

John Rink proposed an 'intensity curve' in his analysis of Chopin's Prelude No. 4, describing it as "a graphic representation of the music's ebb and flow, its 'contour' in time, determined by all active elements (harmony, melody, rhythm, dynamics, etc.)... to create the changing degrees of energy and thus the overall shape." Nicholas Cook[112] criticised this model as overly general, arguing that it cannot be broken down into the elements that Rink claims to contribute to. My vision for my metaphorical intensity curve is for it to aid in the creation of an insightful interpretation, with a three-dimensional depth that extends Rink's work in this domain.

At this point, I must first explain how I formed the narrative and movement in my mind. My approach began with sight-reading the piece, and the initial feeling evoked by the first phrase was "intimate." This emotional response became the foundation upon which I constructed the rest of the narrative, ultimately portraying a love story. Notably, the complete narrative only revealed itself at the end of the initial reading, as vitality affects and meaning arose gradually while the piece unfolded. At that moment, I connected these feelings to a storyline. While the narrative initially sprang from an affective response, the subsequent assembly of narrative and emotions was refined as I noticed more musical details. Some affective responses were refined into specific emotions with the aid of the narrative context, while conversely, certain emotions propelled the progression of the narrative. Crucially, all emotions were rooted in their inherent qualitative dynamics. This relationship between narrative and emotions formed a fluid and reciprocal dialogue between the two realms. While individual musical fragments inherently suggest diverse dynamics, in this experiment, the narrative provided a unifying framework that linked these dynamics coherently.

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111 Rink, John. "The State of Play in Performance Studies" in *The Music Practitioner*, ed. Jane Davidson. (Aldershot: Ashgatelln, 2004), 37–51.

112 Cook, Nicholas & Everist, Mark. "Rethinking Music"(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

The table below illustrates the translation between my immediate perceptions and the corresponding narrative line, along with their respective bar numbers. I suggest reading each column vertically to better understand the flow of sequences in the music, referring to the bar numbers only when necessary. As Cook asserted, "performance (of music) is largely the art of transitioning – in other words, it is oriented to precisely the horizontal dimension of music…"[113] (which is ironically shown vertically on this table!)

Perceived feeling	Narrative	Bar number
Intimate	being in love	1-9
Sorrow	feeling insecure & questioning	10-17
conflict & softens	one has denial and the other pledge	18-25
fragile	hurt & comfort	26-33
tender	express love in the form of a duet	34-37
pleading	one asks again for proof of love	38-45
passionate	embrace	46-49
butterfly in the stomach	murmuring between the lovers	50-61 (50-53)
desperate & confirmation	one gets desperate and agitated, because of the uncertainty and the other claims love	54-62
calm down	calms down	62-68
intimate	walks away & being in love	69-77

It is important to underscore that when I perform this piece, the narrative is not articulated in verbal form, but instead unfolds as a kind of internal narrative dance—an embodied imagining in which emotions and interpersonal relationships are enacted through movement. This narrative, though vivid, takes place within my imagination rather than on stage. While elements of

113 Cook, Nicholas. (2013). Beyond the Score. Oxford: Clarendon Press. P.44

classical ballet occasionally emerge, due to my familiarity with its vocabulary, my imaginative choreography is not restricted to any specific genre. Rather, it remains open and adaptable to a range of movement styles, making it accessible to individuals with differing levels of experience across various dance forms. This was clearly demonstrated in *the Dancing Chopin Project*, where contemporary dance served as the primary mode of embodiment.

The emphasis here is not on codified dance technique, but on the expressive potential of movement as a vehicle for musical interpretation. My approach builds upon and extends John Rink's notion of the "intensity curve" by highlighting the continuous unfolding of an embodied narrative that mirrors the music's expressive contour. In this way, the performer's internalised movement narrative enhances the perception of musical coherence and emotional development across the piece.

As mentioned in the first paragraph of this section, the narrative clarified the different approaches needed for the same compositional material. The opening theme serves as a prime example. It recurs three times throughout the piece, and each appearance requires a distinct interpretation.

The first occurrence is marked *piano*, *dolce*, with no embellishment, prompting me to unfold the melody without rubato and execute the left-hand accompaniment evenly and quietly. The resulting sound evoked a sense of intimacy. The second recurrence is marked *pianissimo*, prompting me to use the left pedal to achieve a softer sound quality. However, I wanted the melodic notes to cut through the mellow softness produced by the pedal. To achieve this, I adjusted my technique, moving from using the finger pads to a very fast and light fingertip attack. This allowed the melody to stand out from the inner texture, creating a sense of suspense. The clarity of the melody, combined with the fragile quality of the fingertip attack, made me think of transparent glass, which led me to name this feeling "fragile".

For the final recurrence, marked *fortissimo*, I initially allowed my upper body weight to sink into the keyboard. However, the resulting sound was loud yet harsh, so I altered my fingering. I used both the 4th and 5th fingers on the same key for all notes requiring the 5th finger. This new hand position altered both the timing and the physical feel of playing those notes. The slightly awkward hand positioning made me feel somewhat laboured, and I imagined a movement from a passionate dance between two lovers in the ballet *Manon*. This movement embodied the intensity I sought, and I named this moment "passionate" in the narrative. This imagery is captured in video 1, at 03:07.

However, these feelings are derived from a single occasion. How, then, can I consolidate these timing and balance decisions from one day to the next? This is where a coherent narrative line becomes invaluable. After reflecting on and analysing my playing, and combining the reversed emoting process, I assigned my perceptions of the three recurrences to specific events in the narrative. These are marked in red font in the narrative table above. The first recurrence, "intimate," is depicted as an image of two lovers walking calmly arm in arm, embodying the stereotype of lovebirds. The second recurrence, "fragile," was interpreted as psychological vulnerability, with one person feeling hurt while the other seeks to comfort. The third recurrence, "passionate," is inspired by a passionate embracing movement, fitting seamlessly into the narrative.

This early example demonstrates the strategy I used to develop an understanding of the piece, as well as a process of exploration to physically express my interpretation. Although this was my first experiment with this strategy and many details were still missing, the metaphors would continue to develop in subsequent chapters. However, we can already see the different variants of performing-as—where different auditory experiences inspire visual ones, whether based on real objects or dance. The next time I play the piece, I will approach it as though aiming to recreate the visual experiences, seeking to capture their emotional essence.

The development of the narrative also revealed more compositional details as I played. A striking example is the parallelism between bars 15-16 and 55-56. Despite being identical in terms of musical material, the harmonies that follow create different narrative implications. In the first instance, the harmony leads to conflict, while in the second, it resolves into calm. The harmonies in bar 17, forming a sequence of diminished chords without a clear resolution, generate a sense of ambiguity and unstable tension. In contrast, the harmonies in bars 57-62 resolve with a perfect cadence at bar 62, imparting a sense of certainty. Furthermore, the score is marked appassionato from bars 58 to 62, suggesting a drive towards the harmonic resolution, which creates a different affective expression than the earlier section. These narrative clues are marked in blue font in the narrative table displayed above.

Figure 3.1: Bars 15-19 from Chopin Nocturne Op.27, No.2
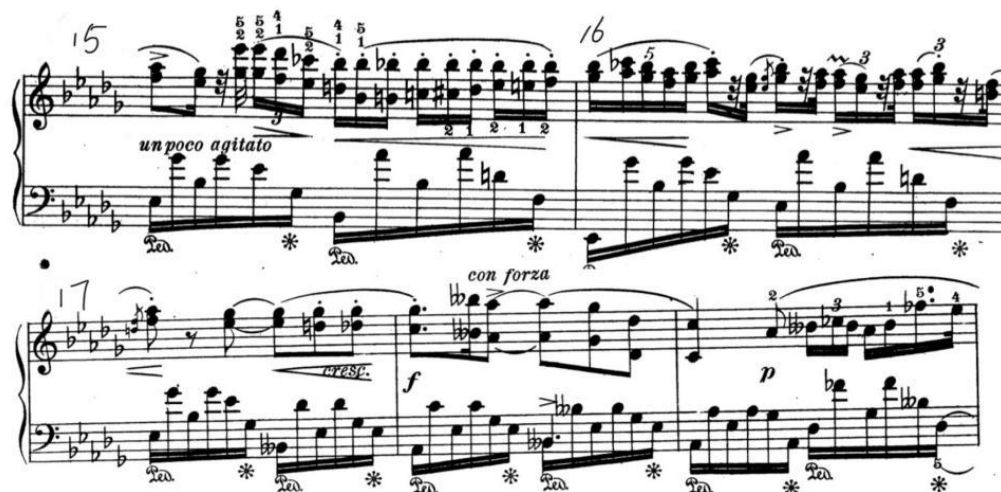
Figure 3.2: Bars 55-62 from Chopin Nocturne Op.27, No.2

These clues led to the application of memorisation strategies such as "switch-points"[114] described by Chaffin, Crawford and pianist Imreh's. They are essentially parts of the score where several continuations are possible, and it is essential for the pianist to know where each "switch-point" leads to. The above-mentioned example was a "switch point" in this nocturne. I identified them by phenomenological reflection of their respective perceptions

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114 Chaffin, Roger and Imreh, Gabriela. *Practicing perfection: Piano performance as expert memory.* (Psychological Science, vol.13, no.4, 2002), 342—349.

and secured their different continuations in my memory with the clues in the narrative. This shows another effective use of the narrative as a memorisation strategy. Having had this experience, I next tested its use in memorisation on a larger scale for an entire movement of the Chopin piano concerto No.1.

3.1.2 Memorisation in Chopin's Piano Concerto in E minor, Movt. 3

A concerto comprises both a solo part and a tutti part, where the two components can either complement each other simultaneously or engage in dialogues to create a cohesive musical flow. Consequently, pianists must consider the tutti part when searching for an appropriate sound and technique in their practice alone. However, solo pianists typically dedicate most of their time to solo repertoire, and even when collaborating in chamber music or accompanying vocalists, they often have more opportunities for extensive rehearsals with other musicians, usually playing with a score in front of them. Therefore, the task of comprehending the entirety of a concerto from memory, with limited rehearsal time with the second piano or the orchestra, can prove challenging, particularly for pianists with less performance experience and those whose memorisation primarily relies on aural and muscular memory. I was confronted with this problem in preparation for a performance of the Chopin concerto in E minor, op.11.

The third movement, composed in rondo form, posed a particular challenge for me during the learning process. Rondo can be especially difficult to memorise due to its recurring rondo theme leading to various episodes, often involving key changes and subtle variations with each return. These variations in linking passage are typical "switches",[115] and make it harder to memorise. Given the limited time I had to internalise the piece, my memorisation based purely on score analysis proved insecure. I found that my aural and kinaesthetic memory had not fully absorbed the analytical framework, which resulted in moments during lessons where my hands lagged behind my mental anticipation. This disrupted the musical flow and, at times, produced an impression of hesitancy or ambiguity in interpretation. Reflecting on the success of the narrative strategy used in the Nocturne experiment, I chose to apply a similar approach here. The table below outlines the narrative trajectory I devised to mirror the

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[115] Ibid.

rondo form, offering a structure that not only supported memory retention but also enhanced expressive coherence.

Form	Narrative	Bar
Rondo	Folk dance of the villagers with celebratory tutti fanfare	1-120
Episode 1	Dance of the cheeky young girls	120-168
Recurring theme	Pastoral song	168 -210
Episode 2	Busy crowd gathering and moving crops before storm approach	210-271
Rondo E flat	Goddess of harvest	272 -279
Rondo	Folk dance with celebratory tutti fanfare	280-339
Episode 3	Windy and dark storm with light rain shower	340-412
Recurring theme	Pastoral song	413-454
Episode 4	Stomping dance of all villagers and cheering in the end	454-520

Indeed, the narrative strategy provided me with a comprehensive overview of the rondo movement, complementing theoretical analysis including key signatures and harmonic progressions. This combined approach proved highly effective in securing memorisation. Importantly, it relieved me of the need to focus my thoughts on analytical aspects during both practice and rehearsals, thereby affording more mental space and freedom for a nuanced musical interpretation.

It is essential to acknowledge the invaluable role of score analysis in shaping the narrative. As far as we know, Chopin did not explicitly give this movement any programme, therefore it is an abstract movement. The narrative only

emerged from my attempt to understand the notations, keys and harmonies, and to intentionally capture my derived feelings using phenomenology.

This narrative served as a mnemonic aid, enabling me to commit to the flow of the performance without being encumbered by overthinking analytical details during the performance. A notable example occurred during one of the rehearsals with the orchestra. My mind temporarily went blank after my own part had finished, but I heard the tutti playing the "celebratory fanfare", and quickly remembered the "storm" was approaching after the "harvest celebration"; therefore, the next section would be Episode 3. Knowing the "storm" was a minor episode, my hand went straight to the correct notes without thinking, playing just in time for my entry. This is an example of vitality affects reacting faster than analytical or logical thinking. However, this is not to suggest that analysis can be completely replaced by an affective narrative. Another example can be seen in Video 2 at 08:40 in the media creative portfolio. In the second iteration of the pastoral song, I entered the section correctly; but halfway through, after a little pause, I started the first two notes of the reprise in the wrong key (08:40). However, thanks to the structural navigation brought by the narrative line, I quickly drew on the relevant analytical information and got back to the correct key within the span of two notes.

While mastering a concerto through comprehensive learning of both the solo and orchestral parts is a commendable approach, it may not always be feasible, particularly when time constraints are a factor in professional life. Such was my case with the Chopin concerto, and in this instance, the method provided a solid mental structure for me to feel comfortable performing within a short period of preparation.

3.2 Playing and teaching Chopin Op.48 No.1

As pointed out by APaR scholars Maarit Mäkelä et al. "contemporary notions of artistic research require the artist to make artefacts with sensitivity and awareness, so that when this initial stage is over, the thought and process can be recapitulated and communicated."[116] So after having experimented with the previous two pieces, I now try to see if the method can be communicated to someone else, i.e. my student and collaborators. This chapter accounts for a small test on my student Z. I picked 19-year-old Z because at the time, he was

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116 Mäkelä, Maarit & Dash, D. P. & Nimkulrat, Nithikul & Nsenga, Francois. On Reflecting and Making in Artistic Research. (Journal of Research Practice, 7, 2011).

learning Chopin's Nocturne Op. 48 No. 1, which I was playing myself earlier on having used the narrative extraction method to a certain extent.

I used the narrative to solve some problems I was facing in the reprise of the main theme (starting from Figure 3.3 until the end of the piece), namely, unifying the melodic and accompaniment parts, so that instead of the thick harmonic texture being a distraction for my ear and mind in tracing the phrases of the melody, I could use both accompaniment and melody as unified tools to express the music by giving organically shaped intensity arches to the rise and fall in the music.

Figure 3.3: Beginning of the reprise in Chopin Nocturne Op.48, No.1

The control of the left hand and the right-hand chordal middle part was challenging, because such thick texture can easily overpower the melody; it is equally difficult to trace the development of the melodic line if I direct too much focus towards controlling the volume of the accompaniment. The existence of the narrative unified both elements, so that in my mind, instead of two parts fighting against each other, they cooperated to tell the same story, and the accompaniment contributed to shaping the melodic phrases. Ultimately, this approach gave me a fresh perspective on the balance between the two hands and provided a wider variety of sound effects (balance) and rubato (timing). For example, the last chord is a tonic C minor chord repeated three times; at first, the music did not provide me with a narrative purpose as to why the repetition should exist as an extension after the music had already reached the tonic. This confusion made it difficult for me to interpret this part convincingly.

Figure 3.4: Last three bars of Chopin Nocturne Op.48, No.1.

Through the story, I gave myself a purpose to play them—in my story, the antagonist dies as the music arrives at the tonic chord in bar 1 of Figure 3.4. The next bar paints an image of cold wind hovering over the bleak plain where the antagonist is situated, and the last three chords are bells from a distant church, as if they are the death knells of the antagonist. Because I have depicted these chords as a symbol of death, which echoes the moment of death from two bars before, I decided to emphasize the tonic note C, which is also the note representing the moment of the antagonist's death. I would not have considered the balance of a chord to this extent, because in my own education as a pianist, I have been taught that the top note in a chord should be brought out over the rest of the notes as a general rule. However, after applying the narrative, the balance was no longer determined by a general rule, but in response to a specific narrative.

A few weeks after I had played this nocturne, student Z also learned this piece, and in the lesson, I noticed that he was also struggling with the same section. So, I decided to use this method with him and test whether it would help other pianists as much as it had helped me. The resulting stories from the two of us turned out to be similar. My story was about a criminal walking to a Siberian Gulag, who eventually dies on the way due to harsh conditions and exhaustion. It was inspired by a passage describing such walks and conditions in a Gulag in Tolstoy's Resurrection. My student's story was based on Chopin's exile and the hypothesis of him having a loved one in Poland whom he would never be able to see again in his life.

Although bearing different plotlines, there were very similar affects at the same points. For example, my criminal and his Chopin both had warm thoughts about someone they loved in bars 53–54, when the harmony is E-flat major (in Video 3, 00:24 and 02:42); they both had wishful hopes that could not come true, as the harmony quickly shifts from major to minor chords again between bars 56–60 (in Video 3, 00:37 and 02:55); the most frustrated moments occurred in bar 69, when the music reaches a climax and both characters scream out their frustrations (Video 3, 01:21 and 03:39). Upon analysing the video recordings of our performances using phenomenological reduction, we observed a commonality of certain types of vitality affects between our two interpretations, suggesting similar plot development despite very different narrative contexts. This discovery supports the idea that "performing-as" is possible in different contexts, regardless of literary knowledge; what enables it is the affective response to the sound of the music.

In retrospect, after studying my own video recording, I noticed another detail in the interpretation that was most likely influenced by the narrative. In the video, I did not play the accented high C marked in the score as the loudest note; rather, I reserved the accent for the next C immediately after, when the antagonist is struggling with his last bit of strength before collapsing. This shifted accent is now on a much shorter note, which acts like the final push that causes an avalanche downwards towards the fortissimo in bar 72. This sense of struggle also made the "collapse" at fortissimo in bar 72 an organic result of the "struggling" in the previous three bars (Video 3, 01:22–01:52). If I had placed the accent where it is notated, the "struggle" would feel less intense, as that C is a much longer note and would lose the powerful momentum. In comparison, the student—whose narrative focus was on the "scream" where the notated accent occurs—demonstrated a very slight difference in rubato and phrasing (Video 3, 03:39–04:12). Please refer to the timings stated above in the video to hear the performances.

This experiment was conducted to examine whether this interpretive approach could be beneficial for other pianists, and whether the reversed emoting process might be understood and applied without prior methodological training. The observed similarities in the resulting narrative structures recall Carl Gustav Jung's proposition in *On the Nature of the Psyche*[117] — namely, that narrative forms are shaped by archetypes, which he described as dynamic, emotionally charged patterns inherent in the human psyche. Jung observed that although stories may differ in content and symbolism according to their cultural and individual contexts, they often share foundational structures that serve as containers for unconscious affective responses. These archetypal patterns give rise to emotional resonances that feel both universal and deeply personal. In this light, even when performers generate distinct metaphoric narratives through their embodied interaction with music, those narratives may still be rooted in shared symbolic frameworks.

My vision for this interpretive, metaphor-based method is that such metaphors often emerge from the initial, bodily encounter with the music—spontaneously, intuitively, and affectively. Yet simultaneously, they may draw upon deeper symbolic structures aligned with archetypal motifs. By attending to both the immediacy of embodied experience and the more expansive symbolic

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117 Jung, Carl Gustav. "On the Nature of the Psyche." In The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche, Collected Works of C. G. Jung, vol. 8, translated by R. F. C. Hull,

159—234. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960).

undercurrents that shape it, I understand this method as a layered process of meaning-making: one that is grounded in personal experience while also connecting to broader human narratives, and crucially, one that facilitates the movement of unconscious content into conscious awareness.

3.3 Inspired by movement

Having experimented with my methodologies and empirical theories in both my playing and others' learning, the next stage was to design a mini-project that combined narrative and music with movement. At this stage of my research, I lacked knowledge of dance movement and was reliant on the dancers to understand the theoretical relationship between music, narrative, and movement within my method, and to be able to improvise to the music. The hypothesis that this method would be viable was based on Ashton's choreographic process in Marguerite and Armand. This project was my first trial using the method with dancers, and served as a practice run for the Dancing Chopin project discussed in the next chapter. It involved dancers and musicians working together to create choreography for existing piano pieces, and also served as a test of my strategy's effectiveness in piano teaching, as I first had to explain my emerging methodology to the participating musicians and dancers.

Three pieces were chosen by two groups of musicians, and each group had a solo dancer. Group 1 (performance in Video 4) consisted of two pianists who played a selection from Schumann's Papillon and Kinderszenen, while Group 2 (performance in Video 5) included one pianist and one clarinettist playing Chopin's Nocturne Op. 9, No. 2. The following paragraphs constitute an account of my observations of the working process and some first-hand responses from the players in a semi-structured interview with the two pianists in the Schumann group. I did not include the pianist from the Chopin group because she was only able to attend the narrative session, and I was substituting for her for the rest of the project.

In this project, I intentionally encouraged dancers to lead the narrative-making process, as it allowed for a fresh perspective on the music that was not constrained by the score or knowledge of the composer's biography or compositional style. However, it is notable that both the dancers and the musicians encountered challenges in translating their perceptions of the music into a narrative. The dancers were influenced by implied movements, such as staccato for jumping or dynamic changes, while the musicians struggled to

break free from their preconceived knowledge of the composers. The Group 1 pianists found it difficult to free themselves from the influence of Schumann's programmatic titles in the pieces, while the Group 2 pianists could not form a narrative at first because it was "all a bit flat" due to the way their pianist played.

I guided them to listen for specific elements in the music, such as harmonic changes and phrasing, and suggested the clarinettist play along with the pianist. The phrasing became more perceivable to the dancer because the clarinet, as a wind instrument, allowed for more noticeable phrasing through breathing. This more rhetorical phrasing inspired greater feeling in their group dancer. Consequently, the narrative-making process became smoother. Once again, this demonstrates that music lies in the sound, not the notation on paper, because with different playing and tone quality, something previously perceived as monotone became quite inspirational.

I observed an interesting phenomenon: the Chopin group followed a narrative approach similar to the reversed emoting process I previously used in *Nocturne Op. 27 No. 2*. As a result, the Chopin group's narrative was oriented towards expressing feelings and mental activities, whereas the Schumann group, which based their story on the composer's programmatic titles, was more descriptive than expressive. These two narration processes highlight the two types of experience-as described in Peacocke's article—the Chopin group employing perceptual metaphors, like the Solitary Tree; and the Schumann group employing represented imagination, such as the picture of pots interpreted as people.[118]

This was evident in the way the Schumann group pianists discussed their playing, as both mentioned how they tried to depict the characters by situating themselves inside the story, which in turn changed their playing. Both pianists also reported directing more attention to the musical cues for dance, which helped them maintain a steady tempo. The Schumann group rehearsed every dance detail with musical cues because they were presenting various characteristics with precise timings, whereas the Chopin group collectively told the same story through their own instruments or bodies, resulting in more spontaneous improvisations.

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118   Peacocke, *The Perception of Music: Sources of Significance.*

I gained very interesting insights while substituting for the pianist in the Chopin group. I noticed that the dynamics in the music were not fixed as they are in the score. We played three times while the dancer improvised each time, and because it was improvised, she danced with different timing, movements, spacing, and points of tension and release. Therefore, I also played differently. However, the overall performance made sense each time, regardless of these differences, because we still told the same story with the same affects that linked us together, and because all the "intensity curves" were coherent within their context. For example, I would maintain the intensity even if the dancer stood still at a climactic point, because I knew what was being expressed in the narrative was intense and trusted that her standing still and my musical flourish were telling the same story. The observation that the dynamics in the music are not fixed to a certain volume, but rather depend on the interaction between musician and dancer, highlights the fluidity and adaptability of musical expression.

Due to unforeseeable circumstances, the CoLab project was cut short, and we also lost one pianist during the project, so the experiential data collected was not as rich as I had anticipated. However, there were still invaluable outcomes I gained. From interactions with the pianists, I understood more about the difficulties they faced when exercising the reversed emoting process. I also realised that mimicking the music in dance is not enough to convey the music through movement; choreographic development is required to effectively tell the story. This made me realise that the dancer's improvisation alone is not a rich enough source of knowledge for this research, and I decided to find a choreographer to collaborate with for the Chopin sonata in Chapter 3.4.

3.4 The Dancing Chopin Project

This chapter is about a collaborative project with a choreographer and four dancers, to perform the Chopin Third Sonata with an original dance creation. To avoid confusion, I am going to refer to movements in sonata form as *parts* (italicized in the text) and bodily movements or choreographed movements as movements.

The Dancing Chopin project is the main practical project in this research, in which I tested my method to its fullest extent and generated rich data from which I could conclude. I chose to work on this sonata to pay homage to the piece that inspired this research—the Liszt Sonata in B Minor. I wanted a piece of the same genre and the same scale, using this method to enhance the

learning. It is a visualised demonstration of how narratives and gestures can influence a pianist's interpretation. The narration-making in this project follows closely the reversed emoting process drawn from Jeanne Deslandes' emoting theory, which I talked about in chapter 1.1.5. By this stage of the research, the reversed emoting process had been tested on two Chopin Nocturnes and a movement from Chopin's concerto by myself, which I wrote about in Chapter 3.1. In this project, I employed the same mental process when extracting narrative; however, collaborating with dancers meant that the invisible process could now be externalised and demonstrated. The mode of collaboration and methods for communication between the musician's language and the dancer's language were based on and modified from the experiment in the CoLab project in Chapter 3.3. I went through this project to further investigate the narrative method and to gather more data on the benefits and problems a pianist may encounter, to understand the relationship between music perception and metaphors more deeply. In the meantime, I am also collecting choreographic language through phenomenological reductions and hermeneutics; thus, this project is also an exploration of how musical and choreographic languages can be mutually understood and correlated.

In this project, the creation of choreography followed two phases—structural concept and exploration. The structural phase involved only the choreographer and me, without dancers, and in the first instance, the choreographer and I discussed the feelings that emerged from listening to the music.[119] We then explored the types of movements and their dynamics that could communicate these feelings. In the next stage, a narrative structure based on the feelings for each *part* was outlined through discussion and dance improvisation. In the meantime, I also verified and substantiated feeling-based narration with musical knowledge on aspects such as tonality, harmonic changes, and motivic transformations. The narrations were later passed on to all performers and became a mutual structural understanding shared by the whole team during the rehearsal period. Both structural concept and exploratory phases are iterative processes, which can be seen in David Kolb's reflective cycle.[120]

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119 According to Stuart Hall (1973), the sender and receiver of a message both take part in the interpretation of meaning, and it may be different for the encoder (sender), and

decoder(receiver). In this instance, we have two receivers trying to interpret the meaning of the same message, the choreographer and I. So before express any affective perceptions

to each other, in order to avoid one's perception over powering the other, we designated a colour to each part, at this stage only, so that there are both freedom of interpretation

and a certain range of emotions we can choose from.

120 Kolb, David A. *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development.* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice _ Hall, 1984).

The chart below shows our working process in Kolb's learning cycle—the inner circle demonstrates the structural concept phase, and the exploratory phase is in the outer circle. The iterative process means that the cycle does not only move in the direction of the arrow, and one quadrant may be repeated a few times in one cycle.

Figure 3.5: David Kolb's reflective cycle applied to this project
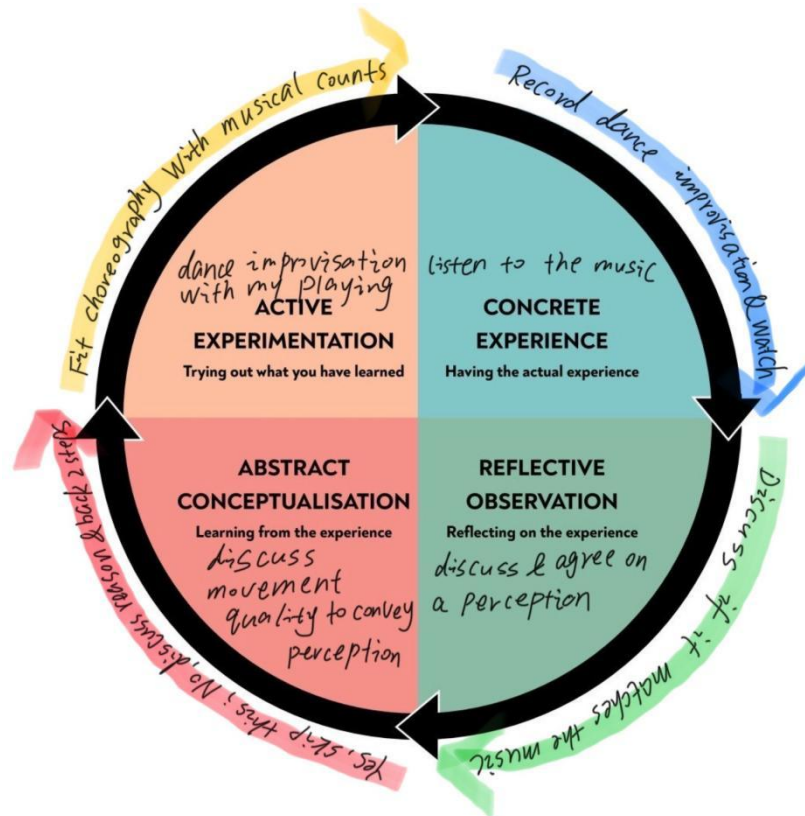
The exploratory phase mostly consisted of only the choreographer and me, and only sometimes all the dancers in the project as well. I would perform different sections of the piece while the choreographer and dancers explored the feelings we had identified in the structural concept phase through dance improvisation. This was also an iterative process, in which we allowed the narrative to change according to the development of movements. Here, we were simultaneously working alongside each other, manifesting a shared understanding of human experience in different artistic fields.

During this process, the choreographer would often ask me how long a "feeling" lasts. I would then translate the musical counts, which are often grouped in small units divided by bar lines, into dance-music counts, which are more about phrase lengths. The dance-music meter translation later proved itself to be not only useful for teamwork but also vital for a clearer version of interpretation when playing this sonata. A collective research led by Karsten

Steinhauer proves that what they call "phrase boundary," with markers such as punctuation in writing and prosodic changes in speech, is important for the speedy and accurate processing of languages. It is also shown that "phrase boundary" is not only related to the pause at the boundary but also to the prosodic cues of the entire phrase.[121] While phrasing is also very important in music, and there are similarities between linguistic phrase boundaries and musical phrase boundaries, there is not yet research that indicates the two are directly parallel.

The concept of "phrase boundary" is rarely explored in music, yet Thomas Knösch led a group of researchers to draw on the similarity between language and music and conducted a collaborative experiment on the influence of phrase boundaries on people's perception of music.[122] They conducted this experiment because they wanted to find out if clarity in phrase boundaries aids the speedy and accurate processing of a piece of music, as is the case in speech, as pointed out by language theorists. The part I found most interesting in this experiment was that the first attempt at the experiment was deemed unsuccessful because the musical samples that were provided to the participants "…did not trigger a sufficiently strong impression of the phrasing." One of the suspected reasons for this failure was that "most of the melodies (14 of 21) did not have a symmetric structure." When they changed phrase lengths to an 8-bar phrase, which can be divided into two equal halves, the listeners obtained much clearer impressions of the excerpts. It is intriguing that they chose an 8-bar phrase length as a model of clear phrasing because, in dance music, 8 counts per unit is the most standard way of dividing music. It may not always be 1 count per bar, depending on the metre or hyper-measure of the music.

As in Knösch's research, irregular phrasing outside of the 8-bar (counts) phrase structure can be problematic for a performer because it results in a more unclear output in their playing and can cause potential memory issues.

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121 Steinhauer Karsten and Alter Kai and Friederici Angela D. Brain potentials indicate immediate use of prosodic cues in natural speech processing. (Nat Neurosci vol.

2,no.2, 1999),191–196.

122 Knösche Thomas R. and Neuhaus Christiane and Haueisen Jean and Alter Kai and Maess Burkhard and Witte Otto W. and Friederici Angela D. Perception of phrase

structure in music. (Hum Brain Mapp, vo.24, no.4, April 2005), 259–273.

Figure 3.6 below is the beginning of the development in the first *part*. At first, I had difficulty making sense of it and being sufficiently fluent when playing. I did not know why until I translated phrase lengths and realized that it was irregular phrasing. The lack of knowledge of the internal division within the phrase led to my lack of awareness of the double phrasing within those bars; therefore, it was particularly difficult to understand. However, the realization flipped the situation. It helped me not only to memorise these bars but also to make articulations and voicing much clearer than before. In this instance, the reflective process in PaR enabled me to interrogate the problem with the knowledge of another artistic form's parameters.

Figure 3.6: Beginning of development of Chopin Sonata No.3 first movement with marking of dance counts

When the exploratory improvisation reached a stage where the choreography and narrative could both fit the music, we entered the last stage of putting everything together with the dancers to make it presentable as a performance. It is still an iterative phase, where movements changed according to how they looked on the dancers. Sometimes spacing changes without a change in movement because the choreographer improvised on his own, and when four dancers shared a space, the same movement looked different. Things were constantly altered throughout the whole rehearsal period. An example of this process is the creation of "the queen bee moment" in the third *part*, which I will discuss soon.

Although this project's culmination was a performance of Chopin's Third Piano Sonata in concert, it is essentially an externalised demonstration of a mental process. On future occasions, I should be able to use the knowledge and mental imagery acquired from this project without any dancers being physically present. The endpoint is that any musician, if they wish, can play with a more embodied understanding of any piece through this mental process. In other words, I was working alongside a choreographer and dancers, but in the future, there will not be such teamwork—the musician will take on the role of the choreographer and use the knowledge of dance movement collected from this research to imagine what dancers might do.

Information was collected partly through video recordings and partly through a diary, which I wrote in the early stage after each meeting and rehearsal with the choreographer and dancers. I relied more on video recordings in the later stage because, after the choreography had been created, there was not much new reflective material, and the changes over time were better captured by video. I am now going to analyse the working process using those raw materials, and further explanation can be found in the creative portfolio, videos 6, 7, 8, and 9.

The third *part*

The working process in this project revealed that some sections of the music quickly suggested a narrative, whereas others took a longer gestational process. The third *part* is slow and quiet, and the long melodic line, together with the use of surprising harmonic progressions and modulations, creates phrase structures that seemingly never end. These features give me a feeling of tenderness when listening to the music, and it resonated with my personal life at that time, where a new relationship was starting after many years of changing dynamics between the two of us. Therefore, I quickly suggested that the story for this *part* could be a love story. The choreographer quite happily agreed, so this *part* was set out to tell stories about love and relationships.

This result points to the "emoter" theory of Deslandes, that secondary emotions[123] are learnt from life experience and may arise from an artefact because the viewer/perceiver has experienced the same perception in a real-life event and is actively empathising with the feeling from that experience

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123 Damasio, *Descartes' Error : Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain.*

in response to the artefact.[124] This was also the fundamental methodology for how a narrative may be generated from musical perception in this research. Thus, the narration process underwent a development that was autobiographical.

However, despite the initial identification of it, some passages took longer to materialise in choreography from the mental imagery, as it was difficult to improvise or find gestures that effectively express those feelings. This is the crux of this thesis—many pianists like me have some sort of imagery for pieces we play, whether visual, sensual, or narrative. However, this imagery is not necessarily used as the central focus of developmental work, as in the approach investigated in this project. In this instance, the creation of choreography was problematising the third movement, yet it was necessary in highlighting that the narrative alone could not help to solve all the difficulties in interpretation.

A compelling example illustrated below is the chordal texture (b90-98) in the third *part*—it posed a challenge due to the harmonic progression, which propels the music without resolution, juxtaposed with the relatively static texture.

Figure 3.7: Bars 88-100 of Chopin Sonata No.3 third movement

124 Deslandes, *Narrative Emotion: Feeling, Form and Function.*

It gave me the perception of an "ongoing lack of direction." Within this transitional moment, the characters in the narrative gradually arrived at a realisation—their initial partner, whom they were paired with at the beginning, ultimately proves to be the ideal match. While the narrative provides structural clarity, it does not offer practical suggestions as to how to execute the musical gesture.

During the choreographic exploration of these eight bars, my initial suggestion for the dancers to wander around to reconnect with their original partner was deemed insufficient by the choreographer to demonstrate the quality in the music. During the gestational period, I had a piano lesson in which my teacher was dissatisfied with my playing in this passage. He posed a question: "Is this part big music or small music?" to which I stuttered because I could not decide what "big" and "small" implied. The expected response was "big," yet the concept remained enigmatic to me—what is "big"? What makes this passage "big"? It was only in the subsequent days that a moment of pivotal enlightenment ensued through the choreographer's experiment with the dancers.

He asked the dancers to run across the space from one end to the other, accompanied by a rhetorical backbend that involved leaning their entire bodies as far back as possible. This can be seen in my creative portfolio in "The

Queen Bee Moment," which is incorporated in the video of the four rehearsals and how this moment changed choreographically.

This display led me to infer that the word "big" refers to big tension, as opposed to my earlier choreographic suggestion, which looked too relaxed in comparison. However, Noé discarded the idea, as it looked 'amateurish' and incongruent with the musical quality he sought to reflect. Upon my enquiry about the exact quality he wished to convey, he expressed that, to him, the sustained chords possess a great sense of elasticity. At the time, I interpreted 'elasticity' as harmonic tension because, as the chords move from dissonance towards a consonant end of the section, the dancers corresponded with diminishing movements until they stood completely still, at which point both music and dance paused on a dominant chord.

This eight-bar passage was finalised as the "Queen Bee Moment," where the dancers symbolically embodied a beehive—three dancers attached their arms to the dancer who was the focal "queen bee," whose movement dictated theirs, and their body movement magnified that of the "queen bee." This was the sort of hyper-connection between dancers that the choreographer was looking for, which he called elasticity. Video 7 is a compilation of how the choreography for "Queen Bee" developed over four different rehearsals.

In retrospect, I think elasticity is a sense of never-ending continuity, created by varying degrees of harmonic intensity that never fully resolve into a state of complete arrival, i.e. a resolution. It entails masterminding seamless transitions between different levels of intensity, whether intensifying or releasing. In other words, the "elasticity" resides *in between* the chords. To effectively convey this sense of line on the piano, it is crucial to cultivate a meticulous execution of touch control, ensuring a seamless integration of sound and rendering the rise and fall in harmonic tension with intention. However, in the realm of high-level pianism, the inexplicable timing and rubato also affect the sound quality or the perception/reception of sound, and my method provides a way in which a pianist could apply such finger technique more intrinsically to achieve their ideal sound effect.

This *part* received a controversial reaction from musicians in the audience at the performance—my teacher in the audience commented to me that he found the intensely fast movements during the calm passage from bar 29 strange; it created aesthetic incongruity. It is true that there is sostenuto written at the top of that passage, which suggests that it is quiet, which may be easily taken as serene. However, the harmonic progressions suggest otherwise—they take

many surprising turns, creating a sonority oscillating between warmth and darkness, which generates unpredictability. Therefore, I thought the intensity changes in the music were not immediately straightforward and could be interpreted in multiple ways.

Video 8 provides an insightful comparison of how two different choreographies influenced my pianistic interpretation. The footage captures a rehearsal in which the original cast members portraying characters A and B taught their choreography to latecomers. In the final production, these characters are paired as couples, with each version of character A interacting exclusively with their own character B. The cast was divided into two parallel pairs who existed in separate narrative universes, without direct interaction between the pairs. This rehearsal was therefore a rare instance in which the complete choreography was effectively split into two halves, allowing each pair of dancers to influence my playing in distinct and independent ways.

The side-by-side video comparison reveals subtle but significant differences in musical expression. While some moments correspond with markings in the score, many others diverge, displaying contrasting expressive choices between the two takes. These contrasts are especially evident in the performances of the dancers wearing black T-shirts, who had a more secure grasp of the choreography and its timing.

As I noted in the commentary at the end of Video 8, intensity in music is often associated with increased volume, but loudness is only one of many parameters through which intensity can be communicated. In Video 9, I present a comparison of how I interpreted the opening of this section across four different rehearsal takes. This comparative analysis explores how our perception of intensity is shaped by various expressive dimensions—including articulation, tempo, phrasing, and gesture—and how these elements evolved throughout the rehearsal process.

The first *part*

If the third *part* of the piece was relatively easy to narrate due to its affective qualities and my personal resonance with its emotional tone, the first *part* posed quite the opposite challenge. Musically, it is intricate and expansive: the two sharply contrasting subjects each generate three to four derivative melodies, resulting in an exposition that spans 92 bars. These thematic

materials then undergo evolution and interweaving in the development section, whose character contrasts naturally divide it into two distinct halves.

In addition, I set myself a further interpretative challenge — using dance to infuse new meaning into the repeated material of the recapitulation. It is important to note that the first subject is not repeated in this section; therefore, my use of the term recapitulation refers specifically to the reappearance of the second subject. Video 10 presents a side-by-side comparison of the exposition and recapitulation, illustrating how changes in choreography influenced my musical choices.

To support this analysis, I extracted the audio waveform of both the exposition and the recapitulation from the final performance recording. I annotated and compared differences in tempo, rubato, and dynamic range. Variations in these parameters — as well as phrasing choices and the choreographic pacing — were considered through the lens of Christopher Peacocke's concept of experience-as. The narrative, dance, and music shared a perceptual coherence, which in turn shaped my approach to performing-as. For a detailed analytical breakdown, please refer to Video 10.

The development section is a complex mix of compositional ingredients—it consists of fragmented motifs from both the first and second subjects, woven canonically together by Chopin. The most prominent feature here is derived from Grandpa's theme in the exposition, so I suggested that Grandpa should be the focal point of the narrative in this section. As is typical of development in sonata form, the tonality becomes less stable, and in this development, the overall tonality is minor. In addition, fragments from Grandpa's theme appear in different voices between the two hands. These features create a feeling of uncertainty, and based on this, using the reversed emoting process, I suggested this could be a throwback to a family conflict, with the grandparents as the central figures. The choreographer then devised a phrase of dance movements to tell the story, with gestures representing the words "I will leave you" and "Why?". The intensity of these dance moves was expressed in three ways:

1. The volume of the movement
2. The speed at which movements were executed and interactions exchanged between the dancers
3. The size of the space in which the dancers moved

At the outset of the development section, the choreography began with Grandma and Grandpa slowly executing the aforementioned phrase using only their arms, positioned at the centre of the stage. As various musical materials began to intertwine, they started to move slowly within the space, walking from one spot to another while repeating the same gestures. Another dancer, playing the role of their child, joined in with the same movements to add interaction, which created the illusion of the movements being sped up. Meanwhile, they moved to different spots on stage at a faster pace to enhance affective intensity. During the climax at bars 108-114, the three dancers moved swiftly, following Grandpa, giving the impression that he was being chased by the others. They eventually cornered him at the piano, where the music suddenly shifted to a calm state in bar 115, at which point they stood still, seemingly reflecting on what had just transpired. Grandpa then initiated interaction again to bring everyone back into unison, conveying the story of him asking for forgiveness. The build-up, cornering moment, and plea for forgiveness can be seen in Video 6 from 04:23 onwards.

To coincide with the music's build-up from bar 115 into the recapitulation at bar 148, the choreography was designed so that Grandpa restarted the same dance phrase as before; however, this time, the whole body was engaged, including the head and legs in addition to the arm movements. The dancers moved in unison instead of executing counterpoint, as in the previous section, and they increased the speed of their movements to intensify the performance. However, in the narrative, Grandma and their daughter Lucy were both unconvinced by Grandpa's apologies and, one by one, dropped out of the stage, leaving a frustrated onlooker, Robin, who was questioning why such a painful event could happen to a loving couple. At this point in the musical development, the tone is dark, and the speed is rapid, just before the recapitulation of the second subject. Robin repeated the same movements as quickly as possible to convey intense frustration:

Figure 3.9: Bars 141-145 of Chopin Sonata No.3 first movement

This section from bar 115 to bar 148 is one of the challenges in musical performance that I aimed to address through research, as it is a precarious moment—it is a calm section sandwiched between a climax and a dramatic explosion into the extraordinarily melodic recapitulation. In a solo piano performance, this section can be particularly difficult to navigate, as the pianist must maintain a sense of forward momentum while also allowing for the necessary relaxation before returning to the second subject.

A compositional "valley" like this, positioned between passages of immense expressive gestures, is often a moment in which I, as a pianist, lose concentration. The lack of complexity and technical difficulty also leads pianists to practise such sections less frequently than others. In cases of interrupted concentration, this can also result in a failure of muscle memory. Imreh and Chaffin's study on a pianist's practice behaviour demonstrated that memory retention is directly proportional to repetition in practice, and that a pianist's decision to engage in repetitive practice is linked to the complexity of the music.

In this project, the addition of narrative and choreography within the performance context enabled a more nuanced interpretation and provided a framework for maintaining concentration. This functioned similarly to what Imreh and Chaffin call "performance features"—elements intentionally set by experienced pianists to safeguard and signpost the music during performance. The narrative served as a structural guide for me to follow while performing, while the movements of the dancers provided visual cues and milestones to help sustain a cohesive performance. The effective use of space and the intensity of the dance movements heightened anticipation and contributed to a more dynamic interpretation of the music.

The second and fourth *part*

I decided to discuss the second and fourth *parts* in the same section, as they were created following the same IPA procedure. In both cases, the order of creation followed a distinct pattern: the choreographer first experienced certain qualitative dynamics in the music and externalised his sense-making through dance movements. While demonstrating the choreography, I in turn experienced certain qualitative dynamics in his movements and made sense of them through a narrative. The two layers of experiencing-as that led to the final narrative resemble the dual interpretation process from the IPA methodology. Following these two experiencing-as stages, both the dancers and I then engaged in performing-as the narrative, using corresponding musical material and movements that matched in dynamics. A detailed account of this IPA process in motion for the fourth *part* can be found in Appendix No.4, which provides examples of how movement dynamics may relate to musical sound and relatively abstract narrative lines.

My initial struggle with the second *part* was in the middle section—it is introspective, hymn-like, and markedly different from the fast outer sections. Assimilating such contrasting emotional contours into a cohesive narrative posed a formidable challenge. However, the choreographer was captivated by the rhythmic elements of the outer sections, particularly the sparse notes in the left hand, which made its upbeat nature especially electrifying. Moreover, as this research project placed a strong emphasis on music, the choreographer wanted to integrate the on-stage piano as an active part of the dance, akin to a prop. This concept eventually became the pivotal point of the narration process in this *part*.

With these two foundational ideas as a framework, the choreographer and I embarked on an improvisatory exploration together. My playing served as a prompt for him to externalise his feelings through dance movements. Through the exploration of potential movements derived from the rhythmic nuances of the left hand and a sketch of possible interplay between the piano and the dancers, a distinctive puppet-like quality gradually permeated the evolving choreography. Emerging from this dance improvisation, a narrative began to take shape.

In the first section, the choreography directly mirrored the rhythm of the left hand, as if the dancers were controlled by the rhythm of the music. Spatially, the dancers began their movements far from the piano and gradually moved

closer, as though irresistibly drawn to this controlling instrument, like puppets. Eventually, they knelt before it just before the hymn-like middle section, in which their movements became reminiscent of worship, symbolising their devotion to the piano as if it were a religious authority. However, towards the end of this section, a pivotal moment occurred in the choreography—they looked at one another and stood up, as if realising they no longer had to be manipulated by the piano. Thus, despite the final section being a mirrored repetition of the first, the dancers moved away from the piano, severing the figurative umbilical cord that had bound them to it. The piano was left solitary in the concluding phrases, which I performed with the most frantic energy, reaching the ultimate climax of this *part*—signifying the hysteria of an authoritative figure losing its power.

The choreography and narrative I have just described were generated simultaneously, meaning that the two cycles in Kolb's experiential learning model, shown above, occurred in parallel. This also implies that I was simultaneously engaging in the reversed emoting process by interpreting dance movements, as well as applying phenomenological reduction to identify commonalities between the movements and the music. In this way, I integrated Peacocke's experiencing-as approach to align the dance, music, and narrative cohesively.

This narrative significantly influenced my interpretation of the first and last sections. In the first section, my playing was light and cheerful, with greater emphasis on the right hand, reflecting the superficial joy of the puppets. In contrast, in the final section, the volume gradually increased to create a sense of growing intensity, and the balance shifted towards the left hand, producing a progressively more resonant sound—as if the piano itself was striving to reclaim its dominance. The fact that the movements were inspired by the left hand led me to emphasise the upbeats more consciously, ensuring that the interplay between movement and music achieved a cohesive synergy, intertwining the choreography and musical performance into a harmonious whole. Without the inspiration of the choreographer, I may not have given the left hand such prominence. This interpretation is yet another example of how PaR generates new knowledge.

When developing the choreography for the fourth *part*, we were constrained by time and had to create the movement before an established narrative. We initially conceived the idea of distinguishing between the rondos and episodes based on their major and minor tonalities. Since this *part* has a fast tempo and

features significant technical brilliance, we employed the reversed emoting process and perceived it as lively. Associating liveliness with the colour green, we colour-coded the sections: dark green for the rondo in minor and light green for the episodes in major. Green, symbolising nature and vitality, was deemed a fitting representation of the fourth *part*'s energy. The illustrations below demonstrate how the musical materials align with this concept:

Figure 3.10: Rondo section "dark green" of Chopin Sonata No.3 fourth movement

Figure 3.11: Episode section "light green" of Chopin Sonata No.3 fourth movement

The dark green rondo sections convey a heavy timbre, shaped by their low register and minor tonality, and are further coloured by the expressive markings piano and agitato. In contrast, the light green sections present a different expressive challenge: although marked *fortissimo* — which aligns well with the opening chordal texture — this dynamic seemed to me less appropriate for the rapid semiquaver flourishes that follow, underpinned by a waltz-like left-hand figuration. This raised several interpretative questions: Do

these sections present two simply opposing expressions? How might I articulate their tension and transition? And which pianistic techniques best express this nuanced contrast?

Semiotician Algirdas Greimas offers a useful conceptual tool for this kind of analysis. His semiotic square expands binary oppositions into a more nuanced matrix of meaning, revealing how apparent contradictions can coexist and generate further interpretive possibilities.[125] The alternating major and minor tonalities in these sections offer a clear instance of affective contrast, emerging through direct, embodied engagement with the music. Greimas's model allows this contrast to be read not only emotionally but also structurally, clarifying the relational dynamics between my interpretive metaphors of dark green and light green. In this interpretive framework, dark green signifies sexual frustration, externalised in choreography through searching gestures, a hunched posture, and downward gaze. Light green, on the other hand, conveys confidence, expressed through open body language and sustained eye contact with the audience. These embodied metaphors operate both as interpretive aids and expressive tools, rooted in physical gesture yet grounded in structural and semiotic analysis..

The semiotic square reveals how additional interpretive positions can emerge between the primary oppositions. For instance, within the dark green minor-key section, a soaring phrase might draw the dancer's gaze upward, adopting movement qualities more aligned with the light green affective state. Conversely, a tonally ambiguous moment within the light green section could evoke a return to the searching, inward quality associated with dark green. This framework allows for a more fluid and layered reading of emotional transitions—not merely as shifts in key or surface mood, but as movements within a dynamic and evolving affective structure. Such an approach underscores how narrative meaning in performance may be generated through both immediate, embodied experience and deeper structural tensions. Rather than treating expressive contrast as binary or fixed, the semiotic model invites

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125 Algirdas Julien Greimas, "The Interaction of Semiotic Constraints," in On Meaning: Selected Writings in Semiotic Theory, ed. Paul Perron and Frank H. Collins

(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 50–62.

a more supple interpretive stance, where affective states interact, overlap, and transform across time and gesture.

Having identified these oppositions and their transitional states—and how they were expressed choreographically—the corresponding pianistic demands also became clearer. In the dark green sections, I brought out the melodic line with *legato* touch while keeping the surrounding textures as subdued as possible, using a *leggiero* touch. The *legato* phrasing embodied the sense of frustration, suggesting continuity and tension, whereas the *leggiero* texture conveyed the feeling of searching—tentative, elusive, and incomplete. This interpretive approach involved stretching certain notes slightly beyond their notated durations, allowing melodic tones to overlap. The result was the impression of multiple voices coexisting within a single texture — a polyphonic richness often heard in recorded interpretations but not explicitly indicated in the score, which presents the passage in evenly spaced quavers. Through this treatment, the inner emotional world suggested by the music became more audible, aligning choreographic metaphor with pianistic realisation.

In the light green sections, to convey a sense of confidence, I aimed for a broad, spacious sound shaped by a pulling motion that engaged both the arm and fingers—an action reminiscent of kneading bread dough—rather than relying on a percussive, high-speed attack to produce volume. This technique introduced a slight delay in sound production, which in turn created a feeling of expansiveness, particularly when contrasted with the denser, more inward textures of the dark green sections. By intentionally delaying the moment of contact with the keys, the resulting tone acquired a subtle elasticity in timing, reinforcing the expressive intention of openness and poise.

These expressive aims informed all technical decisions throughout the passage. As Papadopoulos notes, citing György Sándor's categorisation of five fundamental motion types in piano technique: "What we perceive as a change in motion is nothing more than a mere change of an auditory condition governed by the application of a series of forces by the player."[126]

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126 Marios Papadopoulos, Motion in Music: A Study of Movement and Time through Musical Interpretation (PhD diss., City University London, 1996), 98.

Structure and phrasing

The inspiration behind this research stemmed from the discovery that the plot in a ballet production can assist musicians in navigating a piece's progression and maintaining musical coherence. Theoretically, this concept should be transferable to solo music performance if a narrative can be extracted from the music, using what I term the "reversed emoting process" (see Chapter 1.1.5 of this thesis). Initially, I presumed that, to achieve unity and coherence, the narrative should span the entire composition, as it does in a narrative ballet. However, in practice, it proved more pragmatic to employ separate stories within a unifying theme—an approach that, to my surprise, was equally effective.

On a macro level, the narrative served as a valuable tool for structuring and pacing individual sections, thereby clarifying my musical intentions—especially during transitions between passages. Yet, it was on a micro level—specifically in the division and understanding of phrases—where this research revealed its most significant insights.

A key aspect of my role in this project was to provide the choreographer with phrase lengths by translating musical metres and note values into dance counts. Once the narrative and its corresponding musical passages were established, I subdivided each passage into distinct phrases and determined the appropriate counts, enabling the choreographer to synchronise the dance movements precisely with the music. Drawing on my experience as a dance accompanist, I recognised that dancers are accustomed to working with eight-count phrases—an established convention in classical ballet music as well as in many instrumental pieces based on dance forms such as the waltz, minuet, and mazurka.

However, in the context of a solo piano work such as this piano sonata, I frequently encountered exceptions where an individual phrase deviated from the prevailing regularity. Through the process of translating the music into dance counts, I was compelled to examine in greater detail the development of particular musical materials. This deeper analysis enhanced my understanding of why certain passages are more challenging to play and listen to—often due to their irregular phrasing—which can, in turn, affect memorisation and clarity of interpretation.

One of the most illuminating revelations emerged in the transitional passage between the end of the exposition and the development in the first *part*. Initially,

I mistakenly identified the conclusion of the exposition as the beginning of the development, as a new texture was introduced, causing me to overlook the emergence of a new musical motif at the true start of the development in bar 92. From this point, Chopin employs a double-phrasing canon using the new motif across three voices over the next five bars, resulting in a 10-count phrase. My work in establishing dance counts led me to recognise the true division between the sections early in the learning process. Identifying the introduction of fresh musical material, along with the shift from a chordal to a contrapuntal texture, influenced my approach to phrasing and voicing, ultimately enabling me to achieve greater clarity in my interpretation without excessive practice time.

Another example of irregular phrasing causing interpretative challenges can be found in the fourth *part* of the sonata, specifically in the dark green rondo passages. One phrase was two dance counts short, resulting in a six-count phrase instead of the usual eight-count phrase. Initially, I struggled to determine whether the melodic note F belonged to the preceding or following phrase. The two possible phrasing options, marked by blue and orange slurs, each resulted in an irregular phrase length, with one phrase ultimately falling short of the typical eight-count structure. Here is an example from the score:

Figure 3.12: Bars 18-27 of Chopin Sonata No.3 fourth movement with two phrasing options

The absence of a sharp in the sources may be an oversight by Chopin. Vide Source Commentary.

I experimented with both phrasing options, making decisions based on the sound. Although the blue phrasing aligned more closely with the printed slur in the score, it sounded incoherent because the note F seemed better suited as the open ending of a phrase rather than the strong beginning of the next one. After careful consideration and alternating between the approaches, I

ultimately decided to treat the F as the end of the penultimate phrase, marked by the orange phrasing in the illustration above. This decision proved pivotal, as it led me to realise that Chopin's crescendo marking into the F might not only indicate a change in volume but could also suggest that the F is where the phrase is heading—an arrival point in the phrasing. It dawned on me that this passage may indeed represent another instance of double phrasing. Without this realisation, the crescendo would have seemed purely a matter of increasing volume, without any deeper significance. Had I not gone through this process of deliberation, I would have likely performed this section with ambiguous phrasing, potentially causing memory or interpretive difficulties.

While the original intention was to have one continuous story throughout the entire piece, the decision to adopt separate stories for each *part* ultimately proved successful in uniting the work thematically. Each *part* reflected different aspects of tenderness, conflict, and anxiety arising from unions and separations. Despite the distinct narratives, they were connected through a shared choreographic and spatial language, as well as through recurring choreographic elements across the sections.

A notable example of this interconnectedness occurs at the end of the fourth *part*. As the coda in B major bursts forth from the final dark green rondo, fragments of musical motifs from earlier sections reappear and are woven together, creating a frenetic effect. To reflect this intensity, the choreographer instructed the four dancers to select one movement element from each *part* and repeat it as quickly as possible. The request for speed was intended to mirror the music's intensity, as the fragmented musical materials contribute to a sense of chaos, which in turn generates high energy. Additionally, the dancers were asked to move across the space, running from one position to another, further heightening the sense of manic energy.

This spatial strategy was also employed in the first and third *part*s, enabling the movement to build in intensity without necessitating an increase in speed. This approach reminded me of markings in Schumann's music that previously perplexed me. He often requests a faster tempo even after marking a piece for top speed. For example, in the first movement of his Sonata Op. 22, the opening marking is "so rasch wie möglich" (as fast as possible), yet towards the end, he marks "Schneller" and "Noch Schneller" (faster, still faster). The choreographic strategy of creating intensity through the illusion of greater speed echoes Schumann's use of tempo markings that demand escalation, even after indicating a piece should be played at top speed. Both artistic

approaches share a common objective and present an intriguing avenue for further exploration.

Thematic Analysis and Conclusion

This chapter explores the experience of integrating the three key elements of this research—linguistic metaphor, body movement, and music—through the performance of Chopin's Sonata No. 3 with a collaboratively created choreography. Drawing on my personal experience, this section provides a conclusive thematic analysis of the themes that emerged throughout the chapter. Through an autoethnographic lens, I examined both the working process and final outcome, generating insights that may inform future projects for myself and other musicians. The themes identified highlight ways in which music's narrative and intensity may be embodied, enhancing the musician's interpretative process.

1. Co-existence of the Three Elements

These three elements—music, linguistic metaphor, and movement—co-exist in a complementary manner. Music serves as inspiration for linguistic metaphor, which is then expressed through movement in varying degrees of intensity. They are interdependent: one often fuels the development of the other.

For example, in the third *part*, without the narrative thread, the choreography would have simply mirrored the repetitive nature of the music, lacking expressive direction. The existence of a narrative provided a structural guide, allowing both music and movement to vary in intensity. Similarly, in the first *part*, without a narrative framework, choreographing the development would have been difficult, as the music is too complex to synthesise into a coherent whole. Furthermore, without the choreography, it would have been challenging to layer and differentiate musical textures effectively.

2. Musical Details Shaping Movement Ideas

It may seem that music plays a passive role in this triangular relationship, but in reality, there is a true interdependence among all three elements. Without a detailed analysis of musical material, neither the linguistic metaphors nor the choreography would have been coherent.

For instance, in the first *part*, the linguistic metaphors emerged from a close examination of the development section, which draws material from the

exposition. A similar process shaped the finale of the fourth *part*, where the choreography incorporated fragments from previous movements, mirroring the structure of the musical composition itself.

3. Matching Movement to Musical Phrasing

Aligning bodily metaphor and music does not mean directly matching movement types—such as jumps or runs—to similar sounds, nor does it require mirroring the beat precisely. Instead, the essential element to synchronise is the phrase length and hypermetre.

For example, in the beginning of the third *part* (as analysed in detail in Video 9), the embodiment of narrative did not automatically improve my piano playing. However, once I adjusted my interpretation to align with the shift in hypermetre from 4/4 to 2/2, my playing became more in sync with the dance.

4. Embodiment of Intensity

As previously discussed, embodiment served to define intensity within the framework of linguistic metaphor. From observing Noé (the choreographer), I identified a set of choreographic principles that may be useful for other musicians and performers. These are summarised below, with references to the chapter for further detail:

Unnatural poses convey greater intensity.

Example: The relevé footstep in the third *part*; the dark green section in the fourth *part*.

Abrupt movements enhance intensity.

Example: The outer sections of the second *part*; the repeated middle section of the third *part*.

Increased movement speed corresponds to higher intensity.

Example: The development section in the first *part*; the middle section of the third *part*; the finale of the fourth *part*.

Expanding spatial movement enhances intensity.

Example: The "Queen Bee" moment.

The number of dancers affects perceived intensity.

Example: The transitions from the exposition to the development and from the development to the recapitulation in the first *part*, where intensity builds and then resolves.

These findings reinforce the idea that the co-existence of linguistic and embodied metaphor can enhance a musician's interpretation, even without formal knowledge of dance. This research demonstrates that movement-based exploration can offer valuable insights into musical phrasing, intensity, and expression.

In the next section, I will conclude this research project and explore potential future directions.

Conclusion

In this conclusion chapter, I will evaluate the research that was carried outidentify the new knowledge that has been created, and outline future avenues that need to be explored in this area.

At the outset of this project, I intended to focus on the management of large unfolding structures in a piece, such as the Liszt sonata. However, during my research, I discovered that this method is highly effective for smaller pieces as well, and for resolving specific problems within a small section of a larger piece. Much of my practical component, in the end, was either based on smaller pieces or large pieces that were broken down into smaller sections, such as creating a thematically related but self-contained narrative for each movement of Chopin's No. 3 Sonata.

During the research, I found that the narrative is not only a way of comprehending both macro- and micro-structures, but also serves as a guide for effective movement. In most experiments, for both musicians and dancers alike, the instinct was to mimic the movement implied by the music, such as staccato or short phrases for skipping, and long phrases for swaying. These types of body movements, however, are not effective in aiding the formation of interpretations. When a narrative is present as a structural guideline, having the idea of conveying that story through both music and movement makes the generation of choreography more purposeful. These types of movements can then be further improvised dynamically according to the story. This dynamic extension is key to how movement can provide a clearer perspective on music interpretation.

One major realisation this research has led me to is the importance of phrase structure and the pianist's awareness of it, and the lack of emphasis on it in music literature. I was unable to find sufficient literature to support this finding from practice. Through accompanying dancers' daily exercises and repertoire, I learned about the importance of phrasing from dancers, who are exposed to music as much as musicians are, but do not necessarily have the specialised musical knowledge of a musician. I realised how much care I need to give to the end of a phrase and how articulated the beginning of the next phrase needs to be for it to be perceivable to someone not familiar with the appearance of a score. I learned how confusing an irregular phrase can sound when an odd one appears amongst regular phrases. I learned the necessity of

dividing a piece into several paragraphs, which can then be divided into groups of phrases. Structuring a piece is not only the remit of the composer, but also that of the performer, who must demonstrate the structure through their playing using clear phrase boundaries.

The findings of this thesis point towards three key areas for further exploration: pedagogical applications, performance studies, and interdisciplinary collaborations.

1. Pedagogical Applications and Teaching Practice

Although teaching was not the central focus of this research, my experience applying this method in practice suggests that a metaphorical approach can make abstract musical concepts more accessible to students, particularly those with diverse cognitive abilities. This raises important questions for further exploration:

How can metaphors be used in a way that keeps them fresh and relevant, rather than becoming fixed phrases or concepts that lose their impact over time?

How can this approach be adapted to support students with different learning needs, ensuring that metaphor remains an effective teaching tool across different age groups and abilities?

In addition, metaphor may play a more significant role in musical memory and confidence in performance than is currently recognised. If metaphors help musicians map sound to movement and narrative, they could also provide valuable strategies for memorisation, expressive phrasing, and reducing stage anxiety. These ideas could be explored further through comparative studies across different teaching approaches, and age groups with a variety of music education background, as well as in collaboration with music psychologists and cognitive scientists.

2. Expanding Interpretative Approaches in Performance

This research has explored metaphor primarily in the context of piano performance, but the ideas developed here could be applied more broadly. One promising area for future research is the study of phrase boundaries — examining how musicians perceive, shape, and communicate phrasing through metaphor. This could lead to new insights into expressive timing (rubato), articulation, and the structure of interpretation.

Additionally, the relationship between metaphor, embodiment, and musical structure could be explored further in different repertoires, particularly in atonal music, contemporary composition, and non-Western traditions. These genres often challenge conventional interpretative methods, and a metaphor-based approach might offer a way to bridge analytical understanding with embodied expression.

3. Interdisciplinary Applications: Music, Dance, and Beyond

The ideas explored in this thesis are not limited to pianists or even musicians. They could also be valuable for choreographers, dancers, and artists working across different disciplines. In particular, metaphor could provide a new way of thinking about the relationship between music and movement, moving beyond traditional models where music simply "accompanies" dance. Instead, metaphor could help shape a more interactive and reciprocal relationship between the two.

Beyond music and dance, metaphor could have potential applications in acting, theatre training, and even composition. Future research could investigate:

How linguistic metaphor influences improvisation in both music and movement.

How shared metaphorical frameworks could be used in collaborations between musicians and choreographers.

How metaphor might help performers connect more intuitively with musical structure in both composed and improvised settings.

There is also room for further collaboration with cognitive scientists and music psychologists to test some of the ideas explored in this research. Empirical studies could help clarify how metaphor shapes perception, memory, and expressive performance, providing further support for its role in artistic interpretation.

Final Thoughts

This research has shown that metaphor is more than just a linguistic tool—it plays a crucial role in how musicians experience, interpret, and communicate music. By exploring its function across different levels of musical understanding, this thesis contributes to broader discussions on artistic research, performance studies, and embodied cognition.

While there is still much more to explore, the ideas developed here provide a foundation for future research—whether in teaching, performance, or interdisciplinary collaboration. Going forward, my aim is to continue to develop and apply these insights, refining their practical impact in performance and education, and engaging in conversations with other disciplines to explore the deeper connections between metaphor, music, and movement.

Appendix

No.1 Narrative function eidetic reduction

Narrative function	Seen in chapter…
Connect episodic empathy to become a coherent whole	3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.3, 3.4 (part 1)
Suggest sound quality/technique	3.1.1, 3.2, 3.4 (part 2, 3, 4)
Suggest extra-musical structural division	3.1.1, 3.4 (part 3)
Aid memorisation	3.1.2
Help interprete musical phrase/ timing	3.1.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 (part 1, 4)
Communicate interpretation to others	3.3, 3.4 (part 1, 2, 3, 4)

No.2 Side-by-side comparison of how music and movement convey intensity

Level of intensity	Musical element	Embodiment
Intense	Dissonant harmony, fast tempo, rigid articulation, high dynamic contrast	Full-body engagement, rapid movement, use of awkward or strained body positions
Relaxed	Consonant harmony, slow tempo, smooth and sustained phrasing	Small or isolated movements, minimal spatial displacement, smooth transitions
Increase intensity	Gradual increase in tempo and volume, acceleration of harmonic rhythm, change of register, shorter phrasing, rigid articulation	Expanded movement range, increased speed, larger gestures, increased interaction and number of people in space
Decrease intensity	Gradual decrease in tempo and volume, slower harmonic rhythm, resolution of dissonance, change of register, longer phrasing, legato articulation	Reduced movement, slower spatial displacement, decreased number of people in space, minimised corporal gestures

Summary

The embodiment of intensity is primarily influenced by three factors:

1. Speed of movement – faster movements correlate with heightened intensity.

2. Size and spatial coverage of movement – larger, more expansive gestures indicate increased intensity, while smaller movements signify relaxation.

3. Number of people engaged in movement – a greater number of interacting individuals suggests a higher level of intensity.

Please refer to chapter 3.4 for detailed breakdown and analysis of the working process that lead to this summary.

No.3 Ethic form

**TRINITY LABAN CONSERVATOIRE
OF MUSIC & DANCE**

**Application to the
Trinity Laban Ethics Committee
for Ethical Approval of
Research Involving Human Participants**

Applicant Name and any qualifications relevant to the Study:
Zhu Sun

Name(s) of Additional Researchers (include names of institutions, if not Trinity Laban):
N/A

For Students Only		
Name of Supervisor: Jonathan Clark, Aleks Szram	Study Programme: PhD	

Proposed Study Title (up to 20 words):
Telling Music: An approach for multi-modal interpretational strategy

Study details		
Starting date: 14/02/2022	**Estimated duration:** 1 week	**Source of funding** (if applicable):
Has a similar study protocol already been approved by the Ethics Committee?	Yes / No (if yes, please outline briefly)	

Ethics Approval: To be completed by Ethics Committee		
Name of Chair:	Signature:	Date:
Conditions/Comments:		

1. **Background / Introduction to Study** (300-500 words)
   Researching the impact of narrative and movement on musical interpretation in a one week creative collaboration between musicians and dancers. The data will be collected from semi–structured interview.

Research question:

What does musicians' experience in CoLab project No.52 tell us about the impact of narrative and movement when interpreting a piece?

What can musicians do in practice to re–create the same impact?

Interview questions:

1. How did you approach your piece on day 2 (practice alone after the initial meeting to set up the story)?
Are there anything you notice or do that is different from before?

2.How did you feel in the rehearsal in day 3 (the first time seeing the dancer move to the piece)?
Are there anything dancers did that strike you or you find particularly memorable?

3.How did you approach the piece on day 4 (practice alone after rehearsal)?
Are there anything you do that is different from either day 2 or before the project?

4. Have you performed the same piece in a recital before? Is the experience of performing a piece with choreography different from your solo performance? This can be both/either your interpretation, or how you feel during a performance.

2. Participants

They are all current postgraduate students at Trinity Laban and participants in my CoLab project No.52

3. Methodology

I will be recording their playing, and recording a semi–structured interview with each of them, on a mobile voice memo.

4. Ethical considerations

All recorded material will be stored securely in my personal device and remain confidential.

Please complete the table below marking **X** in relevant box:	YES	NO	NA
Will you tell your participants that their participation is voluntary?	Y		
Will you obtain participants' written consent to take part in your research?	Y		
Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time without giving any reason?	Y		
If participants are required to complete questionnaires as part of the research, will you tell them they have the option of omitting certain questions if they do not want to answer them?			NA
Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs unless specific permission is sought?	Y		
Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e. give them a brief explanation of the study)?	Y		
If the research involves interviews, will you obtain participants' consent to have their interviews audio- or video-recorded, and tell them that you will not record them if they refuse to give consent?	Y		
If you make audio- or video-recordings, will you obtain participants' consent for you to play excerpts from the recordings in the course of disseminating your research (e.g. in presentations)?			NA
Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants in any way?		N	
Is there any realistic risk of any participants experiencing either physical or psychological distress or discomfort? If Yes, give details on a continuation sheet and state what you will tell them to do if they should experience any problems (e.g. who they can contact for help).		N	
Will any conflicts of interest arise from your research?		N	
Will your research include participation from vulnerable groups, individuals under 18 yrs or animals (if yes, give additional details)?		N	
Will data obtained from participants be treated confidentially, stored securely and destroyed appropriately in accordance to the GDPR 2018 regulations?	Y		

5. **References (brief)**

6. **Appendices**

*Please include a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form
Include also, questionnaires or interview guides (or example questions) to be administered.*

Signature of Primary Researcher: **Date:**

For Students Only:
Signature of Supervisor(s):   **Date:**

**Please <u>insert</u> your appendices below and submit as a Word.doc
(do not submit multiple docs)**

TRINITY LABAN CONSERVATOIRE OF MUSIC & DANCE

Telling Music– interpreting music through narrative and movement

Information sheet

Dear participant,

My name is Zhu Sun and I can be reached at

I am conducting a doctoral research at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. I would like to Audio/Video record your playing during the CoLab project No.52, and conduct a semi–structured interview to ask about your experience during the project. These data will help me understand the impact of metaphors on musical interpretation, which include reflecting on my own musical practices and those of others.

I may write about your playing and interview answers anonymously in my thesis and share the data with my two supervisors anonymously, but I will not use them for other purposes, or disseminate them more widely, without explicitly obtaining your consent separately. (For instance, without your separate consent, I would not share these observations on social media or with a general audience.) Please note that you may be identified or identifiable in the notes and observations I share with staff and students.

You have the right to refuse to participate, or to bring the observation to a halt, at any moment and for any reason. Further, at any time up to a 24 hours after this observation has been conducted, you have the right to ask me to destroy my notes, which I will do, not making use of my observations in my work toward the Certificate or for any other purpose.

If you have any questions about the observation, you may pose them after you have read this information sheet. If at any point you have additional questions or complaints and wish to speak to someone other than me, please consult one of the following members of the Trinity Laban staff, namely:

In order to proceed with the observation, I need to obtain your written consent. To grant this, please read and sign the second document I will hand to you.

Best wishes,

Zhu Sun

TRINITY LABAN CONSERVATOIRE OF MUSIC & DANCE

Telling Music– interpreting music through narrative and movement

Consent form

I confirm that I have read Zhu Sun's information sheet concerning her work towards the doctoral research subject on metaphorical interpretation strategy and her proposed observation. I have also been given the opportunity to pose additional questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I have the right to refuse to participate, or to bring the observation and note taking to a halt, at any moment and for any reason. I also understand that, up to 24 hours after this observation has been conducted, I may request that the notes be destroyed, and that this will be done, with the material not being used for any other purpose.

I understand that Zhu Sun may share the notes and observations in her doctoral thesis anonymously. I also understand that Zhu Sun will not use this material for other purposes, or disseminate it more widely, without obtaining my consent separately.

Please circle one of the following:

I agree to take part in the observation

I do not agree to take part in the observation

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