

Towards New Forms of Pianistic Improvisation Across Musical Boundaries.

BY

Mark Templeton Donlon

A thesis

Submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington
In fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Victoria University of Wellington
2019

Contents

Abstract (p.4)

Introduction (p.5)

Methodology/theoretical framework (p.17)

1. Literature Review (p.23)

i: Introduction (p.23)

ii: Improvising Pianists (p.24)

iii: Church Organ Improvisation (p.35)

iv: The Avant-Garde (p.38)

2. What does the term improvisation mean in relation to music? The taxonomy and epistemology of improvisation as a creative process in music and the implications of how improvisation is framed and understood in scholarly discourses. (p.46)

3. Aurality and Textuality in the context of contemporary art music, improvised music and other musics. (p.71)

4. Commentary on the creative works. (p.94)

i: Introduction (p.94)

ii: Southern Shift (p.100)

iii: Between Moons (p.126)

iv: Tales from the Diaspora (p.144)

v: Saraband (p.149)

7. Conclusions (p.151)

8. Bibliography (p.156)

9. Appendix (p.161)

10. CD recordings:

i. Southern Shift

ii. Between Moons

iii: Tales from the Diaspora

11. Video recordings (on USB flashdrive)

i. Saraband

ii. Rachmaninoff Etude Tableau in Eb minor op. 39 no. 5

iii. Rachmaninoff Elegie op.3 no. 1

12. For reference:

CD Recording: *Ashia*

Towards New Forms of Pianistic Improvisation across Musical Boundaries.

Abstract

This thesis is practice-based. The main element in which the research outcomes are manifested is the portfolio of creative work. There are three CD albums of original music: *Southern Shift*, *Between Moons*, and *Tales from the Diaspora*. There are also three video recordings including a performance of my piece *Saraband* (for piano trio), along with my performance of two classical piano pieces by Rachmaninoff: *Elegie op 3 no. 1* and *Etude-tableau op. 33 no. 5*. There is a written exegesis which serves to inform the reader how the creative work may be understood or apprehended, as well as placing it in relevant context. The creative work centres on contemporary piano improvisation and how diverse musical strands can be drawn together in a coherent improvised musical idiom. Models for contemporary improvised music, that constitute key external sources for my musical practice, include the work of pianists Keith Jarrett, Cecil Taylor, Matt Bourne, John Taylor, Misha Mengelberg, Gabriela Montero and Gwilym Simcock. How these pianists' work relates to my music will be discussed in the exegetical text.

Several approaches and techniques, to free improvisation and jazz, will be explored through the creative practice and discussed in the exegesis. The ideas of scholars Nicholas Cook and Ed Sarath play a significant part in the concepts behind the music in this portfolio and in my thinking about improvisation in a wider sense. Cook suggests that improvisation represents a wider and more nuanced set of musical functionalities than is commonly understood by the one term 'improvisation'. This is a key factor in this research.

Extemporaneous Composition is the most salient concept at work in the creative work. The aim is to explore how an improvisation can have elements of a controlled and structured

musical argument, as a composed piece would. This connects to the issue of how improvisation and composition are closely linked as creative processes. The issue of how improvisation and the interpretive performance of composed music are linked will be an important topic, as will the relationship between aurality and textuality in creative musicianship. The two research questions are:

- When diverse and divergent aspects of musical practice, from traditions such as Western classical music, jazz and other African-based music are integrated into an improvised musical practice to give voice to a personal, creative musical identity, what can the nature of that music be? What perspectives will emerge about how creative performers operate?
- Textuality and aurality function differently in these musical traditions. Can improvisation, in its wider sense, be re-evaluated to account for the employment of these through a more complex and nuanced set of creative functionalities than is typically understood by the single term improvisation?

1. Introduction

This thesis explores improvisation as a creative/performative process as well as its interrelation with composition and interpretation. The research outcomes are manifested primarily through the creative work. The supporting exegesis includes critical self-reflection and puts the creative work in context. In the exegesis I will also discuss how improvisation is reflected on in contemporary academic discourses and how my conceptual approach to creative practice interfaces with them. Nick Cook's observation of musicology's "swerving away from the performative" (Cook. 2004) is an important concept in this discussion. The relationship between aurality and textuality is a key aspect arising out of the creative work. This will be the subject of chapter three, in which it will be discussed in depth.

The literature review will survey in depth the work of a wide range of practitioners, from varied genres and different generations. Diverse disciplines and musical scenes are represented, including pianists, composers and organists from jazz, classical music, free improvising and the avant-garde. This diversity reflects the external sources that have informed my musical practice as an improvising pianist and the creative work. Practitioners occupy the largest proportion of the review, since these represent the most meaningful external sources relating to the creative work. Some musicologists/theorists are also included. Ideas from Nick Cook and Ed Sarath have played a significant part in shaping my thinking about and approach to improvisation from a theoretical perspective. Their work has posed interesting questions about how the points of interface between improvisation/interpretation and improvisation/composition can be understood in a more flexible and inclusive way.

A chapter is devoted to critical and reflective commentary on the creative work. Some aspects of these discussions are woven into other chapters in this text. This enables interconnectedness between those discourses and the creative work, without excessive cross-referencing between sections. A key concern of the chapter is to underscore how the creative work is central to the thesis.

The primary element of this thesis is the creative work – a portfolio of recordings of original improvised music. Central to this thesis and to my approach to improvisation, is the issue of being able project and sustain a coherent musical argument through improvising. Integral to this concept is how improvisation and composition are intrinsically linked. This is the crux of most of the main arguments in this research into musical improvisation through creative practice. There is also a video recording of my interpretation of two solo piano pieces by Rachmaninoff. I am the pianist in all these recorded performances. The original music comprises three CD albums and a live-performance video:

- A solo piano album, *Southern Shift* (FUZ009).
- An album of trumpet and piano duo music, *Between Moons* (FUZ012). Alex Sipiagin is the trumpeter and I am the pianist
- A jazz quintet album, *Tales from the Diaspora* (FUZ014). The ensemble is myself on piano, Alex Sipiagin on trumpet/fluegel horn, Seamus Blake on saxophone, Boris Kozlov on bass and Donald Edwards on drums.
- A video recording of my composition for classical piano trio with improvising pianist - *Saraband*. I am on piano, Martin Risely on violin and Inbal Meggido on 'cello.

For much of the music there is no notated score. The scores for the remaining proportion of the music use notation in a manner which reflects different compositional approaches for integrating notated composition with improvisation. The pieces in the albums explore a range of different strategies and approaches for improvisation. I have specifically chosen to focus on producing recordings since this offers two affordances. Firstly, recording preserves improvised music, which is otherwise transitory in nature. This provides the means to create an artefact documenting it. Secondly, making studio albums as opposed to giving live concert performances allowed me to focus on specific aspects of improvisatory approach in different pieces without having to take into consideration the often quite complex factors entailed when playing to a live audience.

Reference will often be made to the term creative works in this thesis. Some clarification of the theoretical implications related to the term *works* is required. The concept of works has been the object of intense critical attention. Lydia Goehr has made a significant contribution to relatively recent theory concerning the subject (Goehr 1992). The concept of a musical work is associated with the cultural practices of Western classical music and

its associated academic culture. Goehr's theorisations about the issue of works relate to the notion of classical compositions in an abstract sense, i.e. separate from the performative life of the music.

These complex ideas are not particularly relevant where jazz and improvisation are concerned. For example, a Beethoven symphony could be deemed to exist as a work, even if it is not being played. The score is a physical artefact and the composition an abstract one. This concept stems from the classical tradition being rooted in the use of notation. The score can be scrutinised and through it the work can be 'known' in the abstract, even if there is not a performance. An arrangement of the same symphony for different instruments than the original (such as for piano duet) could still be considered as being the same work. Performances may be viewed simply as iterations of the work as primarily embodied in the score.

Goehr discusses these ideas at length, drawing on Greek philosophy amongst other frames of reference. The concept of works that have become canonised in academic or cultural circles is not, however, confined only to classical music since a jazz album may be regarded as a work. The important difference is that a jazz album – i.e. a recording – is a performative, as opposed to textual artefact. A recording predominantly preserves a particular *performance*, not the score. In the case of jazz or free improvisation, the high proportion of improvised substance usually out-weighs the notated/composed material. Indeed, there may not even be any composed material. Different recorded performances of the same jazz composition could justifiably be regarded as separate works. For example, the 1959 recording of the Miles Davis Quintet playing *So What* on the album *Kind of Blue* is different music than the 1961 version of *So What* on the album *In Person*, *Friday and Saturday Night Live at the Blackhawk* – they can constitute two different works.

By contrast, two different performances of Mahler's 5th Symphony, live or recorded, by different orchestras and conductors would still likely be viewed as being the same work,

i.e. Mahler's 5th Symphony. Therefore, when reference is made here to jazz/improvised works it refers to the specific artefact of, for example, an album or other recorded performance. There could be some ambiguity in the case of my piece *Saraband*, since it has a significant amount of composed music as well as improvised content. Taking into account the composed score element, *Saraband* could, theoretically, be called a work.

The process of recording has implications regarding the creative process, since recording involves processes of mediation. It is possible for editing recorded music to become a legitimate part of how a musical argument may be developed in a piece of music – *where one is desired*.¹ Some improvised music is not intended to have a structured sense of narrative. As well as it often being a feature of free improvisation, this concept is characteristic of much African music and is discussed later. A good example of this kind of musical thinking in jazz is where there is a continuous static groove over which improvised utterances are projected, such as in Herbie Hancock's *Succotash* and *Jack Rabbit* (1964). The editing of recorded music can also be tool for creating music with a narrative structure/musical argument. 'Comprovisation' is a neologism that describes recording tranches of improvised music and then using editing techniques to structure them into a piece of music, much in the way a composer structures a composition (Michael Hannan 2006). However, the number of edits has been minimal for the three and a half hours of

¹ In performances conceived from the standpoint of allowing music to unfold spontaneously from moment to moment, as for example with much free improvisation. There may be no plan for the music to have an overarching structured musical argument, as per a composition from the classical tradition; the underlying intention may often be that the performance exists to be experienced by the audience (and players) present at the time of the performance rather than for there to be a permanent sonic artefact resulting from the process, subsequently to be listened to or studied. Conversely, however, many of the freely improvised concerts of Keith Jarrett such as *La Scala* (1997) or *Bremen/Lausanne* (1977) were recorded with the intention of creating artefacts documenting the performance. It could be argued that in such instances, the aspect of Jarrett's live performances being both recording sessions and live concerts may have affected his mind-set. This would be speculative; however, it could possibly be an example of Cobussen's notion of an actant being at work in the improvisatory process.

music included in this thesis. Although audio-editing does not play a large role in my musical practice, some aspects of it do figure in my creative process and are discussed in depth in chapter four. In any case, recording has had a defining effect on the development of improvised music in contemporary culture and hence on the music in this thesis. It enables musical utterances with qualities resulting from thinking and inventing spontaneously 'in the moment', to be preserved and made into a musical artefact or work of art. These qualities may be – and often are – lost, or unattainable, when the music is crafted and notated on paper, though different qualities can of course emerge from the latter process. As recording entrepreneur Martin Davidson observes, "Recordings and improvisation are entirely symbiotic, as if they were invented for each other" (Davidson 1984).

There are other terms used in the exegesis which also require definition. These are performative/performance, actants, authenticity, aurality, narrative and textuality.

Performance/performance can be applied in different contexts. For example, performative has a specific meaning in the technical taxonomy of auditing and accounting. It has also acquired more complex associations through its adoption in diverse areas of critical thought. Linguistics theorist J. L. Austin, developed the concept of 'performative utterance,' relating to utterances describing an action in a specific kind of sense that he sums up as follows:

Suppose that I have the bottle of champagne in my hand and say 'I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*'. Or suppose I say 'I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow'. In all these cases it would be absurd to regard the thing that I say as a report of the performance of the action which is undoubtedly done—the action of betting, or christening, or apologizing. We should say rather that, in saying what I do, I actually perform that action. When I say 'I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*' I do not

describe the christening ceremony, I actually perform the christening; and when I say 'I do' (sc. take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife), I am not reporting on a marriage, I am indulging in it. (J.L. Austin et al. 1979) Published to Oxford

Scholarship Online November 2003

Austin's concept of performative utterances has been applied and re-contextualised in relation to music in ways that diverge from the direct sense of the term performative relating to the performance of music. In his book *Performative Analysis: Reimagining Music Theory for Performance*, Jeffrey Swinkin carries the sense of Austin's term further. He applies it to music analysis: "it is more fruitful to conceive of music-analytical statements as performative rather than factual." This recalls Tim Ingold's thoughts about materiality, which are discussed later in chapter three.

In her article "Introducing the Issue of Performativity", Jane. W Davidson acknowledges the centrality of the term performative to the study of music *performance*:

In music study generally, the concept of performativity has been introduced slowly, even though musicians deal with the competencies of performers as articulated and consolidated in repertoires, events and practices; in other words, performativities. Davidson 2014)

In the sense that they are used in this thesis, performative or performance refer either to the act of performing music or to music with relation to its nature as being performed. This includes when music is preserved in a recording. The distinction is between this and music in the form of notation or as an abstract intellectual concept, as for example in an academic or philosophical discourse. This of course resonates with the earlier discussion of works in classical music.

The term 'actant' also is used in a specific sense, exemplified in Marcel Cobussen's theorisations about improvisation in his book *The Field of Musical Improvisation*

(Cobussen 2017). In this sense, any kind of stimuli or contingent factors that exert an effect on an improvised musical performance, such as ambient noise, a broken amplifier, interactions with other musicians etc. can have an effect of some sort on the musical outcomes in an improvised performance.²

Authenticity has associations with some theoretical aspects of music studies. It is often applied in relation to early music and authentic performance practice. It has some practical contexts, such as the use of authentic period instruments in performances of Renaissance music. Regarding less tangible aspects of authentic performance, there is controversy in the early music movement concerning the aesthetics of 'authenticity' in historically-informed performance, sparked off by Richard Taruskin. He suggested that along with the desire to re-create the authentic sound of music from the past, early-music performers may be motivated by hidden or unconscious agendas which resonate more with a modern

² In adopting the concept of 'actants' and applying it to interactions between players or between players and other kind of environmental/contingent factors that may exert an effect on an improvisation, Cobussen draws on ecological concepts emanating from sociology and anthropology, specifically on some of the thinking of Bruno Latour's Actor Network Theory (ANT). Latour's theoretical approach stems from a very convoluted and abstract set of concepts which attempt to coalesce the intractable complexity of how a chaotic network of causal and mediatory factors can be at work in determining human behaviour and actions in numerous contexts such as the social and political. In a sense, perhaps, Cobussen isolates and simplifies some of Latour's rather complex concepts. In the conclusion of his book *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction To Actor-Network-Theory*, Latour articulates how this complexity presents so many problems when an attempt is made to establish a systematic or coherent rationale in this arena of thought; he explains :

What ANT has tried to do is make itself sensitive again to the sheer difficulty of assembling collectives made of so many new members once nature and society have been simultaneously put aside. (Latour 2005)

In respect of understanding improvised music and Cobussen's use of the term, it is perhaps useful in understanding some of the complex interactions that can be at work in any musical performance, though it could also be argued that it at best only offers a taxonomical symbol for what is possibly obvious to any reasonably self-aware performer, namely that any number of internal and external factors can have a greater or lesser effect on the outcome of a musical performance. Needless to say, ANT in Latour's sociological work is an extensive area of thought which extends beyond Cobussen's use of the term is well outside the scope of this thesis.

aesthetic and that they may be selective about which evidence they choose favour or ignore. He makes the distinction between the “true voice of one’s time” and the “assumed voice of history” (Taruskin 1995, p.166).

In philosophy, specifically existentialism, authenticity is a key concept. It was a preoccupation for Jean Paul Sartre, who regarded it as being true to one’s internal motivations, rather than conforming to external or societal pressures to avoid conflict with them. However, his ideas were somewhat elusive and not very clearly defined (Jonathan Webber 2013). In relation to popular music, authenticity is sometimes an issue. Pop musicians, for example, punk band members, may condemn as ‘poseurs,’ artists who adopt superficial aspects of their subculture such as clothes or fashion but do not embrace its true ethos. In relation to Hip-hop Jonathan Williams observes:

Like other genres, including punk, grunge, and American folk music, hip-hop has found itself within the mainstream of a culture it is explicitly opposes. Consequently, MC’s have preserved this identity by invoking the concept of authenticity in attempting to draw clearly demarcated boundaries around their culture (Williams 2007).

In relation to the creative works in this thesis, authenticity can relate to my response to external pressures. This is not the least because creating music in the context of doctoral research could itself create unnatural agendas with the potential to distort musical choices. In a sense somewhat akin to a Sartrean one, authenticity is a consideration I needed to reflect on whilst producing the creative works in this thesis. As Coessens et al observe:

There is the fear that a thinking culture which insists on rigorous analysis, might interfere with the skill and open-mindedness, the pre-noetic, deeply intuitive and intensely felt quality of experience that constitutes an artistic performance.
(Coessens et al 2009)

Within this context authenticity relates to self-reflection during the creative process that entails creating space between oneself and unwelcome external influences to have better creative autonomy.

Textuality/textual³ will be referred to as the aspect of music or of musical practice relating to music as a notated text, as opposed to music as *sound* that is auditioned. This is a specific use of a term which has a broader set of meanings. It can carry the sense that a text is something or even anything that is an artefact conveying conceptual knowledge or information that can become an object for study. Textuality could therefore also encompass other forms of documentation, such as recordings of musical performances. A recording of a piece of music that is improvised with no notation can, in this sense, constitute a text. John Coltrane's recorded solo on Giant Steps is often studied and learned by jazz students through aural mimesis. It can also be learned from notated transcriptions. Therefore, in either context, as a sonic artefact or as a notated score it could be described as a text.

The term aurality in this thesis relates to using the sense of hearing as a cognitive tool for understanding, perceiving or learning music; the distinction is between this and using the sense of sight. Occularcentricity is linked to this distinction. Regarding music, it concerns a preoccupation with notation. Occularcentricity is a concept mooted and discussed by Bruce Johnson and to which later reference is made (Johnson 2002). The term *aural* is also used to make the distinction from what is implied by *oral*. The latter is often employed in respect of ethnological analyses of the jazz tradition and other improvisatory music.

Throughout this thesis a recurrent theme will be free improvisation. The distinction will frequently be made between two approaches: 'extemporaneous composition' and 'stream

³ The Oxford Living Dictionary defines the word textuality thus: 'The quality or use of language characteristic of written works as opposed to their spoken usage (Oxford living Dictionaries en.oxforddictionaries.com)

of consciousness'. Extemporaneous composition is a term coined by Ed Sarath (1996). It is an approach to free improvisation where the aim is produce a piece of music akin to a structured composition, conveying the sense of a musical argument. This can be contrasted with stream of consciousness, referring to free improvisation in which musical argument is not a consideration; you just play and allow the music to develop from moment to moment. The term free improvisation invokes complex debates and is discussed in depth in the introduction to chapter four. In broad terms, free improvisation refers to having no pre-composed or premeditated elements involved in a performance; in other words, you just play. This could be contrasted with jazz improvisation, which requires structured improvisation within highly codified protocols of the genre.

References to narrative concern how a piece of music, whether an improvisation or composition can have a structured, linear sense of narrative. This relates to the concept of argument in a composition. The latter relates to music having a strong teleological sense, for example, as in a classical sonata movement. Analogies between music and literature/drama are numerous. Amongst academics this has been the subject of: "general disagreement about its nature, properties and range of application" (Byron Almén 2008) In a theoretical context narratology was an area of meta-theoretical thought in American musicology of the 1980's and 1990's. Edward Cone was possibly the first scholar to posit the need for a more formal theoretical structure in his 1974 book *The Composers Voice*. He suggested that theoretical frameworks could be established for analysing musical narrative (Cone 1974). Burton Raffel is harsh in his assessment of Cone's arguments: "a distinctly soggy mass of unfounded, windy metaphors, elaborated platitudes, snobbish dogmatisms and mis-used appeals to literary analysis". (Raffel 1975). This seems to epitomise Almén's earlier observation regarding polarised opinions about musical narratology.

There are strong arguments challenging the notion of narrative in music. These mostly centre around incongruities resulting from rigid cross-definitions being made between music and literature. For example, temporality poses different issues for music and literature since music cannot relate event in the past tense. Similarly, the idea of protagonist-as-narrator does not fit comfortably with the nature of music. Almén applies diverse theoretical paradigms in his analysis of classical works by composers such as Mahler, Schubert and Ravel, relating closely to literary models such as topic (or *topoi*), romance and comedy. Analogies are drawn between formal structures in classical music and archetypes in literary narratives such as sonata form being characterised as ‘the return’. He suggests that narrative qualities in music are not determined in relation solely to literature; rather, narrative in music relates to: “...a set of foundational principles common to all narrative media” (Almén 2008). He articulates what is effectively a position-statement:

I will understand narrative as articulating the dynamics and possible outcomes of conflict or interaction between elements, rendering meaningful the temporal succession of events, and coordinating these events into an interpretive whole.
(Almén 2008)

This latter aspect of narrative in music resonates with my personal conception of it, regarding how improvisation and composition intersect in my creative practice. It also connects with how I understand my approach to musical argument, which is greatly informed by my immersion in classical music and its formal processes. Douglass Seaton suggests that what Almén outlines in this latter statement represents plot rather than narrative and that ‘plotted-ness’ would be a more apt adjective than narrative. However, apart from the inelegant nature of the term plotted-ness, plot suggests a narrow focus veering towards drama. Although overtly programmatic music such as Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique* sometimes correlates closely to a dramatic plot/schema, it can

also be much looser in its connection. The album *Tales from the Diaspora* has a programmatic theme (as is discussed later) but there is not a mimetic or diegetic aspect to the music. The allusions to the theme of diaspora are either through evocation of an emotional state – i.e. the sadness caused by separation in *When You Left* - or through abstruse thematic reference in the composition of the themes. For example, the thematic motifs of *Windrush* and *Zanj* reference the traditional song *My Bonny Lies Over the Ocean*. However, narratology has been explored mainly in the context of classical music. How it relates to improvised music is an area of study that would be open for research in the future.

Methodology and theoretical framework for Practice-based research.

Practice-based research is the methodology employed in this thesis. There are, however, some minor elements of practice-led research. The creative work is the principle element embodying the outcomes of the research. The thesis includes a scholarly/theoretical text providing context for the creative work and contributing to how improvisation may be understood in academic discourses. The aim is also to provide insight useful for other creative practitioners. Improvisation is a very elusive subject and the practice-based approach facilitates a valuable perspective benefiting from myself, as the creative practitioner/researcher, being at the centre of the process.

‘Practice-based research’ and ‘practice-led research’ are terms frequently used in discussions about creative practice in the doctoral research context. There can legitimately be a certain degree of overlap between these terms, however, they are often used interchangeably due to confusion regarding what is meant. Linda Candy (2006) clarifies the distinction, explaining that in practice-led research the creative work may, though not necessarily, be included to play an illustrative role supporting the word-based text. In practice-based research, such as in this thesis, creative work is central to the argument.

The exegesis transforms personal knowledge and understanding gained by the practitioner into a form that can be scrutinised, understood and challenged by third parties. This transmissibility is a key aspect of knowledge in the context of practice-based research. The written text serves to inform the reader how the creative work may be understood or apprehended as well as placing it in relevant contexts.

However, there can be a tension between practice-based research and more established traditional research-paradigms favoured in academia. In their book *The Artistic Turn. A Manifesto*, Coessens, Crispin and Douglas articulate how approaches to practice-based research attempting to conform to the protocols of scientific research could compromise the integrity of artistic endeavour by trying to isolate and objectify individual aspects of creative practice, to subject them more easily to systematic and rigorous study. As they put it:

Methods borrowed from other disciplines are too frequently clumsily applied to artistic creativity. They fail to create real insight; at worst, they reduce the arts to what is demonstrable, while apparently successfully ticking boxes of orthodox protocols with regard to research questions, literature review, data gathering and analysis. Such attempts to force the arts through the eye of the needle of conventional science – or, as previously stated, a hardened, assumed or mythologised version of science – lead(ing) to results that are frequently trivial.
(Coessens et al 2009, p22)

They suggest some constructive paradigms, regarding the potentially conflicting agendas of pursuing a personal artistic/creative practice and of conforming to traditional academic traditions. Of these, the model most relevant to this thesis is that in which an additional output is generated; an exegetical word-based document. The reflective and critical thinking inherent in the creative process, is coalesced and articulated in a form that is

explicitly informative. It brings the knowledge generated through the creative work from being intrinsic and personal to extrinsic and public. This is the rationale of the methodology for this thesis.

Some minor aspects of the thesis are more oriented towards the practice-led model. My performance of two Rachmaninoff piano pieces primarily supports the discussion in chapter three, about aurality and textuality. However, the aurality/textuality issue also intersects with the discussions in chapter two, about Cook's concepts, regarding improvisation's intersection with interpretation. Recording my performances of these classical compositions has allowed me to bring the same kind of personal insight, into how these different aspects of musicianship are linked, to that offered through improvising the original music. In the instance of the classical pieces, the creative/performative outputs support and illustrate the verbal/textual discussion, rather than being central to it. Hence this relates to the practice-led model. All the other creative outputs are central to the thesis and represent the practice-based research model.

The term knowledge itself requires consideration here. This is a very large subject and an extensive discussion would be beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, there are key concepts warranting clarification. Traditional university research paradigms have historically tended to focus on a quite constrained concept of what is able to be validated as knowledge. The emphasis has been biased in the direction of scientific or philosophical models. Since the scope of research, especially in humanities, has grown and diversified in recent times, reflecting changes in society at large, these paradigms have needed to evolve to remain both relevant and current.

Coessens et al. argue that perceptions in academia of what constitutes knowledge are attributable to an evolving historical bias towards the predominantly theoretical and logical. They argue that these are derived originally from the Aristotlean concept of

Theoria/Episteme. Aristotle's model included two other elements. *Poesis/Techne* related to knowledge of how to make things or of how to create. The third is *Praxis/Phronesis*, relating to action in the real world and politics, along with ethics regarding human interactions. Currently, the term *praxis* is sometimes used in a sense that overlaps with practice. In the context of improvisation, there are aspects of creative practice involving both musical and interpersonal interactions. In this sense, *praxis* has some relevance, but to avoid possible ambiguity, I have avoided using the term *praxis* in this text.

Coessens et al argue that as the evolution of Western academic culture progressed from the Renaissance to the 20th century the concept of *Poesis/Techne* was gradually abandoned and instead a binary distinction between types of knowledge emerged:

A theory/practice binary division replaced the theory/practice/creation *trichotomy*. It absorbed part of the category of productive knowledge, merging making with acting and thus leaving out important subtleties concerning how this third type of knowledge is embedded in creativity (Coessens et al 2009).

This may account for the frequently-debated issue about the relative values of theory and practice, along with the notion of theoretical thought coming first in creative/artistic research, subsequently leading to practice. This is often unhelpful and even antithetical regarding creative art, where often the obverse is the case. It is more often theory that results from rationalising and codifying the processes at work in artistic creative practice. Theory can, of course play an important role in creative art and the notion of theory leading to practice sometimes has a valid application. The example of Arnold Schoenberg and his development of serial technique comes to mind, as do those of Steve Coleman and Gerry Bergonzi, who both developed an empirical system for systematic pitch-choices in jazz improvisation.

Tacit knowledge is a significant factor in practice-based research. Tacit knowledge is a term coined by Michael Polanyi (Polanyi 1958). The opposite term, explicit knowledge, is that which can easily be aggregated or codified, for example in a word-based text or a diagram. Tacit knowledge is personal to the knowing subject and is more difficult to codify, for example, knowing how to speak a language or improvise jazz. A characteristic of tacit knowledge is that effective transfer tends to require sustained close interaction between the knowing subject and the recipient, whereas transfer of explicit knowledge can be achieved through means such as reading or logical deduction. The distinction is often simplified though the terms 'know-what' and 'know-how'. Niedderer suggested that research through creative practice can provide a means of bringing tacit knowledge to the foreground. This is the rationale at work in this research. It enables a focus on the personal, experiential aspects of knowledge that are difficult to transmit through written text alone. Within older academic research paradigms favouring more explicit or propositional types of knowledge, such areas of creative practice can tend to be side-lined. (Niedderer 2007).

In his influential paper *Research in Art and Design*, Frayling suggests three models for art-research, the third of which resonates with the issue of tacit versus explicit knowledge (Frayling 1993). These three models are:

- Research into art and design, which relates to historical, aesthetic and analytical/theoretical approaches. This corresponds to traditional areas of musicology in respect of music, which belongs in the realm of explicit knowledge.
- Research through art and design. This is research which explores areas such as the possibilities offered to artistic practice by particular materials, techniques or technology, along with action research which aims to contextualise practical processes. This could map on to research such as sound-designers developing new

applications for digital technology or software in a practical context. Again, the generation of explicit knowledge is framing this process. Although there may be some artefacts resulting from the process, it is knowledge of very specific and concrete things which are being sought.

- Research for art and design. This corresponds to practice-based research where the artefact is a primary element of the research outcomes.

In this third model, as Frayling puts it, this is: “Research where the end-product is an artefact – where the thinking is, so to speak, *embodied in the artefact*”. He relates this to what he describes as “the cognitive tradition in fine art... a tradition out of which much future research could grow: a tradition which stands outside the artefact at the same time as standing within it” (Frayling 1993). This model is very apposite regarding this thesis. My being at the centre of the process of creative practice here, provides a unique lens through which to view both the body of original music and improvisation in a wider context, i.e. from an internally-informed perspective. This perspective is not accessible to an extrinsic, third-party commentator. Theorisations from an extrinsic perspective can infer meaning and significations into an artefact that may not accurately represent the thinking that informed its creation. This recalls Swinkin's argument that analysis is an interpretive and performative process that projects thinking into the score (Swinkin 2016). This does not invalidate third-part perspectives, but rather seeks to acknowledge the validity of the internal one, that is extremely valuable.

1. Literature Review

Introduction

This review falls into four sections which examine the work and sometimes, specific outputs, of figures relevant to this thesis. The eclectic nature of this choice of external sources has direct relevance to my approach to improvisation. Their work is central to how I have informed my musical language, which is reflected in my over-arching concern with establishing a personal kind of musical heteroglossia. My earliest formative musical experiences were of Western classical tradition. Subsequently my horizons have broadened to encompass, jazz, free improvisation and the avant-garde. A comprehensive review that includes the whole gamut of improvised music and jazz along with the associated musicology, would be far in excess of the scope of this dissertation. The focus would also be too wide to address the research questions at hand. There is a relatively limited body of musicological writing addressing contemporary improvised music that falls outside the domains of jazz and free jazz suggesting that this is an area that could be explored more extensively in the future.

The first section of this review focusses on improvising pianists. The second section concerns improvising church organists. The organists' improvising tradition is significant to this thesis because of its emphasis on codified musical language in improvisation. It also involves elements of extemporaneous composition, which is an approach to improvisation on which this thesis has a central focus. The third section will discuss avant-garde improvisers relevant to my creative practice and the final section will review relevant work by musicologists. In some instances, there will be an overlap. Vijay Iyer, Ed Sarath, Derek

Bailey and George Lewis have contributed to academic discourses about improvisation and have also published musical works involving improvisation.

ii: Improvising Pianists

I am intensely involved in creative practice as an improvising jazz pianist. Consequently, jazz plays a big part in my aesthetic and stylistic choices. Examining the outputs of all the key figures in the jazz piano tradition would require a review of extensive proportions, as would an equivalent discussion of the canon of classical piano repertoire that has been equally informative to my creative practice. A list of all the jazz pianists (and other instrumentalists) who influence me would be extensive. However, the work of some particular jazz pianists is of especial relevance to this thesis. These include Duke Ellington, Earl Hines, Wynton Kelly, Herbie Hancock, Bill Evans, McCoy Tyner, Keith Jarrett, and John Taylor. The imprint of these players' music can be found in most of my music. Musical concepts from these musicians are deeply interwoven into my personal musical language, as are those of the many classical composers, for example J.S Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Rachmaninoff, Ravel, Messiaen and Tippett, whose music I have studied, practiced and performed over many years.

Amongst the jazz pianists mentioned above, Keith Jarrett has particular pre-eminence in contemporary improvised piano music. He defined new ground when he began playing and recording whole concerts of extended polystylistic piano improvisations in the early 1970's. Polystylism is the use of different, often conflicting styles or techniques that is associated with postmodernism. Jarrett has published a considerable body of work through the German record label ECM (in fact it was probably Jarrett's recordings which served to make ECM into a 'household name'). Many of his solo concerts were recorded and released, including amongst many others, *The Köln Concert*, *The Sun Bear Concerts*, and *La Scala*. His style and idiom have influenced many, if not most, jazz and jazz-related improvising pianists since the 1980's, including myself; he is also a very significant figure

in the contemporary musical world in a wider sense. His musical language is a kind of universally embracing polystylism. Elements from the whole jazz tradition rub shoulders with rock, folk music, and Western classical idioms ranging from the Baroque, classical, and romantic eras to music from the 20th century. In his music, as exemplified in the concert recordings mentioned above, tonality and atonality co-exist in an astonishingly integrated and coherent personal idiom. Ian Carr sums it up:

The result of such a breadth of vision is that the range of his musical response is bewildering in its universality. He seems to embrace every facet of twentieth-century music-making – except for electronic or computer-based music (Carr 1992).

Contrasting Jarrett's music with that of Cecil Taylor can also serve to highlight aspects of my musical aesthetic and rationale in respect of free improvisation. Although there are some overlapping elements, especially where atonality and rhythmic dissonance/freedom are concerned, the intentions behind the music of these two influential figures, and how it may connect with listeners, are quite different. Taylor's music seemingly sets out to be purposefully difficult or intractable for the 'un-informed' listener. This could be attributed to a motivation rooted in making cultural commentary. Taylor most probably developed his familiarity with the aesthetics of the European avant-garde as a classical music student at the New England Conservatory (Jost 1974). His adoption of an unapproachable, dissonant style of music may arguably be motivated by the desire to place his music – and by implication the art music of African-Americans – on a more intellectually elevated level than music which had strong associations with popular or entertainment music – such as jazz (as it was in the late 1960's). Indeed, Taylor's work sits in the politicised context described by Andrew Bartlett (1995) as follows:

The emergence of the avant-garde jazz musician/composer as an intellectual commentator on the political present, prone to delivering trenchant criticisms of culture both obliquely in full-throttle improvisations lacking traditionally cohering

elements such as recurring melodies or identifiable harmonies or equally timed rhythms, and overtly, in interviews and album-jacket liner notes, happens in earnest for the first time in the early and mid-1960s.

By contrast, Jarrett's comments about his understanding of the motivations behind playing jazz reveal him to be more concerned with making music as a means of human expression.

Jazz is not a commodity, it's a process of self-discovery and revelation. It's about ecstasy, not greed; heart, not attitude; musical validity, not race; inclusion, not regression; struggle, not coasting; content, not virtuosity; practice, not theory; risk, not safety; motion, not stagnation; original voices, not mimicry (Jarrett 2014).

Jarrett uses the whole palette of consonance and dissonance to create music which can connect with many people who listen to it, not just initiates of a rarified intellectual elite. In crude terms, Jarrett's music, although demonstrating a high level of musical sophistication and intellectually challenging complexity, is *accessible* for many listeners. Arguably, Taylor's is not music intended to be particularly accessible.

Cecil Taylor's career began slightly earlier than Jarrett's. Jarrett's first solo album *Facing You* was released in 1971. Taylor first came into prominence as a solo piano improviser in 1967 with the release of *Indent* (1967). Prior to that he had worked in jazz ensemble settings – particularly as part of the emerging African-American free jazz movement. Taylor is an immensely influential and significant figure in the free jazz movement, revered by many musicians and in critical discourse concerning free jazz/improvised music. The free jazz movement was closely associated with the intense environment in the USA regarding racial politics and how black Americans could assert and gain validation for their distinctive creative identity in a society which de-valued them. Arguably, this accounts for some aspects of Taylor's significance and notability as an artist in musicological discourses. He was closely associated with Ornette Coleman and Albert Ayler, amongst

others, though he also recorded with other more mainstream jazz players such as John Coltrane. His musical language has embraced atonality and a 'free-form' approach, fused with some elements of hard-bop jazz. The avant-garde classical music of the mid-20th century is also referenced a great deal in discourses about his music and Stockhausen is often cited as an important influence. Around the same time as Taylor was coming to prominence, Stockhausen was experimenting with elements of free improvisation as, for example, in his 'intuitive music' approach found in works such as *From the Seven Days* (1968) and *For Times to Come* (1970).

Taylor has attracted controversy and negative critique, though not in academic discourses. In Ken Burns's 2001 documentary *Jazz*, Branford Marsalis abusively describes Taylor's music and philosophy as "total, self-indulgent bullshit" (Burns 2001). Marsalis comes from a later generation of black American jazz musicians, so this seems surprising, though perhaps his comments speak more to a very conservative tendency amongst jazz musicians of a generation later than Taylor's. Nonetheless Marsalis is an important figure in contemporary jazz and his perspective cannot be discounted out-of-hand. It could be argued, concerning the aspects of Taylor's playing encompassing the hard-bop idiom, that Taylor's approach skims the surface and exploits superficial elements of the style without addressing core musical issues in the genre, such as the meticulous articulation of rigorously-defined musical detail, that is characteristic of his contemporaries such as Tommy Flanagan, McCoy Tyner or Wynton Kelly. This is exemplified by Taylor's album *Hard Driving Jazz* (Taylor 1959) in which he plays with John Coltrane and Kenny Dorham, both of whom epitomise the hard-bop style. The messiness of Taylor's jazz lines and the diffuseness of his comping could be attributed to a motivation rooted in seeking to break free of aesthetic and philosophical limitations imposed by the technical rigor that defines the playing of players like Flanagan, Kelly, and Tyner. It could equally be framed as being motivated in deliberate avoidance of those technical rigors – 'bluffing' in crude terms.

Jarrett's atonal/free playing can be just as bewildering or alienating to some listeners as Taylor's; however, I would argue that when Jarrett uses elements of jazz language in its widest sense – such as when he plays standards with his trio or in parts of his freely improvised concerts where he employs functional and non-functional tonal harmony – he demonstrates consummate musical and technical mastery as well as a profound depth of creativity; the same applies where his atonal free playing is concerned.

It could be argued that those aspects of Taylor's playing in which he breaks away from the tight frame of the bop/jazz idiom and its complex constraints on players may be more the result of mannerism than of musical substance. From an informed pianistic perspective, it is possible that motor-memory and motoric compulsiveness may shape the music more than detailed musical thought-processes, such as the employment and re-contextualisation of codified musical language, systematic pitch choices or other kinds of hierarchical formal approaches such as serialism. The latter could be exemplified by Steve Coleman's Symmetrical Movement Concept. Coleman has developed a complex and systematic methodology for pitch choices in atonal improvisation which are conceptually related to serialism (Coleman 2015). Elements of musical ideas or motifs are discernible in Taylor's improvisations but are articulated rather sketchily and elusively. This sketchiness could be an intentional aspect of his musical idiom and hence could constitute a systematic thought process. Notwithstanding all this, it would be questionable simply to dismiss his music, purely claiming that it represents motoric compulsiveness. This calls to mind Berio's comments about improvisation, which are discussed in chapter two.

It could also risk a large omission in understanding how embodiment may play a significant part in improvisation for some musicians – though not, per se, at the expense of structured thought. In an interview Jarrett talks about 'allowing his left hand to play what it knows' (Jarrett 2005), which on the surface can seem vague and fanciful – and could even support the common myth that motor compulsion or embodiment are the main drivers in

improvising. However, taking into account the intensity of structured and codified musical thought evident in Jarrett's improvising, it seems appropriate to deduce that his ability to access and deploy hierarchically-devised musical ideas spontaneously is the product of years of intensive study, practice and the performative application of a vast amount of musical substance. The literature relating to Jarrett's piano improvisations tends to approach it in ways which cast little light on the process that enables him to play. Most available literature is framed either from a historical perspective as per Elsdon's book about the Köln concert (Elsdon 2012), by analysing transcriptions, as for example with Timothy Page's dissertation which examines motivic strategies in Jarrett's jazz improvisations by using analytical tools rooted in classical musicology or by focusing on areas that relate to his philosophical/spiritual thinking (Petsche 2017).

My own musical and stylistic agenda shies away from the aesthetic of the avant-garde. Nonetheless, the influence of Cecil Taylor is unavoidable. His playing has played a part in informing my improvisations, as for example *Kaitoke* and *Prelude*. He was an original musical voice who has influenced a great deal about how the piano sounds in avant-garde and free-improvised jazz. In respect of the music in this thesis, Jarrett's influence, both aesthetically and as a technical/musical model, is very significant, especially where my album *Southern Shift* is concerned. My approach to several aspects of pianism is strongly influenced by Jarrett's playing. These include the use of sonority, his flexibility in phrasing, which has subtle elements of rubato and a rich harmonic palette. In terms of improvisation, the use of musical concepts from diverse sources is an aspect that can be attributed to his influence.

In his earliest solo performances such as his first recording for ECM, *Facing You* (1971), Jarrett tended to play improvisations based on existing compositions or songs. Elements of more freely-wrought musical discourse emerge in his introductions and 'vamps' – as he developed his solo concerts, the latter quickly seems to become the main emphasis of his

extended improvisations and developed into an approach to extended improvising characterised by what could be termed a 'stream of consciousness'. This is a quite original and innovative aspect of contemporary solo piano improvisation; it was an innovation largely attributable to Jarrett, but also to Cecil Taylor, who developed his style of extended solo free-form improvisation at around about the same time. Jarrett's musical palette and his improvisational language are richer, and far deeper than Taylor's, whose music is open to the criticism of being rather mono-stylistic by comparison. I would assert that Taylor's music does not have the wide range of dynamic and emotional feel that Jarrett demonstrates, nor does he exemplify the exceptionally high technical mastery that Jarrett does, in terms of both the instrument and the complexity of the musical material that he uses.

Some of Jarrett's solo piano outputs are in the form of shorter, more concentrated pieces rather than extended free-form improvisations. In the album *Dark Intervals* (1987), which is a recording of a solo concert given in Tokyo, the pieces are concise and sound as though they could be pre-composed works. This represents extemporaneous composition. The individual movements having titles, such as *Hymn* and *Fire Dance* suggests that these improvisations were perceived by Jarrett as resembling composed pieces. In most of his solo concert albums, such as *Bremen/Lausanne*, there are not titles as such, only 'part 1a' or 'Part 2b' etc. *Dark Intervals* therefore represents an unusual approach for Jarrett.

However, Jarrett's own observations about how he engages with himself when improvising speak to his seeking to disengage consciously from protensive-retensive cognitive processes and, moreover, reveal the significance he attributes to embodiment. This seems paradoxical since Jarrett's music is intensely packed with musical substance, organised within the frame of intellectually-wrought processes, such as complex, chromatically rich, functional harmony and counterpoint. Jarrett has informed his musical utterances by immersing himself in an encyclopaedic range of music from the classical tradition, jazz,

folk music and rock, and seemingly allows this internalised knowledge to flow in a stream of musical consciousness during his concerts.

When I am out there and there is just a piano – it’s like my body knows exactly what to do... it’s just like my left hand knows how to play and if I tell it what to play...I’m stopping it. Not only am I stopping it; I am stopping it from playing something better than I can think of (Jarrett 2005).

Other aspects of Jarrett’s style which are important include his propensity for playing extended stretches of repeating groove-patterns and improvising over left-hand ostinati (which are sometimes quite complex to execute, even without having to improvise over them with the right hand). The latter approach is explored in my piece *Seven*. To ears unaccustomed to ‘groove-based’ music the extended re-iteration of rhythmic patterns can seem strange or repetitious; however, a mind-set informed by African and African-derived music will appreciate the subtle changes and inflections in the “loop”, and the almost hypnotic momentum that such an intense immersion in ‘laying down a groove’ can engender in the listener. There may also be an element of self-hypnosis at work in this aspect of Jarrett’s performances; in a number of instances such hypnotic sessions in Jarrett’s performances precede passages of sublime inspiration.⁴ I have not pursued this approach of cycling a repeated pattern for extended periods in the portfolio since I have found it not to be particularly helpful within the confines of recording tracks for an album in a studio setting as opposed to performing within the longer time-frame of a whole extended concert.

The music of Vijay Iyer and Uri Caine is relevant to the aspect of this thesis that concerns how elements of Western classical musical can be integrated and synthesised with those

⁴ This is exemplified in the Köln concert. From about 44:34 Jarrett initiates a repeating hypnotic pattern in F# minor which he extends and explores until 50:36, when it dissolves and leads into some of Jarrett’s most eloquent and expansive improvised utterances which lead to the end of the concert.

from jazz and other related kinds of music involving various types of improvisation.

Perhaps the most notable of Iyer's works integrating improvisation and composed music for classical musicians is his set of pieces *Mutations I-X* (2013) which he performed live and recorded for the ECM label with a specially recruited string quartet. The music involves him improvising as a pianist, playing pre-composed elements, and using technology to manipulate electronic sound.

Uri Caine, like Iyer, has developed combining jazz-informed piano improvisation with classical chamber music. This music constitutes an interesting example of jazz-classical 'crossover' music. His approach has been to create adaptations or re-inventions of well-known works from the Western classical 'canon' in which he integrates the original music with elements of his own jazz-based idiom. Notable examples have been his re-casting of the Adagio from Gustav Mahler's *5th Symphony*, which received critical acclaim, J.S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations* and the *Rondo* from W.A Mozart's *Piano Sonata in A major, K. 331*. He has also given performances improvising with classical ensembles playing composed repertoire. He recently gave some performances in this vein with the New Zealand String Quartet, including original compositions for piano and string quartet, *Jagged Edges* (2015) and *String Theories* (2015), as well as improvising over the *Allegretto Con Variazioni* of Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 74. Caine and Iyer's work has been a model for the piece for string trio in this thesis, *Saraband*, which explores this relatively little-trodden territory where the practice of classical music and free improvising are integrated.

In the contemporary world of classical music, improvisation is still quite a rare phenomenon. Baroque music specialists who are skilled in continuo, such as Alan Curtis and Ton Koopman, are adept in this practice, which involves a form of improvisation requiring a knowledge and understanding of a specific area of musical style. However the skills of contemporary Baroque harpsichordists are informed greatly by textually based,

historical musicology. Both Koopman and Curtis are notable historical musicologists as well as performers. The scholarship-based tradition that has rediscovered and helped to re-create the art of early music and Baroque continuo is not informed by a strongly established aural tradition comparable with the historical reach of jazz. It is mostly through deductive and speculative work, based on historical texts and scholarly interpretations that an idea of how Baroque music actually sounded can be developed.

Musicians who are adept, creative improvisers are seldom encountered in classical music, perhaps unsurprisingly given the textual focus of the artform in the contemporary era. However, the improvisatory work of David Dolan, Robert Levin and Gabriela Montero is pre-eminent and they epitomise different aspects of improvisation. Levin is a prominent scholar and pianist who specialises in the music of Mozart. He is perhaps most distinctive for having developed the ability to improvise fluently and very convincingly within Mozart's language; his improvisations really do *sound* like Mozart's music. As is the case with Baroque continuo players, his practice is based on knowledge gained from extensive familiarity with notated sources, yet Levin's level of creativity as an improviser is astonishingly high. In certain respects, there could be an analogy to how jazz improvisers develop a fluency rooted in a strongly codified language, which they are able to manipulate and in which they are able to re-contextualise ideas to create original utterances. This approach can be contrasted with that of improvisers who seek to avoid codified stylistic features and instead, wish to create entirely new or original musical ideas not derived from existing models, such as Keith Rowe and Eddie Prevost. Free improvisation is discussed in greater depth in chapter four.

Gabriela Montero has developed an impressive international profile as a classical concert pianist, interpreting mainstream classical piano repertoire. What makes her distinctive and very unusual in the Western classical world is that she has pursued improvisation as a public practice, to a highly developed level of mastery and sophistication. She improvises

variations and fantasias on themes suggested by members of the audience as a high point in her classical recitals. This recreates a practice that was common in the era of pianists such as Mozart, Beethoven, Hummel, Czerny and Liszt. Her improvisations demonstrate a level of fluency and coherence associated with notated compositions, along with the ability to create music spontaneously in performance using elements from musical styles spanning four centuries. Her playing epitomises extemporaneous composition at a very high level. Videos of these performances reveal the extent to which her improvising forges a personal level of rapport and communication with her audience that merely going on stage and performing the programmed repertoire could never do.

Despite this and given that she is now fifty years old and has enjoyed the benefits of having prestigious record contracts, it is surprising that she has only published two recordings of her improvised music: *Bach and Beyond* (EMI Classics, 2006) and *Baroque* (EMI Classics, 2007). This relatively constrained focus on what is her most distinctive and defining aspect as a musician may point to a limited degree of acceptance of improvised music in the classical music world. Both recordings are outstanding achievements in terms of their depth, quality of musical mastery and inventiveness. They centre around the Baroque idioms and techniques in which she is most adept and musically creative; her improvisatory style however, extends through to 19th and 20th century styles.⁵

⁵ She is also a composer – having composed, amongst other works, two large-scale pieces for piano and orchestra, which also involve her improvising as well as playing composed music. Given the extent to which she has proven to be so innovative, it may say a lot about the prevailing conservatism of the classical music establishment that her improvisatory practice is treated more as an interesting curiosity, rather than as the central aspect of her artistry. Whether gender-bias plays a role in this is hard to qualify but it is certainly possible.

iii: Church Organ Improvisation

Heard an improvisation by Messiaen. Music which one could say was composed after the end of the world. It is of monstrous beauty, opening up immense caverns where rivers flow, where piles of precious stones glitter. We do not know where we are – in India perhaps. The composer was playing on the organ of the Trinité. Never have the vaults of this hideous edifice heard more disturbing sounds. Occasionally I had the impression that hell was opening, suddenly gaping wide. There were cataracts of strange noises which dazzled the ear. (Green, 2005)

The improvisational practice of church organists is a valuable point of reference that casts light on the rationale of my improvisatory practice and rationale, in particular where extemporaneous composition is concerned. This is because, in common with jazz improvisers such as Keith Jarrett, who integrate the codified musical language of established musical traditions of different types into their music, church organists employ an approach to musical language informed by strongly-defined protocols and by an associated set of musical/intellectual disciplines. As a genre, Church organists' improvisation embraces traditional disciplines such as counterpoint, fugue and functional harmonic form and is exemplified to a high level by two key figures in the 20th Century: Olivier Messiaen and David Briggs.

Messiaen has achieved a pre-eminent status as a composer in the 20th century Western classical tradition. His life's work as a performing musician, however, was very much defined by his practice as an improvising organist at the Église de la Sainte-Trinité in Paris. He was appointed as resident organist there in 1931 and he remained there for six decades until his death. His improvisations were a primary formative element in his compositional process – many of his works had their genesis and early stages of evolution in his organ improvisations (Benitez 2007) During his formative years Messiaen was immersed in the ancient French tradition of church organ improvisation, which has always

maintained a strong and vibrant creative culture which has out-lived similar traditions in Germany and England. It has also been a significant part of the 'DNA' of the French classical music tradition – Faure, Saint-Saens, Franck, Widor, Duruflé, Dupré, and Francois Couperin were all significant French composers that were organists schooled in this tradition. There are some existing recordings of Messiaen improvising – in which his own distinct voice is evident, synthesised with musical idioms and practices from over four centuries of the Western classical tradition. Church organist-improvisers are trained rigorously in musical disciplines such as counterpoint, fugue and canon along with modal practices with roots in the Medieval and early Renaissance eras, such as improvising music around themes from the Catholic plainchant liturgy. One of Messiaen's most well-known recordings from L'Église de la Sainte-Trinité is his improvisation on the plain-chant theme 'Puer Natus Est' which exemplifies much of his style and approach to improvising. In these improvisations there is an immensely powerful sense of sonority that interacts with texture and rhythm along with a truly compelling articulateness in respect of both musical form and narrative. It seems to surpass even these aspects of the improvisations of Montero and Briggs. Messiaen was operating within a strong and resilient musical subculture, which has clearly defined elements of musical convention, form and language. It seems to serve rather hinder the almost overwhelming power of a genius exercising his creativity. I would argue that Messiaen epitomises how the textually-based (i.e. notated) cognitive/creative aspects of being a composer and the performative cognitive/creative processes of the improviser reinforce one-another in an almost symbiotic manner. There has been little musicological work devoted to Messiaen's organ improvising, compared to the body of work on his composed outputs. Vincent Benitez's article 'Messiaen as Improviser' (Benitez 2007) is perhaps the most notable (if only) example of a study which specifically addresses the improvisatory aspect of Messiaen's output.

Similarly, surprisingly little attention has been given to church organists' improvisation in its wider sense, compared to discourses relating to free jazz and other kinds of free improvisation. This may be because of the tendency of many scholars to favour verbal discourse and analysis of texts over the performative; there are plenty of non-musical matters that sit comfortably within the frame of written verbal forms of discussion, especially relating to free jazz, which do not require a truly detailed knowledge of the musical substance or ability to play the music. To have sufficient understanding of the subject of church organists' improvisation, to cast any meaningful light on the subject would require a similar level of mastery of this technically and intellectually demanding art-form to that demonstrated by its practitioners; the same can be said for Jazz.

David Briggs is one of a small remaining number of masterful church organ improvisers from the British organists' tradition that is now all but extinct. Briggs is a pre-eminent figure in church organ improvisation and demonstrates an impressive command of musicianship and creative invention. He uses a wide range of musical techniques, drawing upon a musical vocabulary that is informed by music from historical eras stretching over four hundred years.

In this respect there is a comparison to be made with Gabriela Montero.⁶ Although his music does not, perhaps, have the unique personal vision that is evident in Messiaen's improvisations, his extended improvisations have a narrative coherence that makes them difficult to distinguish from carefully crafted composed works – extemporaneous composition which demonstrates a very high level of musical thought. His musical

⁶ Briggs's improvisation is exemplified by his improvised fugue recorded in L'Eglise de Saint Surplice in Paris: <https://youtu.be/pQgvesbQwp0> (2018) and his 'Christmas Improvisation', filmed during the Mendelssohn Choir's Festival of Carols concert, December 10, 2014 at the York minster Park Baptist Church, Toronto: <https://youtu.be/45KdF8-YQwo> (2018). Some other notable figures from this field in the UK include Martin Baker (b.1967), who is currently Master of Music at Westminster Cathedral in London and Philip Marshall (1921-2005) who was Master of Music at Lincoln Cathedral for many decades.

capabilities may be strongly affected by his practice (and resulting deep knowledge) of performing large-scale orchestral works, such as Mahler symphonies, on the organ. This seems to be reflected in his ability to maintain lengthy and coherent musical arguments 'on the fly'.

This latter aspect of improvisation, of maintaining sustained musical arguments extemporaneously, is central to my creative practice as an improviser and is one of the main issues driving my approach to improvisation in this thesis. Intertwined with this is the interrelation between improvisation and composition.

iv: The Avant-Garde

The European free jazz and free music traditions have been strongly established for many decades and have developed a separate identity from the free jazz tradition in the USA. It could be argued that a distinct sound can be attributed to avant-garde improvised music from Holland or from Scandinavian countries. The Dutch free improvising scene is particularly distinctive and the term 'Piep Piep Knor' has become a widely-accepted term for the music in Dutch music criticism. Piep Piep Knor is an onomatopoeic representation of the sound of extended techniques widely used in such music (Rusch 2016). Although I have not sought to pursue the aesthetic agenda of this avant-garde aspect of music, it has had a strong influence on my musical evolution since I grew up professionally in a milieu in which this music figured and have performed with a number of notable figures from this scene.

Two pianists who exemplify different aspects of this aesthetic of free improvisation and the avant-garde and who have been an influence in my musical aesthetic are Matthew Bourne and Misha Mengelberg. Mengelberg was a prominent figure on the mid-20th century avant-garde Jazz/improvised music scene in the Netherlands. He was a revered figure in avant-garde circles in Europe, closely associated with drummer/percussionist Han Bennink and other collaborators such as *Derek Bailey*, *Peter Brötzmann*, *Evan Parker* and the

American musician/composer Anthony Braxton. Mengelberg and Bennink were primary figures in the collective called The Instant Composers Pool, which specialised in various types of avant-garde free improvisation. Often, an element of theatricality was a feature of their performances, for example, Mengelberg improvising casually and amiably at the piano, while Bennink prowls grumpily round the stage, seemingly deciding if and when he will want to start playing – eventually stabbing a pizza box with a drumstick after using it as an ‘objet-trouvé’ instrument to play a duet with Mengelberg – then discarding it in favour of playing on his chair and subsequently on a combination of the drum kit and a plastic carrier bag.⁷

The aesthetics of these elements could represent an artistic choice to utilise wider dimensions of human behaviour as performative, expressive tools, or as a statement intended to challenge conventional notions of how performers behave on stage. They could also be dismissed as being simply humour or showmanship, or even all of these simultaneously; however, any of these are artistically valid. What makes these two musicians unusual amongst the European avant-garde improvisation movement is their strongly developed roots within the jazz tradition, in a quite conventional frame. Both Mengelberg and Bennink were deeply immersed in American jazz during their early careers, often playing with mainstream jazz artists – such as Dexter Gordon – when they were visiting the Netherlands from the USA. Mengelberg and Bennink both recorded on Eric Dolphy’s album *Last Date* (1964). It is evident from Mengelberg’s playing that he is knowledgeable and adept as an improviser within conventional/mainstream jazz protocols and that he is informed by his studies of classical music – in particular the atonality of the mid-20th Century. This features in the avant-garde aspects of his playing. He blends these elements, using atonality and dissonance deliberately, to derail or subvert lines of thought

⁷ This is a video of the performance described here: <https://youtu.be/JCYyGth47N8> 2018)

derived from the language and style of American Swing and bop jazz, in order to explore a different, personal musical agenda. The album *No Idea* (1997), which he recorded with Joey Baron and Greg Cohen, exemplifies this approach to jazz. It is interesting to compare this music with John Taylor's album from about the same time, *Rossllyn* (2003), recorded with the same rhythm-section. Mengelberg can sound as if he is playing contextually 'outside' of the musical norms of a conventional contemporary jazz trio – whilst at the same time functioning within the ensemble harmonically and rhythmically, with a level of coherence suggesting he has internalised that tradition and is completely at home within it. This is fascinating and speaks to a deeply-rooted grasp of diverse and often conflicting musical concepts along with the ability to synthesise them. His take on *You Don't Know What Love Is* (Mengelberg (1997) exemplifies this. He utilises textural and harmonic devices informed by the idiomatic jazz trio renditions of pianists such as Bill Evans, which exploit unexpected turns of harmony and tonality that enrich the musical discourse. Mengelberg, however includes 'shock chords' which often reference atonality, thereby raising the stakes in terms of tension and signifying his avant-garde proclivities.

The Instant Composers Pool was the subject of an extensive ethnographical study by Floris Schuiling (Schuiling 2016). However, as would be expected in an ethnographic study, the focus given to the actual substance of the music and its conception/execution are considerably less than that given to the social, interactive, behavioural and political issues at play. This kind of frame tends to epitomise much of the contemporary academic discourses about improvisation –*swerving away from the performative* as Nicholas Cooke has it (Cook 2004).

Matthew Bourne is a British pianist/composer currently in his mid-career. His musical outputs constitute a fascinating and often contradictory mix of influences and traditions including avant-garde classical and improvised music, jazz, heavy metal, math-rock, pop music and Western classical music. As well as these, the influence of early 20th Century

British composers such as Delius and Howells is evident in his harmonic language. The influence of Cecil Taylor, Misha Mengelberg, David Bailey and Keith Tippett are also strongly evident, and he has collaborated with some notable free-improvisers from Norway such as Didrik Ingvaldsen and Petter Frost-Fadnes. Bourne has used multimedia in many of his performances and was a member of the group Metropolis, which explored high-energy psychedelic rock-influenced improvisations, along with multi-media and several other creative avenues. Bourne has tended to embrace the tendency to shock by using transgressive language and statements in his performances, press interviews and even in his PhD thesis. He is predominantly associated with contemporary European improvised music culture, which draws on approaches which would have earned a previous generation the label of avant-garde.

The term avant-garde is questionable in current times however. The extensive use of extreme harmonic and rhythmic dissonance in much mid-20th century avant-garde art music, both in improvised music and within the classical tradition, is now hardly new or unfamiliar and could be pejoratively described as being 'old-hat'. The re-emergence of tonality and melodiousness in both classical music and improvised music, which began in the late 20th century, is now firmly re-established and perhaps what was once avant-garde might now better be described as *arrière-garde*. Furthermore, it could be suggested that within improvised music and composed music, adherence to atonality and dissonance, along with the deliberate avoidance of melody is now a retrogressive and even conservative stance. Bourne, however, embraces and synthesises these conflicting elements in his music, which is diverse and multi-faceted. He integrates atonality with tonality and other approaches in a manner that is coherent and has musical integrity. Of relevance to this thesis is his recording *The Montauk Variations* (2012). This is not, as the title implies, a structured set of variations on a single musical theme. It is a set of improvised piano pieces exemplifying extemporaneous composition. In the music he

employs and integrates many of his diverse influences to create music which has great spontaneity, whilst maintaining a strong intellectual grasp of form and musical narrative. Amongst musicians from the European free improvisation scene, Derek Bailey has had a strong significance, not only as an important performer and creative mind but also as an influential author. He was a revered figure in the European improvised music scene. Rather like Mischa Mengelberg, his early career was rooted in playing popular and commercial music as well as conventional tonal jazz. Aside from his career as celebrated improviser in the avant-garde movement at the height of its fruition, his pre-eminence can be attributed to his ground-breaking book *Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice*. This book is very influential in academic discourses about improvisation and is consistently referenced in articles and books on improvisation. Perhaps this is because it has the distinction of having been written by a significant improviser and thus, in common with Vijay Iyer's writings, benefits from a perspective and understanding that could not be gleaned from scholarship about improvisation theory alone. Bailey's influence was extended in the early 1990's when the book was adapted by the UK's Channel 4 into a four-part TV series, edited and narrated by Bailey himself. The book is deeply well-informed and examines the improvisatory practice of a comprehensive array of musical cultures and genres from a truly performative perspective. His agenda is to explore the music itself and to analyse the practical aspects rather than expand on theoretical or meta-theoretical lines of thought. Bailey does not allow his own stylistic/generic proclivities as a performer to intrude on what is a highly insightful, informative and tautly-argued dissertation on improvisation.

The divide between American and European free improvisers is by no means hermetic. A notable collaborator with the European musicians from the Instant Composers Pool is George Lewis. George Lewis has become a distinguished figure in American academic musical circles – he is a senior academic at Columbia University – and as a trombonist

and composer is active in free improvisation and free-jazz. He has published numerous articles and books about jazz and free improvisation. Most notably he has developed computer-generated systems with which musicians can interact. Voyager is a computer system that actuates a Yamaha Disklavier piano via MIDI interface and which can react autonomously to the playing of human musicians in real time, via digital processes that detect and analyse sound-inputs. This is a quite fascinating phenomenon, posing some interesting philosophical and behavioural ideas/questions about the developing relationship between humans and artificial intelligence. These may become more significant in the future if such technology continues to develop at the rapid pace that is currently the case.

In terms of musical creativity and improvisation, the value of this system may depend on aesthetic preference. Voyager generates musical activity which is rather limited in scope, mostly resembling frenetic and disjunct atonal gestures associated with the avant-garde style of free-jazz; this mirrors Lewis's preferred musical aesthetic. During a live performance in 2016⁸ (with a later question and answer session), pianist Jason Moran's passages of tonal and even functional harmony are not responded to convincingly. This betrays the homogeneity of what the Voyager system can produce. Lewis explains — in answer to a question about this — that the system could not improvise effectively using a tonal/melodic language that involves a complex syntax such as 'standard' jazz — though he suggests that this is because the algorithms the system uses to execute choices were determined by Lewis himself and influenced by his musical preferences. "In some ways the system functions as an independent performer, with its own perspective on a situation that it articulates — in other ways it functions as *'my piece'*." (Lewis 2016). This ambiguity may point to limitations in the device or in the thinking behind it. Lewis goes on to

⁸ The performance can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/Mn3M2JLQOts>

articulate a rather reductionist notion of what is involved in improvising, reducing it to four elements: agency, indeterminacy, analysis and choice.

As a musicologist, Lewis has also written a great deal about improvisation. His focus is a rather narrow take about improvisation as process, along with exploration of the philosophical, sociological and political concepts arising out of free improvisation and racial politics. In terms of my research his approach to improvisation is representative of what my music is *not* about, both in terms of aesthetics and style.

Ed Sarath is an influential academic writer and thinker about improvisation. He has also been productive as a composer and performer (he plays fluegelhorn), having released several recordings. It is as a scholar that he has had the greatest impact. In respect of this thesis, his article “A New Look at Improvisation” (Sarath 1996) is particularly relevant. He discusses temporality and the creative processes at work in improvisation and begins to establish a theoretical framework. His concepts about improvisation also reflect his spiritual/philosophical beliefs. His earlier article, ‘Improvisation for Global Musicianship’ (Sarath 1993) was an earlier manifestation of concepts that were later to come to fruition in his establishing the University of Michigan’s Program in Creativity and Consciousness Studies, which is an interdisciplinary network of academics whose aim is to explore “the inner workings of creativity and its foundations in consciousness.”⁹ He subsequently devised the University of Michigan’s Bachelor of Fine Arts in Jazz and Contemplative Studies curriculum. This degree course integrates meditation practice and related studies into an academic music curriculum. His book *Improvisation, Creativity, and Consciousness – Jazz as Integral Template for Music, Education, and Society* (Sarath 2013), brings together these threads. Sarath’s focus, in common with much writing about improvisation, is on process, social interaction, spirituality and consciousness. His theorisations have

⁹ See: www.edsarath.com

valuable implications which could be relevant to how music educators could approach the use of improvisation in school curricula.

Nicholas Cook is a prolific musicologist whose research encompasses a wide range and diversity of musical culture. Classical music, analysis, Beethoven, performance practice, pop music and improvisation are all areas in which he has contributed to scholarly thought and discourses. His article 'Making Music Together, or Improvisation and its Others: Music as Performance' (Cook 2004) is particularly relevant to this thesis and represents ideas that have exerted a strong influence on my musical thinking and approaches to improvisation. In this article he examines how improvisation may be better understood as being one aspect of a range of musical capabilities, that the duality of distinguishing between the performance of 'composed' music and improvisation undermines. He also advocates for a more performatively-oriented approach to how musical meaning and behaviours can be understood in musicology.

Laudan Nooshin is an ethnomusicologist with an interest in Iranian music. Her article 'Improvisation as 'Other': Creativity, Knowledge and Power: The Case of Iranian Classical Music' (Nooshin 2003) examines Iranian Classical Music after initially de-constructing pre-conceptions and default attitudes relating to 'improvisation', that are rooted in deeply-held hierarchical attitudes within the realm of the Western music establishment and its associated tradition of musicology. She goes on to give an in-depth analysis of the practice and musical substance involved in Iranian classical music from a very performative perspective.

2. What does the term improvisation mean in relation to music? The taxonomy and epistemology of improvisation as a creative process in music and the implications of how improvisation is framed and understood in scholarly discourses.

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone. "It means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master – that's all."

(Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking Glass)

Improvisation is routinely applied to widely divergent sets of skills, practices and cognitive aspects of playing music. Rather in the way that Humpty Dumpty puts it in his discourse with Alice, improvisation represents whatever a commentator wishes it to, often relating to the type of music being discussed. If the music were Indian music, baroque figured bass, or free jazz, the nature of the improvisation involved would be different in each case. Depending on the type of music, the term improvisation can refer to practices that are radically different from one another. In current times, many professional pianists/keyboardists are expected to have a diverse skill-set, including playing from various forms of notation, without notation and improvising in many genres. Such expectations could apply to the musical director of a commercial show, a pianist in a jazz, free jazz, African or salsa ensemble, the keyboard player in a pop group, a concert pianist performing in a classical concert, or a pianist improvising solo piano music in a concert hall. These examples, all involving some element of improvisation, are chosen because

my own professional experience of these has informed the development of my musical capabilities and persona, along with my creative practice. The drawing together of disparate musical and technical threads into a coherent improvised musical language is one of the central aspects of this thesis.

It can be argued that performing, classical music involves an element of improvisation. As Cook observes, with relation to a string quartet playing Mozart:

The players may well play the notes exactly as Mozart wrote them. And yet they *don't* play them exactly as Mozart wrote them, because every note in the score is subject to the contextual negotiation of intonation, precise dynamic value, articulation, timbral quality, and so forth (Cook 2004).

A comparison between Rachmaninoff's scores and his recordings reveal divergences where he plays things that differ from what is notated in the text – for example in the *Etude Tableau op. 33 no. 6 in Eb* bar 49. Moreover, comparing his different recordings of the same piece also reveals telling differences. For example, the tempo difference between his 1919 Ampico piano-roll recording and his phonograph recording from 1920 is pronounced; the Ampico take is much slower. There is also variance in the rubato, pacing and the way he spreads chords and separates lines in complex textures in the middle section of the piece.

There is a need for a more diverse and nuanced understanding of improvisation. This would provide useful insight into it as one of the most exciting and stimulating aspects of creative musicianship. The term 'improvisation' itself – as either noun or verb – only came into widespread use relatively late in the history of the Western classical tradition, most likely in the 19th century. Other terms might be extemporaneous composition, extemporisation and creative performance. Improvisation is frequently described and explained as being a form of musical undertaking that is different from composed or

notated music; in other words, as Paul Berliner observes, it is perceived and framed as an *other*: “in terms of what it is *not* rather than in terms of what it is” (Berliner 1994). In chapter one of Bruno Nettl and Melinda Russell’s collection of essays entitled *In the Course of Performance*, Stephen Blum (Blum 1998) identifies several different terms commonly used in various European languages up until about 1810. These include ‘ex improvise’, ‘ex sorte’, ‘de tête’, ‘aus der stelle” (which means ‘out of the situation’ and speaks particularly to responding to contingency), ‘ad arbitrio’ and ‘à plaisir’, amongst many others (Nettl and Russell: 1998, 36).

Czerny uses the core term (improvisation) in his 1836 treatise (Czerny: 1836, 1):

[T]alent and the art of improvising consist in the spinning out, during the very performance, on the spur of the moment, and without special immediate preparation, of each original or even borrowed idea into a sort of musical composition which, albeit in much freer form than a written work, nevertheless must be fashioned into an organised totality as far as is necessary to remain comprehensible and interesting.

By this time improvisation was already fading from practice as a means for performing music and this may possibly account for why Czerny saw a need for a treatise on the subject. It is also interesting to note that Czerny links improvisation to composition here. This intersection between improvisation and composition is another central theme in this thesis.

Arguably, improvisation represents different aspects of a wide spectrum of cognitive and intellectual processes through which a performer creates – or re-creates¹⁰ – music in

¹⁰ It could be argued that an interpretation in performance of a composition by someone other than the composer, which is the norm in classical music, is a creative act. An interpreter develops their own concept

performance. These could include playing music that has been acquired through notation, aural transmission/mimesis or a blend of these. Various types of notation, such as staff notation, figured bass, chord-symbols, guitar tablature or graphic scores are frequently involved. Performances often feature a blend of these and the focus may shift from one to the other. These different aspects may even operate simultaneously. This aspect of blending and shifting between techniques/processes is a key issue in my conceptual approach to improvisation and is discussed in depth in the commentary about the music.

There is good reason to suggest that there have always been highly capable performers who found improvising to a high level of artistic quality problematic and required notated material to be provided by musicians more adept at inventing music of high quality ‘on the fly’¹¹. This, incidentally, begs the intriguing question of whether – to some extent – it accounts for the origin of ‘composing’ in the first place. Robert Levin (2009) alludes to Mozart writing down an example of how to improvise a ‘fantasia’, to serve as a link between pieces in different keys; this was an important element of performance practice at that time. The music migrates from one key centre to another and was intended for his sister Nannerl, who, according to Levin: “was a fine pianist, but she lacked the ability to

or vision of the piece and hence that there may be an element of re-creation involved; especially so were the only source from which the music has been learned is a score. The disconcerting experience that I have had of hearing my own (heavily notated) music played by the Russian classical pianist Natalia Strelchenko, who had never heard my original recorded performance, was informative in this respect and highlights the limitations of even very detailed musical notation.

¹¹ As Margery Halford observes, in the foreword to Couperin’s *L’art de Toucher le Clavecin*: ‘In the baroque era, a prelude was often played while the audience settled down for the evening’s entertainment. Many times, it was improvised on the spot, but Couperin wrote his Eight Preludes in full for the performer who did not have the natural genius requisite for such improvisation. It is probable that performers played even the written preludes from memory to help create the illusion of extemporaneity. Little virtuosities made the audience anxious to hear more from the brilliant performer’. The last comment recalls the research of Dolan and Sloboda that is discussed later. It also poses some interesting questions relating to the accepted practice of classical pianists and violinists whereby they perform recitals from memory, by contrast with chamber musicians who read from the score during performances. (Halford 1974).

improvise.” (Levin 2004) This manuscript is the only known documentary example of Mozart’s music that is non-metric. It gives an intriguing glimpse into what Mozart’s improvisations may have been like, hinting at a significant unknown aspect of musical language from that time, inaccessible to scrutiny by music historians, since Mozart pre-dated recording technology. For this reason, there can be no truly accurate documentation of it, only informed guess-work based on textual sources, that is, Mozart’s scores.

Nicholas Cook suggests that *any* musical performance demonstrates some element of improvisation (as per the discussion of Rachmaninoff, above) – that there is a spectrum or continuum, regarding to what extent improvisation may be an aspect of a performance (Cook 2004). Even in performances from a detailed score, players add significant musical characteristics and details that are not in the notation. These characteristics can vary in different performances by the same player and there is bound to be more variance between the interpretations of different players. Cook suggests that concerning the element of improvisation in a performance, it is more a matter of *degree* or *extent* rather than either/or. He discounts a duality in favour of a more nuanced, flexible concept with improvisation representing a range of creative input from the performer, from very minimally improvised to largely improvised. I would also argue that there is wide range of divergent cognitive aspects involved in what is termed improvisation. This is reflected in how genres from diverse cultures and traditions require differentiated skill-sets and knowledge-bases. This issue, of a spectrum of improvisatory approaches and their attendant cognitive capabilities has been a central to the musical thinking in this research and is evident in the range of different conceptual approaches, skills and cognitive functions which have been identifiable through developing the creative works in this thesis.

The term ‘improvisation’ is derived from the Latin *-im-prō-vidēre*, meaning not previously envisaged or foreseen, hence the implication that improvisation refers to something undertaken with no previous thought, planning or foresight. This is still a common

misconception of some Western classical musicians regarding jazz. Improvised music in several different cultures and genres often involves *extensive* study, forethought and practice before any performance takes place. The use of the term improvise could infer that there is no preparation or substantive structured thought, instead, a reliance on chance, compulsion, impulse and instinct. Hence, improvised music may be categorised as a lower order of activity, primitive and physical in origin, by contrast with ordered – visibly structured abstract thought – cerebral in nature, as with notated composition. This resonates with Johnson's concept of occularcentrism, where greater validation is given to intellectual activity prioritising the sense of sight over other senses such as hearing or touch. In Western intellectual circles, a musical text on paper is privileged over a musical performance. (Johnson 2002). Such a perception, about how improvisation may be viewed pejoratively by the musical establishment, could be dismissed as being the paranoia of improvising musicians. However, to put things in perspective this is what the 20th century classical composer Luciano Berio had to say about improvisation:

A haven of dilettantes... who normally act on the level of instrumental praxis rather than musical thought.... By musical thought I mean above all the discovery of a coherent discourse that unfolds and develops simultaneously on different levels.
(Berio: 1985, 85)

Berio did not adhere to musical conventions or norms in his work and in fact transgressed many conventions of Western Classical Music. However, this statement demonstrates a remarkably narrow stance regarding improvisation.

In the scholarly context, this bias can be being exacerbated, since structured thought is more easily observed and analysed through a definitive tangible document, a *text* that can be read – such as a composer's score – than where music is a transient event, like a live improvised performance. Nonetheless the latter context requires sophisticated aural skills

for a commentator to understand the music adequately and in sufficient detail. In this context, accurately identifying what is being played in real-time – commonplace for highly skilled jazz improvisers – could be considered analogous to reading.

Improvisation has become highly mythologised in contemporary discourses. This may be attributable to a fundamental mismatch between the nature of improvised music and established paradigms available to musicologists as ‘jazz studies’ became increasingly mainstream in academia. The main problem is that improvised music does not produce a text *on paper* that can be easily studied *on paper*. When improvised music is rendered into notation, significant problems frequently arise. Keith Jarrett offers some highly-informed insight, regarding notated transcriptions of improvisations, in his introduction to Yukiko Kishinami and Kunihiro Yamashita’s published transcription of the Köln Concert, which he has endorsed (Jarrett 1991). He initially outlines his reservations about improvisations being notated but explains that he oversaw the notation personally and in great detail. His caveats encapsulate concisely the limitations of notation:

[T]here are many places where notes are correct, but time is not, because on the recording I am playing *completely out of* metronomic time. There are also places where we had to choose between alternate *inaccuracies*. Also, we decided that notation would actually work *against* accuracy, since none of the notation methods of which we were aware were correct for much of the piece.... So – we are looking at, let us say, a picture of an improvisation (sort of like a print of a painting). You cannot see the depth in it, only the surface. (Jarrett 1991)

Arguably, jazz scholars are either oriented towards textually based, philological analysis, or draw on more recent developments in the academic study of music such as ‘New Musicology’. The latter has a strong evolutionary connection to Ethnomusicology, according to the argument given by Jonathan Stock (1997) in his article ‘New

Musicologies, Old Musicologies: Ethnomusicology and the Study of Western Music'. New Musicology, a very prevalent force in jazz musicology, arguably takes critical thought further from music as a performative phenomenon than did old-fashioned textual analysis. This is ironic because jazz, being largely a-textual, is pre-eminently a performative art-form.

As stated before, there is much musicology relating to the specific field of jazz and free jazz, which tends to dominate the game where scholarship about improvisation is concerned. There has been an exponential growth of Jazz education in universities in America and Europe since the 1980s – with an attendant need for jazz studies or jazz history to provide a scholarly component for jazz-related degree courses; this has facilitated further growth in jazz musicology. There is much less musicology, however, about improvisation in a wider generic scope. Moreover, improvisation itself is still a relatively new and under-developed field of study. Bruno Nettl and Melinda Russell's collection of essays *In the Course of Performance*, which was one of the first substantial publications in English on this subject, was only published as recently as 1998.

An analytical/theoretical approach to improvised music can yield insight, but this is only if the music conveniently fits the chosen analytical paradigm. An example could be Shenkerian analysis of Keith Jarrett or pitch-set technique of Steve Coleman. However, insight would be limited only to those aspects of the music directly matching the relevant analytical tools; other highly significant aspects could go un-noticed. An analytical – text-based – examination of improvised music could only give an incomplete picture; as Keith Jarrett points out, music notation can only represent a fraction of the musical meaning because of the limitations of trying to represent complex and nuanced sound-artefacts in black and white on paper.

An example of research that attempts to address the issue of the lack of notated text comes from Vincent Benitez (2007), who produced one of the few pieces of scholarly

research looking in depth at Messiaen's organ improvisation (as opposed to his compositions, which have been extensively scrutinised). The first section of the article draws on historical documentary sources. It reveals informative and detailed insights into the pedagogy behind Messiaen's improvisation studies with Dupré and Tournemire at the Paris Conservatoire, along with references to articles about composed organ music by Messiaen himself. Benitez makes a lengthy analysis of the text of some relevant scores of Messiaen's compositions. Towards the end he focusses on a DVD recording of Messiaen's improvisation on 'Puer Natus Est'. He does not refer to a notated text in this part of his analysis, instead, he refers to the time-line of the recording; there are no notated music examples. With the recording to hand it is possible to fully understand what he is saying.

Some scholarly analyses of jazz compositions and improvisations focus on notated texts/transcriptions and employ established analytical techniques developed for classical music. This, however, begs the question of whether such analytical tools, along with the context they relate to (i.e. classical music) are inappropriate for jazz, which is conceptually very different from classical music in numerous ways. However, there are, some complexities and contradictions, which I will now discuss.

Gunther Schuller published an analysis of the Sonny Rollins solo on *Blue Seven* (1956), examining how his use of thematic development resembled similar aspects of classical music (Schuller 1958). This analysis was subsequently the subject of much critique, perhaps most notably by the Harvard ethnomusicology professor Ingrid Monson, who centred on how Schuller's Eurocentricity did not acknowledge Rollins' African-American, non-European cultural identity (Monson 1996).

Perhaps there is an irony here, albeit a perverse one, since white-American academic Ethnomusicology in the late 1990's is itself a frame of reference far removed from the cultural realities and musical thinking of a black American jazz musician in the late 1950's.

By considering the musical craftsmanship and musical thinking in the Rollins solo and trying to cast light on performative aspects of the music, some elements of Schuller's observations are more relevant and enlightening – musically – than Monson's, even though they are Eurocentric in their terms of reference and considered out-of-date by current fashions in musicological thinking. I would argue that the differences and similarities between the underlying conceptual nature of musical thought in jazz and classical music is a subject worthier of discussion than the fore-grounding and fetishisation of cultural stereotypes. There are conceptual aspects of jazz rooted in the Western classical tradition, for example, functional harmony is central to both and operates in very much the same way in both. They have much that is different but also much in common. Benjamin Givan casts more musically-oriented light on Schuller's analysis (Givan 2014). He makes the case for Schuller having wrongly identified common and frequently-played features of Rollins's personal musical vocabulary – evident in many of his solos – as being motivic ideas specific to *Blue Seven*. Givan's critique is based on a better-informed knowledge of Rollins's improvisatory language than Schuller's. This highlights how focusing on the musical substance of improvised music can be more relevant than focusing on peripheral issues such as race. Would Monson have been able to level her criticism so neatly if Schuller's analysis was of a solo by Dave Holland, Vijay Iyer or Danilo Perez? Holland, Iyer and Perez, who are of white-British, Indian-Tamil and Panamanian descent respectively, have different cultural backgrounds from Rollins. However, they also have shared frames of cultural reference, since all three are significant jazz musicians immersed in the contemporary New York jazz scene. Keith Jarrett's comments, discussed later, come to mind here, as he argues for valuing (amongst other things) 'musical validity; not race' (Jarrett 2014).

This points to a disconnection between musical practice and musicological discourse, manifested in the frequent avoidance, in musicological literature about improvisation, of

the complexities and contradictions that it poses for critical thought. The preference is for the safer ground of what George Lewis terms ‘theoretical, meta-theoretical, critical, and historical engagements with improvisation’ in his introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies*. He dismisses practice-based research about improvisation and goes on to suggest that non-practice-related approaches are more convenient in the academic environment for reasons unconnected with how musical improvisation is best illuminated in critical thinking. The main concerns are, instead, the economics and politics of academia: “Although these kinds of writing on improvisation have produced important texts for the field, we took the view that critical and theoretical approaches would best enable cross-disciplinary conversation” (Lewis 2016). Indeed, contemporary academic writing about improvisation often focuses on its interface with society; how it can serve to be a subversive element, to bring about the breaking down of an old order by freeing the musician from the constraints of musical convention. In a wider context, it is potentially an agent in the disruption of the status quo of society at large. Since social and political issues lend themselves to verbal discussion more easily than musical substance – especially in a transient, intangible *audible* form – this can encourage concentration on these aspects of improvised music. Although this does not, by any means, represent the totality of commentary, there is a very strong bias in this direction, especially noticeable in the musicological teaching of tertiary music schools and in the research that is disseminated at academic conferences.

This tendency – “swerving away from the performative” (Cook 2004) – is well illustrated by David Borgo (2008), who seems to dismiss the value of the music in the sense of it being listened to, along with its value as performative art:

To define free improvisation in strictly musical terms, however, is potentially to miss its most remarkable characteristic – the ability to incorporate and negotiate disparate perspectives and worldviews.

Free jazz as it emerged in mid-twentieth century America is often framed in terms of racial politics and the conflict between black Americans and white society. The cultural milieu of free jazz in Europe is rooted in anti-establishmentarianism and left-wing politics and this aspect is frequently the focus in articles, books and conference papers about it. From my perspective as a white European musician, *de facto*, not involved in American racial politics nor connected with European radical activism but instead, pre-occupied mainly with music as an artistic form of expression, this is potentially disenfranchising. Although these considerations are of course important – bringing deeper awareness about our society and its politics – somehow the music itself and the whole issue of understanding and de-constructing the process/rationale of how it was created can become a secondary factor and effectively be marginalised.

An example of preoccupation with social, racial, philosophical and political issues comes from the same article, cited earlier, by David Borgo. In 'Negotiating Freedom: Values and Practices in Contemporary Improvised Music' (2008), he references from the outset the aspect of freedom in jazz that relates to a reaction against the constraints of convention and society rather than to the musical substance itself:

Freedom, in the sense of transcending previous social and structural constraints, has been an important part of jazz music since its inception ... The music has also provided a symbol and a culture of liberation to several generations of musicians and listeners, both at home and abroad.

He goes on to discuss the notion of what is effectively another binary distinction, or duality, alluding to George Lewis's two neologisms: 'Afrological' and 'Eurological' (Lewis 1996). An 'Afrological' approach to music is concerned with defining the sense of personal narrative in relation to the artist's social environment – along with the implication that this may connect with gaining freedom from racial-political oppression by white American society. A 'Eurological' approach pursues freedom from idiomatic or conventional constraints; the

notion of 'protest' is negated and the artist seeks to be free from the music itself or any sense of personal narrative or stylistic convention. The music exists as an aesthetically autonomous entity over which the composer cedes control or the ability to structure the narrative. Charlie Parker and John Cage are used by Lewis as examples of Afrological and Eurological respectively, somehow avoiding the point that both represented different kinds of challenges to their respective cultural milieu, arguably better explained with reference to the substance and nature of their music than by trying to frame them through an extra-musical concept concerned with social, philosophical and political issues. Parker's innovative music pursued the development of new and exquisitely articulated, complex musical ideas, which expanded the scope of the improvised jazz language of his time. A focus on his *music* suggests he wanted to play increasingly elaborate bop-jazz solos, rather than to make a political point about race. Racial politics inevitably impacted on his life experience and he could not have been unaware of this – but what is, perhaps, more important about Parker is the nature of his music making. Cage's pre-occupation with philosophy was an integral part of his aesthetic process, but again, more light can be better cast on his thinking by focusing on the substance and conception of his music. The overwhelming pre-occupation here is with the notion of freedom itself – which, whilst interesting, seems to supersede concerns about the nature of the music.

This emphasis on emancipation and cultural politics etc. has the potential to exert a distorting influence on understanding the work of contemporary improvisers as their practices are analysed by academic discourse. In my experience, the pervasive message that musical iconoclasm is privileged and represents a *sine qua non* for free improvisation to be taken seriously, is a strong force that I have consciously needed to resist to maintain musical integrity in my creative practice. Discussions about free improvisation tend to *avoid* the notion of how some musicians purposefully embrace elements of style and convention – re-contextualising or modifying, rather than simply discarding or avoiding

them. For many, including myself, codification is a valuable asset, not a liability. However, as with most things concerning improvisation, clear ideas are elusive. This is possibly another example of how the notion of a spectrum or continuum, as per Cook's assessment of improvisation, could be constructive. In this case, it concerns to what extent codification and convention may hold sway in an improvisation. Whilst codified musical language or a sense of style could potentially inhibit original utterances, they can also enable them by providing a context for coherent musical utterances that resonate with listeners, since existing or familiar musical ideas may already have a meaning for them. Codification or style can be a means to connect and communicate with listeners. The art, as with the written word, is in using ideas that already have certain types of meaning, and which may already be choate – and being able to re-contextualise them to make new and personal utterances. In this sense, the analogy of a composer being akin to a writer and an improviser being akin to someone speaking to a subject 'on the fly' says a great deal; moreover, the latter is usually done better if plenty of thought and attention has been given to the former.

As a qualifying note: emphasis on jazz could, to some extent, be misleading in respect of the music in this thesis. I would most likely be described as a jazz musician. Although this would broadly be true, other musics, most particularly Western classical music and Afro-Cuban music, have informed a major part of my development as a musician. Hence the emphasis I place on the ways in which my music brings together varied musical languages and influences. It would be easy to focus on jazz as a default since so much thought expressed in discourses about improvisation is found in books and articles about jazz and free jazz, along with ethnomusicological studies.

In the introduction to the collection of essays, *In the Course of Performance*, edited by Bruno Nettl and Melinda Russell (Nettl and Russell 1998), Nettl points out that scholarship about musical improvisation is a relatively new field. Where improvisation in the Western

classical tradition is concerned there is even less. He cites Ernst Ferand (1887-1972) as a pioneer in this field, who probably published the first key text on improvisation, *Die Improvisation in der Musik* (1938), largely concerned with improvisation in the classical tradition. More recently, new research about improvisation in classical music has been carried out by David Dolan and John Sloboda. David Dolan includes a strong performative element in his work; he plays improvised music. The pianist and scholar Robert Levin has developed the capacity to improvise very effectively in the style associated with the 'Classical Era', most particularly in the style of Mozart. This goes along with an extensive understanding of Mozart's musical practices, gleaned from documentary evidence and a deep immersion in Mozart's music, of which he demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge. By doing so he has placed the performative at the centre of the discourse. It is also notable that he can deliver a perfectly-structured 90-minute lecture without recourse to any notes or written text. In effect, this represents a verbal version of the process of coherent improvisation.¹²

In his influential article 'A New Look at Improvisation' (Sarath. E. 1996), Ed Sarath analyses and theorises the cognitive and interactive processes at work in improvisation in detail, within a complex framework of his own devising. He challenges what he calls 'the common notion that improvisation is an instantaneous or accelerated version of the composition process'. (Sarath. E. 1996. p.1) Valuable insights come from his thinking, though a criticism might be that his approach tends to valorise cognitive and social/interactive processes, along with an almost utopian concept of consciousness and

¹² See: 'The improvisatory approach to classical music performance: an empirical investigation into its characteristics and impact', David Dolan, John Sloboda, Henrik Jeldtoft Jensen, Björn Crüts and Eugene Feygelson, online journal *Music Performance Research*, Vol. 6, Nov/Dec 2013. Also see this video of a presentation by Levin: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkFdAigjmLA>

creativity in a philosophical, spiritual or socio-political sense. This is not to discount these issues as being irrelevant. The interactions between players in any collaborative performance – improvised or not – are significant actants influencing how the music unfolds. Interactions between performers and audience are also actants that can play a greater or lesser role too. However, focusing more on these aspects of improvisation and less on critical understanding of musical content and the attendant creative processes risks ignoring the most significant aspects of the music itself. Analysis and discussion of the socio/interactive aspects of improvised music are interesting, often complex and thought-provoking, however, such discourses do not tell us much about what or how the music may be.

The performative process itself and the performative life of music – i.e. using improvisation to *create music* that has substance and meaning, as exemplified by Robert Levin or Keith Jarrett, is perhaps a more fruitful way to develop knowledge, insight and understanding about the rather mysterious and elusive nature of creativity and improvisation than abstract theorising. Moreover, abstract extrinsic theorisations can often only relate to the periphery whereas an intrinsic, performative/creative orientation forces the focus onto to the central matter of the music itself. This draws the argument back to the issue of explicit versus tacit knowledge, discussed in the introduction. The process of actively creating music and by doing so, exploring different aspects of improvisation, creates a frame by which more relevant knowledge and understanding can be developed. It requires involvement with the ‘nitty-gritty’ of the subject. This is encapsulated by anthropologist Tim Ingold. His comments regarding concerning the relatively new concept of materiality illustrate this point:

Might we not learn more about the material composition of the inhabited world by engaging quite directly with the stuff we want to understand: by sawing logs, building a wall, knapping a stone or rowing a boat? Could not such engagement –

working practically *with* materials – offer a more powerful procedure of discovery than an approach bent on the abstract analysis *of* things already made? What academic perversion leads us to speak not of *materials and their properties* but of *the materiality of objects*? (Ingold 2007).

Sarath does not give much attention to the content of improvised music or its significance to listeners (Sarath 1996). He focuses on different types of temporality – initially making the distinction between how composers exploit a “multi-layered temporality” as distinct from improvisers constrained by the “localised present”. The composer enters:

the time-scape of a work and yet may also step back to isolate, reflect upon and possibly revise any given moment, all towards fashioning a structure for performance at a time other than that at which it is created (Sarath 1996).

He goes on to make a distinction between improvisation and extemporaneous composition, which he characterises as: “the creation of a composition in a single real-time attempt.” Sarath characterises extemporaneous composition as being something different – or *other* – than improvisation. This recalls Berliner’s observation, mentioned earlier, about improvisation being defined in terms of what it is not. With improvisation, as Sarath sees it, the intention should be to follow the course of events from moment to moment, allowing the music to unfold without any pre-conception and with no medium or long-term plan in mind. I have chosen to adopt two terms – extemporaneous composition and stream of consciousness – to distinguish broadly between these two different aspects of improvisation, rather than to view one as being improvisation and the other as *not*. This challenges Sarath’s suggestion that extemporaneous composition is *not* improvisation. Following Cook, I would argue further that both these aspects of improvisation represent parts of a more nuanced spectrum or continuum, since either can play a greater or lesser role in improvising at different times. These observations reflect my experience whilst

improvising in a variety of musical contexts and these issues are discussed in depth in the critical commentary on my creative work.

Sarath characterises extemporaneous composition as being driven by a 'retensive-protensive temporality' (Sarath 1996). Specifically, he alludes to an improviser making musical decisions/choices about the present moment in the music, whilst taking into account events from earlier in the time-line of the music or intended to occur later. This may be a composer using improvisation to try out new ideas to be integrated into the crafted narrative of a work in progress, or an improviser attempting to work a narrative, 'on the fly', but with a level of cohesiveness and formal design akin to that of a pre-composed piece. His use of these terms is not connected with their use in the context of Embodiment Theory.

However, Sarath seems to contradict his initial refutation of 'the common notion that improvisation is an instantaneous or accelerated version of the composition process' Sarath (1996). Whilst having stated this position, he has also acknowledged that it is possible to shape a coherent piece of music in real-time, with a teleological sense akin to composed music, during a single extemporised performance. Nonetheless he arbitrarily denies that this constitutes improvisation. In some ways, this may resonate with the earlier discussion regarding emancipation, iconoclasm and codification. I would argue that for many musicians – myself included – composition and improvisation are intrinsically linked as processes. Further, extemporaneous composition is just one amongst several paradigms for how musicians can approach improvisation. Neither is more valid than any other, such as improvising a fugue as Briggs would, playing in response to 'flash-cards' as per John Zorn, or responding to conduction, à la Butch Morris (De Schyff 2013).

Sarath elevates one aspect of improvisatory performance, where the emphasis is on the social/interactive/spiritual, to a more valued status than extemporaneous composition. He offers no rationale for this value judgment. One could speculate that Sarath's prejudice

could be driven by his interest in spirituality, collective consciousness and meditation. He was, after all, instrumental in bringing about the degree course in Jazz and Contemplative Studies at the University of Michigan and his recent book – *Improvisation, Creativity, and Consciousness; Jazz as an Integral Template for Music, Education, and Society* (Sarath 2014) – articulates his ideas about these issues in great depth.

Redefining how improvisation is understood could encompass a more inclusive and diverse set of variants, regarding how any kind of music can be performed. As Cook suggests, anything that a performer brings to music not manifest in notation from a composer may belong in the realms of improvisation. A reductionist, dichotomous concept of either/or tends to sideline many complex and nuanced skills, practices and cognitive processes for creating or re-creating disparate kinds of music. Some, though by no means all, of the aspects of musicianship on a spectrum of improvised-ness, involving divergent cognitive approaches, could include:

- Playing a carefully prepared classical composition learned faithfully from a detailed score, employing rubato and other extra-textual elements relating to the style of the music (e.g. a Rachmaninoff piece)
- Playing a carefully prepared composition learned from score which allows/requires leeway for the performer to add or embellish the music (e.g. a Mozart piano piece)
- Playing a cadenza in a classical concerto, ranging from fully pre-composed music requiring an improvised 'feel' to various amounts of improvised input (e.g. the opening of Beethoven's '*Emperor*' Concerto or improvising a cadenza in a Mozart concerto)
- Sight-reading from a score, (where decisions about timing and rubato etc. must be spontaneous)

- Sight-reading from a score and re-arranging or editing it 'on the fly' (a common skill for accompanists/repetiteurs, often referred to as 'busking'.)
- Realising continuo from figures, as in Baroque music.
- Playing aleatoric music (e.g. Lutoslawski).
- Realising Jazz chord-symbols which are being read from a chart to create an accompaniment or comping (in some ways analogous to continuo and sight-reading whilst involving a blend of reading and improvising)
- Improvising a Jazz solo over chord-symbols by reading from a chart (in some ways analogous to sight-reading but again involving a blend of reading and improvising).
- Realising a Jazz chord-sequence from memory to create an accompaniment.
- Improvising a Jazz solo over a chord-sequence from memory.
- Improvising within an Indian Raag.
- Improvising a Jazz solo with no predetermined harmonic structure (time-no-changes or harmolodic improvisation).
- Improvising freely from a graphic score or from 'conduction'.
- Spontaneous or extemporised composition.
- Free improvisation

A taxonomy wider than the single term improvisation could be useful. As the very incomplete list above demonstrates, it would be extensive if it were fully comprehensive. Terminology becomes adopted through commonly-employed practices requiring convenient labels. Terms for some improvisatory practices could be applied to many kinds of music and some only to specific areas. Absolute clarity would be difficult since different aspects of improvisation are often in play at different times and are even blended during musical performances.

An example of such blurring of boundaries is *comping* and *soloing* in jazz. This is a key practice for jazz musicians providing an accompaniment for a soloist. *Soloing* refers to improvising melodic lines. In common with comping, this is usually based on a pre-defined harmonic structure. Interpolating melodic fragments in suitable spaces to frame a melody, as a jazz pianist or guitarist might when accompanying a singer or soloist, makes the distinction between comping and soloing less distinct. These interpolations are sometimes referred to colloquially by jazz musicians as ‘noodles’ or ‘noodling’. Comping is a creative process distinct from soloing, even where the same harmonic form is the basis of both. When comping, the focus is on harmony and rhythm. The aim is to create a musical frame to generate a sonic environment that enables and enhances the *melodic* improvisations of a soloist. Although both comping and soloing are usually related to a chord-sequence in jazz, they are quite different from one-another. Jazz-players who need to comp have to develop a vocabulary and skill-set that is additional to and distinct from that required to solo over the changes.

Some terminology, that distinguishes between practices involving improvisation in classical music, is widely accepted in academic circles. Terminology relating to different aspects of jazz improvisation tends to be used more colloquially amongst jazz musicians and teachers but often needs to be explained or qualified in the context of formal discourses. Division is an ancient term describing the Renaissance practice of improvising lines over a ground bass, which become progressively more elaborate as smaller sub-divisions of rhythmic values are developed. This is analogous to Jazz soloing since there is a pre-determined, re-iterating harmonic form which is the basis for improvising melodic lines. As with Renaissance division, jazz lines can become more elaborate by exploiting smaller rhythmic sub-divisions or ‘double-timing’. Jazz comping is in some ways analogous to

continuo performance – harmonic matter is improvised in response to notation which gives skeletal information about the harmonic form.¹³

Cadenza is a tradition with a rich history. Its origin in classical music refers to the practice of inserting improvisation at significant cadence points in a concerto (and other kinds of pieces). The range of practices here is quite diverse. Classical concertos such as those by Mozart had points in the composition which indicated that a cadenza was required.

Sometimes performers inserted cadenzas even if there was no indication from the composer. The practice of Mozart and other composer/performers was to improvise cadenzas. The limitations that some highly competent performers had, vis-à-vis improvisation, led to composers writing notated cadenzas for them (Levin 2012).

Cadenzas feature in jazz too, as exemplified in the endings of some of John Coltrane's renditions of ballads.

Paraphrasing is another widely employed practice in jazz. The term indicates that a melody is being subjected to elaboration and ornamentation by a soloist during the head of a jazz performance of a jazz composition or a song. Paraphrasing requires the ability to apply elements of musical style often associated with soloing over chord-changes but within the melodic confines of a pre-determined theme. To be able to paraphrase convincingly is distinct from being able to play lines over a harmonic form. Miles Davis's renditions of themes such as *My Funny Valentine* and *Round Midnight* exemplify this kind of paraphrasing in a highly developed way, in certain respects constituting a form of re-composition. This could be another aspect of the improvisation/composition continuum.

¹³ There are some elements from baroque figured-bass notation that have been retained as jazz chord-symbols evolved, such as the use of + and -, as well as the use of small numbers to specify chord tones that are to be chromatically altered.

As far as the music in this portfolio is concerned, defining some specific taxonomy for identifying key approaches to improvisation is helpful:

Extemporaneous composition, as defined by Ed Sarath (1996) and which was previously discussed, is apposite to my creative practice because its reference to composition signifies important things distinguishing it from other approaches. It involves improvisation with the intention to create a piece with a controlled musical argument, as in a classical composition. In some pieces in this thesis, the placing together and ordering of musical ideas plays a vital role in generating a musical narrative, which makes including the word composition relevant, since the derivation of the word from Latin means 'putting together'.

Stream of consciousness: I have adopted this literary term to describe improvisation in which one allows the music to unfold from moment-to-moment in response to the contingent effects of the present. There are no intentions regarding teleological narrative nor any desire to develop a musical argument, as per classical music. In other words, you just 'play' and allow the music to develop out of itself. This approach is frequently at work in free jazz and free improvisation performances and can relate to solo improvisation or ensemble improvisation. The use of a term associated with literature is not intended to suggest any connection with literary theory.

Improvisation over an ostinato or static groove is another approach. *Seven* exemplifies this. In this context, the teleological sense of musical narrative is not particularly relevant. At a conceptual level, a groove is a continuous flow with no concept of 'beginning, middle and end'. There is though, a sense in which short groove-patterns can have a sense of form, in as much as the short pattern itself may have a 'beginning-middle-end'. There is discernible process of tension-release, as for example, in Cuban patterns based on the clave, which have points of rhythmic dissonance which are resolved at cadence points. Continuous repetitions can serve to heighten the perception of the pattern. They can also

tend to undermine the sense of where the beginning and end may be. The idea of a groove-pattern having a 'beat one' (downbeat) is a Western concept which may be born out of the linear type of thinking favoured by Western music notation. This is discussed later in the commentary on the creative works. This musical paradigm is one that can be particularly associated with the music of West Africa and with forms of music that have evolved from those traditions, such as Funk. The track *Seven* epitomises the characteristics described above. The groove pattern has a short sense of internal structure which is repeated many times and the music projected over it is athematic, consisting of linear jazz-soloing. There is no overarching form or structure evident in this track though, other than the groove starting first and the solo beginning once it is established.

Multi-track recording offers interesting opportunities and new techniques in which different kinds of improvisatory approaches can be blended. Bill Evans was an early exploiter, in his three albums *Conversations with Myself* (1963), *Further Conversations with Myself* (1967) and *New Conversations* (1978). His approach was to record up to three layers of his playing, building more complex textures than afforded by playing solo piano. He used standard jazz forms as a reference-point for improvising with himself. The track *Chorale* is the only multi-tracked piece in this portfolio. By contrast with the Bill Evans recordings, both parts were improvised freely, without pre-meditation or employing pre-determined harmonic forms. In *Conversations with Myself etc.*, Bill Evans used pre-established chord-changes, along with structured arrangements of the jazz standards he was playing as a basis from which to make choices in his improvisations. Albeit in a novel context for his time, he is playing jazz within a well-codified context. In *Chorale* there was no pre-prepared music or arrangement.

Since the last quarter of the 20th Century, boundaries between different types of music have been eroding. This reflects an increasing pluralism in our society as a whole. The musical establishment and academia are trying to become more inclusive of musical

concepts and practices outside of the conventions and protocols of a canonised version of Western classical music. Some classical composers, such as Mark Anthony Turnage, have embraced the open territory of opening up the boundaries between classical music and jazz. Classical musicians and scholars, such as Levin and Montero have begun to re-visit and revive improvisation as a once-important aspect of classical music practice, that had become lost. At the same time, there is increasing cross-fertilisation between diverse kinds of world music and popular music, most of which are improvisation-centric. And, of course there is jazz, which has defined a significant domain of its own in contemporary culture. Cook's ideas suggest that improvisation as a term, is too generalised and that a wider understanding of it is needed; that it is a multi-faceted phenomenon that is intrinsic to all kinds of musical performance, At the centre of the disconnect with improvisation, within the thinking about performance in the Western classical tradition, is a preoccupation with notation and text. This is the subject of the next chapter.

3. Aurality and textuality in the context of improvised music and other musics.

The significance of improvisation is becoming increasingly acknowledged in contemporary academic culture. This draws attention to an ‘elephant in the room’ – the dichotomy between aurality and textuality. The music in this portfolio of creative works involved using a wide palette of approaches to musicianship. This has highlighted how both textual and aural capabilities played a formative role in the creative/performative process. The overarching process of improvisation here constitutes a synthesis of aurally and textually-based creative functionalities. The extent to which either of these was predominant depended on the context of the music in question. Many times, there was a blend of processes being employed. To illustrate this, the *Southern Shift* pieces are all free improvisations, so no notation was involved. However, many elements of musical language in these improvisations were originally assimilated from notated scores, along with those from aural sources. *Black Moon* involved detailed staff notation becoming the basis for different improvisatory techniques and whilst the Rachmaninoff pieces are fully notated in detail, aural mimesis played a part in informing the performance.

At a visceral level, any musician’s musical thinking will inevitably reflect culturally-specific learning and habitual practice. In turn, this will define how they articulate musical concepts in performance. I would argue that musicians from the *textually-based*, Western classical tradition benefit greatly if they have embraced aurality and furthermore, learned how to improvise. This observation reflects my own personal experience as a white-European, trained initially as a classical pianist/composer who subsequently assimilated practices from jazz, Afro-Cuban music and improvisation in a wider sense. For example, being comfortable with ‘playing what comes into your head’ as per Mozart (Levin 2012), offers deeper dimensions to the process of interpretive performance. It can enable more flexible

or responsive interactions with the music as it is being played in the moment, rather than thinking solely through the frame of having previously learned and prepared every detail through repetition from a score. If improvisation is a central aspect of a musician's creative functionalities it could influence how they might perform *any* music, including interpreting notated compositions. This resonates with Cook's ideas about improvisation and interpretation being interconnected aspects of a continuum, as discussed previously.

This raises the question of whether classical musicians can benefit from actively assimilating methodological approaches from an *aural* tradition, such as jazz? Arguably, a rigid focus on textual concepts, whilst neglecting aural capabilities, leaves crucial musical capabilities under-developed, as for example, being able to understand, *in detail*, what is being heard, without relying on notation. The inverse also applies. However, it is already common for most jazz musicians to have experienced the textual disciplines of classical music during their music education. Where a musician has been immersed in text-based traditions, such as classical music, along with a similar immersion in an aural tradition such as jazz, the intrinsic nature of musical ideas and methodologies can constitute a synthesis of both textuality and aurality. This characterises my own development as a musician and this synthesis is represented in the creative work in this thesis.

The use, by some musicologists writing about jazz and other forms of world music, of the word 'oral' instead of 'aural' is possibly related to how oral history is greatly valued in anthropology. Ethnomusicology is a close relative of anthropology and the musicology of jazz often intersects with ethnomusicology. Labelling an important aspect of the learning processes in jazz musicianship in a way that is verbally-biased, towards social and interactive factors, i.e. *talking* about music as opposed to listening to it, is another subtle example of Cook's notion of 'swerving away from the performative' (Cook 2004).

In the context of *aural* tradition, knowledge is handed over by means of music being performed by the mentor/teacher. It is demonstrated, not described verbally. In turn, the student/mentee plays what they have learned. This is a fundamentally performative process. This often characterises classical lessons and has further implications regarding how aurality and textuality intersect, as will be discussed later in this chapter. It also relates to the earlier discussions of tacit knowledge, i.e. with effective transfer requiring sustained close interaction between the knowing subject and the recipient. I would argue that a stylistically-appropriate grasp of the nuances involved in interpreting a classical piece are more effectively gained through aural rather than textual means, such as studying a phenomenological analysis of existing performances. From my personal perspective as a performing, creative musician and teacher, heavily involved in jazz performance, the aural aspect of learning is more relevant than the oral. When we learn music as jazz musicians, we use our capacity to hear more than our capacity to talk or to see. Learning music from recordings has always figured significantly in the practices of jazz musicians; we use our ears to learn from records, not our mouths!

In more recent times, areas of music such as jazz, popular music, folk music and world music have gained more prominence in academia. There are currently fierce debates about the nature of music curricula in tertiary education. At the time of writing, for example, Harvard University is proposing, controversially, to supplant traditionally required core areas of study, such as music theory and Western music history, to create room for more diverse choices, allowing the study of other areas such as those mentioned above. This is without reference to Western notation and without the Western classical tradition being an initial point of reference.¹⁴ Aside from ramifications for the preservation of the knowledge

¹⁴These links offer a cross-section of some of the arguments about this: Phys.org blog:

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/phys.org/news/2017-05-insidious-class-music.amp>

and skills essential to the classical tradition, some issues concerning cultural hegemony are pointed to. In the context of studying music there is often the pre-supposition that textually-based, ocularcentric musical thought is pre-eminent and the non-textual is inferior. Non-Western musical traditions are often atextual and the distinction can serve to reinforce the othering of those forms of music by Western thinkers. In his article 'Jazz as cultural practice', Bruce Johnson (2002) sums it up thus:

Key notions in the dominant cultural discourse have served to privilege particular artistic myths – the shaping genius (the composer) handing down the sacrosanct and autonomous work of art, a model of transcendence and permanence. One outcome of this ideology is the sacralisation of the scored composition – the Opus – as the centre of music production.

Even in studies centred on the non-notated (non-Western classical) music, there is a bias at play in favour of a kind of logocentrism. The pursuit of thought embodied in words – specifically written words – is the main objective rather than the creation of new music or new musical concepts or methodologies.

There is an irony here, vis-a-vis the term logocentrism itself and Jacques Derrida's highly influential deconstruction of language and logocentrism, in his book *De la Grammatologie* (1967). He challenged the philosopher Ferdinand de Saussure – whose ideas Derrida saw as encapsulating logocentrism and in doing so sought to undermine the notion of

Harvard Crimson (the daily student newspaper for Harvard University):

<http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2017/3/22/music-concentration-changes/>

This is Harvard Music School's website which announces and explains the reforms in a news item:

<http://music.fas.harvard.edu/news.shtml>

written words as being primarily an embodiment of spoken language – *of the phonetic or oral/aural* in other words. Derrida suggested that written language is a medium for more multi-dimensional thought processes, abstracted from the physical, linear limitations of speech and sound. Regarding the relationship between music and notation an analogy here would be problematic. This encapsulates an important issue, that of how musical notation is intrinsically connected with aurality.

Musical scores are intended primarily as a means by which performers can realise another musician's intentions. In certain respects, they are detailed sets of instructions. Verbal text is usually intended to be read silently; though it *can* have a performative function, such as the script of a play. Nonetheless, it is this cerebral, *abstract* aspect of verbal text that makes it distinct from music notation. The notated musical text is, *a priori*, an artefact defined in terms what is *heard* or intended to be heard. There are some senses in which a musical score can be a visual artefact, additionally to conveying meaning that is aural in intention. For example, part of the score of Peter Maxwell-Davies *Eight Songs for a Mad King* is manifested as a picture a bird-cage, of which the outer structure of bars also comprises the musical staves of the score. The music can be played from the score for performance purposes whilst at the same time the score is a visual symbol relating to the text in question, dealing with confinement and imprisonment.

Where notated music is concerned, the link between textuality and aurality is at the centre of things, by contrast with Derrida's take on written language. However, the limitations of the written word in respect of its ability to convey how spoken words sound cannot go unacknowledged. Subtle, multi-dimensional aspects of speech, such as intonation and inflection, combined with other non-verbal elements such as body language and facial gesture, carry a large proportion of the meaning in human speech – in fact sometimes the largest proportion. The same is true in classical music too, regarding notated scores. It is a performer's ability to bring aspects of meaning to a 'work', that cannot be explicit in a

written text, that are most valued. In other words, *interpretation* is required on the part of the performer. The extra-textual aspects of an interpretive performance (as in classical music) inevitably involve characteristics that must be acquired aurally, for example by listening to exemplary performances and through sustained interaction with an expert teacher. This recalls the improvisation/interpretation continuum. I would argue there is connection between that continuum and the interrelation between aural and textuality. For example, the experience of playing music from a score that has been only partly memorised, reveals the deployment a variable blend of aural and visual cognitive faculties. This suggests that where performing music is concerned, there could be a continuum, regarding aural and textuality, of to what extent either is at work in a performance. This certainly resonates with my experience of how these aspects function and interact, when using different aspects of improvisation, performance and composition in the creative works of this thesis.

What constitutes a musical text is open to question and to a more comprehensive definition. A narrow concept, rooted in musicology and philology, and which still has great currency in academia, would place the written artefact of a dissertation, or a score that embodied a musical 'work', at the centre of things. Music is validated by its documented form, along with critical verbal text 'on paper', rather than by its performative life. A more inclusive concept would be more relevant to the realities of musical culture in contemporary society, with the concept of text being able to encompass recordings, films, live performances and other sonic artefacts.

A cynic might suggest that the move against traditionally held academic values, as in the case of the Harvard curriculum, is selective. It is music notation that is getting it in the neck, not the element of 'verbal' text. The latter is central to the culture of academia and the suggestion is not that essays and dissertations be replaced with spoken presentations. If anything, the latter is disappearing from university curricula, a complex phenomenon in

itself and one possibly driven by economic considerations. Presenting and assessing live, verbal presentations in real-time is time-consuming and expensive. Both these are unpopular factors when organisations such as universities need to cut costs and maximise financial profits in the Neo-Liberal world. The same cynic might also argue that it is primarily economic considerations motivating the expungement of music notation skills, to widen the available market for music degrees when the constituency of musically literate students is shrinking. A more constructive argument might be to allow the enormous potential that music notation has for developing intellectual musical skills to be exploited, *along with* those that can accrue from developing aural and improvisatory skills.

For example, the notion that the non-use of notation implies a lack of structured thought – or a complex level of thought – is at odds with reality. This is especially so if one considers the level of intellectual engagement needed to articulate musical ideas in diverse musical idioms, such as Indian music, Jazz, or the extemporisations of organists such as Olivier Messiaen or David Briggs. The notion of text is given an almost totemic status in a great deal of academic and Western classical music establishment thinking – arguably at the expense of the performative and of aurality – both of which are central to the inherent nature of any kind of music as a human form of behaviour.

The Iranian-born musicologist Laudan Nooshin cites a good example of improvisation being framed as inferior to notated music, referring to Iranian classical music. She argues that a kind of hierarchical dualism is at work, where music is viewed as either composed *rationally* or improvised *irrationally*. In her article “Improvisation as 'Other': Creativity, Knowledge and Power: The Case of Iranian Classical Music” (Nooshin 2003), she highlights how the Western approach to categorising performative musical art is rooted in concepts stemming from a colonialist cultural position. Nooshin deconstructs the term Western as denoting European and American, in opposition to elsewhere and thus othering cultures such as Oriental, Indian and African etc. This is dualistic, and she argues

that it has the underlying dynamic of an uneven power-relationship, originating in colonialism. Nooshin's contention, which echoes Bruce Johnson's observations about occularcentricity quoted earlier, is that the pre-eminent status quo places the Western classical tradition first, where a composer renders canonic works in notation to be executed by performers, (*a step lower in the hierarchy*) later to be analysed and explained by musicologists (*at the top of hierarchy*). This process is the superior norm, from which other practices differ and are hence implicitly inferior or 'other'. She cites the author J.B. Nicholls (1944) who articulates – rather extremely – such presumptive Western cultural attitudes:

Indian music is almost entirely a matter of improvisation. Art is not, never has been, and never can be, a matter of improvisation. ... Indian music has yet to suffer the pangs of birth, the pangs which are the inevitable accompaniment of all artistic creation. It must boldly proclaim itself on paper, in black and white.

The idea that music – or musical thought – is only validated by what is documented 'on paper' still predominates in Western classical music, along with its associated scholarship and culture. 'Just turning up and playing' is seen as being insubstantial and casual, more so if there is no hard-copy or source text available to validate the creative process.

However, it is misleading to make such a distinction between improvisation and composition as creative processes. At the very least, many composers use improvisation to develop musical ideas and pieces. Chopin's music and that of many other composers often began life in the form of improvised, unwritten music that was gradually memorised, coalesced and written down in a final form.¹⁵

¹⁵ "The other day I heard Chopin improvise at George Sand's house. It is marvelous to hear Chopin compose in this way: his inspiration is so immediate and complete that he plays without hesitation as if it

Nooshin makes the point that within the Iranian musical tradition (and others such as Indian music) no distinction is made between the creation of music performatively – in vivo – and composition. This regards any aspect of whether the music has been previously thought out or crafted prior to performance. Furthermore, she suggests that unfamiliarity with *unobserved* processes, prior to performance, along with cultural presumptiveness, resulted in Western commentators failing to understand or even be aware of structured intellectual processes that had previously taken place in order for the performer to be able to play the music. They assumed that because there was no text available the music was played spontaneously ‘out of the blue’. When viewed in this way many of the assumptions about improvised music are open to challenge. As Nooshin puts it:

Creativity in performance was simply accepted as part of a tradition in which no distinction was made between the roles of composer and performer. However, this creativity was understood to be firmly grounded in a lengthy and rigorous training involving the precise memorisation of a canonic repertory known since the late nineteenth century as *radif* (literally ‘series’) (Nooshin 2003).

Nicholas Cook – in a less politically loaded manner than Nooshin – attributes a pre-occupation with written musical text in academia as resulting from the emergence of musicology from nineteenth-century philology: “It is deeply embedded disciplinary factors and not a misplaced bookishness that accounts for musicologists’ swerving away from the performative” (Cook 2004). Recalling Jarrett’s views about notation’s limitations, which were more concerned with accuracy regarding rhythm/duration and metre, there is a considerable amount of subtler musical content and meaning in any musical performance, both improvised or interpretive, not present in musical scores and which cannot be notated

could not be otherwise. But when it comes to writing it down and recapturing the original thought in all its details, he spends days of nervous strain and almost terrible despair” (Eigeldinger 1986).

adequately. Nuances of phrasing, intonation, and timbre are three of the easiest elements to identify; there are many more. This raises the question of whether transcriptions of *any* improvised music into Western and other forms of notation can be used meaningfully as an analytical tool. Inevitably, the focus would be biased in favour of what is able to be represented easily by codified forms of symbology on paper, at the expense of other significant factors escaping adequate representation. Trevor Wishart (1985), for example, makes such an argument in terms of the relationship between electroacoustic music and notation. He argues that notation is a reductive and inadequate cultural technology when applied to sound as a multidimensional temporal medium for artistic activity.

An illustrative example of the limitations notation has, in conveying detailed understanding of more complex subtleties of nuance, comes from *Tales from the Diaspora*. In one passage of Seamus Blake's saxophone solo, it is not simply the choices of pitch and duration which carry musical meaning, but also the subtleties of intonation and timbre that create the expressive quality. The way he plays one note is worthy of analysis. A sustained F# at 2:16.42 is approached from below the centre of the pitch using a slow portamento from the preceding E \flat . This intensifies the note itself and as a result, emphasises the intensity of the change in harmony/modality from C minor to E minor. The subsequent long G at the end of the phrase also changes in tone colour very subtly throughout its duration. The salient point here, apart from casting light on subtleties of nuance in the expressivity of Seamus Blake's playing, is that it is only possible to describe this in words *reasonably* effectively. Reference must be made pointing towards *listening* to the relevant section in the recording with careful attention to fine *aural* detail. Without hearing the music, describing this concept verbally is insufficient. It could only be understood at a superficial level – even with the notes 'on paper' in a detailed score. Textuality, i.e. notated transcription, could not effectively convey what is needed. By contrast, aurality is able encompass dimensions that cannot be adequately be revealed

with mere recourse to textual sources. These concepts could not be understood adequately from a score, however convoluted the notation was.

The idea that reading a score can serve as a superior, sublimated, or abstracted substitute for hearing music is one that has been floated, as for example in the case that Bruce Johnson alludes to: “the eminent Sorbonne musicologist André Pirro”, who said “I never go to concerts any more. Why listen to music? To read it is enough” (Johnson, 2002). Many more such examples populate the history of Western art music (Eisenberg, 1988). In many respects this is a ridiculous notion that possibly speaks more to conceit and intellectual posturing than anything else. *Extremely* skilled score-readers can derive a quite good impression of how music sounds from reading notation. However, this cannot compare to the rich, complex and subtle experience of hearing a performance of that music by great musicians.

Arguably, aurality and aural tradition exert an under-unacknowledged formative influence on classical musicianship. It is common, for example, for serious classical students to seek out teachers with a direct experiential/interpersonal connection to a particular musical tradition. Some distinguished classical piano professors can trace their ‘ancestry’ to important figures such as Beethoven, Chopin or Liszt. For example, Heinrich Neuhaus’s pedagogical ancestry traces back to Tausig and Liszt in in two generations, via Heinrich Barth (Neuhaus 1994). This aspect of classical pedagogy often involves aural transmission of subtleties such as nuance or phrasing not conveyed in a score. It may also be possible be that there is a missing link in Western classical practice – especially where pianists are concerned – since improvisation was considered a key attribute for musicians within that tradition up until the 19th century. I would argue that the potential benefit for classical players of learning to improvise would involve being able to play with greater ease (naturally, as it were), in a manner that is visceral and flexible, as is the case with a good improviser.

Improvising and playing by ear are, however, different skills, even though they are strongly intertwined. Musicians can be adept at re-producing what they hear but at the same time, less adept at spontaneously inventing music of high quality. This is a dilemma facing many jazz students as they begin to acquire a codified vocabulary through transcription and mimesis. In time, however, they develop a better capacity to invent spontaneously if they are persistent enough. Habituation and time are key factors. At an earlier stage in this process, their improvisations will likely be more imitative than original or inventive. The same can be true of classical players, regarding interpretation. Assimilating the complex nuances and inflections involved in performing classical music, to bring more to the performance than a literal rendition of the score, involves aurality. It also involves aspects of *improvised-ness* to be able to play responsively and flexibly. The development over time of this latter aspect of interpretive performance resembles how good improvisers learn to re-contextualise what has been acquired through mimesis etc. to make new and original utterances. Even within a frame heavily dominated by tradition and convention, classical players also develop their own personal style/identity when they play.

Gabriella Montero has made improvisation a distinctive feature of her performance practice. She can improvise music of a very high artistic quality. However, in current times, being able to improvise is not a *sine qua non*, for a classical concert pianist to be taken seriously; if anything, it is a highly unusual attribute and has been so for quite some time. Most classical musicians, including pianists, usually can't or don't improvise. (It is tempting to add 'won't', since this may well be at the crux of much of this issue.) There are recordings of Vladimir Horowitz and György Cziffra improvising.¹⁶ Both of these players are considered exceptionally highly in their field, yet the coherence of their improvising is less impressive than Gabriela Montero's. Lacking the ability to improvise does not preclude

¹⁶ Horowitz improvising: <https://youtu.be/DbNnv-2WpVU>
Cziffra improvising <https://youtu.be/AxozHH1GrSs>

being a good interpretive performer but nonetheless the development of sophisticated improvisatory capabilities may enhance the ability to add dimensions to the music not apparent in the notated text.

Nicholas Cook and Sarath both argue that the performance of a composed text by a classical player has elements that are improvisatory; the distinction between this and the playing of a pianist improvising a piece spontaneously is merely a matter of degree. (Cook 2004)

Even interpretive performance of repertory.... might be considered as a species of improvisation. For even in works entirely composed, performers will have some degree of creative options through volume dynamics, inflection, tempo, frequency of vibrato and other expressive nuances. While interpretive performers do not change the pitches or rhythms delineated by the composer, they certainly do deconstruct personal interpretive patterns in seeking spontaneous renditions of pieces they have already played countless times. (Sarath 1996: 21)

In the portfolio of creative work, I have recorded (in video format) two piano pieces by the Russian classical composer/pianist Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) – the *Elegie op. 3 no. 1* and the *Etude Tableau in Eb minor op 39 no. 5*. These are included because I wanted to explore interpreting a notated classical score from the perspective of how improvisation and aurality function in a strictly pre-determined and textually-based context.

I chose these pieces because of specific factors relating to realising and interpreting them. Firstly, Rachmaninoff, considered as a performer, was one of the major figures in the history of the Western classical virtuoso pianistic tradition. His exceptional capabilities in the execution and interpretation of piano music from the classical repertoire make his recorded performances of his own music as close to being definitive sources as could

reasonably be argued. Secondly, the notated scores for his pieces are very rich in notational detail, regarding indications about pitch, duration, dynamics and phrasing, and so forth. Concerning the interpretation of his piano music, issues about the inter-relationship of textuality and aurality arise from the availability of his recordings. These recordings can be exploited as a supplement to the notated, published scores.

There is a tension between the notion of the primacy of notated text, as embodied in the German concept of *werktreu* and the aural tradition. *Werktru* totemises notated scores as embodying the definitive essence of a composer's musical thought. As discussed earlier, aural tradition is central to jazz and other improvised musical genres and may also be a significant element in the classical tradition. In his book 'The Art of Piano Playing', Heinrich Neuhaus, one of the pre-eminent figures in the 20th century Russian classical pianistic tradition, writes about encouraging his students to study Rachmaninoff's recordings of his Second Piano Concerto op. 18, to best assimilate an authentic sense of the composer's style. Neuhaus goes on to suggest that they could get a better understanding of how to play the music than would be the case from what he could teach them in his lessons (Neuhaus 1998). This recalls the practice amongst jazz musicians of using recordings as a primary source for acquiring knowledge of codified language but also to develop an authentic sense of performing style. Familiarity with Rachmaninoff's recordings and a detailed knowledge of his scores reveals that there is much in his performances not conveyed in the score. Sometimes even details of pitch and rhythm are subject to substantive change in performance. What is more prevalent though, are the characteristics such as nuance in rhythm, phrasing, rubato and sonority, which are quintessential to the nature of how he intended his music to sound. To any pianist wishing to develop a stylistically authentic interpretation of the music, the composer's recordings constitute a hugely significant resource.

Rachmaninoff recorded the *Elegie op. 3 no. 1* using the Ampico piano-roll system. He made several recordings this way between 1919 and 1929. The Ampico system was exceptionally suitable for capturing fine subtleties of nuance. Furthermore, a number of excellent contemporary audio recordings exist of these rolls using modern recording techniques, making them a superior representation of how Rachmaninoff actually sounded than the electric phonograph recordings from the 1930's and 1940's. Rachmaninoff did not record the *Etude Tableau in Eb minor*, so the interpretation had to be informed more by inference — from familiarity with his recordings of other pieces. In effect, familiarity with his playing style from listening intensely and *actively*, as would a jazz musician, could become the basis for elements of the interpretation not embodied in the score.

With the *Elegie*, I closely modelled the recorded performance. I practiced playing the piece along with the recording — often in short loops — in the same way I would practice an aurally-learned jazz solo. Such an approach is possibly anathema to much of the rationale and ethos of classical pedagogy. The end-product, captured in the video recording, is greatly informed by imitation of the composer's inflections. This includes elements such as rubato, the shaping of phrasing and the shaping of sonority. More spontaneous elements stemming from numerous other contingent elements, are very similar to those in play when improvising. Some aspects of how the music is played, such as slower tempos, stem from my not being able to execute some passages as fast as the composer due to my own relative technical limitations.

A composer's recordings can offer a means for developing an authentic performance practice which could probably be the envy of anyone pursuing authentic performance of 17th century music, where the only recourse is to written texts. These cannot adequately convey what the music *sounded* like. Along with the issue of how aurality and textuality can interact in interpreting notated music when a composer's interpretations are available, my concern is also how some aspects of performing notated music may belong in the

realm of the improvisatory. Familiarity with the recorded performances, along with a detailed knowledge of the score yields some interesting and valuable insights. Through reflection on my *internal* experience/perspective in these performances, I observed that when playing this composed music, cognitive aspects of the performative process are similar in function (i.e. they are *experienced* as similar) to performing an improvised piece (I will discuss this observation shortly).

This is possibly a frustrating scenario, in terms of wanting a cut-and-dried objectified observation and analysis of these processes from an abstracted, extrinsic academic perspective. However, this again recalls the issue of tacit and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is a quintessential aspect of understanding improvisation and performativity. The performative frame requires, *per se*, one to place oneself directly inside the process; in a sense to *become* the process, recalling Frayling's third model (Frayling 1993). This is the intrinsic nature of musical performativity. Arguably, such immersion is an optimal standpoint from which to fully understand it. In a way, an analogy is describing the taste of food in written words – the description cannot ever fully allow the reader to experience it in the same way as the writer who has been personally immersed in the experience.

A literal realisation of Rachmaninoff's scores, without the flexibility of rubato, subtle spreading of chords or the off-setting in time of melody against accompaniment etc., would diminish the effectiveness of the music. It would also be at odds with the musical intentions of the composer, as revealed in *his* playing. Rubato is an excellent example of how textual content becomes mediated by an aspect of playing very much within the frame of improvisation. From one performance to another there are necessarily going to be differences in the precise details of timing and phrasing. Too much pre-meditation of rubato would make for a very 'wooden' rendition – the element of spontaneity would be lost at great musical cost. How one has played a phrase, or even one note, will affect how the next phrase needs to unfold. This process recalls how the mitigating effects of

temporality are actants in an improvisation. When improvising, each musical event generates several potential events that may come next. In turn, this generates an ever-expanding network of potential further events. The same process is at work in the interpretive playing of a scored composition, as in these Rachmaninoff pieces. The contingent is inescapable.

One can strive, ideally, to be able to play learned compositions with the same spontaneity and freedom as when improvising fluently. The experience of playing Romantic piano music, such as these two Rachmaninoff pieces, which require freedom and plasticity to be effective, *feels* very similar to improvising in certain respects. As is the case in an improvisation, one is constantly listening to oneself and reacting to the contingent factors – in the present moment – to shape how the next segment of music unfolds. The internal, personal experience of performing this kind of music, is more deeply informative than if one relied solely on reading theorisations about the nature of improvisation and interpretation. A mixture of different kinds of awareness are discernibly at play, when the performative process is working effectively. For example, there is the motor-memory faculty, another significant and essential process required to execute music of such complexity. The capacity of the body, to autonomously enact the complex and detailed movements involved in physically executing the score on the instrument, frees up the more conscious mind and avoids cognitive overload. Thus, one is able to better focus on other important musical factors, beyond merely being able to execute the notes. One is always aware of *not allowing* the quasi-autonomous motor faculty to control the pacing or unfolding of the music. Instead, one is trying to allow an informed sense of proportion and timing determine how the phrases are shaped, so that they have a satisfying sense of ‘flow’. This is similar to what I experience when improvising.

When performing the Rachmaninoff pieces, I was keenly aware of temporally-related protensive/retensive processes being in play. These involve constantly taking different

parts of the time-line of the music into account – past, present and future – to craft a coherently-shaped narrative during the performance. This mirrors similar processes that were at work when I was improvising extemporaneous compositions such as *A Little Song for Kate* or *Forlane*. Reflecting on how much in common is experienced is revealing – in terms of cognitive process – whilst operating in these two seemingly opposing ends of the improvisation-interpretation continuum.

The kinds of cognitive awareness I associate with improvising within a composition-oriented frame have affected my approach to interpreting music such as these Rachmaninoff pieces. As I have discussed, the way that I *think in music* has been noticeably shaped by years spent developing the process of improvising. This differs from when I was younger and had been studying and playing composed music as a student of classical piano, without having worked on improvisation. In turn, the capability to extemporaneously compose (i.e. improvise) has been shaped by my having continuously studied, practiced and performed a lot of classical, notated music since my youth. Developing deeply-seated concepts derived from *textual* processes have affected how I approach improvising.

Walter Ong (1982) suggests that textuality, most specifically using writing as a mechanism to help structure thought, re-structures the very way that one thinks, in a way that non-literate thinking, although it may often be complex, cannot:

All thought, including that in primary oral culture, is to some degree analytic: it breaks its materials into various components. But abstractly sequential, classificatory, explanatory examination of phenomena or of stated truths is impossible without writing and reading. Human beings in primary oral cultures, those untouched by writing in any form, learn a great deal and possess and practice great wisdom, but they do not ‘study.’

Arguably, he betrays some traces here, of the cultural hegemony alluded to by Nooshin. By making a distinction about the term study in the way that he does, he presumes that a culturally specific type of learning and knowledge (i.e. Western) are intrinsically superior. Nonetheless, in some respects, what he observes tends to chime with my argument about aurality and textuality regarding music – that an immersion in musical thought cast in the frame of notation can enrich the scope of musical thought articulated by means of improvisation – and most significantly – *vice-versa*. As is the case in my interpretation of the Rachmaninoff pieces, aurality can inform the textual musician just as much as textuality can inform an aurally-oriented musician.

Lip-service is paid to the importance of aurality in traditional classical music schools, who usually have some sort of aural class, though the scope of this is often limited, compared to many jazz curricula. Moreover, in classical music curricula, aural classes often involve textuality as a significant focus; dictation is a favoured exercise, where the aural is consigned to the textual as quickly as possible – there is no performative outcome. However, it could be argued that textually-based forms of study – such as counterpoint and Western theory – shape the musical mind and extend the scope for improvisation. Essential contrapuntal practices and harmonic concepts, learned and developed on paper, informed musical choices in some of my improvisations and musical ideas – as for example in the piano textures in *Vigil* and *Lament*. In both these pieces contrapuntal lines act as supporting textures to convey the sense of harmonic progression. The study of species counterpoint and voice-leading from Renaissance and Baroque models has provided me with the musical tools and vocabulary enabling me to give individual voices a distinct and active motivic and melodic identity, whilst economically providing harmonic fabric to frame melodic elements in the foreground. The conclusion I would draw, regarding the experience and insight gained through the creative work in this thesis, is that textually-conceived learning adds valuable and fruitful dimensions to non-

textual processes such as improvisation. Improvisation, in turn can greatly inform the creative processes of both interpretive performance and composition.

Regarding my own approach to improvising music, the synthesis of aurality and textuality has been central to my over-arching concern with extemporaneous composition. Through studying music textually, in order to perform it and through using notation to compose music with structured arguments, I have been better able to develop my capacity to improvise music 'on the fly', whilst projecting and sustaining music with a similar kind of structure and coherence. The clearest evidence of this is manifest in the music itself, which is discussed in the next chapter.

4. Commentary on the creative works.

Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss the music in this thesis in depth. I have purposefully chosen *not* to extensively analyse notated transcriptions of the music, specifically because of the considerations articulated so clearly in Keith Jarrett's comments along with the issues relating to textuality that were discussed in detail earlier. To try and validate improvised music through notation that was not part of the creative process would be contrary to the purpose of the thesis. There are some instances where notated transcriptions of segments from the improvisations have been used; this has only been where discussions about pitch-choices are better illuminated through notated texts. Where scores were used in the creative process, they are included in the appendix for reference, where indicated.

The music is specifically intended to be presented as aural artefacts and the most meaningful way in which they can be understood is via listening. It is a reasonable expectation that musical experts, given their training, should be able to discern a sense of argument, musical methodology, and intellectual response sonically – in other words, by listening in detail to the music. The coherence and artistic quality of the music should be evident from what is audible in the music. Reference has been made to points on the timeline of several recordings, since these illustrate the arguments being made regarding the work under analysis. As discussed earlier, notation would fail to encapsulate significant aspects of the music. An analytical, technical discussion of harmonic, melodic and rhythmic components of my musical language with relation to theoretical models connected to classical music and jazz could be an interesting exercise but would not cast light on the research questions. Nonetheless, commentary relating to such aspects of my music has been woven into preceding chapters of this exegesis where relevant.

The research questions in this thesis relate to how language and practices from different musical traditions such as Western classical music, jazz, Latin music and other African-based music can be integrated to develop new, original forms of musical language and new practice, towards the creation of original music that is coherent and has musical integrity. From that the question arises of how different conceptual and performative approaches from those traditions – most particularly aurality and textuality – interact with one another because of this process and what the implications could be.

Improvisation, of course, plays a central role in my creative practice. How improvisation may need to be understood as representing a wider scope of capabilities and creative functionalities than are currently acknowledged, has been a defining consideration in the improvisatory approaches explored and exemplified in the music in this thesis.

The forms of musicianship explored in this portfolio represent the extreme ends and intermediary points of a continuum regarding the extent to which improvisatory inputs are at work in musical performance. This directly relates to some of Nick Cook's and Ed Sarath's ideas that were discussed in earlier chapters. They have greatly influenced my thinking about, as well as my personal approach *to* improvisation. At one end of the continuum are performances of two classical solo piano pieces by Rachmaninoff and at the opposite end, some of the music (such as *Southern Shift* and *Interludes 1 and 2*) was freely improvised. Sometimes the use of pre-composed, notated musical material was blended with approaches that were improvisatory, as for example in *Black Moon* and *Vigil*, where the boundaries here between playing what was in the score and improvising *something else* were blurred and hence this is somewhere in the middle, between the two extremes mentioned earlier.

Some widely employed musical practices require the player to provide supporting or accompanying musical fabric, based on codified, skeletal forms of notation which convey

information about harmonic structures and forms. There is, for example, a lot of similarity regarding functionality between Renaissance/Baroque figured-bass/continuo and jazz comping. To improvise within this context normally requires the player to draw on an extensive knowledge and understanding of strongly codified stylistic conventions and to be able to employ attendant vocabularies. I am not a Baroque keyboard practitioner and hence have not attempted to employ this kind of practice. There are, however several works here in which I am comping within the frame of stylistic norms and conventions of jazz. This aspect of improvisation is exemplified in my piano comping within a jazz quintet in the album *Tales from the Diaspora* and in a jazz duo context, in *Everybody's Song But Not My Own*.

Some of the pieces in the portfolio can be described as representing free improvisation. The term free improvisation is, however, a potentially vexed issue, since it can invoke complex debates about what is implied or understood by both free and by the term improvisation. The latter has been discussed in depth earlier in this text. Derek Bailey sums up the meaning of the free improvisation and its implications thus:

The lack of precision over its naming is, if anything, increased when we come to the thing itself. Diversity is its most consistent characteristic. It has no stylistic or idiomatic commitment. It has no prescribed idiomatic sound. The characteristics of freely improvised music are established only by the sonic musical identity of the person or persons playing it (Bailey 1993).

For some improvisers there can, at one extreme, be a quasi-ethical dimension to the notion of freedom in improvisation. Actively attempting to eschew any existing musical knowledge, enculturation or convention can become an almost totemic consideration. Cornelius Cardew epitomised this mind-set in his 1971 essay "Towards an Ethics of

Improvisation”, in respect of how improvising musicians could approach improvisation when performing his graphic score *Treatise* (1971):

...many readers of the score will simply relate the musical memories they have already acquired to the notation in front of them, and the result will be merely a gulash (sic) made up of the various musical backgrounds of the people involved. For such players there will be no intelligible incentive to music or extend themselves beyond the limitations of their education and experience. Ideally such music should be played by a collection of musical innocents; but in a culture where musical education is so widespread (at least among musicians) and getting more and more so, such innocents are extremely hard to find (Cardew 1971).

In the sense in which the term is being used in this thesis, free improvisation could be understood from a more nuanced perspective compared to that of Cardew's rather fundamentalist position. I regard the musical knowledge, skills and various conceptual frameworks that I have acquired and developed from a variety of sources to be valuable creative assets, to be fully exploited in both improvisation and composition. These sources include education, study and professional experience.

A more fruitful avenue of thought is to consider the interface between improvisation and composition; the notion of an improvisation-composition continuum. This is a significant issue for me as an improvising musician. In many respects, there can be many features in common between improvisation and composition and the two processes may be intertwined for many musicians and composers. A composer can craft a musical discourse by using their existing knowledge of musical ideas and substance, which can be developed further and re-contextualised; an improviser can do the same. The difference is one of temporality; the composer crafts the music outside of the confines of real-time and

can revisit any moment in its timeline to revise what is there, with a view to it being performed later. An improviser crafts the music *in vivo*, in real-time; the conception and execution of the music are simultaneous. They are one and the same thing. This recalls Nooshin's observations about Iranian classical music and Carnatic music: "...no distinction was made between the roles of composer and performer (Nooshin 2003)." A mid-point between the two can be exemplified by some commonly exploited aspects of jazz practice. For example, a chord-sequence can be devised by a composer as a basis for music that is to be improvised. The improviser is, to whatever extent, bound by what has been pre-determined by the composer when making choices about what to play. In both scenarios, i.e. in which composition is involved, the element of notated text may be either present or absent. Compositions can also be fully conceived without recourse to scores 'on paper' and transmitted aurally or they can be written down as is the norm in the classical tradition.

There is a distinction to be made in respect of the music in this thesis between different aspects of my approach to free improvisation and to which extensive reference has been made earlier. The distinction is between 'extemporaneous composition' or 'stream of consciousness'. Extemporaneous composition relates to improvising music that has not been composed or pre-determined beforehand, either on paper or at the keyboard but where there is a strong intention to craft a structured musical argument/narrative, as per composition within the frame of the Western classical tradition. Stream of consciousness is a scenario where the intention is to start playing and allow the music to unfold, with no aim to manipulate the material to craft a structured musical argument; the musical events develop out of the contingent. In a sense, the music goes where it takes itself.

In both contexts, musical ideas and material that I already 'know' are referenced, modified and re-contextualised. There may also be completely novel musical ideas that are which may be the result of experimentation, thus involving an element of spontaneous risk-taking. Stream of consciousness – has less in common with composition than

extemporaneous composition since there is not the overt need to consider events that have occurred earlier or are intended to occur later in the music. Accessing one's existing knowledge and previous musical experience or the use of pre-learned musical material however, is an element that is common both to this kind of free improvising and composition.

Producing any kind of musical output, including live performance, recordings or compositions, raises the issues of communication and how the music may be perceived externally. At one extreme, composers could eschew all considerations about how their music is received and pen an extensive body of notated music on paper, with no intention that the music is ever realised in performance. Kaihosru Sorabji's rather mythologised withdrawal from all public interactions, including his prohibiting all public performances of his music, exemplifies this (Paul Rapoport 1992). In contemporary culture, what constitutes musical meaning is complex, not the least since the presence of music in every-day environments, through digital mass-media, means that music can acquire divergent significations or meanings that were not originally intended by the originators of the music. An example is the use of classical pieces in film or advertising.

Individuals may react differently to the same music and assign their own meaning to it. At the same time, music can seem to affect different people in similar ways, seemingly by coincidence. As Bjornn Vickhoff observes:

“If music signifies something delightful or something terrible, this will affect us. The problem is that music seems to move us emotionally even if there is no such obvious reason. This is the enigma (Vickhoff 2008).

Various theoretical approaches have been applied to the subject of meaning and emotion in music. Amongst others, these include phenomenological theory and a blend of semiotics and communication theory. Philip Tagg has applied these in relation to popular

music. In Tagg's approach, specific emotions, moods or meaning, are associated with identifiable musical features such as harmony or melodic gesture. He coined the neologism 'musemes' as a kind of shorthand for this (Tagg 1982). However, he summed up the inherent difficulty of reaching clear definitions thus:

If we were to analyse or explain in cognitive verbal terms what exactly happens in another type of nonverbal communication, for example when someone strokes the cheek of a loved one and looks longingly into his/her eyes we would find ourselves up to a similar problem. (Tagg 1979).

Theoretical approaches to the communicative aspects of musical meaning and emotion have a long history, going as far back as the ancient Greek concepts of mimesis and catharsis. Mimesis concerns representations of external reality and catharsis represented the purification of the soul through the intense experience of emotions. The emergence of classical opera at the end of the 16th century foregrounded the concept of mimesis because of the Renaissance's cultural preoccupation with ancient Greek culture (Nick Cook and Nicola Dibben 2001). An example of a systematised concept of emotional affects in Baroque music was the *Figurenlehre*. Bjorn Vickhoff characterises this as "a composer's dictionary of music emotions" (Vickhoff 2008). It recalls Tagg's approach in some respects. The 19th century scholar Eduard Hanslick suggested that music consists of pure tonal form – this could be interpreted as implying that music is an abstract absolute that exists on its own terms. (Hanslick 1986). Hanslick's ideas, sometimes characterised as formalism, emerged at a point in classical music history where purely instrumental music had risen to the fore and the verbal aspect of song had diminished in significance. (Nick Cook and Nicola Dibben 2001). Hanslick's views have been distorted to an extent, as Cook and Dibben observe:

Nowadays, formalism and hermeneutics are seen as opposite ends of the critical spectrum. But as we have explained, it was not always so: formalism, the idea that

music is autonomous and should be understood in its own terms, was originally associated with the sense of music's other-worldliness and consequent spiritual value (Nick Cook and Nicola Dibben 2001).

Some current scholarly trends focus on musical meaning in the context of communication, embodiment and how musical meaning can involve listeners/audiences as 'co-performers'. An example is Keller et al, whose research embraces a science-oriented paradigm for their article Musical Ensemble Performance: Representing Self, Other and Joint Action Outcomes (Keller et al 2016). A possible critique of this approach, especially regarding creative practice, might be to recall Coessens's arguments about: "attempts to force the arts through the eye of the needle of conventional science – or, as previously stated, a hardened, assumed or mythologised version of science" (Coessens et al 2009, p22)

Any kind of theoretical framework can potentially play a useful role in a musician's creative practice. As I discussed earlier, the study of counterpoint, musical form and other theoretically-based approaches from classical music and jazz have provided tools that play a role in my improvisations and compositions. It is possible too, for theoretical approaches to aesthetics to inform creative practice in music. Regarding conscious/systematic aesthetic considerations, the extent to which a composer/improviser may make musical choices based on how they think third parties may ascribe meaning to the music will depend on context. A film composer will be very actively engaged with how the music connects with listeners' emotional reactions. The same could be true of a song-writer. However, it is probable that many film composers and song-writers compose without referencing hermeneutic or semiotic discourses, though it is also possible that some do.

My approach to the issue of how musical meaning may be ascribed to my music by external parties is to create space between these considerations and myself to allow creative autonomy. This is not from lack of awareness about the complex issues outlined earlier. It connects with the notion of authenticity in the sense that was discussed in the introduction. In respect of this thesis, it is a pragmatic response to the competing pressures of complex significations that music acquires in contemporary culture and creating music within the frame of doctoral research. This recalls the concerns of Coessen's et al that were discussed earlier, that an emphasis on such concerns:

might interfere with the skill and open-mindedness, the pre-noetic, deeply intuitive and intensely felt quality of experience that constitutes an artistic performance (Coessens et al 200).

On the other hand, my giving the pieces titles is a way of sending signals to the recipients of the music. In a general sense, my use of titles stems from the jazz tradition, where even instrumental compositions are given titles resembling song-titles. My use of them represents a variety of intentions. Some titles such as *Lament*, *When You Left*, and *A Little Song for Kate* offer explicit clues to emotional aspects of the music. *Ostinato* is descriptive of a musical technique being employed. *Song* is an allusion to the composition being linked conceptually to *Everybody's Song But Not My Own*. *Zanj* is a colloquial African-derived term referring to those displaced to the Americas by slavery. It signifies the theme of diaspora (as per the album) and gives clues to how the music is informed by African rhythms. Normally I give pieces titles after I have finished composing or improvising them. It is a means to give them an identity for third parties to connect with that is less impersonal than something like "Part 1" as per Jarrett's concert recordings.

Southern Shift

Introduction:

Southern Shift should be regarded as the key musical output in this thesis. It is an album, released on CD (FUZ009), of improvised solo piano music which is a favourable medium through which to foreground specific aspects of improvisation and focus on my own personal musical idiom. The recording addresses the research question regarding the coherent integration and co-synthesis of disparate genres. It also explores the issue of the intersection between improvisation and composition and the notion of an improvisation-composition continuum/spectrum.

The music in the various pieces that comprise *Southern Shift* draws on musical resources and techniques that I have gained through deep immersion over an extended period of time, in idioms such as bop-derived jazz, baroque keyboard music, classical-era piano sonatas/concertos, 19th century piano music, 20th and 21st century music (encompassing atonality, polytonality and minimalism), Afro-Cuban dance music and Latin-jazz (this list is far from complete). As was articulated earlier, these diverse genres are all an integral part of my musical background and creative practice.

How improvisation relates to composition and the notion of an improvisation-composition continuum/spectrum figure significantly in my creative practice. In this work this is particularly apposite, since solo improvisation involves no interaction with other players and hence in creating *Southern Shift* I had complete autonomy regarding musical decisions. The solo context affords more creative autonomy through which to better shape the musical discourse, in a way that resembles composing, than is the case when improvising with another player (or players). One important aim in making this album was to produce a set of piano pieces that, in many respects, can be perceived in a similar way to those pieces that comprise the album *Ashia* (i.e. as a set of coherent solo piano pieces).

The difference is that the pieces in *Ashia* were crafted through notation and subsequently performed, whereas these were improvised; there was no recourse to notation.

Extemporaneous composition plays a significant role in achieving this, since there is a pre-conceived concept in mind when starting to play, concerning matters such as the projected duration and overall scheme of the improvisation, along with aspects such as the musical material to be explored. A very significant difference between this process and composition is that in an improvisation there is the possibility of the music taking unforeseen turns, to which one needs to be open. The different aspects of this kind of improvisational strategy, along with how it can intersect with other, freer approaches is discussed in this commentary.

Improvised solo piano albums, such as those by Keith Jarrett and Cecil Taylor, often consist of improvisations which I would characterise as stream of consciousness. For example, Jarrett's *Köln Concert* (1975) falls into differentiated sections which result from the ebb-and-flow of a continuous improvisatory stream. The music is being allowed to unfold from moment to moment more than it is being moulded and structured into a concentrated musical argument, resembling such aspects of a classical composition, as per the conventions of the Western classical tradition. The different sections of the published recording represent where one line of thought has run its course and another begins. The mediatory elements of audio-editing and processing, however, play a part in these live concert recordings. Amongst other misapprehensions, the presentation of the *Köln Concert* as an album could give the misleading impression that there is a pre-meditated sense of musical structure, evident in the recorded artefact as a whole. In fact, this may be largely attributable to the production process, subsequent to the live performance, more so than to pre-meditated intentions of Jarrett's. (Elsdon 2013 pp. 6-8)

Nonetheless, the distinction between two positions – the deliberate shaping of a musical argument versus following a contingent flow – is often quite subtly nuanced and to a

greater or lesser degree both may be at work in improvised solo performances; this is certainly the case with the pieces in *Southern Shift* where a range of improvisatory models and techniques are exploited. This will be discussed in greater depth later in this section, through reference to the creative work itself.

Extemporaneous composition is particularly favoured by recording for a number of reasons. Unlike live performance, in the studio there is the possibility of stopping, should the music (or one's execution of it) unfold in an unsatisfactory way and trying to resume the musical thread, to do it better. I have previously seen this technique at work when observing classical pianist Natalia Strelchenko record Agathe Backer-Grohndahl's compositions in the studio; I later adopted it when I recorded my own fully-notated music for the album *Ashia*. It has subsequently proven fruitful applying it to recording improvisations; developing this technique has afforded me a valuable creative tool. In this context, the renewed stream of improvisation can be edited onto the previous section. This is exemplified in *Some Bells* (at 01:07) and *Nocturne* (at 00:52). The discarded 'out-takes' are very similar in content to the re-takes. I had either bungled the execution of what I wanted to play or was unsatisfied with other musical qualities of what I had played (qualities such as syntax, phrasing or various formal features). Immediately re-starting allowed me to continue with the musical ideas fresh and still alive, whilst I was still in a cognitive state of flow. By contrast, in a live performance one would be wholly committed to continuing and responding to such contingent events, seeking to make coherent musical sense of them. Taking something that you have played unintentionally and using it - even embracing it - to integrate it into the musical discourse so it *sounds* intentional is a common improviser's strategy. This could, however necessitate abruptly changing the whole musical agenda originally held in mind. In a sense, this may even correlate to how choices made by another player will affect the musical discourse. The unintentional event

itself thus becomes a significant actant in the creative process. This relates to Actant Theory which was discussed earlier

The notion of what a mistake means in improvisation can be complex – though essentially the key point is that something is played which is not intended by the player. Theories and philosophies about musical intentions and mistakes in improvisation have tended to veer towards mythologisation. For example, there is Cardew's idealistic notion of 'musical innocents' (Cardew 1971) which seeks to avoid musical intentions that are informed by prior musical experience or learning; in such a context there could be no mistakes. Robert Walser theorised that frames of reference in academic discourses in the 1980's and 90's by which theorists conceptualised the issue of mistakes in jazz improvising stemmed from the mis-application of concepts based in Western classical musicology and the increasing trends in academia towards canonising the jazz tradition (Walser 1993). Ted Gioia had earlier suggested that a conceptual framework involving "the aesthetics of imperfection" was needed since, as he put it: "the improviser is anything but methodical" (Gioia 1988).

I would argue that Gioia is adding to the mythologisation of improvisation that is endemic in jazz musicology. Methodical thought is frequently a significant factor in musical improvising. In my experience, as in this body of improvised piano music, it is a vital factor in the creative process. For example, jazz improvisation over chord-changes requires a great deal of systematic thought to be applied in order to consistently make pitch/rhythm choices which are coherent, within a very tightly-codified, intellectually-challenging syntax. The notion of the jazz musician acting mainly on instinctive impulse is misleading – it recalls Berio's sweeping generalisations discussed earlier. Further, the idea of 'aesthetics of imperfection' may itself be totemising technical imperfections by attempting to give them an inappropriate, inflated significance. The implication is that faults in execution have some kind of deeper meaning or artistic value in jazz or improvisation that they do not have in classical music performance. Many, if not most improvisers - myself included -

probably wish for accuracy of execution and consistent coherence in improvised musical utterances. In classical music recordings, audio-editing irons out mistakes easily, since the same composed text can be rendered accurately in as many attempts as are needed to get it right. By contrast, the nature of improvised performance – bound by temporality – makes the acceptance of imperfections a necessity to be able to benefit from the advantages offered by spontaneity.

The concept of what may constitute a mistake in improvisation is ultimately an elusive one, as is the case with most its aspects. It is this elusiveness that makes improvisation a challenging subject for researchers and theorists. A free improviser may choose to allow chance or physical compulsion to play a legitimate part in determining what they play. This is diametrically opposed to a performance in which the intention is to render in exact detail the conscious, explicit musical intentions of composer, performer or both. Concerning cognitive perceptions and intentions, my reflection on the processes of improvising *Southern Shift* highlighted that one can experience quasi-autonomous or seemingly unconscious cognitive states whilst improvising music in which intellectually complex processes are operating. In this scenario mistakes inevitably occur; however, moments also emerge where one becomes aware of the imminent risk of a mistake and intervenes consciously to avoid it. The issue of conscious/unconscious cognitive states whilst improvising is explored in greater depth in the discussion of the music that follows – especially regarding *Lament*.

The process of exploiting audio-editing in recording improvised music differs from comprovisation, which involves a level of temporal displacement very akin to when a composer orders and re-works their material away from the timeline of a performance. Although there may arguably be some overlap, the intention here was not to construct a collage by juxtaposing individual segments of music that have been pre-recorded. The latter process has become commonplace in contemporary studio-based music; the Miles

Davis album *Bitches Brew* (1969) is often cited as being the earliest example of this approach, in which the recording studio itself, in a sense becomes an instrument or creative tool. In *Southern Shift*, initiating alternative takes was an attempt to improvise an alternate draft, in the moment, while still retaining the sense of connection and flow emanating from the improvisation up until the point the disruption occurred. The driving process was using the affordances of editing to allow my musical intentions to hold sway over contingent events such as mistakes – as far as was possible.

A studio project also facilitates recording alternate ‘takes’ of entire pieces and later selecting the preferred one. For example, there were three takes of *Seven*, two of which I considered worthy of keeping and one that was abortive. In a sense, combined with audio-editing, this affords an approach that resembles compositional process in the respect that decisions about which pieces were eventually included in the final output and in which order, effectively constitute compositional/creative choices, albeit on a larger scale. I had no preconceptions about the pieces prior to the recording, other than having practiced working on material for *St Eustache* (this is discussed later). A few pieces were recorded which were not included in the final album which were incomplete, abortive improvisations. There were also viable pieces which were excluded from the album simply because there was insufficient space within the CD format and they did not fit the larger-scale scheme of the album as a whole. Even if the solution had been to make a ‘double-album’, the overall work would, in any case have been disproportionately long. For this reason, these pieces could potentially form the basis of another album or a shorter EP.

Southern Shift – commentary on the pieces

The album is approximately 67 minutes total duration, consisting of 11 improvised solo piano pieces.¹⁷ The primary aims in these improvisations has been to explore, within the

¹⁷ Recorded in the Adam Concert Room, New Zealand School of Music, Wellington 2014.

context of my own personal musical language, different approaches and techniques for solo improvisation. The taxonomy that relates to these improvisatory techniques has been discussed previously. Broadly speaking these techniques/approaches are:

- Extemporaneous composition; free improvising
- Following a stream of consciousness; free improvising
- Improvising over an ostinato/groove
- Multi-tracking

My aims included developing ways to integrate and synthesise elements of style, techniques and practice from the pianistic tradition of jazz and the second common practice (in its wider sense) with those from the Western classical pianistic tradition. As already discussed, one of the key improvisatory approaches I am concerned with is extemporaneous composition. The intention with this is to generate, in real time, pieces of music which have the same sort of sense of teleological formal argument as composed pieces. Two of the primary models are Matthew Bourne's *Montauk Variations* (Leaf Records, 2012) and Gwylim Simcock's *Good Days at Schloss Elmau* (Basho Records, 2011). *Montauk Variations* consists of short to medium-scale improvised works; *Good Days at Schloss Elmau* is a mix of composed and improvised piano pieces. My own work, the album *Ashia*, in which all the music is notated and composed was also a significant influence on the music contained in *Southern Shift*. Composing the music for *Ashia*, as

opposed to improvising, had afforded the opportunity to rethink and rework musical ideas away from the strictures and pressures of performing in real time. In effect it provided a kind of workshop in which I could take advantage of the temporal opportunities offered by the compositional process to forge new musical language for my own personal idiom. This could be exploited subsequently when creating music through improvisation.

Learning and studying an extensive body of classical composers' music has been a key process which has greatly informed the musical language that I employ in improvising. Also, through learning and studying my own notated compositions in the same way that I would another composer's, I have been able to develop my musical language more extensively than if I had only worked at it through only practising improvising. Reference will frequently be made to specific referent musical sources from a range of genres, often to particular composers or specific works. The purpose is to illustrate where musical ideas, concepts and language assimilated from textual music from the classical tradition have been re-contextualised through my creative process. My intention is not to produce pastiches, as may be the case with improvisers such as Briggs or Montero, who were discussed in the literature review.

Forlane

In terms of genre this piece is strongly cast in a stylistic frame emanating from classical music. The continuous rhythmic continuum which drives the music is not characterised by syncopated rhythms which could be associated with jazz, where a groove – often swung – is germane. The continuous stream of left hand notes is conceptually referencing two specific sources in the classical piano repertoire that I have studied in depth:

Rachmaninoff's *Prelude in Eb major op 23 no. 6* and the opening of Tippett's *Piano Concerto* (1953). This textural approach from the Tippett¹⁸ piece also features for a while

¹⁸ Refer to 00:00 - 00:30 in *Forlane*

at the end of *Some Bells*¹⁹. Like the Rachmaninoff piece, the left-hand line is continuously turning melodic corners which embody an implied, hidden process of voice-leading - rather than just outlining scale or arpeggio patterns. This subsidiary texture in the music has its own sense of narrative which is distinct from the main melodic line that it supports. It is a pianistic texture which I also had previously developed in my own composition *Study no. 2* (1995).²⁰ The harmonic language of *Forlane* is ambiguous in terms of stylistic signification. There are rhythmic/melodic features and approaches to modal harmony, which come from jazz. Equally however, there are modal harmonic features that are exemplified in the music of Ravel²¹ and John Adams²².

This piece strongly exemplifies the extemporaneous composition technique. In this respect, it can be contrasted with *Some Bells*, in which my deviation from an initial schema had fueled the creative process. Conversely, I adhered very closely to the plan I had in mind when I began playing *Forlane*. The aim was to spin a long line of melody over the continuous left-hand background and to focus on exploiting increasing intensity in both dynamics and texture to generate a climax – subsequently leading to a gradual recession in intensity leading to the point of completion.

¹⁹ Refer to 12:18 – 12:50 in *Some Bells*

²⁰ The score of this work is included in the appendix.

²¹ Refer to *Forlane* 01:39 – 01:50 and Ravel's *Prelude* from *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, bars 7-10. The harmonic relationship is the same although the example in *Forlane* is a tone lower in pitch.

²² Refer to the section from *Some Bells*: 01:57- 03:0. This employs a scheme in which successive modal areas are juxtaposed in the following sequence: C Aeolian – A Aeolian – F# Aeolian – C Aeolian – G# Aeolian - C Lydian etc. This resembles the opening minute and a half of John Adams *The Chairman Dances* (1985).

Kaitoke

Kaitoke is a free improvisation and exemplifies the stream of consciousness approach.

The piece unfolded naturally into two different sections as I played it. The first section is agitated and declamatory in nature. The rhythmic activity is non-metric and often disjunct.

The textures and gestures which provide harmonic and rhythmic support beneath the prominent melodic stream in the foreground are jagged and pointillistic in form, in a way that is comparable to some of Cecil Taylor's frenetic atonal improvisations. The music is not atonal, however. It begins by strongly establishing D minor as a tonal centre²³ and there is a harmonic schema which develops further and becomes quite complex exploiting modal and functional cadential elements at different times²⁴.

The second section is quiet and reflective. The initial diatonic harmony in G major and is rather 'Jarrett-inflected' in terms of style, although this is subtly subverted with chromatic elements²⁵ which tend to de-stabilise the tonal stasis. These eventually recede and the conclusion is a 'clean' perfect cadence in G major²⁶. In the middle of this section, towards the point of climax or culmination, I consciously chose to weave a rising chromatic scale into the texture. I had in mind a similar ploy used by Gil Evans in his re-casting of Rodrigo's *Concierto D'Aranjuez* in the Miles Davis album *Sketches of Spain* (played by the harp). This exemplifies how a consciously-driven intervention can be integrated into an intuitively-driven improvisatory flow at any chosen moment.

²³ Refer to *Kaitoke*: 00:00 – 00:22

²⁴ For example, refer to the passage from 03:02 – 03:40 where this is exemplified.

²⁵ Refer to *Kaitoke* 07:52 – 08:35

²⁶ Refer to *Kaitoke* 09:12 – 09:35

Some Bells

This is an extensive improvisation lasting nearly 15 minutes – roughly three times the originally envisaged duration. Significant issues arise from the way that this improvisation unfolded, in terms of process technique and improvisation strategy. The opening music is deliberately referencing the use of open fifths conflated over a wide intervallic range. I had experimented with this material in the pieces *Ashia* and *New Corners* (both from the album *Ashia*, see Ex.6). I had a clear conception in mind as I began the improvisation, which was to use a ternary format of which the first and third sections would exploit the open fifths. However, I had no pre-conception as to what the central section would be like. In this case the initial technique I employed of extemporaneous composition became supplanted by stream of consciousness. In my perception, the very expansive nature of the bell-like material (from which the title was subsequently derived) in the second section of the piece (from 01:07) accounts for this switch in technique. In this material a succession of increasingly intense repeated patterns, which call to mind the John Adams *The Chairman Dances*, Aeolian modal constructs are used to juxtapose different tonal centres to develop a process of harmonic progression which moves quite slowly (see footnote 26). A quite long time-span seemed natural to allow this material to climax convincingly. This rendered the relative proportions of this section and the preceding one too unbalanced for a coherent ternary form to have been crafted; three and a half minutes as against one minute. Moreover, the incongruity between the levels of intensity inherent in these two types of musical fabric seemed un-resolvable. An attempt at re-capitulating the opening material served only to damp down the intensity of the musical flow, resulting in an unresolved point of musical stasis.

This switch of strategy, *in medias res*, exemplifies how different techniques and approaches can interact in a quite fluid way during an improvisation. The need to allow the music to evolve from moment to moment overrode the original formal schema. Without the

plan, however the original flow would have been unlikely to be established in the first place. My response to this stasis was to play a slow meditative episode, where sonorities are built up by using very wide-ranging tonal clusters. This references music from the cadenza in the finale of Khachaturian's *Piano Concerto* (1936), where upwardly-spread chords support a sparse declamatory melodic line. This music developed a sense of motion or flow which I then allowed to develop into an expansive jazz-inflected free-form ballad with a subtly-fluctuating metre.

The nature of the metric/rhythmic flow in this segment is worthy of discussion, since my concept here was of a synthesis of concepts from jazz and baroque music. As well as being variable in terms of time-signature, there is a pronounced ebb-and-flow in the pulse. This lends a degree of looseness which would not be wholly appropriate in a purely jazz context. It belongs more in the realm of music such as the Allemandes and Sarabandes in Bach's keyboard suites, such as the Allemande from the D major Partita BWV 826. As this section climaxes the pulse becomes more constant – leading to a jazz-rock type groove, which resembles a recurrent feature in Jarrett's improvised piano music. I was conscious of not wanting to get drawn into a pastiche of Jarrett, so instead of allowing the groove to grow in intensity I used a sequence of chromatic harmonies over a pedal to reduce the tension and 'ground' the flow enough to allow the piece to complete. In this respect a conscious consideration of aesthetic issues relating to style came into the improvising process. The harmonies over the pedal draw on knowledge of similar progressions that are a feature of Rachmaninoff's music – for example the opening of his *Second Piano Concerto* and the end of the central episode of *The Isle of the Dead*.

Southern Shift

This free improvisation explores atonality and ways in which I can integrate it with more tonal aspects of my music, along with melodic language which emanates from jazz and blues. I have sought to develop a personal approach to using atonality in my improvised

music. With regard to harmony, my approach to pitch choices derives from techniques that I developed in my compositions *Three Epitaphs in Memory of Michael Brecker*, from the album *Ashia*²⁷ (2007, see Ex. 4 and 5²⁸). There are some elements of construction derived from dodecaphonic serialism in this approach and also of octatonicism (Tymoczko 2002). (See example 1) In developing an atonal approach I have blended both of these with elements that are derived from modifying aspects of the way jazz harmony characteristically involves dissonant intervals that evolve from the voice-leading in chromatically extended chord-progressions. The rationale of this approach is to derive sonorities similar in nature to the complex, dissonant, yet harmonically functional, sonorities of jazz harmony but have new and different flavours by using 'wrong notes'. This is an approach derived to a great extent from principles based on the quite old concept of 'dissonant counterpoint', an empirical approach to atonality and dissonance that used negativised forms of tonally-based consonant pitch constructs such as species counterpoint. Musicologist Charles Seeger was instrumental in theorising this practice, which was a feature of the work of American composer Henry Cowell (Spilker 2011). Sir Michael Tippett also developed this technique in a very distinctive way that is a key characteristic of his music (Whittall 1982) and it is largely through the influence of Tippett that I was drawn to explore this approach.

At the end of the improvisation a tonal centre is allowed to emerge (G major again), though at the final point of tonal resolution there is a last, subtle shot of dissonance which

²⁷ The score and the recording of this work are included in the appendix.

²⁸ Refer to *Southern Shift* 00:13.49 – 0017.97. The example is a very approximate transcription in relation to timing and serves to illustrate note-choices which juxtapose two octotonic modal fields. The notes do not include all the notes of the two octatonic modes but the chordal associations that are *lingua franca* in jazz implies the missing elements.

purposefully lends a rather bitter-sweet taste - I wanted to echo the sound of the opening music.

Ex 1: (Transcribed fragment from *Southern Shift*)

4

C7

G7-9

St Eustache

In this piece an extended melodic utterance is spun out, cast in a stream of chords which range from triads to complex dissonant chords. The types of chord-voicings are a purposeful conflation of chord-types which can be connected with the music of Olivier Messiaen and Oscar Peterson. (See example 2) This is an extemporaneous composition, the nature and content of which had been premeditated, although I had not made any attempts to work the material through notation. There are systematic/hierarchical processes at work in the harmony which I worked on at the piano and practiced manipulating to prepare for improvising this music. The piece is conceptually modelled on Mat Bourne's *The Mystic* from his album *The Montauk Variations*.

Ex 2: St Eustache segment



Prelude and Lament

It is a freely improvised piece. The first section reflects some aspects of avant-garde improvisation such as that of Misha Mengelberg and Cecil Taylor. The second section is tonal in nature and conflates stylistic elements of a jazz ballad (as per Bill Evans or Keith Jarrett) with elements which are informed by baroque keyboard music such as J.S Bach

and Purcell. Improvising *Lament* highlighted some intriguing issues regarding the cognitive states of that a performer may experience when improvising. In a generalised sense this concerns what is often termed 'flow'.

The ever-elusive phenomenon of 'flow' has been speculated about in many discourses about Jazz. The neuroscientists Malinda MacPherson and Charles Limb suggest that 'flow' is a factor at work in many fields of creativity in varying ways (MacPherson and Limb 2013). They gravitated towards Jazz as an area on which to focus because they consider Jazz musicians to be adept at entering flow states quickly and easily:

While improvising, jazz musicians often enter a state of total focus known as a "flow" state; jazz musicians are particularly adept at entering this state when they improvise. When in a flow state, a person is operating at his peak of arousal and ability.[10] Creativity during a flow state becomes nearly effortless in that the creator may not have to consciously think through or mediate their actions (MacPherson and Limb 2013).

Limb's and Braun used fMRI brain-scanning machines to examine what brain activity might be present, or more – or less – intense, when musicians played whilst using different kinds of musical techniques (Limb and Braun 2008). Inferences can be made from fMRI data about levels of activity in discrete parts of the brain by comparing the varying levels of blood being supplied to neurons at any given point. Musicians were given tasks that involved playing 'learned' music (as a control) and then tasks involving jazz improvisation.

Neuroscience is still relatively new and undeveloped, compared to some other areas of biological science. More questions are identified than answers found since the brain is an unfathomably complex entity – still beyond the scope of contemporary empirical systems of epistemology – and any conclusions from these kinds of experiments are at best highly speculative, particularly with regard to understanding musical creativity. Some experiments

have indicated particular parts of subjects' brains are more active and others are suppressed, depending on whether tasks being performed were improvisatory or involved playing notated or 'learned' music.

Parts of the brain considered to relate to self-monitoring or critical judgement, specifically, the lateral pre-frontal cortex, were less active when 'improvising', while at the same time the medial pre-frontal cortex, associated with more 'self-expressive' functions or self-narrative, was more active. On the first pass this insight seems to make sense, since it resonates with my internal experiences whilst improvising. In this experiment, however, the players were only playing short bursts of jazz improvisation or improvised rap. They were not under any pressure to meet expectations about the quality of the improvisations or the more structured, teleological aspects of their output, compared with a public performance or a recording session. The question is begged, whether different brain functions might have been activated, had protensive-retensive factors had been fully in play, instead of (or as well as) those that were observed in the medial re-frontal cortex? If it had been possible to scan the brain of a player 'extemporaneously composing' rather than casually spinning some bop lines over a few choruses of a 12-bar blues with a 'backing track' (as was the case in the Limb experiment) would the outcome have been different or similar?

It could also be tempting to jump to easy and plausible conclusions about jazz improvisation considering Limb and Braun's experiments with fMRI scans. For example, it could be posited as evidence that successful jazz improvisation is predicated on the abandonment of organised musical concepts in favour of an idealised concept of creative freedom; all you need to do in order to improvise well is to let go of value-judgements, 'zone out' and 'just play'. This would resonate with much of the mythologisation about improvising; however, it depends on context. For example, if there is a strong focus on conscious protensive-retensive factors, as in extemporaneous composition, critical judgement – in the context of Limb's research associated with the lateral pre-frontal cortex

– would need to be strongly in play. There is, though, currently no fMRI data based on such a scenario.

Prelude and Lament falls into two sections of nearly equal length, (the whole improvisation is just over eight minutes long). The intention when I started to play was to allow the musical ideas to emerge and progress without trying to shape or plan a narrative/argument – hence it is a stream of consciousness. Initially, I was playing with two main musical features: an approach to pitch based on mixed modes featuring augmented seconds, combined with the use of quasi-baroque mordants as an ornamental gesture; I had Arabic music in mind, perhaps rather fancifully (00:00 – 00:12). I allowed myself to develop this with no plan as to how the piece might develop. These initial ideas are developed further and eventually reach a climax, with the initial monody having developed into two-part counterpoint, using a free and disjunct rhythmic approach. At 04:00, this music has reached a point of conclusion and a state of stasis ensues out of which another musical utterance emerges. The new section is characterised by a slow and eloquent tonal melody being supported by and interacting with complex chromatic harmony in which multiple suspensions and dissonances interweave. In this section of music there are a number of highly sophisticated musical processes at work, yet when I listened back to the ‘takes’ after the recording session, I was astonished to hear this whole second four-minute section (*Lament*). It was as if I was hearing it for the first time. I had no recollection of this music or of having played it, other than vaguely recalling a moment during the day’s session, as a *whole*, when I had had to think quite actively and quickly about how I continued structuring an extended sequence of rapidly-moving harmony which passed through a number of keys (07:07 – 07:20), so as not to allow the sense of musical form and integrity to be lost - or to make a *mistake*

From this, I deduce is that it is possible to enter a cognitive state in which autonomous functions are predominant but in which complex hierarchical musical processes are

accessed and applied. This could, perhaps, be connected to the same kind of damping down of activity in the lateral pre-frontal cortex that Limb has observed. What I found intriguing is that my conscious critical perceptions became momentarily engaged quite suddenly, when the needs of the music demanded it, for the performance to 'survive intact'. It is possible to speculate as to whether an fMRI scan might have spotted my lateral pre-frontal cortex lighting up at that moment. What might be apparent from this example is that in some aspects of one's consciousness may be dormant while others are in control, and they can be called to 'intervene', as in this instance, when more openly critical analytical faculties are required.

Ex 3: Prelude and Lament mixed mode segment



In the Night

In the Night uses bitonality and the juxtaposition of triads along²⁹ with an open spacing of chords. This reflects immersion in some of the music of Bartok – in particular the second movement of his *Piano Sonata* 1926 – and also some of the piano writing in Aaron Copeland's *Duo for Flute and Piano* 1971 which I have performed many times. The point of climax reached through the displacement of the underlying chordal idea into a higher

²⁹ Refer to *In the Night* – 00:00 – 00:30

range and the compression of the harmonic layout into closed triadic voicings. This is combined with intensification and ornamentation of the initially sparse melodic thread and also by employing more dissonance in the bitonality that plays a part in the musical narrative: the melodic line conflates triadic lines in F major and G major over supporting triadic harmony which alternates between Bb major and Gb major.³⁰

This improvisation represents the extemporaneous composition approach. The aim was to use the triadic material as the main motif in the musical argument, against which melodic utterances could be juxtaposed. By contrast with *Some Bells*, I adhered closely to my initial plan of allowing the music to build to a climax and conclude by re-iterating the same music as appeared at the beginning. Whilst improvising this piece I was very aware of what I was doing to shape the musical discourse – in a consciously-oriented cognitive state – rather than being immersed in an unconscious state of flow. This was similar to how I was functioning whilst improvising *St Eustache*, but contrasts greatly with my sense of cognitive awareness when playing *Lament*. I discussed this issue in detail in the commentary about *Lament*.

Seven

Seven is an improvisation over an ostinato or groove pattern (in 7/4 as the title suggests) and there is no teleological concept at work in this piece, which is also completely athematic (apart from the bass-line). In essence, the inventive process in the foreground is framed by the concept of jazz ‘soloing’. Rhythmic displacements and some complex subdivisions are used as means for developing intensity as the solo progresses. The track is subject to a ‘board-fade’ at its end, since there is deliberately no intention of having a narrative or formal structure which needs to be concluded; the music draws on influences

³⁰ Refer to *In the Night* – 03:19 – 03:35

from West Africa and Cuba in this respect. West African music is also an influence in terms of how the ostinato pattern is constructed.

Ex 4: (Three Epitaphs in Memory of Michael Brecker)

The musical score is written for piano and consists of two systems. The first system begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The first measure is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and contains a half note chord of F#4 and C#5. The second measure changes to a 4/4 time signature and features a half note chord of F#4 and C#5, followed by a half note chord of G#4 and D#5. The third measure is in 3/4 time and contains a half note chord of F#4 and C#5, followed by a half note chord of G#4 and D#5. The fourth measure is in 4/4 time and contains a half note chord of F#4 and C#5, followed by a half note chord of G#4 and D#5. The fifth measure is in 5/4 time and contains a half note chord of F#4 and C#5, followed by a half note chord of G#4 and D#5. The second system begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 5/4 time signature. The first measure contains a half note chord of F#4 and C#5, followed by a half note chord of G#4 and D#5. The second measure is in 3/4 time and contains a half note chord of F#4 and C#5, followed by a half note chord of G#4 and D#5. The third measure is in 4/4 time and contains a half note chord of F#4 and C#5, followed by a half note chord of G#4 and D#5. The fourth measure is in 5/4 time and contains a half note chord of F#4 and C#5, followed by a half note chord of G#4 and D#5. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Ex 5: (Analysis of Three Epitaphs example)

The two chords ex. a and ex. b could be understood as having evolved through a process of distortion. The examples ex. 1a and ex. 1b show chord-voicings would be familiar within the jazz idiom and which could have effectively functioned like a cadence to Ab major. In the first example from the piece the lower half of chord 1b has been displaced in order to create more dissonance and subvert a sense of tonality, whilst sounding similar to a more 'conventional' jazz chord as at ex 1a. In a sense, a 'wolf in sheeps clothing'.

Ex. a and Ex. b are musical examples in 3/4 time. Ex. a features a piano (p) dynamic and a chord voicing in the right hand (treble clef) consisting of a half note G4 and a half note A4, with a whole note chord in the left hand (bass clef) consisting of a half note F3 and a half note G3. Ex. b features a half note G4 and a half note A4 in the right hand, with a whole note chord in the left hand consisting of a half note F3 and a half note G3. The notation includes a treble clef, a bass clef, and a 3/4 time signature.

Mark Donlon

Ex. a1 and Ex. b1 are musical examples in 3/4 time. Ex. a1 features a piano (p) dynamic and a chord voicing in the right hand (treble clef) consisting of a half note G4 and a half note A4, with a whole note chord in the left hand (bass clef) consisting of a half note F3 and a half note G3. Ex. b1 features a half note G4 and a half note A4 in the right hand, with a whole note chord in the left hand consisting of a half note F3 and a half note G3. The notation includes a treble clef, a bass clef, and a 3/4 time signature.

Ex 6:

(From *New Corners*, Mark Donlon, 2007)

The musical score for Ex 6 is presented in five systems, each with a piano (p) and an 8va (8va) staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various dynamics and articulations:

- System 1:** The 8va staff begins with a melodic line. The piano staff has a *subito f* (sudden forte) dynamic marking.
- System 2:** The piano staff has a *subito p* (sudden piano) dynamic marking. The 8va staff has a *cresc* (crescendo) marking.
- System 3:** The piano staff has a *subito ppp* (sudden pianissimo) dynamic marking. The 8va staff has a *cresc poco a poco* (crescendo poco a poco) marking.
- System 4:** The piano staff has a *subito ppp* dynamic marking. The 8va staff has a *cresc poco a poco* marking.
- System 5:** The piano staff has a *subito ppp* dynamic marking. The 8va staff has a *cresc poco a poco* marking.

The score concludes with a final measure in the piano staff, marked with a double bar line.

Nocturne

Nocturne blends atonality and polytonality. The piano writing of Alban Berg is one of a number of key influences from classical music which have been accessed in this improvisation. The atonal aspect of the music reflects my familiarity with Berg's *Piano Sonata op. 1* and the *Chamber Concerto (1925)*, which are works that I have studied and performed. There are two other significant elements in play which also emanate from the classical piano tradition – the pianistic technique of 'the third hand', where a middle voice in the texture is projected in longer note-values and is shared between the hands within a complex mix of textures. This piano technique is exemplified in bars 61-69 of Rachmaninoff's *Etude Tableau in Eb minor op 39 no. 5*. It required a high level of very conscious engagement in order to sustain this technique while improvising and I needed to be able to plan ahead strategically on the spot. The left hand explores a wider range across the lower half of the keyboard and the right hand is used to pursue a rather florid and intricate line that uses trills and rubato in a stylised manner and which fuses the kind of figuration and phrasing that is associated with Chopin's music with some elements of blues language. The pianistic layout is also informed by the piano writing in the second movement of Rachmaninoff's *Piano Sonata in D minor op. 28*, which is very polyphonic in nature and involves a lot of intricate 'choreography' between the hands. In this piece the aim was to work within a frame that was strongly biased in the direction of composition; hence it is an example of extemporaneous composition. Although the right-hand figuration in *Nocturne* has a very 'improvisatory' feel – there is a lot of elasticity and rubato in the phrasing that is very much in the manner of Chopin's music such as his *Barcarolle and the Fourth Ballade* - there was a particularly goal-oriented agenda here in respect of working

towards a climax by generating intensity through a dramatic change in harmonic field after a quite prolonged stretch of relatively static harmony.³¹

Chorale

This piece aims to explore using the possibilities offered to an improviser by multi-tracking and digital processing. I improvised a short chorale-like span of music which was then repeated for three iterations, courtesy of the Logic Pro X software being used for the recording. I had the Bill Evans album *Conversations with Myself* (1963) in mind as a model for the methodology of the piece as a whole and also had the opening music of Kenny Wheeler's *Suite Time Suite*, from his album *Music for Large and Small Ensembles* (Wheeler 1990) for the chorale. The Bill Evans recordings used jazz standards as a formal template and hence there is a well-defined arrangement or structure over which he overdubbed more music as he built up three layers. By contrast, in my piece I over-dubbed an improvised second layer, as a kind of obbligato over the improvised chorale without transcribing or analysing it. However, the improvisation is not, conceived without there being any analytical considerations about how the improvised lines interact harmonically and rhythmically with the chorale, as might be the case within the context of free avant-garde improvisation. Note choices were determined through reliance on my aural ability to understand what harmonies I was hearing combined, to an extent, with my memory of just having played it. This involved using a synthesis of 'playing what I heard' along with applying theoretical knowledge from which I could generate and develop ideas. This recalls the earlier discussion in chapter three, concerning how aurality and improvisation interact. When the three chorale iterations ran out I decided to continue the solo line on its own to allow the piece to conclude in a way which made musical sense to me.

³¹ Refer to *Nocturne* – 03:19

A Little Song for Kate

A Little Song for Kate resulted from a spontaneous decision to improvise an English-sounding quasi-folk melody employing jazz harmonies, fused with harmonies reminiscent of the 20th century pastoral tradition of British composers such as Herbert Howells, Arnold Bax, Gustav Holst and Vaughan Williams (termed ‘cow-pat’ composers by Elizabeth Lutyens). There was no pre-meditation or preparation before the recording session relating to the content or the nature of this piece.

There is a point to note, relating to the issue of mistakes in improvisation. At 01:36 I ‘cracked’ a note. The note A accidentally sounds as well as the intended G. I decided at that instant to continue and accept the imperfection, rather than lose the spontaneity and flow of the music in its wider context. I would have preferred not to have had the imperfection but it is outweighed by the merits of the rest of the performance. Stopping for a re-run at that point would have risked losing the flow. I do not view this small mistake as having any significance beyond it being an unintended flaw that I would rather was not there. There is certainly no aspect of this that relates to Ted Goia’s aesthetics of imperfection (Goia 1988). This response to a mistake can be contrasted with the case of another cracked note whilst recording *When You Left*, (refer to 4:03 – 04:06). This is an unintentional ‘slip’ (04:03), which I incorporated into the subsequent phrase (at 04:06), by mimicking it so that it sounds like an intentional acciaccatura. The mistake in this case became a factor that modified my original musical intentions, albeit in a minor way. I had originally intended the line to be ‘clean’ and without any ornamentation.

Between Moons

Introduction

Between Moons (2016) is an album, released on CD (FUZ0012), of trumpet and piano duo music. The trumpeter is Alex Sipiagin and I am the pianist. Alex Sipiagin also plays fluegelhorn on some tracks. A duo album of improvised music provides the context to explore different functionalities and aspects of creativity from those at work in the solo album *Southern Shift*. Interacting with and responding to another player during improvisation sets a more complex agenda regarding how a musical argument can be controlled. Improvising freely with an ensemble of three or more players could make the extemporaneous control of a musical argument less viable unless there were constraints, a common agenda or a plan agreed previously, establishing terms of reference for the improvisation. This would tip the balance of how the process was framed in the direction of composition, even if there was no notation or if the plan was generated collectively, as might be the case with the Instant Composers Pool (discussed previously). In a duo setting the stakes are more even and hence there is greater opportunity for either player to assert their musical initiative than in a larger ensemble.

Another important consideration at work in this output is that even in a duo, the interactive and creative dynamics will differ significantly from those in a free improvisation if a strongly codified framework is in place, for example when playing a jazz composition/standard such as *Everybody's Song But Not My Own* or realising piece which combines a substantial element of composed/notated music integrated with more freely-conceived improvisation, such as *Black Moon*. The duo context allows for flexibility and diversity in how a range of different approaches to applying improvisational techniques can be explored and interwoven. All these issues were in play during the process of making this album and will

be discussed in depth during this commentary, referring directly to the relevant creative works.

There are practical and historical considerations relating to the coupling of trumpet and piano in jazz. This line-up has strong historical resonance in the jazz tradition and there are several significant examples. This could have exerted an unhelpful influence (even if it was subliminally) on myself and the other musician, Alex Sipiagin, had the issues not been discussed prior to working on the music. This is because firstly, there was the likely presumption that we would be recording a *jazz* album and secondly, the fact that Alex Sipiagin is a player who is pre-eminent in the mainstream of the contemporary, New-York based jazz scene could reinforce this presumption. The intention here was specifically to explore music that was generically more diverse and wider in improvisatory scope, by contrast with the jazz quintet album *Tales of the Diaspora*. During the recording the subject of the recorded duos between Kenny Wheeler/John Taylor/Paul Bley emerged in our discussions. This was in relation to the nature of rhythmic/textural concepts of how to play together. Most particularly, this concerned adopting a looser rhythmic approach - in which the sense of pulse is very subtle and nuanced – being less obviously articulated. The piece *Between Moons* strongly exemplifies this. By contrast with where a drummer is explicitly articulating a regular pulse or, in the absence of drums, another instrument plays things that are surrogates for that element, the pulse is implied though the playing of both players and is sustained in more subtle, nuanced ways, allowing greater flexibility and rhythmic elasticity.

Within the mainstream of the jazz tradition, the earliest notable example of a trumpet/piano duo is Earl Hines and Louis Armstrong's *Weather Bird* (1928) which itself has been the subject of some quite extensive critical writing by jazz historians such as Jeffrey Taylor and Gunther Schuller (Taylor 1998). Oscar Peterson recorded albums with a number of key trumpeters, including Dizzy Gillespie, Harry "Sweets" Edison, Roy Eldridge, Clark Terry

and Jon Faddis. In turn, Clark Terry recorded the album *One on One* in 2000 in which he was paired with a selection of the most prominent pianists from the jazz tradition at the time, such as Geri Allen, Kenny Barron, Barry Harris, Marion McPartland and Billy Taylor (amongst others). There are also numerous other notable couplings; a comprehensive list would be excessive here. In terms of influences that relate to my personal musical aesthetics, Kenny Wheeler recorded and performed with both John Taylor and Paul Bley (as mentioned earlier). As well as this, the influential trio Azimuth (Kenny Wheeler, John Taylor and Norma Winstone) exploits, in a sense, the trumpet/piano ensemble as a backdrop or frame for the voice – in place of a conventional rhythm-section.

In practical terms, the coupling of piano with trumpet has some advantages over saxophone or trombone, which are the main soloing ‘horns’ associated with the jazz idiom. The main operating range of these instruments overlays the central range of the piano, tending to conflict with it. This range is where much of the harmonic/textural substance tends to be concentrated. Saxophones and trombone are more prone to crowding the tessitura of the piano than the trumpet, which has a narrower range that is concentrated higher up, in an area where melodic lines tend to have primacy. This allows greater textural transparency, which was an important consideration for me that informed my choice. Additionally, compared with saxophone, the timbre and attack of the trumpet offer greater clarity, especially in respect of rhythm and articulation. This blends felicitously with the percussive nature and overall sound-envelope of the piano. The timbre and attack of the saxophone is generally more diffuse and prone to sound muddy by comparison with the trumpet. Further to this, a jazz trumpeter can offer a wider palette of differentiated timbres than a saxophonist. The trumpet has a range of different mutes that can be applied such as harmon, bucket, plunger etc. that radically change the sound and expressive qualities of the instrument. Also, it is common for jazz trumpeters to offer the option of fluegelhorn. This was the case with Sipiagin; several pieces on the album employ

fluegel. The only mute employed in the album was the harmon mute, which was to play a significant aesthetic role in one of the pieces, *Black Moon*, which will be discussed later.

The album deliberately employs a range and at times, a blend of divergent conceptual approaches to improvisation. One of the aims is to explore how these may be integrated with a range of composed elements. The improvisatory approaches/techniques employed include:

- Fully notated music with a score employing detailed notation, combined with the application of paraphrasing and improvisation over a tonal centre – as in *Black Moon*.
- Common forms of jazz notation, consisting of a blend of staff notation and chord symbols as in *Between Moons* and *Song*. The staff notation is not very detailed.
- A jazz standard, played and improvised on from memory – *Everybody's Song But Not My Own*.
- Verbal instructions/discussions which were deliberately undefined or sketchy, outlining constraints - as in *Taonga*.
- No discussion at all about intentions, constraints or even about who would start to play; we just played – hence free/open-ended improvisation as in *Interludes 1 and 2*

Some of the pieces in the album are stylistically informed by practices from contemporary jazz. This includes the use and re-interpretation of other Jazz musicians' compositions, such as the arrangement of Kenny Wheeler's *Everybody's Song But Not My Own* and John Taylor's *Between Moons*. The textual material for my composition *Song* is in the same format as *Between Moons*. The notated material was a lead-sheet supplying the melody and the chord-changes only; there are no indications of dynamics, phrasing or even articulation. In terms of both composition and improvisation, some pieces explore the territory where elements from Western classical music are blended with elements of jazz and improvisation in its widest sense – such as *Black Moon*, *Taonga*, *Interlude 2* and *Vigil*. There is a deliberately modulated range and diversity in the approaches to how improvisation and composed elements interact over the whole album. This relates directly to the research objective concerning how a wide and nuanced set of different capabilities, approaches and functionalities can all be aspects of musicianship that are often placed under the heading of improvisation.

As mentioned earlier the often, quite loose, approach to time/pulse is a significant factor at work in this music. The use of rubato and agogic phrasing, both of which belong to Western classical performance practice, intersect with this, for example in *Choro Para Curar Meu Corazon*. The result is that rhythm, phrasing and pulse in some of these pieces are often very flexible and nuanced, very much in the way that would be appropriate for classical playing yet at the same time creating the rhythmic momentum that is essential to the spinning of melodic lines that is a crucial part of how Jazz players think in music.³²

³² The subject of different types of rubato and of agogic phrasing are discussed exhaustively and clearly in Rosenblum, S. "The Uses of Rubato in Music, Eighteenth to Twentieth Centuries." *Performance Practice Review: vol. 7 No.1 1994*. Of interest is the distinction between types of rubato where the flexibility of a melodic line is pitted against a consistent pulse, as distinct from rubato where the pulse itself fluctuates and phrase-endings are broken by a pause or hesitation. The former is very similar to how Jazz musicians 'lay back' against the tempo of a consistent 'swing feel'.

Elements of pre-determined, notated music are integrated with improvised music, using a range of strategies and drawing on a diverse palette of musical languages. Examples include Latin-inflected static grooves with chromatic harmony redolent of music from the ECM genre (*Black Moon*), the Baroque French overture style (*Black Moon*) and 19th century pianism à la Chopin (*Vigil*).

Commentary on the pieces

Song

This is in a style and form typical of a jazz standard/composition. It is intended to complement Kenny Wheeler's *Everybody's Song But Not My Own*. *Song* and *Everybody's Song But Not My Own* were placed at the beginning and end of the album in order to enhance the sense of unity and coherence in the work as a whole, since it is stylistically quite disparate; they act as 'book-ends' for the album. There are specific features of the composition that are shared with the Kenny Wheeler tune, reflecting this intentional connection: The metre is a 3/4 jazz-waltz and the end of the form features an extended Phrygian vamp over a pedal. The chord-changes have a relatively rapid harmonic rhythm – typically lasting for only one of the short 3/4 bars and the tonal centre changes frequently. The melody has a widely arching, expansive profile and subtle polyrhythmic nuances.

As is the case with Wheeler's composition, the complex chord-changes require the soloist to negotiate several key-centres in rapid succession. This frames the improvisations into a very tight stylistic context that can be associated with the music of Kenny Wheeler and John Taylor and which almost constitutes a sub-genre of contemporary jazz. There are two main aspects regarding the role of being the pianist in this piece (as with the Wheeler tune too). Providing supportive accompanying textures required an approach to comping involving close interaction with the soloist. By contrast, when improvising my solo over the

chord-changes, I am effectively plunged abruptly into a solo piano context. There is no rhythm-section providing support and the change between these contexts requires a significant shift in cognitive/functional approach.

Between Moons

This is a jazz composition by John Taylor which he recorded on the album *Rosslyn* (2003). Taylor's original approach with his recording and in subsequent live performances is rather jagged in some respects, especially where rhythmic textures are concerned. In this interpretation, made with Sipiagin, we employed a more fluid and rhythmically loose textural approach. There is a subtle element of rubato at play, which is, to an extent, redolent of 19th century classical piano music. The improvisations are very strongly jazz inflected however.

Black Moon and Black Moon (Reprise)

The commentary for both iterations of this piece, which is a key element in the album, is combined here in one section. I chose to use both versions (alternate takes) of this piece on the CD since the second take, *Black Moon (Reprise)*, has a transformative quality compared to the first. This quality adds to its effectiveness when it is used it like a *ritornello* - placing it at a later stage in the album. This reiteration adds a sense of coherence and thematic progression within the album as a whole. In a sense, this constitutes a compositional decision regarding the over-arching narrative of the CD.

The strategy behind the piece was to explore a personal form of heteroglossia; to integrate disparate stylistic elements and practices from different sources. The composition draws stylistically on jazz, Baroque music and 20th century classical music. Improvisatory techniques employed reflect jazz and late 18th century classical music, specifically the practice of adding improvised ornamentation to material when it is repeated, as for example in Mozart sonata movements (Levin 2012). I had the Baroque French style in mind for *Black Moon*, with its characteristic double-dotted feel and a slow, rather processional character. In terms of harmonic language, *Black Moon* is influenced by 20th century classical composers, most particularly Shostakovich, as well as by contemporary

jazz. Pianistically, Keith Jarrett's influence is strongly felt in this piece. The theme is very heavily composed and the notation is detailed (see ex. 7).

There are two strategies in play regarding the improvised content. The improvised piano solo interludes involve paraphrasing/ornamentation of the composed thematic material whereas the trumpet/fluegel solos consists of jazz improvisation over a static groove. The paraphrasing approach proved not very fruitful as a vehicle for Sipiagin's improvising, so we decided to have the trumpet improvise over a static Db tonal centre (which emerges naturally out of the composed material).

An issue arising from this ad-hoc decision about the trumpet solo, that would be needed to be considered in future live performances of Black Moon, is whether to retain characteristics of what we improvised in the recording – in other words, to re-iterate ideas that were originally improvised spontaneously – or play something completely different. In his 2004 article 'Reading Around Free Improvisation' Jonty Stockdale considers the issue of what can happen when a group of players, who could be categorised as free jazz players, must negotiate the issue of regular performances of the same music:

[T]here is a concern that if the same musicians play together on a regular basis, and the individual repertoires remain static, then even if the framework changes, many characteristics of the performance may remain the same (Stockdale 2004).

This is, however in the context of musicians embracing an agenda where avoidance of the predictable or codified elements of convention and style is an important consideration – perhaps bordering on a fetish. From my personal perspective, style and convention may often, though not exclusively, be viewed as a valuable creative frame of reference. It might be desirable to have the trumpet solo section in Black Moon retain the characteristics of the recording; or not. There are numerous options, which may lead to different choices in

different performances. The recording can be used as a useful referent or we may prefer to improvise something different for another performance. Contrasting this attitude to that of the free improvisers suggests that it is not a black and white matter of either-or; it is a question of degree.

Paraphrasing is an improvisational technique that involves modifying or in some way transforming the existing composed music. By contrast, jazz improvisation tends to have the aim of generating completely new musical substance, based on the harmonic structure of the theme or other chordal material supplied by the composer. The latter is exemplified in *Everybody's Song But Not My Own and Song*. In the piano solo interludes of *Black Moon* my approach was to embellish the existing notated textural/harmonic framework. The melodic lines are based on the composed melody, mainly employing a process of embellishment. This recalls the practice from the classical era of improvising ornamentation and adding to the composed text, as per Mozart's sonatas/concertos, for example. Levin alludes to this in his lecture/recital that was cited earlier (Levin 2012).

Black Moon is given two different iterations in the album. The harmonic content in the trumpet solo section of second iteration - *Black Moon (Reprise)* - is more dissonant than first and the piano textures are more fractured. This was an un-planned response to the sound produced by using a harmon mute on the trumpet. The change in timbre transformed the underlying aesthetic of the piece, creating a rather sour and morbid atmosphere. The nature of this transformation was unforeseen and demonstrates how one small change - in this instance of timbre - can be a significant actant in determining the outcomes of an improvisation, transforming the very character and nature of what is played; this echoes Cobussen's observations about actants (Cobussen 2017). This interpretation of the piece is radically different in character from my original conception. It is rather dark and chilling. A deeper emotional dimension is given to the album as a whole

by its inclusion as the penultimate track, preceding the rather joyous Kenny Wheeler piece at the end. Perhaps rather fancifully, I saw this as representing a process of moving from darkness into light.

Ex 7: (Black Moon)

The musical score is divided into three systems, each featuring a Trumpet in B (TPT.) and a Piano (PNO.).

System 1: The Trumpet part begins with a melodic line in 3/4 time, marked *MP* (mezzo-piano). It includes a triplet of eighth notes. The Piano accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines in both staves, with a 3-measure rest in the right hand at the end of the system.

System 2: The Trumpet part starts at measure 4 with a melodic line. The Piano accompaniment continues with complex chordal textures and moving lines, including a 3-measure rest in the right hand at the end of the system.

System 3: The Trumpet part starts at measure 7 with a melodic line, including a triplet of eighth notes. The Piano accompaniment continues with complex chordal textures and moving lines, including a 3-measure rest in the right hand at the end of the system.

Interlude 1

This is a free improvisation and the music is atonal. There was no discussion about what we would play or even about who would start. The scheme of the improvisation quickly becomes framed by my establishing a continuous flow of evenly-metred notes resembling a swing bass line, against which the trumpet plays lines that have the melodic/rhythmic characteristics of swing-jazz but without a tonal or harmonic framework. This exemplifies the concept of 'time-no-changes', which is a widely used term, relating to an approach to jazz-swing that allowed harmonic concepts to become more open/freer area for improvising soloists. It was pioneered in the late 1960's by the Miles Davis Quintet; the albums *Miles Smiles* (1967) *Nefertiti* (1968) represent the point at which this approach was firmly established. In *Interlude 1* this swing-feel is subjected to progressive metric modulation (diminution), to which the trumpet responds. There is an episode of sparseness and calm which is initiated by the trumpet and which is then superseded by a dissonant and frantic piano cadenza. There is a constant process of cross-initiation at work in this improvisation between Sipiagin and myself. The only consistent element which persists through the piece is the swing bass-line. Conceptually, the piano cadenza is the bass-line idea gradually accelerating and spinning out of control. There was a certain tension that is worth noting, between our two mind-sets whilst improvising. Sipiagin's tendency to move between different ideas – rather in the manner of a collage, (or 'passing clouds') and my predisposition towards maintaining a motif and developing it further are in some ways at odds. This tension was fruitful in making both players respond to conflicting motives in order to create a coherent musical discourse. In a sense, I was allowing a motivation that was compositionally-biased to infiltrate a free improvisation.

Choro Par Curar Meu Corazon

This jazz composition is cast in the Brazilian genre of Chorinho. I have also used this piece in a conventional jazz ensemble context. In this interpretation the feel is quite rhythmically loose, and rubato often plays a part, especially in the piano solo. The aim was to explore the grey area between jazz and classical music, as is the case with the Chorinho style itself. In the accompaniment I referenced a blend of rhythmic/textural approaches from jazz, Brazilian and Afro-Cuban music.

Interlude 2

As is the case with *Interlude 1*, this music is freely improvised and is predominantly non-metric. I began the improvisation atonally, having in mind to explore atonality as discussed in the commentary about *Southern Shift* but within the interactive duo context. The outcome of the exploration took unexpected turns, since Sipiagin's melodic responses to my pitch-choices soon tipped the balance in the direction of tonality. Various key centres are gradually explored in the ensuing dialogue between us. Up until 03:02 the improvisation had been driven by this mutually interactive process, which (I felt) had the potential risk of becoming aimless and rambling. At this point I deliberately exerted a strong musical initiative and began to set up a long-term harmonic schema that would lead to strong point of cadence establishing the key of D minor, which is the key of *Vigil*. This is achieved by 03:51 in the recording. The idea of influencing the music argument to make this improvisation become, in effect, a 'prequel' for *Vigil*, which we had already recorded, entered my mind at the point mentioned earlier (03:20). This constituted an abrupt shift of approach from stream of consciousness to a very strongly composition-oriented strategy. I had in mind both a localised agenda of resolving the current improvisation in D minor and the more long-term objective of how the overall structure of the album was to be taken into account. In effect, protension-retension was operating at two levels simultaneously.

Vigil

Vigil involved using a blend of notated music and improvised music. Stylistically, there is much about this piece which initially places it in the frame of Classical music, rather than as being *Jazz*, as such. Part of the compositional process was to leave space in the notated score of the thematic material for the trumpet to improvise (see Ex. 8). There is thematic material which is fully-composed giving some very strong hints to the trumpet player as to the nature of how to improvise in the gaps. By contrast, the piano writing in the score is very specific; the piano music conveys a very strong sense of mood and frames the style of improvisation for the piece. This piano accompaniment is intended to become an aesthetic backdrop, creating a musical environment within which improvisation in the foreground can be engendered which has a particular kind of feel. I deviated - to an extent - from the set notation as the piece progressed and then developed the musical textures by improvising as the piece developed, later to return to the composed piano part when the theme re-capitulates (albeit with some touches of modification). The aesthetic of the piano music is very influenced by some 20th century Classical music such as Henryk Górecki's Symphony No. 3, Op. 36, and Rachmaninoff's *All Night Vigil* Op. 37. In terms of textually-conceived musical process, the stream of crotchets which delineate the harmony by using two and three part moving textures is influenced by the central episode of Brahms's Rhapsody Op. 79 No. 1, which employs very similar linear processes, albeit in B major.

In the performance I deliberately deviated, from the notated version of the piano layout in a number of ways, since this allowed me to react spontaneously to how Sipiagin played the trumpet lines. This exemplifies the phenomenon to which I alluded earlier in the introduction to this dissertation, concerning improvisation and recording, vis-à-vis how improvised music may have qualities resulting from inventing spontaneously 'in the moment', that can be preserved as a musical artefact through recording and that these

qualities may – and often are – lost, or unattainable, when the music is crafted and notated on paper.

Ex 8: (Vigil)

TRUMPET IN B♭

PIANO

INTRO

5 *Dm* *Gm7/D* 3

TPT.

PNO.

INTRO

(ETC)

9 *D7(b9)* LEAD IN...

TPT.

PNO.

INTRO

(ETC)

13 *Dm* *C#7* (LOSELEY) 3

TPT.

PNO.

Dm *C#7*

17 *Gmaj7(b9)* *Abm7/Bb* *Gm7/A* (CONTINUE PHRASE)

TPT.

PNO.

Gmaj7(b9) *Abm7/Bb* *Gm7/A*

COPYRIGHT © MARK DONLON

Ostinato

This piece is essentially a jazz composition in terms of form and concept. To an extent it also has an element of static ostinato too - hence the title. The piano ostinato figures reflect the 19th/20th century classical toccata genre, as exemplified by Schuman, Prokofieff and Khachaturian. There is a theme which follows an AABA structure as is the case with many jazz standards, and the solos are based on the harmonic form of the theme. The ostinato is maintained by the piano and supplies the main elements of the piece's mood and aesthetic. The intention behind the composition was to provide a vehicle for Sipiagin's formidable virtuosity.

9/8 is a metre towards which I have tended to have a strong disposition – I am particularly attracted to the possibilities it offers for overlaying different additive rhythmic divisions of the 9 with different layers of poly-metric elements.³³ In a sense, this piece and *Zanj*, from the album *Tales from the Diaspora*, constitute a kind of stylised African '3-in-a-bar' idiom, a rhythmic form that I have employed in a number of other compositions and arrangements.

Taonga

This piece explores extemporaneous composition as a collaborative process; there are two players improvising and the element of interaction between us was a significant actant in respect of how the music unfolded and evolved. I had a concept in mind beforehand for the piece of which there were two facets. Firstly, there was Arvo Pärt's *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978) which is a minimalist piece in which stark diatonicism is predominant - often only using notes from a major triad. I discussed this constraint before recording the improvisation with Sipiagin, who knew the Pärt piece. I also had a pre-meditated constraint, which I chose not to share with Sipiagin. My aim was that the music would begin with only root, third and fifth of a triad (G, B and D) being used, as is the case with

³³ Refer to the scores of *Ostinato* and *Zanj* which are in the appendix.

Spiegel im Spiegel and that as the music developed, the other nine remaining pitch-classes would begin to be gradually introduced, to achieve tonal aggregation. After this process had unfolded through our spontaneous interaction in the performance, it seemed natural to allow it to recede and end as we had begun, with a 'clean', G major triad.

A propos of the interaction between myself and Sipiagin in this piece, I was particularly struck with how adroitly he responded to whatever I was doing during the improvisations and seemed to fully understand my musical concepts – almost telepathically. He was also consistently able to improvise musical substance that was of an extremely high level of coherence and artistic quality. This contrasts with the frustration I have occasionally experienced whilst playing with some free/avant-garde improvisers who – from my perspective – were unresponsive to or unaware of the possibilities of developing longer-term processes and clearly conceived musical constructs in free improvisations. I attribute this to shared similarities in both mine and Sipiagin's conceptual and stylistic approaches to music and in particular, to Sipiagin's exceptional musicianship and creative intelligence. He is able to access musical ideas and language which are wholly appropriate to the musical discourse and apply them creatively. I would argue that this reflects a synthesis of his encyclopaedic musical vocabulary as well as great technical mastery and true instinctive artistry.

Everybody's Song But Not My Own

I wanted to include one jazz standard on this album with which both players were extremely familiar. Improvising over a form that is very familiar and 'well-trodden' creates a different mindset and employs different cognitive processes than is the case where improvising over newly-presented and newly-learned material is concerned. There is an ease and freedom in the quality of the improvisations in this piece that I wanted to exploit in order to act as a 'release' at the end of the album. This tune is not as 'hackneyed' as is,

perhaps, the case with many jazz standards. However, as it happened, both Sipiagin and myself were very familiar with it and have both performed it many times, over many years; we were both aware of and familiar with its performance and recorded history too.

Tales from the Diaspora

Introduction

The album *Tales from the Diaspora* is a jazz quintet album released as CD (FUZ014), comprising seven of my original jazz compositions. It was recorded in New York, at Systems Two recording studio. Along with myself as pianist, the personnel of the quintet are:

Seamus Blake - tenor saxophone

Alex Sipiagin - trumpet/fluegelhorn

Boris Kozlov - bass

Donald Edwards – drums

There are seven tracks:

1. *Aleppo*
2. *Tales from the Diaspora*
3. *Matiu*
4. *Windrush*
5. *Zanj*
6. *When you left*
7. *At the Gate*

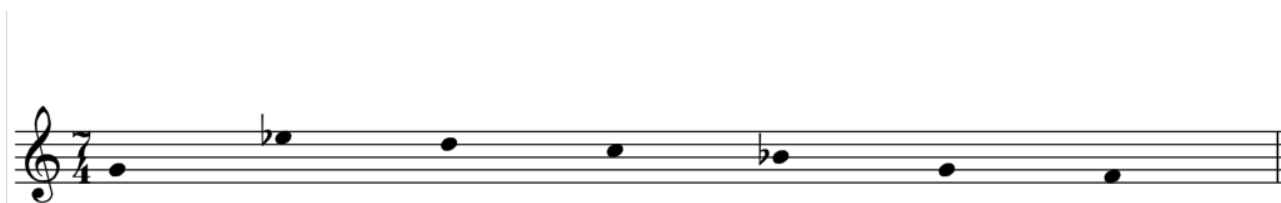
The compositional and improvisational aspects of the work conform to strongly-codified conventions associated with jazz. To this end, the compositions are concisely-wrought and the content is highly concentrated. The compositions reflect my personal idiomatic tendencies and musical background. In particular the music integrates characteristics that reflect my immersion in Afro-Cuban music and European-tinged jazz genres associated with Kenny Wheeler and the record label ECM. ('ECM' has, in a sense, itself become a generic term, used to describe jazz within a European 'sound', such as the music of Eberhart Weber, Kenny Wheeler or Bobo Stenson.) The compositional concepts are framed by the protocols of contemporary jazz, in that the improvisations are based on the harmonic form underlying the themes. There are some exceptions. For example, in *Aleppo* the solos are played over an eight-bar loop from the first part of the theme. Originally, I had intended to use the whole sixteen bar sequence (between letters **A** and **B** in the score - see appendix). In practice, the small but substantive difference in harmony between the two eight-bar sections tended to impede the flow of the soloists (Seamus Blake and Alex Sipiagin). After some discussion and negotiation, I decided that solos would be over the more consistent, shorter loop. Freeing-up the soloist's cognitive attention from the task of remembering which bit of the sequence they were in allowed them to focus on immersion in their improvisations rather than 'counting bars'. The other deviation from 'soloing over the form' is *Tales from the Diaspora*. The metric and harmonic detail in the bridge is very convoluted and would also tend to impede the flow of improvised solos, in a sense, for converse reasons to *Aleppo*. In both cases, taking into consideration where the soloists' attention is concentrated optimised freedom of invention and fluent improvising. The solos in *Tales from the Diaspora* are over the sequence from the **A**-section.

The seven pieces in *Tales from the Diaspora* essentially constitute a suite – adding to the sense of unity in the work. As is often the case with classical suites, there are strong thematic and motivic links between the pieces and the work as a whole has a

programmatic, extra-musical theme of diasporas; it concerns the displacement of people across the world by historical or economic forces such as war, slavery or economic collapse.

These programmatic ideas are reflected in 'leitmotifs'. For example, there is a pentatonic theme, which for myself I dubbed the 'boat-song theme' (see example 9), since it is loosely based on the traditional Scottish folk-song *My Bonny Lies Over the Ocean*. This motif explicitly manifests as the theme in *Windrush* and *Zanj* (see Ex. 4).³⁴

Ex 9: (Boat Song motif)



The stark dissonance of a minor 9th — as cast in the chord F[#]-/G[#], for example — and which is derived from the falling semitone in the 'Boat-song motif', is a motif representing the personal loss such as familial separation that often results from the displacement of people across the world. This motif is the driving material in the pieces *'When You Left'* and *At the Gate*.

Where jazz is concerned, compositional choices about chord-sequences play a significant role in affecting what players might improvise. A jazz composer can use harmony to frame the soloist. This is particularly the case in the piece *When You Left*, where the nature of the predominating harmonic quality (a b9 combined with a sus4) is itself one itself one of

³⁴ The ship called 'The Empire Windrush' was famous in 20th century British history for having transported West Indian immigrants from the Caribbean to Britain in the 1940's and 1950's. The current scandal about 'Windrush' immigrants in the UK began after this music was recorded. The name 'Zanj' refers to an old colloquial African name for those who were forced into ships and taken to the Americas as slaves.

the 'leitmotifs' of the suite, as a whole (see above). There is a contrast between the constraints imposed by the conventional small-group jazz format, with its idiomatic protocols and attendant deeply-codified style and language and the more diverse and open concepts at play in the *Between Moons*. This contrast is even greater with *Southern Shift*. In relation to a spectrum, of the extent of improvised input, *Tales from the Diaspora* could sit in the middle between the performance of a classical piece and free improvisation. Similarly, it sits at the centre of the improvisation-composition continuum/spectrum. Regarding my own improvising in this context, I needed to adopt a much more constrained set of strategies than in the other two albums. It would have been musically inappropriate if I had not focused my musical decisions on playing *jazz* as distinct from improvising through more wide-ranging, eclectic frames. The opportunities for infusing elements from other genres are quite limited in the context in the music is to retain a sense of stylistic integrity. Furthermore, the melodic/harmonic syntax of jazz requires a high level of concision and discernment about what is played.

This ensemble has a background that is worthy of mentioning. With the addition of pianist Dave Kikowski (whom I replaced for this recording), the group is an established quintet on the New York jazz scene called Opus 5. They perform together regularly and have published four albums. In a sense, this required me to adapt to *their* context, regarding how to improvise effectively in the ensemble. I needed to find ways to integrate the looseness/flexibility of rhythm, feel and phrasing that characterise my personal approach with the tighter, direct approach to feel that is characteristic of New York jazz players. This aspect of mitigation is exemplified in my solo on *Tales from the Diaspora*. I would normally use complex subdivision in a very loose and fluid way - in this solo I tried to find a balance between this aspect of my lines whilst still interacting in a tighter rhythmic frame with the bass and drums, through being a little more metrically explicit at times.

During the course of playing with the group, I became aware that there were deeply-ingrained, unspoken conventions that the group employed. An example is regarding dynamics and texture. When there was a change of soloist the rhythm-section would transition with great subtlety, from a driving, precise rhythmic/textural feel to a particular kind of looser, more open feel with much use of space and colour, subsequently transitioning back to a more driving feel. There was never any discussion or pre-meditation about this. Often this was when Sipiagin's solo followed Blake's. Initially I found myself responding to this reactively but with more experience of playing in the ensemble I was able to become more actively involved in anticipating and initiating these changes collectively with the others. The transition from saxophone to trumpet solo in *Tales from the Diaspora* and *Windrush* exemplify this.

Saraband

This is a composition for classical piano trio (piano, violin and cello).³⁵ The piece is based on a jazz composition of the same name which I published on the jazz quintet CD album *Kashasha* (2011) The piece was slightly unusual for a jazz composition, in that the melody re-iterates throughout the whole track and becomes the backdrop for improvisations. This latter approach was one I used again in the piece *When You Left*, from *Tales from the Diaspora*. The concept of this piano trio piece is strongly informed by the Renaissance genre of *Ricercare*.³⁶

Riseley and Megiddo regularly perform with pianist Jian Liu as the Te Koki Trio — so in one sense, the well-defined role of the classical pianist in the ensemble is here usurped by an improvising pianist. In this piece the string parts are fully composed and notated in detail, whereas the piano part is completely improvised – there is no piano part. In the performance I read a short-score of the string parts as a guide from which to improvise. This explores another cognitive approach through which wholly improvised elements can be integrated with composed music. This is a new development for me and which has not been widely employed or chronicled by external sources as far as I am aware (if at all).

The score enabled me to use skills in analysing the notation to make musical choices for improvisation. There is some correlation to playing from jazz notation in the specific sense that an element of theoretical analysis plays a part in playing from Jazz chord-symbols – from which ideas conforming to a codified vocabulary/syntax germane to Jazz can be deduced. However, I had few, if any, pre-conceptions prior to the performance as to how

³⁵ The violinist is Martin Riseley and the cellist is Inbal Megiddo. The performance can be viewed on youtube through this link: https://youtu.be/SJVaYJ_580Q

³⁶ The term ‘ricercare’ can refer to a range of practices, particularly evident in renaissance music. In respect of *Saraband* it is the aspects of *ricercare* that involve variations and the exploration of a particular motif (see Reese 1954).

and what to play; even though I was familiar with the composed elements I had purposefully not rehearsed what I might improvise. I found it interesting that I was drawn to a musical vocabulary that resonated with the way in which the other two players played the composed music – models from the mid to late 20th century classical canon seemed to ‘come to hand’ – the idioms of Shostakovich and Tippett come to mind, rather than what I would have been drawn to had I been playing over the similar harmonies in the context of improvising Jazz. I was also aware that the context of the performance - a formal classical recital in which I had also played a programme of music by Bach and Rachmaninoff - seemed to have heavily influenced my inclinations regarding what kind of musical language to access for the improvisation.

Collaborations between classical musicians and improvising musicians represent a form of musical activity that has only begun to gain acceptance and, to an extent, be ‘legitimised’ in the last two or three decades. In this piece, which was experimental to an extent, I wanted to focus on some very specific issues. This involves the two classical string players and the piano operating at the opposite end of the interpretation/improvisation spectrum. The interpretation of a detailed, composed score is at one end and free improvisation at the other. At the same time this piece simultaneously exploits both extremes of the composition improvisation continuum, since the violin and ‘cello are playing from detailed notation and the piano is free to play whatever they want.

Rachmaninoff Elegie and Etude Tableau in Eb minor

These pieces were recorded to explore and support the discussions about aurality and textuality, through a performative medium. The performances have been discussed at great length in chapter three.³⁷

³⁷ The performances can be viewed on youtube through this links. Elegie: <https://youtu.be/c-yGgiqhFPA> Etude Tableau: <https://youtu.be/lyCdvgeo2Rw>

5. Conclusions

The research questions were:

- When diverse and divergent aspects of musical practice, from traditions such as Western classical music, jazz and other African-based music are integrated into an improvised musical practice to give voice to a personal, creative musical identity, what can the nature of that music be? What new perspectives will emerge about how creative performers operate?
- Textuality and aurality function differently in these musical traditions. Can improvisation, in its wider sense, be re-evaluated to account for the employment of these through a more complex and nuanced set of creative functionalities than is typically understood by the single term improvisation?

The most substantive conclusions relating to these questions, in particular, “what can the nature of that music be?”, are articulated through the music itself. It is the primary element in the thesis, as per the practice-based research model. My musical background and professional practice as a pianist has involved assimilating several divergent musical genres, practices and skills. In my improvised music I have sought to integrate these into an original idiom that reflects my cultural environment and which is also a form of personal expression. To do this, my aim has been to forge coherent music through employing a kind of musical heteroglossia, in which I integrate and co-synthesise all these different types of music, musical skills and creative functionalities. The end-product of this process is the music.

Improvising music offers the opportunity to benefit from valuable aspects of spontaneity – from creativity in the moment — that notated composition cannot. Recording has afforded the facility to preserve this. In contemporary music culture, this affordance has resulted in improvised practices increasingly displacing music skills based in reading/textuality. For

example, this is reflected in many of the musical practices at work in popular music.

Traditional Western academic values have tended to marginalise or devalue such aspects of musicianship. These attitudes are currently being challenged in academia and bringing about paradigm-shifts, regarding how aspects wider than textually-based or logo-centric approaches to study can be embraced and integrated. This can lead to a richer and more relevant culture, regarding how academia interfaces with musical creativity in contemporary society. Areas such as creativity and artistic practice are elusive, when trying to draw clear, objective conclusions. They benefit from being studied through the creative process itself forming the basis for self-reflection, which in turn can yield valuable insights, that have different — additional — benefits from those offered by extrinsically applied hermeneutics and analysis.

The creative process has drawn attention to some wider issues. The extensive synthesis of diverse techniques, styles and approaches to improvisation has highlighted how creative processes often placed under the single heading of ‘improvisation’ are surprisingly diverse and varied. The music in the thesis has required the use of several creative musical functionalities:

- Using notation to decode skeletal information and improvise new music.
- Playing notated music and changing it through elaboration/ornamentation of the existing text.
- Reading notated music but playing ‘something else’.
- Integrating musical ideas from divergent genres such as classical music and jazz.
- Improvising freely whilst structuring a musical argument.

- Playing what one 'hears in one's head'.
- Playing from detailed notation but bringing aspects to the performance that are not notated and rely on responsivity to the contingent present (i.e. interpreting).

These can all be involved in the creative performance of music across a very wide range of musical contexts, types and genres. This suggests that beyond merely widening the taxonomy of improvisation, there is a need to develop more inclusive approaches to how it can be framed in contemporary musical culture, especially in classical music. This could be beneficial to many kinds of musicians. A more flexible scope in paradigms for how improvisation is researched and studied in the context of musical scholarship would enable a more relevant and effective understanding. It is a very nuanced and complex area of musical creativity that is not served well by attempts to make it fit approaches to study that focus rigidly on establishing purely objectivised, explicit knowledge. This inhibits how the dynamic, subtle and highly subjective aspects of musical improvisation can be better understood. The different natures of explicit and tacit knowledge are central to this issue.

Improvised musical practice is a challenging field, requiring many complex types of intellectual/technical engagement and critical thought. I would argue that this demonstrates how musical improvisation can be a legitimate form of scholarship. A wide knowledge-base needs to be researched and deeply assimilated to be able to improvise music that is complex, sophisticated and highly coherent. Complex intellectual processes are applied when re-contextualising musical ideas, requiring critical thinking and sophisticated employment of diverse theoretical concepts/techniques. Research through creative practice can offer wider-ranging and more relevant benefits than an exclusive emphasis on hermeneutics, quasi-scientific enquiry and ethnography can. Improvisation as

a creative practice is transient and involves subtle human characteristics such as intuition and emotion that require sophisticated and nuanced forms of understanding. The most far-reaching aspects of it are transient, visceral and intensely personal, making it challenging to study solely through textual analysis.

Apart from how the perspectives revealed by this thesis can contribute to thinking about improvised music in academia, there may be ramifications for how the curricula of schools, conservatoires and universities are structured. The development of more varied and diverse skill-sets could help the next generation of musicians become equipped to function more relevantly and effectively in the contemporary musical world. Initiatives towards such inclusivity tend to founder on barriers stemming from embedded dualistic attitudes about how the nature of musical practice is perceived in music-establishment circles.

Improvisation and aurality are often seen as belonging solely in the world of jazz and world music, with classical music focusing on textuality. However, these two can find common ground when performativity is placed in opposition to textuality; for example, when performers are competing for territory with musicologists. A more constructive approach would entail embracing the common objective of developing different aspects and types of thought that complement each-other, *in* and *about*, music. There is necessarily a huge diversity, breadth of concept and cognitive approach in musical creativity, which defies reductionist categorisation.

Bibliography

Almén, Byron. *A Theory of Musical Narrative*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2008.

Bailey, Derek. *Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice in Music*. New York, Da Capo Press, 1993.

Bartlett, Andrew W. "Cecil Taylor, identity energy, and the avant-garde African American body." *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 33, no. 1-2, 1995.

Berio, Luciano. *Two interviews with R. Dalmonte and B. András Varga*. Translated and edited. Osmond Smith D. London Marion Boyars, 1985.

Berliner, Paul. *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Borgo, David. 'Negotiating Freedom: Values and Practices in Contemporary Improvised Music'. *Black Music Research Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 2002.

Bourne, Matthew. 'Routine Investigations: Expanding the Language of Improvisation Through Interdisciplinary Interaction'. PhD Thesis. Leeds, University of Leeds School of Music, 2005.

Candy, Linda. *Practice Based Research: A Guide*. Creativity and Cognition Studios Report. 1, 2006.

Carr, Ian. *Keith Jarrett The Man and his Music*. London, Paladin, 1992.

Cobussen, Marcel. *The Field of Musical Improvisation*. Leiden, Leiden University Press, 2017.

Cone Edward T. *The Composer's Voice*. Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1974.

Cook Nicholas and Nicola Dibben 2001 *Musicological Approaches to Emotion in Music*, in *Music and Emotion* (ed. Patrik and John A. Sloboda) Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001.

Cook, Nicholas. 'Making Music Together, or Improvisation and its Others: Music as performance'. *The Source Vol. 1* Sheffield, Equinox Online, 2004.

Czerny, Carl. *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte, Op. 200*, Vienna 1836, translated and edited by Alice L. Mitchell New York, Longman, 1983.

Davidson, M. "On Recording Improvisation". *The Wire no.9* p.23, 1984.

Derrida, J. *De la Grammatologie*. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967 (Re-published 1976).

De Schyff, Dylan Van de. *The Free Improvisation Game Journal of Research in Music Performance* Spring, 2013.

Dolan, D. Sloboda, J. Jeldtoft Jensen, H. Crüts B. and Feygelson, E. 'The Improvisatory Approach to Classical Music Performance: an Empirical Investigation into its Characteristics and Impact', in online journal *Music Performance Research*, Vol. 6, Nov/Dec, 2013.

Douglas, Anne. "Altering a Fixed Identity: Thinking Through Improvisation." *Critical Studies in Improvisation* 8.2, 2012.

Elsdon, Peter. *Jarrett's The Köln Concert*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013.

Frayling, Christopher. Research in Art and Design. *Royal College of Arts Research Papers series*, London, Royal College of Art, 1993.

Fritsch, K. quoted in *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher: As Seen by his Pupils*. Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger Trans, by Naomi Shohet. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Givan, Benjamin. Gunther Schuller and the Challenge of Sonny Rollins: Stylistic Context, intentionality, and Jazz Analysis. *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 67, Number 1, 2014.

Gioia, Ted. *The Imperfect Art* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988.

Goehr, Lydia. *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1992.

Greimas, A.J. *Structural Semantics: An Attempt at a Method*, Lincoln & London, University of Nebraska Press, 1983.

Halford, Margery. Foreword to *L'art de Toucher le Clavecin by Francois Couperin*. Van Nuys, Alfred Publishing, 1974.

Hannan, Michael., 'Interrogating improvisation as practice-led research' paper presented to Speculation and innovation: applying practice led research in the creative industries, Queensland University of Technology. Brisbane, Qld, 5 April, 2006.

Hanslick, Eduard, *On the Musically Beautiful: A Contribution Towards the Revision Of Aesthetics Of Music* (trans. G. Payzant), Indianapolis, 1986 (originally published 1854).

Hill, Peter and Simeone, Nigel. Messiaen, New Haven etc. Yale University Press, 2005.

Ingold, Tim. Materials against Materiality, *Archaeological Dialogues* 14 (1). Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Johnson, Bruce 'Jazz as cultural practice'. In Mervyn Cooke and David Horn(eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Jazz* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Keller, P.E., Novembre, G., & Loehr, J. Musical ensemble performance: Representing self, other, and joint action outcomes. In E.S. Cross & S.S. Obhi (Eds.), *Shared representations: Sensorimotor foundations of social life*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Levin, Robert. *Israel Studies in Musicology Online*, Vol.3, 2004.

- Lewis, George E. Improvised music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives. *Black Music Research Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1996.
- Limb CJ, and Braun AR Neural Substrates of Spontaneous Musical Performance: An fMRI Study of Jazz Improvisation. *PLoS ONE* 3(2): e1679. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0001679> 2008
- Nettl, B and Russell, M. 'In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation'. *Chicago Studies in Ethnomusicology* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Neuhaus, H. *The Art of Piano Playing*. London, Kahn and Averil, 1998 (re-published 2016).
- Nichols, J. B. *Verdict on India* London, 1944 pp.134-6; quoted in R. Anderson Sutton, 'Do Javanese Musicians Really Improvise?' in, *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*, ed. Bruno Nettl with Melinda Russell Chicago, 1998.
- Nooshin, Laudan. 'Improvisation as 'Other': Creativity, Knowledge and Power: The Case of Iranian Classical Music'. *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 128, No. 2, 2003.
- Manuel, Peter. *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean* Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2009.
- McPherson, M and Limb Charles J. Difficulties in the neuroscience of creativity: jazz improvisation and the scientific method. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 2013 Issue: The Emerging Science of Consciousness: Mind, Brain, and the Human Experience*, 2013.
- Monson, Ingrid. *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Niedderer, K. Designing Mindful Interaction: The Category of the Performative Object. *Design Issues: Volume 23, Number 1* Winter, 2007.
- Page, Timothy. "Motivic Strategies in Improvisations by Keith Jarrett and Brad Mehldau." Helsinki, Sibelius Academy, 2009.
- Petsche, Joanna. *Channelling the Creative: Keith Jarrett's Spiritual Beliefs Through a Gurdjieffian Lens*. Sydney, Australian Catholic University, 2017.
- Polanyi, Michael. *Personal Knowledge – Towards a Post-Critical philosophy*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1958.
- Pressing, J. Cognitive Processes in Improvisation. *Advances in Psychology*, Vol.19, 1984.
- Pressing, J. Improvisation: Methods and models. In: J.A. Sloboda (Ed.), *Generative Processes in Music: The Psychology of Performance, Improvisation, and Composition*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1988.
- Raffel, Burton. Review of Edward T. Cone's *The Composer's Voice*. In *Books Abroad* Vol.49, no. 2, 1975.
- Reese, Gustave. *Music in the Renaissance*. New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 1954.
- Rosenblum, S. "The Uses of Rubato in Music, Eighteenth to Twentieth Centuries." *Performance Practice Review: vol. 7* No.1, 1994.

- Sarath, Edward W. "A New Look at Improvisation" *Journal of Music Theory* Vol. 40, No. 1 (1996) Yale University Department of Music, Duke University Press.
- Sarath, Edward W. 'Improvisation for Global Musicianship'. *Music Educators Journal*, Vol. 80, No. 2, 1993.
- Sarath, Edward W. *Improvisation, Creativity, and Consciousness — Jazz as Integral Template for Music, Education, and Society*, Albany, Suny, 2013.
- Schuiling, Floris. "Compositions in Improvisation: The Instant Composers Pool Orchestra" *ACT – Zeitschrift für Musik & Performance*, Ausgabe, 2014.
- Stock, Jonathan. 'New Musicologies, Old Musicologies: Ethnomusicology and the Study of Western Music'. *Current Musicology* 62:40_68, 1997.
- Spilker, John. D. The Origins of 'Dissonant Counterpoint': Henry Cowell's Unpublished Notebook. *Journal of the Society for American Music* Vol. 5, (2011).
- Stewart, Jesse. "'Comprovisation or Imposition?': An Improvised Composition on a Life of Improvisation." *Critical Studies in Improvisation* 9.2, 2013).
- Stockdale, Jonty: Reading around free improvisation'. *The Source* Vol. 1 Sheffield, Equinox Online, 2004.
- Sublette, N. *Cuba and Its Music: From the First Drums to the Mambo*, Chicago, Chicago Review Press, 2004.
- Tagg, P. 50 Seconds of Television Music – towards an analysis of affect in popular music. *Studies from the Department of Musicology*. No 2. Gothenburg, University of Gothenburg, 1979.
- Tagg Philip Analysing Popular Music: Theory, Method and Practice. *Popular Music* 1982.
- Tymozco, Dmitri Stravinsky and the Octatonic: A Reconsideration *Music Theory Spectrum*, Volume 24, Issue 1, 1 March, 2002.
- Webber, J. Authenticity. In *Jean-Paul Sartre: Key Concepts* S. Churchill & J. Reynolds (Eds.) Acumen Publishing, 2013.
- Vickhoff, Björn. *A Perspective Theory of Music Perception and Emotion*. PhD thesis Gothenburg, University Of Gothenburg, 2008.
- Walser, Robert, "Out of Notes: Signification, Interpretation, and the Problem of Miles Davis," *The Musical Quarterly* 77, no. 2, 1993.
- Wilson, John S. In Dancing Spirits: Jarrett Improvises on the Keyboard. New York Times (September 28, 1975: 399). Quoted in Elsdon, Peter. *Jarrett's The Köln Concert*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Wishart, Trevor. *On Sonic Art*. Amsterdam, Harwood Academic, 1985.

Scores

- Adams, John. *The Chairman Dances*. Los Angeles, Schirmer, 1985.
- Bach, J.S. *The Well-Tempered Clavier Part I*. München, G. Henle Verlag, 1997.
- Bartok, B. *Piano Sonata*. London, Boosey and Hawkes, 1926
- Berg, A. *Piano Sonata op. 1*. Ed. Scheideler U. München, G. Henle Verlag, 2006.
- Beethoven, L.V. *32 Sonatas for Piano*. München, G. Henle Verlag, 1961.
- Brahms, J. *Zwei Rhapsodien op. 79*. Ed. Steegman, M. München, G. Henle Verlag, 1976.
- Chopin, F. *Ballades opus 23, 38, 47, 52*. Ed. Samson, J. London, Peters, 1992.
- Chopin, F. *Barcarolle op. 60*. München, G. Henle Verlag, 2011.
- Donlon, Mark. *Study no. 2*. 1995 (unpublished).
- Copeland, A. *Duo for Piano and Flute*. London, Boosey and Hawkes, 1971.
- Rachmaninoff, S. *Moceaux de Fantasia op. 3* Moscow, Muzgiz. 1947.
- Rachmaninoff, S. *Preludes for Piano opus 23*. London, Boosey and Hawkes. 1903.
- Rachmaninoff, S. *Etudes Tableaux Op. 33 and Op. 39*. London, Boosey and Hawkes 1917.
- Ravel, M. *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. Paris Durand, 1918.
- Tippett, M. *Piano Concerto*. London, Schott, 1956.

Discography

- Bourne, M *Montauk Variations* Matthew Bourne BAY77CD 2012.
- Donlon, M. *Ashia* Mark Donlon. FIRE020 2007.
- Donlon, M. *Kashasha* Mark Donlon, Julian Seigel, Mick Hutton, Gene Galderazzo FUZ007 2011.
- Donlon, M. *Between Moons* Mark Donlon, Alex Sipiagin. FUZ012 2017.
- Donlon, M. *Southern Shift*. Mark Donlon, FUZ009 2016.
- Hancock, Herbie. – *Inventions and Dimensions* Herbie Hancock, Paul Chambers, Willie Bobo, Osvaldo Martinez, Blue Note, 1964.
- Iyer, V *Mutations*. Vijay Iyer. ECM 23723764798 2014.

Jarrett, K. *Belonging* Keith Jarrett. ECM 1050 1974.

Jarrett, K *Dark Intervals* Keith Jarrett. ECM 1379 1987.

Jarrett, K *Facing You* Keith Jarrett. ECM 1017 1971 (Re-released 2008).

Jarrett, K. *The Köln Concert*. Keith Jarrett. ECM 1064/65 1975.

Jarrett, K *Sun Bear Concerts* Keith Jarrett. ECM 1100 1976.

Mengelberg, M. *No Idea* Misha Mengelberg, Greg Cohen, Joey Baron. DIW 619 1997.
Montero *Bach and Beyond* Gabriela Montero. EMI Classics 2006.

Montero, G. *Baroque* Gabriela Montero. EMI Classics 2007.

Simcock, G. *Good Days at Schloss Elmau*. Gwilym Simcock. ACT2011.

Taylor, C. *Indent*. Cecil Taylor. Unit Core Records 30555 1967 (re-released 1973).

Taylor, J. *Rosslyn*. John Taylor, Marc Johnson, Joey Baron. ECM 1751 2003.

Wheeler, Kenny. *Music for Large and Small Ensembles* ECM 843152-2 1990.

DVD

Burns, Ken. *Jazz*, Ken Burns Media Walpole 2001.

Messiaen, O., *Quartet for the End of Time; Improvisations*, directed by Georges Bessonnet, 82 min., G.B. Productions France/Image Entertainment, 1991/1999, DVD.

Jarrett, Keith. Carr, Ian. Dibb, Michael. *The Art of Improvisation*. EuroArts Music International GmbH ,2005.

Internet Links

Briggs, D. *Improvised Fugue at L'Elise de Saint Surplice in Paris* 2017
<https://youtu.be/pQgvesbQwp0>

Briggs, D '*Christmas Improvisation*' <https://youtu.be/45KdF8-YQwo>

Coleman, Steve. Essay on Symmetrical Movement Concept. Website article. <http://m-base.com/essays/symmetrical-movement-concept/>

Jarrett, Keith. Essay posted on Jarrett's official Facebook page 14/08/14 – linked to album "last Dance. 2014

Lewis, George E. MacArthur Foundation: Jason Moran, George E. Lewis - Millenium Stage (October 2, 2016) <https://youtu.be/Mn3M2JLQOtS>

Mehldau, Brad "Resignation" *HD Suisse Broadcast 2009* <https://youtu.be/XPJYjVOH4GM>

Mengelberg, M. Bennink, H et al. *JCP Orchestra with Misha Mengelberg and Han Bennink*
<https://youtu.be/JCYyGth47N8>

Messiaen, O., *Quartet for the End of Time; Improvisations*,
Directed by Georges Bessonnet, 82 min., G.B. Productions France/Image Entertainment,
1991/1999, DVD.

APPENDIX

For reference:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| 1. <i>Hardknot Pass</i> | (p.162) |
| 2. <i>Study no. 2</i> | (p.172) |
| 3. <i>Good Friday</i> | (p.185) |

Between Moons:

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 4. <i>Song</i> | (p.187) |
| 5. <i>Between Moons</i> | (P.188) |
| 6. <i>Vigil</i> | (P.190) |
| 7. <i>Choro Para Curar Meu Coracao</i> | (P.191) |
| 8. <i>Black Moon</i> | (p.192) |
| 9. <i>Ostinato</i> | (p.194) |

Tales from the Diaspora:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| 10. <i>Aleppo</i> | (p.200) |
| 11. <i>Tales from the Diaspora</i> | (p.210) |
| 12. <i>Matiu</i> | (P.219) |
| 13. <i>Windrush</i> | (p.228) |
| 14. <i>Zanj</i> | (p.234) |
| 15. <i>When You Left</i> | (p.245) |
| 16. <i>At the Gate</i> | (p.248) |

Hardknot Pass

Mark Donlon

The musical score for "Hardknot Pass" is written for piano in 8/8 time. It consists of five systems of two staves each. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. The first system (measures 1-4) starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and includes the instruction "sempre con pedale" (always with pedal). The second system (measures 5-8) continues the melodic and harmonic development. The third system (measures 9-12) features a crescendo (*cresc*) marking. The fourth system (measures 13-16) includes a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The fifth system (measures 17-20) concludes with a crescendo (*cresc*) marking. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Copyright © Mark Donlon 2007

22

23 24 25

26

27 28 29

mp

30

31 32 33 34 35

36

37 38 39 40

p cresc

40

41 42 43

44 *cresc*

48 *f*

53 *legato p*

58 *poco piu mosso*

62 *delicatissimo*

65

67

69 *accelerando*

70 *tempo primo* *p* *(rh)* *cresc*

74 *p* *p*

Detailed description: This page contains five systems of musical notation for piano. The first system (measures 65-66) features a treble staff with triplet eighth notes and a bass staff with a triplet quarter note. The second system (measures 67-68) continues the triplet patterns. The third system (measures 69-70) includes the instruction 'accelerando' and shows a change in the bass line. The fourth system (measures 71-72) is marked 'tempo primo' and includes dynamics 'p' and '(rh)' in the bass staff, and 'cresc' in the treble staff. The fifth system (measures 73-74) shows a return to a slower tempo with dynamics 'p' in both staves. The key signature changes from two flats to one flat and then to no sharps or flats.

79

83

p

87

pp

92

96

100

f

This musical score is for a piano piece, spanning measures 79 to 100. It is written for two staves, treble and bass clef. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into six systems, each with a measure number at the beginning. The first system (measures 79-82) features a melodic line in the treble staff and a supporting bass line. The second system (measures 83-86) includes a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The third system (measures 87-91) includes a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic marking. The fourth system (measures 92-95) continues the melodic and harmonic development. The fifth system (measures 96-99) shows a return to a more active texture. The sixth system (measures 100-103) includes a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. The score is characterized by flowing melodic lines, often with slurs, and a steady bass line. The dynamics range from pianissimo to forte, indicating a range of volume and intensity.

103

dim *f*

8va

107

8va

111

dim

114

cresc *f* *cresc*

118

f *cresc*

122 *cresc* *ff*

126 *mp* *dim.....*

130 *mf*

133 *dim*

137 *dim*

141 *p*

The musical score consists of six systems of piano notation. The first system (measures 122-125) features a treble clef with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. It includes a *cresc* (crescendo) marking and a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic. The second system (measures 126-129) has a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature, with a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic and a *dim.....* (diminuendo) marking. The third system (measures 130-132) has a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature, with a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic. The fourth system (measures 133-136) has a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature, with a *dim* (diminuendo) marking. The fifth system (measures 137-140) has a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature, with a *dim* (diminuendo) marking. The sixth system (measures 141-144) has a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature, with a *p* (piano) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings.

146

150

154

159

165

169

mf

cresc

mf

cresc

This musical score consists of six systems of piano notation, each with a treble and bass staff. The measures are numbered 146, 150, 154, 159, 165, and 169 at the beginning of each system. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first system (measures 146-149) features a *mf* marking. The second system (measures 150-153) includes a *cresc* marking. The third system (measures 154-158) features a *mf* marking. The fourth system (measures 159-164) includes a *cresc* marking. The fifth system (measures 165-168) features a *mf* marking. The sixth system (measures 169-172) includes a *cresc* marking. The score is written in a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 4/4.

173

mp

This system contains measures 173 to 176. The music is in 4/4 time. Measure 173 starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The melody in the right hand features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a simple bass line. Measure 174 begins with a dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano). The key signature changes to two flats in measure 175. The system concludes with measure 176, which returns to a key signature of one flat.

177

This system contains measures 177 to 182. The key signature remains one flat. The right hand features a more complex melodic line with many beamed sixteenth notes. The left hand continues with a steady bass line. The system ends with measure 182, which has a key signature of two flats.

183

p cresc

This system contains measures 183 to 186. The key signature changes to three flats in measure 183. A dynamic marking of *p cresc* (piano crescendo) is present in measure 183. The right hand has a melodic line with some ties, and the left hand has a bass line with some chords. The system ends with measure 186, which has a key signature of two flats.

187

This system contains measures 187 to 191. The key signature remains two flats. The right hand features a melodic line with many beamed sixteenth notes. The left hand has a bass line with some chords. The system ends with measure 191, which has a key signature of one flat.

192

cresc

This system contains measures 192 to 196. The key signature remains one flat. A dynamic marking of *cresc* (crescendo) is present in measure 192. The right hand has a melodic line with many beamed sixteenth notes. The left hand has a bass line with some chords. The system ends with measure 196, which has a key signature of two flats.

197 *f*

202 *p*

206 *dim*

211 *pp*

214 *ppp*

The musical score consists of five systems of piano notation. The first system (measures 197-201) begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second system (measures 202-205) features a piano (*p*) dynamic. The third system (measures 206-210) includes a diminuendo (*dim*) marking. The fourth system (measures 211-213) is marked piano-piano (*pp*). The fifth system (measures 214-215) concludes with a pianissimo (*ppp*) dynamic. The score is written for piano with treble and bass staves, showing various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

in memory of Lionel Grigson

Study no 2

Mark Donlon

allegro comodo

p cantabile

Measures 1-3 of the piece. The right hand features a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 16/8. Measure 3 ends with a repeat sign.

Measures 4-5. The right hand continues the melodic line with some rests, and the left hand maintains the eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 5 ends with a repeat sign.

Measures 6-7. The right hand has a more active melodic line with sixteenth notes. The left hand continues the eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 7 ends with a repeat sign.

Measures 8-9. The right hand features a melodic line with some rests. The left hand continues the eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 9 ends with a repeat sign.

Measures 10-11. The right hand has a melodic line with some rests. The left hand continues the eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 11 ends with a repeat sign.

11

Measures 11 and 12 of a musical score. Measure 11 features a treble staff with a series of eighth-note chords (F4, A4, C5, E5) and a bass staff with a descending eighth-note line (B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3). Measure 12 features a treble staff with a half-note chord (F4, A4, C5, E5) and a bass staff with a descending eighth-note line (B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3).

13

Measures 13, 14, and 15 of a musical score. Measure 13 features a treble staff with a series of eighth-note chords (F4, A4, C5, E5) and a bass staff with a descending eighth-note line (B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3). Measure 14 features a treble staff with a series of eighth-note chords (F4, A4, C5, E5) and a bass staff with a descending eighth-note line (B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3). Measure 15 features a treble staff with a series of eighth-note chords (F4, A4, C5, E5) and a bass staff with a descending eighth-note line (B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3).

16

Measures 16 and 17 of a musical score. Measure 16 features a treble staff with a series of eighth-note chords (F4, A4, C5, E5) and a bass staff with a descending eighth-note line (B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3). Measure 17 features a treble staff with a series of eighth-note chords (F4, A4, C5, E5) and a bass staff with a descending eighth-note line (B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3).

18

Measures 18 and 19 of a musical score. Measure 18 features a treble staff with a series of eighth-note chords (F4, A4, C5, E5) and a bass staff with a descending eighth-note line (B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3). Measure 19 features a treble staff with a series of eighth-note chords (F4, A4, C5, E5) and a bass staff with a descending eighth-note line (B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3).

20

22

24

27

29

pp

175

31

System 1, measures 31-32. The treble staff begins with a 3/4 time signature and contains a series of chords and eighth notes. The bass staff contains a continuous eighth-note pattern. A 7/8 time signature change occurs at the start of measure 32. A horizontal line is drawn across the middle of the system.

33

System 2, measures 33-34. The treble staff features chords and eighth notes. The bass staff has a continuous eighth-note pattern. A 3/4 time signature change occurs at the start of measure 34.

35

System 3, measures 35-36. The treble staff contains chords and eighth notes. The bass staff has a continuous eighth-note pattern. A 17/16 time signature change occurs at the start of measure 36.

37

System 4, measures 37-40. The treble staff contains chords and eighth notes. The bass staff has a continuous eighth-note pattern. Time signature changes occur at the start of measures 38 (11/16), 39 (3/4), and 40 (9/16).

40

poco cresc.

mp

41 42

43

poco cresc.

44

45

mf

46

47

48

49

50

51

53

f exultando

55

57

mf

(poco meno forte)

178

Detailed description: This page contains a musical score for piano, spanning measures 51 to 60. The score is written for both hands on grand staves. Measures 51-52 are in 7/8 time, 53-54 in 3/4, 55-56 in 3/4, and 57-60 in 19/16. The key signature has two flats. The music features complex textures with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often with slurs. Dynamics include *f exultando* at measure 53 and *mf* at measure 57, with a tempo/mood marking *(poco meno forte)* at measure 58. Measure numbers 51, 53, 55, and 57 are placed at the beginning of their respective systems. The page number 178 is at the bottom.

59

ff

62

63

64

65 66

67

strepitoso

68 69 70

70

Measures 70-71. Treble clef, 11/16 time signature. Measure 70 contains a series of chords with flats. Measure 71 continues the chordal progression. Bass clef, 11/16 time signature. Measure 70 contains a melodic line with eighth notes. Measure 71 continues the melodic line. A double bar line is present between measures 70 and 71.

72

Measures 72-73. Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. Measure 72 contains a series of chords with flats. Measure 73 continues the chordal progression. Bass clef, 3/4 time signature. Measure 72 contains a melodic line with eighth notes. Measure 73 continues the melodic line. A double bar line is present between measures 72 and 73.

74

Measures 74-75. Treble clef, 11/16 time signature. Measure 74 contains a series of chords with flats. Measure 75 continues the chordal progression. Bass clef, 11/16 time signature. Measure 74 contains a melodic line with eighth notes. Measure 75 continues the melodic line. A double bar line is present between measures 74 and 75.

77

Measures 77-78. Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. Measure 77 contains a series of chords with flats. Measure 78 continues the chordal progression. Bass clef, 3/4 time signature. Measure 77 contains a melodic line with eighth notes. Measure 78 continues the melodic line. A double bar line is present between measures 77 and 78.

80

mf

mf

83

mf

86

poco dim *mp*

mp

89

mp

10

92

Measures 92-93. Treble clef, 18/16 time signature. Measure 92 has a whole note chord (F4, A4, C5) with a flat sign over the A4. Measure 93 has a whole note chord (F4, A4, C5) with a flat sign over the A4. Bass clef, 18/16 time signature. Measure 92 has a whole note chord (F4, A4, C5) with a flat sign over the A4. Measure 93 has a whole note chord (F4, A4, C5) with a flat sign over the A4.

94

Measures 94-95. Treble clef, 18/16 time signature. Measure 94 has a whole note chord (F4, A4, C5) with a flat sign over the A4. Measure 95 has a whole note chord (F4, A4, C5) with a flat sign over the A4. Bass clef, 18/16 time signature. Measure 94 has a whole note chord (F4, A4, C5) with a flat sign over the A4. Measure 95 has a whole note chord (F4, A4, C5) with a flat sign over the A4.

96

Measures 96-97. Treble clef, 18/16 time signature. Measure 96 has a whole note chord (F4, A4, C5) with a flat sign over the A4. Measure 97 has a whole note chord (F4, A4, C5) with a flat sign over the A4. Bass clef, 18/16 time signature. Measure 96 has a whole note chord (F4, A4, C5) with a flat sign over the A4. Measure 97 has a whole note chord (F4, A4, C5) with a flat sign over the A4. The text *diminuendo...* is written above the bass staff in measure 97.

99

Measures 99-100. Treble clef, 18/16 time signature. Measure 99 has a whole note chord (F4, A4, C5) with a flat sign over the A4. Measure 100 has a whole note chord (F4, A4, C5) with a flat sign over the A4. Bass clef, 18/16 time signature. Measure 99 has a whole note chord (F4, A4, C5) with a flat sign over the A4. Measure 100 has a whole note chord (F4, A4, C5) with a flat sign over the A4. The text *p* is written above the bass staff in measure 100.

101

Measures 101-102. Measure 101 features a treble clef with a half note chord (Bb, D) and a bass clef with a half note chord (Bb, D). A slur connects the two chords. Measure 102 features a treble clef with a half note chord (Bb, D) and a bass clef with a half note chord (Bb, D). A slur connects the two chords. A piano (*p*) dynamic marking is present in measure 101.

103

Measures 103-104. Measure 103 features a treble clef with a half note chord (Bb, D) and a bass clef with a half note chord (Bb, D). A slur connects the two chords. Measure 104 features a treble clef with a half note chord (Bb, D) and a bass clef with a half note chord (Bb, D). A slur connects the two chords.

105

Measures 105-106. Measure 105 features a treble clef with a half note chord (Bb, D) and a bass clef with a half note chord (Bb, D). A slur connects the two chords. Measure 106 features a treble clef with a half note chord (Bb, D) and a bass clef with a half note chord (Bb, D). A slur connects the two chords.

107

Measures 107-108. Measure 107 features a treble clef with a half note chord (Bb, D) and a bass clef with a half note chord (Bb, D). A slur connects the two chords. Measure 108 features a treble clef with a half note chord (Bb, D) and a bass clef with a half note chord (Bb, D). A slur connects the two chords.

109

109

p o c o a p o c o m o r e n d o

111

111

a n i e n t e

113

113

115

115

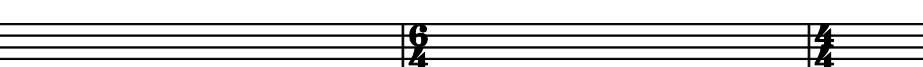
117

Measures 117-120 of the piano part. The music is in 3/4 time and features a descending eighth-note scale in the left hand, with a final measure containing a whole note chord.

119

9/16

121



Good Friday

Mark Donlon

♩ = 36 *lento, molto con tenerezza*

libramente, con rubato

con pedale

8

14

simile

8va

8va...

20

sempre con pedale

25

30

36

meno mosso quasi recitativo

rit.

rit.

p tranquillo

molto rit. - a tempo

(con pedale)

42

46

Detailed description of the musical score: The score consists of six systems of piano music. The first system (measures 30-35) is in 3/4 time and features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed eighth and sixteenth notes. Pedal markings are indicated at measures 30, 33, and 35. The second system (measures 36-41) begins with a long note in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand, marked 'meno mosso quasi recitativo'. It includes a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking. The third system (measures 42-45) starts with a 'rit.' marking, followed by a section marked 'p tranquillo' with a tempo indication of quarter note = 30. This section includes a '(con pedale)' marking. The system concludes with a 'molto rit. - a tempo' marking. The fourth system (measures 46-51) continues the melodic and harmonic development. The fifth system (measures 52-57) shows further rhythmic complexity. The sixth system (measures 58-63) concludes the passage with a final cadence.

SONG

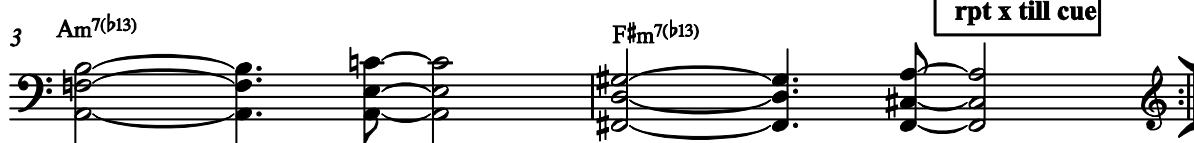
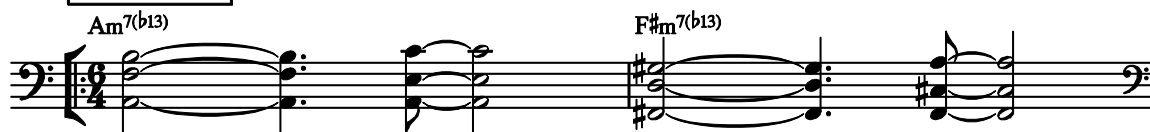
MARK DONLON

Ebmaj7(#11) Am7 F#7 4:3 Bm7 Abm7 Ebm11
 7 Amaj7(#11) 4:3 C7(b9) Dbmaj7(#11) 4:3 Am11 D11
 12 D7(b9) 4:3 Bb7ALT. Ebmaj7(#11) Dm7 Bb7 4:3
 18 F#m7 Bbm11 Gm11 Ebmaj7(#11) 4:3 Dm7 4:3
 23 Am11 Eb7/A 4:3 Am11 Eb7/A 4:3
 31 Ebmaj7(#11) Am7 F#7 4:3 Bm7 Abm11 Dmaj7(#11)
 37 Abm11 4:3 Amaj7(#11) 4:3 Dbmaj7(#11)/C
 43 (ONLY AT END OF 1ST HEAD)

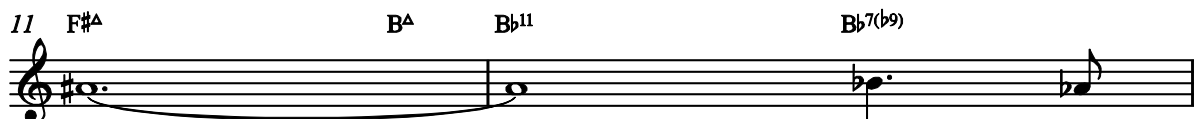
Between Moons

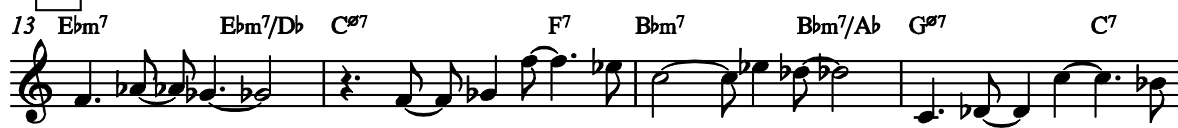
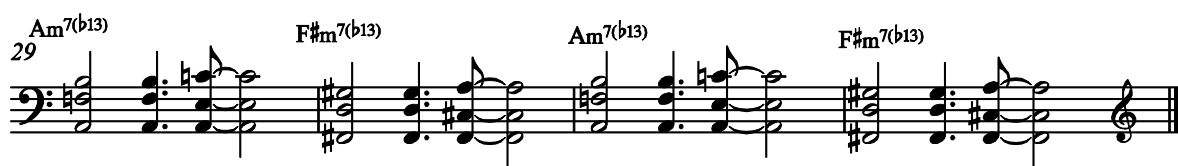
John Taylor

Intro vamp



A ON CUE



B**C**

EX. 3. VIGIL

TRUMPET IN B♭

INTRO

PIANO

INTRO

5 *Dm* *Gm7/D* 3

TPT.

PNO.

INTRO

(ETC)

9 *D7(b9)* LEAD IN...

TPT.

PNO.

INTRO

(ETC)

13 *Dm* *C#7* (LOSELEY) 3

TPT.

PNO.

17 *Gmaj7(b9)* *Abm7/Bb* *Gm7/A* (CONTINUE PHRASE)

TPT.

PNO.

Gmaj7(b9) *Abm7/Bb* *Gm7/A*

COPYRIGHT © MARK DONLON

CHORO PRA CURAR MEU CORACAO

MARK DONLON

(A) F#7(b9)/B Bm7 F#7(b9)/B Bm7/A E°/G# G11

8 CΔ/G F#7ALT. Gmaj7(#11) Abm7

13 A7ALT. Bbmaj7(#11)

17 **(B)** F#7(b9)/B Bm7 F#7(b9)/B Bm7/A E°/G# G11

24 CΔ/G F#7ALT. Gmaj7(#11) Abm7 Bb11 Bb11

30 Cbmaj7(#11) **(C)** GΔ/B

35 F#7/A# DΔ/A E/G# DbΔ/Ab G7ALT.

40 Db11 C11 E/C

44 C11 E/C

EX . 2 - BLACK MOON

TRUMPET IN B

MP

This system contains measures 1 through 3 of the piece. The Trumpet in B part is written on a single staff in treble clef, starting with a mezzo-piano (MP) dynamic. It features a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 2 and a descending eighth-note scale in measure 3. The Piano accompaniment is written for grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and consists of block chords in measure 1, followed by a descending eighth-note scale in measure 2, and a final chord in measure 3.

4

TPT.

PNO.

This system contains measures 4 through 6. The Trumpet part (labeled TPT.) continues the melodic line from measure 3, featuring a triplet of eighth notes in measure 5. The Piano part (labeled PNO.) provides harmonic support with block chords in measure 4, a descending eighth-note scale in measure 5, and a final chord in measure 6.

7

TPT.

PNO.

This system contains measures 7 through 9. The Trumpet part continues the melodic line, featuring a triplet of eighth notes in measure 8. The Piano part provides harmonic support with block chords in measure 7, a descending eighth-note scale in measure 8, and a final chord in measure 9.

11

TPT.

PNO.

FF

Measures 11-13. The trumpet part (TPT.) features a melodic line with slurs and a final 'FF' dynamic marking. The piano part (PNO.) consists of block chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand, all tied across the measures.

14

TPT.

PNO.

3

Measures 14-17. The trumpet part (TPT.) has a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 14. The piano part (PNO.) features complex chordal textures with many accidentals and ties across measures.

OSTINATO

MARK DONLON 2016

TRUMPET IN B \flat

PIANO

This system contains measures 1 through 3 of the piece. The Trumpet in B \flat part consists of three whole rests. The Piano part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes, creating a dense, textured sound. The key signature has two flats (B \flat and E \flat), and the time signature is 9/8.

4

TPT.

PNO.

This system contains measures 4 through 6. The Trumpet part remains silent with whole rests. The Piano part continues its intricate, fast-paced accompaniment. The notation includes various accidentals and complex rhythmic patterns.

7

TPT.

PNO.

This system contains measures 7 through 9. In measure 9, the Trumpet part begins to play a melodic line with eighth notes. The Piano part continues its accompaniment. The system concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

COPYRIGHT © MARK DONLON 2013 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

10

TPT.

PNO.



13

TPT.

PNO.



16

TPT.

PNO.



19

TPT.

PNO.



22

TPT.

PNO.

25

TPT.

PNO.

28

TPT.

PNO.

31

TPT.

PNO.

34

TPT.

PNO.

37

TPT.

PNO.

40

TPT.

PNO.

43

TPT.

PNO.

46

TPT.

PNO.

$A7(\sharp 13)$

$B\flat maj7(\sharp 11)$

49

TPT.

PNO.

FORM FOR SOLOS::

53

TPT.

PNO.

1. $E13(\flat 9)$

$F maj7(\sharp 11)$

57

TPT.

PNO.

2. $C\sharp +11$

$Dm7$

6

61 E^ø7 G^bΔ/F G⁷_{ALT.}

TPT.

PNO.

67 A^bmaj7(♯11) A⁷(♭13) G^bmaj7(♯11)

TPT.

PNO.

72 C[♯]+11 Dm⁷

TPT.

PNO.

ALEPPO

MARK DONLON 2016

♩ = 175

Cm7(b9)

TENOR SAXOPHONE

TRUMPET IN B♭

PIANO

ACOUSTIC BASS

DRUM SET

♩ = 175

2

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

4

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

Measures 4-5. Tenor Saxophone and Trumpet are silent. Piano plays a descending eighth-note line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Alto Bass plays a half-note line. Drums play a steady eighth-note pattern.

5

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

A Cm7(b9)

A

Measures 6-7. Tenor Saxophone and Trumpet enter with a melodic line. Piano continues with the same accompaniment. Alto Bass plays a half-note line. Drums play a steady eighth-note pattern. A box labeled 'A' is placed above the first measure of the Tenor Saxophone and Trumpet staves.

6

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

Measures 6-7. The Tenor Saxophone and Trumpet parts are in 7/4 time, with a key signature of one flat. The Piano part features a dense texture of beamed sixteenth notes in both hands. The Bass part consists of a simple line of half and quarter notes. The Drums play a consistent eighth-note pattern.

8

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

Measures 8-9. The Tenor Saxophone and Trumpet parts continue their melodic line. The Piano part continues with beamed sixteenth notes. The Bass part continues with half and quarter notes. The Drums continue with an eighth-note pattern.

9 E[♭]ma⁷(#11)

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

Measure 9: Tenor Saxophone and Trumpet have whole rests. Piano plays a complex chordal texture in the right hand and a lower line in the left hand. Alto Bass plays a half note followed by a half note. Drums play a pattern of eighth notes.

10

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

Measure 10: Tenor Saxophone and Trumpet play eighth notes. Piano continues with a complex chordal texture. Alto Bass plays a half note followed by a half note. Drums play a pattern of eighth notes.

11

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

Measures 11-12, measures 6-7 of measure 11. The score is in 6/4 time. The Tenor Saxophone and Trumpet parts play a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The Piano part has a complex texture with many beamed sixteenth notes in the right hand and a few notes in the left hand. The Alto Bass part has a long note in the first measure followed by a half note in the second measure. The Drum part has a steady eighth-note pattern.

12

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

Measures 12-13, measures 8-9 of measure 12. The score is in 7/4 time. The Tenor Saxophone and Trumpet parts play a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The Piano part has a complex texture with many beamed sixteenth notes in the right hand and a few notes in the left hand. The Alto Bass part has a long note in the first measure followed by a half note in the second measure. The Drum part has a steady eighth-note pattern.

14 B

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

Cm7(b9)

16

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

17 E Δ

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

18 A Δ

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

19 E Δ

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

20 A Δ

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

21 C

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr. C

23

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

25

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

Measure 25: Tenor Saxophone and Trumpet are silent. Piano (right hand) plays a series of chords: F major, G major, A major, Bb major, C major, D major, E major, F major. Piano (left hand) plays a walking bass line: F, G, A, Bb, C, D, E, F. Double Bass plays a walking bass line: F, G, A, Bb, C, D, E, F. Drums play a steady eighth-note pattern: F, G, A, Bb, C, D, E, F.

Measure 26: Tenor Saxophone and Trumpet are silent. Piano (right hand) plays a series of chords: F major, G major, A major, Bb major, C major, D major, E major, F major. Piano (left hand) plays a walking bass line: F, G, A, Bb, C, D, E, F. Double Bass plays a walking bass line: F, G, A, Bb, C, D, E, F. Drums play a steady eighth-note pattern: F, G, A, Bb, C, D, E, F.

27

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

SOLOS OVER A AND B

SOLOS OVER A AND B

SOLOS OVER A AND B

SOLOS OVER A AND B

(FILL. . .)

A

Cm⁷

TENOR SAXOPHONE

TRUMPET IN B♭

PIANO

ACOUSTIC BASS

DRUM SET

AFRO-SOLERO FEEL WITH MALLETS

LEAD FOR REFERENCE)

[illegible]

7 $F\sharp m^7$ Fm^7

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

10 Cm^7 3

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

13 E_m^7

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

15 B_m^7

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

4

17 8 A⁷

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr. 8 A⁷

19 Gmaj7(♭5) A♭maj7(♭11) Fm⁷

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr. Gmaj7(♭5) A♭maj7(♭11) Fm⁷

(BASS & PIANO - PICK UP ACCENTS)

21 A^b7 5

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

23 B/C E^bΔ B/C A^bma7(♯11)

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

(BASS & PIANO - PICK UP ACCENTS)

26 Cm7

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

29 Em7

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

32 Bm^7 $F\sharp m^7$ 7

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

35 Fm^7

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

38 Cm7 Em7

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

41 Bm7

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

SOLOS OVER A
LETTER B TO GET OUT THEN CODA

SOLOS OVER A
LETTER B TO GET OUT THEN CODA

SOLOS OVER A
ON CUE FROM LETTER B
THEN CODA

SOLOS OVER A
LETTER B TO GET OUT THEN CODA

44 G^{Δ} CODA: Bm^7 9

TEN. SAX. G^{Δ} CODA: Bm^7
RPT TILL CUE

TPT. G^{Δ} CODA: Bm^7
RPT TILL CUE

PNO. CODA: RPT TILL CUE
 G^{Δ} Bm^7

A. BASS G^{Δ} CODA: Bm^7
RPT TILL CUE

DR. CODA: RPT TILL CUE

MATIU

MARK DONLON 2016

$\text{♩} = 200$
 Bbmaj7/C

FLUTE

TENOR SAXOPHONE

TRUMPET IN B \flat

PIANO

ACOUSTIC BASS

Bbmaj7/C

$\text{♩} = 200$
STRAIGHT 8's

DRUM SET

(LEAD FOR REFERENCE)

2 4

FL.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

7

FL.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

10

FL.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

13 Ebmaj7/C

FL.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

222

16

FL.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

19 Cm(maj7)

FL.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

22 $Fm(maj7)/C$

FL. $Fm(maj7)/C$ 3 3

TEN. SAX. $Fm(maj7)/C$ 3 3

TPT. $Fm(maj7)/C$ 3 3

PNO. $Fm(maj7)/C$

A. BASS $Fm(maj7)/C$

DR. $Fm(maj7)/C$ 3

25 $A^7_{ALT.}$ $Bbmaj7(\sharp 5)$

FL. $A^7_{ALT.}$ 3 $Bbmaj7(\sharp 5)$

TEN. SAX. $A^7_{ALT.}$ 3 $Bbmaj7(\sharp 5)$

TPT. $A^7_{ALT.}$ 3 $Bbmaj7(\sharp 5)$

PNO. $A^7_{ALT.}$ $Bbmaj7(\sharp 5)$

A. BASS $A^7_{ALT.}$ $Bbmaj7(\sharp 5)$

DR. $A^7_{ALT.}$ 3 $Bbmaj7(\sharp 5)$

28

FL.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

$E\flat 7$

$A^7_{ALT.}$

$E\flat 7$

$A^7_{ALT.}$

$E\flat 7$

$A^7_{ALT.}$

$E\flat 7$

$A^7_{ALT.}$

$E\flat 7$

$A^7_{ALT.}$

$E\flat 7$

$A^7_{ALT.}$

31

FL.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

$A^{maj7}\sharp 5$

$A^{maj7}\sharp 5^3$

$A^{maj7}\sharp 5$

$A^{maj7}\sharp 5^3$

$A^{maj7}\sharp 5$

$A^{maj7}\sharp 5$

$A^{maj7}\sharp 5$

$A^{maj7}\sharp 5$

3

33 $Bb_m(maj7)/C$

FL. $Bb_m(maj7)/C$
(FORM FOR SOLOS)

TEN. SAX. $Bb_m(maj7)/C$
(FORM FOR SOLOS)

TPT. $Bb_m(maj7)/C$
(FORM FOR SOLOS)

PNO. $Bb_m(maj7)/C$
(FORM FOR SOLOS)

A. BASS $Bb_m(maj7)/C$
(FORM FOR SOLOS)

DR. $Bb_m(maj7)/C$
(FORM FOR SOLOS)

38 Ebm^{maj7}/C

FL.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

12

44 Cm^{maj7}

FL.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

50 13

FL. Fm(maj7)/C A⁷ALT. Bbmaj7(♭5)

TEN. SAX. Fm(maj7)/C A⁷ALT. Bbmaj7(♭5)

TPT. Fm(maj7)/C A⁷ALT. Bbmaj7(♭5)

PNO. Fm(maj7)/C A⁷ALT. Bbmaj7(♭5)

A. BASS Fm(maj7)/C A⁷ALT. Bbmaj7(♭5)

DR. Fm(maj7)/C A⁷ALT. Bbmaj7(♭5)

14

56 Eb♭7 Ab⁷ALT. Amaj7(♭5)

FL. Eb♭7 Ab⁷ALT. Amaj7(♭5)

TEN. SAX. Eb♭7 Ab⁷ALT. Amaj7(♭5)

TPT. Eb♭7 Ab⁷ALT. Amaj7(♭5)

PNO. Eb♭7 Ab⁷ALT. Amaj7(♭5)

A. BASS Eb♭7 Ab⁷ALT. Amaj7(♭5)

DR. Eb♭7 Ab⁷ALT. Amaj7(♭5)

WINDRUSH

MARK DONLON 2016

SOPRANO SAXOPHONE

TENOR SAXOPHONE

TRUMPET IN B \flat

PIANO

ACOUSTIC BASS

Gmaj7(11) *G \flat Δ /B \flat*

2

SOP. SAX.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Ebm7 *Ama7(11)*

5 $G^{maj}7(\sharp 11)$ $G^{b\Delta}/Bb$ 3

SOP. SAX.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

4 7 E^{m9} $C\sharp/A$

SOP. SAX.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

5

9 E_m^9 B_m^7

SOP. SAX.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

6

11 $G^{\flat}maj7(\sharp 11)$ $G^{\flat}\Delta/B^{\flat}$

SOP. SAX.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

13 Ebm7 Amaj7(#11) 7

SOP. SAX.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

8

15 Gbm7 Amaj7(#11) GbΔ/8b

8

15 Gbm7 Amaj7(#11) GbΔ/8b

SOP. SAX.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

8

15 Gbm7 Amaj7(#11) GbΔ/8b

17 Em⁹

SOP. SAX.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

8m⁷ C4/A

10 19 Em⁹ 8m⁷

SOP. SAX.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Em⁹ 8m⁷

21 E_m^9 B_m^7 11

SOP. SAX.

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

E_m^9 B_m^{11}

ZANT

MARK DONLON 2016

$\text{♩} = 200$

TENOR SAXOPHONE

(PIANO FIGURE)

TRUMPET IN B \flat

(PIANO FIGURE)

PIANO

ACOUSTIC BASS

(PIANO FIGURE)

$\text{♩} = 200$

DRUM SET

(PIANO FIGURE)

4

A

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

A (MELODY LINE)

DR.

Ab/C

7

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

10

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

13

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

16

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

Measures 16-18. Tenor Saxophone, Trumpet, Piano, Alto Bass, and Drums. The piano part has a grand staff with the right hand playing a melody and the left hand playing a bass line. The alto bass and drums have a consistent rhythmic pattern.

19

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

Measures 19-21. Tenor Saxophone, Trumpet, Piano, Alto Bass, and Drums. The piano part has a grand staff with the right hand playing a melody and the left hand playing a bass line. The alto bass and drums have a consistent rhythmic pattern.

22 **8**

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

8

DR.

Measures 22-24. Tenor Saxophone, Trumpet, Piano, Alto Bass, and Drums. Measure 22 has a rehearsal mark '8'. The piano part has a whole rest in measure 23. The alto bass part has a whole note in measure 23. The drum part has a whole note in measure 23.

25

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

Measures 25-27. Tenor Saxophone, Trumpet, Piano, Alto Bass, and Drums. Measure 25 has a rehearsal mark '8'. The piano part has a whole rest in measure 26. The alto bass part has a whole note in measure 26. The drum part has a whole note in measure 26.

28

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

4/8

(4)

(5)

(1)

31

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

(2)

(3)

(4)

34

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

Measure 34: Tenor Saxophone, Trumpet, and Piano play a melodic line. Alto Bass has a 5-measure rest. Drums play a rhythmic pattern. Measure 35: Tenor Saxophone, Trumpet, and Piano continue the melodic line. Alto Bass has a 6-measure rest. Drums continue the rhythmic pattern.

36

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

Measure 36: Tenor Saxophone, Trumpet, and Piano play a melodic line. Alto Bass has a 7-measure rest. Drums play a rhythmic pattern. Measure 37: Tenor Saxophone, Trumpet, and Piano continue the melodic line. Alto Bass has an 8-measure rest. Drums continue the rhythmic pattern. Measure 38: Tenor Saxophone, Trumpet, and Piano continue the melodic line. Alto Bass has a 9-measure rest. Drums continue the rhythmic pattern.



39

TEN. SAX.

Dm⁷

(FILL...)

TPT.

Dm⁷

(FILL...)

PNO.

Dm⁷8^{va}-----1

A. BASS

(1) Dm⁷

(2)

(FILL AD LIB)
ON CUE

DR.

(PIANO FIGURE)

FINE

TEN. SAX.

FINE

TPT.

PNO.

FINE

A. BASS

(3)

(4)

(5)

FINE

DR.

FINE

(FILL...)

44 **D** Ab/C

TEN. SAX. (FORM FOR SOLOS)

TPT. (FORM FOR SOLOS)

PNO. (FORM FOR SOLOS)

A. BASS (FORM FOR SOLOS)

(SAMPLE BASS FIGURE - OR SIMILAR) ETC... - CONTINUE

DR. (FORM FOR SOLOS)

SOLOS.

48 E/G#

TEN. SAX. E/G#

TPT. E/G#

PNO. E/G#

A. BASS E/G#

DR.

52 Db/F

TEN. SAX. Db/F

TPT. Db/F

PNO. Db/F

A. BASS Db/F

DR.

56 Bb/D G/B RPT TIL CUE THEN F
THEN BACK TO D FOR NEXT SOLO

TEN. SAX. Bb/D G/B RPT TIL CUE THEN F
THEN BACK TO D FOR NEXT SOLO

TPT. Bb/D G/B RPT TIL CUE THEN F
THEN BACK TO D FOR NEXT SOLO

PNO. Bb/D G/B RPT TIL CUE THEN F
THEN BACK TO D FOR NEXT SOLO

A. BASS Bb/D G/B RPT TIL CUE THEN F
THEN BACK TO D FOR NEXT SOLO

DR. Bb/D G/B RPT TIL CUE THEN F
THEN BACK TO D FOR NEXT SOLO

[F] 60 ON CUE BACK TO D FOR MORE SOLOS
LAST X TO A 11

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

(PIANO FIGURE)

(1) (2)

(FILL - AD LIB)

BACK TO D FOR MORE SOLOS
LAST X TO A

[F] 62 BACK TO D FOR MORE SOLOS
LAST X TO A

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

(3) (4) (5)

BACK TO D FOR MORE SOLOS
LAST X TO A

(FILL . . .)

BACK TO D FOR MORE SOLOS
LAST X TO A

When You Left

Mark Donlon

First system of musical notation for "When You Left". It consists of three staves: a single treble staff, a grand staff (treble and bass), and a single bass staff. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first system contains six measures with the following chords: F#m/Ab, Db(add2)/Ab, Ebm/F, Gbmaj7(#11), Bbm/C, and Dbmaj7(#11). The melody in the treble staff features eighth and quarter notes, with triplet markings in the final two measures. The grand staff provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both hands. The bass staff features a bass line with eighth and quarter notes.

Second system of musical notation, starting at measure 7. It follows the same three-staff format as the first system. The chords for measures 7 through 11 are: Gm/A, Ebmaj7(#11), F#m/Ab, Db(add2)/Ab, C#m/D#, and C#m/D#. The melody continues with eighth and quarter notes, including a triplet in the final measure. The grand staff and bass staff continue the harmonic and bass line accompaniment.

2

12

Bbm/C Dbmaj7(#11) Gm/A Bbmaj7(#11)

Bbm/C Dbmaj7(#11) Gm/A Bbmaj7(#11)

Bbm/C Dbmaj7(#11) Gm/A Bbmaj7(#11)

17 F#m/Ab Db(add2)/Ab Ebm/F F/Gb Eb/D

F#m/Ab Db(add2)/Ab Ebm/F F/Gb Eb/D

F#m/Ab Db(add2)/Ab Ebm/F F/Gb Eb/D

22 D/E \flat Am/B B/C F \sharp m/A \flat D \flat (add2)/A \flat 3

D/E \flat Am/B B/C

D/E \flat Am/B B/C

27 G \flat /F F/G \flat E/D \sharp E \flat /E B \flat m/C D \flat maj7(\sharp 11)

G \flat /F F/G \flat E/D \sharp E \flat /E B \flat m/C D \flat maj7(\sharp 11)

G \flat /F F/G \flat E/D \sharp E \flat /E B \flat m/C D \flat maj7(\sharp 11)

AT THE GATE

MARK DONLON 2017

INTRO VAMP $\text{♩} = 200$
 Ab^{11}

TENOR SAXOPHONE

TRUMPET IN B \flat

INTRO VAMP Ab^{11}

PIANO

INTRO VAMP Ab^{11}

ACOUSTIC BASS

INTRO VAMP Ab^{11}

DRUM SET

FFFF

4

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

FFFF

7 $A^7_{ALT.}$ $D^{\flat}maj7$ $F^{\flat}m7$ $A^{\flat}11$

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

FFFF FFFF

10 $A^{\flat}7_{ALT.}$ $D^{\flat}maj7(\flat 5)$ $A^{\flat}7_{ALT.}$ $D^{\flat}maj7(\flat 5)$

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

DR.

FFFF

13 $F11(b9)$ $F7_{ALT}$ F/E 3

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

FFFF FFFF

16 $Cmaj7(b9)$ $C\sharp7_{ALT}$ $Dmaj7(b11)$ 3

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

FFFF

19 $A\flat^{11}$ $D\flat^{maj7}\sharp^{11}$ $A\flat^{11}$

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

FFFF FFFF

23 $D\flat^{maj7}\sharp^{11}$ $D\flat^{maj7}\sharp^{11}$ $D\flat^{maj7}\sharp^{11}$

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

FFFF FFFF

27 8 Ebm/F Bbmaj7(11) A7ALT. Dm(maj7) 5

TEN. SAX. Ebm/F Bbmaj7(11) A7ALT. Dm(maj7)

TPT. Ebm/F Bbmaj7(11) A7ALT. Dm(maj7)

PNO. Ebm/F Bbmaj7(11) A7ALT. Dm(maj7)

A. BASS Ebm/F Bbmaj7(11) A7ALT. Dm(maj7)

Dr. 8 FFFF FFFF

31 Gm7 All A7ALT. A7ALT.

TEN. SAX. Gm7 All A7ALT. A7ALT.

TPT. Gm7 All A7ALT. A7ALT.

PNO. Gm7 All A7ALT. A7ALT.

A. BASS Gm7 All A7ALT. A7ALT.

Dr. FFFF FFFF

34 $B^b\Delta$ F/B $E^{maj}7(\Delta^{11})$ $A^7_{ALT.}$

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

FFFF

FFFF

38 $E^b\Delta/B^b$ A^{11} $E^b\Delta$

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

FFFF

FFFF

42 A^{11}

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

FFFF

45 $E^b\Delta$

TEN. SAX.

TPT.

PNO.

A. BASS

Dr.

FFFF

BACK TO A FOR SOLOS

BACK TO A FOR SOLOS

BACK TO A FOR SOLOS

BACK TO A FOR SOLOS

BACK TO A FOR SOLOS

256

