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SPEAKING OF CONSEQUENCES:
CONTEMPORARY MUSIC FOR POLITICAL DISCOURSE

by

ELIZABETH ADAMS

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2016



2016

ELIZABETH ADAMS

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by

ELIZABETH ADAMS

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Music to satisfy the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Emily Wilbourne

Date

Chair of Examining Committee

Norman Carey

Date

Executive Officer

Stephen Blum

Jeff Nichols

Joseph Dubiel

Chad Kautzer

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

SPEAKING OF CONSEQUENCES:
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by

Elizabeth Adams

Advisor: Professor Stephen Blum

This dissertation reads politically works by Georges Aperghis, Rick Burkhardt, Mark Enslin, and Elizabeth Hoffman. Chapter 1 argues that suspending intelligibility stimulates the audience to imagine alternative meanings and ways the music might go, in an orientation that is politically desirable. Synthesizing theorizations by Herbert Brün, Joseph Dubiel, Shoshana Felman, and Enslin, it catalogues four techniques for suspending intelligibility, and analyses Enslin's *Sonata Quijada*. Chapter 2 suggests that we read politically metaphors of agency and power sharing in chamber textures, and translate those metaphors into our social and political lives. It draws on Elisabeth Le Guin's reading of Boccherini, and Martin Brody's reading of Wolpe, and analyzes "Assemblage," by Hoffman, and a scene from the opera, "You My Mother, Part One," by Burkhardt and playwright Kristen Kosmas. It offers examples from Aperghis' rehearsal process, and Theater of the Oppressed NYC's Festival of Legislative Theater as examples of how we might translate our analyses into action. Chapter 3 discusses the changes in performance practice necessary to cultivate the kinds of reading described in Chapters 1 and 2, presents eight of my own compositions in terms of political content and the context of their performance, and concludes with suggestions toward my ideal performance practice.

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Introduction

The impetus for this dissertation is my desire that we use new music to think and act politically. While musicology has been concerned for decades with describing how music and its social and political contexts shape one another,¹ I have found that correlative descriptions and conversations about contemporary music are largely absent in current performance practice.² Scholarly descriptions, however transparently or self-consciously situated, necessarily describe what is. Those of us practicing performance have the luxury of imagining what could be, but when contemporary composers, performers, and audiences neglect to engage the social and political relations of their experience, they conserve the status quo by default and miss an opportunity to remake these relations according to their desires. If we are producing social and political context no matter what we do, why not produce what we want on purpose?

1. See, for instance, “Notes” and “Further Reading” in Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 741-754, 759-768, or Vincent Duckles and Jann Pasler, “Musicology 1. The Nature of Musicology,” in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2007-),

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/46710-2014-01-31pg1>.

2. Leonardo Journal of Music, Volume 25, 2015, on “The Politics of Sound Art” begins to redress this issue in scholarship, especially Tara Rodgers, “Cultivating Activist Lives In Sound” and Alyce Santoro, “Return to SOURCE: Contemporary Composers Discuss the Sociopolitical Implications of Their Work,” however in the world of contemporary musicking, in concerts and in university settings, the problem remains.

My premise is that the easiest way to make new music do political and social work towards a world we would prefer is to say that it does and explain how. This premise is rooted in the discourse not of truth claims, but of speech acts, beginning with the assertion that we construct our social reality by what we say. I value the performative potential of speech acts for the reason Judith Butler states so eloquently: “the possibility for the speech act to take on a non-ordinary meaning, to function in contexts where it has not belonged, is precisely the political promise of the performative, one that positions the performative at the center of a politics of hegemony, one that offers an unanticipated political future for deconstructive thinking.”³

The politics I espouse in this project are those of participation, radical inclusion, prefigurative experimentation, and heuristic learning. I consider my own politicization to be ongoing, and apprentice myself to composers, performers, audiences, and respondents to emendate my views. I advocate changes to performance practice that will allow contemporary music to engender a heterogeneous political discourse, and to that end offer up a wide but explicitly non-exhaustive array of modes of politically engaged listening and interpretation. In the process I am writing against a common interpretive Shibboleth: the idea that for music to be political, its attempt must be to win its audience over to a singular, totalized position. Rather, following James C. Scott, I would like to assume his “anarchist squint [which] involves a defense of politics, conflict, and debate, and the perpetual uncertainty and learning they entail.”⁴

For such a roomy and accommodating kind of politics, what does efficacy entail? By what measure do I judge success? It’s a tricky question to navigate between the pull of a self-

3. Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 161.

4. James C. Scott, *Two Cheers for Anarchism* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012).

congratulatory Charibdis of process that says as soon as we have heterogeneous political discourse spurred by contemporary music, we've succeeded, and a dismissive Scilla of issue-specific metrics that says unless we can point to concrete, issue-specific goals we've achieved, we've failed. While I am ready to embrace a project whose efficacy is hard to measure, I do not mean to cast aspersions on concrete, issue-specific goals. The pressure of this question seems unnecessarily exclusionary. Of course I have policy goals, and of course I don't look to contemporary music as a first or only avenue to achieve them. By outlining the politics of my dissertation project I do not mean to imply that they are the only politics necessary—quite the reverse. I think efficacy of the kind of politics this project espouses would look like a local profusion of politics nested in a community of robust social connection in which the performance practice of contemporary music figured as a medium through which we negotiate our political thinking and our social connectedness. I want a performance practice for new music that helps me strategize against the facts and feelings of isolation and helplessness, one that incites, supports and connects the desires of its audience, performers, and composers, and one that nurtures movements in moments of failure and encourages them to try something new. For instance, tonight the non-indictment came down for the officer who shot Tamir Rice, in the same week as the non-indictment was announced in the death of Sandra Bland, and two more unarmed people were shot in Chicago, one of them an anti-police brutality activist. I want a new music performance practice that considers these circumstances its problem. I want music for mourning, I want music for brainstorming direct actions, I want music as direct action and mutual aid, as escalator and de-escalator, for developing our humanity and our imaginations, and for being together.

In the spring of 2005, having just earned my masters' degree, two years into the Iraq War and four years into the Afghan War, I knew I wanted to make my own composing more political but was as yet unaware of any political music I found enduringly compelling. At that point, I encountered the musics of Georges Aperghis, Mark Enslin, Rick Burkhardt, and, slightly later, Elizabeth Hoffman, all of which both fascinated and compelled me to pursue further both compositional and political inquiry, and to search for a way to knit together the roles of composer and activist. It was also in 2005 that I first attended the School for Designing a Society, where I was encouraged to develop utopian desires and use them as input to creative and activist projects. It was there that the connection was first made explicit to me: the work of both composers and activists is first to imagine a world they desire that doesn't yet exist, and then to bring it into existence, learning as much as they can along the way. This dissertation project began partly as an inquiry into how that music elicited such a response from me, and grew into an itinerary for how I might proceed from here.

In their contribution to the collection, *Conditions of Peace: An Inquiry*, compiled in the wake of the first Iraq war, Grace Lee Boggs and Sharon Howell write,

The paths for cultivating peace begin in very different places than those usually looked to by mainstream society. We should look to those around us who have refused to become part of the dominant culture, to those whose memories still hold images of ways of living that are life affirming, to those who have resisted accepting how things are.⁵

5. Grace Lee Boggs and Sharon Howell, "Culture and Communication," in *Conditions of Peace: An Inquiry*, edited by Michael Shuman and Julia Sweig (Washington D. C.: Expro Press), 241.

Contemporary music is strange and marvelous, but rather than trying to make it mainstream, I want to offer its virtues and capacities to movements of resistance. Our tradition is the inheritor of centuries of colonial wealth and uncompensated labor, but our ability to marshal complexities, and the democratic experiments we try in chamber textures and rehearsal practices, could constitute valuable reparations if we can figure out how to offer them. Democracy is difficult and often unpleasant, but playing chamber music is a joy. How can we make democracy more like playing chamber music?

My first two chapters suggest multiple modes of listening we can adopt as listeners, and try to incite as composers, towards giving our experience of music a political valence. Any of these modes might also qualify as what Dylan Robinson has so carefully theorized as “distracted listening,” in that they encourage the listener “to explore the space that they share with the work, a space wherein distraction becomes the method by which the viewer creates a whole from the parts,” where, by “space” I conceive of perceptual space, potentially untethered to either physical position, or silence.⁶ I share with Robinson a critique of the concept of the music performance “as an autonomous object, and as a mere instantiation of a score and style,” however I would distinguish my emphasis from his as adding the audience, and performers, their imaginations and political concerns to works *without* trying to diminish the role of the composer and her work.⁷ For me, as a composer trying her best to engage politically, it is not useful to conceive of co-creation as a zero-sum game.

6. Dylan Robinson, “Distracted Listening,” *Musicological Explorations* 9, 2008, 38.

7. *Ibid.*, 39.

Recent scholarship on the history of listening has documented how changes in listening practice have engendered changes in genre and style.⁸ It is precisely this co-creation between audience, performers, producers, and composers that I seek to engender through modes of listening that encourage political discourse. However, where previous modes of listening have focused on perceiving the work before them, or conceiving of its aesthetic value as belonging to it, the modes of listening I suggest, namely, suspending intelligibility and translating agency, aim to elicit in the listener a conception of and desire for alternatives that are not there. These alternatives might be either those from among which the composer has selected, or the missing context that the composer's selection would require in order to make sense.

In *Music of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Richard Taruskin narrates the evolution of the performance practice of chamber music from Haydn's "daily chamber music at the Prince's [Nikolaus Joseph Esterházy's] pleasure," in aristocratic salons to the public subscription concert, going from occasional and spontaneous concertizing serving the needs of a patron to the production of "musical masterworks" worshiped in public temples of art, commodified so that the haute bourgeoisie might purchase the social prestige that attended the

8. See, for instance, John M. Gingerich, "Ignaz Schuppanzigh and Beethoven's Late Quartets," *The Musical Quarterly* 93, no.3-4 (Fall-Winter 2010): 450-513; Lloyd Whitesell, "Reckless Form, Uncertain Audiences: Responding to Ives," *American Music* 12, no.3 (Autumn, 1994): 304-319; Peter J. Rabinowitz, "'With Our Own Dominant Passions': Gottschalk, Gender, and the Power of Listening," *19th Century Music* 16, no. 3 (Spring, 1993): 242-252; James H Johnson, *Listening In Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley C. A.: University of California Press, 1995).

entertainments of the aristocracy.⁹ Thus the greater inclusiveness that the public concert hall afforded came at the price of reifying and commodifying compositions, and sacralising both composition and composer at an ever increasing remove from the public as death and time gradually separated the audience from its newly conceived cannon and its composers. This process culminated in the conception of “Beethoven,” fundamental to “the modern concept of and practice of ‘classical music,’ [as] the lonely artist-hero whose suffering produces works of awe-inspiring greatness that give listeners otherwise unavailable access to an experience that transcends all worldly concerns.”¹⁰ Though suspicious of any such totalizing narrative, and conscious that even within it there is space for a heterogeneous array of idiosyncratic personal listening practices, I nonetheless recognize it as a largely accurate description of the performance practice we have inherited and against which my project defines itself. I want to amplify the creative role of the audience in determining the meaning of a piece, and I want composers, performers, and listeners to imagine themselves in one another’s shoes, choosing among alternatives, and engaging one another’s concerns, both musical and worldly.

Chapter One, “Suspending Intelligibility,” explores the connection between confusion and engagement, after further contextualizing intelligibility via Berg and Adorno. In keeping with the Shannon and Weaver model of communication, several writings by Herbert Brün help slow down the moment of perception into more of a process, and privilege the period of maximum potential for meaning over any meaning we might eventually settle on. A formulation from Joseph Dubiel offers another angle on this moment of potential, emphasizing our role in

⁹ Richard Taruskin, *Music of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 526, 639.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 649.

generating meanings. Shoshana Felman, in filtering out the contributions of psychoanalysis to education, shows how we must produce our own confusion in order to learn anything, and how teaching is only the sharing of this activity. Pulling my discussion back towards music and politics, I summarize at length a paratactically structured essay by Mark Enslin, written to accompany one of his pieces, in order to show that producing confusion for the sake of generating political analysis enriches that analysis. I proceed to catalogue four different techniques composers or listeners might use to suspend intelligibility, drawing on examples of pieces by Enslin, Rick Burkhardt, Georges Aperghis, and to a lesser extent, Elizabeth Hoffman. I conclude with a close reading of Enslin's solo percussion work, *Sonata Quijada*.¹¹

Chapter Two, "Translating Agency," suggests that we read chamber textures as sites for experiments in agency and power sharing, and that we translate those experiments into analogs in our social and political lives. I theorize the audience's relation to the players and music along two continua, one of breadth of focus, and the other of engagement, or proximity. I cite C. P. E. Bach to establish historical precedent for conceptions of identification between player and audience, and Elisabeth Le Guin on the performance practice of reading gesture. Via Le Guin, I consider an anecdote concerning Boccherini and Charles IV of Spain, in an extraordinarily literal mapping of political power onto agency in chamber textures. I then explore agency, power sharing, and audience relation in readings of "Assemblage" by Elizabeth Hoffman, and a scene from "You My Mother," an opera by Rick Burkhardt and Kristen Kosmas. An article by Martin Brody reads two pieces by Stefan Wolpe as embodying the dialectics of Hannah Arendt's

11. Mark Enslin, *Sonata Quijada*, for speaking percussionist (Urbana: Spineless Books, 2002)
<http://spinelessbooks.com/enslin/SQ.pdf>.

concept of democratic discourse. As examples of how such a reading might be translated into the world, I quote first-person descriptions of Georges Aperghis's rehearsal process by him and one of his collaborators, and Theater of The Oppressed NYC's annual Festival of Legislative Theater.

Chapter Three, "Organizing Audience," posits that the kinds of translation Chapter Two calls for will require experiments in performance practice. The first part of the chapter comprises extensive descriptions of two audiences organized by collaborators of mine, one in Urbana, IL, and one in New York City, and a discussion of how my experiences with those audiences have informed the founding of Julie and Elizabeth's Anti-Capitalist Concert Series. The second part of the chapter discusses seven of my own compositions in terms of their political content, and suggests ideas for a performance practice aiming to maximize audience engagement.

I have adopted the conventions of the Chicago Manual of Style, Notes and Bibliography, with the bibliography separated into writings, audio and video recordings, and musical scores. I have not included entries for my own unpublished scores in the bibliography, since I include the scores themselves in the Appendix, but I do include entries for audio and video recordings of my pieces. In the interest of emulating the poly-vocal discourse of the performance practice I call for, I have preserved some longer quotations intact, instead of paraphrasing them.

Because this dissertation ultimately calls for changes in performance practice I am hoping readers may make or participate in, and owing to my explicitly activist standpoint, I occasionally resort to the rhetorical intimacy and force of the second person. The most extended passage comes at the end of Chapter Three when I am envisioning performance practice experiments. In order to write anything at all, it was necessary for me to conjure you in my mind; to pretend otherwise would be a deception.

Chapter 1. Suspending Intelligibility

In this chapter, I explore how composers' inhibiting, suspension, or postponement of intelligibility elicits a kind of mental engagement of imagining alternatives, an activity I consider analogous to what James C Scott has called "anarchist calisthenics," one that, while perhaps not politically consequential, is good practice for political engagement.¹² I use the word intelligibility to denote the degree to which a piece or an aspect of a piece is understandable to its audience, makes some kind of sense to us, or gives us the feeling that we recognize what is going on.

After briefly establishing some historical context for a discussion of intelligibility via Berg and Adorno, this chapter's theoretical underpinnings begin with some essays written by Herbert Brün in the 1960s and '70s, in which he evaluates three clichés of contemporary music reception and introduces some basics of information theory in order to suggest what his ideal reception practice might entail. This suggestion presents a false paradox, resolved by positioning it in time, and makes room for the possibility of "structural listening" as an activity redefined by Joseph Dubiel.¹³ I use an essay by Shoshana Felman to connect these listening activities of Brün and Dubiel with pedagogy and the unconscious. An essay by Mark Enslin helps me cast these practices as politically useful. To bring us back to the possible musical applications of this theoretical framework, I catalogue (non-exhaustively) four techniques used to interfere with

12. Scott, *Two Cheers for Anarchism*, 1.

13. Dubiel is following Subotnik, referring to Adorno, as well as the title of the book in which his essay, "Uncertainty, Disorientation, and Loss As Responses to Musical Structure," appears, *Beyond Structural Listening? Postmodern modes of hearing*, ed Andrew Dell'Antonio (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 173.

intelligibility: excess and dearth, incompleteness, parataxis, and gibberish. I conclude with a close reading of Enslin's piece "Sonata Quijada." A barely annotated score, and an analytical chart to which my "Sonata Quijada" analysis refers, appear, along with my translation of the text of Georges Aperghis' *Le corps à corps*, in the Appendix.

The question of intelligibility and new musics has a long intellectual history. Writing in 1924, Alban Berg, in his essay "Why Is Schoenberg's Music So Hard to Understand?" addresses the question of intelligibility almost entirely through the issue of density, claiming antecedents for irregular phrase lengths in Mozart and Beethoven, accelerated harmonic rhythm in Bach, and rhythmic innovation in Mozart and other classical masters, but reserving to Schoenberg their dense and simultaneous deployment; lesser composers—in contrast—deploy only one at a time.¹⁴ While emphatic in his praise of Schoenberg, Berg defines his prowess purely in the terms of music that has come before.

Adorno, in his 1938 essay, "On the fetish-character in music and the regression of listening," implicates intelligibility when he asserts that "At one time, music, through impulse, subjectivity and profanation was the adversary of materialist alienation. In capitalist times though, music has become corrupted by the allure of commercial success and now it conspires with authority

14. Alban Berg, "Why is Schoenberg's Music So Hard To Understand," in *Contemporary Composers On Contemporary Music*, trans. Anton Swarowsky and Joseph H. Lederer, ed. Elliot Schwartz and Barney Childs, 59-71 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998).

against freedom.”¹⁵ According to Adorno, commercial pressures have separated serious music from popular music leaving the individual with a false choice between sensual, easy listening, and incomprehensible serious music, where the former is inescapable—ubiquitous due to its commercial success, and the latter is chosen only for the social prestige it affords its listener. I concur with Adorno that commodification reaches farther and farther into our lived experience, robbing us of autonomous perception, even as I protest that different musics serve many different functions in society and that some of these functions have been more successful at resisting commodification, affording listeners what, in our false consciousness, we are free to imagine must be closer to pre-capitalist pleasure. Adorno indicts the intelligibility of popular music for infantilizing listeners.

My attempt in this dissertation, as well as in my composing, concert-organizing, and teaching, is to recoup the unintelligible, to undermine its social prestige through a politics of participation and radical inclusion, and to use it to engage the imaginations of listeners in an attempt to collectively rehabilitate our autonomies. Because Brün theorizes the unintelligible in time, and because he was himself an activist as well as a composer, he has been my best guide in developing modes of listening that articulate the politics of perception and engagement. In his essay, “Music and Information and Chaos and ...,” Brün highlights the contradiction between

15. Theodor W. Adorno, “On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening,” in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, J. M. Bernstein, ed. (New York: Routledge, 1991): 1.

two orientations commonly voiced by promoters of new music.¹⁶ The first has two parts: a) What sounds unfamiliar is really only new treatment of old material;¹⁷ and b) “what seems extremely strange today, will appear meaningful and familiar tomorrow.”¹⁸ For me, the first of these erases whatever newness the composer has come up with, obviating by implication the necessity for anything new at all. The second argues against what it predicts (without support) the audience’s perception will be, forecloses on that perception being meaningful, and conflates meaning and familiarity in an equally arbitrarily predicted future. For Brün, familiarity and meaning are indeed inextricably linked, but he considers them so undesirable as to want to postpone his experience of them as long as possible, which he knows will not be long. .

The second orientation is the unfulfillable wish that one could have been present at the premiere of some now familiar and beloved “masterwork.” He argues that this sentiment is the one to cling to and which ought to inform our approach to listening to unfamiliar-sounding new works. One must suppose that he means the wish that one could have heard a familiar and beloved “masterwork” as unfamiliar and not yet meaningful, and not the possibility that it sounded familiar at its premiere.

Behind these observations and suggestions lies a tenet of information theory, the decay of information, based on the Shannon and Weaver model of communication. In this model,

16. Herbert Brün, *When Music Resists Meaning: The Major Writings of Herbert Brün*, ed. Arun Chandra (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 40-49.

17. See treatment of Berg, above.

18. Brün. *When Music Resists Meaning*, 46.

information is defined as “a measure of one’s freedom of choice when one selects a message.”¹⁹

The theory positions information and communication at either end of a continuum, correlating information with uncertainty, and communication with determinacy. A message first chosen at maximum information, in being repeatedly chosen, gradually accrues meaning, moving along the continuum toward communication until it can only have a single meaning, and indeed potentially, further, into the meaninglessness of cliché. Brün considered this decay of information into communication inevitable, but theorized that composers might conceivably slow the process down, retarding the decay of a message they hoped to protect.

In “Music and Information and Chaos and...”, and in his poem, “Futility 1964,” Brün holds up the fleeting moment of a first performance as a rare and precious one we ought to cherish.²⁰ Brün holds up the fleeting moment of a first performance as a rare and precious one we ought to cherish. My question is, by what criteria does he judge the perception of unfamiliarity and meaninglessness to be so desirable? I must consider but reject rarity in itself as the primary criterion of value. Rather, Brün seems to hold a first performance valuable on the basis of the piece's maximum potential for meaning. I gather this from a passage at the end of the essay in which he contrasts the process of entropy (toward chaos) with the decay of information (away from chaos, toward order). He ends the essay with the sentence, “For us [as opposed to nature], chaos is a potential and not an end.”²¹

19. Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949), 8.

20. Brün, *When Music Resists Meaning*, 40-49, 308.

21. *Ibid.*, 49.

Two things confuse me about this privileging of potential: one is that Brün seems to disparage the very thing there is potential *for*—meaning. He writes, "The meaning that will eventually attach itself to such musical language as can outlive its birthday, this gradual accumulation of attached meanings, will no longer convey the music but only the story of its successful function in society, of its contemporary relevance and significance."²² Is it impossibly contradictory to enjoy the potential for a thing you do not enjoy, or is it that anticipation is often better than the reality of its object, or is it only that he enjoys the absence of meaning, while having to acknowledge that its absence always entails its potential? What is he enjoying when he enjoys the absence of meaning? Returning to Shannon and Weaver, of course it isn't an absence at all, but rather an absolute surfeit of meanings, or the collection of all possible messages from among which meaning has yet to be selected.

The second thing that confuses me is the idea that the accreting meanings tend toward order. His observation that the human mind, in contradiction to a law of the nature to which it also belongs, creates something out of nothing, is a fundamentally generative premise. I am baffled by how excited Brün is by speechlessness, but I must admit I have a hidden agenda: I am reading this article looking for permission to interpret, looking for some agreement that interpretation, very much depending on its content, may be a creative act, a composition – may itself retard, rather than accelerate, the decay of what it interprets, by further multiplying the field of potential meanings.

22. *Ibid.*, 47.

In “The Listener's Interpretation of Music: *An Experience Between Cause and Effect*,” Brün comes tantalizingly close to authorizing the possibility of such a claim in his valorization of the listener, and yet his dialectic of potential persists in its mercurial refusals.²³

The relationship between the composer and the listener is the closest at the moment when the composer cannot do anymore [*sic*], when the work is being performed, and when the listener can still do everything—that is, let as much as possible of the event become an experience. That is the moment in which the new can become venerable and the old can become fresh: where the unheard of is heard of and the unknown is taken cognizance of; where private passion can become common good. [...] The responsibility for it, that such a moment be fertile and worthy of all the questions and wishes attached to it rests with the composer as much as with the listener, of course. It is absurd that throughout the history of music and its social functions, the word *genius*[,] frequently applied to composers[,] never yet has been applied to a listener.²⁴

Earlier in this lecture, Brün distinguishes between “facts” – musical events which may be corroborated by checking the score (or recording, presumably), and the “effects” they may have on a listener. He asserts that traditional “language common to all” will suffice for agreeing on the facts of an event but that a “serious conversation on the subject of the effects an event had can *create* a language common to all.”²⁵ Zooming in on the moment of experience, he places it

23. Brün, *When Music Resists Meaning*, 50-59.

24. *Ibid.*, 52

25. *Ibid.*, 51.

between musical fact and effect and makes it an activity: “the composer causes the music and the listener causes the effect of the music. In between lies the experience of the listener, consisting of a mental activity, which is looking for pleasure.”²⁶ Brün is slowing us down, examining the moment before we understand, putting perception and understanding (effect) on a timeline. For the familiar, presumably, this timeline is short, perhaps instantaneous. For the unfamiliar it may be aborted by dismissal. But ideally, according to Brün, the experience of the unfamiliar requires us to create a new language in order to understand it, and, being new, its unfamiliarity thwarts communication and understanding.

At the moment in which something new is conceived, introduced, and noticed, a temporary gap opens, an *interregnum*, which disappears only when that new something becomes accepted, understood, and used – when it begins to grow old. This time of transition is a time in which messages are sent that no one receives, and in which messages are received that no one sent. This is the time in which a language gained is a language lost.

For most people this time is experienced only occasionally [...]²⁷

I do not know exactly how to evaluate whether (when) language about a piece qualifies as new, rather than dead on arrival. I want it to be when that language widens the pool of possible meanings and has not already made a selection for its listener.

Brün’s moment and activity of experience may allow for what Joseph Dubiel calls structural listening, which “might be a kind of listening that involves wanting to make the way in which

26. *Ibid.*, 55.

27. *Ibid.*, 64.

one's experience is elicited an object of appreciation in itself."²⁸ Where Brün distinguishes between "facts" and "effects," Dubiel specifies that he does "not want to set up a dichotomy between imperceptible (or anyway unperceived) 'structure' and perceived effect; the relevant sort of contrast is between different kinds of perceptibility, different terms of conceptualization that the same phenomena can sustain."²⁹ Dubiel's distinction describes an activity of generating alternative messages of experience to choose among, thereby pushing an experience back toward information, without Brün's somewhat pathos-redolent stipulation that messages be sent never to be received. For the newly generated alternative messages to qualify as new language common to all, we need responsive listeners who treat the new messages as capable of sustaining different kinds of perceptibility, in short who take their listening genius seriously and who compose their responses so that they will not be immediately understood.

To repeat Brun's trope of questioning pabulum we hear around music schools, I have often heard the dismissal, "well, you can't *unhear*" something. In addition to the arguments above in favor of the activity of generating alternative hearings of new (and old!) music, I want to point out that for many of us, the activity of practicing a piece often entails exactly that—that we look for ways to unhear and rehear what is becoming tedious, that is, decaying into already understood communication. In this way, consciously undermining our own comprehension, we produce our own confusion, refusing understanding on purpose. Brün called this activity

28. Joseph Dubiel, "Uncertainty, Disorientation, and Loss As Responses to Musical Structure," in *Beyond Structural Listening? Postmodern Modes of Hearing*, ed. Andrew Dell'Antonio (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 173.

29. *Ibid.*, 173-174.

“looking for pleasure,” but it is more specifically looking for the pleasure of learning, conceptualizing, or feeling something you never have before. This practice is the fulcrum of listening and pedagogy.

Before turning to the political desirability of an orientation of not knowing, I bring in psychoanalysis to connect the conscious production of ignorance more firmly to our Western intellectual history and pedagogy, and to lend it more legitimacy than my readers may be likely to grant early communications theory. I am pursuing a reception practice in which contemporary music lends the political its capacities for complexity and nuance, for affect and intimacy. Although psychoanalysis begins with the anti-political premise that the antidote to suffering lies within the individual rather than in changes to the systems to which she is subject, many of its aspects highlighted in Felman’s essay, “Psychoanalysis and Education: Teaching Terminable and Interminable,” contribute to the model of reception practice I long for. Reading the pedagogical practices of Socrates, Freud, and Lacan together, she concludes:

It is, in other words, as of the moment the student recognizes that *learning has no term*, that he can himself become a teacher, assume the position of the teacher. But the position of the teacher is itself the position of *the one who learns*, of the one who *teaches* nothing other than *the way he learns*. The subject of teaching is interminably—a student; the subject of teaching is interminably—a learning. This is the most radical, perhaps the most far-reaching insight psychoanalysis can give us into pedagogy.³⁰

30. Shoshana Felman, “Psychoanalysis and Education: Teaching Terminable and Interminable,” *Yale French Studies* 63 (1982): 37.

For me, “*the way he learns*” is precisely that activity that Brün calls “looking for pleasure,” before one meaning has been reiterated, the activity during which Dubiel entertains multiple conceptualizations that the same phenomenon can sustain. In the same way Brün pointedly wishes to avoid “this gradual accumulation of attached meanings,” Felman emphasizes how analysis must reassert its own ignorance:

Analysis has thus no use for ready-made interpretations, for knowledge given in advance. Lacan insists on “the insistence with which Freud recommends to us to approach each new case as if we had never learnt anything from his first interpretations” (20). “What the analyst must know,” concludes Lacan, “is how to ignore what he knows.”³¹

In addition, Felman illustrates how analytic knowledge is structured as dialogue: “knowledge is what is already there, but always in the Other,”³² that is, the patient locates knowledge in the analyst, while the analyst locates it in the unconscious of the patient, to which the patient, without analyst, has no access. What if our interpretations of music were comparably socially contingent? Is this so far from what is happening when we are deeply affected by a piece and muse on why? “Knowledge, in other words, is not a substance but a structural dynamic: it is not contained by any individual but comes about out of the mutual apprenticeship between two partially unconscious speeches, which both say more than they know,” writes Felman.³³ But

31. *Ibid.*, 32, quoting Jacques Lacan, *Scilicet: Tu peux savoir ce qu’en pense l’école freudienne de Paris*, I, (Paris: Seuil, 1968).

32. *Ibid.*, 33.

33. *Ibid.*

rather than enacting that structural dynamic with either the composer or another listener, we so often remain speechless. For us to say anything worthwhile we must begin by recreating our ignorance. “Dialogue is thus the radical condition of learning and of knowledge, the analytically constitutive condition through which ignorance becomes structurally informative; knowledge is essentially, irreducibly dialogic.”³⁴ We don’t often speak of a composer needing her audience in such a way. I want to talk about the music we listen to together as if it were a dream we had both had, in a kind of anti-didactic mutual teaching of the most personal kind. When Brün romanticizes the moment of interregnum in the wake of a new piece, when messages are sent that are never received, and the unheard of is heard of, etc., I take issue with his privileging of unreceived messages only because I feel too many pieces remain too often unreceived. But my objection is perhaps a reaction to misplaced emphasis. More broadly, I read Brün as depicting a situation of dialogic abundance, in which the unreceived messages are only some of many, and may indirectly have provoked others.

In his essay “Listening and Unentitled,”³⁵ written to accompany his piece “Unentitled,” for speaking pianist,³⁶ Enslin locates political problems in the context of dialogic knowledge, or as we sometimes call it, conversation. The essay is a paratactically structured sequence of

34. *Ibid.*

35. Mark Enslin, “Listening and Unentitled,” *Cybernetics and Human Knowing* 20, no. 1-2 (2013): 22-29.

36. A radio play version can be found here: Mark Enslin, “Unentitled,” (2002) for speaking pianist. Performed by Susan Parenti, piano and voices. Soundcloud recording, 27:53. Posted 2014 by mark enslin. <https://soundcloud.com/radio2io/unentitled>.

descriptions from strikingly different contexts, between which the reader is invited to imagine connections. Parataxis is the serial juxtaposition of elements in such a way as to elicit the reader's conception of category by defying it. A summary of the elements in Enslin's essay, in order: the first line of the song, "One-Note Samba," by Antônio Carlos Jobim; an anecdote about a misstep in a conversation with a Cameroonian artist and his dramatic response; a description of a radio show featuring the voices of the homeless; some theorizing on persistent problems in hearing and being heard; a quotation of twenty consonant poetry (a literary analog to serialism) from the text of "Unentitled;" a description of the experimental novel, *Reader's Block*, by David Markson; an excerpt from the transcript of a radio interview with Michelle Alexander on her book *The New Jim Crow*; the second line of "One-Note Samba;" another quotation from Alexander; a formulation that casts listening as unavoidably active; an emphasis on the importance of distinction to cybernetics; the third line of "One-Note Samba;" a quotation from Heinz von Foerster that casts memory as a dynamic process involving the whole system; the fourth line of "One-Note Samba;" the formulation, "listening gives the social to significance;" a description of Frederic Jameson's aesthetic of "cognitive mapping" in which the individual imagines her position in relation to global capitalism; the formulation of listening as an art form; G. Spencer-Brown's emphasis on distinction; a formulation that an intention to distinguish precedes distinction; a description of the piece, "Unentitled," as a proposal of virtuosic listening; all four lines of "One-Note Samba;" the musical definition of the term "enharmonic;" the generalization of enharmonicity to socio-political metaphor, making identity and context co-constitutive; a description of the keyboardist as common tone in six different scenes of "Unentitled;" Theodor Adorno's injunction that maladjusted individuals speak up, and his assertion that communicability is not a criterion of truth; cognitive mapping of homelessness

alluding to Jameson and von Foerster; a news story about the US National Guard evicting Puerto Ricans; the formulation of the social world as shaped by the drawing of distinctions, which can only be undrawn by drawing further distinctions; a third excerpt from the Alexander interview; the poem “Futility 1964,” by Herbert Brün; more twenty consonant poetry from “Unentitled;” the formulation, “the starting point for listening is an awareness of need;” the formulation, “listening isn’t for understanding, it’s for transformation;” the assertion that after the conversational misstep and dramatic response from the Cameroonian artist, the conversation continued.

Over repeated readings of this essay, common tones begin to emerge: problems in hearing and being heard; enharmonicity as social metaphor; the drawing of distinctions as both problem and solution; homelessness also involving those who are not homeless; whole systems thinking; reformulations of listening; conversation as medium, as context, and as a locus of choice. It is up to us to imagine their relations to each other, and there is room for a wide variety of formulations. Enslin asserts, “the starting point for listening is attention to what is not heard.”³⁷

One effect of the plurality of content is to suggest the generalizability of the common tones to other contexts—it elicits the suggestion, “if these issues and lenses are at play in all these contexts, surely they are at play all around me; I can find them elsewhere, and bring them to bear elsewhere.” Both the essay and the piece it accompanies require a substantial amount of work on the part of the audience, but this work, once done, has far-reaching applications away from the pieces. The essay and piece require a *modus operandi* from their audience, but once you come up with one, it’s yours to keep. In addition, the *modus operandi* will be particular to you, and

37. Enslin, “Listening and Unentitled,” 25.

require you. Each of ours will be different and, in another way, non-transferable, because no report of the doing of it can substitute doing it yourself. In Felman's terms it teaches nothing but the way it learns; like analytic knowledge, it cannot be exchanged, but must be remade in every case.

Enslin insists that "listening occurs explicitly in the context of conversation. Experimental composition invites experiments in listening and thus necessarily takes part in conversation as well."³⁸ I will address in Chapter 3 the organizing required to create the context in which such conversations are likely to arise and continue.

In the incomplete catalogue of techniques that follows, each method of obscuring, postponing, or confounding intelligibility is a different way of engaging the listener's imagination. In an interview, Georges Aperghis explains how this engagement functions in his own work, when adding quotidian actions to the music he has written:

And then the problem is if it becomes too precise—for example if we say to ourselves, ah yes, they are in the middle of yelling at each other—as soon as we have understood that it's that, we no longer listen. We no longer listen. We no longer listen to each sound. We stop listening because it's necessary that the mind be constantly in the process of asking itself what is happening. And at that point we are all ears, open, and at that point, we hear.³⁹

38. *Ibid.*, 23.

39. My retranslation of an interview with Georges Aperghis, 2:18-2:45 in *Storm Beneath A Skull/The Little Red Riding Hood* (2006), DVD produced by Idéal Audience International -

Crucially, the techniques in the catalogue that follows may be applied either by composers in their composition of new works, or by listeners as conceptual lenses for listening in such a way as to retard the decay of what they are listening to.

Lurking behind the questions that these methods compel us to pose ourselves is the intentional fallacy. Those of us trained in music departments still in thrall to the New Criticism may find ourselves struggling with inherited reservations about this bugaboo. Reading new music politically requires assuming a new position on the intentional fallacy: even if it remains the case that the composer's *actual* intent remains inaccessible to us, this hardly detracts from the potential interpretive usefulness that "mere" speculation generates. But in the case of genuinely new music, it is happily often the case that the composer is available for comment. Even if the composer cannot be relied upon to tell the truth, and even if, true or not, what they say is unilluminating or boring, our speculation about it can generate useful alternatives both for us and for the composer. If everyone is misinterpreting my compositions, I would like to know about it, both in order to defend what exists and to compose toward avoiding misinterpretation in the future.

Promoting the responses that suspending intelligibility elicits, while at the same time cultivating interest in the desires and intentions of composers, listeners, performers, and producers alike, creates a tension I do not pretend I can escape, but which I hope will generate the discussions I long for. I would consider successful a piece that shared with the audience my approach to a problem *and additionally* elicited from the audience readings of the problem I have

Pierre-Olivier Bardet in the *Juxtapositions* series, YouTube video excerpt, 3:32, posted by EuroArts Channel 12/7/2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DG9MWADGkQ>.

never yet imagined, and engagement with the problem beyond the concert. I am interested in constraining the field of interpretation enough so that we can talk to one another about something specific, but not so far as to inhibit the audience's imaginative engagement with the piece, or curtail heterogeneous discourse. What follows is a catalogue of four techniques that may be used by either composers or listeners in order to suspend intelligibility, and engage the imagination of the listener, such that they may be "all ears."

1. Excess and Dearth

Paradoxically, deploying either an excess or a dearth of information in any domain can be an effective strategy for engaging the listener's anticipatory or speculative imagination. Too far toward either extreme is likely to provoke dismissal, but the right degree of under-saturation creates a kind of suspense, an expectation waiting to be fulfilled, while over-saturation poses a puzzle as to how to make all the extras fit. Under-saturation makes us ask, What is missing? or What, in particular, do I long for? Over-saturation makes us ask, How can I order all these pieces into some kind of sense? or How must I expand on, or alter the sense I've already made in order to account for this excess?

In *Le corps à corps*,⁴⁰ as Aperghis establishes antiphony between the percussionist's voice and her drum strokes, stark contrasts between excess and dearth slowly accrete in different domains. The domains are voice vs. drum; syllable vs. word; speed; duration; frequency; texture (anti-, homo-, or polyphonic); meter; even vs. complex rhythm; number of discrete pitches, syllables, or

40. Georges Aperghis, *Le corps à corps*, (1978) performed by Françoise Rivalland, zarb and voice, 2009. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1ONFZ042fc>. My text translation appended, 83-87.

drum strokes; silence vs. sound; gesture vs. sound; etc. The text's gradually accumulating description of a motorcycle/chariot race casts excess as winning but between these multiple domains there are many ways of "winning" to account for. Indeed the number of these domains of excess and dearth operating simultaneously, and the degree to which they coincide with, or contradict each other fluctuates over the course of the piece, creating a continuum of difficulty for our attention.

As alluded to above, Enslin's "Unentitled" (2002), for speaking pianist, deploys over-saturation in domains both musical and extra-musical: it uses twenty-one distinct twelve-tone rows, and many of its chords include twelve pitches; it uses more than one pulse-stream, and thirteen different voices, inhabiting six different scenes, all this heaped on a single performer. This kaleidoscopic structure of contexts—musical, theatrical, and discursive—pivoting around the single, "mute," keyboardist positions her as the metaphorical common tone, as we work to parse the relations between the contexts.

In "Safety Nets II" (2011),⁴¹ Enslin's setting for one-person band of a poem by Indigo Crespighi, the player is saddled, head to toe, with seventeen instruments. Coupled with this excess is the dearth created by the long pauses between words, and often even syllables, of the text. A literal safety net is meant to provide an extra ground where and when the ground is missing. A social safety net is meant to redistribute excess to where there is dearth. Enslin has again placed the performer in a nearly impossible position, and the excess of the performer's task

41. Mark Enslin, "Safety Nets II," (2010) for one-person band, Vimeo video, 16:23, of a performance by Jacob Barton, seventeen instruments and voice, 9/17/11 at The Herbert Brün House, posted by mark enslin 8/11/13, <https://vimeo.com/72140475>.

is mirrored by the magnitude of the audience's task. The patience required to learn the piece is mirrored by the task of trying to track the poem, syllable by long-awaited syllable, while distracted by the circus of instruments animated before you: "trombone, voice, picobot,⁴² tubulon, bass drum, hi-hat, toy train whistle, police whistle, guiro, 5-inch cymbal, flipper, ukulele, tambourine, plastic gallon jug partially filled with water and flotsam, plastic wrapper, finger cymbals, harmonica, umbrella."⁴³

The music of Rick Burkhardt often uses dazzling excesses of timbral detail, produced by assemblages of classical and folk instruments combined with everyday objects, such as kitchen ware, furniture, or shoes, turned into instruments, beaters, or filters. In the confusion produced by this welter, his textual referents to political events and actors encourage listeners to make political readings of both instrumentation and musical features and events. Elizabeth Hoffman's aesthetic often involves a lot of one thing, for instance, the flautando arpeggiation in *red is the rows* (2011) for violin duo.⁴⁴ This type of "repetitive" excess produces uncontrolled variation of a liminal, semi-predictable variety, which leads a listener into deeper and more detailed hearings. I hope it's becoming clear that one can find endless examples of musical excess and dearth, that doing so is a way of producing problems of intelligibility we can then produce solutions for by looking to other aspects of the piece.

42. A slide wind instrument made from a miniature liquor bottle, a latex glove finger, and water.

43. Mark Enslin, "Safety Nets II," (2010) unpublished score.

44. Elizabeth Hoffman, *red is the rows*, (2012), Soundcloud recording, 11:55, by String Noise, *Open Space* 14, and *Perspectives of New Music* 49, no. 2 (Spring 2012), <https://soundcloud.com/string-noise/red-is-the-rows>.

2. Incompleteness

Incompleteness is a more literal technique for producing a gap in our understanding that we may then be inclined to fill. In *Le corps à corps* and "Great Hymn of Thanksgiving,"⁴⁵ sentences are truncated on either end, and words are often bisected. This technique activates our capacity to fill in what is missing. When language is incomplete, I find myself completing it automatically, almost without being able to help it – not necessarily, but often, without effort; and, where effort is required, questions about alternatives arise in my mind. Much of what we call our perception is apparently our brain filling in what we already know. Encountering incompleteness shows us what we already know by compelling us to supply it.

In *Great Hymn*, Burkhardt truncates found texts of newscasts, folk tales, recipes, table talk, and the Army Prayer Manual. Each genre has such well established conventions that we can't help but supply ourselves what has been truncated. Conversely, Aperghis, in *Le corps*, begins with nonsense syllables, then introduces intelligible one-syllable words, and then adds multi-syllable words one syllable at a time, in structures of expanding variation. Sometimes the truncated syllable of a multi-syllable word first introduced is nonsensical; sometimes it has a homonymic meaning, creating two different types of nonsense we must try to parse and form expectations out of.

Incorporating incompleteness in the domain of text makes literal a technique of engaged listening that we employ in other domains. What we perceive elicits expectations in us which we then compare with what actually happens, resulting in confirmation, surprise, different flavors of

45. Rick Burkhardt, "Great Hymn of Thanksgiving," (2003) performed by The Nonsense Company, recorded by Ersatz Film, 2010. <https://vimeo.com/16750262>.

interest, or boredom. There are so many kinds of musical expectation we can form, from phrase length and contour, to timbral variety, to registral spacing, to rhythmic predictability, and on and on. Treating incompleteness as a lens, we simply ask ourselves, What is missing? and, Out of all that is missing, what is this piece likely to supply? Clearly this lens may be used on pieces with or without explicit political content. Nevertheless, once practiced on music, training this lens on the world around us constitutes a political orientation I want to encourage.

3. Parataxis

In my discussion of Enslin's "Listening and Unentitled," above, I discussed parataxis and how it functions, at length. Here, I would like to register Burkhardt's use of it as possibly influenced by both Enslin and the so-called language poets, especially John Ashbery, Ron Silliman, Lynn Hejninian, and Rae Armntrout. In *Great Hymn*, for instance, we are pushed to ask ourselves what newscasts of the Iraq war, folk tales, recipes and table talk, and the Army Prayer manual have to do with one another. The technique can be traced back at least as far as OULIPO, and arguably to *Finnegans Wake*, the surrealists and automatic writing, if not beyond. It is a technique that brings incompleteness to the semantic level—here what is missing is not a part of something that has been cut off; rather, it is the connection between things that is wholly missing. Heavily influenced by OULIPO, Aperghis' formal technique, which has often been described as fragmentary or episodic, is perhaps better understood as paratactic, for instance in *Commentaires*, *Enumeration*, *Les sept crimes d'amour*,⁴⁶ etc. Because it is originally literary,

46. Georges Aperghis, *Les Sept Crimes d'amour* (1979), for soprano, percussion, and clarinet, YouTube video, 8:43, performed by Sarah Maria Sun and the Neue Ensemble, posted by dasneueensemble 8/6/13, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZ48kO_LiRs.

and thus semantic, the term *parataxis* implies more strongly than do the terms *episodic* or *fragmentary* the possibility that the relation between elements has not been supplied.

Additionally, when applied to music theater, it affords the possibility of parts that lack connection occurring simultaneously. The questions parataxis poses listeners are, What have these elements to do with one another? Which of each other's aspects do they emphasize or eclipse? What, together, do they call to mind, that alone they might not? Parataxis is contingent on our calling to mind a plurality of categories, and further, the notion of category. Again while this is possible with or without a political framework, it is vital to the political practices I want to encourage, in the way that Enslin encourages redrawing distinctions as the only way of correcting those already drawn.

4. Gibberish

Removing semantic meaning altogether while alluding directly to its existence by continuing to speak suspends intelligibility perhaps more directly than any other technique. Made of language stripped of its stricter denotative referents, gibberish nevertheless continues to carry its vaguer connotations and associations through all the dimensions of speech quality it retains, from timbre, to contour, to phrase length, to discursive affect. Acclimatizing ourselves to its timbres can render us more sensitive to aspects of instrumental timbre and of intelligible speech, as well as draw our attention to discursive aspects of musical structure or affect. Aperghis' *Le corps à corps* begins with a rhythm of spoken nonsense syllables that could easily double as onomatopoetic names for drum strokes: "toun," "to," "don," "do" "i," "ta" (French pronunciation), wherein "t" versus "d" designates the speed of attack, the openness of the vowel designates the strokes' relative pitch (modified through position on the drum head), and the closing presence or absence of a consonant, whether to let vibrate or damp. The structure of the

zarb's gradual entrance—short antiphonal gestures that gradually lengthen over the first 1:10, ending in a gesture of top-speed homophony—encourages the translation: we hear the speech as drum strokes and the drum strokes as speech.⁴⁷ Later, after intelligible speech has cast the piece as a race that flickers between contemporary motorcycles and ancient Greek chariots, the intelligible speech is performed so quickly as to verge on unintelligible. Antiphonal and homophonic tuplets accumulate until they become long rolls, to be played and spoken as fast as possible, one surmises from the texture, text, and title—there is no tempo marking. The virtuosity of the speed of delivery is cast as the danger and violence that the text depicts, and pronounced to be “brutal folly.” Now the audience is in a bind, longing both to understand and for the performance to go even faster; our complicity first induced, is now indicted.

None of these techniques is new; what I hope is new is the category of *toolbox for suspending intelligibility in order to engage your listeners’ imaginations, or your own, in what could be good practice for political life*. This small collection is meant explicitly not to be exhaustive – I want us to expand it. What follows is a close reading of a single piece, which emphasizes listener experience of, and reaction to the suspending of intelligibility.

An Analysis of Mark Enslin’s *Sonata Quijada*⁴⁸

47. Georges Aperghis, *Le corps à corps*, (1978) YouTube video, 8:49, of a performance by Françoise Rivalland, voice and percussion, at Galerie Éof, Paris, 2006, posted by POLEditeur, 11/22/2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1ONFZ042fc>.

48. Mark Enslin, *Sonata Quijada*, for speaking percussionist (Urbana: Spineless Books, 2002) <http://spinelessbooks.com/enslin/SQ.pdf>; annotated score also appended, 92. The performance in the following video is slower than the score indicates, and than other performances I have

Temporally, the piece breaks obviously into two unequal parts: the first part uses seven percussion instruments and lasts about five and a half minutes. In the second part, which lasts about a minute and eighteen seconds, the speaking voice is accompanied by just two of the instruments. I examine each part on three levels: sound, signification, and listener experience, and explore how these levels affect each other. The text spoken in the second part is a clear invitation to reinterpret what we have heard in the first. I argue that Part 1 sets the audience a problem of intelligibility that we spend its five minutes trying to solve. Like a punch line, Part 2 forces a political reading of Part 1 that we could not have guessed, a reading both of what we have heard and of the way we have been trying to make sense of that.

Part I

As the piece begins, we are confronted with an array of noise-making toys we may not immediately identify as instruments: large wind-up chattering teeth; small wind-up chattering teeth; five dice; a Jack-in-the-box; an alligator-shaped cricket clicker; a *quijada* or vibraslap,⁴⁹ and something veiled, later to be revealed as brass wind chimes, ornamented with a nightingale

witnessed. Vimeo video, 9:05, of a performance by Rick Burkhardt, at Enslin Fest, 2011, posted 8/11/2013 by mark enslin, <https://vimeo.com/72123029>.

49. The *quijada* is a Latin American rattle made from the jaw bone of a donkey, whose teeth rattle in their sockets, or can be scraped, like a guiro. The vibraslap is a metal rattle inside a wood resonator designed to imitate the timbre and decay of the *quijada*. The *quijada* is clearly no toy, but neither is it obviously an instrument to those who are unfamiliar with it -- it looks like a jawbone. The vibraslap is likewise not easily identifiable as a musical instrument, but for those who can identify it, its name and its frequently clichéd use as a sound effect make it ridiculous.

figurine. If the context of the performance and the presence of music stands have not induced us to understand what is happening as music, the clear gestures of the first two phrases assert themselves as sounds organized in time. Both phrases use two instruments in an A-B-A-A' sequence, where A' is a distinct event that disrupts a more sustainable way of playing the A instrument: the Jack-in-the-box pops, and the shaking dice are cast. As the piece unfolds, ever-shifting pairs of instruments play in hocket, as well as antiphonally, homophonically, and polyphonically, and in textures that bridge between them.⁵⁰ Eventually, the piece visits all twenty-one possible combinations of instruments (three are played twice, for a total of twenty-four duos),⁵¹ so that the timbral resemblances and contrasts between each are offered up, one by one. In the domain of definite pitch, there are the plunking chords of short decay from the Jack-in-the-box, with its six-pitch, music-box tune of "Pop Goes the Weasel;" and later, the brass wind chimes, whose high, random tingling and generous decays create shifting simultaneities that contrast with the plunking Jack-in-the-box. In the domain of indefinite pitch, there is the very loud, two-tone clicker; and five tessituras of rattle: bass – cast dice,⁵² tenor – *quijada*, alto – large chattering teeth, mezzo – shaken dice, soprano – small chattering teeth. The small teeth's bites are accompanied by the high hissy buzz of its motor; the large teeth are wound with their

50. At some speed antiphony becomes hocket. Inversely, when a phrase comprises a long sound joined briefly by a short sound, the term polyphony seems a stretch, and yet their relation may not sound antiphonal, either.

51. See Figure 1, and the Barely Annotated Score, appended, 92-100.

52. The dice sound higher being rattled in the hand (against each other) than they do when they hit the table (we hear the table).

key, clickily, in rhythm, later in the piece. This palette of sounds is organized into shorter and longer events, lent direction and pacing by dynamics and tempi. A combination of fluctuating tempi, notated rhythms, and durations in seconds for tremoli vacillate between near-chaotic rhythmic variety and the cohesion of varied repetition. The first section of Figure 1 shows patterns of instrument pairings and repetition; the second shows the organization of rhythms and tempi. The instruments are listed according to register, low on the bottom, high on the top, revealing a gradual rise in the aggregate register of the music over the course of Part 1, answered in Part 2 by the emptied out registeral bracket of the highest and lowest instruments. While organization of this sound palette unfolds in Part 1, the peculiarity of the instrumentation presents itself as a puzzle – why these instruments? – and as I compare their sounds and textures, I cannot help but compare their extra-musical associations.

The first thing I notice is that, but for the Jack-in-the-box and the dice, every instrument is associated with a mouth or voice.⁵³ A phrase during which the Jack-in-the-box and the alligator clicker play homophonically temporarily subsumes the sound of the Jack-in-the-box's timbre and pitch into the alligator's voice and agency. Bone associates the *quijada* and the dice, which, traditionally, were made of bone. The dice and the Jack-in-the-box define a continuum between chance and inevitability. The Jack-in-the-box itself plays on a dialectic of predictability and surprise, while the dice play on one of probability and irrevocability. The Jack-in-the-box and the

53. The figurine of the nightingale associates the chimes with the song of a bird, and even without it, the wind is often personified as having a voice – whispering, howling, whistling, etc.

alligator clicker are designed, on however playful a level, to scare us,⁵⁴ as we might be scared by donkey skeletons. The Jack-in-the-box and the wind up teeth are both mechanical. All these voices are being played, manipulated, spoken, orchestrated, by a person I can see and with whom I identify more than I do with the toys. The act of manipulation is highlighted by the scoring for the Jack-in-the-box: the piece opens with its first gesture, beginning on note 24 of the 31-note melody and turning the crank backwards to note 16 in the space of 1.5 seconds. This makes for nine (sloppy) triplet-eighth notes at quarter-equals-sixty. This is not what Jack usually plays. The tempi, in their extreme, madcap fluctuation (fifteen changes among eleven different tempi, ranging from eighth equals thirty-eight to eighth equals two-hundred-eight), also seem both devised and unpredictable, rather than following naturally with predictable contrasts. Not only the agency of the voices, but their degree of urgency, their pulse – their liveliness – hinge on the whim of the puppet-master.

I do not mean to imply that the observations I have made thus far about sound and signification are all immediately apparent, but I do assert that most are available to a first-time listener. Each instrument plays in a minimum of six duos, and so is brought repeatedly to our attention. Significantly, it is not important that we make these observations (or others) in a particular order – they do not depend upon one another. In Part 1, there is no single, crucial clue we are in danger of missing and no narrative drive to prevent us from comparing the sounds of

54. The alligator cricket clicker frightens because it is an alligator, and loud, but reassures because it is a toy and was used by the 101st Airborne during D-Day to signal friend rather than foe in the dark. But then again, anyone using or hearing a cricket clicker on D-Day was already in a terrifying situation.

instruments not playing simultaneously. Likewise, one can easily reflect on signification while the instrument in question is silent. I posit that the kaleidoscopic structure of Part 1 gives a listener the mental space and time to ask herself what is happening, and I concede that this may feel uncomfortable. A listener might prefer to be told a story, or to feel confident she understands. Counterbalancing that discomfort is the particularity and suggestiveness of the instruments, and the invitation and friendliness of their status as toys and curiosities.

Adding to this structural conduciveness to curiosity, association, and analysis is a repeated dramaturgical gesture of performatively hiding something, and then revealing it. The piece begins with a dramatic unveiling of the table set-up, while the chimes on their stand remain veiled. This gesture of controlled discovery is echoed throughout the piece in the figure of the Jack-in-the-box (who pops three times), the wind up teeth, which are held, wound and at the ready, by a washcloth (for the large) and a plastic cup (for the small), and a second unveiling, half-way through the piece, of the wind chimes. In his 1996 article, “Hearing, Remembering, Cold Storage, Purism, Evidence, and Attitude Adjustment,”⁵⁵ Dubiel discusses the attitude akin to “preoccupation” which he adopts in order to deal with the errant D \sharp that appears, without apparent resolution, in the opening measures of the Beethoven violin concerto. The D \sharp is not contextualized in a way we understand until much later in the piece, and citing Schoenberg, Dubiel acknowledges that this story “is one of the most important paradigms of musical analysis in our professional culture.”⁵⁶ In *Sonata Quijada* this trope is manifold. Rather than being

55. Joseph Dubiel, “Hearing, Remembering, Cold Storage, Purism, Evidence, and Attitude Adjustment,” *Current Musicology* 60-61 (1996): 40.

56. *Ibid.*, 35.

uncertain about one thing (the D#) and waiting specifically for its resolution, we are uncertain about many things, and even more uncertain about whether, and in what way, they will be resolved: how do any of our observations fit together? In the case of a single D#, once you are preoccupied, “what seems salient to you is determined in significant part by your preoccupation,”⁵⁷ but when you are preoccupied by many observations, almost anything might prove salient. By the time the percussionist begins to speak we have been primed to discover something.

Part 2

Part 2 is marked by the entrance of the speaking voice and the abrupt stasis of the accompanying texture, with the left hand continuously shaking the chimes, and the right hand cranking the Jack-in-the-box one note at a time. After seven sentences, the right hand alternates cranking a note and affixing a clothespin to one of the chimes’ seven cylinders. During this process, the notes and clothespins are inserted into the text in such a way as to augment the effect of a pause-for-effect. The last clothespin is affixed just before the last word of the text.

The text excerpts the testimony of William Bader and Karl Inderfurth at the Senate Church Committee Hearings, December 4th and 5th, 1975. It describes the scale of the anti-communist propaganda campaign undertaken by the CIA in Chile during the 1964 presidential election. After contextualizing this particular campaign as part of a larger campaign, characterizing it as a scare campaign aimed especially at women, and recounting its use of “the Press, radio, films,

57. *Ibid.*, 40.

pamphlets, posters, direct mailings, and wall paintings,” as well as black propaganda,⁵⁸ the quotation ends with a string of figures:

During the first week of intensive activity, a CIA-funded propaganda group produced twenty radio spots per day in Santiago and forty-four provincial stations. Twelve-minute broadcasts were produced five times daily on three Santiago stations and on twenty-four provincial outlets. By the end of June the group was producing twenty-four daily newscasts nationwide, and twenty-six weekly commentary programs. In addition, three thousand posters were distributed daily.⁵⁹

The progressive muting of the nightingale chimes with clothespins gradually turns their cheerful, pitched jingling into muted clicking. The effect is chilling. During the delivery of the text, I am torn between attending to it and reinterpreting all that preceded it. The welter of mouths, the inarticulate voices, the bones, the suspense, scares, and the manipulation, each take on very particular meanings in relation to this last revelation. While we begin to assemble and parse a flood of meanings and the text enumerates a simultaneous flood of messages, the instruments are gradually silenced. The teeth have stopped chattering and the last die has been cast. The Jack-in-the-box slows to a stop and the bird-song polyphony is reduced to bony clicking.

These association-laden sounds can be read in (at least) two quite contradictory ways: do the mouths of the instruments represent the propaganda machine manipulated by a unilateral outside force (the CIA/percussionist/us) attributing to them agency they don't have (black propaganda)?

58. Defined in the Church Hearings testimony quoted in the score as “the creation of material falsely purporting to be the work of a particular group.”

59. Enslin, *Sonata Quijada*, 2.

Or, do all the mouths represent the voices of Chilean democracy drowned out by the CIA-puppeted propaganda campaign (not represented in the piece, but born witness to by the testimony), and subsequently disappeared or turned into skeletons by Pinochet's regime? Or something else? The question remains unresolved, and yet the multiple answers we have are far more precise than those we had at the end of Part 1. In "Humanism and Musical Experience," Fred Maus analyzes a poem by John Ashbery as piece of music in order to get at an aspect of Haydn's Sonata in G minor that intrigues him. He writes,

Ashbery's indeterminacies... do not have the effect of rendering irrelevant certain questions...; rather, the poems seem concerned to raise these questions and keep them before the reader. The feel of an Ashbery poem is neither vagueness nor purely non-representational word-play, but is tied up with the precise, unresolvable tension that the indeterminacies constitute.

The precision of Ashbery's uncertainties coexists with the precision of determinate relations within the poetry, relations that resist any simple mimetic interpretation[.]”⁶⁰

This is exactly how I think *Sonata Quijada* functions: its musical syntax – non-teleological, ever-shifting, yet insistent – keeps questions about *what this is about* dancing before the listener's attention, while the peculiarity of the instrumentation and the precision of the political reference severely but not completely constrain their determinate relations. In politicized music a degree of indeterminacy is desirable: if a piece has the audience wondering about conflicting political

60. Fred Everett Maus, "Humanism and Musical Experience." PhD diss., Princeton University, 1990: 160-161.

interpretations, that is actually *more valuable* than conveying something definite, which having been understood, may be too easily dismissed or forgotten. The political reading of Part 1 that Part 2 induces clearly casts what we have heard as a metaphor. I contend that, in addition, the political reading casts the habit of mind of trying to interpret a situation about which we don't have all the information, as a politically desirable one. This piece not only invites us to stay with the problem of the CIA's conquest of Chilean democratic discourse, but also induces and rewards a critical habit of mind trying to make sense out of apparently illegible elements.

Discussing the contradictions that produce indeterminacy is in itself a complex form of cooperation, one I wish were more prevalent in political discourse. Likewise treating an impasse as a reason to continue talking rather than for dismissal is a democratic skill I myself would like to develop further. Suspending the intelligibility of a piece of music, a statement, or a situation invokes a curiosity meant bring forth both your own imagination and that of your interlocutor. Amid these many hortatory suggestions for the listener, the role remaining to the composer is nevertheless an essential one: to supply music that has never before existed for the listener to react to, perhaps supplying, additionally, a political problem. After the performance, and indeed perhaps beforehand and during it, the composer can try to suspend the intelligibility of their own music and to a degree, the responses of their listeners, in order to better listen to those responses and learn from them, in both compositional and political domains. The listening strategies of John Cage as described in his interview with Roger Reynolds in 1962 present a significant degree of overlap with modes of listening I have suggested, particularly when he chooses as

music, sounds that have never been intelligible as such.⁶¹ Yet we differ because he perpetually redirects his intention toward pleasure in whatever sounds present themselves; he directs his interest toward what already exists whereas I want a performance practice in which the desires and intentions of composer, performer and listener *for what is not there* are amplified and encouraged. Following Brün, I consider desire for what does not yet exist, especially socially mediated desire, to be a bastion against the commercialism and alienation Adorno decries. The practice I pursue would take as its communal assignment a responsibility Stephen Blum has described as belonging to musicians, namely “to reveal unsuspected, or forgotten, links among multiple dimensions and domains of human experience,” the achievement of which might “enable us to imagine, and work towards, a musical future in which all human beings are encouraged to develop their creative capacities.”⁶²

61 John Cage. “Interview with Roger Reynolds,” in *Contemporary Composers On Contemporary Music* Elliot Schwartz and Barney Childs, eds. 59-71 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998).

62 Stephen Blum, “Composition,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell, eds., (New York: Grove Dictionaries, 2001): 199.

Chapter 2. Translating Agency

In contrast to the previous chapter, in which composers and listeners produced confusion in order to make conceptual room for political readings of instrumentation and musical events to arise, this chapter suggests that we read the embodied politics of gesture, agency, and power in chamber textures, treating concert music as a forum for critiques of, and prefigurative experiments in, power sharing, role playing, and cooperation. As in the previous chapter, these lenses might be trained on any music, or folded into a composition assignment; again I find fruitful examples in works by Hoffman, Burkhardt, and Aperghis. In order to suggest the latent ubiquity of my concerns in our tradition of chamber music, I cite Elisabeth Le Guin's study of Boccherini, which provides a surprisingly literal example of the politics of musical agency made manifest. I then read kinds of agency and relation in Elizabeth Hoffman's trio *Assemblage* and a scene from Rick Burkhardt's opera, *You My Mother*. I proceed to admire several aspects of Martin Brody's reading of Stefan Wolpe's music as enacting the political ideals of Hannah Arendt, and ask how we might translate these back out of music into real life. Examples from Aperghis' rehearsal process and Theater of the Oppressed supply possibilities for developing a performance practice of chamber music in which we perform publicly our political readings of chamber music in order to suggest solutions for social problems.

Without implying any kind of comprehensiveness, I would like to define two continua along which to conceive of audience relation to music: a continuum of focus from individual, to group, to collective; and a continuum of engagement from observing, to identifying, to playing. The continuum of focus pertains to where and how widely we train the lens of our attention, whether on an individual player or musical feature, relations between players or features, or an awareness of the entire musical environment as something audience and players are all together subject to.

The continuum of engagement pertains to one's feeling of proximity, ranging from a detached appreciation of the music as object, through an identification with players, and with musical features themselves, to actively producing the music and the silence around it. It seems to me I move along both continua both at will and unconsciously. I feel more in control of the lens of my attention than of my degree of engagement, but perhaps this is only a function of being more conscious of my attention. Could I chose to feel inside, rather than outside the music?

Violinist Vita Wallace, with whom I discussed this, concurs that her experience of both continua, as a player, is similar:

I think it is very similar for players. It is quite possible to have one's attention only on one's intonation as a member of the first violin section, completely unaware of the bass line, or focus all of one's attention on the audience, none on the music, if very nervous.... I often make a choice to redirect my attention to players across the stage, or sometimes I choose to widen my attention to include the audience in a positive way, not as a crowd of critics, but as guests at my musical table.

Can I choose to be more engaged or less engaged in the music making? I am not sure I can come up with examples of this. I can choose to listen to the whole and pay less attention to directing my own body's motions and my own part, at least if I know the music or it is easy -- that feels like adopting a point of view above the stage; or I can choose to zone out and think about something else while still

playing, for example in the midst of a nightmare gig when the band is horribly out of tune all around me.⁶³

While never overtly determining my position, certain musical textures or features seem to encourage certain positions. One position that seems fascinating to me is identification with a relation, that is, the lens of attention open wide enough to admit multiple players or features and their relations, combined with a high degree of engagement, that is not observed from far away but felt, as if one were made up of the relation. I will return to this idea in my discussion of Hoffman and Burkhardt's pieces.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to survey the literature on subjectivity and embodiment; however, to acknowledge the deep roots of player-audience identification in the traditions of the common practice period and more recent musicology, I look to Elisabeth Le Guin's exemplary scholarship in *Boccherini's Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology*.⁶⁴ As an epigraph to her chapter "Gestures and Tableaux," she quotes C. P. E. Bach in his 1753 treatise, *Versuch über die wahre Art, das Clavier zu spielen*, exhorting a player to pursue his listeners' identification with him: "Since a musician cannot move others if he be not himself moved, he must necessarily cause in himself every affect which he would arouse in his hearers; thus he gives them their own sentiments to understand, and persuades them the best in this manner through sympathy."⁶⁵ Le

63. Vita Wallace, email to the author 11/16/15

64. Elisabeth Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

65. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments* trans. Willam J. Mitchell (New York: Norton, 1949) 152, quoted in Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 65.

Guin goes on throughout the chapter to suggest that “as listeners we join our eighteenth-century counterparts in ‘reading’ apparently sonic events for imagistic or tactile associations,” and that as performers “we do well to assume our nearly constant role as portals into visualistic fantasies on the part of our audience.”⁶⁶ Obviously much of modernism does its best to thwart the culture of *sensibilité* and affect in which the musics of Bach and Boccherini were couched, but I would argue that the very alienation of subject that modernism seeks to produce depends upon the premises of relation and identification in earlier music which concert music preserved. None of the music I discuss here is so alienating of the subject, and on the contrary it rewards thought and feeling experiments in identification and relation. But even as high a modernist as Helmut Lachenmann invokes more embodied responses to the materiality of his music, observing analogically, “If I hear two cars crashing—each against the other—I hear maybe some rhythms or some frequencies, but I don’t say, ‘Oh, what interesting sounds!’ I say, ‘What happened?’”⁶⁷

Though both seem to involve the continuum of engagement, I do not mean to imply that Le Guin and Lachenmann’s readings are the same, rather that distinguishing between them helps define a field of interpretation and materiality in which to locate yet another kind of reading I would like to call for. Le Guin, in elucidating practices of salon culture, asks us to read the gestures and bodies of players associatively. Lachenmann, in refusing the abstraction of performative events to sound, asks us not to read, but to respond in an integrated way, and with reciprocal urgency, to sounds as traces of an event that itself integrates people, objects, and

66. Le Guin, *Boccherini’s Body*, 102.

67. Paul Steenhuisen, “Interview with Helmut Lachenmann—Toronto, 2003,” *Contemporary Music Review* 23, no. 3/4 (2004): 162.

energy. I want us to respond in both of these ways, and in particular I want us to read the performers' gestures, and our own integrated and bodily response, as political metaphors. In the context of eighteenth-century *sensibilité*, Le Guin acknowledges problems that will attend our readings of gesture, as they attended our predecessors': first that many gestures of musicians remain illegible,⁶⁸ or second that, even when gestures are legible, readings remain ineluctably individual. I hope that my preceding chapter has convinced you that illegibility that elicits one's individuality is highly desirable. Le Guin summarizes Norman Bryson's chronicle of "Diderot's progress [?] from the overflowing descriptive enthusiasm of the early "Salons"—surely some of the greatest flights of visualistic language ever produced—to a profound disillusionment later in life, arising from the ultimate indistinguishability of such descriptions from fiction"⁶⁹ and ultimately adopts Diderot's problem as musicology's.⁷⁰ I struggle to emphasize adequately the degree to which this indistinguishability is *not a problem* for me. I know I am hardly alone in my comfort with analytical fiction,⁷¹ a comfort that might stem from any of a number of premises, but the premise I want to draw attention to is an explicitly activist one: When what you want most is socio-political realities that don't exist, what you want is, by definition, fiction. What I

68. This illegibility is one thing music theater takes up, as I hope will be illustrated later in this chapter, in the statements by Aperghis and Jean-Pierre Drouet, and in Chapter 3 in the discussion of my piece, "COORDINATE."

69. Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 103. This strikes me as more a sad turn, than "progress."

70. *Ibid.*, 104.

71. Marion Guck, "Analytical Fictions," *Music Theory Spectrum* 16, no.2 (1994): 217-230.

hope to suggest is how we might inch these fictions—not necessarily out of our heads—but definitively into our bodies.

I posit that we can reverse-engineer the kinds of conceptualizations Janna Saslaw discusses in her essay, “Forces, Containers, and Paths: The Role of Body-Derived Image Schemas in the Conceptualization of Music.”⁷² In it Saslaw points out that Hugo Riemann’s language describing his theory of modulation reflects some of the body-derived image schema George Lakoff and Mark Johnson describe in *Metaphors We Live By*,⁷³ particularly the inside-outside, and source-path-goal schemas. Instead of using body-derived image schemas to constrain our conceptualizations of music, I propose that we use them to get back out of our heads and into our bodies. Let us leap! Let us pedal! Let us fall down! Let us go in circles! Let us fall down deceptively and pop back up again! Let us look to music for metaphors—not only bodily—of what we can do.

Le Guin quotes at length a story written in 1845 by Henri Castil-Blaze, in which the politics of collaborative chamber ensemble work are writ large. Le Guin regards the story with suspicion, but agrees with me that, even if totally apocryphal, it nevertheless illustrates contemporary conceptions of agency, interest, and collaboration in chamber playing. What is germane for my purposes is that the story is mapped onto literal political power. Boccherini has been invited to play some of his chamber music with Carlos IV, king of Spain, who “always played the first

72. Janna Saslaw, “Forces, Containers, and Paths: The Role of Body-Derived Image Schemas in the Conceptualization of Music,” *Journal of Music Theory* 40, no. 2 (1996).

73. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

violin part.” This particular part was extremely repetitive, oscillating between *do* and *si* for “half a page.” The king plays it for a while, but gets fed up:

finally, abandoning the labor that has been tiring him, he rises and says in an angry tone,

“This is miserable, a student would write thus: *Do si, do si!*”

“Sire if it would please Your Majesty to lend your ear to the play of the second violin and viola parts, or to the pizzicato presented by the violoncello while I keep the first violin on this uniform figure. The figure loses its monotony as the other instruments enter and mingle in the conversation.”⁷⁴

Here we have a bona fide monarch, whose prerogative to first violin has hilariously backfired, sidelining him to a supporting role, for the enjoyment of which his training as perennial protagonist has ill-equipped him. So unaccustomed is he to paying any mind to what others put forward that, despite the simplicity of his part, which he himself derides, he is unable to direct his attention to any other features of the musical context in which he finds himself.

The purpose of this chapter is to offer you a set of related listening lenses, ways of listening to music that help you imagine your body as actor, ways of considering music as experiments in relationship and power which we might translate into non-musical and political settings. For many people, the difficulties of self-governance feel like a preemptive drag. But this music is inviting and resilient and generative. It only needs us to talk about it in the way we need. I need more variety, and fewer differences in power; this music gives me these and makes me want more.

74. Le Guin, *Boccherini's Body*, 69.

In Hoffman's *Assemblage* (2011),⁷⁵ for piano, bass clarinet and metal percussion, each instrument operates in at least three timbral modes: one in which it carves out its own timbral niche, and two others in which it joins each of the other two instruments and mimics, while augmenting with difference, their timbral profiles. We are prompted to compare and contrast materials: wood and wood, metal and metal, wood and metal are combined and recombined, with felt, rubber, skin, reed, and plastic to echo and expand upon each other. The smoothnesses of the piano, and mid- and high-range clarinet, are not as smooth as the temple gong, but smoother than the Thai gongs, which are smoother than the cymbal, which is more complicated than the fry pan. Each instrument offers its own version of rich lowness, of partials, of noise, of activity. In the low register, the piano's timbre is dark and smooth, while the bass clarinet is dark, but grainier. The noise of low metal percussion (Thai gongs, fry pan) is finer and more diffuse than the bass clarinet's, but the piano's low strings, scraped, create a timbral link, having the diffuseness of metal transients, and the graininess of the scrape of the string-wrap. The percussion creates its analog graininess via busy articulation—many short cymbal sounds are made to mimic the timbre of a long sound. Or, the timbre of the long sound—a grainy bass clarinet note, or a piano resonance decaying—itself is recast as very active. The continuity of the bass clarinet's upward multiphonic arpeggios connects the piano's activity in the upper register to its low C, and relate the cymbal's activity back to the piano's smoothness. The wobbling of the clarinet's *bisbigliando* is echoed in the waterphone, while its dry key clicks and the noise of

75. Elizabeth Hoffman, *Assemblage*, (2011), performed by Marianne Gythfeldt, bass clarinet, Stephen Beck, piano, and Matthew Gold, percussion, 2011. <https://soundcloud.com/eliz-hoffman/assemblage-2011>.

piano action in a high register remain both related and distinct. Thus the whole register is integrated as a single, busily activated sound, requiring the ministrations of three absorbed musicians attending to it and to each other.

Instructions in the score emphasize one player's relation to another. At the rest after his cymbal activity, the percussionist is instructed to "*stop suddenly, as if unexpectedly told to by clar.*"⁷⁶ The clarinetist is instructed on two levels of dynamic flexibility at the moment when she feels the absence of the other two players: "*Especially where/when the clarinet is exposed, create a pulsating feeling/pattern.*" The pianist is instructed to "*imitate clar. stuttering-like effect*" and "*add more notes; react to percussion chimes.*" Each of these instructions involves evaluating the sound of another player and *formulating* a response - the creation of the pulsating is left to clarinetist - it will probably be dynamic, but could be vibrato, via throat muscles, and as to whether it's a feeling or a pattern or whether those will be the same is also left to the player. The pianist's reaction to the chimes is barely constrained at all, requiring simply "more notes." From these angles, the piece is a live, relational set of actions taken in response to one another. In my correspondence with Hoffman,⁷⁷ she writes that, in revising the score for a different group of musicians than those playing in the recording on SoundCloud, she had "revisited lots of details in the notation, regarding phrasing, fermatas, cues between the players to get them to understand the gestures, and to express more clearly what I had intended initially timing-wise re elastic but taut motions à trois." What does it take to get three people to perform "elastic but taut motions à

76. Elizabeth Hoffman, "Assemblage for bass clarinet, piano, and percussion," score, 2011, email message to author, October 30th, 2015.

77. Elizabeth Hoffman, email message to author, October 30, 2015.

trois?” How do we balance attention on our own task and responsiveness to others’ being, and doing, and its consequences? When we witness this, can it be a kind of practicing?

In addition to instructions for individual and related actions, the score also casts the piece as a collective project, an other world the players are making together for all of us to inhabit. Several times the percussionist is instructed to stop “*as if evaporating*” and, in addition to several sections delineated rhythmically only by fermatas, there is a marking “*out of measured time.*” The program note draws our attention to surface detail, and “an indulgence in resonance, especially as it evolves over time, and as it impacts our perception of the surface detail,” or the action, and its consequences, and how the consequences affect further action. A moment for the piano is marked “*strange, inner piano world sounds.*”

When I first listened to this recording, I felt the structure of its timbral variety to be so relational, and its gestures so integrative of harmony, timbre and register, that I felt pulled, with vertiginous absorption, into the piece, with little attention left over for “reading” it. Can this aural absorption be another kind of reading, a way of bodily identifying with social complexity via an exchange of sensory translation and kinesthetic projection? Beyond tracking this variety, its relations, and their integration, what I believe my attention was busy with was adjusting my own position in relation to the music. Sometimes I was imagining the actions a player was undertaking to produce a sound, but at other times I was too busy following the sound itself as an actor to even think of the player; at other times, the music seemed more like an object being assiduously produced, and still other times more like an atmosphere. This activity of positioning myself in relation to the music required repeated, if not very arduous, reconceptualization; it is an activity I usually do unconsciously but would like to bring into the light of more conscious awareness. I don’t think a particular music forces a particular relation, but I think it’s safe to say

that the identifications with player or with the sound as actor are more readily elicited by greater activity, and that more static textures, especially of resonance, elicit atmospheric associations. I wonder, however, what makes the difference between identifying with the activity of the sound and hearing the sound as an object—what determines the degree of distance. I don't necessarily think it's a question of duration, though a discrete duration might seem more like an object. Is it a question of affinity, or can I just choose whether the music is saying or doing or being and whether I am? In non-musical group situations, do I also have these options?

In the opening of his book, *Performance As Political Act*, Randy Martin professes a similar desire:

I hope to strain the limits of the performance metaphor so that it ceases to be a metaphor and becomes a perspective for grasping politics. In order to agree we must be shown. To disagree we must show. To move beyond those two poles of consent, we must cease the reciprocation of watching. In order to stop behaving like spectators we must begin to be performers. We begin with words and their devices, such as metaphors, in the hope that, in our moments of action, there will be no one left out to describe the events we are making.⁷⁸

I think that listening affords a unique and liminal space between watching and doing, along the continuum of engagement. I don't mean to espouse doing over watching—I want them inform each other. I am late to the party calling for more political action, but I am not calling for it to the

78. Randy Martin, *Performance As Political Act: the Embodied Self* (New York: Bergin and Garvey, 1990), 2.

exclusion of political reading. If political action as currently conceived seems unappealing, let us reconceive it.

Where, in instrumental music, our identification, whether with music, player, or neither, may be mercurial, in opera we are provided with characters we are very clearly meant to relate to in some way. The opera “You My Mother (Part One),” a collaboration between Rick Burkhardt and playwright Kristen Kosmas, includes a scene⁷⁹ in which a teenaged daughter, Helen, is trying to tell her mother, first over an intercom in their house, and then face to face in the kitchen, that she is depressed. In both instances her mother insists, without apparent malice, that she can’t hear her, initially because of difficulties with the intercom, and subsequently because of “the way your father built this house... the acoustics or something.” The scene depicts nearly incredible (how can she not hear, face to face?) disconnection in a relationship with the potential for the most profound intimacy, identification, and recognition. In the repetition forced by her mother’s inability to hear, Helen rephrases her sadness to comedic excess. Helen’s mother can’t understand her, but we can, so we identify with Helen: we want her mother to hear her. The disconnect is figured musically for Helen by switching rapidly, mid-sentence or mid-word, between speaking and singing, and for her mother by interruptive rests inserted mid-word. The setting highlights binaries that ought to be integrated but aren’t: speaking/singing, saying/feeling, listening/hearing, voice/body. As Helen acquiesces to her mother’s invitation to the kitchen, the

79. Rick Burkhardt, and Kristen Kosmas, “You My Mother,” performed by Theater of A Two-headed Calf, Beth Griffith, Larisa Husiak, Mike Mikos, Kate Soper, and Yarn/Wire, directed by Brooke O’Harra, February, 2012 at the Ellen Stewart Theater at La Mama.

<https://vimeo.com/38046493>.

disconnect effected by the intercom failure is amplified by a stage direction projected on a screen that reads “[*Helen walks three miles to the kitchen.*]”⁸⁰ Three miles is the distance a depressed teenager feels it is from her room to the kitchen when her mother cannot work the intercom. In the staging of this scene, Helen and her mother are standing not too far from one another. In the staging of the three-mile walk, Helen walks *in place* while two percussionists wend their way all around the stage, one holding up a series of flooring surfaces, the other using his hands to “walk” two footless shoes on each proffered surface: metal, wood, cork, carpet, and finally the sound board of the piano. Even without the intercom, Helen’s voice is disconnected from her body, her agency, and her capacity to move. Despite her best efforts (expressing, repeating, instructing, walking *three miles*) she is totally disconnected and stuck, and we feel for her.

The staging and orchestration of the walk is simultaneously a performance of elaborate collaborative empathy in which we, the audience, feel involved. The percussionists take up the feels-like-three-miles premise—it takes a full minute and a half—and perform it for us so that we all feel the premise become real. They embody her disembodied problem, and amplify her unheard voice. As musicians, they cast the rest of the musicians in a similar role. A soprano without a character is deployed to help with the singing half of Helen’s speech/song. The musicians model that we are all here together to embody, identify with, and bear witness to Helen’s unheard feeling.

Helen’s impasse with her mother is finally interrupted by the exultant shouts of her younger brother from another room. The brother faces the audience as he yells to Helen, but all the other singers and musicians face him and deliver his lines along with him in unison, accompanied by

80. Kosmas, “You My Mother,” unpublished libretto, 2011.

octave doublings in the instruments: “Helen! I got a stereo! Come in here! Come in here—I want to play you my stereo! I want to play you a record on my stereo! What’d you get Helen? I got a stereo!” The musicians thus simultaneously betray Helen and enact for us, bearing witness to, the structural power differential between voices in this house. The dramatic irony the audience experiences at this musical amplification of content about the amplification of music is refused by the musicians who must produce it. The attention this moment draws to the shifting relations between singer, musician, and audience offers us the alternatives of identification, solidarity, amplification, enacting, and bearing witness—important choices between being, saying, and doing that we may translate outside the concert hall, if only we want to.

Three threads in Martin Brody’s article, “Where to Act, How to Move: Unruly Action in Late Wolpe,”⁸¹ are especially exciting to me and relevant to this chapter: an extrapolation he makes from an assertion Frederic Jameson makes about Adorno, the liveliness his reading of agency imbues Wolpe’s music with, and his mapping of Wolpe’s aesthetic onto Hannah Arendt’s idea of ‘the shining view of man.’ He quotes Jameson reading Adorno *almost* musically:

Jameson asserts the priority of form in making the operations of dialectical thinking manifest:

[T]he vital relationship of Adorno to political thinking lies in the form rather than the content of his thoughts, which, conceptualizing aesthetic form or philosophical content rather than politics as such, is capable of detecting within them—with a

81. Martin Brody, “Where to Act and How to Move: Unruly Action in Late Wolpe,” *Contemporary Music Review* 27 no. 2-3, 2008.

starker, more luminous articulation than can normally be achieved within political analysis or social history—the complex mobilities of the historical dialectic.⁸²

In suggesting that the form and pacing of Adorno's writing might in themselves model the complex mobilities of political thinking, Jameson implies the possibility of a third element and a transitive relationship: the modeling of complex mobilities of thought and action in the unfolding forms of music.⁸³

What makes Jameson sound as if he is talking about music is his privileging of form and relationship, while devaluing content, even as he admires articulation. Brody's transposition of this idea one concept over, or rather his transformation of a quality into an element, is in itself a very twelve-tone, composerly move, enacting precisely what Jameson describes, without citing itself as an example.

Brody's animation of the dialectics he identifies in Wolpe's music brings to life for me music that had before remained abstract, if full of admirable variety, by ascribing to the dialectics personality, intention, and agency, and integrating domains of pitch, rhythm, timbre, and activity that a dryer analyst might have dissected into lifelessness. My only regret is one I can hardly lay at Brody's particular feet: that this reading is stuck in the pages of *Contemporary Music Review*, and not somehow integrated into performance practice. This regret only increases as he begins to map the dialectics he has animated onto Arendt's ideas.

82. Frederic Jameson, *Late Marxism* (New York: Verso, 2000), 225, quoted in Brody, "Where to Act," 209.

83. Brody, "Where to Act," 209.

Brody describes Wolpe's music as enacting three different Arendtian ideas: first, her "theory of non-authoritarian, pluralistic political action;"⁸⁴ second, a renunciation of sovereignty in favor of "proliferating, unbounded actions: an incitement to begin again and again"⁸⁵ such that "every reaction becomes a chain reaction ... every process is the cause of new processes;"⁸⁶ and third, in the case of Wolpe's quotations of other composers' music that "the process of decay is at the same time a process of crystallization."⁸⁷

I am enthralled with this triangulation between politics, philosophy, and music, but the question I find more and more pressing, and which Brody ignores entirely, is what can this mean in our lives—how do we apply it? How do we enact it socially and politically? Brody uses the word "model" over and over, but when and how does the modeling end and real life start? Although I hope we all perform more Wolpe, I hope even more that our chances to enact his and Arendt's political vision are not exhaustively sublimated into hexachordal transformations. Again I am asking that we try translating in the other direction. I have three inadequate answers to offer in response to these questions, two of which I will discuss here, namely some rehearsal practices of Aperghis, and the Legislative Theater invented by Augusto Boal deployed here in New York City.

84. *Ibid.*, 205.

85. *Ibid.*, 219.

86. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 190, quoted in Brody, "Where to Act," 219.

87. Hannah Arendt, *Men In Dark Times* (New York: Harcourt, 1968), 205-206, quoted in Brody, "Where to Act," 219.

Antoine Gindt's collection of interviews of Aperghis and his collaborators⁸⁸ provides several accounts of how to translate musical abstractions into practice at least as far as staging Théâtre Musical and rehearsal dynamics. One of Aperghis' statements gives two particularly dialectical definitions of Théâtre Musical:

It's when, at the most moving moment of an anecdote, a fragment of the story falls into an arbitrary form. If it functions, the two elements destroy each other, and give birth to a third, very lively and unpredictable.

... Théâtre Musical equals for me the invasion of the theatrical temple by the abstract power of musical organization, and not the inverse.⁸⁹

In the first, the “anecdote” connotes a recognizable story from the outside world, while the “arbitrary form” thwarts that recognition with abstraction. The third element sounds very like a Wolpean musical agent as described by Brody—lively and unpredictable. The second definition, much like Jameson and Brody, above, seems to imply that the abstract power of musical organization has a lot to offer the political world, in this case, the content-redolent theatrical temple; also, I would argue, the political and personal temples.

The first-person account percussionist Jean-Pierre Drouet gives of the production process for Aperghis' piece *Conversations* (1988) suggests how the abstractions of Aperghis' score were translated into rehearsal practice in order to find translations into other domains. To me it sounds exemplary of the three Arendtian ideas that Brody highlights:

88. Antoine Gindt, *Georges Aperghis: le corps musical*, (Strasbourg: Actes Sud, 1990).

89. *Ibid.*, 62. (my translation)

It was astounding because we no longer knew what we were talking about, whether about music, theater, or poetry, that no longer had any importance. We bathed in a poetic world on which we all agreed and in which we sensed each other extremely well. The rehearsals were of a crazy creativity...

One couldn't say exactly that Georges Aperghis was the director. He brought all the material, all the work on the words, but the possibilities were so numerous that it was necessary at every instant to make choices, to bring the formulas to life...

We had completely left behind the idea of scores, because we were more strenuously in a kind of workshop, a labor of ensemble. There was an incredible suppleness, each had the desire to listen to the most unprecedented propositions.

We abandoned the psychological relations which had been initially assigned to the characters to penetrate into the poetic world of Georges Aperghis which was finally our own. We all felt the same way, which is very rare. There was at that moment, a true experimentation, one single text lent itself to multiple versions, we then ruled out numerous attempts. At the beginning there were no scenic instructions. Only the text existed previously, without notes on the play, the rehearsals were there to develop the scenic aspect, to envision the way to express things vocally.⁹⁰

To me this description of process sounds almost like Brody's description of Wolpe's music in that it is anti-authoritarian, pluralistic, beginning again and again, and that the decay of their

90. *Ibid.*, 79-80.

products is also a process of crystallization. Additionally, it is the musical abstraction to which they return as the driver of these relationships.

Italian philosopher Adriana Cavarero reads Arendt similarly, in a way that further illuminates the relations Aperghis' texts engender as political, despite their face-value as gibberish.

According to [Arendt], speech—even when it is understood as *phone semantike*—does not become political by way of the things of the community that speech is able to designate. Rather, speech becomes political on account of the self-revelation of speakers who express and communicate their uniqueness through speaking—no matter the specific content of what is said. The political valence of signifying is thus shifted from speech—and from language as a system of signification—to the speaker. The speakers are not political because of what they say, but because they say it to others who share an interactive space of reciprocal exposure. To speak to one another is to communicate to one another the unrepeatable uniqueness of each speaker.⁹¹

I want to stress that this Arendtian political aspect of Aperghis' texts and rehearsal process is hardly exclusive to Aperghis's work. On the contrary I think many chamber rehearsals operate this way, and that we may read any music without semantic content for the politics of its internal relations. I am struck by how much Drouet revels in the rehearsal process and appreciates *these* relations as their way of working. Later on he laments attempts to recreate the working relations

91. Adriana Cavarero, *For More Than One Voice*, trans. Paul A. Kottman (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 190, quoting Hannah Arendt, *Che cos'è la politica?* (Milan: Edizioni di Comunità, 1995).

this piece engendered that failed to live up to its example for various reasons, including increasing the number of musicians participating, and more immutable aspects of scenic and textual bases they were obliged to work with. Why should musicians hide such achievements, and pleasures in our ways of working? Let us instead translate them and share them with our audiences along with the sounds.

My second inadequate answer to the question of how we bring musical relations out of our heads and into our lives swings to the other pole of the abstract-concrete continuum, in looking to the twenty-year-old experiment in popular political theater that is Theater of the Oppressed. At the School for Designing a Society, the radical education project that in 1991 grew out of Herbert Brün's experimental composition seminar, an assignment we begin with again and again is the formulation of desire statements, or false statements, which are descriptions of the society you would prefer to live in, as if it existed. A false statement must meet three criteria: It must not be currently true. You must want it to be true. Making it true must require a change of system. Some of these statements, we then use as input to creative projects. In the summer of 2014, I wrote the false statement, "My government uses art to make decisions." In early June of 2015, I happened to hear a radio segment on the Brian Lehrer Show,⁹² about a group who has begun to make this false statement true.

Theater of The Oppressed NYC was holding its Third Annual Festival of Legislative Theater, this year "confronting mass incarceration and the collateral consequences of conviction" ahead of the New York City Council's vote on the proposal to Ban The Box, an initiative to further

92. Brian Lehrer, *The Brian Lehrer Show*, produced by WNYC, June 2nd 2015.

<http://www.wnyc.org/story/theater-oppressed-legislators-listen/>.

restrict employers' ability to discriminate on the basis of incarceration history.⁹³ The Theater of the Oppressed is a set of theatrical forms and games developed by Brazilian theater practitioner, Augusto Boal, beginning in the early 1960's.⁹⁴ The techniques translate the teaching philosophies of Paolo Freire into theater in order to promote social and political change. Taking Bertolt Brecht's dissolution of the fourth wall one step further, Boal's forms transform Aristotelian spectators into "spect-actors" invited to intervene in scenes and change their outcome.⁹⁵ The scenes are scripted by their actors to depict scenarios of their own oppression, and are short enough (five to ten minutes) to be performed multiple times in one evening, allowing for multiple spect-actors to assume the role of the oppressed protagonist. The multiple performances allow for the re-scripting of not only actions of the oppressed, but also anticipatory re-scripting of power's responses to the newly proposed actions. Upon his election to the post of city council member in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, Boal adapted his theatrical forms to the process of drafting legislation, inviting participants from his constituency to propose policy legislation.⁹⁶

93. Theater of the Oppressed NYC, Festival of Legislative Theater, 2015, event website.

<http://www.theatreoftheoppressednyc.org/legislative-theatre.html>.

94. Augusto Boal, *Theater of the Oppressed*, trans. Charles A. and Maria-Odilia Leal McBride (New York: Urizen, 1979).

95. Gonzalo Frasca, "Videogames of the Oppressed: Critical Thinking, Education, Tolerance, and Other Trivial Issues," in *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game*, ed. Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Pat Harrigan (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 88.

96. Augusto Boal, *Legislative Theater: Using Performance to Make Politics*, trans. Adrian Jackson (New York: Routledge 1998).

Thirteen of the forty laws thus drafted were passed by the city council. In New York City publicly elected officials who participated TONYC's Festival of Legislative Theater 2015 included four City Council Members, the Public Advocate, and a federal official from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Ban the Box initiative passed the next week.⁹⁷ Without claiming anything like direct causality, and without the space here to adequately acknowledge the twelve years of organizing behind that vote,⁹⁸ I am nonetheless astonished to be able to report: My government uses art to make decisions.

Taking cues from Legislative Theater, Aperghis' rehearsal techniques, and Brody's and Le Guin's readings, I would like to propose a new concert format: one in which one piece will be read as input to non-musical problems solicited from the audience. I want to make more readings of contemporary music, and I want those readings to be performed socially, with audiences. I anticipate the response that this is what we do in classrooms, and I certainly don't want to foreclose on that possibility. But will you ask your students to do the extra translation step into their socio-political reality? There is an inevitable aspect of obligation and power differential built into classroom relations that adds an extra layer of complication, perhaps not insurmountable, but which must be somehow addressed. A concert setting with its communal setting emphasized seems more easily amenable. In Chapter Three I explore some experiments in this direction.

97. "NYC 'Ban The Box' Bill Heads To Mayor's Desk," *National Law Review Online* (New York: Proskaur Rose, Friday, June 12th, 2015). <http://www.natlawreview.com/article/nyc-ban-box-bill-heads-to-mayor-s-desk>.

98. Website of the Ban The Box Campaign. <http://bantheboxcampaign.org/>.

Chapter 3. Organizing Audience

In the preceding two chapters, I have discussed how suspending intelligibility entices the imagination of the listener to produce alternatives, and how we might translate musical agency through metaphor into social and political action. In this chapter I argue simply that some audience contexts are much more conducive to these kinds of imaginings, readings, and actions than others, and that for my own music to have the social and political meaning I want it to have, it needs such a context. The first part of this chapter considers the conditions of audience that encourage and support such conversations. I talk about two long-term audiences developed by collaborators of mine in Urbana, Illinois, and Morningside Heights, NYC, and how these two audiences have informed different conceptions of audience that Julie Harting and I have been aiming for in four concerts we have produced so far as Julie and Elizabeth's Anti-Capitalist Concert Series. In the second part, I present eight of my own compositions, describe the context of their performances, and try to imagine an ideal context.

In order for audiences to give contemporary music the social and political meaning and participatory consequences I want it to have, it is necessary to reshape the performance practice of new music concerts and to organize our audience. When a concert ticket is a commodity, it pressures us to understand pieces and audience members as interchangeable. It isn't that political conversations about new music are impossible under current practices, only that they are so unlikely to take place, so easily truncated. When they do take place, there is often too little coherence of community around them to constitute a medium in which their ramifications may be felt. I am lucky enough to have had access to, and count myself a member of, two audiences that have been assiduously cultivated over many years to address these problems. Herbert Brün suggests we consider listening genius as much as composing genius. What might audience

genius be? Surely it implies a heterogeneous collective of listening geniuses, adept at listening and responding not only to the music but to each other, a group that understands itself to be collectively composing not only a piece's meaning, but social reality. If chamber music was invented as an analogy to such a conception, that is no reason not to analogize back in the other direction.⁹⁹

The two existing audiences I discuss share several characteristics: longevity and localness; the blurring of public and private domains; attention to and design of audience participation and response; the inclusion of extra-musical performances; engagement with community groups and issues outside the performance event.

The audience in Urbana Illinois I will call the House Theater audience, because although it shows up to other local venues, such as the Independent Media Center, and the Red Herring Vegetarian Cafe in the Unitarian Universalist Community Center, it was originally conceived of for, invited to, and trained at House Theaters beginning in 1986. According to Susan Parenti, in her 2004 article in the *Public i*, a local independent newspaper published out of the IMC,

House Theater is a non-university, non-commercial context for mixing experimental composition and political satire in a lived in [*sic*] setting. [...] The atmosphere, program, and performance are so designed that a person might find

99. What if an audience were divided into quartets to script their responses, each person in strict accordance with the music of a particular player? The audience member with the common tone would have to think of a lot of puns (see the Boccherini anecdote related in Le Guin in Chapter Two).

herself addressed by experimental attempts in art or discussing politics with a stranger at intermission. [...]

The idea of House Theater grew out of discussions in composer/activist Herbert Brun's [*sic*] class, Seminar in Experimental Composition, offered at the UIUC Music School (taught by Brun [*sic*] from 1967 to 2000). There, in 1985-6, classmate Candace Walworth¹⁰⁰] and I analyzed Theaters and Concert Halls: as much as we loved those places, they seemed to prejudice and limit our imaginations. When people enter a typical performance space, their expectations become obedient, conditioned. And this, not only for the audience—but also for the creators of the event. If you accept the stage and the imperative to fill up the seats, then you accept a lot of other things, too: that the audience needs to “like it”?, that a liked piece is good for society, that a huge audience is better than a small one. All of these things come from commercial criteria, not artistic! – but [are] swallowed hook, line, and stinker [*sic*] by most artists. However, we mused, if we were to invite people to our house? And then present our music there, along

100. Candace Walworth is now Associate Professor of Peace Studies at Naropa University, where her specialties are listed as “community based learning and reflective practice, socially engaged spirituality and socially engaged imagination, and the role of dialogue in conflict resolution” <http://naropa.edu/faculty/candace-walworth.php>.

with good food and home-made wine, to the people we had invited? Sounded good.¹⁰¹

Hosting House Theaters, needing, and feeding this audience were other projects started by Brün's students, in particular the Performers' Workshop Ensemble, a group of performers devoted to experimental work, and the School for Designing a Society, "a project of teachers, artists, performers, and activists"¹⁰² that asks the question "What would a society be like that you would like to live in?" and uses the answers as input to creative projects.¹⁰³ Many of the composers, performers, teachers and students from those two projects have been involved in local organizing efforts around issues of labor, racial, criminal, housing, environmental, and media justice, and more recently, held elected local office. Over thirty years, a critical mass of audience members with personal, artistic, educational, or political connections to the composers and performers has slowly accreted. Seminar students had access to University spaces as concert venues, but felt their audience would make more of their music if given more context, conceived as both setting and content: a friendlier, homier setting; and interstitial plays and skits connecting the pieces with issues of the day and with each other.

101. Susan Parenti, "Come Over to My House: Performing and Politick-ing of House Theater," *The Public i*, October, 2004. <http://publici.ucimc.org/?p=818>

102. Website of The School for Designing a Society, published October, 2015.
<http://www.designingasociety.org/about/>.

103. Both Rick Burkhardt and Mark Enslin are founding members of both of these projects. I joined SDaS as a student in 2005, and as a teacher in 2010.

This past summer, I performed Susan Parenti's play, *Unrequited*, before the House Theater audience at the Red Herring, which has a long history as an organizing space. As we were setting up, Susan remembered attending anti-Vietnam protest organizing meetings in the green room. Though it was a Saturday afternoon in July in a college town, about seventy people showed up. Some audience members had been listening and responding to experimental work by Susan and her cohort for many years. Many had stood with her and my co-star, Brook Celeste, on many picket lines, and lines to comment at public hearings, or sat with them in meetings, or campaigned door to door together, at one time or another. Some Susan considered her political teachers, and many considered her their teacher, of composition, of activism, of accordion, voice, mosaic, language. The discussion after the play lasted longer than the hour-long play. The responses were formulated, specific, and often long. A month later, audience member Jeff Glassman, a composer, performer and teacher of movement theater, wrote us four single-spaced pages about the work. Brook and I had been working on the play for two and a half years, and the depth and complexity of these responses felt, to me, commensurate with our and Susan's work on it, but the fact that such an audience exists, one that can produce such a response, is the result of other, social, work outside of composing and rehearsing, and done by many people over many years. It is the result of years of taking each other and each others' concerns seriously, in many contexts. It is the result of the same people showing up to the same places to witness experiments and respond to them, year after year. It is not the result of marketing. I struggle find a non-monetary metaphor to convey the significance of performing for this audience. How bio-diverse, stable, and resilient a garden of social connectedness! What a feast! What a public library!

One subset of this audience, a group of friends, met weekly, for conversation for years until they decided they preferred the quality of conversation they achieved one on one; subsequently they met frequently one on one instead. I mention this because it illustrates the self-consciousness with which the community constructs its discourse, not only in terms of content, but in terms of dynamics. This self-consciousness may reflect in part the influence of conversation theorist, Gordon Pask, several of whose students remain members of the extended community, most notably Larry Richards; the interest in dynamics reflects more generally the continuing influence of cybernetics in the community long after the 1976 demise of the Biological Computer Laboratory.

Here in New York City, the Orfeo Duo has been cultivating an audience for the past fifteen years. Based on West 113th Street, as a sister and brother violin and piano duo, Vita and Ishmael Wallace founded their “What A Neighborhood!” series in 2003 to “celebrate the creative spirit in Morningside Heights, West Harlem, and Bloomingdale, primarily through the work of living, local composers.”¹⁰⁴ They sometimes give the neighborhood the more elastic definition of “within walking distance.” Vita has produced a map of neighborhood composers,¹⁰⁵ surprising in its density and appealing in its materiality. The primary venues the duo uses for concerts include several neighborhood churches, especially St. Mary’s Episcopal, Trinity Lutheran, Broadway Presbyterian, and Church of the Ascension, as well as the Nicholas Roerich Museum, the

104. Webpage of the Orfeo Duo’s “What A Neighborhood!” Series.

<http://www.orfeoduo.com/neighborhood.html>.

105. Vita Wallace, *Map of Neighborhood Composers*, (2003-present) Orfeo Duo’s website.

<http://www.orfeoduo.com/map.html>.

Bloomington School of Music. In addition, they organize many house concerts and gatherings in their own apartments, on the roof of their building, in the apartments of neighbors, in community gardens, and in Riverside, Morningside, and Central Parks. A gathering usually has more extra-musical content than a concert, often literary, philosophical, or historical, and explicitly invites participation and contribution from attendees through a question, an activity or some other format. The Wallaces lead many kinds of workshops: song writing with summer camps, schools, and soup kitchens; musical writing with residents at the Senior and Supportive Housing program, Valley Lodge; new music for amateurs; create your own ritual; ballets with a local ballet school. Vita is also a member of a local history group, and plays in several local and regional baroque ensembles; and Ishmael was for many years a leader of the Buddhist Sanga at Riverside Church and a member of St. Mary's Gospel Choir, and has coached many singers.

I have collaborated with the Wallaces on two long term public workshops conducted in community gardens and parks and on the street, The Garden Performance Project (2006-2008) and Songlines (2009-2014, and ongoing). The Garden Performance Project (2006-2009) invited passersby and neighbors to bring their recycling to a small garden on 113th Street, to build instruments out of that recycling, experiment with the instruments, and write music for them. In addition to improvising, we wrote pieces, both traditionally notated, and experimentally notated in sidewalk chalk, which we called "hopscotch scores." For Songlines (2010-present, and ongoing), inspired by Aboriginal religious practice, we set up a table on a street corner, in a park, or at a street fair, and invite passersby to compose a song about their favorite block, whether past, present, or desired future. We have worksheets with some prompting questions to offer them, and we help them notate the melody, often taking dictation, and reproducing the scores on index cards. When we have collected a new route's worth of songs, we go on singing walks. Our

aim is to render the neighborhood more beloved by amplifying the way those who live there describe it. We now have over sixty songlines written by neighbors—a map in song. Sometimes the composer of a songline will join the mailing list and come to a concert. When, on a singing walk, someone asks us what we're doing, we like explaining.

The What A Neighborhood! audience is very diverse across age, race, education level, ability, and socio-economic status, and markedly different in this respect than any new music audience I have ever witnessed. Like the House Theater audience, it too was built through personal connection forged through involvement in neighborhood institutions, the result of interest in and commitment to the well-being of neighbors and neighborhood. House Theaters emphasize politics, critique, and alternatives to current systems, while What A Neighborhood! emphasizes affirmation, creativity, and mutual aid through the life of the mind and heart. However both embody experiments in performance practice in the spirit of solidarity, and in the aspiration, often achieved, of radical inclusion. I see these two audiences as having been deliberately cultivated by musicians who are looking for much more from their audiences than the price of admission. These audiences are met where they are with an invitation to participate in, rather than witness, something that has never been made before—something that requires their individuality in order to become. Each audience is heterogeneous in the degree of their awareness and appreciation of this difference, but many are very aware and grateful for it, and those who are less so are nevertheless its beneficiaries.

In the summer of 2013, composer Julie Harting invited me to start *Julie and Elizabeth's Anti-Capitalist Concert Series* with her, and since then we have produced four programs, in five concerts. For concerts one, four, and five, we have rented Tenri Cultural Institute to provide a warm gallery setting with a good piano and friendly staff. Concerts two and three were in a

house theater that proved less accessible than we would have liked, despite attracting our largest audience. We are hoping that an idea—that capitalism is the root of the inequalities from which we suffer and benefit—can serve as the same kind of commodious nest for ideas and music that go together, as have the Urbana House Theater design, and geographical conceit of What A Neighborhood!. However, in terms of promoting the inclusiveness we long for, we worry the gallery setting is hampering our likelihood of connecting with people otherwise unlikely to come to a new music concert, despite our sliding scale suggested donation of “half your hourly wage.”

Like House Theaters and What A Neighborhood! gatherings, we have given our concerts themes, most recently, the right to the city, and income inequality, and have included extra-musical material to support each theme, from poetry, to a short film, to mini-lectures given by professors of Urban Studies and Political Philosophy to help spark discussions. At one concert we covered a welcoming table with our questions about music and economics printed on index cards, and asked audience members to choose a question that appealed to them to consider throughout the concert. At another concert we provided clipboards, paper, and writing implements for listeners to doodle or take notes in response to the music, and use as input to the discussion. Early on in concert, we like to ask the audience to introduce themselves to their neighbors to see if we can get the conversations going early. These are the contexts in which I prefer to present my compositions, contexts that give my work social life.

In what follows, I discuss eight pieces of mine, written between 2010 and 2015, in terms of their content and the context of their performance, both actual and hypothetical. I conceived of these pieces as political metaphors, which I explain, but I do not mean in any way to foreclose on other readings of them. Quite the reverse. I wrote them out of a desire to engender political discourse. What they require is a performance practice that enables such a discourse. Vita

Wallace has observed that this practice need not be uniform. Even though I have been working in these contexts, and working on producing them, for over ten years now, I do not feel as if I have figured out performance practice well enough to know that I can produce it for my pieces. On the one hand, I have indeed found that my best chances of my feeling the piece gets a social life happen when I have a hand in organizing the concert myself. On the other, when I am organizing or hosting, there are so many things to think about and take care of that I am often not as present to the audience response I have carefully organized to enable as when I am free of concert-organizing responsibilities. For instance, while I can describe the atmosphere, dynamics and mini-events of the discussion and subsequent reception, I am often unable to remember things people say to me about my piece. This strikes me as highly ironic, to the point of embarrassment and a loathing to admit it. I hope I can figure out a way to keep track of what audiences say. At the same time, I do not go to this trouble solely for my own gratification. I hope audience members remember their own responses.

One of my mentors at the School for Designing a Society, the activist, “social change artist,” former City Council Member and Mayor pro tem of the City of Urbana, Danielle Chenoweth coined the phrase, “foraging for consequences,”¹⁰⁶ as a necessary step in the heuristic of desiring, designing, attempting and redesigning social change. She made the formulation in order to remind herself that when you do social work, its social consequences are not always obvious, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that there aren’t any, and often, with the work of a little observing, asking, and describing, you can forage some very real consequences. The word “forage” reminds

106. The author’s unpublished notes from Summer Session 2009 of the School for Designing a Society, Hillsboro, WV.

her that consequences may be hidden, and it may take some labor to find them, but they are there for the finding, like mushrooms. I have to figure out how to forage for the consequences of concerts, pieces, and conversation, and plan to do so. This is yet another kind of work, different from either composing, rehearsing, or organizing, but if I can manage it, it should yield interesting and valuable inputs to those other kinds of work.

In the descriptions of my own pieces and their performance contexts that follows, the heuristic of desiring, composing, performing, and reflecting necessarily includes instances of failure. Failure of some desire to be realized is a necessary precondition to learning from either my work or my audience's response. In the descriptions that follow, I have highlighted the failures that pertain to the concepts discussed in the dissertation, but there may be others. Conceiving of this heuristic in terms of the performative allows the disentanglement of intention or desire, from performance, even as Brün separated musical facts from effects.¹⁰⁷ The virtue of this disentanglement is that the performance or composition can fail, while the desire or intention remains intact, waiting for you to compose another piece. Conversely, if your composition succeeds at performing your intention, you or your audience may reevaluate in retrospect your intention and its desirability.

Before launching in to descriptions of my pieces, a few words on the sequence of my engagement with the sonic and the political in my creative process: What I have found to work best for me of late is to begin by imagining a complex sound I want to hear, and to proceed by

107 See Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech*, (New York: Routledge, 1997), L. J. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

deconstructing and recomposing that sounds constituent parts. During this second part of the process I bring in a political problem I am concerned with, and try to analogize my between possible sonic structures and my analysis the problem. Most recently, in composing “Three Wealth Distributions,” I deviated from this sequence, and began instead with a graph.¹⁰⁸ Though I generated several musical analogies from the graph, I found myself increasingly dismayed by their realization, which remained abstract and symbolic. Only when Elizabeth Hoffman asked me what I wanted to hear did I realize I had inadvertently overlooked the materiality of sound as the inspiration and guiding structure for the piece. As soon as I reconsidered this, the realization of the analogies I had come up with came easily.

CUSP (the music for the noise),¹⁰⁹ I wrote for the violin duo String Noise, Conrad Harris and Pauline Kim Harris, in response to Mark Enslin’s teaching. Mark always has his ear cocked for anything the quietest person in the room might say, which he then remembers and brings up at another time. In the piece I am trying to induce listeners to listen through something louder for something softer, through the noise for the music. There are four sections: in the first, you can listen through scratch tones for transient pitch artifacts; in section two, you can listen through dyads for difference tones; in section three, you can listen through chords for the extra resonance produced by difference tones doubled by the other violin; in section four, you can listen through

108. Appended, 130.

109. Elizabeth Adams, *CUSP (the music for the noise)*, (2011), informally commissioned for String Noise, unpublished score, appended, 105. Recorded by Vita Wallace and Aaron Packard, 12/19/11, at Elebash Hall, CUNY Graduate Center:

<https://soundcloud.com/elizabethadamscomposes/cusp-the-music-for-the-noise>.

the loudness of the open strings and the noise of the timbre for the melodies. The first three sections are meant to sensitize the listener to the fragile messiness of the fourth section. The piece requires intense listening and coordination between the players, and their performance of this is also a model for the audience.

COORDINATE! (2010) for eight performers,¹¹⁰ has two movements, and is notated as a graphic score. The piece is constituted in spatialized sound and an awareness of agency and positionality such that recordings of it do not count as it, though this is more true of the second movement than the first. The first movement positions the performers around the audience facing in. There is no tempo, pulse, or clock. The graphic notation indicates entrances and exits only in relation to other performers' entrances and exits. The performers may choose their pitches to be vocalized on the sound *zh*, a sustained soft *g*, or voiced *shh*. The hardest part is knowing who to listen to for one's next cue amongst the seven other performers. The score is color coded, and coordinating costumes can help a lot with this.

The second movement requires that the audience be arranged in at least eight rows facing "front" with ten pathway spaces for the performers to pass between the rows, inclusive of the spaces at very front and very back. The performers all begin on the left side of the audience, one to each pathway, facing perpendicular to the audience. In a single line, they walk back and forth across the audience ten times, one for each letter of the word "COORDINATE." Imagine printing one letter per page, and imagine the audience seating area as that page, and sound as the ink. The performers, as they walk back and forth in a line like a dot matrix printer, make sound only at the place ink would go in order to print that letter. At the beginning of the crossings for C

110. Elizabeth Adams, "Coordinate," (2010), unpublished score, appended, 109.

the middle performer sounds alone and as the performers move forward, those to either side of her join in, followed by those next to them, etc. The same happens for O; but for D (which starts from the left) everyone sounds together as they sound the vertical line, but the middle performers soon drop out all together, coming back gradually to produce the curve. The sounds they are making are percussive repetitions of the letter they are “printing,” “c c c c c c c,” “oh oh oh oh oh oh”; the second O is sustained, to distinguish it; the R is rolled; the N and I are sustained. To make more visible what is happening in sound, the performers raise their hands high when they speak. The E is silent—only hands.

My idea with the first movement was to require from players a coordination dependent on listening rather than on an outside clock or conducting—a listening for what and when the others are doing, and also a listening for what is missing and needed—which note, according to the player. I conceived of the players as caring for the audience they surround. My idea with the second movement was to create a single “system” of sound which had to be imagined from a bird’s eye view without anyone’s getting to experience it that way. Because the players are dispersed throughout the audience and moving, the audience can only conceive of the whole by imagining what it sounds like from other people’s positions, and from a “bird’s ear” position that doesn’t exist. I want to encourage this mode of political imagination. This seems like a lot to hope the audience intuits, and I think some explanation is necessary. At the piece’s one performance, at Saint Mary’s Church under the auspices of What A Neighborhood!, there was ample time and atmosphere to discuss it afterwards, but I felt I had not explained enough beforehand.

*FLUTE SONG*¹¹¹ is a one-minute piece of perhaps too literal word painting for flutist Robert Dick, using some of the extended techniques and notations outlined in his book *The Other Flute* (1975). In advance of each of the five musical phrases, on his inhale, he recites a line of a short poem I wrote for the piece:

In the hot, little wind
down in the silver mine,
amid the loud machines,
the song fragment was stuck
in one miner's mind.

The last musical phrase quotes the union song “Which Side Are You On?” in whistle tones. I intended the piece as an attempt to momentarily de-fetishize the flute as commodity by calling to mind the miner who mined its raw material and hypothesizing his or her inner life as including music and political struggle. There is also a parallel that appeals to me between the piece we are hearing being made by a hot, little wind through a hole surrounded by silver, albeit in higher concentrations than a mine shaft. Additionally, the production of sound on the exhale is contingent on the appropriation of a natural resource—air—on the inhale, one that is given a political valence. I hoped to undo the risk of too much literality by having the loudest sounds come before and not directly after the line, “amid the loud machines,” while having the more mechanical flute sounds—key clicks and tongue rams—be softer; and also by having the quotation be in whistle tones. I wanted it to be charming, but it might just be heavy-handed, in that it's essentially too legible. It's not as if I don't want there to be flutes, but highly regulated

111. Elizabeth Adams, “Flute Song,” (2014), unpublished score, appended, 110.

coop-owned and operated mines would be nice. Obviously this piece doesn't itself organize for that possibility, but it could be used as an organizing tool for flutists, if any were so inclined. It is, at least, eminently insertable into any more intimate program involving a flute, being so short.

It is possible that my dismissals are too presumptuous, and that a conversation could be started, for I have not yet made an effort to compose a context around this piece, either by organizing a concert or by talking to flutists about it. To my knowledge it has only been performed once, in the middle of a string of fourteen other one-minute-works, as part of The Composers' Voice Series "Fifteen Minutes of Fame," which used to take place fortnightly at Jan Hus Church on the East Side, and I missed the concert.

Three more recent pieces rely on program notes to suggest less determinate political metaphors be read into the music at the listener's discretion. I prefer that the program note be read aloud before the piece, and considered part of the piece.

WHAT SOLIDARITY FEELS LIKE,¹¹² for bass clarinet and bass trombone:

As I become more and more politicized, the relationship between discomfort and solidarity interests me more and more. In order to feel that someone else's struggle is my struggle, must I take on some of the pain of their struggle? If I feel uncomfortable, is it still solidarity? If I feel comfortable, is it solidarity? What do I need to feel in order to join? How do beauty and discomfort mix? This piece

112. Elizabeth Adams, "What Solidarity Feels Like," (2013), unpublished score, appended, 111.

proposes unison, dissonance, multiphonics and spatialization as metaphors for exploring these questions.¹¹³

This piece was originally commissioned by BargeMusic and was performed there four times on their Here And Now Labor Day Festival, as well as once at the CUNY Graduate Center, and at Julie and Elizabeth's Anti-Capitalist Concert Number One. Though I attended all four BargeMusic concerts, almost no one spoke to me about the piece, despite its extended instrumentation of tubing and funnels. At the CUNY Grad Center, fellow students were gratifyingly enthusiastic about the sounds, but only at the Anti-Capitalist Concert did people speak to me about solidarity and discomfort. In this case there is an analogy between acculturation to crunchy multiphonics and acculturation to organizing culture, where in both cases the experience and future behavior of those less acculturated is more important than that of those who are highly acculturated to either, and it is through welcoming conversation shepherded by the more experienced, which validates the experience of the less experienced, that future solidarity can be forged. If and when this piece is performed again, I'd like to organize such a conversation, connect it to a particular current struggle, and get experienced organizers and new music listeners to talk about the process of their acculturation.

DAYLIGHT, HOUSING CRISIS, TOUCH for solo piano¹¹⁴ has a longer program note, also to be read aloud before the performance in hopes of sparking conversation afterwards:

113. Elizabeth Adams, "What Solidarity Feels Like," (2013), program note, read aloud at performances.

114. Elizabeth Adams, "Daylight, Housing Crisis, Touch," (2014) for piano solo, unpublished score, appended, 118.

I wrote this piece in August 2014, for Ishmael Wallace.

This piece is about resonance, timbre, and action.

Resonance is how we hear space and what is in space. It implies an interior space—the space of a room, the space inside the piano, the space inside yourself. It is also the sound of response - when the piano's pedal is down, the other strings are allowed to respond, aloud, to the strings of the note played.

I think the piano's timbre has a special capacity to evoke the kind of indirect, mid-afternoon, daylight that enters rooms in the city, and to convey a feeling of bleakness. For me this particular bleakness includes a feeling of self-possession in the face of difficulty, that almost requires that interior, that daylight. I've been thinking about how the stability of space enables us to face adversity, but in our city now we are allowing space and stability to be taken away from more and more people, through foreclosures, evictions, and gentrification.

I think the piano's timbre has a special capacity to evoke the sweetness that is an antidote to the bleakness. I am not proposing the sweetness as a solution, only as a help to us in organizing a systemic solution. The sweetness of love and being loved. The sweetness of touching each other.

The piano has a special capacity to transmit touch - you can hear how Ishmael touches the piano.

The piece includes a musical quotation, a hymn, written in 1615, published in the Bay Psalm Book, in Boston in 1698, which is around the time we started displacing people, and gentrifying. The words of the hymn are, *I said I will look*

*to my ways, for fear I should go wrong: I will take heed all times that I offend not
with my tongue.*¹¹⁵

This piece too, has been performed repeatedly at BargeMusic, as well as at an Anti-Capitalist Concert, and on a recent What A Neighborhood! concert at the Roerich Museum. My goal with it is to re-elicite feelings the audience has had before, by themselves, to have them all together, and think about other people having them. I'm aiming to induce some kind of emotional imprint on the housing crisis, so that at the very least, when there is an opportunity to take political action, there will be this collective emotional referent. It has worked on me in three small ways since writing the piece: I wrote my City Council Member that I preferred the larger alternative of two housing developments to be built in our district if it would include more affordable housing; I have been wondering how the City can wrest control of real estate taxes back from Albany so that we can tax non-residences back into the market; I have my ear to ground for housing organizing efforts I can support. This is not a lot. This will not suffice. It's a beginning.

ALTER FILTER (trombone analog for an ethic), for trombone and fixed media¹¹⁶ is much more abstract. The attempt is for the program note to be what it describes, altering your perception of the piece to come, and inviting you to alter it too:

Jen's body is an air pump and a sound filter she can alter in many ways. The trombone is a filter, the mute is a filter. Our listening, thinking, speaking bodies filter what we perceive, understand, and project into the world; never neutral;

115. Elizabeth Adams, program note read aloud before performances, unpublished score.

116. Elizabeth Adams, "Alter Filter," for trombone and fixed media, (2015), unpublished score, appended, 122.

neither immutable. Alter filter to hear what we've been missing. Every filter we are has consequences; this piece is a canon.¹¹⁷

I feel this piece needs some other complex phenomenon to be held up against. It needs company. It has been performed on a Dr. Faustus concert, for which it was commissioned, but I made no conversational context for it. It will be performed at BargeMusic in a version for two trombones. The rest of the program is out of my control, but I will have the opportunity to introduce the piece. I must think carefully about how to leverage that introduction for connection to other pieces and outside referents, while projecting enough friendliness to make approaching me genuinely appealing, and since I am not organizing the concert I will be able to muster the attention to remember and write down what people say. There will be more than one performance, so there is the possibility of a heuristic of attempts, consequences, and revision.

FEELING ROTC IS BACK ON CAMPUS,¹¹⁸ on the other hand, was written about a very specific context, described in the program note. It was performed at the CUNY Graduate Center, but I very much wish I'd organized performances at CUNY's ROTC-participating campuses.

In 1972, the Reserve Officers' Training Corps program at CUNY closed for lack of interest, a lack produced by anti-war organizing. In a 2011 report, "Underserved: A Case Study of ROTC in New York City," the American Enterprise Institute asserted that, "The absence of ROTC units on urban

117. Elizabeth Adams, program note published for the Dr. Faustus "New Synchronisms" concert, Willow Place Auditorium, Brooklyn, NY, 5/20/15.

118. Elizabeth Adams, "Feeling ROTC Is Back On Campus," (2014) for bass flute, violin, cello, and percussion, unpublished score, appended, 126.

campuses, especially in the Northeast, prevents the military from taking full advantage of their large, ethnically diverse populations. This is particularly true in the case of the City University of New York”[1]. In 2012, "Military Science" was introduced as a major at York College, and ROTC opened there. In 2013, ROTC opened at City College and at Medgar Evers College, and was proposed at the College of Staten Island. The decisions to reintroduce ROTC at Medgar Evers and CSI campuses were made without consulting the faculty, circumventing college governance structures. In Fall 2013, while former general David Petraeus taught a course at the Macaulay Honors College, College of Staten Island faculty and students organized a town hall meeting to debate the desirability of the ROTC program. The program's reintroduction there has since stalled because no department will sponsor it. In February, taking this strategy as a model, faculty and students at Medgar Evers College, where ROTC had already been reintroduced, held a town hall meeting featuring a panel made up of ROTC participants and brass and three Veterans Against the War: two Iraq vets, one a CUNY student, and one Vietnam vet, Glenn Petersen, chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Baruch. At the meeting, which was organized to precede a College Council vote, audience members spoke eloquently, both for and against the program. On February 24th 2014, reasserting its governing power, the College Council voted to end the program at Medgar Evers, and President Crew has affirmed that the vote "is binding." Efforts to expel ROTC from York and City College are in early stages and need your support.

For much of *Feeling ROTC Is Back On Campus* there is no single tempo; rather, the players, in front of you, take their individual pulses and play at pulse = eighth-note. To stay "together" requires the interruption of a lot of cues, always given by the percussionist, Sean. I chose the most standard percussion instruments, which already have military associations, and they play all the time, coloring everything. We have moved stands to the side, away from the space between your body and the players' bodies. The players are arranged on stage less as an ensemble than as a line of individuals. For me, this piece is an exploration of sensitization, anxiety, and coordination. It is a first draft. Please come talk to me.¹¹⁹

This piece has suffered from my failure to connect its performance with any organizing, though I felt my composition process was deeply influenced by the speak-out at Medgar Evers. There are a lot of campuses with music schools and ROTC chapters, where I could look for sympathetic students to play it. It could be connected to any anti-war organizing or concertizing. The piece needs some revision, specifically more singing in the middle. Students for whom I played the recording responded specifically to its delicacy and menace, some saying it made them feel very uncomfortable, so something is working. I'm afraid that, like "Flute Song," it suffers from too much determinacy, so that, as Aperghis says, we no longer listen. I have to find a way to complicate it.

119. Elizabeth Adams, program note read aloud before the performance, by Cadillac Moon Ensemble, Elebash Hall at the CUNY Graduate Center, 3/29/14.

THREE WEALTH DISTRIBUTIONS (2015)¹²⁰ for flute, violin, cello, and percussion, is based on a bar graph by Michael Norton and Dan Ariely, which depicts the distribution of wealth in the US by quintile in three versions: as it actually is, as Americans report they think it is, and as they wish it to be.¹²¹ In sum, wealth distribution is more unequal than we think, and we wish it were less unequal than that fictional thought. What I love about the graph is that it depicts how things could be different. The bottom two bars are fictional distributions existing only in our minds.¹²² The piece translates the entire graph (actual, think, and wish) in two different ways: first, into duration and density, and second, into number of pitches, durations, or timbres available to each player. Finally the “actual” is translated one last time into dynamic. Each player corresponds with a quintile, with the percussion and vibraphone corresponding to two different ones when five quintiles are needed.

In the graph of the actual, the bottom quintile holds so little wealth as to not be visible. In the first translation, of the actual into duration, the instruments all begin together, but the percussion, cello, and violin soon drop out, leaving only the flute and vibraphone, who go on and on. When the “think” is translated into duration, the durations are strict, but do not begin at the same time; instead entrances are based on players listening for pitches from the cymbal. When the “wish” is

120. Elizabeth Adams, “Three Wealth Distributions,” for flute, violin, cello, and percussion, unpublished score, appended, p. 130.

121. Michael Norton, and Dan Ariely, “Building a Better America, One Wealth Quintile at a Time,” *Perspectives of Psychological Science* 6, no. 9 (2011): 11.

122. In fact, according to Norton and Ariely, the wealth distribution we say we wish for is very close to the reality in Sweden. *Ibid.*

translated into duration, the instruments join one at a time, until they are all playing together. In the translation of “actual” into freedom of choice, the violin is allowed forty-eight equal divisions of the octave, while the cello has only three pitches, the percussion two, and the flute only one. In the translation of “think” into freedom of choice, the violin is asked to play as many different note values as possible. I offer twenty to aid improvisation. The cello is allowed seven note values, and the flute four. The bass drum, played with the fingers, plays a single duration—the sixteenth note—constantly, allowing the others to define their freedom according to its lack of freedom and its labor. In the translation of “wish” into freedom of choice, the instruments have an almost equal number of kinds of articulation, and the texture is balanced but full of timbral variety. In the final translation of the actual, three players mime playing—animated, but silent—while the cello scratches *fortissimo*. The violin and flute each get one note in at the end, and the piece ends with a loud noise from off stage, depicting the bottom quintile not shown on the graph.

This piece has not yet been performed. When it is, it requires some explanation. It’s important to see the graph, and to know *which* bar is being translated, but it might not be necessary to explain *how* each bar is being translated. Audience members who wanted to participate could help in holding up signs or identifying which player is depicting which quintile. My attempt is to make an emotional, aesthetic, and cognitive imprint of the idea that things are worse than we think they are *and could be different*. I want to organize an audience who adopt this problem as their problem—one they are looking to solve, despite the odds. This is the audience Julie and I are trying to cultivate in our concert series.

What I feel music has to offer the political is a forum to experiment and capacities for kinds of nuance and complexity our political discourse is sorely lacking. I want to use music to

practice and improve my democratic skills, such as listening, imagining, responding, and coordinating with others. That project will require much, much more talking in contexts we must continue to imagine and organize. I will strive in future compositions to avoid or at least complicate determinacy, and I hope to continue experimenting with performance practice. I conclude with some guidelines toward my ideal performance practice:

1. If there is any sort of lobby or vestibule to the venue, make the audience collect there, before they are seated. To borrow from some Balkan traditions, if any of the performers can walk and play at the same time, have them play an opening number out in the vestibule. Make some opening remarks of welcome, and be sure to mention something specific about the music, the extra-musical content, some organizing that is happening or a current circumstance in public life, and honor someone special in the audience. Then ask audience members to introduce themselves to someone they are standing next to. Then to someone of a different age. Then to some other person. Only then let them into the seating area. Music, Welcome, Referents, Sociability: prime these four pumps before you start your program.

2. Pair the content of your program. Pair two musical pieces, or pair a musical piece and an extra-musical piece, or a piece and a discussion, or a piece and some other activity. Make a sandwich out of each pair by repeating the first one after the second. Ask people how the elements changed each other.

3. Share with your audience both things you are sure about, and unanswered questions you nurse; also, how you are approaching them. Solicit approaches from the audience and from honored guests. Have some way of recording people's answers.

4. If you want to encourage drawing, moving, or another activity, make sure to have ringers who have agreed in advance to participate and encourage others.

5. Have someone present a short analysis of a piece, with musical examples, and have dancers or actors translate it. Give audience members in pairs a simple task to accomplish together and ask them to change their way of working together in accordance with changes in the musical texture. Or ask them to identify one relation between players they hope to replicate at work on Monday, or in some other social situation.

6. Ask the audience in advance to try to become confused about something. Or, ask them to try to become confused on a second hearing.

I think that audiences can be trained. I think that people without specialized knowledge of music are perfectly capable of making analyses and of appreciating analyses of others. I feel that both contemporary music and audiences deserve more attention than they're getting under current performance practice, and that it makes no sense to vaguely hope they will somehow get more out of each other on their own. I want political analyses of music to be not just for theorists and their students, but for audiences, and not just for journals, but for our lives.

Appendix I

Le corps à corps by Georges Aperghis: Text translation.

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tak [inspiré]

toum

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CORPS À CORPS CORPS À CORPS

body to body body to body (neck and neck)

AVANT DIX HEURES

before ten o'clock

CORPS À CORPS CORPS À CORPS TÉS

body to body body to body ides to the body to

AU CORPS À CORPS COTÉS AU CORPS

body sides to the body to body

À CORPS

AVANT DIX HEURES, AUTOUR DU

before ten o'clock, around the cadaver

CADAVRE

CORPS CORPS CORPS CORPS

body body body body

CORPS À CORPS CORPS À CORPS TÉS

body to body body to body ides to the body to

AU CORPS À CORPS COTÉS AU CORPS

body sides to the body to body two sides to

À CORPS DEUX COTÉS AU CORPS À

the body to body from the two sides of the

CORPS DES DEUX COTÉS AU CORPS À

body to body

CORPS

AVANT DIX HEURES, AUTOUR DU

before ten o'clock, around the cadaver, they

CADAVRE, ILS ÉTAIENT DÉJÀ

had already set off on the whole length of the

REPARTIS TOUT LE LONG DE LA

course on both sides, neck and neck

COURSE DES DEUX COTÉS AU CORPS

À CORPS

COULE COULE COULE COULE

trickles trickles trickles trickles

COULE SANG COULE LE SANG COULE
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 BRAS LE SANG COULE FRAICHE À SON
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 FAISANT UN BOND SAIT SAISSANT
 LE CASQUE ÉTINCELANT FAISANT UN
 BOND SE BLESSANT AU BRAS GISSAIT
 SAISSANT LE CASQUE ÉTINCELANT

trickles blood trickles the blood trickles his
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 trickles fresh to his arm from his wound to his
 arm the blood trickles arm to the arm ding to
 the arm wounding to the arm
 wounding himself in the arm leap a leap ding
 a leap making a leap ning making a leap
 according to making a leap shining making a
 leap helmet shining making a leap the shining
 helmet making a leap ding the shining helmet
 making a leap cing piercing the shining
 helmet making a leap know piercing the
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FAISANT UN BOND SE BLESSANT AU
BRAS
AVANT DIX HEURES AUTOUR DU
CADAVRE ILS ÉTAIENT DÉJÀ
RÉPARTIS TOUT LE LONG DE LA
COURSE DES DEUX COTÉS AU CORPS
À CORPS LES SEULES ACTIONS
VISIBLES AVAIENT LIEU A LA LIGNE
DEPART-ARRIVÉE OÙ DE TEMPS À
AUTRE UN CHARLOT SURGISSAIT
SAISSANT LE CASQUE ETINCELANT
FAISANT UN BOND SE BLESSANT AU
BRAS À TOUTE BLINDE DE NUAGE DE
POUSSIÈRE ET DESCENDAIT EN
TITUBANT DE SA MEULE QUE
L'ÉQUIPE D'ENTRETIEN
S'EMPRESSAIT D'EMPLIR D'ESSANCE
ET DE RELANCER SUR LA PISTE AVEC
UN MOTARD TOUT FRAIS DESSUS SE
SA BLESSURE FRAICHE À SON BRAS
LE SANG GULE D'IMMENSE CRIS
S'ÉLÈLEVANT

making a leap wounding himself in the arm
before ten o'clock around the cadaver they
had already set off again on the whole length
of the course from both sides to the neck and
neck the only visible actions took place at the
starting-finish line where from time to time a
good-for-nothing surged piercing the shining
helmet making a leap wounding the arm to all
armored of cloud of dust and was descending
stumbling from his millstone which the pit
crew was rushing to fill with fuel and
relaunch onto the racetrack with a fresh biker
on it and his fresh wound on his arm the
blood veers from an immense cry going up

L'AIRAIN S'ENFOGANT AU CREUX DE
LA CUIRASSE PLONGE DANS LES
ENTRAILLES
POUR ENCORE QUATRE-VINGT
KILOMÈTRES DE CIRCUIT
RESONNER TERRIBLEMENT LE
BRONZE AUTOUR DE LEURS
POITRINES
IL EN SORT UN SANG NOIR QU'ILS
LAVENT À L'EAU TIÈDE

the bronze digging into the hollows of the
breast plate plunging into the entrails
for another 80 kilometers of the track
resonating terribly the bronze around their
chests
out of which there flowed a black blood
which they wash in tepid water¹²³

1. Georges Aperghis, *Le corps à corps* (Paris: Editions Salabert, 1982).

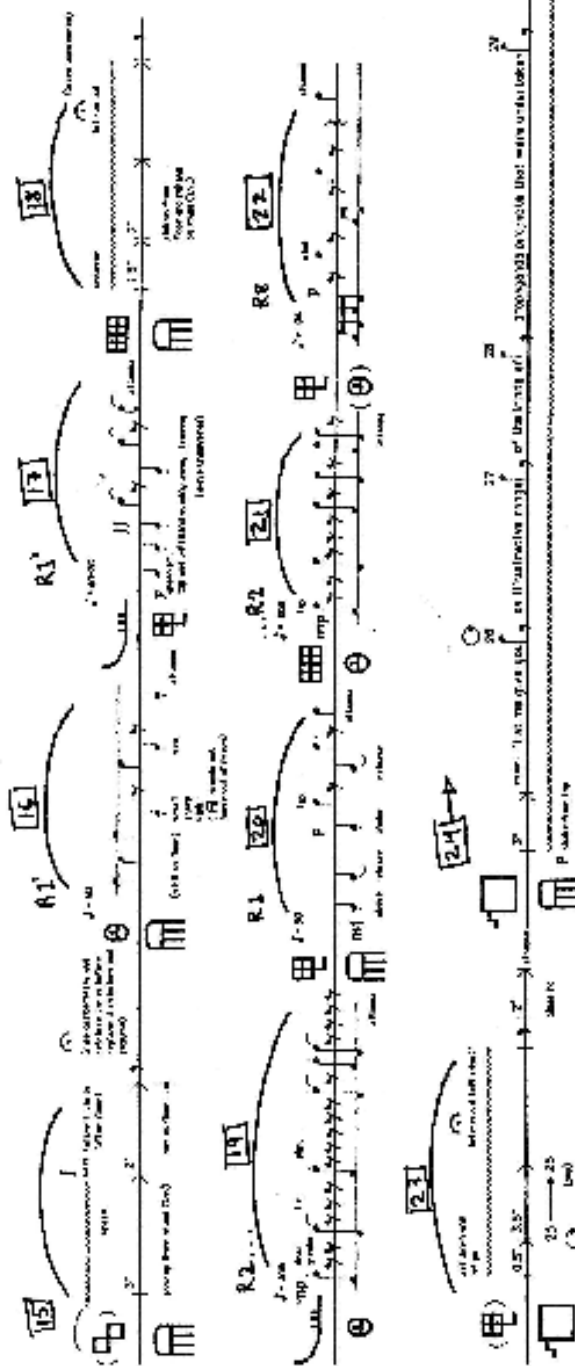
Appendix II

Annotated Score of *Sonata Quijada*

Handily annotated score of Sonata Quilada by MARK ENSLIN

Section numbers are boxed, sections stored.
Rhythms are labeled, "R1" etc.
Percussion key is on page 5.

The musical score is written on a single staff with various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. It is divided into sections numbered 1 through 14, which are boxed. Rhythms are labeled R1 through R5. The score includes a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a time signature of 4/4. The notation is dense and includes many accidentals and slurs. The score is written in ink on a single sheet of paper.



20 21
 115 119 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200

115 119 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200

115 119 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200

Appendix III

Figure 1

Figure 1: Sonata Quijada: patterns of repetition in instrument pairing, texture, rhythm, and pacing

section	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Chimes												x			X	X		x						x
small teeth							x		x								x			x		X	X	
clicker					X					X				x		x			X		X	X		
Large Teeth		x				x			x				x					x						
quijada	X			x		x		X		X		x					x		X					
dice		x		x			x				x			X	X									
Jack-in-the-box	X		X		X			X					x										X	X
texture	ant	ant	pol	ant	hom	pol	ant	pol	ant	hom, pol	pol	pol	pol	ant	pol	ant	ant	pol	hom	ant	hom	ant	pol	pol
rhythm #			1		2	3		4		2'4'2	5	6	1	2		1	1		2'	1	2	7		
roll/trem.	x	x		x			x		x		x			x	x			x				x		x
pulse(s)		x	x		x	x	x	x	xx	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	xx	x	x	xx	
tempo (\mathcal{J})	120	54	96	80	54-60	168, 84	54	38	176	60	40-50	208	60	208	104	n.a.								
approx. durations in seconds	12	7	11	10	23	14	4	10	7	7.5+23 = 30.5	20	14.4	16	13	5	9	11	10	6	9	4	6	16	72
fermata & comma durations in seconds	18	2	0	10	2	0	2	2	3	2.5	2	2.6			15	0	0	3	0	0	0	5	5	
timeline	:30			1:00			1:57			3:02				4:08						5:00		5:27		6:44

Figure 1: Sonata Quijada: break-down by instrument combination, timbre, rhythm, tempo, associations

section	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
quijada	X			x		x		X		X		x					x		X					
Jack-in-the-box	X		X		X			X			x		x										X	X
Large Teeth		x				x			x				x					x			x			
dice		x		x			x				x			X	X									
clicker			X		X					X				x					X	X		X		
small teeth							x		x								x			x		X	X	
chimes												x			X	X		x			x			x
Pitch	J		J		J			J			J	C	J		C	C		C		C			J	JC
teeth		T				T	t		Tt				T				t	T		t	T	t	t	
Teeth & quijada	q	T		q		Tq	t	q	Tt	q		q	T				tq	T	q	t	T	t	t	
dice & clicker		d	c	d	c		d			c	d			cd	d	c			c		c	c		
mouths	q	T	c	q	c	Tq	t	q	Tt	cq		q	T	c	c	c	tq	T	cq	t	Tc	tc	t	
bone	q	d		dq		q	d	q		q	d	q		d	d		q		q					
mechanica I	J	T	J		J	T	t	J	Tt		J		JT				t	T		t	T	t	Jt	J
“alive”	J		Jc		Jc			J		c	J	C	J	c	C	Cc		C	c	C	c	c	J	JC

Figure 1: Sonata Quijada: break-down by instrument combination, timbre, rhythm, tempo, associations

section	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
rhythm #			1		2	3		4		2'4'2	5	6	1	2		1	1		2'	1	2	7		
roll/trem.	x	x		x			x		x		x			x	x			x					x	x
pulse(s)		x	x		x	x	x	x	xx	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	xx	x	x	xx	
tempo (\mathcal{J}^-)	120		54		96	80		54-60		168, 84		54		176		60	40-50	208	60	208	104			n.a.
approx. durations in seconds	12	7	11	10	23	14	4	10	7	7.5+23 = 30.5	20	14.4	16	13	5	9	11	10	6	9	4	6	16	72

Appendix IV

Scores by the author

CUSP

(the music for the noise)

for Pauline Kim Harris
and Conrad Harris

Elizabeth Adams





October 2011

PROGRAM NOTE:

Sometimes a shy sound gets the cover it needs.
I am interested in
 when we can read between the lines,
 what arises out of our doing, above what gets done
 -- how, I can't quite make out.

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

Accidentals carry through the measure.

Scratch tone note values:


Difference Tone (DT) notation



Triple stop melodies (m. 25-40) are to be played far down the fingerboard, where the stopped string crosses the plane of the open strings. The sound is soft and fragile and needs plenty of bow. Portamento is okay.

II		III
III		IV
scratch:		
energetic,		higher-end
full-spectrum	-----	spectrum ----- full spectrum
screech:		emphasis
all noise,		lift bow only if nec. & then
no pitch		imperceptibly & staggered

Violin 1

no pitch imperceptibly & staggered (noise only) half pitch

fff *mf* *f* *ff* *f*

scratch: energetic, full-spectrum
 screech: all noise, no pitch

lower-end spectrum emphasis

full spectrum

lift bow only if nec. & then imperceptibly & staggered

(noise only)

half noise, half pitch

Violin 2

fff *mf* *f* *ff* *f*

Attentive, intent --

A

half pitch, half noise ----- pitch only

tune just fifths with Vln. 2

(Vln. 2 glisses flat so that its 3rd harmonics beat with your 2nd harmonics, first slowly, then faster)

quick gliss. down to tune just fifths with Vln. 2

(lift, not extra time)

slow gliss down so that 2nd harmonics beat with Vln. 1's 3rd harmonics, first slowly, then faster

Vln. 1

mp *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *mp*

half pitch, half noise ----- pitch only

tune just fifths with Vln. 1

both notes gliss down gradually. 3rd harmonics beat with Vln. 1's 2nd harmonics, first slowly, then faster

(Vln. 1 tunes to you)

(lift, not extra time)

Vln. 2

mp *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *mp*

9

Vln. 1

gliss from unison with accelerating beating

find DT; take your time; bow freely

listen for Vln. 2's DT; match it in a convenient octave

mf *ff* *n* *mf*

Vln. 2

listen for Vln. 1's DT; match it in a convenient octave

double it

gliss from unison, accelerating beating

find difference tone; take your time; bow freely

mf *mf* *ff*

I
II

double it

gliss from unison, accelerating beating

find difference tone; take your time; bow freely

listen for Vln. 2's DT (low); match it in a convenient octave

Vln. 1

X 2

mf

ff

n

I
II

gliss from unison, accelerating beating

find difference tone; take your time; bow freely

listen for Vln. 1's DT (low); match it in a convenient octave

Vln. 2

X 2

mf

mf

ff

n

Time is fragile/flexible here.
Listen through the double stop for the other Vln.'s DT before you come in.
Chords may vary anywhere from 8-12 sec.
Attempt DT. If it doesn't work, try to hum it.

13

Vln. 1

fff (adjust dynamics (& timbre) for DT production; generally static, loud)

Time is fragile/flexible here.
Listen through the double stop for the other Vln.'s DT before you come in.
Chords may vary anywhere from 8-12 sec.
Attempt DT. If it doesn't work, try to hum it.

Vln. 2

fff (adjust dynamics (& timbre) for DT production; generally static, loud)

harsh
all-noise
scratch covers
Vln. 2's attack
scratch sul pont.:
low pressure,
upper spectrum
"krssh"

A recording of a memory,
awkward, vulnerable,
resisting manipulation

B = 50

23

Vln. 1

mp

sub.

fff mp

n

position bow over fingerboard
where the stopped string
crosses the plane of open strings.
III a little bit of scratch
II (mute if nec. to match
IV Vln. 1's dynamic in mm. 29-40)

Vln. 2

fff p!

p

III
II → move bow
III
II
IV
position bow over fingerboard
where the stopped string
crosses the plane of open strings.

28

Vln. 1

pp *p* *pp* *p*

Vln. 2

pp *p*

scratch sul pont.:
low pressure,
slow speed,
upper spectrum
flecked with detail: "krssh"

35

Vln. 1

pp *p* *ppp* *pp* *p* *n*

Vln. 2

ppp *n* *pp* *ppp* *p* *n*

scratch sul pont.:
low pressure,
slow speed,
upper spectrum
flecked with detail: "krssh"

for Robert Dick

Elizabeth Adams

Flute

inhale on the text below:

In the hot, little wind,
mp

increase, then vary vibrato

p

Fl. Musical notation for Flute part. It starts with a 4-measure rest labeled 'inhale on the text'. Then it plays a half note G4 (labeled 'Jet'), followed by a half note A4 (labeled 'sing & play; beat faster & slower'), then a half note B4 (labeled 'add roar flutt.'), and finally a half note C5 (labeled '(inhale)'). The lyrics are 'down in the silver mine, mp' and 'amid the loud machines, mp'. Dynamics include mp, ff, and mf.

[illegible]

Fl. *the song fragment was stuck* *ff* Dif. MB1

Fl. *13 (inhale)* *in one miner's mind.* *pp* *whisper tones* *mf* *cough*

Elizabeth Adams

What Solidarity Feels Like

for bass clarinet & bass trombone

Performance Note:

The bass clarinet part requires an extra mouthpiece (any clarinet). All multiphonic fingerings come from Henri Bok's book, *New Techniques for Bass Clarinet*.

The bass trombone part requires 2 tubes, 5-10 feet long that fit snugly into or around trombone tubing. The lining of garden hose tubing works well. Use a motor oil funnel for one bell, positioned to the right of the trombonist, and use a harmon with the wawa taken out for the second bell, positioned to the left. They should be positioned as far apart as possible, with the bell-less ends positioned within easy reach of the trombonist and enough slack so as not to move them much when s/he inserts them. After the tubes are inserted (page 5) a circle denotes center (trombone) bell, a rectangle denotes left bell, a triangle denotes right bell.

Program Note:

As I become more and more politicized, the relationship between discomfort and solidarity interests me more and more. In order to feel that someone else's struggle is my struggle, must I take on some of the pain of their struggle? If I feel uncomfortable, is it still solidarity? If I feel comfortable, is it solidarity? What do I need to feel in order to join? How do beauty and discomfort mix? This piece proposes unison, dissonance, multiphonics, and spacialization as metaphors for exploring these questions.

What Solidarity Feels Like

Elizabeth Adams

$\text{♩} = 54$

Bass Clarinet in B \flat

barely audible brighter timbre darker timbre ord. timbre

ppp *pp* *ppp*

Bass Trombone

sfz (always with bite) *sfz sub. mp* *sfz sub. ppp* *mp* *sffz*

7

B. Cl.

beat slowly with tbn slap flutt. 3

pp *p* *p* *p*

B. Tbn.

beat slowly with bc bucket mute *sffz*

pp *ppp*

14

B. Cl.

sing and play beat slowly with yourself beat faster

sffz *p* *mf* *pp*

B. Tbn.

sing and play beat slowly with yourself slowly remove mute beat faster

p *f* *sffz* *p* *mp* *mf*

$\text{♩} = 72$

19

B. Cl.

slap "kissing" key sound teeth on reed accel. 3

B. Tbn.

slap "kissing" percussive valve sound

3 3 5 3

22 $\text{♩} = 54$ harmonic multiphonic unstable low harmonics

B. Cl.

B. Tbn.

bucket mute beat w/ bc remove mute bring out 5th (b) timbrally

mf mp mp p

27 sing and play

B. Cl.

B. Tbn.

vib. flutt. vib. (b) (b) split tone

mp f p

33 play sing and play flutt. gliss. p f p

B. Cl.

B. Tbn.

gliss. flutt. gliss. p f

39

B. Cl.

B. Tbn.

gliss. gliss. gliss. gliss. ppp ff pp ff

sub.pp ff pp sfz sfz sfz sfz

45 $\text{♩} = 72$

B. Cl. *f* *p* *f* *p* *accel.* *f*

insert bucket mute

B. Tbn. *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

47

B. Cl. *ff* *f*

lip bisbi. approximately or sim. rhythm - irregular/rubato

remove mute. sing smoothly as high as comfortably possible, falsetto, through instrument without playing. match vowel to b.c. color rhythm - irregular/rubato

B. Tbn. *ff* *f*

"muh nuh luh" etc.

49 $\text{♩} = 54$

B. Cl. *mf* *gliss.* *gliss.*

ord. dark bright dark ord.

B. Tbn. *mp* *mf* *pp* *p* *mf*

port. ord. dark "o" "i" "o" "i" dark "o" "i" split tone, octave, unstable changing fundamental

55

B. Cl. *mp* *mf* play and sing

B. Tbn. *p* *mf* *pp*

split tone, fifth, unstable changing fundamental

split tone, third

p. 55
no. 2

no. 6

5

60

B. Cl.

f *mf* *f* *p* *mf*

split tone, all

split tone
any fundamental
sing

B. Tbn.

f *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

65

B. Cl.

f *mf* *f* *p*

Remove valve joints
and insert tubes.

B. Tbn.

sfz *sfz* *f* *p*

69

accel.

B. Cl.

f *p* *ff*

B. Tbn.

f *p* *ff*

lip bisbi. approximately or sim. rhythm - irregular/rubato switch to spare mouthpiece and cont. for 2nd X

71

B. Cl.

f

f *p*

5 3

sing smoothly as high as comfortably possible, falsetto, through instrument without playing. match vowel to b.c. color. rhythm - irregular/rubato

B. Tbn.

"muh nuh luh" etc.

f *f* *p*

3 5

73

B. Cl.

ff *mp* *gliss.* *gliss.*

$\text{♩} = 54$
flutt.

B. Tbn.

f *p* *ff* *pp* *p* *pp* *ppp*

5 3 3 5 3

75

B. Cl.

slap mini slaps

mf *f*

3

B. Tbn.

sfz *sfz* *ppp* *sfz* *sfz* *flutt.*

3

blowing into extra mouthpiece
follow contour, exact pitches not important
if possible, slowly tilt your head back to direct
the sound up into the air

77 get extra mouthpiece w/ right hand

B. Cl.

B. Tbn.

sfz

79

put down mouthpiece ord.

pick up mouthpiece

sim. direct mouthpiece at B. Tbn then slowly pan to the other side

B. Cl.

B. Tbn.

81

trill & flutt. and sing

trill & sing

play & sing

ff

f

gliss.

B. Cl.

□ split tone, all

sing upper note play lower note

flutt.

ord

gliss.

ff

f

mf

B. Tbn.

84

flutt & trill & sing

mp

p

ff

p

ppp

B. Cl.

gliss.

gliss.

split tone, all under G

mp

p

ff

p

ppp

B. Tbn.

daylight, housing crisis, touch

for Ishmael Wallace

Part 1

Elizabeth Adams 8.11.14

- duration given by decay:
next attack comes at ca. 3/4 decay
(duration thus dependent on dynamic & pedal)
- chromatic clusters
- strive for simultaneity of attack

Piano

hairpins indicate amount of pedal (not dynamic)

Pno.

Pno.

Pno.

simultaneity of attack slowly disintegrates /
duration of attack lengthens as notated;
(where no duration is notated, still simultaneous)

5 *(dolce)* ----- *sec* ----- *medium*

Pno. *(mp)* *mf* *pp* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

6 *dolce* ----- *sec*

Pno. *pp* *mp* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *mp*

full *Red.* *full*

7 *simile* *dolce* *simile* *simile. i.e. totally arpeggiated*

Pno. *p* *pp* *p*

half

Part 2

light, ringing (tolling); slightly slower than Part 1; not too *espressivo*, or directional, but some freedom with phrasing; try to be as present as possible and love and listen to the chords
accidentals carry through repetition of the same diad or trichord

8 *mp*

Pno. *half* *Red.*

9

Pno.

10

Pno.

11

Pno.

12

Pno.

13

Pno.

14

Pno.

15 poco rall.

Pno.

Part 3

Silently depress the diamond-shaped notes, then the sostenuto pedal, then sound the silent notes by playing the cluster.
 Let the chords ring. This means the second chord of each measure should be slightly louder than the first, so it rings longer.
 The outer voices of the choral are taken directly from
 MARTYR'S TUNE (C.M) 1615; Bay Psalm Book (Boston 1698); the lyrics are:

I said I will look to my ways, for fear I should go wrong: I will take heed all times that I offend not with my tongue.

16 chromatic clusters

Pno. *p* *Sos.*

19

Pno.

22

Pno.

25

Pno.

28

Pno.

Alter Filter (trombone analog for an ethic)

for Jen Baker

Elizabeth Adams 2015

VOWELS

each line lasts
ca. 30 seconds

Trombone

o u i u o u i u o u i u o u i u

enter trombone or recording
interval of delay = 1 system

2

Tbn.

u o u i u o u i o u i u i u o i

3

Tbn.

u o u i u

4

Tbn.

u i u o u i u o

5

Tbn.

ah o ah

6

Tbn.

i u o u i

7

Tbn.

ah o ah o

HARMON

8

Tbn.

12

Tbn.

16

Tbn.

20

Tbn.

24

Tbn.

26

Tbn.

leave time
for other part
to remove
mute

remove
mute

3
leave time for other part to remove mute

31 sing & play
Tbn. ah i i u i u o
gliss.

35
Tbn. i ah i ah i ah i ah i o i ah i ah o

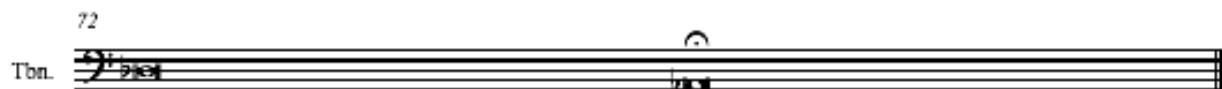
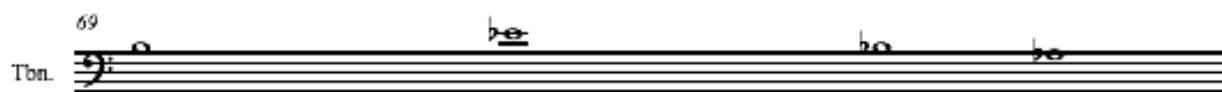
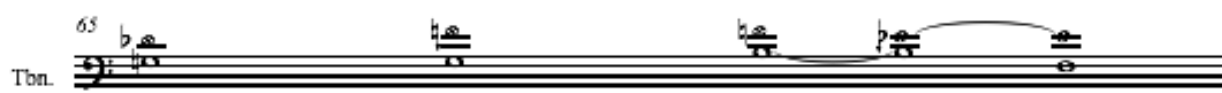
(attacks need not be simultaneous) establish beating tongue at same rate as beating establish faster beating tongue at new rate of beating
40 gliss.
Tbn. ah ta ka ta ka ta ka ta ka ta ta ka ta ka ta ka ta ka ta

44 tongue at same rate establish beating tongue at same rate establish faster beating
Tbn. ta ka ta ka ta ka ta ka ta ta ka ta ka ta ka ta

47 Thuck as fast as possible, unevenly is fine sing & play
Tbn. ah o i u i ta ka ta ka ta ka

49 Thuck, *sim.* sing & play
Tbn. i u o

51 split tone
Tbn.



Feeling ROTC is back on campus

adams

Percussion: vibraphone, bass drum, snare, turkish cymbal (dark, harmonic, complex)

Set up: flute, violin, and percussion players should stand, if possible. All four players should face the audience, rather than each other, spread out in a staggered line across the stage. Stands should be positioned tilted and slightly to one side so that there is nothing between the player's body (or instrument) and the audience. Players should look directly at the audience as often and long as possible -- always when they are not playing, and as much as possible while they are.

Coordination: there is no common pulse. Instead, each player plays in time with their own, physical pulse, which they check periodically. Try to keep from coordinating pulses with anyone even if theirs is a similar tempo. There are cues, however, indicated by eye-glasses and the name of the person to look at, with whom you have a duct. Before a cue, if there's time, check your pulse. At a cue, turn to look at each other, and begin counting at the same time. You will not stay together, or end together. At the next cue, however, two people will momentarily re-coordinate.

After a moment of silence, in your own time, reach up to your carotid artery and find your pulse. Pulse = 

Articulate your pulse for between 2-4 measures. Pulse =  not 



Bass Flute

pp *p* *pp*

Percussion & Vibraphone

bass drum

pp *mp* *pp*

Violin

sul tasto

pp

Violoncello

sul tasto

pp *p* *mp* *pp*

Patti

Sean

4

B. Fl

Perc. & Vib.

Vln. 1

snare

blend with vln.

scratch (damp strings)
try to hide timbre inside snare

ppp pp mp

9

B. Fl

Perc. & Vib.

Vc.

snare off

breathy
match pitch to snare
hide timbre, emerge, blend, hide

flutt.

ord. flutt. ord.

pp p ppp mp pp p

(Meaghan, Patti)

Sean

14

Perc. & Vib.

Vln. 1

Vc.

snare on
= 48 lower (middle)

f p f

pp mp

higher (rim)

scratch (damp strings)
molto sul tasto

scratch (damp strings)
sul pont.

18

Perc. & Vib. *p* *bow cymbal* (l.v.) (l.v.) *roll cymbal* *f*

Vln. I *ord. dolce* *sul pont.* *ord. dolce* *sul pont.*

Vc. *mimic pitch & timbre of 2nd cymbal harmonic* *sul pont.* *ord. dolce* *sul pont.* *ord. dolce*

23

B. Fl. *create beating: play B ♭ sing B ♮* *mp* *pp* *mf*

Perc. & Vib. *p* *pp* *mf* *pp* *ppp* *p* *pp* *mf*

27

B. Fl. *pp* *p* *pp*

Perc. & Vib. *damp rests* *pp* *p* *mp* *p*

29

Perc. & Vib. *Vib.* *bow* (l.v.) (l.v.) *f*

Vln. I *dolce blend, beat* *hum* *no vib.----* *molto vib. (fast, narrow)*

Vc. *dolce blend, beat* *hum* *no vib.----* *molto vib. (fast, narrow)*

mp *p* *pp*

cover embouchure
with whole mouth
flutt. sing A
or lower flutt. sing A
or lower

34

B. Fl.

Perc. & Vib.

bass drum

pp ppp mp pp ppp

After a moment of silence,
in your own time, reach up
to your carotid artery and
find your pulse. Your pulse =

39

B. Fl.

Perc. & Vib.

bass drum

pp p mp pp

Vln. I

sul tasto

pp p mp pp

Vc.

sul tasto

pp p mp pp

42

B. Fl.

Perc. & Vib.

sul pont.

pp mp pp pp

Vln. I

sul pont.

pp

Vc.

scratch

pp

45 $\text{♩} = 60$

B. Fl.

Perc. & Vib.

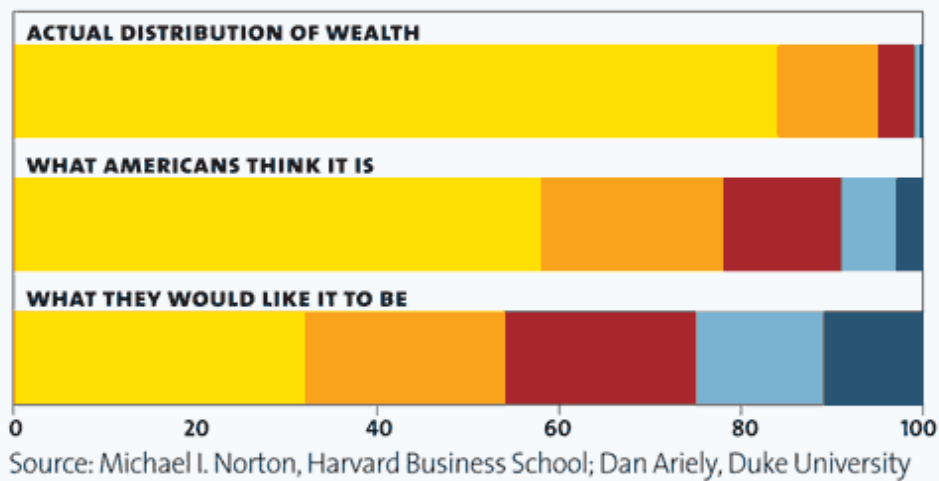
Vln. 1

Vc.

pp *mp* *pp* *fff* *pp* *mp* *pp* *mp*

scratch

Three Wealth Distributions – Source Graph



Three Wealth Distributions

Elizabeth Adams

1:24

0:00 "Actual"
note values; as long as possible
breathe ad libitum

18" 0:18 slow bisbi. 0:50 faster bisbi. 1:05 1:12 1:15 flaut. tr

Flute

mf
E♭ III 1.
2.b
Dif. M3
II (p. 90, The Other Flute)

12" sul point. 0:12

Violin

mf 3"

Violoncello

bongos

Percussion

40" trem. E&Eflat constantly + any adjacent semi or whole tone from upper cluster 0:25 switch on vib. 0:40 bow continuously 0:55 switch off vib 1:10 mallets trem. 14" as before but without pedal

Vibraphone

93a

(p. 90)

(p. 26)

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1:24 "Think"

2:22

Fl. ⁸ listen for another cymbal harmonic

at quiet cymbal and cello moment
play most diffuse, modulated fingering for this note 6"

Vln. ^{2"}
I, II come in 6 times, for 2" each, matching dynamic of cymbal and cello

Vc. ^{1:32?}
play double stop matching cymbal harmonics
molto sul tasto
listen for long bows, slightly uneven durations
2 cymbal harmonics ^{6"}

match cymbal dynamic, which will fluctuate

Perc. ^{58"}
roll cymbal *mf* to establish harmonics,
then, once cello enters, improvise dynamics slowly fluctuating among *pp-f*
mf

(|) at loudest cymbal moment,
add B.D. roll 3"; resume cymbal
3"

2:22 "Wish"

2:32
tongue rams
on bongo pitches & near microtones
as fast as possible, uneven
2:22"

Fl. *f-mp ad lib.*

2:33
pizz.: non-scalar, continuous, uneven, microtonal between these two pitches
2:1"

Vln. *mf-p ad lib.*

2:37
15"
high pressure
twist-scratch
stop-start intermittent

Vc. *mf-p*

2:44
bongo finger roll: uneven, continuous, multiple notes on one and both drum heads, variable speed
3:2"

2:44
continue bongo roll one handed
other hand drag finger nail
around B.D. head,
vary speed

Perc. *p-mp ad lib.*

17

Add your Bb to the violin's improv 5 times -- whenever you think it would sound good.

Fl.

p-f ad lib.

30"

FREE improv on 1/4 tones & glissandi; notes are only suggestions to aid improv, may be used in ANY order, or partially, or disregarded. Use more or less even note values; rests are fine; dynamics, articulation and bowing/stirring free, expressive.

Vln.

p-f ad lib.

30"

molto sul tasto

10"

10"

Vc.

pp-mf ad lib.

30"

drag one fingernail on each bongo drumhead, slowly, continuously, almost inaudibly

10"

Perc.

pp

3:24 "Think"

3:36

23 36" FREE improv. on 4 note values; bass drum gives pulse; rhythms given are only to aid improv; use in any order, partially, loop, or disregard; breathe *ad lib.*

Fl. *p-mf ad lib.*

36" FREE improv. on note values -- as many different note values as possible; bass drum gives pulse; those given are only suggestions to aid improv; use in any order, partially, or disregard

Vln. *ppp-ff ad lib.*

36" FREE improv. on 7 note values; bass drum gives pulse; rhythms given are only to aid improv; use in any order, loop partially, or disregard

Vc. *pp-f ad lib.*

36" one finger on B.D.; sparse cymbal improv. in 2 note values: 1/v. and damped 1/v.

Perc. *p*

4:00 "Wish"

timings spatialized, inexact

play upper note
sing lower note

longue ramis
(T) (T)

flutt. *mf*

key slaps
+ + +

flutt. *f*

sing & play *mf*

Fl.

32

timings spatialized, inexact

accelerate/decelerate *ad lib*; bow changes and articulation changes should not usually coincide; insert rests to taste

scratch
sul pont.

vib. no vib. vib. sul pont. ord. sul pont. scratch

mf *mp* *p* *pp*

Vln.

timings spatialized, inexact

pizz.

pizz. & touch bow pin to string

mf

Vc.

timings spatialized, inexact

dead stroke

super ball

scrape super ball

p *mf* *mp*

Perc.

4:30 "Actual" 5:00

42 29" Fl. silent key clicks drowned out by cello; mime playing expressively, perhaps another piece

4:59 tongue ram (T) wait for loud noise from off stage

4:55 Vln. inaudibly, col legno (no hair), play a lot of notes, passionately

honeyed, vib. 3, 5" *p with shape*

25" wait for loud noise from off stage

scratch; drown out everyone else 25" wait for loud noise from off stage

Vc. *mf*

25" Perc. mime inaudible "Steve Schick"-esque playing - any rhythm, silent but big and visible

3

wait for loud noise from off stage

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