Shifting identities : the musician as theatrical perfomer

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CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

Expanding and reducing: The musician as theatrical performer

The professional activity of musicians today is by and large not restricted to the performing of concert music; more and more musicians are also active in various other realms of the performing arts. In these areas, the musicians' profession tends to be extended; extra-musical or performative[1] elements are appended to this profession. The present study aims to investigate the ways in which musicians take part in theatre and performance, not only in their core function as musicians, but in particular when their professional activities shift towards theatrical performing. More specifically, I aim to analyse and discuss stage works that are dealing with the idea of making specific elements of the musician's profession *absent*, rather than extending it.

As part of the extremely diverse performance practices arising with boundary-crossings between the art forms in the 20th and 21st centuries, musicians not only are required to play their instruments, but also to carry out a variety of performative tasks along with dancers, actors and mimes. The roles of the performers from different art forms tend to merge, and sometimes the borders between the different roles are difficult to define. In the recent theatre works of the Belgian group NeedCompany, founded by visual artist and director Jan Lauwers and choreographer Grace Ellen Barkey in 1986, all members of the ensemble - musicians, actors and dancers - switch fluently between dancing, music making, singing, and acting. In the work of German composer and director Heiner Goebbels, musicians perform various kinds of tasks besides playing their instruments or making music in the broadest sense. They read poetry, ride bikes or dance like dervishes. As musicians reach into other art forms, occasionally even the roles that they traditionally perform on stage disappear: the musician's professional identity becomes extended.

This breaking down of the barriers has not only been applied to the professions of live performers, but also to the human body in combination with digital technology. Since the 1980s, performing artists have been experimenting with digital media and incorporating it in their work. They have developed a diversity of approaches using electronics, video and interfaces for interactivity, to produce a multitude of possible relationships between the human body of the live performer and digital technologies. The multimedial performances of Laurie Anderson, such as *United States* (1983), combine songs, spoken text, singing, instrumental playing (keyboards and violin), electronic effects with projections of hand-drawn pictures, film excerpts and enlarged photographs. Heiner Goebbels works regularly with samplers to integrate extra-musical material into his compositions, staged concerts, or music theatre pieces since his earlier works in the 1980s, such as *Der Mann im Fahrstuhl* (1987), up to more recent works such as *Stifters Dinge* (2007). The Dutch composer, director and film maker Michel van der Aa lets singers and actors of his multimedial operas/operatic works *One* (2002), *After Life* (2005-2006) and *Das Buch der Unruhe* (2008) perform with fixed video parts, composing and closely interlinking the various media

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[1] Throughout the book I will use the terms "performative" and "performativity" in the sense of musical or theatrical performances, as conventionally understood in theatre studies and musicology. I am aware of the fact that the term "performativity" might have different connotations in other discourses, such as the speech act theory and contemporary continental philosophy.

of live instrumental music, electroacoustic soundtracks, live voices and film (also containing speaking or singing performers).

These are only a few outstanding examples of performance-oriented "musical multimedia" (Nicholas Cook)[2]. In general, musicians today might frequently be confronted with electronic media on stage, both in contemporary concert performance situations as well as in the theatre. Microphones and loudspeakers on stage, technical attributes which can extend the activities of musicians on stage, at times with sound modulation, are regularly used in almost all areas of contemporary performing arts practices involving musicians. Singers and instruments including entire orchestras are often amplified, not only in contemporary works by composers such as Louis Andriessen, or in theatre performances as *Sentimenti* (ZT Hollandia, 2003), directed by Johan Simons and Paul Koek, where the actors and singers are amplified by wireless microphones.[3] Also the internationally renowned Koninklijk Concertgebouworkest is amplified when it is performing an opera in the Muziektheater in Amsterdam. Apart from merely amplifying voices and instruments to allow softer sounds to be heard in large spaces, the use of microphones "enables the artistic use of close-up sound and makes expressive intimacy […] part of the singer's repertoire", acting as "a kind of aural magnifying glass, [bringing] individual vocal artifacts and artistic detail to our attention with great clarity." (Salzman and Desi 2008: 23) Additionally, microphones and loudspeakers give access to the possibility of dislocating the amplified sound from its acoustic source (the live voice or instrument), as British composer Caroline Wilkins describes as a part of her concept of "gained bodies": The first body is the live body of the actor. Alongside this, there is the body of the voice, which is the loudspeaker that amplifies and dislocates the live voice of the actor. According to Wilkins, she "gained one body". The instrument, the performer, and the amplified sound of the instrument - all these occupy different places.[4]

As an important area in the vast field of multimedial performing arts, the diversified genre of music theatre with all its varied forms[5] has specifically developed a great variety of strategies for working with musicians in ways beyond their core activity of playing music. An apparent problem of music theatre is that the genre lacks a precise categorisation and definition, and the terminology is confusing: in Germany the term "Musiktheater" is often understood as opera. City theatres that run

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[2] In his book *analysing musical multimedia,* Nicholas Cook (1998) mainly analyses examples of multimedia such as advertising spots or music videos. However, unlike Cook, I focus on musical multimedia occurring mainly in live performance, examining the various relationships and tensions between the different media and the live performer, the human being who is present on stage, standing in relationship, tension and possibly conflict with the disembodied, digital technology.

[3] For a more in-depth view into the background and history of the use of microphones in (music) theatre, as well as its applications, see:
Eck, Cathy van (2013). *Between air and electricity. Microphones and loudspeakers as musical instruments* (Doctoral dissertation). Leiden University;
Verstraete, Pieter (2006). "De microfoon als interface." In Henk Havens, Chiel Kattenbelt, Eric de Ruijter and Kees Vuyk (eds.) (2006), *Theater & Technologie* (pp. 214-227). Amsterdam: Theater Instituut Nederland;
Salzman, Eric and Thomas Desi (2008). *The New Music Theater: Seeing the Voice, Hearing the Body*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 23-27.

[4] Taken from my notes of Caroline Wilkins' lecture "A Sound Theatre of Objects", at the *Music on Stage* conference at Rose Bruford College, Kent, UK, 24.10.2010.

[5] Despite the difficulty of the term *music theatre* as such, - potentially including all forms of performance that include music and theatrical elements - I will use it here, until later specification.

as a threefold stage[6] almost exclusively produce operas under the term music theatre. Many different art forms, works and practitioners can be included within the parameters of music theatre: conventional opera, Broadway musicals, twentieth-century European avant-garde experiments, contemporary performance practices from groups like Monster Truck[7] or Theater der Klänge[8], postdramatic theatre which theatre scholar Hans-Thies Lehmann sees as specifically musical (Lehmann 2006: 91-93), and a great range of other types of music theatre. In short, what distinguishes music theatrical performances and works from theatre and other performing art forms in general, is music's essential role as well as the inherent musical structure and thinking. The specifically musical way of structuring is often a constituting element of music theatre creation, including not only the experimental creations of the recent decades, but also other forms such as opera or the popular musical. This gives many pieces an intrinsic consistency, different from theatre pieces in which the music is more an additional element than the essence of it. (Heilgendorff 2004b: 8) More than in most concert situations, musicians in (music) theatre need to be conscious of the stage space, stage design and lighting. Directors and/or composers create situations in which musicians become confronted with or set in relation to other means and media on stage. These phenomena, where musicians act as *theatrical performers* in different medial situations and contexts, form the core of this research project. In short, I regard a musician's actions and appearance as theatrical in those moments when her usually musical utterances are transformed in a way that they become open for additional meanings other than the musical. The study aims to explore the manifold (music) theatrical situations in which musicians are situated in the late twentieth and twenty-first century, and to develop a perspective, framework and understanding in which future music theatre creations with musicians as performers can be analysed. I understand this in the light of *live performances as events*, rather than in the sense of performing fixed and finished works.

Two perspectives

In most of the theatrical situations where musicians "perform", their profession is *extended*: in the first instance they make music; they sing or play their instruments. Besides this, they have to perform additional tasks such as walking on stage, reciting text, etc. On the one hand this introduces the fascination of watching highly trained people doing what they are best at - making music. On the other hand, other elements of performance are introduced, "settings and tasks in which performers [musicians] struggle and have to invest a new, intensified effort in order to achieve their performative assignments." (Roesner 2008: 12)[9] These diverse tasks, and the challenge and effort to perform them, result in the extension and transformation of the musician into a theatrical performer. I will refer to these strategies under the term *expansive approach*.

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[6] The term "threefold stage" describes a type of theatre that produces operatic, drama and dance/ballet productions. Examples of large threefold stage houses are the theatres in Hamburg, Stuttgart and Cologne.

[7] http://monstertrucker.de.

[8] http://www.theater-der-klaenge.de.

[9] In my discussion I continue with describing this as an "other" or "different" effort rather than "new".

As an alternative strategy to the extension[10], to the use of additional elements, this research introduces and focuses on an opposite approach: the *abstracting away* of specific qualities or abilities of the musician's profession - subsumed by the term *reductive approach*. By *not* being able to use specific elements of their profession, musicians encounter problems that are very different from the ones in the expansive approach. The audience watches musicians *not* doing certain things that usually belong to their profession. Both the expansive and the reductive approaches are concepts of working theatrically with musicians, and are capable of transforming musicians into theatrical performers albeit with completely different working processes and artistic results. They are different, maybe contradictory strategies, but both bearing the potential to shift the musician's professional identity into a more theatrical one.

In performing arts other than music (theatre), both extension and reduction have been the subject of artistic practice throughout the twentieth century. One of the most common extensions of an actor's performance might be to let the actor sing. Kurt Weill's preference for singing actors is only one example among many; his choice also had an aesthetic reason, which is the preference of singing voices that sound different than the ones from trained (classical) singers. The ability of actors to sing has today become so commonplace that even the professional training programs for actors routinely include singing classes. Nowadays, also playing an instrument or dancing could hardly be considered extensions of the actor's profession any more. This is to be understood against the background of today's multidisciplinary theatre practice, but also because of the study programs at faculties of music, theatre and dance. A large variety of "music theatre" courses exists today, in which students are taught acting, dancing and singing, and in which they have the possibility to follow instrumental classes as well.

In dance, German choreographer Sasha Waltz frequently merges her dancers in the direction of other performing arts by means of extending their professions. In *insideout* (2003), two dancers perform both a choreography and a piece of sound/music with a singing saw in between them. In *Körper* (2000), they produce beautifully subtle sounds with dishes on the back of another dancer, and in one solo scene dancer Luc Dunberry performs a remarkable polyphony of spoken text and dance movements of the upper part of his body, closely interlinked in a very musical and rhythmical way. Here the profession of the dancer is extended with speaking text.

Reductive concepts have also been quite common and well-developed and reflected upon in theory and analysis in the performing arts since the early twentieth century: in Dada[11], Fluxus and performance art. In pieces by Steve Paxton[12] the dancers are walking, standing, sitting or smiling and seem to do nothing besides executing simple performative tasks such as everyday movements, but not *dancing* in the traditional sense. In 1965, Yvonne Rainer formulated her famous *No*-pamphlet, as a post-script to the description of her piece *Parts of Some Sextet*:

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[10] Throughout the book I am using the terms "extension" and "expansive approach" synonymously.

[11] The absence of traditional ballet or dance in *Relâche* by choreographer Jean Börlin (chief choreographer of Ballets Suédois), painter and writer Francis Picabia and composer Erik Satie, premiered in Paris on December 4th, 1924. The title phrase means "spielfrei" or "vorstellungsfreier Tag" in German, "free from play" (= no performance) in English.

[12] *Satisfying Lover* (1967), *State* (1968), *Smiling* (1969). The score of *Satisfying Lover* is even created for non-trained dancers. See also Siegmund 2006: 364-365.

> NO to spectacle no to virtuosity no to transformations and magic and make-believe no to the glamour and transcendency of the star image no to the heroic no to the anti-heroic no to trash imagery no to involvement of performer or spectator no to style no to camp no to seduction of spectator by the wiles of the performer no to eccentricity no to moving or being moved. (Rainer in Reininghaus and Schneider 2004: 173)

What else could you take away after this impressive refusal of almost everything that might constitute a dance performance? In *While we were holding it together* (2006) by Croatian/Dutch choreographer Ivana Müller, the dancers stand still in various positions and postures for long intervals, speaking sentences such as "I imagine us still being here in 300 years, being discovered by an archaeologist." or "I imagine we are found in a third world country and then brought to the British museum for professional restoration", all carefully organised in time. The professional identity of the dancers is confusingly relocated somewhere between dancer and actor, but mainly they are transformed into mediators of text. However, precisely by standing still in various positions, the dancers also communicate their profession and masterful control of their bodies. The text functions more than anything else as an opening for the audience, as an invitation to create a theatre individually with one's own imagination and individual interpretation. This will not be the only case throughout this study where reduction results in an *increased* rather than a reduced presence of the performer.

Another work which explicitly takes the profession of classical dancers as a starting point - in particular the classically trained ballet dancer - is *I/II/III/IIII* (2007) by Belgian visual artist and director Kris Verdonck. Four dancers hang like marionettes in a huge machine, performing a choreography that is half produced and provoked by the machine and half "performed" by the dancers themselves. The dancers are denied the strongest, and most-developed habit of their profession: the creation and production of bodily movement. Instead they have to follow the machine and must accept what the machine "offers" them. Verdonck's aim in this performance is very much to create "cyborgs" - an identity falling between man and machine such that the movement is "[for] fifty percent provoked by the machine and for fifty percent their own movement."[13] However, as the movements still refer heavily on the repertoire of classical ballet movements, the piece can only be performed by classically trained dancers.

[13] Personal conversation with Kris Verdonck.

Image 0.1: Kris Verdonck, *I/II/III/IIII* (2007)

In music and music theatre the expansive approach is quite common, and appears regularly. Expansive techniques are highly developed, so that it is not uncommon for most musicians who work regularly in theatrical projects to speak, to sing, or to move on stage in choreographic structures. The reductive approach is much less common, and rarely found in music and music theatre. The reason for this might be a combination of different developments during the second half of the twentieth century, such as the extension of the musical vocabulary in both musical and performative sense, and the emergence of new media, electronic and interactive applications. All of these developments tend to support the extension of the musician's activities much more than to reduce them. Nevertheless the reductive approach offers fascinating and challenging new areas for both theory and the artistic practice of working with musicians in theatre. It opens up new possibilities for a music-driven theatre that does not have to include music, but breathes a musical energy originating from the movements and the profession of musicians on stage. The reductive approach gives access to another kind of *musical theatricality*, which is a major subject and an incentive of my own artistic work. However, because these concepts build very strongly on the

"remaining" professional qualities and skills of the musicians the specific theatricality is quite different from that which actors or dancers may offer, yet allows the musicians to become theatrical without the necessity of becoming an actor.

As yet there are only few examples where the performer is specifically involved in reduction. Here, I will restrict myself to two examples: Dieter Schnebel's *nostalgie* for solo conductor and the *Emergency Solos* by Christina Kubisch. In *nostalgie* (1962) the orchestra and its entire presence and sound are literally taken away from the conductor, so that he conducts an imaginary orchestra. In *Emergency Solos* (1974/75)[14], German composer, visual and sound artist Christina Kubisch uses a variety of objects (thimbles on her fingertips in *In Touch With*, a gas mask through which she plays the instrument without mouthpiece in *Week-End*, a condom stretched over the flute in *Erotika*) to make the playing of the instrument almost impossible. The objects lead to a self-reflective comment on the nature of musical performance and to a "re-evaluation of the visual dimension, which is equal to the musical [dimension] in these performances." (Sanio 2004: 9, my translation)[15] The musician is denied the possibility of a "proper" performance, and it is just that what transforms the flute player into a theatrical performer.

Image 0.2: Christina Kubisch, *Emergency Solos - In Touch With* (1974/75)

There is little research available on the musician as theatrical performer, or the musician in multimedial contexts other than the concert performance practice. Although musicians have obviously taken part in the ground-breaking processes of exceeding the boundaries between the different artistic disciplines in performance throughout the twentieth century (think of the

[14] There are different data available concerning the years in which the *Emergency Solos* were developed. In an email conversation Christina Kubisch wrote me that she developed most of the solos in 1974, and put them together as one performance series in 1975.

[15] "[…] einer Aufwertung der visuellen Dimension, die in diesen Performances des musikalischen gleichwertig ist."

collaboration of composer Nam Jun Paik with Joseph Beuys, Laurie Anderson, John Cage, and others), as performers they have been of little interest to theory and analysis. Musicians have certainly been *mentioned* in several publications about theatre and performance art, but what their actual tasks have been and what directors have asked them to do besides just making music, is barely discussed. There seems to be little academic interest in the musician in the context of other media, or the musician in the theatre. Theatre scholar and music theatre researcher David Roesner has analysed aspects of musicalisation in contemporary German theatre, especially with regard to the work of theatre makers Heiner Goebbels, Christoph Marthaler and Einar Schleef. However, Roesner is more concerned with strategies of musicality in theatre in general than with what musicians actually *do*. Roesner mentions performative assignments as a means to "theatricalise" musicians, but he does not condense this to a concept of extending the musician's profession; nor does he theorise possibilities or any kind of structuring or gradation of extensions. Apart from Roesner's work, there are several accounts to be found on the genre of *Instrumental Theatre* and the tasks that must be executed, especially in Mauricio Kagel's and Dieter Schnebel's work. However, most of these studies generally deal with the composer's intentions, a detailed analysis of the score, and about the nature of the piece-as-work. Typically these studies do not investigate the actual tasks of the musicians, and the potential struggles or extra-musical performative elements that these tasks provoke. The same goes for the way in which authors tend to deal with the creation process, which is often either ignored or neglected.[16]

It is exactly the interest in the musicians themselves, into the actual human being live present in theatrical and performative situations which lies at the heart of the research project at hand. Following Christopher Small in his basic approach that the "fundamental nature and meaning of music lie not in objects, not in musical works at all, but in action, in what people do" (Small 1998: 8), I will focus on the musician as theatrical performer. My dedicated interest is in what musicians actually do on stage; how they are put into a theatrical situation, what they are asked to do besides making music, what their efforts are in performing diverse kinds of extra-musical tasks or in situations in which they are denied specific elements of their core profession. From both an artistic and a theoretical side, I am fascinated by the playground between music and theatre, a situation or moment in which musicians become theatrical. This will test the limits of the musician's profession and define the core elements of this profession in a theatrical setting. Additionally, this study will investigate the relationships between the composer/director and the musician-as-performer, and the techniques and strategies that are used for the transformation of the musician into a theatrical performer. As suggested above, I have structured the various techniques into two main groups: the expansive and reductive approaches. As the reductive approach is less developed I am interested in finding out the limits and challenges of this approach. In my own artistic work I therefore isolate and radicalise reductive elements in close collaboration with the participating and performing musicians. It is especially the reductive approach, its area of artistic production and theoretical specificity, that is the focus of my research. I am interested in situations or moments where essential elements of musical performance are reduced, denied or absorbed, and in cases in which musicians are challenged to become

[16] See Roelcke 1988 on Kagel, Zeller 1980 on Schnebel. One possible counter-example is Matthias Rebstock's study of the compositional process of Mauricio Kagel and several works of Kagel's Instrumental Theatre. Here Rebstock gives detailed insight how works such as *Match* developed from the first draft of the score until the finished staged version, including a somewhat collective process and intensive exchange with the musicians. But also here Rebstock neglects the actual work of the musicians-as-performers, their difficulties or challenges, and what the concrete effect of the extra-musical and performative elements were on the musicians. See Rebstock 2004.

theatrical. Furthermore I want to direct my attention to the possible roles and functions of a musician in performative art forms other than music, and how she can merge with the performers of other art forms; how she might reach into other art forms like theatre or dance; and how she might become a theatrical performer. It will become clear that by recalling the specific qualities, abilities and habits of musicians, it is possible to get access to a specific musical theatricality, different from the kind of theatricality that actors or dancers offer even if there is no music to be played or sound to be heard.

Research area - Music Theatre and the musician as theatrical performer

Looking back - musicians on stage

In order to understand the novelties and developments of today's music theatre, it is useful and necessary to review the appearance of musicians on the theatre stage during the twentieth century. For audiences of contemporary theatre today, it is not unusual to see musicians appearing next to actors, dancers and other performers, and not only playing music, but also performing all kinds of extra-musical assignments. The opposite was true at the beginning of the twentieth century, when opera was the main genre of music theatre, and the musicians in the orchestra "gradually moved out of the main space, down into a pit, and increasingly under the stage." (Salzman and Desi 2008: 34) On the occasions where musicians were on stage in small "mixed ensembles" they merely "provide[d] stage music that is expected to evoke the sound of 'real' […] music that is part of the scenic action […]." (Salzman and Desi 2008: 36) Examples of such on-stage music include Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*, and Bernd-Alois Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten*. This changed with Igor Stravinsky, who pioneered bringing the whole ensemble onto the stage as part of the dramatic action. The seven musicians in *L'histoire du soldat* (1918) were placed on stage together with the narrator and the other actors, so that their playing became a part of the scene. This was the first time that the playing of musicians was treated as a scenic element, which developed into one of the most basic premises of experimental music theatre in the second half of the twentieth century, and was taken up by John Cage, Dieter Schnebel, and especially Mauricio Kagel. (Reininghaus 2004: 20)

Before the experimental forms of the second half of the twentieth century, Berthold Brecht and Kurt Weill took on the presence of musicians on stage in their *Dreigroschenoper* (1928). In the Brechtian concept of epic theatre, the actors were no longer supposed to embody and become the characters they played. Instead, they presented themselves *as actors* to the audience, making it obvious that they were playing a role which was assigned to them. This theatrical concept and change of the actor's function also opened up possibilities to present the musicians *as* musicians, instead of *as if* they were musicians, playing music without having a psychological function in a play or narrative. This set a course for the generations to come. The self-reflexive presence of the musicians developed into a more theatrical use of musical playing.

Music as theatre

At the time when the orchestra "gradually sank into the opera house pit […] and then melted into the film or television soundtrack", on the other side of the music theatre spectrum "instrumentalists reappeared on stage and often came to play leading roles in new performance theater, roles quite equal in importance to those played by singers, actors, and dancers." (Salzman and Desi 2008: 69-70) Grounded by ideas from performance art and Fluxus, the work of composers like John Cage, George Crumb and others lead to the notion of Instrumental Theatre. When Mauricio Kagel entered the European experimental music theatre scene at the end of the 1950s, he essentially introduced the idea of *music as theatre*, or the theatricalisation of the music itself.[17] Influenced by the ideas of John Cage, he emphasised physical activity as intrinsic to the performance of the musicians. Kagel argued that movement on stage is the constitutive characteristic to differentiate between Instrumental Theatre and the classical concert performance. The playing of the instruments should become one with a theatrical performance. The theatrical movement is performed by musicians instead of actors, dancers or mimes. Depending on the nature of the specific piece, the musician is interpreter and/or co-creator of her part. (Kagel 1966: 252) In *Match*, one of Kagel's most well-known Instrumental Theatre pieces, two cellists are placed opposite to each other and alternately playing short pizzicato flageolets on their instruments. In doing so, the execution of the sounds, in combination with the positioning can be perceived as theatrical: two cellists personifying two tennis players hitting balls in a tennis match. This is reinforced by the third musician, a percussion player in the middle of the stage in between the two cellists, as in the role of the referee.

Instrumental Theatre started with subtle extensions of the traditional classical music concert, which was perceived as too static by avant-garde composers of the 1960s like Kagel or Schnebel. The musicians were placed in various positions on stage which differed from their usual ensemble setting, or they had to wear costumes different from their usual concert dress. In the early phases of Instrumental Theatre, various possibilities were developed, such as a wide range of approaches to the playing of instruments; going from the "turning around and exaggeration of everyday movements on the instruments up to 'converting the instruments'." (Heilgendorff 2004a: 8, my translation)[18] Composers and directors created staged structures for the musicians, such as moving from one position on stage to another, or looking at each other according to "composed choreographies". The instrumentalists were assigned to use spoken text, and subconscious and everyday movements of musicians became augmented into the main focus of performance.

[17] Theatricalisation of music is different from musicalisation of theatre. Whereas Kagel's approach in the early phase of Instrumental Theatre belongs to the former, the latter refers rather to a specifically musical approach to theatre and all of its media. This could be an understanding of the different theatrical means as (musical) "voices" of a "score", or working with spoken text in a more musical - e.g. as rhythm or pitches - rather than psychological way.

[18] "[…] das Verkehren und Überzeichnen alltäglicher Bewegungsabläufe an den Instrumenten bis hin zum 'Umfunktionieren der Instrumente'."

Image 0.3: Friedrich Schenker, *Missa Nigra* (1980)

As result of these aspects, something very theatrical but also absurd, comical and sarcastic is inherent to many Instrumental Theatre works. (Heilgendorff 2004a: 8) Besides the already mentioned Kagel and Schnebel, other representatives of the genre are Karlheinz Stockhausen (*Originale* 1961) and György Ligeti (*Aventures* and *Nouvelles Aventures* 1962-65).

In the later period of the genre[19] - since around the 1980s until the turn of the century - these ideas were further developed by a younger generation of composers. The palette of sound generating material was extended by non-musical objects that became substantial elements for sound. (Heilgendorff 2004b: 8) The stage space becomes much more consciously used as a theatrical space using lighting, stage design and visual media much more extensively. This gave the pieces a visual form closer to theatre and dance works, rather than being explicitly connected to the concert stage. Heiner Goebbels, Manos Tsangaris, Gerhard Stäbler and others developed forms that went far beyond the genre of Instrumental Theatre. These works bear obvious references to Instrumental Theatre, but are also influenced by other art forms (dance, visual arts and installation art, or the incorporation of digital media).

The acting of the musician has been affected enormously by these developments. In the few decades up to the present musicians have experienced a great extension of their profession while participating in music theatre projects. In the early stages of Instrumental Theatre, playing music was often the theatrical act itself, although certain aspects of music making were exaggerated, accentuated and staged as visual and physical elements of performance. In later works, this was extended greatly, such that musicians had to do much more than follow the score, play their instruments and perform the (musically or textually) notated actions. They were asked to perform together with actors in mixed musician-actor-dancer-ensembles. They have performed with objects of all kinds to make sound or gestures, quite close to the notion of "live musique

[19] In the division of Instrumental Theatre into two main periods - the first from 1964-1982 and the second one from 1982-2000 - I am essentially following music theatre scholar and viola player Simone Heilgendorff. I do not want to suggest too much of a clear cut distinction between these periods, but, as my description suggests, there are indeed differences to be found between two generations of composers working in the genre of Instrumental Theatre, and differences between the aesthetics of the first experimental period and the second period that moves much further from concert-like settings into clearer theatre spaces and productions, and into more collaborative creations.

concrète".[20] As the stage space, stage design and lighting have become increasingly important, musicians have been issued the challenge of being much more conscious of the physicality of the space and the visual structures on stage. In The Netherlands, composer, theatre maker and multimedia artist Dick Raaijmakers accentuated this awareness of the physical and visual surroundings. In his "instruction exercises" the performers, both musicians and actors, have to execute large varieties of tasks in - or with - stage designs, such as a setup of tables in *The Microman* (1982) or a variety of installations in *Der Fall/Dépons* (1993).

Another excellent example of such spatial and task-oriented work is *Schwarz auf Weiss* (1996) by German composer and director Heiner Goebbels, created in close collaboration with Ensemble Modern. Being a true milestone of experimental music theatre, *Schwarz auf Weiss* contains elements of installation art, concert music and performance art, and combines these into an impressive collage in 23 scenes. Still bearing references to Instrumental Theatre and chamber music, the piece crosses the boundaries. In the opening scene the musicians use their instruments in installation-like setups, combining them with objects and constructions of various kinds; one musician writes with a pen on paper, with the sound amplified and later electronically processed to build musical sounds and structures. Later, besides performing a fixed piece of music, the musicians throw tennis balls against drums and large metal sheets, resulting in a playful cross-over between concert and sports game. In the middle of the piece trumpeter William Forman recites Edgar Allan Poe over his wireless trumpet microphone. Similar elements can be found in his later pieces as well, such as his strategy of task-based performance. Instead of working with any kind of psychology (understood as acting emotional states or developments), Goebbels prefers to give assignments to his actors and musicians to achieve the effects and expressions he wants.[21] He applies essentially the same technique to actors and musicians, and by these performative task strategies he is able to create pseudo-psychological layers performed by musicians without the necessity for them to act. Structurally his works are foremost musically driven, as seen in *Eraritjaritjaka*: the actor André Wilms has to adjust his text to the music, as cameraman Bruno Deville has to synchronise the timing of his movements and camera shots to the musical score.

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[20] The group *Sing Song*, part of the music theatre company VeenFabriek, based in Leiden, The Netherlands, plays "live musique concrète" on instruments made from everyday items and cheap things such as toys and electronic apparatuses. By using these objects as musical instruments, the ensemble seeks to make hidden possibilities audible and to communicate the joy of listening to beautiful sounds created form ordinary material. (www.veenfabriek.nl/De_Veenfabriek, last retrieved May 24, 2011)

[21] In order to underline this approach, Goebbels himself refers to a scene in *Eraritjaritjaka*, in which the actor André Wilms has to cut an onion, which causes him to cry instead of having to act an emotion such as being sad: "When I want an actor to cry, I give him an onion." (Heiner Goebbels in conversation with Marianne van Kerckhoven and Falk Hübner)

Image 0.4: Heiner Goebbels, *Schwarz auf Weiss* (1996)

Music Theatre - a genre?

In the following paragraphs I will narrow my understanding of how music theatre concretely works. First, composers, directors and writers Eric Salzman and Thomas Desi offer two useful theoretical stances towards the genre, referred to as the *inclusive* and *exclusive* meaning of the term "music theatre". The inclusive definition describes all forms of combinations of music and theatre encompassing "the entire universe of performance in which music and theater play complementary and potentially equal roles" (Salzman and Desi 2008: 5), and contains all kinds of music theatre, including opera, operetta and musical theatre. The exclusive definition mostly excludes these forms, and defines music theatre as a different genre than opera and musical, referring to smaller, more experimental forms.[22] A similar differentiation can be found in the writing of the Belgian theatre critic Evelyne Coussens, when she defines music theatre "in its 'narrow' meaning - distinct from operetta, opera, musical and cabaret." However, she problematises a strict classification, as "every effort for classification comes across as artificial, with the risk of harming the richness and diversity of the field." (Coussens, 2009: 23, my translation)[23] I agree with Coussens that, in the end, every precise definition of the term and the genre can only do injustice to the richness and diversity of its manifestations. But even though the lines between the various forms of music theatre are often blurred, "this does not mean that valid species do not exist (they clearly do) and should not lead us to deny that differences exist - differences of purpose, of category, of social setting, of casting, and of vocal type." (Salzman and Desi 2008: 6)

[22] Salzman and Desi (2008: 5) coined the term *New Music Theater* for this exclusive understanding.

[23] " […] elke poging tot classificatie gekunsteld over[komt], met het risico afbreuk te doen aan de rijkdom en diversiteit van de sector."

In my opinion two main aspects of music theatre are its multimedial[24] nature (with, of course, an emphasis on music or sound), and the specific musical way of structuring and organising its material. Situated on a continuum between (concert) music and theatre, music theatre always contains and stages more than one medium; in its most simple form music and mise-en-scène. No music theatre is possible without these two elements. The possibilities of integrating other media in the framework of music theatre are virtually endless: dance, video, interactive electronics, painting, architecture, photo art, etc. Music theatre is by definition an art form that stages different media in various relationships. As theatre in general, music theatre can be seen as a hypermedium, with respect to its ability to stage other media "without damaging the specificity of these other media and its own specificity." (Kattenbelt 2008: 22)

As already mentioned above, the crucial element of music theatre is that it is music-driven in its very essence. This goes for all kinds of music theatre with different implications: in the case of opera the musical score is usually composed and finished before any rehearsals have started, determining for a considerable degree the length of the piece, the timing, the dramaturgical structure, the characters, the voice types, the instrumentation. In the case of new opera works, the score often has to be finished long before the rehearsals begin, or sometimes even before the singers (the individual persons, not the voice types) are known.[25] There are counter-examples for this: Michel van der Aa collaborated with a dramaturge and a stage designer already during the composition process of *After Life* (2005-2006). Still, van der Aa is the one who makes the decisions and holds the musical composition, the direction of the film and the stage direction in hand, which enables him to make a considerable amount of choices, even for the staging, long before the rehearsals start, and fix them in the score.[26] Coussens draws a parallel between operatic music theatre and text theatre, as the musical score has the tendency to over-determine, comparable to the classical drama text. (Coussens 2009: 24) But also (and perhaps especially) in non-operatic music theatre, music is essential in being an element providing structure to a performance. This could be musical timing and organisation of material, but also the way in which music theatre makers think. An example of such a musical thinking is how Dutch director Paul Koek describes the creation process of the VeenFabriek production *Licht is de machine* (2008). In this performance-collage Koek made a "score of assumptions" for a "composed performance" (Koek in Vigier and Elstgeest 2008: 10) in order to structure the piece. Koek's terminology in describing this process of structuring is striking. The fact that he calls this a score, which is an essentially musical term, is insightful to his thinking in musical terms.

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[24] I regard music theatre generally as multimedial in the sense that it presents "different art forms within the frame of one integral medium" (Spielmann 2001: 55). In this case, the integral medium is theatre. Related to this is Kattenbelt's notion of theatre as a hypermedium, which is able to stage different media that behold their own, distinct mediality. (Kattenbelt 2008: 22)

[25] My own practical experience of this working structure is similar to how I describe it here. For the chamber opera collage *Gestrandete Zukünftige* (2009), directed by Amelie Beer and produced at the city theatre of Krefeld/ Mönchengladbach, I had indeed the possibility to work with the four female singers before I started composing the music. However, after the score was finished (and had explicitly been composed for the voices of these four singers), the singers were changed again, as the organisation of the theatre had decided to put the singers in different projects than announced earlier. It was not possible to adjust the score to the new choice of singers, as the rehearsals had to start in time, which was something around three weeks after the decision of the singers' choice.

[26] However, it is remarkable that in the published scores of van der Aa's operas *One* and *After Life*, no staging directions can be found. Typically, van der Aa's scores are accompanied by a stage and film script, although these are not officially published but in possession of van der Aa himself.

The consequent musical structuring of theatre works also found its way to more traditional text-based theatre forms. Several directors use specifically musical structures and ways of working to organise their performances, to rehearse, or to give the music more autonomous space in their works. In director Ruedi Häusermann's *Gewähltes Profil: Lautlos* the "act of composing […] becomes the music-theatrical act itself" (Roesner 2008: 5): the musicians "test" sounds on their instruments as a kind of visible "act of composing", record sounds with small tape-recorders, and hang the recorders on an object, playing back all the different sounds and voices in a musical collage. Works such as *Gewähltes Profil: Lautlos* explore and challenge the boundaries between theatre and music theatre, by playing with the amount and function of music.

In order to embrace a wider understanding of music theatre and an understanding of the form as multimedial and collaborative, I would like to avoid the distinction between a "narrow" and a "broad" definition of music theatre. I want to suggest a different kind of categorisation, which is less bound to specific forms, but pays tribute to the way pieces are created. In order to do this, I would like to have another look at the writing of Evelyne Coussens. As the title of her text "Tweestromenland tussen repertoire en creatie" ("Land between repertoire and creation") suggests she is mainly dealing with a continuum between repertoire and creation. Coussens suggests four categories: interpretation, sampling, radical edit and creation.

First, when a director decides to stage an existing score, or to stage a new score which is finished before the (stage) rehearsals begin, he *interprets* the music in his staging, or he presents a counterpoint in his staging - but he keeps a strong relation with the structure, timing and tempo of the pre-existing music.

The cases where directors go further than interpreting the score and play with elements from the repertoire are called "sampling" by Coussens (2009: 27), which is the second category in her continuum. ZT Hollandia's *Sentimenti* (2003) is a good example for this strategy. Directors Paul Koek and Johan Simons used a number of arias by Giuseppe Verdi that are combined, cut, orchestrated and rebuilt into a new score. Composer and saxophone player Fabrizio Cassol used a similar concept in *Pitié!* (2008), directed and choreographed by Alain Platel, where he re-structured and re-orchestrated Johann Sebastian Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*.

The third strategy are the "radical edits" ("radicale bewerkingen"), taking the second strategy further in the direction of an autonomous creation: "Continuously shifting towards the area of creation, a group of directors announces itself which radically edits the repertoire, in collaboration with a composer and/or dramaturge. This way of editing in fact requires the energy and production means of a totally new creation." (Coussens 2009: 28, my translation)[27] Any combination of repertoire and newly composed music is possible here, including arrangements and even a staged reading of a libretto.

The fourth strategy is where my research is primarily situated: "creation". "In the case of creation we see that the various makers - composer and director/dramaturge/librettist - work

[27] "Steeds verder opschuivend naar de creatiepool dient zich een groep regisseurs aan die het repertoire radicaal bewerkt, in samenwerking met een componist en/of dramaturg. Deze manier van bewerken vergt in feite de energie en de productiemiddelen van een totaal nieuwe creatie."
This note of Coussens is particularly interesting because in the case of *radical edits* and a totally new creation, the production time and process are indeed likely to be quite different from the making process of an opera with a pre-existing score.

together intensively from an embryonic idea. In the practice of contemporary music theatre it happens less and less that a score is written first and only after this a director is been looked for." (Coussens 2009: 28, my translation)[28] Coussens calls this the "parallel and integrated way of working" (Coussens 2009: 28) To put it shortly, the focus in this dissertation lies on *creations* of music theatre, of performance with a strong, if not determining emphasis on music, musical understanding and musical structure. As will become clear in the discussion on the reductive approach, this might also include border cases which are music-driven, even if there is no sound, yet still can be labelled as music theatre. Even if there is no music to be heard, it is interesting that these forms potentially offer new perspectives on what music might be, as music obviously can be about more than sound exclusively.

As Coussens suggests, the working process is an important aspect in all four categories. A central issue is the relationship between the musical and staging elements, and the different media of a creation from within the perspective of performance practice: "Obviously both components, music and mise-en-scène, cannot be separated from each other – it becomes a continuum in which music and theatrical staging merge more or less." (Coussens 2009: 23, my translation)[29] There are different kinds of approaches to this relationship between music(al score) and mise-en-scène, or between the composer and the director. The most traditional way of working in this continuum, as it is still common practice in opera, is that the composer works alone, outside the theatre, and the director works in the rehearsals. It is worth noting that operas in almost all literature are counted as "the composer's work", such as an opera by Mozart instead of Lorenzo da Ponte, no matter how important the libretto has been for the creation of the music. Only later during the twentieth century, collective models emerged. *Parade* from 1917 was a ballet created collaboratively by Erik Satie (music), Pablo Picasso (scenography and costumes), Sergei Diaghilev (choreography) and Jean Cocteau (stage direction). *Sieg über die Sonne* (1913), created by painter Kasimir Malewitsch, poet Alexej Krutschonych and painter-musician Michail Matjuschin, stands as another collective creation of music theatre. These pieces are *devised* - a term that points to a way of theatre making that is not necessarily based on a script, and which is less director-centric. The "traditional role of the text-based director has shifted from one of interpreter to one of conceptualist". (Bicât and Baldwin 2002: 9) The vast majority of music theatre "creations", in the sense as described above since the second half of the twentieth century, have been developed in collective working processes. In its most basic form, a composer and a director might collaborate, but this may also be broadened to include a choreographer, stage designer, and dramaturge. The working process on a devised music theatre piece is often quite different to the rehearsal structure of an opera production, orchestra or chamber music practice. Devised work embraces a process of creation and collective development of a piece, and a "rich dialectic, rather than monofocal, blinkered vision" (Bicât and Baldwin 2002: 6) In most cases the work as such has to be developed during the rehearsals, and it often relies on the ideas and chance discoveries that occur during that process. Concerning the music, many compositional procedures for devised productions are not yet finished, sometimes not even started when the rehearsals begin. In many contemporary music theatre projects musicians work together with the composer and/or director

[28] "In het geval van creatie zien we dat de verschillende makers - componist en regisseur/dramaturg/librettist - vanaf een embryonaal idee intens samenwerken. In de praktijk van het hedendaags muziektheater komt het steeds minder voor dat er eerst een partituur wordt geschreven en pas daarna een regisseur wordt gezocht."

[29] "Uiteraard zijn beide componenten, muziek en regie, niet strikt van elkaar te scheiden - er strekt zich een continuüm uit waarin de muziek en de theatrale enscenering in min of meerdere mate met elkaar versmelten."

during the entire process, similar to the working structures of contemporary theatre or dance productions. The musician becomes an important co-creator, and the creation is more adapted to specific performers. Unlike the relationship between composer and interpreter for whom the composer writes a dedicated composition, there

> has been a new emphasis on the performer/creator following the model of the artist-driven modern dance company or the jazz/pop groups whose repertoire is self-created. […] The movement away from strict adherence to a previously existing text or score and the return of improvisation are both a result and a cause of the changing relationship between creator and performer. (Salzman and Desi 2008: 70)

This specific relationship between creator and performer also results in pieces whose nature is more closely bound to the live performance as event than to the notated score as representation of a fixed work. Significant works of music theatre such as *Schwarz auf Weiss* are scarcely performed by ensembles or performers other than by those who premiered them, even though scores are available.[30] Since the pieces are so closely developed in collaboration with the composer-director and the performers, their performance seems to be bound to those with whom they have been developed.

The musician as theatrical performer

A crucial point in this research is the understanding of *theatricality*, and what the difference is between a musician who is perceived as theatrical, and one who is not. I start developing my argument with the basic assumption that a performance implies an audience; a staged performer in front of an audience constitutes a performative situation or a theatrical performance. The actions of the performer consist of performative utterances, defined as events

> taking place in the here and now, in [their] need to be carried out and presented and, in consequence, in [their] need to be perceived in this very moment. A performative utterance is an intentional act […], which is not just performed in the (literal) sense of being executed, but something that is staged. (Kattenbelt in Bay-Cheng et. al 2010: 30)

These performative utterances as staged intentional acts are complementing theatre scholar Marvin Carlson's understanding of theatricality, which he defines as behavior that seems to be "not natural or spontaneous but composed according to this grammar of rhetorical and authenticating conventions in order to achieve some particular effect on its viewers" (Carlson 2002: 240). With the aspect of "composed behavior" Carlson essentially aims at what Kattenbelt calls "staged", but Carlson adds the relation between the performative utterance and the audience. His understanding of theatricality leads to briefly investigate certain possible conventions and expectations of an audience. For the perceiver, a probable point of reference will be a musician in her usual setting. Obviously this "usual setting" is different from case to case; there are a number of different types of musicians, in a number of different genres and styles of music, in different settings and contexts. A rock musician has a different context, working structure and appearance (on and off-stage) in

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[30] As far as I know, the first new staging of *Schwarz auf Weiss* after the original production with Ensemble Modern in 1996 was done in 2009 by the Czech Berg Orchestra and the director's collective SKUTR (see also www.heinergoebbels.com), twelve years after its premiere and worldwide recognition.

comparison to a classical musician, a singer-songwriter, a computer musician or a DJ. This also applies for possible "theatrical" elements such as costumes: almost every musician on stage wears a costume, no matter if this is a black suit or a t-shirt from a death metal band. With a specific kind of musician come also specific kinds of professional activities and "musical persona" (Auslander 2006) According to performance theorist Philip Auslander, this term includes playing style, outer appearance such as clothing and habitus. This specific set of elements, different from musician to musician, constructs the reference point for an audience when seeing a musician on stage. The appearance of most musicians already has some inherent theatrical elements in the concert performance which goes beyond the purely musical expression in sound; as Auslander recalls the "guitar face" of rock guitarists as a possible example.

As soon as this reference or code is changed, disturbed or broken, the audience's perception of the musician is challenged. The question is what this person is actually doing on stage; the door towards a theatrical perception is opened. This perception can be extremely diverse, as it may be connected to meaning-making processes, but also simply refer to an understanding of what the nature of the profession of this person on stage is: musician, actor, dancer, mime, technician, dervish or biker.

Theatricality means space for imagination, for meaning-making processes, and for individuality of every single member of the audience. This should not suggest that theatrical effects are not influenced by the makers of a performance, concert or any other kind of event. They are *invitations* for the audience to imagine, to think, to experience. What is crucial to the theatricality of the musician is that her performance is *staged* in such a way as to transform her usually musical utterances into performative ones. Deriving from theatre scholar Chiel Kattenbelt's definition of performative utterances, I understand musical utterances as intentional acts taking place in the here and now of the performance with the aim of making music. As mentioned above, performative utterances make up a performance which might be perceived as theatrical. The boundaries are often blurred of course, so that there is seldom one moment or break in which a performance turns from a concert performance with theatrical elements (like the story telling character of most pop songs, including impersonation by the singer) into a theatrical performance. Transitions from music to theatre and vice versa should be understood as forming a continuum, among others depending on the context and stage space in which a performance takes place. To summarise, when I use the term "musician as theatrical performer", I am investigating the moments of performance where musicians are perceived as doing "more" (or less) than playing music[31], which might even lead to the point where musicians are perceived as theatrical characters.

[31] I consciously assign this "more" to the perception side of a performance, rather than the creation side. This is crucial for the further course of the argument, and the division into *expansive* and *reductive* approaches, which are in fact assigned to the creation side.

The reductive approach to musicians as theatrical performers - research question

As mentioned earlier, in most cases when musicians are perceived as theatrical, specific performative elements have been *added* on top of their profession. As a result of the friction between the way in which the musician plays an instrument or sings on the one hand, and the additional effort to perform any extra-musical performative assignments, the musician in perceived as theatrical. However, a transformation into a theatrical performer can be achieved through a variety of techniques. I divide the various approaches into two groups: the expansive and reductive approaches. Both are capable of transforming the musician into a theatrical performer, but the reductive approach is far less developed In music (theatre) than the expansive approach. This goes for both theory and artistic practice, and is the focus of this research. I shall investigate the musician as theatrical performer, through the use of reductive concepts, and with the aim of developing new ideas and possibilities for the musician in theatre. The following main research question lies at the foundation of this investigation:

> How can a musician be transformed into a theatrical performer by reducing, denying, absorbing and adapting, or taking away essential elements of music making?

The research takes its deepest motivation from within my own artistic practice, rather than from theoretical analysis, reflection and discussion. The scholarly problem of *Shifting Identities* was posed from within my practice as composer and theatre maker. In the research question I distil the central aspects of the research, both artistically and theoretically. Starting from the most important subject, the musician as theatrical performer, the research focuses on the reductive approach as a new and fascinating, yet not sufficiently researched area. Given the context of the often multimedial nature of many contemporary creations in our digital era, it must be noted that digital technology can play a significant role in the application of reduction as well. Some of the artistic works created in the context of this research use digital technology purposefully with the aim of taking over specific elements of the musician's profession. This will be elaborated more deeply in Chapter Four.

Research strategy

The research is conducted in and through artistic practice[32]: my artistic questions and struggles are the basis for the research, as well as the study of its context and the formulated research questions. Following guitarist and researcher Stefan Östersjö, the research might best be characterised as "*practitioner research*, in which the practitioner is also the researcher and in which there is no fundamental difference between researcher and other participants in the study […]." (Östersjö 2008: 12) For me the relation between theory and practice works very much like a feedback loop, which continuously influences, feeds and inspires itself. My artistic practice builds the foundation and motivation for the research questions and theoretical studies, which in turn feed back into the artistic work. Since the heart of the research lies in artistic practice - in the creation of experimental music theatrical performances -, some of my artistic works have given important impulses to sharpen the theoretical context and research questions, others are better understood as re-examining previously formulated questions. Artistic practice and reflective theory constantly influenced, fed and inspired each other, although not simultaneously but rather in turn. Theoretical and artistic-practical processes do not necessarily develop at the same time, but rather switch back and forth. Separate moments have to be created by the artist-researcher, where theory is merged with practice or the outcomes of practice.

Focussing on the relationships between theory and artistic practice in the context of theatre and performance, I am interested in "how it works", in how this - often manifold - relationship can be shaped; how the process of making a performance works when related to practice-based research. The theoretical side of the research is quite specific and made explicit by means of the research question, giving the research its direction and aim, and pre-mapping the field in which the research is situated. The practical, artistic side is much more difficult to examine, specifically in theatre. Several problems in this field are not shared by many practice-based research projects in the visual arts or music, because the relation between the artist researcher and her subject is slightly different: a composer relates the reflective theory to his own compositions and/or to compositions of other composers. A visual artist does so with her own art works and works of other (related) visual artists. A musician who performs and researches the performance practice of music from the sixteenth century, spends time with the works and documents from this specific period. In general the objects of these studies - compositions, sculptures, installations or paintings - are considered as finished. The visual artist reflects on her artistic decisions in her own work, as does the composer; works tend to be created individually.

In theatre and performance, things are more complex. Theatre is hardly ever created individually, but almost always the outcome of collective activity. No matter what a director decides, it always has a relationship with other decisions or proposals from the composer, the stage designer, the engineers or the performers. The decisions are, at least to some degree, bound to the performers of a piece, or even co-created. This is true to varying degrees for both traditional text-based theatre and experimental performances, which means that the artist-researcher also does not have complete control over how specific research questions are addressed in a work.

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[32] In this terminology I am essentially following artist-researcher Stephen A.R. Scrivener (2009) in his understanding of research in and through artistic practice, as artistic practice being both the subject of inquiry (research *into* practice) and the research method (research *through* practice). Among others, Scrivener is building his argument on earlier research by Carol Gray (1998: 82), who defines 'practice-led' research as, "research initiated in practice and carried out through practice." (Scrivener 2009: 73)

Related to this is the nature of theatre as a process-based art form: it needs a collective *process* of creation. A piece might be based on a concept, a script or performative instructions, but has to be created in the rehearsal space, the studio, the stage on which it will be performed or in the public space *on location*. During the creation process, several things can change the course of a performance; the artistic team or the director decide on specific elements in the rehearsals which may be used or not. This processuality of theatre and performance makes it difficult for the artist-researcher, because she can never be completely sure about the outcomes of a piece at the outset of a new rehearsal or creation period.[33]

My own practice underlines these observations. All my artistic projects are collaborative and strongly dependent on the collaborators and the performers in particular. Most of the pieces are not only created together with the performers, but cannot easily be performed by anybody other than these specific performers. The collaboration is often so grounded on individuals that it would hardly make sense to let the pieces be performed by anybody else, or, I would have to make a completely new version of a piece, or even create the work anew. The problem with these very individualistic creations is a certain lack of objectivity or relevance for a larger context in (music) theatre and performance. I deal with these problems in two ways. Firstly by designing strong conceptual frameworks for a work, in which the concept already addresses the aspect of reduction, next to artistic interests. Secondly, I do not intend to present my own artistic work as the central element of the dissertation, but rather to a) contextualise it in the contemporary field of theatre and performance in digital culture, and b) present my own work as one example of this field which addresses the concept of reduction in particular. I refer to various artists and works in the current international field and situate my artistic work in this broader context. Additionally however, this practical outcome of artistic research also influences theory, and how the understanding of reduction might be rethought.

The source for this research project lies in collaborative projects which date back a few years. After having worked as a composer in diverse theatre productions across Europe for several years, I started to create my own performance works. Working from the main activity of creating music, I seek to push its boundaries into the media of theatre and performance, creating the mise-en-scène as well. What interests me as a theatre maker in general is the multifaceted way the audience may perceive a performance. In making artistic work, I like to open up possibilities for an active audience. I am interested in fragmentary structures that need to be negotiated by everyone who experiences them. Most interesting are the inter-spaces: between the art forms, between media, between pre-assigned meaning(s). In the following paragraphs I will briefly describe some of my older music-theatrical works in order to explain how I arrived at the ideas which became central for this research.

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[33] It is not my intention to suggest that music and the visual arts never work in an either collective or processed-based fashion. There are cases in music where a performer researches performance practices of contemporary music which stand in close relationship to communication and collaboration with composers. In such cases, the working and creation process might also play an important role. An example of such research in and through musical practice is the doctoral dissertation of Stefan Östersjö (2008). For interesting paragraphs about the work-in-progress see the introduction (Östersjö 2008: 1-23), and his chapter about the collaboration with composer Richard Karpen: "Richard Karpen's *Strandlines*: a Joint Journey into an unknown praxis." (Östersjö 2008: 323-369). Also a visual artist might collaborate with a video artist or a composer to create an installation, which would present similar kinds of collectivity and processuality issues as in theatre and performance.

Musicians and their everyday life - *Alltag*

I developed my first music theatre performance *Alltag* in 2007.[34] The piece focussed on the everyday life and habits of musicians - as live and present performers, as social human beings, as passionate professionals. I was interested in the phenomena and specificities of this profession in a self-reflective view of the musician as a metaphor for specific groups in society and how they give shape to their identity. A large part of this work which lies between documentary, concert and performance dealt with aspects of musical practice that an audience does not usually see: preparing for a concert, setting up the grand piano, putting together saxophones and a trombone and checking the microphones. All these various activities, movements, or in-between moments fascinated me. These elements are things that are usually absent on a concert stage, which is already fully prepared for a concert when the audience appears.

Several elements were already present in this work which then continued to develop up to my recent projects: I worked with a group of musicians as theatrical performers, as opposed to a mixed actor-musician ensemble. This also contained elements of expansive approaches which I had assigned to the group earlier: besides playing their instruments the musicians had to speak text (with or without microphones)[35], and they had to perform a choreography of changing their places while playing various wind instruments. I also used specific elements of music making as theatrical elements, closely related to the concept of Instrumental Theatre. In one scene, three musicians play a saxophone trio. The trio starts with all three of them playing alto saxophone. During this small piece all of them change once or twice to saxophones with a lower range, so that the piece finishes with the instrumentation of baritone saxophone and two tenor saxophones. Besides the aural result, this choice of changing instruments resulted in a kind of choreography, and so heightened the attention to the everyday actions of a musician, such as moistening the reed. Again, this is an action which one does not usually witness or at least not consciously experience as an important element of saxophone playing, but which is accentuated in *Alltag*, simply by having it repeated several times in a short period of time.

An element which should develop into the focus of my recent work and of this research project is the use of absence: an abandoned piano (an instrument without a performer is also an aspect of one of my most recent works, *Living Room* (2011)), but also the accentuation of actions that do not specifically belong to the musical performance itself, such as setting up an instrument. By staging the setting up of two saxophones and one trombone as the central activity on stage (one of the first scenes of *Alltag*) and by deconstructing this setting up with stills, at the same time the absence of music making itself is made explicit: the absence of sound, the actual aim of music making, is made present.

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[34] A trailer of the performance can be seen on http://www.falkhubner.com/Alltag.html.

[35] However, this speaking of text was not spectacularly successful, as I actually fell into the beginner's trap of how difficult it is to let musicians speak on stage, as they are obviously not actors, and can much less easily communicate a spoken text towards the audience, or even keep it audible and understandable the whole time. Of course there are lots of pieces in which musicians do speak successfully; see productions by e.g. Christoph Marthaler, Paul Koek and VeenFabriek, Jan Lauwers and NeedCompany.

Abstraction and absence as a source of imagination - *Malsturz*

The second project which initiated ideas for this research is the staged concert *Malsturz,* created in 2008.[36] Initiated by painter Karl Rusche and pianist Christoph Hengst, we created a concert for solo piano, electronics and live moving canvas. The music consists of compositions by Frederic Chopin, Dmitri Shostakovich, Olivier Messiaen, Maurice Ravel and myself. The canvas has two large areas of white, blue and white again. At the beginning of concert, only the white area is visible. After the first piano piece has been played the canvas starts to move slowly from right to left. Somewhere in the first half the blue area appears on the right-hand side of the canvas, emerging until it fills the whole visible area. In the last third of the concert the second white area appears.

In one section of the piece, the idea of absence, of an abandoned instrument, reappears. After having played Debussy's *Sérénade Interrompue*, pianist Christoph Hengst goes off-stage, accompanied by a loud and powerful soundtrack. He leaves the grand piano while the canvas continues moving. After the soundtrack finishes, Hengst begins playing Shostakovich's *Prelude and Fugue 24 in d minor* on a second grand piano behind the audience. Strangely, it seems as if the music he is playing accompanies the moving canvas: it gives the impression of film music. Although it is perfectly clear that the pianist is playing behind the audience (he is easily visible to anybody turning around), the on-stage piano as the "main instrument" of the concert is perceived as left, and the pianist "seems" to be absent.[37]

What fascinated me even more were the audience reactions afterwards. Despite the fairly abstract nature of the painting, and the absence of any continuous visual dramatic structures - the minimalistic development of the colours changing was much too slow to assign a dramatic development to it – various audience members reported their perceptions, experiences and associations. These were enormously diverse, prompted by the way in which different people perceived the painting, the music, and the relations between both. In fact, the concert was perceived as one large invitation to make one's own "story" - what the audience members did, each one in their own individual ways. Based on two abstract elements, the combination of perceptions allowed the audience to generate their own performances. This experience influenced my later work for a large part: most of my recent performances have been based on everyday experiences, or observations of everyday life, reflecting on these experiences by translating them into performance frameworks. These frameworks are mostly abstract, and seek to open up the individual imagination of each member of the audience.

These two projects and their crucial elements - working with musicians as theatrical performers, working with phenomena of musical performance that are usually absent on stage, and the fascination for absence and abstraction as creating space for creativity and imagination for the perceiver - set the stage for the initiation of my PhD research. By connecting these elements with the idea of making a mime piece, I created *Thespian Play* in 2009, the first actual art work in the context of this research project, using the concept of reduction as a strategy to transform musicians into theatrical performers, and presenting the first thoughts about the focus of the

[36] A video trailer of the staged concert can be seen on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UKHWN7NUaNU&feature=c4-overview&list=UU426oKSwIpk2bBj-Do9SgzQ.

[37] In the trailer this can be seen at 7:46 min.

research question. Below, I will briefly outline the artistic works which are relevant for this research project and give an introduction into each piece's concept and focus.

Reduction in particular - The artistic works of the research project

In *Thespian Play,* a saxophone player performs a musical choreography without his instrument, quasi-miming what happens on the soundtrack. He does not make one single sound during the whole piece; every sound is pre-recorded, partly processed by electronics, and coming out of two loudspeakers. A great deal of what the musician has been trained in for many years - playing his instrument and controlling both sound and timing - is taken away from him. By taking away the instrument, the body of the performer and the various kinds of movement he produces become the centre of the piece.

In the study for a performative installation, *still life 2.0* (2010) for viola player, dancer, live electronics and live video, the two performers execute short movements and sound fragments. For the largest part of the performance they "just stand", watching the other performer and watching the audience. The short fragments are recorded and processed by microphones and video cameras. The piece emerges and develops out of these short fragments on loudspeakers and a video screen. This electronic system works solely with the material of the performers: without them it remains silent. The performers give the input, provide the material, but cannot *control* the system. Nor do they have control over the overall structure of the performance; this is organised and controlled by the computer. The relationship between the live performers and the electronic system is not interactive; the piece is about difference and dependency. Performers and system have different functions that complement each other and need each other to survive.

Two aspects exemplify the concept of reduction in *still life 2.0*: First, the movements of the performers are cut or fragmented, with no instances of longer phrasing, be it movement or sound. Second, the control of the overall structure is transferred to the computer system. For the performers, the loss of control of the overall structure is more striking than it might seem at first: in most performing art works, the performers have a great deal of control over "macro" aspects of the performance: the structure, tempo, volume, length, or the coherence over time. Taking away the ability to control even the starting points of the various fragments and the overall structure means a significant cut in their autonomy and identity as performing artists.

almost equal / meistens gleich (2010) seeks to push the concept of *Thespian Play* further. Here, not only the instrument is missing, but also the reference to sound. The piece is a silent choreography for conductor and trombonist. There are no instruments on stage, the two players perform a choreography of musical movements. More so than in *Thespian Play*, perception is directed towards the bodies of the two performers. As *Thespian Play* lets the musician remain in her traditional playing position, *almost equal* uses musical movements (without its corresponding sounds) merely as point of departure and basis for a choreographic language.

In *Living Room* (2011) a harpist is set into both an oppositional and complementary relationship with her double on a video screen. The concept of reduction is exemplified in two ways: the harp player *plays* the harp occasionally, but in fact does not *do* that much on stage. The piece deals with the tension surrounding the question of who the main performer in the piece

actually is - the live performer or the performer in the video? The harp playing itself does not unfold until the last part of the piece, a composed duet between the video and the live player. Furthermore the idea of a musician without her instrument is reversed to "an instrument without its musician"; the performer enters the stage and leaves it several times, abandoning her instrument as a silent companion of her own video performance.

Wasteland (2011) for pianist, piano objects, soundtrack and video text adds yet another perspective to the idea of a *musical choreography*. As in *Thespian Play* and *almost equal / meistens gleich*, the pianist does not produce sounds during the performance, but performs a choreography based on musical movements, both traditional piano playing and a diverse repertoire of extended piano techniques. But in contrast to *Thespian Play*, the soundtrack is not a doubling of the movements of the performer, but works more like theatre music ("Schauspielmusik"), which is a medium of its own, a self-standing element of the performance.

The ways these artistic works are connected to the research questions and to the theoretical part of the research differ from one project to another. Whereas some of them might initiate theoretical ideas, serving also the process of focussing the research (*Thespian Play*), others might be directly developing the conceptual ideas and experimenting with them (*still life 2.0*, *almost equal / meistens gleich*). What binds them is first of all the explicit connection to reduction, the taking away of specific elements of music making in order to transform the musicians into theatrical performers. Additionally, in all of these works except *almost equal / meistens gleich*, the performers stand in a tensioned relationship with technology or digital media. In general, the use of digital media has the specific purpose of taking over several functions of the musician's profession: in *Thespian Play* the soundtrack takes over the function of sound production, usually the result of musical movement in musical practice. In *still life 2.0* the two performers are staged in conceptual opposition to the audiovisual electronics that take away a considerable amount of performers' control over time and structure. *Living Room* poses the question: which medium is more important as "performer": the live harp player or the harp player in the video? In *Wasteland*, the soundtrack in effect takes over the traditional function of the musician (in the theatre), the production of sound, whereas the musician only performs bodily movements, no longer connected to the sound or dependent on it.

Overview

The book is structured into four chapters. The first two chapters provide the context of the study, the latter two deal with the two approaches of working with musicians in theatre by either extension or reduction. In Chapter One, the discussion is started by framing and conceptualising the profession of the musician, in order to build an understanding of *what* is extended or reduced when the identity shifts from a musician to a theatrical (musician-)performer. Based on a diversity of practices of musicians, such as the actor-musicians in composer Stephen Sondheim's musical theatre and the experimental task-based performance approaches of artists such as Heiner Goebbels and Paul Koek, I develop a dynamic model that builds strongly on what musicians actually do, what their actual practice is. An important part of Chapter One deals with the categorisation of the musician's professional activities into internal, external and contextual elements, which forms the basis for my thoughts on extension and reduction. Based on the

profession of the musician, Chapter Two deals with the performative contexts of music and theatre, that form the field in which the theatrical musician acts. This chapter takes a closer look at the distinctive features of music theatre and related sub-genres, and elaborates on the composer as relevant actor in music theatre and an important collaborator to the musician-performer.

In Chapters Three and Four, I develop the two-fold distinction between extension and reduction, building on the concepts introduced in the first two chapters. I conceptualise the two approaches with a strong relation to artistic practice. Chapter Three elaborates extension as a strategy to transform the musician into a theatrical performer: I analyse works by Paul Koek, Michel van der Aa, Carola Bauckholt, Heiner Goebbels and John Doyle. The concept of extension is mapped to various stages, which have a varying impact on the performing musician. While the more simple kinds of extension are able to theatricalise the musician without having her actively contribute to this theatricalisation, the more complex kinds of extension leave the musician with a range of demanding performative assignments, and potentially force her to leave the initial profession temporarily. Chapter Four presents a closer examination of the reductive approach, designating the taking away of specific elements of music making from the musician, developed and conceptualised through a series of case studies. Being the central chapter of the book, it includes a close examination and discussion of artistic works connected to this research, and how these works transform the musician into a theatrical performer by making use of reductive approaches. The discussion emphasises on music theatre, but also pays attention to works that are situated between theatre and other art forms such as dance, visual arts, and installation art. Examples include my own artistic work, but also relevant works by John Cage, Heiner Goebbels, Xavier Le Roy, Sam-Taylor Wood, Dieter Schnebel and Kris Verdonck. The production processes of these works will receive specific attention, in order to give more insights into the creation strategies of the artists in relation to the final results, the performances.

I will conclude with a discussion of the interrelations of the expansive and reductive approaches, deconstructing and destabilising the dichotomy of those two. While extension and reduction are different strategies to work with musicians on a theatrical stage, I argue that they should be regarded as two sides of the same coin, rather than opposing and excluding each other. What is crucial for reductive approaches is which performative elements a director chooses to remain. However, even if the strategy for a creation might be reduction, the audience can experience the result as an extension of the musician's profession. I will elaborate on this paradox by relating it to the contexts, concepts and works discussed in this PhD dissertation.

CHAPTER ONE - THE MUSICIAN

In this chapter I delineate a conceptual basis for speaking about the subject of this research: the musician. Also related to the more specific focus of this study, the concept of the reductive approach, I will, in some sense, have to define the subject, the musician and her profession. As the process of "taking away" abilities of the musician suggests, one has to know which kinds of skills or qualities are actually belonging to a musician's profession in the first place. This discussion leads to the necessity of conceptualising the profession of the musician. Is there any accepted conceptualisation? After developing such a framework I will use it as a point of departure, going further to propose a structured "vocabulary" of the musician's profession in order to discuss what the possibilities and consequences of taking away the different elements actually are. This will serve as a backbone to develop a scale of extensions for my model of the musician's profession in Chapter Three.

Concerning the actual concept of identity, the first aspect is that any identity is marked not only by what it is, but especially by what it is not; identity to be defined as "the condition or fact that a thing is itself and not something else." (Cobussen 2008: 32) This first entrance lets the musician's profession be compared to that of other performing artists such as actors or dancers: A musician is someone who makes music, and does not act or dance. By highlighting specific differences between the profession of musicians and that of dancers and/or actors, it might become easier to achieve a clearer sense of the specific professional identity of the musician, as we "define ourselves by how we relate to others; who we are is how we relate." (Small 1998: 60) Identity develops through relating and interacting with "the outside", rather than being created only from "the inside", by itself so to speak. As philosopher and pianist Marcel Cobussen puts it: "To be is to be different. This difference marks any identity." (Cobussen 2008: 32)

However, in practice things are not always this unambiguous. Obviously not everybody who plays music is thereby automatically a professional musician. Also, musicians in the theatre often have to do other things than just making music on stage, as they might be walking or dancing, and not performing any music; but this does not necessarily imply that they have suddenly become dancers. The perception if someone is a musician or not can be analysed from various sides, from the one performing, from the audience, from a theoretical or aesthetic perspective, and so on. In the course of the text, I base my analysis on the performer's point of view, connected to observations of concrete performance situations related to what musicians are actually doing in these situations, with the aim of developing this into a theoretical framework that describes the profession of the musician as a network of different elements. There are two reasons for this starting point: First, the concrete practice of the musicians, the specific requirements and practical problems in this kind of theatrical work are seldom discussed in theory and research. Second, my own perspective as an artist comes from the concrete practice, from the experience of working with musicians, from observing how a specific approach of working with performers has an impact on them, and how this affects the rehearsal process as a whole. I am arguing that the combination of these two reasons forms a basis for developing a specific kind of knowledge about the musician that is characteristic for and only obtainable by the insights of a practitioner.

From the performer's point of view, what does it take for someone to consider oneself a musician? An actor who is singing a song or playing an instrument as part of the staging of a dramatic play, most likely does not consider herself a musician, but a music-making actor. And if a musician does not play an instrument in a specific scene in the same dramatic play, but has to stand at a specific spot on the stage drinking a glass of water, she would still consider herself a musician, but one who is performing an assignment that does not include making music. The performer's perception is depending on what this performer considers as the core of her profession, largely based on what she does on a daily basis, what she spends most of the time of her professional life with, and what she is most comfortable with. The audience's perception will often correspond to how the performer defines her profession, but can also differ from it, depending on what the performer does and how a situation is staged, or presented. The aforementioned singing actor could be experienced as a musician, and a musician who has to speak a considerable amount of text could be perceived as an actor. What the audience experiences does not only depend on the performer, but also on what they observe, and what the context and performance space is (theatre space, opera house, public space, gallery).

The aspect which I regard as essential for constituting a professional identity in the context of the discussion here, is what the performer actually *does*, how she *behaves*, and which kinds of performative acts she is *carrying out*. Performance theorist and theatre scholar Erika Fischer-Lichte discusses the constitution of identity by recalling *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory* by Judith Butler (1988). Fischer-Lichte's central argument is that identity is "not in the first place, that means ontologically or biologically, given, but […] the result of specific cultural constitutional acts." (Fischer-Lichte 2004: 37, my translation)[38] Fischer-Lichte points out that these constitutional acts are not limited to speech acts, but include bodily actions and utterances. As such, identity is constructed through oral and bodily acts (ibid.)[39], it unfolds in action. Therefore, what somebody *actually does*, instead of what she *is*, is leading and essential for the course of the argument that takes its way through the text. It is in the doing that someone becomes a musician, a dancer, an actor. Here it is important to realise that, as Butler notes, an identity "is in no way a stable […] locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is […] an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*." (Butler 1988: 519) Identity is unstable, something that changes according to different acts, practices and contexts, yet is able to manifest itself by *repetition of acts*. Taking this as a starting point, in this chapter I aim to develop a flexible framework of how to describe the professional identity of the musician, which will be picked up again later, when the discussion enters the extension and reduction of this profession. In short, extension is marked by performative elements that the musician is asked to do which do not belong to her core profession, which are added to it, while reduction is understood as the denial of performative elements that the musician is accustomed to or even dependent on. In discussing these two different strategies of working with musicians in practice, I continue to rely on the argument that identity is closely related to performative acts. Taking this understanding of identity as point of departure with regard to the musician's profession, I consider how it might shift while

[38] "In dieser Arbeit soll der Nachweis geführt werden, dass Geschlechtsidentität (gender) – wie Identität überhaupt – nicht vorgängig, d.h. ontologisch oder biologisch gegeben ist, sonder das Ergebnis spezifischer kultureller Konstitutionsleistungen darstellt.“

[39] It is worth noting that this notion of constitutional acts "performing" an identity ultimately leads to Fischer-Lichte's conclusion of basing her aesthetic of the performative "on the concept of performing" ("Es bietet sich daher an, eine Ästhetik des Performativen im Begriff der Aufführung zu fundieren.") (Fischer-Lichte 2004: 41), and therefore lies at the foundation of her theory.

working in the theatre, or in theatrical projects. However, this is not to assume that these distinctions are always clear-cut or to deny the many grey areas might occur in practice. I pointed out already that the boundaries between professions, as between the art forms themselves, are dissolving more and more.

The first question that I address in this chapter is: *What kinds of acts are constituting the professional identity of a musician?* In the context of this study, I mean specifically what a professional musician does. At first consideration, one might think the answer to be quite obvious, as almost everyone recognises a musician on stage, whether it is a club concert, a DJ performance, a symphony concert, a piano recital, a theatre piece or a dance performance. But when it comes to clearly defining the actions which constitute a professional musician, the available literature does not offer very much; lexically speaking, "the musician" is poorly defined, and the nature of her profession is unclear. It seems to be a tacit concept, "a concrete idea that one can use directly but that one can only describe indirectly." (Polanyi quoted in Féral 2002: 95)

Taking a look at music encyclopaedias for the entry "musician", or even "instrumentalist" or "singer", one may end up being disappointed. It is easy to find entries for "instrument", "music theatre", "performance" or even "singing". But it seems that the agents who are creating and/or performing the music are either considered not interesting enough, or too difficult to be defined or described, or theorists just have not paid attention to it yet. As Philip Auslander points out, this is in alignment with the work-centred emphasis of traditional musicology, "worshipful of the musical work and disdainful of performance". Only recently has traditional musicology "been undergoing a 'performative turn' ". (Auslander 2006: 100) The observation and analysis of performers as creators of (musical) meaning, but also their professions, creative strategies, problems, struggles, activities and so on demand extraordinary attention, not only in the field of music, but also in those of theatre and every other live art form. There have been sporadic attempts to describe certain aspects of the profession of the musician: Ethnomusicologist Alan P. Merriam writes about the musician's relationship to and his or her position in society as early as 1964. He would most likely agree that a specific definition of a musician and his profession would be possible and meaningful, as he states that

> [in] nearly every case, however, musicians behave socially in certain well-defined ways, because they are musicians, and their behavior is shaped both by their own self-image and by the expectations and stereotypes of the musicianly role as seen by society at large. (Merriam 1964: 123)

However, Merriam remains rather vague as to what these stereotypes of the musicianly role could or should be. As will become clear later, social context is particularly important in shaping the musician's professional identity, because musicians always enact this identity in a social realm, which is given shape not only by the performance space and the audience, but also through conventions and traditions. However, Merriam does not go into this in greater depth in his text. Alongside such minor attempts to contextualise what "a musician" is, what many encyclopaedias offer, does not, in most cases, apply significantly to the contemporary culture of the twenty-first century, neither in a musical nor theatrical sense. *Das grosse Lexikon der Musik* defines the musician as "Wissender im Bereich Musica", at the historical distinction between *Musica theoretica* and *Musica practica*, discussing the difference between both and the different value assigned to

each profession (first the *Musica theoretica* was valued higher than the *Musica practica*, later this was inverted). (Honegger 1981: 392-393, 397-398) *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* discusses the whole development and employment culture of musicians in various ancient high cultures, all the way from musicians described as "Magier mit Musik und Tanz" (Finscher 1997: 1217) through the Middle Ages to the modern era, including the divisions of musicians into various groups - musicians at courts, cantors, organists, virtuosos, conductors, orchestral musicians, choral singers, musicians in the military - around 1500. (ibid.) Obviously, both contributions do not have significant relevance for contemporary music culture or the profession of the contemporary musician, as the field is too narrowly defined and restricted exclusively to the category of Western classical music.

At the outset it is essential to investigate which elements or aspects might actually be considered constituent of one's identity, in the case of this research: a musician's professional identity. What makes *this* musician a musician, and from which point of view? As composer, researcher and professor of "Digital Humanities" Andrew Hugill points out, "the attributes that constitute a musician are [traditionally] summed up by the word 'musicianship'. […] there is clearly a need to summarise the things that constitute this unnameable 'musicianship' […]. There are some musical skills that are irrelevant to it, some that are perhaps marginal, and some that are essential." (Hugill 2008: 121) In his discussion, Hugill mentions five specific skills: technological understanding, transliteracy (the ability to read across a range of media and notations), interactivity (described as the ability to handle human-computer and human-human interaction mediated by technology), reflective practice, and finally virtuosity. Hugill sees technological understanding and transliteracy as most essential. Virtuosity is regarded as less important, however redefined to be "able to both originate and develop successful musical materials and forms". (Hugill 2008: 128) However, the skills Hugill mentions are not entirely appropriate for the discussion at stake due to his focus on what he calls the "digital musician". I regard reflective practice as a fairly relevant skill for the discussion at hand, as the "ability to critically reflect is key to improving both creativity and musicality." (Hugill 2008: 127)

I frame the professional identity of the musician in terms of the specific constitutional acts of this profession: What musicians *do* is what constitutes their identity as musicians. In this also lies the fundamental distinction from other professions within the performing arts: ballet dancers or clowns have a different professional identity than musicians by acting differently in ways that are both perceivable for themselves and for an audience. However, the central difficulty of this idea is the general complexity of all these professional situations as such: Obviously different kinds of musicians are doing different things, such as a jazz saxophone player in a trio with drums and double bass compared to a violinist in the second violins of a symphony orchestra. But also "comparable" musicians - two players in a string quartet, or two drummers playing in local top 40 bands - can differ greatly in what they actually do and how they do it, not only in performance, but also in their practice, habitudes on- and off-stage, communication among each other and to others, and so on. A musical profession cannot be described as something fixed, predefined or precisely delineated, and there might exist many contradictory ways for a musician to enact a professional identity. What I would like to propose is that "the musician" is not a construct in the sense of a closed framework into which different kinds of musicians fit (or don't fit), but what musicians *actually do* gives shape to what a musician is.

It is this point which brings my argument close to the ideas of social theorist and musicologist Bruno Latour, one of the main exponents of Actor-Network-Theory (ANT). He states that it is important not to confuse what to "explain with the explanation."[40] In the case of this study, it is necessary not to *start* with the definition of what a musician is, but to end with it. "[…] instead of taking a reasonable position and imposing some order beforehand, ANT claims to be able to find order much better *after* having let the actors deploy the full range of controversies in which they are immersed." (Latour 2005: 23) There is no such thing as a predefined profession: the musicians are the ones who constantly shape and reshape it. The profession called "musician" is continuously changing, developing, as well as expanding, such as into the realm of management or self-presentation, making websites, etc. Musicians are always acting out their profession in different contexts, revealing more or less specialised parts of what they are able to do (or what they have studied).[41] Although there might be many cases in which the profession remains more or less stable through a professional life, it is much more likely that the profession and the professional identity is constantly re-shaped. Additionally, the musicians also *create* (or at least co-create) the context of their profession in the very moment of carrying out this profession. A rock concert is not an event defined in advance, but it is constituted by a number of actors, including the musicians who give shape to it, their appearance, their names and public image, and, as a matter of course, by the music they play.[42]

Therefore it is also important to take the musician's opinion about her profession into account. Most musicians (in fact all that I know) have their own quite well-formulated ideas about their profession, how it developed in the way it did up to a certain point, what it does and does not consist of, and so on. Speaking with Latour, it would be distracting and misleading *not* to include the musicians' views on this. If "the actor's presence or opinion has made no difference in the analyst's account, they are not real *actors* and have literally not been 'taken into account'." (Latour 2005: 57, footnote 58) To convert a slogan from Actor-Network-Theory, one has to “follow the musicians themselves.”[43] I will trace what musicians *actually do* in their professional life. I am obviously not conducting a sociological study; what enables me to reduce the amount of data that would inevitably be gathered when executing a serious ANT study about musicians, is the focus on how the professional identity of the musicians on stage shifts from being and acting *as musicians* to theatrical performers. Therefore I will narrow my discussion to include only performing artists or musicians who actually perform on stage. The physical expression of music in the very moment, as

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[40] See Latour 2005: 8

[41] It is interesting to note that Latour uses the term "performative" in his theory: "If a dancer stops dancing, the dance is finished. No inertia will carry the show forward. This is why I needed to introduce the distinction between ostensive and performative: the object of an ostensive definition remains there, whatever happens to the index of the onlooker. But the object of a performative definition vanishes when it is no longer performed - or if it stays, then it means that *other* actors have taken over the relay." (Latour 2005: 37-38) Similar to Butler and Fischer-Lichte, Latour understands an identity as *performed*. (Latour 2005: 34)

[42] Obviously other factors determine the event of a rock concert as well, such as audience arrangement (seated or standing) and the size of the concert venue.

[43] "To follow the actors themselves', […] is try to catch up with their often wild innovations in order to learn from them what the collective existence has become in their hands, which methods they have elaborated to make it fit together, which accounts could best define the new associations that they have been forced to establish." (Latour 2005: 12)

all the different activities of musicking[44] add up to a single event, the performance. As I am investigating the characteristics of the *performing* musician, I am excluding activities such as teaching, self-management, or creating websites, although they do clearly belong to the activities of many professional musicians nowadays. In "following the musicians themselves" in their performing practice, this concrete practice is what counts and what I attempt to write about. The study includes musicians in the styles of pop, rock and jazz music, classical concert musicians, conductors, DJs and computer musicians. I am limiting my study to performing musicians, the ones who are actually present on stage.

In the first pages of this chapter I shifted the discussion from what a musician *is* to what a musician *does*. I continue with a number of aspects that I regard as essential for describing what a musician does while making music. I assign four conditions for activities to the musician, mainly thought from the perspective of a professional musician: First, the production of **sound** (including silence) is essential, which is, second, often produced by the musician playing an **instrument** (which includes the voice). The third aspect deals with the more or less direct relationship between the **gestures** of a musician and the sound she produces. Fourth, the existence and nature of a **musical persona** will be discussed, a concept to describe how the behaviour of musicians might change depending on (social) context. Although listening certainly belongs to the core activities of a musician as well, it will remain disregarded, as I focus on the four aspects as described according to their relevance for the theatrical-performative. These four conditions of musician's acting will bring me to a model of internal, external and contextual elements of the musician's profession at the end of the chapter. This model will serve as point of departure for the further discussion of the musician as theatrical performer.

The Art of Sound

The first careful attempt toward investigating what a professional musician actually does when making music is that she produces sound. Music in this first attempt is conceived of as the art form whose medium is sound, understood as the organised form of acoustic events. To put this into perspective, I start my investigation by offering a few standpoints in relation to this most general observation.

Andrew Hugill proposes to use "the word 'musician' […] to cover all those working creatively with sound." Hugill characterises three types of musicians: First, musicians in traditional contexts such as classical music; they play an instrument, and they are located in a context where the "criteria for recognizing virtuosity are clearly established". (Hugill 2008: 2) Pitch is the starting point for the musical training of this type of musician. The second type of musicians, according to Hugill, has rhythm or beat as starting point. As third type, Hugill takes into account musicians with the starting point of *timbre*. They are dealing with sound rather than notes, and are harder to pin down. Sound, as employed by this type of musician is often generated by electronic means.

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[44] Christopher Small defines musicking or "to music" as "*to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing*." (Small 1998: 9)

Regardless how different these three starting points are, the common ground is that all three types of musicians share sound material as their very basis. Composer and multimedia artist Todd Winkler approaches the problem of defining the musician in a slightly different way, as he discusses musicians in the different settings in which they work, rehearse, and perform, such as the symphony orchestra, chamber music and jazz or improvisation bands. This somewhat more narrowed approach to categorising different kinds of musicians has its origin in Winkler's understanding of these different contexts as communicational frameworks, accentuating the social dimension of musical performance. He analyses and categorises the different kinds of musicians according to the way they communicate within a given context. In the symphony orchestra, according to Winkler, all communication is centred around the conductor, "a personality acting as a conduit for musical expression [with] all the large, global decisions regarding interpretation in the hands of the conductor, who relies on the players' skills and judgment for further interpretation." (Winkler 2001: 23) In turn, the conductor reacts to the sounding feedback from the orchestra, which once again informs his conducting actions. In chamber music, Winkler sees the interaction between musicians as much more complex, "since several musicians reciprocally influence each others' performance. […] Intonation, phrasing, and tempo are constantly in flux, with control often passed around to the musician with the most prominent musical material." (ibid.: 25) The third model to which Winkler refers is the one of jazz bands or improvisation ensembles. Here a structure and shared conceptual framework is used to make a broad range of interaction between musicians possible, which influences both the way written music is interpreted (such as the melody or "head" in a jazz tune) and the improvised material (solos, accompaniment, etc.). A considerable number of shared assumptions makes sure that this rather open setting works, and provides a "rule-set" for playing the music, based on a long history of collective experience.

Next to the social and communicational dimension of Winkler's categorisation, and his concern with describing the musical material into categories such as notated and improvised music, audible criteria such as aspects of intonation, phrasing and tempo, are most important. In doing so Winkler both supports and extends Hugill's argument that being a musician means first and foremost engaging in creative work with sound. Summarising the discussion until this point I would like to propose that the main focus of the musician's task, also in comparison to other performing artists, lies in the production of tones, sounds, or music in the most general sense.

The instrument

The physical instrument forms an extremely important part in describing musicians' actions. I agree with Andrew Hugill who states that the instrument "traditionally defines musicians. A person is called a guitarist, or a pianist, or a sitar-player, before they are called a musician." (Hugill 2008: 128) The instrument is of considerable importance when it comes to describing what musicians do, both for an audience and for the musician herself. It is essential for many musicians to "master their instrument" in one or another way: Particularly in the first years of studying and practicing, the relation between musicians and their instruments is characterised by resistance, which musicians aim to reduce in order to make the instrument "a part of themselves", so to speak. This happens by applying technique, in order to "encourage the most efficient meeting with the instrument's resistances." (Evens 2005: 160)

For most musicians, their instruments are their property, well-chosen, and often musicians spend a considerable amount of time and money in order to choose and purchase their instrument(s) of choice, often refined during a period of years or even decades.[45] Some instruments are not usually property of the musicians, such as grand pianos provided by the concert venue, or several instruments of symphony orchestras (double basses, especially the five string models, percussion instruments, harp, and so on).[46] Musicians typically have a quite close, if not intimate relationship to their instruments. Speaking in ANT terms, the instrument is a *non-human* actor. Bruno Latour argues that, while it is essential to follow human actors, everybody and everything, including objects, must be taken into account:

> No science of the social can even begin if the question of who and what participates in the action is not first of all thoroughly explored, even though it might mean letting elements in which, for lack of a better term, we would call *non-humans*. (Latour 2005: 72)

Musical instruments as non-human actors are by definition literally made to be heard or to sound themselves, to communicate their physical sonic capacities, and thus to be accounted for. They form a considerable contribution to the identity of a musician, although they can certainly be called non-humans. Latour provides an interesting parallel to the relationship between a musician and her instrument, namely that of a puppeteer and his puppets:

> But it appears that puppeteers […] possess pretty different ideas about *what* it is that makes their puppets *do* things. Although marionettes offer, it seems, the most extreme case of direct causality - just follow the strings - puppeteers will rarely behave as having total control over their puppets. They will say queer things like 'their marionettes suggest them to do things they will have never thought possible by themselves. […] So who is pulling the strings? Well the puppets do in addition to their puppeteers." (Latour 2005: 59-60)

Just as a puppet, an instrument might be considered to follow and obey the actions and commands of the musician. A pianist presses a key on a piano to provoke a complex chain of mechanical movements, which in the end produces a sound. A drummer hits the skin of his drum with a drum stick, which causes the skin to vibrate, the drum to resonate and to sound. The goal of all the training of the musician is to allow the instrument to become a transparent medium. But, as mentioned, it will also bring some resistance into play, which is traditionally to be minimised by means of practice. Despite the often negative association with this resistance, it can also be understood much more positively, as an "inviting and inspiring quality […] that results in a specific tension while performing." (Craenen 2011: 132) Understood like this, the aforementioned idea of minimising resistance is incomplete, often only applicable in the first years of one's practice of learning to play the instrument. For experienced musicians technique is not a means to overcome the instrument's resistance, but to "feel and work in the resistance offered by the instrument […], to learn in [one's] body the dynamics of its resistance." (Evens 2005: 160) The relationship between musician and instrument is not unidirectional, but marked by cooperation and reciprocal dynamics.

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[45] This goes especially for musicians with somewhat larger amount of equipment devices: keyboards, synthesisers, guitars, different kinds of plectrums, amplifiers, effects, microphones, all kinds of percussion mallets or other sound producing objects. Electric guitar and bass players tend to own a range of different instruments for different styles and purposes, such as a jazz guitar next to a Fender Stratocaster and a custom-made acoustic guitar.

[46] Of course musicians in general do own such an instrument, but these larger instruments are in most cases provided by the orchestra for financial and organisational reasons.

This makes the instrument very much an actor in Latour's sense, as "*any thing* that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor" (Latour 2005: 71). An instrument clearly makes a difference in the course of the musician playing it, as it is not only a passive agent that simply follows what the musician initiates, but rather influences what the musician does, in a mutual relationship. The musician reacts to the sound the instrument makes, as well as to the mechanic or physical reactions the instrument provides, which are in turn provoked by the musician's initial physical act of pressing a key, plucking a string, and so on. These physical acts, the musician's gestures, are the subject of the next few paragraphs.

Gestures

Besides seeing the musical performance as Christopher Small seems to do, exclusively "as an encounter between human beings that takes place through the medium of sound organized in specific ways" (Small 1998: 10), gesture is an integral part of making music as well. Gesture is considered here in a broad sense, as a physical act in general. To produce any kind of sound, a physical action is required. Even in the most solitary and "anti-performative" laptop performance, the musician has to execute an action in order to produce a sound. This does not mean that one specific action always produces one specific sound, every relationship between gesture and the resulting sound on a computer can be designed by the composer, software instrument builder, and performer.

Many musicians tend to think about movement in the sense of how it supports the sound in one way or another. In general, most bodily movement is seen not as an autonomous, self-fulfilling element, but as supportive for either making a specific sound possible, or directed toward achieving a specific reception of the music by the audience. Think about a notated crescendo on a sustained piano chord, which cannot actually be realised sonically, but can be suggested by the pianist by means of specific movements of his body.

Of course, this is not the same for different kinds of musicians. Some tend to optimise their movement, make it as small and efficient as possible; others enlarge the movement in order to enhance the visual and sometimes theatrical aspects of making music. Pete Townsend, guitarist of the rock band *The Who*, is well-known for making large circles with his arms in the process of playing several chords on his guitar. These large, over-sized movements are obviously not necessary for playing the instrument, nor are they very efficient or even helpful for a precise timing of the chords. They serve to enforce the visual reception of the music, situated in a rock setting.

Additionally, several developments in contemporary composed music during the twentieth century emphasised bodily movement while producing sounds: One example is the instrumental playing as theatrical action in the Instrumental Theatre of Mauricio Kagel. In several cases Kagel even asks for bodily movements independent from sound, or movements that are not even meant to produce sound. Another example is the "musique concrète instrumentale" of Helmut Lachenmann in which the scores often ask for specific sounds that need considerable physical effort and unusual playing techniques in order to produce them. In the *Letter Pieces* (2007, ongoing series) by British composer Matthew Shlomowitz, physical actions, text and sounds are combined by means of letters, to which the performers have to invent specific acts in sound and

movement.[47] These different approaches result in an intermedial art form where movement and sound can act as individual counterparts, at times supporting each other, at others contradicting.

The cause-and-effect chain of making music

I summarise the discussion of gestures in relation to the concept of the *cause-and-effect* chain of making music. The basic idea is that a musician performs a specific movement, which causes a specific sounding result. This does not necessarily imply an exclusive one-to-one relation between cause and effect. In the case of playing traditional instruments the chain is obvious and relatively easy to follow and understand. A violin player starts moving the bow with its hairs on the string, this string starts to vibrate, and sound is released through the resulting compression and expansion of air. The sounding result reflects directly the nature of the bowing movement, depending on bow pressure, the spot on the string where the bow is placed, the speed of the bowing movements, and so on. When a drummer hits a snare drum, the sound is the most direct result of the material of the object used to hit it, the speed of movement, the place where the drum is hit, the weight of the stick. It is important, however, to realise the difference in relation to movement and sound from instrument to instrument. The snare drum sound is a sounding result at the end of the hit movement, whereas the string of the violin only sounds *during* the bowing, hardly after.[48]

Not all kinds of "musicking" fit into a direct causal relationship in this cause-and-effect-chain. The circumstances are generally different in the case of electric and electronic instruments. Music critic and researcher Björn Gottstein remarks that "[t]he laptop musician, who only lets his finger glide across the touch pad, who leaves the genesis of sound to mathematic algorithms, seems to have withdrawn from the idea of a physical-physiological music." (Gottstein 2006: 17, my translation)[49] However, what Gottstein does not take into account is that in most cases the laptop musician does not *leave* the synthesis completely to algorithms, as he is the one who designed these. In this way he designs his own instrument, including the means of playing and controlling it: he determines a physical action which results in a sonic result. What makes the analysis of this relationship difficult is that both physical action and sonic result are completely self-designed, without the restrictions and usual resistances of traditional (mechanical) instruments. On the side of gesture design, the musician/programmer/composer/instrument builder can choose between pressing a button on the computer keyboard, using the touchpad or touch-sensitive hardware controllers, turning knobs or pushing faders on physical controllers, or tilting an iPad, up to generating large bodily movements in space (on a concert or theatre stage, in a gallery space, or almost anywhere else) which are registered by sensors - video cameras or devices such as the Microsoft Kinect®. So the artist chooses which kinds of gestures controls which kinds of sounds in

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[47] For more information about the *Letter Pieces*, see http://letter-pieces.blogspot.nl/2008/06/letter-pieces-are.html, last retrieved July 19, 2013.

[48] An open string might continue vibrating shortly after the bow leaves the string, but this is negligible here. First, this vibration is hardly perceptible to an audience at a distance greater than 4-5 meters. Second, the visual image of the musician lifting the bow up or away from the string suggests and emphasises the impression that the actual sound has ended.

[49] "Der Laptopmusiker, der seinen Finger nur noch über das Touchpad gleiten lässt, der die Klanggenese mathematischen Algorithmen überlasst, scheint sich von der Vorstellung einer physisch-physiologischen Musik verabschiedet zu haben."

which way. The difference with traditional musical instruments is that the relation between both can be designed as the instrument builder desires and changed not only by altering the physical design, but also through programming and mapping. The laptop musician described by Gottstein is just one - quite extreme - case. Many computer performers nowadays do pay a significant amount of attention to the design of their instruments, and to the relation between gestures and their sounding results.[50] In general, also in laptop performance, the link(s) between movement and sound need to be designed, though to a large extent based on the needs, skills, and technical opportunities available to the instrument builder. But, recognisable, logical or not, there is still a link, and the link is not accidental, but chosen.

Image 1.1: laptop performer

Summing up, the kind of cause-and-effect-chain that I describe here can be understood as a process that adapts to different kinds of musicians to which it is applied. In the case of a cellist, the chain looks different than with a saxophone player, which differs, in turn, from a DJ performing scratching effects with vinyl LPs. In the case of laptop or electronic musicians, the link between movement and sound can take on a different nature, due to aspects such as starting playback-tracks or loops, or because of the ever-renewed design of the relationship between controllers and software. In the development of the definition of the musician's profession, I can conclude that the musician is still an "artist of sound". This includes bodily movement, traditionally inseparably connected to the production of sound. In computer music performances this connectedness can

[50] Concerning recent research, I refer to the doctoral research of Juan Parra Cancino, who investigates the relation between composer, performer and instrument builder, embodied in one person, in the context of contemporary computer music performance.

become much more loose, as the relationship between movements and sounds becomes an object of design in itself. The production of bodily movement and its resulting sound(s) become separate entities, and the relation between them, not predetermined, has to be defined and given shape by the musician. It is this combination between a consciously produced movement and its concentrated deployment for the purpose of both sound production and reception, that creates a difference between the physical, bodily movements of musical performers and those of other art forms such as dance or acting. In contrast to musicians, the dancers' movement is itself in the centre of carrying out their profession. Although dancers obviously do produce sounds while dancing (such as feet squeaking, breathing, throat and non-language voice sounds), sometimes very intensely, their main medium is bodily movement, whereas in the case of musicians movement is practically always linked to sound - even if there is only an implied reference to sonority (Nattiez 1990: 43), such as in John Cage's "silent" piece *4'33"* or Mauricio Kagel's *Con Voce*. For musicians movement does hardly exist in isolation, or in a self-sufficient way without a sounding reference, but is rather closely related to it, and in most cases a movement is meant to result in some kind of sound or a specific way of perceiving sound.

The social realm: Musical persona as part of the musician's professional identity

Sound and movement, despite their central function in making music, are still insufficient to describe the musician's profession and the various performance situations of a musician. Philip Auslander proposes to think "of musicians as social beings - not just in the sense that musical performances are interactions among musicians […], but also in the larger sense, that to be a musician is to perform an identity in a social realm." (Auslander 2006: 101) The point of departure in his text "Musical Personae" [51] is particularly interesting for the present discussion, as he chooses a performer-centric analysis of musical performance, taking "the presentation of the performer, not the music, to be the primary performance." (ibid.: 103)

With "musical persona" Auslander describes the performing musician's identity as "a performed presence that is neither an overtly fictional character nor simply equivalent to the performer's "real" identity." (Auslander 2006: 102, footnote 5) Unlike many actors, a musician does not embody a character on stage while performing, but still enacts a persona, which is different from the "not-music-making" person offstage or in private life. On top of this, it is important to mention the role of the audience as co-creator of the musical persona: "In no case, however, is the musician in a position to construct a persona autonomously - personae are always negotiated between musicians and their audiences within the constraints of genre framing." (Auslander 2006: 114) The musician's persona is created by interaction with an audience, and is a social construct, created in the process of interaction. This resonates with Erika Fischer-Lichte's "feedback loop"

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[51] Auslander, Philip (2006). "Musical Personae." *The Drama Review* 50/1: 100-119.
Auslander bases his discussion of the musician's identity, among others, on Nicholas Cook's "Between Process and Product: Music and/as Performance" (2001) and, more important, on Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) and *Frame Analysis* (1974). Whereas Goffman suggests that people perform differently in different routines, Auslander uses this argument to suggest that "musicians [do not] perform the same identity when playing music as in their other life routines." (Auslander 2006: 104) Although I choose to analyse the *professional* identity of musicians rather than including all other life routines here, Goffman's and Auslander's ideas certainly are of importance for my argument that musicians have to shift their identity when they change from playing music to performing theatrical.

between audience and performers in a theatrical situation, where the roles of both performers and audience are constantly re-negotiated before, during, and after a performance. The persona can change over time, always in negotiation with the audience, and musicians may enact multiple personae in multiple musical situations - in a rock band, an ensemble for contemporary music, as conductor in a musical, or as a jazz instrumentalist. These multiple personae involve presenting oneself differently, and in different genre frames. But, no matter how many different personae a musician embodies, they are most likely different from the "real" person in private or daily life who embodies them.

When thinking about theatre, there is another interesting parallel that can be drawn between Auslander's musical persona and Erika Fischer-Lichte's theory on performativity. Auslander gives an example of the actor Jack Nicholson: "We do not just see the character Nicholson portrays - we see 'Nicholson' portraying a character. The 'Nicholson' personage is not simply equivalent to the real person; it is the version of self Jack Nicholson performs in the discursive domain of movie stardom." (Auslander 2006: 102) Likewise, when an audience visited a performance of Verdi's *La traviata* with Maria Callas in the leading part, they very possibly went to the opera not only to see the life and death of the character of courtesan Violetta Valéry, but to see the famous opera singer portraying this character. During the opera, the gaze of the audience possibly switched constantly between seeing Violetta and Callas, a phenomenon Fischer-Lichte calls "perzeptive Multistabilität" ("perceptual multistability") However, the audience of course saw Maria Callas, though not the "real person", but the persona of the singer portraying a character - while at the same time enacting herself as opera singer and actress.

The previous paragraphs aim to show that the social context, the relationship between different (musical) roles on stage, the behaviour of musicians, how they enacts themselves as musicians, fully belongs to their professional identity. While adding these findings to the previously collected elements of sound and movement, I will integrate them in the following paragraphs in a flexible framework that allows to describe the musicians' actions in a variety of professional situations.

The internal and external elements of the musical profession

In the previous sections I have gathered different arguments and points of view surrounding the question of what the musician's professional acting could be, what it could entail and what could be necessary in order to be able to describe those actions which turn a person into a musician in various situations, depending on the kind of musician and the context in which she is performing. In order to condense these elements into a more or less coherent concept, I would like to recall the initial main question of this research: How can a musician be transformed into a theatrical performer by reducing, denying, absorbing and adapting, or taking away essential elements of music making? As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, when something is to be taken away, one must know (or at least have an idea) what is actually available and which elements can actually be removed from a musical performance without it becoming something else, leading to the question this chapter is dealing with, namely: *What does a musician do, actually?* My initial standpoint was that the profession of the musician can only be outlined in a model that describes what the musician actually does and that this model needs to be flexible, as there is no such thing

as a monolithic construct called *the musician*. The study of both Latour and Auslander support my initial argument that a blueprint of the musician's profession must be based less on the products of musician's actions, and rather on the actions themselves. Where Latour establishes the identity of his actors based on their concrete actions, "following the actors themselves", Auslander sees the musician in a social realm performing her identity *as musician* - which becomes different in every new or changing professional situation. Closely following musicians in their daily professional practice, I divide the profession of the musician into several skill-related elements, such as playing an instrument or singing, or acquiring an appropriate breathing and finger technique required to make the desired kind of music. Also, the ability to control and to decide what to play and when, on both a macro and a micro level - controlling rhythm and timing in general - surely belongs to the qualities and abilities of a professional musician, just as the ability to control sound and timbre. Very often a prodigious level of control of specific parts of the body, depending on the instrument (including singing and the voice), is considered a part of making music. For different kinds of musicians very different skills can be involved: For classical and jazz musicians abilities such as building larger structures in real time (either notated or improvised), to build a sounding dramaturgy live on stage, compelling interpretation or highly developed listening capabilities are essential, whereas a Schlager singer needs to be able to transport the simple melodies convincingly towards the audience. An average pop musician in a top 40 band has to be able to come as close as possible to the musical original, which asks for specifically refined listening capabilities on the one hand, and both vocal/instrumental and technical abilities to reproduce melodies, keyboard or guitar sound effects and specific styles on the other. An opera singer does not only need to be able to sing on a professional level, to read the score and to understand the lyrics (sometimes in a foreign language), but also has to interpret the character she is embodying (or acting out) and to express this character through posture and facial expressions.

None of these skills are considered as being absolute or restricted for the types of musicians in question here, a lot of overlap exists between different kinds of musicians, the abilities that I mentioned here are meant as extrapolations, certainly sometimes much more blurry than described here. I see all these different abilities and skills as possible *elements* of the musician's profession, and propose to structure them into two main groups: the external and the internal elements of the musical profession. External elements are physical objects not belonging to the musician's body: the instrument and necessary tools for playing the instrument. As I suggested above, the instrument as the most obvious external element plays an important role in the professional identity of the musician, being much more than a vehicle or transparent medium for the musician's expressive and musical qualities. Also, the manifold additional "peripherals" of instruments, such as mutes, bows, percussion sticks, mallets, and so on, belong to this group of external elements. Speaking in ANT terminology, both instrument and peripherals are full-blown non-human actors, participating in the act of making music, just as musicians are.[52] As I will elaborate in Chapter Four, the instrument is such a crucial factor that taking this element away from the musician has enormous and radical consequences, up to the point of drastically challenging and almost stripping her professional identity away.

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[52] Compare this to Latour 2005: 72:
"ANT is not the empty claim that objects do things 'instead' of human actors: it simply says that no science of the social can even begin if the question of who and what participates in the action is not first of all thoroughly explored, even though it might mean letting elements in which, for lack of a better term, we would call *non-humans*."

The internal elements are, on the one hand, physical abilities like breathing and finger technique, on the other hand emotional and intellectual capabilities such as control and interpretation of rhythm and timing, the control of sound and timbre, listening capabilities or specifically trained aesthetic and musical judgement (such as recognising and being able to describe the appropriateness of a specific melodic phrasing in a solo concerto or the timing of a funk groove). The internal elements of the musician's profession are not always so easy to identify, trace, and prove. Finger techniques or breathing techniques are relatively easy to recognise, as they are either visible or audible. Intellectual abilities, on the other hand, are more difficult to trace and to display in musical performance, and even more difficult are the musician's listening capabilities or a specifically trained aesthetic judgement (such as sense of style, for example the ability to judge if a specific kind of timing of a bass guitarist applies more to rock or to reggae music). However, it is widely accepted that active listening as "a state of heightened perceptive or receptive aural awareness […] will be invaluable in most musical situations" (Hugill 2008: 16) - regardless of its traceability. The internal elements are also more difficult to grasp and to summarise in the form of a list of some kind, as this list could be potentially endless.

As a closing statement of this section, I would like to point out that the internal and external elements cannot exist in isolation or independently from each other, but rather maintain a constant and important relationship towards each other; they are two sides of the same coin. In order to be able to use a drumstick - an external element - on a ride cymbal according to the norms of drum playing in a jazz band, a musician must be trained in playing with this drum stick, producing a specific sound with it on the cymbal, in a specific rhythmical manifestation with a specific technique of holding the stick and hitting the cymbal - a whole set of internal elements. Conversely, the internal element of playing technique needs its external element, the instrument, in order to realise its full potential.

Contextual elements

In addition to the internal and external elements, one more group of elements can be added to the set of elements that frame the musician's actions. This group of what I call *contextual elements* is linked to the musician more indirectly, but is no less important for music to happen. I term this "indirectly", because these elements deal with the *context* in which a musician is performing, rather than being linked directly to her body or playing.

A musician is performing *in a specific context*. In the literature this idea of context has been widely acknowledged, such as by Howard Becker in his classic publication *Art Worlds*.[53] Becker suggests describing and analysing art as collective activity and assigns art to various networks of activities, such as creating, distributing and consuming. For Becker an art world consists of "all the people whose activities are necessary to the production of the characteristic works which that world […] defines as art." (Becker 1982: 34) What I am referring to with the group of contextual elements is included in the abovementioned art world of Becker, but is more to be understood as a subset of it rather than encompassing all aspects of it. I am narrowing the focus slightly to elements and factors in these art worlds that have a more direct and concrete influence on the

[53] Becker, Howard S. (1982). *Art Worlds*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

behaviour and performance of the musician, rather than those which facilitate it in the broader sense.

A large theatre stage is a different context than a small jazz club, a rock music hall, an open air festival stage, or a concert hall for symphonic orchestral music. When a musician plays on the street, the challenge is to get the attention of the pedestrians quickly passing by, the musician's "potential audience", a situation completely different from performing in a well-organised concert of classical music. This context can be seen as a concrete space, such as a building or environment in general, but not necessarily. It could also just be two different social occasions or social situations in which the musician is executing her profession. The different locations also function as conveyors of cultural codes, as sites of social situations determining what kind of music is expected and how an audience behaves. Playing a jazz standard at a cocktail party or a wedding dinner is a completely different situation than performing the same standard as part of a concert in a jazz club, as far as the expectations of the audience, the dress of the musicians (most likely), the length of the improvisations, and so on. Depending on the context, the meaning of what the musician performs also changes. What is expected or even asked for in one occasion is not accepted in another. Different kinds of presence, behaviour, musical style, clothing etc. are expected from a musician in different contexts. Changing the context means changing the musical event and the activities of the musician as well. Seen this way, according to Latour's theoretical framework, context can have the function of an actor as well, co-constituting an artistic event and being an essential part of it. Any change of context will change the event as a whole. And, as I pointed out with reference to Philip Auslander, these contexts are never purely aesthetic, but always have a social aspect as well. Audiences react differently depending on the context: in a classical music concert the culturally implicit code is to sit still and listen silently to the music, whereas in a disco this behaviour would be seen as "inappropriate" (or in fact impossible, as everyone else is dancing).

Combining the groups of elements

It is not possible to discuss this aspect of context in its full complexity here. What is essential for this research is that contextual elements play just as important a role in defining the professional identity of a musician in a given situation as the internal and external elements do. One must keep this in mind while attempting to describe and to analyse a specific professional situation in which a musician might be situated. Each musician's acting can be described in a specific "set" of internal, external and contextual elements. This "set" is flexible and can be formed differently in each situation in which the musician performs, or, in broader terms, executes her profession. On the basis of these groups - internal, external and contextual elements - it is possible to define what could be seen as elements which can be either *added* or *removed* in order to achieve a specific effect, a theatrical effect, for example.

Just as the internal and external elements cannot be seen in isolation from each other, the same goes for the complete triad of the internal, external and contextual elements. All three groups are related to each other, and only in relation they can give some kind of a picture that describes the musician’s actions in a specific situation, space and time. The three groups should not be understood as completely separated from each other, but rather as permeable, with holes and

flexible spaces in between them. A costume, or clothes in general could fall in both the external and contextual category: despite not being a tool for playing an instrument, clothes can give context to the musician, or set her into a specific context by being clothed is this or another way. An organ in a church is an instrument, and an external element, but at the same time gives a whole amount of context to the space and to the profession of the musician - embedded in history, religion and culture.

Inherent theatricality

Having discussed the triangle of internal, external and contextual elements as a model to describe the musician's activities, the foundation is provided to discuss elements that might be added to this profession in order to achieve a theatrical effect. However, before going to these added elements, it is useful to take one step back: Besides theatrical elements applied to the musician on top of her profession, there are some words to say on the theatricality which is already inherent in music-making itself. It is well acknowledged and argued countless times that any live performance of music contains theatrical elements. This is supported by the rather evident fact that in a music concert, not only the auditive, but also the visual, plays an important role in the audience's experience: "One looks quite intensely during a music concert. Already simply because the music making action is audible, it becomes visible, too." (Craenen 2011: 27, my translation)[54] On the basis of what is already theatrical in the music-making process, I am about to identify the *extra*-musical elements in performance, which are added to the musical performance by the composer and/or the director, with the aim of achieving a theatrical effect. It should be noted that the theatricality most authors and critics refer to is slightly different from the one I conceptualised in the Introduction, namely a process of giving space for imagination, and as an invitation to the audience to supply additional, non-pre-defined meaning. Sociologist and media theorist Jason Toynbee argues for understanding the theatrical in music making as "stage[d] as something performed by musicians for an audience." (Toynbee in Bennett et. al 2006: 75) Music is not only performed to be listened to, but to be seen as well. Toynbee's observation of "performers conceiving themselves as performers and audience members thinking that they are members of the audience" (ibid.) goes in line with what I previously discussed about the social realm in which musicians are performing and acting out their musical persona, which can never only apply to listening, but always has a visual element in it as well. Inside the different social/performative realms, a multitude of performance strategies are developed, ranging from sincerity and calmness to showmanship and wild entertainment. A demonstrative example of theatricality inherent in performance is the "guitar face", well known to regular visitors of rock concerts. (see image 1.2) During (mostly virtuoso) guitar solos, and well-supported by volume, several rock guitarists contort their faces, during the bending of a string, for example, as if they were experiencing pain during playing. "What is important, after all, is that the performer *appear* [sic] to be feeling and expressing certain emotions, not that she really feel [sic] them at the time of performance." (Auslander 2006: 112, footnote 18) It is an example of a phenomenon I would not understand as an extra-musical theatricality, as is does not refer to a specific meaning or statement outside the concert and music, but is deeply rooted in the musical culture itself in which it appears. Moreover, it is not necessarily only in the context of rock music performances that musicians tend to contort their faces, but among a diversity of other styles, e.g. in jazz and blues music.

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[54] "Er wordt wel degelijk zeer intens gekeken tijdens een muziekconcert. Alleen al omdat de musicerende actie hoorbaar is, wordt ze ook zichtbaar."

Image 1.2: "guitar face" during a guitar solo

But also phenomena such as the head-banging of rock and metal musicians (and their audiences) are certainly inherent to the music making itself, despite their fairly theatrical manifestation. They belong closely to the specific musical-social culture in which they occur and do not refer to any extra-musical meaning. Both the guitar face and the phenomenon of head-banging - two examples out of hundreds - make quite clear that music making and its reception is multi-modal[55] in itself, not reducible to simply the audible. The sound itself is not at all what should be exclusively framed by the term "music making". When a rock guitarist distorts his face, this *is* part of the music making, at this moment, in this specific situation. This is what differentiates it from theatrical elements devised by a composer or director for achieving a theatrical effect additional or different from the already inherent theatricality of music making. Also, I see the inherent theatricality in music making as part of the triangle of internal, external and contextual elements: a phenomenon such as the guitar face could be described as an internal element of the guitar player, as a means of communicating a specific musical expression. The theatrical elements in most of the examples considered as theatre or performance are understood to be "outside" of this model - understood as elements that the musician is not used to in her professional life *as musician*.

[55] With "multi-modal" I refer to multiple modes of reception, meaning not only the audible, but also the visual, physical and other sensory modes.

Musicians as performers - how to perform?

The flexible three-cornered model of internal, external and contextual elements will serve as a starting point for further debate, as a point of reference detailing what musicians do in their daily professional life as musicians. The model makes it possible not only to describe how the musician's profession is shaped in a given situation, but also how it might change due to interventions in the setting or the context, in what musicians are asked to do, and so on. Using the model as reference, it becomes possible to identify performative elements that are added to this profession and therefore extend it, or elements that might be taken away and therefore reduce it. This becomes particularly interesting when musicians are working and performing in theatrical situations, or as part of multi-media projects with other art forms such as dance or theatre. In addition to the inherent theatricality of music making itself it becomes useful to examine the questions of how musicians may become theatrical and by what kind of means or techniques. If a musician is considered to be acting, what does "acting" mean in this case? In the aftermath of performance art and Fluxus, actor/performer and performance scholar Michael Kirby thought intensively about the nature of "acting", about what performers do while acting and how this could be described, analysed, and theorised. He summarised his findings in *A formalist theatre*[56]. In short, Kirby outlines acting as

> to feign, to simulate, to represent, to impersonate. [But, as] Happenings demonstrated, not all performing is acting. Although acting was sometimes used, the performers in Happenings generally tend to 'be' nobody or nothing other than themselves; nor did they represent, or pretend to be in, a time or place different from that of the spectator. They walked, ran, said words, sang, washed dishes, swept, operated machines and stage devices, and so forth, but they did not feign or impersonate. (Kirby 1987: 3)

In *A formalist theatre*, Kirby aims to build a continuum between the two extremes of Not-Acting and Acting. In this continuum he differentiates between five stages: Not-Acting, Symbolised Matrix, Received Acting, Simple Acting and Complex Acting (see image 1.3). Synonymous to Not-Acting, Kirby refers to "Nonmatrixed Performing", when stage attendants or technicians are present on stage but not embedded "in matrices of pretended or represented character, situation, place, and time […]." (ibid.: 4) In fact these "nonmatrixed nerformers" are there but do not do anything like acting, neither are they perceived as doing so. As soon as one or more referential elements "are applied to but not acted by the performer" (ibid.: 5), such as a costume or the title of a play, Kirby speaks of a "Symbolised Matrix". A costume can assign meaning or a role (a worker, a businessman, a cowboy) without the performer needing to enact this character. The point where the performer does not act - meaning to simulate, represent, impersonate and the like - and where it simultaneously becomes difficult to say if she is acting or not, due to an increasing amount of "'received' references" (ibid.: 5), Kirby calls "Received Acting": "Although the performer seems to be acting, he or she actually is not. […] The amount of simulation, representation, impersonation and so forth has increased […], but, so far, none of this was created by the performer in a special way we could designate as 'acting.' " (ibid.: 6) The performer merely receives enough references to make her "ordinary" behaviour seem as if she is acting.

As soon as impersonation, simulation, representation, or "the smallest and simplest action that involves pretense" (ibid.: 7) is devised, acting begins. Kirby uses the term "Simple Acting" to acting an emotional presentation. That could mean, that a performer says something on stage

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[56] Kirby, Michael (1987). *A formalist theatre*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

which is true ("I'm not allowed to carry a loaded weapon."), but also adds an (acted) emotion to it, anger for example. Kirby's criterion for the appearance of acting is "the point at which the emotions are "pushed" for the sake of the spectator. […] [I]t does not matter whether an emotion is created to fit an acting situation or whether it is simply amplified. […] It may be merely the use and projection of emotion that distinguishes acting from not-acting." (ibid.: 8)

On the other end of the spectrum is "Complex Acting". Kirby refers to different areas in which pretence might take place, such as acting out emotional or physical conditions (a person portrayed as young, old, athletic, and so on). As the number of areas increase, the complexity of acting does as well. A performer might not only wear specific clothes, but also chooses to act a specific emotion while dressing. Additionally, she might perform specific physical characteristics of her character, such as portraying an old person or a very young one. She might also act as if she is standing at a specific place, as during a specific weather condition. All of these different conditions could be acted in isolation or in combination. The more conditions that are combined in the actor's performance, the more complex the acting becomes.

NOT-ACTING				**ACTING**
Nonmatrixed Performing	Symbolized Matrix	Received Acting	Simple Acting	Complex Acting

Image 1.3: Not-Acting - Acting continuum by Michael Kirby (1987: 10)

Kirby's model and its consequences

With regard to musicians performing in theatre productions, specifically the middle range of Kirby's model (symbolised matrix up to simple acting) seems to be useful for this study. It happens regularly that directors ask musicians to perform simple tasks, to speak one or two lines of text, at least for short moments during a performance, which are able to transform musicians into theatrical performers (make them "seemingly act", as Kirby would put it) mostly *without* the necessity to act. A fairly obvious example is the way in which a costume can create a character. In such a case, representation, simulation or other qualities that define "acting", according to Kirby, may not be accomplished by the performer herself, but applied to her by the audience. For Kirby this stands in contrast to the performer *actively* feigning, simulating, and so on, which is obviously more on the acting-side of the continuum. The idea of extending the musician's profession, discussed in detail in Chapter Three, in some instances comes very close to Kirby's idea of *applying* elements such as simulation or representation to the performer.

But Kirby's continuum has also other interesting consequences for the actions of the musician in general. The way in which a costume can create a character without the performer having to contribute anything actively to its creation, can also create the identity of a musician on stage as perceived by the audience. If a person is dressed in a way that one would expect her to be a musician (by wearing the same clothes than other musicians who are playing music, for example), she is perceived as one, regardless if she plays (or is able to play) any music or not. But also other "received references", such as carrying music sheets can suggest that someone is a

musician, without playing music at all. But does this also mean that the person in question actually is a musician?

Of course it is possible that an audience perceives a non-musician as a musician, just as a technician can be mistakenly perceived as an actor. Especially in theatrical settings and interdisciplinary performances in which the roles of performers constantly change, it can be hard to trace the actual original profession of performers, such as in the ever-blurring work of Jan Lauwers and NeedCompany where dancers, actors and musicians constantly defy any definition of a monodisciplinary profession. However, my model of internal, external and contextual elements aims at something different, which is the description of the professional musician, coming from the professional activity of making music and shifting in her activities while working in the theatre. This is an altogether different approach than dealing with someone who might be acting as a musician. My observation starts with the acts of the musician herself, as opposed to how these might be perceived by an audience. This is exactly the main difference between the starting point of this study and most other studies: I do not regard the final performance as main object of study, but rather what the musician *does* in her daily professional life, from practicing to rehearsing on the way to the perceivable result, while always staying as faithful as possible to what the actual activities of musicians are. What makes this approach, and the model of internal, external and contextual elements fruitful is its application in different areas where musicians perform in their profession, and to compare these situations, in order to understand on the one hand the differences between them, and on the other hand to understand how the profession (described as a set of elements) might be extended and reduced by composers and directors.

CHAPTER TWO - BETWEEN MUSIC AND THEATRE

In this chapter I will provide a grasp on the field in which the research is situated, the multimedial field of music theatre. Departing from where the discussion about the musician's professional identity ended in Chapter One, the aim of this chapter is to give an outline and a conceptual framework of music theatre as a manifold field in which the musician finds herself as performer, and is doing (or asked to do) things that are possibly different from the things she tends to do in concerts or other "mono-disciplinary" professional situations. I do not intend to aim for an historical account of music theatre, as this has been done extraordinarily well recently by pianist and music theatre scholar Zachary Dunbar (2013). The few historical references that I give are only intended to place the present into context, but should by no means be understood as sufficient for gaining an overview. Although I refer to works that date back to the second half of the twentieth century, the reference and artistic context I am situating this project in is the present and recent past, from around the 1990s. I understand the field of music theatre as an "inter"-space, and area of in-betweens: the musician in between the concert space[57] and the theatre.[58] The same goes for the practice of the "creators" (composers, directors, visual artists): music theatre might serve as a meeting point for artists from different art forms. The case that a composer is exclusively writing music, understood as performance instructions for musicians, or that a director is only concerned with the *mise-en-scene* are fairly traditional cases and tend to be broken more often than followed in contemporary practice. Music theatre dramaturg Regine Elzenheimer suggests to understand this collaborative work as "productive disruptions" ("Produktive Störungen") across the different art forms and aesthetic methods, which irritate "the rules of the individual media […] and pace this irritation out up to the boundaries, where it reverts into an unsettling effect." (Elzenheimer 2009: 22, my translation)[59]

As a first move I will return to the difficult term of "music theatre". In the introduction I suggested to avoid a precise definition of the term, and roughly framed the art form's most important elements as both multimedial and inherently musical. On the basis of concrete practical approaches of music theatre makers, I will recapitulate what this "inherently musical" implies according to my understanding. The focus thereby lies on "creations" (Coussens 2009), collective working processes from the very first ideas until the final performance, rather than traditional forms such as opera. I will trace different possibilities of musical thinking and structuring, how these can take shape in different forms of music theatre, and how this is working out for the performing musician. In doing this, I do not necessarily focus myself in first instance on the actual products, such as performances, compositions, and installations, but rather investigate the processes and

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[57] It does not have to be the concert *hall*, as contemporary music practice is not restricted to this space anymore. When I use the term "concert space", I refer to spaces and locations that are intended to listen and experience music.

[58] I do not limit the field of music theatre to the different media of music and theatre. Obviously contemporary music theatre takes its influences from many more art forms, and generates its various aesthetics in relation to participating art forms such as dance, the visual arts of media art.

[59] […] welche "die Eigengesetzlichkeiten der einzelnen Medien [irritieren] und diese Irritation mitunter bis zu den Grenzen ausschreiten, wo sie in eine ver-störende Wirkung umschlägt."

the agents that create the products: composers, directors and, of course, performers.[60] The pieces, which are on the other hand impossible to "avoid", will serve as references and/or contexts in which the different agents and processes are observed and discussed. They are to be understood as situations in which the musicians find themselves performing.

This chapter is divided into three main sections. Next to the term "music theatre" and its connected concepts of musicality, musical structure and musical thinking I will discuss a few sub-genres of music theatre, giving space to both the diversity of the different approaches and the terminological problems within the field. I will close the chapter with an examination of how the work of the composer is situated within music theatre, and how the composer's profession can be extended towards being director as well.

Musicality, musical structure and musical thinking

In the Introduction I already mentioned the difficulty of "music theatre" as a genre and the apparent problem of defining the term, or to create a generally accepted conceptualisation of music theatre. As outlined, I use the following elements to frame the specificity of the genre: music theatre is a) multimedial by definition, always staging more than one medium, and b) primarily music driven, working with specifically musical structuring and musical thinking while creating a performance. However, some recapturing and further deepening of the aspect of musicality is necessary, in greater detail than the examples of the introduction in order to make this aspect more accessible for practice and for theoretical reflection, and to understand the possible impact and consequences for creating work.

Musicality in theatre and performance

Also in contemporary theatre in general several tendencies and traditions show specifically musical structures, and musical ways of organising a performance - without necessarily becoming music theatre. Musicality introduces various possibilities for performance, since it approaches theatre from a musical perspective. This provides alternative dramaturgies and structures, and makes it possible to shift "the attention from working on character, situation and narrative towards aspects of timing, sound and the polyphony of the theatrical media"; not necessarily merely to introduce a structural order, but as a means "against interpretation" (Roesner 2008a). Directors such as Heiner Goebbels and Christoph Marthaler use the concept of musical polyphony and apply that to all elements of theatre. Roesner sees Marthaler's performances as truly polyphonic in the sense of a polyphony in individual actor's performances: they "co-exist in a well-organized and yet independent and non-hierarchical simultaneity of events." (Roesner 2008: 8) This results in an audiovisual polyphony that allows (or forces) the audience's attention to change and to oscillate between very small details and an impression of the whole, so that an audience member has to choose between following the performers in their vocal and performative utterances, just listen to the music, concentrate on the light, or follow the full impression of everything going on at the same

[60] In practice these different roles are often combined, so that many composers are also performers and the other way round, and sometimes also directors.

time. Einar Schleef and Christoph Marthaler extensively organise their performances in numbers: solos, ensembles, choirs, choreographies. Derived from applications in music, both directors make use or repetition and variation as strategies to make theatre.[61]

The notion of "compositional strategies"

One way of understanding musical structuring and thinking which is frequently recalled in the discourse about the creation of (music) theatre is the notion of *compositional strategies*. Since around the 1960s composers have begun to extend their compositional material to include electronics, video, lighting, costumes, stage design, performative utterances and spatial arrangements. Mauricio Kagel laid a foundation with his often-quoted idea that it is possible to compose with "sounding and non-sounding materials, actors, cups, tables, omnibuses and oboes". (Kagel 1982 quoted in Roesner 2012: 10) Seen this way, applying compositional strategies in the theatre means to "compose" not only with musical material but with many different media, in a musical and compositional understanding,

> […] to approach the theatrical stage and its means of expression as *musical* material. [Various composers] treat voice, gesture, movement, light, sound, image, design and other features of theatrical production according to musical principles and compositional techniques and apply musical thinking to performance as a whole. (Roesner 2012: 9)

Cage's understanding of music as being theatrical, Kagel's Instrumental Theatre, the "optical music" (Meyer in Rebstock and Roesner 2012: 84) of Robert Wilson, the staged concerts by Heiner Goebbels or the intermedial "scores" by Paul Koek are all examples that reveal theatre as a framework for organising and staging musical processes. The observation of the usage of compositional strategies is also one of the central elements that lead David Roesner and theatre scholar and director Matthias Rebstock to their concept of *Composed Theatre*,[62] describing an artistic practice which "is situated *between* the more classical conceptions - and institutions - of music, theatre and dance, and […] is highly characterised and unified by making use of compositional strategies and techniques and, in a broader sense, by the application of compositional thinking." (Rebstock in Rebstock and Roesner 2012: 19) Rebstock and Roesner define several main characteristics as symptomatic for Composed Theatre, such as the independence of theatrical elements without a predefined hierarchy, and without, for example, music illustrating and reinforcing the psychology, or following the dramatic structure of a dialogue. However, not so much the outcomes (performances, compositions, works) are defining what Composed Theatre is, but rather the application of "compositional strategies" during the *process* of creation - not necessarily visible or audible in the products themselves:

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[61] Examples of artists who explicitly work with musical principles are composers like Heiner Goebbels, Georges Aperghis, Manos Tsangaris, Carola Bauckholt, Daniel Ott, Robert Ashley and Meredith Monk; directors like Robert Wilson, Christoph Marthaler, Paul Koek and Ruedi Häusermann; choreographers like William Forsythe, Sasha Waltz and Xavier le Roy; ensembles like Theater der Klänge Düsseldorf, Die Maulwerker and LOSE COMBO in Berlin, Cryptic in Glasgow and Post-Operativ Productions in Sussex, "most of them having some roots in the work of composers such as John Cage, Mauricio Kagel, Dieter Schnebel or in the Fluxus movement." (Rebstock in Rebstock and Roesner 2012: 19)

[62] In 2009, Rebstock and Roesner conducted two symposia with invited artists and theorists to reflect about this notion of *Composed Theatre*, which lead to the publication *Composed Theatre. Aesthetics, Practices, Processes* (Bristol: Intellect, 2012).

> A performance may not show any typical sign of compositional strategies; yet, without applying such strategies, the composer, the director or the ensemble would not have come to the same result. This means that dealing with the field of Composed Theatre requires a consideration, not only of the performances but also of the working processes if we are to determine in what sense compositional thinking drives these processes. (Rebstock in Rebstock and Roesner 2012: 21)

As such, Composed Theatre as a concept offers many useful aspects to the discussion at stake. It has several parallels as to how "music theatre" is understood here, such as the focus on "creations" and on musical strategies. However, in spite of these parallels I do not choose to adopt the term or the field assigned by Rebstock and Roesner as my area of study. The most important argument for not doing so is that I am focussing more on the musician in an intermedial field what I prefer to call music theatre.

"The score" as metaphor

Closely related to the notion of compositional strategies is the use of the "score" as a metaphor for compositional organisation and related to compositional strategies of different media. Traditionally a musical score is understood as result of a composer's work, as a kind of script that organises musical events in time. In music theatre, the "score" is occasionally used as a metaphor for how to understand a structure of a performance as a whole. Comparable to the musical score, a theatrical performance can be described in a kind of multimedial score that organises not only music, but also performative events, dialogues, pitches of spoken text, video, light design, all of them interrelated and yet independent of one another.

> The individual [theatrical] elements should remain independent of one another and self-sufficient - meaning not in the service of illustrating another element - as well as related to one another. This approach has nothing to do with the unrelated juxtaposition of various events that we know from the works of Cage. The musical model here is polyphony. […] the point at which the organisation of heterogeneity according to musical principles comes into play: tempo, rhythm, colour, density, direction, variation, morphogenesis of motifs, repetition, movement types, etc. (Rebstock 2012: 230-231)

Also composers such as Heiner Goebbels or Georges Aperghis emphasise the independency of elements: "The visual elements should not be allowed to reinforce or emphasise the music, and the music should not be allowed to underline the narrative. Things must complement themselves; they must have different natures. This is an important rule for me: never say the same thing twice." (Aperghis in Singer 2001, quoted in Rebstock 2012: 230) Not seldom this emphasis on independence and autonomy of media is mentioned with reference to Bertholt Brecht and his concept of epic theatre, in which he also frequently argues for the independency of the various theatrical elements, as well as the concept of distance on various levels - distance of the performers to their characters, of the audience to the plot, or of the various theatrical elements and media to each other. The application of musical principles has proven an effective way of realising this distance, as a result of understanding the various elements as intermedial voices of a polyphonic score, "as a rhythmical, gesticulatory, melodic, spatial and sounding phenomenon *as well as* a carrier of meaning." (Roesner 2008: 7) When an actor has to concentrate on the exact timing of his text and the pitch of his spoken voice, the attention shifts from character or psychology to performing musically.

It is important to realise that what I present here is a kind of extrapolation of methods used in theatrical processes. In the actual practice, the circumstances are often much more blurred and not that clear at first sight. Musicians are by far not the only group of artists who use this kind of musical vocabulary to describe theatrical processes, ways of working and products. One finds dancers and choreographers using this vocabulary as well, though not necessarily with the same meaning. In music theatre, not every performance has to be organised by a "score" in the sense of a tight organisation. A whole continuum of diverse practices exist, from strictly determining almost every detail of a performance including direction and light assignments, through forms of scripts comparable to more traditional forms of theatre scenarios, to no score or script at all, purely based on oral agreements.

A word about terms and genres

Besides "music theatre", one can come across several other terms that attempt to describe specific sub-genres, such as "staged concerts" or the already mentioned Instrumental Theatre. Most of these terms have once been introduced by practitioners, and have then be taken up and used by theorists. However, as with all definitions of genres, these terms are often blurry and quite unspecified. As any precise and closed definition would be inappropriate to the diversity of the field, I will not try to fill this gap, but rather give an impression of what some of these terms assign and how the musician as performer is situated within them. What I aim to point out is that these different terms assign a variety of thinking on theatre and performance from the medium of music. Here I present an introduction to some of the terms that one comes across either in practice or in theoretical discourse.

I will restrict myself to three different terms or genres in order to show terminological difficulties as well as the plurality of the field in which musicians participate and act as performers. The reason why I include these different genres in my discussion is threefold: First, they all deal with specifically musical structures and musical thinking in one way or another. Second, these terms are relevant because they are either widely used, or play a role in recent theories. Third, they potentially transform the musician into a theatrical performer, that is, doing "more" than playing music.[63] However, every section on the different genres should be read with keeping a certain all-present blurriness of these genres in mind. The borders are never clear-cut, and often one and the same piece could be allocated to different genres.

From staged concerts to Instrumental and "Integrative" Theatre

A term that one frequently comes across is *staged concert*. In first instance this might seem odd, as every concert is "staged" obviously: when a pianist enters the stage before playing a solo concert, there is something theatrical, and a kind of staging involved. An average pop concert is carefully staged, considering the arrangement of the band members, the lighting, the entering of the musicians on stage, the order of the songs, up to pyro effects, video projections, and moving

[63] I will not deal with opera in my discussion of genres here, as most operas do not fall into the category of "creations", as they tend to be created in succession (libretto - score/music - staging), rather than with a collective, parallel and integrated approach.

parts of the stage. However, one hardly comes across the specific term "staged concert" in these kind of contexts, which hints at the self-explanatory nature of the understanding of every concert as staged in some sense.[64] Nevertheless, literature proves that the term "staged concert" seems to be reserved for more experimental and reflective practices.

Thinking of a field between music and theatre, a staged concert is probably the closest to music as a concert form. Staged concerts tend to rethink and to reflect on "traditional" concert modes - mostly understood as a classical music performance, and usually aimed to present ways of 'theatricalising the concert hall'. The term as such has been coined by Heiner Goebbels, who created a number of staged concerts, among them *Der Mann im Fahrstuhl* (1987), *Eislermaterial* (1998) and *I went to the house but I did not enter* (2008).[65] One way of thinking about staged concerts is to start with a composition or piece of music, and then arrange the musicians' positions on stage, such as an ensemble of musicians located in "unusual" spots on stage compared to concert spacing, in which a conductor stands in front, with his back to the audience, facing a half-circle arrangement of the musicians' ensemble. Another example could be the traditional arrangement of a classical string quartet, in a circle, being the four players close to each other. In a staged concert, a composer and/or director could choose four positions of the four string quartet players in the four corners of the stage, with their backs to each other.[66] The idea of a staged concert shows an obvious nearness to Instrumental Theatre, which had its origins in the extension of the traditional classical music concert, and aimed at a theatricalisation of music-making itself.[67]

Salzman and Desi described Instrumental Theatre ("Instrumentales Theater", "azione theatrale") as a kind of music theatre "with only instrumentalists or [where] instrumentalists can be actors in their own musical dramas." (Salzman and Desi 2008: 94) As a sub-genre of music theatre, Instrumental Theatre is particularly important from an historical point of view. As an aesthetic form it is much more located in-between the concert format and the theatre; its basic idea is to turn concert music into dramatic action, and the musicians into theatrical performers. Instrumental Theatre can be with or without voice, with or without stage design, with or without detailed staging directions in the score or by a director. Mauricio Kagel emphasises particularly the importance of onstage movement as crucial characteristic of Instrumental Theatre compared to concert performance with a more static character. (Kagel 1966: 252)

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[64] One also comes across terms such as "semi-staged" or "mise-en-espace". These refer to forms in which musicians, often singers, are performing almost as in a usual concert, staged to be sitting on stairs, or a balcony or just on specific spots on stage, quite often also involved in forms of "quasi"-acting.

[65] He still differentiates his performance works into these two genres, calling *Schwarz auf Weiss*, *Eraritjaritjaka* and *When the mountain changed its clothing* "music theatre", and *I went to the house but did not enter*, *Eislermaterial* and *Der Mann im Fahrstuhl* "staged concerts".

[66] From this point of view, Karlheinz Stockhausen's famous *Helicopter Quartet* (1993, premiered 1995) could be seen as a possible form of a staged concert as well: At the premiere 1995 in Amsterdam the audience could see the four musicians entering four helicopters, The helicopters left off and the audience was guided inside the Westergasfabriek where four monitors showed the inside of each helicopter, filming the members of the string quartet while playing the piece. Loudspeakers projected the sounds of both instruments and the helicopters' motors and rotor blades. The concert form is transformed to a mediation of a concert that actually happens in the air, staged in spacial relationship between the guided audience and the performers entering the helicopters, performing in them and leaving them again.

[67] See p. 14-16.

A way to differentiate between Instrumental Theatre and staged concerts is that whereas Instrumental Theatre aims to transform musical into performative utterances, staged concerts tend to keep a focus on playing music, but in a form that is visually more appealing, or aims to add a visual or scenic element to "just playing music". In Chapter Three I will assign this kind of approach to the first, "simple" category of "extensions". However, the border between Instrumental Theatre and staged concerts is often unclear. It is important to keep in mind that the differentiation that I make here can never be absolute, but merely has the status of an indication, in order to find one's way in the broad field of music theatre. Also the differentiation between either a staged concert or Instrumental Theatre on the one hand, and "music theatre" on the other, might prove equally difficult. When is a piece Instrumental Theatre, when a staged concert, and when is it music theatre? Composer, musicologist and music pedagogue Karl-Heinz Zarius makes the difference according to how the media are handled: while Instrumental Theatre deals with the scenic and theatrical aspects of music making, (new) music theatre is much more concerned with an integration of all elements in theatre, such as lighting and stage design. (Zarius in Klüppelholz 2008: 86) Kagel could have supported this argument, as he opted for merging the musician's instrumental and theatrical presentation, concentrated on the performing musician, without additional theatrical means. He stated that in Instrumental Theatre no stage design is necessary, no "special technical equipment, furniture or other accessories. The naked stage alone offers enough stimulation." (Kagel 1966: 252, my translation)[68]

One last term which is interesting in the discourse at hand is coined by Jörg U. Lensing, artistic director of the German company *Theater der Klänge* (*Theatre of Sounds*). Lensing calls the group's form "Integrative Theatre": an environment "played" by performers. In short, the concept of these kinds of works could be described as having a stage that is fully equipped with all kinds of sensors such as cameras, microphones or other movement-sensitive devices, in order to track actions and sounds that happen on stage. The performers can "play" this environment by movement or sound, then being electronically processed to sound and images. This goes back to experiments such as *Variations V* (1965) by John Cage and Merce Cunningham, where "the entire floor was transformed into a musical instrument responsive to movement throughout the space […]." (Winkler 1995: 1) According to Lensing, dancers are possibly the best performers to play these environments, and a considerable part of the rehearsals is devoted to finding compositional structures that are performed by dancers, as in their recent work *Suite Intermediale* (2010):

> In the scenographic setup for [*Suite Intermediale*], the implementation of sensors and transformation of data generated by the sensors into control data for lighting and sound plays an important role. The space - and during the process of creation this means our rehearsal studio - functions as an electronic instrument, which only waits to be played and played on! (Lensing in Rebstock and Roesner 2012: 161)

The term "Integrative Theatre" as such is not generally used, in spite of a small discourse also in the discussion on Composed Theatre mentioned above, but it can be helpful to describe comparable surroundings, which are not too rare in today's theatre.

Staged concert, Instrumental Theatre, and Integrative Theatre are all terms with a quite specific understanding, which is often connected to one company, director or performance. What they have in common is that performers are challenged to execute assignments that do not

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[68] "[…] benötigt man keine Bühnenbilder, besondere technische Einrichtungen, Möbelstücke oder sonstiges Zubehör. Die nackte Bühne bietet für sich genügend Anregung."

necessarily belong to their specific discipline. As the focus on the musician as performer is fairly independent from the specific sub-genres, I continue to use the generic term music theatre.

The composer in (music) theatre

As a last move in this chapter, I will discuss the role of composers working in theatre, and how the identity of some composers shifted towards being directors as well. Although the performing musician (who might also be a composer) is the subject of this research, the composer is one of the important agents who create music theatre. It is important to discuss the composer's work due to the relevance for the performer. Often the composer is a close collaborator for the performing musician, and this is why I want to give context to the work of the composer, and point out several potential differences from the "traditional" or "autonomous" work of composers. I am relying on my own experience as a composer collaborating with directors, actors, dancers, and choreographers, and the reports of colleagues or students who were trained 'mono-disciplinary' as musicians or composers, and then experienced different working methods (sometimes seemingly incompatible with how they were used to creating music) in theatre.

Of course the possible activities of composers today are by no means limited to sitting at a desk or piano, and putting notes on paper or into the computer. The profession of the composer is (and has been since the second half of the twentieth century), expanding: nowadays one finds a multitude of practices, from the organisation of pitched sounds played by traditional instruments organised on paper, up to the "design of interactive interfaces [as a] speculative composing in which not one concretisation is provided, but where a multitude of models for embodiment are taken into account […]." (Craenen 2011: 228, my translation)[69] However, in most cases, creating music for theatre, dance or other multidisciplinary projects is different for a composer than creating an autonomous composition for the concert stage. This is not meant to be understood as an absolute statement, but more as an indication for a range of practices that happen much more in a collaborative, collective mode that is developed in the process, on the floor in rehearsals and workshop sessions. According to Dutch composer Thomas Myrmel, the work develops "from being an individual composer to a collaborating artist." (Myrmel in Versloot 2011: 117, my translation)[70] This collaborative nature also involves a specific "grey area" in which the work of writer and composer, or stage designer and musician, etc. overlap: "A grey area, where more people have an opinion and where nobody can justly claim the direct responsibility. In collaborative processes this is where conflicts occur constantly." (Myrmel in Versloot 2011: 117-118, my translation)[71]

Concerning the *process* of developing and devising music theatre pieces/performances, the various forms of practices can be located in-between and are often mergers of the traditions of music making and theatre making. In many contemporary music theatre productions musician-performers are working and creating together with the composer-director during the whole

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[69] "Componeren als het ontwerpen van interactieve interfaces […] kan beschouwd worden als een […] speculatief componeren waarin niet één concretisatie wordt vooropgesteld, maar rekening wordt gehouden met de veelheid aan belichamingsmodellen […]."

[70] "Die weg heb ik afgelegd van individuele componist naar een samenwerkend kunstenaar."

[71] "Een grijs gebied, waarover meer mensen een mening hadden en waarvoor niemand met recht de directe verantwoordelijk [sic] kon opeisen. Bij samenwerkingsprocessen treden in dit gebied doorgans de conflicten op."

rehearsal period, in vital processes of collaborative exchange.[72] Composers may start with musicians and actors improvising in order to generate musical material which then serves as basis for the final composition, an approach that aims to include the performer's input in the music. Another strategy is that a composer takes musical fragments to the rehearsals, tries out with the musicians, in combination with texts and/or other media on stage, and then further refines them on the basis of the rehearsal results. Simone Heilgendorff acknowledges these more process-oriented forms of creating in her reflection on Mauricio Kagel's work *Match*:

> *Match* [1964] does not find its musical form via conventional methods of musical elaboration anymore, but through montage of dramatic and sounding material into a musico-scenic structure. (Heilgendorff 2004a: 12, my translation)[73]

Also in the case of Heiner Goebbels, Heilgendorff argues that the development of his theatrical work is very much based on his experiences in theatre and the process-based strategies of working, additional to the intensive exchange with the musicians and everybody else participating in a production. In doing so, "improvisation is a means of finding material: material which is not made out of theoretical consideration, but which is bodily connected." (Heilgendorff 2004b: 17, my translation)[74] In these cases the composer is not exclusively responsible for the creative act anymore (in the sense of having composed a piece of music), and the musician is not merely the interpreter of the music anymore. Rather, the musicians become important co-creators during the creation process, not only of the music itself, but also as performers in a theatre piece. Kagel, though still quite closely connected to the concept of the authorial composer and the score as representative for the "work", argued in his "Thoughts on Instrumental Theatre" (Kagel 1966) that "[d]epending on the requirements of the piece to be performed, the musician is interpreter or co-author of his part." (Kagel 1966: 252, my translation)[75] At the point where the musician does not only have the function of playing music on stage, but also becomes a theatrical performer, the degree of her importance changes. As soon as the individual presence of a musician, her body language and other performative factors are becoming more important, the composer and/or director cannot avoid working with specific persons. By working closely together with the actual performing musicians, both the music and the performance as a whole become much more bound to the performers, far less exchangeable than in a classical orchestra, for example. It is very well possible that a composer does not compose all music for a theatre piece, and that a performing musician might be assigned (or chooses herself) to compose sections of music, next to the music

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[72] However, one should keep in mind that close collaboration with specific performers is not a phenomenon of contemporary music or theatre. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century (and before) it was very normal that composers wrote virtuoso etudes and caprices for instrumental virtuosos, or arias specifically for individual singers as a kind of "add-ons" to an opera. (Cloot 2008: 40)

[73] "Seine musikalische Form findet *Match* [1964] nicht mehr über konventionelle Methoden musikalischer Durcharbeitung, sondern durch die Montage dramatischen und klanglichen Materials zu einem musikalisch-szenischen Ablauf."

[74] "[Dabei ist] Improvisation ein Mittel der Materialfindung: Material, das nicht allein aus der theoretischen Überlegung erwächst, sondern das körperlich verbunden ist."

[75] "[j]e nach den Voraussetzungen des aufgeführten Stückes ist der Musiker Interpret oder Miturheber seiner Partie."

of the "main composer".[76] Composer(s) and musicians alike might bring first rough ideas to te rehearsal, to be developed together in composition, arrangement and staging.[77] Thomas Myrmel reports similar experiences while working on a specific theatrical project: "[…] the tenor got the freedom to rework simple melodies that I brought to the rehearsals into full vocal phrases, which may be counted to his responsibility." (Myrmel in Versloot 2011: 120, my translation)[78] He argues that "[i]f the performers feel more responsibility for the piece, this leads to a stronger authenticity of the result." (ibid.: 123, my translation)[79] This implies that the composer occasionally has to give up on the sole authorship of the composition. Different from composing concert music, the composer in theatre is not necessarily the main author of what happens on stage, and often the concept of a performance is not the concept of the composer, but of the director, performer, dramaturg or playwright. Also the timeline of a production process is typically quite different from the "autonomous" composer's "usual" workflow. Other than in concert music, in theatre a composition is often not finished when rehearsals start, but is an outcome of rehearsal work.[80] Composers are often developing music during the rehearsals, not solely in their studio or at home.

The composer as director

In collaborative ways of working, notation is often much less important than in more traditionally oriented music theatre, opera and classical music. Opera nowadays is still largely based on the sequence libretto - composition/score - mise en scène, mostly executed by different persons, not necessarily closely connected to each other in a collaboration. Richard Wagner is the classical exception, but also Michel van der Aa, whose work will be discussed later. Perhaps because of the dominance of opera as most important form of music theatre for a long time, the

> idea that new music and music theater could be created from something else than a base in strict notation was slow to take hold; even Cage's early work was still based on traditional notation. The creation of new work with strong performer input came about largely in three ways: (1) the development of alternate forms of notation (mostly the so-called graphic notations of the 1960s and 1970s), (2) the introduction of open form […], and (3) the influence and methods of choreographers

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[76] I observed such situations both in the practice of collegues and myself: In a piece where I was participating as a composer, two actors proposed to give shape to a central poem of the piece in the form of a rap, and had already prepared this before showing the result to the director and myself. The director and I liked this proposal that much that I decided not to use my own music (which had been composed already as well) and to give the actors the freedom to develop this section further by themselves, only roughly guided by me.

[77] These techniques are not unusual in popular music, in which pieces of music are often created in co-creatorship in a 'trial-and-error' development directly in the rehearsal studio.

[78] "En de tenor kreeg de vrijheid om de simpele melodieen, die ik meebracht naar de repetitie, om te vormen tot volwaardige zangregels, die zo tot zijn verantwoordelijk [sic] mochten worden gerekend."

[79] "Als de uitvoerenden meer verantwoordelijkheid voelen voor het stuk, leidt dat tot een sterkere authenticiteit (eigenheid) van het eindresultaat."

[80] I am not suggesting that in the case of "traditional" compositions there are no changes made in a score during a rehearsal phase. Of course there are cases where composers make several changes in order to improve their composition. However, this builds on the already practically finished score, either in a draft of almost finished version, mostly not about developing a piece as a whole. Of course there are exceptions, such as composer Richard Karpen, who is used to develop his compositions in close collaboration with the performers, often on the basis of improvisations in the rehearsals. See footnote 32.

> and creative stage directors, working with performers in extended rehearsal periods and without text (or with only text fragments) and without a controlling score. (Salzman and Desi 2008: 344-345)

However, in the course of the twentieth century, the role and function of the composers changed, due to the nature of most theatrical works with musicians as performers. From the early 1970s on many composers decided to direct their pieces, to do the *mise en scène* themselves. They developed a close relation to the actors and musicians performing their pieces, in the sense of regarding the individual *performers* as their "material" rather than agents to execute a score.[81] Several performance artists also established themselves as composer, director and performer in one person, such as Laurie Anderson, Meredith Monk, and Pamela Z.

The reasons why composers start to direct their pieces may be very different. Some composers see their directing activities just as extension of their composing activities, more or less realising with other media what they could not achieve only with musical or sonic means. Others have been working as composers in theatre productions, leading to the development and realisation of their own ideas about theatre, staging and the relation between the different theatrical media.[82] In either case, the decision of composers to take responsibility for staging and directing their pieces themselves results in considerable changes to the act of composing, causing "[the] composition process [to be] prolonged through the process of staging until the very moment of the performance" (Rebstock in Rebstock and Roesner 2012: 21).

I use the term *composer-director* to describe composers who personally direct their own pieces, among them Heiner Goebbels, Georges Aperghis, Paul Koek and Michel van der Aa. This "collection" of artists is not at all to be understood as a coherent group working in more or less the same way. Among the people mentioned Michel van der Aa might be the one who most closely works in the Wagnerian tradition of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, with a similar notion of a "full-blown *auteur* concept" (Salzman and Desi 2008: 106), meaning that he does not only compose the music, but also writes a stage directing script, directs the opera, edits and produces the film part, and often writes the libretto for his operas himself.[83] In the rehearsals and production of these pieces, he also directs both the video and the mise-en-scéne on stage. Heiner Goebbels, on the other hand, mostly rejects the overall authorship for his pieces, and constantly points out how important his collaborators are in order to enable him to actually "do less" during the creation process. Paul Koek has shifted his profession through the years from being a percussion player and composer towards the domain of stage direction (though he continues to play percussion occasionally), he mostly collaborates with one or more composers in the music theatre pieces of his Leiden-based company VeenFabriek.

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[81] That lets the composer-directors belong to a category of artists crossing and transcending the borders between different art forms: Originally based or trained in an art form being not theatre, composers, visual artists, architects and choreographers extended their own profession into the medium of theatre. The theatrical works of these artists often bear strong references to the art form in which they have been based in, but everyone of them offers other fascinating and unusual views on the theatre, both in ways of working processes and the aesthetic results: Among them Kris Verdonck, Jan Lauwers, Jan Fabre, William Forsythe, Sasha Waltz, Heiner Müller, Paul Koek, and Heiner Goebbels, just to name a few.

[82] Richard Wagner might be the first composer who took this so literally that he also claimed the activity of playwright, librettist and stage director of his own operas.

[83] In three out of the four works for music theatre until now, Van der Aa has written the libretto himself (*One*, *After Life*, *Das Buch der Unruhe*). Writer David Mitchell wrote the libretto for Van der Aa's most recent opera *Sunken Garden*, premiered in April 2013.

The working processes of these and other composer-directors are all quite specific and can differ greatly from each other. In the following sections I will exemplify a few of these in slightly greater detail, referring to the working processes of Michel van der Aa, Mauricio Kagel, Georges Aperghis, Heiner Goebbels and Paul Koek, to provide a spectrum of examples that give an impression of how different the potential strategies can be. With Van der Aa I consciously chose an artist who explicitly relies on notation and the score as central element that constitutes a significant part of "the work", opposed to others who might not even write down one single note for a specific performance. As a substantial amount of literature is available about several of these composer-directors, I will not go into too much detail concerning the work of those individual artists, but rather give a brief overview in order to provide a glimpse of the different approaches and working methods.

Mauricio Kagel was a composer who preferred to stay close to the "traditional" western understanding of composition in terms of authority, and in the understanding of a musical score as a manifestation of "the work". In his theatrical works he often brought drafts of his scores to the rehearsals. Then he developed the existing ideas further in a collaborative fashion, testing different ideas both from himself and the performers, as he did for the scenic part of *Sur Scène*.[84] However, after such rehearsal processes and (semi-)collaborative creations Kagel chose to determine these creations in the form of scores and scripts, making them authoritative and binding for future performers. According to Mathias Rebstock, Kagel did this "also to secure the status of an artwork of this scenic compositions." (Rebstock 2012: 235)

Georges Aperghis opts for a slightly different approach. He does compose in the sense of putting notes on paper, but these are often only small fragments or motives; he chooses not to take already finished compositions to the rehearsals, the fragments have the purpose of pure material in order to be tried out and tested in the rehearsals. He not only combines fragments into scenes and/or larger structures; several fragments for solo instruments may also be combined into other ensemble sizes such as trios or quartets. During the rehearsals these musical fragments are then brought into contact with the text and other media, coming to a "shock", as Aperghis himself calls it:

> The goal is that the music is independent. That it does not need to tell something of the piece. That it exists just for itself. And when later it comes to the shock with the text, then it becomes theatre. But if one changes the text it becomes a different theatre. The music is not made from the beginning to play such and such a role. It is just sound material. (Aperghis quoted in Rebstock 2012: 232)

He works closely with the performers during the initial creation of a work. Drawing largely of the inherent theatricality of the composed music itself, Aperghis realises most of the theatrical part without additional assignments or staging instructions, by often using repeating small musical fragments that require a substantial amount of physical engagement. This inherent theatricality of his scores might also be the reason why, in spite of the close collaboration with his performers, once a piece is finished (and fixed in notation as well), Aperghis does not bind a piece exclusively to its performers, having "confidence to other people that will follow." (Aperghis quoted in Rebstock 2012: 235)

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[84] See Rebstock 2012: 235.

Heiner Goebbels acts as composer-director in most of his music theatre pieces, although he does not insist on composing the music for his pieces himself. He (re)uses music of Prince, The Beach Boys (*Hashirigaki*), string quartet compositions by Shostakovich, Mossolov, Lobanoc, Scelsi, Bryars, Ravel, Crumb, Bach (*Eraritjaritjaka*) and others. However, he seldomly collaborates with a composer; in other words, if there is new music to be composed for a piece, he will do that himself. Goebbels tends to see his activities as a composer and director of music theatre pieces in one and the same work as complementary, thinking of himself directing as a composer and composing as a director. This means that when he works as a director he aims to use compositional tools such as rhythm and polyphony, and applies these to the different media or theatrical elements. When he works as a composer Goebbels argues that he does not necessarily invent music, but rather works with the musical qualities and origins of the collaborators: "In the musicians with whom I work, or the musicians I invite to the process, or the machines with which I try to create the sound."[85] Significant for Goebbels' way of working is that he organises workshops with all collaborators, including performers, stage designers, video artists, lighting technicians and so on, about a year before the actual premiere, in order to ensure the active involvement of everyone participating in the creation.

The Dutch composer, director and percussion player Paul Koek gradually developed during his career from a composer and percussion player to a director of music theatre works. Although he still performs as a percussion player (mostly in concerts or staged concerts of his own ensemble VeenFabriek in Leiden, The Netherlands) and composes music from time to time (as for the theatre play *Hiob* (2008) at the Münchner Kammerspiele, directed by Koek's long time collaborator Johan Simons, or for the recent *Drie Monniken* ("Three Monks", 2012), he mostly works as a director for a large variety of music theatre performances. In many of the pieces directed by Koek, someone else composes the music, in the case of VeenFabriek productions he regularly collaborates with keyboard player and composer Ton van der Meer, but also with other composers such as Martijn Padding and Wim Henderickx. Paul Koek is an example of an artist who regularly works with assignments in an open form framework. Everybody of his ensemble might come up with an idea for a scene, a piece of music or just an experiment based on a set of rules. In doing this, Koek implicitly (and at times explicitly in talks that I had with him) rejects the authorship about scenes or whole pieces, although it was based on an assignment by him and although he is credited for the direction of the performance. Unlike Van der Aa or Aperghis, Koek hardly works in a true "auteur"-function, at least in his own understanding, but more as an initiator of a creative act in the sense of delivering the idea and framework for the scene on the one hand, and as the organiser of the material on the other. During the rehearsals he collects ideas, gives assignments, provides feedback and tries to bring everybody further in the process of creation, and in the end combines everything into a theatrical collage; with the result that the piece that is performed is inextricably bound to the performers of the premiere production. In most cases there is a script, accompanied by musical scores. But, and that is the most important difference to someone like Michel van der Aa, the score is hardly ever the basis, the point of departure, but rather the *result* of a working process.

This aspect of and approach to process, and how the process of creating a piece of music theatre is designed, is what actually marks the most important differences between the composer-

[85] Heiner Goebbels in interview with Marianne van Kerckhoven and Falk Hübner.

directors that are discussed here.[86] Kagel, Aperghis and Van der Aa all have a quite close, though different, relation to musical notation and the score as constitutive element of their work. While Kagel used first versions of his pieces in order to work out details together with the performers, Aperghis uses musical fragments in order to be most flexible in rehearsal while at the same time having enough musical material to work with. Van der Aa's scores are usually finished when the rehearsals start, as are most of the film parts; this goes even for the staging script, as the happenings on stage are so closely connected and woven together with the music and the film. Paul Koek operates almost at the other end of the spectrum, as a director of and guide through a collective process during a production. The way how the music is worked out, or how much music is already existent in the beginning of a VeenFabriek production may vary from piece to piece, also depending on the choice of music, as some productions involve existing music (possibly to be arranged or orchestrated), such as by Claudio Monteverdi or John Dowland. However, the music in its actual shape is developed throughout the rehearsals, and the final version is always a result of this process. This goes for Goebbels' work as well, who hardly ever starts with any notated music at all, in order to be able to be most open for the input of everybody participating in the process.

These different composer-directors and their specific ways of designing working processes have two important consequences for the musician-performer. First, they require quite different qualities from the musician in terms of following the rehearsal process, and second in terms of what the musicians are actually asked to do, and how their profession is shaped and transformed. Michel van der Aa's protagonists, besides having to perform the music, have to be perfectly aware of what is happening on the film screen and relate to that in different ways, which asks a constant amount of additional attention.[87] The musicians of Kagel's and Aperghis' pieces have to concentrate on performing both music as well as additional assignments with utmost seriousness and intensity. If not doing so, Kagels often humorous and provocative absurdity runs the risk of drowning in clownish amateurism, and the physical-gestural impact of Aperghis' pieces threatens to be dramatically weakened and therefore become meaningless. Goebbels and Koek at last, both most devoted to the rehearsal process itself, ask enormous flexibility from their performers while developing the performances, as choices tend to be made quite late and things can change until a few days before the performances. Also do they extend the profession of the musicians regularly by a great diversity of assignments, from simple standing behind a window while singing (Goebbels' *I went to the house...*) up to telling the audience about an imaginative research on the composer John Dowland (Koek's *Flow my tears*) while being dressed as somebody in-between an American Indian and a doctor.

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[86] Of course there are also other aspects, such as the reasons why they started to direct, all coming from a background of composition or playing an instrument. Michel van der Aa sees his directing activities as a logical extension of his being a composer, whereas Heiner Goebbels started to formulate his own concept of music theatre (which includes directing for a substantial part) mainly as reaction on what he considers fairly negative experiences as composer for theatre directors in the beginning of his career.

[87] From the instrumentalists in the orchestra Van der Aa asks fairly traditional qualities; they have to play the notes written in the score, not very different from other orchestral musicians performing contemporary music (to a click track). Only incidentally, such as in *Up-Close*, the orchestral musicians have to follow simple performative assignments such as standing up and play the music while standing.

Closing remarks

Chapter Two elaborated on the field of music theatre as context of the research, and as framework of the musician's activities within this context. Similar to the triangle of internal, external and contextual elements, developed in Chapter One, this context can have different shapes and contain various elements, depending on the performance space, the manifold forms of working processes, different natures of collaborations, and the actual products, the performances. Still, I argue that the panorama I have sketched is sufficiently stable for understanding how the musician's activities might change and transform in the multitude of performance situations, and to enable the reader to find one's way in the great variety of repertoire, between the various creators of music theatre, the variety of working situations and processes. Despite the impossibility of providing a panorama as being a "*completely* coherent scenery" (Latour 2005: 187), this chapter should provide the reader with the ability to follow the various examples I am going to elaborate on including my own artistic work, and to contextualise the divergent activities musicians execute in theatrical presentations.

The end of Chapter Two also marks the end of the first half of this dissertation, closing the discussion about the musician as the subject of research, and the different contexts in which she executes her profession, in which this profession is extended or reduced, and in which the musician is transformed into a theatrical performer. Part One has prepared the reader for the endeavor into the second half of this book, the discussion of the expansive approach in Chapter Three and the reductive approach in Chapter Four. The concepts discussed until here will be put into "practice", into concrete examples within the conceptual framework of extension and reduction.

CHAPTER THREE - CONCEPTUALISING EXTENSION

The dynamic model of the musician's profession developed in Chapter One will be used as reference point for the different kinds of extensions of the performer's profession when compared to her professional daily practice in concert situations, or to her traditional training as a performing musician.[88] The nature and degree of extension always stands in relationship to the musician's usual concert practice, implying different practices for individual musicians, as the concert practice of a classical musician in a symphony orchestra is obviously very different from that of a rock singer or a techno DJ. Ultimately, the question is whether a musician experiences something she has to do on stage as an *extension* of her profession in relation to what she is used to, and what her identity as a performing musician implies. This could be a movement, utterance, action or assignment, specific kinds of clothing, or simply a different focus than during the usual activity of music-making. However, it is the context that connects the extensions in this chapter of various kinds of musicians: the art form of theatre functions as a framework that can reflect on the varying kinds of extension in relation to the many kinds of musicians and their professional identities.

Stages of extension

What sparks the transformation of the musician into a theatrical performer is the tension between the elements she is used to and the more "unknown" or unusual, mostly extra-musical elements that she is not used to. Professional musicians are used to making music in accordance with their profession as outlined in Chapter One. Jazz musicians are accustomed to doing different things than classical musicians or pop musicians, and they all think differently about extra-musical or theatrical elements of a concert. Elements that do not belong to the profession might be added to the musician and introduced in a theatrical performance. In many cases, the musician is not used to these performative elements, and the additional effort to perform them introduces a theatrical element.

There may be a considerable variance between types of extensions. In this chapter I am going to develop various stages of extension. I subdivide the field of extending the profession of the musician into several stages, with the idea of a fluent scale of possible extensions of the musician's profession in the theatre. Needless to say, there exist a broad range of indefinable grey areas and transition phenomena between one kind of extension or another. However, to come to an analysis I designed these stages of extension and chose practical examples that extrapolate the various approaches. The different stages of extension are conceptualised by their amount of complexity. In spite of the linear structure of the text, the stages do not necessarily have to build up sequentially. Various kinds of extensions grow more complex as the text proceeds, but they rarely exist in a pure form. Countless hybrid situations exist which cannot be completely isolated or

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[88] There are numerous other discussions on extending the profession from a training point of view currently underway at higher music institutions, which touch on areas such as managing, teaching, networking and entrepreneurship. However, the extensions I am talking about specifically and exclusively aim at the performative and artistic potential of the musician on stage.

constrained in one linear structure or scale of complexity.[89] With more simple forms of extension, the musicians might be dressed differently or sitting in unusual positions on stage, but apart from this they are simply "making music". In the more complex forms of extension, musicians move on stage and perform a variety of extra-musical assignments. It is important to note that the kinds of extensions are conceptualised with regard to what the musician *actually does* on stage in the first place, not how they might be perceived by an audience. The list of extensions is not meant to be exhaustive, as the manifold and quickly developing artistic practice makes it impossible to cover all possible extensions of the musician's profession. What is more important is the understanding of the concept. I shall here attempt to make it possible to provide a framework for analysis of musicians' performances, with which one can easily recognise and describe phenomena of extension, and put them into perspective.

[89] This is also due to a certain resistance of artistic practice: Most theatre makers may not consciously think about using a musician with a specific kind of extension. The extension always emerges from what happens in the rehearsal and creation process, a result of what a director sees necessary for a musician to do.

Extension I. Surrounding, Appearance, Spacing – Making Music on the Theatrical Stage

The first category of extensions deals with phenomena that let the musician become theatrical *without* having her actually to perform too much extra work. External or contextual elements are added without the need of any significant extra contribution from the musician. In the first instance, the musician continues to make music on stage, being contextualised and theatricalised through the specific subtle interventions of the director, the stage designer or scenographer.

Surroundings and appearance

Extension can occur with simple extra-musical elements executed by the musicians: they need to do little more than make music, sing or play instruments. Specific non-musical external elements are applied to the musician, which might alter their appearance when compared to how they usually look on the concert stage.[90] This could be in the form of costumes or masks, but the musicians are still able to make music without being hindered in any way. An example for this kind of simple extension is Friedrich Schenker's previously mentioned *Missa Nigra* (1942),[91] an early piece of Instrumental Theatre. The musicians of the German Gruppe Neue Musik "Hanns Eisler" from Leipzig had to wear costumes and masks, but nevertheless they played and sang the music from the score, performing a composition of contemporary music (including several kinds of *extended techniques* such as shouting). The surroundings change (costumes, masks, objects and paintings as stage design) and allow for a theatrical effect. The added layers provide a meaningful surplus to the audience, setting both the music and the musicians into a relation to the overall theme of a "black mass". The meaning and interpretation of the perceived music is changed, as the music is heard in the visual surroundings of the stage design, connecting image and sound to possible meanings. The possible meaning of *who the musicians are* also changes, as they are not just musicians playing concert music any more, but are in costume. The masks and the white garments frame the musicians as ghostly monks or priests.

A fairly simple change in surroundings allows the audience to not only perceive the piece as a music concert, but also to notice the surroundings. The audience is offered the possibility of seeing something other than the music-making musicians communicate. "Simple" because the actual task of the musician has not changed: they play music, without actively doing something other than this. In the Not-Acting - Acting continuum of Michael Kirby[92], this kind of extension would fall into the category of a "symbolised matrix", as external references such as costumes can assign meaning or even a character to a musician-performer, although she does not consciously "act" in order to create this meaning (Kirby 1987: 5).

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[90] Also in popular music, costume, outer appearance and the concert stage design definitely assign a specific meaning to the music and its performers. Even more, it doesn't only assign a theatrical meaning, but also the "image" of the artist in question: how he or she wants to be seen as a person, an artist, or a commercial brand.

[91] See the photo of the piece on page 15 in the introduction.

[92] See p. 49-50 "Musicians as performers - how to perform?".

A similar approach to working with musicians is made frequently in (dramatic) theatre plays where musicians play live music. In nearly every such theatre production there is a choice of costumes; not only for the actors but for the live musicians as well, who generally do not play in a pit, but are present on stage. The costumes might bear theatrical effects in themselves, but more importantly, they set the musician in the context and framework of the play. The five musicians in the "musical evening"[93] *A Tribute to Johnny Cash* (2008, Bochum city theatre, direction Arne Nobel) are dressed in a way which perfectly and smoothly blends with the outer appearance of the actor who plays Johnny Cash himself. Both the actors and the musicians wear country and western clothing (image 3.1). The musicians function as characters inside the world of the evening without necessarily doing much more than playing their instruments. In one possible basic interpretative layer, the musicians might simply be seen as the band of Johnny Cash: the musicians that would have been accompanying him in "real life" anyway.

Image 3.1: *Johnny Cash* (2008), Bochum city theatre, direction Arne Nobel

Musicians in theatre plays however do not always only make music. Often they have functions in the play that might not immediately be recognised by an audience, but are important for the musicians to be able to *be* on stage, and not to take a mental break in the pause between two songs, for instance. An example is the 2010 VeenFabriek production *De City*, directed by Paul Koek with live music by Ton van der Meer. Van der Meer is sitting at his keyboard, not significantly changing his position most of time during the piece. But besides playing music, van der Meer has

[93] In Germany this is called "Musikalischer Abend", which generally builds on the idea of a concert, sung by actors, and develops this into a meaningful narration. It might be arguable if musical evenings belong to the genre of music theatre, however, I count them as corresponding, because the sub-genre includes the two main elements that I have specified as defining music theatre within this research: they are multimedial and inherently musical, even if the relationship between music and mise-en-scene might not be as challenging as in more experimental works and processes.

another function that allows him to stay on stage the whole time without losing focus or reason to be there. In the piece, everyone of the actors has a "shadow character"[94], each played by a mime performer, functioning as a silent "mirror" to the actor in question. Van der Meer is one of these shadow characters, and thus also has an assignment, even when he seems to do nothing significant in between the music sections.

Image 3.2: *De City* (2010), VeenFabriek, direction Paul Koek, with Ton van der Meer in the background behind the curtain

Digital alter egos as extension: The work of Michel van der Aa

A visual surrounding may also be designed by digital means. A video can be part of or even the complete stage design, such as still or moving images projected onto the back of the stage, providing a sometimes changing environment, potentially determining a large part of the visual identity of a performance. A video projection can fall into the category of simple extension, as long as it is a surrounding that changes without any necessary input of the performer, yet changes her appearance and sets her into a relation with the projection, on the basis of their pure co-presence at the same time on stage. The important point is that a projection is able to affect the performer's presence, even if she does not have to do anything significantly more than without the projection. Her own performance does not necessarily have to be affected from the performer's point of view. To illustrate this, imagine a cellist sitting on a chair playing her instrument, and a video image is projected onto her and the wall behind her. If the video projects images of a sunny day in a forest, the musician is assigned a completely different meaning than if the video projects images of crowded streets in a large city. The musician and the music would immediately become bonded and set into a specific relationship with the visual surrounding of a forest or a city.

[94] Paul Koek in personal conversation.

Dutch composer and director Michel van der Aa[95] regularly combines live musicians and singers with their alter egos in sound and on film. Van der Aa's music theatre work, to put it shortly, extends the profession of the musicians - often opera singers - and theatricalises them by doubling them on film: the content of the film is strongly connected to the live performer, in the shape of a video double or an alter ego in another age.[96] The video image bestows the theatricalisation of the singer as performer, and lets the singer be perceived differently than she would be without it.

Michel van der Aa's stage works are extraordinary examples of "intermediality in opera [which] is located in-between the medium of instrumental music (whether live or technologically produced), the sung lyric and spoken word performed by the singing actor, and the *mise-en-scène*, which may, or may not include multi-media representation." (Chapple in Chapple and Kattenbelt 2006: 81) What differentiates Van der Aa's operatic and music theatrical work from other works that opera and media scholar Freda Chapple assigns to the genre of "digital opera"[97] is that he is explicitly relying on the aural or visual presence of the performers on stage. In his compositions the musicians are confronted by their digital alter ego, in a soundtrack created from the same musical material (*Oog* 1995, *Memo* 2003), or other live voices played by other musicians (*Wake* 1997). In the operatic work, Van der Aa uses alter egos of the performers on film, to create pseudo-documentary layers, and to deal with themes such as loneliness, schizophrenia (*One*), time and remembering (*After Life*). Van der Aa denies an unambiguous relationship between the live characters and those on video. He leaves it unclear just who is following whom and what was earlier, reality or the picture of a dream. (Schönberger 2006: 12)

Alter ego as extension

I will take a closer look at the relation between the live and video performer in the works *One* and *After Life*. The conceptual and formal approaches in these two pieces are closely related and specifically examine a performer on stage and her double on video. These two works seem more appropriate to this research than the later work *Das Buch das Unruhe*. In the latter, Van der Aa introduces especially *other* characters in the video - or the younger self of the character on stage - and uses the constant confrontation of live singers and their alter egos more marginally than in the other pieces. Also the main performer in *Das Buch der Unruhe*, Klaus-Maria Brandauer, is an actor, which makes the work less suitable for the discussion within my research.

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[95] For more information about Van der Aa see www. vanderaa.net

[96] The phenomenon of an alter ego that is significantly older also appears in van der Aa's one-woman-opera *One*. Soprano Barbara Hannigan is not only doubled by her own pre-recorded video image, but also by her supposedly older alter ego in the form of an elderly woman, at the end of the piece. The same constellation is used by Van der Aa in *Up-close*, where cellist Sol Gabetta is paralleled by an elderly women on film.

[97] Chapple coins the term in her discussion of the work of opera director Tim Hopkins and conductor Steven Sloane of Opera North, about their "intent on remediating our understanding of the relationship of opera with other media. Through integrating other media into their work, they are opening out perceptions of contemporary opera. They have moved opera into the digital age and ask us to reperceive the opera stage as an integration of the live with the mediatized in a non-hierarchical intermedial model." (Chapple in Chapple and Kattenbelt 2006: 88)

The one-woman-opera *One* was the first work in which Van der Aa combined his activities as composer, director and film maker. He took the subjects from his earlier *Here*-trilogy[98] - individuality, isolation, loneliness, death, generations - and built further on these experiences, giving shape to them "in a very abstract and dreamlike way. I wanted to keep the associations for myself so that they could not be read too directly by an audience."[99] In *One*, soprano Barbara Hannigan is staged as a lonely and schizophrenic persona between past and present, constantly in conflict with her own alter ego on film, and leading "a sublime dialogue with the voices in her head." (Stoetzer 2006: 8, my translation)[100] By composing very virtuoso duets for the live and video soprano, the composer gave shape to the schizophrenic character, both musically and visually. He inserted close-up film monologues between the musical sections with "old English ladies talking about meeting the main character […]."[101]

After *One*, van der Aa created the much more extensive opera *After Life* (2005-2006)[102], for eight singers, four documentary personae, chamber orchestra, soundtrack and film, a work that takes the developments of *One* to a larger form, driving the "theatrical, virtuoso game between alter egos and media to the top." (Stoetzer 2006: 8, my translation)[103]

Image 3.2: Barbara Hannigan live and as video double in *One*

[98] This series of compositions consists of *Here [to be found]* (2001) for soprano, chamber orchestra and soundtrack, *Here [in circles]* (2002) for soprano and ensemble and *Here [enclosed]* (2003) for chamber orchestra and soundtrack.

[99] Personal conversation with Michel van der Aa.

[100] "een sublieme dialoog met de stemmen in haar hoofd."

[101] Personal conversation with Michel van der Aa.

[102] Michel van der Aa's second opera is based on the homonymous film by Japanese film maker Hirokazu Kore-Eda. *After Life* is set at an intermediary place between life and death. Persons who have just died (called "passengers") have a week time to choose the most important moment of their life and to record it on film to take with them to eternity.

[103] "drijft […] zijn theatrale, virtuoze spel tussen alter-ego's en media op de spits."

The film in Van der Aa's stage works is never an all-encompassing screen that overlays the performance as a whole. It is always framed by a live performance, standing in close relation to the live events. The screens in *One* are part of the minimalistic stage, the translucent screens in *After Life* even more so. Because of the vertical little lines the screens are not just projected areas that are "transparent" in the sense of Bolter and Grusin[104], but also communicate their function as projected areas as such. They are closer to Bolter and Grusin's logic of hypermediacy, which "acknowledges multiple acts of representation and makes them visible." (Bolter and Grusin 2000: 33-34) The constructions of the stage design of *After Life* emphasise the stage as the place where the opera is happening; there is little possibility for the audience of loosing themselves in an illusory or immersive environment, as could be the case in cinema. The projected images are staged as part of the overall design of the stage and interact with the other elements. The film sections are not independent, but always keep a strong relationship with the live singers.[105] At the same time, the screen separates the different perspectives on time. The film refers to memories of the characters' past lives, and to reality in the shape of the interviews with real life persons[106] at the same time, whereas the live action is the actual place of the imaginary plot.

The audience sees imaginary places on video - the small rooms with many mysterious objects in *One*, the various places in *After Life* - yet at the same time knows and sees that the whole piece is happening in a theatre. The audience is constantly aware of the theatre space, of the performance happening live in the absolute here and now, as opposed to a cinema experience. Two parallel places co-exist, inextricably bound to specific performers. One and the same performer - either Barbara Hannigan in *One* or one of the characters in *After Life* - is present both live and mediated in a parallel world in the film; often in the same clothes, even reinforcing the impression of doubling, but also broaching the issue of remembering processes and different aspects of the same persona. In the end it is that double awareness of the parallel realities of the film and the stage that makes the audience more aware of the performance as a live event.

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[104] "a transparent interface […] erases itself so that the user is no longer aware of confronting a medium, but instead stands in an immediate relationship to the contents of that medium." (Bolter and Grusin 2000: 24)

[105] I have used Sigrid Merx' strategy of analysis, when she analysed the intermedial relations between (live) video, the performers and other elements in Guy Cassiers' *Proust 1: Swann's way* (2003) also as different representations of time, see Merx in Chapple and Kattenbelt 2006: 67-80).

[106] These persons are indeed not actors, but private people. Van der Aa asked them the same question as the characters in the story: what was their most important moment of life?

Image 3.3: Margriet van Reisen (live and on film) and Claron McFadden in *After Life*

The film section in the form of alter egos works as part of its surroundings, achieved by digital means which theatricalise the live performers, without them having to contribute any extra-musical effort specifically related to the film. When in *After Life* several of the singers have to sit down at the same time as several of the film characters, not all of the live performers are able to see the projection. They are assigned to sit down by the director at a specific moment in the music (or in the score), which synchronises the live acting and the film movements. This synchronisation is not made by the performers by looking at each other and sitting at the same time, but rather provided by the composition and the director's assignment, thus not significantly extending the profession of the singers *by means of projection*.[107]

It should be mentioned that the amount of theatricalisation works slightly differently with opera singers than with instrumentalists, as opera singers usually do already act in a simple way. They represent characters, at least in *After Life*, as in most historic and contemporary opera repertoire. They are performing between singing and acting, as an "intermedial interface between theatre and music" and as "*in-between* the musical score, the libretto and the audience, to whom they communicate." (Chapple in Chapple and Kattenbelt 2006: 87) This makes the acting part of opera singers an inherent part of their profession and cannot be seen as an extension of it. The film contributes an *additional* theatrical value here, making the various associations of remembering or schizophrenia possible.

[107] This does not take away that there are several sections in which the performers do have to relate to the video and have to react on it. My point is that such an additional effort of the performers is not strictly necessary in order to have the film work as a surrounding that theatricalises the on-stage actions.

Spacing

A slightly greater step, though still simple in its nature of extension, is to either position the musicians in specific spots or places on stage other than the ones they would take in a usual ensemble setting. Every kind of positioning musicians on stage, be it a symphony concert, a rock concert or a disco event, is obviously chosen, either consciously according to the specific event or by tradition in one or another way. What I want to suggest with the idea of "spacing" (or "spaced") in the theatre is that musicians are consciously positioned in ways that are not necessarily usual or even useful for a musical concert performance, but that they are positioned for visual or theatrical reasons. The same goes for their appearance: as the majority of musicians dresses in a way on stage which is different from their everyday clothes (jazz and some pop musicians may be exceptions, but do not necessarily have to be), this "on-stage dress" could easily be called a costume. One might think of the expressive costumes of rock bands (including painted faces), the changing of dress after almost every or every other song by major pop artists such as Beyoncé Knowles or Christina Aguilera, but also the understated dress of musicians in a symphony orchestra.

Positioning the musicians on specific spots on stage is one way of extending the profession somewhat more than just getting the musicians in costumes. The positions of the musicians may be chosen according to visual or spatial criteria. But what is even more important is that it might provoke a kind of *heightened presence* of the musicians, an intensified "being-there", being in the theatrical space. This originates in a more concentrated playing, potentially occurring when musicians are placed far from each other on stage, if they find themselves in unusual playing positions or if they cannot see each other while playing. Such "conscious performative challenges […] help the performers maintain an acute awareness of the overall interplay of all theatrical and musical elements" (Roesner in Rebstock and Roesner 2012: 342) The heightened awareness and presence as result of this state of more concentrated music making potentially results in an extra-musical or theatrical value.

Heiner Goebbels regularly uses that idea in his staged concerts and music theatre pieces. In *Eislermaterial* (1998), a staged concert based on the music of German composer Hanns Eisler (1898-1962), Goebbels' interest was in a heightened presence and awareness of the musicians different from the usual (conducted) classical music concert. He created this by "exterior challenges; formal, spatial or physical settings that acted in opposition to being too comfortable on stage […]." (Roesner in Rebstock and Roesner 2012: 342) Among other techniques to achieve this, Goebbels used physical distance in the spacing on stage: the ensemble of musicians and the actor are sitting at the sides of the stage (left, right and back). The centre of the stage is left empty, except a small statue of Hanns Eisler standing on a pile of a few books. The actor Joseph Bierbichler sits at the back side of the stage as well, in between the musicians. Especially the players of instruments which normally are performing in sections (e.g. the string instruments, woodwinds or brass instruments) are not sitting next to each other, making it harder for the instrument groups to achieve a coherent section sound. The two pianists are not even able to see each other or the other musicians (except through tiny mirrors at the side of their instrument), as their playing position is directed towards the outside of the stage. These distances and challenges, reinforced even more by the absence of a conductor to coordinate the whole, forces the musicians

to invest more effort in their communication and coordination, resulting in high concentration and energy, visible and sensible for the audience.

Extension II. Moving

Additionally to changing musicians' appearances and surroundings, and to space them in specific spots on stage, they might be asked to change their positions, to move from one place to another. Musicians may walk from one instrument to another across the stage or walk with their instruments to various places, which may already have significant theatrical effects. In the following paragraphs I will elaborate on these theatrical effects, and differentiate between the two cases of moving *in between playing* or moving *while playing*. These two perspectives form the second stage of extension, but neither ask the musician for much more while *playing* her instrument or singing - yet.

Moving in between playing

Musicians might be asked to move on stage in between their musical playing or singing. I explicitly refer to the act of moving on stage while *not* playing or making music, specifically the act of displacing the body of the musician, eventually carrying his instrument to the next position. For many musicians this means an extension of their usual concert practice. Classical musicians usually do not move to another position on stage during two sections of playing. The singers and the instrumentalists of pop and rock bands move a lot on stage, both during the musical performance and in between the songs. A "show-aspect" may be assigned to this, but it might also potentially have theatrical functions or results. However, referring to Philip Auslander, on-stage movements, theatrical or not, are in most cases part of the musical persona of the artists in question, and the resulting theatricality belongs to what the artists would understand as inherent in what they are doing in their profession as musicians. If a director in a theatre piece chooses to let the musicians move from one side of the stage to another, something else is happening. The musicians have to do something which is not inherent to the act of making music at a specific moment, and the reason for the movement is not musical, or related to the musician's musical persona. It is staged by the director, according to visual, theatrical or possibly narrative criteria, rendering the movement as an extension of the musician's profession.

An example of this kind of extension is the performance of the three keyboard players in the production *Merlin* at the RuhrTriennale 2007, directed by Johan Simons. In this large-scale music theatre, the instruments were placed around the playground on stage, which was about thirty to forty meters wide. The musicians were clothed in blue overalls, referencing some kind of construction workers. After playing an episode of the music, they took their music sheets and packed them into their bags, walked with them to the place where they had to play the next episode in the score, simultaneously with the actor's dialogues and scenes, or during the music when one or two musicians were playing and the other had to change his location.

What Simons did was in fact quite simple technically, yet very effective. The musicians wear costumes, have to walk between playing music sections, and take their music sheets with them. For the rest they could just play the music. As all three musicians were keyboard players, and all instruments on stage were keyboard instruments (three grand pianos, several organs, synthesisers, Fender Rhodes electric pianos and other instruments), it would easily have been

possible to let each one of the musicians stay in one place (the position of all three arranged across the stage), as everyone was able to play all of the instruments on stage. In several moments of the piece, two musicians change position by exchanging their instruments. Not musically necessary, it is clearly the acting out of a staging decision to do so. In fact Simons gives the musicians something to do, with a double effect: First, it prevents the musicians getting too much free time, too many and too long breaks that they have to fill with their pure presence.[108] Second, it heightens the perception, concentration and thus the presence of the musicians, as they have to remember the moments when they have to stand up and go across the stage and taking their sheet music with them. Playing the music is not their only task, the mise en scène becomes an inherent part of what they are doing. However, *what* they have to do while moving on stage is fairly simple and quite a formal task: the purpose of walking is to get to another instrument and play the next section of music there. Additionally, the distance between them - about 30 meters in some moments - needs considerable extra attention and concentration and contributes to the heightened presence, which serves the overall idea of being actively present on stage and abetting an extra-musical, theatrical effect.

With this simple intervention the musicians are perceived in a theatrical way. As an audience one may perceive them not only as musicians who play their instruments, but also as events on stage that are connected to the narrative; they might be perceived as workers just passing by, in front of or behind the actors during their scenes. In fact this is quite close to what "real" workers are actually doing in real life. They fulfil their task, and then walk to the next spot where they have to do something, or they have to get a machine from a different place. Referring to the discussion of the difference between walking and standing in the previous section, the additional value of letting musicians move instead of just standing or sitting becomes obvious: the possible association with workers comes exactly through the walking on stage, the seemingly passing by. This lets the musicians really seem busy, at work on the way to the next place to get something done.

Together with the previous kind of extension (*spacing*), these approaches resonate with Michael Kirby's concept of "Received Acting". According to Kirby, performers "who do nothing but walk and stand in costume, are seen as 'actors.' " (Kirby 1987: 6) As soon as a musician (or any other performer) is clothed in a specific costume, she receives external references of the character embodied by this specific costume. This is comparable to the musicians in *Merlin*: Simply by wearing blue overalls and carrying bags typical for construction workers, they are perceived like those, as if they were acting them out. When musicians are standing (or sitting) in a costume while playing their instruments, they are indeed perceived more theatrical than without the costume, because the costume adds both a visual and an interpretative layer to the body. It gives the musician an outer appearance in relation to the performance. With differentiating between walking *while* or *between* playing I am suggesting to differentiate Kirby's idea of "walking and standing" a little bit further.

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[108] Or which they would have to fill with assigned characters such as Ton van der Meer in *De City.* See previous section, "Extension by Surrounding or Appearance".

Moving while playing

A small addition is to let the musicians also move on stage while they *are* playing their instruments. This significantly changes what they have to do and what the effect on their focus on stage is compared to moving on stage *without* playing. When a musician has to concentrate on the music that she plays and on the other musicians playing with her, as well as on the pathway which she has to take to another place, she has to divide her attention. Her divided attention adds another layer to the performance of the musician, and contributes to a heightened attention and presence on stage. In contemporary composed music this approach has led to a whole field of compositions that deal with the intermedial area between music making and physical gesture, and which utilises bodily action as compositional (not necessarily sounding) material: The "revealing of the musical action *as* theatre" (Craenen 2011: 51) in Mauricio Kagel's *Sonant* (1960), the soundless gestures of Berio's *Sequenza V* (1960) for trombone solo, or the gestural "musique concrète instrumentale" of Helmut Lachenmann's compositions.[109] Again, for many musicians it is not unusual to walk or to move on stage while playing, especially for rock or pop musicians. Pop concerts with musicians sitting on a chair are practically non-existent, with the possible exception of solo singer-songwriters who are sitting on stage with a guitar and a microphone, or other acoustic settings such as the MTV unplugged series. When Michael Jackson sang and danced at the same time, the dancing even naturally belonged to his singing, being an integral part of it. However, the difference to theatre is again that the movements or choreographies are chosen for reasons that are not inherent in the musician's understanding of making music, they are not chosen for reasons that lie within the framework of the musician's persona.

At this point in the discussion, the musicians do not yet do anything "outside" their profession, only their usual behaviour is structured, organised and staged in the context of a theatrical performance. Speaking with Michael Kirby, the musician may seem to be acting, but in fact is not, assigned with the term of "Received Acting". External references reinforce the idea that the musician is a performer or an actor in some sense, being a meaningful part of the happenings on stage and thus generating meaning by herself: "As 'received' references increase […], it is difficult to say that the performer is not acting even though he or she is doing nothing that could be defined as acting. […] Although the performer seems to be acting he or she actually is not." (Kirby 1987: 5-6)

[109] For more information and in-depth study of this rich field of contemporary composed music see Craenen 2011.

Extension III - Performative Tasks

In the previously discussed categories the extensions either did not affect the musician herself, but rather how she is perceived, or were simple displacements of the body, whether playing or not playing. In both cases the musician was not yet forced into a significant extra-musical effort to put into her performance, as is introduced in the third category of extensions: elements that do not belong to the musician's profession and add additional performative elements. The third category of extensions is the most demanding and complex for the musician, and is the most manifold of the described continuum of extensions. Theatre and dance scholar Gerald Siegmund suggests the useful term "task performance" for describing extra-musical performative elements in an essay about the choreographic elements and working techniques in the work of Heiner Goebbels (Siegmund 2002). Departing from the work of Merce Cunningham in the 1950s, Siegmund traces a variety of techniques with the aim of reducing the subjective in dance:

> This descent or resigning of the personality behind what he or she does is done by giving the dancer specific tasks, which constrain his or her options in the creation and execution of the choreography. […] Often they reduced movement to everyday simple walking. […] Lucinda Childs forced their dancers into sophisticated mathematical structures. Yvonne Rainer dragged mattresses on the stage and piled them up. David Gordon invented five ways to glide from a metal chair.[110]

Siegmund describes a reduction of what dancers can do, to simply executing everyday tasks. These tasks work as specific boundaries or frameworks for dancers in which they have to look for new or other possibilities for designing, inventing and performing movement. This idea can be, and has been translated into music theatre, so that the musicians have to perform assignments that work in specific boundaries or frameworks. On the one hand these boundaries leave a certain freedom to execute them, but on the other hand they provide enough specificity to make sure what musicians have to do, and to force musicians to give up their traditional role.[111] Diverse extra-musical actions are capable of transforming musicians into something else, though they are not acting, but merely carrying out assignments, as is for example walking up and down across a row of benches in Heiner Goebbels' *Schwarz auf Weiss* (1996). These tasks transform the musicians into theatrical performers. More than in the other forms of extension, the musicians have to add performative elements to their profession, which may occasionally be organic and logical, and at times most demanding and unusual. As, in fact, these extra-musical elements may be anything: lighting a match, talking, walking, dancing, carrying boxes or burning tea bags (Heiner Goebbels *Schwarz auf Weiss*), this group of extensions is also the most extensive. In the VeenFabriek production *Licht is de machine*, directed by Paul Koek in 2008, some of the musicians have to

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[110] „Dieses Abtauchen oder Zurücktreten der Persönlichkeit hinter dem, was er oder sie tut, wird dadurch bewerkstelligt, dass dem Tänzer oder der Tänzerin bestimmte Aufgaben gestellt werden, die seine oder ihre Wahlmöglichkeiten in der Gestaltung und Ausführung der Choreographie einschränken. [...] Oft reduzierten sie Bewegung auf alltägliches einfaches Gehen. [...] Lucinda Childs zwängte ihre Tänzer in mathematisch ausgeklügelte Strukturen. Yvonne Rainer zerrte Matratzen auf die Bühne und stapelte sie. David Gordon erfand fünf Arten, von einem Metallstuhl herunterzurutschen.“ (Siegmund 2002: 128)

[111] "By these assignments, between specific boundaries and parameters they are forced to give up their traditional role; by these tasks the musicians become performers." (Siegmund 2002: 129)
"Es sind diese Aufgaben, die innerhalb bestimmter Grenzen und Vorgaben verlaufen, die sie zur Aufgabe der traditionellen Rollendarstellung zwingen; durch diese Aufgaben werden die Musiker zu Performern." (Siegmund 2002: 129)

perform some kind of a hip hop dance in the middle of the piece. At an earlier moment of this large scale production, several musicians are put under tents, moving these through the large theatre space, transforming them into strangely alive large plastic objects.

The speaking musician - extension with text and language

One kind of task performance that often occurs is the use of spoken text. Musicians have to perform text, and in a broader sense their voice to make either vocal sounds or to project text as a potential carrier of meaning towards the audience. The former has been used extensively in the experimental composed music since the 1960s, when Luciano Berio for example extended singing technique in his *Sequenza III* (1966) with phonemes and techniques such as using mouth, tongue, teeth, lips, palates and pharynx as filters to create vocal sounds. (Halfyard 2002: n.p.). György Ligeti developed a fantasy language out of phonemes to create the vocal parts of his *Aventures* and *Nouvelles Aventures* (1962-65). Another example is *Time and Motion Study II* (1973-76) by Brian Ferneyhough for solo cello, voice and electronics all performed by one player. The vocal parts in these pieces are sometimes performed by singers, but instrumentalists have been asked to perform vocal sounds as well. Many of these works have been assigned extra-musical or theatrical qualities, as Georges Aperghis' cycle of vocal pieces *Recitations* (1978) have long been quoted as an extraordinary example of a very theatrical use of language sounds.[112] In this composition Aperghis plays with using sounds that seem to refer to specific languages (French in particular), but do not use any word or phrase of these languages.

Pieces of Instrumental Theatre extend the musician's activities, especially the instrumentalist with spoken language.[113] An example of such a piece is Georges Aperghis' *Le corps a corps* (1978, revised 2006). Here a percussionist plays the zarb,[114] and is asked to speak a text at an extremely fast tempo, requiring the general quality of being able to speak on a stage in an understandably, and to do it in a remarkably virtuosic way.[115] The profession of the percussionist is extended with text and the sounds of language. Bodily gestures and movements such as turning the head are also composed and fixed in the score, when the percussionist has to turn her head as if she is surprised by something: "tournez la tête à droite, comme si vous étiez surpris par quelque chose" (Aperghis 1978: 8) This does not only include the pure execution of turning the head, but adds the intention of being surprised.

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[112] It is striking that both pieces have been executed by other performers than traditional (opera) singers. *Recitations* was composed for and premiered by the actress Martine Viard, and Berio composed his *Sequenza III* for his wife Cathy Berberian. Although she was a professional singer, she was specifically committed to theatrical performances.

[113] I like to call this approach *composed extensions*, as the composer has fixed these extensions and performative assignments in the score, she composed them. Sometimes these extensions were developed and tried out with musicians, sometimes the composers conceived them alone.

[114] The zarb is a Persian hand drum, one of the most important percussion instruments of Persian folk and classical music.

[115] The score of *Le corps á corps* is available for download on the composer's website at http://www.aperghis.com/selfservice.html.

These composed elements of language usage brought into the musician's performance have been developed in devised projects as well, as in *Schwarz auf Weiss*, when trumpet player William Forman was asked to recite Edgar Allan Poe over his wireless trumpet microphone; or in *Flow my Tears* (2012) directed by Paul Koek, when harpsichord player Frans de Ruiter has to give an introduction to the audience about his imagined research on composer John Dowland. For a musician having to speak on stage the ability to pronounce clearly and understandably is extraordinary important. Obviously this is not a given for every musician. Goebbels usually tries out different things with musicians in order to get a grasp on their special, extra-musical abilities and gifts, and to use them as extra qualities in performances, in contrast to training or educating them in the direction of speaking or acting. In *Flow my Tears* Paul Koek repeatedly gave the instruction to the musicians that they should not empathise with the content of the text, but just to pronounce and articulate it clearly.[116]

Along with the various other possibilities of extending the musician's profession by means of task performance, spoken text is probably one of the most obvious to theatricalise and semioticise the musician. As "the expression of a bodily inside" (Craenen 2011: 62), the sound of this specific voice refers directly to this very performer, to her body and presence on stage in the here and now of the performance. Apart from this, spoken words are one of the most obvious ways to communicate an additional meaning, which is simply communicated through the words themselves - not necessarily particularly different to an actor speaking. When a musician says "I am in a forest", an audience automatically puts everything else happening, if only music, in the imaginary setting of a forest. But in the case of non-textual vocal sounds like in the pieces of Aperghis, an additional layer of meaning above the musical is communicated. The meaning of Aperghis' texts and textual-phonetic landscapes, such as the ones from the *Récitations* or *14 jactations*, is abstract and can hardly be verbalised or defined. The "message" of these texts is in fact generated and imagined by the audience, as everyone interprets and listens to the fragmented fantasy language differently and individually.

Connecting Task Performance and Surrounding: Up-Close

In 2010 Michel van der Aa created *Up-Close*, a concerto for solo cello, string ensemble, soundtrack and film. The work is dedicated to its premiere performers, the cello soloist Sol Gabetta and the Amsterdam Sinfonietta. Apart from being a cello concerto, the work can be perceived as an half-hour-long film opera, the cellist being a "co-protagonist with a solitary elderly woman, portrayed on film."[117] What stands out immediately from the beginning of the piece is that the clothing of the solo cellist is significantly different than a common dress that classical soloists usually wear in concerto performances; Sol Gabetta wears a white nightdress, evoking associations of dreams and mystery, making very clear from the initial seconds of the performance that this is not a traditional cello concerto.

[116] Personal conversation with Frans de Ruiter (who performed in the piece).

[117] Program book DVD *Up-Close*, Disquiet Media 2011, DQM 04.

During the piece music (solo cello, orchestra, soundtrack) and film are perfectly synchronised, but co-exist as autonomous elements in a non-illustrative manner. In several moments film and music, and especially the soloist, are brought into a closer relationship to each other. At the moment when the elderly woman in the film goes upstairs in an old house, Sol Gabetta stands up from her chair, holding the cello in her hand, paralleling the upward movement in the film. This kind of synchronised movement, which I discussed earlier in the context of *After Life*, happens several times in *Up-Close*[118], also to be understood as performative assignments extending the profession of the cellist. The relationship becomes closer and increasingly interlinked towards the end of the piece, when both women carry the same old lamp from left to right. The piece finishes with Gabetta sitting and playing before the video screen, next to the lamp. At the same time the elderly woman in the film cowers in the grass carrying the same lamp, which occasionally is turned off, synchronised with a sound of voltage sizzling in the soundtrack.

The cellist herself does not act, feign or simulate. She carries out tasks, among them playing the cello, standing up and sitting down again. At a specific point in the last third of the piece, she lays her instrument down, grabs a chair and runs in the direction of the video screen to the left-hand side of the stage. Such performative assignments support and enlarge Gabetta's physicality. However, the real change in perception of the cellist happens through the assignments in combination with the film. The elderly woman becomes a partner and an older alter ego of Sol Gabetta, and by this sets the two into a manifold, yet not strictly determined relationship. Through the elderly character, the character of the cellist is set into the world of the film.[119] As in *One*, van der Aa does not portray a clear relation, but a much more metaphorical and abstract one, more open for individual associations and imagination. The film affects the way how both Sol Gabetta and the string orchestra is perceived; as playing the notes of the concerto, as well as performers in a mysterious drama. By choosing a much older counterpart as alter ego on film, Van der Aa evokes several possible associations such as themes of time, mother-daughter-relationships or remembering. What is most interesting about the theatrical aspects of *Up-Close* is that it is exactly this combination of film and performative assignment, which transform the cellist into a theatrical performer. The film contextualises the performative assignments and brings them into close relationship to the character in the film. When Sol Gabetta carries the lamp on stage, it is the film that makes her potentially appear as a mysterious character such as the one in the film, and transforms her simple assignments to a level where they could mean much more than just what they are.

A theatre of sounds: Carola Bauckholt's *hellhörig*

In 2008, German composer Carola Bauckholt presented her creation *hellhörig*, a major work for soprano, mezzo soprano, baritone, three cellos and four percussionists. Without words, the piece extrapolates previous tendencies in Bauckholt's work of blending timbres and timbral similarities of instruments, human voices, everyday objects as musical instruments and concrete recorded

[118] As when the soloist and the film character stand up at the same time.

[119] What is specifically interesting here is the question of who could perform the piece except Sol Gabetta, and if a *young* soloist is necessary to perform the piece, and to establish the connection between the live soloist and the actress in the film. Michel van der Aa told me that he definitely has a preference for a young woman as soloist, but he has not pinned this down as requirement in the score to perform the piece.

sounds.[120] It is precisely the wordless nature of this piece of music theatre that provides the potential for many possible associations. The instrumentation is considerably extended by a differentiated choice of everyday objects. Despite the specific presence and manifold associations that come with the use of all these objects, their purpose is never purely visual or theatrical, but essentially to make sound. I will argue that the tension between hearing and seeing is one of the central aspects of this work, which makes it theatrical and lets musicologist Julia Cloot label the piece a "theatre of sounds" ("Klangtheater"), because of the "fluent transition" between sound generators and the resulting demands for the perception", which "unfolds an own theatricality […]."[121]

Image 3.4: Dirk Rotbrust in *hellhörig* (photo: Regine Körner)

[120] For more information on Carola Bauckholt see www.carolabauckholt.de

[121] "fließende Übergang zwischen Klangerzeugern und die daraus resultierenden Anforderungen an die Wahrnehmung". (Cloot 2009: 41, my translation)

The timeline of the creation process of *hellhörig* reminds one more of a traditional way of working similar to opera than of a devised theatre production. The composition process of the piece was entirely independent of the staging and rehearsal period, though while composing, Carola Bauckholt worked closely together with the musicians, especially with the percussionists from the *Schlagquartett Köln*. The composer completed the work in 2007, about a year before the rehearsals were due to start, to give the director enough time to think about the staging.[122] In the final production, theatricality in *hellhörig* is developed in various ways; partly inherent to the score itself, and partly through scenic elements added to the actions in the score by the directors.

Inherent theatricality in the musical score

Although I do not rely very much explicitly on musical scores in this research, it seems appropriate to do so in the case of *hellhörig*. A significant part of both the performative assignments and the resulting theatricality is largely inherent to the score itself, which attests to Bauckholt's enormous auditive and visual imagination, and much experience in creating such work. At the heart of *hellhörig* and several other works by Carola Bauckholt lies a technique to which Julia Cloot refers to as "shifting" or "switching": "A specific sound originates from a sound generator, but is then almost imperceptibly taken over or amplified by another." (Cloot 2009: 39, my translation)[123] The composer refuses a strict sense of difference or demarcation between noise and pitched sounds, and creates a game with sounds that at first hearing has different points of departure. The amplified bouncing of the zinc wash basin could also be percussion hits on a large bass drum. Certain rubbing techniques on the prepared balloons could be soundtrack parts of crying birds as well. It is exactly this technique that is able to create a significant capability for theatricality, and to provide a multitude of possible extra-musical references and invitations for imagination.

A great deal of the score is not merely sounds or pitches to be played as in traditional music scores, but much more notated "actions". Bauckholt realises these actions in ways which both deal with a close relationship of sound and action. Firstly with notated sounds that have to be realised, such as the B quarter flat of the zinc bath in the opening section of the piece (bar 34). The sound as such is closely integrated in the overall flow of the section: it takes over the long glissandi of the cellos, then supported by the tape (playing the same pitch an octave lower), and finally taken over by the cellos again, playing the same pitch. It is important that the percussionist has to pull the bin slowly, turned upside down, in order to produce the pitch. This way both the bin itself as everyday object, and the slow movements of the percussionist's body through the space, as specific action necessary to produce the desired sound, contributes to a theatrical perception.

[122] This early deliverance of the score was consciously chosen. Carola Bauckholt presented the score not because she was obliged to do so according to rules of production, but rather preferred this way of working in order to avoid the often occurring "stress and chaos" of a theatrical process in the "last minute". (personal conversation with Carola Bauckholt)

[123] "Ein bestimmter Klang wird ursprünglich von einem Klangerzeuger generiert, dann aber fast unmerklich von einem anderen übernommen oder verstärkt."

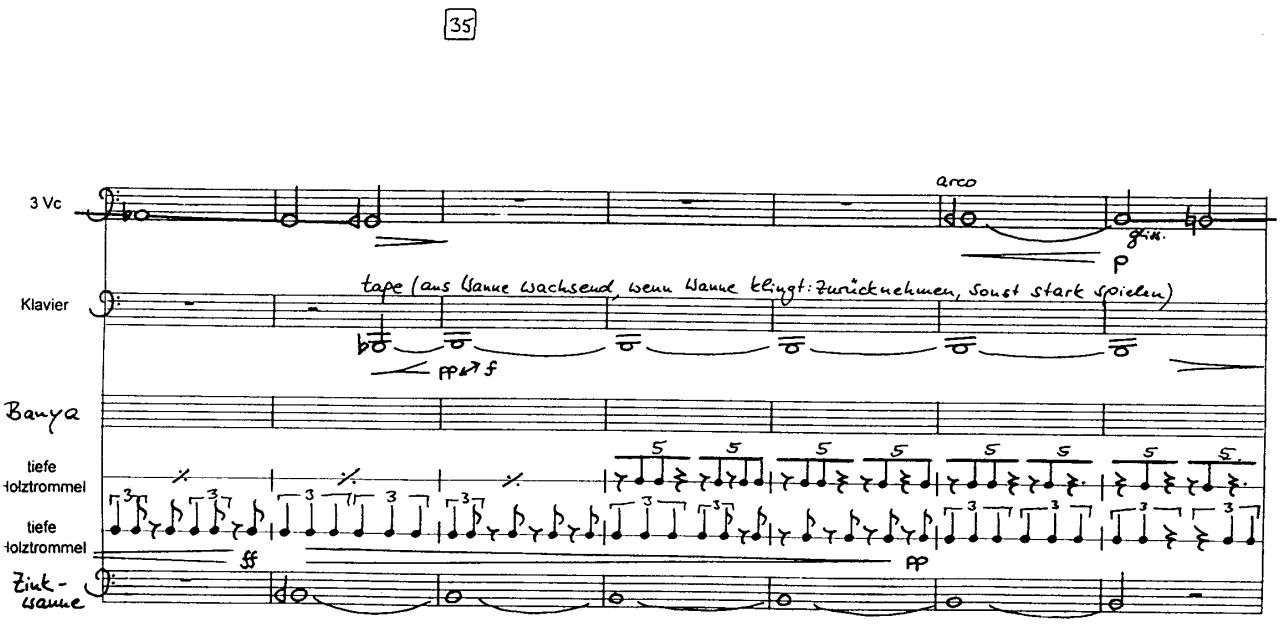

Image 3.5: The zinc bin in the score of *hellhörig*

Secondly, Bauckholt notates the concrete action necessary to produce a certain sound, such as the rolling of a marble in a round biscuit box (image 3.6), performed by the fourth percussionist, or the same action (amplified) with a small steel ball on a cookie jar by the first percussionist a few bars later: "circle cookie jar/steel ball, slower and slower, then back and forth until standing still".[124] Although it is the specific sound that interests the composer she notates the necessary action, in a combination of musical notation and verbal instruction or explanation.

[124] "Keksdose/Stahlkugel kreisen, immer langsamer, dann hin + her bis zum Stehenbleiben".

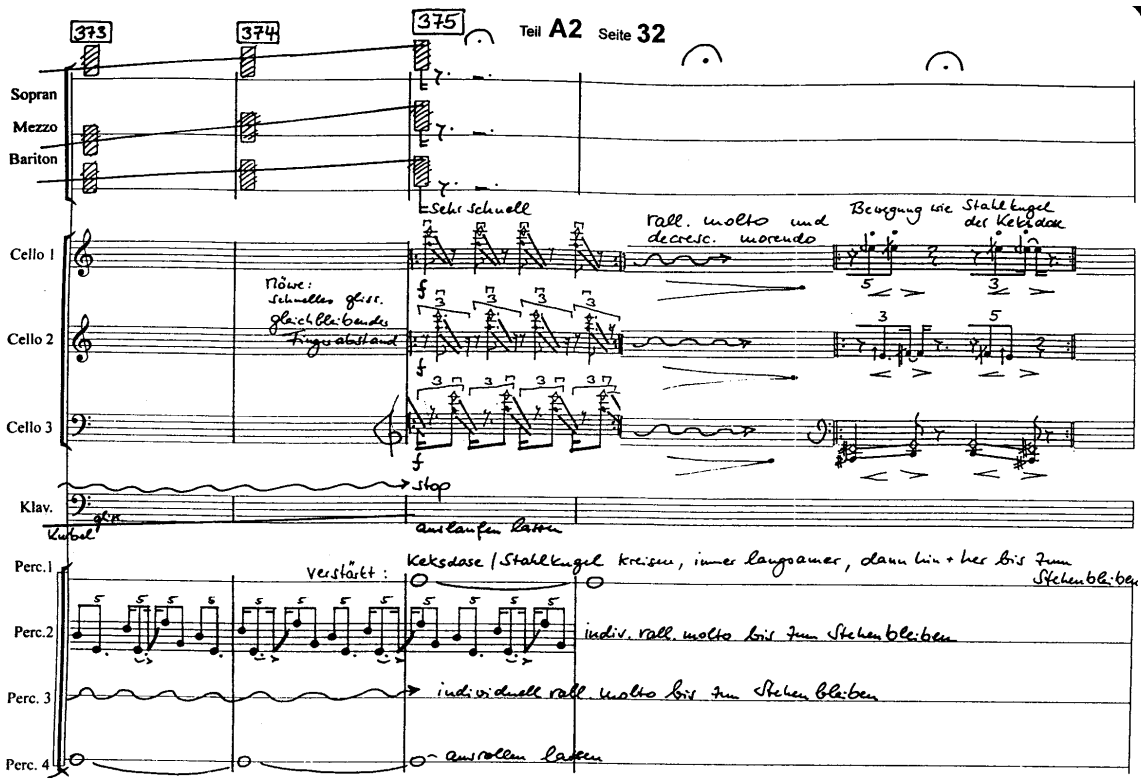

Image 3.6: Rolling marble and steel ball in the score of *hellhörig*

Scenic add-ons to the score

The staging of George Delnon and Roland Aeschlimann supported this inherent theatricality: "Most of what happens on stage is musically determined. […] The sound production stages itself." (Delnon in Traber 2008: 19, my translation)[125] During the rehearsals, according to the composer, the directors were mainly interested in the actual production of sound, and the resulting performative actions.[126] The most important element for the staging was the arena, the space in which the performers and audience were performing and experiencing the piece, an idea that came from Roland Aeschlimann. The aim of this arena was to create an atmosphere of intimacy, somewhere between dream and nightmare. Together with the costumes by Marie-Thérèse Jossen, these extra-musical elements were external, belonging to the category of *Surrounding and appearance* discussed earlier.[127]

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[125] "Das meiste dessen, was auf der Bühne geschieht, ist musikalisch vorgegeben. […] Die Tonerzeugung inszeniert sich selbst."

[126] Carola Bauckholt attended all rehearsals. However, unlike other productions of her music theatre works, she decided to stay out of the staging because of curiosity for the other's ideas, especially because of their profession as artistic director and stage director of large opera houses. During the rehearsals she was mainly surprised in first instance, about "how relaxed and actually passive this works." (Bauckholt in personal conversation) The choreography were mainly developed by the singers themselves.

[127] Some time after the original production, Carola Bauckholt herself directed a concert version of the piece, to be performed on a traditional frontal stage setting. This happened mainly for financial reasons and for the sake of greater flexibility to go on tour.

In staging the performers, only few extra elements were added to the extant movements and actions. Besides the often functional choreography of the performers in the stage space, there are hardly any movements independent of the actual musical events. Georges Delnon added disparate extra-musical elements, as the staging of the section between bar 324b and 333 (image 3.7), in which the performers are assigned to perform sizzle sounds towards each other. The score precisely assigns the rhythmic moments of the sizzlings, and their direction: The mezzo soprano sizzles towards the third percussionist, who sizzles to the baritone, who then sizzles to the second cellist, and so on. The fixed choreography and spatial movement of these sounds in the score already produces a certain theatricality, which is further given shape by the director. He interpreted the section with an idea of "air-Frisbee", and instructed the performers to mime both throwing and catching of a Frisbee. Besides the ironic and absurd nature of the developed scene, these assignments especially help the vocalists to fill the notated action with a specific intention, rather than an abstract movement that produces sound. That intention in turn makes the movement meaningful for the audience as well.

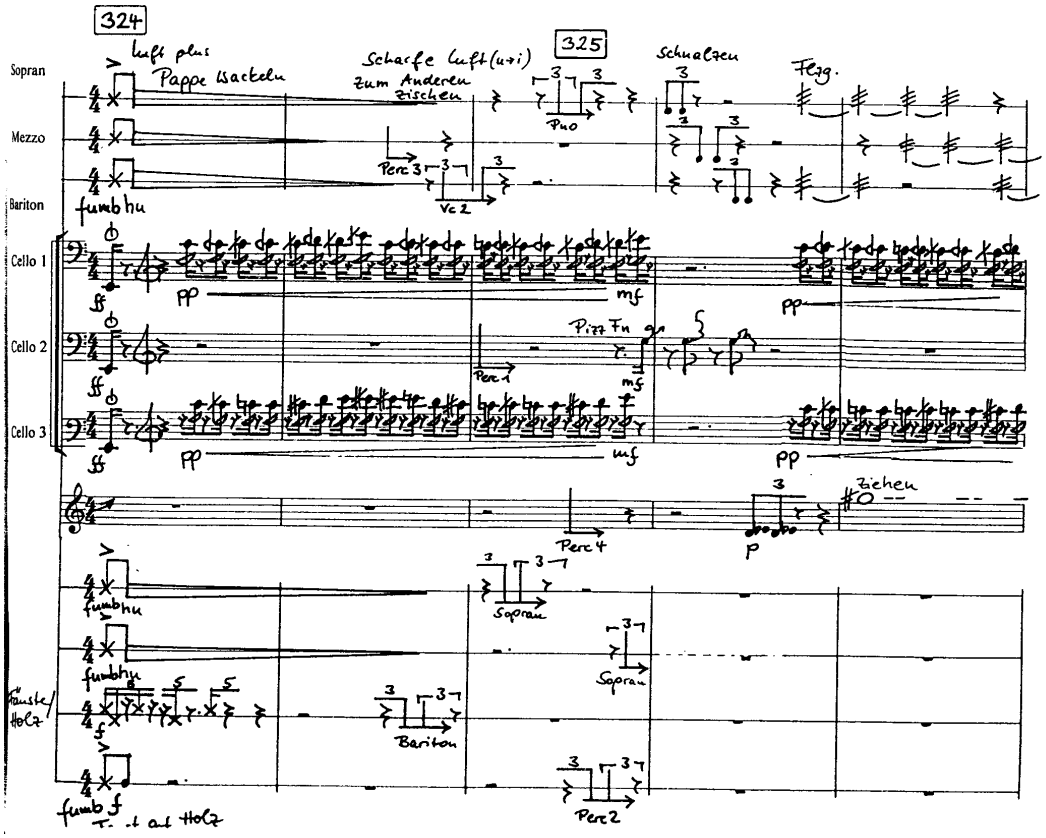

Image 3.7: Choreographed "air-Frisbee" playing in the score of *hellhörig*

Listening as source for performing - the instrumental and vocal sounds of *hellhörig*

With the approach of describing a sound or letting the musicians approximate sounds, Bauckholt makes an implicitly important though very specific reference to listening. It is not possible for the musicians just to rehearse specific playing techniques that are demanded from them, but differently than usual they have to *listen* while producing the sounds, constantly relating them to the already present timbres that should be approximated. This is especially striking in the case of

the singers. There is no text, *hellhörig* is a work "with an absent libretto […], a fantasy language of sounds." (Cloot 2009: 39) In most contemporary experimental scores for voices, vocal sounds are precisely defined (Ligeti, Lachenmann, Berio, Aperghis, etc.), though not necessarily as a carrier of semantic meaning, but as pure sound or abstract references to different aspects of language (structural, rhythmic, sound-wise to a specific language such as French or German, especially in the case of Aperghis). Carola Bauckholt instead links the technique of voice production directly to the audible, less to the written form in the score, and states this explicitly in the opening pages of the score of *hellhörig*: "Voices and instruments should develop into noise-like sounds." (Bauckholt 2008: n.p., my translation)[128] By approaching these sounds through vocal means, and with the help of certain hints in the score[129], the singers automatically create - and rely on - extra-musical references in order to produce meaningful sounds, and inevitably produce theatrical movements to support them.[130] These theatrical movements are a crucial result of the performers' additional effort to meaningfully approximate the desired sounds, and they are the essence of what I trace as the extension of the musicians' profession in *hellhörig*.

Image 3.8: Matthias Horn (baritone) performing sound and movement
"like a washing machine" (video still from the recorded performance)

[128] "Stimmen und Instrumente sollten sich klanglich den Geräuschklängen annähern."

[129] Such as "Abflussschlürfen" ("leakage slurping", Bauckholt 2008: 13) or "wie Waschmaschine." ("like a washing machine", ibid.: 25))

[130] During the rehearsal process, the singers partly developed these movements and choreographic elements themselves, and partly the directors suggested specific movements in order to support the extra-musical reference.

From sound to performance (and back again) - Concluding

In *hellhörig*, the actions of the musicians are "not only part of the happenings on stage, but the centre." (Bauckholt in Traber 2008: 18, my translation)[131] The performative substance of Bauckholt's piece (and many others of her works) lies in the sound production itself. To produce the sounds indicated in the score, performative actions, both instrumental and vocal, are necessary. Some of the actions are notated in the score as assignments, meaning that the concrete action necessary to produce a certain sound is notated in the score. Others are only described in terms of concrete sounds that should be approached. These have to be developed by the musicians (in collaboration with the composer), and result in performative and potentially theatrical gestures.[132]

There is a space between what one hears and what one sees, and the two senses do not necessarily match. When a paper box brushed with rosin is moved across a piece of wood, it may produce a sound close to a crying animal. (Bauckholt in Traber 2008: 18) The difference between actual performative utterance and the resulting sound creates a specific tension between visual and aural perception that cannot be resolved. This is what Heiner Goebbels refers to as distance, which asks the audience to bring both perceptions together, and fill the space between the perceptions with individual meaning.[133]

Task performance as offer - Heiner Goebbels' Schwarz auf Weiss

In the previous paragraphs I argued that Carola Bauckholt creates theatricality - by means of performative assignments - from sound as basic premise, and that the actual sound production can be the basis of a diverse spectrum of theatrical possibilities. The following paragraphs shed light on someone who is working quite differently. The German composer-director Heiner Goebbels is a particularly good example of someone who works with performative assignments executed by musicians. In contrast to Bauckholt, for Goebbels the musical elements are not necessarily the starting point, but many different elements could form the basis of a music theatre work. Goebbels does not necessarily create all of his material from a musical core, and sometimes even chooses to start with music not written by himself.[134] He rather starts together with everybody involved in a

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[131] "Die Aktionen der Musikerinnen und Musiker sind nicht nur Teil des Bühnengeschehens, sondern das Zentrum."

[132] The resulting theatricality is not one that exclusively emerges in Bauckholt's work, but can be observed in many examples in which unusual "extended" playing techniques are used. As these do often guide the attention not only to their sounding character, but also to their visual, physical and gestural quality, they often bear a theatrical potential.

[133] The following quote shows that Carola Bauckholt is perfectly aware of this theatrical space for individual meaning that she creates: "[The sounds] can come out similarly or in the same way sometimes, but can also be very different. It always depends which experiences meet specific acoustic events with every listener. For sure the sounds that I compose tell something […]. But what they 'tell', is certainly understood differently by every listener differently." (Bauckholt in Traber 2008: 18, my translation)
"[Die Geräusche] können bei Zuhörern manchmal ähnlich bis gleich ausfallen, können sich aber auch stark voneinander unterscheiden. Es kommt ja immer darauf an, auf welchen Erfahrungshintergrund bestimmte akustische Ereignisse oder Signale beim einzelnen Hörer treffen. Sicher erzählen die Geräusche, die ich komponiere etwas […]. Aber was sie 'erzählen', wird gewiss von verschiedenen Zuhörern und Zuschauern unterschiedlich verstanden."

[134] In *Eraritjaritjaka*, Goebbels chose to work with string quartet music exclusively by other composers (such as George Crumb, Dimitrij Shostakovich of Maurice Ravel). Besides several soundtrack sections Goebbels did not compose any music here.

production, including performers, technicians, stage, light and sound designers, to assure the active involvement of everyone from the very beginning of the creation process. He aims to involve the performers as individuals, with personal strengths, talents and limits. He invites them to join the rehearsal and creation process with their own ideas, so that he can reach a polyphony of different voices that he couldn't possibly invent all by himself. He is by far not the only one who does so[135], but as the collective process with musicians as performers is such an important thread in his work, I refer to him as an example of best practice. I will refer to a few of his works in this section as examples of task performance that is developed in a process together with the musicians, providing extra-musical meaning and theatricality. It is the potential meanings that are offered to the audience by the performative actions that interest Goebbels, in order to create a polyphonic theatre that provides a multitude of possible meanings, originating from the tension between the different media.

The phenomena that occur in artistic practice can be extremely manifold: In Goebbels' work, among other possibilities musicians have to dance like dervishes in *Landschaft mit entfernten Verwandten / Landscape with distant relatives* (2002), or the four singers of the Hilliard Ensemble have to take a piece of furniture apart in the first plateau of *I went to the house but I did not enter* (2008).[136] Due to the immense diversity of possible phenomena of task performance I would like to discuss only one example in greater detail. Already in my introduction I referred to Goebbels' *Schwarz auf Weiss* (1996). In this groundbreaking piece of music theatre the musicians of the Ensemble Modern perform a variety of assignments. Among them, flute player Dietmar Wiesner sits on one of the benches that are part of the structure of the stage[137] and burns tea bags, which lift up into the air. Before burning the tea bag, Wiesner puts the tea powder into a tea boiler on top of a camping stove heating the water. After a while the water in the tea boiler starts to cook, and the tea boiler produces a sound with a timbre not unlike the one of a flute. At this moment the flutist takes his piccolo flute and joins the boiler to play a duet. The interesting aspect in this visually appealing scene is that the musician needs hardly to learn anything new other than the correct order of actions and the appropriate placing of the tea bags so that they lift up correctly: Making tea (even on a gas flame), burning something made from paper are everyday actions one is easily accustomed to. The fascinating aspect, making the scene visually, theatrically and musically appealing, is twice a moment of surprise: first when the tea bag lifts up. The other one, which is more important, is the moment where the flutist takes his flute (back) and joins the "music" of the tea boiler. The otherwise unmusical - not intended to make music - becomes music.

This scene is an example of an interesting interplay between theatricalised performative actions of a musician and an object that changes its function. The object first supports the theatrical part by being a prop, but also supports a specific meaning, and stands in a direct relationship to the act of burning, as the tea bag is naturally linked to the tea boiler. But then the relationship changes again, when the object - perceived as theatrical prop - turns into a music-generating device, which is joined then by the musician. It is this play and switching back and forth between theatre and music that makes this scene so intriguing.

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[135] Cathy Boyd (UK), Paul Koek (NL) and Matthias Rebstock (D) are only three more examples of directors among many more who work in comparable rehearsal modes.

[136] I mentioned several other possibilities throughout my introduction.

[137] See p. 17 for a photo of the piece and the stage setup.

Cross-Extensions - Entering other professions

All steps and kinds of extensions discussed up till this point have one important aspect in common: the profession of the musician, and what the professional identity of the musician entails, lies at the heart of everything that the musician has to do. The profession is always present, and several elements are added to it. The differences between these added elements and the primarily musical actions of the musician "as musician" make it interesting and fascinating to experience, and are responsible for the theatrical effect.

In most cases, the musician does not encroach upon another profession such as acting or dancing. The performative assignments as such are usually elements that are not directly connected to a specific profession, but share a certain generality.[138] Acts such as carrying mattresses, making tea, throwing balls and so on belong more to everyday life than to a specific artistic discipline, although they might be precisely staged. However, there might be moments or sections in pieces where the profession of the musician is either left, or in which the musician does indeed enter another profession. This might include dancing, participating in a choreography among dancers or even solo; performing spoken dialogues and embodying a character of a drama play. In situations such as these, a musician literally has to cross the border of his profession and enter another. The sense of a double profession may occur. As in the other forms of extension, crossings of the musician's profession are linked very closely to the specific, individual musician-performers. Often a director or choreographer discovers these specific qualities of a musician during the rehearsal process and works with the musician to develop scenes or situations in which the musician dances or acts.[139] This way everything the musician does is strongly, if not exclusively connected to his person and his body, possibilities and limits.

In the closing sections of this chapter I will describe two phenomena of cross-extensions, starting with the musician as *other performer*, the phenomenon that a musician might temporarily leave her profession, but not in favour of extra-musical performative assignments, but replacing it with another profession such as acting or dancing. Second, I will elaborate on a phenomenon specifically discussed by scholarship of musical theatre, however referring back as far as ancient Greek drama: the actor-musician, as a "figure [that] has always occupied the space between music-making and theatre-making." (Dunbar 2013: 197) According to Dunbar, this "hybrid performer" was important in many parts of music theatre history, from Greek tragedy to fifteenth-century Noh theatre and John Doyle's stagings of musicals by Stephen Sondheim. (ibid.)

These two phenomena are closely connected to each other. Again, in artistic practice it is easily possible to find grey areas and mergers of the extrapolated cases. The difference I am attempting to point out, lies in the amount of tension that is created, the specificity with which the crossing is accentuated and the amount of merging between the professions that are crossed.

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[138] This universal quality of most of the performative assignments makes it possible for practitioners to let musicians blend with performers from other art forms, because the assignments are not necessarily connected to one profession.

[139] I understand this acting in two forms. On the one hand in Kirby's sense of pretending, feigning and simulating, but this could also aim at purely technical aspects, such as how a spoken text might be projected towards the audience, which is crucial to an actor's profession.

The musician as *other performer* - Torsten Kindermann in *Superstars*

The situation of musicians having to do several things that belong to other professions such as acting or dancing, might occur without the musician having to make any music at all, so that temporarily the original profession seems to disappear. The fascinating thing about this is to see a musician perform as having another profession[140], and lies in the fact that an audience might experience a switch between a performer as musician at one moment, and as an actor at another; a transition point that results in a tension between the two professions.

I will give only one example of a musician temporarily performing as other performer, in this case as an actor. In 2009 German director Frank Abt created *Superstars* at the Bochum city theatre in Germany, a piece dealing with the contemporary myth of casting shows in which everybody can be a superstar. The musician Torsten Kindermann enters the stage first, with a microphone standing at the front, and a small light spot. He stands at the microphone, his hands in the pockets of his trousers, and starts to tell his life story. Obviously this is not Kindermann talking about himself, but rather him portraying a young woman's character. She was interviewed for the piece, and everything she said has been used to create the text for this opening monologue of *Superstars*. Typical attributes of her language, unusual and incorrect sentence constructions, etc. were all directly transferred into the text and were spoken in the piece. But the scene itself does not clearly communicate that this is not Torsten Kindermann talking here, as several things the woman had experienced could also easily have happened to Kindermann. After the show several audience members reported that they were not entirely sure that these were not Kindermann's experiences, and were surprised or irritated that he had already performed in the musical *Cats* when he was sixteen years old. Only in the course of the evening it becomes obvious that these were not Kindermann's experiences[141].

Two aspects of this first scene are remarkable. First, Torsten Kindermann is a musician. He is not educated as an actor, and not trained to speak text in front of an audience, and to project it towards an audience. He is not used to portraying characters, or to speaking text supposed to be of someone else. It is unusual to see a musician speaking the text of a character. Second, in *Superstars* it is not merely a musician who speaks a small text section, or a few lines. Here, the musician comes on stage and opens a theatre piece with a monologue of a page and a half of text, even before anyone in the audience knows, or anything is said to the audience about him being a musician.

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[140] This idea alone might be questionable from an artistic point of view, because this alone might be perceived as "bad acting", as acting obviously is not the musician's profession. In 2007, dancer Simone Aughterlony and photographer Meika Dresenkamp created the performance *Between Amateurs* that had precisely this as subject. The two women changed their roles, so that Aughterlony embodied a photographer and her specific ways of executing the profession (such as positioning and holding a camera, framing an image, and so on), and Dresenkamp performed as a dancer. (http://www.aughterlony.com/projects/collaborative-projects/between-amateurs/)

[141] I have to thank Torsten Kindermann for talking to me in depth about this performance, about his rehearsal process and the audience reactions. Unless otherwise noted, all my background information is based on interviewing him.

Working process on the monologue

During the rehearsals, Abt used a few techniques or assignments to let the musician perform, or be perceived of, as an actor. Although the use of the microphone certainly avoided difficulties of speech projection towards the audience, it was rather used for creating intimacy:

> [The use of the microphone] was not based on thinking it would not sustain or because of volume. It was because it could get more intimate, so that I would not have speak this personal text so loud. I could just stay in my own speech. (Personal conversation with Torsten Kindermann 2012, my translation)[142]

According to Kindermann, there was not much work specifically dedicated to how this text had to be spoken. The major rehearsal time on the opening section went into trying out different positions on stage, and different postures of the body. The rest of the work was devoted to speaking the text as naturally as possible. Abt did not work on portraying the character, at least not with the musician. The nature of the text itself helped to speak it authentically, as it was not an artificial text written for drama or for the theatre, but a transcribed interview:

> This text was transcribed one to one. Automatically you get sentences that are not at all correct concerning the grammar. As I talk sometimes, make breaks or insert 'ehs', all this was part of this text. Or repetitions that you would not do this way, peculiarities of this speaker. Of course this helps very much, everything becomes authentic immediately. You get such a naturalness in the language. And then you look where you make a break, where you think, where do you make thinking breaks and so on. And this was it, but I did this fairly well by myself. (Personal conversation with Torsten Kindermann 2012, my translation)[143]

What makes the passage possible and working in fact is Kindermann's ability to speak clearly and pronounce text understandably. I have already mentioned several possibilities and examples to let musicians speak on stage, but these examples (such as William Forman in *Schwarz auf Weiss*) aim not at blurring the boundaries between actor and musician, but rather to communicate with a musician who is speaking. The interesting aspect in the approach of *Superstars* is that the director stages the speaking musician as if he was an actor for a specific amount of time. Abt creates a specific expectation in the audience of how to perceive Kindermann during the performance. Another assignment which can be seen as an attribute of acting was that Kindermann should put both hands into his pocket. Instead of being a specific attribute of the character portrayed, this assignment prevented the musician from gesticulating while speaking, in the case of nervousness. It does work however as such an attribute for the audience, as it is staged, and supports the overall impression of intimacy already mentioned as the reason for using the microphone. Furthermore, Abt did not choose to place the monologue in the middle of the evening, where it was already clear that Kindermann is a musician, but instead he presented it at the very beginning. This

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[142] "[Die Verwendung des Mikrophons] kam nicht aus der Überlegung raus dass es nicht trägt, oder wegen Lautstärke. Es lag daran, dass es einfach intimer werden konnte, dass ich dann nicht so laut diesen persönlichen Text sprechen musste. Ich konnte einfach ganz natürlich in meiner Sprache bleiben."

[143] "Dieser Text wurde eins zu eins abgetippt. Du erhältst dann automatisch Sätze, die grammatikalisch überhaupt nicht stimmen. So wie ich manchmal spreche, Pausen mache oder 'Äh's' reinbringe, das alles stand in diesem Text. Oder Wortwiederholungen, die man eigentlich so nicht machen würde, Eigenarten dieser Sprecherin. Das hilft natürlich sehr, dadurch bekommt alles sofort eine Authentizität. Du hast dadurch schon eine Natürlichkeit in der Sprache. Und dann guckst Du halt, […] wo machst Du eine Pause, wo gehst Du kurz in Dich und denkst nach, wo machst Du so Denkpausen und so. Und das war eigentlich alles, aber das hab ich recht alleine gemacht."

way, either consciously or not, a tension emerges, as the piece itself, as already mentioned, does not communicate Kindermann's musicianship in the opening section, but rather presents him as an actor.

The Actor-Musician

A specific way of extending the musician's profession in the theatre, somewhat different from the extensions that I discussed until here, is the hybrid form of an *actor-musician*. The term has been coined specifically in research on musical theatre in the United Kingdom. Actor-musicianship is understood as a multiple combination of skills: acting, singing, dancing and playing more than one instrument. Conceptually, I differentiate between the musician as other performer and the actor-musician because of the underlying strategies in creating and in a different perceptional effect on the audience. When Torsten Kindermann performs as an actor and later as musician, a moment of switching is involved, or at times one of oscillation. The idea and the perceptional effect is one of tension between perceiving him as actor or as musician, whereas in the case of the actor-musician it is one of merging the professions, of creating hybrid performers who do both.

An example of a director who has become known specifically for his approach to creating musicals using actor-musicianship, is John Doyle. It is surprising that in a genre in which the artistic disciplines are still quite separated (a.o. writing the libretto, composing the music, creating the staging and dances), someone like Doyle opts for a very different strategy of working. In his stagings of various musicals by Stephen Sondheim, the ensemble is composed of actors, yet at the same time the cast forms an instrumental ensemble that plays the accompaniment for the songs. Also, during the instrumental playing the actor-musicians have to sing as a choir. They perform solo vocal sections as well, comparable to the style of solo singing in musicals. There are no musicians, in the sense of professional instrumentalists forming an orchestra or instrumental ensemble.

This seems to be at odds with the objectives of this dissertation. The whole research project is about musicians as theatrical performers, and here it seems to work the other way round, with actors whose profession is strongly extended towards the profession of music, singing and instrumental playing. Strictly speaking, it might be arguable to exclude actor-musicianship from the discussion, but there are several reasons why I have not done so. The main point is that cross-extensions, as I understand them, include mergers of musicians and other professions. The other reason is of concrete relevance to artistic practice and education.[144] My own study specifically focuses on combining and interconnecting the actor and the musician. But it also shows that a subject such as the musician as performer does not have clear-cut boundaries, has border cases and is blurred towards what is included in its focus and what is not.

Doyle himself talks about this approach of actor-musicianship as "a multi-skilled way of telling a story" (Doyle in Pender 2006: n.p.), which reveals how he is thinking about the functions of the different professions of his performers. He sees these multiple skills as means of telling a story through different media, so that an actor who speaks in a dialogue may also continue that on his

[144] At present, there exist several possibilities to study Actor Musicianship in a bachelor course, for example at Rose Bruford College in Kent, UK.

instrument. Regarding the working process, Doyle prefers not to have too much of the staging finished at the beginning of the rehearsals, but to develop the staging together with the actors, depending on what they are good at, but also with what kind of suggestions they come, whether concerning the acting or music making. Although the songs are finished at the beginning of the rehearsals, the instrumentation, arrangements, and staging of the show are developed as work in progress in the rehearsals, together with an orchestrator who works with the actors on the arrangements, depending on their instrumental abilities. Doyle's fascination becomes obvious in the following statement, made in an interview about his staging of *Merrily We Roll Along*, at the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park theatre:

> This particular kind of work is full of surprises. You never know who is going to be able to offer to make music. A lot of these performers have multi-skills, so they play many more than one instrument. [sic] And sometimes you find yourself saying 'oh wouldn't it be lovely if we had a violin in this moment?'. And the two violinists are already on stage, so somebody else says 'Oh, I could play the violin.' You didn't know that. So you can incorporate all those skills, and I think those are real treats for a director, it's like having a toy box that's never ending.[145]

Doyle makes clear how heavily he depends on the qualities and creativity of the actors, which again connects him less to the more common way of producing and rehearsing musicals, but much more to process-oriented theatre makers such as Heiner Goebbels or Jan Lauwers. Two other groups that bring forth recent developments of the actor-musician are Gardzienice (Poland) and the Gogmagogs (UK). It is important to realise, however, that together with the hybrid form of singer-actor-dancer in the mainstream musical[146], these hybrid forms did not just emerge recently. Music has been diversified, interlaced and intermingled with poetry and spoken text throughout the history of theatre. Mergers between musicians and actors go back to Greek drama, "as ancients never recited poetry without music and Orpheus played only with verse" (Cohen 1974, 19). Pianist and music theatre scholar Zachary Dunbar points out that

> when actors sang and recited poetry in Tudor masques, when music and dance moved between secular and sacred space in Passion plays, when the actor-dancer-singer combination formed in ancient pantomime, when the eighteenth-century composer Marin Marais instructs a violin player to speak whilst playing in his Le Tableau de l'Opération de la Taille, or when Greek tragedy was idealized in the multi-media spectacle of French Ballet Comique, the visual and aural blurring of parts and roles signified convergences of music- and theatre-making. (Dunbar 2010)[147]

Dunbar is making a quite remarkable point here, as the contemporary division of the various professions such as actor, dancer, musician and so on were not always a given, but a result of specialisation of the different cultural domains since the eighteenth century. The ancient Greeks were not thinking in terms of these specialisations, but rather regarded the various kinds of performance practice much more as a blending of different roles or different kinds of expressions, rather than understanding them as hybrid forms of specialisations. Only on the basis of the latter

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[145] *"Merrily We Roll Along": An Interview with John Doyle*, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTBMjeCTjXo, last retrieved March 14, 2012.

[146] However, I regard the musical of less importance for this study, since in the fewest musicals the material - be it musical, theatrical or movement-wise - is developed as *creation* (see introduction, p. 17). Most stagings of a musical belong to the Coussens' categories of interpretation or, at the utmost, sampling.

[147] In personal email conversation.

the current discourse about hybrid forms as well as the concept of extending a profession makes sense.

CHAPTER 4 - CONCEPTUALISING REDUCTION

In this chapter, the discussion enters the core of my research: the reductive approach. In my own artistic work I apply reduction to the musician's profession, while other artists discussed in this chapter do so with actors or dancers in the fields of performance and installation art. Both the theoretical and the practical work focus on the framework of external and internal elements of the musician's profession, and present examples of how these are taken away. Theory is thus elaborated and concretised through artistic work: the conceptual framework of internal, external and contextual elements not only addresses a specific understanding of existing artistic work (by myself and others), but also strongly influences the creation processes of my performances.[148]

To contextualise the overall research findings, artistic practices in recent music theatrical performances in general and my own artistic work in particular, I will first observe and analyse musicians who are deprived of their instrument as most important external element. This will be followed by a discussion as how to remove internal elements, and then musical sound altogether, and its consequences for performance. Next, the discussion will lead to the idea of staging musicians as "less present", finally getting to works without any performers at all.

Several differences between reduction and expansion can be traced in the creation strategy, the impact on the performer and the reception. In the expansive approach I localised a tension between what the musician is used to, versus several less usual or extra-musical performative elements being responsible for the theatrical effect. In the reductive approach, a specific tension is responsible for the theatrical effect as well, situated for the musician in the distance between well-known and rather unfamiliar elements of performance. This results in an intensified effort in order to be able to perform, and therewith a heightened awareness and presence on stage. The crucial difference is that when the profession of the musician is extended, the core of the profession is kept intact. The musician is performing music, and several elements of performance might be added.[149] In the case of reduction, the profession itself becomes deconstructed; elements of performance are torn apart and the musician is denied certain habits and making use of bodily knowledge that she is used to for many years. The ritual of making music is unsettled, challenged or taken apart into several medial entities that are usually inseparable. In opposite to learning single elements anew (such as in the form of performative assignments in the expansive approach), a musician in this situation has to let go crucial elements of performance. This certainly produces a different kind of tension than described in the previous chapter. For many musicians this deconstruction feels much more radical, occasionally almost violent, as several elements of performance that usually are and have been taken for granted in the concert hall and even on the theatre stage are renegotiated. The musician is challenged intellectually because she has to reflect on her professional habits and to rethink them.[150] Many of the musicians I have worked with in my artistic practice became more conscious of what they were actually doing when they were

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[148] In its most concrete form this happens with *still life 2.0*. See p. 113.

[149] The only exception may be the category of the musician as *other performer*, where the original profession incidentally might disappear.

[150] This rethinking strongly happens in practice, during the performance or in the rehearsal process, or in the talks during or in between the rehearsals.

performing music, playing their instruments or conducting, at the very moment when they were forced into *not* doing something. In the case of the expansive approach the specific process of reflection is situated differently. The profession is in this case influenced by the extra-musical assignments, so that for example flute-playing is situated differently for the musician who is asked to throw tennis balls in between the musical phrases. However, I argue that whereas more and more musicians nowadays are used to techniques that extend their profession (the expansive approach) and thus do not experience the extra-musical assignments as real problems or difficulties anymore, reduction has the potential to intervene into the musician's profession in a significantly more radical way. In the reductive approach, it is the endeavour to handle the missing elements, the denial of certain habits that usually form an integral part of the musician's professional identity, what makes it theatrical. The absence of crucial elements of performance create an emptied space, which on top might be filled in with imagination, interpretation and meaning by the audience.

The differences in the working strategies of the two approaches require different strategies for their analysis. In case of the reductive approach, it does not sufficiently work to address several stages of reduction, comparable to how I described the different stages of extension. Because the different elements of the musician's profession are strongly interdependent to each other, they do not necessarily work in a hierarchic way or in a continuum - one element is not necessarily easier to take away, or more or less complex than another element. I will therefore analyse the different phenomena of reduction by addressing the concept of the internal, external and contextual elements of the musician's profession as outlined in Chapter One. I will discuss these various elements and how it works in practice when they are taken away; how the actual struggle of the musician may take shape, and what the effect of a given strategy of reduction might be, both for the musician herself and for the perception of her in the moment of performance. I will elaborate on how the missing elements might or might not effectively be communicated to the audience as taken away, and with what kind of theatrical effect.

Crucial to the perception are the elements that are left, the remainders of the musician's profession. In fact, two complementary questions are central to the process of creating performances with reductive approaches: what is taken away, and what is staged as left over; which performative elements remain; and with what kind of effect, both for performer and receiver? Reductive approaches play with the audience's knowledge, the conventions and cultural codes of what musicians do, how they are in general perceived by an audience. Depending on which elements are taken away on the one hand, and on the other which are left over, the missing elements are fairly obvious. As performances without performers challenge the general assumption that theatre is performed by human bodies, the performance with reductive elements plays with the expectation of what a musician is and what she usually is supposed to do on stage. This presents an element of friction on the audience's side as well, which is partly responsible for the theatrical effect. A missing element is only perceived as such if one recognises it as missing.

Taking away External Elements - Musicians without Instruments

Taking the instrument away from a musician is perhaps the most obvious and radical way of working with reductive approaches. No matter if a musician is making classical music, jazz, rock- or pop music, at least traditional instruments are such a crucial part of the musician's identity, that taking them away in performance has far reaching consequences. Computer and electronic instruments, with their ever-new design in hard-and software, might be crucial exceptions here. However, also other less traditional instruments such as turntables are usually an indispensable part of this musician's performance.

When the instrument is missing, its function as extension of the musician's body is taken away. Given the understanding of many musicians who indeed perceive their instrument as a natural extension and means for expressing themselves in music, one could even state that a musician who is denied her instrument considers herself as partially amputated. I mean this not only as literally detached from the instrument as a physical object that the musician knows extremely well, but also from an often life-long practice on that instrument. Taking away the external element "instrument" results in the simultaneous detachment from several internal elements of the musical profession.

Speaking from an artistic, collaborative point of view, why expose the musician to such an uncomfortable situation? It is the taking away of the instrument that creates a tension, a state of increased awareness of the musicians, and that makes the approach interesting and fascinating for the theatrical stage. As the attachment to the instrument is absent, the musician has to bridge this missing familiarity by an additional effort to fulfil the performative assignments, with the intention of making something else visible: taking away the instrument from a musician has the potential of really seeing the musician as performer and focus on the bodily performative quality much more than in most music making with an instrument.

Musicians without instruments on film: *Sigh*

Composers or (music) theatre makers are not the only ones who work intensively with musicians and collaborate closely with them. From her background in the visual arts originally, British artist Sam Taylor-Wood (b.1967) created several works with musicians without instruments, manifested in the form of video installations. Reductive ideas are a recognisable thread through Taylor-Wood's work, from various angles, perspectives and viewpoints. In *Breach (Girl and Eunuch)* (2001), the sounds of a girl's tears and her sobbing are removed, taking away the inherent sound of the scene, while at the same time the "qualitative experiencer" (Robin Nelson)[151] is invited to imagine her own sounds to go with the silent movie. Taylor-Wood's film *The Last Century* (2006) seems to be not

[151] "Experiencer" is a term to serve in situations where either 'spectator' of 'audience' may fall too short, suggesting "a more immersive engagement in which the principles of composition of a piece create an environment designed to elicit a broadly visceral, sensual encounter […]." (Nelson in Bay-Cheng et. al 2010: 45).

much more than a static image of a group of actors, with no 'acting' happening. The actors' utterances are reduced to "involuntary blinking, twitching and barely-visible breathing".[152]

Taylor-Wood employed such reductive approaches also in visual works that are closely related to music, works that deal with music or musicians from which or whom specific elements are taken away. In *Mute* (2001) a singer's performance is filmed but the sound has been taken away, giving the work the impression someone pushed the mute button.[153] In *Prelude in Air* (2006) Taylor-Wood filmed a musician playing a cello suite of Johann Sebastian Bach, but without the instrument. The cello is absent.

Departing from the idea of making the musical instrument absent while the playing musician is filmed, Taylor-Wood created the large-scale multi-screen installation *Sigh* in 2008[154], in collaboration with the BBC Concert Orchestra and with British composer Anne Dudley. In the work the members of the orchestra are sitting in their everyday clothes in an old factory building. When the conductor, projected on one of the video screens starts conducting, the musicians start miming the piece of music. The different sections of the orchestra - percussion, woodwinds, brass and strings were filmed individually in different takes and projected on seven screens, in a circle around the conductor's screen. This spatial arrangement plays with the experiencer's perception of how an orchestra is arranged, One has the feeling of being able to walk across the imagined stage, between the musicians, experiencing an orchestra from within its inner workings during a performance.

Image 4.1: Sam Taylor-Wood, *Sigh* (2008)

[152] http://whitecube.com/artists/sam_taylor-wood/, last retrieved September 17, 2012.

[153] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ai14sZvEGw&feature=relmfu, last retrieved June 27, 2013.

[154] I have seen the installation on 14.5.2011 in Kunsthal Rotterdam, as part of the exhibition *I Promise to Love You* (Caldic Collection).

Looking at *Sigh* and other works, Taylor-Wood's play with expectation is remarkable. She makes something absent which is commonly expected by the audience or the museum-goer to be there. One expects to hear the falling tears in *Breach*; to hear the girl sobbing. One expects the singer in *Mute* to sing, even if the work's title does suggest the contrary. These pieces, together with *Prelude in Air*, are often associated with melancholy, loss, immateriality or "the removal of a voice" (program book for the exhibition *I Promise to Love You*). Reduction works as a creation strategy, as a metaphor for aesthetic content, and as a spring board for interpretation.

Playing the saxophone without playing the saxophone: *Thespian Play*[155]

In my own artistic work, simultaneously being used as exemplifications of this research and as radicalisations of the concept of reduction, *Thespian Play* (2009) exemplifies taking away the instrument from the musician. A saxophone player performs a *musical choreography* without his instrument, quasi-miming what happens on the soundtrack.[156] He does not make a single sound during the whole piece. The performance is a kind of mime or playback performance, on the borders of music, choreography and installation. The main conceptual idea at the outset of the creation was the fragmentation of the performer - the separation of the different means of expression. Especially movement (the live body) and sound (loudspeakers/electronics) are extracted and used as separate entities and elements in the performance. Movement is performed solely by the body's physical action, sound solely through the loudspeakers and the soundtrack. Important aspects in which the musician has traditionally trained for many years - playing his instrument and controlling both the sound and timing he produces - are taken away from him. Every sound is pre-recorded and partly processed by electronics. The performer has to follow the mechanical soundtrack and must adjust his movements exclusively to the external sound source. On the other hand, every sound, pure or heavily processed by electronics, has its origin in the musician and his instrument. During the rehearsal process all basic sounds were recorded by the musician with his instrument, so the performer knows very well everything which surrounds him acoustically. He also knows the origin of the processed sounds, which enables him to produce the movements in his body to mime these sounds - though without his instrument. It is a conceptual and conscious choice to make separate, pre-recorded audio and video tracks instead using of live electronics, motion-sensors or live video.[157] The sound and movement produced by a musician are usually inseparable, as part of what I earlier called the "cause-and-effect-chain" of making music, but in *Thespian Play* they are separated, with the result that a fragmentation of the different elements is made visible, remaining fragmented and separate, and at the same time complementing each other to create a new, tessellated whole.

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[155] Parts of this section have earlier been published under the title "*Thespian Play*: Synchronous differences." In Bay-Cheng, Sarah, Chiel Kattenbelt, Andy Lavender and Robin Nelson (eds.) (2010), *Mapping Intermediality in Performance* (pp. 143-148). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press: 143-148.

[156] It is possible to watch a video trailer of the performance on www.falkhubner.com/ThespianPlay.html.

[157] For a detailed discussion of the technique of using live-video to create effects of doubling to express difference see: Merx, Siegrid (2006). "Verdubbeling en transformatie. De rol van video in de Proustcyclus van Guy Cassiers." In Henk Havens, Chiel Kattenbelt, Eric de Ruijter and Kees Vuyk (eds.), *Theater en technologie* (pp. 48-61). Amsterdam: Theater Instituut Nederland.
For a discussion of interactive live electronics in combination with dance see the papers by Todd Winkler on http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Music/sites/winkler//papers/index.html.

The performance developed into a musical choreography of the performer's body. This causes tension with the soundtrack which emphasises a lack of control by the performer, and a tension between seeing and hearing, although happening at the same time. The performance expresses the separation of space and time: something which is recorded in the past, and put together at the very moment of the performance with the live performer. Besides the possibility of gaining access to a specific kind of theatricality, it is crucial to note that the resulting choreographic movements can only be performed by a musician. Even without the instrument, the saxophone player in *Thespian Play* is performing the piece on the basis of his life-long training on the instrument, using the finger movements, his breathing technique and the techniques of his lips, so that the resulting theatricality is exclusively bound to the performer as musician.

Image 4.2: *Thespian Play* (2009)

Idea and concept

In the performance the various medial layers of the performer's body are extracted and used as separate elements, exclusively using pre-recorded material from the performer. An interest I had in the beginning was creating a heterophony of different means of expression and intermodality of rhythms[158]: I questioned whether the rhythms of sound and moving body are the same, or if there is a polyphony of two (or more) independent rhythms, or whether they add up to one compound rhythm.

I was interested in what becomes the identity of the performer's actions on stage. I was interested in dislocating the central parameters of the profession of a musician, his instrument and, even more striking, his ability to control and to decide what to play, and when, his ability for timing. But I wanted to create a piece that can only be performed by a musician, as it calls on the crucial abilities of the musician, in this case a saxophone player, namely his breathing, finger and lip techniques, and his ability to perform and to remember complex musical rhythms. Detached from their usual purpose of creating sound, the musical movements become performative utterances. The bodily movements can hardly be performed by a dancer or actor, they have to be performed by a musician, even specifically by a saxophone, or possibly a clarinet player; partly because of the demanding in-depth physical knowledge of saxophone playing, partly because of the musical complexity of the piece as such.

Regarding her abilities as a performer, a musician generally has control over his appearance and surroundings on stage, over both space and time (see also Kattenbelt in Havens et al. 2006: 22). In this context the performer of *Thespian Play* in fact does not do that much; he seems to be only a kind of human "at rest" in the acoustic surrounding of the performance. He is surrounded by an audio and video environment that he has co-created, but cannot control. His instrument has been taken away from him, as well as one of his most crucial abilities as a musician, the control and interpretation of time. All audio signals have been pre-recorded, processed and produced in advance, so the performer has no control over any musical parameters. Being a live performer, he is the centre of the performance as perceived by the audience, but bound to the control of the electronic system. He has to know very well how to accept and to use the sound coming from the soundtrack.

From process to product

In the opening passage of the piece I composed the player's finger movements and then doubled them by pre-recorded and amplified key sounds of the saxophone, thus fragmenting two elements that usually belong together and are produced at the same time: finger movement and corresponding key sounds. Having recorded the key sounds with the performer, I started composing the choreography, worked on the sounds and organised them in the software program. I loaded the sounds into a sampler in order to be able to react most flexibly to the movements, and to readjust and reorder the sounds if necessary. For rehearsal purposes I composed several

[158] By intermodality of rhythms I understand that rhythms as temporal events can be experienced by all senses. Visual rhythms can be set against musical or textual rhythms. For a more detailed description on intermodality see Brüstle et al. 2005: 16-18.

etudes to test and learn about the relationship between sound and movement in this specific setting. We rehearsed these examples over and over again and I changed sounds until we got a movement-sound-relation that I liked most. In general, on both hands I chose to use lighter sounds for the little finger, the ring finger and the middle finger, and heavier, bass-like sounds for the thumb and the index finger. Thus, in the actual performance of the passage there is no longer any real-life connection between the technique and the original sound the technique usually produces.[159] It is this aspect that forms the most important difference to Taylor-Wood's *Prelude in Air*, despite the obvious similarities: the *Prelude* works in a mime setting comparable to *Thespian Play*, broaching the issue of the loss of the instrument and the resulting melancholy. The possibilities of the instrument as such are not subject of the piece, whereas *Thespian Play* is not even playable on a real instrument; the absence of the saxophone and the setting of the performance makes the piece and the resulting choreography possible.

Other than one would possibly expect in the case of an exact doubling of sound and movement, the experience of this passage is still one of separation and difference, although every movement is precisely doubled in time by sound. The sounds are taken out of their original context (some of the sounds can even hardly be perceived as key sounds if the listener does not know their origin), displaced[160] and confronted with movement, raising the awareness of the viewer and giving the possibility to new experiences of relationships between movement and sound. Without digital technology this process would not have been possible, since only contemporary audio software offers advanced interfaces, direct and fast access to recording, enhanced manipulation, live performance and post-production capabilities. All four play a major role in audio and composition work in theatre and performance in general, and were crucial specifically for the creation of *Thespian Play*.

When I was planning the piece, I wanted to use the auditive and visual elements separately and independently, in a polyphonic and intermodal way. However, during the process this approach did not prove to work best: movement and sound seemed weak and as a rather uncoordinated whole, seeming somewhat arbitrary and without a strong coherence. In general that would not be a problem, as countless contemporary theatre performances have proved, but in this case the artistic and aesthetic result was weak mainly for two conceptual and practical reasons. If movement and sound were presented as autonomous elements, the sound would be perceived more as soundtrack to a minimalist choreography (neither in fact convincing at all). The difference between the two would paradoxically almost disappear, because they would have been presented as autonomous elements which in fact they are not. Although fragmented, both are different performative aspects of the act of music making. When placed at the exact moment in time, the difference becomes most experienceable, because one perceives elements as separate that usually belong together. In fact the concept of intermediality as "phenomena across medial

[159] In my experience of the piece, this disconnectedness does not produce arbitrariness, but on the contrary gives more orientation to the spectator, as the sound is not related to the instrument (which is absent), but on the finger movement. As every finger has a specific sound assigned to it, it is in fact much easier to follow what is happening. Actually the relationship between movement and sound would become much more arbitrary *if* the "real" sounds resulting in the use of the different finger settings would have been used.

[160] I use the concept of displacement here as "[removing] objects, images, and words […] from their original contexts, thus drawing new attention to the object." (Groot-Nibbelink in Bay-Cheng et. al 2010: 97) Usually the sounds belong closely to the musician and her instrument, but through the process of displacing them they become self referential and present as sounds as such, different from their self-evident identity when played by a musician.

boundaries that involve at least two conventionally distinct media" (Rajewsky 2002: 13, my translation) is reversed. In *Thespian Play* aspects not usually perceived as distinct media are separated and thus perceived as distinct *after* the process of separation, with the effect that one becomes aware of the art form's mediality, of the varied elements of musical performance.

The second, more practical reason is that the musician needs some sounding relationship to his movements in order to be able to perform that movement convincingly. Since sound, as *the* effect of his movements and physical bodily processes*,* is already taken away from him, displaced and taken over by the electronic soundtrack, he has to be able to connect his movements to something he knows. As a musician he does not think and act in reference to purely bodily movement as dancers or mime actors can, but he does need some minimal acoustic reference to be able to perform in a convincing way and to fill his movements with meaning and intensity.[161]

Surprisingly, the most striking and interesting relationships between movement and sound occur when the rhythms of both are exactly the same. By placing movement and sound exactly together in unison, the differences between them (and their mediators, the live performer and the soundtrack) are most accentuated. This phenomenon of unison as such is not new in contemporary theatre. In many performances movements are repeated (Christoph Marthaler), or performed in slow motion in unison (Robert Wilson). Precisely because movements are performed at the same time and in the same way by different performers, even the smallest differences become particularly noticeable. The difference in *Thespian Play* is that I use *different* media that are not necessarily directly connected with each other, yet they still match each other in the experience of the here and now of the performance.

In many theatre and performance works since the 1960s rhythm has been used to de-synchronise the audience, as a means against traditional dramatic or character-driven interpretations of theatre. The individuality of the different media has been accentuated by giving them their own autonomous rhythms, rather than supporting each other's rhythms and multiplying one and the same idea. In giving the audience an experience of dislocation, this approach has become a powerful tool for the liberation from logocentrism in the context of postdramatic theatre, as well as for shifting the attention from working on character and narrative towards timing and polyphony of the various media (Roesner 2008). Other approaches work with repetitions, in which a particular element changes every time it occurs, which gives the audience the experience of difference (Fischer-Lichte in Brüstle et al. 2005: 238-239). In *Thespian Play*, it is neither the individuality of the different media nor repetition which expresses and accentuates the distinctiveness of sound and movement, and makes the small differences experienceable. I use exactly the same rhythm for both and hold a strong coherence between both visual and auditive rhythms through the whole performance.[162] It is the exact appearance of visual and auditive elements, placed together in time, which communicates their difference.

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[161] These aspect apply especially for this specific performance with this specific setting. In my later performance *almost equal / meistens gleich* for conductor and trombone player (2010), I use solely the movement of the two performers as choreographic material, completely independent from sound, even in stillness. Here *visual* rhythms become much more important for the performers than in *Thespian Play*.

[162] There are passages in the piece that are so polyphonic and complex in sound that they cannot be completely doubled by one player. Still, in these passages the performer doubles at least one of the audible voices, and also switches between different voices.

The core of this experience of difference is even stronger for two reasons. According to normative conventions, we expect sound and movement to match, even if we already know that they are separately produced (as in playback shows). In *Thespian Play* the perception is twisted because movement rhythmically matches with sound, but the instrument is missing with which these sounds have been produced. What makes this experience more radical is that I manipulate and combine pre-recorded saxophone sounds in ways that do not just re-inform the possibilities of the instrument, but which are not possible in reality.[163] By means of technology the saxophone player seems to be able to perform something impossible, which makes the difference between his movements and the sounds even more striking. Although the technical processes are obvious and made visible, in some passages of the piece one could almost believe that the performer really produces the sounds, although one knows that this is not possible due to the absence of the instrument. The experience constantly shifts and oscillates between knowing and believing.

Nearly all artistic decisions during the process made the piece "simpler" and clearer, but at the same time more radical, and the experience of difference greater; the difference of origins of the displaced material more experienceable, the fragmentation more obvious and clear. In my experience of the creation of this performance, it is not necessarily the best approach to plan or to design difference, fragmentation, displacement or separation. In the example of *Thespian Play*, the most striking experiences emerge from the simplification and rhythmical parallelisation of the different elements.

As a result of the staging of the performance, the audience experiences much more the bodily endeavours of the musician-as-performer than a musician performing a piece on his instrument. As the instrument is missing, the focus of attention shifts to the body; to the musician's hands, his face or his throat. The musician becomes a performer, and becomes theatrical without acting. As I could experience in talks with various audience members, it's not clear what this person on stage actually is: especially in the beginning of the piece it could be an actor or a mime, or perhaps even a dancer. During the piece this changes bit by bit, and in the last third of the piece, at the latest, it is obvious that it is a musician performing. This openness of reception or interpretation is a result of the missing elements of the musician's profession, and the electronic media that fill in these elements. The absent instrument makes it possible for the audience to fill in the emerging "empty space" with their own interpretation concerning the identity of the performer. Still, as all actions have at least some reference to the performer's professional practice as a musician, it becomes possible for him to perform carefully choreographed movements without his instrument. By means of this fragmentation of movement and sound the movements themselves become theatrical, and may be further developed to an independent, yet musical movement language.

However, for the performer the setting of the performance is quite demanding. He has no instrument anymore, and thus a large part of his life-long musical practice is gone; he does something which he has never done before. The performance of the piece demands an enormous amount of concentration, and the performer struggles anew with the piece at every performance.

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[163] This is the case for example when the saxophone player would have to remove the mouth piece for a specific sound, and to put it on for the next sound. In reality, the time to change the physical condition of the instrument would be far too short to play these two sounds directly after one another.

Precisely because the instrument is missing, even standard musical movements become new and challenging; no matter how often the performer plays *Thespian Play*, performing without his instrument will never belong to his professional daily practice. For me as a director watching his performance in the theatre, it remains a challenging experience, sitting on the edge of my seat, as very small mistakes are easy to make and immediately recognisable. Though he is physically there, he is displaced from his habitus; his customary mode of producing sound through his instrument has been digitally displaced through time and space. The player's attempt to reconcile these separations in performance is both futile and at the same time seemingly possible, and this is what makes the performance of *Thespian Play* challenging for the saxophonist and audience alike.

In both *Sigh* and *Thespian Play*, the musicians are performing without their instruments, performing as mimes, while *Sigh* is created from the perspective of a visual artist, given shape in the form of a video installation. *Sigh* tends to work entirely differently than *Thespian Play*, not the least because it is not a live performance but a video installation. The piece does not happen in the here and now with live performers, but the musicians are projected onto screens. A further important difference is that despite the same or a similar technique of performing from the musicians' point of view, the members of the orchestra in *Sigh* remain essentially musicians. They are not transformed into theatrical performers in a way, and I state this for the following reasons.

First, the setting of *Sigh* provokes a kind of an "as-if" situation. The musicians are performing *as if* there were playing, they are almost acting the playing of their instruments, though without instruments. At the beginning of the piece, the musicians concentrate, then look to the imaginary conductor, *as if* there was a conductor, whose performance was recorded separately and during the work only present as video projection.[164] When they start performing, they are playing the air and relaxing their bodies as if it was a real situation, and they were really performing this piece of music. Their performance comes very close to acting in Kirby's sense of pretending, simulating and representing. The conductor finds himself in such an extreme "as-if" situation as well: conducting music in a playback environment, where the music is not played by the ones he is supposed to conduct. He is filmed, and he does not give cues to real musicians (not even the ones who are miming, as the musicians are filmed separately and are thus absent during the conductor's shot), but for a camera. The same goes for his expression, which neither affects nor finds an answer in the playing of the musicians.[165]

Second, the music is an autonomous composition in itself. It can potentially be played and listened to on a CD, but it is also perfectly possible to perform the music as musical composition in a symphonic program. The piece can be perceived as a musical work, without the impression that something is missing. The soundtrack in *Thespian Play* works quite differently. The music is not composed to have the potential of an autonomous piece of music (in fact I myself find it not very

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[164] The whole performance in fact *was* conducted by conductor Jurjen Hempel. During the video recording the music was performed as if it was a normal performance, only without the instruments, with the musical notation projected onto a screen above the camera, invisible on the final video. Each section of the orchestra was recorded separately, as was the performance of the conductor. (I have to thank Kate Perutz from White Cube London for this information.)

[165] I will come to the difficulty of this way of performing for a conductor later, in the discussion of my own performance *almost equal / meistens gleich*; see p. 128.

interesting to listen at), and does not work like that. The music needs the visual and the performative part, the live musician as the complementary part, to be perceived as a complete work of art. What makes *Thespian Play* interesting to experience is the relation between the sound and movements, the tension between these elements and the challenge for the musician to follow and double the soundtrack as exactly as possible. The actual game, subject or even narrative of *Thespian Play* is how the live body relates to the mechanical soundtrack.

Third, related to the previous aspect, is the relation between the sounding notes in the composition and the quality of choreographic movement to produce these notes. As stated in the first chapter, at least every traditional instrument requires a physical action to produce sound, such as breathing, moving fingers to close and open keys of a flute or arm movements of a string or percussion player. Creating a piece like *Sigh* or *Thespian Play* means focussing on exactly the *relation* between the sounds and their movements. During the development of *Thespian Play* we were very much looking for sounds that work well as choreographic elements of the mime: there is no single sound that is not tested for its specificity and effectivity in combination with its "double", the miming performer. This had a huge influence of the musical material we used, as, for example, most of the musical motives or sounds are short rather than long notes or *cantabile* melodies; I judged this as much easier and convincing to follow and experience with an eye on the relation between the visual and the audible. This relationship seems of far less importance in *Sigh*, as the internal logic of the composition is primarily musical. The musicians are doing exactly what they would have done at a regular performance, as if they were playing the music. The strength of the movements works particularly well with the corresponding sound, the result being the movement that is necessary to produce precisely this sound in a concert situation, however, the choreographic potential remains limited. There is no obvious section in the piece focussing on choreographic actions, such as in the beginning of *Thespian Play* that focuses explicitly on finger movements related to key sounds.

Fourth, a re-information of the instrument's possibilities as analysed in the discussion of *Thespian Play* is not happening in *Sigh*. All instrumental gestures that are performed and doubled on the soundtrack (or the other way round, the notes and music which is doubled by the soundless gestures of the musicians) are conventional playing techniques, no kind of extended technique is applied in Anne Dudley's music. All sounds and combinations of sounds are perfectly possible in reality and playable in a live concert without any problem. This is not the case with the performance of *Thespian Play*, on the contrary: it is precisely the impossibility of playing the piece on a physically present instrument which creates the specific gestural-musical language of *Thespian Play* and which adds significantly to its theatrical dimension.

Thinking music from choreography: Xavier Le Roy

An aspect that constantly reappears in the previously discussed examples is the one of choreography. By taking away the instrument from a musician in a performance situation, the body is exposed in a way that potentially enhances the performative presence of this musician, and invites the audience to read and interpret the body much more in a way that focusses on its movements than on the musical content of those movements. In one way, the body literally becomes more exposed as there is no instrument that covers it or blocks the view on the music

making body. Additionally, the absence of the instrument steers the audience's gaze towards the body; something is missing, which highlights the presence of another.[166]

When a choreographic perspective[167] appears from within the main medium of music, it might be fruitful to have a look at an artist who works the other way round, with dance and choreography as the main artistic discipline. Xavier Le Roy is a dancer and choreographer who has used musical ideas in his projects, thought from his own perspective: dance. Le Roy's work has several connections to reductive approaches and to absence in the domain of dance.[168] In recent years several works of Le Roy show quite a conspicuous focus on aspects derived from musical projects. Two works in which his working method with reductive ideas in connection to musicians become most clear are *Mouvements für Lachenmann - Salut für Caudwell* (2005), and *Sacre du Printemps* (2007) based on Le Roy's observations of Simon Rattle rehearsing Stravinsky's famous piece for orchestra.

As part of the staged concert *Mouvements für Lachenmann*, Xavier Le Roy created *Salut für Caudwell* (called *Caudwell* from here on). The music is a composition for two guitars by German composer Helmut Lachenmann (b.1935), composed in 1977.[169] The music is built on a considerable amount of *extended techniques*, such as hitting the neck of the guitars or scratching the strings. Lachenmann's sounds refer to their concrete origin, to the way of sound production itself, by means of physical action. His pieces are "compositions in which the audibility of the music making body is not experienced as merely instrumental, serving a sound ideal, but as expression of physical presence." (Craenen 2011: 50, my translation)[170] As most of Lachenmann's chamber music compositions, *Caudwell* can be experienced as physically demanding for the guitarists, and visually appealing for the audience, a composition not only to be heard but to be seen as well. However, Lachenmann himself does not specifically aim at a theatrical or choreographic experience of his music, despite its choreographic potential. It is nevertheless exactly the physical impact of his music that attracts choreographers such as Xavier Le Roy to these compositions. Especially the relationship between hearing and seeing is important for Le Roy:

> After listening and reading some of Helmut Lachenmann's pieces: I get the feeling that H.L.'s music, at least *Salut für Caudwell*, was written as much to be seen as it was to be heard. Listening to his music coming out of my stereo speakers […] I couldn't help myself from wondering what the musicians were actually doing with their instruments. (Le Roy 2006: n.p.)

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[166] Of course there are many more way of accentuating the choreographic ways of making music. I refer to the doctoral research and dissertation of Paul Craenen (2011), *Gecomponeerde Uitvoerders*. Leiden: Leiden University. Here, Craenen discusses the accentuation of the musician's body in contemporary instrumental compositions, and analyses a "body paradigm" in the work of a generation of young composers today.

[167] "To trace a choreographic intention would mean that specific movement patterns do not have the function of making sound in the first place, but are rather motivated by their visual impact." (Craenen 2011: 82, my translation)
"Een choreografische intentie terugvinden zou betekenen dat sommige bewegingspatronen niet in de eerste plaats een klankfunctie bezitten, maar gemotiveerd zijn door hun visuele bewegingskwaliteit."

[168] See Gerald Siegmund's chapter on Le Roy's work, "Die Artikulation des Dazwischen" in Siegmund 2006: 369-408.

[169] The other compositions of the staged concert are Lachenmann's *Schattentanz* for piano (No. 7 from *Ein Kinderspiel*, 1980) and *Mouvement (- vor der Erstarrung)* for ensemble (1982/84).

[170] "[…] composities waarin de hoorbaarheid van het musicerende lichaam niet ervaren wordt als louter instrumenteel, ten dienste van een klankideaal, maar als expressie van fysieke aanwezigheid."

Le Roy chose a very specific staging of *Caudwell*. He extended the ensemble from two to four guitarists, two of them sitting behind screens, invisible to the audience, for the performance of the work. Two other players are sitting in front of the screens, performing the piece *without* their instruments as mime players, synchronised with the other two, with their movements as close as possible to the actual movements necessary to perform the composition. Le Roy made several small interventions in the piece, such as stopping the movement while the invisible players continue to play, or looking upwards at the end of the performance. The already present choreographic potential of Lachenmann's music gets even more strengthened by Le Roy's interventions, and becomes more visible. In his theatrical-choreographic interpretation, Le Roy develops a "dramaturgy of relationships between the visible and the audible to reveal some already existing theatrical aspects of Lachenmann's compositions and to transform the concert event in a choreography." [171] To do so, Le Roy applies *reduction* as strategy, he works with taking away external elements from the musician's performance. Already in Le Roy's first ideas on the production, documented in his text for *Revue de L'Ircam No 2*, embryonic thoughts about reduction can be traced:

> In order to take the composer's ideas and bring them on stage for a theatrical production we may have to make things more visual for them to be heard (differently); or maybe have only a visual element and not hear anything. […] So what if we take the instrument away and imagine the sound? (Le Roy 2006: n.p.)

The staging of *Caudwell* accentuates the choreographic potential of Lachenmann's composition by taking away the instruments of the visible performers. The sound is not anymore the result of a musical action, but is now the starting point for developing a performative, choreographic utterance. This approach opens the view on the performers' bodies literally, but also metaphorically on the movements and their performative and theatrical potential, it makes a different perception of Lachenmann's music possible. Precisely by changing the relationship between sound and movement in several moments of the performance, Le Roy creates a counterpoint to predictability and achieves a tension that lasts throughout the performance.

[171] http://www.xavierleroy.com/page.php?sp=e347f884fa37480bd0bd5dff79104483a8e284b5&lg=en, last retrieved September 10, 2012.

Taking away Internal Elements

Compared to external elements, internal elements of the musician are far more difficult to identify in live performance. It is also more difficult to stage missing internal elements and to communicate this loss to an audience, because these internal elements can hardly be directly perceived. The ability for active listening for example is crucial to the profession of a musician, but cannot directly be experienced on a theatre stage, and can hardly be communicated convincingly if taken away. However, the "missing" internal elements might have an enormous impact on the performer. Not being able to execute certain habits of her profession may cause the musician an enormous struggle.

One possible example for taking away internal elements may also be the previously mentioned *Emergency Solos* by Christina Kubisch.[172] The performer is assigned to play her flute and several other objects attached to the instrument or to the performer's body. But it is actually the ability for a virtuoso performance that is taken away here. The flute player is denied any kind of virtuoso performance in these pieces; and this denial is also the concrete subject of the piece: As the title suggests, the works comment on the identity of the soloist, mostly associated with classical "virtuoso" music. In the pieces, the soloist is challenged by the task of playing the flute, and encounters the impossibility of doing so. When the soloist tries to play the flute only with thimbles on her fingertips, it is not the actual flute sound in the sense of the sound for which it is built, that is coming out. The only sounds created are the miniaturist metallic noises of the thimbles hitting the flute keys. What the audience perceives is the strife to make an actual flute sound, and the impossibility of getting to it.

The performer being reduced to "impulse and input": *still life 2.0*

Unlike *Thespian Play*, the study *still life 2.0* (2010) for viola player, dancer, live electronics and live video, is an experiment in taking away internal elements from the musician's profession. In doing so, this artistic work is a direct result from the theoretical framework of internal, external and contextual elements; without this framework *still life 2.0* would have hardly been possible to conceive. The objective is to remove the ability to develop structures over time. Electronic media and live performance exchange their functions, so that screen, video and loudspeakers are experienced as performance, and performers become part of an installation. Related to this is the idea that the non-living elements on stage are experienced as living entities, and that the performers of flesh and blood develop an almost machine-like presence on stage, twisting the perception of both human performers and electronic media.

A viola player and a dancer perform short and isolated movement and sound fragments which are recorded by a microphone and two cameras. For the largest part of the performance the two performers are "just standing", watching the other performer, watching the audience, or they are off stage. These short fragments are recorded and processed by microphones and video cameras. A computer program processes the input of the two performers as its only material into

[172] See p. 11 for a short introduction about the pieces.

an audiovisual score on loudspeakers and video screen; the piece emerges and develops completely out of these short fragments. The performers do not have any influence on the computer program, the processing and the emergence of the audiovisual score. One central idea of the work is the mutual dependency of the elements: as the performers provide the basic, fragmented material, the audiovisual electronics provide the overall structure of the performance. Without the performers the computer system is unable to process anything, as there would be no input to manipulate; it would remain silent. Without the computer processing their input, the performers' sounds and movements would remain fragmented and disconnected from each other. Control of the overall structure, the length of certain passages of the performance and a great deal of the auditive and visual identity of the work are taken away from the performers. They are reduced to the functions of giving impulses - such as triggering and starting computer processes - and giving input to the computer. They cannot control the computer system, they can only provide the material, to give the input. Neither are they able to control the overall structure of the performance; this is organised and controlled by the computer. The relationship between the live performers and the electronic system is not an interactive, mutual one, it is about a *difference*. Performers and system have divergent functions that complement each other and need each other to survive. The relation between live performers and electronics oscillates between tension, conflict and collaboration.

Idea and concept

still life 2.0 focuses on aspects around the themes of communication, control and power, and man-machine/technology relationships, yet also about the aspect of the sensuality of the human body in our digital age. In creating this piece I was also interested in posing questions about a society that tends to abstract itself away from many processes or responsibilities by means of technology. Thinking about people's responsibility when using technology, surfing the World Wide Web, but also conceiving technology as extensions of human's body and mind, I was posing several questions, closely related to the research project:

> What remains of a performer, if she may only give the impulses for auditive and visual processes of a performance, but when the actual performance is done by audiovisual electronics?
>
> How much is a performer responsible for a performance that uses her sound, movements and actions as input, but processes these inputs to organise the course and structure of the performance without her?
>
> What is the responsibility of a performer, how much influence might she have on a performance, its structure and course? What remains if the performer's influence on the overall structure as central aspect of performance is taken away from her?

These questions were then translated to the setup and conceptual framework of an artistic work. In contrast to other works and artists I chose for a relatively sensitive approach: The performers are neither physically bound to machines as in the work of Kris Verdonck (*I/II/III/IIII*, *Duet*, *Heart*), nor are the machines controlled by the performer's body or the bodies extended by machines, as in the works of performance artist Stelarc. In technical respect *still life 2.0* exemplifies a less radical but

more sensitive, subliminal framework: by being part of the performance the performers agree in the interplay, the system and its various aspects of control and power. Even more than *Thespian Play*, *still life 2.0* is a paradigmatic example for digital media taking over specific elements of musical performance or the musical profession. However, technology does not work as autonomous element in this work, it is closely interlinked and related to the musician-performer, mostly in a complementary function. As the role of the musician and the possibilities and functions of technology are both restricted, this approach is an example of a challenging connection and relationship between musicians and digital media, with the intention to open up possibilities for a colourful, fragmented and tensional aesthetic experience in contemporary music theatre.

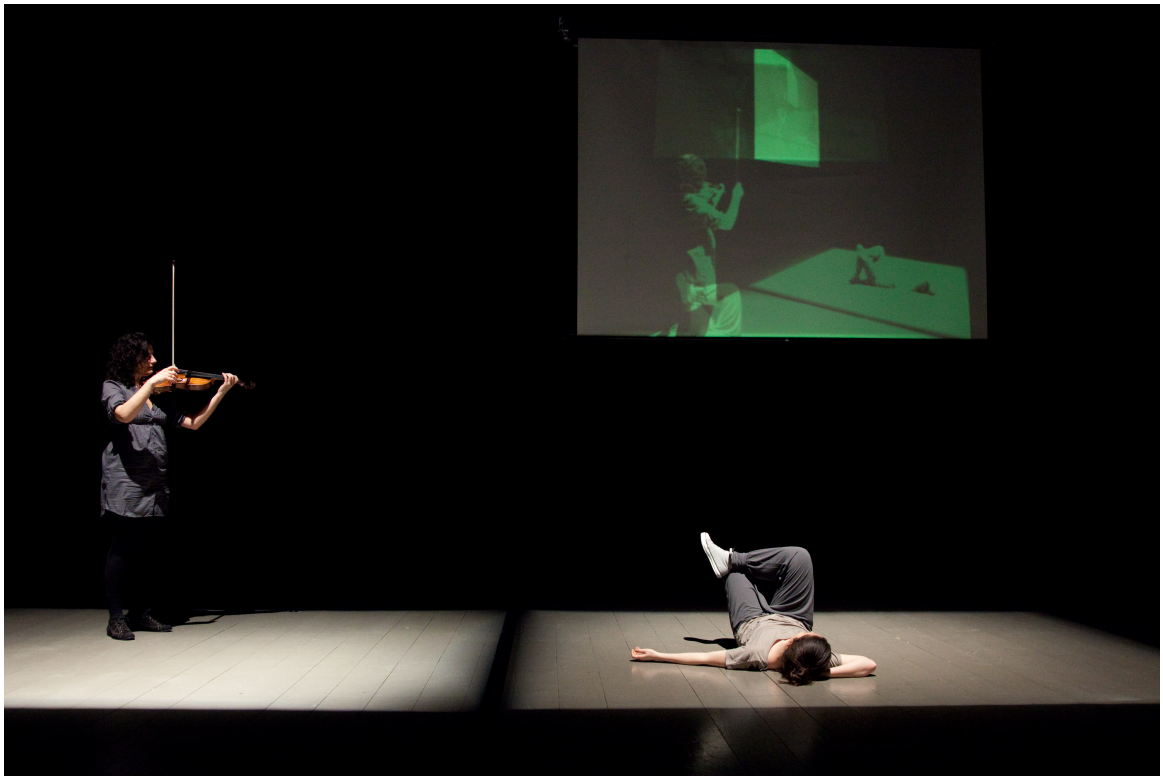

Image 4.3: scene from *still life 2.0*

Two aspects exemplify the concept of reduction: first, the movements of the performers - be it dance or musical movements - are cut or fragmented. Of course several composers of the twentieth and twenty-first century make use of very short and fragmented structures, such as Georges Aperghis who explicitly relies on working with fragments, on the basis of a musical but also ideological and cultural idea:

> I don't believe […] in a world where harmony and coherence of thought rule the day. I don't see any connections between things. That doesn't interest me. I believe more in small fragments, pieces of life,

> that randomly come into contact. They communicate more energy and feeling by this kind of contact. But that can only be fragmentary, I don't believe in a whole. (Aperghis in Maximoff 2006, my translation)[173]

As part of his composition process, Aperghis collects an often vast amount of small fragments and uses them as building blocks to develop a structure for a larger composition. In contrast to this strategy, the fragments in *still life 2.0* remain isolated from the performer's point of view. Only through the processing and manipulation by the computer these fragments can be brought into an overall structure, which is not in the hands of the performers anymore.

Second, as a conceptual idea which links *still life 2.0* to the research in a very particular way, the control of the overall structure is transferred to the computer system. The performers are denied this ability, which I assign as an internal element of the musician's, but also the dancer's profession. For the performers, this loss of control of the overall structure means a significant cut in their autonomy and identity.

From process to product

A central part of the rehearsals was trying out and looking for the relationship between what the performers did and what the computer could do with this as material to process. In the end, the contributions of the performers became staged exclusively according to the criteria of how that served as input for the cameras and the microphone. In the final performance, in a way, they do not perform as an audience would traditionally understand it, but are completely restricted to performing tasks in front of microphones and cameras. In order to depict this concept and to shed light on several important and/or related aspects, I will briefly discuss a selection of scenes of the performance in the following paragraphs.[174]

The opening scene of the piece takes the fragmentation of the musician very literally. After an initial phase of complete darkness, accompanied by processed sounds of a music stand operated by the dancer, the music stand is illuminated by light, in the middle of the stage. A viola in the left back corner becomes lit by a small spotlight, and after a few more seconds the viola player is also suddenly lit up, standing still on the right hand side of the stage in a statue-like playing position without her instrument, and then left in darkness again. The performer, her instrument and sound (in this case the recorded and processed sound of the music stand) become spatially separated. As result of the staging both instrument and musician become objects, positioned apart from each other as seemingly autonomous elements on stage. But while being staged apart from each other both seem to retain their functions: the instrument remains an instrument and the musician remains a musician. Her identity as musician is not questioned as such, but rather supported by the overall musical surrounding, containing her instrument and the music stand. As there is a distance between these elements, however, it is the audience who has to think the elements together - they have to invest some effort to experience the musician, her instrument and the music

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[173] "Ich glaube nicht an eine Welt […], in der gedankliche Kohärenz und Harmonie herrschen. Ich sehe keine Zusammenhänge zwischen den Dingen. Das interessiert mich nicht. Ich glaube eher an kleine Fragmente, Bruchstücke des Lebens, die zufällig aufeinandertreffen. Sie vermitteln mehr Energie und Gefühl durch diese Art des Kontakts. Aber das kann nur fragmentarisch sein, ich glaube nicht an ein Ganzes."

[174] A video trailer of the performance can be seen on www.falkhubner.com/stilllife.html. This trailer includes all of the scenes mentioned.

stand as parts of a fragmented whole. There exists a paradox between the elements which keep their function as parts of the musician in the music making, and yet are at the same time being separated from each other. The perception oscillates between separation and togetherness.

In another section the musician and the dancer are assigned to stand still in specific positions, such as the viola player standing still on one leg while holding her viola in playing position (image 4.4). They are filmed by the two cameras. The software recognises only *changes* in movement in this specific scene, if the performers manage to stand completely still, the video projects black. This way the video only displays the details of the performers *not* fulfilling the assignment correctly; if they move, abstract projections of their silhouettes are projected.[175] Also the violist keeps her bow on the strings, with the general assignment to make no sound. However, by shaking and other movements resulting from not being able to stand still she cannot help making several noises caused by minimal yet tense moves of the bow on the string. This way, also the acoustic result communicates the failure in perfection of fulfilling the performative assignment. The reduction of the musician is translated here to the violist not being allowed to produce a sound; the usual objective of her professional identity - making sound - is not allowed and communicated as failure.

Image 4.4: The viola player in *still life 2.0*

[175] Practically we chose for more difficult positions for the dancer in the "rest" position, while she is most likely much more in control of her bodily positions than a musician possibly can be. This way the "shortcomings" in fulfilling the assignment not only by the musician but by the dancer as well, were communicated to the audience.

In the final section of the performance the dislocated elements of the musician's performance are brought together again by means of digital technology. A section of viola music is repeated as a loop, and a shade of an earlier recorded section of playing is projected onto the screen, combined with the music stand filmed earlier during the performance. Together the screen and loudspeaker seem to project the recorded and processed image of a playing violist behind a music stand - the typical image of a classical musician performing or practicing. The previously fragmented musician is virtually assembled again on screen and through loudspeakers. The live performers are absent, the performance ends with only screen and loudspeakers. Along with the other examples, this scene is the most obvious example of digital media filling in elements of performance. When specific performative elements are taken away from the musician, digital media may take over these missing elements and their functions. This last scene of *still life 2.0* is happening even without performers, by means of digital technology the previously collected fragments of the musicians are combined to appear as the virtual image of a performing musician.

Consequences for the musician-performer

The identity of the viola player in *still life 2.0* becomes somewhat absurd or paradoxical both for herself and for the audience. In several moments of the work she performs *with* her instrument; she has the viola in her hands in the correct playing position, and plays according to the norms of viola playing. Still, the audience does not have the sense of seeing a musician performing music. Similarly, the musician herself does not feel like she is playing music. She only performs certain tasks, which among other things includes producing sound for several seconds. In fact, it is not her task to perform music; her main task is to stand in front of the camera or the microphone and to give input to the computer. The same goes if only her playing movements are recorded by the camera without recording the sound. It is precisely the ability to perform as a concert musician - projecting and communicating music and emotion to an audience - that is taken away from her, as a result of the performative assignment of focussing entirely on the microphone and the cameras.

As mentioned above, one research approach during the creation of *still life 2.0* was to twist and to play with the roles of the computer system on the one hand, and the performers on the other. Standing still for a large part of the work, the performers function as an installation, whereas the electronic audio and video system seems to be "performing". It records and uses the input of the performers - very short and fast viola and dance fragments - organises and processes it and creates the structure of the work, writing an audiovisual score over which the performers do not have any control. This control is actually the aspect of performance which is taken away from the performer in *still life 2.0*, which is more striking than it might seem at first thought: in most musical performances, be it classical, jazz, improvisation or pop music, musicians have a great deal (although in varying degrees) of control over many aspects of performance: structure, tempo, volume, length of a musical piece, coherence of a composition, the amount of physical and acoustic energy. These general parameters could also be transferred in various degrees to performing artists in other artistic forms as dance or acting. Taking away the ability to control even the starting points of the various fragments and the ability to control the overall structure and arc of suspense means a significant cut in the autonomy and identity of performing artists, so also here the question is what remains of the profession and the activity of these performers.

It is arguable if it is obvious or possible to perceive all of the above during a performance of *still life 2.0*, and also to whom in the audience this is applicable. The same goes for the question whether the absence of these elements transforms her into a theatrical performer. I argue that this is the case, for the following reasons. When an audience sees a musician on stage it is expected that she performs music, according to certain criteria. By not giving in to these expectations, the perception can cause irritation, heightening the awareness of the experiencers. An emptied space is created, although it might be difficult to recognise or to grasp what is exactly missing. The emptied space invites the audience to fill it in with interpretation and meaning in a personal, individual way.

Artwork vs. experiment

This section closes with a critical remark on *still life 2.0*, pointing at a central aspect and potential problem or trap in relation to research in and through artistic practice. While introducing the piece above I did so by labelling it a study or an experiment, and the reason for this is connected where the discussion has now arrived. After the piece had had its first performances[176], it proved to be artistically and aesthetically unsatisfactory to me. Though several sections were promising and interesting to experience, and had potential to be developed further, the piece as a whole seemed to be too static, visually not appealing enough, and the separate scenes felt too fragmented from each rather than to build an overall structure. I found it too formal and conceptual to get to the level of a convincing meaning-making potential, and to arrive at a theatrical level. I trace two reasons for this. First, the emerging audiovisual score was not yet developed well enough; to make an artistically inspiring performative installation, much more time would be necessary for both rehearsing and programming work. Second, and this is more crucial, I regard the piece as too close to the research objective, somewhat attempting to exemplify a research strategy, and therefore ending up as a formal experiment instead of a theatrical work.

On the other hand, seen from the perspective of a research experiment, *still life 2.0* actually can be regarded as successful. The performance's setup, the design of the relationship between performers and computer, and the creation process were capable of generating sufficient information to answer the project's research questions. Moreover, the answers were found specifically through the concrete artistic practice and could not have been answered without the collective and practical rehearsal process. In fact it *was* possible to abstract away internal elements of the musician’s profession. At the outset of the rehearsal process, I expected a certain effect on the performer, which proved to be supported by the result: the viola player did feel reduced in her professional identity as musician, and felt like being part of an installation. It was possible to take away internal elements such as the ability to build a structure in performance, though those missing internal elements prove to be hard to communicate to an audience as a surplus when judging the value of the remaining theatrical event.

The problem here seems to be a paradox, located in the centre of what artistic research could be about. In general, if I want to create a performance I really want to create a work for the stage, not a research presentation. Following theatre director Sanne van Rijn who does not "find it

[176] *still life 2.0* was performed twice, on 23rd and 24th february 2010, in Theater Zeebelt, The Hague.

interesting if someone calls his performance research" and wants "to see a performance, not research" (van Rijn in Bleeker et al. 2006: 20, my translation), it is my ambition as artist to create imaginative and meaningful experiences on the theatrical stage, not only successful research. *still life 2.0* was created as an artistic work being part of the research project, but it was only successful as part of this research, and was not able to stand as an artwork in itself. The reason for that seems to be the research itself, as the piece seeks to exemplify one conceptual category of the research, namely the reduction of the musician's profession by taking away internal elements of this profession. But, if the artistic work itself is no longer artistic in its essence but first and foremost research, the relationship between artistic practice and theory and reflection becomes exceedingly difficult. How can such a piece be an artistic example of a research project, if it doesn't qualify as autonomous artistic work? The work of Belgian visual artist and director Kris Verdonck tends to answer this rather provocative question. His production *I/II/III/IIII*, situated between installation art and performance is an example of a successful artistic work that makes the abstraction of internal elements very explicit. In this performative installation, four dancers are denied their most developed habit, the production and initiation of bodily movement, which is taken over by a machine.

Taking away the dancer's habits - Kris Verdonck's *I/II/III/IIII*

From the back of the stage, a sole dancer in a black dress, with the back to the audience, slowly floats in the direction of the audience. She hangs in a huge machine. Arms and feet are hanging downwards, relaxed. The machine lets her sink on the ground, in a position with her knees turned outside that resembles romantic ballets; then the machine pulls the dancer up to about four meters to perform a magisterial pirouette. This is the opening of the performance *I/II/III/IIII* by Belgian visual artist and theatre maker Kris Verdonck, created in 2007.[177]

The dancer performs a passage of choreography while hanging in the huge machine. After about fifteen minutes the dancer disappears into black the same way than she came. In the course of the piece, a second dancer joins the first and they perform the same choreography again, perfectly synchronised. The puppet-like dancer literally seems doubled, staged as an exact copy of the first. Then a third joins the two for a trio, and the doubling changes to the impression of a “copy getting stuck" (de Regt 2008: 36) The three dancers do not go entirely synchronous anymore due to the hanging ropes that cannot move exactly the same. Finally, a fourth dancer joins, performing again the very same choreography as *pas de quatre*. This last part accentuates the repetition as repetition; at this moment the installation presents no more than a "still life of dead beauty" (ibid.: 37). Knowing that this is the last part, the audience has passed the state of boredom. The *pas de quatre*, closes what Daniêlle de Regt calls a "journey through time": a reflection on dance in the periods from romanticism through modernism and futurism to the present (de Regt 2008), closing with the return to romantic ballet, implicitly referring to the four dancers of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* from 1876.

[177] For a visual impression of the piece, see p. 10.

The identity of the performers - A reductive perspective

When focussing on the experience of the performers[178], something else comes to the fore, which is more practical and concrete than the in the above experiential interpretation, but which also gives a clue how the result of the actual performance (and the experience of the performers' presence) is actually shaped and comes into being through the performers' own experience. The most striking is the strange presence of the dancers during the piece, which is not very human, but much more like puppets on the ropes. This reminds one above all of Kleist's vision of the actor as "super-marionette" in his *Über das Marionettentheater* (1810), as Daniêlle de Regt rightfully remarks:

> The puppet as metaphor for rethinking the performer could be seen as an emblem which has been worked out in theatre history by impulses from directors such as Gordon Craig and Oskar Schlemmer. From this Verdonck has primarily remembered that grace, and ultimately beauty, hides in the dematerialisation of the idealised body on stage. (de Regt 2008: 35, my translation)[179]

Within the framework of *I/II/III/IIII*, Verdonck zooms in specifically on this dematerialisation of the dancers' bodies, and on grace as movement quality. He does this by means of the machines, which allow him to give the impression that the dancers seem to be "sent […] into the air as weightless creatures" (de Regt 2008: 34) If one looks carefully at the pirouette one realises that the dancers are not even turning their heads abruptly, a technique of ballet not to become dizzy while turning. This is the perfect pirouette that even liberates the dancer from what is otherwise a purely technical necessity. But despite the freedom that is usually associated with weightlessness, or man's romantic wish for the ability to fly, the performers and their bodies are not free in *I/II/III/IIII*, on the contrary. They are dependant, subordinate to the machine in which they hang, and which suggests the movement to them.

What is most striking in the context of this research is that Kris Verdonck in fact takes away the most important, internalised, intuitive ability and habit of the dancer: the initiation or production of bodily movement. This habit, which is *the* central internal element of the dancer's profession, is denied. The dancers have to leave most of the impulses and initial starts of movement to the machine. It is the machine that provokes movement, and the dancers have to follow this initial provocation.[180] They do move by themselves, but the dancers' own movements result from following what the machine initiates. Verdonck's aim is that the movement is produced by machine and performers for equal parts. In contrast to other performative explorations of dancers hanging in a machine like Cirque du Soleil, Verdonck wanted to explore the possibilities of performers "together with the machine. […] We could have done something like Cirque du Soleil, actually that had been quite simple, but we didn't want that, we really wanted to listen to the language of the

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[178] I base these observation upon conversation with Kris Verdonck, in which he told me about the working process of *I/II/III/IIII*, the collaboration with the dancers and how the dancers communicated their experiences to him.

[179] "De pop als metafoor om de performer te herdenken zou je kunnen zien als een embleem dat doorheen de theatergeschiedenis onder impuls van regisseurs zoals Gordon Craig en Oskar Schlemmer een verdere uitwerking kreeg. Verdonck heeft hiervan vooral onthouden dat gratie, en uiteindelijk schoonheid, schuilt in de ontstoffelijking van het geïdealiseerde lichaam dat op het podium staat."

[180] This is what actually caused one dancer to say to another dancer who was a stand-in for another one who got sick, and who had considerable difficulty in adjusting to the movement provocations, "Just listen to the bloody machine." This is also the title of the book by Marianne van Kerckhoven, Verdonck's dramaturge, about the 2008 production *End*: Kerckhoven, Marianne van and Anoek Nuyens (2012). *Listen to the bloody machine. Creating Kris Verdonck's 'End'*. Utrecht: Utrecht School of the Arts and International Theatre & Film Books Publishers

machine."[181] It is in this respect that I disagree with theatre scholar Robrecht Vanderbeeken when he states that "technology does clearly not get an own identity on this stage" and that it is "an attachment behind the screens, a means for something different." (Vanderbeeken 2008: 65, my translation) In contrast to Vanderbeeken I think that, although the mechanics of the installation are hidden and thus not explicitly staged as being visible, they are indeed very present throughout the piece. Although the audience's eye does not see the machine's mechanics as such, the identity of the machine becomes present in the bodies of the four dancers[182], it manifests itself through the movements of the dancers-as-puppets.

A double logic

Besides the aspects above, *I/II/III/IIII* is also a paradigmatic example for technology taking over specific elements of the performer's profession. In doing this, *I/II/III/IIII* highlights an important aspect of the extension/reduction dichotomy, which I will call its *double logic* later on. The technology makes the perfect pirouette possible, it gives the dancers possibilities beyond the ones of their real bodies. It adds a performative dimension, it adds possibilities; therefore it *extends* the performers' potential. But not without a price. This "extra", this surplus of expression is only possible by taking away the most intimate ability of the dancers, the production of bodily movement. This is the double logic of the reductive approach that will be tackled later in the Conclusion.

[181] Verdonck in personal conversation.

[182] Verdonck himself told me that for him the piece is really about the performers, and that showing the machine's mechanics would only lead the audience's attention away from them.

Taking away sound

What is in the first place associated with music and music theatre is the sounding object. One expects something to sound, be it musical instruments, vocal chords, loudspeakers or other objects. In Chapter One I explained the musical action or playing as an essential part of the profession of the musician. When speaking with musicians about their profession it becomes clear that despite the generally multimodal nature of musical performance including e.g. eye contact and bodily movement, the production of sound remains the most important aspect for them, and their main medium of communication.

The following sections deal with sound being taken away from performance. I discuss several works and performances that tend to thematise the idea of silence in music, and to take away the production of sound from the musician and the musical performance. This starts with John Cage's famous *4'33"*, and continues with Dieter Schnebel's *nostalgie* as well as with my own *almost equal / meistens gleich*. In the discussion on these three pieces I want to leave the notion that "silence" or "the absence of sound" do not exist for what it is, as there are always sounds surrounding us: in a performance space or a theatre this might be coughing, performers walking (or audience members walking out of the performance location) and breathing. What I am concerned with is much more the fact that a musician - both in musical concert situations and in the theatre - is expected to play music, to make sound; sound consciously produced and shaped among others in timbre, rhythm, duration. If a musician does not do this in moments when a musical utterance is expected, such expectations are challenged. As soon as the code of a performance situation suggests that a musician is about to start playing, the negation of this very suggestion can have a radical effect on the audience and on the musician. Cage's *4'33"* is an early and paradigmatic example of a work in which this expectation creates a heightened presence of the performer, which makes this composition relevant in the objective of this study, and for the reductive approach in (music) theatre.

What about no sound? - *4'33"*

John Cage's *4'33"*, often referred to as the "silent piece", can be considered as an early example of reduction in music, and is a central composition in the second half of the twentieth century, with a strong influence on artistic practice and theory up to our time. In its premiere performance, pianist David Tudor came on stage and sat at the piano. After taking a stopwatch and starting it he closed the lid and opened it again. He repeated this procedure two more times. This took 4 minutes and 33 seconds in total, and not once did Tudor play a note or even placed his fingers on the piano keys.

Since its creation in 1952 many accounts on the piece have been written, with its peak a whole book entirely devoted to *4'33"* [183]. In general most of the accounts on the piece emphasise the emancipation of accidental and everyday sounds *as* music, "by nothing more nor less than a temporal frame with which the frame of concert music was broken." (Meyer in Rebstock and Roesner 2012: 83) As such, *4'33"* is not a silent piece at all, but on the contrary a piece that wants to demonstrate the impossibility of silence. What is interesting is that it has been discussed in more

[183] Gann, Kyle (2011). *No such thing as silence. John Cage's 4'33"*. Yale: Yale University Press.

academic disciplines than music theory, but also in musical theatre studies, theatre, and performance studies. With *4'33"*, John Cage introduced an awareness that all audible sounds (of the performers, the audience, external sounds like rain on the roof of the building in which an event takes place) during a performance are an intrinsic part of a specific event's sound world, and that all these sounds contribute to the coming into existence of the event, with the potential to be music. This includes the coincidental appearance of many sounds, and accentuates the space outside the performance space: "The performative space looses its boundaries; they open for spaces that lie outside of them. The boundaries between inside and outside become permeable." (Fischer-Lichte 2004: 216, my translation)[184] Zachary Dunbar refers to *4'33"* as "a landmark piece of music [theatre]" instructing "a pianist *not* to play the piano". (Dunbar 2013: 202) With this formulation, although not explicitly working it out further, Dunbar implicitly suggests a reductive perspective - a musician who does not play. However, one should be reminded that a performance of *4'33"* is usually part of a musical setting, of a concert setting, and consciously not set in a theatre.[185] The radical effect that the piece has, especially on an audience that experiences it for the first time, certainly results from the expectation of the music to be heard. By taking away the music (and very explicitly not sound[186]), for sure the surrounding sounds get into focus. But something else happens as well. In his dissertation on "composed performers"[187], composer Paul Craenen rightly hinted at an aspect of the piece that in most instances is not notified: the heightened bodily presence of the musician.

> In the silence of *4'33"* not only surrounding sounds, the aleatoric or noise is becoming emancipated. One of all the sideways experiential effects in the silence of the discussed works is an increased awareness of the bodily presence. (Craenen 2011: 48, my translation)[188]

Paradoxically, exactly while *not* playing, the body of the performer becomes more present. I would like to elaborate a little bit on this aspect to make the relevance of *4'33"* for the reductive approach in theatre clear. Craenen describes the experience of *4'33"* as a temporal extension of the usually short experience of silence and tension just before the musicians start playing. (Craenen 2011: 45) This short moment of not-yet-playing makes both the performers' and the audience's presence sensible; the audience experiences the body of the musician as more present, and through this

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[184] "Der performative Raum verliert so seine Grenzen; sie öffnen sich für Räume, die 'außerhalb' seiner liegen. Die Grenzen zwischen Innen und Außen werden durchlässig."

[185] This was certainly the case at the premiere and many more performances of the piece I know of. I am not aware of any "real" theatrical performances of the piece, as in a theatre. An interesting example is the performance by Dutch conductor and pianist Reinbert de Leeuw live at the television show *De wereld draait door*. Here, the absence of music and movement is compensated (and to a certain degree made theatrical for the purpose of a popular television format) by subtle yet extensive studio lighting and camera movements, such as moving close-ups on De Leeuw in alternation with long shots on the audience or other studio guests. However, Cage clearly intended the piece to be performed on a concert stage, as obvious at the premiere performance during which the piece was performed together with other, more traditional pieces.

[186] "They missed the point. There's no such thing as silence. What they thought was silence, because they didn't know how to listen, was full of accidental sounds. You could hear the wind stirring outside during the first movement. During the second, raindrops began patterning the roof, and during the third the people themselves made all kinds of interesting sounds as they talked or walked out." (John Cage in conversation with Kostelanetz, 2003: 70)

[187] Craenen, Paul (2011). *Gecomponeerde Uitvoerders* (Doctoral dissertation). Leiden: Leiden University.

[188] "In de stilte van *4'33"* komt niet alleen het omgevingsgeluid, het aleatorische of het ruisachtige tot emancipatie. Eén van de al dan niet zijdelingse ervaringseffecten in de stilte van de besproken werken, is een vergroot besef van collectieve lichamelijke aanwezigheid."

process of waiting, acknowledges one's own presence as well. From a theatrical point of view, Cage zooms in on this moment in-between not-yet-playing and almost playing, and extends it to the length of a complete piece. Related to this aspect of an in-between moment, it is rather questionable if Cage's idea of the surrounding and accidental sounds is really experienced as music in the first place. Not that this is impossible, but I agree with Paul Craenen that what is much more likely, is the "being aware of the collective experience of something that has not happened yet. What will be experienceable in the waiting is the embodiment of that waiting." (Craenen 2011: 45. my translation)[189] This "embodying of waiting" is both irritating and theatrical. One could easily associate this situation with theatre pieces such as Samuel Beckett's famous play *Waiting for Godot*, or other works of absurd theatre treating waiting as a topic. Christoph Marthaler comes to mind - a director who is a master in staging the waiting, thinking about his actors in *Murx den Europäer! Murx ihn! Murx ihn! Murx ihn! Murx ihn ab!* (1993): while several individual actors are speaking short monologues of no more than three sentences or are singing songs sporadically, the rest of the ensemble is sitting, lying or even hanging around at several spots on stage.[190] The waiting for musical action or musical playing does not only heighten the bodily presence of the musician, and allows the view *on* this body in two respects: first, there is *time* for looking at the musician. No musical action is carried out, the score and the pianist literally give the audience time to watch. Second, no instrument covers the view on the musician's body, no musical action disturbs the view on this body. By taking away the musical action, a space is created for experiencing different things other than predominantly music or sound.

Before I close with this short observation of *4'33"*, I would like to draw the attention to an aspect already introduced in the discussion on *I/II/III/IIII* earlier. Andrew Hugill observes this aspect related to the heightened presence of the not-playing musician in *4'33"*:

> Cage used the device of a musical time frame […] to force our attention elsewhere. […] Contrast this with a concert given in a blacked-out theatre or concert hall, through loudspeakers only. Because the loudspeakers fail to provide the listener with any visual indication of the sources of the sounds heard, the imagination of the listener may be thoroughly engaged. No musical performer, no visible sound source, just listening. This is an enforced listening situation that, once again, produces a state of heightened aural awareness. (Hugill 2008: 16-17)

Although Hugill describes a situation from a somewhat opposite point of view to what I discuss here, the idea is the same. By making use of reduction, other aspects of a performance's experience may be heightened. By cutting away or reducing one element (in Hugill's example the visual elements), the audience's senses could be opened into other directions. A specific medium (such as sound, or visual elements) that is usually just one part of the experience could be reinforced by taking away another, and the experience of this medium gets heightened, making it more present. As *I/II/III/IIII* already did, this aspect of *4'33"* offers a glimpse on what I earlier called the *double logic* of the reductive approach: despite, or perhaps because the strategy is reduction, other aspects of the experience may be experienced as heightened or extended. It is exactly *because* of the not-playing that the bodily presence of the pianist in the here and now is

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[189] "bewustwording van het gezamenlijk meemaken van iets dat (nog) niet gebeurt. Wat in het wachten voelbaar zal worden, is de belichaming van dat wachten."

[190] On http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thCMIPYe2I0 one scene called "Backen ohne Mehl" ("baking without flour") illustrates this paradigmatically.

heightened. Referring to the quote by Andrew Hugill above, *4'33"* could be called an enforced waiting situation, or an enforced situation of experiencing the performer's actual body.

Beyond silence

The idea of silence became a more prominent idea among music makers during the 1950s and 1960s, which can be seen as part of a more general phenomenon of staging absence in the performing arts. Making consciously produced sound absent is one possible approach among a larger aesthetic idea: absence of dramatic narration or character in text-based theatre, or specifically trained bodily movement in dance are only two possible phenomena which contribute to an aesthetic that makes specific parameters absent in order to request an "imaginative personal contribution" (Siegmund 2006: 10) from the audience. In music, besides *4'33"* several other pieces have been created since the 1950s up to the present that tend to take away sound, or production of sound from the musician.[191] Many of them have a somewhat theatrical approach, several composers of pieces including elements of silence have also directed them, or asked others to direct. Several of these pieces are experienced by the audience as theatrical, which might result from the already heightened bodily presence that musicians have when they are expected to play, but do not.

In this context Dieter Schnebel's *nostalgie* (1962) for solo conductor is a specifically interesting work that uses the idea of reduction in musical, or music theatrical, performance, though with a different approach towards how the absent music is treated. While Cage accentuates the impossibility of absent sound, Schnebel wants his audience and performers to imagine music. With only a conductor's rostrum and several music stands on stage the conductor has to project his performance towards an imaginary plane, which suggests the otherwise absent orchestra (see image). With a variety of "expressive gestures and countenances of the conductor, an imagined music is evoked." (Craenen 2011: 44, my translation)[192] By taking away sound, Schnebel makes every sound possible through the imagination of the audience. The performative utterances of the conductor merely guide the audience towards this imagined music, its "realisation" lies in the individual audience members. Compared to *4'33"* the bodily presence of the conductor in *nostalgie* is even more heightened. This is because of the expectation of music that does not sound, and even more because of the gestural activity of the conductor-as-performer, which shifts the heightened bodily presence more towards theatricality that is not directed to extra-musical meaning, but directed to itself, to a first of all *musical* meaning, individual for every member of the audience.

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[191] Besides taking away sound completely, also works have been created that just thematise silence (not seldom with a theatrical effect), as the cadenza for solo conductor in Sofia Gubaidulina's symphonic work *Stimmen… Verstummen.* (1986) In the middle of the energetic, fragmented eruptions of the piece, the orchestra falls silent, and the conductor silently performs a cadenza, using arm movements that are organised according to the Fibonacci sequence. The audience experiences an enormous tension in the concert hall due to the sudden silence confronted with the physical activity of the conductor.

[192] "[…] via de expressieve gebaren en gelaatsuitdrukkingen van de dirigent, [wordt] een verbeelde muziek […] opgeroepen."

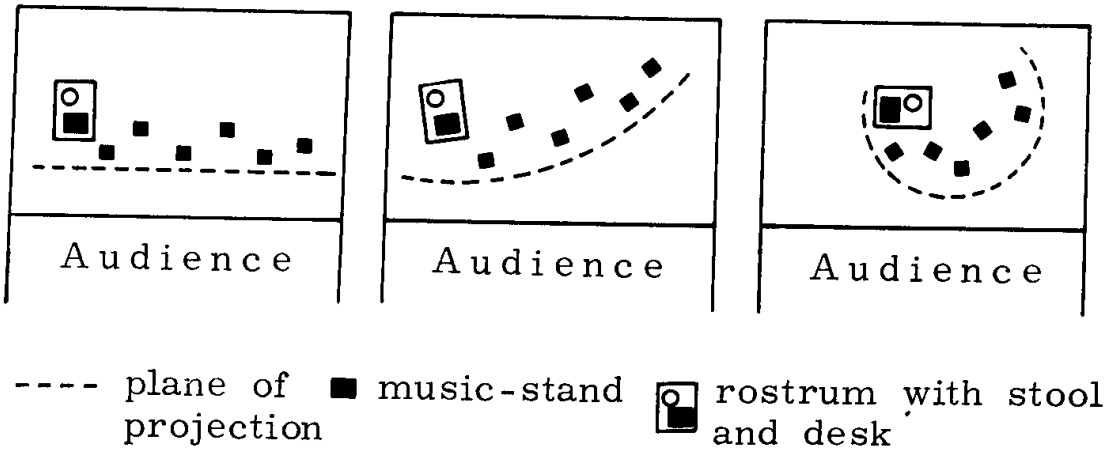

Image 4.5: stage layout in Dieter Schnebel's score of *nostalgie* including the "plane of projection" (Schnebel 1962: 4)

4'33" and *nostalgie* are probably the best known (silent) pieces in the music repertoire of the second half of the twentieth century. It might therefore not be by accident that Paul Craenen discussed exactly these two pieces, together with Kagel's *Con Voce* (1972) for three mute instrumentalists[193], in his imaginary "silent concert program" as part of his dissertation *Composed Performers*. More than *4'33"* Craenen rightly labels both *nostalgie* and *Con Voce* a "theatrical staging of powerlessness with the help of soundless musical gesture." (Craenen 2011: 47) But other pieces with similar approaches to taking away sound from the musician exist, such as the *Concerto for Solo Conductor* (2006) by composer Francis Schwartz.[194] In this work the conductor Roberto-Juan Gonzalez, to whom the piece is dedicated, performs an "imagined musical landscape", miming various famous historical conducting moments: the opening of Beethoven's fifth symphony, the scherzo of Mahler's fourth symphony, the overture of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* and a part of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*. Performing this piece requires a very profound knowledge of the symphonic repertoire, which has an explicit claim on the heart of the classical conductor's profession. The piece thematises the doing-as-if, as the conductor makes pretty much the same movements as he would when conducting the various pieces with an orchestra present. This is at least suggested by the setting of the piece - why would Schwartz want the conductor refer specifically to Mozart's *Figaro* if the conducting movements were not the ones necessary for conducting this piece? Even more, would it make sense to suggest this piece if the movements would not suggest it as well?

What stands out is that several of these compositions dealing with silence, or with the taking away of sound and music at all from the musician, are conceived with the conductor as performer, or have taken the professional identity of the conductor as subject. Besides the mentioned pieces the musician, film and performance maker Thierry de Mey created *Silence Must Be!* (2002) for solo

[193] In *Con Voce*, three instrumentalists have to mime a number of melodic motives with their instruments. They are only allowed to make vocal utterances such as humming or whistling, any instrumental sound is forbidden. The choice of instruments is left to the performer, as is the choice of playing techniques to perform the melodic motives. The length of both the melodic fragments and the total performance is left open to the performers.

[194] A video recording of the piece can be seen at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cY5ux_l2ZiI.

conductor, and *Light Music* (2004) for conductor, projection and interactive device.[195] Both pieces are explicitly created with the idea of conducting movements as both choreographic material and visual input for electronic processing. But when it comes to the question of what could be taken away from a conductor, one of the most obvious ideas is that the ensemble or orchestra is taken away, the musicians who are usually conducted by a conductor. The musicians of an ensemble are the most important co-subjects for a conductor in a musical performance or rehearsal situation, they actually produce the sound on which the conductor is working with them. Taking them away from a conductor leaves a considerable gap in the carrying out of her profession. If a conductor has no one to conduct, and no one who responds to his conducting movements, what is actually left?

Musical movement as choreography: *almost equal / meistens gleich*[196]

My performance *almost equal / meistens gleich* (called *almost equal* from here on) ties in with this question, exemplifying the absent sound, taken away from the musician, and specifically the conductor. The work takes a slightly different approach compared to the pieces discussed above, as it adds a specific theatrical-choreographic perspective to the musician's performance that is less developed in these other works. In 2010 I created *almost equal* as a silent music theatre for conductor and trombone player, in close collaboration with Bas Wiegers (conductor) and Koen Kaptijn (trombonist)[197]. In this piece I seek to push the concepts further that I developed in earlier pieces, two primarily: first, I elaborate on the idea of a *musical choreography*, which I used explicitly in *Thespian Play*. In *almost equal* I develop an autonomous yet musical movement language, and create a music theatrical choreography for conductor and trombone player. Second, the conceptual idea of the research - abstracting away central elements of the musical profession - is taken to a new limit by taking away not only the instruments, but also sound as the central medium and the primary goal of every effort of a musician. In contrast to *Thespian Play*, *almost equal* also takes away the sound. Whereas *Thespian Play* lets the musician remain in his traditional playing position, *almost equal* uses the musical movement (without its corresponding sounds) merely as point of departure and basis for developing a choreographic language. With regard to the concept of the internal and external elements of musical performance, *almost equal* could be seen as making use of taking away both internal and external elements. Obviously the external elements such as the trombone are absent, but also several crucial internal elements are either taken away or transformed to something else, which I will discuss in the following pages.

Without sound, the performance happens in silence. There are no instruments on stage, the two players perform a choreography of musical movements. Even stronger than in *Thespian Play*, the perception is directed towards the bodies of the two performers. The link between reductive approaches to musicians on the one hand and the accentuation of bodily movement and choreography on the other becomes very obvious. Unlike Schnebel's *nostalgie*, which "[brings] the music to an imaginary existence" (Cobussen 2002: n.p.), the two musicians in *almost equal* do not

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[195] http://www.compositeurs.be/en/compositeurs/thierry_de_mey/47/catalogue/, last retrieved October 3, 2012.

[196] Parts of this section have earlier been published under the title " 'as if you would...' " In Craenen, Paul (ed.) (2010). *Beginning with music, continuing otherwise.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam School of the Arts.

[197] A video of the performance can be seen on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qca_biJCYz8.

perform silent music, but rather a choreography based on musical movements that are rooted in their professions. With *almost equal* I seek to research the possibilities of developing musical movements towards choreographic material, and to push the boundaries of musical performance towards choreography. While the bodily movements in *Thespian Play* are still tightly connected to the sounds from the loudspeakers, and every movement is precisely the one that is needed to produce the actual sound if it had been played on a saxophone, such originally musical movements are merely the point of departure for the movement language in *almost equal*, where they form the basis of autonomous choreographic material.

Image 4.6: scene from *almost equal / meistens gleich*

Apart from the focus on bodily movement, the creation strategy has been directed towards the interplay and communication between the two musicians who are relieved from their hierarchical positions in the orchestra (or forced to leave them) and the connected social implications. As being part of a theatrical performance, the conductor does not act as a musical director, but as a performer equal to the trombone player. This social aspect was one of the starting points for the development of performative material, and also the narrative structure of the piece as a whole. The social shift in hierarchy applies first and foremost to the conductor, who is even somewhat subordinated to the director. The unchanged position of the trombone player as part of an ensemble works as a point of reference or comparison with the changed function of the conductor. As such, *almost equal* is based on a close and intimate relation to the forms and rites of classical orchestral performance practice. A specific interesting detail about the two performers of *almost equal* was that they do play together in a variety of different situations (orchestra, chamber ensemble and a trio in which Bas Wiegers plays the violin), which gave me, as director of the piece, the possibility to create a rich and varied relationship between the two.

Conceptual problem 1: Necessity

A musical choreography becomes strong and convincing at the moment when the performer fills the movement with musical meaning. If a director or choreographer just lets the musicians produce abstract movements, there is a risk that they appear meaningless or amateurish, as they do not belong to the experience of the musician. I aim to create an intense and tight relationship to musical movement, because at the moment when the musician can link the movement he performs to a musical action or musical instrument, he can fill the movement with meaning and intensity. For instrumentalists the problem is a solvable one, because they are highly skilled in knowing what their instruments produce under various physical circumstances (such as fingerings or the speed of a drum hit).

In the case of the conductor this becomes more complex. For a conductor the instrument - an ensemble or orchestra - is always different, depending on the ensemble, on the piece being played, and on the mood of the performance. With her movements, the conductor not only precedes any played note, but also reacts strongly to the sounds she hears from within the orchestra. Despite the preparatory rehearsals for a concert this can only partly be rehearsed, since the sound happens in the here and now of the performance, potentially different from the rehearsal situation. The conductor needs the orchestra in order to produce the catalogue of her movements. The problem in this case is not the track from the conductor to the (missing) orchestra, but from the orchestra to the conductor. If there is no orchestra, there is no feedback to react to; why should he conduct?

One possible, elegant solution for this problem could be that the conductor in the end simply won't be a conductor anymore; he becomes a performer, rendering the orchestral feedback unnecessary. As a task-based performance, the conductor could try to convince the audience of a certain sound he has in his mind: a forte-accent by the strings does not only sound different than the same accent played by the brass, it certainly also looks different when watching the conductor. It would be possible to collect material by breaking the orchestral direction-practice down into various elements (different dynamics, different orchestral groups, articulations, phrasings and tempos), search for all the small and large differences between the different specificities of the movements, and in doing so generate the performance material. With such a strategy the close reference to orchestral conducting remains present, but the conductor is freed of the necessity of feedback from the orchestra. Ultimately, I am looking for the musical energy and presence of the movements more than the music itself - it is in fact arguable whether I am creating music at all. If one imagines a percussion player moving as if striking a large tam-tam with full energy, only without the beater and without the tam-tam, one can almost hear the sound, and can certainly feel the energy.

Conceptual problem 2: "… *as if you would…*"

I attempted to work with the performers on movements which bear a strong reference to their musical practice, such as using specific positions of the trombone, or giving a cue to the imaginary orchestra to play a short *fortissimo*-accent. In contrast to *Thespian Play*, two musicians have to imagine the sound completely, without any physical or audible feedback. Thus, in a way I am

asking them to move *as if* playing a trombone or directing an orchestra; I am asking them to pretend to do something that they in fact do not do, or to reproduce something that is not really present on stage. According to Michael Kirby this approach can be understood as a way of dealing with musicians as if they were actors; do the musicians have to act as if they were a conductor and a trombonist? At the outset of the rehearsal process it was clear that it could not be the right way to let the musicians do any acting, as this could easily end up in a performance with musicians doing something they are not very good at. I attempted to solve this conceptual and practical problem by starting with the profession of the musicians. All movements have their origin in the musical movements either of Bas Wiegers' conducting or of playing trombone. From this starting point I wanted to expand the quality of the movement, by slowing it down, stopping in the middle of a movement, letting one movement fade into another, or combining it with movements from everyday life such as taking a cup or lifting a chair. The original musical movements become transformed into performative, choreographic movements; for the audience these movements do not necessarily have to have a recognisable relation to their origin; most important is that the performers can link every movement they do to its origin, and thus to their professional practice as musicians. At the point where that succeeds, the musicians could be able to perform the choreography convincingly and will be able to fill it with energy and meaning. Thus even in silence their professional identity as musicians becomes manifested in the choreography, although these movements are displaced, dislocated and transformed from musical into performative or choreographic movements. This resonates with the earlier proposition of identity being understood as constituted by performative acts. The movement, especially for the performer, refers to the musical action. This musical action usually serves the need to produce sound, thus is merely a means to reach the actual goal of producing sound. In *almost equal* this action is accentuated, and transformed into the central element of performance. The movement is no longer a means (naturally in traditional musical performance the movement to produce sound also has performative potential), but the sole focus, as there is no sound.

From process to product - creating a musical choreography and transforming musical to performative-choreographic movement

In general, when external elements such as the instrument are taken away, what is left and what a composer or director decide to stage as left over becomes crucial. Removing the instrument may introduce the idea of musical choreographies, using the musical gesture, unlocked from its usual effect - the sound -, as autonomous choreographic material. The bodily movements of the musicians remain, and are staged as the central element of the performance. Besides the possibility of getting access to another theatricality of musicians, it is crucial not to forget that the resulting choreographic movements can only be performed by musicians. Even without instrument, the saxophone player in *Thespian Play* and the two musicians in *almost equal* are performing the pieces on the basis of their life-long training on the instruments and the conducting experience with ensembles and orchestras, using finger movements, breathing and lip techniques. This results in a theatricality - although for parts of the audience not recognisable as musical - that is exclusively bound to the performer as musician.

In my own work, in order to realise that the musicians can fill the bodily movements with musical meaning, I attempt to maintain a close link to their professional daily practice, to create an intense and tight relationship to musical movement. At the moment when the musician can link the movement he performs to a musical action, he can fill the movement with purpose and intensity. In general I try to prevent the previously described as-if situation, which would mean to ask the performer to imagine *as if* he would play a trombone and thus to act. In order to achieve this in *almost equal*, we worked essentially in three ways:

First, we created performative scenes based on everyday situations in the professional musician's life, more specifically on different social situations and encounters between conductor and trombone player. At the outset of the creation process of the piece there were several possibilities for relationships between conductor and trombone player, depending on the size and nature of the music ensemble.[198] These relationships resulted in various ways of behaviour and phenomena closely connected to the traditions and conventions of the western classical concert music. Such a convention in a symphony orchestra might be that musicians (including the trombone players) stand up during the applause after having performed a composition or a concert, but do not bow. Bowing in this case is only granted to the conductor. When a conductor enters a rehearsal space, in general a trombone player would not look at the conductor to greet him; he follows the group, not the conductor. With such concrete situations of behaviour we built several moments in the piece, such as the opening section. Kaptijn already sits on a chair when the audience comes in, and after all noises become silent Bas Wiegers enters the stage, asks Kaptijn to stand up by gesture, and bows to the audience.[199]

Second, we used movement patterns from everyday practice as performative acts, such as daily exercises without instrument, warming up and turning the arms. In one scene Kaptijn performs a stretching exercise where his whole body turns down in slow motion, and becomes a kind of breathing sculpture for a moment. The pattern from his daily practice is transformed to a choreographic moment. He does something which is not directly connected to making music, but something which precedes that action of making music. He does something which is completely normal for him, something which he is perfectly familiar with and is able to perform easily; it has a purpose he can refer to. However, although it is originally an exercise, this is not perceivable by the audience. Because it is explicitly staged in a performance situation, it is not perceived as exercise, but as performative act.

As a third strategy, I composed passages of movement, such as a solo for the trombone player, or a duet for conductor and trombone player in the end of the piece. This uses the concept of musical choreography as in *Thespian Play;* both sections are composed and fixed in notation (see image 4.7), so that the performers could practice and perform them with the same precision as they would when they have to play music. However, unlike in *Thespian Play*, during the rehearsals the performers found it problematic to mime the complete playing or conducting in a one-to-one fashion. Partly this was caused by the feeling of having to fake or act, reinforced by the absence of music that could me mimed, as in *Thespian Play*. We decided to abstract the

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[198] The in-depth information about these different possible relationships was the result of talks with Bas Wiegers and Koen Kaptijn, based on their concrete experiences made during their professional careers.

[199] See video at 0:20.

movements more, such as in the solo for the trombone player in the end of the piece.[200] The performer does not try to make use of all necessary movements as if he would mime this part, but instead he only uses his right hand. The left hand which usually holds the trombone is not used, neither does he breath or mime the tone producing mouth and breathing movements and techniques.

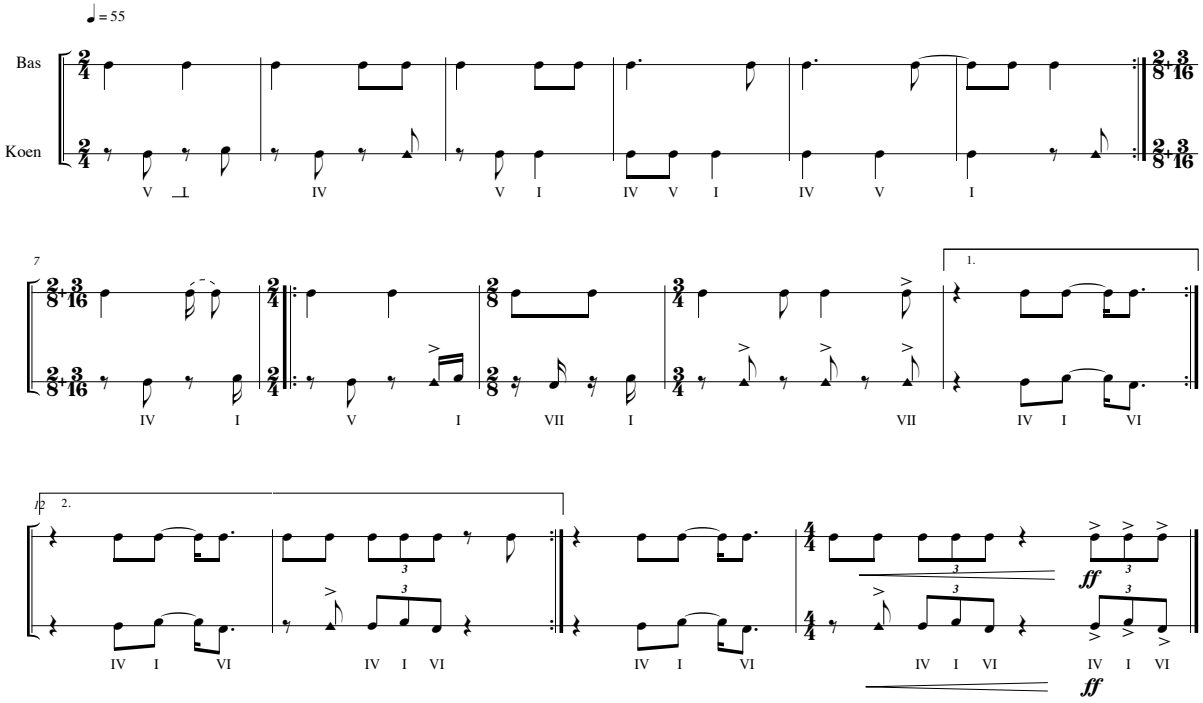

Image 4.7: score of the final section of *almost equal / meistens gleich*

The conductor's movements are treated in a similar way: in one section in the middle of the piece[201] the conductor uses his original conducting movements only as a starting point, but the actual conductor's movements are completely absent. The only remaining reference to conductor's movements is the position of the hands and fingers, how they are formed; but from this point of departure, the choreography consists of very precise rhythmic-geometric figures of the arms. This way there is indeed a clear reference to the profession as conductor, and the quality of movement also communicates the same specifics, such as very precise and detailed control of the movement, the tempo, cues and moments of standing still. All this communicates a very specific inherent musical quality, and makes the movement, though separated from the actual musical context, musical and choreographic at the same time.

[200] See video at 8:34.

[201] See video at 4:25.

Conclusion

When evaluating the creation process with the two performers, it was striking that the relation to sound is one of the most important references for them in order to be able to perform the piece. When thinking about why it actually worked for them to perform *almost equal*, both found that everything they do has a clear reference to what they are used to do, but is not exactly the same. The two musicians abstract their usual acts and in doing so transform them to an individual performative language. This language was not obvious in the outset of the rehearsals, it was one that had to be found, tried out and experimented with. Both Kaptijn and Wiegers described their experience of working on the performance as an "adventure"; it was obvious that they had to cope with several obstacles and uncertainties to find their way into the central idea of the piece. In a performance as radical as *almost equal*, it is striking, perfectly consequential and logical that the two musicians rely on their professional experience, which in the end lies in creating sound, hearing, listening and reacting again, both in movement (conductor) and in the creation of sound (trombonist). As stated in Chapter One, in the end it is sound which is the ultimate reference for the musician - even when there is no sound and the musicians produce movements based on sound, but do not create any sound by themselves. This adds an interesting perspective to what a musician is and could be, and what could possible belong to the profession of a musician when performing in theatrical contexts. But, similar to Thierry de Mey's *Silence Must Be*, in *almost equal* the musicians do not even have to perform original musical movements with the aim of miming or reproducing music without the sound. Neither do they produce a kind of visual music as in *nostalgie*. They produce a movement language based on musical movements, therewith communicating an energy, presence and concentration which is typical for musicians and for the reception of classical concert music. The reception oscillates between experiencing the movements as theatrical or choreographic on the one hand, and specifically musical on the other.

Unpretentious tensions: *Living Room*

Besides the possibility of literally taking elements away, there are other ways to stage the playing musician in a way that she is hindered or even prevented from actually making music. In the *Emergency Solos*[202], Christina Kubisch chooses a framework that thematises the act of musical performance as such. She uses everyday objects to make the playing of the instrument almost impossible. By being hindered from actually playing the flute as usual, the flutist of the *Emergency Solos* is transformed into a theatrical performer. Kubisch's approach in this work still bears a direct relationship to the absurdistic ingredients of Instrumental Theatre or to the tradition of performance and concept art.

In 2011 I created the staged composition *Living Room* for harp, harpist, requisites, soundtrack and video, around a similar idea of reducing the musician, in the setting of a solo concert. The initial interest of the piece was asking questions about the reality of daily audiovisual media such as television, radio and online news feeds. *Living Room* combines the live performance on and around the harp with the same performer on video. During the performance the seemingly incidental and marginal actions of the live performer meet, merge and clash with the complex video part, filmed with a hand camera and edited together with the audio part to a piece of music which pretends to be faithfully documenting a harp performance "as it happened", but in fact far from being possible to be played on a harp.[203]

Non-presence as concept and staging technique

In *Living Room* the performer is set into a staged competition with her own video double. The techniques used in the staging process could equally be described with the vocabulary of the expansive approach as well, because the performer has to execute several simple performative tasks, like setting her harp into position, or switching on the lamp that stands next to her. The approach of the piece fits in the discussion on reductive approaches due to the fact that these assignments almost tend to prevent the harp player from playing the harp, while the video performer has difficult and virtuosic, at times impossible sections of music to play (made possible by means of editing techniques). Instead of being located in the performer, the resulting tension is rather located in the experience of the audience who sees a partly absent performer who is in fact not doing that much, opposed to a video which seems to take over the function of performance and performer. The central question connected to the research was how a live musician is perceived whose presence on stage is fairly reduced, in contrast to a complex video that seems to be more important and perhaps even more present than the actual live performer. This is closely related to how Heiner Goebbels sees the musicians performing in his pieces, concretely in *Schwarz auf Weiss*:

> Presence is doubly reduced in *Black on White* by the rather amateurish 'non-presence' of the musicians, who never did anything similar before. You can observe the un-expressive, un-dramatic, but highly

[202] See p. 11.

[203] A video recording of the full performance can be seen at www.falkhubner.com/LivingRoom.html.

> concentrated faces of the performers, who do not pretend to be anyone other than themselves as musicians in that very space and moment while we watch them. (Goebbels 2010: 7)

It is interesting and necessary to note that although I labelled Goebbels' work an outstanding example of the expansive approach earlier, he himself tends to speak about his work more in terms of reduction or absence. He also does not link his ideas so much with "additive" terms like extra-musical assignments, performance or performative tasks. The reason for this is a difference in focus. While I am observing and analysing the musicians' actions in relation to their "original" profession, Goebbels does two different things: First, he describes the musicians' presence specifically while carrying out the extra-musical assignments, rather than discussing the relationship between these assignments and the musicians' "purely musical" activities. Second, he implicitly compares the musicians' appearance to the probably more expressive or dramatic presence of actors. Even when the musicians do various extra-musical tasks such as the ones in *Schwarz auf Weiss*, they do not pretend to be anyone else than themselves. But the high concentration is in a mode in which they always perform, regardless of what they do - playing their instruments or playing dice.

The idea of non-presence applies to the harp-performer in *Living Room* as well. After the opening section with video only[204], in which neither the performer nor the instrument are yet on stage, the live harpist starts her performance by entering and leaving the stage, performing preparatory actions such as taking the instrument from backstage to the spot where it should be placed for the performance, and placing the music stand. During this opening section, the harp player remains fairly unpretentious - as in a living room she enters and leaves the place, making preparations for her performance (or perhaps just for a rehearsal?). Also in the next section, while the video focuses on augmenting several aspects of the harp-playing such as the immense foot-work and the resulting noises during an extremely chromatic section in the music, the live performer does not do more than a sparse improvisation with small metal objects on the harp strings. Here the non-presence is supported by the staging, as the harp player is standing behind her instrument, making her scarcely visible in the dimmed light, next to the active, concentration-demanding video.

In the third section the harpist is absent again for most of the time, giving space to the unfolding of the more extensively manipulated sounds and images on the video and in the soundtrack. Only in the second half of this part the live harpist joins again, playing some small phrases, filling in the audible space between the phrases of the film sound. The unpretentious actions or utterings of the live performer continue in the fourth part, while the video image gets manipulated more drastically, more explicitly framed in an unusual camera position (see image 4.7).[205] The live performer is just standing behind or in front of her instrument and preparing the harp, putting the same metal objects on the strings of her instrument than the ones in the video. This does not generate any significant sound, and the timeline seems to be corrupted or blurred, as the live performer seems to prepare her instrument for the performance that can be seen on the

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[204] In the opening of the performance, the harpist on video plays a piece of music. The screen shows a moving close-up shot, thoroughly capturing the mechanics of the instrument, before slowly moving towards the harpist and finally arriving at her hands. The music contains quarter tones that are impossible to play on the harp; they are the result of subtle editing.

[205] The strings filmed from the top, getting prepared with little alligator clips. This shot is changing the usual perspective on a harp during playing even more than the previous section.

screen. Only in the final section of *Living Room*, the live and video harpists finally perform a duo of complementary, rhythmically intersected passages of chords and harmonic motives. The performance ends with the harp player preparing her harp with more of the same objects that were previously visible in the film, finishing the imaginative time-circle, in which the harp player prepares the instrument for the film-shooting of which the audience just saw the result.

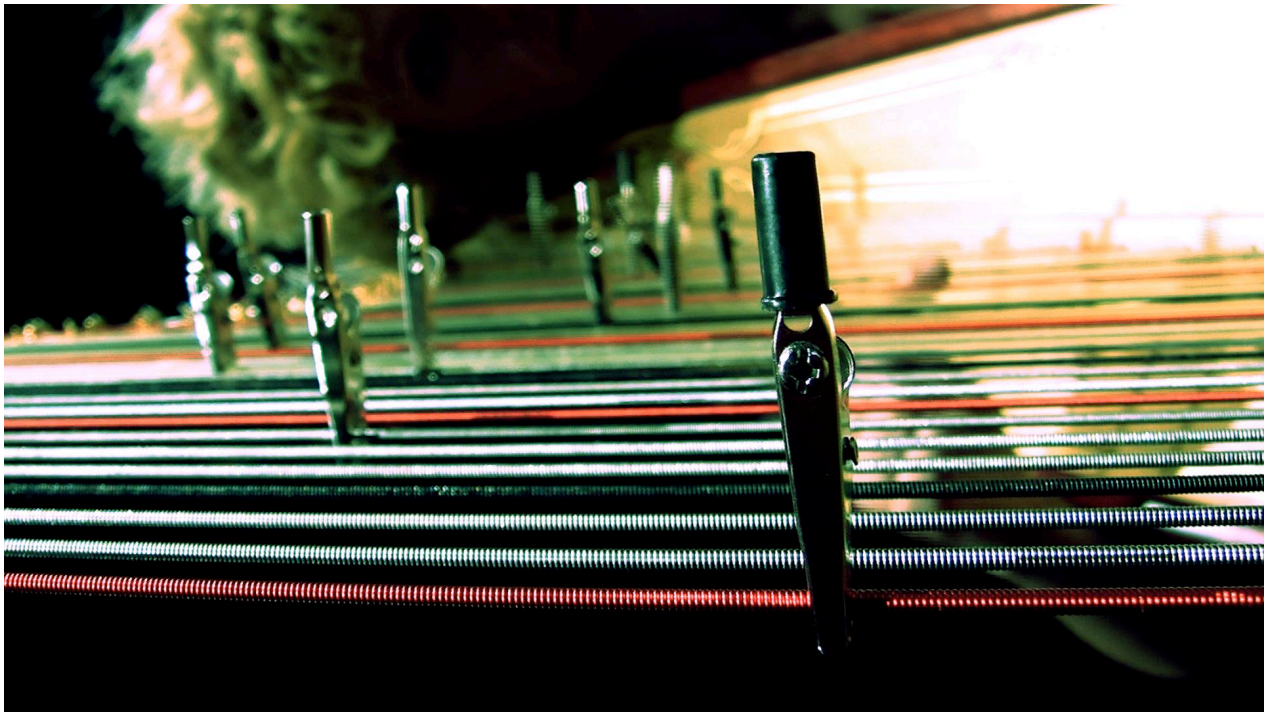

Image 4.8: *Living Room*, still from the video part of the fourth section

In-between the live and the mediated performer - staging an oscillation

The specific tension that results in a theatrical perception, is a result of the somewhat reduced presence, or even non-presence of the harpist throughout the performance. Comparable to *4'33"*, the audience has expectations while visiting a solo harp performance. These expectations are not fulfilled, as the harpist hardly plays; she even leaves her instrument alone for a longer time than she spends playing on it. The staging guides the eye much more towards the video screen than to the live performer, yet the live performer is present on stage, performing. In the moments that the performer is doing something (not just walking in or out the performance space to fetch necessary utensils), attention is naturally directed to her, but the unpretentiousness of her actions and utterances make it easy for the audience to "fade away" and direct their concentration and awareness to the video (which is present all the time). At the same time, one wonders why she is there, what she is doing ("If she is there it must have a purpose, mustn't it?") and keeps having an eye on her. The audience's focus oscillates between the live and the video performer, without clearly knowing what their precise relationship is or which of both is actually more important. The way in which the video and the performer are staged is provoking an intermedial reception of the two, which is by all means another approach than the multimedial reception of the live and video

performer in Van der Aa's *One.*[206] Compared to Barbara Hannigan and her double, *Living Room* does not add the performer and her video to one whole consisting of two complementary parts, but stages a tension and oscillation between the two (except the final section of the piece).

No performer - The ultimate reduction?

"It's absolutely fantastic when you disappear." [207]

As a last and final stage of reduction, in the remaining sections of this chapter I would like to elaborate on works that take away the musician, or the human performer entirely. This will also show the limits of the reductive approach as I framed it so far. A performer who is absent can obviously not be theatrical, so the initial question how a musician can be transformed into a theatrical performer is caused to collapse at this point. However, in the following paragraphs I will attempt to show that even in performances without performers, the theatricality of such pieces results from a fundamental desire for human presence in the context of theatre. Even more than the presence of non-human entities, pieces without performers work specifically with the absence of a performer who is actually expected to be there, situated at the borders of theatre as "the art of the performer" (Kattenbelt 2006: 29). This is the central point why these pieces do also have a relevance for my study. It is exactly the absence of humans that causes a great deal of this specific theatricality, which roots in reduction because it "gives space to what is usually invisible and inaudible, when an actor occupies the middle of the stage and attracts all attention." (Finter 2011: 135, my translation)[208]

A piece in which the provocation due tot he absence of performers is literally tackled is the staging of Maurice Maeterlinck's *Les Aveugles* by Canadian theatre director Denis Marleau at the 2002 Avignon Festival. In this theatrical installation twelve faces of two actors are projected on styrofoam masks, on a stage that is furthermore completely held in black, "reminding of the stage of Samuel Beckett's *That Time*." (Finter 2011: 128, my translation)[209] Two other works I would like

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[206] For more information about the piece see p. 72-73.

[207] Stage designer and visual artist Magdalena Jetelova after a rehearsal of Heiner Goebbels' *Ou bien le débarquement désastreux* to the actor André Wilms, after he was disappearing in the gigantic pyramid she created for the piece. The enthusiastic utterance made the actor so angry that Heiner Goebbels had to kindly ask the set designer not to visit any more rehearsals. (Goebbels 2010: 2)

[208] "[…] gibt dieses Theater auch dem Raum, was normalerweise unsichtbar und unhörbar bleibt, wenn ein Schauspieler die Mitte der Bühne besetzt und alle Aufmerksamkeit auf sich zieht."

[209] "Die Gesichter von zwei Schauspielern leuchteten dort als auf zwölf Styropor-Masken projizierte *Video Heads* aus der schwarzen Bühne in einer Weise hervor, die an die Bühne von Samuel Becketts *That Time* gemahnte."

to discuss in the next paragraphs are Kris Verdonck's short performance *Dancer #1* and Heiner Goebbels' performative installation *Stifters Dinge*.

A one-minute tragedy: *Dancer #1*

In *Dancer #1* (2003) by Kris Verdonck, a grinding wheel with a big steel L hangs from the ceiling. When the disc starts to turn, the L twirls round uncontrolled. The motor races and, after a time between 45 seconds and 1:30 minutes, it burns[210] and the performance is over. The concept of the piece surrounds a central desire for Kris Verdonck in theatre, giving shape to death on stage.

> […] death on stage… it's not possible. You can't let anybody die on stage. But what you *can* do is to let objects break. Objects may indeed burn and explode; and it's real. And the danger of real machines, that's *real* danger! So finally I had something real on stage, something that I could not control. I had something that is really there, in the moment. (Personal conversation with Kris Verdonck)

The turning disk in *Dancer #1* produces exactly this moment of death, the moment of real danger. The short piece provokes similar tensions than death as something acted out - only then for real, as the disk burns for real. Also the reactions by the audience in the times when I saw the piece were expressing a certain compassion with the "dying object". This is specifically interesting, many people were expressing a kind of regret or sorrow when the machine burnt, as if something happened to a human being present. It was an actual emotional reaction, a moment of identification with the machine, supporting the "human side [of the spinning rod] by turning itself to breaking with a spark and a sigh."[211] This human side, the moment of human presence is provided in the moment of dying. It is the absence of a human performer that makes the human-like presence of such an object possible. Through both the absence of a human performer and the phenomenon of a dying machine, the presence of the object is heightened and makes the theatrical possible - the audience is free to fill in what or who the object is, embodies, symbolises or means.

Pianos and water: *Stifters Dinge*

Opposite to the miniature format of *Dancer #1*, *Stifters Dinge* (2007)[212] by Heiner Goebbels is a full-length performance without actors or musicians. Goebbels himself calls the piece a "no-man show, in which curtains, light, music, and space, all the elements that usually prepare, support, illustrate, and serve a theatrical performance and the actor's dominance, become […] the protagonists, together with five pianos, metal plates, stones, water, fog, rain, and ice." (Goebbels

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[210] I saw the piece live at the 2008 Avignon Festival, and had a video recording at my disposal.

[211] "Zo kreeg de tollende staaf uit *Dancer* ineens een erg humaan kantje door zichzelf in een vonk en een zucht kapot te draaien." (de Regt 2008: 36)

[212] "Stifter's Things is a composition for five pianos with no pianists, a play with no actors, a performance without performers […]. First and foremost, it is an invitation to audiences to enter a fascinating space full of sounds and images, an invitation to see and hear. It revolves around awareness of things, things that in the theatre are often part of the set or act as props and play a merely illustrative role. Here they become protagonists: light, pictures, murmurs, sounds, voices, wind and mist, water and ice." (program book of the performance, Theatre Vidy-Lausanne: n.p.)
I have seen the performance on 28.4.2011 in the Koninklijke Schouwburg Den Haag (Royal Theatre The Hague), and had a video recording at my disposal.

2010: 14-15) At the outset of the creation, *Stifters Dinge* could almost be called an artistic research project, with the underlying question if the spectator's attention will be kept long enough if the presence of an actor as an essential assumption of theatre is completely neglected. (ibid.: 14) Only in the first quarter of the piece, the stage is not completely deserted from human beings. Two technicians are making preparations, such as throwing salt in large basins and releasing water from tanks into these basins. Besides the preference of Goebbels for the ritual moment of these actions, their presence could be understood as a paying tribute to the unusual high amount of creative input from the technicians - not only the two on stage, but the whole team - for the production. The program book of the performance explicitly states: "With the artistic and technical collaboration of the team of the Théatre Vidy" (program book *Stifters Dinge*, Théatre Vidy-Lausanne: n.p.) In the outset of the creation process, the aim of the performance is defined in two opposing views. First, there is the explicit absence of human performers, and second the heightened presence of the usually accompanying elements.

An element that for a large part generates the theatrical presence in *Stifters Dinge* are bodyless, immaterial voices. In the course of the pieces the audience listens to an old man reading texts by Adalbert Stifter[213], and to the recorded voices of Claude Lévi-Strauss, William Burroughs and Malcolm X. Theatre scholar Helga Finter localises a "space between hearing and seeing" (Finter 2011: 127) in the context of the disappearance of live voices on stage in favour of recorded voices. The bodies of these recorded voices may remain invisible and absent.[214] According to Finter these voices' presence is mainly resulting "from their own timbre, a special melos and a characteristic prosody." (Finter 2011: 134, my translation)[215] Exactly by leaving out the bodies, and thus the human presence on stage that gives body to these voices, the imagination of the audience is challenged and invited to fill in this empty space between the recorded voices on the one hand, and the objects, machines and events happening on stage on the other. The audience connects the words and voices heard with the visual elements, and every audience member is invited to construct a causality by him- or herself. This way "the sensitive intelligence of the audience stages itself, when it weaves and reads its own audiovisual text." (Finter 2011: 132, my translation)[216] The specific attraction lies in the presence of the voices which relates to the absent body of a performer. It is exactly the absence of this performer that makes the strong presence of the recorded voices possible, which results in a potential for a variety of interpretations and meanings.

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[213] These texts are recorded in the language of the country in which the piece is performed, and therefore the voices of different actors reading.

[214] The separation of the sound of a voice and its body is something which Goebbels did earlier already, and which in fact is an important part of his aesthetic. He is using microphones also in his compositions, to create a distance between sound production and the sound itself; a distance to be bridged by the audience. He used disembodied, pre-recorded voices earlier as well, as in his orchestral composition *Surrogate Cities* (1994). The use of these kind of voices in *Stifters Dinge* is therefore not a new element in his oeuvre, but more a radicalisation of his approaches in earlier works, and used more consequently.

[215] "Die ausgestrahlten Sprechstimmen haben Präsenzwirkung durch ein ihnen eigenes Timbre, ein besonderes Melos und eine charakteristische Prosodie."

[216] "So inszeniert die sensible Intelligenz des Zuschauers selbst, wenn er seinen eigenen audiovisuellen Text webt und liest […]."

The end of theatre?

Does a theatre without performers mean the end of theatre? All three pieces I mentioned answer this question with a clear "no". They all produce theatrical situations with the absent performer as specific point of departure, and each one in its own way. *Les Aveugles* reminds the audience of the actors by bringing them on stage in the virtual form of the actors' video projections, whereas *Dancer #1* evokes human presence through the staging of a machine's death. Finally, *Stifters Dinge* invites the audience to bridge the gap between bodiless voices and a variety of objects and events, to construct the actor in one's imagination. In none of the pieces theatre as the art of the performer is abandoned, even if the performers are absent. Exactly *because* they are taken away from the stage, the desire for a human presence of whatever kind increases. This desire is not literally fulfilled, which creates a black spot, an open space to be filled in by something else. The projections, pre-recorded voices, images, objects, machines and lights can occupy this space and they become in this way objects of attention and subjects of theatricality. This specific presence is a direct consequence of the performer's absence, and would be impossible with human presence on stage. Even this radical stage of reduction preserves the overall phenomenon labelled several times as the *double logic* of the reductive approach, and in the forthcoming Conclusion of the book it will be the time to go into detail into this complementary dichotomy between extension and reduction, between presence and absence.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion refers back to the initial questions of the research, recaptures the course of the text and contextualises my findings in the endeavour of the research project, which finally leads to revealing a new layer in the reduction-extension dichotomy. The project has its outset in my own artistic work, and the issues I encountered in practice while creating works with musicians as theatrical performers, led to the main research question I recall here:

> How can a musician be transformed into a theatrical performer by reducing, denying, absorbing and adapting, or taking away essential elements of music making?

Coming from this initial question, the research project has unfolded in a theoretical and practical part. The contextualisation of the main subject - the musician-performer within the reductive approach - has led to two main areas of discussion that were not previously discussed in an academic discourse and needed theoretical framing: the concepts of extension and reduction, and the musician's professional identity. The first area can be further subdivided into two main segments:
a) I related my work to others who apply reductive approaches, but also to the ones who create work with musicians as performers that do not necessarily follow this idea but rather pursue different paths and creation strategies. These considerations have flown into the two-fold concept of extension and reduction, with the aim to develop and understand a musician's theatrical activities, and how these activities might differ from her professional acts *as musician*. The model of extension and reduction offers a theoretical-conceptual framework for the analysis of musicians' performances in theatrical situations, a way to describe what musicians do (or don't do) in relation to the "usual" activities in their professional life; a new set of analytical tools to explore the nature of the musician's profession in general and in theatre and performance in particular.
b) The concept provides food for thought for practitioners to get a different perception of what they do, how to work theatrically with or as musicians, and in which relations, traditions, aesthetic tendencies or conventions their creation strategies might be situated. This goes for music makers, but also for artists from other art forms: the idea of a musical choreography - using musical gestures for autonomous bodily movements while taking away certain features - can provide choreographers with ideas of how to work with musicians without having them to function as trained dancers or theatre actors.

The conceptualisation of the musician's professional activities is the second main area of discussion. I compared and reworked several existing theories, in order to finally develop a model describing what the musician actually does by establishing a combination of internal, external and contextual elements. This model allowed me to put extension and reduction into perspective, and to take the musician's acts as point of departure. The three-cornered model does not aim at a closed definition, but should be understood as a flexible way to describe and understand the musicians' activities. Additionally, the model offers a way to differentiate between musicians and other performing artists such as dancers and actors, and to relate these different professions in the observation and analysis of artistic work.

Recapturing

I have framed the professional identity of the musician in Chapter One. Based on what musicians do, I attempted to describe their profession in terms of internal, external and contextual elements. This was my point of departure: to investigate what it is that is actually extended or reduced, and which kinds of acts are potentially changing when they become theatrical. With the distinction between these three groups of elements, I aim to shed light on what the musician's profession is. This framework was then put into the context of contemporary music theatre in Chapter Two, relating the musician-performer to another important agent, the composer, or the composer-director. This was done to underline the relevance of this agent for contemporary music theatre in general, and also refers to my own artistic practice, in which I seek to combine the different activities of conceptualising, composing and directing experimental music theatrical performances and installations.

Chapter Three and Four have been devoted to the alleged opposing concepts of extension and reduction, forming the core of the book with the discussion of artistic work made by myself and others. Differences between the expansive and reductive approach were located in the contrasting nature of how musicians are challenged in performance: the expansive approach is driven by the fascination to see the musicians investing effort into performative assignments on top of their profession, communicating extra-musical and theatrical information to the audience apart from the already inherent theatricality in music making itself. Reductive approaches, on the other hand, deconstruct the musician's profession, take its elements apart and unsettle the ritual of music making. They produce a very different kind of tension and provide other tools to transform the musician into a theatrical performer, by creating gaps and spaces in-between the usually inseparable elements of the profession. These fascinating, and potentially irritating spaces invite the audience to "fill in the gaps" with individual imagination and meaning. Chapter Four deals with the analysis of my own artistic work, set in relation to other artists who also work with forms of reduction, such as Sam Taylor-Wood or Kris Verdonck. The choice for including artists from other art forms than music has been made in order to underline the lack of substantial practical work with reduction in the field of music compared to the expansive approach on the one hand, and on the other to make relevant connections to other art forms visible. It should not be unnoticed that most of the artistic works can be understood as direct elaboration of the theoretical framework in practice, seeking to explore the boundaries of what is possible to take away from the musician's profession.

In general, when specific elements of the profession are taken away, it becomes crucial what a composer or director decides to stage as "remainders". In *Thespian Play* and *almost equal / meistens gleich*, the removal of the instrument introduces the idea of musical choreographies, using the musical gesture unlocked from its usual effect - sound - as autonomous choreographic material. This is exactly where my interest as an artist is at its core: by taking away something that is usually present, I stage its absence and make it thereby explicit. The absent elements create space for individual imagination. The bodily movements of the musician remain, and become the central element of the performance. These "remaining movements", unlocked from their traditional purpose challenge what musicians do, yet they can only be performed by musicians. In Christina Kubisch's *Emergency Solos*, various objects such as a gas mask or a condom pulled over the instrument prevent the flutist from playing. Since all instrumental technique is blocked, one can

easily imagine that the work does not have to be performed by a flute player. However, only a flautist is able to experience the tension that this blocking of her usual habits and abilities as a professional flute player evokes, and to communicate this to an audience. For an actor this would be almost impossible, as she does not intimately know either the nature of flute playing nor the virtuosity being denied. In *almost equal / meistens gleich* the identity of the performers is even more nebulous. They neither produce sound nor perform exclusively musical movements that could immediately be recognised as such. The origin of the movements may be musical, but the result lies somewhere between dance and mime, performed by this kind of specialised and specifically well-trained musicians, and therefore offering new theatrical possibilities to have musicians as performers alongside dancers and actors.

With the distinction between expansive and reductive approaches I shed a different light on the way in which the performance of musicians, but also other performing artists might be analysed when they perform in inter- or multimedial stage pieces, and when they potentially go beyond the borders of their professions, reaching into other art forms than their own.

Absence

The reductive approach places music and the theatrical work with musicians into the larger artistic and aesthetic context of *absence* as contemporary strategy in theatre and performance. This larger context has theoretical roots in theatre scholar Hans-Thies Lehmann's *Postdramatic Theatre* (Lehmann 2005), developed at the end of the previous century: one of Lehmann's initial observations with regard to contemporary theatre is the absence of dramatic narration and other elements of traditional, mostly text-based theatre.[217] Performance work devised within an aesthetic of absence can have many different manifestations, from Heiner Goebbels' empty stage centre in *Eislermaterial*, to the entire absence of the performer in Kris Verdonck's *Dancer #1*. The aesthetic idea can be traced back to artists such as John Cage, and is reflected nowadays by the likes of Xavier Le Roy and William Forsythe. Heiner Goebbels, who frequently publishes articles next to his artistic work, has noted a number of ideas about a so-called "theatre of absence" (Goebbels 2010). A few of these are of interest to my discussion here, one being the absence of a story or narrative in the sense of psychological developments of one or more characters. Related to this is the absence of what might be called a clear theme or message of a piece or a play. Another idea is the use of an empty centre: literally, as an empty centre stage (such as in *Eislermaterial*), but also regarded as the absence of a visually centralised focus.

Goebbels develops more ideas specifically related to how *performers* as the main subject of attention might be staged within an aesthetic of absence: performers may hide their individual significance by turning their backs towards the audience and divide the spectator's attention, from the focus on individuals to a "collective protagonist". Such a division of attention can also be

[217] However, it is not Lehmann's objective to condense his observations towards an "aesthetic of absence". He points at elements of traditional theatre (such as character, narrative and text as leading medium) that are absent in many contemporary productions by artists such as Robert Wilson, Jan Lauwers and Jan Fabre. However, Lehmann does not explicitly focus on how performers would be involved in events in which absence plays a distinctive role. This is discussed more in depth by Gerald Siegmund (2006) with reference to dance and by Heiner Goebbels (2010) in the case of music theatre, to which my research adds the specific aspect of making central elements of the musician's profession absent. (see p. 136)

achieved by technical means, separating the actor's voices from their bodies and the musicians' sounds from their instruments. These approaches let the performer disappear from the centre of attention, with its extreme of the performer's disappearance from the stage altogether, as suggested at the end of Chapter Four.

The motivations for the use of absence as a creation strategy can differ, but there are several main stances shared by most of the artists mentioned. Absence can be a means against one-sided interpretation, a means for engaging an active participation of the audience. By creating "empty spaces", the audience is invited to bridge distances between what is expected and what is made absent, and create their own interpretation. The absence of a specific element, be it performative, musical or narrative, can evoke a specific tension, and an increased awareness of the audience: it has to fill in the empty spaces, the blank spots, in order to connect and to make sense of what happens on stage, and therefore each audience member creates an individual "story" or interpretation of what the events on stage could mean. Theatre scholar Helga Finter confirms this active role of the audience. She argues that when actors, for example, are deprived of text (which may be replaced by either recorded voices or text-projections) and merely perform in silence, the audience's desire projected onto the actor is amplified and enhances the experience of theatricality. (Finter 2011: 129)

The double logic of reductive approaches

The previous observations point at a connection that has been hinted at during several moments in the above. When I state that absence of specific elements might *enhance* theatricality, produce a *heightened* awareness or *increased* presence of the musician as performer, it already suggests that absence or reduction has some kind of relationship with phenomena of extension. As a result of my research into the reductive approach it became evident at several spots in the text that it is impossible to leave out its counterpart, the expansive approach. The reciprocal relationship between these two complementary poles of presence and absence grounds the closing argument of this study.

The final deconstruction of the reduction/extension-dichotomy results from the observation that reduction is mainly described from the point of view of the makers - composers, directors, musicians; but the artistic result might not necessarily communicate this strategy of reduction to the audience. By taking away, other possibilities of reception emerge, so that the musician's profession can actually be perceived as extended, from an audience's point of view. By cutting away or reducing one element, the audience's senses could be opened into other directions. This additional or different kind of openness, this *surplus* in perception, paradoxically results from the missing elements, and from the denial of central elements and often most intimate qualities of the musician. I call this the *double logic* of reductive approaches. My argument is in one line with music theatre dramaturg Regine Elzenheimer who observes contemporary relations between music and theatre in her text "Dramaturgien der (Ver)Störung". (Elzenheimer 2009) She argues that destruction in the sense of a loss of form and structure can also work as a condition for new

creative processes, and notes that "the destruction of fixed patterns of reception can aim at exposing different structures of perception." (Elzenheimer 2009: 21-22, my translation)[218]

I have already traced this double logic at several moments, but for methodical and narrative reasons I chose not to discuss this aspect in all of the works where it might have been relevant. Despite this choice the aspect of a double logic can be traced in many, if not all of the works that have been discussed throughout the analysis of reduction in Chapter Four. In Kris Verdonck's *I/II/III/IIII* a machine takes over specific elements of the dancer's profession, while at the same time realising choreographic movements such as the "perfect pirouette" that are otherwise not possible. By reducing the dancer's profession, the machine extends her potential at the same time, yet this extension is only made possible as result of a reduction. A similar observation was made in the context of John Cage's *4'33"*, where the absence of music, or, more precise, the not-playing musician who is expected to play, intensifies the experience of the performer's body on stage.

When choreographer Xavier Le Roy elaborates on his approach to staging Lachenmann's composition *Salut für Caudwell* for two guitarists in which the guitars are taken away from the two visible performers, he implicitly supports the argument of the double logic by saying that "the strategy for the piece is to take away elements in order to discover other aspects of the listening experience […]." (Le Roy 2006: n.p.) By taking the instruments away, Le Roy makes a different reception of Lachenmann's music possible, and even intensifies the experience of the many different extended techniques that are necessary to perform the composition as choreography. Le Roy takes the implied effect on the audience consciously into account, resulting from the instrument taken away in combination with the musico-choreographic movements:

> Obviously, distortions, spacing, intervals appeared between what one looks at, what one listens to, what one hears that is written, what one sees and that is not written… These additional tensions immerse the audience in the music in another way; it is undoubtedly the reason the audience smiles, tenses, sighs, with deception or relief, expresses surprise, laughs and has all the other reactions seen on the faces of audience members during this performance. (Le Roy 2006: n.p.)

Similar kinds of audience reactions could be observed repeatedly during performances of *Thespian Play*, and I argue that this happens for similar reasons as with *Salut für Caudwell*. The absurdity of the different movements, especially by the performer's eyes and mouth, in combination with the playback-soundtrack, causes the audience to smile, laugh or utter other reactions that would certainly not happen if the pieces would have been played with the instruments. This is also where the surplus-value of *Thespian Play* is located: the performative acts that I have determined as central to the constitution of the musician's professional identity and what he effectively does, tend to twist the audience because the performer's gestures could belong to saxophone playing, but also to a dancer's or mime's movements. The absence of the instrument makes the musical gestures productive for different interpretations. Put differently, by taking away the instrument, the audience's imagination opens up and the musician-performer may be perceived also as mime, actor or dancer. I doubt whether the audience perceives the performer as "reduced". In spite of the missing instrument, the audience might rather see "more" than less. While the strategy for creating the piece has been reduction, this does not necessarily result in a reception that acknowledges reduction. On the contrary, the audience might perceive the musician's actions

[218] "[…] kann die Zerstörung eingefahrener Rezeptionsmuster auch auf die Freilegung anderer Wahrnehmungsstrukturen zielen."

in *Thespian Play* as extended, in the sense that he has to do all kinds of different things - especially miming - that he is not used to do, and which have a theatrical effect.

This double logic can also be applied to the extreme cases in which performers are absent. As suggested at the end of Chapter Four, the absence of the performer loads the theatre space with a specific presence that directly results from this absence. Because a performer is expected to take part in a theatrical performance, the objects (or whatever is on stage) can be charged with presence. This is quite similar to the heightened presence of the musician in *4'33"*, which is also grounded in the audience's expectation of music being played.

Here the discussion comes at the point where the dichotomy between extension and reduction dissolves: the individual imagination of the audience adds layers of meaning and fills in the emptied space or absence of specific performative elements, resulting in the perception of both reduction and extension simultaneously. The two concepts may be seen as two sides of the same coin: despite the differences in approach, working processes and artistic outcomes, both are strategies to work with musicians in theatre and performance in order to achieve a theatricalisation of the musician's activities, two ways to shift the musician's professional identity to become theatrical.

APPENDIX

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Summary

The PhD research project *Shifting Identities* investigates the musicians' professional identity and how this identity might shift when musicians start acting as theatrical performers. In most of the theatrical situations where musicians "perform", their profession is *extended*. In the first instance they make music; they sing or play their instruments. Besides this, they have to perform additional tasks such as walking on stage or reciting text. As an alternative strategy to extension, this research introduces and focuses on *reduction*, which means the *abstracting away* of specific qualities or abilities of the musician's profession. By not being able to use specific elements of their profession, musicians encounter problems that are very different from the ones in the case of extension. The audience watches musicians *not* doing certain things that usually belong to their profession. Both the expansive and the reductive approaches are concepts of working theatrically with musicians, and have the potential to enable musicians to transform into theatrical performers. They are different, perhaps even contradictory strategies, but both bear the ability to enrich the musician's professional identity with a more theatrical appearance.

The research is conducted in and through artistic practice: artistic questions and struggles are the basis for the research and the following research question:

> How can a musician be transformed into a theatrical performer by reducing, denying, absorbing and adapting, or taking away essential elements of music making?

The relation between theory and practice is understood as a feedback loop, continuously influencing, feeding and inspiring one another. The ways the practical works are connected to the research question and to the theoretical part of the research differ from one artistic project to another. Whereas some of the projects might initiate theoretical ideas, others are resulting from or experimenting with newly developed theories. What binds them is the explicit connection with reduction.

The dissertation is subdivided into four chapters. The first two chapters provide the context of the study, the latter two deal with the two approaches of working with musicians in theatre: extension and reduction. In Chapter One, the discussion is started by framing and conceptualising the profession of the musician, in order to build an understanding of *what* is extended or reduced when the identity shifts from a musician to a theatrical (musician-)performer. Based on a diversity of practices of musicians, I develop a dynamic model that builds strongly on what musicians actually *do*, a model that categorises the musician's professional activities into internal, external and contextual elements. Internal elements describe technical abilities such as finger or breathing technique, and emotional or intellectual abilities such as sight reading. External elements are the instrument or necessary tools in order to play an instrument (such as drum sticks, bow or brass mutes). The context deals with elements such as the performance space or different social occasions in which the musician is executing her profession.

Chapter Two deals with the performative contexts of music and theatre that form the fields in which the theatrical musician acts. This chapter takes a closer look at the distinctive features of music theatre and related sub-genres. It elaborates on musicality, musical structure and musical thinking; on how the creation processes of music theatre works are influenced by them; and on the effects

these creation processes have on a musician. In many music theatre productions a musical structure or musical-compositional thinking is responsible for the theatrical product. In this sense it differs from e.g. text-based theatre, where the narrative and drama largely determine the course of a performance. Also the composer as a relevant actor in music theatre and an important collaborator for the musician-performer is discussed here. Several composers are introduced who developed their work not only through creating music, but also decided to direct their pieces themselves. Due to the different aesthetics and working methods a broad overview of what is asked from the musician is created here. This includes the effects on the musician's actions and thereby the professional identity of the musician. This overview sets the stage for the discussions about extension and reduction in the second part of the dissertation.

In Chapters Three and Four, I develop the two-fold distinction between extension and reduction, and conceptualise the two approaches. Chapter Three elaborates on extension as a strategy to transform the musician into a theatrical performer. The concept of extension is mapped to various stages, which have a varying impact on the performing musician. While the more simple kinds of extension are able to theatricalise the musician without having her actively contribute to this theatricalisation (such as a costume or stage design), the more complex kinds of extension leave the musician with a range of demanding performative assignments, and potentially force her to leave the initial profession temporarily. The latter can be the case when a director asks a musician to actually act without playing music anymore.

Chapter Four presents a close examination of the reductive approach, designating the taking away of specific elements of music making from the musician, developed and conceptualised through a series of case studies. Being the central chapter of the dissertation, it includes a close examination and discussion of artistic works connected to this research, and how these works transform the musician into a theatrical performer. Examples include works by John Cage, Heiner Goebbels, Xavier Le Roy, Sam-Taylor Wood, Dieter Schnebel and Kris Verdonck. My own artistic work, as the practical part of this doctorate research, plays an essential role here in order to exemplify different kinds of reduction. The examples present a panorama of how "blank spots" can be created by means of reduction, in order to invite the audience to develop an individual interpretation based on their imagination.

I conclude with a discussion of the interrelations of the expansive and reductive approaches, deconstructing and destabilising their alleged dichotomy. Whereas the strategy for a creation might be reduction, the audience can experience the result as an extension of the musician's profession. This paradox is elaborated on in the Conclusion: While extension and reduction are different strategies to work with musicians on the theatre stage, I argue that rather than regarding them as being opposed to one another, and the one excluding the other, they should be considered as two sides of the same coin, with the common aim to make possible that the musicians actions may cause a theatrical imagination.

Samenvatting

Het doctoraatsonderzoek *Shifting Identities* behandelt de professionele identiteit van de musicus en hoe deze identiteit verschuift als musici theatrale performers worden. In veel theatrale situaties waarin musici optreden wordt hun handelen *uitgebreid*: naast het musiceren, zingen of het bespelen van instrumenten moeten musici bijvoorbeeld fysieke taken uitvoeren of teksten spreken. Dit onderzoek stelt een alternatieve benadering voor, namelijk het wegnemen van elementen van het muziek maken. Op het moment dat musici bepaalde elementen van hun professie niet meer kunnen gebruiken komen ze andere problemen tegen dan in het geval van uitbreiding of *extensie*. Het publiek ziet musici die bepaalde dingen *niet* doen die normaliter wel tot hun professie behoren; dit noem ik *reductie*. Zowel extensie als reductie zijn dus concepten waarmee theatraal met musici gewerkt kan worden en die het mogelijk maken om musici tot theatrale performers te transformeren. Het zijn verschillende, misschien tegenovergestelde benaderingen, die evenwel beide de potentie hebben om de professionele identiteit van musici te verrijken met een meer theatrale werking.

Het onderzoek is in en door de artistieke praktijk van de auteur uitgevoerd: artistieke vragen en problemen vormen de basis voor het onderzoek en de onderzoeksvraag:

> Hoe kan een musicus naar een theatrale performer worden getransformeerd door middel van het reduceren, weigeren, absorberen en adapteren, of het weghalen van essentiële elementen van het muziek maken?

Het verband tussen theorie en praktijk wordt als een "feedback loop" gepresenteerd; beide beïnvloeden, voeden en inspireren elkaar. De specifieke verhoudingen tussen het praktische werk en de onderzoeksvraag verschillen evenwel per artistiek project: waar het ene werk theoretische ideeën initieert, wordt in het andere juist met nieuw ontwikkelde concepten geëxperimenteerd. De expliciete connectie met reductie verbindt al deze werken.

Het proefschrift is in vier hoofdstukken onderverdeeld. De eerste twee gaan in op de context van het onderzoek, in de laatste twee worden de strategieën extensie en reductie behandeld. Hoofdstuk één begint met het afbakenen en conceptualiseren van het begrip "musicus", om een kader te ontwikkelen van *wat* uitgebreid of gereduceerd wordt wanneer de identiteit van musicus naar die van een theatrale (musicus-)performer verschuift. Uitgaande van de diversiteit in de artistieke praktijk wordt een dynamisch model ontwikkeld, gebaseerd op datgene wat musici daadwerkelijk *doen*. De professie van de musicus wordt in interne, externe en contextuele elementen gecategoriseerd. Met interne elementen wordt naast technische vaardigheden zoals vinger- of ademtechniek ook de vaardigheid om noten te kunnen lezen bedoeld. Externe elementen zijn het instrument of hulpmiddelen om het instrument te bespelen (zoals drumstokken, strijkstok of dempers voor koperblazers). Onder contextuele elementen kan zoiets als de ruimte of omgeving waarin een voorstelling plaatsvindt, of verschillende sociale gelegenheden waarin de musicus haar professie uitvoert, worden geschaard.

Hoofdstuk twee behandelt de performatieve contexten muziek en theater als de twee velden waarin de theatrale musicus zich begeeft. De onderscheidende kenmerken van muziektheater en aanverwante genres worden nader besproken. De begrippen muzikaliteit, muzikale structuur en

muzikaal denken krijgen bijzondere aandacht en er wordt uitgewerkt hoe deze de maakprocessen van muziektheater beïnvloeden, alsmede het effect dat ze hebben op de musicus. In veel muziektheaterproducties is een muzikale structuur of muzikaal-compositorisch denken verantwoordelijk voor de theatrale structuur, anders dan in bijvoorbeeld teksttoneel, waar het verhaal en drama het verloop grotendeels bepalen. Eveneens wordt de componist als relevante actor in muziektheater en als belangrijke partner van de musicus-performer besproken. Er wordt een aantal componisten geïntroduceerd die niet alleen muziek maken maar hun eigen werk ook zelf regisseren. Door de verschillende esthetieken en manieren van werken ontstaat hier een breed beeld van wat van de musicus in het hedendaagse muziektheater gevraagd wordt en hoe het effect daarvan op de handelingen en daarmee de professionele identiteit van de musicus inwerkt. Dit beeld legt de basis voor de discussie over extensie en reductie in het tweede deel van de dissertatie.

In de hoofdstukken drie en vier wordt het tweeledige concept van extensie en reductie ontwikkeld. In hoofdstuk drie wordt extensie uitgewerkt en via een aantal stadia in kaart gebracht. Verschillende effecten op en consequenties voor de uitvoerende musicus worden hier beschreven en geanalyseerd. Zo kunnen de meer eenvoudige stadia van extensie de musicus theatraliseren zonder dat zij er zicht- en hoorbaar actief aan bijdraagt, zoals door het dragen van een specifiek kostuum of het gebruik van een decor. Bij de complexere stadia kan van de musicus gevraagd worden om een reeks performatieve opdrachten uit te voeren en zelfs tijdelijk haar professionele basis op te geven. Het laatste kan het geval zijn als aan musici gevraagd wordt om te acteren en überhaupt geen muziek meer te maken.

Hoofdstuk vier presenteert een uitwerking van het begrip reductie aan de hand van een aantal case studies. Als centraal hoofdstuk van deze dissertatie worden hier werken besproken die een expliciete connectie met reductie hebben en tonen hoe de musicus in deze werken in een theatrale performer wordt getransformeerd. Er worden voorbeelden van John Cage, Heiner Goebbels, Xavier Le Roy, Sam-Taylor Wood, Dieter Schnebel en Kris Verdonck geanalyseerd. Het eigen artistieke werk van de auteur speelt in dit hoofdstuk eveneens een grote rol; hierin wordt het concept reductie in verschillende benaderingen exemplarisch uitgewerkt. De voorbeelden creëren een panorama hoe door middel van reductie "lege plekken" kunnen ontstaan die vervolgens het publiek kunnen aanzetten tot eigen interpretaties op basis van hun verbeelding.

Het proefschrift eindigt met een discussie over de onderlinge verwevenheid van extensie en reductie, waarbij de vermeende oppositionele tegenstellingen van beide benaderingen gedeconstrueerd en gedestabiliseerd worden. Hoewel de strategie tijdens het maken van een werk op het concept reductie gebaseerd kan zijn, kan het publiek het resultaat als een extensie van de praxis van de musicus ervaren. Deze paradox wordt in de Conclusie uitgewerkt: hoewel extensie en reductie verschillende strategieën zijn om met musici in een theater te werken, wordt hier beargumenteerd dat zij niet als tegenovergesteld en als elkaar uitsluitend gezien moeten worden, maar eerder als twee kanten van dezelfde medaille, met als gemeenschappelijk doel een theatrale verbeelding van het handelen van de musicus mogelijk te maken.

Curriculum Vitae

Falk Hübner was born on January 9th 1979 in Bückeburg, Germany. After having finished the Gymnasium at Bad Nenndorf, he studied chemistry and English at the Ruhr Universität Bochum for two years, before entering the Arnhem School of the Arts in 2001 where he got his Bachelor of Music in 2005, with the two main subjects of composition and jazz double bass.

He founded a number of ensembles in which he performed and for which he composed, such as the trio Falk Fiction & the B-Movies and Ensemble Ultraschall. Besides that he has composed music for a variety of soloists, ensembles and orchestras.

Since 2001 Falk Hübner has been involved in interdisciplinary creations as composer, performer and conductor, collaborating with dancers, actors, choreographers, directors and visual artists. This includes small experimental work created at Mousonturm Frankfurt as well as large stage productions at Schauspielhaus Bochum. Since 2006 he devises music theatrical work as a conceptualist, composer and director, including *Alltag* (2007) for five musicians, *Thespian Play* (2009) for a saxophone player without saxophone, soundtrack and video, and *NewsReal* (2012) for soprano, soundtrack, video text and slide projections.

Since 2002 Falk Hübner has been a teacher at local music schools. Since 2010 he teaches music theory, arrangement, composition and music in other art forms at the ArtEZ conservatory Arnhem. Since 2012 Falk Hübner is also teaching research skills at the master and bachelor courses at the conservatory at the Utrecht School of the Arts. Here he also supervises the students' research projects and gives shape to the research program of the Master of Music.

Publications of Falk Hübner include "Synchronous Differences: Thespian Play" in the most recent edited volume of the research group Intermediality in Theatre and Performance, "Entering the Stage - Musicians as theatrical performers" in *NewSound* 36, and a number of contributions to conference proceedings.

Falk Hübner actively attended many conferences, predominantly on the themes of performance, performativity, interdisciplinarity, intermediality and artistic research. Most recently he was invited as creative director for the 2013 ICON conference about artistic research in Helsinki, Finland. He is a member of several research groups, among them the FIRT/IFTR research groups for "intermediality in theatre and performance" and "music theatre", and the knowledge circle of the Research Centre for Theatre Making Processes at the theatre faculty of the Utrecht School of the Arts.

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