Shifting identities : the musician as theatrical perfomer
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Citation
Hübner, F. (2013, November 13). *Shifting identities : the musician as theatrical perfomer*. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/22342

Cover Page

The handle http://hdl.handle.net/1887/22342 holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

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Title: Shifting identities : the musician as theatrical perfomer
Issue Date: 2013-11-13

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.

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[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

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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-scène 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.

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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*

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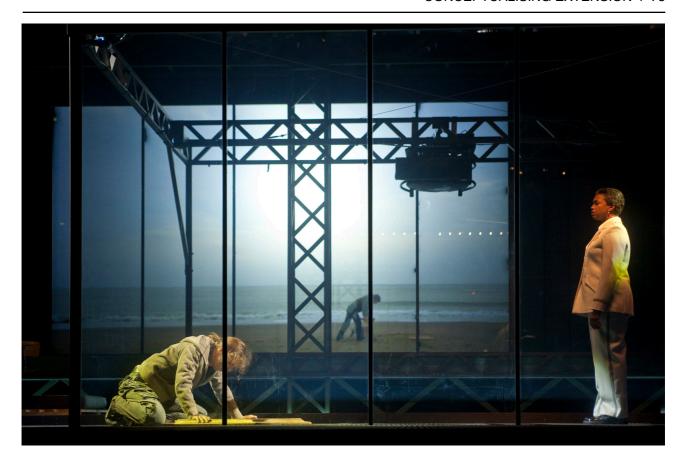
Image 3.3: Margriet van Reisen (live and on film) and Claron McFadden in *After Life*

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.

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[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)

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[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.

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[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

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[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.

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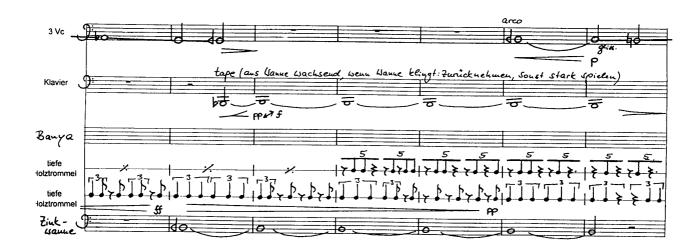
Image 3.5: The zinc bin in the score of *hellhörig*

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.

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[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.
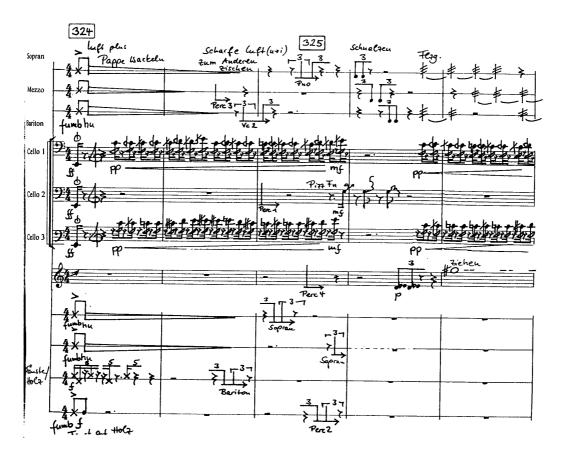

Image 3.7: Choreographed "air-Frisbee" playing in the score of *hellhörig*

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)

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[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

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[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.