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Materialisation of fixed media music

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Citation

Anvaritutunchi, S. (2024, June 25). *Materialisation of fixed media music*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3765322>

Version: Publisher's Version

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Materialisation of Fixed Media Music

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van
de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van rector magnificus prof.dr.ir H. Bijl,
volgens besluit van het college voor promoties
te verdedigen op dinsdag 25 juni 2024
klokke 10:00 uur

door

Siamak Anvaritutunchi

geboren te Tehran, Iran
in 1981

Prof. dr. Richard Barrett
Prof. dr. Marcel Cobussen

Frank Scheffer

Prof. dr. Rachel Beckles Willson	
Prof. dr. Teresa Carrasco	Bern, Academy of the Arts, Department of Music
Dr. Paul Craenen	
Prof. dr. Cathy van Eck	Bern, Academy of the Arts, Department of Music
Prof.dr. Erik Viskil (secretaris)	

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	5
On the audiovisual component	6
Introduction	
0.1. Preamble	8
0.2. What is fixed media electroacoustic music?	9
0.3. Structure and format of the dissertation	13
Chapter 1	
1.1. Actualising fixed media music	14
1.1.1. Sound file versus score	15
1.2. Composer/performer	16
1.2.1. Performativity in the composing process	18
1.2.2. The performer in fixed media music	20
1.2.3. The art of sound diffusion	23
1.2.4. Composing for the Acousmonium	28
1.3. Public presentation of fixed media music	29
1.3.1. Corporeality in fixed media music	30
1.3.2. Liveness in fixed media music	33
Chapter 2	
2.1. Understanding the concert situation through atmosphere	35
2.2. What is atmosphere?	36
2.2.1. Bodily presence	37
2.3. Music, space, atmosphere	39
2.4. The atmospheric power of the acousmatic situation	41
2.5. Lighting in fixed media music presentation	44
2.5.1. The phenomenon of light	45
2.5.2. Dim lighting	47
2.6. Composing atmospheres	49
Chapter 3	
3.1. Composing and performing in practice	51
3.2. From the sound of instruments to sounding instruments	51
3.2.1. The <i>Broken Ensemble</i> project	56
3.3. Spatial polyphony	59
3.3.1. Spatial music	60
3.3.2. Multichannel composition	62
3.3.3. Symmetrical spatialisation	66
3.3.4. Spectral spatialisation	67
3.3.5. The <i>Pejvak</i> method	69
3.3.6. Spatial micropolyphony	70
3.3.7. Sound movements	70
3.3.8. Critical reflections on spatialisation	72

3.4. Post-mix	73
3.4.1. Presenting <i>Sehasht</i> in three different spaces	74
3.5. Dynamics in fixed media music presentation	76
3.6. Azimuth	79
Conclusion	82
References	87
Summary	91
Samenvatting	93
Curriculum Vitae	95

Acknowledgments

First and foremost I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my promoter Prof. dr. Richard Barrett for his wisdom, inspiration, encouragement, generosity, kindness and fundamental support through this long journey, without whom this project would have not been possible. I would also like to wholeheartedly thank my other promoter Prof. dr. Marcel Cobussen for his patience, dedication, support and invaluable feedback with meticulous remarks which shaped this dissertation. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Frank Scheffer who encouraged and helped me to dip my toes into the the world of filmmaking, opening a new path in my life. I also want to thank him for generously giving me access to his precious archive which inspired me and enriched my visual material.

I would like to thank everyone at the Institute of Sonology where I could develop this project both intellectually and practically as a research associate. I would like to thank Dr. Kees Tazelaar, head of the Institute, in particular for his constant support.

I would like to thank my friends and colleagues in Azimuth, Marko Uzunovski and Dario Giustarini, for their enthusiasm and dedication in the production of several unique concerts, which provided a solid practical ground for this research.

I would like to thank the interviewees, Beatriz Ferreyra, Kathinka Pasveer, Daniel Teruggi, Trevor Wishart, Kees Tazelaar, Veniero Rizzardi, Jonty Harrison, Giulia Francavilla and Ji Youn Kang who generously shared their knowledge and experiences with me in front of the camera, helping me to establish a fruitful discourse in this project.

I would like to thank all my friends for their support and company during the ups and downs of this long journey, especially Heloisa Amarel, Marie Guilleray, Shabnam Ataei, Rouzbeh Esfandarmaz, Simone Sacchi, Tom van Hooff, Leonie Roessler, Kevin Toksöz Fairbairn, Anna Glinka, Yannis Patoukas and Leslee Smucker.

I would like to thank Stichting de Zaaier, who financially supported the final stages of this research.

I would like to thank the Orpheus institute in Gent and the Academy for Creative and Performing Arts (ACPA) at Leiden University, especially Dr. Rosalien van der Poel and Prof. dr. Erik Viskil for their support.

At last but not least, I would like to thank my family for their fundamental support and belief in me and the path I took in my life.

On the audiovisual component

This dissertation includes an audiovisual part which is complementary and of equal importance to the written component, simultaneously expressing its central ideas and demonstrating them in the form of a multichannel fixed media work for images and sounds which requires performance. The motivation for adopting a 'non-traditional research output' (NTRO - Murray and Rossmanith 2022) arose from encountering difficulties in using words to explain and describe the concert situation of fixed media music, which led to me recording those situations in order to better demonstrate their characteristics. An NTRO is able to incorporate more appropriate methods and tools for artistic investigation and discussion, especially in a realm such as music, which principally embodies tacit knowledge. In *Shaping the Digital Dissertation*, the author Lena Redman explains the benefits of personalised research methods: '[t]he privatization of knowledge tools enables the knower to create their own path in the quest for intellectual expansion in accordance with their individual interests, capacities and personal experiences' (2021, 210). This is perhaps particularly relevant when the artist/researcher is both a creative agent and the subject of investigation, as in my case. Having some prior experience in photography and videography, I found this a unique opportunity to develop such an NTRO and integrate it into my research trajectory. In the course of this endeavour, meeting the Dutch filmmaker Frank Scheffer (whose work I have always admired) played an important role in helping me to find my way among myriad possibilities.

While the initial idea of incorporating video into my research was to *replace* a written dissertation with a lengthy documentary, during the making process I came to the conclusion that the poetic capacities of the audiovisual medium should not be sacrificed for the concreteness of a written dissertation. For that reason, I decided to include a complementary text in order to free the audiovisual part from the responsibility of defining the theoretical ground, and thus to approach it in a more affective and poetic manner. That is why the film sometimes involves a degree of ambiguity which is necessarily absent from the text. Along the way, a symbiosis between the text and the audiovisual component developed as they affected and inspired one another. For instance, some observations through the lens of the camera helped me to better reflect on my practice. On the other hand, the writing process provided me with ideas which could then be explored in and through the audiovisual medium. In other words, the audiovisual medium was utilised both as a research tool and a method for dissemination. Taken as a whole, the audiovisual and the written components aim at establishing a discourse between the interviews, the documentary material and the literature on the one hand, and the self-reflections and my artistic contribution on the other; it is through this coexistence and dialogue that this research is shaped.

In order to gather some first-hand information concerning the practice of fixed media music presentations, I decided to interview some practitioners, including people who work with various styles and approaches to composing and performing this music.¹ This process involved a learning curve for me in both a technical and intellectual sense. The edited interviews which appear in the final version of this audiovisual component are a selection from many hours of conversation with the interviewees. The selection was principally based on the relevance of the content to the overall narrative of the audiovisual part. These conversations also indirectly

¹ My selection was also partly practical, in terms of the availability of the interviewees and myself.

helped me in the writing process by bringing about an understanding of the similarities and differences between the views and approaches of the practitioners.

While this audiovisual part is not intended as a documentary in the traditional sense, in constructing it I was inspired by Scheffer's idea of the *docu-concert*, which combines the experience of a live concert with the documentary form. My aim is to provide an experience of listening to spatial music and *simultaneously* to elaborate on the issues around its presentation, often blurring the boundaries between artwork, poetic reflection and documentation. Hence this component is probably best seen as a contribution to a range of possible forms of artistic research outcomes.

The complete version of the audiovisual component of this research will be *performed* in form of a screening/concert on 24th of June 2024 during the artistic presentation. A reduced version is available online via the link below.

The audiovisual component (reduced version)

<https://siamakanvari.com/index.php/audiovisualdissertation>

Password: avdmofm

Interviews

Karlheinz Stockhausen 1997, from Frank Scheffer's archive

Daniel Teruggi March 2019, The Hague

Beatriz Ferreyra September 2019, Berlin during *Kontakte* festival

Trevor Wishart October 2021, The Hague, during Sonology concert

Veniero Rizzardi December 2022, The Hague, during *Contemporary Music Heritage* symposium

Jonny Harrison April 2023, The Hague, during *Composing Spaces II* festival

Kees Tazelaar July 2023, The Hague

Giulia Francavilla December 2023, The Hague

Ji Youn Kang June 2024, The Hague