Inside the performer's process:
Exploring four Australian works for the viola through recordings, analysis, and reflection

Ms Phoebe Green
MPhil (Mus Perf), BMus Perf (Hons)

Queensland Conservatorium
Griffith University

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
May 2018
Abstract

This research inquiry is firmly situated within the field of artistic research, where new knowledge about and within practice is gained. There are two equally weighted submission components: one being a series of sound files containing recordings of four recent Australian works for solo viola and related sonic data; the other this exegesis, which provides a context for understanding and unpacking the interpretive decisions housed in the recordings. The four works included in the research are: Liza Lim Amulet (1992), James Rushford Untitled (2012), Helen Gifford Desperation (2014) and Lisa Illean Cranes (2016, revised 2017). With each work, a particular experience stood out: learning, commissioning, performing, and recording a work. These became sites for investigation; problems to solve, choices to decipher, and musical decisions to consider.

Analysis from the performer's perspective became the potential medium through which the research could be expressed. Recent musical analysis literature that attempts to express elements of the score in the context of performance are limited in their ability to capture certain aspects of the performance by their abstract relationship to the site for analysis. In response to this gap in the literature, a goal of this research is to facilitate discourse on performance analysis and present a model of analysis that speaks to processes of the performer. This research argues that performance analysis is to be enacted by the performer, expressing their knowledge and experience of the score in the performance context. Specifically, a performance analysis of Lisa Illean’s Cranes (2016-17) in this exegesis is an embodied analysis that examines knowledge of the score that can only be to known to the performer through performing the score in real time.

Examining creative processes undertaken by the performer as they work towards an interpretation reveals the ways in which the performer controls, manipulates and theorises elements of the score towards a performance. Further to this, the performer is in constant negotiation through their relationship with their instrument, the score, the composer, and the performance context. This can often lead to questions on how to navigate issues of authority and authenticity in a performance practice, as the performer determines what gives their practice meaning. When these experiences are contextualised and enter a reflective space, hierarchies are observed, strategies are developed, and greater understanding is gained.
Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

(Signed) Phoebe Green
Notice of prior publication

Some content and themes discussed in ‘Chapter 1 Examining a learning experience’ was presented as ‘Wrestling the Conscious Autoethnographer’ at The Art of Critical Autoethnography Conference, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, 20 August, 2015. This paper has since been published as: Green, P. (2018). Creating memories: A cartography of musical learning. In S. Holman Jones & M. Pruyn (Eds.), Creative selves/creative cultures (pp. 217-227). Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-47527-1
# Table of Contents

List of figures .................................................. 6  
Acknowledgements ............................................. 7  
Prelude: A journey into artistic research ....................... 8  
Integrated research components: How to approach this thesis 11  

**Introduction** .................................................. 12  
  - Rationale .................................................... 12  
  - Context ...................................................... 14  
  - Methodology ............................................... 25  
  - Chapter outline ............................................. 31  
**Chapter 1** Examining a learning experience .................. 33  
**Chapter 2** Commissioning as a dynamic inflection on performer-composer relationships 50  
**Interlude A** Performing *Cranes*: A conversation between composer and performer 67  
**Chapter 3** A performance analysis of *Cranes* ............... 72  
**Chapter 4** The performer as listener ......................... 84  
**Interlude B** Clarifying my creative role ..................... 102  
**Conclusion** ................................................... 109  

**Appendix 1** .................................................. 115  
**Appendix 2** .................................................. 121  

**Bibliography** ................................................ 123
List of figures

1.1 Timeline of works included in the research project. The star indicates the ‘experience’ that prompted a site within the research.

2.1 *Untitled*, bar 70.

2.2 Placement of foil on I and II strings.

2.3 a) standard tuning of a viola (IV–C string, III–G string, II–D string, I–A string), b) *scordatura* of *Untitled*. The IV string is tuned down a diminished octave, and the III and I strings down a minor third, whilst the II remains unchanged.

2.4 *Untitled*, bar 80. Black denotes full tone, purple for slightly less tone, red for little tone and pink for virtually no tone. Note the secondary “purple” (this will be addressed later in the chapter).

2.5 Excerpt from Billone *ITI KE MI* (1995); light blue denotes light bow pressure, red *ordinario*, and dark blue *moltó* bow pressure.

2.6 *Untitled*, bars 99-101.

2.7 Cycle of learning.

2.8 Fingering chart ‘cheat sheet’ developed for learning *scordatura*. Arrows indicate high or low position of the finger. Some semitones were useful to show.

2.9 *Untitled* featuring colour notation, bars 22-25.

2.10 *Desperation* (2014), bars 48-51.

2.11 *Untitled*, bars 48-49; Rushford uses various slur lengths to convey musical shape.

3.1 Diagram of form with bar lengths; Parts I, II, III interspersed with Interludes A and B.

3.2 Opening bars of *Cranes* (*Part I*). Note the notation of the fragments.

3.3 Score fragment from *Gerlóczy Sári kiállítására in Kurtág’s Signs, Games and Messages* for solo viola (2005). The movement comprises of four staves centred in the page.

3.4 *Cranes*, bars 47-52, in consultation with composer; fragments are to be played less broken.

3.5 *Cranes*, bars 241-243 show the use of quarter-tones and cent deviations. Illean also employs arrows to show -17 cent deviations.

3.6 Harmonic series on A, example from the front matter of the score.

3.7 *Interlude* B, detuning of II string in bars 195-196.

3.8 Problematic section with F sharp played on III string.

4.1 *Amulet*, excerpt from p. 4.

4.2 The ‘performer as listener’ cycle of engagement. ‘F’ denotes focal attention, ‘G’ for global attention.
Acknowledgements

This period of research enabled me to develop many friendships with people that have grown to be both significant and meaningful. Firstly to my principal supervisor Associate Professor Vanessa Tomlinson: thank you for guiding me through this research project, our conversations have been both artistically-changing and mobilising for me. You have been the greatest example of the ‘artist as researcher.’ Thank you to my associate supervisor Mr Graeme Jennings, who is possibly the world’s most encouraging supervisor and gave me the impetus to record the works as part of the project. To the HDR and affiliated staff at Queensland Conservatorium, Dr Paul Draper for support in the early stages of my research, but most especially Dr Stephen Emmerson, whose encouragement and feedback in latter stages of the research was invaluable. Thank you to Ryan Weymouth for his eye for detail, and for answering every possible reference-related question. To the four composers whose works features in this research: Helen Gifford, Lisa Illean, Liza Lim, and James Rushford. Thank you for your pieces, your time, and your conversation. It has been so rewarding for me to explore your works in depth and to build our friendships alongside. These pieces will stay with me for the duration of my playing life. Thank you to the following people for giving me the opportunity to perform/record one or more of the works over the period of active research: Tim Phillips, John McCaughey and Gabrielle Baker, Josten Myburgh, Vanessa Tomlinson, Lisa Illean, Stephen Adams, Adrian Sherriff, Vincent Giles and Alice Bennett, and the New Music Network. Thank you to Myles Mumford and Christopher Lawson who recorded the studio tracks. Thank you most special friends and mentors who have supported and encouraged me during the research; Dan Richardson, Peter Neville, Elisabeth Bodey, Courtney Smyth, Alice Buckingham and Louise Devenish. To my viola mentors; Patricia Pollett, Barbara Maurer, Geneviève Strosser, your passion is infectious and your pragmatism is something I am still learning. To Sarah Buckley for reminding me that it is a privilege to write a thesis. To my church community at St Paul’s Lutheran Box Hill for being so supportive. I wish to especially acknowledge Dr Alistair Noble for his time, insight, feedback, and encouragement. I am so grateful for the assistance you have given me. To Leah Scholes who continued to wave pom-poms of love and encouragement and gave me affirmation of what I was doing and what I was interested in. To my parents, who instilled in me a love of music, and the joy of sharing it with others. And last but never least to my husband Zachary Johnston – I literally could not have done this without you – and to our daughter Aoife, born mid-way through this journey; you are a delight and a champ. Thank you for being such a good little girl and a great sleeper. That really, really, helped.
Prelude: A journey into artistic research

Music from my own time and place is at the centre of my performance practice as a violist. I am foremost an interpreter of other people’s music, inclusive of new and extant works. Since 2006 I have been commissioning new works by Australian composers. I was curious about further exploring the concept of ‘place’ through my own instrument’s repertoire, so I began this research project with the intention of surveying Australian viola literature. The initial research I undertook in 2013 involved the data collection of existing works that would then be analysed in their context of Australian musical literature, as well as several performances that would highlight excellence in this body of repertoire. However, I was gradually drawn into examining my interactions with particular works and composers. The experiences that came from these interactions became a site for potential knowledge – and transformation – within my own practice as I began my journey into artistic research.

One catalyst for this change of course was an early encounter with Schick’s The Percussionist’s Art: Same Bed, Different Dreams (2006). Reading Schick’s book was like encountering the flesh and bones of a performance practice. This was not an account of performance by a historian or analyst; here was a performer speaking about their practice in relatable and illuminating ways. Borgdorff’s The conflict of the faculties: Perspectives on artistic research and academia (2012) articulates the potential of artistic research, and helps explain why Schick’s book resonated so strongly with me:

artistic creative processes are inextricably bound up with the creative personality and with the individual, sometimes idiosyncratic gaze of the artist, research like this can be best performed ‘from within.’ …creating and performing are themselves part of the research process – so who else besides creators and performers would be qualified to carry them out? (Borgdorff, 2012, pp. 50-51)

The Percussionist’s Art triggered reflections on experiences within my own practice. As the mode of inquiry became more inwardly directed, I began to explore deeper questions about my practice, beginning with what draws me to particular works and composers. From here, new questions emerged that led me to re-evaluate roles and relationships that occur in my creative process: between myself and my viola, the score, the composer and the contexts in which I perform. Further to this, I was then able to draw out particular threads and examine how these roles and relationships negotiate, affect, and influence my musical interpretation.

Prior to beginning this research project, I had come to feel invisible in my performance practice, unsure of my position between the score and the composer. In performing scores where I had personal access to the composer, I found negotiating my own interpretation difficult as I wanted to capture as closely as possible the composer’s vision, as I understood it through the score. However, I had become weighed down by self-imposed assumptions that had crept into my practice, the foremost ones being the speed at which an interpretation of a new work can be developed, the authority of the piece being located in
the score and the composer, and the score alone holding a (generally) fixed set of truths for the performer. These assumptions and hierarchies of authority had become embedded in my practice to the detriment of my own artistic voice. I came to realise that they were limiting, unhelpful and creatively unsustainable. It was as if I were trying to make a piece of origami and, at some point, had made an incorrect fold that was preventing me from progressing. Whilst you can unfold, you cannot ‘un-crease’ a piece of paper. Progressively, I began to accept that these folds, undone and re-made, had become an essential part of my story. As I worked to unfold and refold my misshapen practice, I was able to identify moments in which I did have my own response to the works I interacted with, that went beyond merely obeying the composer’s instructions in the score. I needed to explore the inner workings of my practice and re-discover my own voice whilst preserving my belief in achieving fidelity to the composer’s vision with my reading and interpretation of their score.

Towards the end of 2015, I attended a lecture on performance analysis. I was considering exploring analytical models to develop methodological approaches as a route towards answering questions arising in my research, and was eager to hear a perspective on what performance analysis entailed. The lecture was not what I expected. The first example involved a recording of a song that had been put through a software program in order for empirical data to be extracted and observations to be made and analysed. Decisions made by the performer in their interpretation of the score in order to generate the performance did not factor into the analysis. It was clear that the goal of this particular ‘performance analysis’ was not focused on the decisions of the performer; yet, as a performer myself, I had anticipated that ‘performance analysis’ would also consider the creative processes that led to the performance. This analysis had proclaimed itself to be based on performance, however it almost entirely bypassed the performer’s own creative process.

Seeking out other examples of performance analysis (Cook, 2007a, 2007c; Rink, 2002b), I encountered similar instances in which the performer’s contribution was over-looked. Often, the beginning of these analyses would acknowledge the performer and how their physicality and knowledge impacted the performance outcome of the score, yet the empirical-based analysis itself would relegate the performer to the background. I found it difficult to relate to much of the analytical data in a practical sense. The analyses covered the ‘what,’ but I wanted to know more about the ‘how’ and ‘why.’ Early on, I returned to the aforementioned Schick (2006), and gradually found other examples of where the performer speaks including Tomlinson (1998), Viney & Blom (2015), and later Orning (2012). Collaborative papers Fitch & Heyde (2007) and Clarke, Cook, Harrison, & Thomas (2005), offered further ways to explore this area. What emerged was that the clarity of the goal of analysis is central to how that analysis relates particular elements of the score to its reader (or listener). How then could performance analysis models reflect processes undertaken by the performer, and what knowledge could this relate to the reader, while also
serving the performer by extending their knowledge of the score and illuminating possibilities within their own performance practice?

Four particular works for solo viola began to emerge as research sites for me. Early on, James Rushford’s *Untitled* (2012) became my first site for inquiry. The work tested me in new and extreme ways and the layers of complexity in the score provided a rich set of possibilities to explore. I was able to draw on several experiences from *Untitled* in my interactions with other composers and other repertoire. This included Liza Lim’s early viola solo *Amulet* (1992), a work I had for some time wanted to include in my repertoire. During the course of my research activities, opportunities arose to commission composers Helen Gifford and Lisa Illean. Beyond performing these four works in various contexts, the recording of the works by Gifford, Lim and Rushford, in a studio provided a further opportunity to explore them more deeply. Recording musical works confronted my practice with the concept of permanence: a recording functioning as a ‘photo’ of a piece captured from one moment of a whole relationship with that work. With each work, particular modes of experience stood out and drove me to explore further and reflect upon specifically in the chapters of this exegesis: learning, commissioning, performing, and recording a work. These four experiential modes became catalysts and sites for investigation: problems to solve, choices to decipher, and musical decisions to consider. Analysis from the performer’s perspective became the potential medium through which the research could be expressed.

During my research there has been a progression of unfolding shifts as I have meditated on particular experiences I have had, and what they mean for my practice. The developments that have taken place have been subtle and accumulative. In many ways, the transformations that occurred both in myself and within the project are the result of serendipitous pathways that opened at different moments and that I chose to pursue. I could have chosen to focus on one piece alone through multiple lenses, however each of the four works included challenged, illuminated and clarified particular ways of thinking about music in my practice. My research project has two main components: one being recordings of four recent Australian works for solo viola; the other the following exegesis, which will provide a context for understanding and unpacking the interpretive decisions housed in the recordings.
Integrated research components: How to approach this thesis

This two-part research project includes electronic sound files and written exegesis and these are intended as equally weighted submission components. The sound files comprise of 4 studio recordings, 1 live recording, and 1 audio data track to support my argument in Chapter 4.

Track listing:
1. James Rushford, Untitled (2012), recorded at Iwaki auditorium (ABC studios), Southbank, Australia, August 2017
2. Helen Gifford, Desperation (2014), recorded at Head Gap studios, Preston, Australia, December 2016
4. Liza Lim, Amulet (1992), recorded at Head Gap studios, Preston, Australia, December 2016
5. Liza Lim, Amulet (1992), recorded at Iwaki auditorium (ABC studios), Southbank, Australia, August 2017
6. Excerpt of Liza Lim, Amulet (1992), audio data for Chapter 4

Recording engineer for Tracks 1 and 5: Christopher Lawson.
Recording engineer for Tracks 2 and 4: Myles Mumford.

The recommendations for listening are as follows:
- Chapter 1: Track 1 (Rushford, Untitled) prior to reading.
- Chapter 2: Track 2 (Gifford, Desperation) may be listened to at any time.
- Chapter 3: Track 3 (Illean, Cranes) prior to reading.
- Chapter 4 refers to the remaining 3 tracks: Track 4 (2016 recording of Amulet) and Track 5 (2017 recording of Amulet). The reader may choose to listen to these tracks at any time before, during, or after the chapter. The reader is prompted to listen to Track 6 (audio data example) during the course of the chapter.

In addition to these recommendations, text boxes appear (see below) during the course of the exegesis as a visual reminder to listen to recommended track.

Recommended listening: [Track details]

Outside of this the reader is welcome to listen to the tracks at any point if it is helpful to gain a context of the work.
Introduction: Rationale

Artist as Researcher: An experience as a research site

Examining the nature and context of a constellation of experiences situated within a performance practice presents the performer with an opportunity to illuminate new perspectives on, and developments into, their practice. This lies at the heart of artistic research (Coessens, Douglas, & Crispin, 2009, p. 26). The purpose of examining an ‘experience’ within a performance practice is to discover and reveal potential knowledge for the artist to grow, shift and transform their practice. The artistic process weaves a synthesis between the conscious and unconscious, between the tacit and that which can be expressed. But differences emerge when these experiences are contextualised and enter a reflective space; hierarchies are observed, processes are developed, and greater understanding is gained. This final element is the key objective of this research project. The research question that has guided my research may be expressed in the following terms: Drawing on experiences with four Australian viola works, what was my creative role as performer in developing meaningful interpretations of these works?

An experience from within the performer’s realm can be examined from several vantage points that directly relate to the act of performance itself, but which also extend to the relationships and creative processes surrounding the performance (or realisation) of a work in real time. This exegesis examines roles and relationships, and builds on models of performance analysis (see Bowen, 1999; Cook 2007c; Emmerson, 2007; Rink, 2002b) to express creative processes undertaken by the performer as they interpret a score towards performance. In this research, performance is both a process and an outcome, and the accompanying recordings demonstrate the performative outcomes of these processes. Cook defines performance analysis as; “locating the production of musical meaning in performance and not, or not simply, the score” (Cook, 2007c, p. 778). Rink (2002a) suggests it is exploring “the dynamic between intuitive and conscious thought that potentially characterises the act of analysis in relation to performance” (Rink, 2002a, p. 5). However, these empirical-based analysis models are primarily based on recordings and the score, written by analysts, and are limited in expressing knowledge of the score that can be only known through the act of performance. These models provide a point for departure to be explored in this exegesis: a reorientation of performance analysis in order to extract knowledge from the unique vantage point of the performer’s experience. I will suggest a model for performance analysis that analyses what is known to the performer through the act of performing a score.

The following four works for solo viola act both as a trigger and a response to the research question posed:

- Liza Lim Amulet (1992)
Whilst these works all draw on Western art music traditions of notation, the composers importantly represent a spectrum of compositional style, age and gender. These aspects alone, however, did not demand their inclusion in the research. The choice of works is primarily based on the deep connection I built with each score and composer, and their subsequent reflective impact on my performance practice since commissioning and including these works in performance. The works by Rushford, Gifford and Illean were commissioned by myself. These works are personal to my practice, yet the creative processes at work are transferable across performance disciplines that are in many ways key to unlocking potential knowledge.

This exegesis will unfold through recounting and reflecting upon a series of experiences that arose as I engaged with this repertoire through the processes of commissioning, learning, performing and recording. The structure of the exegesis could have followed this series of experiences by analysing interactions with only one composer/work, however the context for these experiences were triggered by (yet not limited to) the particularities of each work. Further research sub-questions informed the research investigation:

- Beyond notation, what issues, decisions and complexities arise for the performer through the act of performance?
- How can new Australian viola music be used as a vehicle to build a deeper understanding of performance practice inclusive of learning methods, composer relationships, recording and analysis?
- How does the performer negotiate aspects of fidelity to the score while subjectively embodying its musical syntax?

The prism of experiences reflected in this exegesis reveal ways in which meaning and fidelity to the score can be expressed through a performance practice. The performer takes on different roles as they navigate through a score in different contexts; advocate, learner, interpreter, analyst and listener, among others. These roles are inhabited instinctively as the performer seeks to develop a faithful and meaningful interpretation, one which aims to align with the composer’s vision for the work but which also reflects the individuality of the performer’s creative contribution. Other outcomes such as performances and recordings are just glimpses into the continuous workings and re-workings of a practice. These experiences operate on a grander scale within particular events or milestones in an artistic practice (for example, premiering a new work). Individually though, they wield a strange power as they shape, re-make, inform,

---

1 The commission of this work was supported by Arts Victoria (now Creative Victoria).
2 See Appendix 1 for programme notes and biographical information on these composers, and a comprehensive list of performances and recording sessions that took place during the research.
influence and perpetuate a developing practice. It is through this mode of inquiry that the embedded assumptions and hierarchies within a performance practice are revealed, and a shifting of state of mind is possible. But perhaps what is most significant is the transformation that takes place within these roles as each experience is explored deep into the recesses of an individual’s performance practice.

**Context**

This project is firmly situated within the field of artistic research, where new knowledge about, and within practice is gained. In *The Artistic Turn* (2009), which explores the “inside view,” the authors discuss the inextricable links between artists’ experiences and their artistic research (Coessens et al., 2009, p. 44). My own research builds on approaches found in seminal texts on artistic research such as the aforementioned and Borgdorff (2012). As Borgdorff clarifies, “In all cases, theory or theoretical research, just like the body of technical knowledge, is used in the service of artistic practice” (2012, p. 18). Drawing on Frayling (1993) also, this research takes place within practice, rather than on practice, or about practice. The research literature was drawn from a variety of sources including musical scores, books, articles and interviews with the four composers of the works included.

My research is centred within a personal practice that manifests outcomes through interactions and relationships within the ‘doing;’ it is messy and human. It is now more common for performers to speak of their creative processes in formalised ways. Schick’s writing (2006) is one example of how the performer can explore their “inside view,” and what knowledge can be gained and then shared. John Zorn initiated the *Arcana* series to enable musicians from an array of disciplinary practices to share stories, problems and developments, aimed at providing “a helpful insight into the artists’ inner mind” (Zorn, 2000, p. vi). This significant series highlights the diversity in artistic practices and approaches, particularly in contemporary Western art music, improvisational, performance and compositional practices. Naomi Cumming’s *The Sonic Self* (2000) is an attempt to build a bridge between artistic practice and philosophy. Cumming’s approach bears a similarity to my own research in genesis, wherein musical experiences prompted curiosity and pathways for further inquiry.

Project-based research by various performers offers potential routes for other performers to build on when exploring their experiences through the lens of artistic research. Recent work in this area includes Emmerson (2007), Kanga (2014a), Orning (2017), Penny (2009), Roche (2011), and Aszodi (2016). Writings that involve a performer and a collaborator, whether with an analyst or a composer – such as Fitch & Heyde (2007), or Clarke et al. (2005) – offer exciting models for performers to take up with a co-creator. Fitch and Heyde acknowledge that “very little attention has been paid to the performer’s

---

3 Appropriate ethical clearance was obtained and approved by the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee, 10 August 2017.
potentially significant mediation between composer and piece,” and that, furthermore, “much of what drives ideas forward is not expressed directly” (Fitch & Heyde, 2007, p. 72). Tacit knowledge forms such a large part of performance practice, and this is perhaps why performers have been less present in this academic field. Articulating how and why we do something and what results in the creative process that may follow is difficult to satisfactorily execute. However, if performers partner with an empathetic and responsive collaborator, then this may amplify the potential knowledge and resultant outcomes. This area of artistic research is rich in possibilities.⁴

**Trajectories of research in literature**

Gradually, three themes emerged from the literature that resonated with perceptions and shifts that were occurring in my research: Roles and relationships; Performative contexts as a site for analysis; and Locations of meaning. These three research trajectories will now be examined within the body of the literature.

**Roles and relationships**

The performer takes on several roles that operate within their own practice, but also extend outwards to interact through various relationships. These relationships include those between the performer and their instrument, the composer and the score, where the historical framework of the practice and cultural and social conditions contribute to a continuity of practice. Small (1998) observes that as these relationships are explored, what we learn about them “is in fact a way of knowing our world…and in knowing it, we learn how to live well in it” (Small, 1998, p. 50). Goehr’s influential *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (2007) traces the implications of the work-concept (and its development into Werktreue) for the performer, exploring how performers relate to works and what it might mean for their practice to be liberated from the works’ concept. Goehr suggests that “Werktreue is a demand not generically for a work as such, nor even for interpretation per se, but, first off, for a specific sort of performance because a particularly authoritative idea of the work is already held firmly in place” (2007, p. xxxii). How then could the presence of the work-concept and authority contribute to the performer navigating roles and relationships in their performance practice? Further studies on this subject by Kivy (1995) and Taruskin (1995) explore one or several of these parameters and offered a critical and theoretical context in which to situate my research.

This exegesis explores the dynamics of performer-composer relationships in relation to all the works featured within it, particularly, however, as they relate to the creative processes that transpired with the commissioned works by Rushford, Gifford, and Illean. Each of these relationships had individual characteristics which were found to be influential on my creative processes at the time, but also flowed onto relationships with other composers that developed subsequently. How might the initial act of

---

⁴ Borgdorff (2012) also highlights “productive combination[s]” in recent interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research (p. 51).
commission lead to creative relationships that explore the work in depth, as the performer works towards developing a meaningful interpretation? This creates an opportunity to examine and compare models of performer-composer relationships.

When a commission is made from performer to composer, this act invites a conversation. This conversation is unique to the creative and intimate working environment that takes place between both the performer and composer, and the performer and the score, as the newly created work becomes sonically realised for the first time. A growing discourse discusses the interactions and partnerships between performer and composer on newly-created works (see Iddon, 2013; Kanga, 2014a; Roche, 2011; Schick, 2006), however, what is rarely addressed is the motivation that precedes the act of commission. Roche (2011) hints that her research aided her approach to collaboration to the extent that it was improved, and that there is a further need for research to provide further models of collaboration for others to build on (see Roche, 2011, p. 29). My research will examine the degree to which motivation provides a context for the performer-composer relationship that can shape, define, manipulate and potentially enhance the subsequent interactions between the two – as well as between the performer and the score – towards a meaningful performance outcome.

The relationship that is built between the performer and composer through the interface of the score allows a continuous and interactive exchange of discussion, exploration, negotiation and affirmation. Where a performer is confronted with a newly-written score, there appears no template or performance tradition available to draw on beyond realising or obeying the instructions in the score, and so the composer’s ability to notate their intentions effectively is vital to the performer’s understanding of the new work. However, with access to feedback from the composer, through conversation, the performer is then able to access knowledge about intention and qualities of the score that notation alone cannot convey. This potentially enables the performer to develop a contextual and hopefully more meaningful interpretation wherein the score is realised as close to the composer’s concept as possible. Kanno (2012) acknowledges the identity of the score as being largely determined by notation (p. 172), however she suggests that the construction of a musical work’s identity is also “a complex social process comprising many different kinds of contribution” (Kanno, 2012, p. 171). A work’s creation may begin with the composer and the performer, but it extends beyond this paradigm as the audience and their interaction with the work contribute to its evolving identity.

The performer’s relationship to the score where the score is treated as ‘text’ is a returning subject in this exegesis. Kivy (1995) argues that the trajectory of ‘text’ as a dominant movement in performance practice has seen the performer’s concern for accuracy increase exponentially – however the term ‘accuracy,’ as he observes, has problematically also undergone considerable changes in its meaning. Furthermore, ‘Text-fetishism’ as described by Taruskin (1995), is observed as seriously “distorting” contemporary performance
practices (p. 187). The ramifications are that, as the score is projected as ‘text’ to the performer, any interpretive freedom by the performer is discouraged. Numerous texts including those by Ashby (2004b) and Kanno (2012), refer to the literary movement that stemmed from Roland Barthes’ essay “The Death of the Author” in 1967. While discovering a text’s “real meaning” was still of importance, the presence of the “Author” was seen to impose limits on deciphering the text or, as Barthes formulated it, “to close the writing” (Ashby, 2004b, p. 28). This notion can also be applied in performance that relies on a score, but does not extend to improvised or orally transmitted musics. Just as an actor reads a script and puts their vocal inflection and expression into the words, so is there room for the performer to add much that lies beyond the notation. As Cook observes: “Thinking of the music as ‘script’ rather than ‘text’ implies a reorientation of the relationship between notation and performance” (2003, p. 206).

Further to the theme of roles and relationships is the idea of how the body and identity of a performer is entwined with their relationship with their instrument. These physical and psychological aspects contribute significant dimensions to performance; the particularities of the relationship between performer and their instrument, and the results of this relationship in the context of performance and the performance space. The presence of a body brings a vulnerability and humanness to the score and its sonic realisation. The learning and interpretative development phases are where decisions are trialled and boundaries are tested both for the instrument and the performer. But in the moment of performance, everything is laid out bare, and the performer must negotiate the score in real time. In the case of a performance a newly-written work, performers are simultaneously negotiating with the composer as well as the score, and creating a performance practice of that work upon which others may build.

**Performative contexts as sites for analysis**

The act of performance is the nexus of the physical and sonic realisation of a work in real time. The impermanence and ephemerality of performance creates an intricate and vulnerable place that paradoxically can be both planned and spontaneous. A sub-question of the research is therefore; beyond notation, what issues, decisions and complexities arise for the performer through the act of performance? In the moment of performance, the performer is constantly making decisions, so quickly that they are almost simultaneously executing the results of those decisions as they ask the questions. It is a constant negotiation between score, instrument, the performance space and the self. I will first address the literature in relation to performative sites, followed by an examination of analytical models that could be applied to uncover knowledge housed in these sites.

The four works that are included in this exegesis were created within the tradition of contemporary Western art music. Rutherford-Johnson (2017) defines this tradition as encompassing “pieces that were composed or pre-planned reflectively, fixed in some sort of notation for a performer or creator to interpret or execute, and intended to be listened to by an attentive, informed, and critical audience”
The notation systems that have developed from the Middle Ages to now see the performer at times confronted by an almost overwhelming amount of detail (see Pace, 2009, pp. 149-152). The practical aspect of notation for performers must be “richly contextualised for it not to be misleading” and “involve innumerable ‘decisions’ that fit within the latitude of even the most prescriptive notation” (Walls, 2003, p. 89). The common practice for competent (and most especially professional) string players means that we come to new work with a degree of expectation in reading the score at sight. Leading violist William Primrose alluded to this when he declared that there is a need for string players who have “good solid technique, good sound, and hopefully [are] good readers” (Dalton, 1989, p. 20). How notation and learning intersect is one thread that will be followed through Chapter 1, whilst Chapters 3 and 4 will examine notation in performance contexts.

In his paper with composer Fabrice Fitch on their collaboration, cellist Neil Heyde does not go into his learning of the work as such, yet he observes;

> the notational strategies of the piece were twofold...it was vital that the conceptual underpinnings of the piece should not be obscured, and...we needed practical strategies for conveying new techniques and dealing with a dangerously obfuscatory scordatura.”

(Fitch & Heyde, 2007, p. 89)

The scores by Rushford and Illean include scordatura with different levels of complexity. In his experience with approaching Bone Alphabet, Schick realised that he “had never focused on the process of learning as an act distinct and separable from interpretation or execution” (Schick, 2006, p. 92). This identifies an interesting position for the performer to be in: have instrumental learning traditions contributed to assumptions towards how a performer is able to forge a path of interpretation almost simultaneously with their learning process? Schick suggests that performers have evolved to potentially take the value of a real learning experience for granted, and that this may be exacerbated by the demands on the modern performer (see Schick, 2006, p. 93). Chapter 1 examines how changes made to the instrument (such as scordatura) and embedded learning practices can be simultaneously affected by increased complexity of notation in contemporary scores.

Pianist and musicologist Ian Pace (2009) examines the performer’s relationship to notation through processes of learning and performing, within a rare example where the analysis draws on modern compositions, in this case by composers Karlheinz Stockhausen and Brian Ferneyhough. Pace mentions different initial approaches to reading through the score as an alternative to immediate detailed and slowly progressive learning, and comments that this is dependent on “such factors as the performer’s ability to sight-read” (Pace, 2009, p. 180). Chapter 1 examines the limits of these approaches in the context of my learning experience of Rushford’s Untitled due to the challenges presented in the notation. Pace also observes that learning is essentially “a process of prioritisation” (2009, p. 180) that is undertaken “both

---

3 Scordatura is the term applied to the non-standard tuning of string instruments.
when learning the work and when performing it” (p. 180, italics mine). In his case study, Pace recognises “what one does in performance, but also how one arrives at the situation which makes things possible. The two things are linked and have deeper implications than might be realised…” (2009, p. 179). Chapter 3, then, will focus on elements of the score that are prioritised in the performance space, as opposed to in the practice room.

When a performer enters a recording space there are similar parameters to be negotiated, but also significant differences. Pianist Glenn Gould wrote his essay The Prospects of Recording in 1966, two years after leaving the public stage. It outlines the potential benefits that recording offers over the public concert, exhibiting “characteristics such as analytic clarity, immediacy, and indeed almost tactile proximity” (Gould, 2004, pp. 115-116). Performers need to make decisions about the presence of these “characteristics” in a recording. To what extent should the performer aim to hide themselves in recordings? Gould also turns his attention towards the listener: “At the end of the technological debate, then, is a new kind of listener – a listener more participant in the musical experience” (2004, p. 121). Yet, as the performer considers their audience via a recording, what instances of listening occur for the performer through this process?

Several texts serve to remind us of the impact of recording on listening practices within modern social and cultural contexts (see Cox & Warner, 2004; Rutherford-Johnson, 2017). Generally there is an emphasis on the listener’s experience (of a recording), but for the performer who is making a recording, what are their approaches to listening as they prepare to record the work, and what potential issues may arise through this experience? In being the operator of the sounds, the performer is in a position in which they are able to immediately respond through physical movements to mediate the sounds. How could the performer’s perspective of listening in a recording studio manipulate their response in ways that are different to that in a live performance context? Voegelin (2010) addresses many different experiences of listening as a “phenomenological journey,” (p. 36) and suggests that:

Phenomenological listening as in intersubjective sensory-motor engagement is a reduction in order to get to the essence of the perceived, to critically experience and expand that essence; not to reduce the heard but to get to the wealth of the heard through a bracketed listening. (Voegelin, 2010, p. 35)

Chapter 4 will examine the highly subjective experience of the performer’s listening experience as they are situated in the context of their making, manipulating and responding to immediacies of sounds.

**Performance and performer-related analysis**

Why and how a performer would undertake performance analysis is an essential question that is necessary to determine the goal of their analysis. Their analysis is likely to explore and prioritise different dimensions to a traditional music analyst who relies solely on the score, and/or a recording. When the performance context is analysed from the performer's perspective in conjunction with the score, the scope for analysis
is significantly broadened to access knowledge of the score’s function which is unique to the performer alone. In *Performance Theory* (2004), Schechner observes “deep structures” within performance;

> These deep structures include preparations for performance both by performers (training, workshop, rehearsals, preparations immediately before going on) and spectators…and what happens after a performance. The ways people cool off and the sometimes extended aftermath of performances are less studied but very important. Cooling off includes getting performers and spectators out of, or down from, the performance; putting the performance space and implements to rest; the aftermath includes spreading the news about performances, evaluating them – even writing books about them – and in many ways determining how specific performances feed into ongoing systems of social and aesthetic life. (Schechner, 2004, p. xviii)

This exegesis seeks to orientate the goal of analysis towards examining a score in relation to a selection of those “deep structures” and processes that are revealed through different stages of the performer interpreting a score for a performance. Therefore, parameters of the subjective analysis are generated by the intersection of the score, the performer, and the playing of the score in real time. Playing is the activity wherein the performer is with their instrument and the score, and performance is the event outcome of the activity.

In recent years, music analysts have explored methodologies and theoretical concepts that could be applied to performance practice, yet the goal of the analysis is usually to inform the reader of things to listen for in order to enhance their musical experience (see Guck, 2006; Hanninen, 2004; Hirata, 1996; Cook, 1987, 2007b, 2015). Repp (1992) explains that conventional music analysis (or methods of musicology) places an emphasis on “removing the encrustations of later interpretation in order to arrive back at the original” (p. 777) and therefore is not intended to explore the act of performance. But Cook (1987) insists that analysis should be useful for both the performer and the listener, where the goal of analysis is a guide “towards a clear and compelling account of the music as you experience it” (Cook, 1987, p. 114). Whilst Cook identifies the importance and relevance of the experience one has with music, doesn’t the listener’s experience hinge on processes that the performer has undergone?

In the literature, a ‘performance analysis’ is undertaken by analysts and often use sound recordings to extract data and make analytical observations in relation to the goal of the analysis (see Bowen, 1999; Cook, 2007c; Clarke, 2004; Repp, 1992; Rink, 2002b, Tsang, 2002). Examples of what may be included in a performance analysis are: the graphing of tempi or dynamics of a work’s duration; or a comparison of multiple performers on the one piece. However, these analyses contain very little reference to the performer or their experience of performing the work. As Cook (2007c) acknowledges, the limitation of this kind of study is that “so little musical information is embodied in it,” (p. 779) and notes his collaborative study in particular (see Clarke et al., 2005) “would have been misleading if it had not been supplemented by reference to the performer” (Cook, 2007c, p. 787). Walser (2003) suggests that the reframing of information already present in the score (such as dynamics, tempi) may be helpful in showing relationships present in the score more clearly and so to understand the purposes and goals of the analysis (see Walser,
2003, p. 24-25). For example, graphs and charts may make structure or dynamics clear, but what further valuable insight could they bring to an analysis if presented alongside the performer’s perspective and experience of executing these elements in the context of the score’s information and its technical implications? Or, how does technique both enable and determine further musical decisions? These questions allow an extension of parameters such as timbre, orchestration, and to an even greater extent temporality and the performer’s relationship to the performance space to be analysed.

Rink (2002b) attempts to recognise the above parameters through the model performer’s analysis, which he defines as a “considered study of the score with particular attention to contextual functions and [the] means of projecting them…” (p. 36) that is to take place “as an interpretation is being formulated and subsequently re-evaluated” (p. 39). Rink presents possible tools of analysis for the performer as they seek to establish their analytical goals. His initial principles of this model appear to bridge the divide between analyst and performer by incorporating, among other things, temporality, intuition and “shape” over “structure” (Rink, 2002b, pp. 39-54). However, Rink’s objective analysis is still limited as it cannot convey that which is experienced by the performer in real time. Rink’s example highlights the importance for a performer to make the goal of analysis clear with set parameters that respond to the articulated objectives of the analysis. Through the performer’s knowledge of the score developed through their physical and psychological experience of performing the score, embedded knowledge enhanced through learning (beyond, but also including technique), means a performer’s analysis has the benefits from employing techniques and strategies from analysts (such as Rink, 2002b; Walser, 2003), while building on their models within a personal and practice-based frame. Though more subjective in nature such an analysis displays a different kind of rigour, where the aural and physical experience of playing the work – this extra-musical information, or ‘data’ – contributes to a dynamic phenomenological analysis.

This research project seeks to promote a model of performance analysis where the performer analyses their experience and the knowledge that is generated from their experience. My analysis is focused on examining the ‘mechanisms’ of the score (to borrow from Schechner, 2004) the performer uses to produce and interpret sonic transformations in real time. The model of analysis therefore is a significant, but not total departure from empirical-based analysis (see Clarke & Cook, 2004); it is primarily an experiential analysis, the potential of which music analyst Dora Hanninen eloquently expresses;

If one thinks of music analysis as being not so much about pieces as about experiences of pieces, a reasonable place to start is at the centre of that experience… we must be willing to analyse not only the music but also ourselves – our habits of thinking, hearing, and doing music analysis, and our understanding and expectation of what music analysis is or can be. (Hanninen, 2004, p. 228)

Here, Hanninen begins to redirect the emphasis away from the score itself as the site for analysis, and instead expands its focus towards the personal, allowing the interaction between the performer/analyst and their experience with the score to contribute to the analysis. This is where analysis can be widened
to include the ‘doing’ through the eyes of the performer; where the work is analysed in the context of the performer’s experience of performing.

Examples of performers exploring ways to analyse and express their creative processes to understand more about their practice and transfer knowledge to the reader include Schick, 2006; Orming, 2012; Tomlinson, 1998; Tomlinson & Wren, 2016; Impett, 2007; and Viney & Blom, 2015. Whilst these examples do not explicitly self-identify as performance analysis, they do however, align with a category of performance analysis that I seek to formalise. A vibrant model can also be found in Stephen Emmerson’s interactive DVD, *Around a Rondo* (2007). Over a period of many months, Emmerson weaves together performance and analysis as he explores interpretative decisions in the preparation of Mozart’s *Rondo in A minor K.511* for performance on a fortepiano. The duration aspect of the analysis allows the viewer to share and experience Emmerson’s frustrations, experiments, vulnerabilities and discoveries; we begin to understand the nuances and possibilities that the interpreter is faced with. There is a moment in one of the video clips when Emmerson speaks about gaining a deeper understanding of the technical implications of performing the *Rondo* on a fortepiano rather than a standard grand piano. Emmerson is trying to discover the fortepiano’s high point of resonance to then place the dynamics of the work in the context of the instrument’s capabilities. This reminded me of similar challenges I faced in performing *Cranes*, as the overall softness of the work combined with the priority of sound quality required a temperate approach to the viola, and I sought to find a resonance in balance with volume. Emmerson’s model of videoed ‘diaries’ and performances of *Rondo*, combined with an interactive analysis that is score-based, is a much more relevant model of performance-related analysis for the interpreter.

Adorno (2002) advocates analysis as a means to find a work’s *Wahrheitsgehalt*; it’s “truth content” (p. 167). This brings up the question, however, of whether the ‘truth’ of a work is limited to its notation. What ‘truths’ can be discovered through the performance of scores, and how might the performance become a site for analysis to contribute knowledge towards a work’s “truth content”? In this research, I re-claim the term performance analysis as an embodied analysis that expresses that which is only known to the performer through their experience of realising the score, and cannot be gleaned through objective analysis or through listening. Whilst Chapter 3 presents a formal examples of this based on a performance, Chapters 1 and 4 are wider examples of this definition of performance analysis to specifically include, represent and uncover new contributions to knowledge of works that is unknowable from the outside.

**Locations of meaning**

While the questions of where a performer locates meaning in their practice underscores all the investigations undertaken in the course of my research, this trajectory only became evident in the latter stages of the project. It is also to where the most significant personal changes in thinking and approaches to my performance practice can be traced. The locating of truth and meaning in musical works has been...
well theorised, most notably by Goehr (2007), Cook (2014), Small (1998), Kivy (1995), Taruskin (1995) and Bowen (1999). Goehr (2007) describes the work-concept’s “regulative” function as driving the Werktreue movement and giving gravitas to the idea that the “real meaning” (p. 232) of a work was located in the score. As a result, ‘authority’ began influencing performance practice and this had a dramatic impact on the way performers interacted with scores, as well as the legacies of the schema of Western classical traditions:

changes in aesthetic theory, society, and politics prompted musicians to think about music in new terms and to produce music in new ways. Musicians began to think about music as involving the creation, performance, and reception not just of music per se, but of works of such. (Goehr, 2007, p. viii)

Goehr’s questioning of how a performer’s practice operated before the work-concept took hold, re-opens possibilities of what fidelity to a score can mean, liberating the performer from a score-centred approach.

Traditions and legacies of Werktreue have influenced performance practices of the 20th century, including that informing this research project (see Small, 1998, p. 116). By being an active participant in music histories past and present, performers within Western classical traditions are already laden with the weight of preconceived assumptions; that is, these assumptions ride on the back of personal knowledge and experience within a continuity of practice. One assumption initially shaping my journey was that the composer’s vision is the location for the work’s “real meaning.” Goehr suggests that Werktreue is a demand “for a specific sort of performance because a particularly authoritative idea of the work is already held firmly in place” (2007, p. xxxii). The idea of a work being fixed is certainly a problem for the performer as interpreter. Whether the “authoritative idea” resides in the composer or the score is not especially important, however, subscribing to the notion that an “authoritative idea” exists in a fixed location that is outside of the performer creates an ‘authentic’ version of the score that would be almost impossible for the performer to reach. Thinking in terms of concepts also contributes to a codex of practices that are held by an “authoritative idea.” As Goehr notes, “Concepts, like families, are joined not only by overlapping threads of similarity but also by competitive instincts to dominate and subordinate, even to replace, each other in roles performed” (2007, p. xl). This is observed in Roles and relationship, and conflict theory within particular contexts of performer and composer interactions.

How a performer can negotiate these legacies and locate a score’s “real meaning” inclusive of their individual voice and skills is a recurring theme in this exegesis. In what ways do performers begin to think about a ‘work’ (or score – Goehr acknowledges the “score-concept,” 2007, p. xl) that can shape how the

---

6 Goehr’s The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works was initially published in 1992 and spurred discussion of it in many of the texts cited above. I drew from the second edition printed in 2007, which is accompanied by a foreword by Richard Taruskin and a new introductory essay by Goehr that sought to respond to criticism she received after the first edition was published.
performer interacts with that work? It is generally understood that musical notation can never be exact (see Sessions, 1971), yet the performer’s awareness of fidelity to the score potentially inhibits their ability to explore a range of interpretations. The score’s instructions become an end, rather than an opening. Bowen however, offers a potential route for performers to operate on, noting:

> Awareness of musical works as neither stable nor fixed phenomena does not have to be paralysing; rather, the fact that musical works change through both the creation and reception of performances presents us with a fundamentally new field of study. (1999, p. 424)

Here Bowen alludes to the presence of the performer and the medium of performance as contributing factors to the identity of a work growing over time. Bowen widens the scope of a musical work to include performance as “an example of that musical work” (1999, p. 425). What might these themes set out here mean for contemporary performance practices today?

In a performance practice that is generally focused on new and recently written works, how the constructs of Werktreue operate and are negotiated is also open to debate. Bowen (1999) poses questions to the performer as to the choices they have about their role, asking “is a performance meant to be a re-creation or a new independent creation?” (Bowen, 1999, p. 442). Bowen suggests that this question is based on whether the performer seeks to “recover old ground or to explore new territory” (1999, p. 442). Yet this line of thinking still advocates for a partitioning of practices between the performer, composer and the score. In practice, the interpreter may not necessarily regard their choices as being so clearly defined. Perhaps there is a middle course where the performance outcomes represent a more integrated ‘creation’ process that builds on, but is not limited to, the performance practice of new and recently written works.

Fixed perceptions and the search of ‘truth’ in a work must be broken down to open up the possible locations of meaning. A step towards releasing the performer from the burden of a “work-concept” may begin with a re-orientation of thinking, from the score being a bridge between composer and performer, to the performer being the bridge between the score and listener. This could open up a more exciting set of possibilities for the score in the sonic realm. It also ties into Goehr’s observation that “works are certainly not the problem. Nor is the work-concept alone the problem. The problem is that as listeners we have fallen too deeply under the spell of the very concept to which we have too blindly submitted our music” (2007, p. lii). If performers blindly submit to these scores, the ability to have a living relationship with the work is lost.

This exegesis seeks to contribute to the small, but growing literature of performers’ perspectives already mentioned that reconcile the performer’s place in the performer-composer-score and score-performer-performance paradigms. The research draws from concepts explored in Small’s Musicking (1998), Kivy’s Authenticities (1995) and most notably Taruskin’s Text and Act (1995), as the performer is persuaded to
widen their scope for interpretation and contribute to knowledge. This study also seeks to shed old concepts within performance practice and respond to shifts posed by Taruskin;

Postmodernist performance values, I would like to think, have to do with the opening-up of borders, in particular that border between the creative and the re-creative that began closing two long centuries ago. The postmodern attitude challenges the “strong concept of art,” and its exclusive claim to seriousness. It is attempting to undo those life-transcending formalist commitments that have stifled musical creativity and recreativity alike. (1995, p. 47)

Similarly, my research aims to open up the “borders” and reclaim “creativity and recreativity” in the performance practice of contemporary music.

Methodology
This research project drew on two primary methodological approaches: action research and critical autoethnography. My approach reflects Borgdorff’s observation that “artistic practice is not only the result of the research, but also its methodological vehicle, when the research unfolds in and through the acts of creating and performing” (2012, p. 46). Action research is a cyclical methodology used to initiate a process that allows reflection and improvements to take place: to plan, act, observe and reflect towards planning a set of new actions (see Lewin, 1958, p. 201). Doing this allowed a natural cycle to remain in my practice, where I would take a process (or series of processes), slowing it down so I might interfere with it just enough that I could extract the information from it, and make a series of observations and reflections to then inform subsequent processes and actions. Action research in tandem with critical autoethnography then offers the subject a powerful set of tools to investigate and reflect, allowing transformation and growth to take place.

Autoethnography is increasingly employed and recognised by music practitioners (see Bartleet, 2013; Bartleet & Ellis, 2009; Penny, 2009; Knight, 2012; Aszodi, 2016). The purposes of autoethnography are described as including:

(1) disrupting norms of research practice and representation; (2) working from insider knowledge; (3) manoeuvring through pain, confusion, anger, and uncertainty and making life better; (4) breaking silence/(re)claiming voice…; and (5) making work accessible. (Holman Jones, Ellis, & Adams, 2013 p. 32)

I saw parallels between the above principles of autoethnography and processes within my own performance practice. My early application of autoethnography awoke a ‘conscious’ voice in my practice, and its elements of reaching in to reflect out have mobilised me as a performer and interpreter. All the musical decisions that I have made are a culmination of cultural, social, historical, and technical contexts. As I consciously utilised this methodology, autoethnography allowed complexities and simplicities to be revealed. As a conscious autoethnographer, my consideration of performing has been one outcome of this research (see Green, 2018). Initially, this awareness had a paralysing effect on my practice, where I began to over-think, over-feel, and over-listen in my practice. However, gradually during the research I
was able to resolve vulnerabilities within my practice, and this process also can be seen to unfold throughout the course of this exegesis. Writing down my reflections after attending concerts or informal discussion with colleagues, and recording a practice session with my thinking out loud, became some of the several useful tools to trace the development and growth of my understanding of the four works. At certain moments throughout the exegesis I use an “internal” voice via italicised and indented paragraphs to demonstrate the more subjective and vulnerable thoughts that occurred during the research in order to capture elements of process.

Critical autoethnography is a recent extension of autoethnographic practices, merging “the study and critique of culture through the lens of the self” with the “why and how and so what” of lives (Holman Jones, 2018, pp. 4-5). It intersects theory with practice and engages with the world, as it “aims to mobilize and develop the explanatory frameworks that critical theory provides us...by putting that theory into action through storytelling” (p. 6). This study involved my applying critical autoethnography to each work through an active exchange and dialogue with action research. Based on the foundation of a traditional and formalised period of training, in my practice I have utilised action research methodologies in both explicit and implicit ways. Throughout this research project I have often found myself caught in between practice-orientated and traditional-centred research sequences. Tensions grew when my thinking was operating in the traditional realm of my training. For example, in learning Rushford’s piece there was no possible way for me to sight-read the score as I would usually do. So how was I to go about learning this piece? And from here, in what context did Werktreue operate, within a performance practice that focused on new and recently written scores? Some constructs within my methodologies needed to be flexed and re-imagined to fit the subject. Sometimes they were also unconsciously rigid and closed, where play became a method to try and tease out the possibilities. Where Oming (2017) tested specific methods and theories in her performance practice as a cellist, I utilised critical reflection to understand what “pedagogical attitudes” (Gritten, 2012, p. 43) were present in my practice and which methods and theories resonated with me, and I drew upon these to undo some of my previously held behaviours and concepts in order to move forward.

At the beginning of this exegesis I described how my initial plan to research Australian viola literature was changed as the direction of the research turned towards specific works, as well as my experiences with them and the composers. Drawing on autoethnographic methodologies was a significant catalyst for the research change of course. I began my doctorate fresh from the difficulties I had experienced with Untitled. After reading Schick’s book in particular, I allowed myself to observe experiences that were lingering with me, and I began to follow them. Applying critical autoethnography meant that my reflections and observations did not stay within a narrative frame but were constantly seeking a context within a critical discourse. The works by Gifford and Illean were not commissioned initially as part of the research project,
but their occurrences prohibited me from remaining passive in my observations and rather to actively initiate changes in my approach.

The following diagram (see Figure 1.1) shows the semi-linear progression of the project. The timeline captures the order in which my knowledge was built up through the series interactions with the works, which continued to inform the subsequent experiences and processes. This influenced decisions that created contexts for musical interpretation to form in, and this is present in the recordings. Highlighted in each work is a particular experience that prompted me to investigate further: my learning experience of Untitled, my commissioning experience with Gifford and how this differed from my experience with Rushford, my experience of recording and the recording preparation for Amulet, and my experience of performing Cranes. There is no direct relationship between the works that determined why I learnt each work at a particular time. However, as the experiences with each work came to the fore and the research progressed, I could trace developments in my approach from my early experience with Rushford and Untitled that subsequently weaved into my interactions with Gifford, Illean, and Lim.
Figure 1.1 Timeline of works included in the research project. The star indicates the ‘experience’ that prompted a site within the research.
The first experience I examined was how I had learnt Rushford’s *Untitled* (2012); what I considered as ‘having learnt’ and the potentiality of long-learning. I had struggled with the work in several contexts: firstly, in initiating the commissioning of the work my respect for Rushford inadvertently created a hierarchy of authority in the creative process; the notation was complex and deeply challenging to learn; and I partitioned the creative roles and initially worked in isolation from the composer. The very few interactions I had with Rushford before the performance were so valuable, that I began to question my learning methods relative to my approach to performer-composer interactions. Strategies and approaches emerged as a potential learning model, and I sought to improve my further learning of the work.

As well as gaining insight into how I learn, this reflection also revealed some insecurities I had around my interactions with Rushford, and I began to wonder if this may have impeded my initial learning of the work. In reflecting on my contact with him, I sought to clarify in myself what I wanted from working with a composer and how I might go about it. I was able to act on this early on in the research when I commissioned Gifford to write me a piece, and later with Illean also, avoiding falling into the same impediment. Although I had initially approached commissioning Gifford no differently to Rushford, the newness of my relationship with Gifford and her more limited experience of the viola (compared to Rushford’s) meant that we needed to actively initiate conversation in order to come to know each other, and for Gifford to learn and understand my abilities and direct her work accordingly. As a result, Gifford was keen to meet often, and I enjoyed the opportunity these interactions afforded me in becoming familiar both with Gifford and then her score. This dialogic practice integrated the composer-performer-score paradigm in unexpectedly meaningful ways. I was then able to bring tools from this approach into my relationship with Illean. In the latter stages of the research, I reflected on how these experiences impacted or affected my approach to musical interpretation and Werktreue, observing differences and similarities to my earlier experience with Rushford.

Liza Lim’s *Amulet* (1992) is the anomaly of the four works included in this exegesis as it is the only work that I did not commission, nor was I the first performer to perform it. My learning of Lim’s score occurred during the most dynamic period of my research, during which a shifting of perceptions and meaning was taking place. I began working on the piece in isolation but then sought Lim for feedback and conversation, and this greatly enhanced my knowing of the work. Lim’s compositional language (evident in *Amulet*) presents the performer with challenges and vulnerabilities to consider in approaching sound-making. This meant that when it came to recording the works, Lim’s piece in particular created unexpected stimuli for my listening, and a tension between my role as interpreter and listener within the recording environment emerged. The sonic implications of playing Lim’s score I encountered again with Illean’s score, but this time in a performance context. The experience of performing *Cranes* (2016-17) in London in May 2017 prompted a series of questions as to how to negotiate the score in the context of a performance space in real time. This allowed me to analyse a score from a different perspective to *Untitled*; one that dealt
with the “doing” in a live context. As I interacted with each piece, a particular experience stood out either as an issue or problem, and, from that, further questions came to the fore. This evolved into a site-specific investigation, yet one that often interacted with an experience with other works. My knowledge was continually being built upon to address particular issues and to refine, improve, or clarify approaches to the next piece.

The experiences I was having with each work meant that even when I was not actively learning or performing one, the knowledge that was being built through my interactions with the scores and their composers was beginning to transfer, project, inform and weave into my performance practice of these works. Sometimes, however, it felt like my aesthetic knowing of the score grew faster than my technical knowing and realisation of it on my instrument. The extent that Werktreue operated in my practice emerged from the use and application of the methodologies discussed. Locations of meaning came up at every turn, every conversation, every reading, and every time I interacted with the scores. Through the lens of each experience with the four works, I was faced with a different set of challenges to try and uncover what fidelity meant for my practice, and where to locate it. It was a macro end-goal, unformed in my mind, but the idea that there could be a true representation of the score still existed for me. This became a methodology; we think what outcome we might want and we work backwards: teasing, prodding, illuminating and allowing interjections, bodies and pathways to enter into the practice via curiosity and instinct.

As my research progressed, my focus was firmly upon developing my voice within the composer-score-performer paradigm. Yet by giving myself presence in the processes that had taken and continue to take place, I felt I still missed the composer’s own voice. To triangulate my research, I interviewed the four composers whose works feature in this project. By spending time with each of them in a formalised context, I could ask questions I perhaps would not have during a usual performer-to-composer interaction about their work. The benefits these conversations have given to my performance practice demonstrates potential of future research outcomes through composer and performer conversations.
Chapter outline

Chapter 1 traces my learning experience of James Rushford’s *Untitled* (2012) and culminates in a series of developed extended learning strategies. The extreme *scordatura* and experimental notation presented initial challenges that required me to adopt an alternative method of learning to my usual practice. On receiving a newly written score, what methods can the performer draw on to extend their inherited learning strategies? Reflecting on one’s learning process has the potential to reveal fresh perspectives on our role as interpreters, and the role of the score. This chapter also addresses long-learning, an activity that fosters depth of knowledge and intimacy with the score.

Chapter 2 discusses performer and composer relationships in the context of commissioning new work, with particular reference to the works by Rushford, Gifford and Illean. How the performer’s motivation to commission potentially shapes or influences the environment for this working relationship is examined. The chapter traces the series of interactions that spurred my revised methodology and approach to commissioning new work. Active dialogue became not only desirable, but also influential and essential to my interactions to each piece. My consideration of the composer and their knowledge of me and my instrument were different for all three pieces, and these factors also contributed to the nuances in each relationship between myself and the composers. These experiences have also had an impact on how I approach other extant repertoire; here I discuss as an example my preparation of Lim’s *Amulet*.

Chapters 2 and 3 are bridged by Interlude A: a transcription of a conversation between myself and Illean that touch on several components examined in Chapter 3. This chapter is a performance analysis of *Cranes* that attempts to capture the “inside view” of a performance. Through my temporal and ephemeral experience with the score in real time, the analysis focuses on my experience of performing *Cranes* in the presence of the composer after a series of workshops and revisions were made post-premiere. The analysis reflects upon site-specific performance-related issues; negotiating conditions of temporal and performance space contexts stemming from notation and score-bound properties as I performed *Cranes*.

Chapter 4 is an investigation of the performer as listener, in the context of preparing Liza Lim’s *Amulet* for recording and the recording process itself. A detailed account of the recording experience of editing, microphone placement, and producing is outside the scope of this inquiry. Instead, this chapter, accompanied by other sonic data, explores the impact of the conflict between the physical and aural relationships of the performer on the resulting sound realised from Lim’s score. What perspectives of listening were occurring that contributed to this conflict and impacted my experience of recording? The effects of the exploration of the performer as listener will then be discussed through a brief comparison of two recordings of *Amulet* I made eight months apart. Interlude B follows this chapter prior to the Conclusion to critically reflect on my journey through this research project.

****
Look for what is absent. This was the advice given to me by my principal supervisor, Associate Professor Vanessa Tomlinson. This approach subtly permeated each method and each tool that I used as I sought to differentiate, as clearly as I could, presence and absence in and from my practice. On reflection, I can see that when I began this research project, a sense of my individual identity was absent from my own practice. I was reliant on external validation and information, while overlooking my own thoughts and ideas. The subsequent investigations, decisions and activities I have undertaken adopted this identification of absence in many different forms. What my research has brought about, in particular, is an awareness of what was absent. Taruskin (2012) observes; “…our behaviour as performers and as listeners reflects our values as well as our knowledge, and contests over behaviour always come down, finally, to contests about values” (p. 23). The “contests” and “values” artists hold are in many ways maintained and challenged in practice by an awareness of the operation of hidden structures. By examining particular processes and behaviours that occur in artistic practices, new knowledge is brought into the practice, and about practice. This gives creative and cultural power to the artist as they can control, manipulate, and experiment with processes and decisions in their own practice.
Chapter 1 Examining a learning experience

This chapter explores my learning experience of James Rushford’s *Untitled* (2012) for solo viola. *Untitled* is a complex score with many layers of information embedded in the notation for the performer to navigate. The score presented extensive challenges which were at the time new to me, and this made the initial learning period painfully slow. I was forced to re-evaluate the learning methods I typically drew on and although I developed strategies to learn the piece, I constantly wondered if there was a better or more efficient way of learning music of this complexity. At times, I felt like a beginner student as I had to surrender to compartmentalising; a separation of processes that usually occurred naturally through an embedded synthesis of actions. I stripped the notation back to a level where individual instructions could be digested, and then piece by piece put back together again.

My motivation to reflect on this learning experience was not necessarily to uncover short-cuts to learning. This chapter explores possibilities and strategies that build on a creative and expanded approach to pre-existing learning habits. Part 1 will discern the process of learning in relation to the particular challenges presented by *Untitled*, and explore approaches towards a general learning model. Part 2 will give examples of strategies that I developed to learn *Untitled* in order to arrive at a performance; how I was able to draw on my known learning, using the tools I already had and extending them. A postlude examines my more recent learning; it discusses the potential growth within continuous learning and draws on conversations with the composer James Rushford.

Overview of Untitled

*Untitled* is a work for solo viola of approximately fourteen minutes in duration. Since giving the first performance on March 20, 2013 in Melbourne, Australia, the score has undergone several minor revisions. The work settled into its current form in November 2016 prior to recording in December 2016. *Untitled* carries four particular features which, individually, are rarely found in contemporary viola repertoire, but are more prevalent in contemporary string repertoire. However, drawn together in *Untitled* they provide the performer with an extensive set of challenges:

1. A second bow is required, where the violist is simultaneously bowing two areas of the viola’s body. In this example; the right hand is bowing near the C bout, the left hand is bowing a peg.

![Figure 2.1: Untitled, bar 70.](image)
The use of two bows is more commonly found in contemporary cello repertoire, including Liza Lim’s *Invisibility* (2009). In *Untitled* and *Invisibility* the bows are played with one in each hand, however there are numerous cello works that employ a technique of playing with two bows in the right hand, as developed by the cellist Frances-Marie Uitti in the 1980s. Notable composers including Luigi Nono, György Kurtág and Richard Barrett among others, wrote works for Uitti including this technique.\(^7\)

2. A preparation of a band of aluminium foil (approximately 4cm in length) is wrapped around the I and II strings 1cm away from the bridge for the bow to play on. The foil remains for the entire piece.

![Figure 2.2: Placement of foil on I and II strings.](image)

Some experimentation with the placement and amount of aluminium foil was required to achieve the desired sound. The foil is wrapped around the two strings and fastened with a small amount of Blu-Tak to avoid coming off when bowed. Pitch is desired, although according to the score the resultant sound is a ‘hissing’ or ‘moaning’ depending on bow pressure (Rushford, 2012, p. 2). After workshopping the piece with Rushford, my experience was that the effect resembles a hollow, ghost-like sound. High-frequency overtones are to be avoided.

Other viola works including various devices for preparations include Annesley Black’s *maiko* (2006), in which Black used aluminium foil for a section of the work. In the last movement of Brett Dean’s *Sketches for Siegbert* (2011), a paperclip was attached to the IV string. Mauricio Kagel prepares all instruments during the course of his *String Quartet I* and *String Quartet II* (1965, 1967) with devices including matches, paperclips, knitting needles and paper, amongst others (Strange & Strange, 2001, pp. 191-192). The use of preparations are as much a part of the sound-world of a piece as any sonic event (mundane or

\(^7\) See Uitti, 2000, pp. 67-77; Uitti’s website: http://www.uitti.org/
otherwise), and the performer is required to make appropriate judgments and refinements on the preparation according to its context in the score.

3. Notation in bass clef, a result of the *scordatura*

![Figure 2.3](image1.png)

Figure 2.3: a) standard tuning of a viola (IV–C string, III–G string, II–D string, I–A string), b) *scordatura* of *Untitled*. The IV string is tuned down a diminished octave, and the III and I strings down a minor third, whilst the II remains unchanged.

The standard clef for the viola is the alto clef, with the treble clef typically used for easier reading of higher registers. This usually familiar terrain was nullified through the *scordatura* and the impact of the score notated at pitch in bass clef, a first at the time for me – I had previously never come across a viola work in bass clef. Composer Jefim Golyscheff uses bass clef briefly in the viola part of his *String Trio* (c. 1914) but the pitch material there is considerably easier to read.

*Scordatura*, a retuning of the instrument is a common feature in string repertoire. (The Rosary Sonatas (c.1674) for violin and continuo by Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber are an early example of this). Minor *scordatura* (of a distance up to a tone) is more common and can be found in viola works including Scelsi’s *Manto* (1957) and Fenn’s *An Interior Monologue* (2013). Grisey’s *Prologue* (1976) and Illean’s *Cranes* (2016-17) both require the performer to tune down during the piece. An extreme example of *scordatura* is Lachenmann’s cello solo *Pression* (1969), where the I and IV strings are both tuned down a major third. Billone employs such radical *scordatura* for the viola solo *ITI KE MI* (1995) that he re-tunes the instrument with two IV strings (removing the II string so that the set-up of the viola is as I, III, IV, IV).

4. The use of colour embedded into the notation to notate delineation of pitch to noise.

![Figure 2.4](image2.png)

Figure 2.4: *Untitled*, bar 80. Black denotes full tone, purple for slightly less tone, red for little tone and pink for virtually no tone. Note the secondary “purple” (this will be addressed later in the chapter).
Western art music composers have utilised colour in graphic forms of notation since the 1950s (see Cage’s Aria (1958), Stockhausen’s Helicopter string quartet (1992-93), Hope’s Stella Degredation (2012), Cassidy’s The wreck of former boundaries (2014-16)), and Billone’s ITI KE MI (1995). Here however, Rushford has embedded the colour into the conventionally notated pitch material.

Comparable to Untitled, ITI KE MI combines several challenges including colour notation. Billone utilises three coloured lines to instruct variants of bow pressure (see Figure 2.5). He also employs extreme scordatura resulting in each string being assigned a stave, with the aforementioned de-tuned second IV string written at pitch in bass clef.

Figure 2.5: Excerpt from Billone ITI KE MI (1995); light blue denotes light bow pressure, red ordinario, and dark blue molto bow pressure.

Upon receiving Untitled, I began to work with the new score as I always did – by immediately playing and reading through it. I often use this method to get as much of an overview of the piece as possible. Typically, as I go through the score I write down my initial observations, noting awkward sections requiring problem-solving of fingerings or bowings, and any relevant questions I have for the composer. However, after spending several minutes on the first bar alone of Untitled, I quickly realised I would not be able to learn this work using my usual approach.

This chapter will focus on challenges faced in the early stages of learning in relation to the aforementioned third and fourth features (see Figures 2.3 and 2.4) in Untitled:

- Deciphering the notation of the score in bass clef coupled with the extreme scordatura.
- Achieving the variants of tone colour within the dynamic frame.

Strategies that were developed through problem-solving skills will be discussed in Part 2.

**Part 1: A context for learning**

Influential string pedagogues Carl Flesch (1973-1944) and Ivan Galamian (1903-1981) both offer models of learning that involve a general process of transforming the visual notation into a performance (see Flesch, 2000; Galamian, 1985). These traditional models – or, to borrow from Schick (2006) “inherited
strategies of learning” (p. 92) – are common string pedagogic practice (including my own) inclusive of repertoire, that in varying degrees of fluency can be read at sight. Learning Rushford's piece signalled a departure from this kind of practice and, incidentally, since learning this work, it has become more common for me to take on works that are not sight readable. Nonken (2002) acknowledges that performers of new music “develop finely tuned learning strategies that enable them to assimilate new material with unusual efficiency…” (p. 2) suggesting that this happens within the context of “formidable traditions of the classical world” (p. 2). What makes learning particularly complex works so difficult for me is that often their notation is still rooted in Western art music notation systems, and this sense of familiarity almost tricks me into thinking it is possible to sight read the piece. As Goehr (2007) observes; “ontologically, we tend to look for that which grounds sameness, that which defines things as being the kinds of things that they are” (p. xxxvi). In the learning of a musical work, it is “sameness” that we search for to make the unknown known. Yet our search for “sameness” could mask creative possibilities through processes of experimentation and alternative methodologies. And how does this intersect with notation?

As Western art music notation systems have been extended in practices during the 20th century, the performer’s ability to read through complex works at sight has been tested. In Sound & Score: Essays on Sound, Score and Notation (2013) researchers from the Orpheus Institute focused on “the musician’s relation to notation” (de Assis, 2013, p. 5). In the opening prelude, de Assis recalls Ferneyhough’s three elements of sound-picture, performing instructions and implied ideology as inherent in any notation system (see Ferneyhough, 1998, p. 3). And yet, we are reminded that “no notation can presume to record information encompassing all aspects of the sonic phenomenon for which it stands” (Ferneyhough, 1998, p. 3). In learning, it is our encounter with the unknown that makes us gravitate towards the known, through the search for a connective element or gateway that enables that learning process to be activated. In Untitled, the notation system Rushford utilised provided that connective element, though the scordatura coupled with the score notated at pitch in bass clef was initially overwhelming. As Gottschalk (2016) notes,

There is a strong practical concern for how readable a score is for a musician. The issue in many cases is not one of technique, reflexes, or training, but the simple question of where the eyes need to be directed on the page. If there are detailed instructions that are not intuitively related to one another happening in different parameters, it is cognitively difficult to take all that information in. (Gottschalk, 2016, p. 81)

---

8 Sight reading is the ability to “recognize from previous experience the basic and familiar technical and musical components, the mental capacity to recombine them as they appear in a given piece, and the technical skill to perform them instantly on the instrument in their new combinations” (Gerle, 1983, p. 63-64). It is considered an essential skill (see Dalton, 1988, p. 20; McPherson, Davidson, & Faulkner, 2012), and its significance is described by string pedagogue Robert Gerle as being “proof of competence as a performer” (Gerle, 1983, p.63). Having good sight reading skills has a certain practicality, for example, when playing in orchestras (see Schick, 2006, p. 93). Gerle also notes the benefits of sight reading: “Once the mental and physical activity of sightreading is put in its proper perspective, the task will no longer seem formidable; a large number of the problems in sightreading stem from not understanding, and therefore overestimating, the difficulties” (1983, p. 63).
Here, the issue of a score’s readability being crucial for the performer extends beyond the early stages of learning. In the moment of performance, brain power will not be unnecessarily expended trying to decipher the score, but will instead concentrate on its technical and performative elements.

Rushford employs elements of the “standard” descriptive notation (that which gives information on/about the sound) and prescriptive notation (on the method of producing the sound) (Kanno, 2007, pp. 231-232). In Untitled there are often moments in which the performer has to regulate these complex instructions that appear descriptive, yet become in action prescriptive. In the example below, it appears as if the octave and rhythm should be perceptible in sound (especially as the rhythm is used elsewhere in the score), yet the speed, flautando ricochet bow stroke and left-hand pizzicato in a gestural combination produces the sound event. Herein lies a moment for the performer to decide what to prioritise; pitch and rhythm, or sonic “effect”?

![Figure 2.6: Untitled, bars 99-101.](image)

In scores filled with complex layers of information, such as Untitled, performers ride a tension between deciphering the instructions to reveal the sonic result, and acting as mediators early on in the learning, towards a space where the two can coexist comfortably. In the context of a newly written work, the performer is afforded an opportunity to be the first to establish the performance practice of that work. In this instance, the piece is being sonically discovered for the first time by the composer, Rushford, and myself:

JR: …it’s always a nice thing to give the score to someone because it doesn’t feel like ‘oh well, my job’s done now’ you know… It’s a bit like putting it in the oven and just waiting to see what comes out – it’s like baking bread. [P: (laughs) I really like that analogy] so it’s like; I don’t know what’s going to happen now. And it depends on the piece. Some pieces you have a better idea than others, but this one was much more like ‘I don’t know what’s going to happen.’ (Rushford, 2017)

Rushford intended the notation to be more openly interpreted;

JR: This one [Untitled]… was more experimental in the notation so for me it was more…not necessarily open-ended in the sort of sound result, but more open-ended in the way it would be interpreted. (Rushford, 2017)

Despite Rushford extending the notation within the “sameness” (traditional symbols) of Western art music traditions, my approach to the notation at the time of initial learning distorted my reading of the score. I needed to break down the actions a lot further than I usually did.
Separation and compartmentalisation

Visually reading the notation in Untitled and translating it into playing was the most immediate problem to overcome. The visual and aural were no longer linked and I couldn’t transfer the information quickly enough. This however was the first of many layers of information that were embedded in the complex score. On reflection, I was limited by my original mindset of inherited learning strategies. It was as if the piece was in code and I knew that if I could just crack it the learning process would get easier: I needed to break down the actions to a fundamental level and find ways to piece them back together, and then work towards combining them into a simultaneous execution of the material.

When the mind and body are being challenged in equally complex ways, they to some extent, become interchangeable as they grasp the concepts on the page. Schick (2006) observes that in contemporary Western art music, “the presumption that somehow body and mind, thinking and doing, are separable – is simply no longer valid” (Schick, 2006, p. 92). He explores the learning process “as an act distinct and separable from interpretation or execution” (2006, p. 92). In learning we are learning to think, in musical performance the emphasis is on “learning to do” (2006, p. 92). With “thinking and doing,” Schick identifies a parallel in music as “understanding and facility,” or the “mental and physical” (2006, p. 92). What is problematic is that they are learned at different rates. Schick advocates for slow learning, as it “cultivates the full benefit of plasticity and possibility” (p. 94). In a period of slow learning, the boundaries between the brain and the body are “maximally porous and their rapport is mutually informative” (p. 94).

The challenges with Untitled were layered in the notation, the changes made to my instrument set-up and the range of sonic timbre to discover. Alongside my struggles with ‘thinking’ mental conversions of the bass clef were ‘doing’ physical consequences from the scordatura effect. Due to the extremeness of the scordatura, the string tension was much looser, particularly on the IV string. This meant the distance between the notes was affected and I couldn’t rely on my pre-existing deeply ingrained knowing of left-hand placement. A tension created by “thinking and doing” now affected the mental, physical and aural aspects of my playing. I felt impaired in converting the visual to the mental, and in physically executing what would otherwise be a straightforward left-hand technique; sonically, too my ear had to adjust to hearing new pitches that are not typically produced on my instrument when at standard tuning. Slow learning and slow practice allows the relationship between the mental and the physical together with the sonic to work together, a re-mapping of the brain as physical gesture becomes a sonic memory. When the sonic memory is intertwined with the physical gesture it can be recalled. Separating and compartmentalising all the elements were the building blocks of my learning. I therefore needed to find a way to do this that would allow experimentation and openness to the range of possibilities.
Towards a learning model

Schick offers a model of learning with three stages: the conceptual phase, the soft phase and a refinement phase. The conceptual phase explores the initial motivation behind the learning of the work (this will be discussed regarding the commissioning process in Chapter 2). Schick advocates for the soft phase to be prolonged as it is the most critical and is where the learning “sustains the period of the most intense communion between player and music” bringing “a result [of] greater richness and sophistication to the final product” (2006, p. 94). Finally, the refinement phase begins as the piece is being prepared for performance. This is where all the building blocks can be reconstructed and transcended in the moment of performance (Schick, 2006, p. 94). In Schick’s model, he is less clear about any interior cycles or models that may be operating within the prolonged soft phase. In my learning with Untitled, I found it was the soft phase that required the most flexibility and creativity to adapt to the piece at large.

As I began to learn Untitled, I found my usual learning processes inadequate and lacking the specificity needed to meet the demands of particular technical challenges. I will now build on Schick’s concept of soft phase with an internal model that describes how complex notation can be learnt and could be applied to arising challenges. After some experimentation my learning grew into a cyclical process of four components: visual, mental, embodied, and sonic, where gradually more detail in the music could be realised. First, I visually see the musical instruction taking in all the notation – both traditional and unconventional symbols – and almost immediately I’m also mentally working out how to do it. I intentionally don’t use the word ‘interpret’ here, as I am focused on literally working out how to execute the material that I see. Interpretation comes later, once I have facility with the material. Next comes an embodied phase in which I physically execute the material. I then move on to a sonic phase, in which I hear the result that then feeds back into the cycle; the sonic outcome cross-checked by the visual followed by the mental and so on. The following diagram captures what was occurring in each moment of my process.

![Figure 2.7: Cycle of learning.](image)

As each piece of information contained in the notation underwent the cycle and informed the next, the learning could be relatively fast or extremely slow. Decisions were being made quickly or postponed, allowing for creativity in spontaneous sonic discoveries, experimentation, or simply in changing my mind.
and doing something differently if I had found a more efficient or straightforward way. The cycle became a strategy for my learning process that I could apply to every moment of my learning, and where I could separate and compartmentalise the visual, mental and physical elements with the sonic outcomes. Once the learning of Untitled had been established, a period of refinement – akin to the aforementioned phase by Schick – was incorporated.

Part 2: Examples of developed strategies
This section will give examples of learning strategies developed to overcome the challenges brought forward by the extreme scordatura, the notated score in bass clef and the colour notation. The following categories were developed during the course of my learning process:

- Strategies for processing results of scordatura
- Strategies for processing embedded colour notation

A third category, ‘Strategies to unite elements of the learning cycle towards gesture,’ will explore the further learning that was required as I gained in confidence in executing the material. Gesture became a learning strategy as I strove to unite processes simultaneously to embody the musical material in order to reach a level of comfort and ‘naturalness’ in performance.

Strategies for processing results of scordatura
Early on it was clear that the most immediate problem to overcome was the written notation in bass clef, a result of the scordatura. Whilst some composers (see Lim, 1997; Illean, 2016-17; Fenn, 2013) offer the performer an ossia ‘fingered’ stave in addition to the score at pitch, Rushford had not presented me with that option and I did not request it mainly thinking it an elemental request. Despite being somewhat familiar with reading bass clef (having learnt piano for several years as a child), I struggled to apply it in context with my viola especially with the specified scordatura and, as a result I would often hesitate. I was averse to covering my score with fingerings because I felt there was enough detail in the score itself already, and I didn’t want to further visually make the score more congested. My strategy was to develop a ‘cheat sheet’ that I could use as a visual prompt alongside my Untitled score while I learnt the piece.

Figure 2.8: Fingering chart ‘cheat sheet’ developed for learning scordatura. Arrows indicate high or low position of the finger. Some semitones were useful to show.
The cheat sheet was used in tandem with the score in the very early stages of learning, as I began to learn the notes and make decisions on fingerings. As well as assisting me to decipher the pitches quicker and to physically map the notes, the cheat sheet also helped me to quickly form the new pitch relationships that the scordatura created. As the start, I decided to simplify fingerings as much as possible and tie myself to something familiar by using positions on the fingerboard that felt the most instinctively comfortable for me. Writing out the cheat sheet also revealed anomalies in the finger pattern on the IV string. In viola (and violin) fingering patterns, each finger deals with one note name, moving higher or lower depending on whether the note is preceded by a flat, natural or sharp. However, one example on the IV string is the second finger (in first position) playing different note names; a ‘low 2’ would play an E, and a ‘high 2’ would play an F (highlighted in Figure 2.8). Despite there being additional anomalies further up the IV string, this particular instance with the second finger continued to be problematic for me to get used to, visually, mentally, and physically.

Another use for the cheat sheet was for the physical learning of the notes. The bottom string was detuned so dramatically that the loosened string tension impacted the usual left-hand placement and physical distances between notes. The cheat sheet then became a tool for mapping and memorising the new positions of the notes in my left-hand. I would use it often as a visual, mental and physical (the “thinking and doing” entwined) and sonic warm-up. Once I had become familiar with the new positions and I didn’t have to expend as much mental energy on simply reading the score, I made progress. The dramatic and varying string tension from the scordatura interfered with my usual viola and performance practice, so I sourced another instrument to borrow for the duration of the learning process. (I now own a second viola to solve this problem long term.) A practical solution, this meant I could leave the instrument tuned to the scordatura which enabled it to settle at those pitches and require less time to set up for practice.

As I became used to the visual challenges in the notation regarding pitch, I was able to direct more attention towards the tools Rushford had used to convey timbre. In navigating and learning my way through the sonic realm of Untitled I had layers of instructions in the notation that I had to reconstruct in order to reach a performance. I began to recognise that ‘touch’ – how I interacted with my instrument to draw sound – would be a key area in which I would need to work with greater sensitivity. At some point in my learning Untitled, I found that I needed to consciously work at bringing the left- and right-hand techniques together with a greater level of awareness of their relationship with the resultant sound. Even though separation or compartmentalisation of techniques were required in the initial learning, later they prevented me from executing the material in context. To me, the physicality of playing my viola is distinct

---

9 Another example of Goehr’s “sameness” (2007, p. xxxvi). Changing from first to third positions is a common early experience of playing outside first position. The fact that this worked well in the initial stages could also indicate the knowledge Rushford has of the viola.
from – but also connected to – touch. Touch is the intimate control centre of the sound, as evidenced in my learning process of *Untitled*.

**Strategies for processing embedded colour notation**

The overall dynamic palette of *Untitled* is soft, but Rushford also employs the use of colour to convey a “timbral spectrum between noise (tonelessness) and tone” (Rushford, 2012, p. 3). An excerpt below illustrates this:

![Figure 2.9: Untitled featuring colour notation, bars 22-25.](image)

In the performance notes, Rushford classifies four colours: black is for full tone, purple “slightly less tone,” red has “little tone” and pink has “virtually no tone” (Rushford, 2012, p. 4). Whilst the colours on the notes themselves are used by Rushford in a clean and logical way to communicate his intentions, in the process of implementing the colours into the score, he unintentionally created a wider spectrum of purple, red and pink. In the above example (see Figure 2.9), a secondary purple is visible in bars 22-24, each time appearing as a timbral *diminuendo* of sorts. This secondary purple is used throughout the work (for example bars 22-25, 77-80 | 129-132) and I interpret it as existing between purple and red.

During the research, in an exercise that analysed the relationship between tone and volume in bars 75-83 (bar 80 can be seen in Figure 2.4), inconsistencies in the colours used by Rushford were identified from the electronic copy of the score. (The results of this preliminary analysis fall beyond the scope of this Chapter and therefore are included in Appendix 2, however it indicates potential for future research.) These inconsistencies are much less noticeable in the score’s printed format, which I used. Upon asking Rushford about the additional colours, he responded that “there really should only be four colours, but if you have found meaning in these small differences, that’s totally a part of the work now.” Where these secondary colours are present, it is always within the context of all the colours being used so that I think of as this working as a kind of ‘crescendo/diminuendo’ of tone. Whilst there is a logic to the colours Rushford uses, further analysis of the colours would reveal the extent to which they provide a difficult layer in the notation for the performer to accurately convey. The closeness of the colour spectrum used also exposes the degree to which the performer’s eye for responding to colour would be variable, particularly if the performer was using an electronic score-reading device.

---

11 Ibid.
The demands of the colour notation in *Untitled*, further complicated by the limited dynamic range, blurred the lines between tone and volume. For example: what are the sonic differences between a *ppp* sound with full tone (black) compared with *ppp* with little tone (red)? And what should the dynamic level of very clear pitch material in pink, where there was to be “virtually no tone” be approached? Insecurities around interpretation were common during the course of my learning. The difficulty lay in the process of translation from the notation’s premise for action towards the intended sonic result. As Gottschalk (2016) notes, “what makes it what it is, is not revealed on the page, but is totally dependent on its specific enactment” (p. 81). Employing subtle differences of touch became the strategy I used to differentiate between tone and volume.

**Touch as a portal for sounds**

In early learning string players develop a greater sense of physicality with their instruments through the reaching of various milestones in technique. For example, in learning the technique of shifting, the skills are two-fold: firstly, new notes and multiple positions for these notes are learnt; secondly is the physical implication of this new ability. This is developed through the feel of the neck as the hand slides up the fingerboard, including how that movement is activated by the left arm, and how the presence of pressure or tension in the left-hand hinders the extended movement. This basic technique is secured via the repetition that continues throughout a lifetime of playing. From another perspective, appropriate finger pressure is also developed in the early playing years. An awareness of touch to the string on the pads of our fingers is developed for pitch and tone clarity, ‘touch’ is adjusted when playing two or more strings at once, and eased off to activate the harmonic nodes. In the bow, similar nuance and facility are attended to by including weight drawn from the arm and shoulder through to the back, and control and versatility of tone and dynamics. The first two digits on the bow hand may be the most important to the physical hold achieve variants of attack and pressure on the string.

This brief description of the two important portals of touch on a string instrument is necessary to understand the destabilisation of technique encountered in a work that is fundamentally deconstructing this physical relationship. These pedagogical constructs of learning technique privilege a particular performative approach that potentially eliminates our openness to experiment with physical possibilities.

I found that in order to carry out Rushford’s detailed instructions of the variant tone qualities, I needed to monitor my interpretation of the notation to avoid treating it as an expression of volume only, rather than timbre. The variants of tonal colour are so subtle it is like trying to express different variants of white noise. I attended to my listening as I attempted to get inside the sound, listening to differently filtered white noise. Touch was also central in developing these variances of tone, with the sonic feedback informing my learning and understanding of this element of the work. My strategy to develop this sensibility was ‘play;’ letting my ear be my guide as I explored bow pressure, speed and placement. Then the pads
on the fingers of my left-hand would soften, subtly augmenting further colouring of tone. Subtle
manipulations of touch in both the right- and left-hands instinctively added a layer of complexity to the
physical execution of the material. Extreme low scordatura, in this instance of the IV string, meant that it
was easily distorted by the bow. One response to this is to play mostly in the middle to upper half of the
bow and physically adjust bow pressure, placement and contact. This response was continually modified
as I learnt the piece and became used to the different string tension. Through experimentation, my hands
instinctively adjusted, becoming tactile to an even greater extent, and achieving a level of expressiveness
that synthesised a new embodied relationship with the instrument.

The skills I developed via the application of touch during my learning of Untitled have also been applied
to other works I have learnt since, including the other three works featured in this exegesis. An example
of this can be found in the following passage from Desperation (2014), which is reminiscent of Gifford’s
ideas on the virtuosity of double stopping (Gifford, 2017).

![Figure 2.10: Desperation (2014), bars 48-51.](image)

In this context, virtuosity is explored within the soft dynamic range compounded by the extreme muting
effect of the steel mute. For me, the passage embodies the spirit of a hurdy-gurdy; when experimenting
with trying to capture the qualities of the winding of the hurdy-gurdy, I liked the resulting slight distortion
of pitch and darkness of the sound. Testing modes of touch in the left-hand and employing a lightness and
fluidity where the hand was almost sliding continuously to manage the double stops helped achieve this
sound. I aimed for the effect of some machine akin to a wind-up toy, winding down, mixed with a dissolving
into nothingness. The bow remained firm on the strings, the steel mute assisting me in negotiating the
double stops on the thicker bottom two strings. Again, the strategy of maintaining play and
experimentation with a sonic ideal led easily to a transformation in sound, and yet another reconstruction
of the physical mapping of my body and my instrument. These strategies wherein touch becomes a mode
of inquiry into sound, and particularly the generating of sound will be explored in greater detail in Chapter
4 when I discuss my experience of recording Liza Lim’s Amulet.

**Strategies to unite elements of learning cycle towards gesture**

As the individual elements of pitch, rhythm, bow placement, articulations, dynamics and so on came
together I began to draw links between the compartmentalisation of actions towards gesture. In The Sonic
Self (2000), musicologist and theorist Naomi Cumming explores gesture from a variety of perspectives
including melodic and physiological parameters. I identify with Cumming’s observation with gesture as a
form of “mediation,” (2000, p. 137) as learning gesture in Untitled became the bridge towards me realising the music itself and my interpretation of it. “Mediation,” as Cumming continues, “whereby a performer brings an embodied understanding of gestural motion, acquired through practice and capable of nuanced differentiation, to meet the interpretive requirements of a specific moment in the score” (2000, p. 137).

For the first performance, my interpretation was not as formed as it is now; it felt like playing a series of contours, movements and subtle shadows of sound. I needed to unify the separate elements to make Untitled a piece of music for me, the composer and the audience.

Gesture became one of the learning strategies I used to try to assimilate all the elements and layers of information embedded into the score in order to reach a performance. As Cumming observes:

This is what I am claiming, in showing that elements of vocality and of gestural force can appear in a musical performance, as the effect of an interaction between a prepared body and an interpreted score. Hearing voices, and responding to gestures, is entering into a mode of engagement where a virtual “presence” or agency can be felt in the work, without false beliefs being held about its capacity to act as a conduit for the creators’ states of mind (composer and performer together). (2000, p. 160)

I felt I required a further level of learning in order to realise an embodied knowing of Untitled for performance. The presence of a body through physicality and gesture can be a “force” in performance where the energy can affect the audience’s experience of a work in significant ways. Yet this was not my primary motivation to draw on gesture at this stage of learning. Using my body through gesture was a tool to unify the elements and so experience a sense of what my musical interpretation could be, and give it agency to further the fluent execution of the material. I needed to enter a malleable state between the score and the physicality of my body, to create a sense of fluidity and capture the musical shape that Rushford indicated clearly in the musical figures (see Figures 2.4, 2.11).

I drew on two pieces of visual material provided by Rushford as a strategy in gaining a sense of gesture in the score. Rushford mentions two works in the performance notes of Untitled that balance the complexity of the notation and inform gesture: Living (1971), a black and white film by Frans Zwartjes, and the landscapes of Sichuan painter Qiu Shihua. The images in these works were helpful in developing my approach to the sonic world of Untitled. From Shihua’s paintings and palette of white I gained a sense of starkness and the stasis that underlies Untitled. In partial contrast, Living conveyed a fluidity of movement

---

12 Online examples of Qiu Shihua’s work can be found at: https://www.yanggallery.com.sg/artists/qiu-shihua/
that is intrinsic to the character and gesture of the score, aided by the tempi, dynamic and timbral contours Rushford had woven into the notation.

Summary

Learn, interpret, perform. As musicians, we follow this cycle instinctively, drawing on layers of embedded learning and tacit knowledge. Years of training are undertaken to develop our playing skills with ease and facility, in addition to unconsciously learning with ease and facility. Since the initial period of learning Untitled, I have revisited the work numerous times.13 Several months after the first performance, I was in equal measure astonished and relieved at how much information was retained in my body and how I was able to build on the initial learning process. Each return to the score feels more and more familiar; the visual impediment of the notation recedes, and pathways into the music continue to open. The specific challenges were tackled through a route of problem solving: separation and compartmentalisation became learning strategies in themselves. The visual, mental, physical and sonic separation of the musical elements then followed a unifying process of assimilation towards an embodiment of the notation as gesture. Finally the score could become music for me.

****

Postlude

PG: Do you feel like you had an idea of how difficult it may be to learn?
JR: I think I did, yes. But I also think that it was a case of… the notation being experimental and operating in layers which meant that it’s difficult to see the whole complexity of it. I’ve been working in that way since, but in a very different way, like in the sense that I work with layers and I work with these kind of grids of information in scores, but it tends not to be so explicitly complicated. So, I think that piece was probably… it’s one of the hardest pieces for a player I’ve written… I guess as a performer I would sympathise with that, because I’ve been in positions where that hurdle somehow creates a connection with the work that’s sort of bounded to you forever. (Rushford, 2017)

Since the initial learning period I identified several assumptions and expectations present in my practice that had contributed to creating a difficult environment for me to learn Untitled. I had attempted to present Untitled at the first performance as if I had been playing the work for years, but this is simply not possible. Learning Untitled represents a pivotal moment in my practice where I had strived for a first performance of a new work to be a completion of the learning, and to present ‘the work’ in its truthful form. Yet even as I was learning Untitled I knew that this was a work that I would be performing for the duration of my playing life, and this became the opening for perceptions and assumptions to shift. I had to learn to embrace the idea that my learning of Untitled was ongoing and would continue with each return to the score. After several performances, I now put on Untitled as if it’s a well-worn cloak, constantly building my knowledge of the score, and with the feeling that my relationship to it and to Rushford is continuing to

13 See list of performances and recording dates in Appendix 1.
grow. On reflection, it would have been useful for me to take more initiative in going to Rushford directly with the score and asking questions at an earlier stage.

JR: It’s interesting because, yeah I think when I gave it to you I probably thought: this is really difficult, to be sure, but, you have questions you’ll have for me… I think… it’s like, I take for granted that it might be hard for a performer to feel like they can be flexible with things, or they can say ‘hey actually what if I did it this way’ because I just sort of think they will. (Rushford, 2017)

To continue building on my knowledge of the score I sought further conversation with Rushford. I began to ask questions, seek feedback, and work towards establishing myself with the piece. The hard work was done in the initial learning, and I am now able to place myself between Rushford and the score in a more playful and performative way, where I could almost be improvising the material myself. I have much more levels of freedom.

In 2014 Rushford shared with me his paper Sketching a Background for Artistic Practice (2014) where he had included some words on Untitled. Although there are things that Rushford had already mentioned in the performance notes and in conversation, being able to read and digest his words clarified several aspects of the score for me. In the paper, Rushford reveals several thoughts which, at the time I read it, I wished that I had known prior to the first performance. For instance, he describes Untitled as a “purely sensual and illusory dance with the instrument, a teetering over the edge of the precipice of sound/expression and the abyss (or perhaps ground) of silence” (Rushford, 2014, p. 6). The image of the work being a “dance” with the instrument also referenced the influence of Zwartjes’ film Living as “an astonishing dance with white” (p. 5). These phrases were helpful to me as I was able to step back from the detail in the score and begin to gain a sense of movement in the interpretation and shaping of my performances. Rushford’s paper further assisted me in seeing the correlation between Shihua’s paintings of white, the destabilisation of “the timbral focus of the material” (p. 6) stemming from the scordatura and colour notation. The foundation had been laid through my initial learning of the individual elements.

Relating Rushford’s visual influences for Untitled and how he creates these ties in the notation became a new way of approaching the material, with more tangibility and animation within the physical movement generating sound.

JR: And I think what’s really exciting to me is that more and more, that you seem to me… you sound like you are more shifting towards sound than vision, somehow. I can see that kind of… the magnetic pull of the score is kind of losing it… sometimes I hear it and I’m like ‘ok, she’s really just inside the sound now’ [P: Yeah…] which is really nice, but it’s really hard to do. [P: But you felt that last Monday?] I felt like that, yeah, and I feel like it’s going to keep happening. [P: Yeah, me too] But I think that’s almost it, it’s like it’s a psychological problem more than a technical problem anymore. [P: Yeah, I know, I agree.] (Rushford, 2017)

---

14 Performance of Untitled at La Mama Musica, 28 August, 2017. James Rushford was present at this performance.
As I sought to observe my initial learning process of Rushford’s *Untitled*, further linkages and pathways were revealed: I became curious about how I learn, how I could learn, and how I can adapt, extend and problem-solve my way through complex scores. How to communicate their ideas is something the composer will always have to consider, although I feel more prepared now in how I approach scores that have especially complex and layered notation. Traditionally, learning methods seem to have developed as a response to the repertoire, but the technical demands of scores have changed and often the performer is the one who is required to make a large leap between realms of genre, both technically and artistically.

James Rushford has written what I consider to be a great gift to contemporary viola literature. Its visual complexity and level of difficulty requires a player of patience and openness. This piece changed the way I thought about how best to approach the commissioning of new work and reflect on the kind of relationship I would like to have with the composer (see Chapter 2). I believe that the greater the sensitivity we have in response to these experiences the more potential there is for our music-making and creative processes to be meaningful. Interacting with our surroundings, a musician’s practice is in permanent flux; we are being constantly informed and inspired with our experiences reflected back at us. This fast-paced feedback, this loop of information and decision-making, embodies elements of being both fixed and flexible. We can desire consistency in our practice and yet also take risks in the moment of performance. Ultimately, we strive to achieve in our performance something that makes the entire process up to that point invisible.
Chapter 2 Commissioning as a dynamic inflection on performer-composer relationships

Amongst the leaves of a notebook that I keep is a list of names, a wish-list of sorts. It is a list of names of composers that I want to commission from in the future. These are composers who over many years I have come into contact with as both a performer and a listener. These are people whose voice I am curious about. It may not be their musical voice that initially draws me to them, it may be a conversation or an article, but something sparks a response in me and on they go onto my list. Most of the names on my list don’t even know they are there…

This chapter explores performer-composer relationships through the lens of performer-led commissions of new works, and the motivations that shape and sustain a performer’s approach to bringing the new work into their performance practice. These relationships are built through the creation of a new work towards a meaningful performance outcome. Personal experiences of commissioning will be analysed alongside external models, to examine the presence of methods, behaviours, and assumptions present in a performer’s practice that shape, influence, and enhance performer-composer relationships. Central to this chapter is an examination of the performer’s motivation to commission. Schick advocates motivation as “a better word and a sharper tool for understanding why we do what we do” (Schick, 2002, p. 10). The influence of Western classical traditions on performer-composer relationship models will also be discussed. This will occur alongside contemporary models, where ‘authority’ constructs are broken down by several practitioners of Western art music performance practices.

Observations on a personal practice

Soon after premiering Untitled (in March 2013), I read Rosalind Appleby’s Women of note: The rise of Australian women composers (2012). At the time I read this book, I was feeling despondent about my voice as a performer. The book contains a mix of stories, although one common theme amongst many of the composers was that they continued to write music despite overwhelming challenges to their professional careers. It was Helen Gifford’s story that moved me to commission a new work from her (Desperation, 2014).15 The brief narrative of Gifford’s life conveyed a woman who had often felt side-lined, yet continued to write music that she wanted to write. She had stuck to her “modernist” aesthetics and expressed disappointment in her contemporaries who had appeared to “give up” their original and explorative voice in favour of appeasing audiences. There were many instances where Gifford’s works had gone unperformed, or premiered with no follow-up performances. Gifford’s story strongly resonated with me and as a performer, I saw myself as someone who was at the very least in the position of being able to facilitate performances of her work. Further to this, I felt compelled to make contact with her and ask her to write me a piece.

This was a particularly unusual commission for me as prior to this I had never met Gifford or played her work. In this context, the subsequent experience I had with Gifford was in stark contrast to that of working with Rushford, with whom I had worked in numerous contexts. Rushford required very few interactions due to his knowledge of the viola and of my playing. As Gifford and I had no previously established relationship, many conversations took place, and I found I enjoyed this level of interaction as it enabled me to build an emotional connection to her, and enhanced my knowledge of both her and her score. This experience encouraged me to revisit *Untitled* and pursue more dialogue with Rushford. Further to this, during the course of this research project an opportunity to commission composer Lisa Illean prompted me to examine these previous experiences: what my motivations to commission were, how my motivations influenced my interactions with composers and their newly written score, and how I might draw on these experiences in interacting with Illean.

Commissioning new work has allowed me to engage with musical voices that I feel curious about in a meaningful way. In fact, commissioning becomes less about the outcome of a work, and more about the opportunity I gain getting to know and understand more about the composer whose work I am playing. I am able to invite the composer into a space in which I aim to give them freedom with their craft and access to a receptive and explorative performer. The process is biased – it is my choice to initiate – and dependent on the connection I build with the composer. I think about my responsibilities as a performer in a contemporary context, where I have an opportunity to engage with composers and work with them to extend their knowledge of the viola, while at the same time extending my own skills and my instrument’s repertoire. Yet what principally draws me to commission a new work from a composer is the opportunity to experience something of them. It is my way of signalling my belief in them, and every time I perform their work I feel like I am advocating for that composer, but also advocating their activity and their original expression of the world around them.

While I had similar core motivations in commissioning Rushford and Gifford, differences emerged in the ways these interactions took place. I could identify approaches that I wanted to change that would enhance my experience with the composer, and potentially the performance outcomes of the score. My experience with Gifford made me realise that during my early interactions with Rushford on *Untitled*, I had unconsciously subscribed to a traditional Western classical performer-composer relationship model. Within this model, as discussed in the Introduction, the roles of performer and composer are embedded with assumptions and hierarchies that partition the creative process (see Kanno, 2012; Goehr, 2007).16

16 Goehr details the development of the composer’s “authority” in her seminal book *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (2007). Goehr also uses the term “power relations” as existing between “composers, conductors, performers, and audiences” (2007, p. 275). She further notes that “The ideal of Werktreue emerged to capture the new relation between work and performance as well as that between performer and composer. Performances and their performers were respectively subservient to works and their composer” (2007, p. 231). These themes will be addressed in more detail later (see also Goehr, pp. 224-229).
My desire to step back and allow a composer ‘freedom’ inadvertently created an environment of isolation, and flowed into my learning of their work towards the first performance (as discussed in Chapter 1). In reflecting on my experiences with Rushford and Gifford, I saw possibilities for the performer and composer roles to expand through deeper interactions. A third presence, the score, plays its own role as an interface between composer and performer, as each person has developed a non-concurrent relationship to the score. As these various roles interact they continue to evolve, change, merge and develop.

A struggle within the performer-composer relationship emerges as I attempt to reconcile my motivation to do what the composer asks with my role as a performer and interpreter. I can confidently make interpretive decisions in traditional Western classical repertoire where the composer is no longer alive. (see Kanno, 2012) Yet when working on a newly written score, I have found that I require affirmation from the composer, and to have a developed level of self-assuredness and trust in my relationship with them (see Roche, 2011) to negotiate how I might take ownership of my performance. My first performances of a new work are usually done for the composer. It is when I sense the composer as having moved on from the score that I feel empowered to focus on my own interpretation.

This reflection generated a series of questions into what motivates performer-led commissions, and how a vocation pre-text inflects the roles of performer and composer within their bespoke relationship, potentially bringing personal responsibilities and expectations to the dynamic. Naturally, there are variables that can affect and influence the efficiency of how some of these stages operate, namely: the composer (their working methods, knowledge of instrument, availability, personality); the functionality of the score; and the performer (and their instrument) as the collaborative context. Interactions through verbal (social interaction both spoken and written) and non-verbal (score-based interactions) dialogue vary through the initial creative process and contribute to what can be considered a slowed-down performance practice. Performer-composer relationships will now be examined through three congruent themes: motivation, roles, and interactions.

Motivation as vocation

“Her unswerving dedication to modernist music has never faltered despite serious illness, financial stress and the fickleness of popularity.”


As mentioned in Chapter 1, percussionist Steven Schick presents a learning model in his book The Percussionist’s Art (2006). The first phase of his model, Schick notes, is the conceptual phase, in which “a performer fantasizes about what a piece might sound like and how it might eventually fit into his or her repertoire. He or she addresses the critical questions of why learn this piece and why now” (2006, p. 94). Performers may find it interesting that Schick includes this within a learning model, as perhaps it is a given
that there is motivation to learn the pieces they take on. But aside from this, the “conceptual phase” is more relevant when thinking about the act of commissioning: why this composer, and why now? Contemporary flautist Claire Chase describes how the example of Edgard Varèse’s seminal flute solo Density 21.5 has impacted on her commissioning new works as she seeks to extend flute repertoire. Chase’s motivation to commission new work is no less than to find the piece “that will singularly change the definition of the instrument” (2012, p. 39).

Commissioning new work is a critical part of several creative processes: the continuation of music as an art form, the composer’s development, and specifically the expansion of an instrument’s repertoire. In an initial survey of Australian viola repertoire in 2005, I observed aesthetic and stylistic holes in the repertoire and I commissioned new works in response to these gaps (see Green, 2005). I connected with Gifford’s story and her intent to remain committed to her “modernist” ideals despite observing her peers conforming to cultural and stylistic expectations. In many ways, I identified with Gifford’s frustration, and felt compelled to give her the chance to write a work for a receptive performer. Ultimately, that is the opportunity I am trying to create for all the composers I commission from; that of creating a work they want to write, for someone who is for them and who will try to do everything within their ability to realise their concept.

Key to this process is identifying the types of motivation that drive the act of commissioning, and the decision about which voice to encourage and engage with. Davidson (2002) describes four types of motivation that are determined by how the outcome within an activity or product is valued or anticipated as “successful” (Davidson, 2002, p. 94). The four types are: extrinsic (involving an external source of reward); social (a wish to please others); achievement (driven by competition); and intrinsic (“interest in the activity itself, engagement for simple personal enjoyment”) (p. 95). Using these four categories, I observe my motivation to be both social and intrinsic. Several composers have informally relayed to me negative experiences of working with musicians on their work. This motivates me to try to create a meaningful experience for them by giving them access to an open and explorative performer.

Clarinetist Heather Roche omits the term “commission” to describe works in her PhD thesis Dialogue and Collaboration in the Creation of New Works for Clarinet (2011), observing her process as “dialogue-based, “intimate” collaborations through the creation of new works for the clarinet,” (p. 4) where both performer and composer are “invested in a long term partnership” (p. 12). Roche’s own motivation stems from “early experiences as a student of music in which collaborations with composers didn’t function and were dissatisfactory” (2011, p. 28). Indicating that her motivation is directly linked to her interactions with the composers who she works with, Roche also implies that this motivation will directly shape the interactions and make the collaboration functional and satisfying. Roche is very clear about the benefits to her creative process in her experience of collaboration with composers towards creating new works,
observing that “the individual collaboration reflects the knowledge and experience of the collaborations that came before it. Mistakes made in earlier collaborations were corrected in later ones” (2011, pp. 128-129). Roche never describes clearly what fuelled her motivation towards a particular collaboration or what sustained her motivation to invest in enabling a piece to come to fruition. However, the network of relationships she describes reveals a developing methodology that nurtures an open and enhanced collaborative experience.

While performers can bring all their knowledge to assist an open dialogue, the relationship may still be vulnerable according to how the composer participates in the creative process. In terms of social motivation, if value is placed on the composer’s satisfaction, this can affect perceptions of validity in the performer’s artistic practice. This might contribute to inner conflict for the performer as they begin to form their interpretation, since the relationship is contingent on how both members participate. If the performer’s motivations potentially inhibit effective dialogue with a composer, perhaps how motivation operates in the relationship can be re-directed away from composer-orientated and towards a ‘co-creation’ model where authorship is expanded. Authorship could be shared to encompass the compositional, learning, interpretational and performance phases as the new musical work finds its identity within the schema of contemporary Western art music. Kanno (2012) also suggests that “that some performers have developed effective ways to engage with composers (and vice versa) in more co-creative, collaborative productions while still taking full advantage of the independent creative and interpretive skills nourished by tradition” (2012, pp. 178-179). A re-orientation of motivation combined with a re-thinking of roles informed my approach to working with Gifford, and later with Illean. Reflecting on our working relationship in comparison to other experiences we’d had, Gifford and I observed:

PG: It was a bit different with us, we had quite a bit of consultation…
HG: This is a novelty to me. Pretty well all my life I’ve sat in a room on my own and written music. (Gifford, 2017)

Roles
This section examines the potential for widening the definition of roles within performer and composer relationships. In the context of working on Untitled, I had restricted my roles as a performer to learning and performing, having assumed that everything I needed to play the work ‘correctly’ already lay within Rushford’s score. The partitioning of roles that I subscribed to was intended to respect the composer’s domain as creator yet this approach left us both the performer and composer limited in their interactions and isolated. Throughout the course of this research project there has been a shift in my thinking as to what contributes to the ‘creation’ of a new work. Kanno is succinct on this point, stating, “the musical work is not a product of the composer” (Kanno, 2012, p. 171). Others have also argued persuasively for the possibilities of co-creation through the disintegration and reimagining of traditional or expected performer-composer roles, namely: Goehr (2007), Small (1998), Kivy (1995) and Taruskin (1995).
In advocating a widening of approaches to the roles of performers and composers, I am not suggesting that during the relationship the performer becomes the composer and the composer becomes the performer. It is rather that each individual may find, through an integrated approach to these roles, that the piece crystallises in both technical and musical aspects. My initial motivation to commission was to allow absolute freedom to the composer, with no interference from me as the performer. I was also, however, motivated by the sense that I would feel safer leaving any interaction with the composer to when I felt sure of my facility with the score, so as not to disappoint them (social motivation). My initial ideas of partitioning the roles between composer and performer were derived from a preference to not be seen as interfering with the composer’s writing process. Working with Gifford later on, though, I was encouraged to give feedback, particularly on technical and idiomatic issues.

PG: I never wanted to influence how you were writing or what you were writing, because I’m not interested in that.
HG: No you didn’t. You gave the absolute yes or no to playability which was most important. (Gifford, 2017)

However, when Gifford shared with me the first fragment of Desperation I was faced with a conundrum. The material did not reflect the defiant modernist approach I was anticipating and my instincts told me she was unsure of how open I would be. Despite being wary of intentionally or actively influencing the composition process, I encouraged her not to change the core material or character – but to extend it. This moment was confronting for me. Had I interfered in Helen’s compositional process, or had I clarified it? Gifford explains here:

PG: Do you feel like you had to make compromises with Desperation?
HG: No. No, I didn’t at any stage. The sky was the limit because Phoebe was playing!
(PG laughs) HG: It was great actually.
PG: I remember the first draft…
HG: Now the first section.
PG: Yes! …But I remember playing the first draft… and I remember saying something along the lines to you Helen about ‘oh I’m not quite sure that you’re really going for it’ – I felt like you were holding back.
HG: Yes, I didn’t want to overdo anything because I didn’t really know you so well.
PG: Yeah… I think that might’ve been one of the first times that I had played for you here [Gifford’s home].
HG: Yes, that’s right.
PG: And that seemed to change a lot of things for you.
HG: Yes, I thought: ah, good. (Gifford, 2017)

The subsequent outcome of the final work suggested I had not interfered but had instead clarified and opened Gifford’s musical ideas, and this was confirmed by Gifford. Once Gifford could merge my abilities with the freedom I was giving her she was able to extend Desperation. What was able to be negotiated was how the performer engaged with the composer to inform and/or extend the composition process. From here, as the roles of performer and composer intersected and reflected, further forms of collaboration could begin to operate.
For many performers, describing who we are and what we do is loosely defined, and more flexible terms are drawn on that are identifiable within other disciplines such as artist, curator, or maker. Performers of contemporary art music are increasingly employing the term collaborator (see Fitch & Heyde, 2007; Kanga, 2014a; Roche, 2011) and choosing to describe their practice as performers collaborating with composers. The term collaborator does invite some suspicion as it could be interpreted as a kind of grab for power between and over independent authorities. History shows various examples of this in performers’ approaches to working with composers. However, the concept of collaboration is not necessarily limited to performers and composers who are alive, but I suggest that it also can extend to ways which the performer interacts with the score and other forms of historical information and artefacts from the composer. For example, how performer’s draw on biographical and socio-cultural context of the composer, the work, and it’s time of composition. In learning and performing newly written works, where the act of commission umbrellas the creative process, the collaboration of performer with score is limited without the triangulation of the composer. When it goes well, inclusion of all three elements can contribute to a more holistic and meaningful performance outcome for the performer and composer. Yet it must be acknowledged that it is also possible for collaboration to go badly; where it is a struggle to negotiate and a power-play scenario unfolds.

Australian pianist Zubin Kanga (2014a) discusses his various experiences as a collaborator, where research became an investigative tool to discern his own creative process within the performer to composer relationship. His aim was to identify his own skills as a collaborator, the efficiency and productivity of the collaboration and whether its outcome could be deemed successful or not. Kanga expresses a sense of fulfilment in close collaboration with composers, affirming extensive benefits to himself and to “the composer and the work we create” (2014a, p. 44). The range of performer and composer relationships featured in Kanga’s thesis includes composers at varying stages of their careers, where there are both implicit and explicit differences acknowledged by Kanga in his motivation in relation to seniority and experience; composer regarded as “peers,” that is “they are similar in age, or at similar stages of their careers, and our collaboration may be assumed to benefit us both equally (both in artistic as well as career outcomes)” (Kanga, 2014a, p. 45).

A predominant motivation of Kanga’s is also one of shared authorship with his collaborators. Kanga draws on a form of collaboration called Integrative Collaboration (found in John-Steiner, 2000) in which the “participant’s roles merge and authorship is shared” (Kanga, 2014a, p. 26). They “construct a set of common beliefs or ideology. They thrive on dialogue, risk taking, and a shared vision” (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 203). Significantly, this form of collaboration is significantly regarded as transformative for “both the field and the participants” (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 70). In reality, though, this approach may not suit the composer, as demonstrated by Kanga’s conversations with composer Michael Finnissy, which offer a fascinating insight into the composer’s rationale and methodology. After allowing Kanga to give opinions
on two concepts, Finnissy’s approach after the exchange was to get to work. As the composer notes: “for me the exciting thing is actually pondering a structure, which doesn’t really have much to do with collaborative practice” (Kanga, 2014a, p. 69). Kanga reflects on his own attempts to collaborate: “to interfere with this process, is also illuminating in demonstrating the limits Finnissy places on collaboration and the limits I place on myself because of his position of authority” (2014a, p. 70). Finnissy clarifies his position, stating

I’m sorry, but there is a point beyond which I have to do it on my own and where other people’s input is simply annoying and it gets in the way. Because I’m sure you don’t want to take responsibility for the notes that are on the page and so [while] it might be nice and gratifying to feel that one has a role in the generation of the piece, in fact it’s my job to get the notes right, and that’s not a committee decision, it’s an individual choice. (Finnissy in Kanga, 2014a, p. 76)

Kanga’s documentation of this experience with Finnissy (among many others in Kanga’s thesis) gives the reader an insight into some of the conversations that can take place between a composer and performer in the creation of a new work. The above scenario highlights that this particular collaboration was approached very differently by Kanga and Finnissy, although it is unclear as to what expectations were conveyed in their initial conversations and how this shaped their interactions. Kanga’s awareness of Finnissy being the “authority” in the collaboration was affirmed by Finnissy and his perceived responsibilities in his role as ‘composer,’ a role that he stated required an extended period of time to carry out alone. In contrast, Kanga appears to seek a mode of collaboration that is integrated, even during phases of working that are typically insulated. Kanga thrives on scenarios in which “the boundaries between these two roles [composer and performer] often dissolve and are reformed: in some cases, power-play and conflicts over creative territory dominate the process, while in others an intimacy develops which allows the roles to remain ambiguous” (Kanga, 2014b). Whether or not Finnissy’s demand is understandable is not being questioned, however the scenario highlights the extent to which for some artists, collaboration might be welcome at the edges, but not at the compositional centre of the creation phase of a work. Whilst discussing collaboration in the context of social and conflict theory is beyond the scope of the research, in further research it would be interesting to observe patterns in collaborative practices, where participants fluctuate from periods of segregated activity to integrated processes.

Fitch and Heyde (2007) acknowledge that the ingrained culture of Western art music, which promotes the authority of the composer, is unlikely to be tested by close collaborations between performers and composers. However, that collaborative process raises “important questions about the ways which we conceive authorship of music” (Fitch & Heyde, 2007, p. 73). I suggest the practice of ‘collaboration’ in performer and composer relationships is still vulnerable to inequitable “power relations” (see Goehr, 2007) and I remain unsure of how to navigate this in reality. Kanga states: “my specialised skills as a virtuoso inspired many of the composers to innovate and explore new approaches to the instrument, and many of the works would not have existed without my presence as co-collaborator” (Kanga, 2014a, p. 463). As previously discussed, I found my skills and interpretive abilities helped to clarify Gifford’s direction for the
composition process of *Desperation*, despite my initial hesitation to provide feedback that could be perceived as influencing the nature of the composition. Therefore, there must be an internal line in my practice where feedback constitutes as being helpful, rather than interfering. Throughout this research project, my understanding of a new work has thrived on conversations with the composers, so that the vision is shared and understood as far as it can be. Still, I do not desire a shared authorship. I interpret this as echoing Foucault's description of the author as "a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes and chooses" (Fitch & Heyde, 2007, p. 73). I choose to exclude myself from sharing "authorship" because my motivation to commission is tied to my desire to preserve the composer's identity. There could however be an opportunity in the future where I experience collaboration in which the two roles merge, and authorship is a shared enterprise.

The ambiguity of the borders between collaboration and interference created a conflict with my initial motivation to commission – giving creative freedom and support to the composer. Composer and educator Roger Sessions describes the performer and composer as “not only collaborators in a common enterprise but participants in an essentially single experience” (1971, p. 5). If we begin to think of the performer and composer as participants in a process rather than collaborators, then perhaps this offers a potential model where roles can interact and boundaries can be respected while also being flexible. This might be more possible in the context of a performer-led commission, as performers recognise how their motivations inflect the dynamics of the performer-composer relationship, and therefore shape their developing performance practice of a newly written score. This highlights again the potential that a reorientation of motivation away from deference to the composer might allow a flexibility and balance to the roles, and for focus to be drawn towards score-based interactions.

In thinking about how I navigated these roles between composer and performer, I began to see multiple perspectives of this one relationship. The opening sentence of Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (first published in 1988) states: "The two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus* together. Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd" (2013, p. 1). Similarly, within myself as a performer, I am both an interpreter of other’s works and a maker of my own sound. These roles are extended as I explore new works. I become a mediator between multiple duos; the composer and the score, my instrument and the performance space, the composer and the audience. These perspectives are all layered into a work and are shaped by the particularities of my relationship with the score. This is echoed in Fitch and Heyde (2007):

> in a musical culture that has understood the performer’s role primarily as mediator between composer/piece and audience, very little attention has been paid to the performer’s potentially significant mediation between composer and piece. When the latter interpretation of the role is brought into play early in the conception, the performer may take a vital, inventive stance in which ‘problems’ (musical ideas) are formulated and reformulated in tandem with their ‘solutions.’ The composer-performer collaboration may thus become a site for the playing out of the dialogic aspects of artistic creation. (p. 72)
I rely on knowledge that is both housed in and beyond the score, some of which can only be passed to me through an interactive relationship with the composer as I work towards developing an informed and meaningful interpretation. This further knowledge derives from personal conversations; gaining understanding of the composer’s compositional style and current interests, which manifest in their compositional approach. I rely on my instrument as it occupies a reactive role. My viola’s response to the pieces I play is dependent on how I interact with it; my instrument’s ability to function well is even dependent on the weather. But the score also has its own role or identity. The composer has an established relationship to the score before it is even seen by the performer. Beyond this relationship, the performer is vulnerable to, and dependent on, the score’s functionality. In this context, a score’s weakness can be exposed through notation that yields unexpected outcomes, and which may leave the performer to question their understanding of the composer’s intentions. The score becomes a bridge between the composer and performer, an imperfect link in the creative space in which both parties are committed to seeing the piece being realised. It is in these moments where the composer may reveal aspects of their process or intentions, and how those are translated (or not translated) through their notation. In a space where the composer’s score, through my skills, gets reflected back to them, questions are posed from both sides. These roles are constantly interacting in different combinations and at different levels of efficiency and creative play to make the first sounded history of the new work.

Interactions

When do things get set in motion? When do these interactions begin? Is it when the score arrives? For me, the creative process is set in motion as soon as I decide to commission someone and make it happen. Now the conversation begins.

Interactions between the roles in the performer to composer relationship can occur at multiple stages throughout the creative process, contributing to a performance practice that is slowed down by negotiations and experimentation. The interactions performers have with both composer and the score can “reveal the various susceptibilities of communicative acts to forces of patterning, individuality, circumstance, and influence” (Gottschalk, 2016, p. 155). There are fundamental processes of learning, mapping and codifying that the performer must take on to embody a piece. During these processes, interactions are vulnerable to the variables within performance contexts. Even if the interactions are all subject to an initial sense of vocation and advocacy, as Gottschalk observes: “…the starting point is different. Within any of these contexts, similarity and difference, familiarity and strangeness are all part of the potential material” (p. 190).

In the models above, the interactions between performers and composers at times highlight the searching, awkward or mannered nature of the conversations and negotiations that may be required. The potential value of these contributions indicate that this area of research is rich in possibilities. Another revealing
contribution to the literature comes from the celebrated partnership of John Cage and David Tudor, thoroughly documented in Martin Iddon’s *John Cage and David Tudor: Correspondence on Interpretation and Performance* (2013). This relationship was one in which, at times, the roles merged, as aspects of Tudor’s practice combined with Cage’s scores (particularly the indeterminate scores), which were “ultimately intertwined with the situations he created, in which certain unveiling of the possibilities beyond the frame of what his score describes is precisely what the score demands” (Iddon, 2013, p. 215). Tudor’s realisation of Cage’s scores, and their subsequent correspondence contributes to what Iddon describes as “one of the most significant, and enduring, musical collaborations of the twentieth century” (Iddon, 2013, p. x).

The extent to which Tudor ‘prepared’ indeterminate scores is briefly mentioned in George E. Lewis’ essay *Afterward to “Improvised Music after 1950”* (2004b). Lewis refers to composer and theorist Sean Griffin’s research on Tudor, which revealed the extent to which Tudor resisted ‘performance indeterminacy’ and ‘prepared’ or re-composed indeterminate scores, such that Tudor’s recorded version of Morton Feldman’s indeterminate *Intersection 3* (1953) was found to be based on a notated secondary score by Tudor himself (Lewis, 2004b, p. 167). This has implications for the categorisation of Tudor’s relationship with a number of composers (including Cage and Feldman) as ‘collaboration.’

Despite Tudor’s methods of working with indeterminate scores, Cage and Tudor spent much time in each other’s company and there still remains a large body of correspondence that offers a glimpse into the dynamic nature of this partnership. There are moments of humour and play amongst their letters with questions and clarifications that relate to several of Cage’s scores at the time. Iddon (2013) observes that Cage and Tudor “managed to collaborate and remain independent at the same time,” with Cage affirming, “I was not telling David Tudor what to do, nor was he telling me what to do, anything that either of us did worked with everything the other did” (p. 159). To the extent that Cage knew or thought about Tudor’s performance preparation process regarding indeterminate scores, there was still, within the parameters of a professional relationship, a friendship. This shared attitude towards the performer-composer relationship, where independent thought is shared towards the common goal of creating a work, appeals greatly to me.

I have yet to establish a long-term partnership with a composer that bears multiple solo works. But perhaps the unique circumstances of Tudor’s and Cage’s relationship, their close proximity, the type of notations

---

17 For example, in Iddon (2013); ‘David Tudor to John Cage, handwritten [late July 1951],’ pp. 17-19; and ‘John Cage to David Tudor, handwritten [c. mid-November 1951],’ pp. 30-31.

18 It may be worth noting that Tudor preferred to focus on his own compositions later in his life, an early example being *Fluorescent Sound* (1964). However, he continued to work collaboratively with several composers. (see Gardner, A. (2013, June 11). Sounds heard: The art of David Tudor (1963-1992). Retrieved from https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/sounds-heard-the-art-of-david-tudor-1963-1992/). Kanga has also expressed an interest in composition, having composed or prepared a cadenza for a Daniel Rojas’ *Concierto para Piano y Orquesta: Latinoamericanismos* (2006). This may account for Kanga’s enthusiasm for close collaboration with composers, and a desire to be involved in the compositional process. It would be interesting to see if in the future Kanga explores more fully a compositional practice more fully.
Cage was exploring, and their access to a conjoined creative space meant their relationship was ripe for such prolific outcomes. Among the many things their letters show is affection for each other, and knowledge of their wider community. But it was when Tudor listed his questions for Cage, in a letter in July 1951 (including clarifying notation and instrument specific parameters; see Iddon, 2013, pp. 17-18), that their communication struck me as being such an ordinary example of the performer to composer relationship. Tudor’s response to a new work by Cage mirrored similar questions that I have when I see a score for the first time. This list, and the examples found in Roche (2011), Kang (2014a), and Fitch and Heyde (2007), are a reminder of the value that conversation brings to the performer to composer relationship, and that while active dialogue involves participation, strategies and skills can also be learnt to enhance these conversations.

Contemporary pianist Philip Thomas describes the advantages of commissioning a composer whose work the performer is familiar with: “much of the interpretative groundwork has already been done. My appreciation of the general aesthetic outlook, and musical qualities and concerns, of Bryn Harrison’s work provided me with an initial base from which to find a route through être-temps” (Clarke et al, p. 38). In my research, despite being familiar with Rushford’s work and aesthetic, the notation employed in Untitled presented an unexpected challenge. In partitioning my role with respect for Rushford, my isolation was further compounded by the few interactions he initiated during his period of writing. Once I had the score, this environment of isolation that had been created made it difficult to seek out further interactions. Rushford similarly notes:

JR: I would say that even I struggled to see how complicated it was. But I agree with you that had we had more conversation in the process of writing and sending it to you and the learning, I think we could have developed something kind of a little bit more integrated which would’ve been nice. Because for me it was never a piece that was supposed to be sent to you and you run off and hide in your cave and learn it because the score for me was kind of experimental. … I would say that, yeah, I probably learnt something from that too, and I think every piece you write for someone you learn something from. That piece I would say and a few other pieces from around that time I was writing, I would say a similar thing happened. In that I was trying something, and I didn’t quite know how it would end up. But I think that feeling of the stakes being so high for the performer, is something that the composer can sometimes overlook. (Rushford, 2017)

Navigating a newly created work requires exploration, experimentation and interactions (or collaboration) that nurture an environment of co-creation. Roche advocates ‘intimate’ collaboration noting “a relationship founded on dialogue, where trust is built between the collaborators and a playfulness exists, this is a collaborative space where risks can be taken (Roche, 2011, p. 37). The composer is the only person at the that time of this process who can offer insights into the score that the performer is in the process of discovering. Moreover, my own insecurities fostered an environment of isolation which contributed to my

working method with Rushford being inefficient and problematic. Conversation, as Roche notes, is the key: “through dialogue comes trust: as a result of this trust, risks can be taken and mistakes can be made without fear. Trust has been developed when each collaborator feels the freedom to say anything” (Roche, 2011, p. 15). Cellist Fred Sherry concurs, noting that “A healthy dialogue with the composer will almost always achieve better results” (Sherry, 2002, p. 90). These cases reiterate the point that trust between composer and performer, in both directions, is necessary before the performer can trust themselves in the score. I derived enormous benefits from my interactions with Gifford and Illean in sharing my motivation to commission them, as I felt this helped establish a dialogic practice that from the beginning invited openness and conversation. I would continue to foster this environment of co-creation, where space was given for the performer and composer roles to each remain identifiable and operate with integrity, but in which the knowledge was shared to bring the work into being.

My reaction to reading Gifford’s story was so immediate that it contributed to a sense of responsibility towards her that is still present even after several performances of Desperation. I couldn’t shake off the disappointments that Gifford had encountered and I felt determined to give her a positive experience. What I learnt most from my experience with Rushford, and then drew upon with Gifford, is that conversational interactions are a valuable tool for both performers and composers as they come together to see the score sonically realised. Conversation between performer and composer, (but also, in many ways, the performer and the score), captures “that pact of duality whereby the ideas and conceptions of a composer abut directly with the interpretations and capacities of a performer” (Schick, 2006, p. 69). In some cases, these interactions can help these newly written works be learned more efficiently, as conversation can illuminate potential access points in the score that clarify our understanding of a work, as we feel our way through the possible sonic expectations. I have been surprised about the degree to which my interactions with Gifford have solidified a potential methodology, and that she similarly felt enthused by our interactions:

HG: I haven’t had such a complete experience, though, as with you.
PQ: I think this piece has really kind of being a turning point for me in terms of how and why I want to do what I do.
HG: Well it’s established me to myself. That I have had more confidence about what I like doing.
PQ: I think it’s a viola piece… it feels true to the instrument, and it feels true to my instrument… I feel like when I play your piece that… it’s more than just playing notes, that I’m kind of playing your journey, my journey…
HG: Yes, yes, that’s exactly what I’ve felt when listening to you play it. … It certainly is a lovely experience for me. It all worked out beautifully. And I couldn’t have told where that piece was going until I got right to the end… I managed to tap in on all sorts of desperate things in my past. We all have them… put ’em to use! (Gifford, 2017)

In a dialogic practice during subsequent interactions with the composer, words and phrases can jump out, illuminating a pathway to the idealised outcome of their work. Performers are in conversation with them, playing their work to them for immediate feedback, discussing any struggles or confusion in elements of
the work. As the performer’s knowledge of the score grows, so does their insight into the score and opportunities and possibilities for interpretation come to the foreground. We meet the score through our personal lens, and our technical abilities to mould them to bring the score to life sonically. This is the performer’s interaction with a score – a conversation or even a type of dance of sorts – as we test, listen, react, reflect and explore this new territory.

Authority and authenticity in the commission process

The interactions between performer and composer are the human side of notation; before a score exists, these roles are unstable and fidelity to the score is not yet possible. However, even in these early interactions, hierarchies of authority can form. This stems from a traditional Western classical approach that pre-supposes that the authority of a work resides within the composer through the score and that a ‘correct’ performance is contingent on the performer accessing this knowledge. As discussed in the Introduction, this notion is widely discussed in Goehr (2007), Kivy (1995), Small (1998), and Taruskin (1995) among many others. The consequences of these structures of authority are that through a sense of responsibility, it is the composer’s vision that is made a priori for performance. This makes it difficult to realise fully the score’s sonic potential through a process of co-creation between the composer, performer and score. It would be interesting to observe, in current performer-composer relationships, how common it is for the composer to behave according to their assumed authority, and whether performers then typically respond with deference.

The issue of authority and space in the performer-composer relationship is a complex one. As Kanga writes, “the central questions remain: how much authority do composers have over the interpretation of their scores, and under what circumstances would a performer be justified in intentionally ignoring, amending, or even contradicting these intentions?” (Kanga, 2014a, p. 30). Diverting for a moment towards Stravinsky’s infamous assertion that “music should be transmitted and not interpreted,” (Taruskin, 1995, p. 360) Taruskin recounts his observations of a performance of Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring conducted by Benjamin Zander (in 1994). How a conductor navigates tempo in relation to their interpretation as “authentic” is often scrutinised. Comparing several tempi decisions by Zander, Stravinsky and Robert Craft, Taruskin finally settles the conflict of authorities:

Mr. Zander’s exciting performance is his performance, not Stravinsky’s, that it represents the “modernist” trend for this music, and that his claim of fidelity, not to say “truth,” is as specious a claim of privilege as anyone else’s. Like everyone else, he respects authority (the composer’s “intention”) only insofar as he agrees with it. And, as always, that only makes his performance the more authentic and respectable, not less. Performers can leave the quest for truth to scholars. What they need, and what Mr. Zander has, is certainty. (1995, p. 367)

Here I find the terminology important, and equally hard to capture; “respecting” the composer’s intentions, yet “only insofar as he agrees with it” (italics mine). From the “inside view,” periods of experimentation, reflection and re-examination on a micro level contributes to the essential process that performers
undergo as they determine in what ways they do in fact “agree” with the composer. In many ways, the composer actually has to convince the performer that what they want works – they need to persuade us to follow their instructions as script and give us the platform to then transform the score via interpretation into a sonic performance.

In my performance practice there are further ways in which I can reconcile the composer’s authority with my own. The performer’s and composer’s perspectives can enrich the ontology of the score and what “authenticities” exist. When these moments happen, the composer-performer-score paradigm is operating at an optimum level; a unification of creation. This kind of thinking allows a different kind of freedom to enter into my practice. The score becomes less dependent on me to interpret or realise. My reading of the score, which is as faithful as I can attain, is one transformation of the score at one time. To approach these commissions as works that I will be playing well into the future takes the pressure off the first performances, since through a long knowing of the score I can continue to interact with both the composer and the score, to build my ontology of the work, and use every performance opportunity to participate, to grow, and to shift with the score and the composer.

**Conclusion**

The above reflections have made me reconsider my role as a performer in how I negotiate this role within the composer-performer-score paradigm. This has enabled me to apply what I have learnt from my interactions with composers during the commissioning process to existing works, such as Liza Lim’s *Amulet* (1992). I initially learnt Lim’s score by building on knowledge I had from previous experiences of performing her work (see Chapter 4). I had even worked with Lim on her string quartet *Hell* (1992), in which some of the material became the basis for *Amulet* (confirmed by the composer). The extent to which I enjoyed my interactions with Gifford compelled me to seek conversation with Lim. I was able to workshop the piece with Lim and this allowed space for her to express her thoughts on the visceral language of sound in her music, and also wider subjects on sound-making, and vulnerabilities within music-making, that provided me with extra-musical information about *Amulet* (that can also be applied to other scores by Lim) that cannot be discovered through notation alone. This experience was invaluable to developing my interpretation. Lim speaks about the score as being “a kind of boundary” for the performer to negotiate. (Lim, 2017) She argues that:

> I think all music must be created by the performer. And that the things that are handed down in terms of stylistic or technical things are...also inventions, and so when you play my music you...you draw upon the body of knowledge that you have as a performer that you have from playing other work, listening to other pieces that may intersect. Lachenmann say, in terms of extended techniques, or Billone, or whatever, they all flow into... they create this store of knowledge from which you draw to then make your own... to make this performance practice... (Lim, 2017)
Lim encouraged me to identify my role in contributing to the performance practice of Amulet. This assisted me in acknowledging my role in creating the performance practice of the works by Rushford, Gifford, and Illean. And in that sense, to draw on the composers knowledge for this practice was necessary for my performance practice of these works to be inclusive and holistic.

In sharing what I had learnt with Lim and the kind of relationships I realised I enjoyed having with composers, that is, a relationship that is integrated, open, with a shared belief and trust, she similarly observed:

I think that’s a really essential part of the commissioning process. When I think about the situations where I felt, where I’ve given my best work, has been where I’ve felt that the performers, there was some kind of situation of trust that the performers would be willing to put themselves into the performance whereas if you feel, if there’s any hesitation…where, oh – this is not going to be taken seriously – than that just destroys the flow. So I think you’ve touched on a really important component of what makes a commissioning situation… [the] artistic relationship successful…it is those flows of trust and understanding. (Lim, 2017)

Furthermore, seeking a dialogue with Lim opened up possibilities for me, access to lineages within Amulet, the memories of this work in the hands of other violists. This is not done with the aim of appropriating former interpretations, but rather seeking to build on a performance practice of contemporary repertoire. In traditional Western classical music, the performer has often numerable lineages to go to for interpretative guidance. But in this context with Amulet, I was not seeking this. Nonetheless, knowing that the score has been in violists' performance practices, does make me consider the score differently to that of a newly written work that has come out of a commission. It requires finding a balance where I able to explore fresh perspectives on extant scores, whilst accessing knowledge that is still, in many ways, new in the context of recently written works.

Opening up these channels of dialogue is still based on a motivation to bring that score into my performance practice – for motivation, as Schick (2002) emphasised, can be used to examine “why we do what we do” (Schick, 2002, p. 10) and what this means for a performer’s practice. By examining motivations to commission and responsibilities in my practice and others, I could discern what kind of conversation I wanted to have with Illean and in further commissioning experiences. The performer’s motivation for commissioning can be key to creating an open and explorative working environment between performer and composer, and performer and the score beyond the first performance. The score is there for the performer to inhabit, and the composer has their own role in facilitating this process. Performers must be faithful to the score, but our foremost responsibility is make music that is meaningful to us and hopefully to our audiences. Motivations held by the performer and directed in multiple pathways

---

20 Lim wrote Amulet for Jennifer Curl, the violist of ELISION at the time. A recording of her performance is available through the Australian Music Centre.
provide a context to a creative process that invites conversation and collaboration, as the piece is sonically revealed for the first time.

The spacing between my commissions of Rushford, Gifford and Illean allowed a time of reflection that would then shape subsequent experiences. Layers of knowledge that were built, informed the next commission and its resulting creative process. However, my behaviour with each composer was also influenced by their own approach and the ways they expressed, inferred, or contained their own expectations, methods and knowledge. Whilst I could not change their behaviour, I could adapt to each relationship to enable a dialogic practice that might be fluid and integrated. As a result, there are no rules or fixed methodology in my commissions – except for the connection that I have with the composer that begins every conversation. Each of the works discussed have extended my technical skills and taught me something about myself, my playing, and what it means to be a violist and an artist. I am still in a process of applying my sense of vocation to the relationships I have with the composer and the score. It involves a negotiation of expressing confidence in my abilities and what I can offer the composer, and the power that has to enhance my interactions with the composer without impeding their own creative process.
Interlude A Performing Cranes: A conversation between composer and performer

The following is an extract from a conversation that took place between myself and Lisa Illean during the Women in Creative Arts conference at the Australian National University, Saturday August 12, 2017. Illean and I gave a joint presentation on Cranes, and I also performed the work in its entirety at the conference.

On my experience of performing Cranes:

Li: I wanted to pick up on this idea of performing something for the first time. For example, with Cranes, we had had lots of conversations, so I know you had – probably too many – ideas and images and let’s say ‘ideals’ about the sound world and the way the form should be conveyed. In that moment of performing [the London performance], I wonder if you know which things stuck and which things you had to let go of? Were there any particular ideas to do with the piece that were carried through the performance? And which ones were not?

PG: I think for me, the journey of the piece, the line from the beginning to the very end is quite at the forefront of my mind when I’m performing the piece. Even before I even play the very first note of Cranes I feel very aware of where I’m going, although even I feel like I’m mystified in how I get there. So, it’s not such a purposeful direction, it’s more like I unfold with the piece as it unfolds. There is this mystery of the piece which is really special, and I don’t want to necessarily lose that, even through my further knowing of the work.

Negotiating the fragments and the silences are tricky on a technical level, and trying to balance that with musically… what I’m personally wanting to try to express, and not letting technique get in the way or impede that expression, is really hard in Cranes because of maintaining such a delicate and soft dynamic palette. And because it literally feels that every note is important in Cranes. There’s no such thing as a passing note or an auxiliary note. Every note feels to me that it’s been thoughtfully placed. But it doesn’t have this kind of…it’s thoughtful, but not thoughtful in this kind of tension way…

Li: Not precious, or…

PG: Yeah, I don’t want to give the impression that I think of thoughtful like I’m being careful…like I’m treading on eggshells. It’s not like that, it’s just that everything has its place.

Li: Yeah.

PG: Everything is there for a reason, and that’s a really nice feeling. Although it’s by no means a flashy piece, but it gently makes itself known as it goes from the beginning to the end, and my hope is that it draws the listener in. I feel like I’m drawn in further into the piece as I play it. Especially when I get to Part III, it’s like I completely lose any sense of orientation, I feel very much that I’m just drawn into a world and I suddenly feel like I don’t have any sense of time, but there are little rhythmic points of interest that need to be quite clear, as they re-focus the ear and they re-focus me as well I think.

Li: And proportion in that third movement is also quite important.
PG: Yes.
LI: Even though there’s a continuity to the movement, the proportion of the different harmonic things is very important. One thing you touched on is to do with the technical demands of the piece.
PG: Yeah. It’s in a very subtle way.
LI: Yeah, this is something that I’m personally very interested in, and when I used to perform more I was interested in it as a performer as well, it is to do with a discreet virtuosity. But, I’m wondering what it is like for you as a performer to perform something which is quite technically demanding, but on the surface, not only needs to feel quite effortless, but is also not very showy, and is not impressive in the classic sense?
PG: I think in many ways, it reminds me of playing Bach.
LI: I love that!
PG: Because Bach you might say, “it looks so easy,” and then you play it and realise it’s quite hard. I love that term ‘discreet virtuosity’ because it is the perfect way to describe it, really. How the bow attacks and deparst the string, and attack I don’t mean accent, but that string needs to start, it needs that kick to vibrate, and how I approach that. Also in Cranes, the double stops, those two strings, their optimum resonance, is going to be at different bow speeds and pressures, but of course if you’re playing both strings at the same time you have to find a middle ground. And so, there is a certain vulnerability and fragility in that part of Cranes, which means it won’t necessarily work 100% of the time.
LI: That word vulnerability is really good because I feel like when you include some of those things in a work, it also not only exposes the performer a little bit, it exposes the instrument, and the acoustical make-up of that instrument.
PG: And I’ve spoken about the weather impacting… you don’t realise it until you move out of your home base how much that can impact on it.
LI: Absolutely. I’ve done experiments with instruments in the UK and then come over here in the humid summer and found that you really need to rethink some things.
PG: Takemitsu was a big believer of that as well. About performances being different to each other depending on the climate and environment of the performance space.21

*****

LI: As I was preparing for the presentation this week, I had a question for myself about the idea of ‘composing out of fragments’… I became more aware of the fact that I was interested in this kind of ‘composing-together’ as opposed to just the corrosive nature of fragmentation. So, what it is to actually take those fragments and remake something into a whole again. And then we

---

21 Nature and its elements were deeply influential on Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu (1930-96) and he was keenly aware that even a finished ‘work’ was not beyond nature’s influence. See Green, P. (2010). *The Influence of nature on two works for the viola by Toru Takemitsu and Ross Edwards* (Unpublished dissertation). Brisbane, Australia: The University of Queensland.
spoke about – one example of many – the Winchester Cathedral window image, which you said you really loved. And I wondered if you think that has coloured or changed any of your thoughts on the piece?

PG: Yeah, I think if anything it’s consolidated some of my feelings I have, or my interpretation. I’m a very, very, visual person and I respond strongly to visual images. When I was learning James Rushford’s piece, because I struggled to initially learn that piece, I really hung onto two strong images he’d given me… to get me through to the other side because I struggled so much with breaking the code of the work, so to speak, to reach the performative aspect of the work. And you gave me John Berger’s *The White Bird* to read early on and I love John Berger’s writing, and so I just really enjoyed reading that piece and having that as part of my early reading of your piece. *Cranes*, as a title is quite evocative, and it made me think of origami cranes and these folds…

LI: Which is similar to what I had in mind, this sort of folding and unfolding. Also, without drawing on it too much, I remember as a child in primary school we would make origami cranes to commemorate Hiroshima… Something about that process of folding and making, and also it being an act of remembrance, these small, quiet actions in which people invest hope, or peaceful intentions… I didn’t have these ideas set into a proper argument at all, but they were floating around.

On resonance, and instrument:

LI: Also with this piece…at the moment it’s very closely tied to not only one person but to one instrument…

PG: Yes.

LI: …which is kind of a fascinating thing for me, to think that actually this piece was written specifically for this viola, which has really particular resonance and certain qualities…and that your viola was made by a particular person in a place with particular wood…This kind of ‘particularity’ I find really special as well.

PG: I think we’ve chatted a little bit before about how when you sent me firstly *Cranes III* [*Part III of Cranes*]… and my first read-through I was focused very much on the pitch because we’d talked about pitch being quite central to the compositional make-up of the work, and pitch being a priority for you in terms of accuracy… whether or not that is related or not to prior experiences of inaccuracy… I won’t go there… You are very generous in the score – you do mark that I may need to make small adjustments to make those pure intervals…

LI: Yeah, yeah. It’s also true, you can write something down very, very precisely, but the ultimate judge has to be the ear when you’re playing.

PG: And the instrument – the instrument can really guide you on that as well.

LI: Yeah. So, for example in that third movement, the guideline is that those intervals be pure intervals, and have that special resonance of pure intervals. Which of course you teach with your
muscles, but in the end you judge with your ear, not with a needle on a metronome, telling you whether you’re 40 cents flat or not… and maybe that’s why it becomes an introverted section, that one – because you’re listening very, very closely to what’s going on, so you’re both making and listening, and being this kind of dual person…

But the purpose of this kind of precision is to in the end create a sense of freedom for the performer, because there are also so many poetic aspects to the piece. It doesn’t stop with an accurate production of pitch.

That would be a very cold idea of what it is to be a performer. I was cautious when we were having those first conversations about Cranes III [Part III of Cranes], that you’d be so attentive to producing the pitch, that any other more poetic sense of expression would drain out of it. And I’m really happy that it has reached this beautiful equilibrium, where you’re free with the sounds.

PG: Absolutely, I feel that. There was this really interesting feeling of my viola learning the work as much as I was learning the work. Because the piece is quite microtonal and there’s also a very strong feeling of resonance, different qualities of resonance in the piece, because obviously so not every single note on a string instrument is super resonant or equally resonant to each other.

There is a desire for me to achieve resonance and I’ve had to be ok with actually not reaching this absolute peak resonance for every single note. I’ve had to tell myself it’s ok for there to be different qualities and particular resonances depending on the pitches. That first time I sat with Part III there were all these interesting overtones coming out that disappeared as I learnt the piece. Because my instrument learnt…

LI: It settled…

PG: It settled into what the piece was asking, or what you were asking.

LI: …into a particular harmonic world.

PG: Yes, and I find that really interesting. To my knowledge there’s not a lot of research done on that, but the idea that these instruments can learn, can adapt to different sound-worlds, that adaptability is something that composers should be really aware of.

LI: From what I understand, especially with string instruments, that used to be a much more common phenomena – to retune, or be in differing tunings – and it seems to be something which has fallen out at times.

Going back to the question of resonance, I really liked our conversation where it shifted from resonance being one particular thing to us talking about a palette of resonances. Which then, of course, plays into a lot of important poetic ideas in the piece, to do with a proliferation of musical fragments, not just with subtle harmonic differences but differences in resonance. I think that is fascinating, and something I’d like to work with a lot more…

PG: Is that something that came out for you in the piece that you weren’t anticipating?

LI: I don’t think I anticipated it as strongly as it came out.
PG: But there’s definitely potential material to work with from there. I’m not sure how this works for a composer, but if you just kind of tip the priorities, where you shift where the initial thinking of writing and interpretation lies; what happens if I focus on rhythm more than anything else…

LI: Exactly.

PG: …what happens if I focus on phrasing more. Certainly, in my practice I experiment with that. I do experiment with, “ok, I’ve worked a lot on the pitch, now I need to merge it with other elements.” So, I do a run where I am focusing on the rhythm, and it might mean something is sacrificed, but it’s just to check in with that… its gradually getting all the pieces together that’s going to inform that kind of ‘final’ and I say final as not necessarily as a final way, because I don’t think there is a final way – but in terms of that kind of initial presentation of the piece, you are experimenting, ok I’ve tried it this way, let’s see how that sits.

LI: It’s the same thing when you’re composing. If we talk of musical elements, they have to give way to one another, not all can be equally present at any given time. As you’ve mentioned before, in parts where certain harmonic ideas are very strong, the rhythmic ideas take a more background role to allow those harmonies space to speak. So, yeah, I’m interested to know what it is to set up a situation where resonance can come to the foreground.
Performing Cranes reminds me of an experience I had in performing Feldman’s Piano and String Quartet (1985) in Darmstadt in 2014. There are similarities in the sparseness of texture that allows the clarity of the material to sound, and the care in the phrase or fragmentary structures of the work through to the chosen pitch material, all generally within a soft dynamic palette. As with Feldman’s work, so often with Cranes I ride on the edge of touch, testing how little exertion is required to initiate and send out the sounds. Occasionally it is just not quite enough. I cannot compare the durational nature of these works, yet my encounters with these sounds and the experience of temporality in both works is similar, wherein time dissolves in and of itself. When I perform Cranes, I am shadowed by a constant feeling of something unfolding, seeking; of tensions unseen yet felt on the periphery. In the final section, it is easy to feel disorientated, absorbed into a meditative sound-world of dissolving and merging tones.

In this chapter, the mode of inquiry resides in my “inside view” of a performance of Lisa Illean’s Cranes (2016-17) and is expressed as a stand-alone performance analysis. The objective of the analysis is to uncover and express knowledge that can be only known to the performer through their performance of a score, based on the submitted recording of the first performance of the revised score of Cranes (April 2017) that took place at The Old Church in Stoke-Newington, London, in May 2017. The analysis will reference changes from the original score only where comparison offers additional insight or reflection from myself. My performance analysis attempts to uncover particularities of performance in real time within two parameters: temporality and resonance. This is not to analyse interpretation as such, but the processes of mediation as the score, performer and acoustical space intersect.

The acoustic space creates a site-specific context for performance that the performer tests, negotiates and responds to through their sounds. In Here & Now: Artistic Research in Music: An Australian Perspective (2016), the editors claim that “Sites affect the resonance, the texture, and our perception of what is important in the music, changing the emotion, the perceived complexity, and access to the music” (p. 63). Performers enter into a dialogue with the performance space as they feel and listen to the sounds reformed by the acoustics. In this interaction performers are constantly making a multitude of decisions in real time to converse with the space, while taking into the considerations posed above. As theorist Marshall McLuhan observes, “There are no boundaries to sound. We hear all directions at once. But the balance between the inner and outer experience can be precise” (McLuhan, 2004, p. 68). This analysis seeks to express the ways in which the performer shifts between their inner and outer experience in the moment of performance within the acoustical space. The skills of the performer in negotiating the properties of the score have a particular impact on how the performer mediates the score and sounds in real time within the performance space.
Processes in performance practice may be described as accumulating strategies to bring the past into the present for the moment of performance. Once we are there in the performance space, there are elements that we must negotiate in that moment. These may differ from score to score, but elements of temporality and resonance are central to the performance (the “doing”) and the performer in that space, as they intersect at that time. Resonance, for instance, allows us to hear what’s immediately passed. As Brubaker notes; “How the “next note” is played can strongly affect our “hearing” of what we have already taken in” (Brubaker, 2009, p. 145). The performer’s position here is one in which our next move is impacted by our simultaneous playing in response to listening, and the time and space that this takes place in. The performer is an agent of re-creation where the score, composer and performer merge and a sonic journey that unfolds for the listener. Responsiveness occurs in real time to the audience’s energy, the acoustical properties of the space, the immediacy and presence of the sounds generated going into that space which lingers, yet the performer remains knowing how to tell their story of the piece.

My performance analysis seeks to extend upon the primarily empirical methodologies of analysts Cook (1999, 2007c, 2014) and Rink (2002b), and draw on considerations by Emmerson (2007), to fill in a gap in the knowledge and offer an exploration that embodies the performer’s experience and mediation of sounds in real time. The analysis will focus on Cranes’ transition from the score as an artefact to its sonic transformation in space; elements that have implications for the performer, and information that is localised and transferable as the interface between the score and the act of making the score sound in real time is explored. These elements are not confined to fixed positions, but they interact as they impact on each other and the subsequent decisions that take place, including those “between intuitive and conscious” (Rink, 2002b, p. 35). It is from doing the ‘tasks’ in the score that all these things come apparent.

Overview of Cranes

Cranes is a notated exploratory work for solo viola that is approximately fifteen minutes in duration. It is a quiet piece; mellifluous, understated and luminous. But it is not without its surprises, especially for the performer to navigate. It is a piece that calls for close listening both by the performer and the audience. Every note feels important, deserving of attention. The structure of the piece is clearly notated and takes the form of three parts, each part bridged by a short interlude.

![Figure 3.1: Diagram of form with bar lengths; Parts I, II, III interspersed with Interludes A and B.](image)
As the piece gently unfolds, there are subsets of material in Parts I and II where defined and distinctive changes in texture add a layer of complexity to the form. These subsections are clearly audible and anyone listening to a performance would perceive these smaller and defined sections. Furthermore, within subsections of Parts I and II there are notated punctuated fragments of material for the performer to negotiate that generally range between two and six bars in length.

Harmonically, the sound-world is inflected by microtones and occasional harmonics amongst double stops (where two or more notes are played together at the same time). Particularly when orchestrated closely, the interval between the 19th and 22nd partials (c.250 cents, where a tempered semitone is 100 cents) offers a recurring sonic touchstone throughout Cranes. Resonance is implied everywhere, with the goal clarity of every sound, no matter what timbral effect colours the note. A sonically unexpected moment occurs during Interlude B where the violist tunes down the II string, from a D to a C sharp minus 35 cents. This scordatura affects only one string but it impacts upon the entire instrument. Suddenly, the resonance of the viola is split into two, with the strings III and IV (G and C) one combination of resonance, and the top strings (C#-35 cents and A) occupying a separate state of resonance and thrusting Part III into a new sonic realm. The loss of the D harmonic series disconnects the four strings as a resonant whole and dismantles a potential reference of tuning navigation.

Parameters of analysis

In Schechner’s Performance Theory (2004) time in performance is described as differing to uniform clock time where “time is adapted to the event” (p. 8). This means that temporality is subject to interpretation and variation. Schechner outlines three main varieties of time in performance:

- **Event time** – dependent on a set sequence not constrained by limits of time.
- **Set time** – a sequence limited by a set amount of time.
- **Symbolic time** – a sequence that projects beyond the time the actions take place. (2004, p. 8)

Most musical performances would be initially thought of as Event time, however there are certain pieces whose objectives fall into the category of Set time (for example film scores, or scores that are set to a precisely measured duration). How time passes during a performance, and where time becomes a methodology for the performer to negotiate along with the structural elements of the performance (space, proximity of audience, equipment) mean that the performance outcome can differ every time.

There are elements both notated and implied in the score, and external factors resulting from the act of engaging with the score, that contribute to this feeling of resonance as being a sonic priority in a performance of Cranes. The piece inhabits what Illean calls “discreet virtuosity” (Illean, 2017) where no gesture is thrown away. The thoughtfulness being taken by the composer contributes an awareness and sensitivity to resonance and how it interacts with the performance space, and a mediation of form through temporality.
Having previously performed the work in several environments, The Old Church in London provided a lofty and rich acoustical space where the resonance gave me a sense of latitude between myself and that space. The venue had been chosen by Illean who was familiar with the space and appreciated its resonantly distant acoustical properties as appropriate for the piece. This gave me the impression that the space amplified the qualities of the piece as I played, or perhaps the inverse of this, that is, the piece became the device through which the space’s acoustics become alive. In observing works that similarly bring an awareness of resonant spaces (including pieces by Alvin Lucier and Peter Ablinger), Gottschalk notes, “Sound is always subject to the qualities of the space in which it is performed; but these pieces are remarkable in that spaces function not only as the context, but also as the primary focus of the work” (Gottschalk, 2016, p. 89). As with much of Illean’s oeuvre, the particularities of Cranes lend it a resonant space. The soft dynamic palette, the use of timbral combinations of harmonics with stopped notes and the emerging and dissolving of sounds are easier to achieve in a generous space. The performance space becomes an extension of the work, integrated through its sense of temporality and resonance. It is these two elements that are central to this analysis, having emerged as key components for the performer to negotiate during a performance of Cranes and its context with space.

**Temporality**

There are several instances in Cranes where Illean is generous to the performer, providing choices in how to approach the passing of time. From the beginning she encourages a sense of the organic: Part I “freely and tenderly,” and “slowly opening up,” and Interlude A “delicate, shadowy, flexible” (Illean, 2016–17). Further to this, rather than writing complex rhythmic structures, Illean has opted to notate tempo contours with gently rising and falling arrows, offering the performer flexibility and freedom in their execution of material. This organic ebb and flow within tempi encourages the performer to engage with their physical presence as it interacts with the sonic and responds to the performance space.

![Figure 3.2: Opening bars of Cranes (Part I). Note the notation of the fragments.](image)
In the opening fragment, as the tempo rises and falls, there is a danger that the performer will simultaneously get louder (there is an obvious absence of *poco crescendo*). This can often feel unavoidable and an extreme response would be to play this opening too fragilely in performance. With nerves and adrenalin of the moment into the mix, and the alertness of the audience in the performance space waiting for sound, I found the presence of physical tension is difficult to overcome – especially when playing softly with the instructed slow bow speed. This all makes getting the first note to sound with clarity difficult – if that is the performer’s objective. These are amongst the performer’s considerations for the first sounds; do they ‘start’ or ‘emerge’? Beginning with a slow bow does feel like an element of theatre is being brought into the first phrase of this work, especially since, as the piece unfolds, the bow speed increases, emulating a kind of organic breath. The very start of this piece can just be about an opening, even if it is very small. The resonant chamber of The Old Church in London provided an opportunity to explore extreme levels of softness, where ‘emerging’ sounds would take longer to reach the edges of the space and the audience.

A marked addition to the revised score included Illean’s decision to make the fragments of *Cranes* visually more discernible to the performer. Workshopping the piece together in March, we discussed Illean’s desire for the fragments of the material to be more obvious. Drawing on examples from other viola works I offered some possible approaches in notating these fragments to indicate phrasing, structure and negotiation with silence. I showed Illean excerpts of György Kurtág *Games, Signs, Messages* (2005) as an example where Kurtág uses a layout of fragments and different bar-lines to show how much silence should be observed by the performer.

![Score fragment from Gerlóczy Sári's *kiállítására* in Kurtág’s *Signs, Games and Messages* for solo viola (2005). The movement comprises of four staves centred in the page.](image)

Visual space between fragments of material implies some reflection on the sonic realm of a piece. I now had to now consider what these punctuations meant for me. The fragments of material and the spaces in between them could be interpreted as silence, a comma, a stop, a breath, activity or emptiness. Often, music structured by fragments can give an impression of the music being broken up, but I did not interpret it as such for my performance. The connectivity of the fragments is still perceptible in the score, and so
this should be reflected in the sonic life of the piece. The punctuation between these fragments, in conjunction with particular sites in the material the phrase alludes to, also enables a sense of breath in a state of rest. Another form of breath, within a sound itself, comes with frequent ‘intake’ of breath in the middle of a bow stroke, the sound dissolving and drawing in for air and then resonant again. This becomes an organic element in the temporality and its intersection with sonority in Cranes.

In my planning and working with Illean during the week before the London performance, we had talked about the clarity and effectiveness of notating these fragments and for the most part she was happy with how I negotiated them. Whilst Illean never specifically directs the performer in articulating these spaces, fragments in semiquaver passages (see Figure 3.4), she expressed to me a preference for a more fluid and flowing approach.

In the opening section of Cranes (see Figure 3.2) the fragments are more perceptible, and gradually become less and less prevalent, except for a ‘recollection’ of them in the sections leading up to Part III. They seem to represent a beginning, a revealing. In the moment of performance, in the large and reverberant church space, I was almost surprised by the overwhelming pull of my musical instincts to take what felt like a lot more time than I had planned. I negotiated the silence between these fragments by maintaining continuity of phrasing, as well as in the fragments’ interaction with the acoustic environment. Silence between fragments is variable as it can be determined by the acoustic space. But it was in this moment of performance that the punctuated spaces between the fragments began to clarify for me; these spaces were a kind of sonic temporality, where sounds in time were allowed to sound in space. It was almost as if the performance space was an implied presence through the notation, and it was only in performance that I could see this new element in the piece.

Cranes is an evocative title, and I immediately thought of origami cranes, something which Illean and I both recall making in our childhoods. Creating folds, making, re-making, and unfolding are themes that infuse this piece. I could choose to perform these fragments in isolation from one another. Although I hold the memory of earlier drafts prior to the material containing fragments, I didn’t feel bound to playing the piece

---

22 These themes evident in Cranes also became significant symbols in my performance practice, as expressed in the opening pages of the Prelude.
as connected as I had done previously. The fragments reveal a fragility in the score. I needed to be unafraid of showing these spaces, showing the fragments. That is because the space can be equated with the origami fold; it guides me in how I can navigate time where sound resists stillness. The performance space taught me to listen and to trust.

In London there was time to get a sense of the space prior to the concert. The resonant chambers of the church amplified the resonance of the sounds in pleasing ways, yet the compromise was a loss of the sound’s intimacy. I was aware of this potential impact on the audience during the performance. The several poco (little) swells (see Figure 3.4), particularly in Part I, became difficult to navigate. They pass by quickly, yet feel vulnerable to being overplayed. A clean and resonant tone is for me a priori in Cranes, and so if the resonance becomes lost, the impact on the dynamics is the first compromise that is made. These are all examples of the micro decisions and considerations the performer is required to negotiate in the performance space.

Locations of resonance
Whenever I come to Cranes, I always ask the question: how do I want this to sound? Making sounds gives me immediate information, felt kinaesthetically through my viola, and aurally through its close proximity to my ear but also distantly from the performance space. The extension of resonance by the viola will always be mediated by the qualities of the space. Quality of resonance is determined by the strings vibrating freely and is essentially impacted by the following elements, both in the left and right hands:

- Pitch: relative to access points within the harmonic series on the viola strings, enhancing ‘natural’ resonance.
- Bow: how the bow makes contact with the string, its attack, contact, speed, placement, and departure from the string. A soft dynamic palette contributes to the varying of these elements.

Illean only draws on ‘natural’ intervals (as opposed to tempered intervals) for the pitch material of Cranes and these are organised in an logical way for the performer to work with (in particular, Illean’s notation reflects the standard string practice to think in pitch, not frequency). Whilst the pitch material has been constructed through the lens of just intonation and spectralism, Illean notated the pitches using a combination of quarter-tones (each a distance of 50 cents) and various cent deviations (see Figure 3.5). These are clearly explained in the performance notes attached to the score.
Illean’s performance notes, detailing her approaches to notating her pitch with quarter-tones and cent deviations, initiate the kind of dialogue the performer will have with the score when negotiating pitch matter. In string performance practice good intonation contributes to greater resonance. Expanding the system of pitches on the instrument extends the possibilities of resonance from the instrument. It felt like my viola had to learn new ways to resonate, while I myself was learning what the quarter-tones and cent deviations sound and feel like. As was discussed in our conversation in *Interlude A*, quarter-tones grew into a strange resonance on my viola – its qualities seemed slightly greyer – and this altered in small ways as my viola adapted to being played in these pitches.

In the performance notes, Illean also provides an example of the A harmonic series, and it is evident in the work that much of the compositional material derived, as previously mentioned, from exploring certain intervals of the harmonic series – namely between the 19th and 22nd partials. This created a tuning environment for me to approach intonation in a performative context.

It has been said that, as a consequence of playing a continuous pitch instrument, “string players hear psychologically rather than physiologically” (Strange & Strange, 2001, p. 142). We have at our disposable
a tuning system (or systems) that can be manipulated for the purposes of expression. String players do not generally operate pitches within equal relationships, as Strange and Strange (2001) note: “A string player’s ear has been traditionally trained to hear and play F sharp and G flat as two different pitches” (2001, p. 142). It is universally understood that we make these manipulations to enhance the expression of the phrase in its context of harmony, including voice leading. In terms of hearing “psychologically rather than physiologically,” this statement does capture the struggle I have had at times in consciously negotiating pitch with the unconscious expectations embedded by my classical training.

I wanted to experience Illean’s attentiveness to pitch and so utilised a tuner, specifically the app Cleartune, to provide objective points of reference, but this sometimes conflicted with my aural instincts. I worked to find the 19th and 22nd partials for each string, beginning with the assumption that each open string act as a fundamental. Yet the specific pitch discoveries derived from this method did not clarify the context for these pitches, and a search for the fundamental became irrelevant. I had to make a decision on how I would prioritise my concept of pitch to prevent every note ultimately becoming a moving target. I worked to build pitch relationships of quarter-tones (distance of 50 cents) with Illean’s particular use of the interval between the 19th and 22nd partials (250 cents). This required me to build an aural memory of the pitch relationships. Additionally, the first microtonal double stop featured in Cranes (see Figure 3.2, bar 5) includes this performance note: “quarter-tones approximate pure intervals: please seek pure intervals as much as possible and make fine adjustments with the fingers.” I interpreted the intonation of the double stops (in particular) be ‘clean,’ with no beating between the sound waves colouring the sound. This was confirmed by Illean, however there is one exception that occurs in Part III (bar 225), where beating is not only present, but furthermore, it is a feature.

This is where my struggle between psychological and physiological approaches to pitch came to the fore. I began to deal with pitch in the context of micro-relationships; not bound to a fundamental, but based on what had sounded before. Pitches directed to be played as an open string or a natural harmonic acted as a hook into familiar territory, a realignment to the known. Because the request by Illean to “seek” within intonation invites close listening by the performer, I associated different pitches with being coloured by a kind of character, found through its resonance. As harmonics are naturally incrementally both sharp and flat, quarter-tones interact with their resonance in fine and delicate ways. The sonority of quarter-tones is still resonance, but it gives a different colour to the resonance. In the early stages of learning Cranes I worked closely with an electronic tuning device to check the accuracy of my quarter-tones. I later focused on developing my ear that needed to be trained to hear them, and my fingers that needed to be trained to feel the new distances. Hearing and feeling the pitch were synthesised, becoming one action. Yet

---

23 Strange and Strange (2001) refer to the classifications “dynamic intonation” and “expressive intonation” (p. 142).
24 As also expressed in Strange and Strange: “traditionally trained musicians use these microtonal variations in their playing almost unconsciously” (2001, p. 143).
approaching a hierarchy of pitch can be confusing sometimes. I needed to reorientate my perceptions of good intonation in relation to a broader palette of pitch relationships. In Part III of Cranes, Illean draws on cent deviations to further notate pitches. Immediately prior to Part III, the second string is tuned down during the performance (see Figure 3.7) to a C sharp -35 cents, a pitch I had to ‘memorise’ both the sound and feel of.

This detuning immediately impacts the I string (A) sending it sharp on average +12 cents (III and IV strings remained typically stable). To prepare for this in performance, I worked out an estimate, based on the average increase in pitch, on how far I needed to adjust my fine tuner for the I string flat before continuing on with Part III. While I could never be sure that it would be perfectly in tune, this is a consequence of retuning strings during a live performance, and I decided it was not worth disrupting the atmosphere in performance by checking tuning with a device prior to Part III.

Results of the tuning environment in Cranes affect the instrument’s resonance, and occasionally fingering options are unable to improve the sonic outcome. This can be different for every player and their instrument. For example, an F sharp when played on the III string on my instrument is difficult to make resonant. This temperamental pitch (in this position) is akin to a ‘wolf’ tone, where a sympathetic overtone distorts the pitch thus making it difficult to play at a soft dynamic, as required in the following example:

A wolf tone can be described as an interference or mismatch of vibrations to the bridge and string whilst bowing. The effect is a distortion where the note does not speak clearly in contrast to general tone production. (see Rossing, 2010, p. 220)
in a clearer tone, but at a soft dynamic this is harder to achieve. Ideally, I would try to play the F sharp on the II string where it would resonate clearly, but this is not possible because of the G sharp-quarter-sharp that is present in the double stop. In the London performance, I overcompensated by playing stronger, but as I was playing I felt like it was too much. I am still seeking possible alternatives. A similar problem can be found in the double stops, where Illean pairs a harmonic (natural or artificial) with a stopped note. The resonance of natural harmonics alights upon the viola in a particular and sonorous way, and generally, harmonics speak best when played with the bow placed towards the bridge, with good contact. However, the bow contact and speed that suit best for harmonics are slightly different to stopped notes and a double stop that combines these can be difficult to achieve with clarity, particularly in a soft dynamic.

The viola itself provides seemingly infinite variables that the performer must interact with in real time and ultimately negotiate, as the instrument is affected by varying conditions of climate and instrument set-up (bridge and sound post placement, age of strings, time since re-hair of the bow and so on). In my personal experience, I find that in moderately humid climates my viola feels more relaxed and open to play. In drier climates, it feels more tough and closed, and I have to work harder to get it to speak more cleanly (as I found in London). Through some experimentation with bow hair tension, I now play Cranes with my bow slightly less taut than usual, as I found this helped to control the soft dynamics and achieve seamless bow changes.

Although resonance is a priority for me when performing Cranes, if Illean wanted to achieve optimum resonance in every note, her pitch selection would reflect the intention through resonance maximisation. Naturally, there are certain notes that are more resonant on the viola depending on how the pitches align with the harmonic series of each four strings. Tuning down the II string in Part III changes this again, and playing double stops complicates the relationship between pitches for the performer even further. Therefore, resonance begins to have different properties, or qualities. Even if I attempt to maximise the resonance of every note in Cranes, there is a tension between what the instrument can do and what the score is asking it to do. And yet I believe that my instrument has learnt resonances through Cranes. There are combinations of pitches (single and double), especially in Part III, where I could initially feel resistance from my viola. What Cranes has taught me is to embrace inequality between different resonances of my instrument, and to welcome this as a presence in performance.

**Conclusion**

In examining elements of the temporal and resonance properties of the score of Cranes in the context of a performance, capturing the overall architecture of the work within an acoustic space is amongst the most crucial considerations of the performer. ‘Performing form’ triangulates the score, the performer and the performance space. Cook speaks of form as containing structures that draw “the listener into the compositional sphere” (Cook, 2007b, p. 248). However, he appears less willing to expand on the
performer’s role in conveying this through the “audible surface” (Cook, 2007b, p. 249). It is the performer who can manipulate how the form of a piece is conveyed in ways from the subtle through to the explicit, or for example in Cranes, exposing the fragmentation versus the continuity of line.

As discussed earlier, Illean has crafted a clarity into Cranes in its macro form (see Figure 3.1) and, within each Part, these are further delineated into audible micro-structures. Each Part and Interlude is defined, yet Illean maintains a continuity in the language that means the overall form is effortlessly conveyed even across these micro and macro levels. Consequently, this empowers me to manipulate the passing of time in how I choose to articulate the structure of Cranes, project the essence of the score and tell its story. Further to this, performing form is not fixed as it is contingent on the acoustic properties of the space. This was evident during the performance in London when instinct compelled me to allow the sound to linger after the first fragment for far longer than I had previously planned. As Pace (2009) notes, “a spontaneous approach to such parameters in live performance can be most fruitful” (p. 162).

The passing of time when performing Cranes feels like a growing, emerging ‘thing’ – it ebbs and flows almost as naturally as my own breath. There is an instinct to allow the sounds to be themselves; nothing needs to be made explicit to the audience; the sounds can materialise as a bed of moss. As the piece begins to take flight the detuning that occurs during Interlude B transforms into another sonic realm and time seems to slow down. In the final moments of Cranes, we come to the place where Illean has been leading us all along. It is an ethereal, disorientating and strikingly beautiful aural experience.

****

The performance is me simultaneously presenting everything that I have worked towards the betterment of the piece; with Lisa’s input, and a close consideration of her ideals, her aesthetic and with the score. But the variables in this moment are myself and my instrument, because, although I prepare all the elements beforehand – pitch, rhythm, dynamics, phrasing and so on – all these things are ultimately in my hands in the moment of performance and in front of a live audience. An instinct emerges in the performance arena. It is my essence; my absorption of everything I have gleaned from Lisa and Cranes – all the discussion, direction, background and thinking behind the piece. I sensed its presence as I finished the first fragment; it was telling me to let that first fragment linger, just a little longer in the air, let it gently come up to the audience, let them recall it before I give them the next fragment. Yet physically, I had trained myself in my preparation to not linger so long, and I recall a resistance that fought for a moment longer, enough that it unsettled me. There were nerves, and I was not allowing my instincts to emerge fully, instead trying to do everything as I had planned. The tipping point was a fingering blunder – it had never happened before in bar 30. With the mistake made, my body began to relax, my conscious will began to flex, and my instincts entered the space and I refocused.
Chapter 4 The performer as listener

“What sound are you conveying? What sound is conveying you?”
– Brandon Ross, (2009, p. 265)

Previous themes examined in this exegesis including roles, physicality, gesture and negotiation, intersect with the topic of this chapter: the performer as listener throughout the process of preparing a recording of Liza Lim’s Amulet (1992). This chapter differentiates between the objective listener (the audience) and the embodied listener (the performer). In the highly subjective experience of the performer, listening extends from the sonic towards the embodied, as tactile proximity, vibrations and sound generation affect and inform the continuity of musical decisions (as discussed in Chapters 1 and 3). The particularities of Lim’s score, in the context of preparing the score for recording, triggered my investigation of the relationship between sound generation and listening from the perspective of the performer. This chapter draws on my experience of listening as a performer and will investigate the processes, or ways of listening from this perspective that impacted on the two recordings of Amulet that accompany this exegesis.

The term objective listener stems from observations made in Rebelo, Green, & Hollerweger (2008), where a majority of research was found to be dedicated to a “culture of listening” that “delineates relationships between subject and object” (p. 16). I use the term objective listener; not to suggest that the listener is ‘objectifying’ the performer, but that the position of the ‘objective listener’ is from a different vantage point to that of the ‘performer as listener,’ whereby they are separate to sound in ways which the performer is not. As Rebelo et al., note, “The object (a sound) remains relatively unaffected by the subject (the listener)” (2008, p. 16). However, the position of the performer as an embodied listener means that not only are they affected by their listening, furthermore, they can react and then manipulate their next sound. It is only when the performer is listening back to a recording of themselves, that they are then in the position of the objective listener.

This chapter is accompanied by audio data that is intended to bring to life the listening experience in the context of recording in a studio. The first recording took place in December 2016 and is the primary focus of this chapter. The second recording took place in August 2017, and this will be discussed towards the chapter’s conclusion through a brief survey of experiences of listening. This chapter is not a performance analysis of these recordings. The goal of my analysis in this chapter is to identify the perspectives of listening that I had to navigate as I prepared Amulet for recording. Further to this, the chapter will identify how the performer might negotiate perspectives of sound through their listening. The knowledge gained from this analysis may provide insight into future approaches performers could take in preparing for recording, as well as for live performance projects. As examining the context of recording was a catalyst for this investigation, the recording environment will also be discussed. However, editing, microphone placement, and other technical and production aspects of recording processes will not be
covered as these do not pertain specifically to the listening experience being analysed and therefore fall beyond the scope of this chapter. Nevertheless, these aspects within recording contexts offer further potential research pathways.

Timeline overview and the listening ‘problem’

Building on my previous performance experience of several works by Lim (Hell (1992), Gothic (1995-6), Garden of Earthly Desire (1988-9)), I spent a concentrated period learning Amulet in early 2016. By the time I came to record it in December 2016, I had performed it twice, and had worked on the score with the composer, as well as with leading contemporary violist Geneviève Strosser in Darmstadt, Germany, in August 2016. I was encouraged by Strosser to play the work with greater physicality, which is a strong characteristic of Strosser’s own playing. Utilising this physical approach worked well for me. It brought a vitality to my interpretation, which was amplified by the strong tactile qualities that become present through the playing of the score. The piece requires me to move the bow around from the fingerboard to the bridge and the left-hand sliding with various kinds of finger pressure, a combination that lends to vulnerability in the sounds but also captures a kind of electricity and spark of sounds in transformation; the synchronicity of embodiment of the physical and sonic at play. Despite the decoupled activity that both hands attend to, Amulet feels beautifully fluid and natural to play. Becoming physically freer heightened my awareness of the impact the physical body has on sound generation, with my resulting sound immediately more alive and visceral. Utilising my entire body in the score had a stimulating effect, providing the music with an agency that made it more exciting to play. When I came to prepare Amulet for recording, however, the progress I had attained with the work physically became undone, as a distinction emerged between my expectations of performing Amulet live and capturing the work in a recording.

In imagining what qualities I wanted in a recording of Amulet, I tried to place myself in the perspective of the objective listener and focus on listening to the qualities of the sounds themselves. I prioritised the aural perception of the sonic outcomes and as a result, became disengaged from my body as it generated the sounds. As I imagined the objective listener’s experience, I focused in on the sounds and became sensitive to extra-musical noises that were present from my physical execution of the score. In response, I attempted to minimise these noises and play ‘cleaner.’ Reflexively, my body naturally moved less and consequently tightened, enough to dampen the vitality of the sounds I was generating. Yet this was not capturing the sounds I had imagined in my own interpretation. I felt vulnerable in this mode of listening; it was disorientating and the more I tried to listen intently the more complex the sounds became, and more foreign to my interpretive preferences. Occasionally, I was able to pull myself out towards a mode of global listening and re-capture the energy I had unlocked with Strosser. As I weaved in and out of different perspectives of listening, I found myself questioning and experimenting with sounds and how within this new terrain of listening, levels at which my hearing and feeling simultaneously interacted with one another affected the sonic outcomes.

Recommended listening: Track 4 Lim (2016)
The recording environment

Recalling Schick’s conceptual phase (see Chapters 1 and 2), before I began preparing Amulet for recording I considered my motivation and goal for recording this work. In the context of contemporary Western art music, there can be several reasons to record; for example, the composer or performer may require a recording for their own use or documentation. In conversation, Lim offered her perspective on recording, noting, “it’s part of the environment, the conversation, the way in which you can… send your music out there, be part of a wider conversation about it as well through this documentation” (Lim, 2017). Ultimately, I decided to record for two primary reasons; firstly, I wanted the composer to have a quality recording of the work for her own use; and secondly, to create access to my interpretation of Amulet for other performers (in particular violists who might be interested in this work) and potential listeners.26

Surprisingly, anticipating the recording studio environment became a catalyst for the conflicts that emerged in my listening experience. Mastering engineer Bob Ludwig (2009) describes an approach to recording music where in a “great” space, there is a “great” artist “trying to capture that performance as faithfully as possible, like making an aural photograph of something that already sounds wonderful” (p. 193). The analogy of the “aural photograph” is well suited, as there are many elements that must come together for the recording to be of good quality, and captured ‘on the day.’ The planning of this “aural photograph” is vulnerable to how the day unfolds in the studio, through the performer, the space, the instrument and their synergy with the score. In a performance with an audience, performers can anticipate how they will negotiate risk and reconcile decisions in the performance context, but then this plays out in real time in the space with the audience (see Chapter 3). In the recording studio the performer is not limited to the one “aural photograph,” and temporality is based more on resources. During recording, the linear nature of the score is not as fixed in its relationship to temporality as it is in performance; sections are repeated, phrases can be fractured, notes isolated and the ‘flow’ that exists in performance can be lost.

If a recording can have a specific goal or site projected (for example a ‘definitive’ recording, or fidelity to the score) this sets a context for the performer as they negotiate their relationship between the score and their perspectives of listening to the resultant sounds. Takemitsu articulates the performer’s role in negotiation and discretion:

In this way there is a dynamic change in the sounds as they are constantly reborn in new relationships. Here the role of the performer is not to produce sound but to listen to it, to strive constantly to discover sound in silence. Listening is as real as making sound; the two are inseparable. (1995, pp. 84-85)

Takemitsu’s observations are as relevant to the performer in live performance as they are in a recording studio. In the live performance context (as discussed in Chapter 3) considerations of resonance and

26 Indeed, this was my motivation for doing a studio recording rather than a concert recording of all the works that accompany this exegesis.
temporality, particularly with the performance space, form an integral part of the negotiations. However, in a recording studio the sound may be more close and intimate, manipulated by the studio’s surface materials and via the presence of several microphones. As Cox and Warner (2004) remind us,

the microphone hears neither what the ear hears nor how it hears. It is what Marshall McLuhan (2004) calls a technological prosthesis, an extension of the human nervous system that retrains the ear and triggers in us a new auditory awareness and a new set of auditory desires. (p. 113)

The way the microphone receives sounds cannot replicate the changes that occur as the performer listens. However, the performer’s experience of being surrounded by microphones can in some way contribute to the particular set of concentrated perceptions of listening that is created through the recording environment.

Prior to recording Amulet, I had already performed my interpretation of the work several times. Now this interpretation would be negotiated within the new context of a recording studio. The potential of the recording studio to fulfilling interpretive goals led to Glenn Gould’s infamous retirement from public performance. In the recording studio Gould sought to dedicate his talents towards attaining artistic goals beyond those that could be achieved in a concert situation with a live audience. The factors that drove Gould’s public exit from the concert hall include “his view that the live concert had been eclipsed by audio recording, which could produce perfect, ideal performances that highlighted the work itself rather than the performer and his or her virtuosity” (Cox & Warner, 2004, p. 115). Even though Gould sought to remove his presence from recordings so that the work could speak for itself, it could be argued that he did not succeed in that quest. The irony is that Gould’s recordings of J.S Bach’s Goldberg Variations are labelled ‘definitive’ for his interpretation, more than the work itself. For both the performer and the listener, a significant difference between listening to a live performance and a recording is how to negotiate between the performer’s ‘presence,’ their interpretation of the score, and the sense of the work as whole.

Another perspective on how ‘presence’ can operate within recordings can be found in Music after the Fall: Modern Composition and Culture since 1989 (2017). In this book, Rutherford-Johnson describes recording as a form of mediation, “the transmission of music from originator to listener… a factor in Western art music since the invention of musical notation itself” (2017, p. 26). This ‘mediation’ is found both within and outside the concert hall (p. 26). The mobile listening experience, “the Walkman effect” increased the acknowledgement that some styles of music are better suited to “mediation” than others. Lisa Illean, for instance, identified herself as a part of the Walkman generation, noting:

LI: I remember the shift from the ghetto blaster on the bus to the Walkman. During my adolescence, I spent a lot of time with headphones on, and so, this experience of music – which is an extremely intimate one when you are listening that closely – it is very different from one which is a communal shared experience in a space (whether it be a performance or another kind

---

27 For example, see https://www.gramophone.co.uk/editorial/bachs-goldberg-variations
of public music-making). And what I’m trying to think about more and more is how those two things can be quite different. So, if you make a recording of a piece, how the recording can actually be something that is a totally different thing to the live performance. Which is an intimate version, one of close, perhaps, solitary listening… As opposed to something which is written considering all the other aspects that come along with a body and a space and live performance. (Illean, 2017)

Here, Illean distills for me the tensions that operated in my preparation for recording as the distinctions between ‘presence’ and ‘physicality’ became blurred and prompted the conflict in my listening. I did not want my presence to overwhelm, interrupt, or disturb the recording outcome. However, if I was performing the work I naturally draw on my physicality to enhance my connection to the score, my instrument, the audience and the performance space. In the performance space my body is an integral part of the performance process, but in preparing for the recording, my body became an unwelcome distraction as it interfered with my perception of what sound clarity encompassed. The objective listener’s purely aural experience of a recording omits the visual information from a live performance that would contribute significantly to their overall listening experience. This distinction contributed to me reflexively changing the way I initiated sound. Feldman notes: “…it must be played before we can hear it. …One can’t just imagine sound as an abstraction, as not being related to someone pounding the piano or beating a drum. To play is the thin g. This is the reality of music” (2000, p. 24). I could not completely separate myself from generating the sounds, yet I experimented with physically minimising my ‘presence’ in them. Perhaps it was an attempt to abstract myself from the listener’s experience to see if it could appear as if the sounds were being generated without a person. Absence had crept back into my performance practice, and the effect was counter-productive.

Inside the process

From my perspective as performer, I approached the preparation for the recording by purposefully focusing on listening to the resultant sounds. A heightened awareness of the ‘extra-musical’ sounds developed, sounds that were naturally occurring through the mechanics of playing: the bow striking and departing the string, the left-hand on the fingerboard or catching neighbouring strings while juggling fingering combinations with left-hand pizzicato. These noise elements are ever-present but are heightened by the listening microphone in the recording process. Occasionally, my left-hand felt constrained as I grappled with minimising these ‘noises’ as much as possible, presuming their presence would interfere with the quality of the recording. As I shifted, my hand sliding up or down the fingerboard, these auxiliary sounds seemed to amplify from my hand, my left-hand technique descending into a volume range comparable to a herd of elephants, and with about as much grace. I developed a similar sensitivity to the sounds resultant from the bow; as the bow moved between the extreme positions of h sul pont (a molto sul ponticello effect that is harmonic rich) to a molto tasto position, all kinds of sounds were captured in transformation – a trademark of Lim’s writing. Whilst these sounds were intended, there was a high level of susceptibility to the bow being interrupted, with the sound catching in an undesirable way, particularly when entering or exiting silence. The variables of the bow (speed, contact, pressure) seemed to become
magnified with the margin for error increasing correspondingly. I recorded myself playing short excerpts to recreate the recording environment I would be in, and to listen back on the results of applying this perspective of listening. I perceived a direct sonic impact from my increased physical restraint on the vitality of the sounds I was producing, and a tension in the musical phrasing.

The experience of playing Amulet in this context led me into new territories of awareness. At first, I struggled to identify the ways this listening experience was unfolding and expanding. As Brandon Ross (2009) asks, “are there ways to listen to it [music] that do not involve the human ear?” (p. 262). In my preparation, I often felt caught in moving between perspectives in my own listening, both leading and being led by my ears and my body. The short test recordings done in my practice revealed a segregated listening: as I focused on the sounds themselves there was a countering physical response to minimise and restrict, so as to not interfere with the sound. In Chapter 1 I had, through my learning of Rushford’s score, developed a heightened awareness of touch and had been able to differentiate micro levels of pitch to white noise ratios. Building on this knowledge with Amulet, I could then draw on this awareness of touch to further embody the listening that was at work during this process. I began to experiment with different modes of listening; the ways in which my body listened concurrently to my ear, or in a different realm. From these, new perspectives might be born.

Perspectives of listening

“Yet, although every image embodies a way of seeing, our perception or appreciation of an image depends also upon our own way of seeing.”
– John Berger, (1972, p. 10)

My interpretation of Amulet was conflicted as perspectives of listening operated in complex and mysterious ways. This section will look at modes of listening from the perspective of the performer. As previously mentioned, within the literature on listening there is a bias towards the perspective of the other – the objective listener (see Adorno, 1976; Voeglin, 2010; Cox & Warner, 2004; Toop, 2004). Analytical models that use a score or recording as their primary resource are intended to inform the listener of a work’s structural content in order to enhance their musical experience (see Hanninen, 2004; Guck, 2006; Rink, 2002b; Toop, 2004). In these models, however, the performer is strangely absent, as their insights or knowledge of their intentions as the generator of the score into sound goes unacknowledged. Music analyst Catherine Costello Hirata edges somewhat closer to incorporating the activity of performer in her paper The Sounds of the Sounds Themselves: Analysing the Early Music of Morton Feldman (1996). Several times, Hirata appears to acknowledge that the playing sound is a contributor to how sounds can be

29 Musicologist Richard Toop uses the term ‘segregated listening’ in a music analysis context; here I apply the term within an embodied and subjective context (see Toop, ‘Informal Reflections on Simple Information and Listening’ in Ashby’s The Pleasure of Modernist Music (2004, pp. 223-249).
analysed. Hirata quotes Feldman on his desire for sounds to be “more direct, more immediate, more physical than anything that existed before” (1996, p. 6). The connection between the sonic and the physical, or “touch” as Feldman himself describes it, (Feldman, 2000, p. 30) is a step towards analysis capturing the experience of the listening performer. Hirata shares Feldman’s recollections, in his own words, of his piano teacher Madame Press: “The way that she would put her finger down, in a Russian way of just the finger. The liveliness of the finger. And produce a ‘b’ flat. And you wanted to faint” (Hirata, 1996, p. 11). Here, sound is expressed through the memory of it executed by touch. Feldman’s memory of his teacher draws attention to reflexive modes of listening that rely on physiological as well as aural perceptions of sound. Musical analysis would be enriched by incorporating more often a wider range of analytical perspectives of sound.

Salomé Voegelin (2010) proposes new ways of listening for the objective listener to build an awareness of their sonic sensibilities. Voegelin describes listening as “an interactivity, that produces and invents and demands of the listener a complicity and commitment that rethinks existing philosophies of perception,” (2010, p. 5) and “the consequences of a sonic perception and subjectivity as a philosophical experience” (pp. 10-11). When the listener is also the performer who is generating the sounds, this enables a physiological experience to listening. Singers might feel this even more keenly in an embodied way as their instrument is inside their body and therefore inseparable from it. In bringing this awareness, performers “bear on our notion of communication, language and shared meaning…” (Voegelin, 2010, p. 11). Furthermore, the performer’s position is particularly complicated by emotional factors, and the “meaning” that we give to sound-making is simultaneously affected by emotional responses to those sounds.

As in Voegelin’s description of Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s belief “phenomenological sense that comes out of sensation,” there exists the potential to expand on the listening experience (Voegelin, 2010, p. 11). This feels particularly relevant for the playing of Amulet, as there are particularities in the score where the senses of touch and hearing intersect. Lim’s music captures the music of sounds in-between – or, sounds in transition. In practice, it resembles lingering in the doorway of a sound and, as you play the sound you feel, just for a moment, it passing with you through the door. Lim reveals aspects to her approach to thinking about the role of sounds in “transformation” in her music:

LL: Forever since I’ve been composing, one aspect of that is the focus on… fairly detailed sonic transformation in my music… timbral transformations of various kinds, at a very granular level have been kind of worked within and written into my music and for me that is one way for entering into this highly attentive flow of listening.
I suppose another aspect is setting up situations for… in which the… a certain kind of instability explored, instability of the kinds of sounds that I like tend to be fairly unstable, different kinds of distortion, different kinds of harmonic rich types of sounds in which the… what comes out, the results are very much dependent on the performer’s navigation of those sounds, so one comes into an intimacy with the performer’s body through that, because it really, the sounds that you hear you really register, all the subtle shifts, the kinds of incredibly complex decisions that are going on all the time that the performer is working with and for me that gives a sort of liveliness, it gives a kind of… this aliveness I’m looking for in terms of the experience of sound. (Lim, 2017)
While Lim is speaking more generally about her music, *Amulet* is an identifiable example of the instability mentioned here. The properties of a string instrument are an ideal site for this sonic exploration, and they also possess capabilities of capturing the “aliveness” that Lim touches on. Jennie Gottschalk (2016) identifies certain musical works that “make the physical actions of the performer a fundamental point of tension or interest in their encounters with thresholds of audibility, capability, and raw physicality. For a performer to transcend these demands would be to miss the point. The drive and substance of the work lies at the point of physical encounter” (p. 77). This brings up the relationship of modes of listening to the score and its notation. Danish composer Simon Steen-Anderson describes the score as “a premise for action and sound” (quoted in Gottschalk, 2016, p. 77). This feels particularly relevant as Lim’s compositional language requires the performer to engage with her scores in ways that capture the “aliveness” of sounds. Although an early work, *Amulet* requires the same dedication from the performer in interacting with the score and their instrument, and in bringing out the visceral and gestural energy that can be transformed through the actions into sounds.

Figure 4.1: *Amulet*, excerpt from p. 4.

The score excerpt in Figure 4.1 is a particularly energetic passage in *Amulet* that I use to demonstrate the physical implications or demands from the notation to make the sounds come ‘alive.’ The left-hand generates some small glissando amongst fixed pitches, but in the right-hand there are bow scrapes (arrow pointing up or down) and arrhythmic circular movements (in addition to the usual up and down direction), whilst simultaneously changing bow pressure to observe both the dynamics and create quick changes in timbral differences from *sul pont* (bridge) to *sul tasto* (fingerboard) as well as distortion (marked with a cross). By the time the ear has heard the sonic result, the body is already on to generating the next action, (Voegelin’s “sense that comes out of sensation,” p. 11). Sound is continually in motion, as Voegelin notes: “It is an invisible act, a dynamic of production that is not interested to linger and hear its outcome. It is perpetually on the move, making time and tenses rather than following them” (2010, p. 14). In being the

---

30 To listen to this score example in Figure 4.1, see Track 4 (Lim 2016) at 4:58, and Track 5 (Lim 2017) at 4:22.
generator of sound, I am in the position of being able to immediately respond to or mediate the sound. Fine or major adjustments in either hand impact the sound. String players continually do this with several standard parameters of playing (such as intonation, shifting, vibrato, bow techniques) that can be found in traditional repertoire, but contemporary repertoire brings these elements into sharper relief.

As Lim described herself as wanting to experience “aliveness” of sound (Lim, 2017), similarly John Cage (1973) observed that, “New music: new listening. …[is] just an attention to the activity of sounds” (p. 10). The differences of string technique parameters within a contemporary art music context, as in Lim’s score, are such that the normalised techniques are expanded in such complex and simultaneous ways to create an “activity of sounds” that the variables present a multitude of pathways to choose from and navigate. Just as the score is a ‘premise for action and sound’ (Gottschalk, 2016, p. 77), the score’s function also becomes a tool for modes of listening where sounds and action coexist.

During the performer’s listening experience, perception of function in relation to sound, and more specifically sound generation is vulnerable. As Voegelin notes:

> Sound invites the body into experience and reciprocally makes the object physical. Listening to sound is where objectivity and subjectivity meet: in the experience of our own generative perception we produce the objectivity from our subjective and particular position of listening, which in its turn is constituted by the objectivity of the object as a prior moment of hearing, subjective and particular. (2010, p. 14)

In practice, there are many ‘objects,’ namely the body in contact with the instrument and the sounds that it generates as the sonic response, which are pursued by the performer in adherence with the score. As Voegelin mentions, there is further scope for the performer to pursue a physiological listening: “The sense of place is its sensation, which has to be brought to life in a sensory-motor action of listening” (2010, p. 21).

In exploring the listening relationship between hearing and feeling, Ross asks:

> If we listen/hear with more than our ears, [which we do: we perceive sound with our entire resonant cavity (body), and the skeletal framework that defines its contour] there must be incalculable subtleties to the experience and interpretation of the message sent and received. (2009, p. 262)

The feedback loop for learning Rushford’s *Untitled* (2012) depicted in Chapter 1 (see Figure 2.7) also operates here in the context of engaging with the recording process. In particular, it is the information that is being exchanged and developed through the embodiment and aural phases that are pertinent to this listening experience. The performer-specific listening experience is so personal because it completely informs the decisions we undertake in our interpretation of musical works. Music analyst Marion Guck notes that “Hearing is not limited to audition; it also includes somatic and physical responses to sound, in other word, feeling and movement. I might say that we hear with our whole bodies, not just our ears” (Guck, 2006, p. 202). Here, Guck identifies what became distorted in my listening experience, as, by
restricting my own body, I was no longer able to access channels of information from the bodily perspective of listening. Guck also observes that “Musical experience happens in the negotiation between an individual’s sensibility and some music’s affordances. It happens in the individual’s imagination, additionally bringing sensations of action and intensity to the sounds” (2006, p. 206). This could be observed during a test recording made during practice.

**Sonic example**

To illustrate this listening process, the following section relates my response to a test recording made twelve days prior to the studio recording. A Zoom H4n recording device was used in close proximity to the instrument to replicate a recording environment as a site for listening.

I start from the beginning of the score, stopping and restarting several times, sometimes getting through a few bars, sometimes restarting after one note. I am constantly testing, listening for a certain kind of sound for each moment – the score’s sonic answer. I am switching from a macro to a micro level of listening depending on the different needs of the score.

That first glissando – to get that left-hand to move at the right speed sets up the entire first phrase.

(0:17) Not quite. Left-hand too slow. What’s my bow doing? INTERGRATE. Use the body.

(0:22) I think that’s it. I’m using the bow to temper my left-hand to find the right speed to depart the starting note. But those pizzicato – can I get them louder as Liza wanted? (0:39) I try again.

I know what I want but it’s not quite right and I gasp in frustration (0:54) when the last left-hand pizzicato accidently collects the I string.

I test different bow pressures, different speeds of glissando departing from the first note, different bow speeds, testing and searching ways to get clarity and reliability in the left-hand pizzicato. I remind my body to initiate the bow as this is where I am trying to manipulate the sound most of all; the right combination of bow and speed will create an environment for everything (left- and right-hands and the body) to operate freely and for the sounds to activate.

(1:35) The bow pressure is too light and it slides over the bridge and I restart in breath as it’s feeling good – the body is working and function is operating in sync with the viola and the sounds being produced feel right. Even the slight distortion of the bow transition to molto sul tasto (2:11) doesn’t faze me, I almost embrace it.

This sonic example and reflection demonstrate the reflexivity of the activity of listening, and the changes that occur during the course of listening. John Berger’s seminal BBC series *Ways of Seeing* (1972) was influential in the popular understanding of the visual image and there are many parallels that can be drawn between the ways we see things and the way we listen to sounds. Berger notes:
this seeing which comes before words...is not a question of mechanically reacting to stimuli...We only see what we look at. To look is an act of choice. As a result of this act, what we see is brought within our reach – though not necessarily within arm’s reach. To touch something is to situate oneself in relation to it...We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves. Our vision is continually active, continually moving, continually holding things in a circle around itself, constituting what is present to us as we are (1972, pp. 8-9).

Similarly in music, listening is “an act of choice” and is in constant motion. When it is the performer who is both generating the sounds and listening, then there is a different and perhaps deeper level of relationship at work. The performers’ response to the sounds they generate makes their perception multidimensional and layered in complexity and, as Voegelin observes, “In that sense the [sonic] thing is intersubjective and only starts to sound in the ears of the thing that is the body encountering it” (2010, p. 19). The performer as listener may try to identify sounds objectively, however the subjective self will always be present and influence the sounds being generated.

For the ‘performer as listener,’ a continuous feedback loop of sound generation and listening is in constant motion. The performer is reacting to themselves, and while decisions are always moving between the ‘doing’ and ‘hearing,’ neither activity can be accurately captured. This echoes the “uncertainty principle” of quantum theory, in which; “…the more accurately you try to measure the position of the particle, the less accurately you can measure its speed, and vice versa” (Hawking, 2005, p. 90). Similarly, as the performer generates sound, their act of listening alters their perception of that sound. Through experience the performer learns how to anticipate what sound their physical action will generate with an increasingly higher degree of accuracy. While the rate of “uncertainty” decreases in their listening, it can never be eliminated. Notable listening practitioner Pauline Oliveros (2000) derived the concept of Quantum Listening from her developed practice of Deep Listening. Deep Listening, Oliveros explains, “is listening in every possible way to everything possible to hear, no matter what you are doing.” (2000, p. 37) it “involves going below the surface of what is heard, expanding awareness to the whole field of sound, while finding focus...” (p. 39) and is “an exploration of the relationships among any and all sounds” (p. 39). Beneath this umbrella term, Oliveros differentiates two modes of listening; focal and global (p. 37). Any listener (the objective listener and the performer) is capable of listening using these two modes. In Deep Listening, the “listening effect” is “what is heard is changed by listening and changes the listener” (p. 37). Subsequently, Oliveros states Quantum Listening as the listener becoming aware that they are listening, defining this mode as: “listening simultaneously in as many ways as possible – changing and being changed by the listening” (p. 37). In the context of the performer as listener, this has profound consequences for the simultaneous acts of listening and playing; the changes occurring in through their role as ‘listener’ as well as the changes responding to the sounds being generated through themselves as the ‘performer.’

Oliveros (2000) references notable ethnomusicologist Mantle Hood’s proposal in 1990 for the quantum theory of music. Oliveros mentions in particular the developing formula for Hood’s theory as being
contingent on participation. At this level, participation goes beyond the objective listener and encompasses all aspects of practice, including making. In this context:

Quantum Listening is listening in all sense modes to or for the least possible differences in any component part of a form or process, while perceiving the whole and sensing change. Quantum Listening simultaneously creates and changes what is perceived. The perceiver and the perceived co-create through the listening effect. … This creates potential, cultivates surprises, opens the imagination, and approaches the edges of perception…. (Oliveros, 2000, p. 43)

Participation includes the performer as listener, the sounds being generated in constant flux and perpetuating changes made both to the sounds and the listener. For the performer as listener, these are constantly being negotiated, but they also rely on the performer to move between “focal and global” attention.

These modes of listening became for me, a way to consider sound through both physiological and aural listening. Within the roles of performer as listener, the flexible but complex series of processes that are occurring from action to sound can be given greater attention once the score material has been learnt. Figure 4.2 attempts to capture the multi-layered and permeable approach that the performer as listener draws towards integrating the roles and activities (sound generation and listening) operating, and re-connect with a methodological application of perspective of listening. The role of performer as listener is enacted through participation and exploration. It is at the intersection of these layers where a performer is ultimately seeking to hear their sound. This is done through a continuing cycle of generating sounds and listening to those sounds, whilst moving from focal to global attention.
Figure 4.2: The ‘performer as listener’ cycle of engagement. ‘F’ denotes focal attention, ‘G’ for global attention.

Drawing on Oliveros’ themes of exploration and participation, the performer as listener can and should attempt to move between focal and global attentions. This allows listening to remain an embodied activity, occurring through small, regular and persistent encounters that, with each experiential repetition, are sonically navigated as the body learns what sounds derive from particular physical acts or gestures. Separating this interactive listening activity was helpful in that it made me realise to what extent my body is participating in listening itself, and how I am physically connected to the sounds that I generate in minute and magical ways.

In reflecting on my own listening experience of preparing Amulet, I identified aspects of Oliveros’ modes of listening as being present; the more I listened, the more the sounds changed. When I focused in on the sounds themselves, my listening practice was overwhelmed by the distorting and disorientating effect on
my perception of sounds. At times I was not immediately able to respond intuitively to manipulate the sounds as I wanted. It was difficult at that time to sustain this mode of listening for a long period of time, as I struggled to gain perspective on how move forward. I needed to find ways to remind myself of the strategies I had learnt with Strosser and draw on the physical memory that I had previously embodied and learnt. To move ‘listening’ perceptions and to have a ”global” approach to listening felt like a more holistic and embodied experience of listening wherein the hearing and feeling operated in unison. When I drew from this perspective of listening I was able to retain some of the details I had gained in the focal listening processes and bring them into the physical experience of playing and listening to Amulet. Extending my experience with learning Rushford’s score, the relationship between embodiment and mental was operating more specifically within the sonic realm of executing Lim’s score. In preparing Amulet for recording, I learnt that my body was listening in connected and intuitive ways that were more immediate than those in which my ear could respond.

Listening as a methodology is not just limited to score-based instructions, but also to developing one’s own sound. As Ross (2009) proposes, “Consider what it might be to play one’s sound, that if one could perceive the sound of one’s Self, and convey it as an audible emanation, what sound would that be?” (p. 263). Building on Ross’ question, the performer’s perception of their sound – as a reflection and integration of their sense of self – opens up exciting possibilities for their performance and listening practices. As Voegelin notes, “the process is emotional, binding and contingent” (2010, p. 25). The relationship built between the performer, their instrument, and the embodiment of playing and generating sounds encapsulates the participatory and exploratory aspects of Oliveros’ listening practices; to listen is to explore.

Conclusion

“After speaking comes listening. And after listening?”

– Liza Lim (Sirota, 2017)

In addition to the recording environment creating a space for conflicts within my role of performer as listener, influences that stemmed from my imagined, idealised version of Amulet were also present. Treating a score like Amulet (and Untitled) as a readable text is difficult when the notation cannot indicate to you exactly what the resultant sounds will be. A leap of faith is required as the composer guides the performer through the notation towards a sound-world for the performer to explore, build on, and create sonic possibilities. Cusick (1994) describes the “mind/body problem” where “the focus on music’s fixed, textlike qualities – a focus that sometimes seems contrary to my own musicality” (p. 10). My “mind/body problem” was that I let my analytical mind interfere with, rather than inform my body in tuning into my instincts. What I then perceived in Lim’s score as ‘text’ in relation to my fidelity to the score, changed as I
navigated my way through different perspectives of listening, just as the sounds themselves changed the closer I listened to them.

Listening in a focused way initially gave me the sense that my execution of the work was tidier, adding a certain clarity to the material coming through. Yet this sense changed when I discovered my playing had become stifled, and my interpretation lacklustre. Focal listening still did not help me to replicate the way the piece existed in my mind, my ear, my body. My interpretation of Amulet lay in all three areas but I was not fully utilising on one key element: my body. Composer and performer Jennifer Walshe observes that “Perhaps we are finally willing to accept that the bodies playing the music are part of the music, that they’re present, they’re valid and they inform our listening whether subconsciously or consciously” (Walshe, 2016). What altered my perspectives of listening was an awareness and acceptance of the role my body played in listening. A more physical engagement with Amulet made my interpretation and playing of the score a little risky – I didn’t necessarily become wilder in my playing by any means, but, as things moved more, there was greater risk of losing control. However, the energy of the work as a whole was so much more exciting; I felt freer and engaged with the score in a more natural way and some harmonic-dependent phrases certainly flowed much better. Riding close to the bridge on the viola for a large part of Amulet comes with its risks too, and the bow has slid over the bridge completely more than once during a live performance. Risk, negotiated with the score and my body, was mediated through the act of listening.

When it came to editing the tracks I recorded, I was then in the position of the objective listener, although listening with the memory of the physical response of playing the work. Gould suggests that the performer as editor;

is no longer compartmentalized. In a quest for perfection, he sets aside the hazards and compromises of his trade. As an interpreter, as a go-between serving both audience and composer, the performer has always been, after all, someone with a specialist’s knowledge about the realization or actualization of notated sound symbols. It is, then, perfectly consistent with such experience that he should assume something of an editorial role. (Gould, 2004, p. 118)

In listening to the edits I can hear where I was focused on the aural listening, aiming for this ‘perfect’ take. There is a tension in the sound that is present. I shared my conundrum with Lim, here in an extract from our conversation:

PG: It’s really interesting to hear takes where I was trying to be more attaining that level of perfection, and then takes where I tell myself to remember to use the body, to try and disengage from such a small locale from where the sound was being made to a more holistic feeling. Those takes have a lot more energy movement momentum, they might have less… they might have more imperfections so to speak, but the energy is so good I choose those takes.
LL: Of course
PG: It shows the aliveness.
LL: Absolutely, I mean that’s always the balancing act, you want something that isn’t so bloodless, that you just think – ok – it’s such a pale representation of the music because after all music… in the live performance is absolutely ephemeral… that’s its absolute beauty and melancholy, and
then when you have a recording it’s a fiction, you’re creating a momentary… you’re capturing that momentary picture, that ephemerality in a certain way, but you’re really making choices about that representation… The absolute vast majority of the time we hear recorded music over the live performance so for sure it’s something to take care of. (Lim, 2017)

Oliveros’ developed practice of Deep Listening and Quantum Listening offer tangible approaches and methods for the performer as listener. In the recording environment, however, these listening activities must be mediated just as they are for a live performance context. To shift perceptions of listening can be difficult, but it enables the performer to draw on the strengths of each perception, and unify the knowledge gained from both to produce sounds that are engaged, as well as an interpretation that can better represent the performer’s goal of fidelity to the score entwined with their own artistic voice. Listening is a highly subjective activity and as performers actively engage with a listening practice their own sound and original approach can become more empowered and defined.

Afterword: a post-recording reflection

Several months after I recorded Amulet in December 2016, I was asked to record some works for a podcast to be distributed by ABC Classic FM (Australian Broadcasting Corporation). I decided to approach this recording differently to my earlier experience in 2016, that is, to interpret Amulet in the same spirit that I do with an audience in a live performance context. The recording was in a much larger space, the Iwaki Auditorium, in which the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra rehearse. Having performed and recorded in this space previously, I was prepared for the heightened resonance of the space in contrast to the small studio where I recorded in 2016. This made it easier to imagine an audience present, and so during the recording I tried ‘performing’ Amulet as if there was an audience there. I spread myself out more, making sure I physically felt freer in the space. I also decided to try and record larger sections to maintain the overall arc of the piece and sustain a greater intensity and energy in the sounds. I took risks, and so paid off. I embraced the vulnerabilities and transformations within the sounds that Lim’s compositional language exposes. But more importantly, I embraced my body and its perspective of listening; what my body feels and hears and how it responds to the sounds I generate – making decisions faster than I can cognitively process, and before the objective listener hears anything.

Perhaps the most telling difference between the two recordings – hereafter referred to as ‘2016’ and ‘2017’ – is the 43 second duration that separates them. As already discussed in this chapter, the ‘2016’ (7:12) recording that occurred during the listening ‘problem,’ is staggeringly slower than ‘2017’ (by almost 10% at 6:29) for a work that is approximately 7 minutes in duration. Whilst both recordings open with a similar pace (the first page in both recordings hover within a few seconds of each other around the 1:00 mark), the difference in vitality is most obvious in the centre of the work (around 2:30-3:30). Care is taken in different ways; ‘2016’ allows much more space for the sounds to form and open, resulting in the phrasing to be lacklustre and the aliveness of the sounds be somewhat dampened, when compared to ‘2017.’ In

---

**Recommended listening: Track 5 Lim (2017)**
the latter recording I took more opportunities to attack the beginning of sounds with more focus, and the strings responded with vibrancy. I observe the circular bowing as heavier and more laboured in ‘2016.’ In ‘2017’ passages where I ride right on the bridge for the h sul pont, these have an increased spectrum of partials, most likely because I was freer in the bow arm. A particular example of difference is in ‘2016’ (1:49) a gesture is laboured, but the same moment in ‘2017’ (1:39) I move quicker through the phrase and it sounds more exciting, more gestural and almost improvisatory. My more relaxed and embodied use of physicality and gesture is what I ‘hear’ as the profound difference between the two recordings: it impacts the relational energy between the changing timbres, and this is noticeably lost in ‘2016.’ The ‘2017’ recording feels more physical, gestural, and less nervous about the vulnerability or unreliability of particular technical passages, but seems to embrace movement and fluidity and the sounds respond to the lighter touch. As Jennifer Walshe concludes in her treatise ‘The New Discipline:’ “it’s not too late for us to have bodies” (Walshe, 2016).
There are seven steps in every project:

1. Awareness
2. Resistance
3. Submission
4. Work
5. Reflection
6. Courage
7. The Gift

— Marina Abramović (Rose, 2016)
Interlude B Clarifying my creative role

During the course of this research project I realised that the ways in which I thought about music, and the ways in which I approached playing – “doing” – music did not always align. As I grew to understand how fixed preconceptions of authority and authenticity in the score were impacting my performance practice, I observed influences on my practice that either challenged these perceptions, or encouraged them to persist. A tension grew between the constructs I submitted to and the musical instincts I held. As I undertook analysis and reflected on my experiences with the works included in this exegesis, I found that what connected them was a persistent questioning of my creative role as a performer and interpreter, and that I needed to examine this role in the wider context of music-making. This second interlude prior to the Conclusion of this exegesis, serves to address those issues that arose during the course of the research that became pivotal to the transformations occurring in my practice. Although I began drawing my own conclusions as to how I could negotiate the composer-performer-score and score-performer-performance paradigms without losing my own voice, this interlude draws on responses from the composers of the four works included in this exegesis. Their thoughts were sought to clarify my thinking and further my understanding of the score’s role in conjunction with that of the performer.

One outcome of the research has been seeking ways to expand outwards from my musical training, and break away from a practice that is dependent on the work-concept and which submits to hierarchies of authority through the composer and the score. This process of a transformation of attitudes has occurred gradually through the course of this research and is still being negotiated in my performance practice today. Early on, these behaviours and habits restricted my creativity in performance practice and isolated roles present in my practice in fixed forms. These behaviours and habits were exposed, in the context of the three commissioned works, as being fundamentally flawed, where the totality of immersion moved beyond the score to encompass to integrate notation, interpretation, and interactions in my creative process. When the authority of a work is given over to the composer and the score, it negates the contribution and potential that a performer can bring to a work. As hierarchies and past behaviours were broken down, I felt confident in embracing a creative process that was more fluid; examining how my interpretation of musical works could unify a true reading of the score that represents the composer’s vision, but that is strengthened by the knowledge and presence I bring to each work. Collaborative creation unites a work in all its forms and processes; composition, notation and performance.

My own informal observations of the presence of ‘old-school’, pan-European influences in my musical training are echoed by the esteemed improviser, composer and academic George E. Lewis who also observed, “Once in schools, however, an aware improviser cannot fail to notice the lack of experience with alternative models of musical thinking that many students bring to university. In my experience, students who have been extensively trained in the European-based musical practices and histories that continue to dominate academia are particularly susceptible to a range of prejudices regarding other musical forms, which often accompany the folkways of European musical pedagogy and its American extensions” (Lewis, 2000, p. 79).
Fluidity in practice

In my conversation with the composers, we discussed the presence of ‘authorities,’ the role of the score and the performer, and the problem with trying to pinpoint or infer the existence of a singular meaning of a work. As a performer and composer, Rushford identifies with all the elements here;

JR: And so often, I feel like, being someone who has commissioned work myself I’ve had this problem where I’ve been slaving away over some crazy rhythm or something and then I go to the composer and they say ‘oh it doesn’t really matter,’ and you want to strangle them but at the same time I’ve been there too, and it’s this thing where… it’s easy for the performer to think the composer has written something very specific sort of without thinking through it or they’re being too aloof about it. But in fact it’s not that what they’ve written isn’t important or isn’t meaningful or well thought out, it’s just that it’s not the only way that they imagined the piece would sound. So… even if a score’s really specific I feel like there’s so much in it that can move and shift and grow and there’s an elasticity in the way you read things. And I feel like we’ve come that… we’ve sort of approached the piece that way more and more… But I think it’s that danger because of… authorial properties of the score to think that somehow any deviation from the score is some kind of failure to reach an idea. (Rushford, 2017)

I find that the level of complexity in a score is often relational to how much I treat the score as ‘text,’ the more detail there is in a score, the more information I have towards achieving the intentions of the composer. This perhaps is what made Rushford’s piece so integral in my own personal journey through the research project, because my experience of the work was like a tipping point in my practice. Untitled was full of layered instructions which required me to simultaneously execute complex material. However, there was also a lot of fluidity in the score that I could not see at first because of the demands the piece entailed. It took repeated visits to the score to begin to see the possibilities that Rushford had actually given me.

Liza Lim explicitly acknowledges the performer’s role in the creation of a work; that the score and the composer are dependent on the knowledge that the performer brings. For her, ‘creation’ is layered through the processes of composition, notation, interpretation and performance. This layering of the ‘work’ therefore enables many ‘truths’ – if any are intended – to emerge within the work holistically and not just with the score and the composer.

LL: …at a really fundamental level I don’t think I’m the only one that owns, makes and has authority over… the thing called the piece of music that also has my name on it. So, at a fundamental level I think that the music is not made by myself and the score the music is made through a whole series of interactions. And I take that very seriously because I suppose I’ve been very much influenced in my thinking also from aspects of ecological thinking and anthropological research which is that knowledge is not something that’s transmitted from one location to another. I don’t believe knowledge can be, let’s say, transmitted it can only be… it’s like one object to another object but… I would prioritise the whole process by which the so-called receiver let’s say in this model of transmission must take on, develop, grow and… make and re-make that knowledge for it to even be anything. So, I think that transmission model [of]; here’s the composer who’s the creator who hands over the score as the interface to the performer I mean it really misses out the whole… the really important stage I think which is the way in which the performer makes the music…in an absolutely fundamental way and that the performer… actually creates the knowledge, has to create the set of skills, has to create the whole kind of interpretative relationship at a really sort of… in a very
creative way has to invent has to make a whole series of decisions to actually make the music. I don’t think it exists without any of that.

…I really reject that… that firstly that I know everything about the music that I supposedly make… or that it can even be understood in that way because I think the whole thing about art is that it’s absolutely non-totalisable. You can’t know every interpretation, you can’t know every meaning you can’t know every possibility of what it is and for me there’s that aspect of inaccessibility… and for me that’s the magic, that’s the mystery that’s really, really important. (Lim, 2017)

What was perhaps lacking in my practice prior to the research, was a fluidity between these processes. At the very least, I was dependent on the composer directing the process, whereas now I feel more equipped to recognise alternatives methods to process and collaboration, and that I can be more conversational and expressive in my participation. I also now feel encouraged to claim a creative space to be a part of a work’s process of “creation” through performance.

Lim’s expression of co-creation between the performer, composer and the score presents an exciting model for how performers can approach not only newly written works, but also extant ones. In formal musical training, are there “pedagogical attitudes” (to borrow from Gritten, 2012) that insinuate fundamental differences between how performers approach the interpretation of repertoire that is old, compared with that which is new? Or has the performer always been involved in the creation of the score and history writes out that part of the process? It would be interesting to observe differences and similarities between performance practice models across a spectrum of musical genres. For example, one could compare a practice that is rooted in Western classical repertoire, with a contemporary performance practice that focuses on newly created works, where the performer is involved in the creation of the score from the point of commission.

In conversations with Gifford, Illean, Lim and Rushford, I gained an insight into the composer’s perspective of navigating the composer-performer-score paradigm. Gifford expressed feeling solitary in her practice; “alone, but not lonely” (Gifford, 2017). Yet, despite thinking of the composition role as enacted in isolation, Gifford still acknowledges the interaction needed as a composer moves from working in solitude to interacting with a performer via the score:

HG: It can never be a dual activity. The composer has to work true to her instincts then passes it to you. And then you work on it true to your instincts. So it’s strange, it’s an interaction. … You’ve got to do it in solitude… You want the freedom to work on something, work over and over and over something. It’s like living together really. (Gifford, 2017)

A fluidity between practices allows the participants to shift between working in different contexts. Illean further observes that, as a composer, “what you make is not in isolation and it’s not just one voice, it has these layers; what you bring and then what the listener brings, the context of the performance… the listening experience…” (Illean, 2017). Illean touches on the presence of all these layers which make the subsequent creative processes undertaken by the performer complex to navigate. Performers and composers require the space to be alone in their practice in order to complete certain tasks that
contribute to a performance (as Finnissy expressed to Kanga in Chapter 2). However, the danger is when an individual becomes locked in solitude, unable to see their own work in a global performative context. In Chapters 1 and 4, the examples of my working on the scores by Rushford and Lim demonstrated the consequences for a performer of remaining too long in an intense period of internalising the score. The analyses undertaken revealed the importance of moving beyond the initial necessary embodiment of the score’s mechanics and mediating the score out towards to the composer, performance space and audience.

Reflecting on my interactions with Rushford made me wonder if the isolation I felt in my learning process was exacerbated by feeling unable to go to Rushford with questions. The closeness of premiering Untitled to commissioning Gifford (see Figure 1.1, p. 28) meant that I was still carrying that experience with me, yet Gifford’s approach was so different that I immediately had to respond to the conversations with her that took place. I can identify that in our early interactions I was hesitant to influence Gifford, but that I relaxed into a back-and-forth dialogue that grew throughout the course of Gifford’s writing of Desperation. I came to really enjoy our interactions and was able to draw on this experience with Illean. With both Gifford and Illean, the close relationships I built with them grew out of their work and our interactions, which meant that any isolation never became too oppressive because of the strength of dialogue between us, as performer and composer, had been established early on.

The shifting score

At the beginning of my research I treated the score as the access point to the composer’s vision. The score had represented both the beginning and the end of the work, rather than an opening, or even an on-going dialogue between performer and score. In my performance practice I observed a tension between what I thought I should do with the score and what my instincts told me I could do with the score. The direction of my focus was so much on the composer that often I didn’t acknowledge how my presence was impacting the sounding of the score and what possibilities existed through engaging in a dialogue. As Goehr notes, “Our aesthetic appreciation of works is mediated through our experiences of performances and scores” (2007, p. 3). It was during the course of the research and through my experiences with the four works that my ideas of what a score represented began to shift. I perceived a reorientation of how the roles of composer, performer and score contribute to not just to the creation of a new work, but to the creation of a new performance of a work, allowing a more holistic and integrative process to evolve.

Goehr’s tracing of the work-concept (originating circa 1800) identified the limits that the operations of Werktreue posed for performers. My previous assumptions, which circled around attaining the ‘true’ or ‘correct’ version of the score, negated the performer in the creative process. In the composer-performer-score paradigm I felt in constant negotiation between all the elements to find the ‘truth’ of a score.
However, the changes in my performance practice have occurred as the idea of the ‘truth’ of a score becomes less fixed and recedes to the extent where it is no longer the goal. The score is reconciled as a tangible link to an ephemeral ideal that never fully disappears, but that also provides a point for departure as I bring it into the sonic realm. Goehr articulates well the problem that I may still struggle with into the future; “How much variation can there be in interpretive gesture before fidelity is undermined?” (2007, p. 273). Yet in practice, fidelity to the score and work can occur in multiple ways. Because of my dedication towards the composer and their score, I will always retain aspects of being ‘faithful’ to the score. But, in most cases, the composer has become reconciled to, and does give permission for, their score to be an ‘object’ to be carried forward. Rushford shares some thoughts about the ways in which the performer and the score are able to shift:

JR: …just like the score is layered and it’s shifting focus all the time with those layers, the way we sort of psychologically imagine music or we perform music I feel like we’re always shifting in those ways. And maybe it’s not that linear thing like you said that… you have some kind of score devotion and then you morph into some freedom from it or it becomes more internalised… maybe that problem of the score is there always but you feel more comfortable being able to shift between; not worrying about the score and just worrying about the sound, and then worrying about the score or — worrying’s not a great word, but — these kinds of shifting of focus. If you can feel comfortable in being allowed to sort of shift through those things constantly, in whatever way, then that for me is the progression… That’s really exciting for me. It’s not necessarily a progression from score to performance to… whatever. It’s about being comfortable in that ever-shifting paradigm. So I think this score in particular is kind of tricky in that way, because it may not let you, I mean it’d be great if it did… it may not ever disappear from your focus, but at the same time I hope you can feel like more and more that you have an ability to shift your focus on it or distance from it, or proximity to it. (Rushford, 2017)

The way I now see a score feels very different to the fixed ideas I held prior to the research. I feel more patient in the different stages of my relationship to the score, where I am working towards an embodied knowing of it that I am able to then move beyond the pages; but also in drawing on the knowledge I gain through my interactions with the composer and what I have within my skill-set. Because each score is different, and because each composer is different, it’s then a matter for me to find the line in each piece where I take the information that is present through the composer and the interface of the score and merge it with the musical ideas and instincts I hold as a performer/interpreter into something that can exist beyond the score.

Reflecting on my learning experience of *Untitled* (see Chapter 1) showed me that I was initially hesitant to experiment in my approach to learning complex scores. My approach would be very different now. Through revisiting the score and seeking further interactions with Rushford we began to build a more integrated process and this enabled an exciting period of progress on the work.

PG: I think for the premiere I went about the score as if there was an ideal. And through my research I’ve become a bit more, not playful, but more… open, creative with how I go about these pieces now. Which I’m… just relieved, it just sits so much better for me to be like that.
JR: Yeah, you should integrate it like that. And also, there's a pressure that we put on ourselves when we commission work to feel like there should be a connection immediately because somehow it should be personally tailored and if it doesn’t feel like there’s a connection then we panic. But it’s like you have to find what makes it connect for you.
PG: Well I think my connection was to you before the score. And now it’s just kind of merged with you and the score.

Untitled has continued to grow for both Rushford and myself, allowing the work to build an identity, and for me to build a performance practice of the work. Reflecting on this experience gave me the confidence to approach the other works featured in this exegesis with a more assertive awareness to the creative process.

Inside the performer’s process
A practice in which authorities and ‘truths’ are fixed within the composer’s vision, and where the sole access point to this ‘vision’ is the score, creates a difficult context for interpretation to take place. I had locked myself out of the creative space, handing over creative and cultural power to the composer and the score. My personal practice was lacking in the essential properties of experimentation and play (see Tomlinson, 1998). The moment of performance was the only realm I could still have some voice because, in that arena, I was making the piece sound and I had to commit myself to the temporality and ephemerality of the music in the performance space. Performance, then, became a site for discovery and freedom, and a starting point for claiming my own space within the work. Once I recognised this was the space where I felt able to express my voice, I then tried to work backwards into finding a similar space as I constructed my interpretation.

Rediscovering what the possibilities of interpretation mean for my practice came out of the investigations of each experience in this exegesis. In many ways, my reluctance to ‘interpret’ stemmed from the diminished value I placed on myself in the creative process. I didn’t want to interpret a work to the extent that the composer’s voice was lost or compromised. Sontag decries how “the modern style of interpretation excavates, and as it excavates, destroys; it digs ‘behind’ the text, to find a sub-text which is the true one,” (1966, p. 6) and argues that; “In some cultural contexts, interpretation is a liberating act. It is a means of revising, of transvaluing, of escaping the dead past. In other cultural contexts, it is reactionary, impertinent, cowardly, stifling” (Sontag, 1966, p. 7). Here Sontag touches on my difficulty with interpretation: if my interpretations cannot reach a ‘truth,’ can they still be honourable, tangible, and transformative?

While Sontag is talking about interpretation in primarily visual arts, there are parallels that intersect with music, and possibly even more specifically post-World War II modernist music. Sontag touches on the word transparence as being “the highest, most liberating value in art – and in criticism – today. Transparence means experiencing the luminousness of the thing in itself, of things being what they are”
(1966, p. 13). When our interpretation has such transparency perhaps that is how we can begin to access real meaning in these works; and realise that meaning can come from multiple places, as there are multiple contexts for these works to exist in. When the paradigm is transparent, then the experience of everyone, including the audience, has a greater possibility of finding their connection and for meaning to be found at the nexus of each moment of the work’s creation: in the writing, the learning, the performing and the listening of the work.

Concluding remarks

Li: …The piece… Ideally it should have a continued existence which resembles in some way an aural tradition, in the sense that – it’s not a perfect analogy – but in that over time it accumulates countless layers but also the immeasurable depth of human experience which can only be brought to it by a number of people. And so, in making the score you have an initial ‘story’, but it only acquires depth through your own work with it, and any other work that happens after that. That’s how I think of it anyway. (Illean, 2017)

Each of the four works included in this exegesis and the recordings became a point for departure; a trigger for conversation, analysis and reflection. Through the experiences examined in this exegesis, I have searched for ways to gain greater meaning and authenticity in my artistic practice. But, if anything, what my research journey has revealed is that I create meaning from multiple pathways. The cellist Fred Sherry asks: “where is the space for myself inside this piece?” (Sherry, 2002, p. 89). I now feel more able to embrace my own presence in the process of the co-creation of a work; to interact more with the composer to understand their approach and thinking, to mediate these expectations with what I can bring to the score and to reveal personal and differing results.
Conclusion

This research project has documented my journey into artistic research by tracing a constellation of experiences through four Australian works for solo viola. The goal of the research was to examine processes that the performer undergoes as they create an interpretation of the score towards a performance outcome. This was the main site of the research; the performer and their relationship to the score, the composer, and the performance context – all informing the outcome of the work as documented by the recordings. The exegesis highlighted several creative processes that included: commissioning; performer-composer relationships; learning; performing (a process and outcome); play (practising, exploring, discovering); listening; and recording. Complementary to the operation of these creative processes were three research trajectories: roles and relationships, performance analysis and locations of meaning. The creative processes and research trajectories often merged and blurred as particular features within an experience stood out. These research activities became a way to critically examine my creative role as the performer in order to locate greater meaning in my interpretation of these musical works. Therefore, while the research outcomes extend beyond the four works included in this exegesis, they allow valuable insight into, and transformation and knowledge of, my performance practice.

Through the domain of artist as researcher the exegesis and recordings seek to contribute to the growing presence of the performer’s perspective in artistic research. While this research project is built on experiences deriving from my body, my instrument and my performance practice, the themes expressed can to some degree be extrapolated into different instruments, compositions and contexts. This summary of findings to follow offers the reader potential models and pathways to extend the literature on roles and relationships, performer and composer relationship models and performance analysis, that is, analysis undertaken by the performer.

Summary of findings

Performers and composers relationship models

The latitude of the research (see Figure 1.1., p. 28) allowed the accumulation of knowledge to inform, shape and influence my subsequent experiences with the other works and composers featured in this exegesis. As my learning experience of Rushford’s Untitled began this research, the impact of this work on my performance practice underpinned my approach to learning complex works more efficiently. It also made clear the need to seek relationships with composers that are built on a strong foundation of conversation. This model was explored in working with Gifford, and then to a greater extent with Illean, finding a collaborative methodology of working with composers to allow a dialogic practice to flow and an integrated approach towards the creation of a new work. This led to a performer-composer working relationships that consciously maintained communication, sharing of motivation for undertaking the
project, and being more vocal about personal investment in the work, best exemplified in the Illean example. Cranes was a particularly special and unique music-making experience for both parties as we explored an approach that requires the composer to share and express similar values, and the performer to define the environment in which the piece grows. Although my interactions with Lim opened up possibilities to trace performer legacies of Amulet, this has not been a possible research pathway for this project. However, this exegesis documents the beginnings of a performance practice, particularly of the works by Rushford, Gifford and Illean that provides a foundation that future performers of these works might choose to interact with, build on, and document.

Over the course of the performer’s learning and performing of works, relationships can be built with the composer where knowledge from these interactions can be integrated into the score itself and the performer’s interpretation of it. In performer and composer relationship models, three particular values emerged for me as vital to carry forward into future potential relationships with composers:

- **Sharing of motivation**: where the performer or composer can each articulate their motivation for bringing a new work to come into being. Both individuals can then establish their own role in the conversation that develops;
- **Conversation**: an open dialogue between performer and composer allows ideas and responses to be shared to the benefit of the score in its notation form, and to that of the performer’s developing interpretation;
- **‘It’s a beginning’**: the composer and performer relationship that surrounds the creation of new work is established at the very beginning of the work’s identity and performance practice. Yet it is not fixed. The work grows through time and performances, and can be re-visited by the performer and composer. This enables the work to be taken on by other performers.

The values *Sharing of motivation* and *Conversation* are not limited to performer and composer relationships within the context of a new work but also extend to extant works where the composer can be present. There are also instances in which a composer wishes to re-visit an older score with a secondary performer, and see how the work can be developed by new approaches and interpretations. In the case of the Rushford, I wanted to revisit the score and engage in further consultation with Rushford to continue developing my own interpretation.

**Analysis through the performer**

One goal of the research was to facilitate discourse within the field of music performance analysis and identify a space for the performer to contribute in which the performer’s process is the site to extract knowledge from the score. This was in response to the literature in which the ‘performance analysis’ drew on the score and the performance outcome, without illuminating the processes that the performer themselves negotiated as they developed their interpretation to ultimately create the performance. This research extends the literature where the performer speaks (see Schick, 2006; Emmerson, 2007; Oming,
and presents formalised practice-based methods to approach performance analysis. In contemporary Western art music practices where there is an increasing number of scores that draw on prescriptive notation (see Kanno, 2012), as Gottschalk (2016) notes, “the locus point of such a work, what makes it what it is, is not revealed on the page, but is totally dependent on its specific enactment” (p. 81). Therefore, a performance analysis cannot be undertaken objectively, but is based on an experiential model that reflects the subjective and embodied understanding of the score and examines its performative dimension. This exegesis argues that performance analysis is to be undertaken by the performer to express knowledge which can only be known to the performer through their realisation of the score, to be carried out by the performer and where the goal is to objectify the performer and performance.

The performance analysis models presented in this exegesis encompass knowledge of the score discovered by the performer through the acts of learning, performing and recording; that is, an analysis where the goal is to extract knowledge of the score from the experience of it being played in real time. Chapter 3 presented a stand-alone performance analysis of Illean’s Cranes that specifically targeted knowledge of the score that could only be analysed through the performance of the score. The parameters that were discussed were:

- Temporality, the negotiation of time in a performative context.
- Performing form, how performers ‘plan’ or convey the score’s structure.
- Touch, (or portals of touch) and its relationship and role in mediating the score to the sonic.
- Physicality (or Gesture), derived and built from ‘touch,’ this acknowledges the presence of the body in performing the score, but also interacting with the score (as seen in Chapters 1 and 4).
- Adaptability, of the instrument and the performer, to respond to the specific performance context.

Based on the findings of the research, these parameters reflect the embodied nature of performance analysis inclusive of: temporal sensation, navigating structure, visceral responses, as well as technical solutions to cognitive dissonances proposed by the score.

The above parameters mostly speak to a model of performance analysis that pertains to an actual performance. However, this definition can be widened to included findings from Chapters 1 and 4, as they can also be interpreted as examples of performance analysis as they also explored the score’s implications for the performer and a performance. However, they specifically focused on interactions with the score during periods that led towards a performance outcome. Similarly, there are examples in literature where the performer does not self-identify their analysis as a ‘performance analysis.’ Their reflections collect and classify knowledge, and share the outcomes of their experience for other performers to take on. While performance analysis is an output of this exegesis, this kind of analysis shows potential as a methodology performers might undertake to analyse the score in relatable and practical ways that extend their
knowledge of the work and share it with others. A performer’s analysis can also communicate to the reader and listener what is unknowable from the outside; the complex negotiations they navigate with the score in real time.

The outcomes of the analyses were found to be transformative to my performance practice of the works. What is most critical for this model to be adopted is for the performer to clearly articulate the goal of the analysis and to identify parameters that reflect the knowledge housed in their performance of the score. These analyses are not intended to be an end to themselves but are there to contribute to a continuity of practice. They also provide a model for other performers to take on, or build on the findings expressed. Further possibilities, however, lie in the partnering between performers and analysts to widen the scope and parameters of the score to be analysed. As some collaborative papers suggest (see Fitch & Heyde, 2007; Clarke et al., 2005), there is great potential for performers to partner with analysts to capture a kaleidoscopic picture of a ‘work’ – not just the score. Where the presence of the body is crucial to understanding both the function and sonic outcome of the score analysis of these works, it would require the performer’s insight and first-hand experience.

Roles and relationships
Performance analysis also became a tool to examine the relationships that are mediated by the performer’s presence within the performer-composer-score and score-performer-performance paradigms. Through analyses of Rushford’s, Illean’s, and Lim’s works, the relationship between the performer and their instrument came into focus. Each piece learnt and performed accumulates knowledge and deepens this relationship. It is an evolving, growing dynamic that is tested and expanded as it interacts with outside forces, including those of the score, performer and composer interactions, and performance contexts. These four works in particular deepened the physical relationship between myself and my instrument. I was pushed to widen my technical abilities to generate sound, to develop further nuances in my playing, and to navigate extra-musical sounds that come from my bodily playing of the score. The portal of touch returned as a common site for sonic exploration, extending the way I use touch upon my instrument via both a localised feedback mechanism and also in negotiation with the performance space.

In addition, what came out of these performer-composer relationships, was not only knowledge that is grown through my relationship with the score, but importantly, the score becomes a site where the relationship is extended between performer and their instrument. If the performer can be thought of as a ‘vessel’ where the composer’s ideas, the score’s instructions pass through them. Sessions speaks of the performer as “projecting” a work, exercising “individual judgment” all within specific contexts, and that we are “aware of these conditions and be affected by them” (Sessions, 1971, p. 82). I was reminded that that there are many “intangible factors” within scores that composers trust the performer to bring to the score.
to convey breath and movement (see Sessions, 1971, p. 73; Clarke et al., 2005) It is the performer that brings these pieces to life – the scores become living beings through us, but as Sessions notes:

To “conceive,” to “translate,” to “bring into being” – these terms have a pleasant, cultivated sound, but, if examined carefully, they are seen to be still imprecise. …Their meaning is oblique and therefore easily susceptible to misunderstanding: …[tends] to create obscurity rather than clarity. (p. 68)

For performers, the confusion can be exacerbated by a number of factors including different editions of works, and inconsistencies or inaccuracies in notation. Furthermore, the performer’s position is particularly complicated by emotional factors, and the “meaning” that is give to sound-making is simultaneously affected by emotional responses to those sounds. But interestingly, I wonder if in the context of contemporary performance practices, the context and methods performers and composers interact has the potential to both confuse and clarify the performer’s role. It must be acknowledged that any combination of performer-composer relationships can occur within a spectrum of differing opinions on the role of the performer; from someone who simply executes the instructions in the score, to an interpreter.

Final remarks

“What I am trying to lead up to is that there is a difference between the many anxieties of an artist trying to make something, trying to find safeguards against failure, and the anxiety of art. The anxiety of art is a special condition, and actually is not an anxiety at all, though it has all the aspects of one. It comes about when art becomes separate from what we know, when it speaks with its own emotion. Where in life we do everything we can to avoid anxiety, in art we must pursue it. This is difficult. Everything in our life and culture, regardless of our background, is dragging us away. Still, there is this sense of something imminent. And what is imminent, we find, is neither the past nor the future, but simply – the next ten minutes. … We can go no further than that, and we need go no further.”

– Morton Feldman (2000, p. 32)

As these remarks come at the conclusion of this research project, they are made in the spirit of the research process as having been an opening. As I looked to my own past to renew a way of working in the present, my journey into artistic research has been transformational for my performance practice. Out of four pieces of music, modes of inquiry grew and meditated on the particular experiences I had with each work, allowing me to follow trajectories, to recalibrate old ways of thinking, and to reflect on what I consider to be the essentials of music-making. I have been overwhelmed by the generosity of the composers Helen Gifford, Lisa Illean, Liza Lim, and James Rushford, and their perspectives have contributed to several walls in my thinking being broken down. I have been encouraged by them and many writings of other performers and music thinkers, to see the score as an opening, a premise for action and opportunity to discover.
The performer is still an underrepresented voice in articulating this creative process. We need to share our stories, because we have so much to learn from them; from others as much as from exploring our own performance practice. I have been most struck by instances where the performer’s voice has been absent among some musicological and analytical texts. Absence, in its many guises will continue to form the basis of my future research. There is much potential for a shared knowledge within the context and frame of a musical work and I hope both to collaborate with individuals in these fields in the future and to contribute examples of interdisciplinary activities. Similarly, the sharing of knowledge gained from conversations between composers and performers multiplies access points to musical works that can often appear complex, mysterious and hard to navigate – for performers and audiences alike.

This research project initially sought to advocate for Australian viola music but gradually it revealed itself as being an advocate for the performer’s knowledge and presence. I had searched for meaning in external ways; through the score and the composer. What I am most grateful for, in this journey into artistic research, is that I have been changed by it. The research made me critically reflect, analyse and observe how structures are built into performance practice and how we absorb, take on, reject, or turn these structures into something powerful, and emotional, as we bind ourselves and connect to new art. My performance practice has been freed from self-directed limitations, and has become an engaged, dialogic, explorative practice that has in some ways rediscovered what creativity can mean in action.
Appendix I

1. List of performances and recordings during active research 2013-2017
2. Programme notes on featured works
3. Composer biographies

List of performances and recordings during active research 2013-2017

James Rushford Untitled (2012)

2013:
Premiere: New Music Studio and 6 degrees ensemble, March 20, Melba Hall, Parkville, Melbourne.

2014:
New music network mini series, May 8, Ian Hanger Recital Hall, Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Southbank, Brisbane; May 12, Northcote Uniting Church Hall, Northcote, Melbourne.
Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, August 8, ‘Open Space’ Lichtenbergschule, Darmstadt, Germany.

2016:
Recording, December 22, Head Gap recording studio, Preston, Melbourne.

2017:
La Mama Musica, August 28, La Mama Theatre, Carlton, Melbourne.
Recording, August 29, Iwaki Auditorium, ABC studios, Southbank, Melbourne.

Helen Gifford Desperation (2014)

2015:
Premiere: Astra Concerts 2015, April 19, Church of All Nations, Carlton, Melbourne.
Amazing Women 2, April 24, Ian Hanger Recital Hall, Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Southbank, Brisbane.
Live performance on radio, May 29, Australian Sounds on 3mbs FM, Abbotsford Convent, Melbourne.
6 degrees ensemble presents: floof, June 27, Church of All Nations, Carlton, Melbourne.
Arcko Symphonic Project and 6 degrees ensemble, December 11, Church of All Nations, Carlton, Melbourne.

2016:
Astra Concerts 2016, April 19, Church of All Nations, Carlton, Melbourne.
Recording, December 21, Head Gap recording studio, Preston, Melbourne.

2017:
Recital at Women in Creative Arts conference, August 12, Australian National University, Canberra.
Recording, August 27, Iwaki Auditorium, ABC studios, Southbank, Melbourne.

Liza Lim Amulet (1992)

2016:
Phoebe Green | Leah Scholes Duo, June 24, Northcote Uniting Church, Melbourne.
Presentation at Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, August 6, Lichtenbergschule, Darmstadt, Germany.
Recording, December 21, Head Gap recording studio, Preston, Melbourne.
Lisa Illean Cranes (2016-17)

Programme notes on featured works

Helen Gifford Desperation (2014)

Gifford’s first piece for the viola explores the nature of desperation in its many forms. At the time of composition, Gifford was experiencing building works outside her property that were disruptive to what is often a quiet existence. In this sense, desperation can exist between two extremes of hyper-activity or a paralysing numbness. Gifford’s tenacity and commitment to modernism is evident in this virtuosic work that explores the richness of the viola’s tone. After a furious opening, the piece calls for a combination of mutes, including a steel mute which gives the viola an intimately medieval sound. The final third section moves quickly between extremes before ending almost unexpectedly. The piece was commissioned by Phoebe Green after reading about Helen Gifford in Rosalind Appleby’s Women of note: The rise of Australian women composers (2012). Green and Gifford worked closely through the composition process, as well as the preparing for publication process with Kim Bastin for Astra Publications.

Lisa Illean Cranes (2016-17)

Cranes is a notated exploratory work for solo viola that is approximately fifteen minutes in duration. It is a quiet piece; mellifluous, understated and luminous. Whilst the structure of the piece takes the form of three parts, each part bridged by a short interlude, the piece is composed of musical fragments that fold and re-fold, like paper origami crane, shifting through different combinations of colour of time and harmony. In the opening sections, these fragments are punctured on the page. However, it is to the performer’s discretion how these fragments unfold through the line of the piece. Particularly when orchestrated closely, the interval between the 19th and 22nd partials (c.250 cents, where a tempered semitone is 100 cents) offers a recurring sonic touchstone throughout Cranes. A sonically unexpected moment occurs during Interlude B, thrusting Part III into a new sonic realm. There is a constant feeling of something unfolding, seeking; of tensions unseen yet felt on the periphery. In the final section, the listener is absorbed into a meditative sound-world of dissolving and merging tones. The first performance of the revised score of Cranes (April 2017) took place at The Old Church in Stoke-Newington, London, in May 2017. It was commissioned by, and written for Phoebe Green.
Liza Lim *Amulet* (1992)
Themes explored in Liza Lim’s viola solo *Amulet* are drawn from her string quartet *Hell* (1992), composed in the same year. An amulet is a talisman or charm object that is intended to bring good luck or protection to its owner. The magical properties that can be associated with an amulet come alive through Lim’s distinctly visceral language, which is well suited to the capabilities and nature of continuous pitch and bowed string instruments. The piece requires the performer to move the bow around from the fingerboard to the bridge, and the left-hand sliding with various kinds of finger pressure, a combination that lends to vulnerability in the sounds but also captures a kind of electricity and spark of sounds in transformation.

James Rushford *Untitled* (2012)
*Untitled* is a work for prepared viola and two bows that draws on elements of Rushford’s own improvisatory practice. Two visual pieces inform this work; the sparse landscape paintings of the Sichuan painter Qui Shihua, and the Frans Zwartjes film *Living*, which features Zwartjes exploring a closed space with a swirling hand-held camera. These two pieces of visual information assist the performer in navigating a complex, layered score as they capture an evocative ‘dance’ with white. In particular, the piece explores an emergence of *prima materia*, the state of becoming, where nothing is fixed or placed. To convey this, Rushford embeds a series of colours into the notation to delineate pitch to noise ratio, where some passages the performer is called to sound with virtually no tone. A preparation of foil is placed on the I and II strings for the entire duration of the work, and resembles a ghost-like, hollow sound, where pitch is still perceptible but high overtones are not desirable. It is a hallucinatory piece, that requires close listening from the audience, and gentle handling from the performer. This work was commissioned by Phoebe Green and supported with funding from Arts Victoria (now Creative Victoria). Since the first performance in 2013 the score has undergone several minor revisions, settling into its current form in 2016.

Composer biographies

**Helen Gifford** was born in Hawthorn in 1935. She was educated at Tintern Junior School and Melbourne Girls Grammar. A Commonwealth scholarship was obtained for the music degree course at Melbourne University Conservatorium, where she studied piano with Roy Shepherd and harmony with Dorian Le Gallienne, gaining her Bachelor of Music in 1958. *Phantasma* (1963), for string orchestra, was chosen for submission to the ISCM Festival at Copenhagen. On receiving the First Commission of the Dorian Le Gallienne Awards in 1965 she wrote a string quartet that was performed at the 1966 Adelaide Festival. *Chimaera* (1967), and *Imperium* (1969), both for large orchestra, were recorded by the ABC on their in-house LPs.

Between 1970 and 1982 Helen Gifford received regular commissions to write music for Melbourne Theatre Company productions. Directors included Rick Billinghurst, Tyrone Guthrie (UK), Frank Hauser (UK), Ray Lawler, Bruce Myles, David Myles, Mick Rodger (UK), John Sumner, and Joachim Tenschert (Berliner Ensemble), for plays by Brecht, Congreve, Shaffer, Shakespeare, Sophocles, Stoppard and Tourneur.

In 1973 Helen Gifford was awarded a Senior Composer’s Fellowship, and in 1974 was appointed composer in residence to the Australian Opera. Two substantial music theatre works were written on grants from the Music Board of the Australia Council: *Regarding Faustus* (1983), and *Iphigenia in Exile* (1985) - in 2010 given the alternative title of Exile for internet use. In 1993 she received a grant from the Edward H. Green Foundation, and in 1997 wrote a work for mezzo soprano and orchestra, *Point of
Ignition, while on a composer fellowship from the Australia Council. In 1996 she was awarded Doctor of Letters (honoris causa) by Monash University.

Music for the Adonia (1993) was her first work written specifically for the vocal talents of soprano Deborah Kayser. It was commissioned by the Elision Ensemble, who provided the accompaniment of piccolo/flute, clarinet, percussion, harp, mandolin, 10-string guitar, viola and cello. The text is an imaginary ancient language, and the piece aims to evoke the music for one of the festivals of Adonis that took place all around the ancient world.

In 1999 ABC Classic FM commissioned the piano piece, As Foretold to Khayyam, for Michael Kieran Harvey, for the millennium. The same year she completed a 50-minute work for choir and instruments, Choral Scenes: The Western Front, World War I, commissioned by Astra - a setting of verse from that time in English, French and German. Catharsis (2002) was another choral work written for the Astra choir, which sets verse by Anna Akhmatova, Kathleen Raine and Elizabeth Riddell. Three poems of Kathleen Raine provided the text for a work in the following year: Spell Against Sorrow (2003), for soprano and guitar, written for Deborah Kayser and Geoffrey Morris. Menin Gate (2005) was another work for piano written for Michael Kieran Harvey. This won APRA/AMC Classical Music State Award for Victoria 2006.

In 2010, David Young, Artistic Director of Chamber Made Opera, arranged for the ABC to record Iphigenia in Exile, now given the alternative title of Exile. With soprano Deborah Kayser, and an ensemble of percussionists, clarinets, piccolo/clay flute, mandolin-guitar and a women’s chorus, the recording was made in June in front of a live audience at the Iwaki Auditorium by ABC Classic FM. This recording will now become part of an interactive music video iPad application by Champagne Valentine in Amsterdam, and launched online in December this year. Set on a desolate coastline, Exile explores the psychological state of Iphigenia as she reflects on her time as a high priestess of human sacrifices. This form of the work will combine Greek tragedy, chamber opera, advanced digital media, new mobile technologies and contemporary music.

Addendum to Helen Gifford biography:
Helen Gifford OAM has had a resurgence more recently, with numerous portrait concerts celebrating her music presented by ASTRA, Arcko Symphonic Project, and Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM). In 2016 Helen was the recipient of the Distinguished Services to Australian Music award. Recent works include piano solos Shiva the auspicious one (2012) and Undertones of War (2015) for pianist Michael Kieran Harvey.

Lisa Illean is an Australian composer of acoustic and acousmatic music, living and working in London. Her music has been described as "exquisitely quiet shadows shaded with microtunings" (The Sydney Morning Herald) and “a compelling exercise in stillness and quietude” (The Australian). Works span pieces written for orchestra to those commissioned for new, prepared or adapted instruments, and sound works conceived for unique spaces.

Her ensemble works have been performed internationally in venues ranging from Royal Festival Hall to Carriageworks and Cafe Oto. She has recently worked with BBC, Sydney and Melbourne symphony orchestras, London Philharmonic Orchestra, members of the Philharmonia Orchestra, Scordatura Ensemble and Ensemble Offspring, and has made site-specific sound pieces for the Arts Centre, Melbourne, and the Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver.

Lisa is completing doctoral research at the Royal College of Music as a Soiree d’Or scholar, where she is also supported by a Rae and Edith Bennett fellowship (2017-19). Recent work has been made with the generous assistance of Australia Council for the Arts, the APRA AMCOS Art Music Fund and the
Liza Lim (b.1966, Australia) was educated in Australia and is based in Melbourne. Works explore Australian Indigenous and Asian aesthetics & ritual; a Sufi poetics of bewilderment, communion and ecstasy; weaving & knot-making as a cross-modal ‘technology for thinking’; the textility of time. New projects explore ideas around ecology and the uncanny (Extinction Events & Dawn Chorus); mobs and power (Atlas of the Sky). She has written four operas, the most recent, Tree of Codes was commissioned by Opera Cologne, Ensemble Musikfabrik and Hellerau-European Centre for the Arts and premiered in Cologne and Dresden in 2016. She has had important long-term collaborations with ensembles such as ELISION and Musikfabrik as well as working closely with solo musicians to reimagine instruments, for example, with Alban Wesly (Axis Mundi), Séverine Ballon (An ocean beyond earth), Melvyn Poore (The Green Lion eats the Sun), Florentin Ginot (Table of Knowledge), Tristram Williams (Ehwaz; Roda), Wu Wei (How Forests Think) and Eugene Ughetti (An Elemental Thing). She has received commissions and performances from some of the world’s preeminent orchestras (Los Angeles Philharmonic, Bayerische Rundfunks Orchester, BBC, WDR, SWR), festivals (Festival d’Automne Paris, Salzburg, Lucerne, Holland, Venice Biennale and all the major Australian festivals) and ensembles (Musikabrik, Ensemble Intercontemporain, ELISION, Ensemble Modern, Klangforum Wien, ICE, Arditti String Quartet etc). She is currently Professor of Composition at Sydney Conservatorium of Music and the University of Huddersfield; also Visiting Professor Shanghai Conservatory in 2017; formerly Director of CeReNeM, Huddersfield (2008- 2017). Published by Casa Ricordi (Milano, London & Berlin) since 1989. CDs with Hat Hut, WERGO, ABC- Classics, Neos, Aeon and Winter & Winter.

Current to December 2017, sourced from https://lizalimcomposer.wordpress.com
James holds a Doctorate from the California Institute of the Arts, and is currently a fellow at Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart.

Current to April 2018, sourced from http://www.james-rushford.com
Appendix 2

The two charts on the following page (see Graph A and B, p. 122) relate to Chapter 1 and were made in collaboration with my colleague Daniel Richardson. The aim of making these graphs was to visually capture the relationship between volume (dynamics) and tone that the performer must navigate in Untitled (2012), made complex by Rushford employing colour to delineate pitch-noise ratio. We used spreadsheet software (Microsoft Excel) to accurately plot the location of each note in the bar in the horizontal axis (where bar numbers are a proxy for time, although not a completely accurate one as tempo changes are not taken into consideration), and volume (or dynamics) in the vertical axis, with line thickness and colour to signify the tone/colour relationship.

These graphs both visually surprised me, and disappointed me as I felt that they did not in the end convey the complexity of the notation. In particular, the softness of the material is not captured in ways I would expect it to look visually. This is because the degrees of numbers in the vertical axis – 0-4 alone cover niente to piano (soft). In Graph A, the events that go beyond piano do not stand out as much. But what these graphs did show me, is that there are more peaks that come out of the very soft palette Rushford creates, and that I could probably give these moments more attention.

As discussed in Chapter 1, during the process of analysing the relationship between volume and tone for these graphs, Daniel and I discovered inconsistencies in Rushford’s implementation of colour. I was already aware of an extra purple, however Daniel discovered through the electronic copy of the score, further inconsistencies in how red and pink are conveyed. This mean our analysis was at a cross-roads – do we proceed to analyse according to the colours we now identified, or do we follow my interpretation of the colours I had already made, and what does this mean for future players of this score? Furthermore, what does this mean for composers who wish to explore ways of drawing on colour to convey further musical information in the score? I would like to explore this in future research.

Note: In the vertical axis, 0 = niente, 1 = pppp, 2 = ppp, 3 = pp, 4 = p, 5 = mp, 6 = mf, 7 = f
Diamond heads (see top right-hand corner of Graph A) indicate isolated sound events that were outside the contour of the material being analysed.
Black denotes full tone, purple for slightly less tone, red for little tone and pink for virtually no tone.

Graph B: Volume-tone relationship analysed in bars 75-83 (note the vertical axis covers dynamics 0-4: iese to piano, and the presence of 2 extra colours, see Figure 2.9).
Bibliography


understanding (pp. 185-196). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.


University Press.


Draper, P., Emmerson, S., Brown, A., & Tomlinson, V. (2015). What were we thinking? Reflections on three artistic research projects from Australia. Presented at the EPARM Conference 2015, Graz, Austria.


Pace, I. (2015). Composition and performance can be, and often have been, research. Tempo, 70(275), 60-70.


Toop, R. (2004). “Are you sure you can’t hear it?”: Some informal reflections on simple information
and listening. In A. Ashby (Ed.), *The pleasure of modernist music* (pp. 223-249). Rochester, NY: The University of Rochester Press.


