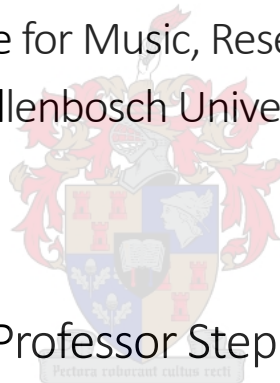# Artistic experimentation through decolonial sound projects for clarinet

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Dissertation presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
Africa Open Institute for Music, Research and Innovation
Stellenbosch University

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March 2021

Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted the work for obtaining any qualification.

March 2021

Abstract

This study explores the sounding capacity of the clarinet through decolonial projects. This study's sound projects are infused by a decolonial imperative that invokes the conglomerate concept of modernity/(de)coloniality (Walter Mignolo, 2012: 90). Mignolo's term, together with his notion of decolonial aestheSis operate as turbines from which to explore the sounding capacity of the clarinet, an instrument that is conventionally situated in a largely Western music practice. In my research, the clarinet, as well as the researcher, encounter endogenous sounds and thereby engage in processes of sound translation.

The method of investigation used is that of artistic research and specifically artistic experimentation that relies on generating knowledge from practice and reflecting on the generated knowledges, as possible avenues for exploration. The avoidance of a potentially opportunistic use of a decolonial imperative for a sound translation process directs this study towards the researcher's creation of an index of clarinet sounds. This index is codified as a list of newly improvised sounds and from this index a collaborative creation process for a new composition emerges. The new composition, created with the composer Pierre-Henri Wicomb, is composed, notated and performed by the researcher.

Throughout this study, various decolonial encounters are staged ranging from interaction with musicians and dancers, discussions with colleague artistic researchers, as well as two research performance events, one in front of a small group of participants at the Percival Kirby Collection of Indigenous instruments, and the other in front of a much larger audience at the Stellenbosch University Museum. The experiments presented through this research delink the clarinet from Western performance practice and its discourses, so that novel avenues for exploring the sounding capacity of the clarinet, and the situatedness of the clarinet player, arise.

Resulting knowledges and further questions from the various research processes crystallise into consideration of how a decolonial imperative confronts, questions, and enhances the sounding clarinet, together with how these processes morph with the identity of the clarinettist-researcher.

The research finds that a decolonial imperative does indeed transform the sounding capacities of the clarinet, so that the clarinet practice of the researcher itself, as well as its contexts of influence, are shifted into forms of sonic migrancy. Aspects such as these are documented and clarified through self-reflexive writing in the dissertation. The research presented in the thesis is paired with film footage of sound experiments, as undertaken throughout the research.

Opsomming

Hierdie navorsing onderneem om die klankkapasiteit van die klarinet deur middel van dekoloniale projekte te ondersoek. Verskeie klankmoontlikhede wat energie aan die dekoloniale imperatief ontleen, neem as vertrekpunt die gekombineerde konsep moderniteit/(de)kolonialiteit (Walter Mignolo, 2012: 90), asook Mignolo se dekoloniale estese. Sodoende word die klarinet, met sy oorwegend Westerse klassieke praktyk, aan endogene klanke van Suid Afrika deur 'n klankvertalingsproses gekoppel.

Die metodologiese vertrekpunt behels artistieke navorsing en artistieke eksperimentering as proses-gedrewe interaksies, tesame met refleksiewe denkprosesse wat navorsingsvrae vanuit die praktyk skep. As 'n oplossing vir die probleem van 'n opportunistiese kaping van die dekoloniale in die klankvertalingproses, word 'n indeks van nuutgeskepte klanke aangebied, wat as inspirasie dien tot 'n kollaboratiewe skepping. 'n Nuwe klarinetkomposisie is gekomponeer, genoteer saam met die komponis Pierre-Henri Wicomb en uitgevoer deur die navorser.

Dekoloniale ontmoetings sluit ondermeer ook in interaksies met mede-musikante en dansers, gesprekke met 'n kollegiale kring van artistieke navorsers, en 'n ontmoeting met inheemse instrumente in Percival Kirby se versameling. Tesame met 'n openbare uitvoering in die Stellenbosch Universiteitsmuseum, dui hierdie klank-eksperimente op die klarinet se ontkoppeling van konvensionele kontekste om in hierdie studie verbreding van praktyke te vind.

Die navorser bevind dat hierdie klankvertalingsproses die self van die musikant as klankbewuste identiteitswese wysig, vorm, verryk, en uitdaag, aspekte wat ondermeer self-refleksief in die tesis aangespreek en verwoord word. Hierdie navorsingsprojek wys uiteindelik dat 'n dekoloniale imperatief die klarinet se klank kon transformeer binne, rondom, en ook weer terugkerend na die praktyk, sodat 'n proses van klank-migrasie plaasvind. Die navorsing word aangebied in 'n proefskrif tesame met video-skakels wat aanlynmateriaal aan die leser beskikbaar stel.

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Introduction

Motivation

During 2015 and 2016 student protests flared up on South African university campuses. While clashes between students and police (with subsequent damage of property) were reported at some universities, Stellenbosch University was comparatively less affected by these events, in part due to severe private security company clampdowns. During this time, the Department of Music at Stellenbosch University had scheduled its performance practice examinations (all of them in Western performance practice), and among the performances was my Masters chamber music exam. On the day of the public examination, staff members of the conservatorium locked the entrance doors to the Music Department, making sure that the examinations, which were 'open' to the public, could continue without disruption. While the protesting students did not enter and occupy the space of the department on that particular day, the sound of the protesting students travelled through the locked doors into the corridors surrounding the examination hall. As I was rehearsing the melodies of Brahms and Mozart in my head, students marched in Neethling Street with placards. The sounds of massed vocal protest merged with those of Brahms and Mozart, and the relevance of my concert practice, my instrument, my musicianship, as well as the ability of my practice to engage with forms of activist dialogue began to form as questions in my mind.

The Fallist movements in South Africa called for financial, political, racial, gender and curriculum content reconstruction in university institutions. I came to recognise the sensation and feelings of a chasm between the sensorial practice of playing my instrument, embedded in a longstanding tradition of Westernised performance practice in South Africa, as seemingly oppositional to the calls issued by the student Fallist movements. This thesis is my attempt to engage and experiment with different options for opening up my practice as clarinettist. Artistic research, with documentation in a dissertation and video formats, merge theory and my practice. My method of working is inspired by a decolonial narrative that views the local as biological, organic systems of vibrancies that are not museum pieces, or 'indigenous', but are endogenous (Escobar, 2010: 19), ever-changing and therefore potentially activist for their capacity to bring change to my practice and, perhaps, to my musicianship.

Research Questions

Research questions to this study centre around the options and possibilities of exploring, through artistic research, the decolonial in relation to sonic practices. How does artistic research contribute to an understanding of decolonial imperatives and possibilities in music? What could be understood under the idea of 'endogenous' sounds and is the idea of 'translation' feasible as an approach to explore conventional Western performance practices and aesthetics as a decolonial gesture? How do these questions relate specifically to the manner in which my own practice and sound as a clarinettist can become changed through artistic research? Is it possible to explore the identity of the clarinet and the clarinettist associated with conventional concert practices of South Africa by experimenting with the relational possibilities that manifest in creating interfaces with instrumentalist and composer, practice and composition?

I embark with a hypothesis that a process of 'translation' could draw together into closer proximity my sensorial ideals of sound and sound production, and work in-between the interstices of so-called Western music practices towards local practices, the latter better described as endogenous systems. Translation, in this study, concerns linguistic, natural and musical endogenous sounds brought to bear on my instrument's sounding capacities. Sensorial knowledge and practice, in this study, concerns the sense perception of musicianship that is able to accompany theoretical, aesthetic, ideological and historical premises of musicianship. Sense perception is located primarily in hearing, listening and being present. It includes the interaction of the body with the instrument and the relational aspect of these senses, including the visual awareness of performing music with other people.

My research aims and methodologies draw on the work of various South African scholars and colleagues who have critically investigated the aesthetic ideals of Western music practices and musicology. Artistic researcher and pianist Mareli Stolp, who engages with contemporary art music practices in South Africa, postulates that South African art music practices and performances are entrenched within a cultural narrative of European hegemony driven through social constructs determined by the term 'canon' (Stolp 2012: 11,93). Stolp uses 'canon' to denote a narrow focus on 'Western European compositions from the later eighteenth and nineteenth century', whereby, in performing and educating practices in South Africa, 'new or experimental music', as well as indigenous music, is excluded. Transformation, innovation and infusions are therefore not a core endeavour of Western classical musical traditions (Stolp, 2012: 30,31). Stolp argues that repertoire-based canonical approaches occupy a privileged ideological 'safe space' (Stolp, 2012: 83) in South African performance, educational and creational music practices.

Carina Venter (2015) addresses the 'absence of postcolonial and decolonial epistemologies' in Western musicology. Her critical readings of epistemological postcolonial artistic claims from composers such as Steve Reich, Phillip Glass and Phillip Miller evoke post-minimalist aesthetics as 'stream-of-violence' narratives that strengthens the ideological hold of Western hegemony (Venter, 2015: 2). Marietjie Pauw (2015) incorporates landscape as a theme for concert practice where the theoretical framework of curating becomes 'interventionist' as a practice that is 'context-sensitive' in the exhibition of South African flute compositions. Pauw's artistic research projects are a critical awareness of the topic of landscape brought into artistic arguments with her flute practice, that through her sound embraces a 'sub-altern' voice 'that sounds decoloniality as a radical tool towards social transformation' (Pauw, 2015: v).

My own probing into the sounding aspects of the clarinet and its formalised education subsequently explores ways in which a narrative of music-Eurocentrism can be challenged by 'decolonial thinking-doing'. I use artistic research and experimentation with endogenous sound impulses in order to explore some of the sonic gradations that become translated from the endogenous to my former practice, producing a widened spectrum of sound in my practice. Decolonisation and decolonial thinking-doing, for this study, are suggested as manners of destabilising a Western performance practice through the clarinet—and through the body and experience of the clarinettist—to explore the sounding capacity of the instrument.

In order to contextualise my research questions I briefly introduce a selection of terms, namely decoloniality, decolonial aestheSis, artistic research, artistic experimentation, and improvisation. These terms, each of which is imbued with long histories and vast discourses, are potentially illuminating points of entry into a complex terrain of my music instrument's signification, my musician's self, as well as my observations of wider political and historical processes. They are therefore terms that help me to find coherence amidst broader tensions of my research project. The scope of this research does not allow for my study critically to contest, or theoretically to add to these terms, but instead acknowledges that aspects of these terms operate as turbines of inspiration and demarcation for my research to become explorative, experimental, critical and activist. I discuss these terms at some length in this introductory section of the dissertation.

Decoloniality

Decoloniality finds its roots in a concept and movement discussed at the Bandung Conference in 1955 with the gathering of Asian-African nation governmental representatives (Wood, 2010: 1001). The conference discussed the role of 'Third-World' and 'Non-Aligned' countries during the Cold War (Mignolo, 2012: 52). In an interview conducted by Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández (2014: 197), Walter Mignolo suggests that the use of 'Third-World' and 'Non-Aligned' as synonymous terms expose the hidden agenda of modernity, an agenda which he calls coloniality. Coloniality as a concept, according to the definition of Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (2000: 533), is different from colonialism. The latter refers to historical moments in the modern/colonial world. However, coloniality can exist without colonialism, as colonialism is one of the faces of coloniality (Gaztambide-Fernàndez, 2014: 197). Mignolo and Rolando Vázquez (2013) maintain that the discourse of decoloniality is defined by modernity – coloniality and decoloniality are entwined concepts (rather than three individual concepts) – and can be written as modernity/(de)coloniality. Decoloniality thus features as a 'space', opportunity or opening for 're-evaluating' the 'completeness' of modernity and coloniality (Mignolo & Vázquez, 2013).

Modernity/(de)coloniality relies on the revolt of the so-called decolonial turn which is embedded in 'specific forms of scepticism and epistemic attitudes out of which certain questions and the search for answers are generated', according to Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2011: 1). Decoloniality includes the term 'delinking' to indicate such revolt against the 'colonial matrix of power', and simultaneously embraces the 'pluriversal', according to Mignolo.[1] In the book *Decolonising the university* (Bhambra *et al.*, 2018) multiple perspectives of decoloniality are acknowledged given the ontological nature of political sites, activities and views generated by the term over several centuries. The editors of the book consider decoloniality to indicate two ideas in particular:

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[1] The terms 'delinking', 'colonial matrix of power' and 'pluriversal' are used by Walter Mignolo to not only indicate a severance (from the Occidental), but to also indicate an energy towards finding new avenues of knowledge production. For Mignolo, delinking operates against the matrix of power caused by the decolonial healings and options, as searches for better futures. (see, for example, Mignolo 2012: xviii.)

> First, [decoloniality] is a way of thinking about the world which takes colonialism, empire and racism as its empirical and discursive objects of study […]. Second, it purports to offer alternative ways of thinking about the world and the alternative forms of political praxis. (Bhambra *et al.*, 2018: 2)

The first referent, the notion of colonialism, empire and racism as objects of study, equates to thinking about the modern world as a knowledge system that has created what Quijano and Ennis (2000: 533) term the 'coloniality of power' with regard to the history of South America. Alternative ways of thinking, and alternative options to praxis – the second referent by Bhambra (*et al.*,) – suggest that thinking and speaking of coloniality through markedly investigating better options, could potentially shed light on decolonial processes over several centuries (Mignolo, 2012: 2; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018: x).

In the book *As by fire: The end of the South African university* (2017), Jonathan Jansen uses the term decolonisation, rather than decoloniality, thereby indicating that the decolonial operates differently in African contexts, in comparison to South American contexts (Jansen, 2017: 156). Toks Oyedemi (2018: 7), however, warns against over-simplifying Eurocentrism as a particularly negative phenomenon for African decolonial discourse. Similarly, Pascah Mungwini and Achille Mbembe remind that difference is perhaps less important than finding pluriverses of coexisting traditions and epistemic diversities (Mbembe, 2016: 37; Mungwini, 2013: 81).

Mbembe writes (2016: 36) that Boaventura de Sousa and Enrique Dussel have made clear that 'knowledge can only be thought of as universal if it is pluriversal'. Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Rafael Vizcaíno, Jasmine Wallace and Jeon Eun Annabel We echo observations by Dussel, suggesting that philosophy remains a 'bastion of Eurocentrism' (2018: 64), whereas the arts perhaps offer comparably more options for decolonial intervention. However, they suggest that the liberal arts and sciences and, by implication, the creative arts, have also been colonially manipulated and interpreted in a manner similar to (Occidental) control over philosophy. For them:

> Philosophy is not the only field that has to contend with the legacy of continued investment in Eurocentrism and white male heteronormativity. The entire arrangement of the liberal arts and sciences arguably has to as well. (Maldonado-Torres *et al.*, 2018: 66)

From my experience as a clarinettist in Western music performance practice and education, it is evident to me that my pedagogical lineage has also been interpreted and controlled by that which can be termed coloniality. My instrument was crafted in Europe, and has a European history, but I suggest that a decolonial imperative that endeavours to encounter endogenous sounds will not only decolonise 'my' mind (referring to Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o book, *Decolonizing the mind*), but also decolonise my practice, particularly through exploring (music) language as translation. In his book, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o frames language as a means of communication that exceeds immediate and lexical meaning, and thereby (decolonial) language invokes a wider community of sensorial associations with words, images, symbols and games.

According to Casper Anderson (2019: 72), two narratives presented in *Decolonizing the mind* balance on replacing European knowledges with African knowledges, but also on opening to a multitude of wider knowledge options. Decolonising the mind in my artistic practice likewise invokes a replacing of knowledges, but also an openness to wider knowledges, specifically knowledges made possible by knowing through the senses. Walter Mignolo's concept of decolonial aestheSis—decolonial knowing through the senses—is one such pluriversal option for myself as sensing musician.

Decolonial AestheSis

Decolonial aestheSis is a conglomerate mode of 'sensing-being-thinking-doing' that directs decolonial theory and praxis (Gaztambide-Fernàndez, 2014: 196; Mignolo & Vázquez, 2013). Decolonial aestheSis, written with a capital S, is a performative delinking from knowledge as 'thinking', and aesthetics as judgement (only) according to European hierarchical knowledges. Decolonial aestheSis emancipates from 'Occidental aesthetics' (Baker, 2015: 3; Pauw, 2015: 156), and simultaneously invites a 'collective shift' by philosophers, politicians and artists towards 'sensing-being-thinking-doing' creative and activist knowledges and praxes (Lasch, 2013).

Decolonial artists and scholars create through aestheSis by employing modes of sensing complex matrices of harm, and using the senses to work through these harms into creating better options. In her article, 'Dirty laundry: Artistic responses to colonial baggage in Cape Town', Daniela Franca Joffe (2019: 144) documents artistic activism as a process of 'reading the signs' through visual awareness and palimpsest responses. Alanna Lockward (2013) presents artistic practices titled 'afropean decolonial aesthetics' that makes space for furthering possibilities of sensing and doing, through embodiment with 'Black Europe Body Politics'. 'BE.BOP.' has developed into a recurring project with its fifth edition in 2018, following the 'collective shift' as suggested by Lasch, with a variety of disciplines from art, science, film, performance and activism (Lockward, 2018). Many of these works have been published by the *Social Text Collective Journal* (2020) and the *Decolonial AestheSis Dossier*, which contain texts that speak of 'processes of healing', of acknowledging 'wounds' and encourage rebellion through art to recognise a pluriverse of existence (Mignolo & Vázquez, 2013; Ostojic & Mignolo, 2013). The *Horizon 2020 Project ECHOES* (European Colonial Heritage Modalities in Entangled Cities) works with various keywords which include 'epistemic decolonisation', 'decolonial aesthetics' and 'decolonising the mind' to rethinking colonial heritage in various city settings (Anderson, Knudsen & Kølvraa, 2019: 3).

Many of the collective shifts are concerned with visual representations, infrastructure, museum spaces and body-politics. However, a collective shift from the consideration of classical musicians, or music making, has been absent from the concerns of the decolonial aestheSis project in the above-mentioned artist endeavours.

I have come across several artist interventions that engage sonic work through a decolonial approach. These include virtual platforms, social locations, concert stages and social spaces such as the online journal *HERRI's* fourth issue dedicated to the publication and 'documentary redress' of a conference titled 'Africa Synthesized' (Vos & Venter, 2020). In this issue, George Lewis (2020) refers to the *Unyazi Electronic Music Symposium and Festival* of 2005 as 'the most ethnically and methodologically diverse music festival I [he] have ever attended'. The *Unyazi* 2005 festival was a

platform that brought various international and local electronic composers, artists and poets, together in Johannesburg at the Wits Theatre Space, among them Halim El-Dabh and Pauline Oliveros (Botha, 2005). Lewis writes in reflecting on the *Unyazi* festival, that his work

> …has always been bound up not only with the need to create sonorous and sensuous experience, but also, and equally importantly, to create a critic space for musicians and listeners to empathize in considering the nature of human interaction. This goal connects my [his] work with the *black Atlantic sonic tradition,* as part of what African art historian Robert Farris Thompson calls 'songs and dances of social allusion.'(Lewis, 2020)

Creating music, improvising with sound and electronics, in addition to singing and protesting (as happened during the Fallist movements), evoke the work of Brandon Labelle (2018), who suggests that sound is sonic agency. From my perspective, sonic agency can be aligned to a decolonial aestheSis response. As a result of the clash between student protests and the private security of armed responses at Stellenbosch University, came the organising of a solidarity concert titled *You're in chains too* that took place on 18 November 2016 in Kruiskerk (translates from Afrikaans to Cross Church) in Stellenbosch (Kax, 2016). Stephanus Muller (2017: 6), co-organiser of the event, writes that:

> The event was symbolically important as a way of curating an artistic response to violence and trauma, creating a sense of togetherness and comfort for a vulnerable constituency and forging solidarity between university staff members and students concerned about institutional violence and police responses.

At this event artistic expressions included jazz improvisation, music making and poetry as acts of defiance and processes of healing. Music making from this event could be considered as part of a process of decolonial thinking and decolonial aestheSis. Sound, when viewed from this perspective, is a phenomenon that requires critical engagement, and can operate as a form of delinking from a deeper underlying harmful systemic narrative, from within systems of knowledge and praxis (Maldonado-Torres, 2016: 46; Schütz, 2019: 75). A system of knowledge like the use of colonial languages as suggested by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o can then, in many ways, be paralleled to a hegemony of colonial sound, a knowledge system of the Western classical sound in which the clarinet resides.[2]

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[2] In June 2020, a 'visible' virtual collective shift occurred towards classical music practices in South Africa. The 'Alternative Orchestra South Africa' (instigated by William Fourie and Kerri-Leigh Wayne) is decolonial, queer and feminist, and is a response to the South African orchestral music scene, orchestral managers, artistic directors, festival organisers, conductors, and instrumentalists to include more diverse programming for a growing society in classical music (personal communication with William Fourie, 4 August 2020).

I propose that the classical concert hall, symbolic of the rigours of classical performance practice, can also be understood as a colonial hegemony that resembles a form of what Rob Nixon describes as 'slow violence' (2011: 2). Nixon associates slow violence with environmental aspects such as 'climate change', 'deforestation', 'radioactive aftermaths of war', and also encourages me to 'rethink—politically, imaginatively, and theoretically' my clarinet practice as a site of slow violence. Nixon writes,

> By slow violence I mean a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all. (Nixon, 2011: 2)

I find particular resonance with slow violence, as my young childhood music experiences were open to many options of sonic experience, but my growing-up years were increasingly harnessed into Western performance practice where I was expected to recreate existing compositions to the tutoring and judgement of my teachers. I now perceive my music training as a form of indoctrination and slow violence whereby I became harnessed to aesthetic 'manifestations of colonial modernities', as suggested by Albert Memmi (1974: 40).

Western performance practice can be viewed as slow violence particularly when brought into connection with Lydia Goehr's notions on social and artistic exclusion associated with the 'musical work' (1989:56). For Goehr, the musical work is embedded in an accepted (but not acceptable) designation of roles assigned to musicians, composers and audience members in and around the concert hall. This practice amounts to what she calls 'conceptual imperialism' of colonial aesthetics (Goehr, 1989: 58). A delinking from conceptual imperialism and colonial aesthetics includes a delinking from a discourse of global North concepts and terminology in my artistic experiments. This form of delinking allows decoloniality in artistic experimentation to remain focused on the process of delinking rather than the potential outcome of an artistic event or a composition. While the artistic event or composition could potentially resonate with other contemporary practices, it is not my intention to locate my process within such practices, even if it could be argued that it is a way of decentering a European hegemony of artistic research associated with the global North. Conducting artistic research in the global South comes with a responsibility to delink from a discourse that reimagines canonical practices in and through contemporary practices.

In this study, my endeavour is to use artistic research and experimentation, aligned with decolonial aestheSis, to explore how my clarinet practice can delink from the hegemony of colonial modernity.

Artistic Research and Experimentation

Artistic research as design and methodology engages the 'unknown' from an open-ended procedural trajectory, as Paulo de Assis suggests (2013: 153). It takes particular context into consideration and engages critically in mutual entanglement with 'the phenomena at hand' (Hannula, 2009: 1). Artistic research is reported on through reflection and self-reflexive practices, as defined on various levels

by artistic researcher Graeme Sullivan (2010: 110), [3] and it values phenomena that originate from sensorial observation in and over time and space. Artistic research requires that the 'dual personality' of researcher and artist become one (Coessens, Crisping & Douglas, 2010: 169). Henk Borgdorff (2012: 112) suggests that in artistic research '…practice is infused by theory…', and to his statement Pauw (2015: 17) suggests that theory is '…likewise infused by practice'.

Within artistic research there exists the potential methodology of artistic experimentation as an open-ended entangling of music practice and theory, in the spirit of the 'boldness' of questioning context, self, past and present (Crispin & Gilmore, 2014: 9). Artistic experimentation, as practised by music researchers at the Orpheus Institute in Ghent, makes use of the notion of experimental systems, applied from the methods and reflections of molecular biologist Hans-Jörg Rheinberger. Rheinberger's observations on scientific experimentation contribute towards a methodological shift (for artistic experimentation) where science moves from a 'system of scientific experimentation' to a 'process of scientific experimentation' (De Assis, 2018: 112). Rheinberger's process-approach invites research to be conducted 'in' the system, rather than be conducted on or 'about' the system, and, as applied to arts research, artistic experimentation as process occurs 'in the arts', and not merely 'about the arts' (Raes, 2014: 55). Researchers at the Orpheus Institute[4], who concern themselves with process-directed research 'in' music through experimental systems, pose the following questions:

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[3] The level that Graeme Sullivan names 'self-reflexivity' concerns self-reflexive practice as 'an inquiry process […] directed by personal interest and creative insight, yet it is informed by discipline knowledge and research expertise' (2010:110).

[4] European scholars' engagement with experimental research questions can be viewed on the Orpheus Institute repository under artistic experimentation via this link: https://orpheusinstituut.be/en/projects?q=artistic-experimentation. The methodological projects of Lucia D'Errico, Kathleen Coessens, Michael Schwab, Gerhard Eckel, Catherine Laws, William Brooks, Stefan Östersjö, David Gorton, Valentin Gloor, Juan Parra Cancino, Jan Schacher, Bart Vanhecke, Anne Douglas, Paulo de Assis and Hans Roels, all of which is showcased on the website, share experimental work that aims to move beyond the accepted notions of performance conventions, embodiment, composition, collaboration, notation and improvisation. These projects do not articulate themselves as being concerned with decoloniality as a driving force for a delinking process from conventions and practices.

      For example, MusicExperiment21, led by principal investigator Paulo de Assis (2018: 11) aims to generate 'new modes of music performance and exposition' with visual and auditive stimulation that goes 'beyond the score'. Although the context of this project does not create an inclusive environment for other knowledge systems to infiltrate the experiment, the premises of MusicExperiment21 pose the possibility of incorporating decolonial thinking-doing-sensing-being. De Assis writes (2018: 12) that the notion of artistic experimentation encourages 'a critical willingness to constantly reshape thoughts and practices, to operate new distributions of the sensible, affording unpredictable reconfigurations of musical, artistic, social, and conceptual practices'. MusicExperiment21 is focused on changing 'European higher education' (de Assis, 2018: 12).

      A second pertinent example is called 'Declassifying the classics' (for more information please see here https://orpheusinstituut.be/en/projects/declassifying-the-classics). Tom Beghin's creative and imaginative processes with Beethoven's piano sonatas and the *Gehörmaschine,* create historically informed options for interpreting Beethoven's piano sonatas, writing articles, conducting research while strengthening an academic discourse and adding to an existing oeuvre of Beethoven piano sonata recordings available online. Beghin's work is a good example of how a colonial practice is reinscribed through contemporary practice in search for new knowledges.

      Both these examples potentially reinscribe colonial cultural categories through contemporary music experimentation and lay claim to a different sort of new knowledge to change European higher education. My own work in artistic research and artistic experimentation is a creative process to delink and to destabilize a European knowledge system from my global South perspective.

> What is the character, function, and potential of experimentation in musical practice? How does experimentation shape artistic identity and expertise, and how can it disclose aspects of embodied knowledge? How does artistic experimentation affect the development of musical practices, both historically and currently? How does artistic experimentation in music relate to other fields of human activity? (Crispin & Gilmore, 2014: 13)

These questions portray open-ended trajectories without homogeneous research outcomes. Bob Gilmore confirms such open-ended approaches by commenting that 'experimental work […] takes risks and asks provocative questions about method, material, working practices, and everything else [and] remains as rare and precious as ever' (Gilmore 2014: 28).

Brett Pyper (2020:25) writes that artistic research in contexts with colonial legacies such as South Africa 'requires attending to how [these] colonial legacies' operate; requires investigating 'how the notion of "art" is freighted' and further complicated in 'its recognition as—and its equation with—research'. 'Artistic research with music', he writes (2020:25), 'necessitates the ongoing reflection on how artistic research is affected when engaging with "musics" beyond the "Euro-American canon"', and (in mutual engagement) how these musics are morphed by theorised artistic research engagement.

My first interactions with a multi-instrumentalist from Lesotho who played the lesiba (a mouth resonated bow), and later a Mozambican multi-instrumentalist immersed in the Chopi timbila tradition, challenged me to encounter the endogenous through the decolonial imperative as processes of sound translation and working from and towards creative experimentation and artistic production. While my interaction with the texts on decoloniality prepared me for an idea of an encounter with the endogenous, potentially housed in the matrix of colonial legacies, the actual meetings with the lesiba and timbila indicated such seemingly disparate sound worlds from so-called classical concert practice, that I questioned my notions of the translation of sonic material. I was not ready for such an encounter and had to rethink what made me unsusceptible to this decolonial encounter. Ben Spatz (2019: 9) writes about 'decolonizing embodiment' in theatre practice and embodied arts. Quoting the work of Alison Bailey, he writes that 'white south Africans' should take steps to make themselves 'epistemologically and ontologically vulnerable' (Spatz, 2019: 21). Spatz (2019:21) further argues that embodied art practitioners must 'take steps towards deconstructing or at least better understanding' our own racialization in our embodied practice.

Adapting my approach from an intention to harvest sounds from the endogenous and translate these sounds to my practice, evolved instead into learning to theorise and practise the potentials of creative acts in connection to theorising knowledge production through a deconstruction of the self in my own practice. Decoloniality with artistic research and artistic experimentation, indicated pathways into theorising and practicing a clarinettist's decolonial aestheSis tautology in a global Southern context. I began to think of myself not as a translator, but to sense myself as a migrant. I was not translating in my practice, but migrating between worlds. Thus I became the migrant, and began to learn about the risks of migrancy, of never being at home, but also always being at home in a pluriverse of sonic worlds.

Improvisation

In my approaches to experimenting, improvisation increasingly posed openings for exploration, creating, and reflecting. I first encountered improvisation in the context of a workshop titled *MusicDance 021* (encounters which I write about in Chapter Four).[5] In writing journals on my experiences, I initially referred to my improvisation as 'free improvisation' to indicate liberation from a process of improvising and playing music without being directed by structural and tonal requirements of performing Western notated music. Practitioners and theorisers like Derek Bailey and Ben Watson, make a similar distinction in their distinguishing between 'jazz' improvisation, directed by tonal harmonic processes, as opposed to sonic, or free improvisation (Bailey, 1993: xi; Watson, 2004: 26–28). For me, improvising increasingly became an engagement with sound and music 'in the moment', with the impulses of reacting on sound with sound from 'sensorial observations and listening' (Neeman, 2014: 35).

I kept on improvising in my practice since the *MusicDance021* workshop. It became evident to me that the manner I was taught to play the clarinet as a Western performance practitioner has taught me to listen to sound very critically. While improvisation allows me to be 'free' from the expected standards of playing the clarinet, I embrace the knowledge that I learned in training my sensorial perception of listening to others and playing my own instrument with a basis of technique fostered through Western performance practice. In many ways, the idea of 'free' improvisation is then a paradox, as this sort of interaction with my instrument cannot simply rid itself of the life-long training and precisions embedded into my practice, but can perhaps delink from the superficial social conventions associated with Western performance practice and the musical work. I therefore engage with music improvisation in the way that Erik Jansen (2018: 1) argues is possible: as a way of focusing on the world. For me, improvisation is an interrelation of dialogues of sound open to translation. It is an activity that resembles aspects of 'one's being-in-the-world', as suggested by Marcel Cobussen (2017: 175). Cobussen (2017: 13) proposes that sound and music improvisation is less concerned with 'what improvisation is' and, instead, is interested in articulating 'how [improvisation] functions'. Engaging with improvisation through decolonial aestheSis evokes 'something new that imparts itself to our senses. It elicits an experience from which one emerges changed', as Elke Bippus (2013: 124) argues.

Notions of improvisation as being impulsive and taking place in the moment of performance (Eldson, 2013: 11,14) are broadened, and given depth, in my study, as I remind myself that my improvisation is directed by artistic research, self-reflexivity, and a siding with decolonial aestheSis as forms of confronting colonial aesthetics. Kitty Zijlmans and Janneke Wesseling (2017: 216) remind us that the artistic endeavour that connects to a particular enquiry, often emerges as a long-time interest and concern that morphs the practices of the artistic researcher. Improvisation as explored in this dissertation is potentially the beginning of a long-term process of experimenting with sound in

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[5] The *MusicDance 021* workshop is an ongoing workshop in South Africa that started in 2018 with dancers/movers and musicians. At this workshop I explored the idea of improvisation as a process of delinking from my own former classical concert practice.

decolonial aestheSis, a mode of doing-thinking-being-sensing that helps direct a delinking from a former concert-, score-based practice, and invites the endogenous to seep into and through my work as a creative intervention and a new inventiveness.

Chapter Layout

The chapters of this dissertation engages with sequential (and simultaneous) processes of research that I undertook. The chapters function as experimental responses to one another, so that the knowledges that emerged from phases of the study are transported from chapter to chapter as documentations of a process of discovery.

Chapter One highlights the underlying power of colonial education, viewed through my critical examination of the discourse of clarinet related dissertations that emerged from research produced locally over the past forty years.[6] I explore how research dissertations that relate to the clarinet (produced in South African tertiary institutions) have created a mode of what I call 'containment', or self-absorbed naivety. This containment is akin to Walter Mignolo's descriptions of a 'unity of the western code', which I equate to 'the unity of the clarinet sound'. I briefly consider how the clarinet's sound has remained uncontested in its refusal to sever itself from Western-directed music endeavours, and therefore refuses convincingly to engage a local cultural, social and political landscape, and have its core sound affected by such influences.

In Chapter Two I turn to my music 'practise room' and experiment with options of epistemological emancipation as a way of delinking from the constructs of my own undergraduate and post-graduate Western classical music education. I interrogate patterns of practice that have become embedded in my thinking and doing experiences. I then turn to experimentation, to posit that the practise room can be seen as a 'laboratory' (Brooks, 2014: 194; Cancino, 2014: 208) rather than a space for developing mere prowess and skilled control of a canonic repertoire. The practise room as laboratory is potentially able to uncover 'epistemic things' in sound (Schwab, 2014a: 113). Epistemic things, a term used by Michael Schwab but adapted from its original usage by Rheinberger, are things that

> present themselves in a characteristic, irreducible vagueness. This vagueness is inevitable because, paradoxically, epistemic things embody what one does not yet know. (2014a: 113)

This chapter engages with forms of reflexive writing and is the result of many hours of practising and writing in the laboratory space, with the aim of 'exploration and discovery' (Barrett, 2014: 107). Through articulating epistemic things in my clarinet sound, I evoke the idea of 'exposition' in the way that Anna Scott (2014: 378) finds 'laboratory notes' and other discursive modes of 'transformation

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[6] In this chapter I consider (with one exception) clarinet-related dissertations that were not the result of artistic-led research degrees, thus providing an overview of academic thinking about the clarinet in South Africa.

and presentation' that operate as notated excerpts that expose 'knowledge', as Michael Schwab also argues (Schwab, 2014a: 113).

Chapter Three engages with my interaction and translation of endogenous sounds that appeared to remain silenced, but existed as instrument bodies in the Percival Kirby Collection of Indigenous Instruments, held at University of Cape Town. Due to a restriction on engaging with the collection (a restriction that had been intended to prevent playing on the collected instruments) I developed notions about silenced voices, decolonial resistance and colonial harm; but I also searched for productive and interesting ways to engage sound and the endogenous, despite the restrictions. At about the same time when I was corresponding with the curator of the collection, I turned the concert stage of the Endler Hall at Stellenbosch University into a 'laboratory'. The hall, an iconic space for Western classical music concerts since the late 1970s, became a site for my solo improvisations as yet another a way of delinking from canonic concert practice. Improvisation sessions were video recorded and, from the recorded videos, I was able to explore Deborah Kapchan's (2017) concept of 'sound writing' by distilling a codified index of sounds. I viewed these sounds as 'epistemic things', and gave these to a fellow musician and composer to respond to through composition. In this third chapter these epistemic sounds exist in the realm of an 'unknown' potential from which a composition later emerges, the latter reported on in Chapter Five.

In Chapter Four I engage more fully with improvisation as a practice that helped me to delink from a former Western classical music canonic repertoire-directed training, and inspired me to search for novel sounds. I was first introduced to improvisation through *MusicDance 021*, a project that explored improvisatory dance and music collaborations. Looking back, I realise that collective music-making and movement improvisation richly influenced playing capacities that I was able to engage with whilst playing at the Kirby Collection. By the time I staged my performing encounter in the Kirby Collection, I had built a practice and a vocabulary, as well as a daring and an embracing of the risks involved in stepping out of a canonic repertoire-based tradition and into novel ways of doing and being a musician.

In the same (fourth) chapter, I then report on the live music session in the Kirby Collection where I improvised three short pieces (on my own instrument), created in real-time, and on the spot. This sonic event, as decolonial option, allowed me to experiment with my created sounds, engaging with the silent instruments that were present visually but not sonically. Together with my supervisors, and the curator of the collection, we engaged in thought-provoking discussions following on from each improvised solo clarinet piece. The chapter includes links to three improvisation sessions that took place that day.

Chapter Five discusses a public research event titled *Gateway*, featuring two music performances: a new collaborative composition with composer Pierre-Henri Wicomb, titled *It'll be a thing…* and followed by Igor Stravinsky's *Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo.* This chapter considers aspects of collaborative composition that initially harvested motifs from my index of sounds and led to a public research concert event. Looking back, I realise that *Gateway* as artistic research event reconfigured my former (classically-trained) notions about 'art' and 'research', 'artists' and 'researcher'. In the chapter I explore sounds as 'epistemic things' that posit a 'transpositional logic' as suggested by Michael Schwab (2018). I also articulate how I experienced the workings of decolonial aestheSis,

particularly in the dialogue that I created by jointly programming *It'll be a thing…* with Stravinsky's *Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo.* In this final dissertation chapter, a link is provided to view the *Gateway* event. The score of *It'll be a thing…* is included as an Addendum to the dissertation.

Chapter 1: The Unity of Clarinet Sound

Introduction

The unity of the clarinet sound is akin to what Walter Mignolo (2012: xii) refers to as the unity of the Western code. The Western code, which is a system of knowledge, proclaims to be a system of knowledge that serves all humanity, while in retrospect, Mignolo suggests, it only serves a small portion of humanity (Mignolo, 2012: xii). As a clarinettist embedded in a sound and an epistemology associated with this sound and its production, I aim to confront one of the dangers associated with decoloniality as a discourse. Catherine Walsh (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018: 82) writes:

> …there is the danger of thinking, imagining, and seeing decoloniality only from the outside of the matrix of modern/colonial power. Such thought and visioning not only limit the spheres of action, but they also blind eyesight of the decolonial cracks that exist within this matrix and system and that, in essence, complement and push toward the edges and border. For many of us, these cracks are the place of our location, agency, and everyday struggle.

I engage with decoloniality from my listening, embedded in my praxis, in order to grasp what it is that makes the unity of my clarinet sound so overpowering. The term praxis is used here in the manner that Walsh (2018: 50) refers to the concept through the work of Paulo Freire:

> Praxis, in a Freirian sense, is 'an act of knowing that involves a dialogical movement that goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action'.

Praxis, then, is more than the pragmatic engagement of the sound of the clarinet. It is also a critical and a theoretical engagement with a body of work through reflexivity, that presupposes the physical praxis of the instrument (Walsh, 2018:50). This chapter critically considers the discursive constructs of academic clarinet dissertations submitted at South African universities. In reading these dissertations, I attempt to discover how the clarinet sound is constructed academically as what I call 'the unity of the clarinet sound'. Working from inside the matrix of modern/colonial power represented by the unity of the clarinet sound, I attempt in this chapter to identify patterns, themes and topics that have created and maintained nomenclatures within a clarinet-related academic discourse. Once identified, these nomenclatures can be considered as themes and topics that may or may not obscure the decolonial cracks that might open towards the edges and the borders. I wish to use these nomenclatures of clarinet sound to inform my subsequent decisions about an appropriate academic clarinet discourse in my own work. Decoloniality poses the challenge critically to consider academic clarinet dissertations that participate in the construction of the unity of the clarinet sound, and through this process, to identify the risks in making choices and decisions about a delinked clarinet sound.

Analysis and Catalogue

Die komposisies vir klarinet van Suid-Afrikaanse komponiste by Leon Hartshorne, completed at Stellenbosch University in 1989, is a catalogue of South African clarinet compositions. Hartshorne was a clarinettist (Hartshorne, 1989: ii) and gives special recognition to a one Sibyl Whiteman, for her influence on his clarinet playing:

> Die skrywer dra hierdie tesis op aan Sibyl Whiteman wat met haar benadering, insig en onderrigmetodes 'n groot invloed op sy spel, belangstelling en liefde vir die klarinet gehad het.[7]

Hartshorne (1989: vi) writes in his summary that in the years leading up to writing the dissertation, clarinettists and lecturers have experienced problems in obtaining and knowing what clarinet compositions are written by South African composers. It is from this lacuna in clarinet repertoire that he writes his dissertation with the intent to assemble a catalogue of clarinet compositions composed between 1928 up to 1981.

The compositions are not discussed in a rigorous analytical manner, but rather with the intention to guide students in acquiring insight into each of the compositions through engagement. Practising the compositions, according to Hartshorne (1989: 1), is the best manner through which a clarinet student can get acquainted with the style of the composers' works. A total of eighteen male composers[8] are discussed. Through this selection of composers for their compositions, Hartshorne (1989: 4) establishes a structure of writing around each of the composers individually, by giving a short biography, discussing one or more compositions of the composer and finally grading the composition by level of difficulty. The biography includes dates of birth and death (where applicable) with a biographical scope encompassing music education ranging from first music tuition to tertiary education (where applicable) and further professional employment. The compositions range from solo works, sonatas and concerti. Each composition is discussed in terms of macro structure (form), tempo, key signature, range of the clarinet, examples of difficult passages from the score and, where applicable, the solo clarinet with clarinet accompaniment is graded according to difficulty. The grading of each composition ranges from being acceptable for examination performance purposes to being a concert piece for an audience (Hartshorne, 1989: 152).

A similar structure to Hartshorne's dissertation is used by Claire Louise Webb to expand the catalogue of South African clarinet compositions. Webb's 2005 master's dissertation, titled *An annotated catalogue of selected works for clarinet by South African composers*, was completed at

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[7] This dissertation is dedicated to Sibyl Whitemen, whose approach and teaching method had a big influence in the author's practice, interests and love for the clarinet.

[8] The composers catalogued by Hartshorne are: William Henry Bell, John Coulter, Dirk de Klerk, Jacques de vos Malan, Gerard, de Vries, Hubert du Plessis, Stefans Grové, Albrecht Holm, Peter Klatzow, Petrus J. Lemmer, Hans Maske, Graham Newcater, Arthur Willem Wegelin, Laurie Potgieter, Walter Swanson, Henk Temmingh, Klaas van Oostveen, Carl van Wyk.

the South African College of Music, University of Cape Town. It continues the work of Hartshorne by selecting clarinet compositions written from 1981 onwards (Webb, 2005: iii). Webb (2005: 1) selected composers for discussion as follows:

> …the widest possible definition of 'South African' was used, to include both composers born outside this country who have become South African citizens, and South Africans who have become foreign citizens.

Webb includes male and female composers[9] in the annotated catalogue, but her work follows the same trajectory set out by Hartshorne. Arranged by composer, she proceeds via the subheadings of biography, analysis, and grading (Webb, 2005: iv). Each subsection is more elaborate compared to Hartshorne's work. The biography is more expansive, while the analysis is focussed on the technical difficulties the clarinettist might experience while preparing each composition for performance. The performance level, according to the technical difficulties, is then graded according to the University of South Africa (UNISA) music examination board, ranging from the different grades to teacher's licentiate and performer's licentiate qualifications. As with Hartshorne, the grading system includes solo clarinet compositions and the clarinet compositions accompanied by piano (Webb, 2005: 1). Some of the compositions are noted to have already been included in the UNISA syllabus for the clarinet, while others are not (Webb, 2005: 10, 18, 21, 23, 32, 47, 51, 57, 60, 62, 78, 88).

The Hartshorne and Webb dissertations collect and discuss compositions in no specific order with regard to musical genre, yet Webb includes more composers and has a broader definition of what constitutes 'South African'. Hartshorne (1989: 4) discusses the composers in alphabetical order, while Webb (2005: iii) presents the compositions in chronological order according to the year of creation. Both dissertations are referenced by Justin Munro Carter in his 2015 master's dissertation titled *The South African clarinet concerto*. Carter's (2014: v) dissertation was completed at the South African College of Music, University of Cape Town. He (2014: v) writes:

> Ultimately, by examining all the sides of this musical story, and by keeping in mind the historical context and more in-depth examinations of the solo clarinet parts, this aspiringly ground-breaking discussion looks towards highlighting what amounts to a much under-valued genre within South African Music.

The dissertation structure of Carter follows the same trajectory as Hartshorne and Webb when it comes to discussing the composer[10] and the composition; yet there is expansion on the subheadings

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[9] The composers catalogued by Webb are: Priaulx Rainier, Ian Holloway, Stefans Grové, Hendrik Hofmeyr, Peri Lykiardopulos, Peter Klatzow, Ėtienne van Rensburg, Ashley Ross, Michael Blake, Alexander Johnson, Surendran Reddy, Robert Fokkens, Peggy-Aan Haddon, Allan Stephenson, Braam du Toit, Paul Loeb van Zuilenberg, Isak Roux, James Wilding, David Kosviner.

[10] The composers catalogued by Carter are: Allan Stephenson, Peter Klatzow, Thomas Rajna, Hendrik Hofmeyr, David Earl, Graham Newcater, Matthijs van Dijk, Roelof Temmingh.

(Carter, 2014: vi–viii). Carter codifies South African clarinet concertos not by grading the concerti for examinations, but rather by identifying the concerto as being 'premiered' or 'unpremiered' during the time of submitting the dissertation (Carter, 2014: 82). The details shared about each work include the work's duration, the number of pages of the score, the clarinet range of the work, the person or institutions responsible for the commissioning of the work, the person to whom the composition is dedicated, the date when the work was composed, the publisher of the work, the date and place of the premiere of the work, and information about an audio recording of the work (Carter, 2014: 2).

The 'biography' of each composer, and the 'background history' of each composition is similar to the information typically printed in a concert program, gesturing towards providing suitable information for audience members to form an idea of the composition before hearing it performed. The instrumentation of each composition is discussed, and a theoretical analysis outlines the structure of the composition and each movement. Main melodic material from the solo clarinet part is analysed, and musical examples and excerpts are included for the analysis. In response to this analysis, Carter includes 'technical observations' of the work. As a clarinettist, one assumes that these observations emanated from playing and practising the solo clarinet parts. Although he never writes about his practice, his suggestions to use alternative fingering for specific notes in melodic passages to create a clear clarinet tone for '…the matching of timbre…', in addition to commenting on the demand in embouchure control, references a musician's physical engagement with the music (Carter, 2014: 13, 25, 40, 63, 80). In examining and analysing the South African clarinet concerto genre, it is located in the lineage of the '…highly important clarinet concertos…' from composers like '…Copland, Nielsen, Hindemith, Francaix, Finzi, Corigliano, Penderecki, Rautavaara, and Lindberg among others.' (Carter, 2014: 98).

Historical Lineage

Allan Bruce Olivier completed his master's dissertation in 1985 in the Faculty of Arts, University of Pretoria. Olivier's dissertation, titled *The clarinet as an orchestral instrument in the years 1690 to 1830: Technical, artistic and historical developments*, states that 'The clarinet is the youngest member of the Classical symphony orchestra.' (Olivier, 1985: i). Olivier uses the classical symphony orchestra as context to document the development of the clarinet from the instrument's origin to establishing itself as an orchestral instrument. The origins of the clarinet are associated with the chalumeau created by Johann Christoph Denner, '…a folk instrument played with a single reed.' (Olivier, 1985: i). The development of the chalumeau is associated with the different types of wood used to create the body of the instrument, in addition to adding metal keys for the expansion of sound range. The construction of the instrument was done by several practitioners and technicians before 1830. In this dissertation it is investigated in three phases of development, linking the instrument in its technical construction to composers and sound development of the instrument.

First, the chalumeau, as a folk instrument, is traced and related to other folk instruments like the Brelka, Arghul, and Launeddas. These folk instruments are either played with a single reed, a double reed, or without a reed (Olivier, 1985: ii, 32). The comparison of the folk instruments and the chalumeau is offered as a possible link to the invention of a simplistic version of the clarinet, created and developed by the practitioner and technician Iwan Müller (Olivier, 1985: 33, 36, 42).

Second, the clarinet's development is located within two national '…schools of clarinettistry…', namely German and French (Olivier, 1985: 48, 55). The schools are identified by clarinet virtuosi – with Iwan Müller falling under 'the French school of clarinettistry' – and their contributions to the instrument through their playing. The process during which the clarinet was adopted as a standard instrument of the orchestra is subsequently traced. Initially the clarinet assumed a position of replacing or doubling other instruments in the orchestra like the oboe. It is from this initiative of ingression that the clarinet started to create a voice within the bigger orchestral sound by the practitioners, technicians and composers like Christopher Willibald Gluck, Joseph Haydn and most importantly Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Olivier, 1985: 74, 89, 91). According to Olivier (1985: 101, 127), it was only during the time of Haydn and Mozart, between 1770 to 1800, that the clarinet was identified as an orchestral instrument. During this time the score and notation was written specifically with the intention to incorporate the sound of the clarinet into the orchestra, rather than doubling on other orchestral parts.

Third, once the clarinet was introduced into the orchestra, several composers continued to incorporate the clarinet into their orchestral compositions. Olivier identifies some of these composers, in addition to Haydn and Mozart, to be Ludwig von Beethoven, Franz Schubert and Carl Maria von Weber (Olivier, 1985: 185, 222, 240). He evaluates the role played by the clarinet in some of the orchestral compositions of these composers through a form of analysis indicating the melodic and harmonic possibilities of the clarinet and the way it was put to use in the classical orchestra (Olivier, 1985: 267).

The orchestral development of the clarinet, and what is identified as an orchestral sound for the clarinet, is researched by Perica Zuvela in his master's dissertation completed in 2000 at the University of Pretoria with the title *The use of the clarinets and bass clarinet in combination with other instruments to portray the libretto of Puccini's opera* Tosca*.* The research is motivated from a practical perspective as clarinettist, playing Puccini's opera *Tosca* professionally in an 'opera orchestra'. It is from this practical experience that Zuvela (2000: 1–1) aimed to:

> …find a deeper understanding of the utilisation of the musical abilities of the clarinets and bass clarinet among the other instruments in creating the different atmospheres and for portraying the libretto in Puccini's opera *Tosca*.

In the process of trying to find a deeper understanding for the clarinet and bass clarinet in *Tosca*, Zuvela writes a short biography of Puccini (2000: 2–1), followed by a discussion about the libretto from the three acts of the opera (Zuvela, 2000: 3–1). After the initial introduction to create a context for the opera, Zuvela selects technical fundamentals of playing the clarinet, and how those technicalities should be incorporated by the player, as a way of identifying how the clarinet and bass clarinet create different atmospheres in the opera in relation to the libretto and other orchestral instruments. Zuvela uses musical excerpts from the score to indicate specific moments of atmospheric creation. He (2000: 4–1) starts with 'tonguing and articulation', giving a definition of this technical fundamental. Then the different styles of 'tonguing and articulation' are deduced from

the score, libretto and the sound effect that these texts imply. The different nuances of articulation are defined through the text in various sections:

Legato

Puccini uses legato articulation like a painter uses his brush: his strokes are short and long, slow and fast or thin and thick, depending on the desired sound effect. Puccini uses legato mainly to gather the notes of a melody in one continuous line. (Zuvela, 2000: 4–2)

Staccato

The staccato articulation has a role to create a transparent and devout atmosphere, which surrounds Tosca while she approaches the statue of the Madonna and arranges around it the flowers she has brought. (Zuvela, 2000: 4–5)

Staccatissimo

One of the most dramatic moments in the opera *Tosca* is a staccatissimo passage found in Act Two. Tosca has a conversation with Scarpia unaware that something horrible is taking place behind the closed door of the other room. At the moment when she realises what is going on in the torture chamber, Puccini employs a very effective tutti staccatissimo… (Zuvela, 2000: 4–9)

Staccato in combination with legato

Puccini often applies staccato articulation in combination with other articulation like legato for example. Staccato combination with legato between the last and first beat in mm.3-4, 5-6, 6-7, 7-8, 9-10, 10-11, and 11-12 suggest how Sacristan looks up at the scaffolding looking for Cavaradossi. He is surprised to find no one there. (Zuvela, 2000: 4–13)

Tenuto

The articulation in this case has a role to suggest a dramatic fight between Tosca and Scarpia. Scarpia pursues her round the room and Tosca screams" "Aiuto! Aiuto!", meaning "Help me! Help me!" Tenuto articulation illustrates Tosca's resistance to Scarpia. (Zuvela, 2000: 4–14)

Non legato

> Non legato articulation is used mainly by Puccini when he wants to emphasise clarity of rhythm and increase a tightness of atmosphere. Most often non legato articulation in the clarinets' lines follows the general articulation for all instruments. (Zuvela, 2000: 4–18)

Throughout the dissertation, Zuvela writes about technical fundamentals for tonguing and articulation. More technical fundamentals discussed in the dissertation includes the role of the clarinet when playing in unison with the voice (Zuvela, 2000: 5–1), the clarinet playing solo material when accompanying the voice (Zuvela, 2000: 5–6), and shorter clarinet and bass clarinet solos (Zuvela, 2000: 5–22) with the use of embellishments such as trills and tremolos (Zuvela, 2000: 5–30). Over the course of this dissertation, the discussion turns to analysing compositional techniques by Puccini and then implying that the compositional technique creates the atmosphere that Zuvela is trying to identify through clarinet and bass clarinet playing. In chapter 6, Zuvela analysis the dynamic aspects of the clarinet by stating:

> As far as dynamic range and control are concerned, the clarinet has more complete control over this form of expression than any other solo instrument, wind or string. The clarinet can reduce its warm round tone to an incredibly soft whisper and can achieve the subtlest nuances of colour and phrasing. (2000: 6–1)

The clarinet controls its dynamics within the range of *ppp* (very soft) and *fff* (very loud), and in between this range applies the use of accents to emphasise dramatic effect and atmosphere (Zuvela, 2000: 6–12). Zuvela sketches a portrait of the clarinet's technical capabilities through the work of the composer, giving the instrument an image of dominance among other orchestral instruments.

A similar portrayal of the clarinet and its technical capacities through the musical repertoire of composers is presented in the 2010 master's dissertation by Yu-Chi Wei. Completed at the South African College of Music, University of Cape Town, Wei's dissertation, *The historical development of the clarinet with special reference to its musical repertoire*, retraces the development of the clarinet from the Baroque period to the late nineteenth century (Wei, 2010: 1). Where the dissertation by Olivier in 1985 briefly researched the development of the clarinet from the chalumeau, Wei's dissertation aims to close the 'lacunae' in the existing literature of the instrument and its repertoire '…to present a closer understanding of the development of the instrument.' (Wei, 2010: 1).

The intention by Wei to present a closer understanding of the instrument is thus framed by retracing the development of the instrument in establishing a relationship that exists between the instrument and its repertoire. In doing so, Wei (2010: 5) includes a discussion of solo clarinet repertoire and orchestral repertoire in the dissertation:

> A minimum of three different works in each period between the Baroque and late-Classical or early-Romantic period, which is the period during which the development of the instrument settled, will be compared and placed in the context of clarinet development.

Wei (2010: 5) then continues to write:

> The music analysis in the dissertation is not the typical musical analysis of form
> and structures. It is more focused on the range of notes, the register, the
> dynamics, difficult passages, and the relationship between the accompanist and
> the clarinet, or the orchestra and the clarinet.

Wei constructs a meticulous historical development of the clarinet through the international seminal clarinet texts of Jack Brymer, Eric Hoeprich, Colin Lawson, Francis Geoffrey Rendall, Albert Rice, and Pamela Theodora Weston, to name but a few, who all wrote and published extensively on the clarinet's practice and development, also in the context of Historically Informed Practice.

In the 2016 doctoral dissertation of Becky Stelzner (the clarinet teacher of Wei (2010: iii)), completed at the South African College of Music, University of Cape Town, the historical development of the clarinet is made context specific to South Africa. Stelzner's doctoral dissertation, which is also a '...practice-based…' degree, is titled *The history of the clarinet in South Africa*. It claims that:

> There is a need for the historical study of individual instruments in South Africa,
> because the only studies of this kind to date have been general, either to an
> instrument group, e.g. wind instruments, or military bands in South Africa, or to a
> city such as Durban, Grahamstown, Johannesburg, or Port Elizabeth, or to a
> region such as the West Transvaal, or to a genre such as chamber music in South
> Africa. (2016: 1)

The study set out to use as many primary historical sources as possible. Yet, due to the nature of South African history, the process, according to Stelzner

> … has its own distinct set of problems of researching: no newspapers, a relatively
> illiterate society, very few journals or letters written to the size of the society,
> etc. Conclusions cannot always be drawn because of this lack of references. In
> several cases, a conclusion can only be listed as 'probable'. (2016: 2)

Stelzner's dissertation, in the process of researching the South African history of the clarinet, unintentionally leads to the discovery of historical traces of other European instruments in South Africa, such as flutes and oboes (Stelzner, 2016: 3). In addition, in unearthing primary sources referencing the clarinet, Stelzner's work provides insight into the compositions that were performed by traveling clarinettists in South Africa (Stelzner, 2016: 5). Based on this aspect of the research, Stelzner argues that the 'creative component' of her study is located in a performance of the compositions performed during the timeline covered of the conducted research:

> For the practice-based part of this research, five recitals were given. To integrate research and practice, some works were chosen to match a specific reference, and others were chosen because they were the type of general repertoire that would have been played by any of the professionals, students or good amateurs working or studying within South Africa. (2016: 5)

The selection of repertoire for the five recitals was based on the references from concert programs, radio broadcast list recordings, newspaper articles, and references to popular 'opera tunes' to choose and create a '…balanced programming for every recital.' (Stelzner, 2016: 6). Her first recital included Olivier Messiaen's *Quartet for the end of time* (Stelzner, 2016: 170), while the second recital was compiled around the clarinet sonata in f minor, op 120, no.1 by Johannes Brahms with clarinet compositions by Gregoria Sciroli, Paul Jeanjean, and Robert Muczynski (Stelzner, 2016: 173). These works were selected as ' … standard repertoire item[s]…' that form part of the repertoire lists from examination boards like the Associated Board of Royals Schools of Music (ABRSM) and Trinity College of London (Stelzner, 2016: 7).

Recital number three included five works, including two works that have appeared on the broadcasting and recording list of the South African Broadcast Corporation: Arthur Benjamin's *Le tombeau de ravel*, and Witold Lutoslawski's *Dance preludes* (Stelzner, 2016: 7). The other three works for this recital included two solo compositions – homages to Johann Sebastian Bach and Manuel de Falla – composed by Béla Kovács, and a sonata by Charles V. Stanford (Stelzner, 2016: 175). The fourth recital was the world première of Hendrik Hofmeyr's *Concerto for clarinet*, which at the time of its performance was considered the latest addition to the South African clarinet repertoire (Stelzner, 2016: 7). The performance of the Hofmeyr concerto formed part of a symphony concert program preceded by the *Ruslan and Ludmilla overture* by Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka, and followed by the Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125 (the "Choral") by Ludwig von Beethoven (Stelzner, 2016: 177).

Recital five was a lecture-demonstration with a selection of works arranged and based on the chronological findings of the research by references found in the research process. The lecture demonstration aimed to cover all the periods relevant to the findings in the form of a lecture, by making the programming of recital five a play-through of single movements from selected compositions (Stelzner, 2016: 8). Stelzner's (2016: 7) lecture demonstration focused on three specific areas:

> a) the 19th century references, particularly the earliest ones and the known solo performances; b) the earliest compositions written in South Africa, or by South Africans, for solo clarinet; c) the latest composition (as of the recital date) written by a South African.

The movements and pieces of composers performed during the lecture-demonstration included Ludwig von Beethoven (1770-1827), Vincenzo Righini (1756-1812), Franz Anton Hoffmeister (1754-

1812), Jean-Xavier Lefèvre (1763-1829), Ali-Ben-Sou-Alle (1824-?), William Henry Bell (1873-1946), Walter Swanson (1903-1985), Stefans Grové (1922-2014), Priaulx Rainier (1903-1986), Petrus Lemmer (1896-1989), and Hendrik Hofmeyr (b.1958) (Stelzner, 2016: 180).

Tone Quality

The 1995 master's dissertation by Stefanus Nicolaas de Villiers, *Clarinet tone production: An acoustical approach*, was completed at the University of Port Elizabeth, today known as Nelson Mandela University. De Villiers's dissertation aims to document the accepted conversational notions of clarinet playing associated with tone production amongst clarinet players and teachers (De Villiers, 1995: 1). The departure point for this dissertation is the unwritten conversational knowledge of clarinet playing among teachers and students in describing tone quality of the clarinet (De Villiers, 1995: 6). The tone quality of each clarinettist considered in this dissertation is considered different,

> …even when they play on the same instrument, mouthpiece and reed combination. This is particularly noticeable when an experienced clarinettist and a beginner pupil produce a sound on the same instrument, mouthpiece and reed combination. (De Villiers, 1995: 1)

Each clarinettist has a particular tone quality, yet the lineage of tone quality, according to De Villiers (1995: 1), starts with the teacher-student relationship framed by the tone quality cultivated by the teacher. Tone quality development is described as follows: The student does not have a tone quality in mind when starting out with the clarinet; therefore, the tone quality of an inexperienced pupil will ultimately become that of the teacher who introduces tone quality during the lesson. As the student becomes more advanced, the initial tone quality of the teacher may present different nuances of sound allowing the student to '…experimenting with tone quality.' (De Villiers, 1995: 6). The type of 'experimenting' De Villiers (1995: 6, 7) refers to here is described as follows:

> …at an advanced level of playing, clarinettists should be able to adjust tone quality to suit musical demands dictated by a conductor, or to accommodate a particular style of playing called for when performing a particular piece of music. Some advanced pupils seem to have little difficulty in adapting their style of playing when required, while others struggle to meet such musical demands.

The musical demands of experimenting with tone quality is then further elaborated to categorise students according to their musical abilities. Some students are more 'natural' in adapting their sound for 'experimenting', while others are not. The 'naturals', those who can instinctively adhere to the change of 'tone quality nuances',

> …sadly, often become the teachers of tomorrow and do not know how to solve tone production problems which the majority of their pupils experience. (De Villiers, 1995: 7)

The 'correct' tone quality for achieving the different nuances required, is then acoustically researched through a recollection of the international schools of clarinet playing (De Villiers, 1995: 8). The dissertation lists the sound control parameters for tone production on the clarinet by discussing an in-depth analysis of the embouchure required to play the clarinet. The research scope of the instrument, for this section, is directed towards the reed, mouthpiece, and ligature and the facial muscle tone of the lips, chin, cheek bones, nasal and oral cavity (De Villiers, 1995: 8).

De Villiers (1995: 7) conducts an in-depth discussion with regard to the pronunciation of vowels and where they sound within the vocal tract and mouth. This procedure makes it possible for the researcher to investigate the role that the facial muscles, tongue, lips and vocal tract play in the production of sound. The conclusion states that acoustical research results have made it possible to assist teachers in understanding the complexities of embouchure control for a beginner clarinet player and a professional clarinet player (De Villiers, 1995: 109). In addition, De Villiers assures clarinet players that the type of instrument should not have the upper-hand in defining a professional sounding clarinettist. Rather the technique and understanding of the instrument, combined with the facial muscles, are the most important factors in cultivating acoustically recognisable properties of the clarinet framed within the educated teaching of the clarinet (De Villiers, 1995: 113).

My own dissertation, *The life of Jimmy Reinders and his approach to teaching the clarinet* (2015) was submitted at Stellenbosch University. In this research I engage with a contemporary approach to understanding the technical fundamentals of the clarinet, and playing the instrument for a specific tone quality. I do this by investigating the life of Jimmy Reinders as a teacher and clarinettist:

> The aim of this thesis is to understand and investigate Jimmy Reinders's approach to the technical fundamentals of the clarinet, his choice of clarinet and accessories and to place this information within the context of the major international clarinet schools. (Liebenberg, 2015: 2)

This investigation into Reinders's life and teachings is intended to understand how the international schools of clarinet playing have had a direct influence on the teaching style of a South African clarinettist. This understanding then generates information and references to the international schools of clarinet playing, in order to grasp Reinders's perception of a 'good' sound:

> …Reinders' choice of 'sound quality' on the clarinet [which] is defined by Reinders as a dark, resonant, warm, broad and rounded sound, over the entire range of the clarinet. (Liebenberg, 2015: 6)

The modern-day clarinet, and the approach towards the clarinet through the lens of Reinders, is used in this research as a means to retrace the historical development of the clarinet with specific reference towards the clarinet mouthpiece, reed, barrel and ligature, i.e. the clarinet 'set-up' (Liebenberg, 2015: 35). This set-up is defined and identified by Reinders's understanding of creating

a 'good clarinet sound' and how to sustain this sound quality with specific relation towards the technical challenges, or fundamentals of playing the instrument (Liebenberg, 2015: 47). The technical fundamentals for playing the clarinet (2015: 47–59) include embouchure, tone, vibrato, tonguing, finger technique, breathing technique and breath support. In addition to the technical fundamentals, the dissertation includes a 'Recommended Course of Study', referencing technique books that can be used to enhance Reinders's choice of sound quality. The information gathered for this dissertation was based on a student-teacher relationship. Practical preparation of specific repertoire applying some of the 'technical fundamentals' was used as a departure point to discuss and gather information during practical lessons with Reinders (Liebenberg, 2015: 1).

Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, I proposed assessing how clarinet sound is constructed academically as a way of knowing that imposes a Eurocentric imaginary on performance. Each of the dissertations discussed in this chapter made a specific contribution to this construct from a very particular praxis. Collectively, they point to the risks involved in working unreflectively from within a praxis. Hartshorne, Webb and Carter expand information on South African compositions for the clarinet. Hartshorne's thesis establishes the idea that a South African clarinet tradition is grounded in a repertoire, that the repertoire is grounded in the white male composer, and that an engagement with that repertoire is a graded affair allowing examinable entry into the practice. Webb continues with this work, but introduces an expanded definition of 'South African' in her study, as well as a sensitivity to the presence of gender in the construct of the tradition. In this respect her work shows an increased awareness of the situatedness and representativity of academic discursive constructs surrounding the clarinet, although it would be going too far to assert that the work is self-reflexive in a decolonial way. Carter locates the South African clarinet concerto squarely in an Anglo-American genealogy. He assumes a reader that resembles a South African concertgoer, typically a white middle-class music enthusiast. Although his writing shows evidence of practical engagement with the instrument, there is little to suggest that he sees that practical engagement as the source for a different epistemological approach to clarinet sound. In all of these academic texts, the clarinet is firmly embedded in a discursive appendage to a larger Eurocentric narrative. Documentation, one could argue, functions as a way to motivate for this narrative, to justify its presence, to naturalise its practices in South Africa.

What is remarkable about Olivier's dissertation, is that his historical study documents a European history of the clarinet which had already been documented (Brymer, 1976; Kroll, 1968; Rendall, 1954; Street, 1916; Weston, 1977). In a way his shadowing of an already documented European narrative constitutes its academic domestication in South Africa. Even more significant is that his history includes a reference to the folk origins of the clarinet, without any acknowledgement that the evolved instrument exists in South Africa in a geographical space with very different folk music traditions. A historical awareness of this juxtaposition is entirely absent from the sensibility of the

writer.[11] For Zuvela the clarinet sound is embedded in a composer-focused study of repertoire. This dissertation emphasises how the clarinet sound is viewed as an outcome of creative, white, male genius. It would have been possible, for example, to probe questions concerning atmosphere creation in contexts of dramatisation in more experimental contemporary and South African settings. But for Zuvela these matters are logically and naturally addressed in the context of Puccini's writing for the clarinet.

Wei's dissertation, again, traces the development of the clarinet. As was the case with Olivier's dissertation, the observation can be made that this historical narrative can only be recounted through secondary sources that had already done the primary historical work. It is difficult to view this kind of postgraduate work as anything other than work with a pedagogical purpose, in other words a topic calculated to inculcate the writer into an already documented history. In a very particular way, the regurgitation of past research done elsewhere, is a form of containment and entrainment, proposing research as an extension of the professional vocation of playing an instrument (by understanding its past, its repertoire, and the history of its technique). Wei concludes her dissertation by stating that the instrument has reached a limit in its design (Wei, 2010: 94). It is then when '...the new clarinet spread widely throughout Europe, and even extended to America.' (Wei, 2010: 95). This sentence implies that with the completion of the instrument's design, the possibilities for exploring its sound had also reached a historical end point. In this sense, Wei's dissertation points towards an understanding of instrument design as a perceived understanding of containment, together with earlier indices of containment like repertoire and established conventions of technique. The idea that the clarinet sound could continue to evolve, as for instance in Historically informed practice or experiments like those of Swedish clarinettist Martin Fröst,[12] is not acknowledged.

Stelzner's doctoral dissertation is a remarkable example of the cul de sac represented by South African academic engagements with the clarinet. As a practice-based degree, it is unique among the literature discussed here in its potential to depart from constrictive affirmations of history, repertoire, or pedagogical aspects of technique. However, Stelzner explains her application of practice-based research in her dissertation as follows:

> To integrate research and practice, some works were chosen to match a specific reference, and others were chosen because they were the type of general repertoire that would have been played by any of the professionals, students or good amateurs working or studying within South Africa. (Stelzner, 2016: 5)

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[11] Unfortunately, Olivier's PhD dissertation completed at UNISA could not be acquired due to the corona virus pandemic, as the digitization of the 1990 dissertation has not yet occurred. Stelzner referenced this dissertation as a reference for the type of research work being done on the clarinet.

[12] The work of Swedish clarinettist Martin Fröst challenges this idea. Fröst has created, written, and re-imagined the compositions of Antonio Vivaldi for the clarinet. His 2020 album, titled *Vivaldi*, entails creating a voice for the clarinet from the sound identity of Vivaldi, who had never written compositions for the clarinet. This project, in my opinion, reinscribes coloniality in contemporary clarinet practice.

From the compositions, composers, and clarinettists identified while searching for the origins of the clarinet, Stelzner selects the repertoire for four concert recitals and one lecture demonstration (Stelzner, 2016: 7). The well-rounded programming of the recitals, however, does not provide the connection between theory and practice one would expect of a study that claims to a practice-based research degree. Practice-based research is the fusion process of theory and practice to destabilise the equilibrium of practice and theory through reflection. It should be clear that the mere selection of composition titles culled from specific references to compile performance programmes, amounts to a highly unusual understanding of practice-based research at best. Its effect, however, is to use a research methodology useful in dislodging epistemes of containment, to confirm those very epistemes.

In conducting primary research on the history of the clarinet in South Africa, Stelzner acts on similar impulses to earlier academic dissertations that attempted to create a sphere of interiority (to evoke Peter Sloterdijk (2011: 83,84)), for the clarinet in South Africa. Other writers attempted to do this by showing how a South African repertoire had sprung up around the instrument, whereas Stelzner wishes to show that primary documentation contributes to this new shared space outside the West. In this sense Stelzner's study is still part of a process to contain the instrument in its existing mode of being. Practice-based research does pose a possibility to re-write the history of individual woodwind instruments in South Africa, but that surely requires that such instruments not be returned uncritically to their original early colonial contexts to justify and perpetuate old ideas about performance, clarinet sound and the relationship between performance and ideas.

The clarinet sound, and the desired tone of the clarinet sound, emerges from all of these academic engagements with the clarinet as a major preoccupation of the writers. The desired sound seems to be a beautiful tone, a tone colour that pays homage to a development of performance practice developed through a particular repertoire, and a lineage of sound cultivation passing from teacher to student. This sound is without exception imagined as associated with the sound capacity of orchestral, chamber and soloist sounding instruments. De Villiers states in the opening section of his dissertation that there is very little personal latitude for developing sound when it comes to the way teachers expect students to learn, for if a student is not a natural sound copy of the teacher, the student sound has to be corrected (De Villiers, 1995: 7). He does not seem to notice the discrepancy between this point of view, and the following statement:

> It can therefore be concluded that the exact extent to which a player employs resonances inside the vocal tract to affect the waveform of the clarinet is a matter of personal taste and preference. (De Villiers, 1995: 113)

The teacher-student paradigm of learning sound and of playing with sound does not allow for the development of individuality in sound production. This is very clearly illustrated in my own dissertation about Jimmy Reinders. Reinders as a teacher was fixed in his thinking about the tone quality for a good clarinet sound. In my dissertation I aimed to place his perception of a good clarinet sound within the sound qualities of the international clarinet schools. Yet, when confronted with a clarinet sound that did not fit into his frame of reference, Reinders did not know what to do

other than to advise a changing of my sound to emulate his personal understanding of what a good clarinet sound should be. My performance master's degree program included three clarinet lessons a week. As a way of protecting what I felt to be my individual sound, I decided to turn each lesson into an interview giving Reinders a chance to focus on formulating his own knowledge through explication, in order to avoid him compromising my sound with a perception of what it should rather be. My own earlier academic work was, on the face of it, part of an academic engagement with containment in its desire to document the perspective of a clarinet teacher, who in turn was a link in a pattern of transmission connecting the clarinet to conventional Eurocentric performance ideals connected to repertoire, history and technique. And yet, leading to this doctoral dissertation, I sensed those cracks that Catherine Walsh writes about as a decolonial sensibility in my struggle for my agency and sound as a musician and a writer.

Chapter 2: The Practise Room

Introduction

This chapter is part of a written exploration about being in the practise room, an exercise in writing about the embodied and enacted state of practice for the experimentational opportunity it presents in written text (Wilson, 2018: vii). The practical musician has embodied practices of preparation that can only be encountered by being in the practise room. Not one practise room session can be repeated to replicate a previous one. One concern with this process of writing about practice and being in the practise room, is finding a style of writing that is clear and descriptive, which features as a translation for the creative process itself:

> Giving linguistic expression to one's research is work that demands as much dedication and commitment as creative work does. Moreover, writing is not just practice, but is creative work itself, a constructive process that enables the emergence of the new and the unforeseen. Every writer has that experience of accessing new ground while trying to formulate conjectures. (Wilson, 2018: viii)

In the process of creating a context for the relationship between art practice and writing, in this case, practice preceded the writing, and then the writing infused the practice. Once the roles of practice and writing were established, the one could not proceed without the other. When practice failed practice, writing was used to stimulate practice. When writing failed writing, practice was used to stimulate writing. [13]

The Practise Room

Warm-up

It is 6:55 am on a Wednesday. The white building is dark, it is early May. The student card beeps access through the titanium glass door. In the Neethling Street foyer, (the 'poort'), the streetlights reflect their receding light that merges into the corridors of darkness. In the practise room a couple of sound boards hang from the railing near the ceiling. The floor is a hard, carpetless surface and the upright piano is pushed against the wall. A big rectangular window reflects my image, as does a half-size mirror against the wall. I place my clarinet case on the piano and unpack and assemble it. The final selection of a reed. The pattern is familiar. At exactly 7am, the sound of air moves through the room. The practise room in the Conservatoire warms up with sound. The practise room is engaged.

I open Paul Jeanjean's book on the first page. The composer condenses clarinet-technique into a book with six special etudes meant to render the fingers and tongue rapidly supple. It is a thin book,

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[13] The music excerpts in this section was created by the author from examples of notation presented in the clarinet technique book by Paul Jeanjean.

its pages slightly larger than A4, making it awkward to copy or scan. Jeanjean joined my practise room collection in 2013 when I visited the United Kingdom. The British clarinettist Richard Hoshford remarked: 'You know what is a really good book to work from? The *Vamecum*. It's great! Covers all the bases when you have to play a lot of performances and don't have time for too much practicing'. The next day, at the Royal College of Music, lesson three of six, this time with Hoshford's colleague Timothy Lines. He also advises me to acquire what sounds like the '*Vamecum*'. At the book shop, the librarian assists me in finding the title: *Vade-Mecum*. *Vade-Mecum* means something that is regularly carried out by a person, derived from Latin, to go with me, as a pocketbook containing memorised gems of wisdom.

Ever since, these little clarinet gems in the *Vade-Mecum* have been a source of both comfort and frustration. They are perfect for exercising time management while practising, knowing that once they are perfected I have managed time and perfected the frustrating task of practising technique perfectly.

Etude 1

Special trills played with long legato lines. Starting from the lowest note possible to play on the clarinet, and interchanging the pitch by a semi-tone upwards, repeat note combination with semi-tone interval for four metronome beats totalling sixteen notes per bar. Bar one's note combination is therefore E and F. I let the left-hand little finger find the rhythm and set the tempo for what is to follow. On the last note of bar one, I change the pitch chromatically with a semi-tone upwards, and then again downwards, repeating this combination for another four beats. Bar two's note combination is G-flat and F. Left-hand little finger still going at it, slowly and surely finding a steady activation in the different finger phalanges. After the last note of bar two, I transition back to bar one. Once I've reached the last note of bar one, which is bar three, I transition a tone upwards for G and F interval change.

My right-hand is my dominant hand, however after the left-hand little finger was doing most of the work for the first three bars, the right-hand little finger is still asleep to some extent. It takes some concentration to find my body's midline, centring in a seated position on the chair. At the end of bar four, I repeat bars one to four by echoing the group patterning and dividing the number of notes per bar, by two. Therefore, bars five and six constitute a shortened version of bars one to four with eight note groups, instead of sixteen note groups per bar. A slightly smoother transition occurs between the left-hand little finger and right-hand little finger as the interchanging notes are halved in their values. Bars one to four are to be executed with a *sforzando* in sound on the first note of each bar. Bars five and six require a *sforzando* on note one and note nine. Apart from the starting note, each *sforzando* is to be preceded with a two-note crescendo and ended with a two-note decrescendo. The first note of the exercise must start with a *sforzando* decrescendo and the last note with a long held decrescendo for four beats.

It is critical to process and channel the amount of air that needs to be released from the body in order to maintain a focussed tone up to the last note of the exercise. The last bar is a long-held note of four beats of the opening note pitch. The blood starts to stream to the lips as they warm up and the concentration of embouchure muscles is activated. A slight perspiration forms on my upper lip

with my ears popping open as resistance from the reed is encountered. I start by playing the first exercise in Etude 1 at 60 beats per minute. Each exercise can be considered complete if it has been executed with the correct dynamics and the flow of notes within the subdivided parameters of the metronome without feeling the need to enhance the exercise in tone colour. The purpose of this etude is to render the fingers supple.

Figure 1. Excerpt from Vade-Mecum

Etude 1 has a profound effect on the chest and the capacity to release stale air from the body in a controlled manner. Not an unconscious release of the air, but a conscious flow of exhalation so as to meet the resistance of the reed. Due to the nature of playing slow notes for an extended amount of time, any tension in the body will impede the clarinettist from completing an exercise in one breath. A repositioning of posture occurs after every exercise is played and sometimes during the exercise. Shoulders are 'pulled' back, with the navel pulling to the spine as the lower spine is then lengthened to the top of the neck, creating space for oxygen to fill all corners of the chest. Playing the exercises slowly at 60 beats per minute, encourages a relaxed posture in neck, shoulders, chest, arms, hands, fingers and fingertips. Embouchure control is required to function in optimal capacity for dynamic control and tone colour.

Once all twenty exercise structures, moving chromatically upwards per exercise, have been played, I repeat all twenty of them at 120 beats per minute. If one can do it slowly, one can also do it fast: breath support is easier, the fingers slide from one key to another, closing and opening the holes on the clarinet to manipulate the pitch sound. The body starts to heat-up with the embouchure muscles of the lips. The last note of the etude resonates for the second time in the practise room.

Etude 4

There is little time to work through etudes 2 and 3. The purpose of a well-rounded practise room session is, after all, to cover the basics and have enough time to play other music. The process of moving from one reed to a next reed is swift. I unscrew the ligature from the mouthpiece and replace the reed. Etude 1 doesn't have to be played on a specific reed as it is meant to awaken the

senses of the body through whichever form of sound the reed deems fit to produce. That is not the case with Etude 4.

Etude 4, articulation on the clarinet, or tonguing, is a tricky exercise. It has to be light enough, fast enough, and articulate enough for most of the standard repertoire that require 'virtuosity' from the clarinettist. Therefore, I play on each read to find one that sounds light and easy in tone as it enhances the articulation exercise. In short, selecting the correct reed for the exercise has an effect on the feeling associated with 'virtuosity'.

According to practise room guiding sessions (clarinet lessons), the best manner to articulate is with the tip of the tongue to the tip of the reed. It's like gently touching the corner of a paper's edge with the tip of the tongue, without allowing the triangle shape of the corner to lose its original form. The reed, however, is sharp at the edge, which makes it a focused exercise to let the tip of the tongue merely stroke the edge of the reed to stop its vibration for a split second. If the tongue can hit the reed on the same spot every time, a lightness in sound is created from the smallest possible muscle effort of the tongue. If the tip of the tongue hits the reed with more force than is intended, the tip of the tongue becomes smooth, and eventually raw. Sometimes, it could result in a very small tear on the tip of the tongue, leaking small amounts of blood onto the reed and into the mouthpiece. Most of the time, I don't bleed for my music; however, on rushed days, the raw sensation of the tongue is the only guideline for when to stop hitting the reed.

I play Etude 4 on more or less 60 to 70 beats per minute. I concentrate on keeping the tongue close to the reed. If the distance between the reed and the tongue is very small, then the exercise of playing the notes will sound easier. Each note is written twice, following the six-eight time signature in notation. Two groups of eight sixteenth notes count as two beats per bar. Soft monotone sound in the low register makes it easier to listen to the heaviness of the tongue. Most of the time the notes are repeated, as I play each pitch twice and then move on to the next pitch repeating the same pattern. Sometimes there is a slur assisting the pitch from one note to another, allowing the tongue to take rest. The pattern is somewhat inconsistent in pitch, but consistent in articulation.
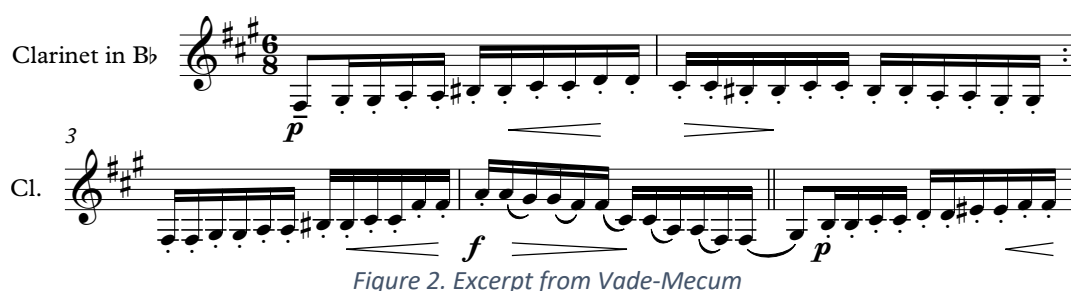

Figure 2. Excerpt from Vade-Mecum

The exercise is long and tedious. Halfway through Etude 4, the double repeated notes are replaced with triplets. Slurring the first note of each triplet group to a different pitch adds a pouncing sound effect for the tongue. The articulation sound changes from being clumsy to smooth and supple.

Figure 3. Excerpt from Vade-Mecum

Although Jeanjean did not intend for this exercise to be used in different ways, it is a wonderful opportunity to experiment with double-tonguing on the clarinet. I remember the instruction of my trumpet teacher concerning double-tonguing, 'Tu-Ku'. The 'tu' sound happens in the front of the mouth, as the tongue touches the back of the front teeth. The 'ku' sound happens at the back of the mouth, purposefully spitting out the 'k' consonant. If the 'tu-ku' is repeated quickly and then repeated again, double-tonguing sound is established.

Figure 4. Excerpt from Vade-Mecum with 'tu-ku'

Trumpet double-tonguing is different from clarinet double-tonguing. The 'tu' sound cannot be made on the back of the teeth. It must be made while stroking the reed of the clarinet with the tongue. Then the 'ku' can be made in the back of the throat. 'Tu-ku' in the low register of the clarinet sounds good, soft, quick and light; however, as soon as the exercise escalates into the higher register of the clarinet, the throat starts to constrict and the sounds of 'tu-ku' escape their pronunciation. The sound loses focus, and becomes rough. The constricting of the throat creates a mumbling from the vocal cords. It is soft, yet the voice behind the 'tu-ku' screams for attention as the neck muscles are strained in order to forcefully perform double-tonguing.

Some clarinettists have mastered the art of playing double-tonguing, although as a woodwind technique it is mainly associated with the flute, oboe and bassoon. My voice murmurs and mumbles in the back of my throat.

Experiment 1

Would it be possible to sound two voices on the clarinet? The Bel Canto school of clarinet playing, associated with the Italian school of singing, has a strongly recognisable place in my clarinet education. When I was taught to play the instrument, I was also taught to sing with the instrument. Most woodwind players know that singing while playing enhances the musicality of any melodic line.

Of course, singing while playing is a contradiction. It is impossible literally to sing the melodic line of Aaron Copland's clarinet concerto and produce a clear tone on the clarinet. The expression is meant figuratively in order to enhance phrasing, memorise the music, and much more. A great deal of air needs to pass through the vocal cords to create a stream of motion hitting the resistance of the reed on the mouthpiece. The vocal cords must remain open in order to let enough air through.

When singing, the vocal cords have the capacity to create sound with the minimal flow of air through them. So how do I play the clarinet and sing, simultaneously? It is useful to imagine a drone, humming to the most natural pitch of my vocal cords and body. Once the drone has been established, I open my mouth and exhale consciously out of the mouth while maintaining the drone. Easier said than done. Yet, as I keep practising it, the voice of the clarinet changes. I now have the capacity to sing a drone note of considerable volume to match the sound of the clarinet, and I am literally singing while playing. However, I am not singing Mozart, Brahms, Debussy, Copland, Hindemith, Stravinsky or Schubert. They can sing on their own. My vocal pitch can be maintained in a comfortable register from low G to middle G on the clarinet. While maintaining any pitch in what I will call the Voice in Clarinet range (my singing-while-playing range), the clarinet can vary in pitch from the top C to the low E.
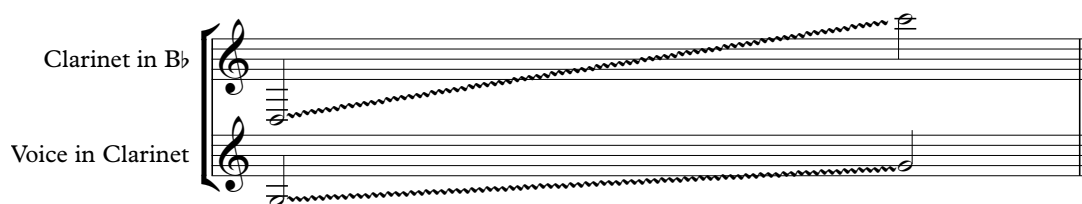

Figure 5. Pitch range for Voice in Clarinet

Due to the constriction of the vocal cords to create a drone, higher clarinet notes do not sound good to my ears. The tone colour becomes rough, something short of the 'growling' I manage when playing jazz clarinet. The forceful sound of clarinet singing is strenuous for the vocal cords and the clarinet sound. The clarinet and vocal cords clash and fight for space and identity. Together they limit each other's range and capacity for technical virtuosity, creating what is for me a new world of sound possibilities in the practise room.

Experiment 2

There was a time when I tried to separate two different voices in the practise room. An early morning would not start with the clarinet, but with the trumpet. According to most of my trumpet teachers, the embouchure of the clarinet did not compliment that of the trumpet. My clarinet teachers did not seem to have similar concerns. My trumpet teacher, Robin Finlay, used to say: 'Throw away that liquorice stick!'. If I remove the head of the clarinet, in other words the top two joints consisting of mouthpiece and barrel, the left-hand connected to the right-hand and bell of the clarinet remains. Although the top-edge connection joint of the left-hand piece is not as smooth as that of a trumpet mouthpiece, it is easy to seal the lips and insert them into the neck of the clarinet.

With a shared amount of pressure from the bottom and top lips, forced open with air directed through the body of the clarinet from my chest, a buzzing sound occurs. It is not pleasing to listen to, but after some time playing and changing the flow of air, increasing the vibration of lips on each other, the instrument creates the sound of discomfort and beauty, almost like the Duduk. The Duduk is from Armenian descent, played with double lip embouchure on a double reed about three times the size of a bassoon reed. The sound of the Duduk has long been part of my practise room for the composer Aram Khachaturian's trio for clarinet, violin and piano.

With this embouchure technique, the pitch of the clarinet is limited, yet the addition of vibrato in the sound contributes towards the air-on-wood colour generated from organicity. When considering the differences in embouchure for clarinet and trumpet, the trumpet embouchure makes the instrument more daunting to play. The trumpet consists of three valves to guide the flow of air into different sections of the instrument to create the desired pitch. One finger combination from the three-valves can, for example, play up to eight different pitches. The only way to guide the pitch is through embouchure control. While experimenting with the embouchure technique of the trumpet on the clarinet, the only way to guide sound and pitch is to use the existing fingerings of the clarinet to find pitch.

By starting on the low E and playing trumpet on the headless clarinet, I create relative pitch and sound. Slowly moving chromatically upwards, as happens in Etude 1 of Jeanjean, different pitches are created. Every note has a specific haptic response to the instrument. By moving chromatically upwards with the fingering, the pitch produced through the headless clarinet follows suit. Low-E fingerings sound A-flat concert pitch. As the chromatic movement raises in pitch, so does the semitone finger lift of fingerings. This shared motion between fingers and pitch continue until E-flat fingering is reached, sounding G-sharp creating an augmented third interval. G-sharp flows a semitone upwards to A; whole-tone to B; whole-tone to C-sharp; whole tone to E-flat. Apart from the difficulties in embouchure, I become aware of a new sound in using the register key at the back on the clarinet. The register key is never used on its own while playing the clarinet. It is always used in conjunction with other keys. It functions in its normal capacity as creating the 12th interval jump upwards or downwards and is always played in simulation with the A left-hand key to sound B-flat. With the headless clarinet I find that the B-flat register key can stand on its own, singing concert pitch F.
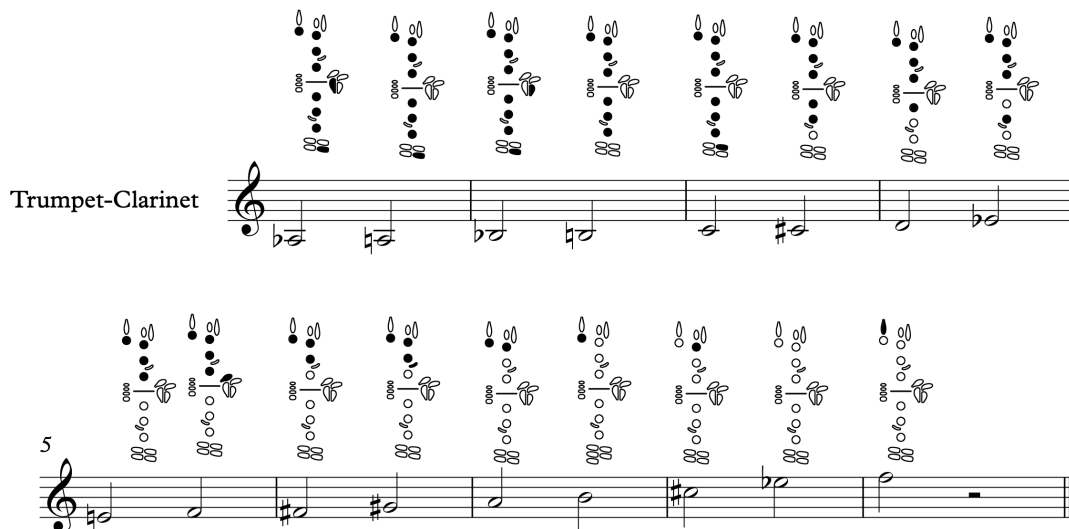
Figure 6. Fingering and pitch indication for Trumpet-Clarinet

My inheritance from playing trumpet is the stronger embouchure activation of the lip muscles to remember pitch and sound. The addition of singing while playing is also appropriate when playing the trumpet, as singing the pitch of a note in one's head, leads to successful playing of pitch on the trumpet. Playing the clarinet does not involve the same complexity in embouchure control as trumpet playing. Learning to play the trumpet on the clarinet requires a change of perspective when it comes to pitching, singing and embouchure.

The basic pitch structure on the trumpet-clarinet is more limited compared to the trumpet. The embouchure resistance from playing trumpet-clarinet is almost nothing due to the easy flow of air through the clarinet. The mechanical structure of the trumpet leads many pipes in different directions with the sound protruding only from the bell, while the clarinet has many holes from whence sound can protrude before reaching the end of the bell. Without the resistance of the reed, the amalgamation of embouchure techniques led to a new notation system with the familiar clarinet fingering chart above each new pitch and note.

Experiment 3

I have often heard other clarinet players tell me how important it is to practise long tones. Practising long tones entails playing every note on the clarinet from the lowest to the highest note separately in one breath. Practising long tones can then be described as practising notes by holding a pitch and the tone of the pitch for an extended amount of time. Starting from the low E, I inhale comfortably, filling the chest with air while keeping the shoulders down and relaxed. Once the lungs have been filled, I start the sound from no sound at all. Like creeping into the silence of the room, sound gently enters the space and is allowed to expand for approximately ten beats at 60 beats per minute. Once the volume has reached full capacity on beat ten, I start to take the sound back down in volume to arrive at complete silence. I repeat the process by moving upwards chromatically until I reach the highest note possible.

During this exercise of holding long tones, it is possible to feel the resonance of each note in the body, and if attention is given to it, in the room. The objects in the room can start to vibrate with the frequency of sound and pitch produced by the clarinet. Often, the piano is singing along while the clarinet is sounding through its four octaves. The strings inside the body of the piano are held down with a softening pedal, yet they still vibrate. If the soft cushioning of the pedal function is removed or just lifted through the pedal, the strings are allowed to vibrate freely with the sounds from the clarinet. This resonance from external objects is not audible when playing faster sections of varying pitches. In order for objects to find and present their voice from vibration to sound, one needs to make the sound present in the room, and only then will the shared sounding pitch of other objects in the room present themselves. Sometimes the chair vibrates at a low frequency. Sometimes the solid metal music stand vibrates at a pitch within the range of the clarinet.

Halfway through the clarinet register of playing long tones, I start to notice how the tongue position inside my mouth has changed from its original resting position. The tip of my tongue is at the bottom of my teeth, while the back of my tongue, at the end of my mouth cavity, slightly risen. If the tip of my tongue is resting at the edge of my bottom row of teeth, and the back of my tongue creates a rounding to manipulate the flow of air, would it manipulate the sound production in such a way as to foreground multiphonics?

Multiphonics is a problematic extended technique. Applying the technique on the clarinet is not a new concept and has been used by many South African composers in a relentless manner. One of the problems with multiphonics has to do with the mechanical build of each clarinet. Sometimes the indicated fingerings for multiphonics work on a specific clarinet model and brand. Yet, the mechanical build of each of the instruments has miniscule variations in size and production, making such fingerings nothing more than guidelines for producing specific sounds. On my B-flat *Buffet Tosca* clarinet, multiphonics and the execution of correct pitch has never sounded 'correct' according to the notation. I always play my own fingerings of multiphonics depending on the notation and the pitch that precedes the multiphonic, and what pitch or single note is required to sound after the multiphonic.

The second problem with an extended technique, is that the notation of an extended technique like the multiphonic is the inverse of a sound creation process. It is also true that none of the composers I have worked with, have had the capacity to hear the multiphonic sound accurately in comparison to what they had written in the score. Most often, the composer's only request is that the dynamics be performed correctly, and it is then up to me to position the multiphonic sound in relation to what the rest of the chamber group, or orchestral group of instruments, are doing.

If the sound of the clarinet were to be manipulated while playing a long tone, the tongue, embouchure and chest play vital roles in directing the air stream to function differently from when creating a clear tone on the clarinet. If the clarinettist has the capacity to manipulate the sound structure through changing the direction of air from the body, to the mouth cavity, it becomes sound, reacting on sound to create a sound.

I start out with a clear low E resonating in the room, then I slightly relax the embouchure. My bottom lip curves over the bottom teeth, protecting the reed from the teeth, resting in harm's way,

as it were. My top lip stretches forward on the mouthpiece, creating a triangular lip shape. I allow the bottom jaw to drop slightly lower while the tongue creates a valley descending from the back of the tongue to the tip of the tongue for the air to flow down into the reed. The overtone of the sounding pitch will present itself with an airy timbre. Airy, as in not sure if it is there, but noticing an additional texture enfolded by the sounding pitch. I focus on the overtone, and it might become more prominent, fighting against the sounding pitch, moving out from its enfoldment to occupy the space. I notice what the corner edges of the mouth are doing, and I keep them strong and focused, allowing the overtone to sing stronger and ultimately to obliterate the sounding pitch with it. I take it back to the original sounding pitch. A circular rotation in exploration brings me back to resting position, resonating the low E.

Cool down

I have never shared with anyone what happens in the practise room. Always, I have practised with the ghosts of teachers, allowing them to dance with my sound. Their tuition and regulation of sound, technique, repertoire and rules infuse my practice. I realise that I am embedded in an ideology of practising. Like dismantling the clarinet into its constituent parts and pieces, I dismantle my sound ideology, my identity, unsure what will emerge.

Conclusion

For me, being in the practise room entails mastering skills, techniques and repertoire. I was taught to engage with the practise room as a place of perfection, as the engine room of 'virtuosity'. However, the practise room is not always a physical room. Sometimes it is the state of being that occupies itself with the idea of practising. Being a classical musician means that one exists in a paradigm of practise room routines. These routines are also routines of containment. They entrain body and mind, and the sounds imagined by both. They are, without doubt, embedded in a form of creativity that is somehow part of a colonial matrix of power. Like the academic encounters with the clarinet documented in the previous chapter, the practise room normatively functions as a mechanism of containment, especially for younger musicians. It is a testing space, not for new ideas, but for perfecting old ones. How will one decolonise a sound, a repertoire, an instrument if one doesn't practise doing so? If the practise room does not become a laboratory for delinking?

In this chapter I have documented patterns of practising contained in and containing prescribed exercises meant to hone concert skills, to polish technique and to maintain dexterity and control. I have made explicit the often auto-mechanical processes of entrainment by articulating in detail both process and thinking. I have followed up on these descriptions by using the practise room as a space for experimentation, taking the same care and attention that I am used to applying to the refinement of technique, to consider and implement experimental adventures in sound creation. This represents a new departure for me. The practise room as laboratory for experimentation is a step away from the cultivated privacy of my technical mastery of the instrument. It undoes my technique even as it expands it, introducing vulnerability I have practised countless hours to dispel. Embracing this vulnerability in the most intimate space of communion with my instrument may be what is required to make the practise room a laboratory for delinking.

Chapter 3: Codifying a Sound Index

Introduction

How does one stage encounters with indigenous aerophones and the techniques, forms and knowledges associated with them? One way of doing this, would be to embark on an ethnographic study in which the researcher sets out to find practices and instruments in geographically and chronologically determined frames. Encounters could then be planned according to historically documented musical practices associated with particular groups of people or instruments, or could take the form of a voyage of discovery, as it were, to meet individual practitioners cultivating particular repertoires enabling of particular skills and techniques. Mindful of the danger that indigenous African musics could be reduced to reified 'traditions', something one encounters in older ethnomusicological literature, the latter would seem to be the more promising ethnographic course of action. This remains something that can be done, and it is perhaps a long-term successor to the project outlined here. However, as this project unfolded, it became more evident that this methodological route – if embarked upon – would require a different kind of preparation and training than I possessed as a classically-trained clarinettist.

A second way of encountering 'the Other' in wind sounds, would be an organological approach. This would enable acquiring a working knowledge of indigenous aerophones as mechanical, rather than cultural, instruments. What kinds of sounds could be produced by this or that material, or by this or that instrument-making technique? The advantage of following this route of engagement, it seemed to me, would be to restrict variables and postpone more complex cultural interactions to such a time when I had managed to 'loosen' and relativise my decades-long inculcated sound ideals and techniques. In order to do this, I contacted Richard Deja, the archive manager of Percival Kirby's Collection of Indigenous Instruments at the South African College of Music, University of Cape Town. I requested permission physically to engage with the indigenous aerophones under strict supervision (R Deja 2018, personal communication, 29 October). Deja responded that playing on the instruments would not be possible, even if the utmost care were taken. Given the inherited institutional challenges as a newly appointed archive manager, he had been wrestling with establishing new parameters and protocols allowing more engagement with some of the indigenous instruments (R Deja 2018, personal communication, 1 November). Unfortunately, meetings with staff members and outside consultants about opening up the indigenous instrument collection for engagement, came to naught.

And so it happened that my request physically to engage with Percival Kirby's Collection of Indigenous Instruments was denied by the South African College of Music, University of Cape Town. Instead of pursuing a different methodological avenue (getting access to the Hugh Tracey collections of musical instruments at the International Library of African Music, for example, or changing tack to include a more committed ethnological approach), I found this obstacle sufficiently interesting and provocative to pursue the question of what it could mean that the Percival Kirby Collection of Indigenous Instruments was unavailable in this way, for this purpose. Was there something about the decolonising encounter that I was seeking, in some sense so 'easily' directed away from my own

embedded practices towards a somewhat vaguely intuited 'Other', that was not merely bureaucratically impossible and methodologically impractical, but also politically naïve?

Jonathan Jansen writes about different levels of decolonisation and decolonial gestures (2017: 156). In *As by fire, the end of the South African university*, he states that the term decolonisation is context-specific, and enabling of different conceptions of knowledge. My initial thinking about the decolonial imperative – translating the sounds of indigenous woodwind instruments to the clarinet – speaks to what Jansen calls the contextualisation of decolonisation as a way of decentring European knowledge in South Africa (Jansen, 2017: 158). As explained in Chapter One, located at the centre of my clarinet sound and its education, I have traced a discourse of containment: didactic containment, technical containment, stylistic containment and repertoire containment. My instinct towards an encounter with an 'Other' was to me a decolonial imperative leading to a decentring of my clarinet sound through a translation process from the sound of indigenous woodwind instruments. When I encountered a hurdle in developing this thinking, I was faced with a different kind of decolonial 'option', namely a critical engagement with the settled knowledge of my existing sound (Jansen, 2017: 161).

Informed by the first decolonial imperative, this option provoked me critically to engage with the constellations of sound comprising my own sound knowledge, without the foil of an 'Other'. In my music education, sound knowledge centred on my instrument and its technical requirements, practice and repertoire existed and exercised an unequal power relation to other sound knowledges. Perhaps, given this power imbalance, decentring was always going to be but a gesture enabled by the position of power. The more radical gesture, and more radically opening gesture, would be one of dismantling the own, delinking from the known, and creating options from within. 'Replacing' one knowledge system with another knowledge system, or shifting the sense of margin and centre, would still maintain a sense of two different knowledge systems.

I therefore set about unravelling my own sound and sound knowledge system, using the notion of sound writing as discussed in Deborah Kapchan's *Theorizing sound writing*.

Engaging Sound Writing

In *Theorizing sound writing*, Kapchan's opening gambit is a short piece of writing, presumably her version of sound writing. She follows this gesture by writing that 'Sound knowledge' is 'a nondiscursive form of affective transmission resulting from acts of listening', and 'Sound writing' is 'a performance of word-sound of such knowledge' (Kapchan, 2017: 1).

Kapchan approached numerous scholars with a simple question: 'How theorize sound writing?' How do scholars engage with sound knowledge when the focus of writing is turned towards engaging with sound knowledge in the form of sound writing? She (2017: 2) links her notion of sound writing to the work of Jacques Attali, proposing that engaging sound writing has the potential to speak to new realities. Referencing the work of social theorist Lauren Berlant, she suggests that engaging sound writing might have the capacity to reframe and invent new genres for the '…kind of speculative work we call "theory".' (Kapchan, 2017: 2).

Each of the fourteen contributors of Kapchan's book engages with the *idea* of sound writing. This they do by writing about their field of study and their experience of engaging with sound knowledge. However, their syntax of sound knowledge, by engaging sound writing, is often limited to short samples of sound writing from their individual contributions leading to extended reflections about these short sound writing experiments. This process of writing therefore includes acts of listening, so as to engage with what Jean-Paul Sartre describes as the process of experimenting, in which the experimenter is part of the experimental constellation as the process of the experimentation occurs (Kapchan, 2017: 3). The object of investigation, which features as a theme and a section of sound writing, is used conceptually to intertwine the knowledge of the subject and the object. Therefore, engaging sound writing, Kapchan (2017: 3) argues, brings a stronger connection between theory and method that Henk Borgdorff (2012: 24) associates with the work of artistic research, and Jansen (2017: 161) associates with the context-specific conception of decolonisation: a form of delinking from settled knowledge.

Borgdorff (2012: 24) writes that 'research in and through the arts' reduces the distance of the object of research and poses the possibility that the object of research can become oneself in the creative and artistic process. In order for a feedback system of sound knowledge and sound writing to occur, sound writing engages with a process of translation from listening to a source or an object. This listening process must include a form of re-imagining the source or object from which the sound comes, in what Kapchan (2017: 6) titles 'metaphor as method'. According to Michelle Kisliuk, thinking about the metaphor is one thing, but when it comes to working with sound and metaphoric engagement, we have the capacity to conceptualise our emotion and comprehend the experience of the process. In doing so we can identify the different aspects of that experience so as to assist the transmission of sound knowledge by engaging sound writing (Kapchan, 2017: 7).[14]

Engaging sound writing in this manner allows the object of research to become oneself. Within the frame of the decolonial imperative, such sound writing of the self could be wielded to interrogate settled knowledge as a process of delinking from such knowledge. My method of practising was the practise of music and sound improvisation. My understanding of improvisation is that it is ephemeral and temporal in nature. Indulging in improvisation allows the clarinettist to engage with sound without the forms of containment I associate with my clarinet sound. Improvisation in practice to create sound knowledge, links to what Kapchan (2017: 10) says about the process of creation associated with sound writing: 'It is not writing [sound] that is a prison house per se, but our modes of perception, of listening and translation, that must be broken through'.

It was on 28 June 2019 that I started with the solo improvisation experiments in the Endler Hall of Stellenbosch Conservatorium. The Endler Hall represents a space for Western performance practice in which the final product of an artistic process is performed, while the process of preparing for that performance remains hidden, off-stage. As part of the process of delinking from that world of

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[14] In the discourse of Western Performance practice music criticism and music scholarship has also expanded into the interdisciplinary field of sound studies, i.e. writing about sounds, acoustemology, sound curatorship, sound ecologies, and sound art criticism (Kapchan, 2017: 9). But, where the potential lies within sound writing, due to the contradictory nature of the term, is its imaginative possibility and potential to '…listening and writing to transform experiences of temporality…' and ephemerality (Kapchan, 2017: 9).

practice, I considered that this space should present a departure point for improvisation as an exploration and probing towards sound knowledge through delinking.

This act constitutes a complex gesture of accepting, processing and making choices in the artistic creation process, a gesture that Kathleen Coessens (2014: 68) describes as being embedded in a 'web of artistic practice'. The 'web of artistic practice' presents one way of viewing moments in a creation process where the artist is seldom aware of the tools and their dimensions within the artistic idea, despite their irrevocable presence. Coessens (2014: 69) goes on to say:

> The tools of the artist, knowledge, expertise, experiences and actions, present in his or her creative endeavour, remain in the background of this act. It is often only after the act of creation, that some reflection or recollection, as a kind of re-enactment of the background, is possible.

My form of reflection from the improvisation sessions resulted in journaling and unedited writing about the improvisation session of the day, which was also video recorded. Later on the same day, I would view the video and listen to the improvisation session in order to start imagining how to translate what happens in the video, visually and auditively. By viewing the video on the same day as the experiment, I re-enacted the 'web of artistic practice' by reducing the distance of the object and the subject.

This translation process presents a second confrontation with the style of writing associated with Western performance practice and the clarinet. How would I write about my own clarinet sound and sound creation without using the devices of music notation? How would I describe the sound of the clarinet without referring to the existing phraseology of describing a clarinet sound? How could I further delink through sound writing? The clarinet sound has been thoroughly researched and through this research, a literature has been created with a nomenclature of containment associated with both historically informed practice, and the lineage of the clarinet created and built in Austria/Germany and France. The clarinet sound, from this literature, can be described as warm, fuzzy, sweet, open, closed, big, small, and thin, to give but a few examples. These kinds of descriptions are noted by Roland Barthes (Barthes, 1977: 179) in 'The grain of the voice', as 'our writing on music that has ever been dictated to our conversation and criticism of music in the form of the adjective', or put differently, 'this music is *this*, and that execution is *that*'. Barthes's writing in 'The grain of the voice' – even though it rules out the adjective – is still captured in a way of listening where the object and the subject are separate from the creation process of sound. Because of the artistic choice to delink from an existing sound world as a process to create sound knowledge, with an intention of communicating that sound knowledge to a composer, my approach to listening back to my video recordings changed.

The videos engage with both movement and sound, and I attempted to describe and narrativise both movement and sound. What started out as indiscriminate scribbling and attempts to find a tone in which to perform sound writing from the created sound knowledge, became repeated re-listening of the recorded material. I could identify phrases, structures, techniques and playing styles that would probably have been inaccessible if I had reflected on the improvisation sessions without

the recordings. The listening process created the opportunity to identify familiar concepts in my existing sound world, and with the writing process, it was possible to delink – a secondary delinking, if you will, considering that the performance gesture was already an attempt to delink – from the familiar concepts and discover new sounds and new descriptions in retrospect, in language. My codification of those sounds happened through what I would call sound writing. Although those sounds might have existed before, as noted by Coessens when she refers to the 'web of artistic practice', my attempt at sound writing probed towards their articulation in language.

Kapchan states (2017: 11) that writing sound constitutes a process of '…duality to inhabit a multidimensional position as translator between worlds'. My sound writing, presented here, is intended not as a peremptory text to theorising, but to function as a section to be read on its own. In each section there is a text engaging sound writing from the improvisation session video. A link to the video is provided in a footnote, and videos should be viewed as part of the reading process of my sound writing section. On both days one and two, I improvised twice, and I number these fragments accordingly (Day 1.1 and Day 1.2; Day 2.1 and Day 2.2). After each video engaging with sound writing, I codified, in language, the sounds I 'discovered'. This I see as a different codified form of engaging sound writing. Each of the sounds I identified in the videos is provided with a footnote allowing the reader of this thesis to access that video at the indicated time to listen to the sound I discovered. Initial impressions from the day of improvisation were captured in journal writing, included at the end of each section. In total, I improvised for five consecutive days, only three of which are described in this chapter in order to avoid repetition and overlap.

Reading Sound Writing

Day 1.1

Stage Layers [15]

The stage floor shines brightly against the backdrop of ruby red seats. Rows A and B, closest to the stage platform, have the same colour, but rows C, D and E slowly fade into blood red darkness. The platform of lined wooden planks has different nuances of light oak to light brown. Apart from the scratch marks of force exerted on the intertwined wood planks, everything else is bathed in silence. Without warning a low sounding drone enters the space creating a base tone of sound. After a couple of seconds, it needs to compete with a quick pitch disruption sounding three octaves higher. The battle of pitches is won by the higher tone as it sings with a vibrato, bending higher and lower and higher and lower until it drops into the middle ground tone between the opposing forces. The sound is held in the middle ground until it plummets to the low sounding drone fading into the empty space.

The clarinettist stationed outside of the camera shot has not moved his fingering to change pitch. He could have changed his fingering on the clarinet to create these pitches. However, he chose to keep

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[15] https://vimeo.com/352680208 password for Vimeo link: @VisserClari9105

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the low sounding G fingering and with a versatile embouchure control and air flow, produced a variety of sound combinations from the instrument.

A barefoot clarinettist enters the empty stage. As his feet touches different wood planks, his movement is paced by a repetitive clarinet sounding motive. The step-by-step motion changes the sound reception feedback to the clarinettist.[16] With the twelfth step taken towards the right side of the invisible audience, the clarinettist activates a squeak in the floor. Only on the fourteenth step does he reverse to retrace his foot motion, searching the squeaky floorboard. Once he has found it, there is an interaction with the sound of the floor. The squeaky floorboard has a small range in pitch which is enough for a 'conversation' with feet pressure. This conversation causes the clarinettist to react and repeat a clarinet sound pattern like a pendulum swaying from left-foot to right-foot, testing his reception of the floor board conversation.[17] Once the discussion is over, the clarinettist walks away from the spot and makes a slow 180-degree turn to come to a halt.

Breathing more heavily from his walk to the other side of the stage, he starts to produce an inhale-sound-exhale-sound pattern: inhale through the mouth, play a clarinet pitch, exhale through the mouth, play a clarinet pitch. He repeats this pattern of sounding pitch interacting with inhalation and exhalation. This interaction is an affected sound version from the floorboard conversation that has become part of the improvisation session.

The stationary position is not maintained for a very long time but serves as a moment to restate the low sounding drone followed by the battle of pitches through embouchure control and air flow. A similar pace guides the movement while the unrefined sound resounds in the hall. The step-by-step motion is interrupted as a different floorboard creates a consonant sound, percussive, short and with no range in pitch. The consonant phoneme is produced by the weight distribution of left foot and right foot. The floorboard sound is transparent and therefore not strong enough to change the clarinet sound. The clarinettist finds his pace again as he searches for another wooded voice in the stage floor. The low sounding drone remains present in musical material until it is joined by another squeak in the floor.

This time the clarinettist is slightly more entertained by the floor, knowing that he wants to test the range of the floorboard. Both his feet are planted firmly on the springiness of the wood, and he bends his knees, lifting his body up and pushing it down to exert force onto the floor. He stops. He reflects on the strangeness of what he has done.

He assumes a stationary position, preceded by another 180-degree turn. It feels comfortable and safe to be in a still-standing position. He tests the floor with a left- and right knee bend, takes a breath and creates the low sounding drone note that quickly jumps into the higher register of the

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[16] The Endler Hall is acoustically very resonant. Although audience members might hear sound more or less in the same manner while seated, by changing the direction of sound to the back of the stage platform, a different reception of the sound is audible to the instrumentalist and the audience members.

[17] A solo improvisation session requires the improvisor to be receptive of any possible sound in that moment. I did not have another musician in the space to draw musical inspiration from. That caused me to pay detailed attention to the sound created from movement on the stage floor.

clarinet. This interval jump is the beginning of a fifteen-note pattern, played with a strongly resonant sound. The fifteen-note pattern is recreated in different variations with the register-key at the back of the clarinet, jumping the interval of a twelfth higher, and then even higher. When the sound cannot ascend any higher, the fifteen-note pattern is resumed from the start. First, the pattern becomes longer as the clarinettist walks briskly over the stage, back to the first squeaky floorboard. However, the volume of the clarinet sound has increased so much that it overpowers the squeaky floorboard. The clarinettist directs his sound towards the empty seats, allowing the sound to travel further away from him. He now finds himself in the middle of the stage where he first stopped, to the right side of the empty seats. The fifteen-note pattern, repeated, sounds stuck. This 'stuck' perception is enacted through the bodily movement of the clarinettist, who seems to wait for the sound to become unstuck before he walks to the edge of the camera shot, almost out of sight. The clarinet sound is still strong, as the last low sounding drone note is placed. Once placed, it splits into a battle of pitches again as it ascends in pitch and volume as he exits the stage. The barefoot clarinettist disappears out of sight, but the sounds linger. Then they fall silent.

The wooded voice has the last say.

Sounds Discovered

Shapes for Mobility and Sound [18]
The clarinettist has the capacity to give his sound direction, guiding his oxygen through the clarinet to create sound and direct the sound into a concert hall or space. The direction of sound through the flow of air, what constitutes 'normal' playing on the clarinet, is accompanied by dynamics and nuance. But the notion of 'direction' can be augmented through movement, with dynamics and nuance changing as the body moves around in space. Like a sound system placed in a specific position to complement a listening process, the clarinettist can position sound through the clarinet and through the movement of his body (and the clarinet body) to create a listening experience different to the one of stationary sound creation.

Given the possibilities of movement and the direction of sound, movement on stage can be planned before a performance,[19] or it can be left open for free movement with a performance. Movement can simulate a shape on the floor, by following an invisible path with sharp corners or smooth edges.[20] This creates an interaction between movement and sound where any external forces of sound can be ignored; or an interaction between movement and sound where external forces of

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[18] Watch the video from 02:50 – 05:45 to get a visual perception of sound interacting with movement.

[19] Different shapes of lines can be imagined by the clarinettist; drawn out on the performance platform if it is allowed; or the shape can be written into the score of the composition.

[20] In the composition *Harlequin* by Karl Heinz Stockhausen, the clarinettist plays around with movement by miming and dancing contemporaneously. The 1975 composition starts with the clarinettist creating 'the first trill' sound from backstage before starting a dance of spiral motion, moving in circles inwards until he has made it to the front of the stage (Stockhausen, 1978: xiii).

sound are acknowledged.[21] With the information presented above, the following interaction with sound and movement can occur:

Walk-Sound

Movement can occur without any sound interaction from the clarinet. Walk out a shape or figure on the stage allowing whatever sounds elicited by the shape of the perambulation as the only audible sounds. No clarinet sound is produced by the clarinettist.

Walk-Play-Sound or Play-Walk-Sound

Movement can occur with sound interaction from the clarinet. Walk out a shape or figure on the stage that interacts with clarinet sound. Allow the shape or figure to dictate what sound should be created on the clarinet, or allow the clarinet sound to dictate the direction of movement. For example, if you walk a triangle (or any other shape/figure) on the stage, three long sides and three sharp corners are available for the imagination to draw upon for musical material. Therefore, a dynamic exists between the imagined shape and the sound created from imagining that shape.

Walk-Play-Interact-Sound

Movement, and the sound created by movement, can interact with the clarinet sound. Walk a shape or figure on the stage platform, allowing the clarinet sound and movement to become one. If the movement of the body creates unintended sounds (like the squeaking of a floorboard), allow the clarinet sound and movement to interact with the sound.

Toe-Space

The haptic senses of the feet are valuable in the performance space during sound creation processes.[22] The toes' senses have the capacity to introduce a texture based on the feeling of the performance space. By relying on the feet to analyse the ground, a sound elucidation can be created. Toe-space is the translation of haptic senses from the toes, to sound.

Zoning-Out

The concept of zoning in, is a choice and a skill often used to cut out any form of distraction or disruption in order to stay attentive to sound. Being 'in the zone' is a phenomenon that often occurs in the practise room, induced in order to repeat the conscious state of a live performance.[23] If the

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[21] Like the movement that is described in Stage Layers. The movement in the video is described in two ways: how my moving around on the stage caused some of the wood planks to squeak and how I then interacted with the sound from the floorboard by listening to it and reacting with the clarinet sound. The second manner, as an example, would be to move around on the platform space without reacting to any external sounds created by the floorboards or the texture of the stage platform.

[22] In the book *Deep listening* by Pauline Oliveros, the author touches on the idea that the soles of the feet are one of our strongest connections to the earth. Oliveros insists that the feet have many nerves that are connected to organs in the body (Oliveros, 2005: 14).

[23] Being in the zone or 'in flow' (Bhattacharya & Marin, 2013) is a state of focus that the mind and the body goes into while participating in a specific activity, like learning a composed piece and performing the musical piece. This activity is often associated with the self, in the case of a solo performance, and not with any external factors. Zoning-Out is therefore a process of zoning in on the external factors of a performance space. By merely focusing on the sounds created from the

process is intentionally reversed, a sense of interaction can occur allowing any perception of audible sounds in the performance space to play a role in the performance, or in the composing process of a new composition.

Clarinet-Layers [24]

The clarinet-layer is the grounding of a low-sounding bass note, which is then manipulated to sound together with its counterpart higher note for a polyphonic texture. This ground tone can be released in order for the higher note to remain. It is therefore a monophonic to polyphonic to monophonic transition of sound. The process can also be inverted, starting from the top note, dropping into the polyphonic texture and sinking down to the low-sounding bass note.

Day 1.2

Vīrāsana [25]

The clarinettist enters the stage and assumes the Vīrāsana position[26] by kneeling, folding his legs underneath him and sitting on them. The tops of the feet touch the ground, and his toes point in the opposite direction of his face. He removes his glasses. He inhales deeply and exhales easily in order to come to terms with the posture. He starts looking for stillness. Stillness in body and mind. His buttocks touch his heals and the bridges of his feet, while the hamstrings rest on the calves. He tries to sit upright with his lower back lifted and slightly forward, pulling navel to spine. Gently he draws the shoulders backwards and down. He honours the clarinet by placing it in front of him. The clarinet is positioned upright with the bell on the floor and the mouthpiece pointing to the roof. He rests his hands on his thighs and starts with a couple of breath cycles. When he is ready, he opens his eyes and makes eye contact with the clarinet. He takes hold of the instrument while maintaining the foundations of Vīrāsana in order to create sound.

He thinks about sound. How can he play something different from what he had done in the previous improvisation session? What does he want to say? Can he avoid repeating some of the previous techniques, to create something different?

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environment of the performance space in an improvisation session, external factors can influence the performance setting and the composition.

[24] In the video, a rendition of clarinet layers occurs from 00:27 – 01:30.

[25] https://vimeo.com/352682426 password for Vimeo link:@VisserClari9105.

[26] Vīrāsana (pronunciation: veer-ah-sah-nah) is a posture that assumes respect and control. By taking this seated posture, the person doing so takes into account a position of power with breath. This posture is also called the 'Hero Posture' (Ramaswami, 2005: 184).

The clarinettist establishes a theme of irregular rhythmic pitches.[27] They are slow, soft and very uncertain. Slightly hesitant about the idea of sound. Once he finds the tone colour,[28] he repeats the theme, only to realise that he has repeated the idea of repetition. Not initially his intention. The natural inclination of uncertainty on a new canvas, a clean slate, so to say, forces him to hold onto the melodic phrase of pitches that he had just created. He adds high pitched notes at the end of the note sequence and then creates a pause. Recouping, he starts to sing the pitches of the established melody with his voice through the clarinet. His voice is soft as it resonates through the body of the instrument. The voice starts to imitate the previous irregular rhythmic pitches of the clarinet. The process continues for a bit as the clarinet establishes a new short motive and the voice repeats the motive to match that which he has heard. This call and repeat process from clarinet to voice, is soon inverted as the voice starts to lead and the clarinet follows.

The seated position becomes uncomfortable while the voice starts to take the lead for musical creation. The clarinet struggles to imitate accurately the motive sung by the voice inside him, but not for long, as an amalgamation takes place. Voice becomes clarinet and clarinet becomes voice. The one struggles with the other, trying to figure out who is to take the lead. So, they sing and play in unison.

The musical motive hasn't changed much with the fusion of voices. They do sing comfortably together. Yet, the tube of the clarinet is not strong enough to contain the polyphonic texture. The clarinet squeaks intentionally. From this squeak, an opportunity is created to expand on the sound.[29] A new sound has been created through a forceful process. In the rhythmical pattern and the established tone of this pentatonic-sounding phrase, the clarinettist intentionally repeats the squeaky sound at the exact same time, in the manner it would have sounded if the improvisation session were to be notated with a time signature.

The interaction of voice and clarinet becomes a game of leading, following and working in unison. The tension of sound is slightly higher while maintaining a sounding pitch. The clarinettist is an instigator of new sound sources through exploration, reception and reaction. A melodic flow is

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[27] Irregular rhythmic pitches, in comparison to regular rhythmic pitches, follow a structural rhythmical pulse, with irregular note patterns positioned in between the overarching compound pulse. It is a style of playing where the single pulse of the rhythmic pattern cannot be identified to be regular. Kelly Gross and Michelle Kisliuk (2004: 255), in teaching the singing style of 'BaAka' music to students, refer to what I call regular rhythmic pitches, as a 'tendency to square rhythms and to momentarily be drawn into reproducing the harmonies of Western Choral singing'. Kisliuk considers the squaring of rhythms to un-squaring rhythms, as a 'musical negotiation' that takes place (Kisliuk & Gross, 2004: 249).

[28] Every improvisation session is based on a feeling. This feeling, in my opinion, can only be expressed through a specific tone color. Whatever my body is feeling before I start creating sound, does have an effect on the tone color, yet it does not dictate the tone color. Feeling and tone color work in correlation with each other; the one molding the other to become one. Yet, feeling and tone color need space to find each other. The push-and-pull relationship between feeling and tone color is expressed through a process of creating sound, reflecting on the sound, and re-creating sound by adjusting sound.

[29] In the doctoral dissertation by Edward Neeman discussing improvisation as a performance technique, the author argues that improvisation as a process relies substantially on instinct. What Neeman refers to here, I think, is how a process of losing control while creating sound has the capacity to bypass our thinking about music, and in my case sound, posing a possibility to react creatively to what my auditory receptors pick up (Neeman, 2014). With that said, a 'mistake' in sound, like squeaking on the clarinet, poses an opportunity to react creatively towards the mistake for sound expansion. Yet, here the idea of losing control is juxtaposed to combining voice and clarinet.

created with consistent rhythmic patterns repeated in the tone colour of the session. It ranges in pitch to go very high and very low. The voice is lost. The clarinet remains. The body starts to interact with the clarinet, calling for a stillness and calmness to appear.

Less and less sound emanates from the clarinet with slower melodic lines. The notes come to an abrupt stop. The clarinettist holds the Vīrāsana playing position to realise he has guided his breath to play the clarinet, losing the foundations of the posture. His shoulders lean forward, his lower back is round and the only thing to do is to place the clarinet back in its standing posture. He does so. He gently rolls up his spine to straighten his legs with an immediate forward fold. His right hand reaches for his glasses to see where his clarinet is, he takes it and walks off stage.

Sounds discovered

Clarinet

'Clarinet' is the normal style of playing the clarinet.

(I) [30]

(I) is the voice of the clarinettist. The physical singing voice of the clarinettist, sung through the body of the clarinet. While keeping the mouth to the mouthpiece (embouchure ready to play), the clarinettist sings through the clarinet. [31]

clar(i)net [32]

With the (i) being placed back into the clar(i)net, the identity of (i) is embedded in the clar(i)net. The (i) is locked in by a stronger identity, enfolded by the clarinet. The (i) then presents a process whereby a melodic statement is made with the clarinet, and the human voice imitates that statement, or reacts to it by singing through the instrument. In other words, the clarinet leads, and the voice follows. This technique is a monophonic interaction.

clar(I)net [33]

The clar(I)net is the inverse of the process mentioned in clar(i)net. Here the voice leads, and the clarinet imitates. In the application of this index, the difference between (i)[34] and (I)[35] in clarinet is tested. Repeating the melodic statement of the voice through the clarinet, could be a more difficult process for correct melodic repetition on the clarinet. This interaction is also monophonic.

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[30] Hear the (I) from 01:15 – 01:20.

[31] This technique, or sound index, is a recognition of my own identity. Playing the clarinet has given me a voice that can only exist through the instrument. Before this voice was found, a different voice existed, one which precedes the clarinet voice, and therefore written as (I). I am the big (I) written outside of the clarinet.

[32] Hear the clar(i)net from 01:15 – 01:40.

[33] Hear the clar(I)net from 01:15 – 01:25.

[34] (i) follow the clarinet.

[35] (I) lead the clarinet.

clar(i)(I)net [36]

With the previous two categories of sound production enacting the leadership with the voice and playing the clarinet, clar(i)(I)net is an amalgamation of the voice and clarinet sounding together. Melodic interaction can occur in many different ways. A polyphonic texture is created with this technique.

Journal Reflexion

28 June 2019

This morning I entered the Endler Hall with my clarinet, tripod stand and cellphone. I entered the space to start a five-day creative exploration in the Endler Hall. The first angle I chose for the camera was to showcase the empty seats of the hall. The camera was placed at the back of the hall to include a big portion of the stage and the first couple of rows with the empty seats. It showed a big part of the Endler floor where I have performed numerous times. I have always been aware of the Endler floor and the manner in which it 'speaks' to me when I perform on it. It squeaks and produces noises – rhythmically responding to bodies, but also producing pitches. The stage floor requires maintenance, but its loquaciousness is also an opportunity to work with different structurally produced sounds. The floor is made of a living material, wood, and wood is not silent. It cannot ever be silent.

I have a deep-seated desire to share the videos that I made this morning; however, I have an equally deep-seated fear of sharing them. This sound exploration makes me oddly vulnerable. I enter a space and then play on my clarinet. I did this for an hour this morning, and this resulted in two videos: one of seven minutes, one of five minutes. I don't know what they mean.

Creativity is somehow 'conjured' in solitude, away from videos, social media, and people. Video 1 is about space. I enter a space, a big hall and then explore freely with the sound in the hall. I can imagine passers-by thinking, 'What is he doing?'. Their eyes follow me while I sit there and move around on the stage:

What happened?
Why?
Why waste the promise of becoming an extraordinary clarinettist?
He doesn't want to go through the effort of studying a proper performance degree overseas.
You should have gone overseas.
You should have pursued further studies to become a true performing artist. Instead you are sitting on the stage of the Endler hall, making horrendous sounds on your clarinet. Trying to do what?
No music, no direction, no proper technique. Just awkward sounds.

It confuses me, and I don't know what to do with the sound I am creating. What to make of the two videos shot this morning?

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[36] Hear cla(i)(I)net from 01:50 – 02:08; 02:15 – 02:45.

Day 2.1

Freedom [37]

The grand piano stands to the left of the stage platform. It takes up almost a third of the space when perceived from this angle. The video recorder is levelled just below the body of the piano. At this height, the recording device will be able to capture the face of a seated pianist but not a standing clarinettist. This set-up for the improvisation session provides a different perspective on the stage, which has now become a space of freedom, expression and maybe rebellion.[38] The clarinettist uses the grand piano to place the clarinet,[39] in order to position the reed correctly on the mouthpiece.

The positioning of the reed on the mouthpiece is swift, and the first staccato note escapes the clarinet and resonates from the walls of the concert hall. Every note has an opportunity to bounce in whichever direction it wants. The silence between the sound articulates the choices of pitches before a pattern is established that will dictate the tone colour of the remainder of the improvisation.

A flow of movement[40] interacts with clarinet sound as the clarinettist walks around in the space, seemingly directionless, as he listens attentively. The clarinet sound gathers direction as the body turns and sways from left to right. Although the space is familiar to him, every day produces a different response to the production of tone in a familiar space. The pouncing rhythm expands with the technical playing of respective note groups: The articulation style changes from short, to sloppy-long-thick-quick bursts of double-tonguing.

There is interaction with the squeaky stage, creating a brief satirical conversation. This interaction stimulates aspects explored in the previous session the day before. It is part of a process to work with and through the familiar sounds and movement. This quick warm-up session is interrupted when the clarinettist stops playing. The sounds from the previous day are slowly reasserting themselves. Although it is time to move beyond them, they linger in his memory. The singing through the instrument occurs naturally to create a polyphonic texture.

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[37] https://vimeo.com/352683345 password for Vimeo link: @VisserClari9105.

[38] The positioning of the video recording device (iPhone 6 +) has played an important role in each improvisation session. Although the purpose of the device was mainly to record sound and movement, the recording device became part of an improvised performance of sound and movement. I often felt that I was performing and playing for the recording device, while in the same session also completely forgetting that this process was being recorded.

[39] The big grand piano, like any instrument, should be handled with care and caution. Its purpose is not to function as a table or an object on which other objects or things should by placed. However, in this session I decided to allow the piano to intrude on my space and the stage platform space and use it as an object on which to place my clarinet.

[40] Free flow of movement is drawn from my own yoga practice and attending yoga classes. In the yoga classes I attend, the instructor has a prepared sequence of postures that flow from one to the other through inhalation and exhalation. Once the basic postures of the class have been explored, the teacher would allow the class a couple of minutes to flow freely with their bodies. This is part of a process to get into the body in your own time. I consider a free flow of movement on stage a process to get into my body not with postures and breath, but with sound and breath.

The clar(i)(I)net sound is strong, with the flow of movement – an addition of circular breathing[41] – incorporated to keep the tone present. An inverted V sound, a pyramid, is built with the clarinet and voice participating in an upward motion in pitch. The sustained sound of the top note slowly drops down to the base sound, dispersing voice, allowing the clarinet to resonate and fluctuate as oxygen is inhaled through the nose while simultaneously flowing into the clarinet. A dip in pitch occurs as oxygen is inhaled. This moment becomes a signal to repeat the construction of the same pyramid of sound.

As the pyramid of sound is built, an overblown[42] sound register is audible. With the correct fingering used to resonate with the body of the instrument, the overblown sound register remains present. If a different fingering is used, the sound drops down to the original-sounding fingerings. The lightness in touch from tongue to reed allows clarity of articulation in the overblown register.

The flowing movement of the clarinettist stops. The left-hand clasps the bell to carry the weight of the instrument while the right-hand moves closer to the top of the clarinet, attempting to imitate the muscle memory of the left-hand. The right-hand struggles to position the fingers correctly. The clarinet is not built with a dominant hand in mind. However, the weight of the clarinet relies mostly on the strength of the right-thumb, right-hand and right-arm.

With the inverted hand position the clarinettist covers the bell of the clarinet with his left-hand. The tone colour remains unchanged. The inverted hand position doesn't last long before the original hand position is retaken. A flow of melodic ascending and descending pitches celebrates the original hand position in the throat register of the clarinet. This is followed by consecutive note jumps ranging from high pitch to low pitch and back up again, which leads to a sounding of harmonics.[43] Different pitch jumps occur with the same consecutive fingerings until the sound is stopped.

The clarinettist quickly removes the barrel-mouthpiece from the clarinet, creating the trumpet-clarinet. He starts playing with trumpet embouchure on the clarinet.[44] The sounding pitch of trumpet-clarinet creates a notable difference.[45] For one thing, the trumpet-clarinet is lifted to a horizontal position for playing rather than a semi-vertical position.[46] The clarinettist quickly adjusts his embouchure to produce the sounds of opposing aerophone embouchures, creating a dark resonant tone with little control in volume and pitch.

The barrel-mouthpiece has been placed on the piano, and the clarinettist reaches for the head joints. He builds the instrument to its original form and plays a long legato line. A change of pitch

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[41] Circular breathing is understood as a technique used by woodwind players, like the oboe, clarinet, bassoon, etc. to maintain a continuous stream of sound. 'A player uses the cheeks as air pockets, allowing them to expand and fill with air. The player then squeezes the cheek muscles, directing the air into the instrument, while simultaneously inhaling through the nostrils' (Odom, 2005: 8).

[42] Listen to the overblown sound register in the video from 06:00 – 07:00.

[43] Sounding of harmonics from 08:25 – 09:31.

[44] This technique is also called 'lip buzzing' (Odom, 2005: 10).

[45] For more information about the trumpet-clarinet pitch and fingering, see the fingering pitch reduction created in Chapter Two.

[46] Trumpet-clarinet playing from 11:22 – 13:24.

occurs after the volume has increased to a climax. The changed pitch trembles with a vibrato from a stationary position, allowing the flow of air in sound to be the only movement and direction. The interval jumps of a fourth higher makes the legato line sound different in colour and texture. The phrase comes to an end as the clarinettist takes a silent breath.[47]

Another long legato line is sounded after the pause, expanding to a higher pitch and louder dynamic swelling with a similar duration to the previous legato line. A shorter silence follows, as the phrasing allows a snatch-breath[48] with a quick interaction of repetitive articulated pitches, jumping down to the softer sounding throat register. The third phase of this melodic section sounds through a familiar rhythmic structure with a loud dynamic in the higher sounding pitches. The same repetitive articulated pitches are audible; this time, sliding downwards while pitch-bending the melodic section. The clarinettist's movement in sound and body directs him to the first retractable ledge at the back of the concert hall. The ledge is about forty centimetres higher than the stage platform, creating a seat while the feet rest on the stage floor.

In this easy, seated position, the sound colour of the clarinet is maintained with articulated notes and nuances from the throat and chest. The clarinettist pauses, followed by a technical display of notes within a three-octave range. Then, he slowly starts to build a melodic motive by playing a short motive, then adding more notes at the bottom of the descending motive, then again at the top of the ascending motive, adding one note with every repetition of ascending and descending parts of the motive. The motive ascends and descends in pitch, expanding in range, creating a mini-cadenza ending on the lowest note of the expanded motive. The low note is maintained in fingering as the embouchure and air flow is manipulated to create the textures of clarinet-layers sounding monophonic – polyphonic – monophonic. A replay of the mini-cadenza occurs swiftly, this time moving into alternative key trills and alternative side key trills. The alternative side key trills are manipulated with embouchure control and air flow and allow the initial clean sound of one note to spill over into the high register of the clarinet, creating a sound fluctuation more prominent than a vibrato sound which gently fades into silence. The clarinettist marks the end of this section by taking a breath.

Now there is a contrasting melodic line, and the clarinettist stands up from his seated position to return to the flow of movement on the stage platform. A bigger breath is followed by staccato notes pouncing from the walls of the hall. A quick interaction between a clogged throat becomes part of the clarinettist's musical material, as if he is trying to say, 'Ahem – excuse me'. The pitches are spaced out creating millisecond pauses between them, giving ample time for the clarinettist to make his final statement.

The clarinettist slowly starts to walk out of the screenshot, while the short notes linger.

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[47] A silent breath is a breath taken silently, so that the sound of inhaling oxygen does not disrupt the interaction of separate melodic phrases.

[48] A snatch-breath, in my experience, is often used as a quick moment to inhale enough oxygen so as to complete a long melodic line. A snatch-breath can also be used to enhance the sound of a long melodic phrase by breaking the phrase into two shorter phrases while using the sound of the snatch breath to enhance the tension of the longer phrase.

Sounds Discovered

Pyramid[49]

Clarinet – clar(i)(I)net – high pitch sound: Allow the clarinet to sound a low register note. While maintaining the sound, start singing into the clarinet, either on a similar pitch or a different pitch until the voice and the clarinet 'ignite' to produce a high pitch sound. React swiftly with the embouchure to maintain the high pitch sound. Slowly take the pitch level down again to voice and clarinet, ultimately letting the voice fade out, leaving the clarinet to sound the first low register note.

Harmonics[50]

Playing the harmonics of a note can be used to create quick, successive jumps over the range of the instrument through embouchure and air-flow manipulation. The easier jumps are from middle-C, moving chromatically upwards to G sharp.[51]

Overblown-Register[52]

When playing harmonics, a note pattern of overblown harmonics can be played consecutively while maintaining embouchure and air flow control. The sound quality vibrates in the nasal cavity and through the entire instrument.

Dynamic-Spiral[53]

On any sounding pitch, the dynamics of the pitch can be manipulated to create fluctuations of sound waves. A slow fluctuation would be quick-sounding crescendo's to decrescendo's, going faster and faster until the dynamic interchange smoothly transition to throat articulation creating chested sounds and reaching a faster fluctuation in clarinet sound.

Iron-out[54]

This is a technique that can be exercised through 'ironing out' a difficult extended motive, or creating a difficult extended motive. Start by playing the middle note of the motive, play one note forwards from the original note, and then backwards from the original starting note. From the original note, start adding one extra note, playing 'in opposite directions' until the entire extended motive is audible. An eight note motive of numbers 12345678 will read and play as follows: 45434-456543234-4567654321234-456787654321234 etc.

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[49] Listen to Pyramid from 04:50 – 06:20.

[50] Sounding of harmonics from 08:25 – 09:31.

[51] For more information on how harmonics work, view the chart of clarinet harmonics created by Allen Cole (Cole, 2003).

[52] Listen to the Overblown-Register in the video from 06:00 – 07:00.

[53] Listen to the Dynamic-Spiral from 15:25 – 15:38.

[54] Listen to a rendition of Iron-out from 16:20 – 16:40.

Alternative-key-trills[55]

The left-hand and right-hand fifth fingers are required to interchange their movements by playing alternative keys of the same note. Both fifth fingers have the option of playing the notes C, C sharp, B and E flat with the register key; or E, F, F sharp and A flat, by interchanging the left-hand and right-hand fifth fingers separately. This creates a fast trill.

Side-key-trills[56]

The clarinet has four side keys on the left-hand piece. Side keys 4 and 3 are easily reachable with the side of the right-hand index finger while maintaining the right-hand thumb on the thumb rest. Side keys 2 and 1 can be reached by easing the weight of the right-hand thumb and using the right-hand index finger to trill. The left-hand position can remain on the fingering while alternating side keys 1 and 2. This creates an opening on the side of the clarinet for interval jumps to occur. This sound effect changes the tone colour, with fast tremolo sounds, and can be used with any given fingering while the left-hand fingering remains in place.

Day 2.2

Seat A12[57]

The first row, row A, seat number 12, has an intimate relationship to the stage platform. It is close to the performing musician and can serve as a space from which to create music. The clarinettist jumps into seat A12, resting the bell of the clarinet on the cushion of the seat. This close-up shot shows a full body view of the clarinettist with his clarinet. It is now possible to see his hand position for the clarinet fingering, while his elbows rest on the arm rests. He takes a moment to make himself more comfortable on seat A12.

A low sounding E protrudes into the seat cushion, creating a damped sound until R1 is lifted to stop the sound. A long silence follows. Then an audible breath. A new tone colour has been found.

A low sounding E protrudes into the seat cushion, creating a damped sound until R2 is lifted to stop the sound. A long silence follows. Then an audible breath. The tone colour is repeated.

A low sounding E protrudes into the seat cushion, creating a damped sound until R2 is lifted, followed by R1-L3 to stop the sound. A shorter silence follows. Then a silent breath.

Low sounding E protrudes into the seat cushion creating a damped sound until R1 is lifted and starts to interact with R2 in a steady rhythm. L2 joins R1 and R2 in a dance-off on the clarinet fingerboard. They are interrupted by R3 to join the dance. When one finger 'stands up', the other finger 'sits back

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[55] Listen to Alternative-key-trills from 17:15 – 17:33. This sound can also be heard in 'Meditate' (https://vimeo.com/353300584) from 15:10 – 15:20; 22:40 – 23:18.
[56] Listen to a rendition of Side-key-trills from 17:35 – 17:38.
[57] https://vimeo.com/352688308 password for Vimeo link: @VisserClari9105.

down'. They give each other space to stand up and sit down; once or twice they stand up in unison. On a rare occasion, three of four of them rise together.

The finger dance gains tempo and confidence, speeding up, activating the forward motion through air flow while a circular breath is taken to maintain the motion.

The register key is added to jump the interval of a twelfth upwards in pitch. The sound does not complement the tone colour. The register key is quickly released.

Low sounding F protrudes into the seat cushion, changing the pitch slightly higher for the finger dance. Low sounding E returns as it protrudes into the seat cushion, changing the pitch back again. The dance continues.

The clarinet bell is moved forwards and backwards to deepen the sound colour into the cushion seat. With the airy sound produced from the finger dance the dynamic range expands, increasing and decreasing in volume, until the dance is depleted of finger movement and air flow.

The sound stops.

The clarinettist holds the clarinet out in front of him, the bell resting on the seat cushion. He looks to the empty seat on the right and quickly to the left and back down to the clarinet. With a swift motion he stands up to leave seat A 12.

Sounds Discovered

Finger-Dance
A damped or muted tone colour can be produced through the finger dance. By holding down the fingering for low E or F, interchange between R1, R2, R3, L1, L2, L3. R1 = right-hand index finger; R2 = right-hand middle finger; R3 = right-hand fourth finger. The same fingers are used on the left hand, indicated with L1, L2, L3. Two or three fingers can be lifted in unison, or just one finger at a time. The bell of the clarinet can rest either on the calve of the leg or, if available, on the cushion of the seat. A seated position on the floor or on a chair is required to execute this technique.

Journal Reflexion

29 June 2019

I really enjoyed playing with sound on the clarinet this morning. The first video is about twenty minutes long, while the second is very different, with the individual fingers being lifted in order to create a muted tone colour of different pitch. It is a daunting task to be alone on stage with my own sound, and to use only that sound to explore more sound. It is like a meditation process. I have to get rid of the old melodies and tunes that are stuck in my head, 'playing them out'. I remember Kyle Shepherd, South African jazz pianist, saying something like that. Sit for an hour a day just exploring sound, working with sound and the possibilities presented by sound.

I explored a variety of individual sounds this morning. Broken sound structures, with high-pitched sounds. And then there were melodic lines, some of them sounding beautiful in the concert hall. It is an exciting and daunting phase to challenge my sound perception of playing the clarinet in solitude. I mostly practise in solitude; so why should sound improvisation experiments be any different?

Day one started as a scary interaction with 'ghosts' in the Endler Hall. The conjured images of prominent figures in the Conservatoire, staff members and performers, possibly listening to my sessions. Students look up to those who are in teaching positions as performers. I do too. Their auras are always present in the concert hall, even if their physical bodies are not. Today their presence was weaker. I did not 'feel' or sense them.

Writing about improvisation experiments is difficult. That is why my focus is on the sounds and nuances that I can discover through experimenting with improvisation.

My practice is changing. I write about sound and then play. Could this be what I am after? Can the 'discomfort' of a sedimented practice be used to find a different, meaningful entry point to writing/practise?

Day 3

Meditate[58]

Basking in the completion of the previous improvisation sessions, the clarinettist finds himself in a strange, empty space. The initial confrontation with his constructs about his clarinet sound have led to a 'loosening', or 'opening' in his thinking. His thoughts are directed to the abstractness of creating and working with sound. He removes his sandals and finds a comfortable cross-legged position: Taking time in meditation, conjuring an idea for today's improvisation session.

His fingers are hesitant to pick a note to start on. They shiver slightly, but soon he plays a long-sounding G. Clear and soft. He gives an equal amount of time for silence after the first clarinet sound. His fingers are still hesitant as he plays a F with more confidence. A pattern of equality is created as sound and silence find parity.[59] Then the notes start to move, in no apparent pattern except for what he is thinking. The clarinettist doesn't want the sound of this morning to be predictable. The notes need not have a pattern or contain a possibility to find a pattern. The sound must be 'illogical', which he understands as meaning that once a note has been played, it should not be played again in that manner. He doesn't want the same pitches to recur. If it should happen, a different note value should be assigned to it. The interval jumps should be unpredictable in this manner. They need to sound out of place.

He realises that what he is playing still sounds like a melodic structure. How should he dismantle the 'transparency' in his playing? How can he get rid of the idea that once a tone colour and associated notes have been established, he no longer wants to be able to hear the established tone colour as it keeps on affecting the sound that will be created in the seconds and minutes to come? It seems impossible, but he keeps on trying, and once he has found a specific note, his ears remember a pattern of notes associated to a tone colour from an existing classical sound. The difference of this improvisation session is the amount of silence allowed to infiltrate clarinet sound. Silence allows pre-existing old melodies and notes to be conjured up as memories.

He tilts his head to the left and the right while playing a strange pattern that represents snippets of composed music from his past. It is at this stage in the improvisation session that clouded textures start to float behind his eyelids. It helps if the eyes are closed when meditating, but that is just one contributing factor to successful meditation. While taking a moment to clean the clarinet mouthpiece and his throat, the clarinettist realises that this meditation improvisation session is guided by the finger muscles.

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[58] https://vimeo.com/353300584 password for Vimeo link: @VisserClari9105.

[59] This idea where sound and silence play in relation to one another, comes from yoga. With the start of a yoga class, or self-practice, the inhalation length and exhalation length must interact with one another. Inhale and exhale must become equal in length and texture. An easy way to do this, would be to count the length in numbers of my inhalation, and then match that number in length with exhalation. Once a balance is found between inhale and exhale, the general length of both can be made longer or shorter. In this section above, I practise this breathing technique with sound and silence.

Every finger pad has a unique haptic response to the clarinet. Every finger position is a living posture, before it is defined by a pitch and tone colour. The fingers start to flow over the body of the clarinet, this time not listening to sound, but feeling the texture of every fingering. The clarinettist adjusts his focus to the finger-postures, guiding sound through finger-posture movement. A subtle change in dynamics is an indication that the finger postures have surrendered their short-lived pre-eminence to auditory reception. Sound reclaims the improvisation session.

Every melodic statement is part of a new process to react on and create a very subtle contrasting section of sound. Sound reception starts to control the clarinettist's entire body: throat, tongue, lungs, and spoken words. He removes the clarinet from his mouth to gather his thoughts. Big inhale, strong exhale.

A mysterious sound is created, light in tone and melodic material, in the low register of the clarinet. The rhythm is steady and easily jumps into a high-sounding pitch. The clarinettist has become familiar with embouchure control and air manipulation, or lip-up.[60] The bottom lip is the foundation for the reed to vibrate on, and if the foundation is strong, the vibration speed is much faster than on a weak foundation. Fast vibration creates a clear tone; slow vibration a less clear tone. He repeats the lip-up process, creating a playful interaction through technical finger dexterity. The playfulness directs the music to a nine-note figure sustained in monotone dynamics. The pattern consists of counting the notes from one to five, with a descending pitch trajectory and on the fifth note reversing the direction to play the same notes, speeding up the flow of notes in a repeat pattern of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, etc.

The sound continuum (flux), is repeated in different tempi and dynamics. A softer dynamic results in the pitches occurring after the sounds of the finger pads hitting the clarinet. A 'thud' sound escapes the wooded body of the clarinet before the pitched sound, creating a first layer of sound. The second layer of sound, the pitched sounds, becomes the backdrop for the sound of the clarinet: The sound of touch. This sound links to the more obvious layers of sound audible from the finger dance; however, the clarinettist only starts to realise this when he starts playing around with the idea of the finger dance by flowing into side-key trills. The clarinet mouthpiece starts to fill with the sound of a clogged reed. It is a mushy sound, scratching at the original sound. The clarinettist inhales the scratchy sound, back into his mouth, in order to unclog the reed and move directly into an acciaccatura exercise. The open G grace note jumps in between each melodic note, creating a dialogue where every other note needs to touch base with the grace note.

It is at this stage that the clarinettist starts to realise that the overlap in sound discoveries creates a pleasant feeling of freedom and expression. He is spending time not thinking about being productive, but being free to be creative, to repeat creative discoveries already made, and perhaps developing them into something new.

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[60] Lip-up is when the bottom lip exerts more pressure on to the reed in order for it to vibrate faster. With enough force, the sounding tone will produce a high-sounding pitch of up to two octaves higher.

The clarinet bell rests on his ankle and the mouthpiece on his bottom lip. The clarinettist sits like this for a minute or two. Enjoying the silence of a 'sound' meditation.

Sounds Discovered

Flux[61]

Flux is a nine-note motive, based on the idea of creating a delusional sound feeling. The clarinet range for flux to occur uses a combination of using both hands. The left hand fifth finger is the turning point for the nine-note motive. On the clarinet, this finger has a limited function of working with three fingerings. The first note and fingering is number 1, therefore, the pattern of numbers presenting fingerings in a motive is: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, etc. The interval jumps between each number must be less than and equal to a major third. The pattern functions in a repetition, creating a loop with different nuances of sound through dynamic control.

Finger-Thud[62]

The fingers of the clarinettist often hit the clarinet with a hard, quick motion, creating a finger strike onto the wood. This creates a sound (not associated with the click sound created by the pads and metal on the instrument) of split second duration, where the air of sound streaming out of one finger hole, is manipulated to create a different sound. The finger-thud sound is dependent on the softer range of dynamics that can be created while playing the clarinet.

Dirty-Mouthpiece[63]

The clarinet mouthpiece and reed have a small opening for the air to pass through in order for the reed to vibrate. Often the warm air going into the mouthpiece creates condensation on the inside of the mouthpiece, creating the scratchy sound of a clogged reed, masking the clear tone of the clarinettist.

Acciaccatura-Melody[64]

The acciaccatura figure is used to sound a pitch, right before the intended pitch, creating a pre-pitch for the actual pitch to rely on. The acciaccatura-melody therefore functions as a technique where the played melody is preceded by the acciaccatura note.

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[61] Flux can be heard from 19:22 – 20:34; 24:25 – 25:04.

[62] Finger-Thud can also be heard from 19:22 – 20:34 by listening past the sounded pitch. Listen through the fingers. With that said, any section in this video where the dynamics is softer, finger-thud is audible.

[63] Dirty-Mouthpiece showcases itself from 23:45 – 24:00, the exact time that Acciaccatura-melody is started.

[64] Acciaccatura-Melody can be heard from 23:45 – 24:20. The sound can also be heard in 'Freedom' (https://vimeo.com/352683345) from 07:35 – 08:30.

Journal Reflexion

30 June 2019

Today I encountered a sense of slowness in my work with sound. Slowing things down, accepting the process as something that will unfold in its own time.

I unpacked the instrument, took a half-lotus position and rested the bell of the clarinet on my leg. I started playing with the idea of sounding sound slowly, a way of practising in the practise room. I explored with sound and pitch, slowly, trying my best not to play the same pitch and pattern of the pitching so that it can be heard as a motive or phrase. Complete unpredictability of pitch was the idea, something I had not been able to conceive of or do while improvising fast, exciting sections with a focus on technique rather than sound. I started seeing the shades of clouds moving behind my eye lids, something that I experience with most seated meditation sessions. Yet in this case I was meditating with sound. Or was I? The clarinet sound relapsed into a pattern about which I wrote in my journal sometime last year.

Good things happen when things are slowed down. I am becoming comfortable with relying on myself to create sound. Even so I did pay attention to the drone in the concert hall, and the ringing in my ears of the room's 'tone'. It is an essential part of meditation to become aware of your surroundings. I've heard recording engineers record the tone of the room as a way of working with sound. A lot can be said for listening to the tone of the room.

Conclusion

David Henderson (Kapchan, 2017: 9) asks: 'Why would we wish to theorise and experiment with the print medium in the digital age? Why write, rather than do something else?' Of course, academic writing can also be considered a form of settled knowledge. But my enquiry has aimed at engaging critically with a different settled knowledge, the knowledge of what clarinet sound is (historically and perceptually). In this chapter, writing was about engaging with settled musical knowledges as one way to induce the critical delinking implied by a decolonial practice.

By engaging sound writing or writing sound, I could identify an index of sounds, codified in text, coaxed from my practice through compassionate listening to my creation process. From creating sound knowledge as a way of delinking from an existing sound world, to listening to that sound knowledge, to writing sound writing, emerged a re-identification and re-constructed sound knowledge that created different sound possibilities. I view the work presented in this chapter as a form of decolonial aestheSis. Walter Mignolo and Rolando Vázquez (2013) in their observation of the decolonial work being done in the humanities, write about decolonial aestheSis as a 'visible sign of underground conversations and activities taking place following in the trajectory' of the decolonial option as praxis.

What is clear from their observation, is that the term 'decolonial aestheSis' was coined only after viewing and noticing the defiant practices of embodied knowledge that emerge from a space of compassionate listening, a space they locate between modernity and coloniality. This space presents an 'opening' where artists, scholars and academics can engage in a defiant process of experimenting with the containment of aesthetics associated with aspects of the colonial matrix of power. Engaging sound writing from the improvisation experiments, artistic experimentation in artistic research has become a confrontation of the colonial matrix of power as it exists in my understanding of Western performance practice of the clarinet.

These processes of engagement push towards the emancipation of knowledge systems, and in this performance gesture, sound knowledge systems, to create another option among existing sound knowledge systems. For Mignolo (2013) the term decolonial aestheSis is not just an indictment of the universal validity claim of modern/colonial aesthetics, but an assertion of an option among many other options. This chapter presents one option, an illustration of the kind of work that can be done when decolonisation as a concept is allowed to challenge settled knowledge systems from within the patterns of sound production, technique and spatial conditioning.

Chapter 4: The Kirby Collection

Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed how a predicament arose in my research when I could not obtain permission to engage physically with Percival Kirby's Collection of Indigenous Instruments. Subsequently, I was given permission to engage sonically with the instruments, but an important modality of interaction, on which I had projected what I understood to be the decolonial encounter, was no longer possible. I couldn't play and experiment on the instruments, or copies of the instruments. The practical obstacle had focussed my attention inwards, towards my patterned thinking about sound production and clarinet technique, and I set about creating an index of codified sounds, through sound writing, that could become the basis for what I hoped would be compositional engagement with the clarinet's possibilities documented in this index. The different options, I believe, emerged not from an engagement with a purported 'other', but with a deconstruction of musical identity articulating the 'own'.

How could this process continue in a sonic encounter with the instruments held in the Kirby Collection of Indigenous Instruments at the University of Cape Town? For one thing, the gains I had made in exploring improvisation could happen in a space different to the Endler Hall, and could be directed by locating the sessions in a space evocative not of settled Western self-knowledge, but of settled Western knowledge of the Other. Could this spatial relocation, this reframing of my practice in an epistemological containment of the musical Other, push my sound exploration in different directions?

In the following section, I document my introduction to improvisation and improvisation performance. I engage with it as a practice, and how I came to practise it, and my concerns towards it. For me, improvisation practice was prompted by the decolonial imperative I embraced at the beginning of the study. It is a practice that infiltrated the study and actualised something particularly decolonial in my academic project. This practice, and how I found it, and it found me, resonates with what Mignolo and Vásquez (2013) refer to when speaking about the decolonial option as a praxis. Decolonial aestheSis, for them, is when the praxis occurs before the praxis is identified with a discourse or a concept. Therefore, the praxis follows a trajectory without the intention to develop discourse of any kind, including the discourse of decolonial aestheSis (Mignolo & Vázquez, 2013). However, in reflecting on my introduction to improvisation, it becomes clear that my process with decolonial aestheSis and artistic experimentation as an intentional practical phase of delinking from the unity of the clarinet sound and the containment of the clarinet sound as is discussed in Chapter One.

Free Improvisation?

In *The field of music improvisation,* Marcel Cobussen poses the questions: 'How might a book on improvisation begin?' (2017: 22), 'How can a scholar approach improvisation?' (2017: 51), and 'What is improvisation in music?' (2017: 37). Cobussen's *Field of musical improvisation* (FMI) proposes 'The FMI Theory' as a recollection of stories concerning specific musical phenomena (2017: 81). Instead

of debating what improvisation might (not) be, Cobussen suggests that it is a complex system that goes beyond the music [sound] itself, as it is part of a complexity in organisation where actants of the field explore musical possibilities (Cobussen, 2017: 84).

I had engaged in improvisation performance before my experiments in the Endler Hall, and the delinking gesture I was planning to perform in the museum space of the Percival Kirby Collection of Indigenous Instruments. Like improvisation itself – Cobussen writes that (2017: 21) 'a typical improvisation can have many different possible beginnings' – I return to a different beginning than the one I had initiated in the Endler Hall and Kirby Collection.

In improvisation, and with improvisation, the beginning has already begun. As an option, improvisation in life is a choice to take oneself to a different location or space in practice, musically or extra-musically. Alfonso Montuori writes (2003: 241) that improvisation and the creative engagement with improvisation through the body is a manner of dealing with the complexities of life through the expression of that world with improvisation. Improvisation, in my opinion, is a philosophy that allows one to identify constructs of thinking containing the reality of existential thinking. Philip Alperson (2010: 273) argues that improvisation is a human activity, i.e. directed human thinking and action for our way of acquiring knowledge of language, senses and existence. Improvisation thinking can then be seen as a disruptive option when compared to non-improvisation thinking. Improvisation thinking is a choice to open up one's body to external influences, musical and otherwise, while non-improvisation thinking is to remain closed off from external influences, musical and otherwise. By implementing improvisation thinking onto myself as a Western performance practice musician, I chose to engage with the practice of improvisation as an option for practicing the clarinet. In this way I also engaged with the colonial constructs of sound that constitute part of the clarinet's colonial matrix of power by opening them up to external influences.

In January 2018 – also my first year of registration for this degree – Theatre Arts Admin Collective (TAAC) in Observatory, Cape Town, launched a project of improvisation hosted by the artist in residence Manuela Lucia Tessi. [65] The aim of this project, titled *MusicDance 021* (in 2018 it was still called *Music/Dance improvisation sessions*), was to bring dancers and musicians together to create a platform for interdisciplinary collaboration towards improvisation performance.[66] Edward Neeman (2014) posits that in the moment of performance, new sounds and music [movement] can be discovered. This was what Tessi intended to facilitate.

The focus of the *MusicDance021* sessions was to workshop improvisation towards the idea of a performance. The workshop sessions were held on Sunday afternoons, and a performance for the public was scheduled in the week showcasing the results or partnership connections created during

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[65] Manuela Lucia Tessi considers herself a 'mover'. She said during the improvisation workshops that her understanding of a 'mover' entails that she has a background in dancing as an artist that goes beyond the traditional academic dance. In the broader sense she considers herself a physical performer. Tessi facilitates every process with her body, sometimes before explaining with words. She is interactive in her facilitations. As an artist in residence, she allows herself to learn and teach through her facilitation, i.e. an artist as a teacher; an artist as a student; an artist as a facilitator; an artist as an artist.

[66] The performance is just one part of the process of discovering new sounds and music. It should not make the process before the performance seem less important. That is one of the differences I noticed with *MusicDance 021.*

the improvisation sessions.[67] The partnership items of each performance were identified as a duo, trio, quartet, quintet, sextet or group, and included either dancers and musicians, or only dancers, or only musicians, and were aimed to address improvisation in the following manner:

> [Free] improvisation has often been presented as an improvisational practice in which musicians [dancers] try to reduce to a strict minimum the decisions made before performance, aiming at the spontaneous act of improvisation in and of itself, independent of the expression of any musical idiom. (Canonne, 2018: 1)

The platform space for *MusicDance021* was an old church building with different spaces in the form of a church hall and gathering hall. TAAC ("Theatre Arts Admin Collective", 2019) described itself as:

> a home for local theatre practitioners – where they can create work, develop skills, perform, engage in dialogue and meet and work with theatre practitioners who come from diverse backgrounds, whether cultural, social, economic or simply in skill and experience.

Chris Atton (2012: 432) writes that improvisation constellations take place in venues that serve a multipurpose role for artistic productions and non-musical phenomena. TAAC as a platform correlated with Atton's description: The venue was affordable and 'dedicated to creating the right environment for artists and theatre to flourish' ("Theatre Arts Admin Collective", 2019). The TAAC platform also allowed the space to become a site of contestation through artistic practice and collaboration (Atton, 2012: 433). [68]

A square black mat covered half of the Church hall floor. The square block was always swept before the start of the improvisation sessions, as most of the dancers moved without shoes on the square. The Western performance practice musicians would soon learn from viewing the dancers that they, too, could remove their shoes for the sessions. The constellation of dancers and musicians would start with a movement exercise of familiarising oneself with the space inside the old church building. Some of us stretched our muscles, others moved up and down, rolling on the ground, making arbitrary motions in order to get acquainted with the texture and space of the environment. As I noticed the bodies of others creating movement in and out of different positions, the group dynamics of interaction in the room stimulated me to join the 'flow'.

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[67] When there are different bodies in a small space like TAAC, certain bodies connect better than others. This connection is a connection of 'mind, body and spirit' that is felt, and is discovered by individuals as the deciding factor for a partnership in performance. It often occurs that two people, or more, connect with one another while all the other bodies are present in the space. This connection could be based on many different things, but the result of this connection can only be made once each person has found themselves holistically in that space. This is true of many art form bodily practices like yoga, chi gung, tai chi etc. It could be described a process to re-associate the dissociated psyche into embodiment.

[68] In the previous chapter, I took it upon myself to confront the space of the Endler Hall as a space of contestation, in order to react with sound in solitude, in that space. The Endler presents a sound world of the clarinet, that I wanted to confront with improvisation as a delinking gesture of decolonial aestheSis.

This exercise and approach framed by the suggestion of 'familiarising oneself with the room'[69] had the purpose of allowing participants to engage with their bodies, and with other bodies in the space through movement, touch, visual and auditory stimulation. Atton argues that the practice of improvisation involves different bodies in one space, and each of those bodies contains a history within itself. Improvisation as a practice in process allows each body to disrupt the aestheticism of their histories, which in itself enables the description of meaning and behaviour in the presence of other bodies sharing the space and experience (Atton, 2012: 439). I recall a moment when the intensity of movement from more or less ten people in the square space became overwhelming and I had to take a moment of 'pause'.

I found myself sitting at the edge of the square looking at the moving bodies and listening to the sound of movement. I seemed to be the only performer who felt disrupted in this way. Perhaps my history as a Western performance practitioner had imposed strict rules and ethics over my body, which might have been disrupted in this space of joint behaviour through movement, interaction, listening and responding. This moment of 'pause' allowed me to connect with my breath and when I was ready, I joined the 'flow' of moving bodies again.

The 'pause' and 'flow' of this initial warm-up familiarisation exercise constituted part of a bigger structure of improvisation under the guidance of Tessi. Mindful of the controversy of holistic teaching, which includes aspects of spirituality,[70] the methodological guidance of Tessi is distinctly indebted to ideas of holistic art education. Aspects of holistic education have been emphasised by philosophers as early as Plato and Rousseau, arguing that education should seek to address multiple individual dimensions while relating the person to society (Campbell, 2011: 18). Peter London (2006: 8) argues that:

> Authentic, creative undertakings, serious artistic engagements, prove a perfect
> model of holistic activity in that their fullest, the artist engages the fullest array
> of their attributes; their mind, body and spirit.

Although Tessi's project may not explicitly have been set up under the auspices of education, or disruption, the self-education in the form of holistic education could only be achieved in a setting, or by a platform, where it was safe for each person to notice the other person as they moved around through 'mind, body and spirit'.

Whether one identified as a musician or dancer, participant or teacher, and regardless of gender, race, or nationality, the embodied dialogue of movement stimulated the narrative of every person,

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[69] Personal journal reflexion from the workshop in 2018.

[70] According to Campbell (2011: 18), contemporary holistic theorists create a distinction between spirituality and religion. Spirituality, in the contemporary view, includes the awareness and interconnectedness of space, society and oneself. Within the constellation of *MusicDance 021* presented in this chapter, spirituality means first and foremost connecting with oneself in the presence of others. Contemporary improvisation is not possible if the self, the inner being, has not found its footing in social integration.

allowing for self-acceptance to govern the creation of art. For the dancers, art was created through their movement; for the musicians who considered sound their medium, a new form of artistry was discovered through movement. In this first warm-up constellation,[71] I discovered my body as an instrument through movement. During *MusicDance021*, I also had to re-discover and identify my original reason for coming to the workshop by embracing the clarinet as an extension of my body that defines my artistic expression. The introduction to disrupting my body, confronted me with new expectations to explore movement and motion with sound as a response to the other bodies present. In doing so, I also had to confront my sound world through other bodies.

After our warm-up session, I tried to pick up my clarinet. As a performer trained in the Western classical tradition, joining Tessi's workshop with my clarinet was daunting. In the tradition into which I had been inculcated, the clarinet is a formal instrument that requires a sense of formal respect when it is played. It is seldom played in this manner without the notated scores of composers. The instrument is kept clean, polished and safe. It is expensive. Taking it out of its normal space of functioning, like the practise room, concert hall etc. is like a breach of etiquette and propriety considering the value of the instrument and its lineage of performance. The instrument is 'safest' in its formal environment, because other people in this environment are cognisant of these formalities, and the way in which they share in this knowledge shapes their behaviour and their way of listening to the clarinet sound.

By taking the clarinet out of the Western performance practice paradigm and receiving exposure to the paradigms of other performing options like improvisation presented at *MusicDance021* (and to a certain extent, later, the space of the Kirby Collection), I wilfully disrupted my own inherited and entrained constructs by thinking improvisation, and by reacting with sound as a way of disrupting and juxtaposing concepts such as security, freedom, space, sound, and creativity. Cobussen (2017: 177) writes that with this form of improvising there is the capacity to change our ideas of concepts in their concrete attitudes:

> Herein lies the justification for dealing with improvisation in music, a justification that exceeds the mere musical domain.

My initial introduction to *MusicDance021* did indeed breach my sense of artistic containment as defined by a so-called 'musical domain'. I was aware that notions of vulnerability and freedom touched on a sense of right and wrong, of how creativity touched morality.

Guidelines for Performance

In 2014, a document was assembled by the Music Department of Stellenbosch University containing the internal guidelines for what it called an 'Integrated PhD in Music', which was intended as a

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[71] Tessi uses the word constellation for when bodies come together in time and space.

practice-based higher degree. Point 4.b of this document, under the title 'Internal examination stipulations' states that:

> During the public performance of the creative work it has to be clear that the performance constitutes part of a doctoral programme.[72] The internal examiner has to be present at all these performances and has to prepare a report on them that is taken into account in the final examination and can be mentioned during the oral examination. (University Stellenbosch integrated PhD in music - Internal guidelines, 2014)

The approval of creative work as public performances for this degree must be presented to a programme committee in the form of a program portfolio or program proposal. While the program committee is not there to validate the quantity or quality of the public performances, they are given the role to assess the meaningfulness of each project 'in terms of the coherence between the proposed creative work and the part of the research that will be submitted in written form' (University Stellenbosch integrated PhD in music - Internal guidelines, 2014).

This guideline document goes on to say that the internal examiner is to be present for the approved public performances, which opens up a form of engagement – or at least the possibility of engagement – between the internal examiner and artistic researcher-performer during the public performance.[73] The internal examiner therefore enters a process of relatedness to the project of the researcher when the public performances are presented in the program proposal, and approved by the programme committee. Considering that the concept of 'public performance' connotes a closed system with a strict divide between audience and performer, this design of the process has the potential to open the system and blur the divide.[74]

Working towards the idea of a 'public performance', the engagement with creative thinking is captured in the public performance paradigm, limiting the process to a set choreography of preparation and performance. In other words, if the goal is to present a public performance, a certain kind of creative engagement relating to preparation and preceding the public performance can be considered as a means to an end.[75] I have come to think that working with the idea of 'public performance' in the description of the degree is unnecessarily limiting as a way of inducting performance into academe, especially when it is clear that this notion of public performance is

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[72] This loophole presents the artistic researcher to fall back into the traditions of performance practice. The keywords that are problematic here, are 'public performance'.

[73] Firstly, the student can engage (or not engage) with his internal examiner as an examiner that will merely assess the public performance. Or, secondly, the student can allow the internal examiner to be part of a process as an artistic event, which open the possibility for engagement and interaction of such an examiner as an embodied person, rather than a ghost figure as indicated in the previous point.

[74] The embodied presence of an internal examiner (and supervisors) gives the artistic researcher the opportunity to create an artistic event that is a different option or version of the 'public performance' as described in the internal guidelines.

[75] The nature of a public performance or working towards a public performance where the creative work of this degree is presented as a public performance, limits to some extent the capacity of creative engagement for this degree.

understood as an expression of a particular historicised Western performance practice. The use of the term, in the way I encountered it in the guidelines to my degree, assumed too much, and much of what it assumed worked against the idea that artistic work could interact with more conventional academic reflections in an iterative manner.

For my project, I interpreted the public performance as the staging of an artistic event. An artistic event can start with an initial strand of thinking or doing, and these strands could inform an artistic and/or conventional academic process leading to the artistic event as a research and/or artistic outcome as a stage in a process of working through an idea. This means that the artistic event is not a single goal, but a point somewhere on a continuum of discovery and exploration, a meaning that goes beyond what is understood with 'public performance'. This process occurs before, during and after the artistic event. In 2014, Michael Schwab suggested the word exposition be used as a supplementary term to describe the discursive nature of artistic research and practice. Schwab considers the term 'exposition' arbitrary in nature, as the term presents '…a process to transgress the confines of academic publishing' (2014b: 36). The term 'exposition', the content of which can be altered and changed, must serve to define a specific practice in artistic research that brings practice and theory together. I choose to use the concept 'artistic event', rather than 'public performance', allowing the performance aspect of my degree to allow for Schwab's 'exposition' as a more flexible relation between theory and practice. It is a conceptual turn than includes the creation of the sound index through improvisation (documented in the previous chapter) as part of a practice-led exposition essential to the artistic event.

On 23 October 2019, I entered the museum space of the Percival Kirby Collection of Indigenous Instruments with both my supervisors, internal examiner, and the lecturer in ethnomusicology who is also the curator of the Kirby Collection. In the months preceding the event, the email conversations with these parties included the keywords 'Kirby performance'. I was still thinking of a performance, and had in mind the idea of a solo clarinet improvisation as a performance. However, days before the event, the concept of 'performance' struck me to be one of containment that would set the event on a particular non-interactive trajectory. It seemed to inform a choice that I had not made, but had been entrained in. Where my usual way of preparing for a performance would include mental preparation while practising my instrument (in the practise room), i.e. mental and physical preparation, I stopped practising and focussed only on mental preparation for the event. The staging of the Kirby Collection event as a conventional public performance was placed under interrogation by the presence of those present in the room (as explained earlier with regard to the internal examiner), but also by the way in which I changed my preparation in the practise room. I found myself, subsequently, closer to the idea of an artistic experiment.

An artistic experiment as an artistic event, to my understanding, could simulate an open system public performance as opposed to a closed system public performance as suggested by the internal PhD guidelines to my degree. Bob Gilmore covers a five-point summary of what experimentation could mean for composers in his 2014 article 'Five maps of the experimental world'. The term experiment, according to Gilmore (2014: 26), 'links it to the Old French *esperment,* meaning a trial or test, but which also had the sense of "practical knowledge".' In Gilmore's essay, John Cage gives two definitions of experimental music which Gilmore labels the soft and hard versions. The 'hard version', which is of interest here, is associated with the action of practical knowledge where that

action '…is the outcome which is not foreseen' (Gilmore, 2014: 25). Cage's successor, James Tenney, brings a different definition to experimentation:

> Tenney believed that 'experimental' in music should mean more or less what it does in the sciences. The composer would write a piece of music, try certain things out, then judge whether they worked, didn't work, or only partly worked, then in the next piece that experiment could be followed up: like a scientist, one could go further down the same line. (Gilmore 2014:26)

Gilmore's research on experimental music composers interprets the composer's identity as comprised of many characters: creator, inventor, scientist, judge and jury of success or not. In a closed system of composing, similar to a closed system of performance, Tenney's idea of equating science experimentation to composition experimentation is plausible. However, if the outcome of experimental composition is only open to the unforeseen effects of composerly designs by the composer, one might argue that the experiment is not experimental at all. Opening up the performance as an artistic event, for me, meant changing and disrupting my usual preparation routine. But I wanted to push the experiment further, in opening up the event to prompts not of my own design, through delinking from my own control by immersing the event in improvisation as research.

As an artistic experiment, the Kirby Collection event presented an opportunity to involve those present to interact with the improviser through listening to sound and imagining sound. The museum space, or artefact exhibition space, was made available to me for two hours. I planned at least three improvisation sessions. After each session, it was my intention to create an opportunity where my 'audience' (supervisors, internal examiner, curator) could share their impressions of the improvisation session. With this idea in mind, I set up the space through different forms of engagement. First, I invited those present to participate in 'familiarising themselves with the room'. Learnt in the *MusicDance021* workshop, the familiarisation technique was now implemented to open engagement in a way that could influence the improvisation sessions. Although the intention was not to make those present uncomfortable, it did. My supervisors, examiner and the curator did not expect to participate in events. The initial reaction from the those present was slow, uncomfortable and unsettling.

The passivity of the 'audience' as I engage with improvisation in this space was something that I could not change, but I did attempt to challenge it by involving them, without warning, to participate before and after the improvisation sessions in the form of interactions, comments, impressions, and ultimately taking part in imagining appropriate sound responses to the collection of instruments. They were invited, in other words, to become part of a process of joint artistic thinking through language, which goes beyond traditional aspects of improvisation performance. I wanted to see what would happen if one engaged with language and sound in a shared embodied manner, where the creation of sound allowed a shared space for the creation of words. I also wanted to give my 'audience' the opportunity to imagine what they would have done with sound if they were playing the clarinet instead of me, and then the opportunity to verbalise those sound images. Cajoling them to become participants, this form of engagement allowed a different imaginative engagement with

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sound to occur with the participants present, allowing improvisation to come one step closer to engaging with a domain that exceeds the mere musical domain.

In the following section, the link to each improvisation session is provided in a footnote.

Feeling space[76]

Feeling space in the Kirby Collection resonates with the manner I was introduced to the concept of improvisation at the *MusicDance021* workshop. The first sound of this session emanates from my emergence into the space where the collection is held, and becoming accustomed to that space through sound. The clarinet sounds from a seated position, a position of grounding and finding sound from the bottom-up. The resonance of sound created on the lowest level of the space, speaks to engaging with the entire space of the Kirby collection. The traveling sound from this position prompts me to start on a low-sounding note. The entire body of the instrument guides the sound to move through the bell of the instrument. Once sound is created, the tone of that sound has to be sustained and circular breathing has to be implemented to sustain this sound. I feel that this is imperative to occupy the space, and that silence breaking the sound will shut me out. My sound is soft and insinuating, not disruptive. It is aesthetically pleasing in a conventional way relating to good tone, yet the interchanging of clarinet sound with that of my circular breathing creates a plea for the space to accept my presence through my clarinet sound.

After my first improvisation, I invite my supervisors, examiner and the curator to sit on the floor and engage with me about what had transpired. They tell me that they find it impossible to hear dialogue between what I had done, and the surroundings of mute, indigenous instruments. In my own perception, the space had a specific effect on my clarinet sound, and in that sense, there was an always-already conversation taking place between my playing and the instruments, one that preceded the start of the improvisation session. Although I did take this dialogue with me into that space, my interlocutors did not hear this, and suggested different ways in which I could elicit sounds from the mute exhibits. One suggestion was to stand closer to the big drums in the room, and see what sort of resonance could be drawn from them, or to place the bell of the clarinet inside the drum to resonate differently. I resisted this gesture from the onset because of its banality. The sound created in this session, 'feeling space', had already physically entered the space without being close to any instrument. But listeners heard my sound as indifferent, and even 'exotic' given the surroundings. This kind of sound, it was suggested, was suitable (and not exotic) in a concert hall setting.

In 'Feeling space', I focussed on timbre and the technique involved in its configuration. I created a maintained drone sound that demanded physical exertion through the implementation of circular breathing. On top of this drone, I improvised figuration in conversation with the drone. Combined, I experienced the sound in the context of the Kirby Collection as deeply meaningful, even meditative. The indigenous instruments, removed from their original contexts as a collection of instruments in a

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[76] https://vimeo.com/399092110/1bd788a753 password for Vimeo link:@VisserClari9105.

museum, created as an exhibit a new context where my perception of listening, and that of my listeners, was deeply aware of their presence in different ways.

Transmutation[77]

As a response to the participant conversation, I react with sound in a more aggressive manner. The second session, which I call 'Transmutation', exhibits this change. In the first session, I started in a seated position. I now stand, and further explore the response of the room by acknowledging the delay in acoustics when presenting the space with a drumbeat, emulated on the clarinet. This cliché comparison is one I intentionally create in response to the comments I received after the first session. I become engaged in a longer improvisation session, responding to the first session and the subsequent discussion. This is not how I envisaged a free improvisatory response, as it is reacting to a previous attempt and the reflexions of others upon this event.

The session 'Transmutation' presents aspects of change through contrast. I contrast musical material, sounding difference musically by exploiting technical capabilities of my instrument through my own advanced technique developed over many years. I push for contrast by indulging in technical playing that borders on the edge of disintegration.

In both 'Feeling space' and 'Transmutation', the videography shows the one side of the museum and how the instruments are stored. One can see the drums and other percussive instruments, but no woodwind instruments. After the second session the participant discussion raised the curious fact that the instruments that I had intended engaging with, and the drawers and glass case in which they are exhibited, had been used as a utility area for the videographer. Not being able to play these exhibits, I had chosen to ignore them.

As a reflexion on 'Transmutation', I struggle to come to terms with the fact that improvisation, in this space, required me to do more than just work with sound. Where the decolonial imperative had led to a process of decolonising myself through the manner that I practise, my personal commitment to and identification with the instrument and its technique and the acceptance of vulnerability beyond the certainties of the tradition in which I had been trained, I resented being cajoled into reconsidering the instruments I had not been given permission to play. I had become undone as an instrumentalist, I had participated in my own dismantling, and in a way had become comfortable in that process through embracing improvisation. My supervisors, internal examiner and the curator of the Kirby Collection challenged what they sensed had become a new complacency.

Mute[78]

I stare at the indigenous woodwind instruments closed off in drawers and behind glass casings. With improvisation thinking directed towards the political decolonial imperative of engaging with these

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[77] https://vimeo.com/399093021 password for Vimeo link: @VisserClari9105.
[78] https://vimeo.com/399093755 Password to Vimeo link: @VisserClari9105.

instruments, my clarinet sound becomes fragmented. The musical expression is fragmented. The sound splits into the different registers of the clarinet. The melodic movement is mostly unpredictable, and the sound is piercing and disruptive. After the first breath, a few seconds of silence; then a change in timbre that emulates my perception of what some of the instruments could sound like. The idea is brief, and the instrument is physically dismantled as I remove the head joint, working with the sound of the trumpet-clarinet. My technical training becomes superfluous. I dismantle the clarinet. I end the session by placing the clarinet in its different pieces on the countertop.

Concluding options

Concerned with what I now believe to be a more political engagement with the Other, I requested permission to play on and experiment with the instruments in the Kirby Collection. This request was denied. In response, I entered the exhibition space of the collection as a classically trained musician with a specific perception of Western performance practice, with the intention to improvise. I am not an ethnomusicologist or a specialist on African woodwind instruments; yet I engaged with the space intentionally, playing my instrument. I am unsure if this can be described as a decolonial gesture, because the Western tradition of tone and sound production is deeply embedded in my own practice. I was pleased to be informed by the curator that students training in the classical Western tradition in the College of Music, had not done this before. Perhaps this does make my effort meaningful.

My first two improvisations were well-rounded, though contrasting, structured performances. Musically and melodically I hear directed thinking, self-containment and beauty. The third improvisation disintegrated. The visual confrontation with the African woodwind instruments had an impact on the directed thinking, affecting my sound. In 'Mute', my containment as a musician is breached. I successfully fail. The decolonial imperative opens up a void in technique and sound. The question as to how a practice is delinked from its patterns of containment, remains open.

There is a correlation between the three improvisation sessions in the Kirby Collection and the three days of improvisation in the Endler Hall documented in Chapter 3. 'Feeling Space' and 'Day 1' are both attempts to get into the respective spaces where they happen. Both use sound to get into a space, to understand and confront what the space has historically presented. Both work with sound literally and figuratively from the bottom up to sustain a tone in a space as if to ask permission from the space to be there and to be present. 'Transmutation' and 'Day 2' are both a celebrations, displaying a warming to space and using sound to settle space. Both these sessions work with and through sound from previous sessions, and grapple with contrast and technical mastery of sound. 'Mute' and 'Day 3' are both confrontations. 'Mute' is a politically-directed thinking process sparked by visual engagement with a display of indigenous woodwind instruments, while 'Day 3' is an internal searching for something else in sound through a constant critique on sameness in sound. In both scenarios there is a literal and metaphorical dismantling of sound and the instrument.

Chapter 5: It'll be a thing…

Introduction

Even though my project changed much over time, with the decolonial option shifting from a focus on engaging a putative Other to identifying and delinking from my own structures of musical containment, the intended outcome of presenting a composer with an index of sounds redolent with decolonial options, remained. This chapter describes this outcome, itself a moment in a larger performance event, which depended on all the previous phases of my project: Discovery of structures of containment in South African academic literature, self-reflexion on practice and the practise room as a shaping pattern, delinking from a performance tradition in the Endler Hall with improvisation experiments, and ritually enacting a performance event where the decolonial option flips from self-discovery to Other-response and back. Improvisation was a key to this process, and when I commissioned a composition from the composer, Pierre-Henri Wicomb, it happened through a presentation of the sound index I compiled in Chapter 3. The collaboration process between Wicomb and I led to the presentation of an artistic research event, *Gateway*, on 28 January 2020. The iterative nature of the collaboration, the compromises of give and take, push and pull, informed all decisions relating to the event: The creation of a new composition, the decision to perform a canonical work from the repertoire as a companion piece, the framing of the event by a statement from one of my supervisors, and the conversation Wicomb and I had with my other supervisor in front of the audience subsequent to my performance.

When I refer to the new composition, I do not mean to intimate a work, but rather the entire process of creating this composition as a collaborative artistic endeavour. The canonical composition, and my reference to it, is informed by an idea of composition as something done by a composer, and in this case a work that was part of my clarinet education before I had embarked on this project. The new composition represents for me a new sound world from a new creation process, and I choose to refer to it by its title, *It'll be a thing…*, rather than by the surnames of its joint collaborators, Visser Liebenberg and Pierre-Henri Wicomb. The old composition, and the old sound world it refers to, is *Three pieces for clarinet solo* by Igor Stravinsky.

I write about this collaborative creation process under the subheadings of 'Creation process', 'Pre-performance', 'Performance' and 'Post-performance'. A link is provided in the section 'During performance' to listen to and view *Gateway*. The text and the video can function separately from each other for viewing and reading. Yet, combined, the text and the video speak to a process of translation, recognising human activity as complexly constituted of innate knowledges that cannot always be made readily available through the expression of writing and playing. My writing references concepts, notions, ideas and their juxtapositions from the artistic act of creation, intended to assist in comprehending an artistic research event, *Gateway.*

The artistic research event, *Gateway*

The report or written exposition for an artistic research event is confronted with difficulties in academic writing. The academic writing should be a written explication convincing the reader that the artistic event has made a critical inquiry with regard to phenomena at hand. The academic writing should also make a critical enquiry into knowledge production through the artistic event. In the written work of Paulo de Assis, for example, this critical enquiry is often assertive, stating and bolstering the validity within the artistic event for artistic research as academic knowledge. Writing in *Logic of experimentation*, De Assis is adamant that artistic research must be seen as a field standing on its own, an equal to musicology, art history or philosophy (De Assis, 2018: 12). This tone reveals something about the kind of work required for artistic research to be recognised in academe, and how a case still has to be made for its validity.

In my own degree and the presentation of a project in the form of an artistic research event, *Gateway,* my biggest concern was to create a space for the introduction to the concept 'sound knowledge'. *Gateway* aimed to make my understanding of the concept accessible to the listener through the form of a spoken introduction about artistic research, a performance of a new composition, a canonical composition and then a discussion of my understanding from these sound worlds and how they influence each other. *Gateway* engages with my process of presentation that has been created through artistic research and artistic experimentation between composer and artistic researcher-performer.

Brandon LaBelle (2018: 3), in discussing the work of Frances Dyson, tells us how sound and the presentation of sound can be associated with a holistic approach when it comes to dealing with contemporary political struggles. *Gateway* attempted to confront my contemporary political struggles, my position and practice as a clarinettist of Western classical music in South Africa at a time of concerted discursive enquiry about decolonisation, in the form of sound presentation for reception. *Gateway* presents the conditions of an existing sound world and a new sound world that, combined, may create the (sound) space for dwelling outside the parameters of a (my) previous condition(ing). In the process of creating what I identify as a new sound world, the idea of a compassionate tone for working with sound, as LaBelle finds in the work of Dyson (LaBelle, 2018: 3), became important to me. In the entirety of my doctoral project, working with sound is directly tied to writing sound, which has an enabling function, allowing sound to become a space in different dimensions which can react to itself.

Sound is forceful in its metaphoric theatrical presentation, and that is in itself a critical act, a prerequisite posed by De Assis in working with musical practice in performance (De Assis, 2018: 19). Due to the natural invasiveness of sound in its presentation, I believe it is not possible to engage with sound without it being a critical act. The aim of *Gateway* was to recognise this critical agonistic potential, and to take conscious steps to mitigate it in a compassionate act of presentation. Part of the turn taken in my doctoral work was in reconsidering processes of decoloniality as these pertain not to an Other, but to myself. I believe that this turn has informed my preference for compassion rather than combat, and sympathetic invitation rather than confrontation.

The presentation of a new composition was preceded by a process of creation that required a sense of compassion towards the self, which was clearly expressed by the composer when deciding on a name for the piece. Pierre-Henri Wicomb's process of creating a composition from my index of sounds was given the title *Will it be a thing…?* in its initial phase of existence. Several weeks later, Wicomb changed the title to *It'll be a thing…*. In the act of naming, Wicomb and I slowly started to create a relationship with the composition through a compassionate process of accepting a new sound world that we dwelled in for several months, and where we still dwell. For me the naming process of the composition showed a holistic process, where bodies, thoughts and emotions were acknowledged and recognised as important things made possible and nurtured by the artistic research degree.

Although academic writing might still be the outwardly visible facade of the artistic research degree, the process-driven act of creation produces new sources of knowledge in the form of voice-memo recordings, video recordings, journal entries, collaborations and conversations. This process had to be accompanied by an acceptance of my own creation process as a source of knowledge. Central to this understanding, was a growing concern of how to present such knowledge in a way that does not reduce it to mere academic writing. Michael Schwab has coined the notion of 'transpositions', understood as 'what kind of transpositional operations may be implied as research develops' (Schwab, 2018: 7). Transpositional logic presupposes that it is possible to create an identity between two functional epistemic things that, as individual entities, afford a transpositional logic. Transposition, as understood by Schwab, is multilayered, while presentation is linear or singular (Schwab, 2018: 7). The multilayeredness of transpositional logic can occur between more than two epistemic things, creating a lineage of multilayeredness leading to the presentation of that thing in its linearity. This is how I view *Gateway* as an artistic event: As an unfolding of linearity (music performance is tied to chronological linearity) that derives a multilayeredness from being embedded in a process of knowledge generation that is not understood as incidental to its meaning *as outcome*, but that transposes its meaning well beyond the event itself.

Creation Process

The compilation of a sound index, which preceded *It'll be a thing…*, identified and documented in prose a number of delinked sounds. It was my intention that this index would be provided to a composer, directing his/her options to the experiments documented in the index as a basis from which to start work, and that the resulting composition would reflect not only the delinked base of musical materials, but also a fundamentally changed power relationship between composer and performer. The composer would have more or less twenty-four different sounds at his disposal, and would have to accept the fact that making a new work would entail continued engagement with the instrumentalist in something that could only be called co-composition.

The commissioning project was aimed at restricting a composer to the codified written index of sounds and how that influences the interaction between the composer and performer. In this sense, performance experimentation, rather than compositional experimentation, would determine creative energy, an energy I had hoped would be characterised by compassionate listening and newness. In one way, through the provision of the index, the commissioning of the new work was unusually restrictive. In another, in the understanding that the outcome of the commission was not

a performance or product but a stage in a process, it was open to multilayeredness. In a way, the commission would become a creative codification of a delinked index codified in prose.

At my first meeting with Pierre-Henri Wicomb, I presented him with the written index of sounds I had compiled, which I also proceeded to demonstrate technically. When Wicomb presented me with handwritten notation of his first attempts to work with the different sounds at a subsequent meeting, it occurred to me that a transpositional logic had been put into motion: My written sound index was a translation of sound experimentation, and Wicomb was now transposing the writing into music notation. My understanding of my own techniques did not include reading those techniques in notation. Moreover, Wicomb was notating polyphonic textures, unusual for clarinet writing. Apart from sounding multiphonics, the clarinet does not conventionally play multiple notes at the same time. Yet, Wicomb took the technique titled 'Clarinet-Layers' and created a notational image of the technique that went beyond the initial technique (which dismantled the sound of the instrument) to dismantling the technique itself. Where my practising of 'Clarinet-Layers' was open ended and not pulse driven, Wicomb created a version of 'Clarinet-Layers' in pulse and pitch restrictions. Wicomb's notational image of this technique created a specific sound, which appeared throughout the composition in different guises that expanded on its original conception. Wicomb called this the 'Gateway Note'.

When playing 'Clarinet-Layers' there is a discernible interval in the transition from the low sounding note, to the counterpart higher note produced by the same fingering. These two notes can sound together or separate, with remnants of the one note either dominating or falling into the background of its overall sound. Upon transposing 'Clarinet Layers' to 'Gateway Note' in notation, one could reasonably expect that such delimitation in notation limits the sounding capacity of the original technique. However, Wicomb's notation expanded the potential of the original technique. This expansion, doing the opposite of what notating sound does, is why the artistic research event was called 'Gateway'. Where I dismantled my own technical capabilities of sounding a process of delinking, Wicomb's notation, based on my technique, forced me to take control of the sounding from notation. 'Take control' is not a phrase I would normally use, but that is how I understood what happened when I had to produce sound from the notation to give meaning, direction, and acceptance of newness. The entanglement was as of two different entities engaged in an intricate choreography of transposition. Wicomb states (Voice memo recording, 3 October 2019) from one of the collaboration sessions that:

> For me as the composer, I want to find my perception of a sound world within
> your sound world. I find it fascinating. You [Liebenberg] have given me a
> perspective of your sound world, which in many ways have been 'fixed' in its
> creation and presentation, and I want to see if there is space for my sound world
> around these fixed sounds. Are there different sound worlds?

The 'Gateway Note' became the departure point for Wicomb to identify an interiority of possibilities in my index (thus moving beyond the idea of 'restriction'), forcing me to manipulate sound with embouchure, far beyond the normal lifting or dropping of pitch when playing with other instrumentalists. The embouchure manipulation breaks through that pitch adjustment sound, into a

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different clarinet register, and for Wicomb that entire register became one of sounding worlds implied within my index that he aimed to occupy in his notation sounding. In Figure 7, showing a fragment of the handwritten score, it becomes clear how Wicomb is searching for his own discoveries in my index through notation. In Wicomb's imaginative use of the index, it developed through a process of notation to enact a transpositional logic between sounding, texting, and notating.
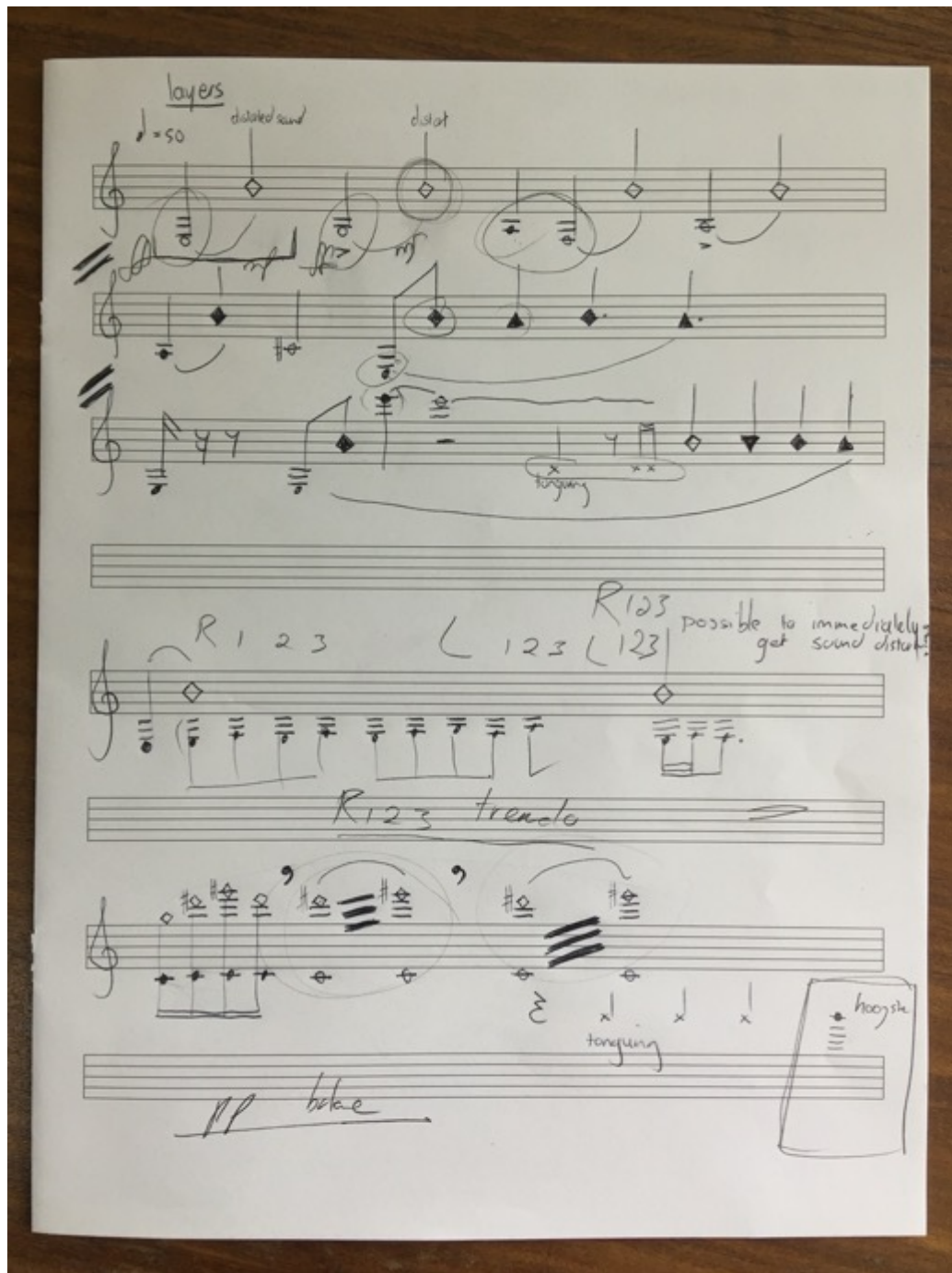

Figure 7. Pierre-Henri Wicomb's hand-written notation

The notation of Figure 7 is multilayered. The first line indicates a melodic movement that tests the 'Gateway Note' on different pitches. In the second line, Wicomb aims to change the pitch of the

'Gateway Note' by writing a melodic contour from B to A to B to A, while maintaining the low E fingering. This exploration in notation was not attempted in my experiments, and forced me to manipulate embouchure control in the 'Gateway Note'. In this sense, the last five notes of line two featured as an exercise to acquire the sound and explore it. When the notation was realised as sound, it represented a sound discovery for Wicomb. After the collaboration session based on Figure 7, Wicomb continued to work with expanding the possibilities of the index in notation that would allow him to direct a compositional structure. Figure 8 represents this next stage, and is not only a result of the collaborative engagement between performer and composer on the interpretation of the sound index codified in the notation in Figure 7, but also the basis for further testing of the notation in practice.
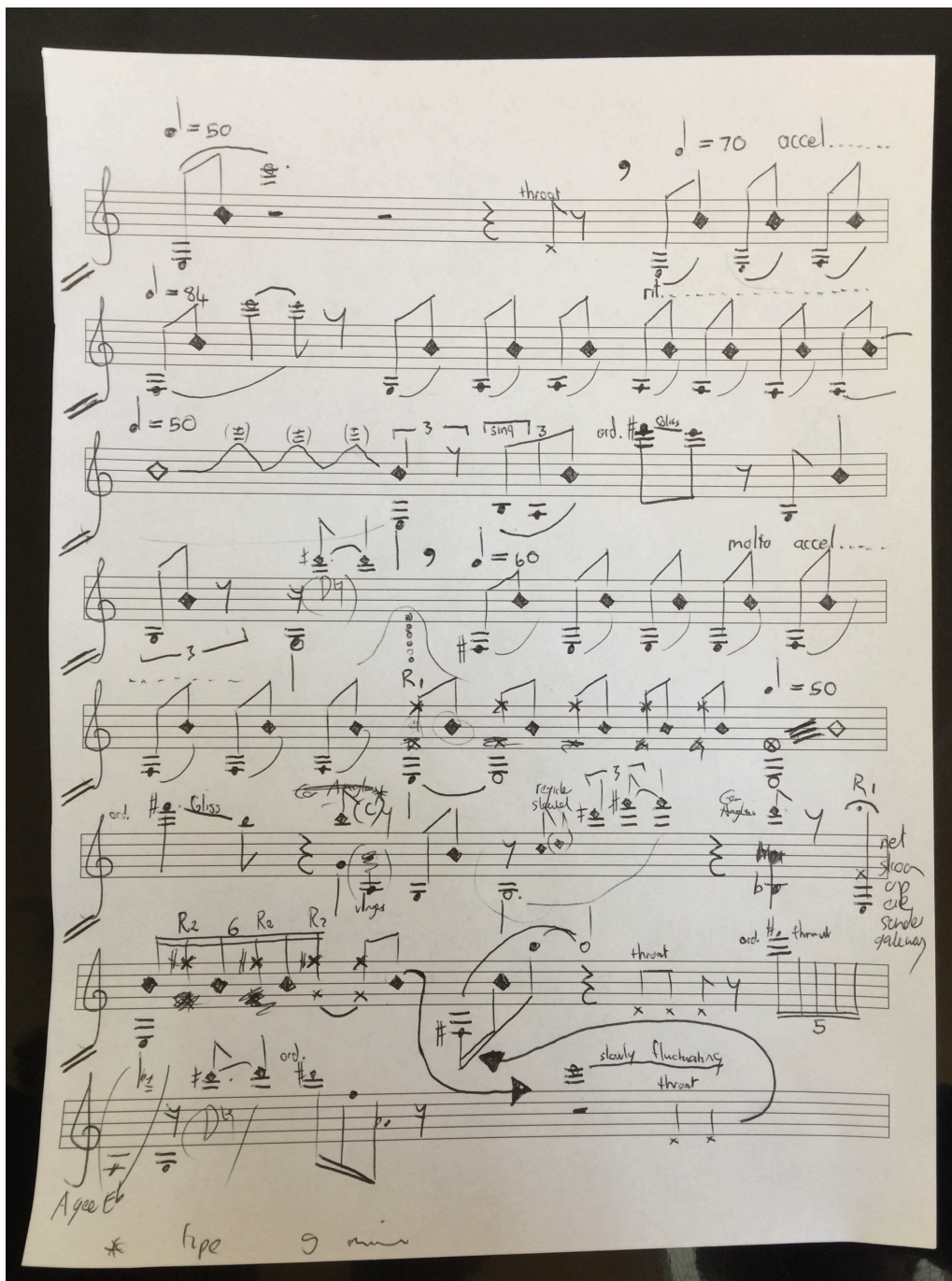
Figure 8. Pierre-Henri Wicomb's hand-written notation

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Once Wicomb had settled into a notational language that allowed him to translate the sound index in a creative and practical manner, he moved to computerised notation on the program Sibelius. In this phase, the same process of collaborative exploration took place, and continued, right up to first public presentation of *It'll be a thing…* at *Gateway*. The complexities and changes that occurred from notating notes and sounding in collaboration sessions led to a different codified notational text after each collaboration session.

The multilayeredness that resulted in the composition, can be traced as follows:

- Liebenberg presents a clarinet sound through sounding;
- Wicomb hears and become familiar with the sound;
- Wicomb writes about his familiarisation process through notation;
- Wicomb then presents the notating to Liebenberg;
- Liebenberg decodes Wicomb's notation through clarinet sounding;
- Liebenberg creates different clarinet sounds in the de-codification sounding process;
- Wicomb hears the different sounds as Liebenberg decodes his notation through sounding;
- Wicomb re-familiarises himself with the sound Liebenberg is decoding;
- More sounds are discovered through notation and de-codifying;
- Wicomb returns to produce a different notation;
- Liebenberg returns to processing the decodified sounding.

Typically, the evening before another collaboration session, Wicomb would email me and share the most recent version of the composition. The encounter with Wicomb's notated sound world could not proceed in solitude in the same way I was used to preparing performance of a score. In this case, the process of preparation was infused with collaboration and decoding what the notated sound world entails in a transpositional logic moving back and forth between sounding, notating, codifying and decodifying.

In his notation, Wicomb used the technique 'Pyramid' by dislocating its structure. The 'Pyramid' technique is the combination of three different sounds that build on one another, and collapses that process to arrive back at the beginning. The low-sounding note of the clarinet, combined with singing into the instrument, leads to a high-pitched note (often the harmonic of the fingering) that breaks out because of the tension and friction between singing into the clarinet while playing it. The high-pitched note must then fall back to reignite the tension and friction between singing and playing in the clarinet, with the voice falling away, allowing the low-sounding note of the clarinet to remain. Wicomb used this technique in building the pyramid of sounds, but not the part that includes the collapse of the pyramid. He left the high note hanging and unresolved, gradually building up this technique in such a way that the singing note was sometimes pitch-specific with clarinet playing and other times not, depending on the melodic contour. In its final form presented at *Gateway,* the singing and clarinet playing were constructed to be pitch-specific to the intervals of a major third, an augmented fourth, and a minor second lower.

Wicomb also incorporated 'Finger-Dance' into the 'Gateway Sound'. His first attempt at this can be seen in Figure 7, lines five and seven. In Figure 7, line five, Wicomb merely notes the capacity in

pitch that could be used for 'Finger-Dance'. In line seven, he presents a tremolo figure based on this technique. The original technique was a dismantling of finger dexterity, confronting the clarinettist with a finger lift motion that does not occur as a functional sounding note. 'Finger-Dance' dwells in the lower register of the clarinet, which sounds slightly more conventional for the normal sounding clarinet. The 'Finger-Dance' technique included the lifting of one finger at a time while maintaining the rest of the fingers on the clarinet. The finger, in the written notation of R1/L1 (Right/Left Hand Finger 1), R2/L2 (Right/Left Hand Finger 2), R3/L3 (Right/Left Hand Finger 3) was never lifted in any different manner than explained above. Wicomb started exploring with lifting individual fingers, and then later started grouping different fingers together to create a slight pitch variation, while maintaining the 'Gateway Sound'. In Figure 8, line 5, the first expansion of this technique is found in the 'Gateway Sound'. Here Wicomb is relatively conservative, singling out R1 to create the intended sound. In line 7, he uses R2 as interchanging sound. In the presentation of *It'll be a thing…* at *Gateway,* the sound of the technique is unrecognisable when compared to its original. Throughout the composition there are various versions and combinations for combining the three right hand fingers with three left hand fingers to create a desired sound for the 'Wicomb Finger-Dance' technique. My 'Finger-Dance' technique was also retained in parts of the composition. I refer to the two techniques by name in this manner, but in notation they stand in correlation to the 'Gateway Sound'.

The fingering style of playing the 'Gateway sound' adheres to the same principle in which 'Harmonics' are produced on the clarinet, but with different results. 'Harmonics', as written in the sound index, explains how the clarinettist can reach the harmonic notes of specific fingerings ranging from middle C moving chromatically upwards to G sharp. This middle range of the instrument is comfortable for a production of harmonics, even though the technique requires air and embouchure control manipulation to achieve the desired harmonic sound.

My presentation of 'Harmonics' in the sound index and improvisation videos, evolved from a linear perception: The fingering constitutes the first note; the first harmonic is reached through maintaining the fingering and manipulating air and embouchure to build on the first note, and so on for the third, fourth and often fifth harmonic. This upwards and downwards motion for the 'Harmonics' in its original form is a linear motion build-up from bottom to top and back down. Wicomb saw this technique as a closed pattern, in that 'Harmonics' has starting- and end points for accurate pitch placement. He inverted this technique in two ways: First, he changed the starting point by providing fingering and pitching one of the five harmonic notes, which is not the base note associated with the fingering. Second, he expanded on the original harmonic fingering range (middle C chromatically upwards to G sharp), through a horizontal melodic contour. Wicomb created a harmonic melody through the 'Harmonics' that interacts with the techniques 'Pyramid', 'Finger-Dance', and 'Wicomb Finger-Dance', all centred around the 'Gateway Sound'.

The creation process of *It'll be a thing…* gives some clarity as to how each sound technique has been created in improvisation, and how improvisation was codified back into the notation of the composition. The improvisation, codified in the composition, raised the (for me) alarming concerns about the kind of control effected by notation, and how it would demand a certain kind of preparation. Being prepared for *Gateway* also meant practising as preparation for *Gateway.* Yet, the

openness of the exchanges with Wicomb meant that preparation became something different than an ideal of perfection: Preparation was experimentation.

Pre-Performance

It'll be a thing… forced me to re-evaluate the idea of preparedness for performance. Where the preparation for *Three pieces for clarinet solo* was strict and disciplined in a conventional manner, *It'll be a thing…* posed a physical and mental challenge that I could not anticipate. *Three pieces for clarinet solo* by Stravinsky is a standard repertoire piece for clarinettists, and its possibility is embedded in my entrained sound world, and existing recordings of that sound world by other clarinet players. Contextualised by *It'll be a thing…,* my approach to Stravinsky changed from an overly reverent *Werktreue* obsession with rendering rhythmic complexity, to reading a transparent reiteration of a fixed codified notating system. My entire preparation phase for the event changed to accommodate *It'll be a thing …*, effectively putting Stravinsky 'in his place', as it were, as the easier option, the comfortable option, as the option unproblematically enabling of fixed practising routines. Preparing Stravinsky presents the clarinettist with minimal choices and decisions, and even less choices left for the final performance. The composition can be practised from any bar or difficult section in isolation. It is not necessary to practise the entire composition from the start to the end. Sections and bars can be identified and practised in order to avoid sporadic, and chance, encounters with sound in performance.

It'll be a thing… was a process that required the ability to listen, identify and practise the intended sporadic and controlled chance encounters of sounds with notation, a notion that exceeded not only the kinds of control of notation required by Stravinsky's work, but also by the idea of improvisation. Practising sounds that exist in their entirety in the composition, also didn't exhaust the horizon of experimentation, as each sound, or technique used by the composer, provided different sounding options for me to work with. Therefore, practising shorter sections of the composition felt like going against the nature of the material that had been codified in its creation process. Sound in *It'll be a thing …* was processual, dense, multi-layered, and endogenous. I use the word endogenous to indicate that each index of sound, on its own, as worked with in the collaboration session, is alive in and of itself, growing from the inside while maintaining that on which its grows either in the new form, or the object in which that form exists in coming from text, sound or notation.

Like all other notated music the sounding of each bar in *It'll be a thing …* is dependent on what precedes and follows after that sounding bar. Yet, the processual embeddedness of sound encounters that went through multiple processes if dismantling, required that I be acutely aware of sound per se rather than notation, and of notation elaborating on sound, and of the iterative process outlined above. All of this prompted me to explore different nuances embedded in the endogenous nature of each technique. In other words, the creation of sound was aligned to solo improvisation encouraging of exploring multiple clarinet sounds from process-embedded technique. The multiple sounding options in one sound were focussed on and reacted to in relation to previous soundings. I found that in sounding *It'll be a thing…*, I created (and discovered) many different versions of my performing self, all with different sounds. I could participate in the process by interacting with these sounding personas when realising the codified notated composition.

This constituted an overwhelming encounter with sound, that if subjected to over-rehearsal, could collapse the fluidity of discovery into something more fixed as composition. I therefore resolved to focus my preparation for the performance on being able to perform the entire piece of music for the first time at a singular occasion. I viewed this as a compassionate process of sounding the clarinet, neither mechanical nor pre-determined (and therefore over-determined). I wanted the event to be a unique interaction with the sound possibilities that had arisen through collaboration and iterative processes of experimentation. The event, *Gateway*, can be viewed by clicking on the link provided in the next footnote.

Performance[79]

The invitation

Dear colleagues and friends

I hereby invite you to an artistic research event, Gateway, *on 28 January 2020, 18:00 at the Stellenbosch University Museum (52 Ryneveld street).*

This performance and conversation probe roles' of the composer and the music instrumentalist in creating and performing scored art music. Processes of collaboration from source material to live sound installation are explored by myself and composer Pierre-Henri Wicomb as we present and perform conventions and delinkings that emerge from creating Gateway, *a conduit bringing together research and art.*

This event forms part of my doctoral research in artistic research. After a spoken introduction by Dr Esther Marié Pauw, I will perform a new composition created by myself and Pierre-Henri Wicomb for solo clarinet, followed by Igor Stravinsky's Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo. Thereafter Prof Stephanus Muller will host a discussion with myself and Pierre-Henri as we talk about our processes of creating a composition within the context of artistic research. To conclude the evening, we invite you to have a glass of wine with us.

Entry is free of charge and no bookings need to be made. It would be a pleasure to have you there, and I look forward to sharing the evening with you.

Kind Regards

Visser Liebenberg

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79 https://vimeo.com/399094629 password to Vimeo link: @VisserClari9105.
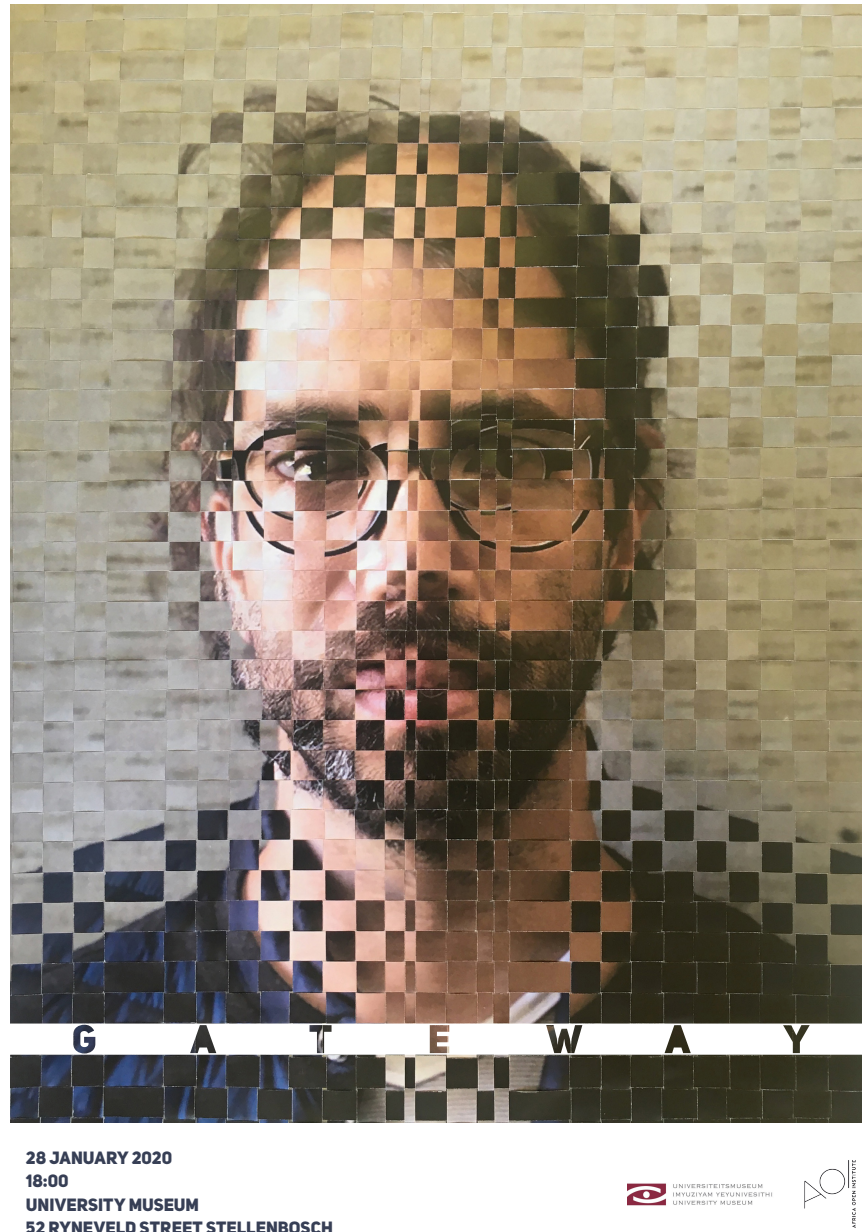
Figure 9. Gateway *poster designed by Brendan Newman*

The self-doubt

I sent out this email to almost everyone I know. Yet I could not help but be selective with regard to some of the email recipients, as I feared prejudice about the kind of work I had embarked upon, and the traditional conservatory training in which my musical identity had been shaped. I asked myself: 'Would person x be able to understand what happens when present in the space as I introduce them to my new sound world, my new performing identity?' I sent the invitation to thirty-five people. Two people from that email list showed up. The research institute of which I am a doctoral fellow has a different email distribution list and contact details for academic thinkers and institution members

that did show up to the artistic research event, eventually filling almost half the seats. Strangers I never expected to be interested, showed up, amongst them a long-lost family member.

The poster designer, Brendan Newman, engaged with the poster commission by graphically merging my face with that of Wicomb in response to my brief, outlining collaboration, conversation, merging and entanglement. Newman wrote in the email communication and delivery of the poster:

> Because I saw the project as a collaboration between composer and instrumentalist, I came up with the idea of how two become one. The artwork was created by cutting the two portraits and weaving them together to create a single image without being recognisable as a specific individual. I actually found the process rewarding because the outcome was a mystery until the finish.

The new composition

I play that first sound with the utmost care and precision. The sound sets the tone, as it were. I launch the sound into the silence and resonant acoustics of the University Museum. The upper level of the Museum constitutes an acoustic space within a larger acoustic space. The bell of the clarinet points in the direction where the listeners are seated, and the low E fingering allows the air and sound of the body to exit at only one part of the instrument, the bell. I lift my right foot, which is in a shoe (the other foot is bare) and stomp loudly on the floor. Again, and over and over again. I slip the shoe off, and turn to the second music stand, walking and playing. I pause at the second music stand, taking the time to find the right bar. I then walk up and down the stairs towards the third music stand. Then up and down the stairs again, and further down a couple of steps to the fourth music stand, now facing the listeners. I sing the last note a semitone lower than its clarinet pitch.

The old composition

I swop the B-flat clarinet for the A clarinet. The A clarinet produces a clear sounding tone and I struggle to make the transition to the Stravinsky. The notes are predictable, the sound conventional, and the technique strictly limits variation, but the tone is clear, and the sound is perfect.

The conversation

Stephanus Muller and Pierre-Henri Wicomb join me in conversation after the performance. Our chairs face the audience. The transition from performing to speaking about what I have just done, is extraordinarily difficult. My supervisor gives his impression of the performance, giving me some time to find my breath, and he directs the first questions towards Wicomb. He can see I'm exhausted. I end up speaking to the techniques I used, to the smaller details of my playing that just occurred. I illustrate and play them. I become aware of how Afrikaans my English sounds. Not only do I struggle to exit the performance world and fully enter into the discursive world, but I worry about the structure and cadence of my language. 'Why perform the Stravinsky with the Pierre-Henri composition?', my supervisor asks. In the moment, I'm no longer sure why.

Postperformance

Giorgio Agamben posits that the act of creation must ultimately encompass the potential to become comprehensible (Agamben, 2019: 17). In this, Agamben references Gilles Deleuze, who interrogates the act of creation as an 'act of resistance'. For Agamben, the manner in which Deleuze proposes creation as an act of resistance is misleading. One can resist in order to release potential, or one can resist the release of potential. Depending on who is doing the resisting, the term requires more direction for comprehension. That is where Agamben (2019: 18) states that 'the act of creation must be a potential that is internal to itself, just like the act of resistance must be internal to itself'.

For Agamben (2019: 18), understanding 'resistance only as an opposition to an external force does not seem to be sufficient for a comprehension of the act of creation'. The collaboration process, pre-performance and *Gateway* can be viewed as objects that function from within, internal to themselves, and external to themselves. The entire collaboration process constituted a creation act that is both an external resistance and an internal resistance through collaboration. Individual roles in collaboration switched from being external to sound, to being internal to sound and by moving in between these domains. The act of creation was an act of resistance to the conventional sound of the clarinet. A week after *Gateway* happened, Wicomb and I referred to our concert experience as an external resistance to the conventional notion of a classical performance that is deemed or judged to be a 'success'. We felt that to speak of the event in a judgmental mode was to reduce the event. The process as a whole from my initial improvising of sounds for the index, to the discussion after presenting *It'll be a thing…* and *Three pieces for clarinet solo* had expanded the sounding capacities of the instrument, the political moment of the concert event, as well as conventional notions of control that exist between composer and performer. I use the term 'political moment' to refer to the activism and creative resistance-and-surprise that became embedded in this event.

In *Gateway,* the presentation of *It'll be a thing…* is infused with a process of transpositional logic that is multidimensional in the act of creation in different layers. The index of sounds, viewed and discussed through the lens of the creation process, exist as individual sounds. The index of sounds contains the potential to become something more, and simultaneously the potential not to become something more. The sounds are individual 'epistemic things' (Schwab, 2018: 18). Each sound from my index, viewed from this perspective, had the potential to grow into a different variation of itself, or transpose an epistemic logic of itself. In our process of co-creation, singular logics of transposition transformed into 'multiple logic[s] of transposition', a phrase suggested by Michael Schwab (2018: 18). For me, as an experiment towards and with a decolonial impulse, *It'll be a thing…* operated as a complex epistemic thing carrying significations of the decolonial.

It'll be a thing… contained multiple logics of transposition that were transported into the presentation of *Three pieces for clarinet solo*. The two compositions, as objects, were not mutually recognisable to each other, yet the inherent transpositional logic of *It'll be a thing…* carried its multiple acts of creation and acts of resistance, internally and externally, onto *Three pieces for clarinet solo*. To my interpretation, internal acts of resistance included our 'tampering' and morphing of a conventional sound spectrum of an instrument, to include the activism of sounds beyond a conventional Western performance practice. Also, external acts of resistance were at play in our joint programming of two pieces with juxtaposing sound ideals, the one creatively-composer

oriented, the other decolonially-oriented. I suggest that decolonial aestheSis was at play in these internal and external processes. With the senses, I was able to expand the clarinet's sonic spectrum, and with the senses, we were able to engage in expanded complexes of signification that took their energy from sensing-being-thinking-doing.

It'll be a thing… was imbedded within the political moments of sound and notation and heard in the same space as *Three pieces for clarinet solo* at the artistic research event, *Gateway*. In this space the interrogation of the one work next to the other can be presented in the following metonymic presentation of notation:
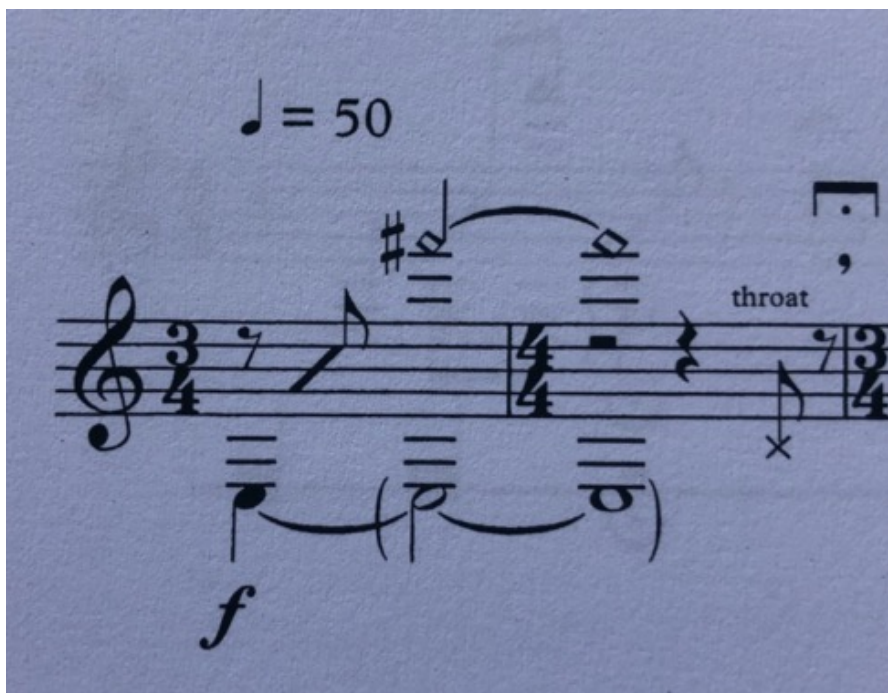
Figure 10. Opening bars of It'll be a thing…

In Figure 10, the first note is that of the normal sounding clarinet. That note is maintained in both fingering and sound while breaking into the political opposite sound, the 'Gateway Sound'. Both notes are sustained into the second beat of the first bar to allow the harmony to sound simultaneously, and clash with the subsequent sound. The fingering is still that of the note indicated in brackets, sounding loudly for four beats ending with a throat thud. The metonymic presentation of this bar speaks to many spirals and networks of sensing, as an intervention into and with decolonial aestheSis. I suggest that some of these spirals and networks include (what I call) compassionate creation processes, compassionate listening processes, compassionate presentation processes, juxtapositions of new sound worlds with old sound worlds, and sounding ways of notating the capital S of decolonial aestheSis as response and act of resistance.[80] The capital S that

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[80] Compassionate creation, compassionate listening and compassionate presentation are aspects that I borrow from my own yoga practice creating sequencing and teaching, in addition to Biodynamic craniosacral therapy that I associate with embodied 'creativities' (Artistic Research Africa Dialogues, 2020). Compassionate creative dialoguing invites oneself to being open to transformative communication with the self and with others.

Mignolo inserts so prominently, foreshadows and *becomes* the 'Gateway Sound' that prominently connects the compositional, performance and reception process of *It'll be a thing…* and *Three pieces for clarinet solo* with decolonial sensing-being-thinking-doing. Through these spirals and networks, symbolised by a capital S becoming a 'Gateway Note', our creative collaboration became a process of delinking from occidental aesthetics into decolonial aestheSis.

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Conclusion: Sonic migrancies

I encountered Donna Haraway's text, *Staying with the trouble,* when I was completing my doctoral dissertation. I had not known this text before and on the face of it her concerns with interspecies, epistemes, the Anthropocene, the Capitalocene and the Chthulucene did not appear to resonate with my project. However, the phrase 'staying with the trouble' and Haraway's understanding of that phrase (2016: 1), suggested to me that learning to be present in times of crises were a form of survival and energising, also for my current project and positioning. Perhaps my practice became a process of fusing 'decolonial interspecies epistemes', to forge notions from Haraway and Catherine Walsh. My practice operated in the 'cracks' and risks between an awful endemic past and a pandemic apocalyptic future. Being present, as suggested by Haraway, perhaps relates to Mignolo's idea of 'sensing-being-thinking-doing' as an acknowledgement of our entire bodies being present within our work. Derived from decoloniality and the decolonial option, 'sensing-being-thinking-doing' became a central tenet of artistic research and artistic experimentation in this thesis. Mareli Stolp (2020: 250) echoes these notions when she writes that 'the reliance on tacit, embodied, experiential knowledge; the resistance to Cartesian dualism; and the integration of subject and object positions' open up options for thinking and doing artistic research. Being present with the trouble, and in the cracks, and continuing to find energy in those spaces of risk and in-betweenness, became important to me.

Artistic experimentation, in this study, required of me to explore how the decolonial imperative could potentially engage in artistic research by 'mode of critique', as suggested by Leonard Praeg (2014: 20). I wanted to experiment with the sounding capacity of the clarinet, normally located within Western art music practices, and to do so through encountering the endogenous, and be aware of 'sensing-being-thinking-doing' as critical self-reflexivity. A process that I called sound translation emerged as a feasible means to encounter the endogenous, thereby 'staying with the trouble' of forming connections between my clarinet's former Western Euro-centred home, and its repositioning within a local and a Southern global geo-politicality.

My research contextualised the sounding capacity of the clarinet and its discourse in South Africa by first examining how a form of (what I call) 'containment' inhibits the instrument and its significations, particularly in local academic dissertations about the instrument. I thereafter explored decoloniality in its potential theoretical and practical manifestations by examining my subjective involvement in the practice of being a clarinettist, and particularly in my own practise room. I reframed my practise room as a laboratory space for experimentation and 'delinking', and in the process created 'epistemic things' (Rheinberger) relating to a decolonial practice of translation and recontextualisation.

I staged an organological encounter with the indigenous instruments of the Percival Kirby Collection at the South African College of Music (University of Cape Town) in order to explore an extension of my clarinet's sounding capacities. By improvising three new pieces in the collection's space, I began to direct the remainder of my work towards compiling, describing and creatively applying an index of sounds that I had begun to record. Improvisation became a prominent process of engaging with my clarinet, also as a means of decolonially 'delinking' from my former practices. The Endler Concert

Hall became a space in which I could continue to delink from former practices through numerous solo improvisation sessions. I then created and codified an index of sounds that I began to see as epistemic things carrying decolonial knowledges.

I further engaged in a collaborative process with composer Pierre-Henri Wicomb, to co-compose a solo clarinet composition from my codified index of sounds. The composer selected a few of the motifs (from the many that I provided), and proceeded to use those that held significant epistemic meaning to his judgement. These motifs became core inspirations to the composition. The result of our collaboration was a public artistic research event in the Stellenbosch University Museum that I called *Gateway,* where I performed *It'll be a thing…*, together with a canonical piece by Igor Stravinsky. After the performance, Wicomb, my supervisor and I engaged in a public discussion with the audience present. In this discussion we explored the epistemic nature of the original sound motifs, as well as the significance of the concert event against my broader research and sonic exploration process.

To conclude, I suggest that decolonial aestheSis, as a mode of sensing and creatively working through harm, has significantly changed my perception of what the clarinet instrument can do and can potentially signify, amidst contexts of trouble. A decolonial imperative has nudged me to become a musician-player who is able to move between sound worlds that were formerly, in my experience, kept apart from one another. The process of artistic experimentation, connected to the decolonial, created options that morphed my clarinet practice, making my practice multi-layered and exciting but also messy, risky and complex. As a visual and metaphorical notion, I suggest that I have become the migrant that is able to walk between worlds, now all the richer in experiences, and also somewhat the wiser for the hazards that are contained in wandering sonic migrancies.

Addendum: *It'll be a thing…*

The co-composition *It'll be a thing…* is here included as a music score with instructions. The instructions were written by the composer with the help of the clarinettist. As instruments vary in build, the instructions may be considered as guidelines for the clarinettist to explore and find his/her own best version of the sounding capacity of the notated sounds.

The photograph included at the end of this dissertation shows the clarinet player's music stand, and the audience chairs. The photo was taken by the composer, prior to the public performance, *Gateway.* The image reminds the clarinettist to take decisions with regard to the placing of his/her four music stands, as well as rehearsing the walking distances between the music stands whilst playing. The 'visibility' (or non-visibility) of the clarinettist (for the audience) should also be considered.

A performance of the composition *It'll be a thing…* can be viewed through the *Gateway* link provided in Chapter Five, and a sound recording (recorded at a different time) can be accessed through the following link https://soundcloud.com/wicomb/itll-be-a-thing.

Pierre-Henri Wicomb

It'll be a thing…

Clarinet in B flat

Visser Liebenberg

Instructions

A piece for solo clarinet in B flat, based on the personal clarinet
sound catalogue of Liebenberg. The generation of the sound 'effects'
are specific to Liebenberg as a player and his instrument, having
said that, alternatives may be explored for other players/instruments.

ppp indicates the softest and *fff* the loudest possible dynamic signs

The clarinet part has been transposed in the score, including the sung parts.
See last page for possible movement of clarinettist within the performance
space.

R1 — indicates which key/hole has to be opened to produce sound (right hand,
first hole or second finger)
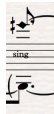
A high harmonic is created by singing into the instrument, which
forces the throat to close and highten the air pressure to create
the high notated pitch. This is a forceful action moving
between a growl and singing note executed over a low fingered
note.

A technique generating a multiphonic sound built on
the fingering of a low bass note. This unstable distorted
sound forms a 'gateway' between the low and high plitch.
The sound is produced keeping the embouchure and lips
very stable while repositioning the tongue in the throat
by imagining making a 'hee' sound.
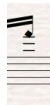
The high pitch, a result of the continuation of the 'gateway'
note, should sound without the low bass note (from which it
derives) or multiphonic 'gateway' note. The sound is produced
keeping the embouchure and lips very stable while
repositioning the tongue in the throat by imagining making
an 'aah' sound. This action always follows on the previous mentioned
one.

a technique using the throat to produce articulation, rather
than using the tongue

a quarter tone higher (no previous
accidental - in a bar - has an influence
on this note/sign)

three quarter tones higher

a quarter tone lower

three quarter tones lower

93

It'll be a thing...

3

Improvising box: this sequence of notes can be repeated as many times as possible (but always in the notated order). The tempo and preciseness of the notes can deviate from the original tempo. The last note can be any length and is the only one that does not have to be in proportion to the other notes, **except for the first time.** To move towards next bar, the last note in sequence should be long.

Improvising box: The order of the notes should not always be executed as they appear in the box.

4

5

duration approx. 10 min. 20 sec.

98

7

Plotting of movement of clarinettist in venue

The ideal execution of this piece, as it was conceived and premiered (but not a necessity in the realisation of the piece) demands the movement of the performer between four music stands while playing (specifically aimed at improv block sections), marked with a big 1-4 in the score. A venue should be chosen (with interesting acoustic potential) in which the performer/clarinettist starts the piece semi concealed, with the audience still having unblocked access to the sound coming from the bell of the instrument (ideally positioned on another level, having a view of the audience, as was the case with the premiere; see picture). The clarinet player should stay in this position until the completion of an initial round of the first improv block (with 'move' indicated in the score). Hereafter the player should immediately turn away from the audience and slowly move to the second music stand further away from the listeners (while performing the rest of this improv block), with the bell of the instrument facing away. The instrumentalist does not have to be visible at all at this stage. The instrumentalist starts moving again after bar 57 at the start of another long improv section, firstly further away from the audience and then again towards them (steps are indicated in the score), but following another way as the initial setup. The instrumentalist should be revealed again at the 3rd music stand which gives a side view of the instrumentalist, after which the player should immediately leave this position again following a quick roundabout route (not visible to the audience) only to come to a halt at the last music stand facing the audience (a conventional concert setup).

View of Stand 1 (University Museum, Stellenbosch)

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