The Musical Anthropologist: A study of performance practices in Finnish and American contemporary repertoire for clarinet

LUCY ABRAMS-HUSSO

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines differences in the performance practices of Finnish and American contemporary classical clarinet repertoire from a performer's perspective. The goal is to better understand how and why contemporary Finnish and American contemporary music are practiced and performed differently while advocating for greater inclusion of contemporary music in traditional American instrumental education for clarinet. Contemporary music requires that the performing clarinetist learn unique physical and aural music-making skills, as well as conceptual skills that reflect the musical and cultural values of a particular performance practice. This study considers the sociocultural aspects of music performance and cultural geography as equally important to the study of performance practice as musical aesthetics.

Using case studies from Finnish and American contemporary clarinet repertoire, performance practice is analyzed in terms of performance and performer expectations as well as performer agency. The added artistic responsibility of performing new music and the presence of a living composer affects the relationships between the performer, composer, and audience in different ways. The nature of these relationships is addressed through the research themes of notation as cultural practice, shared ownership, and the translation of cultural values through and in performance. The clarinetist's artistic process of preparing and performing Finnish and American repertoire is combined with ethnographic participant observation as an insider-outsider in Finnish and American contemporary music fields. In assessing the clarinetist's role in the performance of contemporary repertoire, the dissertation is divided into seven chapters addressing the clarinetist as soloist, composer, recording artist, chamber and orchestral musician.

Keywords: *contemporary music, performance research, artistic research, ethnography, cultural anthropology, clarinet*

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Lucy Abrams-Husso

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CHAPTER 1

I Introduction

This doctoral project is an artistic and sociocultural study of contemporary clarinet repertoire by Finnish and American composers. The goal is to better understand how and why contemporary American and Finnish repertoire are practiced and performed differently, while simultaneously advocating for the inclusion of contemporary music study in traditional American instrumental education of the clarinet. I argue that contemporary Western art music – music that is written in our current time by composers who intend for it to be performed by other musicians – requires a set of artistic skills that are unique and artistically beneficial for all classical clarinetists. It must be acknowledged, however, that contemporary Western art music, if we attempt to define and use it as a genre, is diverse and inclusive of numerous performance sub-practices dependent on compositional style, as well as cultural geography. This study attempts to consider these cultural geographic distinctions as equally important to the study of performance practice as musical aesthetics.[1]

The motivation for this research is entirely personal. I trained as a classical clarinetist in the United States from the age of ten until the age of twenty-three. Through my bachelor's and master's-level studies in the US, my musical goal was preparation to work as a classical clarinetist in the United States, meaning in the orchestra and training to teach the clarinet at the university level. I do not recall ever having a distinct interest in contemporary music. A few times during my six years in American

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[1] The term 'contemporary Western art music' can refer to specific aesthetics or musical styles and has been used to oppose other types of music, like classical, popular, alternative, etc. Integral is acknowledgment that contemporary Western art music is "transmitted mainly through Western or Western-structured music institutions (conservatories, music faculties, and music research and experimentation centers) and whose ideological and performance-practice foundations lie at the dawn of the 20th century in North America and Europe but are not limited to the avant-garde movement or to those continents" (El-Ghadban 2009, 157). The term is inherently flawed, but "the continued use of the 'western' adjectival prefix is testimony both to the tenacity of musical labels and categories, the lack of an obvious alternative (simply removing 'western' would obviously not solve the problem, since this would invoke a whole range of local art musics), and the fact that, despite its shortcomings, the term does signify a particular kind of music culture that still tends to look to Europe (and North America to some extent) for its validation and sustenance" (Nooshin 2011, 295)

universities, I performed in my university's new music ensemble or was asked to perform a work written by a composer colleague. Performance of contemporary music was only required in two main settings – degree recitals and auditions. Degree recitals typically mandated the performance of an unaccompanied solo or a solo with piano composed after 1950. Auditions, entrance examinations as well as competition and scholarship auditions, similarly required a generic contemporary unaccompanied solo work from the second half of the twentieth century. The generally understood goal of learning more recently written compositions was so that the clarinetist could acquire advanced technical skills and/or the ability to perform so-called 'extended techniques' so that he or she may be equipped to teach those skills to other clarinet students in the future.

This experience is my own, but it is not uncommon for many classically trained clarinetists in the United States. While a focus on contemporary music was by no means discouraged, it was commonly understood as a specialty distinct from the more traditional, classical repertoire and separate from orchestral training. Unless a clarinetist sought out contemporary music experiences either for social or artistic reasons, it was almost entirely dependent on the individual's clarinet instructor whether he or she was exposed to contemporary music, and in what frame. For example, in my second year of bachelor's studies I formed a trio with a pianist who was also a composer and a violist. My professor, who was our ensemble's coach, wanted us to focus on Mozart's Kegelstatt Trio, K. 498 (1788). Our pianist wanted us instead to perform György Kurtag's *Hommage à R. Sch.* Op. 15d (1990). After one coaching, my professor exasperatedly expressed to me, in private, something to the effect of "[one] need[s] to learn how to play Mozart first."

In 2012, I received a fellowship from the American Scandinavian Foundation to study with Olli Leppäniemi at the Malmö Academy of Music. In preparation for my studies in Sweden, Olli requested that I prepare concerti by Mozart (1791) and Nielsen (1928), a Brahms Sonata (1894), Stravinsky *Three Pieces* (1919), Debussy *Premiere Rhapsody* (1910), Poulenc *Sonata* (1962), 20-30 orchestral excerpts, a Bach transcription, a Paganini caprice and a solo piece - Denisov *Sonata* (1972), Berio *Sequenza* (1980), Stockhausen *Der kleine Harlekin* (1975) or *In Freundschaft* (1977), Boulez *Domaines* (1968) or Donatoni *Clair* (1980) or *Clair II* (1999). The request was made without assumption or mention of any intention to

audition for a competition or specific scholarship, though I did perform Denisov in the semifinal round of the 2nd Lisbon Clarinet Competition in the spring of 2013.

Following my year in Malmö, I moved to Helsinki to study in the Master of Music program at the Sibelius Academy. One of my first observations was how much contemporary music was performed by the professional orchestras in Helsinki, compared to my concert experiences in Chicago, Champaign-Urbana (which was a tour stop for many top American orchestras), Rochester, Copenhagen, and Malmö. I also observed in Finland that the principal orchestral musicians ('solo' instrumentalists in European parlance) often premiered new concerti and performed contemporary repertoire in their recitals, often featuring works by Finnish composers.

My strongest experiences with contemporary music came in the final year of my Sibelius Academy Master's Degree. In January 2016, I was invited to perform as soloist with the *Mikkelin kaupunginorkesteri* (city orchestra of Mikkeli) for a private concert where the United States Ambassador to Finland would be in attendance. I chose to perform the first clarinet concerto of James Cohn (1986), the only chamber concerto aside from Copland that I knew of because it had been recorded by my former teacher, Jon Manasse. It only made sense to perform the piece again on my Sibelius Academy A-examination a few months later, where it joined a program including Sebastian Fagerlund's *Sonata for clarinet and piano* (2011), Donald Martino's *A set for solo clarinet* (1954) and the flute and clarinet duet *Esprit Rude / Esprit Doux* (1984) by Elliott Carter. As a musician who had never previously focused on contemporary repertoire, I was profoundly changed by the experience of preparing and performing this program. I realized that contemporary repertoire did not have to be a niche specialty, but rather could be understood as an artistic practice integral to classical music-making in the twenty-first century.

This opinion was only solidified by my experience performing as a soloist in Magnus Lindberg's *Kraft* in May 2016 with the Sibelius Academy Symphony Orchestra. Not only was my own musicianship enriched by the experience, but solo and soloist group preparations with Kari Kriikku and Anssi Karttunen introduced an approach to contemporary music performance practice that was new to me – that the performer's contribution was both unique and integral to the performance of *Kraft.*

The effect of these musical experiences and the way they changed my overall perspective on contemporary music and classical music-making became this doctoral research project. My goal was to investigate whether the differences I had observed in performance culture were reflected in performance practice. My methods of investigation combine my two academic backgrounds in clarinet performance and anthropology. While at the University of Illinois as an undergraduate, I completed a double-degree in Clarinet Performance and Anthropology. My specific focus on cultural anthropology in those studies informs this research.

II Research questions and aims

Contemporary music requires that the performing clarinetist learn new and different sets of music-making skills that they would not acquire by performing only older repertoire in traditional concert settings. These include commonly discussed physically and aurally learned skills like advanced and extended playing techniques, familiarity with different tonal and non-tonal, rhythmic and phrasemaking systems, and technological aspects involved in performing music with electronic elements. It also includes lesser-explored conceptual skills like understanding shared ownership, the different roles and expectations of the performer in new music performance, decision-making surrounding acoustics and acoustic effects, overall concert design, and the reflection of cultural values through musical performance. This research focuses more on the conceptual skills by examining and discussing them in the context of my own performances. Their identification and analysis in this study further advocates for contemporary music's importance in artistic development for clarinetists today.

This research also investigates the possibilities and challenges of performing new music, premiering new music, and performing the works of living composers. There comes added responsibility on the part of the clarinetist when performing works that are newly composed and works that have a short performance history. There is the existence of the living composer, a valuable resource not available in the performance of older repertoire. The role of that individual offers both possibilities and challenges for the performer to consider. Finally, the performance of contemporary music requires careful analysis of the relationship between the performer and

the notated score. The nineteenth-century concept of *Werktreue*[2] has long mediated the relationship between classical music composer and performer through the notion of fidelity to a notated score. *Werktreue* continues to play an active role in many contemporary music practices internationally, but this research demonstrates that its importance should not be assumed and its enactment in practice can vary widely.

Finally, I consider the question of sociocultural differences both between and within Finnish and American contemporary music performance practices the central motivation of this research project. The question of sociocultural differences frames the previous two lines of inquiry, which each have been and continue to be rich topics in the field of contemporary music scholarship. The focus on Finnish and American contemporary music is personal, as an American who now permanently resides in Finland, but it is also a significant topic within contemporary music scholarship. Finnish and American contemporary music cultures are large and heterogeneous, encompassing a wide spectrum of approaches when it comes to the relationships between the performer, the composer, and the musical score. They are also repertoires that are widely performed internationally by soloists, chamber musicians and orchestras. This research demonstrates some very fundamental differences in performance practices between the repertoires, which must be recognized and reconciled by the performing clarinetist.

III Choosing repertoire

I have defined contemporary music in my research project as a repertoire composed after 1980. In Finland, the 1980s were a pivotal decade in thrusting new music to the front of artistic and cultural life. The important group 'Korvat Auki!' (Ears Open) was founded in 1977 by a young group of composition students that included Kaija Saariaho, Jouni Kaipainen, Magnus Lindberg, Olli Kortekangas, Eero Hämeenniemi, and Esa-Pekka Salonen. In the United States, the 1980s marked the beginning of when distinct styles of contemporary music began to become much more fluid, and less defined by distinct geographic areas. Finally, my research focuses on performing works

[2] *Werktreue,* or the work concept, defines a work of music as its musical score and idealizes faithfulness to the score in performance (Goehr 1992, 242).

by living composers, which practically speaking, means works that are composed at the end of the 20th century and later.

The artistic output of this doctoral research project constitutes three live performances and one commercially released recording, each with a different theme.[3] The themes of each concert were contemporary music specific, and each included both works by very well-known composers in their home country (or internationally), as well as those who are not. The first concert aimed to re-envision a 'traditional' clarinet recital with repertoire programmed around the John Adams chamber concerto, *Gnarly Buttons* (1996). The theme of the second concert was to design a program for a non-traditional concert space, the Talvipuutarha Winter Botanic Garden in Helsinki. *Duel*, which was released by SibaRecords in April 2022, featured all works for clarinet and electronics, and the third live concert featured contemporary repertoire influenced by folk (or 'folk') music. Except for the first concert, all concerts featured a commissioned/premiered work by a Finnish or American composer. All concerts also combined unaccompanied repertoire, solo repertoire (with piano or orchestra), and chamber music.

Specific repertoire for the concerts and the recording were selected with three main goals: personal artistic development, to create programs that I thought would be interesting to non-musician audiences, and to perform as wide a stylistic variety of repertoire by as many different composers as possible. This included composers at various stages of their careers and who work in different parts of the United States and Finland (geographically and institutionally). As a result, the project draws on a diverse group of American and Finnish composers, rather than focusing on those whose names might already be familiar to the reader. A wide stylistic variety of compositions is also included.

In addition to these three concerts and the recording, I also draw upon my musical experiences working as a freelance musician in Finland since 2016.[4] This includes performing contemporary repertoire for solo, chamber, and orchestral concerts, and working with composers in those settings. This repertoire was performed only in Finland, but includes both American and Finnish composers.

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[3] The programs and notes on each program can be found in **Appendix A**

[4] Supplemental repertoire can be found in **Appendix B**

IV Methodology

This study engages both ethnographic and artistic research methods to examine performance practices in contemporary music. In its most basic definition, performance practice refers to "the way in which music is or has been performed".[5] Practice, more specifically, can be understood as "the habitual doing or carrying on *of* something", as well as "the actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method".[6] Quite often in contemporary and classical music performance and scholarship, the work of performers is treated as habitual. In this research, I examine practice as the application of beliefs and ideas to see beyond *what* performers do to *why* they practice in the ways they do.

My emphasis on the practice and performance of contemporary music focuses centrally on the performer rather than the composer. This breaks with approaches of musical study that rely exclusively on the musical score (*Aufführungspraxis*[7]) or prioritize the composer's perspective. My approach acknowledges that the action of musical performance is itself a reflection of specific cultural values that are not universal across the genre known as Western contemporary art music. For this reason, ethnographic and artistic research methods must be employed.

Basic ethnography, the systematic study of people, societies, and cultures, takes as its premise that "our ideas, our values, our acts, even our emotions, are, like our nervous system itself, cultural products – products manufactured out of tendencies, capacities, and dispositions with which we were born, but manufactured nonetheless" (Geertz 1973, 50). When applied to music, ethnomusicologists have traditionally used fieldwork to study musical cultures outside of their own. However, researchers are increasingly looking towards subjects in Western art music to produce ethnographies of Western art educational institutions (Cameron 1982,

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[5] "performance practice, n.". *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, September 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/3696598789>

[6] "practice," Oxford English Dictionary Online. Dictionaries. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/. Accessed December 13, 2022.

[7] *Aufführungspraxis* is a conception of performance practice by which compositions are understood to be "fully composed prior to performance" (Goehr 1998, 139). The term functions alongside the concept of *Werktreue*, faithfulness to the score, and the understanding that a musical work is synonymous with the notated score.

Kingsbury 1988, Nettl 1995), research centers (Born 1995), and orchestras (Herndon 1988, Small 1987).

Musicologists have also begun employing distinctly ethnographic methods that acknowledge broadly "the study of music in culture" (Nettl 1983, 6). As Laudan Nooshin has written, "adopting an ethnomusicological approach to western art music requires scholars to both re-assess their relationship to the music culture and to question some of their most fundamental assumptions" (2011, 292). By increasing the perspectives of observation, one can analyze aspects of Western art music that have gone previously unnoticed. Particularly important in the field of musicology is that "ethnographies of living traditions…provide a rich opportunity to enhance understanding of musical life traditionally only viewed through the lens of written historical sources" while "collaps[ing] both disciplinary and musical boundaries" (Shelemay 2001, 23-24). Or, as Georgina Born has suggested, integrating ethnomusicology and musicology would eliminate "the conceptual boundary between music and the social" (Born 2010, 221). The commonly understood goal of applying ethnomusicological methods to music research is to reconnect classical music to the societies and peoples that produced it.

Ethnography as method is particularly suited to the performer, who Cook has suggested are the original ethnomusicologists, since the "ethnographic approach… seeks to understand the performance of a particular piece in the context of the total performance event, encompassing issues of program planning, stage presentation, dress, articulation with written texts, and so forth" (Cook 2012, 192). As Pirkko Moisala has written, "one of most common contexts in which ethnomusicological methodology is applied to western art music is within so-called practice-based research on performance" (Moisala 2011, 444). This is particularly true for the study of contemporary music, where performers serve a number of immediate roles contributing to a composition's identity as communicators and collaborators with the audiences, historians, critics, colleagues, and the composers themselves.[8]

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[8] Practice-based studies in contemporary music include Barrett et al. 2014; Buckley 2017; Dogantan-Dack 2012; Fernqvist 2020; Fitch and Heyde 2007; Hayden and Windsor 2007; Kanga 2014; Lough 2020; Merrick 2009; Orning 2014; Roche 2011; Roe 2007.

Using my own artistic practice engaging with the contemporary music cultures of Finland and the United States, I employ ethnographic and auto-ethnographic methods that aim simultaneously to draw universal conclusions "about the way in which [these cultures] construct, use, conceive music" whilst also examining them as "unitary phenomenon" (Nettl 1983, 9). While wide-ranging conclusions are sought, unique case-specific observations are as important to recognize and report.

The fundamental ethnomusicological belief in the equality of all music and music cultures also applies as a method in my project. The composers included in this study are those who have been both recognized and ignored by musicologists, and those who are institutionally affiliated and unaffiliated in both the United States and Finland. This includes academic institutions like universities, as well as performance institutions like orchestras. My approach aims to counter some contemporary music scholarship in the twenty-first century that tends to focus on a small group of composers who have been academically acknowledged as important based primarily on their connections to historically important musical institutions like orchestras, opera houses, and universities. By contrast, I have tried to include a diverse range of composers of different ages and backgrounds who compose in a wide range of styles. The conclusions drawn from this research, therefore, identify patterns of performance practice that are not limited to a specific aesthetic style of composition or a certain *type* of composer.

Traditionally, the ethnographic researcher considers themself an objective observer embedded in the environment of their research subject. Through field recordings, videos, interviews, informal conversation, and general observation, they seek to reach greater understanding by reporting on and drawing conclusions from what they witness. There are examples of this type of approach in both contemporary art (Bunzl 2014, Thornton 2009) as well as in contemporary music scholarship (Born 1995, Robin 2016) that have influenced this research.

When I first initiated this project, I had assumed that my methods for investigating the sociocultural research questions would be primarily ethnographic. I planned to interview all composers whose works I performed and premiered, whenever possible, as well as clarinetists in Finland, while also observing my interactions with composers and other musicians as an insider-outsider in my day-to-day life as a working

musician. However, shortly after my first artistic concert I began to realize that my perspective as a performer was more integral to my research subject that originally anticipated. When a researcher uses ethnographic methods but turns the focus on themselves, it is referred to as auto-ethnography. As Heewon Chang has articulated, "like ethnographers, auto-ethnographers follow a similar ethnographic research process by systematically collecting data […] analysing and interpreting them, and producing scholarly reports, also called autoethnography" but crucially: "autoethnography is not about focusing on self alone, but about searching for understanding of others (culture/society) through self" (Chang 2008, 48-49). The goal of this practice-based research is not to examine my artistic practice in isolation, but rather to use it to understand types of performance practice cultures more broadly.

I did rely on my interactions with composers and performers, as the case studies throughout this dissertation demonstrate, but not in the ways I had planned. I made every effort to contact and perform for all the composers of the works examined in this dissertation and relied on those interactions when they took place, but I eschewed formal interviews following the second doctoral concert. Composers and performers today take great pains to articulate and moderate how they communicate with audiences, performers, and critics, and the control of these communication channels have very real consequences for professional livelihoods. As Moisala articulated when reflecting on writing her biography of Saariaho, "representation is not only a matter of 'speaking about', but also of 'speaking for' others, and is therefore tightly connected with politics and hegemony," reflecting very real issues of ethics that one must consider (2011, 447). In that same article, Moisala writes:

> Despite my efforts, particularly in the early interviews, I was not always successful in getting beyond journalistic knowledge. On other occasions, however, our discussions opened up new and interesting dimensions and Saariaho started to discuss aspects of her composition that she had not talked about before; we also encountered a limit beyond which she did not wish to verbalise such aspects of her music. (Moisala 2011, 446-447).

Not only did I have a similar experience to Moisala, whereby composers were reluctant or hesitant to provide answers to my inquiries in the terms I dictated, but more importantly, as the research themes took shape, I found

that the answers I sought could be drawn more effectively from examination of my own artistic practice.

For this reason, the project is also practice-based artistic research, where knowledge is produced "as research in and through art practice", particularly "the practice of creating and performing" (Borgdorff 2010, 45-46). This work encompasses all three of Christopher Frayling's variations of research on art and design – research *into, through* and *for* art and design (Frayling 1993, 5). Or as Henk Borgdorff explains it, "experimentation *in* practice, reflection *on* practice and interpretation *of* practice" (Borgdorff 2012, 23). There is some theoretical distance embedded in my methodology aiming to draw conclusions about contemporary artistic practice generally (research *on* art). My art practice *is* my study objective (research *for* art). Finally, my methodology includes the creation and performance of art itself (research *in* art). For this reason, the written dissertation should be considered alongside the total artistic output of the project.[9]

The goal of my research is to understand contemporary musical performance practice as an aspect and reflection of certain sociocultural values and understandings. I use my own artistic practice as the primary data source, including collaborative interactions with other musicians and composers in Finland and the United States. Throughout the project, I used my personal website as a means to digest and investigate different topics like notation, shared ownership, collaboration, and programming as they have emerged in my artistic research.

V Research themes

Three themes in this research project will shape the discussion through each chapter of this dissertation:

i Notation as cultural practice
ii Agency and shared ownership
iii Performance practice as a reflection of cultural values

[9] Recordings from all the three concerts as well as the CD, *Duel*, can be found on my website, www.lucyabrams.net.

These themes emerged from the practice-based research itself, and they frame the answers I offer to the research questions of how contemporary Finnish and American clarinet repertoire are performed and practiced and why differences in these practices exist.

i Notation as Cultural Practice

One of my earliest realizations, from my first doctoral concert, was the existence of differences in the way a clarinetist is expected to work with the notated scores of Finnish composers and of American composers. In a reflection on my second doctoral concert, Elollinen, I wrote:

> As a performer, I have begun to feel that in most Finnish contemporary compositions, there is more space for, or even expectation that, the performer 'translates' the score far beyond what is notated; that the performance practice of Finnish contemporary music requires a greater creative contribution on the part of the performer. (Abrams-Husso, 20 December 2020)

I questioned whether this observation was the result of my proximity to the Finnish composers whose works I was performing and my distance from the American composers as I conducted this research in Finland. I also considered whether it has anything to do with a particular composer being institutionally acknowledged in some way, whether that institution be a performance institution like an orchestra or an educational institution like a conservatory or university. And I considered whether a work becoming "standard repertoire" affected my approach to the notation. Ultimately, I conclude that the differences I have observed in notation culture are shaped by the differences in contemporary music performance cultures in the United States and Finland.

The interaction between performer and score in (notated) contemporary classical music has many analytical models. Most are often overshadowed by the nineteenth-century concept of *Werktreue* and its "set of quasi-ethical imperatives concerning the preparation and execution of a 'proper' performance, of which adherence to the evidence set before us [the notated score] – rather than willful pursuit of our own subjective instincts and speculations – is the cornerstone" (Cox 2013, 12). Underlying analyses of how performers interact with notated scores can assume a taken-for-granted understanding that fidelity to the notated score is the first priority for

a valuable performance. Embedded is the assumption that the notated score contains all necessary artistic information for performance. By extension, the composer becomes central to the conversation regarding notation and performance practice because it is assumed that the composer is the authority on all interpretative questions. Unlike in older repertoire, for which knowledge regarding the deceased composer must be drawn from the work of music theorists and musicologists, contemporary classical music offers theorists, historians, and performers access to the actual living, breathing composer. A focus on fidelity to the composer's intentions and to the notated score can produce meaningful artistic performance, but what about the contributions of the performer? What about performance practices that expect the performers to act more as independent co-creators?

Transitioning from score to sound is a process affected by elements such as the evolving understanding of music history, the technical evolution of musical instruments and music technology, artistic opinions, and performance practices unique to certain musical institutions and cultures. In her essay "Exploring Musical Integrity and Experimentation", Kathleen Coessens writes that the level of interpretation (meaning "freedom" of "semantic exploration") "will depend not only upon the intended interpretation of the musician but also upon prevailing expectations in the music community" (Coessens 2013, 63). Paul Thom also alludes to the underlying sociocultural aspects of musical performance, writing "the art of turning the score into a performance, however, presupposes a whole musical culture comprising a richly interrelated set of musical practices" (Thom 2007, xiv). Different practices of working with notation are shaped by different musical societies and include a range of expectations of composer, performer, and audience. The amount of freedom a performer has to process, translate, and interpret the symbolic form that is musical notation is directly affected by these expectations and differences. It is these relationships that enable musical sound, not the representative symbology of the notation itself (Schuiling 2019, 435). The musicality of notation should therefore be analyzed not for its representation of sounding musical structures, but rather in terms of its "mediation of the social and creative agency of musicians" (Schuiling 2019, 431).

Some studies of notational practices[10] analyze different *types* of notation like graphic, aleatoric, and open-form scores as well as prescriptive

[10] For example Brown 1986; Orning 2014; Kanno 2007.

and descriptive notation.[11] Notation as a cultural practice, on the other hand, focuses on how composers and performers work with notation, and in what frames, to create music. Ian Pace has written that scores serve as "the means for channeling performers' creative imagination in otherwise unavailable directions", elevating the role of the performer to that of translator or interpreter rather than reader or executant (Pace 2017, 285). Those 'imaginative effects' become "central to the formation of notational cultures" (Schuiling 2019, 432).

Using several case studies from my research, I offer two main strategies for clarinetist interaction with the contemporary Finnish and American notated scores – translation and interpretation. Neither is artistically superior and both require a high level of artistic knowledge, musical skills, decision-making at different levels, and investment of time. I use translation to describe a process of working with notation whereby the performer is primarily expected to be a conduit between the composer and the audience.[12] Interpreting notation, on the other hand, requires expanded, independent artistic contributions on the part of the performer. Translation indicates a release of obligation or expectation that the performer significantly alters or contributes creatively to what is notated in the score, while interpretation assumes and expects greater performer contribution outside of and in addition to what is notated. Using case studies from my research, I argue that American contemporary clarinet works typically require a more translative approach to performance, while most Finnish contemporary clarinet works require a more interpretive approach.

ii Agency and shared ownership

The concept of shared ownership was a research line of inquiry from the initial outset of this project. I proposed that the concept of shared ownership was unique to contemporary repertoire within Western art music and was

[11] Prescriptive notation communicates through the notated score the means for producing specific sounds, while more traditional descriptive notation communicates the sound. Kanno has argued that the increasing presence of "prescriptive notation points to a shift in the function of notation from representation to mediation" (Kanno 2007, 232).

[12] What I call translation is historically linked with the associations of *Aufführungspraxis*, where the performer's primary task is understood to be realizing the intentions of the composer through the notated score.

particularly inherent to the performance of brand-new compositions. I reasoned that studying works that had never been performed, or have yet to be written, carries a different type of musical responsibility for the performer. I hypothesized that this responsibility required a musical attitude from the performer that differed from that with which one would use to perform older, classical repertoire.[13] Furthermore, this would result in a preparation and performance model that differed from the performance of existing repertoire. I suggested that by premiering new music, the performing musician becomes a more active part of the generation of the music itself, thus establishing a greater sense of shared ownership in the artistic production.

Contrary to my hypothesis, my research revealed that shared ownership in the production of contemporary music is not inherently present or reliant on premiering a new work. Rather, it can exist, and even be felt more strongly, in the artistic process of preparing some existing contemporary works more than others. I observed this first in working with clarinetists Heikki Nikula and Kari Kriikku, who themselves have premiered a great number of compositions. From their experiences and my own, I came to understand that shared ownership depends on the composition's (or composer's) expectation of the performer, which I consider part of performance practice. The Finnish contemporary clarinet compositions analyzed in this project require greater personal artistic and musical input on the part of the performer than the American contemporary clarinet compositions studied. This creates a greater sense of shared ownership in artistic production when performing these contemporary Finnish compositions, and less of a sense of shared ownership in performing the contemporary American ones. This applies to the performances of commissioned works as well as existing works, solo as well as chamber music repertoire.

The second theme is related to the first because artistic agency granted by notational culture is a major factor in a performer's sense of shared ownership. Artistic agency most commonly appears in a sociology of art context.[14] Sociologists, in trying to define art and establish its societal

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[13] Classical repertoire here refers to works composed before 1980 that have established performance histories and are likely considered part of the "standard" repertoire.

[14] Bourdieu 1993; Becker 1982; Latour 2005.

function, realized that they had to include the people, systems, and institutions that enable and promote art's creation. Most sociological models, however, tend to treat artists as a single entity, which is problematic for any artistic form where the 'maker' and 'presenter' are different. Couple this with the historic tendency in Western classical music to emphasize composer over performer and to separate the fields of performance from musicology and theory in musical scholarship, and you end up with a significant hole in understanding artistic agency as it relates to performance.

It is important to distinguish between agency and creativity, for which there is significantly more existing research when it comes to the performing musician. Creativity refers to the use of imagination or original ideas to create something, whereas agency is the feeling of control over action and consequences.[15] How a Western classical musician interacts with the notated score is critical to a performer's artistic agency. Notation can be an enabler as well as a limiter of agency, "since it confines what can be played to what has been notated, so the player's power of self-directed performance is liable to atrophy, especially when, as in the Western concert tradition, non-literate performance is judged to be in some ways inferior to literate" (Small 1998, 110). While all performance of notated music requires some amount of creativity and decision-making, since "no score can ever fully determine a performance," the levels of agency afforded vary greatly (Payne 2015, 64).

This is reflected in musicological studies over the last thirty years that have reintroduced the performer as a greater creative actor in classical music production.[16] Hatten identifies performers as "not merely conduits through which a preconceived set of notational instructions is more or less accurately transmitted but creative interpreters who bring to bear their stylistic competency and their selection from the vast constellation of sounds

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[15] Agency relates also to Mel Rhodes' concept of *press* in his well-documented model of creativity. The four P's of creativity are **Person** (the creator and his/her/their personality, intellect, temperament, physique, traits, habits, attitudes, self concept, values, etc.), **Process** (the experience of being creative, i.e., Csíkszentmihályi's concept of 'flow'), **Press** (external factors that affect the creative output), and **Product** (the evaluation of a creative process, i.e., a performance). (See Csíkszentmihályi 1996 and Rhodes 1961)

[16] For example Rink 1995, 2002; Cook 2013; Payne 2015; Hatten 2018; the research being completed at the Centre for Musical Performance as Creative Practice (http://www.cmpcp.ac.uk/cpiccm.html).

and meanings attributable to a work" (Hatten 2018, 220). This body of research "has challenged the romanticised view of the composer as the source of all musical creativity" by "recognising the relational qualities of music-making, and the more permeable boundaries of creative ownership" (Payne 2015, 34). However, when we turn to the performer, we see that the frames through which they make decisions, and the types of decision made, can vary greatly across contemporary music performance practices.

The conclusions I draw regarding the differences in performance practices as they relate to the first two research themes are in no way a signifier of musical quality or artistic value. That shared ownership or performer agency is more or less prevalent in a particular contemporary performance practice has no effect, in my opinion, on the artistic importance of the art in question, its quality, or its musical value for the performer or the audience. These differences, however, do indicate artistic differences that should be understood by the performer and sociocultural differences between artistic practices in both places that reflect different cultural values.

iii Performance practice as a reflection of cultural values

The third and final theme of this research project examines differences in performance practice between Finnish and American contemporary music as reflections of differences in cultural values in both places. Offering explanations for performance practice in the context of sociocultural analysis allows us to enhance musical understanding beyond aesthetic explanations. I believe that understanding differences in performance practice in this sociocultural frame contributes to insights offered through music theory and musicology, rather than negates or replaces them.

In Finland, egalitarianism is one of the most fundamental societal values and results in a very non-hierarchical society. This is reflected in many aspects of classical music practice, from the bureaucratic structure of classical music institutions to day-to-day practices. I was struck, for example, that students address everyone from professors to conductors to deans by their first names throughout the university and conservatory, in all situations. I have also never heard a conductor be addressed as "maestro", an orchestral practice that is common in the United States. In the context of contemporary music practice, this non-hierarchy translates into a collaborative contemporary musical environment where composers are

generally very accessible regardless of an individual's professional background. I also have observed that this egalitarianism has promoted and supported both experimentation and individuality in contemporary music-making, while equally valuing the creative contributions of performer and composer. This is particularly the case for contemporary Finnish clarinet repertoire. The artistic prominence of such artists as Heikki Nikula and Kari Kriikku in the development of clarinet repertoire in Finland since the 1980s cannot be overstated. Their inspiration to and collaboration with Finnish composers for the last forty years has yielded a significant body of repertoire, influenced numerous clarinetists, and inspired composers internationally.

In the United States, equality of opportunity is highly valued, alongside individual freedom and self-reliance. This has also yielded individuality and experimentation, but in a more hierarchical environment that thrives on competition.[17] American classical music culture is also a direct descendant of nineteenth-century Austro-Germanic music culture, where the conductor as supervisor and the composer as engineer and designer, are considered hierarchically superior to the performing musicians, or workers (Toynbee 2017, 41). The concept of *Werktreue* and the canon of great master composers has shaped American orchestral and operatic performance to a high degree. In contemporary music performance practice, this has contributed to a prolonged separation between the composer and performer, as well as the separation of classical and contemporary performance institutions. While there has been no shortage of exemplary American clarinetists in the last forty years, there exists a divide between orchestral and 'solo' clarinetists in the United States that does not exist in Finland. Furthermore, those American clarinetists primarily understood as soloists, like Richard Stoltzman or Jon Manasse, are recognized primarily as virtuosic, solo artists rather than the collaborative partners of contemporary composers. Recent renewed interest in contemporary music on the part of

[17] It must be noted that intense competition for a small amount of public and private funding in the arts in the United States has certainly exacerbated this issue, though it is not the only factor.

singers and instrumental soloists indicates that this might be changing.[18] However, the separation of classical and contemporary performance practices in the United States reflects cultural values that do not exist in the same way in Finland.

VI Chapter outline

The chapters of this dissertation highlight aspects of performance from the perspective of the twenty-first-century clarinetist – as a soloist, composer, recording artist, chamber musician, orchestral musician and anthropologist. Each chapter draws on case studies from my practice-based research in contemporary music by Finnish and American composers. Though discussed from different lenses of performance practice, the research themes of notation as cultural practice, agency and shared ownership, and performance practice as a reflection of cultural values are analyzed in each chapter.

A personal artistic goal of this project was to use contemporary music to develop my personal artistry on the clarinet – in other words, to become a soloist. In the United States, 'soloists' in classical music are those who aim professionally to perform *concerti* and recitals, and whose professional path often involves competitions and a high level of virtuosic and technical study. This differs from the professional and artistic path of an orchestral musician, who focuses much more on older repertoire and trains for orchestral auditions. In Finland, there is much less distinction between these two paths, both in terms of professional training and artistic practice. For one, in Finland (and most other European countries), the first chair or principal clarinetist of an orchestra is referred to as the 'Solo clarinetist'. I have also observed, since moving to Finland, that contemporary music is performed by clarinetists of all artistic levels from an earlier age.

In Chapter 1: Clarinetist as soloist, I focus on repertoire where the clarinetist is treated as a soloist: the unaccompanied solo and the *concerto*. I analyze how clarinetists performing contemporary repertoire require unique

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[18] Information on changes in the orchestral performance practice of contemporary music in the United States can be found through my own reporting (https://www.lucyabrams.net/news/2022/12/1/2022-2023-con), as well as in the reporting of journalists like Beth Wood (https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/entertainment/classical-music/story/2020-07-03/classical-music) and Javier Hernandez (https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/26/arts/music/metropolitan-opera-endowment-contemporary.html)

skills for working with notated scores, introducing the terms translation and interpretation as artistic strategies for performance, and discuss how these approaches affect the notion of shared ownership in performance practice and performer agency. The case studies included in this chapter are solo unaccompanied works for clarinet by composers Jack Hughes, Eric Mandat, Markku Klami, and Lotta Wennäkoski along with two *concerti*, John Adams *Gnarly Buttons* and Magnus Lindberg *Kraft*.

In the second chapter, Clarinetist as composer, I focus on the unique aspects of performance that clarinetists performing contemporary repertoire are required to consider when presenting an ever-changing and diverse genre of music. Contemporary Western art music encompasses a wide variety of performance practices, aesthetics and values – a much more heterogeneous genre than has existed previously in the history of Western classical music. Acknowledgment that performance practice is not universal across the genre is paramount. I argue that a clarinetist must consider abandoning the performance practice ideals of *Werktreue*, as well as the idea of a 'standard' or 'core' repertoire, which has been integral to clarinet performance and pedagogy. I posit that *what* in performance – what kind of music, what style, what composers, and what works – is less important in contemporary classical music performance practice than questions of *how* and *why*. In this chapter, I explain through two concert case studies how the performance practice of Finnish and American contemporary music both requires and permits greater performer agency in a live performance setting. I consider topics of programming, acoustics, overall concert design, and how cultural values are reflected in performance.

Chapter 3: Clarinetist as recording artist takes as its case study the third artistic component of my research project, the commercially released album *Duel*. This chapter discusses the performance practice of recording, particularly contemporary works with electronics, as distinct from live performance. I analyze the adaptation to a recording environment for a performer used to predominantly live performance and I analyze the multiple layers of decision-making required in a recording environment. I also discuss the roles and expectations of the performer, composer, and sound engineer, and how performance practice can change in an aural-only musical environment. Finally, I explore how the strategies of translation and interpretation play a role in the performance practice of contemporary works

with electronics, proposing that the electronics play a very similar musical role to notation in this genre.

The fourth chapter, Clarinetist as chamber musician, discusses how the research themes analyzed in the earlier chapters manifest in chamber music. I use chamber music case studies from composers Augusta Read Thomas, Kaija Saariaho, Mason Bates, and Ville Raasakka to illustrate how the patterns of shared ownership and performer agency that were identified in solo unaccompanied repertoire translate to collaborative musical environments.

In Chapter 5: Clarinetist as orchestral musician, I use case studies from my work as an orchestral freelancer in Finland alongside quantitative programming data to examine the differences in Finnish and American contemporary orchestral music practice. Since the fall of 2017, I have conducted a contemporary programming study every season from six American and six Northern European orchestras. The data from the American and Finnish orchestras is presented in this chapter to support my observation that differences in contemporary music culture between Finland and the United States are reflected in orchestral programming practice.

Finally, the last chapter Clarinetist as anthropologist summarizes the findings of this dissertation through the three research themes of notation culture, shared ownership and performance agency, and performance practice as a reflection of cultural values. I discuss how this research has led me to understand a performer's role as an ethnographer and to understand contemporary music more broadly as a person-based rather than a work-based practice. I also offer paths forward for future research, including how performers can decide their own artistic practice and the role of the audience in contemporary music performance.

VII Performance activity during this project

Throughout this research project, I have worked as a freelance musician in Finland. There were extended periods of work as a grant-funded artistic researcher (Wihuri Rahasto Spring 2017, Wihuri Rahasto Fall 2019, Emil Aaltonen Young Researcher Fellowship Fall 2020-Summer 2021) and as a salaried doctoral researcher at the University of the Arts Helsinki Sibelius Academy (Fall 2021-Winter 2023). There were also periods of full-time work in various orchestras throughout Finland (Oulu Symphony Fall 2017,

Pori Sinfonietta Fall 2018, Turku Philharmonic Fall 2018, Pori Sinfonietta Spring 2019), alongside freelance work in the orchestras of Helsinki and Lahti (2015 to present). I have performed with the Defunensemble, Changensemble, Uusinta, and NYKY contemporary ensembles in Helsinki, and was a founding member of the Earth Ears Ensemble. As a producer, I initiated the Elollinen Concert Series in Talvipuutarha in August 2021. The goals of the series are to provide musicians from the Uniarts Sibelius Academy the opportunity to bring their musical performances to new audiences in a different concert environment, encourage new listening experiences, and provide a concert series free to the public that features high-level artistic performances in a wide variety of genres and styles. I consider all these aspects of my professional life as integral to my research and draw on all experiences therein.

CHAPTER 2: CLARINETIST AS SOLOIST

The solo concerto and unaccompanied solo have featured prominently in clarinet repertoire since the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, respectively. Their artistic value for the clarinetist is to further certain musical skills and to provide a way to artistically communicate directly with the audience. For clarinetists, both newly composed and existing unaccompanied repertoire are inextricably tied to instrumental competitions like ARD, Naumberg, Geneva, and Nielsen, which have been an important tool for clarinets to establish both orchestral and solo careers since the mid-nineteenth century. The concerto and unaccompanied solo have also helped promote professional and personal connections between clarinetists and composers, especially in the twenty-first century.

In Finland, clarinetists like Kari Kriikku, Heikki Nikula, Harri Mäki, Christoffer Sundqvist, Mikko Raasakka, and Lauri Sallinen have been critical in commissioning and premiering new clarinet concerti and solo unaccompanied works, while also remaining active in the classical repertoire. Kriikku's close relationships with Finnish composers Magnus Lindberg, Kaija Saariaho, Jukka Tiensuu, Jouni Kaipainen, Kimmo Hakola, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Eero Hämeenniemi and Olli Koskelin have yielded some of the most important Finnish clarinet repertoire. Mäki, Sundqvist, and others have continued this tradition, promoting solo clarinet works by Finnish composers both in and outside of Finland while remaining active in traditional classical music institutions, like conservatories and orchestras.

In the United States, clarinetists like Richard Stoltzman, Charles Neidich, John Yeh, Anthony McGill, David Krakauer, Elsa Ludewig-Verdehr, Jon Manasse, Sean Osborn, and Ricardo Morales have commissioned and premiered new repertoire. As principal clarinetists of large orchestras, McGill and Morales have premiered contemporary American concerti with the New York Philharmonic and Philadelphia Orchestra, respectively. However, most American clarinetists who work with living composers are considered specialists of contemporary music, often outside of the classical music institutions of orchestral performance and music education. It is less common to find American orchestral clarinetists who also perform a significant amount of contemporary music, and even

fewer clarinet professors in higher education who promote contemporary music alongside older repertoire.[19]

Much has been published about the technical skills clarinetists must acquire to perform contemporary music with an emphasis on "extended techniques" like multiphonics, the performance of microtones, growls, and slaps, as well as those skills necessary to perform non-traditionally notated scores, like graphic scores. This study does not discuss these technical musical elements in Finnish and American repertoire, nor skills as they relate to specific styles of musical composition. Instead, I focus on the role of the soloist as a creative agent as it relates to the notated score and the role that shared ownership plays in the creation of contemporary clarinet music by Finnish and American composers. To illustrate, I will analyze and compare unaccompanied solo works by Libby Larsen, Markku Klami, Jack Hughes, Lotta Wennäkoski, Kimmo Hakola, Eric Mandat, Magnus Lindberg, and John Adams.

I Agency versus flexibility

It is necessary before beginning this discussion to distinguish between the concepts of agency and flexibility as they relate to analyzing the role of the performer within a contemporary music performance practice. Both concepts are involved when discussing a performer's actions in performance, especially with the notated score. Flexibility is defined as the "susceptibility of modification or alteration; capacity for ready adaptation to various purposes or conditions; freedom from stiffness or rigidity".[20] A performer can exhibit flexibility in performance, for example, by reacting quickly to

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[19] There are notable exceptions, particularly in the realm of music education. Clarinetist-composers like Scott McAllister and Eric Mandat are both prominent clarinet professors and active performers of their own repertoire (McAllister at Baylor University in Texas, Mandat at Eastern Illinois University). Neidich is both an expert in historical clarinet as well as contemporary repertoire at the Juilliard School, Manhattan School of Music and Mannes. Finally, Ludewig-Verdehr was professor at Michigan State University for forty-five years and was a member of the Verdehr Trio, which commissioned over 200 works. John Yeh of the Chicago Symphony is a regular perform in the Music Now contemporary music series of the Chicago Symphony, commissions and records new music for clarinet, and teaches at Roosevelt University in Chicago.

[20] "flexibility, n.". *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, July 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/9907100328>

changing situations in real time. In relation to the notated score, flexibility is often used to describe instances where the performer must choose between a set of performance possibilities like dynamics, *tempo*, and phrasing. Conditions that encourage flexibility can be situational, like performing unaccompanied, which eliminates the need to react to another person or sounding body. Importantly, however, flexibility is understood as expression within finite boundaries, particularly what might be considered the finite boundaries of a notated score. When discussing potential possibilities in creative performance, flexibility has a limited frame.

Agency, on the other hand, is the "ability or capacity to act or exert power; active working or operation; action, activity."[21] In expressing agency, performers feel more or less in control over various aspects of their musical performance. Agency can also be seen as "a dynamic cultural and socioeconomic practice based on relationships to written scores, performance practices, audiences and societal institutions" (Johansson 2014, 73). The potential agency possessed by a performer is the result of the mediation of many factors including notation culture and the audience's and composer's expectations of the performer. When we understand the performer as having agency, "we ascribe to them the ability to manifest certain kinds of behavior, namely actions" (Kalis 2011, 38). We become much more conscious of the relationships of power and expectations between performer, composer (and notated score), and audience, and the extent to which a performer has control of various aspects of performance.

Analysis of agency involves examining a wider scope of actions taken by the performer, as well as what relationships and situations permit the performer to intentionally take those actions. In the context of this study, the performer's capacity for decision-making, types of decisions being made, and the influence of those decisions on the musical performance all serve as indicators of agency. Researchers in musical creativity have also argued that "the ability to control, and thus to modify, a highly prepared performance" can be considered a source of creativity in musical performance (Chaffin et all 2006, 215). However, it is not only the act of making decisions that generates agency. The types of decisions a performer is expected or chooses to make and the extent to which the performer feels those decisions

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[21] "agency, n.". *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, September 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1249589150.

fundamentally shape or individualize a performance both affect agency and can be considered part of performance practice.

For this reason, agency is felt more deeply and fundamentally by the performer than flexibility, even if a performer has never been aware of it as such. I argue that a performer's sense of agency is linked to the concept of shared ownership, because with increased agency, an increased feeling of control, and a greater capacity for creativity, the performer becomes more deeply connected, emotionally and artistically, to the performance. Increased agency can also result in a more personal, individual performance.

II Performer Agency in Solo Repertoire

As an orchestral clarinetist, musical artistry is affected profoundly by the artistic decisions of a conductor. In both orchestral and chamber music repertoire, the clarinetist is also affected by his or her collaborative colleagues on various instruments. In solo repertoire, whether it be with orchestra, piano or unaccompanied, the performing clarinetist, as a soloist, has greater creative agency over the musical decisions leading to and in performance.

Throughout this research project, the preparation of my artistic concerts was overseen by clarinetist Kari Kriikku.[22] Kriikku is critical to the genesis of a lot of Finnish contemporary clarinet repertoire, as well as an inspiration to composers internationally. Having premiered a great deal of the repertoire I included in my project, he also served as an important resource for this research project.

What I observed over the course of my performance preparations was a strong difference in Kriikku's comments to me on the repertoire he had played (predominantly the Finnish repertoire), versus the repertoire he had not (most of the American repertoire). In a discussion of the pre-examination for my second doctoral concert, I wrote on my website in October 2020:

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[22] In the arts study program in DocMus doctoral school at the Sibelius Academy – which is the department that housed this research project – doctoral researchers have a research supervisor, artistic jury, and what is known as a "pre-examiner". The role of the pre-examiner is to listen to the artistic component (i.e., doctoral concert) prior to the actual performance to provide guidance on artistic preparations. As pre-examiner, Kari Kriikku listened to all the programs in Appendix A prior to their live or recorded performances.

> The nature of his [Kari's] comments on those two works [Tiensuu and Saariaho] had much more to do with performance practice - his opinions, his experience of performing the score, his work with the composers - than they had to do with interpretation. I felt in no way limited by the comments, and of course was fortunate to be able to benefit from his expertise. But what Kari showed me in the nature of his comments, and the difference between his comments on those two works and the other six works on the program, was what I am coming to understand that shared ownership is. (Abrams-Husso, 27 Oct 2020)

I observed that when we discussed solo works that Kriikku had performed and premiered, the comments he made extended beyond what was notated in the score. But when they were works that he had not played, like most of the American repertoire, his comments were limited to the content of the notated score. This is not inherently surprising – it is common classical music performance practice to use the notated score as the source of most musical information. Particularly when one is coaching a work that one has never played.

Kriikku's comments, which I wrote related to "performance practice", demonstrated that there was something about the way this Finnish repertoire was performed that invited or allowed the performer to contribute individual expertise to its musical performance. Does American contemporary solo repertoire invite the same level of contribution or performer agency? The case studies analyzed here suggest that there are differences in the composer-performer model between American and Finnish repertoire, and that creative agency and shared ownership tend to be greater in the performance of Finnish solo repertoire.

III Markku Klami *Twirl* (2008) and Libby Larsen *Dancing Solo* (1994)

At the outset of my research, I hypothesized that commissioning and premiering works were integral to understanding the notion of shared ownership in contemporary music practice. I reasoned that not only does premiering a new composition inherently entail more artistic responsibility but that the notion of shared ownership was inextricably linked to the commissioning and premiering process. In actuality, my experience with the Finnish and American repertoire of my project revealed that premiering

a work, or even working closely with a composer, does not solely contribute to a sense of shared ownership.

This was observed for the first time with the very first unaccompanied works I prepared during my research project. *Twirl* was composed by Markku Klami while he was a composition student at the Sibelius Academy. He worked closely with classmate and clarinetist Lauri Sallinen during the composition process and Sallinen premiered the piece. When I performed *Twirl* for Klami in the fall of 2018 in preparation for my first doctoral concert, I experienced that most of his comments to me were based on aspects of Sallinen's approach to the piece, rather than comments related to the notated score or Klami's compositional opinions. It became clear that Sallinen's artistic contribution to the work was as integral to its understanding as the notated score. Klami used Sallinen not as a model, but to encourage my own contributions, indicating that the performance practice of the piece was one of constant re-creation rather than re-exhibition. This was unexpected. In my previous experiences performing for composers, I found them more often focused on explaining their own intentions and clarifying what was already notated in the score rather than suggesting I come up with my own artistic solutions.

In a written reflection on *Twirl* following my first doctoral concert, I commented that interviewing and working with Klami made me "more confident approaching the score alone and developing my own ideas in the music" (5 Dec 2018, "After 'Imagined Models'"). The confidence was a result of feeling secure in my own musical decision-making, not in how I should or should not translate what was composed in the score. The performance practice of *Twirl* treated the notation as a starting point for music-making, which allowed both greater artistic agency and a more personal performance. I observed already after Imagined Models that my experience of *Twirl* suggested a "sense of ownership [with the work] even though this was not a premiere performance" (5 Dec 2018).

In contrast, *Dancing Solo* by Libby Larson suggests a different performance model. The work was commissioned and premiered by American clarinetist Caroline Hartig. In advance of the 2003 International Clarinet Association (I.C.A.) Young Artist Competition, where *Dancing Solo* was one of the required pieces, Hartig published a "Masterclass" on the work in the journal of the I.C.A. In a movement-by-movement analysis, Hartig outlines pedagogically how the clarinetist should approach Larson's

solo work. However, everything proposed is in response to the written notation. Her focus on the technical details of articulation, finger speed, and air pressure all refer to the printed material of the score. In her opening, Hartig writes:

> Unaccompanied works clearly present many challenges, yet they also provide an opportunity for the performer to find a unique voice. This is especially true if the work is well-written and the performer and composer realize the importance of their symbiotic relationship. (Hartig 2002, 6)

The acknowledged mutual dependence of composer and performer implies that the performer has an important role to play; however, her analysis communicates that the performer's focus should be on the best technical execution of the score. There is no elaboration on the nature of the artistic collaboration between composer and performer, and such discussions might have been intentionally avoided in this particular article. However, the instructions provided by Hartig imply that all artistic information required for performance is in the score.[23]

Compositional process aside, what is the experience of performing these works from the perspective of the performer? In a July 2018 case study on my website, I wrote of *Dancing Solo*:

> …this piece is very approachable and would be very accessible for the musician who might not have much experience with contemporary solo clarinet repertoire. Compared to other works composed the same year (Jörg Widmann's *Fantasie*, Elliott Carter's *Gra*), it is much more technically straight forward, dare I say even 'easier'. (Abrams-Husso, 24 July 2018)

I go on to suggest that the musical challenge of the piece lies in its simplicity, as well as its length. I experienced exactly what Von Glahn wrote: "As with many of her pieces, Larsen uses only what she needs: a minimum of rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic motives" (Von Glahn 2017,

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[23] A recent biography of Libby Larsen, *Libby Larsen: Composing An American Life*, also lacks elaboration on the nature of her collaboration with performers (Von Glahn, 2017). There are references to the performer, like "Larsen encourages the instrumentalists to play 'freely,' 'very freely'…" (76) or "Larsen's interests lie…also with the active roles musicians assume projecting, releasing, and spinning a 'sound into space and time'" (196). There are examples given of her working with musicians like the Fry Street Quartet (207-212). Unfortunately I was unable to reach Larsen to discuss or perform *Dancing Solo*.

30). While I suggested that the work "does not play itself" and requires some decision-making, my notes in this short analysis from the time of preparation imply that I was working predominantly with the repetition and form of the work and the dynamics involved therein. My decision-making was focused on the content of the notated score, which included temporal and dynamic pacing of the repetitive phrasing and stamina involved in maintaining clarity of articulation and lightness in sound quality. The scope of decision-making did not appear to me to include or expect additional creative contributions on the part of the performer.

For me, the musical responsibility of the solo clarinetist in the performance of *Dancing Solo* was translating the notated score and presenting the idiomatic musical material in a clear and transparent way to audiences. While my performance was the unique result of personal creative decision-making with regards to musical execution of the material, I did not feel my performance was individual in the same sense at my performance of *Twirl*, nor did I feel a profound sense of shared ownership of the work.

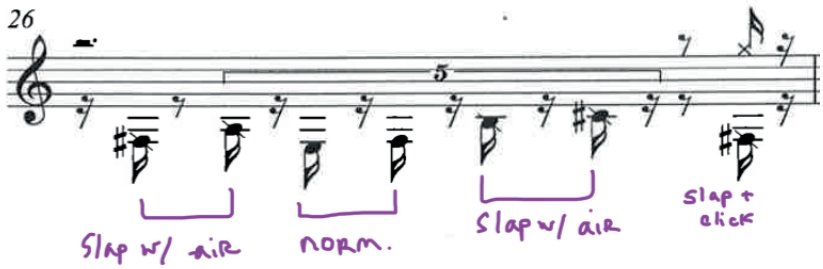
IV Lotta Wennäkoski *Limn* (2002) and Jack Hughes *Ripple Reflected* (2019)

In the second doctoral concert, two solo works revealed similar patterns of shared ownership and performer agency. This time, however, I had contact with both composers, Lotta Wennäkoski in Finland and Jack Hughes in the United States. The work from Hughes was also a commissioned premiere, which offered the opportunity to investigate whether shared ownership would be inherently tied to premiere performances and whether premiering a work would offer expanded avenues of performer agency through decision-making related to the notated score.

In the case of Wennäkoski's *Limn* for solo bass clarinet, the model of performance – that of the clarinetist making fundamental artistic decisions based on but less limited by the notated score – was very similar to my experience with *Twirl*. When I interviewed Wennäkoski, she repeatedly referred to her collaboration with Heikki Nikula, just as Klami had with Sallinen. When I asked if I could play *Limn* for her, she suggested that working with Nikula might be more helpful for me. This was

unexpected because my experience has often been that composers are more than eager to guide artistic understanding of their own works. I did, however, follow Wennäkoski's advice and played the work for Nikula. His guidance was instrumental, a similar experience to performing Tiensuu or Saariaho for Kriikku. Nikula provided critical artistic coaching that extended beyond what was notated in the score. It was clear that his comments, like those of Kriikku, were not generated merely from his understanding of the notation itself, but rather stemmed from his expanded artistic decision-making. His comments revealed an increased level of performer agency and a sense of shared ownership in the performance practice of *Limn*.

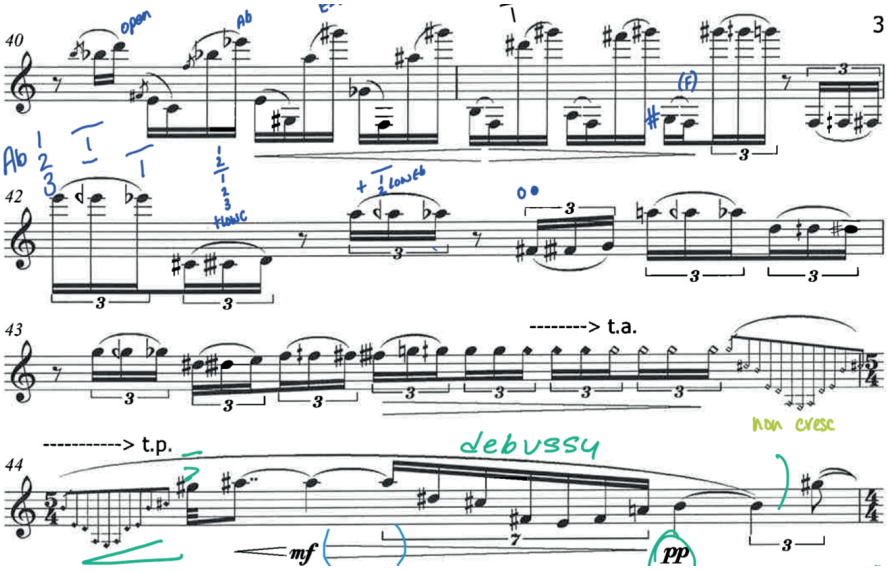
That said, some of Nikula's comments were notation based. The first thing I was told, for example, was that *Limn* only has bar lines due to the limitations of the software used for printing the material, which makes a huge difference in the musical understanding of the work. Nikula also explained the (non-notated) heavy Hungarian folk/Bartók-ian folk influences, particularly at the beginning. Finally, there were clarifications about the articulation and rhythm, like the use of slap articulation without pitch in measure twenty-six (Example 1) or how in measure thirty, what appear as grace notes are really a continuation of the run (another notation software side-effect).



Example 1 Lotta Wennäkoski *Limn* (2002/04), m. 26 (score in B-flat)

The remainder of Nikula's comments reflect his personal understanding of the piece and reveal the amount of artistic agency and contribution possible and expected in the performance practice of *Limn*. The character changes, for example, are more musically significant than the notation alone might imply. From measure forty to measure forty-two shown in Example 2, the sixteenth notes require significant dexterity from

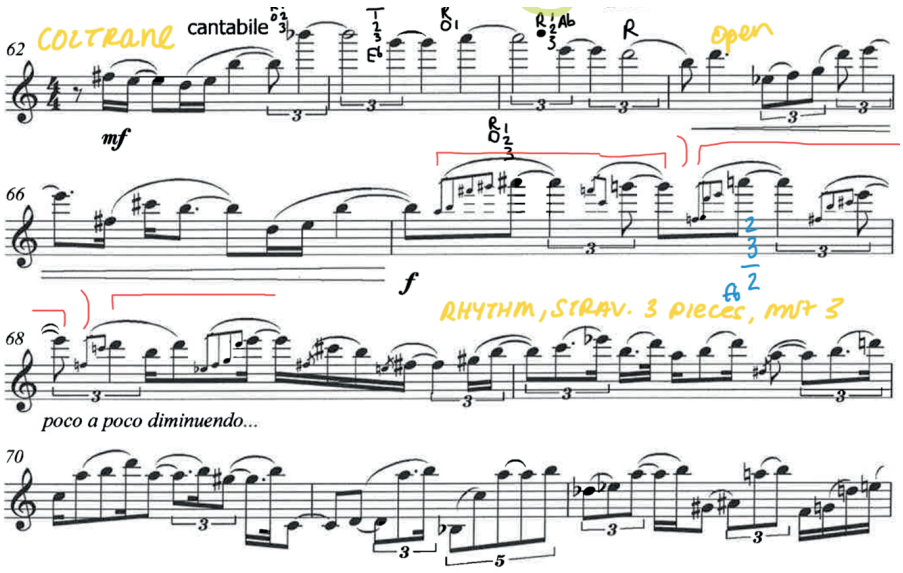
the performer but also invite a singing and sustained quality. Nikula made reference to Brahms Sonata No. 1 in f-minor. The microtonal sixteenth-triplets can be viewed musically as a development of these interval leaps, compressed into smaller cells. Or, as Nikula suggested, they can serve as a musical transition to a lighter, more transparent tone and impressionist interpretation of the section beginning at measure forty-four, where I have marked "Debussy". In this reading, then, next section that begins energetically at measure forty-eight can be presented with even greater stylistic contrast, a section of maximum sound saturation, completely unlike the twenty measures prior, both in sound quality and in the clarinetist maintaining a stricter tempo.



Example 2 Lotta Wennäkoski *Limn* (2002/04), mm. 20-44 (score in B-flat)

Similar stylistic contrasts can be exaggerated in the sections after measure sixty-two, shown below in Example 3. Wennäkoski indicates *cantabile* after the *scherzando* section immediately prior in measures fifty-six to sixty-one. Nikula, however, suggested even more extreme musical contrasts, offering that the section beginning in measure sixty-two can be played à la John Coltrane. For the bass clarinetist, this suggests a more relaxed embouchure and free use of a jazz-style vibrato. It feels natural to do so in this range of the instrument, as bass clarinet in the high register can sound timbrally very much like a saxophone. A composer would probably not be aware of this. Creating this stylistic contrast in

performance requires both the bass clarinetist to apply their own expertise and a notation culture that invites the performer to make significant decisions with regard to sound and style. After the singing section, Wennäkoski indicates a change in dynamics (*poco a poco diminuendo* mm. 68*)*, but Nikula again suggests another stylistic contrast rhythmically, invoking the third movement of Igor Stravinsky's *Three Pieces* (1919).



Example 3 Lotta Wennäkoski *Limn* (2002/04), mm. 62-72 (score in B-flat)

These are just two examples, but my session with Nikula indicated that the entirety of *Limn* invites, even necessitates, the bass clarinetist to use the notation as a prompt to greater musical imagination and creativity. The musical Examples 2 and 3 demonstrate how Nikula references other composers to trigger himself, musically, to reach greater stylistic contrasts than might be inferred only by the score's notation - from the sustained singing (Brahms) to color infused tone changes (Debussy) to expressive vocal vibrato (Coltrane's jazz) to playful rhythmic irony (Stravinsky). But Nikula explains that the clarinetist can apply the same creative agency and flexibility to their presentation of the variety of tongue and air articulations that Wennäkoski composes, the phrasing and coloration of the improvisatory multiphonic passagework, and the treatment of the long cadenza-like passage from measure seventy-eight to measure one hundred thirty-one. With this approach, one's performance of *Limn* becomes very

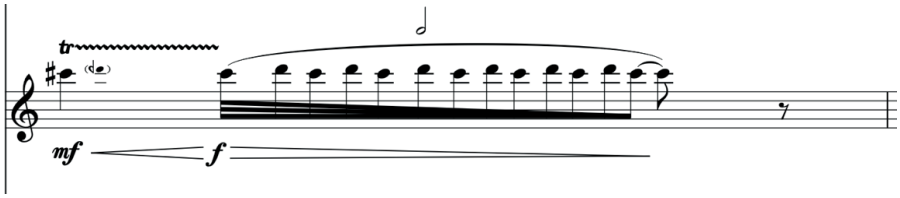
personal, with a huge amount of artistic decision-making required. This contributes to a greater sense of shared ownership, even when one is not performing the premiere of the work or even working closely with the composer.

Jack Hughes' *Ripple Reflected* suggests a difference performance practice. Prior to the premiere performance, I had two in-person meetings with Hughes. In the first, I interviewed him about his musical background, education, and musical influences, and we discussed the nature of the piece he would compose for me. In the second meeting, I played through a draft of the score for him. *Ripple Reflected* uses an existing recording of Hughes' chamber work *Ripple* (2016) as fixed media to create a new solo with tape, *Ripple Reflected*. In our first meeting, we discussed the format of how the piece would be, but mostly Hughes told me the ideas he had of manipulating the recording of the *Ripple* and how the clarinet could interact with it in different ways. In the second meeting, I played through the score for him so he could hear what he had written. There were a couple of technically awkward passages, and I encouraged those to be rewritten. Even though the work was a commission, and I participated during its writing, our working method involved greater separation of tasks between composer and performer.

In preparation and performance, *Ripple Reflected* encourages a great degree of musical flexibility. Unlike the other solo pieces with electronics included in this research project, the tape for *Ripple Reflected* does not align precisely with the live clarinet part. While there is a basic tempo marking at the beginning of the score, the tempo is approximate because the fixed media was created from a live performance and then manipulated further. Precise alignment was not something that was important to Hughes, and therefore timing queues are not indicated in the score. Hughes stated that he wanted the musical relationship of live and recorded sound to be that of a clarinet 'solo-ing' on top of the tape part. For that reason, its analysis is included in this chapter, because musically it is very much a clarinet solo. The clarinetist's artistic agency is not affected, or limited, by the tape part in that same way that the works with electronics are in Chapter 4.

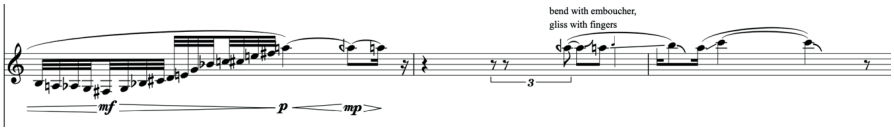
The musical flexibility is indicated in the score in various ways. For example, Hughes uses notation to show where to freely speed up and slow down various trill-like figures over a given note duration. This serves

as a sort of prescribed improvisation, a flexibility within strict parameters, for example, the end of the phrase shown in Example 4. Hughes writes in the Performance Notes that "after several appearances of similar versions of this figure the rhythmic durations have been omitted", which instructs the clarinetist to continue to employ the same technique throughout the work where musically appropriate.



Example 4 Jack Hughes *Ripple Reflected* (2019), m. 40 (score in B-flat)

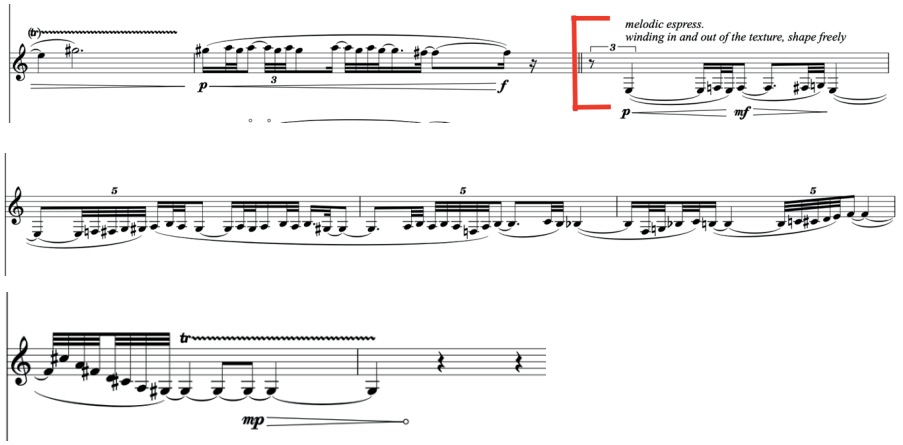
While the clarinetist in *Ripple Reflected* is meant to sound like they are 'soloing' on top of the fixed media, in an improvisational way, Hughes is highly specific in his notation. In Example 5, he not only indicates that he would like a pitch bend, but specifies on which pitch to begin, how large the bends should be, and how he would like the bends and glissando to differ, specifying "bends using embouchure, *glissando* with fingers". The melody in measures twenty-nine to thirty-four (Example 6) is another example of an improvisatory-sounding phrase within strictly notated parameters. In measure twenty-nine, Hughes writes, "melodic *espressivo*, winding in and out of the texture, shape freely". As the phrase is written in the lowest range of the clarinet, the clarinetist *must* play expressively with a soloistic sound in order for the melody be heard within the amplified texture. Hughes indicates



Example 5 Jack Hughes *Ripple Reflected* (2019), mm. 10-12 (score in B-flat)

the *crescendo* and *diminuendo* in the first measure, and that the clarinetist should repeat those dynamic waves throughout to "wind in and out of the texture". Though "free", the musical and natural application of those *crescendi* and *diminuendi* follow the contours of the melodic lines, such that the clarinetist's sound grows when the line ascends and relaxes when it

descends. In addition to the dynamics, the clarinetist can increase the tension in the sound when it gets louder and relax the timbre when getting softer, to add to the wave-like motion. While the phrase might appear to be free and might sound as such, the actual performer's flexibility in performance is more limited, dictated by the notation.



Example 6 Jack Hughes *Ripple Reflected* (2019), mm. 27-34 (score in B-flat)

Unlike *Limn*, the creative decision-making involved in performing *Ripple Reflected* is dictated heavily by the specifics of the notated score. Premiere performance or not, my artistic agency – my capacity for decision-making – was limited in many ways to the notation. Though Hughes indicated, in our conversations and in the notation, that the clarinetist was to be 'soloistic' and 'flexible' in the presentation of the material, and especially in the relationship between the acoustic and amplified sound, much of that flexibility composed. This is not to say that the clarinetist had no creative decisions to make at all, quite to the contrary. Like *Dancing Solo*, the score is full of important artistic decisions that determine how the performance will sound. But there is no expectation that the clarinetist makes decisions that *add* much to what the composer has already indicated. As a result, I felt less shared ownership in premiering *Ripple Reflected* than I had performing *Twirl* or *Limn*.

V Kimmo Hakola *Diamond Street* (1999) and Eric Mandat *Folk Songs* (1986)

> Is it possible that my sense of greater freedom, or what I might call 'creativity beyond the score' in working with Finnish contemporary scores has to do with my proximity to those Finnish composers, my conversations with them, my work with the Finnish clarinetists who have premiered these scores? Does this situation generate, for me, a broader understanding of those composers' expectations and a greater trust in myself? Are the 'liberties' in approaching the score really just a high level of 'score fidelity', by nature of my work with those composers? (Abrams-Husso, 20 December 2020)

This reflection from December 2020 poses a question I wrestled with constantly, of whether what I perceived as greater artistic agency in performing works by Finnish composers had to do merely with my geographic, social and cultural closeness to the composers themselves. Had I just lived outside the United States so long, and arguably never had any close connections with American composers while I lived there, that my musical education in that genre was lacking? Ultimately, I answer no. What I refer to as "creativity beyond the score" – decision-making promoted by increased artistic agency – and a greater degree of shared ownership can be experienced by the clarinetist independent of whether the work is a premiere performance or not. It is also not dependent on contact with the composer themself.

Two of the final solo unaccompanied works included in my research project were Hakola's *Diamond Street* and Mandat's *Folk Songs*. Both were performed in my final doctoral concert in May 2022. I had no contact with either Hakola or Mandat in my preparation and performance, and neither work was a premiere.[24] The works are similar in that they are both influenced by folk music. Hakola's inspiration is very literal – klezmer music – while Mandat composed his own songs in a folk style.

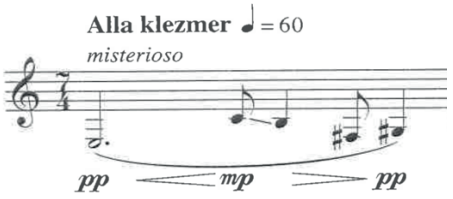
While there are many different types of folk music, most are oral traditions. Often they are improvised, or improvisatory, in style. Rarely are they written down. Both *Diamond Street* and *Folk Songs* attempt to 'classicize' folk music using notation to standardize performance and make

[24] I tried to contact Hakola, but unfortunately was unsuccessful. While I think Mandat would have welcomed contact, I ultimately decided to experiment with tackling his score independently to see if performance was possible without his guidance on the extended techniques.

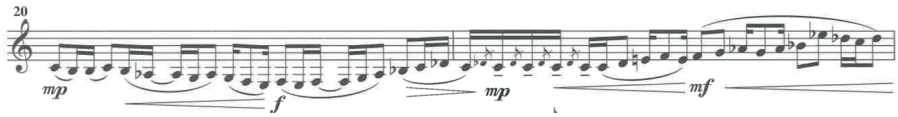
the genre more accessible to classically trained clarinetists. Both works also attempt to use the notation to reflect the timbral and rhythmic aspects of the folk music style composed. To do so, 'non-traditional', or rather non-classical, clarinet playing techniques are used.

To perform klezmer music, or in the klezmer style, the clarinetist uses musical skills such as vibrato, *glissandi*, *portamento*, pitch bends, grace notes, and rhythmic agogic weighting that are characteristically non-classical. Clarinetists who specialize in klezmer music also typically play with an embouchure and/or combination of mouthpiece and reed that allow for greater flexibility in tone color and to make sliding between notes (*glissandi*) easier. Argentinian-Israeli clarinetist Giora Feidman, who performed in both classical and klezmer settings and was an inspiration for Hakola, famously played clarinet with a double-lipped embouchure, where the clarinetist tucks the lip over the top teeth as well as the bottom teeth rather than making contact between the top teeth and the top of the mouthpiece. This allowed Feidman to produce a stable yet flexible sound, with a ringing tone of balanced overtones he could manipulate and vibrate easily.

Hakola indicates *alla klezmer* at the opening (Example 7), implying that the clarinetist should play the entire piece in a klezmer style. He also notates specifically to use *molto vibrato* at two points, in measures thirty-six and forty-six. Finally, Hakola notates klezmer-style grace notes throughout, as shown in Example 8. The remaining musical indications in the score are more traditionally classical and notated in Italian – *misterioso, cantabile narrando, con gioia,* and *con brio*. At first glance, the score presents itself as classical in style. However, Hakola indicates in the performance note that the performer should feel free to use additional klezmer techniques in performance. The decision is left to the performer, resulting in a potentially much more individual interpretation of *Diamond Street*.



Example 7 Kimmo Hakola *Diamond Street* (1999), m. 1 (score in B-flat)



Example 8 Kimmo Hakola *Diamond Street* (1999), mm. 20-21 (score in B-flat)

As a clarinetist, and a composer, Eric Mandat has occupied a unique space outside of both east- and west-coast contemporary music practices at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, IL where he has taught since 1981. Mandat composed *Folk Songs* for himself to perform in his final doctoral concert at the Eastman School of Music in 1986. In the program note at the beginning of the score, Mandat writes:

> I had been listening to a lot of different folk music recordings from non-Western cultures, and I was fascinated by the intricate intonations, the richness of timbres, and the subtle rhythmic variations which propelled the melodic cells in the music I heard. (Mandat 1986, Program Note)

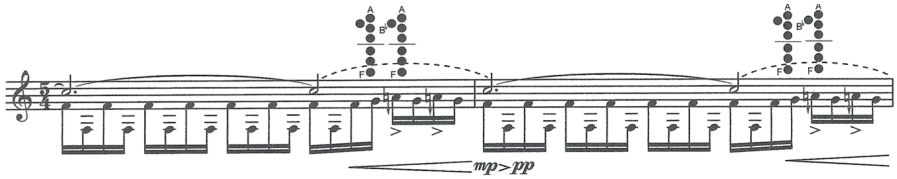
Taking inspiration from these unnamed sources, Mandat relies heavily on non-classical playing techniques to achieve a folk-sounding style. He continues:

> Each of the five movements of *Folk Songs* uses a specific set of extended performance techniques to suggest a particular folk-like character, blended with my own predilection for jazz rhythms and for pitch structures common in the early 20th century post-tonal Western art music. (Mandat 1986, Program Note)

The folk-like character that Mandat composes in each movement is first, timbral. Only in the final movement is the clarinet played in a "classical style", without any added techniques. The other four movements use various extended techniques to achieve different types of sounds and colors from the clarinet, which invoke non-classical styles of music-making.

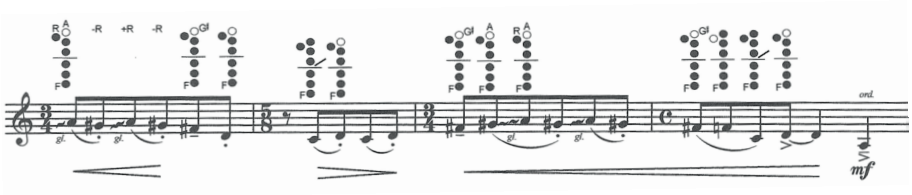
Mandat's notation is predominantly prescriptive, indicating the specific method needed to produce the intended sound. The titles of each movement are descriptive, but the clarinetist must rely on the playing techniques indicated by Mandat to make the notation sound as intended. In the first movement, he indicates "Spirited; as if from a distant Appalachian hill". To achieve this sound image, Mandat composes drone-like oscillating multiphonics, leading to short chord changes with accents and resolutions

back to the original multiphonic drone. These are shown in Example 9 below.



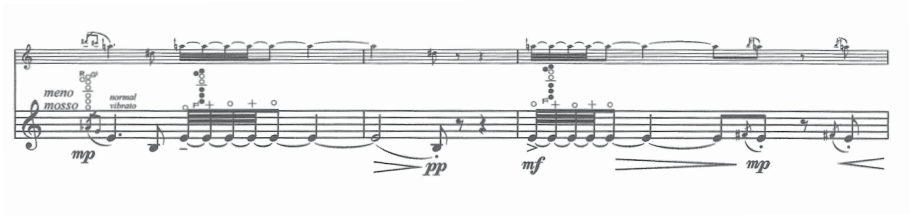
Example 9 Eric Mandat *Folk Songs* (1986), Movement 1 excerpt (score in B-flat)

The title of the second movement, "Heavily, with a fuzzy unfocused, breathy tone", describes the tone color the clarinetist should aim for using Mandat's alternative fingerings. Some of these fingerings are shown in Example 10. Color fingerings, glissandi, accents, quarter tones, and mixed meter are all used to great effect to bring out the honky-tonk folksy tune. The timbral fingerings, especially, are absolutely essential for achieving the desired musical effect.



Example 10 Eric Mandat *Folk Songs* (1986), Movement 2 second line (score in B-flat)

The most unusual example is from the fourth movement, "With devotion, like a prayer." The clarinetist is instructed to remove the mouthpiece and barrel and blow across the top of the upper joint. The method and sound produced borrows from the transverse or end-blown flute, which is an instrument used extensively in folk and art music throughout Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Mandat notates the entire movement on double staves, illustrated by the excerpt shown in Example 11. The top line indicates the approximate sounding pitch and the lower line shows what pitches the clarinetist should finger, including alternative fingerings for timbral and color changes where indicated.



Example 11 Eric Mandat *Folk Songs* Movement 4 (1986), third line (score in B-flat)

Performance practice of Mandat's works often involve direct consultation with him for explanation and demonstration of the unique extended clarinet techniques that he has pioneered. I found, however, that the prescriptive notation in the score for *Folk Songs* was substantial enough to for independent study and performance. While the instruction given through the notation are clear, the non-traditional playing techniques in each movement are not intuitive. Significant time during performance preparation is spent not only achieving muscular comfort with the technique, but also applying the techniques to achieve intended musical affect. Tone color and timbre are crucially important, and tied directly to the extended technique Mandat notates. Once technical and musical fluidity is achieved, I find that the performing clarinetist has less flexibility in quality and character of the sound produced than one would in a traditional classical playing style. I experienced that strict score fidelity is necessary because following the instructions written are the only way to produce the musical sounds as they are descriptively and prescriptively notated in the score. Like the Larson and Hughes works discussed earlier, there also appears to be little expectation that clarinetist contribute their own musical ideas significantly to the score.

In my experience performing *Folk Songs* and through reading about Mandat, I came to understand that Mandat's philosophy regarding the artistic roles of composer and performer were that the performer's responsibility and priority should be in faithful execution of the composer's intentions as communicated through notated score without added creative application of the performer's own ideas. In her doctoral treatise on Eric Mandat's teaching style and philosophy, Jessica Anne Hall Speak outlines in detail Mandat's approach to clarinet and the teaching of the instrument, informed by his own musical background, education, and composing. Like Kriikku, Mandat is credited by colleagues and former students as being

integral to expanding the creative possibilities of the clarinet in contemporary music (Speak Hall 2020, 8). However, I believe that Mandat and Kriikku diverge in their understanding of the role of the clarinetist in relation to the composer's notated score.

In an email response from former students and colleagues included in Speak's treatise, Jon Goodman's comments are revelatory. Goodman notes that Mandat's teaching revealed to him the importance of "accuracy of interpretation (and the integrity of that interpretation with regards to his music and other composers)" (Speak Hall 2020, 57). Goodman elaborates:

> Teaching of his pieces were always well planned and he [Mandat] has specific images and concepts he is trying to convey in his music. I do believe Dr. Mandat always loves to see interesting interpretations of his pieces, but within what he has written. If I could put his style of composition (and how he teaches it) it is definitely a little bit more towards the composer side of the equation (rather than the interpreter). (Speak Hall 2020, 58)

From Goodman's perspective, Mandat's "style" of teaching of his own works comes from the perspective of the composer rather than of performer ("the interpreter"). Even though Mandat is both, his teaching has implied, and his students have understood, that the composer's intention rather than the clarinetist's artistic vision, is of paramount importance. While Kriikku has never said, nor can I attribute to him, that the composer's intention is any *less* important to his music-making, his coaching has implied that the performer has greater capacity for decision-making, and creativity through agency, in working with the notated score.

Both *Diamond Street* and *Folk Songs* were prepared and performed without any contact with the composers. While not initially planned, this independent approach allowed me to prove, in a way, that my observations regarding performer agency and creativity were inherent in the performance practice of these works and not dependent on the input or approval of the composer. To prepare *Diamond Street*, like the composer, I consulted recordings of klezmer clarinetists. But I mostly relied on my own ear and sonic memory of the traditional Jewish sounds and songs I experienced growing up. Ultimately, my interpretation of *Diamond Street* is personal. I find that each of my performances of the work is slightly different, particularly my ornamentation and vibrato. Though antithetical to typical classical music performance practice, where preparation is most

often designed to standardize execution, variance is standard performance practice in many folk music traditions, including klezmer.

Feedback from my Finnish clarinet colleagues has implied that while my "interpretation" is different from "standard" (i.e., Finnish) performances of the work[25], they found my performance no less artistically acceptable. My approach is in line not only with statements the composer has made but also with the inspiration he has taken from Kari Kriikku in composing these pieces. An interview with Hakola in the dissertation of clarinetist Erin Elizabeth Vander Wyst contains the following quote:

> Vander Wyst: Do you have any general advice for clarinet players learning and performing these pieces [*Diamond Street* and *loco*]?
>
> Hakola: Just *play.* Don't be shy!!!
>
> (Vander Wyst 2016, 72)

Hakola comments that the performer should play confidently, without worry, with confidence, which I also interpret it to mean without *overwhelming* preoccupation with the details of notation. As already mentioned, the preface of *Diamond Street* invites the performer to take liberties with the klezmer notation even though many performers may choose not to. I would argue that an invitation to apply a stylistic marking like *alla klezmer* can promote more creative decision-making, and a more individual performance, than, for example, a composer notating "freely" (as Larsen does at the beginning of the third movement of *Dancing Solo* when she notates "slowly, freely, legato").[26]

This sentiment, "just play", is something I have heard repeated by many composers during my time in Finland, and speaks to expectation that Finnish composers have towards performers applying their own creative expertise and ideas in performance. I believe that this creative contribution is

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[25] Implied by comments to me by Kari Kriikku during my pre-examination, as well as stated explicitly by clarinetists Harri Mäki and Mikko Raasakka in the jury assessment following the doctoral concert.

[26] Though not exclusively, "freely" in notation most often refers to treatment of musical time and by extension, rhythm, whereas the free application of a style like in *Diamond Street* or *Magyar Madness* (to be discussed in Chapter 5) can involve decisions with regards to time, phrasing, articulation, ornamentation, vibrato, improvisation, etc.

the direct result of Kari Kriikku himself. In an article about new clarinet repertoire, Paavo Helistö quotes composer Jukka Tiensuu:

> The great thing about Kari is not that he 'participates in the composition' (unlike some players he doesn't interfere). He is a major reason why some works ever get composed and repeatedly performed, and he has also proved that his instrument has greater potential than people conventionally assume. It's also encouraging for the composer to know that his work is absolutely certain to get a magnificent performance, however much it demands. (Helistö 2003, 4)

In Tiensuu's analysis, the performance practice discussed here is not one that relies on collaboration in the composition of the music itself (Kriikku *does not* "participate in the composition"). But rather Kriikku has widened the creative understanding of the clarinet – the shapes and sounds possible – and therefore has both expanded what composers can write but also established a performance practice in the music-making culture whereby clarinetists can and are expected to bring their own expertise to the performance of notated music. This is best illustrated by the Magnus Lindberg's *Kraft* (1985).

VI Magnus Lindberg *Kraft* (1983-85)

Though older than the other repertoire in this chapter, I include Magnus Lindberg's *Kraft* as a case study for the soloist's role in a concerto setting. In many ways it epitomizes the idea of performer agency and creative decision-making shaping the outcome of a performance, which is surprising given the orchestration of the work and the fact that the clarinetist is only one of six instrumental soloists. The sheer size of *Kraft* has contributed to its "cult" status as a work that is massive in its "scale, emotional range, [and] technical demands" (Howell 2007, 231). It is also hard to overstate how important the work is to Finnish contemporary music history and performance practice. Kimmo Korhonen has written that *Kraft* has developed into a "symbol of 1980s modernism" and has been accepted internationally as "one of the major works of late 20th century modernism" (Korhonen 2003, 163). The work is also a prime example of a composition made possible by the performers, the Toimii ensemble, for whom it was written. As Howell writes, Toimii existed as a "laboratory of performers dedicated to experimental

techniques" who "inspired developments in a number of pieces", including *Kraft* (Howell 2007, 233).

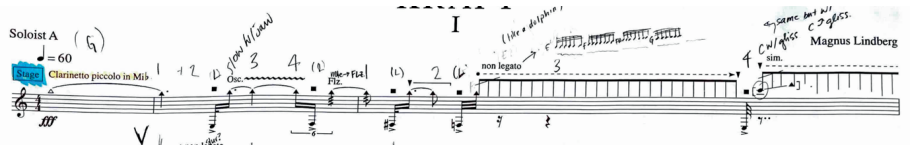
I performed as clarinet soloist in *Kraft* with the Sibelius Academy Symphony Orchestra in May 2016 in a concert to celebrate the 100th anniversary of that ensemble. The orchestra was conducted by Sakari Oramo, and the soloists were coached by two musicians who premiered *Kraft* as members of the Toimii ensemble, cellist Anssi Karttunen and Kari Kriikku. Karttunen coached the soloist ensemble ahead of the orchestra project week and I met with Kriikku one-on-one in the months leading to the performance. These sessions occurred prior to the start of my doctoral project but offered a preview of Kriikku's approach to contemporary Finnish repertoire that I would experience through my doctoral project.

The clarinet soloist part, Soloist A, is uniquely demanding. The clarinetist is required to perform on E-flat, B-flat, bass and contrabass clarinets, in addition to large amount of percussion including bamboo chimes, Chinese cymbal, castanets, pingpong balls, opera gong, a giant tam-tam, crotales, water sounds (performed by blowing bubbles into a bucket) and paper sounds (the crunching of). If that was not enough, the soloist must also perform in three different stations –in front of the orchestra in the typical position of soloist, in a high balcony behind the audience, and behind the orchestra on stage. With meticulously planned choreography, the clarinetist's performance involves constantly switching between clarinets and percussion while moving about the concert hall, starting and ending center stage. In an informal conversation with Lindberg during the rehearsal week, I recall him commenting that the reason the clarinet part is so densely packed is because when he asked if something was possible, Kriikku never said "no". Echoing Tiensuu's published remarks previously quoted, Kriikku's expanded understanding of the artistic possibilities of the clarinetist inspired and enabled the Soloist A part in *Kraft*.

Despite his profound influence and uniqueness as an artist and clarinetist, it has never been considered that *only* Kari would or could perform *Kraft.* Despite the specialty nature of the work and the novelty of the various extended clarinet techniques, like Mandat's *Folk Songs*, any clarinetist can perform the work and *Kraft* has been performed by many

different clarinetists.[27] But unlike Mandat's techniques, which must be precisely executed according to his instructions, the techniques in *Kraft* require more individual creative decision-making and therefore promote greater performer agency. Lindberg is non-specific as to exact execution, and Kriikku encouraged me repeatedly to experiment and find my own method, rather than simply repeat what he has done in performances.

For example, the first three measures of the work are shown below in Example 12. In the space of only three measures, the E-flat clarinetist develops a sound fluctuation from oscillation to flutter to "non-legato" to "non-legato" with *glissando*. In addition to lacking pitch specification, there is no clear explanation of what "non-*legato*" means and how to apply that technique with *glissando*, especially since *glissando* on a clarinet requires sustained notes and not articulation, which contradicts "non-*legato*". One can see from my handwritten notes, how I approached the passage. To develop the phrase, I started with a slow jaw vibrato, followed by a growl-like flutter, and then I used jaw pressure and tongue position in my mouth to produce a dolphin-like sound that ascended through the length of the phrase for the "non-legato". In the *glissando* version, I started with a slide up from high-C and then did the same dolphin-like sound.

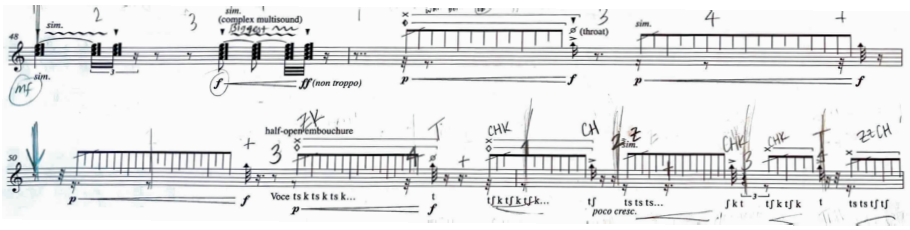


Example 12 Magnus Lindberg *Kraft* (1985), Soloist A part, mm. 1-3 (score in E-flat)

In another excerpt shown in Example 13, the clarinetist must again develop their own performance of the descriptive notation. Lindberg indicates he would like a modulating multiphonic sound that grows in volume and can also grow in "complexity" (number of notes, sound quality, timbre or any combination thereof). In measure forty-nine, the clarinetist

[27] While Toimii ensemble has toured and performed *Kraft* internationally, it has also performed by other groups of soloists with clarinetists like Andreas Ottensamer (with the Berlin Philharmonic), Chen Halevi (with the New York Philharmonic and others), Giuseppe Gentile (with the Finnish Radio Symphony), Jérôme Comte (with the Ensemble Intercontemporain), and Gaspare Buonomano (with the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester).

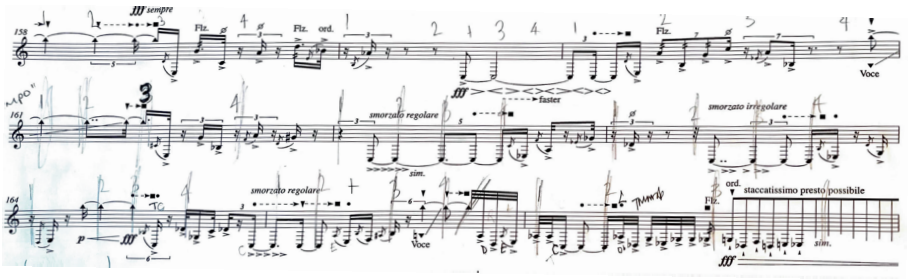
should perform some quickly articulated notes with half air, half sound, key clicking sounds, and growing in volume to a slap-tongued throat sound. This method continues through measure fifty, when consonant vocalizations should be added, continuing in short bursts through the end of measure fifty-one. The clarinetist must also be sure to use the amplification, most likely a standing microphone, effectively throughout this passage to make sure that the mouth sounds and key clicks can be heard as well as possible. It is entirely up to the clarinetist how to perform the passage, and there are many performance possibilities. In our coaching session, Kriikku recommended, for example, certain multiphonics that might work better than others, and he suggested using a double-tonguing sound beginning in measure forty-nine. But aside from those suggestions, it was entirely up to me to create my own performance.



Example 13 Magnus Lindberg *Kraft* (1985), Soloist A, mm. 48-51 (score in E-flat)

A final example from *Kraft* is from the contrabass clarinet solo towards the end of the first movement. The solo makes use of the extensive range of the instrument, particularly the differences in sound quality and timbre between the lowest registers, which sound similar to the lowest notes of the contrabassoon, and the highest registers, which sound like a soprano saxophone. In the excerpt shown in Example 14, Lindberg again uses predominantly descriptive notation to communicate to the clarinetist how to vary timbre and articulation throughout the passage. Combinations of flutter tongue and slap tongue, especially on a large metal instrument like a contrabass clarinet, amplify different qualities of sound and different resonances than the same techniques would on a smaller wooden bass or B-flat clarinet. The sound fluctuations of the *smorzato regolare* on the lowest C in measure one hundred sixty-two are also amplified by the size of the instrument. Despite the large number of "instructions" given in the score, the solo feels free to perform. The longer notes (into measure one hundred fifty-

eight, into measure one hundred sixty-one, measure one hundred sixty-two, etc.) give the performer more time to develop the type of timbral effect indicated, while the dotted rhythms, syncopations, and septuplets give the performer space to establish tension and release through the phrase.



Example 14 Magnus Lindberg *Kraft* (1985), Soloist A, mm. 158-166 (score in B-flat)

Despite its breadth and density of musical ideas, why is the score lacking in specificity, particularly when it comes to the extended and non-traditional playing techniques? Why are so many important sounding decision left to the clarinetist? Taking into account the close relationship between Lindberg and Kriikku, one could reason that Lindberg did not need to be specific because Kriikku understood already Lindberg's intentions through their close work on the piece and in the premiere and repeated performances. Or Lindberg relied on Kriikku's expertise in performance and therefore did not need to be more specific in the score. However, the work has been performed by many different orchestras, with many different clarinet soloists. If Kriikku's musical approach was so integral to the performance of the Soloist A part, Lindberg could have easily modified the Soloist A part in subsequent editions to indicate specifically how the performing clarinetist should execute techniques to achieve Kriikku's approach.[28] But this is not the case; the techniques remain descriptively but not prescriptively composed. Having worked closely with Kriikku and Lindberg, I conclude that they share the belief that the clarinetist should

[28] For example, Luciano Berio published a new edition *Sequenza I* (1958) for flute in 1992 with more conventionally notated rhythms, rather than the spatial notation used in the original edition. He did so because he did not agree with the rhythmic liberties being taken by certain performers, and wanted to "reimpose" stricter parameters in order to achieve the intended feeling of pressure and instability in the work. (*Berio's Sequenzas: Essays on Performance, Composition and Analysis* ed. Janet K. Halfyard, 2007. Ashgate.)

apply their own expertise and make their own decisions in performance. The performance practice of *Kraft* involves strict adherence to certain aspects of the score, but also a high level of artistic agency in performance.

VII John Adams *Gnarly Buttons* (1996)

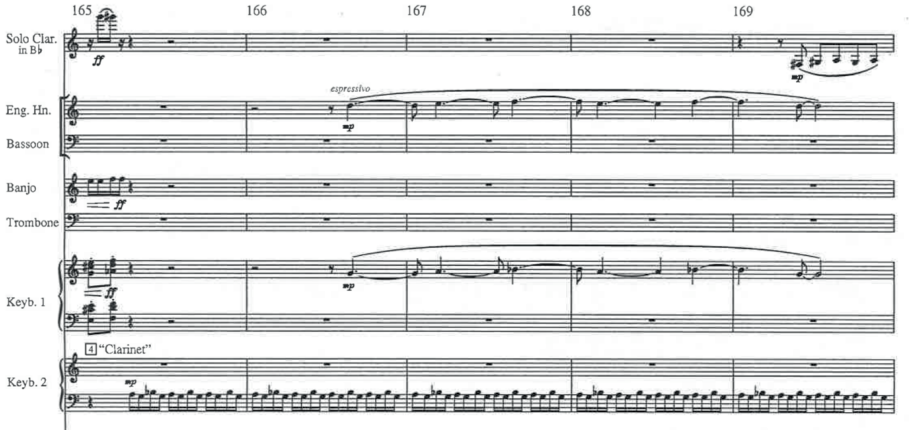
Like Magnus Lindberg, John Adams is one of the most performed living composers in the world. Year after year, my orchestral programming studies have shown that Adams is one of the most consistently programmed contemporary composers season-to-season across the United States and Northern Europe. His clarinet concerto, *Gnarly Buttons*, is traditionally composed in three movement but features a unique thirteen-member chamber ensemble that includes banjo (doubling on mandolin and guitar), English horn, bassoon, trombone, piano, two sampling keyboards, and strings. The work was co-commissioned by the London Sinfonietta and Present Music (Wisconsin, USA) and premiered by British clarinetist Michael Collins and the London Sinfonietta.

I performed the concerto with the full ensemble in my first doctoral concert, Imagined Models, in November 2018. The concerto presents important artistic decision-making challenges to the performer musically and acoustically. The instrumentation, particularly the combination of amplified and acoustic instruments, as well as the unique timbre of the instrumentation, means special attention must be paid to the sonic relationship between the ensemble and the soloist. However, the scope of the decision-making is more limited than in *Kraft.* I believe this reflects a performance practice where the notation culture has limited the avenues for decision-making and therefore performer agency.

Like Larsen, Adams' music is characterized by a small amount of musical material (harmonically, melodically, and rhythmically) used to its greatest creative potential. There are strong references to popular and idiomatic musical styles, and musical performance relies on clarity of musical phrases as well as flawless fingering technique and clear, resonate articulation. The musical notation is non-complex and traditionally classical, approachable for advanced clarinetists who might not specialize in contemporary music. The decision-making required by the clarinetist focuses predominantly on clear musical presentation of the notated material,

particularly in regards to acoustics and balance, rather than creative decisions regarding how the music is supposed to sound.

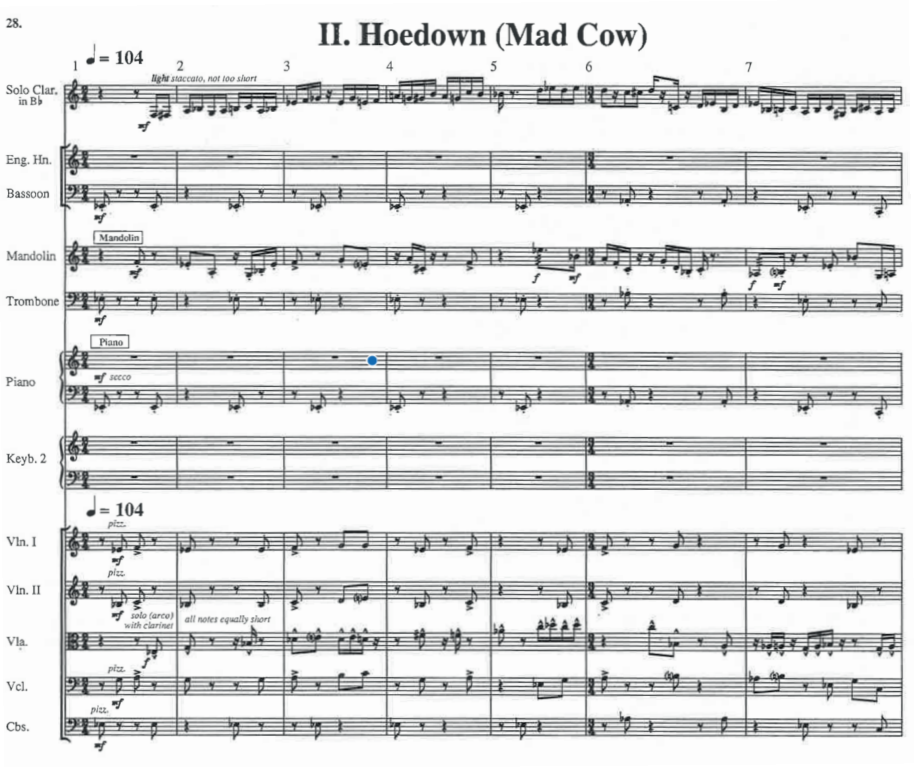
For example, when the opening material returns in the end of the first movement, The Perilous Shore, the solo clarinet in the low register is supported by another "clarinet" - the Keyboard 2 sampler part. The Keyboard 2 part enters with accompaniment sixteenth notes in measure one hundred sixty-five, and continues through the solo clarinet entrance in measure one hundred sixty-nine until the musical material begins to change in the Solo clarinet part around measure one hundred ninety-two. Musically, it is as if the layered clarinets are meant to recall the memory of the opening with not only a repeat of the opening material in the same range, but with a running condensation of the material layered beneath. Acoustically, the Solo clarinet, in a low range, must balance with the amplified Keyboard 2. The Solo clarinet must also balance the countermelody in the English horn, which is doubled by the amplified Keyboard 1, first shown in Example 15 measures one hundred sixty-six to one hundred sixty-nine.



Example 15 John Adams *Gnarly Buttons* (1996), Movement 1 mm. 165-169 (score in C, solo clarinet in B-flat)

In the second movement, Hoedown (Mad Cow), the Solo clarinet must balance in duet with a solo viola. The clarinet is again in the lowest range of the instrument, and playing lightly separated notes, marked "light staccato, not too short", with a lot of character. The opening bars are shown in Example 16. In my performance, the small concert hall and elevated organ platforms enabled me to stand behind and above the orchestra, which provided both visually theatrical and acoustic benefits. My sound was more

separated from the ensemble than if I had been standing in the traditional position near the conductor. In this situation, it was much easier to balance the clarinet and viola duet, because the sounds were already separated enough that the viola player did not need to play softer to balance with me, or to hear me, which might have been a challenge if I was in front of the ensemble.



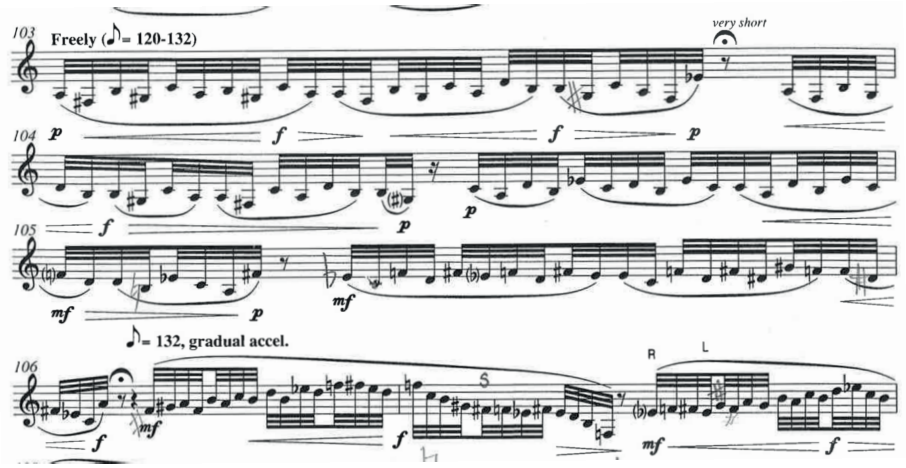
Example 16 John Adams *Gnarly Buttons* (1996), Movement 2 mm. 1-7 (score in C, solo clarinet in B-flat)

Musically, the artistic challenges for the soloist are predominantly technical and stylistic. It is noticeable that the composer was a clarinetist, for the passagework lies well in the fingers. There is nothing that pushes the limits of technical performance, but the part does require advanced technique and endurance. The clarinetist plays constantly throughout the entire work with few breaks. The first movement is characterized by very fast sixteenth note passages, the entire second movement is again sixteenth notes, this time in a low range with more articulation, and the third movement has long

singing melody lines beginning in the lowest part of the clarinet and ascending to the highest register of the instrument. *Gnarly Buttons* uses the entire technical range of the instrument – low to high, fast fingers to singing melodies – in a range of musical styles. Adams freely references idiomatic folk and popular sources, like the hoedown in the second movement and the rock ballad in the third movement. Though the styles referenced might be non-classical, the composed approach to the clarinet remains quite classical. This stands in contrasts to *Folk Songs* or *Diamond Street*, where the clarinet can be performed in a very non-classical way.

In analyzing the role of the soloist as it relates to creative agency and the relationship with the notation, *Gnarly Buttons* is markedly different from *Kraft*. The score appears very straight forward and, in some ways, simple. There are no extended techniques of any kind, and the detailed notation leaves little question as to Adams' intentions regarding tempo, dynamics, articulation, phrasing, and musical execution. Despite being a concerto there are no completely free solos or cadenzas. While the opening of the first movement is unaccompanied for the first thirty measures, the clarinetist is instructed to perform completely in tempo, in a soft dynamic, with the added note to "breathe only where indicated". It is reminiscent of the first movement of Stravinsky *Three Pieces* in this regard.

The cadenza of the first movement, the beginning of which is shown in Example 17, is marked "Freely" but with the tempo indicated as eighth note 120-132, with dynamics also indicated specifically. Like the solos of Larsen and Hughes discussed in this chapter, and Augusta Read Thomas' duet *Capricci: Hummingbird Romance* that will be discussed in Chapter 5, the music is meant to sound improvisatory, but in actuality is strictly notated. The cadenza in *Gnarly Buttons* is also very short, only five measures, before the clarinetist should reach a steady speed of eighth note equals one hundred thirty-two and the orchestra enters with steady sixteenth note accompaniment in measure one hundred eight.



Example 17 John Adams *Gnarly Buttons* (1996), Movement 1 cadenza excerpt, mm. 103-107 (score in B-flat)

I understand the expectation of the clarinetist is to present Adams' compositional ideas, rather than contribute one's personal artistic ideas to the score. The clarinetist has flexibility in their execution of the dynamics, phrasing, and articulation in performance, and has to make important decisions regarding acoustics and the relationship between soloist and ensemble. However, these decisions affect the overall performance much less than the decisions that the clarinetist is required to make in a work like *Kraft*. The performer in *Gnarly Buttons* is expected to translate the composer's ideas to sound rather than interpret them. With more limited agency comes a reduced feeling of shared ownership in performance.

This is echoed in remarks Adams himself has made and implied to clarinetists performing his works. In an interview in the online edition of *The Clarinet*, Rachel Yoder asks composer and clarinetist Derek Bermel to recall anything Adams remarked about the *Gnarly Buttons* when Bermel performed it with the composer conducting. Bermel replies:

> Well, of course it's beautiful, the last movement is so gorgeous and needs to be expressive, but John doesn't want a whole lot of changes to his music, stretching time and rubato and all that; he wants what he writes, and the notation is pretty clear. You know, John has worked with some of the world's great soloists so… I don't think he needed *me* to do it as a clarinetist, I think he just had the idea that it would be interesting for the audience to experience two composers up there performing together – him conducting, me playing. (Yoder 2020)

The idea that "he wants what he writes" is clear from the notation in both its specificity. The performance practice of the work reflects a notation culture whereby the performer is expected to focus their decision-making on sounding the composer's ideas as communicated through the notated score.[29]

VII Concluding remarks

Solo repertoire is the best place to begin discussing the role of performer agency in performance practice because it is where the clarinetist can most directly interact with the composer's intentions as communicated through a score. There are no other musicians or conductors to affect one's approach, the model of production is as streamlined as possible. However, as the case studies in this chapter have demonstrated, the performance practice of the contemporary clarinet solo across Finnish and American repertoire is varied.

In "Notation Cultures", Floris Schuiling writes, "different musical ontologies allow musicians to position themselves differently as agents in relation to the various processes of social interaction that characterize performance" (Schuiling 2019, 444). Finnish and American contemporary music cultures are different ontologies that place more or less value on different aspects of performance, like score fidelity or performer contribution. The examples in this chapter have demonstrated that performer contribution and a shared sense of ownership between composer and performer are valued in Finnish contemporary music practices. The performer of Finnish solo clarinet repertoire is often expected to make decisions that require applying their own ideas to how a work should sound. Their individual, creative contributions are considered integral to the performance practice of a given work. In contrast, the examples provided in this chapter demonstrate how contemporary American solo clarinet works tend to permit less agency in performance, with greater priority placed on communicating the composers' ideas.

The solo repertoire examined here also suggests that personal collaboration between performer and composer is highly valued in the

[29] Leading up to my first doctoral concert, I tried to contact John Adams but was unsuccessful. By chance, I was able to perform with him in an orchestral setting years later. That case study is presented in Chapter 6.

creation of new Finnish contemporary music. With the exception of *Diamond Street*, the composition of the other Finnish solo clarinet works of this chapter all involved close extended contact between composer and performer – Klami and Sallinen, Wennäkoski and Nikula, Lindberg and Kriikku. Hakola has said, however, that Kriikku was an enormous inspiration to him and they have worked closely on many of Hakola's other clarinet works. Even though the American solo works studied in this chapter were often composed *for* a particular performer (Larson for Hartig, Hughes for myself, and Adams for Michael Collins), I have understood that the roles of performer and composer remain more separated in the American model. Analysis of the American works in this chapter suggests that the composer is expected to supply a precisely, specifically, and thoroughly notated musical score for the performer to translate into performance.

From a pedagogical perspective, all the musical works discussed in this chapter contain great artistic value for the performing clarinetist. The straightforward nature of the notation of the Larsen and Adams make these contemporary works very approachable for a clarinetist who might be less experienced in contemporary music. That does not make those works easy to perform, quite the contrary, they are musically and technically demanding. The clarinetist must have absolutely solid fundamentals of sound, articulation, and finger-technique, which are challenged through the creation of musical phrases and presentation of musical material in more popular or idiomatic styles of music-making. *Ripple Reflected* would be a great first work for someone less experienced in performing music with electronics, as I was. Finally, *Folk Songs* requires the application of extended techniques to different approaches of sound and style, rather than the acquisition of those techniques for their own sake.

The Finnish works presented in this chapter have in common a model of performance practice that expects a greater degree of creative decision-making on the part of the performer. I would argue that there is a greater variety in the way these Finnish works can be presented due to the fact that the performer's contributions make performances more individual. As a result, the performer has the potential to feel more of a sense of shared ownership in performance. *Twirl*, *Limn*, *Diamond Street*, and *Kraft* were challenging for me as a performer because I had to make more creative decisions as to how the works would sound. The performances of *Kraft, Twirl* and *Limn* that were early in this research project also changed

something fundamental in how I have come to approach all contemporary music by making me aware of the variety of models that exist with regards to composer and performer collaboration.

As the quotes shared from my blog posts throughout this chapter demonstrate, I constantly questioned whether my understanding of performance practice and the importance of shared ownership was the product of situational bias. Being based in Finland, I was geographically closer to the Finnish composers whose works I performed. While I tried to investigate my interactions with composers and my own practice from a so-called 'outsider' perspective, I was constantly reassessing my objectivity. However, initial contact with all composers was always the same - via email. Additionally the COVID-pandemic, which occurred approximately halfway through my research project, inadvertently leveled the playing field with regards to video calling becoming the default replacement for person-to-person interaction.

The analyses presented in this chapter relied on my own experiences as a clarinetist preparing and performing these solo works. Examining the different types of decision-making encouraged through notation culture offers a new perspective on understanding performer agency. It also allowed this aspect of performance practice to be understood as a reflection of a particular music culture, and the differences that exist between contemporary music cultures. In addition to my own practice, my conclusions regarding notational culture were informed by observing what was said, or not said, by composers either in person or through musicological, biographical, and autobiographical sources when direct contact was not possible. The perspectives of performers like Hartig, Kriikku, Nikula, Bermel and others proved equally important sources.

This chapter focused on agency and shared ownership as it relates to performer and score. In the next chapter, agency and shared ownership will be examined as they relate to performance and composition more widely.

CHAPTER 3: CLARINETIST AS COMPOSER

The case studies in Chapter 2 demonstrated how contemporary clarinet repertoire, particularly Finnish repertoire, grants the performer more agency as well as a greater degree of shared ownership in performance. Artistic agency is expressed as the performer's degree and type of decision-making in performance. The notated score becomes a contributing factor, rather than a limiting factor, to agency and creative expression. Not only is performer contribution sometimes allowed, but in the performance practice of some Finnish repertoire composers expect the performer to apply their own expertise to the performance. In this chapter, I suggest that creative agency working with the notated score can expand to more aspects of live performance and performance practice. I argue that in considering the expanded role of the performer in live contemporary music performance, it can be argued that the performer acts also as a composer, in a way.

Scholars of both contemporary and early music have acknowledged the composition-like role that performers can play in certain practices. In the genre of early music, performers and their knowledge of performance practice are called upon to realize very sparsely notated scores. In contemporary music performance practice, particular focus has been paid to the role of performers in indeterminate styles and in the performance of graphic scores. For example, pianist David Tudor is recognized as both performer and composer for performing his own compositions as well as for his close work with John Cage. In his article "David Tudor as Performer / Composer in Cage's *Variations II*", James Pritchett argues that the performer is so integral to the realization of indeterminate scores that in a work such as *Variations II*, Tudor can be considered the composer as much as Cage can be.

The last quarter of the twentieth century proved to be a pivotal moment in the redistribution of creative agency in the performance of classical music. Prior to the Romantic period, it has been argued, performers had greater agency in musical performance. Improvisation was part of performance practice, and performers also had greater agency over musical aspects like *tempo* and ornaments. But by the nineteenth century, performance practice of classical music changed so that "dynamics, phrasing, articulation, and tempo of the music [were] no longer adjuncts to the pitch structure but are an integral part of the work and [had to] be

realized with an equivalent degree of accuracy" (Smalley 1969-1970, 75). As Goehr has written, the romanticized ideal of composer-genius established in the nineteenth century, alongside the development of copyright laws,[30] created "the demand for originality" that "translated into a demand that each composer should create his works from scratch" (Goehr 2007, 220). As composers "began to conceive of their works [i.e., scores] as discrete, perfectly formed, and completed products" there came the expectation that performers adhere to the guidelines provided by the composer (Goehr 2007, 222).

This practice peaked in the mid-twentieth century, after which the development and spread of structurally variable, completely indeterminate, verbal, and graphic scores led to the "total reversal" of the composer-performer relationship outlined above (Smalley 1969-1970, 82). Smalley writes that this shift

> … implies a recognition that musical creativity is not just the prerogative of the composer but of all musical people (and not only 'musicians'). This recognition has had several consequences – composers have been able to broaden the range of their activities, and performers have been brought into closer contact with (and therefore understanding of) the contemporary composer. In other words the composer and performer are now in the process of drawing more closely together than, perhaps, they have ever been in the history. (Smalley 1969-1970, 84)

Smalley's analysis not only implies that the performer has been handed back some of their 'creative freedoms' (i.e., decision-making capacity or agency), but an increasing amount of creative responsibility in performance (see also Pace 2009). Not only do composers rely on performers just to play their works, but rely on many more facets of the performer's artistic practice. This includes but is not limited to, the technical and virtuosic capabilities of the performer, the preparatory artistic decision-making pertaining to sound and form, the real-time artistic decision-making involving the physical body of the performer, the physical performance (acting in and reacting to), and the performance format.

Could we then consider that there are multiple composers at work in contemporary classical performance practice? There is the composer of the

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[30] Attali 1999; Frith 1993; Frith and Marshall 2004.

notated score, the Composer, but there is also the composer of the live performance, formerly recognized as the performer. Broadening the concept of the composer in this way acknowledges the performer's wide contribution to a work's performance, or a collection of works performed, outside of just working with a notated score. It also captures and instills in the performer greater artistic responsibility, and promotes a greater sense of shared ownership. Broadening understanding of composition contributes to recent scholarly efforts to redefine music as performance, redefine a classical or contemporary "work" as more than the notated score, and gives scholarly consideration to all the activities involved in a performance's creation.

Why use the term compose rather than curate? Curation requires professional expertise and is widely accepted in other fields of performance and fine art as the suitable term given to that individual who manages or executes the performance or exhibition of art. But to curate means to select, organize and present.[31] It implies that the curator is choosing between a set of given options or formats, even though they might also be innovating said formats simultaneously. A performer, or small 'c' composer, on the other hand, is actively creating the art while exhibiting it. While neither term is artistically or creatively superior to the other, to compose potentially encompasses a wider set of creative actions. To borrow from Cook, "… composing music becomes not so much a matter of designing musically interesting sounds as such, as of creating contexts in which sounds will be heard as musically interesting" (Cook 1990, 12). Alongside the Composer of the notated score, the performer too composes the context during which sound is created, organized, and presented to the audience.

In this chapter, I discuss how live contemporary music performance specifically entails the performer to act in the role of composer. In contemporary classical music there is no 'core repertoire' that is universally accepted by both performers and audiences. It is therefore up to the performer to both create and artistically justify their performance choices both in content and in format. The composition of a live performance also introduces new aspects of shared ownership. I offer two case studies, a concert series initiated in 2021 at Talvipuutarha Winter Botanic Garden in Helsinki and my third doctoral concert, 'Folk' clarinet. Through these case studies, I will examine the decision-making processes unique to these live

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[31] *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "curate (v.)," September 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/5474100739.

contemporary music performances and why such performances should be considered compositions.

I Performance or performing a score?

The composer-performer hierarchy that has existed in music scholarship for most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has undergone a re-evaluation in both musicology and performance practice research. The increased consideration of the acts of the performer in music creation serves to redefine music as performance, rather than music as notated score.[32] This encourages theorists, historians, and other scholars of music to consider not only the composer's life, notes, sketches, comments, and ultimately published score, but also the actions of the performer, including the analysis of historic recordings, concert traditions, performance institutions, and the collaborations between performers and composers.

To start this discussion, I recall the often-recycled quote by Roger Sessions, "…music is not totally present, the idea of the composer is not fully expressed, in any single performance, actual or even conceivable, but rather in the sum of all possible performances" (Sessions 1950, 85). These words, published nearly seventy-five years ago, inadvertently point to the limits of the 'work concept' in classical music performance, which tied the conception of a musical work to the composer's score. In Sessions' view, "music" (i.e., a musical work), consists of all existing and potential performances, by all previous and future performers. It therefore follows that musical understanding should be drawn from all these sources, rather than only from the perspective of the composer, or the composer's score.

When we understand music as performance rather than text, its meaning becomes generated by performance rather than score. In other words, "performance, then, is not simply a reproduction, a performance of something, but a process, experienced in a particular cultural context, created by performers (using the notation) and mentally constructed (uniquely and temporarily) by each listener" (Leech-Wilkinson 2012, 7). Cook, who has written extensively about music as performance in eighteenth and nineteenth century repertoire, argues that understanding music as performance "turns the traditional relationship between work and performance upside down" by

[32] See Cook 2013, 2018; Rink 2018; D'Errico 2018.

positing that artistic meaning is derived from performance rather than work, or score (Cook 2012, 185).

There is also a body of research that seeks to liberate the performer by redefining 'the work', arguing that the only way to liberate the creative agency of the performer is to break away from the values of *Werktreue*. In *Logic of Experimentation*, Paolo de Assis argues that the idea of interpretation was "a last refuge through which to express some kind of individual subjectivity". For him, even the idea of "interpretation" is firmly embedded in the work concept and only "help[s] performers perform better *within* the traditional image of *work*" (de Assis 2018, 190). If we define the artistic work of the performer as interpretation, according to de Assis, we simply re-establish the values of *Werktreue* and perpetuate the composer-performer hierarchy. Instead, he suggests performance should replace interpretation. De Assis writes: "Beyond interpretation, performance is the place to embrace experimentation, to establish, on the basis of productive contradictions, the possibility of free, creative action for music performers" (de Assis 2018, 198-199). In other words, "to play a piece of music without caring for any agent of authority would mean that we would no longer be interpreting at all but approaching music via other, conceptual frames." (Dreyfus 2020, 162). By breaking the composer-performer hierarchy, we allow for new avenues of analysis and understanding in musical performance.

Both arguments – to break away from the ideology of *Werktreue* and to redefine music as performance rather than score or text – attempt to both liberate and highlight the performer for their contributions in music-making, at various levels of performance. For those working with score-based contemporary repertoire, it is not possible to do away with the work concept entirely as Dreyfus suggests. However, the case studies of the previous chapter demonstrate that different notation cultures exist within different performance practices. The performance practice of Finnish and American contemporary repertoire contains a varying degree of approaches to performer agency in relation to notated scores. This chapter considers performer agency and shared ownership as it relates to aspects of performance beyond notation. By conceptualizing the work of the performer as creating, or composing, we enable greater analysis of what the performer is doing beyond communicating the notated score to the audience.

II Composing a performance

What constitutes a performance? In its most basic sense, it is the presentation of material, like a play or piece of music, for some kind of audience.[33] Jonathan Dunsby has elaborated further, specifying musical performance as "both endemic, more or less evenly spread throughout the species and its history since prehistoric times, yet also value-bearing", highlighting the fact that musical performance is both historically universal and a source of significant value (Dunsby 2001). However, Dunsby continues by specifying that the performer of composed Western art music is "the composer's ambassador", a third of the crucial triangle of performance that includes composer, performer and audience (Dunsby 2001). In this framework, the performer is situated between the composer and the audience.

Eric Clarke emphasizes the importance of expression in musical performance, which he defines as "deliberate departures from the indications of the written score" (Deutsch, et. all 2001). This definition of performance separates the acts of Composer and performer further, establishing the performer as the active agent in performance. Though this might seem intuitive, *Werktreue* values since the nineteenth century tend to designate the performer as a representative of the composer's genius, or 'ambassador' in the words of Dunsby. Clarke continues that "performance is a re-creative rather than reproductive act, and that each performance is a unique realization of the performer's conception of the music", stressing the creative, or re-creative, aspect of performance (Deutsch, et. all 2001).

There is, then, something spontaneous and unique about a performance. As Kathleen Coessens writes

> a concert performance of music seems, at first sight, a non-experimental, well-prepared activity requiring considerable technical and instrumental skill, background knowledge of context and composition, rehearsal, and interpretational fidelity to a tradition. However, small gaps – possibilities for experimentation – emerge in the elaboration, preparation, and performance of a musician's act, in the background of the musician's world of highly skilled practices, profound training, embodied schemata, and prepared interpretational expression. (Coessens 2015, 61)

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[33] "performance, n.". *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, September 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1163430397>

As the previous chapter demonstrated, those "gaps" can be large. While the performances themselves are instantaneous, of-the-moment events, they are the result of several interlocking experiences, preparations, decisions, and people or groups of people. A performance should not be studied solely in terms of its execution, but rather holistically and in view of its generation. Central to the web of situations that yields the performance is the performer.

Within contemporary music, the element of newness – the premiere performances of new works and the sharing of new musical experiences with the audience – is central to understanding performance. In her dissertation "A holistic view of the creative potential of performance practice in contemporary music" (2012), Barbara Lüneburg argues that to understand a performer's capacity for creativity in the performance of contemporary music we need to focus on the entire scope of artistic activity from the moment a new work is commissioned through to the building of the concert or performance experience. Lüneburg focuses her analysis on the nature of collaboration with composers and on what she calls the creation of a "concert aura". Concert aura is the result of "the quasi-alchemical situation formed through the charismatic radiance of the performer and their ability to communicate, interact, and bond with an audience in a particular shared time and space" (Lüneburg 2012, 11). For Lüneburg, a performer uses charisma and leadership to develop their artistic persona, which becomes even more important in the performance of contemporary music where "the audience cannot necessarily rely on previous knowledge of a composition" (Lüneburg 2012, 46).

Furthermore, it is the uniqueness of each performance, the "particular shared time and space", that makes a performance authentic art.[34] Rather than merely performing a piece of music, Lüneburg argues that

> the performer creates a *Gesamtkunstwerk*: a unique, potentially novel event in its specific context of time, space, audience, performer's personality, vision, charisma and music. I use the word *Gesamtkunstwerk* in the literal sense of "a total work of art", which includes the whole creative process − commissioning compositions, programming, collaborating, practising, developing a concert setting and finally performing − and leads to the experience of each concert

[34] Lüneburg invokes Walter Benjamin, who acknowledged that while all art is reproducible, the core quality that defines art is its originality. To make art authentic requires "its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be" (in *Illuminations* 1968).

> as being authentic, radiant and attached to the historical moment and specific locale. (Lüneburg 2012, 14)

She proposes that the creation of a total work of art requires both a strong artistic persona, through which the performer communicates effectively with the audience, and a strong artistic vision that requires cooperation between the performer(s), politics, sponsors, audience, and market issues. While Lüneburg's analysis frames the creative potential of the performance as the mediation between composer-performer collaboration, artistic persona, performance vision, audience, and production structure, I analyze performance composition through performer decision-making.

The decision-making capacity of the performer is an expression of agency. Not only does the performer experience a greater sense of shared ownership when they have more control over the resulting performance, but decision-making is an expression of creativity and artistry. In the analyses that follow, I separate decisions into two categories – sounding and non-sounding. Sounding decisions include musical decisions that relate to the notated score, to and with collaborating musicians, and in communication with the audience. They also include decisions related to how one chooses, alters, and shapes an acoustic performing environment and how one reacts to that environment in performance. Non-sounding decisions are equally important and creative in performance even though they are not heard. Non-sounding decisions include the performer's physical movements during a performance (embodiment), the placement of the audience (affecting both acoustics and social aspects of audience interaction), the lighting concept, how to enter and exit the stage, or if there is a stage, attire, the existence, form, and content of a program or program notes, and last but not least, the contents of the program performed (if at the discretion of the performer). In this context, notation is only a small part of performance, despite its overwhelming place in most discussions surrounding the performance of Western classical art music.

III Presenting a diverse and evolving musical genre

In the performance of contemporary classical music, the sounding and non-sounding decisions of performance described above are compounded with an additional responsibility: presenting a repertoire that is uniquely wide, stylistically diverse, and mostly unfamiliar to audiences. Contemporary

music, unlike Baroque, Classical, Romantic, or Modern, is a genre of classical music defined by time rather than aesthetics. It is not a cohesive body of repertoire that has maintained and established a cultural presence and familiarity. Nor is it universally connected through audible distinguishing characteristics like harmony, rhythm, instrumentation, or melodic style. Its only unifying trait is that it has been composed in the last thirty or forty years. This does, however, make it the genre of classical music most relevant and closely-connected to our everyday lives. As Arthur Danto wrote in *After the Fall*,

> 'Contemporary' in its most obvious sense means simply what is happening now: contemporary art would be the art produced by our contemporaries. It would not, clearly, have passed the test of time. But it would have a certain meaning for us which even modern art which *had* passed the test of time would not have: it would be 'our art' in some particularly intimate way. (Danto 1995,10)

In general parlance, Danto acknowledges that the term "contemporary art" has come to signify more than the temporal. In cultural practice, 'contemporary' has been co-opted by certain parties to designate particular styles or sub genres. Despite its frequent association with complex or atonally composed repertoire, it is important to remember that contemporary classical music encompasses an extremely wide array of styles, methods, practices, and performers.

While this breadth presents boundless opportunities for performers, it has its own distinct challenges for a performer trying to communicate with an audience who can be unfamiliar with the works, composers, or styles being performed. In his book *Classical Music, Why Bother?* composer Joshua Fineberg discusses the complex challenges of being a classical composer in the world today. In his opinion, contemporary music often sounds so unlike the classical music that most of the public is used to that it "puts a real burden on those who program and present art" because "they have to astutely mix repetition with discovery, all the while knowing that no one can attend every concert" (Fineberg 2006, 32). Fineberg acknowledges that it is the presenter, the performer, who bears the most responsibility in contemporary music programming when it comes to audience interaction. If one cares for the audience at all, it is up to the performer (if they are in control of their own programming) to balance their own artistic aims with empathetic understanding of the audience. While true of any Western art

music performance, it becomes especially important in contemporary music, which is going to be new to most audiences.

IV Abandoning the idea of core repertoire

When I initiated this doctoral project, I had intended to identify and focus on important, or "core", contemporary American and Finnish repertoire. I argued that this was best for my personal artistic development, and I reasoned that audiences should be offered the "most important" contemporary clarinet repertoire, whatever that means. This aim is purely a reflection of my own classical music bias, and traditional clarinet training. In the past, my artistic practice as clarinetist focused on the performance of a commonly accepted set of core repertoire by commonly accepted master composers like Bach, Brahms, Mozart, Debussy, Poulenc, Copland, Stravinsky, Nielsen, etc. In my role as an orchestral musician, this repertoire set is also included the standard orchestra repertoire of American orchestras, which focuses predominantly on music by European composers composed before the mid-twentieth century.

I realized quickly that there exists no such "core repertoire" in contemporary American and Finnish repertoire. I could, of course, select works and justify them as "core" for any number of reasons – their presence on audition lists, competition requirements, or proximity to the institutions connected to my artistic work. I would be assigning value based on any number of factors, i®ncluding musical-historical significance to American or Finnish repertoire writ large, musical value for the performing clarinetist, or some miscellaneous stylistic or aesthetic attributes. This method would be both arbitrary and artificial. I have no way of knowing, in the present, which composers and which works will "stand the test of time" and be performed in the coming decades. Core repertoire is only "core" if its value is accepted by an overwhelming number of performers and concert-goers, who will continue to perform certain works, purchase tickets and recordings, and prolong the performance-life of a particular performer or composer. My selection, however justified, has little to no bearing on the shelf-life of any work or composer.

More importantly, the identification or formation of a "core" contemporary American and Finnish repertoire is not necessary to pursue the aims of this research project. In fact, the formation of such a repertoire

would run counter to the aims of my research, since it would ultimately be an exclusionary rather than inclusionary exercise. My research goal to examine contemporary musical practice in American and Finnish repertoire requires examining broadly different styles and composers and exploring those composers and works who are institutionally affiliated or accepted, as well as those who exist outside those structures. Performer agency and shared ownership are not unique to any contemporary music sub-genre or institutional affiliation.

Despite agents in classical music culture that have tried to define contemporary music as particular styles or repertoire of a certain ensembles, it is a wide and constantly changing genre.[35] In the case of one's own artistic practice, it is ultimately up to the artist to decide repertoire. It is the artist's responsibility also to decide how to communicate that repertoire to the audience. In live performance composition, there are considerations one must deal with beyond simply aesthetics. The *what* of the live performance – what kind of music, what style, what composer, what piece – has come to be less important to me than I had previously considered. Of greater priority are questions of *how* and *why* – how is a work, or a composer, being performed or presented and why is the performer choosing to do so in a given way. This frame ultimately gives even more creative agency to individual performers, particularly in contemporary music practice. It also permits less reliance on existing institutions and holds the potential for promoting a greater sense of shared ownership for the performer.[36]

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[35] See for example "The institutionalisation of 'Uptown': Contemporary orchestral music practices in New York City 1960-1975" by Abrams-Husso (*Trio* Vol 11 Nro 1-2 2022).

[36] Institutions, notably professional orchestras and opera houses, have relied more heavily on the "what" of classical music due to market pressures of ticket sales and sales of recordings. However, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, there does exist a wide variety of orchestral programming practices that reflect and parallel the differences I have observed and analyzed in contemporary music performance practice. The *how* and *why* over *what* argument, however, can be observed in the advent of contemporary music ensembles in both Finland and the United States, which have established their own performance practices outside of the traditionally accepted classical music institutions. (See: https://www.lucyabrams.net/news/2022/12/1/2022-2023-con)

V Case Study 1: the Elollinen concert and concert series

The artistic goal of the second doctoral concert, Elollinen, was to experiment with environment-led performance composition.[37] Classical music does not have to be tied to the concert hall. The concert hall, though pragmatically useful as a space built for performance, mandates certain behaviors like the positioning of the performer on a stage, the seating of the audience, how a performer can enter the performance space, lighting, etc. Contemporary music is particularly well-suited to non-traditional spaces because of its adaptability, variety, and versatility. The extra-musical references of the works themselves and acoustical properties of contemporary compositions work well in a variety of non-traditional performance spaces. These spaces also can promote different types of interactions between collaborating performers and performers and audience through the removal of a stage and the integration of performer(s), audience, and environment.

The space chosen for the Elollinen concert was the Talvipuutarha Winter Garden in Helsinki. Located in the center of Helsinki, the botanic garden is operated by the City of Helsinki and is free and open to the public. The garden consists of three main rooms and has tremendously good acoustics, comparable to an excellent chamber music recital hall. A sketch of the floor plan can be found below in Example 18. The main, center room of the garden has the highest ceiling, a walking path around the perimeter, fixed benches along the east wall, small tables and chairs on either side entrance on the south side, as well as stools that can be moved. At the north end of the room there is a fountain, represented by the blue oval, which can be turned off. There are stairs on the west side of the fountain that lead to an elevated platform that looks out over the main room. West of the main room is a side room that has a slightly lower ceiling. This room has café tables and benches, offering many places to sit, as well as a large open area at the back of the room for larger set ups. Due to the lower ceiling height, this room is not *as* live as the larger center room and there is less echo. The third room, the east-most room to the right of the main room, is the smallest. It contains the cacti and succulents, and therefore is acoustically the driest space of the garden. There is a narrow rectangular walking path around the room, with space in the corners large enough to accommodate one performer. It is also the quietist room of the garden.

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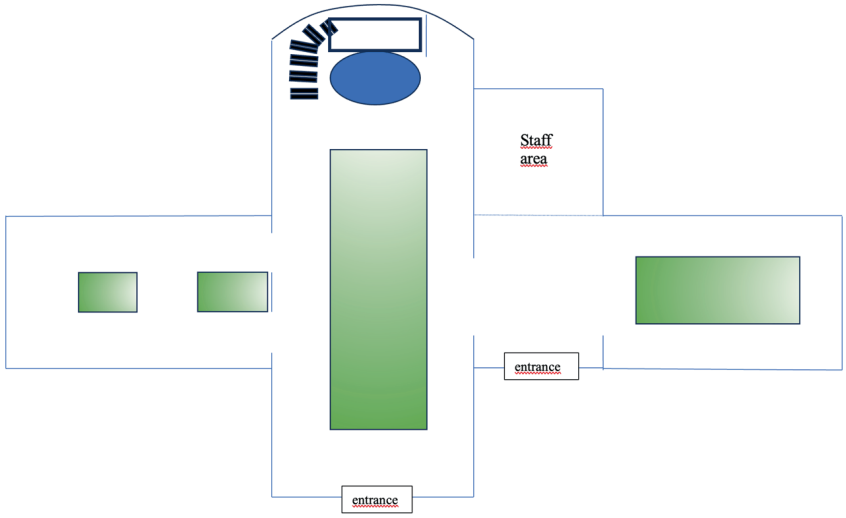
[37] *elollinen* in Finnish means alive or living



Example 18 Floor plan of Talvipuutarha, Helsinki (not to scale) (Abrams-Husso, 2023)

The program for the Elollinen Concert (see Appendix A) was selected specifically for Talvipuutarha. There were eight works on the program, four by American composers and four by Finnish composers. There was a combination of solo and chamber music repertoire, including two works with electronics. The program is approximately one hour in length and performed without intermission. The first work, Mason Bates *Life of Birds* (2008) for flute, clarinet, violin and cello was chosen for its references to nature, as well as its approachability for audiences. Not unlike *Gnarly Buttons*, Bates freely references popular and idiomatic styles of music. Bates' work shares a nature-theme with next work, Augusta Read Thomas' *Capricci: Hummingbird Romance* (2011), but is stylistically very different. Thomas' bird-inspired duet for flute and clarinet is highly technical and modernist sounding, meant to sound like "captured improvisations".[38] Following the Thomas duet was the commissioned work by Jack Hughes, *Ripple Reflected* (2019), for solo clarinet and electronics (discussed in Chapter 2). I felt the acoustic reverberance of *Ripple, Reflected* would suit the garden, as would the water theme with its connection to the fountain in

[38] Phone interview with Augusta Read Thomas, December 22 2019.

the main room. Aesthetically, the clear melodies and consonant harmonics are aurally approachable for most audiences.

Kaija Saariaho's *Oi Kuu* (1990) for bass clarinet and cello was chosen for musicological, artistic, and practical reasons. The instrumentation and aesthetics of the piece were well suited to the space, as *Oi Kuu* is a timbral, spatial, and subtle chamber music that relies on good acoustics and benefits from close contact between performers and audience. Saariaho is also one of the most internationally recognized Finnish composers, and I was happy she had a work that I could include early in the research process. Nina Young's *Creeping Ivy* (2013) for flute and clarinet is like *Oi Kuu* in that it relies heavily on multiphonics, but it is less subtle than Saariaho. While Saariaho more relies on alternative bass clarinet fingerings, cello harmonics, air sounds and bow pressure, Young uses a singing and playing technique throughout. *Creeping Ivy* also has a distinct plant-reference as suggested by the title.

Plant references are also key in Ville Raasakka's *Everyday Etudes No. 1: Garden* for bass clarinet, object play and electronics. The most theatrical work on the program, the electronic part contains everyday sounds like a bus stopping, dogs barking, cats meowing, and bees buzzing. The bass clarinet weaves in and out of these sonic references while the object player performs using a variety of gardening tools and a large pot containing soil and flowers. The piece ends with the bass clarinetist walking over to the flower pot and placing the flowers in the soil as the electronics end. The final two works on the program were Lotta Wennäkoski *Limn* (2002) for solo bass clarinet (discussed in Chapter 2) and Jukka Tiensuu's *Plus II* (1992) for clarinet and cello. *Limn*, a nearly 10-minute monologue for solo bass clarinet, benefits from the Talvipuutarha acoustics and the proximity to audience. However, I will admit it was included for predominantly personal reasons as an artistic challenge for myself on bass clarinet. *Plus II* is a quasi-theatrical, high energy duet that uses silence as much as sound. Though simple in material, it is challenging for the performers, and I thought it would be an energetic closing to the program.

The program was selected and choreographed such that different works would be performed in different rooms of the garden. I did this so that I, as a performer, could use the acoustic differences between the rooms in my performance. I also wanted to encourage movement for performers and audience throughout the garden, and to promote closer interaction between

performer and audience. There is a limited amount of seating in the garden, and the plants can also prohibit sight-lines to the performers. While this would encourage audiences to sometimes use their ears more than their eyes, I also wanted to ensure that physical, visual connection between audience and performers could be refreshed as the performers changed positions. It can also be a challenge in contemporary music when the sounds are too unfamiliar, so I attempted to combine works that I thought would be easier to listen to (like the Hughes and Bates) with works that would be more challenging (Saariaho and Thomas). The instrumentation also changed between each piece, to refresh the ears.

The choreography was conceived as follows. The concert would start with *Life of Birds* on top of the fountain in the back of the main room, to welcome the audience with familiar, upbeat sounds and to draw their attention to the opening of the concert, like a fanfare. The two works with electronics would be performed in the west, "café" room, because the larger space of the west side of the room provides the largest stage for the audience to be able to experience the visual aspects of *Everyday Etudes No. 1: Garden* (and for practicality of set up, if one work with electronics is performed there, the other should be as well). Both the works with clarinet and cello, *Oi Kuu* and *Plus II*, would be performed in the east room (the "cactus" room). The quiet subtleties of *Oi Kuu* benefit from the quieter, dry acoustic. Similarly, the challenging coordination between cello and clarinet in *Plus II* would benefit from a space that was not too acoustically live. Also, the performance note of *Plus II* indicates that the clarinetist and cellist should begin on opposite sides of the room and move towards each other. The east room is well-suited to this theatrical choreography and would allow the cellist and clarinetist to be able to still hear each other clearly despite the distance. The remaining four works would be performed in the main and west rooms.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that began in spring 2020, the Elollinen doctoral concert could not be performed in Talvipuutarha as planned. Ultimately, the concert had to be performed in Organo concert hall in September 2020. The program remained the same, and I tried to incorporate as many choreographic and theatrical elements as possible. Throughout the performance, performers moved between the choir balconies above the audience and the ground floor where the audience was seated. The program was performed without intermission, and without applause between

certain pieces. I changed the type of content provided in program notes between the first and second doctoral concerts. Program notes are required for artistic doctoral concerts, but their form and substance is without criteria. After a newspaper review of my first doctoral concert made clear that there was a lack of understanding regarding the content of artistic doctoral studies and the varied purposes of the doctoral concerts themselves, I decided it was important that the program notes include a summary of my research project's content, goals, and methods as well as a description of the theme or concept of the performance and its purpose in the doctoral project.[39] When writing about each individual composition, I began including my personal perspectives as a clarinetist. This included how a work challenges or encourages the performer or performers to think in new ways or develop new artistic skills.

While the Elollinen doctoral concert could not performed in Talvipuutarha as intended, the experience of planning that performance motivated the Elollinen Concert Series.[40] The concert series launched in Talvipuutarha in August 2021 and successfully completed its third season in September 2023. The goal of the series has been to provide performers from the doctoral community of the University of the Arts Helsinki Sibelius Academy the opportunity to bring their musical performances to new audiences and to compose performances for the unique Talvipuutarha concert space. Performances are free and open to the public and about one hour in length (like the original Elollinen doctoral concert). The series included seven concerts in 2021 and five in both 2022 and 2023. The series has been funded by the Sibelius Academy Foundation, City of Helsinki, and the Finnish Cultural Foundation.

In the final concert of the 2021 series, I acted as both producer and performer in the final concert of the series as a member of the Earth Ears ensemble. The Earth Ears Ensemble is a chamber music ensemble founded in Helsinki in 2021 whose goal is to enliven contemporary music performance by focusing on experimentation and presenting lesser-heard

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[39] Liljeroos, M. (2018). "Teoretiskt flummigt men emotionellt okonstlat på klarinett." 14 Nov 2018. *Hufvudstadsbladet.* https://www.hbl.fi/artikel/4c4cdedd-ed34-4fa7-9571-c7a85d99319b.

[40] For more information on the series, as well as concerts included, visit the series website: https://www.lucyabrams.net/elollinentalvipuutarha.

ideas and voices in new settings.[41] For the Earth Ears ensemble performance composed for Talvipuutarha on September 25, 2021, sounding and non-sounding performance decisions were informed by my experience planning and performing the original Elollinen doctoral concert.

The program for the Talvipuutarha concert was based on the artistic wishes of the performing members, informed by the acoustic qualities of the pieces relating to the performance environment, and the logistical requirements of instrumentation and requisite technology employed. The Earth Ears ensemble draws its name from Pauline Oliveros' *Earth Ears: A Sonic Ritual* (1980) and Oliveros' concept of Deep Listening is integral to the ensemble's artistic practice. For this Talvipuutarha program, the Oliveros work *The Witness* was chosen as the finale because the three strategies it employs for listening – to oneself, to another, and all over – served the artistic development of the ensemble as well as the spatial and acoustic environment of botanic garden. The work "lends itself well to movement and drama" and "could take place in a variety of performance situations", with performers "close together or at long or changing distances… inside, surrounding or moving through an audience" (Oliveros *The Witness*, 2). It was decided that the work would be performed with four live performers using clarinet, flute, keyboard and objects, along with a soundscape that was created using field recordings made in and around the botanic garden. The keyboard/object player 1 and object player 2 would remain in the west room (marked "café" room, in Example 20) with the speakers producing the soundscape, while the flutist and clarinetist would begin in the main, center room. The flutist and clarinetist would move about the garden independently during the first part of the work ("Attention to oneself"), transition to a closer position so they could hear one other member of the ensemble (or the soundscape) for the second part ("Attention to other"), and then finally move to the west room for the final part ("Attention all over"). The movement would encourage independence in the first two parts of the work, while also contributing to a surround-sound affect for the audience. It would also encourage contact with the audience in a different way, and create unique listening experiences for different listeners participating from different parts of the garden.

The performance opened with Peter Ablinger's installation *Weiss/ Weisslich 31f: Membranes, dripping water* (1996). It was set up in the main

[41] https://www.earthearsensemble.com

room, on the south side in front of the main entrance to the garden. The installation served as both a visual and aural invitation to the performance. The fountain at the north end of the main room was turned off for the performance to isolate the sound of the performers but also the public moving about the garden. It was also my idea to translate the water sounds from the fountain into a different context by beginning with the Ablinger. Vessels and pots of different sizes were covered with aluminum foil and kitchen sponges were hung above from a clothes drying rack and drip water on to the pots (photo of the performance shown in Example 19). The dripping continued until the sponges lost enough water. The use of everyday objects in this work mirrored the use of objects in other works in the program by Ville Raasakka and Oliveros.

Example 19 Photograph of Ablinger *Weiss/Weisslich 31f: Membranes, dripping water* (1996), Earth Ears ensemble performance in Elollinen Concert Series at Talvipuutarha 25.9.2021

Following the Ablinger installation was the flute-clarinet duet *Harmaapäätikka* (2018) (grey-headed woodpecker) by Minna Leinonen. The flute and clarinet imitations of woodpecker sounds, and the theatric elements of the work make it well suited to the natural Talvipuutarha environment. It also fit the diverse audience that includes children and non-specialists. Leinonen's score, the opening eight measures of which are shown in Example 20, instruct the flutist and clarinetist to stand apart from each other and move towards each other as the work progresses (like Tiensuu's *Plus II*), as if noticing each other from different trees. In email conversation with the composer, Leinonen encouraged us to take liberties with the notation to add even more musical/sounding and theatrical mimicking elements, and to tell us to be sure not take it (the notation, the music) "too seriously" (M. Leinonen, personal communication, September 20, 2021). The work was performed on the north side of the main room using the stairs leading to the top of the fountain. The flutist started at the bottom of the stairs and through the work, moved towards the clarinetist on the landing over of the fountain. The elevated positioning along the stairs enhanced the sonic effect of the bird calls and improved the audience's ability to see the performers during the work.

Example 20 Minna Leinonen *Harmaapäätikka* (2018), mm. 1-8 (transposed score)

The next work on the program was Raasakka's *Everyday Etudes: Gardening* (2015), which was already introduced in the context of the original Elollinen doctoral concert program and will be discussed in greater detail Chapter 5. It was my particular wish, as clarinetist and Elollinen series producer, that this work be performed in Talvipuutarha as homage to the Elollinen doctoral concert as it was originally conceived. Its use of everyday sounds, plants, and gardening equipment paralleled the use of objects in Oliveros and the Ablinger installation. The theatrical element of planting flowers at the end of the work and the bass clarinet's imitation of cats and bees paralleled the staging and bird calls in the Leinonen. Its narrative and musical qualities were particularly well-suited to Talvipuutarha.

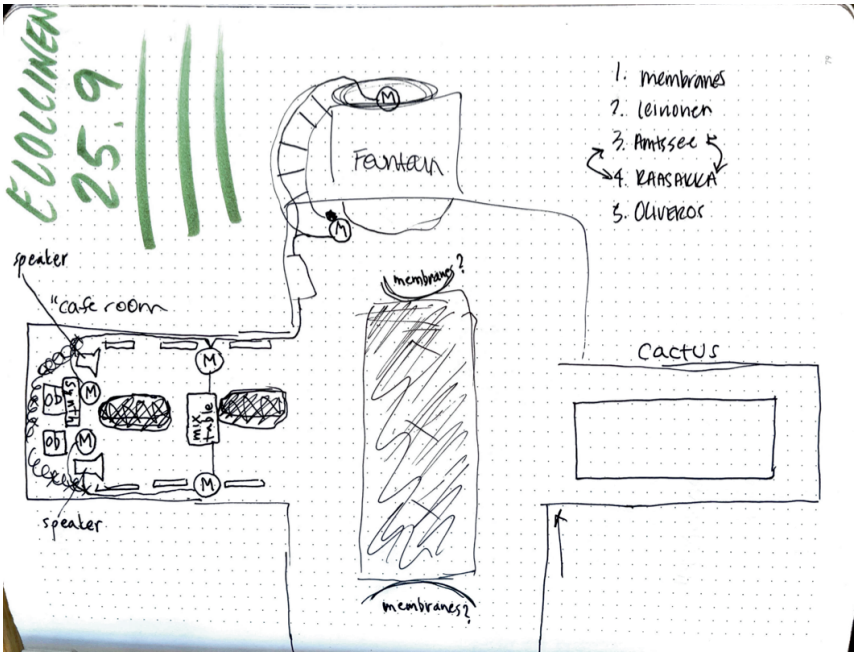
The fifth work on the program right before the Oliveros finale was an experimental challenge within the composition of the program, the artistic practice of the ensemble, and most likely the musical experience of the audience: Peter Ablinger's *Amtssee bei Regen* (2018). The work is for variable instrumentation, and it was performed in Talvipuutarha with electronic keyboard, flute, and clarinet. The notes to the work are as follows:

> *Music: A Composer who writes notes on the 5-lines system, which are then played by Interpreters, and are received by Listeners - actually not even the most self-evident way of making music.*
>
> *Music: The fundamentals of traditional European composing. The basis. Writing notes. Almost no other intention, at least no stylistic intention, no minimalism, no maximalism, no style, no denial, nothing of specific interest.*
>
> *Music: The desire to do something very simple. No ambition. No specific idea, Chinese/Japanese maybe: To listen to nature (to rain) and to set a note on paper. To use the system (Composer, 5 lines, Interpreter,...). A kind of nothing, the small nothing - as opposed to the "large" one (the denial, the silence, anti-art, the pause, black-film, ...)*
>
> (Ablinger 2018)

The work is an aesthetic and auditory commentary on what Ablinger describes as the "fundamentals of traditional European composing". Only the fundamental triad of composer-interpreter-listener is maintained. The interpreters (performers) are to sound the pitches indicated in the score, in temporal relation to the composed lines of the other members of the ensemble and within a certain time frame (there are twenty-four pages, or sections, each with a specific duration indicated in seconds). But the

performers are instructed to play softly, clearly and simply, with little to no phrasing, *rubato*, dynamics, or distinct articulations. Like the Ablinger installation and the Oliveros, the work encourages the performer and audience to listen differently, inwardly reflect, and reconsider conceptions of music and sound.

The five compositions performed in Talvipuutarha by the Earth Ears ensemble were performed in different parts of the garden (planning sketch shown in Example 21). The performance would open in the main room, with the Ablinger dripping membranes on the south side, moving to the fountain north side of the room for the Leinonen, then to the west (café) room for the Raasakka and second Ablinger work, and finally the Oliveros, where the object players and soundscape would remain in the west (café) room while the flutist and clarinetist would migrate from the main room and/or cactus room to the west room by the end of the performance. The movement of the ensemble reflected the goals of the original Elollinen doctoral concert with



Example 21 Planning sketch of Earth Ears ensemble concert in Talvipuutarha 25.9.2023

regards to the contact between audience and performers. There were no physical paper programs, but small pieces of paper were placed throughout the garden with QR codes that would direct audiences to the website of the

concert series, where they could find a description of the performance, list of performers, and works performed (where applicable). These papers were reused at each performance of the series.

This description of programming and choreography demonstrate some of the sounding and non-sounding decision-making involved in composing the Earth Ears ensemble Talvipuutarha performance. As with all environment-led performances, the programming and choreography were determined by the Talvipuutarha space. Though the lighting and basic structure of the garden could not be fundamentally altered, the acoustic properties of the various rooms of the garden determined what kinds of compositions could be played, and where in the garden they would be played.

The interactive relationship between the collaborating musicians varied between the different pieces. In the beginning of the Oliveros, for example, the musicians were listening to only themselves, and therefore could be placed throughout garden space. The Leinonen, Ablinger *Amtssee bei Regen* and Raasakka, however, required closer musical interaction between musicians and therefore the performers needed to be placed where they could hear each other better. The positioning of the audience was also important in the composition of the performance, since there would be audience members who were present for the musical performance, but also unintended audience members – those members of the public who happened to visit the garden that day and stumble upon the performance accidentally. There would be those audience members who would want to see the performers, as well as those who would be more comfortable sitting and listening, or listening while exploring the garden independently. The performance, therefore, could not inhibit the movement of people throughout the garden, nor block main walkways, entries, and exits.

As with any performance, there are several other factors of composition which can and cannot be planned. This includes such things as the physical dress of the ensemble. We chose to be more 'business casual', trying to wear colors and patterns that suited the space. We wanted to distinguish ourselves as performers, but not be too formal. We chose to start the concert without any announcement, verbal or choreographed, only with the installation. We could not anticipate whether there would be applause between works, but we did not try to discourage applause; it was beneficial to have the applause to let the audience have a break in concentration

between works. The physical movements of the performers during the performance and their spontaneous interactions with the audience during and between pieces performed are also integral parts of the composition of the performance that could not be anticipated or planned.

The Elollinen doctoral concert, and the concert series, demonstrate the ways in which *how* and *why* can become much more significant and analytically rich in the performance of contemporary classical music than *what* is being performed. Furthermore, the non-notational aspects of performance contributed as much to the performance practice of these compositions as did the notational score. The works by Oliveros, Raasakka and Leinonen all had notation cultures that promoted the creative and artistic agency of the performers. But beyond notation, the decisions demanded by composition of this performance exponentially increased the artistic agency of all the performers involved. As an ensemble, we experienced a great deal of shared ownership, not necessarily of the works themselves, but in the composition of the performance as a whole.

VI Case Study 2: Folk clarinet

The second case study offered in the discussion of performance composition is the last live performance of the doctoral project, Folk clarinet, which was presented in May 2022. The theme of the concert was Finnish and American contemporary composers' use of Other musical influences in their compositions, specifically the influence of folk music. Composers of Western classical music have always explicitly and implicitly borrowed and referenced what has been referred to in musicological literature as folk, global, vernacular, traditional, non-Western, non-European, or "ethnic" music. Defined in different ways, these terms signify composers' adoption of harmony, melodies, rhythms, ornamentation, and instrumentation that are not considered typical in a particular style of classical music. I use Other in this context to emphasize differences in performance practices that are applied to the works performed, not just musical qualities.

Today, the public and the performing musician are more aware than ever before of the issues surrounding cultural appropriation and misrepresentation. Often, discussions surrounding appropriation in Western classical music involve in-depth analyses of accuracy and authenticity. This is one way to recognize and acknowledge the borrowing of ideas, methods

and skills. It is no longer acceptable to say that adopting and adapting other musical practices in one's work is merely a complimentary gesture reflecting creative curiosity and mutual respect. However, sometimes focusing on accuracy and authenticity becomes a tool to establish levels of "otherness" rather than enable discussion of what it means to make music in different ways, particularly from the perspective of the performer. In the composition of this concert, the recognition, understanding, and communication of source materials was of paramount importance.

This begins with an understanding on the part of the performer of what exactly folk music is. Folk music encompasses a wide array of musical and cultural practices from around the world. There are, however, a few general commonalities. First, it tends to be an oral tradition (Nettl 1976, 22). Folk music tends to be less tied to notation and often is not written down at all. Though it can of be instrumental or include instruments, folk music is connected in many places to songs or a song tradition and often used as accompaniment to narration (Nettl 1976, 29). Finally, there is variation embedded within the practice of folk music. A single piece of folk music, or an entire folk music tradition, continues to exist through "communal re-creation", or the creation of varieties (Nettl 1976, 25). For example, though the same song might continue to be performed over hundreds of years, it has been changed and altered by different people and across time.

From this definition of folk music, the Folk clarinet performance was composed. The program included two works by American composers and two by Finnish composers, including one commissioned world premiere. The first half of the concert featured three unaccompanied works for solo clarinet, and the second half included a single chamber music work for clarinet and string quartet. I focused on the clarinetist as soloist performer in this performance because it was the best way, I felt, to connect artistically to folk music practices in contemporary repertoire. Though folk music can be a collective or group performance, the easiest way for me to try and experiment with the performance practices of folk music was to do so individually. From there, I could communicate these influences more clearly to the audience.

I chose the Organo organ recital hall at the Helsinki Music Center as the place for this performance. Though a more traditional classical music concert space than Talvipuutarha, it is possible to arrange ones' own staging, lighting plan, and the spatial arrangement between performer(s) and

audience because there is no fixed seating or formal stage. It was important to me that the audience be seated close to me and on the same elevation. Particularly for the first half, I wanted the audience to be able to sit close enough to me that they could connect with the music visually as well as aurally. Folk music is a communal practice, and I felt a close seating arrangement between audience and performer(s) would contribute to a less formal and more cooperative relationship between performer and audience. Rather than enter the hall to start the performance, I was already in the performance area sitting next to one of the organs as the audience entered. When lights became darker, indicating the start of the performance, I stood up and walked a few meters to where my iPad and clarinets were set up and began to play. I did not leave the hall between the solo works on the first half, because I hoped staying with the audience would create a more relaxed atmosphere and also maintain a closer connection between myself and the listeners.

There were two real-life folk music practices drawn on for this performance – Jewish klezmer tradition and the personal song traditions of the indigenous Sakhalin, Kamchatka and Chukotka peoples of Northeast Siberia. In this performance, klezmer was the folk influence of Hakola's *Diamond Street* (1999), which was discussed in Chapter 2, and David Del Tredici's *Magyar Madness* (2006) for clarinet and string quartet. The personal song tradition of Northeast Siberia was the influence for *Three Clarinets* (2022), composed by my friend and colleague Pia Siirala for this concert. Siirala uses composition as research method to research personal songs, which are an integral part of the personal identity of certain indigenous Siberian peoples.[42] The personal song is given at birth to every child and becomes as fundamental to the person's identity and being as their name or the sound of their voice. The fourth work on the program, Mandat's *Folk Songs* (1986), which was also analyzed in Chapter 2, references many different musical styles to create a folk-sounding composition.

My artistic approach to *Magyar Madness* and *Three Clarinets* was very similar to *Diamond Street*. Variation, communal re-creation, was the main folk music practice emphasized in the composition of this performance. *Magyar Madness*, as outlined in the program notes (Appendix A), is not as overtly influenced by folk or klezmer traditions as the other works on this program. Similar to *Diamond Street*, it is entirely up to the performers

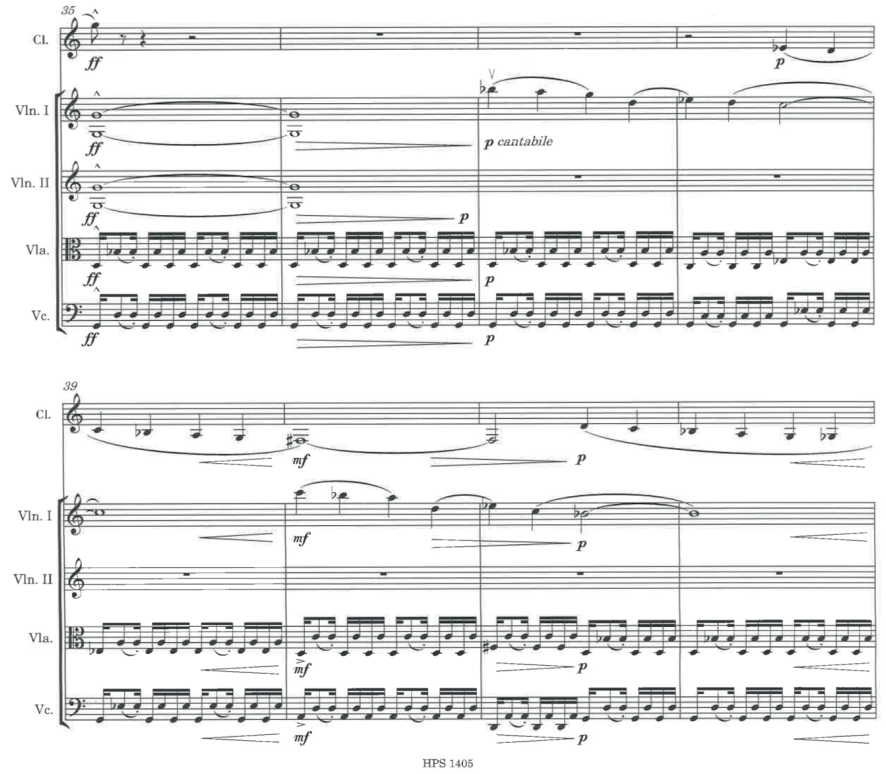
[42] Siirala 2024.

whether and to what extent to incorporate klezmer or folk musical practices at all. At the start of preparations, I had initially thought to assemble a string quartet of folk musicians. However, Del Tredici's traditionally classical composition style required the music-making skills possessed by a classical string quartet. Like the classical clarinet quintets of Weber, Mozart and Brahms, the clarinetist in *Magyar Madness* is treated as a soloist, which allowed me to personally experiment with how much I could incorporate klezmer styles without requiring the string quartet to do the same. Throughout rehearsals and into the performance, I was still experimenting with ornamentation, *glissandi*, vibrato and improvised passagework within sustained notes. It was important to me, personally, to emphasize the aural connection to klezmer music wherever possible in the work.

The first movement of *Magyar Madness* is the most classical, without seemingly any references to klezmer or folk music. The opening of the work is shown in Example 22 below. The clarinetist is treated completely as soloist, with the string quartet acting as a unit. The style of the notation is traditional and classical. The solos in the clarinet part at the opening are like cadenzas, marked *freely*, but are more reminiscent of the vernacular style of John Adams than klezmer music. In the opening, I chose to employ a wide, klezmer-style vibrato from the opening note to signify to the audience that there was something musically different about this work from a typical, classical clarinet quartet.

Example 22 David Del Tredici *Magyar Madness* (2006), movement 1 mm. 1-3 (score in C)

The third movement, entitled "Magyar Madness", is the most rhapsodic and offers the best opportunity for the clarinetist to incorporate klezmer stylizations. However, unlike in *Diamond Street*, there is no indication in the notation itself that the clarinetist is expected to add klezmer elements. It was only after hearing David Krakauer's recording of the work that I realized it was possible to improvise. Following a dramatic and technical opening cadenza, the clarinetist and first violinist have a call-and-response style duet, the beginning of which is shown in Example 23. The simplicity of the melodic material offers space to improvise in a klezmer-like style with scales and figurations at the end of the long whole notes, for example in measures forty and forty-one.



Example 23 David Del Tredici *Magyar Madness* (2006), movement 3 mm. 35-42 (score in C)

With every rehearsal, I experimented with the style and contours of figurations, ultimately deciding approximately where I would add them but allowing myself the freedom to improvise completely in performance, which was a new experience for me. I used the same method to add *vibrato*, *tremolo*, trills and klezmer-style grace notes throughout the first and third movements (the clarinet is tacet in the second movement). It is notable, though, that the inspiration to improvise came only from listening to Krakauer's recording. As the clarinetist who premiered the work, and for whom it was written, I inferred that Krakauer's approach was acceptable to Del Tredici.[43] Ultimately, though, it is completely up to the performing clarinetist to decide if and how to use klezmer in this work. Del Tredici, unlike Hakola, does not indicate *alla klezmer* in the score, and it is unclear to

[43] Unfortunately I was unable to contact Del Tredici.

me whether improvisation is part of standard performance practice for *Magyar Madness*.[44]

The expression of variation in performance practice that emerged in my performance of *Three Clarinets* was slightly different. The personal song tradition of the indigenous Siberian people quoted and referenced by Siirala is not a musical tradition like klezmer. To Neshkarultin, Raug'tit, Koravye and Vonne, whose songs are quoted in *Three Clarinets*, the songs are not artistic expressions as we understand them to be in Western classical music culture. They are also not folk songs. They are integral parts of the identity of these individuals, recalled from memory, produced as easily and off-handedly as speaking. Therefore, it became as important to me to reflect the artistic qualities of the personal songs quoted in *Three Clarinets* as it was to translate their "non-artistic" aspects.

Though I had the notation from Siirala, performance preparations began with studying Siirala's field recordings. Rather than listening for musical qualities like timbre and articulation, I tried to use the field recordings to understand something about the personality or human quality of the individuals themselves. Of course, the field recordings were necessary for understanding the characteristic gliding pitch, the progression of repeated motives, the timbre, the percussive quality of the drum, the sound quality of the singer, dynamics, and tempo. But ultimately, it was more important to me reflect the uniqueness of the individuals rather than just imitate the vocal qualities I heard.

Three clarinets opens with the personal song of Neshkarul'tin (b. 1945) from Chukotka, which Siirala composes for bass clarinet. The notation, shown in Example 24, roughly indicates articulation, speed, dynamic, and phrasing. But listening to the field recordings makes clear the impossibility of communicating critical qualities of Neshkarul'tin's personal song, like how the blunt-talking quality he begins with changes to a more lyrical, sung quality as he progresses. Or the way he begins to employ *vibrato* as he continues. While most clarinetists have, at one time or another, been encouraged by teachers or conductors to imitate the human voice,

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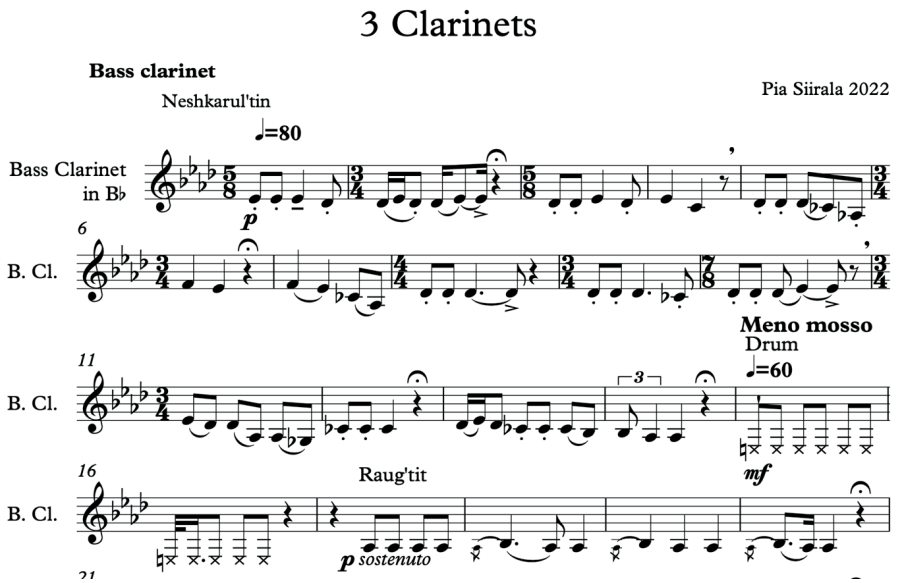
[44] Though not discussed here, the role that recordings play in establishing the performance practice of contemporary repertoire is a topic for further discussion. While I have avoided listening to recordings of other clarinetists in the past, particularly when I was a student, it sometimes becomes extremely necessary when programming and preparing contemporary repertoire to consult recordings. This is especially true when scores are not readily available.

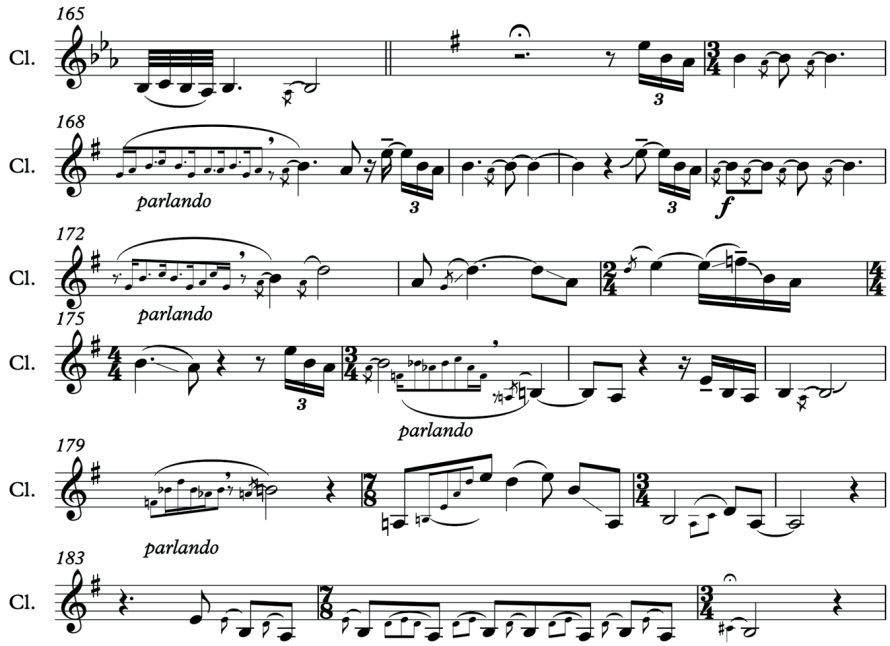


Example 24 Pia Siirala *Three clarinets* (2022), mm. 1-20 (transposed score, bass clarinet in B-flat)

translating a field recording of voice to a sounding clarinet makes plain the impossibility of the task. Rather than attempt imitation, I felt that my artistic responsibility lay in translating the personal qualities of Neshkarul'tin's song, like the way he started and stopped phrases and the way the style changed as his voice warmed up and he seemed to lose himself in the recitation of his song. When the personal song of Raug'tit (b. 1945) begins in measure seventeen, not only does the articulation change (Siirala marks *sostenuto*), but the style of presentation. The field recording of Raug'tit indicates a much steadier, almost more confident, recitation. It is still quiet, but the timbral quality of her voice, the speed of the *vibrato*, and the fluctuations of pitch (which Siirala notates as grace notes) are all constant and steady.

As I experimented in rehearsal with my performance of the quoted personal songs on the clarinet, I also became more familiar with the field recordings and began to pick up on different details of the recordings, which then affected how I approached the clarinet. These artistic developments culminated in the end of the work, where Siirala develops the quoted material from the four personal songs into what is meant to be my own personal song, an excerpt of which is shown in Example 25. Beginning in measure one hundred and sixty-seven, the clarinetist breaks away from the

quoted material completely. The section from here until the end has no tempo or dynamic indication and very few articulation markings. Siirala suggests a quasi-echo or stylistic contrast with the *parlando* sections. But in our discussions, it was most important that I feel free to express as I felt it should sound. Though it is both artistically ambitious (and culturally ignorant) to attempt to perform my own personal song in this indigenous tradition, it fulfills the artistic aims of the Folk clarinet performance to try to adopt and create music through the performance practice of another tradition.



Example 25 Pia Siirala *Three Clarinets* (2022), mm. 165-185 (transposed score, clarinet in A)

In the case of Folk Clarinet, the artistic focus on communicating folk influences shaped my approach to each work on the program as well as the composition of the performance. Composition aspects that I controlled as a performer, including set up of the performance space, positioning of performer and audience, performer apparel and physical embodiment before, during and after the performance, and content of the physical program (which can be found in Appendix A) were all in furtherance of how I wanted to communicate my conception of Other music influences in the works on this program. The composition of the performance was dictated less by

notation than by the incorporation of my understanding of the borrowed folk music practices.

Through the adoption of the various folk performance practices employed in this concert, I communicated to the audience a new sonic identity for the clarinet. Though klezmer, as a musical style and sonic concept, is likely familiar to audience members the incorporation of klezmer performance practices – improvisation, ornamentation, *vibrato*, variation – to these contemporary classical works by Hakola and Del Tredici was novel. It was also personal, and a personal reflection of myself as a Jewish musician who had never before dared to experiment with klezmer. The personal, individual aspect of performance practice was also clear in Siirala's *Three clarinets*, the performance of which relied entirely on my embodiment and understanding of the source material and expression of the personal song at the end.

The decisions made in the composition of Folk clarinet were not necessarily inherent to the performance practice of this particular repertoire. As mentioned, it is not artistically necessary to incorporate folk music performance practice methods into the performance of these works. However, the decision to do so reflected my artistic development as a performer deciding to shape my artistic practice of contemporary music around the questions of *why* and *how* rather than *what.* It also reflected my growing understanding of the role of agency and how I value artistic agency in my own practice.

VII Concluding remarks

This chapter expands the understanding of performer agency in contemporary music practice beyond the notated score to the composition of a live performance. The compositional role of the performer has been acknowledged in early music and contemporary music performance practices, but most often as it relates to notation styles and cultures. This chapter makes the case that the compositional role of the performer expands beyond the notated score. Rather than feeling as if one is choosing from fixed selection of options, the composer of a live performance uses decision-making as a tool for achieving greater artistic agency. This analysis of sounding and non-sounding decision-making is used as a tool for understanding the ways in which a performer can become aware and exercise

their agency in performance composition. A performance composer's decisions reflect not only artistic aims, but personal values as well. Performance composition is especially important in contemporary music practice, where not only is there a broader understanding of what constitutes a concert, but the performer has the added responsibility of introducing audiences to new sounding experiences.

The two case studies presented in this chapter offer different examples of live performance composition. In the case of the Elollinen doctoral concert and Earth Ears ensemble performance in the 2021 Elollinen concert series, environment-led performance composition demonstrates a widened understanding of performance composition and offers the possibility for new levels of analysis thereof. The botanic garden, as a public natural space, demands that the performer consider acoustic and narrative aspects of programming. This is particularly important in the performance of contemporary repertoire, where there exists greater possibilities to establish connections between the extra-musical influences and acoustic properties of a composition and the environment in which it is performed. The performer (if she is also the concert producer) must also consider the way in which the intended and non-intended audience will interact with the performers and created acoustic environment. The Elollinen examples demonstrate that *what* is performed depends on careful consideration of *how* it should be performed and *why* is it being performed in a certain way.

Because the theme of Folk Clarinet was Other musical influences, specifically folk music influences, the priority in performance composition was communicating the presence of those influences to the audience. In this case, my personal artistic preparations were a significant part of the performance's composition because how I came to conceive the works greatly determined how I presented them to the audience. There was a greater sense of responsibility with regards to artistic integrity in Folk Clarinet, not towards the notated score, but to the folk and Other influences used by the composers. *How* and *why* I prepared the performance as I did directly affected *what* was being performed.

In both cases, one must expand the understanding of live performance and performance composition to include artistic decisions relating to social, environmental and personal interactions within a performer's own artistic preparation and practice, between collaborating performers, between the performer and the audience, and between the

performer and the performance environment. In this frame, the boundaries of performer agency become significantly expanded. The potential for shared ownership in the performance also increases. The examples provided here are unique, as it is not always the case that the performer is able to control so many aspects of a performance composition. But the sheer newness of contemporary music means that contemporary music practice is being created *now*, through its performers. As performers of contemporary music increasingly consider themselves greater agents in the composition of performance, so will the boundaries of their agency continue to expand. This becomes even more apparent when recording contemporary music.

CHAPTER 4: CLARINETIST AS RECORDING ARTIST

In contemporary music, commercial recordings serve a unique role because they introduce audiences to previously unheard composers or works while simultaneously enhancing and extending the "shelf-life" of both. Recordings of older classical repertoire rarely present never-before heard compositions, but contemporary music recordings frequently expose listeners to new music. Artists who record contemporary music have a vast array of compositions and compositional styles to choose from. With the advent of free-to-use and free-to-consume audio and video streaming platforms like Soundcloud and YouTube, commercial recordings are not as integral to contemporary composers' or performers' professional livelihoods as they once were. However, commercial recording remains substantively important from both a scholarly and musical perspective because of the ability to create performances not possible in live performance.

The opportunity arose in 2020 for me to record and artistically direct a CD through the Sibelius Academy's in-house recording label, SibaRecords. I chose to record an album of works for clarinet and electronics, which was to be the topic of my (then) third doctoral concert. Works with live and fixed electronics are an important sub genre within contemporary music, and one that is unique to music composed after the mid-twentieth century. Electroacoustic and electronic contemporary compositions also benefit greatly from a studio environment, where one can exert greater control over the produced performance and work in a more detailed way than is possible in a live performance setting. The album, *Duel*, was released in April 2022 as a 2-CD album in physical and digital format. The album includes eight compositions, all but one of which have never previously been recorded. The album also includes a commissioned solo work for clarinet and fixed media by American composer Molly Joyce.

In addition to providing rich opportunities for performer-composer collaboration, the album opened the opportunity to research contemporary music practice as it relates to recorded performance. It afforded a new avenue for understanding performer agency and shared ownership in this context. As the artistic producer of the album, complete conceptualization from programming to recording to mixing to album concept and booklet notes was my responsibility. This situation is unusual because it is rare for the performer to have that level of control and responsibility over the entire

recording process. From a research perspective, however, the set up was ideal. In this chapter, I will discuss the shift from live to recorded performance, what a recording means as an artistic product, the role of electronics as they relate to performer agency, and will analyze contemporary music performance practice in two case studies – the commissioned work *Attack and Sustain* (2020) by Molly Joyce and *Pheme* (2011, rev. 2021) by Minna Leinonen.

I Recording versus live performance

A few months before I started recording *Duel*, I had the opportunity to record a work in studio that I had previously performed live – *Everyday Etude No. 1: Gardening* (2015) by Ville Raasakka.[45] In a brief reflection on my website, I discussed the transition from live performance to studio recording.[46] Going into the Raasakka recording, I understood studio recordings of classical music to be representational of live performance. My personal experiences of professional recording up to that point had been in orchestral settings, where the orchestra is often trying to create a product that sounds as if it is a "perfected" live performance. After experiencing the recording session of *Everyday Etude No. 1: Gardening*, I realized that the artistic product created through recording can be valued as an artistic product entirely different from live performance precisely *because* one is able to do things in a studio not possible in live performance. This is particularly true of electroacoustic works, where one could never exercise comparable levels of control and manipulate in such a detailed way the musical and acoustic interactions between acoustic instrument and electronic sound.

The act of recording a solo work with electronics demonstrates clearly just how different recording is from live performance. In general, recording is a much longer artistic process than live performance – a sort of hyper-extended performance. The active performance, the playing into the microphone to record the acoustic parts ("raw tracks"), involves performing in longer and shorter sections, pausing to listen back and make adjustments,

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[45] For the album *Ville Raasakka: Coal, Wood, Oil* (SibaRecords).

[46] Abrams-Husso, L. (13. Oct 2020). "Between live performance and studio recording." Personal website. https://www.lucyabrams.net/news/2020/10/7/between-live-performance-and-studio-recording.

and performing again with changes. In real time, it becomes possible to assess the aural artistic product of ones' own performance, make changes, and perform again with that new knowledge. This playback process also demands more reflection on the relationship between the acoustic and electronic sound in an aural-only environment. In live performance, this interaction of real-time listening to oneself and to the relationship between acoustic sound and electronic sound can only last for the maximum duration of the work. In a recording situation, the playing-listening-reacting-playing again loop can go on for an entire day, or more. In that sense, the act of recording the raw tracks could be considered the ultimate creative act, because one is "reordering and re-distributing… focusing anew on details not previously presented in context together… re-examining and ornamenting" constantly and continuously for an extended period (Gould 1996, 6). In a live performance context, one performs only once. In recording, one performs again and again.

Solo recording, from a performer's perspective, also encourages the performer to focus on different things while playing. In a live performance context, even if a work is technically a solo piece, a performer coexists in sound space with the electronic material. While not chamber music in the same way as an acoustic work with another musician (because the electronics, even live electronics, do not react the same way a human musician does), the performer of a solo electroacoustic work will react to the electronics in time, timbre, and style. Unless it is the artistic intent of a work, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to completely ignore the electronics and not react to them in any way while sharing an acoustic space and presenting them together in live performance. In a recording setting, however, the performer is normally completely isolated. While one likely uses headphones to listen to the electronics and/or a click track, the reason for listening is predominantly timing and secondly, musical inspiration/aural queues. The performer's sound, in this case the clarinet, is completely isolated. When listening back, the clarinetist is only reacting to themself. Rather than having to respond to the ever-changing conditions of live performance, in recording, one concentrates entirely on oneself and one's own sound.

In live performance, the performer also reacts to the audience, aware of their own physical embodiment of the work. The body, and the way the body is used to communicate musical intention to the audience, is

used by the performer to amplify various musical aspects of sound. There is no visual communication whatsoever in an audio recording. When a performer is no longer concerned with the physical representation of the sounding music, it affects not only the aural performance by the performer but also enables the performer to direct that energy elsewhere during performance. As a clarinetist, I move a lot while I play, often unconsciously. In live performance, however, I must consciously use my body language to help translate my sounding musical ideas to the audience. This is especially true when performing works that include unusual sounds, which I might try to draw the listener's attention to my raising my clarinet, engaging my forehead and eyebrows, or crouching low and gesturing towards the audience. In a recording, however, none of these communicative gestures are necessary. As aural-only medium, I need to convey all musical ideas through sound.

Furthermore, the recording of raw material is only the first step in performance. It is a misnomer really, but recording an album is an artistic process that extends far beyond actually performing music through a microphone in the studio. If the performer participates in the artistic production, editing and mixing can require more artistic decision-making and can take as much, if not more, time than the recording of raw tracks in the studio. In creating *Duel*, the editing and mixing work was more intensive, and more integral to the end product, than the creation of the raw tracks. The sheer amount of decisions that I needed to make – acoustic, temporal, stylistic, timbral – made me feel as though the raw tracks that I had spent so much time preparing and recording were only one small piece of a much larger puzzle.

II What do we create when we record?

If a recording is non-representational, what is it? If recording technology is not being used to simulate live performance, what does it do?

Glenn Gould is perhaps the best-known example of an artist who switched entirely from live performance to creating recordings because he believed that the recording studio promoted more creativity than the concert hall. Rather than understanding a recording as that which reproduces the artistic qualities of a live performance, he understood recording to be a completely separate and valuable artifact. Gould argued that "important

values such as analytic detail or precision need not be tucked inside the cloak of naturalism, acoustic fidelity or the artificial reconstruction of live recordings through space-simulated reverb" (Hecker 2008, 79). In other words, the efforts of artist and sound engineer in post-production (the editing, mixing, and mastering stages of recording) should not be towards reproducing a natural environment. Nor should they disguise their technical manipulations to become "transparent", where the goal is to minimize the detectability of technology (Neuenfeldt 2005, 91). Rather, artists, sound engineers, and producers should feel free to use technology in more innovative and creative ways with the goal of creating art, rather than re-creating live performance. By creating that which is *not* possible in live performance, "a recording is not a copy anymore of the live performance, but is a genuine musical performance in itself" (van Eck 2017, 17).

In his book about the role of digital technologies in music production, Paul Théberge writes:

> Both notation and sound recording were initially conceived of as primarily mnemonic or reproductive technologies, but each has, in its own manner, become *productive*; that is, each has become a vehicle for the planning and creation of musical works (Théberge 1997, 176)

For Théberge, technologies do not become productive based on what they can do, but through how they are used (Théberge 1997, 159). In the same way that notation provokes creation, so too can music technology, even recording technology. In Chapter 2, I discussed how notation culture can promote or limit the agency of the performing clarinetist. The same is true of both music technology and recording technology. The electronics of electroacoustic works – an expression of music technology – can both promote and limit the performing agency of the clarinetist (to be discussed further in section IV). However, recording technology, including the various tools used in post-production, universally promotes performer agency because it functions entirely as an instrument of the performer (and sound engineer). It requires the performer to make more decisions directly affecting the musical product, enabling the creation of that which is not possible in live performance. While many of these decisions are made after the physical act of creating sound is done, they are no less creative and no less integral to the creation of the recording.

In *Between Air and Electricity,* Cathy van Eck analyzes the ways in which loudspeakers and microphones act as musical instruments themselves. She argues that microphones and loudspeakers were initially considered tools only for the reproduction of musical performance because sound was considered the only "desirable" component of performance (Van Eck 2017, 16). In order "to become ideal reproducers of musical performances, sound reproduction technologies, and especially their input and output in the form of microphones and loudspeakers, should reproduce sound without themselves being audible" (Van Eck 2017, 16). As technology advanced and composers started employing it more and more in their creative processes, microphones, and loudspeakers were given new creative jobs. In analyzing the role of microphones and loudspeakers as musical instruments, van Eck considers their role as reproducers, supporters, generators, or interactors (Van Eck 2017, 38). As reproducers, microphones and loud speakers are used only to reproduce a live performance experience. As supporters, microphones and loudspeakers can be used to amplify. Both reproductive and supportive approaches can be employed to achieve sonic "transparency" – the perception, or culturally accepted consensus, that the technology should be inaudible (Van Eck 2017, 41).

As generators, sound is produced by microphones and loudspeakers without "any connection to existing musical instruments nor needs musicians to perform on them" (Van Eck 2017, 45). This categorization includes purely electronic compositions, without any instrument or performer (per se). Finally, microphones and loudspeakers as interactors involve any musical experience or performance where contact (interaction) between microphone and loudspeaker is recognizable and audible. Though Van Eck uses the interaction to describe the technology interacting with itself (for example, a feedback loop), it can also be used to analyze the relationship between technology and human agent. While microphones and loudspeakers served as both reproducers and supporters in creating *Duel*, their role as interactors is of paramount importance. In the construction of each track, there was constant interaction between the performer, clarinet, and technology. Viewing the relationship as interactive, more avenues for performer agency are generated.

This expanded agency experienced by the performer in recording situations can feel contradictory to the cultural pressure to create a so-called perfect recording. Since there is the ability to go back and correct mistakes

by re-recording, splicing, and editing, and the ability to use recording technology extensively in different ways, there exists the expectation that a studio recording should be more precise, more "perfect", and more "accurate" to the notated score and to the ideas of the music more generally. This can be achieved naturally or through artificial means.

The increasing presence of "unfinished" or imperfect recordings on social media and YouTube has helped reshape how both performers and audiences view recording. The inclusion of "human" elements in studio recordings, like the sound of someone breathing or the creaking of a chair, can help humanize a recording process that might feel or sound artificial. But just like an audience member pays for a concert ticket and expects a polished live performance, so too remains the expectation that studio recordings be as "perfect" as possible. As another example of creating something not possible in live recording, there is value in recording's ability to eliminate unwanted sounds or mistakes.

As artifact, the studio recording contributes to the artistic "file" of the performing artist, the composer(s) and the identity of the work itself. For contemporary music, since there might only exist one recording of a given work, studio recordings are relied on even more as representations of the work itself. In function, they also can be integral in sustaining the life of a composition by giving it wider exposure.

III Decision-making and performer agency – the roles of performer, composer and sound engineer

The recording of *Duel* was unique because the process was completely at the discretion of me, as performer and artistic director, in cooperation with sound engineer Tuukka Tervo. The album was produced by SibaRecords, which is affiliated with the University of the Arts Helsinki's Sibelius Academy. The goal of SibaRecords is to increase the visibility of the university, and to publicly showcase the artistic activities of the university (*"Valituilta tuotannoilta edellytetään, että ne lisäävät SibAn tunnettuutta sekä tuovat esiin SibAn sisältöjä innostavalla tavalla*"[47]*)*. For doctoral researchers at the Sibelius Academy, a SibaRecords recording can replace a

[47] Text description taken from the SibA Records call for applications received via email and sent to all doctoral candidates of the Sibelius Academy (P. Raitakari, personal communication, January 14 2020)

live doctoral concert in the doctoral research project. Unlike recordings produced through larger labels, recordings produced through SibaRecords serve only artistic and academic interests, rather than economic ones. SibaRecords/Uniarts funded the production of *Duel*, including the commissioned work from Molly Joyce. The production process, including the program selection and all aspects of recording and post-production, were supervised and directed by me.

Except the two chamber music tracks where the composer was present in the sound booth (Riikka Talvitie for her work *Seireenietydi* (2006) and Maija Hynninen for her work *Earthship* (2015)), Tuukka and I were the only ones present for the recording of the raw tracks.[48] It is possible that the presence of an additional set of ears could have made recording easier and faster. It might have even made the recording better. However, for the purposes of this research, it was valuable that I could perform and manage the recording completely independently. Tuukka handled the reproductive technology, microphone set up being the most crucial.

Six of the tracks were recorded in the music studios in the Helsinki Music Center, which has by nature a dry acoustic. This included the first two works recorded in January 2021, *Spellbound* (2006/2015) by Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner and *Seireenietydi*. The microphone placement was close to the clarinetist above the stand for *Spellbound*, which was performed on B-flat clarinet, and lower for *Seireenietydi*, which was with bass clarinet (see photo in Example 26). Although the soprano uses live electronics in *Seireenietydi*, while the bass clarinet is purely acoustic, it was decided that both soprano and bass clarinet would record in the same room at the same time. A wall was inserted separate the soprano and bass clarinet sounds to attempt to isolate the sound of singer and clarinetist (see photo Example 27).

My goal in recording the clarinet sound was to create intimacy, or closeness, between the listener (microphone) and performer by recording the clarinet sound without any reverberation and inclusive of "imperfections"

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[48] In the recording session for *Seireenietydi*, Talvitie mainly consulted on the electronics. When asked, she offered suggestions on the soprano and bass clarinet performances. But she mainly was concerned with the electronics. Talvitie also participated in postproduction to consult on the electronics. In the recording session for *Earthship*, due to the size of the ensemble and the presence of conductor, the management of the recording session was handled by composer, conductor and sound engineer. Hynninen was not present for postproduction, except to provide written feedback on mixes via email.

like the sound of a reed or the sound of my breath. Though room microphones were used in all recording sessions, it was important to use close microphones to isolate the clarinet sound to allow for manipulation and to create a sonic space in post-production. For the three works recorded in Kallio-Kuninkala (Leinonen's *Pheme*, Hynninen's *Earthship*, and the live clarinet part for *Attack and Sustain*), it was even more important to design the recording space intentionally, because it is a much bigger room with much more reverberation. For the solo works *Pheme* and *Attack and Sustain*, three walls were used to eliminate room reverberation (see photo in Example 28). The setup for recording *Earthship* was made without walls, due to the size of the ensemble. Though there were close microphones for each instrument, and contact microphones for the piano, percussion, and strings, it was difficult to isolate individual sounds precisely in postproduction. This is frequently a challenge in recording large ensemble and orchestral works.

Because only Tuukka and I were present for most sessions, this was the first time I was aware of the details of the recording set-up. In previous recording sessions, solo and orchestral, I merely sat down in my seat and performed. This time, I paid attention to microphone placement, the acoustic properties of the room, how each could be changed, and the effect they had on the raw tracks recorded. During all recording sessions except for the Hynninen, I wore headphones to listen to the electronics. For some works, I also used a click track. During the recording of Jovanka Trbojevic's *Fantome du Vent* (1999), there was a large time clock that I could see in the sound booth instead of a click track.

We decided to add all electronics in postproduction, even the live electronics, so that we would have more control over the sound environment, an easier time creating precision in the performance, and better control over editing. However, it was still important to hear the electronics during the recording for timing, phrasing, and other musical cues. As a clarinetist, playing with headphones affects how one hears oneself. Listening back to the various cuts constantly throughout each recording session became a new way of assessing my own performance. Rather than analyzing my playing while performing, I exclusively relied on the playback versions. As discussed in the previous section, recording smaller sections with only the clarinet part afforded new opportunities for experimentation in performance. The process of assessing my performance *after* each take rather than during them also changed my performance perspective. While playing, I was entirely

consumed with musical communication via the clarinet without any reaction to my own sound or the acoustics of the room. I could commit all energy to maximum artistic production, without fear of mistakes or losing my place in the music, which would be rare in any other performance situation.

Example 26 Microphone placement for *Spellbound* (Lucy Abrams-Husso, 12 Jan 2021)

Example 27 Microphone placement for *Seireenietydi* (Lucy Abrams-Husso, 12 Jan 2021)

Example 28 Microphone placement for *Pheme* and *Attack and Sustain* (Lucy Abrams-Husso, 11. & 23.5.2021)

Because all but one of the works on the album had never been previously recorded, I anticipated that I would rely heavily on feedback from the composers (except from Jovanka Trbojevic, who passed away in 2017). I was unsure, in most works, what the relationship should be between the

acoustic clarinet and electronics in terms of timbre, dynamics, and in some cases, time. Ultimately, however, the majority of the decisions in recording and postproduction were made by myself, with specific but limited feedback from the composers.

Before the start of recording, I initiated contact with all composers via email. For only two of the works – *Attack and Sustain* and *Pheme* – conversation between myself and the composer regarding various aspects of performance started before we recorded recording. For the *Attack and Sustain* (the commissioned work), I communicated back and forth a few times with Joyce to send her short recordings of me trying out different techniques, as I had done with Hughes during the composition of *Ripple Reflected.* While my sound samples were noted, I would not say I was actively involved in the generation of the notation. This differed from *Pheme*. Leinonen and I met only once in person before recording, when I performed the original version of the work for her. Following our workshop, where I experimented with different sections and offered suggestions as to notation style and performative approach, Leinonen provided a revised score and revised electronics.

During post-production, the composers were sent mixes for their comments. Both Nina Shekhar and Leinonen had very specific comments about the electronics in terms of the effect of the electronics and the balance between the acoustic and electronic parts. Shekhar's comments clarified some instructions that were already notated in the score regarding reverberation and volume, but did not provide additional musical information. The comments of Leinonen, Talvitie, and Hynninen did not refer to the notation in discussing the electronics. Meanwhile, Joyce, Hinkle-Turner and Carolyn Borcherding (*Frenetic Disintegration*) had few comments about the mixes and generally accepted my musical approach. Though the nature of the conversation could have been a result of the proximity (me in Finland, with the Finnish composers, and the American composers in the US), most of the communication was done via email for all composers.

Recording occurred from January until June 2021 and postproduction from August until November 2021. While much of the US was still in various stages of lockdown because of the COVID pandemic, by the start of recording, life in Finland had returned to what we now might call "new normal". Masks were used, but in-person meetings, rehearsing, and

performing were all possible throughout the recording and postproduction process. Talvitie, Leinonen and Hynninen were all involved in person as schedules permitted. The nature of the email contact with the American composers in the project did not differ from the types of contact I had with American composers before the first and second doctoral concerts (and before). The character of the correspondence was generally friendly but more formal. The tone of conversations tended to imply first, that answers to questions regarding musical intent could be found in the score, and second, that responsibility for the recorded performance was my own.

I believe this reflects a divided performance model that is common in American contemporary music performance practice. The composers are responsible for providing the score and electronics, and the expectation is that I use my artistic expertise and decision-making towards execution of the notation. So long as I adhere closely to what is in the score, there is little to add. The comments I received back from my American colleagues nearly always referred to what was already notated in the score. The performance model with the Finnish repertoire for this album was collaborative. Contact between performer and composer was encouraged and prolonged through discussion of both the notation and aspects of performance not found in the score. Notation culture signaled an expectation that I would exercise more creative decision-making in performance and contact with the composers themselves supported that observation. Like the case studies discussed in Chapter 2, the performance practice of the Finnish works on the album granted more performer agency, and I felt a greater sense of shared ownership in the performance of these works.

All that being said, there was not a single notation or instruction in any of the scores to indicate the sonic space the composer imagined. Or the exact relationship between the electronic and acoustic parts. Or if the overtone and timbre of the electronics could or should be adjusted based on the recording of the clarinet part. Some of the electronics were provided in a multi-track format that could be manipulated with great precision, but some were only a single track. In the end, I relied on my own, and Tuukka's, ears to make nearly all the decisions in postproduction for both the Finnish and the American works. This added level of decision-making, of performer agency, gave me a profound sense of artistic control over all the works on the album. I developed a deep sense of shared ownership over the performance of each work because I know the breadth of decisions made to produce it.

The experience of performing these works live would have been fundamentally different. The artistic product would be different, as would my level of agency and sense of shared ownership.

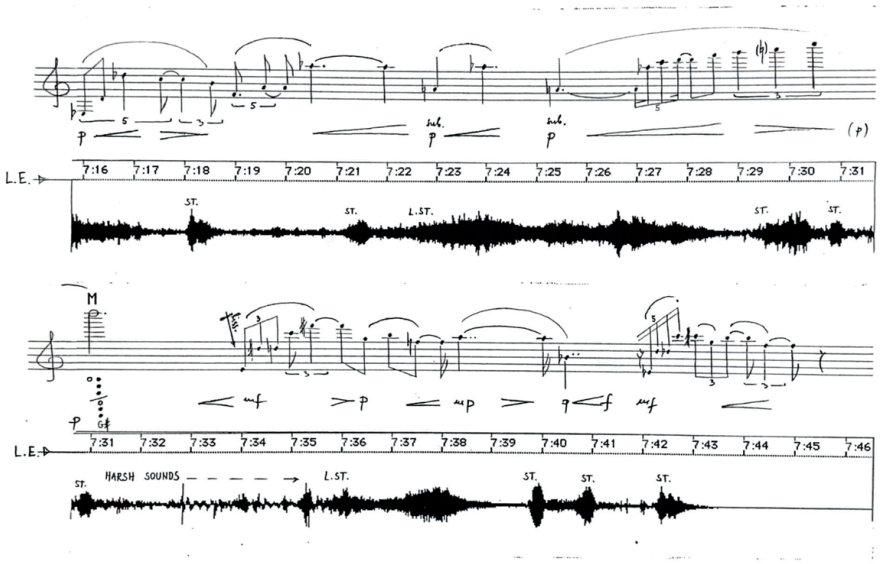
IV Electroacoustic performance practice: electronics as notation

Electronics in electroacoustic compositions take on an interesting role as it relates to performer agency. Whether live or fixed, they exist as an extension of the score. Notated aurally, they are most often provided and controlled almost entirely by the composer in absentia. The relationship between acoustic performers and electronics varies broadly, but generally, it is a curiously one-sided chamber music relationship where the acoustic performer reacts musically to the electronics, but the electronics do not react to the acoustic performer. The exception, of course, is in the case of live electronics where the performer's sounds are providing the material for electronic manipulation. But even then, that manipulation is most often still controlled by the composer who has programmed the desired effects through software like Max or Ableton.

I propose that the model of translation and interpretation introduced in Chapter 1 holds in the electroacoustic setting with regards to the relationship between clarinetists and electronics. The extent to which electronics enhance or restrict performer agency works similarly to the notated score. In some cases, the electronics can also be notated in the score, either through cues that show pitch quality or relative rhythm or through some graphic visual representation. The purpose of such notation is primarily to coordinate sounding alignment between the electronic and acoustic parts.

Electronics, fixed or live, can promote performer agency by allowing musical and sonic space for performer contribution. For example, in Trbojevic's *Le Fantome du Vent* (1999) the relationship between bass clarinetist and electronics is equal but very independent. The bass clarinetist keeps aligned with the fixed electronics using a stopwatch and the timeline provided in the score, and graphic notation attempts to describe some of the sonic qualities of the electronics (excerpt shown in Example 29). Despite the detailed timeline, there is temporal flexibility in the moment of performance. In addition, there are quasi-improvisational sections in the score, which grant the bass clarinetist even more agency to make musical decisions. *Le Fantome du Vent* uses fixed as well as live electronics, which are operated by

the sound engineer. The live electronics include reverb effects and a "freeze" effect, which sustains sounds produced by the bass clarinetist. These effects melt into the sound world created by the fixed tape and acoustic parts and can go almost unnoticed by the

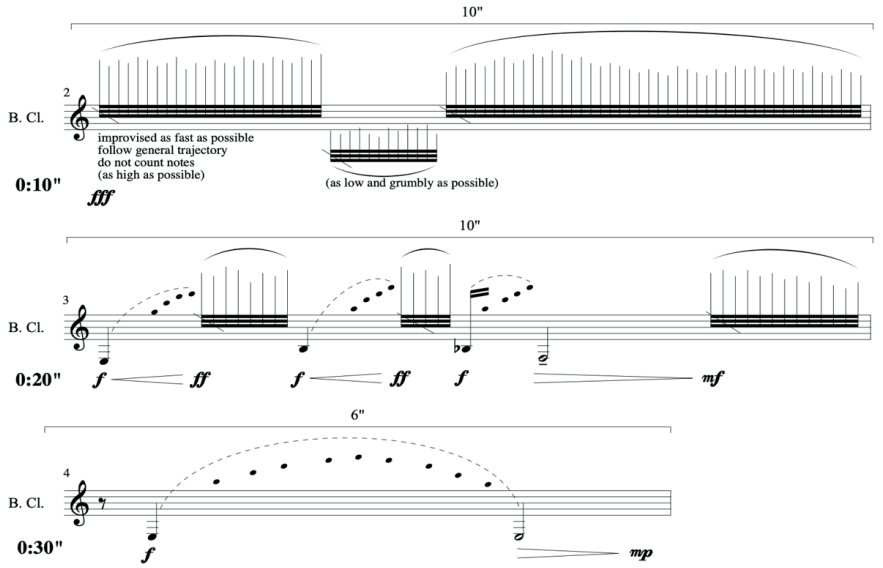


Example 29 Jovanka Trbojevic *Le Fantome du Vent* (1999), p. 5 (score in B-flat)

bass clarinetist. The timbral quality of the electronics, which at times is ambient but turns soloistic towards the end of the piece, also gives sonic space to the bass clarinetist. This, in turn, enhances agency by allowing the bass clarinetist to feel as though he or she is actively contributing to the sonic environment rather than having to react to it or feel limited by it.

Electronics can also restrict agency by narrowing the performer's creative possibilities for expression, therefore giving them less control over the performance created. The score and musical style of Carolyn Borcherding's *Frenetic Disintegration* (2018) for bass clarinet and fixed media appears at first to be like *Le Fantome du Vent.* The work relies on a timeline for alignment and has a similar free style of notation that includes guided improvisation. However, the electronics in the Borcherding create a very different relationship with the bass clarinet. Despite a certain freedom implied by the notation and timeline, the presence of the click track throughout (which both speaks the measure numbers and clicks at quarter note = sixty) creates musical tension for the performer. The music implies a

sense of timelessness, with rhythm-free gestures and a lack of musical pulse. Yet, at the same time, the click track implies a constant pulse and the bass clarinetist must keep track of the time (see Example 30). There is also a lot of material, though much of it improvisational in nature, that must be produced in a short span. Finally, the sonic dominance of the fixed media and its aggressive timbre creates a tight sonic environment where the bass clarinetist must battle, in a way, for recognition. I believe all these aspects to



Example 30 Carolyn Borcherding *Frenetic Disintegration* (2018), mm. 2-4 (score in B-flat)

be intentional to the musical aesthetics of the composition, but they also result in limiting the bass clarinetist's creative agency in performance. The clarinetist has less space, musically and sonically, to make creative decisions. They need to perform a lot of material in a compact time and a saturated sound space. The bass clarinetist ends up translating the notation more than interpreting in performance, executing more than creating.

Like written notation, the relationship created by the electronics between the acoustic performer and performance reflects a certain cultural practice. These examples have demonstrated how in electroacoustic compositions, the electronics indicate to the performer what is expected of them in performance practice as much as the notated score does. The electronics in Trbojevic's *Le Fantome du Vent*, like the notation, invite the

bass clarinetist to artistically contribute their own ideas by giving temporal and sonic space for creative decision-making. In contrast, the sonically crowded space created by the electronics Borcherding's *Frenetic Disintegration*, along with the stricter demand for temporal alignment, afford the bass clarinetist less freedom to experiment creatively in performance. There are fewer opportunities to make creative decisions that affect the outcome of the performance, indicating the bass clarinetist has less agency in the performance practice of that work.

V Case Study 1: Molly Joyce *Attack and Sustain* (2020)

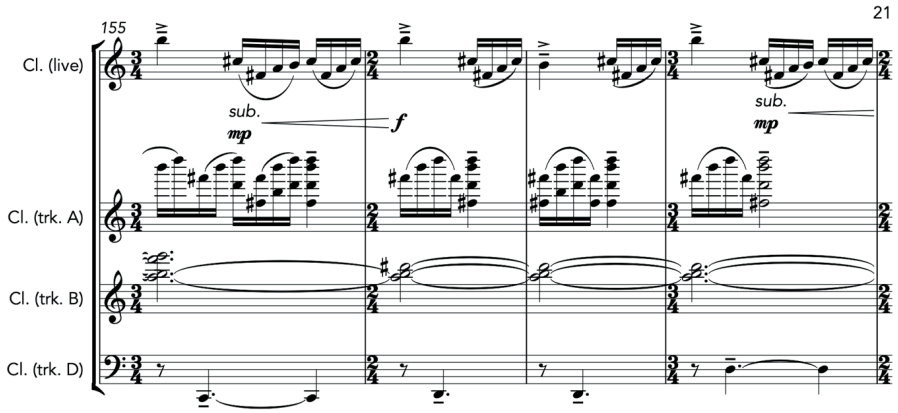
The solo work commissioned for *Duel* was *Attack and Sustain* (2020) by Molly Joyce. Joyce revised the score between November 2020 and January 2021 and recording the work occurred in two sessions in February and May 2021. Joyce and I communicated by email throughout the process and had online video calls. The first correspondence included Molly asking for some samples of works I had played with electronics, and I sent her videos of the Raasakka and Hughes from my second doctoral concert. As she began composing, she sent very short measure-long excerpts from the clarinet part to ask whether certain techniques she had written, like growls, were possible in lower or upper octaves in a given tempo.

I received the score for *Attack and Sustain* at the end of January 2021 and it was not at all what I had imagined. The ten-minute work for B-flat clarinet and pre-recorded electronics was a score that included the live clarinet part plus six back-tracks labeled A through F written for B-flat clarinet. Though the score was complete, Joyce expressed that she still had questions regarding how the pre-recorded electronics would be processed. It was decided that Tuukka and I would record and edit all the backtracks, but that Joyce and sound engineer Michael Hammond would mix and process the prerecorded electronics themselves. They would then send the electronics back, and we would record the live part and postproduction of the entire track.

Though Joyce never spoke of it, there is a strong musical connection between *Attack and Sustain* and Steve Reich's counterpoint series, where he composed for one live performer who performs with up to twelve prerecorded sounds of the same instrument. Commissioned by Richard Stoltzman in 1984, *New York Counterpoint* (1985) is composed for amplified

clarinet and tape, or can be performed with 9 clarinets and 3 bass clarinets. Most often, the solo clarinetist prerecords the backing parts themself. Unlike *Attack and Sustain*, the prerecorded parts of *New York Counterpoint* are not normally processed. Though meant to sound like electronics, Reich does not actually instruct for any electronic manipulation of the backtracks.

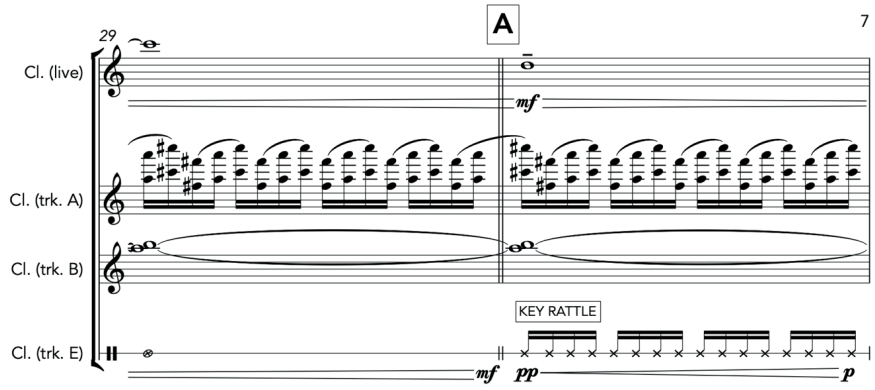
Even though the recording of the backtracks was an unexpected step, it was the part of the performance of *Attack and Sustain* where I felt I had the most artistic agency. This might appear contradictory since the processing done by Hammond drastically affected the musical product. However, both in the performance and in the recording of *Attack and Sustain*, the recording and editing of the backtracks required the most amount of decision-making, and therefore was where I felt I had the most agency as a performer. Though the score shows only six tracks, tracks A and B alone included eight tracks that had to be recorded individually. This was due to the chords composed (that could not and were not meant to be performed using multiphonics, as shown in Example 31 in Tracks A and B). Not only did all tracks have to be separated into individual lines and recorded, but I had to decide how best to orchestrate the tracks between E-flat, B-flat and bass clarinets.



Example 31 Molly Joyce *Attack and Sustain* (2020), mm. 155-158 (score in B-flat)

I decided to play Track A on E-flat clarinet because it was very high in range. The track is continuous sixteenth-note arpeggios in octaves that start at the beginning and continue until the sixteenth notes pass to the live clarinet part in measure one hundred seventy-four (see excerpt in Example 32). I felt it was necessary to introduce as much timbral variety into the

backtracks as possible, since (upwards of) twelve B-flat clarinet backtracks supporting a live B-flat clarinet part, even with processing, could lack transparency and ample tonal variety for the listener. Unlike the Reich, there is significant difference in the musical material of each track in *Attack and Sustain*. From what Joyce had told me about the nature of the work, it was clear that the goal was not to have the live clarinet part disappear in the backtracks, but rather that the texture should allow the listener to hear the different lines. The timbre of the E-flat clarinet in the highest octave tends to be thinner and dominated by high overtones. With the live clarinet part performing sustained notes in the second and third registers, Track A performed on E-flat clarinet creates enough contrast in range and timbre to distinguish between the two parts. It also makes balancing the parts easier.



Example 32 Molly Joyce *Attack and Sustain* (2020), mm. 29-30 (score in B-flat)

Tracks B and C, which included four individual tracks in the B-line and two in the C-line, were both performed on B-flat clarinet. Close microphone placement was used to try isolate the clarinet drone as much as possible, and looping was avoided so as not to create any unexpected "bumps" in the drone texture. From measure two hundred twenty-nine onwards, Tracks B and C gradually change from sustained tones to articulated rhythmic material. To ensure matching articulation between the six individually recording lines of Tracks B and C, Tuukka and I layered the material during recording so that I could listen to the previously recorded lines while recording the next ones. This also ensured good intonation, and the same technique was used in recording the drone chords. When I received the score, Molly indicated that Track B should be "static" and without

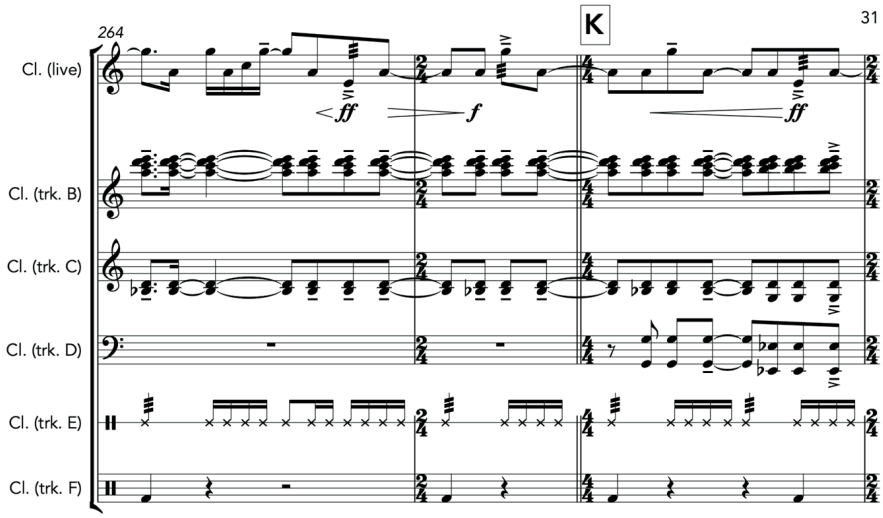
dynamics (M. Joyce, personal communication, January 28 2021), but there were no indications as to articulation or dynamics for Track C. The rhythmic material of Track C comes at the densest point of piece, so I understood the musical purpose was primarily to emphasize rhythmic stability and to accompany the rhythmic texture that would come later in the live part. Even when articulation is indicated (like the accent at the end of measure two hundred sixty-six in Example 33), it is a musical echo to the live clarinet part and therefore should not dominate the musical texture.

Tracks D, E and F were all recorded with bass clarinet. Track D, which does not enter until about three-fourths through *Attack and Sustain*, doubling Track C in octaves (Example 33 measure two hundred sixty-six). Track D provided musical emphasis at the ends of the rhythmic phrases, which get shorter and shorter leading to the musical climax of the work around measure three hundred nine. Though not specified for bass clarinet, Joyce composed the line in bass clef and used contrabassoon in the MIDI sketch of the score. Contrabass clarinet could have also worked well, but I decided to use bass clarinet to match the timbre of the other lines even though it made it an octave higher than the score indicates.[49]

Tracks E and F are textural and percussive. Track E begins immediately at the beginning with four-measure units of *crescendo* and *diminuendo* on unpitched air sounds. In the score, Joyce writes, "Air Sound – Through Bass Clarinet?" (measure 2, page 3), a suggestion I agreed with because the bass clarinet can achieve a deeper, richer air sound that would contrast with the upper registers of the live clarinet and Tracks A and B. In measure thirty, Track E switches from air sounds to rhythmic key clicks, and later key click tremolos (see Example 33). The key rattles are textural, providing non-pitched percussive timbral contrast to the pitched rhythmic material in the live clarinet and Tracks B, C and D. But because they must support the rhythmic material, it is paramount that they maintain strict time. This can be challenging when there are continuous measures of sixteenth notes, and repeated measures of tremolos and sixteenth notes. Joyce indicated in our conversations that Track F was intended to be type of "thump" percussive sound. Though pitched, it was meant to have a lot of resonance and volume. In the studio, Tuukka and I created this effect using a

[49] Contrabass clarinets are typically made out of metal and therefore have a different timbre that E-flat, B-flat and bass clarinets, which are made from wood.

deep slap tongue-like articulation with added reverb, overtone adjustment, and volume.



Example 33 Molly Joyce *Attack and* Sustain (2020), mm. 264-266 (score in B-flat)

The nature of the pre-recorded electronics begged the question, when all was said and done, of whether it "needed" to be recorded in its entirety, or whether it could have been supplemented or created entirely electronically in the studio using MIDI and other techniques. From my perspective as a performer, creating the pre-recorded electronics added great personal artistic value to my performance, as well as a strong sense of shared ownership. My agency as a performer was expressed predominantly through recording the backtracks, rather than in the performance of the live clarinet part. Though certain details might have gone unnoticed by the listener if the pre-recorded electronics had been created synthetically (partially or entirely), I maintain that MIDI instrumentation, clarinet or otherwise, would not have created the depth of sound and timbral variety that pre-recorded and processed acoustic clarinet did. There are certainly imperfections in the pre-recorded electronics that came from recording acoustic clarinet, which could have been eliminated if the pre-recording had been made synthetically, but I think these add rather than detract from the recording artistically.

Ultimately the backtracks took much more studio time and creative energy than performing/recording the live clarinet, and they involved many more musical decisions for the performer. Even though I recorded the

backtracks thinking of them as accompaniment to the live clarinet part, their tonal size (upwards of twelve clarinet voices vs. one live part) dominated the sonic environment of the work. Even *before* Hammond's additional processing added even more musical interest and sonic effects, the body of timbres and the unrelenting rhythmic drive of the pre-recorded electronics narrowed the musical creative and sound space for the live clarinet part. I felt I had very little creative agency performing the live clarinet part, which starts as *crescendo*-ing and *decrescendo*-ing sustained notes in the third register, developing into moving quarter and half notes, and then finally into the arpeggiated sixteenth-note motive first introduced in Track A at the beginning. The main performance concerns for the live part are maintaining pulse and good intonation against the strict pulse and pitch references of the pre-recorded electronics. The largest challenge in recording was that the live clarinet part sounded thin, and so there was significant time spent in post-production balancing the resonance and overtones of the live part so that it had enough depth of sound and timbral interest.[50]

As the second commission and premiere of this doctoral project, *Attack and Sustain* exhibited similar aspects of performance practice as the first commission, Hughes' *Ripple Reflected*. In both instances, there was verbal, written, and musical communication with composers while they composed. My role was more of a consultant, rather than collaborator. I was asked specific and very detailed questions that I answered using my knowledge and experience as a performer. In most cases, my answers confirmed the composer's ideas, rather than altered or developed them. The structure of performance was a division of labor – the duty of the composer was to provide a score that communicated to the performer as completely as possible all the artistic ideas of the work, and I felt my duty as performer was to communicate as thoroughly as possible the information in that score.

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[50] Marc Mellits' compositions for multiple clarinets, including *Black* (2008), make reference to Reich but do not employ electronics. Those works make clear that discerning timbre in multiple-clarinet settings is very difficult without electronic manipulation. Another example is Gavin Bryars' *Three Elegies for Nine Clarinets* (1994) for four B-flat, two alto, two bass and one contrabass clarinet, which makes use of a more diverse clarinet orchestration. Ashley Bathgates' album *8-Track* (New Focus Recordings 690277901225, released 7 July 2023) includes Reich's *Cello Counterpoint* alongside newly composed works inspired by it. Additionally, the compositions of Tristan Perich like *Surface Image* (2013) for solo piano and 40-channel 1-bit electronics and *qsqsqsqsqqqqqqqqq* (2009) for three toy pianos and 3-channel 1-bit tones demonstrate Reich's lasting influence.

The relationship between electronics and live clarinet part, however, was slightly different between the two works. In the Hughes, as previously discussed, the relationship between live clarinet and electronics is independent. In *Attack and Sustain* the electronics, like the notated score, strictly guide the clarinetist's performance. Performance agency in *Attack and Sustain* came through recording the backtracks, not in the performance of the live clarinet part. Shared ownership was felt in the performance of *Attack and Sustain* because of my experience recording the backing tracks. Without that, the performance model would have been entirely different.

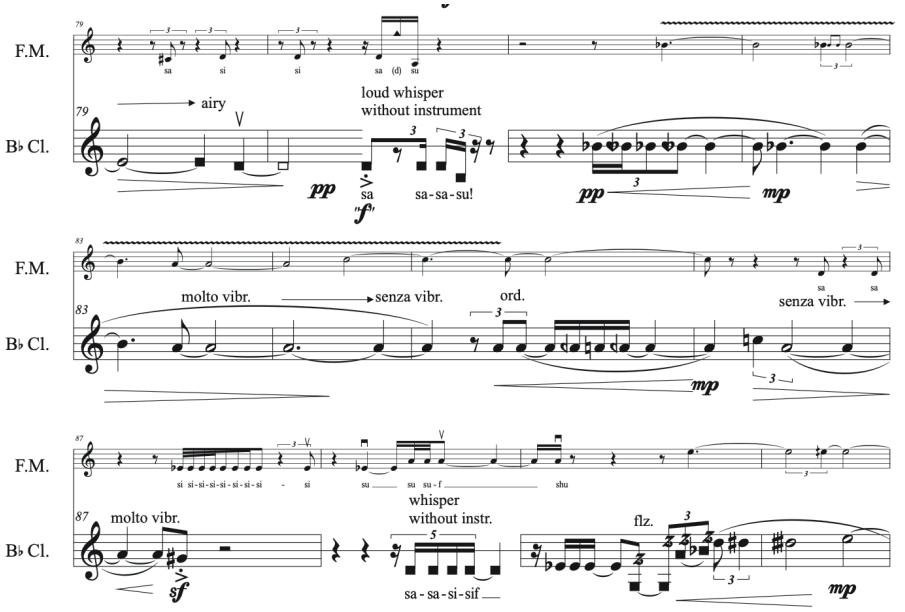
VI Case Study 2: Minna Leinonen *Pheme* (2011/21)

As a counter-example to *Attack and Sustain*, I offer one more case study from *Duel*, Leinonen's *Pheme* (2011, rev. 2021). Although it was not a commission, both the electronics and clarinet part were revised significantly for this recording. The following analysis examines the nature of the artistic collaboration between the composer and performer, the performance model of the work and the recording, and the role of electronics.

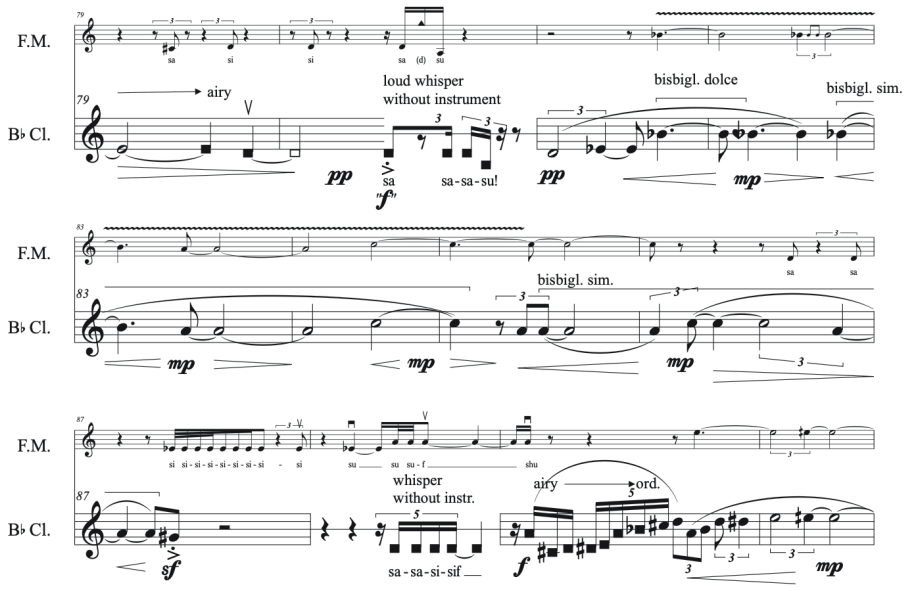
As discussed in Section III, I met Leinonen online and in person before recording *Pheme*. In our meetings, not only would I play the latest version of what Leinonen had written, but there was a great deal of discussion back and forth about the technical execution of various playing and speaking techniques employed in the work. We also discussed how to notate some of the non-conventional playing techniques and improvised sections. Finally, we experimented together with different sound possibilities and playing methods on the clarinet. While Leinonen had clear musical intentions and knew what she wanted, I did feel during this process like I was affecting how Leinonen was composing the piece. Rather than confirming Leinonen's pre-existing ideas, *Pheme* continued to be revised based on our discussions.

As an example, I present the passage from measures eighty-one to ninety-one in Examples 34 and 35. In both the 2011 (not shown) and 2021 versions, the clarinet part melodically follows closely to the fixed media part, which is a prerecorded and processed soprano singer. When I performed the 2011 version for Leinonen, we discussed the nature of the notation, which had detailed pitches and rhythms written, and the contour of the melody Leinonen wanted to hear in the clarinet part. We did not discuss the

particulars of how it should be composed, because I understood this to be the task of the composer. I understood that my role as the performer was to use the notation as a guide to my creative expression of the phrase, rather than literally perform exactly was written. Using my sound examples, combined with her own ideas of the phrase, Leinonen re-wrote it in the 2021 version (Example 35). In the newest version, not only is the phrase extended and sustained to weave in and out of the fixed media part, but it is actually more lightly notated. In my understanding, the clarinetist should not play a simpler or flatter phrase (which is how one *could* interpret what is written), but rather play improvisationally with *vibrato* and *bisbligliando.* In its rewritten version, the clarinetist has more artistic decisions to make, more agency, to create the phrase in performance with greater freedom of expression.



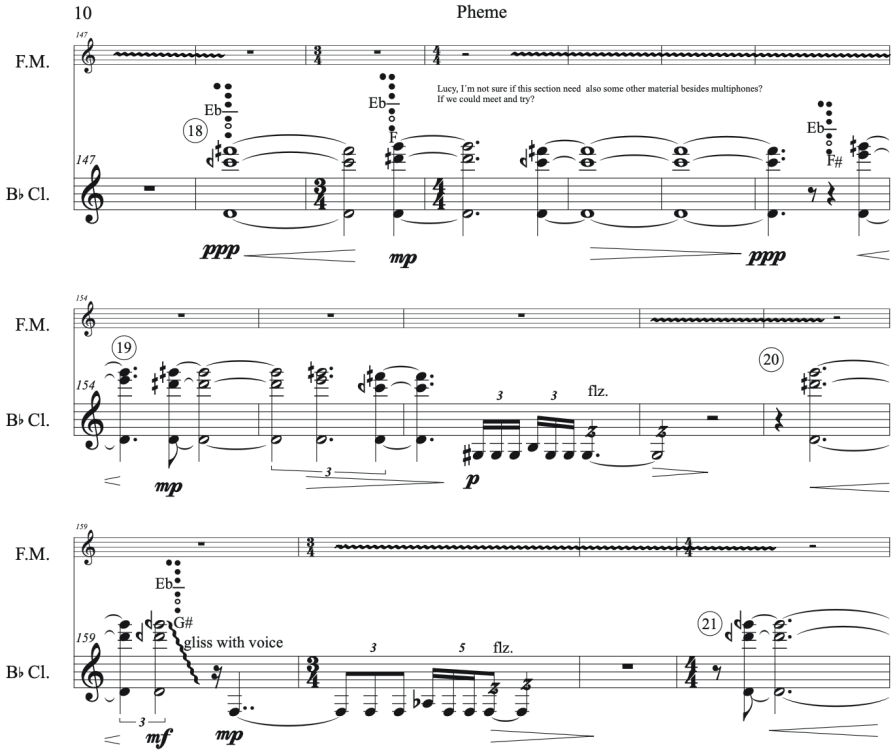
Example 34 Minna Leinonen *Pheme* (2020 version), mm. 79-92 (transposed score)



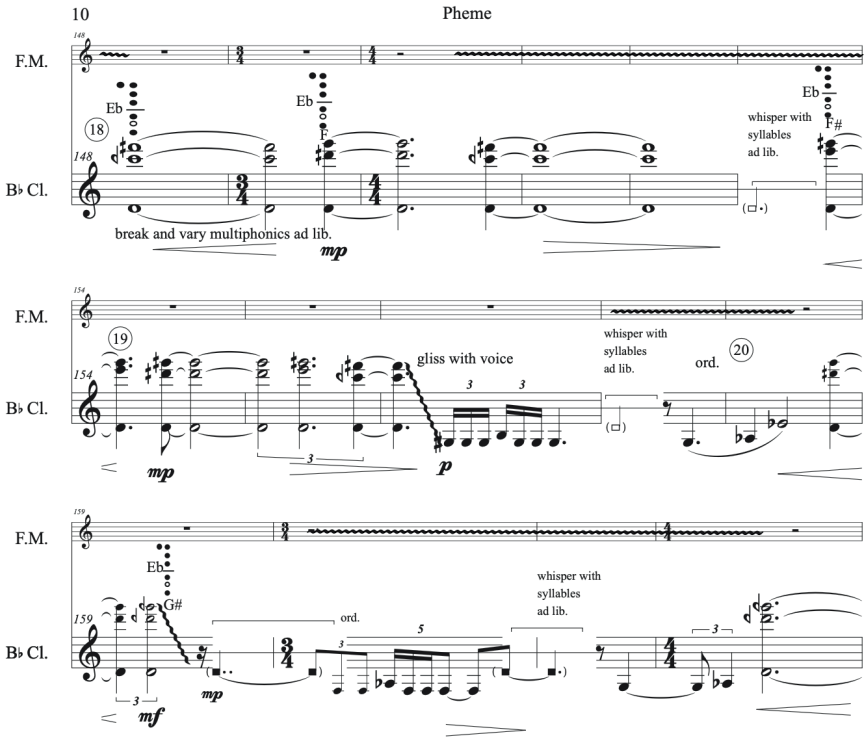
Example 35 Minna Leinonen *Pheme* (2021 version), mm. 79-92 (transposed score)

A similar approach was used in the extended multiphonic phrase before the coda, in measures one hundred forty-eight to measures one hundred sixty-two. In both the original 2011 version and the first revision (2020), the phrase relied on a melodic passage of multiphonic chords. The clarinet is almost unaccompanied, and the fixed media comes in and out of the musical texture with fuzzy-sounding whispers. It is the most unaccompanied moment for the clarinetist in the work. From our first meetings, Leinonen knew she wanted to revise this section. One can see her note in the 2020 version: "Lucy, I'm not sure if this section need[s] also some other material besides multiphonics? If we could meet and try?" (Example 36). When we met, I experimented with different ways of using the multiphonics by adding trills, *vibrato*, air variation, and sound oscillations. I also experimented with adding vocalizations to mimic and echo the whispers in the fixed media part, referencing the duet between fixed media and clarinet at the beginning of the work. Like the previous Example 35, Leinonen ultimately opted to compose this section freely with the simple note that the clarinetist should improvise. Example 37 shows the same passage in the 2021 version. In four measures in this excerpt, Leinonen added a written indication to whisper syllables ad libitum. This notation is suggestive, rather than literal. In performance, the intention is that the

clarinetist should feel free to use the multiphonics in combination with tonal oscillations and whispered syllables.



Example 36 Minna Leinonen *Pheme* (2020 version), mm. 147-162 (transposed score)



Example 37 Minna Leinonen *Pheme* (2021 version), mm. 148-162 (transposed score)

The changes to the score, however, were only one step in the revision of this passage. In post-production, live electronics were also added even though they were not indicated in the score. Aside from Talvitie's physical presence during the post-production of *Seireenietydi* (which was required to re-do the live electronics), Leinonen provided the most detailed feedback during the postproduction stage of all the composers. She maintained, however, that her comments were suggestions and, in the end, she trusted Tuukka and my artistic judgments. Regarding this passage, in particular, she commented on the first mix in a personal email:

> For me the clarinet is too loud and Tuukka could add some kind of echo on the clarinet (or even delay). The recording can differ from live performance. The section should be *misterioso* and now it feels like the clarinet is in charge. The balance could be better, the dynamics of the clarinet should be decreased and take "further" – more distant with mixing. This section can sound a little weird and twisted. (M. Leinonen personal communication, August 17 2021).

It was notable, first, that she recognized and distinguished between what might be possible in live performance versus what we could do in a studio setting. I was happy that Leinonen was willing to approach the recording in this way, as my goal was to create a performance that was distinctly different from a live performance. From these comments, Tuukka and I decided to use various live electronics to create echo and reverberation so that the clarinet part sounded more mysterious and also so that the clarinet sound would be separated clearly from the fixed media (to create "more distance"). These changes were so effective that Leinonen asked that we apply the same approach to a few more places earlier in the piece.

The working relationship between Leinonen and myself during the recording of *Pheme* relied on both Leinonen's compositional ideas and my contributions as performer. I felt, in the end, that I was not only encouraged during revision of the score to contribute my own musical ideas, but also in performance and during postproduction. The final revised score, which clearly indicates that the clarinetist should contribute their own musical ideas rather than relying only on the ideas notated in the score, demonstrates how the performance practice of the work permits greater performer agency by expecting the clarinetist to make more creative decisions in execution. While I felt a sense of shared ownership in my own performance of *Attack and Sustain* because of my extensive work with the backtracks, *Pheme* promotes shared ownership for any performing clarinetist, in live and recording situations.

As an extension of the notated score, the fixed media in *Pheme* plays a different role in relation to the clarinet part than the pre-recorded electronics in *Attack and Sustain*. The fixed media in both works is the processed sound of a recorded acoustic instrument – clarinet, in the case of *Attack and Sustain*, and soprano voice, for *Pheme*. In both works, there is a click track and the fixed media is notated in the score. However, whereas the electronics in *Attack and Sustain* create a sonic space that is strict both in time and in sound, the fixed media in *Pheme* is more flexible. After the opening twenty-five measures where clarinet and fixed media are in a synchronized duet, the clarinet part breaks from the fixed media and becomes more independent. This independence grows more and more as the piece continues, allowing the performing clarinetist greater and greater musical space and creative freedom. Like the written notation, the electronics of *Pheme* encourage creative contribution and allow for a higher

level of artistic agency by leaving sonic and musical space for the clarinetist make more decisions that affect the performance.

VII Concluding remarks

When a performer switches from live stage to recording studio, there is a huge mental shift in understanding the function of performer. This is particularly the case when the performer is artistically directing their own recording. The experience of recording the album *Duel* in 2021 fundamentally shifted my understanding of recorded performance and opened my eyes to the varying levels of agency exercised through creative decision-making. What I have observed in recording this album will also translate back to live performance, as I consider acoustic space, recording technology, and musical communication in a whole new way.

Interactions with technology, both studio technology and the technology of electroacoustic performance, invite the performer to consider sound, and music-making, in new ways. Théberge has described it as such:

> With the expansion of sonic technologies, the musician is able to engage with the micro-phenomena of musical sound itself, and such an engagement often forces a reassessment of the role of more traditional categories of musical practice. For example, a concentration on the 'right' sounds for a given musical context can shift the musician's attention away from other, more familiar levels of musical form, such as melody, rhythm, and harmony. (Théberge 1997, 186)

In the process of recording, this translated to my prioritizing *how* I wanted the music to sound and *why* I wanted it to sound that way over *what* notes, rhythms, and melodies I was performing. This was perhaps most pronounced during the postproduction process, when technology was employed at the micro-levels to manipulate aspects of each track to accomplish very specific artistic goals. This type of detail-oriented work, and focus, is not possible in live performance.

From my perspective as a performer the ways in which I experienced performance differently in recording, particularly in recording the raw tracks, are also unique to contemporary music. Because all but one of the works had never been recorded, there were few references of existing performance practice. I had to make more decisions regarding performance practice and

felt greater pressure to be absolutely secure in my artistic communication and representation of the composers' intentions. The awareness of editing and the ability to listen back immediately throughout the recording process made it possible for me to take the risks in my musical choices required by contemporary music without having to worry about losing my place on a timeline or making a mistake. In live performance of works with electronics, there is the constant need to monitor the temporal and acoustic relationship in real time, and one must approach performance with full awareness of the whole aural picture. In recording, this total awareness is not required until postproduction.

The production and postproduction process also created a new model of performance that elongated the process beyond the physical sound creation. This process established a personal sense of music-making as construction, rather than execution, which is how I normally feel in a live performance situation. It is a unique phenomenon that as you continue to work in postproduction, your artistic views on the work continue to develop, just as they would through and after a finished live performance. But unlike in a live performance, which is understood as a snapshot in time, a studio recording exists permanently. And whereas a performer is expected to apply previous live performance experiences to the next live performance, in recording, your artistic viewpoints may continue to develop but you still must work with the original raw tracks recorded. This alternative model of working and developing through musical ideas is unique to recording.

The case studies by Trbojevic, Borcherding, Joyce, and Leinonen suggest how electronics can function as notation with regards to their expansion or limitation of a performer's degree of decision-making. When electronics provide space for the performer to contribute their own acoustic sound to the total sonic sound world, and when performers feel like they can affect the character and quality of that sound world, a performer feels more control over the total artistic product. If that space is not available, or a performer feels they cannot affect the sound environment while they play, they feel less artistic control and have less creative agency as performers. In a similar way, electronics can affect how performers experience control over their expression of musical time. Use of time, and timing, is one integral way that musicians express creativity in classical music performance. Regardless of whether an electroacoustic work has a timeline or clicktrack, electronics

are capable of increasing or diminishing a performer's ability to experiment creatively with timing.

The case studies of Joyce and Leinonen also demonstrate examples of performances created in recording that would have been impossible to create in live performance. There were two distinct components of *Attack and Sustain* that relied on recorded performance. First, the backtracks relied completely on the technology and technical manipulation available in the recording studio. From recording and layering the multiple tracks within each backing line, to looping where necessary to maintain rhythmic and technical integrity, to the processing done by Michael Hammond, the fixed tape part was the direct product of studio performance. It would, of course, be possible to create the fixed media without processing, as one would do performing Reich's *New York Counterpoint*. But the resulting backtracks would contribute to a completely different end performance. Even the performance of the live clarinet part of *Attack and Sustain* was the result of a studio recording environment. The clarinetist is required to perform the nearly ten-minute work without breaks to rest, regroup, or breath. Tuukka and I used editing to eliminate breaks for breath during the first half of the work, when the clarinet is sustaining long tones, and in the second half to maintain rhythmic and technical stability. In live performance, it would be possible to perform the first half without breaks using circular breathing, but it would be noticeable to the audience. Maintaining total control over sound, technique, and rhythm would be possible in the second half in live performance, but it would require a great deal of stamina. For these reasons, the performance of *Attack and Sustain* created for *Duel* is unique.

The recording of *Pheme* is also the unique product of studio production. The detailed manipulation and mixing of clarinet and fixed media was possible only in postproduction, and even detailed sound engineering in live performance would never be able to achieve the same precision of execution. But more precisely, the performance of the improvised section from measure one hundred forty-eight (shown in Example 37) was only possible in a studio recording environment. Leinonen acknowledged such when she wrote, "the recording can differ from live performance" (M. Leinonen, personal communication, August 17 2021). The live electronic-effects in this section were created specifically for my performance, and were created by Tuukka for this recording. Their application to other sections, as suggested by Leinonen, was also unique to

this performance. Live electronics could, of course, be created to provide this effect in a live performance setting, but the end musical result would be much different.

As with the case studies from the previous chapters, the examples from this chapter invited questions regarding the role of notation, the role of the Composer, and the role of performer as composer. The examples also suggested that the patterns of geographic characteristics demonstrated in earlier chapters hold in electroacoustic repertoire and for recorded performance. The notation culture and the electronics-as-notation culture of the Finnish works by Trbojevic and Leinonen invite the performer to make more creative decisions in performance. This increased agency results in both a greater sense of artistic control over the performance as well as a greater feeling of shared ownership. The notation culture and electronics-as-notation culture in the American works by Joyce and Borcherding, though very different aesthetically, both limit certain types of decisions the clarinetist needs to make in performance.

However, the fact that this was a recording in which I was the artistic director drastically increased my agency in performance of all the works because of decisions that I was required to make in the recording, mixing, and postproduction process. These decisions, which were the result of the collaboration between myself and sound engineer Tuukka Tervo, so significantly shaped the result that I feel a substantial degree of shared ownership over all works performed on *Duel*.

CHAPTER 5: CLARINETIST AS CHAMBER MUSICIAN

Having analyzed performer agency and shared ownership for the solo, composing, and recording clarinetist of contemporary Finnish and American music, I continue by examining these concepts as they relate to the clarinetist as a chamber musician. In situations where a clarinetist performs with other musicians, or as a member of a larger ensemble with a conductor, personal performer agency is affected greatly. In a chamber music setting, the clarinetist's decisions are shaped by the sounding and non-sounding actions of others in rehearsals and their own musical actions must be negotiated with others in performance. This contrasts strongly with the complete freedom to create independently when performing solo or as the sole performing agent. When a conductor is present, they have even greater control over many aspects of a clarinetist's agency, from tempo to style and even to the repertoire performed. In this chapter, I will use case studies from my second doctoral concert to analyze agency and shared ownership as it relates to chamber music repertoire.

I Case study 1: Two chamber works by Augusta Read Thomas

When I interviewed Augusta Read Thomas by phone in December 2019 she mentioned something as an aside that has stayed with me. When I asked her about the role of the performer and the role of the composer, she said that the composer's job is to "sculpt and polish pieces" and the player's job is to "translate and bring [the work] to the audience" (Personal Interview, 2019). In her view, the role of the composer is to conceptualize the performance as completely as possible, and to notate this image as clearly as possible in the score. According to Thomas, it is the composer's responsibility to craft every sound, and to use notation to articulate these intentions to the performer. It is inferred, then, that the performer's role is first and foremost to sound the composer's intent, adhering as closely as possible to the composer's notation.

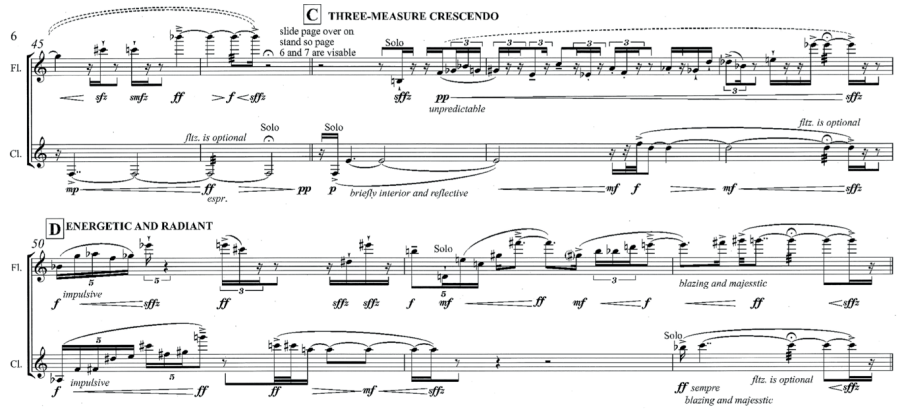
According to this model of performance, if the composer has fulfilled their role, then the performer should have clear instructions on performance. Composer and clarinetist Derek Bermel alluded to a similar idea when he spoke of performing Adams' *Gnarly Buttons* with the composer conducting. Bermel said, "[Adams] wants what he writes, and

the notation is pretty clear" (Yoder, 2020). Bermel intuited that the focus of the performer is sounding Adams' score rather than creating something individual to the performer. This viewpoint aligns with the concept of *Werktreue* – that a composed piece of music *is* the notated score, rather than the performance, and that fidelity to the score is of primary concern for the performer.

The two of Thomas' chamber music works that I have performed, *Capricci: Hummingbird Romance* (2011) and *Dancing Helix Rituals* (2007), both follow this performance model. *Capricci: Hummingbird Romance* was performed on my second doctoral concert in September 2020 and I performed *Dancing Helix Rituals* in November 2021 on the doctoral concert of my colleague, Maria Puusaari. Both works sound improvisational, but the performer's artistic expressions are precisely notated. This affects not only the performance, the performer's agency, and the sense of shared ownership experienced, but also the nature of the collaboration between chamber musicians and the rehearsal process.

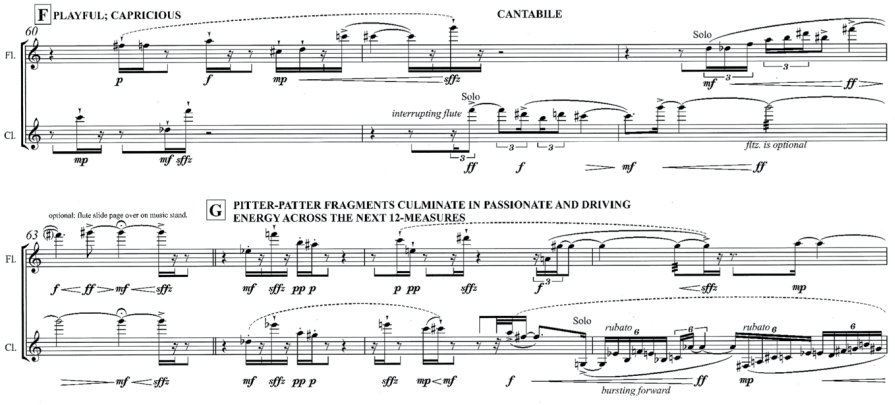
Capricci: Hummingbird Romance is a highly virtuosic duet for flute and clarinet. Following the opening, a call and response of solos by the flute and clarinet, the instruments join in duet for the remainder of the work. As seen in Example 38, the notation of the score is extremely detailed. Not only is the articulation, style, and dynamic indicated for every note in both the flute and clarinet parts, but Thomas uses notation to clarify the musical relationships between flute and clarinet as well as specify further the style of musical presentation.

In Example 38 at rehearsal C measure forty-seven, Thomas notates "solo" first in the clarinet part, and then immediately in the flute part. The argument can be made that the experienced performer would play the music this way without these markings. The clarinetist's entrance in measure forty-seven is unaccompanied, and accented, while the flute entrance in the same measure is characterized by moving notes, which would be commonly understood as more important than the clarinetist's sustained E. Thomas marks "solo" in each part to ensure that the musical relationships are clear



Example 38 Augusta Read Thomas *Capricci: Hummingbird Romance* (2011), mm. 45-52 (transposed score)

and easy to understand for both performers. Again at Example 39, Thomas marks the clarinetist's unaccompanied and *fortissimo* entrance in measure sixty-one as "solo" with the moving notes in the flute part are marked *solo* immediately after in measure sixty-two. The clarinetist's entrance in measure sixty-one is unaccompanied, and Thomas adds "*interrupting flute*" signifying both stylistic and musical importance. The moving notes in the flute in measure sixty-two are more musically important than the sustained note in the clarinet part. Still, Thomas makes the additional effort to ensure musical clarity within the dense texture.



Example 39 Augusta Read Thomas *Capricci: Hummingbird Romance* (2011), mm. 60-66 (transposed score)

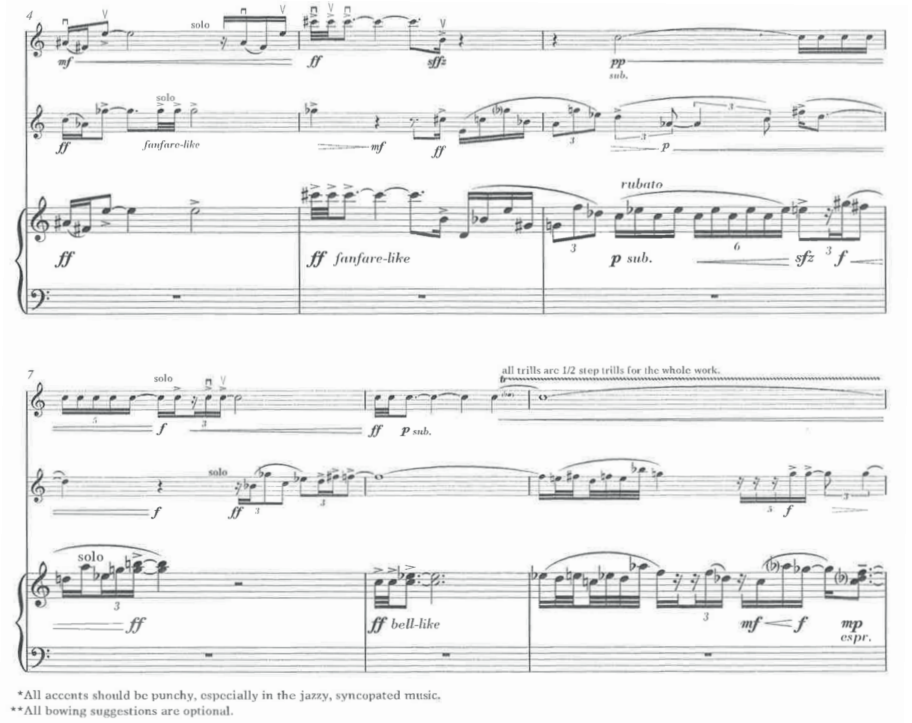
Examples 38 and 39 also demonstrate Thomas' detailed notation of all aspects of performance. Nearly every note has its own articulation and

dynamic marking. Thomas also writes the style of each section, using single words like "playful", "capricious", "energetic", "radiant" and "*cantabile"* but also longer descriptions, like at rehearsal G in Example 39 where she writes "pitter-patter fragments culminate in passionate and driving energy across the next twelve measures" (Thomas 2011, 7). Not only do these descriptions attempt to answer any performer questions regarding style, but they clarify further the dynamic and articulation markings. However, they also eliminate much of the discussion of these stylistic elements between collaborating musicians. Rather than having to ask "what should the style of this section be?", and then come up with a creative solution together, performers are faced with the more literal questions of execution - "how do we make it sound energetic, radiant, etc.", or "how do we match these articulations between flute and clarinet?" Finally, Thomas also restates phrase markings using notation. In addition to *crescendo* and *diminuendo* markings Thomas uses dotted lines (like measures forty-seven and forty-eight in Example 38) and text (like at rehearsal G in Example 39), to reiterate the direction and length of phrases.

The style of notation is the same in the trio work *Dancing Helix Rituals* for violin, clarinet and piano. Like in *Capricci: Hummingbird Romance*, Thomas uses the notation to meticulously communicate the dynamics, articulation, style, speed and balance of every note, motive, and phrase. Like in the duet, she uses "solo" frequently within the three voices to indicate balance and musical importance. For example, the excerpt shown below in Example 40 contains five markings of "solo" in two measures.

In most works, articulation tends to be a major performance aspect that requires communication between collaborating musicians. Different type of accents, *staccato*, *legato* and other types of articulation are musically circumstantial – they do not always mean the same thing from work-to-work, even in multiple works by the same composer. It is typically up to performers to decide how articulations should be understood in the context of a given performance. Thomas, however, accompanies the marking of an articulation with a clarifying description. In Example 40, the figure in the clarinet part in measure four is accented, but also marked *"fanfare-like*". The same articulation follows in measure five in the piano with the same description. However, when the motive returns in the piano part in measure eight, the description changes to "*bell-like*". In our rehearsals, there were still discussions about the starts and ends of notes, and the importance of

matching between clarinet, violin and piano, as three instruments that produce sound in such different ways. However, the specificity of the articulation markings and accompanying descriptions resulted in a rehearsal and performance situation where decisions were made regarding execution rather than figuring out musical purpose or creative expression.



Example 40 Augusta Read Thomas *Dancing Helix Rituals* (2007), mm. 4-9 (transposed score)

A performer is not required to follow Thomas' markings exactly and is always free to select which aspects of the notation to adhere to and to use their own musical judgement to create the remainder of the performance. However, the nature of Thomas' notation suggests two important things regarding the performance practice of her works. First, Thomas wants there to be no question for the performer of how each note should be played. She also wants there to be no question between performers of which notes, motives, or measures should be performed with equal balance and which should not. Second, the nature of the notation implies to the performer that their role, the expectation of them in performance, is to pay as much detailed

attention to the notation as possible.[51] If the performer's priority is fidelity to the notation, their creative focus will be almost entirely on executing the notated details of articulation, dynamics, balance between the voices, musical style, and tempo. This focus, alongside normal performance awareness of intonation, acoustics, and ones' own sound quality, leaves little mental or aural energy for any other aspects of decision-making. The performer's agency, the control over their own capacity for musical creation, is nearly completely dictated by the score and its notation.

More is affected than just the performance of the work. The nature of collaboration – between performer and composer and between musicians in a chamber music setting – is shaped by notation culture. The benefit of Thomas' clarity of writing is that musicians can feel confident in understanding the musical ideas and intentions of these works even if they are not able to work with Thomas herself. The work is also approachable for performers who may not have as much experience performing contemporary music, even though it is technically demanding. The downside of this practice is its potential for perpetuating the separation between performer and composer and the division of their musical roles.

Second, the notation affects the nature of rehearsals and can affect the musical relationships forged between chamber musicians. In the rehearsals for both works, we prioritized translation of the notated articulations, styles, dynamics, and balance. Ensemble rehearsals were simpler and more straight forward, with fewer questions as to musical intention and artistic approach. More time was also spent on individual mastery of one's own part rather than on ensemble rehearsals. Though both works are filled with energy and very rewarding to perform, the ensemble rehearsals felt cooperative more than collaborative.

II Case Study 2: Kaija Saariaho *Oi kuu* (1990)

In contrast, I offer the bass clarinet and cello duet *Oi kuu* ("Oh moon") by Kaija Saariaho, which I performed on my second doctoral concert,

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[51] In her personal correspondences with me after the performance of *Capricci - "Hummingbird Romance"*, Thomas praised the performance as "alive, spirited, fun to hear, engaging, musical, elegant, accurate…" (A.R. Thomas, personal communication, November 11 2020)

Elollinen.[52] Related compositionally and aesthetically to the electronic compositions Saariaho produced around the same time, timbre and harmony are of paramount importance in *Oi kuu*. Saariaho composed the work under the concept of the "sound/noise axis", as opposed to a more traditional framework of consonance and dissonance (Saariaho 1987, 94). In this construction, the air sounds in the bass clarinet and the maximum bow pressure in the cello are considered noises that create musical tension. Release, or consonance, is created through the clarity that comes from pure sound. Alongside the sound/noise axis that creates tension and release, Saariaho considers harmony horizontally to propel musical momentum, while timbre vertically fills and follows that propulsion (Saariaho 1987, 94).

At first glance, the notation of *Oi kuu* is as detailed as the previous examples from Thomas. Like in *Capricci: Hummingbird Romance* and *Dancing Helix Rituals*, tempo and dynamics are carefully notated. Whereas Thomas is particularly precise about articulation and style, Saariaho is highly detailed about the type and timbre of sound used. She uses notation to indicate the transition between air and normal clarinet sound, from *sul ponticello* to *sul tasto* in the cello, as well as *senza* and *molto* vibrato in both parts. However, whereas Thomas implicitly and explicitly expects articulations, styles, and tempi to be followed precisely[53], Saariaho emphasizes more flexibility. She writes in the preface to *Oi kuu* that the metronome markings "can be considered suggestions" and it is more important that the relationships between *tempi* be precise. Saariaho writes that "bar lines serve mostly as a means of synchronization, so bar lines and beats never mean an accentuation" and *vibrato* is at the performer's discretion when not otherwise specified. Upon closer examination, Saariaho's use of notation is entirely different than Thomas'. Thomas' notation is extremely descriptive, attempting to capture entirely how the

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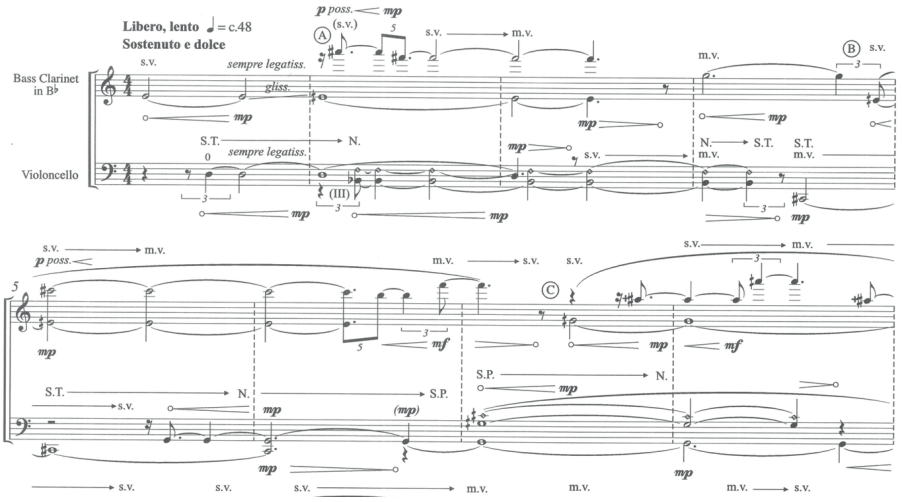
[52] *Oi kuu* was composed at the request of Kari Kriikku and Anssi Karttunen; there is also a version for bass flute and cello composed for Camilla Hoitenga and Anssi Karttunen.

[53] At the beginning of *Capricci: Hummingbird Romance*, Thomas writes in the score that "there are only six dynamics used in this score (*pp, p, mp, mf, f, ff*) so that each 'level' of volume has a clear meaning and sound" and "in the flute part, the sixteenth notes with the carrot/wedge should be played secco, staccatissimo, and like a peck." In the preface to *Dancing Helix Rituals*, Thomas emphasizes the descriptive style markings in the score and specifies that "all accents should be punchy, especially in the jazzy, syncopated music."

work should sound. Saariaho's score, on the other hand, is prescriptive. She uses dynamics, *vibrato*, and other timbral colorations to instruct the performer how to create the sound she had in mind. How the work is then performed is up to the bass clarinetist and cellist.

The opening of *Oi kuu* is shown in below in Example 41. The notation prescribes how to achieve the timbral qualities Saariaho imagines through air pressure, bow pressure, and dynamics. The bass clarinetist is instructed to begin the first measure from nothing, slowly increasing to a *mezzo piano* dynamic, without vibrato, and gliding as smoothly and sustainedly as possible to bass note of the multiphonic in measure two. Once the bass note is established, the bass clarinetist should allow the A-sharp upper partial to speak without *vibrato* as softly as possible, growing to *mezzo piano* before shifting to the high F-sharp partial within the multiphone and transitioning from *senza* to *molto vibrato* and then getting softer again, back to *niente*. This sustained pitch and chord are paralleled by similar dynamic phrasing and timbral development in the cello.



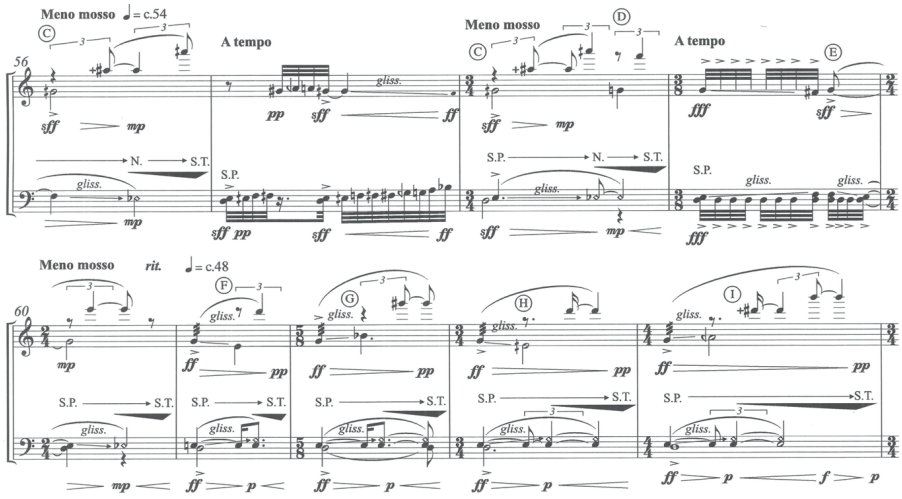
Example 41 Kaija Saariaho *Oi kuu* (2007), mm. 1-9 (transposed score)

However, executing these instructions is not enough to communicate the musical idea of the passage. The musical meaning is not found in the individual actions of each performer, but rather the timbral and harmonic connection between bass clarinetist and cellist. Each musician must decide of the expressive of each notated instruction in relation to the other, and the musical effects of the timbral changes are very individual to the musicians

themselves. The tonal material for the bass clarinet in these opening nine measures is minimal – two notes and three multiphonic chords. Even with the notated dynamics and specifications for *vibrato*, bass clarinetist and cellist must create their sounds together through experimentation of dynamics, *vibrato*, location of bowing and time. The prescriptive notation, providing detailed technical instructions for how to produce the timbre through air, bow pressure, and vibrato, serves to encourage artistic collaboration between performers, using the score to mediate between the artistic visions of performer and composer (Kanno 2007, 231). A descriptive approach, on the other hand, would have attempted to inform performers of exactly how the work should sound, reducing the need for the performers to negotiate and experiment between their parts.

The climax of *Oi kuu* is shown in Example 42 below. Like in the opening, the notated dynamics, articulations, *glissandi*, bow pressure markings, and tempo changes are crucial for understanding the harmonic pacing of the climax. However, much is left to the discretion of the performers, who must take into consideration their own personal method for executing the sounds prescribed. The bass clarinetist and cellist must work together with great consideration of the sounds being produced by the other person. For example, in the movement from measure fifty-six to fifty-seven and from measure fifty-eight to fifty-nine, the bass clarinetist must rely on the cellist's pacing. The cellist first transitions from *sul ponticello* in measure fifty-five to normal playing in measure fifty-fix, and then to *sul tasto* while simultaneously increasing the bow pressure to create a scratching, noise sound by the end of measure fifty-six. The musical impetus from the *forttisimo sforzando* on the downbeat of measure fifty-six in the bass clarinet prompts a decay from sound to noise in the cello, with a new *forttisimo sforzando* impulse at the start of measure fifty-seven in the cello. The cellist decides the pace of the phrase both in the transition to noise at the end of measures fifty-six and fifty-seven, but also in the jump from *sul tasto* to *sul ponticello*. As the climax builds to measure sixty-four, the speed of this harmonic and timbral development increases from every two measures to every measure from measures sixty to sixty-four. Even though each of these four measures is full of notated information in both parts, the bass clarinetist and cellist must negotiate their sounds together and in reaction to one another to make musical and sonic sense. The musicians also decide together

the pace of the climax, a decision that rests not only on the execution of each individual part but on the acoustic environment one is performing in.

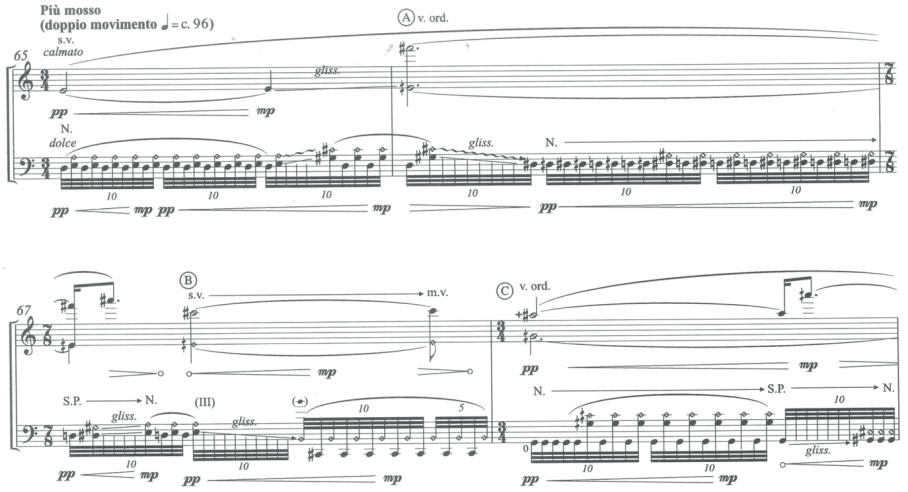


Example 42 Kaija Saariaho *Oi kuu* (2007), mm. 56-64 (transposed score)

Though Saariaho is specific in the notation of character of sound and timbre in *Oi kuu*, performers are given more agency in performance than in the chamber works by Thomas previously discussed. They are required to make more musical decisions, and more collaborative chamber music decisions, that affect the sounding performance. The musical meaning is not found in the specific notes, or the way they are notated, but rather in how the performers combine their sounds and react to one another in performance. The style becomes personal; while not improvisational, there is space in the score for freedom in performance.

For example, all *glissandi* in the cello part shown in Example 43 below are non-specifically notated. The cellist follows their own musical pacing of the rising and falling dynamics, while the bass clarinetist reacts in dynamics, *vibrato*, and harmony to the cello. The faster tempo from measure sixty-five onwards to the end requires technical dexterity from the cello and sonic flexibility of the bass clarinet. In my opinion, the technical or virtuosic aspects of performance are not the musical goal, but rather a tool to shape the sound through the phrase. Once again, the specific notation is prescriptive rather than descriptive, leaving it up to the musicians to decide how phrase should sound through their individual tonal and timbral decisions. As in

Example 42, Saariaho provides a large amount of prescriptive detail for both musicians. The bass clarinetist's varying dynamics and *vibrato* markings work alongside the cellist's overlapping dynamic swells and the movement between normal and *sul ponticello* playing. Like the climax, the pacing of the phrasing relies on the performance decisions of the cellist, who has faster harmonic and timbral rhythm.



Example 43 Kaija Saariaho *Oi kuu* (2007), mm. 65-68 (transposed score)

Whereas Thomas aims to provide a score that will answer as many questions regarding musical execution and intention as possible, Saariaho's score provides instructions for how to produce the timbre of sound she imagines and a blueprint for how cellist and bass clarinetist work together to create timbral and harmonic connections. In the performance practice of *Oi kuu*, the performers are expected to make more significant decisions regarding tempo, quality and blending of sound, the execution of noise effects (air sounds, bow scratching), and pacing of phrases, all of which fundamentally impact the performance. The style of the notation of *Oi kuu* must allow the performers to have the mental and sonic space to make those decisions, rather than be consumed entirely with the instructions in the score.

Finally, the style of notation of *Oi kuu* promotes certain relationships both between collaborating performers and between the composer and performers. Though one must prepare one's part individually, I found that my practicing the bass clarinet part alone created more questions than answers. Much more time was needed for ensemble rehearsals than with the

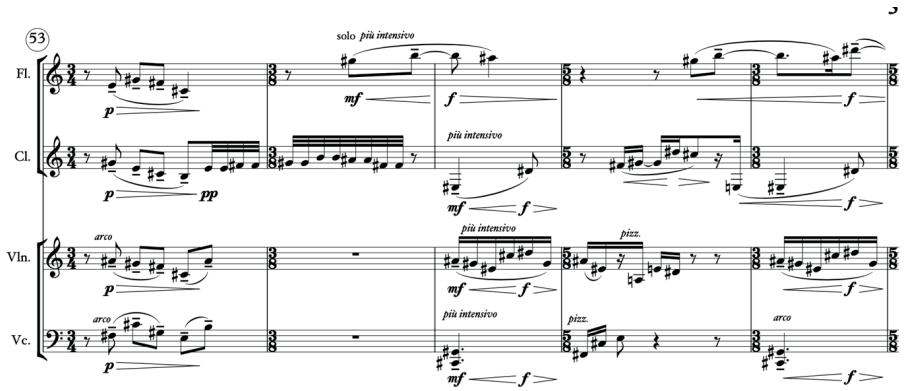
works by Thomas. When I began rehearsing with cellist Iida-Vilhelmiina Sinivalo, despite our individual preparations, we felt a bit lost for a while. It took some time to begin to hear and understand the musical intentions behind the interactions of the bass clarinet and cello parts, and the reasons for certain notations of texture and sound quality.

While challenging, this type of rehearsing promoted a sense of personal investment in the performance. It also required experimentation and deep musical conversations, building a rich collaboration between chamber musicians. There were plenty of questions regarding musical execution, phrasing, and pacing, and we sought each other's feedback regularly. There is inherent individuality present in the performance practice of *Oi kuu* that promotes new discoveries when returning to future performances. Our questions also prompted us to reach out to Saariaho herself. Unfortunately, the rehearsals in spring 2020 coincided with the outbreak of the COVID pandemic, and our planned sessions together had to be canceled. It is with deep regret that they were never able to be rescheduled. While we reached a performance we were musically happy with, the performance practice of this work promotes the interaction of performers and composers, of which Saariaho was very well-known in the course of her career.

III Case Study 3: Mason Bates *Life of Birds* (2008)

Aesthetically, Mason Bates' *Life of Birds* (2008) is very different from the works of Augusta Read Thomas. However, the performance practice and notation culture are similar. The work's clear, easy-to-listen-to musical style is reminiscent of *Gnarly Buttons* and *Dancing Solo*, with melodies that draw from popular music and jazz, and simple harmonies that give the work transparency and lightness. *Hummingbird Romance*, *Gnarly Buttons*, *Dancing Solo* and *Life of Birds* all follow a similar performance preparation model that is comfortable for most classically trained musicians. This involves reading the piece through at slower speeds, gradually working up to the tempo indicated in the score to master the physical embodiment of the passages while incorporating as much of the given dynamics and articulations as possible. Once performance speeds are attained and the sonic picture is clearly in one's ear, ensemble rehearsals were straightforward and efficient.

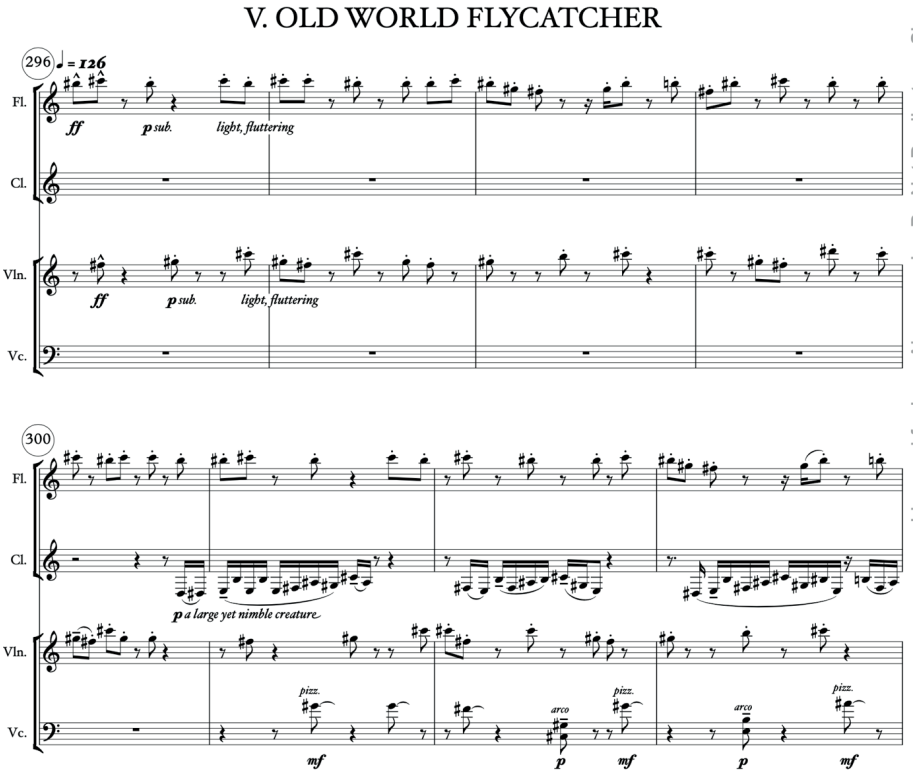
In preparing *Life of Birds*, the musical goal of the ensemble was to achieve a sounding easiness that reflects the light-hearted nature of the work. Each of five movements aims to paint a sonic miniature of different birdhouses and the avian activities within. Though active, the piece relies on transparency and comfortable fluency with the technical writing and jazz influences. The excerpt shown in Example 44 from the second movement, Parakeet Dream, reveals the denseness of activity within a movement Bates describes in the program note as "a lazy dreamstate" (Bates 2014, "Program Notes"). The orchestration makes clear who has the important musical material, which Bates reiterate with the marking *solo* as well as using dynamics. Like in the examples from Thomas, Bates prioritizes clear communication to the e/ensemble as to which musical lines carries the most importance. In measure fifty-four in Example 44, he marks *solo* in the flute part, even though the dynamic is already marked *mezzo forte piu intensivo* growing to *forte*, and the entrance is almost unaccompanied except for *pianissimo* articulated notes in the clarinet.



Example 44 Mason Bates *Life of Birds* (2008), Movement 2 Parakeet Daydream, mm. 53-57 (score in C)

Bates also emphasizes important musical material by adding stylistic descriptions and/or narrative descriptions alongside the part, just as Thomas does. In Example 44, he notates *piu intensivo* in the flute in measure fifty-four and then in both the clarinet and violin in measure fifty-five. In final movement shown in Example 45, Bates adds textual descriptive notation to the clarinet part in the pick-up to measure three-hundred-one, "a large yet nimble creature." This repeats the program note provided in the front of the score in which Bates describes the movement as a meeting of predator and

prey. Per his note, the insectoid motives in the flute and violin are the target of "the clarinet, which enters low in its register but ultimately moves higher to devour its prey" (Bates 2014, "Program Note"). To the flute and violin parts, Bates also adds descriptions "*light, fluttering*", as if to remind the musicians again of the program note. Not only do these aspects of notation serve to answer any questions as to musical importance for the ensemble, but they also address stylistic questions as to the musical imagery the composer had in mind.

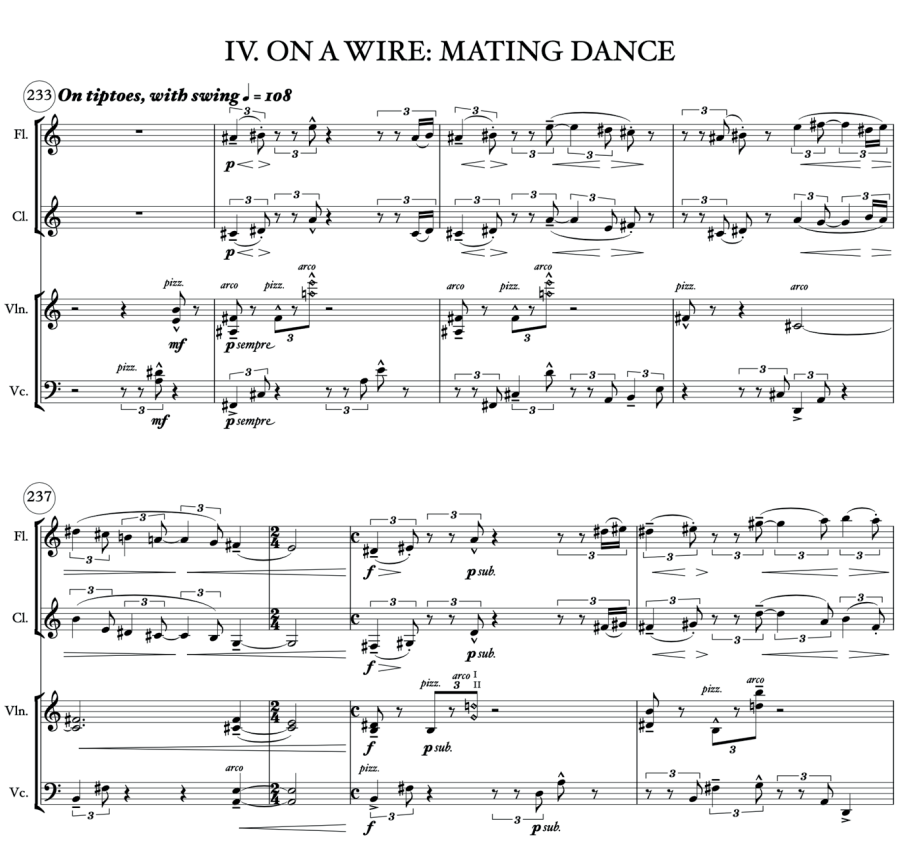


Example 45 Mason Bates *Life of Birds* (2008), Movement 5 Old World Flycatcher, mm. 296-304 (score in C)

With questions of balance and musical importance answered through clear and extensive dynamic markings and written stylistic descriptions, the ensemble's primary task is to translate the notation to sound with as close attention paid to executing the style and dynamics as possible. The reiterative notation serves to remind the ensemble frequently of the narrative intent of the composition and reign in impulses by the ensemble members to

apply their own interpretations. While articulation is not as specifically notated as in the Thomas, as a mixed ensemble of woodwinds and strings, matching articulation between instruments that make sounds in different ways is a core element of any performance preparation process. The orchestration moves musical importance around frequently. Between that, and the dense writing style, rehearsals predominantly involved achieving proper temporal alignment and similarity in stylistic execution. There was little discussion of musical elements, like the purpose of any musical material or the direction of a phrase, because that information is readily provided in the score.

As noted at the outset, the most challenging aspect of *Life of Birds* is establishing an ensemble feel for the jazz and popular style influences. The clearest example is the fourth movement, "On A Wire: Mating Dance", the opening of which is shown in Example 45. There are instructions to play in a swung style ("On tiptoes, with swing"), with swung triplets throughout. Though very easy to listen to, if one is unaccustomed to performing music in that style, it can be a challenge. Establishing an ensemble "groove" for this style and matching articulation and dynamics took the most time in rehearsal. However, these are not musical problems that require a great deal of creative thinking. Like Mandat's *Folk Songs* and the final movement of *Gnarly Buttons*, the composition encourages musicians to perform in a non-classical way. This can establish new music-making skills in rhythm, sound, and technique. However, the notational culture used by Bates, Mandat and Adams does not necessary require the musician to come up with their *own* musical creations, or solutions, for the musical material composed. On the contrary, all three composers do their best to communicate as many of the "answers" as possible, through both descriptive and prescriptive notation. This stands in contrast to Hakola's *Diamond Street*, where the performer must decide the degree and extent to which klezmer style should be incorporated in performance, thereby granting more agency for the clarinetist to create their own version of the work. While Bates wants the quartet to perform in a non-classical style, he does his best throughout to indicate how this should be accomplished through specific dynamics, rhythms and articulations.



Example 46 Mason Bates *Life of Birds* (2008), Movement 4 On A Wire: Mating Dance, mm. 233-240 (score in C)

Like the Thomas, *Life of Birds* reveals a style of composition and notation in which the composer considers it their responsibility to answer as many musical questions for the performer as possible. This could be interpreted as a level of control the composer aims to exert over the performance of their work(s). A performance practice that values fidelity to the score mandates that the composer communicates how the performer should perform the work in as complete a way as possible. However, my discussions with Thomas have led me to believe that this notation culture more importantly signifies a performance practice where the composer considers it their duty to make performance as simple and easy as possible for the performer. If the composer believes that the performer has "enough to do" preparing the notation technically, with good sound and intonation, he or she might believe they are in fact doing the performer a favor by answering as many musical questions through their notation as possible. The logic

could be that a work that is easier and more straightforward to prepare and perform, no matter the difficulty of each individual instrumental part, the more likely it is that musicians will program it when they are already operating under tight time and financial constraints.

IV Case Study 4: Ville Raasakka *Everyday Etudes No. 1: Garden* (2015/20)

Everyday Etudes No. 1: Garden by Ville Raasakka was the first work chosen for the Elollinen doctoral concert in the botanic garden, and it was the work that really inspired me to move the performance to that space. Composed for sound file, bass clarinet (or baritone saxophone), and object player with garden tools, the work is equally electroacoustic chamber music as it is chamber music and theatrical performance. Like many of Raasakka's works, the electronic sound file incorporates field recordings. In this work, the field recordings include sounds of a dog, a cat, a bird, the door of a bus, bees, and a shovel. The object player performs on a patch of artificial grass using a hand spade, hand rake, garden scissors and a watering can. The piece also makes use of a flowerpot with soil, small bag of plant seeds and an assortment of flowers. At the end of the work, the bass clarinetist walks to the flowerpot, places some cut flowers into the soil, and then waters them as the sound file fades away.

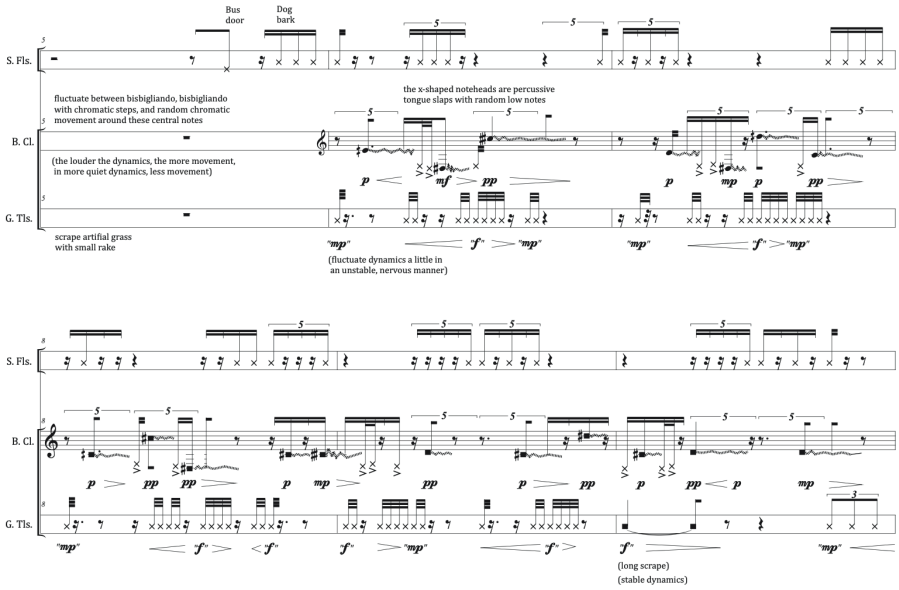
The work was composed in 2015, but as I was preparing for the performance in 2020, Raasakka was in the midst of editing the work for publication. During this process, small changes were made to the bass clarinet part. In our many meetings, I spoke with Raasakka about how certain techniques could be notated for future performers. In October 2020, I wrote the following reflection in a post on my website:

> I was fortunate to unexpectedly collaborate with Ville on his work 'Everyday Etudes No. 1: Gardening"' for bass clarinet, electronics and gardening objects during Spring 2020. The original work, entitled "Botanical", was composed in 2015 (revised in 2017) and premiered by Heikki Nikula. The version of the work that I played underwent revision whilst I was working on it, and I had the opportunity to contribute to, or at least offer my opinion on, the nature of the notation. In addition to the notation discussions better informing me about compositional intention, I also feel that participation in the revision process provided unique artistic insights to me as the performer that would not be available to a future clarinetist who is 'simply'

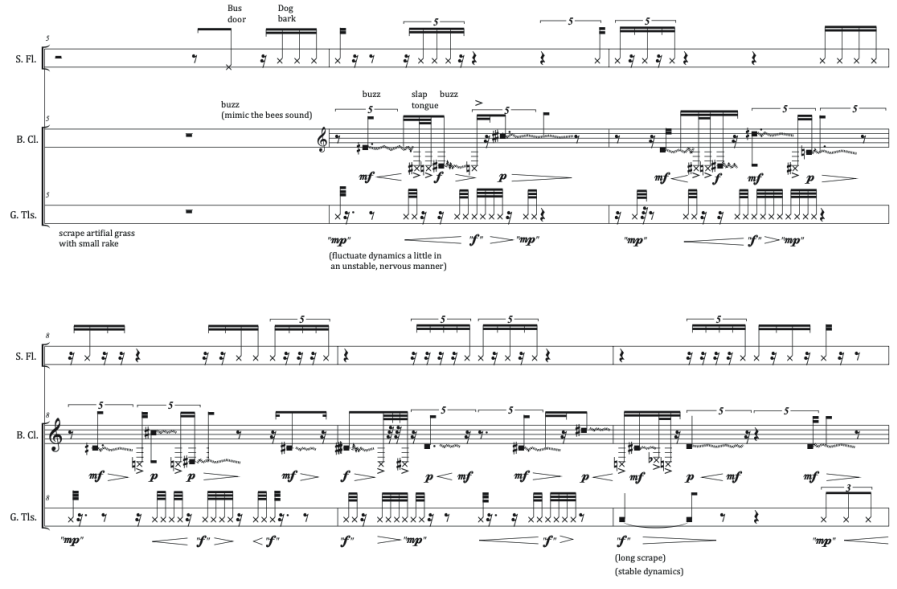
> performing the work. Is this shared ownership? (Abrams-Husso, 27 October 2020)

Raasakka had a complete understanding of the work, and its musical ideas, and the score is very specific. Still, I wondered at the time whether our discussions and my ideas might have contributed to the notation, and whether my participation through this revision process might contribute to a sense of shared ownership performing the work. Having performed the work twice, as well as recorded it for Raasakka's album *Coal, Wood, Oil*, I confirm now that I feel more personally invested in its performance practice than most of the works of this research project. Having performed with the composer in all performances, I also feel better informed of his musical intentions and how *he* feels the work should be performed.

Like in the Leinonen examples from Chapter 4, the revision process reveals much about the notation culture of this work. Example 47 shows the opening clarinet and object entrances in the original version, and Example 48 shows the same musical material in the revised version. The original version instructs the bass clarinetist to use *bisbigliando*, quarter-tone, and chromatic trills at varying speeds depending on the dynamics (louder faster, softer slower). The prescriptive and descriptive notation is very detailed and implies a strictness about the musical execution. In the revised version (Example 48), the instructions have been streamlined and only say to create a "buzz" sound that imitates the bees from the sound file. The other difference in the revised version is that Raasakka has gone ahead and notated specific low notes for the bass clarinet to articulate using slap tongue. In the original version, the score instructs that "the x-shaped noteheads are percussive tongue slaps with random low notes", requiring that the bass clarinet improvise.



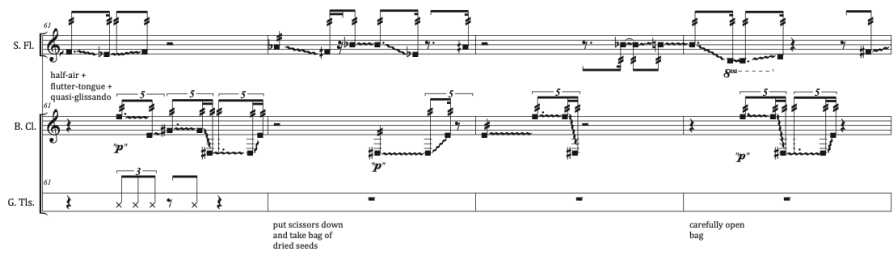
Example 47 Ville Raasakka *Everyday Etudes No. 1: Gardening* (2015 version), mm. 5-10 (transposed score)



Example 48 Ville Raasakka *Everyday Etudes No. 1: Gardening* (2015/20), mm. 5-10 (transposed score)

While both the original and revised notation permit a great deal of creative agency for the bass clarinetist, the revised version goes even further. In our sessions, Raasakka and I discussed making the notation simpler for the bass clarinetist. I argued that not only can excessive notation be off-putting to a performer, but it can detract from communicating musical meaning clearly. Though I did not find the prescriptive notation Raasakka provided in measure five in the original version objectionable, replacing it with only graphic notation and the word "buzz" communicated the necessary essential information to the bass clarinetist. This method places implicit trust in the clarinetist's expertise to decide the creative sound-solution that works best in the specific musical and acoustic situation in which the performance occurs. In addition, the notated low slap notes allow the bass clarinetist to mentally focus on creating the correct sound and timbre on the buzzed notes, rather than having to concentrate on improvising the slapped articulations (deciding which notes to articulate). The object player is also given rough guidelines for dynamics, but is instructed to "fluctuate dynamics a little in an unstable, nervous manner". The performance thus becomes personal and individual, with each performer creating their own sound solution while reacting to the other's dynamics and timbre. This is very similar to *Kraft*, in which Lindberg uses descriptive notation to communicate timbral or sonic effect, but leaves it up to the performer to determine exactly what that means in a performance situation.

Another passage that Raasakka and I discussed extensively was the passage where the bass clarinetist must imitate the cat in the sound file. It is shown below in Example 49. Ultimately no changes were made between the original and revised versions of the score because it was decided that there was really no way to further specify the prescriptive notation in a way that would aid the bass clarinetist's performance. Like the opening buzzed notes shown in Examples 47 and 48, in what way the bass clarinetist should imitate the cat in the sound file becomes very personal to the musicality of the performer and the acoustic in which the performance takes place. The notation suggests that the clarinetist employ half-air to add an auditory fuzz to the timbral texture. From there, the clarinetist can use a combination of flutter-tongue and *glissando* to imitate the sound of the cat. The rhythm and notated pitches are approximate and should serve as a guide for the contour of the motive. Beyond that, it is entirely up to the performer.



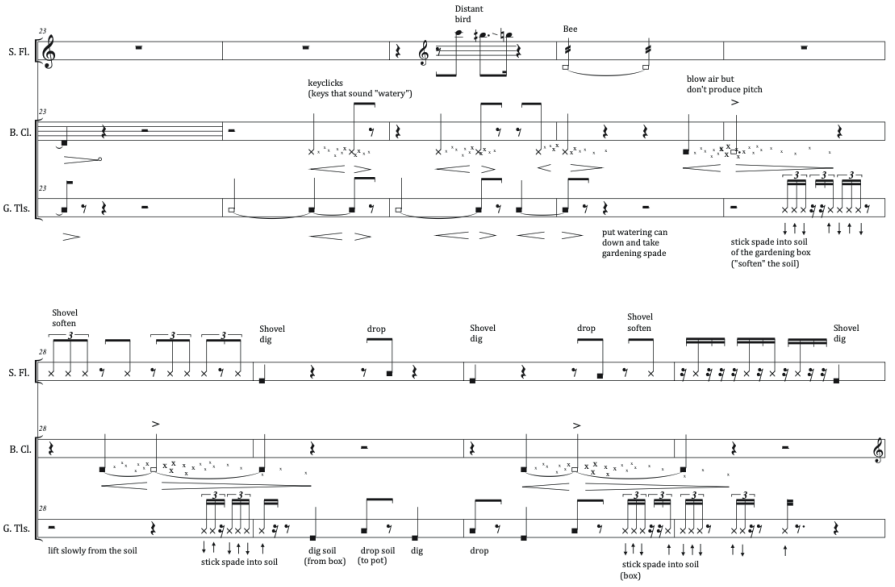
Example 49 Ville Raasakka *Everyday Etudes No. 1: Gardening* (2015/20), mm. 61-64 (transposed score)

The instructions are similarly open for the object player. Entirely prescriptive, they merely instruct the object player of the physical actions of the passage – to "put scissors down and take bag of dried seeds" in measure sixty-two and to "carefully open bag" in measure sixty-three. How the performer choses to do it, and with any theatrical element of facial or gestural expression is entirely up to the performers and how they chose to employ the objects in their performance.

As a chamber music piece, the live performers of *Everyday Etudes No. 1: Gardening* are navigating between creating chamber music individually with the sound file and creating chamber music with each other. For most of the work, the object player and bass clarinetist are performing quite independently and are acutely aware of the sound file for temporal and timbral reference. The excerpt shown in Example 50 is one place where bass clarinetist and object player perform more as a duet, with greater awareness of each other more so than the sound file. It is also a musical moment where descriptive notation is sparse, with limited instructions for both bass clarinetist and object player. Beginning in measure twenty-two, the object player pours water into the flower pot that is filled with soil. Close-range microphones amplify the sound of the water being poured into the pot, with the *crescendi* and *decrescendi* representing the speed and loudness of the water as it is tipped into the soil and then taken back. The timbre, speed, volume, and acoustic are all controlled by the object player.

When the bass clarinetist enters in measure twenty-four, they must react musically to the sound quality, speed, and volume of the object player. When the object player moves to the hand spade in measure twenty-seven, the bass clarinetist continues the water pouring motive alone,

developing it in their own way using air sounds with accents. Measures twenty-seven to thirty-four are an object solo, where the object player rhythmically softens the soil, takes soil from the box, and moves it to the pot. The sound quality, the physical action of the object player and the inclusion of any bodily or facial acting on the part of the object player is completely up to the performer. This is very different from the theatrical specificity of a work like Georges Aperghis *Sept Crimes de L'Amour* (1979), where the performers' actions and interactions are specifically notated in the score. In *Everyday Etudes No. 1*, it is up to the performers to decide, therefore granting them more creative agency. The composer relies on not only the performer's expertise, but takes into account the variation of the acoustic environment and amplification that each performance might employ, and how the performers can and should adjust in those situations.



Example 50 Ville Raasakka *Everyday Etudes No. 1: Gardening* (2015/20), mm. 23-31 (transposed score)

The performance practice of *Everyday Etudes No. 1: Garden* is similar to the other Finnish case studies of this dissertation. The style of notation suggests a performance practice whereby the composer expects expanded performer contribution and both acknowledges and accepts the individuality of performances. The notation culture indicates that the composer expects both the object player and bass clarinetist to contribute

their own artistic knowledge to the creation of the performance, rather than prioritize translating the written ideas of the composer. My personal interaction with the work promoted the collaboration between composer and performer first, because Raasakka performed as object player in all performances, and second, because he elicited my opinion regarding notation in preparation for publication. However, I think that for any performers of the work, there is space in the notation style to promote conversation between performers and composers, if the performers so desire.

V Concluding remarks

This chapter analyzed notational culture and performer agency in the context of Finnish and American contemporary chamber repertoire. The four composers discussed compose music in very different styles, and yet the similarities in notational culture exhibited by the American compositions stood in contrast to that of the Finnish compositions. Like in the examples of electroacoustic repertoire from Chapter 4 and solo repertoire in Chapter 2, the notational culture of the American compositions reduces significant creative decision-making in the performing ensemble, while the Finnish compositions grant the performers more agency to control the individual nature of their performance. A greater feeling of personal contribution corresponds to a greater sense of shared ownership for the performer. The differences in notation culture, agency, and shared ownership experienced, however, do not affect the artistic value of any of these works. My goal in highlighting the differences in notation culture is to make performers more aware of the varying degree and types of decisions made through preparation and performance.

The chamber music works by Thomas and Bates demonstrate a performance practice model whereby the composer uses the score to try and answer the interpretative questions a player might have regarding how the work should be performed. Rather than interpreting this as a method of artistic control, I understand it to be a reflection of the composer's belief that their artistic responsibility is to conceptualize the performance as fully as possible through the notation. This eases the process of individual and ensemble preparation for performance and makes it possible for anyone to

perform the score, regardless of contemporary music performance experience or access to the composer.

It also minimizes the scope of decision-making required by performances and therefore, to a degree, the performer's creative agency. As with any chamber music performance, the performers are tasked with making individual decisions regarding the execution of their own sound, intonation, dynamics, articulation, and phrasing and negotiating these elements with their collaborating musicians. However, managing these decisions while simultaneously focusing on executing the details of the notation leaves little room for creative individual contribution and also limits the extent to which the ensemble needs to make larger, artistic decisions regarding performance. Rather than being tasked to experiment and make important decisions as a group regarding musical intention, the ensemble had a more straightforward path reaching performance-readiness. Coordination and cooperation rather than collaboration became the artistic working model.

The Finnish chamber music examples in this chapter reveal a different type of performance practice. The detailed nature of the notation in the works by Saariaho and Raasakka both go to great lengths to try and communicate the type of sound and timbre the composers wished from the ensemble. However, both composers ultimately rely on extensive individual decision-making by the performers regarding more aspects of performance. More rehearsals were required, and the musical preparation process was less straightforward, requiring ensemble experimentation and trial and error. In the performances of *Oi kuu* and *Everyday Etudes No. 1: Gardening*, the performers had to exercise more creative agency when it came to performance of their own parts as well in cooperation with the collaborating performer.

While the notated scores contain crucial information that only a composer can provide, Saariaho and Raasakka are also operating with the understanding that the performers have distinct duties in performance as well. As with the Finnish examples from Chapters 2 and 4, the performance practice assumes there is certain expertise that the performer has, and that expertise is relied upon in performance. As a result, the performers feel a greater sense of shared ownership in understanding the individuality of the performance and their contribution to it.

CHAPTER 6: CLARINETIST AS ORCHESTRAL MUSICIAN

At the outset of this dissertation, I attributed my inexperience in contemporary music to the fact that as a clarinetist training for a career as an orchestral musician in the United States, contemporary music was not part of my job training nor anticipated job description. In most American classical music institutions contemporary music is a niche genre reserved for performance specialists as well as those who are required to learn contemporary music-making skills to teach them to future students. Though ignorant to the fact that contemporary music affords the performer the opportunity to acquire music-making skills that are not possible to gain only by studying older repertoire, it is not impossible that an orchestral clarinetist in the United States today could establish a successful career by only performing works composed before 1975.

My personal experience auditioning for professional positions in American and Finnish orchestras demonstrates immediately that the role of contemporary music in orchestral practice is different in both places. I have never once prepared an American orchestra audition list with a contemporary work, while nearly every Finnish orchestra audition I have participated in has included at least one contemporary orchestral excerpt, usually by a Finnish composer.[54] Outside of the auditions themselves, I have observed personally that professional orchestras in the United States do not perform contemporary music as often as their Finnish counterparts. These observations confirm important differences in contemporary music culture in both places.

However, in the realm of orchestral music, contemporary music practice becomes harder to study. Not only are there more musicians to consider, but there is the role of the conductor as well as standard implications of the institutional nature of orchestras, their management, leadership, financial model, and societal positioning. In this chapter, I have chosen to examine the topic from both my personal perspective as an

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[54] CK Dexter Haven's website *All is Yar* maintains a reference page of repertoire and audition lists for American and Canadian auditions (https://allisyar.com/orchestral-audition-lists/). The clarinet section contains recent principal clarinet audition lists from the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony, Houston Symphony and Los Angeles Philharmonic, as well as various associate, E-flat, second and bass clarinet auditions. There is not a single list that asks for the applicant to prepare an excerpt composed in the last 90 years.

orchestral freelancer in Finland and using quantitative programming data that I have gathered from 2017-2023. By reflecting on two contemporary music performances in Finnish orchestras, I am able to see how my observations of notation culture, performance practice and shared agency in solo and chamber repertoire translate to an orchestral context. The quantitative programming data is used to demonstrate the differences how much and what kind (premieres, commissions, etc.) of contemporary music is performed in Finland and the United States. The data demonstrates the extent to which orchestral musicians perform contemporary music and shows how some American orchestras are changing their contemporary music programming practice. The amount of contemporary music performed by orchestras directly influences the exposure that musicians in those orchestras have to both contemporary music performance and to living composers.

I Case Study 1: Adams conducting Adams in Lahti

As a freelance orchestral musician, I have worked in the capital area as well in cities like Oulu, Pori, Turku, and Lahti. I have yet to perform in a Finnish orchestra where contemporary music is *not* performed regularly. My experience is that while smaller cities might perform less contemporary music overall, the works they do perform tend to be by Finnish composers. This reflects the general inclusion of contemporary music into Finnish orchestral music performance practice at levels not seen in the United States. Finnish audiences are accustomed to listening to contemporary music in orchestral settings and Finnish orchestral musicians are used to performing this repertoire. Similarly, the focus on performing Finnish composers and the close relationship between Finnish composers and Finnish orchestras reveals a certain obligation that Finnish orchestras feel to promote and give recognition to orchestral music being composed by Finns today.

In reflecting on recent orchestral performances that directly relate to the themes of this research project, my participation in a performance of John Adams' *Harmonielehre* (1985) with the Lahti Symphony Orchestra and the composer conducting immediately came to mind. The performance took place in October 2021 on a program that included Philip Glass' Concerto for Two Pianos and orchestra (2015) and Maurice Ravel's *La Valse* (1919-1920). *Harmonielehre* is one of Adams' best known orchestral works, and one that he has referred to as "a one-of-kind, once-only essay in the wedding of fin-

de-siècle chromatic harmony with the rhythmic and formal procedures of Minimalism" (Adams 2008, 130). Though on the older side of what one considers contemporary, the work continues to be performed widely by orchestras because it is accessible for both orchestral musicians (even those who might not perform a lot of contemporary music) and audiences.

Based on the quantitative programming data that will be discussed in section III, John Adams was the second most performed contemporary composer after Thomas Adés amongst both American and Finnish orchestras. Seven out of eight orchestras surveyed performed works by Adams during the last six seasons. In Helsinki, the Finnish Radio Symphony performed Adams in four of the last six seasons and the Helsinki Philharmonic performed works by Adams in two of the last six seasons. As composer-conductors, both Adés and Adams direct their own compositions frequently with orchestras. This dual role of conductor-composer contributes to contemporary performance practice by both increasing the performance frequency of the composer's own works (i.e., orchestra musicians' and audience's exposure to a composer's works) and controlling to a degree an orchestra's musical interpretations of their own compositions.

The Lahti Symphony Orchestra is the city orchestra of Lahti, which is around one hundred kilometers north of Helsinki. Though the city of Lahti has a population of only around 120,000 people compared to Helsinki's 1.4 million, the city boasts one of the best concert halls in the world, Sibeliustalo or the Sibelius Hall.[55] The Lahti Symphony Orchestra came to international prominence in the 1990s with its recordings of Sibelius with then chief conductor Osmo Vänskä. The orchestra performs contemporary music regularly, specializing in the works of Kalevi Aho and Einojuhani Rautavaara. Over the past eight years, I have participated in performances of works by Aho, Rautavaara, Wennäkoski, Olli Kortekangas, Joonas Kokkonen, Harri Ahmas, and Lauri Porra with the Lahti Symphony.

Composed for an especially large orchestra, *Harmonielehre* uses minimal musical material in a maximalist way. As the clarinet parts are not technically difficult, individual preparation mostly involved listening to a recording of the work to mark key entrances and rhythmic queues in the part. As the longest piece of the program, and due to its unfamiliarity to most

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[55] Cox, T. "Ten of the world's best concert halls." *The Guardian* (Online). 5 Mar 2015. https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2015/mar/05/10-worlds-best-concert-halls-berlin-boston-tokyo.

members of the orchestra, *Harmonielehre* consumed the most rehearsal time over the course of three days.[56] The driving rhythmic propulsion and the overlapping of rhythmic motives required the most ensemble rehearsal time. The nature of the notation, which was very similar to *Gnarly Buttons*, meant that there was little that Adams contributed in terms of musical explanation to what was already notated in the score. Performance instructions were clear, and it was inferred that the role of orchestras was to translate the notation to sound. Adams noted when we were not playing the dynamics properly, or when we were being rhythmically inaccurate. As a conductor, he made sure to control our tendencies to rush or drag and made sure to check the occasional intonation issue and adjust balance between instruments when necessary. He encouraged adherence to what he had written. The style of the music itself, and the style of his conducting, limited individual creative liberties.

In general, my experience performing *Harmonielehre* with Adams conducting repeated the performance practice that I had experienced preparing works like *Life of Birds* and *Capricci: Hummingbird Romance*. While Adams' presence undoubtedly motivated the orchestra to do an especially good job, and Adams remarked repeatedly during the week how pleased he was with our work and our performance, there was not a lot of creative musical thinking we really had to do as musicians to perform *Harmonielehre*. This might sound controversial, I do not mean it to be. This characteristic does not minimize in any way the value of the artistic work. It merely signifies a different performance practice, a certain way that individual musicians, composer, and conductor relate to the notated score and the expectation of musician, composer, and conductor in performance. Like the ensemble works of Bates and Thomas discussed in the previous chapter, the individual parts of *Harmonielehre* are prepared very classically – find any technically challenging measures, work them up to performance tempo, and get to know the score well enough to recognize how your part lines up with others. Group rehearsals were concerned with assembling the individual parts such that everything lined up properly in time, harmony, and balance. There was little individual creative thought required to understand

[56] The typical work week in Lahti is three four-hour rehearsals Monday through Wednesday, a three-hour dress rehearsal on Thursday (usually a run through of the entire program), and a concert on Thursday evening.

how to play ones' part, and Adams primary job as the conductor was to make sure we were observing all the necessary notated details.

II Case Study 2: Tiensuu premiere in Espoo

In contrast, I recall the premiere of Jukka Tiensuu's *Ihmepari* (2022), a concerto for two violin-playing sopranos and orchestra, which I performed with the Tapiola Sinfonietta conducted by Sakari Oramo in December 2022. This performance stands out in my mind for many reasons. Like the Adams, it was an important musical moment with a preeminent conductor in a concert that received a lot of press attention and for which there was a lot of excitement in the orchestra. But from a performer's perspective, and a performance practice perspective, the Tiensuu performance was unique.

For one, the nature of the orchestral writing was extremely individual. Not only were the solo parts composed with specific performers in mind (Anu Komsi and Minna Pensola), but the orchestra parts were very soloistic. The strings were seated in the normal orchestral position in the center of the orchestra immediately in front of the conductor, behind them were the bassoons (where the front row of woodwinds would normally sit), while the flutes, clarinets, and trumpets were split into two groups on either side of the stage. At various moments of the work, the wind trios played off each other on either side of the stage with thin orchestration. The physical positioning alone altered the mental perspective of the players, making us feel more important and less anonymous within the orchestra. Tiensuu uses physical movement often in his compositions. For example, the performance note to *Plus II*, which I performed on the Elollinen program, instructs the players to begin on opposite sides of the stage and move towards each other.

Though the seating position was unique, the soloistic approach to orchestral writing is common in many Finnish contemporary works for orchestra that I have played. In 2022, I performed and recorded Antti Auvinen's *Andalusian Panzerwagen Jazz* for solo guitar and chamber orchestra with Tapiola Sinfonietta. Though that work employs standard seating, the sparse orchestration allows for soloistic lines in the winds to be audible, which is not always common for a concerto. I also recall works like Rautavaara's *Cantus Arcticus* and Wennäkoski's *Flounce*, both which I have performed in Lahti, which have very soloistic writing especially in the woodwinds despite being composed for a rather large orchestra.

In the preparation of *Ihmepari,* one notable observation was that while the composer was present for rehearsals, he remained mostly in the background. There were a few moments where he was very concerned with adjusting balance and transparency of the orchestral lines. But for the most part, it seemed that while his guidance would be offered when necessary, or asked, he trusted the performers – the orchestra, conductor, and soloists – and considered them both capable and responsible for making their own musical decisions. This meant that not only were the conductor and soloists free to exercise their own creative decision-making, but also the orchestral musicians. *Ihmepari* also utilized a notation that left openings for deciding both musical intention and musical execution.

Though the work was in the middle of the program, sandwiched by Kurt Weill's *Der Neue Orpheus* and Brahms Third Symphony, it consumed a large amount of rehearsal time. The technical and musical difficulty of the individual parts required conductor and ensemble attention. While the rehearsals of *Harmonielehre* were about coordination, the rehearsals for *Ihmepari* focused on deciding acoustic qualities and musical intent. Like rehearsals for *Oi kuu*, it took time to determine as an ensemble what sound quality of the work, the musical momentum of the phrasing, and the connection between different sections. As a member of the orchestra, I felt that my individual part was important and that I needed to make important creative decisions into how it was supposed to sound. The notation indicated articulation, dynamics and style, but in more flexible terms. Rather than execute what was notated, it felt as though additional decision-making was needed from the performers and conductor. This increased decision-making and sense of performer agency contributed to a greater sense of shared ownership of the performance. Not simply because it was a premiere, but because the performance was the unique result of the decision-makings of the ensemble, soloists, and conductor in that time and place.

Preparing *Ihmepari* for performance demonstrates how aspects of Finnish contemporary performance practice like notation culture, performer agency, and shared ownership translate to the orchestral setting. The preparations of a contemporary composition for performance in an orchestral setting are high-stakes for a composer, particularly if the performance is a premiere. Despite the composers' presence for both *Harmonielehre* and *Ihmepari*, the nature of the interaction between composer and orchestra in each performance was very different. Without a doubt, Adams' dual role of

conductor and composer of *Harmonielehre* made him inherently more central to the performance preparations in Lahti. However, the score-based nature of his comments in rehearsals and the minimal creative decision-making exercised by the orchestral musicians revealed a contemporary performance practice similar to the other American compositions examined in previous chapters.

The performance of *Ihmepari*, on the other hand, reflected how Finnish composers are more inclined to both trust and rely on the performers' expertise and to collaborate with performers to yield a performance rather than depending on musical execution of the prepared score. Tiensuu's presence leading up to the premiere was integral for addressing important questions of intent, and he certainly spoke up when he felt it was necessary. But he seemed equally comfortable trusting the knowledge of the conductor, soloists, and orchestra to sort out of the creative decisions involved in performance, of which there were many. It was very similar to the way Auvinen trusted Petri Kumela and the orchestra in the performance and recording of *Andalusian Panzerwagen Jazz*.

These experiences seem to suggest that Finnish composers, being quite used to working closely with orchestras, view performers as central in the practice of contemporary music. Collaboration between performers and between performers and composers is valued highly, and the contribution of all involved are valued equally. Though Adams has worked with a lot of orchestras, it seemed like he did not want to assume that the Lahti Symphony was comfortable with contemporary music performance. Like the scores of Thomas and Bates, the notation culture of *Harmonielehre* attempts to make performance preparation as smooth and clear a creative process for the orchestra as possible. It cannot be assumed, as was the case for the preparation of Tiensuu, that the orchestra can spend a large amount of rehearsal time on the contemporary work on the program. The quantitative programming data presented in the next section offers further clues as to how American and Finnish orchestra consider contemporary music as part of their orchestral practices and why these practices differ.

III Contemporary music programming in Finnish and American orchestras 2017-2023

When I began this doctoral research in 2017, I initiated a programming study because I was curious to see if what I had observed personally regarding Finnish orchestras' incorporation of contemporary music and American orchestras' exclusion of that repertoire was factually and statistically true. Seasonally since the fall of 2017, I have recorded and analyzed the contemporary repertoire being performed by six of the largest orchestras in the United States (New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cleveland, and Los Angeles) and Northern Europe (the Finnish, Danish and Swedish Radio Orchestras and the Helsinki, Stockholm and Oslo Philharmonics). These reports are published annually on my website[57], and will be the topic of an upcoming article publication about contemporary programming in orchestral music. For the purposes of this dissertation, I focus only on the data from the American and Finnish orchestras.

Six seasons of programming data has revealed three important things. First, at the outset of this study, the American orchestras were performing significantly less contemporary music than the Helsinki orchestras studied. However, since 2017, these American orchestras have been steadily increasing their contemporary music programming. The Finnish Radio and Helsinki Philharmonic, meanwhile, have maintained a consistently high amount of contemporary programming. This suggests that American programming practices are currently evolving, while the Finnish (or Helsinki) orchestras' practices are established.

Second, even though the American orchestras perform more than twice the number of concerts per season, the Helsinki orchestras have performed more contemporary works over the last six seasons. These American orchestras usually perform close to a hundred concerts a season, not including their summer seasons (which were not examined as part of this study). The Helsinki orchestras, on the other hand, perform usually between forty to fifty concerts per season. In Helsinki, a single orchestra program is performed once or occasionally twice in a week. In the US, these large orchestras repeat a single program three to five times in a week. Statistics showing the total number of contemporary works performed indicate that not only are there more programs with contemporary music, but also that the

[57] http://www.lucyabrams.net

Helsinki based-orchestras are more frequently performing programs that include more than one contemporary work.

Finally, the data reveals various approaches to contemporary programming and commissioning of national composers – American composers for the American orchestras, Finnish composers for the Finnish orchestras. The two Helsinki-based orchestras commissioned mostly from Finnish composers during the period surveyed, while some American orchestras commissioned predominantly European composers. This reveals important regional differences amongst the six American orchestras. The Finnish practice of commissioning national composers reinforces the central role that Finnish contemporary music plays in Finnish orchestral music practice and the varying degree to which American orchestras support the creation of new American contemporary music.

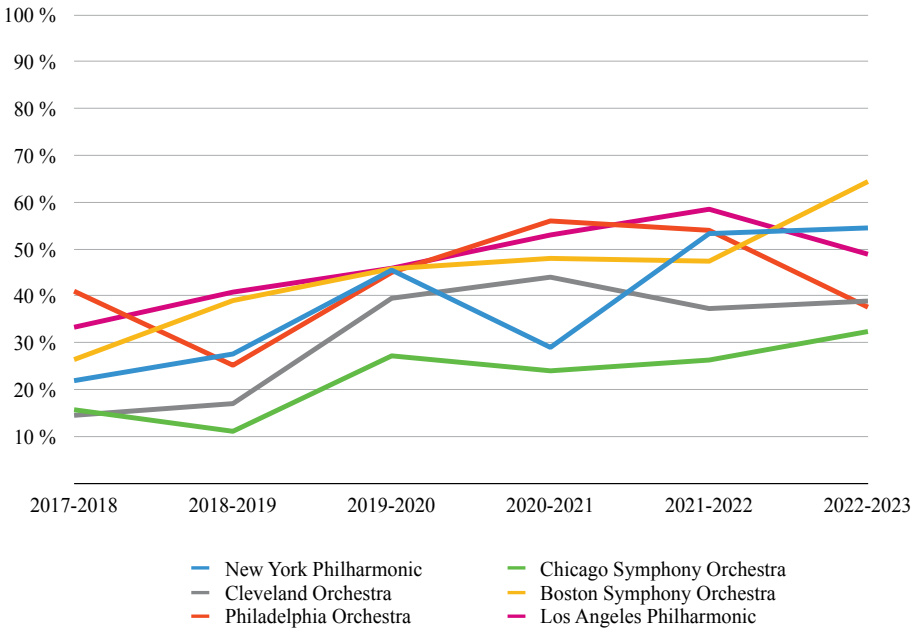
i Percentage of orchestra concerts that included at least one contemporary work

At the start of this programming study, the American orchestras surveyed played contemporary music much less frequently than the two Helsinki orchestras. The graphs in Example 51 and 52 show the percentage of orchestra concerts performed seasonally by that contained at least one contemporary work.[58] Example 51 shows the six American orchestras, while the graph in Example 52 shows the two Finnish orchestras. The data in 2019-2020 season includes all planned performances and does not take into account performances canceled on account on the COVID pandemic. By fall 2020 (for the 2020-2021 season data), the Finnish orchestras were back to performing in person. While the 2020-2021 seasons were canceled for all the American orchestras except the Philadelphia Orchestra (who went to only-streaming), the intended programming for the 2020-2021 was announced in its entirety in spring 2020. Because of this, the programming study could proceed using this data (less touring concerts, which were not included).

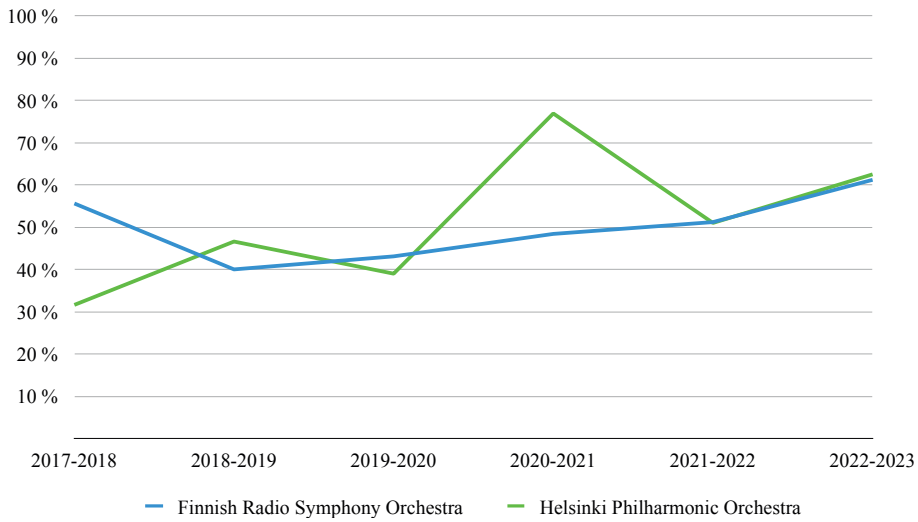
For the American orchestras, not a single orchestra performed a contemporary work in more than half their concerts until the (planned) 2020-2021 season. In the 2017-2018 season, the Philadelphia Orchestra performed a contemporary work in the highest frequency of concerts, around

[58] Contemporary defined as composed after 1980.

forty percent, while the Los Angeles Philharmonic featured a contemporary work in about a third of their concerts. The Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, on the other hand, performed contemporary works in over fifty-five percent of their concerts. While the Helsinki Philharmonic performed a contemporary work in only about a third of their concerts in the 2017-2018, I have concluded this was an exceptional low. As the graph in Example 52 shows, contemporary music was presented much more frequently by the Helsinki Philharmonic since. Amongst the American orchestras studied, the Chicago Symphony



Example 51 Percentage of symphony orchestra concerts by six American orchestras that included at least one work composed after 1980 from 2017-2023



Example 52 Percentage of symphony orchestra concerts by two Helsinki-based orchestras that included at least one work composed after 1980 from 2017-2023

and Cleveland Orchestra perform contemporary music least frequently in their concerts.

Over the course of six seasons, four of six of the American orchestras studied – New York, Boston, Chicago and Cleveland – drastically increased their contemporary music performance frequency. In the 2022-2023 season, the New York Philharmonic played contemporary music in over half their concerts, compared to less than a fourth of their concerts in the 2017-2018 season. The Los Angeles Philharmonic increased their frequency of contemporary music performance slightly, while the Philadelphia Orchestra fluctuated from season-to-season but stayed around forty percent. Despite the increase, the Chicago Symphony performs contemporary music the least frequently of the orchestras studied. The Helsinki Philharmonic performed the study's highest frequency of contemporary music performance in the 2020-2021 season, when they performed at least one contemporary work in over three-fourths of concerts. But only the Helsinki-based orchestras have consistently performed contemporary music in around 50% of concerts for the last three seasons.

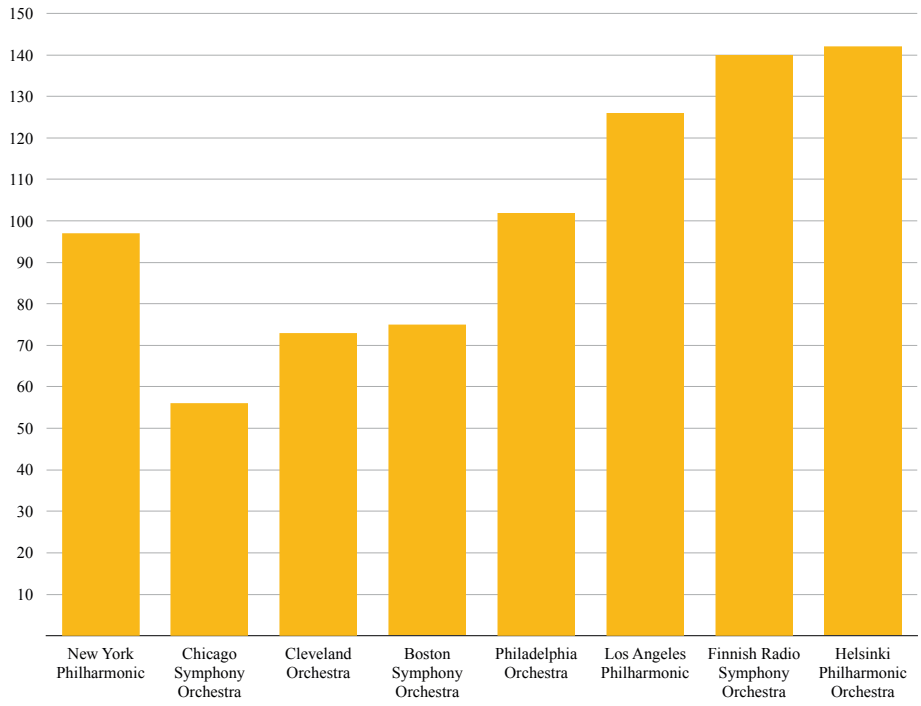
It is also notable that the COVID-pandemic does not appear to disrupt the upward trends in American contemporary music programming. Despite the cancellation of the seasons of New York, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, and Los Angeles, the contemporary music programming in

2021-2022 and 2022-2023 continued to increase from its starting levels. It is true that planned premieres were moved ahead to these subsequent seasons, making it arguable that offerings decreased. However, in view of the 2023-2024 data not yet published, I conclude that American orchestras are beginning to take the view that contemporary music programming offers artistic, ethical and political rewards that might outweigh financial risk.

ii Total number of contemporary works performed

The Finnish orchestras studied also performed the most contemporary works over the course of six seasons. The bar chart in Example 53 shows the total number of contemporary works performed by each of the eight orchestras during these six seasons. The Helsinki Philharmonic and Finnish Radio each performed one hundred forty or more works between 2017 and 2023. The Los Angeles Philharmonic performed the most works of any of the American orchestras studied, while the Chicago Symphony Orchestra performed the least number of works.

It is important to consider both the frequency and number of works performed when trying to analyze the contemporary music performance practice of these ensembles because American orchestras performed twice as many concerts as their Finnish counterparts by repeating a single program up to five times. The graphs in Examples 51 and 52 do not show, for example, when more than one contemporary work is performed in a concert program. That the Los Angeles Philharmonic performed the most contemporary works over six seasons of the American orchestras, despite only performing a contemporary work on an average of forty-six percent of concerts, indicates they more frequently perform more than one contemporary work on a given program.



Example 53 Number of contemporary works (composed after 1980) performed by eight large orchestras from 2017-2023

iii. The importance of performing national composers

Within the contemporary music repertoire performed by each orchestra, I also took note of the frequency with which American and Finnish orchestras performed works by American and Finnish composers, respectively. The data demonstrates that many of these American orchestras still tend to favor non-American contemporary composers. This is due in large part to the European origin of American orchestras and the dominance of European composers in classical music generally.[59] It is a lasting effect of the division of contemporary music practices stylistically and institutionally in the United States, particularly in the end of the twentieth century.[60] This is particularly true when it comes to new contemporary works commissioned yearly by each orchestra.

[59] See for example Horowitz 1987, 2005, 2008.

[60] See Abrams-Husso, L. (2022). Institutionalization of 'Uptown': Contemporary Orchestral Music Practices in New York City 1960-1975. *Trio 11*(1-2), 11-38. https://doi.org/10.37453/tj.120916.

On average, most orchestras performed more works by foreign contemporary composers than national ones. Only Boston, Chicago and Philadelphia performed more contemporary American composers. Chicago and Philadelphia both currently have American composers-in-residence (it is not always the case that composers-in-residence in American orchestras are American). Around forty-five percent of contemporary composers performed by the New York Philharmonic were American, while less than forty percent of contemporary composers performed by the Cleveland Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic were American. Both the Finnish orchestras studied also performed more works by foreign composers than Finnish composers.

When it comes to commissions, however, there was a pronounced difference between American and Finnish practices. The graph in Example 54 shows the percentage of commissions from the national composer over the six seasons surveyed (an American composer by the US orchestras, a Finnish composer by the Helsinki orchestras). Over eighty percent of the works commissioned by the Helsinki orchestras were by Finnish composers. Only the Philadelphia Orchestra and Chicago Symphony engaged a comparable proportion of American composers, again due in large part to the composer-in-residence programs by both orchestras. The Cleveland Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic commissioned the lowest proportion of works by American composers.

The practice of commissioning national composers reflects both the extent to which national composers are integrated in symphony orchestra institutions, and the degree to which the orchestras themselves feel responsible for supporting and strengthening the position of national composers. Funding, and systems of funding, also play a huge role. Symphony orchestras, particularly the eight studied here, remain hugely influential within the world of classical music nationally and internationally. It can be argued that other American institutions, like new music ensembles or universities, are more integral to the professional survival of composers today.[61] However, a commission from a large symphony orchestra remains a huge career milestone with implications for audience and peer recognition. Not to mention the monetary significance.

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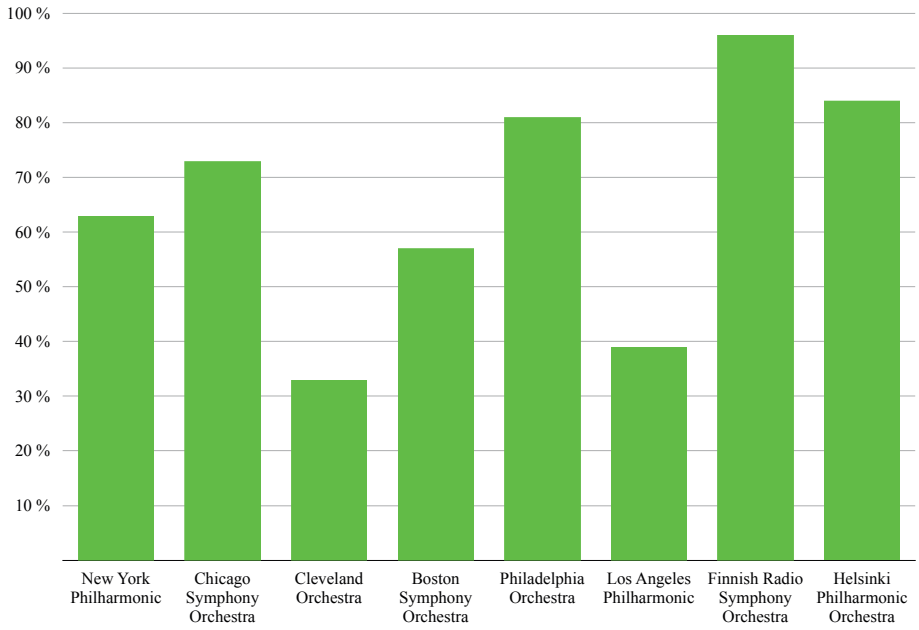
[61] See Lochhead 2019; Pippen 2014; Nash 1957; Robin 2016, 2018.



Example 54 Percentage of commissioned works that were composed by a national composer (American composer for the American orchestras, Finnish composer for the Finnish orchestras)

iv Final remarks on the programming data

This programming study contributes to the study of contemporary music performance practice because the extent to which orchestras perform contemporary works directly influences the exposure that musicians of those orchestras have to contemporary music. It also affects orchestral musicians' contact with living composers, national or international.

The New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, and Los Angeles Philharmonic have separate performance ensembles and series that focus only on contemporary repertoire. The New York Philharmonic produces *Sound On*, the most recent iteration of new music concerts initiated by Pierre Boulez in the late 1970s. Augusta Read Thomas launched the *Music Now* series at the Chicago Symphony in 1997 and the Los Angeles Philharmonic has had its own LA Phil New Music Group (founded 1981) that is featured prominently in its Green Umbrella contemporary music series. While these ensembles and series do expose the orchestra's members and audiences to contemporary repertoire, commission and perform a great deal of new music, and put players in contact with living composers, they also contribute to the

separation of contemporary music practice from classical orchestral performance practice.[62] The performances by these New Music ensembles are not included in the regular orchestra musician's job duties, and therefore extra players are often hired. They also are frequently performed in other locations besides the orchestra's main venue. The practice of delegating new music performance to these ensembles enables the commissioning of new works for mixed ensemble, but they do not add to the orchestral contemporary music repertoire or promote the cooperation of composers with large symphony orchestras.

While general trends regarding the orchestral practice of contemporary music in the United States can be ascertained through the study of these six American orchestras, it is especially important to recognize the regional and individual differences of these orchestras. It also is necessary to note that each orchestra carries a different amount of institutional strength in their given city. For example, the New York Philharmonic is one of many important, large, and influential classical music institutions in New York City. New York City has several orchestras, like the American Symphony Orchestra, Brooklyn Symphony, Orchestra of St. Luke's and Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, as well as entire orchestras dedicated to contemporary music, like the American Composer's Orchestra. Los Angeles, as the second largest American city after New York City, has about a third the number of people as New York City and half the population density. In addition to the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chamber Orchestra, the Pacific Symphony, and Long Beach Symphony are less than an hour's drive from downtown Los Angeles. In many ways, it is most appropriate to compare the practices of the Helsinki orchestras with the New York Philharmonic or Los Angeles Philharmonic because these ensembles coexist with other orchestral institutions and various large and small contemporary ensembles in their respective cities. However, for Chicago (America's third largest city), Philadelphia, Boston, and Cleveland, the large symphony orchestras studied here are the major orchestral institutions and the most

[62] Separate New Music concerts are not included in the statistics presented here.

influential classical music institutions in their metropolitan areas.[63] When programming is understood from this perspective, the amount of American contemporary music performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra or the amount of European contemporary music performed by the Cleveland Orchestra is significant.

IV Concluding remarks

This chapter examined contemporary music performance practice in an orchestral context. Drawing on my own experiences as a freelance orchestral musician in Finland, I presented two case studies. The first, of Adams conducting Adams in Lahti, demonstrated how my observations regarding American contemporary notation culture, performer agency, and shared ownership, carried over to orchestral performance. The second, the Tapiola Sinfonietta's world premiere of Tiensuu's *Ihmepari*, showed how Finnish contemporary music practice places more musical responsibility in the hands of the performer, even in an orchestral context when you have many more performers, and a conductor.

Following the case studies, I presented parts of my large-scale contemporary music programming study. The study, which I began over a year before my first doctoral concert, was started out of curiosity more than anything. I wanted to see if my personal impressions of contemporary music performance in large orchestras was true - did Finnish orchestras perform more contemporary music than American orchestras? The first year of the study, in the 2017-2018 season, the answer was overwhelming, yes. As the study progressed, however, some American orchestras began to program more contemporary music, and more works by American composers. In contrast, orchestra audiences in Helsinki were exposed to a consistently large amount of contemporary music and a large amount of music by contemporary Finnish composers. This quantitatively confirmed my initial

[63] In Chicago, the Chicago Sinfonietta and Chicago Philharmonic each perform around 10-20 symphony orchestra concerts per season in the city and suburbs, while the Chicago Composers Orchestra performs 2-4 concerts per year and specializes in contemporary music. The Philly Pops and Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia each perform 15-20 concerts per season. The Akron and Canton Symphony Orchestras each perform around 12-14 concerts per season about an hour from Cleveland. In Boston, the Boston Philharmonic, the Longwood Symphony, Brockton Symphony, Boston Civic Symphony, North Shore Philharmonic, and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project each perform 3-5 concerts per season.

observation when I moved to Helsinki in 2013 – that contemporary music is central to orchestral Finnish music life. In the United States, contemporary music remains a separate field, even though the orchestras I studied have recently begun performing more contemporary repertoire.

CHAPTER 7: CLARINETIST AS ANTHROPOLOGIST

This doctoral project placed the perspectives of a performing clarinetist at the center of the study of contemporary music performance practice. Motivated by my own discovery of contemporary Finnish music, I wanted to focus on contemporary music performance for my general personal artistic development in repertoire new and old. It has never been my aim to become a specialist in contemporary music, but rather to embrace music by living composers as part of my classical music practice broadly. In addition to acquiring the unique skills needed to perform contemporary repertoire, I sought to understand the added responsibility of introducing new repertoire to audiences and of working with living composers.

The project was equally motivated by my observations of differences in classical music culture and performance practice between my home country of the United States and my second home in Finland. Finland is recognized as a small, but particularly active country in classical music culture. It is the home country of a disproportionate amount of internationally recognized conductors and produces the most contemporary music per capita (Howell 2007, viii). On the ground, living in Finland, I witnessed a classical musical culture that is uniquely nonhierarchical, with composers, performers, and conductors equally respected for their artistic contributions. I also witnessed a classical music practice that incorporates contemporary music rather than distinguishes it as a completely separate practice.

There was culture shock, to be sure. The United States is also a classical music powerhouse, home to some of most prestigious and internationally renowned classical music performance and education institutions. With importance comes deference, and a fiercely hierarchical social structure. In the US, contemporary music is widely considered a separate specialty within music performance. It is not often considered integral to one's classical instrumental music education, and it is markedly removed from orchestral training and orchestral performance. The United States and Finland both produce an enormous amount of important and aesthetically varied contemporary music. I wanted to understand if my observations regarding performance culture translated to performance practice.

These dual motivations – of personal artistic development and to study cultural differences – resulted in this practice-based doctoral project consisting of three live concerts, a 2-CD album, and a dissertation. Each artistic output of this project had its own theme centered around contemporary music practice that brought together solo, electroacoustic, and chamber music repertoire by Finnish and American composers of different styles, ages, backgrounds, and institutional affiliations. The topic of the first concert was clarinetist as a soloist (November 2018), the topic of the second was designing a concert for a non-traditional concert space (September 2020), and the third concert (March 2022) focused on contemporary music with folk influences. The 2-CD album, *Duel,* featured all works for clarinet or bass clarinet and electronics and was released in April 2022. The second and third concerts, and the album, each included a world premiere / commissioned work for clarinet.

In the preparation and performance for each concert, I researched through practice the unique skills required and acquired in contemporary music performance. I also began writing about my research and digesting material in real time on my website. In my written reflections and analyses, I came to rely equally on my perspectives and observations as a performing musician as my day-to-day experiences as a musician embedded in classical culture in Finland. This included working with other musicians, composers, producers, and conductors, and interacting with them and with audiences. For this reason, I identify the methods of this project as both practice-based research and auto-ethnography.

During written reflection on my first concert, in which I recalled both the act of performing and of playing for the Finnish composers whose works I performed, I realized that my relationship as a performer with the American versus Finnish scores was markedly different. The research theme 'notation as cultural practice' emerged to identify how notation affected the nature of the artistic and collaborative relationships between composer and performer(s). Notation culture revealed the composer's expectations of the performer and I noticed that these expectations were different between most Finnish and most American repertoire. Related to this theme of notation was the second research theme of shared ownership. I define shared ownership as both the feeling of responsibility for and the degree of participation in the creation of new music, and of sharing that music with audiences. Though I had expected the experience of shared ownership to be tied to

commissioning and premiering compositions, I found that shared ownership was an important aspect of the performance practice of most Finnish contemporary works. Rather than being dependent on one's relationship with the composer or the performance history of a work, it was dependent on the performance agency experienced by the clarinetist in preparation and performance.

The final theme, translation of cultural values in performance practice, was, to me, the most important but the hardest to articulate within this performance study. By attempting to understand a performance practice as the reflection of a culture's values, there is a risk of assigning and attributing false generalities about a pluralistic body of people and practices. I argue that the contemporary music practices of Finland and the United States do reflect differences in cultural values in both places – Finnish egalitarianism and national collectivity and American equality of opportunity and competition perhaps being the most pronounced dichotomy. Framing performance practice as a reflection of cultural values is one way to understand *why* contemporary music is practiced the way it is, and why there are differences in practice in different places. My goal is to try to become more aware as a clarinetist, and encourage others to become more aware of how and why we produce art the way we do.

The final output of this research project is this dissertation: "The musical anthropologist: a study of performance practices in Finnish and American contemporary repertoire for clarinet." Following the introduction, each chapter focuses on the roles that a contemporary clarinetist must take on as a professional musician today. Clarinetist as soloist draws on six case studies from the solo repertoire and two from the concerto repertoire to analyze the role of the clarinet soloist in contemporary American and Finnish music performance. Clarinetist as composer expands the understanding of clarinetist from performer of a piece of music to composer of a live performance, identifying the sounding and non-sounding decisions that a performer as composer faces in the creation of a contemporary music performance. Clarinetist as recording artist follows the transition from live performance to studio recording, discussing the unique nature of contemporary music recording as a distinct artistic practice from live performance by focusing particularly on the recording of electroacoustic works for clarinet. Clarinetist as chamber musician uses case studies from Finnish and American contemporary chamber music to examine how

notation culture, agency, shared ownership, and cultural values are reflected in Finnish and American contemporary chamber music repertoire. In Clarinetist as orchestral musician, I combine two case studies of orchestral music performance from my working life with quantitative orchestral programming data.

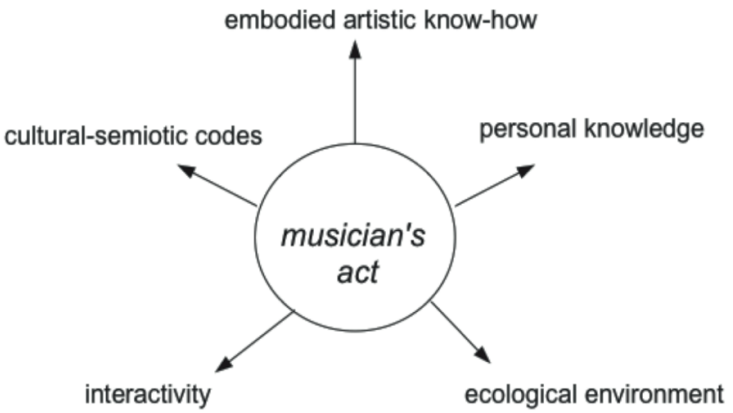
In this final chapter, Clarinetist as anthropologist, I summarize my findings as they relate to the research themes outlined in the first chapter, discuss how these findings have changed my perspectives as both a researcher and a performer, and propose a path forward in both music-making and contemporary music performance practice scholarship. I believe that my anthropology background has profoundly shaped both the execution of this doctoral project as well as my analysis of its findings. While ethnographic methods, particularly auto-ethnography, are becoming increasingly common in artistic research, it has always been my goal to connect the artistic form of contemporary music with the people and cultures that produce it.

I Research theme: notation as cultural practice

The importance of notation in Western classical music cannot be overstated due to its position as the communicative vessel between composer and performer. There is no shortage of studies about notation as it relates to contemporary classical music performance, particularly as notation techniques and technology have developed at breakneck speeds. The changing function of notation has also been a prime area of study. With the establishment of the ideals of *Werktreue* in the nineteenth century came the idea that the identity of a work of composed music *was* the notated score itself, not the performance(s) of that work. With the belief that the notated score contained every thought and will of the composer came the expectation that the performers of notated scores be primarily concerned with the composer's intention. A performer's agency – their freedom to contribute their own artistic ideas and conceptions to the performance of a composed score – became severely limited by the propagation of *Werktreue* ideals.

Today, there exists a spectrum of beliefs when it comes to work fidelity and the expectations of both composer and performer. Increased scholarly focus on the performer has also made plain that the creative act of music-making is only partially informed by notation, regardless of the

composer's intent. For example, Coessens has written extensively on the musical act of creation, seeking to map its form. Example 55 below shows what she refers to as "the five dimensions of the artist's web of practice" (Coessens 2013, 341). In her model, "cultural-semiotic codes" include "notation and musical styles" as well as "the socio-cultural values, meaning and modes of transmission", while "interactivity" refers to all social interactions of the musician from personal friendships to cooperation with the composer and collaborating musicians to communication with the audience. She notes that while this map is universal, the weight and relationship of each node are unique to each performer.



Example 55 From Coessens 2013, 341.

This analysis of Finnish and American contemporary music for clarinet suggests that the significance of cultural-semiotic codes can affect other aspects of creativity including interactivity, embodied artistic knowledge and personal knowledge. The case studies presented by American composers Libby Larsen, Jack Hughes, Eric Mandat, John Adams, Molly Joyce, Augusta Read Thomas, and Mason Bates represent a notation culture that limits not only a performer's agency but also shapes the working relationships between collaborating musicians and between the composer and performer(s). While these works are aesthetically diverse, they share a quality of wholeness or completeness held in the notation. No matter how complex or simple the musical ideas communicated, the notation style of these composers implies that the performer is expected to translate that which is written.

This style of notation promotes a performance practice that is straightforward and easy to understand for most classical-trained musicians: practice to embody the technical and aural qualities of the work, coordinate with fellow musicians (when applicable), and execute that which has been practiced in performance. The decision-making required for performance centers around execution rather than having to make significant creative decisions about musical intent or expression. This can involve having to entirely focus on executing very detailed notation, like in Thomas' *Capricci: Hummingbird Romance* or Mandat's *Folk Songs*. Other times, the musical ideas or their expression are so simple that performer-contributed alterations or additions detract from rather than contribute to the performance, like Joyce's *Attack and Sustain*, Bates' *Life of Birds*, or Adams' *Harmonielehre*. In these instances, the performance of this style of work relies on transparency and clarity.

In contrast, I have offered stylistically diverse case studies from Finnish composers Markku Klami, Lotta Wennäkoski, Kimmo Hakola, Magnus Lindberg, Minna Leinonen, Kaija Saariaho, Ville Raasakka, and Jukka Tiensuu. At first glance, their notation does not appear different from the American examples. However, when one begins preparing for performance, one realizes that embodying the technical and aural qualities alone is insufficient. At various stages, the clarinetist is required to make decisions as to the musical intention of the work. This can include technical decisions of how to sound descriptive notation based on the clarinetist's knowledge of timbral effects, like in Lindberg's *Kraft* or Raasakka's *Everyday Etudes: Gardening.* It can also include decisions regarding musical pacing, and the motion of important harmonic, melodic, or timbral developments like in Wennäkoski *Limn* or Saariaho's *Oi kuu*. There is also the general application of style, the degree to which a performer decides to make a performance individual, like in Hakola's *Diamond Street* and Klami's *Twirl*. Even balance can become a source of creative agency, as seen from the orchestral examination of Tiensuu's *Ihmepari*.

Notation as a cultural practice reveals the role a composer believes themselves to have in performance and the role they see the performer as having. In the case of the American examples, it can be argued that the composers studied here consider it their artistic responsibility to deliver a complete and whole musical idea to the performer. By understanding the score as the work itself, the role of the performer is executant, not creator.

The Finnish examples, on the other hand, suggest a more collaborative type of performance practice in contemporary music is possible. While the Finnish composers, of course, are the source of the musical ideas that are crucially necessary for the existence of the work, the performer is given a separate but equally important role. The examples presented here demonstrate the different ways in which the cultural practice of Finnish contemporary music notation promotes individual performer agency. Notation culture impacts the types of decisions performers make in performance, the relationships of collaborating musicians in rehearsal and performance, and potentially the relationships between performers and composers.

II Research theme: agency and shared ownership

Agency is the feeling of control over one's actions and their consequences. By creative agency, I refer to a performer's sense of freedom, or power, to make decisions in and through performance, and to feel that those decisions affect the performance outcome. A performer's creative agency is different from the idea of flexibility in performance. It can be argued that there is some level of flexibility in all contemporary music-making. Even in the strictest performance practices, analysis will show some degree of flexibility and decision-making on the part of the performer. However, flexibility operates within constraints and limitations. Creative agency invokes the idea of endless possibilities and as well as the possibility of feeling a sense of individuality in one's performance. I will acknowledge that in contemporary music-making, the rhetorical difference between flexibility and agency might not be perceivable to the audience. However, a performer's sense of control and freedom to make decisions in performance has a profound effect on a performer's sense of shared ownership. While improvisation has been suggested as a way to identify creativity in musical performance, examples by Hughes and Borcherding demonstrate that notation that contains improvisation does not necessarily promote agency.

Shared ownership is unique in contemporary music because the newness of the works being performed means that there is significantly less performance history than in, for example, a Brahms symphony or a Mozart concerto. With every performance of a contemporary work, particularly in brand new works and works by living composers, the performer is directly

contributing to the very identity of the work itself.[64] The performer also has the added responsibility of being the individual who introduces that work to an audience who might be unfamiliar with it or its composer. This added responsibility, and the increased sense that the performer and their performance are both integral and unique to the understanding of the work itself, is defined here as shared ownership. I have argued in this dissertation that a performer's creative agency is inextricably linked to the idea of shared ownership. A performer's sense of personal creative agency, of more decision-making, in performance contributes to a sense of greater artistic responsibility and individuality in performance practice.

The Finnish musical examples referred to in the preceding section summarized how the notation culture exhibited in those works left space for the clarinetist to use their individual expertise to shape the performance individually. The composer's role is to provide the musical ideas critical to the work via the notation, but it is the performer's equally important task to use their personal and embodied knowledge to decide how those ideas should be performed. The importance of performer agency in Finnish contemporary music performance practice is not only illustrated by the notation. The way the composers themselves refer to the clarinetists they have worked with reveals the importance that those performers have for *them* in the identity and performance practice of their works. When I spoke with and performed for Klami, Wennäkoski, and Lindberg, all three referred to the specific performance approach of the clarinetists who premiered the work I was playing in discussion of each piece (Lauri Sallinen for *Twirl*, Heikki Nikula for *Limn* and Kari Kriikku for *Kraft*). Both Hakola and Tiensuu have repeatedly mentioned to Kriikku in interviews regarding his importance in the performance of their compositions. But, interestingly, none of these composers have implied that a clarinetist should copy or imitate the work of these previous performers, or that the performances of those individuals represent some ideal version of the works in question. Rather, all the composers I have spoken with refer to the previous performers as examples to illustrate the individuality and expertise those performers brought to their performances, implying that I should do the same.

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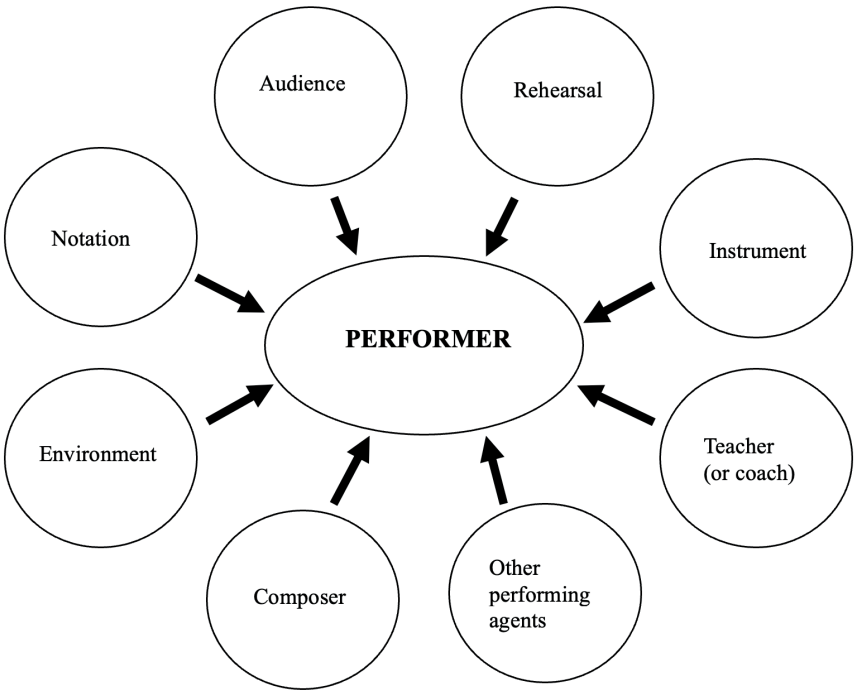
[64] If one is defining a work of music as inclusive of all its non-sounding (notated) and sounding components, as scholars like de Assis have suggested we do (de Assis 2018, 196).

The notation culture of the American contemporary music examples shared here does not promote performer agency in the same way as the Finnish compositions, and therefore there is less of a sense of shared ownership experienced by the clarinetist in performance. Even in the American works I premiered, the notation culture of *Ripple Reflected* by Jack Hughes and *Attack and Sustain* by Molly Joyce did not promote creative performer agency. As I discussed in Chapter 4, the shared ownership I experienced recording *Attack and Sustain* came from the extensive studio work recording the backtracks and combining the live and pre-recorded elements in postproduction. None of the American composers I communicated for this research project referred specifically to a performer they worked with, or the significance of a particular performance.

Notation culture is not the only thing that affects agency, and while it plays a major role in the sense of shared ownership, there are other factors and other levels of decision-making that promote both. In Example 56 below, I created my own map of factors that affect a performer's creative agency.



Example 56 Factors that affect a performer's creative agency. (Abrams-Husso, 2023)

Some, like the presence of a teacher or coach, the condition of one's instrument and performing materials, or the presence of the composer (in real life or any other form) are fixed entities. Others, however, like notation, physical performing environment and the presence of collaborating performers (other performing agents) can serve to encourage or discourage a performer's individual sense of agency.

Notation culture and its effect on individual performance was discussed throughout Chapter 2, while the effect of notation cultures on collaborative musical relationships and on rehearsals was discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. The case studies from Chapter 3 argue that holistic conceptualization of live performance composition promotes creative agency by creating more avenues for decision-making. For example, the Elollinen concert and concert series illustrate the ways in which a performer can shape performance environments and audience interaction through concert design. They also highlighted the expanded decision-making capacity a performer can experience when acting as composer of a live performance.

The analysis of recording and studio work in Chapter 4 also demonstrates how the unique sets of decision-making involved in studio recording contribute to the clarinetist's creative agency and sense of shared ownership in ways not possible in a live performance environment. Expanding one's understanding of creative agency beyond notation encourages the performer to consider the sounding and non-sounding decisions that contribute to performance. With greater opportunities for decision-making comes a greater sense of shared ownership.

III Research theme: performance practice as a reflection of cultural values

The final research theme of this dissertation is the analysis of performance practice as a reflection of cultural values. It is to be expected that eyebrows would be raised at a perceived attempt to define a culture practice as diverse of influence and international in nature as contemporary classical music. I am reminded immediately of the newspaper review of my first doctoral concert, Imagined Models, where a journalist declared: "Doktorsstuderande Lucy Abrams är skickligare på att spela än teoretisera kring music": *doctoral*

student Lucy Abrams is more adept at playing than theorizing about music.[65] I would argue that observing how contemporary music practices respond to, preserve, or challenge cultural values in the places where they are performed gets at the core of what artistic performance is. It falls upon performers, not theorists or historians or even critics, to understand how and why they practice the music the way they do, and to take greater responsibility for the way they practice.

This dissertation examined specifically the ways in which notation, performer agency, and shared ownership are a reflection of the cultures that produced them. By limiting performer agency and focusing on the acts and intentions of the composer, American contemporary music practices in the works studied here consider the composer as the creator and the performer as the executant. American culture places high value on individual achievement, and in classical music practice this has meant identifying the composer as sole creative actor while the performer might be considered highly skilled executant. In a highly competitive cultural environment, it is understandable as well that composers should feel the need to take complete artistic ownership over their compositions and their performance. In the realm of orchestral music, large American orchestra institutions continue to operate on the assumption that older, standard classical repertoire is more highly valued, though the programming data examined here suggests this environment is changing.

In Finland, equality for all rather than equity of opportunity is valued most highly. This absence of a zero-sum mentality has profound effects on all aspects of day-to-day life, including classical music culture. In the context of contemporary music practice, this can be observed through the non-hierarchical performance models that value all involved, from performer to composer, audience to sound engineer, equally. The case studies of this dissertation have demonstrated how the notation culture of Finnish contemporary music works promotes performer agency and expects a certain degree of creative contribution on the part of the performer. With greater agency comes a greater sense of shared ownership. The inclusion of contemporary music in orchestral practices, for example, also communicates an understanding of equal value in both older classical music repertoire and

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65 Liljeroos, M. (2018). ”Teoretiskt flummigt men emotionellt okonstlat på klarinett.” 14 Nov 2018. *Hufvudstadsbladet.* https://www.hbl.fi/artikel/4c4cdedd-ed34-4fa7-9571-c7a85d99319b

works by living composers. I would argue that the more significant role for performers in Finnish contemporary music has also encouraged more performers to participate in contemporary music performances, which results in more audience exposure and acceptance of contemporary music writ large.

The reflection of values in contemporary music can also be understood through the profound differences in institutional funding in the United States versus Finland. Classical music in the United States has always relied on private patronage, a foundational difference to classical music institutions in Finland, which are supported by the state. Today, American classical music institutions like universities, new music ensembles, and orchestras rely on a mixture of corporate and individual donors, with a small amount of government assistance in the form of grants. In Finland, most of the funding for these institutions comes from the state, with additional support given through private foundations (some of whom also receive their funding from the state). Through the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries, the private individuals who funded classical music in the United States did so primarily to support the production of what was understood as "high art" by primarily European composers. As corporate donor support of classical music in the United States has increased and Anglo-Saxon capitalism[66] has proliferated, justifying support for classical music has become increasingly fraught. In Finland, classical music continues to be considered a public service as evidenced by Finnish orchestral musicians being employed as city employees.[67]

Marianna Ritchey and Andrea Moore have both written extensively about neoliberal ideology in American classical music. In her book *Composing Capital*, Ritchey argues that the key values of neoliberal capitalism like innovation, entrepreneurship, disruption, and flexibility have "profoundly shaped contemporary ideas about classical music in America"

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[66] Anglo-Saxon capitalism is generally identified as a free-market economic model, while the Nordic model of capitalism maintains a comprehensive welfare state as part of its economic policy.

[67] With the exception of the Finnish Radio Symphony, who are employed by the national radio Yle, all the orchestras in Finland are identified as city orchestras and the musicians are paid as city employees.

(Ritchey 2019, 1).[68] Using examples such as the corporate sponsorship of Mason Bates, the proliferation of "indie composers", the opera company the Industry, and the International Contemporary Ensemble as case studies, Ritchey and Moore have both shown how various actors in American classical music use neoliberal values in an attempt to demonstrate market viability for classical music. While these actors claim to rebel against the elitism, isolationism, and "high brow" musical aesthetics found in traditional classical music institutions, they have simultaneously been recognized and rewarded by these very institutions, thus reinforcing the neoliberal values embedded therein. Composers and performers have adopted popular music idioms to counter elitism and espoused innovative flexible career paths without acknowledging the economic necessity that can underly these decisions. Elsewhere, it has been argued that the push for interdisciplinary practices in classical music embodies neoliberalism by eschewing highbrow exclusionism in favor of multicultural appreciation (Blake 2017, 328).

I am not arguing that technology is inherently anti-artistic, nor should classical music be exclusionist, nor is there nefarious intent behind interdisciplinary performance practices. But I am arguing that performers have long been active participants in certain performance practices without thinking about why they practice in that way. The ways in which performers interact with composers, with notation, with fellow musicians, with the audience, and their personal approaches to artistic practice and performance are the result of embodied habits learned consciously and subconsciously as members of a society. From this perspective, the performer's role becomes central to understanding how cultural values are reflected in performance practice.

IV Performer as ethnographer

Ethnography as a method of research aims to achieve qualitative understanding through extended immersion in the social setting being studied (Shapiro 1994, 418). Within the setting of contemporary music

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[68] Neoliberal economic policy is understood as the advocation of free-market capitalism, and a general belief in the benefits of deregulation and a free market economy. In the United States, it has been argued that the ideals of neoliberalism have become so engrained in day-to-day life that they are as much cultural values as they are economic ones.

performance, the clarinetist occupies a central position as active participant in creation as well as direct line of contact with collaborating musicians, audience, and composers. Rather than seeking out objectivity, appreciation and acknowledgement of the levels of subjectivity in ones' analysis becomes both inherent and valuable in ethnographic research.

At the outset of this research, I intended to rely heavily on interviews as part of my ethnographic method. I began interviewing composers before my first doctoral concert, and continued through the second, but eventually abandoned interviews as a formal process. I chose instead to rely on the interactions with composers that were part of my performance preparation process and my general life as a performing musician. Occasionally an off-the-cuff comment in a formal interview setting would provide some great insight on notation style or performance practice, but I mostly found that composers did not think about my topic in the same way that I did and therefore had difficulty providing the types of information I was seeking. No matter how I tried to frame my question or lead a discussion, I realized that the answers to my questions would not come from the composers themselves but rather my analysis of performance situations shaped by the relationships between myself, notation, electronics, composers, fellow musicians, and audiences. I am reminded that while interviews can be valuable, the key to ethnography is physical and mental presence. Data comes from the "precision of the observations, the large number of details, and the vividness of the account," rather than any specific data-gathering technique (Gobo 2008: 4).

There are many important similarities between the methods of ethnography and artistic research. In her book *Transcoding*, Barbara Lüneburg suggests the following:

> In ethnography (classical, visual or sensory ethnography) data are collected to directly learn something about a selected group of people (or multiple sites and cultures), i.e. the field. In artistic research investigation could also mean to investigate through and on an abstract, aesthetical topic (through which we can explore more indirectly the notion of being human). Ethnographic researchers gather data on something that already exists, while in artistic research we often first have to create the data (the artwork and the process of creating art) that we base our inquiry on. Ethnographic researchers investigate others, whereas for art researchers their own art and arts practice are central to their work. (Lüneburg 2018, 160)

On one hand, the topic of inquiry in this dissertation – that of contemporary music performance practice – is the product of my own artistic practice. On the other hand, the goal of examining socio-cultural difference focuses on both a select group of people and cultural practice. In this context, performer serves as both artistic researcher and ethnographer, alternating between zooming in on the examination of ones' own practice and zooming out to examine what that practice reveals about cultural patterns more broadly.

It is the ethnographic perspective that has revealed one important quality of contemporary music performance practice that I did not anticipate – the importance of people. More than individual works, musical styles, or institutions, it is the individuals in contemporary music cultures that create the art, establish new practices, and maintain the existing cultural practices. *Werktreue* ideals are still present in the notational culture of American contemporary music practice. But the expanded conception of performance composition introduced in Chapter 3 suggests that while notational culture dictates some terms of performer agency and shared ownership, a performer's agency in the composition of both live and recorded performance can be independent. Particularly in situations where performers are free to choose their own repertoire and develop their own performances. That aspect of contemporary music practice is the result of the person-to-person interactions of performers, composers, producers, and audiences. Those personal interactions, or networks, remain under-examined in the context of contemporary music.

V Contemporary music as a person-based rather than work-based practice

This project has made the case that in contemporary music practice, regardless of national origin, *how* and *why* in performance can be considered as significant as *what* is being performed. From this perspective, the person-to-person interactions between performers, composers, and audience shape the performance practice more so than the aesthetic properties of the work being performed. It is possible to then conceive of contemporary music as a person-based rather than work-based practice, holding implications for contemporary music practice, scholarship, and the posterity of contemporary musical works.

It is important to clarify that I do not mean composer-based or performer-based. Throughout the history of sacralization of classical music and classical music practice, both performers and composers have been elevated as artist-geniuses. This bestowment served to convey hierarchical status and mystical significance. In referring to contemporary music as person-based, I seek to define the practice as the actions taken by and the interactions between people and bodies of people, rather than to center the practice around an individual.

There exists already a rich history of the crucial partnerships between performers and composers and their acknowledgment of mutual symbiosis. In Finnish contemporary music, I have experienced the impact that the creative collaborations between Kari Kriikku and Magnus Lindberg, Kimmo Hakola, Jukka Tiensuu, and Kaija Saariaho, Heikki Nikula and Lotta Wennäkoski, and Lauri Sallinen and Markku Klami have had on the performance practice of the repertoire generated. In his dissertation on performer-composer collaboration, clarinetist Paul Roe reasoned:

> many performers who become involved in contemporary music do so because of the active role they have in creating the music. The ongoing involvement with living composers and the development of new forms attracts musicians keen to promote music as emergent and living (Roe 2007, 191)

In addition to agency, it is the importance of the personal relationships that motivate performers. The relationships not only enrich a performer's otherwise quite solitary personal practice but contribute to a sense of relevance between classical music and present day life.

However, it is not only clarinet. Finnish cellist Anssi Karttunen has emphasized the importance of his close relationships with composers throughout his career, arguing that "if the instrumentalist has no personal relation with the composer, he will not necessarily know what the composer is looking for" (Karttunen 1999, 19). The assertion that performer and composer should have a personal relationship contradicts the notion that the notated score should be considered the identity of a work of contemporary music. It will, of course, be argued that knowledge of a composer's life, opinions, other works, writings, etc., have always been included in a performer's practice beyond the technical preparation of a single score. However, Karttunen's quote and my experience with Finnish clarinet repertoire indicate reciprocity, mutual action, and equality between agents.

Beyond the performer-composer pairing, and the agency of the performer discussed throughout this dissertation, there is also the importance of performer-to-performer collaborations and the connections with audience that both deserve more scholarly attention. Scholars have identified the importance of contemporary music organizations and ensembles within American contemporary music practice, particularly their role in experimental music practices, audience creation and navigating economic conditions.[69] The importance of ensembles like the JACK, Kronos, and Arditti quartets as well as eighth blackbird, the American Contemporary Music Ensemble, the International Contemporary Ensemble, and percussion ensembles like Nexus and So Percussion in the creation of new contemporary repertoire is widely recognized. Within the Finnish context, well-established organizations and ensembles like Uusinta, Defunesemble, Toimii, Zagros, Tampere Raw, Tulkinnanvaraista, and Avanti! as well as newer ensembles like Awake Percussion, the Hiss quartet, Trio WAS+, Minimalia, Kaaos Ensemble, the Earth Ears Ensemble, and others invite examination.

The importance of the "intimate socialities of musical performance and practice" produced by music's "own diverse social relations" has implications as well for the posterity of repertoire within contemporary music practice (Born 2011, 378). Commissions are important for adding to the repertoire, but contemporary works require repeated performances if they are to remain in active practice. Not to mention, it is well understood amongst performers and composers that a premiere performance is rarely the complete artifact audiences might imagine it to be. Though not explored here, I hypothesize that characteristics of performance practice like performer agency and shared ownership can impact performance longevity of contemporary works. Particularly as the body of contemporary music repertoire continues to grow daily. The reasons performers return to certain works depends as much on the artistic characteristics of the work (i.e., the

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[69] For example, see Julia Wolfe's 2012 dissertation and William Robin's 2021 book about Bang on a Can, Andrea Moore's writings on the International Contemporary Ensemble, William Robin's discussion of the yMusic chamber ensemble in his 2016 dissertation, James Patrick Smart's 2009 dissertation on Alarm Will Sound, and Emily Wozniak and Paul Judy's 2013 study of alternative ensembles (http://www.polyphonic.org/wp- content/uploads/2013/06/Alternative-Ensembles-Report.pdf)

artistic rewards for a performer) as the more social aspects of performer-to-performer and performer(s)-to-composer collaboration.

This dissertation has proposed many factors for how and why a contemporary work could continue to be performed in context of solo, chamber and orchestral music. The potential for the performer to discover new musical qualities and create renewed performances is valuable for both performers and audiences, an idea introduced in the case study of Saariaho's *Oi kuu* in Chapter 5, but also applicable to other works included in this project like Lindberg's *Kraft*, Siirala's *Three clarinets,* and Klami's *Twirl*. The importance of performer-composer collaborations, like the partnerships Kari Kriikku has had with many composers, have resulted in repeat performances as well as national and international recognition of works amongst clarinetists, conductors, and audiences, which then leads to more performances. The same can be said of contemporary ensembles, and their contribution to staying power. Studio recordings as well as streaming platforms like Soundcloud and YouTube create new audiences and make performers more aware of new works and composers. The contemporary performance practice of orchestras – whether they emphasize commissioning or performing existing works – has a large effect on posterity, as well as the role of composer-conductors in promoting their own compositions. Finally, repertoire databases like Music Finland are hugely important resources for discovering new repertoire.[70]

The idea of permanence in the context of art creation has always been tantalizing for creators and consumers alike. It is one way people and groups can assign value to an artifact. If a musical composition continues to be performed fifty or one hundred or two hundred years later, it is reasoned that there must be some inherent value in it. However, it is ultimately people who decide that something has value, and there are infinite reasons for bestowing value. In the context of this dissertation, I hypothesize that exercising agency and experiencing shared ownership can become an important value-creators within contemporary music performance. I can also hypothesize that the personal relationships between performers and between performers and composers that are formed by and through contemporary music performance create value. Both factors will undeniably play a role in the lastingness of certain works in the repertoire, as well as contribute to the evolution of contemporary music practice.

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[70] https://core.musicfinland.fi

VI Deciding on an artistic practice

The findings of this research project have affected my personal artistic practice by making me more conscious of my role as a performer and the potential I have for agency and shared ownership in performance. It is my hope that this study can contribute to better understanding of how to navigate being a performer of classical and contemporary music today by making performers more aware of aspects of contemporary music performance beyond technical execution and musical interpretation. Rather than providing instruction on how certain contemporary works or styles should be performed, this dissertation aims to characterize different approaches to notation and performance more generally. When it is acknowledged that different notation cultures promote different types of performer agency, the performing musician becomes more conscious of the types of decisions they are making in performance. Independent of notation, there is also a specific type of creative agency inherent in live performance composition and in recording.

The artistic practice of an orchestral musician, which is and hopefully can remain a significant part of my own professional artistic life, is structurally controlled. This is particularly true if one is a freelance musician, and therefore cannot serve on the various orchestral committees that contribute ideas and give feedback. One does not get to choose one's parts or the repertoire performed. The conductor of the orchestra makes nearly all musical decisions as well as practical decisions that affect performers greatly, like rehearsal schedule. While certain orchestral cultures and repertoires might permit some agency, it is lacking in an orchestral context when compared to performance of solo or chamber music repertoire.

That said, it is ultimately the choice of the performer whether or not to embrace, exercise or seek out the opportunities for artistic agency, in the performance of all repertoire. In response to Abbate's call for a performance-based music understanding, Coessens, Crispin and Douglas point out that it is up to

> the will of the performer, who generally have a strong sense of what they wish to achieve – whether that sense includes transcendent musical communication, or merely focuses upon executing a note-perfect performance in order to advance to the next round of yet

> another competition – an apparent 'success' masking the deadening of creative spontaneity and institutionalized objectification" (Coessens et al 2009, 156).

First, there will always be musical situations like competitions and orchestral auditions where note-perfection is valued incredibly highly. This is something performers who aspire to be soloists or orchestra musicians face as a reality. And, I should say, it is entirely possible to have a "note-perfect" performance be transcendent. But Coessens, et all, bring up a very good point, which is that it is ultimately for performers to decide what kind of agency they seek and exercise within their artistic practice. Even within contemporary music, whose performance practices arguably have the most avenues open for artistic agency, performers are not in agreement over their relationship to the notated score and their role in performance.

Simply expanding ones' own performance practice to include contemporary music is a good place to begin. In addition to enabling the development of new technical music-making skills, incorporating contemporary music into one's practice affords solo as well as chamber music opportunities to work with other musicians in new ways and interact with living composers. All contemporary music requires new aspects of artistic decision-making and new artistic responsibility not present in the performance of older classical repertoire. Experiencing shared ownership affects not only the performance of contemporary repertoire, but also a performer's approach and experience of performing older repertoire.

In the performance of older repertoire, particularly standard or core repertoire, one tends to experience notated music as fixed and static. There is always some decision-making to be exercised through *tempo*, phrasing, articulation, dynamics, and ornamentation. However, the frame within which one can fluctuate is narrow. Older works are most often valued for their permanence, and as performers, our performances serve to strengthen that permanence. For audiences, this repertoire holds value for its familiarity. When one performs contemporary repertoire, particularly repertoire that has not been widely accepted by other performers and audiences, one realizes, first, that it is the performer who must find the artistic value and communicate it to the audience and second, that our range of expression and decision-making as performers is much wider than *tempo*, phrasing, articulation, dynamics, and ornamentation. When we return to older repertoire, which I still believe holds great artistic value, I have found it

easier to be less preoccupied with details of technical execution and more focused on issues of communicating to audiences through sound. Not to mention that the technical demands of a lot of contemporary repertoire suddenly make the hardest passagework by Ravel or Shostakovich or Nielsen seem much less daunting.

Finally, there is the issue of shared ownership, which I have argued is experienced in the performance of contemporary repertoire more than in older repertoire. Shared ownership refers to the added artistic responsibility felt by the performer in the performance of new music. Feeling shared ownership also comes from a performer's expression of creative agency in performance and from creating a performance that feels individual and unique. What is the value in shared ownership, and should performers seek it out? It is personal, but from my experience, I have felt that shared ownership makes me feel more invested and more active in the music I am producing. I also feel more personally connected to the people I am producing music with and the composers with whom I am working. I would say that this feeling motivates me to seek out artistic experiences where I can feel shared ownership.

The socio-cultural side of this research, that of connecting cultural values with performance practice, makes me equally aware of my personal values and how I reflect those in performance. Contemporary music is uniquely positioned for aligning musical performance with personal values, because the options for performance are so wide. From instrumentation, to composer, to musical style, to performance environment, to type of performance art, a performer can choose to express what they think is important for their artistic development and personal beliefs, as well as what they think is important for an audience to hear. Rather than seeing contemporary music as another "skill" for professional marketability, I encourage clarinetists to consider its ability to transform how one thinks of classical music more broadly.

VII. What about the audience?

Critical to the discussion of contemporary music practice, particularly in the context of posterity, but notably absent from this research is the audience. As mentioned in Chapter 3 in the context of performance composition, the audience – as a large but mysterious being – has remained in the front of my

mind with every performance I have composed in this project, and continue to compose in my working life. From programming decisions to communication of musical ideas, my goal as a performer is to reach the listener. However, the actual role of the audience, particularly in contemporary music practice, remains largely unexplored but of paramount importance.

In both music theory and musicology, the listener's role has been central to the debates surrounding music's definition and analysis. When Cook wrote "if it is not possible to arrive at a satisfactory definition of music, simply in terms of sound, this is probably because of the essential role that the listener...plays in the concentration of any event as a musical one," he was alluding to impossibility for performer and composer to fully comprehend the listener's perspective in performance (Cook 1990, 11). Similarly, Abbate wrestles with the listener as being both paramount and impediment to analyzing live performance as "an exemplification of the work" (Abbate 2004, 509). Hatten outlines the listener as an active agent alongside composer, performer, and teacher/coach in his model of virtual agency in music performance just as Britten identified the listener as a third of his "holy triangle" (Hatten 2018, 34). And from Sessions, "we are all very much concerned, these days, with the listener – the person who makes neither music nor performs it, but simply listens to it" (Sessions 1950, 87).

In the context of music composed in the last century, the listener as agent is most understood in the context of postmodernism. In *After the Fall*, Tim Rutherford-Johnson argues the work of John Cage "opened up the agency of the listener" while also granting permission "to composers to assert that agency without fear of reproach" (Rutherford-Johnson 2017, 54). In his seminal text "Postmodern Concepts of Musical Time", Jonathan Kramer articulates the fourteenth and final trait of postmodern music as: "locates meaning and even structure in listeners, more than in scores, performances or composers" (Kramer 1996, 22). While the work of composers like Cage placed greater agency in the hands of the listener to decide music's meaning, composers like Boulez focused on educating listeners in the qualities of serialism and modernism in the "Informal Evenings" series at the New York Philharmonic in the 1970s and 1980s.

Today, semblances of both approaches to audience engagement remain in performance practice. There are those composers and performers influenced by the ideals of the Fluxus movement who continue treat listeners

as the primary agents defining music's meaning. There are those performance practices that maintain audiences should be educated on contemporary music in order to understand and appreciate its value. And there are also those who, for various reasons, take influences from popular musical forms in an effort to make contemporary music accessible to listeners, often in hopes of increasing financial and societal support.

What is lacking, in both American and Finnish contexts, is quantitative data on contemporary music audiences.[71] Lüneburg refers to Hans Neuhoff's study ("Konzertpublika – Sozialstruktur, Mentalitäten, Geschmacksprofile" from 2008) as the only one in contemporary music that quantitatively examined the audiences for new music.

> Neuhoff investigates socio-cultural similarities and differences in audiences in contemporary German cultural life and establishes a system of co-ordinates for creating socio-cultural lifestyle segmentation and classifying audiences of different music styles accordingly to their social structure, mentality and profile of taste. He chose twenty different audiences from four main music styles (pop/rock/dance, classic, jazz and folk music) for the survey, carried out in Berlin in 2000. He used a factor analysis to obtain results from a questionnaire which focused on 48 aspects, including general goals in life, social self-assessment, mentality, fashion style or dress code of a certain group, aesthetics, taste in music and function of music for the group or individual." (Lüneburg 2012, 49)

The limits of the study are that it only considered one festival (Music Berlin Biennale) in one city (Berlin). The implications of a similar study being undertaken in Helsinki or Tampere, New York City or Los Angeles, with different participating performers, ensembles, and festivals would be a boundless source of valuable information.

In the absence of such data, Lüneburg proposes based on her experience as a performer and producer that location, programming and promotion have the most impact on audience attendance, in a similar way Small's emphasizes the importance of physical and social setting in *Musicking.* As performers continue to create their own practices, their considerations of audience in everything from the performance of a work to the composition of a performance remains critical. Like in this study of

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[71] There are studies of classical music audiences more generally, including Dobson 2010; Dobson and Pitts 2011; Kolb 2000; Pitts and Spencer 2008; Roose 2008.

contemporary music performance practices, performers should consider their perspectives as central to future studies of listeners and audiences.

Contemporary music, with its wide aesthetic variety, constant changes, and access to living composers, invites the development of a wide potential of performance practices. Examining the differences in performance practices, for example between Finnish and American contemporary music repertoire, can be a rich starting place for simply raising awareness of how and why we perform the way we do.

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APPENDIX A: Programs of artistic components and program notes

1. Imagined Models - November 13, 2018

Lucy Abrams, Clarinet
Naoko Ichihashi, Piano
Jutta Seppinen, Conductor

Program:
Uljas Pulkkis *Aria* for solo clarinet and piano (2002)
Markku Klami *Twirl* for solo clarinet (2008)
Kirmo Lintinen *Rieha ('Frolic')* for clarinet and piano (2009)
intermission
John Adams *Gnarly Buttons* (1996)
I. The Perilous Shore
II. Hoedown (Mad Cow)
III. Put Your Loving Arms Around Me

"Imagined Models" draws its title and inspiration from John Adams' own program notes for *Gnarly Buttons.* He wrote: "the three movements [of *Gnarly Buttons*] are each based on a 'forgery' or imagined musical model."[72] Adams uses this compositional device extensively in other works, such as *Nixon in China, to* draw musical and extramusical connections in form and style from typically non-classical musical traditions.

In designing this program, I felt that all four works can be drawn together through this idea of imagined models. In *Aria*, Uljas Pulkkis makes a connection to the opera aria, with the clarinetist as vocalist and the pianist as orchestra. However, as the work progresses, it weaves in and out of the operatic model, forging its own style and form. In the solo work *Twirl*, the clarinetist must find his or her own model, like in many contemporary solo works, where a pre-existing musical form might not be readily available. Inspired by Markku Klami's self-described process of composing this work, I imagine the clarinetist finding her voice through improvisation-like experimentation of melodic and harmonic cells, rapidly evolving through the

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[72] Adams, John. "Gnarly Buttons." <https://www.earbox.com/gnarly-buttons/> 28 September 2018.

harmonic and dynamic range of the instrument. Finally, jazz pianist, composer and arranger Kirmo Lintinen offers *Rieha,* a competition piece that takes jazz and classical models and creates a musical style that is completely unique.

Uljas Pulkkis (b. 1975) was born in Helsinki, Finland and studied computer science and mathematics before switching to composition in his early twenties. He had great international success early in his career, winning prizes at the Queen Elisabeth, Gustav Mahler, and UNESCO competitions, all when he was studying at the Sibelius Academy. Many of his early works were inspired by the French spectral style of composition, which focuses on the acoustic physical properties of sound. Still very interested in acoustics, Pulkkis' current postgraduate research project at the Sibelius Academy is entitled "Orchestration Balancer - a computer application investigating the possibility to inspect the orchestration from the score", combining acoustic study with orchestration, particularly as it applies to opera.

Aria for clarinet and piano was commissioned for the 2002 Crusell Clarinet Competition, where Pulkkis was asked to compose a work that was "not too easy".[73] Pulkkis usually composes from the piano, but when he was working on *Aria*, he was able to also compose from the clarinet, his second instrument, enabling him to experiment with both sound and technique. The artistic inspiration for this work was opera, which has always greatly influenced the composer's musical thinking. Pulkkis was an avid fan of Wagner in his teens, listening to Wagner almost daily! This work is Pulkkis' interpretation of an opera aria for clarinet, which combines Wagnerian dramatic singing and Puccini bel canto coloratura with Richard Strauss' love of the high female singing voice. Opening with a quote from "Vissi d'Arte" from Puccini's *Tosca*, *Aria* progresses narratively, gaining dramatic momentum, with clarinet and piano alternating solo and orchestral roles. The work climaxes with a long, dramatic cadenza for the solo clarinet. Performance time: 10 minutes.

Markku Klami (b. 1979) was first exposed to music at *musiikkileikkikoulu* growing up in Turku, Finland. While he started piano around age 5, and later

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[73] Pulkkis Uljas. Personal Interview. 12 September 2018.

violin at age 9, it was not until he began playing classical guitar around age 16 that he became more serious and focused in his musical studies. After receiving his Bachelor of Arts in music theory and pedagogy from the Turku University of Applied Sciences, Klami entered the Sibelius Academy in the Master of Music in composition class in 2010. Klami's first experimentations with composition occurred earlier, however, when he was 14 or 15, using computer, digital software and synthesizers. He eventually abandoned work in the more popular electronic music genre, deciding to focus on classical music. He cites the late works of Rautavaara as well as Oliver Messiaen, George Crumb and Steve Reich as musical inspirations.

The solo piece, *Twirl,* was composed in 2008 when Klami was studying at the Sibelius Academy. *Twirl* was inspired, first and foremost, by the clarinet itself, in particular the dynamic and timbral range of the instrument. The clarinet, according to the composer, is unique amongst the other woodwinds in its ability to play both very low and very soft. Klami explores this from the very opening of *Twirl, w*ith its near silent opening figurations leading the audience through the wide musical capabilities of the clarinet, with fast, lively sections quickly changing to soft mysterious passages. *Twirl* was composed at a time in his studies when Klami was experiencing a creative block; in his own words, he felt "stuck", and unable to compose.[74] As a performer, I imagine this experience as I play, trying to sound as if I am experimenting and improvising throughout, exploring both the clarinet and the piece itself. Performance time: 7 minutes.

Known to many jazz fans as the pianist of UMO Jazz Orchestra since 1989, Kirmo Lintinen (b. 1967) has worked intensely in both jazz and classical music genres as a composer, conductor and arranger. He studied both composition and piano at the Sibelius Academy, graduating from the jazz music education program in 1997, later studying composition and arranging with Jukka Linkola and Eero Hämeenniemi, and attending courses with Jukka Tiensuu, Helmut Lachenmann and Peter Eötvös. He taught jazz, composition, and music history at the Sibelius Academy from 1989-2007. Since 2000, Lintinen has focused more on composition, in jazz, classical,

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[74] Klami Markku. Personal Interview. 19 June 2018.

and baroque styles, and for a wide range of ensembles from solo pieces to movie music, opera, and concerti.

Rieha (2009) was commissioned for the 2009 Crusell Clarinet Competition, where it was premiered by competitors in the semi-final round. Neither completely jazz nor purely western classical music, the work shows the influence of early twentieth century French composers like Ravel and Poulenc, as well as aspects of French baroque. The work starts with improvisational and virtuosic fanfare-like figures in the clarinet, which are answered in the piano. Very rhythmic throughout, Lintinen's metric units are often 'irregular', with running quintuplets and quick meter changes requiring extreme precision between the clarinet and piano. All the while, the work is meant to sound carefree, and 'frolicking'. The work is similar in structure and style to *Buster!,* also for clarinet and piano, which was composed in 2002-3 and revised in 2007. Other solo works for clarinet by Lintinen include *Oikuu* for bass clarinet and piano, *Duo Concertante* (2002), a double concerto for clarinet and double bass, and a Clarinet Concerto (2012-2013). Performance time: 10 minutes

John Adams (b. 1947) is arguably America's best known and most widely performed living composer. Growing up in Worcester, Massachusetts, he was taught clarinet by his father, an active performer in Depression-era New England swing bands. Adams' most likely could have become a professional clarinetist, but the extensive orchestral performing he did in his late teens and early twenties seems to have only inspired him to pursue composition and conducting. As a composition student of Leon Kirchner and Roger Sessions at Harvard University (A.B 1969, M.A. 1971), Adams also conducted many student ensembles, in both contemporary and classical repertoire. Upon graduation, Adams took a teaching position conducting new music at the San Francisco Conservatory, where from 1972-1984, he worked to establish himself as a composer. He succeeding in developing his own distinct compositional voice, moving from an east coast academic style to one that included a broader variety of source material, from pop to jazz, electronic music and minimalism. Since the mid-1980s, he has worked as a conductor and composer of mostly large scale orchestra works and opera.

Despite his musical start as a clarinetist, *Gnarly Buttons* was the first and only work Adams wrote for clarinet, and is the only concerto he has ever composed for a wind instrument (he has concerti for piano and for violin). As with many of Adams' works, the stylistic influences of the piece are varied and reflected in everything from instrumentation, to orchestration, harmony and melody. The work was commissioned by the London Sinfonietta and by Present Music in Milwaukee, and premiered in London in 1996 with Michael Collins as soloist and John Adams conducting. The title, *Gnarly Buttons,* alludes to both the clarinet itself ('gnarly' as something knotted and twisty, as well as something 'awesome' or 'cool' in colloquial American English), and as a reference to Gertrude Stein's "Tender Buttons."

As mentioned in the opening remarks, each movement of the work is based an an 'imagined musical model'. The first movement, "The Perilous Shore", is based on a Protestant hymn, whose opening lines are:

> O Lord Steer me from that Perilous Shore
> Ease my soul through tempest's roar.
> Satan's leering help me firmly turn away
> Hurl me singing into that tremulous day![75]

A simple melodic line begins in the clarinet, winding its way monotonously, eventually inviting in the other instruments starting with the keyboard sampler "accordion", and providing the source melodic material for the entire movement.

The second movement, "Hoedown (Mad Cow)" musically exists between a traditional Western hoedown and a satire, or parody. In this movement, especially, instrumentation shines, with Adams using the timbral color of the English horn, bassoon, mandolin and trombone with the clarinet to accomplish his vernacular hoedown.

The final movement, "Put Your Loving Arms Around Me", is a naively tender and simple song, reminiscent of a pop music ballad, with the opening played by clarinet, guitar and piano. Adams wrote that the idea to composer

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[75] Adams, John. "Gnarly Buttons." <https://www.earbox.com/gnarly-buttons/> 28 September 2018.

with this "extreme simplicity", a very basic diatonic melody with strummed accompaniment, was later explored in the 1998 work *Naïve and Sentimental Music* (1998).[76] Performance Time: 25 minutes

2. Elollinen - September 12, 2020

Lucy Abrams-Husso, clarinet and bass clarinet
Iryna Gorkun-Silén, flute
Iida-Vilhelmiina Sinivalo, cello
Sebastian Silén, violin
Ville Raasakka, objects
Tuukka Tervo, sound engineer

Program

Mason Bates *Life of Birds* for flute, clarinet, violin and cello (2008)
I. Moving Parts
II. Parakeet Daydream
III. The Caged Bird Sings
IV. On a Wire: Mating Dance
V. Old World Fly Catcher
VI. Moving Parts

Augusta Read Thomas *Capricci 'Hummingbird Romance'* for flute and clarinet (2011)

Jack Hughes *Ripple, Reflected* for clarinet and fixed media (2019) *World Premiere

Kaija Saariaho *Oi Kuu* for bass clarinet and cello (1990)

Nina Young *Creeping Ivy* for flute and clarinet (2013)

Ville Raasakka *Everyday Etudes No. 1: Garden* for bass cl, object player and elec. (2015)

Lotta Wennäkoski *Limn* for solo bass clarinet (2002)

Jukka Tiensuu *Plus II* for clarinet and cello (1992)

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[76] Adams, John. "Gnarly Buttons." <https://www.earbox.com/gnarly-buttons/> 28 September 2018.

About my doctoral project

"Elollinen" is the second of five concerts in my doctoral research project, "Contemporary Clarinet Repertoire from Finland and the United States - New Ways of Artistic Expression and a Study of Sociocultural Differences". The project is an artistic and sociocultural study of contemporary clarinet repertoire composed by Finnish and American composers post-1980. My artistic goals are to develop my musicianship through a comprehensive a study of contemporary music, and to identify the unique skills required to perform contemporary music in order to 'prove' that contemporary music is a necessary artistic area of focus for the twenty-first century orchestral clarinetist. I analyze these skills as they develop through my own practice and performances, in collaboration with composers and other musicians, and through the commissioning and premiering of new works for clarinet.

Why Finnish and American contemporary music specifically? Aside from tremendous heterogeneity of Finnish and American contemporary repertoire, allowing me to explore the largest variety of styles and sounds, I am interested in the differences between Finnish and American contemporary music, including how the music is composed and performed, and music history. Since I moved to Finland in 2013, one of my most profound musical observations has been the difference in the way contemporary music is conceived and received by composers, performers, and audiences in Finland compared to my home country, the United States. These differences manifest themselves, for example, in practice, performance, aesthetics, notation, and the relationship between composers and performers. In order to investigate these differences, my research method combines performance, analysis, musicology and anthropology. Practicing and performing a piece of music offers unique perspectives on aesthetic, technical, and timbral qualities that cannot be gained simply by studying the musical score. My own participant observation, alongside interviews with performers and composers in the US and Finland, contribute to greater cultural and artistic understanding. And I believe that understanding the artistic and performative differences between Finnish and American contemporary repertoires is enhanced through an understanding of the sociocultural differences in both places.

Notes on the Program

The "Elollinen" concert program was conceived in spring 2019 with the goal to experiment with the versatility and adaptability of contemporary compositions to be performed in non-traditional concert spaces, and to design a program specifically for a place. I chose Talvipuutarha Winter Garden because, in addition to being one of my favorite places in Helsinki, it offered a great opportunity for an environment-led musical performance. Each of the three rooms of the garden have different acoustics, different background noises, and the potential for different spatial relationships between audience and performer. I chose works for clarinet and bass clarinet with limited instrumentation, including chamber works with only flute, cello and violin. The works I chose were included for their narrative, acoustic, and instrumental qualities to form a cohesive program in an unusual concert space.

The name "Elollinen" refers to both the living, organic quality of contemporary music as well as the natural environment of the botanic gardens. In the last six months, "Elollinen" has taken on a new meaning for me - 'living' as changeable, flexible, adaptable. The world is a very different place than when this concert was planned over a year ago. This concert has changed, first from April to September. Most recently, it had to be moved from Talvipuutarha to the Helsinki Music Center less than a month before the concert was to occur. These changes force adaption, as preparations and rehearsals are put on hold and resumed on a new time frame. Unexpectedly, the changes have also fostered a different creativity, as new problems require new solutions. Quite like the creativity required to translate and perform new music compositions.

I am grateful that this concert can be performed today, even if it is in a different form than originally designed. In another unintentional form of 'elollinen', this concert is being performed in the same concert hall where I held my first doctoral concert almost two years ago. An organic cycle - bringing my doctoral research back to Organo - but with a different artistic intent, and myself a different artist than I was two years ago. With my first commission/premiere of the project, and the first inclusion of bass clarinet, I am becoming more aware of the strong sense of shared-ownership in the

performance of contemporary music, and the freedom of creativity it promotes.

Thank you for listening to this concert, wherever you are, and I hope you enjoy.

Lucy Abrams-Husso, 23 August 2020

Notes on the compositions

I learned of the American composer **Mason Bates** (b. 1977) while working on my 2018-2019 report on contemporary music programming by large American and North European orchestras (yearly reports on my website: https://www.lucyabrams.net/news). As a performer, I have found notational and aesthetic similarities between Bates and John Adams, whose clarinet concert *Gnarly Buttons* I performed two years ago on my first doctoral concert. Both Bates and Adams, about thirty years apart, moved from East to West coast in their early twenties, settled in the Bay Area, and held close relationships with the San Francisco Symphony. Artistically, both composers draw on a wide range of sound and narrative influences, from electronic sounds to current events, popular and serious music. The approach to notation is simple and clear, and draws narrative references that are often idiomatic, comical, or light-hearted in nature.

Life of Birds is one of four chamber works Bates has composed with clarinet, and the only one without piano (making it suitable for Talvipuutarha!). As the title suggests, the narrative is about “birds”, but aurally the piece connects more to jazz or light popular music than, for example, Messiaen’s 'Abîme des oiseaux’ from the *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* (perhaps the most well-known clarinet ‘bird’ piece). As a performer, I find the challenge of the piece is making the work sound light and free without being sloppy or loose with the complex rhythms and the relationships between the instrumental lines. The balance between the instruments is not always clear from the score, and finding clarity was challenging. Like Paquito D’Rivera’s *Aires Tropicales* for woodwind quintet or Copland’s Clarinet Concerto, the aural simplicity disguises challenging orchestration.

As a Chicagoan, I noticed that both Mason Bates and **Augusta Read Thomas** (b. 1964) were long-time Composers-In-Residence of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (Thomas from 1997-2006 and Bates from 2010-2015). As a performer, however, I found this to be the only similarity.

Life of Birds and ***Capricci - 'Hummingbird Romance'*** both invoke bird-like imagery, but they are very different. *Capricci* sounds improvisatory, high energy, and abstract. With the fanfare-like calls between flute and clarinet and the rapid figurations in both parts, one can imagine two quick birds calling out to each other, and flying together, zooming in and out of each others paths.

In performance and notation, the two works represent very different approaches to instrumental writing and notation. Bates indicates the tempo (speed) and describes the style of each movement, leaving rest of the notation limited to dynamics and articulation. This leaves more decisions up to the performers, with much room for interpretation. Thomas, on the other hand, is incredibly detailed, providing instruction for articulation and dynamics of nearly every individual note, while also notating phrasing and describing in adjectives the style of individual figurations or groups of notes.

Capricci is intended to sound improvisatory, which could seem counterintuitive with so many instructions and seemingly little room for performer-led interpretation. When I interviewed Thomas in December 2019, she spoke at length about the level of detail with which she composes. She remarked to me, "excellent composition requires sculpting every note", indicating that the 'freshness' that one hears in the work is dependent on the deliberacy of the composer. She believes that it is the duty of the composer to imagine, and notate, how every single note in a piece is meant to sound and to instruct the performer of compositional intent through extensive and detailed notation. She said that the composer's job is to sculpt and polish pieces, while the player's job is to translate the notated score and bring it to the audience.

Thomas is a longtime professor at the University of Chicago, where she was the PhD advisor of composer **Jack Hughes** (b. 1992). I learned of Jack's work not through Professor Thomas (I only found out after asking him to write a piece for me that she was his advisor!), but through the American

Composer's Orchestra, who workshopped his piece *Needlework* in 2019. On Jack's website I heard his work *Ripple* (2015), scored for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano, and I was drawn to the textures of the instrumentation and its reminiscence of the center space of Talvipuutarha with the large fountain.

I contacted Jack and asked if *Ripple* could be arranged without piano, but Jack suggested writing a new work based on *Ripple* for clarinet and fixed media. A live recording he had of the original work was treated as 'found object', edited and distorted, and a clarinet solo piece was written over top. In composing the original work, Hughes wanted to fuse melody, harmony and texture into what he referred to as a 'primordial soup'. *Ripple, Reflected*, was an experiment for both of us. Jack had not worked a lot in works with electronics or site-specific composition, and I had never worked intimately with a composer to commission and premiere a new piece.

As expected, the experience was a rich one for me, creatively, artistically, and mentally. Jack encouraged me to take liberties with the written passages, to experiment, for instance, with speeds, colors and volume of trills and tremolos. What started as weird musical experiment of trying to play "chamber music" with a recording, turned into a more flexible approach, of constantly experimenting in the clarinet part and reacting to things I heard in the fixed media. I realized that 'exactness' in timing with the fixed media was impossible, allowing me to focus creative energies on other aspects of performance.

Acoustic effects, changes in timbre, and sonic distortion are key elements of both *Ripple, Reflected* and **Kaija Saariaho's** (b. 1952) ***Oi kuu*** for bass clarinet and cello. While many of Saariaho's compositions from the 1980s and early 1990s include electronics, *Oi kuu* explores the functions of timbre and harmony through acoustic-only sonic effects. For the bass clarinet, this includes a great variety of multiphonics, split multiphonics, air sounds, vibrato, trills and micro-intervals. Each measure in the score is filled with instruction on volume, air speed, vibrato, harmonic and timbral changes.

Saariaho has noted that when she composed *Oi kuu*, she sought to find commonality between two unalike instruments - the cello and the bass clarinet. To accomplish this, she introduces a variety of unusual playing

techniques for both instrumentalists. What I found particularly challenging was to stay aware of the cello sound and movement throughout, whilst trying to abide by all the notations in my part. All the meanwhile, remembering that the work is in constant motion. Despite all the details in the notation, the music is meant to be in motion, and can never stand stagnant.

Acoustic relationships between disparate instruments are also at the center of ***Creeping Ivy*** by American composer **Nina Young** (b. 1984). Similar to Saariaho, Young composes predominantly music with electronics, or acoustic music heavily influenced by by electronic sounds. *Creeping Ivy* was composed in 2013 when Young was a Composition Fellow at the Tanglewood Music Festival. The short work for flute and clarinet, premiered by instrumental fellows at the festival, is built from the beginning from a concert A, which develops sonically through perfect intervals, arpeggiation, multiphonics, and microtones. Eventually the chordal density gives way to polyphony, with the flute and clarinet each playing their own melodic line. Following a rapid climax, the lines grow sparse and chordal again.

Both the flute and clarinet are challenged by extended techniques involving playing multiple pitches at the same time with multi phonics, and through singing and playing. The challenge of singing and playing for clarinet, in particular, is that interaction of the sung and played sound waves creates additional sounding dissonance, which changes when the played pitch changes. While *Creeping Ivy* was initially chosen for the garden based on its title and instrumentation, the live acoustic of the gardens would have enhanced the chordal dissonances of the interaction between flute and clarinet.

The second piece on the program with electronics is **Ville Raasakka's** (b. 1977) ***Everyday Etudes No. 1: Garden*** for bass clarinet, fixed media, and object player with gardening tools. Like *Creeping Ivy*, I was first drawn to the work for its imaginative title. Whereas the connection to the garden is abstract in earlier works, *Everyday Etudes* provides a literal connection, sonically and visually. The fixed media contains a variety of recognizable outdoor, living sounds: the doors of buses, the bark of a dog, the buzzing of bees, tram tracks, birds in the distance, a shovel in the ground, a cat. Then the object player provides both visual and aural cues, with soil, flower, a

gardening hose and pots for plants. In between, the bass clarinet takes auditory cues from both the fixed media and the object player.

Ripple, Reflected and the *Gardening* etude are the first pieces I have ever played with fixed media, and the relationships between the clarinet part and the electronics in both are very different. In the Raasakka, the fixed media is very clearly notated and the steady, constant tempo is crucial for aligning all three instruments - the objects, bass clarinet, and fixed media. Acoustically, similarly to the Saariaho, the extended techniques of the bass clarinet are intended to connect timbrally and harmonically to both the object player and the fixed media. Collaborating with Ville on the notation for this updated version of the work was hugely informative for me and made me more aware of notation, in general, on all works on this concert.

One goal of this concert was to include bass clarinet significantly, in chamber music and solo compositions. Bass clarinet is often considered an 'auxiliary' instrument in the orchestra, and in orchestral training. It is, however, a hugely solo important solo instrument in contemporary clarinet repertoire. Thanks to important solo bass clarinetists like Heikki Nikula, there is a particularly significant body of Finnish contemporary bass clarinet repertoire. ***Limn*** by **Lotta Wennäkoski** is one such work.

The title, meaning to portray or represent, signified to me a great deal of freedom within the work. My experience working with Heikki on the piece also made me realize the level of 'shared ownership' that a musician has when he or she collaborates on and premieres a new composition. Heikki's experiences provided essential musical insights to the piece, for instance that the bar lines of the work were only mandated by the musical composition software used to write and print the score. Same with many of the rhythms. I have always understood notation to be both a tool and a limitation to compositional expression. In the case of *Limn*, understanding the musical intention required taking liberties with the notation that I did not imagine when I began working on the piece.

In approaching the bass clarinet as a solo instrument, the solo piece *Limn* emphasizes many things that the bass clarinet can do very well. For instance, the range on the instrument is very large and timbrally even, more so than B-flat and E-flat clarinets, meaning that the low register sounds just as rich and

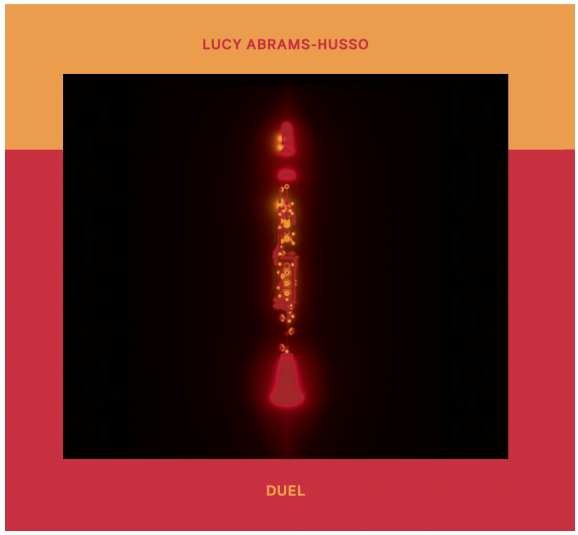
singing as the altissimo, or very high, register. *Limn* also challenges the player through extended techniques, a variety sound effects, and the combination and contrast of many different musical styles in one solo work.

The final work on the program is by Finnish composer **Jukka Tiensuu** (b. 1948), whose compositions are as diverse as his own performance repertoire as a harpsichordist, conductor and pianist. Since the 1980s, he has refused to speak about his music, preferring it to speak for itself. This does present a challenge for me, as I have tried to interview and play for every composer included in my doctoral project. Relying only on performance history, however, focuses the understanding of the work on musicianship and creativity. But the focus for Tiensuu is on the audience, whom he wants to be free from any limitations that speaking about the music will cause.

In keeping with the composer's wishes, I will not say more about **Plus II** for clarinet and cello. Enjoy.

3. Duel – Released April 8, 2022

Clarinet & bass clarinet: Lucy Abrams-Husso
Recording, editing, mixing: Tuukka Tervo
Mastering: Svante Forsbäck, Chartmakers Audio Mastering
Cover art: Vesa Pasanen
Graphic design: Janne Gammelin



TRACK LIST

1. Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner *Spellbound* (2006/2015)
2. Molly Joyce *Attack and Sustain* (2020)
3. Riikka Talvitie *Seireenietydi* (2005)
   Tuuli Lindeberg, soprano
   Riikka Talvitie, electronics
4. Minna Leinonen *Pheme* (2011, rev. 2021)
5. Nina Shekhar *Honk if you Love Me* (2018)
6. Jovanka Trbojevic *Le fantôme du vent* (1999)
   Tuukka Tervo, electronics
7. Maija Hynninen *Earthship* (2015)
   Eva Trygg, flute/piccolo
   Aleksi Trygg, violin
   Sirja Nironen, cello
   Antti Ohenoja, percussion
   Martin Malmgren, piano
   Janne Valkeajoki, conductor
8. Carolyn Borcherding *Frenetic Disintegration* (2018)

Notes on the album:

The engagement between electronics and acoustic clarinet inspired the title of this album, *Duel*. Combining these disparate sound worlds of acoustic and electric can exciting, challenging and frustrating for both composer and performer. Instrumentation joins all works on this album, but artistically, the musical outcome of each *duel* is unique.

Like the electronics, the clarinet and bass clarinet can offer a wide possibility of sounds effects - registral, timbral, monophonic, polyphonic, melodic or discordant. At the same time, each composer on the album incorporates electronics in their electroacoustic work in a different way.

Some composers use fixed media or tape, others live processing. The electronics of some works, like *Spellbound*, *Attack and Sustain, Seireenietydi* and *Pheme*, consist of pre-recorded or live-processed instruments like saxophone, clarinet or voice. The electronics of *Honk if you love me, Le Fantôme du vent*, and *Earthship* use field recordings. Finally, *Frenetic*

Distintegration has an electronic part that uses a bit of everything, helping to create an outer-worldly soundscape.

This album, my first solo artistic recording, owes a depth of gratitude to sound engineer Tuukka Tervo. I also would like to thank my doctoral advisor Mieko Kanno for her guidance, and my husband and parents for being my number-one fans.

Lucy Abrams-Husso
September 2021, Helsinki

Liner Notes (Eng)

Composer, author, and researcher ELIZABETH HINKLE-TURNER (b. 1964) is an IT support director in academic computing at the University of North Texas. She is the author of *Crossing the Line: Women Composers and Music Technology in the United States* (Ashgate, 2006) and is beginning a new edition of that text. An avid martial artist and an (ill-advisedly) aspiring gymnast, she is currently working on a new piece exploring current aspects of her life in connection with electroacoustic music.

Spellbound (2006/2015) was composed for saxophonist, pedagogue, and conductor Shelley Jagow (Wright State University) for live and pre-recorded soprano saxophone. Jagow can be heard in the prerecorded fixed media of this performance. The work was inspired by Warren Beatty's character in the movie *Heaven Can Wait*. As a 14-year-old, Hinkle-Turner was 'spellbound' by the timbre and flexibility of the instrument played by Beatty's Joe Pendleton. Throughout the film, Pendleton performs an Italian ballad, 'Ciribiribin', by the composer Albert Pestalozza. In *Spellbound*, Hinkle-Turner focuses on the bright timbral quality of the soprano saxophone and expands the composition from the tone of the opening single note.

Though originally composed for soprano saxophone, *Spellbound* has most often been performed by clarinetists. The clarinet lends a different resonance than the soprano saxophone. The contrast between the two instruments can be heard as the clarinet weaves in and out of the texture of the soprano saxophone in the fixed media part. The work is composed in clear sections, each highlighting a different performative aspect of the clarinet. In the beginning, the long sustain builds from the overtones of a single oscillating

note. This builds into melodic singing passages and later, technical virtuosic displays. Though tempos are indicated, there is flexibility within each section in the musical conversation between clarinet and electronics. The clarinetist must choose when and how to relate to the electronics in different passages.

MOLLY JOYCE (b.1992) focuses on disability as a creative source in her work. Using an electric vintage toy organ purchased from eBay, she has found an instrument perfectly suited for her performance and composition. Her debut full-length album, *Breaking and Entering*, featuring toy organ, voice, and electronic sampling, was released in June 2020. Molly is a graduate of The Juilliard School, Royal Conservatoire in The Hague, and Yale School of Music, and currently serves on the composition faculty at New York University Steinhardt and Wagner College.

Attack and Sustain (2020) for clarinet and fixed media was commissioned by Lucy Abrams-Husso for this album. The work combines live acoustic clarinet with pre-recorded processed clarinet sounds. Abrams-Husso recorded the fixed media on E-flat, B-flat and bass clarinets, with sound engineering by Tuukka Tervo and Michael Hammond. The pre-recorded electronics incorporate the full clarinet range, from the high octave of the E-flat clarinet to the lowest register of the bass clarinet. They also make use percussive elements including key slaps and slap tongue on the bass clarinet. Unlike the prerecorded fixed media in *Spellbound*, the fixed media of *Attack and Sustain* was processed to manipulate sound, balance, and sonic effects. The acoustic clarinet part in both works, however, contains no live processing.

The piece explores the process of going between sustain and arpeggiation, and the relationship between the two states. As the clarinet moves from sustain to motion, the electronics shift from arpeggiation to sustained chords and finally dense polyphony. The fixed media is constant, mechanic, and unyielding. The acoustic clarinetist, meanwhile, must navigate between the rigid backing sounds and her own musical expression. Though all sounding elements are clarinet, the processing of the pre-recorded sounds distinguishes the live clarinet sound from the choir for the entirety of the work. The live

player must navigate not only rhythmic alignment but timbral space with a distorted version of herself.

RIIKKA TALVITIE (b. 1970) – composer, oboist, pedagogue – graduated as an oboist from the Sibelius Academy in 1997 while continuing composition studies with Tapio Nevanlinna and Paavo Heininen. Recently, her interest has shifted to the field of community and performing arts, particularly the question of how authorship could be shared. Talvitie is preparing her artistic doctoral degree on the changing role of the composer at Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki, where she also works as a lecturer in composition.

Seireenietydi *(Etude of Siren's)* (2006), composed for bass clarinet, soprano and live electronics, is the first of two chamber music works in this album. Soprano Tuuli Lindeberg's siren song is the musical source for the live electronics, operated by the composer on this recording. The text is inspired by Franz Kafka's short story "The Silence of the Sirens", a retelling of Ulysses' encounter. In Kafka's version, Ulysses places the wax in his own ears and orders himself tied to the mast of the ship. While Ulysses was convinced that the sirens were singing and the wax saved him, Kafka argues that the sirens were so in awe of Ulysses' face, his faux-enrapture at their non-existent song, that they spared him. That Ulysses survived is not thanks to the wax, but rather a testament to the strength of the man's naiveté in thinking he could outsmart the sirens.

In telling Kafka's story, the solo soprano voice takes on the role of narrator as well as the sirens themselves. Utilizing whisper, electronic looping, canon, melisma and distortion, the soprano becomes a cacophony of voices, narrating as well as acting out the story. In contrast, the bass clarinet anchors the work, providing a contrast in range, musical content and at times, reality. The soprano extends beyond the realm of the living, like the sirens themselves, while the bass clarinet is of the Earth.

MINNA LEINONEN's (b. 1977) compositions are inspired by extramusical phenomena and sounds of everyday life. Her music has been performed by the BBC Philharmonic, the Finnish Radio Symphony, the Tampere Philharmonic, the International Contemporary Ensemble, the Ostrobothnia

Chamber Orchestra, Tapiola Sinfonietta, and Defunensemble amongst others. She works across artistic disciplines in projects involving acrobatics, documentary film, video, and installation. Leinonen is a doctoral candidate at the Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki and lives in Tampere.

Pheme (2011, rev. 2021) for clarinet and fixed media also combines clarinet with the human voice. The fixed media part features soprano Meeri Pulakka and the acoustic clarinet part has slight live processing. The work was commissioned by the 2011 Crusell Festival and is dedicated to clarinetist Harri Mäki. Pheme (pronounced FEE-mee) was the Greek goddess of rumor and gossip, often portrayed in antiquity as easy to provoke but hard to pacify. The work begins with a unison line in the clarinet and electronics where clarinet and voice are indistinguishable. Quickly, however, the texture transforms into a duet and then into a dense choir of voices. The music continues to gather momentum, like a rumor mill, and does not cease until the end of the work.

Leinonen employs several unique playing techniques to add texture and timbral density to the clarinet part. In the beginning of the work, the clarinet is played without the mouthpiece by blowing air into the top joint and fingering normally. While blowing into the top joint, the clarinetist articulates various notated vocalizations on different syllables to match and imitate the soprano in the fixed media. The clarinetist also sings and whistles, creating a polyphonic texture that completely blends the clarinet and the electronics. Later, after the clarinetist reattaches the mouthpiece, the clarinet part continues to incorporate whispered vocalizations, air sounds, multiphonics and improvisation. The clarinetist, utilizing all creative possibilities, performs as both singer and instrumentalist.

NINA SHEKHAR (b. 1995) explores the intersection of identity, vulnerability, love, and laughter to create bold and intensely personal works. Her music has been commissioned and performed by leading artists including Eighth Blackbird, the International Contemporary Ensemble, the LA Philharmonic, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the Albany Symphony, JACK Quartet, and Alarm Will Sound. Current projects include performances by the New York Philharmonic, LA Philharmonic (with

soloists Nathalie Joachim and Pamela Z), and New World Symphony. Shekhar is pursuing her PhD in Music Composition at Princeton University.

Honk if you Love Me (2018) for clarinet and electronics was inspired by the traffic sounds of India, particularly the sound of car horns. In most places, car horns indicate aggression or frustration. However, in India, the melodic nature of car horns is almost joyful and serves as a reminder that honking is a communicative gesture. Rather than simply traffic noise, the sounds assume a form of self-expression and a reclamation of technology. The electronic part is assembled from various types of car sounds alongside Indian percussion. The clarinet part is performed with and without live processing. Shekhar indicates in the score specific sections where live processing should be used. The processing aims to make the clarinet completely blend with itself and increase the density of clarinet sound when combined with the electronics.

Composed in sections, the conversation between electronics and clarinet alternates between energic and meditative. In the exciting sections, the upper range of the clarinet is featured in technical and improvisatory ways. The timbre is varied using vibrato, glissando, multiphonics and growl. These variations allow the clarinet sound to ring out against an increasingly dense electronic environment. The expressive sections focus on sustained tones in the middle and lower registers of the clarinet. Live processing in the form of reverb and delay help provide depth to the sound and enable the clarinet to resonate more audibly. The work was commissioned by the Third Angle New Music and can be performed live with a Bharatanatyam dancer, a style of classical dance from southern India.

JOVANKA TRBOJEVIC (1963-2017) was born in Bosnia (formerly Yugoslavia) and moved to Finland in 1986. She studied piano in Belgrade and Prague, and later composition at the Sibelius Academy. A composer of many chamber works, she is perhaps best known for her opera, film and electroacoustic music. Her radiophonic work *CreationGame* won the Prix Italia grand prize in 2009. Trbojevic's works have been performed internationally across the Nordic countries as well as in South America, Japan, and Australia. Her orchestral works have been premiered by the Avanti! Chamber Orchestra and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Le fantôme du vent (*The Phantom of the Wind)* (1999) for bass clarinet and live electronics demonstrates Trbojevic's stylistic experimentation of playing techniques and reimagining soundscapes. The work was commissioned by bass clarinetist Heikki Nikula and was previously recorded on Nikula's album *Piping Down the Valleys Wild*, which features works for bass clarinet by Finnish composers. *Le fantôme du vent* was inspired by Trbojevic's *Le fantôme du Ondes* (1998) for ondes Martenot and tape, which was commissioned by Japanese virtuoso Takashi Harada. Whereas *Le fantôme du Ondes* was composed without any contact between composer and the ondes Martenot, *Le fantôme du Vent* was a close collaboration between Trbojevic and Nikula. The electronics contain manipulated field recordings alongside live processing of the bass clarinet part.

The field recordings utilized in the electronics part are taken from an ice skating rink using very close microphones. The movements of the skaters in the opening electronic solo create a shadowy atmosphere, joined by the bass clarinet in the low register. The layering of the wind builds to virtuosic moving lines in the bass clarinet part matching the quickening whooshing of the electronic sounds. As the work evolves, the bass clarinet changes from a monophonic to a polyphonic instrument. The work becomes more static and the listeners perspective changes from moving through the wind to being suspended within the soundscape. The clarinetist must balance musical priorities, understanding changing multiphonic chords as both ambient sound and pitched harmonies.

MAIJA HYNNINEN (b. 1977) works in the areas of concert music, electronic instrument design and multidisciplinary performance. Her music centers on finding unique moments where the limits of this world can be changed so that we may peek into another reality. These moments can result from a surprise timbre in acoustic writing, or when electronics project sound to another domain, space and reality. Hynninen received her Master in Music in Composition from the Sibelius Academy and is a current PhD candidate at the University of California Berkeley.

Earthship (2015) for flute/piccolo, clarinet/bass clarinet, piano, percussion, violin, cello and electronics was composed for the final round of *Feeding Music international Composition Contest* at the Italy Pavilion of the EXPO

Milano 2015. Inspired by the idea of living in harmony with nature, Earthship is a house designed to be completely in harmony with its surroundings. Made completely of natural and recycled building materials and powered by solar energy, its inhabitants nurture and survive within nature rather than resist its forces and act in destruction. In this work, the ensemble has the narrative role of creating the utopian Earthship space acoustically, without sound processing.

The sections of *Earthship* are subtitled as 'habitats' and 'portraits'. The habitats refer to the building itself, while the portraits depict the endangered animals outside and around the building in nature. The instrumentalists, in sounding these environments, employ unusual playing techniques and microtonal harmonics. The goal of the extended techniques is to create the widest range of timbres and textures, such that it becomes indiscernible which sounds are coming from which instrument. The electronics were created from pre-recorded sounds of endangered birds and insects. The fixed media enters seamlessly as the ensemble reaches the musical climax of the piece. When the ensemble enters after a prolonged tape solo, they blend again completely with the electronics. The concluding textural duet of the work is performed by the pianist playing inside the piano and the percussionist using Styrofoam prepared to the composer's specifications and amplified using contact microphones.

Composer, multimedia artist and teacher CAROLYN BORCHERDING (b. 1992) is interested in building embodied sound and visual worlds through compositions. She composes for a wide range of solo instruments as well as multimedia ensembles. Her works experiment with listener perception of space, and more recently explore narratives relating to historical, cultural, and personal matters. Her compositions are performed internationally, and she is currently a Doctor of Musical Arts candidate in Composition at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Frenetic Disintegration (2018) for bass clarinet and fixed media is the sonic representation of unraveling energy. The notated score combines graphic and metered notation with timings to align with the fixed media part. The score also includes both improvised and specified phrases. The work opens chaotically with the bass clarinet performing fast improvisatory gestures,

independent of the energetic sounds in the electronics. As the work continues, phrases become longer and less disjunct. Similarly, the electronics get smoother, and the bass clarinet and fixed media come together to form one sounding body. Unlike *Le fantôme du Vent*, the bass clarinet is performed without any live processing, emphasizing further the timbral difference between the bass clarinet and electronic sounds.

The work offers tremendous freedom for the bass clarinetist. The score has suggestions for interpreting the graphic notation, however, there is opportunity to experiment with sound effects and various methods of sound production. Musical momentum is developed through rapid movement from the lowest to the highest ranges of the bass clarinet. The bass clarinet aligns exactly with the fixed media in time, but the musical connection with the electronic sound develops more strongly through the second half of the piece. As the energy dissipates, time seems to pass more slowly, and virtuosity gives way to melodic sustain and harmonic connection. In the final passage, the bass clarinet performs a short motive containing all previously performed pitch material.

4. **Folk Clarinet – May 22, 2022**

Lucy Abrams-Husso, clarinets

Program

Kimmo Hakola *Diamond Street* for solo clarinet (1999)

Pia Siirala *Three Clarinets* for solo clarinets (2022) *World Premiere

Eric Mandat *Folk Songs* for solo clarinet (1986)

1. Spirited; as if from a distant Appalachian Hill
2. Heavily, with a fuzzy, unfocused, breathy tone
3. Expansive; as if hurtling through space
4. With devotion, like a prayer
5. Like a Flamenco dancer with St. Vitus Dance

Intermission

David Del Tredici *Magyar Madness* for clarinet and string quartet (2006)

1. Passionate Knights
2. Contentment (Interlude)
3. Magyar Madness (Grand Rondo ‘A La Hongroise’)

Bålder Quartet
Marie Stolt, violin
Andrew Ng Wen Hao, violin
Vadim Grumeza, viola
Iida-Vilhelmiina Sinivalo, cello

Notes on the program

The topic of Other musical influences on contemporary Finnish and American clarinet compositions is the topic of my fourth doctoral concert. More specifically the influences of folk music, sometimes referred to as 'ethnic', 'global', or 'vernacular' music. Using the term Other rather than "non-Western" or "non-European", I mean to reflect the general oppositions that composers, performers, musicologists, and theorists have created, for centuries, in art music performance and scholarship to differentiate not only source material but also attempt to divide art by race and class. What is "western" art music if not 'not eastern'?

My aim is not to analyze accuracy or authenticity of appropriated material, nor do I hold that borrowing from other musical practices is merely a complimentary gesture that simply reflects mutual respect and creative curiosity. I think focusing on accuracy or authenticity quite often becomes an exercise in identifying levels of 'otherness' rather than understanding what it means to make music in different ways, from a performer's perspective. Most often appropriation is neither an inherently offensive gesture nor harmless artistic enrichment.

It is my opinion that it falls on the lap of the performer to recognize, explain, and understand source materials in compositions and to reflect that understanding in the musical and textual communication with the audience. It is my hope that these program notes can not only enhance understanding and appreciation of the works performed today, but also recognize the Other elements in these compositions.

Notes on the compositions

Kimmo Hakola's solo clarinet work ***Diamond Street*** (1999) is his fourth clarinet work from the 1990s that was heavily influenced by "oriental global music"[77]. Whereas *Capriole* (1991) and *loco* (1995) include far-East folk styles, the *Clarinet Quintet* (1997) and *Diamond Street* (1999), are influenced by the Eastern European folk music, klezmer.

Klezmer is an instrumental Ashkenazi Jewish musical tradition that is characterized by its tone, cadences, and ornamentation. Klezmer music includes traditional dances and solemn songs as well as improvisations that can be highly virtuosic or soulfully expressive. As a young clarinetist, I was always anxious and intimidated when family would ask at holiday gatherings if I could play klezmer. Despite its familiarity, the style of sound, the vibrato and the improvisation were uncomfortably different from my early classical clarinet training. It is ironic that my first experiments in klezmer, or klezmer style, have arisen through this contemporary Finnish clarinet composition.

At the top of the score, Hakola indicates *alla klezmer* ('towards' or 'in' a klezmer style) and the composed music contains syncopated rhythms, glissandi and grace-notes that are characteristic of klezmer music. Vibrato is indicated in two specific moments in the score, and the modal-like scales also create a klezmer-style sound. Like the composer himself, I ultimately found musical inspiration in the recordings of Giora Feidman, as well as recalling the style and sound of the traditional Jewish songs I experienced growing up.

This preparation method - relying predominantly on my own ear, personal experience, and experimentation - has led to a very personal interpretation of *Diamond Street*. I find that each of my performances of the work is slightly different, particularly my ornamentation and vibrato. Though antithetical to typical classical music performance practice, where preparation is most often

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[1]"Hakola Clarinet Concerto; Diamond Street; Verdoyances crépuscules." *Gramophone*. Available online: https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/hakola-clarinet-concerto-diamond-street-verdoyances-crépuscules. Accessed 30 April 2022.

designed to standardize execution, variance is standard performance practice in many folk music traditions, including klezmer.

I am grateful to my friend, violinist and composer Pia Siirala, for composing the work ***Three clarinets*** (2022) for this doctoral concert. Siirala researches the personal song tradition of the indigenous Sakhalin, Kamchatka and Chukotka peoples of North East Siberia. The personal song is an integral part of the personal identity of these indigenous people. Given at birth to every child, the personal song becomes as fundamental to the person's being as their name or the sound of their voice. The personal song tradition provokes questions about the root of musical thought, how and what we hear as music, and the role of the subconscious in musical expression.

The personal songs themselves are stylistically and harmonically unique. They are characterized by gliding pitch and horizontal harmony; the songs do not maintain a tonal center, however there is a type of harmonic awareness as demonstrated through repeated motives and the relationships between notes. They also curiously sound constantly in the middle, without a beginning or end. When recalled, they seem to start and stop suddenly, flowing from the subconscious. Sometimes a person might also use a drum to accompany their song, imitated on the clarinet at various moments during this work.

Using composition as a research method, Siirala created *Three clarinets* using parts of the personal songs of four individuals from Chukotka: Neshkarultin (b. 1945) from the village of Konergino, Raughtit (b. 1945) from Sirenniki, Koravye (b. 1935) from Keperveem, and Vonne (b. 1940) from Us Belaya. After transcribing recordings of the personal songs taken during her field trips in 2009, 2016 and 2017, Siirala composed *Three clarinets* combining specific musical parts of each personal song, her own musical ideas generated through her research of this indigenous tradition, and the sound qualities of the bass, E-flat and A clarinets.

Like with *Diamond Street*, my preparation of *Three Clarinets* came through constant experimentation with sound quality and articulation. Also, like *Diamond Street*, I find that each performance is slightly different depending on how I hear the music on a given day. I relied heavily on the field

recordings to get a sense of the musical, timbral and personal qualities of each song, but the work is not a transcription. A clarinet is not a human voice. The recordings and western-style notation serve only as a starting point, as *Three Clarinets* ultimately becomes one's own personal song.

Eric Mandat composed the rarely performed ***Folk Songs*** (1986) for himself for his final doctoral concert at the Eastman School of Music. He wrote in the program note at the beginning of the score: "I had been listening to a lot of different folk music recordings from non-Western cultures, and I was fascinated by the intricate intonations, the richness of timbres, and the subtle rhythmic variations which propelled the melodic cells in the music I heard." Unlike the first two works, which each draw from a specific folk tradition, Mandat creates his own folk songs using aspects of harmonic, timbral, and rhythmic style that draw on any number of unnamed musical sources.

The resulting work is one of the most challenging works I have ever prepared. Each movement is composed in a different style and uses a different non-standard playing technique. Only in the final movement is the clarinet played 'normally'. The notation is also predominantly prescriptive, showing the method for sound production. While the notation is clear, the non-traditional playing techniques in each movement are not intuitive. I feel surprisingly little flexibility in quality and character of the sound I produce, perhaps due to the newness of the playing techniques. Unlike the first two works on the program, I feel faithfulness to the score is necessary because following the instructions written are the only way to produce the musical sounds intended.

Compositionally, the works of Eric Mandat are also unique. He has been composing mainly for himself for over forty years, developing several playing techniques that have most often required direct instruction from Mandat himself, either in a masterclass or requiring a visit to Southern Illinois University in Carbondale where he has been clarinet professor for over 25 years. He is an experimental performer and composer outside the traditions of American east- and west-coast classical music.

The final work on the program is the most classical. I first encountered the music of David Del Tredici as an undergraduate at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in a project to record his stage opera *Final Alice*

(1974-1975) for soprano, folk ensemble and orchestra. The recording was ultimately never released, but the experience stuck with me because I had never heard such a wide variety of influences interact in such a large symphony orchestra.

Del Tredici's life and career have been largely influenced by both American coasts, having begun as a piano student at UC Berkeley and moving east for graduate study in composition at Princeton with Roger Sessions. Though he experimented in modernism, serialism being the predominant musical style in east coast academia, Del Tredici returned to neo-Romanticism in major works for ensemble and voice from the late 1960s.

The clarinet quintet **Magyar Madness** (2006) was commissioned for and dedicated to the American klezmer clarinetist David Krakauer and the Orion String Quartet. In Del Tredici's program note from 2007, he writes that Krakauer "asked me to write something using that melismatic style [klezmer]. I told him 'Oy vey! Klezmer I can't do but Hungarian I'll try."[78]

The compositional style of the clarinet quintet, including its treatment of folk influence, is entirely neo-classical. Del Tredici writes he was influenced by Schubert's *Divertissement a la Hongroise* Op. 54, specifically the "oddly ethnic seasoning" of its harmony and the "quasi-Gypsy device" of repeating the same theme with increasing ornamentation.[79] Even the proportion of movements, with the third being significantly longer than the first two, was inspired by Beethoven String Quartet No. 13, Op. 130 performed with the original *Grosse Fugue* Op. 133 finale.

From my perspective, the notation and musical approach to the clarinet is not dissimilar to John Adams *Gnarly Buttons* from my first doctoral concert.[80] The main difference between the works is that there is space for stylistic

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[78] David Del Tredici, "*Magyar Madness* for clarinet and string quartet," program Notes. Accessed 25 February 2022. https://www.daviddeltredici.com/works/magyar-madness/.

[79] Ibid.

[80] See "After 'Imagined Models' (DocMus Concert 1) / Part 1 & 2) available online: https://www.lucyabrams.net/news?offset=1568310954103. Concert recording available: https://www.lucyabrams.net/media.

experimentation and improvisation in *Magyar Madness*. There is nothing inherently klezmer about the work, for example compared to Osvaldo Golijov's clarinet quintet *Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind*. However, listening to Krakauer's recording is a reminder that there is space to exaggerate the style, to make it personal. My goal in this performance is to find my own approach, informed by my artistic discoveries and development through preparation of this fourth concert.

About my doctoral project

"Folk Clarinet" is the fourth of five concerts in my doctoral research project, "Contemporary Clarinet Repertoire from Finland and the United States - New Ways of Artistic Expression and a Study of Sociocultural Differences". The project is an artistic and sociocultural study of contemporary clarinet repertoire composed by Finnish and American composers post-1980. My artistic goals are to develop my musicianship through a comprehensive study of contemporary music, and to identify the unique skills required to perform contemporary music to 'prove' that contemporary music is a necessary artistic area of focus for the twenty-first century orchestral clarinetist. I analyze these skills as they develop through my own practice and performances, in collaboration with composers and other musicians, and through the commissioning and premiering of new works for clarinet.

Why Finnish and American contemporary music specifically? Artistically, there is tremendous heterogeneity in both Finnish and American contemporary repertoire, allowing me to explore the largest possible variety of styles and sounds. But more importantly, I am interested in the differences in performance practice between Finnish and American contemporary music. Since I moved to Finland in 2013, one of my most profound musical observations has been the centrality of contemporary music within the classical music culture, which is different than in the United States. These differences manifest themselves, for example, the way performers interact with the notated score, the collaborative relationship between performers and composers, and expectations of and by the performer.

To investigate these differences, my research method combines performance, musicology and anthropology. Practicing and performing a piece of music offers unique perspectives on notational, aesthetic, technical, and timbral

qualities that cannot be gained by studying the musical score alone. My participant observation is shaped also by my position within, between and outside of both American and Finnish classical music cultures.

For more on my research, musical and written, please visit my website, www.lucyabrams.net.

APPENDIX B: Supplemental research repertoire

Solo (unaccompanied)

E. Carter *Gra* (1993)
P. Heininen *Discantus II* (1969)
L. Larsen *Dancing Solo* (1994)
S. Ran *Monologue for an Actor* (1978)
K. Saariaho *Duft* (2012)
J. Tower *Wings* (1981)

Solo (with piano)

S. Fagerlund Sonata for clarinet and piano (2011)
S. Stucky *Meditation and Dance* (2004)
J. Tower *Fantasy (those harbor lights)* (1983)

Solo (with electronics)

M. Seppälä *Response* (2017)

Concerto (with orchestra)

J. Cohn Concerto No 1 for Clarinet and String Orchestra (1986)
M. Lindberg "Kraft" (Soloist A - E-flat, B-flat, Bass, Contrabass clarinets, percussion) (1983-1985)

Chamber music (acoustic)

K. Aho Woodwind Quintet (2006)
D. Bermel *Coming Together* for cello and clarinet (1999)
E. Carter *Esprit rude/esprit doux* for flute and clarinet (1984)
J. Kokkonen Wind Quintet (1975)
M. Leinonen *Harmaapäätikka* for flute and clarinet
B. Monk Feldman *Snow in the Dark* for flute, clarinet, violin and cello (2012)
A. Norman *Music in Circles* (2013)
A. Sallinen *Nine Fragments for Barabbas Septettto* (2022) *Premiere
A. Thomas *Dancing Helix Rituals* for clarinet, violin and piano (2007)
S. Webb *On the Topic of Roethke* for clarinet, violin and piano (2016)

Chamber Music (with electronics)

C. Kytökorpi *22* for flute, bass clarinet, cello and electronics (2022) *Premiere

E. Lehtonen *Errare* for clarinet, cello, and sampler (2022) *Premiere

O. Moilanen *Paralysis* for flute, clarinet, cello, piano and electronics (2022) *Premiere

V. Raasakka *Coal Plant* for flute, clarinet, cello and electronics (2016) *Also recorded

Orchestra

J. Adams *Harmonielehre* (1985) (Lahti Symphony, cond. John Adams)

H. Ahmas *Lux Arctica* (2012) (Lahti Symphony)

K. Aho *Geija* (2012) (Lahti Symphony)

K. Aho *Hiljaisuus/Silence* (1982) (Lahti Symphony)

K. Aho *Sinfonisia tansseja. Hommage a Uuno Klami* (2001) (Oulu Symphony)

A. Auvinen *Andalusian Panzerwagen Jazz* (2020) (Tapiola Sinfonietta) *Also recorded

D. Del Tredici *Final Alice* (1976) (UI Symphony Orchestra) *Also recorded

S. Fagerlund *Drifts* (2017) (Turku Philharmonic, Uuden Ajan Ensemble)

S. Fagerlund *Isola* (2007) (Uuden Ajan Ensemble)

S. Fagerlund *Mana* (2014) (Uuden Ajan Ensemble)

S. Fagerlund *Nomade* (2018) (Uuden Ajan Ensemble)

S. Fagerlund *Water Atlas* (2018) (Uuden Ajan Ensemble)

P. Glass *Double Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra* (2015) (Lahti Symphony)

J. Kokkonen Symphony 4 (1971) (Lahti Symphony)

O. Kortekangas *Via Oratorio* (2017) (Lahti Symphony) *Premiere

L. Porra *Entropia* (2015) (Lahti Symphony)

L. Porra *Kohta* (2016) (Lahti Symphony)

J. Pisto Symphony No. 1 (2017) (Oulu Symphony) *Premiere

U. Pulkkis *Difference Engine* (2022) (Uuden Ajan Ensemble) *Premiere

U. Pulkkis *Dragonfly* (2012) (Uuden Ajan Ensemble)

U. Pulkkis *Encanto* (1998-1999) (Uuden Ajan Ensemble)

U. Pulkkis *Lagrangian Point* (2018) (Uuden Ajan Ensemble)

U. Pulkkis Piano Concerto (2010) (Uuden Ajan Ensemble)

U. Pulkkis *Shades of Night Descending* (2002/2022) (Uuden Ajan Ensemble) *Premiere

U. Pulkkis *The Tears of Ludovico* (1998) (Uuden Ajan Ensemble)

U. Pulkkis *Victoria* (2011) (Uuden Ajan Ensemble)

E. Rautavaara *Cantus Arcticus* (1972) (Lahti Symphony)

E. Rautavaara *Towards the Horizon*: Cello Concerto Nr. 2 (2008/09) (Lahti Symphony)

T. Räisänen *Pulmo* (Organ Concerto) (2023) (Helsinki Philharmonic) *Premiere

J. Tiensuu *Ihmepari* (2022) (Tapiola Sinfonietta) *Premiere

L. Wennäkoski *Flounce* (2017) (Lahti Symphony)

S. Zinovjev *Batteria* (2016) (Turku Philharmonic)

Opera

S. Pohjola *Kansanradio-Opera* (2020) *Premiere

A. Sallinen *Barabbas dialogues*, Op. 84" (2002-2003)

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