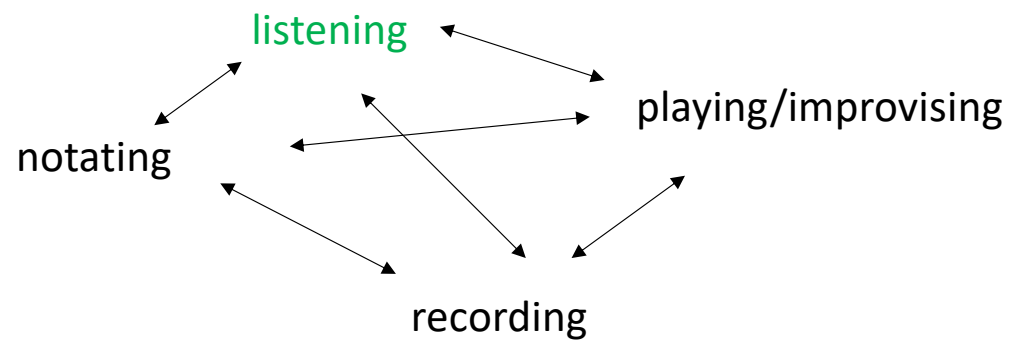


Circular compositions for saxophone solo

Following a composition's transformations through
improvisation and collaborative creating

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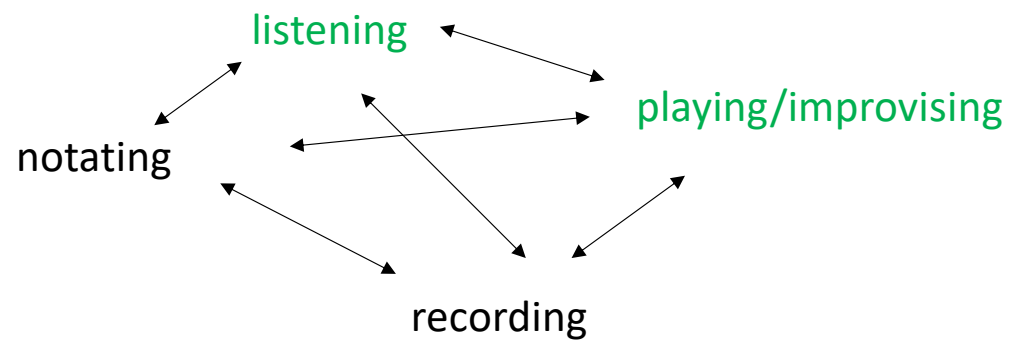
Entangled activities



“Music is then understood as the sound of human bodies in motion; to listen to music is to perceive the actions of those bodies, and a kind of sympathetic, synchronous bodily action (i.e., dance) is one primary response.”

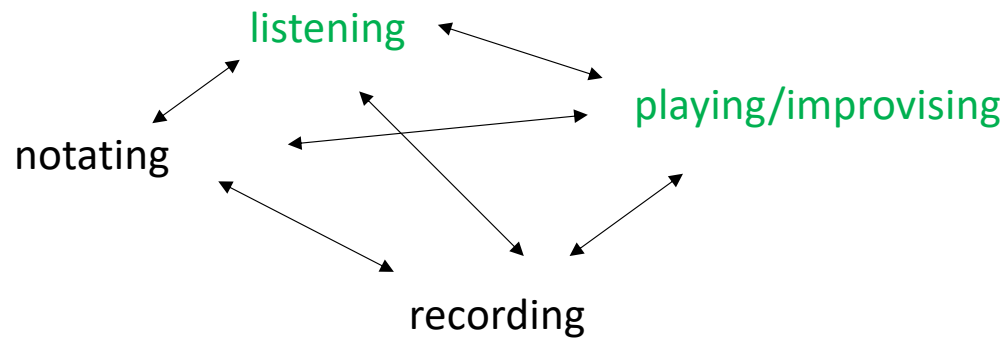
(Iyer 2014:3)

Entangled activities



“The point here is that the embodied improvising agent, situated in a real-world physical and cultural environment, is most often the listener *and* the doer in the equation.” (Iyer 2014:7)

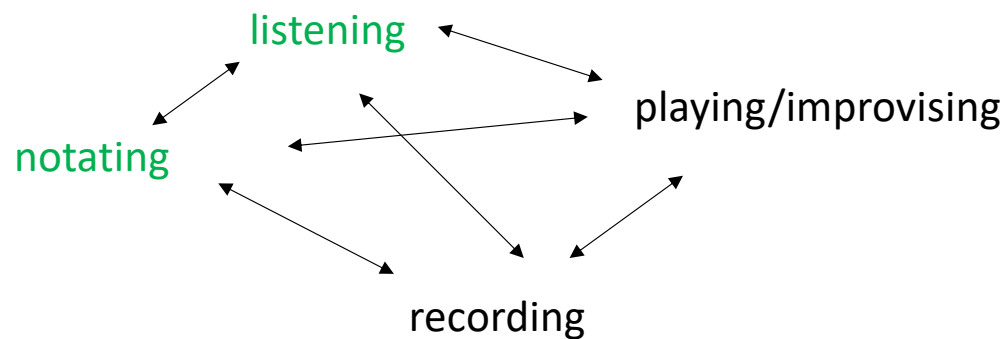
Entangled activities



How can I describe the contact between my human body and other partaking materialities (e.g. instruments) when listening and/or playing?

Is this entanglement of listening and playing what we call improvising; when we soften up and transgress the borders of our human body in the interaction?

Entangled activities

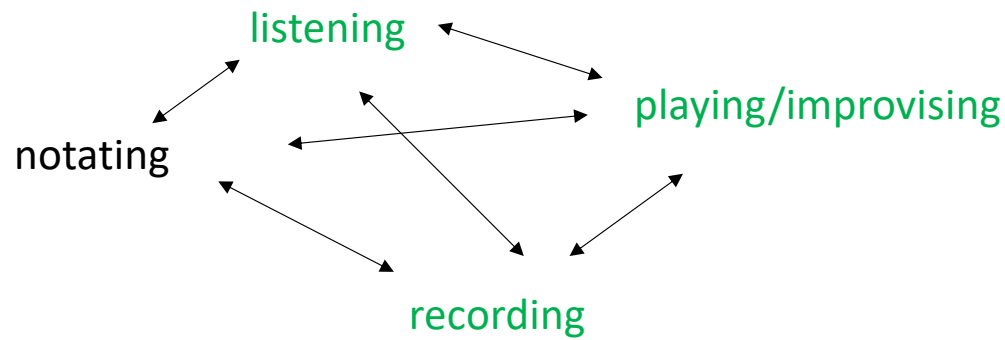


How does the knowledge I gain by creating through listening and notating differ from the one that evolves through listening and playing? Or does it at all?

Is there a difference between interacting with a materiality when the intended result is sound or when sound is just the byproduct of the interaction?

Notating involves interpreting, judging and taking choices.

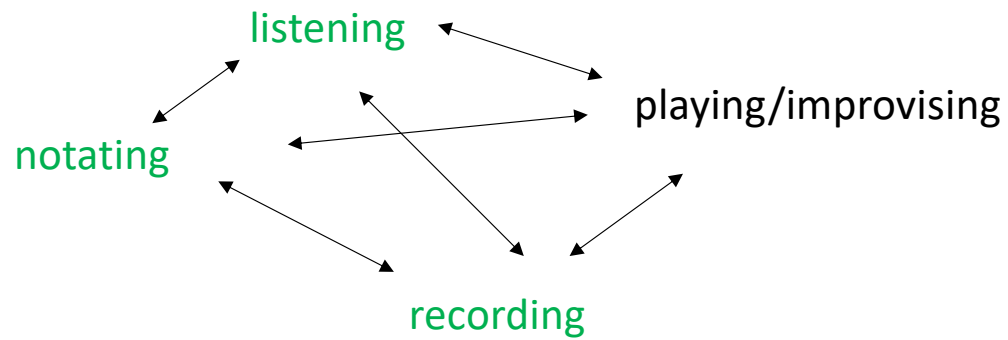
Entangled activities



(How) does my playing/improvising change when I am aware of recording it?

As notating, recording involves judging, interpreting and taking choices – but this happens primarily at other stages of the creative process.

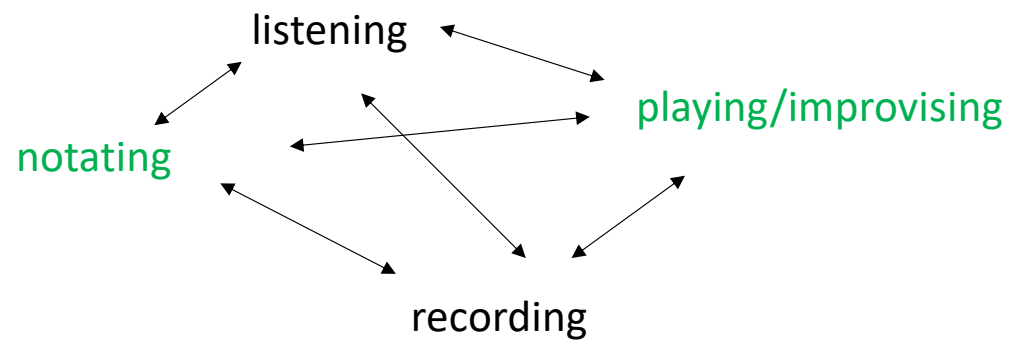
Entangled activities



Is there a difference in the relation to temporality and its impact on the creative process between notating and recording?

Do I understand recording as notating or rather as inscribing?

Entangled activities



Is this at all possible?

Lichtspiel for saxophone solo

Exploring a free-tonal melodic motive in its interplay with sound explorations

I'm **listening** to how my human body keeps the air column moving within and through my saxophone when exploring multiphonics and other sounds in the piece's introduction. In Vijay Iyer's words: I need to be both the listener and the doer to filter the partials I want.

My lips, teeth, tongue and fingers are the surfaces where my body and the saxophone touch each other, but it is the flowing air that I initiate the sound with – and that moves both our bodies from outside and within when **listening** and **playing**.

Through **listening**, **playing** and **recording**, the initial melodic motive of the piece took shape, but its melodic and motivic development and the process of interplay with the sounds was enabled through entangling **listening** (to my imagination and playing) with **notating** musical developments and spaces for improvising.

Transposed score

Circular Composition II 1 Lichtspiel

Birgitta Flick

Freely

ppp *pp* *p*

improvise using air sound

mf

Merge into a short free improvisation before you continue. (ca. 5-7")

B

Circular Composition II 1 Lichtspiel

Improvise and lead in the next part (8-14")

22

25

29

improvise based on these sound colors, 5-10".

C A tempo, steady (shape accentuations spontaneously)

♩ = 118-128

Lower every now and then the f natural to a slightly flat f (see legend).

mp

build up intensity until the end of this movement, maybe even the volume.

D

36

40

44

46

bisbigl.

bisbigl.

bisbigl.

Circular Composition II 1 Lichtspiel

50

bisbigl.

54

start improvising..

Keep improvising, use these pitches/chords they represent. (open)

57

Continue through improvisation, keep pulse/tempo, you may change the meter, go seamlessly into next part. You may include reminiscences of motifs or other musical means from this movement (both written or improvised ones).

ca. 30-45"

rit.

Glass for saxophone solo

Exploring stability and the development of sounds and motives from *Lichtspiel*

I continue **listening** to the air moving within my saxophone and to how I can ‘answer’ to the lively conclusion of *Lichtspiel*. I aim for stability and let my bodily actions follow my imagination that envisions bright and warm sounds. I again found it easiest to unfold the initial motive’s voice leading and implied harmonic structure by interweaving my **listening** and **playing** with **notating**.

It is through the exploration of the A-section’s last pitch that the B-section with a more sound-centered investigation of stability is set in motion. As the ‘sound world’ I’m investigating, I enjoy the bodily feeling of pulse that comes with my fingers’ rhythmic interaction with the keys.

Notating the B-section’s outlines with music notation and language involved many choices – where the most important one was to not take too many choices concerning the material’s interplay, thus adding a larger improvisatory layer to the already ongoing improvisatory interaction between the instrument and my body.

Circular Composition II

2 Glass

Very freely, agogically
Starting point: ♩ = 64

Birgitta Flick

Improvise with the material of these boxes. After having started with the first one you may freely combine all boxes, repeat or go back to them and create your individual musical flow until the end of the movement.

Senza misura if not noted differently, shape even the dynamic flow yourself.

B Experiment with the transition between a regular cis[#] and 'underblowing' the cis[#].

I. freely, agogically

Keep the central c[#] and improvise with lines that widen and vary the intervals around it.

Circular Composition II

2 Glass

Vary pitches before c[#]

Merge smoothly into next section **A tempo** ♩ = 116-144

Continue with these arpeggios, keep slowly changing max. one or two pitches at a time to shift to other harmonic structures. You may sometimes do small musical excursions or pause to breathe, but do both only in relation to the pulse. Play with the phrases' meter, change 3x2 sometimes in 2x3, but always go back to 3x2. Enjoy the sound of your keys and take them as rhythmic thread and guidance.

Dm

Improvise an ending starting from the material in the box. Keep pulse, circle around a'.
a.n.

Sorrow for saxophone solo

Reflection on the preceding music through improvisation with a song form

Though the initial melodic motive of *Sorrow* was improvised on the saxophone, I needed the interaction with another sounding (and non-transposing) body to let it unfold melodically and harmonically. Interweaving my **listening, singing** and **playing** on my new piano with **notating** a sketch seemed easiest to keep the overview and to not rush in my search for the development.

Recording and then **listening** to a somewhat 'finished' version became a tool for clarifying phrase lengths and other rhythmical details when **notating** the score.

Again, an important notational choice was to defer the choices of interaction with the notated to the moment of performance, including also the transfer back to the saxophone.

Circular Composition II

Concert score!

If possible, transpose, otherwise interpret
it as a Bb chart. Treat it as a leadsheet and
improvise freely with it.

3 Sorrow

Birgitta Flick

4

7

11

15

1st x only

Kumbhaka for voice & ensemble (lyrics/title by Chanda Rule)

A new song derived by ear from *Sorrow*

Listening to each other's explorations was the core of Chanda Rule's and my transformation of *Sorrow* into the piece *Kumbhaka*. Being both **listeners** and **doers**, we played and sang for and to each other, communicating our ideas through **recording** with our phones.

A piano recording of mine in combination with the methodologically inspired title of the *Circular Composition* inspired Chanda to the theme and the lyrics of *Kumbhaka*, reflecting on the pause in our circular breathing cycle. Chanda's recordings showed me a new way of interpreting the voice leading in *Sorrow*.

Deferring again the relation and interaction with the notated to the moment of improvising together, seems to be a natural continuation of this collaborative creation process.

Score

Kumbhaka

(coming from Circular Composition II, 3. Sorrow) Lyrics: Chanda Rule
Music: Birgitta Flick

Just for a mo - ment _____ Be - tween love's song _____ And

_____ e - ter - nel _____ void _____

Be - hind the waves and Live gi-ving wa-ter, Be-fore the __ push-the _____ fight for _____ glo -

The score consists of three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The first system (measures 1-3) features a vocal line with lyrics 'Just for a moment... Between love's song... And' and a piano accompaniment with a steady eighth-note pattern. The second system (measures 4-6) has lyrics 'e - ter - nel... void' and continues the piano accompaniment. The third system (measures 7) has lyrics 'Be - hind the waves and Live gi-ving wa-ter, Be-fore the __ push-the _____ fight for _____ glo -' and includes a triplet of eighth notes in both parts.

2

Kumbhaka

ry, Af - ter the tide rolls Hold me _____ Hold

Hold me _____ Hold Hold _____ me. _____

1st x only

1st x only

The score continues with two systems. The first system (measures 11-13) has lyrics 'ry, Af - ter the tide rolls Hold me... Hold' and features a vocal line with a five-measure rest and a piano accompaniment with a five-measure rest. The second system (measures 14-15) has lyrics 'Hold me... Hold Hold... me.' and includes first endings marked '1st x only' in both parts.

Transformation for saxophone solo

Conclusion through improvisation with an intensified rhythmic impulse

Listening to the need for rhythmical intensification and interaction of the motives, sounds and the already happened developments of *Lichtspiel*, *Glass* and *Sorrow* became the origin and methodology for *Transformation*.

Through entangling **listening** to my imagination and **notating**, a rhythmic-motivic development (with only directional melodic proposals) in a two-part form evolved.

Through **listening** and **playing** I look back and create a conclusion of the four pieces, exploring and transgressing the permeable borders of my human body in the interaction with the saxophone body, the notated developments and my surrounding in the moment of performing – improvising.

Score

Circular Composition II 4 Transformation

Birgitta Flick

If not indicated differently, articulate all pitches that are longer than a 16th-note as staccato.

Take this as a starting point for an improvisation that looks back on what has happened in movement 1-3 and at the same time transforms this into a new musical statement and concludes the piece.

There is consciously no tempo or pulse information. Adjust that to your momentary musical flow. The same is true for the length of the movement.

Credits

Introduction (Circular Composition III) composed by Birgitta Flick with phone recordings from the composition process of *Circular Composition II*, 2023.

Lichtspiel, Glass, Sorrow, Transformation composed by Birgitta Flick (parts of *Circular Composition II*), 2022.

Kumbhaka composed by Birgitta Flick (music) & Chanda Rule (lyrics, melodic transformation), 2022.

Recording of *Kumbhaka* (June 3rd, 2022, in the framework of the Dr. Artium presentations at University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna):

Chanda Rule – voc

Birgitta Flick – sax

Ivar Roban Križić – bass

Gernot Bernroider – drums

Literature:

Iyer, Vijay (2014). Improvisation, Action Understanding, and Music Cognition with and without Bodies. In: *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies, Volume 1 (Forthcoming)*. Oxford Handbooks Online. https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/vijayiyer/files/improvisation_action_understanding_and_music_cognition_with_and_without_bodies.pdf (Accessed 2023-02-26).