

Metaxis: Sound of Movement and Movement of Sound

Entangling Cello, Bow, Body, and Movement in a Collaborative Compositional Process

Metaxis, a Greek concept evoking an in-between state of shifting boundaries where movement becomes sound, the physical merges with the auditory, and the visual intertwines with the sonic, is an interdisciplinary work for moving solo cellist, composed by the cellist in collaboration with two choreographers.

This artistic research focuses on two key questions:

- How can improvisation function as a compositional method to explore a *sympoietic* (Haraway) collaboration between body, instrument, and disciplines?
- What happens when the performer's body is no longer just a tool for sound production, but a material and agent of artistic expression in its own right (Fischer-Lichte)?

Through *Metaxis*, the cello, bow, and the performer's body are treated as entangled agents within an ongoing creative process. The cello is not merely a tool but a co-creator, its material presence resonating with the body's gestures and the choreographic input. Movement, sound, and physicality are given equal status as concrete compositional materials. Improvisation serves as a method for experimentation: trying out ideas, testing hypotheses, and discovering unexpected relationships between the sonic and the physical.

The concept of *response-ability* (Haraway) is central to this collaborative process. It involves cultivating a heightened sensitivity to the agency of all participants, whether human (choreographers, performer) or nonhuman (the cello, bow, and environment). In iterative workshops, improvisation is used to explore how sound and movement emerge as interdependent processes. These sessions are documented through video and audio, enabling critical reflection and analysis of perceptual instabilities, patterns, and discoveries. This cyclical process of experimentation, reflection, and refining is central for both the artistic work and the research.

By combining improvisation, choreographic work, and theoretical reflection, *Metaxis* seeks to create a space where the boundaries between movement, sound, roles, and the musical work are continually renegotiated. *Metaxis* challenges classical music hierarchies, foregrounding the performer's body and gestures as visceral sources of artistic agency and materiality. Operating in the liminal space of metaxis, it explores the in-between, where distinctions blur and transform—where movement becomes sound, sound becomes movement, and each informs the other in a dynamic, *sympoietic* process.

The presentation will include live performance

Relevant artistic reference: excerpt from MOVING CELLIST Tanja Orning (composer, musician, mover) Gunhild Bjørnsgaard (choreographer, producer)
"Lueteckno" 5.37, performance of the choreography concert during the Ultimafestivalen 2023 at Gamle Munch 21.9-2023. The choreography concert lasts 50 minutes.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQ72WJOu_si

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BIO

Tanja Orning is an experimental contemporary cellist, composer, researcher, and educator who explores the intersection of classical tradition, contemporary music, improvisation, and interdisciplinary art forms. She has realized projects like "Cellotronics" and ensemble collaborations including asamisimasa (Spellemann awards 2012 and 2015), Helga&Tanja, Kyberia, Boa trio, Ametri String Quartet, and Wunderkammer. Orning has premiered over 200 works, such as cello concertos by Lene Grenager, Bente Leiknes Thorsen, and Mark Adderley, and collaborated with prominent composers and musicians internationally. An active improviser, she has performed with Ayumi Tanaka, Christian Wallumrød, Sigurd Hole, Eivind Lønning and others. Her compositions have been performed at festivals such as Ultima, Borealis, Tonehimmel, and Dark Music Days (Reykjavik). She has collaborated with dramaturges and choreographers on projects like "Ensemble Studies" (2021) and "Moving Cellist" (2023). Orning earned her PhD at the Norwegian Academy of Music, where she is Associate Professor in Performance Practice and Contemporary Performance. www.tanjaorning.com

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