

Chapter 3

Love Mangs' *Viken*: an integrative collaboration.

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

This chapter outlines my collaboration with the Swedish composer Love Mangs in ways that provide a strong contrast to the previous chapter. We share a same age and musical background. However, when the project started, our musical training and professional work were still worlds apart: I was a classically trained performer and Love was a composer working exclusively with electroacoustic music. This chapter discusses a piece for guitar, banjo and electronics called *Viken*, the second out of two pieces that we have collaborated on between 2000 and 2008.

In Vera John Steiner's discussion of artistic collaboration, she finds 'integrative' patterns to be most typical of artistic collaboration. Even if I claim that fully integrative collaboration between composer and performer is unusual in the Western art music tradition, I find that my work with Love Mangs makes up an exception to that rule. I will argue in section 1.3 that the reason for this is the shared tools used in the process of producing *Viken*. In section 2, I examine selected examples of how we both interacted with the agents of 'instrument' and 'electronics'.

Section 3 of this chapter is based on a study that my Ph.D. colleague Henrik Frisk and I carried out on the work Love and I carried out on *Viken*. This study was the starting point for a project that we called 'Negotiating the Musical Work'. A further discussion of this project (which eventually also provided the subtitle of the present thesis) is found in Chapter 6. We started the project by proposing a paper for the 2006 ICMC conference in New Orleans, which to a great

extent took its material from an empirical study of my collaboration with Love Mangs in the making of *Viken* (Frisk & Östersjö, 2006b). In the context of *PLAY!*, this study, and the continued work on the terminology and method in a paper for the 2006 EMS Conference in Beijing (Frisk & Östersjö, 2007), was important for the development of a methodology for reflexive study of artistic processes and interaction. In section 3, I bring the material in those two papers together and develop and further discuss the approaches designed there. The discussion of musical semiology found in my deconstruction of musical interpretation in Chapter 1, section 4, is also based on material from these papers.

In May 2006 Henrik Frisk and I initiated a project with two Vietnamese master musicians from Hanoi: Ngo Tra My playing the *Dan Bau* (a traditional monochord instrument) and instrument as the Chinese qin). For the first Swedish tour with this ensemble, now called *The Six Tones*, I suggested to Thuy and My that we should complete a transcription for trio and electronics of *Viken*. I called Love to find out if this was satisfactory, and he had no objections. In section 1.5 I will study the sessions in which we made this transcription as an example of how the Derridean notion of the 'growth' of the original *Viken* when transcribing the guitar part to a trio of *Dan Tranh*, *Dan Bau* and 10-string guitar.

There are many twists and turns in the language within this chapter. I make several stylistic experiments, such as writing in third person and referring to the composers with initials, but most of the writing will be on the more personal note that characterises the main body of the text in this thesis. Due to the personal nature of these collaborations it seems most natural to me to refer to the composers by their first name and writing these sections in 'I-form'. However, I will in all the empiric studies adjust to the nature of the ongoing discussion, sometimes referring to the composer by surname and, when the discussion gets more personal, switch to first name.¹⁴³ The descriptions of composer-performer interaction in third person emanate from the study that Henrik and I carried out. I personally found the cooperation between two artistic researchers in analysing my video documentation rewarding and have decided to keep them in this form as a reference for further discussions concerning methodological issues related to artistic research.

1.2. *Nerthus* and the beginning of the collaboration

The pre-history of the production of *Viken* goes back several years. I met Love Mangs for the first time at a festival for electroacoustic music in 2000. After having heard the last (and by that

¹⁴³ So, when the composer's name is *Love* (a Swedish name etymologically related to the French *Louis*, but pronounced Lu□ ve) as in this chapter, I will as you can guess provide accounts for instance of 'how I met Love' etc. These instances are not to be misinterpreted!

time the only existing) movement of a projected work-cycle called *Hemlanden* (2000-02)—a tape piece using the acoustic guitar as sound source—I asked Love for a new piece for guitar and electronics. The idea that this new commission should make up the middle movement of *Hemlanden* occurred in the discussions that followed. The first movement eventually came out as a piece for tape alone. The guitar piece was commissioned by Concerts Sweden and the premiere of the final three-movement work took place during the 2002 International Rostrum for Electroacoustic Music in Copenhagen and Malmö, with performances in both cities.

When I commissioned this work for guitar and electronics, Love had been working exclusively with electronic music. (His first tape composition, *Vi, vi vågorna* received a Prize in the prestigious 1997 Bourges competition). *Nerthus*, the second movement of *Hemlanden*, came to be his first instrumental composition. As a composer of electronic music, Love was a new but respected name, and the decision to write an instrumental piece was therefore an important step in a new direction and a kind of risk-taking on his part. This of course affected both Love's creative process and the interaction between us. Our collaboration started out in the complementary mode, with Love taking on the classical role of the composer.

One thing that can be seen quite clearly in the guitar part is the composer's wish to produce an impeccable piece of instrumental music. The guitar is approached in a quite classical manner, using a variety of virtuoso techniques of the classical guitar. The form of the piece is fully defined by the solo part, which runs like a continuous thread throughout the piece. The electronics follow and enhance the guitar music, but seldom engages in a more substantial counterpoint or dialogue. The outer movements for tape alone set up entirely different soundscapes; Winter in the first movement and Autumn in the closing one. This gives the whole three-movement work a theatrical aspect, since the guitar enters into the sonic landscape of electronic music as a distinct musical object, 'the classical guitar'. The piece evokes the shifts of seasons in Scandinavia, and from this programmatic point of view the guitar enters into the piece as a metaphor for spring (and the flow of the piece depicts the transition to summer).

In the later stages of the work on *Nerthus*, after the premiere and up to the final version and the CD-recording, the interaction between us became more dynamic, as a result of our growing mutual respect, security and understanding. When Love worked out the first version of the score and the tape part he was working with a synthesized guitar as a timbral reference. This turned out to be problematic in some parts of the piece, since the acoustic properties of some of the intended performing techniques, such as *rasgueados* and heavy strumming, are actually more percussive than the synthetic simulation. As a result, in some sections the electronics did not always match the solo part. After the premiere the collaboration between us was intensified, and

we jointly revised the score and the tape part. I suggested some changes in the guitar part, including transposition of some materials, and discussed possible solutions in the tape part that were realised later by Love in the studio. One intention with the piece had been to work with live processing and to avoid fixed tape parts. However, in the first version, the piece was actually performed in a version in which the electronic part was a single stereo sound file and the synchronisation was organised by means of a click-track. After the premiere a new version was worked out which was more flexible in terms of timing since the tape part was cut up in smaller chunks triggered with a pedal. Some live processing was also added, mainly to resolve problems with the amalgamation of the acoustic and electronic sounds.

Another important aspect of the collaboration, apart from the fact that the whole practice of notated music was more familiar to me, was that Love also plays the guitar. So even if not trained as a classical guitarist—and hence not able to try out all performing techniques and sounds—he was still able to compose with the instrument on his lap. Yet, in the case of *Nerthus*, Love was more focussed on producing a score and working via the computer simulation of the guitar part. The initial ideas with the second commission resulted from the evaluation of the process of writing *Nerthus*, and one conclusion was that in the next piece, Love should himself work out parts of the piece on the instrument.

1.3. *Viken*

A second project was launched by Love and myself fairly soon after completion of the first¹⁴⁴: The recording of *Nerthus* was produced in August 2003 and released in 2004 on Play Time, (Östersjö, 2004) a solo CD on dB Productions with works for different guitars and electronics. The next piece (in focus in this chapter), which was eventually called *Viken*, is a piece for guitar, banjo, e-bow and electronics (2004-05) and was commissioned by the Swedish Arts Grants Committee. The project had several explicit intentions, apart from the mere production of a work for guitar and electronics. One was to use real time processing as the main source of electronic sound. The other was to explore and challenge the boundaries between composing and performing. These explicit ideas, and the development of our collaboration in the course of finalising *Nerthus* were, I believe, reasons why our continued work took on a strongly 'integrative' character. But furthermore, the way we used the tools needed to produce the piece—the guitar, technology (above all the patch written in max/msp) and musical notation—tended to be shared

¹⁴⁴ It is important to bear in mind when studying the second collaboration how the interaction between Love and myself is coloured by the experience of the former piece, and also how the evaluation of the work on *Nerthus*, and the problems identified in the process of creating it, quite directly influenced the ideas behind the next piece.

by both parties. The development of the guitar part as well as the electronics was undertaken jointly.

The decision to use real time processing was due mainly to the performance-related problems with fixed tape parts, and was triggered by the problems encountered in the previous piece. The second field of interest - the boundaries between composition and performance - had several different origins. To me, this interest was caused by my ongoing theoretical studies of the nature of musical interpretation and the ontology of the musical work. From Love's point of view, it was probably more due to his background in pop groups and the kind of collaborative processes typical of playing in bands.¹⁴⁵ On the other hand, this is also a background that we share, even if it belongs to my early pre-history as a performer.¹⁴⁶ Also, it was agreed that a study of the process of producing the new piece would comprise part of my Ph.D.-project and thus be documented on video and analysed in this thesis. All this should be taken into account, when judging the outcome of our joint work.

Love started out his work, not by writing music but by writing a haiku-poem which served as a metaphorical lantern for the piece. He also wrote a second, haiku-like poem (from here on referred to as the first since it begins the two-verse poem), which however did not use the traditional structure of syllables (5-7-5) of the haiku. The two 'haiku' together are now titled *Viken*, a title that appeared fairly late in the work on the piece. The early patches with the electronics are simply titled 'Haiku', referring to the form of the second poem and the atmosphere (and the characteristic reference to nature) of both of them.

Viken

Dimljusa dagar

bryter jag spegeln på mitten

¹⁴⁵ See also section 3.5 below. Members of of pop groups are not always characterised by 'peace, love and understanding'—at least not when it comes to the authorial rights to the 'works' produced by joint agency in the groups.

¹⁴⁶ The influence of this pre-history on my practice should not be underestimated. I will return to it in my discussion of the collaboration with Kent Olofsson in Chapter 4. But in a sense, what we did when creating *Viken* was just to skip the 'art-music' cultural baggage and produce a piece in a mode that was similar to how we worked when younger.

i kraftiga årtag

Ytringars eko

röjer i gröna dunklet

stimmets silverregn

Viken (The Bay)

Bright foggy days

I break the mirror in half

with heavy strokes of the oar

Echo of the ripples

Unveil in the green mist

The shoal's silver rain¹⁴⁷

There is no formal connection between the guitar piece and the two poems by Love that share the title *Viken*. Initially, Love wanted to derive the musical structure from the poems, but eventually the music took its own course. However, the poems served as a kind of 'regulative' text, not at all in the sense of being a kind of notation or set of instructions for the music, but as a point of reference in the unfolding of the musical material, in order to retain the original impulse to the piece. Does this imply that *Viken* is a kind of program music in a sense similar to the Romantic works in this genre? Well, to start with, the poem does not have any kind of narrative, but unfolds two images related to nature. The flow of events in the music is not related to the poem, but to intra-musical logic. I think one can see a certain connection to the first poem

¹⁴⁷ In my non-haiku-translation to English.

and the first section of the piece. The short melodic gestures appear like strokes of the oar in the ‘mirror’ of the bay. The second part refers more explicitly to the second poem and the underwater-atmosphere that it evokes. The musical ideas for this part were initially very open; it was intended to be an improvised section, starting out by playing the guitar with slide, recording and then playing back this improvisation while moving into pizzicato playing. According to the instructions in the score, this improvisation should depict a kind of underwater behaviour, such as in the instruction for the first section, where it is recommended to play like ‘sliding around in a glass of water’. In the course of our work on the piece, this section became increasingly fixed, both in the acoustic and the electronic part.

One of the early beginnings in Love’s work on the guitar part was to find a *scordatura* for the instrument. The idea to use a *scordatura* rather than the classical tuning of the guitar was one of the ideas for *Viken* that emanated from the lessons learnt in the making of *Nerthus*. With the kind of idiomatic approach Love applied to the instrument, the standard tuning of the instrument came out unintentionally as an open tuning. By instead starting out from the use of a *scordatura*, the moments when the tuning of the instrument would be exposed could then be intentionally shaped.

When we met for the first time to look at the material, one of my suggestions was to modify the *scordatura*¹⁴⁸ that Love had derived by tuning the three top strings up and leaving the three bass strings unaltered. To me, the material that Love had derived using this tuning seemed to work well, but I found the pitch structure between the bass strings to be problematic. Hence, I wanted to find a modified tuning that would not change the harmony of the material he had derived but with a different ratio between the open bass strings. In addition, I also thought that the sound of the instrument could be improved with a lower tuning. The result was a slightly modified pitch structure in a *scordatura* transposed a semitone down, changing the internal pitch structure by leaving the fifth string on A. These tunings can be seen in Figure 1. On the same day I also derived a *scordatura* for the five-string banjo that related to both of the guitar tunings. However, even if it shared three of the open string pitches of the new tuning, the intervallic structure was very different much due to the peculiar feature of this instrument, having a treble string as its 5th string. We will return to the banjo in section 2. For now it is enough to note that the *scordatura* for the banjo was tried out while I was transcribing some of Love’s guitar material for the banjo. Thus, the somewhat haphazard idea of combining the pitch material in Love’s original tuning with that in my new version was directly related to the transcription of this music.

¹⁴⁸ Scordatura, from the Italian ‘scordare’ ‘to mistune’, designates the use of a tuning departing from the standard tuning of an instrument. For more on scordatura see Chapter 7, section 2.2.1. (also in footnote 6 in that section).

Guitar and Banjo tunings in *Viken*

Figure 1: chart of the scordaturas used in *Viken*. The top tuning is the *scordatura* that Love originally conceived for *Viken*, the second is my modification of it. As indicated in the image the tuning of the banjo was derived by combining pitch material from both of the guitar-*scordaturas*.

Another early compositional material was a melody that Love had derived from a filtered electronic sound clip, which originally wasn't intended for *Viken* (Audio: excerpt 7). As the process of composing *Viken* evolved he wanted to include the sound file as well as the melodic material derived from it in the work. Almost any kind of notation will inevitably be a reduction of the material that is the object for notation. Already when he decided to make a transcription of the sound clip he subjectively chose elements to emphasize and elements to exclude; in effect he made an interpretation of his own material. Here he is working in the *esthetic* domain on the 'trace' left by his earlier compositional work performed in the *poietic* domain.



Figure 2: Love Mangs' first notation of the melody derived from the sound file. Audio: excerpt 7, the original sound-file from which the melody was derived.

What is interesting with the way Love has carried out the transcription is the deliberate disconnection between the original sound clip and its expressive qualities and the resulting transcription. Instead of attempting to recreate the characteristic features of the sound file Love has extracted an ordered set of discrete pitches that establishes a clear tonality (see Figure 2). One can say that he reconstructed a musical motif independent from its source. In the context of his working on *Viken*, what he heard in the sound clip was a melody. An action performed in the *poietic* domain as a result of working with the material in the *esthesisic* domain but with 'knowledge of the *poietics* of the work' as Nattiez would put it, the work in this case not being the context of the sound clip but the *poietics* of *Viken*.

The original sound file was eventually expanded into a tape part making up the coda of the piece. In this section, the performer is to improvise on the melody that Love had abstracted from it.

The live electronics were worked out in parallel with the guitar part, in contrast to the division of instrumental and electroacoustic compositional work in the process of writing *Nerthus*. For this reason it was regarded as essential that Love should work out the guitar part with the guitar in hand, a working mode that would allow him to work on the electronics in direct interaction with the instrument and the live processing in *thinking-through-performing*.

2. The Agents of Instrument and Technology in the Field of *Viken*

2.1. Introducing the banjo

The process of working out the live-electronics involved several interactive phases. The way the electronics in *Viken* was developed, Love would at times function more as a computer-

programmer than as a composer. At times I would provide the *poietic*¹⁴⁹ input to a feature in the electronics that he would implement in the patch. In the field of *Viken*, the programmer can be identified as a discrete agent, interacting with the agents of 'composer', 'performer', 'instrument' and 'electronics'.

An example of interaction between the agents of 'programmer', 'instrument' and 'performer' can be seen in an exchange of material between Love and me in the summer of 2005. Love (working within the agency of the 'programmer') had prepared some presets in a subpatch called *Pitcher Delay* (see Figure 3) and sent it to me so that I could try to map acoustic material to relevant presets. I worked my way through the

26 settings, mapping certain playing techniques to different presets. I found that much of the electronics seemed to work better on sustained sounds; not a particularly characteristic feature of the acoustic guitar. For this reason I decided to try using the banjo with *E-bow*¹⁵⁰. I had at this time never really played the banjo, except in a single sampling session with the objective of



Video: excerpt 7

producing sounds for a piece by Polish composer Lidia Zielinska. The improvisations I performed on a banjo in that session had since then been on the back of my mind, and I was attracted by the idea of finding ways to use the instrument. I found the response of several of the presets to be particularly interesting, both with long sustained glissandi with slide and E-bow, and with some percussive material combined with E-bow playing that I also tried. I made systematic notes of the combinations of instrumental material that I found could work with each of the presets in the *Pitcher/Delay* subpatch, and when this work was completed, Love and I arranged a session on August 19 2005 in a studio at EMS in Stockholm. In this session I played through all the presets improvising on the playing techniques I had tried out on the guitar and banjo. The intention with the session was to present this material to Love and agree on which material we might use in *Viken*. As it were, much of the most successful material with the *E-bow* on the banjo was rather noisy and harsh. Much of that material was rejected (it could still be used for some

¹⁴⁹ In musical semiology, the 'poietic' refers to the constructive and the 'esthetic' to the interpretative phases of artistic work. See Chapter 1, section 4.3.3. for a further discussion of the tripartition suggested by Molino and Nattiez.

¹⁵⁰ An E-bow is an early electronic tool that was developed at the end of the 1960s; the first commercial model was produced in 1976. Since then it has been used by many leading rock guitarists and several virtuoso techniques have been developed for it, such as arpeggiation, volume and timbre changes, but the basic feature of the E-bow is the continuous long sounds produced by the electromagnetic field that sets the string in motion instead of excitation by plucking.

other piece!) since it fell outside the images evoked by the poems¹⁵¹, but one of the presets that gave more stable pitch in response to long sustained sounds was eventually included in the piece, called the ‘power drones’ by Love in the final score.

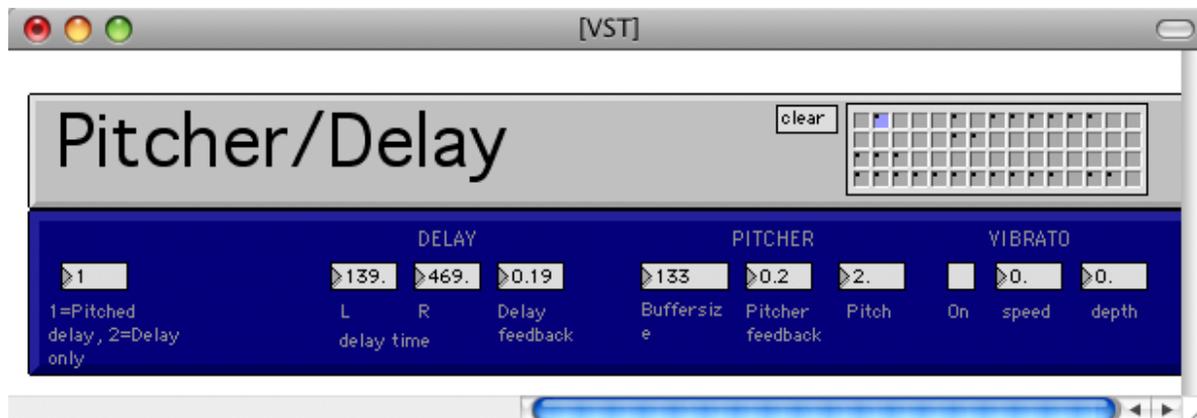


Figure 3: The settings in the Pitcher/Delay VST-object in the video clip.

If we turn to a clip from the session at EMS, we can see how Love asks me to try material with long sustained notes and percussive playing on the skin and body of the banjo. One can immediately sense my acquaintance with the material at this point for when Love asks which preset I had used, I do not need to look in my notes but immediately say that it should be ‘the second one from the top left’. (See Figure 3)

2.2. The guitar in the composer’s lap

As mentioned above, a fundamental working method in the piece was Love’s own performance on the instrument while working out the instrumental part and the programming of the electronic processing. This compositional work was performed by means of *thinking-through-performing*, exploring the *affordances*¹⁵² of the tuning and deriving the guitar part from this interaction with the agents of ‘instrument’ and ‘electronics’. It is important to note that this does not necessarily imply that the guitar part in the score is a transcription of Love’s improvisation. I will argue below that the compositional work was to a great extent not completed in real time, but illustrative of the slowness and reflection that characterises compositional work in the Western musical traditions.

¹⁵¹ This is actually one of the clearest examples of the ‘regulative’ function that the poems had in the making of the piece.

¹⁵² For a further discussion of the significance of this concept, which is central to the ecological approach to perception developed by James Gibson, see Chapter 1, section 4.5.1. and Chapter 7, section 2.2.2.

We met in mid-September 2005 to work on the piece, which was to be premiered on a tour in Scandinavia less than two months later. Love started out the first session with a slow-motion 'performance' of the first part of the piece, showing the playing techniques and gestures and how they interact with the electronics. But before he picks up the guitar, he gives an outline of his ideas for the piece and the current status of the instrumental and electronic material. This first introduction is important in order to understand his role as a composer in the project: What he drafts is the greater form of the piece, which is now coloured by the work done at EMS a month earlier. For instance, the banjo has now become part of the instrumentation, together with some of the combinations of playing-techniques and presets tried out at EMS. At this point, the piece had two main parts (I think one may say that as compared to the final form of the piece, they made up two thirds of the final greater form). What Love defines as the 'A-part' of the piece has two sections, the first is a prelude-like opening, that presents several different materials in a quasi-improvised manner, then a second section which should be a kind of 'underwater' music, first played with slide and then with *pizzicati*; in the B-part, the electronics should consist of play-back of previously played material, and against this background, the banjo was to enter. Love first wants to use the percussive material (that I had suggested could be the beginning of the piece, but now it becomes the beginning of the banjo-section) followed by the E-bow material with long sustained notes and glissandi. His draft is unclear in the B-part, but the end itself is settled, it is to be a pre-prepared tape part with a melodic motif on which he wanted the guitar to make further variations. The formal scheme that he presented here was further elaborated in the second half of the piece, but the first half and the general flow of events was not altered. So, at this point, much of the greater form and the main material of *Viken* was defined.



Video: excerpt 8

When Love picks up my guitar to read through the material from the beginning of the piece, his 'score' consisted merely of written instructions, with references to the programming of the electronics and names for the various motives, but no musical notation of the guitar part. To me, these instructions were of course a little enigmatic to start with, but, as we can see in the video, also Love found it quite hard to interpret the instructions. I find the slow action in this clip intriguing: even if Love has been playing the material himself when writing the piece, trying it out with the live processing, he has a hard time even remembering the order of the events. He plays

the material with ease when he eventually remembers what the phrase is like, but he has to think hard to go from one event to the next. The slowness of the action in this clip provides evidence about the nature of much *thinking-through-performing* in a composer's practice. It is not a matter of finding fancy ways of showing off on the instrument but more a mode of 'thinking'. What Love does in this session is more or less passing on orally a work that does not yet exist in musical notation. The instructions that we both are trying to read refer more to the chain of events in the electronic part, with only abbreviated annotations linking the events to material in the guitar part.

Love's presentation of the material is dialogical rather than projective. He did not display the piece to me as a finished 'product' (which it by no means was at this point) but presented material for discussion and further work. Still the outline he provided remained the same in the finished piece. One objective with playing through the material was to give me an idea of how the processing was interacting with the guitar material. But he is also presenting some quite open ideas for the guitar part, for instance when he reaches the melodic material found in the tape-part intended for the coda (more on this tape part and the melodic material follows in section 3.2.) and first tries to play it with natural harmonics, fails to find the right notes and simply states that it should be possible, to which I agree. Following Love's suggestion I made a version of this melody in harmonics later on that day.

Viken is not a virtuoso piece of the kind that builds on a tension between a musical idea and the instrument¹⁵³. On the contrary, the material seeks the most accessible route to a sonorous and classically sounding result. The use of *scordatura* on the guitar is perhaps most of all related to the use of open tuning in different kinds of popular music, and it is motivated by a wish to undertake an experimental exploration of the instrument.

¹⁵³ I discuss the concepts of the strain of the instrument in line with Levinson in Chapter 4, section 3.1 and the way virtuoso elements emerge from the tension between a compositional idea and the 'resistance' of the instrument in Chapter 6, section 2.1.

3. Negotiating the Musical Work: a Collaborative Study

3.1. Introduction

As mentioned before, the collaborative studies carried out by Henrik Frisk and myself were of great significance for the further work within *PLAY!*. The possibility of adding to the self-reflection necessary in artistic research the interaction with other researchers is, I believe, an important methodological factor, which I found fruitful when approaching the video documentation. What we studied was a single clip from the material documenting my work with Love Mangs on *Viken*. I will in section 3 outline the background of this study. In sections 3.4-6 I will analyse and further discuss the video documentation that was the point of departure for the study. I will take the material in our two jointly written papers as a point of departure and further elaborate on the analyses and approaches developed there.

3.1.1. Material worked out prior to the documented session

It is of importance for the analysis of the communication processes shown in the video snippets to understand the nature of the material that was at hand at the outset of the session. In his preparatory compositional work, Love had derived a melody from an electronic sound clip and, as we have seen in section 2.2. above, he now wanted to make further variations on this melody.

3.2. Analytic approaches to the video

Our work involved trying out several different approaches to a verbal analysis of the video material. In section 3.2.1. I outline some fundamental points of departure.¹⁵⁴ In section 3.3. I present the results of an attempt to study the material 'from outside', which was the first approach that Henrik and I adopted. The descriptive analysis that we made focussed on the interaction between the two agents. In 3.3.3. I move to a lower level of analysis studying parts of the material in more detail.

¹⁵⁴ A further discussion of the methodology used in the work on the video documentation used in this thesis is found in the Introduction.

3.2.1. Qualitative Method

The video documentation from the project of course consists of many hours of recorded data from different occasions. On my suggestion, we focussed on a series of clips from a session on September 17 2005. The selected video clips were transcribed verbatim by Henrik Frisk and myself. The transcription was divided into three fields, following a model I had tried out earlier in



Video: excerpt 9

transcriptions of videos with Rolf Riehm: one field with verbal transcription proper of the dialogue, one with comments on the nonverbal action and a third field with images from the video. The second field with comments on the action was found to be necessary, due to the fact that much of what was going on in the session was happening outside the verbal dialogue.

Much of the descriptions in this field are simply descriptions of the visual action, movements, gestures and such like. The formulation of these comments was done with an awareness of the highly interpretative nature of the undertaking. For this reason, making the transcription together turned out to be a useful (but time-consuming) methodological approach. One could say that we were, to a great extent, negotiating the meaning of the action shown in the video. This joint study is the only opportunity I have had to work out transcriptions by means of negotiations with another viewer. One of the conclusions on method that we were able to draw from this study was how valuable joint projects can be in artistic research from a methodological point of view. The transcription in turn was used as material for a graph that also became an important analytical tool in the study. It was only at the point when the graph was produced that significant traits of the interaction and the communication between the two parties emerged.¹⁵⁵

The verbatim transcription played an important methodological role in the analysis, the first part of it can be found in the appendix. All references to the video in this text are made to sections of the transcription. The video clip that is discussed in this section is edited; sections with little or no musical action have been taken away¹⁵⁶, but the order of events is not altered. In other words, they could just as well be referred to as a series of clips but they are only surrounded by silence and some irrelevant discussions of a practical nature. The video was recorded during a

¹⁵⁵ This is in line with the recommendations of Strauss & Corbin (1998) to work by means of graphic representations and schemes in the analytical process.

¹⁵⁶ For instance when Love asks what I would say to pasta a little later (the studio where we are working is in the basement of his home).

session in the composer's studio on September 17, 2005, which is later on the same day as the clip discussed in section 3.2. above.

3.3. Descriptive interpretation of the interaction

As mentioned above, Henrik Frisk and I approached the material in the video in several ways. The analysis was the result of the process of making the transcription followed by the making of the graph. (Figure 4) The initial perspective gave priority to overarching events and shifts of initiative. It was of methodological importance that the interpretative description was provided by myself and Henrik (as an external viewer). For this reason the following section is quoted from our first paper (Frisk & Östersjö, 2006b) and therefore the text refers to the two agents in third person, by initials for short (S.Ö. and L.M.):

In the first scene S.Ö. has just played an improvisation on the melody and following L.M.'s suggestion he is notating the new variation (see Figure 4 below). This can be understood as constructing new material for the piece, hence an activity in the *poietic* domain. S.Ö. turns to L.M. for feedback, but at this point he appears remarkably indifferent. This is illustrated by the arrow going from the new variation box in the *poietic* field on S.Ö.'s side of the graph pointing down towards L.M.'s side in Figure 4. There is a lack of communication between L.M. and S.Ö. (illustrated by the dotted arrow going upwards from the 'restless, passive' box) since L.M. does not respond to S.Ö.'s invitation to discuss the new variation. L.M. seemed to have accepted the new material as it was played and instead takes the initiative (illustrated by the initiative axis going from S.Ö.'s side to L.M.'s), by adopting an interpretative approach to S.Ö.'s variation. L.M. is now active in the *esthetic* field, suggesting to S.Ö. an addition of a fermata in the variation (line 24) represented by the fermata box in the graph. Now there is apparent noise in the communication (represented by the dotted arrow going from the fermata box to the new variation box): L.M. appears to be unclear of where in the notation the fermata should be. This in turn leads to a misunderstanding by S.Ö. (line 59), taking L.M.'s suggestion to mean several fermatas (dotted arrow from the several box to the fermata box).

The interpretation that we made of the dialog and the interaction was that it takes L.M. a while to find the right spot in the notation (by S.Ö.). He seems to point at different spots in the score but in fact he is seeking for the end of the phrase, which is where he meant the fermata to be. Eventually L.M. finds it and for the first time a clear communication takes place, illustrated by the two arrows in the graph going in both directions (line 68 in the transcription). In this segment

both L.M. and S.Ö. are acting in the *esthesis* domain, L.M. in his interpretation of S.Ö.'s notation and S.Ö. attempting to try out L.M.'s suggestion. S.Ö.'s initial misunderstanding as to the fermata seems to lead to the next initiative taken by S.Ö. and is illustrated by the initiative axis going from L.M. to S.Ö. at 75. Again in the *esthesis* field, S.Ö. suggests that long fermatas could be added to the last notes of the phrase. At first L.M. doesn't get the idea at all (line 78, dotted arrow going from the 'long fermata' box to the 'what?' box) but eventually he approves of the suggestion (line 85, solid arrow going in the same direction).¹⁵⁷ This is followed by what seems to be an attempt on L.M.'s part to enter the creative discussion or to reclaim the artistic initiative. The response from S.Ö. is not related to what L.M. says (the dotted arrow going from the 4th string box over to S.Ö.'s side in the graph at line 94). The passage ends with S.Ö. playing the whole phrase again giving L.M. a look at the end (glance box at line 111) without getting a noticeable response (dashed left-bound arrow). It is obvious that the communication in both directions is very noisy — this passage is filled with unanswered questions and misunderstandings.

In the next clip S.Ö. is writing down the variation in more detail, inserting L.M.'s idea of the fermata as a normative inscription (line 119). In that sense the initiative is on L.M.'s side, in spite of the fact that S.Ö. is the physically active part. At this point S.Ö. is not artistically involved, he is just making a note of L.M.'s interpretative idea. L.M. then develops his idea of the fermatas and their significance in this passage, still active in the *esthesis* domain.

This analysis follows a model in which the difference between creative actions in the *esthesis* and *poietic* domains is a difference with regard to the class of material the creative act refers to. Nattiez calls these domains the psycho-sociology of creation and psycho-sociology of perception respectively (Nattiez, 1990). L.M.'s discussion of the fermata emanates from his perception of S.Ö.'s improvised new variation at the very beginning of the video clip and is therefore to be regarded as an *esthesis* process.

The idea of inserting several fermatas, which at first was a misunderstanding on S.Ö.'s side, is now accepted and incorporated in the music as it is envisioned by L.M.. However, just as in the previous passage, S.Ö. doesn't respond to L.M.'s remarks. Instead he starts playing the

¹⁵⁷ In the final version of the piece the electronics end the section discussed here with a massive fermata.

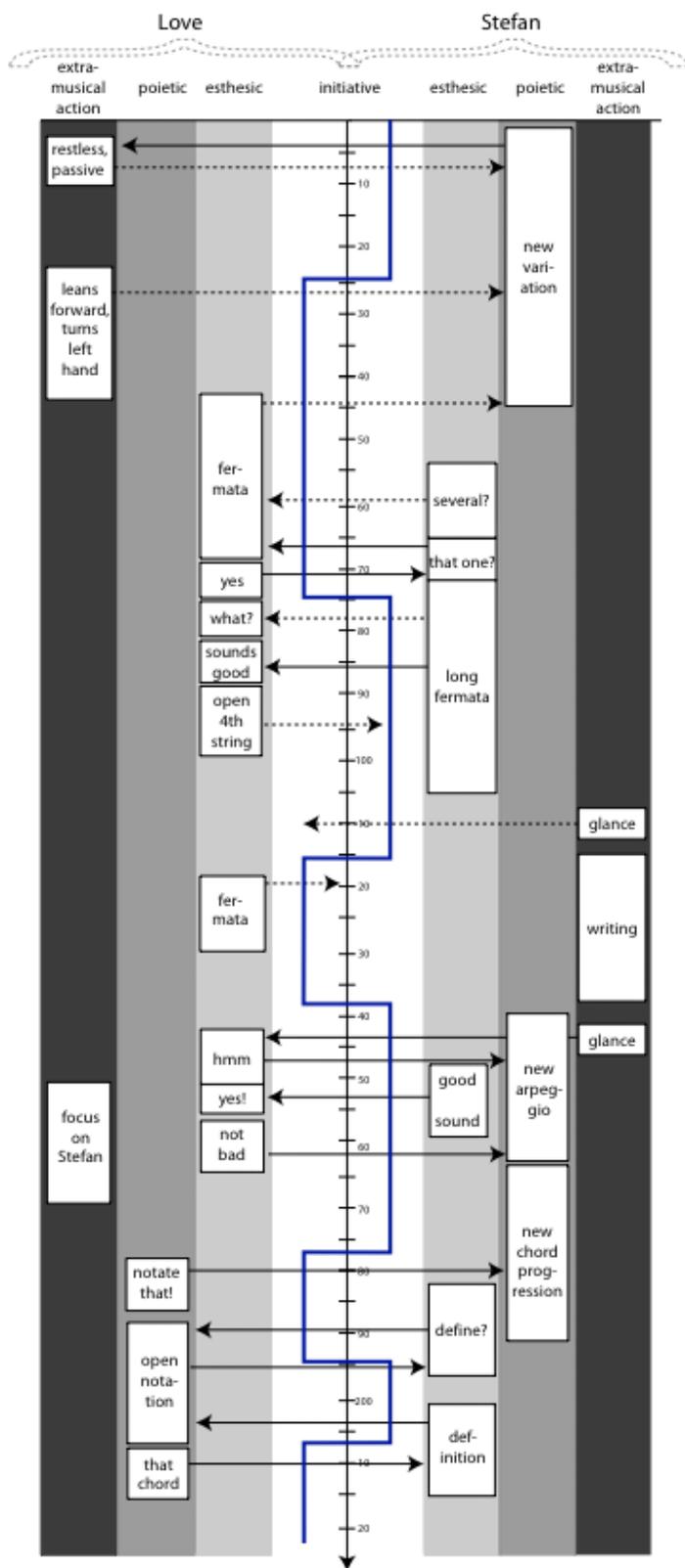


Figure 4: A graph of the interaction between Love and me in the session analyzed in Section 3.2. The scale in the center axis refers to line numbers in the transcription of the video.

phrase from the beginning (line 139) and, when reaching the end of the phrase, he introduces new material in the form of an extended arpeggio (line 140). S.Ö. regains the initiative and moves

into the *poietic* domain. The communication at the moment when the new material is discovered is immediate and distinct: S.Ö. gives L.M. a glance and L.M.'s humming reply is evidently positive (at line 145). At line 150 S.Ö. takes an interpretative approach, commenting on the sound of the new arpeggio. The clear communication at this point is underlined by the fact that for the first time in the video clip, L.M.'s attention turns to S.Ö. and the instrument and away from the music stand.

At this moment S.Ö. starts trying out a new context for the arpeggio that evolved from the previous variation but is of a different character. He plays with the minor seconds that since the introduction of the idea at line 140 have been leading up to the arpeggio and attempts to bring together the new arpeggio with a series of chords from L.M.'s material notated prior to the session. S.Ö. starts to summarize the achievements so far during the day. He starts playing the version of the melody with harmonics. L.M. interrupts him by asking him to 'notate the last thing you did!'. The remark indicates that L.M. has decided to include the new chord progression in his conception of the piece (see Figure 4) and thus his actions move into the *poietic* field. This leads to a discussion of how to define the passage in terms of musical notation. L.M. suggests that it doesn't have to be all that defined ('Just notate it as a draft', line 201). S.Ö. suggests a strategy for the notation of the phrase which L.M. finds satisfactory. In this last sequence L.M. is organizing the material engaging in a typical 'compositional' action in the *poietic* domain.

This descriptive interpretation follows the verbal transcription and the graph closely, to the extent that they should be regarded as one single approach to the video. Our joint interpretation of the material made up the core of the study. A further discussion of the implications of the interaction such as we described it follows in sections 5 and 6.

3.3.1. Lower level analysis of the video

I will now leave this description of the interaction and examine in detail a couple of smaller chunks of the video clips in order to elaborate on these conclusions and attempt to contextualize the reasoning in section 3.3. I start by an examination of lines 33 to 87 in the transcription, which is the main part of the discussion of the fermata¹⁵⁸. The phrase we are discussing was entered in the score as shown in figure 5.

¹⁵⁸ We return to the fermata in the third clip (in excerpt 9), which is when I notate the fermata.



Figure 5: Material 8B from the final score of *Viken*.

As can be seen in the overview above, when I have made the first notation of the improvisation, Love tries to make me shape the melody differently by introducing the notion of a fermata. In the following section I will discuss the negotiation of the significance of this message. Again I will refer to the interaction in third person, in the form of an abstract discussion between two agents.

In his *esthesis* perception of the melody as it is defined by S.Ö., L.M. presumably wishes a certain passage to be extended in time. At first his suggestion about the fermata is not clearly understood by S.Ö. (One could even say that it is clearly *misunderstood* cf. 6.) The situation and the following communication indicates that L.M. isn't interested in a fermata in the classical sense — he is merely interested in a different rhythmic contour of the melody. (This confusion is likely to be one of the reasons that his message is not comprehended by S.Ö.)

What follows is a negotiation between the two agents to establish the meaning of the message 'a fermata'. In this process they are both active in the *esthesis* domain. However, if we move to a lower level of analysis, the suggested fermata can be seen as a *poietic* process introduced by L.M., the meaning of which is being specified by S.Ö. in an *esthesis* process. The important thing here is not to establish the denotation of the musical term fermata. Different performance traditions will always hold different signifiers to the idea of the fermata. But to fully understand the signifier of the idea of the fermata in the context of *Viken* as the idea is put forward by L.M., we need to understand what is signified by it independently of the *poietic* and *esthesis* processes that led to its inclusion, as well as of it in relation to the subculture of the collaboration between S.Ö. and L.M. In this short example it is interesting to note that the receiver as well as the sender are active in working out the code used to encode as well as to decode the message 'a fermata'. This 'working out' of the code is the process that in effect eventually leads to the abstract definition of the cultural entity, the subculture that becomes the referent of the sign in question. At the end of this process of negotiation a mutual understanding of the function of the fermata in this specific context is established (which actually goes well beyond the current meaning of the symbol 'fermata').

This session is also a useful example of how interpretative processes of several kinds overlap and interact. When new material is developed by means of improvised instrumental performance, it is evident that a greater part of the interpretative processes are performed by

various modes of *thinking-through-practice*. However, as soon as notation is introduced, analytical modes of thinking also make their way into the continuous performing and listening of the two agents. This overlap of different interpretative processes can be complete, in the sense that an analytic process concerned with one specific problem can go on simultaneously with an action/perception loop and thus deal with another material or even take off on a completely different path.

We will now examine an example of how the processes can start out with a similar focus, then go in different directions and finally meet again when deciding upon a notation. An example of this can be found in the third and fourth video clips (still from the September 17 session) in which Love is discussing the use of fermatas on the *pizzicato* variation. Simultaneously, I continue to improvise on the variation and on how to continue from the last trills. At first, the two processes pursue similar goals. I'm trying out the same variation as Love is discussing analytically. However, when I reach the end of the phrase such as it has been notated, I start improvising on the last note, adding harmonics and circling around the central pitch creating quite a different kind of sound. This excerpt, starting at line 131 in the transcription, captures the point at which the two processes go in different directions:

Love: "What's good is, eh, when you ... when you sort of... improvise, circling around that one is when you change the emphasis eh... where... kind of..."

Stefan starts playing the phrase.

Love: "... what you stress with the fermatas, where you drag... in the...melody."

Stefan reaches the last note and expands the fermata with an arpeggiated chord. Stefan gives Love a glance, leaves the chord ringing, waiting for Love's response.

Love: "mmm!"

Stefan continues to improvise on the arpeggio.

Stefan looks at Love.

Stefan: "Good sound."

Love: "Yes. Really!"

What follows is a sequence in which both of us leave the verbal discourse aside, focussing instead on my improvisation, which takes on a different path, exploring the new chord. For the first time in this sequence Love's attention moves from the music stand to my playing. One could say that the *affordances*¹⁵⁹ of the instrument and the new arpeggio are now in focus. Love's utterances—

¹⁵⁹ This term, that refers to the constant properties in an object is central to the ecological theory of perception developed by James Gibson, which is discussed in the section on 'thinking through' in Chapter 1 section 3.2.

especially the first 'mmm'—are integrated in the flow of the improvisation, and have a decisive function in the distribution of phrases. We are both drawn into *thinking-through-practice*, in fact one could even say that Love is drawn into the performance at this stage.

When taking this section into even closer scrutiny¹⁶⁰, what I wish to point out is how my performance of the new chord and the arpeggio—an action that in the graph is analysed as *poietic*—can also be understood as oscillating between the *esthesis* and *poietic* domains. In order to regard performance as a mode of 'thinking-through' it is understood that it, in itself, involves *thinking-through-hearing*. When I continue to play the new arpeggio, I do not simply repeat it, but in each 'repetition' I vary the articulation, dynamics, and the figurations within the arpeggio. I also experiment with different combinations of slurs, trills and harmonics inserted in the arpeggio. This is followed by an abrupt return to the variation developed just before. This can be understood as part of an *esthesis* process, an interpretation of how the new arpeggio might function. By trying to combine these two elements, the identity of the two can be defined and the *affordances* of the arpeggio can be further explored. This first attempt to connect the material to the surrounding material is immediately followed by a second try, now employing the final ascending line of the variation as a series of slurred figures leading up to the arpeggio. I again make a fermata on the chord, improvising arpeggios with fingered notes and harmonics combined with trills. Love listens and says approvingly, 'that's not bad at all'. The improvisation continues by the introduction of a new chord in the third position. Now, throwing this chord in does of course not come from mere inspiration but can be understood as an analytical turn in the exploration of the material. The chord is part of the material that Love had notated prior to the session.

According to my understanding, this kind of interaction with a material can be described as a typical *esthesis* action performed by means of action and perception.¹⁶¹ In the discussion that follows one can see how the two modes of thinking interact in a direct manner. I am continuously playing while we are both analytically discussing the new phrase. The trace of these *esthesis* and *poietic* processes is the notation that I provided, (Figure 6) (actually clearly defined and

¹⁶⁰ I am more concerned here with the combination of the different processes rather than with discussing a moment of extraordinary musical excellence. In other words, the actual improvisation I do may be much less interesting than the theoretical implications from it. (This is my apology for dwelling on this section in a piece that has so much more to afford musically)

¹⁶¹ In other words, if this had been what was intended with the term 'performance interpretation'; then I would completely agree.

eventually ‘fixed’, despite Love’s suggestion that it should be left rather open-ended)¹⁶² but also the performances, out of which, some have been recorded.



Figure 6: Material 15 from the final score for *Viken*.

3.4. Whose work and whose performance?

At the beginning of the video clip just discussed, the immediate impression could be that of a complete swapping of the agent’s respective roles: Who is the ‘composer’ and who is the ‘interpreter’ in this session? When the video clip starts, I am writing music while Love is passively listening. Love’s first initiative is the suggestion to add a fermata in the variation that I have just notated. However, my claim is that, even if we encounter the two agents in a situation in which the relative positions happen to be at their respective extremes, what we see is still within the boundaries of the agencies of composer and performer respectively. The observed interplay is an example of how the roles of composer and performer in themselves overlap, and can even seemingly be interchanged in this way *without* basically changing the roles of the collaborating individuals.

The question of authorial rights has not been an essential interest in these studies. However, it cannot be denied that the study on the collaboration between Love and me does have a bearing on issues of legal property and authorship. In this section I introduce the perspective of authorial rights into the study of the interaction.

The copyright of musical works has historically been connected with musical writing. The questions posed by our collaborative work on *Viken* is which *poietic* and *esthesis* actions should be regarded as work-identifying, and hence decisive in determining the copyrights associated with

¹⁶² It may be of interest to note that this ending chord was further elaborated when I was travelling with the piece to Vietnam and China bringing only a 10-stringed guitar and the banjo on the tour. When I for this reason was forced to try the piece on this instrument I made a scordatura using the extra bass strings available which somehow made this phrase come out in an even more convincing way. The transcription for 10-string guitar could then be described as a further interaction of *esthesis* and *poietic* processes, an interpretation of the trace from this first session (i.e. the notation in the score) that in this case results in the *poietic* action of constructing a *scordatura* for 10-stringed guitar.

the work. A brief overview of the history of copyrights, especially with regard to the musical work, indicates that it emerged around 1800.

Anne Barron, discussing the reasons for the emergence of the copyright law for musical works, identifies it to appear by 1777 in England¹⁶³. Contrary to Goehr, she suggests that this development was independent of the rise of the Romantic work-concept. She identifies the immediate context as 'the business of selling printed music to an emerging 'middling class' of buyers with aspirations to participate vicariously in the consumption of high culture.' (Barron, 2006a, p. 122) Hence, historically the copyright law is connected to musical writing rather than to the concept of an 'ideal' work. In the present day, when music can be stored in other ways than in writing, the definition of the entity that should be subject to copyright must be defined differently.

In another paper, 'Harmony or Dissonance?' (Barron, 2006b) she discusses the copyright issues associated with popular music, and there are many similarities between these genres and the joint agency in the case of *Viken*. She refers to a 1999 case in which three members of the British band *Spandau Ballet* made a case against the band's principal songwriter Gary Kemp, arguing that the songs that made up the band's repertory should be understood as the product of joint authorship. Interestingly enough, Kemp did not write the songs down, but presented them aurally to the group. In spite of this fact, the judge referred to the image of Beethoven: 'We have all seen imaginative sketches of the great classical composers of the past sitting in their desks in what one imagines might be an attic, quill pens in hand and sheafs of musical paper before them, writing out their compositions by hand'.¹⁶⁴ In this specific case, the judge made a big point of this connection between 'the great composers of the past' and Gary Kemp: 'A composer can 'hear' the sound of his composition in his mind before he ever hears it played. Beethoven could hear his music in this sense¹⁶⁵ even when he was deaf. When Mr. Kemp was devising his songs the sound which he had in his musical consciousness must surely have been the sound they would have when performed by Spandau Ballet, not the sound they would have when sung by Mr. Kemp alone to the accompaniment just of his own guitar.'¹⁶⁶ As I suggest in Chapter 1, the borderline example of 'inner-hearing' is not to be understood as the same kind of

¹⁶³ J.C. Bach was a key-figure in this development. He took the initiative to legal processes in two cases against two publishers for unauthorized publications of his work in 1773. In 1777 the Bach vs Longman case resulted in the ruling that the 1710 protection applied to 'books' should extend also to musical scores.

¹⁶⁴ Hadley vs Kemp p. 639 (1999) quoted in (Barron, 2006b).

¹⁶⁵ The way I see it, this verdict is outrageously stupid in many ways, firstly by the way the judge refers to Beethoven as a composer working out his pieces only through inner hearing. As is common knowledge from the evidence of his sketch-books, the melodies and symphonies did not at all come falling down unto him from the skies but were laboriously worked out under stretched out periods. For other critique see the main body of the text.

¹⁶⁶ Hadley vs Kemp p. 646 (1999) quoted in (Barron, 2006b).

action/perception feedback loop as the 'concrete listening' in performance or a studio. In my opinion, we should understand 'inner hearing' as a partly analytic *esthesis* process. Especially the complexity of timbre is hard to experience by means of inner hearing. However, this is not to say that a composition cannot be created by other means than writing. In that sense the judge (who ruled in favour of Gary Kemp) may have had good reasons to equal Kemp's compositional work with composing by means of musical notation. However, as pointed out by Barron, there is a problematic neglect in the verdict with regard to the processes leading up to the final product, and especially regarding the joint agency typical of the production of musical content in a pop group. In the case of *Spandau Ballet*, the rehearsal process before finishing a song lasted several months after Kemp's first aural presentation of it. Barron concludes that 'as far as the judge was concerned, the work was still 'the same' at the end of the rehearsal process as it had been at the beginning, despite the fact that it sounded different: the *sound* of the musical composition, it would appear, is not a component of the music which is protected by law.' (Barron, 2006b, p. 30)

But how is the evolving work that we are now discussing stored and its identity defined? In the case of *Viken*, what eventually will make up what Stephen Davies terms the 'work-identifying instructions' is not only the notation of the guitar part in the score. As also pointed out in Chapter 1, section 2.3, in a piece for instrument and electronics much of the identity of the work is also specified in the computer programming¹⁶⁷ and the electronic sounds. This is important to bear in mind while considering the interaction between the parties. The decision as to which pitches or durations should be employed in a certain moment in the work does not necessarily have to be decided by the 'composer'. Authorship is not intrinsic to writing.¹⁶⁸ The fact that I happen to be producing material and making notation that eventually is entered in the score does not necessarily imply that I should be regarded as a co-composer of the piece. In my opinion, intention is the most relevant parameter when trying to decide who's who in the complex situation with joint agencies in musical production. It was not my intention in this project to produce a piece according to a concept of mine. The *poietic* action on my side was always related to the overarching ambition of contributing to a piece of Love's. And this is not a matter of submission, but of interaction. On the other hand, Love developed the initial conception of the piece and the materials with which we worked. He also did all the computer programming and decided the greater form of the piece: the point of departure in the video clip

¹⁶⁷ There is a great level of uncertainty today as to how instructions of this kind can be stored for future performances. Several projects i.e. Integra (www.integralive.org) and Mustica <http://mustica.ircam.fr/mustica/index.php> are undertaken in order to ensure relevant documentation of live-processing in a certain software and for a specific piece in order to make future performances possible with a desired level of authenticity.

¹⁶⁸ This is obvious, writing can have many other intentions than the production of a work, for instance copying or making memos.

we have been discussing is a melody that Love had derived from a previous tape composition and it was Love's idea to make variations on this material. Even if the material derived in the session was not worked out together with live processing it was still constructed for a context where real-time processing and pre-prepared tape material should contribute strongly to the identity of the music. Sections of the guitar part were intended to be more like structured improvisations related to the specific processing and sound-files prepared by Love. This is the context in which the interaction took place.

In the case of *Viken*, considering the impact of the programming of the electronics on the identity of the work, and also the comprehensive labour of structuring formal ideas and deriving initial materials undertaken prior to the session in September 2005, may lead to the conclusion that Love is rightly to be understood as the sole composer of this piece. Furthermore, I would say that the strongest argument for him to be regarded as the sole author of the work is that he was the only one that had the intention of composing a piece of music. In other words, if we had agreed otherwise when starting the project¹⁶⁹, there is nothing in the process itself that indicates that it could not have been a co-authored work, as long as we both had agreed on such an approach. However, if we accept the idea that Love Mangs and I are acting as composer and performer, respectively, and consider how our actions can be divided between the *poietic* and *esthesis* fields, this strengthens the conclusions drawn in Chapter 1 that:

1. composing may be regarded as a complex interaction between *esthesis* and *poietic* processes.
2. Performers may similarly oscillate between these two modes of artistic activity.

These findings support the critique of the semiological model of the musical work (developed in Chapter 1, section 4), and the need for a more detailed understanding of the *esthesis* and *poietic* processes at play in the production of musical content. The study has also provided a more detailed insight into 'thinking-through-performing', giving a better idea of the complexity of these processes and of how they interact with analytical thinking.

¹⁶⁹ Or of course if we had changed our minds concerning the intentions as to authorship.

3.5. Interactivity

One may say that the flexibility in the interaction between the agents of composer and performer in the video clip is remarkable. Complete misunderstandings and miscommunication do not halt the process nor do they appear to lead to false conclusions; it is only at a close examination of the flow of events in the video that we can observe the misinterpretations. Indeed, some of the misunderstandings, such as the idea of adding several fermatas (line 59 in the graph, see Figure 4) eventually worked their way into the final version of the score.

The quote from Molino¹⁷⁰ in Section 2.1 can now be read in the light of this analysis. Although the misunderstandings can be regarded as ‘noise’ when analyzed from the point of view of information theory, in the interaction shown in the video clip it rather seems to be an integral part of the artistic process. It shows how the classical notion of the ‘creative misunderstanding’ really can play an important role in artistic work. But how can it be that misunderstandings can lead to acceptable and creative results? The simple explanation is that the subculture created by the two agents allows for new impulses, even if they result from a lack of communication, to be drawn into the context of the work in question. Looking at this example of human-to-human interaction, is there any knowledge to be gained when it comes to the construction of performer-to-computer interaction?

The way the computer part in *Viken* is set up, the performer has a pedal that controls the synchronization between the acoustic part and the computer, a method of resolving this particular issue in mixed media music that is not uncommon. It relates to the notion of synchronization as a purely technical issue; a unidirectional stream of communication. Although the occasional pressing of a pedal does not resolve the critical issue of rhythmic alignment and musical timing on the micro level, it does keep the two musics aligned in terms of the larger structural meter. Thus, when it comes to synchronization of pre-prepared electro-acoustic material with acoustic instruments, what is achieved is a series of meeting points and more seldom an integrated flow of events. Now, in the context of the composer/performer interaction (see the analysis in Figure 4) there is a striking lack of synchronicity between the different actions. There is evident and independent flow of initiative, of the constructive and the interpretative input between the two agents.

¹⁷⁰ ‘in the case of the artificial transmission of information, the fundamental hypothesis is that there is a single, well-defined item of information to be transmitted, all the rest being simply noise. It is the same reality at the beginning and at the end in the communication circuit. This hypothesis is dangerously inaccurate and misleading as soon as we move from the artificial communication of information to a concrete act of human communication as a total social fact.’ (Molino et al., 1990, p. 129)

Would it be possible to use the knowledge gained from the analysis of the video when designing an interactive interface for a mixed media piece that could be used in live-performances? Before drawing any conclusions, it must be stressed that the session with Love and myself is obviously not staged under the same conditions that apply to a performance of a piece of mixed media music. When it comes to real-time electronic processing and synthesis the processes quite naturally translate themselves into the language of *esthesis* and *poietic*. In general—and somewhat simplified—I find that processing of acoustic sound input is an interpretative action and that the generation of new sonic material is a constructive process belonging to the *poietic* domain. The actual program, and the code and the run-time instructions that constitutes it, is a trace from this creative process. Finally, as has already been pointed out, the program or computer part may affirm important aspects of the work-identifying instructions that a graphic representation of the computer part cannot specify.

Achieving noise in the communication between a performer and a computer is of course quite easy (...) ¹⁷¹ but still, in order to obtain artistically valid results, there has to be a certain structure in the output from the computer. As pointed out above, the reason that creative misunderstandings can occur in the interaction between Love and myself is the 'subculture' or 'discursive practice' that regulates our work. The quest in the above discussion is how to create a common 'subculture' in the computer-to-human interaction in which more or less random input from the computer may become a valid contribution to the piece.

3.5.1. Conclusions

What follows are some conclusions that may be drawn from the above discussion of interactivity.

- Noise in communication can lead to creative solutions in human-to-human interaction.

We may be used to thinking of a computer-based interactive system as a cybernetic system in which information is transmitted from point A to point B, and where great care is taken to avoid noise in the transmission. Think of the pedal that I am using in *Viken*. If the signal going from the pedal to the Max/MSP patch running the piece was noisy or ambiguous it would probably be quite useless. 'Almost a pressed pedal' is not a valid message in that system ¹⁷².

¹⁷¹ This footnote is just to say thanks to all the people who have helped me with computers, interfaces, pedals, cables, midi-interfaces, line-boxes, guitar-pedals that have provided merely noise in the communication, normally in the last moment in sound check.

¹⁷² There's an entire continuum of possible responses to 'almost a pressed pedals in acoustic pianos though. Digital instruments are a different matter, I discuss the problem of digital and electric instruments in Chapter 4, section 3.3.2. and footnote 22.

In the final version of Henrik Frisk's: *Repetition Repeats All Other Repetitions* we will attempt to avoid the kind of binary oppositions that require a clean control signal path in the design of the interactive system (or at least we have outlined a more open mode in which to employ the pressing of a pedal). Obviously this will also affect the way the instrumental part is written.

- Direction may be more important than synchronicity.

A few comments are necessary if we want to successfully transfer this knowledge to a practical musical situation:

- In the video S.Ö. and L.M. are not performing a musical work in real time but interacting and improvising in the process of compositional work. Time is not an issue — the result is not affected if it takes them 15 years to finish the process.
- In performance musical time is an integral part that always has to be taken into consideration.

Accordingly, the musical synchronization and low-level time scale has to be dealt with. On the structural level above that, on the other hand, a sensitive interactive real time performance system might perhaps deal more freely with time, and perhaps such an approach will result in a more natural interaction from the point of view of the performer. I believe that this kind of flexible machine-musician interaction also calls for flexibility in terms of musical notation, perhaps even approaches that intentionally avoids notation.¹⁷³ The concept of the open work is one of the early ideas of musical modernism and obviously not a new thing in itself. In other words there is a great deal of experience to be gathered from these early experiments. However, the attempts that Henrik Frisk and I have made¹⁷⁴ at creating a dynamic score, a framework of musical notation in which different paths can be taken, is not implicitly related to the stylistic and aesthetic foundation of the open work in the modernist era¹⁷⁵, but instead related to its impact and operational function in machine-musician interaction today.

- The initiative may shift independently of the *esthesis* and *poietic* processes.

¹⁷³ See Chapter 7 on Richard Karpen's *Strandlines* for a further discussion, and also Chapter 1 section 2.2.

¹⁷⁴ In the different versions of *Repetition Repeats All Other Repetitions* (2005-ongoing)

¹⁷⁵ An important contribution to the poetics of the open work under the paradigm of modernism is Umberto Eco's 'Opera Aperta' available in translation to English as 'The Open Work' (Eco, 1989) See chapter 6 for a more elaborate discussion.

What this may translate to in the context of an interactive real time performance system is that no matter what the current process is, and regardless of the current mode of interaction, the initiative should be able to shift back and forth between the performer and the electronic part just as it does in the documented session between S.Ö. and L.M..

In this chapter I have outlined a method for studying the low level processes in the production of musical content. We have seen how the perhaps somewhat dated and endlessly debated semiological terminology of Molino and Nattiez may be helpful when bridging the gap between disparate activities in the field of musical production. The complex web of actions by several agents in the production of musical content requires methods that are flexible and responsive to the multiple layers of musical practice.

3.5.2. Further applications of the study

As already mentioned, this study was intended to lay the ground for a new work for guitar and computer by Henrik Frisk, a project that also became an important part of *PLAY!*. This piece, called *Repetition Repeats all Other Repetitions* is discussed in Chapter 6. In the time of writing, Henrik's and my work on the piece has resulted in two separate versions. A third expanded version is scheduled to premiere in October 2008 in connection with the final defence of our respective Ph.D. Projects¹⁷⁶. This third version will attempt at a more developed interaction between performer and computer,¹⁷⁷ taking into account the reflections on interactivity developed above, but also building on the long-time acquaintance with the sonic content in the acoustic and electronic material that we now have gathered. It is my belief that thanks to the research undertaken in the original study, we were both able to enter the artistic project of the new commission with a slightly different view on our respective practices. There is much to say about the way our artistic work was affected by being carried out in the form of artistic research and vice versa. This is discussed in Chapter 6, section 6.

¹⁷⁶ And those who read this book will be able to find out how it went!

¹⁷⁷ The study performed on Stefan Östersjö's collaboration with the composer Richard Karpen has provided a context in which some aspects of the interaction between composer and performer such as they have emerged in the pilot study could be further elaborated.

4. Transcription as transmission

4.1. Transcription in context

Transcription¹⁷⁸ has two different meanings in musical practice, referring either to the making of an arrangement of an existing piece or to notation of a piece of music existing only in aural form, for instance as an audio recording. Transcription in the earlier sense of the word is a borderline activity between composition and performance, and as such it makes up a critical problem in the discussion of the ontology of the musical work. The reasons for making transcriptions have been diverse, and they can be divided according to two different underlying motivations, either practical (1 and 2) or artistic (3-7):

1. making a work originally written for larger performing forces more available for listeners by means of a reduction of the original score. Before the phonograph, the practice of making piano transcriptions of symphonic works was a popular and culturally significant practice.
2. the adaption of a musical work for an instrumentation other than the original in order to expand the repertoire for a specific ensemble or instrument. In this case the transcriptions may either expand or reduce the original forces. This was a common practice early in the history of classical music.
3. The transcription becomes a vehicle to transcend the technical constraints of an instrument; the demand to truthfully render a musical structure conceived for larger instrumental constellations creates a tension between an abstract musical structure and the instrument.
4. The transcription is motivated by a latent orchestral potential in a work, as is the case with Ravel's various transcriptions for orchestra.
5. The transcription is regarded as an interpretation of the work and brings out its structural content, often by means of reduction.
6. The original is used as a spring-board for a new composition that transforms the material into a new independent work. This category brings us into the field of paraphrases, a term that was more in use in the romantic era than today.

¹⁷⁸ For a further discussion of the practice of transcription, also specifically in relation to the music of Per Nørgård, see my essay 'Transcription, interpretation and construction' in the CD-booklet in *Tales From the North* (Östersjö, 2008), originally published in danish in the Danish paper Dansk Musik Tidsskrift (DMT).

7. With the development of digital sampling, the practice of musical quotation has become an artistic mode of expression highly characteristic of our own time. It is important to bear in mind that literal quotation of this kind is in many ways the very opposite to transcription!

Obviously, practical and artistic reasons for making a transcription often (luckily) interact. Transcription became an important vehicle for many composers in the 20th Century, expanding on various compositional techniques that make the paraphrase into a highly personal and serious mode of expression. When also tied up with the concept of transcription as an 'interpretation' of a work, these contemporary practices of transcription point to an important possible connecting point between the agencies of 'composer' and 'performer'.

4.2. Negotiating the transcription of *Viken*

4.2.1. Introducing the idea

It was on my initiative that we made the transcription of *Viken* for *The Six Tones*. I say 'we' because this transcription was made as a result of a collaboration by Thuy, My and myself in three sessions in April 2007. I think my initial idea was more related to the group's demand for new repertoire than to a wish to explore hidden a potential in the work. I of course realised that for instance the pentatonic motif (motif 6 in the score) would sound more at home with the *Dan Bau* and *Dan Tranh* and I was also vaguely attracted by the idea of expanding the acoustic material by dividing it between our instruments. But still, I think my ideas were quite open-ended. And this was also intentional, for in a sense *Viken* also became a vehicle in the search for collaborate ways of working out pieces to play in *The Six Tones*. The trio-version we made of *Viken* is based on agreements we made in the sessions. We did not produce a new score and did not change the pitch structures in the parts of the piece that are fixed in notation. Still I think that Thuy and My made a very strong contribution which set the 'growth' (in a Derridean sense) of the original guitar piece in motion.

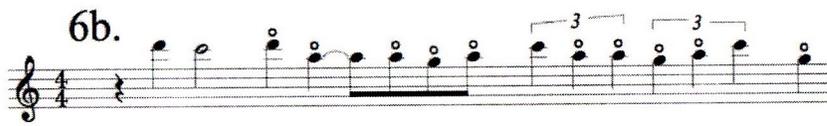


Figure 7: Motive 6 in *Viken*.

4.2.2. Authenticities in the field of *Viken*

When drawing Thuy and My into making the transcription, the field of *Viken* changed quite drastically, involving also the authenticities of their musical tradition(s)¹⁷⁹. This thesis is not the place to fully draw the consequences of this move, but I will attempt to show that the model of the field of the musical work is also able to represent the expanded force-field of different agencies at play here. At the same time, when considering all four authenticities identified in the field of the musical work in the Western art music tradition in this expanded context, some aspects of their agency may be further clarified. I will have reasons to consider the function of all four authenticities, but I will start out with *Authenticity-as-intention*, the agent related to the composer's intentions for performance. It appears to be particularly problematic since the concept of the 'composer' hardly exists in traditional Vietnamese music.

Authenticity-as-intention is, the way I understand the function of and the history of ideas behind this form of authenticity, deeply rooted in the regulative work-concept and in the elevation of the composer as an 'author-god'¹⁸⁰. Bringing this authenticity into the discussion of the making of the transcription of *Viken* is for that reason doubtful. Thuy and My were not at all ignorant of the fact that Western art music is very much focussed on the composer¹⁸¹. I would not analyse their pre-understanding as an influence from *authenticity-as-intention*, it is more like a considered attempt on their side to try to understand another culture from outside. For instance, this is how Thuy described her impression of our first sessions on the piece that Henrik was writing:

¹⁷⁹ I discuss some of the problems involved in a conception of multi-cultural collaboration as juxtaposition of different 'traditions' below.

¹⁸⁰ For a more elaborate discussion of this agency in the context of western art music, see chapter 5.

¹⁸¹ For a further discussion see Michael Talbot's book chapter on what he calls the shift to a 'composer-centered' culture in the period around 1780-1820 (Talbot, 2000).

In the beginning, I thought Henrik was not happy because we played a lot of his notation the wrong way. Partly because Henrik did not know my instrument very well he asked me for techniques that were not suitable for my instrument. But even where he asked for the right techniques, I tended to play differently, to 'play wrong'. Henrik's score seemed to me like a 'framework' [in the same way as she would describe the notation of a traditional Vietnamese piece S.Ö.] and I felt that I had the right to play 'a little bit different' from what was notated.

That right is unthinkable to a composer in the Western culture, I know. In Vietnamese traditional music, we don't have the concept of the composer. Every traditional piece we have now is anonymous. No version we play bears the name of the master who made that version. [...] In traditional music, the role of the performer is more important than the composer. (Thuy, 2008a)

One reason for my excitement over the project with *The Six Tones* is that I think both Thuy and My have had reasons to find that for many composers in the West, the role that the performers have in their culture is in fact not quite unthinkable any more. Not that composers today want to be anonymous, but there is certainly a strong move towards more interactive ways of producing musical works, and the projects started up with *The Six Tones* have all been going in that direction. In any case, the above quote gives an idea of the view that Thuy and My had of the Western composer at the outset of the project.

What I find most important in the work we have done in the group is the way in which we have tried to create a platform of mutual learning, a meeting point where we can build up respect and understanding for the musical traditions of the other performers' culture. It was an intentional and fundamental starting point that we should work both on transcriptions of traditional Vietnamese music and with new commissions of Western art music with electronics. One reason that we wanted to work also with electronics is that it makes up a possible meeting point in which an amalgamation can be achieved between the acoustic instruments as well as their sound worlds and playing techniques.

Before we return to authenticity-as-intention, we need to consider the way we worked with traditional Vietnamese music in the group. In those transcriptions, I tried to work out ways in which I could make the guitar adopt some characteristics of the performance style of Vietnamese music. For instance, I found that by tuning the first string down to the G of the third string I could get fairly close to the characteristic bend-glissandi of the *Dan Tranh*. This is useful in two ways; on the *Dan Tranh*, glissandi around a pitch may be performed on several strings,

creating a characteristic sonority that can be simulated on the guitar with this tuning for instance by doing a glissando with slide upwards on one of the 'G-strings' followed by a glissando downwards on the other. Also, the low tuning of the top string allows you to bend the string much further than would otherwise be possible, and also to bend a pitch and then immediately return to the original pitch on the adjacent string tuned to the same pitch. Another (more conventional) approach was to use a 10-string guitar in order to also have a set of bass-strings tuned to the pentatonic scales in the pieces. By means of these open bass strings I could do glissandi on open strings similar to those on the *Dan Tranh*, but of course also provide a lower bass register to the pieces.

The first 'transcriptions' we worked out were duos for 10-string guitar and *Dan Tranh*. In studying these pieces I of course not only had to find a way to transcribe them for the guitar. Again I was a novice, but this time not trying to learn the practice of a Western composer like Per Nørgård, but a tradition of playing that was much more remote. Most of the cornerstones of Western art music are irrelevant in this tradition (the approach to notation, the work-concept, the view of the performer as an interpreter of musical works, but also the concepts of sound production, harmony, rubato and articulation). Also the way the music is taught is quite different, and Thuy has tried to explain some of these fundamentals to me: as far as I understand, the teaching of traditional music has more and more come to use Western notation.¹⁸² Notation is used for 'transcription' in the sense of notating a piece of music such as it is played by a certain 'master'. The notation is not to be taken literally, but functions as a 'framework' within which the performer has a certain freedom to shape her performance. But at the same time, the 'version' of a certain master is a highly authoritative 'text'. Here is one thing that made me really surprised: Even if Thuy is a highly regarded performer on her instrument she explains that she would not perform 'versions' that she has made herself in a public concert, this could only happen in a semi-public situation such as while teaching. The 'versions' that she plays in concerts, she has learnt from several master players. In other words, the duo transcriptions we played can be understood as performances *of* a 'version' of a piece. In the rehearsals, Thuy would have the role of a 'master' and I, as an apprentice would attempt to learn as well as I could to follow the way she played the piece, but the 'versions' we were playing were by master-performers such as Nguyen Van Thinh and Hoang Co Thuy. In the reflexive discussions we've have had on our work, we have also arrived at the future aim to, not only play the 'versions' of other masters, but also make our own. To me it seems like a natural first step that Thuy and My make versions that

¹⁸² But in fact, there exists two parallel systems in Vietnam, one conservatory model which is very much based on the Russian system, and one traditional 'system' in which a student is taught by an (old) master-performer. Thuy has been involved in both systems, and has developed her repertoire in studies with many 'masters' in different parts of the country.

I learn. It is of course a dream, and a dream that I will always bear with me, to also be able myself to take part in the making of new 'versions' of traditional pieces.

But the last line in the quote from Thuy ('In traditional music, the role of the performer is more important than the composer') strikes an interesting note: if the intention of the 'master-performer' is such a strong influence, perhaps we could identify an authenticity similar or equivalent to *Authenticity-as-intention* in the Western tradition, related not to the authority of the composer (who is normally unknown) but to the authority of the 'master-performer'?

Also *The-other-authenticity* or 'Personal authenticity' is an agent that can be seen in a new light in this context. In a project that draws together the performance traditions and the 'musical voice'¹⁸³ of performers from traditions quite widely apart, personal authenticity suddenly appears to be very closely linked to *authenticity-as-practice*. The way personal authenticity is expressed within a performance tradition is a subtle mixture of departure from and dependence on tradition. Regarded in the light of *The Six Tones*, personal authenticity raises many important questions: Firstly, to what extent can we claim that a performer represents a single tradition? Consider, for instance, the complex situation facing a Western classical performer approaching a historic work. The 'history' of a certain musical work today, encompasses not only the musicological interpretations of the work but also the recordings that may function as regulative 'texts' in the field of that work. This is how Donald Greig describes the scenario for a singer about to make a recording of a piece by Johannes Ockeghem:

Singers today are surrounded by a multitude of conflicting ideologies and aesthetics of performance in a way which marks an unbridgeable divide from the original performers for whom the range of musical experience would have been highly circumscribed. This is not only because the development of recording allows access to a thousand years of music, nor just because daily life is constantly surrounded by music (from signature tunes for TV and radio programmes to the ever-present "elevator music") - singers today are bombarded by different styles and idioms (and are practised in them), a situation which must have a determinant effect upon their aesthetic sensibility. For the original performers there was not just the lack of recording, but also an almost wilful derision of the old, most obviously seen in the short sell-by date of late medieval polyphony. The contemporary singer's ears are not innocent, then, and can never hope to undergo some kind of aesthetic cleansing whereby immersion in fifteenth-century polyphony can rinse away the stains of experience of music from the past six hundred years. (Greig, 1997, pp. 150-151)

¹⁸³ See Chapter 1 section 3.4 for a discussion of this term—coined by Eleanor Stublely to denote the instrumental persona that a performer develops in the interaction with her instrument—and also of other related concepts.

This lack of ‘innocent ears’ is not only characteristic for a Western performer, but has also become a challenge to the transmission of traditional music in Vietnam. Today, a student at the Hanoi Conservatory is equally ‘bombarded by different styles and idioms’ and faces similar difficulties in navigating in this multiplicity of musical aesthetics as does a Western performer. But having said this, we arrive at the second issue, which is related to how we should approach tradition, verbally and analytically. Considering the fluid nature—the fuzzy edges—of traditions we should be careful not to ‘frame’ a certain style too narrowly. Continuous transformation is part of the transmission of a tradition. When discussing a musical tradition, we must bear in mind the crucial difference between ‘description’ and ‘definition’ (Emmerson, 2000, pp. 116-119).

The Eurocentric view that artists/writers/musicians coming from other cultures are first and foremost ‘typical’ or ‘representative of’ their culture is still a major problem in intercultural exchange. In a project like *The Six Tones*, a considered approach to this problem is called for. On the one hand I find it vitally important to be aware of, and try to describe (not define) one’s own cultural traditions, on the other hand we do not want to fall into the old trap of old colonialist heritage. A rather casual comment by Thuy, when we compared the approach we had in our duos with Vietnamese music to the projects with Western composers, highlighted this problem:

I know normally people like to hear something Vietnamese from us. Sometimes I think I could do something that is not Vietnamese and still make people like it. (Thuy, 2008c)

The performance traditions that we draw on are from fairly distinct musical cultures, but still, the ‘musical voice’ of a performer must be allowed to expand beyond tradition. In other words, in the last analysis, *The-other-authenticity* is not only a matter of the Western tradition but can be analysed in a similar way as an agent in the expanded field of *Viken* as well.

4.2.3. The transcription of *Viken* by *The Six Tones*

The first session, when we worked out how to approach making the transcription, took place on April 21 2007. In the first video clip we see the very first minutes of that session, starting in fact even before I was seated. I begin right away by showing the opening phrase on the instrument and explaining how it interacts with the electronics. In hindsight I find it surprising that there is no discussion of the fundamental issue whether we should stick to the sparse monophonic material in the piece or if we should add some contrapuntal element. In fact, there is no

discussion at all to start with. Thuy and My are quietly listening to my presentation of the beginning of the piece. They react to my initiative and play when I ask them to try something.

[...] until yesterday, I didn't think that what we did in *Viken* was a kind of master-apprentice situation. Even if I myself wrote it in an email. At that time, when I saw the first video clip of *Viken*, I smiled at myself and the idea of 'you as a master, I as an apprentice' came spontaneously. (Thuy, 2008b)

When the session started they really had no idea how I had imagined we should do the transcription. They had heard the piece before, since I played it as a solo piece when we did our first concerts in Vietnam in 2006. A few days earlier I had given them the score and a recording of the piece. The piece was still new for them and furthermore, they were fully aware that it was a piece that I knew and had played already. It was my intention that we should



Video: excerpt 10

do this transcription in an interactive and open manner. But what happened at first was almost the opposite: we swapped roles from the work on the transcriptions of Vietnamese music. Now Thuy and My were my 'apprentices', I was the 'master' who was to teach them a piece (or a version of a work). One may say that my role here is parallel to when Love plays the piece to me in the session discussed above in section 2.2.; in a similar way am I now passing on the piece in a basically oral manner. However, if we compare the video clip with Love playing the beginning of *Viken* to me, there are several essential differences that have to be taken into account. Above all, I am presenting a work that I regard as finished whereas Love displayed material in a work in progress. This is of course the main reason why my presentation is so much more assured.

We worked on the transcription of *Viken* in a manner quite similar to how we had been doing our transcriptions of Vietnamese music: without changing the internal structure of the piece we adapted its pitch and time structure to a new instrumentation. If we find that the piece 'can' be approached in a similar way as a 'work' in the Vietnamese tradition (obviously unrelated to the regulative work-concept and part of a more fluid notion of work and performance), what are then the work-identifying instructions in *Viken*? Our strategies in the transcription might

imply that the piece is identified by its pitch-time structure, timbre being exchangeable as in earlier classical music. But this is in conflict with the conclusions drawn in section 3.4, in which I claim that the electronics are essential to the identity of the work. Since most of the electronic part is generated by real time processing of the acoustic source sound, changing the instrumentation will also affect the sound of the electronics, and hence the sound world of the piece itself. The version we made should, I think, be regarded as a transformation of some of the work-identifying elements of the piece, not replacing the sound world of the guitar-version of the piece, but adding to it the possibilities in a wider conception of the source production in the acoustic part.



Video: excerpt 12, re-arranging the start on April 27

The acoustic part in *Viken* was initially conceived of as a projection of an acoustic sound world based on the classical guitar traditions. This aspect of *authenticity-as-sound* in the piece was intentionally disregarded in our transcription, which transformed the acoustic part of *Viken* into the sonic mixture of the instrumentation in *The Six Tones*. But as we have seen above, an important part of the identity of the piece lies in the electronics. This parameter in the sound world of the piece was treated with great care, and both Thuy and My invested hard work in finding sonorities that would work with the live-processing in a similar way as in the original guitar piece.

I will not dwell on many details in the transcription. One fragment I will study more closely is the opening phrase. The change this opening went through captures nicely the kind of transformation that is also a transmission of musical content. But I also want to return to the melody that was also discussed in section 1.3 and further analysed in section 3. This melody continued its journey in the trio version and can be understood as an example of how the piece continued to grow *by* the ‘text’ of the performance traditions of improvisation in Vietnamese music.

I will first turn to three video clips dealing with the start of the piece, first by looking back at the clip discussed above from the beginning of the first session we did on *Viken*. The two following video snippets are from the rehearsals on April 25 and 27 2007. In the first session, on April 21, I start out by stating that the first phrase should be played on the guitar as written. Even

if the first session was done without involving the electronics (a rather surprising decision since the piece is to such a great extent built on live processing), I also comment on how the electronics are derived in the first phrase. Since I have already proposed that this phrase should be played on the guitar alone, our negotiations start with the second phrase, leaving this opening figure out of the discussion. In the rehearsal on April 25 I bring up the problem of getting a good sound on the first granulation which uses a recording of the first dotted quarter note, with crossed bass-strings, producing a noisy sound with only little pitch-content. I try this start on my own several times, since it demands minute timing of the moment in which you start the recording of the first sound. In the third rehearsal, on April 27, I got the idea of changing the start in the trio version by bringing all three instruments into the opening gesture. I ask Thuy and My if they could produce sounds of a similar noisy character as that from the crossed strings in the guitar part. I must admit that it seems that the verbal communication wasn't really great here. I'm afraid neither Thuy nor My really understood what I intended by 'noisy' in this context.¹⁸⁴ We can see in the clip how Thuy and My start scanning their instruments for possible sounds that work together with the guitar sonority. I had already in the two previous sessions tried the result of the first sound several times, and now we did the same thing with the new 'mixed' sound. Each time when we have played the start I turn to Thuy and My to see what they think of the result. Looking at the clip I now think that Thuy and My wanted to leave the decision to me. Again, the vague way in which they respond to my question points to a central issue in artistic collaborations of this kind: the difficulties in making aesthetic judgements. To which culture, to which aesthetics should we refer? To me it seems that it will be a matter of a very extended process before we can take these decisions on equal terms. Despite the fact that I was driving the entire process, despite the misunderstanding of what I meant by 'noisy', I think (and here's again an aesthetic judgement from my side) that the trio version improved by adding the *Dan Bau* and the *Dan Tranh* to this opening phrase. I think also that the phrase itself gained from the long ascending glissando on the *Dan Bau*, connecting nicely to the short descending glissando that follows in the guitar, and also from the richer sound source in the following granulation in the electronics.



Video: track 13, concert recording of *Viken* with *The Six Tones*

¹⁸⁴ This was a typical language-problem that of course is not unexpected in an ensemble where no one speaks his or her mother tongue.

As mentioned in section 1.3, the second section in the A-part of *Viken*, with its extended improvised part took a long time to develop into its final form. The verbal instructions were very vague and the electronics did not really guide very clearly in any direction. After the first performances we agreed that we had to do more work on this section; even if it was intended to be improvised, it seemed that this improvisation needed to be more structured. I proposed that Love could make a fixed tape part that I would improvise along with to give it more shape and an underwater character. Love agreed that this might be a good idea, but in the end this was not quite how we proceeded. Instead we met in January 2006 to do a studio recording of the piece, as a way to finalise the piece. In the studio we negotiated the way to shape the improvisation, for instance deciding that plucking on both sides of the slide was a good technique to use. But foremost, we recorded a few takes and decided which to use. Afterwards, Love took my improvisation and made a tape part to go with it. In the final version of the electronics for this section, the tape part, shaped according to my improvisation in the studio, goes along with the live improvisation. But the tape part does not make this section completely fixed, it is quite sparse with a lot of silence. In the transcription, this section has tended to get longer than originally intended. We have been building on the playing techniques and sounds that I was using in the solo version, expanding the range of the sounds quite a bit from that point of departure.

If we turn to the coda of *Viken*, in which the tape-part is derived from the original sound clip (that also gave rise to the melody discussed above), we can follow the further journey that Love's melody made in the trio version. Especially if we compare the concert video of the trio version firstly to the way I played the melody in the version with harmonics in the guitar version (Audio: track 8, demo recording of the guitar version of *Viken*), and secondly to how I improvised on the sound file in the same recording, the melody in the trio version has departed substantially from the shape it had (and still has) in the tape part. To me the rhythmic shape that it has in the way Thuy plays it has more to do with the phrasing of Vietnamese music than with the original rhythm of the original melody. This coda was also the moment in the piece when Thuy and My started to feel really at home in the piece. Here they felt that they could draw freely on the improvisation-traditions of Vietnamese music, and they do so beautifully!

There's always a bit of give and take in transformations of this kind. The entrance of the guitar in the solo version was quite subtle and much in the style of electroacoustic music - you first hear only the attacks of the right hand while playing the melody on harmonics. Only gradually does the guitar materialise. But in the trio version, the melody itself has continued a journey on which it will certainly continue to adopt new shapes and shadings.

5. Discussion

5.1. An integrative collaboration, and one that was not

As suggested in the Introduction, section 3, fully integrative collaboration is rarely found between a composer and a performer in the Western art music tradition. The reason for this is above all the extent of the division of labour between the two parties. When there is no overlap whatsoever between the agencies of composer and performer, integrative modes of collaboration are not possible. As we have seen above, the artistic tools used by Love and me in the process of producing *Viken* were all common to both of us. In different phases of our work we were both found to be writing music; working analytically in non-real time; preparing material for the piece; playing guitar - when producing material for the acoustic part and when interacting with the electronics in the process of defining the electronic part. For this reason it was fully possible for us to approach the collaboration in an integrative mode, adapting our artistic tools to the work of the other. One example of this of suspension of individual stylistic elements can be seen in my improvisations. For instance, the arpeggios that I improvise in the end of the clip discussed in section 3 are not conceived within the *poietics* of a 'free improvisation' but in the *poietics* of *Viken*.

The integrative mode of the collaboration in the process of creating the piece had a strong impact on the ways in which I approached the piece after the premiere. Since the processes were so strongly collaborative and the tools with which it was worked out were shared to such a great extent, the decision to make a transcription of the piece for trio was very easy to make, already knowing the piece from the inside.

It is impossible to write about collaboration in the context of *Viken* and not to mention my interaction with Thuy and My. The fact that they still have not met Love (referring to the composer of *Viken*) is a surprising coincidence that divides the collaborative work on *Viken* in two phases; one in which Love was working with me while composing the piece; a second one when the composer was absent and I was working in *The Six Tones* on the transcription. Getting involved with these wonderful performers (and friends) from Hanoi has been a great experience for me, but it also launched an important process in the further growth of the piece. The discussions I have had with Thuy about the processes involved in our work have been crucial for me to be able to pin down the play between different authenticities in the field of *Viken*. In other words, this collaboration has also come to be a part of the research-process and not only of the artistic practice.

But when we started out the project with *The Six Tones*, we were all intending and expecting it to be a highly integrative collaboration, and always on equal terms. As we have seen, that was ignorant and over-optimistic. In the first two years of our work, the mode in which we have mostly been working has been of the highly hierarchic master and apprentice-kind (but I admit that the work has turned more and more interactive). This was, I think, a big surprise for all of us (see also the quote from Thuy above). The reason is the extended learning processes that are demanded in this kind of work. By bringing this to light in the context of *PLAY!* I think we have increased our awareness of the complexity of the collaborative processes at play within *The Six Tones*. It is obvious to me that future studies on the project could be useful from many perspectives.

5.2. The work

We have seen how easily *Viken* was ‘drawn into an unknown praxis’ (Barthes, 1977a, p. 153) when Thuy and My got involved in the making of a transcription of the piece for *The Six Tones*. When Barthes finds in the ‘second’ Beethoven a music that can only be rediscovered by being read (the *inaudible* in the late works), or better ‘operated’ as a ‘text’, he is pointing to the world that is opened by the ‘modern text’ and the act of writing. He is discussing a kind of music that has disappeared: *musica practica*, the music one plays, ‘a muscular music in which the part taken by the sense of hearing is one only of ratification, as though the body were hearing’ (Barthes, 1977a, p. 148). By way of a modern reading of the ‘text’ of Beethoven’s music, a transformation may take place that reinvents this lost praxis. This brings back to mind the way in which a tradition, such as the performance practice within the discourse of hierarchic music,¹⁸⁵ may be transmitted through the transformation *by* the text of a performance.

To me, a piece like *Viken* marks another kind of return to *musica practica*. If we again consider three stages from the path along which the piece has travelled—Love, seated with the guitar, showing me how the piece goes; how I inherit this role and ‘teach’ the piece to Thuy and My; when Thuy and My get involved in transcribing the piece *on* their instruments—we can see how the piece grows, not so much from the *esthetic* and *poietic* processes launched by the act of writing, but in the act of performing.

Again, if we consider the transformation of the melody that Love derived from a processed soundfile, we see a process, not launched by writing but by *thinking-through-practice*.

¹⁸⁵ This is how I refer to the musical discourse of Per Nørgård’s music in Chapter 2. The specific meaning that ‘hierarchic’ has in his world of ideas is discussed in Chapter 2, section 1.2.

Apart from the analytical interpretation of this soundfile, abstracted into a melodic shape that could be written down in musical notation, all the following steps took place in the moment of performance.

The transformation of *Viken* in the transcription for trio was made *by* the 'text' of the performance traditions of Vietnamese traditional music. Or perhaps I should say by the 'musical voice(s)' of the players of the group. No doubt, *Viken* is a musical work that is 'willing to be drawn' from its original identity and context into new musical practices. Nonetheless, I think we still sense the friction between 'the translation' and 'the original'. With the fixity of the electronics and the relative fixity of the musical notation, it is much more of a 'musical work' than is a piece composed in the Vietnamese tradition. But perhaps one may say that the two 'versions' of *Viken* (for guitar solo and for trio) are as distinct as 'versions' in the Vietnamese tradition might be. In that case one can also claim that *Viken* is no