

## Two approaches to relationality in experimental notation

This article emerges from a shared desire to explore and experiment with more holistic approaches to musicking than is generally offered within music institutions – practices in which listening, composing, performing, and reflecting are entangled and inseparable. In our respective artistic research processes, notation is treated as a relation of dynamic variables whereby music creation can be challenged and reimaged, thereby going beyond its conventional function of communication. Through a series of examples from our respective doctoral research projects, we engage with various implications of composing and performing within the Western classical music tradition, while seeking possible alternatives that add diversity to common hierarchical conventions. Rather than positioning the composer as an absolute authority – as is often reinforced through *Werktreue* approaches – we propose a multi-dimensional and relational understanding of musical authorship and interpretation, grounded in our own artistic processes.

Leena Julin conducts art-based action research where art is used both as a tool for experimentation and as a means of transmitting knowledge,<sup>1</sup> focusing on the religious-philosophical question of a possible shared humanity within Christian culture and contemporary secular humanism. Working to free religious language for everyone's use, she views it as an expression of humanity rather than a truth-telling system, while acknowledging the multitude of ways it can be understood and used. Julin has come across similar convention-based traditions in Christian and Western classical music traditions. Through addressing these issues and translating religious-philosophical questions into art, she has produced the by-product of relational notation that she introduces in this article through four pieces composed for her first artistic research event, *Sonic sanctuaries*.<sup>2</sup> Julin's work arises from a discussion with, among others, liberal theologian John Shelby Spong and cultural theorist Christoph Cox, combining philosophical considerations within theology and sound arts into a framework of simultaneously existing transience and permanence. Her practice

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<sup>1</sup> On art-based action research, see Jokela & Huhmarniemi 2020. On experimentation in artistic research, see Bippus 2013, 123, 127.

<sup>2</sup> *Sonic sanctuaries* was the first artistic publication of Julin's doctoral degree, taking place 8.11.2024 in Helsinki. <https://www.uniarts.fi/en/events/leena-julin-sonic-sanctuaries/>. The pieces will be published by Suomen Laulajain ja Soittajain Liitto, Sulasol.

leans on traditional notation but aims to use it without certain restrictions of the convention. Julin also offers a relational notation she developed, still relying on semiotic conventions traditionally used in Western art music practice.

Ava Imogen Grayson's work focuses on the embedded negotiations that emerge from the act of creation. They perceive their work as an extension of their accumulated life experience: composer, artistic researcher, university educator, performer; nonbinary, queer, neurodivergent; a European-descended Settler from Turtle Island (Canada) living in Finland; and someone with a strong DIY ethos. Their research opens up critical, reflexive spaces<sup>3</sup> within the field through various points of co-creation, and they consider these materially-based "notational actants" as diffractive etudes that serve as an access point to various forms of dialogue. In this article, they discuss relationality and the entangled processes of making and knowing predominantly through the works of writer and researcher Salomé Voegelin, philosopher Jane Bennett, and anthropologist Tim Ingold. They implement these theories through discussing the hands-on experimentation and conversation that took place both alone and with musician/collaborator Heli Hartikainen during a residency in Saari in late 2024.

Following discussions of our respective work, we concluded that co-authoring this article acknowledges what we believe to be frictions in our histories as classically-trained performers and composers. Additionally, we feel the need to address what we find to be a lack of suitably alternative approaches to notation, composition, and performance within our shared traditions. Despite the differences in our works, they share similar goals: both are attempts to broaden the possible entry points to musicking within institutionalised Western music practices (secular and religious), as well as many of the surrounding processes.

We acknowledge that this article also navigates a tension between our desire to decentre fixed authority and the academic conventions that often reassert it – a relationship which we choose to leave transparent as part of our inquiry. Through six subsections, we reflect on the philosophical and practical aspects of relative notation, drawing on both our shared and divergent approaches and practices. We begin by situating our personal and professional experiences within the broader discourse on Western art music. The second section, "Relationality as being in timespace", explores the philosophical and theological underpinnings of the temporality and perception that shape our understanding of sound. In the section "Being in that reality" we examine how presence, attunement, and active listening inform our compositional and notational choices. The section "Relationality as a nuanced reality" proposes an alternative to linear time and fixed meaning by foregrounding non-binary and interpretive approaches to notation. In "Semiotics", we reflect on the

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<sup>3</sup> See Hannula, Suoranta, and Vadén (2005) for an in-depth framing of artistic research as a means of criticality/reflexivity.

communicative potential of notational forms, drawing from material affordances and emergent gestural vocabularies. Finally, “Materials” considers how the physical characteristics of scores – texture, scale, medium – contribute to relational listening and co-creation in performance.

## OUR EXPERIENCES AND THE ONGOING DISCUSSION

We are musicians and composers educated in Western classical music. Despite our university settings, we are not tied to one identity within these traditions: we simply make music.

Throughout our education, and perhaps even still, our perceptions of theory and analysis have not lined up with many of the standard methods we were taught – what we heard and what we were expected to hear were two different realities. We both had the experience of barely scraping by in advanced ear training classes, for example, because of this disparity. Many universities still value one kind of epistemological experience, centred on gender, ethnicity, or learning style. In our experience – as well as within recent ongoing conversations already taking place in the academic sphere – these sentiments are often reflected quietly and privately between those who experience these frictions, but are rarely openly addressed due to fears of inadequacy in honouring traditions of *Werktreue*.<sup>4</sup>

I should have been the mediator of the intentions of canonised composers. [...] In Goehrian terms, at the heart of the art music world is a musical work. This idea was born during the Romantic period and has carried on to the present day. Art music appears largely as a tradition of canonised white male compositions and major works requiring loyalty. (Lampela 2023, 241–242.)<sup>5</sup>

We cannot help but question how harmful these frictions were to our own overall progress as creatives. Our research – and Grayson’s pedagogical stance – are a direct challenge to questions of this tradition’s values, who has the right to determine these values, and how these aspects affect all of us in all spaces of Western classical music practices. Fortunately, we are certainly not the only ones participating in the discussion and practical work of expanding the concepts and applications of musicking. Among others, Hyytiäinen (2022), Leinonen (2025), and Talvitie (2023) have contributed to this through their work on various notational practices and

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<sup>4</sup> *Werktreue* (fidelity to the work) is a concept that has been present in Western classical music practices since around the turn of the 19th century, and is often applied retroactively to works that came before this value appeared in Western conventions. An excellent in-depth exploration of this concept is presented in Lydia Goehr’s writings (see Goehr 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Transl. Leena Julin.

understandings of composition, while Lampela (2023) and Chorell (2024) have focused on performance.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, scholars such as Ewell (2023) and Ramstedt (2024) have addressed the challenges inherent in Western classical music culture.

Seeing the *why* that underlies the *how* is a difficult process, often requiring a lot of unlearning. We are usually enculturated from a very young age, and we cannot see past our own assumptions if we are not offered plural possibilities. Many of the challenges we address parallel that of religious indoctrination. Juxtaposing Western classical music tradition and religiousness is not unheard of (see e.g. Lampela 2023). For example, by substituting religion with music in the following quote, one could understand how the considerations of Jablónski, Lans & Hermans could apply:

[T]oo strong of an involvement with a religious tradition may lead to an overfamiliarity with certain religious narratives; dulled reactions to what can become clichés; and at times rather blinkered inability to decipher different ways of expressing religious matters, with adherence to only those representations of religious concepts that are held in one's religious group. (Jablónski, Lans & Hermans 1998, 290.)

The cultivation of criticality induces discomfort – addressing these challenges also means acknowledging the disliked and complicated aspects of the musical culture that we ourselves may embody or perpetuate. As noted by Dylan Robinson, our listening positionality brings “privilege, listening biases, and listening ability that are never wholly positive or negative” (2020, 10–11). There is no neutral or ideal listening stance: a listener always listens with their own history of listening (Basanta 2016). In gaining awareness of our internalised norms, we also discover the multiplicity of cultures that exist inside of us and inform the ways we understand ourselves as musicians and creators – cultures that parallel, offset, or even contradict each other. This intersectional approach includes aspects like ability, nationality, gender, race, and generational identity, all of which inform our ways of creating and performing music.

Decentring aspects of Western art music concepts such as *Werktreue* does not mean we need to neglect the entire tradition. In proposing these value shifts, we attempt to further an ethical stewardship of the culture that we are a part of. Despite its challenges, this field has also offered us so much throughout our careers that could not be found elsewhere. The work we discuss is an attempt to better understand which aspects of our training we wish to use as a source of remixing and experimentation, while also avoiding the perpetuation of the dogmatic aspects of

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<sup>6</sup> In the search for new ways of musicking within, with, or coming from the Western classical music tradition, one should not forget either the importance of the European contemporary improvisation scene. See e.g. Bailey 1993; Onttonen 2023; University of the Arts Helsinki 2025.

our musical heritage.

Through our philosophical and practical approaches, we propose a shift away from an authoritarian system where truth comes from above (and often from the past) and toward a more intra-active<sup>7</sup> network where each agent influences the rest. “[A]ll bodies are kin in the sense of inextricably enmeshed in a dense network of relations,” says Jane Bennett, “and in a knotted world of vibrant matter, to harm one section of the web may very well be to harm oneself” (2009, 13). There are distinct entities with differing agential abilities, but in the process of intra-action, these agencies are only distinct in relation to their mutual entanglement (Barad 2007, 33). Rather than focusing on linear progress or the idea of the body as a means of channelling the perfect ideas of long-dead composers, could we not focus instead on the qualities of attunement, presence, and context? “Rather than insisting artists are good or right, it asks artists to be present” (Lace 2021, 178).

## PRACTICE AND THINKING

JULIN

The starting point of my artistic research is a view of religion as a representation of humanity, limiting my research to the Christian tradition. Regardless of personal convictions, human beings share the experience of limited life and the questions we are faced with due to it. Thus, I am using Christian culture and its verbalisations as one reference point in approaching a multidimensional view of our surroundings and being in a relation with it. I find that Christian language is not limited to a specific group of people interpreting it in a particular way. Instead, it serves as a verbal expression of a rich culture that addresses the fundamental questions of human existence.

Within this research I am using art to address and examine how to be present in this world, at the intersection of transience and eternity. This topic focuses on presence, perception, and awareness.<sup>8</sup> The key concepts in this quest, both musically and philosophically, are *signal and noise*, and *listening*. I am using the concepts of signal and noise to approach the relationship between linearity and non-linearity, or transience and eternity. I am interested in how they co-exist, and how they can be seen in and through each other. The latter has to do with actu-

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<sup>7</sup> See Barad 2007.

<sup>8</sup> I am asking if there are, in the Christian tradition, elements or aspects that can offer a present-day, secular person an environment or setting that enables them to be present – or simply, just be. In addition, could Christian culture offer a setting to contemplate concepts such as eternity, holiness, or divinity without added dogma.

alisation, where signal is understood to come perceivable from noise. Perceiving again takes us to the viewpoint of the perceiver, where I am offering listening as a way to be in relation with one's surroundings.

Being inspired by the similarities between the sonic philosophies of signal and noise and religious-philosophical re-imaginings of transience and eternity, as well as meditative traditions, especially singing and chanting in monasteries, I aimed to find (sonic) forms that would create a space of being, free from execution, and even from the sense of time passing. I found traditions of listening-based music and prayer chanting as a way to join the non-linear constantly-existing, not only through the musical solutions but also through "the movement of mind between the audible and inaudible world in the meditation" (Vuori 2019).

I called these spaces *sonic sanctuaries*, including four notated pieces: *Esse est percipi*, *Anerkennung*, *Nefesh*, and *Jubel*, which can be realised as acoustic or electro-acoustic versions. The pieces aim to embody these concepts of the-constantly-existing becoming tangible, perceiving beyond the first signal, and joining the constantly existing.

#### GRAYSON

As a composer, the perspective I present comes naturally from my experiences of the many choices that must be made (purposely or inadvertently) when creating any new work. Composing, listening, and performing within a musical realm are inherently relational and entangled acts.

The majority of these choices are often left implicit, remaining subject to mystification or simply being referred to as "composer's intuition". As a student, receiving the answer "I compose intuitively" from teachers whose processes I wanted to better understand demonstrated at best an inability to articulate inner working processes and at worst the outright gatekeeping of knowledge. In the case of the latter, it can also serve to reinforce the hierarchical and meritocratic structures inherent in concepts like *Werktreue*.

The possibility exists to demystify and decentre absolute authority within music creation and realisation in a way that re-enchants these practices without losing agency, accountability, or fidelity. It is also a means of subverting the success or failure of a piece by basing it solely on a composer's capacity: time limitations, the ongoing accumulation and shift of knowledge, and factors of other agencies (materials, performers, conductors, instrumentation, the individual instruments

themselves, and even the performance spaces) are all aspects that a composer should be attuned to when making a piece. When creating what composer Denis Smalley (2007, 48) terms “perspectival space”, the attributes are a combination of sonic qualities and techniques, many of which are only partially within a composer’s control.

The challenge with this approach is that it is time intensive and requires attunement and communication skills that require practice. However, the goal with this line of thinking is ultimately to encourage a wider kind of empathy or understanding of agents and circumstances that bring a performance or work into being.

Another aspect of my ethos is that of non-binariness or non-duality. I do not propose one new, “right” way of approaching music-making – which runs the very real risk of becoming its own binary dogma. Rather, I suggest an open-ended exploration of the many ways of defining, practising, and communicating. This kind of simultaneity allows for the presence of parallel knowledges, perceptions of time and space, or traditions, all of which have the ability to enrich and inform each other.

## RELATIONALITY AS BEING IN TIMESPACE

*We need to slow down; allow experiences of perception to take the time they take. To not rush over them and barely notice, but to taste them fully and allow the experience to unfold at its own pace.*

*(Van der Wielen-Honinckx 2021, 92.)*

JULIN

I attempt to integrate philosophical reflections on signal and noise within sound arts with liberal theological and religious-philosophical concepts of transience and eternity. Despite the difference in language, I see parallels in both of my fields of expertise: music and theology.

Upon engaging with sound art, I was immediately drawn to the conceptualisation of sound as a continuous and dynamic backdrop to human perception and material reality (see e.g. Cox 2018, 4). In seeking to approach realities both within and beyond perception, I found the terminology of signal and noise particularly fruitful – especially when noise is understood not as unwanted sound, but as “the hubbub that occupies silence” (Serres 1995, 13), from which the perceivable – signal – emerges. Noise is a constantly existing potential of sonic forces, which can, for example through contrast or interaction, enter

into relationships that allow them to cross the threshold of perception (Cox 2018, 118). Consequently, signal is an actualised form of something that already existed.

Extending this to an existential dimension, Serres writes that “background noise may well be the ground to our being” (1995, 13) and that noise “is to the *logos* what matter used to be to form” (ibid., 7). While Serres might have used the term *logos* in a Western philosophical context, it is difficult to overlook the intriguing comparison to the biblical concept of creation and Christ’s role.<sup>9</sup> Traditional Christian theology, however, often risks or even suffers from the limitation of providing a concrete explanation of the incarnation of *logos*. Therefore, I find it more productive to compare this incarnation with Michel Henry’s philosophy and John Shelby Spong’s liberal theology.

Henry speaks of the invisible becoming visible in different times and places, the incarnation of already (and always) existing matters.<sup>10</sup> Spong, on the other hand, has highlighted the idea (neither new nor radical in Jewish tradition) that “being Christ” is not limited to a single historical figure. What is essential is *what* incarnates or becomes reality, not in whom. Spong sees the birth of Jesus as “a sign that the infinite could be known in the finite” (Spong 1998, 190; see also xi, 189).

Thus, signal and noise can also be seen as analogous to concepts such as transience and eternity, or temporality and permanence. I offer this perspective as an alternative perspective on the predominantly religious discussion about eternity, not as a place beyond or after our lives, or as a god’s realm, but something inherent to reality. Serres, Henry, Spong, as well as Cox, all talk more or less about the same thing: how the constantly existing invisible reality, may it be noise, flux, life, *nefesh*,<sup>11</sup> or eternity, incarnates or actualises in time and space into *logos*, the visible, signal, or Christ.<sup>12</sup> I am proposing that these concepts all touch upon the reality of the-constantly-existing and share the intention to reach beyond immediate, actualised reality.

Not only do I see sameness in the different ways of naming the-constantly-existing, I also see sameness in the constant and the transient. Serres formulates that “as soon as a phenomenon appears, it leaves the

<sup>9</sup> See e.g. John 1:1–3; Gen. 1:1; connection also to Prov. 8:22–26.

<sup>10</sup> Henry uses the term incarnation, see e.g. 2002, 13–41. He draws on Kandinsky’s idea of the internal, linking it with “invisible,” “life,” and “pathos” to describe a contrast between external phenomena and the interior experience of being (Henry 2009, 7). In discussing *logos*, he uses Christian terms, describing incarnation as the manifestation of the divine word in Christ (Henry 2002, 31–32).

<sup>11</sup> See the chapter “Relationality as a nuanced reality” of this article.

<sup>12</sup> Could also be compared to thoughts on virtual reality, see e.g. Leibniz 1996, Deleuze 2007.



noise” (1995, 13), but I see no separation. What actualises is part of the-constantly-existing; thus, actualising reality (transience, temporality) and the-constantly-existing reality (eternity, permanence) are the same. I want to emphasise not the separation of signal from noise in the actualisation but these two being the same reality, just differing in manifestation and (human) perception.

### GRAYSON

By emphasising the oft unheralded approach of foregrounding emergent processes within predominantly dualistic, outcome-oriented ways of musicking, a more complex perspective of sound emerges. I argue that just as the act of composing is inherently a negotiation of agents, sound is similarly an emergent process, where seemingly opposing aspects are actually intertwined. Sound is not an object, but a complex relationship that occurs via the interactions of space, time, and material.

This inextricably relational happening is summed up well in the term *timespace*, in which the temporal aspect of sound is “neither time as opposed to space nor is it time *plus* space” (Voegelin 2010, 124). Inversely, the spatial aspect is neither in opposition to nor taking precedence over temporality. As Voegelin (ibid.) states, “these are not terms of contradiction or even paradoxes. Rather they reveal how time and space extend each other and produce each other.”

The concepts of time and space were not always a deeply implicit or neglected part of the treatment of notation: earlier composers, such as those from the *ars nova* and *ars subtilior*,<sup>13</sup> often applied notation in ways that caused the score to seem somehow self-aware through playfulness, contextual and architectural specificity, and the materiality (i.e. the score as an object to be held and touched). This kind of approach, I argue, could redress musical abstraction and might work to counter stifling self-seriousness: rather than instruments and voices (and human bodies) being vessels of transmission, we could think of the music they produce as occurring through co-creation. In contemporary composition, many composers whose works transcend the general public’s definitions of music<sup>14</sup> have already proven that expanding the Western

<sup>13</sup> Works like *Tractatus de musica Guidonis d’Arezzo* or *Chantilly Codex* are excellent examples of how the space, place, and body were a larger element of musicking, containing works like the Guidonian Hand and Canonic Ballade on a Labyrinth, “En la maison Dedalus”.

<sup>14</sup> John Cage or Pauline Oliveros, for example. I name these two specifically because of their career trajectory from more traditional to highly experimental composition methods, and also because there is abundant litera-

art music canon through radically transdisciplinary and intercultural imagination can take place without diminishing previously-established practices. Forgetting that everything was a novel experiment at some point is to forget how to keep playing.

*Example: Esse est percipi*

*Esse est percipi*<sup>15</sup> features a traditional psalm cantillation. The use of time is guided by the use of the text.<sup>16</sup> I link this piece with the idea of simultaneously existing eternity/transience and the thought of signal actualising noise – the signal paints the all-the-time-existing noise visible. The temporal makes visible what is permanent; eternity is perceived in time. I like Serres’s thought of noise as the ground of our being, but propose a different aspect to the relationship between signal and noise. This would mean that nothing actualises from eternity *into* time; rather, eternity actualises *in* and through time.

The piece features a sonic background created by bordunas,<sup>17</sup> a lead singer “painting” the background visible (see Picture 1), and other singers echoing and colouring the scenery further. As more things are being actualised, the perception of the “eternal” background changes: as more notes are being sung, it changes the harmonies.

*Example: the detritus of materiality*

“Systems work because they do not work. Nonfunctioning remains essential for functioning”, says Serres. “If the relation succeeds, if it is perfect, optimum, and immediate; it disappears as a relation.” (2007 [1982], 79.) In terms of the inherently co-constituent relationships of time/space, transient/eternal time, and signal/noise, Serres concisely shows us the non-dualistic possibility that noise – or in the case of the physical score, detritus or damage – are as inherent as the information they aim to convey. Cestino (2021, 90) also makes explicit these aspects: “Their material transformations can constantly be caused by humans (restorers, librarians, etc.), non-humans (for instance mold or woodworms), and atmospheric agents (like humidity or heat).” Each

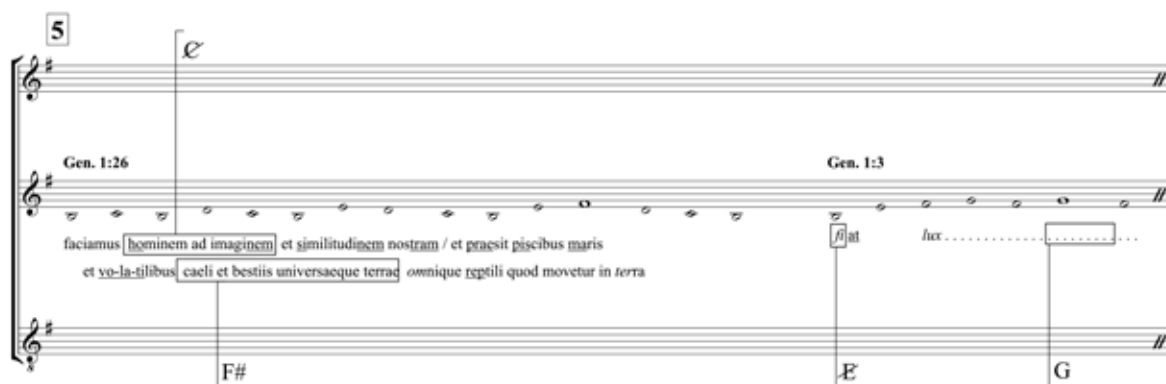
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ture on their methods and works.

<sup>15</sup> The phrase means “to exist is to be perceived”.

<sup>16</sup> In this piece, time is the only relative component. That is, the pitches follow standard conventions of Western classical music, with an emphasis on the richness of different phonemes and the overtones they produce.

<sup>17</sup> The bordunas can be played by any suitable instrument, including voice. In the artistic event of my doctoral research, they were made with handbells using the singing bell technique.



**Picture 1.** Example from *Esse est percipi*. The bordunas (marked with a pitch name) can be played by any suitable instrument (handbells as singing bells, organ, string instruments, shruti-boxes, etc.) and their octave range can be freely chosen. The boxed lyrics indicate the timespan when the bordunas should start (note name at the end of the line) or stop (note name strikethrough).

of these agents has the potential to alter the readability and usability of a score. Although noise frequently carries with it negative moral connotations, I also view noise as not just inevitable but necessary.

In the context of my work, detritus or “material noise” is embedded in my working process. These notations can be held in one or both hands, and through years of working with objects of this scale I have become aware of the incredible sensory ability of the average human finger, which transports the mind into a near-microscopic terrain where a grain of sand can be as obvious to the senses as a stone in one’s shoe. It is this kind of sensitivity, along with a material’s distinct thing-power,<sup>18</sup> that has the potential to subvert compositional agency in various ways.

In the three days I worked closely with Heli Hartikainen in late 2024, there was a moment in our conversation while listening to the recorded interpretations of various notational actants (see Picture 2) when I realised that a certain repeated motif was caused by this kind of material noise. Asking Hartikainen about a certain musical gesture that I could not place on the score they had played, it came to light that this something unexpected – a so-called glitch – was caused by a small sliver of linoleum shaving that was still stuck to a part of the score. While touching the notation, Hartikainen had been so taken

<sup>18</sup> Thing-power is a term referring to the vibrant and dynamic agency or influence that traditionally-inert matter or objects possess (see Bennett 2009).



**Picture 2.** A series of notational actants created during 2024 at the Kone Saari Residency. Scores in this image are made from paper, reclaimed linoleum, wood (ash), and recycled candle wax.

by the contrast in texture of this little sliver that it became an integral part of the interpretation. Curious and bemused by my own annoyance with this “accident”, it became a fruitful conversation for me to reflect on how my own expectations in my role can differ from the performer, even in experimental notations where there is no standardised precedent.

## BEING IN THAT REALITY: LISTENING AND PRESENCE

*To hear is to let the sound wander all the way through the labyrinth of your ear; to listen is to travel the other way to meet it. It's not passive but active, this listening. It's as though you retell each story, translate it into the language particular to you, fit it into your cosmology so you can understand and respond, and thereby it becomes part of you.*  
(Solnit 2013, 193.)

*JULIN*

After picturing a world consisting of the simultaneous constantly-existing and its temporal actualisations, how can we position ourselves in it? And where? These two inseparable entities suggest a mutual im-

manence: the permanent within the temporal, and the transient within the eternal. According to Cox (2018, 115), “it is from this background that any signal comes to the fore, temporarily drawing our attention to it and away from the background noise.” However, I would like to change the ending from “away from the background noise” to making it tangible, visible, perceivable. Something similar echoes in Cox’s formulation of Leibniz’s thoughts on minute perceptions: “[E]ach conscious perception is the local registration of the entire state of the universe at any given moment” (ibid., 116).

For me, the key to positioning oneself in relation to signal and noise – or transience and eternity, or linearity and non-linearity – is to be present and perceive beyond the first signal that catches our attention. Such presence can be reached through listening, understood more broadly than just a physical happening, rather as a state of mind, much like in meditation where the intention of listening “is towards three directions: oneself, others and the echoing space” (Vuori 2019). Listening is an active and creative engagement; it “discovers and generates the heard” (Voegelin 2010, 4); it is being in a relation with the reality and forming a view of it.

The constantly-present background is often ignored or unnoticed, requiring special attention to shift focus from signal to noise. However, the signals are perceiver-dependent, as different things act as signals to different people. What is a signal to whom, and why? Furthermore, can we see or hear beyond the primary signal? Or notice our own tendencies? Voegelin (2010, 3) states that sensory interactions filter and shape the perceived object through the senses used, making it hard to recognise these filters.

Listening as being in space surpasses the thought of merely hearing sonic happenings. Oliveros writes that “if you are [...] sounding, then you are sending. Are you receiving what you send and also receiving the whole of the space/time continuum of sound?”, making listening “a spatial/temporal phenomenon” (2005, 13, 16). Van der Wielen-Honinckx expands on Oliveros’ concept of deep listening by introducing deep perception, which “requires another relation to time”, as truly engaging with the ambiguity of one’s environment demands a willingness to dwell in and attune to it (2021, 91). Perception should unfold rather than be directed.

## GRAYSON

In my eight years lecturing in the field of sound art, my definition of listening has broadened significantly. It is now often replaced by *attunement*, which can largely relate to concepts of negotiation and presence. All of these actions require intent, focused attention, and an active role (however passive it may appear externally). These are also relational actions that develop over time. In other words, listening is not simply a bodily function – the ear is a palimpsest of ideological, cultural, political, and experiential layers that shape how we understand our audition. Furthermore, we can also reframe that there are passive or even extractive ways to listen, and other ways of listening that are in and of themselves an act of creation. Similar to my own practices, fellow sound artist (and field recordist) Lawrence English argues that this calls for a theory of relational listening (2020, 10–11). Despite English using this concept within the context of field recording, he states throughout his writings on perceptual politics that listening has the potential to be a creative act of transmission, whereby “the way in which sounds act upon a listener in place is critical as sound’s affective forces encourage the listener to seek emergent understandings and appreciations” (2020, 3). In the context of my work, the places where understandings or misunderstandings emerge are embedded in notational actants. The notations are not just a score: they are a site where material, gesture, association, and our listening histories come to fruition in the form of musicking and conversation. As in the aforementioned idea of timespace, these notational actants are a site where multiple temporalities and negotiations take place.

In working with these notational processes, I recognise that they have been a tool primarily for reflection. As I mentioned previously, the music in and of itself is something that – at least for the moment – is a by-product of these etudes.

In working with materials that are primarily used in other fields (e.g. sculpture or design), I place myself in a position of having to learn (for the first time) or relearn (through a synthesis of practices) in what ways I negotiate and listen, aurally and haptically. Tim Ingold refers to this concept as *correspondence*: “In making, the maker follows the material and that process of following the material is a correspondence between the flow of the material and the movement and flow of the maker’s consciousness” (2007b, 64).

This creates an agential feedback loop in a material sense, but also in the sense of our listening histories. It is a mutual making-with, further reinforcing this notion of “things thinging in a world worlding”: the

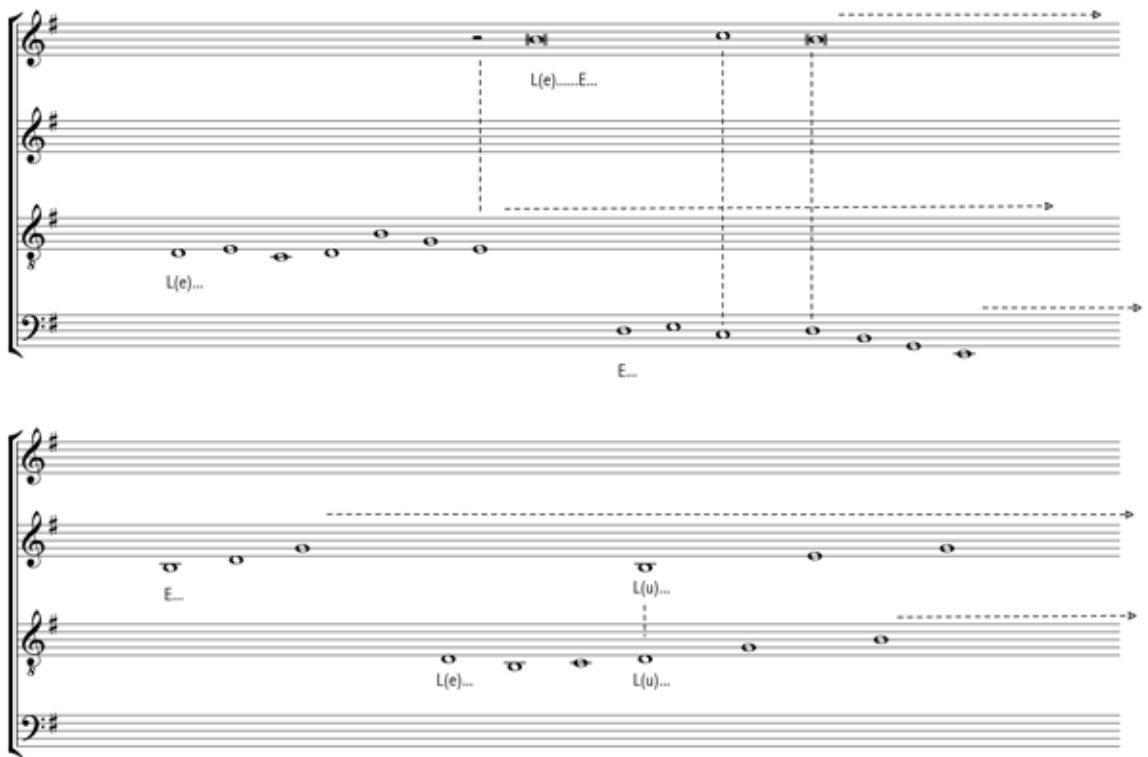
maker is not just conversing with matter but is in a process of *becoming* alongside their materials, coupling their very life with the same forces that bring about their own creation (Ingold 2012b, 435). The thing-power of materiality thinging asks us to listen as a thing among things from *within* the worlding: “[W]e do not hear rain, but hear in it... we should say of the body, as it sings, hums, whistles or speaks, that it is *ensounded*” (Ingold 2007a). This sentiment is also frequently shared by Voegelin, who – much like Ingold – has been heavily influenced by Heidegger. “The sonic thing as a doing ‘substance’ is not sublimated to the noun in the sentence. Rather it abandons the hierarchy and becomes the noun as a thinging being.” (Voegelin 2010, 19.)

#### *Examples: Anerkennung and Jubel*

Two of the pieces, *Anerkennung* and *Jubel*, share a common theme of exploring the reality beyond the first signals we perceive. Both compositions focus on overtones, illustrating how they interact with subtle changes in the fundamental note or phoneme.<sup>19</sup> They invite listeners (including musicians) to slow down and perceive our surroundings. This invitation is further emphasised by free use of time – naturally while interacting with each other. The text is one word, “Immanuel” (in *Anerkennung*), and “Alleluia” (in *Jubel*), which slowly evolves over the course of the whole piece (see Picture 3). Each phoneme is sounding, as are the consonants, which allows changing overtone harmonics within the word.<sup>20</sup> Linger on a word, making it the foundation of both sound and presence, can also be seen as a way of taking part in the-constantly-existing, as “words are not ours to begin with, they were spoken before, and continue to reverberate in and through us” (Pomarico et al. 2021, 236–237).

<sup>19</sup> As in *Esse est percipi*, the pitches follow standard conventions of Western classical music, but the use of overtone variation is significantly more pronounced. In addition, *Jubel* made stronger use of electronics, incorporating convolution alongside reverb, painting an even stronger background harmony with the singers’ tones, as was done through bordunas in *Esse est percipi*. I also included two vaguely choral-like passages where the electronics were reduced to just reverb, and a common pulse guided the singing, uniting the singers through a different parametre.

<sup>20</sup> I would like to thank overtone singer and teacher Wolfgang Saus for inspiring me many years ago with the idea of music hidden within words. This concept has stayed with me ever since and has finally manifested into sound through these pieces.



**Picture 3.** Example from *Jubel*, slow change of phonemes. Vertical dashed lines indicate simultaneous happenings, mostly changes of the fundamental note. From the guidelines of the piece: “Linger on notes, especially on note changes and phoneme changes. Enjoy them. Take the time on each note to listen to what happens. You can pause between or during the notes if you feel like it. Especially enjoy the changes of pitch. Take the time between themes to listen to what happens. (Pause between the themes for at least 10–15 seconds, but don’t count. Just be and listen.)”

## RELATIONALITY AS A NUANCED REALITY

*Among primitive peoples, sound was attributed to the gods. It was considered sacred and reserved for priests, who used it to enrich their rites with mystery. Thus was born the idea of sound as something in itself, as different from and independent of life. And from it resulted music, a fantastic world superimposed on the real one, an inviolable and sacred world. [...] We must break out of this limited circle of sounds and conquer the infinite variety of noise-sounds. (Russolo 1986, 23, 25.)*

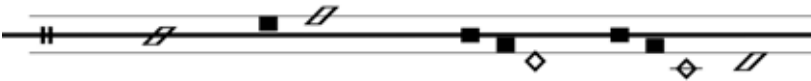


The idea that the-constantly-existing and the actualising share the same nature leads me to the concept of time. We can distinguish such a background canvas for these happenings in the thoughts of Cox, Henry, Leibniz, Serres, and Spong, where it is different from the thought of linear time in an essential way. The invisible that becomes visible in a certain time but also exists outside of that time. Within such thinking, the signal is not the only truth, the entire truth, or the only happening, but one possible actualisation within a wider reality. Different invisibilities may become visible in different times, in different places, and through different means.<sup>21</sup>

*Example: three-lined staff*

The three aforementioned pieces utilise traditional Western classical notation, albeit with an effort to introduce flexibility. To move towards a more relative approach, I created a three-lined staff that aims at singing and playing based on listening and gestures rather than technical implementations and producing certain (correct) notes. While it clearly stems from the Western classical tradition and is easily adaptable, it does not require the ability to read sheet music.

The three-lined staff (Picture 4) does not indicate exact pitches, but is based on a pedal point. The initial idea is to use an environmental pedal point, like a loud air conditioner or another noise-producing machine, transforming a space with disruptive, constant sound into a sonic sanctuary. Alternatively, the pedal point can be established on a pitch agreed upon by the performers, using for example an organ, shruti box, or handbell.



**Picture 4.** Example of the 3-lined staff. The middle line of the staff indicates the pedal point. The first spaces under and above the central line indicate “a very close” pitch (to the focal pitch), the lines under and above the central line “a relatively close” pitch, the spaces lowest and highest “a further away” pitch, and the ledger lines indicate “a far away” pitch.

<sup>21</sup> An example of a Christian viewpoint on nonlinear time is the connection of all the saints, meaning every Christian who ever lived, for example in the moment of communion. The act of communion is decisive; it is there that the connection and presence can be found, not in physical co-existence in time and place. Furthermore, I am reminded of Marc Chagall’s paintings with biblical themes, where events from different times are depicted simultaneously. For example, in *The Sacrifice of Isaac* (1960–1966), as an angel stops Abraham from sacrificing Isaac, Jesus is shown carrying his cross on the way to Golgotha.

Only the pedal point remains fixed throughout the piece, while other notes are relative to it. Also, the octave range is flexible and should be adapted by each singer. There are three types of notes indicating relative lengths: a rather short note, a rather long note, and a long/resting note. Before or during any longer note, one can pause to listen to the focal pitch, and before changing pitch, one should listen to the harmonics present. The text can be freely chosen, whether it be a single word, one sentence or more, or just phonemes. The rhythmic handling of the text is at the singer's discretion.

*Nefesh* sonically manifests the idea of taking part in the-constantly-existing, which is not separate from this world but an integral part of it. The name of the piece, *Nefesh* (Engl. *Nephesh*), is biblical Hebrew, meaning roughly the breath of life, also referring to the soul. It approaches the thought of life itself: the very being that penetrates all living reality.<sup>22</sup> It can be compared to Chinese philosophy, where “Chi is the energy of the universe that flows through and around all living things” (Oliveros 2005, 94). A similar musical approach can be found, for instance, in Indian tradition, with “the notion of *Nda-Brahman*, which conflates the metaphysical absolute (*Brahman*) with sound (*nda*). [...] Through meditation and the intense contemplation of music, the Indian tradition teaches, one can ascend to this unstruck sound.” (Cox 2018, 126.)

## SEMIOTICS

*We are motivated to inhabit a different mode, to diverge from the (hetero)normative, exclusionary, hyper productive space and structure, one that we criticize and contest as inherently unjust and oppressive. And yet, after all, are we truly prepared to reverse the dynamic usually at stake in the classroom, the museum, the tribunal, the institution, the nuclear family, the neoliberal university, the factory, the office, the marketplace? There spaces seem to have leaked into any and every other space, including that of our imagination.*  
(Pomarico et al. 2021, 233.)

### GRAYSON

As a young composer, I was fascinated with how to successfully convey ideas that necessitate approaches that go beyond standard musical terminology and symbols. The spectrum can vary dramatically, and is

<sup>22</sup> See e.g. Spong 1998, 60–62.

entirely contingent on the needs of the work. I came to understand notational processes like an aperture that focused on a certain idea: this aperture could be as narrow or as wide as the composer chose (in terms of precision and performative agency), but it was up to them to communicate their intent clearly and with purpose. All the better if the final score is also aesthetically engaging.

Throughout my research, I have avoided creating a new notational system; new musical or symbolic languages that require literacy are not desirable. Over time, a shift toward feminist, ecological, and queer ways of working and living have subsequently caused my notational approaches to evolve similarly. Linguistic or semiotic patterns would still emerge: in fact, I assume this to be inevitable. A quote I had read years ago in an interview with sound artist and composer Annea Lockwood echoed through my mind while thinking about the semiotics of this research: “Eventually, all styles of performance music become languages, even Cage’s anti-linguistic works, as people become more and more familiar with his intentions and sound worlds” (as quoted in Aldrich 2012, 15). However, my approach focuses on simplifying the ability to see more clearly the underlying *processes* of thinking and creating. What are the stories we are telling when performing scores like these, and what stories are we using to tell those stories? What previous traditions do we perpetuate when building new traditions?<sup>23</sup>

My main question during the Saari Residency was how to understand semiotics as something that emerges from material negotiation itself, not as form imposed on inert matter. The two concepts that I feel best answer this in my work are affordance and vitality forms: the former dealing more with the material aspect of transmitting intent, and the latter dealing with the intent itself.

Originally referring to what a surrounding environment offers (in other words, what an individual organism can do within a given environment) (Gibson 1966, 285), it was later adopted into the field of design to refer specifically to actionable possibilities a user or actor can perceive, given the qualities of an object or interface:

Affordances can signal how an object can be moved, what it will support, and whether anything will fit into its crevices, over it, or under it. Where do we grab it, which parts move, and which parts

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<sup>23</sup> I am borrowing from Donna Haraway (2016, 12): “It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties.”

are fixed? Affordances suggest the range of possibilities, constraints limit the number of alternatives. (Norman 1988, 81.)

Materials themselves can be loosely approached as one might negotiate with the affordances of a musical instrument: given any material or object, there are limitation and liberties. However, this still does not fully answer what kind of idea can be transmitted or communicated through a notational actant. This is where vitality forms come in.

Vitality forms are a concept proposed by developmental psychiatrist Daniel Stern. The concept of vitality is framed as a mental integration of various internal and external factors and events. Unlike the original usages of the concept of vitalism, this particular version of vitality necessitates both a physical action and a mental process that are *traceable*, and which occur from an encounter with dynamic events (Stern 2010, 4, 7). Even though vitality forms can occur without content,<sup>24</sup> they always contain movement, which in turn contains force, time, space, and intention (expressed as directionality) (ibid.).

Between what is possible with a material and the performance that occurs every time we run our fingers over a materially-based notation, it is now possible to see how the qualities of the material we interact with could produce something signifying a gesture. I settled on thinking in terms of working with material affordance to create gestures of “terrain” (i.e. shaping the surface of a material to be convex or concave, curved, textured) and using the simplest forms of symbols – the line and the dot. Even with these very basic ideas, it emerged that the interpretative possibilities could become extremely complex, and that only through repeated musicking could one begin to understand the emergent patterns: a notational, co-creative understanding, potentially always in flux.

#### *Example: idiolects*

In my observations and our conversations with saxophonist Heli Hartikainen, it became clear that interpreting these scores clearly demanded processes of relearning. They were not touching the scores nearly as much as I would have anticipated, often propping them up on a table so they could view from a close distance. I was also surprised to see that when the scores were handled, the trajectory of the “reading” often had a left-to-right, up-to-down hierarchy.

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<sup>24</sup> See Stern 2010, 23.



**Picture 5.** A notational actant made of wax, created in late 2022.

By the third day, however, something began to emerge from our working processes: when listening again to the recordings, a musical idiolect began to emerge. A shared co-understanding was establishing itself. There were moments when a musical choice – a sudden compound melody, an increase in intensity, or a timbral shift – were possible to locate and follow on the surface of the notation. These moments were often brief, but through repeated listenings I could follow many aspects of their interpretive choices while also having some understanding of their reasoning.

#### *JULIN*

The practical work was guided by listening-based, relational music-making in both composition and performance, rather than by score-based or performative approaches – where the latter rely on prescribed, imposed instructions meant to be executed. I aim to shift the focus from the parametres to what they produce, not only as sound but as an experienced reality. I perceive sounds affecting the space. As sounds change, it also changes the space. I see floating masses of sound, superposed, overlapping, and interlacing. They are space, not in space.<sup>25</sup> This shifts my focus to gestures over details. Gestures can communicate and form shapes without strict, detailed definitions, enabling non-linearity. Gesture-forms emerge from reactive relationality, not bound by pulse or metre, or a specific point in time.

<sup>25</sup> “Music is not in visible space, music erodes visible space, surrounds it, and causes it to shift” (Merleau-Ponty 1974, 234).

My musical focus is on transformations, on the changes of the hardly-moving, the evolution of notes, rather than the notes themselves. As Eliane Radigue puts it, “[e]verything is an interval, we are always in-between” (2019, 51). One does not have to add happenings as things are (reality is) already happening all the time. It is a stream we can join.

In a way, I employ two opposite approaches: zooming in on minimal changes, the in-between states, and zooming out to observe gestures and shapes, avoiding fixation on singular events. I am trying to let these aspects co-exist. Instead of following an external concept or rule, everything is based on being in a relation to something and reacting to it, termed as reactive or sensory listening.<sup>26</sup> Notation, while intended for performers, can also impact the audience by creating a shared space.

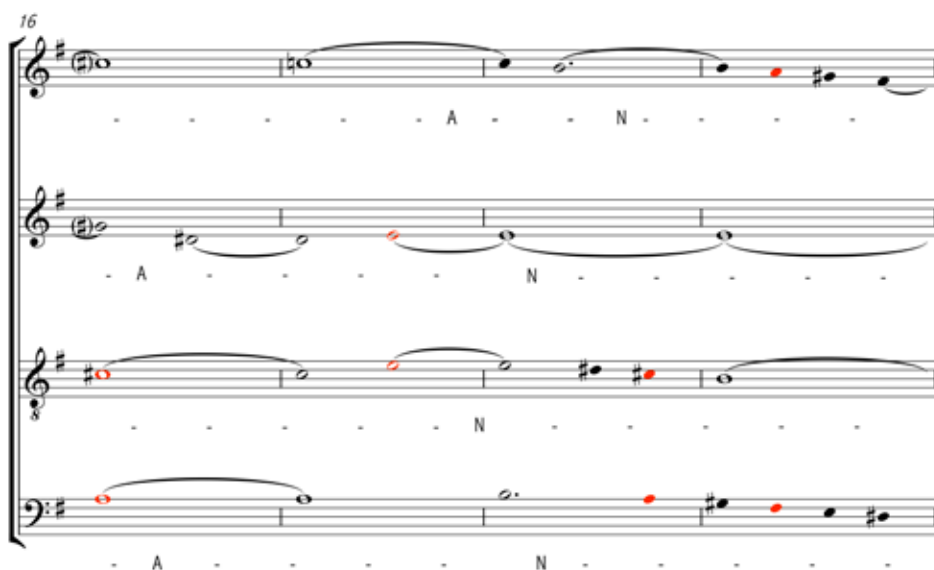
A key challenge is notating listening-based music. I use traditional Western classical notation, but adapt it so that listening guides the musicians, just as it guides me during composing. This endeavour also led to the creation of the aforementioned three-lined staff. Regarding notation, I pondered two aspects. Firstly, how to achieve a timeless feeling through verbal instructions. I experimented with various approaches, from traditional Italian terminology (“*Como senza tempo*”) to more descriptive phrases (“Sing as if the notes are already floating in the air”), and even quite poetic formulations (“There is no time. Nor hurry.”).<sup>27</sup>

My second question was how to notate without a set tempo or coherent rhythm indication. The cue to “act” is not supposed to be a specific point of time, like a particular beat of the bar, but rather previous and simultaneous events. I used text, patterns, and coloured notes as cues for the musicians to evolve their pitch or initiate a gesture simultaneously, leaving the timing to their discretion (see Picture 6). This unfixed temporality encourages concentrated co-musicking, where “the other’s vagueness [...] is defining rather than preventing the sense of community, a connection that is formed by a space that is constructed by perception and time” (Buzzi et al. 2021, 61).

The pieces are designed to be open and flexible regarding the number of singers, the use of live electronics, whether some parts are sung

<sup>26</sup> The latter is my own term, referring to the earlier mentioned listening that involves not just physical hearing but a sensory experience and a state of being, taking part in reality.

<sup>27</sup> After the first practical experiments, it became apparent that the willingness and openness of the musicians to expose themselves to such meditative and reactive approaches to musicking is perhaps more important than what constitutes the written instructions.



**Picture 6.** Example from *Anerkennung*, using red notes as indications of simultaneity, but the notes do not refer to a fixed use of time.

or played, the choice of instruments, the choice of key, and whether the pieces are performed non-metrically, fully metrically, or somewhere in between. My intention is to create notational methods that enable listening-based music-making among both professional and amateur musicians trained in the Western classical tradition, without excluding those without such training.

## MATERIALS

*Assuming such a way of thinking, we can identify a constant counterpoint between things and processes...in which both humans and things lose their supremacy over each other and engage in a flow with one another. If we accept that humans and things correspond, we can easily re-include notational artifacts in every music-related process.*

*(Cestino 2021, 86–87.)*

*JULIN*

In addition to notational solutions and descriptive texts, I wanted to test the impact of alternative materials on the performance practice of



**Picture 7.** Excerpt from *Nefesh* embroidered on fabric.

classically trained musicians. *Esse est percipi* was printed on fibre paper, and I used laser cutting on plywood in *Anerkennung*, UV-printing on fabric in *Jubel*, and embroidery on fabric in *Nefesh* (Picture 7).

All of the materials can be held in hand and felt, providing a multi-sensory experience that fosters presence in the moment, rather than merely interpreting and executing instructions from paper or a screen. Additionally, these materials are silent, which is beneficial in the subtle soundfield that encourages active and attentive listening, presence, and meditative awareness.

#### GRAYSON

My stance on increasing the status of materials and their thingness is tied to ethical duty: as a denizen of this planet, I see a need to shift towards more nuanced and humane ways of co-creating and existing. In turn, I would hope that in the future whatever imbalances might come of these ways of thinking would be redressed and reconsidered. The point is that the trouble begins when we propose a singular right way of going about musicking.

I am not alone in this moral impetus for proposing such ideas: I acknowledge my work is one example of a multitude of artists, theorists, and authors calling for similar paradigm shifts across the humanities. Jane Bennett, who is well known for her writings on vital materialism, as well as other current authors and philosophers (such as Donna Haraway and Karen Barad), propose the need to understand ourselves not only in relation to other beings and materials, but also understanding ourselves as complex entities comprised of materials. Recognising matter as active also connotes rethinking the status of human beings – not by diminishing the accountability of human agency, but by viewing those effects as evidence that we, too, are composed of vital material (Bennett 2010, 10).

In a very similar vein to our objections to the prioritisation of *Werk-treue* culture, we are not the first to discuss potential imbalances within



approaches to material cultures. Tracing this imbalance back to Aristotle, the hylomorphic model permeates many art practices, of which music making is no exception. Being an amalgam of matter (*hylē*) and form (*morphē*), every created thing results from the combination of form and matter – form being the intended design and matter the raw, formless substance shaped by it. The worldview of matter being passive, merely a vessel that receives the form imposed upon it, is an oversimplification that has the ability to engender subtle but deep consequences within musicking (Ingold 2012, 432).

In my process of composing, material negotiation is a thinking done elsewhere in my body and brain. I cannot access many of the routes previously available to me. This seeming “inability to think straight” also means that there is no possibility for me to truly lay claim to a hylomorphically-oriented will over these materials, and in turn this negates my ability to enforce the *Werktreue*. I see this emergent kind of attuned music-making as an extremely valuable kind of co-creation that any craftsperson already knows well. Anyone who works regularly in any hands-on activity has an understanding of the “creative materiality with incipient tendencies and propensities, which are variably enacted depending on the other forces, affects, or bodies with which they come into close contact” (Bennett 2010, 56).

This sentiment is shared by Voegelin in many of her works, also echoing Ingold’s Heideggerian influences; “The sonic thing as a doing ‘substance’ is not sublimated to the noun in the sentence. Rather it abandons the hierarchy and becomes the noun as a thinging being” (Voegelin 2010, 19).

## CONCLUSION

Our works emerge from a framework of relationally-based listening practices and open-ended questioning, manifested in parallel choices to create music scores that emphasise materiality and exist beyond two dimensions. Through these approaches, we align our values with intra-action, presence, and listening that goes beyond our conventional training.

Rather than reject our Western classical music training, we wish to enrich the canon and practices within the Western music institutions we are a part of. We recognise existing practices as inherently complex systems of agents and relations, and further challenge the common fixation on the *Werktreue*, its tendency toward anonymous authority, and its privileging of certain forms of knowledge over others. In this way, we reframe our ways of thinking about musicking as an unfolding,

multidimensional relationship that happens in affective atmospheres, lived-in and intimate zones framed within both space and location that open us up to new ways of knowing (English 2017, 5). In this place, a score is an agent of facilitation that contains histories of materiality, acts of listening, and certain possibilities for a dynamic and experiential performative interplay.

Engaging with philosophies and practical choices as music makers, we embrace complexity through our alternative approaches to notation, which call into question the agencies of composer, performer, and audience, as well as the composition or score itself. We also attempt to re-situate all potential listening within a sonic unfolding based on these entangled relations. By de-emphasising our separateness, we may become open to completely new ways of experiencing even familiar works, as was the case in Hilikka-Liisa Vuori's "Body, Soul and Sound" workshop (which focused on meditative approaches to the chants of Hildegard von Bingen): "[T]he listening to the echo and the overtones have a relaxing, concentrating, meditative and refreshing effect on the singers and the listeners – which in the best case are the same persons" (Vuori 2019). As Haraway (2016, 12) reminds us, "[i]t matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with" and, we might add, it matters how we listen in order to make room for new forms of musical presence.

Within this musical lineage, there exist many threads: scholars and musicians who seek to accurately represent these works (such as through Historically Informed Performance) as well as those for whom radical experimentation is key. We claim that both ends of this spectrum hold a particular importance within Western classical music – convention without questioning promotes dogma, and innovation without historical basis lacks richness and maturity. In short, there is room for plural approaches to exist and inform each other.

Despite convention's place in our traditions, we recognise that continuing to uphold anonymous authority and rigid musical orthodoxy has the potential for great harm: this authoritarian, colonial approach not only harms those from outside these traditions who would otherwise provide us a wealth of learning opportunities (often treating them with indifference or even contempt), but also alienates individuals inside the system who do not fit the status quo. It is a matter of agency – fitting into a narrow tradition can mean relinquishing one's own sense of self, body, or voice. As Tanja Tiekso describes, we are "disturbed by the institution that intervenes between the music and the listener, its studied mannerisms, pre-given schematic frameworks of performances, the expressions, sounds and movements of the audience, the distance between the players and the audience" (2024, 37).<sup>28</sup> In other words, unquestioning tradition has the capacity to fracture us even from ourselves. A lack of criticality sets up coming generations for failure: a student being given rules without context is different than being given tools with the explanation of how they came to

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<sup>28</sup> Transl. L. Julin.

be and what functions they have.

Ultimately, we do not offer fixed answers. Our work is rather an invitation toward diffractive and critical dialogues, toward an ongoing attunement to the intra-actions of notation, sound, and perception. Within this place that exists beyond ideas of right and wrong, the richness and complexity of all involved are multiplied.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

*JULIN*

In my research I am interested in listening as being, and listening to happenings, entities, or phenomena we do not notice at first glance.<sup>29</sup> My interest lies in sonic events occurring in a non-linear, multidimensional reality, as well as in the psychological aspects of perception. Integrating this thinking into music-making, I shift from two-dimensional, linear analysis and performance toward relational engagement with the environment – while still working within the semiotics of Western classical music. I am not writing fully-controlled and fixed compositions because, in terms of just music, I do not think music can be fixed. Most of all, I am trying to take part in something that is alive and constantly present. Rather than replacing traditional notation, I offer an alternative. While conventional music emphasises harmony, pitch, and rhythm, this approach invites near-stillness – focusing on what happens between notes and within evolving tones. It calls for listening that guides the happenings, not just analyses them.

*GRAYSON*

Integrating theories of vital materialism, material culture, and sound philosophy together alongside more practical aspects of affordance theory and vitality forms, I offer one possible approach to ways we can reevaluate aspects of Western classical music that are presently not as accessible to some (due to education, ability, or non-normative ways of thinking and knowing). This approach hopes to contribute to a larger conversation around musicking that does not prioritise the hylomorphic model and *Werktreue* over interpretive agency and creative fidelity. These views also have the potential to reframe our relationship to the ways we create and co-create music, as well as the ways in which we

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<sup>29</sup> I am naturally not the first person on this path. For example, the famous piece *4'33"* by John Cage is asking us, in Cox's (2018, 124) words, "to shift our auditory focus from foreground to background, from one field of sounds to another".

should understand sound: namely, that sound is neither a commodity nor an object, but is an entangled emergence happening between time, space, place, and entities.

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