

## ARTICLES

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MIIKA HYYTÄINEN



### **Composing anti-acousmatically: an autoethnography**

This autoethnographic study introduces the process of composing anti-acousmatically, as exemplified in the creation of a music-theatre work, *Žižek Says!*, for a speaking accordionist and a singing saxophone player. Composing anti-acousmatically acknowledges and simultaneously challenges the acousmatic aesthetic, intentionally guiding the audience's awareness toward the sound source. It can be seen as one of the so-called post-acousmatic practices, but it extends the possibilities outside digital media. In *Žižek Says!*, anti-acousmatic composition is present in numerous analogical techniques: ventriloquism-like theatrical acts inspired by Slavoj Žižek, a music-theatre derivative of the children's game "Simon Says", a challenging vocal part performed by the saxophonist, and the performers' bodies positioned almost intimately close to each other.

The autoethnography reveals how using self-imposed constraints stimulated creativity and questioned established compositional conventions and hierarchies, ultimately making the performer's agency more evident. Part of the creative reflection also involved asking how the crucial role of acousmatic aesthetics has affected composers' ideas of voice and performer, which is evident even in the rehearsal process. Thus, anti-acousmatic composition can help explore new creative pathways and address social questions in contemporary classical music.

**Keywords:** composition, acousmatic, anti-acousmatic, experimental music theatre, autoethnography

*About the author:* Miika Hyytiäinen is a composer and researcher of transdisciplinary art forms and a facilitator of communications between composers and performers, especially singers.

PILVI JÄRVELÄ



### **Imagining the peasant at the piano: folk music aesthetics as an expansion of pianistic expression**

The piano has not traditionally been considered a folk instrument, and its broader use in folk music contexts emerged only in the early 1990s alongside the development of folk music education. This article examines the artistic process behind a 2023 concert per-

formed with a violinist specialised in Finnish *pelimanni* music. Employing practice-based and artistic research methods, I explore how the stylistic and aesthetic qualities of *pelimanni* violin playing can be applied to piano expression.

Through my artistic work, I developed practical techniques for translating traditional violin features into piano expression, revealing that such adaptation extends beyond technical solutions to a holistic approach to folk music aesthetics. The study offers insights for pianists engaging with folk music, and opens perspectives on aurally based music-making practices in contemporary musical expression.

**Keywords:** Finnish folk music, piano, folk music pianist, aurality, pianist's practice, folk-like character

*About the author:* Pilvi Järvelä is a pianist and harmonium player. Her primary research focus is on the affordances of the piano in folk music, with particular emphasis on its pedagogical applications and potential. Järvelä is also actively involved in *Näppäri* activities (a folk music-based educational philosophy).

ELINA P. ARLIN, KATRI LIIRA & MARJA-LEENA JUNTUNEN

**Students' experiences of practices supporting mind–body unity as part of pop/jazz voice studies in higher music education**



This article reports on an experimental case study conducted in a pop/jazz vocal pedagogy context at the Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki. In the study, pop/jazz vocal students were guided to practise skills that support the mind–body connection by using a specially prepared audio recording, created by the teacher-researchers, as part of their independent vocal practice. The core components of this practice were concentration/presence, bodily awareness, and self-talk (CBS). The study was motivated by the teacher-researchers' perceived need to further develop pop/jazz vocal instruction, particularly from the perspective of vocal expression. The research question was: *How do students experience CBS practice and its effects on their vocal training?* Eight master's-level music education students participated in the study. The data consisted of the students' learning diary entries and a transcribed focused group interview. The material was analysed using qualitative content analysis, supported by researcher triangulation.

The students' responses showed that bodily awareness, concentration, and self-talk are closely intertwined, forming a unified experiential whole. CBS practice increased the students' bodily awareness, supported concentration in vocal tasks, and helped them recognise and regulate negative self-talk. This strengthened their confidence, enhanced their sense of presence, and oriented their inner speech in a more positive direction. The prac-

tice also helped students to calm down, reduce performance-related tension, and attend to bodily sensations, highlighting the importance of embodied methods in vocal training. The reliability of the study is limited by the small sample size and the single-institution context. Future research would benefit from a larger dataset, and from examining how bodily awareness and self-talk relate to performance situations such as performance anxiety.

**Keywords:** body awareness, concentration, higher music education, popular music singing, mindful presence, self-talk, pop/jazz vocal pedagogy

*About the authors:*

Elina Arlin is lecturer in popular music singing at the University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland, where she is also a doctoral researcher in the MuTri Doctoral School. Her doctoral study focuses on vocal pedagogy, vocal expression, and embodiment.

Katri Liira is lecturer in popular music singing at the University of the Arts Helsinki, where she is also a doctoral researcher in the MuTri Doctoral School. Her doctoral study, in a joint project with Arlin, focuses on vocal pedagogy, vocal expression, and embodiment.

Marja-Leena Juntunen (PhD) is professor of music education at the University of the Arts Helsinki. Her research in music education covers a wide range of topics, including embodiment in learning, teaching, and expressing music.

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## LECTIONES PRAECURSORIAE

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VISA-PEKKA OSKARI MERTANEN (VISA OSCAR)

### **Jazz improvisation on synthesizers**

This doctoral work examines jazz synthesizer improvisation through transcriptions and analyses of solos by Jan Hammer, Joe Zawinul, George Duke, Chick Corea, and Michael Brecker. Using artistic research and aural imitation, it reveals how jazz synthesizer pioneers crafted their distinctive voices through sound choices, phrasing, and creative use of the synthesizer. It stresses that great improvisation arises from combining jazz tradition with imaginative sound design and expressive playing techniques.

**Keywords:** jazz, synthesizer, improvisation, artistic research, transcription, imitation

*About the author:* Visa-Pekka Mertanen (Visa Oscar) is a Finnish jazz musician, composer, and producer who researches and develops expressive jazz synthesizer improvisation.

JOHANNA TALASNIEMI

**Distinct and distinguished: Sibelius singer Aulikki Rautawaara**

This doctoral research explores soprano Aulikki Rautawaara's concert career as a performer of Jean Sibelius' songs between 1927 and 1957. Employing the methods of the cultural history of music and biographical research, the study examines her repertoire choices, wartime performances, and reception after the Second World War. Performing Sibelius' songs was musically and artistically interesting for Rautawaara, and it also became a way to pursue an international career in changing social situations.

*Keywords:* Aulikki Rautawaara, biographical research, concert repertoire, cultural history of music, Second World War, Sibelius' songs, singer research

*About the author:* Johanna Talasniemi works as a senior lecturer at the Metropolia UAS and as a researcher at the University of Helsinki.