Music from Some(no)where, Here and There
Reflections over the Space of Sounding Compositions

In a traditional conception of music performance, bodily participation of the performer is situated in an intermediate position between a composed sound ideal and its expression in the performance. In the author’s artistic research, an approach is attempted that tries to create performance situations in which the bodies of performers and their armamentarium are both a beginning and ending point, so that their sounding takes up an intermediary function. This inevitably extends the compositional working domain into choreographic and theatrical domains. The approach raises problematic issues on different levels, such as the delineation of disciplinary fields, or the place and space of composed intermediality. The article makes such questions more explicit, creating discursive phenomenological distinctions between a sounding 'here', 'there' and 'somewhere'.

Intermediality takes its place once again in the center of musical experimentation. Ever since all the hubbub around 'open form', sound theater, or the happening had somewhat died down in the mid ’70s – the evolution of the composer Mauricio Kagel is exemplary in this context – it has been, for the past decade, impossible to imagine artistic life without all kinds of cross-pollinations among various disciplines. The nature of the driving force of this evolution seems to be, more than ever before, technological, or, more specifically, digital. On a digital level, sound and image have become completely interchangeable. ‘Stretching’, ‘looping’, ‘freezing’, … – DJ’s and VJ’s make use of the same types of techniques, often identically designated, which set in motion an aesthetic reflex which infiltrates deeply into fields which at first sight seem to offer scant fertile ground. Intermedial manipulations are ubiquitous and offer a contemporary artist an experimental playground, which, until now, knows little canonization. Still, it seems that, for the time being, ‘unpartitioned art’ remains primarily the job of collectives of artists stemming from different disciplines.

The current surge of intermedial sound experimentation, which at first glance appears to be motivated largely by technological devolpments, raises along with it questions about the delineation of the sound artists’ working domain, about the composability of intermediate forms and about the necessity of a metasyntax. Where can the material for the intermedial artist be located, and what is its destination? Can it be found in the cumulative result of sound plus image, both put to the service of an overriding story? Can it be found in the creation of multimedial situations capable of overwhelming the senses so much that they produce the sort of immersive experiences so typical of the current technoculture? Or, on the other hand, is the ‘between’ in itself a possible destination; can the production and

1 This article was translated from Dutch by Sharon Stewart.
2 One exception to this premise may be installation art, which, if due only to the spatial anchoring of the artwork, generally compels the artist to take into account the interaction between sonorous, visual, sculptural and sometimes even textual aspects.
maintaining of feedback processes between different forms of medality be understood as a form of self-reflexivity, as a never-ending process of intermedial design, which, first and foremost, serves to express itself?

This question regarding the material of the intermedial artist reminds us that intermediality can be understood not only as something which occurs due to the mixture of disciplines, but also as a given, inherent within every form of expression. No single medium is pure.\(^3\) A musical performance is not only the concretization of a sound ideal, it is also the theatrical appearance of the performers, surrounded by a decor of instruments, music stands, chairs and audience. It is the performance of micro-choreographies on an instrument. It is the affirmation and cultivation of historic disciplines and years of training. It is also always a sound ritual.

In my artistic research, I consider the intrinsic intermediality of a musical performance as a compositional field of action. Hereby, the physical presence of the performers serves as the main focus of attention. This research centers on exploring the way in which the choreographic, theatrical and musical potential of the sound performance is able to unfold itself as an intermedial interaction, derived from a compositional gesture, but without putting the performers to work as actors or dancers for that purpose.

Therefore, from a compositional point of view, I search for interventions that can shed light on the performing body from various medial approaches differing in nature. Sometimes these interventions can be found within the sphere of playing techniques, for example in the development of playing techniques that produce a certain quality of sound, while being at the same time highly choreographic in nature. Other times I resort to a mise en scène in which the audiovisual expectations of sound actions are problematized. Another possible intervention lies in the design of a specific communication model to be applied by the performers, leading to certain sound-theatrical situations. In the resulting performance concept, the choreographic, sonorous, theatrical or cinematographic elements are not goals in themselves. What I do attempt in the process is to set in motion feedback processes that are inter-, trans-, infra-, or intramedial in nature,\(^4\) with the body of the performer as the bottom line. Concerning instrumentation, the compositions that will arise from such research will cover a broad spectrum: acoustic-instrumental sound theater, mixed acoustic-electronic sound situations, multimedial total concepts, interactive sound installations in which the role of the performer is sometimes taken over by the listener.

In the linguistic portion of my research, I attempt to lay bare the mechanics of the identified medial feedback loops and to capture in words something of that intermedial experience. Given the fact that there is, by definition, no available, finalized vocabulary for describing the intermedial, I choose an indirect approach, or I go on a search for traces from which intermedial functioning can be derived. Also, with this approach, I make use of a variable style register. Phenomenological research alongside theoretical, practical compositional problems, alongside the formulation and the development of new aesthetic concepts. Furthermore, I try to maintain as far as possible an, in my opinion, hygienic separation between my personal artistic work and my search for the words to construct a linguistic context surrounding that work. By simultaneously offering independent theoretical and artistic products, I hope to present a body of research in which composition and

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3 See also Oosterling (2003).
4 Ibid.
theory are not brought into existence simply to reinforce one another or where one acts as argumentation for the other. My goal, on the contrary, is to create a field of tension by means of the autonomy of text and composition, a tension that is of itself intermedial and from which new linguistic or compositional commentaries and interpretations can be derived continually. The encounter between theory and composition takes place at a common point of departure, which I consider as a phase in which the composition or theory is not yet formulated as a score or text, but where a physical performer and an armamentarium are in a state of waiting for a performance concept. This is the light in which the following text should be read: not as a discursive explanation of a compositional research, but as a free-standing text inspired by a body of research, for which a score is only one of the possible forms of expression. For the reader who is not familiar with my work, I have included occasional references to my compositional practice in the footnotes.

**Somewhere**

Up to now, the ranking order of sound qualities in western music is as follows:

1. tone pitch (harmony-melody),
2. tone duration (metre-rhythm),
3. tone quality/timbre (phonetics),
4. loudness (dynamics),
5. tone placement (topic).

K. Stockhausen

The meaning, in the sense of intention, of composed classical music does not lie in the articulation of the location where it comes into being. Even if the spatial distribution of instruments is so organized as to create a situation in which the texture and instrumentation of a symphony or ensemble work are brought out as advantageously as possible, the sounding left, right, far away or close by are not generally put to use as compositional material. The apparent lack of interest demonstrated by canonized western music as regards the use of actual three-dimensionality has perhaps a rather straightforward explanation: the human hearing apparatus is not good at precisely locating sounding objects. The ear is much better in distinguishing variations in pitch, duration, sound quality and sound intensity. If classical western music wishes to say something concerning far away or close by, then it does so metaphorically: the musician does not need to reposition herself, but instead can play louder or softer, higher or lower. To create the impression of an expansive or boundless space, a composer would more likely resort to the use of prolonged, sustained tones rather than a succession of abrupt, rapid percussive sounds (which would more likely serve to suggest local action). In respect to the vertical aspect of sound: dissonance, polyphony and differences in timbre are used to break up the musical space, while consonant intervals and spectral merging serve to (re)centralize this space.

5 ‘Die Rangordnung der Toneigenschaften in der bisherigen abendländischen Musik ist also die folgende: 1. Tonhöhe (Harmonik-Melodik); 2. Tondauer (Metrik-Rhythmk); 3. Tonfarbe (Phonetik); 4. Tonlautheit (Dynamik); 5. Tonort (Topik).’ Stockhausen 1963, 152-175.

6 Sound sources generally work as spherical radiators. Sound fills space homogeneously. The ear is extremely suitable for analyzing certain spatial properties (the size of the space, the materials present); however, the ear is not extremely sensitive to direction and is imprecise in estimating distances to sound sources.
Implicit concepts of spatiality are not in any way absent from traditional composed music. When discussing classical music performances or compositions, one can speak almost endlessly in terms relating to movement. Not only does one refer to the first or second movement of a symphony, almost all notated music reveals to us from the outset something concerning its own moving identity: with either a tempo indication or an indication concerning the character or impulse of the movement (such as rubato, giusto, con brio etc.). Movement presupposes a 'somewhere', a space in which it can take place, although this space does not seem to be the actual space in which the musicians and listeners find themselves. The ability of classical, especially tonal, music to evoke a moving, mystical body through sound alone reveals its relative lack of attachment to actual physical and spatial properties. Although this music is no stranger to experiences of spatiality, the actual space is neither its topos nor its instrument. This music is neither here nor there; from the moment of it starts sounding, it is omnipresent and completely penetrating. It is not a music that triggers you to suddenly turn your head. It is also not a music that requires top-of-the-line speakers. It is not the bow that you see moving back and forth, but the musical impulse that sets the body of the cellist in motion. It is not a music that wishes simply to transport; it wishes to deport the players and listeners, dancing and singing, abducting them from a concrete here and there.

Let us call this music, therefore, as regards its spatiality, a ‘music from somewhere’, understanding that somewhere as a phantasmic, plasmic space that is experienced kinetically. The kinetic experience is not only a result of listening to this somewhere, it also lies at the core of its existence. The kinetic stimulus is at the same time reaction and impulse. That is what is meant with the assertion that music does not lie in but between the notes. In that fictitious 'between the notes', an experience of moving in a fictitious space comes into being. Song and dance, in the broadest and metaphorical sense, are the audible, visible and sensomotoric guises whereby this phantasmic, plasmic space can unfurl itself in the actual space.

Resonance

All forms of music might be considered resonance phenomena, both in their production and in their reception. Likewise, the kinetic as stimulus and reaction can be described as a form of resonance, whereby all singing and dancing can be considered as a singing or dancing along with. Resonance transports a body to a new state: in that event of vibrating together, the distance between the first (sounding) body and the second (listening) body disappears. The resonating bodies are, in the music from somewhere, vehicles of a 'spatial euphoria'.

If we draw a parallel with the acoustic sphere, we could make the assertion that this somewhere trip is brought in motion through the resonating self-frequencies of the body. It is these self-frequencies which seem to bring this music 'from inside-out' into existence. As a music from inside-out, it does not, during its sounding, grant the cognitive awareness either the time or the distance to arrive at a conclusion concerning the concrete place of its happening. In this sense, one cannot speak of a localizable object in this music from somewhere. From the moment it sinks in, it stupefies by means of its omnipresent

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7 The resonance curve, as put into practice in acoustical science, is useful in approaching an understanding of certain aspects of musical perception, such as tempo and rhythm, as is demonstrated in the research of Dirk Moelants (2002).

8 This does not deny the existence of other possible approaches to this sounding music from somewhere which...
resonance. It takes possession of the actual spatial differences and destroys them, melting them into a fluid unity: simultaneously the dancing leg here, the back and forth flying bow there. Music from somewhere plays itself out in a 'topos teleios'.

It compels a synchronous singing and dancing. It calls forth spirit; it is magic. In its sounding, it takes possession of life, and in doing so becomes life itself.

Disciplining

In the actual world something is necessary to make possible the sounding creation of a phantasmic space. In the first place, the awareness of the actual environment should not be allowed to hinder the motion within a somewhere. If the high of the music from somewhere means the dissolution of actual spatial differences, then this music does not seem to benefit from the use of sounds that refer to, or, to put it more strongly, point out actual spatial presence or location.

For this, a playing field must be delineated which can draw the attention to the dance in the somewhere, while at the same time drawing the attention away from the delineation of that playing field. If we describe the spatial high as a state in which the awareness of concrete reality is pushed to the background, than disciplining can be understood as a high booster: the stronger the discipline, the more the attention can be directed toward the intradisciplinary relations and as much less towards the discernment of that which is present in the actual space (people, instruments, actions, sounds) as singular manifestations (there) of presences (here).

The build of an instrument, playing technique, performance and style conventions, these can all, in that sense, function as disciplining amplifiers, as loudspeakers for the movements of a mystical body. They form the sound box in which resonance and transport take place, on the condition that they themselves are no subject of relocation. Moreover, discipline is capable of suppressing the question regarding its right to exist during and through its practice. That means: how stronger the discipline, how less its boundaries can be a subject of the compositional effort. This clarifies at the same time the meaning and the importance of the standardized body in classical performance situations: the performing body does not count as compositional material, but as a permissible, disciplinary lens.

Resistance

If we carry the parallel with acoustics further, then every body holds a certain stiffness, a resistance that must be overcome before it can begin to resonate. The attack of the bow

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9 ‘Topos Teleios is, in some more or less obscure corners of Middle Platonic philosophy, the Perfect Place. The perfect place is, then, one whose presence, in the strongest possible sense of that term, is such that it absorbs into itself whoever happens to be present in it. Middle and Neo-Platonic philosophy (or, rather, mysticism) of this kind aims at finding and/or producing the presence of that place, or, alternatively, one’s presence in it’ (Kunst 1994).

10 See also Ruud Welten (2002).

11 A definition of discipline by Michel Foucault: ‘In discipline, the elements are interchangeable, since each is defined by the place it occupies in a series, and by the gap that separates it from the others. The unit is, therefore, neither the territory (unit of domination), nor the place (unit of residence), but the rank: the place one occupies in a classification, the point at which a line and a column intersect, the interval in a series of intervals ... Discipline is ... a technique for the transformation of arrangements. It individualizes bodies by a location that does not give them a fixed position, but distributes them and circulates them in a network of relations’ (p. 145).
is not the beginning of the cello tone, but consists of the typical noise envelope arising in that fraction of a second during which the hairs of the bow set the string(s) in motion. Remove the articulation from the instrumental sound, and in most instances that sound will lose its recognizability, the connection to its source. Or, to indulge in a quip: in the consonant resides the body, in the vowel the voice.

At the point where the resistance of the instrumental body is surmounted, the body disappears and the medium takes shape. A music-making body as a transparent medium becomes music itself. Or, perhaps the converse: in a medium without resistance, music becomes flesh. In that simultaneously becoming fluid and flesh, experiences of virtuosity can come into existence. These experiences have a magical aura: the virtuoso is able to transcend his actual spatial existence by embodying a sounding ‘not-here’. At the same time, such an experience of ecstasy can only exist through an awareness of being ‘rooted’, of experiencing at the same time concrete physical resistance. The magic of the virtuoso is a magic that always carries with it traces of liberation, an overcoming.

Nonetheless, the magic of the virtuoso is no entitled possession. No matter how strong the internal discipline, virtuosity and discipline are liable to processes of erosion, an erosion which is sometimes not perceivable initially in the discipline itself, but which has to do with a crumbling resistance of that to which the discipline (for example the art of cello playing) owes its very existence. Along with the advent of electronic and digital reproduction techniques in the second half of the twentieth century came a remarkable tendency towards making audible once again the (music-making) body. Through the rise of historic performance practices, steel strings were traded in for gut; concealing vibratos were barred in favor of a clear diction. In avant-garde music, noise and action scores made their entrance. Perhaps it is no coincidence that around the same time, in the new youth culture, pop and rock music came into being, in which the apparent directness of the sighing, groaning, screaming and, above all, personal voice was chosen rather than the cultivated vocalizations typical of the classically trained singer. It seems as if, under the surface, there was an awareness that in a period of expanding reproduction capacities, the individual corporal resistance in musical performance situations was declining. In this sense, the twentieth century penchant for bodily sounds can be read as a parting ritual, in which as many bodily traces as possible should be engraved in the auditory memory. This zooming in on the bodily sound might also be interpreted as a compensation, as an artificial expansion or suggestion of resistance to make up for its loss, for the purpose of giving back the necessary tension to the musical performance. From a compositional perspective, there are a number of available methods which can be used to increase the perception of resistance of the performing body. The performance can be made so complex and difficult that the physical effort to complete the task is brought to the forefront. Intrinsically effortless motions can be repeated for such a protracted period of time that the body begins to be revealed in a sort of (if not suggestive) fight toward a

12 This phenomenon is revealed most strongly in sounds producing a sharp peak at the onset followed by a quick decline (the majority of percussion instruments), or with instruments such as the flute, whereby, in the production of tone, the overcoming of the initial resistance unavoidably results in its characteristic sound shape. An interesting aside: in the sound research by Pierre Schaeffer at the end of the 1940s, the ‘discovery’ of the sound derived by artificially removing the onset of a clock tone (‘la cloche coupée’), was one of the inspirations for the development of a listening attitude described by Schaeffer as ‘écoute réduite’: a mode of listening in which attention for the internal sound evolutions – stripped of their history of origin or references to an external, physical world – was foremost.
collapse from exhaustion. With the help of (contact) microphones or cameras, zooming in on details of the physical performance, details become visible that would remain unnoticed in a conventional performing situation. The ‘normal’ communication between the performers on stage can be made physically impossible, so that a sound-theatrical meaning comes into existence.\footnote{In my own work, the artificial generation of resistance plays an important role. One means is by limiting the playing material to a rudimentary group of tones or positions, combining this with an attempt to achieve, within that situation, some level of virtuosity. Another is by making audible the physical preparation of a sound result so that the body becomes, as it were, imprisoned within the performance. In Atman (2001) this was realized by making audible, using a microphone in a stethoscope, the in- and exhalations of a bass clarinetist. In chamber music situations, I engage in a search for resistance by problematizing ‘chamber music’ communication. In Touw (2000) the performers sit with their backs toward each other and communicate via ropes attached to the feet, attempting the shortest possible reaction time.}

\section*{Interruption}

Whenever the high of a musical somewhere is interrupted, this typically manifests itself in an abrupt jolt to the forefront (again) of the actual space, in the form of an incident or presence. Limiting ourselves to the domain of sound, these interruptions might be the audible result of some external incidents, unexpected sounds which point us toward movements and happenings: an airplane passing over, the entrance of a latecomer, the mobile phone that was not turned off.

Even more drastic are the internal interruptions: the tenor who can’t reach the highest note, the note that is out of tune, the breaking string. When the vehicle of the high no longer rides silently, the vehicle itself becomes heard. This ‘becoming heard’ of the vehicle is experienced as a jolt in the somewhere music. The ‘out-of-tune’ note reveals in one blow the resistance of the body. The out-of-tune note is an undisciplined, insular note. When too much lack of discipline impedes the carrying away, the transport of delight, only a painful togetherness remains. The listener is forced into the position of peeping Tom, and the body of the performer becomes undesirably intimate.

A third form of interruption is more difficult to ascribe to either external or internal factors, but can be attributed in most instances to what has been described in the preceding paragraphs as a crumbling of resistance, in which the inalienable right of a discipline to exist is brought into question. When the musical euphoria remains absent and boredom sets in, the attention of the listener quickly abandons the musical somewhere and fixes itself on the here of the uncomfortable chair, the there of the grimaces and movements of the playing musicians, the penetrating overtones which seem to slam into his or her weary temples.

In the examples mentioned above, the musical somewhere is interrupted, allowing concrete incidents or actual presences to get the upper hand: what is getting attention is not the dynamic relationship of the engine sound to the double bass, but the airplane flying over. It is not the deviation of pitch, but the determining of who or what is there off-key. It is a matter of an interruption of the sound movements in the somewhere by a non-intentional sound manifestation of a concrete, physical presence. If these audible manifestations are experienced as disturbing, then it is because they have, by their very nature as ‘indicators of concrete reality’, difficulty in losing themselves within the phantasmic, plasmic somewhere space.

Can these irreconcilabilities between the sounding somewhere and the concrete here and there be carried further to the intentional, compositional level? Does the putting to use of actual space as compositional material always lead, by definition, to a non-music?
can one avoid that the localizable sound is perceived as a reference to something extra-musical, so that its presence in a musical sense is experienced as something completely contingent, so not belonging to the compositional structure? Can the ‘écoute réduite’ (see footnote 12) of Pierre Schaeffer be augmented or reinterpreted through the incorporation of ‘sounds as record of a localized happening’? Can the here or there of sounds be put to use as musical structure? Is there, alongside a somewhere music, also a composable here and there music? If the answer is yes, is this music, due to its lack of a spatial intoxication, of a more sober type? From where can this music procure its seductive powers? What is its ontological relationship with the dancing-and-singing somewhere music?

Concrete music, moving sound

It seems that a number of current sound situations and music forms do indeed exist, which not only put to use the concrete here and there as compositional material, but which also appear to center primarily on the actual space and/or the body of the performer as the place where their meaning comes into existence. Within the limits of this article it is not possible to provide an overview of the current practice by means of an analysis of examples and fragments of various compositional scores. Nevertheless, I will make an attempt to answer the questions posed above by implicitly referring towards two types of sound use which have made their way into composed music of the last century.

The first type can be categorized under the appellation ‘sound spatialization’. The scattered placement of instruments and performers is not a new phenomenon, although historic examples of an effective use of performance space might sooner be labeled as peripheral phenomena.\(^\text{14}\) It was only under the influence of serialist ideas that, since the 1950s, numerous compositions have come into existence, in which the spatial organization of the musicians and their instruments is played out as a compositional parameter. From another quarter, space was brought in as a theatrical element of musical performance (John Cage, Mauricio Kagel, Dieter Schnebel and others). It seems that in the last decade primarily the accessibility of technological possibilities such as sound dispersal and ‘surround sound’ serves to inspire composers in the organization of the spatiality of sound. Since we can, from a composer’s perspective, consider these techniques of spatial distribution of sound as a formal partitioning and appropriation of the performance space, this music will be categorized here under the appellation ‘music from there’.

A second type of sound use which we will refer to here is characterized by the introduction of what is called ‘concrete instrumental sounds’, or sounds that, in their sounding, point strongly towards their physical source, towards the means by which they are brought into existence. In acoustical-instrumental music this generally means an emancipation of the whole potential gamut of noise offered by the classical collection of instruments, and the exploitation of all possible qualities of ‘grain’ in the tone.\(^\text{15}\) The most influential composer at the moment in this area is the German Helmut Lachenmann (who has also given us the term ‘musique concrète instrumentale’\(^\text{16}\)). The Dadaistic performances, the extended techniques

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\(^{14}\) Some examples are antiphonal song in early Christian liturgies, double choirs (as in, for example, St Matthew’s Passion by J.S. Bach), the use of multiple, alternating orchestras (Berlioz, Les Troyens) etc.

\(^{15}\) Barthes 1981.

\(^{16}\) ‘Meine letzten Werke gehen von einem Moment des Klanglichen aus, das schon immer Teil des Musik-Erlebnisses war, aber höchstens in extremen naturalistischen Fällen, und sonst nur untergeordnete Beachtung fand, obwohl die Wirkung von Musik wesentlich damit zusammenhängt: nämlich vom Klang als
of Henry Cowell, and the prepared piano of John Cage can all be considered as forerunners of this, by now, well-established practice. The use of these ‘concrete instrumental sounds’ as compositional material will be considered here as composition of a ‘music from here’.

**There**

A sound that is repeated in fast succession and played from loudspeakers set up next to each other can produce an illusion of movement or relocation. An illusion, because in reality there is no movement of sound from loudspeaker A towards B (by which the actual space between the speakers would literally be crossed), but simply a sounding from B to A.17 These types of sound-spatialization techniques are common within ‘acousmatic music’ (music for loudspeakers) and have, by now, worked their way into acoustic or mixed acoustic-electronic music. Proceeding from the foregoing, this would mean that the evocation of phantasmatic spatial movements is not only reserved for the musical space of the *somewhere*, but can also take place as a result of techniques in which the actual space is put into use within a compositional structure. However, it is far from a given fact that, if this is the case indeed, both phantasmas can be considered comparable.

What is the meaning of those sounds zooming back and forth over the heads of the listeners? Is it an as realistic simulation of moving back and forth as possible?18 In this sense, the difference with the music from *somewhere* is clear: the arousal of auditive illusions through the exploitation of the (greatly increased) knowledge of auditive perception belongs more to the domain of the developments in virtual reality than in the musical composition of a phantasmatic *somewhere*. The natural biotope of surround sound is the cinema rather than the concert hall. If we set this up alongside the fact that with cinema techniques, intense, immersive illusions of space are the goal, then one could also speak here of a spatial high. However, the use of ‘surround sound’ seems to hardly call upon the kinetic body in order for it to come into its spatial phantasma. The simulation of the acoustics of a cathedral through the addition of digital reverberations and echos does not actually require the participation of the kinetic body of the listener in order to make its suggestion ‘true’. More than a ‘from inside-out’ participatory construction, it gains, via holes in our perception filters, direct access into our perception of reality. Surround sound’s urge for cinematographic reality can also be understood as an obstruction of the actual spatial world through the setting up of another (virtual) world in its place.

Is there yet another possible interpretation of the composed back and forth? Can sound spatialization also be put to use in order to conjure up a ‘between’, a spatial interval that is comparable to pitch intervals or metrical divisions in the music of *somewhere*? In other words, is it possible that through calibrations or gradations of back and forth (in distance, in speed), interval relations can arise which lead to movements in a *somewhere*? In that case, the difference with the phantasma of the sounding *somewhere* becomes less obvious. Where *there1* and *there2* are capable of creating audible differentiations in concrete space, there arises, at least in theory, the possibility of an interval relationship: a relationship which no longer only serves

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18 An interesting commentary on this phenomenon was given in Stay Low (2005) by composer Serge Verstockt. In cooperation with architect Werner Vandermeersch, he built an installation in which four miniature loudspeakers, equipped with motors and propellers, flew around just over the heads of the spectators.
to stimulate an awareness of the concrete location, but which allows for an intradisciplinary relationship, which invites for variation and development. In that sense it seems that anyway here, just as in the disciplined music from *somewhere*, a role is reserved for the kinetic body as the interpreter and creator of spatiality. We must, however, continue emphasizing that, due to perceptual strengths and weaknesses, the use of calibrations or gradations in the *between* of the concrete sounding space will offer considerably less compositional possibilities than those offered by a *between* of pitch intervals, duration and sound qualities (see footnote).

There seems to be still another, a more complex, possible meaning for the sounding *there*. We already presented a number of examples in which the spatial intoxication of the music from *somewhere* is interrupted by means of external sound events. In the first instance, these sounds always seem to point to a *there*. That sound *there* makes the head turn in the direction of its source. Whereas the music from *somewhere* makes an appeal to the hips, feet and vocal chords, the noise *there* calls out to the neck muscles. Through the ears, the eyes are mobilized and enjoined to localize and detect where the sound is coming from. As interruption of the *somewhere*, the *there* sounds as a concrete *somewhere else*. *There* is a distance which must be bridged. The sound *there* has a form, but the form is not in proportion to its sound context. *There* is the undisciplined, the unexpected or the estranged/displaced sound. *There* sounds, from the perspective of the *somewhere* space, as an abstract sounding, even though that meaning does not get priority in its apprehension, but a perspective of the actual space: where sound sounds as a closed-in-on-itself structure, it will literally coincide with the place and the moment of its origin. From a compositional context, this can be considered on the one hand as an emancipation of a global parameter called ‘sound form’, on the other it can just as well point to the impossibility of acknowledging a disciplining environment in which this sounding has structuring power. Sound thrown back on itself seeks out a new environment. Due to the lack of a disciplining musical framework, the search will lead it in the first place to its origin, to the direct history of its origin. In this way, the *there* sound elicits a ‘cognitive movement’, which binds together the history of the sound situation, the awareness of a concrete presence, and the position of the observer/listener. The cognitive movement leads to a perception of a new situation as well as to a consciousness of physical (dis)positions, including the position of the observer/listener.

From this follows that a music taking place only in a *there* is, by definition, impossible. It would sound something like a total and continual disorientation. From a compositional perspective, there seems indeed to be a role laid out for putting to use a spatial *there*, as an opening to new relationships, to renewed awareness of positions and spatial relationships. This composed *there* is a *there* which not only makes an appeal to the hearing apparatus, but which can also, via the activation of a cognitive movement, potentially connect with all the other senses. The ‘what is happening there?’ or the ‘what is sounding there?’ can thereby enjoy a permitted place in the musical experience, a place which it is forbidden in the music from *somewhere*. Hereby choreographic and theatrical domains will be unavoidably entered, not through a joining of disciplines, but through a multi- or intermediality, which already lies hidden within the performance situation at the outset.\(^{19}\)

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19 Especially the work of Helmut Lachenmann contains such intermedial potential, as was recently demonstrated convincingly in the choreographic staging of a few of his compositions by Xavier Leroy (*Mouvements für Helmut Lachenmann* (2005)). One example is *Salut für Caudwell*, originally a work for two guitars, overflowing with ‘extended techniques’. In the staging by Leroy, the work is performed by two guitarists on stage, hidden behind two panels. Two other guitarists take their places in front of the panels and perform the score synchronously with the performers behind the stage, without instruments but with suitable playing motions.
Here

‘Here is this and there is that – Here is the world of this – There is the world of that’ 20

In the preceding paragraph, we described the music of somewhere as music become flesh, as music that points to a kinetic interior. Music which points to within has no concrete place. In the real world, the kinetic inside is delimited by the bounds of the body. Here is then the primary place.21 Pronouncing a ‘this’ is experiencing a here. In the sounding of ‘this’, presences are articulated as being here. ‘This’ lies close at hand, and what is within reach of hand and touch lies within an intimate zone, which envelops the body as an atmosphere in which a first contact with the outside world is established, and where the outside world is made familiar. It is the zone where a friction occurs between the body and its immediate environment. We might call the sounds of the here friction noise from an intimate zone. They inform of bodily presence, nothing more.

Everything that sounds as here is already localized. The sounding here is not a localizing but a becoming aware of and a (re)formulation of presence. If the hand moves as a sounding here, it is not performing a function within a movement program, but it is realizing its own presence. In its sounding, the hand convinces itself of its movement. 22 In the here, concrete presence is expressed, not the relationship or difference with a there. The articulation of here is thereby more likely to work in steps. It needs an intimate ‘this’ to make itself known.

Where the interruption of the there operates as a surprise, the pronouncement of a here brings about a brief hiatus. Here is what manifests itself as the silent or the unstirring. Not in the sense of the soundless or motionless, but as a self-assertive, concrete reality which relegates the en route between past and future to the background. Here is ‘not finding itself between’; it is pure presence. It is the blink of an eye which assures itself of the position

and the addition of a few small choreographic interventions (for example, interrupting their ‘playing’ at a certain moment while the sound continues).

In my own work, similar kinds of intermedial games with the presence of the performers often play a critical role. In Kooi (2001) and Palindroom (2002), audible performers on the stage are screened off from the eye of the audience in order to be, in a roundabout way, made visible again through the help of cameras and image projection. In F(r)ictions (2006), the play with visible and audible presence is taken even further. A cellist and a dancer are accompanied by two doubles, of whom only fragmentary shadows are projected on a screen in the back of the stage, while the real performers, in their turn, enter into a visual and auditive shadow play with and in the video projection.

20 Raaijmakers 1985, 23.
21 ‘Le contours de mon corps est une frontière que les relations d’espace ordinaires ne franchissent pas.’ Merleau-Ponty 1945, 114.
22 The experience of the sounding here was the direct impulse for my current body of research. In to test the ice (1999), a short piece for guitar solo, I took a typical parasite noise of the fingers made while moving to a different position on the fingerboard (causing inadvertent contact with the strings) and notated it into the score. Confronted with the performance possibilities, I was lead to the question of what was actually of importance to the performance: the sounding of this noise as pure sound within a musical whole, or the sound as a reference to the sliding hand motion. In the latter case, the presence of the movement intention overrules the sound result in the performance. In the former, the sound could also be produced with a completely different, much less visible movement.
of the hand on the fingerboard after the sound has already sounded. Or it is the instant just before the sound production. Or it is the sound which during its sounding only gives information regarding the mechanical process of its coming into being: ‘this is the sound with this movement.’ In its coming to a halt, the sounding here has the potential of forgetting discipline and becoming fascinated by its ’own’ strangeness. Nevertheless, that which is found in the here is not yet estranged. In the here, stammering and shuffling goes on, but the shuffler stops before he lands somewhere else. Where here, otherwise, gives up the strangeness, it already finds itself in the euphoria of a somewhere. That is why the sounding perpetuation of the here asks for a continuous differentiation in the articulation of presence, together with a rejection of a somewhere buzz and an ear that is averted from the distance. The performing body in concrete instrumental music seems to want to say continually: ‘this sound, this body, now.’ It demonstrates the specific; it shows the sound and how it is made. Its tactic is therefore one of continual alter(n)ation: the movement now like this, and then like that. The composition of the here would more likely make use of a continual differentiation rather than repetition. It chooses fluctuation in favor of rupture, the endless unfolding of microstructures within the local rather than the search for new boundaries and identities.

The more we attempt to describe the here, the clearer it becomes that the here is ungraspable. Whenever the musical performance says ‘here’ without interruption, it runs the risk of becoming a portrayal of a body that says ‘here’ which as a result becomes a ‘there’. Or it becomes a ‘pulsing here’, which transports to the euphoria of the somewhere where the dancing is going on. The music which places an experience of the here in the forefront must approach its material continually from other points of hearing. This repeated refocusing on presence presupposes small or large breaks. Thus, a continuation of the here can not exist without all the recurring, if only momentary, interruptions of a there (or a somewhere). Some music(s) seem(s) to be able to balance well on the tightrope and, with the use of a rhetorical there, continually wish to say ‘(stay) here!’ In the best-case scenario, such a composed here works as a mantra, as a sort of reversed high. In that sense, a music that places the here in the first place and refuses to transport to a somewhere is related to meditative activities in which the desired state is alert observation combined with a rejection of movement or enthrallment.

**On the way between here, there and somewhere**

Logically examined, the here of the musician is a there for the listener/observer. But just as the sounding space of the music of somewhere is shared by all listeners, the principle of resonance can also be applied to a music of here and there. Sounds in movement resonate, in their concrete referral to bodily origins, as potential or inward movements in the body of the listener. Identification with the body of the performer transforms the sounding there into a potentially kinetic here. The sounding body there acts as a mirror, in which the here of the observer can light up. The intermedial difference with resonances in the somewhere lies in a reversal of the medial movement: there where, in a conventional music performance, seeing the moving hand intensifies the hearing of the movements of a phantasmic body somewhere, in a music from here and there, the heard sound strengthens the Gestalt of a concrete performing presence. Which can, for that matter, also be interpreted as a weakness: where the resonance (or the recognizability) of a disciplined melodic line, pulse or sound progression is missing in the performance, there is only the bodily concentration and the performance tension which preceded the sound action left to resonate.
This means that, in its most radical consequence, it is not the musical Gestalt that resonates in a music of here and there, but the bodily ‘will to sound’, or the continuous possibility of expressing physical and spatial presence in sound. Sound in and of itself is not the message; rather the referral of sound to its physical, local and momentaneous origin – not the culture of the altered dominant seventh, but the reaching gesture of the hand to the keyboard, in quest of that particular sound – which, from a compositional point of view, means that it is not about a lack of interest in the sound Gestalt, but about shifting the work domain to an area somewhere between the concrete instrument and its sound articulation. The infectiousness of a well-organized sounding here and there would, for that reason, more likely inspire to a composing along, to a multitude of local, asynchronous, and individual expressions, rather than to a singing in unison. That also means that the ultimate destination of a music of here and there lies in interactive or cooperative sound situations – which does not prevent that a theatricized performance by musicians for a more or less passive public remains, for the time being, a defendable and pragmatic (most) workable solution.

Situated opposite to the music from somewhere high – where one can speak of an expulsion of the actual spatial presence in favor of a through-sound-mediated kinetic space – is a music that makes the actual presence, or the performance itself, the subject matter of its discourse. It not only seeks to evoke illusions which seem to take place in reality, but sometimes it seems also to be able to sublimate the actual and concrete by making precisely their materiality audible and tangible: it does not use the performer as a keyhole to another world, but cuts off musical escape routes with the raw surfaces of bodies, instruments, walls. The reverberation of the here and there in the music performance implies an existential crisis and an erosion of existing disciplines. That is why the compositional use of a sounding here and there can be interpreted as a making primitive, as a reduction of musical experience to the most basal sound experience, raw rubbing, etc. However, the primitive does not need to be the final destination. The musical here and there are not places where you can arrive and stay. The experience of the sounding hand here acts as a mirror in which the hand already sounds strange, and a movement to a position there (as a necessary refocusing on that here) pushes itself forward. In a good set-up, here and there work as an infinite mirror structure: it bounces the observer continually away from his/her actual point of hearing or viewing, and in so doing impels toward participation. What can be preserved, therefore, in a music from here or there is the kinetic pulse. The impulse cannot be perceived in the auditive appearance of a phantasmic, plasmic moving body, but in the coming into existence of a feedback process in which bodies and sounds are continually repositioning themselves among themselves. In an attempt to sublimate itself, to free itself, in an intermedial movement, from the cage of sounding immediacy. The preservation of the kinetic is therefore the preservation of the composable: the kinetic is also the compelling drive towards (re)composing.

And so we come full circle: setting in motion a sounding here and there can lead to a nowhere which is a sublimation of that here and there. The difference with the music from somewhere is thus one of nuances: where the disciplined body is the vehicle in the music from somewhere, the vehicle in the music from here and there is bodily resistance, and disciplining enacts itself as a sounding exploration of space and presence. It is somewhere without the euphoria of the debarred space, or even better, it is a somewhere which no longer allows concrete space to be denied, but, on the contrary, absorbs it in a process of intersensorial feedback. In other words, it is an inclusive place where not only sound concepts but also the entire performance
situation comes into consciousness. Not a disappearance into the confirmation of discipline, but an affirmation of bodily existence. Not a taking the place of, but a bringing to hearing of the place itself. In that ‘elevating to materiality’ of the concrete world, speaks not only a consecration of life, but its organizability is made audible. In that sense, a music from here and there, which surpasses the Cageian ‘it is here already’, is possible, a music which radically chooses for the composing of concrete presence. As a ritual, or as an affirmation that intervention does influence.

**Literature**


