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The Curating Composer: Mediating the Production, Exhibition and Dissemination of Non-Classical Music

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<u>Acknowledgements</u>

<u>Declaration</u>

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Abstract

This study presents the curating composer as a new role in twenty-first century music making. It transfers and constructively applies curatorial language, methodology and strategies from the discipline of visual arts into the musical domain.

The methodology is creative practice and a written commentary. There are two research outcomes: 'Blank Canvas 17' is a single-author exhibition platform for new music; and 'bloom' is a new body of non-classical music presented as a composite public outcome in six manifestations. In each of the outcomes I construct the role of the curator in music and demonstrate an inter-relationship between the mode of production and an expanded mode of exhibition. I also provide the first outline of non-classical music that has developed within the independent classical scene (indie-classical) in London since 2003.

The research context extends to contemporary visual culture and the supervisible roles of the curator and artist-curator or curartist as independent exhibition makers. I also examine a selection of historical activity to reveal proto-curating practices associated with the public presentation of new music. These include Andy Warhol's 'Exploding Plastic Inevitable'; early minimalism associated with La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich and Philip Glass; and experimentalism and pirate radio in the UK.

Introduction

The independent curator currently occupies a highly visible position in the discipline of visual arts. In the last decade alone there has been a regular flow of critical literature reexamining his or her shifting role (Obrist, 2008; Wade, 2009; O'Neill, 2012; Balzer, 2014) and Paul O'Neill (2012, p.32) neatly categorises this into three distinct periods: 'from demystification in the 1960s to visibility in the 1980s to supervisibility of the curator in the 1990s'. Scores of journals and symposia plus the legions of graduating students well versed in the curatorial turn help to maintain this now highly professional career path.

The contemporary understanding of the curator has its foundations in the early twentieth century. Artists and designers such as Marcel Duchamp, Kurt Schwitters and Piet Mondrian attempted to subvert traditional modes of art production and exhibition for the first time. O'Neill (2012, p.10) says it was these artists who 'began to criticize art as an institution in need of counterattack and confrontation'. In doing so they set the stage for a modulation from the autonomous curator-as-carer within the institution (Lichty, 2008, p.164) to an independent exhibition maker. Amelie Nordenfelt and Per Hüttner (2003, no page number) argue this was one of the important changes for contemporary art, 'to step out of the white cube to search for new challenges, to claim more space, new contexts and to rework ideas'.

More recently a distinction has been made between the discursive and the practical within the art institution (as seen by the respective positioning of curator and practitioner in the schools of humanities and fine arts). This serves to highlight a fork in an uneven road; that is the curator is dominating contemporary culture over and above the artist (Borelli, 2013). David Balzer (2014, p.26) asks the question 'if the curator is present, is the artist necessarily absent, i.e., disempowered and negated?' A counteraction to this possible imbalance is the phenomenon of the artist-curator or curartist, whose impact first gathered momentum in the 1980s (O'Neill, 2007a, p.16), only to be fully realised in Gavin Wade's text 'Artist + Curator=' (O'Neill, 2012, p.105). While still seen as a subdominant form of exhibition maker (Birchall and Mabaso, 2013, p.64), artists, curators, artist-curators or curartists and curatorial collectives are all now stakeholders in bringing about institutional reinvention.

In the field of music (and performing arts more generally) there has been a distinct lack of literature, modelling and practical application of the same role despite old forms of creation and mediation seemingly losing their legitimacy (Malzacher, Tupajić and Zanki, 2010, p.2). The conservatoire has seen no such bifurcation between the producer (composer and/or performer) and its discursive other. Moreover, the institution of art music, that is the predominance of the concert hall model (including its associated etiquettes, practices and ephemera), has received surprisingly limited critique from its producers historically. However, in the last fifteen years, there has been some movement towards a discourse on curating music (Andrewes, 2014, pp.103-105; Rutherford-Johnson, 2017, p.136) and it is a profile that is only just gaining traction. This has come about, in part, because there have been some considerable developments in the independent classical scene (indie-classical[1] herein) as a 'do-it-yourself' culture.

This study seeks to address the following three questions through creative practice and the provision of a written commentary:

(1) What does contemporary visual culture offer the development of the role of curator in music?
(2) What might the construction of this original role look like?
(3) Which curatorial practices have I favoured and why?

In order to curate any process-led art, Sarah Cook (2008, p.45) highlights the importance of focusing on the artwork's production and mediation. As such this study features two research outcomes that investigate modes of production, exhibition and dissemination. Interactions with composers, curators and audiences are carefully documented to support my critical evaluation and they add to curatorial criticism at large. Furthermore, it is my hope that this study acts as a contribution towards the discussion and definition of non-classical music creation and institutional critique.

The term 'curating composer' is presented here as a new role in the field of music appropriating its terminology and methodology from contemporary visual culture. A

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[1] Indie-classical and/or alt-classical are terms contrived by the press to describe this culture (Kozinn, 2011; Greene, 2012; Mariner, 2012, p.31).

simple definition of curating is the selection and compilation of objects in relation to a given context (Hüttner, 2003, no page number]. This definition is substantiated and expanded upon as the commentary progresses. For the successful exhibition of his or her work, and/or that of a number of artists, the independent curating composer must look to the artist-run models that employ innovative curatorial design and exhibition strategies in order to reach his or her audience and engage new audiences. This is due, in part but not exclusively, to the widely acknowledged decline in audience attendance at concert halls for art music and by association new music performances (Benjamin, 2009, p.7). Moreover, the practitioner, aided by advancing technologies, can create, promote and disseminate his or her work so the curator-as-mediator or 'middleman', as Lars Bang Larsen and Søren Andreasen describe, is particularly pertinent (O'Neill, 2007a, pp.20-30).

At this early stage, it is worth considering the tension between the roles of curator and programmer. Paul Couillard (2009, p.85) describes it as a crude but useful binary 'to recognize that they are distinct methodologies that will affect not only what performance art gets shown, but also how that work is understood'. He offers a curated programme to be 'an authored selection guided by goals of analytic inquiry… to privilege notions of coherence and interrelationship' (Couillard, 2009, p.84), whilst programming prioritises entertainment over theoretical framework; events engage audiences with a set of experiences.

In Chapter 1, 'Exhibition: Framing Devices and Meaning Making', I begin the process of constructing the role of curator in the first research outcome, 'Blank Canvas 17'. I founded 'Blank Canvas' in 2007 as an exhibition platform for new music and there have been sixteen editions prior to the most recent under investigation. I demonstrate learning by employing framing mechanisms, narratives and other curatorial design features and this marks a divergence in approach to earlier editions. I preface this with an interrogation of historical modes of exhibition in which I aim to reveal proto-curatorial practices associated with the public presentation of new music. These are Andy Warhol's 'Exploding Plastic Inevitable'; early minimalism associated with composers La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich and Phillip Glass; and experimentalism in the UK. I also discuss at length the flourishing indie-classical scene where non-classical music has been encountered by its first large-scale audience before

being considered by the traditional concert halls and concert hall-going public.

Chapter 2, 'The Curating Composer', addresses the application of expanded exhibition formats to include the physical and virtual in the second research outcome, 'bloom'. I have divided the chapter into two sections. Part 2A. 'Production' is a critical reflection on the mode of production in which idiomatically led artistic creation and curatorial processes converge. The outcome here is a new body of work I have composed (or initiated) in collaboration with electronic music duo Plaid (Ed Handley and Andy Turner), computer-music designer Manuel Poletti and composer Max de Wardener. In Part 2B. 'Dissemination: Composite Material', I investigate how modes of mediation have changed over three time periods to demonstrate how new technologies have empowered artists to engage audiences beyond the physical experience. I use this learning together with two curatorial methodologies to exhibit 'bloom' in six manifestations. In doing so I seek to establish a dynamic system of interaction between the modes of production and presentation.

A stylistic analysis of non-classical music

One of the first issues to consider in a study of this kind is the range of music under research. I use the nomenclature 'non-classical music' throughout and it is a name I have inherited from the composer Gabriel Prokofiev (Andrewes, 2014, p.12). I have adapted the usage (and spelling) to reference a particular musical style that has its beginnings in the record label with the same name (spelt 'Nonclassical') and I use it as an umbrella for the work of a select group of composers. By doing this I am claiming a position: it is my contention that there is an inter-relationship between non-classical music and its exhibition in a club context and this has led directly to germinal curating practices. Moreover, this is my starting point that leads to the discovery of the curating composer.

In his article on minimalism, Timothy A. Johnson (1994, pp.742-773) argues for it to be understood as an aesthetic, style and technique; 'each of which has been a suitable description of the term at certain points in the development of minimal music' (Johnson, 1994, p.742). His definition is possible in light of a wide range of musical texts and a limited, but not altogether sparse, set of critical literature at his disposal (Nyman, 1974; Strickland, 1993). If viewed under Johnson's lens, at this time, non-classical music

is far from integrated into the music landscape, market and literature so it would be too early to explore it as a technique. Is it then a new aesthetic? Thom Andrewes (2014, p.53) suggests 'the Nonclassical [sic] aesthetic is all about displacement… displacing one style of music into the frame or context of another'. However, he does not suggest it requires a new way of listening. For example, it is not music as a gradual process (Reich, 2002, pp.34-36) although elements of minimalist technique are often employed. See, for example, the second movement of John Richards' *Suite for Piano and Electronics* where the piano is treated like a resonating chamber to create a drone or 'meditative state, where the listener is gradually drawn into the resulting textures' (Richards, 2006, no page number). In general, non-classical music can be described as teleological 'in which goals are established, the music progresses toward these goals, and the listener travels on a journey among and between different musical areas' (Johnson, 1994, p.744). Therefore, it is not a new aesthetic.

In the following section, I analyse the stylistic features of non-classical music with reference to musical texts by Gabriel Prokofiev, John Richards, Max de Wardener and my own work. I use as a framework form, rhythm, harmony, melody and texture (Robert Pascall, 1984, p.316) to discover whether it is a style of its own. (I frequently draw on these same features as a resource to make important curatorial decisions later in the commentary.)

It is important to note that the composers' texts under discussion are all notated and the composers have undergone some formal musical training, to postgraduate level in many cases. Arguably, notation is a pre-requisite of non-classical music, as a type of art music. Moreover, the notion of a style as a school of composition (Johnson, 1994 p.747), is given some degree of weight because Prokofiev, Richards and de Wardener overlapped as students at the University of York[2] between 1993 and 1997 (and the performers associated with these early works, Elysian Quartet, GéNIA and I, studied at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance between 2000 and 2004).

Form
The shape or structure of non-classical compositions is organised, logical and coherent. The metre, tempo and rhythmic characteristics of electronic club music are often

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[2] For more information about how Prokofiev, Richards and de Wardener first met, see Appendix I

quoted directly or present in abstraction. See, for example, *Jerk Driver* (Prokofiev, 2011) and *Overcolour* (Dutta, 2012a). Often in multi-movements, ternary and variation forms are evident in *Piano Concerto* (de Wardener, 2013) and *Concerto for Turntables and Orchestra* (Prokofiev, 2006). In general, however, form is traditionally used and composers avoid more recent developments, such as mobile or moment forms.

Rhythm

I observe how the rhythmic language of electronic club music is implicit and/or explicit in a range of non-classical texts. See, for example, *String Quartet No. 1* (Prokofiev, 2003). The violins open the second movement with an unusual syncopation, which becomes more irregular as the four-bar phrase repeats. I am reminded of the often-unusual snare placements and drum accents found in 2-step garage music. The string techniques frequently change, from *col legno* to *spiccato*, *arco* to *pizzicato*. Repetition and timbral variety are essential to electronic club music and are used as developing tools to maintain listener interest (Sherburne, 2004, p.320). Philip Sherburne (Ibid., p.322) describes the unique corporeal experience of the beat and Prokofiev acknowledges this in his original intention 'to do a contemporary classical quartet… and actually have people dancing to it' (Andrewes, 2014, p.12).

Harmony

In all the texts surveyed the harmony is traditional in its function and this parallels with electronic club music. At times, it is highly chromatic or extended, for example in the first movement of *String Quartet No. 2* (Prokofiev, 2006) and the second movement of *Piano Concerto,* but it is invariably tonal with familiar triads, seventh, ninth and other compound chords. In the same pieces, harmonic movement is mostly strong: the alternating harmonies are brought to the fore in *String Quartet No. 2* where they contrast with each other, helping to propel the music forward and shape its character.

Melody

There is a range of melodic invention in the texts, from the repetition of a single note in the opening of Prokofiev's second quartet to an elaborate and fast-moving first subject in de Wardener's concerto. Only in the second movement of Richards' *Suite for Piano and Electronics* is melody totally absent.

<u>Texture</u>

The works under investigation are for string quartet, solo instrument and chamber orchestra and/or solo instrument and electronics. I observe a variety texture, including homophony, polyphony and polyrhythms. In addition, when software technologies are used they add an extra stratum to the composition's texture often being very rich in their design. See, for example, *Aerophobia* (de Wardener, 2012).

From the analysis above I conclude that non-classical texts are relatively traditional in form, harmony and melody, especially when one considers other contemporaneous works. Even tempo instructions are often in Italian; the conventional, though not exclusive, method used since the 1600s (Scholes, Nagley and Latham, 2002, p.1264). Rhythm and texture provide the focal points in the style and as a result the texts reflect, in part, the continuing influence of notated minimalism on composers and their works (Johnson, 1994, pp.768-770).

I position non-classical music on the continuum of musical postmodernism, which has its roots in the counter-culture of the 1960s and in turn on experimentalism in the UK. Much has been written of a free exchange (Sande, 2010; Lolavar, 2011; Rutherford-Johnson, 2013; Andrewes, 2014). Soosan Lolavar (2011, p.4) attributes this to 'a largely pluralistic approach to music as part of a new era of "cultural postmodernism" which has broken down hitherto boundaries of style, genre, aesthetic value and audience appreciation'. The critic Alex Ross (2007, p.542) describes the 'great fusion' as one possible destination for twenty-first century music with 'intelligent pop artists and extroverted composers speaking more or less the same language'. The invention within non-classical music arises in its shared characteristics with electronic club music and, as I set out to show, the symbiotic relationship between this particular music making and its exhibition space. The composers are not using electronic club music as an occasional effect, such as Thomas Adès (1999) and Dai Fujikura (2006) might or as crossover (Rutherford-Johnson, 2017, pp.75-78). It is idiomatic of their compositional language, which is informed as much by their roles as producers. See, for example, Prokofiev's work under his guises 'Medasyn' and 'Gabriel Olegavich' for grime MC Lady Sovereign, 'Public Warning' (2006) and 'Jigsaw' (2009), or de Wardener's solo album, 'Where I am Today' (2004).

Chapter 1. Exhibition: Framing Devices and Meaning Making

In his history of the art exhibition, the curator Hans Ulrich Obrist (2014, pp.26-29) identifies the innovation of the gallery as framing device as pivotal to the development of the curator. This process started in the early twentieth century when a range of artists, including Marcel Duchamp, 'began to innovate and invent display features within this expanded format' (Ibid., p.29). They took it upon themselves to challenge what they saw as the rigid institutional framework within which works of art were displayed and critiqued.

Duchamp questioned the very nature of what constitutes a work of art in his readymades *Bottle Rack* (1914) and *Fountain* (1917). His event-based installation *Mile of String* (1942) 'treated the exhibition itself as the relevant carrier of meaning' (Ibid.). Kurt Schwitters' invention of 'Merz' to describe his collage and assemblage works blurred the boundary for the first time between fine art and popular culture; and both Schwitters and Piet Mondrian rejected completely the idea of exhibiting pictures in traditional gallery spaces. Schwitters' *Merzbau* (Fig. 1-1) is an example of a total environment.

Fig. 1-1 Kurt Schwitters' *Merzbau*. Photograph by Wilhelm Redemann, 1933 © Wilhelm Redemann

These artists foreshadowed the contemporary understanding of context as an idea 'to serve as the artwork by itself' (MoMA, 2014). The pregnancy of this has since become one of the curator's most important devices in their armoury of storytelling, meaning making and analytic inquiry. This aspect of the model informs some of my choices in the two research outcomes.

The ever-increasing numbers of artists who have become active simultaneously as curators is, therefore, a logical outcome of this learning. The author Winfried Stürzl (2013, p.6) says the foundation of a large number of project spaces or off-spaces is a clear sign of intent by this now omnipresent phenomenon. One such example is Eastside Projects in Birmingham (UK), co-founded in 2008 by artists Gavin Wade, Ruth Claxton, Simon and Tom Boor, designer James Langdon and architect Celine Condorelli. Eastside Projects (n.d) describes itself as 'an artist-run multiverse, commissioning, producing and presenting experimental art practices and demonstrating ways in which art may be useful as part of society'. They provide material infrastructure for local, national and international artists and present a national public art programme. In describing the evolving model of Eastside Projects, Gavin Wade says 'we don't call

ourselves a "collaborative curatorial platform" but it may apply' (Birchall and Mabaso, 2013, p.65).

Artist-run projects and off spaces then continue to challenge, critique and reinvent the often formal, institutional gallery apparatus where, as Paul O'Neill (2007b, p.15) says, art is traditionally mediated, experienced and historicised. These are some of the ambitions I seek to transfer from contemporary visual culture in constructing the role of curator in music.

In the next section, a selection of historical precedents is examined because there were occasional turns towards expanding the context of new music during the twentieth century. Some of these were led by visual artists and are well documented. See, for example, Hugo Ball's 'Cabaret Voltaire' and 'Galerie Dada', Allan Kaprow and Adrian Henri's 'Happenings' and George Maciunas' 'Fluxconcerts or Aktionen'. However, pertinent to this study are the progressive countercultural trends in art and music associated with the 1960s on the West and East Coasts of America and their effect on experimental practices in the UK. These reveal new approaches to music-making, proto-curating processes and institutional critique that lead to the development of my own artistic and curatorial voice. They also demonstrate an inter-relationship between the music's production and performance scenario.

In the final section of the chapter, I discuss the first outcome of the research process, 'Blank Canvas 17'. Here I show the development of a single-author curatorial platform in which I set up a situation and invite responses from two composers. I demonstrate an application of curatorial design thinking and the contemporary understanding of context to create a novel platform for mediating and experiencing new music. Lastly, I show how 'Blank Canvas' is an extension of my own artwork.

Multi-media experience

Andy Warhol's 'Exploding Plastic Inevitable' (herein referred to as the 'EPI') is a valuable resource to review and critique in the study of expanded formats and development of the artist-curator or curartist. It lies approximately halfway on the continuum of contextual inquiry begun by Duchamp where in this instance a non-

gallery space is used as a framing device and the artists and spectators are themselves the art object.

Curators and theorists Cornelia and Holger Lund (2009, p.181) describe the 'EPI' as 'a new kind of hybrid event positioned somewhere between art and party'. This fulfills Claire Doherty's (2007, p.107) assertion that 'the un-stated aim of any curatorial endeavour is to produce a situation like no other'. How did this novel platform first come about?

The 'EPI' had its beginnings in a residency at the Film-Makers Cinematheque in February 1966, entitled 'Andy Warhol, Up-Tight'. During this weeklong residency, Warhol presented The Velvet Underground and Nico for the first time. Each show featured slide and film projections by Warhol and Paul Morrissey, lighting by Danny Williams, and dances by Gerard Malanga and Edie Sedgwick among others. Following its success, Warhol toured the event to several university campuses. In April 1966, he signed a one-month lease on the Dom in New York's East Village and the 'EPI' was born.

> 'The rock'n'roll music gets louder, the dancers get more frantic, and the lights start going on and off like crazy… you don't think the noise can get any louder, and then it does, until there is one big rhythmic tidal wave of sound… all of it fused together into one magnificent moment of hysteria' (Bockris and Malanga, 1983, p.50).

The authorship of 'Andy Warhol, Up-Tight' and the 'EPI' is contentious and this is particularly striking because of the value placed on authorial distinction by art world institutions (Birchall and Mabaso, 2013, p.66). Lou Reed said the unique presentation was indicative of what The Velvets and others had been doing at the time, 'so everybody thought of it' (Bockris and Malanga, 1983, p.35). However, Bockris and Malanga (Ibid., p.52) recognise 'it was undoubtedly [Warhol's] presence that gave the discordant productions cohesion'. They suggest the 'EPI' was an extension of his work as a portrait artist. In this light, it is possible to say that Warhol's community of art producers and spectators were framed in the nightclub space and given meaning through their exhibition. Therefore, the 'EPI' as Warhol's artwork was mediated

primarily through the physical experience (with secondary mediation through a studio album and later through archive film).

The 'EPI' used many innovative techniques and placed new music at the centre of its curatorial design. Cornelia Lund (2009, p.181) explains:

'The party extracted visual music from the cinematic context in which it had hitherto largely been embedded, and then transplanted it not only onto the stage, but onto the entire venue, spectators included'.

Curator Henry Geldzahler recalls the thrilling effect of this; 'I was more impressed with the music than with the other effects, but it was enhanced by the combination' (Bockris and Malanga, p.3). The unique visual presentation went against the accepted rock mores of the time. At the end of April 1966, the 'EPI' closed at the Dom and Doherty laments 'they would never play in such a perfect art rock cultural configuration time set again' (Ibid., p.57).

Risk-taking on the West Coast and the lofts and galleries of downtown Manhattan

Many of the creative principles of the 'EPI' (light shows, interdisciplinary collaboration) came out of the experimental practices in San Francisco at the beginning of the decade. The San Francisco Tape Music Center is an example of an autonomous composer-led organisation that was unaffiliated to any university or college and it rejected traditional concert hall culture (Bernstein, 2008, p.34). Morton Subotnik and Ramon Sender founded it in 1961 'to provide a group of local composers with a studio and a venue for the presentation of their works' (Ibid., p.9). From the start, its conceptually liberated approach to art production was reflective of the wider avant-garde arts scene that took in theatre, dance and mime (Ibid., p.5). Sender and Pauline Oliveros setup the new music series 'Sonics' in December 1961 to present compositions created in the studio: 'those involved found themselves in a new relationship to the audience… this stimulated new concepts in the performance procedures' (Ibid., p.49). Performances regularly featured visual environments created by Tony Martin. Arguably, a defining moment in its short history was the world-premiere of Terry Riley's *In C* on November 4, 1964. La Monte Young, Riley and Steve Reich (who played keyboards in Riley's work

and had recently graduated from the nearby Mills College) transferred these techniques to the East Coast and a new scene quickly established itself. David Bernstein (2008, p.34) says of the modest facilities of the Tape Music Center:

'[It] had more in common with the small presses, underground newspapers, and filmmakers collectives that had increasingly emerged during the 1950s and 1960s as alternatives to corporate control and commercialization of the arts'.

South of Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, 'free of modernist angst and inflected with pop optimism' (Alex Ross, 2008, p.475), a scene of purely American art was brewing in the lofts and galleries of 1960's SoHo and TriBeCa. The filmmaker, actor and performance artist Jack Smith refers to these artist-run spaces in Manhattan as 'rented island' and much of this 'object theater', 'loft performance' and 'new psychodrama' has only recently been catalogued (Sanders, 2013, pp.9-39).

For composers La Monte Young, Dennis Johnson and Terry Riley limited financial resources played an important role in these performance scenarios. The author Keith Potter (2000, p.18) explains:

'The Manhattan artistic community that spawned many of the artistic developments which have fed into the continuing story of musical minimalism and "post-minimalism" in part owed its existence to purely practical aspects: the low rents for large loft spaces available in downtown Manhattan in 1960s and 1970s for instance'.

Arguably the composers' tendency towards extreme dynamics and extended duration, that is 'of maximal-length minimal-action' (Ibid., p.164), could not be suitably managed in the concert hall either. Instead a premiere of Johnson's *Piece for Two Saxophones* took place at Yoko Ono's loft on Chambers Street. In the winter of 1960-61, Young took over curatorial duties for the series that Potter (2000, p.50) describes as 'perhaps one of the first to take place in a loft in New York City, thus representing one of the beginnings of alternative performance spaces'.

The desegregation of performers and audience was a frequent feature of these early minimalist works and a continuation of John Cage's experiments a decade earlier. In Young's *Composition 1960*, the lights are turned off for a stated duration and once restored the audience is advised that the performance is over and their activities are the composition. In 'Dream House', Young and his partner, the artist Marian Zazeela, setup their first continuous sound and light environment in a loft on Church Street that ran from 1966-70. The concept of 'stasis' served as the artwork itself. The 'EPI' took inspiration from the multi-media experiments of Young and Zazeela. She pioneered several lighting techniques, including the projecting onto performers' clothing, which would be seen later in the 'EPI'. Billy Linich (later an assistant to Warhol) and John Cale (founding member of The Velvet Underground) both played in Young's ensemble between 1963-65.

The two examples above show how spatial co-presence is fundamental to their experience. Author Tim Rutherford-Johnson (2017, p.55) describes this as reinserting the body into music 'to reinstate the listener as the site of meaning making and pleasure'. Consequently, there are few official recordings of Young's music – David Grubbs (2014) writes extensively on the difficult relationship of recording and experimental music practices – and in the current version of 'Dream House' (1993-present) filming and photography are strictly forbidden. Thus, both artworks are primarily mediated through their physical exhibition.

White cube gallery spaces and lofts were often the framing mechanisms for Reich and Glass' early motoric process music. Glass was present at Ono's Chambers Street loft series throughout 1960-61 and in general 'gravitated more to art than to music circles' (Strickland, 1993, p.203). Both he and Reich had professional and personal friendships with a number of visual artists, notably Minimalists Robert Rauschenberg, Sol LeWitt, Richard Serra and Michael Snow, and by extension access to art world apparatus and important financial aid (Reich, Berkeley and Bryars, 1986). Potter (2000, p.174) says:

> 'The personal, as well as aesthetic, connections he made with the art world in the 1960s allowed Reich access to art galleries as performance spaces long before he became accepted in Western classical music circles, and audiences for his work who were often well-informed about its intentions'.

The two composers distance themselves from direct comparisons between their artwork and Minimalism as a visual art form (Reich, Berkeley and Bryars, 1986). However, galleries and museums inclined towards Minimalist art were the most welcoming of and receptive to their music (see, for example, *An Evening of Music by Steve Reich* or *An Evening of Music by Philip Glass* and the exhibition 'Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials' at Whitney Museum of American Art in 1969). Arguably this was a radical act to situate musical and visual material alongside one another in this way (and this is discussed further in Chapter 2, Part 2B). One of the first artist cooperatives in New York, Park Place, The Gallery of Art Research, Inc., played a particularly important role in this respect. It attracted a progressive audience who experienced the premiere performances of some of Reich's first live pieces (Reich, Berkeley and Bryars, 1986). This finds a parallel with the reception of non-classical music discussed earlier and it is a theme which is investigated in more detail in 'Blank Canvas 17'.

The British connection

In the UK, Reich's rigorous approach inspired the experimental music scene owing in part to his friendship with composers Michael Nyman, Gavin Bryars and Cornelius Cardew. His and Glass' composer-led groups were important models for a number of British composers who were experimenting with and re-evaluating sonic concepts and extended formats away from the art music institution (see, for example, The Michael Nyman Band and The Gavin Bryars Ensemble and later The Steve Martland Band and The Fitkin Band). Their artistic and political concerns challenged established authorities; 'traditionally passive onlookers (listeners, audience) could now be empowered participants, as performers, composers and conductors' (Gregory, 2004, p.20). This is evident in groups such as the Scratch Orchestra (founded by Cardew, Michael Parsons and Howard Skempton) and Portsmouth Sinfonia (founded by Bryars). Brian Eno (1999, p.xi) says that 'by and large, the music colleges were not at all interested, whereas the art colleges – with their interest in happenings, pop and performance – were soaking it up'. Sean Gregory (2004, p.29) explains the conservatoires' reluctance:

> 'Wider cultural awareness and connecting to a variety of contexts is often seen at best as fringe activity and at worse as an irrelevance to the core business of traditional vocational arts training'.

It is, perhaps, unsurprising that much of the Scratch Orchestra's experimentation took place at one of the UK's leading centres of adult education, Morley College in London, or that Bryars taught at Portsmouth College of Art rather than a conservatoire.

The historical precedents so far examined reveal small collectives and communities of composers and performers actively, or inadvertently, critiquing rigid institutional frameworks in a Duchampian mould. They show how new forms of creation, often resulting from a shifting understanding of context, went hand in hand with alternative modes of presentation. In the face of existing hierarchies and limitations, composers and performers had to develop new skills to achieve editorial control. It is in this expanded role that proto-curatorial practices in all but name can be identified.

The arrival of the so-called classical club nights in 1998 onwards is a uniquely contemporary response to many of the same institutional challenges cited in the previous sections. Some of the series no longer exist and others have taken their place but they are the foundations of the indie-classical scene that is active largely in London and New York now. Thom Andrewes (2014, pp.134-43) provides a list of notable events in London from 2004-2014. Individual motivations, scales of production and the style of artistic direction vary yet common practices can be identified. These are:

- Composer or performer-led (single or group) artistic direction
- Alternative and informal performance contexts
- Do-it-yourself ethos and grassroots
- Short performances and DJ sets: music spans electronic club music, existing modernist and experimental music and core classical repertoire
- Limited financial resources requiring support from corporate sponsorship, public and private trusts and foundations.

I identify divergent approaches in these platforms, however. The agenda of some of the classical club nights is to find new relevance for art music performance and they privilege informality. The following examples are a representative sample:

'[The Little Proms] mission is to make it as easy to go to a classical concert as it is to go to an indie gig' (The Little Proms, n.d).

'Classical music concerts can be horrible… The Night Shift is all about making classical music easy to enjoy' (OAE, n.d).

'[Yellow Lounge] brings classical music bang up-to-date, leaving a trail of twin-sets, pearls and grey suits in its wake… Yellow Lounge fuses the greatest international performers with cutting-edge DJ and VJ sets in urban spaces' (Yellow Lounge, n.d).

The recontextualising of existing repertoire, or it's displacing as Andrewes (2014, p.53) argues, is the primary goal. In my opinion, these motivations suggest a critique of the concert hall, and its etiquettes in particular, rather than the positioning of context at the heart of new artistic creation. Furthermore, they can be seen not as acts of curating but programming because they prioritise entertainment (although there is often slippage between the two terms, particularly in publicity materials).

The second approach places greater value on new music and it is here genuine curating practices are evident. Representative examples include 'London Contemporary Music Festival', 'Kammer Klang' and some (but not all) 'Nonclassical' events (their ongoing series 'Rise of the Machines' regularly features first performances). Rutherford-Johnson (2017, p.41) has noticed how performed repertoire at 'Nonclassical' events often privileges 'works with a strong rhythmic profile and a loud dynamic… as do those that do not require concentrated listening in service of a continuous musical narrative'. The founders of 'LCMF' are generally cautious about the role of the curator as auteur. They recognize there is a story-telling aspect in their selection process and performance context (Andrewes, 2014, pp.103-105) but I do not find a symbiotic relationship between the two. Later in the commentary I show how this differs from my work (particularly in the second research outcome, 'bloom') because I establish and follow the logic of curatorial principles to develop new work thus demonstrating a dynamic system of inter-related and interconnected activity.

The next section explores the initial development of my own curatorial voice and how I used curatorial and exhibition design strategies to inform 'Blank Canvas 17'. I show how 'Blank Canvas 17' inherits and applies its breadth of curating and production ambition from the already mentioned historical examples; that new music is created in direct relationship to the performance space rather than solely repositioning existing

repertoire; and that analytic inquiry underlies the work on display. The learning from this project feeds into the second research outcome, 'bloom'.

Research Outcome No. 1: 'Blank Canvas 17'

Village Underground, London (UK), September 05, 2013. Curated by Will Dutta.

Works:
Arvo Pärt *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten,* 1977/1980
Max de Wardener *Piano Concerto**, 2013
Tim Exile *Bardo EP†*, 2013

DJ Sets:
Plaid

Line-up:
*Will Dutta, piano
Manuel Poletti, electronics realisations
†Tim Exile, electronic artist
Finn McNicholas, orchestral realisations

Tom Trapp, conductor
Heritage Orchestra

See Folder 1, Part A for supporting materials

Displacement and radicalism in 'Blank Canvas' Nos. 1-16

The 'Blank Canvas' platform originates from a project I initiated and creatively produced at London's Scala on 26 July 2007. DJ Yoda (Duncan Beiny) and Heritage Orchestra gave the first performance of Gabriel Prokofiev's (2006) *Concerto for Turntables and Orchestra*, conducted by Jules Buckley, to a capacity audience. The billing also featured electronic musicians Plaid (Andy Turner and Ed Handley) in a collaborative performance of their film score for *Tekkonkinkreet* (Dir: Arias, 2006) and Prokofiev and Beiny presented DJ sets (Figs. 1-2a and 1.2b). A prominent reviewer in The Guardian newspaper described it as 'one of the most exciting musical premieres I've seen' (Blake, 2007).

Scala was originally the King's Cross Cinema. It was built in 1920 and used to seat over a thousand with space for a twenty-piece orchestra. It came into effect as a nightclub in 1999 and its change of function saw the seating replaced with a dance-floor. The presence of the Heritage Orchestra in this performance then was not exceptional in itself. However, the club situation proved a significant critical and audience success due

to the seemingly unusual location for an orchestral performance and the radical style of the new work. A review by Mark Crabbie (2007) for Scala's website reads:

'As the unfamiliar sound of scratching with its orchestral accompaniment became more settled, the performers visibly relaxed into Concerto for Turntables and Orchestra [sic] and the audience started to relax too, sometimes forgetting to maintain the polite silence that you expect when watching orchestral work. This was a two edged sword, while it may have made the performers work that bit harder and blurred the enjoyment of some of the subtler aspects of the music it also signaled a certain kind of success in the aim of the night, i.e. to fuse the styles and cultures of hip hop and classical music'.
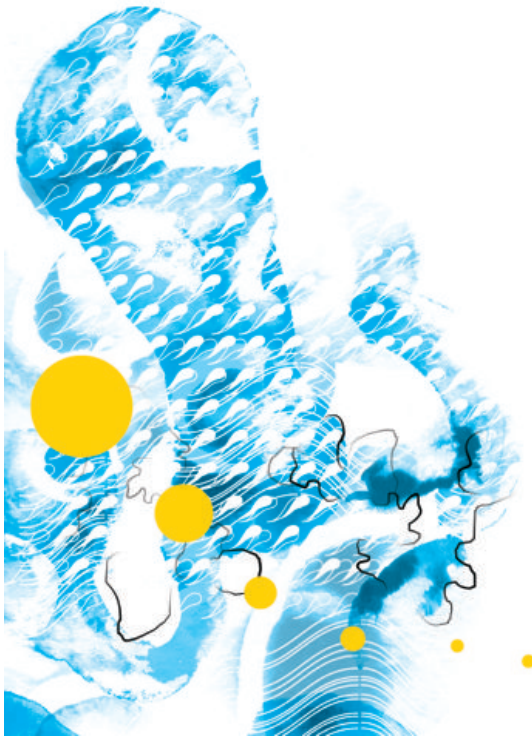
Fig. 1-2a Front side of A5 flyer. Designed by Ross Clarke (2007)
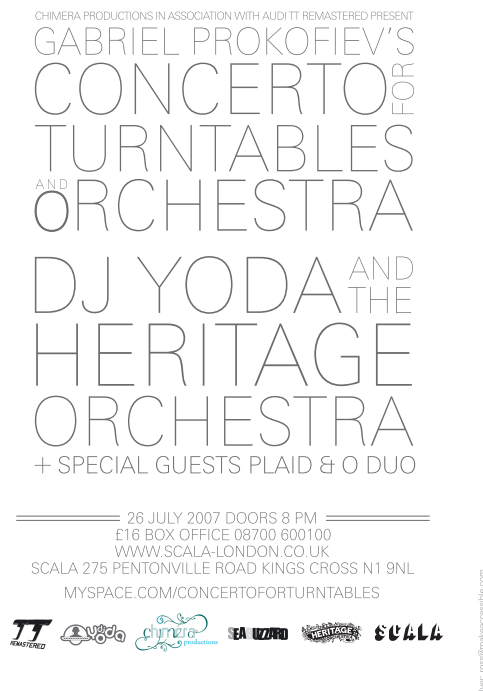
Fig. 1-2b Reverse side of A5 flyer. Designed by Ross Clarke (2007)

I devised and launched the 'Blank Canvas' platform soon after on 20 September 2007 at the Alchemist, a nightclub in Battersea (Fig. 1-3). The success of the Scala event gave me confidence that such a series could thrive although in reality it took time to establish an audience base. For five editions in year one, I viewed 'Blank Canvas' primarily as my own performance platform, in part but not exclusively, because of limited performance opportunities elsewhere and a frustration with the prevailing mode of presentation. However, it was also an opportunity to present young musicians I admired. In the early events, repertoire generally ranged from nineteenth to early twentieth century Romantic solo piano or chamber music alongside DJ sets. New music did not feature until the fourth event and where it did it was pre-existing rather than being initiated by myself. For example, in 'Blank Canvas 6' on 9 July 2008, I presented Dominic Murcott's (2005) *Installation for String Quartet*. I did not have knowledge or understanding of curatorial models at this time so I tended to select and partner pieces by personal taste. After two events, I regularly changed venues in London (taking in bars, nightclubs, cinemas and converted public toilet) guided by opportunities to reach new audiences and increase capacity. Some consideration, although no formal analysis, was given as to how the space would affect the reception of a work.

On reflection, these early events can be seen through Andrewes' (2014) prism of displacement as outlined in the previous section. They critiqued the concert hall model (but with less pointed language than some of the other nights listed above). I generally operated in isolation to the other events (on occasions I would collaborate or cross-promote with 'Nonclassical', 'Faster Than Sound', 'Kammer Klang' and 'Arctic Circle') and I was unaware of the historical precedents as set out at the start of this chapter.

Between the seventh and fifteenth editions, I was collaborating on new music with Plaid and regularly programmed these works-in-progress. At this point I began to experience (but not fully understand) the inter-relationship between the material presented and the exhibition space. Here was a particular style of (non-classical) music being framed, mediated and received in urban spaces and in turn affecting how the music was composed. This was developed further in 'Blank Canvas 16' (Fig. 1-4) where I created the partnership with Village Underground, a warehouse in East London. In this event, I prioritised new music and programmed the UK premiere of Dai Fujikura's (2009) *Prism Spectra for Viola and Electronics*, a selection of Martin Neukom's (2007/8) *Studie 18* and Mark Fell's (2011) *Multistability Live*. I also commissioned Leafcutter John's *Graphic Score No. 2* and a special presentation of *Multistability Live* in a twelve

channel, third order ambisonic arrangement where sounds were sequenced in the space. A significant outcome of this event was a rudimentary understanding of the radical nature of my first project at Scala: how the combination of a particular style of music and a specific spatial context could create a unique situation.

In 'Blank Canvas 17', the research outcome considered next, I apply my learning from past editions, the already mentioned historical examples and curatorial theory and best practice to discover what a construction of the curator in music might look like. This responds directly to the second research question. The next section should be read in conjunction with the materials in Folder 1, Part A.

Fig. 1-4 Poster of 'Blank Canvas 16' at Village Underground. Designed by Ross Clarke (2007)

Creating the situation and generating ideas for 'Blank Canvas 17'

The planning of 'Blank Canvas 17' starts with a conversation with composer Max de Wardener. On this occasion, I initiate and present the situation for him to respond to: a new piece for piano, electronics and chamber orchestra, where I am soloist and the Heritage Orchestra is the ensemble, to be presented at Village Underground. I formed this idea from our most recent collaboration: *Aerophobia* (de Wardener, 2012) uses a palette of synthesised sounds and samples mapped to a piano part. In our

conversation, we discuss developing the musical language, described by critic Steven Johnson (2012) as a 'miniaturised idiosyncratic version of Autechre, as clusters of beats and piano splinters fire into each other', using larger orchestral forces, a more ambitious structure and flexible electronic arrangement. For the latter, we explore plans to use software technologies to process and manipulate the piano in real-time and I propose making an approach to Manuel Poletti[3] to design the tools. I suggest that his technical expertise will contribute much to the commission and provide de Wardener an opportunity to develop his own computer-music skills. Thereafter significant artistic freedom is given to the composer.

Once the commission is underway I make an approach to Tim Exile whose work I have been aware of for some time. He has built a considerable reputation with his electronic music and custom built instrument, the 'Flow Machine'. In addition to his renown as improviser, his success with albums for Warp Records and Planet Mu and activity on social media mean that he has cultivated a loyal audience that can be targeted in the marketing campaign. This is also his first show in London in over a year. In our first meeting, I present the resources of the Heritage Orchestra but I do not bring any pre-conceived ideas of how he might use them. Instead, I ask him the question of how he might approach this. We give some consideration as to how his piece might relate to or contrast with de Wardener's. The concept starts to take form over an email exchange following a performance by Aphex Twin and Heritage Orchestra at the Barbican in October 2012. Both of us left the concert with the opinion that the collaboration had been a missed opportunity and journalist Elisa Bray (2012) sums it up thus:

'What it lacked above all was the beats that [Aphex Twin] is so celebrated for. It was almost completely devoid of rhythm… a lack of texture and momentum let the ideas with nowhere to develop. It was an interesting night, but one that, musically, could have been so much more'.

Our correspondences discuss moving away from a solely ambient texture (Dutta, 2012c) and we agree he should sample and process the orchestra live through his 'Flow Machine'. Emphasis is also placed on exploring the beats that Aphex Twin left out in his collaboration. The two composers are now given time and space to create the music.

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[3] Poletti designed the software technologies in Fujikura's (2009) *Prism Spectra for Viola and Electronics*.

A curatorial narrative guided by analytic inquiry

I seek to curate a coherent and composite public outcome in this edition of 'Blank Canvas' and I want to articulate in practice some of the ideas and relationships around non-classical music as worked out in the Introduction. To do so, I employ a framework or narrative device in which to hang these two new pieces[4]. I use Brian Eno's (1996, pp.327-329) concept of 'edge culture' for the first time to create a coherent dialogue between the new and historical. Many curatorial texts (O'Neill, 2007; Obrist, 2014) support connections to art history but I think Eno offers a particularly interesting way to approach this. He prioritises temporary connections and values that are negotiable, interchangeable and avoid single narratives (Eno, 1996, p.328).

As the musical material in de Wardener and Exile's pieces takes shape it is possible to unpick and reveal relationships between their sonic concepts. In the first movement of *Piano Concerto*, de Wardener abstracts 'the rules and disciplines of norot – a style of melodic elaboration played on mounted gongs called the reyong in Balinese Gamelan music' (de Wardener, 2013a). The second movement features a detuning of the piano (nine pitches of a whole tone scale detuned by a quartertone) that is manipulated through resonant comb filters and other software technologies to accentuate the colour of the upper registers. The final movement returns to the Gamelan sound world, focusing on the spectral possibilities of gongs. Exile's *Bardo EP* is a single movement work where a series of disparate musical states are setup by the orchestra and then sampled, looped and mixed through the 'Flow Machine'. These have 'stylistic hints of Andy Stott, Raster Noton, Tim Hecker, Nathan Fake, Jon Hopkins, Holy Other [and] Blawan' (Exile, 2012).

I conclude that the extended rhythmic cycles of Gamelan and minimalist techniques – Toop, (1995, pp.15-16) suggests a continuum between Gamelan, minimalism and electronic club music – are common to both *Piano Concerto* and *Bardo EP*. Therefore, in selecting a third piece that creates a temporary connection between the two new works I should seek music that supports and highlights this relationship. I also consider the overall balance of the programme, tonality and duration and practicalities such as rehearsal requirements and instrumentation. I select *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* by the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt (1977/1980). It is an example of European

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[4] It is worth noting that in 'Blank Canvas 17' I developed the narrative posterior to the production of the new music whereas in 'bloom' I followed its logic and this impacted directly on the works' production.

notated minimalism (Schwarz, 1996, pp.213-214) that satisfies the Gamelan and non-classical requirements. Its tonal and ambient textures and slow moving harmonies contrast with *Piano Concerto* and Exile's dynamic use of the orchestra. At just over six minutes in length, the piece creates tension and serves as an introduction to engage the audience without being overly demanding. From a practical perspective, it does not require significant rehearsing, which proves vital given the technical complexities of the two commissions and the relatively short rehearsal time available. The instrumentation fits within the chamber orchestra setup so no extra players or unusual instruments are required (which would increase costs).

To complete the programme, I invite Plaid to DJ. Their sets move between electronic club music, experimental and minimalist repertoire and this strengthens the concept of 'edge culture' running throughout 'Blank Canvas 17'. They also bring an established audience base, which makes the final line-up an attractive offering to promote (Figs. 1-5a and 1-5b).

Fig. 1-5a Front side of A5 flyer. Designed by Mark Fell (2013)

Fig. 1-5b Reverse side of A5 flyer. Designed by Mark Fell (2013)

Designing the curatorial narrative in the performance context

Village Underground is an artist-run performance and studio space in East London. It sits outside of the institutionalised network of music venues. In the last decade, it has emerged as the foremost venue for electronic club music and other subcultures, in part, because of the decline of nightclubs but also its striking features (Whitfield, 2014). To give shape to the 'edge culture' narrative, I aim to exploit Village Underground's urban aesthetic through staging and lighting design (Fig. 1-6). I experiment with the idea of performer-spectator desegregation and emphasising spatial co-presence.

Two staging areas are setup at alternate sides of the venue and there is a bar underneath an archway. Plaid is situated on the ground level at the front of the building and spectators are met with this encounter when they enter (Fig. 1-7). This draws them into the centre space. The main stage is at the rear and is heavily modified, tiered and extended to accommodate the chamber orchestra and conductor, a concert grand piano and Exile's 'Flow Machine' (Fig. 1-8). Lighting Designer Mike Nunn accentuates the unusual shapes, textures and structures of the warehouse and staging with various lighting states. The audience appreciates the 'dimly-lit, high brick walls

[and] intimate atmosphere' (Londonist, 2013).

Fig. 1-6 Village Underground. Photograph by Howard Melnyczuk, 2013 © Howard Melnyczuk

Fig. 1-7 Plaid DJ-ing at 'Blank Canvas'. Photograph by Howard Melnyczuk, 2013 © Howard Melnyczuk

Plaid opens the event and DJs until the Heritage Orchestra are in position. Spectators

are in close proximity to Plaid, which is in itself unusual, so there is some movement in their position as the orchestra takes to the main stage. The visual impact of having the full orchestra on a tiered stage is dramatic and a spectator describes the opening performance as a 'stunning first piece' (Londonist, 2013). I follow immediately with the premiere of *Piano Concerto*, which features sound design spatialised through ten channels, and the audience is noticeably still throughout. Once the performance is complete, I perform a short encore and then we leave the stage and Plaid leads with a second, more energetic set. At 9.45PM, the Heritage Orchestra returns to the main stage with Exile and his collaborator, Finn McNicholas, to present *Bardo EP*. The audience response is very enthusiastic; they cheer and dance throughout. Exile is also requested to perform an encore and he weaves white noise from the sound desk into an up-tempo solo improvisation. Plaid follows this immediately with a more typical club set as people continue to dance and this brings the event to a close at 11PM.

Fig. 1-8 The modified stage. Photograph by Howard Melnyczuk, 2013 © Howard Melnyczuk

Limitations and measuring success

The first outcome of this study is delivered relatively early in the research process. As a result, it has a number of limitations. Its primary focus is on 'Blank Canvas 17' as a physical exhibition platform so I do not discuss its dissemination online or provide an analysis of supporting ephemera. It needs to be restated that I developed the curatorial

narrative posterior to the production of the new music (although this shows another way the curatorial voice can emerge). These limitations are addressed, and the learning from this study developed, in the second research outcome, 'bloom'.

'Blank Canvas 17' reached a capacity audience at Village Underground (Fig. 1-9). Did I successfully communicate 'edge culture' and the wider context of non-classical music in this edition? Did the desegregation of performers work? How was spatial co-presence emphasised? The musical material featured in this edition deliberately reinforced the continuum of Gamelan, minimalism and electronic club music and I am satisfied that the programme embodied the idea of 'edge culture' and provided a suitable context for non-classical music. However, I did not produce any interpretive materials (excluding a double-sided handout, which featured composer notes and performer/funder credits) in which to make explicit 'edge culture' as a curatorial device so the success of this is mixed. In my opinion the desegregation of performers also achieved its aim. Spectators were encouraged to move around the space, as the focus shifted from live performance to DJ, but the desegregation was intentionally limited and controlled (see Chapter 2: Part 2B, Section 7.2 for an expanded application of this concept). Spatial co-presence was emphasised through Poletti's multi-channel electronic renderings: the live situation was unique from any mediatised versions because of this. Again, this could have been used to greater effect because *Bardo EP* was not spatialised.

The public response can be measured in qualitative feedback taken from social media and other published reviews. A sample of social media comments include:

'Yo @will_dutta smashed it last night! Loved that detuned vibe on bits of the piano' (LV, 2013).

'I love Blank Canvas for its uncompromising approach' (Payne, 2013).

'LOVED [sic] Max de Wardener's piano concerto for fab @will_dutta tonight. Lush orchestral textures crunch with sonic effect. Powerful' (Nelkin, 2013).

Another useful source of public feedback comes from a three-month partnership I had with Sound and Music. The UK's new music agency invited me to join their Audience Development Programme in partnership with online magazine 'Londonist' where five anonymous 'Samplers' were sent to attend new music performances. The 'Samplers' were readers of the magazine who responded to a call 'to bring new audiences to some intriguingly creative events… then feedback to us for an honest reader-led review' (Londonist, 2013). Their reaction is 'overwhelmingly positive':

'Tim Exile's Bardo EP is mindblowing! It bamboozles its way though most genres of dance music with Tim's hands moving at a blurred pace across his 'self-made, live-sampling, beat-looping, sound-mangling instrument' whilst the conductor somehow knows when to bring in the orchestra to add their perfect sound to his beats'

'I was particularly impressed by The Bardo EP. It was a bit like clubbing meets film score… it was a perfect fusion of classical orchestra meets electronica'

'Anyone who thinks they have eclectic music taste doesn't until they experience this'.

Alternative performance contexts bring compromises. Noise from the bar was particularly noticeable during the quieter moments in the performance; 'the only complaint being that the bar was too noisy at times'. Andrewes (2014, p.68) acknowledges that by moving out of the concert hall musicians are 'trading in certain dimensions of acoustic control for a great control over other parameters'. The sound engineer, David Sheppard, gives weight to this: '[Village Underground] is basically a warehouse with a slanted roof… so there's a lot of acoustic considerations to think about' (O'Mullane, 2013).

For the composers involved, 'Blank Canvas 17' provided an opportunity to realise large-scale musical ambitions. De Wardener (2013b) reflects:

'Blank Canvas provided an amazing opportunity to compose a large scale work as well as devising a fascinating collaboration with IRCAM for the realisation of the

electronic elements of the work. The principals of sound spatialisation in particular I aim to explore more fully in my future work'.

Members of the orchestra said the pieces were 'suitably challenging… very well crafted [and] of a type of repertoire the orchestra do [sic] not usually perform' (Heritage Orchestra, 2013).

Fig. 1-9 Capacity audience. Photograph by Howard Melnyczuk, 2013 © Howard Melnyczuk

Concluding remarks

From the overall success of the event I draw the conclusion that Village Underground is the ideal performance space for 'Blank Canvas' and that it is a hybrid event of its own: somewhere between club and concert. It is also the first example in this study of the exhibition space affecting the mode of music making (production). Furthermore, I now identify a correlation between the situation of 'Blank Canvas 17' and the premiere of Prokofiev's *Concerto for Turntables and Orchestra* at Scala and this accounts for much of its success.

Obrist believes that curators should follow artists and the suggestion that they are secularised artists in all but name goes too far (Obrist, 2014, p.33). In 'Blank Canvas 17', I have had to grapple with this because my application of curatorial strategies has been

given flight, in part, out of a concerted effort to develop a body of non-classical music. In fact, I view this exhibition platform as an extension of my own artwork and consequently it is accorded legitimacy (Stürzl, 2013, pp.8-9). It has moved on significantly from early editions where I treated it as my own vehicle for performance only. I am responsible for creating the situation for composers to respond to in much the same way Warhol did in the 'EPI'; I establish the framing mechanism and performance context, inheriting breadth of programming and editorial control from the artist and composer-led curatorial initiatives that preceded it; and I provide the material infrastructure to showcase experimental practices as per Eastside Projects. Therefore, in answering the second research question, I have begun to transfer techniques associated with the artist-curator or curartist in contemporary visual culture into the musical domain for the first time. I have successfully used the group exhibition format without subjugating the artistic integrity of the individual composers. In the singular moment of the exhibition, I have communicated my own artistic voice as much as Exile and de Wardener theirs.

Once the radical and unique situation of the exhibition has past the new pieces must stand up on their own merits, just as the 'EPI' is primarily remembered for The Velvet Underground and Nico (Bockris and Malanga, 1983, p.51). Prokofiev's *Concerto for Turntables and Orchestra* has received over fifty performances since its premiere at Scala and continues to be programmed in venues around the world. In November 2015, I gave the second performance of *Piano Concerto* with Orquesta Sinfónica Juvenil de Caracas in Venezuela and Matthew Yee-King designed new software technologies to process the piano. A film of *Bardo EP* has been viewed over forty thousand times online.

In this chapter, I have shown how an artist-run (single author) exhibition platform might challenge, critique and help to reinvent the institutional art music apparatus. It is beyond the scope of this study to measure how much the work created for 'Blank Canvas', and its predecessor event at Scala, is part of the 'brave corrective' (Balzer, 2014, p.59) required to change the perception of the institution. It is, however, my contribution.

Chapter 2. The Curating Composer
Part 2A. Production

In his curatorial project 'Remote' Vince Dziekan (2007) continues the expansion of the exhibition format to include the virtual. He calls this 'dimensioning' and suggests the exhibition is now 'a dynamic, interconnected system of forms, spaces and relationships' (Dziekan, 2007, no page number). Furthermore, he establishes a symbiotic relationship between the publication format (as interactive PDF) and the content of his argument (production). In my second research outcome, 'bloom', I seek to address and transfer the dimensioning possibilities of the physical and virtual where different manifestations feed into a dynamic system and undergo development throughout the duration of the activity. In doing so I apply modular and iterative curatorial models to construct and name for the first time the curating composer. This is a significant development from 'Blank Canvas 17' where I established and applied curatorial language, theory and practice in a physical situation only. In doing so I answer the second and third research outcomes.

This chapter is divided into two sections and this should be read alongside the materials in Folder 1, Part B. Part 2A examines the creation (production) of musical material for a new body of work. I set out the research context. In doing so I introduce the curatorial turn into the compositional act. The framework for critical reflection is an amalgamation of the composer Iannis Xenakis' (1992, p.22) 'Fundamental phases of a musical work' and artist Dan Fern's (2015a) 'Ecology of process'. The four stages are 'Research gathering and planning', 'Defining the sonic entities', 'Modelling' and 'Production and presentation of the finished work'. The methodology to examine the new compositions is based on textual analysis, as described by Richard Middleton (2000, pp.104-121). Here notational centricity is avoided in preference of a broader discussion of texture and form that relate to generic and social function (Middleton, 2000, p.4). Moreover, this corresponds to the stylistic focal points of non-classical music as set out in the Introduction.

In Part 2B, I address the exhibition of 'bloom' as a composite public outcome in six manifestations. These are:

1. Recording

2. Performance

3. Interactive Digital Space

4. Newsletter

5. Film

6. Workshop

Introduction

The second research outcome features six new works that I composed (or initiated) in collaboration with practitioners encountered in the previous chapter. We all share an interest in the interactions between software technologies and contemporary music creation and I have cultivated these professional and personal relationships over many years. My first curatorial act then is to create a new situation for them to come together. While there is no direct communication between them they are aware of each other's work as it progresses.

I co-wrote *A Higher Sense of Time* and *Beauty Still* with British electronic music duo Plaid (Ed Handley and Andy Turner) and *Bloume* and *whiting flowre* with French computer-music designer Manuel Poletti. Plaid has released eleven albums on Warp Records over a twenty-five-year career and Handley and Turner have a track record of collaboration with singers, ensembles and instrumentalists. I have worked with them regularly for eleven years, including two pieces for my first album in 2012. Handley describes this partnership as a rare opportunity to work together over an extended period of time resulting in a 'purer and more organic collaboration' (Handley, 2016). Poletti is a composer, consultant for Cycling '74 and a computer-music designer at IRCAM in Paris where he regularly creates custom multimedia systems for contemporary music, dance, theatre and art. De Wardener trained as a composer and completed postgraduate studies in jazz and studio music. He regularly writes music for the concert platform, film and television alongside remix and production work for a variety of vocalists and instrumentalists.

Plaid, Poletti and de Wardener were brought into the creative process at different times and compositional decisions are unique to the requirements of the six pieces. This means no two processes are the same and consequently the writing credits reflect

this. My two collaborations with Plaid saw equal creative exchange (50/50). Poletti designed specific electronic tools in response to a creative brief yet he is also made some important compositional decisions so we agreed to a proportionally smaller split (80/20). Max de Wardener is the sole composer of *Tangram* and *Morte Point*.

1. Research and planning

I establish the narrative device at an early stage and I interact with it at regular moments in the production process. I return again to Brian Eno's (1996) concept of 'edge culture' because it allows me to setup an intentionally rich network of reference points from which to make theoretical connections. This is valuable because it allows me to navigate Paul Couillard's (2009) binary tension between the curatorial and programmatic encountered in the Introduction. As I show later in the chapter, I also extract important ideas from this framework in each of the manifestations. Research categories include music, and to a lesser extent, poetry and fashion.

1.1 Constructing my edge culture network

The planning of the six pieces focuses on the creative use of software technologies to manipulate the properties of the piano. There is significant historical precedent in this field with a wide range of musical texts and critical literature available. Rather than providing a full literature review of relevant musical texts (which would obscure the scope of this study), the following list examines those works that form active nodes in my network. These include individual compositions by Jonathan Harvey, Paul Lansky, Alejandro Viñao, Aphex Twin (Richard D. James) and Plastikman (Richie Hawtin).

The title and text of Harvey's (1980) composition for tape *Mortuos Plango, Vivos Voco* are taken from the inscription of the tenor bell at Winchester Cathedral. Two natural sounds are used as source material: the bell and the voice of the composer's son singing and chanting the text. Harvey uses spectral analysis and synthesis techniques to structure the piece and move between the spectrum of a vocal vowel and that of the bell. See Patricia Lynn Dirks (2007) for a detailed analysis.

In the context of this study *Mortuos Plango, Vivos Voco* is particularly notable for the performance state that Harvey creates. He says 'the walls of the concert hall are conceived as the sides of the bell inside which is the audience, and around which

(especially in the original 8-channel version) flies the free spirit of the boy' (Harvey, 1980). This shows Harvey is thinking about the audience in the production and exhibition processes; reconsidering the concert hall space by using multi-speaker technology.

Lansky's three compositions *Idle Chatter*, *just_more_idle_chatter* and *notjustmoreidlechatter* were composed from 1984 to 1988. He attributes his discovery of rap music as inspiration for them; 'I particularly enjoyed its lavish use of spoken language' (Lansky, 2014). In *Idle Chatter* (Lansky, 1985)*,* the composer layers up to thirty phonemes taken from a recording of Hannah MacKay reading Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* to create complex musical rhythms and an almost unintelligible texture:

> 'I invented this texture to solve the problem of listening to electronically made pieces that will always be the same every time. In the absence of performers they can be said to make the listener into a performer in that he must lean forward and "squint" his ears' (Lansky, 2014).

This texture is superimposed onto a relatively simplistic harmonic progression allowing the listener to browse at his or her leisure. *just_more_idle_chatter* (Lansky, 1987) and *notjustmoreidlechatter* (Lansky, 1988) push this technique further.

Viñao's (1994) *Hildegard's Dream* is for soprano and tape and is based on the visions of composer, poet and religious figure of the Middle Ages, Hildegard Von Bingen. Viñao uses the original words and phrases in Latin and selects phonemes from these to create a study on the relationship between melody and timbre in a microtonal context. The composer says of his music, 'sound processes such as interpolation or sound-morphing have played a central role but never to the exclusion of note to note relationships' (Fischer, 2012). Viñao uses phonemes in quite a different way to Lansky and the result is otherworldly: the soprano duets with her transformed other.

In *minipops 67 [120.2][source field mix]* Aphex Twin (2014) creates texture that is in a state of flux and this has an important influence on *Bloume* and *whiting flowre*. Micro and macro rhythmic variation (Middleton, 2000, pp.105-107) and a large palette of

sounds positioned over a wide register give the illusions of presence and depth. Overall the music is unstable despite its steady metre. This is Philip Sherburne's (2004) avant-garde production examining the nature of repetition.

Kriket by Plastikman (1994) is another. Strictly percussive its economy of means is deceptive: the opening clicks imitate stridulation (the sound made by rubbing together body parts commonly associated with species of crickets and grasshoppers) and form important structural points in the music. This repeats for almost two minutes without change. The second percussive figure enters displacing the stridulation to reveal the aural illusion: the crickets are clicking off the beat. The second figure continues to develop in rhythmic complexity over the stridulation for four minutes and Plastikman, as per Aphex Twin above, positions a palette of percussive sounds to create the illusions of presence and depth. Once the second figure stops the stridulation acts as an outro for one minute.

Other active nodes in the research network include Stockhausen's *Mantra* (1970), Somei Satoh's *Incarnation II* (1977), Harvey's *Tombeau de Messiaen* (1994) and Julian Day's *Dark Twin* (2016). Each piece uses software technologies to transform the piano.

The second research category is poetry. The symbolist poetry of the French writer Stéphane Mallarmé (2008) influences my texts for *A Higher sense of Time* and *Beauty Still*. His sensuous and mysterious verse, particularly in *Placet futile* and *L'Après-midi d'un faune*, provides the ideal texture to situate my own writings to my then fiancée (and now wife).

In the third category, the fashion house of Coco Chanel stimulates useful visual imagery: in particular, the design and quality of the materials Gabrielle Chanel uses in her first collection of fine jewellery in 1932. Her motifs (including the camellia and bow) contribute towards the language in the two texts.

The research network above forms the basis of a reciprocal exchange between the first compositional acts to be discussed in the next section and an emerging curatorial brief that effects how the artworks are exhibited.

2. Defining the sonic entities

Poletti and Plaid bring distinct methodologies and conceptual approaches to composition and I need to create the right conditions to achieve successful outcomes. These include the provision of a brief, cue sheets and timeline. I set out to create four single-movement pieces of approximately three minutes duration where rhythm and texture are the stylistic focal points and the piano is treated using a variety of software technologies.

In the following subsections, I define the sonic entities *Bloume* and *whiting flowre*. I set Poletti the primary objective to design, develop and apply bespoke software technologies (specifically through Ableton Live 9 Suite featuring Max for Live) to modify the spectral components and sonic properties of the piano in two compositions. In a secondary objective I require a flexible system whereby the electronic output (that is the processing of the piano that is heard in live performance) can change within set parameters. This is in reaction to my experience of performing works for piano and tape where there is inherent inflexibility. (In Part 2B, Section 8.2 I develop a suitable mode of dissemination that allows me to mediate this flexibility in the artwork further. I view this is a curatorial act.)

2.1 Bloume

The compositional act begins with a sketch on paper of the desired musical shape and this is followed by a period of improvisation at the keyboard to find the harmonic language and a possible layout among the hands. At this point, there is no fixed concept in mind (other than the sketched shape) and improvisation is the primary tool in generating ideas. The outcomes of these sessions are a tone row (Fig. 2-1) and preliminary arrangement of these notes as a motif (Fig. 2-2). I want to enlarge the phrase and create a state of flux so certain pitches are rearranged (Fig. 2-3). The resultant two-bar phrase expands across the full range of the keyboard and provides a variety of pitches and registers for Poletti to work with.

The two-bar phrase undergoes further rearrangement followed by a harmonic change that provides an important structural moment.

Fig. 2-1 Tone row for *Bloume*

Fig. 2-2 Preliminary arrangement of notes

Fig. 2-3 Development of the motif

The main body of the musical text uses a long passage of repetition to provide space for the software technologies to modify and augment the texture ahead of the recapitulation. Poletti (2015) describes his treatments here as 'allowing the effects time to express themselves'. This is put to further use in the opening and closing sections where I divide the main harmonic idea among the hands as alternating chords for an extended duration. This forms section A and bookends the main body of the

music (section B) in traditional ternary form. In doing this I deliberately reference *Kriket*.

2.2 whiting flowre

I begin by improvising at the keyboard to generate harmonic and melodic ideas (Figs. 2-4 and 2-5). I want this piece to share similar characteristics with *Bloume* to maintain cohesion within the pair of collaborations and the wider body of work. This means the piano writing uses similar techniques introduced above: using displacement as a developing tool – rhythmic and pitch displacement – and passages of repetition to bring focus to the software technologies.
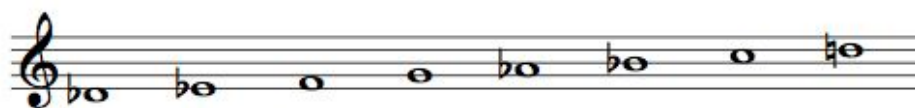
Fig. 2-4 Tone row for *whiting flowre*

Fig. 2-5 Preliminary arrangement of notes

In the next subsections I define the sonic entities *A Higher Sense of Time* and *Beauty Still* and provide an insight into the collaborative process with Plaid.

2.3 A Higher Sense of Time

The process of composition starts at the keyboard with a melodic tracing of the phrase 'a higher sense of time' (Fig. 2-6), adapted from an introductory text to *N.N.N.N.* by The Forsythe Company (2013). A repeating right-hand accompaniment (Fig. 2-7) is composed during the period of improvisation. I send these two ideas as a score, midi and audio files to Plaid and a brief suggesting a sound palette (industrial over organic, a preference for metallic and tuned break-beat percussion, a large dynamic range).

Fig. 2-6 Melodic tracing of the phrase 'a higher sense of time'

Fig. 2-7 The right-hand accompaniment

Once a basic musical shape is in place I write lyrics around Chanel's emblem, the bow (or 'ruban' in French), using symbolist language and imagery:

'Elevate, higher sense of time.

Comes Valentina

Vision, with a ruban

Did I love a dream?'

2.4 Beauty Still

Inspired by Lansky's trio of pieces I use the voice as the starting point for the composition based on the following original material (based on another of Chanel's emblems, the camellia):

'In a garden of camélias,

Laced in white, hair dressed by goldsmith deities,

You arrest my attention in these blissful revelries:

You make me keeper of your smiles.'

My brief instructs Plaid to abstract the material and use layers of phonemes to create rhythms with differing lengths to unsettle the metre. Handley (2017) explains:

'Will gave me his poem and some ideas about a voice driven piece that iterates through the text. We initially tried using a synthetic voice but ultimately preferred the depth and variety of a real voice processed in Melodyne and granulated.'

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Using Plaid's processed spoken word as a guide short, I improvise melodic ideas at the keyboard (Fig. 2-8) and developed using additive techniques associated with minimalism (Johnson, 1994). These phrases are adapted and developed to follow the contraction and expansion of the granulated voice.

Fig. 2-8 Melodic ideas for *Beauty Still*

3. Modelling

3.1 Bloume and whiting flowre

Poletti develops a model of each piece building a variety of tools controlled by a master instrument. These include filters, resonators, spectral transformation, delays, ring modulators and microtonal transposition. Poletti (2017) describes the instrument as:

> 'Extending the natural timbre of the piano through relatively classical effects in a dynamic and organic fashion, giving the electronics its own life. Instead of applying one effect to one sound event rather we think of the live electronics as a matrix of available timbral deviations and the control sweeps across the matrix (the dynamic) with freedom in the selection of the effects. At any time, what you get is a mix of effects and it is always different (the organic). The composer can control the amount of dynamic movement and the makeup of the mix'.

I record a number of iterations from a simulation of the piano to generate material. I select preferred outcomes and edit these into a final mix. Conceived as a whole the dynamic and organic electronic processes undermine the stability of the pulse.

3.2 A Higher Sense of Time

Handley uses Logic Pro X to arrange the piece and host various plugin instruments and effects. He describes the various tools:

> 'Falcon is the main synthesiser, providing some of the percussive elements using samples, wavetable and subtractive synthesis and physical modelling. Alchemy also

provides percussion mainly using additive synthesis. The mallet instruments are provided by Pianoteq, which physically models each note for a richer and more complex sound than a sample. Various GRM Tools are used for real-time processing of the voice and piano. Cantor is a simple formant/additive style voice synthesiser that allows the user to edit the characteristics of each phoneme of a typed text. In *A Higher Sense of Time,* it is used to follow Ed Macfarlane's vocal recording. Lastly, Alter/Ego is a formant based voice synthesiser like Cantor and used to layer over the voice' (Handley, 2017).

Several arrangements are developed and I provide cue sheets with specific feedback. Once the basic structure is agreed Ed Macfarlane records the lyrics: his breathy voice emphasises the dreamlike state.

3.3 Beauty Still

Handley structures the piano phrases into the poem for further refinement and processing. Logic Pro X is used again to arrange the piece and host the plugins. He explains how specific tools affect the text:

'Each word in the poem uses multiple instances of Falcon's IRCAM granulator which is the main tool for the vocal granulation. It provides automatable access to the important parameters of a granular sampler. Melodyne is used to even out and correct the pitch modulation in the recorded voice. This gives the effect of a synthetic voice whilst still retaining some of the complexity and depth of a recording. Stutter (GRM Tools) adds another layer of time based processing to sections of the voice by reordering sampled fragments randomly' (Handley, 2017).

4. Production and presentation of the finished work

Once the composition period has concluded I prepare for the final recording. At this point I initiate the commissioning of two new pieces by Max de Wardener. I provide him with the research context and models of the four new works. Similarly to 'Blank Canvas' I suggest our partnership continues to explore sonic concepts associated with Balinese and Javanese Gamelan and electronic club music. De Wardener (2017) explains the ideas behind *Tangram* and *Morte Point*:

'*Tangram* is built around a simple-seven beat rhythm… [with] subtle layers of pulsing resampled piano to propel the music forward. All the sound [in *Morte Point*] is derived from time stretching and filtering of the piano. Both pieces are written to be played with one hand and then looped to create denser textures. The idea arose to give Will more freedom to manipulate the sound electronically with the redundant playing hand when performing the pieces live'.

4.1 Names

In this instance the titles of the pieces and studio album come about towards the end of the period of composition. In naming the studio album, I reflect upon the original research network; I give consideration to the musical characteristics; the emotional imprint of the music when listened to as a whole; modes of dissemination (how might the title adapt across other manifestations? Is it memorable?); and the design aesthetic (what might the visual imagery look like?).

'bloom' suggests development, growth or flowering and it has the potential for other meanings. This correlates with how I use software technologies to modify and augment the piano. Moreover, it captures the broader additive concept of the album as curated playlist (see Part 2B, Subsection 6.2) and it is a short and recognisable title to communicate on digital platforms. There is no danger of mispronunciation or understanding (although its potential for multiple meanings creates depth of interpretation) and it does not create a barrier for the listener.

The alternative and now obsolete spelling 'bloume' dates to the fifteenth century. Why use alternative spellings as both track and album title? The practice of using a song name to title the album is common practice in popular music and so it follows here. However, the alternative spelling is playful and invites the listener to consider this separation. Some of the musical characteristics and structure of *Bloume* have already been paralleled with *Kriket* in the sections above so its naming mirrors Plastikman's altered spelling.

'Flowre' is another obsolete spelling from Middle English to sixteenth century (OED, 2016). Chanel's camellia is a white flower: 'flowering white' reintroduces ideas of

movement and this is reordered to become *whiting flowre*. Its lower case references Aphex Twin's own naming system of *minipops 67 [120.2][source field mix]*.

A Higher Sense of Time takes its name from the main text that gives rise to the primary motif on the piano. *Beauty Still* draws on Mallarmé's sensuous writing style and is an aural play on 'beautiful'.

The final public presentation of the musical material is in six manifestations and these are discussed next in Part 2B.

Part 2B. Dissemination

In the first chapter, I presented material exhibition strategies as a distinct mode of dissemination through which the curator mediates the artwork. What are the dimensioning possibilities of other modes of dissemination (physical and virtual)? How can I shape the curatorial construct in response to these and present a unified outcome? In Part 2B of the commentary, I address a set of dissemination modes in a quest to expand my answers to the second and third research questions. I go on to demonstrate an application of this learning in the second research outcome, 'bloom'.

In the last decades composers have successfully exploited technological innovations to disseminate their work and engage audiences far beyond the live encounter. In the 1960s visual artists and composers collaborated for the first time on high quality artwork for LP releases on major record labels. This revolutionised the way in which audiences experienced new music. In the 1980s musicians and DJs in the UK used radio technology to broadcast black and other alternative music on pirate radio stations to reach a previously marginalised audience. This had a considerable impact on urban culture. Since 1999 a variety of digital technologies have dramatically changed and shaped viewing and listening habits while offering creative practitioners immediate access to a global audience. The three distinct modes of dissemination under discussion in the following sections reveal valuable methodologies for my construction of the curating composer.

Art plus music equals

In the late 1960s, major record labels noticed the experiments of minimalist composers Terry Riley, Steve Reich, Philip Glass et al. At this time the LP was the primary mode of disseminating music. These composers were quick to recognise that if they collaborated with their art colleagues they could best exploit this multidisciplinary format: 'the record presented itself as a medium for sound, but also as a medium for text, art, design and a general confrontation with the world' (Grubbs, 2014, p.xi).
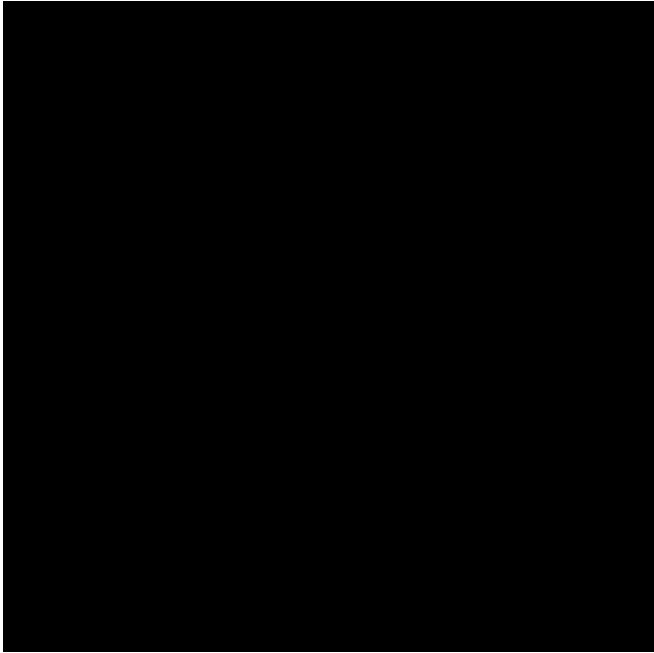
Fig. 2-9 LP cover artwork for Terry Riley's *In C* by Billy Bryant (1968)
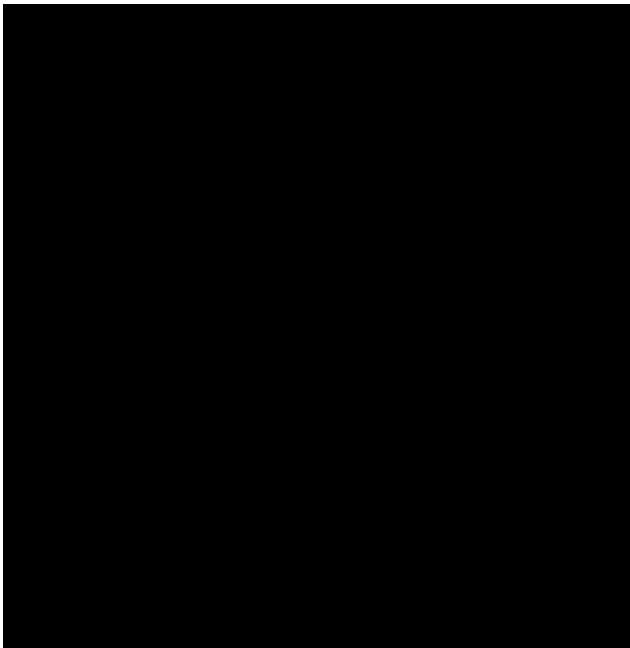
Fig. 2-10 LP cover artwork by William T Wiley (1968)

Keith Potter identifies the LP release of Riley's (1968) *In C* as a seminal moment in new music 'packaged in a style redolent of the period when the idea of a rock album with integral aspirations was still new' (Potter, 2000, p.149). See fig. 2-9. The artist William T Wiley created original designs for the release of Reich's first album in 1968, *Live/Electric Music*, (Fig. 2-10). These close associations (Reich and Wiley had a professional and personal relationship through Park Place, The Gallery of Art Research, Inc. in New York) helped to create a particularly strong design aesthetic. This was

revolutionary at a time when most classical music was packaged with reproductions of old master paintings and/or austere photography. This set a precedent for albums of this kind. For example, Sol LeWitt designed the sleeve for Glass' *Music in Twelve Parts (Part One and Two)* released in 1976, and Beryl Korot and Roy Lichtenstein later worked with Reich.

Another seminal moment for this mode came with the release of Reich's (1978) *Music for 18 Musicians* on the New Series imprint of ECM Records (Potter, 2000, pp.209-210). The cover features Korot's weaving notation (Fig. 2-11). Over ten thousand copies of the LP were sold and mainstream magazines, including Rolling Stone and Billboard, wrote enthusiastic reviews. Manfred Eicher founded ECM Records (Edition of Contemporary Music) in Munich in 1969. It became highly regarded for its design philosophy, which valued abstract designs and imaginative typography over artist portraits. ECM Records was enormously influential on contemporary classical labels such as Kranky and Touch Music. It also demonstrated a track record in successfully promoting experimental jazz and other 'difficult music' to non-traditional audiences (Potter, 2000, p.209).

Fig. 2-11 Beryl Korot's weaving design (1978)

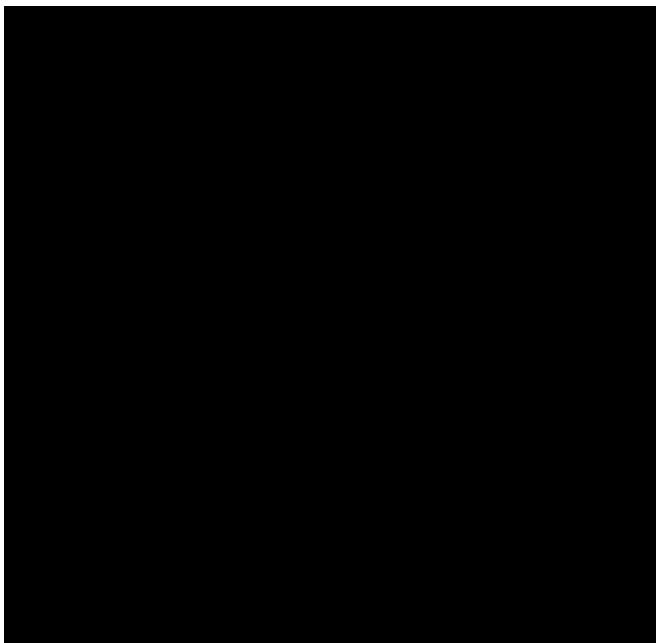John Metcalfe, founder of the Factory Classical imprint of Factory Records in 1989, desired it to be 'artist-led and artist-based in a way that Factory [Records] was doing with New Order' (Metcalfe, 2014). Reflecting on the status quo at the time he says:

'Back then you either had terrible out of focus pictures of whoever it happens to be in white tie or a terrible ball gown… or you had some random photograph of some flowers… perhaps there was a master painter. I found it boring, unimaginative; it didn't connect with me at all… it was creating a keep out sign for a younger audience' (Ibid.).

Metcalfe and the wider team at Factory Records were obsessive in their standards of design (see Robertson, 2007). Peter Saville, Central Station Design and 8vo developed their own visual language alongside the music and today their artwork is widely recognised and imitated. Other notable collaborations during this period include Russell Mills' designs for Brian Eno, Michael Nyman and Harold Budd. See Appendix II for newly documented insights into the founding of Factory Classical.

Pirate radio revolution

In the previous section, I showed how a new mode of dissemination (because of technological advances) provided composers with a greater opportunity to reach audiences. Often these emergent technologies were used in unexpected ways. For example, Tony Conrad was an early adopter of analogue video when it became commercially available in 1965. Then a member of La Monte Young's *Theatre of Eternal Music* he created important works for this new medium, which could record simultaneously image and sound. This allowed for a more sophisticated collaboration between musicians and artists and provided a new creative context in which to reach audiences.

The 1980s saw a rise in the number of pirate radio stations across the UK owing to changes in the cost and availability of broadcasting equipment, and antenna in particular. Pirate radio stations such as Dread Broadcasting Corporation (DBC), Radio Invicta and Kiss 94.5 FM became essential tools for disseminating black and urban music at a time when these styles were marginalised by mainstream radio. Music that might have been heard by relatively small groups at illegal blues parties or sound system events was suddenly available for a wider audience to hear. This in turn fuelled a growth in independent record shops and live events (including Kiss 94.5 FM's nights at The Wag) and very quickly the music disseminated into wider culture (see, for

example, street art, graffiti, skateboarding and fashion). This is an example of a musical ecology or dynamic system.

Many producers and DJs of electronic club music developed their skills on these illegal broadcasters and the MC's verbal jockeying has since entered the vernacular. Paul Sullivan (2014) provides a comprehensive analysis of the relationships between dub, sound system culture and pirate radio and I have written on the subject (Dutta, 2015). The musical rituals inherited from Kingston continue to influence British electronic club music in what Simon Reynolds (1998) calls the 'hardcore continuum'. (In Part 2B, Sections 6.2 and 7.1, this guides some of my curatorial choices of music in the curated playlist and live set accordingly.)

The founder of Kiss 94.5 FM, Gordon Mac, was exposed to Soul, Disco and Reggae at a very young age and he had his first DJ-ing residency at a local church by the age of ten.

'When I was 10 my mum and dad moved to Anerley near Crystal Palace and got in with the local sound system guys, so every Friday night, every Saturday night, there would be an illegal blues in the shop underneath. It was an eye-opener to have this massive sound system with all these rum barrels with speakers in and just one little light in the whole place... It was a totally different culture but one that I loved' (Mac, 2015).

Mac launched Kiss 94.5 FM in 1985 and he describes it as a community of interest station for those into House, Reggae or Rare-Groove or your dance music of choice (Ibid.). His policy of hiring DJs was based purely on their love of their specialist interest. Their internal journey towards legalisation started within a year of being on air. Mac bought out his original partners (Tosca, George Power and Pyres Easton) because of divergent interests. He resold their shares back to some of the DJs and this bought him enough transmitters to be on air for up to twelve weeks in which time he could start to make money. DJs such as Tim Westwood, Norman Jay, Jonathan Moore (Coldcut) and Trevor Nelson were now incentivised to promote the station and the Kiss FM nights at Dingwalls and Bar Rumba in London reinforced the station's musical ethos. Flourishing audience figures helped to support their application for a license and this was granted on their second attempt.

Pirate radio generated a do-it-yourself (DIY) methodology and ethos, which was community focussed. I have noticed how this sensibility has returned in the disruptive technologies of present and in the indie-classical scene set out in the previous chapter.

Moving towards greater engagement

Arguably a defining moment, when listening habits dramatically changed again, was in May 1999 when the peer-to-peer file-sharing service Napster launched. Apple's iTunes and iPod soon followed in 2001 and the musical landscape was altered irrevocably. In seventeen years audience consumption shifted from physical media to a download and ownership model to a streaming and access one (PRS for Music, 2014). Will Page (2006, p.2) shows 'how recorded music has long since lost any notion of being "pure private good" and now risks becoming a "pure public good"' owing in part to these game-changing digital services. According to PRS for Music, the popularity of on-demand streaming services overtook the download market for the first time in 2014, with more than two hundred and fifty billion usages of music being processed in a one-year period (PRS for Music, 2014, p.18). This figure accounts for a plethora of audio and visual platforms.

The overwhelming uncertainty as to how the market would evolve at the start of this new period led to some notable experiments with this new mode of dissemination. In 2011 the Icelandic singer-songwriter Björk released 'Biophilia', a multimedia project comprising of a studio album, an interactive and educational hybrid software application (app) and a live tour. The app (the first of its kind) features interactive graphics, animations and musical scoring for each of the ten songs. It invites user engagement. The app developed into an educational project in 2014 led by Björk, Reykjavík City and the University of Iceland with a global reach: she completed eight six-week residencies during her 'Biophilia' tour. The app has since entered the mainstream school curriculum in the Nordic countries and been inducted into MoMA's permanent collection. Anglo-American singer-songwriter, Beatie Wolfe, has experimented with materialising the virtual experience of her music. See, for example, her 'NFC Album Deck (Montagu Square)' (2015). A striking counteraction to music as a pure public good saw American hip-hop group Wu-Tang Clan auction online a single edition album-as-art-object in 2015. The elaborately designed 'Once Upon a Time in

Shaolin' sold for a reported $2 million and came with a legal agreement: the album could not be commercially exploited until 2103 but the owner could release it for free or play it at listening parties. This example begs the question, is it anachronistic to make a medium inherently reproductive a one-off?

At this moment in time there is a proliferation of digital content providers. The online medium affects what we choose to communicate: certain platforms lend themselves to rapid communication and others to long form. Practitioners, labels and publishers have adopted an armoury of digital tools to share new music and generate audience engagement. Websites such as Bandcamp allow fans to buy directly from the artist; on Soundcloud there are hours of remixes where stems of original tracks have been released to fans who in turn rework them in competitions that celebrate user creativity; video game platforms have become collaborative web projects where fans build and remix songs using animated objects, structures and shapes. See, for example, Plaid's (2016) 'The Digging Remedy' <http://www.thediggingremedy.com>.

In this new environment, the primary challenge is monetisation but what are the risks associated with digital dissemination? Grubbs (2014, p.xxi) says 'historical context can become a casualty of online listening, especially owing to incomplete and often mistaken information attached to audio files circulating on the web'. The historical and listening context of albums and bodies of work (for example suites and symphonies) are reductively fragmented when purchased or streamed separately. Moreover, a critical context is often missing entirely. This should be a pressing concern for the curator whose original function was to care for the art object.

Furthermore, in contemporary visual culture, most people experience a work of art in hybrid forms; that is in countless contexts in the digital domain, as posters, postcards or in books. These forms are reductive in some way; colours, sizes and textures are transformed; and a reproduction becomes part of the endless global flow of visual information. Dan Fern (2015b) likens an original art work or artefact as a genetic precursor; 'it spawns a new species, in a billion reproductions it will remain recognisable, though it [will] become more and more distant, and will acquire its own different features. It will have mutated into *something else*, in a million different forms'. It is in these hybrid forms that dimensioning possibilities are to be exploited

and they form an important part of the curator's dynamic system. The question of status of the original in a culture of mass mediatisation is beyond the scope of this study but it is worth mentioning critical literature on the topic exists (Auslander, 1999; Grubbs, 2014; Reason and Lindelof; 2016).

Media theorist Lev Manovich and choreographer William Forsythe push standard web browser technology in their interactive project websites. They create new archiving, reinterpreting and exhibiting (i.e. dimensioning) possibilities where imagery, film and supporting text are embedded in striking ways. See, for example, 'On Boadway' <http://on-broadway.nyc> and 'Synchronous Objects' <http://synchronousobjects.osu.edu>. The two projects are experienced in web applications and interactive installations. The user is provided with a variety of tools to interact with and alter the perception of each project and this has pedagogic, research and interpretive functions. Here, the digital platforms counter the risk of loss of context and give power back to the practitioners to present their work authoritatively and at the quality of their choosing. (I adapt this in Part 2B, Section 8.)

How can music practitioners place their work in a context that does justice to its quality and where it is presented alongside material of equal standard and merit? Digital journals exist in the visual arts: 'The Design Observer' <http://designobserver.com> features critical essays and peer reviewed scholarship. Another risk with online dissemination is audience fragmentation. Online distribution is rhizomatic and Tim Benjamin (2009, p.80) explains how 'social groups form from social networks on a highly transient and temporary basis and can grow (and disappear) very quickly'. Is there an opportunity for a collaborative curatorial platform to establish a digital journal as part of their dynamic system? (I experiment with this idea in Part 2B, Section 9.1.)

Research Outcome No. 2: 'bloom'

In the previous section, I described how the means of dissemination changed over three time periods and that these went hand in hand with technological advances. I now seek to answer the third research question. I demonstrate in my practice and this commentary herein an application of two curatorial models (modular and iterative) to navigate the complexities of delivering a mixed media dissemination strategy. I have chosen to exhibit 'bloom' as a composite public outcome in six manifestations, three of which are ancillary in function (D-F). These are:

A. Recording
B. Performance
C. Interactive Digital Space
D. Newsletter
E. Film
F. Workshop

In the following sections, I present and critically evaluate each manifestation. In doing so I aim to realise Dziekan's (2007) dimensioning so that the totality of the exhibition extends to the physical and virtual. In order to do this, I choose to employ an exhibition structure that is modular. This curatorial working method (Paul, 2008, pp.41-43) enables me to drop or defer any problematic modules in the event of unforeseen difficulties. The delivery of this strategy requires significant funding support. Fortunately, I am able to meet my fundraising target and thus deliver the first phase of activity. At the end of this section I suggest additional modules suitable for a second phase of activity but their delivery is outside the scope of this study.

6. Manifestation A: Recording

I release 'bloom' as a recording in two stages. Stage one is the studio album in digital and LP formats and it launched on 2 November 2017. Stage two focuses on the digital medium only. Here I exploit the streaming format to expand the studio album into a curated playlist. This is an open-ended process that launches on Spotify and Apple Music later in 2018. I choose to setup my own record label to manage the delivery and

execution of this strategy. I use existing digital platforms that have democratised the once costly process.

6.1 Casting the studio album for its release as LP and Download

The production and manufacturing processes are not relevant to this study so I only include a brief overview. I record piano parts for the six new pieces in a single session with Curtis Schwartz at his studio in West Sussex. I distribute the recordings to each of the collaborators and we prepare the pre-master copies. The mastering session takes place over two days with Guy Davie and Chris Potter at Electric Mastering in London. They cut the acetates in-house and the vinyl is manufactured at GZ in Holland. I use two digital services to manage distribution (<https://www.landr.com> and <http://studiowilldutta.bandcamp.com>).

More pertinent to this study are the curatorial decisions I make in fixing the running order of the studio album. I do this in between the two mastering sessions and I follow similar criteria to those in 'Blank Canvas 17': I consider the shape and flow, tonality and balance of durations of the complete listening experience. Importantly, I refer to the stylistic features of non-classical music and prepare a new recording of *this was written by hand* (Lang, 2003) as an example of notated minimalism. It has a restless character and the stuttered rhythms echo the break-beats in *A Higher Sense of Time*. The slowly thinning texture of the last eighteen bars acts as a natural outro so I position it at the end of the studio album. The final running order is:

1.   whiting flowre
2.   Tangram
3.   Bloume
4.   A Higher Sense of Time
5.   Beauty Still
6.   Morte Point
7.   this was written by hand

6.2 Album as curated playlist

Historically the public release of the studio album would complete this first manifestation. However, Gavin Wade says the artist-curator or curartist applies

'curatorial strategies as a way of presenting themselves, alongside other artists, to create composite public outcomes' (O'Neill, 2012, p.105). I consider how I might transfer this strategy in the mediation of the recording: I discover that by exploiting streaming technology I can develop the concept of 'bloom' as a curated playlist. I select existing and record additional material (guided again by the research network, the curatorial frame of 'edge culture' and stylistic features of non-classical music) to extend the listening experience of the original studio album and widen the context and historicity of the works presented. This is an open-ended process. In doing so I make visible a series of temporary connections between pieces that are negotiable and avoid notions of absolute value – the listener may decide to construct their own running order or individual pieces might find a place on other playlists.

For the purpose of this study, I now discuss a curated playlist sample provided in Folder 1, Part B. The first addition is my previously un-released recording of *In a Landscape* (Cage, 1948). I wish to dissipate the energy of *Bloume* and *A Higher Sense of Time* and return the focus back to the instrument without any electronic manipulation. The ambient and hypnotic musical texture, its simple but occasionally surprising harmonies and long form 'invites the listener toward a state of tranquility' (Drury, 1995). Next, I select my recording of *Overcolour* (Dutta, 2012b), taken from my first album, to transition back to the non-classical sound world. Its beat-driven finale gradually builds the shape of the set and the intensity peaks with three musical works by Flying Lotus (2014), Scratcha DVA (2012) and Kode9 (2013). Here, the historicity of electronic club music (and Reynolds' hardcore continuum) is most clearly audible. I follow this with a second previously unreleased recording, *Piano of Pleasure* (Richards, 2010), which is a piece I initiated with John Richards and it is another example of non-classical music. My preferred running order is:

1. whiting flowre
2. Tangram
3. Bloume
4. A Higher Sense of Time
5. In a Landscape (Cage, 1948)
6. Overcolour
7. Never Catch Me (Flying Lotus feat. Kendrick Lamar, 2014)

8. Fly Juice (Scratcha DVA, 2012)

9. Uh (Kode9, 2013)

10. Piano of Pleasure (Richards, 2010)

11. Beauty Still

12. Morte Point

13. this was written by hand (Lang, 2003)

6.3 Artwork

I approached Russell Warren-Fisher to lead the art direction for this project on the recommendation of Professor Dan Fern. Warren-Fisher has experience in album artwork, having designed sleeves for Gavin Bryars and The Michael Nyman Band among others. I present him with the situation and models of the pieces in an initial meeting and allow him artistic freedom in his response. His concept for the lead image (Fig. 2-12) is intended to be flexible across media (and the other manifestations). Here he describes the process:

'Creating a design that echoed the complexities and subtle audible cues evident within "bloom" began by creating a list of descriptive words associated with the sounds. Noticeably, some of the words on this list were contradicting one another – words like chaotic, precision, static, fluid, simple, layered. These oxymoronic style pairings led me to think that "contradiction" or looking for a point at which control and randomness meet could be part of the creative solution.

By dropping black diluted Indian ink onto white paper from a variety of pre-determined heights I purposefully relinquished some of the control I had over the mark-making so that the introduction of gravity and the medium itself became equally responsible for the outcome. While I had certain expectations in how ink may behave as it fell through space to eventually arrive on the page, its exact appearance or behavior could never be fully predicted and it was within this formalised chaos that the design for the album cover emerged' (Warren-Fisher, 2017).

Fig. 2-12 Artwork for 'bloom' by Russell Warren-Fisher (2017)

7. Manifestation B: Performance

My conception of the second manifestation is to provide material shape to the 'edge culture' narrative. To do this I use an iterative curating model (Paul, 2008, pp.39-40) where outcomes and feedback from other manifestations (workshops and seminars, for example) or previous performances as versions have a dynamic effect on the next performance. 'bloom LIVE' shifts and morphs over time giving life to Eno's (1996) temporary, negotiable and interchangeable connections.

7.1 'bloom LIVE': audio-visual performance

I invite Damian Hale at Treatment Studio to lead the creative direction of 'bloom LIVE' at an early stage in the project. He brings significant experience in designing large-scale audio-visual stage shows and we have an existing professional relationship. In our first meeting I present him with drafts of the music and Warren-Fisher's artwork concept. We also discuss the importance of having flexibility in the visual footage in the same way I sought to achieve in *Bloume* and *whiting flowre*. Hale (2017) describes the process of developing the visual language:

'Most of the show content is driven by something "real" which adds an element of warmth to the final output, even when it's buried beneath layers of digital processing. Footage filmed in our studio, out and about with cameras and phones

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and found footage become the building blocks for After Effects where they are cut up, layered, effected and made into sequences which are then loaded into Notch for playback.

Notch is a really powerful tool for us, as well as triggering the sequences via midi, we use it to add another layer of effects, or generate content from scratch. This can be done manually or by using an input such as live audio or camera data to control the parameters, meaning we can respond to what is happening musically and each show becomes unique'.

Once the visuals are underway, he brings in Matt Reed to design the set. Our initial meeting results in the basic idea of a gauze structure in front of the piano onto which visuals are mapped (Fig. 2-13). Logistical necessities dictate the structure must be transportable, quick and simple to (de)rig and fit most stages. Hale and Reed draw on Gabrielle Chanel's fine jewellery collection to design the unusually shaped structure.

Fig. 2-13 'bloom LIVE' at Institute of Contemporary Arts. Photograph by Michael Robert Williams, 2017 © Michael Robert Williams

Performance context provides another opportunity to reinforce 'edge culture' and the historicity of the new body of work and visual language. I seek black-box venues that

are multidisciplinary in their programming and offer scope for research sharing with students and early career practitioners (see Manifestation F). The resulting four-date tour of the UK is:

- 12.10.17 Institute of Contemporary Arts, London
- 08.11.17 De Montfort University, Leicester
- 22.11.17 Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow
- 29.11.17 The House, Plymouth

Throughout the tour I reconfigure the set list for each performance. The new body of work is shaped by temporary connections with club culture, minimalism and experimental music practices in the same manner as the curated playlist. For example, the set list for 'bloom LIVE' at The House mirrors the playlist sample in Part 2B, Section 6.2. However, in the live situation, the extra material is mixed into a single, continuous DJ set experience.

7.2 (Un)controlled activity

In the six manifestations, I consider how much of the activity is controlled or not. Each can be given two axes where the activity on the vertical axis is controlled and the horizontal uncontrolled (unregulated). For example, in 'bloom LIVE' much of the event is regulated by the activity taking place on the stage. However, the interactions between performer-spectator and spectator-spectator are unique, unregulated and specific to the live moment. Spatial co-presence is fundamental to the experience. Fig. 2.14 shows this in more detail.
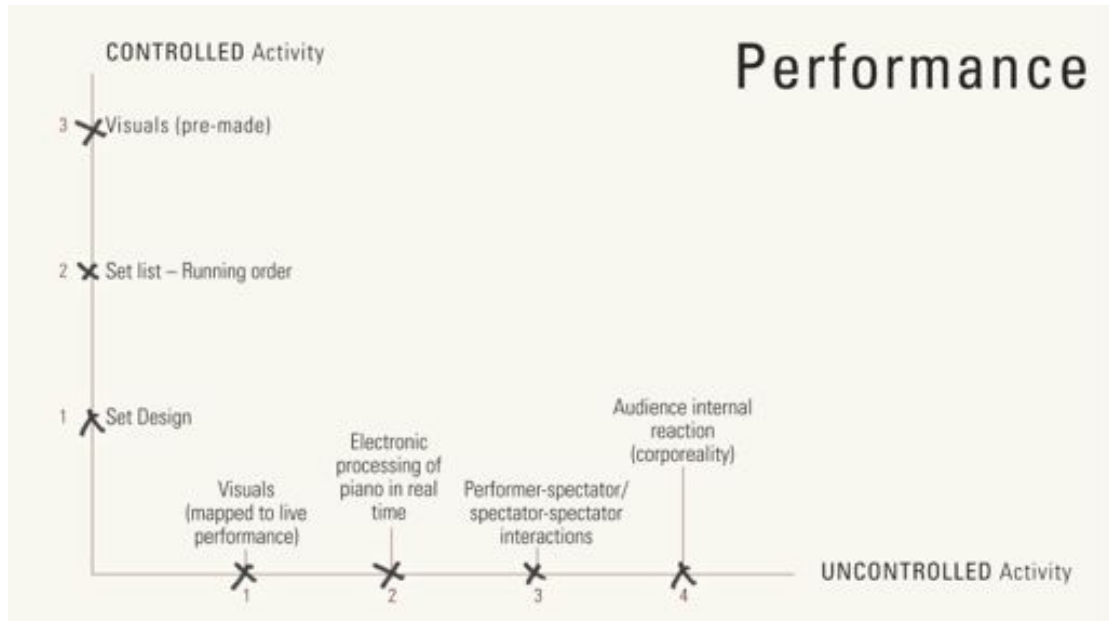
Fig. 2-14 (Un)controlled activity in 'bloom LIVE'. Diagram by Russell Warren-Fisher (2017)

My curatorial impulse is to balance controlled and uncontrolled activity. Too controlled and it becomes a passive experience. Conversely, too much unregulated activity, see for example La Monte Young's *Composition 1960*, tends to the extreme.

The urban sprawl of music featured in 'bloom LIVE' inter-relates with the activity taking place in Manifestations A and C. New material is gradually introduced into performance (which folds back into the playlist) and this continues in turn to strengthen the curatorial narrative.

8. Manifestation C: Interactive Digital Space

'bloomworks' <http://www.bloomworks.art> is 'the technologized interface between physical and virtual spaces' (Dziekan, 2007, no page number) and as such it is the central hub of the project. It has four primary functions and it is designed and built by Warren-Fisher and Marcus Stephens:

- Documentation (presenting materials in their optimum format)
- Research (providing critical and historical context to create meaning)
- Pedagogy (examining organising structures of the project and select works)
- Interpretation (inviting user interaction and engagement)

How is the relationship between communication and meaning and social participation curated? In the first instance, access to the site is communicated through the provision of a postcard. Visual artist Roberta Smith (1993) describes such ephemera as ancillary and collective artworks that prepare the receiver for the main thing.

8.1 The architecture of 'bloomworks'

The architecture of the site avoids unnecessarily complex structures. Instead, it is designed around the provision of text and imagery giving meaning to the project ('About' and 'Explore') and tools to invite social participation ('Interact'). The first two categories allow me to communicate much of the context covered in this study already and I do this through a combination of diagrams, photography (including photo essays on select topics) and text (for example, academic essays and creative processes – I privilege the latter over biographical information because it quickly dates and I want the site to function as a digital archive once the project ends). I show how this activity is self-reflexive (it is curating about curating).

8.2 Remixing as open source music making

The invitation to participate and co-create is communicated through an on-going call for remixes of *Bloume*. (See Chapter 2, Part 2A, Section 2.) Manuel Poletti and I built a system of real-time processing that is inherently flexible. However, at the point of recording it becomes fixed. To navigate this I use the virtual space as a suitable mode of mediation: I invite users to submit their own remixes of the piece. They can either use the stems from Poletti's software technologies or they can create their own following a similar aesthetic approach. This gets around the problem of a fixed recording because there is now a selection of versions of equal value to listen to. The original is the genetic precursor (Fern, 2015b) and the remixes are many different forms (mutations). This is another example of the mode of dissemination impacting upon the compositional act. It is a small-scale open source response to music making and there is growing discourse on remixing as an object, process and postmodernist culture (Lolavar, 2011; Andrewes, 2014; Sullivan, 2014). I select and upload remixes to the site over the lifespan of the project and in return users get their own page and revolving vinyl. There is further scope to arrange remixes into live versions and fold them back into 'bloom LIVE'. Fig. 2-15 shows examples of controlled and uncontrolled activity in the recorded works.
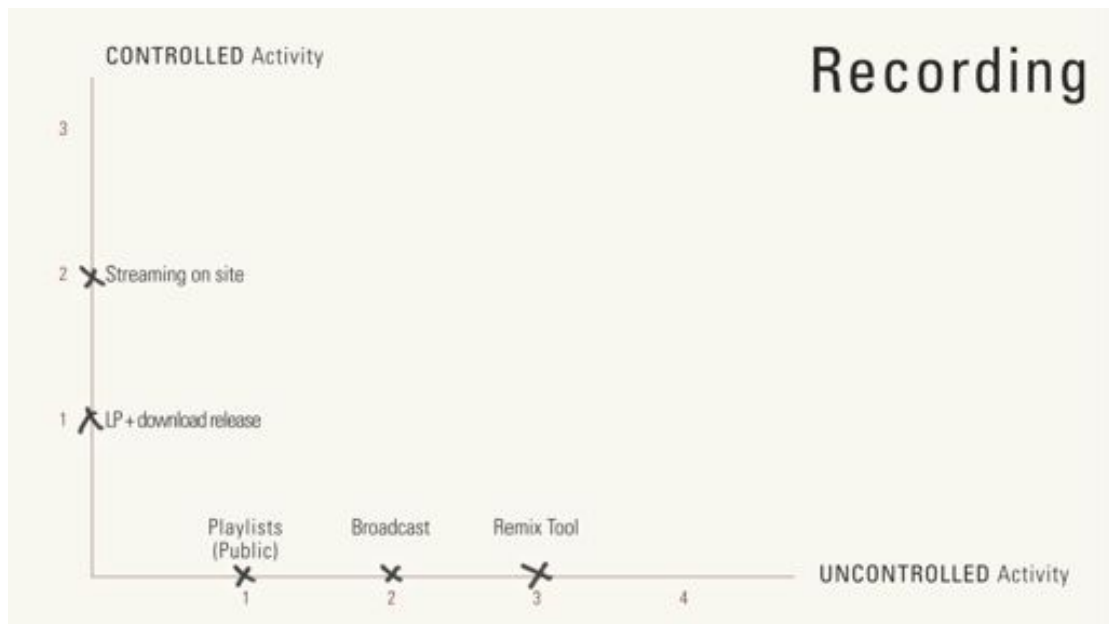
9. Manifestation D: Newsletter

I make the ideological decision to avoid using social media channels in order to control the design of the primary means of communication (the first ancillary manifestation). I create two newsletter templates (designed and built by Warren-Fisher and Stephens) using an existing digital provider: 'Edge Culture' and 'Studio Talk'.

9.1 'Edge Culture'

This is a long form journal that I use to communicate ideas and context directly to my subscribers. Each journal is edited jointly with a featured guest. I choose the guest based on whether their creative practice fits within the research network established in Part 2A. Furthermore, it is a deliberate decision to make explicit the framing narrative in the naming of the journal. Subjects under discussion include new media, technology-led performance, electronic club music, urban culture and contemporary visual culture, for example. The activity is unregulated (it sits on the uncontrolled axis) because once the topic is agreed guest editors are responsible for sourcing material and writing the text. I am responsible for the formatting only. This is an example of a collaborative curatorial platform. See Figs. 2-16a and 2-16b.

9.2 'Studio Talk'

I use this newsletter template to communicate topics directly related to the project. These include upcoming performances of 'bloom LIVE', special offers and insights into the recording and manufacturing process.
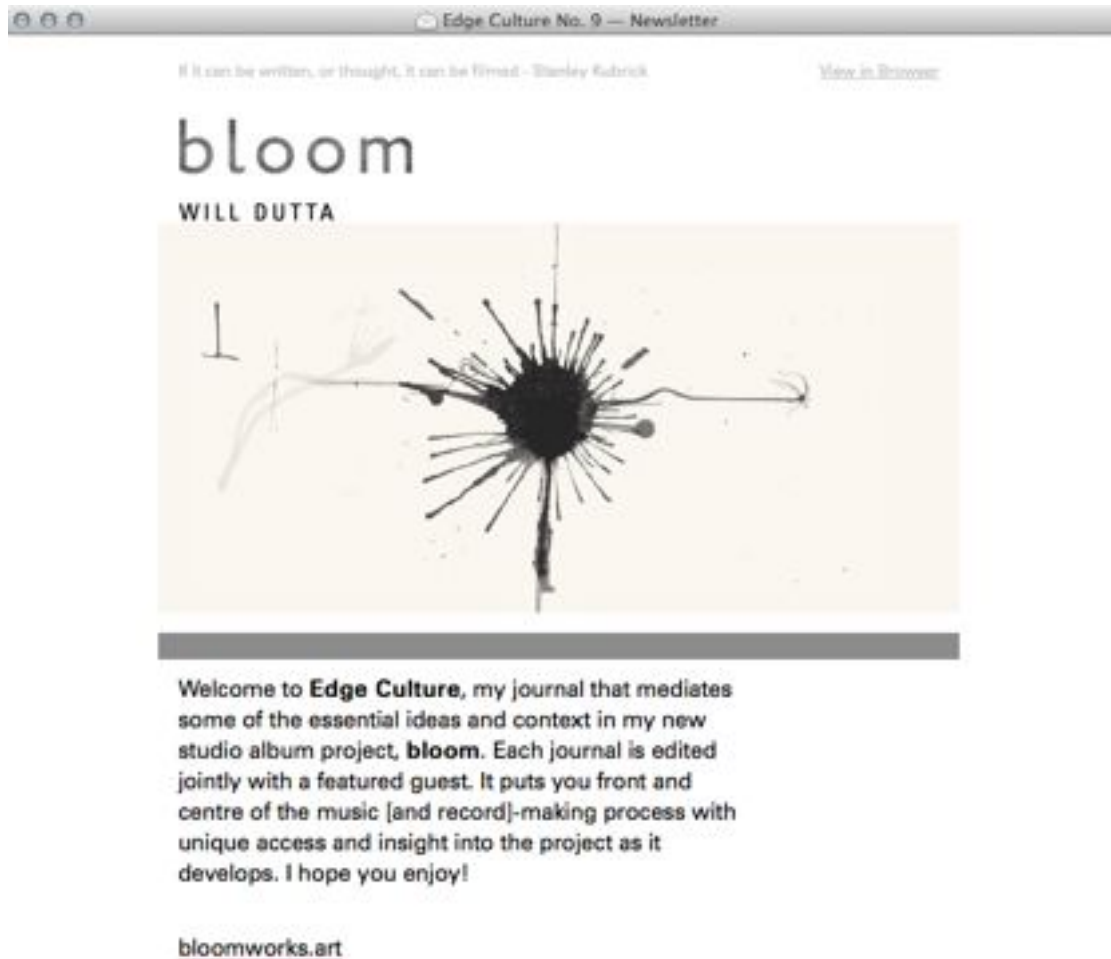
Guest Editor: Anne Lanzilotti

Anne is a composer, performer, scholar and educator. She is the new Assistant Professor of Viola at University of Northern Colorado having previously been on the faculty at NYU. A fierce advocate of contemporary music, recording projects include a include a chamber work by **Dai Fujikura** (Sony Japan/Minabel, 2017) and her debut EP, *Wanderweg*, available now.

Anne gave the UK premiere of Dai Fujikura's *Prism Spectra* at one of my **Blank Canvas** events in 2011. In the piece, her viola is processed using software technology created by Manuel Poletti at the sound lab, IRCAM in Paris. I'm delighted to say he is providing sound design on two tracks for my album. Our theme is music and architecture.

Fig. 2-16b Example of a guest editor in 'Edge Culture' newsletter. Photograph by Tessa Sollway, 2015 © Tessa Sollway

10. Manifestation E: Film

I use film as an alternative medium to communicate the framing narrative of this project. This is the second ancillary manifestation and it disseminates my work indirectly. A series of short films are produced with filmmaker Nicolee Tsin. The series covers 'Dub, Migrations and UK Sound System Culture', '1960s New York', 'Pirate Radio and Urban Culture' and 'Experimentalism in the UK'. In each episode, I interview an academic and/or artistic contributor.

11. Manifestation F: Workshop

The third ancillary manifestation is the 'Curating Music' workshop that goes hand in hand with performances of 'bloom LIVE'. These are up to three hours in duration and

take place at partner Higher Education Institutions (HEI). They are targeted at students and early career practitioners. I establish a workshop structure that allows me to deliver an introduction to the curator through the prism of 'bloom'. I also use the iterative curating model to explore with attendees how the other manifestations can be developed throughout the project. These ideas provide further instruction for the development of the main project.

Limitations and measuring success

In the following section I discuss some of the limitations and successes of the manifestations so far. I also provide an overview of optional modules for a second phase of activity. It is too early to measure the success of the project in terms of audience engagement and in any case this is beyond the scope of the study. However, a preliminary analysis of cumulative statistics shows that there is a proportionally high level of referral activity (interaction) among users within the six manifestations. This shows it is a dynamic system.

The regional tour of 'bloom LIVE' reached over 375 spectators and a review says '[Dutta's] piano compositions were elegant and masterfully minimal, paired with electronic tones as seamlessly as the whole thing paired with the imagery' (Reinbach, 2017). Approximately ten percent of spectators purchased the vinyl record in situ. Those who purchased the record via my store were added to the subscriber lists for 'Edge Culture' and 'Studio Talk' and continue to engage with the project. Composer David Lang (2017) says 'listening to your album… sounds great… I love LPs so thanks for making one'. Five of the six manifestations have an international reach and the UK, US and Japan are the largest markets. According to cumulative statistics from my distributors, 'bloom' has received over 3.8k streams since its launch in November. According to Google Analytics, just over 1k unique users have visited 'bloomworks' with a total of over 3.6k views since its launch in September 2017. The average session duration is approximately 2.5 minutes (with a peak of 6 minutes) and this demonstrates a proportionally high level of engagement from those visiting the site. According to MailChimp analytics, the average open rate of 'Edge Culture' is 52.8% (MailChimp's industry average is 16.4%). A reader comments:

'Loving it. Great format. Effortlessly adds context to your work, and in the broader process adds meaning and a greater variety of access points for a broader audience' (Paterson, 2017).

In the second phase of activity I plan to increase responses to the remix offer (by forging links with specialist HEIs), deliver the curated playlist activity on Spotify and Apple Music and secure further national and international performances of 'bloom LIVE' and supporting workshops. Subject to additional funding, the following modules can be included:

Virtual reality experience and download

Damian Hale and his team at Treatment Studio are interested in developing a virtual reality (VR) rendering of the film to *Beauty Still*. This would be presented as a premium experience, using HTC Vive, and could feature in 'bloom LIVE' (before and after the performance) and other VR festivals and pop-up locations, in the UK and internationally. Once the premium VR experience has been successfully toured, a second version is made available to Google Cardboard users via 'bloomworks'. This would be a secondary invitation to social participation on the site. A holding page is currently in operation on the website.

Online broadcasts of 'bloom LIVE'

At the time of writing, the BBC is developing an augmented video player and I am in discussions to trial and host it on 'bloomworks'. The objective is to offer online users interactive visualisations, additional footage and interferences unique to the medium during live broadcasts. I see this returning rivalry and excludability (Page, 2006) to the online experience. This module was originally dropped from the project owing to unforeseen circumstances. However, with a longer lead in time this could be reinstated.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter I set out to show the dimensioning possibilities of the extended exhibition format for a new body of work. I transferred curatorial theory and practice from contemporary visual culture into the musical domain and in doing so I constructed a new role that I name 'curating composer'. I developed material and

immaterial infrastructure to create the second research outcome. I consider each of the six manifestations of 'bloom' its own artistic product, or work in its own right, situated in a dynamic system of reciprocal exchange. I have deliberately made any potential hierarchies redundant. In carrying out this research outcome I have now answered all three research questions.

<u>Conclusion</u>

Throughout this study, and in response to the first research question, I thoroughly investigated contemporary visual culture and how independent curators, artist-curators and curartists shaped dynamic systems of art production, exhibition and dissemination. I uncovered valuable language, working methodologies and strategies and transferred these from one discipline to another.

I discovered and presented the curating composer as an important new role in twenty-first century music making. To answer the second and third research questions, I constructively applied the curating composer over the course of two research outcomes, 'Blank Canvas 17' and 'bloom'. I made micro and macro curatorial decisions to affect how the material was produced, exhibited and disseminated. I showed art music and curatorial practice converging. The following diagrams (Figs. 2-17a and 2-17b) show how my approach to 'bloom' moved on significantly from my first studio album, 'Parergon' (Dutta, 2012b). The degree to which I curate activity has increased in line with the research process.
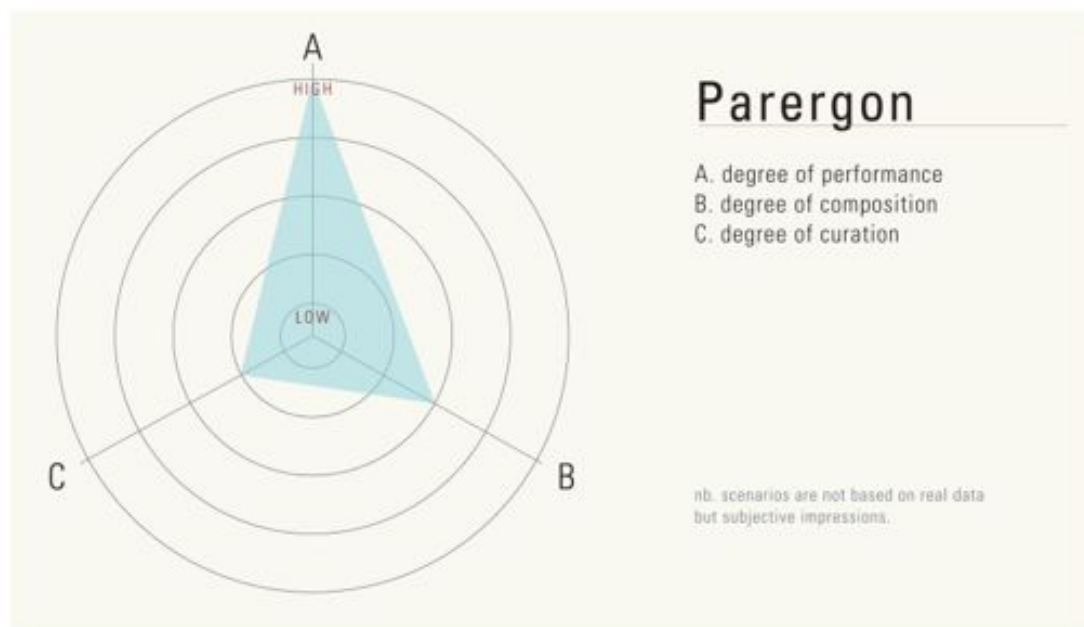

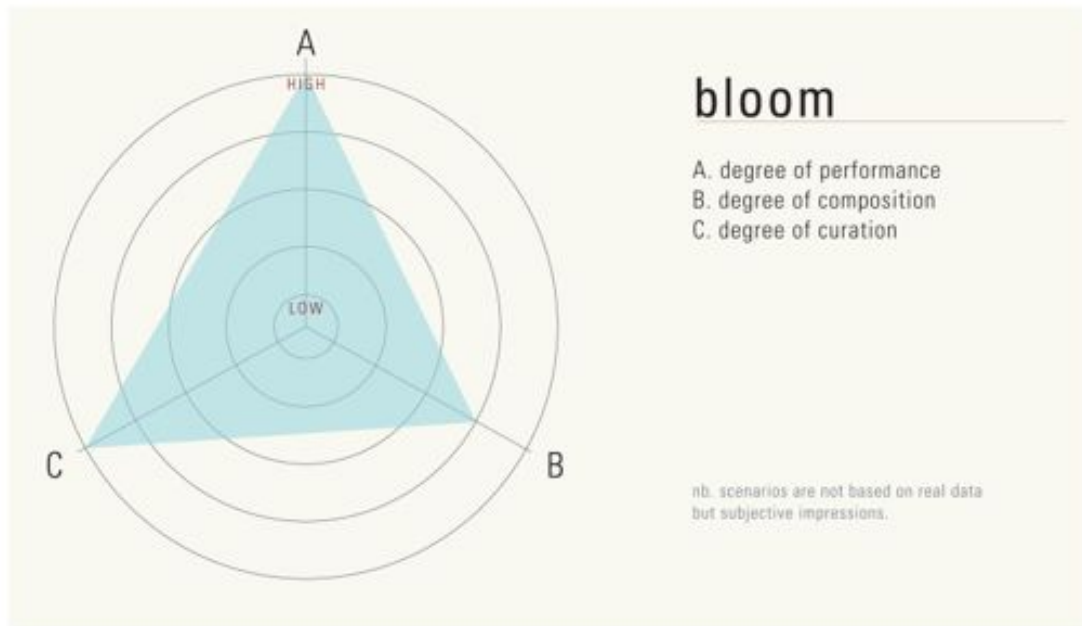Fig. 2-17a Diagram by Russell Warren-Fisher (2017)

Fig. 2-17b Diagram by Russell Warren-Fisher (2017)

A third outcome of this research is the first outline of non-classical music that has developed in the last fifteen years. In my analysis, I showed it to be a new style of art music, grounded in a context of notated minimalism and electronic club music, where rhythm and texture are the stylistic focal points and a postmodernist attitude to aesthetics and institutions prevails. Furthermore, I demonstrated an inter-relationship between its mode of production and exhibition.

At this point it is pertinent to highlight an unexpected strand of rebelliousness and subversion that is present in the study. In the historical and iconoclastic examples, the practitioners rebelled out of necessity from the seemingly fixed or impenetrable institutional systems. Similarly, composer and performer-led platforms associated with the indie-classical scene chose to do it themselves because opportunities were either not available to them or they wanted to confront the institution of art music and its associated ephemera and etiquettes. Institutional critique is at once progressive and subversive.

Another unexpected outcome and potential research project in the future is the relationship between the institutional critique discussed in this study and pedagogy and preparation of music students in the conservatoire. How can curatorial modelling be successfully embedded in and applied to conservatoire and HEI training without the

bifurcation between the practical and theoretical that has taken place in the art school? In the UK, Guildhall School of Music and Drama and Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance already offer dedicated programmes in creative practice (with the awards of Bachelor of Arts and Master of Fine Arts respectively) and others (including the Royal Northern College of Music) have specialist options available to undergraduate and postgraduate students. Internationally, Codarts Rotterdam is developing a new undergraduate curriculum that includes aspects of curatorial practice. Five HEIs have come together to devise and deliver the 'Music Master for New Audiences and Innovative Practice' or NAIP European Master of Music. Arguably many of these modules and programmes could go significantly further in grappling with some of the themes explored in this study. As a consequence of this I plan to share my research with these conservatoires. There is certainly applicability beyond Trinity Laban. Lastly, formal musical training needs to embrace and take on board how contemporary practitioners are producing notable artworks from little or no formalised learning. How can conservatoires understand this and adapt accordingly? Guildhall School of Music and Drama's BA (Hons) Performance & Creative Enterprise in collaboration with the Barbican has begun this process by having a course delivered by some of these creative practitioners together with tutors from the School's roster fostering a more diverse and collaborative environment within the conservatoire.

What might the curating composer look like in the future? He or she will likely continue to expand the dimensioning possibilities of the rapidly changing technological landscape (imminent new technologies such as augmented and virtual reality and blockchain offer exciting and as of yet unexplored opportunities). There is also significant space to explore beyond the fixed walls of a building. Away from consumerism and commodity, what function will live and mediatised performances have? There is a growing international discourse on the artist as citizen (see, for example, the 5th international 'Reflective Conservatoire Conference' at Guildhall School of Music and Drama) and I believe the curating composer will have an important part to play.

I have shown the construction of the curator in music to be significant in historical terms and conservatoires ignore him or her at their peril. It is vital a new generation of curating composers are created who can provide aesthetic, mediation and

entrepreneurial direction to musicians in what has become a bewilderingly fragmented landscape. Fundamentally, however the curating composer chooses to incorporate dimensioning strategies, at any given time let them make exciting temporal connections to challenge and engage audiences and be a creative force in twenty-first century new music culture.

Appendix I

Composer John Richards explains how he met de Wardener through mutual friends Hilary Jeffery and Rowan Oliver. As double bassists, they were 'press ganged into the orchestra (both being more interested in contemporary music and improvisation) so we had some fun in the bass section' (Richards, 2014). Prokofiev came to York in 1997: 'the post-grad community then was still quite small and we shared a lot of interests and became friends. We organised quite a few gigs of electronic music together under the moniker "nerve8". These concerts were in more unusual locations'. Richards says the department was full of interesting composers and performers during the late 1990s and many are now associated with the indie-classical scene. These include composers Anna Meredith and Emily Hall (founding members of 'Camberwell Composers Collective'), Laura Moody (cellist in Elysian Quartet) and Sarah Dacey (soprano in juice vocal ensemble), among others.

Appendix II

John Metcalfe founded Factory Classical and became its project coordinator in 1989. Metcalfe says that while a student at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester he was unaware of the wider contemporary classical landscape:

'All that I knew about was Joy Division, Durutti [Column] and the Haçienda... all the music I was listening to was Post Punk, New Wave, some electronic music [including] Kraftwerk. I certainly didn't know about Steve Reich or Philip Glass or any of the stuff going on in New York' (Metcalfe, 2014).

He cites his motivations for setting up the imprint as a direct result of the industry's resistance to change:

'I found myself in a situation, training to be a classical musician, with the potential to embark on a career in an environment I didn't particularly like... I wanted to do something that was relatively young, not new for the sake of it, but something that might have a connection with people my age and with my outlook'.

He initially launched Factory Classical at the Diorama Arts Centre in London after deliberately ruling out the established concert halls; 'there was no intention ever for it to be in the Wigmore [Hall]'. This was due, in part, to the associations audiences would make with their surroundings, 'associating certain venues with a certain mix of music and styles' and the octagonal space fit 'with the post-industrial vibe that Factory had'. Metcalfe says that he was not trying to break down barriers; rather he 'was fed up with the status quo'.

Glossary

Throughout this study I have made reference to and expanded upon a number of concepts, some of which I have transferred from the discipline of visual arts. In doing so I have claimed a curatorial position. The following glossary is a list of terminology with their meanings explained in the context of this study. Together they formulate my personal construction of the curating composer.

Artist-Curator / Curartist

A creative practitioner who uses the physical and intellectual experience of an exhibition to present themselves alongside other artists.

Art Music

Notated music that takes an established form to a lessor or greater extent to communicate artistic expression.

Curate

To authoritatively select objects in relationship to a given context prioritising analytic inquiry and theoretical coherence.

Curatorial Design

Contemporary curating features that affect the aesthetic experience of the exhibition.

Digital

Used to subsume the full range of new technologies around computers and the Internet.

Dimensioning

A term used by Vince Dziekan to describe the enlarging of the exhibition platform to cover physical and virtual spaces.

Edge Culture

A term created by Brian Eno to describe an alternative approach to art history that avoids notions of absolute value.

Exhibition

A temporary public platform within which an overarching curatorial framework is provided.

Institution of Art

The apparatus for producing and distributing art and art ideas that prevail at any given time and determine the reception of works.

Institutional Critique

Critical examination of the parameters and apparatus of the institution of art.

Mediation

In contemporary visual culture, the term mediation is used to refer to education based practices and/or the provision of ephemera ahead of and during exhibitions that include ongoing cultural dialogue between curators, artists and audiences. In the discipline of music, it has taken on a slightly different meaning. Tim Rutherford-Johnson applies it to the transmission of music from originator to listener via one form of media or another.

Mediatisation

Transference from one medium to another and often associated with artistic dissemination and distribution.

Non-Classical Music

A new style of art music, grounded in a context of notated minimalism and electronic club music, where rhythm and texture are the stylistic focal points and a postmodernist attitude to aesthetics and institutions prevails.

Programme

To select objects or musical works that privilege entertainment over theoretical inquiry.

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