COMPOSING THE SURFACE

Eleanor Cully

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Name of student: Eleanor Cully

Supervisor: Prof. Monty Adkins

Co-supervisor: Prof. Michael Clarke

Department: School of Music, Humanities and Media

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Abstract

'Composing the Surface' comprises a collection of ten instrumental works that explore issues relating to a performer's engagement with a given instrumental interface. I consider the notion of 'surface' as the initial motivation for all of my portfolio, a catalyst from which I work outwards into visual art or music. I am concerned with focusing the listener's attention on the performer's interaction with their instrument by using a reduced sonic palette that is explored from multiple perspectives. The notion of performance 'surface' is examined in various ways such as the utilization of fixed hand positions, fluctuations of instrumental sonority resulting from micro-gestural changes and critiquing performance gesture through its translation onto other instruments. I will discuss these issues in three essays, 'Approaching the Surface' which presents an exposition of my concerns with surface; 'Instrumental Interface' will consider two distinct approaches to working with acoustic instruments; and finally, 'Almost Unnoticeable' which discusses an aesthetic for my work.

List of works submitted

Works for Solo Instruments:

First Caprice (2013) for flute head-joint (2.5')

> For Alba Bru. Premiered at re:sound, Huddersfield, December 2013

Second Caprice (2015) for flute head-joint (2.5')

Third Caprice (2015) for flute head-joint (30")

coextensive on the surface (2014) for flute (3')

> For Nancy Ruffer. Premiered at St Paul's Hall, Huddersfield, March 2015

Itself Within (2015) for clarinet (5')

everything located on the surface skin (2014) for piano (3.5')

> For Fred Feeney. Premiered at 'At Your Place', Bastard Assignments, London, April 2014

often empty on the insides (2014) for piano (20')

Movements in Two Positions (2014) for piano (variable duration)

Works for Ensemble:

I, as mouth (2014) for voice & percussion (7')

> For Juliet Fraser & Maxime Echardour. Premiered at St Paul's Hall, Huddersfield, February 2015

Works for Multi-Instrumentalists:

Fixations I-VII (2014) for various instruments (variable duration)

> For David Pocknee. Premiered at Sonikab, The Coffee Kabin, Huddersfield, November 2014

Works for Silent Reader:

often amongst (2015) for silent reader (variable duration)

  Found Online. Published by Imaginary Sound Works http://imaginarysoundworks.com/ May 2015

Sculptural Installations:

Private Sculpture Series (2014) with title cards (silent installation)

  First Exhibited at hcmf// Shorts, Huddersfield, November 2014

With Itself (2015) glass on window (silent installation)

  Installed for 'Discrete Positions', Unit 9 Gallery, Huddersfield, May 2015

Paintings:

Ten Points in Contrary Motion (LH, RH) (2015) poster paint on rag paper

  First exhibited at 'Discrete Positions', Unit 9 Gallery, Huddersfield, May 2015

Five Points in Parallel Motion (RH) (2015) poster paint on rag paper

  First exhibited at 'Discrete Positions', Unit 9 Gallery, Huddersfield, May 2015

Five Points in Parallel Motion (LH) (2015) poster paint on rag paper

  First exhibited at 'Discrete Positions', Unit 9 Gallery, Huddersfield, May 2015

Contents of DVDs

Disk 1

Compositions, Part 1

i. *Coextensive on the Surface* – video of the premiere by Nancy Ruffer at St. Paul's Hall, Huddersfield, 02.03.15

ii. *everything located on the surface skin* – audio from the premiere by Fred Feeney at 'At Your Place', Bastard Assignments, London 26.04.14

iii. *First Caprice* – audio from the premiere by Alba Bru at re:sound, Huddersfield, 14.12.13

iv. *Fixations* – video of the premiere of *Fixations I, II & IV* by David Pocknee's at 'Sonikab', The Coffee Kabin, Huddersfield, 12.11.14

v. *Movements in Two Positions* – audio documentation by the composer from practice rooms at the University of Huddersfield

vi. *often empty on the insides* – video documentation from my studio space in Huddersfield

Documentation of Visual Works

i. *Points in Various Motions* – three videos each documenting one of the three visual art works exhibited at the exhibition 'Discrete Positions', Huddersfield, 05.05.15

> *These videos serve as documentation of three white paintings that record small finger gestures only visible up close. During each video, the camera traces the gestures, then gradually moves away from the work. This illustrates the changing perceptual relationship between the work and the distance from which it is viewed.*

ii. *Private Sculpture Series* – still images of the title cards in their various locations in Huddersfield as part of hcmf// Shorts, 24.11.14. Title cards were installed amongst the following venues: Creative Arts Building Atrium, Phipps Hall, St Paul's Hall, St Thomas' Church, St Peter's Church and Bates Mill, Huddersfield.

iii. *With Itself* – video documentation of the installation during the 'Discrete Positions' exhibition, Huddersfield, 05.05.15.

> *This video serves as documentation of an installation piece consisting of three glass panels each placed upon three window surfaces in a gallery. Rather than replicate an installation view of the whole work, the video combines individual views of each panel separately, in order to highlight the movements of passers-by, and their relationship to a piece of art which they are simultaneously part of, but perhaps not aware of.*

Disk 2

Compositions, Part 2

i. *I, as mouth* – video of the premiere by Juliet Fraser & Maxime Echardour at St Paul's Hall, Huddersfield, 12.02.15

ii. *Itself Within* – videos of Carl Rosman performing each section of my composition at his home in Cologne, Germany.

Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to thank my supervisor Monty Adkins for his eloquent and valuable guidance and support throughout my research period.

I would like to thank performers Alba Bru, Fred Feeney, Carl Rosman, David Pocknee and guest artists Maxime Echardour, Juliet Fraser, and Nancy Ruffer for performing my music.

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Finally, a special thank you to Jorge Boehringer for his complete support of my work and hours of time spent assisting with its documentation.

APPROACHING THE SURFACE

A surface is the outer or uppermost part of an object. The surface can become a platform for something other, for the inside to open up outwards. Interfaces between surfaces can generate material relationships, elements of framing and reframing, and even illusions. The subject of 'surface' has featured in all of my compositional and visual work since beginning my MA at Huddersfield. This essay attempts to explore some of the areas in which surface features in my work, and to unpack various approaches to these surfaces.

Surface Skin

I first considered the idea of surface as a subject in my compositions when I came across the work of sculptor Richard Deacon in the spring of 2014. In an interview with Penelope Curtis for the book 'RD' (Curtis et al., 2014), Deacon speaks of his desire for lightness, rather than heaviness, in reference to ideas about surface:

> I was slightly anorexic as a teenager, and I found weight a bit disgusting, so that's, I think, the reason why I didn't like making heavy things. I thought they were dumb and stupid. The heavy bits of steel kind of were really unattractive to me. You couldn't get inside them; they hurt you when they fell over; it had no lightness to it, in all sorts of ways. I didn't like them. I didn't want the work in the studio to be difficult to move around or to manipulate. It was also connected to ideas about surface and what was inside things. (Deacon in Curtis et al., 2014)

When discussing his work, Deacon often speaks of the surface as a prominent feature: "The insides of my works are often empty. The surface, the skin, is where everything is located." (Deacon in Tate, 2014). The surfaces of his sculptures are often made up of excessive adhering materials such as bolts and glue, often in seemingly unnecessary places. These surfaces provide points of attraction for the participant, their appearance is active in relation to the skeletal open forms of the work that make contact with the ground through few points of contact. Figure 1 is an example of a work with an active surface made up of bolts, layers of wood with glue seeping out of the joins, and a patterned surface.
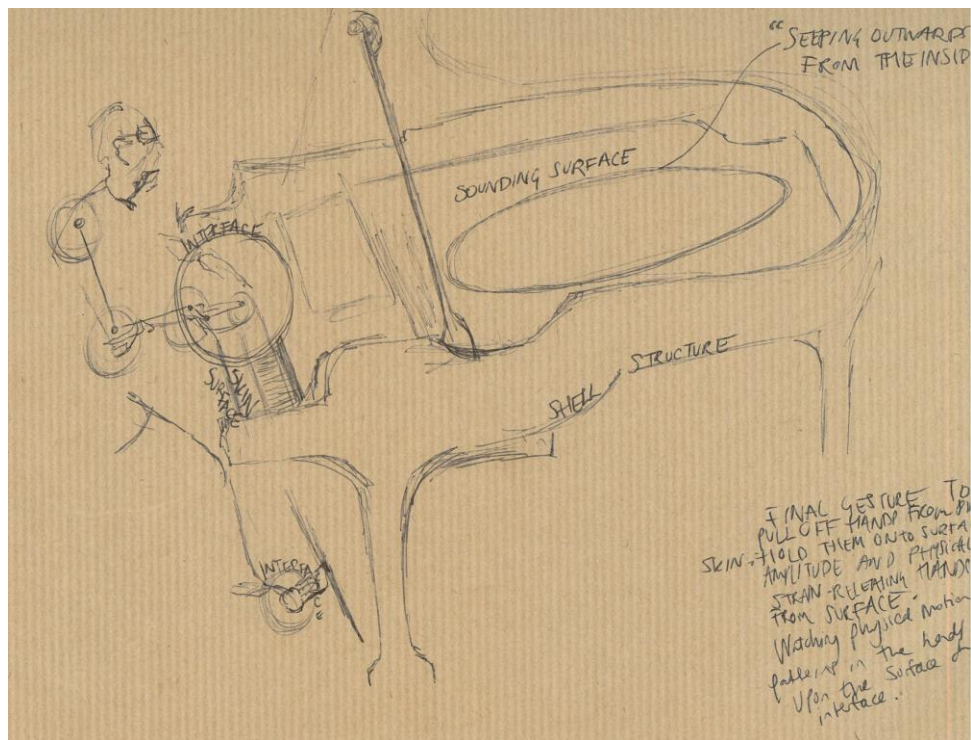
Fig. 1 *Lock* (1990), Richard Deacon (Döhne, n.d)

Fig. 2 sketch of the interface between skin and surface in piano playing.

The dichotomy between the surfaces and spaces in Deacon's works caused me to recognise the structures of musical instruments in this way. Instruments too, are hollow resonating spaces, with surfaces that provide points of attraction for the body. This simple realisation altered my compositional approach to writing for an instrument, and my physical approach to playing the instrument.

I began to think about surfaces on an instrument where "everything could be located" in a composition. I began to imagine and develop a compositional practice arising out of working the structural surface of the instrument in a visual and touch-based way, imagining an idealised instrumental interface between surface and skin. I began to explore a touch-based approach to the musical instrument, locating a tactile centre for each piece, and subsequently composed a whole body of instrumental pieces about instrumental interface.

I envisage the structure of the piano in terms of the physical separation of the keyboard surface from the resonating piano body (see figure 2). Shortly after seeing Deacon's work at the Tate, I composed the piano piece *everything located on the surface skin* (2014), titled as a paraphrase of the quote: "the surface, the skin is where everything is located." (Deacon in Tate, 2014). In this piece I sought to explore new ways of inhabiting the surface for the duration of the piece. Visually, I was interested in the cracks between the white piano keys. This initial point of attraction became a gestural point of focus as I began to depress only the cracks between two adjacent keys, rather than the centres of any keys, as the basis for the composition (see figure 3).
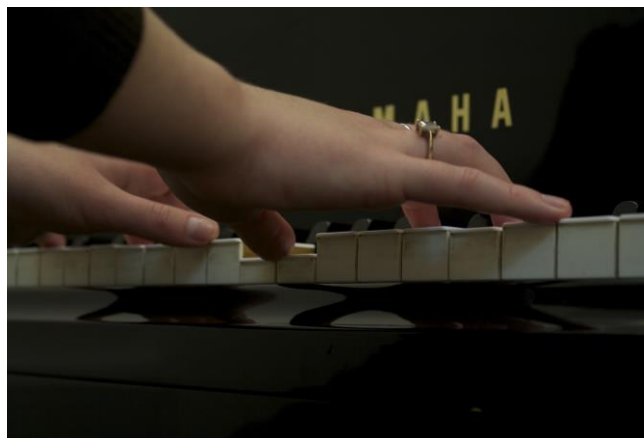

Fig. 3 Photograph of the fixed hand position in *everything located on the surface skin* (2014)

(Maguire, 2014)

This resulted in an enlarged key surface on the piano - each gesture sounding as two keys from a single point of contact. I created a line of such contact points on the piano within one fixed hand position, acting as a way to frame an enlargement of surface. This position inhabited the space of a 15th chord on the piano surface and enabled me to work within a limitation of eight possible dyads from the resistance of the position.

Within this position I liked the feeling of all potential pitches beneath the fingertips in one space during the composition. It was appealing to compose within a fixed surface area. Through the resulting piece, the player is asked to remain in contact with the surface of the piano with all eight utilised fingers, for the duration of the composition. This was the beginning of a series of instrumental works to do with instrumental interface, where harmonic content is derived from prolonged, tactile relationships between surface and skin.
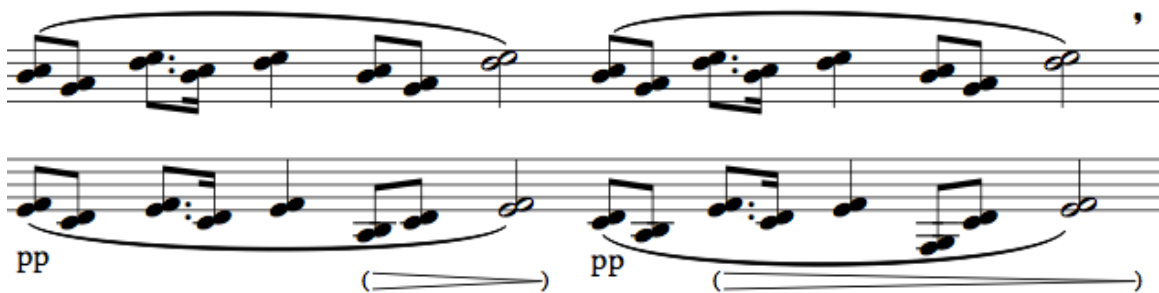

Fig. 4 extract from the score for *everything located on the surface skin* (2014)

Preparing the Surface

In the late 1940s John Cage famously prepared the strings of a piano to create an expanded percussive-type instrument (see figure 5). With this in mind I decided to prepare the surface of the piano, its interface - the keys, with masking tape. I was interested to see if I could obstruct the mechanism of playing the keys with the tape. By means of the prepared surface, I created a piece that deals with elements of indeterminate sound from the body of the instrument. Pushing down on a key stuck with tape is likely to mean that the hammer inside the piano will not hit the string inside with correct force for producing a pitch. Only the sound of the tape itself will be heard on the surface. Throughout most of the key depressions in this work, the masking tape provides resistance to this mechanism, causing few pitches to sound against the sounds on the surface.

Unlike John Cage's preparations of the inside of the piano, my preparation on the playing surface could be manipulated by touch as part of the work, the gestures of the pianist directly, and visibly, affected by the preparation as part of the performance. Cage had affected the sonic *result* of hitting the keys; I had affected the *mechanism* of playing the keys, as well as the (non-) sonic result. See figures 5 and 6 for visual representations of these preparations.

Fig. 5 John Cage preparing a piano in 1947 (Penn, 1947)

Fig. 6 Photograph showing the depression of a single key in a performance of *often empty on the insides*

(2014) (Maguire, 2014)

Like wind instruments, the piano's surface of performance is isolated from its separately located centre of vibration. The piano keys are an external touch mechanism to the strings that produce the sound. On wind instruments, the keys are an external touch mechanism to the air that produces the sound. Because of this, the action of the hand on the mechanism can be isolated from any sounding result. In doing this, the focus can be diverted from the sound to the touch of the player upon the surface of their instrument. From this realisation, I went on to limit the sonic potential in my piano and wind pieces in order to present the surface as the focal point of my works. I am particularly referring to my flute piece *coextensive on the surface* (2014) and David Pocknee's performance of *Fixations I* (2014), where only breath sounds accompany the activity of the hands. These pieces present the action of the hands and the breath on the surface as the subject of the work, rather than a by-product of the sound.

Cross-Surface Interface

In the video "'flutonette extended'" (Kornstad, 2008), Jazz musician Hakon Kornstad plays a flute with a clarinet mouthpiece, causing the flute body to be held and played like a clarinet. This interested me in terms of a crossing of instrument surface and a crossing of instrument interface. The pitched sound of Kornstad's 'flutonette' is still largely that of a clarinet due to the mouthpiece, and the physicality of this flautonette remains true to the clarinet also in terms of playing position – it is not held to one side like the flute but rather held forwards like a clarinet. However, a larger volume of the instrument consists of flute parts, pertaining to the idea that the instrument is in fact a flute with a clarinet mouthpiece.

In my own flute playing I had explored techniques of playing the flute down the mouth hole like a trumpet, and using finger glissandi and finger vibrato inside the tube of the flute like a string instrument. This was an exploration of sound and physical techniques adopted from other instruments; however, I still held the instrument in a manner associated with flute playing.

One day on a train I had the idea of applying a gesture associated with one instrument, onto the surface of another different instrument. This idea was very different to my previous work; instead extending techniques upon an instrument that were inspired or taken from other instruments. This new idea was disconnected to any desire for sound; I merely wanted to present a gesture on the surface as a statement. On the same train journey I composed a text score for a series of pieces titled *Fixations* (2014) written for David Pocknee. Each score asks the player to apply the posture and positions from one instrument onto another instrument of a different family. The performer performs a suggested singular gesture upon the instrument of their choice and puts down the instrument to finish the performance. The pieces last no more than 1 minute each. Below is an extract from the score for *Fixations* (2014) (see figures 7, 8, and 9 for photographs of David Pocknee's performances).

Fixations 1

Place the exterior of a non-wind instrument against the bottom lip, and whilst holding it like a flute, exhale slowly

Fixations 2 (a & b)

Place a non-string instrument upon your left hand shoulder, using your right hand either/or:

- use a detachable part of that instrument to resemble a bow and move across the instrument from left to right
- pluck a part of that instrument with a finger

My work around the time of composing *Fixations* (2014) had been exploring interface through fixed positions on the surface of the instrument, where all material for a work may come from a single position on the instrument. I was using the fixed position as a compositional limitation, and developing new ways of playing the surface of an instrument within this position. Compositing *Fixations* was a response to a question I had for myself in my work - was it really the approach to the surface of a musical instrument that I was exploring in my work? Perhaps it was actually another aspect of a locked position that was appealing to me, or something other I hadn't yet articulated.

I composed *Fixations* as a test in order to answer this question. These pieces are an attempt to direct the audience's attention to the surface of an instrument, the subject of my instrumental music. My thinking was that I could take the idea of presenting the surface so far that all that would be presented is the frame within which the performer approaches the surface, rather than a sonic result from this approach. In this case, the cross application of gestures between instruments draws more attention to this idea. With very little sound, these works, though perhaps perceived as comical, isolate the playing position of an instrument, emphasised by its 'meaningless' application to another.

Fig. 7 David Pocknee performing *Fixations I* in 2014

Fig. 8 David Pocknee performing *Fixations II* in 2014

Fig. 9 David Pocknee performing *Fixations IV* in 2014

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Cross-Surface Sound

In his work *Hanging in the Balance* (2015) composer Colin Riley uses percussive surfaces to amplify harmonic elements in the piano. In the documentary for this piece (Riley, 2014), Riley explains that the motivation for composing the work came from unintentionally activating a snare drum when playing the piano in a room with a drum kit. Various percussion instruments are "kinds of resonating objects, kinds of bodies which transcend various different sounds of pianos down through these materials". (Waterworth in Riley, 2014).

At the beginning of Autumn 2014 I began working on a piece for voice and percussion, titled *I, as mouth*. During the whole work, the vocalist speaks a text softly into a microphone that is connected to two transducers controlled by the percussionist. The surface of the vocalist's speech is placed with these transducers, upon the surface of the percussion skins, which act as amplifiers. There is no separate amplifier for the dry sound of the voice alone.

Fig. 10 Juliet Fraser and Maxime Echardour in the rehearsal for *I, as mouth* (2014)

The skins of the percussion amplify the vocalist's voice amongst the sound of their own vibration. The vocal part would barely be audible without the transducers on the percussion skins. However, the percussion skins themselves vibrate with the transducers and therefore often mask the text. Thus the voice becomes lost in its own amplification.

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Riley's work explores the dynamic between his percussive objects as a non-human accompaniment to the pianist. He views the percussive resonances as an accompaniment to the soloist (Riley, 2014). Although my piece would be possible with only one performer performing all the action, the physical separation of the vocalist from her audible source of amplification makes for an interesting performance dynamic. In my work a strange relationship between the two performers is revealed, as the sound of the voice is present inside the surface sounds of the percussionist. A crossing of surface is revealed in the sound of two surfaces at any one time, with only one onset of sound from the speaking voice.

Imaginary Surfaces

Sculptor Fred Sandback presents illusions of surface in his work. Figure 11 shows how his geometric lines of yarns provide outlines to an empty surface, framing a vacant space. He writes:

> My work is not illusionistic in the normal sense of the word. It doesn't refer away from itself to something that isn't present. Its illusions are simply present aspects of it. Illusions are just as real as facts, and facts just as ephemeral as illusions … I'd rather be in the middle of a situation than over on one side either looking in or looking out. Surfaces seem to imply that what's interesting is either in front of them or behind them. (Sandback, 1975)

Fig. 11 Fred Sandback and one of his works (Sandback, 1975)

Sandback's work caused me to consider a surface as an illusion, as something that is not really there, an illusory surface. "In this non-hierarchical state of objects, the work is not made to cause *a result* but an *opportunity* to establish an interactive environment for individual perception." (Akama, 2015, p35).

I began to work on a framework for something that could be imagined, contemplated as emptiness, or experienced as nothing at all, something outside of material qualities. In the spring of 2014, around the same time that I composed *everything located on the surface skin*, I began to contemplate what is now called my *Private Sculpture Series*. These are a series of traditionally designed gallery title cards, made from foam and cardboard.

Acting like musical scores in the visual realm, they require a kind of performance or participation for the work to be realized. This realization is a sculpture imagined in the mind of the participant and/or the surrounding context/space. In 2014 they were exhibited at hcmf// festival, where they were located within various open spaces amongst concert venues (see figure 12). Here is the note for the works at hcmf//:

> The Private Sculpture Series is an installation running 'silently' through hcmf// shorts venues. One piece from this series can be found amongst the following venues: Creative Arts Building Atrium, Phipps Hall, St Paul's Hall, St Thomas' Church, St Peter's Church and Bates Mill. The pieces consist of entirely disembodied artworks articulated only by title cards containing the name of the artist, title, media, and year of creation. The pieces invite the observer to imagine private sculptures.

Sandback's works are surfaces for something else, but that something else –the empty space between the yarn- is also a surface of illusion. These title cards are physical surfaces themselves, requiring a material surface for them to be adhered to. As in Sandback's work, they are also frames around an imaginary surface. This process is enhanced by the text used, which offers three materials as a platform for imagining relationships between these materials. My works offer an opportunity for the imagining of various other surfaces and structures taking place in the imagination. With the proposition of materials on the card, a participant is likely to consider surface properties of these materials as well as sculptural qualities of weight, size and structure.
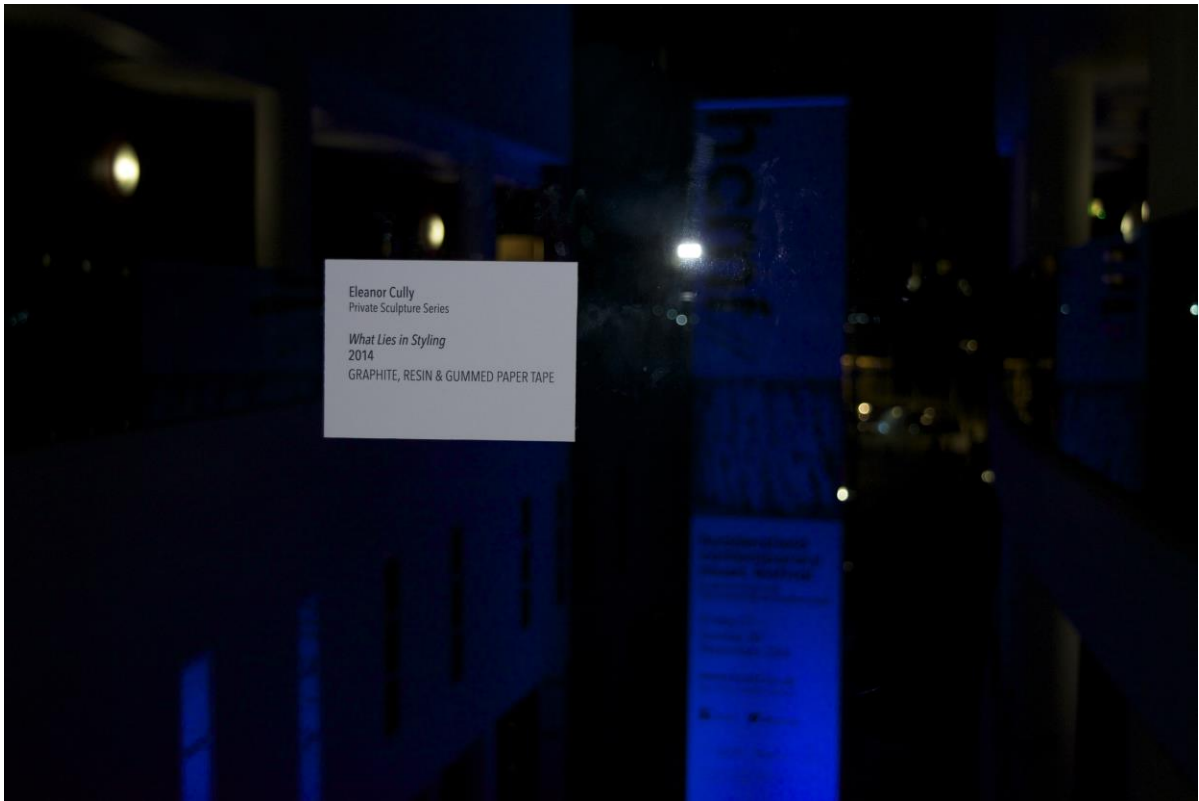
Fig. 12 *What Lies in Styling* (2014) on the second floor of the Creative Arts Building, University of

Huddersfield during hcmf// 2014

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INSTRUMENTAL INTERFACE

Points of Attraction

In his paper 'An Instrument Is An Egg', composer Alex Grimes defines the act of composing as "an act of reframing instrumental space by shifting points of attraction along its surface." (Grimes, 2014). I had been using the phrase 'points of attraction' myself in my own work to describe single points upon an instrument surface, on which a compositional practice may focus. In my own music, points of attraction refer to areas on the instrument surface that are appealing to me in terms of a visual or haptic response to a physical element of the instrument body, and a desire to explore it in a work.

In viewing the instrument as a landscape, a surface, or a space for a performer to inhabit, a hands-on approach to the performer/instrument interface is developed. Exploring the physical properties of the instrument body such as its mechanisms, individual parts or structural surfaces has provided me with a new platform for composing for acoustic instruments. These points of attraction in my work either primarily stem from a location on the instrument, or from the hand itself applied to the instrument. I will discuss these two approaches as the basis for this essay on instrumental interface in my work. I focus on outlining and explaining two approaches to the performer/instrument interface in my solo instrument compositions.

Frames

My compositional practice is one of setting up reductive frames around said points of attraction, from which to work within, rather than creating a series of stopping points as fleeting landing spaces for a performer in a work. These frames are created by mapping out or sectioning off single spaces upon the instrument from which to develop material within reduced surface areas. Framing these points in a work may result in creating new anatomical positions, and new gestural techniques to explore them. In this essay I refer to two approaches to framing in my work, these are named 'Structural Frames' and 'Anatomical Frames'.

A structural frame is a framing of a macro section of an instrument as a platform from which to compose. This could be a single string of a cello, or the black keys of the piano. The initial motivation in 'structural sectioning' is to work within a constraint upon the instrument anatomy prior to developing gestural content.

An anatomical frame is the framing of an instrumental space by a hand position. In fixed hand positions (when the hand is assigned to remain in one position for the duration of the work), the hands can host all of the material for a work beneath their fingertips, with the fingers exploring possibilities inside a position. The initial motivation in anatomical framing is to work within a pre-set interface between the hands and the keys within which to develop gestural content. From either approach, my compositional practice unfolds as an exploration of a touch based interface between instrument surface and human skin.

Structural frames

In the first movement of Ligeti's *Viola Sonata* the violist occupies a single string of the viola for the whole movement of the piece. The player inhabits one particular focused area of the instrument and is therefore required to familiarise themselves with the various alternative positions for certain pitches upon that string. These pitches may traditionally be played upon different strings, were the work not specifying the fourth string (IV). Ligeti's motivation to write for the fourth string may be an exploration of sound colour resulting from this situation, and/or a demonstration of the virtuosity of the performer. In any case, this limitation of location is a platform on which new techniques may be developed.

Material in my music often arises from an initial structural decision to inhabit a certain part of the instrument. This decision is made before the material within this constraint is developed; it is the initial motivation to compose the work. A commitment to making a piece out of a reductive limitation of location is then at play. Once a restriction is put into place upon the surface of the instrument, material for the work is developed in relation to what is physically possible within that limitation. Afterwards, other considerations such as choices of harmonic qualities can be undertaken from the available material. This is an inward approach, working from the instrument towards bodily gestures.

In 2013 I began to compose notated material for the head-joint of the flute. As a flute player I had used this restricted part of my instrument in many improvisations, and had previously developed a handful of other techniques and gestures upon the head-joint, including glissandi techniques that I had played with a player of Japanese flutes. However, the initial motivation for writing for this part of my instrument was not to develop further specific sonic techniques as such, but to create new techniques within the structural constraint of the reduced section of my

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instrument (see fig. 1). For each piece in this series of three *Caprices*, I explored new ways of working with the constraint, creating new techniques for each.

Fig. 1 Alba Bru performing my *First Caprice* (2013) (Maguire, 2013)

In 2005 Hugo Morales wrote a piece for solo head-joint and electronics called *Tú vo*. In Morales' piece, as in Sciarrino's *Lohengrin* (2014) and *Studi per l'Intonazione del Mare,* the inner tube of the head-joint is not used, and no pitched sounds are produced. The material for my *First Caprice* (2013) consists of an exploration of the available equal tempered pitches inside the tube (see fig. 2). I developed numerical finger positions for this pitches, realising that it was in fact better to use standard pitched prioritized notation. Inspired by melodic contours and glissandi in Sciarrino's *Capriccio No. 1* from the *Sei Capricci* or violin, I composed melodic lines that rise and fall in sequence. The vibrato is specified and quantified, and is played in a similar manner in which a string player would produce vibrato on the fret board in that a single finger oscillates around a central point on the instrument surface. Like the string player, the flautist eventually learns locations of pitches through muscle memory and acute listening.
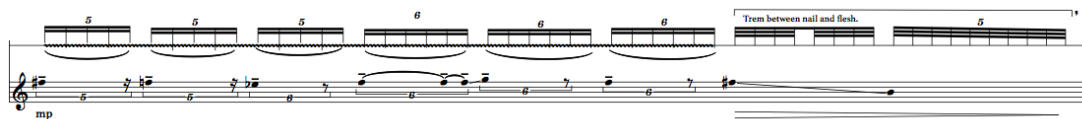
Fig. 2 Extract from *First Caprice* (2013) showing the range of the first partial of the head-joint inside the tube

One day in 2014 I sectioned off the white keys of the piano with three overlapping strips of masking tape. I was familiar with using masking tape in my visual work, and had seen sellotape used in a performance of Edward Henderson's *Tape Piece*. Though I was aware of the sonic properties of unravelling tape, I did not explore the sounds of the tape upon the piano prior to using it as a structural frame upon the instrument in sectioning off the white keys. It was the structural constraint of sectioning off the white keys, and their visual appeal beneath the neutral coloured tape, that motivated me to write a piece. From the moment of covering the keys, I had decided that I would somehow create the piano piece later titled *often empty on the insides* (2014), a paraphrased quote from sculptor Richard Deacon.
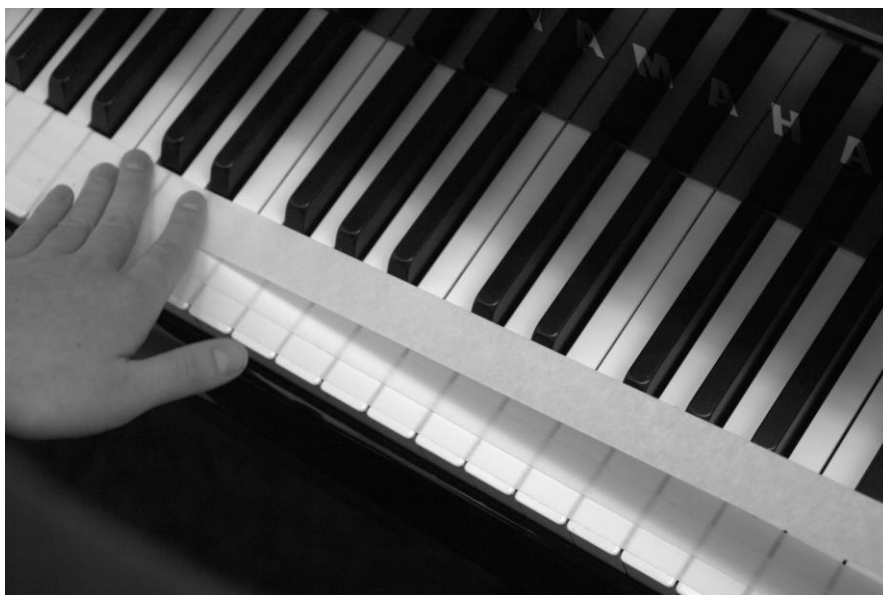

Fig. 3 Preparations of the piano surface for *often empty on the insides* (2014) (Maguire, 2014)

Working within the limitation of a section of the instrument resulted in an unravelling of the form of the piece by composing patterns within the frame. From this preparation, I developed gestural and sonic content of depressing each white key underneath the tape. My structural goal became to have played every white key through the procedure of unsticking the masking tape. I developed a sequence of slowly depressing each key at a time in order to eventually produce indeterminate pitches from the body of the instrument.

Fig. 4 Depressing a single key in a performance of *often empty on the insides* (2014) (Maguire, 2014)

In both of these works, the decision to compose upon a specific location of the instrument's structure was made prior to working with anatomic decisions or notations within that limitation. Neither of these scores prescribes a fixed/singular approach to anatomy, gesture or position. Specific fingers may be suggested, but the performer is liberated to choose a finger/s to realise the piece, placing the involvement and awareness of touch on the player exploring this unfamiliar interface as the work. That is to say that the performer's experience of working upon the instrument within the constraints I have implemented is as much the point of a piece of mine, as the sounding results are.

Anatomic frames

In the work of performance artist Tom Marioni, bodily gestures are mapped onto large surfaces such as walls or large pieces of paper. Marioni takes an action-based approach to composing patterns and shapes that come out of mapping physical extensions of his body against a surface. Marioni's work *Out of Body Free Hand Circle* (2000-2014), for example, which is itself a response to Leonardo da Vinci's *The Vitruvian Man* (1485), delineates the limits of the body. A single gesture, beginning at the far reach of his arm, sweeps in an obsessive circular motion around his form. The work has a clear performance trajectory prior to performance.

Fig. 5 Tom Marioni performing his work *Out of Body Free Hand Circle* (Marioni 2009)

Similarly, in works of mine that are concerned with Anatomical Framing, patterns are developed in relation to mapping my body onto a fixed position on the musical instrument. However, in contrast to Marioni, it is primarily the tactile as well as the limits of gesture in my instrumental compositions that is sought as experience. Touch experiences with the mechanism of the instrument are the initial points of attraction, from which I develop a body position on the surface. Developing initial gestural material for a work is essential before I can map out appropriate spaces upon the instrument surface for a performer to inhabit. This is the opposite approach to the Structural Framing approach, discussed in the previous section of this essay.

Material for a piece in the 'Anatomical Framing' category comes out of an area marked by the body as a fixed hand position. Once a restriction on the surface is put into place, other physical properties of a fixed position come into play in the composition. The physical constraints of the hands have ramifications on my compositional parameters in the making of the work: dynamics, pitch relationships, and rhythms are limited in terms of what is physically possible in the hand position. The resistance of the position is rather like a frame for restricted movement of keys/fingers within. The musical material results from my hands at work upon the surface, within a specific neighbourhood determined by the hand itself.

In my piano piece *everything located on the surface skin* (2014), a fixed position on the space of a 15th chord inhabits the piano surface. The player is instructed to inhabit this central area of the piano keyboard for the entire piece. Fingers within this position are notated to be located on the cracks between the white keys. These white key dyads were the initial points of attraction for the work. I developed the position of both hands side by side, stretching as many dyads as possible in one space. Such stretching caused the hand to be positioned in an unconventional, but in no way grotesque manner. The hand span of a 15th is not an extreme space to inhabit with both hands. However, it is perhaps unusual for a viewer to experience the single point of a fingertip activating two white keys, rather than one, within a fixed hand position (in standard playing two fingertips would be used to activate two white keys). When multiple dyads are played as one large cluster, the hand covers a large surface area through few points of contact, a kind of augmentation of surface.
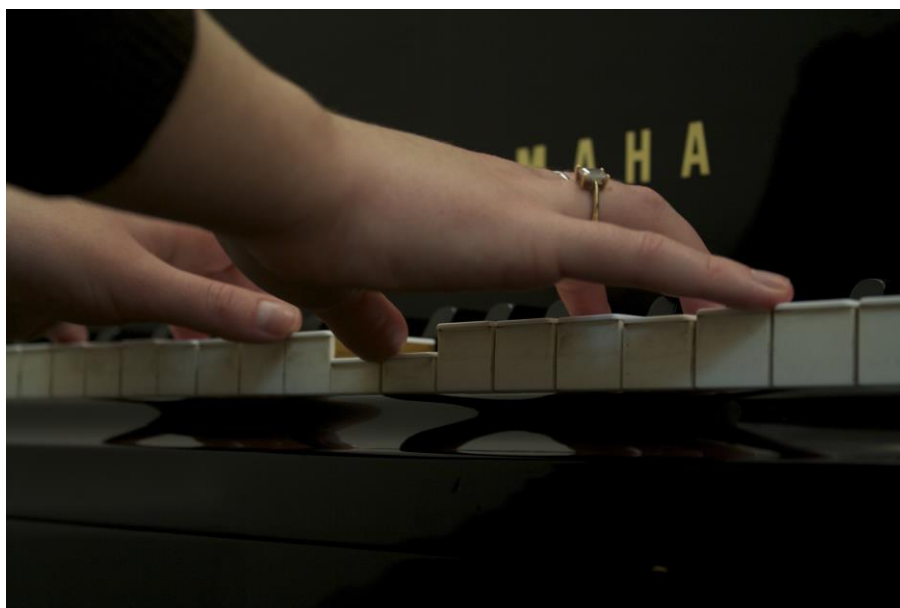

Fig. 6 Hand positions for *everything located on the surface skin* (2014) (Maguire, 2014)

Fig. 7 Hand positions for *everything located on the surface skin* (2014) (Maguire, 2014)

In the first section of the piece, single fingers of each hand play dyads in alternating patterns. Inspired by Luk Vaes' performance of Vladimir Rebikov's *Parmi Les Fleurs* at Brunel University in 2013, a piece of complete cluster chords, I sought to make melodic contours that flow within a restrained position. I composed chords for both hands at the beginning of the piece, splitting into separate parts as the piece develops. In the whole piece, the player is instructed to release a dyad only when another one has been depressed, an idea that is further developed in my other piano pieces *Movements in Two Positions* (2014) and *often empty on the insides* (2014).

Fig. 8 score extract of Vladimir Rebikov's *Parmi Les Fleurs* (1913) (Rebikov, 1913)

In *movements in two positions* (2014), the pianist plays a notated cycle of action throughout the entire piece. This cycle takes place upon two fixed spaces, one for each hand, which are chosen by the performer. The player is required to select a fixed hand position of their choice

for each hand on any area of the keyboard, providing that all ten fingers are utilized on different notes. This provides the player with a chance to select a position that is appealing to them, producing varied pitch results in any repeated performance.
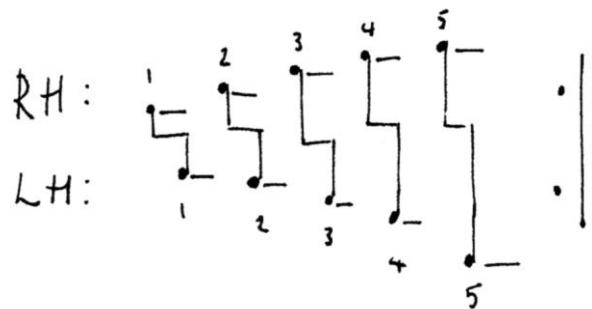
Fig. 9 sketch showing the cycle of finger movements for both hands in *movements in two positions* (2014)

I noticed that if all my fingers were depressed on the piano surface, I would sometimes miss a key if I lifted them in turn to re-depress them. This was the result of certain hammer mechanisms not being activated properly when fingers behave in a manner alternative to that prescribed by classical technique. A simple gestural pattern is notated for the fingers to move within in this work. Each key is not released until the next repeat; meaning that only one key out of ten is lifted at a time. This sequence is repeated throughout the entire piece, so that gestural variations evolve. Varying levels of tension, together with notated variations in speed and dynamics result in fluctuations in rhythms and pitch cycles containing ghost notes: where the action takes place without the sound.

In addition to the sensation of touch in my work, the action of depressing a key for an extended time period was appealing to me as I discovered a different way to inhabit the piano surface. In both of the resulting scores, fixed hand positions, specific fingerings and sequences of action are essential to the pieces. This places emphasis on the player to learn new ways of physically inhabiting and working with the piano surface. Although identical sonic results may be derived from a variety of fingerings and positions in playing, I compose specific hand positions as 'the work', as much as the sound. The performer experiences all of the musical material beneath their fingertips within a fixed hand position at any one time during the piece. Thus, the tactile experience of interface between the skin of the fingers and the surface of the instrument is foregrounded.

Notation

In notation systems developed over the past decade or so there has been a growing trend to focus on the performer's bodily movement and interaction with their instrument to produce sound rather than 'traditional notation' specifying pitch, rhythm and dynamic. These works generate many single moments where the performer moves between spaces upon the instrument. These spaces are highlighted in the notation, which prioritizes a representation of space and a motion trajectory in an attempt to notate *"the technique itself* when movement is re-contextualized into instrumental space."* (Grimes, 2014). The notations become focused on visually mapping the instrument as a representation geometric space on the score, from which to prescribe movements of the body upon these specific spaces. See figure 11 for an example of composer Alex Grimes' work from this tradition.
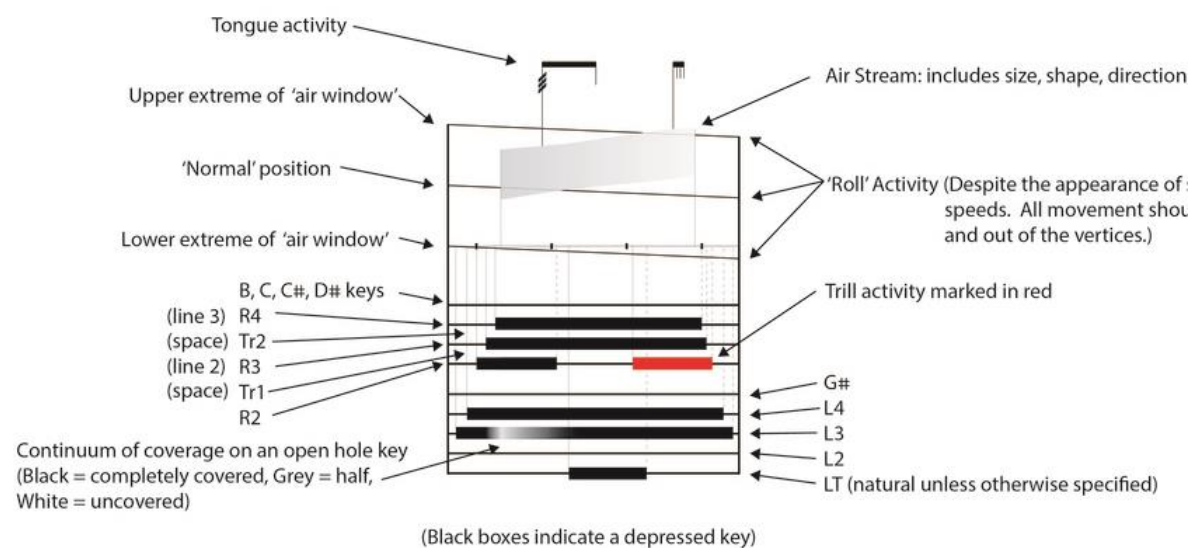

Fig. 10 extract from the performance notes for *Glass Transition* (2014) by Alex Grimes, indicating the notation system for bodily activity upon the flute

My works are not concerned with complexity of multiple motions upon a space, and therefore do not attempt to replicate this in the notation. It is within any given fixed position or reductive gestural potential that I compose my music. Rather than developing a notation practice that visually maps out the instrument body, my notation merely provides the simplest way of comprehending the relevant gestural content for the individual piece. Thus, my scores do not visually relate to one another, they merely refer to the task at hand in each discrete work. Whilst my scores help to map my ways of thinking behind the work, they are primarily communicating to a performer how to engage with their instrument – how to grasp it, which pattern to play, and within which position.

coextensive on the surface
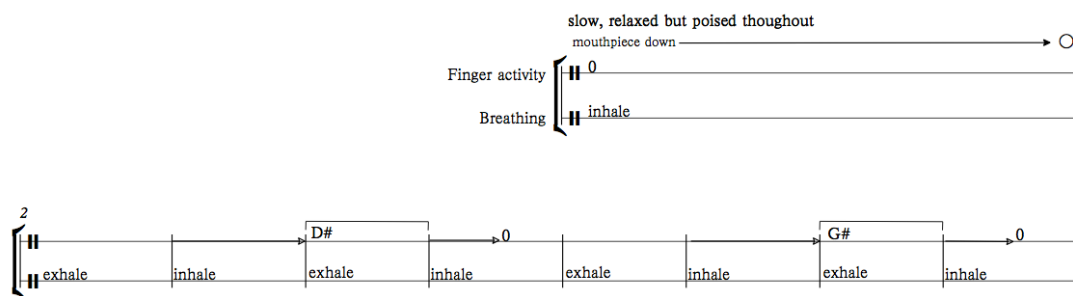### for solo flute

Eleanor Cully

Fig. 11 extract from *coextensive on the surface* (2014), showing simple instructions for breath and key depressions

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ALMOST UNNOTICIABLE

Ways of Noticing

In 1958, Yves Klein created an exhibition titled *La spécialisation de la sensibilité à l'état matière première en sensibilité picturale stabilisée: Le Vide (The Specialization of Sensibility in the Raw Material State into Stabilized Pictorial Sensibility: The Void).* Behind blue curtains, Klein unveiled an empty gallery space. He had painted every surface white, having removed everything in the room except a single (white) cabinet. This was an exhibition of emptiness.

Previously, in 1952, David Tudor had opened the lid of a piano to a piece of 'silent' piano music. John Cage was advocating an acceptance of all of the audible sounds in and outside the concert hall as the music in this piece, titled by its duration *4'33".* Later, in 1966, Max Neuhaus attempted to extend this aesthetic outside of the confinements of the concert hall. "I became interested in going a step further. Why limit listening to the concert hall? Instead of bringing these sounds into the hall, why not simply take the audience outside – a demonstration in situ?" (Neuhaus 1988, 1990, 2004). Neuhaus took his audience outside for performance of his work, stamping their hands with the word LISTEN.

Klein's curtains, Cage's piano lid, and Neuhaus' stamp are all props for the staging of rather empty productions. In drawing attention to their endeavours, these artists were outwardly disclosing their radicalism. Without the word LISTEN to draw attention to listening, a subtler, gentler approach to *opening the window* onto this aesthetic credence can be adopted. Would it not be more consistent for works of this nature to frame themselves less clumsily? It is possible to imagine outgrowths and reactions to such approaches that are themselves so subtle as to blend into their own environments, becoming almost unnoticeable.

The almost unnoticeable aesthetic offers the opportunity for quietly presenting an artistic subject in a concert or gallery context. It draws attention to the space one is already in through subtle augmentation of a situation one is experiencing. This kind of work is not so much outwardly seeking attention; it is offering the opportunity to notice for those who are looking or listening.

When installed, displayed or performed, fundamental aspects of the existence of an almost unnoticeable work can easily be entirely or partially missed, and sometimes misunderstood. This is because the subtle aspects they are forefronting are not obvious within the first moments of experiencing the work. These works focus attention at a detailed level. They could consist of sounds that are difficult to hear, to locate or to place, gestural material that is difficult to see, hear or locate, or visuals that confuse the eye or are difficult to pinpoint from a distance. This essay focuses on what I call the 'almost unnoticeable' aesthetic in my art work and thinking, drawing on the work of other artists whose practice deals with elements of mystery or misperception.

Music for Looking

In his trio *Con Voce* (1972), Mauricio Kagel composed a piece of music for three musicians instructed to sing and vocalise the sounds of their instruments whilst miming the gestures. Whilst this is an evocative sound piece, it is also, arguably, a music for looking. The audience watch musicians performing gestures that are physically unconnected to the sounding result, and yet, paradoxically, are indicative of the sounding result being imitated vocally. This aspect of music for looking interested me and was relevant to my work to do with touching the surface of an instrument. My work *Fixations* (2014) has some perceived crossover with mime and imitation, as well as with the disconnection between a performed gesture and a sounding result. In a piece from this series, a performer picks up one instrument in a manner associated with another, unrelated instrument. The performer performs a short gesture associated with that unrelated instrument on the body of the instrument they hold, before putting it away and leaving the stage. This set of pieces was my most performative attempt to forefront the touch of the player on the instrument as the point of the work.

From this I went on to create a much more subtle piece for solo flute, dealing with the flautists gestures across the surface of the flute as the material. Unlike *Con Voce*, or *Fixations*, this piece does not dramatize the gestures of standard playing positions. The flautist merely brings the flute into position and begins breathing quietly. She depresses single keys in a notated order, rather than attempting to mime an already existing score of notated gestures. The gestural detail of the piece is hardly noticeable from the mid to back of the concert hall. The breathing is hardly audible.

This work, titled *coextensive on the surface* (2014), is not *just* another silent piece. It is actually quiet, not silent, as the breathing is prescribed. The piece draws attention to the act of flute playing as a empty shell, it provides a chance to see what is going on in flute playing, not requiring the flautist to stand still at the music stand (like a flute performance of 4'33") but to take part in playing. The work does not fling open the windows and give way to the wonderful sounds of the outside concert hall flooding through the walls. Occasional ambulance sirens passing St. Paul's Hall, Huddersfield would be welcomed in a performance of this work, but not celebrated. The piece is about looking at flute activity without the sound of the flute. In fact the piece ends by the flautist covering the entire mouth hole as one slow backwards roll – an instrumental fadeout. The audience has to pay attention to not only hear or see, but to discover what is going on.

Self-Reference

As well as drawing attention to the physicality of playing in subtle ways in my instrumental music, I am interested in spreading the focus outwards from the performer and their instrument to the outside situation and the audience looking into it. This was heavily inspired by the self-referential language in John Cage's piece *45' for a speaker*, a piece where a performance situation is created in which the audience's attention is drawn to the act of performance itself, and not merely the sonic.

The text for this work is an assemblage of previously written lectures together with new material (Cage, 2011). These texts from their various contexts together flit between questions and statements in different sociolinguistic registers during the course of the work. Some statements imply a kind of reference to the performance situation that one is currently present within. "Form, then, is not something/ off in the distance in solitary confinement:/ it is right here right now." (Cage, 2011). "Time,/ which is the title of this piece/ (so many minutes/ so many seconds),/ is what we/ and sounds/ happen in." (Cage, 2011). Hearing these kinds of statements in this work, amongst other opinions and narratives, draws our attention to the situation of being in a performance.

In the Autumn of 2014 I composed a self-referential piece for voice and percussion, titled *I, as mouth*, which speaks of its own situation of performance. The vocalist is amplified with a microphone that is connected to two transducers, which the percussionist places on percussion surfaces. There is no separate amp for the voice; it is only heard through the skins of the percussion

instruments. The vocalist speaks softly about the situation on the stage at the beginning of the piece. The following statement is taken from the beginning of the text in the score:

> I speak through skins
> to me, they speak to me
> me through them
> they with their surfaces and shades
> I, with my hole and frame

The text for *I, as mouth* was formed from several short texts of mine, some of which are about surface and other themes I have been exploring in my MA. The intention was for some, but by no means all of the words and phrases to be incomprehensible against the percussion sounds. Depending on the resonance of the room and the pressure of the transducers, the voice is more or less obscured, adding an element of mystery to parts of the work. If comprehended, the audience has the potential to understand that the piece is about the situation of the piece itself, and its own performance. The final line in the work reads:

> Now you've had your chance to hear
> I, as mouth
> You as ear.

Since making this work, I have created a few works that deal with other forms of self-reference and mental realisation. *often amongst* (2015) was composed on the day of its publication in Imaginary Sound Works (Allen, 2015). This work is a comment on the situation of reading a score or musical work amongst other content. The words are only a surface, that when placed amongst other content in this platform, can their meaning be realised as a comment on the situation of reading. These works provide surfaces of reflecting on the reality of the piece and the process of reading it.

Almost Unnoticeable Art

"To be an artist is not a matter of making paintings or objects. What we are really dealing with is the state of our consciousness, and the shape of our perception." (Irwin,1972). To notice the works of installation artist Robert Irwin, one must be paying attention to their surroundings. Small cuts in windows, or delicate reflective surfaces are very carefully placed to catch attention peripherally, and confuse before one can begin to grasp the piece in front of them.

> One work by Irwin [...] is easily missed. Although a dramatic intervention, *Square the Room* (2007) barely draws attention to itself. Normally an irregular shape, the gallery has been made rectangular by the introduction of a white scrim stretching across and dividing the room. The transparency of the scrim is almost unnoticeable, but with careful attention one can perceive the second room beyond. Such minimal yet meaningful manipulation of space is characteristic of Irwin's art. (Zabrodski, 2011)

Irwin's pieces are what he calls "site-conditioned installations" (Diehl, 1999). His works, though bold, are not grotesque. They offer a private view amongst a public space; one has to commit to looking to notice the work and what it is doing. The works, whilst bespoke, do not solely refer to themselves but to their perception in the conditioned space. The works are your attention to them. "'What I realized,' Irwin says, 'was that [the problem of public art] has nothing to do with [questions of] object or non-object. It has to do with the object existing not in a vacuum of its own meaning, but in the real world, affected by the real world.'" (Diehl, 1999)

Visual artist Wolfgang Laib's work *Milkstones* are stones made of white polished marble with a beautiful surface of milk poured into an almost unnoticeable depression made in the top layer of the marble. This layer is sanded down to create this slight depression, before it is gently filled with milk. These pieces present what appears to be one solid object made from one material - the marble without the milk. Figure 1 shows Laib preparing one of his *Milkstones*.

Fig. 1 Wolfgang Laib preparing one of his *Milktones* (Sarakapud, 2012)

In May 2015 I installed my window piece *With Itself* (2015) in Unit 9 Gallery, Huddersfield as part of a group exhibition titled 'Discrete Positions'. For this exhibition I wanted to make a piece that was "site-conditioned" in that it draws all of its aspects from the space and its surroundings, rather than a partial response to the site. My favourite aspect of the gallery space, being an old shop in a market arcade, was the open windows on two of the room's four sides. I especially noticed three small panels of glass beneath the three larger panels of glass that made up one of the walls. These three small panels of glass were near the ground, which was sloping downwards towards an entrance/exit of the arcade. I had been playing with panels of glass against windows in my studio and decided that I could try and adhere glass panels onto these gallery windows as a piece of three panels. The content of the piece explored the interface of framing the rectangular glass panels on the window with small pieces of rectangular glass.

Fig. 2 One of the glass panels for *With Itself* on one of the window panels in Unit 9 Gallery, Huddersfield

In this piece I was interested in making something that would operate directly with small details of the exhibition space itself, and be available both for the public that came to the exhibition as well as those who passed by the gallery windows outside. However, the work was not so subtle that I could not expect someone to notice. Unlike Laib's *Milkstones* these pieces, if seen, are noticed *for* their material relationship, however, they are also not seen *because* of their material relationship.

At the same exhibition I installed another three pieces titled *Five Points in Parallel Motion (LH), Five Points in Parallel Motion (RH),* and *Ten Points in Contrary Motion (LH, RH).* These pieces are part of a working set called *Points in Various Motions* (2015). These pieces are white paintings on cream rag paper, appearing as a white sheet of paper from a distance. Like *With Itself,* I was interested creating a work that slowly reveals itself to the attentions of a perceptive viewer. On closer inspection, aspects of interface can be revealed within the content of the work. Close up, traces of hand gestures can be seen in the paint. These pieces, with their musical titles, reference a reductive way of working with gesture in close interface in my instrumental music.

Fig. 3 Two of my works from *Points in Various Motions* at a distance in Unit 9 Gallery, Huddersfield

Fig. 4 *Five Points in Parallel Motion (LH)* from *Points in Various Motions*

Is that a piece?

Outside of being told to observe art, we can seek to find it. "[M]usic relates to the people who make it through participation [...], as a stream or river whose waters offer refreshment and cleansing to those who find it."(Oliveros, 1974). As well as sharpening our awareness and focus towards other people's work, we can make art experiences for ourselves, by looking closely, listening carefully and embracing unframed aspects of a situation. Almost unnoticeable works have potential to wander so far outside the frame that they escape the programme note in the concert, or the floor plan in the gallery.

In the concert we can choose to pay as much attention to the details between pieces as the pieces themselves. Have you specifically listened to the shuffling between movements in an opera? Have you noticed the hand position of the piano player? If so, you may have discovered possibilities for locating some almost unnoticeable works. Once noticed and embraced, these happenings can stimulate an interest in looking beyond the frame of a given piece of music. In doing this we can learn to experience the whole situation as part of the work or concert, as well as attempting to make artwork that deals with these by-products of performance. However, unless one desires to repurpose, replicate, or moderate these experiences, they can merely pass by as something noticed for oneself. Arguably, if experienced as part of a work, such a happening becomes a work in your attention to it.

Within the gallery context we may find art works of uncertainty, and ask, "is this art?" The white vending machine at the back of the gallery space filled with business cards of the artist, is this a piece? The title card in isolation from any nearby sculpture, is that a piece? These experiences may not have intentionally been installed as works of art at all. Or maybe they are intentional works of art that are mistaken for a hazy, uncertain experience. They could merely exist as such in the experience of a single or a group of participants who notice them.

In their nature, works of an almost unnoticeable kind do not express frustration if misread, misunderstood, or all together unnoticed. They are not deemed unsuccessful, but merely lost in the senses of that particular observer. Those who are really paying attention best embrace the almost unnoticeable aesthetic. Even then, those who are mindful cannot be sure what they have observed.

Is this a work of art, or merely an artefact of life around us? Either way, it would go otherwise unnoticed without this kind of thinking.

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Eleanor Cully

First Caprice

for solo c flute head-joint

2013

First Caprice for Alba Bru

Programme Note
Before composing my *First Caprice* I was developing swelling and fluttering sounds made up of trills, tremolos and glissandi. I wanted a vibrato sound without the mouth, and a trill sound without the keys. I removed the keys from the flute and developed new material for the head-joint alone. I produced a vibrato sound by oscillating a single finger in the right hand about a point inside the tube of the head-joint, where various pitches are possible by moving the position of the finger inside the tube. My first approach was to establish and notate nine different positions for the finger inside the tube for the nine pitches I could make, using the knuckle as an anchor and reference point. This was an attempt to make it easier for the flautist to learn the positions for each pitch that I had developed. However, on rehearsing with Alba, the preference was for a notation that indicates exact pitches, prioritizing them in the notation over positions that can be learned alone with practice.

Alba Bru performing my *First Caprice* in December 2013. Photography by Phil Maguire.

Performance Notes

The score for this piece prescribes exact pitches that are possible inside the head-joint, learned through muscle memory and acute listening.

The score has two staves:
The top stave shows the type and amount of oscillation for the finger upon a pitch position (specified by the stave below).

The second stave shows pitch content produced inside the tube, dynamic markings and durations. The high and lower A flats are played with an open tube. The lower G through to C are played with the finger inside the tube. Moving the finger downwards inside the tube will produce lower pitches.

Vibrato oscillation	This technique is played rather like the vibrato technique upon a string instrument, in that the finger oscillates about a central point. If a sextuplet is notated, the flautist should oscillate their finger six times upon the location of the pitch indicated in the lower stave. If the pitch contour is in motion with glissandi, the flautist should play the notated rhythm whilst moving between the pitches.
Trem between nail and flesh	A tremolo effect produced with the finger inside the tube alternating between hitting the tube with the flesh and the nail.
Hand trem	Tremolo with the palm of the right hand at the end of the open head-joint.
w.t	Whistle tone
	Gradually begin to trem between the nail and flesh
	Breath tone
	Gradually move from breath tone to full tone
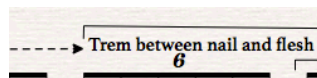
First Caprice

for Alba Bru

Eleanor Cully

♩=52 **vivace, delicate, fluttering.**

R.H Finger Oscillation

vibrato oscillation

Pitch

continue sim.

p

pp

p

pp

gliss.

accel.

a tempo

Trem between nail and flesh.

gliss.

gliss.

gliss.

mp

sfz

p

mp

p

Eleanor Cully

Second Caprice

for solo c flute head-joint

2015

Second Caprice for singing flautist

Performance Notes

After comments that the head-joint in my *First Caprice* sounded like the voice, I decided to include the well-known technique of singing whilst playing the flute in the *Second Caprice*. The score shows pitches for the voice on the bottom stave and pitches for the head-joint of the flute on the top stave. The voice and flute may weave in and out of each other a little when playing this piece; they do not have to arrive at each pitch exactly together.

The piece should be played at a fairly slow tempo, without any vibrato or note bending. It is rhythmically flexible, free of a strict pulse. The piece should evoke a sense of expansion, as each phrase grows a beat each time. Breaths should be taken after each phrase, indicated by the commas as breath marks.

Notes for playing the head-joint

The *Second Caprice* explores the lower range of available pitches on the head-joint, which are C through to A flat. To produce these pitches, the flautist should adopt the embouchure equivalent to that used when playing the same pitches on the c flute (from the c flute's second octave).

The highest note in this piece, the A flat, is produced with the open head-joint. The locations for playing the other pitches are found inside the tube, with a single finger - moving the finger down inside the tube will result in descending pitches. The flautist should learn these pitch positions through acute listening.

Notes for the voice

The voice part is marked '*flautando'* so as to make it sound as much flute like as possible. The flautist should imitate the sound of the flute with their voice. The desired result is for both parts to blend together as if two voices or two flutes.

If a female performer cannot sing as low as the score is notated, she may sing an octave higher, to match the range of the head-joint if she wishes. However, singing the octave lower is always preferable, even if her lower range is weak, quiet or even unstable. The dynamic is soft throughout.
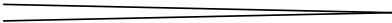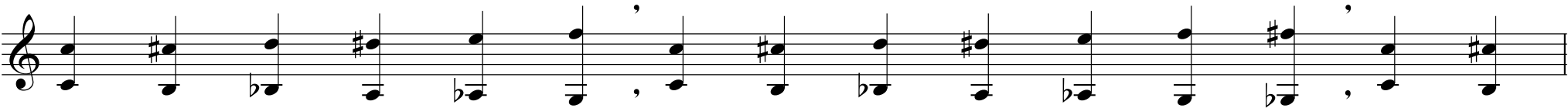
Second Caprice

Eleanor Cully

Eleanor Cully

Third Caprice

for solo c flute head-joint

2015

Third Caprice

Performance Notes

The *Third Caprice* explores the second harmonic of the head-joint, which is centred around a high A flat. Upon a normal sized flute, playing the embouchure for the octave above any fingered note will sound an octave above. However, on the head-joint this is not the case.

The stave shows the high A flat which is to sound throughout the piece, beneath which are fingerings for the first harmonic. These should be treated as positions to navigate through during the piece. These positions will alter the A flat slightly during the piece.

When learning the piece I would suggest practising it whilst playing the first harmonic to learn the positions. Then, once learned, play the second harmonic as indicated on the score.

The A flat of the first harmonic is played with the head-joint open. The G through to C of the first harmonic are played with the finger inside the tube. Moving the finger downwards inside the tube, with an embouchure of the first harmonic, will produce lower pitches.

Third Caprice

Eleanor Cully

at a steady pace, at the slowest tempo possible in a single breath:

Eleanor Cully

coextensive on the surface

for solo flute

2014

Programme note

The fingers and breath of the flautist coexist on the surface of their flute. In my piece *coextensive on the surface* attention is focused on micro-gestural movements and respiration. The affect lies below the surface in the visibly moving diaphragm of the performer. This is less a work of sound and more a visual music, a sculptural presence.

Performance notes

Breathing is slow and relaxed, and defines the structure of the piece. 'inhale' and 'exhale' are written in alternate bars where inhalation and exhalation should last the duration of the bar. The performer should stand straight, in one position, concentrating on movements of the chest, fingers and hands whilst breathing. If possible, the performer should wear clothing that allows the expansion and contraction of the diaphragm to be perceived in the performance.

D#,G#,C#,C,thumb,Bb refer to key names. A square bracket over a key name means that it is fully depressed during that bar.

0   normal position of fingers above holes, assuming R4 hovers over the D# key and that L4 hovers over the G# key. No keys depressed

embouchure should be loose but poised in order for exhaling to be audible across tube

mouth hole open and facing outwards from the lips, so as not to catch air

mouth hole closed with the mouth

gradually depress/release key over duration of bar

gradual change of position over duration of bar/bars where arrow is situated (for finger key changes move finger across keys without depressing them)
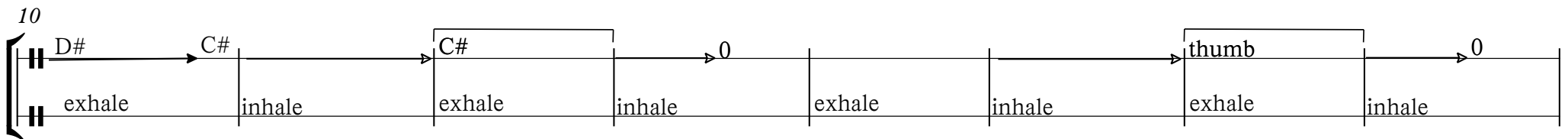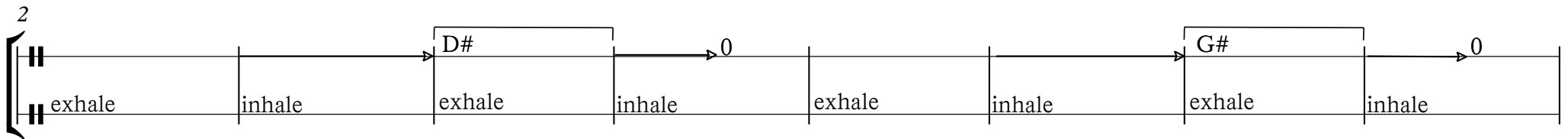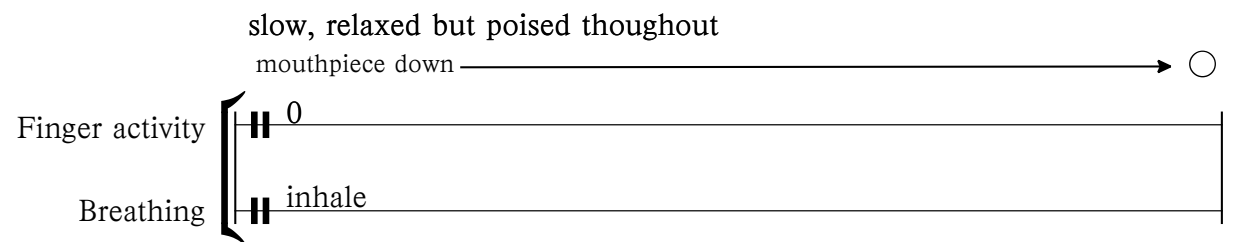
hover trill: indicated fingers perform trill action over key surface, without depressing key

coextensive on the surface

for solo flute

Eleanor Cully

slow, relaxed but poised thoughout

mouthpiece down ⟶ ○

Finger activity | 0

Breathing | inhale

2

D# → 0   G# → 0

exhale | inhale | exhale | inhale | exhale | inhale | exhale | inhale

---

10

D# C# → C# → 0   thumb → 0

exhale | inhale | exhale | inhale | exhale | inhale | exhale | inhale

18

D# → C → C → 0 thumb → Bb Bb → 0 *roll flute away*

exhale | inhale | exhale | inhale | exhale | inhale | exhale | inhale

26

trill with: L1,2,3 R1,2,3 +LT, L4, R4

exhale | inhale | exhale | inhale | exhale | inhale | exhale | inhale

34

roll flute in

exhale | inhale | exhale | inhale | exhale | inhale | exhale

41

0 *stay still for a few seconds before collapsing position*

inhale

Eleanor Cully

Itself Within

For clarinet

2015

Itself Within for Carl Rosman

Performance notes

This piece was written and notated in sections (A-I), which can be used as rehearsal marks in the piece.

The left hand is represented by the top four holes on the stave. The right hand is represented by the bottom three holes. When holes are black they indicate covered keys, when they are white they are uncovered when the fingers are lifted. A line adjacent to the hole indicates that the hole should remain covered through the relevant beat.

The C# key is represented by the comma that appears with the left hand holes.

The register key is represented by the 'R' symbol.

As the piece makes use of a repeated right hand pattern for the most part, the repeat sign is used after the pattern for each beat that the pattern continues to repeat.

Itself Within (2015)
for Carl Rosman
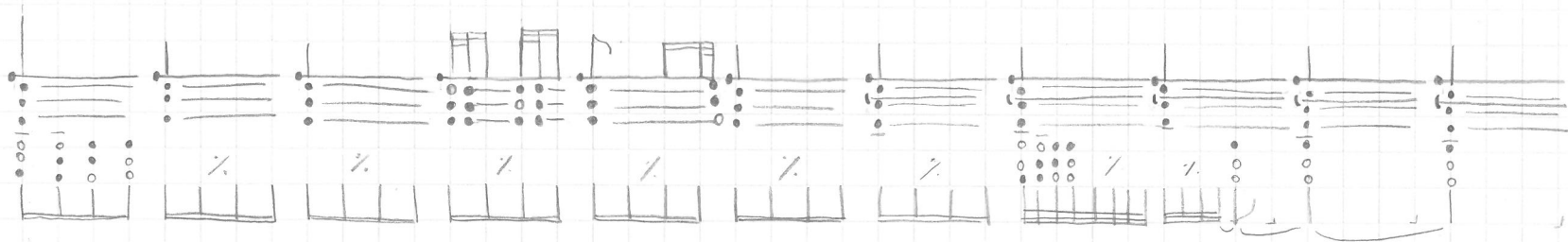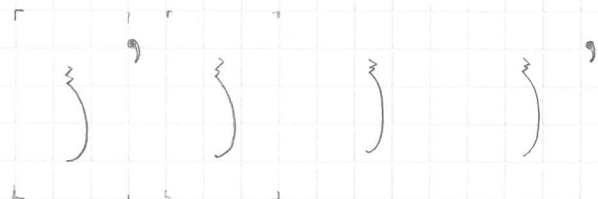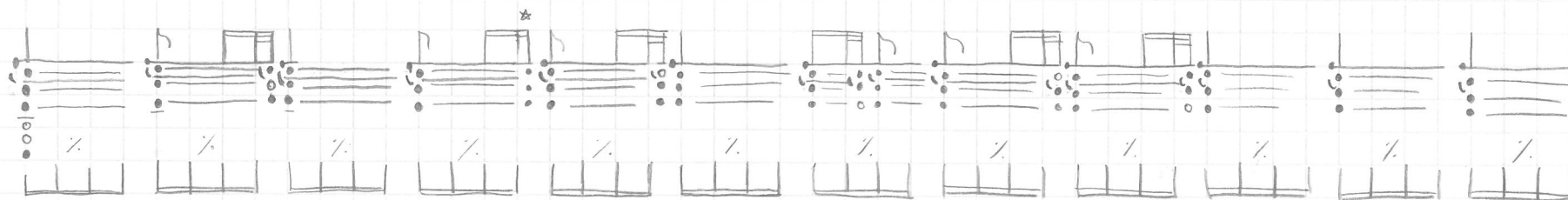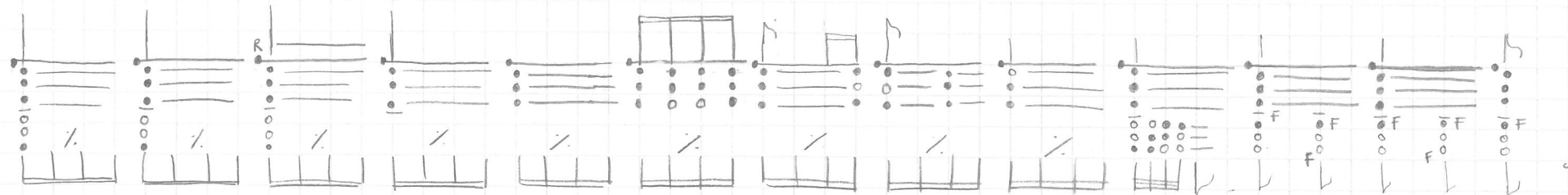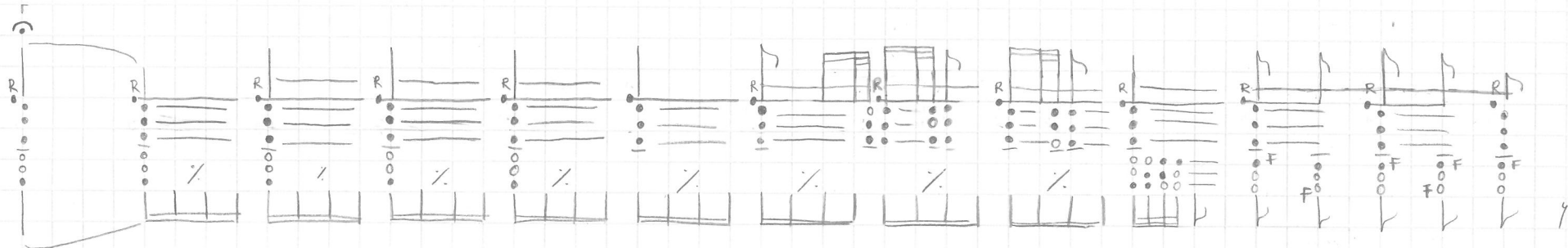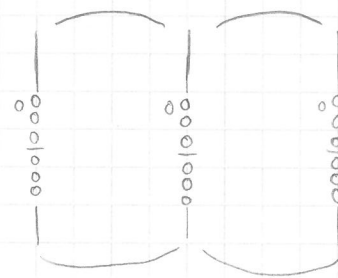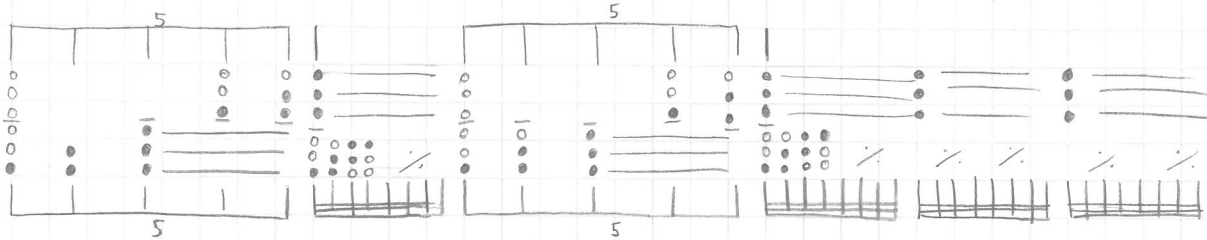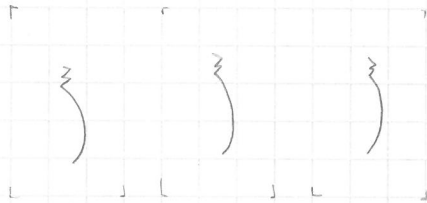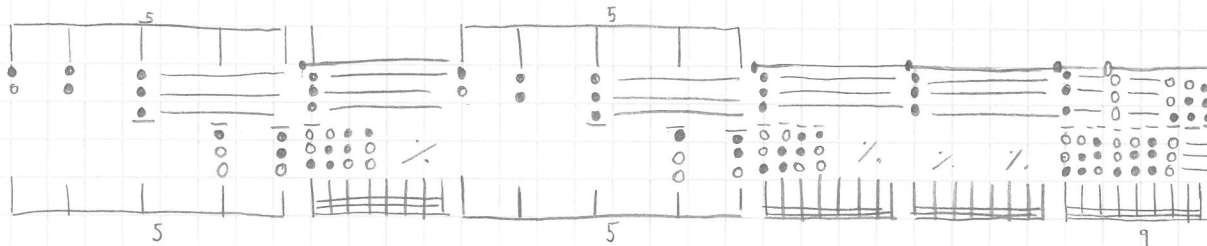
Eleanor Cully 2015

-1-

* No ♭ key

Eleanor Cully

everything located on the surface skin

for piano solo

2014
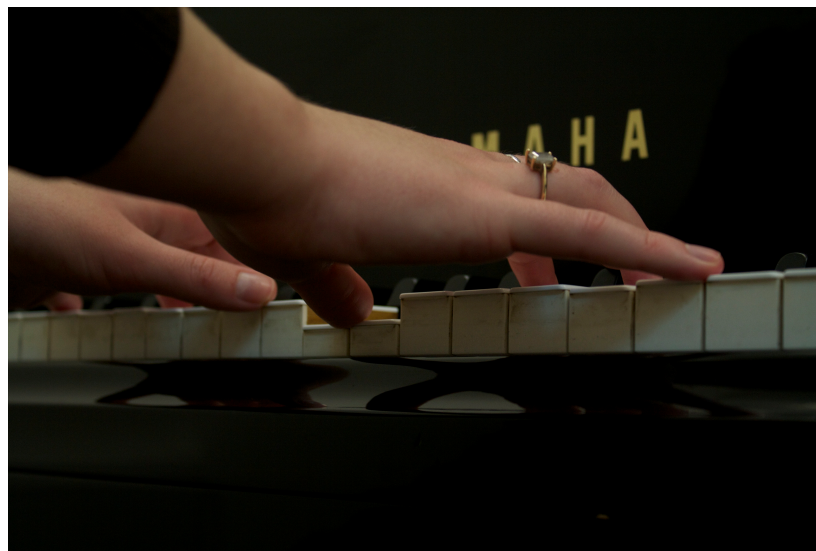
Performance notes

This piece requires a specific hand position to be utilised throughout this work.

In the LH the following fingers should be positioned upon the cracks between the following white keys: 5-f&g, 4-a&b, 2-c&d, 1-e&f.

Similarly, in the RH: 1-g&a, 2-b&c, 4-d&e, 5-f&g.

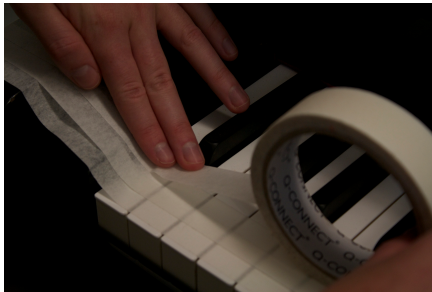# everything located on the surface skin

piano solo

Eleanor Cully

often empty on the insides (2014) piano and masking tape
Eleanor Cully

Preparations:

Extend three overlapping strips of masking tape across the white keys of the piano as shown above: the first piece across the front edge of the white keys, and the third nearest the black keys. Note that the tape will not make full contact with A1 and C8 due to the raised case.

Without depressing the keys, write the following set of numbers in pencil, one per white key, on the third strip of tape. Begin on A1 and continue to C8:

51, 18, 40, 6, 28, 16, 34, 4, 26, 10, 30, 20, 8, 22, 14, 38, 24, 2, 36, 32, 42, 12, 46, 44, 17, 35, 7, 48, 19, 50, 5, 23, 39, 13, 41, 1, 49, 25, 15, 33, 27, 3, 21, 47, 9, 43, 37, 29, 11, 45, 31, 51

Do not attempt to learn the order of numbers and pitches, take your time locating each key during the performance

Performance:

The piece begins by slowly depressing the sustain pedal (keeping it depressed throughout the work).

Starting with the RH on key #1, slowly and gently depress keys in chronological order up to #50, alternating between RH and LH for each key.

Release the previously depressed key slowly upon depressing the next numbered key.

If a pitch sounds, keep it's key depressed until it has rung out before moving to the next numbered key.

Once you arrive at #51 (A1 and C8), pinch the masking tape at both ends of the piano before suddenly and forcefully (to ensure loud pitch results) pushing down onto the keys, breaking the tape from the side of the case.

This action should take place in unison but may result in A1 and C8 sounding one after the other.

Keep these keys depressed until they have rung out.

The piece ends by releasing A1 and C8 together.

Eleanor Cully

Movements in Two Positions

For piano solo

2014

Performance Directions

Movements in Two Positions is a piece for two fixed hand positions upon the piano keyboard. A fixed hand position is a position that remains present throughout the piece. For this piece the player chooses a hand position for each hand, with the left hand to the left of the right hands position. All ten fingers must inhabit different keys. I usually do this by putting my hands down upon the keyboard without looking at which notes I am covering. Once the position is decided, it has been set for the whole piece.

Within this position the player performs an alternating sequence with all ten fingers throughout the whole piece. The pattern is notated as so:

Hands:	Fingers:								
LH	1		2		3		4		5
RH		1		2		3		4		5

(The player can choose for the RH to lead also. In fact a swap of the leading hand can occur during a performance of this piece).

When playing this sequence, the performer should keep each key depressed after it has been played. However, the first time the sequence is played the player should start from a lifted keyboard surface - there is no need to silently depress the keys within the position prior to beginning. This is to ensure that the first time the sequence is played; all pitches are present within the pattern. Then, for the continuation of the sequence the player lifts each key before it is to be played, in a manner alternative to that prescribed by classical technique (where keys would usually be lifted after depression, and depressed from a lifted position).

During the playing of this sequence, some keys may be missed due to the constraint of the hand position. This is encouraged! Interesting cycles emerge from unpredictable sounding keys, and unpredictable missed keys – sound spaces inside the sequence of action. The player should depress their hands into the keyboard surface during this piece to encourage missing the keys.

The player should start off at the dynamic of *mp*. Within the repetition of the pattern, certain notes played by stronger fingers will sound louder than others. Similarly, certain pitches will sound quieter if played by weaker fingers that struggle to lift the keys high enough for the hammer mechanism to hit the strings. The player should not fight this but let naturally occurring dynamics occur. This can be played with to ensure various dynamics within the piece, but it is not encouraged to dramatize this aspect. If the player depresses their fingers into the surface of the keyboard more fully, the piece will likely get quieter, with stronger fingers producing more prominent pitches in comparison.

The player is free to play at various tempi during the piece, but should start off playing a regular pulse, to ensure the pattern of pitches could be recognised as being repeated. Tempo changes should not occur suddenly, they should be elegantly placed when the moment 'feels' right or when the hands seem to naturally slow down or speed up in anyway.

The pattern can be played for any duration of the player's choice. If possible, this should not be assigned before a performance, as the unfolding performance should dictate the duration.
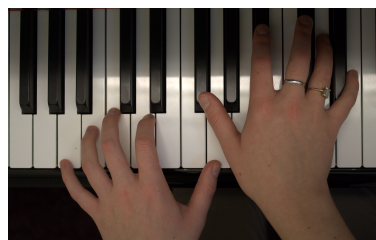
Photography by Phil Maguire (2014)

Eleanor Cully

I, as mouth

for voice and percussion

2014

I, as mouth for Juliet Fraser and Maxime Echardour

Technical Equipment
Shure sm87c microphone (or comparable)

Transducers x2

Mixer (with phantom power for condenser mic):
EQ   high - 10 o'clock
        mid - 2 o'clock
        low - 5 o'clock
Level – maximum
Main mix between 2 & 4 o'clock
Pan - L or R depending on notated transducer activation

Stereo 8 Ohm Amp:
Main level – 10 o'clock
Base – 2 o'clock
Treble – Noon
Tone Button on 'direct' not 'tone'

Percussion set up from left to right
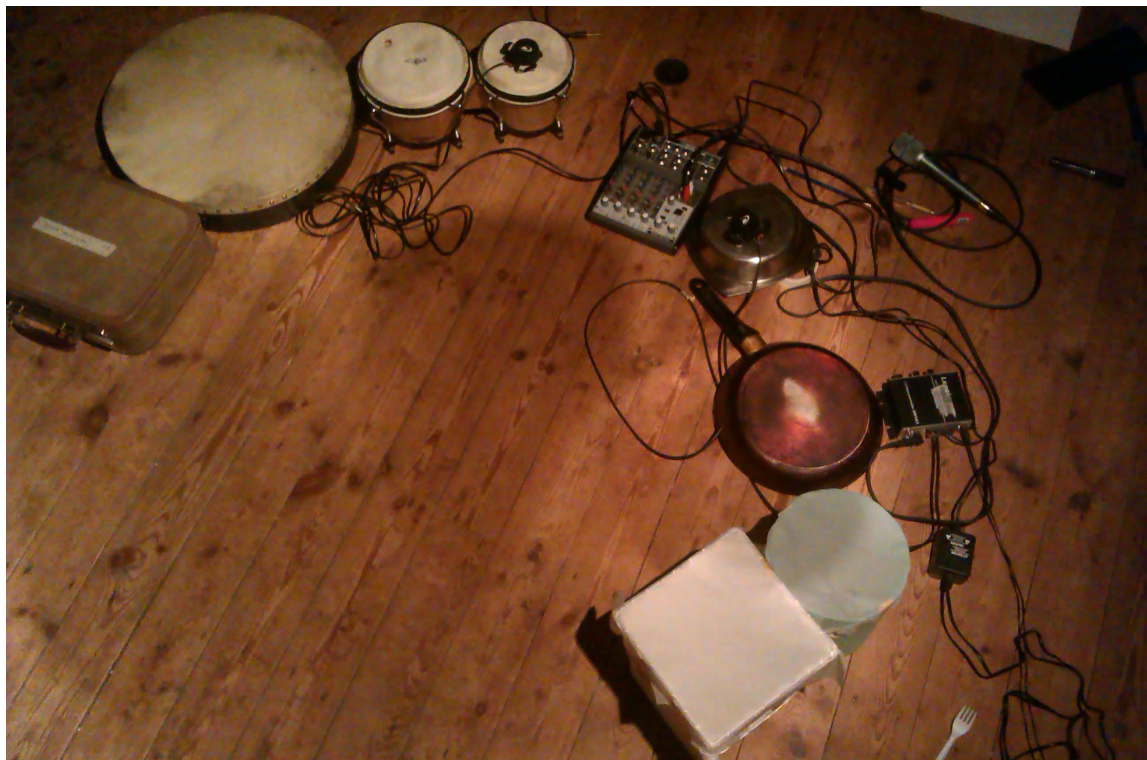Clarinet case
Bodhrán
Bongos low & high
Mixer
Cake tin (propped up with wedge)
Frying pan (propped up with wedge)
Tracing paper covered bin I
Tracing paper covered bin II

I, as mouth for Juliet Fraser and Maxime Echardour

I, as mouth for Juliet Fraser and Maxime Echardour

Performance Notes
This piece is for speaking vocalist and a percussionist with two transducers. The vocalist speaks text into a condenser microphone held close to the mouth. The voice is amplified using two transducers to excite various percussion instruments and objects set up in a semicircle around the percussionist. The percussionist places transducers (left and right) on various objects, directing activation of objects by controlling the pan control on a mixer.

Notes for percussionist
The percussionist's part is on the left side of the score. This part specifies which drum to activate with a transducer, the location upon the drum to place this transducer and the amount of pressure to apply.

Centre = transducer to be placed in centre of drum
Mid = transducer to be placed between centre and edge of drum
Edge = transducer to be placed at edge of drum
Pressure = slight pressure on transducer
→ = using the pan control, perform a transition from one instrument to another during a line of text
+ = pan to centre (two percussion instruments excited at same time)

Notes for vocalist
The vocalist's text is on the right hand side of the score. Text should be vocalized closely into the microphone. In general, text should be read slowly and in an introspective, but natural manner. Excessive theatricality should be avoided. Text in **bold** should be read in a low speaking tone, and text in *italics* should be whispered.

Gaps between line breaks should leave sufficient time for the percussionist to change positions. Generally, pauses between sections (indicated by roman numerals) should be longer than line breaks but there are no fixed rules about pause length

Percussionist: **Vocalist:**

I

high bongo, centre, no pressure

I speak through skins

cake tin, edge, pressure

to me
they speak to me

bodhran, centre, no pressure

me through them

→bin I, edge, pressure

they with their surfaces and shades

clarinet case, no pressure – pressure

I, with my hole and frame

II

bin II, centre, pressure

the surface begs skin

cake pan, edge, pressure

it cannot steal
it cannot hold
the figure

low bongo, centre, no pressure

its eyes or its yearning ears

and it sighs
still

cake pan, edge, pressure

as the skin steals surface

+ bodhran, edge, no pressure

it speaks

III

clarinet case, centre, pressure

can you hear me?

as myself

or as my voice

you see me
red-
skin
flickers

all pink delights

dancing
wet

and sound

can you taste me as myself

I taste
myself *in you*

in two

IV

the voice is a poem
a ballet of mouth

elegance enough to choke

V

bongo, centre, pressure

from me

with voice

bodhran, centre, no pressure
+ bin II, centre, no pressure

exhales

increase pressure

and inward

lift R transducer off

in your black

VI

bodhran, centre, pressure + frying pan, centre, pressure

we don't exist *in the air*
or against the breezes

bongo II, centre, pressure

still

→Cake tin, centre, pressure

we are skins between surfaces

VII

Clarinet case, centre, no pressure   →

two moths:
one as a shell
a husk
carries the other
flutters
no sound
unsounding

→frying pan, centre, pressure

engulfing with seeds

X

no pressure

the tongue

the spaces between

+ clarinet case, edge, no pressure

spilling-out
unclosing, telling me:

bongo I, centre, pressure

"I am not what I sound"

XII

bongo II, centre, pressure + cake tin, centre, no pressure

now,

you've had your chance to hear

I, as mouth

you

as ear

Eleanor Cully

Fixations

for various instruments

2014

Fixations for David Pocknee

Duration of each piece should be 1' or less:

Fixations 1
Place the exterior of a non-wind instrument against the bottom lip, and whilst holding it like a flute, exhale slowly

Fixations 2 (a & b)
Place a non-string instrument upon your left hand shoulder, using your right hand either/or:
- use a detachable part of that instrument to resemble a bow and move across the instrument from left to right
- pluck a part of that instrument with a finger

Fixations 3 (a & b)
In a seated position, place a non-string instrument between your knees, using your right hand either/or:
- use a detachable part of that instrument to resemble a bow and move across the instrument from left to right
- pluck a part of that instrument with a finger

Fixations 4
In a seated position, place a non-keyboard instrument across your lap and either/or:
- lay your hands down in a manner resembling playing a single chord upon a piano and remove after a few seconds
- lay your fingers down in a manner resembling playing a pattern upon a piano, once each finger has been used remove hands from the surface

Fixations 5
In a seated position, spread parts of a detachable non-percussive instrument in front of you and perform a short groove upon the parts with both hands (using two separate detachable parts of that same instrument if relevant/possible)

Fixations 6
Hold a non-guitar in a position representative of a guitar and strum the body

Fixations 7
Whilst holding it like a reed instrument, lick a small part of a non-reed instrument, place the part in your mouth and exhale slowly over it