Chatzimakris, V. (2025) *Interfacial scores: indeterminacy of performing means as composition strategy.* **PhD thesis, Bath Spa University.**

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INTERFACIAL SCORES

Indeterminacy of Performing Means as Composition Strategy

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A thesis and portfolio of creative work submitted to Bath Spa University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Bath Spa University - Bath School of Music and Performing Arts

July 2025

Ethics Statement

This study was approved by the Bath Spa University Ethics Panel on 19.12.2024. Should you have any concerns regarding ethical matters relating to this study, please contact the Research Support Office at Bath Spa University (researchsupportoffice@bathspa.ac.uk).

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the concept of interfacial scores, a distinct category of open scores that allow for alternative interpretations using substantially different performing means. Drawing on a broad range of examples, from mid-20th-century experimental traditions to contemporary practices, the research examines how interfacial scores function as mediators between composer intent and performer agency. It explores their potential to foster creativity and adaptability across varied performance contexts while highlighting their evolution to embrace diverse media and paradigms. Central to this exploration are the notions of activity, time, and space—categories systematically analysed and developed throughout the study as integral compositional elements within interfacial scores.

Given that interfacial scores do not specify the exact means of performance, the thesis turns to performance theory to investigate what composers of such scores do notate. By examining the shared characteristics underlying all performing means, the study identifies the fundamental elements that guide performers in interpreting these works. Furthermore, it addresses how performance is framed, considering the interplay of context, space, and time in shaping the realisation of interfacial scores.

The study is guided by four key research questions addressing the structural and conceptual foundations of interfacial scores: the specific elements composers include, the language and notational strategies they employ, the historical trajectory of these works, and the potential for systematising these approaches into a coherent framework. Through these inquiries, the thesis establishes a comprehensive taxonomy of compositional strategies, offering a practical schema for the analysis and creation of interfacial scores.

Ultimately, this thesis serves as both an academic and practical resource, providing a toolbox for composers and performers to engage with interfacial scores in innovative ways. It also lays the groundwork for future research, particularly in integrating these scores with emerging technologies and interdisciplinary practices, advancing their role as a transformative medium for creative expression and analysis.

Key words: interfacial scores, open scores, activity, time, space, framing, experimental composition

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INTRODUCTION

Don't pay too much attention to the sounds. If you do, you may miss the music.

- George Ives

The idea introduced by John Cage—that any sound can be perceived as music—has proven to be highly generative in the artistic practices of numerous twentieth-century composers, granting them the freedom to incorporate any form of sonic activity into their compositional materials. Cage's philosophy dismantled conventional boundaries, redefining music as a perceptual, rather than strictly auditory, phenomenon. Furthermore, there exists a logical extension of this notion, one that encompasses not only sonic activity but all forms of activity, embracing the totality of action and gesture within the realm of art (Douglas Kahn in Armstrong and Rothfuss, 1993, 117). This broader conceptualisation resonates deeply with my interest in interdisciplinary art and the possibilities it offers for creative expression.

My fascination lies in the potential of scores to transcend the auditory domain, serving as catalysts for diverse realisations across multiple media. By crafting scores that are not confined to sound alone, but which can also inspire performances in visual, spatial, physical, and other forms, I aim to expand upon traditional paradigms of artistic creation and performance. This approach aligns with the ethos of interdisciplinary art, fostering dialogue between different artistic practices and encouraging performers to engage with the work in ways that reflect their unique perspectives and mediums of expertise. Such scores become platforms for exploration and multiplicity, inviting interpretations that range from sonic compositions to choreographed movements, visual art, or even conceptual installations.

Ultimately, my work seeks to revisit the boundaries of what a score can represent and achieve, shifting the focus from fixed outcomes to dynamic processes of realisation. This thesis explores these possibilities, examining how interfacial scores—those designed to navigate the intersections of sound, action, and media—can generate profoundly diverse interpretations while maintaining a coherent artistic identity. By situating this practice within the broader context of Cagean philosophy and interdisciplinary exploration, this research aims to contribute to the evolving discourse on the nature and potential of contemporary composition.

What is an interfacial score?

Since the 1950s, a number of American and European artists and composers have sought to create interdisciplinary notations and performance contexts that exist between and beyond established art forms. A central aim of this work has been to blur the boundaries between art and life, and to merge music, theatre, and performance art. This research is particularly concerned with one key development in experimental composition: the creation of what I term *interfacial scores*. These open scores use verbal, graphic, and/or action-based notations to allow for alternative interpretations using substantially different performing means, offering more freedom than traditional staff notation. As John Cage explains, such scores "refer to what is to be done, not to what is heard, or to be heard" (Nyman 1999, 21). While many open scores remain within the sonic domain, a significant number also explore extra-musical, theatrical, and philosophical actions. In some cases, the performance means are not defined explicitly in the score, leaving room for diverse interpretations that could involve sound, movement, poetry, or imagery. These scores thus function as interfaces between different performing means, leading to the term *interfacial scores*.

My definition of interfacial scores centres on their capacity to facilitate multiple, alternative interpretations that employ substantially different performing means. These scores serve as a dynamic interface, mediating between diverse media and enabling a wide array of distinct realisations. By embodying this interconnectivity, interfacial scores transcend traditional boundaries of composition and performance, inviting a dialogue between varied artistic forms and practices.

The notion of *experimental music* is, as Michael Nyman suggests, an ongoing exploration of the question, "what else could music be?" (Nyman 1999, xii). In this context, composers and performers of interfacial scores ask, "what else could a score encompass?" and "what else could composition and performance of a score entail?" Early on, in 1961, composer Robert Ashley argued that "the most radical redefinition of music that I could think of would be one that defines 'music' without reference to sound" (Nyman 1999, 11). This view resonates with John Cage's citation of Ashley's statement that "music was any kind of temporal act whatsoever" (Cage 1981, 209).

In experimental music, sound may no longer be privileged over non-sound, and the distinction between seeing and hearing is dissolved. As Cage contends, theatre is pervasive and has always been present in music—if only one allows their attention to be "distracted" from the sounds (Nyman 1999, 22).

The emphasis on interdisciplinarity—working across and beyond established art forms—is central to both contemporary art and experimental composition. Interfacial scores exemplify a mode of

composition that invites a wide range of unpredictable possibilities. They place the performer at the centre of the performance practice, as their personalities, backgrounds, and creativity profoundly shape the interpretation. This disrupts the traditional sender/receiver model prevalent in Western music.

While the term *composer* is traditionally associated with the creation of music, I employ it here to define my practice, even in instances where the realisation of a work may not involve sound. This usage reflects an expanded conception of composition as the organisation of actions, events, and interactions across multiple media.

In 1969, the Draft Constitution of the Scratch Orchestra, written by Cornelius Cardew, Howard Skempton, and Michael Parsons, explicitly rejects a narrow definition of music. It states that "music" is "not understood to refer exclusively to sound and related phenomena (hearing, etc.). What it refers to is flexible and depends entirely on the members of the Scratch Orchestra" (Cardew 1969, 617).

Given this context, the aim of this research is to investigate and explore the phenomenon of interfacial scores—open scores composed in ways that permit alternative interpretations through a wide array of performing means. These scores can be understood as part of a broader category of work known as *intermedia*, a term coined by Dick Higgins to describe artistic practices that exist between media, including performing media (Priest 2013, 61).

Research Questions

The study of interfacial scores raises several critical questions that guide this research.

1. **What elements do composers of interfacial scores include, given that they do not prescribe particular performance means?**
   Since composers of interfacial scores intentionally avoid specifying the means by which a score is to be performed, the first question explores what they do specify within the score itself. This inquiry seeks to uncover the components of interfacial scores that provide structure, such as the types of activities, temporal frameworks, or conceptual prompts, which allow performers to shape their own interpretations.

2. **What language and notational strategies can composers of interfacial scores use to address diverse performance media while maintaining interpretative flexibility?**
   Closely linked to the above, the second question examines the language and notational techniques that composers can employ to ensure their scores remain relevant across a range of

media. Here, the focus is on the practical and creative tools that enable a score to be interpreted in multiple, sometimes radically different, ways by performers in different contexts.

3. **What have composers of interfacial scores notated over the past sixty years, and what methods have they employed to enable the multiplicity of interpretations these scores afford?**
   A third question turns to the historical and practical development of interfacial scores. This question explores the trajectory of interfacial score creation, examining the range of notational practices and strategies that have emerged over time, and how they have shaped the performance of these works.

4. **How can the strategies used in interfacial scores be systematised in a way that provides a structured framework for composition, performance, and analysis?**
   Finally, the study seeks to understand whether these various notational and interpretative strategies can be systematised to offer a coherent framework for engaging with interfacial scores. This question aims to develop a set of principles that can guide both future composers and performers in navigating the complexities of interfacial works, while also offering tools for critical analysis.

Together, these questions guide the exploration of how interfacial scores function, how they have been realised over time, and how they can be systematically understood and applied in both creative and analytical contexts.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured in two parts: the first, which is primarily theoretical, explores performance theory, the framing of performance, and the ontology of interfacial scores. The second part provides a practical framework for creating, performing, and analysing interfacial scores.

Interfacial scores do not prescribe the specific performing means by which they should be interpreted; instead, they allow for multiple interpretations by different media. Consequently, these scores transcend medium-specific constraints and incorporate more universal concepts. By omitting the specifics of individual performing media, composers employ notational techniques that circumscribe potential actions relevant to more than one mode of performance. This general approach calls for an exploration that is not confined to any single disciplinary tradition. Rather, it necessitates an investigation of the shared principles across all forms of performance. Thus, the first chapter of this thesis is dedicated to performance theory and practice. It examines the core commonalities in

performance and the performative arts to establish a comprehensive theoretical framework for the composition and analysis of interfacial scores.

The second chapter focuses on the concept of framing and the role of framing devices in performance. Drawing from both scholarly work and practical examples, this chapter discusses how performance is delineated from 'ordinary life.' It explores the function of scores as framing devices, positioning them as tools that separate the performative act from everyday experience and context.

In the third chapter, the thesis shifts its attention to the defining characteristics of interfacial scores. It provides an in-depth analysis of the compositional and notational techniques that facilitate alternative interpretations using different performing means. This chapter examines a variety of notational approaches, ranging from the highly structured to the more open-ended, highlighting how different levels of determinism in scoring contribute to the malleability and performative possibilities of interfacial scores.

The second part of the thesis is concerned with the application of the principal common characteristics of performance, as discussed in the first chapter, in the creation of interfacial scores. This section provides both a compositional and analytical toolkit for the development and critical examination of interfacial scores. It presents a broad (but not exhaustive) range of compositional approaches related to the notation, content, and context of interfacial scores. These are organised into three chapters, each dedicated to one of the key elements of performance: Activity, Time, and Space.

Aims

This exploration seeks to expand and deepen the understanding of interfacial scores, both historically and contemporarily, through three interconnected approaches. First, it establishes the theoretical framework for why interfacial scores represent a relevant and innovative compositional method within broader contemporary artistic practices. Second, it provides an analytical and practical approach to understanding how interfacial scores can be performed, analysed, and composed, with a focus on the fundamental characteristics of performance and the diverse ways these characteristics can be notated. Third, the research is explored through practical means, including the composition and documented performances of interfacial scores—both those composed by myself and by other composers.
As Henk Borgdorff argues, artistic practice is integral to artistic research. He notes, "methodologically speaking, the creative process forms the pathway (or part of it) through which new insights, understandings, and products come to being. [...] This means that art practice is paramount as the subject matter, the method, the context, and the outcome of artistic research" (Borgdorff in Biggs and Karlsson 2011, 46). In this context, Borgdorff expands the concept of knowledge beyond mere factual

accumulation to include practical skills—"knowing how to make, how to act, how to perform" (Borgdorff in Biggs and Karlsson 2011, 55).

For this research project, I have employed composition and performance as processes through which the inquiry unfolds. Original compositions and performances are not only outcomes of this research but also serve as a lens through which compositional strategies and artistic tools for interfacial scores can be developed and systematised. In this way, the research aims to enrich my own artistic practice and compositional "toolbox," while also mapping out new approaches to composition. Ultimately, this project aspires to provide a resource that can inspire future compositions by others, further advancing the field of interfacial scores. This way, as Borgdorff emphasises, artistic practice functions both as a methodological approach and as a goal of research (Borgdorff in Biggs and Karlsson 2011, 45).

There is, however, a broader social and political dimension to this exploration. As Cornelius Cardew suggests, composition is not merely an end in itself or a means to express personal ideas, emotions, or aesthetic preferences, but rather a method to engage "the most valuable resource of any music—people" (Nyman 1999, 115). In this context, interfacial scores, by inviting diverse individuals to engage in performance in ways that reflect their own skills, perspectives, and creative decisions, can be seen as fostering a form of micro-democracy. Through this process, they embody a form of collaboration that emphasises collective participation and inclusivity. This approach challenges the notion of authoritative control over artistic production and instead represents a dynamic where discipline within chaos reflects how communities without central authority can function effectively.

PART I

Performance Theory and Framing

1. ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF PERFORMANCE

Composers, performers and auditors of music permit sound-experiences by arranging situations having sound as an aspect. But the theatre is well lit. I have to cough; the seat creaks, and I can feel the vibration. Since here is no distraction, why choose sound as the common agent?
- George Brecht (Brecht 2005, 115)

The Cognitive Questions (asked by most artists of the 20th century, Platonic or Aristotelian, till around 1958): "How can I interpret this world of which I am a part? And what am I in it?"
The Postcognitive Questions (asked by most artists since then): "Which world is this? What is to be done in it? Which of my selves is to do it?"
- Dick Higgins (Higgins 1978, 101)

Interdisciplinarity In Performance Research And Practice

In our everyday experience, we are constantly engaged with multiple aesthetic stimuli that activate all our senses. This sensory engagement is inherently inclusive—there is no way to perceive a single event in isolation from the others, as our senses work in concert to process a multitude of simultaneous experiences. Artistic perception, too, operates in this way. From a historical perspective, the notion that art should engage all senses is not new. As early as 1933, Antonin Artaud called for a theatrical experience that would involve all the audience's senses (Artaud 1938, 67). John Cage's *4'33''* (1952) further demonstrated that not only is there no absolute separation between sound and silence, but that there is also no clear divide between musical and theatrical action. Such performances are frequently perceived as both musical and theatrical, blurring these once distinct categories. Cage himself observed that because absolute silence is unattainable, there is always something to perceive—both through hearing and sight—if one is attentive. He encompassed this dual sensory engagement under the broader umbrella of "theatre," extending its reach beyond traditional performance contexts to include everyday life (Cage 1965, 50).

The navigation of attention toward one sense—whether hearing in a concert or vision in a theatre—is largely shaped by the context and cultural significance of the activity at hand. Cage himself pointed out that established art forms like music and theatre are, in his words, "oversimplifications" of the richer, more complex sensory situation in which we actually live (Cage 1968, 149). Similarly, Robert Ashley argued for the radical redefinition of music to include not just sound, but the entire experience it entails, proposing that music need not be confined to auditory phenomena (quoted in Harren 2020, 201).

Historically, much of the human artistic creation, especially in performance, integrates sound, text, movement, and objects into a cohesive whole. This interlacing of media has led theorists like Huxley and Witts to critique categorisation in the arts as "artificial" and indicative of historical insecurity. They argue that performance practitioners deliberately resist these rigid boundaries (Huxley and Witts 2002, 5). Similarly, scholars such as Noel Carroll contend that performance, as an art form, lacks a distinctive medium of its own (Carroll 1986, 78), while Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett suggests that the division of the arts into distinct categories is arbitrary (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett in Bial 2003, 43).

This blurring of boundaries between media was already evident in the mid-20th century. In the 1940s, there were discussions about Jackson Pollock's dripping technique, which straddled the line between painting and performance (Kahn 2001, 263). In the 1950s, the Letterist movement explored the fusion of poetry, music, and visual art, and this was followed by artists like Yves Klein and Piero Manzoni who challenged traditional separations in the arts (Armstrong and Rothfuss 1993, 30). Theodor Adorno observed a trend of "erosion" in the boundaries between art forms, suggesting that artistic genres were increasingly transgressive, "revel[ing] in a kind of promiscuity" (Adorno 2003, 371). He argued that while the art forms were distinct in some ways, there was value in exploring the spaces between them, rather than simply breaking down their boundaries (Adorno 2003, 383).

These ideas align with Richard Schechner's view that art forms like music and dance, as well as the very concept of "art" itself, are historically and culturally constructed conventions (Schechner 2002, 32). Allan Kaprow echoed this sentiment, suggesting that today's artist need not identify as a painter, poet, or dancer, but instead simply as "an artist," with a broad and open engagement with life (cited in Wood 2002, 22).

Fluxus artist Dick Higgins coined the term "intermedia" to describe works that defy categorization within established art forms. Fluxus artists like George Brecht, Nam June Paik, and Alison Knowles exemplified this ethos, producing work that crossed boundaries between media, reflecting a holistic approach to how we perceive the world (Harren 2020, 215-216). Ken Friedman explained that Higgins saw no reason for a boundary between art and life or between different art forms, advocating for a more fluid, open approach to creativity (Friedman 1998, 247). Higgins argued that the separation of art forms—beginning in the Renaissance—mirrored broader social stratifications, and that these divisions were increasingly irrelevant in modern society (Higgins 1978, 12). He believed that artists should embrace a fluid identity, one that allows for experimentation across different artistic disciplines and reflects the complexities of modern life (Brecht 1978, 99-100).

Interdisciplinary and intermedia practices also have roots in ancient rituals and ceremonies, which have long combined sound, movement, visual art, and spoken word in a continuous, interconnected

pattern. However, it was principally in the 20th century that artists and scholars began to intentionally explore and challenge the distinctions between art forms, art and life, and the functions of artistic practice (Kostelanetz 1970, 3). In contrast to earlier performances, where artistic elements were often clearly delineated—such as the distinctions between dance, music, and scenography in ballet—contemporary artists increasingly interweave these elements. In today's performances, the boundaries between dance, music, and theatre often collapse into a singular, more fluid experience.

Equally, in contemporary art, interdisciplinary or intermedia practices do not represent a specific style but rather a mode of thinking. Artists blend different media, sometimes prioritising one while using others in complementary ways, and at other times treating all media as equally important. This approach fosters new creative possibilities, allowing artists to transcend traditional genres and classification systems (Breder and Rapaport 2011, 17).

As a matter of fact, the contemporary experimental composer Tim Parkinson has stated that his work is not about creating a specific piece of music or art but about creating an experience—a "natural experience" that opens up possibilities for engagement (Saunders 2009, 341). This focus on the experience rather than the product is emblematic of a broader shift in the art world toward prioritising engagement, interaction, and the sensory experience over the conventional boundaries of artistic form.

As the 21st century progresses, there seems to be a marked increase in interest in interdisciplinary work. Artistic fellowships, residencies, and calls for collaboration between practitioners of different disciplines are becoming more common. In this context, artists must develop a wider range of skills and knowledge across various fields. As Higgins notes, today's artist is no longer confined to a single identity; they must be able to navigate and synthesise multiple disciplines and approaches, embodying a fluidity of expression that mirrors the complexities of contemporary life (Higgins 1976, 1).

As the boundaries between art forms continue to dissolve, performance itself is increasingly understood as an all-encompassing concept. Richard Schechner suggests that performance should be studied not only as art but also as a way of understanding broader historical, social, and cultural processes (Schechner in Bial 2003, 8). Performance, in this sense, serves both aesthetic and social functions. It has the power to create community, build social awareness, and express identity, while also offering entertainment and a space for creative expression. Schechner notes that performance is defined by a dynamic tension between efficacy and entertainment, and that understanding the essence of performance requires identifying the common characteristics that it shares across cultures and periods (Schechner 2002, 81).

Mary Strine, Beverly Long, and Mary Hopkins observe that the concept of performance is contested. Scholars often offer contradictory interpretations, but these differences are not attempts to silence

each other; rather, they contribute to a deeper, more nuanced understanding of what performance is (Strine, Long, and Hopkins 1990, 83). Richard Schechner agrees that there is no fixed definition of performance, as it is a fluid and evolving concept. He argues that "any action that is framed, enacted, presented, highlighted, or displayed" can be considered performance (Schechner 2002). Performance, he asserts, includes both extraordinary and everyday actions, from artistic exhibitions to sports, social rituals, and even the presentation of oneself in daily life.

The term "performance" thus spans a wide range of human activity, from formal performances to casual social interactions, and it is often used to describe both exceptional acts and routine behaviours. In this context, everything from playing, resting, interacting, presenting oneself, to social and political actions can be considered performance (Allain and Harvie 2006, 3). With the advent of technology and social media, many people now view their everyday lives as a series of interconnected performances (Schechner 2002, 49).

The interdisciplinary field of performance studies has evolved through various theoretical shifts, expanding its scope and methodologies over time. In this chapter, my discourse is intentionally grounded in the foundational texts, concepts, and key scholars that have shaped the field's early development. While I am aware of the shifts and developments that have since broadened and diversified performance studies, my focus here remains on these core foundations, using them as the primary framework for my analysis.

The interdisciplinary nature of performance studies is reflected in the vast range of cultural practices it encompasses. These include rituals, sports, festivals, political activism, music, theatre, performance art, fine art, and much more. Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett suggests that performance studies should not artificially separate its objects of study into distinct disciplines or art forms, but rather approach them holistically (quoted in Schechner 2002, 3). Performance studies has thus developed a broad and rich interdisciplinary approach, integrating anthropological, sociological, artistic, and philosophical perspectives to enrich our understanding of performance in its multiple forms and dimensions (Allen and Harvie 2006, 8).

In summary, performance is a dynamic, evolving concept that transcends the boundaries of traditional art forms. By exploring performance as an interdisciplinary and intermedia phenomenon, we can begin to appreciate its full range of meanings and possibilities. As artists continue to challenge and dissolve the traditional categories of art, performance will continue to offer new ways of engaging with and understanding the world around us.

From an anthropological perspective, Nicolas Evreinoff suggests that all human activity and societal interaction can essentially be understood as playing a theatrical part (Evreinoff 1927, 19). This conceptualisation of life as performance is echoed by Erving Goffman, who posits that all social interactions can be viewed, analysed, and evaluated through the lens of theatre. He extends the notion of performance to include not only costumes (such as suits and work clothes) and makeup but also props (objects imbued with significance that we use in specific roles in daily life), and behaviour, which can be understood as acting. For Goffman, this is not seen as a false or deceptive act, but rather as an essential function of society that emerges through a complex network of human interactions. As such, social behaviour can be interpreted through the methodology of performance analysis (Allain and Harvie 2006, 151). In his foundational work *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman defines performance as "all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants. Taking a particular participant and his performance as a basic point of reference, we may refer to other performances as the audience, observers, or co-participants" (Goffman 1959, 15). His theory suggests that individuals not only enact specific roles in various situations, but also shape their actions to align with what is culturally and historically perceived as appropriate for the role they occupy (Counsel and Wolf 2001, 201).

In a complementary way, Richard Schechner elaborates on the idea of performance by presenting it in relation to the concepts of "Being" (as in existence), "Doing" (the totality of activity), "Showing Doing" (performance proper, or the highlighting of activities), and "Explaining 'showing doing'" (which is the realm of performance studies) (Schechner 2002, 28). This distinction between "doing" and "showing doing" is crucial because it offers a way to parse out what constitutes performance in both everyday life and theatrical contexts, providing a framework for understanding how ordinary activities can be framed as performances.

Building on this, Dell Hymes takes this further by describing three levels of human interaction that shed light on the progression from general behaviour to the highly structured acts of performance. The first level, behaviour, simply refers to what is happening in our lives—our everyday actions. The second level, conduct, refers to how we behave according to societal norms, cultural rules, shared principles, and interpretative frameworks. Finally, performance represents a subset of conduct, involving actions where individuals consciously take on responsibility to an audience and to tradition, as they understand it. According to Hymes, performance is an active display of communicative skill, one that is done with an awareness of its context and its audience (Hymes 1975, 13).

In a similar vein, Richard Bauman further emphasises the communicative function of performance. He sees performance as not merely the act of communication itself, but as a display of skill and effectiveness that is evaluated based on how well the performer executes the act. Bauman asserts that performance is carried out with a dual focus on both its referential content—the substance of what is communicated—and the way it is done, which is assessed through the relative skill and effectiveness of the performer's display (Bauman 1986, 3).

Further extending the discussion of performance, Judith Butler's groundbreaking work in gender studies has introduced the concept of the performativity of gender. She contends that gender is not something one is, but something one does, through repeated and socially regulated performances. This perspective extends the discussion of performance beyond traditional theatrical and social roles to encompass identity itself. Butler's theory suggests that gender is a series of acts that are culturally prescribed, and these acts are continually performed, thus reconstituting the very notion of gender within the realm of performance studies (Allain and Harvie 2006, 33).

While Butler's framework is rooted in the social construction of identity, my use of the term *performativity* here focuses on the inherent potential of a concept or structure to generate or enable performance. This interpretation, though informed by performativity theory, is not wholly derived from it; rather, it views the term in a broader sense, to emphasize an intrinsic potential for activation and realisation within a performative context.

Butler's work aligns with and enriches earlier performance theories by illustrating that identity is not static but is constantly performed through repetition. Her ideas reflect the ways in which individuals conform to and resist cultural expectations, showing how identity is both a personal performance and a public display. This extension of performance studies into the realm of gender provides a more nuanced understanding of how human beings, in their everyday lives, perform not only societal roles but also their most fundamental identities.

Thus, performance, as understood through the theories of Goffman, Schechner, Hymes, Bauman, and Butler, becomes a versatile concept that can be applied to numerous facets of human interaction, from the roles we play in social settings to the identity we perform through gender and other cultural markers. These various thinkers collectively suggest that the act of performing—whether it is in a formal theatrical context, in everyday social behavior, or in the performance of identity—constitutes a fundamental aspect of human life. What these perspectives make clear is that performance is not merely an act confined to the stage or the spectacle but is an ongoing process that informs and shapes the way individuals experience and interact with the world.

Performance And Tradition in Performance Studies

Within performance theory, there exist two contrasting, although not mutually exclusive, perspectives regarding the relationship between performance and tradition. On one hand, some theorists regard performance as an activity that supports, is supported by, or even encapsulates tradition. In this view, performance acts as a medium through which cultural continuity is preserved, reaffirmed, and transmitted. On the other hand, much of performance research suggests that performance can, in fact, serve as a site for resistance to tradition—challenging or even undermining established cultural norms. Performance, in this sense, provides a space for the exploration of fresh and alternative structures and patterns of behaviour, offering opportunities for societal transformation (Carlson, 2004, 12-13). This duality—performance as both upholding and challenging tradition—reflects the complex role that performance plays in shaping, maintaining, and sometimes revolutionising social structures.

The term "cultural performances" was introduced by Milton Singer to describe events that are circumscribed from everyday life. These performances are marked by their ability to display, represent, and encapsulate the cultural structures, assumptions, and values of the society in which they take place. Singer's framework underscores how certain events can act as condensed representations of a culture's social fabric, offering insights into the underlying norms that govern social life (Singer 1959, xii). Similarly, both Richard Schechner and John MacAloon suggest that tradition—manifested through enduring behavioural patterns and established social models—serves as the principal foundation for performance. Schechner, for instance, characterises performance as "restored behavior," arguing that performance involves the re-enactment of behaviours based on pre-existing cultural models. MacAloon also stresses that "there is no performance without pre-performance," underscoring the idea that every performance is informed by and rooted in prior behaviours and rituals (MacAloon 1984, 9). In this way, performance is inherently tied to tradition, as it both draws on and perpetuates culturally shared models of behaviour.

A key concept in performance studies is *play*, which plays a central role in many theories of performance. Richard Schechner, in particular, suggests that "performance can be defined as ritualised behaviour conditioned/permeated by play" (Schechner 2002, 89). In this view, play refers to a mode of behaviour that is distinct from the everyday, serious conduct of life. It allows for a temporary escape from normal societal roles and functions, offering participants a space where new possibilities can be explored and where established norms may be momentarily suspended. This understanding of play is linked to the idea that performance, in its many forms, can function as a form of experimentation, enabling individuals to explore alternative modes of existence and interaction. Moreover, Schechner

further argues that performance, in some ways, may have emerged from animal play, which similarly involves a setting apart from ordinary life, the expression of emotions, and social interplay (McConachie 2011, 45). This connection between performance and play reveals the fundamental flexibility and creativity inherent in performance as a form of behaviour.

Schechner's notion of "restored behaviour" is integral to understanding the relationship between performance and tradition. Restored behavior refers to actions or events that are re-enacted in accordance with pre-existing models, whether cultural, personal, or artistic. This concept applies not only to theatrical performances but also to everyday behaviours, suggesting that much of what we do is informed by past actions or established routines. Schechner argues that for every action or event, there is a pre-existing model that guides how it will unfold in subsequent iterations (Schechner 1985, 35). In this sense, the performer draws from a reservoir of cultural or personal memory—whether consciously or unconsciously—to re-enact or re-interpret behaviours. Even in activities perceived as "one-time" events, whether artistic or mundane, the performance mirrors a certain behavioural arrangement that has been experienced before, albeit within a shifting context. The specifics of each performance—such as time, place, body, voice, mood, and other nuances—are always different, which means that no two performances can ever be identical. Thus, the fluidity of performance becomes apparent, as each enactment is both a return to tradition and a reinvention within an ever-changing context (Schechner 2002, 29-30).

In analysing any activity as performance, Schechner notes that there are elements which relate to the intrinsic nature of the activity itself, and there are other factors which pertain to the frames of time and space within which the activity occurs. These frames, along with the critical evaluation of the activity, are essential to understanding performance as a dynamic event (Schechner 2002, 34). As Schechner succinctly puts it, "performance means: never for the first time. It means: for the second to the nth time. Performance is 'twice-behaved behaviour'" (Barba and Savarese 1991, 206). This concept of performance as a repeated enactment reinforces the idea that each performance is both a return to tradition and a re-engagement with a pre-existing model. At the same time, the particularity of each performance ensures that tradition is never merely repeated but is constantly reshaped by the context in which it is enacted.

Restored behaviour is closely linked with the notion of play, which distinguishes performance from the more "serious" pursuits of daily life. Play provides a space where societal norms are temporarily suspended, enabling performers to experiment with new roles, behaviours, and relationships. This quality of play is what allows performance to operate as a site of both continuity and innovation. As Schechner observes, "performance is ritualised behaviour conditioned/permeated by play," which allows for creative flexibility within a structured framework (Schechner 2002, 89). Performance, in this sense,

is both a continuation of tradition and an opportunity for creative expression and exploration. Schechner further emphasises that every performance occupies a space between ritual and entertainment, with performances incorporating elements of both functions to varying degrees. The degree to which one or the other is emphasised—ritual versus entertainment—is central to understanding the intent and impact of the performance (Schechner 2002, 87).

In contrast, Victor Turner, building upon the work of anthropologist Arnold van Gennep, introduced the term *liminal* to describe activities that lie outside the sphere of everyday life. Liminal activities provide a space where participants can step away from the normal boundaries and roles defined by cultural norms. These activities encourage individuals to think and act in ways that do not conform to their usual codes of behaviour, inviting them to renegotiate and reconsider the structures that govern their lives. Turner describes liminal activities as existing in the "gap" between ordinary norms and roles, often possessing a symbolic character that borders on ritualistic behaviour (Turner 1969, 22).

Building upon Turner's concept of liminality, Brian Sutton-Smith suggests that liminal activities function not only as a temporary break from the normative structure of society but also as a source of cultural innovation. These activities provide a space for imagining alternative cultural structures and behaviours, allowing individuals to temporarily experience different ways of being and relating. Turner himself referred to these liminal spaces as "seedbeds of cultural creativity," where new social possibilities can emerge. However, Turner also argued that the ultimate purpose of liminal activities is not to permanently disrupt or challenge societal norms, but to reaffirm them by demonstrating the disorder and chaos that would result from their absence. In this way, liminal performances serve as a reminder of the value and necessity of cultural norms in maintaining social order (Schechner 2002, 66).

In modern, industrialised societies, where there are very few possibilities to reaffirm generalised cultural norms through traditional rituals, Turner introduced the concept of *liminoid* activities. These activities, which include forms of play, sports, leisure, and art, exist outside the realm of work and business. Liminoid activities, unlike their liminal counterparts, are voluntary and often more individualistic in nature. Although they have a less significant impact on reaffirming societal norms, liminoid activities can nonetheless play a crucial role in challenging or undermining the way society is organised. By suggesting alternative social structures, liminoid performances offer new visions of possible ways of living and relating to others (Turner 1982, 20-60).

The Role of Audience in Performance

In performance theory, there is a broad consensus regarding the pivotal role that the audience plays in identifying an activity as performance. However, the precise nature of the audience's involvement, and its reciprocal relationship with the performer(s), has been a subject of much debate and intellectual exploration. Scholars have long pondered how the audience's engagement not only shapes the performance itself but also influences how both the performer and the performance are understood within a given cultural and social context. What remains central in performance studies is the way in which the audience contributes to the framing of an activity as performance, which can vary significantly depending on the level of participation and engagement.

In the 1950s, the scholar William H. Jansen proposed a theory that suggests the extent of audience participation is directly related to the degree to which an activity can be classified as performance. Jansen argued that the less involvement the audience has in an event, the more likely that event is to be understood as a performance. He even described performance and participation as two ends of a continuum, suggesting that events with high audience participation are less clearly defined as performances, while those with minimal involvement from the audience are more easily recognized as such (Jansen 1957, 110). This perspective implies that performance exists on a spectrum, with the most conventional forms of performance being those in which a distinct divide between audience and performer is maintained. This divide is not simply physical but conceptual, marking a clear separation between the two groups, thus framing the event in a way that encourages the audience to focus on the performer's actions as deliberate, intentional, and designed for observation.

Erving Goffman, a major figure in performance theory, also placed significant emphasis on the relationship between the performer and the audience, viewing it as a central aspect of performance. Goffman defines performance as "all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers" (Goffman 1959, 213-31). This definition acknowledges the crucial role of the audience in shaping the performance, yet Goffman's approach presents the audience as passive observers rather than active participants. He stresses that it is the performer who holds primary agency in shaping the performance, and the role of the audience is largely limited to observation.

For Goffman, the audience's involvement is not participatory, meaning that they do not intervene or directly influence the course of the performance (Goffman 1974, 125). This passive role is fundamental to his theory, as it reinforces the performer's central role in controlling the performance and its meaning. Goffman also introduces the concept of the "front," which refers to the performer's intentional management of their public persona and the setting in which the performance occurs. The front encompasses elements such as the performer's clothing, demeanor, physical setting, and the selection and arrangement of performative material, all of which are deliberately chosen to communicate a

particular identity or message to the audience (Goffman 1974, 65). For Goffman, this "front" serves as a critical element in distinguishing performance from everyday behavior, as it is the performer's deliberate presentation that turns an event into a performance. The audience, by contrast, remains on the periphery, tasked with interpreting the intentions of the performer but without the ability to shape or alter the performance itself.

While Goffman's theory focuses on the passive nature of the audience in relation to the performer, it is important to note that the dynamic between the two is not completely one-sided. The performer is keenly aware of the audience's presence and often tailors their behavior to evoke certain reactions, thus creating a subtle but significant form of reciprocal influence. However, the central distinction remains that the audience is, in Goffman's view, primarily an observer, and it is the performer's intentionality and control over the presentation that define the activity as performance.

Key Attributes and Theories of Performance

Kenneth Burke identifies "five key terms of dramatism": "what was done (Act), when or where it was done (Scene), who did it (Agent), how he did it (Agency) and why (Purpose)" (Burke 1945, xv). Johan Huizinga famously sums up the essential features of play by describing it as "a free activity standing quite consciously outside 'ordinary' life as being 'not serious,' but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly" (Huizinga 1950, 13). This concept positions play as an activity that both deviates from the routine seriousness of everyday life while simultaneously drawing participants into an engrossing, immersive experience. In addition to this freedom, Huizinga also emphasizes the structured nature of play, noting that it "proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner." (Huizinga 1950, 13). Thus, the juxtaposition of freedom and structure becomes central to understanding the playful aspect of performance.

Building upon Huizinga's work, Roger Caillois attempts to identify more specific qualities of play, which, as he notes, are closely linked to performance. Caillois lists six essential attributes of play, each of which mirrors characteristics found in performance (Caillois 1954, 9-10). First, he underscores that participation in play is voluntary, and it can be suspended at any time, establishing a clear distinction between leisure and work. Second, the activity is circumscribed in both time and space, ensuring that the play is contained within specific boundaries. Third, the activities are not entirely determined, leaving room for flexibility and improvisation. Fourth, the activity is unproductive in material terms, focusing instead on symbolic or experiential value. Fifth, the play is governed by fixed rules, which

structure the experience. Finally, it creates an alternate reality, allowing participants to step outside the constraints of everyday life. These characteristics echo key aspects of performance, where both the performer and the audience engage in activities that are temporally, spatially, and symbolically distinct from everyday occurrences.

Milton Singer's work further develops the idea of cultural performances by emphasizing their specific attributes. He notes that cultural performances are marked by a "definitely limited time span, a beginning and an end, an organized program of activity, a set of performers, an audience, and a place and occasion of performance" (Singer 1959, xiii). These attributes are essential in distinguishing performances from other activities, underscoring the intentional structuring of time, space, and social roles in creating meaningful, ritualized events.

Richard Kostelanetz offers a valuable framework for distinguishing different types of performances by categorizing them as "open," "closed," "fixed," or "variable," based on the three key elements of space, time, and action. For example, pure happenings, which are spontaneous and less structured, are characterized by openness in space and variability in time and action. In contrast, staged performances tend to be more "closed" in terms of space and "fixed" in terms of time and action, offering a more rigid structure that is recognizable as a performance (Kostelanetz 1970, 7). This framework allows for an understanding of performance as a spectrum of experiences, with more formalized performances existing at one end and more fluid, spontaneous events existing at the other.

The most crucial ontological attribute of performance, according to Peggy Phelan, is its existence only in the present moment. Phelan rejects the notion that recordings or reproductions of a performance can be considered performance in an ontological sense. She argues that performance can only exist in the here and now, providing a shared space and time in which performers and audiences engage in an interactive experience (Phelan 1993, 146). This fleeting, ephemeral nature of performance gives it a unique ontological status, as its value is derived not from its potential for replication but from its live, transient qualities. In her work, Phelan employs psychoanalytic and feminist theories to argue that the temporality of performance underscores both a sense of loss and the potential for social and political significance. The ephemeral nature of performance emphasizes its importance not only as a social and cultural event but also as an ethical and political act in its very presence.

Marvin Carlson's analysis similarly highlights the cultural significance of performance, suggesting that "within every culture there can be discovered a certain kind of activity, set apart from other activities by space, time, attitude, or all three, that can be spoken of and analyzed as performance" (Carlson 2004, 13). Carlson emphasizes that these performances are culturally defined, marked by clear distinctions from other forms of human activity. Likewise, Richard Bauman identifies several characteristics of

performance, asserting that they are "scheduled" and "temporally bounded," "spatially bounded," "programmed" in terms of activities, and generally represent "coordinated public" and "heightened" occasions. These attributes contribute to the way society frames an activity as performance, emphasizing the social context and the communicative intent behind the event (Bauman 1992, 46).

In developing a synthesis of the definitions and observations put forward by these theorists, I propose four fundamental features that are necessary for an activity to be considered a performance:

1. **A circumscribed space** - Performance occurs within a specific, designated space that separates it from the ordinary, everyday world.
2. **A circumscribed time** - The performance takes place within a defined period, ensuring that it is temporally distinct from other activities.
3. **A particular kind of activity** - The activity must have a specific character or purpose that qualifies it as performance, rather than just an ordinary action.
4. **A willingness to perceive the activity as performance** - At least one person, whether a performer, audience member, or theorist, must recognize and engage with the activity as a performance. This can include anyone involved in the activity, from the performers themselves to the theorists who analyze the event.

This final point highlights the importance of perception and interpretation in the creation of performance. It is not enough for an activity to simply occur; there must be a shared understanding that it is a performance, whether that understanding comes from the performer, the audience, or an external observer.

Even in contexts that challenge the traditional boundaries of space and time—such as the expansive concepts of performance in the work of Allan Kaprow and his Happenings aesthetics—there is still a recognition that performance relies on a person's willingness to frame an event as such. In Kaprow's Happenings, for example, the boundaries of performance are extended to encompass all of space and time, but the act of framing these expansive experiences as performance remains central to their significance (Kaprow in Huxley and Witts 2002, 263). Similarly, John Cage's assertion that there is no such thing as silence and no such thing as non-activity reinforces the idea that everything can be viewed as performance, depending on how it is framed and perceived. As Cage notes, when looking at the world, "it appears to be very busy" (Cage 1965, 64), suggesting that every moment and every action, when regarded as performance, becomes significant.

As previously discussed, Richard Bauman also emphasizes the communicative aspect of performance. He suggests that the effectiveness of performance lies in the performer's ability to facilitate communication with the audience. The extent to which the audience perceives the event as a

performance—facilitated by the skill of the performer—is what ultimately defines the success of the event as a performance. In this sense, performance is not simply about the act itself, but about the interaction and the shared recognition of the act as a performance between the performer and the audience (Bauman 1992, 41).

It's a Performance, Because I Say So

Director Peter Brook, in 1968, famously declared, "I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged" (Brook 1968, 11). This observation highlights the fundamental essence of performance: its ability to exist wherever there is a defined space, a performer, and an audience. In the same year, John Cage, in his lecture on experimental music, expanded this notion by stating that "there is no such thing as an empty space or an empty time. There is always something to see, something to hear" (Cage 1968, 8). The Fluxus artists, too, exemplified this idea by perceiving and evaluating everyday life and activity as performance, blurring the lines between art and life (Armstrong and Rothfuss 1993, 36). In this context, the performance is not always immediately recognized as such by the participant. As Erving Goffman notes, an individual enacting a social role in everyday life may not consciously realize they are performing. However, what makes this act a performance is the acknowledgment and interpretation of it as such, either by the individual or by an external observer (Counsel and Wolf 2001, 159).

The potential for performance exists everywhere. Any action or activity may be considered a performance if there is at least one individual who perceives it as such. Therefore, while the first three features of performance—space, time, and activity—are universally present (there is always space, time, and some activity occurring), it is primarily the fourth characteristic, the willingness of someone to interpret what is happening as performance, that differentiates what is recognized as performance from what is not. Cage emphasizes this point when he states that there is no real difference between a person experiencing the beach and someone attending a theatre performance, provided that the observer "assumes that the beach is theatre" (John Cage 1965, 55). This idea builds upon Goffman's suggestion that everyday life can be understood as performance. In fact, Michael Kirby notes that there is a continuum of performance in daily activities, with some actions more closely aligned with traditional acting, while others are more subtle (Kirby 1972). John Cage further underscores this when he states, "theatre takes place all the time wherever one is, and art simply facilitates persuading one that this is the case" (Nyman 1999, 80).

A key example of this idea in practice is John Cage's iconic *4'33"*. In this composition, a driver passing by may not be aware that their presence contributes to the sonic landscape of the piece, yet the audience and even the driver's co-performer, who remains silent on stage, perceive the sound of the car as part of the performance. Similarly, in Augusto Boal's Invisible Theatre, performers (who are usually trained actors) enact staged performances in public spaces. While they are fully aware they are performing, the bystanders, or audience, perceive the actions as part of everyday life, unaware that they are witnessing a performance. This underscores the fluidity between performance and everyday activity—what the performer and audience understand as performance is mediated by perception and context. As performance theorists assert, it is often the act of framing an activity as a performance that makes it one.

Richard Schechner echoes this concept when he states, "[e]ven non-performance—sitting in a chair, crossing the street, sleeping—can be made into a performance by framing these ordinary actions 'as performance.' If I look at what happens on the street, or at the rolling ocean, and see these 'as performance,' then in that circumstance they are as such. This is what John Cage meant when he answered my question 'What is theatre?' with, 'Just look and listen'" (Schechner 2002, 169). This notion parallels the work of Marcel Duchamp, whose ready-mades, such as *Fountain* (1917) and *Bicycle Wheel* (1913), challenge traditional concepts of artistic creation by recontextualizing ordinary objects as art. By presenting a urinal or a bicycle wheel as art, Duchamp emphasized the role of context and interpretation in the construction of meaning, similar to the way everyday actions can be framed as performance depending on how they are perceived (Wood 2002, 11-12).

Uberto Eco, in his study on the semiotics of theatrical performance, suggests that something is interpreted as a sign not because of the producer's intention but because the receiver chooses to interpret it as such (Eco 1977, 112). This act of interpreting an action or object as a sign is what facilitates its recognition as performance. The "set-apart-ness" of space, time, or activity, which distinguishes performance from ordinary life, relies on the willingness of someone—whether the performer, an audience member, or a performance theorist—to perceive it as performance. Thus, the boundaries of what constitutes performance are inherently subjective, shaped by the observer's perspective and the framing of the activity.

2. FACILITATING WILLINGNESS: FRAMING PERFORMANCE

Framing and Context in Performance Theory and Practice

In the field of performance theory, a recurring aspect discussed by several prominent theorists is the idea that the identification of an activity as performance does not solely arise from the actions of the performer but is heavily influenced by the context in which these actions take place. As Allan Kaprow famously states, "a cow in a concert hall is a musician; a cow in a barn is a cow. A man watching the musician cow is an audience; a man in a cow barn is a farmer" (Kaprow 1993, 174). This playful observation highlights the role of context in transforming ordinary actions into recognised performances. It suggests that performance is not an inherent quality of actions themselves but rather a social and perceptual construct, dependent upon how those actions are framed.

One key aspect of this framing comes from Jacques Derrida's exploration of Immanuel Kant's concepts of *ergon* and *parergon*. Derrida builds on Kant's distinction between the work itself (*ergon*) and what surrounds or frames the work (*parergon*). He argues that the *parergon* is necessary because it provides a boundary that distinguishes the *ergon* from its context (Derrida 1987, 128). This framing mechanism is crucial in performance studies because it allows an activity to be perceived as performance by setting it apart from the mundane flow of life. Without such a frame, performance would be indistinguishable from everyday actions, as time, space, and activity are constants in all environments. As Seth Kim-Cohen suggests, naming or labelling an activity—whether through definition, classification, or distinction—creates boundaries, highlighting what is included and what is excluded. By designating something as "art," one inevitably invokes the parergon and the associated connotations of performance, generating a frame that guides the audience's perception (Kim-Cohen 2009, 246).

In understanding how context shapes the perception of performance, Erving Goffman's concept of "strips of experience" is particularly illuminating. Goffman suggests that to analyse a particular activity, one must isolate it from the flow of daily life by selecting specific "strips" of experience—essentially, arbitrary segments of time and action that can be framed for analysis. These strips are not inherently distinct but are artificially demarcated as the focus of attention (Goffman 1974, 10). Goffman introduces the concepts of *fabrication* and *keying* to explain how these strips can be manipulated to create different perceptions. Fabrication involves altering the activity to create an illusion of something different, while keying involves recontextualising an activity to imbue it with new meaning (Goffman 1974, 10). Kaprow echoes this idea in his concept of "ready-mades," where even mundane, everyday actions can be seen as performance depending on the individual's willingness to frame them

as such. In this view, it is not the actions themselves that change, but the attention and interpretation of those actions that transforms them into performance (Kaprow 1993, 188).

Another critical element of performance is the notion of time and space, particularly how activities are temporally and spatially circumscribed. In his seminal work on play, Johan Huizinga asserts that play, and by extension performance, is distinguished from ordinary life because it operates within a "temporary sphere of activity with a disposition of its own" (Huizinga 1950, 10). This temporality and spatiality are essential in defining performance as a distinct category. However, Jacques Ehrmann critiques Huizinga and Roger Caillois's dichotomy between "play" and "serious" life, arguing that privileging the latter as a stable, neutral background for play is too rigid. Drawing on Derrida, Ehrmann proposes a more fluid model in which play and culture are not separate but in constant flux, influencing each other (Ehrmann 1968, 33).

Marshall Sahlins offers a model that resembles Huizinga and Caillois's distinction between play and reality by introducing the concept of "performative structures." These structures develop in response to societal norms (prescriptive structures) and represent an evolving, fluid base of cultural activities. Like Ehrmann, Sahlins challenges the privileging of prescriptive structures, advocating for a more dynamic view in which what is considered "serious reality" is subject to change and varies across cultures (Sahlins 1985, xi-xiii).

Gregory Bateson, in his exploration of play, also highlights the importance of framing through metacommunication. He argues that in both humans and animals, play is marked by subliminal messages that indicate an activity should not be taken seriously. These metacommunicative cues establish a "psychological frame" that helps the participants understand that the interaction is playful rather than serious (Bateson 1972, 144). Bateson's work has been influential in linking the concept of play to performance, suggesting that activities are perceived as performance not because of their intrinsic nature but because they are framed in a particular way. As Andrew W. Miracle explains, play communicates two messages: one signalling that the activity is playful, and the other defining its context as separate from the everyday (Miracle in Bauman 1992, 63).

This process of framing and the boundaries between performance and ordinary life have been further explored by artists such as John Cage and the Fluxus movement. Through graphic and verbal "event scores," these artists invited people to perform everyday actions as art, dissolving the boundary between the mundane and the artistic. Fluxus artist Dick Higgins coined the term "intermedia" to describe this blurring of boundaries between different media and activities, emphasising the fluidity and interconnectedness of performance and daily life (Priest 2013, 61).

In performance studies, scholars like Richard Schechner have also examined the role of framing in distinguishing performance from ordinary life. Schechner's concept of "restored behaviours" involves actions that are separated from their everyday context through framing devices, creating a distinct performative space (Schechner 1985, 137). However, Schechner argues that no activity can be performance in isolation; instead, performance emerges as a relation between the performer, the audience, and the media through which the performance is communicated (Schechner 2002, 30). This relational understanding of performance is central to contemporary performance theory, where the framing of an activity plays a crucial role in defining it as performance.

The concept of framing plays a pivotal role in understanding performance as a distinct mode of activity. Erving Goffman emphasizes that framing isolates certain actions from the flow of everyday life, transforming them by placing them within a conceptual boundary that signals their special status (Goffman 1974, 124-25). This notion aligns with Umberto Eco's idea of ostentation, which he describes as the deliberate selection and display of specific events or objects to emphasize their importance (Eco 1977, 112). While framing directs attention to the surrounding context that sets an event apart, ostentation focuses on the intrinsic features of the event that warrant elevation, as Carlson has observed (Carlson 2004, 37). Together, these concepts highlight the dual process of contextual separation and intrinsic significance in constructing performance.

Ellen Dissanayake extends this discussion by illustrating how ordinary elements—such as sounds, movements, or colours—can be elevated through framing to create what she calls a "metareality," a domain imbued with heightened significance. This transformation is deeply rooted in the interplay of human emotions, perception, and cognition, which together reframe the mundane into the extraordinary (Dissanayake 1988, 90; 1992, 54). Similarly, Bert States explores the perceptual shift that occurs when objects or beings are placed within an intentional space, such as a stage. Here, they are no longer simply seen for their everyday functions but become signifying, exemplary images. This process does not erase their original referential qualities; instead, it allows multiple layers of meaning to coexist in a superimposed context (States 1985, 35-36).

Victor Turner's perspective offers a complementary lens, particularly when considering rituals and rites of passage. He positions performance within a liminal space, a threshold between two states of normalcy. In this transitional zone, societal roles and norms are temporarily suspended, creating an arena where identities and relationships can be reimagined. Rather than framing performance as wholly distinct from daily life, Turner reveals how it operates at the intersection of transformation and reintegration, blurring the boundaries between ordinary existence and the extraordinary realm of performance (Turner 1982, 65).

In conclusion, the perception of performance as distinct from everyday life is not inherent in the actions themselves but arises through the framing and contextualisation of those actions. Whether through the concept of *parergon*, Goffman's "strips of experience," or Bateson's metacommunication, theorists emphasise the importance of context in shaping how we perceive performance. The framing of actions, whether in the realm of play, art, or ritual, plays a central role in defining performance and distinguishing it from the flow of everyday life.

The Role of Framing Devices in Defining Performance

The act of setting specific events apart as performance is achieved through the use of framing devices that delineate the time and space of the performance, as well as the actions to be performed within it. These framing devices provide the necessary boundaries and context within which an activity can be recognised and understood as performance. They serve as the structural conditions that distinguish the actions from the flow of everyday life. One prominent example of such a framing device is the score. Scores, in this context, can be understood as mechanisms that circumscribe a range of actions and behaviours, categorising them within the domain of performance. In this regard, a score does not merely function as a directive for the performer but also as a tool for the audience, defining the framework within which the actions are to be perceived as performance. It is through this framing that a particular activity becomes identified as part of the scored composition, even when those actions, in their everyday form, may not be inherently regarded as performative.

Interestingly, the frame itself is not always consciously constructed by the performer. For example, during a performance of John Cage's *4'33''*, the sounds of traffic or the hum of nearby cars may serve as part of the performance's soundscape. However, the individuals driving these vehicles are often unaware that their actions are becoming part of the performance. In such instances, the framing of the activity as part of the performance is not determined by the performer's direct intention but by the broader context and social understanding of the event. This underscores the broader notion that a score can function as what Richard Schechner terms "proto-performance"—a source or impulse that gives rise to performance, a starting point from which the larger performative context is established (Schechner 2002, 226).

Richard Schechner's model of *restored behaviour* further elaborates on how scores function within societal performances. In this framework, scores are not limited to traditional artistic works but also manifest in everyday social roles. Performers wear these scores, akin to costumes or masks, in the sense that they embody societal roles and norms that structure their actions within particular contexts. These scores, in turn, operate within a subjunctive or "as if" mood, as described by Victor

Turner, or what Stanislavsky refers to as performing "as if" in an imagined or constructed universe (Barba and Savarese 1991, 206). In this way, the score functions as both a formal and informal guide to action, suggesting a parallel reality or constructed space within which the performance unfolds.

Framing devices also play a significant role in facilitating the audience's willingness to identify certain activities as performance, even when the performance itself is mediated or temporally and spatially separated from the audience's experience. A pertinent example of this is the genre of filmed drama. In cinema or television, the performance is often not continuous; it is typically constructed through multiple shots taken at different times and in different locations, creating a discontinuous narrative in terms of both space and time (Sontag 1966, 29). Despite this disjunction, the audience, after the film is edited, willingly suspends disbelief and perceives the fragmented scenes as a coherent, continuous performance. This process is not unlike the experience of watching live theatre, where the audience perceives a real-time unfolding of events, even though, in the case of the film, the performance has been artificially constructed through editing and spatial manipulation (Auslander 1999, 22).

Similarly, in the realm of music, recorded performances present another example of how framing devices influence our perception of performance. When we listen to a recording, we generally assume we are witnessing the documentation of an actual live performance, even though we are often aware that the musicians may not have played the specific sequence, timbre, speed, or pitch exactly as heard in the recording. Moreover, in contemporary recordings, it is common for different musicians to record their parts separately or for virtual instruments to be added later. Despite this, the framing of the recording as a "performance" facilitates the audience's perception of the recorded sounds as part of a continuous performative act. The recording serves as a framing device that constructs a reality in which the music is perceived as performance, even though it may not reflect a singular, live event.

These ideas surrounding framing and performance have been explored conceptually and aesthetically in art since the early 20th century, particularly with the advent of Marcel Duchamp's *readymades*. Duchamp's approach involved selecting and arranging everyday objects and placing them in the gallery context, thus reframing them as art objects. This reframing shifted the perception of the objects from ordinary, mundane items to objects of artistic significance. Duchamp's work paved the way for the conceptualisation of everyday events as performative acts. This idea was further developed in the 1950s and 1960s by performance artists such as Allan Kaprow, who staged works like *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* (1959), and Tom Marioni, who created *The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art* (1969). These performances intentionally blurred the boundaries between art, life, and performance by framing ordinary activities as artistic acts (Carlson 2004, 112).

Similarly, George Brecht's *event scores* employed the concept of framing by creating minimal texts that suggested actions to be performed in specific contexts, thus transforming mundane activities into works of art. The interpretation of these scores, often ambiguous in nature, required the audience to engage with the activities as art and performance, further demonstrating how framing can alter the perception of an event (Harren 2020, 87).

Eugene Barba's approach to performance offers a different perspective, suggesting that the perception of an activity as performance is not solely dependent on cultural framing but also on intrinsic qualities of the performer's body. According to Barba, performance is marked by "pre-expressive" qualities—physiological responses to stimuli such as balance, tension, and directed energy—that transcend cultural boundaries and traditions. Barba asserts that these physiological responses are universal, creating a shared basis for understanding and experiencing performance across various cultures and traditions (Barba and Savarese 1991, 187-88).

In contrast, Richard Bauman's conceptualisation of performance focuses on communication between the performer and the audience, where performance is achieved through the act of marking and objectifying an action. Bauman emphasises the importance of framing in this process, noting that performance is only meaningful when viewed through a designated frame—whether through a play script, a musical score, or any other predefined guidelines. The act of following these guidelines, or "intersemiotic translation," transforms the actions of the performer into a form of communication that the audience can interpret within the context of performance (Bauman 1992, 41-42). Furthermore, Bauman acknowledges the centrality of "situational markers" in performance, such as the setting (stage), props, costumes, and specific times that signal to the audience that an action is to be understood as performance. These markers are essential in defining the boundaries of performance and making it meaningful for both the performer and the audience (Bauman 1992, 45-46).

The social framing mechanisms discussed by Bauman, Goffman, and Caillois, as well as the physiological responses identified by Barba, illustrate the various ways in which framing devices facilitate the audience's willingness to perceive an activity as performance. However, it is important to note that such framing does not always require public presentation before an external audience. There exists a substantial body of work, particularly in the realm of intermedia art, that explores performance in everyday life or even within the realm of the imagination (Nyman 1999, 79). These interfacial scores, which may not be intended for public performance, invite individuals to perceive their actions or thoughts as performative within their own personal or conceptual frameworks.

Furthermore, framing devices and modes can direct and modify the frames of reference through which performance is recognised. Drawing from the concept of *frames of reference* in physics, where motion is

measured relative to specific points or objects (DiSalle 2020), performance can similarly be understood relative to a given frame of reference. For example, when a person watches a concert on television, they recognise the concert as a performance. However, if the person is a participant in a reality show, the viewing of the concert may be perceived as a performance in itself. This creates a complex web of "frames within frames," where each layer of context provides a different perspective on what constitutes performance. In this way, framing devices not only define the boundaries of performance but also shape the multiple levels at which performance is experienced and understood.

3. WHAT IS AN INTERFACIAL SCORE?

An experimental action is one the outcome of which is not foreseen. Being unforeseen, this action is not concerned with its excuse.
Like the land, like the air, it needs none.
(John Cage 1968, 39)

I asked him what a musical score is now.
He said that's a good question.
I said: Is it a fixed relationship of parts?
He said: Of course not; that would be insulting.
(John Cage 1985, 27)

Definition

John Cage famously remarked, "Composing's one thing, performing's another, listening's a third. What can they have to do with one another?" (Nyman 1999, 2). This inquiry holds particular relevance in the context of interfacial scores, wherein the composer consciously relinquishes control not only over the specific qualities of the activities to be performed but also over their very nature, and consequently, the ways in which these activities will be experienced and perceived by an audience. As Eric Andersen insightfully articulates, event scores represent "a fine point of departure" (Eric Andersen in Lely and Saunders 2012, 81).

Interfacial scores thus provide a fertile ground for experimentation and the exploration of space and time by performers. They offer a "vague script" for the activities to be performed, a description that resonates with Kostelanetz's characterisation of pure happenings as open to interpretation. Performers are frequently required to determine their approach to the score—its intended meaning and the nature of the actions involved—prior to the performance itself, making the activity "indeterminate rather than improvised" (Kostelanetz 1970, 4). This interplay between the multiple possible interpretations of the score upon reading and its actual realisation in performance is a key feature of interfacial scores, connecting them to the traditions of conceptual art (Higgins 2002, 114).

The term *intermedia*, often associated with Dick Higgins, is central to discussions of interfacial scores in modern performance. First coined by Higgins in 1966 in the inaugural newsletter of the Fluxus-associated Something Else Press, the term has since become synonymous with the intersection of different media and the blurring of boundaries between distinct artistic forms. However, the concept of *intermedia* predates Higgins, with Samuel Coleridge first using the term in 1812 to describe phenomena situated between different art forms, as well as the interstitial space between art and life

itself (Higgins 2002, 91). While *multimedia* involves the juxtaposition of different media (such as the co-existence of dance and music in ballet), *intermedia* reaches beyond such pairings, existing between and beyond established art forms and between art and everyday life. It explores the complex dynamics of these interrelations, creating an open space for new, hybrid forms of artistic expression. As Higgins puts it, *intermedia* is "not so much a thing as a function," a fluid concept that permits a boundless array of artistic formations and experiences (Higgins 2002, 93). This tendency toward the dissolution of conventional art forms had already begun in movements such as Futurism, Dada, and Russian Constructivism, continuing through artists who embraced sound poetry, happenings, object music, action painting, and beyond (Armstrong and Rothfuss 1993, 14).

Yet, a more productive understanding of interfacial scores may lie in viewing them not merely as an attempt to connect established art forms but rather as part of the larger erosion of the once-purposed boundaries between those forms. The theorist Theodor Adorno's analysis of "pure" art forms, which are defined and separated from one another, is instructive here (Adorno 2003, 368). Rather than creating a universal artwork by collapsing these distinctions, interfacial scores may be seen as functioning within what Andreas Huyssen terms "aesthetic entropy," where the dissolution of boundaries occurs naturally, giving rise to new, more exciting forms of art (Armstrong and Rothfuss 1993, 150). In this sense, these scores do not serve as a negation of the arts, as Adorno might suggest, but as an ongoing creative process that challenges and redefines the status quo, opening the door to a dynamic artistic evolution. John Cage himself emphasises this fluidity, asserting that "when we live, we seem we smell, we touch, we exercise our body every moment… The titles have little importance" (Cage 1981, 166). Similarly, Hans Breder underscores that *intermedia* is a dynamic process, grounded in both intentional and serendipitous encounters that give rise to new languages and creative possibilities: "Intermedia follows the law of attraction: a deliberate meeting or a chance 'collision' of distinct realms, of a new language, new potentialities" (Breder and Rapaport 2011, 21).

The historical development of interfacial scores also reflects their alignment with everyday life and empirical reality, diverging from other forms of cross-artwork that reach toward an "extra-aesthetic reality"—a realm that, as Adorno suggests, alienates the viewer by becoming "something we know not what" (Adorno 2003, 385). In contrast, interfacial scores resonate with lived experiences, incorporating elements of the mundane into the artistic process. Today, intermedial works are often recognised as a distinct and established art form in their own right (Huyssen in Armstrong and Rothfuss 1993, 150), a testament to the ongoing integration of these forms into mainstream artistic practice.

Brian Eno's recent definition of experimental music offers further insight into the philosophical grounding of interfacial scores. Eno suggests that experimental composition involves creating a "system or organism" that facilitates unrepeatable realisations while also imposing constraints that

define the range of those realisations, thus creating a "set of goals." This approach differentiates itself not only from traditional composition, which seeks a singular, definitive goal, but also from the "goalless behavior" of the 1960s, which emphasised a lack of restriction (Cox and Warner 2004, 227).

The impact of John Cage's teachings on the Fluxus artists, many of whom are considered the pioneers of interfacial scores, is well documented. The artists, influenced by Cage's experimental approaches to music and composition, expanded upon his notions of "events in time-space," which offered the possibility for scores to transcend traditional definitions of music (Harren 2020, 36). The texts produced by these artists were not seen as instructions or scripts, but as scores that invited flexible, open-ended realisations. George Brecht's work, for instance, emphasizes that his event-scores, such as those in *Water Yam*, were "plans, or suggestions for realising something concrete," rather than strict instructions for a fixed musical event (quoted in Warren 2020, 129).

Given these perspectives, the connection between interfacial scores and various artistic movements and strategies becomes clear. These scores can lead to an almost infinite variety of realisations, engaging with diverse media in numerous performance contexts. Despite the broad array of potential outcomes, the question of the *score*—and by extension, the role of the composer—remains central to the understanding of these works. Interfacial scores, although akin to experimental scores that seek sonic outputs, open up a broader range of possibilities where a given performance could be classified within whichever art medium is most congruent with the chosen realisation. Some scholars view these scores as musical compositions, while others see them as standalone artworks or even gallery pieces (Kim-Cohen 2009, 56). Interfacial scores, therefore, occupy a liminal space between the temporal object (performance instructions) and the object as artwork in itself, creating an interplay between instruction, action, and result (Kotz 2007, 77).

Ultimately, it is crucial to recognise that interfacial scores embody what Lydia Goehr describes as an "open concept," which is inherently incomplete or contestable. As Goehr notes, "the possibility of an unforeseen situation arising which would lead us to modify our definition can never be eliminated" (Goehr 1992, 91). Situated in an area of compositional and artistic practice that seeks to challenge and redefine existing frameworks, interfacial scores are not static or fixed; rather, they are fluid and open to ongoing reinterpretation. In this sense, the concept of interfacial scores is not merely a product of its time, but a dynamic space that invites continual creative exploration and expansion, both in contemporary and future artistic contexts.

Since at least the 1960s, there has been a concerted questioning of the nature and function of the score, both within the realms of art and in everyday life. Lawrence Halprin, in his exploration of the concept of a score, suggests that "scores are symbolisations of processes which extend over time," citing examples such as calendars, shopping lists, and other everyday items that function as mechanisms for "planning for future events" (Halprin 1969, 5). For Halprin, this temporal function of the score forms its "essential purpose," expanding its definition beyond traditional artistic contexts to include the mundane and practical aspects of daily existence.

In her book *Fluxus Forms: Scores, Multiples and The Eternal Network*, Natilee Harren examines various realisations of George Brecht's *Drip Music (Drip Event)* (1959-1962), a pivotal work within the Fluxus movement. This score, included in Brecht's *Water Yam* (1963), presents a set of ambiguous instructions that ask performers to arrange a source of dripping water and a vessel "so that the water falls into the vessel" (Brecht 1963). These minimal directions, typical of Brecht's event scores, allow for a wide array of interpretations and performances, embodying the open-ended nature of Fluxus practice. Harren explores several early realisations of *Drip Music*, which include solo performances by Dick Higgins, George Maciunas, and Brecht himself, as well as a photograph of the arrangement taken by Peter Moore and a series of performative sculptures created by Brecht for different locations (Harren 2020, 1-6). These diverse performances, which employ a variety of media ranging from live actions to fixed objects, render *Drip Music* one of the earliest, if not the earliest, examples of what can be classified as an interfacial score.

Brecht's event scores originated as notes in his personal notebooks, slowly finding their way into literary magazines and experimental anthologies. Eventually, they were compiled into a unified collection by George Brecht and George Maciunas in *Water Yam* (1963). These scores are minimalist in their approach, often using bullet points or parentheses and listing objects without specifying their intended actions. In some instances, Brecht used few or no words at all, allowing the performers to exercise their imagination (Harren 2020, 27-28). For Brecht, the "event" was the smallest unit of a "situation," one that was fully embodied in its sensory experience. Eric Andersen notes that Brecht conceptualised the term "event" not only as a specific occurrence but also as something that could exist both as an object and as an activity, a dual substance that placed a premium on the experience rather than the result. Brecht was careful in determining the appearance and presentation of his scores in *Water Yam*, positioning them as both instructions for action and artworks in their own right (Andersen in Lely and Saunders 2012, 80).

Other Fluxus artists, including Yoko Ono, Alison Knowles, Ken Friedman, and Emmet Williams, also created scores that invited diverse interpretations—sometimes private, sometimes public—ranging from the purely conceptual to the performative. These scores can be understood as analogous to Wittgenstein's exploration of "the connection of abstract contemplation to concrete activity" (Armstrong and Rothfuss 1993, 67). The relationship these scores establish between art and everyday life reflects Gregory Bateson's question, "Is this play?" (Bateson 1972, 141). Indeed, these text-based scores can be interpreted as music scores, visual art, poetic texts, performance instructions, or proposals for actions. They blur the traditional distinctions between score as a script for performance and as a visual artwork, thus challenging established art categories (Kotz 2007, 61).

Dick Higgins, another central figure within Fluxus, employed the term "exemplativist" to describe works that embrace an open-ended approach, where any given realisation serves not as a definitive or final expression of the score, but rather as one among many possible interpretations. In his *Exemplativist Manifesto*, Higgins writes that "the look of the written text, the graphic element of the musical notation, the prescription of the dramatic representation… in exemplative works, much of the meaning interfaces here with the work as the final audience will see it" (Higgins 1972, 1-2, emphasis mine). According to Higgins, the focus shifts from the individual performance to the relationship between the various realisations of the score and to the score itself, underscoring the dynamic interplay between the written instructions and their diverse interpretations. However, this relational understanding of the score is not always immediately apparent to every audience member but may be recognised primarily by composers, performers, or scholars familiar with the interfacial nature of the score (Higgins 1972, 1).

In a later essay, Higgins further elaborates on the concept of non-cognitive art, which, he argues, is not concerned with the identity, preferences, or self-expression of the artist, but rather with creating a "matrix" that can be filled with any number of ready-made events that are already taking place. This notion of non-cognitive work challenges traditional authorial presence, as the identity of the composer is often not revealed in the work itself. Instead, the audience encounters the open-ended nature of the piece, unaware of the underlying conceptual framework (Higgins 1978, 8). This practice of distributing creative power throughout the process, engaging both the performer and the audience in a dynamic exchange, contrasts with more hierarchical forms of artistic authorship and allows for a more collective and fluid approach to art-making (Kim-Cohen 2009, 55).

John Cage's composition *0'00"* (1962), a sequel to his seminal *4'33"* (1952), similarly embodies this open-ended philosophy. It instructs the performer to perform any activity with maximum amplification but without feedback. Variations of this concept are found in *Song Books* (1970), particularly in solos such as 8, 23, 24, 26, 28, 62, and 63. *Theatre Piece* (1960), another large-scale interfacial composition by Cage, consists of a series of numbers that performers assign to nouns and verbs (which then become

their activities) and perform them according to the spatial layout of the score, where space on the page corresponds to time. Over the years, these pieces have been realised in numerous performances that encompass a wide array of performing media, including sound, movement, literature readings, magic tricks, painting, technology, and everyday actions with or without props (Fetterman 1996, 84-117).

Natilee Harren suggests that graphic notation's ability to create "a constellation of relations" classifies it within the semiotic category of diagrams, akin to maps or architectural plans that depict spatial and temporal relationships. This diagrammatic approach can be extended to text and action notations, which describe a series of possible realisations connected by a single interface—the score itself. As such, these scores can be understood as diagrammatic structures that chart potential actions and their connections (Harren 2020, 51, 70).

This artistic approach aligns chronologically with a broader cultural unease with established art forms, institutions, and performance spaces during the 1960s and 1970s, which gave rise to performance art and happenings, among other experimental art practices. Roselle Goldberg observes that performance art has traditionally existed at the boundaries of disciplines such as literature, theatre, music, and painting. It has involved various media—including video, dance, and narrative—and has been performed in diverse spaces, ranging from streets and bars to galleries and museums. As an open-ended, variable medium, performance art has long attracted artists dissatisfied with the constraints of conventional art forms (Battcock and Nickas 1984, 24). Replacing "performance" with "interfacial scores," this description remains equally applicable to the fluid nature of interfacial scores.

Moreover, when considering interfacial scores in comparison to traditional musical scores, one encounters ontological challenges regarding the relationships between the composer, the work-concept, the score itself, the performer as the mediator of the score, and the audience as its ultimate receiver. These complexities—central to the practice of composing and performing interfacial scores—are the subject of the following section, which delves into these nuanced connections and their implications for both the composition and realisation of such works.

The composer and the score

Marvin Carlson observes that, traditionally, theatrical plays are regarded as stable objects in their own right, while the varying realisations, productions, and their contexts are often treated as incidental, not integral to the ontological existence of the play itself. According to Carlson, the play is conceived as an idealised form, distinct from its performance iterations and the conditions of its staging (Carlson 2004,

86). In contrast, Joel Weinsheimer, in his discussion of Hans Georg Gadamer's reception theory, challenges the idea of the play's ontological primacy, suggesting that "the play proper exists first and only when it is played." For Weinsheimer, performance is not merely a vehicle for representing the play, but the play itself; it is the act of playing that brings the play into existence (Weinsheimer 1985, 109-10). This perspective aligns with a broader trend in contemporary theory that regards the performance event as constitutive of the work, rather than its mere realisation.

This debate between stability and fluidity of artistic identity is particularly relevant when considering the nature of interfacial scores, which stand in stark contrast to traditional musical or theatrical works. Composers of interfacial scores do not imagine concrete sounds, images, or actions to be notated; rather, they compose frameworks or processes that allow for sounds, images, spoken word, or any other form of activity to emerge (Nyman 1999, 4). The challenge, then, is that identifying two different performances of the same score as equivalent can be both difficult and, in some cases, impossible. Consequently, documentation of these performances does not offer a definitive or identifying representation of the score; rather, it provides a snapshot or a version that showcases one of many potential realisations. While this documentation may be misleading or partial, it still offers valuable insights into the spectrum of possibilities the score can generate.

This shift towards process over product can be traced back to the early avant-garde movements of the 20th century, particularly Futurism and Dada, which introduced the notion of shifting artistic focus from the final artefact to the creative process itself. John Cage, for example, suggests that in order to embrace the non-intentional sounds of nature, one must abandon preconceived notions—such as the very concept of music (Cage 1968, 8). Similarly, when composing interfacial scores, the composer relinquishes a significant degree of control over the performance, not only in terms of content (a characteristic of open scores in general) but also in terms of form, appearance, and the defining characteristics that would typically allow a group of performances to be recognised as representations of a particular score. As the number of performances and realisations of a given interfacial score increases, it amplifies the multitude of possibilities the score encompasses, gradually fostering a sense of identity for the score—not as a singular object or form, but as a family of related, yet often disparate, performances. Thus, the role of the score is to act as an agent or construction that inspires, frames, and relates to a diverse array of unconnected, but interlacing, realisations.

Dick Higgins uses the term *invitingness* to describe a key feature of such works, where the composition is "empty" not in the sense of lacking content, but rather in that it awaits being filled with anything and everything. This concept of an "inviting void" shares a profound affinity with the Zen notion of emptiness, which is not a lack but a space full of potential (Higgins 1978, 18). Similarly, Seth Kim-Cohen characterises open scores as "never satisfied," asserting that no performance could ever exhaust

the full potential of a score, which would continually demand further realisations (Kim-Cohen 2009, 51). This ongoing openness is integral to the nature of interfacial scores, where the performance process itself is understood as one of infinite possibilities, each contributing to the overall "identity" of the score, albeit in a more diffuse, process-oriented manner.

Of course, the degree of openness inherent in any particular composition can vary significantly. The structure, instructions, and scope of possibilities articulated within a given score can significantly affect how open or closed the work is. During the 1960s and 1970s, interfacial scores often functioned as framing devices or mental experiments. For instance, in George Brecht's event scores, ordinary actions are framed as performances in a manner analogous to how Marcel Duchamp framed his ready-mades as art. Other event scores, by contrast, propose performance activities that are either impossible to execute or are designed to exist only in the imagination, echoing the work of figures like Dick Higgins, who explored the potential of such mental or conceptual performances (Higgins 2002, 2).

The distinguishing feature of interfacial scores, and open scores in general, as compared to conventional staff notation, is that they do not focus on producing a singular, definitive realisation that represents the written score with utmost fidelity. Instead, the emphasis lies in the "dialectic between any single realisation and its alternates" (Higgins 1972, 1). In other words, the score's role is less about encapsulating a specific interpretation and more about framing a series of interconnected possibilities. This dialectic encourages a more dynamic relationship between the score and its realisations, where the ability of the score to encompass multiple possibilities becomes more significant than any one particular version of the score. While the composer's style or strategy for notating the score might seem chaotic, arbitrary, or even non-traditional, the true essence of the compositional act lies in the creation of an interface that allows for a multiplicity of related performances. The score, therefore, can be understood as a connective structure, linking an infinite number of potential realisations, each of which is ontologically and analogically related to the score through its fidelity to the instructions provided by the composer. In this respect, Higgins observes that the "idea" of the composition, its essence, can be reduced to a "blank structure" that is then filled with "meaningful content" by the performer (Higgins 1978, 78).

In staff notated music, the identity of a score is communicated from the composer to the performer, and then from the performer to the audience. Success in performance is often defined by how accurately the performer conveys the nuances of the score—its articulations, dynamics, and other specific details that constitute its identity. However, in the case of open notation, and especially in interfacial scores, this traditional chain of communication is disrupted. Here, performers, through their interaction with the score, can imagine and explore numerous interpretations, each representing a facet of the score's potential realisations. Each performance, then, represents only one interpretation

among many. Unless the score is explicitly displayed or described to the audience, they are exposed to only one of these many possibilities, which may lead them to mistakenly perceive this performance as the full extent of the score's identity. Thus, the realisation that the audience witnesses is only one among an infinite set of possibilities, each reflecting a different aspect of the score's potential.

This phenomenon has led some scholars to argue that the score itself is not the site of the artwork but rather a template or a utility through which artistic work is perpetually re-created. In this view, the score is not an object to be interpreted once and for all, but a dynamic framework that allows the work to be continuously remade in an endless series of "nows" (Kotz 2007, 194). The score, in this sense, becomes an active agent in the perpetual creation of art.

The approach of composers who employed compositional automatisms (such as the I Ching or the rolling of dice) to guide their composition, further highlights this principle. The use of these pre-determined parameters ensured that the outcomes of the compositional process were not entirely under the control of the composer. By following these automatisms rigorously, composers accepted whatever result arose from the process, provided it adhered to the framework of the score's instructions. This interplay between predetermined structure and open-ended interpretation ensures that the basic goals of the composition are met, while the composer's personal preferences are largely removed from the equation (Lucier 2014, xi). Similarly, in interfacial scores, composers delineate the broad purpose or function of the composition but leave considerable room for performers to exercise their own creative freedom within the constraints of the score.

Dick Higgins coined the term *Games of Art* to describe works where the composer sets the rules, much like in a board game or a sport, and the performers define the specific content based on their individual characteristics and interpretations. In this framework, the composition becomes the set of rules, and its success depends on how well these rules serve their purpose. Higgins compares this dynamic to a well-crafted table: if the rules are sound, anything can be placed upon them and enjoyed. In this way, the score, like a well-made table, provides the framework for the work, while the performer fills it with their own interpretation, thus engaging with the score's "invitingness" (Higgins 1978, 19).

The matter of identity

Not only is the composition's identity obscured from the audience, but the personal aesthetics, preferences, and self-expression of the composer are often only partially present in the structure or instructions of an interfacial score, and in some cases, these elements may be entirely hidden. The very nature of interfacial scores often means that the composer relinquishes control over the final form of

the performance. As a result, there may be realisations that deviate significantly from the composer's own aesthetic sensibilities or beliefs. Some of these interpretations may even run counter to the composer's personal preferences, yet they must still be regarded as valid expressions of the score. This complex dynamic is highlighted by the composer Mieko Shiomi, who discusses the inherent uncertainty in the realisation of text scores—a concept that can be extended to interfacial scores as well. Shiomi states,

> a text score has its own destiny. It always risks being misunderstood. In some cases, it can inspire even more imaginative performances than the composer expected. A person who writes text scores must endure any undesirable performances that arise from his/her scores. However, text scores themselves are not damaged by any poor or messy performances. This is because text scores always maintain their original concept (Shiomi in Lely and Saunders, 2012, 343).

In this quotation, Shiomi makes it clear that, for her, the score functions as a separate ontological entity that represents the artwork in its most essential form, distinct from the individual performances it generates. This view aligns with certain theoretical perspectives that maintain a separation between the score and its realisations, suggesting that the score itself is the artwork, which should be appreciated as a conceptual or aesthetic object in its own right, independent of the performance. In line with this, realisations of the score are often viewed not as definitive interpretations but rather as enactments, experimental executions, or tests of the conceptual premises embedded within the score (Kotz 2007, 48). Moreover, Seth Kim-Cohen supports this view by suggesting that text scores, even those written in imperative language, do not offer fixed answers or prescribed actions. Instead, they function as open-ended questions, where "every command is followed by a silent, parenthetical 'why?'" (Kim-Cohen 2009, 54). The conceptual nature of these scores, Kim-Cohen argues, is the core defining feature, as they resist the establishment of a singular, authoritative mode of performance or interpretation. This inherent openness of interpretation is a fundamental characteristic of interfacial scores, challenging performers to engage with the score's instructions without expecting definitive or uniform results.

This challenge is further complicated by the fact that open scores often incorporate significant graphic and representational elements, which demand an individualised hermeneutic approach from the performer. In many instances, the score becomes a map or framework that necessitates a distinct process of decoding before it can be enacted, and this process often extends beyond mere musical or verbal interpretation. In the case of interfacial scores, the range of possible performing means expands even further. These scores can give rise to diverse realisations, incorporating sounds, objects, spoken words, movement, or other forms of activity, each of which brings different aspects of the score into focus. Consequently, these works complicate traditional understandings of what constitutes the "real"

artwork. Is the score itself the artwork, or does the performance constitute the actualisation of the artwork? Some scores, particularly those by composers like George Brecht or Yoko Ono, are designed to be realised not through physical action but in the mind of the observer, which further blurs the line between the score as a tangible, self-contained object and its performance as a separate ontological entity. In this way, the interfacial score becomes not just an instruction but an invitation to the performer to generate multiple interpretations, each of which holds the potential to be seen as an independent artwork in its own right.

This open-endedness places interfacial scores firmly within the category of works that do not adhere to the traditional model of a fixed "work" with a clear and repeatable identity. As discussed by Lydia Goehr in *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, these open scores challenge the notion that a composition serves to identify a work through a chain of score-copies and performances (Goehr 1992, 100). In the case of interfacial scores, each realisation can differ substantially from the others, to the extent that two different performances of the same score may not even be recognised as belonging to the same composition. This characteristic aligns with what Goehr terms the "regulative function" of the traditional work-concept in Western art music, which posits the score as a means of preserving a stable identity across performances. Interfacial scores, however, effectively broaden or even undermine this regulative function by suggesting that the very notion of the "work" is fluid and contingent upon its various realisations. Consequently, this challenges the traditional concept of "Werktreue"—fidelity to the work—which holds that the score and its identity must remain consistent across all interpretations.

However, this fluidity and openness have not been universally accepted. As part of what Goehr refers to as "conceptual imperialism," there exists a tendency among scholars, curators, and artists to regard open scores and interfacial scores as though they were fixed objects or works of art in the traditional sense. This perspective often treats the score as something to be revered in isolation, much like a conventional artwork, and de-emphasises the performative potential of the score in its open-ended state. Many composers, however, resist this interpretation. For instance, the experimental composer Max Neuhaus has explicitly stated that his works are not intended to be seen as "products" or "works" in the traditional sense, but rather as "activities" (Goehr 1992, 244). In this sense, Neuhaus aligns himself with a broader trend among experimental composers who view their scores not as fixed artistic products but as invitations to engage in ongoing, dynamic processes of artistic creation. These composers recognise the score not as an artifact to be preserved but as a framework within which a series of potential performances can unfold, each one contributing to the overall understanding of the composition.

This notion of the score as a catalyst for ongoing activity is also echoed in the work of Dick Higgins, who coined the term "Games of Art" to describe compositions in which the composer establishes the

rules but leaves the content to be determined by the performers. In this model, the performers essentially "fill in" the score with their own interpretations, based on their individual strengths, weaknesses, and creative choices. Higgins likens this process to a carpenter building a table: if the rules (or the composition) are well-crafted, the performers can place anything on the table, enjoying the process of interpretation and creation. The composition, then, becomes a platform for exploration, not a final product to be presented to an audience as a definitive interpretation (Higgins 1978, 19). This view highlights the generative nature of interfacial scores and further reinforces the idea that the score's role is not to dictate a singular, predetermined outcome, but to facilitate an open-ended process of realisation, in which the performer plays a central role in shaping the final work.

In sum, interfacial scores disrupt conventional boundaries between composer, performer, and audience, questioning the very notion of what constitutes a finished artwork. By offering a framework for a range of possible realisations, these scores foreground the generative process of performance and interpretation, inviting multiple, equally valid interpretations that extend the scope of the composition beyond the limitations of a fixed "work." As such, interfacial scores exemplify a fundamental shift in the relationship between composition and performance, from a static model of artistic production to a dynamic, ever-evolving process that embraces uncertainty, ambiguity, and creative freedom.

The performer(s)

Interfacial compositions do not exist as fixed, preconceived objects but rather function as 'occasions for experience,' engaging all of the senses and necessitating a psychological openness from performers to approach them as such (Cage 1968, 31). Unlike conventional music notation or even sound-based open notation, interfacial scores place a considerable amount of decision-making responsibility on the performer. These decisions extend to fundamental aspects of the performance, including the selection of media, the form the performance takes, and various other substantial elements that influence the final realisation. Performers are acutely aware that each realisation they produce is not a final endpoint, but rather a manifestation of a vast array of potential outcomes. As Higgins (1972) suggests, the score conveys "an entire range of possibilities of an aspect of reality," with each interpretation acting as a partial reflection of that broader potentiality.

The process of realisation, therefore, involves much more than merely interpreting written instructions; it requires a deep engagement with the score that intertwines the performer's background, aesthetic inclinations, and individual conceptual framework. This interactive and co-creative process is inseparable from the score itself, as the performer does not merely execute an external directive but contributes to the construction of the artwork, alongside the composer, through

their active participation in the performance. John Tilbury further reinforces this notion by asserting that "the onus is on the performer to show the composer some of the implications and consequences of what he has written […]. What he writes and what you read are two different things" (Nyman 1999, 19). This highlights the agency of the performer, who does not passively interpret the composer's intentions but engages with the score in a manner that reveals new dimensions and possibilities.

The responsibility associated with this freedom can initially be daunting for performers, especially those unfamiliar with open notation or unconventional musical forms. However, over time, performers develop a form of "heroic (unsung, unnoticed) virtuosity" (Nyman 1999, 15) as they engage with the decision-making challenges posed by the variable nature of interfacial scores. Through sustained interaction with such scores, performers cultivate a level of expertise that allows them to navigate and shape the open-endedness of the instructions. Paradoxically, while freedom entails responsibility, it also opens up further possibilities for creative expression. In the case of interfacial scores, performers are granted significant interpretive liberty within the broad outlines set by the composer. As George Brecht notes in relation to his event scores, "it's implicit in the scores that any realisation is feasible… Any and every. I wouldn't refuse any realisations" (Nyman 1976, 108). This expansive view of performance allows interfacial scores to yield a diverse array of realised activities, each potentially serving as art, ritual, play, or an aspect of everyday life. Performers are encouraged to explore the full spectrum of human experience, using the score as a framework to perform a range of identities and social constructs, such as gender, race, or sexuality, according to their personal vision within the context of the score's instructions.

Despite the inherent liberty afforded to performers, interfacial scores are still firmly situated within the broader context of Western experimental composition and performance practices. Consequently, while many interfacial scores are not exclusively defined by this practice, the predominant performance style for such scores often aligns with Michael Kirby's concept of "nonmatrixed representation" (Battcock & Nickas, 1984, 99). Kirby's term refers to a type of performance in experimental theatre and performance art where the performer does not portray a specific character or adopt a fictional persona but instead engages in a series of activities that may or may not carry symbolic or representational significance. This approach emphasises the activity itself, rather than any external narrative or dramatic structure, and allows the performer to explore the score's instructions as a process rather than as a representation of something external to the immediate performance.

The notion of "score compliance" has been widely discussed in music theory, where the performer's duty is often framed as the faithful execution of what is written, ensuring that performances adhere to the intentions of the composer. Nelson Goodman (1968) uses the term "score compliance" to describe this expectation, which helps audiences distinguish between performances that genuinely belong to

the work and those that do not (Goodman 1968, 128). In the case of interfacial compositions, however, the question of fidelity extends beyond mere adherence to written instructions. Performers are tasked with making crucial decisions related to various aspects of the performance, such as its length, structure, and form. These choices are not simply technical or aesthetic; they fundamentally shape the relationship between the score and its realisation, meaning that the "regulatory relations" between instruction and activity, as well as between composition and performance, are constantly in flux and subject to ongoing negotiation (Kotz 2007, 35).

In this sense, interfacial scores defy fixed or predictable outcomes. They cannot take on a specific form until they are realized through the performer's engagement. The interaction between the composer, the score, and the performers—including the audience—forms a dynamic, continually reshaping system that enables exploration and experimentation with different activities, spaces, and times. As Higgins (2002) suggests, interfacial scores create a "constantly reshaping system" in which the boundaries between the elements involved are fluid, allowing the score to serve as a catalyst for new and evolving forms of performance. In this way, the score becomes not just a set of instructions but a platform for collaborative exploration, where the roles of composer, performer, and audience are intertwined.

Moreover, if we accept that interfacial scores belong to the category of diagrams, as proposed by Harren (2020), the performer's task becomes one of deduction—extracting a realisation whose essential parts correlate with the diagrammatic object of the score. This idea applies not only to interfacial scores but also to scored art and music in general. However, interfacial scores require a particularly creative process of discovery, as performers must identify and invent relationships that may not be immediately apparent, either through theoretical contemplation or practical experimentation. In this sense, interfacial scores can be understood as devices for "thought experiments" (Harren 2020, 52), offering performers a means to explore possible structures, both existent and imagined, whether in the past, present, or future.

Without specifying a particular performing medium or prescriptive forms, interfacial scores open up a vast array of possibilities, which, if left unchecked, may seem chaotic or aimless. However, as Priest (2013) observes, "having no particular point is having too many points" (Priest 2013, 19). The ambiguity inherent in these scores often requires the performer to make critical decisions about how to focus their efforts and what aspects of the score to emphasize. Such decisions may range from the mundane and routine to large-scale, transformative performances—all arising from the same symbols or words on the page. In a contemporary world where attention spans are increasingly reduced, and "plug-and-play" convenience is prioritised—even in the arts—performing interfacial scores can be seen as a

demanding challenge. Yet, it is precisely this challenge that invites deeper engagement and creative exploration.

At their core, interfacial scores are designed to highlight artistic, performative, and perceptive viewpoints of reality that are to be experienced as holistic events, observed in their unique aesthetic qualities and interactions, rather than compared against preconceived ideals or conventional standards. Priest (2013) suggests that the inclusive nature of these scores allows performers to interpret them in their own ways, finding personal meaning and contribution that is as far inside or outside their comfort zones as they desire. There are no mandates that performers must go beyond their capabilities or desires. As Nyman (1999) states, "There is nothing that someone is forced to do outside of their capabilities or desires" (Nyman 1999, 74). Consequently, these compositions require performers to engage actively, choosing from among the many points within the score's scope where they wish to focus their attention. In doing so, performers provide a concentrated point of reference that reflects their specific interpretation of the score, rather than representing the score as a whole.

The audience

The performer plays a pivotal role as a mediator between the composer and the audience, occupying a unique ontological position in which the three roles—composer, performer, and audience—may occasionally converge within the same individual. Despite this central role, the audience's experience remains largely outside the composer's direct control, which underscores a fundamental distinction in the dynamics of interfacial scores. Unlike traditional works, where composers might anticipate specific audience reactions, creators of interfacial scores often prioritise the performer's perception and engagement with the score. The essence of these compositions lies in how performers interpret and respond to the instructions, rather than in the audience's reception of any specific realisation.

This emphasis on the performer's agency sometimes means that the profound questions posed by interfacial scores—concerning the nature of scoring, performance, and the artistic process—are accessible primarily to the performer and composer. For the audience, what is presented is merely one possible instantiation of the score, devoid of the context that reveals its full spectrum of potentialities. For example, a sound-based open score might elicit a specific performance that appears fixed to the audience, obscuring the multiplicity of unrealised sonic possibilities inherent in the score's structure (Nyman 1999, 23). The audience, therefore, may only encounter the fragmentary output of a work, often without the conceptual framework that informs its creation.

In the context of experimental art forms, including performance art, happenings, and interfacial scores, there exists a core assumption about the audience's ability to interpret and evaluate diverse aesthetic

stimuli. This expectation, articulated by Kostelanetz, posits that the audience must be as "artistically polylingual" as the creator (Kostelanetz 1970, 8). Beginning with John Cage's seminal work *4'33"*, experimental compositions have shifted the audience's role from passive spectatorship to active participation. In these contexts, audiences are invited to co-create the work through their perception, which extends beyond merely witnessing a performance to engaging with its conceptual and sensory dimensions (Allain and Harvie 2006, 83). Interfacial scores exemplify this shift by encouraging audiences to exercise openness and experimentation, perceiving multiple stimuli that blur the boundaries between art and everyday life. Such stimuli challenge conventional notions of performance time, space, and meaning, transforming the audience into an integral participant in the artistic process.

This reimagining of the audience's role also reflects a democratisation of art. Unlike traditional works that may presuppose a specialised knowledge of scoring or artistic conventions, interfacial scores invite diverse audiences to engage with the work according to their unique perceptions and conditions. Through universal elements such as the human body, sound, and movement, these scores foster a deeply personal engagement that transcends formal artistic education or background (Kostelanetz 1970, 8). By exercising a heightened awareness and receptivity, audiences not only expand their appreciation of art but also redefine their understanding of their own role within it.

The interfacial approach further complicates the traditional dichotomy between performer and audience. In some instances, interfacial scores do not assume a clear distinction between these roles, instead inviting participants to oscillate between them or even occupy both simultaneously. For example, in La Monte Young's *Composition No. 6*, the audience becomes the observed subject of the performers, subverting conventional performance dynamics. Similarly, in his *Composition No. 4*, the activities of the audience themselves constitute the performance (Nyman 1999, 85). Such works challenge entrenched hierarchies in performance art, emphasising relational dynamics over rigidly defined roles.

The indeterminacy inherent in interfacial scores means that no single realisation can fully encapsulate the composition's possibilities. To an audience member unaware of the interfacial nature of the score, a specific performance may appear as a discrete, self-contained event. Moreover, if the same individual were to encounter another realisation employing different media, they might fail to recognise the shared identity of the two performances. This reflects a key characteristic of interfacial scores: the composer communicates the identity of the score to the performer, but this identity is not always transmitted to the audience, allowing for fluidity and multiplicity in interpretation and perception.

This intentional ambiguity is often an artistic choice that aligns with the conceptual goals of interfacial scores. George Brecht's work provides a compelling example of how interfacial

compositions merge art with everyday life. Brecht's event score *Three Chair Events*, presented at Martha Jackson Gallery in 1961, included three chairs positioned in different locations—a white chair illuminated in the gallery, a yellow chair on the sidewalk, and a black chair in the bathroom. Most viewers overlooked the yellow and black chairs, engaging with them as ordinary objects rather than artistic installations. Brecht celebrated this outcome, considering it a success when the chairs became integrated into everyday life rather than isolated as aesthetic artifacts. He famously remarked on the beauty of such moments, such as when an audience member casually used one of the chairs for rest, effectively "losing" the artwork in ordinary experience (Harren 2020, 122).

Such examples highlight the deliberate erasure of art's boundaries in interfacial compositions. Brecht's enthusiasm for the "invisibility" of his works underscores the potential for interfacial scores to challenge traditional expectations of art, performance, and audience engagement. By situating artistic objects and actions within the flow of everyday life, interfacial scores prompt audiences to reconsider the very nature of art and its relationship to their lived experiences.

In interfacial scores, the composer, performer, and audience form an interconnected system that constantly renegotiates roles, interpretations, and outcomes. This framework dissolves the hierarchical structures of traditional art forms, replacing them with dynamic and participatory modes of creation and reception. Audiences, like performers, are invited to explore and co-create the work, drawing upon their unique perspectives to contribute to its meaning and impact.

Ultimately, interfacial scores exemplify a broader trend in experimental art toward inclusivity, indeterminacy, and the fusion of art and life. By embracing openness and ambiguity, they invite both performers and audiences to expand their aesthetic horizons and challenge preconceived notions of what art can be. These compositions do not merely present a finished product but rather offer an evolving space for exploration, reflection, and interaction. In doing so, they underscore the transformative potential of art as a shared, participatory experience that transcends traditional boundaries.

Conclusion

Interfacial scores occupy a unique space in the landscape of experimental art, bridging traditional and contemporary practices while challenging hierarchical distinctions between composer, performer, and audience. These scores are not merely frameworks for generating artistic outputs but are themselves profound inquiries into the nature of art, performance, and human interaction. By their very design, interfacial scores emphasise the relational dynamics between these roles, presenting them as fluid and interdependent rather than rigidly defined.

The performer's mediating role is central to this dynamic, yet it shifts focus away from the audience's reception of a particular performance and toward the performer's interpretative and creative engagement with the score. This approach opens a broader conceptual field, where the audience often perceives only fragments of the possibilities encoded within the score. As such, interfacial scores simultaneously expand the potential for artistic expression and obscure the full range of their implications, allowing for a multiplicity of interpretations that mirror the indeterminacy of life itself.

Furthermore, interfacial scores extend the democratising impulse found in much of experimental art by inviting audiences into a more active and participatory role. Drawing on Cagean principles and the broader ethos of Fluxus, these works challenge audiences to become "artistically polylingual," engaging with diverse stimuli, transcending conventional artistic categories, and co-creating meaning alongside performers and composers. The fusion of art and everyday life—so central to interfacial works—dissolves traditional boundaries, encouraging audiences to recognise the artistic potential of ordinary experiences. This democratisation aligns with broader trends in contemporary art that emphasise accessibility, inclusivity, and the breaking down of elitist barriers.

The deliberate ambiguity of interfacial scores is not a limitation but a feature that reflects their conceptual richness. Whether through Brecht's event scores, Young's reversal of observer-observed roles, or Cage's framing of silence and stillness as active phenomena, interfacial scores embrace the unpredictability of human perception and interaction. They invite participants—whether performers, audience members, or both—to question their assumptions about art and its role in their lives.

In conclusion, interfacial scores exemplify a shift from art as a static object to art as a dynamic process. By decentralising the composer's authority, empowering the performer, and activating the audience, these works transform traditional roles into sites of negotiation and exploration. They challenge not only the conventions of artistic practice but also the fundamental ways in which we understand creativity, collaboration, and meaning-making. As such, interfacial scores stand as a testament to the evolving possibilities of art in the modern era, offering a rich field for further inquiry and innovation.

PART II

Scoring Activity, Time and Space in Interfacial Scores

1. ACTIVITY

Richard Schechner's assertion that "[e]very consciously performed action is an instance of restored behaviour" (Schechner 2002, 166) resonates profoundly within the field of experimental music, particularly in the context of interfacial scores. In this domain, there has been a discernible shift among several composers toward describing or notating actions—what is to be done—rather than focusing on the sounds to be produced. The auditory outcome, in such instances, often becomes a circumstantial byproduct of the performative actions, highlighting the conceptual and performative dimensions of the work over its sonic elements (Gottschalk 2016, 78).

This tendency aligns closely with the ethos of interfacial scores, which reject the prescriptive rigidity of traditional compositions. In these works, the framed activities and the media employed are not universally predetermined by the composer but are instead subject to the interpretative choices of the performers for each specific realisation. This flexibility underscores the dialogic relationship between composer, performer, and score, positioning the performer as a co-creator rather than a mere executor of predetermined material.

Moreover, the modalities through which interfacial scores can be experienced—whether live or mediatised—further extend their conceptual scope. In contemporary performance, the audience's engagement is no longer confined to the live event; it can also occur through live broadcasts or recorded mediatisations, expanding the temporal and spatial dimensions of the performance (Auslander 1999, 3). This mediatisation mirrors the dynamic and fluid nature of interfacial scores themselves, as they blur the lines between live and recorded experiences, performance and everyday activity, and art and life.

The realised activities of interfacial scores transcend singular interpretations, offering a multiplicity of potential readings and meanings. These activities can be perceived as forms of art, ritual, play, or framed elements of everyday life, depending on the performer's intentions and the audience's perception. They also possess the potential to interrogate and express complex identities, including gender, race, and sexuality. Within the scope of the score's instructions, performers have the agency to embody, critique, or explore these themes, making interfacial scores a fertile ground for both personal and sociocultural reflection.

In this light, interfacial scores exemplify a contemporary performative practice that prioritizes process, engagement, and interpretation over fixed outcomes. By focusing on "what is to be done" rather than

"what is to be heard," they invite performers and audiences alike to reconsider the boundaries of artistic creation and the ways in which art intersects with life's restored behaviours.

The diverse strategies employed by composers of interfacial scores reflect a deliberate openness, encouraging performers to engage creatively with the material and expand the interpretive possibilities of each piece. Among these strategies, four key approaches can be identified:

1. **Unspecified Activities.** In this strategy, composers provide instructions that are intentionally vague, asking for "some activity," "any action," or "do something" without specifying what the activity should be. This openness allows performers significant latitude to devise actions, often leading to highly individualised interpretations. Such instructions emphasise process and decision-making, challenging performers to engage actively with the score and contribute their own creative input.

2. **Numbered Unspecified Activities.** Here, composers include two or more numbered or lettered activities within the score, yet leave their nature entirely undefined. For instance, a score might specify "Activity 1" and "Activity 2" without providing details about what these entail. This approach fosters both structured exploration—through the use of sequencing—and open-ended creativity, as performers must conceptualise and realise these activities themselves.

3. **Options of Specified Activities.** This strategy involves the composer offering a selection of detailed activities, often spanning various media, from which performers may choose. For example, a score might describe a sound-based action, a physical movement, and a visual element, leaving it to the performer to select one or more. This method provides a balance between guidance and flexibility, giving performers a curated set of possibilities while still maintaining their autonomy in shaping the final performance.

4. **Ambiguous Instructions/Words.** Composers employing this strategy rely on abstract, evocative, or ambiguous language to guide performers. Words such as "exit," "horizon" or "free" might appear in the score, inviting interpretation rather than dictation. This approach requires performers to deeply consider the conceptual and emotional implications of the language, leading to a realisation that is as much about individual perception and meaning-making as it is about execution.

Each of these strategies underscores the collaborative and participatory ethos central to interfacial scores. They transform the performer from a passive transmitter of the composer's intent to an active co-creator, ensuring that every realisation of the score is unique. This multiplicity of possibilities enriches the work's artistic scope, aligning with the broader aims of experimental and open-form compositional practices.

Unspecified Activities

This strategy involves the composer intentionally refraining from prescribing specific actions, instead directing the performer to carry out "some activity," "any action," or simply to "do something." Alternatively, the composer may present a graphic shape or visual symbol without further instructions, leaving its interpretation entirely open to the performer. The absence of detailed guidance transforms the score into a highly flexible framework, granting performers full autonomy to define the nature of the activity based on their own experiences, instincts, and artistic sensibilities. This deliberate vagueness encourages creativity and interpretative freedom, allowing performers to explore their unique approaches to realisation.

An illustrative example of this approach is Ulrich Krieger's graphic score collection *Connect*. In its first iteration, the score is marked as "for any instrument(s), and/or sound producing means" (Krieger 2011). However, after engaging in a series of discussions with Krieger in 2021 regarding interfacial scores and their potential for enhancing performance creativity, he developed a second version, specifying it as "for any instrument(s), and/or sound producing means and/or any other artistic activities" (Krieger 2021). This revision broadens the scope of the score to encompass not only sound-based performances but also other artistic expressions, maintaining the score's open-ended nature while acknowledging the performative diversity it invites.

The collection consists of nine graphic scores created between 2011 and 2019, each composed of curves and straight or non-straight lines of varying thicknesses. Apart from *Connect V*, which includes some specific musical instructions and sets a minimum duration of three minutes for its three pages, the scores contain no further directions. Notably, unlike many Fluxus artists and other composers of interfacial scores, Krieger stipulates that the activities used to interpret these scores must be "artistic," distinguishing them from everyday actions or functional activities by emphasizing their aesthetic and performative qualities.

To exemplify this approach in practice, I incorporated Connect I into my Solitary Performances video series (2020-) on YouTube, where I interpret various interfacial scores by myself and other composers. For my realisation of *Connect I*, I traced the page of the score onto a semi-transparent sheet, including its title, instructions, dedication, composer's name, and the date of composition. This act of tracing both honoured the graphic elements of the score and transformed it into a performative gesture, showcasing the interpretative freedom afforded by Krieger's open framework.

Another example of this strategy can be found in my own work, *Activity Time Space III*, composed in 2020 as part of the broader *Activity Time Space* series. This series, comprising 28 interfacial scores

created between 2019 and 2023, explores innovative ways of defining the three essential performance variables: activity, time, and space. The goals of the series include:

1. Investigating various approaches to open notation for these variables.
2. Encouraging performers to respond creatively within the defined confines of each score.
3. Examining the social dynamics of sharing artistic work, as performers pass scores to one another and document their interpretations online.

Each score in the series features unique combinations of the three variables (see Appendix III for a table showing the distribution of the variables), with *Activity Time Space III* utilising the strategy of unspecified activities. The score presents three activity values or options—"Do something," "Anything," and "Something to be done"—without prescribing the specifics of what those actions entail. Performers are required to select at least one value from each column (activity, time, and space) to create a documented realisation, which is then shared online. The score then is passed to another performer, encouraging a chain of diverse interpretations.

To date, two documented realisations of *Activity Time Space III* exist. The first, by Alexis Porfiriadis, involves rubbing a wooden beater around the rim of a coffee cup, while the second, by Dmitri Papavasileiou, features improvised sounds performed on an electric guitar. Neither performer disclosed the precise combinations of activity, time, and space they selected, reflecting the open-ended and interpretative nature of the score.

Unspecified activities thus offer a powerful method for composers to relinquish control and empower performers, fostering a dynamic interplay of creativity, individuality, and collaboration in each realisation. This strategy emphasises the score as a starting point for exploration rather than a fixed set of instructions, making each performance a unique manifestation of the work's possibilities.

Numbered Unspecified Activities

This compositional strategy features multiple activities identified through a numerical or alphabetical labeling system, such as "Activity 1," "Activity 2," or "A, B, C." While the numbering introduces an implicit sequence or structure, the specific nature of these activities remains undefined. Performers are thereby tasked with conceptualising and interpreting these activities, enabling a balance between a structured framework and open-ended creative exploration. This method invites performers to exercise their imagination, shaping the performance according to their unique interpretations and artistic sensibilities.

A notable example is Stefan Thut's *sechs* (2010), which exemplifies this approach through its structure and flexibility. The score is designed for six performers, each receiving a page containing a line of eight iterations of the letters "x" and "y" in varying sequences. These sequences can be interpreted from left to right or right to left. Performers independently assign specific activities to the letters "x" and "y," which may optionally include sound-based actions, and execute these in the order prescribed by the score. Durations are left entirely to the performers' discretion. While the score defines a clear sequence and alternation of two activities per performer, the nature, pacing, and execution of these activities vary widely, allowing for diverse and individualised performances.

Another example is my *Same Page* series (2016), comprising four compositions: *We are on the same page*, *Let's move on the same page*, *We are on the same music page and it comes from [composer]'s [title]*, and *Let's move on the same music page which comes from [composer]'s [title]*. In this series, performers associate six activities with either letters (for textual pages) or musical notes (for musical pages). These symbols are assigned specific activities by the performers.

In the *We are* pieces, performers use a page of text or music and treat it as a temporal representation, where the spatial distribution of symbols corresponds to the flow of time. As they "read" the page from left to right, encountering their chosen letters or notes prompts the execution of the assigned activities. Activities cease when the symbol is no longer present and resume with its reappearance, allowing for overlaps between different activities. In the *Let's move* pieces, the page is treated as a spatial map, and performers physically navigate the performance area based on their interpretation of the page's layout, executing their activities accordingly.

For instance, *We are on the same page* was performed twice. The first performance, part of the *New Wave* concert series in London, featured the In(s)core collective, of which I was the artistic director. Participants used a variety of instruments, props, and bodily movements, creating a dynamic blend of sounds and actions. The second performance by the 6daEXIt collective at the Dimitria Festival in Thessaloniki, Greece, utilised entirely sound-producing means, incorporating wind and percussion instruments, objects, and electronic sound.

Principia Actionum I (2014–2015), another example from my own work, integrates the approach of numbered unspecified activities within a broader interfacial framework. This composition for four players is part of an ongoing series inspired by Isaac Newton's three laws of motion. The score includes an instructional video, a booklet of instructions, and a spreadsheet. Performers select their activities from a library divided into three categories—sounds, movements, and miscellaneous—where the latter allows complete freedom for performers to introduce their own material.

The spreadsheet provides a temporal structure of 44 segments, each lasting 15 seconds, with a defined maximum number of actions for each segment. This structured yet flexible approach enables performers to engage with the work creatively while adhering to the overarching framework. *Principia Actionum I* was performed in Aarhus and Copenhagen by the Apartment House Ensemble as part of the AUT Call for Scores concert series.

From the *Activity Time Space* series, *Activity Time Space I* (2019) demonstrates this strategy by listing three numbered unspecified activities: "Activity I," "Activity II," and "Activity III." Of the two realisations to date, my own features a mix of activities—long sound creation, poetry reading, and site-specific performances in my room, the basement of Hamley's in London, and on London Bridge. A contrasting performance by James Saunders involved recording video footage of a tree's branches and leaves against the night sky, offering a completely different interpretation of the same score.

These examples underscore the versatility and creative potential of numbered unspecified activities as a compositional strategy, enabling both structured exploration and interpretative freedom within interfacial scores.

Options of Specified Activities

This strategy involves the composer crafting a score that presents performers with a curated selection of specified activities spanning multiple media, such as sound, movement, or visual elements. Performers are then tasked with selecting one or more of these predefined actions to realise the score. By offering a structured yet varied set of possibilities, this approach balances the provision of a clear framework with the encouragement of performer agency. It enables performers to shape the outcome of the piece while remaining within the boundaries of the composer's creative vision. The result is a dynamic interaction between the score's explicit instructions and the interpretative choices of the performer, fostering a nuanced collaboration between the composer's intent and the performer's realisation.

An exemplary work employing this strategy is George Maciunas' *In Memoriam to Adriano Olivetti* (1962 version). In this piece, the score uses ready-made tape from Olivetti adding machines, featuring rows of numbers that serve as prompts for performance. Each digit in a row is assigned to a specific performer, while blank rows indicate moments of silence. Performers have the option to choose from six distinct methods of realisation, offering a spectrum of interpretative possibilities within the structure of the score.

In Version 1, performers vocalise their assigned digits. In Version 2, each digit corresponds to a specific movement, encouraging a physical interpretation of the score. Version 3 introduces a playful element where performers alternate between putting on and removing various types of hats corresponding to their digits. The remaining versions engage sound production: in Version 4, performers create sounds with their mouths, while in Versions 5 and 6, they use string instruments, adhering to the instructions provided. The score encourages further creativity by allowing performers to combine these versions, resulting in unique performances with diverse outcomes. The found numbers on the tape dictate the overarching structure of the performance, while the performers' choices introduce interpretative variance and personal artistic expression.

Another illustrative example of this approach is my own composition, *Counter-Viewpoints II – Porthleven* (2013–2014). Created during a residency in Porthleven, Cornwall, as part of the Bath Spa Porthleven Award, the piece consists of 17 pages featuring scattered letters. These letters correspond to the names of the prize winners, organisers, and a local boat. The score provides five distinct methods for realisation, each inviting a different mode of engagement with the material.

The first method involves assigning activities to the letters and freely navigating the pages to perform them. This creates an open yet structured process where performers can interact with the score in varied ways. The second method treats the letters on each page as a floorplan, with performers painting them on the performance space floor using brushes and black paint, adhering to a timeline of their devising. The third method focuses on sound production, where performers create sound events based on groupings of letters and a chart assigning sound techniques to specific letters. The fourth method shifts the focus to textual creation, instructing performers to use the grouped letters to compose poetry. Finally, the fifth method introduces an experiential element: performers are instructed to visit a location away from home, observe it following specific guidelines provided in the score, and create an artwork inspired by their observations upon returning.

This work has been performed four times. Two performances, using the Actions alternative, were staged at the O3 Gallery in Oxford and Guildhall Arts Centre by Porthleven Prize winners. A third realisation, focused on the alternative for creating poetry, was undertaken by Carl Bergstrom Nielsen. The fourth was my own solitary performance, documented as part of my *Solitary Performances* series, using the sound events alternative. Each performance uniquely reflected the performers' choices while remaining grounded in the framework provided by the score.

Lastly, *Activity Time Space XII* from my *Activity Time Space* series further exemplifies this approach. This score offers the activity values: "eyes shut or wide open," "mouth shut or wide open," and "ears shut or wide open." Performers are encouraged to choose and combine these activities within the broader

instructions of the score. This approach not only overlaps with the subsequent strategy of activity notation (discussed below) but also underscores the flexibility and interpretative potential inherent in this method.

For my own realisation of Activity Time Space XII, I performed two combinations: "eyes wide open after getting dressed in a space for silent contemplation" and "eyes shut after getting dressed in a space for silent contemplation." These performances were documented with a formal aesthetic, with the actions taking place in a Greek Orthodox church. Through careful planning of timelines for opening and closing my eyes, the performance highlighted the interplay between structured guidance and individual interpretation.

These examples demonstrate how this strategy enables performers to engage deeply with the composer's vision while maintaining creative freedom. The resulting performances reflect a symbiotic relationship between the composer's framework and the performers' interpretative contributions, showcasing the versatility and richness of this approach.

Ambiguous Instructions/Words

Composers employing the strategy of ambiguous instructions often use abstract, suggestive, or open-ended language within the score, leaving the nature of the performer's actions open to interpretation. The words presented serve not as explicit directions, but as conceptual prompts that invite a multitude of potential realisations. This approach necessitates that performers engage subjectively with the score, drawing upon their personal experiences, perceptions, and emotional responses to the language. As a result, the performance becomes an act of meaning-making, where the final interpretation is shaped as much by the performer's imagination and understanding as by the composer's initial words.

An illustrative example of this strategy is found in George Brecht's *Word Event* (1961), which consists of the single word "Exit." Similarly, Brecht's *Three Aqueous Events* (1961), which includes the words "Ice. Water. Steam," allows for a vast range of potential actions or processes to be initiated by these abstract terms. In these scores, the performer's interpretation of the words can unfold over varying lengths of time and in multiple contexts, whether in live performance, mediated formats, or private execution (Battcock and Nickas, 1984, 60-61). This open-ended approach is similarly seen in *Two Elimination Events* (1961), where the phrase "empty vessel / empty vessel" invites performers to interpret "empty" either as a verb (instructing the performer to empty a vessel) or as an adjective (suggesting the vessels themselves are empty). The ambiguity inherent in the instructions requires performers to make

decisions based on their own understanding of the word choices, thus activating the score in a highly personal and flexible manner (Kaprow, 1993, 179).

A more recent example can be found in my own *Solitary Performance* series, in which I performed Cornelius Cardew's CCR76 (1969), part of the *Nature Study Notes* collection from the Scratch Orchestra. The score's instruction is deceptively simple: "It's not music. It's my heart beating." For my realisation, I used a pencil to rhythmically tap the surface of my desk to mimic the beating of my heart. Over a span of three days, I recorded six separate instances, and later edited these into a video playing simultaneously, creating a layered performance of this abstract instruction. The ambiguous nature of the score opens up various avenues for exploration, ranging from bodily actions to conceptual interpretations of the heart's rhythmic pulse.

One of my own compositions, Grammar Study III (2015), utilises a unique approach to ambiguous instructions through an online word generator. The generator pairs nouns and verbs from the Oxford English Dictionary to create combinations such as "play light" or "light play." The performer is then tasked with interpreting and realising these pairings in a way that draws upon the inherent ambiguity of the instructions. The result is a performance that is as much about individual creative choices as it is about the relationship between the two words. To date, there have been three realisations of Grammar Study III. The first, by Caitlin Rowley, was based on the pair "record pile" and "pile record." For the first, Rowley recorded a pile of miscellaneous objects on her desk, while for the second, she created a pile of records on a stool. James Saunders worked with the pair "slant stay" and "stay slant," using photography to capture the sense of the words. The third realisation, by visual artist Harry Deemos, interpreted the pair "jerk tint" and "tint jerk," producing a video in which he jerks a bottle of hair dye, making it "ejaculate" onto a picture of Donald Trump.

From my *Activity Time Space* series, *Activity Time Space X* employs the strategy of ambiguous words to notate activities. The options provided in the score are "empty," "pay attention," and "question." These instructions embody a clear connection to the notion of emptiness, a concept made famous in Brecht's work, while also suggesting a more contemplative or interrogative engagement with the world. The score's vague and abstract terms invite the performer to engage with them in highly subjective ways, leading to varied interpretations.

For my own realisation of Activity Time Space X, I chose to "pay attention" to the sounds of traffic and the shifting shadows and reflections of cars on a white projection canvas, during what the score terms "work time" and "in a space." My interpretation adhered to the score's instructions, but how "pay attention" and the concept of "space" were applied were left to my own perceptive and reflective process. The resulting performance was less about the precision of the actions performed and more

about how the abstract terms could be activated in a specific context, ultimately drawing out the performer's personal understanding of "paying attention" and engaging with the environment.

In conclusion, the use of ambiguous instructions and abstract language within scores offers a unique and dynamic approach to composition, fostering a deep sense of performer agency and interpretation. By presenting performers with open-ended prompts, composers invite subjective engagement, where the performer's personal understanding and creativity shape the final realisation. Whether through the minimalist, evocative language in Brecht's *Word Event*, the conceptual ambiguity of Cardew's *CCR76*, or the playful pairings in *Grammar Study III*, this approach not only challenges the traditional boundaries of composition but also encourages a collaborative relationship between composer, performer, and audience. Ultimately, this method underscores the fluidity of meaning and interpretation in performance, where each realisation is a unique exploration of both the score and the performer's individual artistic vision.

2. TIME

Time is a profoundly contested concept, occupying a central role across diverse fields of inquiry. To discuss time and its experience requires drawing from a wide array of disciplines, including science, psychology, anthropology, sociology, mathematics, philosophy, and the performing arts. This multiplicity reflects the inherent complexity of time as both a universal and subjective phenomenon. Complicating matters further are the interwoven perspectives of time as understood from a human-centred standpoint and the larger-scale, universal views of temporal dynamics (Burckhardt 1994, 492).

In the realm of music, a quintessentially time-based art form, the question of time is especially crucial. Experimental composers, even within sound-based notations, have frequently emphasised the role of time, sometimes elevating it above sound itself as the central organising metaphor for music (Nyman 1999, 22). Time in music is often conceptualised using spatial metaphors, a linguistic tendency that informs the way composers notate and articulate temporal structures. "Traditional" and experimental composers alike employ spatialised language to describe temporal processes: for example, the space of a bar, filling time with sounds and rests, or the spatial representation of musical events on a score. John Cage succinctly captures this duality when he observes, "time [...] is what we and sounds happen in. Whether early or late: in it" (Cage 1968, 151).

This conceptual overlap between time and space is not merely a linguistic convenience but points to deeper cognitive structures. The ways in which we discuss time mirror the ways we conceptualise and describe space, and vice versa. Time is frequently understood in spatial terms, while space is often perceived sequentially, as a progression through before-and-after states. As Bernhard Lang notes, "it is an interesting fact that we are only able to describe temporal changes via spatial metaphors, and spatial changes via references to a before and after" (Lang 2002, 8). This interdependence of temporal and spatial language reflects the human propensity to map abstract concepts onto familiar sensory dimensions, underscoring the need for nuanced frameworks in discussing time, particularly in the context of interfacial scores.

To navigate these complexities, I propose a categorisation of time into primary and secondary compositional strategies, which account for the various ways time is discussed in both everyday and compositional contexts. These strategies can be thought of as tags that are neither exhaustive nor definitive but provide a practical schema for the conceptualisation of time in interfacial scores. The secondary tags function as sub-categories of the primary ones, offering a more granular perspective within the overarching framework. Furthermore, it should be acknowledged that there is often overlap between all tags and compositional strategies, as the boundaries between them are fluid and context-

dependent. This interconnectedness underscores the multifaceted nature of time as a compositional element, enriching the interpretative and performative possibilities of interfacial scores.

This categorisation underscores the multifaceted nature of time and its implications for creative practices. In the context of interfacial scores, such distinctions become essential for enabling performers to engage with temporal instructions that may vary in specificity, abstraction, or cultural resonance. By identifying and systematising these layers of temporal understanding, we gain a deeper insight into how time functions not just as a compositional tool but as a bridge between different media and interpretations.

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PRIMARY TAGS

1. **In relation to something else**

2. **Abstract reference**

SECONDARY TAGS

1. **Duration Defined by Limits**

    I. **Absolute**
    II. **Relative**

2. **Duration In Relation to Some Condition**

    I. **Objective**
    II. **Subjective**

3. **Pace**

    I. **Objective**
    II. **Subjective**

4. **Function or Imposed Characteristics**

5. **Specific Time**

6. **Subject to Emotional Response**

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Primary

   In Relation To Something Else

Time is often measured in everyday life in relation to natural phenomena, such as the Earth's rotation around the sun or its daily rotation on its axis. Clocks and watches, such as those using quartz crystals, measure time through regular vibrations, providing a more precise, though still relational, understanding of time. In the realm of experimental music and interfacial scores, this concept of relational time is frequently adopted by composers, who define the duration, activity, and simultaneity of events through reference to external events or activities.

An example of this compositional strategy can be seen in Howard Skempton's _HSWR54_ from the Scratch Orchestra's 1969 collection _Nature Study Notes_. The score simply reads, "Rotate/before starting." While the meaning of "starting" is left unclear and open to the performer's interpretation, the action of rotating becomes a key reference point that may precede whatever activity is to come. By placing time in relation to rotation, the composer creates a framework where performers are free to interpret the timing and action within the bounds of the relational reference provided.

In my own work, _Activity Time Space XV_ employs a similar relational approach to time. The Time column reads: "for as long as someone else is shaving," "for as long as someone else is eating," and "for as long as someone else is talking." Here, time is defined in relation to the activities of others. Each action is contingent upon the duration of a different activity, suggesting simultaneity between various actions. The performers' actions are directly linked to external activities, and the time frame is therefore flexible, based on the social interaction and pacing of the other participants.

These examples illustrate how time in interfacial scores can be understood as relational. While traditional time signatures or metronomes may also define time in relation to external markers (such as a clock or a rhythmic pulse), the key difference in interfacial scores lies in the use of open-ended references to external activities or events. These references create a framework where time is contextualised and relative to the specific situation at hand, allowing performers to interpret and adjust their actions based on external or internal cues. Thus, while not a radical departure from the relational nature of conventional time measurements, this approach offers a shift in how time is

understood and experienced within the performance, focusing on the dynamic interaction between participants and the activity at hand.

Primary

Abstract Reference

Event scores created by Fluxus artists have established a tradition of using pithy language, which has had a lasting influence on the development of interfacial scores over the last seventy years. The characteristic brevity and abstract nature of terms such as "a time," "one time," and other similar expressions are often employed in these works to encourage flexible and open-ended interpretations by performers.

A notable example of this is Manfred Werder's score *2005(1)*, which consists of just three words: "place, time, (sounds)". This highly ambiguous notation exemplifies how time, place, and activity can be treated abstractly, creating a framework that can encompass virtually any scenario or activity. In my performance of this score (Chatzimakris 2022) for the *Solitary Performance* videos, I interpreted it by recording a brief, 1'33" video using my mobile phone's camera, capturing a seat at a café in Athens International Airport on July 13, 2022. In the background, other voices and the ambient noise of the café were heard, with no explicit structure or activity prescribed beyond the simple presence of time and space.

Similarly, my own composition *Grammar Study II* (2013) consists of six individual scores that can be performed in relation to one another, other works in the Grammar Study series, or any events occurring concurrently. In the section titled *Processes*, the part of the score labeled "II. Location" instructs: "This score is to be realised at a predetermined location on a predetermined time, simultaneously with whatever else occurs there." Here, the score combines both the "in relation with something else" strategy and the "abstract reference" approach, as the phrase "a predetermined time" suggests a specific point, but the exact nature of the event is left open to interpretation. The piece has been realised as a sound-based performance, as mixed-media performance, and as a dance performance as well, showcasing the wide range of possible realisations and the different performing approaches interfacial scores can prompt.

From my *Activity Time Space* series, *Activity Time Space IV* (2020) incorporates abstract time references such as "for a time," "then," and "this time" in the Time column. These values frame time in subtle ways, suggesting different perceptions of its passage. In my realisation of this piece, I selected the combination "Be - for a time - in your mind," which led me to perform seated meditation. I filmed this

process for three minutes, emphasising the fluidity and subjective quality of time within the context of the score.

In conclusion, the use of abstract references to time in interfacial scores provides a highly flexible and interpretive approach to time-based notation. By incorporating vague terms such as "a time," "one time," or "for a time," composers create space for performers to project their own understanding of time onto the score, leading to a variety of potential realisations. This strategy allows time to be conceptualised not as a fixed, measurable entity but as a dynamic and subjective experience, open to personal and contextual interpretation. Works like Werder's 2005(1) and my own *Grammar Study II* and *Activity Time Space IV* exemplify this approach, where time is not rigidly defined but instead becomes a fluid element, shaped by the performer's engagement with the score. In this way, abstract references to time encourage performers to explore the temporality of their actions and the context in which they perform, blurring the boundaries between the score, the performer, and the environment.

Secondary

Duration Defined by Limits

Absolute

The strategy of defining duration by absolute limits, such as minutes, seconds, hours, or observable changes, is among the most prevalent approaches in interfacial scores. This method parallels how we commonly reference durations in everyday life, grounded in measurable units or observable phenomena like the earth's rotation or the passage of time marked by aging. The precision and familiarity of such measurements make this strategy an accessible and reliable way to frame time in a score, providing performers with clear temporal boundaries.

Dominic Lash's *for four* (2011) exemplifies this approach. The score comprises four lines of instructions:

> I every 10 seconds identical
> II every 25 seconds converging
> III every 40 seconds diverging
> IV every 55 seconds unique

The total duration of the piece is specified to be between one minute and an hour. While the score does not clarify what the term "four" in the title refers to—whether four performers, four activities, or another interpretive choice—it clearly delineates the temporal structure. The durations for each

instruction, spanning from 10 to 55 seconds, are precise and absolute. However, the nature of the actions that fulfill these instructions, as well as how they might embody qualities such as "identical," "converging," "diverging," or "unique," are left open to interpretation by the performers. This interplay of strict temporal guidelines with interpretive freedom in the content of the actions exemplifies how absolute durations can coexist with ambiguity in other elements of a score.

In my own compositions, I have employed similar strategies to define duration with absolute precision. For instance, *Principia Actionum I* (2014–15) consists of 44 segments, each lasting exactly 15 seconds, resulting in a total performance time of 11 minutes. The rigid temporal segmentation provides a fixed structural framework while allowing flexibility in how performers interpret and execute each segment. Similarly, *Activity Time Space XXI* (2023) from my *Activity Time Space* series defines time in exact units: "for 2 minutes and 53 seconds," "for 4 minutes and 22 seconds," and "for 6 minutes and 40 seconds." These durations anchor the temporal aspect of the performance in measurable, objective terms while leaving room for variability in how performers engage with the prescribed times.

This method of defining duration by absolute limits underscores the potential dual nature of interfacial scores: they can offer clarity and structure in one dimension—here, time—while maintaining openness in other aspects, such as the nature of the activities or their relationship to the temporal framework. By doing so, they create a balance between precision and interpretive freedom, enabling performers to engage creatively within a clearly defined temporal architecture.

Secondary

Duration Defined by Limits

Relative

The compositional strategy of defining duration by relative limits involves framing time not in absolute terms but as a duration tied to another event or activity. This approach reflects how we often conceptualise time in everyday life, emphasising relationships rather than fixed measurements. Phrases like "you should not swim for two hours after eating," "half of the time we were there, they were talking about themselves," or "she came home three days after she left" exemplify this relational way of thinking. Time is not experienced in isolation but in connection to other occurrences, forming a sequence or overlap of events. This relational understanding of time finds direct expression in interfacial scores, where the temporal structure is defined through dependencies rather than absolutes.

Michael Parsons' *MPIR106* (1969), part of the *Nature Study Notes* collection, provides a compelling example of this strategy. In this score, each performer is assigned a number, with the sequence of performances progressing numerically. Parsons suggests that there can be a minimum and a maximum interval for the timing of each entry, relative to the previous performer's start time. For instance, performers may agree that the next person should begin no sooner than 10 seconds and no later than 10 minutes after the previous performer. This relative framework introduces a structured yet flexible temporal logic, as the specific intervals are determined collaboratively by the performers. The score emphasises the interdependence of actions, with each performer's timing influenced by the choices and actions of the preceding performer. The result is a fluid, relational temporality that prioritises sequence and connection over fixed durations.

Similarly, in my own work, the score *Activity Time Space XXIV* (2023) employs relative durations to structure performance. In this piece, performers select from three time values: "starting 7 minutes before another activity and finishing 7 minutes after that activity," "starting 7 minutes before another activity and finishing in the middle of the time allocated to that activity," and "starting in the middle of the time allocated to another activity and finishing 7 minutes after that activity." While the specific activities are left open to the performers' interpretation and decision, the temporal relationships between activities are precisely defined. This balance between fixed relational structures and interpretative freedom allows performers to navigate a dynamic interplay of activities, creating performances that highlight interdependence and temporal layering.

The relative approach to defining duration introduces a unique temporal fluidity to interfacial scores, one that mirrors human experience and perception of time as inherently relational. By framing time as contingent on other events, these scores foreground connections and interactions, enabling performers to engage in a collaborative negotiation of timing. This strategy not only enriches the temporal complexity of a score but also aligns it with the lived, relational nature of time as we experience it in everyday life. Through its reliance on connections and context, the relative approach invites performers and audiences to consider time as a network of interwoven events, spotlighting its fluid and interconnected qualities over absolutes.

Secondary

In Relation to Some Condition

Objective

The compositional strategy of defining time *in relation to some condition*—particularly an objective condition—employs finite, observable criteria to mark a specific temporal boundary, often signalling

the end of a performance. This approach offers a practical and predictable way of structuring the temporal dimension of a piece, tying its duration to the fulfilment of a tangible condition. In many cases, this method alleviates the reliance on abstract temporal metrics, and grounds the performance in real-world events or processes, aligning its temporal structure with the activities or objects involved.

One of the earliest proponents of this approach, George Brecht, actively rejected the idea of using traditional clock-time as the framework for his event scores. Instead, he integrated material and physical processes into the temporal fabric of his works. Brecht's *Candle-Piece for Radios* (1959) provides a striking example of this strategy. The performance's duration is tied to the time it takes for birthday candles to burn out, with the burning candles also serving as an innovative method for performers to access the score's instructions. By allowing the activity itself—in this case, the burning of candles—to dictate the temporal structure, Brecht embeds the notion of time within the internal mechanics of the piece. As Natilee Harren notes, Brecht's approach turned the "content of the activity into an internal structural element" that determined the duration in real time (Harren 2020, 86). This approach emphasises a kind of temporal logic that is both objective and intimately tied to the materiality of the performance.

Hugh Shrapnel's *HMSVR48* (1969), from the *Nature Study Notes* collection, similarly uses a definitive, objective parameter to define the endpoint of the performance. In this piece, performers engage in actions that encourage communication and collaboration while intermittently consuming a large bottle of vodka. The performance concludes for each participant either when they have finished the bottle or when they are "completely incapacitated." The consumption of vodka introduces an unambiguous and shared metric for concluding the performance while simultaneously leaving room for variability based on individual limits. The piece cleverly combines objectivity with the unpredictable dynamics of group interaction and personal endurance, situating the temporal framework within the activity itself.

Christopher Hobbs' *Composition, December 25 1968* offers another inventive take on objective condition-based timing. In this piece, performers create their own score by connecting at least four randomly placed points on a page. Each point represents a starting position for activities, and the lines connecting these points define potential pathways of movement. Performers navigate the diagram, changing direction at intersections or endpoints while adhering to the rule that they cannot revisit the same point or intersection. The performance concludes when there is no way to proceed without retracing a previously visited point or intersection. The temporal structure here is intrinsically tied to the spatial and conceptual conditions of the diagram, with performers' decisions determining the

duration. The constraints of the score create a finite framework that ensures the piece has a clear, inevitable conclusion.

For my own interpretation of *Composition, December 25 1968*, as part of my *Solitary Performances* series, I followed Hobbs' instructions to create a diagram but added my own creative layer by colouring the spaces between the lines in vivid hues. I assigned each point on the diagram to a popular Christmas song and produced a sound collage that evolved as I moved through the diagram's points and intersections. The resulting video performance combined visuals of myself creating and colouring the diagram with the changing soundscape of the collage. This reinterpretation highlighted the interplay between Hobbs' condition-based temporal structure and the subjective, interpretative choices that performers bring to the piece.

My own work, *Activity Time Space VII* (2021), exemplifies the use of objective conditions as a temporal framework. The score employs the method of numbered unspecified activities, such as "Do A," "Use B," and "Make C," but balances this ambiguity with precise temporal endpoints defined by clear conditions. The Time column offers three criteria for concluding the performance: "until you hear the voice of a child," "until you get told off twice," and "until two birds fly over you." Each of these conditions introduces a concrete and measurable element, while still engaging performers with the unpredictable, external environment.

In sum, the strategy of defining duration by objective conditions represents a departure from traditional notions of time as an abstract or externally imposed framework. Instead, it embeds time within the physical, material, or environmental context of the performance itself. By tying duration to finite, observable conditions, this approach creates a direct and often playful relationship between the actions of performers and the temporal structure of the piece. It also introduces a sense of inevitability and clarity to performances, as the fulfilment of the condition provides an unambiguous signal for the conclusion. Through its integration of materiality and process, this strategy reflects a broader artistic interest in grounding temporal structures in the tangible, lived world.

Secondary

In Relation to Some Condition

Subjective

The compositional strategy of defining time *in relation to some subjective condition*—introduces an intimate and fluid relationship between the performer's psychological and physiological state and the temporal structure of a performance. Unlike objective conditions, which are externally verifiable and

predictable, subjective conditions depend entirely on the performer's internal experience and perception. This approach foregrounds the variability of human emotions, endurance, and cognition, reflecting the inherent subjectivity of time as lived and experienced.

Allan Kaprow articulates this dynamic perceptual quality of time: "All of us know how, when we are busy, time accelerates, and how, conversely, when we are bored it can drag almost to a standstill" (Kaprow in Huxley and Witts 2002, 262). Subjective conditions capitalise on this phenomenon, employing personal thresholds—such as boredom, fatigue, or confusion—as criteria for structural decisions within a piece. Wording such as "for a short time" or "for a long time" also embodies this strategy, as these descriptors are inherently tied to a performer's psychology and perception of duration. The ambiguity introduced by subjective conditions challenges traditional compositional frameworks, emphasising the human experience of time over abstract or mechanical metrics.

An example of this strategy can be found in Christopher Hobbs' *CHSBR19* (1969), included in the *Nature Study Notes* score collection. The score requires performers to work in pairs. While one partner engages in an activity, the other strokes their lips with a small brush. The performer being brushed must continue until the sensation becomes intolerable, at which point the roles switch. The performance ends when no one can endure having their lips stroked any longer. This imaginative setup introduces a compelling physical and psychological criterion for both the switching of roles and the conclusion of the piece. The score's reliance on individual thresholds of tolerance fosters a unique interaction between performers, creating a dynamic and unpredictable temporal structure that is intimately tied to the participants' subjective experiences.

Similarly, David Dixon's *DDNWO110* from the same score collection employs subjective criteria to define the endpoint of the performance. Performers are instructed to identify "surprising qualities" of their activities and to progressively amplify this surprising factor as they proceed. The piece concludes when the performers reach a point where their activities are no longer surprising, signalling the exhaustion of their capacity to innovate or perceive novelty. The subjective condition of surprise introduces a psychological element that is variable across performers and performances, linking the progression and conclusion of the piece to individual and collective perceptions of creativity and novelty.

My own work, *Activity Time Space IX* (2022), similarly incorporates subjective conditions to shape the temporal boundaries of a performance. The Time column of the score offers three parameters: "until it's boring," "until it's tiring," and "until it doesn't make sense." These directives rely on the performer's internal state to determine the duration of each activity. The malleability of these conditions underscores the variability of psychological time—what feels "boring" or "tiring" in one performance

may not in another, even for the same individual. By embedding these subjective conditions within the score, the piece emphasises the personal and momentary experience of time as a fluid and dynamic construct.

This strategy reflects a broader philosophical and artistic engagement with the subjective nature of time. It resists the imposition of rigid external structures, allowing performers to navigate their internal thresholds and reactions as integral components of the composition. In doing so, it foregrounds the variability and intimacy of lived time, offering an alternative to more traditional, mechanical approaches to duration. By prioritising the performer's psychological and physiological state, subjective conditions invite a deeply humanised and context-sensitive approach to time, celebrating its inherent flexibility and unpredictability.

Secondary

Pace

Objective

The use of objective criteria to define the pace of a performance introduces a structured and measurable rhythm into interfacial compositions, counterbalancing the interpretative freedom often present in other parameters. This strategy involves specifying a fixed rate or interval—derived from clock time, mechanical devices such as metronomes, or natural environmental processes—that determines the timing of actions or gestures. By anchoring the performance in an external and objective pacing mechanism, the composer provides a framework that ensures temporal consistency, even if other aspects, such as the type of activity or the spatial arrangement, remain open-ended.

My composition *Grammar Study II* explores the role of objective pace. The *Context* section of the score includes a page displaying 40 numbers. Half of the performers are unaware of what these numbers signify, while the other half are permitted to look at the final page of the score, which reveals that these numbers are metronome markings. Although the exact use of these markings is left to the performers to decide, one evident application is to employ them as pacing guidelines for regulating the timing of various activities. This juxtaposition of hidden and revealed information adds an element of discovery to the performance process, while the objective nature of the metronome markings ensures a consistent temporal framework for those performers who choose to incorporate them.

Objective pacing is further central to my work *Activity Time Space XIII* (2022), which explicitly defines the timing of actions in the Time column. The score instructs the performer to execute "a full gesture

or phrase," "the smallest recognisable fragment of a gesture or phrase," and "an expanded gesture or phrase," with corresponding time intervals of "every 5 or 11 seconds," "every 3 or 9 seconds," and "every 4 or 10 seconds." While the performer has the freedom to determine the exact nature of the gestures and their degree of fragmentation or expansion, the temporal structure is rigorously defined by the objective intervals.

For a lecture recital at the 2024 SMI/ICTMD-LE Postgraduate Conference at Maynooth University, I performed *Activity Time Space XIII*. My chosen gestures included taking a sip from a small bottle of rum (the full gesture), sipping and then wiping my mouth with my hand (the expanded gesture), and merely lifting the bottle without drinking (the fragment). The performance followed a strict sequence of gestures based on the specified intervals:

- Full gesture ×5 every 9 seconds
- Expanded gesture ×2 every 11 seconds
- Fragment of gesture ×7 every 3 seconds
- Expanded gesture ×3 every 10 seconds
- Full gesture ×3 every 11 seconds
- Expanded gesture ×2 every 9 seconds
- Full gesture ×2 every 9 seconds

The result was a structured performance with a clear and evolving rhythm (despite the fact that the actual performance resulted in a faster pace). The predetermined pacing intervals created a predictable, almost mechanical pulse that defined the temporal backbone of the piece. While the specific activities and gestures varied, the pace provided a unifying framework, highlighting the importance of objective criteria in shaping the temporal progression of the composition.

This use of objective pacing also highlights a key aspect of interfacial scores: the ability to juxtapose freedom and constraint. The rigid intervals specified in *Activity Time Space XIII* allowed the performer to explore the relationship between repetition, variation, and time perception. The regularity of the pacing created a metrical undercurrent, drawing attention to the interplay between fixed timing and variable gestures.

The reliance on objective pacing mechanisms aligns with broader traditions in experimental and minimalist music, where composers often use time-based systems to structure performances. By grounding the performance in measurable temporal markers, this strategy not only fosters clarity and predictability but also encourages performers and audiences alike to focus on the rhythmic dimension of the piece. In doing so, it transforms time from a passive backdrop into an active and defining element of the compositional process.

Secondary

    Pace

        Subjective

Pacing a performance based on psychological and physiological criteria introduces a deeply human element into the temporal framework of interfacial scores. Unlike objective pacing strategies, which rely on external mechanisms like clock time or metronomes, this approach foregrounds the performer's emotional, mental, and physical state, making pace a malleable and responsive factor. By tying pacing to the performer's subjective experience, this strategy embeds the "here and now" into the fabric of the performance, foregrounding individual interpretation and situational variability.

Ulrich Krieger's *Ghost out of the Machine* (2009/2021) exemplifies this approach, particularly in its revised interfacial form, which was developed after his engagement with my research and the concept of interfacial scores. The piece instructs performers to produce a sound or artistic action of an electronic quality and repeat it without rushing between iterations. Over time, the performer is directed to transition "very gradually and slowly" into a second activity, which is performed again "for some time" before concluding the piece. The use of phrases like "without rushing," "gradually and slowly," and "for some time" places significant weight on the performer's subjective perception of pace and duration. These instructions are inherently tied to psychological and physiological conditions, such as patience, focus, and individual rhythms of bodily movement or thought. This allows for a range of interpretations that vary not only between performers but also within a single performer's different iterations of the piece. The pacing becomes a reflection of the performer's internal state, influenced by their mood, energy levels, and overall disposition in the specific moment of performance.

Krieger's use of subjectivity in defining pace aligns with a broader trend in interfacial compositions that embrace variability and personal agency. By avoiding prescriptive temporal markers, such as seconds or beats, *Ghost out of the Machine* invites performers to inhabit the temporal aspect of the piece fully, transforming it into a living, adaptive element rather than a rigid framework. The openness of pacing ensures that performances are unique, shaped as much by the performer's internal dynamics as by the external conditions of the performance setting.

Similarly, my own composition *Activity Time Space XX* (2022) explores this strategy by introducing subjective pacing criteria in the Time column. The three time values—"as fast as it feels right," "as slow as it feels right," and "at natural pace"—centre the performer's intuition and self-awareness. The inclusion of phrases like "feels right" and "natural" highlights the fluid and context-dependent nature of pacing. What "feels right" in terms of speed or slowness is inherently variable, influenced by the

performer's emotional state, physical comfort, and the surrounding environment. Moreover, the conceptual and perceptual distinctions between these three values add further nuance to the performance. For instance, the tempo that "feels right" as fast might involve a sense of urgency or excitement, while the tempo that "feels right" as slow could reflect a meditative or cautious approach. The idea of a "natural pace" introduces an additional layer of interpretation, potentially tied to biological rhythms such as breathing or walking, or to an intuitive sense of equilibrium.

This compositional strategy underscores the interconnectedness of pace, psychological engagement, and the performative moment. By making pacing responsive to subjective criteria, interfacial scores like *Activity Time Space XX* encourage performers to engage deeply with their internal experience, allowing their performance to evolve dynamically in response to their immediate state. This approach shifts the focus from standardised metrics to individualised, lived experiences of time.

Furthermore, the malleability inherent in subjective pacing invites both performers and audiences to consider time as a relational and fluctuating phenomenon rather than an absolute constant. The performer's unique interpretation and the temporal variability across performances highlight the complexity of psychological time, where moments can stretch or compress based on attention, emotion, and perception. By incorporating these elements, interfacial scores that use subjective pacing contribute to a rich and multifaceted understanding of temporality in contemporary composition.

Secondary

Function or Imposed Characteristics

For social and practical reasons, humans have long imposed characteristics onto specific times of the day, week, or year. This practice helps to organise daily lives and routines, shaping time into functional categories that reflect societal norms and rhythms. Examples such as "bedtime," "lunchtime," and "schooldays" highlight the way particular times are associated with specific activities. These associations are not inherent to the times themselves but are instead human constructs. Even broader systems of time organisation, such as naming the days of the week or dividing hours into specific periods, are influenced not only by practical considerations like Earth's rotation and seasonal cycles but also by cultural conventions and shared understandings. While such systems are often aligned with natural phenomena, such as daylight cycles tied to circadian rhythms, they more frequently reflect social constructs designed to accommodate the workday, school schedules, or leisure activities. Expressions like "it's time for a nap," "it's Happy Hour at the pub," or "it's about time I finished

my PhD" further demonstrate how time can be assigned a function or purpose based on human priorities and expectations.

This concept of imposed temporal characteristics and socially constructed associations with time is explored in two scores in my *Activity Time Space* series. *Activity Time Space X* (2022) uses the method of deliberately abstract wording in the Activity column, while the Time column reflects functional time designations. The three time values in this score are: "at lunchtime," "at bedtime," and "at work time." These values represent three distinct periods of the day, each with a typical societal or personal activity assigned to it. In my interpretation of *Activity Time Space X*, I engaged with the surrounding environment by attentively observing the auditory and visual elements present. I concentrated on the hum of traffic and the dynamic interplay of shifting shadows and car reflections on a white projection canvas, corresponding to the score's designation of "work time" within a defined "space." This performance highlighted the imposed characteristics of time as it intersects with subjective experience.

Similarly, *Activity Time Space XXII* (2023) also adheres to this compositional strategy, with its Time column indicating "on a work/school day," "on holiday," and "on a day off from work/school." These categories reflect broader patterns of imposed temporal characteristics, this time on days rather than smaller periods. They suggest how people in particular life circumstances—such as students or workers—perceive time differently based on their responsibilities and roles. Unlike *Activity Time Space X,* this score employs more defined options in the Activity column, offering specified actions for performers to undertake, and the Space column further mirrors imposed characteristics, such as specific locations assigned to specific functions. This results in one of the most "closed" scores in the *Activity Time Space* series, with relatively limited scope for interpretative freedom. The juxtaposition of imposed time features with the structured Activity and Space columns allows these scores to critically engage with the ways humans organise and perform time in their daily lives.

In summary, the use of imposed temporal characteristics as a compositional strategy in interfacial scores reflects the deep entanglement of human perception with socially constructed frameworks of time. Scores like *Activity Time Space X* and *Activity Time Space XXII* demonstrate how these constructions shape not only the rhythms of daily life but also creative interpretations of time in performance contexts. By embedding these imposed characteristics into the Time column, these compositions encourage performers and informed audiences alike to reflect on how time, often perceived as a fixed entity, is inherently shaped by human priorities, activities, and conventions. In doing so, they highlight the dynamic interplay between societal norms and individual experiences of time, making it both a subject and a medium of artistic exploration.

Secondary

    Specific Time

        Once

In everyday life, we frequently reference specific times that occur only once, forming part of our social and organisational frameworks. Statements such as "We will meet tomorrow at 3 pm," "There's a concert on Thursday evening," "Today is Monday," or "Mid-term in October 2024 is from the 12th to the 20th" are all examples of time markers that regulate schedules and activities. These instances underscore a view of time as a linear progression, where hours, days, months, and years succeed one another in an orderly sequence, often tied to cultural, social, or individual events. Such references are integral to how humans structure their lives around singular occurrences.

An illustrative example of this compositional strategy is Mieko Shiomi's *Spatial Poem No.5* (1972). The score instructs participants to perform the minimal action "open something which is closed" within the specified time frame of July 15 to August 5, 1972. Participants were further asked to document their interpretations and the outcomes of their actions in approximately 300 words, including the exact date and time of their performance. Shiomi subsequently incorporated these reports into a world map. By doing so, Spatial Poem No.5 juxtaposes the objective, detached nature of a map with the subjective, lived experiences of individuals, highlighting the intersection of specific time and human activity. This transformation of a static, universal representation into something deeply personal underscores the unique temporality of singular, non-repetitive moments.

Similarly, my composition *Activity Time Space XXVII* (2023) employs this strategy by specifying three singular, festive dates for performance: December 25, 2024 (Christmas), January 1, 2025 (New Year's Day), and February 25, 2025 (my 40th birthday). Performers are provided with options of specified activities to realise on one or more of these dates, embedding the temporal uniqueness of each occasion into the structure of the piece. Upon completing the performance, participants are instructed to pass the score along to another individual, suggesting alternative dates for their realisation, each within a three-month window following the prior date. This method extends the idea of singular temporality by creating a dynamic chain of performances, each anchored in its own specific yet transient time, while allowing for a degree of fluidity within the piece's temporal framework.

By engaging with specific, non-repeating time frames, compositions like Shiomi's and *Activity Time Space XXVII* explore the uniqueness of temporality in human experience. These works reflect the interplay between the linear progression of time and the singularity of events, imbuing otherwise fleeting moments with structured artistic significance.

Secondary

      Specific Time

           Repeating

In addition to singular temporal occurrences, recurring time periods are integral to our understanding and articulation of time in everyday life. These are temporal specifications that recur regularly, forming the backbone of routines and periodic rituals. For example, Mondays, New Year's Eves, or 8 a.m. signify recurring temporal moments that we often use to organise activities, anticipate events, or mark traditions. In the realm of interfacial scores, the use of such recurring temporal markers introduces multiple potential occasions for performing the piece, thus embedding it within cycles of daily, weekly, or annual rhythms.

George Brecht's *Thursday*, part of his *Water Yam* (1963) collection, is an iconic example of this approach. The score consists solely of the single bulleted word "Thursday." While it provides no specific instruction on how to interpret or perform the piece, the name of a day of the week inherently points to a recurring moment. This condensed notation invites participants to create realisations centred around any or every Thursday, underscoring the significance of repetition and periodicity in shaping artistic interpretations. The lack of explicit guidance further broadens the potential for varied realisations, each tied to the recurring nature of a single weekday.

Similarly, Stefan Thut's *equinox* (2010) and *solstice* (2010) offer another take on recurring temporal markers. These works feature concise, almost identical text instructions: "at the present time of equinox happening (records, documents about)" and "at the present time of solstice happening (records, documents about)." By referencing annual celestial events, Thut frames the recurring equinoxes and solstices as temporal anchors for activities and performances. The cyclical nature of these instructions evokes ancient rituals tied to seasonal transitions, connecting modern artistic practices with longstanding cultural and astronomical traditions. These works are particularly striking in how they intertwine natural phenomena with artistic expression, drawing attention to the passage of time as an ever-repeating but inherently significant cycle.

Building on this tradition, my own *Activity Time Space XVIII* (2023) integrates the concept of recurring temporal markers with a deliberate focus on daily rhythms. The score instructs performers to interpret at least one of the deliberately ambiguous terms in the Activity column, during the periods indicated in the Time column - "at noon," "at midnight," or "in the antemeridian." These time markers recur every 24 hours, embedding the piece within the fabric of daily life. By choosing these particular times, the score highlights the contrast between different parts of the day and how activities might unfold differently

depending on the time of performance. Performers are invited to engage with their surrounding environments and internal states, as the recurring nature of these time markers allows for multiple performances, each influenced by subtle shifts in context, mood, or interpretation.

By incorporating recurring temporal markers, works such as Brecht's *Thursday*, Thut's *equinox* and *solstice*, and *Activity Time Space XVIII* highlight the cyclical nature of time as a fundamental organising principle in both artistic creation and daily life. These compositions encourage reflection on the rhythm and variation of repeated moments, prompting performers and informed audiences to reassess how cycles of repetition influence our understanding of time and shape our experiential reality.

Secondary

Subject to Emotional Response

This compositional strategy centres on the subjective experience of time as shaped by individual or collective emotional responses. Expressions like "happy days," "dark times," or "the best day of my life" illustrate how emotional states are often used to characterise temporal periods, linking time to personal or shared psychological landscapes.

Two scores from the *Activity Time Space* series, *Activity Time Space VI* (2021) and *Activity Time Space XXV* (2023), exemplify this approach by embedding emotionally charged temporal references into their structures. *Activity Time Space VI* utilises intentionally abstract terminology in its Activity column, while the Time column assigns emotionally evocative temporal markers such as "during happy hour," "at a time of certainty," and "during dark times." This score probes the spectrum of emotional responses to personal and communal experiences of time.

One realisation of *Activity Time Space VI* was performed by James Saunders, who documented his process in an imaginative and reflective manner. Interpreting the score's Time column as "during dark times," Saunders chose to engage with an intellectual activity by reading about pseudoscience on Wikipedia. He subsequently sent an email to me describing his experience:

> OK, here you go for *VI*
> Physics - in dark times - online
> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pseudoscience
>
> I've just spent the last half an hour reading about pseudoscience, which has been really interesting. So good that the piece has opened up a line of inquiry for me.
> Hope this works for you!

I'll pass on to someone.

J (Saunders 2022)

As per the score's instructions, Saunders documented his interpretation by uploading a screenshot of this email to his website, fulfilling the requirement to share the performance online. His realisation demonstrates how the emotionally charged temporal framework of the piece can inspire deeply personal and introspective connotations, even within open-ended parameters.

In contrast, *Activity Time Space XXV* explores the way emotional states can alter the subjective perception of time's passage—its apparent acceleration, deceleration, or stasis. The Time column for this piece includes "when feeling so happy that time speeds up," "when feeling so bored that time slows down," and "when time stands still." These options aim to foreground the psychological elasticity of time, encouraging performers to examine how intense emotional states influence their approach to performance and interpretation. I performed this score as part of my lecture recital at the 2024 SMI/ICTMD-LE Postgraduate Conference at Maynooth University. In my realisation of two of the combinations described in the score, I interpreted "an experience—when feeling so happy that time speeds up—in the field of your main profession" by playing a recording of music I had composed for a theatre production the previous month. Simultaneously, I engaged with "an eventuality—when time stands still—in the territory of your aspirations" by performing a slow and deliberate action. I gently pushed a bottle, which had previously been used in the performance of *Activity Time Space XIII*, off the palm of my hand with the finger of my other hand, continuing until the bottle eventually fell to the floor.

Through these emotionally resonant temporal constructs, both scores engage with the fluid and subjective nature of time as shaped by human emotion. Rather than offering a rigid framework, these pieces invite performers to explore how emotional states not only colour their perception of time but also influence their actions and decisions during the performance. By foregrounding the emotional dimensions of temporality, these scores encourage a deeper engagement with the lived experience of time, transforming the act of performance into a space for introspection, self-awareness, and the exploration of emotional resonance.

Secondary

Historical Timeline, Process, and Change

Linear timelines constitute the primary framework through which people conceptualise time in daily life and historical discourse. These frameworks reflect both personal and collective temporal

structures, emphasising sequential progression. On a personal level, time is articulated through markers like "when I was a child" or "when I retire," while collective timelines are captured in grand narratives such as "the Bronze Age," "the Industrial Revolution," or "the Digital Age." These frameworks often include cyclical patterns—days, months, and seasons—but even these cycles are understood as sequences nested within a broader linear structure. Linear timelines provide a mechanism to discuss the flow of time in an objective, detached manner. This includes the observation of natural processes, such as growth, decay, and transformation, which underscore the inexorable forward movement of time and serve as philosophical reflections on its linearity.

Makoto Nomura's *Mae-Machi ArT Centre* (2009) exemplifies the use of linear timelines in interfacial scores. The piece, inspired by the name of Maemachi Art Centre, is divided into five consecutive parts corresponding to the five parts of the name (1. Mae, 2. Maki, 3. Ar, 4. T, and 5. Centre), with the last one representing a coda. The first part invites each performer to face a self-chosen direction and engage in an activity of their choice "for a while." The second part transitions into a period of stillness, where performers wait, again "for a while," without performing. In the third part, participants vocalise "arrrrr" in any pitch or style, while the fourth and fifth parts mark a collective movement toward resolution. Performers cycle through the first three parts, moving sequentially to the coda when one participant signals the transition by moving toward a door. Observing this cue, others follow and eventually gather in the room's centre to conclude the performance.

While Nomura's score does not explicitly name its temporal structure as linear, the sequence is embedded within its design. The repeated phrase "for a while" allows performers to determine durations individually, introducing a subjective interpretation of time. Nonetheless, the overall structure progresses through a series of defined stages, moving from cyclical repetition in the earlier sections to a linear, conclusive resolution. This juxtaposition of cyclical and linear elements mirrors the coexistence of repetition and progression in how we experience time in life and history.

My own composition, *Activity Time Space XVII* (2022), explicitly underscores the linearity of time through its focus on processes of change. The Time column of this score provides three distinct temporal frameworks: "as long as it takes for a chopped apple to change colour significantly," "as long as it takes for the Earth to rotate significantly," and "as long as it takes for your mood to change significantly." These durations are linked to entities of varying scales, each illustrating the pervasive nature of change in different contexts. The apple's discolouration reflects immediate, observable transformation; the Earth's rotation connects the performer to a larger, cosmic timeline; and mood shifts highlight the internal, psychological dimensions of time.

By specifying the qualifier "significantly," the score introduces a subjective layer to these temporal measures, requiring performers to interpret what constitutes meaningful change in each context. This dynamic interaction between subjective and objective markers of time draws attention to the ways linear progression is perceived and experienced differently across scales and circumstances. Through its interplay of natural processes and personal judgment, the score invites participants to reflect on the inevitability of change and the multiplicity of ways in which time's passage manifests in the world around and within us.

Ultimately, interfacial scores like *Mae-Machi ArT Centre* and *Activity Time Space XVII* engage with linear and sequential notions of time to explore its layered complexities. They position time not as a detached abstraction but as a tangible force that shapes natural processes, personal experiences, and collective narratives. By blending cyclical and linear elements, as well as subjective and objective measures, these works create nuanced spaces for performers to explore the temporality of change and its profound implications for understanding time as both a framework and an experience.

Secondary

Time as Commodity

In everyday discourse, time is often conceptualised as a finite resource that individuals can possess, allocate, or lose. This view is reflected in numerous expressions such as "we don't have time," "give me a minute," or "don't waste time," all of which underscore the perception of time as something that can be owned, exchanged, or squandered. Within modern capitalist society, the notion of time management has become increasingly prevalent, although it is evident that what is truly being managed is the individual's actions within the confines of available time. This distinction highlights how time, as a social construct, is intricately tied to individual agency and societal expectations. When this perception of time as a commodity is incorporated into interfacial scores, it can generate intriguing, and often humorous, instructions for realisation and performance. The use of such terminology imbues the work with layers of meaning that challenge the performer to reflect on their relationship with time in both practical and philosophical terms.

One such example of this approach is found in *Activity Time Space XI* (2022), where the Time column includes three familiar ways of talking about time as a commodity: "having time," "giving time," and "wasting time." These terms are embedded in everyday conversations, often used to frame our perceptions of our daily routines and the value of our activities. In this piece, the Activity column presents the performers with three open-ended activities, designated as "x", "x'", and "-x". This open

structure encourages performers to explore and interpret these familiar expressions of time in creative and diverse ways. The score's condensed nature invites a wide range of imaginative realisations, where performers can experiment with how time can be "had," "given," or "wasted," thus transforming these common expressions into a performative exploration of time's social and personal implications.

In contrast, *Activity Time Space XVIII* (2022) engages with the notion of time as a commodity in a more explicit and contextualised manner. The Time column in this score reads: "during a time that is being paid for," "during a time that is being given for free," and "during a time that cannot be paid for." These distinctions are deeply tied to the capitalist framework of labor and leisure, in which time is divided into segments based on monetary exchange or personal choice. This compositional strategy highlights how time, in modern economies, is often categorised according to its economic utility—whether it is time spent working for remuneration, time offered as a gift without expectation of compensation, or time that transcends monetary value, such as moments of personal reflection or creativity. Through these temporal distinctions, the score invites the performer to engage with time as both a social construct and a lived experience, reflecting on how time is perceived, measured, and valued in contemporary society.

In conclusion, the concept of time as a commodity serves as a powerful tool for reflecting on the societal and personal implications of how time is perceived, exchanged, and valued. By incorporating familiar expressions and distinctions such as "having time," "giving time," "wasting time," and the division between paid, free, and priceless moments, *Activity Time Space XI* and *Activity Time Space XVIII* encourage performers to engage with time not only as a measurable entity but also as a socially constructed and fluid concept. Through these interfacial scores, time is not merely a backdrop to performance but becomes an active participant in the creative process, inviting reflection on the commodification of time in capitalist society.

3. SPACE

The concept of space is multifaceted and central to understanding performance, as it encompasses not only the physical dimensions of a venue but also the social, ideological, and perceptual frameworks that define and shape it. Allain and Harvie (2006, 206) identify three distinct yet interrelated categories of theatrical space: *stage space*, referring to the scenic area and scenography; *theatre space*, encompassing the architectural structure of the theatre, including its seating, layout, and infrastructure; and *theatre environment*, which extends beyond the theatre itself to include the geographic and social context surrounding the venue. These divisions highlight the layered nature of space in performance, each level contributing unique aesthetic, functional, and social dimensions to the overall experience.

Crucially, Allain and Harvie underscore the inherently social nature of space, observing that it generates social effects and meanings that are deeply ideological. The stage space, for example, can reinforce or challenge power dynamics depending on how it is constructed and utilised. Similarly, the architectural design of a theatre space may evoke certain cultural or historical resonances, while the broader theatre environment can frame a performance within a particular societal or geographical context. Through these layers, space becomes not merely a container for performance but an active participant in the creation and transmission of meaning.

From an anthropological perspective, any open space, particularly when designated for performance, can be seen as liminal, occupying a transitional state "between and betwixt" its everyday functionality and its potential as a site of artistic expression (Schechner 2002, 67). This liminality renders the space dynamic and versatile, opening it to reinterpretation and reinvention. The empty stage, for instance, serves as a blank slate onto which any narrative, aesthetic, or conceptual framework can be projected, embodying the infinite possibilities of performance. Such a perspective highlights the transformative power of space, as it shifts from its mundane identity into a realm of heightened symbolism and interaction.

Moreover, space is not an isolated phenomenon but a continuous entity without fixed boundaries, making its definition as a performance area highly dependent on perception and framing. Counsel and Wolf assert that what constitutes a performance space is essentially "a product of its perceptual context" (Counsel and Wolf 2001, 156). This suggests that the recognition of a space as a site for performance is determined by cultural, social, and situational cues. For example, a park bench, a public square, or even a subway station can all become performance spaces depending on how they are framed, acknowledged, or appropriated by performers and audiences. This framing shifts the function of the space and its perception, thereby altering its meaning and significance.

The interplay of these theoretical perspectives underscores that space in performance is not merely a static or neutral backdrop. Rather, it is a dynamic, ideologically charged element that both shapes and is shaped by the activities and interactions it hosts. It is a site of negotiation where physicality, symbolism, and social context converge to produce meaning. Recognising the fluid and contextual nature of space enriches our understanding of its role in performance and its broader implications for cultural and social practice.

In parallel with the strategies addressing time, I suggest a classification of space into primary and secondary compositional strategies. This framework encompasses the diverse ways space is articulated in both everyday discourse and compositional practice.

In examining the multifaceted nature of space, these primary and secondary compositional strategies provide a structured framework for understanding how space is conceptualised, utilised, and experienced in performance and composition. By categorising space through these lenses, we can explore its physical, social, emotional, and metaphorical dimensions, highlighting the interplay between objective structures and subjective interpretations. This approach not only deepens our comprehension of spatial dynamics but also illuminates how space operates as both a tangible and symbolic entity within interfacial scores. In the following sections, each category will be explored in detail, demonstrating its relevance and potential for artistic expression.

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PRIMARY TAGS

1. **In relation to something else/scenery**

2. **Specific location**

3. **Defined by limits (distance)**

   I. **Objective**

   II. **Subjective**

4. **Abstract reference**

5. **Non material**

   I. **Digital**

   II. **Inner**

   III. **Content**

   IV. **Opportunity**

SECONDARY TAGS

1. **Function/imposed characteristics**

2. **Subject to emotional response**

3. **Historical Significance**

4. **Space as Commodity**

_____

Primary

In Relation to Something Else/Scenery

Space, as a continuous and boundless entity, gains meaning through reference points that contextualise and define it. In everyday language, this contextualisation often takes the form of relational expressions, positioning objects or activities in proximity to or alignment with other elements of the environment. Examples of such expressions include "a person next to the tree," "a walk by the river," or "this arrow points north." These references provide spatial clarity by situating an entity in relation to its surroundings. This linguistic tendency also appears in interfacial scores, where referencing spatial relationships becomes a fundamental compositional strategy for defining the parameters of performance or activity. By doing so, such scores frame space in a manner that allows performers to ground their interpretations while leaving room for imaginative expansion.

A notable example of this strategy is George Brecht's *Sink* (1963) from his *Water Yam* collection. The score consists of the simple, enigmatic phrase: "on (or near) a white sink." This minimalistic instruction refrains from specifying the activity, duration, or any other contextual details, thereby inviting the performer's imagination to interpret and realise the score in a multitude of ways. Whether conceptualised as a performance, an installation, or an internal reflection, the score's spatial reference to the white sink serves as both an anchor and a point of departure, highlighting the dynamic interplay between specificity and abstraction that characterises Brecht's work.

Similarly, Michael Winter's *just above and/or below the waterline* (2010) uses its title as both instruction and definition of spatial parameters. Like Brecht's *Sink*, Winter's score refrains from prescribing specific actions, performers, or timeframes, instead offering a broad conceptual framework. The spatial phrase

"just above and/or below the waterline" prompts the performer to engage with the boundary between water and air, literally or figuratively, evoking a liminal zone that invites diverse interpretations. This ambiguity allows the score to unfold in infinite variations, shaped by the performer's response to the spatial and conceptual prompt.

Expanding on this relational approach, my own score, *Hachiriki* (2024), incorporates the concept of coordinates to organise spatial dimensions in performance. Inspired by the Japanese martial arts principle of Hachiriki, or "eight life forces," as described by Aikido teacher Bjorn So, the score assigns each of the eight cardinal directions a corresponding life force. Performers are instructed to orient themselves toward one of these directions and perform according to the energy associated with it. They are free to change directions and repeat the process at their discretion, potentially forming and dissolving group dynamics as they explore the spatial and energetic interplay. The piece seeks to bridge the aesthetics of interfacial scores and experimental performance with the philosophy of Japanese martial arts, using spatial association as a unifying and dynamic structural element.

Another example of the relational framing of space is found in *Activity Time Space XVIII* (2023), which incorporates a triadic compositional structure involving deliberately abstract activities, temporal markers, and spatial references. The *Activity* column suggests open-ended prompts such as "draw," "affect," and "free," while the *Time* column introduces temporal anchors like "at noon," "at midnight," and "in the antemeridian." The *Space* column complements these with spatial relationships: "in front of a screen," "beside an ironing board," and "under a cloudy sky." These spatial references span indoor and outdoor contexts, blurring the boundaries between domestic and natural environments. By positioning actions relative to specific objects and settings, the score encourages performers to navigate and reinterpret space creatively, fostering a sense of playful exploration and improvisation.

Through these examples, it becomes evident that relational references to space provide a versatile and evocative compositional strategy in interfacial scores. Whether framing performance in proximity to everyday objects, natural boundaries, or abstract coordinates, this approach allows for a wide range of interpretations, enabling performers to situate their actions within dynamic and layered spatial contexts. This interplay between specificity and openness underscores the potential of relational spatial strategies to enrich and diversify performative experiences.

Primary

      Specific Location

In our daily lives, meetings, events, and countless other activities are often tied to specific locations. These locations can range across scales, from the vastness of Mars to the intimacy of a baby's cot. Specific locations include cities like Athens, landmarks like Tower Bridge, or even private spaces such as someone's house. At times, they are pinpointed with precise coordinates, further emphasising their distinctiveness. While the use of specific locations as a compositional strategy in interfacial scores is relatively uncommon, when employed, it can inspire site-specific performances that broaden the interpretative possibilities of a score. Such scores not only enrich the diversity of their realisations but also contribute to the cultural and artistic fabric of the places in which they are performed.

A quintessential example of this strategy is Mieko Shiomi's *Spatial Poem No.5* (1972), which exemplifies the use of specific spatial notation to create a geographically distributed artwork. In this piece, participants were instructed to perform an action—opening "something which is closed"—and to document a 300-word account of their activity, including the specific place and time of the performance. These accounts were then compiled into a map by Shiomi, resulting in a work that geographically and temporally mapped the realisations of the score during a set timeframe, from July 15 to August 5, 1972. The inclusion of specific times and places not only provided a framework for appreciating the individuality and ephemeral nature of each performance but also underscored the importance of situating actions within a particular spatial and temporal context.

Similarly, my own composition *Counter-Viewpoints II - Porthleven* (2013–14) demonstrates the potential of specific locations to shape a score's framework and outcomes. One of the piece's realisation methods, titled "[Porthleven] observing," instructs performers to travel to Porthleven, Cornwall, and stay for at least three days and nights. During this time, they are tasked with conducting five to seventeen hours of observation, divided into separate sessions. Each session is to take place in a different location within the town, with performers dedicating one page of the score to each hour of observation. While observing, they are encouraged to take notes on their sensory impressions—sounds, smells, and images—using the letters on the page as a creative prompt. After returning home, performers must wait a month before revisiting their notes, at which point they create something inspired by their observations. The score provides an alternative instruction for those unable to travel to Porthleven: they may choose another location, provided it is not their birthplace. This restriction reinforces the significance of engaging with unfamiliar or emotionally neutral spaces as a source of creative inspiration.

The strategy of situating a score within a specific location also appears in *Activity Time Space XXIV* (2023). This piece includes spatial instructions that specify three academic settings: "at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Department of Music Studies campus," "at the University of the Arts London, Central Saint Martins College campus," and "at the Department of Music, Bath Spa University, Newton Park campus." These locations hold personal significance as the sites where I completed my Bachelor's and Master's degrees and am currently pursuing my PhD. By linking the performance to these institutions, the score incorporates a deeply personal dimension, resonating with the "subject to emotional response" strategy discussed elsewhere. This overlap illustrates how spatial tags in interfacial scores are not rigidly distinct categories but rather part of a fluid and interconnected network of compositional approaches.

Through the use of specific locations, interfacial scores invite performers and audiences to engage with the unique characteristics of a place, both physical and symbolic. This strategy fosters an intimate connection between the score and its setting, transforming performance spaces into sites of cultural, historical, and personal significance.

Primary

Defined by Limits (Distance)

Objective

The compositional strategy of space defined by limits involves objective methods for circumscribing or delineating a performance area. These definitions might include physical boundaries such as walls, measurable distances like "3 meters," or spatial constraints such as "within the stretch of your arms." This approach enables composers to set clear parameters for the performance space, often grounding the work in specific dimensions that can be interpreted physically or metaphorically. This strategy also encompasses works that explore spatial characteristics, such as the acoustic properties of a room or the layout of a performance site, as noted by Gottschalk (2016, 85).

An illustrative example of this approach is Peter Ablinger's *einen Tunnel passieren* (2011), which translates to "passing a tunnel." The score itself functions as a conceptual piece, with the titular phrase serving as its primary instruction and spatial reference. Ablinger specifies that the activity may be performed physically, but it is not a necessity; the realisation can exist solely within the imagination. Here, the concept of a tunnel provides an objective spatial framework—a clearly enclosed, identifiable, and circumscribed entity. This abstraction invites performers or observers to engage with the concept of space as a bounded, yet versatile, entity that can be realised in various ways.

Similarly, my composition *Let's move on the same page* (2016) employs an objective approach to defining performance space through the use of a floorplan. Performers are instructed to associate six letters from any alphabet with specific performance activities. They then select a page from a book written in that alphabet and overlay a transparency of the floorplan of the performance space onto the page. The performers identify where the chosen letters fall within the spatial grid of the floorplan, marking these as the locations where the associated activities will take place during the performance. The activities can be executed in any sequence and duration, with the total performance lasting a minimum of ten minutes. This approach demonstrates an objective and systematic means of defining the spatial framework of a performance while leaving room for interpretative freedom in how the activities are enacted.

Another example of space defined by limits is seen in *Activity Time Space XX* (2022), which provides performers with instructions to determine the spatial parameters themselves, rather than specifying fixed measurements. The Space column includes values such as "within the stretch of your arms," "within the stretch of a hairband of a loved one," and "within the stretch of your main computer cable." Each value defines a distinct spatial range, varying in intimacy and scale, that frames the space within which the performance should take place. While these values remain objectively measurable, they also encourage performers to engage with the tactile and personal dimensions of space, creating a balance between precise circumscription and imaginative interpretation.

The objective delineation of space serves as a powerful tool in interfacial scores, enabling composers to anchor performances in tangible spatial frameworks while maintaining interpretative openness. This strategy bridges the physical and conceptual dimensions of space, fostering interactions between performers and their environments that can range from the personal and intimate to the formal and structured. By employing measurable limits and defined boundaries, these scores prompt performers to explore space as both a literal and symbolic construct, enriching the interpretative possibilities of the work.

Primary

   Defined by Limits (Distance)

           Subjective

In contrast to more objective methods for delineating space, subjective approaches to defining spatial limits prioritise personal interpretations and emotional evaluations. In this framework, space is described using terms that are inherently open to individual perception and context, such as "over a

short/long distance," "large/small space" or similarly vague phrases that rely on the subjective experience of those involved. These subjective descriptors create a dynamic and flexible way to circumscribe performance space, encouraging performers to define space in ways that resonate with their personal feelings, emotional states, or conceptual understandings of proximity and distance.

A noteworthy example of this approach can be found in Ulrich Krieger's *parallel lives* (2010), which exemplifies how subjective spatial definitions can be utilised in composition. The score reads as follows:

multitude

universes within universes

far away

worlds next to each other

unfathomed

separated and dependent

extremes

never one and the same

The phrases in this score are intentionally abstract, leaving ample room for the performer to interpret the meaning of the words and their relation to spatial boundaries. In particular, the phrase "far away" evokes a sense of distance, yet the exact nature of that distance is left entirely to the performer's interpretation. This invites subjective evaluations of space based on the individual's emotional state, the spatial context, or even the personal associations that the performer may bring to the work. The broader concept of "far away" may carry different meanings depending on the context in which it is performed, suggesting that the distance is not only physical but also metaphorical, emotional, or experiential.

Similarly, in *Activity Time Space XVIII* (2022), the Space column includes terms like "far away," "close by," and "far/close enough," each of which is designed to be interpreted subjectively. These terms are purposefully vague and non-specific, allowing for flexible interpretations by the performers. What is considered "far away" or "close by" can vary greatly depending on individual perspective, emotional context, and even the specific circumstances of the performance. These terms evoke a fluid, conceptual approach to space, one that does not rely on exact measurements or spatial configurations but instead

focuses on the performer's internal sense of distance. For instance, "close by" could be understood in a literal, physical sense, but it may also represent emotional proximity, such as a closeness between people or ideas, depending on the performer's interpretation. The conceptual openness of terms such as "far away," "close by," and "far/close enough" allows the score to evolve dynamically within each performance, with the performers contributing their own subjective definitions of space.

Thus, subjective approaches to delineating space provide an invaluable tool for composers and performers, allowing for deeper exploration of space that is not merely about distance but also about meaning, experience, and perception. By embracing these subjective definitions, interfacial scores can cultivate performances that are not only creative but also deeply personal, as the concept of space becomes intrinsically tied to the performer's own sense of the world around them.

Primary

Abstract Reference

The use of abstract references to space in interfacial scores mirrors the deliberately abstract approach to time discussed earlier. This compositional strategy provides performers with the freedom to interpret spatial elements creatively and flexibly, fostering open-ended realisations of the score. By avoiding concrete or specific spatial prescriptions, abstract references allow performers to engage with the work in a personal and subjective manner, tailoring the performance to their unique circumstances and interpretations.

Mark So's *some forgotten day (sparse winter)* (2009) exemplifies this approach to subjective spatial delineation. The score is characterised by a series of deliberately abstract words and phrases that performers can interpret and realise individually, in any sequence, and for any duration. The instructions lack specificity in spatial guidance, with the sole spatial direction being that the performance must take place in "an ordinary open space, indoors." This minimal specification creates a framework of immense flexibility, leaving performers to define and interact with the space based on their own understanding of what constitutes an "ordinary open space." The term itself is open to a range of interpretations, inviting performers to reflect on the qualities of the space they choose— whether it is defined by its simplicity, functionality, or familiarity. By removing prescriptive spatial elements, the score embraces ambiguity as a tool for artistic exploration, encouraging performers to infuse the spatial dimension of the work with their own creativity and individuality. In doing so, *some*

forgotten day (space winter) transforms space into a subjective and personalised element, with each realisation of the score reflecting the performer's unique relationship with the environment.

Similarly, my composition *A Curious Unfinished Game* (2017) incorporates a deliberately abstract approach to spatial reference. The piece invites performers to participate in a treasure hunt for cards that contain instructions for performance activities. These activities involve interactions with various objects, such as a musical instrument, a light source, a piece of paper, or other performers, within a performance area referred to only as "the space." The lack of specificity surrounding "the space" allows for considerable flexibility in its interpretation. Performers are instructed to hide and find cards within this undefined space, with no restrictions on its size, shape, or configuration. This can lead to performances in settings ranging from a confined indoor area, such as a theatre or gallery, to more expansive and unconventional environments, such as a public park or an entire urban landscape. The open-ended nature of the spatial instructions allows performers to engage creatively with their surroundings, shaping the performance space in a manner that is responsive to their unique context and imagination. By leaving the definition of space open, the composition fosters a dynamic interplay between the performer and the environment, making each realisation of the piece distinctive and contextually rich.

Activity Time Space XIII (2023) also demonstrates this compositional strategy, using abstract references to space, time, and activity to encourage creative interpretation. The Activity column features combinations of letters and repetitions, such as "a b b," "a b a," and "a a b," while the Time column includes vague temporal references such as "now," "then," and "whenever." In parallel, the Space column uses spatial references that are equally abstract and open-ended: "here," "there," and "wherever." These terms, like their temporal counterparts, lack precise definitions, allowing performers to shape their interpretations according to personal, conceptual, or situational factors. For example, "here" could signify an immediate, tangible proximity, while "there" might evoke a more distant or abstract location. Similarly, "wherever" suggests an entirely open possibility, unbound by physical constraints. This deliberately vague phrasing encourages performers to define the spatial and temporal dimensions of the work in a deeply personal way, resulting in performances that are not only unique but also reflective of the performers' individual perspectives and contexts.

By employing abstract spatial references, these compositions create an open framework for performers to navigate. The ambiguity inherent in these spatial directions invites performers to explore the concept of space as a dynamic and interpretative element, rather than a fixed or predefined one. This approach enables a multiplicity of realisations, each influenced by the performers' personal experiences, the physical characteristics of the chosen environment, and the interplay between space and other elements of the score. Abstract spatial references thus serve as a powerful compositional

tool, fostering an artistic dialogue between performer and space that is continually reshaped with each performance. This emphasis on openness and subjectivity aligns with the broader aims of interfacial scores, which seek to facilitate diverse and imaginative interpretations, enriching the relationship between composition, performer, and audience.

Primary

Non Material

Digital

Non-material, metaphorical uses of spatial language occupy a prominent position in contemporary discourse, particularly as technology continues to redefine our understanding of space. In the modern age, digital media and online platforms have given rise to language that conceptualises 'space' in distinctly non-physical terms. Phrases such as "digital space," "cyberspace," and "the Cloud" highlight how these environments have become integral to communication and interaction, yet remain inherently intangible and dynamic. While this use of 'space' bears similarities to the idea of "space as content" discussed elsewhere, digital spaces possess unique traits due to their ephemeral and nebulous nature. These traits include the absence of physical boundaries, the potential for asynchronous interaction, and the ability to transcend geographical constraints. Although the use of digital spaces in interfacial scores is relatively rare, this approach offers a contemporary framework for exploring spatial concepts that resonate with the lived experiences of individuals in the technologically interconnected Western world.

Two *Activity Time Space* scores, *Activity Time Space VI* (2021) and *Activity Time Space XXVI* (2023), employ digital spaces as part of their spatial framework. These scores exemplify how digital environments can be reconceptualised as artistic performance spaces, offering new ways of interacting with these domains while fostering mindfulness and creativity.

In *Activity Time Space VI* (2021), the Space column features the values "online," "on social media," and "on TV." These three values represent distinct yet interconnected digital environments that individuals frequently navigate in their everyday lives. By decontextualising these spaces and positioning them as sites for artistic realisation, the score encourages performers to reflect critically on how they engage with these platforms. "Online" serves as an overarching category encompassing the internet as a whole, while "on social media" narrows the focus to a subset of online activity characterised by interpersonal interaction and curated content. The inclusion of "on TV" extends the concept of digital space to broadcast media, bridging the gap between traditional and contemporary digital formats. This layering of digital contexts underscores the fluid boundaries between different forms of mediated

communication. By framing these familiar spaces as sites for artistic exploration, the score highlights alternative modes of engagement, fostering greater awareness and mindfulness in how performers—and, by extension, audiences—interact with these environments.

Activity Time Space XXVI (2023) further expands the exploration of digital spaces by incorporating software-specific environments into its spatial framework. The Space column in this score includes the values "in a messaging application," "in a drawing application," and "in a video game," reflecting the ubiquitous role of software in contemporary digital interactions. These digital spaces are selected not only for their prevalence in everyday life but also for their distinct modes of interaction: messaging applications facilitate communication, drawing applications encourage creativity, and video games combine narrative, strategy, and play. The score pairs these spatial values with the "numbered unspecified activities" strategy in the Activity column, where performers engage in combinations such as "x y," "-x y," and "x -y." The Time column, in turn, introduces subjective temporal conditions, with values such as "until before it feels enough," "until it feels enough," and "until after it feels enough." These subjective criteria allow performers to engage with the digital spaces in a manner that is both intuitive and reflective, fostering a deep connection between activity, time, and space.

The inclusion of digital spaces in interfacial scores such as *Activity Time Space VI* and *Activity Time Space XXVI* represents a significant development in the conceptualisation of non-material space. These scores reflect the growing importance of digital environments in contemporary life, while also encouraging performers to critically examine their interactions with these spaces. By framing digital media as performance spaces, the scores foster a reimagining of technology's role in artistic practice, bridging the gap between the tangible and the intangible, and between the physical and the virtual. Ultimately, this approach highlights the versatility of interfacial scores as a medium for exploring the evolving relationship between humans and the spaces they inhabit—both material and non-material.

Primary

> **Non Material**

> > **Inner**

The concept of "inner spaces" occupies a significant place in both everyday language and artistic practice, representing the abstract, non-physical realms of feelings, thoughts, memories, and emotions. These inner dimensions are often metaphorically described as "spaces" where internal processes occur. Phrases such as "in my mind," "in my heart," or "in my thoughts" illustrate how we conceptualise these

subjective experiences as if they were located within defined boundaries. In the context of interfacial scores, invoking such non-material, inner spaces encourages performers to engage in deep introspection, turning their focus inward. This reflective process can serve as a foundation for performance, enabling realisations that resonate with the performer's personal internal journey and emotional states.

Tim Mitchel's *TMTTR38* (1969), from the *Nature Study Notes* collection, exemplifies this approach by seamlessly integrating the exploration of inner and outer spaces. The score consists of a few lines of varying textures and directions and includes the instruction: "Mark out a journey (inwardly/outwardly/ spatially). Make it." This deceptively simple directive underscores the importance of both conceptualisation and action. The act of marking a journey, whether it is inward into the performer's inner world or outward into external spatial environments, fosters a preparatory phase that invites reflection. For journeys inward, this marking process encourages performers to delineate and structure their engagement with their own internal landscape, promoting self-awareness and intentionality. The requirement to "make it" solidifies the link between reflection and action, emphasising that the inward journey is not merely an abstract exercise but a performative act that can manifest in tangible or intangible ways.

Similarly, my own composition, *Activity Time Space IV* (2020), explicitly incorporates the exploration of inner spaces within its framework. The Space column in this score includes the values "in your mind," "in your memories," and "in the friend zone," each of which evokes a distinct dimension of the inner world. The first value, "in your mind," provides a broad reference to cognitive processes, encompassing thoughts, ideas, and mental imagery. This expansive category encourages performers to delve into the vast and varied terrains of their mental activities, drawing inspiration from the richness of their imagination and reasoning. The second value, "in your memories," narrows the focus to the past, inviting performers to engage with personal history and recollection. This act of revisiting memories fosters a reflective practice that can evoke emotions and insights, shaping the artistic realisation in deeply personal ways. The third value, "in the friend zone," introduces a more relational (often derogatory) dimension to the exploration of inner spaces. Although commonly associated with social dynamics, this term, when decontextualised and placed within the score, invites performers to consider the nuanced feelings and connections that define their interpersonal relationships. By framing this emotional landscape as a "space" for performance, the score encourages an intimate exploration of the performer's relational experiences, blurring the boundaries between the internal and the external.

Through these inner spaces, *Activity Time Space IV* highlights the potential of interfacial scores to serve as platforms for introspection and self-expression. The deliberate ambiguity of the Space values invites performers to interpret and navigate their inner landscapes in ways that resonate with their

personal experiences and emotional states. This flexibility not only facilitates diverse realisations but also fosters a deeper connection between the performer and the work, as <u>each realisation </u>becomes a unique reflection of the individual's internal processes.

The exploration of inner spaces in interfacial scores offers a profound means of bridging the abstract and the tangible. By framing the performer's internal world as a legitimate site for artistic practice, scores such as *TMTTR38* and *Activity Time Space IV* challenge traditional notions of spatiality in performance. They extend the boundaries of what constitutes a 'performance space' to include the subjective and intangible realms of thought, memory, and emotion. This shift encourages performers to view their inner lives as dynamic, fertile grounds for creative exploration, ultimately enriching the practice of interfacial scores and broadening their potential for meaningful, reflective engagement.

Primary

Non Material

Content

The use of spatial language to refer to content is deeply embedded in everyday communication and artistic discourse. We frequently describe events, information, or actions as occurring 'in' a performance, appearing 'on' the news, or unfolding 'in' a movie. Similarly, we might refer to articles as being found 'in' a magazine or a story existing 'within' the pages of a book. These linguistic patterns frame content through spatial metaphors, treating the temporal or physical carriers of information—whether they are media, texts, or performances—as containers or spaces within which events and narratives occur. This metaphorical spatialisation of content reflects how humans conceptualise and organise information, providing a framework that is intuitive and widely understood.

In the realm of interfacial scores, this use of spatial language to denote content becomes a powerful compositional tool, opening pathways for performers to explore the relationship between space, content, and interpretation. Ken Friedman's *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1985) serves as an evocative example of this approach. The score reads:

> A desk or a table.
> A beautiful calendar or time planner is on the desk.
> The book is open to a date selected at random.
> Written on the page with 3pm circled:
> 'Destroy Pompeii this afternoon.'

Here, the content of the book is not merely presented but is spatially contextualised—situated within the 'space' of the book and further described as existing 'on' the page. The use of spatial language mirrors everyday expressions of content location, grounding the imaginative scenario within familiar linguistic patterns. At the same time, the content itself—a surprising and anachronistic instruction to "Destroy Pompeii this afternoon"—introduces an unexpected juxtaposition that provokes reflection and interpretation. This interplay between spatial framing and content serves as a focal point for the score's creative potential, enabling diverse realisations that range from poetic recitation to multimedia installation or performance. The score's flexibility underscores its multidimensional nature, as it can be appreciated as a stand-alone textual work, realised physically, or even experienced solely within the imagination of the performer or audience.

Similarly, *Activity Time Space XXI* (2023) explores spatial language patterns to engage with content in a conceptual and performative manner. The Space column in this score includes the entries "in a verbal account," "in a picture," and "in a video," each representing different modalities through which content can be documented, described, or witnessed. These entries situate content within distinct 'spaces,' encouraging performers to engage with the transformation and representation of activities through varied mediums. The accompanying activities—"convert," "alternate," and "permute"—invite performers to explore the dynamic processes by which content shifts, evolves, and interacts with its medium and context over time. By framing these activities within spatial descriptors, the score foregrounds the fluidity of content and its capacity to transcend the boundaries of its medium, offering a fertile ground for artistic experimentation.

The conceptual framing of content as spatial in these examples highlights the utility of spatial language as a bridge between the abstract and the tangible. In *The Last Days of Pompeii,* the interplay between the spatial and the imaginative situates the content within a familiar yet surreal context, encouraging both reflection and creative engagement. In *Activity Time Space XXI,* spatial descriptors provide a structural framework for performers to navigate the fluidity of content across different mediums, fostering a deeper exploration of how content interacts with its spatial and temporal dimensions.

Moreover, the use of spatial language to denote content aligns with broader linguistic and cognitive patterns in human thought. Spatial metaphors provide a means of organising abstract concepts, enabling individuals to navigate and make sense of complex relationships between information, medium, and experience. In the context of interfacial scores, this linguistic approach not only facilitates comprehension but also enhances the interpretative richness of the scores, allowing performers to engage with content in ways that are both intuitive and innovative.

Primary

      Non Material

            Opportunity

Spatial metaphors are a useful tool for conveying the idea of 'opportunity,' framing abstract possibilities as figurative spaces where action, interaction, or exploration can occur. Phrases such as "there is room for improvement," "leaving space for creativity," and "a window of chance" illustrate how everyday language often relies on spatial constructs to express the potential for growth, innovation, or engagement. These metaphors are rooted in a conceptual understanding of space as an opening or a domain where activities can take place. This linguistic pattern is not only prevalent in daily communication but also finds its way into artistic and compositional strategies, enriching the interpretive possibilities of interfacial scores.

Two *Activity Time Space* pieces explicitly incorporate spatial metaphors to signify opportunities, using them as a compositional framework that merges figurative and literal meanings. *Activity Time Space XII* (2022), for instance, employs expressions such as "in a space for verbal dialogue," "in a space for silent contemplation," and "in a space for verbal expression." These phrases create a nuanced interplay between the absence and presence of verbal interaction. The spectrum of opportunities these terms represent ranges from silent introspection, which invites performers to engage deeply with their inner selves, to one-way expression, where performers articulate their thoughts without immediate feedback, culminating in the full exchange of ideas through dialogue. This layered approach challenges performers to interpret and inhabit these 'spaces' creatively, allowing for diverse realisations that reflect their individual perspectives on communication and interaction.

In *Activity Time Space XIX* (2022), the compositional use of spatial metaphors extends further to explore domains associated with growth and transformation. The Space column includes values such as "in a space for innovation," "in a space for creativity," and "in a space for renewal." These figurative spaces signify opportunities for performers to engage with abstract concepts and processes that encourage exploration and change. The corresponding Activity values—"become aware of something," "get in contact with something," and "become involved with something"—provide prompts that guide performers in their interaction with these metaphorical spaces. The Time column, which specifies the durations for these activities, adds another layer of structure while maintaining the open-ended nature of the score.

The deliberate vagueness and abstraction of these spatial references encourage performers to interpret the instructions imaginatively, crafting unique realisations that resonate with their understanding of these metaphorical opportunities. For example, a performer engaging with "a space

for renewal" might interpret this as a personal or emotional transformation, finding ways to embody this process through movement, sound, or silence. Similarly, "a space for innovation" might be seen as an opportunity to experiment with unconventional techniques or materials, pushing the boundaries of their artistic practice.

The use of spatial metaphors (explicitly using the word 'space' in all values to highlight the notion even further) in these scores serves multiple purposes. On one hand, it invites performers to reflect on the abstract nature of opportunity, prompting them to consider how these figurative "spaces" align with their personal experiences and creative intentions. On the other hand, it encourages an active, performative engagement with the metaphors, transforming abstract concepts into tangible artistic actions. By framing opportunities as spaces, these compositions transcend the boundaries between the literal and the figurative, fostering a dynamic interplay that enhances the interpretive and performative potential of the works.

Primary

  Non Material

    Metaphorical Spaces

Metaphorical spaces are frequently invoked in everyday language to frame abstract domains, disciplines, or contexts where activities and events take place. Expressions such as "in the field of physics," "within the scope of practice," and "in the arena of politics" illustrate how spatial language is used figuratively to delineate practices, professions, or spheres of influence. These metaphorical spaces provide a conceptual framework for organising and articulating areas of human activity or thought, offering boundaries that are not physical but rather intellectual, emotional, or aspirational. In interfacial composition practice, such metaphorical spatial constructs can serve as valuable tools for framing the areas within which realisations of a score can take place, encouraging performers to engage with abstract domains and interpret their instructions within these conceptualised spaces.

An example of this application can be seen in *Activity Time Space XIII* (2022), where the Space column employs values such as "acting in the sonic realm," "acting in the spatial realm," and "acting in the visual realm." These metaphorical spaces emphasise distinct but interpenetrating aspects of perception, directing performers to engage with auditory, spatial, or visual dimensions, depending on the instruction they select or are assigned. The deliberate interplay between the conceptual and the tangible in these spatial values encourages performers to devise performances that focus on one dimension while remaining mindful of the interrelationships among the realms. This approach fosters

a diversity of interpretations and expands the possibilities for creative expression, as performers navigate these metaphorical domains to realise the score.

Similarly, *Activity Time Space XXV* (2023) explores metaphorical spaces related to personal and professional identity, with the Space column offering values such as "in the field of your main profession," "in any area within your interests," and "in the territory of your aspirations." These metaphorical domains invite performers to reflect on and engage with the intersections of their professional work, personal passions, and future ambitions. By asking performers to situate their activities within these metaphorical spaces, the score prompts introspection and self-discovery, encouraging participants to consider how their current roles, hobbies, and goals align or diverge. This reflective process adds depth to the performance, as it bridges the gap between abstract conceptualisation and tangible realisation.

The use of metaphorical spaces in interfacial composition thus creates opportunities for performers to inhabit and explore abstract domains. Moreover, the engagement with metaphorical spaces extends the interpretive reach of the compositions, as it situates the performative act within broader intellectual or personal contexts. This not only enriches the realisation of the scores but also highlights the versatility and applicability of metaphorical spatial language in artistic practice.

Secondary

Function/Imposed Characteristics

Colin Counsell and Laurie Wolf (2001, 155) argue that "[s]pace is a continuum, no more than the name we give to the combination of three dimensions, and most of the divisions within it which we acknowledge are of human manufacture". This conceptualisation highlights how humans attribute function and meaning to otherwise neutral spatial dimensions, transforming a generic physical continuum into spaces imbued with purpose, identity, and social significance. For the sake of convenience and functionality, we designate one three-dimensional space as a restaurant, another as a graveyard, or yet another as a park or a courtroom. Beyond these primary designations, we also impose characteristics on spaces, such as defining them as private or public, accessible or restricted, sacred or profane. These distinctions often depend on physical markers such as walls, fences, ribbons, or even subtle indicators like floor colouring or the arrangement of objects within a space.

In artistic practice, particularly within interfacial compositions, such imposed characteristics of space are not only acknowledged but are frequently subverted or redefined. Alison Knowles' *Street Piece* (1962-63) exemplifies this approach by instructing performers to "make something in the street and

give it away." The street, traditionally designated as a public space meant primarily for commuting and characterised by urban anonymity, becomes the setting for an act of creative generosity. By integrating an artistic intervention and the act of giving, Knowles redefines the imposed characteristics of the street. It transitions from a space of utilitarian passage to one of human connection and exchange, challenging its conventional societal purpose and inviting a reimagining of its potential functions.

Similarly, Ken Friedman's *White Bar* (1964) illustrates the imposition of characteristics onto neutral spaces. The score outlines a space described as "a simple room" furnished with bright colours, a plain bar, clear liquors, clean glasses, and a bowl of limes. While the description initially frames the space in neutral terms, the designation of the room as a bar or tavern immediately imposes cultural and societal expectations. This transformation underscores how human constructs, such as the notion of a bar, ascribe specific purposes, behaviours, and identities to otherwise undefined spaces. The flexibility of *White Bar*—whether realised as a performance, installation, photograph, drawing, or other creative interpretations—further demonstrates the fluidity of imposed characteristics, revealing how spaces can shift in meaning depending on the context and imagination of those engaging with them.

The interplay of imposed characteristics is also central to *Activity Time Space VII* (2021). The Space column of this score reads: "on public property," "adjacent to a religious place," and "next to a forbidden space." Each of these values highlights how societal norms and regulations define and differentiate spaces. Public property, by nature accessible to all, contrasts with the restrictive connotations of a forbidden space, which might be off-limits for legal, cultural, or safety reasons. Similarly, the proximity to a religious place introduces behavioural expectations influenced by reverence, decorum, or ritual. By juxtaposing these spatial values, the score interrogates the ways in which we assign and enforce functions and characteristics to spaces, as well as how these designations influence human behaviour and interaction. The performers must navigate these imposed characteristics, exploring their boundaries and intersections in ways that challenge or align with societal conventions.

The deliberate use of imposed characteristics in interfacial compositions reflects a broader inquiry into the dynamics between space, function, and societal constructs. These scores not only critique the ways in which spaces are labeled and bounded but also open avenues for reinterpretation and transformation. By engaging with the imposed characteristics of space, performers are encouraged to question, acknowledge and/or reimagine the relationship between physical environments and the social, cultural, and functional meanings attributed to them. This practice underscores the fluidity of space as both a physical and conceptual entity, inviting participants to explore its possibilities, within or beyond the constraints of imposed definitions.

> ### Subject to Emotional Response

Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* is a seminal philosophical inquiry into the way spaces are experienced, particularly intimate ones, from a phenomenological perspective. Bachelard moves beyond the objective, geometrical understanding of space to delve into how it is subjectively inhabited and imbued with meaning through memory, emotion, and imagination. His work explores how spaces, such as homes, rooms, or nooks, evoke emotional, imaginative, and poetic responses. For example, homes are described as spaces that generate feelings of shelter, intimacy, and belonging. In contrast, spaces such as cellars are associated with unconscious, primitive forces or irrational fears, embodying the darker corners of human psychology. Through his concept of *topophilia*—the emotional attachment and affection we develop toward specific spaces—Bachelard examines how the spaces we inhabit not only shape our lives but also influence our feelings, memories, and language. The emotional resonance of spaces thus becomes an integral part of how we perceive and engage with our surroundings (Bachelard, 1964).

In interfacial score composition, this interplay between space and emotional response offers a rich avenue for exploration. Such scores can engage with the subjective ways performers and audiences interact with spaces, creating frameworks that elicit personal and unique emotional interpretations. By foregrounding the emotional qualities of spaces, interfacial compositions open up possibilities for creative expression and introspection.

Activity Time Space V (2020) exemplifies this approach through its Space column, which includes the values: "somewhere safe," "somewhere boring," and "somewhere cozy." These descriptors are deliberately evocative, aiming to provoke reflection on the emotional and psychological characteristics of different spaces. "Somewhere safe" calls upon performers to consider what spaces in their lives provide comfort, security, or refuge. This might lead them to environments that are physically secure, such as a locked room, or emotionally safe, such as a familiar family setting. Conversely, "somewhere boring" introduces an element of neutrality or monotony, encouraging exploration of spaces that lack stimulation or excitement but may serve as blank canvases for creative intervention. Lastly, "somewhere cozy" evokes warmth, intimacy, and relaxation, inviting performers to connect with spaces that foster a sense of comfort. By engaging with these emotional characteristics, the score encourages performers to transform their subjective responses into the material for artistic practice, whether through performance, installation, or another medium.

Activity Time Space XVII (2022) takes this concept further by incorporating a spectrum of emotional and cognitive engagement with space. The Space column for this score reads: "in a place that evokes

thoughts," "in a place that evokes emotions," and "in a place that evokes emptiness." Each value represents a distinct dimension of human experience, offering a wide range of interpretative possibilities. "In a place that evokes thoughts" invites performers to engage with spaces that stimulate intellectual reflection or curiosity, such as libraries, study rooms, or even abstract spaces like cyberspace. These environments might prompt introspection, dialogue, or critical analysis during the realisation of the score. "In a place that evokes emotions," on the other hand, emphasises spaces that resonate on a deeply personal level, such as those associated with love, loss, joy, or nostalgia. Performers are encouraged to explore how these emotional connections influence their interactions with the space and inform their artistic output. Finally, "in a place that evokes emptiness" challenges performers to confront spaces that are devoid of overt stimuli or meaning, such as barren landscapes, minimalist interiors, or places imbued with feelings of absence or detachment. This value prompts a consideration of how the absence of stimuli can be as evocative as their presence, fostering a meditation on the interplay between space and human perception.

By engaging with the emotional and psychological dimensions of space, these interfacial scores transform otherwise neutral or functional environments into dynamic arenas for personal and collective exploration. They underscore the capacity of space to influence and reflect human emotion, demonstrating the profound ways in which we inhabit and respond to our surroundings. In doing so, they align with Bachelard's insights, reinforcing the notion that space is not merely a physical construct but a deeply subjective experience, rich with imaginative and poetic possibilities.

Secondary

Historical Significance

The historical significance of a site or building often becomes a defining aspect of how it is perceived, understood, and valued. Places are frequently discussed and appreciated in terms of the events that occurred there or the people who lived, worked, or passed through them. This emphasis on history transforms spaces into repositories of memory and meaning, granting them cultural, emotional, and sometimes even sacred significance. Those places deemed most historically significant are often designated as official historical sites, preserved and celebrated as part of a collective heritage. These spaces, imbued with historical weight, allow people to engage with the past in a tangible and often profoundly personal way.

In the context of interfacial score composition, historical significance offers a fertile ground for exploration. By incorporating a place's historical or personal past as an organising principle, scores can invite performers and audiences to reflect on the ways in which history shapes the meaning of space.

This approach fosters a deeper engagement with the layers of memory and experience that define a place, creating opportunities for performances that are both reflective and resonant.

Activity Time Space XI (2022) exemplifies this approach by using a place's historical significance as the basis for its Space column. The three values—"where someone walked for the first time," "where someone walked for the last time," and "where no one has ever walked before"—highlight the temporal and existential dimensions of space. These values encourage performers to consider not only the physical characteristics of a performance space but also its history and symbolism. "Where someone walked for the first time" evokes the beginning of journeys, whether literal or metaphorical, and could reference moments of discovery, birth, or initiation. Conversely, "where someone walked for the last time" speaks to endings, whether associated with departure, loss, or finality. This value invites reflection on the poignancy and gravity of spaces tied to such significant moments. Finally, "where no one has ever walked before" draws attention to the unexplored and the new, emphasising the idea of potentiality and uncharted territory. Together, these values encourage a multifaceted reflection on the relationship between space, history, and human experience.

Activity Time Space XV (2022) offers a more personal approach to the historical significance of space by focusing on individual memories and emotional connections. The Space column for this score reads: "where you have fallen in love," "where you have made love," and "where you have felt loved." These values foreground deeply personal and intimate histories, transforming the performance space into a site of self-reflection and emotional resonance. "Where you have fallen in love" encourages performers to engage with spaces associated with new beginnings, passion, or deep connection, imbuing the performance with a sense of nostalgia or celebration. "Where you have made love" brings a layer of physical and emotional intimacy to the score, inviting performers to consider how spaces shape and are shaped by acts of love and vulnerability. Lastly, "where you have felt loved" emphasises spaces that evoke care, safety, and emotional sustenance, offering a framework for exploring themes of support and belonging.

By focusing on both collective and personal histories, these scores invite performers to consider how the past informs the present and how spaces act as vessels for memory and meaning. They also shed light to the interplay between public and private histories, encouraging performers to navigate the boundaries between the shared and the individual, the monumental and the intimate. In doing so, they not only highlight the historical significance of spaces but also create opportunities for new narratives and interpretations to emerge. These scores align with a broader understanding of space as dynamic and layered, where history becomes an active participant in shaping both performance and perception.

Space as Commodity

The concept of space as a commodity extends beyond its literal buying, selling, or leasing, into metaphorical realms where it becomes something that can be shared, reserved, given, or claimed. This way of discussing space often parallels the metaphorical treatment of time as a commodity, reflecting societal attitudes toward control, allocation, and the distribution of tangible and intangible elements. Common expressions such as "give me some space," "occupying space," and "save some space" illustrate the commodification of space in everyday language. These expressions do not merely denote physical dimensions but encapsulate emotional, psychological, and social dynamics, suggesting space as a resource that can be managed and utilised.

In the realm of interfacial scores, this conceptual framing of space as a commodity becomes a tool for exploring the dynamics of human interaction and creativity. The Space column of *Activity Time Space VII* (2022) employs this metaphorical treatment explicitly, with the values reading: "having space," "giving space," and "claiming space." These phrases can be interpreted both figuratively and literally, allowing performers to explore how the dynamics of possessing, sharing, or asserting space influence their realisation of the score. The act of "having space" might symbolise the privilege or opportunity to act, while "giving space" could entail fostering inclusivity or yielding ground to others. "Claiming space," on the other hand, might emphasise asserting presence or agency, highlighting the societal implications of space allocation and access.

A more literal approach is presented in *Activity Time Space XVI* (2022), which directly references the commodification of physical space. The Space column here reads: "in a space that is being sold or rented," "in a space that is being given for free," and "in a space that cannot be sold or rented." These values probe the performers to consider how spaces are treated in economic and social terms, reflecting their status as commodities with varying degrees of accessibility. Spaces that are sold or rented represent the commercialised aspects of space, emphasising the transactional relationships that dominate much of contemporary life. Conversely, a space that is given for free might symbolise generosity, public access, or communal sharing. Finally, the notion of a space that cannot be sold or rented—such as culturally or historically significant landmarks or sacred sites—invites reflections on the societal and ethical boundaries of commodification, underscoring spaces that are preserved for collective or symbolic purposes rather than monetary gain.

Both pieces illustrate how the commodification of space, whether metaphorical or literal, can serve as a foundation for artistic exploration. By framing space as something that can be "had," "given," or "claimed," or as an entity subjected to economic transactions, these scores engage performers in a

critical dialogue about the socio-cultural dimensions of space. They also challenge performers to navigate the interplay between physical, emotional, and conceptual spaces, fostering a nuanced understanding of space not merely as a neutral or passive backdrop, but as an active and contested site of meaning-making and interaction.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored the principal characteristics of performance through the lens of interfacial scores, unpacking the compositional strategies that inform their creation and realisation. By examining the diverse ways in which activity, time, and space can be articulated in interfacial scores, this research has positioned such scores as a dynamic and versatile framework for artistic exploration. Through the analysis of specific scores by myself and other composers, I have demonstrated how these compositions engage with a broad spectrum of concepts, from the tangible and material to the metaphorical and emotional. The result is a resource that hopefully serves not only as an academic investigation but also as a practical toolbox for the composition, performance, and analysis of interfacial scores by others.

The work presented in this thesis provides a comprehensive framework for engaging with interfacial scores, offering a range of compositional strategies that can be adapted and applied by practitioners across disciplines. By delineating how interfacial scores operate through their interaction with spatial, temporal, and activity-based elements, I have created a modular system that others can use to construct their own scores. For composers and performers alike, the analyses and examples presented here offer a foundation for understanding how scores can mediate the relationship between abstract concepts and tangible performance outcomes.

The study of interfacial scores was driven by several research questions that sought to illuminate the compositional strategies, historical practices, and interpretative possibilities of these works. First, I explored what elements composers of interfacial scores include, given that they do not prescribe particular performance means. This inquiry revealed the critical role of structured components—activities, temporal frameworks, spatial references and conceptual prompts—in providing performers with a creative scaffolding that balances structure with interpretative freedom.

Next, I addressed the language and notational strategies employed in interfacial scores to maintain interpretative flexibility across diverse performance media. This investigation highlighted the importance of open-ended instructions, metaphorical language, and flexible temporal markers in crafting scores that can be interpreted in multiple, sometimes radically different, ways.

A historical perspective further deepened this exploration by examining the development of interfacial scores over the past sixty years. The trajectory of this practice showcased a range of notational innovations that have enabled the multiplicity of interpretations these scores afford. From early experimental works to contemporary approaches, this historical overview demonstrated how interfacial scores have evolved as a distinct and influential compositional practice.

Finally, this thesis sought to systematise the strategies employed in interfacial scores to provide a structured framework for composition, performance, and analysis. The resulting categorisation of primary and secondary compositional strategies offers a practical schema for understanding and utilising the complexities of interfacial scores. By framing these strategies as adaptable tools, I have developed a lexicon that not only aids in the creation of new works but also enriches the critical analysis of existing ones.

While this thesis offers a framework for understanding and utilising interfacial scores, it also represents a starting point for further development of my own compositional practice. The analyses and reflections contained within these pages have deepened my understanding of the interplay between space, time, and activity, and the ways of framing them, and have illuminated new pathways for exploration. Moving forward, I aim to expand upon the concepts introduced here, exploring how interfacial scores can engage with emerging technologies, interdisciplinary practices, and diverse cultural contexts.

One potential avenue for future research lies in the integration of digital and virtual spaces into interfacial scores. As contemporary life becomes increasingly mediated by digital interfaces, the potential for exploring virtual environments as performance spaces offers rich possibilities. This includes investigating how digital tools can be used not only as mediums for realisation but also as active participants in the compositional process. For example, how might augmented reality or artificial intelligence shape the creation and execution of interfacial scores? How can the interactivity and connectivity of digital platforms enhance the collaborative aspects of these works?

Additionally, the cultural and historical dimensions of interfacial scores present fertile ground for further inquiry. By engaging with diverse cultural practices and traditions, I hope to broaden the scope of interfacial scores, exploring how they can be used to interrogate questions of identity, memory, and community. This might involve collaborating with artists from different cultural backgrounds or investigating how interfacial scores can be used as tools for storytelling and social engagement.

Finally, the pedagogical potential of interfacial scores merits further exploration. As a resource for teaching composition and performance, interfacial scores offer a flexible and inclusive approach that encourages experimentation and critical thinking. By developing workshops, publications, or digital platforms based on the methodologies outlined in this thesis, I aim to make interfacial scores accessible to a wider audience, fostering a global community of practitioners who can build upon and adapt these tools for their own creative practices.

This thesis has sought to position interfacial scores as a vital and versatile resource for contemporary artistic practice. By providing a detailed analysis of their characteristics and strategies, I have created a

foundation for others to engage with these works in meaningful and innovative ways. At the same time, this research serves as a stepping stone for the ongoing evolution of my own practice, opening up new possibilities for exploration and collaboration.

In framing activity, time and space as central elements of interfacial scores, this thesis underscores the importance of rethinking traditional notions of performance and composition. Whether engaging with tangible entities, metaphorical constructs, or emotional landscapes, interfacial scores challenge us to reconsider how we experience and interact with the world around us. Through this lens, time and space become not merely a backdrop for action but an active and dynamic participant in the creative process. As such, interfacial scores offer a powerful tool for expanding the boundaries of artistic expression, inviting us to imagine and inhabit new dimensions of possibility.

By addressing the research questions that have guided this study, this thesis has not only examined the compositional, historical, and interpretative dimensions of interfacial scores but also established a foundation for their continued exploration. The mapping of strategies, the historical analyses, and the practical tools offered here form a cohesive framework that empowers others to engage with interfacial scores in new and meaningful ways. Simultaneously, this work serves as a stepping stone for my ongoing compositional journey, pointing toward exciting possibilities for expanding and enriching the practice of interfacial composition in the years to come.

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APPENDIX I - COMPOSITIONS IN PORTFOLIO

GRAMMAR STUDY SERIES

1. *Grammar Study I* (2013)
2. *Grammar Study II* (2013)
3. *Grammar Study III* (2015)

This series explores concepts from Systemic Functional Grammar as compositional strategies. The scores can be performed individually or simultaneously, offering performers an interplay between linguistic theory and artistic interpretation.

4. *Counter Viewpoints II - Porthleve*n (2013-14)

This composition, created as part of the Bath Spa Porthleven Prize, uses scattered letters from the names of organizers, participants, and other key figures from a ten-day residency in Porthleven, Cornwall, as material for the score. Performers can realise these letters using one of five methods outlined in the score's instructions.

5. *Ready Made Word Event* (2014)

Adapting select words and dates from George Brecht's *Word Event* (1961), this piece is dedicated to the experimental music and improvisation ensemble 6daEXIt.

6. *Principia Actionum I* (2014-15)

This composition, commissioned by AUT Open Call: Open Scores 2014 and first performed by Apartment House, consists of an online instructional video, a booklet, and a spreadsheet. It guides performers in creating their own parts inspired by Isaac Newton's three laws of motion.

SAME PAGE SERIES

7. *We are on the same page* (2016)
8. *Let's move on the same page* (2016)
9. *We are on the same music page and it comes from [composer]'s [title]* (2016)
10. *Let's move on the same music page which comes from [composer]'s [title]* (2016)

In the *We are* pieces, performers interpret a page of text or music as a temporal representation, where the spatial arrangement of symbols reflects the progression of time. As they read the page from left to right, selected letters or notes trigger assigned activities, which pause when the symbol disappears and resume upon its reappearance, enabling overlapping activities. In the *Let's move* pieces, the page serves as a spatial map, guiding performers to physically navigate the performance area based on their

interpretation of the layout, executing activities in response to their movements through the mapped space.

11. *A Curious Unfinished Game* (2017)

The score invites performers to engage in a treasure hunt for cards containing performance instructions. Its open-ended approach encourages performers to adapt creatively to their surroundings, making each realisation unique.

12. *Some of Wassily's points of view* (2022)

This performance piece draws on Wassily Kandinsky's *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1911), where performers embody contrasting activities associated with the colours yellow and blue. Yellow signifies warmth and agitation, while blue represents calm and introspection. Performers navigate between these qualities by initiating and receiving calls, reflecting the emotional and spiritual dynamics of colour, as envisioned by Kandinsky.

***ACTIVITY TIME SPACE* SERIES**

13 - 40. *Activity Time Space I-XXVIII* (2019-2023)

The series employs the categorisation of Activity, Time, and Space developed in this thesis. Across its 28 pieces, each of the 14 Time and Space tags appears twice, while the four Activity composition strategies rotate seven times. Each combination of Activity, Time, and Space tags is unique within the series.

***KOAN* SERIES**

41. *Hachiriki* (2024)

42. *the one thousand hands of bodhisattva's compassion*

The *Koan* series (in progress) consists of pieces inspired by Zen Buddhist koans and concepts, incorporating composition strategies developed and discussed in this thesis.

APPENDIX II - STRATEGIES FOR REFERRING TO ACTIVITY, TIME AND SPACE IN INTERFACIAL SCORES

Activity

1. **Unspecified activity**

   do something; some/any action/activity

2. **Numbered unspecified activities**

   activity a, b, c…; 1, 2, 3…

3. **Options of specified activities**

   sound/move/say; mail/email/scream

4. **Abstract words**

   exit; relapse; face; position

Time

PRIMARY TAGS

1. **In relation to something else**

   before the meeting; during the storm; after getting dressed

2. **Abstract reference**

   a time; whenever; some time

SECONDARY TAGS

1. **Duration Defined by Limit**

   I. **Absolute**
   25 seconds; three days

   II. **Relative**
   ten seconds before another activity; for two hours after you have eaten

2. **Duration In Relation to Some Condition**

   I. **Objective**

   until the candle burns out; until someone passes away

   II. **Subjective**
   as soon as you feel bored; long enough

3. **Pace**

    I. **Objective**

    2 sounds per second; metronome; once every 8am

    II. **Subjective**

    very slow; medium pace

4. **Function or Imposed Characteristics**

bedtime; schooldays; lunchtime

5. **Specific Time**

    I. **Once**

    5pm on Friday 6 June, tomorrow

    II. **Recurring**

    every Thursday; on 5pm every day

6. **Subject to Emotional Response**

happy times; good old days; better days ahead

7. **Historical Timeline, Process, and Change**

during my childhood; Roman times; apples will rot

8. **Time as Commodity**

give my some time; do you have time?; he is buying his time

Space

PRIMARY TAGS

1. **In relation to something else/scenery**

next to a tree; by a river; around your cup

2. **Specific location**

on London Bridge; on my bed; in Europe

3. **Defined by limits (distance)**

    I. **Objective**

    3 meters; 9 inches; four light years

    II.   **Subjective**

        over a long distance; close enough

4. **Abstract reference**

    a space; wherever; somewhere

5. **Non material**

    I.   **Digital**

        online; in the Cloud; on YouTube

    II.   **Inner**

        in my heart; in my thoughts; in the friend zone

    III. **Content**

        in a film; in a recording; on the news

    IV. **Opportunity**

        a space for discussion; a window of opportunity

    V.   **Metaphorical spaces**

        in the field of music, within the scope of practice; in the arena of politics

SECONDARY TAGS

1. **Function/imposed characteristics**

    a church; a school; the street

2. **Subject to emotional response**

    happy place; cozy couch; somewhere boring

3. **Historical Significance**

    where a baby cried; where Marx lived; where you met your friend

4. **Space as Commodity**

    you have lots of space; give me some space

APPENDIX III - STRUCTURE OF ACTIVITY TIME SPACE SERIES

ATS	Activity	Time	Space
I	Numbered unspecified activities	Duration - absolute	Specific location
II	Options of specified activities	Duration - relative	Defined by limits - objective
III	Unspecified activity	Pace - subjective	In relation to something else
IV	Abstract words	Abstract reference	Non material - inner
V	Unspecified activity	Specific time - once	Subject to emotional response
VI	Abstract words	Subject to emotional response	Non material - digital
VII	Numbered unspecified activities	Duration - relative to objective condition	Function/imposed characteristics
VIII	Options of specified activities	Specific time - recurring	Commodity
IX	Unspecified activity	Duration - relative to subjective condition	Non material - content
X	Abstract words	Function/imposed characteristics	Abstract reference
XI	Numbered unspecified activities	Commodity	Historical significance
XII	Options of specified activities	In relation to something else	Non material - opportunity
XIII	Options of specified activities	Pace - objective	Non material - metaphoric
XIV	Numbered unspecified activities	Historical timeline	Defined by limits - subjective
XV	Abstract words	In relation to something else	Historical significance
XVI	Unspecified activity	Pace - objective	Commodity
XVII	Abstract words	Historical timeline	Subject to emotional response
XVIII	Options of specified activities	Commodity	Defined by limits - subjective
XIX	Unspecified activity	Duration - relative to objective condition	Non material - opportunity
XX	Numbered unspecified activities	Pace - subjective	Defined by limits - objective
XXI	Abstract words	Duration - absolute	Non material - content

ATS	Activity	Time	Space
XXII	Options of specified activities	Function/imposed characteristics	Function/imposed characteristics
XXIII	Numbered unspecified activities	Abstract reference	Abstract reference
XXIV	Unspecified activity	Duration - relative	Specific location
XXV	Unspecified activity	Subject to emotional response	Non material - metaphoric
XXVI	Numbered unspecified activities	Duration - relative to subjective condition	Non material - digital
XXVII	Options of specified activities	Specific time - once	Non material - inner
XXVIII	Abstract words	Specific time - recurring	In relation to something else