STUDIO/STAGE

ENTANGLING PRIVATE AND PUBLIC CREATIVE SPACES THROUGH INTERDISCIPLINARY COMPOSITION

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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

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ABSTRACT

In this practice-based research project, I have used an autoethnographic approach to investigate the effects of entangling a composer's private and public creative spaces – Studio and Stage, respectively. To do this, I have used documentation of my own composition practice as material in new interdisciplinary works and made my private composition notebooks publicly accessible online.

In defining the spaces of Studio and Stage as centred on the artist and their actions, I suggest that Studio space can be represented by documentation of the artist's actions. This definition has been crucial to my use of documentation to entangle these two spaces. To establish these definitions, I have drawn on theory from multiple disciplines regarding space, place, the everyday, private and public, and I have also investigated the reasons why making private work public so often invokes the emotions of vulnerability and embarrassment. Understanding the sources of these emotions has helped me to develop strategies to build resilience and manage my response to them.

In this research, I propose an original framework for categorising documentation of creative practice that may be encountered as content in musical works. Additionally, my notebook publication project has yielded models for those considering publishing their own composition notebooks: my model of using overwriting in combination with legible text, which supports both the composer's need for privacy while working with written language, and the practicalities of making that work public; and my publication model, which not only makes individual pages from the notebooks available to peruse but also provides filters that bring to the surface information about the development of individual pieces and the composer's broader working habits.

My work demonstrates that aspects of composition practice that are usually hidden may become available to a public audience by entangling the Studio and the Stage. These aspects include timescales, locales, tools, habits, personas and the emotional experiences of composition. It is my hope that this research might contribute to discussions relating to the visibility of composition practice and provide models for composers and composer-performers wishing to engage with this area.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This study was approved by the Bath Spa University Ethics Panel on 17 August 2021. 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).

DATA STATEMENT

No new datasets were created during the study.

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

COLLABORATION STATEMENT

Some of the creative work submitted in the portfolio – *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* and *WALKS 1–4* – was created in collaboration with members of my collectives Bastard Assignments and Kaths Kaff, respectively. However, I am the principal creator of both works.

In *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, I initiated the experiment of using my composition notebooks as graphic scores, I made the decisions about which elements to include, I designed and constructed the virtual reality environment of the work within Mozilla Hubs, and I created new 3D elements in Blender, to my own designs, to use in the environment. The members of Bastard Assignments (including me) performed the improvisations that are heard as audio tracks in each room, contributing their expertise as improvisers. Their voices are also heard discussing the work and the workshop situation in 'The Corridor'. They also agreed to record the 'eyes videos' with mumbled discussion of their own work in progress ('Phyllida Barlow Playground') and the videos of warm-ups ('The Warm-Up Room'), to my specifications.

WALKS 1–4 assigns authorship to Kaths Kaff and is created from documentation provided by three members of the group – Jon England, Katie Hanning and myself. However, while the overarching Walks project was initiated by Katie Hanning and included a suggestion of creating additional works from the materials generated by the group, I initiated the making of these videos and was the lead on the video project to create *WALKS 1–4* and the eight other videos in the series which followed. I chose the form of these pieces, drawing inspiration from the 1-minute video that had been Kaths Kaff's first collaborative endeavour. It was also my idea to create sets of interlocking 1-minute pieces, suitable to be shared both as individual looping videos on Instagram and as a set unified by a continuous score for posting on YouTube or other channels. I undertook the creation of both the videos and soundtrack while seeking input from my colleagues throughout the process. Ultimately, the decisions made about this work were mine, but signed off by the group.

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LIST OF FIGURES

All figures are © Caitlin Rowley, with the exception of Figures 8, 19, 20, 25, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39 and 41, where attribution has been provided in the captions.

LIST OF WORK IN THE PORTFOLIO

This thesis is accompanied by a digital portfolio of creative work developed during the course of my research. This portfolio includes pieces for live performance, video and digital works and a website. Each work's materials are listed in the Portfolio section of this thesis (starting on p. 180) with links to where they may be found in the BathSPAdata online repository. These materials include videos, audio files, scores, a description of each work and other information and media appropriate to the type of work.

The works in the portfolio, in alphabetical order, are:

AIDES MEMOIRE/POV (2017)

c. 9 minutes (*Aides Memoire*), no fixed duration (*POV*)

Aides Memoire is a piece for live performance by four performers with cameras, and tape; *POV* is a video work realised from the photographs produced by the performers during a single performance of *Aides Memoire*.

HAYDN SPACE OPERA (2019–2024)

No fixed duration; however, it can usually be explored in 20–30 minutes

HAYDN SPACE OPERA is a virtual reality environment created from documentation of its creation, based around a set of audio recordings of a workshop where composer-performer group Bastard Assignments experimented with using my composition notebooks as graphic scores in November 2019. It was created in collaboration with the other members of Bastard Assignments.

NOTEBOOK WEBSITE (2019–ONGOING)

The notebook website is the result of a project to publish my composition notebooks online. It exists as a publicly available WordPress website, which contains every volume of my notebooks from 25 March 2019. At the time of first submission (April 2024) this included 24 volumes, and three partial volumes of altered books, which I used as composition notebooks between 2017 and 2019.

QUIET SONGS (2019)

c. 10 minutes

Quiet Songs is a work for live performance by solo performer (viola and voice) and video.

WALKS 1–4 (2020–2021)

4 minutes

WALKS 1–4 is a video work created with members of the Kaths Kaff artists' collective during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns in the UK. The set comprises four 1-minute videos which are designed to fit together to form a single 4-minute work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project could not have been completed without the support and encouragement of a great many people. In particular, my supervisors, James Saunders and Robert Luzar, have been the best supervisory team I could have wished for, providing the perfect combination of expertise. Their knowledge, enthusiasm for my work, and constant encouragement, patience, kindness and sense of humour throughout the nine years of my PhD mean more to me than I can say.

My thanks to all my collaborators: Tim Cape, Edward Henderson and Josh Spear (Bastard Assignments), Jon England and Katie Hanning (Kaths Kaff), who have all contributed not only their feedback, suggestions and skills to my work, but also much-valued friendship and inspiration.

Harry Matthews deserves special thanks – not only for writing *Home and Away Chords* for me, but also for his friendship, company and support as my thesis-writing companion for so many months while we were both writing up.

The artists who so generously responded to my enquiries about their work also deserve thanks: Joanna Bailie, Iris Garrelfs, Neil Hannon, Zubin Kanga, Luke Nickel, Ben Nobuto and Alexander Schubert.

My gratitude also goes to the members of Open Scores Lab; to my readers, Misha Penton and Joshua LeClair; and to the members of the Postgraduate Research Hub Discord server.

Finally, I want to thank my family: my parents, Don and Jan, for being perpetually supportive and encouraging of my work; and, most of all, my partner, John. Throughout these years, he has consistently supported and believed in me. His love, patience and playful humour, as always, have made all the difference.

ABOUT THIS THESIS

Much of my creative work exists in the form of video or audio recordings, and I make reference to numerous pieces of audiovisual documentation throughout this thesis. Where examples will be most effective in an audiovisual format, I have placed a still image as a figure and linked it to the media online.

Such media are marked with a ‘play’ symbol (as seen to the right of this text) in the lower left corner, indicating that they can be clicked to launch a web browser and access the example. The captions will also identify these figures as video examples and denote the URL in the caption.

GLOSSARY

authenticity

An accurate representation of composition or other artistic practice. Authenticity sits in opposition to creating a fictitious image of creative practice. However, awareness of being filmed or recorded may result in the artist feeling some vulnerability, which may shape their actions (possibly unconsciously) towards the performic to a greater or lesser extent. Authenticity is, therefore, a continuum rather than a clear authentic/inauthentic dichotomy.

intention

The intended context for which documentation was created, whether for private or public use.

overwriting

Self-obscuring, illegible handwriting, where each line overlaps the preceding line. In my work, this is a strategy to preserve privacy in my notebooks, in preparation for their being published online.

performic

A term coined by John Hall to '[distinguish] between the two senses of performative [...] – something that is performance-like rather than the carrying out of an act' (Hall, 2013, pp. 156–157).

studio/stage

The places of studio and stage. For example, the room which is designated the artist's studio, or the stage of a concert hall or theatre.

Studio/Stage

The spaces of Studio and Stage. These are both mobile and artist-centred, entangling the artist, their activities and the place in which they are engaging with their work. The Studio settles as an overlay on wherever the artist is undertaking the work of the Studio; the Stage settles as an overlay on

wherever the performer is performing. Broadly speaking, the Studio is a private space, the Stage a public one.

writing-down

Writing-down consists of legible handwriting, often used for note-taking, whether in the form of jotting down sudden ideas, details to remember or taking notes in the margins of (illegible) writing-through. The counterpart of writing-through.

writing-through

Writing-through consists of long-form handwriting, which in my notebooks occurs most often as overwriting. It is therefore usually illegible and frequently coupled with legible notes (writing-down). The counterpart of writing-down.

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

> '[T]he tragedy of music is that it begins with perfection. You can see all the time, while you are looking at a terrific picture, where the artist changes his mind. [...] There's nothing like that in music.'
>
> Morton Feldman, 1976 (in Villars, 2006, p. 69)

The above quote, from an interview with Morton Feldman, has been central to the development of this research project. For me, it draws together several longstanding creative interests: my interest in creative practice and contemporary art, my fascination with studios and notebooks, and my archivist's approach to documenting practice. It also connects with my limited compositional interest in perfection and virtuosity, and my corresponding preference for exploration, amateurism and technical experimentation. Feldman's quote draws out the central intention of my project: to 'bring to the surface' aspects of the composer's practice that are commonly kept private. In this project, I have endeavoured to bring the composer's private 'studio' into a public context – the 'stage' – by using documentation of my creative practice as content in public-facing work, entangling these private and public creative spaces. Feldman's statement raises the possibility of members of the audience for a piece of music being able to assemble an idea of the work that went into making it, simply by watching and listening to it. The example he provides, following this quote, is the still-visible semi-erasure of earlier lines in Mondrian's paintings. For me, this principle of the visibility of practice is tied to two particular encounters with contemporary art: the sideways and upwards 'drips' at the outer edges of some of Mark Rothko's Seagram Murals, which reveal that these paintings' orientation changed at least once while the paint was still wet;[1] and the early portraits of Frank Auerbach, in which the accumulated paint from many sessions of work almost forms a sculpture rather than a painting

1 My attention was drawn to these drips by Carlyle *et al.*'s illuminating chapter analysing the material aspects of Rothko's paintings in the catalogue for Tate Modern's exhibition *Rothko: The Late Series* (Carlyle *et al.*, 2008). An example of one of these paintings is *Black on Maroon* (1959), which can be seen online at https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/rothko-black-on-maroon-t01164 (Accessed 28 March 2024).

of the sitter.[2] It also links with my experience of large retrospective exhibitions of artists' work, where often I am most interested to see the sketchbooks, doodles and early works that provide a hint of how ideas and techniques developed, and it connects deeply with my love of how the artist Anselm Kiefer has hybridised his vast estate-studio La Ribaute in the south of France, so that his artwork appears where it was created and forms its own gallery.

While there are some examples of compositions by others that draw in elements of their creation – and I will discuss these across this thesis – they seem to be relatively few and often difficult to identify clearly, for reasons that I will touch on in Section III: 'Working with documentation'. It is much more common that when experiencing a piece of music there will be little to no indication of the critical decisions and phases of its composition, whether constructive or destructive. Most often, an audience effectively has no opportunity to extract any information from the piece itself about, for example, where it was composed, how long it took or how the composer went about composing it. Perhaps these elements might not be highly valued by many listeners, but some writers make a case for the importance of the context to a work's creation and comprehension. Jean-Jacques Nattiez, for example, contends the following:

> [T]he [musical] work is not merely what we used to call the 'text'; it is not merely a whole composed of 'structures' [...] Rather, the work is also constituted by the procedures that have engendered it (acts of composition), and the procedures to which it gives rise: acts of interpretation and perception.
>
> (Nattiez, 1990, p. ix)

Nattiez's idea of the work encompasses, then, the creative spaces of both studio (composition) and stage (performance and its reception), entangled to become the work. An alternate viewpoint contends that knowing the context of an artwork is important to understanding the work itself (Dewey, 1980, p. 3). This

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2 I first encountered these paintings in 2015–16 at Tate Britain's exhibition of Auerbach's work. An example of this early style of Auerbach's is *Head of Helen Gillespie* (1962-1964), which can be seen online at https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw305005/Helen-Gillespie-Head-of-Helen-Gillespie (Accessed 28 March 2024).

perspective seems to be supported by Pignocchi's 'intentional model', which proposes that our evaluation of an artwork is shaped by the intentions we (either consciously or unconsciously) attribute to the artist in making the work, and that those intentions 'depend on what we know about [the artwork's] context of production' (Pignocchi, 2012, p. 478). Drawing on work from communication theory, Pignocchi suggests that – as with communication between human beings – where an artwork is perceived as having communicative intent, the audience member will try to understand its 'message', assembling information from whatever they already know, or from cues they have access to at the moment of the encounter. Pignocchi's work, therefore, seems to indicate that people are likely to attempt to understand an artwork, whether or not they have any information about it. Pignocchi's examples demonstrate that this can lead to quite different interpretations of the work, affecting the audience's response to it. Considering a parallel perspective of reading ethnography, anthropologist Ruth Behar argues (following ethno-psychiatrist George Devereux) that the ethnographer's personal experience needs to be made available to the reader if that reader is to comprehend their ethnography (1996, p. 6). These viewpoints suggest that there may be value in being able to access at least some aspects of the composer's studio in a musical work as it is experienced by an audience, regardless of whether this is something an audience member might profess (or even think) to seek.

My interest in these often-missing details, however, is more practical. I believe that the fact that the compositional process and the spaces of a work's creation are so often concealed has consequences for how the *work of composition* (rather than the musical work) is understood, particularly by non-composers, and that this in turn has repercussions for how that work is valued and recompensed.

To illustrate these consequences, I offer the results of research undertaken by Sound and Music and the Australian Music Centre (AMC), and by the Musicians' Union (MU). In 2015, Sound and Music and the AMC produced the 'Composer Commissioning Survey Report 2015',[3] compiled from the responses of 456

3 While this report is nearly a decade old at the time of writing, it is nevertheless the most recent survey of its type that I have been able to find for the UK, the primary location for my own work, and its findings still seem to ring true for both the UK and

composers in the UK and Australia to questions relating to practices regarding commissioning contemporary music in those countries. The broad findings of this report were that composers in both countries are routinely underpaid for the work they do – the report describes the average commission fee as 'incredibly low' and states that '[i]t appears that commissioners do not always understand or allow for the time necessary for a composer to make a work, nor the time needed to prepare and rehearse it for its first performance' (Sound and Music and the Australian Music Centre, 2015, p. 3). Many composers, of course, are not even offered a commission. At the time of finalising this chapter (March 2024), the MU website states that 71% of musicians (including composers) have been asked to work for free, with 54% having been asked to work for 'exposure'.[4] The MU estimates that over £5,000 is lost per person per year to unpaid work (Musicians' Union, no date).

Some requests to work for free, for exposure or for a reduced fee may be made with the intention of exploiting the composer for the commissioner's benefit. However, I suggest that other requests of this nature may simply result because there is little way for non-composers – and especially non-musicians – to truly understand the realities of compositional work. So little information about composers' daily lives is accessible, and what is available is so often glossed over, romanticised or the stuff of legend[5] that perhaps widespread misunderstandings about composition practice are not surprising. Even in composer interviews (for example, Ford, 1997; Duckworth, 1999; Banfield, 2003; Palmer, 2015), it is clear that very often details of timescales and how composing fits around the unavoidable requirements and responsibilities of everyday life are skimmed over in favour of aspects such as formative musical experiences and influences. There are reasons why much of this

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Australia as far as I can tell. Unfortunately, as of 2023, Sound and Music do not have any plans to undertake an updated survey.

4 'Work for exposure' is the practice of asking someone to work without pay but with the offer positioned as a potential 'opportunity' for their work to reach a new audience. It is generally considered to be an exploitative practice. See, for example, Wilson, 2018.

5 As a well-known example, the portrayal of Mozart in Peter Schaffer's play and later film, *Amadeus*, shows a composer who is seen to be able simply to write entire symphonies down as complete, error-free works ready to be performed.

material is hidden, as I shall explore in Section II but there are also consequences for its concealment.

My personal experience – especially as an undergraduate student – has also contributed to my interest in this area and influenced how I have approached this project. For many years, I struggled to compose because I had a completely false idea in my head – namely, that composition needed large swathes of time and a dedicated studio in which to work. I also erroneously believed that if I was 'doing it right' ('it' being composing), the ideas would flow effortlessly, and my piece would develop quickly and easily. This flawed concept was accompanied by the corresponding distressing belief that since I rarely experienced this easy flow when I composed, then I must be failing at some part of it, or that I was just not a 'good' composer. Lacking publicly accessible models of how other composers worked on a day-to-day basis, and being too shy at that point to ask any of the experienced composers I knew about their everyday experience of composition, I persisted for a long time in doubting myself, which ultimately led to many years of creative blocks, self-doubt and impostor syndrome.

It is beyond the ambition of my work here to propose ways to correct misunderstandings about the work of composition such as those I have mentioned in this introduction. However, I view my work in this project as an early step in thinking about the ways in which normally private composition practice may start to become visible to others. These include direct means – such as the publication of my composition notebooks – and ways of exploring what can be 'surfaced' in pieces, thereby addressing the lack suggested in Feldman's quote above. I have chosen to use the verb *to surface* in its transitive form rather than the similar verbs *reveal* or *expose,* which might also be considered appropriate for describing the effect of making private things public. 'To bring or raise to the surface' – as the Oxford English Dictionary defines *to surface* (2023) – indicates movement from one area to another. In this research project, the movement is the point, more so than ensuring that composition practice seen by an audience will also be recognised as such by them. My goal is to place these things where they can be seen, not to ensure that they are recognised. My approach in doing this has been to take documentation created in the (ostensibly) private creative space of the studio

(for me, a term which encompasses related workspaces such as notebooks and laptop, as I will make clear in Section II) and make it publicly accessible by putting it on a sort of 'stage', as it were. Sometimes this is a literal stage, as with *Aides Memoire* and *Quiet Songs*, which were created for live performances; at other times, the stage is a metaphorical one, as with the video pieces *WALKS 1–4*, the virtual reality work *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* and my notebook publication project, all of which were designed to be accessed online.

0.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The questions I have aimed to answer in this thesis are as follows:

1. How might entangling the researcher's private and public creative spaces affect her practice? What benefits and drawbacks might be experienced from this?
2. What can documentation of private creative practice contribute or represent when entangled with public-facing work, and what needs to be understood about documenting creative practice to facilitate this?
3. What aspects of the researcher's composition practice may be surfaced through entangling private and public creative spaces?

Question 1 will be addressed across Sections I, II, III and IV, while Question 2 will primarily be considered in Sections III and IV, and Question 3 in Section IV. It is perhaps telling that in my project about entangling private and public spaces, the questions themselves are entwined across multiple sections. As I will explain in the next chapter, there is also a significant entanglement demonstrated within my practice and methodology, merging composition with research, composition with performance, and music with art.

CHAPTER 1 METHODOLOGY

The idea of entanglement is central to this project – in Section II, I position the ideas of place and space, and then those of private and public, as being pairs of

entangled concepts, linked by the everyday. I have come to understand that my creative practice and my research process are similarly entangled. This is, perhaps, not unusual in a practice-based project, but since my practice is the subject of my research, the content of my pieces, and the means by which I have conducted my research, I feel it is important to describe its nature here. This chapter, therefore, will begin by explaining the nature of my creative practice as an iterative, interdisciplinary process centred around language, writing and the different types of writing I use. I will then consider the role played by documentation creation and use, autoethnography and other methods used in this project, including protocol development and making experimental pieces. While I do not feel that this practice-based research project adheres to a particular theoretical framework – it has been driven more by the nature of my practice and the need to understand that practice in order to surface it – I acknowledge that as the project has developed I have found ideas from pragmatism and phenomenology to be useful in developing an understanding of what I have been doing. However, the centrality of experience and experiment in my methodology primarily stems from the central role these play in my composer-performer practice, where I continually test my ideas through performance, making and – particularly – writing.

1.1 THE CENTRAL ROLE OF WRITING

Both the composition and research aspects of my practice are centred around writing, and they find a common hub within my notebooks. Through writing in these books, I capture and process initial concepts, work out which ideas to implement and how, and develop them further after I have begun to realise them. When I am stuck, I write; when things are going well, I write; and once a piece is complete, I continue to write in order to develop my understanding of what I have created and the process of making it. Throughout all this writing, other aspects of my work – reading, note-taking, investigating the work of other composers and artists, and engaging in conversations with colleagues about the work, its context and the ideas it generates – fold into my 'compositional' writing as needed. Writing is also the medium I prefer to produce scores for my work, which are most often text scores (for example, *Aides Memoire/POV*) or at least expressed informally through language (*WALKS 1–4*, which has guiding principles but no formal score).

My work often deprioritises those aspects of music which are so well specified by conventional stave-based musical notation – such as designating precise pitches or rhythms – while placing more emphasis on timbre and structure, which I feel are less well served by a conventional approach. Language is also an important aspect of my work – whether in the form of narration as in *Aides Memoire*, scraps of conversation in *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* ('The Corridor') or utterances that use or resemble language but play with incomprehensibility, such as the layered thinking-out-loud mumbling found in 'Phyllida Barlow Playground' in *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, or the nonsense 'conversation' I have with my viola in *Quiet Songs*.[6]

Robin Nelson posits praxis as resulting from 'an iterative process of "doing-reflecting-reading-articulating-doing"' (2013, p. 32). For my context, this iterative process describes not only how composition folds into research, but also how the process of composition works, regardless of its intended relationship to 'the research'. My practice is characterised by regular returns to writing. I write to begin a train of thought, move away to process and develop that thought through practical means, and then use writing to synthesise that experience and its discoveries in order to determine what my next step will be (see Figure 1).

In my practice, Nelson's 'doing' takes many forms, including drawing, improvising, making objects, making scores, performing – even distracting myself. His 'reading', for me, also includes 'listening' and 'watching' (as important insights are not only found in books, but also in audio recordings, performances and videos). 'Reading' is an ongoing element of the cycle which shapes both 'doing' and 'reflecting'. Both 'doing' and 'reading' sit outside the writing, but are intimately connected to it: I use writing to plan what I will do and digest what I have done, and to take and make notes from the materials I have 'read'. 'Articulating' and 'reflecting', however, most often occur in writing,[7] taking the forms of what I term *writing-down* and *writing-through*.

6 See 3:51 in the performance documentation video of *Quiet Songs*, https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582174.

7 'Reflecting' also sometimes takes the form of some of my 'doing' activities – drawing, improvising and making objects are all sometimes used for reflective purposes, alongside contemplation and simply letting ideas 'sit' to allow further ideas to emerge at some later time. 'Articulating' occasionally occurs verbally, usually as a voice memo taken on my phone.

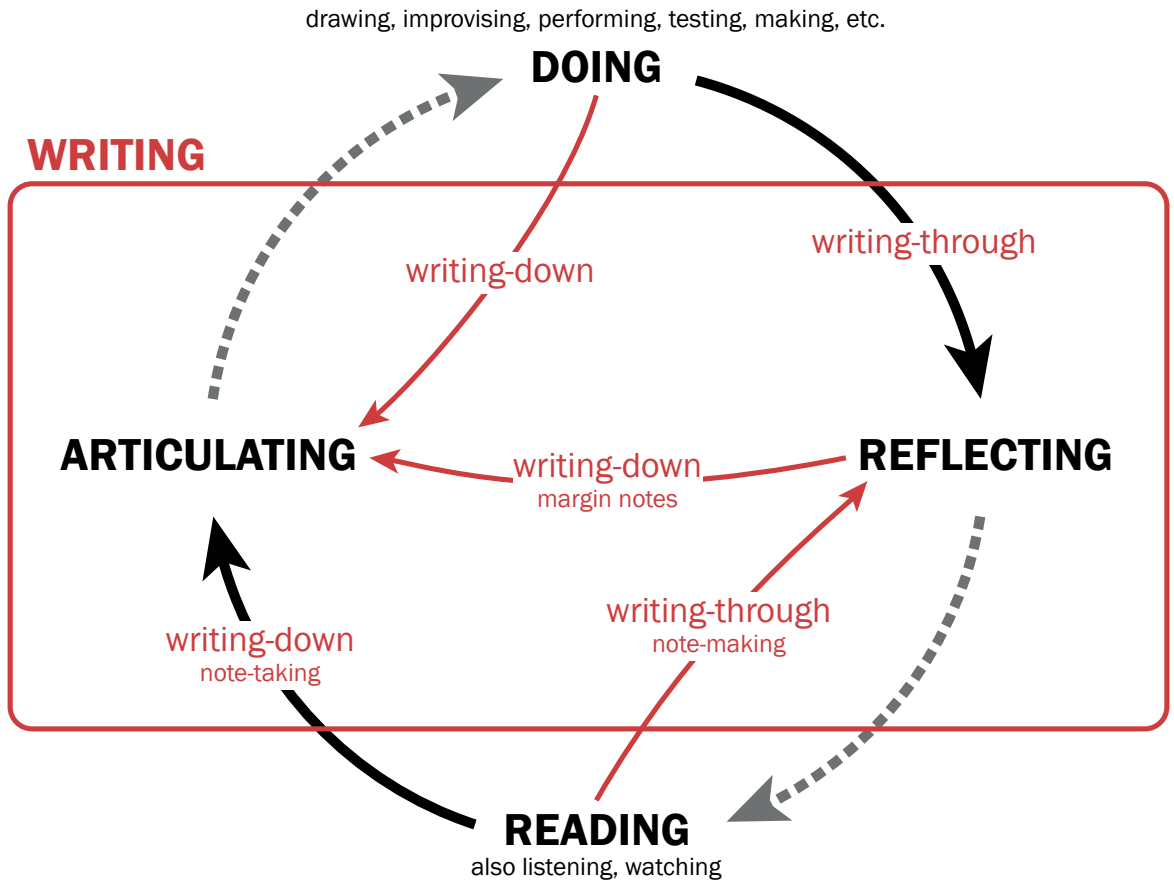

Figure 1. Diagram portraying my practice in alignment with the steps of Nelson's iterative process, showing the position of writing in my practice and the roles that it plays.

WRITING-DOWN, WRITING-THROUGH

When I talk about 'writing' in the context of my practice, I am referring to one of the two types of writing that I regularly work with in my notebooks, which I term 'writing-*down* and 'writing-*through*'. These writing types loosely equate to the 'articulation' and 'reflection' elements in Nelson's iterative process described above, but as they serve particular purposes within my practice and take different forms, I will describe them in some detail here. Of course, I also undertake more formal writing (as in this thesis, but also in conference presentations, articles, and book chapters), but this sits largely aside from the composition process, although it often acts as a prompt to pull together and refine ideas initially generated during the composition/research work, which may then result in new ideas to work with. It may be worth noting that I am the type of person who thinks through writing, though, so formal writing tends to start as a mix of reflection and articulation

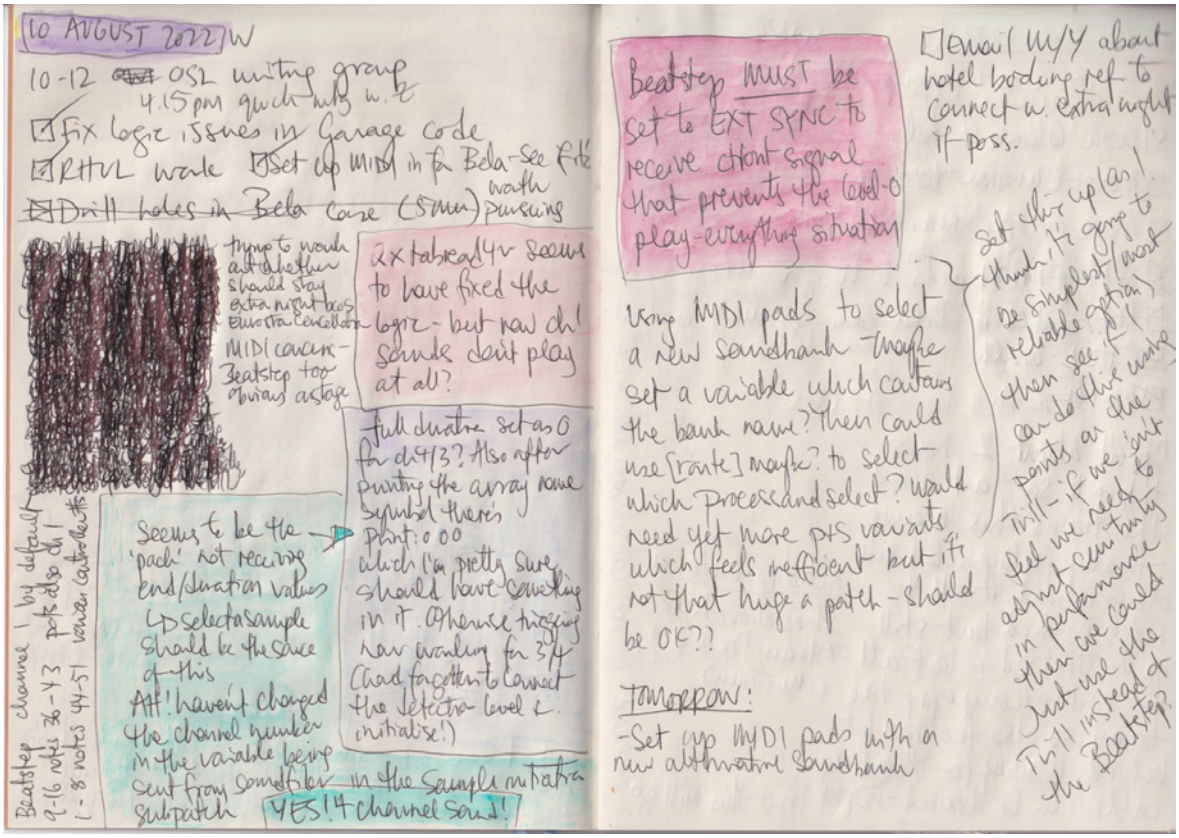

Figure 2. This is a spread from volume 17 of my notebooks, mostly showing writing-down, with a small patch of (illegible) writing-through on the left page, https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29291672.

and also tends to prompt the more intense development of ideas, which have the potential to reshape my thinking, even about completed work. This has happened several times during the writing of this thesis.

Writing-down

The first type of writing I want to discuss here is simply capturing ideas on paper, which I call writing-*down* to differentiate it from writing-*through*, which I will explain next. The main function of writing-down, for me, is to get ideas out of my head once they have reached a certain level of clarity and communicability (see Figure 2). There are two situations in which I use this: one, to capture ideas that have attained a clear form but which might be lost if I tried to keep them in my head; and two, to prevent me from thinking about an idea endlessly, round and round, like a hamster in a wheel, once it has achieved that level of clarity and simply needs to be acted on. The element of clarity and communicability inherent in this type of writing connects it with Nelson's 'articulation' (see Figure 1, above).

Often, the appearance of writing-down in my notebooks indicates a decision made or a course of action committed to, but it also enables the capture of rough concepts (which may be explored further) and fleeting thoughts, written down so they are not forgotten. Writing-down occurs in legible[8] text in my notebooks and is more immediate in its practical application than writing-through.

Writing-through

The second type of writing I use is what I call writing-through, a term which acknowledges this practice's relationship to Freud's concept of 'working-through' (Freud, 1958). As with working-through, writing-through contains within it an aspect of healing mental stresses and blockages or resolving a lack of clarity in my thoughts. This type of writing is exploratory and relates to aspects of automatic writing and stream-of-consciousness writing. When writing-through, I usually write in complete sentences, but do not plan either the form or content of my writing. As such, very often it is rambling and unfocused. When writing-through, I find I often need to write for a relatively long period of time (compared to the immediacy of writing-down) before useful ideas emerge. I use writing-through when I need to clear my head, to examine issues which are perhaps emotional or make me feel vulnerable, and when I have something that I feel I need to understand to be able to move forward. Writing-through is writing in the service of developing clarity and comprehension, and while I feel it relates to Nelson's 'reflection', it is a tool that helps me move from reflection towards 'articulation', which then often prompts 'doing'. In my composition notebooks, most notably in the short series of altered books I used as my principal notebooks between 2017 and 2019, writing-through usually takes the form of *overwriting*. Overwriting is a self-obscuring writing technique where, instead of writing one line separate from the next, each line from the second onwards is written over the top of the line before. The text this produces is therefore illegible (often even to me while I am writing it) (Figure 3), but the illegibility allows me to undertake this freeform thinking on paper in a spatially efficient way. It also enables me to continue to write even when feeling vulnerable, specifically in the context of making this

8 Legible for me, that is – while I try to avoid being too messy in my notebooks, I am aware that sometimes my scrappy scrawls may not be readable by others. This is a factor of the book's use as a working document rather than an attempt to make this type of writing illegible for others.

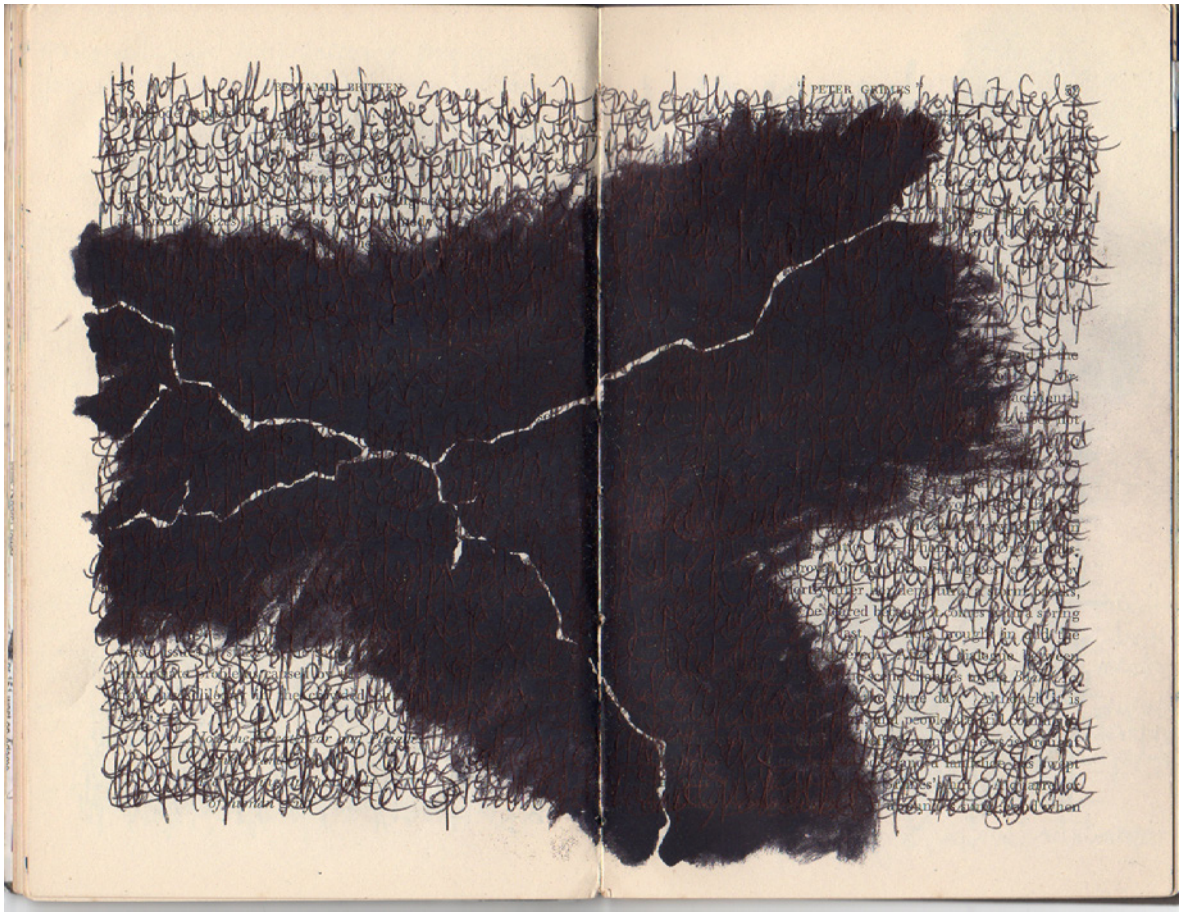

Figure 3. This is an example of writing-through in the form of overwriting combined with drawing in the 'Britten' altered book, https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29291747.

'private' work public, as it has become in the composition notebook publication project. I discuss how I began to use overwriting in this project in Chapter 8.

Writing-through often serves an additional purpose in my notebooks. Because overwriting renders language incomprehensible and unidentifiable, text produced using this technique is abstracted, becoming a textural rather than a textual element on the page. In this form, it offers different information to that which was contained in the words used to create it. The density of the lines, the deformation of the paper when the pen has pressed hard upon it and the amount of page covered, hint at information such as the volume of writing undertaken; the amount of time, perhaps, spent on writing; and even sometimes a sense of the emotional state of the writer. The abstraction of language into texture has also led me to use it as a ground for drawing or collage (as in Figure 3), where I have found it useful in

serving a role in reflecting on concepts such as layering, hiding and revealing, and the relationship between past and present in my work.

Combining writing-down and writing-through

The two forms of writing meet in the notes which regularly appear in the margins of the pages of my composition notebooks (see Figure 4). Ideas which have surfaced through the writing-through are written down to capture them in a legible format which I can refer to and use as the work progresses. These notes are a marker of the clarifying role that writing-through has in my process. They indicate how practical action and clarity of concept emerge from the mass of words generated by my need to think through writing.

This writing-centred approach to composition emerged over several years of needing to adapt my practice to an ever-increasing amount of travel, especially in relation to my career as a composer-performer. The shifting backwards and forwards between writing and practical action that is represented in Figure 1 (p. 9) is relevant to the subject matter of this thesis because it usually

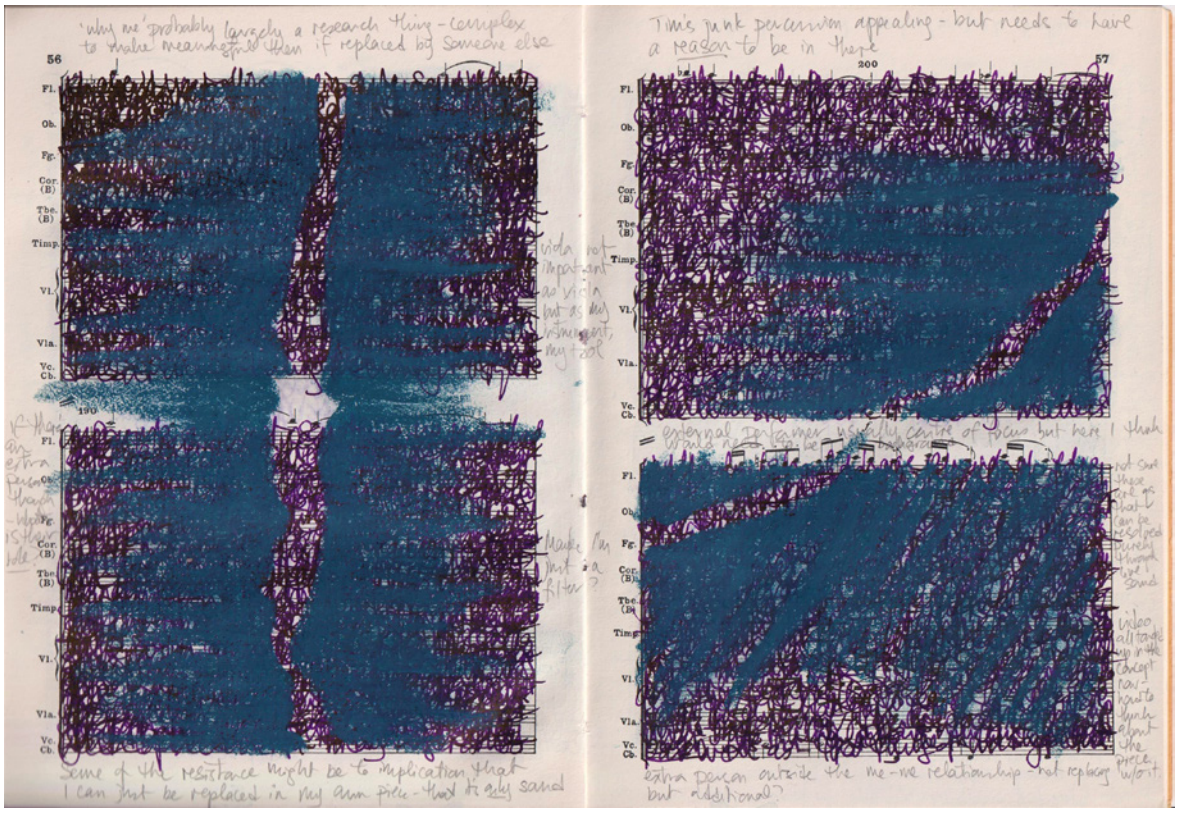

Figure 4. This image shows writing-through in the 'Haydn' altered book, annotated with written-down notes in the margins, https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29291771.

represents a shift between spaces. I move from notebook (writing) to studio (making or improvising), from notebook to park bench (contemplating, reflecting), from notebook to rehearsal space (enacting, improvising, testing, discussing with others) and from notebook to laptop (video or audio editing, graphics or score creation, or yet more writing). Even the notebook work itself occurs in a variety of locations – perhaps at home, but maybe on a train, in a café, in a hotel room or in a library. Sometimes the notebook work takes place in the same location as the other types of work just mentioned – rehearsal rooms or studios, for example – but with a change of focus. The type of work I undertake is shaped by the circumstances I find myself in as much as the needs of the current project. I will discuss these ideas in more detail in Section II: 'The studio is not (just) a room'.

1.2 DOCUMENTATION

Making and using documentation of my creative practice has been central to this project. As well as providing material to use in my compositions, it has been vital for reflecting on the implications of my artistic and research choices, identifying significant elements of my working process and pieces which might not have been apparent at the time of documenting, and tracking the development of my work. I will delve more deeply into the issues surrounding documentation – especially those of intention, commitment to authenticity and the use of documentation after creation – in Section III: 'Working with documentation'. Here, however, I will outline how documenting my creative practice, and my later review and use of that documentation, has aided reflection on my practice and developed my research.

MAKING DOCUMENTATION

Creating documentation is a knowledge-making process (Pink, 2013, p. 1). With every act of documentation, decisions must be made to select a medium, set it up and begin the capture, and each of these decisions requires a certain thoughtfulness – however cursory – about what is to be captured and why. The question of what medium to use and how to use it is never a neutral one – my experiences documenting my practice then revisiting and reflecting on the results have demonstrated this principle to me time and time again across this project. A thoughtless choice of medium could even prove detrimental to the research being

undertaken. For example, participants' awareness of being filmed may shape their actions away from a desired natural response and towards performance (Gregory, 2020), or actions may be repeated (essentially, performed) to capture them on camera (Garrett and Hawkins, 2015, p. 144).

In this project, I have used a wide range of media to document my creative practice, which I feel has been important for developing my understanding of documentation as it pertains to my research. My choices of media have been based on circumstances, availability, the type of work to be documented, and curiosity about what a different medium might reveal. The writing that I discussed earlier in this chapter is one such medium, both in its writing-down and writing-through forms. I also keep a research journal (sometimes handwritten, sometimes typed) and have used the voice memo function on my phone at times when it has been impractical to stop, sit down and write about an idea. Other media I have used to document my work include:

- video
- audio
- photography
- drawing
- collage
- diagramming
- taking screenshots or screen recording videos for digital work, and
- file versioning.

Each medium has contributed a unique perspective on the practice it captured and to my thoughts about documentation in general. My choices have often been linked to the technologies I had access to at the time, and even that access might depend on factors relating both to the devices themselves and my circumstances and/or requirements. For example, most of my video documentation has been captured either on:

- my DSLR camera (high-quality lens, full HD size image, 12 minutes maximum recording duration, bulky and a bit heavy to carry), or

- my compact camera (reasonable-quality lens, HD size image, can film up to an hour, small size and fairly lightweight), or
- my phone (good-quality lens, up to 4K image size, maximum duration dependent on available disk space, no additional weight or bulk to consider because it is always with me).

Each device produces a different result and offers different challenges. None of them is the 'perfect' option for me in all circumstances, and so I have found that the choice of which to use is often based on a series of questions about practicalities: 'Am I in the studio, or travelling to where I will document work?', 'How much other equipment do I need to carry with me (laptop, instruments, etc.)?', 'Do I anticipate needing to film a long session or only short segments?', 'How important is it to have high-quality footage of this work?', as well as 'Did I remember to charge the battery?' and 'How much storage space is currently available on each device?'. The chosen device often sits at the intersection of several of these questions.

While video, audio and photography are widely used to document practice research, media such as drawing and collage may be less commonly encountered as documentation of musical practices. For these activities, I consider there to be a slightly different operation at work because what may be deemed the 'documentation' that can be preserved and examined after the activity is over might be considered a by-product of the working process. The activity of drawing or collaging is often the work itself in my practice (as is the writing I have already described, and the same might frequently be said of my use of diagramming), while the resulting object (physical or digital) of a drawing or collage forms documentation of the process which created it. Following Matthew Reason's proposed 'theoretical archive of detritus' (Reason, 2003, p. 88), which suggests that the detritus remaining onstage after a performance could be considered to be documentation of that performance, such by-products – including those which might otherwise be viewed as rubbish – might similarly be interpreted as documenting the work which created them.

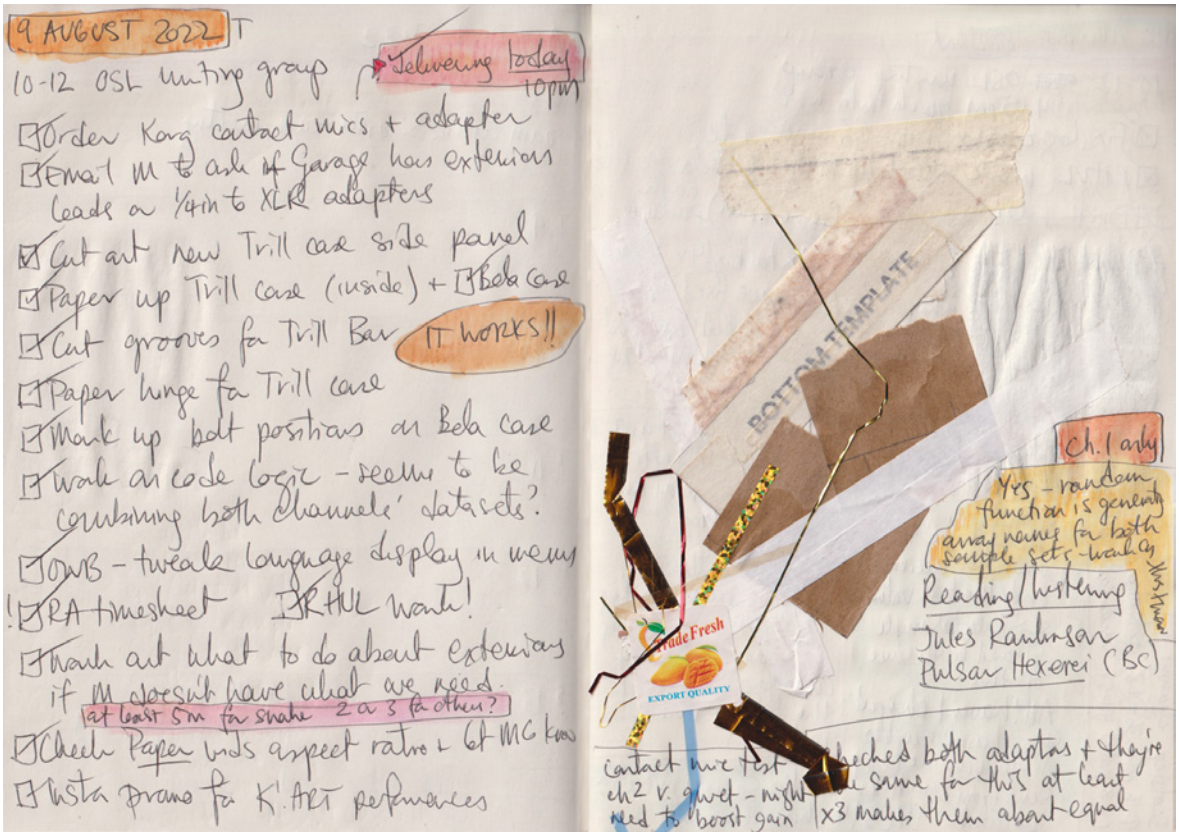

Figure 5. Spread from volume 17 of my notebooks, showing an example of a studio floor collage (right) incorporating discarded paper templates and tape from constructing a case to hold a Bela Trill Bar touch sensor for use in *From the Exquisite Dark*, along with other found scraps. The left page gives context for the collage, with completed tasks relating to making the case, https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29291786.

My 'studio floor collages' (Figure 5) emerged as a way to capture some of the detritus of my work, brought to my attention while cleaning my studio. While tidying up, I gathered numerous scraps of paper, thread, tape and the like from the floor, left over from composing, sewing, and other activities. Collaging this debris roughly into my notebook became a way to consciously engage with the materials and the activities they represented, contextualising this work within the flow of dates in the book. Handling and manipulating these materials prompted reflection on the activities and circumstances of their creation; placing them in relation to one another became a way to think about relationships between the varying types of work I do in my studio. Each collage became a way to preserve that thoughtful work in a manner which is meaningful to me, even if likely somewhat opaque to others.

Sometimes the tools I have used for documenting have prompted new ideas. When undertaking digital work, for example, my software tools for capturing screenshots and screen videos automatically name the files they output with the date and time of the capture. This has proved to be very useful for ascertaining the order in which changes occurred and has influenced my attempts to maintain a rigorous approach to titling other documentation files to communicate a timeline of activity. File versioning[9] has been similarly useful for documenting scores or video parts in development. Technological problems have also resulted in insights about documentation. The initial sessions in Mozilla Hubs with Bastard Assignments, while digital, were captured on my phone because my ailing Macbook Pro could not handle making a screen recording while dealing with the processing requirements of the Hubs environment. These videos captured not only what was onscreen at the time, but also the surrounding computer hardware. Revisiting these pieces of documentation later, after that computer had been replaced with a Windows laptop, helped me to realise how later screen captures – which did not show the physical computer – nevertheless revealed the different operating system I was using. These realisations shaped my thinking about how to frame screen captures and what additional information about creative practice may be implicit in the details of a piece of documentation, even if not the focus of it, or perhaps not even intended to be included.

I feel that it is important to note that most of my work has been documented in more than one medium. My primary media for documentation have been – as already discussed – writing and video. At the very least I would write about the work before and after it was undertaken, and I would often video it while it was happening and sometimes capture audio too. I may, additionally, have taken a photo of a physical setup, or the rehearsal room,[10] or set two forms of documentation capture running simultaneously.

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9 Usually by manual duplication and editing of filenames to add version information in this project, although towards the end of the project I began to experiment with versioning tools such as Git to try to develop a more reliable versioning workflow.

10 Many of these photographs made their way into the notebooks, which provides additional context, rather than those images just being a file in a folder of documentation.

My experiences creating documentation via these different media refined my understanding of what documentation is or can be, what it might show – what it might even reveal that had not been specifically intended by its creator – and how individual pieces of documentation could combine to provide a richer image of practice than a single piece on its own. I will discuss this last idea in more depth in Section IV, 'Surfacing practice through entanglement'.

REVIEWING AND USING DOCUMENTATION

However, creating documentation is only half of the knowledge-making process, the other half being reviewing and using that documentation. In practice-based research, documentation is commonly created and used to 'assist in articulating and evidencing the research inquiry' (Nelson, 2013, p. 90) and to support claims made about the practice undertaken (Nimkulrat, 2007). Certainly, this has been an important role for the documentation I have made of my practice. At certain points in this thesis, I have drawn in examples from that documentation, used quotes from my research journal, and been able to refer to my documentation to fact-check my own memories while writing to ensure an accurate recounting of when significant steps were made or how I felt about them at the time. However, I have experienced additional research benefits from reviewing and using the documentation I have created throughout this project.

Firstly, much of the video documentation I have captured has served an immediate compositional purpose. I review such footage to view my actions 'from the outside' – that is, from the audience's perspective – when improvising or performing. Incorporating documentation into my composition process supports my critical thinking about the work I am making and helps me to assess my previous decisions about a piece, and determine its future direction. I have used video documentation in this way for many years – both on my own and in group work with Bastard Assignments. This approach supports my research by integrating research-relevant documentation creation, review and reflection into the composition process, as well as providing material which could later be used directly in a piece of music.

Secondly, once documentation of creative practice has been captured, it may be used to create secondary documentation which reflects on or interprets earlier

work to provide a different perspective. As my work on this project has progressed, I have realised that documentation may be created at multiple points, not only while the work is happening. In particular, secondary documentation of my practice is often created well after the work session(s) it relates to. The studio floor collages I described above are a form of secondary documentation, and have creation dates ranging from the same day (as in the collage in Figure 5 on p. 17) to weeks after the initial work which created the detritus used in them.

The most extensive exercise in documentation review and use that I undertook during this project was the creation of the 48 episodes of my composition vlog (see Appendix 1), which I produced regularly from 2017 until pressures in the early COVID-19 pandemic led me to halt production in 2020. In my practice, video blogging ('vlogging') is secondary documentation which uses performance (my filmed commentary) and composition (video editing and the selection and integration of previously created documentation materials) to document two to three weeks' worth of composition activity, rather than a single session. My schedule for producing episodes provided a small amount of temporal 'padding', giving me a little distance from the work sessions I was reporting on by the time I was recording and editing the episode. This slight delay tended to provide me with a different perspective on the work than when I had initially documented it, especially for material that I had experienced a charged emotional response to at the time. I would often find that my thoughts about the work had changed by the time I filmed the vlog. Whether I loved or hated what I had done, vlogging a week or two later meant that while I could still recall my initial reactions, I could also reconsider the work with a slightly cooler head: perhaps that experiment was not pointless and awful but contained a kernel of something useful; maybe a tweak would make a good experiment even better.

The nature of vlogging is regular, repetitive and public-focused, each aspect of which benefited me in my research. The regularity and repetition of episodes demanded that I review my new documentation materials on a regular basis and within a restricted timeframe. This meant that I closely inspected my documentation in manageable amounts, rather than trying to examine a vast amount of material only at the end of the project. Information that might

otherwise have become buried and forgotten in a folder full of files could be extracted and recorded quite easily. For example, when a collaborator's comment in a workshop resulted in a new experiment, I would be reminded of this when reviewing the video documentation, and could mention it in the vlog. Credit could be given where it was due, a collaborative moment in my work could be highlighted, and that information would be captured where I would be able to find it later. The public-facing aspect of vlogging required me to make sense of my documentation and workflow for others – to make my ideas and actions 'explicit, accessible and communicable' (Scrivener, in Mäkelä and Nimkulrat, 2018, p. 2). This encouraged me to document broad changes of artistic direction, synergies between pieces being worked on concurrently and fallow periods in the vlog, outlining the trajectory of the work along with the context in which it was developing.

Some insights communicated in vlog episodes only became apparent to me through the process of making those episodes: reviewing the documentation, identifying the best segments to succinctly convey the point I wanted to make about a piece's development, and improvising the commentary[11] to draw everything together. The vlog episodes provided a condensed record of my overall thinking and work over a short period of time, and served as an index to the vast mass of raw documentation files I was accumulating, making it easier to identify where to look for specific examples while I was writing this thesis.

These varied ways of documenting my practice have been central to my research on this project. Using the means at my disposal, I have captured as much of my entangled composition and research process as has felt practical without disrupting that work, and developed a workflow for regularly reviewing and using the documentation I generate. The reflection inherent in secondary documentation forms such as the vlog might be considered to introduce an autoethnographical element into the documentation itself, through the processes of review, selection and use of existing documentation and its contextualisation via commentary.

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11 My commentary in every episode except the first was unscripted. Instead, I improvised my way through it, using bullet points of key moments and concepts drawn from the notes in my notebooks.

1.3 AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

With my own practice[12] being the focus of my research, and with the attendant examination of my own studio(s), studio practices and emotional responses, it was perhaps inevitable that autoethnography became a core method for this research project. Ellis, Adams and Bochner define autoethnography as 'an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)' (2011, p. 273). Understanding my own reactions to the work I have been doing has been equally as important as the actions that allow that work to progress. The insights yielded by my autoethnographic approach have helped me to understand what types of situations prompt a sense of vulnerability in me and my instinctual responses to vulnerability, allowing me to query these and test different approaches. While working in a field where I am exposing, at least to a degree, activities that would normally happen in a private zone, autoethnography has permitted me to access aspects of private and everyday experience which I might not be able to discover were my research focused on other people's experience rather than my own. Revealing the private thoughts and experiments of the studio renders the artist vulnerable (as I will discuss in Chapter 4), and so to ask others to do this raises ethical questions and limits what I can know about others to what they are willing to tell me. For my own part, I have been discussing work in progress and artistic risk-taking in public for over a decade at the time of writing. This has given me a slightly muted sense of privacy, perhaps, and developed my opinions of the value that I feel my work may have for others, to be balanced with my sense of personal vulnerability. Working autoethnographically means that I can use this extensive experience and I can question and articulate where my own boundaries lie in ways which would likely have been uncomfortable for other people, possibly leading them to dissemble and hide valuable insights.

12 While much of my work is undertaken in collaboration with others, and two of the pieces in the portfolio – *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* and *WALKS 1–4* – were created this way, this project focuses on the individual composer-performer and does not specifically investigate more social versions of the studio, collaborative practices or ways in which group working practices may be surfaced.

Autoethnography is not without its challenges and criticisms, however, and these sometimes intersect with the criticisms of artistic research or practice-based research. Darla Crispin writes that the 'objective/subjective paradox is particularly acute in artistic research, where researcher/practitioners must constantly balance the unique and personal with the shared and replicable' (2019). This objective/subjective paradox is a significant challenge for autoethnography, which has been subject to criticisms of being 'self-indulgent, narcissistic, introspective and individualised' and 'therapeutic rather than analytic' (Atkinson, 1997 and Coffey, 1999 referenced in Méndez, 2013, pp. 283–284). Méndez clarifies, however, that autoethnography 'is not just writing about oneself, it is about being critical about personal experiences in the development of the research being undertaken, or about experiences of the topic being investigated' (2013, p. 281).

Throughout this project, I have tried to prioritise this type of self-critical approach to personal experience, attempting to continually challenge the reasons behind my choices. For example, while aesthetics have played a part in my selection of material to use in compositions, I have tried to do this in balance with a set of research principles, engaging with material which I felt was aesthetically compromised in some way if the alternative would be to compromise my research principles.

1.4 RESEARCH PRINCIPLES

In the first half of the project, I developed certain principles, or perhaps 'protocols' or 'rules of conduct' (Gray and Malins, 2004, p. 18), which have shaped my approach in broad terms:

1. The (compositional) needs of the piece are more important than how comfortable or uncomfortable I am with the material being used.
2. Never remake something just because it doesn't present me, my skills or my practice in the best light.
3. Find the interest in imperfection wherever possible.
4. Consider how my choices may affect others.

I will discuss 1, 2 and 3 in more detail in Chapter 9, where I discuss productive limitations and working with uncomfortable documentation. Principle 4, considering how my choices affect others, was of particular importance for the notebook publication project, in which the material I was posting online could have infringed on other people's right to privacy. This principle led me to establish habits such as using initials instead of full names and blurring some photographs on publication.

1.5 OTHER METHODS

Apart from documentation, autoethnography, extensive writing as writing-through and writing-down, and the establishment of research principles which have guided my decision-making, other methods I have used in this project include:

- the creation of new compositions
- improvising
- drawing
- discussion with others, especially the groups I regularly work with – Bastard Assignments,[13] Kaths Kaff[14] and Open Scores Lab[15]
- computer programming using PHP[16] and the WordPress website platform
- video blogging.

13 Bastard Assignments is a group of four composer-performers: Tim Cape, Edward Henderson, Caitlin Rowley and Josh Spear. We have worked together for over ten years, developing a collaborative practice through which we create, perform and produce events. For more information, see https://bastardassignments.com.

14 Kaths Kaff is a collective of artists working in a range of disciplines including fine art, music, sound and performance. Its core membership is a group of artists who met at the Porthleven Prize residency in March 2020 – Jon England, Katie Hanning, Ashley Pegram, Caitlin Rowley and Ceri Shaw.

15 Open Scores Lab is a research group at Bath Spa University, led by Professor James Saunders, that I have been a member of since 2016. For more information, see https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/research-and-enterprise/research-centres/music-and-performing-arts-research/open-scores-lab/.

16 PHP is an open-source programming language. It is the language used to programme WordPress templates and plug-ins.

The compositions presented in the portfolio – *Aides Memoire/POV*, *Quiet Songs*, *WALKS 1–4* and *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* – all incorporate documentation of practice in some way. Creating these has, in every case, provided new ways to think about documentation, the process of creating it, and the entanglement of private and public creative spaces. Working on other compositions such as 'Floor Piece', *Whitespace*, *Studio: Composer's Own* (all mentioned in this thesis) and others involved experimenting with a range of approaches, developing my ideas and helping to narrow my research focus. Improvisation is an integral part of my composition process, and has been particularly useful in this project as a way of developing material for a piece that would simultaneously provide (usually) some aesthetically interesting documentation to use in my compositions.

Drawing is often a way for me to reflect on complex concepts and explore ways of thinking about my work that differ from my usual standby of writing. For example, across 2018 and 2019, I created a series of drawings of cracks (in pavements, tree stumps, rocks and so on) in my altered books (see Figure 3, p. 12). This was a way for me to think around ideas of showing and hiding, past and present, public and private. Making these drawings was instrumental in developing some of these concepts for my research. The resulting drawings (which, as I mentioned in 1.2, 'Documentation', I consider to document the activity of drawing) have then sometimes been incorporated into other work, where they have helped to expand my ideas further. Several of the crack drawings were used as graphic scores for *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, ultimately becoming part of the virtual reality environment of the piece, as I will discuss in detail in Chapter 8, 'Multiple intentions, shifting intentions and multivalence'.

Much of my work is collaborative, and it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge that discussion with the various groups I work with regularly has often been instrumental in reaching moments of breakthrough in pieces or for providing an insight which can unlock a whole new area or way of thinking about my research.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, my notebooks are central to my composition and research practice, so perhaps it is not surprising that the notebook publication website – in conjunction with the vlog, the benefits of which I have already

discussed in 1.2, ‘Documentation’ – has formed a backbone for everything else in the project. Both these projects have allowed for a different sense of aesthetic responsibility to an audience than creating pieces, providing new ways to think about how I produce and use documentation of (and in) my practice. However, employing my skills from my former career as a web interface developer has enabled the notebook website to be more than just a way for other people to see my books. Programming has allowed me to develop a number of ways to view what has become an enormous set of images, drawing information out of what would otherwise be a confusing and not particularly useful collection. It has also allowed me to develop a way to observe patterns within the dataset, through the ‘Piece Maps’ view, which has provided me with a more thorough understanding of my own practice. I discuss the programmed views of the notebook website in more detail in 11.2, ‘Contexts that hinder the visibility of practice’.

All these methods have offered ideas and insights that have developed my thinking about this project. As I described earlier in this chapter, and illustrated with Nelson’s iterative process (Figure 1, p. 9), ideas and work shuttle between the elements of ‘doing’, ‘reflecting’ and ‘articulating’, with contributions from ‘reading’ being drawn in as appropriate. The notebooks sit at the heart of my methodology, as they do my composition practice, and are the place where doing and reading become reflection, reflection becomes articulation, where ideas to put into practice are captured to ensure the cycle continues.

CHAPTER 2 STRUCTURE

The structure of this thesis intertwines – even entangles – literature and theory with the examination of creative work produced across the project. The theory for my work has drawn on a range of fields including music, contemporary art, sociology, geography, performance and gender studies to establish several substantial and intersecting fields of inquiry. My rationale for this entangled structure is that I found that I was able to write more clearly and succinctly about the theory and the literature which informed it when I could directly connect that theory to the work I had produced. Consequently, many chapters of this thesis

include elements of both literature and theory while also examining my practical creative work.

I have divided the text into five sections, each comprising several chapters. After the section you are now reading, Section II: 'The studio is not (just) a room' takes a somewhat autobiographical approach to outlining the underpinning concepts of this project. As my work engages with three very large and cross-disciplinary fields of study – place and space, private and public, and the everyday – I have focused on relating each of these fields to my understanding and interpretation of 'the studio' in my work. In Chapter 3, I examine the idea of the studio as a place before moving to establish a concept of Studio space which is artist-centred and mobile, an entanglement of the artist, their actions and the place in which they are engaging with their work. To establish this definition of Studio space, I draw on literature from the fine arts, combining this with definitions of place and space from geography, cultural theory, sociology and experimental literature. Chapter 4 investigates the entangled notions of private, public and the everyday and establishes a parallel definition for the stage as both place and space. In considering the relationship between private and public, I also explain how vulnerability may result when our human preference to present a 'perfect' persona to others may be threatened by making public what is usually private – such as an artist's work in progress. Across these two chapters are three 'in practice' sections, in which I present examples of early work from this project. These pieces demonstrate my developing understanding of 'the studio' and how this has enabled the evolution of my creative practice. The last of these sections, 4.1 'In practice: Becoming a composer-performer', additionally includes a brief examination of composer-performer practice and how it relates to my work.

Section III: 'Working with documentation' begins (Chapter 6) by considering the nature of documentation and some key ideas debated in this area, establishing a distinction between documentation of performance and documentation of practice, which are likely to be created with different audiences and uses in mind. The role of decision-making when creating documentation of creative practice is then discussed in Chapter 7, with particular attention paid to the creator's intention for how documentation will be used and the level of authenticity it may (or may

not) commit to. I propose a framework of types of documentation of practice which may be found within musical works, based on these ideas of intention and authenticity, demonstrating each type with examples from the work of others and my own pieces. While the framework may seem straightforward, in Chapter 8, I stress the importance of acknowledging inherent ambiguities, shifting intentions during and after documentation creation, and the possibility of multivalence, where documentation created for one purpose may take on additional roles and meanings as it is used. Finally, in Chapter 9, I introduce the idea of possibilities for working with documentation after its creation which may assist the composer to manage feelings of vulnerability that might be prompted by working with material that feels flawed. Starting with a case study on factors contributing to vulnerability when working with documentation, I suggest some strategies that I have found useful for managing vulnerability in this after-creation phase.

Section IV: 'Surfacing practice through entanglement' begins, in Chapter 11, with an examination of the importance of context and its possible implications for the visibility of surfaced practice when entangling documentation of private creative spaces in public-facing musical works. This chapter contains an explanation of the effect of accumulating documentation and a description of techniques which may be needed to draw meaning out of a mass of information, using my notebook website as an example. The following chapter (Chapter 12) draws out the elements of my practice which have been surfaced in the portfolio works, looking at time and space, tools and practices, personas and emotional experiences, and the everyday.

I conclude this thesis (Section V) with a summary of my research and findings, a consideration of avenues which might productively be pursued in further research, and a final reflection on the project as a whole.

SECTION II: THE STUDIO IS NOT (JUST) A ROOM

In this section, I present an overview of relevant literature, interspersed with 'in practice' examples of my early pieces from this research project. This section aims to position the creative space of the studio as something formed from an artist's everyday actions and decisions. While often considered to be a private space, I suggest that the studio can nevertheless be entangled with public space through the capture and use of documentation of the artist and her everyday actions as she goes about her work. I examine my developing understanding of the 'studio' – from being a place (often a designated room) to becoming a space which entangles the artist, her actions and the place she is in (Chapter 3). In Chapter 4, I expand on this understanding of the studio to consider how the studio is the artist's everyday and consider the related entangled concepts of 'private' and 'public'. I also examine the reasons why making normally private work public is closely linked with feelings of vulnerability.[17]

The 'in practice' segments demonstrate my developing understanding of 'the studio' through practical creative work, highlight questions that arose through practice-based research which pushed that understanding further, and explore how my practice has changed in response to my changing understanding of these concepts of the studio, place and space, private and public, and the everyday.

To begin, however, I want to establish some alignments in the terminology, both in the title and throughout this thesis. While acknowledging a gross generalisation in doing so, I have nevertheless found it useful to align the concept of 'studio' with 'private space' and that of 'stage' with 'public space'. The reality is far more complex than these simplistic equations – as I shall show in this section – yet they continue to be useful for me, as they are representative of perhaps 'pure' or ideal states of privacy and publicity, which I have found to rarely exist in practice. I will draw connections between these pairs in Chapter 4, in particular.

17 More detail on what may prompt such vulnerability and how I have managed these prompts and feelings can be found in Chapter 9, 'Possibility and vulnerability'.

CHAPTER 3 PLACE AND SPACE: THE ROOM AND THE ARTIST

In this chapter, I propose an understanding of the studio being centred on the artist and their practice, and that this studio space exists as an intangible overlay on a physical or digital place. I begin by examining what it means when the studio is considered to be a place, drawing together definitions of the studio from fine art sources and Michel de Certeau's definition of 'place'. A brief 'in practice' interlude (3.2, 'In practice: The uninhabited studio') presents some of the earliest experiments from this project and demonstrates how concentrating on the place of my studio brought my presence in that space into focus. In 3.3, 'Space: Studio as the artist's presence', I continue to explore the idea of 'place' by providing several definitions that suggest a refinement of de Certeau's concept, and I consider place's relationship to 'space'. Demonstrating connections among concepts from geography (both terrestrial and marine), cultural theory and literature, in 3.4, 'In practice: Becoming visible in the studio', I establish my understanding of space and place before discussing a small number of early works which illustrate my developing understanding of these two concepts as they relate to the studio.

3.1 PLACE: STUDIO AS ROOM

In his influential 1979 article, 'The function of the studio', Daniel Buren outlined three defining characteristics of the studio:

1. It is the place where the work originates
2. It is generally a private place, an ivory tower perhaps
3. It is a *stationary* place where *portable* objects are produced.

(Buren, 1979, p. 51, emphasis in original)

All three designate that the studio is a 'place'; therefore, this term seems worthy of examination to understand what it means. The terms place and space are often used somewhat interchangeably in everyday speech, but in the literature surrounding them, they are clearly differentiated. Michel de Certeau provides a neatly succinct definition, establishing 'place' as being stable, physically concrete,

a situation which 'excludes the possibility of two things being in the same location [...] the elements taken into consideration are *beside* one another' (de Certeau, 1984, p. 117). This 'beside one another' can be understood to mean that one object cannot occupy the same point as another object. Instead, they will be positioned in relation to each other – beside, on, under, near or even inside. In the context of the studio, we may then read Buren's definition as referring specifically to a room designated as the artist's studio. I will delve further into definitions of place when I discuss the studio as space in the next chapter, but for now, this understanding of place suggests that the studio is a zone of objects, of the physical form of a room which contains certain items. Buren's description of the studio as 'stationary' certainly supports this interpretation, and these factors seem to be a reasonable starting point for a definition of the studio.

However, Buren's use of the passive voice here eliminates any sense of the role the artist themself (or the composer, in my case) might play in our understanding of the studio. Certainly, points 1 and 3 suggest that activity takes place in the studio, but it is the results of that work, the objects produced, that are the focus of these statements: 'where *the work* originates', 'where *portable objects* are produced' (Buren, 1979, p. 51, my emphases). The objects that make up the room itself and the objects produced seem to be given a higher priority here than the person – the artist – who inhabits the former and produces the latter and for whose benefit the aspect of privacy in point 2 is valued.

The combination of these ideas suggests that the room of the studio could be independent from the artist and the work they do there. This option of an uninhabited studio is an aspect often encountered in how studios are represented in photographs and other images, as unoccupied rooms that are still somehow understood to be imbued with the character of the artist who usually inhabits them. Flipping through Danièle Cohn's book on Anselm Kiefer's studios (2013) yielded only one of 139 full-page or two-page photographs that portrayed people working in the studio – almost all the other plates show either unpopulated rooms or locations, sometimes with open tins of paint or equipment in evidence, or close-ups of objects or artworks. In artist Joe Fig's book *Inside the Artist's Studio* (2015), each artist's interview is preceded by an image of an artwork by Fig which is his

response to the studio visit that resulted in the ensuing text and photographs. He describes these artworks as 'a type of portraiture' (Fig, 2015, p. 8), and while his stated interest is in the artistic process, the majority of these works seem to focus on the objects as representative of that process – tools or materials for the most part. The photographs in Alexander Liberman's *The Artist in His Studio* (1960) predominantly show unoccupied studios or objects in the studio. When an artist appears in their studio in these images, they are often simply in the room, seated or standing, perhaps looking directly at the camera in a manner suggesting a posed portrait rather than work-related contemplation. There are several images of artists holding tools of their trade – paintbrushes, welding equipment and so on – but remarkably few that show them recognisably engaged in artistic endeavour. In many of the photographs where these tools are visible, no work in progress is visible[18] and in a couple of them, the work the artists are 'working' on appears to be complete.[19] In these photographs, the studio is disconnected from the artist and their working processes. Only towards the end of the book, in the section titled 'The Younger Generation', do we start to see photographs of artists clearly working in the studio, through sequences of related images, like frames of a film, or Eadweard Muybridge's famous photographs of animals and people in motion. The studio as place is fetishised in images like these, with objects standing in for the artist's activity. This does not make the images any less compelling, but it does present a curiously sterile view of the studio – a view of a place where work *has been* made rather than one where work *is being* made. Danièle Cohn vividly illustrates the distinction between the two when she describes the experience of being someone outside of the artist's inner circle, without access to the studio, as follows: 'we can only peer in at the results; we see the cold final version, not the heat of the creative act; not life, but death, perhaps' (Cohn, 2013, p. 9).

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18 An example of Liberman's photographs showing an artist's tools without showing what they might be working on is his photograph of Picasso's hand and paintbrush (Liberman, 1960, p. 55). A version of this photograph can be viewed online at http://hdl.handle.net/10020/2000r19_152 (Print 39).

19 An example of one of these photographs of an artist working on an apparently complete work is Liberman's photograph of Antoine Pevsner (Liberman, 1960, p. 102). This photograph can be viewed online at http://hdl.handle.net/10020/2000r19_151 (Print 1).

The studio-as-place par excellence is perhaps Francis Bacon's studio. After Bacon's death in 1992, his studio was catalogued with archaeological precision, and the entire room – including 'walls, doors[,] floor and ceiling' (Hugh Lane Gallery, no date) – and all its contents were removed from its location in Reece Mews in London to the Hugh Lane Gallery in Dublin. There, it was painstakingly reconstructed to reflect the state in which it was left when Bacon died. This studio, it could be argued, is no longer a studio. Returning to Buren's definitions, while the artist's activity seems to be secondary to the objects it produces, his use of the present tense – 'where the work *originates*', 'where portable objects *are* produced' (Buren, 1979, p. 51) – precludes Bacon's studio from qualifying as a studio in its current form. It certainly was a studio, but it has become an artefact, something people look at – possibly even an artwork itself.

These examples suggest that the room itself is not the whole of what the studio is. *Oxford Art Online* defines the studio as an 'artist's place of work' (Hicks, 2003). This broader definition acknowledges the presence of the artist in a way that Buren's does not, inviting the possibility that at least part of what makes a studio a studio is drawn from the artist and their actions. Here, there is no mention of artworks or objects, only that the studio is a place where an artist can work.

3.2 IN PRACTICE: THE UNINHABITED STUDIO

I have a studio – a room at the top of my house that was facetiously named as such several years ago to differentiate it from my partner's study, which is on the same floor. I would agree with Buren that this room is generally a private place for me to work, and it is certainly stationary, a place from which various things I have made emerge and make their way out into the world in their assorted forms.

The physical form of my studio reflects its use. It has a door, which I can close for privacy and to muffle other sounds from inside the house; it is away from the main areas of the house, a dead-end rather than a thoroughfare, again to facilitate privacy and a quiet working environment (something that Buren does not mention but that is usually important for those who work with sound). It contains a variety of furniture and other objects which I use in my work, including the following:

- a desk
- an office chair
- a piano
- a piano stool
- a comfy chair
- two bookcases
- a 1970s G-Plan teak sideboard
- a box of files
- a cabinet with yet more files, sheet music and a scanner on top
- an Anglepoise lamp
- a flute
- a piccolo
- a viola
- a laptop
- an old laptop
- an older laptop
- a sewing machine
- postcards
- pens
- markers
- paper
- rulers
- USB keys

I have some floor space to work with when I want to move and a big single-glazed window, which provides excellent light and a view of quite a busy road and the 1980s-style flats opposite. It is a practical room in which to work, in short, with the things I need and the space to move around in.

This room was central to most of the earliest works created for this project, which focused largely on the form of the room and the objects contained in it: the sideboard in the set of photographs and manipulated photographs titled *Studio/ Sideboard* (Figure 6), the whole room in *Studio: Composer's Own* (Figure 7) and my desk and tools as I worked with drawing, erasing, cutting and crumpling paper for *Paper* for cello and video (Figure 8). Working on these pieces, I came to realise that what they had in common was that I was not visible in them, or at least not recognisably visible. Instead, my presence was implied. The unseen hands that moved the panels of the sideboard about between shots were mine (*Studio: Sideboard*), the unseen camera operator slowly panning around the room but always behind the camera was me (*Studio: Composer's Own*), and the pair of

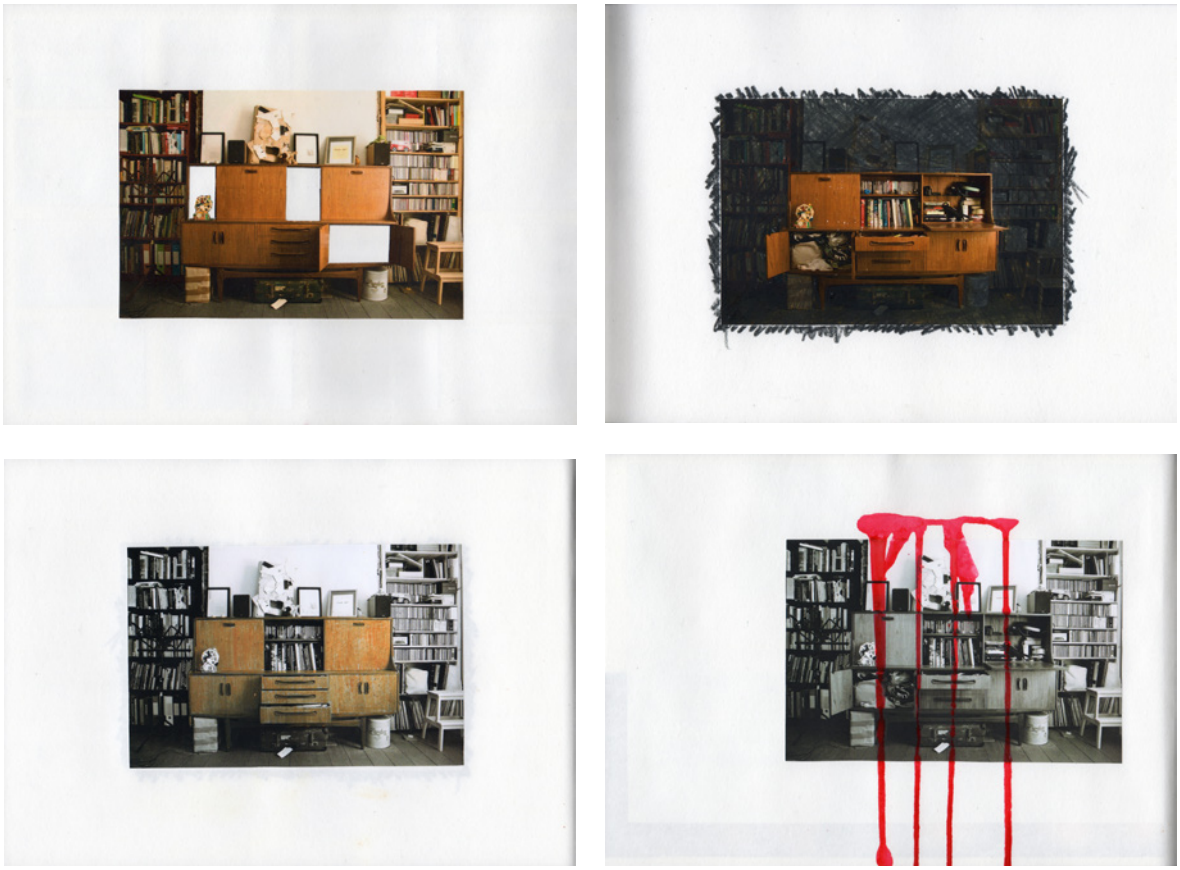

Figure 6. *Studio/Sideboard*, example images. Further examples can be found in Appendix 2.

hands manipulating paper and tools on the desk for *Paper* were mine too. I was ever-present in these pieces, but never truly seen.

I recognised that the significance of this simultaneous presence and absence was that these representations of the room could not exist without my being there, so it felt like subterfuge to be creating these works in which I was not seen. The unoccupied studio is static. It cannot truly be a studio, because if it is unoccupied, then it is *not* a place where 'work originates' (Buren, 1979, p. 51), it is not an 'artist's place of work' (Hicks, 2003). Without the artist – I began to understand – the studio is just a room.

3.3 SPACE: STUDIO AS THE ARTIST'S PRESENCE

Having confirmed across 3.1 and 3.2 that the artist is central to what the studio is, I will explore how this shifts the idea of the studio from being a place to being a space. A number of definitions of both place and space will be considered here

Figure 7. (video). *Studio: Composer's Own*, https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29571884.

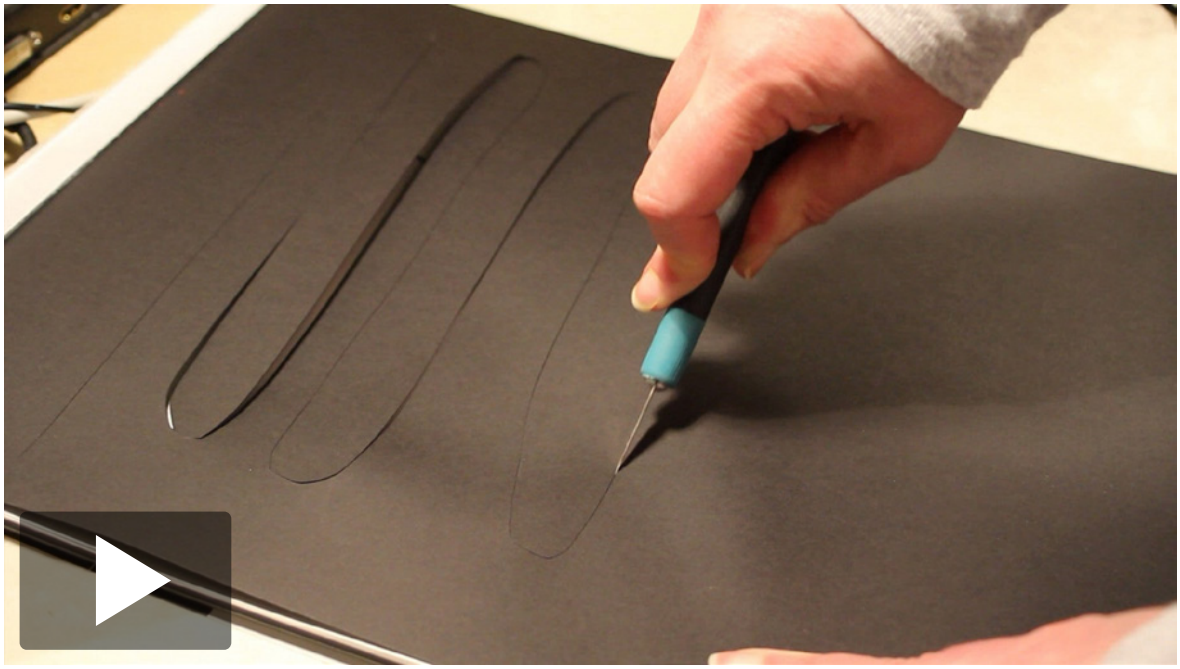

Figure 8. (video). *Paper*, video part still showing my hand cutting a line back and forth across black paper, https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29291861. [Linked video © 2022 K!ART Ensemble]

to establish an understanding of how the two relate to one another, and what the implications of this relationship are for defining the studio.

I have already introduced Michel de Certeau's definition of place as a situation which 'excludes the possibility of two things being in the same location [...] the elements taken into consideration are beside one another' (1984, p. 117). De Certeau contrasts this stable, concrete 'place' with a concept of 'space' as something unstable, mobile and active: 'Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it and make it function' (de Certeau, 1984, p. 117). The French experimental writer Georges Perec shows how this might be experienced in practice:

> We use our eyes for seeing. Our field of vision reveals a limited space, something vaguely circular, which ends very quickly to left and right, and doesn't extend very far up or down. If we squint, we can manage to see the end of our nose; if we raise our eyes, we can see there's an up, if we lower them, we can see there's a down... This is how we construct space, with an up and a down, a left and a right, an in front and a behind, a near and a far.
>
> When nothing arrests our gaze, it carries a very long way. But if it meets with nothing, it sees nothing, it sees only what it meets. Space is what arrests our gaze, what our sight stumbles over: the obstacle, bricks, an angle, a vanishing point. Space is when it makes an angle, when it stops, when we have to turn for it to start off again.
>
> (Perec, 1999, p. 81)

Perec's words position space as an embodied experience. He refers principally to the sense of sight, but also uses the relative terms up, down, left, right, in front, behind, near and far – all terms which are considered in relation to a single reference point: one's own body. He writes of actions, 'if we squint', 'if we raise our eyes', 'if we lower them', 'when we have to turn', and he talks about 'constructing' space, all of which imply that the experience of space is not simply to be somewhere and see something but rather that we are active in our experience and, indeed, in our creating of space through our turning, squinting, raising our eyes, etc. We may also deduce from this passage that Perec's view of the experience of space is as a duration, not just a moment.

These examples suggest that human beings create space by being in a place – doing things, thinking, using objects, passing the time and so on. The studio as described in the room-centred definitions from the previous chapter is a place; the artist's presence *in* that room – or other place – creates the space of the studio. In the interests of clarity, across this thesis, I refer to *Studio* (with an uppercase S) to indicate the space and *studio* (with a lowercase s) to indicate the room that takes this name.

The Studio space may consequently be understood as something mobile – it is centred on the artist, and she carries it around with her. It settles as an overlay on whatever location she is in whenever she engages in some way with her work as an artist, be it thinking about the work, undertaking physical activity in service of the work or even avoiding the work.[20] This view might be supported by Henri Lefebvre's statement which suggests that spaces can be layered with one another:

> We are thus confronted by an indefinite multitude of spaces, each one piled upon, or perhaps contained within, the next: geographical, economic, demographic, sociological, ecological, political, commercial, national, continental, global.
>
> (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 8)

Viewing place and space from the perspective of geography, however, both supports this idea of space being related to activity and complicates de Certeau's description of place as fixed and stable.[21] In the first paragraph of *Space and Place: The perspective of experience*, Yi-Fu Tuan states, 'place is security, space is freedom' (1977, p. 3) which might be seen to parallel de Certeau's understanding of these two terms. However, Tuan's elaboration begins to suggest a point of disagreement: 'What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value' (Tuan, 1977, p. 6). Developing this further,

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20 For a useful consideration of the value and range of the habits of artists in the studio when they are not making art, see Addison and Kidd (2019).

21 De Certeau's work does not limit itself to physical locations and how one moves about them. He also applies his thinking to language, narrative and other aspects of everyday life. However, to make sense of the apparent differences between his ideas and those found in geography, and how these differences have helped me to arrive at an understanding of 'Studio space', I focus on their application to a geographical context here.

‘if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place’ (Tuan, 1977, p. 6). In *Space and Place*, Tuan is concerned with understanding how a ‘sense of place’ is established. His use of the word ‘place’ refers to this concept – a shorthand for it – while de Certeau’s description of ‘place’ is centred on objects – physicalities – which seems closer to what Tuan terms ‘location’. This, then, clarifies the apparent disagreement between the two – de Certeau argues that ‘*space is a practiced place*’ (1984, p. 117, emphasis in original), whereas Tuan’s work explains (to borrow Merrifield’s neat de Certeau-referencing phrase) that ‘place can be taken as *practiced space*’ (Merrifield, 1993, p. 522, emphasis in original). ‘Stories carry out a labor that constantly transforms places into spaces or spaces into places’ wrote de Certeau (1984, p. 118) in his discussion of place and space in relation to narrative. If we consider this together with the inverted phrases above, then a cyclical relationship between place and space is suggested: that they might be profitably considered not as distinct concepts but rather as an iterative cycle that entangles the two, describing the process of humans’ actions creating meaning in the places they inhabit.

That place may be both something that human presence acts upon in constructing space *and* something which results from those space-making activities, is supported and clarified by John Agnew’s division of place into three aspects: location, locale and sense of place (Agnew, 1987 referenced in Cresswell, 2015, p. 12). Location is where the place can be found on a map, locale is ‘the material setting for social relations – the actual shape of place within which people conduct their lives as individuals’ (Cresswell, 2015, pp. 13-14), and ‘sense of place’ ‘means the subjective and emotional attachment people have to place’ (Cresswell, 2015, p. 14). In this schema, de Certeau’s ‘place’ seems to correlate best with Agnew’s ‘locale’.

Even splitting the concept of place into three, however, does not result in a firm conclusion that place is fixed and unchanging as de Certeau’s description suggests. The marine geographer Jon Anderson, establishing how the surfed wave can be a place, suggests that place can be understood as an assemblage or convergence of multiple factors, which also has a temporal aspect:

> Place, at any moment, emerges in time and space from the web of flows and connections meeting at a particular node. Place becomes the 'point' in this motion, a temporary pause. However, this pause is not solely geographical but also temporal. A place is now. It is permanently in the present, only temporarily 'fixed', and now something else.
>
> (Anderson, 2012, p. 574)

The word 'pause' suggests a stopping point – that *in that moment*, place may be fixed, as de Certeau suggests. Bearing in mind Anderson's proposal of the place of the surfed wave as an assemblage of wave, board and surfer, we might consider place as a pause in the (ongoing) space created by the surfer's actions in surfing the wave. This temporal relationship supports the sense that place and space are in a constant state of making and remaking each other. A cyclical pattern emerges, where, encountering a place (de Certeau), a human presence activates that place to construct space (de Certeau), allowing for (a sense of) place (Tuan, Agnew, Anderson) to emerge, moment by moment, 'temporarily "fixed", and now something else' (Anderson, 2012, p. 574).

We can see this cycle at work in relation to the studio. The room of the studio exists in a particular location and is composed of certain objects – walls, floor, tables, chairs, instruments, pens, books, etc. – which form its locale. This is the basis of what the artist works with and within. It is a space in the geographical sense in that it 'allows movement' (Tuan, 1977, p. 6). For de Certeau's space to come into play, however, an artist must be doing things *in* the studio: 'Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it and make it function' (de Certeau, 1984, p. 117). Sara Ahmed proposes that the combination of people and objects dictate what the object is: '[d]oing things "at" the table is what makes the table what it is and not some other thing' (Ahmed, 2006, p. 45); therefore, by performing the actions which produce the effect of Studio space, the artist begins to imbue the locale of the studio with a sense of place – the room *becomes* 'the studio' through *being used as* a Studio.

Returning to the list of objects in my studio from 3.1, these things shape the locale of my room. Most of them are not unusual – they could conceivably exist in any

composer's studio. However, annotating the list reveals the hidden life of my interaction with these apparently static objects, for example,

- a piano[22]
- a comfy chair[23]
- a 1970s G-Plan teak sideboard[24]
- a box of files and a cabinet with yet more files[25]
- a piccolo[26]
- paper[27]
- ink[28]

These annotations help to explain how and why the objects come to be in my studio. The details of my decisions, preferences and interactions with these objects are how I define my Studio space, which in turn defines what objects are in the room.

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22 Electric. I play it occasionally, but more for fun than for composing. I draped the plastic bag it came in over it to try to keep it clean. It is not doing a very good job.

23 Not particularly comfy, really, but it is also a fold-out futon bed, which is useful for visitors.

24 Found in a charity shop for £35 and carried up the stairs, with great effort, by my partner and our neighbour. It features wide drawers for holding A3 scores and paper as well as an assortment of stationery items and scissors, several cupboards for technology, instruments and fabric, and shelving for CDs, books, cameras and art supplies. It also has a small fold-down desk area, which I sometimes use to lay out artwork that is drying. I use the top of the sideboard as a display area, where I position artworks, objects from performances I was involved in, childhood toys and a small collection of stones I gathered in Aldeburgh, Porthleven and Dartmoor.

25 I am an obsessive archivist. In my collective, Bastard Assignments, I have assumed this role to the extent that when other members have lost files that have been used in previous performances, they now come to me to ask if I have a copy. I often do.

26 I do my best to avoid playing this, and I have been quite successful to date. Somehow, though, I cannot quite bring myself to sell it or give it away.

27 Many different types, some handmade, some I chose for the sounds they make when handled.

28 Some of which I have made myself from materials such as elderberries (pale grey-blue or a rich red), mint stems (a nice sepia) or turmeric (a bright yellow).

In using a studio as a Studio space, an artist works within its confines in the larger sense (walls, windows, floors, chairs and tables) and adapts it to her needs ('this chair is in the way, so I will move it'). As such, the locale aspect of the place shapes the artist's work, but her actions (such as the repositioned chair) may also shape the locale, which then affects what she can do there. Different decisions may affect the work done in that space in different ways, and hence, while still stable and concrete in the moment (place), the form of the room is in flux over time as the artist uses the things in it and moves them about to accommodate the realisation of her ideas (space).

The implication here for understanding Studio space is in the centrality of the artist. I have shown that Perec views the body as the centre of the experience of space and that de Certeau views the body as the source of the activity that generates space in a place. Tuan's ideas are around space as a zone of possible action from which place emerges, but he, too, acknowledges the importance of the human being in creating that sense of place: 'Space assumes a rough coordinate frame centered on the mobile and purposive self' (Tuan, 1977, p. 12).

If a person is at the centre of all these definitions of space, then the space of the Studio must also be centred on a person – the artist. The Studio could be said to exist wherever the artist is, as long as she is engaging with her work in some way (which may include avoiding it). Once the artist is understood to be central to the space she experiences, the Studio can be seen as mobile, and the place of the studio opens up beyond the confines of the rooms I have previously discussed. Notebooks or sketchbooks, laptops, tablets, phones – even 'places' constructed in software, such as collaborative tools and virtual reality environments – may constitute an 'artist's place of work' (Hicks, 2003). Each may be a 'place where the work originates', 'a private place' and 'a place where portable objects are produced' (Buren, 1979, p. 51), according to how they are used and the nature of the artist's practice. They may therefore be deemed both a tool that the artist uses and a studio.

One of the legacies of post-studio practice, of '[trying] to do art around where we [are]' (Baldassari, 1992), has been an increased acceptance of this broader

idea of the studio as no longer being 'strictly defined by physical dimensions or geographic specificity' (Eastwood, 2017). For example, Caitlin Jones emphasises that whether or not a laptop is a valid form of studio is no longer a question: 'For many artists the notion of the studio does not present a problem to be dismantled or deconstructed. The laptop studio serves simultaneously as the tool, the space, the product and the frame' (Jones, 2012, p. 121).

This is certainly the case in my practice, where the studio room, notebooks, laptop, tablet, phone and digital workspaces such as Zoom and Slack all have a place in my workflow – as do trains, hotel rooms and cafés. Correspondingly, I disagree somewhat with the singularity of Buren's statement, '*the* place where the work originates' (Buren, 1979, p. 51, my emphasis). I consider the aforementioned assortment of places to equate to the 'zones' described by Iwona Blazwick (2012, p. 25): areas of a studio which are associated with or demarcated for different types of activity.

The significance of the artist's presence and actions in the studio dominates the BBC's *Composers' Rooms* series of podcasts. Delivered as audio only, although each of these conversations includes sometimes-detailed descriptions of the places where the interviewed composers work, the focus is on how that composer uses those things, that room. Rebecca Saunders describes having a red upholstered rocking chair and then sitting in that chair to listen to music (Mohr-Pietsch, 2015b). James MacMillan's studio is arranged with a large space in the middle of the room 'just to walk about' (Mohr-Pietsch, 2014a). Roxanna Panufnik '[walks] with great purpose' down her garden to work in her studio and will sometimes tap a Tibetan singing bowl as she enters (Mohr-Pietsch, 2014b). Jennifer Walshe discusses having two studios; the one in Ireland has more room and houses props and costumes, so she reserves some projects to work on there because of these particular qualities (Mohr-Pietsch, 2015a). These descriptions demonstrate that the studio is not simply a place which contains various work-adjacent objects; rather, it is a space where the composer and her actions are entangled with the place, shaping what it contains and what is done there.

I suggest that the space of the Studio – whether it is constructed within the room of the studio, the notebook, the laptop or some other place – forms from an entanglement of the artist, their actions and the locale in which those actions take place, not in an instant but over a duration of time. Representing the Studio, then, should ideally encompass all these elements, not just the room.

3.4 IN PRACTICE: BECOMING VISIBLE IN THE STUDIO

As described in 3.2, 'In practice: The uninhabited studio', I came to a realisation that the work I had been producing at the start of the project either showed the studio as an empty room or revealed my presence only indirectly, as a partial representation (just my hands) or through indications of off-camera movement. This approach began to feel inadequate as I reflected on my presence in the studio and the role I play in creating that room as a space. The result of this line of thinking was a feeling that if I were to convey 'the studio' in my pieces, then I – the composer – needed to be visible, recognisable in the work I was producing. I consequently started to document my practice more with video, focusing on my body and actions as I worked in the studio.

'Floor Piece' is an unfinished work I created in April and May 2017. In addition to being an exploration of the floor of my studio, it was also an experiment in becoming visible in the studio, which took the form of consciously trying to develop my composer-performer practice. In particular, I sought to understand how I move, how to find interesting ways of moving and how to reconcile these with my own body-image problems. In the second episode of my vlog, I refer to some of the movement I was experimenting with as having a 'beached-whale quality', which I was not particularly delighted about (Rowley, 2017b, c. 17:47). I elaborate on the sense of vulnerability encapsulated in this phrasing in the next chapter, 'The Studio and the artist's everyday', and then further in Section III: 'Working with documentation'. The difficulty in being visibly present, which this vlog segment illustrates, is that visibility implies being seen by others, something which had not previously affected me, when I was hidden, out of frame or implied but not seen.

The physical form of the studio and the objects in it shaped my work on 'Floor Piece' (Figure 9). In the vlog episode mentioned, I reflect on how the most interesting movements I found in developing the early versions were those that were awkward in some way:

> The things that were not awkward, it just felt like I was just drawing, it wasn't anything in particular, it wasn't interesting to look at, there was no tension to it – but the bits where I was, like, crouched under the piano, or trying to dodge the viola and ended up in a slightly strange position were much more interesting and compelling.
>
> (Rowley, 2017b, c. 15:28)

That awkwardness was the result of the entanglement of my presence and actions with the physical form of the studio. In addition to the studio being the place where I was performing, it also affected the actions I *could* perform and how they could be performed – it shaped the space of my work.

Later in 2017, I worked on another piece which is relevant to this discussion, *Whitespace*. This work was created as a tool to explore the studio through performance, my starting point being 'thinking about space on the page, space [in] the studio, space on the stage and how that affects a performance and what [I] do' (Rowley, 2017c, ca. 10:20). In practice, when performing *Whitespace* in the studio, I was confronted with my own everyday patterns of movement in that room. *Whitespace* uses a performance score which maps positions on a blank page in relation to one another, but without reference to where the piece will be performed. Performing it, I realised that I had – without thinking – been following certain habitual paths between the various points in the room. The score might

Figure 9. 'Floor Piece', video stills from an early experiment, showing my movements being shaped by the physical form of the studio.

indicate a move from a position by the desk to one near the bookcase, but with the comfy chair blocking the direct path, to go from one to the other would have meant choosing to clamber over the chair, halt my progress or take a less efficient route – possibly my usual route: around the chair and through the gap between it and the sideboard. Performing *Whitespace* brought me face to face with my own habitual practices which, even without my awareness, contributed to the space of my Studio.

CHAPTER 4 THE STUDIO AND THE ARTIST'S EVERYDAY

This chapter focuses on the everyday and its relationship with the creative activity and physical surroundings of the Studio. The everyday is often tied to private life, and this leads me to discuss the related – I suggest entangled – concepts of private and public. To some extent, the everyday may be considered to bridge these two ideas and those of place and space, which I addressed in the previous chapter. Here, I link these ideas to the spaces of Studio and Stage. I briefly explain why emotional discomfort – such as vulnerability, a sense of exposure which may result in embarrassment or shame – is a likely response to making private creative practice public (as I do across this project). Finally, in a last 'in practice' segment, I discuss the final stage of my personal and professional development through this research project: how making myself and my actions central to my concept of the Studio edged me towards becoming a composer-performer rather than simply a composer who performs.

There are numerous synonyms for the everyday, many of which may have somewhat negative connotations of being uninteresting and perhaps even unimportant: ordinary, banal, commonplace, mundane, habitual or routine, for example. Repetition, particularly repetition leading to habit formation and a sense of being 'in place' (Ahmed, 2010, p. 235) or at home, is a central element to many writers' work on the everyday (including Perec, 1999, Ahmed, 2006 and 2010, Lefebvre, 2014 and 2004).

Gerry Smith's informal survey of his acquaintances resulted in a conclusion that 'the everyday always happens to someone else' and that people often do not see their own lives as being ordinary (Smith, 2016, p. 33). Nevertheless, there is an aspect of commonality to many everyday activities that connects people both within a community and across a wider grouping. For example, the ordinary activities of preparing meals, brushing one's teeth and tying one's shoelaces are so common in private life as to be considered universal. 'Everybody sort of knows what goes on in private, just as everybody has private parts', states John Hall (2013, p. 78). For artists, the work and objects of the Studio form the everyday of their working lives: sharpening pencils, making a cup of tea, turning on a laptop or performing more medium-specific tasks such as sketching out the structure of a piece or cleaning brushes. Scanning any collection of composer interviews (for example, Duckworth, 1999; Saunders, 2009; or Kelly, 2013) reveals that among composers, there is a multitude of approaches to both the work itself and the way in which it is accomplished, just as every household has its own way of organising the tasks that must be accomplished.

The everyday is entangled with the private in the ordinariness of such necessary and common activities and the familiarity of the objects of daily use in the home and studio, such as kettles, pads of paper and lamps. Hall reminds us of the negative connotations of the abovementioned synonyms for the everyday, highlighting a difficulty for my own project of entangling private and public creative spaces: 'the private that is not secret is often up against [a] form of shame: quite simply that it is not worth saying; the banality of private life should be kept from public view' (Hall, 2013, p. 78). With this statement, Hall establishes an apparent separation – even opposition – between private and public, which positions the habitual and the routine as private for the simple reason that they are too familiar to everyone and therefore may be of little interest.

However, I propose that – rather than being viewed as opposites – private and public are instead entangled states. Starting with dictionary definitions, 'even the [*Oxford English Dictionary*] can't talk about one without the other' (Hall, 2013, p. 77): 'private' is defined in the *OED* as 'Restricted to one person or a few persons as opposed to the wider community; *largely in opposition to public*' (Oxford English

Dictionary, 2024b, my emphasis), while public is defined as 'In general, and in most of the senses, *the opposite of private*' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2024c, my emphasis). This entanglement applies not only when trying to define one or the other but also in how the two interact in the world: 'It is a very public notice on the door which reads "private"' (Hall, 2013, p. 77). Indeed, the aforementioned *OED* definitions contain a certain amount of hedging – '*largely* in opposition to' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2024b, my emphasis) and 'in general, and *in most of the senses*' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2024c, my emphasis) – which suggests that these states are not only entangled but also, perhaps, not absolute. These statements indicate that private and public could exist simultaneously.

Hannah Arendt affirms the entanglement of private and public as she traces the changing meanings of these terms across history. After outlining the ancient understanding of private and public as relating to 'the household and the political realms', respectively, she examines the emergence of 'the social realm, which is neither private nor public, strictly speaking, [which] is a relatively new phenomenon whose origin coincided with the emergence of the modern age' (Arendt, 1998, p. 28). Explaining how the lines between the political and the social have become blurred in the modern definition of 'public', she states that '[in] the modern world, the two realms indeed constantly flow into each other like waves in the never-resting stream of the life-process itself' (Arendt, 1998, p. 33). Likewise, she declares that our understanding of 'private', while perhaps superficially related to that of ancient Greece – as we still consider home life to be private – has also changed: '[We] call private today a sphere of intimacy whose beginnings we may be able to trace back to late Roman, though hardly to any period of Greek antiquity, but whose peculiar manifoldness and variety were certainly unknown to any period prior to the modern age' (Arendt, 1998, p. 38). However, what is perhaps retained in our modern understanding of 'public' and 'private' – even though the specific meanings and implications have changed – is a sense of things shown or hidden, of extraordinary or ordinary, everyday activities.

Broadly – even simplistically – speaking, the Studio may be considered to be a private space – a zone of everyday activity, of repetitive actions and habits, often kept private from others or only made available to select individuals or at certain

times. Correspondingly, it is worth acknowledging that the space of the Stage is – again, to oversimplify – often thought of as a public space, where actions, particularly performance, are undertaken in front of and often for other people. Following my reasoning in Chapter 3, which established a place and space of the studio, the stage may also exist as both place (*stage*) and space (*Stage*). Where the Studio is centred on the artist, the space of the Stage is likewise centred on the (performing) artist, and just as the Studio does not necessarily imply a room that is called a studio, so the space of the Stage is not necessarily a literal stage such as one might find in a concert hall or similar locale designed for performance. Instead, the Stage is a space created by the actions of the performer at its centre, and it may exist wherever that performer intends for other people to witness the activity occurring in it. The primary function of a Stage space is to be observed by someone, whereas in the space of the Studio, the possibility of observation by others is expected to be controlled (or at least controllable) by the artist at its heart. Buren acknowledges this private aspect of the Studio, both in his initial definition and later in 'The function of the studio', where he describes the privacy of the studio in terms of the artist's control over what goes out into the world (Buren, 1979, p. 52) – out to what we may call the Stage space, which may take the form of a gallery, installation location, performance venue, YouTube livestream or other public place.

As I have acknowledged, these broad applications of private and public to Studio and Stage, respectively, lack nuance, but as my work in this project plays with, distorts or disrupts these simplistic allocations, they form useful generalisations from which to start. The distinction between private and public spaces is non-trivial when it comes to making artwork of any kind. The privacy of the Studio is an important element to enable the experimentation, failure and not-knowing of any artistic endeavour. William Kentridge describes studio work as 'making a safe space for stupidity' (Kentridge, 2014, p. 128), a description which aids in understanding why entangling the private space of the Studio with the public space of the Stage can result in feelings of vulnerability. Notebooks and sketchbooks,[29]

29 I consider notebooks and sketchbooks to be different names for the same thing – a book which an artist uses to capture and develop their ideas through writing, drawing, collage and other methods. Artistic work in such books may be accompanied

which, as demonstrated in the preceding chapters, may be considered as a form of Studio space, frequently seem to be described in terms of safe spaces for creativity. Timothy O'Donnell contrasts the privacy of the sketchbook – a 'private, personal space to vent, daydream, free associate and explore' (O'Donnell, 2011, p. 6) – with the visibility of work done on a large computer monitor in a shared studio space: 'work becomes instantly public and open to critique in the project's infancy' (O'Donnell, 2011, p. 6). Artists who contributed to Richard Brereton's *Sketchbooks: The hidden art of designers, illustrators & creatives* use phrases such as 'sketchbooks allow me to be free, to express myself without boundaries [...] without judgement' (Frédérique Doubal in Brereton, 2009, p. 52). They describe their books as 'a kind of portable laboratory' (Pep Carrió in Brereton, 2009, p. 46), 'incubators, a free and non-judgemental place to make mistakes and try things out' (Johnny Hardstaff in Brereton, 2009, p. 136), and 'like an approving henchman' (Dominic Del Torto in Brereton, 2009, p. 62). The reason such freedom, lack of judgement and approval are needed is because these books – or, indeed, studios – are considered as having 'no filters, everything goes in' (Andrea Dezso in Brereton, 2009, p. 76); they are 'a place for unedited creativity' (Chris Gilvan-Cartwright in Brereton, 2009, p. 126). These descriptions, as well as Kentridge's, highlight artists' need (or at least preference) for a sense of safety to allow them to experiment without judgement while developing artistic concepts. Privacy provides such safety.

This desire to feel protected from the judgement or approval of others – the need for the privacy that provides those things to an artist – stems from a basic human preference for presenting ourselves to others in the best possible light (Goffman, 1990, p. 44). Sociologist Erving Goffman likens our approach to interactions with others to an actor performing a part for an audience (1990, p. 9). He emphasises the connections between how we present ourselves to others and the values held by the society in which the 'performer' lives (Goffman, 1990, p. 45). That society's values may well position artistic activity – for example, that described by Kentridge, including 'a day [...] spent walking backward, throwing encyclopedias over your shoulder' (Kentridge, 2014, p. 128) – to be eccentric at best and

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by other elements, such as lists or doodles. I call my own working books 'notebooks', so this is my preferred term across the thesis, but by its use, I include sketchbooks too.

antisocial at worst. In response to societal expectations, people will usually try to show others a perfected version of themselves, which may involve two types of concealment which are particularly relevant for my work:

> we find that *errors and mistakes are often corrected before the performance takes place, while telltale signs that errors have been made and corrected are themselves concealed*. In this way an impression of infallibility, so important in many presentations [of self], is maintained. [… In] those interactions where the individual presents a product to others, he will *tend to show them only the end product*, and they will be led into judging him on the basis of something that has been finished, polished and packaged. In some cases, if very little effort was actually required to complete the object, this fact will be concealed. In other cases, it will be the long, tedious hours of lonely labour that will be hidden.
>
> (Goffman, 1990, p. 52, my emphasis)

These tendencies are understandable: we like to seem competent, professional and confident – infallible, as Goffman puts it; we want people to trust us, all the more so when we might be seeking a commission or some other form of employment. To me, the connection between Goffman's comment about showing only the 'finished, polished and packaged' result of our endeavours while hiding the work that went into making it (Goffman, 1990, p. 52) seems to reflect precisely what Morton Feldman described when he said that 'music begins with perfection' (Villars, 2006, p. 69). However, when something emerges that we feel undermines the idealised impression we are trying to convey, the result is usually embarrassment (Goffman, 1990, p. 204).

Embarrassment is closely related to the emotion of shame, the difference being that 'embarrassment [results] from surprising, relatively trivial accidents', while 'shame [occurs] when foreseeable events [reveal] one's deep-seated flaws both to oneself and to others' (Miller and Tangney, 1994, p. 273). Both embarrassment and shame play a role in society to promote or reinforce standardised behaviour: 'By gradually teaching children to experience shame and embarrassment, a society inculcates respect for normative behavior that slowly reduces the need for external monitoring of individual conduct' (Miller and Tangney, 1994, p. 273). Where artistic activity becomes visible and may appear to be at odds with societal expectations, embarrassment – or shame, if the artist feels that the work seems

to indicate a personal failing – may be experienced. Societal expectations may be breached due to unusual behaviour, as with the Kentridge example above, or for other reasons, such as work appearing derivative because it has not yet evolved enough to show the artist's unique voice. Combining Goffman's and Miller and Tangney's research suggests that when normally private work in progress is made public, the artist is likely to feel vulnerable and exposed to the criticism and judgement of others. When documenting private creative work, the artist may not be able to both present an idealised performance of themself and remain productive, and they certainly are not hiding the work of creation. The anticipated result, then, may be feelings of embarrassment or shame, both of which 'can pose problems for people's sense of well-being and psychological adjustment' (Miller and Tangney, 1994, p. 285). To do the work that has been necessary for this project, I have needed to develop approaches to assist me with managing my feelings of exposure without resorting to performing a version of myself and my practice when I document my work. I discuss the approaches and techniques I have used to accomplish this in Chapter 9.

4.1 IN PRACTICE: BECOMING A COMPOSER-PERFORMER

Becoming visible in the studio – as I described in the 'in practice' segment at the end of Chapter 3 – led to an increase in the amount of performing I undertook in the studio when composing. I have already mentioned that the work I did on 'Floor Piece' was intended to develop my composer-performer practice by experimenting with movement, and I gradually began to create pieces designed for me to perform. At first, I performed these pieces within sets of works at performances by my group, Bastard Assignments, but now, at the end of this project, I am undertaking some solo performances of my own and others' work without the scaffolding of the group to support me.

The significance of developing a composer-performer practice in the context of this research project is that in this type of work, the roles of composer and performer are 'fully integrated' (Ingamells, 2017, p. 2), perhaps even – I would suggest – entangled. Both the Studio and the Stage are always present because the practice of such an artist is 'reflexive: the two roles [composer and performer] are equal in one

person and workflow shuttles back and forth between them' (Rowley and Spear, 2023, p. 3). Furthermore,

> because of this reflexivity, the distinctions between the phases of 'composition', 'rehearsal' and 'performance' blur. Our experience is that they become impossible to separate: preparation for a performance and performance itself inform our ongoing compositional thinking about a piece. The piece itself is not fixed but exists in a state of perpetual evolution.
>
> (Rowley and Spear, 2023, p. 3)

This 'blurring' and 'reflexivity' have resulted in an increased tendency to use performance as a compositional tool, whether in the studio or on the stage. I have also embraced the idiosyncrasies of my artistic skillset and ways of working. For several years, my work has been informed by ideas expressed in Jennifer Walshe's manifesto 'The New Discipline' (2016) and Marko Ciciliani's 'Music in the Expanded Field: On Recent Approaches to Interdisciplinary Composition' (2017), particularly the idea of composers doing things for themselves. 'The New Discipline is located in the fact of composers being interested and willing to perform, to get their hands dirty, to do it themselves, do it immediately', declares Walshe (2016). This DIY principle extends to aspects such as self-taught skills (Ciciliani, 2017, p. 27) and to an acknowledgement that the people performing the music are 'part of the music, that they're present, they're valid and they inform our listening whether subconsciously or consciously' (Walshe, 2016).

Inhabiting a Stage space has required me to accept my limitations as a performer and turn them into strengths. For example, my ability to reliably produce precise, in-tune pitches on the viola is currently very limited, so I now frequently work with scordatura, retuning the strings of my instrument away from standard tuning. This largely bypasses any need to produce pitches with my left hand and allows me to focus on the elements of timbre, texture and structure, which I find more interesting. None of this precludes the possibility that I might (and indeed plan to) become a better violist in the future. It is more that the principle of 'move fast and break things' – which Jennifer Walshe (2016) appropriated from Mark Zuckerberg's motto from the early days of Facebook – encourages me to work with what I have now. Coupled with my limited interest in perfection and my Master's

research project's identification of amateurism as a valuable creative tool (Rowley, 2014a and 2014b), this research project has reframed my understanding of my own role in creating my Studio and equipped me with the tools to manage the vulnerability inherent in becoming more visible in my work.

My first composer-performer piece, which resulted from this work, was *dot drip line line 8918: EDGE*, a solo vocal piece which incorporates gesture and mime. In developing this piece, I continued the work I had started with 'Floor Piece', aiming to understand how I could use movement as a musical element in a piece. *EDGE* was created primarily through improvised performances, developed with feedback from the other members of Bastard Assignments after each attempt. I would film each improvisation, discuss the performance with my colleagues, reflect on their comments and then develop a new version of the piece for the next session, first by assembling fragments of the video documentation into a structure and later using that structure to develop a rough text score. Ultimately, this piece took the form of a structured improvisation, whose open score encourages the performer to find the edges of their own vocal technique and physicality. Performing the piece often results in new material, which develops my understanding of the work. For me, repeated performances resulted in changes to the score to define more clearly what I felt was essential to the piece: I performed to create the work, and each performance develops it further, Studio and Stage entangling every time I engage with the piece.

Ultimately, the change that has been effected through this project has been to eliminate any clear boundary between private and public in my work. Not only are my composition notebooks now publicly available online (which I will discuss across the remaining chapters of this thesis), but in the entangled identity of composer-performer, the private and public creative spaces of Studio and Stage are also entangled. When I compose, I perform; when I perform, I compose.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

In this section, I have established a concept of the Studio as a space which entangles the artist, her actions and the place in which she is working. This approach allows for a mobile understanding of the Studio, centred on the artist. It also confirms a comprehension of 'place' which encompasses both physical and digital tools as well as the geographic locations in which the artist works. Not only the room of the studio but also notebooks, laptops, trains, virtual reality environments and an infinite number of locales can become the Studio, if the artist is there and engaging with her work. A parallel conception of the Stage has likewise been established – a similarly entangled space with the performer at its centre. Like the Studio, the Stage is also not restricted to a literal stage but can accommodate the performer anywhere they decide to perform for others.

While I have formed loose associations between the Studio and private space and between the Stage and public space, I acknowledge that these are sweeping generalisations. Accepting the Studio as a space suggests that while often ostensibly private, a Studio space may be constructed in private or public, and, as Henri Lefebvre suggests, spaces may even be 'piled upon or contained within' each other (1991, p. 8). Wherever it happens to be, the Studio is the space of the artist's everyday work. Given that the everyday is entangled with private life, this entanglement also draws in the Studio. The regularity of artistic practice tends to lead to habit formation and preferences for certain tools in the same way that we form routines around, for example, cooking. Artists' everyday working practices involve routinely engaging with experimentation and failure, and while work in progress is developing, it may be rough, unstructured, unclear, awkward or lacking in originality. Considering Goffman's work (1990), which indicates that people prefer to present an infallible image to others, hide errors and corrections and routinely disguise the effort expended when creating, it becomes clear that revealing the work of the Studio can be a very uncomfortable experience for an artist. The resulting sense of vulnerability is a natural response. However, if the artist aims to make their private creative work public and retain fidelity to their (private) practice, Goffman's findings suggest that ways of managing such vulnerability must be identified.

Across this section, in the 'in practice' segments, I have endeavoured to demonstrate how my understanding of the Studio as a space has developed through the works I have created. This has encompassed pieces which show the studio as an unpopulated room (3.2, 'In practice: The uninhabited studio') and those which make me more visible and central, performing in the studio (3.4, 'In practice: Becoming visible in the studio'). Finally, with the understanding that my presence and actions create the Studio wherever I am, my work has reached a point where I have embraced the entangled identity of composer-performer (4.1, 'In practice: Becoming a composer-performer').

SECTION III: WORKING WITH DOCUMENTATION

Documentation of my creative practice is at the heart of this project. It has been the principal way in which I have been able to bring the Studio space into the space of the Stage to entangle my private and public creative spaces. In my second research question, I asked what needs to be understood about documenting creative practice to facilitate its use in this entangled context – this is the focus of this section. After outlining the well-discussed fields of documentation of performance, documentation for research purposes and ethnographic documentation, I will consider how documentation of creative practice relates to these established areas. In Chapter 7, 'Intention and authenticity', I propose a framework for categorising documentation of creative practice which is used as content in a musical work, considering the intention with which it was created (whether intended for a private or public audience) and how authentically, or truthfully, it represents the practice of the artist whose work is its subject. I outline each of three categories of this framework – 'true' documentation, 'performed' documentation and fictive practice –and offer examples from the work of other composers and my works in the portfolio to illustrate each of these. A chapter looking at ambiguity, shifting intentions and multivalence complicates this fairly simple framework (Chapter 8) before I close the section with a chapter on understanding and managing the feelings of vulnerability that often arise when working with documentation material that might not be as polished as the composer would prefer (Chapter 9, 'Possibility and vulnerability').

CHAPTER 6 DOCUMENTATION AND DECISION-MAKING

In their work on documenting music with non-sonic elements, Michael Wolters *et al.* state that the 'relationship of documentation to the work is one of "fidelity" or "faithfulness"' (2023). While I would suggest that this is a somewhat utopian stance, the examples they offer demonstrate that achieving 'fidelity' when

creating documentation is far from a straightforward endeavour, with numerous choices to be made, each of which creates a different result. The documentation of performance, more broadly, is an object of vigorous debate regarding the difference between a live performance and the documentation of that performance. Matthew Reason highlights a 'contradictory, mirroring discourse of documentation and disappearance' (Reason, 2006, p. 8) that sits at the centre of this debate, the gist of which is that '[performance] cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations *of* representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance' (Phelan, 1992, p. 146). Philip Auslander (2006) appears to concur, proposing that documenting a performance is a performative act which constitutes the documentation itself as a performance. Wolters *et al.* develop these ideas further, acknowledging that the difference between the two does not necessarily position documentation in a negative light in relation to the work or performance it documents:

> The documentation is separate from the THING that is being documented (i.e. the 'work').
>
> There is always a loss, or an addition, or a transformation which might be aesthetically interesting
>
> or not
>
> and which might add surplus value to the work
>
> or not.
>
> (Wolters *et al.*, 2023)

These losses, additions and transformations are introduced through the decision-making of the documentary process. From the decision *to* document something, to the decisions of what and how to document it, and what to do with the material once it has been created, every decision shapes the resulting documentation.[30] I examine the 'what' and 'how' in Chapter 7, 'Intention and authenticity' and Chapter 8, 'Multiple intentions, shifting intentions and multivalence'. Decisions which may reframe documentation after creation, while making use of it in another context, are covered in Chapter 9, 'Possibility and vulnerability'.

30 See Wolters *et al.* (2023) for examples of many different approaches to documenting the same piece.

From a research perspective, numerous writers on practice research discuss the importance of documenting practice (for example, Gray and Malins, 2004; Smith and Dean, 2009; Nelson, 2013; Mäkelä and Nimkulrat, 2018), as both a tool for reflection and an aid to communication of the research and its results. In the realm of visual ethnography, it is acknowledged that the making of documentation, as well as the documentation itself, becomes 'part of [the ethnographer's] ethnographic knowledge' (Pink, 2013, p. 1). In short, the making of documentation as part of research is an active component of the knowledge-making process, not simply a record of the work undertaken.

The documentation I work with, however, sits between these well-examined forms of documentation of performance and documentation for research purposes. My work occupies a niche that draws on both approaches but has its own focus, which might perhaps – at least in some cases – be considered *documentation for composition*. I document my creative practice in ways which serve as documentation of my research, which often may involve a form of performance documentation. This documentation may additionally become material within pieces,[31] reusing the video and audio recordings, the photographs of notebook pages and so on directly in the works I create.

Documentation may use a variety of media – from video, audio and drawing to verbal forms, both written and spoken, such as diary entries, text chats, transcription and voice memos. No single medium is the best solution for all situations – decisions need to be made about what will best capture whatever aspect(s) have been determined to be the most important by the people making the documentation. In particular, audio – which some might assume to be extremely important in a music project such as mine – has drawbacks when compared to visual media. While audio recordings are excellent if all that is wanted is to capture the sounds that were made or occurred during a working session, they are

31 For the purposes of clarity, I make a distinction between 'documentary music', which is work which draws on primary sources to depict or engage with historical events, and my use of documentation of my own creative practice in pieces. An example of documentary music is Robert Reid Allan's 'documentary opera' *Bermondsey, 1983,* whose text consists of the words from articles and interviews from 1983 and later relating to the events which are its subject matter.

of limited use in providing context for those sounds – how was that vocal sound produced? What is being done on the viola to create that result? Was that sound something a musician did, was it made by someone observing, or did it originate from something occurring outside the room?

Another problem with audio documentation is that, in comparison to human beings' strong memory for images, we have a limited ability to recognise audio recordings that we have heard before. Cohen, Horowitz and Wolfe conducted a series of experiments where they established that across a wide range of sounds, 'from complex auditory scenes (e.g. talking in a pool hall) to isolated auditory objects (e.g. a dog barking) to music […], auditory memory [is] systematically inferior to visual memory' (Cohen, Horowitz and Wolfe, 2009, p. 6008). This means that while people may quite easily recognise a locale they are familiar with from a photograph or video clip, they are extremely unlikely to recognise the same locale from its acoustic profile. This problematic aspect of audio recordings for reliably representing spaces was emphasised for me during the soundcheck for the première performance of my piece *Quiet Songs*, which includes sounds of traffic recorded using a contact microphone on the window of my studio. My colleague Edward Henderson went into the room the BBC sound engineers were recording from and found them frantically trying to identify the source of the 'leak' that they believed was letting traffic sound in from outside.[32] I mean no disrespect to these highly experienced engineers, but if even audio professionals struggle to tell the difference between the sound of a busy tarmacked road and the low-traffic, speed-limited asphalt/gritty gravel traffic situation outside the Britten Studio at Snape Maltings, what hope do other people have to identify spaces based on sound alone? Not only is this differentiation difficult, but given that the sounds of my studio are more likely to involve crumpling paper, the scratch of a pen on a notebook or the clack of laptop keys than, for example, improvising at a piano, I would be surprised if these sounds reliably indicated a composition studio to anyone at all. I have used some audio recordings in this project – notably in *Aides Memoire* and *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* – but much more prevalent are the media of video (which often includes audio), still images and writing or drawing.

32 Private conversation with Edward Henderson, 15 June 2019.

Wolters *et al.* state that '[a] live situation always needs to be documented in order to be preserved and distributed. It always needs the transformative, conserving effects of documentation to bring it into another context' (2023). Documentation has therefore been a valuable tool for entangling private and public creative spaces, allowing for the private work of the Studio (which is often inaccessible to others) to be brought into a public context, both temporally and geographically removed from its point of creation. As mentioned above, the form of the documentation is shaped by the decisions made about it. These decisions may include choices about the format, the framing (including audio framing through the choice of microphones and their positioning), the technology used (including lo-fi or hi-fi options), and when and why the recording process begins and ends. Many of these decisions will relate to the intended audience and use for the documentation and how much importance is placed on creating an accurate, 'authentic' record of the Studio work.

CHAPTER 7 INTENTION AND AUTHENTICITY

In this chapter, I will describe an original framework for categorising documentation of the Studio in relation to its role within a Stage context. I will define the terms 'intention' and 'authenticity', which I use in this framework, before introducing the four types of documentation I have identified – 'true' documentation, 'performed' documentation, fictive practice and feigned practice. I will then illustrate each of the first three types with case studies from other composers' work and the works in my portfolio.

I use the term *intention* to describe the principal context for which the documentation was created, whether for a private purpose or to use in some public-facing context. Wolters *et al.* emphasise that the intended use of documentation shapes the decisions made about it: 'The way a work is documented and how the documentation is presented depends on the question: FOR WHAT PURPOSE is this documented?' (2023). Whether the documentation will or will not be seen or heard by other people influences how it is approached.

When I use the word *authenticity* in relation to documentation of creative practice, I am referring to how accurately the documentation shows the reality of the practice it documents, as opposed to an idealised or fictionalised version of it. In the quote at the beginning of this thesis, Morton Feldman declares the appearance of perfection to be a 'tragedy', a problem for music (Villars, 2006, p. 69). I consider this appearance of perfection to be a problem of authenticity, in that it hides the reality of composition, presenting instead a polished, completed product that usually provides no indication of the effort that went into its making, or that any particular challenges or problems were encountered along the way. My concept of authenticity implies a certain rawness, something unrefined – as befits work in progress. Being committed to the authentic documentation of composition activity results in material which shows unrehearsed and unperfected actions and results. However, I do not consider authenticity to be a binary state opposing authentic and inauthentic. Instead, I view it as a continuum, along which alterations – conscious or unconscious, trivial or substantial – gradually dilute the authentic practice that is being documented.

Charles Taylor (1992) identified three characteristics of authenticity which are of particular relevance to its relationship with intention and making private creative practice public:

> authenticity [...] involves
> (i) creation and construction as well as discovery,
> (ii) originality, and frequently
> (iii) opposition to the rules of society
>
> (Taylor, 1992, p. 66)

These characteristics of authenticity connect with the research I discussed in Chapter 4 (from p. 50) to indicate that creating documentation with a high degree of authenticity has the potential to prompt feelings of vulnerability or exposure in the artist whose work is being documented. Taylor's first point connects with Goffman's discovery (1990, p. 52) that people prefer to hide the effort which has gone into making something, and to hide any errors or corrections too – creation, construction and discovery are all things we prefer to keep hidden. The second and third points of Taylor's list link to Goffman's statements (1990,

p. 45) about how the performance of the idealised self which we all prefer to show to others also relates to the expectations of the society the 'performer' lives in. In Chapter 4, I discussed how artistic experiments may challenge societal norms of behaviour, but any form of originality implies a deviation from a well-trodden, socially accepted path. So, even if not actually in 'opposition to the rules of society', being original may entail personal or professional risk-taking, exposing the artist to criticism from others. All these circumstances are likely to prompt a sense of vulnerability in artists which may develop into feelings of embarrassment or even shame (Goffman, 1990, Miller and Tangney, 1994). Given that authenticity involves allowing yourself to become vulnerable in these ways, I suggest that the more public the intention of the documentation being created, the more challenging it becomes for the artist whose work is being documented to maintain authenticity in their work, and the more likely that work is to tend towards performance.

The continuum of authenticity, then, is shaped by the quantity and scope of alterations which may form a defence against the discomfort of vulnerability and embarrassment. The continuum may be considered to range from ignoring the knowledge that documentation is happening, intending to proceed with the work as if unobserved[33] (authentic, but may still involve some minor unconscious changes) to incorporating inconsequential conscious adjustments such as tidying one's appearance before filming, to more substantial alterations – perhaps avoiding certain types of work because the artist is uncomfortable with them being seen by others. The extreme 'inauthentic' end of this continuum would be pure invention – 'acting composition', perhaps, or material which only seems to resemble creative practice.

Naturally, different situations have different priorities, which will position the resulting documentation at different points along the continuum of authenticity. In some cases, establishing a particular narrative that connects in some way to artistic

33 It could be argued that the most authentic form of documentation would be captured without the artist being aware of it at all, but this would be an unusual circumstance, and even more unusual that the artist would be given access to the documentation afterwards. Therefore, given its likely rarity, I have not included such surveillance in my description of the continuum of authenticity.

practice may be the goal. In that case, aspects which promote coherence with the rest of the piece, or which position the artist in a certain way, may be of greater importance to the creator than providing an accurate portrayal of their creative practice. Some material which may be read as documentation of creative practice may even prove on closer investigation to have no relationship to practice at all, instead merely giving the appearance of doing so. In this project, I have committed myself to producing documentation of my compositional activity which sits at the authentic end of the scale. This has resulted in documentary material which shows unrehearsed and unperfected actions and results, attempting to only allow minor alterations which do not materially affect the way I work.

7.1 A FRAMEWORK OF DOCUMENTATION TYPES

The intersection of intended private or public use with a continuum of levels of commitment to authenticity suggests an approach to categorising the documentation of creative practice that is used as material within pieces. I propose this framework as a way to help with thinking about how a piece of documentation's appearance in a work may relate to the circumstances of its creation and its relationship to authentic creative practice. I have identified four broad types of documentation that may appear as content within pieces, which I have designated as follows:

- true documentation[34]
- performed documentation
- fictive practice
- feigned practice.

Figure 10 shows a simplified diagram of how these types of documentation sit at the intersections of different types of intention and levels of commitment to authenticity.

34 The designation 'true' is not intended to indicate that the documentation *is* the practice – as discussed in the previous chapter, this is an area of debate within the field of documenting live performance.

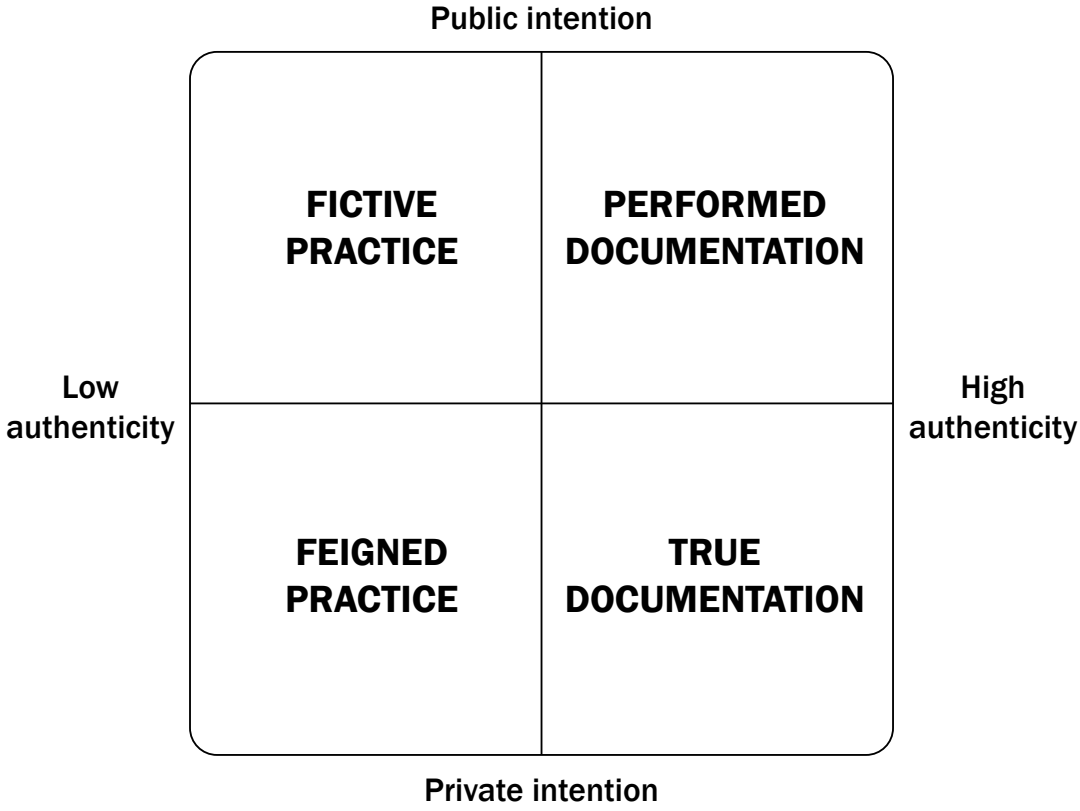

Figure 10. Simplified diagram positioning true documentation, performed documentation, fictive practice and feigned practice documentation types along axes of public or private intention for use and low to high commitment to authenticity.

The fourth sector, where an intention for private use intersects with a low commitment to authenticity, is an area I will not be investigating in this thesis. I have marked this zone as 'feigned practice' because this type of documentation seems most likely to be unproductive from the viewpoint of composition work – it is neither composition practice nor a performance to be included in a composition. An example might be that I film myself pretending to work, or pretending to work in a way I would not normally, with the intention to somehow use this privately. The pretence aspect suggests a disruption to the utility of such work – if I were testing out someone else's process, for example, to see if it contained elements that I could productively adopt, that would be an experiment which had an authentic compositional function, and true documentation would result. The documentation of pretence, however, would seem to be restricted to a role as private entertainment or play. Certainly, such playful documentation could find its way into a piece or some other public-facing context after its creation, so it may be

that this zone has a practical use, but for the purposes of my research, it remains theoretical.

TRUE DOCUMENTATION

In Figure 10, true documentation exists at the intersection of private intention and a high commitment to authenticity. An example of this type of documentation is when I document work in progress to be able to see or hear what I am doing from an audience's perspective. This is a perspective which is inaccessible to me while performing because I cannot see my body nor hear my voice as other people will, so documentation of this sort helps me to understand better the effect of what I am doing when performing, which helps me to develop the piece further. The video footage of 'Floor Piece' and *Whitespace* that I referenced in 3.4 was recorded to do this. Another example is documentation to preserve a sudden idea – such as the notes taken in my composition notebooks, as seen in Figure 2 on p. 10. The nature of these types of private intentions tends to go hand in hand with a commitment to authenticity because the documentation loses its value to the artist if it does not show (in some way) what is truly going on. True documentation is not captured with any clear intention of its being used in a work – any such decision is made separately from the decision to document.

The track 'Philip and Steve's Furniture Removal Company' from The Divine Comedy's 2019 album *Office Politics* provides an excellent example of true documentation. The beginning of the track is a voice memo – we hear songwriter Neil Hannon talking about an idea for a sitcom, and through the unevenness of his breathing and the background sounds, we can determine that he is walking outside. The voice memo culminates in his singing a brief jingle for the sitcom idea before the piece suddenly switches into a cleanly recorded version of the same jingle in a different key and begins to develop it. Hannon confirmed that the recording was made for his own private purposes, as an aide memoire: 'I thought, well, I'm gonna have to make a quick note of this tune before I forget. And I thought, well, I'll do a sort of voice memo about the idea itself while I'm at it, you know?' (Hannon, 2022). The idea to include the voice memo in the track emerged while Hannon was recording, and the decision was contingent on how he felt about the recording on listening to it:

> [A]s I was doing it, I remember thinking, well this is fun. This is almost like performance in itself. And I just hoped that it would sound good when I got to the other end. And I thought it did. So I kind of used that as the jumping-off point for the rest of the piece.
>
> (Hannon, 2022)

Hannon's statement shows that the idea of performance came after the initial driver of capturing the idea before it disappeared, confirming that the voice memo recording is true documentation.

Ken Ueno uses true documentation in his concerto for himself, *On a Sufficient Condition for the Existence of Most Specific Hypothesis*, incorporating an 'edited mix' of recordings he made when he was six years old (Ueno, 2011). The recordings he made as a child were a form of play: 'Back then one of my favorite things was a portable Aiwa cassette recorder and I used it to make non-linear musique concrète — that is a fancy way of saying I recorded weird sounds around the house, rubbing my toy cars against the microphone, alternately growling and counting off numbers in Japanese'[35] (Ueno, 2011). Six-year-old Ueno would have had little idea of using these recordings in a piece so many years later, but the sounds he made anticipate the vocal practice of his adult self:

> When I listened as an adult, and as a trained musician, to the tapes I made when I was 6, I was shocked to find that I wasn't just growling – I was singing multiphonics. So, in some sense, I had been non-semantically broadcasting my identity before I ever thought to transcribe those sounds.
>
> (Ueno, 2011)

Ueno approaches this piece as a way of relating to the history and documentation of his own performance practice:

> The tape allows me to sing in counterpoint with myself, 30-plus years apart. The opening also includes excerpts of me counting in Japanese as a kid. At the end of the piece, during the cadenza, I recite some numbers in Japanese,

35 I feel that this type of documentation, made with the unselfconscious approach of a child at play, is true documentation; however, the same sort of work if undertaken by an adult would probably be termed performed documentation or performance. I will discuss performed documentation later in this chapter.

> which, to me, not only recapitulates the tape part, but reconnects me to that moment when I was 6, when I recorded myself counting.
>
> (Ueno, 2011)

He also has plans to develop this work further by recording sounds he can make now with a plan to incorporate them into the piece in another 30 years, combining the true documentation with new, performed documentation.

Both these examples use audio recording as the medium of documentation. In *String Trio #1* and *String Quartet #1*, however, Luke Nickel uses transcriptions of recorded conversations rather than the recordings themselves. Working from recordings of ensembles in rehearsal, Nickel has selected and transcribed sections of the ensemble's conversation to be performed by others, leaving silences where the instrumental music was played in the original rehearsal. While the ensembles were aware of the purpose of the recording, the rehearsal's own goals – preparing another piece for performance – were the principal intention for the documented conversation. This keeps the work captured by the documentation within the area of high authenticity and private intention, and so represents true documentation.

True documentation in the portfolio

In the portfolio, examples of true documentation are found in the field recordings of *Aides Memoire*, some of the video material used in *Quiet Songs* and the improvised recordings and recorded conversation used in *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*.

I started making field recordings to supplement my travel photographs after meeting a sound artist who used his field recorder the way most people use a camera. His recordings of a trip to China (on which he took no photographs, only audio recordings) prompted me to think more about the sounds around me, and since then I have endeavoured to record interesting soundscapes I come across. These recordings often bring back much more vivid memories for me than any photos taken. My original intention with making these recordings was to use them

in musique concrète pieces.[36] However, over time, my approach has changed towards recording simply to document sounds or soundscapes that attracted me in some way.

The field recordings used in *Aides Memoire* were captured over 10 years, from 2005 ('Brussels rain', recorded on a Sony MiniDisc player) to 2015 (the Australian sounds, recorded on an iPhone). They were all captured primarily for my own enjoyment, with a secondary idea that they 'might be useful sometime'. As they were not designed for a particular use at the moment of capture, they form true documentation of my experiences. Certainly, there is an element of framing at work – in when I chose to start and stop recording, in the direction I pointed the microphone, in whether I walked while recording – but without a specific intended use, they represent a true record of my experience of the sounds I heard at that moment. My intention was private – to capture sounds that interested me – and my commitment to authenticity was high at the time of recording because my priority was to capture a sonic record of that particular experience.

Quiet Songs uses three pieces of video documentation, which I describe throughout this thesis as 'portrait' (Figure 11), 'mid-shot' (Figure 12) and 'close-up' (Figure 13) footage. The mid-shot material was captured partly for research purposes, and partly so I could listen to and see my experiment from the audience's perspective. I was trying to find sounds and techniques to use in the piece, but I had no vision for the documentation's use beyond that – my decision to use this material in *Quiet Songs* came considerably later, separately from documenting this work.

HAYDN SPACE OPERA is centred around several pieces of true documentation – the improvised performances by Bastard Assignments which I recorded for research and reference purposes during workshops in November 2019 at Centre 151 in Haggerston, London. The sessions were an experiment to see how we might

36 I have used my field recordings several times in musique concrète pieces: e.g. 'Random Study No. 1' (2015) https://soundcloud.com/caitlinrowley/random-study-no-1 or the more heavily processed 'Nightbirds' (2015) https://soundcloud.com/caitlinrowley/nightbirds.

Figure 11. *Quiet Songs*, ‘portrait’ documentation.

Figure 12. *Quiet Songs*, ‘mid-shot’ documentation.

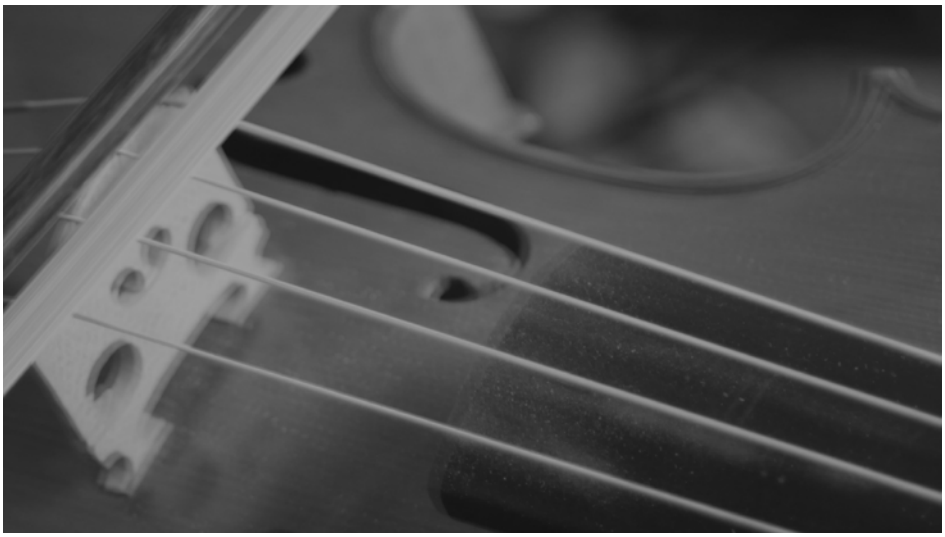

Figure 13. *Quiet Songs*, ‘close-up’ documentation.

use my altered book notebooks as graphic scores,[37] and we planned to test out several different approaches to them. I recorded the sessions to ensure that I could revisit anything that seemed interesting and review the conversation afterwards. Snippets of that conversation appear in 'The Corridor', alongside other true documentation from a later workshop on the piece, experiments and playtests in Mozilla Hubs with Bastard Assignments and Open Scores Lab.

PERFORMED DOCUMENTATION

Performed documentation documents genuine compositional activity but to a greater or lesser extent the composing is approached as a performance, often with the intention to include the material in a specific piece. Performed documentation is often created with a particular vision of how it will be used in a public context, such as a concert work. It documents authentic composition practice but has a public intention. An example of this can be found in Alexander Schubert's piece *HELLO*, for ensemble and video. While much of the video part of this work offers a glimpse into 'the personal world of Alexander Schubert' (Schubert, 2014b), mostly showing him performing gestures in his lounge room, towards the end of the work (Schubert, 2014a, c. 8:22), we see the composer at his computer, working on the video part of the piece we are watching. Schubert told me that he planned to include some footage of himself working at his computer in the piece.[38] Only after he had set up the camera did he decide that if he were to be working at the computer, he might as well work on the piece itself. The intention to perform 'working' informed the selection of camera angles and framing decisions; Schubert's decision to work on *HELLO,* rather than some other type of work or a simulation of working, shifts this footage from filmed performance to performed documentation.

Joanna Bailie's *Artificial Environments 1–5* shows a different approach to performed documentation. Early in the composition process, Bailie recorded a set of science-fiction-influenced voiceovers outlining a fantastical idea of how sound

37 Graphic scores use graphic elements such as shapes, lines and colour rather than (or sometimes as well as) conventional stave-based musical notation. They may be used 'to inspire the free play of the performer's imagination in unstipulated ways' (Pryer, 2011).

38 Private conversation with Alexander Schubert, 9 December 2022.

might be rendered in worlds where acoustics function differently from here on Earth. 'The texts were pretty much the first thing I made', she wrote to me,

> you can tell that they are integrated into the electronic part, and are often processed in the same way as the field recording. I'd just started my practice of making [field recordings] and wanted to find ways of musicalizing them. […] The instrumental writing (as always) comes after making the tape part since it is always based on a partial transcription of the electronics.
>
> (Bailie, 2023)

Bailie had a primarily public-facing intention in creating these voiceovers: 'I wanted to find a way to contextualize my music, and in particular the use of manipulated field-recordings' (Bailie, 2023). However, by creating this text and the recordings early on and folding them into the electronics part before she began to write the instrumental parts, she might be seen to have committed herself to using them as a structural device to inform later compositional decisions. This suggests that the narration serves a private compositional function as well as being a performed element of the piece. Regarding the aspect of authenticity, Bailie's writing the narrative and giving a fictional shape to the sonic ideas she was working with positions the text at a slight remove from a completely authentic rendering – this is not, for example, a direct use of notes from her notebook; rather, it is a scripted element that presents a clearly thought-through concept. My identification of the reduced authenticity of practice here is not intended to be disparaging. On the contrary, Bailie's fascinating approach presents her early concept for the work to an audience in a way that can shape how they listen to the piece and think about the act of composing. 'Imagine a world', she says in the voiceover, 'where sound is subject to constant fluctuations in pitch and tempo […] Composing music in such an environment, one might think, would be a case of just letting the material go and allowing it to be transformed by nature's chance operations' (Bailie, 2020, from 00:58).

Performed documentation in the portfolio

Performed documentation is the approach I have used most in this project, appearing in most of the portfolio works. Examples include the narration in *Aides Memoire*, which documents my memories of the sounds in the tape part via a

condensed, loosely scripted verbal performance, and the videos of eyes used in 'Phyllida Barlow Playground' in *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, where the members of Bastard Assignments talk to themselves about pieces they were working on at the time of recording, knowing that this material was going to be part of the piece. I will examine just a few examples in detail here, to illustrate my approach to this category.

In *Quiet Songs*, the clearest example of performed documentation is in the 'portrait' footage (Figure 11, p. 70), which forms the backbone of the video part. Drawing on discarded experiments with video diaries and chroma keying created for another piece, *TURN* (Figure 14), I filmed myself performing experimental vocal improvisations in front of a greenscreen set up in my studio.

I intended from the start to strip the sound out of this footage to create an effect of my voice being silenced, so the fairly tight framing on my face from the video diary experiment was important to allow my facial movements to be clearly seen. However, the performances themselves were an experiment. I had an idea of the types of sounds I wanted to work with, but I had not planned what I would do, and I did not know how effective removing the sound from the video would be. As such, this footage constituted a private compositional experiment as well as a performance I intended to incorporate into the piece.

On comparing the portrait with the mid-shot footage (Figure 12, p. 70), there are discernible differences reflecting the differing intentions behind the materials' creation. On close examination of Figure 12, my hair (while tidy) is not styled, as it is in the portrait footage.[39] There is a pale stain on my black top, and the framing of the mid-shot material is functional rather than dramatic. The portrait footage, however, is carefully framed for a particular effect, and I appear to be performance-ready.

39 My hairstyle in the portrait material is what I call my 'performance hair' and matches (at least approximately, allowing for the passage of time and slightly different haircuts) how I have styled my hair for onstage performance since about 2018. I usually do not bother with this level of preparation when at home, however.

Figure 14. (video). Video diary chroma key experiment for *TURN*, showing a similar framing to the *Quiet Song*s portrait footage, https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582048.

WALKS 1–4 was created with my colleagues, artists Jon England and Katie Hanning, as our collective, Kaths Kaff. Every element of these videos may be categorised as performed documentation. The initial concept of this project, proposed by Hanning and developed by the group over the early weeks of the first UK COVID-19 lockdown, was to find ways to document our daily walks, which at the time had been limited by government mandate to a maximum duration of 1 hour. Even when our results were rough or unpolished, though, there was an element of performance, of awareness of an audience – even if that audience was just our group – and this awareness positioned these pieces of documentation as performed documentation. By our walking, observing and recording, the streets and fields surrounding our homes became our Studios. The locations and our movements in them were our subject matter, captured as videos, photographs, drawings, audio recordings, poems and scores. Most of these materials were simply uploaded to a shared Google Drive in their rough form with little, if any, refining, and over the weeks when we were undertaking this project, we accumulated a large array of them. These pieces of documentation became the source material for my *WALKS* videos. No matter how quickly produced, the pieces of documentation emerging from this project tended to reflect our individual

artistic traits, documenting not only our walks but also our working methods, ways of seeing and hearing, and preferred media. England's contributions tended to be precise and in series; Hanning's were excitingly chaotic and ever-changing; mine were wide-ranging and playful with moments of obsession and involved a wide array of technology.

A second layer of performed documentation was created for the first set of *WALKS* videos.[40] England had created a series of 'walking drawings', by holding pen to paper in his pocket while he walked. The form of these drawings intrigued me as a way of documenting the body's movement in interaction with the terrain covered. While the result was a series of static drawings, they nevertheless seemed to capture a space (England's activity in the locale of his walks) rather than a place, which I felt positioned these images as a form of documentation of a mobile Studio as much as any of the video contributions to the project. I experimented with using these drawings as chroma keyed frames through which the other visual elements of the video could be glimpsed. While interesting, the resulting video felt static, which prompted a discussion among the group's members about animating the line itself. England did not have access to the technology needed to create animated drawings in this way, but I did. I used England's approach to produce an animated version which then constituted a documentation of *my* walking around *my* neighbourhood using *England's* technique. The variables of stride length and unevenness of terrain, for example, are authentic to my walk, but this video was created with a specific vision for what I wanted to retrieve from the technology and how that would be used in the piece, which demanded a certain type of result from the digital media that would (loosely) resemble England's hand-drawn versions.

While not in the portfolio, I propose that the vlog episodes (Appendix 1) are also a form of performed documentation. Authenticity is a priority for these episodes, which aim to share the reality of my practice with others, but the intention was always public-facing, with episodes published on YouTube and often publicised on social media. I also built up a small base of subscribers for this work. The documentation used in these episodes was often true documentation, but the

40 At the time of writing, three sets of four one-minute videos have been created, although only *WALKS 1–4* is included in the portfolio.

episodes themselves are a form of performance. The limitations of the vlog format include a need to keep each episode short (ideally around 10–12 minutes) and to create a narrative which makes sense of the documentation provided, both within each episode and across multiple episodes to position recent developments within a wider context of ongoing work. These limitations demand selectivity and require timelines to be greatly compressed. Selecting and assembling documentation, deciding the most important developments to talk about and then filming the narrative constitute a public-facing performance of my practice, even while trying to present an accurate portrayal of the work undertaken.

FICTIVE PRACTICE

The third type of documentation, perhaps, should properly use scare quotes around 'documentation' because, in this area, authenticity is either low-priority or not a factor at all. It is more likely to *appear* to document than to genuinely document practice. This is a difficult area because it may encompass a range of things, from misunderstandings on the part of an audience member (who may think a piece shows the creator's practice when in fact it does not), through unintentional misrepresentations of practice (e.g. an idea may be presented in a way which seems to indicate that it emerged fully formed from the composer's imagination, when in fact it took several iterations to reach that point), all the way to intentionally misleading representations of practice. This last type is likely to be difficult to prove because of the desire to mislead, but as an example, it is now recognised that Charles Ives engaged in an extensive and complex re-imagining of his creative narrative, through both his autobiographical writings and the re-dating of his manuscripts. His alterations '[suggest] a systematic pattern of falsification' (Solomon, 1987, p. 463), which appears to have been an attempt to emphasise the originality of his work.[41]

An example of fictive practice is that of the end of Laura Bowler's *SHOW(ti)ME*. Throughout this piece, pianist Zubin Kanga shares (true) stories of his relationship

41 For a detailed exploration of Ives' alterations, see Solomon, 1987, and Massey, 2007.

with piano practice, and for the end of the work[42] Bowler requested 'a video of [Kanga] coming home after a gig' (Kanga, 2023). We see Kanga entering his home with a pair of large suitcases, heading to the kitchen to make a hot drink. Mug in hand, he moves into another room to play a few notes on the piano before going upstairs and turning the lights off. Despite the appearance of these mundane actions, this video is not a *documentation* of returning home, but rather a performance which blends accurate recreation, sprinkled with practice from earlier in the performer's life, with material chosen for effect:

> The getting in the door with lots of bags is pretty much exactly as it happens. I'd say fixing some sort of drink would often come soon after, although the tea with scotch in it (a rough version of a hot toddy) was something I came up with for the video, as I thought it would be amusing. The going to the piano to try out things after the concert isn't something I do now, but it is something I did when I was younger, and I also based it on stories of other pianists (Richter, Paderewski) who used to practice after the gig, to try and fix what went wrong.
>
> (Kanga, 2023)

The context is important here. Across this work, Kanga performs – onscreen and live – a series of theatrically heightened personas of a performer preparing for a performance. The piece culminates in his sitting onstage, wearing a mirror-ball motorcycle helmet while boiling a kettle and making a cup of tea while this video plays. Within this context, Kanga's gentle embroidering of his usual habits strengthen the connections with the work's personas, reinforcing connections across the piece.

As an example of misinterpretation, I offer my own erroneous identification of documentation where none existed. Ben Nobuto's *Bad Infinity* incorporates scraps of text spoken by the keyboardist (again, Zubin Kanga) as he plays a synthesiser. This text includes phrases such as 'Is that kind of what you were thinking, or…?', 'Should I, like, start over?', and 'Should I continue?', as well as numerous hesitations and filler words such as 'um' and 'like'. Hearing the piece for the first time as an audio recording, I assumed that Nobuto had used segments of audio

42 The section described can be seen in the video at https://youtu.be/oAEaBhzt19w?t=1308 (Accessed: 18 March 2024), starting at 21:50, ending at 25:10.

documentation of a workshop with Kanga. When I saw it performed, however, I realised that Kanga was speaking the part live, which prompted me to rethink my interpretation and to read the 'documentary' aspect as perhaps being transcribed phrases from a workshop rather than audio-recording documentation. However, both my interpretations were erroneous – no doubt prompted by my immersion in this research. There was no documentary material used in this piece; nor had it been created with any documentary intent (Nobuto, 2023). Nobuto's text was pure invention: 'I wanted it to sound like someone stumbling their way through a bad speech so I recorded myself talking for a few minutes and then only used the "bad" bits, like stutters, pauses, rambly phrases etc.' (Nobuto, 2023). To my mind, however, these 'bad bits' resembled how one often communicates with collaborators, trying to find a way to the heart of the piece. I heard *Bad Infinity*'s text as checking how well a performed section matched up with another person's idea ('Is that kind of what you were thinking, or…?'), confirming progress through a work ('Should I, like, start over?', 'Should I continue?'), offering simple feedback to different interpretations ('no… no… no… no… yes'), asking for feedback ('What's been your favourite moment so far?') or just engaging in conversation around the practical work, and so I formed a false impression that this offered a glimpse into how the piece was made.

Given that my interest in this project is primarily around surfacing information about private composition practice as a result of entangling the Studio with the Stage, I have not created works which engage with the area of fictive practice. However, as indicated here, an audience member's interpretation of material presented in a piece may differ from the composer's aims, so there is a possibility that I have given a false impression of some aspect of my work without being aware of it. Selection and arrangement of documentation is necessary because of the usually long timelines of composition in relation to the short durations of completed pieces, and omissions may encourage misinterpretation. I have no intentional examples of fictive practice in the portfolio, however. I include this description here, though, to acknowledge this area of the framework, where commitment to the authenticity of the 'practice' seen may be low or absent. When low, authenticity may be hidden behind barricades of fiction designed to present the composer in a possibly idealised light, protecting them from feeling vulnerable.

Alternatively, authenticity may be overwhelmed by a greater need to prioritise a narrative or other performance element. It may also not be a factor at all, with the impression of documentation existing solely in the mind of the audience member.

CHAPTER 8 MULTIPLE INTENTIONS, SHIFTING INTENTIONS AND MULTIVALENCE

In the previous chapter, I proposed a framework which characterises documentation based on how the intention behind its creation intersects with a commitment to portraying authentic composition practice. This framework establishes four potential types of documentation that might be encountered in pieces which entangle the private space of the Studio with the public space of the Stage: true documentation, performed documentation, fictive practice and feigned practice.

However, a question lingers which has particular relevance to my research: when documenting work within the context of a project that makes the private public, can anything that is documented ever be said to be truly private in the first place? This question hangs over the classification of true documentation for any such material that I created after this research project's inception. Any awareness of the possibility that the documentation being created may be used in a way that makes it visible to others (in a piece, on a vlog, on a website) risks skewing decisions made about documenting practice towards the performic[43] as the composer tries to avoid feelings of vulnerability. In Chapter 9, I will discuss some strategies I have developed to try to constrain this tendency; here, however, I will explore examples of works which manifest complex, ambiguous, mobile or multivalent applications of the framework. These examples complicate the relatively simple categorisations I defined in Chapter 7. While I stand by those categorisations as being useful for considering documentation in relation to the activity it captures and its future

43 With John Hall, I prefer the term 'performic' over the more usual 'performative' to '[distinguish] between the two senses of performative [...] – something that is performance-like rather than the carrying out of an act' (Hall, 2013, pp. 156–157).

context, many more examples occupy this ambiguous zone where authenticity and intention become mobile, porous or multilayered.

8.1 HOW AUTHENTIC IS 'AUTHENTIC'?

The example of my composition notebooks is one such complex situation, where a mix of public and private intentions creates tensions in relation to maintaining authenticity. My composition notebooks are working documents, in which I note meetings, write to-do-lists, write-through thoughts, draw, and write down notes about pieces and other projects. Their function as working documents ensures a high commitment to authenticity because otherwise, they would be useless for my private purposes. They might therefore be considered true documentation. However, it is equally the case that I am constantly aware that they are destined to be scanned and posted on a public website. I am also aware – from comments by others about how 'beautiful' and 'artistic' they are – that some people enjoy looking at them as if they were artworks. This awareness of a public audience for these books establishes a sense of responsibility to that audience with regard to how the pages look, which pushes them more towards performed documentation. While the books are authentic working documents, they are also (however much I try to limit this) a performance for others.

My challenge, then, is to maintain authenticity in order to prevent the performance from distorting the practice the books document. To do this, I endeavour to focus on things that are useful for me to have in these books and avoid adding material solely for others. For example, while my simple but extensive use of colour does often result in appealing pages, its principal uses are to support my day-to-day mental health (colour makes me happy) and to form part of a visual mnemonic system which helps me remember more detail than is captured on a page. It also helps me to orient myself within the timeline of work simply by seeing the changing patterns of colour and the rhythm of the shapes formed by writing or drawing. Photographs perform a similar function, helping me to recall both personal and work-related experiences in more detail. One or two photographs of artworks on a page, for example, will often prompt memories of the many more encountered on a day of wandering around a gallery. However, my approach is

never purely for myself; it is always both for me and for others. The notebooks' position as documentation, then, is complex, occupying a space where true and performed documentation overlaps, always striving to prioritise authenticity in the face of the pull to display a certain artistry to the future audience, to keep it out of the area of fictive practice.

'Authentic' does not necessarily indicate 'complete', though. While the notebooks form a central hub for my work, as I explained in the Methodology chapter (Chapter 1), this does not mean that they are a complete record of my life. To start with, it would be well-nigh impossible to do this in a notebook, with so much of everyday life and creative work existing in the continuous chatter of our heads or the mundanity of actions so familiar that we are barely aware of doing them – even 24-hour surveillance would only capture physical movements, not our thoughts. There are also constraints of space in the notebooks – not everything can fit in them while maintaining their practicality as portable day-to-day working documents. I consciously obscure and omit certain types of content which might infringe others' rights to privacy when the pages become public, such as using initials instead of other people's names, or blurring photographs. My regular use of overwriting for writing-through obscures private thoughts while rendering the activity and quantity of writing visible on the public pages. I began using overwriting as a direct response to my plan to publish my notebooks, as it allowed me to continue using long-form writing to work through my muddled thoughts, while sidestepping an unproductive tendency to self-censor that I began to discern once I knew my words would be made public. Illegibility became a way to continue to work comfortably once my private notebook practice became entangled with a role as a public-facing archive.[44]

I have also created rules which result in the omission of elements for reasons of practicality, or which allow me to bend to the pressure of vulnerability in areas where an omission would not inhibit the public notebooks' central purpose of making my everyday practice available to others. Of the former type, it may be

44 I discuss the relevant elements of the notebook publication project's evolution throughout this thesis, but a detailed description of all the changes my notebook practice underwent while preparing for publication can be found in Rowley, 2021.

noted that audio documentation is largely absent from the notebooks. This is due to a rule to avoid content types that would add to my publication workload, and another rule that I try not to include any element that is added solely for an anticipated audience. I could upload my field recordings, pasting printed QR codes into the books to link to them, but this process would take time and since I lack a pressing personal need to capture recordings in the books, this would be purely a performance for others. Illustrating the second type of rule – acknowledging vulnerability – I do not capture any reading for pleasure in these books. Were these wholly private spaces, I probably would note everything I read. As they are not private, I found that the idea of sharing my non-work-related reading (which over the course of my PhD has increasingly taken the form of 'guilty pleasure' books read over and over again) made me uncomfortable. This discomfort reduced both my enjoyment and the mental health benefits of this activity, so I decided not to log this information. However, guilty-pleasure listening is certainly in evidence in the books. I feel that my listening habits are relevant to the work I do, so I try not to shy away from noting even the cheesiest of albums, focusing instead on how they are balanced with a range of other types of music.[45]

The question of omission is at the heart of how documentation frames the material it captures. This may be a question of what is not captured in the video frame or in the photograph, but other formats have their own framing devices too. For example, in the previous chapter, Chapter 7, I mentioned Luke Nickel's use of transcription in *String Quartet #1*. While Nickel's transcription is an accurate record of the ensemble's conversation in the rehearsal, the conventions of the style of transcription used lean towards omitting filler words such as 'um' and 'ah'.[46] The words of the conversation are accurate, but the omission of the filler words results in a conversational style in which nobody hesitates, nobody is uncertain or working out what they're trying to say as they go. Just as the video camera frames

45 For example, in a day of particular variety, 7 December 2021's page shows a broad listening list including Ariel Ramirez's *Missa Criolla*, a Christmas album by The Sixteen, John Lely's *Orrery*, Danish pop group Alphabeat's *This Is Alphabeat*, a playlist of Australian pub rock classics, and the lounge album *Bongoland*. A full list is available in the spread for this date at https://notebook.caitlinrowley.com/view-by-notebook/combined-composition-notebook-diary-12/.

46 Nickel was working as a transcriber at this time, so he used the same style of transcription that he was using professionally (Nickel, 2024).

a particular subject, the conventions of this style of transcription prioritise words over other forms of utterance which may contain meaning.

Authenticity may also depend on perspective. In Chapter 7, I positioned the video part in the final section of Laura Bowler's *SHOW(ti)ME* as an example of fictive practice. However, Zubin Kanga's description of his actions in this sequence entangles the performer's present and past practice with historical precedent and the addition of invention for effect (Kanga, 2023). This mélange of fact and fiction demonstrates the complexity of the idea of authenticity across the framework. Except for the invented detail of the hot drink, it could be argued that all Kanga's actions in this clip offer some measure of 'authenticity' in that they have a basis in his practice, but the complete performance does not represent Kanga's practice *at the time of recording*. This section of *SHOW(ti)ME*, then, sits primarily within fictive practice, but also has strong links with performed documentation.

8.2 MULTIPLE INTENTIONS AND AMBIGUITY

Similarly to the notebooks example given above, Iris Garrelfs' *Bedroom Symphonies* (2014) uses documentation created with simultaneously private and public intentions. *Bedroom Symphonies* is

> an album of eight compositions made from voice practice sessions during a number of tours and residencies. So, imagine me sitting on a hotel bed, or friend's sofa, laptop on the night table with a head microphone plugged straight into it and you won't be too far from reality.
>
> (Garrelfs, 2014, p. 3)

In an email interview with Garrelfs about *Bedroom Symphonies*, she acknowledged the ambiguity of her intentions when making the source recordings:

> The intention was a little ambiguous – I was recording partially just because I could, partially to hear what it sounded like when out of the performance/ practice mode and partially because I wondered if I could do something with the snippets afterwards.
>
> (Garrelfs, 2023)

Garrelfs' comments feel very familiar to me. They chime with my own often multiple intentions when creating recordings, such as with field recordings, where I have a private purpose to capture a moment for my own enjoyment as well as a vague sense that those sounds could become useful in the future, without having any specific purpose in mind. I find that these types of mixed-intention situations often feel like play: nothing in the future is committed to, so while it exists, it does not particularly interfere with the documentation I am making. Garrelfs declares that the intentions did not affect her decisions about what equipment was used: 'I was using what I had available and I liked the restrictions a pared-down set-up entails' (2023). She seems, too, to take a certain delight in what others might consider imperfect recordings, accepting their 'flaws' as being interesting and authentic to the Studio space she created through her practice:

> As the practice microphone wasn't exactly the best on the market and it was also used sans sound card, there is a certain raw feel to the sound. […] I really like the way you can hear the materiality of the situation in the recordings, the quality of the equipment, my response to it, the occasional keyboard sound that creeps into a rhythm.
>
> (Garrelfs, 2014, p. 3)

The mix of private and public intentions, along with the desire to be able to assess her performance from an audience perspective (which encourages a commitment to authenticity), positions the documentation used in Garrelfs' album across both true and performed documentation.

In the case of my work *POV*, however, one set of intentions for the documentation's creation overrides another. *POV* is realised from photographs captured during a single performance of *Aides Memoire*, in which photography assumes a sonic and gestural role. In this piece, the performers make a range of sounds with their cameras – by taking photos, turning dials and so on – and use them as props with which to gesturally illustrate the travelogue-style narration. The instructions relating to photography in the *Aides Memoire* score state the following:

> In this piece, what is photographed is less important than the sound of the photo-taking. There is no need to frame a pleasing image or to ensure that photographs are in focus. Instead, listen to the sounds of the recording and the narration, know the sound of the cameras you are operating and

> improvise your part to interact with these sounds and the other sounds being produced around you.
>
> That being said, photos should be taken from a variety of angles over the course of the piece – this will contribute more visual interest to the performance and provide variety in the resulting images.
>
> (Rowley, 2017a)

Not only is the intentional framing of images a low priority for the performers, but it is supported by the instruction in the score which encourages performers to switch the display screens of all digital cameras off (where possible). Without the screens, trying to construct a pleasing photograph requires deliberate action to achieve – raising the viewfinder to the eye, framing the image, etc. The two sets of intentions – the intention to make sounds and gestures as part of the performance through photography (which documents the performance) and the intention to document the performance (through photography) for use in *POV* – exist simultaneously. However, there is a 'high-stakes'/'low-stakes' situation in play which directs the performers' attention more strongly to the current performance than to the later, potential use of the images. While a decision about whether to create a realisation of *POV* must be made before the performance of *Aides Memoire* (so that appropriate consent can be obtained from people at the performance), that decision changes nothing about the performance except for awareness of what might happen with the images afterwards.

Theoretically, this awareness could prompt a certain amount of vulnerability and concern for a performer who might feel that their images might not be 'good enough' to be made public. However, the live performance is a high-stakes situation (happening now, certain, an audience is present, the performers are professionally invested in presenting a convincing performance) while the *POV* realisation is relatively low-stakes (sometime in the future, not guaranteed to be made, the performers are not professional photographers whose reputation could be damaged by producing technically imperfect images, nor will any individual performer-photographer be associated with any particular image). As both of these occur at the same time, the immediate, real needs of performing *Aides Memoire* take precedence over any perceived needs of *POV*. This ensures that the resulting photographs, in all their roughness, accurately reflect the actions of the

performance rather than being shaped by knowledge of their planned use. The overriding sonic and gestural priorities of *Aides Memoire* become the intention of the documentation used in *POV*, and the resulting images might therefore be considered 'true' documentation despite their public intention.

While some forms of multiple co-existing intentions result in ambiguity, as with Garrelfs' *Bedroom Symphonies*, ambiguity may also be generated by the impossibility of precisely capturing something intangible, such as emotions or personal experiences. In the previous chapter, I offered the portrait footage of *Quiet Songs* as an example of performed documentation. However, an argument might also be made for the portrait material – in both its original and edited forms – to be considered true documentation as well.

> Visual ethnography does not necessarily involve simply recording what we can see, but also offers ethnographers routes through which to come to understand those very things that we cannot see.
>
> (Pink, 2013, p. 38)

To pursue this idea, the portrait material – as a vocal improvisation responding to my memories of my emotions and the experience of trying to work in a restrictive working environment – might be considered a form of creative documentation of my state of mind in that difficult situation. The video editing that fractures, silences and repeats the elements of the improvisation, being also created by me with the goal of trying to convey that experience, could similarly be considered an element which contributes to the documentation. Both the improvisation and the editing could be read as audiovisual representations of a state of mind that can only be conveyed second-hand, not captured directly – composition as a documentation medium, perhaps.

8.3 SHIFTING INTENTIONS

Intentions may shift during documentation in ways which may also adjust the commitment to authenticity and so move the resulting material from one category of documentation towards another. In Chapter 7, I mentioned Neil Hannon's experience of capturing the voice memo that 'Philip and Steve's Furniture

Removal Company' begins with. He was clear that his awareness of the performic possibilities of the documentation emerged while – not before – recording: 'As I was doing it, I remember thinking, well, this is fun. This is almost like performance in itself' (Hannon, 2022). I suggest that this developing awareness of a public use for the voice memo could be categorised as a shift from true to performed documentation during the recording.

Alexander Schubert's intentions, however, move in the opposite direction while creating the documentation for *HELLO* described in the previous chapter. I have already described (in Chapter 7) Schubert's intention to film himself working on his computer. However, he also told me that after setting up the cameras and beginning to work on *HELLO* (performed documentation), he became so immersed in what he was doing that he forgot he was being filmed. This situation resulted in, he told me, a couple of hours' worth of footage, rather than the few minutes he needed for the piece.[47] Not being aware of being filmed equates to not being aware of being observed – this moves the composer's activity from taking place in a public space to effectively taking place in a private one, becoming true documentation. I suggest that as Schubert's level of focus on his work rose, so did (unconsciously) his commitment to authenticity, pulling his intention from the public zone into the private.

8.4 MULTIVALENCE

Iwona Blazwick makes a connection between multivalence and the nature of the Studio, stating that '[t]he conceptual zone of the studio is [...] multivalent and constantly mutating' (Blazwick, 2012). I use the term 'multivalence' to indicate where a piece of documentation simultaneously holds multiple meanings relating to different pieces or contexts. As implied in Blazwick's suggestion of ongoing change, I have found that multivalence develops over time.

Reusing documentation in different contexts may cause it to become multivalent, as it retains its relationship with its initial context while taking on new meanings. My long-standing interest in making field recordings when travelling (as

47 Private conversation with Alexander Schubert, 9 December 2022.

discussed in relation to *Aides Memoire* in Chapter 7) has recently been more precisely directed through my work with Harry Matthews for his piece *Home and Away Chords*, which he wrote for me in 2022.[48] Matthews asked me to make recordings of my environment, when travelling and while at home, and to sing or play a viola note in response to the sounds around me. While I normally consider my field recordings to be true documentation, made primarily for my own interest and enjoyment, these recordings for Matthews' piece are performed documentation. The 'away' sounds (sounds recorded while away from home) are true representations of the places and sonic environments I find myself in when I am out or travelling, but the choices I make about which sounds to capture for this piece are informed by my desire to contribute a variety of sounds for Matthews to choose from, as well as by whether I feel comfortable singing in the (usually) public environment I am in. Similarly, when I am at home, I find myself listening for sounds that will provide some variety in my 'home' recordings – building works nearby, changed traffic patterns due to temporary traffic lights, and so on. While I do regularly listen to the sounds of my studio and think about the sonic profile of the room (an inevitable activity, given my area of research), I would not normally make multiple recordings of that familiar place, nor perform with them as I do for Matthews' piece. These recordings are made for the specific purpose of being used in *Home and Away Chords* – they are performed documentation of my studio.

In *Home and Away Chords*, Matthews weaves a soundscape from my recordings, layering the sounds from different places to create chords by aligning my sung or played notes. One of the recordings made for this piece, however – an extended recording of church bells and unexpectedly melodious screaming children captured in Cologne in August 2022 – has gained a second life in a different context which shifts its position in relation to the framework. This recording was (re)used in whole,[49] including my sung note, as the basis of *Exquisite Bells (Cologne)* (2022–23), a duo for piano, ROLI Seaboard Block and tape by Edward

48 See the score and performance video for *Home and Away Chords* at https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.26106031.v1.

49 Only minor edits – in the form of brief fades to smooth the start and end of the recording – were applied for its use in this new context.

Henderson and me.[50] In this context, the recording could be seen perhaps not only as a performed document of that place and experience, captured on my travels, but also as true documentation of the work I was doing with Matthews that prompted the recording and shaped the way I approached it. The latter designation, however, does not replace the former. Instead, both exist simultaneously, and the documentation itself accumulates meanings within the context of *Exquisite Bells (Cologne)*, becoming multivalent.

This example of documentation reuse is fairly straightforward. The reuse of documentation in *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, however, is more complex because the documentation not only takes on multiple categorisations from the framework but is positioned in an immersive and interactive virtual reality environment to take on additional roles as Stage space, score and even instrument.

These additional roles become possible in *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* because of two aspects of the Mozilla Hubs platform. First, Hubs allows for spaces to be 'inhabited' by an audience through the use of avatars. Once they have chosen an avatar, visitors can move around and between the 'rooms' of the piece, choose their own paths, and stop and start sound files and videos. Second, Hubs is designed as a *social* virtual reality space. Multiple people can inhabit the same digital environment, interact with one another and hear at least some of each other's interactions with the media around them.

Roland Barthes defines composition as 'to give to do' (Barthes, 1977, p. 153). If we accept that the person who 'does' in this scenario is the performer, then in *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, the audience member who is making decisions about where to go and what to interact with has taken on that role. In respect of what is 'given' to the performer, the virtual reality environment forms first the score – a structure which provides the parameters of performance – and then the instrument on which the performance takes place, through activating sounds by entering rooms or clicking buttons on media panels. The social nature of the Hubs platform means that the decision to start and stop sounds and videos is not necessarily a private one if

50 A recording of *Exquisite Bells (Cologne)* is available at https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.30228136.

others are present in the same room of the piece. Instead, these actions become a shared, social – and therefore public (at least to an extent) – performance, and the VR environment is simultaneously the score that guides the performance, the instrument the visitor-performer plays and the Stage they perform on.

The notebook spread which forms the 'floor' plane of 'Phyllida Barlow Playground' (Figure 15) provides an example of multivalence in *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*. These pages were created while I was working on ideas for *Quiet Songs*. The writing and drawing in them were my response to the sculptures in Phyllida Barlow's exhibition *cul de sac* (Barlow, 2019). The overwritten writing-through was how I processed my thoughts about the exhibition, and the margin notes were the ideas which emerged from the writing-through. These notes – '[...] highlights joins', 'join as content – consistency' and 'unity doesn't require coherence' – were critical for developing the colour flashes which highlight each cut in the video

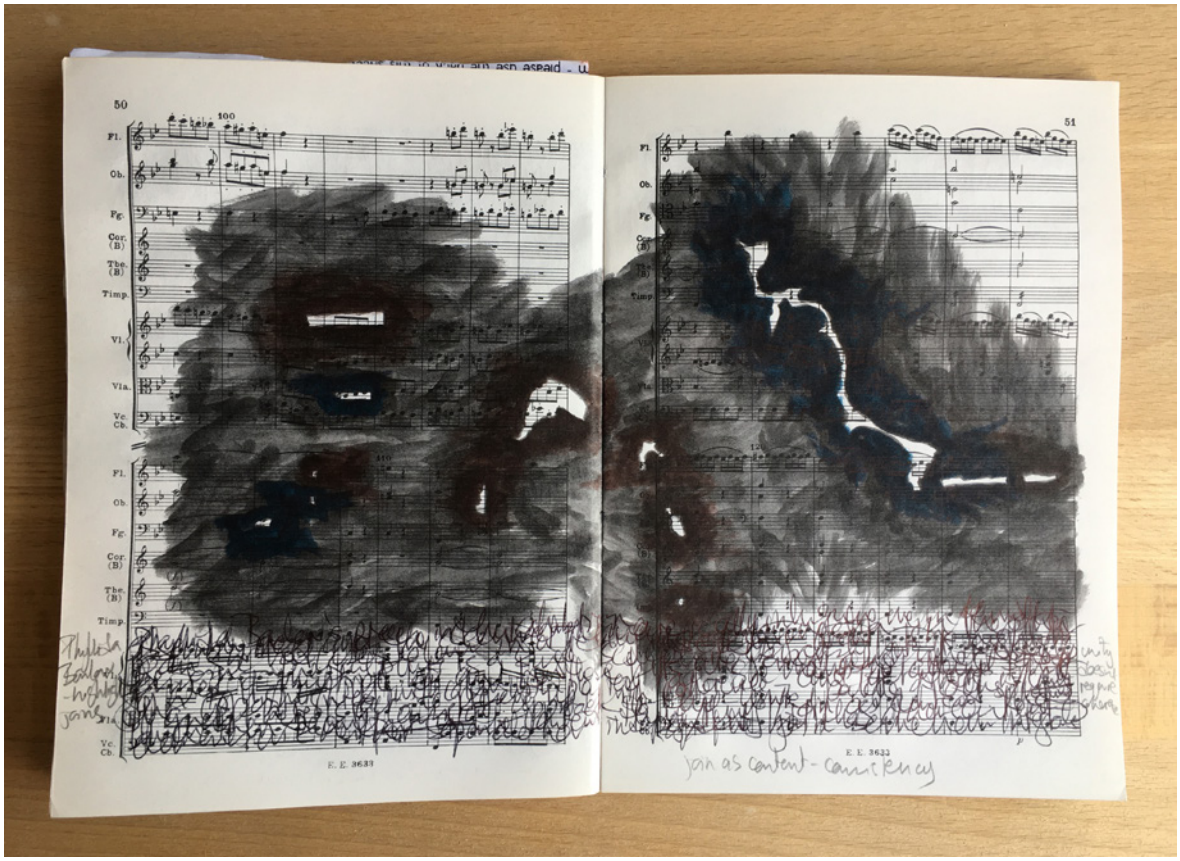

Figure 15. *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, the notebook spread from the Haydn volume of altered books, which forms the 'floor' in 'Phyllida Barlow Playground', https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582051.

part of *Quiet Songs*.[51] The drawing is of cracks in one of the artworks on display in the exhibition. Photographing this notebook spread not only digitised the pages for online use, but also documented them as they were at a particular point in time.[52] This photograph – originally created for archival purposes and to post on social media – was one of the images of notebook pages that I offered Bastard Assignments to use as a graphic score in the workshops we held in November 2019. The group performance heard in 'Phyllida Barlow Playground' was improvised in response to this spread.

So far, there are three layers of meaning accumulated in this single image:

1. the notebook itself as true documentation of my working process for *Quiet Songs*
2. the photograph of the notebook as performed documentation (carefully lit and framed for use on social media) of the notebook spread
3. the photograph as true documentation of its role as the score for the performance heard in 'Phyllida Barlow Playground'

However, in the virtual reality environment of *HAYDN SPACE OPERA,* this photograph is used as the 'floor'. It is something both to be observed and traversed, to be seen from a distance as well as close up. It can even be passed through and seen in reverse from the other side, owing to the strange non-corporeal physics possible in virtual reality. In this guise, a fourth layer of meaning has been accumulated by this image:

4. the photograph as an object that is part of the Stage space's locale in 'Phyllida Barlow Playground'

Finally, a fifth layer may also be added to this image:

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51 I discuss these colour flashes in Chapter 9, 'Possibility and vulnerability'.

52 Several spreads in this volume (although not this one) were created using homemade inks, so some have faded over time, and the notebooks themselves are subject to handling damage, so photographing them early captures the state of a spread close to the time when it was created.

5. the photograph (in association with my memories of its creation) is the source of the other important element of the Stage space locale in this room: the strange physics-defying white structures which loosely resemble some of Barlow's sculptures in the *cul de sac* exhibition.

All five layers of meaning served roles in the development of this piece in a sequential fashion; however, the photograph itself holds all of them simultaneously in the space of the piece, encapsulating all these meanings and functions in one multivalent digital object.

The notebook spread which formed the score for the performance in 'The Apocalypse' occupies a similar position, in that the image used in the room was the score for the performance which is heard there. It is similarly multivalent, but whereas the 'Phyllida Barlow Playground' spread prompted the creation of a new 3D construction (as just discussed), in 'The Apocalypse' the treatment and appearance of the notebook photograph itself draws on the content of the pages it represents. The margin note 'make more mess'[53] has been implemented in this room by creating what I think of as an 'exploded field' of image fragments, most suspended in 'thin air' while a few move slowly through the space, creating a different experience of navigating the page than in other rooms of *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* that use notebook pages as floors.

The writing video that appears in 'The Café', flanked by two videos of sugar sinking into coffee, is also multivalent. First, it documents an occasion of my working in my notebook in a café; it was then multiplied (Figure 16) and used as a score in the first workshops on *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*,[54] then that video score was reused in a Zoom experiment for the Bastard Assignments 'Lockdown Jams' project, before finally becoming an element in the virtual reality environment.

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53 It is difficult to find – and read – the margin notes in 'The Apocalypse', but these can be seen in the image of this spread which appears at the start of 'The Corridor', https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.30246409.

54 I combined three copies of this video at different speeds, placed next to one another to use as the score for what became the mumbled speaking heard on first entering 'Phyllida Barlow Playground'. This configuration can be seen in the Zoom experiment on display in 'The Corridor' (panel 5 on the map of this room).

Figure 16. (video). *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, video score created from three copies of the video of me working with overwriting in the Haydn altered book in a café. Each copy is running at a different speed from the others. https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582054.

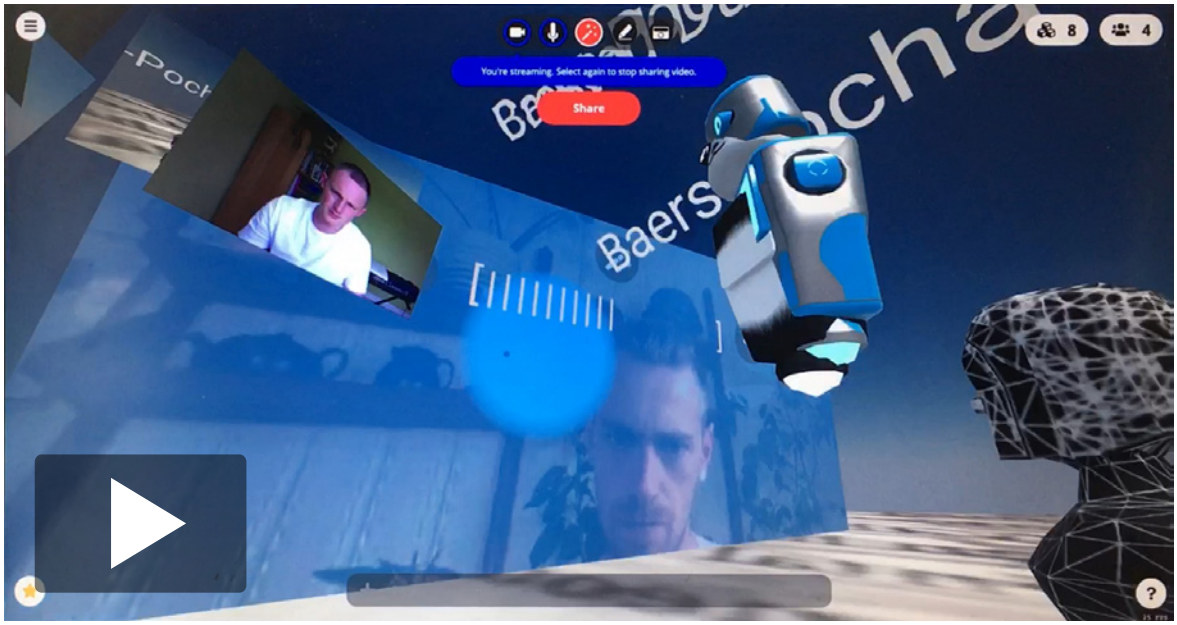

Figure 17. (video). *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, Bastard Assignments experimenting with video livestreaming in Mozilla Hubs, 17 July 2020. https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582060.

To further complicate the multivalent nature of *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, some of the documentation hung on the walls of 'The Corridor' evidences yet another role – that *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* has functioned as the Studio for its own making. The videos of Bastard Assignments' experiments in early versions of the piece (Figure 17) show the group playing with the possibilities of the Hubs environment for interaction and live performance, testing out how proximity affects conversation, experimenting with the scale of videos and testing remote performance with webcams. Two screen shots showing different stages in 'The Corridor's development capture moments from 'playtests' with Open Scores Lab members (Figure 18), where the group explored the piece with me while discussing their experience of it.

Figure 18. *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, two screenshots taken during Open Scores Lab playtests in 'The Corridor', 15 January 2021 (above) and 26 May 2023 (below).

Studio, Stage, score – all these spaces are entangled in the multivalent virtual reality environment of *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* and the pieces of documentation which form it. This example, perhaps more than any other offered in this chapter, demonstrates the complexity that may be generated when using documentation as material within pieces and not just for archival or research purposes. Certainly, some pieces of documentation may be categorised simply, using the framework I introduced in Chapter 7, but for many more, the framework is perhaps more useful as a tool to understand the collisions, shifts and overlaps – the entanglements, even – that often emerge when creating and using documentation within new creative work.

CHAPTER 9 POSSIBILITY AND VULNERABILITY

In this chapter, I return to the topic of vulnerability which I introduced in relation to the entanglement of private and public in Chapter 4. In that chapter, I referred to Erving Goffman's work (1990), which suggests that vulnerability may result when people feel that they are not presenting an idealised version of themselves to others. Such a situation may be prompted by working with documentation of creative practice in which the ideas and actions of the artist may be improvisatory, open to serendipity but also risking failure. The results may be exciting and productive, but they may also appear rough and imperfect – perhaps even unprofessional. In a project such as mine, in which private and public are entangled, the voluntary nature of the exposure does not diminish the feelings of vulnerability. Instead, I have needed to develop an understanding of what prompts these feelings and find ways to manage them. 'Every behavioral scientist', writes George Devereux, 'has at his disposal certain frames of reference, methods and procedures which – incidentally – also happen to reduce the anxiety aroused by his data and therefore enable him to function efficiently' (Devereux, 1967, p. 83). In this chapter, I will present a case study which was instrumental in helping me understand the type of circumstances that prompt the discomfort of vulnerability for me. I will then outline some 'frames of reference, methods and procedures' which I have developed to manage my vulnerability around the creating and

assessing of documentation, and which allow me to use documentation which makes me feel exposed in public-facing work, without significant distress.

I feel that I should acknowledge here that I have been posting work in progress online – 'working with the garage door up' (Matuschak, 2023) – for over a decade at the time of writing this thesis. I began blogging about work in progress in 2010,[55] and after years of working in this way, I feel that I have developed a greater tolerance of feelings of vulnerability around my creative work than is perhaps usual. The more I have written about and posted examples of my work in progress online, the easier I have found it to make incomplete material and half-formed ideas public. Presumably, practice somewhat dulls the discomfort that accompanies making normally private material public. However, this does not indicate that I do not feel vulnerable when I make working material available to others; it merely shows that I have found ways of developing resilience to such work.

9.1 'TOGETHER/NOT TOGETHER': A CASE STUDY IN VULNERABILITY

'Together/Not Together: A conversation about networked collaborative processes'[56] is a video presentation I created with my Bastard Assignments colleague Josh Spear in which we discussed our online collaborative projects for the 2021 Music and/as Process online conference. While other projects positioned me to confront my vulnerabilities surrounding self-confidence, appearance, skills and other issues, in no other project did I feel as if I was trying to battle my way through a storm of discomfort in the way that I did in creating this presentation. This experience prompted me to question why I felt so much less vulnerable working on any of

55 I posted my first blog post about work in progress on 6 October 2010, writing about how I was approaching a new piece which I had just learned would be for a different instrumentation than originally suggested. See Rowley, C. (2010) 'On starting up fresh', *Caitlin Rowley*, 6 October. Available at: https://caitlinrowley.com/journal/2010/10/06/on-starting-up-fresh/ (Accessed: 9 March 2024).

56 'Together/Not Together' can be viewed online at https://youtu.be/C4wH1yn085Q.

my other projects which used documentation than I did on this one conference presentation.

After some reflection, I concluded that 'Together/Not Together' created somewhat of a 'perfect storm' of vulnerability-prompting circumstances, each related to some sort of limitation. While individual aspects would likely have created some feelings of restriction in me, at the intersection of them all, I felt trapped in a sense of exposure about which I could do very little other than choose to battle through it or pull out of the commitment altogether. These limitations related to the presentation's intended context, the format, the material we were working with, the time we had available to complete the work, the time limitation of the presentation itself, and the subject matter.

CONTEXT LIMITATION

The context of an academic conference, such as the one in which this work was to be presented, imposes a certain pressure to appear authoritative on the topic under discussion. This feeling was increased by Bastard Assignments' online work having been used as an example in the conference's call for papers. This expectation of authority prompted a perception of the requirement to communicate that authority clearly and concisely.

FORMAT LIMITATION

Spear and I had agreed to use a conversation format for this presentation, and we had decided that presenting a pre-made video would be better than trying to hold a structured conversation live on Zoom, due to the uncertainty of how to manage a presentation by two simultaneous presenters through that software. The format of the presentation was therefore 'locked in' from an early stage; to change it would have meant starting again from scratch, which was not feasible because of the limited time we had to work on the presentation.

TIME LIMITATION

The decision to create a video presentation to play back at the conference meant that not only were we working to complete the presentation by the day of the

conference, but we also needed to ensure that the video was finished and ready in advance – there could be no last-minute changes or improvisation while presenting; it needed to be complete. Additionally, we both had multiple other commitments while preparing the presentation, reducing the amount of time we could each spend on it. The presentation itself also had a time limitation – 30 minutes, a duration which the improvised conversation we recorded to work with had greatly exceeded.

SUBJECT MATTER LIMITATION

The subject matter we planned to cover in our presentation had been set out in our submitted abstract, so we needed to – at least broadly – produce a presentation which matched the abstract that had been accepted.

MATERIAL LIMITATIONS

To create the material for the video, Spear and I recorded a conversation over Zoom. While we had planned some points to talk about, we had approached it as a real conversation, so we had only one set of footage and one answer per question. As is often the case with casual conversations with friends, sometimes our responses rambled. Our arguments were not always clear, and sometimes we forgot to include important pieces of information. However, Spear did not want to rerecord, as he felt strongly that we had achieved 'a very authentic conversation feel'[57] in the recording we had. Additionally, after colour-grading an early, rough-cut version, we became limited to the material that had been in that cut, because returning to the pre-colour-graded state would have meant that the edits made after that point would have needed to be recreated, requiring more time than we had to spare.

Assembling all these limitations, the challenge of this project, then, was:

- to be able to clearly and concisely convey authority
- on a pre-determined topic
- to fit the designated time,

57 Private email from Josh Spear, 9 June 2021.

but to do so with

- very limited time to work on it, and
- very limited material, which did not always feel concise or clear or authoritative.

My solution to this dilemma was necessarily multi-faceted:

1. **Selection:** identifying the most succinct points from our conversation, trimming them as much as possible to save precious seconds.
2. **Using examples:** identifying points where a long description could be more effectively replaced with an example image or clip. Images also helped to disguise moments where creating a condensed argument resulted in numerous cuts. At these points, the audio might have sounded natural, but the video revealed all the changes made, giving a 'choppy' effect which emphasised that there was a need to edit in the first place (see Goffman, 1990, p. 52 on the concealing of corrections as well as errors). While these sorts of changes would have been unacceptable to me to hide in a piece – as I will discuss shortly – they felt necessary in this context to project an appearance of authority, as well as a more comfortable and less distracting viewing experience.[58]
3. **Annotating:** text annotations over the footage and examples to replace or correct inaccurate verbal comments, or to add information we had failed to mention during our conversation (see Figure 19).
4. **Refilming:** as a last resort, due to not being able to appropriately apply the above techniques and struggling to trim my descriptions of *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, I refilmed one section.

I wish to dwell for a moment on the last solution of refilming. I have avoided refilming documentation in this project, except where required for specific compositional needs (I will discuss this in more detail later in this chapter). Even

58 In the context of the framework I proposed in Chapter 7, this might be considered to be edging towards fictive practice in its quest to present a coherent narrative that positions the speakers as more authoritative than the original material implied.

though this presentation was not part of my research project, it felt like a betrayal of my research principles to attempt to disguise the fact that I had refilmed. Given the non-replicable effect of natural light and the difficulty of exactly recreating framing, as well as my appearance at a later date, this would probably have been impossible anyway. So instead, I chose to recreate my responses in the

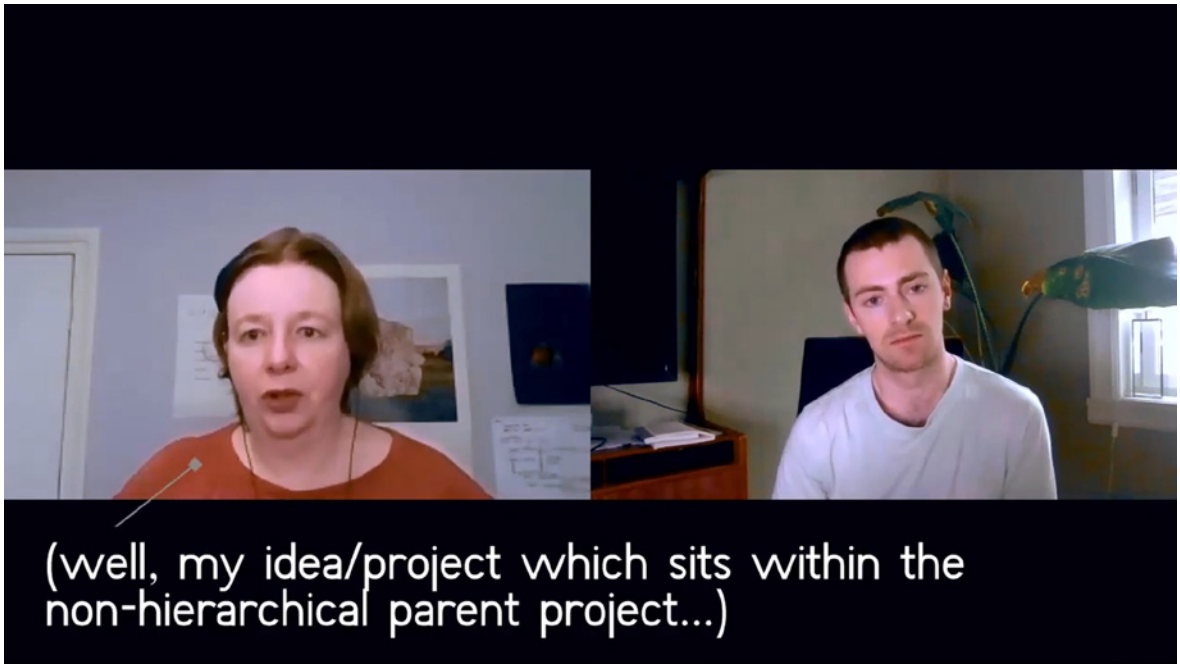

Figure 19. 'Together/Not Together', Screen shot showing a corrective annotation. [video presentation © 2021 Caitlin Rowley and Josh Spear]

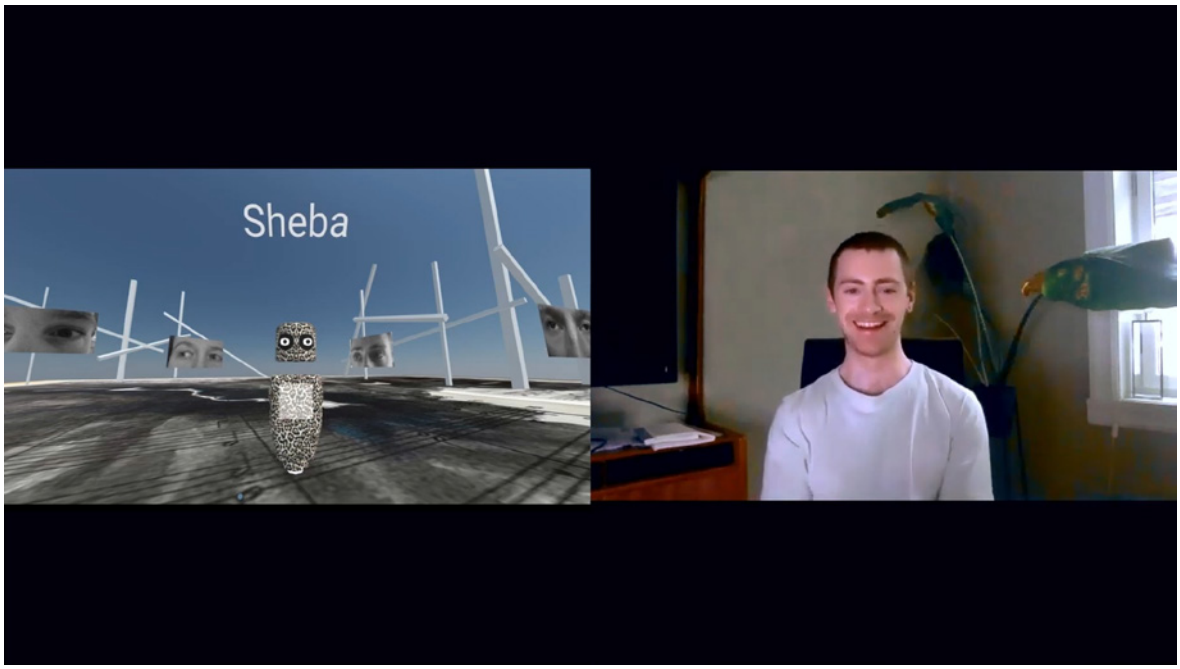

Figure 20. 'Together/Not Together', Sheba conversing with Josh Spear from within *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*. [video presentation © 2021 Caitlin Rowley and Josh Spear]

persona of my *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* avatar, Sheba (Figure 20). This solution sidestepped the question of presenting something that had been faked, because the replacement footage looked so different from the original, while simultaneously taking on an aspect of *becoming* an example, contributing an additional dimension to what I was saying about the piece.

The use of textual annotation added information that had not been mentioned in Spear's and my original conversation. It also helped to create explicit links between verbal comments and visual material, which was useful for the context. However, it is worth mentioning that while annotation was useful for filling in the gaps in our 'performance of authority' in this presentation, it can also highlight omissions. As noted in Chapter 4, Goffman explains that people tend to hide any evidence that an error was corrected, as well as the error itself (1990, p. 52), so while annotation resolves one source of vulnerability (a concern about diminished authority or professionalism due to missing important information), it may also prompt another, by suggesting that the annotation needed to be made to correct an error.

9.2 UNDERSTANDING MY VULNERABILITY PROMPTS

Reflecting on the differences between creating 'Together/Not Together' and creating the work incorporating documentation of creative practice in this research project, I realised that the principal difference between these was the level of control I felt over what I was creating. This applied especially to being able to choose the material I worked with and the expectations of the final form of the work.

Both these aspects were extremely limited in assembling 'Together/Not Together' but have been quite broad for my other projects. For a piece like *Quiet Songs*, for example, I had a self-imposed limitation to use *some* documentation in the piece, and video seemed an appropriate medium to use. Beyond this, however, I was free to select from well over two and a half hours of documentation video footage for the material to use in my 10-minute piece. This contrasts with 'Together/ Not Together', for which I needed to construct a 30-minute presentation from

45 minutes of material. I therefore had around 10 times[59] the amount of video documentation (not even including non-video documentation) to choose from for *Quiet Songs* than I did for 'Together/Not Together'.

While, at 10 minutes, the expected duration of *Quiet Songs* was one-third of that of the conference presentation, the other aspects of its creation allowed for a lot of leeway. I had started writing the piece as a way of thinking about how restrictive working environments made me feel, but there was no requirement to keep to that idea or ensure it was communicated to the audience. I did not even need to make the piece a solo for myself – it only needed to be able to be performed by one to four members of Bastard Assignments. I had a fixed première date, but I had started working on the piece about 10 months before so there was no need to rush.

These circumstances differ substantially from the many intersecting restrictions of creating 'Together/Not Together', and I believe that the availability of choices lies at the heart of my experience of vulnerability. The lesson of 'Together/Not Together' was about being able to identify how much agency I felt I had or could find in the choices I made about the material that made me feel vulnerable.

9.3 MANAGING VULNERABILITY

While having the agency to make choices about the material I use is a factor which can reduce my feelings of exposure while working with material that makes me feel vulnerable, making decisions can also be a source of discomfort and possible disruption. Vohs *et al.* (2008, p. 895) found that decision-making reduced people's capacity for self-regulation, suggesting that the making of one decision may make it harder to make subsequent choices. They also link this finding with behaviours such as procrastination and a reduced ability to solve problems (Vohs *et al.*, 2008, p. 888 and 890). Seeking to avoid such behaviours, I employed precommitment strategies (Baumeister and Tierney, 2011) in this project: self-imposed limitations which reduced the number of decisions I needed to make about working with documentation in my creative practice. Two precommitments which I found particularly useful were my commitments to:

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59 On calculating the ratio of material to work duration, *Quiet Song*s had a ratio of 152:10 (1,520%) compared to the 45:30 ratio of 'Together/Not Together' (150%).

1. wholeheartedly doing the project I had set out to do, finding ways to use the documentation I created in the pieces I was making
2. not re-filming documentation that fulfilled my compositional requirements, even if I was uncomfortable with how it seemed to present me as a musician or a person.

These decisions led me to confront rather than try to avoid my own vulnerability, and to find ways to work with that vulnerability without being crushed by self-doubt or impostor syndrome. Having these precommitments in place removed the possibility of not engaging with vulnerability – backing away from the discomfort was simply not an option I allowed myself.

I devised these precommitments in response to what I wanted to achieve with this research (as outlined in Section I: 'Introduction'), and in defining these parameters I clarified what I would and would not accept from myself in relation to these ideas. I had worked with similar limitations before and found those precommitments useful for getting me past easy solutions and into a zone which I found tended to produce more interesting, challenging and educational results for me. Writing in a 2014 blog post about using 12-sided dice to determine pitch repetitions in my song cycle *Crossing Dartmoor*, I noted that

> faced with a predetermined decision, the question is no longer 'gosh – should I?' but becomes 'how should these repetitions be paced?' 'what are their dynamics?' 'how do I shape the repetitions so they create suspense and momentum and don't just interfere with the piece's progress?'
>
> (Rowley, 2014c)

Precommitments, I have found, offer a way to bypass the gut reaction to vulnerability or creative fear, replacing it with more useful, less emotionally challenging questions of technique. In committing to working with documentation, I pushed everything I did towards pragmatic questions of how to make it work; my commitment to not re-filming for aesthetic purposes alone encouraged me to embrace serendipity and learn new skills to work with rather than eradicate perceived flaws in the material. I feel that the resulting work – as I will show below – has often been more interesting than my initial vision, and a large part of that

has been due to needing to find ways to work with the material which makes me feel vulnerable.

COMMITMENT TO THE PROJECT: NOTEBOOKS AND VLOG

The notebook publication project exists almost entirely because of my precommitment to wholeheartedly engage with the project I had set out to do. In a supervision meeting on 10 May 2017, James Saunders raised the question of how it would feel if everything in my notebooks was online for anyone to see. Realising that I could not know the answer without testing it, and with my precommitment to the project in place, posting my notebooks online became something I was going to do – I just had to work out how best to do it. Solving this problem took about three years. At first, I was considering only the logistics of the project – what was the most efficient way to post this material online, and what system would best support what I needed to do *and* provide a system that would allow others to find meaning as they interacted with the books? As I researched and considered options, I realised that the prospect of publication was leading me to censor what I was writing in a way that limited the usefulness of the notebook for my work. This led to several iterations of experimenting with formats and approaches, the most significant change of which was my adoption of overwriting for writing-through (as discussed in Chapters 1 and 9). The final step was to choose a platform and identify how to extract certain types of information from the images of the books for others. All this work has resulted in a transformed notebook format, combining my daily diary and composition journal, using both legible and illegible text; drawing; using initials instead of full names where other people are mentioned; and incorporating pasted-in photographs and ephemera from my daily life. Scans of these pages are edited to obscure any personal details and some personal photos, then uploaded to a WordPress website, re-dated with the date of the pages rather than the date of uploading and tagged to capture details such as piece names in a trackable form. I discuss the technical side of publishing the notebooks in more detail in Chapter 11, 'Context and visibility'.

My precommitment reduced my stress levels and allowed me to move straight to thinking more deeply about the implications of my publication project, and on to practical experimentation. Without that limitation, I suspect that not only the

first stages of the project but every subsequent development would have been accompanied by anxiety about whether publication would seem narcissistic, or if there was an audience for it, and what other people might think about me. It seems likely that I would not have completed the project, as so much of my energy would have gone into repeatedly deciding whether to continue with it.

In the vlog, my precommitment to the project reduced the number of decisions I needed to make about using documentation which made me feel vulnerable. The challenge with vlogging was to succinctly convey important steps in a piece's development as it stood at the time of filming, sometimes from limited available material. Sometimes the best solution to this challenge was to use a clip that captured a failed experiment, was unflattering, or at times both, as in the segment in Figure 21 where I discuss an early stage of my vocal solo *dot drip line line 8918: EDGE*.

My precommitment meant that the only relevant question in these circumstances was 'Which clip conveys the idea most clearly and efficiently?' The narrative surrounding the clips became vital (as it is in Figure 21) to cushion my sense of

Figure 21. (video). Vlog, episode 18, 13 March 2018, featuring a clip of a failed improvisation for *dot drip line line 8918: EDGE*, https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582063.

vulnerability and to make the context clear to an audience so they could understand why these failures, which might look 'stupid' or 'ugly', could still contribute value to the composition process. If the Studio needs to '[make] a safe space for stupidity' (Kentridge, 2014, p. 128), then sometimes it becomes necessary, when making the Studio public, to try to reconstruct the 'safety' of the space through other means, both to protect me so I can continue to work, and to help others understand the nature of the work.

FULFILLING COMPOSITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

As described above, my second precommitment was to not refilm documentation that 'fulfilled my compositional requirements'. I feel that this phrase requires explanation. Most of the documentation I have had to work with is of me doing things for the first time, enacting ideas, or experimenting without having refined my concepts or perfected a performance approach beforehand. This approach relates to the high value I have aimed to place on authenticity across this project – my commitment to documenting the reality of how I compose. Correspondingly, this material is sometimes poorly framed or lit, may show me from an unflattering angle, and may show actions that appear 'silly'. All of these are things that I would find it more comfortable to suppress, but to rehearse and refilm would introduce a measure of artifice that could suggest a slicker approach to composing than is true for me – a form of fictive practice, to use my framework's term. My goal, however, was not to prevent all refilming, but to avoid doing it for the sole reason that some aspect of the documentation already produced was embarrassing or not to my liking. The question of refilming relates particularly to performed documentation (as described in Chapter 7), which I have often created with a particular plan for how I wanted the result to look and/or sound, according to its intended use in a piece.

Refilming – or not – for compositional purposes

My original idea for *Quiet Songs* was that it would be a set of very quiet songs, reflecting my response to a restrictive working environment in which I needed to work temporarily in 2018. When I filmed the portrait material (Figure 11, p. 70), I was still feeling very close to the quiet improvisations I had experimented with in that environment, but I was starting to draw in ideas of how I felt my

compositional voice had been silenced there. My compositional intention in filming the portrait material comprised three elements:

1. the framing focusing on my face
2. performance of quiet vocal improvisations
3. stripping the sound out of the footage to produce an impression of being silenced.

Once I had recorded my improvisations and removed the sound, however, I found that the footage showed very few visible cues that I was making any sound at all – the imagined silencing effect was completely absent (Figure 22).

The first two compositional intentions had been met, but the third, the silencing idea, had failed. I could have discarded the silencing idea and sought a different way to use these quiet improvisations, but the silencing felt like the driving element of what I wanted to do in this piece. One of the other parameters needed to change to try to make it work. After some consideration, I realised that in the restrictive working environment, it was not the quiet sounds that were being silenced but the loud ones, so I made a new version. In this refilmed version, I favoured effortful sounds which might render my performance comprehensible even when silenced – blowing raspberries, popping sounds, screaming, etc. This time, on removing the sound from the footage, it was immediately clear to me that this version conveyed my compositional concept of silencing – it fulfilled my compositional requirements where the first version had not (Figure 23).

The close-up footage of the viola's strings in *Quiet Songs* posed the opposite problem. My concept in this material was to show the strings vibrating as I pulled the bow across them. I set up my camera on a tripod, framed the shot I wanted and kept as still as possible while I improvised. However, when I watched the video afterwards, I found that I had underestimated how much I moved while playing. My intended focal point of the strings between the bridge and the fingerboard wavered in and out of shot as I played, and I was consequently very unhappy with the look of the documentation. Even accepting my limited skill as a violist, I felt it looked amateurish, and the motion even made me feel a little queasy. I could not

deny, though, that as my bow moved over the strings, I could see them vibrate in response (Figure 24). This was what I had set out to capture and – according to my own rules – it fulfilled that compositional requirement so was not a candidate for refilming.

Figure 22. (video). *Quiet Songs*, quiet vocal improvisation, with and without sound, https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582066.

Figure 23. (video). *Quiet Songs*, loud vocal improvisation with and without sound, https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582072.

Figure 24. (video). *Quiet Song*s, original documentation of the close-up viola strings showing the movement of the strings, https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582078.

9.4 WORKING WITH UNCOMFORTABLE DOCUMENTATION

While numerous decisions need to be made at the point of creating documentation, decisions about how to use that documentation after it has been created are also important. When incorporating documentation that feels unsatisfactory or flawed in some way into a piece, the choices the composer makes can smooth uncomfortable edges to the material that may prompt the composer's vulnerability response. Awareness of this realm of 'possibility' after the creation of documentation can support the prioritisation of authenticity while recording. If I know that I have a range of options for working with the material later, then the pressure to 'get it right' when creating it is reduced. In this post-production zone, I have identified three main areas where decisions can be made about documentation and its use to cushion the artist from feelings of vulnerability: selection, editing and framing.

SELECTION

As with the example of *Quiet Songs* used in the case study in this chapter, I have found that every piece has generated significantly more documentation than could have been used in it. Indeed, I had an idea to create a set of pieces entirely out

of the unused documentation of *Quiet Songs* but became overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of material and abandoned the attempt. Having a large amount of material to choose from is beneficial for a composer who may feel sensitive about some of the material they have accumulated. Elements need to be selected, and if something is truly too uncomfortable to use, there is often a different segment that could be chosen in its stead.

Selection has been important in all the works I have created using documentation, but it is central to *WALKS 1–4* and *Aides Memoire*. The entirety of *WALKS 1–4* is created from pieces of documentation. My selections were shaped by a desire to ensure that all three artists who had contributed material to the original project were represented and that all the places we worked in and with were visible. I also chose material which, to my mind, represented our individual artistic styles and interests.

My choice of field recordings in *Aides Memoire* prioritised sounds that I felt were interesting and which prompted clear memories for me, without taking much account of the quality of the audio. In some places, this created challenges, such as the faint, wind-ridden recording of distant church bells in Naples. The noise of the wind and the rough phone recording made it difficult to increase the volume of the recording to make it audible within the piece. Instead, it was placed at the end, emerging out of the mass of other bell recordings, to be heard on its own.

EDITING

Editing – whether of video, audio or images – is an extremely rich area for 'rescuing' uncomfortable material, and there are innumerable options available. Some editing techniques I have worked with over the course of this project include colouring footage, cutting, repeating, and layering effects.

The problem of the disappointing close-up viola documentation from *Quiet Songs* that I discussed in 9.3, 'Managing vulnerability', was resolved through a combination of selection and video editing, along with the application of my third research principle, to 'find the interest in imperfection'. I experienced this as a shifting of the domain of control from the point of filming and improvisation into

the zone of the edit. Selecting a short segment where the strings were mostly in the frame, I experimented with layering this footage over itself, playing with opacity effects to render the topmost layer semi-transparent and slightly offsetting one layer from another by a few frames so both could be seen. I was learning my way around a new (to me) piece of software, DaVinci Resolve, trying things out, playing and embracing serendipity. The result of these experiments is now the climax of the piece and one of my favourite sections of it, despite my initial concerns about the documentation used. The layered images and sounds not only look and sound richer than the original video, but they even amplify the effect I was aiming for: to show the movement of the strings. As a result of doubling and offsetting the video, the images of the viola move away from one another and merge again, suggesting a vibration of the instrument itself as well as its strings. The merging effect takes on an additional quality when combined with the live part, where my viola drone eventually merges into the held tone from the duplicated videos (Figure 25).

While this protective manoeuvre of video editing does manage my sense of vulnerability by making something interesting out of material I perceived as

Figure 25. (video). *Quiet Songs*, a section of a performance, showing the doubled footage with the live performer [Photograph © 2019 Max Colson; Linked video © 2019 Thom Verdenius], https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582081.

flawed, it does not hide the fact that my viola moves about a lot. Selection helped me choose a part where the movement was less extreme, but recontextualising the problematic footage and playing with it to test different approaches also makes the movement meaningful in relationship with the live performer. Somehow, offsetting the second copy by a few frames stabilises the slightly nauseating motion of the original, while the transparency effect gives the section an almost otherworldly feel. The layering and offsetting draw attention to the 'failings' of this piece of documentation but make a virtue of the very thing that had made me uncomfortable.

Simple colour changes can also be extremely effective. The video part of *Quiet Songs* is black and white because I failed to realise my idea to change the background colour of the portrait footage (filmed against a green screen) due to my inexperience with chroma key effects. Rather than keep the bright green background, I graded the portrait footage to be black and white and then, feeling the movement between colour and black-and-white to be jarring, changed everything else to match. This change had the unanticipated benefit of smoothing out differences in lighting and colour between the different pieces of documentation, which helped to make the video feel coherent. The colour change enabled a further edit which allowed me to render the compositional aspect of editing visible in the piece. Prompted by the splashes of colour used by Phyllida Barlow on the joins of some of her sculptures in the exhibition *cul de sac* (Barlow, 2019), I added a 'colour flash' (Figure 26) at the edit points in the video to emphasise where cuts had been made to the original footage. I favoured hard cuts between shots, in combination with the colour flashes, to draw attention to the number of edits in the video part, something which likely would go unnoticed otherwise.

Editing in *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* was mostly restricted to choosing the starting and ending points of pieces of documentation and applying subtle fades in or out, where appropriate to the material and the way it is used in the piece. In 'The Corridor', however, I used editing to convert audio documentation into short videos. On entering, the visitor is confronted with a mass of square, coloured panels, each of which plays a brief audio recording of a moment of conversation

Figure 26. (video). *Quiet Songs*, a section of the video part showing colour flashes at edit points, https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582087.

or improvisation from Bastard Assignments' 2019 workshops on the piece. I chose a square format to differentiate these videos from the others in the room and selected a colour palette to go with the peach colour of the walls,[60] based on a vague idea of Vaporwave graphics which seemed to match well with the strangeness of this room. Each video has a simple colour gradient, which moves across the panel as the audio plays. While I only had audio documentation from the 2019 workshops, I created these video clips because I did not like the way Hubs showed a clickable audio file – as a black panel with two joined quavers on it (see Figure 18, p. 94). The massed pastel videos give the room a more coherent feel and help the images and videos on the walls to stand out.

As video pieces, *WALKS 1–4* were composed within video and audio editing software.[61] The main video editing effect in evidence in this set is chroma key, which I used on the animated drawing to gradually reveal the underlying videos. The audio edits include level adjustments, and subtle EQ and reverb to mix sounds from the different locations with the synthesiser track.

60 The wall colour was the result of a happy accident while learning about lighting in Blender.

61 I created *WALKS 1–4* using DaVinci Resolve and Ableton Live 10.

FRAMING

I consider framing to relate not only to the frame of an image or video but also to how a piece of documentation is contextualised when used. This is an element which takes into consideration the relationship between various elements of the piece – from other pieces of documentation to live performers, the environment of the piece and even the audience's relationship with the work. The process of selection creates a certain type of frame – something is chosen, other things are discarded and a frame is also formed by choosing the starting and ending points of a recording, where only a section of a clip is to be used. The narrative forms a frame for viewing and listening in *Aides Memoire* and the vlog, providing context for the documentary material which may guide how the audience perceives it. For example, in the vlog, the narrative may describe how the experiment shown in a short clip or image was reached or express my embarrassment over showing this material to others. The relationship between live performer and documentation can be seen as framing the documentary material too: in *Aides Memoire*, my live narration frames these sounds as my memories of particular places and times; in *Quiet Songs*, the live performer's part first forms the voice of the silenced performer in the video, then underscores video material, or develops it, connecting to and disconnecting from – framing and reframing – the flow of images across the whole work. In *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, the scale of documentation forms a type of frame. When approaching an oversized image or video, the visitor may only be able to see part of it when close, but the whole when further away. Documentation presented in a group can also form a frame for each individual piece. The videos in 'The Café' use both these types of framing. The large scale of these everyday images suggests they are significant in some way, and the framing they provide for each other draw attention to both the locale depicted in the writing video (Figure 27) and the repeated ritual of watching sugar sink into coffee.

CHAPTER 10 CONCLUSION

In this section, I have considered the relationship between documentation and decision-making before, during and after the capture of creative practice. I have

Figure 27. *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, videos forming a frame for each other in 'The Café'. The scale of the videos is demonstrated relative to my avatar, Sheba.

proposed a framework to categorise documentation of private creative practice that may be encountered in musical compositions, with particular reference to the intentions with which it was created and its relationship to the authenticity of the practice it captures.

The first decisions with regard to documenting practice relate to whether and how to document. These decisions are closely tied to whether the documentation's anticipated use is public or private (its intention, as I termed this at the beginning of Chapter 7) and how much value is placed on creating a truthful rather than idealised representation of the practice being documented (authenticity). These factors influence how aware of an audience the artist being documented may be, and therefore how vulnerable they may feel while going about their work in the Studio. William Kentridge reminds us that the Studio is a 'safe space for stupidity' (Kentridge, 2014, p. 128), and Erving Goffman (1990) tells us that people prefer to present an idealised version of themselves to others. A composer who knows their work is being documented may therefore take self-protective measures which alter what they would normally do in the Studio if they feel that an accurate representation of their practice may not portray them as they prefer to be seen. These measures may be small alterations, such as tidying a usually messy desk

or putting on make-up, or large ones, such as filming multiple versions of a documented action to find a version that the composer is comfortable with others seeing. Whether small or large, such changes diminish the authenticity of the document. A public intention for the use of documentation may therefore affect its authenticity unless the composer whose work is being documented is committed to capturing an authentic representation of their creative practice – and is willing to engage with the uncomfortable sensation of vulnerability to do so.

In my proposed framework, outlined in Chapter 7, I suggested four categories of documentation. The first, true documentation, documents creative activity for private purposes, such as to gain an audience's perspective on work created by improvising. Authenticity tends to be high for this type because accurate representation of practice is required to fulfil the aim of the documentation. Performed documentation is created with the intention for it to be made public, so the practice is likely to take the form of some sort of performance for the intended audience. However, performed documentation also serves a compositional purpose, and so there is a measure of private intention which encourages a strong commitment to authenticity. An example of this could be filming an improvisation to test a concept but intending to use the footage in a composition. Fictive practice sits at the intersection of public intention and a low value placed on authenticity. Authenticity may be deprioritised because the piece's goals override a desire to represent the true nature of practice, or because the artist wishes to hide or disguise some aspect of their practice – or even because there was never an intention to represent creative practice, in which case 'documentation' may simply be how the audience member interprets the material. The fourth category, feigned practice, seems to have only entertainment value and has not been investigated in this project.

As shown in Chapter 8, these simple classifications are likely to be complicated by the existence of multiple intentions, an intention that changes during the creation of the documentation, or through recontextualising the documentation in such a way that it takes on multiple simultaneous roles or meanings.

Regardless of why or how it was created, when it comes to using documentation in a piece, some decisions can help to shield the composer from feelings of vulnerability. As I have observed in my own work, the level of agency a composer feels she has in how she can use the documentation of her practice seems to shape how vulnerable she feels when making her private creative practice public. Post-production options such as selection, editing and framing all offer possibilities for cushioning composers against the uncomfortable sensation of exposure.

In this section, I have outlined the types of documentation which may be encountered and how they may be worked with, especially in relation to vulnerability. In Section IV: 'Surfacing practice through entanglement', I will explain how I have used documentation in the portfolio works to surface aspects of practice – of the composer's everyday Studio space – that would normally remain hidden in work which inhabits the space of the Stage.

SECTION IV: SURFACING PRACTICE THROUGH ENTANGLEMENT

In this section, I use the idea of 'surfacing' – raising things up from hidden depths to where they can be seen – to describe the way in which aspects of composition practice have become discernible in the portfolio works. Entangling documentation of my (private) Studio practice with the public space of the Stage draws aspects of my normally hidden composition practice 'up' into a zone where they become available for an audience to interpret. I begin (Chapter 11) by considering how context affects the way the documentation of creative practice may be viewed by an audience, whether it can be recognised as being documentation and what the implications are for what that documentation can convey to others. I build on my earlier introduction to 'the everyday' (Chapter 4) by showing how techniques which estrange material –which render it strange or unfamiliar in some way – can help to refresh overly familiar things and experiences when they are encountered within pieces. Chapter 12 enumerates specific aspects of my creative practice which may be identified from the portfolio works and how that information may be deduced from performances,[62] thereby demonstrating possible models for other composers or artists to work with. My findings presented here focus on several aspects of creative practice which are often hidden from others. I have grouped these into four areas:

- composition timelines and locales;
- practices and tools;
- the personas of composer, performer and composer-performer and the emotional experiences of composition; and
- everyday objects and activities which intersect with creative practice.

I should re-emphasise that the goal of this project is not to ensure that the audience understands everything about the compositional process that led to the

62 By 'performances', I mean either literal performances or the equivalent for non-live digital works such as *POV*, *WALKS 1–4* and *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*.

final piece they are experiencing but rather to make available some indications of the work involved in creating a composition.

CHAPTER 11 CONTEXT AND VISIBILITY

While the aim of this project is to find ways to make my composition practice more visible in the work I present in public by using documentation to entangle my private and public creative spaces, the entangling on its own is not sufficient to ensure the visibility of that practice. The context in which the documentation is encountered affects how an audience may 'read' the material provided. In this chapter, I outline how entanglement can both aid and impede the visibility of practice in relation to the context in which it is encountered. First, I discuss how over-familiarity makes it difficult to investigate one's own everyday objects and habits and how a change in context can estrange those things, to make them more visible. Then, I consider some contexts which may make it even more challenging for audiences to recognise documentation when they encounter it. I conclude with an examination of how a large amount of accumulated documentation, despite being recognisable as documentation, may cause difficulties in bringing to the surface the practice that is contained therein, paying particular attention to how I have used computer programming to surface specific areas of my practice on the notebook website.

11.1 HELPING VISIBILITY: THE EVERYDAY AND ESTRANGEMENT

In Chapter 4, 'The Studio and the artist's everyday', I suggested that the space of the Studio incorporates the artist's everyday experience – the objects and activities which make up their routines and which are regularly used. The challenge in researching the everyday, however, is that our familiarity with the things we use regularly and the actions we perform routinely means that they fade into the background of our lives and become difficult to notice. Writing in 1917, literary theorist Viktor Shklovsky declared that '[h]abitualization devours work, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war' (1997, p. 4). In 1973, Georges Perec stated that the problem with '[questioning] the habitual' is that

> we're habituated to it. We don't question it, it doesn't question us, it doesn't seem to pose a problem, we live it without thinking, as if it carried within it neither questions nor answers, as if it weren't the bearer of any information. This is no longer even conditioning, it's anaesthesia.
>
> (Perec, 1999, p. 210)

More recently, Sara Ahmed commented that 'we might not even think "to think" about' such overly familiar things (2006, p. 5), and her book *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, objects, others* (2006) includes an exhortation to make ourselves aware of the everyday, including cultivating an awareness of how things and people came to be where they are. In consideration of objects, for Ahmed, this awareness should encompass details ranging from the materials something is made of to the labour of the people who made it, sold and bought it and delivered it to its current location, as well as the history that has informed how the object looks and the function it serves. These details form a genealogy of objects, one might say, that enables us to consider something beyond 'the table is for writing' (to borrow Ahmed's example). Roland Topor, in his introduction to the 1990 edition of *An Anecdoted Topography of Chance*, seems to agree, describing the accumulation of apparently inconsequential objects which appear in the home: '[t]hese migrating objects which wash up in our homes have different histories, the consequence of the ebb and flow of daily life penetrating the imaginary' (Spoerri *et al.*, 2016, p. 23).

For over a century, then, writers and theorists have been highlighting the difficulty of truly paying attention to or thinking about the elements that make up our everyday lives. They have also made suggestions for overcoming this difficulty. One such suggestion has been to estrange these overly familiar things to allow them to be considered afresh. Shklovsky outlined techniques of literary estrangement in 'Art as Technique' (1997), naming them *ostranenie*. Svetlana Boym, considering the etymology of this term, explains that it '[suggests] both distancing (dislocating, dépaysement) and making strange' (Boym, 2008, p. 18). Boym's description of *ostranenie* explains its effect, how it can disrupt our 'anaesthesia' (to use Perec's term) and bring the everyday into focus:

> By making things strange, the artist does not simply displace them from an everyday context into an artistic framework; he also helps to 'return sensation' to life itself, to reinvent the world, to allow the observer to experience it anew.
>
> (Boym, 2008, p. 18)

In *Queer Phenomenology*, Sara Ahmed presents an example from Martin Heidegger, arguing that the separation of an object from its intended purpose results in a changed perception of the object. A broken hammer appears differently to us than a hammer that can be used (Ahmed, 2006, p. 47). This example shows that the breaking of the hammer estranges it, as it separates it from its purpose: 'it is when the hammer is broken or when I cannot use it, that I become aware of the hammer as an object-in-itself, rather than as object, which refers beyond itself to an action that I intend to perform' (Ahmed, 2006, p. 48). In the context of entangling the private and public creative spaces of Studio and Stage, this type of separation of an object – or, I would also suggest, an action – from its purpose may be accomplished through documentation of the creative practice seen or heard in a new context, as material in a piece. Displacing everyday activities such as exploring sounds on the viola or writing in a notebook from their original contexts, first by documenting them and then by using the documentation in a new context (*Quiet Songs* for the first of these examples, 'The Café' in *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* for the second) estranges and recontextualises these activities. For some things, this encourages visibility. In *WALKS 1–4*, for example, everyday elements such as the pavement below and trees overhead become objects to pay attention to, even though we often may not pay much attention to these familiar things in our own lives. In *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, as I examine in detail in Chapter 12, coffee-drinking looms (literally) large, commanding attention in the piece in a way it generally would not in day-to-day life. Simply making the documentation of a particular person's or group of people's everyday experience available to others may estrange it too, such as the photos taken during a performance of *Aides Memoire* that become *POV*, offering up images of the performers' everyday experience to an audience who may not otherwise have access to that perspective.

In addition to being an effect of using documentation, estrangement has also proven to be a useful research method in this project. While determining how

to publish my notebooks, for example, I was able to use the estranging effect of knowing my work was to be made public to test different ways of working in the books. Each new format re-estranged my notebook practice, allowing me to assess each format more easily and to consider how I felt about it being seen by others. This enabled me to iteratively refine my approach to identify a format which I have now used over several years to meet both the private and public needs of these books.

11.2 CONTEXTS THAT HINDER THE VISIBILITY OF PRACTICE

Changing the context, however, does not always result in estrangement. Sometimes, documentation may simply be absorbed into the new context. In such circumstances, the new context may hinder the recognition of documentation, causing it to become unremarkable in that context. The story of the BBC technicians and the traffic noise in *Quiet Songs* that I recounted in Chapter 6, 'Documentation and decision-making', is an example of such a misreading. Being on the alert for problems with the sound setup, the audio engineers read the recording of traffic noise from my studio as live traffic noise leaking in through their system. Their context changed how they heard these sounds. Similarly, when documentation is presented in a performance context, projected onto a screen at a larger-than-life scale or played back at high volume through a PA system, there is a high probability that without additional information, the audience will interpret this material as simply another performance element. This means that at least some of the interpretations which I propose in the next chapter, 'Surfaced practice', may be moot simply because the audience cannot recognise that the materials constitute documentation, not performance. This seems likely to be a particular problem where compositional activity takes a performic turn, involving improvisation or the use of instruments.

Even when documentation can be recognised as such, a context that presents a large volume of documentation together may create problems of visibility, which can hide the practice that the documentation contains. The notebook project represents such a situation, and the problem here has been so extreme as to require me to develop approaches that allow specific strands of practice to surface

from the mass of information. The result of my decision to publish every page of my composition notebooks is an enormous number of pages[63] where information about composition is entangled with the tasks, notes and detritus of my everyday life. There are also days – and consequently pages – on which nothing related to composition took place, whether because of a dearth of ideas or because other things were prioritised. On the one hand, as documentation, these pages surface practice in the sense of showing what I did (or did not do) on any given day. Viewing a single page, it may be clear that perhaps I did no composing because I had several meetings, or perhaps I was highly productive because I had a long train journey or was on residency with Bastard Assignments. Viewed en masse, however, the sheer number of pages and the volume of relevant and irrelevant information they contain can be overwhelming and make it onerous to connect one piece of information with another. As Chapter 12 will clarify, forming connections between elements has been central to being able to surface practice in other projects.

However, the benefit of a long-term accumulative project such as publishing my notebooks lies in the possibility of bringing to the surface information across a longer or more specific term than is possible in a single piece. Strands of information must therefore be able to be drawn out to surface this longer-term information. My solution for this has been to use computer programming to filter the images of notebook pages on the site using tags and categories. Every image uploaded is assigned the following:

- a notebook volume number;
- a notebook type (altered book or hybrid composition journal/diary);
- a date, which corresponds to the first date of the spread in the image; and
- the name of any piece(s) that were worked on in the pages in the image.

I am also starting to work on tagging pages by theme[64] to draw out broader references relating to particular areas of my practice, such as when I worked in

63 1083 images, giving a total of over 2000 individual pages as of 30 March 2024.

64 This is a late development in this project, prompted by a comment by James Saunders. At the time of writing, I am working out how to implement this, what themes to track and how best to display this data on the site.

cafés, when I visited art galleries or when the pages show evidence of writing-through or writing-down. Categorisation has enabled me to create (at the time of writing) three types of views which 'cut' the vast quantity of data on the site in different ways.

VIEW BY VOLUME

On each view-by-volume page, a single volume of the notebooks can be perused from start to finish.[65] Pages are displayed in the order in which they appear in the book.[66] 'Flipping through' each book offers a sense of the activity that occurred within that limited time period and at least a vague sense of the physical form of the book I was working with then – the number of pages and how I see the pages as I move from one to the next.

VIEW BY PIECE

The view-by-piece pages use the category information on each image to display only those notebook spreads that reference a particular piece. These pages sometimes include activities which I have retrospectively identified as having been significant to the development of a piece despite having occurred before the piece was explicitly conceived. For example, the *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* view-by-piece page[67] starts with crack drawings from 2018 and 2019 which were initially created as a means of thinking about other pieces (*TURN* and then *Quiet Songs*) but later used as graphic scores for Bastard Assignments' workshop improvisations in November 2019. These improvisations became the backbone of *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*. For September and October 2019, the page shows spreads demonstrating a sudden interest in Georges Aperghis' work and incomprehensibility. This interest fed into experiments with mumbled speech in the November 2019 workshops,

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65 The altered book volumes are only partially available due to copyright considerations.

66 For the altered books, however, this is not the order in which they were created, as pages were worked on at random rather than sequentially, and I did not record dates at the time. I have been able to apply some dates retrospectively due to other factors, such as when I posted pages on Instagram or – for later pages – where I noted working in the altered book in parallel with the hybrid format.

67 See https://notebook.caitlinrowley.com/view-by-piece/haydn-space-opera/ (Accessed: 2 December 2023).

related experiments with Zoom performance for the Bastard Assignments' Lockdown Jams (8 May 2020) and eventually the mumbled discussion about our individual work in progress that is connected to the eyes videos in 'Phyllida Barlow Playground'. Without this categorisation and programmatic collation of related pages, the Aperghis exploration would be unlikely to have a clear connection to the later work on *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, especially as the work's title (or the abbreviation HSO) is not mentioned in the books before 21 December 2019.

Scrolling through the view-by-piece images for *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, the viewer may also notice that, over this period, I was working on the cello piece *TURN*[68] and a new piece for Zubin Kanga tentatively titled *Down Under*, was applying for the 2020 Darmstadt summer school and Bath Spa University's Porthleven Prize, had been having nightmares, was ill for several days around Christmas 2019, which reduced the amount of work I could do, and so on. Reducing the number of pages to just those related to a single piece makes it easier to see and interpret how the composition of that piece intersected with other projects and life events.

PIECE MAPS

The third view of the data contained on the notebook website at the time of writing is the page of 'piece maps'.[69] Unlike the other views I have described, this view does not show the notebook page images. Instead, each map is a table displaying a year's worth of data. It uses the date information and piece categorisation for each notebook image, with large bullets indicating where work was undertaken on a piece. Combining this information for all the pieces in the database in tabular form provides a broader view of patterns of compositional (in)activity than can be easily discerned from the other views. This view shows that I regularly work on multiple pieces at a time, that older pieces still generate tasks or ideas even years after they were 'completed',[70] that my ideas for new pieces often develop in what might seem

68 Also referred to in the books and the vlog as 'Britten Variations' or 'BV'.

69 See https://notebook.caitlinrowley.com/piece-map/ (Accessed: 1 March 2024).

70 For example, note the appearance of *Quiet Song*s tasks not only in 2019, when it was written and premièred, but also in 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023, some of these being performance-related and some relating to determining the best approach to creating a formal score for this work.

to be random bursts over periods of weeks[71] and that I often work in fits and starts in the early stages of a piece, knuckling down to more regular work as the première looms.[72]

This view of the notebook data is admittedly somewhat imprecise due to inconsistencies in the relationship between notebook spreads and days. Usually, a spread of two pages will present two days' entries, but during periods of little activity,[73] sometimes more days will be captured in a single spread, and sometimes the volume of work done in a single day requires more than one page. For example, on 26 November 2019, I needed to review all the recordings made in the *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* workshop and determine what I wanted to follow up on in the next day's work, resulting in six pages of notes. Regardless of this variation, the piece-maps view still provides a sense of how the work proceeds day to day, without the noise of the pages themselves. This view brings to the surface the relationships between pieces, broad trends in how I work and significant periods of interruption. It demonstrates clearly that – for me – to 'work on a piece' almost never means to 'work exclusively on a piece'. It also highlights the rarity of finding a single piece that I have made in the past few years whose development has not at some point been interrupted, be it because of the need to sit with an idea for a while or to prioritise other pieces or because life or other work prevented me from returning to it.

I have learned much about my own practice from this project of publishing my notebooks and programmatically drawing out the strands of information I describe here. Before I began this work, I felt that I was a composer who created very little in any given year, because I was only noting the pieces I had completed when I reflected on the year – a perspective which ignored the many pieces I had actually worked on but not completed. The maps show me that I need to allow plenty of

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71 See the patterns for *Accretions* (October 2021 to April 2022) and *Patchland* (between January and April 2022).

72 See the piece-map entries for *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* as it developed towards its launch at SparkFest in May 2021 or for *From the Exquisite Dark,* from its beginnings in January 2022 to its workshopping and première in Cologne in August of the same year.

73 Especially in the earlier books, before I realised that differing ratios of days to pages would result in fluctuating data in these maps.

time to sit with ideas early in a project and that I must be patient with myself; I must not expect that pieces will pop up fully formed or even that I will be able to work on a piece with any consistency for some time after the first ideas are conceived. I now understand that I must plan a quiet month before the date of a première to allow time at the point where I know that I will be working intensively and productively on the piece to complete it.

For others viewing the maps, I feel this view has the potential to raise questions about how composers work, what other work must be made room for around a commission, how much time is actually reasonable (rather than apparently reasonable) for a particular composer's unique circumstances and how the amount of money offered for a commission might relate to the work required and the way that composer must do it. It also triggers consideration for the questions that should be asked of composers themselves to ensure that the circumstances are right for them. My work does not offer answers to any of these questions but perhaps can highlight the importance of considering individual circumstances when planning commissions, in particular. My own circumstances have shaped the patterns of my work, with factors such as freelance work and more regular employment, studying and family responsibilities all affecting how much time and energy I have to compose. The effects of writing this thesis are also evident in the maps between 2022 and 2024: a reduced number of new compositions in that timeframe[74] and renewed work on some of the pieces in the portfolio. These effects are the result of the entanglement of the work of composition with everyday life.

Assigning metadata by allocating dates and categories to images and using that metadata to extract a subset of the material on the site provide a way to draw out a single strand of information from the mass of entangled data presented on the notebook website. Each strand represents a surfacing of detail about individual pieces (view by piece), particular time periods (view by volume) and broader patterns of composition (piece maps) which are hidden among the pages.

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74 It might also be noted that sustained work on new pieces in this period has only been achieved in collaboration with others, as I found it easier to contribute to a project with someone else than to initiate work on my own while focusing on writing. See the activity on *From the Exquisite Dark* (with Josh Spear) and *Nightcall* (with Edward Henderson) as examples.

CHAPTER 12 SURFACED PRACTICE

In this chapter, I discuss aspects of my compositional practice which have been raised to the surface by entangling my private and public creative spaces in the portfolio work. These aspects include information about time and locale, the tools and habits of my work, the personas of composer and performer (and composer-performer), private emotional experiences related to creative work and everyday objects and occurrences which may not be restricted to composition but play a role in my working life. As discussed previously in this section, some readings may be supported by their context, while others may be undermined by theirs. I therefore approach these readings with an assumption that the documentation is recognised as being documentation (as opposed to, for example, performance) while acknowledging that this may not always be the case for the audience viewing this material.

12.1 SURFACING TIME AND LOCALE

The challenge of conveying a sense of the timeline of composition is that 'composition time' (the time taken to compose the work) bears no predictable relationship to 'performance time' (the time taken to perform the work). A ten-minute piece may have been dashed off in a few hours or painstakingly worked out over years; thus, conveying this information within the scope of 'performance time' can rarely take a literal approach. Instead, I have worked with compressing timelines, often showing significant moments rather than a complete record. Therefore, the timelines that may be discerned in these pieces tend to be relative rather than absolute, as I shall explain.

In 3.4, 'In practice: Becoming visible in the studio', I referred to two early pieces from this project, namely 'Floor Piece' and *Whitespace*. Each of these works uses image layering combined with opacity adjustments[75] to condense a timeline. This combination of techniques allows me to create the appearance of multiples of myself, indicating a temporal relationship between the layers – people are not

75 Changing the transparency of one or more layered images so that layers beneath the semi-transparent layer can be seen through it.

transparent, and they cannot appear in multiple places at the same time; therefore, the images needed to have been recorded in sequence.

In ‘Floor Piece’ (Figure 28), I used a simple strategy of filming myself lying on the floor, performing a short sequence of actions. In the edit, I moved the later actions earlier in the timeline, layering them over earlier actions. The sequence of movements was maintained, but as layers were added, the relationship between the poses became vertical (through the layers) rather than horizontal (along the timeline). Condensing the single timeline in this way draws attention more to the relationship between the poses than to the particular shape of any one pose.

Figure 28. (video). ‘Floor Piece’, video still showing layering of footage, https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582090.

Whitespace (version 2) uses a similar approach, except with still images extracted from a video of a performance of the piece. Single frames are contrasted with layered images, representing small and large ‘actions’, respectively, from this performance in the studio. In the singular image of the small action (Figure 29), I appear to be a static object among the static objects of the studio. However, in the image of the large action (Figure 30), the layering of the multiple frames condenses the timeline of the action into a single image which – again through layering and

Figure 29. *Whitespace* (version 2), image showing a small action (single frame).

Figure 30. *Whitespace* (version 2), image showing a large action (manipulated, layered still).

opacity changes – suggests my mobility, that I exist in time, creating space within the place of the studio.

Each of these pieces uses layering to condense a single timeline. Nothing is moved out of sequence; the time is simply compressed. In 'Floor Piece', this results in a

shorter video than the original footage; in *Whitespace*, this allows for the duration of the action to be represented in a single image. In *Quiet Songs*, however, there is neither a straightforward, linear temporal relationship between the clips in the video part nor any indication of order. A cut may indicate that material was removed between one shot and the next but may equally represent a change in the sequence of shots. The timeline is disrupted by the edits, but where footage is layered, the principle of my multiplied image suggesting a temporal relationship persists. One must have come before the other because the doubled image is a physical impossibility. Hence, retaining the sequence in which documentation was filmed is not a requirement to suggest the before and after of composition; the layering effect which doubles my image serves this function to compress the timeline regardless.

The suggestion of the time between images is clearest in moments where material from the different sets of footage – the portrait material, the mid-shot footage and the close-up viola footage – is combined (Figures 31, 32 and 33). In Chapter 7, I drew attention to the differences between how I had styled my hair in the portrait and mid-shot material: in the portrait material, it is styled as if for a performance, whereas it is simply neat and combed in the mid-shot footage. However, where these are combined into a single layered image, the visible differences in my appearance indicate not only that time had passed between the capturing of each image but also that the images had been captured during different recording sessions, probably even filmed on different days. While the multiplication of my image suggests that time had passed between shots, comparing details of the layered images may evidence whether that time is likely to have been minutes (from the same documentation) or a longer period (from different pieces of documentation), even if it is unclear which was captured first.

In *Quiet Songs*, another layer is added, as I perform onstage in front of the video. This additional layer suggests another duration between when the video materials were created and the present moment of performance. This layering of live performer over video entangles the documentation of the Studio space with the Stage space, drawing out the relationship between them and pointing to the relationship between how I work in the Studio and how I perform onstage.

Figure 31. *Quiet Songs*, layered portrait material.

Figure 32. *Quiet Songs*, portrait material overlaying mid-shot footage.

Figure 33. *Quiet Songs*, portrait material overlaying close-up viola footage.

Developing the idea of multiple episodes of filming, my presence onstage confirms that no part of the video is filmed live but, rather, has been created in advance of the performance. This introduces another element into the timeline of the creation of the piece: the video edit. The layered footage, along with the cuts and the flashes of colour which highlight them, emphasises the compositional aspect of creating the video. A differentiation between live and not live, present and past surfaces through the combination of the elements of performer and video. Naturally, with the passing of time, if I continue to perform *Quiet Songs*, the gap between creation and performance will stretch. As my appearance changes over time, whether through choices such as changing my hairstyle or the visible alterations of ageing, information will begin to surface about the age of the piece itself and the point in my career at which I made it.

When I perform the piece, another temporal aspect emerges, which relates to my practice as a composer-performer: the development of my performance technique through the process of creating and performing *Quiet Songs*. To provide some context, my education as a violist has been patchy, to say the least. A relatively late starter on the instrument, I easily passed my second-grade exam with a high mark, and my teacher skipped the next two grades because she was keen for me to audition for the school orchestra, which required me to play fifth-grade pieces. Consequently, I did not learn many basic techniques[76] and did not pursue the viola much after leaving school. Returning to the instrument over 25 years later, I found I needed to relearn some techniques; as for other techniques, I knew the theory but had never learned how to apply it. I therefore work with my instrument by learning, as I go along, things that most string players are comfortable with from an early age.[77] For example, Figure 34 is a section of the video part which shows

76 Yes, I did make it into the orchestra; no, I could not really play any of the parts they needed me to play.

77 Much of my performance practice, particularly as a violist, engages positively with amateurism and discards conventional values such as virtuosity and perfection. My aim is, rather, to be able to produce a particular sound reliably in performance (even if my control of it overall is imperfect) and work with my idiosyncrasies rather than execute a technique perfectly every time. In *Quiet Song*s, this largely emerges as an interest in timbre more than pitch and my corresponding use of scordatura (unconventional tuning of the strings) which removes most of the need to use my left hand for pitch creation.

me performing a tremolo on the viola. Recorded in the early stages of preparation for *Quiet Songs*, I am visibly tense in this footage, biting my lip as I struggle to control the bow; my left hand is rigid, my bow-hold like a claw, all indications of my unfamiliarity with this basic technique.

In the performance video, however (Figure 35), the effect of the intervening time and practice is evident. My tremolo may not be technically perfect, but it has become something that I can perform with relative ease. No sign of that early tension remains; the tremolo has become a technique that I now have in my performance arsenal. The intervening time and the work involved in creating and rehearsing the piece have been condensed into a simple visual comparison: tense Caitlin, struggling to maintain the tremolo in the studio, layered behind calm Caitlin confidently tremoloing live onstage. This type of development is an aspect of composer-performer practice[78] which would normally be hidden. That *Quiet Songs* renders this type of normally private development publicly visible is an acknowledgement that sometimes creating a piece requires engaging with new, raw and imperfect ideas and techniques and that the process can be difficult and uncomfortable. In positioning this material alongside the same performer executing the same technique at the end of the process, in the live performance, the piece also demonstrates that engaging with that difficulty develops new capabilities which may then be employed more easily in other work, whether later performances of the work that developed them or new pieces.

Of course, this visual comparison does not indicate how long the shift from tense uncertainty to calm confidence took in weeks and months.[79] Time as part of the

78 This is also an aspect of a performer's practice which would likewise normally be hidden – any new technique is likely to raise challenges while it is being learned. This activity is commonly kept private by performers, especially professional performers whose reputations may hinge on their ability to perform difficult techniques flawlessly and apparently without effort.

79 Looking at the *Quiet Songs* entries in my notebooks, this was about 2 months: from filming this material on 23 April 2019 to the first performance at Snape Maltings on 15 June 2019. Technical improvement can be observed to continue across performances after the première, and I reached my most confident state in the performances at City Lit on 10 and 11 October 2019 – I have used the video from these performances as the performance example of this work in the portfolio which accompanies this thesis.

composition process may be understood here as encompassing 'how long it took to develop the skills to perform the piece' as well as 'how long it took to make the piece'. The timelines that surface in this way are relative rather than absolute.

Figure 34. (video). *Quiet Songs* video part, showing my level of tension while playing in the studio, during the development of the piece, https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582093.

Figure 35. (video). *Quiet Songs*, performance video showing me confidently performing a tremolo live, https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582099. [Still and linked video © 2019 Thom Verdenius]

Without annotations or other clues such as visible calendars or a narration of dates and times, the idea of the time it took to create *Quiet Songs* is necessarily loose. However, a considerable amount of temporal information is still made available through the approaches I have discussed here:

- at least two, possibly three, sessions of experimenting with the viola and vocal material (to create the three types of documentation observed in the piece);
- sufficient time to edit the video, including cuts, colouring and layering work; and
- sufficient time to develop the instrumental techniques seen in the documentation into the more polished and confident (even if imperfect) versions of the same techniques that I perform onstage.

In *Aides Memoire*, the narration does include dates and times, but only for some of the sounds presented; others are simply described in terms of their location. 'In 2012, we visited Spain', I state at the beginning of the piece; then, later, 'In 2015, we went back to Australia for three months'. While the dates form an incomplete timeline – the earliest recording was captured in 2005 – a comparison of the dates mentioned with even the first performance of the work (in 2017) indicates that this piece has taken several years to make. While I did not record those sounds with this piece in mind, their recording nevertheless enabled the creation of *Aides Memoire*. The recurring practice of making field recordings that the list of dates and places indicates (which I discuss later in this chapter, in 'Surfacing tools and practices') is a creative habit that forms part of the work on this piece.

Time is conveyed more precisely in the notebooks. Each day's entry is dated, with the notes for that day being positioned within a limited duration (24 hours). Through the development of programmed views of the pages relating to either a particular piece or a particular volume, which I described in Chapter 11, a longer timeline surfaces. View-by-volume pages usually cover approximately 6 weeks to 2 months, depending on the format, while view-by-piece pages show varying timeframes depending on the work they relate to. The piece maps depict the full

range of time represented in the database, revealing temporal patterns in how I work.

The use of overwriting (writing-through) in the notebooks can sometimes also indicate the time spent on composition, especially where it is connected to notes in the margin (writing-down). In Chapter 8, 'Multiple intentions, shifting intentions and multivalence', I mentioned that overwriting can render the quantity of writing visible, even though the words themselves are obscured. The density of a patch of overwriting offers clues as to whether few or many layers of writing exist, which may also be interpreted as suggesting a smaller or greater amount of time spent on writing. In conjunction with margin notes, it can also suggest whether ideas were clarified quickly or took a great deal of writing (and time) to reach the point where they could be articulated.

Shifting focus to the locales surfaced in the portfolio works, entangling my private and public creative spaces regularly reveals the places in which I work. The portfolio works collectively demonstrate how mobile my creative practice is. Only one of the pieces, *Quiet Songs*, shows my studio. In that piece, we can see the room in the background of the mid-shot documentation and hear the sounds of the room in the audio track at the beginning of the piece. These sounds, recorded via contact microphone on the studio's single-glazed window, foreground the traffic sounds which are the usual sonic background in that room. In *WALKS 1–4*, the streets of our neighbourhoods became our studios, as we creatively documented our daily walks during lockdown, and in *Aides Memoire*, mobility encompasses both the local and the international. The changing specificity of location names in the narration of *Aides Memoire* ranges from countries (Australia and Spain) to cities (Brussels and Madrid) to towns (Axminster) and sites such as the ruins of Pompeii and the skateboarding area at Southbank in London, all of which served as my studio while making those recordings. The photographs taken during performances of *Aides Memoire* document the movements of the photographer-performers through images of the locale in which they performed, which become visible in *POV*. These images may reveal details different from those which audiences might have seen at the performance, including technical equipment and the audience themselves. For example, the first 30 seconds of the

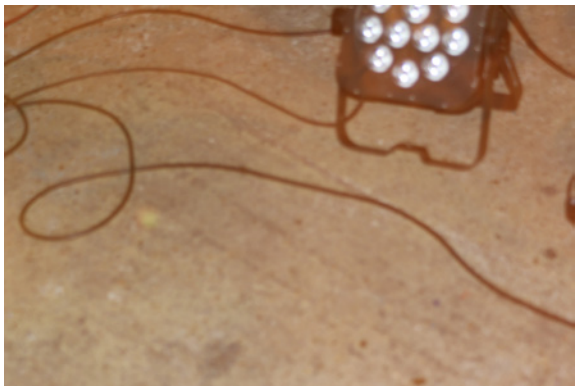

Figure 36. *POV*, photograph of lighting and cables. [Photograph © 2018 Bastard Assignments]

Figure 37. *POV*, photograph of the seated audience watching the performance. [Photograph © 2018 Bastard Assignments]

Figure 38. *POV*, photograph of other performers in close-up. [Photograph © 2018 Bastard Assignments]

Figure 39. *POV*, photograph of the performance venue, Asylum, in Peckham, London, from the viewpoint of the performers. [Photograph © 2018 Bastard Assignments]

Peckham realisation of *POV* show the lights facing the stage and cables on the ground (Figure 36), the audience watching the performers (Figure 37), and other performers in close-up (Figure 38) as well as the venue (Figure 39).

The space of the composer's notebook is foregrounded in *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, becoming wall art, floors and fragments to be navigated. The pages are estranged by the unnatural nature of the virtual reality environment and by the scale at which the notebook is represented in relation to the visitor's avatar. As described in Chapter 8, the notebook, displaced from the physical world, is no longer something to be held in the hand but, rather, a performance space to be occupied

and traversed. In the spread which appears as the floor of 'Phyllida Barlow Playground', when one moves around in 'walk' mode, details are visible that, in the 'real' notebook, could only be seen with a magnifying glass. Switching to 'fly' mode, the visitor can zoom out to return the pages to something like their 'normal' size. To view details, instead of only moving their eyes, the visitor must move their entire 'body' (avatar) towards the point they would like to view, which may involve either vertical (when flying) or horizontal movement (when walking) or both.

These estrangements alter the visitor's relationship with the book, from viewer to explorer and performer, as they move about it, adjusting the scale and focal point through their movements to suit their interest. In 'The Apocalypse', where flying is encouraged, the notebook image is fragmented and the only object in the room apart from the gateway. The view here is not of complete pages but of the detail of the scrawled overwriting, each fragment removed from its context within the page. In 'The Blank Page', the notebook page is no longer something to look at but something to contribute to, a room where the visitor can add their own 3D objects, images and videos, adding sources to the room similarly to the way in which I accumulate writing, drawing, photographs and other collaged elements in my notebooks.

Other Studio spaces discernible in *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* include cafés – via the writing and coffee videos in 'The Café' – and (as mentioned in Chapter 8) the piece itself as a Studio, documented in the images and videos of experiments and playtests with Bastard Assignments (Figure 17, p. 93) and Open Scores Lab (Figure 18, p. 94) that appear in 'The Corridor'. Finally, Bastard Assignments' regular rehearsal space at Centre 151 in Haggerston is discernible through its unique acoustic profile. All of the recordings made during the workshops in this room feature a distinctly resonant, even 'boomy', acoustic quality. These recordings include those which form the sonic backbone of 'The Warm-Up Room', 'The Apocalypse' and 'Phyllida Barlow Playground' as well as the many fragments of conversation in 'The Corridor'. This particular acoustic quality is created by the properties of the indoor space in which they were recorded, with low ceilings and many hard surfaces (see Figure 40). The open spaces of most of the rooms of *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* in which these sounds appear – no walls, no ceiling –

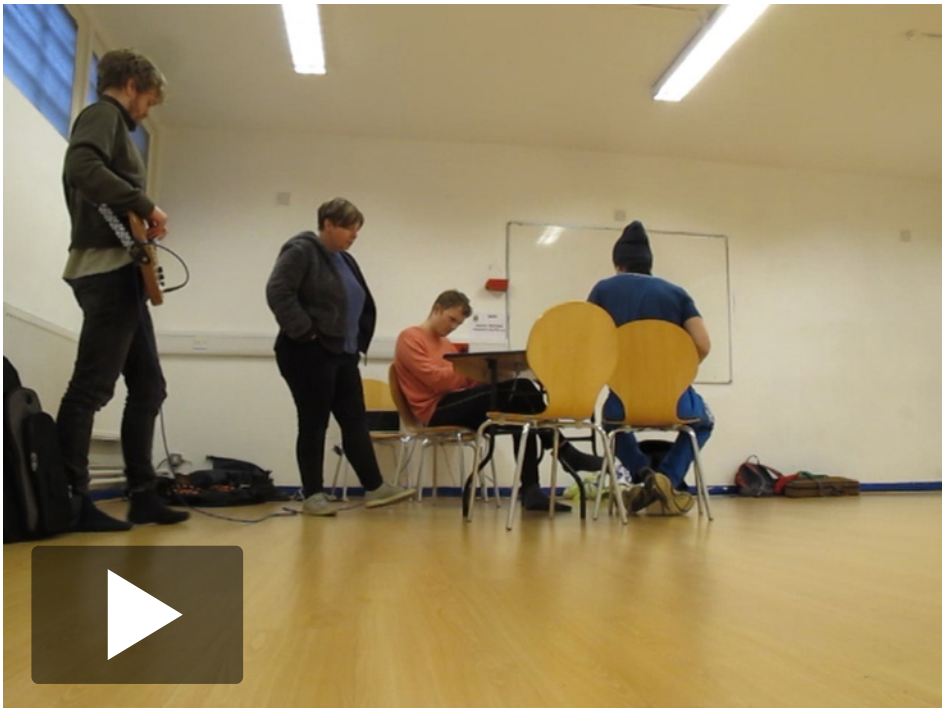

Figure 40. (video). *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, video of a Bastard Assignments workshop session for this work, showing the room in which the recordings were made. https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582102.

make a virtue of acoustic cognitive dissonance that (for the sharp-eared) may draw attention to the discrepancy between the indoor acoustic heard in these recordings and the 'outdoor', open environment in which they have been placed. The mismatch between the two provides a potential cue by which information about the physical properties of the place in which the recordings were made may surface.

To conclude this discussion of the aspects of space and time that are surfaced in the portfolio works, I briefly discuss *WALKS 1–4*. Despite using similar layering techniques to those used in *Quiet Songs*, 'Floor Piece' and *Whitespace*, and although some indication of material created at different times can be discerned through the layering and other visible edits, overall, I feel that this work is not as effective as the other works in the portfolio in conveying a clear sense of either time or space. What seems to be lacking in comparison to the other works are elements which estrange the documentation materials. For example, there is no doubling of a single person or image, no indication of the locations where the material was

captured – far less the significant distance between them – and no clear indication (apart from the group authorship) that the documentation used was captured by more than one person, although differing styles may hint at this. The result is a portrayal of an artful hybrid location, where Gravesend, Bristol and the Somerset countryside merge into a single fictitious place. Overall, *WALKS 1–4* demonstrates the importance of context when trying to bring to the surface temporal and spatial aspects of creative practice.

12.2 SURFACING TOOLS AND PRACTICES

WALKS 1–4 does offer some insight into some of the tools and practices that were used in its making. Video, audio recording, instrumental performance, drawing and video editing are all evidenced in these tiny works, and the role of walking is also clear both in the videos themselves and in the title, through camera motion and the sounds of footsteps. In *Quiet Songs,* we can likewise determine some of the tools and practices used. In the video, I can be seen playing the viola and performing a vocal improvisation, indicating that I use performance – specifically performance with these instruments – in both a composition context and a performance context. The video part itself demonstrates that I also employed video, audio and audiovisual editing to create this work, which involved, at minimum, editing three pieces of footage together, adding additional sound elements and working with colour effects.

Much of my practice involves working collaboratively with others, and although this is not demonstrated in every piece, *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* makes it explicit by incorporating the recordings and videos with Bastard Assignments and the evidence of the playtest with Open Scores Lab (see Figure 18, p. 94) Instrumental and vocal performance is again in evidence in the audio recordings found throughout the piece and in the workshop video on the wall of 'The Corridor' (Figure 40). My use of digital tools, including Blender to create 3D elements and Zoom to experiment with online performance during the COVID-19 lockdown period, is also evidenced by material in 'The Corridor'. Even my laptop can be partially seen in the experimental sessions with Bastard Assignments in Mozilla Hubs, where it should also be clear that we are experimenting with webcams to project our images live into the virtual reality environment.

Field recording is established as a creative habit through the narration of *Aides Memoire*, and the use of field recordings can also be detected in *WALKS 1–4*. In Chapter 8, when discussing Harry Matthews' *Home and Away Chords*, I mentioned that field recording has been a creative habit of mine for many years, but the narration of *Aides Memoire* may make the habitual nature of these recordings clear for an audience. The narration follows a trajectory that gradually builds a sense of field recording as a regular practice, starting with specific trips and dates (the 2012 visit to Spain and the 2015 trip to Australia) and then dropping the dates to focus more on the locations and the sounds themselves: 'This is a train leaving Seville [...] I recorded a few trains in that station', 'That rain is in Brussels', and 'This is skateboarders at Southbank'. Finally, the sounds are simply grouped by type: 'church bells', implying a regular practice, where specific sounds interest me enough to capture them again and again in different places. The gradual reduction in information moves the sounds from the specific to the generic. Returning to Cohen, Horowitz and Wolfe's research, which I first mentioned in Chapter 6, people have little difficulty recognising generic sounds, but the ability to recognise the detail in specific recordings eludes them (2009). 'Church bells in Bruges... Axminster... Cadiz... London... Naples', I recite as each location's bells start in the recorded part. The list implies recurring activity and highlights the inclusion of each new peal in the mix. The proximity of the recordings to each other offers an opportunity to recognise that every peal is different, which may help the listener understand why one recording of church bells has been insufficient to slake my interest.

The technologies used in creating *Aides Memoire* tend to be implied rather than specified – there is only one mention of 'pulling out my phone' to record an irresistible sound, and no other recording devices are named. However, the existence of the recordings implies the regular use of one or more recording devices and therefore microphone(s). The playback indicates the use of a PA system in the venue and a computer from which to run the playback. The fixed media part overlaps and sometimes repeats sounds which the narration indicates are from different times and places. This overlap and repetition implies that, rather than being played back in sequence like an aural slideshow, the part has been edited, and this, in turn, suggests that a computer has been used to create

the part. Other enabling technologies, such as aeroplanes to reach other countries, may be assumed from the language – which indicates that those countries are not my place of residence – and the implied distance between those countries and what might be assumed to be a UK base,[80] in conjunction with the dates provided. For example, while Australia is still impractical to visit for a three-month trip by any means other than aeroplane, the date of the Spanish visit provides a useful clue as to how I would have travelled. In 2012, air travel would have been the usual method to reach Spain from London, but at the time of writing this thesis, increasing concern about the damaging environmental effects of short-haul flights means that such a trip in 2024 may equally have been accomplished by rail.

12.3 SURFACING EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES AND PERSONAS

At times, across the portfolio, pieces have combined elements which suggest emotions related to the composition process, or which emphasise the entangled professional personas of the composer-performer. For example, the narration of *Aides Memoire* foregrounds my private memories and indicates that my prompts to make the recordings heard in the fixed media track are often spontaneous and emotional: 'I couldn't resist recording them', 'I just liked the way it sounded', 'I was captivated', 'I was struck by the sound of the boards and the wheels… and especially the squeak of the shoes against the concrete'. The emotional imperative to record is reinforced across this piece through these types of phrases, providing a context not only for the sounds themselves but also for my thought processes in documenting them.

I mentioned in Chapter 8 that the edited video of *Quiet Songs*, especially the portrait material, might be considered a form of autoethnographic documentation of a state of mind, specifically the frustration I felt when trying to work in a restrictive Studio environment. Throughout *Quiet Songs*, however, there is an interplay between Caitlin-the-live-performer and the multiple Caitlins-on-video, which establishes a relationship between the Stage and Studio personas of the composer-performer. While my physical position as the live performer is (usually)

80 Probably around London, if the greater level of specificity of UK locations in the piece (Axminster, London and especially Southbank, offered with no city designated) is taken as an indicator.

in front of the video, the live part is not always the foregrounded element in the piece, and the video is certainly not simply an accompaniment. Attention therefore oscillates between the video, representing the Studio, and the live performer, representing the Stage, suggesting both tension and co-operation between the two and between the two roles they represent, namely composer and performer. These shifts in attention between the private and public creative spaces of this work are established from the start of the piece. 'Video Caitlin', performing in the studio, is the focus at the beginning, starting the (audible) vocal improvisation. I am onstage at this point, but my eyes are closed; the viola is in position, but my arms are relaxed, waiting, rather than ready to play. My exaggerated gesture of slowly raising the bow and the viola indicates that something 'live' is about to happen, but the moment of the shift from Studio-as-foreground to Stage-as-foreground still jars, as the scream from my projected self is abruptly silenced and my live viola playing 'speaks' for the muted Studio-me. Across the work, Stage-me can be seen to have different options than Studio-me. Where sounds from the Studio are not silenced, they often sound like they are at a distance, due to having been recorded via a contact microphone on the window of the studio, rather than capturing the room sound of my performance. By contrast, the sounds I make live are unfiltered except for amplification through a headset microphone. Other sounds on the video are constrained, restricted and tense, but as they are taken up in the live part, they are transformed and become more appropriate to a Stage space, which encourages volume and expansiveness in a way that the Studio sometimes cannot. Onstage, I can engage the full range of communicative modes – I can be loud, I can be quiet, I can make no sound at all. For example, the squeak sound I perform in the video part (Figure 41) is tight-throated, tense and therefore also limited in volume.[81] When I repeat this squeak live (Figure 41, from 0:07), I start with the constrained sound (to make the connection with the video), and I then begin to alter that sound to suit the greater range of expressive options available to me as a performer onstage. I gradually loosen my throat muscles to allow a more open, relaxed sound; I engage my diaphragm so that I can gain more control and volume, to project this more open sound towards the back of the venue. These modifications reflect the

81 This could also be considered the other way round: the tight-throated, tense sounds may be the result of the tension between needing to limit volume because of the constraints of the workspace and wanting or needing to work with loud sounds.

Figure 41. (video). *Quiet Songs*, 'squeak' section.
https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582111. [Linked video © 2019 Thom Verdenius]

difference between composing in a studio within a domestic space (I must limit volume and keep the sound controlled so as not to disturb the neighbours and others in the house) and performing in front of an audience (if I want to be heard, I must project that sound, but I can also use a full range of modes of expression).

A less direct and more complex example of surfacing personas is the way visitors to *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* assume the role of performer (as discussed in Chapter 8) as they navigate the creative spaces of the work's composition, including rehearsal and workshop spaces, cafés and my notebooks. Their performance may be simple – just moving through the work with minimal interaction – or they might interact with videos and sounds which will shape their own experience of the piece and the experience of others who may be in the same 'room' at the same time. The 'audience member' therefore assumes the persona of explorer-performer, and they do this as they enter the work, by choosing an avatar.[82]

Selecting an avatar is the visitor's first experience in Mozilla Hubs and, therefore, in *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*. A visitor cannot enter the virtual reality space of

82 The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines an avatar as a 'graphical representation of a person or character in a computer-generated environment' (2024a).

the piece without an avatar, and the choice of avatar shapes how others see that individual while they are in the piece. A detailed examination of avatars and their relationship with the people they represent online is beyond the scope of this thesis (see Taylor, 1999, for an excellent introduction to this topic), but it is worth noting that donning an avatar parallels what Erving Goffman terms 'front', 'that part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance' (1990, p. 34). This may include 'clothing; sex, age, and racial characteristics; size and looks; [...] facial expressions [...] and the like' (1990, p. 34). Choices are made when selecting an avatar – or even simply confirming the randomly chosen avatar offered by the system – and these choices constitute a performance that allows the visitor to experiment with online identities. Legacy Russell describes the liberating experience of choosing an online identity:

> I was a young body: Black, female-identifying, femme, queer. There was no pressing pause, no reprieve; the world around me would never let me forget these identifiers. Yet online I could be whatever I wanted. And so my twelve-year-old self became sixteen, became twenty, became seventy. I aged. I died. Through this storytelling and shapeshifting, I was resurrected. I claimed my range.
>
> (Russell, 2020, p. 4)

For me, choosing my Hubs avatar led me to gain a better understanding of who I am when I perform onstage. When I first started working in Mozilla Hubs in 2020, the system offered me the 'LeopardBot' avatar. I accepted it, amused by its dissimilarity to my usual wardrobe preferences. For a name, I chose 'Sheba', one of the (several) nicknames my Bastard Assignments colleagues have given me. My delight in the apparent incongruity of this avatar (Figure 42) kept me coming back to it, and I found that it quickly became recognisable to others as 'me' and that choosing a different avatar disoriented the people who knew me in Hubs as Sheba, even if they knew me well offline.[83]

83 Private conversation with Harry Matthews, 26 January 2021.

Figure 42. *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, my avatar, Sheba, in 'The Apocalypse' room, Instagram post artwork to promote the launch of the piece at SparkFest, 2021.

The visitor's avatar in *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* not only represents a performance persona but is also the means by which they can move about and approach objects in the piece. The avatar is what *enables* them to perform.

12.4 SURFACING THE EVERYDAY

Finally, I present some examples of where the everyday of creative practice has surfaced in the portfolio pieces. There is some overlap, perhaps, with the surfacing of spaces, creative practices and habits, which I have discussed above; therefore, here, I focus on mundane elements and situations that surround creative practice and aid it in some way, whether by becoming a focus for work themselves or by supporting the work I do.

Aides Memoire and *WALKS 1–4* both present everyday situations and objects that have prompted a creative response. In *Aides Memoire*, the narration points out the sounds of rain, a construction site, skateboarders and trains, all perfectly ordinary things but which have nevertheless drawn my attention through the sounds they make. *WALKS 1–4* is centred around the everyday activity of walking, which was limited by government mandate to 1 hour a day during the first UK COVID-19 lockdown. For me and my colleagues in the Kaths Kaff collective, limiting this previously unregulated activity estranged it. It made us value our walks more, and our initial project involved paying greater attention to these walks and the areas in which we could walk. Repeating the walks over and over again led us to find a range of ways in which to capture them, some of which are visible in the four-minute set of videos in the portfolio. The video elements of these pieces depict ordinary, unremarkable items: a paved footpath, trees, a squirrel, bricks, foliage and a boat. Each of these things is familiar to the people who filmed them, even if they appear new to others or are seen from an unusual angle (the boat, for example, appears upside down). Many of the sounds in the work are likewise unremarkable – creaking and tapping metal, seagulls and other birds, footsteps and small waves on a pebble beach. Austin Kleon (2019, p. 98) writes, 'The ordinary + extra attention = the extraordinary', a simple equation to describe what is occurring here. Through their capture and their incorporation into this work, the aforementioned sounds have been estranged and thereby refreshed. They have first been separated from the things that make the sounds[84] and then combined with other sounds, from their original environment and from far away locations. These changes draw attention to the sounds, and the new context directs more attention to them than they would command in their usual environment.

POV similarly uses everyday objects and situations as its materials, but the everyday it showcases is that of the performer onstage. In these photographs captured during a performance of *Aides Memoire*, we can see several mundane elements that the performers would normally ignore during performance, but which members of the audience may not see at all, such as the cables, lights and venue seen in Figure 36 and Figure 39 (p. 138).

84 R. Murray Schafer terms this splitting of sounds from their original contexts 'schizophonia' (1994, p. 8).

The ordinary items in my studio – including books, CDs, stereo, notebooks, art supplies, an unoccupied music stand, cables, a plush toy frog, a toy Ferris wheel, earlier work and a few ornamental objects – are visible behind me in the mid-shot footage of *Quiet Songs*. The role these objects play in my life is unexplained – some obvious, others obscure – but they clearly form part of the environment I am improvising in. Additionally, the video part of this piece shows a different aspect of the everyday: between 0:07 and 0:12 of Figure 43, my performance falls away, and I am seen coughing, a natural response to the physical strain of performing some of the sounds in the vocal improvisation and an indication of the effort that went into my recorded performance.

To conclude, I would like to draw attention to the humble cup of coffee and its common, important, but generally unobtrusive role in many composers' practices. Drinking coffee is so everyday that it is hardly ever mentioned in my notebooks, yet it often feels fundamental to my working day, whether at home or elsewhere. Within *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, however, it assumes an unusual prominence. First, in 'The Corridor', there are two snippets of conversation which refer to coffee. In the first, Josh Spear, Tim Cape and I discuss a rehearsal coffee run (Figure 44) and in the second, we are discussing a video clip which features an iced coffee (Figure 45). In 'The Corridor', these clips primarily serve a textural role, with

Figure 43. (video). *Quiet Songs*, coughing segment, https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582117.

Figure 44. (audio). *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, Bastard Assignments discussing a mid-workshop coffee run, from 'The Corridor', https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582120.

Figure 45. (audio). *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, Bastard Assignments discuss the writing video, from 'The Corridor', https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582129.

their somewhat muffled speech and (in the former) intermittent bass guitar notes. They might seem to have little significance, in fact, until the visitor reaches 'The Café'. Here, two giant (relative to the visitor's avatar) videos of sugar sinking into coffee flank a similarly large video of me writing in an altered book in a café, iced latte visible in the background (Figure 27, p. 115). If the visitor understands that all the elements in the work relate to its making (as explained upon entering the piece), then they might extract the following ideas from these five elements, spread out across the work:

- some of the work on *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* took place in cafés;
- at least two cafés were used, at one of which I had at least two cups of coffee (based on the similarity of the cups and the coffee art, although the spoons differ). This additionally suggests that working in cafés might be a somewhat regular activity for me and that I do not frequent one particular café for work purposes;

- the multiple videos of the sinking sugar suggest that I take ritualistic pleasure in coffee and that the ritual is in some way connected to my working process;
- the scale of the sugar-adding videos may be interpreted as indicating a high value placed on coffee-drinking and its rituals;
- the iced latte in combination with the flat whites – supported by the audio clip in Figure 45 where Bastard Assignments are discussing the writing video ('It was a stinking hot day at the Illy Café in South Kensington') – suggest that I drink coffee year-round, replacing hot with cold coffee at warmer times of year;
- Bastard Assignments' exchange about the coffee run in 'The Corridor' implies that coffee is not reserved for when I am working alone but that coffee breaks are also part of the working routine when I work with other people; and
- by its omission, it may additionally be deduced that either I am not a tea drinker or tea is not a drink that I consider to be as conducive to work as coffee.

Even for such a mundane example, this is a substantial amount of information to glean from five pieces of documentation within a single piece. The key to this information, however, is the context of each piece of documentation and how it combines with the rest. Little would be learned from only encountering one of these pieces of documentation, as the element of repetition and the possibilities for comparison would be lost.

CHAPTER 13 CONCLUSION

In this section, I have used the verb 'to surface' to indicate the idea of bringing hidden things – in this case, aspects of composition practice – into the open, to the surface. I have not intended to provide audiences with an exhaustive understanding of how the work they are experiencing was created but, rather,

to present pieces which – somewhat like a good mystery novel – can be combed through for clues as to how the final result was achieved.

In undertaking this work, I have discovered that context is crucial. The context in which documentation is encountered can determine whether it is identified as documentation or as performance, which in turn affects how it might be interpreted. If an audience member reads documentation as a performance, then they will likely not be able to discern the elements of practice that the documentation could communicate, even though the same information is still in the piece. Incorporating documentation into compositions can therefore require the composer to accept some ambiguity. If wishing to be more certain that the practice which could be surfaced will be communicated to the audience, then the composer would need to include more explicit materials, such as narrative or annotations, in their work.

Context is also key to estranging the everyday aspects of creative practice. In Chapter 11, I outlined how estrangement can help us to focus on overly familiar objects and habits, which we may not normally notice. A review of the examples of surfaced practice that I have provided in Chapter 12 suggests that estrangement has been a vital element in achieving my aims. Regardless of its form – be it displacing sounds from different environments into the concert hall, an unnatural multilayering of a single person's face or a notebook one can 'walk' across – estrangement seems to emphasise small differences that may indicate the passage of time, changing locations, states of mind or the assumption of personas, for example. Where estrangement is absent or not clear enough – as seen in *WALKS 1–4* – discerning the practice in the piece may become difficult, even when one knows it is there. This seems especially true when searching for indications of timelines, identifiably different locales or personas. For other composers seeking to undertake similar work, using documentation in pieces to bring to the surface aspects of their own practice, the techniques and approaches I have outlined in this section could serve as a model or starting point to assist with experimentation using their own documentation.

In this section, I also demonstrate the difficulties in trying to surface practice from a large collection of archival documentation. All the pieces in the portfolio use only a fraction of the documentary material created while working on them, allowing for the creation of clear relationships between the documentation and other elements of the piece. The notebook website, however, is an archive of every page of my composition notebooks from 25 March 2019 onwards, and as a living archive, it is constantly expanding. In Chapter 11, I demonstrated that the volume of material is a barrier to reaching much of the information the collection contains. In such a case, alternative approaches must be used to extract strands of information from the mass. Programmed views reduce the quantity of visible data to only the information relevant to the current query. This creates subsets of information relating to a single piece (view by piece), a single period of time (view by volume) or a longer period, but further limiting the information to enable broad comparisons to be made (piece maps).

Finally, I must acknowledge two key omissions from the list of practice-related elements which have surfaced in these works: scores and material from the later stages of composition.

Score creation and use are largely indiscernible in the final form of the portfolio pieces. Part of the difficulty may be that I almost always perform from memory, and I rarely work with conventional stave-based notation; therefore, scores are not visible in performance videos, and when they appear within a work (for example, the notebook spreads in 'Phyllida Barlow Playground' and 'The Apocalypse' in *HAYDN SPACE OPERA,* which were used as graphic scores for the performances heard in those rooms), they may be difficult to identify as scores. One video in 'The Corridor' shows Bastard Assignments playing from a score (Figure 40, p. 140), but the angle of the video hides the score itself from view. The only hint of its existence is that at one point, Edward Henderson (seated on the left side of the table) leans forward to look more closely at the page. *WALKS 1–4* uses a form of documentation as the score (Figure 46) for the synthesiser part in the soundtrack because it was important to me that every element of the videos be grounded in a walk by a Kaths Kaff member. However, while my interpretation of that score,

on a ROLI Seaboard Block expressive keyboard, is heard in the work, the score is nowhere to be seen in the piece.

Documentation from the later stages of the composition process is largely absent from these works, which I only noticed quite late in the project. Once I began to work with procedural blending diagrams[85] to identify the stages of creation and visualise where the documentation used in the portfolio pieces originated, I realised that all the earlier works for this project only included material from the early stages of composition. In *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*, I was able to add documentation from each of the major phases of the piece's creation to 'The Corridor', but this could be difficult to do in, for example, concert works with a fairly fixed duration, and would likely require the design of a structure which could support ongoing additions of new material.

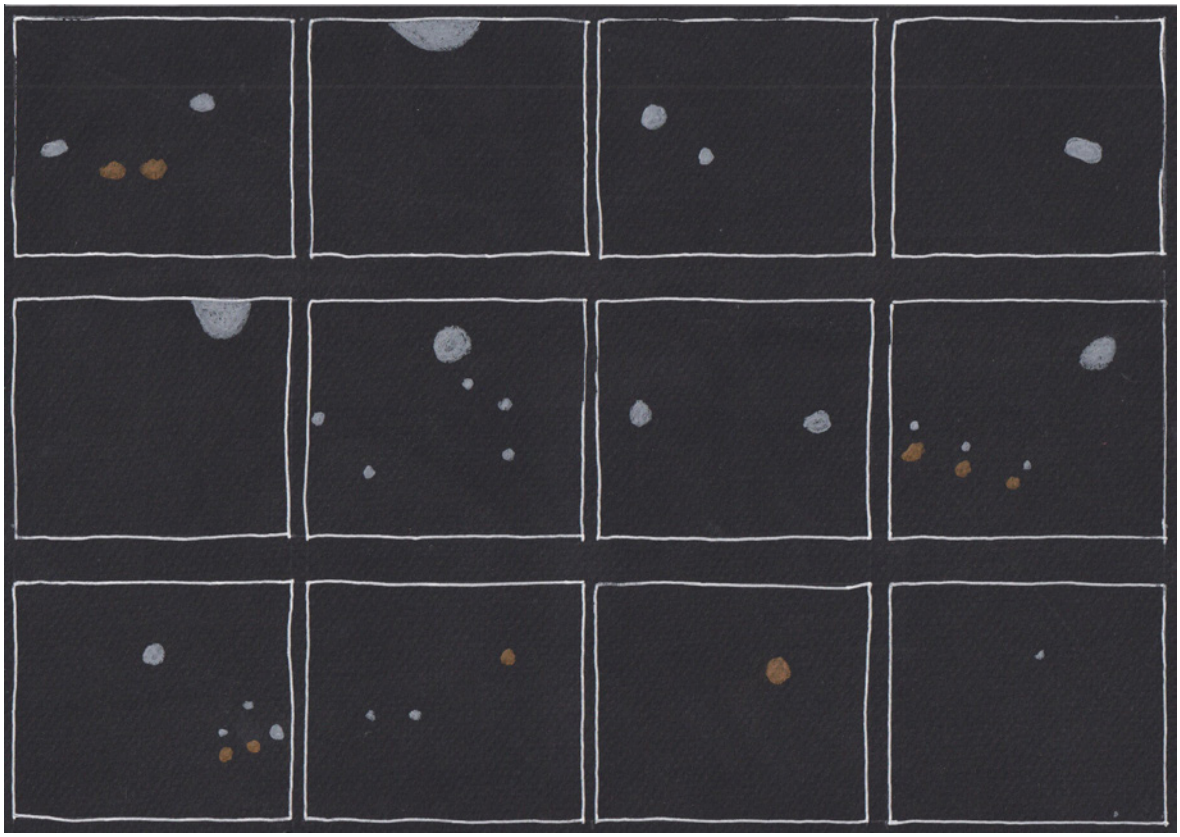

Figure 46. *WALKS 1–4*, graphic score for the synthesiser part, created from the positions of streetlights in a night-time walk video contributed to the original Walks project by Katie Hanning.

85 See Garrelfs (2016) for more information on this 'tool for considering and articulating process' (p. 71).

SECTION V: CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 14 SUMMARY

Across this project, I have entangled my private and public creative spaces, bringing the space of the Studio into the space of the Stage in ways which inextricably fuse the two. First, I have used documentation of my creative practice (which I have positioned as representing the Studio) as material incorporated into new compositions, establishing relationships between the elements of the piece that allow for the practice which created the work to become visible to others. Second, I have adapted the way I work in my composition notebooks – a form of Studio – to be able to accommodate both the private and public purposes of these books, so that these normally private working spaces can be made public without hindering their usefulness to me.

My first research question was about how entangling private and public creative spaces – the Studio and the Stage – might affect the practitioner undertaking such work. My experience suggests that the brief answer is 'substantially'. A certain level of emotional discomfort should certainly be anticipated when making private, incomplete work public. However, strategies to help composers both accept and minimise the uncomfortable emotions of vulnerability and embarrassment may be found by reflecting on the situations that lead to such emotions and understanding the defences that human beings erect to shield themselves from such feelings – such as those identified by Goffman (1990). As I have gained a better understanding of my emotional responses, the more accepting I have become of the imperfections in my practice, and as this project has progressed, this work has made me more confident in entangling my Studio and Stage spaces. For me, the result of this process has been a transformed practice. I am no longer a composer-who-performs but have embraced the entangled persona of composer-performer.

In Section II, I established a definition of Studio space that entangles the artist, the place they are working in (which may be physical or digital) and their everyday actions as they engage with their practice. With the artist at its centre, this idea of the Studio may be visualised as an overlay, settling over any place the artist uses. The Studio is, therefore, mobile and may be more accurately represented by documenting the activity of the artist's creative practice than by documenting the place or places where they work. This documentation may be understood as a way of 'packaging up' the Studio so that it can be entangled with the public space of the Stage. Section IV: 'Surfacing practice through entanglement' demonstrated that this approach has the potential to surface aspects of composition practice including timelines, locale, tools, artistic habits, personas, emotional experiences of composition, and everyday objects and experiences in the composer's working life. Establishing relationships between the documentation used in a piece and other elements of the work, including other documentation and live performance, has been central to surfacing these elements of practice. My use of layering, repetition and – particularly – the effect of estrangement in the portfolio pieces may be of use to other composers wishing to engineer such relationships in their own pieces. However, my work has established that surfacing practice through these approaches and techniques is not guaranteed. The example of *WALKS 1–4* suggests that without estrangement to destabilise certain documentary elements, a piece may fail to illuminate the practice which created it. Additionally, where documentation is presented as part of a performance, there is a high probability that it may be read as performance itself, thereby negating the possibility of a documentary interpretation. If documentation is not recognised, practice may fail to be surfaced for the audience, no matter how carefully crafted the relationships between the piece's elements are.

I have mentioned above the importance of understanding how feelings of vulnerability or exposure are likely to result from entangling private and public creative spaces. When creating and using documentation of authentic composition practice – that is, documentation which aims to be truthful to the reality of the composer's private work – it is probable that these emotions will be keenly felt. Committing to authenticity often means putting perceived inadequacies and failures on display for others to see, potentially undermining the flawless image we

all prefer to project to others (Goffman, 1990). My framework of documentation types, which I proposed in Chapter 7, outlines categorisations for documentation of creative practice found in musical works, based on the context in which it was intended to be used (whether private or public) and the level of commitment to capturing authentic artistic practice. This framework establishes four types of documentation – true documentation, performed documentation, fictive practice and feigned practice. The framework has the potential to provide a useful schema when considering the practice shown in a piece of documentation, whether assessing it for use in a new piece or attempting to understand apparent documentation in another composer's work. The framework encourages the questioning of what we see as documentation in pieces:

- Why was it made?
- How accurately does it represent this composer's practice?
- How does my understanding of the piece change if I change my assumptions about which type of documentation it is?

However, as demonstrated by the examples I have provided to illustrate the framework's categories, applying the framework is rarely straightforward. In most cases, the pieces I have examined engage with multiple intentions which may pull the artist in different directions, override one another, or occur in sequence, causing shifts of direction and, therefore, of how the documentation is categorised according to the framework. Individual pieces of documentation may also become multivalent through reuse in different contexts, becoming representative of multiple phases of the work, or even multiple pieces. I have endeavoured to avoid applying value judgements to the examples of documentation types I have examined; different circumstances simply result in documentation with varying levels of authenticity to the practice of the artist(s) portrayed. The framework provides scope for the effects of vulnerability, which may edge documentation towards performance or even fiction. Even where fictional versions of practice are the result of deliberate decision, they seem more likely to be created in response to a narrative or entertainment priority than an intention to deceive. I should re-emphasise, too, that identifying documentation in the work of others is no guarantee that it exists. In every example presented but one, I have needed

to contact either the composer or the performer to determine whether the documentation I perceived was, in fact, documentation.

I believe the notebook publication project to be the first to be undertaken by a living composer over a period of several years with the aim of providing information about how a professional composer's creative practice may be entangled with their everyday life. This project highlights the difficulties that can arise when documentation is assembled in large quantities. While individual pages bring the details of my everyday composition practice into view for a public audience, the density of data accumulated in the entire database poses problems for surfacing particular strands of information from the depths of the archive. I have demonstrated a solution to this problem by programming views – 'View by volume', 'View by piece' and the 'Piece maps' – which use filters to limit the visible data, clarifying the relationships between pages. This technological intervention may be seen as the equivalent of the processes of selection and design which establish relationships between documentation and other elements in the pieces of the portfolio. The notebook website's views provide a broader perspective on my practice than can be easily identified by looking at the individual pages.

To return to Morton Feldman's statement, which I quoted at the beginning of this thesis, I feel that the work presented in this project offers an alternative to the polish of 'perfection' in music in a way that incorporates the possibility for an audience to gain some insight into the practice of composition. Entangling the private and public creative spaces of Studio and Stage encourages the composer to make use of the surprises and the often-energetic rawness of the documentation of their artistic practice. Using such documentation encourages experimentation – to work with imperfect materials – and self-examination, which allows the composer to investigate their own familiar practice and develop tools to manage vulnerability.

CHAPTER 15 FURTHER AVENUES FOR RESEARCH

During this project, numerous intriguing avenues of inquiry and ideas for pieces surfaced and were discarded. Some I intend to follow up myself, and some may appeal to other scholars. I present a few of these further avenues for research in this chapter.

15.1 THE COLLABORATIVE STUDIO

My understanding of the Studio as an entangled space centred on the artist and her actions, as presented in Section II, is focused on the individual artist. However, this interpretation may also be applied to collaborative creative relationships, such as those of Bastard Assignments or Kaths Kaff. I presented my initial thoughts on this topic, alongside Josh Spear's related work on 'the creative acreage', at the conference 'Collaborations Are More Refreshing Than New Socks' in Antwerp in 2019,[86] but there is more to be done to develop the nuances of Studio space in this respect.

15.2 USING DOCUMENTATION FROM THE LATER STAGES

As indicated in Chapter 13, most of the pieces created for this project have only used documentation from the earlier stages of the composition process. While I addressed this shortcoming in *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*'s 'The Corridor', I feel that using documentation from the later stages poses some intriguing compositional challenges, such as how to keep the structure of the piece fluid enough to incorporate ongoing additions of documentary content.

15.3 FROM DOCUMENTATION TO SURVEILLANCE

After deliberately documenting practice, a logical – but challenging – next step would be to use surveillance technology to capture everything that happens in the studio. This has resonances with the work of artists such as Bruce Nauman, e.g. *Mapping the Studio I (Fat Chance John Cage)*, or Wafaa Bilal, who mounted

86 Josh Spear's and my paper for this conference is available online at https://www.academia.edu/41361013/Bastard_Assignments_The_collaborative_studio_and_the_creative_acreage (Accessed: 2 March 2024)

a digital camera on the back of his head to take photos of whatever was behind him every minute for a year. Surveillance was impractical for this project due to the mobility of my practice and the challenges of managing and working with the quantity of footage that would have been generated. However, the benefit of surveillance would have been the ability to capture more of the in-between moments in composition, the less distinct work of sitting and thinking, pacing, or procrastinating by tidying or poking around the internet.

15.4 PIECES FORMED ENTIRELY FROM DOCUMENTATION

The logical conclusion of my work of incorporating documentation into pieces seems to be to create pieces entirely out of the documentation accumulated while composing another work. To some extent, this occurs in *WALKS 1–4*, which was a second phase of the Kaths Kaff project in which we documented our daily walks. However, I also intended to make a piece entirely from the documentation captured while working on *Quiet Songs*. This work was titled *Accretions*, but it was abandoned for this project due to the overwhelming amount of documentary material under consideration and the limited time available towards the end of the project. However, I still feel that this idea has the potential to surface different aspects of practice from the source piece whose documentation was used.

15.5 DEVELOPING THE NOTEBOOK VIEWS

I mentioned in Chapter 11 that, following a suggestion from James Saunders, I am developing the notebook website further, to capture thematic data. I intend to use this information to create new views which can intersect with the existing data already being captured. This may lead to views that can show, for example, the relationship between patterns of composing and touring, my use of the viola, or a comparison between time spent collaborating and time spent on my solo work. I intend to develop this work as I continue to add pages to the site.

15.6 DEVELOPING THE FRAMEWORK

The framework that I proposed in Chapter 7 for categorising documentation was designed to be applied to a narrow field: documentation of creative practice as used within musical works. However, I feel that this framework has the potential

to be adapted for wider use. I intend to develop, adapt or refine my framework in a new study where I will be examining the documentation provided by composers to other researchers' projects. I anticipate that the categories of true and performed documentation will prove useful in this application and that they will become more nuanced through being considered in this alternative context, and plan to develop a set of questions – similar to those on p. 157 – to support the framework's use as an analytical tool.

CHAPTER 16 FINAL REFLECTIONS

My research has drawn on the work of theorists and practitioners across multiple disciplines, particularly music, contemporary art, geography, sociology, and cultural theory. Establishing a definition of the Studio as a mobile space entangled around the artist has been central to this project, as it supports the perspective that to document a composer's creative practice is to document their Studio space. This allows for the use of that documentation – either within pieces or through more direct methods, such as publishing my composition notebooks or making vlog episodes – to form an effective way of entangling Studio and Stage within interdisciplinary composition practice. The work of Goffman has been particularly significant for clarifying the general human preferences that have formed a framework for understanding where my own sensitivities lie. I would encourage anyone seeking to undertake similar work to pay particular attention to the tendencies he identifies and to reflect on their own responses within and around those.

I hope that the original contributions outlined in this thesis – my framework of documentation types and the solutions I have found to the challenges of publishing my composition notebooks online – can contribute to ongoing dialogues surrounding the visibility of composition practice. I also hope that other composers – especially composer-performers, for whom this way of working would seem to be particularly appropriate – may find my techniques and approaches for entangling Studio and Stage in pieces to be useful as they contribute new works to the already fascinating area of documentation use within composition.

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SECTION VII: APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 VLOG

Between 22 April 2017 and 8 March 2020, I created 48 episodes of a 'composition vlog' that were posted on YouTube. I posted approximately every 2–3 weeks (with some gaps), filming updates that were usually 8–20 minutes long. While I am aware of several short series of vlogs by composers, some of which, sadly, have now been taken offline, I believe this to be the first extended attempt to show the composition process in this format over a period of years.

The vlog was a step towards publishing my composition notebooks, but it posed different challenges. One of the greatest of these was the combination of reporting on a relatively short period of time (and therefore having a limited amount of documentation available to work with) while needing to keep each episode short, as is common with the vlog format. Less documentation meant that I had less choice of material to work with, while the short episodes meant that I needed to use the most effective material, regardless of how exposed it made me feel.

In this appendix, I suggest two episodes – one from early in the series, and one from two years later – which I consider to be representative. I also provide a link to the full playlist and a list of all episodes, with their dates and links.

Suggested episodes

- Episode 8: 22 August 2017: https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.30279178
- Episode 32: 27 February 2019: https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.30279181

Playlist of all 48 episodes on YouTube

- https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCx7Iub9Vqpi6-fH5HlCmQYyH6jDGCAyT

List of all vlog episodes

No.	Date	Link
1	22 April 2017	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJ9AKFxyhgA
2	6 May 2017	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fB6TSLvcPoo
3	21 May 2017	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNOoroKjJPE
4	3 June 2017	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_JfB7oUoM00
5	17 June 2017	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVvhJW6CWyQ
6	2 July 2017	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxgsHtE1MNs
7	2 August 2017	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXDxkD0Y5cM
8	22 August 2017	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QFxxh4RyLww
9	7 September 2017	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFDDkFpq2uQ
10	25 September 2017	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBM5uUUUfKU
11	17 October 2017	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bdf1GPOaG-A
12	1 November 2017	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtdOpzNk7OQ
13	25 November 2017	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-InkIPXKz8U
14	13 December 2017	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpQuKeAlhUQ
15	13 January 2017	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrSqFtjJFfc
16	30 January 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsfhDqy5iMM
17	15 Feburary 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tCJXeJa7O_c
18	13 March 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEpJ8cucy58
19	11 April 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbGdFLxJjdM
20	23 April 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P89VQL-dMdE
21	20 May 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLguWnW2hRY
22	6 June 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JjFrYrvw6cM
23	28 June 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wJmkdKIKQA
24	14 July 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbfJPcBcpWM
25	23 July 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10gudsmU29c
26	1 August 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASGe4ehfPIY
27	16 August 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uj9B7PAJOS4
28	12 September 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mP-7cD8x8s
29	7 October 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=719EgjhJ-wE
30	11 November 2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_fXi1MXNgs
31	3 January 2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dp6kfOq_mOU
32	27 February 2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBpYMve18C8
33	26 March 2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BVwRA5aUtA
34	16 April 2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbi8PImrKUU
35	30 April 2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWYA8bZzaUY

List of all vlog episodes (continued)

No.	Date	Link
36	19 May 2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iAFskT_OO24
37	4 June 2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mQi40ECoKk
38	28 June 2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8H5AsVOSY0U
39	30 July 2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d33iWSXr0eg
40	15 August 2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyIpi8Qa89g
41	14 September 2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Q0OVZdkSPg
42	14 October 2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPtt36Y7ABE
43	4 November 2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2knzfOVpCE
44	18 November 2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrRZ3UtC_X8
45	12 December 2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2GKq72n_NQ
46	19 January 2020	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0LbDaCpsg8
47	20 February 2020	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GaC4unm-KOk
48	8 March 2020	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23d5kaAWo_U

APPENDIX 2 STUDIO/SIDEBOARD

Studio/Sideboard is a set of photographs and experiments in image manipulation which I undertook in 2017 to investigate the place of my studio, using the teak sideboard that sits in my studio as a synecdoche for the whole room. The first step of the project was a sequence of photographs of the sideboard with its drawers and cupboards open and closed in different configurations. This series of images formed the basis for the later manipulations, such as those provided in the text as Figure 6 (p. 35). I include them here – on the following page and in digital form at https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.30279208 – to more thoroughly demonstrate how this work shows the invisible hand of the studio's artist. Although my body is not seen in these images, my manipulations of this piece of furniture betrays my presence.
















SECTION VIII: PORTFOLIO

AIDES MEMOIRE/POV

For four performers and tape (2017)

c. 9 minutes

View or download materials online

https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582147

- Score
- Video: *Aides Memoire* performance documentation
- Video: *POV* realisation

Description

Aides Memoire and *POV* are linked but independent works. *Aides Memoire* is a piece for live performance, while *POV* is a video work created from photographs taken by the performers during a performance of *Aides Memoire*.

Aides Memoire was created for a live BBC Radio 3 broadcast performance by Bastard Assignments on the theme of 'Memory'. It is a piece which incorporates photography, drawing parallels between photography and audio recording to document experiences and capture memories. The four performers use cameras as instruments throughout the piece, responding to cues in the tape part or narration with photo-taking and dial-twiddling.

The tape part uses field recordings from my collection of sounds which I have captured while travelling. Sounds from over ten years of travels are represented in this work. The live narration (which I perform) details my memories, as prompted by the recordings, of the circumstances of recording, often including information about why I captured these sounds. The result is somewhat like an aural version of a slideshow of holiday snaps. The somewhat mundane sounds of birds, rain, a building site and church bells being framed by my narration, which often indicates that I experienced an emotional imperative to record. The recordings are often rough, some marred by wind sound or recorded from further away from the source

of the sound than was ideal for a clear recording. However, they all document my experience of hearing those sounds at that time and place.

POV is a video work which is realised from the photos taken by the performers during a single performance of *Aides Memoire*. These photographs form an unusual body of documentation, as they are a way of recording both the performers' physical movements and the performers' perspective while performing – their point of view. All the photographs from the performance are used in realising *POV*, collated to be as close to the order in which they were taken as possible. The tempo of the passing images is shaped by the number of images taken by that camera and the speed at which they were taken, with photographs from a camera that yielded a large quantity of photos passing by faster than those from cameras which yielded smaller collections.

First performed by Bastard Assignments (Tim Cape, Edward Henderson, Caitlin Rowley and Josh Spear) in a live performance for BBC 3's 'Hear and Now' radio show at Wellcome Collection, London, 14 October 2017.

HAYDN SPACE OPERA

Virtual reality environment (2019–2024)
No fixed duration; visits may take up to c. 30 minutes

View or download materials online

https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582177

- Document: How to navigate *HAYDN SPACE OPERA*
- Document: Map of the rooms of the piece and a detailed map of 'The Corridor', showing the locations of each piece of documentation
- 'Walkthroughs' folder: Walkthrough videos for each of the rooms of the piece
- 'Media' folder: Images, videos and audio files used in the piece, organised by room

Description

HAYDN SPACE OPERA is a virtual reality piece created on the Mozilla Hubs browser-based social VR platform. It considers the private creative spaces of my practice, including my notebooks, and rehearsal rooms with my Bastard Assignments colleagues. Every permanent element of this work relates to its creation in some way, with most elements in the work being documentary material created over the course of the piece's development. This includes images of notebook pages, audio and video recordings of workshop experiments, videos and screenshots of playtests, 3D structures, and an interactive space which loosely aligns the adding of digital objects to a VR 'room' with my process of adding layers of writing, drawing and collage to my notebooks.

The piece forms a metaphor for my composer-performer practice, starting with the development process ('The Corridor'), then warming up for performance ('The Warm-Up Room'), the performance itself ('Phyllida Barlow Playground' and 'The Apocalypse') and all of this interspersed with ongoing development of the piece by working in notebooks ('The Café', 'The Blank Page') and workshops and other work that continues to shape the piece between performances ('The Corridor').

The experience of *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* is different for every visit, shaped by the way the visitor moves through the rooms, experiencing localised and room-wide audio, turning sounds on and off. Multiple visitors may be in the work at the same time, in which case they can converse with one another by voice or text chat, and when others are there, the experience changes again, as turning media on and off can often affect other peoples' experiences.

HAYDN SPACE OPERA was launched at SparkFest's online festival in May 2021, and relaunched in April 2024 with the addition of a new room, 'The Corridor'.

Caveat

While *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* was created to run on Mozilla Hubs, an interactive browser-based social virtual reality platform created and hosted by Mozilla, this platform was shut down at the end of May 2024 (two months after my initial thesis submission was scheduled) with very little notice. Since 31 May 2024, therefore, *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* has no longer been available to explore in virtual reality. For this reason, I have provided video walkthroughs of each room of the piece in this submission, and I have also included every significant piece of video and audio material and imagery used in the work in this portfolio. You can find these in folders organised by room in the linked repository item for this work. I do have plans to recreate *HAYDN SPACE OPERA* in another form, whether using Mozilla's 'Community Edition' – the open-source version of Hubs that continues to exist – or remaking it in something like the Unity game engine, but as Mozilla's announcement was made only six weeks before my submission date, it was not possible to prepare this alternate version for this portfolio.

NOTEBOOK WEBSITE

Website, launched 20 December 2021

Latest volume at the time of submission: Volume 24, to 1 October 2023

View or download materials online

https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582186

- Document: Detailed technical outline of the system, plugins and workflow to maintain the notebook website

Notebook website: https://notebook.caitlinrowley.com

- View by volume: https://notebook.caitlinrowley.com/view-by-notebook/
- View by piece: https://notebook.caitlinrowley.com/view-by-piece/
- View piece maps: https://notebook.caitlinrowley.com/piece-map/

Description

The notebook website contains scanned images of my composition notebooks – 27 volumes are represented in this portfolio. The earliest three volumes are all altered books and have only been partially uploaded due to copyright considerations; however, the books that use a combined composition notebook and daily working diary format are uploaded as complete volumes.[1]

Where work on a composition has been noted within a spread of pages, the image of that spread is categorised by the name of the piece, and every image is also categorised according to the volume it belongs in. This categorisation has allowed me to set up automated views which filter the images in the archive to show only a subset of the whole collection. Three types of views are currently available, each allowing the viewer to click to view the pages in more detail: view by volume, view by piece, and the piece maps. The piece maps display a higher-level view of my

1 Planning spreads have been redacted from these volumes, however, for reasons of privacy.

composition practice, showing the pacing of projects and the intersections between work on different pieces; they also show more clearly than the other views where significant gaps in composition work occurred.

Caveat

As this website is a living archive of my notebooks, requires the interactivity provided by a web server and currently contains over 1,000 images of my notebooks' pages, it has not been possible to provide a downloadable version of it for this submission.

As a living archive, content will continue to be added to the site approximately every two months. I have therefore noted the date of the last entry added before submission: any notebook page dated after 1 October 2023 (volume 24) should not be considered part of this submission.

Finally, while the website has been very reliable since its launch in December 2021, it is nevertheless dependent on the uptime of my website host, and the responsiveness of their technical staff in case of difficulties. These are factors which are beyond my direct control.

QUIET SONGS

For solo performer (viola and voice) and video (2019)
c. 10 minutes

View or download materials online

https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582174

- Score
- Video: *Quiet Songs* performance documentation
- Video: Video part of *Quiet Songs*

Description

Quiet Songs was commissioned by Aldeburgh Festival in 2019 for Bastard Assignments' performance at the Festival that year. Written for me to perform, it sets live detuned viola against a video part compiled from documentation of the piece's creation, manipulated and periodically silenced. Starting with a simple mirrored relationship between the two (the viola provides the sound for the silenced vocal performance onscreen), they quickly take different paths, coinciding here and there throughout the piece.

The live viola part uses few traditional playing techniques. I use scordatura (the strings are retuned to F-E-A-G), a wide range of playing positions (near, on and behind the bridge all the way to the fine-tuners, and over the fingerboard all the way down to the scroll), creating white noise by bowing the body of the instrument, and noise effects. The live vocal part takes sounds from the video and adapts them to the public environment of the concert platform.

The audio in the video part uses recordings made in my studio – most notably via a contact microphone positioned on the window. This recording documents my performance in the 'portrait' material, simultaneously capturing the sound of my performance in the studio and the sounds of the street outside.

Quiet Songs was premiered by Caitlin Rowley in the Britten Studio at Snape Maltings on 15 June 2019 as part of Bastard Assignments' performance for Aldeburgh Festival.

WALKS 1–4

Video works (2020–2021)
4 minutes (four 1-minute videos connected into a single work)

View or download materials online

https://doi.org/10.17870/bathspa.29582180

- Document: Score elements document
- Score: Graphic score for synthesiser part
- Video: All four pieces as a single video

Individual looping videos shared on Instagram:

- WALK 1: https://www.instagram.com/p/CQIlz5eALmR/
- WALK 2: https://www.instagram.com/p/CQI1uX1grr4/
- WALK 3: https://www.instagram.com/p/CQJEG6xAWoN/
- WALK 4: https://www.instagram.com/p/CQJT6Xpg7mD/

Description

WALKS 1–4 is a set of short video pieces created from documentation of local walks by three members of the Kaths Kaff collective – Jon England, Katie Hanning and me. In late March 2020, shortly after the start of the first UK COVID-19 lockdown, Hanning proposed that we use our government-mandated one-hour walks as a prompt for creative responses. This resulted in a great mass of documentation created by the three of us, which took the form of videos, photographs, field recordings, drawings and other media, all capturing different aspects of our daily walks in Somerset, Bristol, and Gravesend in Kent. Acting on a suggestion that emerged out of the group's discussion early in the project, I brought these responses together to create *WALKS 1–4*, combining documentation and input from all three artists. Every element of these short video works uses a form of documentation from the initial project. Some elements from the project were used directly, as with the four videos showing pavement, a boat, a brick wall and vegetation blurred by the walker's motion, and a squirrel leaping from tree

to tree; others were reinterpretations of documentation contributed by one of the other artists. These reinterpretations include the animated frame that reveals the underlying videos, which I created as a digital translation of a technique England was using to document some of his walks with pen and paper, or my graphic score for the synthesiser part, which I based on frames from a night-time video contributed by Hanning.

The result is a set of short, interlinked videos, designed to be shared both as 1-minute looping uploads on Instagram and as a connected set on other online channels.

WALKS 1–4 was followed by two more sets (5–8 and 9–12), which were commissioned by Electric Medway Festival in 2021 but which are not included in this portfolio.

WALKS 1–4 was launched as four looping videos on my Instagram account on 15 June 2021.