Reimagining the Saxophone: Preparing Works by Six Irish Composers for Performance – A First History

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ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY OF MUSIC

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Abbreviations

AHRC  Arts and Humanities Research Council
CHARM  Research Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music
CMC  Contemporary Music Centre
DAW  Digital Audio Workstation
HIP  Historically Informed Performance
JAR  Journal for Artistic Research
NCH  National Concert Hall (Dublin)
OED  Oxford English Dictionary
RIAM  Royal Irish Academy of Music
RTÉ  Raidió Teilifís Éireann
SDT  Self Determination Theory
Abstract

This thesis examines the processes involved in the performance preparation of works for saxophone by six Irish composers: John Buckley (1951), Bill Whelan (1951), Benjamin Dwyer (1965), Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin (1950-2018), Conor Linehan, (1971) and Kenneth Edge (1965). All of these compositions were either written for me, or as in the case of Linehan’s *Three Pieces*, adapted for me. The compositions chosen for this thesis represent a reimagining of the saxophone as a solo instrument across a spectrum of intellectual and compositional concerns, and through my artistic research I examine the embodiment processes from within the works. Incorporating knowledge from the scientific fields of expertise in performance, embodied cognition, sports psychology and autoethnography; the philosophical fields of the ‘work concept’; the positive psychology field of ‘flow’; and the artistic fields of performance, notation, interpretation and sound recording; I have created a first history of the performance preparation for the works under discussion in this thesis.

Although this thesis is concerned with preparation rather than performance, I include sound recordings of the world premiere performances of the works by Ó Súilleabháin, Buckley and Linehan as research artefacts.
Accessing the Audio Recordings

Chapters 8 through 13 are accompanied by audio recordings of my rehearsals and performances, denoted by the saxophone icon (above). These audio files are included on the accompanying CD and are also accessible for download at this web address:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9z304yqaqw7g4r7/AABvpWwJnmUPh476FrEcwoB4a?dl=0
Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest thanks and gratitude to my supervisor Professor Denise Neary, whose inspirational guidance and boundless patience has given me the confidence and necessary skills to pursue my research.

I can’t begin to find words to express my gratitude and love to my partner Veerle and my wonderful children who have been a constant source of support and wonder to me throughout.

Finally, a heartfelt thanks to the composers whose works form the centre of this research; John Buckley, Bill Whelan, Benjamin Dwyer, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin and Conor Linehan.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my dear friend Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin.
Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the preparation for performance of works for saxophone by six Irish composers:

John Buckley: *Arabesque* (1990)

Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin:


Bill Whelan: Saxophone solo from *Riverdance* (1994)

Benjamin Dwyer: *Parallaxis* (1997)


1. *Eleven for a While*
2. *Trip to Bray!*
3. *Garret*

Kenneth Edge: *Paganini’s Elbow* (2020)

1. *Prelude - The Devil at My Elbow*
2. *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*

The selected compositions encompass a wide spectrum of compositional praxes and from the performer’s perspective each work demands its own unique preparatory and performative approach. The scores of some of the above works are published by the
Contemporary Music Centre (CMC). Instrumentation and durations are as follows (Table 1.1):

Table 1.1: Instrumentation and durations of the selected works

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Instrumentation</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buckley</td>
<td>Arabesque</td>
<td>Alto Saxophone</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ó Súilleabháin</td>
<td>Templum</td>
<td>Soprano saxophone and chamber orchestra</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Brook of Donode</td>
<td>Soprano saxophone and concert harp</td>
<td>8 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whelan</td>
<td>Riverdance</td>
<td>Soprano saxophone</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwyer</td>
<td>Arabesque</td>
<td>Soprano and alto saxophone duet</td>
<td>11 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linehan</td>
<td>Three Pieces</td>
<td>Soprano saxophone and piano</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edge</td>
<td>Paganini’s Elbow</td>
<td>Soprano saxophone and piano</td>
<td>12 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The compositions selected for this thesis represent a reimagining of the saxophone as a solo instrument, and through my artistic research I examine the embodied cognition of these compositions from within the works. Through incorporating knowledge from the scientific fields of expertise in performance, embodied cognition, sports psychology and autoethnography, the philosophical fields of the ‘work concept’, the positivist psychology field of ‘flow’ and the artistic fields of performance, notation, interpretation and sound recording, I have created a first history of the performance practice of the works under discussion in this thesis.²

¹ The CMC is Ireland’s archive and resource centre for new music. See, https://www.cmc.ie/about-us
² The autoethnographic model I use is that of the researcher being the subject of the research. Embodied cognition concerns the role of the body in the learning process.
Interpretation in musical performance can be viewed as an absorption of previous performance models coupled with new insights, or as Isabelle Héroux observes, ‘to combine the expected and the unexpected.’

The Irish saxophone works I have chosen for this thesis eschew easy categorisation and their stylistic differences have acted to liberate me from certain tropes of musical interpretation, such as a reliance on well-defined ‘codified performance models.’ I have collaborated closely with the composers over a number of years and approach their music using an autoethnographic methodology. My artistic research praxis has produced new knowledge outputs in recorded form, which I present in the formats of written word and recorded sound. As Heinrich Neuhaus observes in the concluding remarks of his book *The art of piano playing*, ‘I am convinced that in the none-too-distant future such books as mine will be published only with an appended soundtrack which alone is capable of giving a full and clear idea of what is being discussed.’

In discussing knowledge production through artistic research, Jonathan Impett remarks: ‘taking western masterworks as our sole evidence might be equivalent to understanding architecture only on the basis of the pyramids: objects of wonder but perhaps eccentric to any general case of human behavior.’ This specificity of ‘artistic research in music’ to the Western Art Music canon limits our understanding

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of musical expression and is addressed in this thesis through the inclusion of works by Whelan and Ó Súilleabháin, neither of whom can be limited to the ‘category’ of Western Art Music.

Aside from the contribution this thesis makes to the field of artistic research, its research findings are also of relevance to the scholarship of contemporary music in Ireland.

As an artistic researcher and performer, it is evident that musicological score study without the performer’s perspective is an increasingly redundant research route. John Rink remarks on the existing literature on musical narrativity from the 1980s and 1990s: ‘In retrospect, it seems astonishing that so little attention was paid to performance in that literature, given that music’s narrative properties - however constituted - can be actualised only through performance.’

This thesis’ examination through self-reflection of the process of preparation can be seen as a departure from the standard assumption of the end result as research outcome. As Amanda Bayley observes, ‘research into most western traditions has historically focused on the end result rather than the process of arriving at that result.’

My methodology of investigation is twofold. Firstly, I have approached and examined the works from an autoethnographic perspective, and secondly, I have

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explicated the process of embodied cognition of these stylistically varied works, which through their differences, illuminate the polyvalent characteristics of the saxophone.

Margaret Wilson observes that ‘there is a movement afoot in cognitive science to grant the body a central role in shaping the mind.’\(^9\) As a wind instrumentalist, it is my breath that animates the sound and brings a notated score to life, as Eva-Maria Houben observes:

> Form originates from the corporeality of the breath. The breaths are individual events. One follows the other. In this way, I advance as a performer breath by breath, dwelling at individual places. The actual performance reveals the spaces where the performer acts and lives. We can observe a coming-into-being of space, of time, of the composition itself. Time passes, an unavoidable fact. With each breath, we grow older — we exude our lives. This corporeality manifests itself through the breaths. At the same time, the limits of the body as well as those of life itself are obvious. Music becomes an existential experience and confronts us with the limits of our bodies.\(^10\)

As this artistic research thesis is written in an ‘autoethnographic’ style, in which I am both the researcher and the research subject, I interrogate the seeming dualism between artist and researcher, demonstrating how the translation of knowledge from the subjective, intuitive domain, to that of the discursive, can meld these two seemingly disparate selves, engendering unique and exciting modes of knowledge production. My research investigates the selected saxophone works through my own artistic processes of practise and preparation.

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According to Amanda Bayley, ‘the impact of a composer’s presence affecting the process of interpretation and performance has yet to be fully explored.’\textsuperscript{11} This thesis investigates this very ‘impact’, through collaborative work with the composers and in my own expansion of the autoethnographic model of the performer and researcher being the same person, to that of composer, performer and researcher being the one.\textsuperscript{12}

In Chapter 2, I provide an overview of the works under discussion in this thesis, with some commentaries from the composers. Chapter 3 constitutes an investigation of recorded sound and its relevance in artistic research through its effectiveness as an archival, educational and analytical tool. Chapter 4 examines the research models of autoethnography and artistic research, both of which are of relevance to the performer. Chapter 5 looks at the subject of performance and examines issues of notation, interpretative authority and the philosophical concepts of the autonomous ‘work’, the Werktreue ideal and the concept of ‘saturated phenomena’. Chapter 6 concerns the vital aspect of embodied cognition. This chapter also discusses the primacy of tacit knowledge in artistic research and ideas of embodiment in the realm of sports psychology. Chapter 7 is an examination of the scientific field of ‘expertise in performance’ and the positivist psychological concept of ‘flow’. Chapters 8 through 13 offer detailed accounts of the processes involved in preparing the selected works for performance, including written and recorded research and a discussion of the usefulness of the digital audio workstation (DAW) as a learning aid. Aside from


\textsuperscript{12}Although autoethnography is broadly recognised as a viable qualitative research tool involving the practitioner’s self-reflection and dissemination of new knowledge, it does not appear in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED).
the research recordings, these chapters contain audio recordings of world premiere performances of the works by Buckley, Ó Súilleabháin and Linehan.

A certain limitation to my research in this thesis is the fact that I have not included any works for saxophone and electronics. This was not a conscious decision on my part, but a by-product of the choice of works for inclusion.
Chapter 2: The Composer in the Music: An Overview of the Works

The saxophone works being investigated in this thesis have unique embodiment concerns, and before pursuing a detailed investigation of the learning paths involved in the embodied cognition of these works (see Chapters 8 through 13), I will here provide an introductory overview to the works.

In my choice of compositions for this thesis, I have intentionally used a representatively wide-angle lens overview with the purpose of demonstrating the saxophone’s aptness across a wide spectrum of stylistic application. I have adopted an autoethnographic methodology as a means of approaching the selected works through the prism of the composer’s intentions.

As I discuss in Chapter 5, the Werktreue ideal is tied to the emergence c1800 of the concept of the autonomous musical work. This ‘work-concept’ saw the notated score taking primacy over the role of the interpreter, whose main duties would involve a faithful rendering of the composer’s expressive intentions, as encoded through the musical notation of the ‘work’. It is clearly an impossibility that a composer’s intentions can be fully notated, regardless of the complexity of detail used, and I realise that although all the works investigated in this thesis were composed or adapted with my playing in mind, it is possible that my very presence within the creative process may have contributed to a certain lack of specificity in the notational detail in some of the scores, as certain elements which could have been notated were left to me to supply.
John Buckley: Arabesque

In a 1955 article, published in *The Musical Times*, the esteemed Irish literary critic Denis Donoghue opines, ‘the frequency and standard of concerts in Ireland are not the primary issues: the real question concerns the vitality of Irish composition, the actual music being written here today. On this major issue I see no grounds for optimism: quite the contrary.’ In a wonderfully titled article *I’m a Composer: You’re a What?*, the composer Frank Corcoran writes, ‘the Irish composer is working on a *tabula rasa*: there is no tradition to guide the way, no dark fathers to be strangled in order that their sons may create monuments to their *Auseinandersetzungen*.’ Corcoran makes clear his stance on the question of embracing and utilising the enormous wealth of Irish traditional music when he observes ‘the Irish composer has inherited a corpus of traditional Irish material which, because of its very perfection, must reluctantly be placed to one side.’

This purposeful disengagement with the Irish traditional canon is a shared concern in John Buckley’s compositional praxis. As Benjamin Dwyer observes, ‘[Buckley] sought, rather, to investigate his Celtic heritage uniquely through a modernist language.’ Buckley expands on this point:

I consider all my compositions to be entirely Irish and I see no inherent contradiction here. In the first half of the twentieth century, Irish compositions proclaimed their national identity by extensive reference to folk melody. In my own original compositions however, I have almost never drawn on sources of Irish traditional music (arrangements or fantasies on traditional Irish

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1 The following musical examples of *Arabesque* sound a major 6th lower than written and the page numbering begins on page 3.
3 *’Auseinandersetzungen’* can be translated as a heated discussion or debate.
4 Frank Corcoran, ‘I'm a Composer: You’re a What?’, *The Crane Bag,* 6 (1982), 53.
5 Benjamin Dwyer, ‘From the Celtic to the abstract: shifting perspectives in the music of John Buckley’, *Musical Times,* 151 (2010), 9.
melodies constitute another category) and yet I believe they are completely imbued with a sense of Irishness. The Irishness of my compositions arises from an engagement with even more fundamental sources than traditional music: mythology, history, landscape and in particular the extraordinary qualities of Irish light.  

John Buckley’s *Arabesque*, composed in 1990, dates from a time in Irish cultural history when attempting to operate, never mind make a living, as a composer in the western art music tradition, was a daunting prospect. Dwyer observes:

> Extraordinarily, Buckley rose to prominence in Irish contemporary music despite the fact that he came from a relatively poor rural background in the southwest of Ireland. Even in Ireland today, government commitment to classical music in relation to education, infrastructure, radio and television broadcasting, professional development initiatives and so on leaves much to be desired in comparison with broader European contexts. 

Buckley composed *Arabesque* for me in 1990 and I gave the world premiere performance on 1 November 1991, at the National Concert Hall (NCH), Dublin.  

The title *Arabesque* came to Buckley as a musical reflection of the highly ornate Arabic artworks of the eighth and ninth centuries. This sense of the highly decorative is reflected in the elaborate ornamentation of the melodic line throughout Buckley’s work. *Arabesque* opens with a flourish of *double-forte* demisemiquavers, delivered *con fuoco*. The tempo is quaver = 132+, denoting a required tempo, with the option of playing faster. The opening section of *Arabesque* presents a complex physical and psychological challenge, dispensing as it does with any inbuilt opportunity for the

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6 Personal communication, 16 August 2020.  
7 Dwyer, ‘From the Celtic to the abstract’, 7.  
8 The CMC’s website mistakenly lists *Arabesque* as a work composed for solo soprano saxophone, instead of its correct instrumentation of solo alto saxophone. See, https://www.cmc.ie/music/arabesque.
soloist to acclimatize and gradually enter the virtuosic landscape of the work. It poses the same psychological challenges faced by the sprinter preparing to burst from the starting blocks, and it requires a sudden, ferocious unleashing of instrumental virtuosity to effectively convey its composer’s intentions (Ex 2.1):

Example 2.1: Buckley, *Arabesque*, page 3, systems 1-5

As Buckley states in a correspondence with the author:

I love your analogy of the sprinter and this indeed is what I had in mind. Clearly, many of my compositions do present significant technical and interpretive challenges to the musician. This, however, is not something I set out to achieve. My musical ideas just tend towards elaboration and complexity.9

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9 Personal communication, 16 August 2020.
As I discuss in greater detail in Chapter 8, the embodied cognition of Arabesque is demanding in a variety of physical, technical and psychological ways. Nonetheless, there is great pleasure to be had in performing Buckley’s work, as it is in the performance that Arabesque truly comes to life. Although the preparation of Arabesque requires a stringent program of deliberate practice, a performance of the work must present itself as a display of barely controlled virtuosic energy. As Buckley states, ‘the expressive potential of virtuosity is central to my aesthetic. Only after mastery of technique is achieved, is the composer or performer free to give true expression.’

Through the preparation process of Arabesque it becomes clear that there is artistic knowledge that comes only through live public performance. Mine Dogantan-Dack is in accord with this when she writes, ‘the most significant knowledge acquisition during the development of expertise in music performance happens through live public encounters with audiences and music.’ Although Buckley’s Arabesque can be accurately described as ‘virtuosic’, it is not so in any romantic conception of the virtuosic ideal. A note-perfect rendition is merely a starting point, the element of struggle as an inbuilt component of this work is vital to its communicative power. As Daniel Barenboim observes, ‘there are certain pieces, like Brahms’s first Piano Concerto, where the actual physical strain of playing is part of the music.’ Buckley’s Arabesque shares this inbuilt element of struggle as a component part of its musical presence. Buckley states:

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10 Personal communication, 16 August 2020.
I do, however, deliberately attempt to push the instruments to a fair degree. However, there are many difficult pieces in the repertoire of every instrument now, so I am working within acceptable advanced parameters. I have been extremely fortunate in the amazing musicians I have composed for […] Without them, perhaps I would have composed in a more conservative vein.\textsuperscript{13}

In my earliest performances of \textit{Arabesque}, I used Buckley’s handwritten score, and it is interesting to note some of the differences between it and the later published version.\textsuperscript{14} The example below shows a short passage as it appears in the printed score (Ex. 2.2):

Example 2.2: Buckley, \textit{Arabesque}, page 4, systems 5-6

\begin{music-image}
\begin{music}
\begin{music}{5-6}
\end{music}
\end{music-image}

If we compare the above example (Ex. 2.2) to the same passage (below) taken from Buckley’s original manuscript, we can observe in the original the inclusion of a three-note multiphonic, which as we can see was crossed out by the composer.\textsuperscript{15} (Example 2.3):

\begin{music-image}
\begin{music}
\begin{music}{5-6}
\end{music}
\end{music-image}

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Personal communication, 16 August 2020.
\item \textsuperscript{14} The first printed edition of \textit{Arabesque} dates from 1994.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Multiphonics are a device used in woodwind and to a lesser extent, brass writing. A multiphonic is a chord or group of notes which can be sounded simultaneously on a monophonic instrument. Multiphonics are very much a part of modernist woodwind composition and can create great dramatic effect through their power and microtonal pitchings. One of the most striking examples of multiphonic writing is in Luciano Berio’s \textit{Sequenza VII} for solo oboe, composed in 1969 and reworked by the composer in 2000 as \textit{Sequenza VIIb} for solo soprano saxophone.
\end{itemize}
This particular multiphonic (Ex. 2.3) is one of the more aggressive and raucous of those available to the saxophonist, and although Buckley deemed it unsuitable for use in the final version of *Arabesque*, its inclusion in this first draft illustrates the sustained energy level envisaged by Buckley.\(^{16}\) *Arabesque* has a duration of approximately 5 minutes and is a single-movement work, starting and finishing at a fast tempo, with a central *Meno mosso Liberamente* section comprised of highly embellished melodic lines. It is not just the grace notes of this central section which are to be played as ornaments; the gestural qualities of the musical line require that much of the writing in this section of *Arabesque* should be considered as extended ornamentation (Ex. 2.4):

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\(^{16}\) The most comprehensive collection of saxophone multiphonics can be found in the French saxophonist Daniel Kientzy’s book, *Les sons multiples aux saxophones* (Paris: Editions Salabert, 1982).
*Arabesque* contains a quotation from one of Buckley’s earlier works, *Three Lullabies for Deirdre* (1989), written for his daughter Deirdre on the occasion of her eleventh birthday. I have a great fondness for these three short works and would often play them on the piano in Buckley’s studio during our sessions developing *Arabesque*. The opening two bars of the first *Lullaby* is a very quiet inversion of an A major 7th arpeggio, the notes piling impressionistically upon each other (Ex. 2.5):

Example 2.5: Buckley, *Lullaby No. 1, Floating Gently*, from, *Three Lullabies for Deirdre*, bars 1-3

Here is the quotation of the *Lullaby* (above) in the manuscript of *Arabesque* (Ex. 2.6):

Example 2.6: Buckley, *Arabesque*, manuscript, page 5, systems 7-8

These work sessions mentioned above were quite informal, as Buckley and I enjoy a close personal as well as working relationship, so I would sight-read through any new sections and we would discuss whether or not they worked on the instrument.
Buckley’s *Arabesque* is perhaps the most un-sight-readable work for saxophone that I’ve encountered, and this added element of challenge put me in the fascinating position of having to decide if certain passages were difficult to play because they were hard to read, unidiomatic for the saxophone, or technically insurmountable. It was of course a mixture of all these factors, and over time what appeared unidiomatic became playable, though never without an element of ingrained struggle.

Buckley’s *Arabesque* is central to my technique as a saxophonist, having greatly defined and clarified my physical relationship with the alto saxophone. Buckley wrote *Arabesque* for me, specifically with my playing skills in mind, but he also wanted to present me with a technical challenge on a grand scale, and in this he succeeded. In Chapter 8, I document the process of preparing a performance of *Arabesque* on the soprano saxophone, a process whose initial difficulties I greatly underestimated.

**Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin: Templum and The Brook of Donode**

**Templum**

The composer and pianist Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin fully embraced his Celtic heritage, creating and inhabiting the centre point of a profound cultural revival in Irish traditional music, becoming the first appointed chair of music at the University of Limerick in 1994 where he created the ‘Irish World Music Centre’, which would later be renamed ‘The Irish World Academy of Music and Dance’. Ó Súilleabháin’s immeasurable contributions as an educational leader and cultural visionary are

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17 The soprano saxophone is notated at concert pitch in the following musical examples.
worthy of a broad study, which is unfortunately outside the scope of this thesis. I am fortunate to have premiered all of Ó Súilleabháin’s compositions for saxophone since the first of our many collaborations.\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Templum} was originally composed as the ‘opening meditation music’ of Ó Súilleabháin’s large-scale composition \textit{Missa Gadelica}.\textsuperscript{19} It has received many performances as a stand-alone piece for soprano saxophone and chamber orchestra, as well as being recorded in a version for soprano saxophone, chamber orchestra and chamber choir.\textsuperscript{20} The score I use in this thesis was prepared by Ó Súilleabháin for the combination of soprano saxophone and string quartet and given its first performance at the ‘Boyle Arts Festival’ on 1 August 2014.\textsuperscript{21}

In Chapter 9 (below) I use audio examples taken from a live recording of \textit{Templum}, with me (soprano saxophone), Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, (conductor) and the Ulster Orchestra, from a St. Patrick’s Day concert on 17 March 2012 at ‘The Waterfront Hall’, Belfast.\textsuperscript{22} I use this particular recording because I feel, as the performer whose playing Ó Súilleabháin had in mind for \textit{Templum}, that this particular performance came close to the essence of Ó Súilleabháin’s compositional ideal.

\textit{Templum}’s opening bars provide an illustration of the necessity for a musician’s body to operate both independently and in tandem with conscious processing. The

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{19} \textit{Missa Gadelica} was commissioned by the Irish Christian Brothers and first performed in Westland Row Church, Dublin, in 1994.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Micheál Ó Súilleabháin, \textit{Templum}, Kenneth Edge (soprano saxophone), Micheál Ó Súilleabháin (conductor), Irish Chamber Orchestra, National Chamber Choir of Ireland, CD, Virgin Records Ltd. CDVE955, 2001.
\item \textsuperscript{21} The performers at this concert were Micheál Ó Súilleabháin (piano and conductor), The Carolan String Quartet, Kenneth Edge (saxophones) and Moley Ó Súilleabháin (vocals). The version of \textit{Templum} at this concert retained the original saxophone part, with the string orchestra score being reduced for string quartet.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Taken from a live broadcast on BBC Radio Ulster at 8.15 pm on Saturday 17 March 2012.
\end{itemize}
soprano saxophone enters on a *piano* B which crescendos over an eight second timeframe, arriving at a *mezzo-forte* dynamic marking. (Ex. 2.7):

Example 2.7: Ó Súilleabháin, *Templum*, bars 1-6

![Templum Ex. 2.7](image)

The fact that the saxophone and strings start together means the saxophonist must have an internalised conception of the exact pitch, tonal coloration and dynamic level of this note and a somatic awareness of the exact embouchure musculature necessary to produce the desired sound. A compounding difficulty for the saxophone soloist here is the fact that the first soprano saxophone note is not within the string chord but is situated an octave above the highest pitch of the strings. *Templum*’s opening bars rely almost entirely on the soloist’s intuitive embodied awareness. As Daniel Barenboim observes, ‘no matter what instrument you play, or whether you conduct

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23 Christopher Small speaks of wind instruments being ‘animated into life by the breath from the body, the most intimate relationship one can have with a musical instrument’. See Christopher Small, *Musicking: The meanings of performing and listening* (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 202.
or sing, you will only produce the sound you want if you can hear it in your head a fraction of a second beforehand.²⁴

Ó Súilleabháin described the compositional process of *Templum* to me as beginning with the solo melody line, which he created by recording a series of improvisations on the tin whistle. An amalgamation of these whistle improvisations became the soprano saxophone melody. In Chapter 9 I explore the emergence of the saxophone line from the composer’s physical connection to a traditional Irish wind instrument and its somatic relevance to the composer’s original concept of this work.²⁵

_The Brook of Donode_

Ó Súilleabháin’s _The Brook of Donode_ was composed to a commission from Mairéad Mason, as a birthday gift to her husband Maurice Mason. _The Brook of Donode_ is scored for soprano saxophone and concert harp and received its world première performance at a private event in the Masons’ home in Ballymore-Eustace, Kildare on 17 January 2014.²⁶ The score is prefaced by Seamus Heaney’s poem _St Kevin and the Blackbird_, and the above world première performance was preceded by a recitation of Heaney’s poem by Micheál Ó Súilleabháin (see Chapter 9 for an audio link to a recording of this performance). Ó Súilleabháin explained to me: ‘regarding mood, that should be easily evident from the poem attached to the score.’²⁷ Although _The Brook of Donode_ is scored for soprano saxophone and concert harp, I will also be discussing it as a work for soprano saxophone and piano, as Ó Súilleabháin spoke of he and I performing it

²⁵ I use the term ‘somatic’ as denoting relevance to the body rather than the mind.
²⁶ The performers were Kenneth Edge (soprano saxophone) and Geraldine Ó Doherty (concert harp).
²⁷ Personal communication, 6 January 2014.
together as such. The instruction in bar 9 regarding ornamentation points to a flexibility in terms of notation and this avoidance of dogmatism is a consistent feature of Ó Súilleabháin’s compositional praxis (Ex. 2.8):

Example 2.8: Ó Súilleabháin, The Brook of Donode, bars 8-11

In Chapter 9, I demonstrate how the process of realising Ó Súilleabháin’s musical intentions can be explicated and shared as knowledge gained through artistic research. It could be noted that in Ó Súilleabháin’s works for saxophone, the Werktreue and Textreue elements are inseparable due to the fact that I am a central part of the work’s realisation. I understand Ó Súilleabháin’s musical intentions and I can interpret the notated scores through my awareness of what has been left out, or more accurately, what has been left to my performative input.

Bill Whelan: Riverdance (excerpt) 28

The centrality of my role in realising Bill Whelan’s musical intentions can be seen through the saxophone score of the final section of Whelan’s Riverdance, which contains the melody notes and chord symbols tempo marking, but very little in the

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28 The soprano saxophone part in the following musical example is notated at transposed pitch and sounds a Major 2nd lower than written
The expressive power and nuance of *Riverdance* exists in its performance, and from the musician’s understanding of the composer’s expressive intentions. The musical notation of *Riverdance* acts as a guide and stimulus to performance rather than as a definitive text.

Example 2.9: Whelan, *Riverdance*, bars 1-9

Some of the original musicians in *Riverdance* were not music readers and learned the music ‘by ear’, the learning of music through aural methods being a fundamental part of the Irish music tradition, with each instrument having its own collection of applicable ornamentations and each performer having their own individual ideas of melodic embellishment. As Whelan states:

I also tried to encourage the players to take ownership of the score for each performance, and to express themselves as much as possible (at least within the boundaries of recognizability!). Choosing the right players for this kind of task was essential and indeed having those musicians in mind when writing the score was also very useful. I was lucky with most of the original Riverdance orchestra to be quite familiar with the playing style of each musician and in rehearsal encouraged each of them to bring their own expression to the music.

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29 I am borrowing from Stanley Boorman, who in his writings on early musical texts highlights notational lacunae which he claims would not have been seen by performers as deficits, but rather as performance opportunities in which they could display their performative prowess. See Stanley Boorman, ‘The Musical Text’, in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (eds), *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 413.

30 Personal communication, 18 August 2020.
Whelan composed *Riverdance* with specific instruments and performers in mind, and as such he demonstrated an artistic trust that these players would grasp his musical intentions and bring his music to life through performance.\(^{31}\)

The inclusion of the saxophone solo from *Riverdance* in this thesis on Irish composer’s works is a vital addition to my study, as it represents the incorporation of the soprano saxophone into a new musical idiom that has become a worldwide cultural phenomenon and spread this very particular ideal of the soprano saxophone throughout the world.

Whelan’s inclusion of the soprano saxophone in the sonic palette of *Riverdance* is an important reimagining of the instrument. The combination of saxophone and traditional Irish instruments was common in the 1920s in Ireland and America. But the saxophone was used more for its potential volume in crowded dance halls than for its timbral uniqueness. Mick Moloney writes of the emergence in 1920s New York of Irish-American ‘hybrid ensembles’ that were able to play diverse repertoire for the many musical tastes within the community. According to Moloney ‘the typical hybrid might include instruments used in traditional Irish music - such as the fiddle, flute, and accordion - as well as instruments from American popular music such as the tenor banjo, tenor saxophone, trumpet, and even the tuba.’\(^{32}\)

In discussing the instrumentation choices for *Riverdance*, Whelan explains his inclusion of the soprano saxophone:

> I placed the soprano at the centre of the ensemble, the melodic fulcrum around which the myriad of traditional instruments were gathered to deliver the melodic playing. The sax also

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allowed me to wander off melodically from the strictures of the two-octave, non-chromatic pipes, and it gave me an instrument that could handle the jazz-inflected melodies that appeared in a few places in the score.  

**Benjamin Dwyer: Parallaxis**  

Benjamin Dwyer’s *Parallaxis* (1997), though not overtly concerned with concepts of instrumental virtuosity in the romantic sense of the virtuosic ideal, nonetheless presents the performer with complex technical challenges. In discussing the topic of virtuosity as it exists within *Parallaxis* Dwyer states:

> The case of *Parallaxis* is quite specific. Its creation was a result of the specific relationship between me the composer (also a professional guitarist) and you [Kenneth Edge] the virtuoso saxophonist. So, this relationship was, from the beginning, built around both your virtuosity and (in a way) my own virtuosity as a player being central to my compositional signature.  

*Parallaxis* is scored for a duet of alto and soprano saxophone.  

For this thesis I have created a version for live soprano saxophone with the alto saxophone part recorded and used as a backing track or fixed media. My reasons for creating this version are threefold: firstly, from a practical perspective, *Parallaxis* can now be performed as a work for solo soprano saxophone with fixed media, thereby increasing its performance possibilities. Secondly, from a pragmatic viewpoint, it is nowadays feasible both technologically and financially for musicians to make high quality home recordings, so saxophonists can either use my recorded alto saxophone track or create their own version following the artistic research methods outlined in Chapter

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33 Personal communication, 18 August 2020.  
34 Both saxophone parts in the following musical examples are notated at concert pitch.  
35 Personal communication, 18 August 2020.  
36 *Parallaxis* was composed for Kenneth Edge (soprano saxophone) and John Hogan (alto saxophone).  
37 I am hesitant to use the term ‘backing track’, as both saxophone parts are of equal importance and technical difficulty.
11. Thirdly, I’m of the opinion that *Parallaxis* deserves a central place in the canon of works for solo saxophone. As I discuss below, selecting the alto saxophone part as the backing is apt for a variety of reasons. In the example below we can see that the alto saxophone (lower staff) starts each of these phrases at *triple-forte* and the soprano saxophone responds at *mezzo-piano* fading to *niente* in the manner of an echo fading to silence (ex. 2.11):

Example 2.11: Dwyer, *Parallaxis*, bar 76

It happens quite often throughout *Parallaxis* that the alto saxophone either begins a phrase or supplies an element of pulse, which can be conveniently locked in to by the live soprano saxophonist. These considerations amongst others led to my choice of placing the alto saxophone part on fixed media.

‘Parallaxis’, refers to a perceived feeling of movement such as that which can occur when sitting on a stationary train while an adjacent train pulls forward, giving one the imagined sensation of movement. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines ‘parallax’ as ‘difference or change in the apparent position or direction of an object as seen from two different points.’ As Dwyer explains:

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This sense of uncertainty, the optical play on reality can be rather disconcerting and points to sensory and psychological misreadings that question our sensorial relationship to our surroundings. A space opens between the physical environment and our perception of it that is often volatile, vulnerable and strangely magical.\textsuperscript{39}

This perceived sensation of movement is transposed to the realm of the auditory in the opening bars of Dwyer’s work, as we can see in the following example (Ex 2.12):

\textbf{Example 2.12: Dwyer, \textit{Parallaxis}, bars 5-6}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example212.png}
\end{center}

\textit{Parallaxis} is highly detailed in its notation, including graphical elements such as advanced fingering plans for timbral fluctuations, as in the alto saxophone part (Ex. 2.2) above. This notational style is something that evolved in Dwyer’s praxis while composing \textit{Parallaxis} and previous saxophone works for me.\textsuperscript{40} As Dwyer writes to me:

\begin{quote}
You will remember that \textit{Parallaxis} was the third piece I wrote for the instrument; and we had numerous (informal) workshops where you shared with me rather specific details of the instrument’s potential for dynamic range, timbral exploration, alternative key usage, tonguing techniques, etc.\textsuperscript{41}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{39} Personal communication, 18 August 2020.

\textsuperscript{40} Dwyer’s pre-1996 works for saxophone are: \textit{Prakriti} (solo alto saxophone - 1993), \textit{Tiento} (soprano saxophone and piano - 1994), \textit{Song for Her} (soprano saxophone and classical guitar - 1995).

\textsuperscript{41} Personal communication, 18 August 2020.
Aside from these informal composition workshops, myself and Dwyer had a very strong musical relationship through our recital work together over many years. This musical closeness and understanding fed into Dwyer’s compositions for saxophone, and also meant that I had a unique understanding of his expressive concerns. Also, Dwyer had just started his Doctoral studies at Queen’s University, Belfast and Parallaxis was being composed as part of his compositional portfolio, and he was concerned with making his musical notation as specific as possible. Though outside the scope of this thesis, Dwyer’s earlier works for me did not display the same level of notational precision as Parallaxis, as he understood that I would bring his notated and unnotated ideas to life through my performance.

Even with Dwyer’s clarity of notation, the expressive power of Parallaxis emerges in performance through the combination of the composer’s notated intentions and the performer’s understanding of the composer’s expressive intentions. From an audience’s perspective, the gestural components and technical challenges of Parallaxis do not apply only to the live soprano saxophonist, but are also an element of the pre-recorded alto saxophone part, with its physically challenging vocal components (ex. 2.13):
The above alto saxophone line (Ex. 2.13) which begins in bar 96 and repeats until the end of the work has (through its iterative construction) a visceral power and emotional rawness which I find close to overwhelming. Another specific location which affects me in the same way is the sonic climax in bar 74 (Ex. 2.13a):

I asked Dwyer about these two specific points in *Parallaxis*, mentioning that my personal reactions are of course subjective, and that these moments of extraordinary musical power are ineffable, nonetheless, I asked if these sections of *Parallaxis* arose from visualisations or emotions which he could explain? Dwyer answered:
I did, however, have a sense that, at this very moment [bar 74], the instrument itself (and therefore the player) was being pushed to the utmost extreme limits. The feeling for me was (is) more psychological (extreme, perhaps exasperating)…The second example [Ex. 2.13 above] for me felt like ritual. But also (in both examples) a kind of excavation and release through sound of some inner psychosis. The repetitions here lend the music a strange sense of mental incapacity…These sounds were among the first where I felt I was tapping into some inner world of the human; that the music was more than about the ‘pitch sequences’, compositional ‘operations’ but rather about sudden exposures of human frailty or inner torment. Which gets us back to Stravinsky’s notion of music not expressing anything but the music itself. In the end, I don’t believe this. It’s the inner world made sonic.\footnote{Personal communication, 18 August 2020.}

Dwyer writes of pushing the boundaries of saxophone technique through ‘modes of virtuosity’:

So while Parallaxi is rather controlled in its use of a specific set of intervals and a controlling four-part formal design, its desire to push boundaries (range; use of voice and instrument; extreme dynamic use; use of side keys, multiphonics, etc.), that is, it’s [sic] desire, through specific modes of virtuosic techniques, to break free from the established formal and intervallic designs set in place create a tension that is perceived as emotional.\footnote{Ibid.}

Parallaxi is effective as a solo work (with fixed media) or as a live duet. In the solo version, the alto saxophonist may not be physically present but is gesturally an equal partner in the performance. These gestural aspects and human elements of struggle, which cannot be fully encoded in a musical score, do not need the agency of a live performance setting, as John Rink observes, ‘the performances in question need not
be live: recordings too have distinctly gestural properties even if the visual
dimension and experiential character of live music-making are lacking.\textsuperscript{44}

**Conor Linehan: Three Pieces**\textsuperscript{45}

Conor Linehan is an Irish pianist and composer. He and I are colleagues in ‘The
WhistleBlast Quartet’ and have collaborated on many recitals and theatrical
productions over the years.\textsuperscript{46} Linehan’s *Three Pieces* were originally composed for
violin and piano in 2018 and adapted by me for soprano saxophone and piano in
2019. The *Three Pieces* were written as part of Linehan’s tenure as musician in
residence for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown in 2018. As part of the residency, musicians
were asked to create something which reflected the area. Linehan wrote these three
‘memory’ pieces which attempt to evoke feelings and impressions from his
childhood in Blackrock.\textsuperscript{47}

When I heard Conor Linehan and Oonagh Keogh performing the first movement,
*Eleven for a While*, I was taken by the attractiveness of the music and found myself
hearing possibilities within the sound that could be adapted for soprano saxophone. I
decided, with Conor’s imprimatur, to adapt *Eleven for a While*, along with the other
two movements, *Trip to Bray!* and *Garret*, for soprano saxophone and piano. The
world premiere performance of this version was given by myself, soprano saxophone

\textsuperscript{44} John Rink, Neta Spiro and Nicholas Gold, ‘Motive, Gesture and the Analysis of Performance’, in
\textsuperscript{45} The saxophone part in the following musical examples is notated at transposed pitch and sounds a
major 2\textsuperscript{rd} lower than written.
\textsuperscript{46} The ‘WhistleBlast Quartet’ is one of Ireland’s leading music education groups. See,
http://www.whistleblastquartet.com/
\textsuperscript{47} The *Three Pieces* were first performed in the studio space of the Lexicon Library, Dún Laoghaire
on Sunday 30\textsuperscript{th} September 2018. The performers were Oonagh Keogh, violin, and Conor Linehan, piano.
and Conor Linehan, piano, in a recital at the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) on 14 June 2019. In Chapter 12, which is devoted to Linehan’s *Three Pieces*, I discuss the adaptation process in detail. The duration of Linehan’s *Three Pieces* is approximately ten minutes. Linehan explains the origin of the individual titles:

*Eleven for a While* refers to both the memory of being a somewhat carefree elven [sic] year old boy at a time when children enjoyed a great deal more freedom than is the case nowadays. It also refers to the predominant time signature of 11/8. *Trip to Bray!* describes the ebullience of a bicycle trip to the seaside when children could happily inform their parents that they would be home sometime before sundown. *Garret* refers to my childhood friend Garret Bruton who I interviewed as part of un-earthing these memories. Garret spoke fondly of my late father and the piece attempts to evoke the strange sadness of memory fading into the distance.\[^{48}\]

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\[^{48}\] Personal communication, 19 August 2020.

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The tempo remains constant throughout *Eleven for a While*, and in bar 38 the texture thins out as the piano left-hand ascends into the keyboard’s middle register and the soprano saxophone plays the second theme which possesses a more rhythmic character than the first (Ex. 2.15):
The third theme of *Eleven for a While*, beginning in bar 58, sees both the soprano saxophone and the piano playing on every quaver beat of each bar and also the introduction of semiquavers into the melody (Ex. 2.16):

Example 2.16: Linehan, *Eleven for a While*, bars 58-60
Trip to Bray!

Trip to Bray! begins with the saxophone and piano playing a fast unison pattern. Linehan speaks of this piece programmatically as a half-remembered, half-imagined bicycle trip of 14 kilometres from Blackrock in County Dublin, to Bray in County Wicklow, undertaken by himself and a friend at the age of ten. Linehan recounts the accompanying sense of joy, freedom, danger and exhilaration.\(^{49}\) These emotions are palpable in the music. As can be seen below, the score does not contain much in the way of dynamic or phrase markings (Ex. 2.17). I explain, in Chapter 12 how the final notations were decided on.

Example 2.17: Linehan, Trip to Bray! bars 1-4

The middle section of Trip to Bray! changes character, and as Linehan explains: ‘the middle section represents the lounging around eating sweets and playing slot machines that characterised the afternoon itself’\(^{50}\) (Ex. 2.18):

\(^{49}\) Conversation in rehearsal with the composer, 13 June 2019.
\(^{50}\) Personal communication, 18 August 2020.
Garret

Garret begins with a gently swaying piano introduction of quintuplet semiquavers and a bass clef melody in the right hand which starts at bar 5 (Ex. 2.19):

Rhythmic conflation is a characteristic of Garret, as is apparent in the following excerpt, in which we see the simultaneous soundings of rhythmic groupings of five, six, seven and eight subdivisions of the crotchet beat (Ex. 2.20):
Linehan’s *Three Pieces* have transferred well from the violin to the soprano saxophone and Chapter 12 below contains the recordings of the world premiere performance of *Three Pieces* in their version for soprano saxophone and piano. As Linehan states:

I’d like to say how well the transition of the music from violin to saxophone worked. In fact, some of the more melismatic passages worked even better on the latter. It gives me great pleasure that both versions of the pieces have received a number of performances. I consider myself a ‘practical’ and, I hope ‘useful’ musician and in that capacity the *Three Pieces* have gratifyingly fulfilled their remit.\(^{51}\)

**Kenneth Edge: *Paganini’s Elbow*\(^{52}\)**

*Paganini’s Elbow* for soprano saxophone and piano was composed in 2020 as a musical commentary on my lecture-recital ‘The Devil Riding Upon a Fiddle Stick: Niccolò Paganini in Great Britain and Ireland 1831-1834.’\(^{53}\) The research findings of the lecture-recital fall outside the scope of this thesis but *Paganini’s Elbow*

\(^{51}\) Personal communication, 19 August 2020.

\(^{52}\) The soprano saxophone part in the following musical examples is notated at transposed pitch, and sounds a Major 2nd lower than written.

\(^{53}\) ‘The Devil Riding Upon a Fiddle Stick: Niccolò Paganini in Great Britain and Ireland 1831-1834’ was a lecture-recital I delivered online as a part of the RIAM Doctorate in Performance programme, 10 June 2020.
represents my artistic distillation of the knowledge gained through that investigation of the life and essence of Niccolò Paganini. There is much virtuosic writing in *Paganini’s Elbow*, as the work was composed with the aim of sounding technically impressive, such that it can be delivered with tremendous bravura but without a tangible sense of struggle. I am fascinated by instrumental virtuosity, not just the romantic version of the ideal as epitomised by Niccolò Paganini and Franz Liszt. As Dwyer observes, ‘the relationship between composition and instrumental (ensemble) virtuosity has never been broken in the history of Western music. The Romantic period merely placed a spotlight on the virtuoso as a kind of demigod.’ As we shall see in Chapters 10 through 13, some of the works I am investigating, particularly Buckley’s *Arabesque* and Dwyer’s *Parallaxis*, contain inbuilt technical struggle as a component part of their expressive effect.

The Oxford English Dictionary provides the following definition of virtuosity: ‘Exceptional technical skill in music or another artistic pursuit.’ I have never composed a work for saxophone with instrumental virtuosity as its main aesthetic concern, but I have done so for clarinet. My composition *Wait a While*, was written in November 2015 for the clarinettist Paul Roe. The work is scored for B-flat clarinet and piano, and received its world premiere on 14 January 2016, in Tokyo, Japan, performed by Paul Roe with the pianist Tomoko Nakagawa. I decided to freely adapt *Wait a While* as a work for soprano saxophone and piano, but merely transcribing the clarinet part into an appropriate saxophone register didn’t seem apposite. What I intended was to begin my adaptation of *Wait a While* by divining its virtuosic essence through the embodiment of the original version. I had a composer’s mental

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54 Personal communication, 18 August 2020.
construct of *Wait a While*, but as a performer I had no embodied concept of the work. This dislocation between cognition and physicality is embedded in the fact that I identify the clarinet as a secondary instrument in my performing activities. This led me to compose *Wait a While* entirely away from any tactile contact with the clarinet, as I did not want the work to be contaminated by my own clarinet playing idiosyncrasies. What I sought by negating any dependence on my own physical knowledge of the instrument was a compositional *tabula rasa*. In order to relocate the essence of *Wait a While* into the new saxophone work *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*, I decided to learn *Wait a While* in its clarinet version so as to be able to disassociate all traces of the clarinet from the new version. I have catalogued the process of the cognitive embodiment of *Wait a While* on the clarinet alongside my re-imagining of its expressive core onto the soprano saxophone.

The three roles I adopted in the preparation of *Paganini’s Elbow* presented me with challenges, opportunities and questions. As a composer, would I be rigid on points of notation, or would I display a flexibility nourished by the growth of my performing interpretation? As a performer, would I adhere slavishly to the notated score, or would I suggest textual alterations to reflect new knowledge gained through embodied cognition? As an artistic researcher how would I best ‘contextualise the personal’?  

*The Devil at My Elbow*

*Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick* is a re-imagining of *Wait a While*, and constitutes the second movement of *Paganini’s Elbow*, the first

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movement being a highly bravura unaccompanied prelude, *The Devil at My Elbow* (Ex. 2.21):

**Example 2.21: Edge, The Devil at My Elbow, bars 1-4**

The *Devil at My Elbow* is scored for solo soprano saxophone and has a duration of approximately two minutes. The piece begins at a triple-piano dynamic marking and uses just three notes, B, C-sharp and D. The work crescendos and accelerandos until it encapsulates the saxophone’s entire spectrum of pitch and dynamics, arriving at a sustained triple-forte B in bar 13. Thence begins the retreat to a final al niente with audible breath through the body of the saxophone as the final trace of the work (Ex. 2.22):
Example 2.22: Edge, *The Devil at My Elbow*, bars 11-25

*Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*

*The Devil at My Elbow* segues into the second section, *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*, which opens with sparse tintinnabuli-style piano chords played at a *mezzo-forte* dynamic, with the soprano saxophone entering in bar 3 (Ex. 2.23):
Example 2.23: Edge, *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*,
bars 1-4

The tempo marking of crotchet = 68 should allow the soprano saxophone’s entrance in bar 3 (which is notated at a *piano* dynamic with *diminuendo*) to blend with and merge into the piano’s decaying chord. This strict dynamic notation is a characteristic feature of *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick* and is a good example of the limited instructional possibilities inherent in even the most careful of notations. My dynamic notation here is an approximation of decay times in piano sound. Obviously, a nine-foot Steinway concert grand ‘Model D’ piano in a reverberant acoustic will have a longer sustain capability than an upright piano in a dry rehearsal studio. Therefore, the effective delivery of the composer’s dynamic and timbral intentions in this score are reliant on the performers’ judgement in reacting to whatever performing environment they find themselves in. Certain sections of *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick* are rhythmically complex, and as I show in Chapters 8 through 13, the use of a DAW such as *Pro Tools*, *Logic Pro X*, or *Garage Band* as an advanced metronome can be enormously beneficial in the learning process of rhythmically complex and rapidly changing note patterns. Below (Ex. 2.24) is a good illustration of such a section, with a metronome marking of crotchet = 126 bpm.
Rhythmic complexity is a challenge to be overcome in *Wait a While - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*. It is one of many technical and musical complexities encountered in the preparation of the above works for performance. Chapters eight through thirteen contain a more detailed examination of this preparatory process. As already mentioned, the selected works represent a wide spectrum of compositional praxes, but they share two immediately apparent commonalities in that they were all written with my saxophone playing in mind and they were all premiered by me.

What of the commonalities of shared cultural surroundings and upbringings?

**Commonalities and an Irish ‘semiosphere’?**

Knowing and collaborating with the composers whose works are being discussed in this thesis has led me to question whether there may be cultural commonalities and crossing points. Kathleen Coessens appropriates the term ‘semiosphere’ to describe the system of shared cultural signs and symbols available to the creative artist.\(^{57}\)

Coessens elucidates her definition of ‘semiosphere’ as:

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\(^{57}\) Although the Oxford English Dictionary does not contain a definition of ‘semiosphere’, it appears that Coessens has appropriated it from Yuri Lotman’s usage of the term in the field of semiotics as a cultural code that provides access to a network of shared understandings and processes.
the semiotic and symbolic horizon, present to the artist, by way of culture and education. Each culture, each period contains its own semiosphere, a realm or context in which interconnected systems of signs, symbols, codes and significations permit its members to communicate with others, to express themselves.58

I enquired of the composers if they regard the fact that they are Irish as being an important aspect, either implicitly or explicitly, of their compositional praxis? John Buckley speaks of avoiding any explicit usage of Irish traditional music in his composing, yet feels that his work is imbued with a sense of Irishness, particularly the extraordinary qualities of Irish light. In addressing the same question Whelan notes:

It was very important for me to feel that what I was doing in Riverdance and elsewhere, [sic] came from my own cultural background. However, what I tried to see in my native music was its capacity to open up tributaries into other forms of expression while staying rooted in the modes and styles that distinguished it from other ethnic forms. The melodies I wrote for Riverdance are not “traditional” and have turns and corners that are not common in the tradition.59

Benjamin Dwyer offers this fascinating viewpoint:

We [Ben and I] grew up in ‘the South’ so avoided all the ‘troubles’. We were more or less privileged white Irish Europeans who availed of music educations on the Continent and the UK. I think perhaps the relatively poor state of music in Ireland shaped us more than some other mysterious aspect of ‘being Irish’. That scenario forced us to be more innovative and, for example, made us perform world and Irish premieres … I grew up in Crumlin, Dublin, and had no access to live Irish music. It meant nothing to me. But Hendrix did. But this is also Irish

59 Personal communication, 18 August 2020.
… it was the Ireland I grew up in, so can’t be denied … I just happen to be a composer who is Irish.⁶⁰

Conor Linehan points to the fact that the world is now so globalised that:

one can share many international cultural signs. For example, I grew up surrounded by musical theatre and listening to British pop music! Who am I to say that there [sic] influence has been any less powerful than my ‘Irishness’?⁶¹

Commonalities of nationality and cultural heritage aside, the main crossing point of the selected works is my input into their coming into being. This level of involvement in such striking musical creations makes me very proud and places me in a unique position as a commentator, both on the works themselves and their preparation for performance. The compositions represent a wide spectrum of compositional praxes, but the fact that they were all written with my saxophone playing in mind affords me the opportunity to explore my relationship with them, through the prism of autoethnographic investigation. Knowing and collaborating with the composers is obviously a wonderful opportunity, and the decision to create audio recordings of my preparatory rehearsal processes will, I hope, be of benefit to future performers and researchers.

⁶⁰ Personal communication, 18 August 2020.
⁶¹ Ibid., 19 August 2020.
Chapter 3: Recordings as a Window on to the Preparatory Process

In this thesis, the audio recordings produced as research artefacts in Chapters 8 through 13 will hopefully be of cultural significance and artistic benefit to future generations of composers and performers. As Amanda Bayley observes, ‘recordings are crucial in fulfilling a role comparable with historic performance treatises in terms of their value for future players.’

Multiple takes

Bayley strikes a cautionary note regarding the dangers of omni-present recorded versions and the pressure they may cause for the performer: ‘The striving for perfection that has arisen from an overwhelming tendency to regard recordings as reified references is unlikely to change until commercial and economic priorities make it viable to release multiple instantiations of a performance.’ Here, Bayley is referring to the recent practice of commercial recordings, particularly in the jazz genre, being released (though generally re-released) with added takes and out-takes. Although these rejected takes are now standard time-fillers on jazz re-issues, it is worth considering that the choice of the original best take for release would have been very much the prerogative of the artist, whereas the choice of extra takes on re-issues is very much the prerogative of the record company.

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1 Bayley, ‘Multiple takes’, 217.
2 Ibid., 208.
3 This has a lot to do with the fact that vinyl recordings typically had a run-time of 40 minutes whereas today’s CDs have runtimes of 70 minutes-plus, and streaming, by its nature is unlimited time-wise.
4 In 1998, Sony released a CD composed entirely of alternate takes by bassist and composer Charles Mingus and his band. These takes are from the 1959 recordings of two of Mingus’s classic albums, ‘Mingus Ah Um’ and ‘Mingus Dynasty’. See Mingus, Alternate Takes, CD, Sony music entertainment Inc.’ CK 65514, 1998.
Music as a finite product

Bayley states that ‘thinking in terms of finite products […] is anathema to music which has any kind of improvisational component.’5 Bayley is referring not just to jazz but to any music which has inbuilt elements of indeterminacy, and she includes the composers Pierre Boulez, Witold Lutosławski and Michael Finnissy in this category. I would like to widen the net cast by Bayley by saying that thinking in terms of finite product is anathema to all music, regardless of whether elements of improvisation or indeterminacy are part of its makeup. Western Art Music recordings are generally of a performer interpreting a composer’s works, and as no single interpretation can conceivably convey everything knowable about an artwork, these recordings by definition cannot be seen as finite, rather as a transitory commentary on an open-ended narrative.

Recordings of process – some commercial examples

The various processes involved in my research are undertaken using a multi-modal approach involving written word and audio recordings to present the fullest possible access to my findings. This aural documentation of the preparatory processes forms a key component of Chapters 8 through 13 below. Bayley states that:

> It would indeed be illuminating (to composers, performers and musicologists) to issue additional takes made at a recording session in order to “provide a window on to” performance preparation as well as the process and production of recording. Such research may provide useful insights into what goes on behind the scenes into those areas that have historically been invisible.6

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5 Bayley, ‘Multiple takes’, 208.
6 Ibid, 208-209.
A notable example of what Bayley speaks of (above) is exemplified in Sony Classical’s decision to release the audio of the entire recording session of one of the most iconic of all piano albums, Glenn Gould’s 1955 recording of Bach’s Goldberg Variations, titled Glenn Gould – The Goldberg Variations – The Complete Unreleased Recording Sessions June 1955. Sony Classical released this in 2017 and it is comprised of six CDs containing over six hours of Gould’s rejected takes (two hundred and eighty-three in all). It also contains an 80-page book which lists all the takes and includes a verbatim transcription of the rehearsal talk and various spoken exchanges between Gould and the record’s producer Howard H. Scott. Also included are the final versions of Gould’s recording on both CD and vinyl. Fascinating as it is, a release like this is obviously aimed at the pianophile or the ardent Gould admirer and is prohibitively priced.\(^7\) I believe it is not outside the realms of likelihood that Glenn Gould would have been horrified at such a release.

Some other notable examples of recordings which provide windows on to artistic processes are the releases featuring behind-the-scenes glimpses of Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli, Aaron Copland, and Mikhail Pletnev. Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli – The Unpublished EMI Live Recording London 1957 was released in December 1996.\(^8\) This live recording from London’s Royal Festival Hall dating from March 4 1957, features Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli performing music by Schumann, Chopin, Mompou and Debussy. The CD also includes a thirty-minute audio recording of

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\(^7\) Glenn Gould – The Goldberg Variations – The Complete Unreleased Recording Sessions June 1955, Glenn Gould, CD, Sony Classical, 88843014882, 2017. This is currently for sale on amazon, priced at £83. [https://www.amazon.co.uk/s?k=glenngould+golberg+recording+sessions&ref=nb_sb_noss] [accessed June 30 2020].

Michelangeli’s pre-concert sound check, in which we hear him practicing sections of the concert repertoire and commenting on the piano’s action and sound. This is a revelatory window on to the preparation process of one of the most gifted pianists of the twentieth Century. It can also be viewed as an incursion into the personal practice space of a famously reclusive performer, and as such we cannot be certain that Michelangeli would have given his blessing to such a decision by the record label.

Unlike Gould and Michelangeli, the Russian pianist Mikhail Pletnev gave his consent to the commercial release of a group of unusual recordings on the album *Mikhail Pletnev in Person.* This album is comprised of recorded warm-ups by Pletnev, before the commencement of various recording sessions. These warm-ups saw Pletnev playing one piece by memory to himself, including works by Beethoven, Bach-Busoni, Chopin and Liszt, none of which were part of the repertoire of the recording session, but Pletnev allowed them to be recorded anyway. Because of the different pianos, studios and engineers involved, this album of single takes is sonically uneven but presents us with staggering pianism and a tantalizing look at the preparatory process of an extraordinary musician. As *Irish Times* critic Michael Dervan notes in his review, ‘this disc offers a fascinating behind-the-scenes peek at an awesomely gifted player in unbuttoned mode.’

Sony Classical’s CD, *A Copland Celebration Volume 1*, includes a 17-minute track of Aaron Copland rehearsing the chamber version of his work *Appalachian Spring* with *The Columbia Chamber Ensemble*, recorded in 1973. This particular window

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into the rehearsal process is valuable, as Aaron Copland is highly skilled at articulating his thoughts about how he would like his music to be performed.

All of the above examples of recorded artistic preparatory process are audio recordings and in the case of the Copland rehearsal it is from his spoken words and not his embodied gesture that we can glean his meaning. The only way to study a conductor’s physical gesture is through the medium of video, and an excellent example of this is the DVD, *Pierre Boulez in Rehearsal*.\(^\text{12}\) This is a marvellous research resource and features the French conductor Pierre Boulez rehearsing the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in a programme of Alban Berg’s *Three Pieces for Orchestra* and Boulez’s *Notations I-IV*. Whereas this DVD is different to the previous examples of behind-the-scenes insights in that it is deliberately produced and edited as a specific stand-alone product, it shares with the examples above a value as a repository of knowledge, with significance for performers and musicologists alike.

**Recordings as ‘performance trace’**

The historic invisibility of the preparatory process of a recording or a performance is something easily rectifiable now through an abundance of affordable technological tools available to the performer-researcher. John Rink writes that ‘although recordings are indeed an invaluable tool in performance research, they are still ephemeral documents representing merely a trace thereof, not the performance itself.’\(^\text{13}\) Nicholas Cook also uses the notion of ‘trace’ in his description of


recordings, stating that ‘the recording (a marketable product) purports to be the trace of a performance (process), but is in reality usually the composite product of multiple takes and more or less elaborate sound processing—in other words, less a trace than the representation of a performance that never actually existed.’ 14 What we hear in recorded music is a conglomeration of multiple takes knitted seamlessly and imperceptibly together to give the impression of one autonomous performance.15 Even live performances are often heavily edited and aurally sanitised.

**The research value of recorded performance**

The analysis of over a century of recorded musical performance is now possible, and according to Cook, ‘recordings are a largely untapped resource for the writing of music history, the focus of which has up to now been overwhelmingly on scores.’ 16 This viewpoint is echoed by Daniel Leech Wilkinson who states:

> It would be impossible to come anywhere near the sounds people actually make by following only what they write. Documentary evidence now seems hopelessly insufficient without sound.17

We now enjoy virtually unlimited access to audio and video recordings of any performer we choose, this video footage adding extra levels of meaning to recorded performances. Nicholas Cook points to a downside to this when he states that ‘Music has become part of an aesthetic economy defined by the passive and increasingly

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15 A Notable exception to this is the CD *Mikhail Pletnev In Person*, mentioned above, (page 48).
private consumption of commodified products rather than through the active, social processes of participatory performance.¹¹⁸

Audio Recordings are now a component part of musicological research and their merit as a window on to the historically invisible preparatory processes of the creative artist makes them invaluable as resources for future performers and researchers. Chapters 8 through 13 of this thesis are concerned with my artistic research processes of performance preparation, as captured through audio recordings and autoethnographic written self-reflection.

Chapter 4: Artistic Research and Autoethnography

An autoethnographic journey

Using an autoethnographic approach as a qualitative research method, whereby I am both the researcher and research subject, allows me to avoid the problems identified by Mine Dogantan-Dack as stumbling blocks in the traditional researcher-subject relationship, in which ‘the performer’s discourse is embedded within the researcher’s discourse’ and ‘the performer as agent disappears altogether’.¹ Nicholas Cook observes that ‘one way to avoid, or at least displace, such tensions is of course for the researcher and the performer to be the same person - in other words to conduct autoethnographic research.’² As the compositions I investigate in this thesis were composed for me, there is an added personal element available, which through self-reflection I can contextualise into a wider knowledge domain.

The methods of autoethnography as a research tool have sparked much debate, not least amongst its practitioners. The noted sociologist Leon Anderson, espouses the use of an ‘analytic’ rather than ‘evocative’ autoethnography, as this is more closely related to the traditional social science values and styles of writing. Anderson is of the opinion that ‘analytic autoethnography is simply a specialized subgenre of analytic ethnography’.³ Anderson’s methodology is rejected by practitioners of what he terms ‘evocative’ or ‘narrative’ autoethnography, who feel that his work is not autoethnography at all but ‘has the feel or lack of feel(ing) of realist ethnography, so

why not call it what it seems to be?"\(^4\) Carolyn S. Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner describe wanting to ‘move ethnography away from the gaze of the distanced and detached observer and towards the embrace of intimate involvement, engagement and embodied participation.’\(^5\) This post-colonial rejection of the concept of ‘the other’ is in large part responsible for the emergence of autoethnography as a research method. These debates aside, it is generally agreed that autoethnographic research must have relevance to the larger society of which the practitioner is a part and from inside which he carries out his work. Dogantan-Dack memorably describes this facet of autoethnography as ‘contextualizing the personal.’\(^6\) Although ‘the personal’ is of central importance to the autoethnographic researcher, the methodologies of the research undertakings provide a valid source of new knowledge. Although autoethnography is a personal and often subjective methodology, it can never be purely autobiographical. ‘As a research method, autoethnography takes a systematic approach to data collection, analysis, and interpretation about self and social phenomena involving self. This systematic and intentional approach to the socio-cultural understanding of self, sets autoethnography apart from other self-narrative writings such as memoir and autobiography.’\(^7\)

**Artistic Research - ‘contextualising the personal’**

This thesis is an ‘artistic research’ project in which my research is informed by my artistic practice. This approach differs from more traditional research undertakings in

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\(^5\) Ibid., 433.


a variety of ways. Henk Borgdorff states that ‘as a rule, artistic research is not hypothesis-led, but discovery-led.’

Stefan Östersjö’ claims that ‘validity in artistic research is not created by reference to repeatability but rather in the “singularity” of the artistic output.’ Here, Östersjö is making the indisputable though rather obvious point that an artwork is by definition unique and unrepeatable, and that this ‘singularity’ removes from it the scientific onus of repeatability. Michael Polanyi, in his book *The Tacit Dimension* discusses whether tacit skills can be absorbed into the sciences as a valuable research tool by approaching the question from an angle positing the ‘what-if’ scenario of the sciences eliminating subjective forms of knowledge, stating:

But suppose that tacit thought forms an indispensable part of all knowledge, then the ideal of eliminating all personal elements of knowledge would, in effect, aim at the destruction of all knowledge.

Much of the artist’s knowledge resides in the intuitive, tacit areas of their creativity and self-awareness. This tacit, ineffable knowledge is what artistic research strives to illuminate by bringing the artist’s implicit knowledge into the arena of the explicit. Some recent writings by Paulo De Assis on the subject of artistic research as it impacts the performer’s role conceives of the performer’s praxis as ‘moving from passive modes of musical reproduction to productive, active and clearly creative modes of operating.’ Janet Ritterman states, ‘traditional approaches to musical research now far more frequently incorporate insights gained through artistic practice

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- through engagement with the sonic character of music - rather than solely through the study of scores or documents alone.'

**Process and product**

Deciding on a research methodology at the outset of an artistic research project is problematic, as the embedded knowledge which is a component part of the creative process only emerges through the act of artistic creation and can thus only be commented on retrospectively through self-reflection and examination of the newly created artwork. As Janneke Wesseling comments, ‘often, the central question is only revealed at the completion of the research project.’ William Brooks offers the opinion that ‘every research undertaking seems typically to construct its own method, its own rationale.’ As the German artist Paul Klee (1879-1940) wrote, ‘we document, explain, justify, construct, organise: these are good things, but we do not succeed in coming to the whole.’ Kathleen Coessens et al. in their book ‘The Artistic turn: a Manifesto’, offers Klee and American painter Jackson Pollock (1912-1956) as examples of artists who don’t objectify the world they are exploring: ‘They both become part of that world’s development and transformation by acting within it.’ Coessens writes that these two visual artists point towards the fact that

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16 The title of Coessen et al. book title *The Artistic Turn: A Manifesto* borrows its nomenclature from the ‘performative turn’ in the humanities of the early 1990s (see Orning, page 64).
Artistic research creates new knowledge during the process of creation rather than by its end product or created work of art.

Artistic research and academia

While it is undoubtedly true that creative artists enter the field of artistic research in order to embrace, reflect upon and explore the tacit aspects of their creativity, the converse does not hold true: we do not see academics entering the field of artistic research to advance their own methodologies through artistic endeavour.

It is often asserted that the field of artistic research artistic research arose through the subsuming of arts institutes into a broader University framework, giving rise to creative artists/teachers feeling a pressure to comply with the rigorous academic ideals of knowledge production - in other words, the field of artistic research can be seen as a mechanism of self-preservation.¹⁸

An artistic research praxis

The artistic research field is now twenty years old and is still rife with internal debates about what artistic research is, coupled with a recognition of political forces which may be reticent in welcoming artistic research as a fully-fledged research praxis on to the university campus. Dogantan-Dack makes the point that:

Within the neoliberal university, where the processes of standardization continue to curtail plurality of perspectives and diversity of methods, negotiating a research path through the confines of socio-economic forces while simultaneously keeping in clear sight the intrinsic

value of the pursuit of knowledge and understanding often becomes a political act, requiring political judgement.\(^{19}\)

As Borgdorff observes, ‘new knowledge can be presented and studied in many formats alongside written word research.’\(^{20}\) These artistic products, created through the research process, can be disseminated through a large variety of currently available affordable digital technologies.\(^{21}\) This thesis adopts the artistic research model of multi-modal knowledge production through its coupling of written word and recorded sound.

The epistemic qualities inherent in knowledge gained through artistic research arise through the produced artwork, and although a large amount of the artist’s skill is tacit and unavailable to scientific scrutiny, the polyvalences of any artwork renders the artist’s awareness and reflections upon its creation valuable as research. As Tanja Orning states: ‘Only by investigating the works from inside the practice will they divulge a knowledge that cannot be accessed from outside the work itself.’\(^{22}\)

There is much fascinating and ground-breaking artistic research being created across a multitude of artistic domains. Some of the most important and vital projects can be found on the Journal for Artistic Research (JAR) website.\(^{23}\) This excellent resource takes full advantage of the immediacy of knowledge-sharing through online

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21 Nicholas Cook speaks of a revolution in digital affordability, saying that ‘As compared to its analogue equivalents, digital technology has democratised audio-visual redaction in terms of both the necessary skills and financial outlay.’ See, Cook ‘Digital Technology and Cultural Practice’, in Cook, Nicholas, Ingalls, Monique M., and Trippett, David (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Digital Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 18.
23 https://www.jar-online.net/.
resources. There are numerous other online access points to current artistic research and the JAR website acts as a portal to many of them. One of the leading educational institutions focussing on artistic research in music is The Orpheus Institute in Ghent, Belgium.24 The Orpheus Institute’s researchers publish much of their research in book form through Leuven University Press.25

Acting as both researcher and research subject has presented me with a selection of challenges and opportunities. It is invaluable for an artistic researcher to be able to collaborate with a work’s creator, and this thesis, whilst partly a celebration of the collaborative process, is also an acknowledgment of certain issues inherent in this process, such as those of score notation and interpretative authority. These collaborative insights can be shared through a variety of formats and this thesis constitutes a first history of the performance practice of the works under discussion.

25 Some of these titles can be found in the bibliography of this thesis.
Chapter 5: Performance and Interpretative Authority:

‘Traduttore-Traditore’

But in any case, the composer’s notation must be regarded - as a matter of course - as binding; and the performer must learn to interpret the inherent gesture in terms of it. This is the only valid meaning of the word “interpretation” in this context.¹

The above quote from the American composer Roger Sessions (1896-1985) sets the tone for an appraisal of ‘interpretation’ as one of the most important issues facing the re-creative performer. Recent decades have seen an increased acceptance of the centrality of the performer’s implicit musical knowledge in the realisation of scores, as witnessed by the rapid emergence of artistic and performance research degrees at doctorate level.

For performers, the essential nature of their contribution has always been self-evident, though the perceived (or real) gulf between a composer’s intention and a performer’s interpretation has been a source of debate since the emergence of the Werktreue ideal (see section 5.1 below). Composers’ notational styles range from the vague to the forensically precise and performers and conductors have their own idiosyncratic methods of marking up their parts, ranging from musically specific shorthand aide-memoires to a full colour-coding of complex scores.²

² John Butt observes that, ‘interestingly, performers do not seem universally to have added many markings to their parts until well into the twentieth century – in other words, the period of expanding recording technology and regular rehearsals. However much Bach added performance directives in his performing parts, the performers themselves seemed to have added little more.’ For more, see John Butt, Playing With History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 99.
Werktreue

The German term Werktreue can be defined as a faithfulness or fidelity to a composer’s intentions, which since the end of the eighteenth century has become one of the overarching concerns of musical performance. The Austrian pianist Alfred Brendel approaches the concept of Werktreue with a profound sense of distrust, not through the actual usage of the term to denote fidelity to a composer’s intentions, but with a distrust of the amalgamation of the words ‘work’ and ‘fidelity’, which he describes as striking a ‘militant pose’. Brendel suggests that alongside Werktreue, the term Texttreue should be used as a more ‘concrete’ and less philosophically ambiguous concept, denoting fidelity to a written text and by default to the composer’s notatable intentions. Texttreue is not of much import to this thesis as having direct access to the composers takes me closer to their ‘intentions’ than their written scores can, although it can be argued that the notational styles used by the composers is tied to their knowledge of my playing and particularly to what can be left unnotated. Textual fidelity is merely a starting point and perhaps not even the best avenue to understanding a composer’s intentions.

The emergence of the ‘work concept’

Lydia Goehr writes that the ideal of the autonomous musical ‘work’ as a representation of a composer’s ‘unique objectified expression’ and as a blueprint for subsequent performances has held true since the end of the eighteenth-century.  

Harry White offers a rejoinder to Goehr’s claim, citing compelling examples of the ‘work concept’ as an aesthetic component of the late baroque era.

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Goehr’s ‘work-concept’ objectifies a musical work as something that exists through but also outside of performance, allowing it to be reproduced by future performers thanks to the roadmap of the notated text. As Willem Erauw writes, ‘a musical work became something which, because of its special transcendental nature, could be repeated without becoming out-dated. As a consequence, only from this period on, could musical works begin to function as a canon.’

Contradicting both White and Goehr’s writing, Karen Leistra-Jones dates the emergence of the Werktreue principle to later in the nineteenth century, borrowing the idea of ‘museum concert culture’ from Lydia Goehr’s writing and stating that ‘faithful presentation of musical works gradually supplanted popular concerts based on improvisation, audience interaction, and the star personalities of virtuosos.’

Goehr’s contention that the Werktreu ideal has its seeds in the late eighteenth-century is supported by reference to various artistic paradigm shifts taking place in Europe at the time, most notably the emancipation of musical sound from poetry and religious texts, and the rise of instrumental music. This uncoupling of music and text coincided socially with a rise in bourgeois politeness which prompted a modified notion of acceptable audience behaviour. According to Erauw, ‘instrumental music

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6 Although Leistra-Jones does not specify a timeframe it can be assumed she is speaking of the decades after the heyday of the travelling virtuosos such as Paganini and Liszt. See Karen Leistra-Jones, ‘Staging Authenticity: Joachim, Brahms, and the Politics of Werktreue Performance’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 66 (2013), 399.

7 In his book *Listening in Paris*, James H. Johnson writes of post-revolutionary societal trends. Politeness was seen as a paramount element of bourgeois etiquette and this had a direct consequence on audience attentiveness and reception. Johnson writes humorously of bygone audience behavior patterns which were now supplanted by politeness verging on boredom when he writes: ‘Politeness invented boredom. Happy were the days when you could mill about the parterre if the singing got monotonous, or visit the next box when you heard a good conversation, or continue with your parlor sketches as the musicians played from over in the corner. Now indignant spectators were bearing down sanctimoniously with all the weight of “propriety.” Now they made you listen. Politeness may have created a private space for inner communion, but it also had its victims.’ See James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 235-236.
came to represent a transcendental world in which the bourgeoisie could find comfort.\(^8\)

A central tenet of the Werktreue ideal was that the role of the performer is ancillary to the inherent truth of the ‘work’. This is an uncomfortable concept for a performer unless we recognise that a composer’s intentions cannot be fully encoded in a notated score and must be discovered through performance.

Goehr writes of Felix Mendelssohn’s reconstructions of past masterpieces: ‘they did not see that, if one can in fact be true to anything at all, then being true to early music is not necessarily the same as being true to a work.’\(^9\) Goehr is paraphrasing herself from an earlier article in which she observes: ‘to be true to music is not necessarily the same thing as being true to the musical work. This lesson, by itself, is of substantial musical and philosophical significance.’\(^10\)

**The non-autonomous score**

The non-autonomous score was very much part of the mid-nineteenth century performance praxis of the ‘virtuoso instrumental recital’. The era of the travelling virtuoso in the 1830s and 1840s, epitomised by Niccolò Paganini and Franz Liszt, saw the beginnings of the solo recital tradition. In these recitals there was no separation of score, composer and performer, no concept of the autonomous ‘work’. This break from the hegemony of the text ‘liberates the music of museum culture and

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\(^10\) Goehr, ‘Being True to the Work’, 64.
restores it to the continuum of history.' As a performer it is obvious to me that a notated score is an abstraction which finds meaning through performance. Of course, meaning is not imbued solely through performance, but also through interpretation and reception.

**Conceptual imperialism and stylistic stereotyping**

Goehr ascribes an element of ‘conceptual imperialism’ to the work-concept, an imperialism which she says is not one-sided, taking the example of jazz as a genre which has different musical concerns to Werktreue, but which nonetheless seeks to adopt certain Werktreue ideals as part of its modus operandi. Goehr offers the opinion that, ‘some jazz musicians, for example, have sought (perhaps only for financial reasons) and then found respect from “serious” musicians by dispensing with the smoky and noisy atmosphere of the club and by performing instead in tails.’ In such a tightly-argued and academically-esteemed thesis, Goehr, in her comments above, succumbs to a weak reflection of an outdated stereotype. Inferring that the smoky and noisy club is the natural habitat of the (under-dressed) jazz performer is analogous to the cliché of the Irish traditional musician playing in a dark corner of the pub and being remunerated in the currency of alcohol. Goehr does however make an interesting point regarding performance habitats when she ponders: ‘Do we not lose something when we hear the music of a flamenco or a blues guitarist in a concert hall? For the conventions of that setting determine that audiences should listen with disinterested respect to the “works” being performed.’

We may lose something intrinsic by the displacement of musical performance

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11 White, ‘If it’s Baroque, Don’t Fix It, 96-97.
13 Ibid., 249-250.
intended to be enjoyed in a particular setting, such as chamber music, but Goehr is incorrect in her assertion that the conventions of the concert hall setting determine how audiences perceive music. These conventions exist only in the mind of an audience, whether they are symphony subscribers or fans attending the famous Carnegie Hall concert featuring the Thelonious Monk Quartet with John Coltrane on 29 November 1957, or the 1969 Concert by Sean O’Riada and Ceoltóirí Chualann on the stage of the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin – a concert event which is credited with the elevation of Irish traditional music onto the world stage. These and countless other occurrences of the transposition of venue not negatively impacting on artistic outcome or audience enjoyment adequately disprove Goehr’s assertion of limitation imposed through a venue’s supposedly ingrained tethering to the romantic ideal of the Werktreue tradition. Concert halls are no longer seen as being part of a museum culture.

The hegemony of the text

Faithfulness to a notated musical text is something particular to western art music. Stefan Reid speaks of an ‘indeterminacy inherent in western musical notation’.

Mine Dogantan-Dack relates this indeterminacy to its effect upon the performer:

Performers thus submit to an ideological contract demanding of them to acquiesce to the disappearance of their [artistic] practice behind the musical ‘object’ as represented by notated symbols […] this contract obliges them to search for and adhere to an ‘authentic’ meaning that in reality does not exist.

It is clear that one of the most indeterminate aspects of notation is its limited ability to communicate the composer’s emotional and timbral intent through expressive markings. The nuances of phrasing, dynamics and timbre remain for the greater part outside the resources of notation. Kevin Bazzana makes the disputable point that the Canadian pianist Glenn Gould (1932-1982) was indebted to a romantic intellectual aesthetic of interpretative freedom in his performance choices: ‘He did not, for example, justify interpretive [sic] license by appealing to a composer's intentions; On the contrary, he insisted that the performer was not bound by them even when they are known.’\textsuperscript{16} Music notation is invaluable as a preservation and transmission tool, though from the performer’s viewpoint, as Christopher Small writes, it can also be seen as a limiter, ‘since it confines what can be played to what has been notated, so the player's power of self-directed performance is liable to atrophy.’\textsuperscript{17} Theodor Adorno states:

The musical score is never identical with the work; devotion to the text means the constant effort to grasp that which it hides. Without such a dialectic, devotion becomes betrayal; an interpretation which does not bother about the music’s meaning on the assumption that it will reveal itself of its own accord will inevitably be false since it fails to see that the meaning is always constituting itself anew.\textsuperscript{18}

This reconstitution of meaning can be applied to a study of the changing attitudes towards performance practice throughout different historical periods. Many aspects of older performance practice and interpretative style seem embraceless to us,

\textsuperscript{17} Christopher Small, \textit{Musicking: The meanings of performing and listening} (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 110.
whilst the HIP movement has changed or at least significantly influenced current interpretative and performative strategies.

The performative turn
Tanja Orning speaks of a ‘performative turn’ in the arts as a paradigm shift occurring in the humanities during the 1990s.\textsuperscript{19} This recalibration of outlook comes from the sociological concept that all human behaviours and interactions are essentially performances of one kind or another, and Orning observes that this performative turn ‘seriously challenged the image of the musical score as a carrier and transmitter of objective knowledge […] which is no longer viewed as a finished work but as an aesthetic event perpetually changing through each performance.’\textsuperscript{20}

Rehearsal talk … finding the words
Amanda Bayley, in her research project with the composer Michael Finnissy and the Kreutzer String Quartet, notes the usage of metaphor in the dialogue during rehearsal between the composer and performers, as Finnissy searches for the linguistic means of describing the timbre required for various parts of the piece. Bayley identifies ‘rehearsal talk’ as a new research area.\textsuperscript{21} As an example of the uniqueness of rehearsal talk as a communication mode during performance preparation, I recall that Ó Súilleabháin would sometimes jokingly comment: ‘Let’s not over-rehearse!’ The apparent light-heartedness of this remark cloaked far deeper meanings. This one

\textsuperscript{19} Orning notes that the subsequent performative turn in musicology has been theorized by the musicologists Richard Taruskin, Lydia Goehr and Nicholas Cook.
\textsuperscript{21} Bayley, ‘Multiple takes’, 219.
simple comment from Ó Súilleabháin communicated a sense of trust from composer to performer.

**Saturated phenomena and cloaked meaning**

The linguistic sense of layers of meaning cloaked in simplicity reflects the French philosopher Jean Luc Marion’s theory of ‘saturated phenomena’. This philosophical concept is explained by Kirsty Beilharz as a sensed and embodied experience:

[...] in which the giving of a “thing” (an object or person or idea, a phenomenon) gives far more than its appearance because it is richly imbued with meaning and potential to influence and transform objects and persons outside of itself. There is an excess of intuition over concept, in which the saturated phenomenon gives beyond the norm.22

Marion’s philosophy of cloaked meaning within ‘saturated phenomena’ is applicable not just to representational arts but also to music, and as Cook observes, ‘a performance’s richest potentiality [is] not for the communication of specific meaning but for the construction of infinite meanings.’23

**Text and act**

The musical artwork comes into being through a synthesis of score and performance. Nicholas Cook states that ‘the shift from seeing performance as the reproduction of texts to seeing it as a cultural practice prompted by scripts results in the dissolving of any stable distinction between work and performance.’24

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concepts from the field of theatre studies, is identifying the musical score as a script which works as a prompt to performative interpretation. Ian Pace takes umbrage at some of Cook’s writings, stating:

       Cook seems to go too far: in his writing I perceive an implicit valorization of act over text and in common with many new musicologists - a disparaging view of written music, in ways that sometimes point towards a general anti-literacy.  

Pace’s above comments are taken from a review of Nicholas Cook’s book Beyond the Score: Music as Performance (see bibliography) and he criticises Cook for what he considers an avoidance of value judgement, writing that this ‘is radically at odds with the experience of any performer who has listened self-critically to their own work and modified it accordingly […] as an active performer I feel profoundly estranged when reading Cook’s text.’ Pace’s comment on Cook’s avoidance of value judgement is something that I agree with, as I have extremely well-defined ideas of artistic quality, which although well considered and defendable are also subjective. Pace writes that the most influential group of new musicologists are the four scholars: John Rink, Nicholas Cook, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, and Eric Clarke. Pace observes that ‘their most prominent collective endeavour was the establishment of CHARM, the AHRC Research Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music, in 2004.’

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27 Ibid. 282.
28 CHARM (Research Center for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music ) was an AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council) funded project situated at Royal Holloway, University of London. Headed by Nicholas Cook, CHARM sought to resituate musicological research away from a perceived over-dependency on text, with a focusing on recorded sound as a repository of knowledge. CHARM was succeeded in 2009 by a phase 2 scheme CMPCP (Center for Musical Performance as Creative Practice), based at Cambridge University and led by John Rink. See http://www.cmpcp.ac.uk/ and https://charm.rhul.ac.uk/index.html
Cook cites Lawrence Rosenwald as having ‘characterized the identity of the [Beethoven’s] Ninth Symphony as something existing in the relation between its notation and the field of its performances.’ Cook’s citation of Rosenwald makes mention of both the notated score and its realisation through performance, while maintaining the ambiguity at the core of this relationship. Rosenwald, in the article cited by Cook (above), writes of the unknowability of a musical score except through translation:

I can explain more precisely, or at least in a language I’m more familiar with, what I mean about the relation between notation and performance by discussing the relation between translation and original […] we do not know the original, do not and cannot know it in se, and that we come to know it precisely by means of reflecting on its translations. The translation, then - or rather, the translator’s perspective - is independent of the analyst’s or explicator’s; and in precisely the same way, on precisely the same ground, the performer's perspective is independent of the theorist’s.

A performer’s perspective is independent of the theorist’s in that musical decisions must be made about interpretation, both before and during performance. Multiple interpretative options can be weighed during the preparation process, but choices must be definitive for performance.

**Notational limitations - interpretation and translation**

Are interpretation and translation analogous? The American writer Susan Sontag (1933-2004) states that ‘the task of interpretation is virtually one of translation … the situation is that for some reason a text has become unacceptable; yet it cannot be discarded. Interpretation is a radical strategy for conserving an old text.’

The American composer, pianist and conductor Lukas Foss (1922-2009), writes of musical notation as a ‘translation of the supple into the realm of the rigid.’

Polish Composer, Witold Lutosławski (1913-1994), in writing about the notation of extremely complex rhythmic patterns cites two methods available to the composer, the first being an absolutely precise rhythmic notation and the second relying more on the performer’s innate grasp of the composer’s intentions. There are advantages and disadvantages to each of these approaches, but as Lutosławski writes of the strict notational approach, ‘it unsettles and hampers the performers, since it imposes requirements that can be much better fulfilled by a machine.’ Conversely:

The imprecise system of notation aims at inciting and mobilizing the initiative of performers, giving them greater freedom and releasing their natural tendency to display creativity in playing or singing. The use of this system, however, risks deviating too far from the composer’s intentions and may lead to a complete misunderstanding of them.

The limitations inherent in any attempt at a ‘complete notation’ are concisely summed up by Christopher Small, who says that ‘however finely we draw the net of description there will always be details that are finer.’

**Traduttore-Traditore (translator-traitor)**

The most renowned autocrat of textual fidelity was the composer Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971). Stravinsky speaks of interpretation as:

A thing I have a horror of. The interpreter of necessity can think of nothing but interpretation, and thus takes on the garb of a translator, traduttore-traditore; this is an absurdity in music, and

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34 Ibid.
for the interpreter it is a source of vanity inevitably leading to the most ridiculous megalomania.36

Although Stravinsky’s portrayal of the interpreter as traduttore-traditore (translator - traitor) could not be more clear, he strikes a more conciliatory tone in a conversation with Robert Craft, in which he seems to accept the necessity of a performer’s interpretative input, though with the caveat that his own interpretations (as conductor) of his works should be regarded as a blueprint for future performers. Stravinsky states:

But, you will protest, stylistic questions in my music are not conclusively indicated by the notation; my style requires interpretation. This is true and it is also why I regard my recordings as indispensable supplements to the printed music.37

Composer’s recordings - blueprints or transitory interpretations?

In the Western Art Music tradition, is a composer’s vision of their own work necessarily the blueprint on which future generations of performers should base their interpretation? Through recordings we now have direct access to composers such as Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962), Edvard Grieg (1843-1907), Bela Bartók (1881-1945), Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943), Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) and Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953).38 Although it is argued that the composer-performer is part of a bygone tradition, we can add to the historical list of composers above the names

38 We cannot be certain of the attitude these composers had to being recorded. Many performers dislike having a microphone placed in front of them and they feel that it very much dampens spontaneity. Donald Greig states that ‘the microphone is the representative of potentially countless future audiences. As such, the microphone confronts the performer as an inhuman critic.’ See Donald Greig, ‘Performing for (and against) the microphone’, in Nicholas Cook et al. (eds), The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 16.
of some of the composer-performers active now in western music, such as Thomas Adès, Pierre Boulez, Philip Glass, Jörg Widmann, Caroline Shaw, John Adams, Brett Dean, Benjamin Dwyer, amongst countless others. Pierre Boulez observes that:

Until recently, the realizations of performers, even of composers, existed only in the memory, as more or less legendary accounts. Now, there are witnesses: willing witnesses in the case of prepared, studied, and approved recordings … the truth of any interpretation is essentially transitory.  

Boulez’s view is echoed by Robert Philip when he talks of historical recordings of composers interpreting their works, ‘Each of them had an idiosyncratic approach to the performance of their own work, which could not be deduced simply from their scores.’ Quite often these older recordings of composers performing their own works are criticised for their technical limitations of the performances. Aside from the fact that this viewpoint is more suited to the sporting arena of quantifiable performance phenomena, there are notable exceptions to this assertion of limited technical prowess, such as Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943), who apart from his renown as a composer was hailed as one of the great pianists of the twentieth century. Rachmaninoff recorded most of his own solo piano works and all of his concerto works to enormous popular acclaim. Despite the fact that this recorded legacy exists as a possible template for the realisation of Rachmaninoff’s music, many pianists, such as Sviatoslav Richter, Vladimir Horowitz, Mikhail Pletnev, and Martha Argerich have created profound artistic statements through their performance of Rachmaninoff’s scores, thereby pointing to the malleability of the written score and the central role of the performer in its realisation.

40 Robert Philip, Performing music in the Age of Recording (Yale: Yale University Press, 2004), 177.
John Rink discusses learning Rachmaninoff’s ‘Prelude Op. 23 No. 10’ in his essay, ‘The Work of the Performer’. Rink observes that when he listened to Rachmaninoff’s 1940 recording of the piece, he decided:

not to allow his [Rachmaninoff’s] interpretation to influence mine to any significant extent (though the rapidity of his tempo proved to be liberating). However inspired it might be, his rendition is of course not “the work,” that is, a version that I or anyone else must revere and strive to resurrect as a matter of course.41

**Expressive concerns**

The English cellist Stephen Isserlis describes the performer’s communion with a composer’s score, and he emphasises the narrative qualities which the performer must elucidate through interpretation:

To perform a piece of music is essentially to tell a story. The task of an interpreter is that of narrator and actor; he or she must relate the tale woven by the composer, not merely portraying, but fully identifying with the characters and their fates.42

Isserlis is presenting his idea of the score as a narrative to be expressed by the performer. Patrik Juslin coined the acronym GERMS as a way conceptualising the component parts of musical expression.43 Juslin and Lindstrom observe that the

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43 Juslin states that a useful way to view musical expression is as a multi-dimensional phenomenon consisting of five primary components: (a) Generative rules that function to clarify the musical structure; (b) Emotional expression that serves to convey intended emotions to listeners; (c) Random variations that reflect human limitations with regard to internal time-keeper variance and motor delays; (d) Motion principles that prescribe that some aspects of the performance (e.g. timing) should be shaped in accordance with patterns of biological motion; and (e) Stylistic unexpectedness that involves local deviations from performance conventions. See, Patrik N. Juslin, ‘Five Facets of Musical Expression: A Psychologist’s perspective on Music Performance’, *Psychology of Music*, 31 (2003), 273.
notion of expression does not require a correlation between ‘what a listener perceives in the performance and what the performer intends to express’.  

As Benjamin Dwyer observes:

Stravinsky also said (famously) that music only expresses itself and nothing else. Strictly speaking, this is true; but he does not get into what music is expressing of inner consciousness—that whole extra-linguistic inner world of feeling.

Musicking

Music has no existence on the page except as an abstraction and it comes to life only when someone performs it into being. This involvement with and animation of music has been called ‘musicking’, a term coined by the New-Zealand musicologist Christopher Small (1927-2011).

One of Small’s contentions is that ‘to music’ is an activity which should not be confused with the notion of music having an autonomous existence. Small speaks of the trap of reification in which we imagine that abstractions like love or hate have any existence outside the activities of loving or hating, much the same way we imagine music as something that could exist outside of the activity of performing, creating or participating in music. This participation is what Small refers to as ‘musicking’ and he offers this definition:

To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing.

45 Personal communication, 18 August 2020.
46 Small, Musicking, 9.
47 Ibid.
This is an idea that finds resonance in the writing of Philip V. Bohlman, who observes that ‘the metaphysical condition of music with which we in the west are most familiar is that music is an object ... By contrast, music exists in the conditions of a process.’

If, as Cook says, ‘no one performance exhausts all the possibilities of a musical work’, what then can composers expect from their interpreters and audience, what use can they expect their music to serve? Dwyer asks: ‘If music is not to be interpreted, what is to be done with it? What is it for?’ John Sloboda provides one answer to this question of functionality, through his likening of music to architecture: ‘An architect can never entirely predetermine all the uses that people will make of his building.’ This is a clever analogy in terms of recognising a musical score as an item which can serve disparate purposes for its users. Sloboda goes on to say that ‘much sterile debate about “the” meaning of a piece of music can be avoided by looking at the music as an artefact which can be used in different ways.’ Lawrence Kramer writes of the open-ended intimacy of feeling available to the listener as ‘the fact that such a musical work can never be fully present even in its richest appearance means that this intimacy cannot be closed and thus gives it grounds on which to thrive.’ A performance can only ever be a transitory commentary on an open-ended narrative, an act of purely in-the-moment musicking.

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50 Personal communication, 18 August 2020.
52 Ibid.
Chapter 6: The Performing Body

Our body is the ultimate instrument of all our external knowledge, whether intellectual or practical. In all our waking moments we are relying on our awareness of contacts of our body with things outside for attending to these things. Our own body is the only thing in the world which we normally never experience as an object but experience always in terms of the world to which we are attending from our body. It is by making this intelligent use of our body that we feel it to be our body, and not a thing outside.¹

**Embodied cognition and the verbally inarticulable**

In his book, *Music and Embodied Cognition*, Arnie Cox observes: ‘Strictly speaking, the notion of embodied cognition in the title of this book ought to be redundant, on the premise that there is no disembodied cognition.’² Dogantan-Dack speaks of the central point inhabited by the body in performance, ‘such that in its absence the notated “text” remains mute and lifeless.’³

John Sutton, in his writing on the nature of skill in cricketing, speaks of the elusive qualities of a cricketer’s skill and ability to unthinkingly deliver the correct action response to a given set of circumstances. Sutton observes that ‘skills, habits and embodied movement capacities are to some extent both consciously inaccessible and verbally inarticulable.’⁴ Sutton also speaks of a ‘flow’ or ‘grooved’ state in which an athlete is operating at an optimal performance level, outside of conscious awareness.

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and in a state of what he calls ‘expertise-induced amnesia’. This ‘grooved’ state of action is not limited to sport or indeed musical performance; there are many examples in everyday life, perhaps the most striking being the example of learning to drive a car. In the early stages of learning to drive, every action to be taken and the order in which those actions occur must be considered in real time, the conscious mind is in control at all times. With experience, the automaticity of the action sequences of driving become embodied, and we enter Sutton’s state of ‘expertise-induced amnesia’. Sutton observes, though without offering evidence, that players who are able to give a well-thought-out account of their playing are ‘rarely the most successful’, and he adds his thoughts on what the cricketing community in general assumes, which is the feeling that it’s better to be a ‘brilliant player utterly unable to articulate your gift.’ Speaking of the embodied automaticity of expertise, Sutton writes that:

   Truly skilled practitioners do not rely on verbally articulable propositions behind their decision and action, nor need they have conscious control over, or even conscious access to, the processes by which they act: an expert’s skill has become so much a part of him that he need be no more aware of it than he is of his own body.

Although Sutton is speaking specifically of cricket, we can see how the above writings are applicable to the music performer. In much the same manner as in sport, the preparatory process for musical performance involves the deployment of two distinct types of knowledge: the ‘declarative and the procedural.’ Declarative knowledge consist of empirical facts, such as the prescriptive, fundamental elements

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6 Ibid. 769.
7 Ibid. 768.
8 For a more detailed discussion of these two knowledge types see Alice Healy et al. ‘Expertise: defined, described, explained’, Frontiers in Psychology, 5 (2014).
of a musical score; procedural knowledge refers to implicit or tacit skills, which are both consciously and subconsciously drawn upon. These ineffable skills, in conjunction with conscious engagement are the elements that come to form our concept of a composer’s intentions. The performer does not internalise a work in a linear manner but does so through a confluence of cognitive and embodied acquisition. This holistic description of knowledge acquisition is contradicted by Susan Hallam and Nancy Barry, who argue that musicians utilise one of two approaches in learning a piece of music: the intuitive or the analytical. They state that ‘some musicians adopt both approaches to developing interpretation, although they tend to exhibit a preference for one’.9

Isabelle Héroux describes two aspects of the mental representation of a piece of music: ‘first, the formal image, or what is written in the score … and second, the artistic image, or what is not written in the score’. Héroux goes on to elucidate a four-stage process of individual practice which she adapts from a 2003 paper by Roger Chaffin et al.10 The four stages Heroux identifies are: 1. ‘Scouting it out’ - In this stage the musician approaches the music with a broad overview of creating an overall mental image of the work. 2. ‘Section by section’ - The musician develops the work in small sections, refining the requisite motor skills and developing aesthetic opinions.11 3. ‘The gray stage’ – this can be viewed as the embodiment or

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11 In my experience, aesthetic opinions held by a performer are not something to be limited to or associated with a certain stage of knowing, rather these opinions or feelings for a work of art develop at a pace with one’s learning and are constantly evolving just as in any continuously morphing interaction. The American composer Roger Sessions, in his series of Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard University in 1968-1969, states simply: ‘Understanding must come before judgement’. This
automaticity stage. 4. ‘Maintenance’ - This is the stage of consolidation, or final polishing before a performance.\textsuperscript{12} My own experience of learning leads me to posit a slightly different four-stage process than Heroux’s: an initial sight-reading (cognitive), a deliberate practice (associative), a post-performance (heightened associative) and finally a fully-embodied (autonomous).

\textbf{Tacit knowledge}

In his book \textit{Intelligence in the flesh}, the British cognitive scientist Guy Claxton quotes Michael Polanyi’s lyrical description of tacit knowledge as:

knowledge that is such a fine web of contingent possibilities … The neuro-chemical loops and networks that underpin your expertise are orders of magnitude more intricate than any vocabulary, however technical, could hope to capture. It is not that you are inarticulate … the knowledge itself is of such delicacy that it is in principle inarticulable.\textsuperscript{13}

Although Igor Stravinsky spoke frequently and eloquently on the subject of music, he observes that:

what a Picasso or a Stravinsky has to say about painting or music is of no value whatever […] the composer works through a perceptual, not a conceptual, process. He perceives, he selects, he combines, and he is not in the least aware at what point meanings of a different sort and significance grow into his work. All he knows or cares about is his apprehension of the contour of the form, for the form is everything. He can say nothing whatever about meanings.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13} Guy Claxton, \textit{Intelligence in the Flesh} (Yale: Yale University Press, 2015), 232.
\textsuperscript{14} Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, \textit{Expositions and Developments} (California: University of California Press, 1959), 102-103.
Stefan Östersjö highlights the importance of embodied knowledge, observing that ‘knowledge production in artistic research is situated in three domains: the artistic, the embodied, and the discursive.’\textsuperscript{15} In these three knowledge domains, the artistic refers to output, the artwork itself; the embodied refers to the non-intellectual, tacit, intuitive skills of the artist; while the discursive is the domain into which we would like to bring forward this tacit knowledge for investigation.

**The narrative of the performing body**

Cook writes that in the case of WAM, ‘a [performer’s] body is disciplined and reconfigured by notation.’\textsuperscript{16} This view of the embodied aspect of performance challenges the top-down Cartesian dualism model of the brain as a computational device controlling the body. As Cook observes, ‘in striking contrast to the disembodied aesthetics of WAM, then, music emerges as a paradigm case of embodied cognition.’\textsuperscript{17} This embodied aspect of performance is something that can be observed in the physical actions of expert performers as they interact with their instrument, and one can examine Cook’s notion of the narrative of the performing body across a wide spectrum of genres, where we encounter examples of performers whose corporeal bearing and physical interaction with their instruments seem inextricable from their music-making. In Jazz music there are countless examples, but two who readily come to mind are the pianist/composer Keith Jarrett and the trumpeter/composer Miles Davis. In an acceptance speech for his 2014 ‘National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship’, Jarrett observes: ‘It’s like my body knows


\textsuperscript{16} Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 319.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
exactly what to do, it’s just like my left hand knows how to play, and if I tell it what to play, I’m stopping it.’

The most obvious example of embodied music-making in western art music is the example of the orchestral conductor, who uniquely in the practice of music performance does not produce any sound. The conductor guides and shapes an orchestra’s performance through a series of gestures which cue the orchestra to play in a specific way; the conductor is in a sense, ‘playing the orchestra’. In a performance setting, this outward realization is achieved entirely through the conductor’s bodily gesture. In his archaically-titled book *The Compleat Conductor*, the American composer and conductor Gunther Schuller (1925-2015) adds a cautionary note to any discussion solely focussed on podium histrionics, stating that ‘all the physical, choreographic skills in the world will amount to nothing if they represent an insufficient (intellectual) knowledge of the score and an inadequate (emotional) feeling for the music.’

One of the most physically gesticulative conductors was Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990), who wrote that ‘the feelings evoked by music cause certain muscular reactions, and these, given back to the orchestra through conducting, can re-evolve these feelings in the players.’ Bernstein acted as chief conductor of the New York Philharmonic during the years 1958-1969 and was succeeded in this post by Pierre Boulez. Boulez, whose performative bodily gestures are minimal and who conducts with his hands rather than a baton remarks that ‘the relationship between music and

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gesture has a physiological basis that depends on each individual.'21 Clearly, there is no universally ‘correct’ mode of embodied communication.22 Boulez warns against the imitation of someone else’s physical gestures, stating that what is important is that gestures are ‘accurate and instructive’.23 Jarret also cautions against imitation, relating how students tell him that they want to play like him; his tongue-in-cheek reaction being: ‘I can’t teach that, I don’t want to teach that, do you know how many chiropractors I need?’24

Mimetics

Despite Jarrett and Boulez’s strictures against imitation, it is a fact that imitation forms the basis of all human learning. Learning through imitation is a topic of relevance in fields such as education, biology, neuropsychology, and speech, motor and musical imagery studies. Arnie Cox outlines ‘mimetic hypothesis’:

The core of the “mimetic hypothesis” holds that 1) we understand sounds in comparison to sounds we have made ourselves, and that 2) this process of comparison involves tacit imitation or mimetic participation, which in turn draws on the prior embodied experience of sound production.25

Cox’s mimetic hypothesis is of relevance to musical skill acquisition as it infers that when listening to sound (musical or not), our motor imagery remembers and mirrors

22 In conducting it is often said that the only teachable aspect is the ability to beat patterns accurately. This is of course untrue as there is an enormous wealth of knowledge to be passed down to the young conductor. What is true however is that a conductor’s skills increase through experience as the only actual equivalent of practicing on a musical instrument is when they stand in front of an orchestra, they cannot engage in deliberate practice with their instrument in the way instrumentalists and vocalists can.
23 Jean Vermeil, Conversations with Boulez, 66.
24 Keith Jarrett, ‘Interview and speech at NEA Jazz Masters Awards 2014’.
the muscular tension and release necessary to produce the sounds we are hearing, making the mimetic process ‘integral to music perception and cognition, regardless of whether we are conscious of this motor imagery.’ Naomi Rokotnitz writes that ‘the same neural circuits recruited for action are also activated when we look at others performing an action.’

Performance cues

Every act of music-making is done through the body. Instrumentalists and, perhaps to a greater degree, vocalists, learn to use physical gestures as cue points in aiding their performances, and as we see below, aiding audience perception. Performance cues are made up of pre-decided elements of the music to focus on during performance, such as a specific dynamic structure or an unusual fingering or breathing choice. These cues serve to keep the performer anchored in the performative present both physically and mentally and help in the avoidance of unthinking automaticity. Roger Chaffin and Jane Ginsborg state:

Experienced performers train themselves during practise to attend to specific features of the music. These performance cues come to mind automatically during the performance providing a series of landmarks that the performer can use to monitor progress through the piece, and directing attention as needed to technical issues, interpretation, and expressive gestures.

Coessens notes that ‘the artist condenses a multitude of perceptual, kinesthetic and aesthetic experience into embodied patterns and gesture, from which aesthetic and interpretative output emerge.’ Davidson argues that these embodied pattern and

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26 Arnie Cox, ‘The mimetic hypothesis and embodied musical meaning’, 204.
gestures are often useful as cue points for an audience in that ‘embodied musical meaning seems to be both perceptually available and comprehensible to audiences.’

Performative physical gestures can aid in the communication and heightening of certain musical scripts to the audience, such as dynamic nuances, which may seem through expressive gesture to be more extreme than they actually are, just as virtuosic flourishes may appear heightened through the performer’s dramatic physical interaction with his or her instrument and the performance space ‘providing an idiosyncratic balletic correlate to sound.’

The performers use of their body in communicating meaning to an audience ‘can be more effective than sound for informing an audience about a performer’s emotional intent’. According to Rink:

The need to recognise physical movement as an integral part of any performance conception and enactment is one more reason why we must look beyond the score to understand both musical meaning in general and musical narrativity more specifically.

Knowledge from the field of theatre studies can be co-opted by the musical performer. Actors move about a stage whilst delivering their lines and this movement acts as a mnemonic device, aiding in the memorisation and delivery of lines.

Arriving at a particular stage marking prompts the action and speech associated with

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31 This phrase is borrowed from Nicholas Cook’s description of the Russian pianist Grigory Sokolov (1950) who according to Cook ‘performs virtuosity as much as he performs Chopin.’ There are numerous examples of this physical performance allied with the musical across every genre of music. There are also counter-examples where performative gesture is of little import to the performer’s stage habits, such as the violinist David Oistrakh and most strikingly, Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli, whose extraordinary technical perfection and stillness at the keyboard led to claims of coldness in his playing, which is of course the opposite of the above-mentioned Sokolov and also shows how gesture can prime an audience reaction. See Nicholas Cook, ‘Beyond the notes’, *Nature*, 453 (2008), 1187.


that particular location: ‘Acting differs from recitation because it requires the actor to learn the text and incorporate it into action, in the form of movement, on the stage.’

**Cue points and the ‘memory palace’**

In 2011, I composed the score for a show called *Touch me* by the Irish dance theatre company *CoisCéim*. I was incorporated into the show as a character and though I was not dancing, I was continuously moving about the stage playing instruments. The show lasted one hour and the music was continuous throughout. Although I had composed the music, memorising an hour of music was quite an undertaking. This, combined with learning an hour of movement direction seemed daunting but turned out to be highly enlightening as my memory was cued by my body and its movement through space. The fact that I had definite physical cue points meant that my body and its position on stage acted as a perfect musical retrieval method. Being aware of the choreography also meant that I could rehearse the entire production in my head using mental imagery whilst remaining perfectly still. This mnemonic technique, through my embodied cognition of the choreography, provided me with certain loci where I could place my mental cues for easy retrieval. As Neal Utterback observes, ‘a mental imagery sequence being rehearsed repeatedly becomes more deeply embodied.’ (See 6.6, below).

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35 CoisCéim Dance Theatre is based in Dublin Ireland. *Touch me* was the fourth production of theirs for which I wrote the music, the others being, *Dances with Intent* (1994), *Reel Luck* (1995) and *Straight with Curves* (1996). See <https://coisceim.com/>
The memory technique of using loci as associative items dates back to antiquity. In her book, *The Art of Memory*, Frances A. Yates presents an overview of the historical development of mnemonic techniques for retaining and delivering vast amounts of information, from the Greek orators through to the sixteenth-century theatre memory system of Robert Fludd.\(^\text{37}\) Yates’s study of the classical art of memory has ramifications for performers as it is concerned with bodily movement through a visualised mental space and the retrieval of information from pre-decided loci: ‘We have to think of the ancient orator as moving in imagination through his memory building whilst he is making his speech, drawing from the memorised places the images he has placed upon them.’\(^\text{38}\) This ancient mnemonic system flies in the face of Cartesian dualism with its concept of mind-body separation, as it is the imagination of the embodied action which enables the mental retrieval process. While we may not use this concept of loci purely as a memorization tool, we can see its relevance as a generator of cognition cues, both conscious and subconscious, which guide us as we move through our mnemonic structure. These mnemonic structures, or ‘memory palaces’ are either purposefully constructed or arise naturally through the learning and embodiment process involved in the cognition of new information. Jacquelyn Bessell and Patricia Riddell observe that ‘it has … been suggested that both online cognition (processing as we move through the world) and offline cognition (processing through reflection) might be body-based.’\(^\text{39}\)

\(^{39}\) Bessell and Riddell, ‘Embodiment and Performance’, 326
Functional equivalence and ‘PETTLEP’

Mental rehearsal without any corresponding physical movement is an effective cognitive preparation method for performance. The field of sports psychology explains how it works:

In short, it is the degree of neural overlap between imagery and the preparation and production of actual movements called functional equivalence. Not only are similar brain activities noted when a behavior is both imagined and performed, but recorded EMG activity showed similar responses in muscles when performing and imagining tasks.⁴⁰

Eddie O’Connor speaks here of the functional equivalence hypothesis as ‘the proposition that imagery, although it does not result from stimulation of sense organs is essentially the same as perception in the way that it functions’.⁴¹ Sports research contains much that is transferrable to the domain of music performance. An important cognitive neuroscience paper by Paul S. Holmes and David J. Collins proposes a motor-imaging model to be used as an enhancement to physical preparation in the sporting domain. Holmes and Collins created the ‘PETTLEP’ model to house their seven-step imaging tool, contending that the brain stores memories in the form of a central representation, which is accessible both to real-world physical preparation and execution and motor imagery preparation and execution. The neural crossover between the physical and the imagined is similar to a music performer’s mental rehearsal, but is more complex in its detail and more complete in its efficacy.⁴² Although I am not using the PETTLEP model within this

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current research but I am identifying it as something for further research arising from this thesis. I have created a proposed musical application of the PETTLEP model, which is attached to this thesis as Appendix 3.

The PETTLEP model could be of great benefit to the musical performer and its suitability of application is worthy of a far more detailed investigation than space allows for here. Sarah Sinnamon observes: ‘putting it most bluntly it is feasible that music educators could consider cherry-picking and adapting some of the most successful training techniques found in sports settings.’

Learning through the body is of particular relevance to my current research. Sutton’s reference to a ‘grooved’ or ‘flow’ state links perfectly to the Croatian psychologist, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s work on ‘flow’, which I discuss in Chapter 7 below. Successful musical performance is not solely dependent on a performer’s embodied awareness of a work, nor on an understanding of a composer’s expressive intentions, but is also reliant on a high degree of technical performance expertise.

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Nicholas Cook observes that:

Instead of being seen as the beneficiary of analysis, performance is now seen as an object of analysis.¹

The above quote from Nicholas Cook is liberating to the performer as it validates the importance of the performer’s role in the delivery and appreciation of music. Paulo De Assis observes: ‘It is time to take performers seriously as engaged co-designers of our aesthetic, intellectual, and epistemic world.’²

**Expertise in performance**

The artistic researcher is afforded the opportunity of investigating and identifying areas of shared common concern across a wide spectrum of creative endeavour. Scientific and psychological fields of study such as *expertise in performance* and *flow*, can serve to nourish the artist’s creativity and lifelong-learning capabilities, whilst constructing a symbiotic bridge between the humanities and sciences.

*Expertise in performance*, as a scientific discipline, has its roots in the work of Swedish psychologist K. Anders Ericsson, most notably in an article written with Ralf Krampe and Clemens Tesch-Römer in 1993 for the journal *Psychological Review*.³ Anders Ericsson has conducted interviews and studies with leading practitioners in the fields of sport, medicine, music, chess, and the fine arts. He cites many statistics cataloguing extraordinary increases in human capacity through

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¹ Cook, *Beyond the Score*, 49.
deliberate practice, postulating that if one can explain how elite performers have attained such high levels of achievement, this knowledge would benefit others hoping to maximize their performance potential in their chosen field. Ericsson argues that the key to achieving expertise is the amount of time spent on ‘deliberate practice’, and he puts a round number on it: 10,000 hours. His contention that deliberate practice over a prolonged period is more relevant than innate talent in achieving mastery is a strongly contested claim.

Certain aspects of the deliberate practice model have been challenged, such as the fact that the physical slowing down associated with ageing needs to be woven into the fabric of Ericsson’s hypothesis, ‘to account for the fact that more hours accumulated within an activity do not necessarily result in performance improvement.’ Paul Ward distinguishes between high-level performance and elite-level performance within a sporting discipline stating, ‘it is not understood whether the processes responsible for attaining high levels of performance are equivalent to those for attaining the best or elite-levels of performance in the same sport.’

Elite artistic performance, unlike sporting ‘achievement’, is qualitative rather than quantitative and some of Ericsson’s pronouncements are debatable due to poor word choices. For example, in a 1997 article, co-authored with Andreas C. Lehmann, Ericsson misappropriates the word ‘achievement’ when he is clearly referring to the more mundane topic of technical facility in the following remarks:

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4 This was brought into the popular culture by the author Malcolm Gladwell, in his best-selling book of 2008, Outliers.
6 Ibid. 441.
In sports and music alike, the level of achievement that only a century ago was attributed by contemporaries to the unique innate talents possessed by a performer, is today regularly achieved by a large number of individuals after extended training.\(^7\)

Within the performing arts, ‘achievement’ cannot be equated with advancement in technical prowess alone, not even during the transition from novice to expert. The true achievement of elite performative expertise lies outside the domain of the quantitative and can’t be explicated through scientific methodologies alone. It is simply not possible to adequately describe in words the artistic achievement of a great musical performance. How could we possibly convey through words the essence of Ella Fitzgerald singing \textit{Mac the Knife} or Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau singing Mahler’s \textit{Kindertotenlieder} to someone who has never heard these recordings?\(^8\) Trying to use words to describe musical intention is a difficult proposition, as Igor Stravinsky observes, ‘when someone asserts that a composer “seeks to express” an emotion for which the someone then provides a verbal description, that is to debase words \textit{and} music.’\(^9\) Roger Sessions describes music as a medium with which words are ‘ultimately incommensurable’.\(^10\)


\(^8\) Daniel Leech Wilkinson makes the case that certain performers, through the power and persuasion of their recorded interpretations, can single-handedly alter musicological perspectives on certain composers, citing Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau’s Schubert recordings in particular as having added to Schubert research, ‘bringing to him a new seriousness and psychological depth that was not there in earlier commentary or - for earlier listeners.’ See: Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, ‘Recordings and histories of performance style’, in Nicholas Cook et al. (eds), \textit{The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 246.


It is true that in terms of technical refinement, music performance would appear to have advanced through the proliferation of performance education institutions. I would argue however that, at the pinnacle of musical artistry in performance, technical excellence is at once vitally and merely a component part in the gestalt of performance, and in trying to address the unquantifiable, Ericsson breaks from the scientific rigour of his research methodology and leans unconvincingly on the soft ground of unverifiable pronouncements by citing Henry Roth’s 1982 book *Master violinists in performance* as follows: ‘the improvement in music training is so great that according to Roth (1982) the violin virtuoso Paganini “would indeed cut a sorry figure if placed upon the modern concert stage.”’¹¹ A statement like this is mere supposition and has no place within such a carefully argued paper, particularly since there are no extant recordings of Paganini playing the violin and all we have is access to the legend of Paganini, a legend that has been created, amplified, nourished and distorted purely through the written word and does not have any rightful place within Ericsson’s oft-cited and influential article.

**Deliberate practice**

The concept of ‘deliberate practice’ is generally ascribed to K. Anders Ericsson, but as Farmer and Williams observe, ‘Ericsson and his colleagues did not invent deliberate practice. Their contribution was to document the elements of deliberate practice and to show that, when rigorously applied by motivated individuals, this method is an efficient and effective process for gaining expertise in many domains and instructional settings.’¹²

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Anders Ericsson’s describes deliberate practice as follows:

A highly structured activity, the explicit goal of which is to improve performance. Specific tasks are invented to overcome weaknesses, and performance is carefully monitored to provide cues for ways to improve it further. We claim that deliberate practice requires effort and is not inherently enjoyable. Individuals are motivated to practice because practice improves performance. In addition, engaging in deliberate practice generates no immediate monetary rewards and generates costs associated with access to teachers and training environments.\(^{13}\)

The lack of implicit enjoyment inherent in the deliberate practice model constitutes a distinguishing characteristic between expert performers and their peers, as this very ability to commit to such an unenjoyable undertaking is itself a distinguishing factor of measurable success rates in Ericsson’s studies. Ericsson et al. put this willingness to commit to domain-specific deliberate practice ahead of the input of innate talent as a forecaster of success, stating baldly, ‘we reject any important role for innate ability.’\(^{14}\)

The rejection of the importance of talent as a success predictor is the most contentious claim in Ericsson’s 1993 paper and is widely refuted. Alice Healy et al. acknowledge the fact that talent without development, usage and refinement is as good as useless but that conversely, practice can be futile ‘if one doesn’t have some initial capacity.’\(^{15}\) Deliberate practice involves receiving immediate feedback on one’s efforts, as in a one-to-one music instructor or, in the sporting situation, a coach. With increased expertise the need for immediate external feedback decreases, as the practitioner becomes more reliant on metacognition which links to the

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\(^{13}\) Ericsson et al. ‘The Role of Deliberate Practice’, 368.

\(^{14}\) Ibid. 399.

autoethnographic model of the practicing researcher. According to Araújo, ‘the findings of this study suggest that self-regulation through personal resources may be the most relevant aspect of self-regulation for practice efficiency among advanced musicians.’ The central role of deliberate practice in expertise development has been challenged in a recent publication by David Z. Hambrick et al. who contend that:

models of expertise that only take into account deliberate practice will never adequately account for the major facts of expertise … deliberate practice does not account for all, nearly all, or even the majority of the variance in expertise.

In referring to methods of accessing expertise, Ericsson points to the pitfalls of assuming that a highly-established reputation, coupled with extensive experience is a good yardstick with which to measure expertise. Ericsson’s models of expertise and deliberate practice assume lifelong-learning, in other words, without continuous stretching of one’s abilities through increased challenge, a certain plateauing will occur and ‘reputation’ will take precedence.

The stretching of one’s abilities is a constituent part of early education but relies on intrinsic motivation in a real-world setting. Ericsson cites studies showing that the social indicators of expertise such as reputation and experience do not correlate to superior outcomes in the fields of clinical medicine:

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16 Metacognition can be understood as ‘thinking about thinking’, or as defined by the OED, ‘Awareness and understanding of one's own thought processes, esp. regarded as having a role in directing those processes.’ Metacognition’ in OED Online, Oxford University Press, June 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/245252. [Accessed 7 July 2020].


The accuracy of decision making involved in medical diagnosis for common diseases, and in investment in the stock market do not improve with further professional experience or social status within the respective domain.19

For experts in their fields who have plateaued, the self-regulation through personal resources which is vital if skills are to be maintained appears to have faded. Even if the commitment to deliberate practice is still intact, what seems to be lacking is ‘passion’.

Passion

One of the most motivating personal resources available to humans is ‘passion’. ‘Passion’ is not mentioned in the expertise literature and from my readings the word ‘commitment’ is used extensively as a surrogate. True, ‘commitment’ fits into the schema of ‘unenjoyable deliberate practise’, whereas ‘passion’ and ‘unenjoyable’ are far less easy bedfellows. Passion must be viewed as a vital component of gaining and maintaining expertise. When we feel passionate about an area of study, our ability to learn and retain information is greatly heightened. How does passion differ from commitment and why is it generally overlooked in the literature on expertise? Perhaps the word itself speaks to an ephemeral state of being, or is seen as being unavailable to quantitative research. Passion imbues us with the driving force and ‘commitment’ necessary to achieve our goals. In a 2011 paper on passion and excellence in music, Arielle Bonneville-Roussy et al. observe that ‘passion is defined as a strong inclination towards a self-defining activity that people love, that they consider important, and in which they devote significant amounts of time and

energy. The authors also link passion to one’s idea of self and the innate tendency towards personal growth, as set out in the ‘Self Determination Theory’ (SDT).

Flow

Anders Ericsson’s writings on expertise both compliment and contradict the work of the Croatian psychologist, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, who coined the term ‘flow’ to describe the state of ‘being in the zone’. Ericsson views flow as being a component part of performance, rather than deliberate practice: ‘This state of diffused attention is ‘almost antithetical to focused attention’ required by deliberate practice to maximize feedback and information about corrective action.’ Ericsson’s representation of the flow state as ‘almost antithetical to focused attention’ is not a viewpoint shared by Csikszentmihalyi, who describes flow as being a subjective state possessing characteristics such as an intense and focused concentration, a losing of oneself in the present moment, a sense that one is in complete control of one’s actions, the experience of the activity as being intrinsically rewarding such that the end product serves merely as an excuse for the process, and a loss of self-awareness. The intrinsically rewarding aspect of flow is described by Csikszentmihalyi as being ‘autotelic’, a word defined by the OED as ‘having a self-contained goal or

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21 The ‘Self-Determination Theory’ (SDT) is field of psychological study concerned with intrinsic motivation. This theory states that we have an inclination to internalise a sense of self identity from what we do. For instance, I play the saxophone and have internalised this sense of self to the point that I identify as a saxophonist. I enjoy playing tennis but I do not identify as a tennis player.
purpose’\textsuperscript{24}, in other words, doing it for the sake of doing it. Here is a graphic representation of the flow state.\textsuperscript{25} (Ex. 7.1):

Example 7.1: A graphic representation of ‘flow’

![Graph of flow state]

We see from this graph (Ex. 7.1) that in order to achieve flow we must match our skills to appropriate challenges. As we overcome these challenges our skills increase and we must therefore increase the challenge levels in order to remain in flow. Like deliberate practice, flow is concerned with the clarity of goals and the continuous improvement of skills.

Csikszentmihalyi states that ‘flow also happens when a person's skills are fully involved in overcoming a challenge that is just about manageable.’\textsuperscript{26} There are studies suggesting that flow creates its own spontaneity which serves as a positive

\textsuperscript{26} Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, ‘Finding Flow’, Psychology Today, 30 (1997), 47.
feedback loop of action and thought, or as John Vervaeke et al. refer to it, an ‘insight cascade’. The application of the ‘flow’ model to musical performance provides many benefits in terms of wellbeing to the performer, for instance, ‘music, which is organized auditory information, helps organize the mind that attends to it, and therefore reduces psychic entropy.’ Studies have shown that being in a state of flow is inconsistent with the occurrence of stage fright and therefore a valuable research undertaking, if it can benefit the many performers who suffer the crippling effects of this psychological state.

Anders Ericsson’s work on expertise has had a profound impact across a variety of disciplines. However, some of his ideas are more appropriate to quantitative rather than qualitative inquiry, thus making them of little relevance in the field of musical performance. I strongly disagree with his view that achievement in music is something measurable (see above), but I do feel that his deliberate practice model is extremely useful, particularly when coupled with Csikszentmihalyi’s ‘flow’ model. Performative expertise, once acquired, relies for maintenance on the under-researched involvement of ‘passion’.

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Chapter 8: Reimagining John Buckley’s *Arabesque* for Soprano Saxophone

John Buckley composed *Arabesque* for me in 1990 as a work for solo alto saxophone. Having performed *Arabesque* frequently over the years on alto it sometimes crossed my mind to attempt it on soprano saxophone, but the thought seemed daunting, as the soprano is a much more difficult instrument to control and I identified the soprano as an instrument on which I performed traditional music rather than western art music. This identification was for the most part subconscious and undefined, really only becoming apparent to me at the outset of my doctoral studies, as I began to objectively examine what it is I that do as a performer. As my artistic research is concerned with the process of learning, I decided, with Buckley’s imprimatur, to confront my embedded thinking and prepare an interpretation of *Arabesque* on soprano saxophone for a recital scheduled for 14 June 2019 at the RIAM. The audio recording of this premiere performance on soprano saxophone is included in this chapter. Buckley describes *Arabesque* as follows:

The title refers to the ornate and elaborate ornamentation of the melodic line which runs right through the piece. The work is cast in a single movement. It has extremely fast and vigorous opening and closing sections. The central section is slower and more lyrical in mood.\(^1\)

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\(^1\) All notated music examples in this chapter sound a major 6\(^{th}\) lower than written when performed on alto saxophone and a major 2\(^{nd}\) lower than written when performed on soprano saxophone. The score of *Arabesque* begins on page number 3. The audio files for this chapter are included on the accompanying CD and are also accessible for download at this web address: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9z304yqaqw7g4r7/AABvpWwJnnUPh476FrEcwoB4a?dl=0

\(^2\) John Buckley, liner notes to, *In lines of dazzling light: John Buckley Solo and Chamber Works*, various performers, CD, Black Box, BBM1012, 1999.
As part of this artistic research undertaking, I began with a play-through on alto saxophone to investigate the elements of embodiment which are now an implicit part of my understanding of Arabesque as a work for alto saxophone.

Arabesque opens with a flourish of demisemiquavers marked Prestissimo, con fuoco.

The commas indicate breath marks and are inserted as guides only (Ex. 8.1):

Example 8.1: Buckley, Arabesque, page 3, systems 1-4

I recorded Arabesque in 1998 as part of a CD of Buckley’s solo and chamber music for wind instruments, and listening to this recording now I note that I started this recorded version at a tempo of quaver = 132 bpm. In recital, I try for an opening tempo of quaver = 160 bpm, as I feel this conveys the requisite impression of struggle and risk inherent in the work. Here is an audio example of the above (Ex.

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3 Buckley *In lines of dazzling light*, 1999.
8.1) opening section played on alto saxophone in a version I prepared for this thesis

(Audio 8.01):

(Audio 8.01: Buckley, Arabesque, opening)

Having decide to prepare Arabesque on soprano saxophone I undertook some
deliberate practice of the piece. The following audio is from my first rehearsal on
soprano saxophone and is of the same musical selection (Ex. 8.1) above (Audio
8.02):

(Audio 8.02: Buckley, Arabesque, opening rehearsed slowly)

I can hear the inherent clumsiness in this playing and as I vocalised later in this
recording, there were a variety of hurdles to be overcome during this preparation
process. Firstly, I had embodied Arabesque through my own physical relationship
with the alto saxophone. Every aspect, including air stream, wrist movements,
shoulder height, finger weight and pitch had all been part of the embodied cognition
of Arabesque on the alto saxophone and now appeared to lie outside the realm of
conscious accessibility. None of the tacit elements automatically transferred to the
soprano saxophone, and this came as a surprise. What proved most problematic for
me was the difference in pitch (a major 5th). This effectively erected a barrier
between my cognitive and physical relationship with the music. One positive aspect
of this barrier was the realisation of needing to create a new physical and aural
relationship with Arabesque, and from a research standpoint this proved extremely
fruitful in terms of knowledge production. Over a period of six weeks spent in
deliberate practice I realised that I was not ‘adapting’ Arabesque but reimagining it.
This paradigm shift suggested the possibility that certain aspects of Arabesque could be more effective on soprano saxophone. For instance, during rehearsal I decided to play the opening section as fast as possible to see if I could get to my regular performance tempo. What happened was unexpected, as the tempo I achieved went significantly beyond any I’d managed on the alto, and the soprano saxophone seemed to be clearer and brighter sounding, partly because of its higher pitch but more importantly because of its particular timbral qualities (Audio 8.03):

(Audio 8.03: Buckley, Arabesque, soprano fast)

A new performance approach to Arabesque seemed to lie not in the uniqueness of the soprano saxophone, but in the differences between the alto and soprano saxophones. I decided to use these different characteristics as a way of reimagining the work. In order for Arabesque to be successful in performance it must sound as if the performer is playing at the limit of their abilities. This visceral excitement is not something for the rehearsal room, Arabesque being a work which demands rigid deliberate practice, which is a necessity in the work’s preparation, as the technical challenges in Arabesque are quite uneven in their demands and must be stripped down to their basics. For instance, the first group of eight demisemiquavers is technically easier than the third group of eight (Ex. 8.2):

Example 8.2: Buckley, Arabesque, page 3, system 1
This unevenness of technical difficulty is an omnipresent feature of *Arabesque* and can only be overcome through methodical deliberate practise. The gradual embodied cognition of *Arabesque* in a rehearsal setting is a vital process in the preparation for performance and there is an enormous amount of artistic knowledge to be gained through examining this process. For instance, looking at example 8.2 (above), the saxophonist may learn these notes by practicing with a metronome and gradually increasing speed. This is a correct approach but it must be also considered that the *ff* dynamic should be a later addition so as to keep stress out of the hands and wrists during the learning phase.

Also, there are performance considerations here which must be fully incorporated into rehearsal practice. For example, the beginning of this piece is the musical equivalent of a sprinter preparing to burst from the starting blocks. In performance, the added pressure of an expectant audience makes this opening section of *Arabesque* even more prone to collapse. Over the years I have devised a technique which I use to launch *Arabesque* in performance. I put the saxophone mouthpiece into my mouth and form the appropriate embouchure, I open the D key so that all I have to do is exhale to begin the piece. As I inhale, I count to five slowly in my mind and on each count I imagine playing the first eight demisemiquavers of *Arabesque* repeatedly at my chosen tempo, this mental practise then links to a physical manifestation as I begin to play. I find this psychological approach effective in performance as it helps me to focus by blocking out awareness of my surroundings for a few seconds. This approach also adds a lot more theatricality to the performance.
The first three pages of *Arabesque* constitute a tremendous outburst of musical energy and consist entirely of demisemiquavers.

As I stated earlier in Chapter 2, my first acquaintance with *Arabesque* was through John’s handwritten score. Below are systems 6-9 of the opening page of that manuscript (Ex. 8.3):

Example 8.3: Buckley, *Arabesque*, manuscript, page 3, systems 6-9

In my initial learning phase, I mis-read the demisemiquavers grouped in threes (above) as triplets and therefore imagined them to be played faster than notated. This reading error became an ingrained part of my interpretation and upon realising this and mentioning it to Buckley, he remarked that he didn’t mind and actually enjoyed the increase in energy, so although my interpretation of this section cannot be seen as an accurate reading of the score, it can be seen as an example of my deep involvement in the performance development of *Arabesque*. The following audio example taken from a rehearsal session on soprano saxophone, demonstrates this
triplet demisemiquaver effect as illustrated in the manuscript (Ex. 8.3) above (Audio 8.04):

(Audio 8.04: Buckley, Arabesque, soprano – triplets)

Buckley allows his performers a large measure of interpretative freedom, which is a reflection of his innate musical trust of those with whom he chooses to collaborate. As I mentioned in Chapter 2 (above), Buckley inserted an excerpt from his 1989 solo piano work, *Three Lullabies for Deirdre* into *Arabesque*. His reasoning for doing this was because I loved playing these works on piano. Below is the opening section of the first movement of *Three Lullabies for Deirdre* (Ex. 8.4):

For context, here is a recording of me playing this (Ex. 8.4) on the piano (Audio 8.05):

(Audio 8.05: Buckley, Lullaby No. 1, Floating Gently, from, Three Lullabies for Deirdre, bars 1-10)

The Lullaby is quoted within what I consider the most technically difficult section of Arabesque, as shown in the example below (Ex. 8.5), which shows the repetitive patterns beginning with the last eight demisemiquavers of page 5, system 5.

Example 8.5: Buckley, Arabesque, page 5, system 5 - page 6, system 1

Here is how this section (Ex. 8.5) sounds; first on alto saxophone (Audio 8.06):

(Audio 8.06: Buckley, Arabesque, page 5, system 5 - page 6, system 1)

And now the same passage (Ex. 8.5) on the soprano saxophone (Audio 8.07):
After six weeks of deliberate practice, the soprano saxophone version is now at the same technical level as the alto saxophone version. In fact, because of the soprano’s lower key tension, it is possible to perform the fast passages of *Arabesque* at a faster tempo. Part of the embodied process involved mental rehearsal at soprano saxophone pitch as a way of making my inner ear accept the music. I recorded all of my rehearsal sessions in preparation for the 14 June 2019 recital at the RIAM. Included in these recordings is my self-talk, which I use as a method of metacognition. Below is some of the self-talk from my first practice session of *Arabesque* on soprano saxophone:

This is the first rehearsal of John Buckley's *Arabesque* for alto saxophone in its adaptation for soprano saxophone. Today is the 7th of May 2019 … One kind of half thought is that it might be nice to remove it from the realms of the voicing of alto saxophone which can be a little aggressive … As I’m playing this now, I’m discovering that the alto saxophone body positions are not working. That’s extraordinary … It feels absolutely alien … Because of the weight of the keys being so different to the alto saxophone keys it's absolutely messing with my embodied alto saxophone version.⁴

As this first rehearsal progressed I started to reimagine rather than merely transfer. In my first run-through of the section above (Ex 8.5), I received a pleasant surprise as can be heard in this audio (Audio 8.08):

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⁴ These are verbatim excerpts from my first rehearsal session on soprano saxophone of *Arabesque* on 7 May 2019.
As can be heard in the audio above, I am slightly taken aback at the aptness of this section on soprano saxophone, and I purposely included my spoken reaction in the audio excerpt.\(^5\) Sometimes notational styles can make music more difficult to cognitise. For instance, the repetitive demisemiquaver patterns (Ex 8.5) above, can be rewritten for metronomic practice, and by using music notation software those passage can be made easier to learn. My own method of learning a difficult passage is to remove it from its context and re-write it in a way I find easier to read, using a software notation such as *Sibelius* or *Finale* (Ex. 8.6):

Example 8.6: Buckley, *Arabesque*, page 5, systems 5-8, notated using *Sibelius* software

The isolation of problematic passages and the simplification of their notation speeds up the process of achieving embodied cognition. It is through the repetition of the above passage (Ex. 8.6) and other problem areas that the actions of our hands and

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\(^5\) My spoken reaction was as follows: ‘That section seems different but easier, maybe easier than on the alto saxophone’.
breath links the music to our subconscious processes of embodiment. Here is an audio example of the above section (Ex. 8.6) as it should be practiced (Audio 8.09):

(Audio 8.09: Buckley, *Arabesque*, page 5, systems 5-8, deliberate practice session)

The entire opening section of *Arabesque* is played legato with the exception of page 5, system 1. The staccato interruption of the elaborately ornamented melodic line is very effective in its abruptness (Ex. 8.7):

Example 8.7: Buckley, *Arabesque*, page 5, system 1

The following audio is of the entire first section (page 3-6) of *Arabesque*, from rehearsal recordings, first on alto saxophone (Audio 8.10):

(Audio 8.10: Buckley, *Arabesque*, pages 3 through 6, alto)

And now the same section (page 3-6) on soprano saxophone (Audio 8.11):

(Audio 8.11: Buckley, *Arabesque*, pages 3 through 6, soprano)

Comparing these two versions of the same notated music played on different saxophones is illuminating in a variety of ways. Firstly, it is possible for me to play
this section faster on soprano saxophone because of the instrument’s lighter key tension. Secondly, because of the smaller body size of the soprano saxophone, breathing is easier to control. From an entirely subjective standpoint, I feel the soprano has a screeching, almost keening aspect to its sound while the alto inhabits a more nuanced timbral domain. The main piece of artistic knowledge I gleaned from reimagining *Arabesque* for soprano saxophone is that although the realisation of the music through a new instrument presents entirely new challenges both physically and psychologically, the techniques of embodied cognition through deliberate practice remain constant. Though Buckley speaks of *Arabesque* as having extremely fast and vigorous opening and closing sections with a slower and more lyrical central section this is not quite true. The central highly ornamented *meno mosso* section contains within it a re-emergence of the tempo, figurations and energy of the opening section (Ex. 8.8):

Example 8.8: Buckley, *Arabesque*, page 6, system 6 - page 7, system 1
This (Ex. 8.8) is quite performatively challenging as the sudden energy outburst quickly retreats back into the more sedate musical landscape of the central section. Here is the above (Ex. 8.8) played in rehearsal on the alto saxophone during a deliberate practice session (audio 8.12):

/audio 8.12: Buckley, Arabesque, page 6, system 6 - page 7, system 1, practice session

And here it is played in rehearsal at performance tempo (audio 8.13):

/audio 8.13: Buckley, Arabesque, page 6, system 6 - page 7, system 1, fast

And finally, we can compare how it (Ex. 8.8) sounds on the soprano saxophone, also from a rehearsal recording (Audio 8.14):

/audio 8.14: Buckley, Arabesque, page 6, system 6 – page 7, system 1, fast on soprano

On page 7, system 4, there is a pp section which from a playing perspective is one of my favourite parts of Arabesque. This is the first of only two occurrences of a pp notated dynamic in the entire score and as such it needs to stand out as a dynamic event (Ex. 8.9):

Example 8.9: Buckley, Arabesque, page 7, extract from systems 4 through 6
When I am playing this section (Ex. 8.9), I find that reducing the \textit{pp} dynamic down to something closer to inaudibility is an effective performative approach, as it invites the audience deeper into the performance as they must make an effort to hear the sound, and also it takes the listener inside the saxophone, as at this reduced volume the action of the saxophone’s mechanism and the performer’s exhalation of breath becomes audible and present as a component of performance (Audio 8.15):

(Audio 8.15: Buckley, \textit{Arabesque}, page 7, systems 4-6, alto)

I know from my close collaborations with Buckley over the years that as a composer he feels an enormous sense of compassion and respect towards performers and that approaching this central section of \textit{Arabesque} entails having an awareness of the composer’s proclivity towards trusting his performers.

The third and final section of \textit{Arabesque} is marked by a return to the figurations and musical concerns of the first section. Page 10, systems 5 and 6 contain the only occurrence of accent marks in the entire score, and much in the same way as the minimal appearance of staccato markings, these accent markings must make their presence felt as an aural event. In this case, they should be played as percussively as possible, almost in the fashion of a ‘Bartók pizzicato’ (Ex. 8.10):
There is an omission of articulation markings in the example above (Ex. 8.10). From working with composer I know that the articulations should be as notated below (Ex. 8.11):

Although not notated in the score, from an interpretative standpoint I always insert a slight ritardando in the ascending passage of system 8 on page 10, before performing an accelerando with accents from the high F-sharp to the final D-sharp. I find this adds an effective dramatic surge to the final gestures of Arabesque. My interpretation, when notated looks like this (Ex 8.12):
Although it is a virtuoso work *Arabesque* does not count romantic tempestuousness as part of its musical character. It has a much more modernist take on virtuosity, as can be heard in this live world premiere performance of the soprano saxophone version, given on 14 June 2019 at the RIAM (Audio 8.16):

(Audio 8.16: Buckley, *Arabesque*, live recording, 14 June 2019, at the RIAM, Kenneth Edge – soprano saxophone)

John Buckley’s *Arabesque* is, from a technical standpoint, one of the most difficult saxophone works that I’ve encountered. Its performative demands have come to define my embodied relationship with the alto saxophone, and as I explain above, my decision to prepare a performance of *Arabesque* on soprano saxophone was reached through a slow and complex thought process. I have a very different musical and physical relationship with the soprano saxophone than I do with alto, viewing the two instruments not as different sized members of the same family, but as autonomous musical entities. As documented above, I am pleased with my realisation of *Arabesque* on soprano saxophone and I am also surprised by the stumbling blocks encountered along the way. A thought that was at the back of my
mind throughout this research process, but which is not a part of this current thesis, is the notion of aging and its possible effects on performance ability. It dawned on me that my initial learning phase of *Arabesque* took place in 1990 and here I am twenty-nine years later presuming that the only difference in performing *Arabesque* is the different instrumentation. This is worthy of further research but is not central to this thesis.

In Chapter 8, the audio documentation of the learning process will be of value for future performers of *Arabesque*, and the recording of the world premiere live performance will be valuable as an artefact for researchers of this repertoire and this important composer.
Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin’s works for saxophone require a centrality of the physical performing body, a body which as Catherine Laws states:

is modified through years of practice, through discipline in relation to the instrument, through the nature of one’s training, by other (non-musical) embodied experience, by social and cultural experience, and by the specific demands of repertoire.²

A more general discussion of Ó Súilleabháin’s music was undertaken earlier in Chapter 2, while this chapter deals specifically with the interpretation of two works, Templum and The Brook of Donode.

Coessens writes that the development of embodied, intuitive know-how comes about through an integration of the ‘sensorimotor, intellectual and embodied capacities towards expert artistic skill in a specific domain.’³ If a performer is fortunate enough to work with a work’s composer, certain other elements, such as collaborative access and unspoken musical understandings also contribute to the development of embodied intuition.

¹ The soprano saxophone parts throughout this chapter are notated at concert pitch, unless otherwise indicated. The audio files for this chapter are included on the accompanying CD and are also accessible for download at this web address: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9z304yqaqww7g4r7/AABvpWwJnmUph476FrEcwoB4a?dl=0
**Templum**

The opening two bars of *Templum* consist of a sustained E-minor chord which crescendos for eight beats (Ex. 9.1):

Example 9.1: Ó Súilleabháin, *Templum*, bars 1-6

The embodiment issues of these opening bars were discussed in Chapter 2, but what is difficult here is the fact the saxophone’s first note is written an octave higher than the highest note in the sustained string chord, making the accurate pitching of this exposed note quite treacherous (Ex. 9.2):

Example 9.2: Ó Súilleabháin, *Templum*, bars 1-6
In the attached audio excerpt it is clear how exposed the saxophonist is in the opening bars of *Templum*. This audio is taken from a recorded version for soprano saxophone, strings and chamber choir⁴ (Audio 9.01):

(Audio 9.01: Ó Súilleabháin, *Templum*, bars 1-6)

In all of Ó Súilleabháin’s saxophone writing, improvised ornamentation is presumed, as the following audio example (below) of the same excerpt attests. This is from a live concert at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast on 17 March 2012 with the Ulster Orchestra conducted by Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin⁵ (Audio 9.02):

(Audio 9.02: Ó Súilleabháin, *Templum*, live on BBC, bars 1-6)

As I related in Chapter 2, Ó Súilleabháin told me that the melodic line for *Templum* arose from a series of improvisations on the tin whistle. This is a fascinating insight into interpreting *Templum* and a crucial step towards achieving an embodied cognition of the work. For example, here is a section of the melodic line written at concert pitch (Ex. 9.3):

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⁴ Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, *Templum*, Kenneth Edge (soprano saxophone), Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin (conductor), Irish Chamber Orchestra, National Chamber Choir of Ireland, CD, Virgin Records Ltd. CDVE955, 2001.

⁵ Taken from a live broadcast on BBC Radio Ulster, Saturday March 17th, 2012.
As I play the tin whistle, I am aware by looking at the above excerpt that this melodic line is perfectly suited to how the body interfaces with a tin whistle. Most telling in this melody is the fact that it reaches its dynamic peak in bar 19 with a C-natural minim. This act of sliding up to a C-natural on instruments such as whistles and pipes which generally play non-chromatically in the key of D-major, is a standard expressive device in Irish ‘slow air’ performance. In the following audio example I play the above excerpt (Ex. 9.3) on a D Whistle, in the same manner as I imagine Ó Súilleabháin improvising it (Audio 9.03):

(Audio 9.03: Ó Súilleabháin, Templum, bars 7-22, played on tin whistle)

From the above audio example (9.03), we clearly hear the roots of the creation of the saxophone melody and how perfectly it is moulded to the expressive nature of the traditional Irish wind instrument. The soprano saxophone’s fingering system is virtually identical to that of the tin whistle, but with the inclusion of chromatic keys, however the written version of Templum must be transposed up a tone, which, in
terms of fingering, removes many of the intuitive traditional ornamentation possibilities. Alternative techniques of ornamentation must be employed, not to imitate the naturalness of the tin whistle, but to create a new aural awareness, allowing the saxophone to sound natural in this setting. (Audio 9.04):

![Audio 9.04: Ó Súilleabháin, Templum, bars 7-22, sax and orchestra]

The fact that the saxophone is a transposing instrument was something I never discussed with Ó Súilleabháin, he always assumed I would be able to match what was in his head.

Bars 38-48 constitute a coda of sorts, as the saxophone starts a retreat back to final silence. From bar 40 the melody becomes chant-like in its aural contextualisation. (Ex. 9.4):

Example 9.4: Ó Súilleabháin, Templum, bars 38-48

![Example 9.4: Ó Súilleabháin, Templum, bars 38-48]

Below is an audio of these final phrases. Although tempo changes are not notated, it is clear that these final ten bars should sound as though they reside outside of any temporal consideration (Audio 9.05):

![Audio 9.05: Ó Súilleabháin, Templum, bars 38-48, sax and orchestra]
This retreat into silence forms part of the meditative aspect of Ó Súilleabháin’s *Templum*, which was originally composed as the ‘opening meditation music’ of his 1994 large-scale composition *Missa Gadelica*.\(^6\)

**The Brook of Donode**

Ó Súilleabháin’s work *The Brook of Donode* was commissioned by Mairéad Mason as a birthday gift to her husband Maurice Mason. *The Brook of Donode* is scored for soprano saxophone and concert harp and received its world premiere at a private event in the Mason’s home in Ballymore-Eustace, Kildare on the 17\(^{th}\) January 2014. The performers were me (soprano saxophone) and Geraldine Ó Doherty (concert harp). The score has the poem *St Kevin and the Blackbird* by Seamus Heaney prefacing it, and the above premiere performance was preceded by a recitation of Heaney’s poem by Ó Súilleabháin.

Before the premiere of the piece, Ó Súilleabháin wrote to me:

> Regarding mood, that should be easily evident from the poem attached to the score. St Kevin has “forgotten the river's name”, and this music thus exists in his head - as the poem asks: “Is there distance in his head?” In a way the music title gives us the name of the river - Donode, which runs alongside the house of the person for whom the music has been commissioned - Maurice Mason. He likes to walk the brook and we might imagine him listening to this on his i pod [sic] as he does so. The harp recurring motif is surely the water's onward tranquil movement. The sax is commenting on the surround of nature - the underwater life, the wood, trees, clouds, wildflowers, perhaps the occasional wildlife.\(^7\)

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\(^6\) *Missa Gadelica* was commissioned by the Irish Christian Brothers and first performed in Westland Row Church, Dublin, in 1994.

\(^7\) Personal communication, 6 January 2014.
Ó Súilleabháin and I discussed performing the work in a version for saxophone and piano, and as the harp plays a supportive accompanying role throughout we imagined this would be easily transferable to the piano. Sadly, we never got the opportunity to realise that aim. So as a practice element of this thesis, I am presenting *The Brook of Donode* as a work for soprano saxophone with either concert harp or piano accompaniment. (I have arranged a new piano part). The world premiere performance of *The Brook of Donode* in its version for soprano saxophone and piano was given by me (saxophone) and Dearbhla Brosnan (piano) at a recital at the RIAM on 29 May 2019. The recordings of the premieres of both versions are included in this chapter.

When learning a new piece of music, if appropriate I use software as a learning aid. In the case of *The Brook of Donode*, I wanted to have a strong internal audio realisation of the harp part before the first rehearsal. Using the music recording DAW Pro Tools, I created a digital version of the harp part. The tempo of *The Brook of Donode* remains constant throughout at minim = 50, aside from a *ritardando* in the final section, so it is quite suitable as a track to play along to (Ex. 9.5):

Example 9.5: Ó Súilleabháin, *The Brook of Donode*, bars 1-3
The harp part is almost entirely made up of repetitions of these rhythmic figurations (above), which Ó Súilleabháin refers to as recurring motifs. In the first section, the saxophone plays very long notes over the moving harp part. Ó Súilleabháin gives the saxophone player the freedom to improvise ornamentation and timbral nuances, (see Ex.9.6 below):

Example 9.6: Ó Súilleabháin, *The Brook of Donode*, saxophone score, bars 1-20

Here is an audio of the above section with the sampled harp sound (Audio 9.06):

(Audio 9.06: Ó Súilleabháin, *The Brook of Donode*, bars 1-20)

This section must be played using a small but highly pressurised airstream. In terms of intonation, the final minims in bars 12, 13 and 16 have the saxophone and harp playing the same notes. If these particular tones are perfectly in tune with each other, a wonderful acoustic resonance is produced. The first of seven key changes occurs at bar 37 (rehearsal mark A) and the saxophone part starts to gain some forward momentum (Ex. 9.7):
Although bar 37 has a legato marking, the repeating notes must be articulated with the lightest of tonguing (Audio 9.07):

(Audio 9.07: Ó Súilleabháin, The Brook of Donode, bars 37-48)

In bar 63, the soprano saxophone appropriates the harp quaver figuration, with the harp answering canonically on the fifth beat of each bar (Ex. 9.8):
This creates a pleasing aural effect as demonstrated in this audio example take from the saxophone and piano live performance, with Dearbhla Brosnan on piano (Audio 9.08):

(Video 9.08: Ó Súilleabháin, The Brook of Donode, bars 63-68)

There is a ritardando stretching from bar 85 to bar 94 in the score, but there is no tempo indication from bar 94 to the end of the piece. When asked about this at the rehearsal prior to the work’s premiere, Ó Súilleabháin told myself and harpist Geraldine O’Doherty that the tempo here must be very free and reactive to the feeling of the moment, (see Ex. 9.9):
When I performed *The Brook of Donode* for the first time I found myself inserting a *diminuendo* alongside the *ritardando* (Ex. 9.9 above). Ó Súilleabháin commented that this seemed to work as it gave the saxophone line at bar 94 a slightly more declarative sense of purpose. Also, from a saxophonist’s perspective, the repeating C-sharps from bar 87 to bar 93 should be played sub-tone so as to meld into the overtones of the accompanying chords.

To illustrate this, the audio recording of bars 81-101 is provided (audio 9.09):


As part of my doctoral research, I undertook the process of preparing *The Brook of Donode* as a work for soprano saxophone and piano. Through recordings we can revisit live performances and acquire tremendous amounts of knowledge from them. This falls outside the scope of this thesis, but nonetheless, I present here a recording
of the world premiere performance of Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin’s *The Brook of Donode* in a version for soprano saxophone and piano, (including my recitation of Seamus Heaney’s poem *St. Kevin and the Blackbird*) performed by me (soprano saxophone) and Dearbhla Brosnan (piano) in the Katherine Brennan Hall of the RIAM on 29 May 2019 (Audio 9.10):

(Audio 9.10: Ó Súilleabháin, *The Brook of Donode*, Kenneth Edge - soprano sax and Dearbhla Brosnan - piano)

I also include (audio 9.11 below) the world premiere performance of *The Brook of Donode*, in its original version, at a private event in Ballymore-Eustace, Kildare on 17 January 2014. The performers are me (soprano saxophone) and Geraldine Ó Doherty (concert harp), preceded by a recitation of Heaney’s poem by Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin (Audio 9.11):


The live recordings of *The Brook of Donode* presented in this chapter capture the only times I have performed music by Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin without him playing the piano or conducting me. Ó Súilleabháin and I shared a closeness, both professionally and personally, which in one sense puts me in a unique position to discuss his works for saxophone, but can also be seen as limiting my objectivity. For instance, it is possible that Ó Súilleabháin might have left certain aspects of a score (such as ornamentation) unnotated, as he knew and trusted that I would do as he wanted. Aside from notational issues, the audio recordings of preparation work and
performance in this chapter do represent how Ó Súilleabháin wanted his saxophone music to sound, and of particular research value is the recording of the live world premiere performance of *The Brook of Donode* given by myself and Geraldine Ó Doherty, preceded by Ó Súilleabháin’s recitation of *St. Kevin and the Blackbird*. 
Chapter 10: Bill Whelan: *Riverdance* (excerpt)\(^1\)

I have already discussed some of the issues around performing Bill Whelan’s *Riverdance* (see Chapter 2, above) but I would like now to focus directly on how to prepare the saxophone solo from the final section of the original track, first performed as the interval act of *The Eurovision Song Contest*, held in Dublin in 1994.\(^2\) As I wrote in Chapter 2 above, from an interpreter’s perspective, very few of Whelan’s musical intentions are encoded within the notated score. The musical notation of *Riverdance* acts as a guide and stimulus to performance rather than a definitive text. Most of the musicians in the original *Riverdance* band did not read music and learned the entire score by ear, listening to a midi sequencer playing the melody and moulding the music to their own instruments through their own playing styles and concepts of melodic ornamentation.\(^3\)

As is apparent from the following musical example, only the melody notes and the accompanying chordal harmonies are apparent. The time signature alternates between 6/8, 4/4 and 2/4 (Ex. 10.1):

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1 All musical examples in this chapter are notated at concert pitch. The audio files for this chapter are included on the accompanying CD and are also accessible for download at this web address: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9z304yqaqw7g4r7/AABvpWwJmmUPlb476FrEcwoB4a?dl=0

2 *Riverdance – The Show* has been touring globally for twenty five years and since I performed as its original saxophone player it has provided full-time employment to over twenty other saxophonists from Ireland and around the world.

I have recorded on a midi keyboard the melody and harmonies for this section into the DAW Logic Pro X. Using a midi recording means that this backing can be played at any speed using the DAW’s inbuilt metronome, rendering it invaluable for deliberate practice. Below is an audio example of this fixed media, played at full tempo (Audio 10.01)

(Audio 10.01: Whelan, Riverdance, Section 1, no saxophone)

If we slow the tempo right down to crotchet = 167 bpm it becomes clear how effective this usage of digital technology is in terms of learning and embodying the saxophone part, particularly from the point of view of familiarity with the frequently changing time signatures. Riverdance is performed at exactly the same tempo in every performance, as the music is linked to the tempo of the dance steps of the Irish dance troupe and soloists. An unchanging tempo setting presents a variety of issues
which are reliant on the body for solution, one of which is breath control. Ideally, the entire saxophone opening melody should be played in one breath. When performing Riverdance, the musicians wear in-ear monitors, which is now the norm for live onstage theatrical productions. These monitors are a convenient way of receiving a comfortable sound mix, but they can also cause a tendency in the performer to play louder than they imagine they are playing, the same way a person wearing headsets is unaware of sounding louder than their usual speaking volume. Playing a wind instrument even slightly louder that one imagines one is playing has the effect of extraneous air being exhaled, and greatly increases the difficulty of achieving the above phrase in one breath. The recognition of this problem stems from one’s conscious awareness, while the realisation of the solution resides in the body’s ability to use an exhalation and breath-support level appropriate to the task, i.e. playing the phrase in a single breath at a natural acoustic volume. This means a disassociation of the breathing mechanism from the perceived aural output and an ability to be physically cognizant of one’s playing volume, even when that information is not unavailable acoustically.

Here is a recording of the soprano saxophone part (Ex. 10.1) along with the midi keyboard and metronome and maintaining strict airstream awareness (Audio 10.02):

Audio 10.02: Whelan, Riverdance, section 1 slow, with sax and click track

Usually the section in the recording above is virtually impossible to play in a single breath, even at full tempo of crotchet = 222, but in the recording above I play it comfortably in one breath at the slower tempo of crotchet = 167.
The second section of this piece goes into a straight 12/8 double-jig, as we see in the example below (Ex. 10.2):

Example 10.2: Whelan, Riverdance, bars 23-34

This marks the loudest part of this work, as the entire Irish dance troupe take to the stage. Bars 23-30 repeat and should be played up the octave on this repeat. Here is an under-tempo recording of me practicing the second section with the midi keyboard and click track, I’ve also added a double bass line for some bottom end.

(Audio10.03)

In these audio examples I am using Logic Pro X but any software DAW can fulfil the role of fixed media and advanced metronome. Also, bars and phrases can be looped for repetitive deliberate practice and I find that using software in this way speeds up my ability to absorb and embody new works quickly.
Through deliberate practice methods we eventually arrive at the music’s desired tempo (Audio 10.04)

(Audio 10.04: Whelan, *Riverdance*, complete)

It was a great honour for me to be a part of the original production of *Riverdance*, sharing the stage with a group of truly extraordinary performers. Whelan’s inclusion of the soprano saxophone in the sonic palette of Riverdance is discussed in Chapter 2 above. As this music was written with my saxophone playing in mind, the discussions and audio recordings in this chapter are of significance as research artefacts for researchers and performers alike. Although I have focused solely on Riverdance’s title track, there is other wonderful saxophone music in *Riverdance The Show* and, as Bill Whelan has produced an orchestral version titled *Riverdance: A Symphonic suite*, it would be good for saxophonists if there were a version for saxophone and piano of excerpts from the show. This would take *Riverdance* onto the recital stage worldwide.⁴

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Chapter 11: Benjamin Dwyer: Parallaxis – Exteriorising the Interior

*Parallaxis* was composed in 1997 for me and saxophonist John Hogan, as a duet for soprano and alto saxophones. This chapter discusses the adaptation of *Parallaxis* as a work for solo soprano saxophone and fixed media. The work was not conceived aesthetically as a duet in which the soprano saxophone line is the dominant voice and from a performative perspective *Parallaxis* would be equally viable as a work for live alto saxophonist with fixed media. My decision to put the alto saxophone part on fixed media was arrived at through the practical realisation that it is the alto saxophone begins many of the sections, including the beginning of the piece (Ex. 11.1). This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2 above.

Example 11.1: Dwyer, *Parallaxis*, bars 1-3

[Music notation image]

In the above example, both saxophones are playing the same note and in performance this passage should sound like a continuous note with slight timbral

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1 In this chapter, all of the music examples are taken from the transposed score of *Parallaxis* and sound a major 6th lower than written on alto saxophone and a major 2nd lower than written on soprano saxophone. The audio files for this chapter are included on the accompanying CD and are also accessible for download at this web address: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9z304yqaqw7g4r7/AABvpWwJnmUPh476FrEcwoB4a?dl=0
fluctuations. An illusion of continuity is central to these opening bars. I would recommend from a notational point of view that the players should perform each of these notes fading in from and out to *niente*, as opposed to having a definite beginning and end. Also, Dwyer uses the symbol (*sk*) throughout the score to indicate the use of side keys to elicit timbral or dynamic variation. The first written D in the alto part should have an (*sk*) marking to help the timbral blend with the soprano G.\textsuperscript{2} The methodologies I used in preparing this version of *Parallaxis* are centred around my use of the DAW, *Logic Pro X*. As the preparation of the fixed media involves the recording of an audio track without the need for any digital effects or processing, it is possible to use any of the many available DAWs, such as *Pro Tools*, *Garage Band*, or *Audacity*. Many DAWs are free of charge and one’s choice of music recording software is related more to its compatibility with the hardware being used. Something worth mentioning is that in a live situation a pre-recorded sound can never match the dynamic range and overtone colouration of the live sound. This can be somewhat offset by using a good quality microphone to record the audio.\textsuperscript{3} Also, the recorded fixed media should not have too much in the way of reverb or other processing on the sound, as this could cause a discomfiting clash between the live and recorded sounds, depending on the acoustics of the venue in which the performance is taking place. *Parallaxis* contains many complex time-signatures (5/16, 7/16, 21/8) and I found that using *Logic Pro X* as an advanced metronome was extremely helpful in learning each part separately through the methods of deliberate practice, and in recording the alto saxophone fixed media.

\textsuperscript{2} The side keys to use here cannot be notated definitively, as each saxophone has its own particular intonational tendencies. I would recommend either the C1 or C2 fingering, in combination with whatever extra front key are necessary to find the correct pitch.

\textsuperscript{3} In this chapter’s audio examples I have used an AKG C414 microphone, which is an excellent choice for wind instruments and vocals.
Certain limitations and inflexibilities are unavoidable in this process, such as the previously considered issue of the difficulty of matching the dynamic curve of live and recorded sound. Other issues encountered are the live soloist’s lack of access to the physical gestures of the recorded player, these gestures being such an important component of the communicational interplay of chamber musicians. Also, in a live chamber music situation, players are constantly adjusting their intonation, dynamic nuance and rhythmic parameters to match and blend with each other. This level of interplay is not possible in this version of Parallaxis, so the recorded alto part, which is not alterable in a performance situation must be perfectly in tune and rhythmically exact throughout. Returning to the opening section of Parallaxis (See Ex. 11.2)

Example 11.2: Dwyer, Parallaxis, bars 1-9

The numerical notation in the alto saxophone part (Ex. 11.2) is an instruction to add these fingers to fluctuate timbre and pitch, as illustrated in the following audio
example of the alto saxophone part, recorded using Logic Pro X’s inbuilt click track.

(Audio 11.01):

(Audio 11.01: Dwyer, Parallaxis, alto sax with click, bars 1-7)

Now, removing the click track and adding the soprano saxophone part to the recording we can hear the full effect of the sense of sensory confusion created by Dwyer’s aural ‘parallax’ (Audio 11.02):

(Audio 11.02: Dwyer, Parallaxis, alto and soprano saxes, bars 1-7)

In bar 7 (Ex. 11.2, above) the D minim in the alto saxophone part should be played using the normal front fingering to attain the sforzando impact and then quickly switch to a side key fingering to re-enter the music’s initial soundscape.

Bars 10-16 see the development of more timbral interlocking, dynamic volatility and sensory confusion, as the pitch centre moves to G (concert pitch) in bar 10, A (concert pitch) in bar 11 and B (concert pitch) in bar 13 (Ex. 11.3):
From a performance perspective, the most difficult section of the above excerpt (Ex. 11.3) are bars 11 and 12, as they are hard to tie together rhythmically, because the alto saxophone recorded part consists mostly of long sustained trilling F-sharp notes. All the rhythmic movement is in the live soprano part, so if the live player oscillates in any way tempo-wise, bar 12 and bar 13 will not be simultaneously arrived at (Audio 11.03):

(Audio 11.03: Dwyer, Parallaxis, bars 10-16)

The next section of Parallaxis starts at bar 21 (rehearsal mark B), and although the original metronome mark of crotchet = 60 is retained there is an increase in the sense of horizontal movement. The alto saxophone initialises this movement at bar 26 and the soprano saxophone must immediately lock into the pulse set by the alto.
Achieving this ensemble precision is straightforward in a live duet setting where one of the saxophonists can physically indicate the downbeat through bodily gesture (Ex. 11.4):

Example 11.4: Dwyer, Parallaxis, bars 19-34

As is apparent from the above example, it is difficult to start bar 21 with exact ensemble precision without some sort of visual connection between the two players, as both play a concert B on the first beat of bar 21 after a couple of non-rhythmical preceding bars. A solution to this is for the live soprano saxophone player to tie the written C-sharp across from the end of bar 20 and allow the recorded alto saxophone to set the pulse by having the tiniest pause at the end of bar 22 articulating clearly the start of bar 23. This solves any ensemble issues associated with the fixed media in this transition and would look like this if notated (see Ex. 11.5):
Example 11.5: Dwyer, Parallaxis, bars 19-21, edited by Edge

Performing this section, with fixed media, from rehearsal mark B (see Ex. 11.4) is difficult if one is playing in a reverberant acoustic, as the live soprano saxophonist can easily fall victim to the sensory confusion which is a component part of Parallaxis. (Audio 11.04):

(Audio 11.04: Dwyer, Parallaxis, bars 19-34)

This entire section, which extends from bar 21 to bar 74 is composed of highly intricate interlocking musical gestures within complex time signatures, such as 7/16 and 7/32 (Ex. 11.6):

Example 11.6: Dwyer, Parallaxis, bars 47-61
Logic Pro X proved helpful in rehearsing this section by fulfilling the role of the complex metronome. For example, here is a recording of the alto saxophone fixed media of the above (Ex. 11.6), recorded using Logic Pro X’s click-track (Audio 11.05):

(Audio 11.05: Dwyer, Parallaxis, bars 47-61, alto solo)

It is obvious that using this approach really aids practice as we strive for a perfect realisation of such complex writing. When we add the soprano saxophone to the alto, we can see how these motifs lock together (Audio 11.06):

(Audio 11.06: Dwyer, Parallaxis, bars 47-61, sax duet)

In bar 68, Dwyer introduces the voices of both saxophonists into the music, as we reach the climax of this section (Ex. 11.7):

Example 11.7: Dwyer, Parallaxis, bars 68-75
Bar 74 (above) ends with the soprano saxophone sustaining a B-flat concert (above its normal range) and the alto sustaining the loudest of the saxophone multiphonics. (See Chapter 2, footnote 16). This sustain must happen for quite a while in order that the following silent bar comes as both a relief and a shock. As DAWs do not accommodate pause bars, particularly when a click track is involved, a good working solution is to change the time signature in the DAW of bar 74 to 10/4 so that the end of this bar can be sustained without the bar numbers of the score and DAW software going out of sync. Here is an audio recording of the above music (Ex. 11.7 above), in which we can hear the power of the silent bar and the level of auditory distortion caused by the introduction of the voices (Audio 11.07):

(Audio 11.07: Dwyer, Parallaxis, bars 68-74)

The next section of Parallaxis starts at bar 76 and has a new tempo marking of crotchet = 65. This is a typographic error, as I discovered through my collaborative work with Dwyer; it should read minim = 65, or crotchet = 130 (Ex. 11.8):

Example 11.8: Dwyer, Parallaxis, bars 76-79
Each of these lines (above) ends with a bar of silence, without time signature but with the temporal guide of circa 5 seconds. The above configuration of a bar begun on alto sax and echoed and embellished on soprano, followed by a silence of 5 seconds occurs nine times in succession (until bar 95), but music recording software needs a very definite beats-per minute (bpm) indication, so that bar numbers maintain their integrity and stay linked to the written score. What works here for the construction of the fixed media is to give each of the nine empty bars a time signature of 10/4 which at this bpm provides us with a silence of very slightly under five seconds, as we hear in this recording (Audio 11.08)

(Audio 11.08: Dwyer, *Parallaxis*, bars 76-79)

A difficult performance aspect of the above music example is that the soprano saxophone must start at the exact moment the alto ends, and this difficulty is compounded by the fact that the alto patterns are constantly changing throughout the section from bars 76-95. Bar 94 (rehearsal mark F) seems like a continuation of the previous section but it actually marks the music’s development into what Dwyer describes as ‘kind of primordial, a sound correlating to some extremely remote emotional damage that seeks outlet’⁴ (Ex. 11.9):

⁴ Conversation with the composer.
In speaking of the primordial aspect of the above excerpt (Ex. 11.9), Dwyer is referring to the alto saxophone part, which starts in bar 96 and continues relentlessly until the end of the work, repeating itself thirty-one times. There is an enormously visceral cumulative effect generated by the sonic power and repetition of this sound. Here is an audio recording of bars 92-96 (Audio 11.09):

(Audio 11.09: Dwyer, Parallaxis, bars 92-96)

The soprano saxophone plays complex configurations over the repeating alto saxophone part, while also employing the voice (Ex. 11.10):

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3 See Dwyer’s comments on this section in Chapter 2 (above).
We can hear this in the following audio example (Audio 11.10):

(Audio 11.10: Dwyer, *Parallaxis*, bars 109-110)

The soprano saxophone settles into its own repeating pattern in bar 112, which is notated as repeating ten to fifteen times. In a live duet version, the amount of repetitions of bar 112 can be decided in the moment, but in constructing a fixed media it is necessary to decide the exact number of repetitions of bar 112. In my version I repeat this bar thirteen times, before progressing to the final bar, which is written to be the loudest bar of the entire piece (Ex. 11.11):
Consider the recording of this end section (Audio 11.11):

(Audio 11.11: Dwyer, *Parallaxis*, bars 111-113)

In constructing a fixed media for *Parallaxis*, it is worth considering ways in which we can make the audio technology more useful to us. One way, as we have discussed is to imagine how a DAW can be used as a rehearsal tool, such as an advanced metronome, or as way of becoming aurally familiar with the music we are rehearsing. It is true that there are disadvantages to playing *Parallaxis* with fixed media, such as losing the sense of enjoyment and spontaneity associated with high level chamber music and the added pressure of being at the mercy of elements outside of one’s control, such as having to rely on technology working as it should.
Conversely, there are advantages to the fixed media method of performing *Parallaxis*, the most obvious being that the piece will receive far more performances as a work for solo soprano saxophone with fixed media than as a piece for saxophone duet. Using fixed media is somewhat liberating on another level also, as one can decide which way to record the backing. For instance, a saxophonist may decide to record the saxophone and voice parts separately, or to add some of the soprano sax vocal lines to the fixed media to create a greater homogeneity between recorded and live sound. In my fixed media recording, I added the soprano saxophone’s final bar so as to add power to the live soprano saxophone in performance.

I conclude this chapter with an audio recording of the complete score of *Parallaxis* and an audio recording of the completed fixed media in my own version\(^6\) (Audio. 11.12 and 11.13):

![Audio 11.12: Dwyer, Parallaxis, full version for saxophone duet](image)

![Audio 11.13: Dwyer, ParallaxisI, full fixed media recording](image)

Like John Buckley’s *Arabesque*, Benjamin Dwyer’s *Parallaxis* makes extreme physical and technical demands on its performer(s). In preparing *Parallaxis* as a work for live soprano saxophone and alto saxophone recorded to fixed media, I made certain slight editorial tweaks, which I discuss above. Dwyer’s score is quite forensically detailed in its notation, but there is plenty of room within its parameters for the performer(s) to create a huge amount of performative excitement.

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\(^6\) Saxophonists who read this and would like to perform *Parallaxis* are welcome to use the fixed media recording.
This work is particularly close to my heart and in this chapter I’ve created valuable research artefacts, both through my recorded performance preparation and full performances.
Chapter 12: Conor Linehan: *Three Pieces*

Linehan’s *Three Pieces* are unique in this thesis as they were not originally conceived with my saxophone playing in mind. They were composed as works for violin and piano, and the main reason I decided to adapt Linehan’s *Three Pieces* was simply that I found them to be extremely attractive on first hearing. I was preparing repertoire for a recital at RIAM, scheduled for 14 June 2019. This recital would include the world premiere of John Buckley’s *Arabesque*, played on soprano saxophone. I had already decided that the concert should be comprised entirely of works adapted for soprano saxophone and to that end had made arrangements of Poulenc’s ‘Oboe Sonata’, Vivaldi’s ‘Oboe Concerto in C Major R447,’ and Sergei Prokofiev’s ‘Five Melodies’, to go with Buckley’s *Arabesque*. The idea came to me that Linehan’s *Three Pieces* would fit perfectly into this programme and so I adapted them.

**Eleven for a While**

Conor Linehan’s *Eleven for a While* starts with the piano playing a gently undulating left hand quaver pattern in groupings of 4+4+3 (Ex. 12.1):

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1 The saxophone parts throughout this chapter are notated at transposed pitch and sound a Major 2nd lower than written. The audio files for this chapter are included on the accompanying CD and are also accessible for download at this web address: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9z304yqaqw7g4r7/AABvpWwJnmUPh476FrEcwoB4a?dl=0
There are no pedal markings, but it is clear from my performance with the composer at the piano (Audio 12.05, below) that the pedalling is mostly linked to the harmonic changes. The soprano saxophone enters in bar 5 at a piano dynamic, playing a melody sonically situated within the mirroring two notes of the piano’s right hand (Ex. 12.2):
Each dotted crotchet has a tenuto mark, denoting a slight emphasis or ‘lean into’. In bar 22 (rehearsal mark B) the soprano saxophone repeats the opening melody an octave higher and the piano left hand drops an octave while the right hand takes on a
moving quaver configuration situated around the centre of the keyboard register\textsuperscript{2} (Ex. 12.3):

Example 12.3: Linehan, *Eleven for a While*, bars 22-29

\textsuperscript{2} In creating a performing edition of Linehan’s *Three Pieces* I have added rehearsal marks to the text.
In Example 12.3 (above), the soprano saxophone melodic line inhabits a higher register than that of the piano part. This wide register gap can pose some intonational difficulties for the saxophonist.³

These two iterations of the saxophone melody (Ex. 12.2 and 12.3 above) are differentiated by their pitch and the change in register of the piano accompaniment. Another way of differentiating these phrases and adding nuance is by breathing through the phrases in different ways as a means of varying the syntax of the melody. I recommend playing bars 5-20 (Ex. 12.2, above) in one breath or in two groups of eight bars; from rehearsal mark B (bar 22), I recommend taking a breath at the end of each four bars. The example below shows a suggested breathing map for this opening section (Ex 12.4):

³ Each make of soprano saxophone presents the player with a unique set of idiosyncratic intonational tendencies. The soprano saxophone is a notoriously difficult instrument to play in tune and the written C-sharp at bar 22 (Ex. 12.3, above) was the highest available note in Adolph Sax’s 1850 patent of the soprano saxophone. As Stephen Cottrell writes, 'It is conceivable that these high notes, which are in any case often the most difficult part of the soprano instrument to control, were deemed to be insufficiently secure for some technological reason that has been subsequently overcome. See Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 63.
The following audio example (Audio 12.01) demonstrates how this breathing approach gives each iteration of the melody a unique sense of musical character. In this audio example I have recorded the piano part into Logic pro X which I am using as both an advanced metronome and an aural aid:

(Audio 12.01: Linehan, Eleven for a While, bars 1-37)
Bar 38 displays a time signature change to 5/4 and a *subito* (unmarked) *mp* dynamic instruction. Although the music here is written in a more regular time signature, the internal quaver subdivisions are uneven and grouped in the following pattern, 4+3+3, which could be more clearly notated as a 10/8 time signature. The time signature returns to 11/8 at bar 58 (Ex. 12.5):

Example 12.5: Linehan, *Eleven for a While*, bars 38-65

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4 Bars 34-37 are marked *crescendo* from *mf*. Though unmarked in the score, it is clear that this crescendo must attain at least a *forte* intensity, which necessitates the *mp* at bar 58 to be delivered in a *subito* manner.
This central section of *Eleven for a While* (Ex. 12.5) presents a challenge in terms of breath control. This issue is not just tied to the fact that it is very difficult to take a breath in such a continuously moving pattern without breaking the melodic line, but is also bound up in the continuous increase in dynamic and intensity level between bar 38 and bar 50, which then reduces to a *subito mf* in bar 58. In the original version, bars 50 through 57 of the violin part are notated an octave higher than in the saxophone version above (Ex. 12.5). This high violin writing indicates the level of intensity Linehan had in mind for this section. The main issue affecting breathing here is the metronome mark which remains stable throughout at minim = 80. If this tempo is increased, breath control becomes easier. In rehearsal with Linehan, we first played this piece at its notated metronome mark. In listening to the audio file below, it is clear that Conor felt the tempo a bit slow and suggested an increase to minim = c.90 (Audio 12.02):

![Audio 12.02: Linehan, Eleven for a While, rehearsal](audio/sound.jpg)

With a faster tempo agreed upon, I was able to solidify my breathing decisions for *Eleven for a While*, as can be heard in this audio in which I rehearse breathing points between bar 38 and bar 65 (Audio. 12.03):

![Audio 12.03: Linehan, Eleven for a While, bars 38-65, rehearsal](audio/sound.jpg)

*Eleven for a While* returns to its opening theme at bar 66, marked *mf* with a continuous diminuendo to the end of the piece, returning in its final six bars to the opening piano figurations (Ex. 12.6):
Below (Audio 12.04) is a complete recording of *Eleven for a While*, with me playing the soprano saxophone and piano parts, both recorded into *Logic Pro X*:

![Audio 12.04: Linehan, Eleven for a While, complete, with Logic Pro X](image)

Below is a live recording of the world premiere performance of *Eleven for a While* in its version for soprano saxophone and piano. This recording is from a recital given at the RIAM on 14 June 2019, with me on soprano saxophone and Conor Linehan on piano:

![Audio 12.05: Linehan, Eleven for a While, world premiere performance of sax version](image)
Trip to Bray!

Trip to Bray! starts with the saxophone and piano playing a fast unison pattern (Ex. 12.6):

Example 12.6: Linehan, *Trip to Bray!* bars 1-13

From a technical point of view there is nothing too taxing in this opening section.

One section which needs time spent in deliberate practice are bars 34-41 (below),
particularly bar 41 where it is essential that the saxophonist’s left wrist remains as relaxed as possible (Ex.12.7):

Example 12.7: Linehan, *Trip to Bray!* bars 34-47

The following audio (Audio 12.06) is a recording of my first sight-read through bars 1-41, and is instructive in that some technical issues are immediately apparent as are their solutions through changes of articulation:

(Audio 12.06: Linehan *Trip to Bray!* sight-read of bars 1-41)

An important aspect of this opening section (Ex. 12.6 above) is the need for the saxophone and piano to lock together rhythmically and to be perfectly synchronised in re-entry after each of the pause bars (Audio 12.07):

(Audio 12.07: Linehan, *Trip to Bray!* bars 1-13)

*Trip to Bray!* is in three sections. A fast opening section (Ex. 12.6, above), a very slow and serene central section, and finally a fast section, which is almost an exact duplicate of the opening section. The slow central section begins in bar 63 (Ex.12.8):
This slow section contains the only modification I felt was necessary to make to the violin original, which is the octave transposition of the written A on beat three of bar 76 which was an octave higher in the violin part. This section is not in a strict metre and as the saxophone and piano parts move together in block harmonies, a certain amount of gestural movement on the part of the saxophonist is necessary to lead and conduct this section. This slow section is difficult to control on the soprano saxophone, particularly from bar 73 to bar 86 where the melody and piano lines ascend to the higher octave (Ex.12.9):
This section (Ex.12.9) retains a *pp* dynamic yet it extends above the written range of the soprano saxophone. On the violin, it is idiosyncratic of the instrument that the high notes can represent an ethereal aural domain. On soprano saxophone in this register we must use an enormous level of air support, coupled with an absolutely still embouchure so that the reed may vibrate without obstruction. In my initial reading of bars 63-86, the difficulties inherent in this passage are clearly audible (Audio 12.08):

(Audio 12.08: Linehan, *Trip to Bray!* read-through of bars 63-86)

In the above section (Ex.12.8) the saxophone part is moving in block chords with the piano, and as I discovered, a major part of embodying this section was linked to having an aural awareness of the piano part. The harmonic sequences, once learned, are the key to delivering this difficult saxophone line, as the instrumentalist learns to instinctively know where each note should fit into the overall harmonic scheme.
Rehearsing with the piano accompaniment recorded into Logic pro X was of tremendous benefit. We can hear how useful Logic Pro X is as a rehearsal tool now in the below complete recording of Trip to Bray! (Audio. 12.09):

(Audio 12.09: Linehan, Trip to Bray! complete with Logic Pro X)

The world premiere of Linehan’s Three Pieces in their version for saxophone was given at the RIAM on 14 June 2019 and in our final rehearsal for this concert, Linehan suggested that the central section of Trip to Bray! (bars 63-86) should be quieter than pp and that the tempo of this section should be as elastic as possible. The ethereal dynamic and flexibility of tempo is quite different to the above recording (Audio 12.09 above) and illuminates the fact that interpretations are malleable up to the moment of and during a first performance (see Audio example 12.10):

(Audio 12.10: Linehan, Trip to Bray! rehearsal, bars 63-86)

This thesis is concerned with preparatory processes, but it is highly instructive to examine a recording of a premiere performance in conjunction with a documented process of interpretation building. Below is a live recording of the world premiere performance of Trip to Bray! in its version for soprano saxophone and piano. This recording is from a recital given at the RIAM on 14 June 2019, with me on soprano saxophone and Conor Linehan on piano. Aside from slight errors inherent in any live performance, what is fascinating about the following recording of the premiere performance of Trip to Bray! is the amount of in-the-moment interpretative choices made by both performers (Audio. 12.11):

(Audio 12.11: Linehan, Trip to Bray! world premiere performance)
Garret

The third movement of Linehan’s *Three Pieces* posed the greatest challenge in terms of adaptation as a saxophone work. There were a few minor notational issues to be addressed before the adaptation process could proceed. It is instructive to examine the original violin part (Ex. 12.10):

Example 12.10: Linehan, *Garret*, violin score

My first consideration here was written range and whether the soprano saxophone could play the violin part exactly as written. I decided that I would play the melody down an octave from the A on beat two of bar 36 until bar 45. Although this section goes above the written range of the soprano saxophone it is playable at the notated pitches. The deciding factor in this octave transposition was the fact that the final
bars (47-57) are notated as harmonics and as such must be the highest sounding section of *Garret*. As it is not possible to play these final bars as notated I decided to transpose them downwards to a playable range. This determined that the previous section must be transposed down the octave. From these notational choices I could begin a soprano saxophone adaptation (Ex. 12.11):

**Example 12.11: Linehan, *Garret*, soprano sax score, unedited**

I have taken some editorial liberties here. Firstly, I added a metronome marking of crotchet = 56, which I guessed might be the composer’s intention from an examination of the piano score. Linehan then verified that a metronome marking of
crotchet = 60 would be appropriate for this piece. I decided to retain the Allegretto marking as although this would not usually be associated with such a low tempo indication I felt uncertain of its intention. Linehan clarified this for me as follows: ‘the marking of Allegretto reflects more on my desire for the music not to drag than anything else. Maybe Andante might have been more appropriate, but it is such an ambivalent term that I hesitate to use it.’

I recorded the piano part into Logic X Pro to familiarise myself with the harmonic and textural elements of Garret. A feature of Garret is its variety of subdivisions of the crotchet beat beginning with groups of quintuplet semiquavers (Ex. 12.12):

Example 12.12: Linehan, Garret, bars 1-8

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5 Rehearsal conversation with the composer, 13 June 2019.
6 Personal communication, 19 August 2020.
The subdivisions increase in complexity in bar 21 with the piano playing sextuplet semiquavers in the left hand against quintuplet semiquavers in the right (Ex. 12.13):

Example 12.13: Linehan, *Garret*, piano score, bars 21-22

These subdivisions reach their most complex in bar 30 where the crotchet is now divided into five, six, seven and eight subdivisions (Ex. 12.14):

Example 12.14: Linehan, *Garret*, bars 29-31

Even without having a dynamic schema, *Logic Pro X* proved helpful as a learning tool because of its absolutely precise way of playing back these complex subdivisions. Below is the score of bars 29-35, where we can see many rhythmic subdivision and the most technically demanding bars for the saxophonist in this movement, which are bars 30, 32 and 35 (Ex. 12.15):
Example 12.15: Linehan, *Garret*, bars 29-35

In the above case, using *Logic Pro X* in rehearsal is beneficial in a variety of ways:

Firstly, we can hear how the complex subdivisions lock into place; and secondly we can isolate the bars we would like to add to our deliberate practice and loop them at
whatever tempo we desire. Here is an audio example of what this rehearsal with

*Logic Pro X* sounds like (Audio 12.12)


Rehearsing with Linehan on piano answered many of my questions about the notation of *Garret*, the result being the following saxophone adaptation (Ex. 12:16):

Example 12.16: Linehan, *Garret*, saxophone score, edited

Some items have gone unnotated, such as bars 37-45; these should be played *molto espressivo* and the demisemiquavers in this same passage should be played shorter or
more clipped than they are notated. From the saxophonist’s point of view, the final section (bars 47-57) should be as ethereal as possible (I have added a marking), with no vibrato, so as to capture the essence if not the pitch of the original violin harmonics. Below is a live recording of the world premiere performance of Garret, for soprano saxophone and piano. This recording is taken from a recital given at the RIAM on 14 June 2019, with me on soprano saxophone and Conor Linehan on piano.

(Audio 12.13: Linehan, Garret, world premiere performance of saxophone version)

Conor Linehan’s Three Pieces are the only works in this thesis not originally conceived for the saxophone. In this chapter I document the process of adapting them for soprano saxophone and I suggest solutions to certain performance issues. In Chapter 2 (above) I discuss the reasoning behind their inclusion in my research. The live recordings of Three Pieces presented in this chapter are important research artefacts and I also include a complete recording of Eleven for a While with a piano backing pre-recorded to the DAW Logic Pro X, as a way of illuminating the difference between this well-thought-out rendition and the live performance with Linehan on piano, in which certain spur-of-the-moment interpretative decisions are taken through the energy chamber music interaction between myself and Linehan.
Chapter 13: Kenneth Edge: *Paganini’s Elbow*

**Prelude - The Devil at My Elbow**

*Paganini’s Elbow* begins with a prelude for solo soprano saxophone, titled *The Devil at My Elbow*. This prelude is played *sempre legato* and is concerned not only with the bravura possibilities encoded into the score’s notation, but also the relationship between the performer’s body and breath, as the notation is ‘animated into life by the breath from the body, the most intimate relationship one can have with a musical instrument.’

Bar 1 is marked *ppp*, but if possible it should be played so that the sound of the performer’s breath and fingerwork is more audible than the notated pitches. The *crescendo* and *accelerando* to bar 13 must be well judged as this entails a very gradual increase in volume and velocity over a period of approximately one minute (Ex. 13.1):

Example 13.1: Edge, *The Devil at My Elbow*, bar 1

\[ \text{sempre legato} \]

\[ \text{ppp} - \text{gradual accel and cresc. to bar 13} \]

1 All the music for saxophone and clarinet in this chapter is notated at transposed pitch and sounds a major 2nd lower than written. The audio files for this chapter are included on the accompanying CD and are also accessible for download at this web address: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9z304yqaqw7g4r7/AABvpWwJnmUPh476FrEcwoB4a?dl=0

2 I borrow this elegant phrase from Christopher Small, (see Chapter 2, footnote 23).
At the **ff** in bar 13, the music must gradually fade back to the sound of the performer’s breath as shown below (Ex. 13.2):

Example 13.2: Edge, *The Devil at My Elbow*, bars 13-25

I use harmonics, symbolised by circles above noteheads in bars 11-12, and these notes must sound as written but be played using the fingering of the same note an octave lower (Ex. 13.3):

Example 13.3: Edge, *The Devil at My Elbow*, bars 11-12
The main technical issues in *The Devil at My Elbow* concern accurate finger work, but I have composed this music idiomatically for the saxophone, so as to sound impressive without exerting undue physical strain on the performer. Learning *The Devil at My Elbow* involves deliberate practice with a metronome until everything feels comfortable under the fingers. In terms of interpretation, I am happy to leave that to the discretion of the individual performer, my one demand is that the performance conveys a sense of increasing entropy and blossoms into a kind of maniacal energy, before retreating back to nothingness as in the recording I made for this thesis below (Audio 13.01):

(Audio 13.01: Edge, *The Devil at My Elbow*, full performance)

**Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick***

The second section of *Paganini’s Elbow* is *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*. This work is a reimagining of *Wait a While* for clarinet and piano, composed in 2015. As I discussed previously in Chapter 2, when composing the original clarinet version, I did so purposely away from any tactile contact with the instrument, as although I have a knowledge of many technical aspects of clarinet playing, I regard the clarinet as my second instrument and I wanted to avoid the subconscious inclusion of my own clarinet-playing idiosyncrasies in the composition. In reimagining *Wait a While* as *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*, I decided to learn *Wait a While* in its clarinet version, so as to gain a physical understanding of the virtuosic elements of the work as they are idiomatically suited to the clarinet, and thus to be able to not just rearrange the work

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3 The bar numberings and rehearsal marks referred to in this section apply to both *Wait a While* and *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*.  

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but to reimagine it as a work for soprano saxophone. In this chapter, I’ve catalogued the process of the embodied cognition of *Wait a While* on the clarinet alongside my reimagining of its core essence as a work for soprano saxophone.

The opening section of *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick* has no expressive markings, (except for the ambiguous term ‘freely’, in bar 20), and consists of piano chords in the tintinnabuli style, coupled with long, plaintive saxophone lines. The emphasis here is very much on timbre, the saxophone’s sound melding into the piano’s decaying chords. This effect cannot be strictly notated in dynamic terms as various pianos have different rates of sound decay. It is imperative that the performers are aware of their differing dynamic instructions and attend acutely to each other’s sounds (Ex. 13.4):

Example 13.4: Edge, *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*, bars 1-18

![Example 13.4: Edge, *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*, bars 1-18](image)

There are some issues in this opening section; for instance, my wish is that the piano part from bars 15 -19 should be played metronomically, without any rubato; otherwise the tempo shift in bar 15 to crotchet = 80, will not be effective (Ex. 13.5):
Also, the saxophone melody in this opening section (Ex. 13.4) should be played in a very still, almost emotionless fashion. The introduction of the saxophone melody in bar 24 is notated at an *mp* dynamic and this phrase should be played without any dynamic fluctuations. Although it is technically difficult to achieve, the high notes should be at the same volume level as the rest of the phrase (Ex. 13.6):

The first section of *Wait a While* (bars 1-62) works well on either soprano saxophone or clarinet, both instruments capable of conveying the plaintive essence I envisaged. We can hear how the two instruments compare in the following audio clips. First consider the clarinet original – see Audio 13.02:
Now contemplate the differences within the saxophone version (Audio 13.03):

The piano part in bars 63-69 is a repeat of bars 15-18 (see Ex. 13.5 above) and must maintain a strict pulse so as to allow the solo instrument an element of freedom (Ex. 13.6a):

Example 13.6(a): Edge, *Wait a While*, bars 63-69, clarinet score

In learning the clarinet original here (see Ex. 13.6a above), I found myself encountering some technical difficulties that needed to be worked on and the audio (below) charts my gradual embodiment of this section on clarinet and provides a good aural example of the efficacy of deliberate practice (Audio 13.04):

(Audio 13.04: Edge, *Wait a While*, bars 63-69, deliberate practice session)
This embodiment of bars 63-69 of the clarinet configuration allowed me to rethink this section for soprano saxophone (Ex. 13.6b):

Example 13.6(b): Edge, *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*, saxophone score, bars 63-69

We can hear this saxophone version in the audio example below (Audio 13.05):

(Audio 13.05: Edge, *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*, bars 63-69, for saxophone)

There is a jazz-inflected element to the section between bars 72 and 173, with its walking bass line in the piano left hand, coupled with accented chords in the right. The placing of accents must be precise here as they most often occur off the beat. It is essential that there be no feeling of the tempo lagging, or else the energy can quickly dissipate (Ex.13.7):
Example 13.7: Edge, *Wait a While*, Bars 92-96

The next audio file documents my learning of bars 72-95 (Ex 13.7a) on clarinet with a view to reimagining this section on the soprano saxophone:

Example 13.7(a): Edge, *Wait a While*, clarinet score, bars 72-95
The efficacy of the deliberate practice of the above (Ex 13.7a) is heard in the following audio (Audio 13.06):

(Audio 13.06: Edge, *Wait a While*, bars 72-95, deliberate practice on clarinet)

Having embodied this section on clarinet it seemed to me that with little change, except some octave transpositions, the above section would be more vibrant on soprano saxophone. This audio recording attests to this realisation as we hear the soprano saxophone playing bars 74-95 (Audio 13.07):

(Audio 13.07: Edge, *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*, bars 74-95, saxophone)

Bars 100-103 of *Wait a While* contain one of the most challenging technical passages for the clarinettist (Ex. 13.8):

Example 13.8: Edge, *Wait a While*, clarinet score, bars 100-103
The following audio documents my practice of these four bars on the clarinet (Audio 13.08):

(Audio 13.08: Edge, Wait a While, bars 100-103)

Having embodied the above phrase on clarinet, it seemed to me that the writing was idiomatically suited to the clarinet, with its screeching top register redolent of its outdoor usage in a Dixieland jazz setting, which is what I visualised for this four-bar outburst. In reimagining these bars for soprano saxophone I decided to use a far wider compass of notes as can be seen below comparing the clarinet and saxophone lines (Ex: 13.9):

Example 13.9: Edge, Wait a While 2 -The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick, Bars 100-103

In the following audio the above soprano saxophone version of bars 100-103 can be heard (Audio 13.09):

(Audio 13.09: Edge, Wait a While - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick, bars 100-103)
The section of *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick* between bars 104 and 173 (Rehearsal marks G to M) retains many of the original clarinet ideas though with some radically re-written sections. One phrase I puzzled over for quite some time was the clarinet part in bars 122-125 of *Wait a While* (Ex. 13.10):

Example 13.10: Edge, *Wait a While*, bars 122-125

Bars 122-125 are particularly challenging and effective at full tempo on either clarinet or saxophone, so I decided to transfer them unaltered to the saxophone.

*Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick* (bars 104-173) now sounds like a work idiomatically suited to soprano saxophone (Audio 13.10):

(Audio 13.10: Edge, *Wait a While - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*, bars 104-173)

The section from bar 190 to bar 211 of *Wait a While* is written idiomatically for clarinet, as it exploits the murmuring characteristics of the lower chalumeau region as counterbalanced by the high register. It was written with a much wider compass in mind than that of the soprano saxophone. The piano right hand part and the clarinet are mostly in unison in this section. Rhythmic precision and buoyancy are vital here.
The cognitive embodiment of this section of the clarinet part proved difficult for me as I found it increasingly difficult to visualise the soprano saxophone being able to adequately deliver my musical intentions for this section. The following is an aural record of my embodiment on clarinet of bars 190-211 (Audio 13.11):

/sources/audio/13.11.mp3

After much deliberation I rewrote this section for soprano saxophone and I feel I have managed to find a way to make it suitable for that instrument by using a wide variety of timbral nuance and articulations (Audio 13.12):

/sources/audio/13.12.mp3

For the final section of *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick* (bars 213-274), I decided not to refer to the clarinet line but, as an experiment, to loop-record myself improvising saxophone to the piano part which I had recorded into *Logic Pro X*. Having done this, I selected various phrases from each improvisation and assembled them as the soprano saxophone melody for the final section. Below is an example of the notated version of the improvised saxophone melody (Ex. 13.11)
Example 13.11: Edge, *Wait a While* 2-*The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*, bars 221-229

Consider the recording of this final section (Audio 13.13):

(Audio 13.13: Edge, *Wait a While* 2-*The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*, bars 213-274)

Through the embodied cognition of *Wait a While* as a work for clarinet and piano, I developed a relationship with the work which I didn’t have through composing it. This liberated me from the concept of creating an arrangement or a transcription for soprano saxophone and piano, and allowed me to reimagine the work as a new, autonomous composition. The complete recording of *Wait a While* 2-*The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick* is available below. Here I play the soprano saxophone line live, against a recorded piano which I recorded using the DAW *Logic Pro X* (Audio 13.14):

(Audio 13.14: Edge, *Wait a While* 2-*The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*)

*Paganini’s Elbow* was composed as an artistic reaction to the research findings of a lecture-recital I gave online on 10 June 2020, titled ‘The Devil Riding Upon a Fiddle Stick: Niccolò Paganini in Great Britain and Ireland 1831-1834’. In order to provide
the fullest possible insight into this chapter’s research, I provide a summary of this lecture-recital in Appendix 4. The lecture-recital on Paganini contained much thought and discussion around the idea of virtuosity. My work *Wait a While* was composed as a blatantly virtuosic piece of woodwind writing. Originally composed for B-flat clarinet and piano, my idea for the lecture-recital was to recast it as a work for soprano saxophone and piano, primarily as a method of investigating my own attitudes towards instrumental virtuosity. The Paganini lecture-recital documents Paganini’s profound physical and mental health issues, but finds no written evidence of any diminishment in his performative powers. As I mentioned in the concluding remarks of Chapter 8, the issue of aging and the possible loss of performative energy and technical fluidity is something that I feel is worthy of future research.

In researching my performative reimagining of my own compositional output, I have become aware that the triumvirate of composer, performer and researcher as one person is a thought-provoking extension of the standard autoethnographic model, as it involves maintaining the essential objectivity of the researcher, alongside the undeniable subjectivity of the composer/performer.
Conclusion

As the epistemic qualities inherent in knowledge gained through artistic research arise through the produced artwork, it is perhaps redundant to attempt a concluding verbalisation of this dissertation’s written and recorded knowledge outcomes. However, the polyvalences of any artwork renders the artist’s awareness and reflections upon its creation valuable as research.

The primary concern of this thesis is an examination through self-reflection of the processes involved in the preparation for performance of saxophone works by John Buckley, Micheál Ó Súilleabháin, Bill Whelan, Benjamin Dwyer, Conor Linehan and Kenneth Edge. The autoethnographical model of the researcher being the research subject is of importance to the field of artistic research, and in the case of this thesis I acted as researcher, performer and composer, creating a triumvirate as a way of exploring from within the multivalences of artistic research. As the works which I research in this thesis were composed for me, there is an added ineffable component, which through self-reflection I have contextualised into a wider knowledge domain.

In Chapters 8 through 13, I examined the embodiment processes of the musical works, incorporating deliberate practice techniques from the scientific fields of expertise in performance. The audio recordings produced as research in Chapters 8 through 13 will hopefully be of cultural significance and artistic benefit to future generations of composers and performers. As Amanda Bayley observes, ‘recordings
are crucial in fulfilling a role comparable with historic performance treatises in terms of their value for future players.1

The historic invisibility of the preparatory process of a performance is something easily rectifiable now through an abundance of affordable technological tools available to the performer-researcher; the recordings produced in these Chapters (8 through 13) are of equal value as research outcomes to the self-reflective written word and through these methodologies of artistic research I have created a first history of the works under discussion.

The compositions chosen for this thesis represent a reimagining of the saxophone as a solo instrument across a wide spectrum of intellectual and stylistic application and although outside the research parameters of this thesis I find that there is scope for further investigation of the world premiere public performances included as audio files in the above chapters.

The ‘work concept’ investigated in Chapter 5 has proved useful in prompting me towards a more intimate understanding of the composers’ intentions. Jonathan Impett’s assertion that ‘taking western masterworks as our sole evidence might be equivalent to understanding architecture only on the basis of the pyramids’, speaks to a specificity of artistic research in music to the western art music canon, an imbalance I have addressed in this thesis by the inclusion of works by Whelan and Ó Súilleabháin, neither of whom can be limited to the ‘category’ of western art music, their musical notations acting as a guide and stimulus to performance rather than as a definitive text.

1 Bayley, ‘Multiple takes’, 217.
Although there is much to be gleaned from the study of ‘expertise in performance’, Anders Ericsson’s contention that deliberate practice over a prolonged period is more relevant than innate talent in achieving mastery is a strongly contested claim.

Elite artistic performance, unlike sporting ‘achievement’, is qualitative rather than quantitative. The German artist Paul Klee elevates ‘innate talent’ from the mundanity of a priori empiricism to the lofty heights of ‘genius’ when he writes:

> We have worked hard: but genius is not hard work, despite the proverb. Genius is not even partly hard work, as might be claimed on the ground that geniuses have worked hard, in spite of their genius. Genius is genius, grace; it is without beginning and end. It is creation. Genius cannot be taught, because it is not a norm but an exception.²

Csíkszentmihalyi’s concepts of the ‘flow’ state could be of enormous benefit to musicians through its propensity to quell stage-fright (see Chapter 7), but as Sarah Sinnamon observes: ‘the paucity of research on flow among musicians as compared with athletes is surprising in view of the fact that music is an activity that commonly is understood to elicit peak performance experiences.’³

Mental rehearsal without any corresponding physical movement is an effective cognitive preparation method for performance and the sports psychology research into functional equivalence and PETTLEP appears to have applications for the field of music performance research. Sarah Sinnamon observes ‘putting it most bluntly it is feasible that music educators could consider cherry-picking and adapting some of the most successful training techniques found in sports settings.’⁴

⁴ Ibid. 21.
Benjamin Dwyer describes music as ‘the inner world made sonic’ and when I asked him of his view on interpreters, he replied: ‘The notion of music without interpreters for me is problematic, as it excludes the participation element, you could say, an ethical element.’\textsuperscript{5} Bill Whelan’s attitude is: ‘I have tried to always regard the players for the most part as collaborators’.\textsuperscript{6} Conor Linehan states: ‘For me, the interpreter brings art to life’; and John Buckley observes that ‘without the performer, the music doesn’t even exist, at least in the full sense of the term.’\textsuperscript{7}

A particular artwork whose essence can be sensed through its relationships between author, text, translation and reader has, in my opinion, never been as beautifully imagined as within the Italian writer Italo Calvino’s (1923-1985) novel \textit{If On a Winter’s Night a Traveller} (1979)\textsuperscript{8}. In this postmodern masterpiece Calvino, confronts the questions of identifying a work of art’s ‘characterizable identity’. In \textit{If On a Winter’s Night a Traveller} both the author and the reader become characters in the book’s narrative. The start of the book sees us (the reader) rushing with barely contained excitement to our local bookshop to purchase the newly published book by Italo Calvino, \textit{If On a Winter’s Night a Traveller}. Upon our return home and having settled ourselves comfortably, we begin to read:

So here you are now, ready to attack the first lines of the first page. You prepare to recognize the unmistakable tone of the author. No. You don’t recognize it at all. But now that you think about it, who ever said this author had an unmistakable tone? On the contrary, he is known as an author who changes greatly from one book to the next. And in these very changes you recognize him as himself.

\textsuperscript{5} Personal communication, 18 August 2020. 
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid. 
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., 19 August 2020. 
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 16 August 2020. 
Similarly in music, we can recognize, or perhaps more accurately, glimpse, the essence of a composer’s intention, not from what is on the page, but through a combination of the notated text and the numerous interpretative choices available to the performer, most of which lie outside the limited notational possibilities of the musical work.
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Appendix 1

Performance scores used in the thesis
The Brook of Donode

Andante Tranquillo

\( \text{mf} \)

\( \text{mf \ sempre} \)

© Eye Music 2014
Sax may ‘ornament’ throughout *ad lib* including timbral variation.
Riverdance (Final Section) for Soprano Saxophone

Soprano Saxophone

Bill Whelan

\[ \text{Repeat back to B and play 8va until D} \]
Trip to Bray!

Conor Linehan

Copyright © Conor Linehan
Soprano Saxophone

Repeat al niente - just air sounds
Paganini's Elbow

2. *Wait a While - The Devil Riding Upon a FiddleStick*  

Kenneth Edge (2020)
Appendix 2

Audio Recordings

Chapters 8 through 13 are accompanied by audio recordings of my rehearsals and performances, denoted by the saxophone icon (above). The following audio files are included on the accompanying CD and are also accessible for download at this web address:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9z304yqaqw7g4r7/AABvpWwJnmUPh476FrEowoB4a?dl=0

Audio 8.01: Buckley, *Arabesque*, opening

Audio 8.02: Buckley, *Arabesque*, opening rehearsed slowly

Audio 8.03: Buckley, *Arabesque*, soprano fast

Audio 8.04: Buckley, *Arabesque*, soprano – triplets

Audio 8.05: Buckley, *Lullaby No. 1, Floating Gently*, from, *Three Lullabies for Deirdre*, bars 1-10

Audio 8.06: Buckley, *Arabesque*, page 5, system 5 - page 6, system 1

Audio 8.07: Buckley, *Arabesque*, page 5, system 5-page 6, system 1, played on soprano

Audio 8.08: Buckley, *Arabesque*, page 5, system 5-page 6, system 1, first run-through

Audio 8.09: Buckley, *Arabesque*, page 5, systems 5-8, deliberate practice session

Audio 8.10: Buckley, *Arabesque*, pages 3 through 6, alto

Audio 8.11: Buckley, *Arabesque*, pages 3 through 6, soprano
Audio 8.12: Buckley, *Arabesque*, page 6 - page 7, system 1, practice session

Audio 8.13: Buckley, *Arabesque*, page 6 - page 7, system 1, fast

Audio 8.14: Buckley, *Arabesque*, page 6 – page 7, system 1, fast on soprano

Audio 8.15: Buckley, *Arabesque*, page 7, systems 4-6, alto

Audio 8.16: Buckley, *Arabesque*, live recording, 14 June 2019, at the RIAM, Kenneth Edge – soprano saxophone

Audio 9.01: Ó Súilleabháin, *Templum*, bars 1-6

Audio 9.02: Ó Súilleabháin, *Templum*, live on BBC, bars 1-6

Audio 9.03: Ó Súilleabháin, *Templum*, bars 7-22, played on tin whistle

Audio 9.04: Ó Súilleabháin, *Templum*, bars 7-22, sax and orchestra

Audio 9.05: Ó Súilleabháin, *Templum*, bars 38-48, sax and orchestra

Audio 9.06: Ó Súilleabháin, *The Brook of Donode*, bars 1-20


Audio 9.08: Ó Súilleabháin, *The Brook of Donode*, bars 63-68

Audio 9.09: Ó Súilleabháin, *The Brook of Donode*, bars 81-101

Audio 9.10: Ó Súilleabháin, *The Brook of Donode*, Kenneth Edge - soprano sax and Dearbhla Brosnan - piano


Audio 10.01: Whelan, *Riverdance*, Section 1, no saxophone

Audio 10.02: Whelan, *Riverdance*, section 1 slow, with sax and click track
Audio 10.03: Whelan, *Riverdance*, section 2 slow, sax and click track

Audio 10.04: Whelan, *Riverdance*, complete

Audio 11.01: Dwyer, *Parallaxis*, alto sax with click, bars 1-7

Audio 11.02: Dwyer, *Parallaxis*, alto and soprano saxes, bars 1-7

Audio 11.03: Dwyer, *Parallaxis*, bars 10-16

Audio 11.04: Dwyer, *Parallaxis*, bars 19-34

Audio 11.05: Dwyer, *Parallaxis*, bars 47-61, alto solo

Audio 11.06: Dwyer, *Parallaxis*, bars 47-61, sax duet

Audio 11.07: Dwyer, *Parallaxis*, bars 68-74

Audio 11.08: Dwyer, *Parallaxis*, bars 76-79

Audio 11.09: Dwyer, *Parallaxis*, bars 92-96

Audio 11.10: Dwyer, *Parallaxis*, bars 109-110

Audio 11.11: Dwyer, *Parallaxis*, bars 111-113

Audio 11.12: Dwyer, *Parallaxis*, full version for saxophone duet

Audio 11.13: Dwyer, *Parallaxis*, full fixed media recording

Audio 12.01: Linehan, *Eleven for a While*, bars 1-37

Audio 12.02: Linehan, *Eleven for a While*, rehearsal

Audio 12.03: Linehan, *Eleven for a While*, bars 38-65, rehearsal

Audio 12.04: Linehan, *Eleven for a While*, complete, with Logic Pro X

Audio 12.05: Linehan, *Eleven for a While*, world premiere performance of sax version

Audio 12.06: Linehan *Trip to Bray!* sight-read of bars 1-41

Audio 12.07: Linehan, *Trip to Bray!* bars 1-13

Audio 12.08: Linehan, *Trip to Bray!* read-through of bars 63-86
Audio 12.09: Linehan, *Trip to Bray!* complete with *Logic Pro X*

Audio 12.10: Linehan, *Trip to Bray!* rehearsal, bars 63-86

Audio 12.11: Linehan, *Trip to Bray!* world premiere performance


Audio 13.01: Edge, *The Devil at My Elbow*, full performance

Audio 13.02: Edge, *Wait a While*, bars 1-62, played on clarinet

Audio 13.03: Edge, *Wait a While*, bars 1-62, played on saxophone

Audio 13.04: Edge, *Wait a While*, bars 63-69, deliberate practice session

Audio 13.05: Edge, *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*, bars 63-69, for saxophone

Audio 13.06: Edge, *Wait a While*, bars 72-95, deliberate practice on clarinet

Audio 13.07: Edge, *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*, bars 74-95, saxophone

Audio 13.08: Edge, *Wait a While*, bars 100-103

Audio 13.09: Edge, *Wait a While - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*, bars 100-104

Audio 13.10: Edge, *Wait a While - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*, bars 104-173

Audio 13.11: Edge, *Wait a While*, bars 190-211

Audio 13.12: Edge, *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*, bars 190-211, saxophone

Audio 13.13: Edge, *Wait a While - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*,
bars 213-274

Audio 13.14: Edge, *Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding upon a Fiddlestick*
Appendix 3

Musical application of the ‘PETTLEP’ model

I propose that the ‘PETTLEP’ model can be applied with some modifications to music performance practice in the following ways:

1. **P** - Physical. The physicality of playing our instrument. Every aspect of the physicality of our body’s interaction with our instrument and our external environment must be imagined as clearly as possible.

2. **E** - Environment. We can imagine in great detail the space in which we are rehearsing and the setting in which we will be performing. (Having an opportunity to rehearse both physically and mentally in the actual performance space is the preferred option.)

3. **T** - Task. This is our undertaking, the music we are preparing, which should be imagined at the precise skill level at which we can physically perform, so as to be open to improvement through imaging.

4. **T** – Timing. This refers to the speed of our images and may seem to have more application in the sporting arena as complex movements can be slowed down and minutely analysed. This correlates to ‘slow practise’ in music.

5. **L** - Learning. We learn and improve over time. The mental imagery of tasks should also develop over time as a representation of real-world skill acquisition.

6. **E** - Emotion. We visualise the emotions we feel through practicing and performing the music.
7. **P - Perspective.** Imagining ourselves in the first person as we rehearse and perform and also in the third person to lend an objective analytical perspective to our motor imaging.
Appendix 4

A brief summary of ‘The Devil Riding Upon a Fiddle Stick
Niccolò Paganini in Great Britain and Ireland 1831-1834’

Many of the published accounts of Niccolò Paganini’s life tend to obfuscate their subject, replete as they are with tales of satanical collusion, astronomical performance fees, abductions, a murdered mistress and a very public elopement. We have little tangible access to Paganini; yet his legend persists, a legend that has been created, amplified, nourished and distorted purely through the written word. The name ‘Paganini’ has come to us as a Dionysian embodiment of the superhuman, a one-word symbol possessed of its own life-force. The real Paganini resides within the stark dichotomy between this Dionysian version and the all-too-frail flesh and blood version, travelling by horse and carriage throughout rural Ireland, England and Scotland. There are, of course no extant recordings of his playing, and with the exception of his Concerto op. 6 and 24 Caprices op. 1, few of his works have gained a foothold in the classical canon.

From the outset of this research, I encountered many errors and omissions in the primary body of the biographical literature and as I delved deeper my research took on an investigative air: factual errors and contradictions began to coalesce into an unignorable stumbling block of misinformation. Through a triangulation of numerous sources, I have arrived at a more complete portrait of this period of Paganini’s life. The unanticipated by-products of this investigative cross-referencing are a newly updated chronology and the identification of many biographical errors.
which needed amendment and facts which merited inclusion. To the existing chronology I can now add fifteen previously uncatalogued concerts, many hitherto unidentified concert venues, error corrections pertaining to dates and other ephemera, and a variety of documents whose details shed light on Paganini’s never-quite private life. This lecture-recital is not however a fact-checking exercise; it is a fact-finding celebration of arguably the most influential performer in the history of Western Art Music. I have composed a two movement work, titled *Paganini’s Elbow*, for saxophone, backing tracks and piano, which I present as a direct artistic response to my findings and observations. *Paganini’s Elbow* is a personal distillation of the essence of Niccolò Paganini’s human frailty and superhuman virtuosic prowess.
Appendix 5

Kenneth Edge’s annotated saxophone scores
For copyright reasons, we are unable to reproduce the following scores here:

John Buckley, Arabesque for Alto Saxophone
Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, Templum
Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, The Brook of Donode
Bill Whelan, Riverdance (Final Section) for Soprano Saxophone

For more information about these works, please contact www.cmc.ie
Eleven for a While

Conor Linehan

V.S.

Copyright © Conor Linehan
Soprano Saxophone

Paganini's Elbow

1. Prelude - The Devil at my Elbow

Kenneth Edge (2019)

sempre legato

ppp - gradual accel and cresc. to bar 13
Soprano Saxophone

Repeat al niente - just air sounds
Paganini's Elbow

Wait a While 2 - The Devil Riding Upon a FiddleStick

Kenneth Edge (2020)
Paganini's elbow 2
Soprano Saxophone

\[ P_r = 126 \]