VOCAL ACTION:
from training
towards performance

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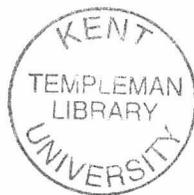
ABSTRACT

This thesis describes and analyzes a practice as research study (2008 – 2011) which comprised performances, ongoing workshops and a symposium. Its focus is the (re)examination of voice training for the contemporary performer exploring what existing methods are still relevant, what gaps exist in current training, and how these might be bridged.

The methodology is that of a feedback loop in which theoretical research informs practical explorations (conducted by the researcher on herself) which inform practical applications (in which the research is applied with other performers in a pedagogical context). The inquiry is divided into two main topics: training for Vocal Presence and for Vocal Composition. In the first, the theoretical base is that of Konstantin Stanislavski's method of physical actions and its interpretations by Jerzy Grotowski and Ingemar Lindh, with a further link made to the work of positive psychologist Mihaly Czikszentmihalyi. In the second, the starting points are the work of John Britton and Anne Bogart's Viewpoints. Within both areas, these theories and their related practices are explored through the creation of two performance pieces: *the sound of m/y/our name…* and *One By One* and then applied in the creation of 'a method of vocal (re)actions.' This work was presented through a practice as research symposium and is documented on DVD and in an interactive website.

This thesis argues for the importance of mapping the connections between different aesthetic and cultural methods for voice training. For the performer, it proposes a non-aesthetic-specific practical method and terminology, which can be used to work both within and across different vocal techniques as well as between body and voice. It thus aims to broaden the repertoire of approaches to voice work for vocal training and for devising performance.

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CHAPTER I

THE PERFORMER'S VOICE

This thesis describes and analyzes a practice as research study conducted between 2008 and 2011. The focus is the (re)examination of voice training for the young contemporary performer/university drama student (18 – 25) who will most probably work within an international context and within a wide variety of performance forms. I use '(re)' in the sense that Phillip Zarrilli introduced in *Acting (Re)considered*: 'For the actor, moments of (re)consideration are times when practice and thought crystallize in an insight which clarifies his or her (embodied) performance practice and technique' (2002:2). This study does not propose to reinvent the wheel; it is rather an embodied journey of questioning and (re)constructing what exists into functioning models for a new historical moment. The thesis begins with a comparative study across time, tracing how training methods adapted or didn't adapt to new historical and aesthetic contexts. The aim was to identify the gap between what trainings provide and what contemporary practices/performers have need of. From this theoretical outset, the focus of the practice was to develop an integrated training method/pedagogical approach to address this gap. The intention is that these results can be used in full, as a kind of 'method' and also in part, as a series of principles, reflections, exercises, approaches and/or strategies which any practitioner can adapt for their own work.

1. THE PERFORMER'S VOICE: 1900 TO 2012[1]

Voice training does not exist in a vacuum. It is created and develops in relation to changes in performance; as what needs to be trained changes, so does training. The question is how fast and/or adequately do trainings adapt? Jacqueline Martin, in her

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[1] In this thesis, I will primarily use the term 'performer' (rather than actor) to refer to the one who does. When discussing the work of a historical practitioner, however, I will use the term that they use. When speaking of the performer using the voice I will primarily use the general term 'sounder' in order to avoid 'singer' or 'speaker', two terms which are specific to certain kinds of vocal material, i.e. song and text.

comprehensive historical study came to this conclusion:

> Although actor training has endeavoured to keep abreast of these changing attitudes to vocal delivery [...] it has been shown that the problems [...] seem to be of a much more complex nature [...] very few opportunities seem to have existed for experimentation of the nature which could encompass the kind of training necessary for contributing to the demands of the postmodern theatre. (1991:192)

What caused this disjunction to happen and what are the nature of the gaps which exist? This study takes a step onward from Martin's work, (re)evaluating her questions within the postdramatic context. To do this I first step back. The following section offers a brief historical review wherein I outline three significant shifts in the role of the performer within the performance event and examine how these developments affected the content of voice trainings then and now.[2]

The playwright's theatre: voicing the text

At the beginning of the twentieth century the playwright was the primary creator of a theatrical piece. They constructed the story, the director attempted to faithfully stage it and the performers functioned primarily as 'embodiers' of the playwright's ideas and visions.[3] In accordance, training methods focused on presence: *how* the performer does, rather than *what* they do. Stanislavski's method historically marks the beginning of systematised presence training. He named it a *psychophysical* approach and later focused it around what he called *the method of physical actions*. It

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[2] This study takes as its base performer training in the West. Firstly, as a Western performer myself it is the only tradition which I know on all levels, theoretically, practically, socially, culturally and subconsciously and thus have any authority to write about. Secondly the research took place within a Western context and is aimed at this group of performers. This focus highlights a certain subset of concerns. The Western performer adapting Asian traditions, for example, has a unique set of problems which is very different from the Asian or African performer integrating themselves into a Western context. For this reason, it is important to attempt to focus this study on a certain group of performers, as much as one 'group' can be defined in the current context of growing multiculturalism.

[3] For a definition of 'embodiment', I turn to Zarrilli who has done significant research in this field. For the purpose of his work, he complexifies a singular understanding of 'embodiment' stating rather that it is: 'a process of experiential encounters'; we can inhabit many bodies. He goes on to theorise a chiasmic model which includes 4 'bodies': the surface, recessive, aesthetic inner bodymind and the aesthetic outer body (2009:50-52). I mention this to exemplify the difficulty of describing such a seemingly simple event. However when discussing 'embodiment' in this document I will use it in a simpler sense, which Zarrilli describes later as: 'on a subtle level, the sense of experience/awareness of what one is doing as it is being done, i.e., the vibratory quality of one's relationship to the acting task in relation to the environment one inhabits' (2009:57).

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was an integrated training in the sense that it guided the performer from basic exercises to the final presentation of a role. This is related to what Ian Watson calls 'direct' trainings. These consists of trainings where the skills are often learned within the context of a repertory of roles/plays within a certain aesthetic and are opposed to 'indirect' trainings where there is not necessarily a direct connection between the training and the final performance form (2001:2).

Due to the complexity of the work with language in text-based drama and the size of the stages on which it was historically performed, the vocal method in Stanislavski's time was very technical. The works of Russians Volkonski and Ushakov served as a theoretical base (Martin 1991:49).[4] As Bella Merlin asserts, Stanislavski rarely wrote about the specifics of these classes and treated voice training as a place where skills could be honed (2007:20). Where he did address the voice was through the work on textual analysis. This was a method Stanislavski created; a precise way in which an actor approaches text searching for units of meaning, punctuation, tempo-rhythm, character indications etc. Another of his innovations was *subtext* - the idea that there lay meaning underneath and in between the written words. In summation, the voice was conceptualized as a function of language and training as an accumulation of skills.

The director's theatre: voicing the vision

In her chapter 'A Smorgasbord of Ideals' Martin traces how certain practitioners such as Bertold Brecht and Antonin Artaud in the 1930s, and Roy Hart, Jerzy Grotowski and Peter Brook in the 1950s-70s, began to challenge the primacy of the text in dictating the performance form. This led gradually to a shift in focus from the playwright to director as the main composer of a piece (1991:468-75).[5] This approach became widespread by the 1960s. As directors started to develop new stylistic approaches, trainings needed to adapt beyond the psychological. Now that the composition of a piece happened more during the rehearsal process than on the

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[4] Volkonski wrote *The Expressive Word* and Ushakov, *Brief Introduction to the Science of Language.*
[5] It must be noted that although this shift occurred and new methods were developed to address it, the older methods of work continued to exist parallelly.

playwright's desk; the performer became more active in the creation of material, i.e. composition, and thus also needed training in this area. Jerzy Grotowski and others were at the forefront of creating such methods. Grotowski recorded these in *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968). The highly developed nature of that work and its significant difference from a naturalistic approach marked a new relationship to and respect for training in its own right. Despite these developments towards an autonomous actor, it was still the director's show. Gordon, in speaking of Grotowski and others, reminds us that: 'While insisting on the organic process of the *actor,* [they] regard the principle of montage as the *director's* structural device' (2006:7). With this widening spectrum of different expressions, from Brook's made-up language in *Orghast* to Beckett's minimalism, the relationship between training and performance was no longer one to one, but rather one to many. In Stanislavski's lifetime his method could be quite easily applied to most plays of the era due to the relatively narrow range of existing performance forms. In this new context, training forms began to split, dividing into general and performance/aesthetic specific training (Martin 1991:48). Now, training methods in the West started to be what Watson would call 'indirect' trainings, where basic principles are applied to the challenge of making performance without there being a direct connection between the skills learned in the training and the performance aesthetic.

These new trainings were based on principles ostensibly of all performance styles. Some of these trends were strongly influenced by the rising interest in multiculturalism which looked for 'universal' similarities between cultures.[6] Grotowski, Barba and others were involved in developing this approach. Barba writes:

> Different performers, at different places and times in spite of the stylistic forms specific to their traditions; have shared common principles. (1991:8)

The hypothesis is that if a performer is able to understand these principles they will be able to apply them to any form of performance; they will be working on a 'pre-expressive' communicative level, common to all humans.

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[6] It is interesting to note that these researchers looked for universal principles for an 'indirect' training within cultures in the East which have very strong traditions of 'direct' training which are by nature highly steeped in very culturally specific aesthetic traditions.

> The pre-expressive level can be defined as the level at which the performer constructs and directs her presence on the stage, independent of and before her final goals and expressive results. (Ruffini in Barba 1991:64)

It is significant that most of these methods are based in physical principles and that the term *psychophysical* (which these practitioners adopted from Stanislavski) lacks any mention of the voice. In addition to this focus on the body, a distrust for the representational delivery of text and, after a time, voice work in general, began to take hold. As Martin writes, 'a trend which has become the trademark of many of the postmodern theatre pieces […] indicate[s] a total lack of belief in the spoken word for contemporary life' (1991:153). O'Keefe and Murray, sixteen years later, asserted:

> the theatre forms most likely to serve the impulse of transculturalism will be those which are highly visual and which employ and explore vocabularies of movement and physicality (2007:200).[7]

In reaction to this distrust of the voice and psychological text, trainings developed methods which subverted the performer's ability to 'make sense' of a text in an intellectual way. Instead they searched for a more instinctive connection to sound.

> The approach to vocal delivery in the theatre has been greatly influenced by the contribution of certain directors, who in their productions have experimented with the balance between voice, text and emotion […this] has taken its impulses from Artaud and Grotowski, and has chosen the 'non-verbal' style as most suitable for the postmodern theatre (Martin 1991:119).[8]

In Grotowski's work, perhaps the most famous example is the exploration of the use of resonators.[9] Exploring pure sound and how it emanated from the body was a unique development for the time. Another example is the Body Alphabet, a training form created by his actor Zygmunt Molik (Campo 2010). Here actors execute several simple body actions based on tension and release such as pushing, pulling, flying a kite, etc., which they alternate in a seamless flow while searching for the 'unknown.' This unknown is when these actions in a specific order suddenly unlock a stream of concrete sensations/emotions/memories. To this score, text or song can be added. In

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[7] This opinion is of course not held by all practitioners working in postmodern or transcultural performance. They are not, however, alone. A common occurrence in books about pre-expressive trainings is that the voice is given a minimum of space. An example of that is John Martin's *The Intercultural Performance Handbook* (2006), which only designates 17 pages of 142 to the voice.

[8] By 'non-verbal' she does not mean silent, but non-text-based.

[9] Wolfson and Hart also developed this work and Martin suggests that Grotowski was inspired by them (1991:70).

this way the voice rides the flow of impulses coursing through the body. This method of beginning text work from body work is radically different from the textual analysis of Stanislavski. At this historical moment, vocal and physical trainings became integrated but at the cost of the voice's demotion; it was no longer the main carrier of meaning.

The performer's performance: voicing the multiplicity

In 2012 the spectrum of performance is probably the widest it has ever been. Lehmann gave this diversification a name.

> The […] 'postdramatic' denotes a theatre that feels bound to operate beyond drama, at a time 'after' the authority of the dramatic paradigm. (2006:27)

As Gordon writes in his book *The Purpose of Playing* it is this characteristic of plurality and cross-pollenization which makes the present moment unique:

> In an increasingly global world, this […] tendency to 'mix and match' forms and techniques of performance from around the world may well herald the start of a new epoch in the history of performance. (2006:7)

Interestingly, this multiplicity of styles actually highlights the individuality of each performer's expression.

> In the twenty-first century we have the entire panoply of methods and sounds available to us […] Today we have a chance […] to be in charge of how our music is to be created, how we communicate it to other people. We can experience the liberating value of being at the origin of our creative acts. (Nachmanovitch 2005)

This plethora of methods is coupled by a widened theoretical understanding of performance.[10] The consequence of these developments is that there is no longer any underlying or unifying idea of what performance is. The closest to an overarching definition is perhaps Lehmann's broad statement that 'Theatre means the collectively spent and used up lifetime in the collectively breathed air of that space in which the performing and the spectating take place.' (2006:17)

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[10] This practical development was paralleled by advances in theory by such practitioner/theorists as Richard Schechner (the founder of Performance Studies) who with books such as *Between Theater and Anthropology,* questioned *what* can be called performance and how it might be analysed (1985).

The largest result of this shift is that the performer, not the director, can now stand at the centre of the creative work: they are both composer and embodier of material. In the UK the term 'devising' was coined to describe this new role:

> Devised work is a response and a reaction to the playwright-director relationship, to text-based theatre, and to naturalism, and challenges the prevailing ideology of one person's text under another person's direction. Devised theatre is concerned with the collective creation of art [...] and it is here that the emphasis has shifted from the writer to creative artist. (Oddey 1994:4)

In this context, the range of what a performer may need to do with their voice has been greatly extended. Performance forms now include work with text, song and sound, in many different varieties and combinations. Performers are now required to shift between these different ways of working, sometimes even within the context of a single performance. The training traditions described above were created in relation to specific historical moments and the consequential needs of a performance. These traditions now exist in this new context in which their methods match and mis-match the current performer's needs. Below I will discuss three main trends which have developed.

Training towards text

Firstly there is training for text-based performance. This is similar to Stanislavski's technical voice work but has integrated some of the recent innovations. Cicely Berry and Kristin Linklater are two seminal pedagogues who have created groundbreaking techniques within this category.[11] Cicely Berry roots her hands-on and physical training firmly in the word and text. She believes that it is through discovering the viscerality and action within the text that the emotional centres are opened. Her exercises involve a lot of movement, stretches and activities, something which was revolutionary in her time and institutional context. This physical work however is always in service to the text. Berry never creates performance material herself; the voice teacher is a technical assistant. As Berry said to me:

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[11] Other significant contemporary voice pedagogues include among others: Patsy Rodenburg (1992, 1993, 1998, 2005), Michael McCallion (1988) and Barbara Houseman (2002).

although you work with the actor, moving through the room with them to free the voice and to find it, that actor will then, of course, always be working towards being able to say that speech *standing up straight*. (pers. comm. 2011)

This is significant because it points to the fact that although body and voice trainings are integrated more than they were in Stanislavski's time, the physical aspect is still seen as a kind of support that is later discarded, rather than a potential part of a final artistic form.

Linklater, Berry's US contemporary, approaches the integration of body and voice from a scientific point of view.[12] Building on the physiological principles of Elise Fogerty she developed a training based on the physical mechanics of the voice.[13] Linklater asserts that her method works cross-culturally. As Patsy Rodenburg, her contemporary concurs:

> Whatever their cultural differences, the voice of every culture works in the same manner. The biology, mechanics and hydraulics of the human voice are the same everywhere. (Rodenburg 1992:107)

Linklater's seminal book *Freeing the Natural Voice* outlines exercises for relaxation and alignment, energizing and articulation. Although her work is more 'radical' than Berry's, at the base it is, like Berry's, aimed towards work with text, as her book titles make clear: *Freeing Shakespeare's Voice* and *The Actor's Guide to Talking the Text.*

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[12] Interestingly, although she champions a scientific approach, Linklater notes herself that her exercises are not actually 'scientific.' She chooses instead poetic images and metaphors. Although they are based in anatomically correct ideas, she asserts that they function better than clinical descriptions in stimulating the actor (1976:7).

[13] Elise Fogerty was a speech specialist and the visionary founder of the Central School of Speech and Drama. She believed that voice training should be central to actor training.

The gaps[14]

Gordon suggests that

> Most actors today are trained according to the one method favored by their particular teacher or school. Most often the specific approach is not taught in a conscious or critical process, but is absorbed *experientially* by the student as a unique set of practices [...] Problems occur when [...] actors are asked to create performances utilizing techniques and stage conventions other than the ones in which they were schooled. These problems arise not merely because actors are unfamiliar with the alien conventions and techniques, but also because their performing identity has already been formed by the aesthetic they have unself-consciously absorbed in training (2006:2)

Martin discovered that this was the case for many drama school trained performers wherein the methods of pedagogues such as Linklater and Berry, form a main part of the syllabus (1991:154). The training, while freeing within a certain context appears not to be translatable to a wider range of performance.

From his experience with professional performers trained in a similar tradition, dramaturg Ludvig Uhlbors articulates this problematic of applying aesthetic-specific models (learned in training) within a new context:

> Actors who use the same tools when they work with Jelinek's or with Strindberg's texts jump over the question of what 'the individual' is and therefore don't come into the performance or communicate with the piece, themselves or the audience. When you say that you use the same tools on Strindberg's and Jelinek's texts, you are saying actually that you use the tools which are bound to Strindberg's aesthetic on Jelinek and apply Jelinek's world-view on Strindberg. (2010:4)

Uhlbors describes here the problem within the range of working on text. Orlanda Cook, a Roy Hart voice pedagogue, speaks of the even greater problem of a performer working between text and song.

> All too often, an actor who is marvellously versatile with text, showing great vocal freedom and invention, will suddenly 'freeze up' when it comes to singing a song. It's as though s/he suddenly loses touch with their body [...] The immense range and choice of colour and expression s/he pours into

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[14] Even though I will here discuss here the gaps existing between what trainings offer and what performers need, I would like to acknowledge the continuous and genuine effort of many individual voice pedagogues and organisations to adapt to the changing times. This is evidenced by several concrete efforts taking the form of, among others: the conferences held by The International Centre for Voice at the Central School of Speech and Drama, the creation of the Voice Care Network (http://www.voicecare.org.uk/), and the collaborative book project *The Vocal Vision: Views on Voice by 24 Leading Teachers, Coaches and Directors*, edited by Marion Hampton and Barbara Acker (1997).

his/her speaking voice seems to be lacking when s/he thinks about singing. (2004:9)

In most drama schools and universities, singing is not even considered part of the voice or speech pedagogue's work, but rather as a separate field in itself (Central School of Speech and Drama 2000a:43).[15]

Why have these trainings not adapted? This inflexibility is partially economic; experimentation in voice training does not pay. Positions for voice teachers are mainly available within drama schools and institutionalized theatres, which continue to produce dramatic plays.[16] Linklater (whose breakthrough book speaks of 'freeing') ironically works in one of the most expensive actor training programs in the US, teaching actors who will go on to Broadway and film.[17] Although these trainings have integrated some of the new trends, they remain primarily in service of a more naturalistic/realist performance tradition.[18]

It also appears that the proposal of a biologically universal model is limited. Tara McAllister-Viel, a lecturer at Central School of Speech and Drama who works with cross-cultural voice training, takes apart the 'universality' of Western approaches, showing their cultural specificity and historical roots (2007, 2009a, 2009b). She documents how this critique has grown in the past twenty years.

> Mainstream contemporary voice training for actors has been heavily criticized for privileging anatomy over cultural influence and has therefore been characterized as an 'effacement of cultural and other kinds of difference' that attempts to 'transcend cultural conditioning' in favour of 'universal' anatomical experience. (McAllister-Viel 2009b:246 quoting Knowles)

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[15] This problematic has been pointed to by many as limiting, for example Linda Gates' in her 1998 article 'The need for a shared pedagogy for the successful use of the singing/speaking voice in theatre voice training.'

[16] See Martin's chapter on 'Actor Training' (1991:154-186).

[17] She has also patented her training methods so that anyone can pay to become a certified Linklater teacher. (www.kristinlinklater.com)

[18] Joan Mills, in her keynote address at the conference 'Voice in British Actor and Performance Training' poignantly mentions the following anecdote: 'I knew a student at one of the London, accredited theatre schools being humiliated by a voice teacher who pronounced […] that she [the student] "just did not have an actor's voice" What kind of performance culture did that voice teacher think he was involved in? Did it ever occur to him that she did not wish to possess an "actor's voice" but a fully expressive human voice capable of opening to the widest range of performance demands' (Central School of Speech and Drama 2000a: 58).

Within the voice tradition being discussed, the common assumption is that the performer begins with blocks, created by social and/or cultural habits that are considered negative and which the performer must unlearn in order to return to the efficient functioning of the 'universal' anatomical mechanics of the body. This model is culturally specific.

> Modern voice pedagogy emerges from a tradition of understanding the self of the actor through a Western biomedical model, which I suggest is viewed through the lens of Cartesian philosophy. By conceiving of the act of breathing as the act of creating a thought (Berry 1992, 26; Carey and Carey 39; Hampton and Acker 247–48; Morgan, 86), training is able to construct one kind of relationship between thought/mind and breath/body. The body/mind dualism is realized on a muscular level; specifically, the action of the diaphragm during involuntary/voluntary lung function. Involuntary breath understood as unconscious response is associated with the actor's self as biological matter of the body. Mind […] understood as conscious motor control, is associated with the voluntary act of breathing and is conceptualized as representing the thoughts and emotions of the actor/character. (2009a:168)

This duality she compares with the polarity[19] in Eastern approaches: '[in] "body-mind oneness" there is no longer a felt distinction between "the mind qua subject and the body qua object."' (2009a:168) This has a direct effect on how voice trainings are structured.

> The difference between Alexander's 'psycho-physical' and the notion of Eastern bodymind unity is not simply philosophical, but is manifested at the most fundamental muscular level. Because Western Voice assumes the body begins training with unnecessary 'tension' (excess muscular contraction) the majority of the training focuses on 'release' exercises. In contrast, p'ansori [traditional Korean singing technique] trains the body/voice using a muscular contract/release cycle […] P'ansori performers do not train towards 'release' because one cannot have release without 'tension', and one cannot have 'tension' without release. 'Tension', as muscular contraction, and release of that contraction is a cyclical process within the body. In this way, the 'characteristic organological structures' under which the p'ansori is produced exist in a world of polarities, not a dualistic world in which one rids the body of tension through release exercises. (McAllister-Viel 2007:103-4 my insertion)

In the East, the practitioner does not train the breath, but trains the united body/mind, cultivating ki (energy) which then manifests itself as breath. She concludes that:

> Concepts are dependent on cultural and discipline-specific concepts of the

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[19] 'Here I am borrowing Roger Ame's definition of polarity, who wrote: "I want to claim that mind and body are polar rather than dualistic concepts, and as such, can only be understood by reference to each other"' (McAllister-Viel 2009a:174).

body. Breath is not a universally understood physiological process able to be reduced to lung function (object-body). Also, breath understood subjectively (subject-body) is equally problematic, in part because the 'lived body' is heavily influenced by the sociocultural understandings of self and the place of body as self within praxis. (2009a:173)

If concepts of breath are not universal, than a training which supposes they are, is culturally bound.

Training from song

Existing parallel to these, what I will call 'traditional' trainings (as they are the most commonly practiced and accepted in university/conservatoire contexts), are a loosely related family of trainings which have developed out of the search for universal principles. Among these trainings there are two main evolving trends. The first is that of director-led companies who have developed highly stylized, recognizable aesthetics. The second is a renaissance of pedagogues exploring intensive and sometimes therapeutic approaches. This trend moves away from training for performance, and towards training as a worthwhile activity in its own right (eventually as therapy). Gardzienice Theatre Association, Teatr ZAR and Piesn Kozla are examples of the first. I choose to discuss them because their work specifically focuses on an important movement in voice pedagogies: working from traditional song.[20] In the late 1970s, Gardzienice developed a training based on traditional Polish songs gathered on Expeditions which consisted of the company of artists visiting small villages and exchanging songs with locals. With the songs and stories they created performances which placed them on the map as innovators (Allain 1997 and 2002b, Hodge 2005). Piesn Kozla and ZAR continue in this tradition, building training methods and artistic expressions directly out of intensive field research.[21] Their performance aesthetics, guided by the strong shaping hand of a director, are also greatly influenced by their research material. In this way their work

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[20] These companies are part of what can be called a 'Grotowski diaspora.' Wlodimieriz Staniewski, the director of Gardzienice was an early collaborator of Grotowski's. The two directors of Piesn Kozla were first members of Gardzienice. Jaroslaw Fret, who also worked with Gardzienice, is the founding director of ZAR.

[21] See for example: Teatr ZAR 2012, www.teatrzar.art.pl and Piesn Kozla, www.piesnkozla.pl accessed 30 October, 2011.

is integrated, or 'direct,' in the same way as Stanislavski's: their training methods and the work towards performance are inextricably linked.

Of the second tradition, one of the most noteworthy examples is that of Roy Hart (1926-1975) and his school that still exists today in France. He developed the work of Alfred Wolfsohn, who underwent severe trauma during World War I and ended up losing his voice. In an attempt to regain it, he made the discovery that what appeared to be blocking him did not have a physical but rather a psychological root. Practicing as he was in the early days of psychology, his discoveries were revolutionary.[22] An actor by profession, Hart translated this therapeutic method towards performance. His technique came to be known as the extended vocal technique, and is based in singing. This method has a strong following internationally in both universities and therapeutic communities in which there are many related traditions and teachers.

The gaps

It would seem logical that these 'universal' methods would fill the gaps created by the 'traditional' trainings. Unfortunately this is not the case. Let us first look at the question of universality and the ease/difficulty of translating these Polish trainings into other contexts. Gordon writes that a 'specific approach is not taught in a conscious or critical process, but is absorbed *experientially* by the student as a unique set of practices.' (2006:2) This suggests that those passing on the training do not spend time contextualising the training and its 'truths,' highlighting their historical relativity and specific relationship to certain aesthetic traditions, but rather teaches them as an integrated whole providing ostensibly universal 'truths.' In the 'traditional' trainings, which focus on release and do not have a developed physical form, this seems to create a block mostly on an intellectual level; the performer interprets all aesthetics they meet as if they are in the aesthetic which was encoded in their training. In these 'universal' methods, which are often based in physically demanding forms and taught in extensive and intensive daily trainings, the block can

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[22] http://www.roy-hart.com/awebiography.htm, accessed 30 October, 2011.

be mental but also physical. In such a work, the performer's body become literally shaped by the training: the well-trained Grotowski diaspora performer's specific muscle development, as that of a ballet dancer or karate master, make them easily recognisable. The training, while developing certain skills and abilities, also limits their ability within others: ballet dancers often struggle to find the softness and grounding needed for African dance, the Grotowski diaspora performer often appears over energetic or naive in British devised theatre, melodramatic in naturalism. The performer trained in the foundational idea that their training is based on universal principles may be intellectually open to the idea of performing within one or many aesthetics. Ironically however, the highly immersive nature of their training is both its greatest strength and weakness: because it is embodied on such a deep level, it is of a high quality, but becomes even more difficult to adapt to new forms.

Susana Pillhofer, an ex-member of Gardzienice who founded Teater Tanto in Austria, myself and others have struggled to translate these 'universal' techniques to new contexts.[23] Piloffer remarked that while she greatly appreciated the work of the Polish company, it was 'impossible' to do Gardzienice training in Vienna. She points out that there are elements of the training encoded not only in the exercises, but also in the whole atmosphere around the training, which make it difficult to translate into another context where the atmosphere asserts other sets of morals and ethics.

> You simply cannot do the things you do in a barn in Poland in a Vienna basement when your actors travel to rehearsal on the metro and not on foot through the cow fields.[24]

The priority of developing organicity and instinct through long-term training, can also lead to less time spent on dramaturgy in rehearsal and consequently in performance, especially in groups who do not have a strong directorial force behind them. These methods grew out of a director-led tradition where the compositional work was not needed as part of the performer's training. Thus, when this technique is adapted within a performer-driven context, the compositional element of training is

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[23] In her 2005 article 'Gardzienice's Influence in the West,' Hodge discusses more examples of practitioners who have had trouble translating these methods to new contexts. A banal but relevant example from my own experience is that these trainings often centre around singing group songs. These songs require a large amount of people. Trying to teach Polish songs in a British university devising context with a cast of four appears immediately limp and the strength of the song dwindles easily.

[24] Private conversation with Susana Pillhofer in January, 2006.

missing.[25] In addition, the work of some directors within this tradition is characterised by an intuitiveness and lack of reflective distance which makes their methods highly individually specific. The lack of a followable method is exemplified in such statements as this one of Grzegorz Bral. When asked to explain his approach to selecting performance material, the director of Piesn Kozla provided this highly instinctual answer.

> I choose elements from the training or rehearsal that work on me, in a way they have to touch me because we believe that if something is touching me, that the touch is so organic and objective, it will hopefully touch the audience too. (Bral 2010)

In addition, this group of pre-expressive trainings, which looked to explore the space *before* aesthetics, has over the years become an aesthetic in itself. Clichés such as candles, bare feet, traditional song and sweat have become the markers of a 'Grotowskian aesthetic,' something that would make him turn in his grave. These three directors are making aesthetically consistent work, something which is understandable from an economic point of view as it allows their work to be recognizable and thus marketable. It does however assist in sedimenting a general association of their work, both performance and training, as highly aesthetic-specific rather than potentially universal.

The trend of work inspired by Roy Hart blurs the lines between performance training and self-help. It attracts to the field many non-performers. The consequence is that in this context the voice pedagogue can easily be seen almost as a psychologist, rather than a creative artist. In the opening of the International Centre for the Voice at CSSD, many voice pedagogues complained that they felt marginalized, used by performers as a counsellor and not seen by the director as a creative collaborator (anon. comm. 2010a). While the Polish example has the problem that the director and aesthetic too strongly guide the training/performance, this example has the opposite effect. These trainings often exist separate from any aesthetic tradition and are in danger of not making the bridge towards creative work at all.

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[25] This is also symptomatic of this tradition in which many directors have not trained as directors but rather as performers.

Both of these trends find their methods and research limited by economic concerns. As Martin asserts, it does not 'pay to be experimental' within the institutions. It does pay however in workshops and, in some cases, university training programs. The trends mentioned above have become staples in many British universities which look to train a more flexible and psychophysically engaged performer.[26] As a Module Handbook at the University of Kent states, their aim is not to train for West End naturalism but rather for something more universal:

> This course will introduce you to key approaches in body use and understanding: including how to warm up and prepare the body/voice [...] how to maximise potential of the body/voice as a free and open resource, and how to understand basic bodily principles (energy, focus, concentration, engagement and projection) that *lie behind all modes of performance.* (2008:5, my emphasis)

The difficulty lies in the fact that the traditions of training from which they draw are all based on the premise that the practitioner will train intensively for years. Within the context of the British university, students rarely get more than a few hours per week together with a large number of other students. The context into which these methods must fit often counteract their basic principles and thus their effectiveness.

> A modern British actor trainer does not have the privilege of working with actors on one technique over a long period of time. This is one of many things preventing us from using Grotowski's techniques honestly and successfully – they require a lot of time and focus on one way of working [...] Grotowski's physical training does not seem suited to a weekly slot on a busy, varied timetable. (Oxley 2006:12)

The second place where these trends are often found is within the context of workshops. The West has been flooded by workshops in the past 20 years, making training a market in itself.[27] As Frank Camilleri writes:

> Performer training in the West has been increasingly commodified in the course of the last two decades by having its most tangible and transmittable aspect (i.e., training techniques) severed from the wider contexts that had initially given it impetus. (2009:26)

What is significant to note here is that this commodification has successfully separated training from performance: training becomes an isolated and sellable object. It is easy to see how this will over time result in training forms responding

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[26] To date I have identified at least 12 UK Drama Departments which advertise their training as being at least in part psychophysical, including Exeter, Huddersfield, Rose Bruford, Kent, Goldsmiths, Leeds, Glamorgan, Aberystwyth, Sheffield Hallam, Manchester Metropolitan, Birmingham, Central School of Speech and Drama and East 15 Acting School at the University of Essex.

[27] A google search on the terms 'psychophysical theatre workshop' produced 342 000 matches.

more to what the consumer market likes to buy, rather than the needs of developments in performance.

Towards training composition[28]

The last trend is that of devising, which focuses on the performer's ability to work as creator of his/her own material. It is elusive to define, as it is based in a tradition of eclecticism.

> What [...] defines devised theatre as a separate form worthy of consideration is the uniqueness of process and product for every group concerned [...] However, it is the very nature and eclecticism of the devising experience that makes it impossible to articulate any single theory of how theatre is devised (Oddey 1994:2)

I will not discuss this trend in detail here for this reason of its ephemerality, but also because this trend has not established a clear line of vocal training.[29]

Rather than focusing on technical voice work, the interpretation of another's text, or the exploration of the extremes of the voice as instinctual sound, devising focuses on the development of the performer's 'authentic voice' and their ability to create text: 'This legacy has led to practices where performers use their own experiences – social, physical and psychological – to create performance texts.' (Govan, Nicholson, Normington 2007:7) Interestingly this focus on an 'authentic voice' has rarely been coupled with an exploration of the physical voice. What exists within the performance context is very varied and practitioner-specific, such as the unique work of Meredith Monk or Phil Minton and his feral choir. The Giving Voice festival hosted bi-annually by the Centre for Performance Research is perhaps one of the few places worldwide which attempts to collect and trace the development of

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[28] Although there is a long tradition of composition within music, I will here focus on the traditions existing within theatre/performance; firstly because a study of the intersection between music and performance traditions is a rich field, deserving a full study in its own right; secondly because I aim to deal with those trainings which have been, and are most accessible to a university/drama school student with limited classical music knowledge.

[29] In books on devising, the voice is not given priority. For example, in *Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical Handbook* (Alison Oddey 1994), the voice is mentioned only 14 times in 272 pages. In *Making a performance: devising histories and contemporary practices* (Govan, Nicholson, Normington 2007), it is mentioned only 9 times in 215 pages. In most of these instances it is in reference to the idea of the performer's creative rather than physical voice.

new approaches to vocal composition. While this trend of the performer as composer is perhaps the most crucial area to be developed within voice trainings today, it is the one in which, as of yet, voice training features most minimally.

Onwards

Over the years, voice trainings have attempted to adapt to the changing needs of performance. However in the past forty, the rapid expansion of performance forms has produced gaps. In 1991, Martin concluded her study by stating:

> Either they [training institutions] have been content to settle for a fragmented schema where a little of everything is taught, or they have adopted a special ideology or aesthetic line which has determined the training and consequently the kind of theatre which best suits the kind of training offered. (Martin 1991:192)

In 2012, the case has not changed greatly. In my analysis I have looked to identify the main approaches and their missing pieces. The 'traditional' model prioritizes the voice but is limited in that it works within a narrow range of expression and does not help the performer shift aesthetic, as it is based in culturally specific core ideas. The 'universal' model can train a highly vocally expressive performer but this 'expressivity' exists also within a narrow aesthetic range. In addition, this model does not often include a composition training. Devising offers the much needed compositional element but often totally ignores or de-prioritizes work on the physical voice. This is often due to limited rehearsal time which leads to prioritizing the creation of material over vocal training and a residual distrust of the voice as a function of text-based performance, a form from which devising actively looks to separate itself. Today there is a need for an approach which is psychophysical but also trains composition and is based on universal principles but not trained within an aesthetic specific form. This study aims to create such a training. The following two tables, based on the conclusions of this literature review, outline the criteria of the training and the common mistakes to avoid. These serve as the hypothesis for this study. This is followed by 'The beginning of a terminology' which marks the first step towards synthesising theory into a set of terms and concepts to accompany this practice.

Figure 1. The contemporary performer's training

The contemporary performer...	Their training needs to...
may be both creator and performer of their work	•train vocal presence and the ability to work with vocal composition.
often works without a director	•be collaborative rather than have a hierarchical work ethic. •create a common vocabulary that can be used for physical or vocal work and allows discussion of sound as structural rather than psychological.
will work within many different forms of performance	•not be based in a single aesthetic but rather work across forms. •be non-hierarchical: all vocal forms are valued equally as potential performance material. (Work with text is not prioritized over work with pure sound, for example).
may be from any cultural or aesthetic background	•not promote the idea of a 'free' or 'natural' voice as a starting point but rather focuses on the necessary voice – the voice which responds adequately to the moment.
may work in a variety of collaborative constellations with a variety of different economic limitations	•be flexible and can be adapted for solo, pair or group work, all skill levels and varying rehearsal/training periods.

Figure 2. Assumptions to avoid

'Voice training should'	• Why should this be avoided?
train vocal skills such as range, resonators, articulation, pitch, blending etc.	•concepts of skills are culturally bound. 'I saw some highly educated King's College choirboys demonstrate their aural acuity by repeating with their voice complex chromatic phrases played once at the piano. The same talented group was then presented with some 'simple' tunes learned by novices in Java [...] The choirboys were confounded by a division of the scale that evaded the concept of both tones and semitones, although found simple by Javanese children half their age [...] what may seem apt vocally in Cambridge may seem inept in Java.' (Barker 2004:3-4)
'warm-up' the voice	•This idea artificially isolates one part of the work from the rest and places it in the fictional space of 'not being the real thing'; an idea which has limited validity in many performance forms today. Secondly, it often results in performers not committing fully to the 'warm-ups' and doing them automatically.
Train one to 'breathe correctly'	•In most Western voice trainings the breath is conceptualized and trained as a biological process. Breathing is thus seen as a skill which you can get good at. As McAllister-Viel made clear, this approach is culturally limited.
Work to 'free' or 'open the voice' and promote the concept of a 'good' voice	•'Free', 'open' and 'good' are also culturally bound concepts. An extreme example is *The Diagnosis and Correction of Vocal Faults* (1994), where McKinney defines 'good' and 'bad' voices into very narrow technical boxes. This search for 'openness'/'goodness' which guides many of the leading vocal techniques in a Western context, leads to a great amount of stress put on realigning actors, fixing postural habits, correcting breathing. This is however based in a Western concept of bodymind duality and the metaphor of the voice as machine. Both of these images constrict the creation of voice exercises as well as the range of expressive choices the practitioner perceives as available to them. (McAllister-Viel 2009b:427).

The beginning of a terminology

When working across different aesthetics, terminology is needed that is non-hierarchical or judgemental. When discussing the variety of different performance forms I will use Zarrilli's understanding of *aesthetic logics*. 'The production's aesthetic logic guides the overall dramaturgy, style and tempo-rhythm.' (2009:113) I find the inclusion of the word 'logic' useful as it defines an aesthetic by *what makes the aesthetic work*, rather than its elements. A Pina Bausch piece and Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* can both include the same elements: women pirouetting in pointe shoes, but using them within completely different aesthetic logics and thus creating radically different artistic outputs and resulting 'meaning' for an audience. Secondly it places the creation of the aesthetic logic within the boundaries of a specific performance and not a historical period; a commedia dell'arte-inspired performance in 2012 may well shift its logic to adapt to its context.

In this work of shifting between different aesthetics, of what does the performer's work consist? Zarrilli names this work that of the 'actor's dramaturgy' and defines it in the following manner:

> The term 'dramaturgy' refers to how the actor's tasks are composed, structured, and shaped during the rehearsal period into a repeatable performance score that constitutes the fictive body available for the audience's experience in performance […] The actor's performance is shaped by the aesthetic logic of the text and the production per se as it evolves in rehearsals […] Post-dramatic performances often require the actor to develop a performance score that has multiple dramaturgies. (2009:113)

I will use his term with a few amendments. Firstly I will refer to the *performer's* dramaturgy. Secondly, although Zarrilli's work is, in a sense, devised, it often stems from a written text and is always strongly driven by a director who is in charge of creating the overall aesthetic logic. In this way his research, although it highlights the autonomous role of the performer, is still strongly based within an older model of actor/director relationships. In this study I will approach the work on the performer's dramaturgy in a much more fundamental way; the question of dramaturgy becomes much more complex when it is the performer constructing the aesthetic logic as well as embodying their own journey through it.

2. METHODOLOGY

This is a practice as research project in which I am involved as theoretical researcher, subject of research and as a pedagogue applying findings in training with others. It is necessarily hermeneutical, drawing from subjective lived experience, but framed in thorough analysis. As Melissa Trimingham, in her paper 'A Methodology for Practice as Research' writes: 'We need a methodology that can account for the disorderly creative process and yet demonstrate rigorous planning.' (Trimingham 2002:55) She proposes the 'possibility of mixing hermeneutic methods with logical positivist ways of proceeding.' (57), in other words identifying clear aims and objectives to tackle specific problems. The breadth of the research question, 'What kind of voice training does the contemporary performer need?' required a methodology which could produce specific results without losing the wide scope. I take inspiration from Tara McAllister-Viel's study of integrating Eastern and Western approaches to voice in a devised theatre project. She proposes a comparative intercultural approach in which analytical reflection informs practice in a dynamic dialogue. Her model creates both embodied knowledge and offers a method of inquiry which functions to separate cultural and aesthetic ideas from potentially 'universal' principles.

I will sketch out the overarching structure of this study and thereafter discuss the reasoning behind each stage of the work. The area of enquiry, 'training', as informed by the conclusions of the literature review, is divided into two main subsubjects: training for presence and composition. This study is organised as a feedback loop, cycled through twice (once for each subsubject). This loop consisted

of three repeating phases, each with its own methodology and category of result.[30]
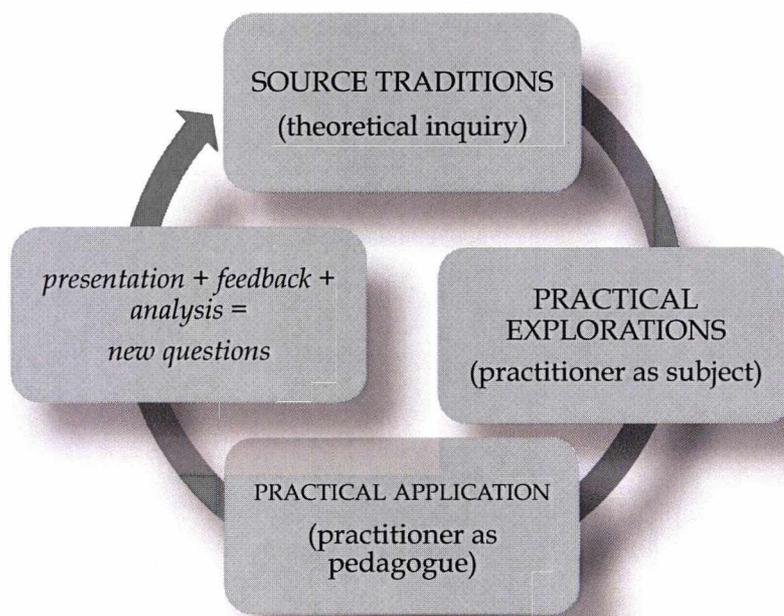
Figure 3. Feedback loop

Within each cycle, an initial hypothesis guides theoretical groundwork, which forms the basis of practical experiment, which then is applied in a pedagogical context; the conclusions serve as the basis for the next round of theoretical inquiry. 2008-10 focused on presence, which then fed into the 2010-2011 inquiry on composition.[31] In the third year, the work on presence ran parallel to composition in the Practical Applications which resulted in the development of *a method of vocal (re)actions.* The combined results of these different periods were presented publicly in the PaR Symposium *VOCAL ACTION: from training towards performance.*

The table below shows the general timeline, which is indicative. The practical work was continuous, and the events marked here are those which were publicly shown. In the body of this document, each section discussing practice begins with a more detailed table providing contextual information about the specific case study including where it took place, names of collaborators and timescale of sessions. This

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[30] Each phase of practical work was recorded through written reflections and all public presentations were filmed. See DVD.

[31] It must be remembered that this research was cumulative: the first area continued to develop in parallel and in relation to the second. In this study and linear document, it is necessary to artificially separate them in order to isolate areas of analysis. It must however be kept in mind that these two foci are inseparable.

standardization aims to clearly outline the research conditions and to allow the reader to easily contextualise analysis.

Figure 4. Timeline

DATE	VOCAL PRESENCE	VOCAL COMPOSITION
FALL 2008 SPRING 2009	THEORY • Stanislavski • Grotowski • Lindh • Czikszentmihalyi	
FALL 2009 SPRING 2010	PRACTICAL EXPLORATIONS • *the sound of m/y/our name…* • *One By One* • *a series of accidents*	
FALL 2010		THEORY • Improvisation • John Britton • Anne Bogart (Viewpoints)
SPRING 2011	PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS • February sessions & THE WAY • Bologna workshop	PRACTICAL EXPLORATION • *One By One* PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS • Bologna etudes • June etudes
JUNE 2011	**VOCAL ACTION SYMPOSIUM: from training towards performance** Included: Open Training, THE WAY, June etudes, Feedback session with the audience, *One By One*	

I will now briefly map out the strategies applied within each subsection. The theoretical analysis was comparative, tracing key terms and questions through the work of various relevant practitioners. Special focus was given to the investigation of how cultural and consequently aesthetic considerations affected training models. The

aim was to map out the territory of existing scholarship/practice within a given area and to identify the key questions which would form the basis of practical work.

In the 'Practical Explorations', the aim was to identify what might assist the performer in working within and across a variety of aesthetics. They consisted of the performances *the sound of m/y/our name...* and *One By One*[32] and the training sequence *a series of accidents.*[33] These studies were embodied comparative research. As McAllister-Viel writes:

> principles and practices inside of my body/voice can be understood in reference to each other; each tradition becomes an embodied context for learning the praxis of another tradition. Through trial and error as well as strategically designed interactions, the different trainings inside of me can interface. These combinations create different body knowledges from which I am able to develop alternative methods and models for training my voice. (2009a:174)

In each study I applied this principle of interfacing. I explored a wide variety of 'ways the performer will use their voice' within the context of a single performance/training event. My justification of using myself as test subject is that this 'interfacing' requires a high degree of embodied experience within the methods to be compared. Due to the monetary and logistical restrictions of this study, I was the most logical subject.[34] Creating a performance rather than a training sequence within which to test these questions about training, was essential. To do this research only in the field of training would exclude dramaturgical and organisational questions within which many of the aesthetic assumptions, which I aim to uncover, are embedded. To work only on training would have been to repeat the mistakes of the past where trainings discovered seemingly universal principles which are untransferrable to a performance context (especially one in another performance style). I propose that testing potential principles within the complexity of a

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[32] It should be noted that although these performances had great relevance in my own artistic development, in this document I will analyse this work not for its artistic content but rather for the questions raised and the directions suggested.

[33] *A series of accidents* was actually the first practical application where I worked as a pedagogue instead of as a performer. It is however included in the 'Explorations' for the clarity of the general flow of this document and timeline. As the initial application of methods within a training context, it was very much an exploration and formative in nature in contrast with the later 'Applications' which were exploring methods and exercises which had been developed to a much greater extent.

[34] The next section, 'Practitioner history' describes the other qualifications which make me an appropriate person to conduct this research.

postdramatic performance with multiple aesthetic shifts is the necessary context for uncovering assumptions.

McAllister-Viel's methodology forms the basis of this study, but her model only partially serves this research, as it compares only two training methods. This narrow focal point provides focus and promises concrete results, yet this binary does not represent well what a contemporary performer will have to do 'in the real world.' Few performers are moving between such distinct methods as, for example, Korean p'ansori singing and Kristin Linklater technique. Most of us are moving in a 'grey zone,' somewhere between many aesthetics.[35] Her approach of conceptualising two modes of training as related (existing in a polarity) rather than contradictory (dualistic) is an important starting point. However, when extended to embrace a larger spectrum of training methods, its strategies become limited. From personal experience, I know that translating from one culturally specific model to another still leaves many assumptions intact and can even develop them, as it is these culturally-coded markers which help you orient yourself.[36] The skill of this binary interfacing can also assist within these two contexts but does not necessarily offer articulated or reflexive strategies to meet a third approach. Hence, this inquiry requires multiplicity. As a metaphor, this study is not about translating from one language to the other but rather to uncover what is the skill that allows one to more quickly learn a third.

In this aspect of the work, my mode of thinking takes inspiration from (though is not systematically based in) Noam Chomsky's inquiry into the formation of language. My study aims to create a training which can help the performer to learn 'new languages' of performance not through learning more than one specific language, but by looking to understand the (hypothetically) fundamental elements of language/training and consequently how we learn/create a new language/training.

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[35] McAllister-Viel's work focuses on how culture affects and intersects with voice training. In this thesis, while including culture, I choose rather to focus on what I call 'aesthetics.' When a performer is working across different forms, especially within the context of a single performance, I think it is more useful to conceptualise these shifts as aesthetic rather than cultural shifts (as they are not always both). This also attempts to separate the myriad of meanings and implications of culture as a large concept from the smaller context of how those cultural specifications affect a performance form.

[36] One example is in my PaR MA thesis work: 'Negotiating Presence', in which I compared the methods of Dah Theatre Research Centre (from the tradition of Eugenio Barba) and Phillip Zarrilli (kalarippayattu) and created an integrated training.

Chomsky proposes the idea of UG (universal grammar), in which he suggests that *all* languages are organised by some underlying principles and parameters (P&P) which order their construction. (1957).[37] UG is a transformational generative grammar: it offers a fixed number of rules which govern a fixed number of signs (letters, for example) which can be combined to create an infinite number of meanings. 'An elementary fact about the language faculty is that it is a system of discrete infinity.' (Chomsky 2005:11) This has evident parallels to the performer's work, where with a fixed number of body parts and a voice, the performer can create an infinite number of expressive forms. The significant shift in Chomsky's work, as opposed to his behaviourist predecessors, was that it focused on the syntactical (how language is put together) instead of the lexical (the different individual units of language).

> Syntax is the study of the principles and processes by which sentences are constructed in particular languages. Syntactic investigation of a given language has as its goal the construction of a grammar that can be viewed as a device of some sort for producing sentences of the language under analysis. (Chomsky 1957:11)

In performance there has been a similar shift, away from skills trainings (lexical, things you have to learn) to those based on principles (syntactical, existing properties of life which one can be made aware of and consequently use more efficiently). This study is, in this sense, syntactic, looking to uncover the *principles* and *prototypes* of how sound can be organised to make meaning, within the 'languages' of text, sound, song and everything in between. In addition to principles, I look to identify what I call 'attitudes,' which are conceptual approaches which can assist the performer applying the principles within different aesthetic contexts.

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[37] This argument for universality was initially and primarily grounded in the 'poverty of the stimulus' argument. 'The Poverty of the Stimulus argument was […] proposed by Noam Chomsky (1980) […] The essential claim is that human beings must have some form of innate linguistic capacity that provides additional knowledge to language learners. The argument is twofold: Firstly, in general conversation, speakers' mistakes are generally not attended to or corrected, meaning children are continually exposed to incorrect language that is often not identified as such. Because of interference from these incorrect encounters, children should not be able to reach an understanding of the rules that govern the language system. But, obviously, normal children develop complete, correct language. Additionally, if children do not hear sufficient positive input, or correct speech, they should have difficulties acquiring and using language. However, it can be demonstrated in some cases that an incomplete or incorrect input still yields a full and rich output, suggesting an internal, innate faculty to mediate and supplement the stimuli.' (Gullick 2007:38) I will not argue for the 'innateness' of the language learning capacity within the field of theatre trainings. However, I find his scientific argument for 'universality' proposes an interesting approach for unlocking question of translation; how to look underneath languages rather than at their most immediately evident elements.

In the 'Practical Applications,' consisting of: *February sessions, Bologna workshop/etudes* and *June etudes,* I developed my hypothetical UG training, the *method of vocal (re)actions.* The test subjects consisted of a wide range of individuals, from an award-winning performer to a businessman who had never done any voice training or performed before. The problematic of creating a UG training, is that it is, in a sense, impossible. Any exercise will necessarily have an aesthetic. In the past, many practitioners have taken the strategy of introducing universal principles in highly codified training methods which made the principles at work evident through extreme and rigorous repetition. As discussed above, this has often led to the problematic where performers are unable to extract the principles from the specifics of the form they were learned within. This study asks the question: is it possible to train universal principles *not* through an extreme form, but rather through a constant shifting of form? Can this shifting make the principles evident to the performer because the principles are the only red thread through a stylistically varied method? In addition, instead of a solely immersive and embodied technique, can introducing the performer to certain conceptual ideas equip them with the tools to meet and build new performance forms themselves?

At the end of the three years, the outputs of the practical sessions was shown in the Symposium. As a research event in itself, the Symposium proved an intriguing and successful form within which to present material, due to its flexibility, the possibility to include research of different natures and to interweave theory and practice in a dynamic relationship.

Practitioner history

My own trajectory of training identifies me as a performer located firmly within the eclectic postdramatic context and hence appropriate to conduct this study. I began at Vassar College (USA), where the acting methods were what could be loosely called American Stanislavski technique. In 2001 I was introduced to companies working in the legacy of Grotowski through Odin Teatret, Denmark and the CPR in Wales. Since then I have completed a PaR MA with Phillip Zarrilli at Exeter University and

worked professionally with several experimental companies. Currently I am co-founder of d-moor produksjoner (Norway) with Jørn Wimpel.[38] Within the thesis period I have been involved in sessions at MXAT (Stanislavski's school), various workshops at The Grotowski Institute, John Britton's 2010 workshop in London, and a Viewpoints workshop in Oslo in 2011. In addition, I have personally met and/or worked with Cicely Berry, Kristin Linklater, Tara McAllister-Viel, Hans-Thies Lehmann, Eugenio Barba, Grzegorz Bral, Jaroslaw Fret, Richard Schechner and several other of the practitioners/theorists whom I quote. My background thus gives me first hand and embodied knowledge of the practice I analyse.

My identity as a performer is nomadic: my work does not belong to or occur within the boundaries of one country or culture. This creates a *Verfremdungseffekt* between me and my training: I am constantly questioning the basis upon which my work is formed. This, along with a BA degree in anthropology, gives me a useful base for the kind of comparative and cross-cultural analysis needed here. In the trajectory of my career I am at a turning point. After ten years of work, it is time to reflect upon and synthesise my experience. My hope is that this subjective invested interest gives the study added validity. PaR is a holistic inquiry that requires a preparation on all levels; one must be psychologically 'ripe' to investigate one's own history unromantically, with rigor and a desire to draw conclusions.

Outputs

There are three main outputs of this study, having significance for the field.

1. The creation of a new 'method' – *the method of vocal (re)actions*.[39] This 'method' consists of interrelated principles, attitudes, exercises and terminology. These essential elements have been gathered in the Glossary (Appendix B). While the exercises were derived in a specific historical context and thus will need to be

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[38] Wimpel worked for seven years at the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards.
[39] I have chosen to use the word 'method' not to denote something fixed or final, but pragmatically, in order to make the historical connection to the method of physical actions.

altered and adapted for new contexts, the principles and attitudes have a wider application and longer potential shelf-life. These are:

Attitudes:
- Be a heretic
- Your voice is not about you
- See your voice

Principles:
- Vocal presence
- Vocal (re)action
- Action = form + flow

They have been determined by the criteria that they must function holistically - on *all levels of the pedagogical/training/performance event*. They were determined after being tested:
- Within training exercises
- As a pedagogical approach
- Within an etude/performance of a single aesthetic
- Within a performance which shifts between aesthetics
- As a model for understanding the relationship between the 'act' of performance and the 'reaction' of the audience

2. The creation of a new devised performance.

Often PaR performances remain within the context of the academy, fulfilling, as is appropriate, first and foremost the requirements placed on the form by its nature as research. In other words, if viewed without its theoretical contextualisation, it does not 'hold water' as a performance on its own. For this reason, many practitioners argue that PaR research has limited directly transferrable results to non-research contexts. I would argue that one of the main justifications for the legitimacy of PaR, is exactly to create such transferrable results. Thus, in this study it was crucial that one of the outputs be a performance that could also stand on its own outside an academic context.

3. The ongoing development of a website integrating video and written material. This can be found at:

http://ewb.dmoor.com/ELECTA/VOCAL_ACTION_RESEARCH.html.[40]

Documentation

Documenting work with the voice offers specific challenges. The issue in this context is multilayered, as the study includes theory and two forms of practice (training and performance), which require different forms of documentation and consideration. Firstly, there is a rift between 'academic' and 'professional' modes of writing about the voice. This was dramatically evidenced by the hot debate in *New Theatre Quarterly* throughout 1996–97, in which the academic Sarah Werner attacked the writing of the three leading ladies of Western voice training: Linklater, Berry and Rodenburg. Werner criticized these pedagogues for imbedding in *their texts between exercise descriptions,* many cultural and unfeminist assumptions (Werner 1996). In response, the practitioners criticised Werner for drawing assumptions about their work without having any solid experience of their methods in practice (1997). In her article, which attempted to rebuild the bridge between these factions, Jane Boston wrote:

> The language of academia has thus far proven inadequate to express and reflect the nuances of voice practices in contemporary theatre. The language of working practitioners, on the other hand, with its tendency towards the technical [here meaning the physiologically rather than theoretically technical], has appeared shallow. As a result, the debate has polarized and the terms of reference for each side have remained unknowable to the other. (1997:248, my insertion)

In the last 15 years, there have been several practitioner/theorists, such as McAllister-Viel, who are developing new integrated languages for this space

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[40] Currently this page is password protected. Name: vocal, password: action. For the purposes of evaluating the PhD, the video information from the website will be finalized as DVDs. In the written document, I will only reference the videos, images and texts which are primary to this research and can be found on DVD. The website, which represents the potential of the further extension of this research in a flexible form and is currently a work-in-progress, will include all possible hyperlinks, both to the research of this project as well as referenced external sources.

between practice and theory, finding precise theoretical ways to discuss embodied practice. The documentation of this study, however, requires something different. The aim of this work was to create a voice training. To document this, I necessarily require the image-rich instinctive language of the training studio. As Berry asserts 'We voice teachers are not talking theories' (1997:49). Linklater concurs:

> Had I written *Freeing Shakespeare's Voice* for an academic readership, the light-hearted liberties I take with psychology and dramaturgy, designed to enliven the actor's imagination, would have been replaced with humourless, well-documented, and copious footnotes. (1997:51-52)

The question becomes how to regulate, on the page, the relationship between theory and practice. How to make explicit to the reader my different modes of engagement as a writer? Rather than attempt to placate both camps by finding a single language which satisfies everyone, I instead propose a clear separation, allowing the languages of practice and theory to each exist in their full strength in their respective sections, and allow the organization of the document to create the bridges between. This thesis is three interwoven narratives which can function as a whole or individually. Chapters II and III are composed of mirror sections titled respectively, 'Source Traditions', 'Practical Explorations' and 'A method of vocal (re)actions.' The 'Source Traditions' sections make-up an analytical document, the 'Explorations' are reflective analysis of my own subjective practice and the 'Method' sections are a handbook for performers, employing visual prompts, direct and active language as well as the 'technical' descriptions of exercises. Chapters I and IV serve to contextualise the whole as a PaR thesis, providing the literary review, methodology, framing questions and concluding remarks. One implication of this choice is that the document is flexible, making itself potentially available to a wider audience than the normal PhD thesis.

The second problematic of writing about the voice is the difficulties of writing a linear document about practice. Most pedagogues insist on the individuality of each performer's voice and how this necessarily affects how and what they need in terms of training. '[W]e, as voice teachers, have to be […] more flexible in the way that we work because there's no one method that works for everyone.'[41] This is facilitated by the common practice in most conservatoires of voice training being an

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[41] Plenary session anonymous comment at the conference: 'Voice in British Actor and Performance Training'. Recorded in the booklet of the event, (Central School of Speech and Drama 2000:63).

individual study (and hence flexible and performer specific), in contrast to, for example, movement which is almost always taught in groups. Paradoxically, this individuality is not mirrored in written documentation of training. In books, pedagogues attempt to describe exercises 'for everyone,' often organising them in easily followable sequences. Although these books can greatly assist performers, they do not in any way serve as an accurate documentation of a training situation. Neither are they able to offer that kind of instinctual improvisation with exercise order and introduction, which the voice pedagogue offers the student, attempting to guide them to their next 'break-through.' I have never heard of anyone who reached any true catharsis through working with a voice book. As Boston writes:

> Part of the invisibility of this multi-layered understanding lies in the inadequacy of the writing on all sides, which cannot yet capture the subtleties of the practitioners' promptings as raw sound on the page, muscle memory in action, or the workings of the psyche in relation to the process of utterance. (1997:250)

Voice training describes a work with text, yet seemingly defies the written word.

> To write about the voice is a bit like writing about eating food.
> It means to bring the sensual experiences of the body: the oral experience of smelling, tasting and swallowing […] into the written realm, into an explicable mode [...] The voice does not function in a linear way. But rather in a spatial way [so…] one has to bring simultaneous/synchronous movements into a context that appears chronological […] So this isn't merely an act of storytelling but also an act of translation that serves the purpose to be acceptable for the linear-oriented mind filter and to become spatial (Gabriel 2011)

Is it possible that an alternative form of documentation can offer the performer a greater chance to understand, from a document, as they would from a teacher, not only the voice exercises *but the process of employing them?*

Supplementing writing with video records (which is of course necessary in a contemporary context) only partially answers this question. As Rye writes of a problem common to all practice as research:

> if our practice is to function effectively as research beyond the experience of the immediate performance we have to find types of document that can speak about this inherent paradox: that is, documents that do not suggest an unproblematic transparency between the live event and its record and therefore that the two cannot be conflated. (Rye 2003:2)

How can the documentation of this study highlight - in the text - intertextuality, holes, the space between, and - in the video - the messiness, viscerality and fragility of any training session or performance? The chapter organisation discussed above, is the attempt, in written form, to give the reader multiple entry points to the work. Through employing different forms of video documentation, I make evident the necessarily subjective eye of the camera and highlight how this can be used to give different views of a body of work. Static camera continuous shot footage of some events allows the viewer the greatest objectivity and freedom to gauge for themselves the content. Highly edited and commentated clips explore how this multimedia approach to documentation can allow the viewer an insight into the thinking behind the practical material. This has particular significance in the potential of video as a teaching tool.

The further expansion of this documentation project, which will reach beyond the thesis period, is to create a website, in which video, text and image can increase this fluidity and allow for the research to be an evolving reference point rather than a fixed document which immediately becomes historically contextualised and limited. A crucial element of a website is that the reader's path through the material cannot be fully controlled: they will move between the different media sparked by their own instinct and interest. In live voice training (as discussed above) the voice pedagogue is continuously shifting and adjusting their approach and methods depending on the needs of the performer in the moment. This can, of course, not be replicated by a written document. However, the active position the performer takes in navigating a website is closer to this improvisation of the live session. In this way, the reader almost takes on the role of a self-pedagogue, creating their own pathway through the material.

In a wider context, the documentary element of this project looks to build on existing scholarship, and help develop models of innovative documentation. Steve Dixon in his article 'Digits, Discourse and Documentation' argues for such multimedia as the necessary form for future performance documentation.

> 1. digital multimedia offers a significant new direction for the documentation and critical analysis of performance processes and products 2. Computer theory and recent discourses on hypertextuality are inextricably linked, both with notions of performance and with parallel debates in the fields of literary

and performance theory. 3. Drama is not only ideally suited to hypermedia remediation, but is already an inherent component of the computer - human interface. 4. Academic writing is intrinsically hypertextual, and its remediation into an audiovisual hypermedia form clarifies and contextualizes the critical analysis of visual artforms. (1999:154)

He suggests that academic writings about art are perhaps most accurately represented through media forms such as DVDs or websites. Since he wrote this in 1999, the web has become an even more integral part of pedagogy, research and daily life. For these reasons, a website is both the most appropriate future form for this research and the one which will allow it to most immediately interface with young students and researchers and potentially adapt to the changing future.

CHAPTER II

VOCAL PRESENCE

Is there a single training which can train a performer for all aesthetics or do we need one for each style of performance? Are aesthetics just skin deep? Zarrilli asserts that

> Every time an actor performs, he or she implicitly enacts a 'theory' of acting – a set of assumptions about the conventions and style which guide his or her performance, the structure of actions which he or she performs, the shape that those actions take (as a character, role, or sequence of actions as in some performance art), and the relationship to the audience. (2002a:3)

Gordon agrees and for clarification proposes that all performance forms fit into six meta-theories. They range from: '1. realistic approaches to characterization: psychological truth' to '6. performance as cultural exchange: playing one's otherness' (2006:6) To this Zarrilli adds: *'performance as psychophysiological process: the embodiment and shaping of energy'* (2009:42), the category wherein his practice falls. He goes further to suggest that a change in 'theory' alters the very 'nature of the self' and that different training models are created to help the 'process of actualizing a particular mode of embodiment or inhabitation of action within an aesthetic form' (2009:41). He suggests that aesthetics are not just skin deep, but rather related to *both* an altered inner state and an outer worldview. Following this logic, when a performer transitions from one aesthetic to another they do not just change how they move their limbs or the language they speak, but they shift their inner approach to presence. Is it different to be present in Butoh and opera? In contrast, Barba states that there is a level which is pre-expressive and 'independent of the director's poetics and/or aesthetic choices.'[42] (1991:53) In other words, presence (either innate or trained) is something which, once mastered, will shine through anything one does, including any performance style. Which of these hypotheses most accurately describes presence in a multicultural and mutli-aesthetic reality? Or is there a third option?

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[42] Barba and Zarrilli agree on many counts and their two proposals here, although set up oppositionally, are not necessarily contradictory.

1. SOURCE TRADITIONS

In this section I look at how presence is understood within three historical psychophysical trainings through analysing their different versions/understandings of *a method of physical actions*. I look at presence not in isolation, but within the context of action because presence is the first step of the action-reaction cycle and it is this cycle which most concretely connects the act of being present to the physical and vocal manifestation of that presence in an aesthetic form (the action). I look to determine what aspects of the training or understanding of terminology changed over time and in relation to what. How was presence training related to the aesthetic style it was serving? I have chosen to analyse the methods of Stanislavksi, Grotowski and Lindh, three practitioners who provide significant contributions to the discussion of action and who also are associated with three of the main traditions a contemporary performer might work within today, respectively, naturalism, 'physical theatre' and devising.[43] Methodologically, I look to see these trainings not as isolated and inflexible models, but as fluid systems born from and in constant dialogue with their historical moment.

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[43] These three categories are loose and debatable. Naturalism and physical theatre are arguably aesthetic traditions while devising describes more an attitude towards how to develop/create work. My aim is not to banalise any of the above by placing them within a narrow definition. In this discussion, my desire is rather to focus on how the performer experiences the process of 'becoming present.' This shifts markedly depending upon what role the performer has in creating material as well as embodying it. These three 'categories' of performance aesthetic are merely markers to delineate what I see as three main shifts in an understanding of presence. In naturalism, presence is connected to 'filling out' a prewritten character. In 'physical theatre', it is commonly a strict physical score (often created in collaboration with a director) which is in focus and which the performer must 'fill'. In devising, 'presence' has the most flexible and problematic definition, as it can be any element of the form – narrative, voice or body which is placed in focus and which the performer must 'fill' as well as the fact that presence also becomes intertwined with discussions regarding ideas of 'authenticity' which are connected to the individual personality of the performer.

Konstantin Stanislavski[44]

As mentioned in the Chapter I, Stanislavski was the first to coin the term 'psychophysical.' His emphasis in the mind/body balance was on an inner technique. This arose from the very practical reality that such training did not exist before his time. It was only in the early 1900s that science began to map out the territory of the subconscious and a proposal of an inner technique gained validity. Stanislavski's *method of physical actions* was influenced by the new idea, proposed by James and Lange, that 'the physiological manifestation of the emotion *is* the emotion' (Gordon 2006:24). This means that emotions cannot be called at will by the individual as was previously thought, but that they are the byproduct of physical action. Thus the job of the actor was to discover the correct line of physical actions which would elicit the desired emotion. Stanislavski wrote:

> things of the spirit are evanescent; it is difficult to fix them firmly. We cannot make sound 'rails' out of them; we need something more 'material.' Most appropriate for this purpose are physical objectives, for they are executed by the body, which is incomparably more solid than our feelings. After you have laid your rails of physical objectives, get aboard and start off to new lands - in other words, the life of the play. You will be moving along, not staying in one place or thinking about things with your intellect; you will take *action*. (1961:234-5)

Stanislavski's system helped actors to be present, with both body and mind, in the text of the performance.

> Psycho-physicality basically alludes to the fact that your body and your psyche are trained together to achieve a sense of inner-outer co-ordination. This means that what you experience internally is immediately translated into an outer expression, and [...] what your body manifests physically has a direct and acknowledged affect on your psychological landscape. (Merlin 2007:18)

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[44] In 2008 Jean Benedetti came out with a new translation of Stanislavski's key texts. These awoke a lot of debate regarding the original translation choices of Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood. In this section I will, however, refer mostly to her translations, it is they which have shaped an understanding of Stanislavksi in the West until recently. Though not directly quoted, the following analysis has been influenced by three more recent secondary research sources that it is needed to mention here. Firstly, Vasily O. Toporkov's book *Stanislavski in Rehearsal* (1998) offered an interesting first-hand account which set Stanislavski's own writing in relief. Secondly, while most scholarship on Stanislavski focuses on the psychic elements of the training, such as 'emotional memory,' Paul Allain's 2012 edited DVD/booklet *Andrei Droznin's Physical Actor Training* is a concrete example of the intense physical component of the training. This set these older narratives in a new context and shed light on possible reasons as to why the singular aspects of Stanislavski's method which have survived have not successfully adapted to a contemporary context. John Gillett's *Acting on Impulse, Reclaiming the Stanislavskian Approach* (2007) is an interesting, if limited, contemporary example of a practitioner attempting to 'translate' Stanislavski to the reality of the present. It highlighted certain problematic areas which I kept in mind in approaching my own translation.

In his first book, *An Actor Prepares* (1937), Stanislavski breaks down this overall aim into a step-by-step guide. He writes 'You have learned that *all action in the theatre must have an inner justification, be logical coherent and real.'* (1936:46 emphasis in the original) In this discussion we will focus on how Stanislavski suggests that the actor craft this 'real.' Firstly, there is the concept of the 'given circumstances' - the back-story of the character and what happened just before the scene begins and in it. With the help of the imagination, the actor trains the ability to make these circumstances as real as possible. Secondly, Stanislavski trained an awareness of and ability to provoke impulse, which is the initial element of a physical action. This was trained through a sensitization to real things in the space (through awareness exercises) and fictitious stimuli (the actors created objectives which are previously determined through textual analysis). These impulses are regulated by the magic *if*:

> *if* acts as a lever to lift us out of the world of actuality and into the realm of imagination. (1936:46)

The 'real,' in this sense, is born from the performer's imagination. Their 'circle of attention,' a spotlight which can widen to include the whole room, or narrow in to include only a hand, was Stanislavski's metaphor for the action of the performer controlling what they allow into their sensory awareness. In a Stanislavskian world this circle does not cross the footlights of the theatre and includes the inner imaginary world the performer has created through rehearsal. In a naturalistic context, this metaphor assisted the actor in opening their awareness. In a contemporary context, it becomes evident how this idea also developed the actor's ability to filter *out* aspects of the current moment (such as the audience or the 'not-realness' of the scenography, if it would hinder their ability to be in the imaginary reality of the play).

In the last years of his career Stanislavski created the method of Active Analysis, a practical strategy of rehearsal which would integrate the analytical and physical elements of his work more organically. It is a method which stimulates the actor to 'think on their feet'; to create their physical actions by doing instead of constructing them beforehand. In this way he extended his concept of the psychophysical to be a rehearsal strategy (one which creates a flow between the

work of the brain and that of the body). The method also has built into it a system of 'checks and balances' where the improvisations of the actors are analyzed through discussion, in order to check if they are truthful to the text. The interesting points to follow as we trace this method outside the realm of naturalism are: how is a sense of logic and coherence maintained when there is no structure of a narrative to return to, and without a play-text which creates a selection criteria for 'creative' and 'uncreative' impulses, how is impulse understood?

Jerzy Grotowski[45]

Grotowski developed Stanislavski's method within a context of a metamorphosizing aesthetic which challenged the primacy of the dramatic text and prioritized an immediate physicality of the actor.

> The art of the actor is *not* necessarily limited to realistic situations [...] daily life. Sometimes, the higher the level and the quality of this art, the farther it distances itself from this realistic foundation, entering into realms of exceptionality: the living stream of pure impulses. (Richards 1995:101)

Yet when not grounded in the logic of a play-text, finding a 'true' stream of impulses is complex. Grotowski makes the following clarification:

> What we must immediately understand is that which physical actions are not. For example: *they are not activities.* Activities in the sense: to clean the floor, wash the dishes, smoke the pipe. These are not physical actions, they are activities. And where people think to work according to the 'method of physical actions,' they all the time make this confusion [...] But an activity can become a physical action. For example, you ask me a very embarrassing question [...] so, you ask me this question and I stall for time. I begin then to

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[45] Due to the debates surrounding writing about Grotowski, this section must be contextualised. Grotowski did not personally publish a great deal of theoretical writings about his own work. The practical research was often conducted with small groups in isolated and protected contexts. See the writings of Lisa Wolford Wylam, 1996 and 1997 with Schechner and the 2008 TDR issue she co-edited with Kris Salata for several poignant examples of how this has led, over the whole period of Grotowski's work, to both highly detailed research and great misunderstandings of the work outside of its intimate circles. This TDR issue also includes some newly translated texts by Grotowski and others recently written by his close colleagues which provide hereto undocumented insights into his later work. The politics of who was asked to contribute to this journal issue reflect strongly the still hot debate surrounding who is 'allowed' to critically reflect on Grotowski. I do not personally agree with this idea of exclusive 'rights,' however, for the purpose of maintaining the desired focus of this argument, I will in this thesis refer to primary sources, mainly to the writings of Grotowski himself, Thomas Richards his chosen 'heir,' and my own experiences with Wimpel who worked with Richards over seven years.

> solidly prepare my pipe. Now my activity becomes a physical action, because it becomes my weapon: 'Yes I am actually very busy, I must prepare my pipe' (cited in Richards 1995:74)

Often Grotowski did not begin from as concrete psychological intentions as the ones used in this example. More commonly in his work, impulses and actions were more abstract in their outer form though just as precise in inner intention, as those mentioned above. His techniques assisted the performer in finding impulses not from conscious thought (such as, 'what does my character want'), but from the subconscious, memory, or colleagues. He was looking for impulses connected more deeply than our logical brain, in what he called the reptile brain.

> I began to ask myself how all this is related to the primary energy, how - through diverse techniques elaborated in the traditions - access to the ancient body was looked for. (Grotowski in Wolford 1999:298)

To do this, the performer's potential performative circle of attention needed to be increased, encompassing also past or ancient realities which lay deep within the performer.

Physical improvisational structures were created through which the performer could search for this new area of impulse. Thomas Richards writes about the methods of such work:

> I led the elements of work in which I could improvise spontaneously within a structure. In these elements, such as training and 'games in movement,' the need for a score of physical actions did not come into play. I was still concentrating on the source, working at the root where the unknown might appear. (1995:73)

They worked with improvisation but it was not completely free or borderless. A concrete example from Grotowski's early Polish period is Molik's work on 'finding the unknown' (discussed in I.1). Through using structured actions as a starting point, they looked for the destruction of structure and the creation of new form. Grotowski continued this search for contact throughout his life, working in more complex and obscure areas such as ritual practices, the performer's personal memories and, at the end, Afro-Caribbean songs. Whereas Stanislavski's actors were attempting to come close to the ideal manifestation of a play-text, Grotowski's performers were searching for deep impulses and their embodiment through specific physical or vocal structures. For Grotowski, a system of Active Analysis in which director and actors

analysed a scene was not possible, as an actor's intellectualization of their work might ruin it. Instead the responsibility of structuring was Grotowski's.

> Grotowski here remarked that now we should not structure quickly. Now we must recognize that some wild animal had come into the space with its organicity. It should not be trapped into the structure too soon, or we might just limit its natural drive. The animal should arrive at its natural drive, and the *director should know the precise way in which he must encircle the wild animal in order not to frighten it away*. (Richards 1995:63, my emphasis)

The job of analysing whether something 'worked' or not, lay with Grotowski. In Opole he used to sit in the corner for hours, watching, saying nothing except 'I believe' or 'I do not believe'.[46] Performers developed a sense of truth through intensive repetition and feedback, rather than a process of intellectual analysis.

In his Art as Vehicle period,[47] Grotowski made some very specific explorations into the flow of the voice within a song. Here the song was used as a structure through which new non-psychological impulses could be found. Richards writes about singing for Grotowski:

> in the beginning as I sang the song, still being unsure of its melody, [Grotowski said] my way of singing was very alive; modest and alive because there was a true action: I was searching for the song. But the moment I thought I knew the song, I started to sing as if I knew it, and there was no more action [...] Grotowski told me that there was a way to sing in which the searching never died. (1995:85 my insertion)

It could be argued that this *search for the song* is an example of the song as act, not as aesthetic interpretation or psychological storytelling. It is the place in which the meaning of the form is being discovered in real time. This included an awareness that to act requires that one takes in everything that is part of the reality of the moment. Grotowski writes:

> there is also a jet plane passing over the work building. And you, with your song, your melody, you are not alone: the fact is there. The sound of the engine is there. If you sing as if it is not, that means that you are not in harmony. You must find a sonic equilibrium with the jet plane and, against

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[46] *Jerzy Grotowski: An Attempted Portrait*, by Maria Zmarz-Koczanowicz, TVP S.A./Arte, 1999, 53', held in the archive of The Grotowski Institute.

[47] This was the last period of his work. At this stage, the work entered a period of isolation and deep research. Tatinge Nascimento describes the approach in this period as follows: '[The]...performers engaged mode of action is no longer acting, but the actual doing of the character's journey as a means to gain insight.' (2008:156)

everything, anyway keep well your melody. (Grotowski in Wolford 1997:297)

What Grotowski speaks about here is unique, especially when working within the context of music. In classical music a singer is always looking for the right notes, timing and interpretation, honing their ability to repeat the song identically every time. Referring to Balk, Barker writes of how the role of the singer is perceived:

> the singer's only recourse to 'truth' lies in an understanding of the score [...] The singer's motto is 'In score we trust,' [...] Singers are often pejoratively termed re-creators, a sort of bureaucratized copying machine. (Barker 2004:79)

The primacy of the score in classical singing traditions is similar to the primacy of the text in text-based performance; in the training of both the focus may easily over-emphasize work on form and under develop an understanding of attention to the moment. In this way Grotowski's approach is innovative, drawing a postdramatic principle out of traditional techniques: act in relation to the reality of the moment, allow both the mundane plane noise and the memories of your ancestors to affect you. Grotowski opens up the awareness of the performer; their *presence* is now defined *in relation to,* not a fictitious theatre text or a predetermined musical score, but to all the external sounds/movements in the space.[48]

Ingemar Lindh

Lindh was a Swedish practitioner who trained with Decroux in corporeal mime and then went on to develop his own individual research, which moved entirely away from dramatic texts and structures towards an open flow of alive improvisation. He was greatly influenced by his meetings and work with Grotowski in the earlier stages of the latter's work. Lindh researched the principle of collective improvisation.

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[48] Although this may appear simple, it is actually an extremely challenging shift to make. I trained initially within classical choral singing, opera and Shakespearean plays. It has taken me years to undo habits learned in order to embrace this idea and its various consequences. When asked to approach my singing with this awareness, it elicited in me a sense of terror and confusion; I was so bound up in listening for the 'right' note that I could not hear anything else, not even myself. In the beginning, the only way to break through this 'sound wall' was if I could manage, through a sheer act of will, to scream or cry in the middle of a song in order to rip myself out of its pattern and to re-establish my existence in the moment.

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Outside of the context of any set structure, Lindh looked to isolate the process of flow in order that it could be applied to different contexts. While both Stanislavski and Grotowski worked within or towards forms which gave them a criteria for the selection of impulses, Lindh attempted another way. Yet his improvisation was not completely free either. He maintained the idea of action as a phrase connected to sense. Camilleri, in his article 'Collective Improvisation The Practice and Vision of Ingemar Lindh' gives the following description of Lindh's conception of a phrase:

> [A phrase has] a beginning, a development with a precise direction, and an end. A precise action is always a vehicle of sense. In a context the sense acquires signification, and at that point the actor is capable of improvising, that is, capable of creating physical and vocal themes […] and changing and developing them to encounter the world around them and adapt to a new situation without losing the sense. (Camilleri 2008:88)

Lindh places focus on awareness of the moment to an even greater extent than Grotowski; it is from this reality that the performer draws impulse *and* creates the *form* of action. Whereas Stanislavski used the text as a mirror to see if his actions had sense, and Grotowski himself was the judge of truth, Lindh uses the moment as his mirror.

> The resistance to predetermined scores […] presents a vertiginous space where the only navigational coordinate is processual and experiential. In this dimension, the only 'motivation' to act is the imperative to act in the here and now. Concepts such as 'intention,' 'precision,' 'truth,' 'memory,' 'repetition,' indeed of 'theatre' itself as a practice, are placed in a position that demands reconsideration. (Camilleri 2008:95)

Pietruska, Lindh's collaborator, comments on an important choice of terminology:

> Intention in our work terminology indicates this small movement of mind that is at the beginning of every act and indicates an act's mental direction […] *Intention is prior to impulse* (which is physical, involving directly nervous and muscular systems) and can be concretized both through stillness (non-movement) and movement. (2007 in Camilleri 2008:92 my emphasis)

She suggests that for the contemporary theatre a development is needed beyond focusing on the physicality of the actor when looking for work with impulse.

> For Ingemar it was logical not to return to the physicality of the actor; this had already been done and it could only be applied. That which he sought to reach was that which was not yet accomplished: to work directly on mental precision. (Giuntoni 2004 in Camilleri 2008:92)

What could stimulate an impulse Lindh named 'senso:'

'Senso' could be anything from a mental image or memory to a tactile feeling or gesture, as long as the image, memory, feeling, or gesture has some kind of psychophysical resonance that is recognized by the bodymind in the here and now of occurrence. (Camilleri 2008:86)[49]

The way in which Lindh widens an understanding of Stanislavski's circle of attention is significant. It liberates the idea of action as being merely a psychologically motivated activity or a deep impulse from the reptile brain, but that it could be *either*, as long as it is in relation to the here and now. Significant also is that the performers who worked with Lindh experienced a greater autonomy than Grotowski's actors. As Lindh was not working with a set form, such as text or song, he allowed the intentions of the performer to totally shape the action in the moment.

This section has looked to map out how each of these models of action has developed in its particular historical moment. The question remains, how can these models be useful today? In a contemporary context, the methods of Stanislavski, Grotowski and Lindh are often in practice considered dissimilar, even contradictory: oil and water that do not mix. For example, I currently teach in two conservatoires. In one, to invoke the name of Stanislavski is sacrilegious, whereas in the other his method guides the syllabus and Grotowski is a name to be avoided. On close inspection, all three methods explored here are actually based in very similar ideas of the flow of action and reaction. What is it in each method that binds it within a specific historical/aesthetic context? It is their varied understanding of what can trigger an action: what Lindh describes as intention and impulse. I suggest that it is an expanded circle of attention (to use Stanislavski's term) that facilitates the inclusion of these new categories of impulse and consequently (aesthetic) action. In conclusion, it is the widening of this area *before* action that allows the performer to enter into a greater variety of performance selves.

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[49] Camilleri describes further that Lindh made a clear and important distinction between what he called 'senso', which can be translated in English as 'sense', and 'signficato'. Pietruska clarifies that: 'The senso of an accomplished act by the actor is [...] immanent to one's own action; thus belonging to the present. In contrast, significato does not belong to the present but to a subsequent reading of the present.' (Camilleri 2008: 87). In this sense, the actor must focus on 'making sense' while it is the job of the audience to interpret, to give that 'sense' a signification.

Mihaly Czikszentmihalyi as translator

I propose that in order for a concept to work as a translator between different versions of a common idea (in this case the method of physical actions) it needs to be wide enough to encompass the differences between the individual systems, allowing them to co-exist rather than contradict. In addition, its terminology should assist the performer in finding anchor points which help them to navigate the space between. The existing models of a method of physical actions discussed above, are laden with too many associations and preconceptions to be successful in themselves as a basis for a 'new' training. In order to find a more neutral model, I looked outside the field of performance. Taking with me the idea of 'flow,' a central term within all three practitioners' work used to describe a successful action-reaction cycle (ie. to be 'in the flow'), I turned to positive psychology. Here I found the work of Mihaly Czikszentmihalyi, who was looking to understand human happiness, which he calls - flow.

> The optimal state [...] is one in which [...] psychic energy - or attention - is invested in realistic goals, and when skills match the opportunities for action [...] 'Flow' is the way people describe their state of mind when consciousness is harmoniously ordered, and they want to pursue whatever they are doing for its own sake. (1990:6)

This description is reminiscent of how the above practitioners, and many others, describe the highly desired state for the performer of being: 'creative,' 'alive,' or most simply, 'when things work.' Looking closer, his model for making life choices is surprisingly similar to the method of physical actions; suggesting that life is a continuous work of following goals and reacting to reality. He describes this process as a graph. The channel of flow is represented as a diagonal corridor between the increasing axes of skill and challenge. When the challenges of a situation are too great the individual feels anxiety (such as an amateur tennis player trying to play at Wimbledon). When the challenges are not great enough for the skills at hand boredom ensues (like a Wimbledon champion playing the amateur).

Why the complexity of consciousness increases as a result of flow experiences
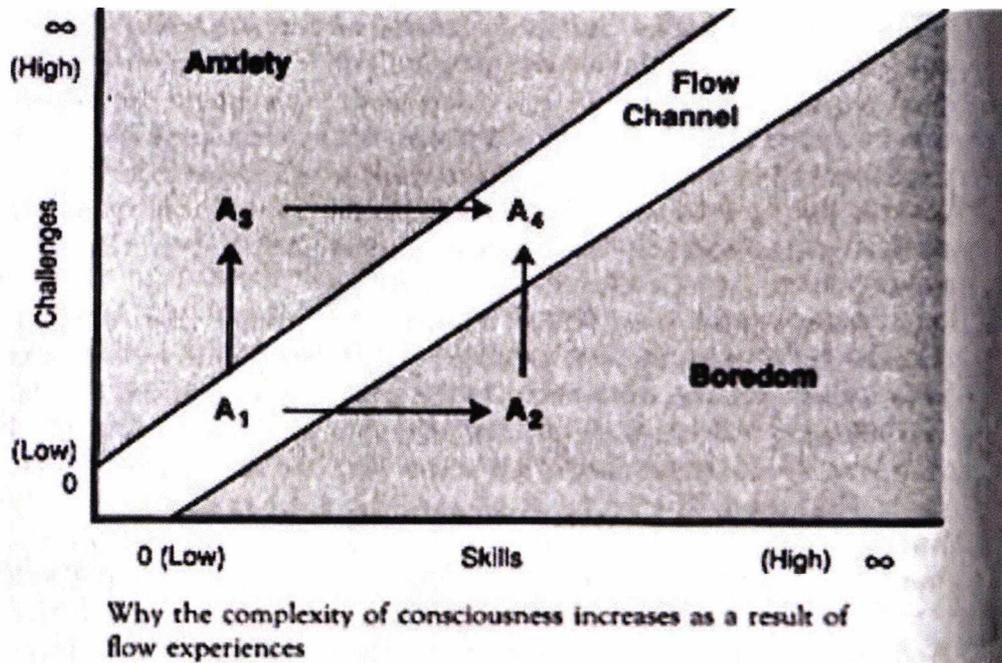
Figure 5. Flow graph

From Mihaly Czikszentmihalyi's book *FLOW The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. 1990 p. 74.

To remain in a state of flow, the individual must make choices that challenge them enough in order to stimulate the development of new skills but not enough to create a sense of panic. Remaining in a state of flow is a constant re-evaluation of the present moment and a successful assessment of how you, with your specific skills and blocks, can act.[50] The individual's circle of attention includes everything in the moment. So far, this description of flow appears applicable to a wide variety of performance styles. In the following paragraphs I will compare Czikszentmihalyi's model with the key points of the other versions of flow discussed in this chapter. I will test how this method from positive psychology can work as a translator between aesthetic realities.

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[50] Significant when examining this concept as a model for performer training, is that in it the individual develops new skills not as a result of the goal ' I want to learn a new skill,' but rather as a *by-product* of being in flow. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter III.

In the first instance, I take Stanislavski. In the following table I juxtapose Czikszentmihalyi's description of the process of flow with Stanislavski's steps to building a believable action on stage.[51]

Czikszentmihalyi Action in the context of reality	Stanislavski Action in the context of the *what if...*
(a) to set an overall goal and as many subgoals as are realistically feasible	*to find the superobjective and the objectives of each beat of action*
(b) to find ways of measuring progress in terms of the goals chosen	*do reflective analysis after improvisations: do your improvised actions make sense with the character you play?* *in the moment of improvisation react to:* • *the obstacles your stage partners present you with* • *the changing given circumstances in the moment*
(c) to keep concentrating on what one is doing, and to keep making finer and finer distinctions in the challenges involved in the activity	*defining and refinding the smaller objectives of each beat and line through rehearsal*
(d) to develop the skills necessary to interact with the opportunities available	*rehearal*
(e) to keep raising the stakes if the activity becomes boring	*rehearsal!*
(Czikszentmihalyi 1990:97)	(Italics are my approximations)

Here it can be seen how closely the two parallel each other. For example, the terminology of 'goals' and 'objectives' is clearly transferrable. Cziszentmihalyi's description of the specification of goals corresponds easily to Stanislavski's breakdown of the superobjective into smaller objectives. While they describe the same process, Czikszentmihalyi's terminology is more neutral and thus applicable in both this and a wider context.

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[51] If read by row, the column makes clear the parallels between the authors.

Czikszentmihalyi's description of how to *choose* a goal also corresponds with Stanislavski.

Czikszentmihalyi Advice to the individual	Stanislavski Advice to the actor
Do not get above the channel of flow where you do not have the skills to complete the task, as this will result in a feeling of stress.	Every objective must be within the powers of an actor; otherwise it will not lead him on, indeed it will frighten him, paralyze his feelings, and instead of emerging itself it will send in its stead mere clichés, craft acting [...]
Do not get below the channel of flow where your skills are more than what is needed to complete the task at hand, then you will get bored.	the same thing occurs when an objective raises doubts, uncertainty, weakening or even destroying the striving for one's creative will.
(Italics are my approximations)	(Stanislavski 1961:81)

With this analysis of one's skills and the tasks at hand, Czikszentmihalyi provides the performer with a system of checks and balances which functions outside the context of predefined story, directorial vision or aesthetic. A performer can evaluate, within any given task, naturalistic or stylistic, their potential range of action based on balancing between what bores them and what scares them.

In (re)reading Grotowski (beyond an analysis of the action cycle, which would be similar to the charts above) Czikszentmihalyi serves as a translator also in an additional area. Grotowski focused on developing the performer's instinctive ability to understand when they are flowing. He invoked flow as opposed to Stanislavski's construction of it.[52] Czikszentmihalyi's model demystifies this process without making it mundane, thus allowing it to be more accessible to those who might not share Grotowski's other ethical and spiritual beliefs which necessarily colour his choice of terminology and approach. Richards discussed how Grotowski told him that the song was 'dead' when Richards sang as if he knew it already. This can sound cryptic. In Cziszentmihalyi's terms, Richards was allowing himself to fall into boredom, not finding the way to sing where he was challenging himself, this place where the 'true action' had occurred. In reflecting on my own work within a

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[52] It should be noted that in different periods, such as in Objective Drama, Grotowski worked with a method very close to Stanislavski's, even beginning his lessons from Stanislavski's book (Wolford 1994:54).

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'Grotowskian-paradigm,' supplementing it with the terminology of Czikszentmihalyi has allowed me to have a more specific and concrete relationship to my own flow as something related to myself in the moment rather than to some kind of spiritual 'inspiration.' The sensation of flow is still mystical and indescribable, but Czikszentmihalyi offers concrete tools that help me negotiate my journey in and out of this state as well as being more able to communicate this process to others.[53]

Lindh's methods are the most 'modern' of the three practitioners discussed and his descriptions of intention, impulse and action also fit perhaps most neatly with Czikszentmihalyi's. While Stanislavski and Grotowski explore flow within the context of a tight form (text and song), Lindh allows the flow to create form, just as Czikszentmihalyi's method assists an individual in making choices which shape the form of life. In reading Czikszentmihalyi and Lindh together, what is noteworthy is the specification of 'where an intention comes from,' if not character. Lindh writes about a special kind of attention that allows one to separate from a psychological understanding of intention.

> I have proposed the 'disinterested act' in order to clarify the difference between a psychological interpretation, and the act of listening to the psyche itself. The listening, in this case, means that one does not start from a psychological need, or a desire, in order to accomplish an act, but one reaches the will *(volunta)* in avoidance of wanting. In this way, one does the act 'in spite of oneself.' One can then reach beyond personal needs, beyond wanting and so called 'aware' motivations (Lindh 2010:123)

Czikszentmihalyi makes a similar assertion that 'when in flow, the individual feels as if they want to pursue whatever they are doing for its own sake' (1990:6); optimal experience does not mean selfishly following your ego, but rather a open dialogue with the challenges of life. In this sense Czikszentmihalyi's model is not limited to 'making sense' within the context of the 'individual as a character in their life' with psychological objectives. Rather it is able to function as well as an appropriate model within a postdramatic, non-character-based, context.

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[53] One specific example is when I took part in work sessions of the group Song of Songs, led by Sergei Kovalevich, a Russian director. He has no recognisable method beyond demanding presence in an extreme way in each moment of life, in training, cooking, cleaning etc. While most participants felt completely lost without a method and frustrated, I was able to make sense of the experience and to do things which the director responded positively to. Internally, I was using Czikszentmihalyi's criteria of flow to gauge my actions in each moment.

2. PRACTICAL EXPLORATIONS

The historical analysis showed that (the seemingly universal concept of) 'presence'was inextricably connected to an aesthetic context in each historical moment. Czikszentmihalyi's model widens an understanding of presence, encompassing the conceptions of previous models, and proving itself a useful metaphor for translation. He gives us a single aesthetic-neutral yet performance-moment specific term for presence: flow, as flow is essentially a state of being continuously present in action. The sense of movement, flexibility and relationship to a specific action (which will necessarily have its own aesthetic) inherent in the word 'flow' makes it a more specific term in this context of working across/between aesthetics than 'presence', which can have associations of immobility and singularity. This concept will serve as the basis for the practical work.

In order to make the bridge from theory to practice, this analysis needs to be consolidated into concrete concepts which can frame a performer's understanding. I propose such a model which offers a visual image of the action-reaction cycle and how it changes within different aesthetics. This clearly elucidates how the nature of stimulus, impulse and circles of attention shift.

Figure 6a. Action-reaction cycle
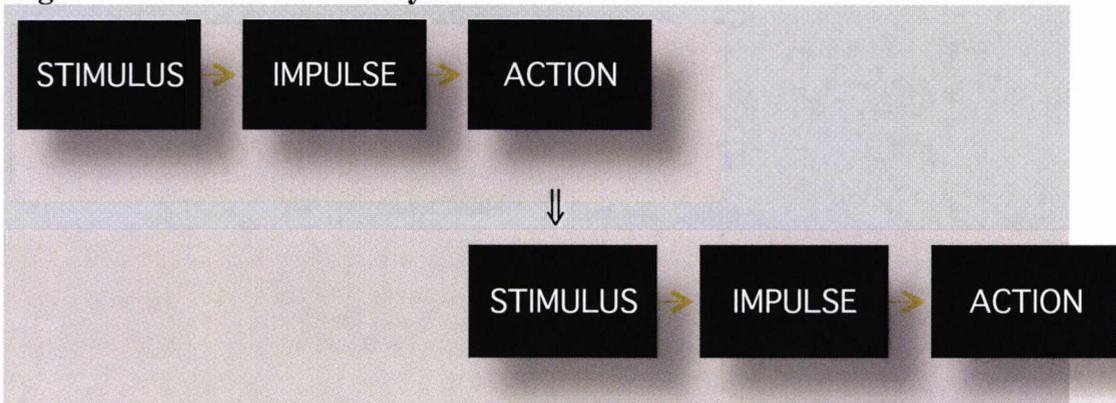
A stimulus causes an impulse, which creates an action which is then the stimulus for another impulse and another action. This cycle continues in a loop. (This looping is not pictured here but the pattern should be assumed to continue). The grey box suggests that this occurs within a single aesthetic logic and consequent circle of attention.

When occurring within one aesthetic, this cycle is relatively easy to understand. For example:

Figure 6b. Action-reaction cycle based on meaning of words
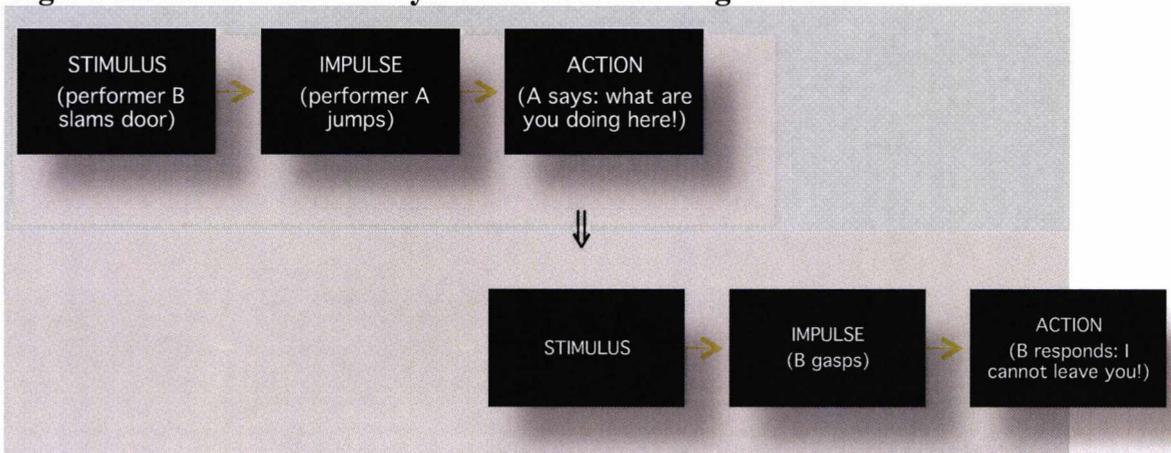
When there is a shift in aesthetic this becomes more complex.

Figure 6c. Action-reaction cycle across an aesthetic shift

This example shows a shift from a linear and text-based logic to a cycle of actions-reactions based in the instinctive meaning of sound.[54]

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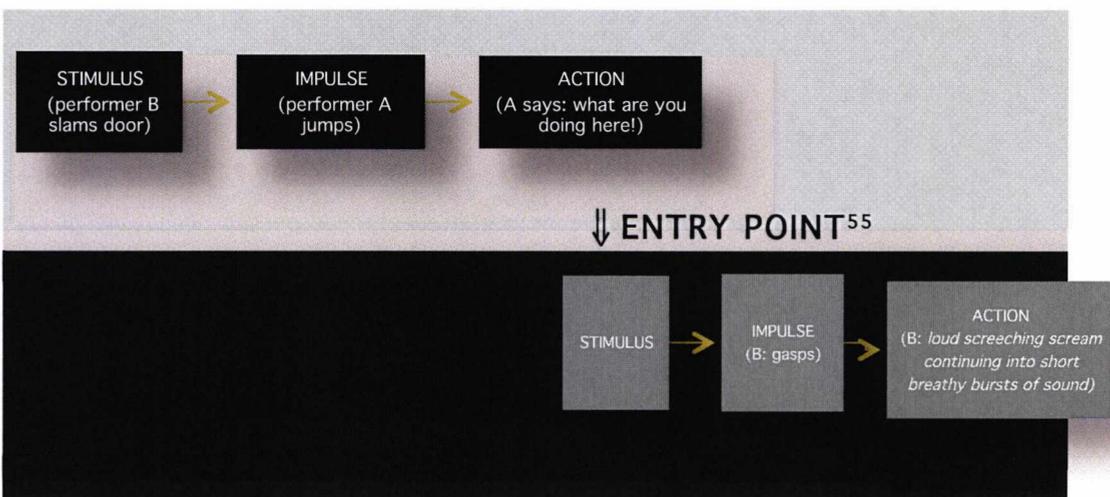
[54] The use of the term 'instinctive' will be further described in the following paragraphs.

[55] Entry point: the first impulse of a new action-reaction cycle. This is a crucial moment when shifting aesthetics as it requires the performer to find a stimulus available within the circle of awareness of the preceding action which can be channelled into an impulse which can be the entry point for a new aesthetic with its own circle of awareness. This is the easiest place to fall out of flow.

The practical studies focused on two main questions:

1. What is the nature of this *stimulus* ⇒ *impulse* ⇒ *action* flow within different aesthetics? What defines each kind of presence?

2. What occurs in the performer when shifting between aesthetics? How does the performer find the entry point to a new aesthetic?

In looking at these questions, a terminology for how sound makes meaning will be needed. In I.1 it became clear that as the as the spectrum of aesthetics gets wider, so does the variety of ways in which sound communicates, or in other words, *acts*. Words, for example, can be used to communicate information or be the rhythmic base of a new music composition. In this context, it is useful to remember the theories of Saussure who suggested that how language makes meaning is not fixed, but rather made up of two halves, the signifier and that which is signified. This relationship is fluid. 'The sign [unit of language] is the union of a form which signifies, which Sassure calls the *significant* (signifier), and an idea that is signified, the *signifié* (signified). (Culler 1976:28) The signifier is arbitrary, and thus can be connected to another *signified* to create another meaning. John Freeman, writing in the context of analysing performance, asserts that although it is the performers/director who create the signifiers of the performance, it is the audience who gives them significance:

> Each and every performative moment is a sign comprised of a signifier (the image) and a signified (the concept). Within its own specific frame a signified of its own small referent is offered, whereas when the spectator begins (or is allowed) to add these moments together the referent becomes larger and the network and interplay of signs begins to build into a system. (2003:40)

This will feature in later discussions of overall performance dramaturgy.

In looking for a prototypal terminology, I have roughly divided the spectrum of how sound makes meaning into three main categories: informational, associative, instinctive. Within each of these, the action-reaction cycle circulates different kinds of impulse. Within text-based performance, performers speak the text of characters. Their voice functions to communicate meaning through words; the information within one line is reacted to with information given in the next line, as per the above example. Functioning *associatively,* the voice makes meaning much as it does in

music: it gives associations, provokes memories, set a mood. The action-reaction cycle here is more based on tempo, rhythm, quality, tone and volume. For example, in Handel's famous Hallelujah Chorus, the various voices repeat the same phrase in close succession, building to a glorious frenzy and accomplishing the action of metaphorically lifting the audience from their seats. The last is *instinctive.* This is when whatever the performer does with the voice communicates on the most basic level, in a way that makes the body react physically, as the action of gulping for air and crying which over time can provoke the body to laugh. It must be noted that these categories are loose and that very often the voice communicates on all of these levels, or some combination, simultaneously. This said, there is usually one mode which is the primary carrier of meaning, while the others are secondary: a text may be infused with associative subtext but if the words cannot be understood, it is assumed that it is not functioning. In contrast, if one cannot understand the words in a song, it does not necessarily bother the listener, as here it is the melody which is the thing being communicated.

The pervading assumption is that this spectrum:

Figure 7. Spectrum of vocal actions
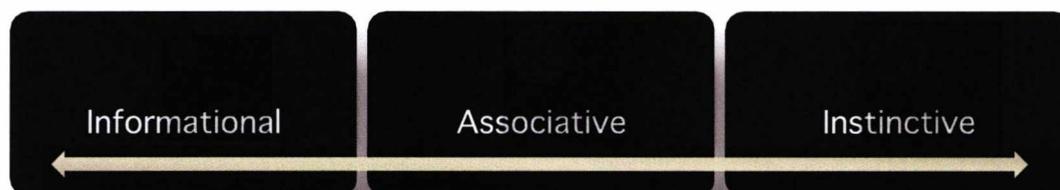
Informational	Associative	Instinctive

corresponds roughly to different performance aesthetics:

Psychological realism	Concert/music /stylized performance	Ritual
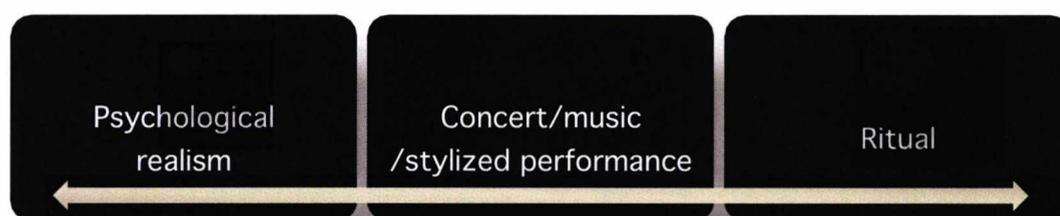
Which are connected with different kinds of Vocal Material[56]:

Text	Song	Sound
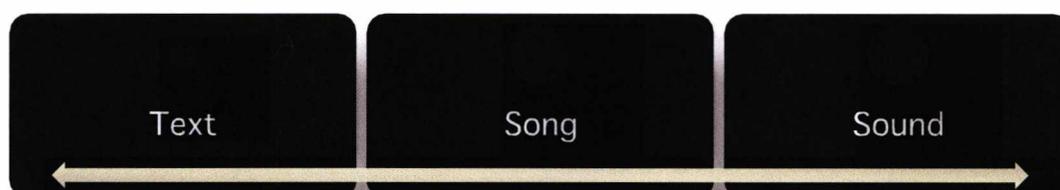
The key to opening up the expressive possibility of the human voice in performance is to destabilize these assumptions: to use sound to communicate information, text to communicate to the subconscious instinctual brain.[57] In order for this to happen, voice trainings need to conceptualise these different functions and forms (text/song/sound) as equally valid performance forms, not in a hierarchy.

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[56] When I use the term vocal material I mean: any kind of material, (such as musical notes, words, rhythm patterns, images, set of instructions etc.) which the performer is given to work with. By definition they are not performer specific and can be given to any other performer.

[57] This idea is of course inherent within different existing vocal forms. For example, ballads, whose main function as music is to tell a narrative are more informational in how they carry meaning. The improvisations of a flamenco singer or the ornamentations in opera, on the other hand, could be more easily understood to create associative (or even if you will, vertical) meaning.

In order to distinguish between a piece of vocal material and how it functions, I will use the term vocal form to describe the repeatable structure of vocal material which can be transferred from one performer to the next.[58] 'Structure' is understood as the order of words/notes *or* a set of tasks, which limit and channel the performer's actions in the performance moment. The key difference between material and form is that one vocal material can be used to create several forms. While the material is the raw matter that the performer/director begins from, the form is performance specific and is created by the performer/director with the aim of functioning in a specific way. For example, the textual material of Hamlet's 'to be or not to be' speech can be used as a classical monologue, or as a 'wall of sound' in which ten performers repeat this text at high volume and speed in a loop for ten minutes. These concepts, terms and ideas are the basis upon which the following case studies are analysed.

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[58] This terminology is chosen consciously so that it can also be used to discuss physical material/form.

the sound of m/y/our name...

Illustration 1. Rehearsal for *the sound of m/y/our name...*, September 2009. Still from film footage.

TIMELINE		
FALL 2008	*the sound of m/y/our name...* Rehearsals Kent, UK	• **Collaborators:** myself • **Rehearsal:** informal, 3 weeks spread out over months • **Performances:** 2 showings to Paul Allain, Frank Camilleri and visiting teachers from MXAT
SPRING 2009	Performance[59] Kent, UK June	• **Collaborators:** myself, Jørn Wimpel • **Rehearsal:** 3 consecutive weeks • **Performances:** 1 at *Grotowski: After-Alongside-Around-Ahead,* Kent University, UK
FALL 2010	Performance[60] Kent, UK September	• **Collaborators:** myself, Jørn Wimpel • **Rehearsal:** 3 consecutive weeks • **Performances:** 1, PaR Showcase, University of Kent

The focus of this performance was to start simple: to research the nature of presence across a single aesthetic shift, from the Stanislavskian to the Grotowskian.[61]

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[59] Available as part of the Arts Archive DVD of the event. http://www.arts-archives.org

[60] See DVD.

[61] Please note that by this I am not referring to some imagined 'Stanislavskian aesthetic' but rather to approach my work on presence with what I have understood as a 'Stanislavskian sense' as described in II.1.

The story

The performance began with a tongue-in-cheek announcement in the theatre that ended:

> Please keep your mobile phones turned on during the course of the performance, you never know who might call […] the theatre does not wish to be responsible for any such losses. (Behrens 2009)

This was cut off by a sudden blackout accompanied by a violent banging on the outside of the theatre door. Into the darkness entered a character talking on two cell-phones simultaneously. In the semi-darkness she spills papers, waves the phone and speaks at a great speed. This culminates in a scream and a pause. A small lamp is turned on and I as Electa say:

> In what I just did I tried to create an atmosphere of stress, anxiety, frustration, fragmentation. That's done. Now, I would like to try to uncover in myself something which is not that. (Behrens 2009)

The audience is asked to close their eyes and the light goes off. I enter into the 'Thunder, Complete Mind' text. When this is finished I sing an old Ukrainian song as I walk around the audience in the dark.

In the following chart of my performer's dramaturgy, I look to provide a visual image of how my presence, and consequently how I was making meaning with my text/song/sound, shifted. The titles describe each moment: 'name of etude – keyword description.' The following list shows the chronological order of etudes. The arrows in the chart indicate the direction I moved from one etude to the next along the spectrum of vocal action. Please note that the 'back' arrow still suggests a movement forward in time. It is used for the practical reason that otherwise the chart would be impossible to read, as the numbers would fall on top of each other.

Figure 8. Performer's dramaturgy *the sound of m/y/our name...*

1. Pre-show announcement – metatheatrical text
2. Cell phone - Stanislavskian character
3. 'What I just did' - metatheatrical comment
4. Thunder, Complete Mind - Grotowskian action
5. Oj Davno[62] -Traditional song

Informational	Associative	Instinctive
1. ⇒ 2.		
3. ⇒	⇒ 4. ⇒	5.
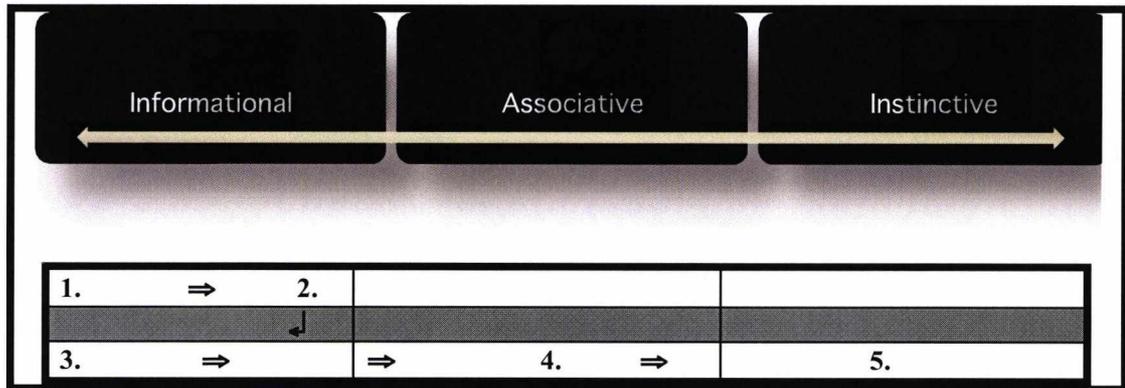
Stanislavskian character

In approaching this work, I referred to my early theatre training and the teaching I am in contact with through MXAT. In creating this etude I began by establishing the given circumstances of my character, her intentions and obstacles. The score of actions I created was, though not totally realistic, grounded in my psychological flow of associations. I did not take in the audience or consider Electa's needs in the moment. In this sense, my awareness was focused on stimuli which came from inside myself, the props and theatrical space in which I was working. The vocal form which I created was fairly fixed. It consisted of a set physical pattern of movement and a set vocal pattern of rhythm, tempo, volume and expressivity. There were small changes night to night but the general shape of the etude was fixed.

The entry point into this flow of actions came from the imaginary given circumstances of my character. I would focus on these, allowing them to affect my flow of breath. Then I would channel them into the beginning of my physical score, which was to bang myself repeatedly against the outside door of the theatre. This was accompanied by a fragmented text made up of words like 'sorry, sorry...I'm

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[62] Learned from Natalka Polyvynka, a Ukranian singer, during the Atelier held at The Grotowski Institute in the summer of 2008. Used in this performance with her permission.

late, I'm late…' This action served to provoke the inner state needed to provide me with the entry point to the scene. From this starting point, I found that I was able to find flow within this structure quite consistently.

Thunder, Complete Mind[63]

I worked on this text extensively with Wimpel. Finding flow proved much more complex than in the cell-phone etude. The first key for me was to strip away my own assumptions surrounding 'Grotowskian work.' The sometimes pseudo-spiritual language that certain Grotowski-inspired teachers use has led to many misconceptions of this work as a kind of theatre therapy which looks to 'heal the inner psychological self.' Many of the directives used (such as 'asking the song' or 'looking for the life/flow') were developed by teachers in the moment of teaching. While they can be highly useful in the working space when used by a leader who comprehends their meaning, their openness can lead to misunderstanding when used by someone not appropriately trained or in an inappropriate context (Brook in Wolford 1997:383). What I have understood from working with Wimpel is that this sense of 'looking' or 'asking' is not a psychologically-based directive. It is rather from an approach of practicality and detachedness that something 'more' might eventually appear:

> look for that paradoxical sensation inside, of being a humble servant, a piece of bird shit on someone's shirt, and a heroine of divine measures, divine size. So in a way what it is practically, is walking up on stage with that kind of face which is stoic, singular, with a very singular mind of what you want to achieve from second to second and also knowing that you are just a gust of wind in the long run. And that is just a check to make sure that you don't become haughty. You can almost think of it like a check point Charlie. You can think of it like singing, every ten seconds you think, am I in tune […] when you are experienced, you do that automatically […] you gotta open your eyes and say I am just nothing [...] I am naked, standing in front of you

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[63] The Thunder text is approximately 3000 years old and was found at the Nag Hammadi. It was used by Jerzy Grotowski in his last stage of work, Art as Vehicle. At the Workcenter, this text, along with others, was researched for its 'Vibratory qualities which are so tangible that in a certain way they become the meaning of the song [or text]' (Growotski 1995:126). The literal meaning of the words was not taken into primary account. Grotowski himself translated many of the texts from ancient Coptic, leaving them in a form of 'bad English' (Wimpel 2010). Grotowski asserted that he was trying to retain some of their special power, which existed in some of the sound combinations rather than their literal meaning. It should be noted that for this performance I used the translation, not of Grotowski, but of George W. McRae http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/thunder.html.

humbly […] ready to do my act without interfering in it. And that creates
something that is larger than our petty lives. Something that is bigger than us
and that we can link up to at any time. (Wimpel 2010).

It is similar to what Zarrilli explains as: 'discovering what is 'necessary' in the
performative moment; '[…] (it is not) a decision of the mind, but one of learning
how to embody a sedimented decisiveness in space through time' (1997:105).
McAllister-Viel writes: 'This understanding of what is "necessary" is different from
responding to the needs of the self in Western voice pedagogy.' (2009a:172)

When I worked on the Thunder text, I allowed into my awareness the whole
spectrum of internal and external stimuli available in the given moment. This
included (1) my inner physical state, (2) the associations which have been created
within myself from whatever text or song I have been working with the moment
before, (3) how I, Electa, felt, (4) how I sensed the audience and (5) the sounds from
inside and outside the space. When I manage to enter this kind of flow it feels like a
waterfall inside of me and yet paradoxically I am also completely detached from it.
This is similar to McAllister-Viel's description of a voice coming not from breath,
but from 'ki:'

> Breath/ki may first be experienced through the movement of the act of
> breathing. As the bodymind reaches further levels of integration, the breath
> into ki is experienced as 'an energy flow' independent of the physical process
> of breathing (McAllister-Viel 2009a:166)

It does not feel like the *voice*, but rather *the moment* speaking. As Lindh suggested,
you find yourself doing an action *in spite of yourself*. In order to find this kind of
flow, I could not set the outer form of the vocal act in the same way that I could
when working on the cell phone etude. In that etude, setting the rhythm and volume
assisted my flow within the material. In the Thunder text, any attempt to 'set' the
form led to failure. In the Thunder etude, the *moment of performance* had a much
larger consequence on how my vocal action actually sounded and whether or not my
action appeared truthful to an audience. However, in this attempt to open my
awareness, I would sometimes become paralysed by an overwhelming flood of
stimuli, as I had few criteria upon which to determine which one to follow: my
awareness was very open, but I did not know how to focus it into an action. I did not
yet understand how to provoke my own flow in this mode of embodiment.

Interestingly, being 'vocally open' or 'warmed up' often added to this paralysis. Some of my most clear moments of embodiment came when I was sick and barely able to phonate at all. While Western warm-ups prepare the technical vocal apparatus for phonation, they do not necessarily 'warm-up' the mind or the mindbody connection. In addition these warm-ups tend to instil in the performer a judging voice which measures how 'correctly' one has done an exercise in relation to an imagined 'right way.' Starting from such an attitude it is difficult to find a place of oneness with the whole, as discussed above. In this way, warm-ups often warm up the ego and warm down the connection to the energy flows in the room. Ironically, university students chatting to each other before class, flirting and fighting can be very efficiently warming themselves up for a true mindbody act: they are fully engaging in the energy transfers happening in the room and are poised to make a move. When I am sick and on the edge of my physical abilities, my decreased powers mean that I focus my awareness, opening it not to everything, but instinctively to those specific external stimuli which I need in that moment – like a drowning woman grasping for a passing log. In other cases when I have come into the rehearsal room 'cold' but having just been fully engaged in the flow of some other activity, I am able to continue to flow from 'real life' into the life of the text.

Returning to a Czikszentmihalyian 'now'[64]

It took many attempts to find a functional transition between the two different vocal forms discussed above. First I tried to find 'smooth transitions.' In these, I invariably carried a Stanislavskian mode of presence into the Thunder text; I started to interpret it and it stopped working. In the end we created a metatheatrical moment of shift. I exited a Stanislavskian circle of attention and re-entered (what I would later term) a Czikszentmihalyian 'now.' The practical steps of returning to this now included: (1) a full stop in which the Stanislavskian mode of presence was completely suspended,

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[64] The Czikszentmihalyian 'now' is a term I have coined to mean the most open circle of attention possible. It contains everything within and outside the performer, including the imagination, the audience and everything in the present moment. I use this term to distinguish it from an understanding of 'now' within a specific performance context which could be, for example, guided by a more Stanislavskian concept of now directed by a specific set of *what ifs*.

(2) a change in light (turning it on), (3) a change of costume and (4) I spoke directly to the audience as myself, taking the time to see them and let them in. All of these actions allowed me the time and space to fully release the fictional *if* which had driven my last etude. What became clear was that in order to enter a new vocal form (which had not yet been introduced) I needed to clearly exit the first (both for myself and the audience). The needed stimulus for Thunder did not lie within the imaginative circle of attention appropriate to the cell phone etude and thus as long as I stayed in that vocal form I would not be able to make the shift. Re-opening my circle of attention to a Czikszentmihalyian 'now' allowed into my awareness new stimuli, which enabled me to thereafter enter the Thunder text. At the time I did not make the connection to Czikszenthimihalyi. It is interesting to note here the complexity of PaR research; even though the answer to my practical problem lay in the theoretical research already conducted and written about, I needed to find again this knowledge in the doing.

One By One
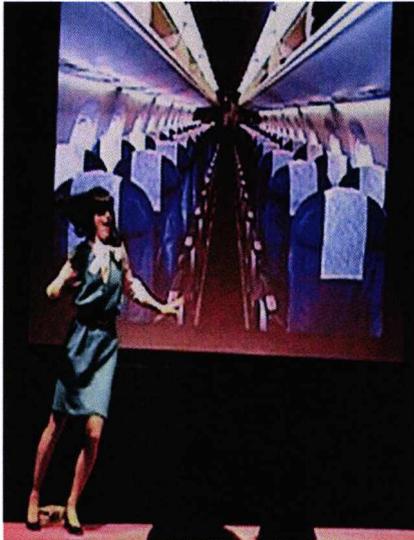
Illustration 2. *One By One*, University of Kent, May 2010. Still from film footage.

TIMELINE		
SPRING 2010	*One By One* Performance Moscow, Russia April	• **Collaborators:** myself, Jørn Wimpel • **Rehearsal:** 2 months over 4 months • **Performances:** 1, MXAT
	Performances[65] Kent, UK May & June	• **Collaborators:** myself, Jørn Wimpel • **Performances:** 6, Lumley Studio, Kent University

The sound of m/y/our name... was the starting point for the more complex performance structure *One By One*. My aim here was to include in one performance 'all the different ways a contemporary performer might have to use their voice in performance today.' This resulted in the creation of thirteen different modes of working:

1. Thunder, Complete Mind – Grotowskian action
2. Stewardess persona – stylized associative text
3. Camera close-up – naturalistic text
4. I am fear - sound improvisation with text
5. Camera close up dream – surrealistic text
6. Mask man – dialogue with mask
7. Because the night (among others) – song (duet and solo)

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[65] See DVD.

8. Want to – text repetition
9. I look, see - Beckettian text
10. Scientist – character monologue
11. Trial – surrealistic dialogue with voice-over chorus
12. Stop – sound improvisation
13. Youtube – metatheatrical voice

Figure 9. Performer's dramaturgy *One By One 2010*

(first 25 minutes of May 2010 version)[66]

Informational	Associative	Instinctive
	1	
2		
3 ⇒ 2		
3 ⇒ 2	⇒	4
2	⇒	5
6	⇒ 7	
3		
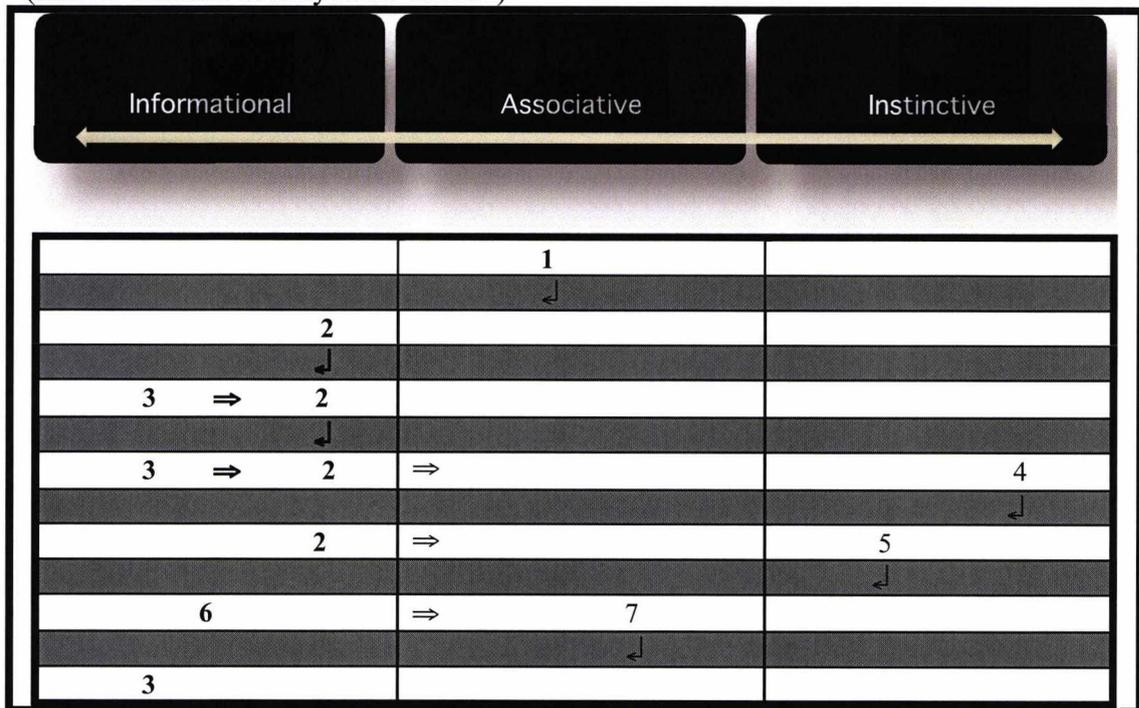
The story

The performance tells the story of an airline stewardess who is a modern everywoman, mobile, multitasking, successful. She meets a man in business class, falls in love and gets pregnant. She is faced with the question: career or baby? She chooses both. She has a miscarriage. She does not know how to continue living. She

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[66] This is the version viewable on the DVD.

looks for a way forward.[67] The performance ends when it turns out that the whole thing is a youtube post which she has made in order to tell her story and to search for contact.

The narrative is embodied by the thirteen different voices mentioned above. I will here describe briefly how they interrelated. The main figure is the Stewardess herself who tells her story in a stylized physical/vocal form. When she speaks to the live-feed camera she enters a naturalistic form. In the miscarriage she disintegrates into a fragmented Beckettian version of herself. Afterwards there is a song, silence, and then a Scientist character pops up to reflect upon the circumstances and to draw parallels to larger historical patterns. By the end, the Stewardess speaks directly to the audience, sings and leaves. These voices function in rapid dialogue and repetition, with no scene lasting for more than four minutes. Needless to say, it was an extremely demanding structure in which I was constantly shifting my mode of engagement, type of vocal material and how I was employing it to make meaning.

I approached this performance in the same manner I approached *the sound of m/y/our name....* In each section I looked to embody the mode of presence which corresponded to that aesthetic. For example I approached the camera close-up as filmatic naturalism. This meant for example that I would call up the given circumstances of the character as I walked towards the camera and forget them all again as I breathed in to begin the Thunder text. The difficulties I encountered while exploring this approach were significant. When I increased the spectrum of forms, the model of understanding presence I had employed in *the sound of m/y/our name...* no longer appeared sufficient. It did not help my embodiment nor the audience to follow the performance. Below I will analyze how this helped me to (re)consider the notion of presence.

In both *the sound of m/y/our name...* and *One By One* I approached developing my presence within the Thunder text in the same way. This was based on the research from section II.2, in which I looked to uncover what Gordon and Zarrilli

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[67] Metaphorically, the performance looked to ask larger questions: (1) do we miscarry our lives? i.e. abort priceless moments of life because we are on the quest of 'bigger, better, more?' (2) What are the small choices which over time lead to large disasters?

name the 'underlying assumptions' of the aesthetics in which I would be working, as they assert that this will assist the performer in being able to embody the form. However, this knowledge did not help in *One By One*. The (what I assumed to be superficial) differences in how I used the Thunder text in this performance were that the light was on and that I wore the wig and costume of my Stewardess persona.[68] Although I looked for body positions that assisted my ability to enter into the text, I often resorted to a kind of textual interpretation that I had managed to avoid in *the sound of m/y/our name...*. Why was this?

In *the sound of m/y/our name...*, I had defined each mode of presence separately: i.e. Stanislavskian, Grotowskian. In a moment of shift, I thought I needed to 'exit' one mode, to 'forget' what had happened in that etude, so that I could enter the logic of another; like in training where one does an exercise, stops and then begins the next, which has another set of rules. I thought this was what made the shift work. However, when translating 'what I thought I was doing' to the context of *One By One,* my confusion became clear. The understanding of 'listening to the moment' founded in 'forgetting,' proved unproductive. What I discovered was a gap between what I thought I was doing and what I was actually doing. Instead of exiting one flow of actions to enter another, I was in reality in a continuous flow of action and reaction: each moment was related to the one that came before, even if it was in a contrasting outer form. In *the sound of m/y/our name...* I had unconsciously created a structure which demanded this: the physical challenge of the cell phone etude in terms of tempo and precision meant that my body was forced to respond to my increased pulse and heat as I spoke the metatheatrical text, even though I thought I was disconnecting in order to reconnect. This heightened energetic state was also useful in entering the Thunder text, as it placed me in a state of higher sensitivity simply due to increased physical exertion. In *One By One* I shifted aesthetics many times and my structure did not often 'demand' this kind of connection. In the space between etudes, where I thought I was returning to a Czikszentmihalyian now, I was actually returning to an imagined 'now' - an empty, 'neutral' place, *as if* the previous etude had not existed. This state of in between 'nothingness' which I thought was the most non-aesthetic in the performance was, ironically, a highly fictional space.

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[68] In *sound of m/y/our name...* the Thunder text was said in the dark.

Concretely, the result of using this idea was that the performance was very heavy to perform: I felt like I had to create anew the energy for each scene. Sometimes I could flow within a single form, but the shifts were tough. The Thunder scenes rarely worked. It was from these mistakes that I started to understand how presence is as much related to the moment of performance as to any inner shifts. Presence is not just about you, it is about you *now*. The space between aesthetics is not a neutral no man's land, but a bridge which is specifically related to the land it starts in and where it is going to. Even if some outer logic shifts, the performer's inner logic from in-breath to out-breath must remain intact.

My lack of understanding of this space between, discussed above on the level of presence, also became an issue on the explicit outer level of the performance's overall dramaturgy. Many audience members commented that they had a hard time reading the performance. Interestingly it was often what I thought would be the simplest vocal forms to understand which caused confusion. For example, several people remarked that they did not quite understand the camera close-up – was it me, Electa or was it the character, or something else? Another example was my use of song. One audience member said that she understood the songs as songs which the stewardess had accumulated in her travels, which represented her identity crisis (anon. comm. 2010b). This was very far from my intention. I conceived them as associative in meaning, having the function of changing the atmosphere in the room. Although this logic was clear to me as a performer, there was no explicit clue in the dramaturgy for the audience that helped them to follow my internal logic.

Reflecting later on the performance, I noticed that the vocal forms which were seen as truthful were all ones which had not been pre-written but rather discovered in rehearsal as a response to another scene. An example of this was an improvised outburst of sound that came after a surrealistic scene with video images. This sequence appeared one day when the content of the surreal scene created such an inner frustration that I exploded into sound at the end of it. This sequence was similar to *the sound of m/y/our name…* where the energetic pressure created in the cell phone scene was answered by the peace and pause of the following moment. At the time I could not describe why these scenes worked, they just 'felt right.'

But how could it be that something as aesthetically recognizable as a camera close-up confused audiences and a strange wordless scream made sense? The audiences were unable to read meaning for the same reason as I was having trouble finding flow: each scene had its own internal logic, but there was not a logic between one and the next. I had not established an overall performance logic within which these various scenes could exist and be read by an audience. (It is interesting to note that at the time of this performance, I had just begun to look into Czikszentmihalyi's flow, the model which would later theoretically connect my various understandings of action). As Merlin writes, a sense of truth is not universal but rather based on a logic and coherence in the moment:

> Truth is a tricky word and an even trickier concept. In the twenty-first century, there is no such thing as 'objective truth' any more: your perspective is as legitimate as my perspective which is as legitimate as anyone else's perspective. Each person's vision of the world is to be as justified as anyone else's. Which is fine, because when it comes to TRUTH, what we're really looking for is a *context* for what we're seeing, some rules which determine our expectations, some kind of LOGIC AND COHERENCE [...] the key to this sense of TRUTH is the ongoing sequence of Action – Reaction. (Merlin: 2007:114, my italics).

A performance is itself an ongoing sequence of actions and reactions in which one scene, even if it is in a different aesthetic, must be a reaction to that which has come before. Aesthetics are not recognizable regardless of context. Naturalism (although it is historically definable) in the performance moment only appears as naturalism because it comes after a scene which is in comparison stylised. 'An identical action in a different context would appear totally unrealistic.' (Lindh 2010:15) In the places in the performance where this relationship was clear, I found it easy to flow and the audience was able to follow. The simplicity and training-like nature of *the sound of m/y/our name...* had hidden the complexity of this question. *One By One*, with its plethora of vocal forms was a necessary experiment for uncovering assumptions. It was also significant that the performance was shown for an audience. In rehearsals these issues had not arisen because both the director and I understood the aesthetic we were working with in each scene and thus were reading my success or failure based on our own internal logic, which it appeared the audience was not always able to follow. John Freeman noted

> the spectator [...] become[s] the ultimate creator of meaning. 'Sense' is [...] defined by the way in which the signs are read and by the receptive weight

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given to the elements seen rather than by the semiotic potency of the signs. (2003:40)

Regardless of how clear my presence within each scene was or the clarity with which *I* understood the aesthetic within which I was working, if I did not make my structure explicit enough to allow an audience to begin to draw connections, my signs become meaningless.

a series of accidents

Illustration 3. Workshop, University of Kent, February 2010. Still from film footage.

TIMELINE		
FALL 2008 SPRING 2009 FALL 2009	Workshop sessions	• **Frequency:** various small research sessions including 3-day intensive work-session with Elisabet Hagli Aars (NO) and Wilhelm Støylen (NO) • **Participants:** the above including various students of Kent University, Frank Camilleri (lecturer) and Katie Jones (visiting lecturer)
SPRING 2010	*a series of accidents*[69]	• **Frequency:** 1 2hr session/week from February – June • **Participants:** Various. Final event with Carla Kedzierski and Lucy James for Frank Camilleri and Judita Vitkauskaite. • **Presentation:** June 2009. A 40-minute continuous exercise.

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[69] See DVD.

In this experiment I looked to extract the essential elements from the two previous studies and apply them to the development of a training. The output was a 40-minute sequence of exercises which took performers through nine shifts of aesthetic.[70] The aim of the structure is to teach the performer how to establish a flow of action and the skill of transitioning into another with a different aesthetic logic. In the following analysis I will discuss how this period of work assisted in two ways towards the development of the *method of vocal (re)actions.* Firstly, I tried to translate my work on entry points into training exercises. Secondly, it marked the beginning of my work as a pedagogue and consequently the initiation of this area of research.

I explored flow as a pedagogical strategy. My aim was to take this principle to the extreme, looking for 'authenticity' in my own presence and not hiding behind a set of 'things to teach.'

> To be authentic is to be in touch with oneself in this extended sense, which is opening to one's own life and to the levels where it may touch on or merge with the life of others […] the openness of this condition is risky: risky to achieve and risky in that it is always improvising - never static. Form is dynamic, the self in its articulation is always in the flow of change and needs to adjust to it. (Frost and Yarrow 1990:160)

Practically, my first task each day was to sense the performers (including myself) and evaluate how best to channel our energy forward. Instead of putting on a smile and trying to 'rev up my engines' when I was tired for example, I rather explored how to begin from this energetic reality. This vulnerability led to surprising results. Instead of uncomfortableness at seeing a 'weak' teacher, the level of listening often increased and wonderful things were born. On a few days where I did artificially try to be energetic or to push through a lesson plan, I was met with resistance and/or apathy among individuals who were not normally of that nature. Ironically by being more 'teacher-like' I managed to transmit less. Here Frost and Yarrow speak about the relationship between actor and audience, but the resonance of their comment in the rehearsal/studio can easily be seen:

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[70] The title of this training sequence *a series of accidents* was inspired by this quote: 'the nature of such "accidents", illustrates that we *choose* meaning, and that choice imposes limitations on the possible range of meanings available for any given act. Accidents can realign the choice, open up new directions […] Whereas a text, or an established performance style, implies certain rules […] improvisation can challenge and revise these rules. (Frost and Yarrow 1990:177)

when the giving is reciprocal, the result is a creativity shared by both the performers and the audience. [...] If it descends into trickery - if it ceases to be true - then it closes itself off and ceases to be *available* to all its potential creators. [...] which denies the possibility of *mutual* discovery. (Frost and Yarrow 1990:155)

Interestingly when I 'gave up' my plan and worked from the present energy, we would often end up doing all the exercises I had hoped to approach, just in a completely different order than planned. I began to understand that my task as a pedagogue was to cultivate flow in the room and from there look for *entry points* into the specific exercises. The result of this was that we never did anything technically. If the group was not ready we did not do the activity. This means that each time they did an exercise, it was connected with a sense of pleasure rather than duty. This developed further into the attitudes and pedagogical strategies further discussed in II.3 and III.3.

In terms of the content of the sessions, I worked with a wide variety of exercises: Suzuki, Barba, Zarrilli, Allain, Camilleri, Berry, Bodyweather, Grotowski, and Linklater. I did not work in any kind of cumulative sense. One day we worked with Suzuki, the next Grotowski. The risk was that the performers would experience this approach as extreme training tourism. I took this chance because I needed to explore whether this approach would assist the performer in being able to identify and transfer their work on underlying principles from one form to the other. By introducing them to different methods daily which shared underlying principles but had a variety of outer forms, I looked to activate their search for principles as a main task of the work.

A series of accidents consolidated this work into a repeatable sequence of exercises. I will here discuss briefly how this work provided the base for the *method of vocal (re)actions* exercises. The two main functions of this sequence were that it allowed me to test out a logic for structuring training and secondly a chance to explore how to develop pre-existing exercises towards my specific aims. The structure was created with three main goals: (1) to design exercises which clearly isolated what the performer was responding to – the stimulus and hence the entry point to different flows of action-reaction, (2) to work from the individual's body out

into space and (3) to work from flow towards form. It began with a listening exercise which stimulated the performers to be in relation to the present moment. The second exercise focused on making the performer aware of their circle of attention and opening it through directing their attention to focus on things present inside and outside their body, such as ambient sounds and contact with their partner. The following exercises directed the performers to respond with sound to different categories of stimuli: from the mind, from the body, from the partner, from text and from a stylized physical score. In this way the performer experienced, for example, both a flow of actions based on physical impulses and those born from the meaning of text. The sequence included exercises adapted from those of Suzuki, Grotowski and Berry. Each exercise was placed next to another exercise with a very different aesthetic in order to (as in the training sessions) allow the exercises to interface and provoke the performer to keep their focus on the underlying principles.

In conclusion, my pedagogical strategy and structuring of *a series of accidents* appeared successful. The apparent 'randomness' of the workshop sessions produced in the students an openness and an ability to 'go with the flow,' in a Czikszentmihalyian sense. They were not at all thrown then when we put together this sequence over the course of a weekend, and they were able to execute it with high focus and quality. The students did not feel the transitions as jarring but actually found that they assisted their engagement. Secondly, placing existing exercises in new contexts allowed me to observe them for essential principles. Though the exercises served the purpose I had intended for them, they did not make this purpose transparent for the performer or viewer. The performers could sense the flow within and between exercises, but as Gordon said, they rather absorbed it than intellectually understood it. The multiplicity of active elements within each exercise opened up the possibility for misunderstanding: while for me it was clear that I was looking to isolate different forms of stimuli, a performer could rather easily understand the focus as 'speaking in different positions' or even that the first part of the sequence was 'just' a preparation for getting to text work. The next step of the research was thus to strip away any unneeded elements and create a training series which made the active ingredient of each exercise, the *what* was being trained, self-evident. In addition to this, the terminology needed to be synthesized. These aims became the focus of the next year of work.

3. A METHOD OF VOCAL (RE)ACTIONS
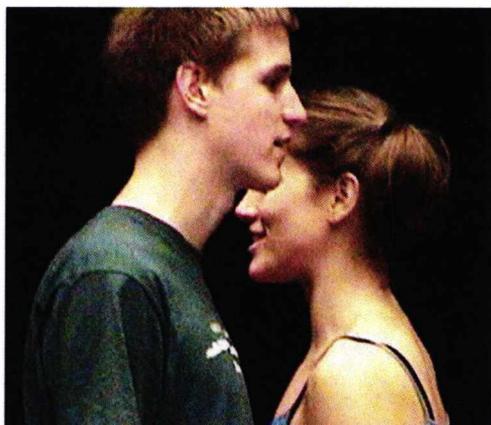
Illustration 4. Workshop session, University of Kent, February 2011. Still from film footage.

TIMELINE		
FALL **2010**	Preparation sessions	• **Frequency:** 2hrs x 2 times/week • **Participants:** Various, including future members of the Symposium team: Carla Kedzierski, Lucy James, Alice Taylor, Dan Petrovici, Judita Vitkauskaite and Peter Morton
SPRING **2011**	February Sessions Jan-Feb[71]	• **Frequency:** 9, 2hr sessions • **Participants:** the above excluding Peter Morton and with Liam Brennan. • **Presentations:** 2: (1) 45 min presentation of training and improvisations to Frank Camilleri and Paul Allain and (2) performance of THE WAY at a PANeK scratch event.[72] • **Other research from this period:** Discussed in III.3
	Bologna Sessions[73] March	• **Frequency:** 5-day workshop in Bologna, Italy. 10 – 5pm/day • **Participants:** Lucy James, Carla Kedzierski, Chantal Marti, Francesca Lateana, Sara Bizzoca, Marie Helen, Sophie Claire • **Other research from this period:** Discussed in III.3

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[71] See DVD.

[72] PANeK is an arts organisation whose aim is to support the creation of new work and which functions as a producer, event organiser and information resource for Kent-based arts groups. http://www.panek.org.uk.

[73] See DVD.

Context

In 2011, the focus of the work changed. I began to synthesize the information gathered into *a method of vocal (re)actions*. I have conceptualised a 'method' as a set of interrelated parts: a set of principles and attitudes manifested through a set of exercises and ethics – the latter in the form of a contract. These are in turn implemented through a certain set of congruent pedagogical strategies adapted to a specific temporal context. These elements are held together by a comprehensive terminology.

Although this section is a 'handbook' for the performer, it will not merely be the 'the light-hearted liberties [...] designed to enliven the actor's imagination' which Linklater argues for. (1997:49-52) Although perhaps unbalanced in her overall critique, Werner does make a valid point in that the texts *between* the descriptions of exercises often, as her collegue Knowles asserts, 'encode and reinforce ideological structures and assumptions that are both deeply embedded in theatrical discourse and too easily overlooked or mystified when their methods are applied in practice.' (Knowles in Werner 1996:93) It is exactly such unconscious culturally-coded presumptions that this study looks to avoid. Hence, I look to write as a 'transparent pedagogue', giving the reader a sense of the reasoning behind exercises, including the specific context within which they were created. The aim is that this framing will avoid or at least make apparent any of my unwanted assumptions and the necessary specificity of this training to its context. I hope that uncovering this subjectivity of the work will enable future practitioners to employ it in new contexts. For example, the following exercises were created within a university and workshop context with performers who have a wide variety of experience. In working with more physically trained performers I add more challenging stretches into the Vocal Spectrum exercise. In working with opera singers I ask them to use their songs while working within the Vocal (re)action exercises. The idea of this chapter is not to give the performer a recipe, but rather to list the necessary ingredients and some guidelines about how to combine them. It is the responsibility of the performer/pedagogue to create their own training to suit their taste.

At the beginning of any series of training sessions or rehearsal, collaborators enter into a more or less explicit contract that determines how they will approach the

work done together. While some methods refer to the *ethics* of a training or the *attitudes* that a 'performer should have,' I prefer to use the term *contract*. This suggests that it is an open agreement entered into from both sides for the duration of a particular set of activities, rather than a spiritual promise, a moral code or something that has to do with behaviour. The pedagogue should make the contract explicit and throughout the work clarify what one is asking for without resorting to habits or aesthetic preferences.

Attitude: Be a heretic

In the previous studies I have been exploring the area before impulse: how to widen awareness so that one is able to open the senses to different kinds of stimuli. From the 'Explorations' it was clear that it is easy to become blocked by unconscious assumptions. Thus the process of opening awareness must start from a fundamental approach towards work.

> **Be a heretic**
>
> Approach what you do as a heretic. Take responsibility to follow your own path and challenge the 'rules' of any method within which you work.
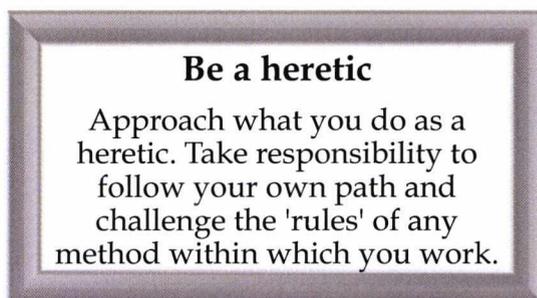
A heretic is 'anyone who does not conform to an established attitude, doctrine, or principle'. It comes from the ancient Greek hairetikós: able to choose (The Free Dictionary 2011).[74] The heretical performer is thus one who is able to *choose* at any moment to follow or to break the 'rules of the game' of a performance form. It suggests a consciousness and autonomy while at the same time responsibility; the one who goes out on their own must be prepared to stand alone for what they

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[74] Although this word commonly has negative connotations, this did not exist in the original definition of the word, and has rather been an adopted meaning, coming historically with certain famous religious heretics.

believe.[75] Translated into the practical reality of the training room, this attitude can be used as the directive: 'there is no one right way' - remember that today there is no one 'right' way to make performance. Truth is not objective but rather relative, context-based.

As a pedagogical strategy, this has the consequence that when creating exercises and my teaching terminology I never propose a 'right' way. Exercises are task-based, proposing a *way to work* and not a final result. My aim is to make exercises that open the sounder's awareness to where stimuli can come from, but I do not try to shape how they articulate these impulses. Rather I embrace the range and variety within the person and group. The other main impact that this strategy has on how the work is conducted is that I do not function as an authoritative teacher with the answer. Instead, many opportunities for the sounder to reflect upon their own experience and for colleagues to give their partners feedback *practically* are built into the work. When I give feedback it is rather reflective than directive. The aim here is to develop the sounder's individual sense of a 'necessary' voice – a voice which has truly responded to the moment.

Attitude: Your voice is not about you

> **Your voice is not about you**
>
> Remember that making sound is an action that occurs simultaneously inside and outside you. It is not only about you, but is just as much about the space around.
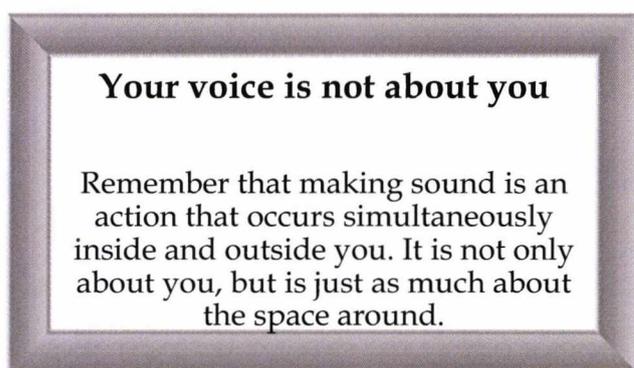
This attitude is important in a Western context, where culture works counter to this statement. Work with the voice can be a sensitive area for many individuals often

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[75] To keep this as a constant reminder, I named the training laboratory group Heretics' Playground.

connected to two commonly held ideas: (1) that the 'voice is the doorway to the soul' and (2) that the voice is a biological and mechanical apparatus; if you cannot make it work 'correctly,' it is because something in you is 'broken.' It goes without saying that if you think your voice is telling intimate secrets about you, you will be self-conscious to use it. Conceptualizing the voice as a biological machine places the focus of the sounder not on the act of communication, but rather on the technical functioning of organs. This idea has strong limitations. I introduce the idea that although your voice does begin inside you and is affected by what is there, it is also shaped just as much by the material that the wall is made of, off which your voice bounces (which is also scientifically true). Hence, your voice is not about you. Instead it is an *articulation of a relationship between you and something else.* This focuses the sounder's attention on the work with responsivity and communication. The consequence of this idea is that I do not consider any of my exercises as preparatory and they do not conceptualise the voice as machine. This method refocuses vocal work on the communicative (rather than technical) within *all* exercises.

Principle: Vocal presence

> **Vocal presence**
>
> Being vocally present is about YOUR VOICE in a NOW
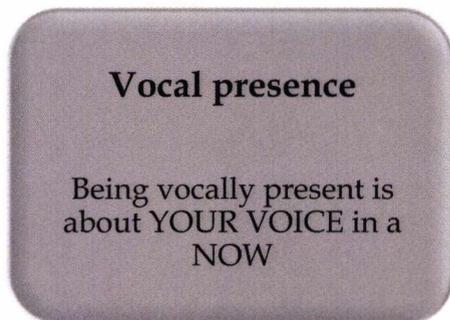
In the 'Explorations' I was looking for a way to describe what felt like different modes of presence. This idea proved to be limiting. Rather, an exploration of presence is essentially, an exploration of space(s). To approach this large idea, I needed a concrete metaphor to describe this multi-layered 'now.' To that end, I updated Stanislavski's circle of attention, extending the circles beyond the stage and

shifting 'attention' to 'awareness' (as the latter is wider and hence a more precise term in this context). This allows me to talk about the necessary opening or narrowing of the field of awareness which a performer does as they shift aesthetic logic, without using terms that have an aesthetic connotation. More fundamentally it defines presence *relationally* rather than as any kind of objective experience. As McAllister-Viel reminds us, it is almost impossible to get a Western and Eastern performer to have a similar inner experience of presence (and thus it is complex to base a training system on trying to create this). It is however possible to have these two performers work in specific relationship to concrete things in space such as objects, people and architecture. This also reinforces the idea of presence as something individual to the performer, rather than as some 'thing' which they are trying to acquire. This method becomes transcultural *not* because it is based on a 'universal' definition, but because it focuses on the present moment – which is the one thing that all the performers and audience share.

Exercise sequence: Dilation of presence[76]

Illustration 5. VOCAL ACTION Symposium, University of Kent, June, 2011. Still from film footage.

Below are examples of exercises created from these principles and attitudes organised as a series for systematically opening the individual's awareness out in space. I suggest that this exercise sequence be done in a continuous flow. All exercises can be done with a variety of vocal material, however I find it most useful,

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[76] This consists of exercises 1-4 in the following section.

in the West, to begin with sound and then work towards more formally complex materials. The discussions around each exercise give the reasoning behind the creation of the exercise and any salient guidelines for practitioners.[77]

Illustration 6. 'Drive your partner like a car', Bologna, Italy, March 2011. Photo: Silvia Bernardi.

Exercise 1: Drive your partner like a car[78]

This exercise aims to develop the sounder's ability to react instinctively to an outside stimulus through sound.

1. Determine who is the driver (the one who gives stimuli) and who is the car (the sounder). The sounder wears a cloth belt tied firmly around their hips, but loose enough so they can breathe.

2. Car: focus your awareness at your centre, the seat of your breath, the bottom of the spine, the place where all physical/vocal action begin. Close your eyes. Your task is to allow yourself to be moved by your partner.

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[77] It should be noted that although these exercises are numbered, and appear in a certain order in this text, I do not mean to suggest that they need to be done in this order. As discussed in Chapter I.2, improvisation and flexibility in exercise choice are key characteristics of the voice pedagogue's work. On the DVD it can actually be seen that I often begin with Exercise 7. The order in which these exercises are described here is chosen based on the most logical order for this narrative in terms of ideas introduced.

[78] Source: inspired by two exercises practiced in the Grotowski diaspora. Firstly, a fundamental presence exercise, 'Balancing the space,' which trains the performer's ability to move in any direction at any time and to respond to the movements of the leader. Secondly, yanvalou, a dance from the Yoruba tradition which is based on a continuous undulation of the spine and which Grotowski used in the last phase of his work. Both of these exercises stimulate a dynamic ability to work with the spine and the displacement of weight in order to create organic movements. They do, however, require daily work over a longer period of time and thus are not appropriate in the current context. The 'Dilation' sequence has the intention of working with these underlying principles in an explicit enough (but not banal) manner, so that they can be understood in a shorter amount of time by performers with a greater range of experience.

3. Driver: hold tightly onto the belt in the rear, placing your hands behind the hipbones. With very small movements with your hands you can provoke a corresponding movement in your partner's spine.

4. Your job is to be a helper, assisting the sounder in their exploration of their centre. Slowly begin to move your partner in space. Sense when their muscles 'hold,' not allowing them to move in a certain direction. Work physically to help them find a way to release. Use a surprising flow of different tempos, rhythms, qualities and levels.

5. Car, work with an image of suspension: a state where you are in control of your weight yet released and able to move in any direction at any time, as if floating in water. Sensitise yourself to the changing shape of the air flow inside you.

6. Gradually, the car should start to sound. Car, your task is to give sound to the action of the body; to allow the sound to flow through the shape the body is currently making, allowing the physical to shape the vocal.

Exercise 2: Pull like a horse[79]

Note on entry point to the exercise: I begin this work with a starting task for grounding called 'being here.' The sounder tries to ground themselves in a standing position while their partner gives them steady pressure on the lower back in a forward direction, trying to push them over. The task of the sounder is to 'be here' – in other words not to be pushed forward or to fall backwards. This should be done first physically and then voice can be added.

1. The driver's task is to try to pull the horse backwards. The horse's task is to walk forward. The driver gives just enough resistance to increase the horse's sensation through their feet, but not enough to pull them over. The horse has their eyes open.

2. 'Drive your partner like a car' and 'Pull like a horse' are explored separately and then alternated between in quick succession (40 sec alternation). In both of these exercises we begin from physical exploration working towards sounding. The two exercises cross-pollinate each other: the 'car/horse' discovers their centredness in the driving and their flexibility in pulling. Thus this exercise establishes an idea of presence as an active awareness and from the start integrates sounding and moving.

How to stay centred in the voice while still and while moving? How to continue to ask 'what is the reality of the moment' and to respond to it sonically? This is the aim of exercise #1. In physical trainings, presence is often connected to

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[79] Source: Inspired by a work with cloths and resistance that I did with Julia Varley at the Magdalena Festival at the Odin Teatret in January 1999. It is also similar to Suzuki-inspired exercises which work with the imagery of resistance (Allain 2002a:117).

two contradictory and crucial ideas: being 'centred'/'grounded' and being so responsive to the moment that you are able to 'move in any direction at once.' However, these two concepts are rarely embodied in a single exercise. There are many trainings for grounding, and several which incorporate the 'ability to move in any direction at once,' but include the latter only as a visualisation and not as a concrete task. The consequence is that this presence gained while standing still is lost when moving.[80] In addition to this problematic, many physical trainings do not take into account the performer's inner air space and thus unconsciously close down their ability to sound with increased physical activity rather than increase it. Ballet dancers who are extremely physically fit but often have trouble speaking with support are an example of this. In another example, singers often train standing still. Although they work extensively with grounding and alignment, they can lose this ability when asked to sing and move. They have not developed a sense of how to continue to open their inner passages for resonating air in various positions and instead often collapse or believe it is not possible to sing in any dynamic position.[81] This exercise is based on the importance of listening to the moment as made concrete by the task of responding to the partner as the stimulus to sound. It looks, through working with centredness in dynamic movement and stillness and integrating physical and vocal impulse, to train a flexible performer, able to stay vocally present within an unpredictable and wide range of physical positions and actions.

Exercise 3: Becoming transparent

1. Sounder: stand still with eyes closed.

2. Partner: your task is to give your partner a large variety of clear stimuli on the skin by touching them with different strengths, durations and qualities.

3. Sounder: sound these stimuli (i.e. make sound when and how you are touched) while maintaining the inner connection your centre.

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[80] An example would be yoga where while executing a series of fixed positions, the practitioner sends their awareness out in space, focusing on the flow of energy within the form. Although this is very useful, it trains centredness in a significantly different way than the actual action of an individual following that energy flow in space as a physical movement. Such a training does not train the translation of this centeredness to other activities than the yoga poses. One consequence of this can be the individual who can be highly centred during their yoga class and then when they return to their work life immediately again enter a state of uncentred nervousness and uncoordination.

[81] Teaching Composition to opera students in 2012 made this problem very clear to me.

The second step is to open the sounder's awareness from their centre and their spine out to the level of their skin. In exercise #1, the physical movement helped to sensitise the performer to the movement of impulse, as the stimulus to sound was physical and concrete. In this exercise, it is only the voice that moves while the body is still: the performer now follows the internal path of the voice from centre to their skin. This is less concrete. While it is easier for the sounder to stay both grounded and flexible when their helper is touching the centre (thus constantly reminding them that this is the seat of the reaction) it becomes more challenging as the helper touches different areas of the skin. Often, people conceptualise their voice as something that goes out of them, the energy of which is sent out into space and lost, as in the phrase 'to throw the voice.' This can lead to the voice becoming unsupported or inflexible, especially in more dynamic sounds. This often happens when the performer 'squeezes' the air out of them, like a tube of toothpaste, while collapsing inwardly. The aim of this work is to counteract that. What happens technically when the performer has to respond to the touches of the partner is that they can never really go to the 'end of their breath' in the sense of really collapsing and squeezing out the last drop. They cannot do this because they must always be listening to the physical impulse of the partner, as it might at any time unexpectedly change and they need to be able to respond. (A physical metaphor would be that they cannot just collapse on the ground, as they must as any moment in the 'falling' need to reverse directions back towards standing). This creates a kind of inner suspension in the sounder, what technically is necessary for what are often called 'support' and 'control.' An image which can assist is that the voice is like a third arm, reaching out from the centre to touch the hand of the partner from the inside of the skin. Firstly, the 'arm' is not something you loose, it is a part of you with which you make contact with others, but which remains with you. Secondly, this image can help visually concretise the idea that the sound you make is happening not just from your mouth outwards but rather starts at your centre and opens outwards resonating the air inside you from the centre to your skin.

Exercise 4: Sounding the space

The last stage of this work extends the work with stimulus out to the walls of the space in which you are working.

1. Sounder: stand still with open eyes.

2. Partner: move in the space at different distances from your partner.

3. Sounder: your task is to sound the distance between you and your partner.

4. Partner: when the sounder is able to do this, develop the work by moving in different tempo-rhythms, levels and qualities of movement, which the sounder must sound.

This exercise extends the awareness of the sounder out to the edges of the training room. The challenge is still to remain grounded while reaching far with the voice: to be present with yourself out into space. Within this sequence the performer's soundings are always directly provoked from outer stimuli. In this way the idea that being vocally present is not about you but about you in a now, is embodied as exercises.

Principle: Vocal (re)action

Vocal (re)action

Every action is a reaction
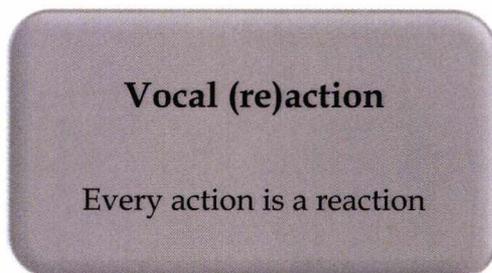
The main idea is that 'action' is not about creating something out of nothing, but rather a reaction to something. The importance of this 'being in relation to' became evident in *One By One*. But what kind of reaction? How can we train performers to be present in a variety of different kinds of reactions? The previous exercises focused on opening awareness, giving the performer concrete stimuli to react to, in order to stimulate this opening in specific directions. The next step is to focus on the exchange of action and reaction between individuals. My aim is to keep the sounder's focus on the *functionality* of how they are working together with their partner rather than on what it sounds like from the outside. Thus I explored the flow within different action-reaction cycles.

Figure 10. Prototypes of communication between people

Communication between 2 people	• (re)act together in a common impulse = unison song • the (re)action of one can be the stimulus for the other = dialogue
Communication between more than 2 people	• the whole group responding together in a common impulse = choral text/song • the whole group responding to stimuli differently = the prototype of much experimental soundscape/ music work • the group setting up a cycle of action-reaction in which they can each react individually but in relation to the whole group = the prototype of rhythm-based improvisatory/ choreographed work

The categories of prototype are of course approximate, e.g. a song can be sung as a dialogue or a text can be spoken as a common impulse. The aim here is not to provide a strict categorisation, but to give a suggestive organisation, which allows the performer to conceptualise what is done with the voice on the level of impulse rather than aesthetic. This terminology allows the performer to work more easily between physical and vocal actions. To translate a song into a physical action may seem a daunting task. But if the song is understood as a series of actions-reactions, of pulls and pushes, for example, the task becomes easier.

Exercise 5: Chain of action-reaction[82]
1. Two partners stand one behind the other facing the same direction. The one standing behind sounds.

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[82] Source: inspired by Eugenio Barba's exercise called: Vocal Action. In his exercise, Iben Nagel Rassmussen (one of his performers) has the task of 'moving her partners' with her voice. She is speaking a made up language. They respond to the quality, tempo-rhythm and pressures in her voice. (Wethal 1972)

2. The task of the sounder is to move their partner with the voice. Begin using only sounds. The task of the mover is to move - if they feel moved. Both partners should look for the specificity of their action and avoid 'sound effects.' Explore, allowing both partners to experience both positions.

3. On the clap of the pedagogue, both partners jump 180 degrees. The exercise continues, with the new sounder beginning to sound immediately as their feet hit the ground. The task is to 'steal the energy' from your partner's sonic action, allowing that to be your stimulus.

This exercise explores the flow of impulses of dialogue: my action is the stimulus for your action, which is the stimulus for my action. The aim of the exercise is to train instinctive response. Having the moment of shift initially dictated from outside allows the sounders to focus on the act of listening without thinking 'my turn to speak is coming.' Later they can begin to choose when to jump, or to reduce the bodily action and increase the vocal, standing face to face as in a naturalistic dialogue.

Exercise grouping: Vocal (re)actions in pairs and group

Illustration 7. 'Common impulse', Bologna, Italy, March 2011. Photo: Silvia Bernardi.

Exercise 6: Common impulse
1. Two partners extend a 2m length of cloth between them. The cloth must be kept taut at all times. The task is to play. You can move anywhere in the space, in any tempo-rhythm or dynamic, but you must keep the cloth taut.

2. Come to stillness. Start to work with the image: the cloth rope is your shared diaphragm. Work with the action of 'breathing in,' releasing slightly the tension in

the cloth and then 'breathing out' and pulling it tight. Add sound to the 'breathing out.'

4. Explore the variety of different tempo-rhythms, durations and qualities of 'breath' you can have between you.

6. Take the rope away. The task is the same. Explore and vocalise a shared (re)action. Be careful not to mime what you are going to do with physical gesticulation.

This trains the ability to read and follow the flow of impulses within a partner. It is the vocal equivalent of many physical trainings for moving together without a leader, of which mirroring is the simplest example. This work can be developed towards more abstract tasks, where for example one partner will be able to sing, together with the leading partner, the improvised song, 'as if' they both know it from before. It can as well be a great preparatory exercise for choral text/song work.

Finally, I will describe the exercise which trains group communication: *Full Spectrum*.[83] It takes the group from exploring a common impulse to a multiplicity of smaller impulses within a predominant action-reaction cycle. It is the last exercise in this sequence, in which the performer has worked out from their own inner presence towards a concrete understanding of their voice in a multiplicity of spaces and with others in the now.

Illustration 8. 'Full Spectrum'. LIV Bologna, Italy, March 2011. Photo: Silvia Bernardi.

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[83] I will not explain the whole exercise, but rather focus on the elements relevant to this discussion.

Exercise 7: Full spectrum

1. Tuning in: the group sits on the floor in the centre. The pedagogue should take a moment to see each person, allowing everyone to come together in their own flow.

2. Loosen and engage the spine: walk in and out on your backside as a group. Allow yourself to laugh, release sound, funny noises. Enjoy.

3. Sounding stretches: a series of easy but dynamic stretches combined with self-massage while sounding single notes which correspond to physical actions. The order of stretches is never fully set, but rather improvised each day according to the needs of the group. This can include, for example, opening and closing the legs in a squeezing action or the cat/cow from yoga.

4. Pushing sand sequence: physical position of the body is: legs wide, centre low, knees bent, back straight. Stretch arms long and the hand does the action of pushing sand from one foot to the other. Shift weight from one foot to the other with this action, engaging the whole body. Gradually let the upper body come up into a standing position, like skiing. Coordinate the movement with the group and continue it as turning to stand in a circle, facing inwards. Focus on the moment when the weight shifts – this moment of choice where there is no turning back to the other foot. Add sound to that moment. Try to synchronise the engagement of the physical body with that of the vocal chords, encouraging the voice to come from the body. Repeat this until the group is firm in their common rhythm.

5. When established, each person should begin to push sand in different directions. Remember to keep the awareness open and not bump into anyone. While the group is still in the same rhythm, allow different tones, qualities and pressures to appear.

6. Allow your actions to become more and more heterogeneous, also beginning to disintegrate the main rhythm adding upbeats, syncopations etc. At this point the pedagogue becomes a suggestive leader. Do not fully dictate what will come next but give small proposals through example or instruction. Some examples: (1) extend the rhythm and length of sounds towards something that resembles a classical song, (2) increase the use of consonants, working towards rap, or a soundscape of human sounds, (3) introduce a text and work towards choral speaking in all its variations. In this work, there is not a set order of variations. Instead try to listen to the group and respond to what is there. Allow the improvisation to end of its own accord.

To briefly conclude, the aim of this chapter has been to work from theory towards practice, allowing concepts to be consolidated into training. In the theoretical work, key areas for research were identified, including the moment of shift between different aesthetic logics and the question of how impulse and awareness are defined. The explorations represent the space between, experimenting with these theoretical questions within a practical context, clarifying more and less useful approaches. The last step has been to fully translate these developing concepts

into a series of concrete images and exercises. The groundwork of a terminology has been laid out, including the ideas of circles of awareness, vocal material/form, the spectrum of how sound makes meaning and the prototypes of communication. This completes the inquiry into presence. In the next chapter this information is fed back into the theoretical research and serves as the starting point for the work towards the second strand of the performer's work: composition.

CHAPTER III

VOCAL COMPOSITION

As far as I know, there is no composition training for the voice. Within the text-based tradition of theatre, there is 'speech' (as opposed to 'voice') training, working with, but not creating, text: the latter is the job of writers.[84] Outside theatre, there are several composition traditions, each with their own aesthetic-specific methodologies: musical composers and music theory, writers and literature, jazz singers and improvisation, and so on. Except in the case of folk singers/pop musicians, the one who composes is rarely the one who performs. As far as a terminology is concerned, there has been some borrowing of terms from music to describe work with the spoken word, but such translations have not been developed into a systematic or all-encompassing vocabulary.

As a basis for the terminology of vocal composition, I thus look outside of vocal trainings. When movement practitioners began to devise their own original material, a need for a common terminology became apparent. Over the years, a range of terms emerged to describe the underlying principles of movement: balance, weight and tempo-rhythm etc. Categories of basic elements were created, such as walks or runs, movements with the core of the body or limbs, movements which are curved or straight. It is this kind of cross-form awareness I am trying to develop within voice work. As one of my research team, Judita, remarked, 'in movement classes, you learn how to sense how what you do looks from the outside. What you are trying to get us to do is to understand how to *see* our voice' (Vitkauskaite 2011). This does not mean to judge if one has 'said the line well,' but to understand how the sound functions structurally, like a physical object.

To define the elements of vocal composition however is not enough. This must be coupled with a systematic understanding of how these elements can function to communicate with different aesthetics. As Barker asserts:

> The presence of both speaking and singing on stage or in the concert hall
> provokes a series of philosophical, dramatic and technical questions.

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[84] As discussed in I.1, devising (the performance composition training) does not focus strongly on the voice.

Philosophically it raises the question of the relationship between song and speech: whether the character is aware of their singing or speaking, and whether the voice is their own, their character's or the voice of the writer, composer, or director. Dramatically it necessitates a demonstration of the contrasting emotional states of speaking and singing: without the presence of speaking we might accept the ostensible 'normality' of the singing voice, but the presence of both leads us to necessarily provide an answer as to why one is appropriate at one moment, while the other is more appropriate at the next. (2004:72)

This work of determining 'why one is appropriate at one moment' I name vocal dramaturgy.

1. SOURCE TRADITIONS

Improvisation

Improvisation is a very large field of concepts, methodologies and exercises. Why do I choose it as a base for composition work and how is it applied here? I turned to methods within improvisation for two reasons. Firstly, their underlying approach to composition is appropriate to the postdramatic context: they focus on composition as a function of creating meaning in the moment, rather than from isolated aesthetic ideas. As Frost and Yarrow assert, it is exactly this skill that improvisation trainings train:

> Improvisation promotes the capacity for creating meanings. Those meanings are created in performance, as a process occurring in the present moment. (1990:165)

In this inquiry I focus on two practitioners, Britton and Bogart, who each have their own narrow definition of improvisation each of which I will argue are significant in this context. Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, in this inquiry I look at improvisation not merely as a set of exercises (some traditions use it as a way to generate material to use in a non-improvised performance) but as a kind of meta-theory, an underlying approach to all work. To return to Zarrilli's idea of *performance as psychophysiological process: the embodiment and shaping of energy,'* this section will focus on the significance of the fact that this

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psychophysical embodiment (discussed in Chapter II) is always in *process,* i.e. improvisational.

Czikszentmihalyi describes how this basic principle of making choices in the moment creates a specific relationship to the world. He calls it an 'autotelic' personality.

> one of the basic differences between a person with an autotelic self and one without it is that the former knows that it is she who has chosen whatever goal she is pursuing. What she does is not random, nor is it the result of outside determining forces. This fact results in two seemingly opposite outcomes. On the one hand, having a feeling of ownership of her decisions, the person is more strongly dedicated to her goals. Her actions are reliable and internally controlled. On the other hand, knowing them to be her own, she can more easily modify her goals whenever the reasons for preserving them no longer make sense. In that respect, an autotelic person's behaviour is both more consistent and more flexible. (1990:210)

This autotelic self is the heretical performer; one able to make and break the 'rules of performance.' Without this approach, the exercises of improvisation will never lead to a training that can cross borders. It is this idea of continuous improvisation, or questioning, which is paradoxically at the heart of this training about creating form.

John Britton

In this section I look at how Britton translated the flow theory of Czikszentmihalyi into a practical approach. Britton is a lecturer at Huddersfield University, UK. He studied with Al Wunder, a master improviser currently practising in Australia.[85] Britton's work, though grounded in improvisation, is not exclusively so. He states that:

> the performative imperatives that improvisation imposes on participants serve as models and metaphors through which trainees can identify, explore and understand their capacity within a range of improvised and non-improvised performance structures. (2007a:1)

Czikszentmihalyi writes that the key to finding optimal experience is being able to

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[85] Wunder's work began in the melting pot of dance improvisation in the 1960s in New York and later in San Francisco.

react appropriately to a shifting reality, based on the skills you have *in the moment you need to react.* Within this statement lies the assumption that one is able to be in the moment. I regard Britton's principles as primarily explanations and reminders of: how do we stay in the *now* with a *true picture* of who we are and what we can do? Britton's method of catching beanbags makes this explicit: we are present enough to catch the beanbag, or we're not. Britton states that 'the heart of the training is attitudinal' (2007a:7). Building on Czikszentmihalyi he calls his basic principle the 'pleasure principle':

> In particular I want to suggest how a rigorous insistence on the primacy of pleasure in the approach a performer takes to his or her work, provides important strategies for structuring that work and developing and channelling creative energies (2007b:1)

I will not mention all of his principles here but rather mention a few significant examples.[86] I look to reveal both the substance of and the unique manner in which he presents these principles. The first I will discuss is 'No wrong, no right,' which challenges the performer to constantly reopen their awareness to potential stimuli they may be ignoring. In improvisation where there is no repeated structure, there is nothing that is 'a mistake,' it is only a mistake if you make it one. Britton made this point in a memorable way. I will take an example from his workshop I attended. We had been throwing beanbags, catching beanbags, dropping beanbags, and apologizing for it, for over two hours. He stopped us and said: 'OK, now, there is a new rule. If you drop a beanbag, or make a crap throw, I want you to jump up, throw your hands up and say 'I did it!'' (pers. comm. 2010) We laughed politely and continued to play. The first drop was followed by a half-hearted yell. He admonished us. The second was better. After a while we managed to break the Western circle of shame that had made us all feel 'bad' for having dropped the beanbag. It suddenly became clear that what made the drop 'bad' was that we were trying to pretend it had not happened. When we celebrated it, this action of dropping became part of our 'performance,' and more significantly a stimulus that our partners could react to. Taking this attitude into a performance context, it reminds the performer to always be curious and to 'say yes' to everything that happens, as it can be a potential source of creativity – it is something to react to.

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[86] As Britton admits, his principles are not unique, but similar to those of many psychophysical trainings.

The principle 'Know your task' helps outline how Britton, by very simple means, reminds the performer to stay in flow. I will take another example from training. During a session he slowly added more and more beanbags. After a while he added jumps, turns and other small physical tasks. Performers started to overload, getting blank in the eyes and limp in the body. He stopped us and said:

> I always give too many instructions…or too little. *It is up to you to know how many tasks you need to keep you engaged.* Take that, and ignore the rest. If it is enough for you just to try to catch the beanbag, do just that. If that is boring and you need more challenge, do this jump as you catch.' (pers. comm. 2010)

In a Czikszentmihalyian sense he is asking the performer to keep themselves on the flow graph, to take on only the amount of tasks that keep them from being bored but not too many so they become stressed. He is asking the performer to take responsibility for their own work, through very concrete means. It is significant that Britton focuses on this idea within the context of training. Many performers *think* they are responsible, but actually aren't. Their excuse is: 'I will be responsible when I am out there on stage, but in training my job is to do what you tell me.' But if a performer cannot take responsibility in the safety of the studio, how will they find that courage on the stage?

Britton further defines this responsibility, counteracting some common preconceptions. In a Western context 'responsibility' is often a heavy 'adult' word connected with unpleasant duties. Britton insists that we each have a responsibility to *follow our pleasure.*

> I am not talking about the trainee doing what they want, I am talking about the trainee finding active pleasure in what the task requires of them […] I am requiring a trainee to structure their conscious engagement with the task so that the doing of it is pleasurable, not unpleasant. I'm asking the trainee to undertake a conscious ordering of their consciousness. (2007b:5)

He goes on to further delineate the specifics of following pleasure.

> The mechanics of pursuing pleasure within training are complex […] It requires that a trainee:
> - actively engages in the work,
> - that they adopt a conscious attitude to their work,
> - that they break the set task into sub-tasks as a way of identifying and pursuing personal pleasure in the shared work – this in turn requires that they engage with the detail rather than the generalities of a task,

• that they identify and address the personal blockages they encounter
[…]
• that they take responsibility for the discoveries and achievements
they make […]
• and (perhaps most importantly) that they revisit this matrix of
obligations every time they revisit an exercise – in other words that
they engage in a task always in the present. (2007b:6)

In this way, the directive to follow pleasure becomes a specific and highly
challenging activity and one that can be done within any form of performance. A
significant by-product of this method is that by focusing on pleasure, performers will
actively choose to create forms which allow them to flow, adding structural
complexity (such as adding the jump in the beanbag game) *only when it is something
they can fully embody* without stress. Abiding by this flow principle, a performer's
work, in training or in creating performance, will never be mere cold repetition, but
rather a full action in the moment.

When performers work within forms, a common mistake is that they shift
principles, deprioritizing flow and focusing on form as a static entity.

When I am given a 'blocking' of some sort by a director, I usually start from
the 'talking head' effect and only after many repetitions can I engage fully
and actually have a presence. (Ioannou 2011)

Britton proposes a more dynamic relationship between form and flow and thus
another approach:

However one rehearses a piece of non-improvised performance, what one
rehearses is not what is performed. Both the presence of an audience and the
very passage of time means, whenever a piece of work is performed, in
public or in a studio, it is altered. *The rehearsal process is not a way of fixing
performance, it is a setting of the parameters within which the
director/choreographer/writer are happy to see the performance exist.*
Sometimes those parameters are tight, sometimes loose. The tighter the
parameters […] the more detailed will be *the improvisational subtasks* that
the performer will need to focus on if they are to keep the flow of energy
within their performance immediate. But however fixed or fluid the form and
content of a final performance, every live act is […] an improvisation, for it
cannot have happened before. So the heart of the training must be that we
allow performers to develop their capacity to respond appropriately to the
unexpected in real-time. (2007a:4 my emphasis)

There are several key points here. Firstly, inherent in his text is the idea that
'performance' indicates the live act before the audience, which is distinct from the

performance form created in rehearsal. Secondly, his assertion that within any performance score, however fixed, the key to its ability to function as live performance is the improvisational aspect (the flow).[87] Thirdly, the task of rehearsal is not simply to discover what the form of the performance is, but also to identify *how the performer can find their flow within that form.* Lastly, he writes that performers should 'develop their ability to respond appropriately to the unexpected in real-time.' It should be noted that what makes a response 'appropriate' *changes within different forms.* For example when performing *Tosca*, an appropriate response to a stage light falling down would not be to begin to tell jokes; the form requires something else. In a comedy improvisation, jokes might be exactly appropriate. When viewed in this perspective, a performance form is very similar to an exercise form: it is a series of tasks/constrictions which determine the parameters for a live doing. The only difference is the apparent aim: the exercise structure trains a certain form of presence/skill, whereas the performance structure is in service of the dramaturgy. What Britton suggests is that the aim of both should be presence, and that to understand the act of performing means not only to understand form, but to understand the relationship between form and flow. This is something that many might agree with, but a conscious exploration between leader/director and performer regarding this *area of flow* is rare. Britton's training notably focuses on this.

> As the training process progresses there are a series of ways that I will work, ranging from the purely improvisational to the relatively prescribed [...] from the macro-improvisational – where the performers are responsible for both what they do and how they do it, to the micro-improvisational where what they do is fixed, through scripting or choreography, but the way that they do it, the fine details of impulse, action and reaction, remain fluid, as they must in all live performance. (2007a:7)

Britton is not alone in understanding performance material as macro/micro improvisational. One example I will mention briefly here is from the field of music and comes from Nachmanovitch (2005). (The centre of the diamond represents the

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[87] Note that when conceptualising improvisation as flow, it becomes a much more specific task than simply 'coming up with something in the moment'. Instead it becomes, as Britton describes, a detailed negotiation with the present moment determined by a very fixed set of criteria which include both the skills and blocks of the peformer and the constrictions of the perdetermined performance form.

Received structures

Improv structured by
agreement: Jazz, Raga

More structure →   ← More spontaneity

Strictly following
a score

"Free jazz"
anything goes

Improv structured by
listening

Intuitive structures
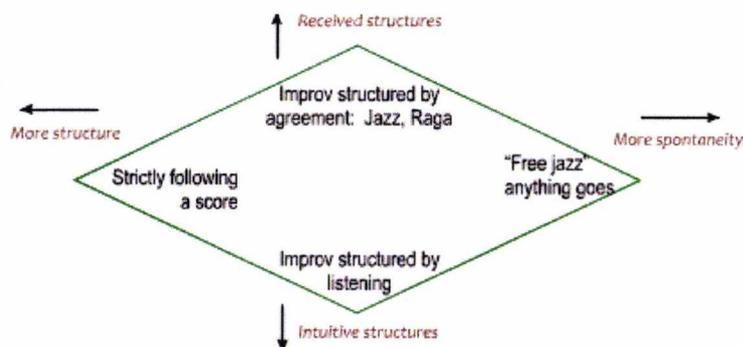
area of improvisation).

Figure 11. Structure and free flow in improvised music

This model is even more nuanced than Britton's, suggesting the complexity of this negotiation between form and flow.

The first step in understanding this form/flow negotiation, is to open up an understanding of what 'form' is. As a simple example, I will consider one of Britton's movement exercises. The form of the exercise is that one partner makes a body shape and then the second must make another statue in relation to it. The first person then breaks their statue, observes their partner and makes a new shape in relation to this. The exercise has no set 'form,' understood in the sense of choreography as a set repeatable order of movements, often with an assumed set 'meaning.' It is not, on the other hand, simply 'freeform.' Instead the form is *that which creates the logic* which determines how the performers move/sound.[88] This is similar musically to jazz in which a pattern 'structured by agreement' serves as a base logic for an elaboration in the moment.

When approaching form from this point of view, the understanding of what it means for something to be 'repeatable' is wider. Form can be as simple as a single spatial/temporal relationship (the performer must go and stand in front of the microphone at the same time each night and see what happens) or as complex as a specific set of spatial/temporal relationships (the performer knows they will speak the lines of Hamlet, stand in pre-determined places, speak at pre-determined sound levels, in relation to pre-determined colleagues, in a pre-determined scenography, in

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[88] Britton takes a lot of inspiration from the exercises of Wunder, who in his book described how he developed many of his exercises. In turn, his inspiration came from the dance world and movement task-based improvisation scores. (Wunder 2006:43-45).

front of a stationary audience sitting in a pre-determined area). Both of these are forms and both have a distinct area within which a flow of reactions to the present moment is possible. Nachmanovitch describes this 'scientifically' as 'free play':

> free play is [...] an engineering term, and it simply refers to degrees of freedom of mobility. A joint such as my wrist or shoulder can move so many degrees forwards and backwards [...] *That's a quantifiable amount of what engineers call free play.* The sensitivity of this microphone and the lower and higher frequencies that it can respond to, the limits of its response, is a definition in engineering of free play. [...] We talk about the semi-structured or semi-scored improvisations, or when we talk about how my free improvisations are tilted and structured by the way the instrument is and by the way the room is and by the way my emotions are, we're just dealing in that eternal dance of form vs. freedom, which is the oldest dance there is. (2007:8)

This quote makes it evident that one's ability to understand the difference between form and flow in an aesthetic is key: one would meet with great difficulties trying to 'bend the wrist' of a form beyond its limit.

In many training contexts performers may experience exercises that acquaint them with form on macro/micro levels; but the macro-improvisational exercises are often seen only as preparative. A classic exercise is one where the performer has the task to walk on the stage and look at the audience and walk off, nothing more. This is usually seen as a fun game to test someone's ability to 'be present' but not as a performance form in itself. In performance, forms which have little set structure such as comedy improvisation are often scoffed at by those who work with highly structured forms such as Shakespeare or opera. The shift in Britton's approach (and my own) is that we dismantle this hierarchy, placing both as equally valid performance forms, each with their unique set of challenges.

Anne Bogart

While Britton's work will serve as an attitudinal base for an understanding of compositional training and the relationship between form and flow, Bogart's work provides the skeleton of a terminology for form. Anne Bogart is a director and trainer from the USA. She developed her Viewpoints method from the work of Mary

Overlie, a dancer who in the 1960s began to look for a terminology which would allow her to categorise different types of movement across various aesthetic forms of dance. Bogart's development included a further clarification of Overlie's terminology, the addition of a few terms, and the inclusion of exercises for voice. The two parts of her system are Viewpoints (a presence training) and Composition. She writes: 'Composition is to the creator (whether director, writer, performer, designer, etc.) what Viewpoints is to the actor: a method for practicing the art.' (2005:13) Bogart's method is highly relevant to the discussion as it is an example of a training model for both presence and composition and the relationship between the two. Here I will discuss Bogart's work on three levels: the underlying 'ethics,' the Viewpoints themselves, and specific concerns when exploring voice within this model.

In the introduction to *The Viewpoints Book*, Bogart clearly contextualises and makes transparent her aims. She is firmly planted in and reflects upon her historical and political context: she is a director, writing to creative artists/directors/pedagogues in a postdramatic, multicultural society.

> Viewpoints and Composition offer an alternative to conventional approaches to acting, directing, playwriting and design. They represent a clear-cut procedure and attitude that is non-hierarchical, practical and collaborative in nature. Both address particular problems and assumptions that a young person faces when entering the field, and offer an alternative. (2005:15)

She begins the Preface with a warning: '*The Viewpoints Book* is not definitive […] not absolute truth. It is written out of personal experience and belief.' (2005:x) She finishes with a challenge: 'We are torn between the desire to provide a map for you and the desire to tell you to rip up this book and enter the terror for yourself.' (2005:xi) The book succeeds in both. It paradoxically provides one of the most clear 'how-to' guides and simultaneously challenges the artist to break the rules and discover their own. This opening statement is key to remember, as some aspects of the approach can appear almost clinical.

Viewpoints consists of nine principles of movement in space and time. Where Britton's approaches are attitudinal, Bogart's Viewpoints are elemental; he focuses on *how,* she systematizes *what.* Her attitudinal strategies are a secondary focus,

written as pedagogical strategies/philosophical principles (Bogart 2005:204). The Viewpoints are implicit in Britton's work, as they are in many trainings. Bogart asserts:

> The ultimate lesson of Viewpoints, after all, might be one of humility. We did not invent a system that the world mirrors. Rather, it is the natural world itself that holds such timeless and consistent patterns of behavior. It is our struggle to name the patterns and then apply them to our art. (2005:210)

In order to assist further discussion, I will name and briefly define the Viewpoints. In the following paragraphs I will discuss the potential benefits and problems of conceptualizing vocal composition in terms of time and space.

TIME[89]

- Tempo: the rate at which a movement/sound occurs
- Duration: over how much time a movement/sound occurs
- Kinesthetic response: 'A spontaneous reaction to motion which occurs outside you; the timing in which you respond to the external events of movement or sound; the impulsive movement that occurs from a stimulation of the senses.'
- Repetition: the repeating of something

SPACE

- Shape: the shape body/voice makes in space
- Gesture: a shape of the body/voice which has a beginning, middle, and end
- Architecture: the physical environment in which you are working
- Spatial relationship: 'the distance between things onstage, especially (1) one body to another; (2) one body (or bodies) to a group of bodies; (3) the body of the architecture
- Topography: 'the *floor pattern,* the *design* we create in movement through space.'

Although the Viewpoints appear to be very clear and indisputable, I will suggest that the equal weight Bogart gives them on the written page does not match

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[89] I have here paraphrased Bogart with the addition of adding 'vocal/voice' where there is 'movement/body'. All quotes from (Bogart 2005:8-11)

their weighted application in training. What complicates the issue is that she uses the Viewpoints within *both* presence and composition trainings, but does not clearly articulate how the relationship between these elements shifts as the focus of the work shifts from flow (Viewpoints) to form (Composition). In the former, rather than training nine equal interrelated principles, I contend that she actually trains kinaesthetic response *within* the other viewpoints. Architecture, for example, cannot be 'trained,' the walls are fixed. What her exercises actually do is put the focus on one or other of the Viewpoints as the stimuli which the performer becomes aware of and trains the ability to respond kinaesthetically to. For example, in one exercise the performers have to walk in a fixed topographical pattern. Fixing this element alters what Britton calls the parameters of the performance; the performer's kinaesthetic response/possibility to respond to the moment is in this case 'appropriate' or limited to shifts in time. To step out of the topographical pattern, to make choices in space, would be considered 'wrong' or breaking the exercise. Conversely, by fixing a repetition of a text at a fast and steady tempo, the performer's area of flow includes the possibility to make spatial choices in response to the performance moment.

In the exercises this primacy of kinaesthetic response is evident. For example her famous warm up consists of the group running around in a circle together and shifting direction, jumping or stopping at the same time on a common impulse. She writes that this 'cultivates listening and responding in the moment both individually and as a group' (2005:27). Is this not kinaesthetic response? In other preparatory work, she develops skills which allow this listening to happen, such as 'soft focus,' 'extraordinary listening,' 'ongoing awareness of others in time and space' and 'sats.'[90] When introducing the exercise aptly named The Flow she writes: '*Always, when working with Viewpoints, the choices are made intuitively and based on surrounding events.* (66).[91]

In Composition work the aim of the exercises shifts: rather than the pedagogue proposing a form in which to train the performer's experience of kinaesthetic response, now the performer's main task is to themselves create form. In

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[90] 'Sats' is an idea taken from Barba meaning 'the quality of energy *before* the action' (Bogart 2005:73). See (Barba 1995:59) for a more detailed explanation.
[91] Bogart is familiar with Csikszentmihalyi's work and gives him a nod at the end of her book when discussing what she calls being, as in sports, 'in the zone' (Bogart 2005:209).

this context the other Viewpoints take a more central role, as they become the building blocks of composition. Here is an example of an early composition exercise. Performers will first be prompted to work out from these directives. Later, they will be asked to create the lists of directives themselves.

Determine how many people will take part in the etude and where it will be.
The composition will not last more than 5 minutes.
The composition should be built on the following structure: 1. The meeting 2. Something happens 3. Loss 4. The reunion.
The composition should include the following ingredients in any order:
     a. A sustained moment where everyone looks up
     b. Repetition of 5 lines of text at top speed
     c. A gesture repeated by all performers
     d. 15 seconds of unison movement

Through writing and exploring compositions like the one above, performers gain an understanding of how their work looks from the outside, how it is built in time and space, and have a language with which to communicate this structure to others. Significant to note is that flow is still primary in this work, even though the aim is to create a form. The structure (or as Britton writes the 'parameters within which the director/choreographer/writer are happy to see the performance exist') is decided before the performing of the etude, leaving the performer free during performance to focus on their kinesthetic response to the form in the moment.

Bogart writes that 'There are lazy or undigested ways of teaching Viewpoints' (2005:x). I would suggest that this misunderstanding comes partially from the imprecision of terminology discussed above. In pedagogues she has trained, the primary position of kinaesthetic response is evident. Those who adopt Viewpoints from the book can tend to place too much emphasis on the fixable Viewpoints.

> Yes, Viewpoints can be used to make incredibly sophisticated and intricate pieces of choreography. Eloquent form, let's say. But personally, Viewpoints continues to interest me more as a way *towards* emotion than *away* from it (which isn't to say form can't create emotion; of course it can, and that is one of the fundamentals of this book) [...] I believe not in the superiority of one process over the other but in *both,* together, fighting, alternating, informing [...] Use everything available to you to be in the present moment.' (2005:214)

What is valuable and unique about Viewpoints as a form training is exactly the focus on the relationship between form and flow as primary. Bogart's terminology gives us words to describe form and exercises to develop flow. What she calls 'fighting, alternating and informing' and what Britton names the macro and micro layers of improvisation, will form the focus of the practical works described in section 3 of this chapter.

Now I will discuss concretely her methods for approaching the voice. Bogart dedicates one chapter to the work with the voice: 'As elements accumulate in the process of Viewpoints training, there comes a moment for the human voice.' (2005:105) This moment comes in the 9th of a 17 chapter book; the position is definitely not primary. This is symptomatic of many training methods which give the voice (consciously or unconsciously) second place in terms of time and dramaturgical potential. Bogart argues:

> we start to address how it [the voice] sounds and how the sound itself contains information and expressivity [...] As an actor-training tool, the introduction of these *points of view* can be invaluable in cultivating *vocal virtuosity*. (2005:105 my emphasis)

It is interesting that although she speaks of widening our understanding of how the voice can communicate, she describes this as 'virtuosity,' an attitudinal approach she does not support when working with the body. Although this might not be her aim, it is significant that her terminology, which is thorough and consistent in relation to the body, appears more lax here.

The exercises Bogart describes are clearly linked to a 'traditional approach' to voice, having much in common with the work of Linklater and Berry. They focus mostly on explorations of the Viewpoints of Time: sounding in a fixed place, with a fixed material (usually text). 'Each participant works alone at first, choosing a place in the room where s/he can most effectively concentrate on his/her own voice or sound.' (2005:106) The opening exercise includes saying a nonsense word in a variety of different tempos, pitch, dynamic, timbre etc. (2005:106-7). When working with the body she emphasises the importance of beginning with group exercises in which kinaesthetic response is key. Yet with voice she begins with what might be called 'technical' exercises. Although one can dismiss the significance of this, I

would assert that initial exercises in a training are key in establishing the underlying principles upon which a work is based: pedagogy is as much about what order elements are introduced in as the elements themselves. If one begins technically, that will always remain in the subconscious of the performer, no matter how many communication-based exercises are done subsequently. As Bogart's exercises develop, they become more based on kinaesthetic response. Although the Viewpoints of Time are explored to a large extent within different sets of relations (alone, pair and group) they are almost all understood from fixed spatial positions; work with the voice in space is de-prioritised. Furthermore, although she begins with nonsense sound, the exercises clearly are structured to build towards text, eventually abandoning pure sound. Lastly, the relationship between the physical and vocal elements of the work is characterized by the following words of advice she gives in exercise 2, The Chair Piece:

> Once all the A/B couples have set the sequence [of movements], and only after every move is secure, ask them to find a way to place the Pinter text 'on top' of the sequence without changing the moves to suit the text. (2005:118)

It is clear that she regards text/sound as coming necessarily *after* movement in the process of material development. This is significant for two reasons. Firstly it implies that the body will always shape the voice, an assumption that limits a performer's range when creating material. More importantly, it sets up a hierarchy in which the body always guides dramaturgy. The postdramatic paradigm shift opened up the possibility of a non-text-based dramaturgy. Viewpoints, as many other devising techniques, rather than embracing the whole spectrum, simply replace text with movement as the dramaturgical motor. In the following practical explorations I discuss the basis for a dramaturgy of the voice.

2. PRACTICAL EXPLORATION
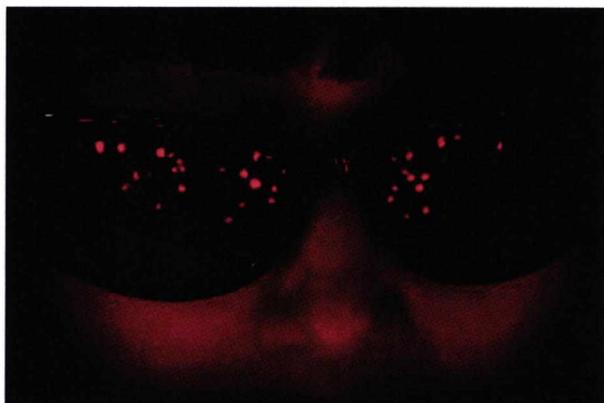
Illustration 9. *One By One*, University of Kent, June 2011. Photo: Katie Porter.

TIMELINE		
FALL 2010	*One By One* Rehearsals September	• **Collaborators:** myself and Jørn Wimpel • **Rehearsal:** 2 weeks
	Composition Intensive Wroclaw February	• **Collaborators:** myself • **Rehearsal:** 10 days at The Grotowski Institute
SPRING 2011	Performance Bologna March	• **Collaborators:** myself • **Performances:** 1, at PerformAzioni Festival
	June Symposium[92]	• **Collaborators:** myself • **Performances:** 2

In the following analysis I will discuss how this study allowed me to explore two key elements of vocal composition and consequently dramaturgy:

- Overall performance logic
- Analysing vocal forms in space and time

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[92] See DVD.

To do so, the approaches of Britton and the terminology of Viewpoints give me reflective distance on my own work as a performer.

In 2010, the performance had been a site wherein to research different modes of presence. While focusing on the action-reaction cycle within each scene, I had lacked a systematic understanding of the action-reaction cycle of the performance as a whole. I had not created what Merlin describes as the prerequisites for creating a sense of 'truth' 'a context for what we're seeing, some rules which determine our expectations, some kind of LOGIC AND COHERENCE.' (Merlin 2007:114) It is interesting to note that this 'context for what we're seeing,' which is necessarily an aspect of composition and dramaturgy, is inherently linked to questions of whether an audience can respond to the presence, or 'truth' of the performer's individual actions. It reasserts the interconnectedness of these two fields and confirms the importance of a training including both halves.

In 2011, the focus of the work on this performance became to clarify and make explicit the performance's 'logic and coherence.' As often happens in artistic processes, a line of questioning and some luck allow one to discover something totally unexpected but deceptively perfect. In this case I happened to stumble across some articles about the workings of the brain. Laying this concept over the performance material I had, I suddenly saw a pattern which would connect the main vocal forms of the piece; the performance now takes place inside the brain of the Stewardess. The various voices are different parts: *left brain, right brain, back brain, and frontal lobe.*[93] In addition, there is a *real time voice* which represents the 'now' of the performance moment. The metaphor of the brain justified the use of radically different expressions, as the different parts of the brain have very different functions and even produce different kinds of impulse.

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[93] I will use here the term 'voices' instead of vocal form, for the ease of reading.

The story[94]

The year is 2200. This is a future in which the world is plagued with disease and human-to-human contact is no longer considered safe. People live solitary lives connected only by machines. Underground theatres and the airplanes of the rich are the only places where people have bodily contact. The performance begins with the Stewardess lying on her floor paralysed. The *real time voice* is the thoughts going through her head as she lies there. She wants, but is afraid, to go to an underground theatre to tell the story of her miscarriage. She talks to the audience in a confidential manner. She cannot find the impulse to get up. She lies on the floor and dreams. Here her *left brain*[95] (characterised as a scientist) tries to understand logically why she miscarried. She decides to run an experiment. By introducing chemicals into the brain she can stimulate activity and cause memories, in the form of dreams, which she hopes will reveal the answer. These dreams are played out by *the Stewardess*[96] on the front stage, in the form of surrealistic scenes which flow between naturalistic monologue and stylistic 'physical theatre.' These dreams awake the *right brain,*[97] who is a lounge singer. She too is looking for answers to why the miscarriage happened, and looks to stimulate memory through music. Through the course of the performance, the left and right brain dialogue, stimulating the subconscious brain and bringing back memories of different events. Each memory is of course affected by who has called it up, some memories being more emotional, others intellectual. Now and then these dreams provoke a deep memory in the *back brain,*[98] inarticulate sounds, garbled words and song. Periodically the Stewardess wakes up, only to find herself still on the floor. The climax comes as her left and right brains discover that they cannot find an answer to 'why it happened' that will allow the Stewardess to make the choice to get on with her life. This happens in a scene where the left brain comes to the realization that 'choice' happens in the corpus collosum, the part of the brain which connects the left and right. No choice can be made by either half of the

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[94] The 'voices' are here written in italics so that the reader can get an idea of how they were in relation to each other in the performance.

[95] This voice absorbed all the texts which had been the 'scientist' texts and as well having many new texts written for it.

[96] This voice absorbed all the 'Stewardess' texts. They were all rewritten so as to fit within the logic of a dream self who is trying to remember, but simultaneously does not want to remember. They were also rewritten so that she is always talking to her 'passengers' on a dream flight.

[97] This voice absorbed most of the songs in the performance along with some of the more 'emotional' Stewardess texts.

[98] This voice absorbed those texts which were deeper or more unconscious memories than those described by the Stewardess.

brain independently: intellect and intuition must work together.[99] (This is scientifically accurate). The show ends as the Stewardess wakes up to the realization that perhaps there is no answer to what has happened except acceptance that life is paradoxical; that something has died inside her and she is still alive. This realization comes in the form of a Thunder, Complete Mind text.[100] Then she is able to stand up. She 'goes to the theatre,' represented by going to the front of the stage, not as the Stewardess of the dream world, but as the real time self. This voice asks some final questions, ending with: 'if I slow down enough, will I be able to feel the changing temperature on my skin?' (Behrens 2011) which questions the potential of an individual to sense cause and effect on a small scale and consequently be able to affect larger change. She slowly takes off her dress and unwinds herself from an electrical cord which encircles her body as she sings a song. Then she leaves and the performance ends. I come back as myself to thank the audience.

There were a few significant technical shifts which supported the new dramaturgical choices. Firstly, I controlled all technological aspects of the show: lights, sound and video. In this sense, it was truly a one-woman show. Secondly, the video went from being two projectors hung from the ceiling to a single projector placed above my head when I lay amongst the audience. All film footage was played on the computer which was filmed live and projected. In this sense, the video became more explicitly the alpha wave activity in the Stewardess' brain. The audience sat on the floor on a pink carpet and there was no raised stage making the space less 'performative'; it felt more as if we were all 'inside my head.' In addition, I chose to play in smaller spaces in which the set filled the space to the walls. This gave a greater sense of intimacy.

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[99] In this scene the different voices started to 'mix'. The left brain walked onto the stage and then the right brain 'took over the body.' In this way the struggle between the two sides of the brain was physicalized on stage.

[100] The Thunder, Complete Mind text was used rarely in this version of the performance. It was absorbed into the *direct address to the audience voice* as a kind of deep understanding that comes from a moment of enlightenment.

Figure 12. Performer's dramaturgy *One By One 2011*
(first 25 minutes)

Informational	Associative	Instinctive
5 ⇒		3
		↵
5		
↵		
1 ⇒ 4	⇒	3
		↵
5 ⇒	2	
	↵	
4		
↵		
1 ⇒ 4	⇒	3
		↵
	2	
	↵	
5		
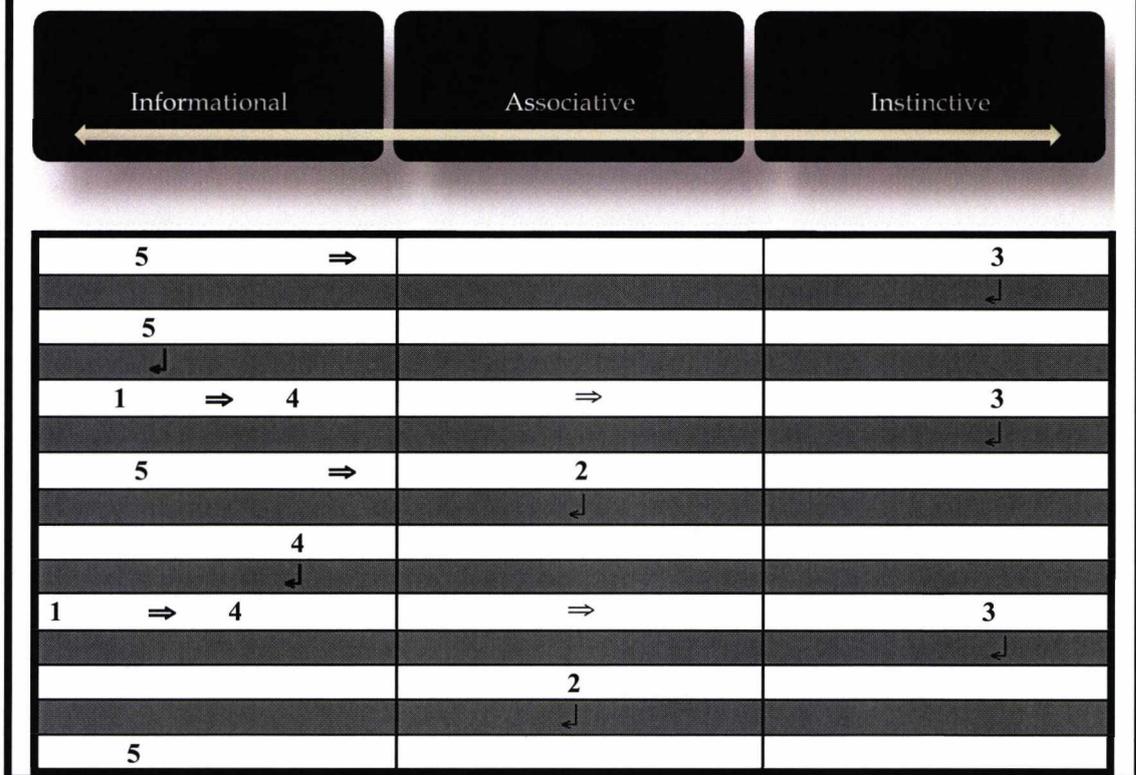
1. Left brain
2. Right brain
3. Back brain
4. Stewardess
5. Real time

In the following analysis, I will look at how Viewpoints helped me to analyse my performance, clarify vocal forms and later structure them into an understandable dramaturgy. To begin with, the new overall performance logic served as an organizing principle by which I could designate, adapt or delete the material I had. It gave me a distance to my embodied work, and allowed me to make structural choices without losing my engagement.[101] The number of forms decreased from 13 to 5 and the dramaturgy began to have more integrity in terms of both story and style. In

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[101] If a performer only understands their work from the inside, they often make choices of what material to keep or cut based on whether they 'feel good' in it, or react emotionally if the director cuts something because they assume that it meant that it was not 'good enough.' Here, in contrast, I could make choices structurally. In what I kept, I also had a clearer idea of *how* it should be communicating, so thus this process of elimination also improved my ability to inhabit the material which remained.

2010, I had decided which material should be informational/associative/instinctive based upon an instinctive hunch. The concept of the brain, however, made it much clearer what scene should be told by which voice. Lastly, a kind of circular structure began to develop in which the scenes progressed from informational to instinctive and then back to informational. This supported the thematic content: the Stewardess tries to work from her conscious thoughts back to the unconscious memories she is afraid to see, but continually returns violently to the 'reality' of waking up. I think that this 'logic' made the shifts easier to follow both for audience and performer, as opposed to the more chaotic shifts of 2010 which were not supported in the same way thematically.

Then came a process of further articulating the vocal forms I had created. This was done by looking through the lens of time. How does time create meaning? Informational meaning takes only the time it takes to say something once. The audience, for example, do not need to hear the line 'He is dead' twice. Creating an atmosphere or mood, on the other hand, must occur *over longer time* and requires *repetition*: singing the first line of a song does not create the same meaning as that song sung continuously for ten minutes. In this way shifting the duration, repetition or speed of a text/song/sound can greatly affect how it functions. In *One By One*, it became clear that some of the scenes which had been informational in 2010 needed to be re-evaluated. For example, it became clear that to say 'I am pregnant' was not the most interesting way to communicate this information. This scene became a song sequence of the right brain, who sang a lullaby interspersed with a poetic text while gathering up red lights into a ball at the stomach. This scene communicated the sensation and atmosphere of becoming pregnant rather than bare informational fact. Similarly the 'man scenes' which had told the story of the Stewardess' relationship through embodying the man as a mask on the back of the head, appeared to limit the interest of this narrative element rather than increase it. In 2011 the man did not exist as a character. Instead the love she felt for him was expressed through the right brain, as a song/rhythmic text. The brain metaphor focused the story on the Stewardess' inner conflict and thus the man as character, who was more part of her outer story, became no longer necessary. The left brain voice absorbed all of the scientist texts, which now had a concrete sense in the story, rather than just a non-introduced scientist appearing out of nowhere. In addition, instead of having a monologue in

which the Stewardess contemplates having an abortion, we created (in 2010 and kept in 2011) the scene where the phrase 'want to' is repeated over and over in monotone. In this way, the idea of indecision as a sensation of getting stuck in a repeating thought manifests on a level of bodily sensation rather than intellect. While in 2010 this had been another, perhaps random scene, it now became a more readable scene; it occurred as the Stewardess walked from her front brain back to her back brain, and thus could be seen as the character's inner movement from the more articulate thoughts to an instinctive state.

A conscious and consequent use of space also helped me to make my various voices clear to an audience. There are five 'stations' in the performance, each occupied by a different voice.[102] Each station has an identifying light setting and props. For example, the left brain has the live-feed camera, and the right brain has the lights and microphone. These are chosen to place focus on the way the voice is being used to tell the story: the right brain sings (the microphone enhances the resonance of the melody, the light is low and atmospheric, as the body does not really need to be seen), the left brain lectures (the live-feed camera functions to increase the dramatic presence of the text through enlarging the face, placing focus on the words and their meaning, rather than the movement of the body which is necessarily limited by the camera lens and fact of sitting down). Grounding each voice in a different place in the space allowed me to work with different vocal forms within a single voice. For example, if the right brain had only been defined by the vocal material 'song,' then anytime I would have sung in the performance would have been 'read' as the voice of the right brain. Instead she became a character who 'lived' in one part of the space and thus I could speak, sing or make sound at that station, and the audience would still 'read' what I did as being part of that voice.

Once the voices were established, I created a dialogue between them. Here the use of stations was very useful as it made shifts unambiguous. It also highlighted the contrasts between the voices, allowing me to further develop their unique features. This articulation made it easier to sense in rehearsal (even from the inside) how long various scenes should be or how they related to each other. It also inspired

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[102] Although this idea dated back to 2010, it had not been developed consequently through the structure.

me to rehearse the piece non-linearly. I would begin a rehearsal with my own flow training and then seamlessly transition into working on the voice which I needed to work on in that moment. In this way, I took into my own rehearsal the strategy I had explored in *a series of accidents*; I listened to what I needed and explored from there. Thus, my rehearsal process was in dialogue with how I was in the moment. This resulted in a feeling of collaboration, even while working alone.

In trouble-shooting the order of scenes I worked with the idea proposed in II.2: the audience *understands* ('buys') a shift in aesthetic because it is in relationship with what came before. In approaching this, it was important to start at the very beginning of the piece. John Freeman points to Bert O. States who makes the interesting assertion that 'it is the "first four seconds" that are the most vital in our process of determination. That our empirical world is put on hold as we trust only our connection with that which we see.' (2003:45) It is in these first seconds that the overall performance logic is established. As Duska Radosavljevic, a dramaturg, remarked: 'you give them something concrete to hold onto, then they will make their own interpretations from there' (pers. comm. 2011). However, Freeman goes on to qualify States with the statement

> And yet, it is the previously experienced outside world which has provided us with the library of seemingly intuitive references, which in their own turn allow us to arrive at the 'immediate' and untrammelled perceptions (2003:45)

This assertion is particularly relevant in a contemporary context where audiences are more and more varied in background and hence their libraries of reference. In approaching restructuring the opening of *One By One,* two things were evident, firstly that I needed to make the metaphor of the brain explicitly clear to the audience and secondly that as I could not attempt to guess who they were and how they might 'read' the performance from their personal experience, that the best I could do would be to give space at the beginning of the performance for me to sense at least the atmosphere with which they entered the theatre. Thus I structured the opening so that I would meet the audience in the atrium before the performance. I greet them and chat, trying to sense the energy, excitement/boredom, preoccupation/awakeness amongst those present. This 'moment' did not have a concrete length, but could be extended to include personal conversations etc. When this task of sensing has been

accomplished, I invite them in: 'Welcome to my brain. Please feel free to sit on the right or the left, where ever you feel most comfortable.' (Behrens 2011)

When working on length of scenes, I worked with the principle of trying to find the edge of each form, taking it as far as it would go and creating a build up of pressure which would then be released by a shift. For audience and performer, I create a 'need' for the next vocal aesthetic by pushing the previous one to its limit. An example is the shift between text and song. When you have heard enough text, especially the jabberings of the left brain, the songs of the right brain can feel like a balm on the ears. This gave the shifts (as well as their logic in terms of the story), a kind of intuitive logic based on dynamic shifts of volume, quality and texture of sound in the live event of the performance.

Lastly, the voice lying on the floor was an essential addition to the 2011 version. This voice is the one which 'breathes in the audience' and lives in a Czikszentmihalyian 'now.' It is the necessary anchor which allows me to fully dilate my presence into an awareness of the performance moment and from there to re-enter another voice. While the tempo-rhythms of the other voices are quite strictly determined, here I have more flexibility. I can just lie in silence for as long as I, or the audience need. I can change text or talk to them individually. The form is very simple and allows me greater room to listen to what is going on around me. If I happen to get 'carried away in some great moment of acting,' this voice brings me back. When this voice was added to the structure, it allowed the structure as a whole *to become present.* It was the in-breath of the structure, allowing it to be in relationship with the performance moment.

In creating *One By One* I travelled in a backwards trajectory from confusion to clarity. Beginning from hunches and large hypotheses, some essential elements of composition began to make themselves apparent across a variety of aesthetics. The extension of the concept of action as a *dramaturgical* principle assisted the organisation of my overall performance dramaturgy and the creation of a sense of logic and coherence. Viewpoints gave me a common language with which to compare all of the etudes, to further articulate how they make meaning and their relationship to each other. In the next section I describe how this experience was

translated into a training, so that other practitioners might not have to take the long way towards their dramaturgical goals.

3. A METHOD OF VOCAL (RE)ACTIONS

Illustration 10. Workshop session, University of Kent, February 2011. Still from film footage.

TIMELINE		
SPRING 2011	*One By One*	**Note:** see III.2 for full details
	THE WAY	**Note:** see II.3 for full details
	Bologna Etudes March	**Note:** see II.3 for full details
	June Etudes	**Frequency:** 4 catch-up sessions were held in March and April. They consisted of 2 hr sessions on 2 consecutive days, a total of 8 hrs. In May sessions were held from 18th until the presentation on the 8th and 9th of June (2.5 weeks). Each participant attended 4 3 hr sessions per week. 2 of these sessions were with a smaller group (Mon/Tues or Wed/Thurs). The whole group met on Fri/Sat. **Participants:** Kristin Fredricksson, Lucy James, Carla Kedzierski, Peter Morton, Dan Petrovici, Alice Taylor, Judita Vitkauskaite, Lucy Western

This chapter is the counterpart of II.3. As an introduction, I echo Bogart who begins her chapter, 'Introducing Composition' with the words: 'Composition is the natural extension of Viewpoints training. It is the act of writing as a group, in time and

space' (2005:137). The emphasis here is that while in the initial training Viewpoints have been used to awaken possibility, to open the performer to the range of choices they may choose in any given moment, composition *uses the same tools towards a different aim*; in composition the performer's goal is to 'write,' to create repeatable structures which have an outside logic. This work necessarily builds on the presence training, applying it towards new aims. While the theme of vocal presence is 'BE HERE,' the theme of composition is 'MAKE A CHOICE.'

Attitude: See your voice

The voice is often conceptualised as 'invisible,' yet it is difficult to compose with something ephemeral. In order to work towards composition, another image is necessary. I propose:

> ## See your voice
> Your voice is like another limb of your body. It is something which you experience physically, and is something concrete in space.
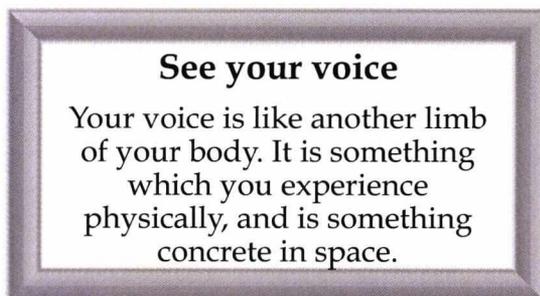
I encourage sounders to see the vibrating air of their voice as an object moving in their body and the room. It is something they can shape and direct. Sound is in fact waves of energy, admittedly imperceptible to the human eye, but nevertheless measurable and perceivable by the human body: we are moved by sound. This helps the performer understand their voice not as some pseudo-spiritual entity but as a concrete energetical effort. One active image, is to imagine that you can dye these energetic vibrations of your voice, and that you can see them as they extend out in space. This opens up the sounder's ability to see sound as *shapes in space* – just like the body in choreography. This attitude also promotes the idea that an impulse can interchangeably be channelled through either body or voice. They are two different but equally valid modes of communicating an element of the story/dramaturgy.

Principle: Action = flow + form

> ## Action = flow + form
>
> Without flow, a form is an empty activity, without form, flow is unarticulated and incomprehensible viewed from the outside. As a functioning whole they become an action which communicates.
>
> **Form:** consists of the elements of the structure which are fixed and repeatable. They are chosen *before* the moment of performance and defined in space and time.
>
> **Area of flow:** the area of the action which is in direct contact with the now, these choices are made in the moment and are thus always unique to an individual performance action.

I propose that understanding how to act within different aesthetics is to understand how a specific balance of form and flow allows communication (read action) to occur. It is the form which is consistent across performances, yet it is the flow which makes it communicate in the moment. When creating material, form should be fixed in relation to this. For example, if one wants to communicate information, one could set the text. If one wants to communicate in

the sense of establishing personal contact with the audience, one could fix where one stands in the room but probably leave the text free to be improvised: here it is the contact which is the action – the text can adapt in order to make that contact specific to those in the room. The performer should set the performance form at a level of complexity which matches their skills and is not so challenging that they cannot focus on their flow.

I will use *One By One* as an example to explain this process further. The aesthetic logic of the Stewardess etude was that of a tightly choreographed vocal and physical score which gave a lot of informational and associative meaning through creating stylistic images with the body and voice. If I started to improvise with this

form, to alter my physical score or text, my ability to communicate became less, as I lost the detailed information that was coded in this form and was necessary dramaturgically for the audience. Yet it was my small improvisations within the form, made in relation to my own inner state and the reactions of the audience (small stops, subtle shifts in rhythm etc.) which made this form 'come alive' and not be merely a cold stylistic experiment. In contrast, as the 'left brain,' I improvised often with the text. The ideas communicated here were key information for the story, but communicated in complex pseudoscientific rambling monologue. In this voice, it was important that I improvise with text, adding repetitions and pauses depending on whether I felt like the audience was following me or not. As I was not able to make any physical improvisation (I was seated behind the camera) it was within my level of skill to make these text improvisations. As the right brain, making a musical action meant that I was making shifts in my vocal structure as I tuned to my own voice recorded through the looper. Here, to break the strict vocal score would 'ruin' the etude. In the 'real time voice' the structure was the simplest and the loosest. Here the things I had to communicate depended greatly on finding the right moment and way to say them, or they would become banal. Thus my freedom within a simple form, lying on the floor, allowed me to improvise with silence, volume and even sentence formulation in order to find the right entry point to this elusive material.

The question became how could this hypothetical principle help to propose a new terminology with which to describe how I was approaching making, setting and performing vocal form? I needed a terminology that did not make me feel like I was 'betraying' one aesthetic as I moved to the next. This principle proposed that (instead of conceptualising an aesthetic shift as 'now I go from naturalism to expressive surrealism' as I did in 2010), that a transition be understood as a shift in the relationship between form and flow. In the following two examples of the form/flows of *One By One*, I propose a standardized way to explain this relationship which can be useful for the performer refining material or sharing it with others. In the following charts, first comes the description of the vocal material. Second comes form, defined in space and time, which has been created in rehearsal. Bogart's term kinaesthetic response becomes the *area of flow*. I use Britton's terminology of a spectrum from micro to macro to describe this area. I have indicated here the relationship between the body and voice in terms of which is leading. For example,

both a rock singer's and an improvising dancer's physical movements might not be set (have a macro area of flow), but the singer's movement *follows* the flow of the voice (they sing and move where the voice takes them) while the dancer's improvising voice *follows* the movement (their primary attention is physical and the voice rides the flow of their movements).

BACK BRAIN

Illustration 11. *One By One,* University of Kent, June 2011. Photo: Katie Porter.

Material:
      Vocal: text, song and sound

Fixed form:
1. Architecture: Standing behind audience
2. Topography: Still
3. Spatial relationship: I relate to the back wall
4. Shape: No body in light, a non-amplified voice that bounces off all the walls and fills the space.
5. Gesture: none
6. Duration: scenes last maximum a few minutes
7. Tempo: fast and violent or slow and floating
8. Repetition: little

Area of flow: body follows voice
VOICE – macro. In some scenes there is a set text, but *how* it is said varies greatly.
BODY – macro. The body does whatever is needed to support the voice.

PERSONA-THE DREAM STEWARDESS
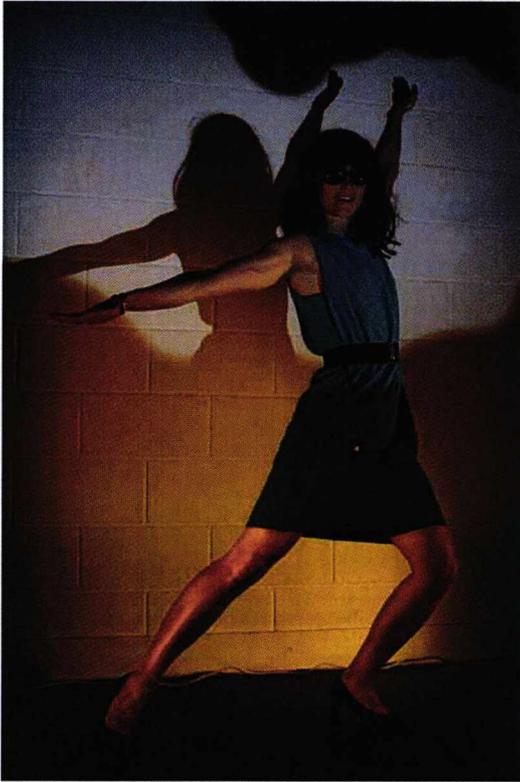
Illustration 12. *One By One*, University of Kent, June 2011. Photo: Katie Porter.

Material:
    Vocal: text – poetic monologue

Fixed form:
1. Architecture: Front stage
2. Topography: Moving back and forth
3. Spatial relationship: This voice relates to the audience from a stage-like position in front of them.
4. Shape: A brightly lit energetic body making big angular and energetic shapes in space. Sound coming from visible body to which movements correspond.
5. Gesture: several recognizable stylistic gestures of bodyvoice
6. Duration: scenes last maximum a few minutes (usually longest scenes overall)
7. Tempo: fast and violent, staccato or slow and questioning
8. Repetition: medium – with text

Area of flow: body and voice together
VOICE and BODY – micro. This 'character' has a set vocal and physical choreography in which the physical assists the vocal in terms of coordinated impulses and supportive body positions.

Exercise in flow composition: THE WAY

Illustration 13. THE WAY', University of Kent, February 2011. Still from film footage.

In beginning to develop the training for composition, I needed to step back from the complexity of what had been done in *One By One* in order to determine the building blocks which could help others to build their own vocal actions. In the following sections, I propose a flow of training which first explores flow and form separately as active compositional elements and then builds towards exercises which combine the two. As discussed in relation to Bogart, choosing the first exercise in a trajectory of work is critical, as it is this exercise which will serve to sediment what the participants understand as underlying principles of work. Thus, in approaching compositional work it was key to begin from flow. I looked to create a compositional training score with a very small degree of fixed form and a large area of flow. The exercise does not function without flow and thus asserts the primacy of improvisation within the flow/form balance. For form, I chose to set architecture and spatial relationship. Space plays a very large part in how we hear and interpret sound, yet most voice trainings are done without moving, or moving in preprescribed patterns. Improvising with sound in space thus seemed an appropriate challenge for Western performers.

Exercise 8: THE WAY[103]

1. A group stand in a circle around a small audience who are blindfolded.[104] It is best to do this in a large and resonant space.[105]

2. Group task: explore sonic relationships with each other, the space and the audience. You are allowed to make any kind of sound, or use text or song. Do *not* try to 'make something happen.' Wait, open your awareness and only begin to sound when there is a stimulus that provokes you. This can be anything from feeling the closeness of a partner to a traffic horn outside. Allow the improvisation to come to its natural end.

In order to give the reader a larger picture of how this exercise can function and to highlight some useful pedagogical strategies, I give here some analysis of my experience with the structure at the University of Kent. This exercise serves primarily to challenge the performer to discover, within a very abstract form, the difference between what Grotowski would call an activity and an action, and what I would call form without a flow vs action. The first challenge was for the group to recognise what makes a form manifest in time and space, and to train this ability to create order out of chaos.

> Coming up with ideas or being creative is utterly a non-issue, because everybody has walked into the room infinitely creative with infinitely many ideas. The problem of improvisation is not coming up with ideas, but to learn to let your ideas out of the starting gate at a slow enough rate that the people out there can understand them. (Nachmanovitch 2007:4).

After some sessions of exploring this structure, we started to identify different forms that regularly appeared. This included something we called: *sound massage*, in which the performers were closely huddled around the audience making intensive sounds, which felt like a massage on the skin. Another was *dissolving into the real,*

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[103] Source: this structure was developed from jazz musician and vocal improviser Phil Minton's Feral Choir. In this work, a group of performers stand together in a chorus-like formation. Phil conducts. The performers sound a variety of 'feral' sounds, grunts, shouts, squeals etc. Phil conducts them in a kind of raucous symphony, using repetition, juxtaposition, and crescendos to make a strange kind of music. I came in contact with Phil's work through the Giving Voice festival of the Centre for Performance Research in April 2002 and April 2006.

[104] Having the audience blindfolded heightened their sense of hearing as well as taking away the potentially intimidating aspect, for the performers, of being watched as they do a vocal improvisation. Most importantly, however, it focused everyone on the sounds the performers were making and *not* on their bodies; the spatial choices the performers make are not based on creating 'readable' actions but rather solely to affect their sound production.

[105] This sequence was developed in the large open and very resonant atrium of the School of Arts building at the University of Kent.

where sounders would almost stop sounding, allowing the sounds of the space to enter the composition and then slowly start sounding again in a way that the audience became unsure as to what was 'performed' and what was 'live.' At one stage of the work we, as a group, attempted to set an order, fix a compositional form. This failed miserably, several times. What had made these forms work when they were created was that they were actions. Coming after a slower section, for example, the *sound massage* acted to awaken and stimulate the audience, to tickle their senses. *Dissolving into the real*, coming after a more intensive section, functioned to stimulate the audience's mind as they question – is it over? What is 'real?' When we set an order, the performers stopped really listening to the moment and immediately focused on their mental idea of the form. Suddenly what had been an embodied vocal action (which they themselves had created) became a boring empty shell. The exact lack of structure in this structure was what made it a useful pedagogical exercise. It did not allow the performer to simply 'go through the motions,' rather it demanded an engagement in order for the vocal action to manifest and communicate.

This developed the performer's individual sensitivity to when a composition worked. Nachmanovitch describes the pedagogical approach necessary within this type of work, as a feedback activity:

> I was doing a workshop […] couple of years ago, and I was having them create pieces […] One person […] said, 'You know that piece we did about two or three pieces ago […]? It was really horrible […] Why didn't you say anything, or stop us?' I said, 'How was the next piece?' 'It was much better. We were listening to each other.' The fact is that I knew the piece was horrible and they knew the piece was horrible, so they didn't need me to tell them the piece was horrible […] It was there in front of everybody's eyes and ears and mind, and that's it. Your next activity is a feedback on the prior activity. (2007:5)

In THE WAY, I looked to allow this feedback loop to develop among the performers. I gave little feedback allowing them to sense and later speak. It was extremely interesting to note that even though the improvisation was in itself often very abstract, the performers could feel 'what worked' as a concrete, non-intellectual thing and were often able to clearly point to the problem points. This structure was done periodically until it was performed in the Symposium. Over this time the performers fed back into the structure their understanding of the different ways in which it worked, each of them slowly developing their own compositional ear.

Exercise sequence: building vocal forms
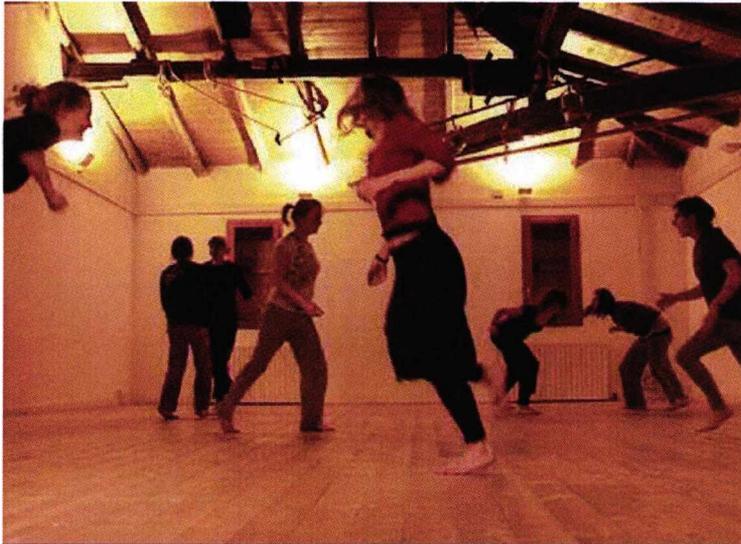
Illustration 14. Bologna workshop, Bologna, Italy, March 2011. Still from film footage.

In February 2011 parallel to continuing THE WAY structure, I began working with adapted Viewpoints exercises. This focused on developing the performer's ability to build vocal form. As in the *Dilation of presence* exercise sequence (II.3), this sequence focuses first on the centre of the performer and then works outwards in space.

Exercise 9: Vocal gesture ⇔ vocal shape

1. Move freely. Start to carve a shape in space with your body. Explore straight lines. Explore curves. Explore the dialogue between the two.

2. Create a repeatable physical shape with a beginning, middle and end. Add sound to this shape. Feel the changing shape of the air in your body and how the sound can find the best passageway through the body.

3. Get into pairs. One person will do a one-minute solo for the other. Your task is to explore your shape in time and space. You do not have to complete it, you can repeat only the beginning in different tempos or sizes, or, you can repeat it 100 times in 1 minute. It is up to you. Your shape is your material. The minute is your performance. The task of the observer is to watch.

5. After the solo, allow the watcher a few minutes to feedback *what they saw/heard*, keeping strictly to the real.

6. Development: add a phrase of text or song, allowing the text to be influenced by the flow in the shape.

Exercise 10: Shape duets

Each performer needs a sonic shape/gesture and a text. Together you perform a duet.

1. Two performers stand back to back. Partner A: use the vocal/physical shape to look for the different meanings (especially informational) in the words themselves. You can repeat words, you do not have to finish the whole phrase, but your aim is to try to wring out the meaning.

2. Partner B: use your text/sounds as an accompaniment to your partner. Your focus is not on the informational but rather associative meaning of your text. Make sure that you are not louder than your partner so that you can hear them and be in relation to them.

3. Partner B begins, using the first approximately 30 seconds to establish a base for A to enter into. A enter as you feel. The duet will last 90 sec. Switch roles. Repeat.

These two exercises explore how the performer can understand the range of form and action within their own voice. Within one vocal material, the performers explore the form continuum from gesture to shape, thus experiencing the spectrum of vocal action.

In exercise 10, allowing these two forms to happen at the same time introduces the idea of how different vocal actions can be layered. Often in a performance, sound has a single function: the actors speak or the singers sing. Layering often happens between different elements of performance; e.g. a naturalistic text is placed together with stylistic movement, or a dialogue is underscored with music. Exercises like this open up the possibility that within the vocal element itself there are several layers of meaning within a single moment of performance.

Exercise 11: Solo and support[106]

Led exercise, preferably with two leaders. The performer works with a text or a song which they know *very well*.

1. The group stands in a circle blindfolded. They are instructed that if they are led into the centre, they will speak/sing. The rest of the group will support. The leader directs the group sounding by touching individuals on the back to indicate that they begin or stop to sound.

2. Support is defined as following:
- you must be lower in volume than the solo so that you can hear them
- you can work with sound/tones or text. The action of your sound work is instinctive/associative, to create as a group a kind of carpet on which the solo can surf.
- 'support' can mean both something that is in harmony with the tempo-rhythm tone and quality of the sounder or in contrast to it.
- work as a group – there cannot be one individual that makes a different enough choice that they become a kind of solo themselves.

In II.3 the *prototypes of communication*[107] were introduced. While exercise 10 focuses on pair communication, exercise 11 extends the same idea into the context of communication with a group. It is devised especially for Western performers who can often be self-conscious to have a 'solo' and thus do not often grab the opportunity. The purpose of the blindfold is to take away the pressure of the soloist and to increase everyone's listening. This exercise combines the strength of individual voice sessions, in which a pedagogue can work intensively on one performer and the strength of group voice sessions, in which being part of a group helps the performer to release and feel safe. After doing this exercise, the instructions 'who is the solo' or 'support X' can be used in more open improvisations.

Exercise 12: Sonic space[108]

Ask yourself in any moment of an improvisation: *where am I in the sonic picture of the performance, foreground, midground, background?*

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[106] Source: This exercise is related to and builds upon the Full Spectrum exercise. It was developed in close collaboration with Wimpel for the Bologna workshop.
[107] Figure 9.
[108] Source: inspired by a presentation by contemporary Norwegian composer Henrik Hellstenius and his concept of 'layering'. I heard him present this work at a seminar in 2008. At http://hellstenius.no/pdf-filer/EnNyMaateAaLyttePaa.pdf there exists an earlier version of the text he presented, accessed on 23 November, 2011.

In many trainings the work with a performer's volume is ignored beyond the question: can the audience hear you? When given free reign to improvise, a common occurrence is that everyone begins to sound at the same volume. Yet, if everyone is trying to be heard, no one can be heard. Interestingly many performers instinctively understand this more quickly with the body. If you set them off on a physical improvisation, after a while the number of things 'going on' will thin out as the group senses the chaos that results if too many people are active. By this token performers will sometimes understand that they are in the background with their body yet their voice overpowers the whole scene. This prompt helps the performer to understand sonic space and to determine (based on how they mean their voice to function) where they should be. This can be used as the basis of an exercise or a reminder within other work.

Composition exercises

Illustration 15. Bologna workshop, Bologna, Italy, March 2011. Still from film footage.

After the initial flow and form exercises the next step is to work towards the creation of small scenes. To describe this process, I will use examples from the Bologna workshop and the 'June etudes.' Firstly, some contextual information is necessary in order to 'set the scene.' In each case, I began from material proposed by the performers: short texts on the theme coward/hero or a song. Both of these periods had two pedagogical aims. Firstly, to create a collection of scenes which each had a different balance of form/flow, in order to train this flexibility in the performers. Secondly, that each performer make meaning with their vocal material in a variety of ways. To a large extent these aims were reached on both occasions.

Each period had its own specific challenges and advantages. Bologna had the advantage of being an intensive workshop to which all performers dedicated their full time. In June I was working with some performers whom I had been working with for two years, who thus had a more nuanced understanding of my work. In addition, we had a longer, if limited, development period. The disadvantage was that due to scheduling we worked primarily in two groups. In addition there was quite a bit of absence and in the end we only had approximately four training sessions with the entire group before the Symposium. In both cases there was a sense of pressure that we needed to create material by the end of a relatively short period. In each instance I worked with a similar number of performers. As well, both ensembles

were made up of performers with a wide range of experience, from highly professional performers to those who had barely worked with voice before. In both instances, it naturally occurred that I worked primarily with text. This necessarily limits and focuses the following examples and analysis.

In the two occasion I employed different strategies. Bologna was the first case study and due to the newness of this inquiry and limited time, I functioned more authoritatively and prescriptively, presenting the performers with structural sketches from which they developed etudes. In the 'June etudes' I worked with a flatter structure, allowing the performers greater formative agency. In this second case study I looked to employ the knowledge gained in Bologna to help give the performers tools with which to build vocal structures themselves.

Towards composition

At this stage in the training, the performer shifts from working primarily psychophysically-vocally, towards integrating this work with reflective and analytical skills which traditionally belong to the role of 'director.' Thus the 'exercises' necessarily shift from practical towards combined physical and mental tasks. They become less prescriptive and closer to directives and suggestions for starting points. It should be noted that although the mental and psychophysical tasks are described as integrated in these exercises, they can be divided between director and performer. In Bologna for example, Wimpel and I worked more as directors - we did the analytical work and proposed the results of this as practical tasks to the performers. In June this process was done in plenum. While both are functional models, it is important that an ensemble make a clear choice about which hierarchical model they are working under.

During these exercises the underlying directorial work is to ask these questions.

1. What does the performer need?
   - o What physical/vocal forms support their flow? What challenges match their skills?
2. What does the text/sound/song need?
   - o What is its internal logic? Does it communicate informationally, associatively or instinctively? Do you want to work with or against this?
3. What is the text in relation to?
4. Where in space/time, history/style is it?

Exercise 13: First meeting with the material

Preparation note: The performer should have their text *well* memorised but not have made any decisions about interpretation.

In the first meeting with the text the aim is that the performer look to do two things (1) integrate their body with the body of the text[109] and (2) explore the range of possible meaning within the text, from its informational to instinctual meaning.

Timeframe: For a text of half an A4 page, I would devote minimum 40 minutes to this work. The performer should have the chance to say their text so many times that they forget the beginning and end of it and that it becomes a kind of river inside of them.

13A: For one performer and pedagogue/duet

For the more kinaesthetic performer: Do variations on *exercise 3: Becoming transparent* while the performer works saying their text in a loop.
2. For the more intellectual performer: Do Berry's exercise 'questioning the text' as adapted and used in *a series of accidents* (viewable on the DVD).

13B: For a group

Do *Exercise 11: Solo and support* with the speaker's text. All involved should be aware of looking for the particular relationships that provide the most interesting possibilities.

I will give here two simple examples of how the needs of the performer and text can be met simultaneously. Lucy Western is a performer very inspired by touch. A slightly shy personality, she closes herself off easily. However when given the *Becoming transparent* exercise, her voice and creativity open because the exercise is both scary and stimulating for her. She chose a text of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* in which Caesar is waking from a dream – the text itself is metaphorically reaching out, searching for contact. It is a dramatic text spoken in verse. Meaning is communicated both informationally through the words and through associative

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[109] By the 'body of the text' I mean the physical shapes of the vowels and consonants of the words which, when spoken, form shapes or a 'body' within the mouth and body of the speaker.

rhythm and melodies implicit in the poetry. In the final etude, we translated these two needs into a structure. In it, she is blindfolded and surrounded by a circle of 'dream voices' touching her with their sounds. Her focus as a performer was to relate to these voices vibrating her skin. The atmospheric soundscape of the chorus created a context for the text and heightened some of the musical aspects of the words and rhythms in it. Peter Morton, on the other hand, is a more intellectual performer and while stimulation on the skin assists him it does not really challenge him. Berry's exercise, which provokes him to respond with both a fast body and mind, on the other hand made him sweat, in the creative sense. The text he chose, an excerpt from Camus' *The Plague* is a complex philosophical meditation on human beings. It is not dramatic, and does not propose or require a particular narrative setting. In order to make this text understandable for a modern audience, it needed to be slowed down and repeated. In the final structure, this need of Peter and the text was translated into a score based on Viewpoints grid work in which the other members of the group repeated phrases he said, provoking him in his fight to bring out the meaning of his complex text. The action of Lucy's text was focused on the information, on Caesar's dilemma; hence her text was the main aspect which was fixed. In Peter's, the action was 'helping the audience to understand,' which required an improvisation with text and movement.

Exercise 14: Who is the vocal material talking to?
This can be an exercise led by an outside pedagogue or one in which the ensemble itself establishes the 'rules of the game' before beginning and then performs the improvisation.

Start by doing the *Shape duets* (for a pair) or the *Solo and support* exercise (for a group). Add the possibility to improvise within in a physical topographical shape. Further develop according to the proposals offered by the group.

Possible physical structures to begin from:
1. Viewpoints lane work
2. Viewpoints grid work
3. The ensemble must stay in a circle formation, but can improvise with size of the circle, movement within the circle, etc.
To begin with, work in a physical shape that is characteristic of the text itself.[110]

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[110] For example in working on Caesar's text the group instinctively started working in circles as the thoughts in the text are themselves circular, without any clear direction or answer. Camus was more linear.

Suggestions:
1. Remember that if a performer has too many choices it can lead to paralysis. When deciding the 'rules of the game,' think about how much structure you need to be able to continue to focus on the contact and relation between performers.
2. The more performers you have, the more 'rules' you need.
3. The more you limit the physical form (giving them the minimum amount of physical choice) the more they will be able to focus on their vocal choices.
4. Try to work solely with spatial relationships and topography. Limit gesture and shape.
5. One possible choice: limit the range of sound/vocal gestures possible within a given improvisation. For example, stick to a vocal vocabulary of open vowel sounds or murmuring nonsense text. 'What works best' probably became evident in exercise 13.
6. One possible choice: decide whether the group (not the soloist) should work in relation to the text as a group, or each looking to establish their own individual connection. Is the material speaking to an individual or group?

After working to integrate the body of text and the body of the performer, the next step is to work towards establishing what this text/body is communicating with. It is the Viewpoints of spatial relationship and topography which predominantly determine this. For example, the vocal material 'I love you' said at a whispered volume and medium speed can 'read' differently to an audience based on how it is staged in space: whether it is whispered into the lover's ear, whispered to their back or whispered at so great a distance that the loved one hears nothing at all. In Bologna we created two scenes that included two texts each. As opposed to the texts of Camus and Shakespeare, which are speaking to an undefined conversation partner (Caesar speaks to the air in his bedroom and the Camus text is literary musings), these four texts were speaking directly to someone with the aim of trying to convince. We made the choice to keep this action, but not its literal context: the text which was speaking to the British parliament was not staged with performers 'playing' the parliament but the action of an individual trying to convince a protesting group, was developed. In the following description of the etude it can be seen how this was translated into a series of spatial relationships.

Illustration 16. Bologna workshop, Bologna, Italy, March 2011. Still from film footage.

Example: FREEDOM ETUDE
Material
Vocal: a text in French speaking about the preciousness of tasting life before you die and a text of a speech given by an anti-slavery politician (in English)
Performer: Marie-Helene, a French professional performer with a background in dance/physical theatre and Lucy, a member of my Kent laboratory team and a second year University student

Overall structure: 1. The status quo, 2. Rebellion, 3. Conflict, 4. Resolution?

Fixed form:
1. Establish the 'status quo.' The whole group walks up and down the room in straight lines. They repeat continuously words like destroy, more, money (the group should choose 4)

2. Realization. Lucy and Marie-Helene break out of the vocal and physical pattern established. They move in perpendicular lines counter the stream and begin to say their text in relation to the group.

3. Conflict. The group turns against them, spatially surrounding them in a circle and increasing volume. Lucy and Marie-Helene join forces physically, turning back to back and take turns speaking to the crowd.

4. Resolution? This was left up to the group

Area of flow: voice follows body
Media/micro. The area of flow was mainly temporal, and guided by Marie-Helene and Lucy.

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1. Do an analysis of the material you are working with and how you aim to stage it. Will it be in a specific time period? Should it create a specific atmosphere?
2. Working within the range of spatial relationships that you have identified as useful in exercise 14, start to add an exploration of gesture.
3. Before beginning, discuss what range of vocal and physical gestures you will explore. As suggested above, it is better to start with a narrow range of options and work towards greater complexity and variety slowly.

Illustration 17. Bologna workshop, Bologna, Italy, March 2011. Still from film footage.

After establishing the spatial relationships required by the text/body, the next step is to explore gesture and shape, the two Viewpoints that most inform what is read (most obviously) from the outside as the aesthetic of the etude. In Bologna, we worked with a monologue of Clytemnestra, which can serve as an interesting example of a use of gesture to establish place. It is a dramatic text: a character speaks to another character, telling a linear story. In the etude we decided not to create a historical staging. However we needed to solve the dramaturgical problem of how to create Agamemnon, the person Clytemnestra was speaking to, and to create a 'world of the etude' in which the heightened language of Racine sounded at home. Firstly, the group was given the task of creating Agamemnon out of a series of vocal and physical gestures. Secondly, this range of vocal gestures served to create both a heightened atmosphere within which Racine's text seemed normal and also served as a creative obstacle for Chantal. Thirdly, the surreal song of Iphigenia served to give the scene a base rhythm of impending destruction. Lastly, Chantal's blindness helped her to stay grounded in physical impulse, something which was key for her as a performer and served as an interesting metaphor: Clytemnestra is blind to the horrible truth which stands in front of her.

Example: CLYTEMNESTRA ETUDE

Material:

    Vocal: Racine's monologue of Clytemnestra when she accuses
    Agamemnon of sacrificing their daughter. (In French)
    Performer: Chantal, a Swiss professional actress trained 'traditionally'

Overall structure: Clytemnestra's plea for mercy disintegrates Agamemnon

Fixed form:
  Group:
  1. Make a human sculpture: Agamemnon
  2. This man goes through 3 states which will be expressed in sound and
  physical gestures/shapes
    a. inner remorse/outer resoluteness: use sound
    b. hopeless impotent defence of his decision: use words like I had to, I
      must (3 languages)
    c. physical disintegration and shrill castration: use sound

Clytemnestra: To work blindfolded with the text, speaking it in a loop,
responding to the sounds around her

Iphigenia: To sing to Clytemnestra and to guide her in the space

Area of flow: voice and body together
Medio. The overall timing of the etude was set, but the inner temporal/spatial
relationships were fairly free.

In contrast to this etude was the structure we made for the song of Francesca. This song was not telling a story but rather functioned as a kind of calming meditation. While the Clytemnestra scene had a logic in which the audience could follow a development of the relationship between 'characters,' this scene had a musical logic in which the repetition of the song established an atmosphere. In this etude it was clear that any use of gesture, especially behavioural gesture, immediately suggested a kind of character or linear meaning which confused the overall musical meaning of the etude. Hence this was avoided and a simple relational physical structure was created.

Exercise 16: audience relationships

The final exercise of this sequence is more of a directorial consideration than practical exercise: what is the relationship to the audience? Bogart connects this to historical developments, proposing that over time the 'actors' primary relationship onstage has shifted several times.' These she divides into playing: 'to the Gods (ancient Greece/Rome), To the royalty (Renaissance), To the audience (19th century), To other actors (4th wall naturalism) and to nothingness (introduced with Beckett and a relationship to 'the void').' (Bogart 2005:92-93) Performances have now spatially stepped beyond the proscenium into black box theatres, interacted with audiences and eventually stepped outside theatres into site-specific spaces. Thus this is an important consideration when creating an etude and assessing how it will communicate to a contemporary audience. Placing an etude within a fourth-wall reality, for example, will greatly affect how the audience reads the material, even if the material itself is not 'fictional.' In the June Symposium, the three etudes and THE WAY each had a different audience relationship which framed how the etude looked to communicate:

1. THE WAY has no border between audience and performer at all. As mentioned, the blindfold allowed the audience to focus on the voices without having to 'read' the performer's bodies as carriers of meaning.

2. Peter's etude spoke to the audience as a theatrical orator. The etude occurred at a large distance, allowing the audience to focus on physical tableaux which helped to elucidate the information in the text.

3. Lucy's Caesar was intimately close to the audience moving in half-light. She was blindfolded and the audience was not addressed by anyone; audience and performers existed rather in a kind of secretive common space like the subconscious mind.

4. Judi's text pierced the fourth wall literally; the group was placed between the half-open curtains through which Judi physically tried to exit the 'stage' area to the audience. She spoke her text to the audience as if asking them to rescue her from the reality she was being sucked into, as the group (with their faces turned away from the audience) attempted to physically pull her back into the apocalyptic and surrealistic reality of the Charles Mee text. At the end a disembodied Japanese song pulled her into the still darkness.

CHAPTER IV

CLOSING WORDS

This study set out to (re)examine voice training for the contemporary performer. The starting point has been to identify the areas in which assumptions hinder the performer/pedagogue from being flexible across the current multiplicity of aesthetic forms. The work has been to dissolve these assumptions and to make visible the bridges between aesthetics by way of concrete methods. The results of these tests speak for a needed (re)visioning of how to conceptualise the potential role(s) of the voice in performance. The output is a series of principles, attitudes, exercises and terminology that together make up *a method of vocal (re)actions*. Before embarking on a further analysis of the content and applications of this study, I will first make a few comments about the study's overall organisation and how these structural elements facilitated the research.

The methodology of this study was based on the idea of a feedback loop, where initial questions were researched theoretically and then the resulting hypotheses were tested within specific practical experiments, both pedagogical and performative. This narrowed the wide field of inquiry through the identification of an essential starting point, a clear directional flow of work and a system of criteria by which to judge the evolution of the study. It allowed the work to have focus and simultaneously maintain the degree of flexibility needed in order to faithfully approach the research question. For example, at the beginning of the study, the practitioners to be analysed in Chapter III (Vocal Composition) were not yet identified, as that would have been to presuppose the conclusions as yet not gained from the first round of research. It was the clarity of the sub-questions addressed in the first round and the process of analysis after the practical work, which made the subsequent choice of practitioners and key terms to discuss in Chapter III, evident.

I would like as well to highlight here the significance and ramifications of one perhaps unusual aspect of this study: both theory and practice were subjected to the same strategy of dialectical analysis. In both, ideas/methods were placed beside each other with the aim to separate their essential elements from those which are

historically/culturally/aesthetically specific. Theoretically, this study thus contributes to the field not by further developing the key ideas of any one theorist, but by proposing new links across time and fields of discipline. As a mirror, in the practical work, juxtaposing different methods within a training flow allows for the extraction of principles from context specific elements. In the case of theory, the comparative analysis took place within the body of the written text and becomes theoretical ideas, in the practical work the 'analysis' is located within the bodyvoice of the performer and become body knowledges:

> principles and practices inside of my body/voice can be understood in reference to each other…through…strategically designed interactions, the different trainings inside of me can interface. These combinations create different body knowledges... (McAllister-Viel 2009a:174)

This approach is markedly different from studies in which the strategies applied in the theoretical analysis draw on models which cannot be applied to practical work; where the mind skills the PaR researcher develops within one area reduce their ability to function in the other. For example, when the close reading, linear logic and exacting attention to detail needed for some theoretical work hamper the researcher's intuition, ability to see the whole and flexibility to the needs of the moment necessary for practical work. In this case, although the material is different (ideas and practical methods) the researcher is using the same tools of analysis, or, in other words, a similar process is being conducted in the mind (and body). This link between theoretical and practical research argues for the relevance of PaR work to the active practitioner, not simply in the sense that a theoretical grounding can contextualise practice and give it new areas of focus,
but that the actual process of learning applied within one field can allow the practitioner to go deeper in the other.

Now, I will move to a more detailed analysis of the content of the study and its applications. Most concretely, sections II.3 and III.3 together with the Glossary form a concrete handbook immediately available and potentially applicable to a wide range of performers and contexts. This relevance has been argued for throughout the course of this thesis. Regarding other aspects of the study, I now attempt to step back and to draw connections to a wider context. This includes the following three sub-sections which cover: (1) an evaluation of the final practical event, the *VOCAL*

ACTION Symposium, (2) discussion of unique contributions and (3) applications of this work in my own continuing practise and suggestions for future research. This section does not provide any kind of final conclusion. These words rather represent the effort of boiling down of a period of work into concrete assertions which can serve as the basis for further studies.

1. VOCAL ACTION SYMPOSIUM[111]
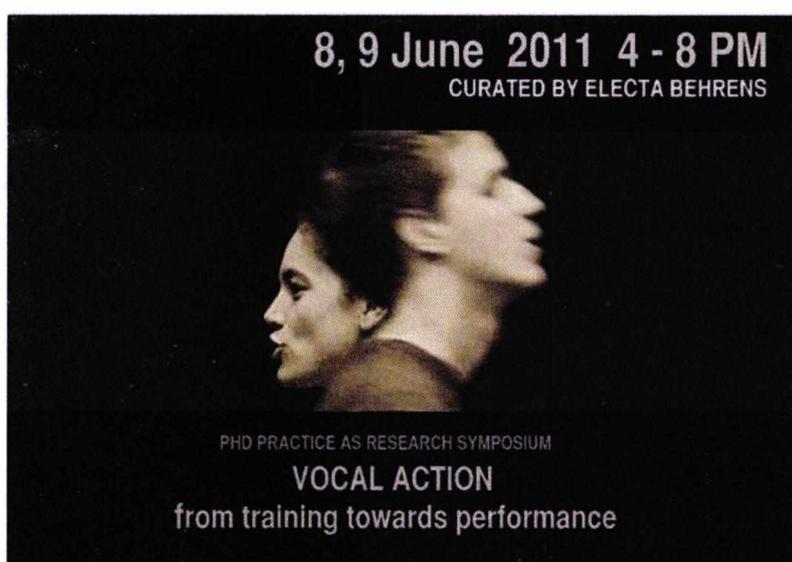
Illustration 18. Symposium postcard. Designed by Agne Kikvadze.

TIMELINE		
8&9 JUNE 2011	4 – 5 PM *Open training*	**Participants:** Kristin Fredricksson, Lucy James, Carla Kedzierski, Peter Morton, Dan Petrovici, Alice Taylor, Judita Vitkauskaite, Lucy Western and *six first-time participants*
	5.15 – 6 PM *Towards performance*	**Participants:** all from the training except the first-time participants
	6 – 6.30 PM *Talk-back*	**Participants:** all performers and the audience (including the first-time participants)
	7 – 8 PM *Performance: One By One*	**Participants:** myself

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[111] See DVD for video, Appendix for the program notes.

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At the conclusion of the PhD period I coordinated the symposium *VOCAL ACTION*. The primary aim was to present my practical research in condensed form for an audience in order to test its degree of clarity and development. This was structured as a journey, as the subtitle indicates, *from training towards performance.* It included *Open Training* (an hour-long training session exploring the exercises and principles put forward in II.3), *Towards Performance* (THE WAY and 'June Etudes,' both discussed in III.3), a *Talk-back* with the audience and *One By One* (III.2). The content of each event has been analysed in its respective section. The focus of this discussion is to consider how the Symposium, although made up of existing practice, was a unique event with original research results which later proved crucial for the reflective analysis of the study as a whole. One of the challenges of PaR research is how to effectively present three years of intensive practical work in a single assessed piece of practice. In the following paragraphs I will discuss how the Symposium was a challenging and rewarding choice in this study. It provided both a concrete frame within which to assess the success of the research and to provoke new conclusions. Most significantly, the Symposium prefigured this written document: it attempted to present the full range of the research as an integrated whole.

I will first consider how the Symposium allowed me to test my main hypothesis through two of the most marked examples. I had set out to look for a series of principles and attitudes, a universal grammar between different performance aesthetics. The process of 'interfacing' different exercises/aesthetics, allowing them to dialogue within the performer, served as the methodology of inquiry. Based on an initial analysis of the field, I created criteria with which to measure the usefulness of my results. I stated that the method I would come up with must fill the requirements laid out in Figure 1 'The contemporary performer's training' and should be valid within all the contexts set out in I.2 (see below). The case studies tested my hypothesis in the context of different individual events (performance or training). The Symposium tested the transitions between different types of events.

Figure 13. Application of principles/attitudes at the Symposium

SYMPOSIUM EVENT	PRINCIPLES/ATTITUDES USED:
Open training	*Within training exercises*
	As a pedagogical approach
June etudes	*Within an etude/performance of a single aesthetic*
Talk-back	*As a model for understanding the relationship between the 'act' of performance and 'reaction' of the audience*
One By One	*Within a performance which shifts between aesthetics*

The unbroken flow of activity functioned to identify any 'slip' in principles/attitudes which might happen between events. This was the first time this had been tested.

One such slip came in the *Open Training*. The aim in this section had been to structure it as a 'real' training and not as a presentation of such. This was facilitated by certain dramaturgical choices, such as seating the audience on the floor in the round to avoid creating a stage area and introductory comments. On the second day with a larger group of observers, I sensed that I was not present and that the uneasiness I felt was not only due to the fact that I was being assessed. In hindsight I realized that I had broken the principle of presence: to open my awareness to everything in the moment. Ironically I was supposedly teaching awareness to fourteen people, while I was myself ignoring twenty. Although I had in the introduction explicitly stated that this event took place in a Czikszentimihalyian 'now,' that the audience were indeed a part of the action, I was actually functioning primarily within a fourth wall reality. What I thought I was doing and what I was actually doing were two different things. I did not create an adequate form within which both the performers and audience could find flow in their two goals: the performers to engage with the training and the audience to actively observe and question 'what they were seeing.' More specifically, I had not fully thought through the compositional relationship with the audience. Although I had set up some spatial markers, they were not effective, and I was not equipped to deal with unexpected inter-human contact. This is understandable, as I had not had the time to experiment with this structure on test audiences. Although I failed in standing by my own

principles in this section, it was clear in hindsight how, with more time, the principles I propose in this thesis could have helped me to trouble-shoot this event more effectively.

During *One By One*, I was again tested in my ability to remain true to the principle of presence. This time I had better luck. It occurred that three quarters of the way through, the power went out to my stage lights. Having no technicians on site and in the intimacy of a solo performance with no backstage I was totally vulnerable in my handling of this 'mistake.' I managed to continue with the performance, 'saying yes' to the proposition of the moment and incorporating it into my score. My rehearsal strategy from Poland, where I would work from flow exercises into the structured score and consequently practice rupturing the score with new improvised material, proved a useful preparation for such a moment. My clarity in understanding how the different voices of the performance needed to function helped me to make clever choices about where and how to improvise. I was able, without too much extra sweat, to improvise text and play on the metaphorical meaning of what had occurred, weaving it smoothly into the score.

The main difficulties in the Symposium occurred not in the content of the events themselves, but when I was not able to properly facilitate the audience's entry into them through a clarification of the 'rules of the game' within each section. When I did not define form well, the audience felt uncomfortable and was not able to follow the flow. In the moments when I did manage to stick with these stated principles and attitudes, the Symposium flowed smoothly. As I had hoped, these principles and attitudes appear to have a fractal-like quality, functioning on various levels of organisation from the shift between my in-breath and out-breath in performance to the shift between talk-back and performance. In this sense they were a successful series of check points which allowed me to construct, analyse and be present within a variety of different events. It should be noted that this analysis is only within the context of my own research which is necessarily limited. Whether they really can form the basis of some universal grammar between training aesthetics must be tested over many years in multiple contexts.

Beyond testing this main focus of the work, the Symposium allowed me to explore two newer areas of research. In the *Open training* I invited six new performers to join my laboratory group. In this context I tested, in an extreme situation, the criteria that these exercises must be able to be easily done by people from a variety of backgrounds including different skill levels and physical fitness. The participants were not given any information about what the training would entail. This test was made more challenging by the fact that it was done before a live audience; the invited performers were working under an unusual situation for training which, if anything, should hinder them from engaging in the work. The support they received was that each of them was paired with a member of my laboratory group. The participants had a wide range of fitness and in experience they ranged from a second year drama student to a professional performer. This aspect of the work was a success. From the feedback discussion and written comments, it was clear that each new participant easily found their entry point into the work. The exercises and approach appeared clear, inviting and allowed them to engage with their voice in a non-judgemental and playful manner.

Another stated criteria for the contemporary performer's training is that they must be able to be both within their work and to reflect upon its structure. The *Talk-back* served to test my ability to do this before a gathered public. It proved to be highly constructive, helping me to see angles of the work I had not been aware of and highlighting the areas of underdevelopment. Its placement seemed successful: it occurred after enough had happened that the audience had many concrete things to respond to. I think that the Symposium and the research could have benefitted from extending this event and creating more moments for spoken feedback. This was not possible due to time constraints. For further development, it would be interesting to show the whole Symposium to a greater range of observers to gain a fuller picture of 'what can be seen' in such a presentation of work. Another potential experiment would be to research a Symposium model wherein the time given for feedback is equal to the time for presentations. Could a Symposium function as a Stanislavskian Active Analysis of a research topic, functioning as research in the making rather than presentation?

2. CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE WIDER CONTEXT

In this section I will name a few of aspects of this work which represent a unique contribution. On the most general level, this study takes a wider approach than is customary in this field. Although breadth can suggest a dangerous lack of depth, I would argue that this breadth is necessary in order to approach the research question and that this width provides an interesting addition to existing scholarship. As stated in the introduction, there is a trend that voice trainings isolate themselves from the larger field of performer trainings and it is this isolation which places them in danger of becoming out-of-touch. I have attempted to bridge this gap. By looking across the fields of music and theatre I have aimed to propose non-aesthetic-specific terms which can be used to compare and contrast various aesthetics and traditions. The potential is that these terms can be used by a variety of practitioners. In addition, it provides one possible set of criteria upon which to create a map of the existing vocal methods and traditions and their relationship to other trainings, in this way making explicit how these seemingly diverse forms exist in a continuum or web rather than as contradictory models.

In the context of psychophysical training methods, this research proposes to refocus the attention on reaction rather than action. This is not unique in itself. As McAllister-Viel writes, it is a common feature of Eastern metaphysics (2009a). However, my particular application of the theory of Czikszentmihalyi as an aesthetic-neutral model for understanding the flow of action-reaction, perhaps represents a distinctive development. In addition I introduce two 'skills for bridging aesthetics.' In a time when skill-based training is decreasing in popularity, I would argue that skills of translation are the new tools of the performer's toolkit. The first, is the updating of Stanislavski's *circles of attention* (now awareness) to encompass an understanding of a Czikszentmihalyian now. As a metaphor, this expanding and contracting circle allows different aesthetics to exist in the same space and allows the performer to shift between them merely by readjusting the focus of their presence. It allows a non-aesthetic specific discussion of a shift of aesthetic. Consequently, the performer can shift without feeling like they are 'betraying' one form as they move to the next. Secondly, the concept of *entry points* provides a concrete way to discuss this moment of shift. I have been criticised by those who suggest that this space *between* has purposefully not been previously theorised; it is one of those intangible

acts which should not be concretised. I suggest that these terms do not banalise the process or create a step-by-step guide to it, but simply awaken the performer's awareness to the complexity and give them some concrete metaphorical images with which to meet this elusive process.

In the work on composition, my aim has been to do for voice work what Viewpoints did for movement: to provide performers with a non-aesthetic specific terminology with which to talk about the different categories of structural options available. While these exist piecemeal within some music traditions, what I have created here attempts to work across song, text and sound. As I pointed out in the discussion of Bogart, one of the weaknesses of her written method is the lack of articulation about the relationship between kinaesthetic response and the other Viewpoints. On an essential level, this results in a gap in understanding how these structural elements, these forms, create meaning. As she says herself, Viewpoints has been used to make 'empty forms.' With my 'Prototypes of communication between people' and 'Spectrum of vocal actions' I look to link the work on form with the work on meaning (action) explicitly, while still maintaining the flexibility inherent in this relationship.

3. APPLICATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has applications within the fields both of pedagogy and professional practice. In the following discussion, I will begin from an analysis of how I have developed this method in my own continuing work, further point to its relevance within a variety of contexts and conclude with suggestions and proposals for the future.

Since completing the research described here, I have had the chance to apply it in four different pedagogical contexts. As discussed in the methodology, the thesis research was focused on developing a method of principles and prototypes, a 'universal grammar' of performance training which could be applied towards work on performance material with a variety of aesthetic requirements/restrictions. The

exercises created attempted to be as 'aesthetic-less' as possible, in order to keep the focus on the principles. After completing the thesis research, I have had the chance to apply these exercises in work towards specific aesthetics. This represents the next needed phase of research. Firstly, at the University of Kent, I created the course: The Deviser's Voice. Working within the same context within which the research had been developed, i.e. a British university, the application was direct and the exercises were immediately applicable. They were well received and easily employed. In January 2012, I had the opportunity to apply these methods within three very different Norwegian drama conservatoires in which the process of application proved more complex. This included two theatre academies, one strongly based in Stanislavskian naturalism, one based in a postdramatic non-acting aesthetic and an opera school.[112] In each case I began from the principles proposed here, but adapted the exercises based on the aesthetic needs of each context. There is not sufficient room here to go into a detailed analysis of these case studies. In summary, it was encouraging to experience the ease with which the exercises were embraced and the facility that the terminology gave me in speaking with students. This training formed the basis for the creation of naturalistic and surrealist scenes based on text (including work with Ibsen and Strindberg texts, modern poetry and contemporary Norwegian drama) and scenes from opera.

These case studies also highlighted a limitation of the research which had begun to become clear in the composition work conducted within the context of the study. In my research I began from the proposal that voice work be seen as a spectrum from text to sound to singing. I do not retract this proposal as a fruitful image for a student to base their work with vocal presence on, as I do believe it is crucial that the performer develop the ability to work smoothly between these different 'modes' of using the voice. Singers speak of learning to sing through the 'breaks' in their voice from 'head' to 'chest'. So must the contemporary performer easily be able to move between speaking, singing and sound. I do as well stand by my proposal that this shift is primarily a negotiation of presence rather than a technically masterable skill. In working with young practitioners towards creating

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[112] The schools are, in the order mentioned, Nordisk Institut for Scene og Studio (NISS.no), Akademi for Scenekunst (fig.hiof.no) and Kunsthøyskolen i Oslo (khio.no).

scenes however, I found my terminology and approach limited. Although the singing and speaking voice are connected, and the work of being present within both is closely linked, there are certain problems with approaching them in a 'similar' manner when working towards composition. This is connected to the different technical demands of each vocal form. My insistence on 'presence as primary' in the initial exercises of a course, created an unconscious resistance in students towards the later introduction of the kind of 'technical' or repetitive exercises needed for the creation of a challenging vocal form such as song or text. My misunderstanding was perhaps that in an attempt to keep presence as the focus of all work, I allowed it to determine the form/content of the exercises rather than only the mode of engagement within a certain form/content. One consequence of this is that I could, for example, abandon an exercise if it appeared to 'die' rather than insisting on the form and proposing methods for re-finding presence within the repetition.

Over time, I have begun to develop terminology and strategies for bridging this gap. Firstly, it appears to be about clearly contextualising the different stages of work, taking time for in class discussions about the shift that is needed as we go from working on presence to composition. Secondly, in the exercises, such strategies include introducing a principle of alternation where the performer is responsible to shift between more technically focused exercises and small 'games' which refresh the performer's presence. The performer is for example, instructed to 'break' from the technical exercise and to enter the 'game' if they find themselves unable to be engaged, and then to smoothly re-enter the 'technical' exercise when they are again present. That the performer and not the pedagogue is responsible for the shift (after the initial introduction of the principle of work), means that the performer is perfecting a vocal material (with might require many repetitions to master) and simultaneously monitoring their own inner flow of presence.

The work at the academy based in postdramatic ethics/aesthetics suggested one potential pedagogical development of the research. In this teaching context I began to understand how the idea of *entry points* could be developed as a pedagogical strategy. In this conservatoire I had the challenge of meeting 18 new students over the course of a seven-hour day. They were all radically different in their creativity and I worked with them all on the same exercise. The challenge

became: how to explain it? What words would help each of them find a way in? It is natural that as a pedagogue we use/create the descriptions and images which spark our own creativity. Some go so far as to refuse to describe something which they consider to be a technical exercise in an associative way or vice versa: they understand the imagery of the explanation as an integral part of the exercise.[113] I would propose that exercise explanations should be performer- rather than exercise-specific. The underlying principles are specific to the exercise and cannot be changed, while the description (the performer's entry point) is performer-unique. I have identified four general categories of description. They are those based on:

- A psychological image/intention
- An abstract image/element (e.g. fire, water)
- The physical/kinesthetic
- The intellectual/technical (e.g. feel your diaphragm tighten)

I suggest that a pedagogue should be able to describe all of their exercises in each of these four ways. This will test their own understanding of the principles at work. It will also help them to counteract any instinctive judgements or preconceptions which the performer may have and which can block their engagement. For example, being able to describe a caveman-like position in my exercise technically (for how it helped release the ribs and increase breath-flow) helped me to gain the trust of one intellectually-minded student. Being able to give another student the image of 'pulling their voice up from the earth' helped them to 'get out of their head' and to engage with the task. A third student needed to be encouraged to fully explore the physical sensation of their feet on the ground, the growing heat in their belly and squeezing in their thighs. Having this rubric of categories in my head, allowed me to quickly assess the situation and respond appropriately to the performer. In a larger context, it is this kind of multi-layered understanding of one's pedagogical material that will allow one to introduce trainings to a specific group of performers who might be resistant to a certain training method. Such as for example doing 'new-age Grotowski' exercises with 'ironic dispassionate British devisers.'

Another concrete application has been to employ this research as an approach to lesson planning. There exists a difficult gap between training and performance in

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[113] This is common in the Polish traditions I discussed in I.1, which have been so steeped in aesthetic-specific information such as candles, bare feet and skirts, that practitioners have difficulty separating the active ingredients of the work from what is created by the atmosphere of the work space/leaders.

which performers sometimes get lost. For me as a performer, the Symposium structure proved highly informative in relation to this problem. It provoked the idea: why not use the dramaturgical structure *from training towards performance* as a structure for training sessions? Although many pedagogues work from 'warm ups' towards 'scenes' as a general arc in a training period, I have attempted to take this to another degree of integrity: I insist on making this journey towards performance in *each* session and include active reflection on this act of translation as part of the training. So far this has proven highly successful. Until now, I have explored this hypothesis in the context of two aesthetics (naturalism and opera) and with two different groups of students. In both cases the performers quite quickly started to develop both an ability to engage in and to reflect upon their work. Through being stimulated to apply training principles immediately in new contexts, they became more active learners.

In terms of the larger field of voice trainings, the significance of this study is the speed at which it can be applied. It counteracts assumptions that to make changes in voice training is a large and overwhelming task, like turning back history. Instead it is a practical example of how a single pedagogue within a university drama department was able to introduce a new approach to three year groups. Through simple terminology, supporting images and easily accessible exercises, I was able to communicate quite complex ideas efficiently. Within conservatoires which have a more established tradition, this (re)conceptualisation may take more time. However the focus on translation within this method equips the pedagogue with terms and strategies to approach this bridging activity. In addition the skeleton of this approach is easy to learn. As with Viewpoints, these methods are not highly complex and subtle forms; one does not have to be an 'Electa Behrens certified pedagogue' to be able to teach them. Rather they are recycled and adapted exercises which do not require a great degree of musical or technical vocal 'skill.' Also, because the exercises are strongly based in methods from physical trainings, they are easily accessible to a wider range of pedagogues. With this argument I do not mean to promote my method as 'the way forward' and certainly hope it will not become 'the way.' It is rather an example that the shift that needs to come is not an overwhelming task. It can be greatly assisted if the focus is placed on drawing connections (polarity) rather than replacing an 'old' method with a 'new' (dualism).

The change that I believe is necessary is that conservatoires and university drama departments work towards policy changes which include voice to a greater extent in their curriculum: to break the outdated association of voice work with text-based performance and to instead focus on the field of vocal dramaturgy. Within theory and practice, this work is first and foremost about contextualisation, about seeing the different existing approaches to voice in relation to the larger field of performance so that students can navigate this territory themselves. In the field of theory there is a gap in that there are few studies or books which look to systematically record the different approaches to the voice in performance *across* the fields of music and theatre/performance. This kind of scholarship would greatly enhance both the theoretical and practical fields.

In terms of the professional milieu, an increased visibility of the voice in performance would as well be greatly beneficial. One concrete project which I plan for the future is to use my website to create a portal for voice. This will not attempt to draw conclusions about various methods, but simply act as a virtual map, allowing groups and practitioners to link themselves up to their mentors, collaborators and students. Another concrete project which offers itself is to create a book/DVD of the long work of the Giving Voice festival of the Centre for Performance Research. As pioneers in the field over many years, they sit on an extremely valuable archive of performance, workshop and lecture material (Christie, Gough, Watt 2006). The synthesis of this work into a written form/online archive could be a significant contribution to future practitioners as both a historical document and inspiration for work.

Creating *One By One, a method of vocal (re)actions* and working with colleagues across Europe over the past three years has convinced me of the high relevance of studies in voice work at this particular moment in history. The voice, due to its nature as a sound wave, has the power to touch the audience in a way that the body cannot. Also (in its unmediated form) it is the area of the performer's expressivity which is perhaps most difficult to manipulate ('the voice never lies') and is thus most closely connected to our humanity and that which most significantly separates us from computers. As Lehman writes:

> *From sense to sensuality* is the name of the shift inherent to the theatrical process. And it is the phenomenon of the live *voice* that most directly manifests the presence and possible dominance of the sensual *within* sense/meaning itself and, at the same time, makes the heart of the theatrical situation, namely the *co-presence of living actors*, palpable. (Lehmann 2006:148 emphasis in the original)

We live in a continually more isolated society. The need of each and every one of us for this *co-presence* with others will only get greater. Performance as a live act has already understood that this immediacy is its lifeline to survive against the growing popularity of film and online media and entertainment. In this context, the human voice in its vulnerability and viscerality stands alone. Innovations in vocal dramaturgies are thus the little discovered country which I believe can bring increased focus and interest to live performance events. In 2007, O'Keefe and Murray asserted that

> the theatre forms most likely to serve the impulse of transculturalism will be those which are highly visual and which employ and explore vocabularies of movement and physicality (2007:200).

In 2012 and looking forward, I would suggest that things have changed:

> the theatre forms most likely to serve the impulse of *the now* will be those which are highly *vocal* and which employ and explore vocabularies of *sound* and *vocality.* (my insertions).

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A : DVDs

There are five DVDs attached to the inside of the back cover. These include the video documentation of the practice discussed in this thesis.

CONTENTS

DVD 1: Practical Explorations
     a. *sound of m/y/our name...*(7 min)
     b. *One By One* 2010 (51 min)
     c. *a series of accidents* (6 min)

DVD 2: Method of vocal (re)actions
     a. Exercise montage (20 min)
     b. Bologna etudes (27 min)

DVD 3: Vocal Action Symposium
     a. Open Training (43 min)
     b. Towards Performance (32 min)

DVD 4: Vocal Action Symposium
     a. Talkback (47 min)

DVD 5: Vocal Action Symposium
     a. *One By One* 2011 (57 min)

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B : GLOSSARY

This glossary presents a list of all the terms and concepts introduced in this thesis. The aim has not been to create new terms but to (re)consider and (re)define commonly used terms in performance. These terms may be used to refer to work with the voice or the body. It includes words like 'stimulus', which within a single aesthetic *may be assumed to be fixed/universal.* By asking questions about these categories, the performer can uncover preconceptions which may be blocking their process and/or lead them to a clearer understanding of a word.[114]

METHOD OF VOCAL (RE)ACTIONS

Includes two parallel strands within the performer's work within and across different aesthetics:
- I. Presence
- II. Composition

This method has been designed to function in a variety of contexts:
- Within training exercises
- As a pedagogical approach
- Within an etude/performance of a single aesthetic
- Within a performance which shifts between aesthetics
- As a model for understanding the relationship between the 'act' of performance and 'reaction' of the audience

Based on these criteria:

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[114] Within this glossary, figures retain the same number they had in the body of the thesis.

Figure 1. The contemporary performer's training

The contemporary performer...	Their training needs to...
may be both creator and performer of their work	•**train** vocal presence and the ability to work with vocal composition.
often works without a director	•**be coll**aborative rather than have a hierarchical work ethic. •**create** a common vocabulary that can be used for physical or vocal **work** and allows discussion of sound as structural rather than psychological.
will work within many different forms of performance	•**not be** based in a single aesthetic but rather work across forms. •**be non**-hierarchical: all vocal forms are valued equally as potential performance material. (Work with text is not prioritized over work with pure sound, for example).
may be from any cultural or aesthetic background	•**not** promote the idea of a 'free' or 'natural' voice as a starting **point** but rather focuses on the necessary voice – the voice which responds adequately to the moment.
may work in a variety of collaborative constellations with a variety of different economic limitations	•**be flexible** and can be adapted for solo, pair or group work, all skill levels and varying rehearsal/training periods.

I. PRESENCE

Trained within the context of action by employing principles and attitudes within the context of exercises.

CONCEPTS AND TERMS

THE ACTION-REACTION CYCLE
This cycle occurs within the performer's:

Circle of awareness: the reach of the performer's awareness. It is flexible and can dilate. For example it can extend to include the audience or contract to include only a small area of the performer's imagination.

> **Czikszentmihalyian 'now':** This is the most open circle of awareness possible. It contains everything within and outside the performer, including the imagination, the audience and everything in the present moment. It is necessarily connected to what has happened in the moment right before the present moment.

Figure 6a. Action-reaction cycle
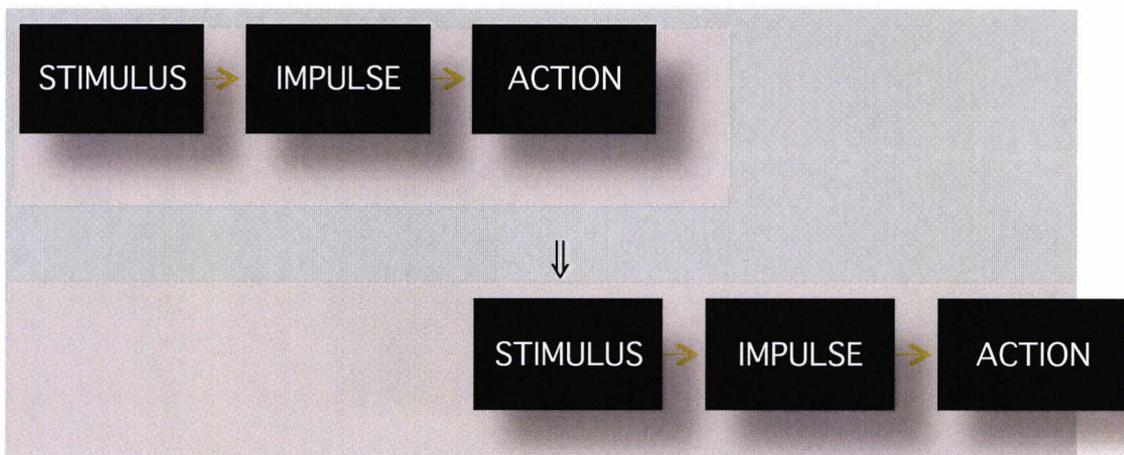
A stimulus causes an impulse, which creates an action which is then the stimulus for another impulse and another action. This cycle continues in a loop. (This looping is not pictured here but the pattern should be assumed to continue). The grey box suggests that this occurs within a single aesthetic logic and consequent circle of attention.

Stimulus: anything from inside or outside the performer which they react to. Each circle of awareness defines the area of available stimuli and thus affects the resulting actions. This is where the significant shift occurs within the action-reaction cycle when the performer shifts form.

> Stimulus within a Czikszentmihalyian 'now' can be described as Lindh's sense: "'Senso' could be anything from a mental image or memory to a tactile feeling or gesture, as long as the image, memory, feeling, or gesture has some kind of psychophysical resonance that is recognized by the bodymind in the here and now of occurrence.' (in Camilleri 2008:86)

Impulse: a clearly articulated burst of physical or mental energy triggered by a stimulus.

> Related term - **kinesthetic response:** Bogart describes this (which is both stimulus and impulse together) as 'A spontaneous reaction to motion […] the impulsive movement that occurs from a stimulation of the senses' (2005:8).

When occurring within one aesthetic, this cycle is relatively easy to understand. For example:

Figure 6b. Action-reaction cycle based on meaning of words

```
┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐
│  STIMULUS    │ →   │  IMPULSE     │ →   │   ACTION         │
│ (performer B │     │ (performer A │     │ (A says: what are│
│ slams door)  │     │   jumps)     │     │ you doing here!) │
└──────────────┘     └──────────────┘     └──────────────────┘

                            ⇓

              ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
              │  STIMULUS    │→ │  IMPULSE     │→ │   ACTION         │
              │              │  │ (B gasps)    │  │ (B responds: I   │
              │              │  │              │  │ cannot leave you!)│
              └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
```
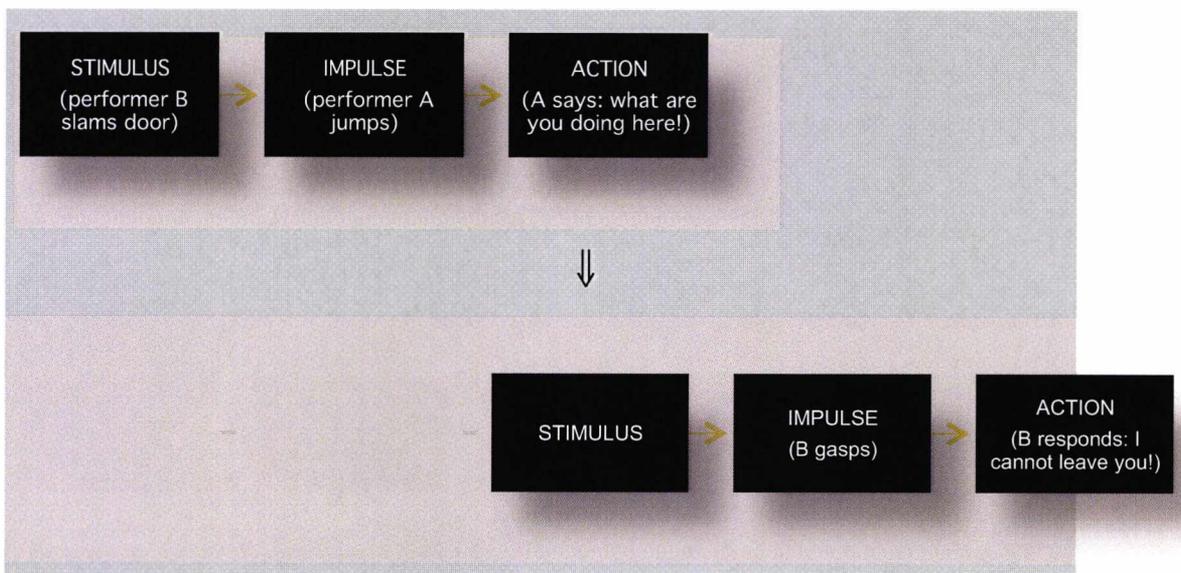
When there is a shift in aesthetic this becomes more complex.

Figure 6c. Action-reaction cycle across an aesthetic shift

This example shows a shift from a linear and text-based logic to a cycle of actions-reactions based in the instinctive meaning of sound.
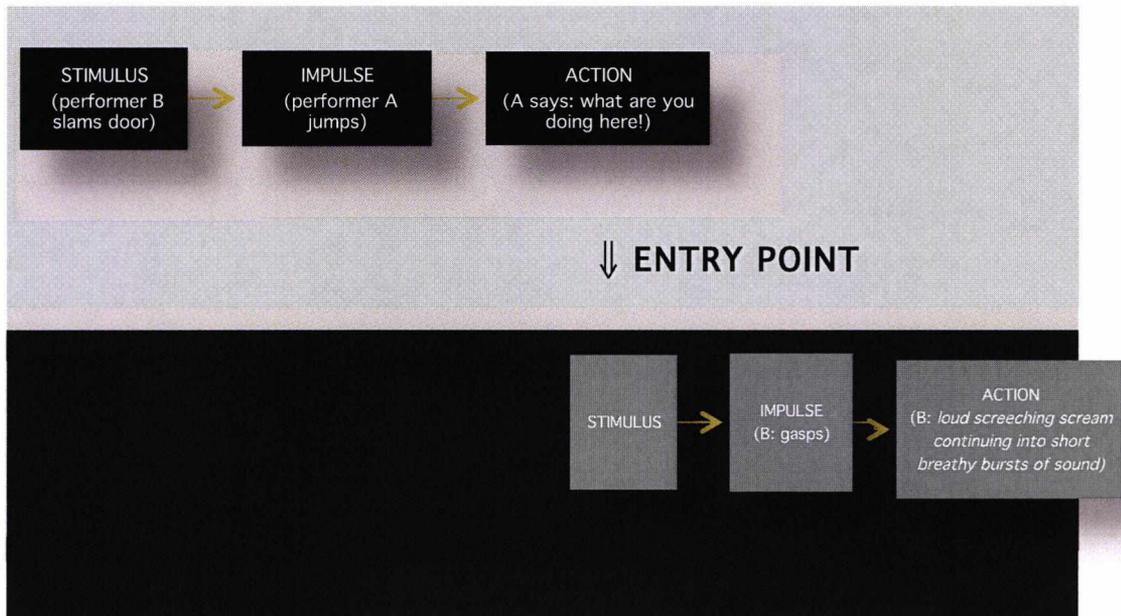
Entry point: the first impulse of a new action-reaction cycle. (See above) This is a crucial moment when shifting aesthetics as it requires the performer to find a stimulus available within the circle of awareness of the preceding action which can be channelled into an impulse which can be the entry point for a new aesthetic with its own circle of awareness. This is the easiest place to fall out of flow.

Flow ⇔ presence: to be in flow is to be present within an action-reaction cycle of any aesthetic.
Note: 'flow' is a more useful term than 'presence' in the context of working within and between aesthetic as it implicitly implies movement and a *relation to* rather than 'presence' which can be associated with being static and singular.

ATTITUDES AND PRINCIPLES
Attitudes

- **Be a heretic:** Approach what you do as a heretic. Take responsibility to follow your own path and challenge the 'rules' of any method within which you work. Remember that today there is no one 'right' way to make performance. Truth is not objective but rather relative, context-based.

- **Your voice is not about you:** Remember that making sound is an action that occurs simultaneously inside and outside you. It is not only about you, but is just as much about the space around.

Principles

- **Vocal presence:** Being vocally present is about your voice in a now.

- **Vocal (re)action:** Every action is a reaction.

EXERCISES
- Exercise sequence: Dilation of presence
    - #1: Drive your partner like a car
    - #2: Pull like a horse
    - #3: Becoming transparent
    - #4: Sounding the space
- Exercise grouping: vocal (re)actions in pairs and group
    - #5: Chain of action-reaction
    - #6: Common impulse
    - #7: Full spectrum

II. VOCAL COMPOSITION

Trained within the context of making performance material by employing principles and attitudes.

TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Composition (with the voice): *'writing on your feet,* [with the voice] with others, in space and time, using the language of theatre.' (Bogart 2005:12 my insertion)
> **Connected to:** the field of vocal dramaturgy: exploring how the human voice can function structurally in performance

Vocal material: any kind of material, (such as musical notes, words, rhythm patterns, images, set of instructions etc.) which the performer is given to work with. By definition they are not specific to a performer and can be given to any other.

Vocal form: repeatable structure of vocal material, which can be transferred from one performer to the next. It is what is determined *before the moment of performance.* A form is thus the aesthetic logic as seen from the point of view of the performer. Note: one vocal material can be used to create a variety of vocal forms.

Area of flow: the area of the action which is in direct contact with the now, these choices are made in the moment and are thus always unique to an individual performance action.

Aesthetic logic: 'The production's aesthetic logic guides the overall dramaturgy, style and tempo-rhythm.' (Zarrilli 2009:113). In terms of the vocal aspect of the work, this is vocal form seen from the point of view of the audience/director.

Performer dramaturgy: 'The term "dramaturgy" refers to how the actor's tasks are composed, structured, and shaped during the rehearsal period into a repeatable

performance score that constitutes the fictive body available for the audience's experience in performance [...] The actor's performance is shaped by the aesthetic logic of the text and the production per se as it evolves in rehearsals [...] Post-dramatic performances often require the actor to develop a performance score that has multiple dramaturgies' (Zarrilli 2009:113)

Rehearsal: '*The rehearsal process is not a way of fixing performance, it is a setting of the parameters within which the director/choreographer/writer are happy to see the performance exist.* [...] The tighter the parameters of a performance, the more detailed will be *the improvisational subtasks* that the performer will need to focus on if they are to keep the flow of energy within their performance immediate. But however fixed or fluid the form and content of a final performance, every live act is, at some level, an improvisation, for it cannot have happened before.' (Britton 2007a:4 my emphasis)

SPECTRUM OF VOCAL ACTIONS

The elements of the vocal form which are fixed, are determined by how you want the voice to function. (One needs to fix what should be consistent across different performances. For example, if the form should communicate information, one could set the text. If it should communicate in the sense of establishing personal contact with the audience, one could fix the place in the room but probably leave the text free to be improvised; here it is the contact which is primary).

As a basic structure to begin to conceptualize how the voice functions, I created a spectrum of meaning ranging from:
-Informational: giving intellectual meaning
-Associative: giving association, mood or sensation
-Instinctive: giving intuitive meaning/speaking to the subconscious

The pervading assumption is that this spectrum:

Figure 6. Spectrum of vocal actions

Informational	Associative	Instinctive

corresponds roughly to different performance aesthetics:

Psychological realism	Concert/music /stylized performance	Ritual

Which are connected with different kinds of vocal material:

Text	Song	Sound
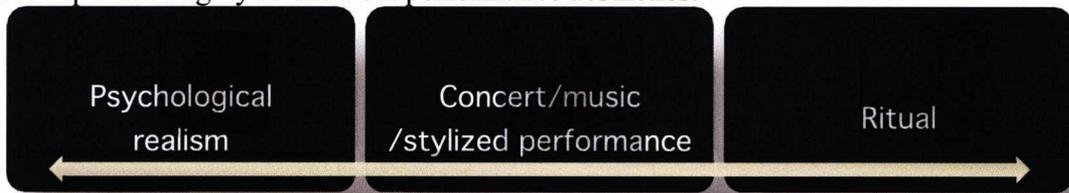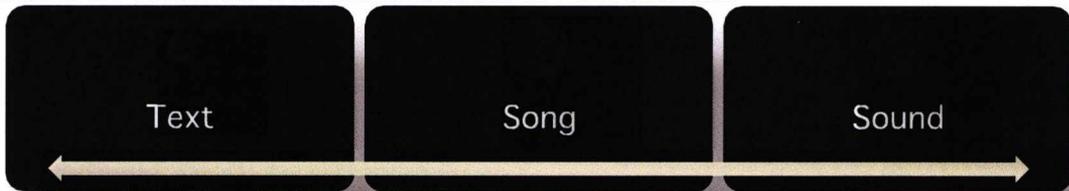
Assertion: The key to opening up the expressive and dramaturgical possibility of the human voice in performance is to destabilize these assumptions.

Figure 10. Prototypes of communication between people

Communication between 2 people	• (re)act together in a common impulse = unison song • the (re)action of one can be the stimulus for the other = dialogue
Communication between more than 2 people	• the whole group responding together in a common impulse = choral text/song • the whole group responding to stimuli differently = the prototype of much experimental soundscape/ music work • the group setting up a cycle of action-reaction in which they can each react individually but in relation to the whole group = the prototype of rhythm-based improvisatory/ choreographed work

ATTITUDE AND PRINCIPLE

Attitude
- **See your voice:** Your voice is like another limb of your body. It is something which you experience physically, and is something concrete in space.

Principle
- **Action = flow + form**

Without flow, a form is an empty activity, without form, flow is unarticulated and incomprehensible viewed from the outside. As a functioning whole they become an action which communicates.

Form: consists of the elements of the structure which are fixed and repeatable. They are chosen *before* the moment of performance and defined in space and time.

Area of flow: the area of the action which is in direct contact with the now, these choices are made in the moment and are thus always unique to an individual performance action.

- Exercise in flow composition
    - #8: THE WAY
- Exercise sequence: building vocal form
    - #9: vocal shape ⇔ vocal gesture
    - #10: shape duets
    - #11: solo and support
    - #12: sonic space

- During the following exercises the underlying directorial work is to ask these questions.
  a. What does the performer need?
    - What physical/vocal forms support their flow? What challenges match their skills?
  b. What does the text/sound/song need?
    - What is its internal logic? Does it communicate informationally, associatively or instinctively? Do you want to work with or against this?
  c. What is the text in relation to?
  d. Where in space/time, history/style is it?

- Composition exercises
    - #13: First meeting with the material
    - #14: Who is the vocal material talking to?
    - #15: Establishing place
    - #16: Audience relationships

Prototype for vocal form/flow of an exercise/performance etude
This chart can be used to determine or analyse the relationship between form/flow in a form or exercise in terms of space and time.

Material:
    Vocal: text/song/sound?
    Performer: describe relevant strengths/challenges

Fixed form: (can be)
1. Architecture:
2. Topography:
3. Spatial relationship:
4. Shape:
5. Gesture:
6. Duration:
7. Tempo:
8. Repetition:

Area of flow: does body follow voice or vice versa? How large is the area: macro, media, micro?

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C : SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM

Practice as Research PhD Symposium

VOCAL ACTION:

From training

towards
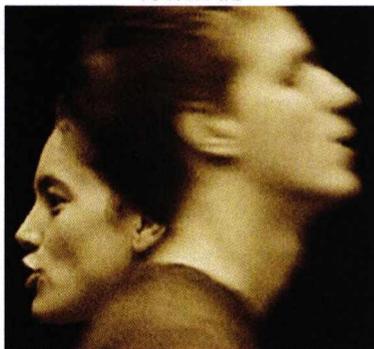
performance

8 & 9 June, 2011
4-8pm
University of Kent

Open Training: 4-5pm
Participating: Members of Heretics' Playground and invited guests.
The aim: To allow the audience a real time glimpse of the training work. This training has been built around the following aims determined by the perceived needs of the contemporary performer.

The contemporary performer:	Their training needs to:
may be both creator and performer of their work	train vocal presence **and** the ability to work compositionally with the voice.
often works without a director	be **collaborative** rather than have a hierarchical work ethic.
	create a **common vocabulary** that can be used for physical or vocal work and stimulates discussion of sound as structural rather than psychological.
will work within many different forms of theatre	not be **based in a single aesthetic** but rather work across forms
	it is **non-hierarchical**: all vocal forms are valued equally as potential performance material. (Work with text is not prioritized over work with pure sound, for example).
may be from any cultural or aesthetic background	not promote the idea of a "free" or "natural" voice as the beginning point, (concepts which are in themselves culturally specific), but rather focuses on the **necessary voice** – the voice which responds adequately to the moment.
may work in a variety of collaborative constellations with a variety of different economic limitations.	be **flexible,** and can be adapted for solo, pair or group work and all skill levels.

This training is called **Heretics' Playground** as it trains the heretical performer.

Heretical Performer: the word heretic, meaning anyone who does not conform to an established attitude, doctrine, or principle and comes from the ancient Greek *hairetikós*, able to choose. The heretical performer is thus one who, within whatever form of theatre they are working, is able to *choose* at any moment to follow or to break the "rules of the game" of that form. It suggests an attitude of autonomy paired with responsibility, which I propose is the paradoxical essence of what it means to be a contemporary performer.

Towards Performance: 5:15 – 6pm

Performers: Kristin Fredricksson, Lucy James, Carla Kedzierski, Peter Morton, Dan Petrovici, Alice Taylor, Judita Vitkauskaite, Lucy Western
Vocal dramaturgy by: Electa Behrens and the group

The aim:
To present the space between training and performance. The Heretics' Playground laboratory group will present a series of small etudes that explore the creation of vocal dramaturgy from different starting points. They explore various balances of form and improvisation. These have been developed over the past 2.5 weeks.

THE WAY
a prototype sound/space installation/improvisation
This structure has the least amount of set form and the greatest amount of improvisation. What has been set beforehand is the audience/performer relationship, the space, an approximate length of time for the performance and the performers. The performers have a variety of different forms of sound/text/song material that may come into the improvisation but the order or inclusion of this material is not pre-determined.

Etudes
In these small scenes, we began from various texts the performers proposed, all of which were centered on the theme of hero/coward. In this work, there is a greater amount of form. What has been set beforehand is the text and a progression of tasks and spatial relationships.
The process of building material was as follows. First, we explored what was the essential nature of the various texts. This included background research on the form of the text, practical work in which the speaker explored the physical embodiment of the words/sounds (the text within the form of their body) and an inquiry into where the *sense* or *meaning* lay within the act of sounding (in the melody, words, rhythms, vowels etc).
Lastly, we explored how we could compose vocal and physical dramaturgies from this starting point of *how the text/song is communicating meaning (functioning)*.

The vocal material heard includes excerpts from:
Inferno by Dante Alighieri
The Plague by Albert Camus
Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare
My house was collapsing toward one side by Charles Mee

Performance ONE BY ONE: 7 – 8pm
Written by: Electa Behrens (concept) and Jørn Riegels Wimpel
Directorial advisors: Jørn Riegels Wimpel (main)
Additional text excerpts from: Tori Amos, Patti Smith, Sam Shepard
and the ancient Gnostic text: Thunder, Complete Mind
Performer: Electa Behrens
Producer: Electa Behrens and d-moor produksjoner (NO/UK)
Supported by: Norsk Kulturråd, University of Kent

As research

This performance explores what happens to the performer as they work across different vocal forms. The aim has been to investigate the form/aesthetic from the inside, discovering the function behind each vocal action, or in other words, where the meaning lies in it. This ranges between: meaning lies in the language/words, meaning lies in a combination of words and vocal/physical stylistic gestures and rhythms, meaning lies in the quality, tone and melody of a song, and meaning lying in pure sound. This has been an examination of how to find the impulses for these different kinds of actions and translate them into dramaturgies.

As performance (blurb)

Ever had those moments when you stare at the ceiling of your bedroom searching for the impulse to get up and not finding it? Ever had those moments where your heart starts to pound and you know you will never be the same afterwards? This story lives in the space between those two. It is a futuristic fable about an airline stewardess searching for contact in a world where technology has isolated the individual.

The performance is an eclectic collage of devised writing, ancient text, sound and media, popular and traditional song and the science of Creeping Normalcy. Using minimal technology to maximum result, it looks to speak about the global by touching the very personal.

A very warm thank you to

all the students and performers with whom I have had the pleasure to work over the past 3 years, my advisers Paul Allain and Frank Camilleri, Jacqueline Aldridge, Ian Baird, Elisabet Hagli Aars, Mike Keeling Smith, Deborah Metcalf, Scott Miller, Duska Radosavljevic, Wilhelm Støylen, Jo Tuffs, Sam Westbury, Angela Whiffen, CPR, The Grotowski Institute, Instabili Vaganti, MXAT, Studio Kalari and for their unending support Jørn Riegels Wimpel and my family.

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PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

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Anonymous (2010b) Comment at feedback session after a performance of *One By One*, 20th May, 2010.

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EVENTS

I cite here the events in which I participated during the course of this research that had a significant affect on both the practice and analysis.

'Suspension of Expression' Atelier 2008 of The Grotowski Institute, 30 June – 27 July 2008, Wroclaw, Poland. Included practical sessions with work leaders: Zygmunt Molik, Domenico Castaldo, Matej Matejka, Sergei Kovalevich/Natalka Polyvynka, Teatr ZAR and Grzegorz Ziolkowski. Partial records of the event held in the archives of The Grotowski Institute.

'Harmonic Accord - *Encounters Through Song*' a Giving Voice Festival curated by the Centre for Performance Research and the Grotowski Institute, 18-26 April 2009 in Wroclaw, Poland. My participation included an open conversation on my research titled: 'the sound of the name' and participation in the workshop of Natalka Polyvynka. A recording of the event is held in the archives of the Centre for Performance Research.

Practical worksessions at MXAT school 16-27 May 2009, Moscow, Russia. Organised by Paul Allain and Kent University with support of The Leverhulme Trust. My participation included leading a master class in voice for 2nd year MXAT students. A recording of this event is held in the archives of MXAT school and by the author.

'Grotowski: Theatre and Beyond', organised by the British Grotowski Project, 11-14 June 2009, Canterbury, UK. My participation included speaking on the panel 'By Initiation or by Theft'. A recording of this event is held at the British Grotowski archive, University of Kent, Canterbury and in Arts Archives.

'Grotowski: After – Alongside – Around – Ahead', an open symposium 14–15 June 2009, Canterbury, UK. My participation included the presentation of a work-in-progress version of *the sound of m/y/our name....* A recording of this event is held at the British Grotowski archive, University of Kent, Canterbury and in Arts Archives.

'Practice As Research Showcase', 24-25 September 2009, Canterbury, UK. Included the showing of: *The Story of Imam Hussein, the sound of m/y/our name...*, *Butoh Bodies* and *Faidra-Rock*. A recording of this event is held at the Drama Department of Kent University.

'Name of the Land. The Territory of Image' working session of international art resource 'The Song of Songs' 28 September – 14 October, 2009, hosted by The Grotowski Institute at the Brzezinka work space, Poland. Work leaders included: Sergei Kovalevich, Natalka Polyvynka, Sankarlal Sivansankaran Nair, Klim and Andrey Vipulis.

Participation in practical worksessions at MXAT school, 26 April – 7 May 2010, Moscow, Russia. Organised by Paul Allain and Kent University with support of The Leverhulme Trust. My participation included the showing of a work-in-progress version of *One By One*.

'School of Arts Fringe Festival' 14-16 June 2010, organised by and at the University of Kent, Canterbury, UK. My participation included 3 showings of *One By One*. An archive of this event is held by the author.

'Porsgrunn Internasjonale Teaterfestival' 18-27 June, 2010 organised by Grenland Friteater in Porsgrunn, Norway. My participation included showing an excerpt from *One By One*.

'In the Body: Movement for Actors, Britain/Russia', 3-5 September 2010 held at the rehearsal spaces of the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon, UK.

Co-organised by Professor Paul Allain from the University of Kent's School of Arts and Struan Leslie, Head of Movement at the RSC, with the support of The Leverhulme Trust and the RSC's Artists' Development. A recording of this event is held in the archive of the University of Kent, Canterbury.

'Ensemble Improvisation – a weekend workshop with John Britton' 16-17 October 2010 at London Buddhist Arts Centre, London.

'Viewpoints med Peer Perez Øian' intensive workshop held 10-13 January 2011 at the Skuespillersenter in Oslo, Norway.

'PerformAzioni' International Workshop Festival 22 March – 8 April, 2011 at Live International Venue, Bologna, Italy. My participation included leading the workshop 'A collaborative workshop of vocal explorations and the process of composing material' with Jørn Riegels Wimpel and the presentation of the performance *One By One*. Partial recordings and photos of these events are held by the author.