A MUSICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH 'MA' – JAPANESE AESTHETICS OF SPACE AND TIME

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A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts by Research.

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   unperformed

   approx. 6 min

3. 'Hair' variations for solo Alto Saxophone (2010)

   Performance history:

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   Timothy O'Dwyer, Café Olimpico, Tokyo, Japan, 20th of June 2010

   Written as part of Tokyo Wonder Site research-in-residence, 1st June to 17thJuly 2010.

   Commissioned by hyb. project

   approx. 25-30 min

   Installation history:

   Tokyo Wonder Site Open Studio, Tokyo Wonder Site Aoyama, Tokyo, Japan, 26th of June 2010

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Abstract

This thesis discusses my exploration of a musical engagement with *ma* – Japanese aesthetics of space and time, within my Master of Arts by research portfolio of compositions. Part 1 elaborates a constellation of the concept focusing upon the key terms 'framing' 'transition' and 'interpenetrated identity' which provides a way of understanding this aesthetics of a heightened sense of presence. Parts 3 and 4 discuss specific techniques which have actualized these concepts within two of my recent compositions focusing upon questions about spatio-temporal relations elaborating of the 'manifesto' of a concise form of assertions found in Part 2. Further considerations in relation to this research are discussed in Part 5. In the conclusion, I summarize my investigation of a musical language through which I sought to find structural analogues congruent with the concept of *ma*.

Dedications and Acknowledgements

I am heartily thankful to my supervisor, Prof. Liza Lim, whose encouragement, guidance and support from the initial to the final level enabled me to develop an understanding of the subject.

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Lastly, I offer my regards and blessings to all of those who supported me in any respect during the completion of the project.

To Toshio Morishita and Eiko Morishita.

Chikako Morishita

Introduction

'Ma' is an immeasurable space-time where two worlds cross…In this space lies an experience beyond the boundaries of sounds and silence, instruments and performers, physicality and sensibility, is the transcendent aspect of the musical performance.—Satsuki Odamura (Morishita, 2010)

Such experiential "places" evoke, by their very nature, a sense of reality characterized by a dynamic, active, changing, poetic immediacy instead of being merely objective or subjective…It is an opening or emptying of oneself into the immediacy of the ever-changing moment beyond distinctions and in between the "this and that" world. It is a world in between subject and object. —Richard Pilgrim (1986, p.267)

At the opening night of the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival 2009, Richard Barrett's *Opening of the Mouth* was performed by the ELISION Ensemble[i]. I attended the general rehearsal and during the ensemble's rehearsal break Satsuki Odamura, the koto player of the ensemble, posed a question to me which seemed to illustrate a number of issues that I aim to draw out in relation to non-Western/Western artistic interactions.

This question—'what is the role of a conductor? What role does *'ma'* play when there is a conductor?'—in Odamura's words, is something that I understood as the issue of how a performer relates their inner sense of time to external, measurable time. She is a Japanese musician currently based in Australia and has performed in a wide range of contexts including traditional Japanese music, jazz, solo, with orchestras, and various forms of improvised music, though, I suppose that her performance philosophy grows out of her training and experience of performing traditional koto repertoire.

Traditional koto notation uses a form of tablature that provides strings numbers and approximate beats represented by rectangles of music paper as pitch and rhythmic information which acts as a guidance for the piece's realization, rather than intending to

completely fix the performer's realization of the score. This circumstance requires the performer to apply their personal sensibility to all aspects of the music, creating a situation in which the performer and the piece are merged.

When I look at my musical projects over the years, what I see is my recurring interest in musical performance in which the performer's subjective space is of central value. I am especially interested in how my perception and way of approaching time are influenced by the unique sensibility my cultural background provides.

The Japanese cultural concept *ma* that Odamura refers to, is the essence of traditional Japanese music as well as the factor which causes her to 'become music itself' during the instrumental performance. For me, the concept is a constellation of knowledge about space and time that I find very provocative, fascinating and rich in possibilities and certainly one that seems very much part of Japanese cultural sensibility.

The quotation at the top of this chapter is from an essay *Intervals ("Ma") in Space and Time: foundations for a Religio-Aesthetic paradigm in Japan* which expresses ideas that are entirely central to my research of *ma*. The scholar of Japanese religion and arts Richard Pilgrim, in this essay, refers to Norman Girardot's book *Myth and Meaning in Early Taoism* and says:

> [H]uman existence constantly finds itself at the juncture between the ordering codes of culture and language and the chaos of a pure experience of order in all its modes. This pure experience, perceived as touching an inner law or hidden network of life and self, seems to have no existence except as perceived through the grid or order created by culture'…(Pilgrim, 1986, p.273)

In my research 'a musical engagement with "ma" – Japanese aesthetics of space and time', I will examine music's form which reflects the performer's sensibility and how the performer can be openly receptive to the flux of moment in continuous time-flow within a given

framework defined by the concept of *ma.* At the same time, in my work, I hope to reflect on cultural practice through which I aim to transfer Japanese aesthetics into a Western culture based art form, in particular, in the context of contemporary music.

1. The Japanese aesthetics of 'ma'

A. Definition

Ma is a richly ambiguous term which Pilgrim describes as a 'conjunction of space and time (Pilgrim, 1986, p.261) while Odamura refers to it as 'immeasurable space-time'. For me, it is a concept which symbolizes the uniqueness of Japanese sensibility where manifesting 'against' others doesn't have a priority: what is at the heart of such a cultural space is 'to perceive something invisible, inaudible, which exists in the space in between'.

In Pilgrim's essay, he indicates that the term carries both objective and subjective meanings. As a description of reality, *ma* basically means an interval between two or more spatial or temporal things, events or phenomena; a room can be called ma, for example, as it is a space between the walls. As a musical term, it points out silence between and within sounds in connection to rhythm, tempo and timing. The contemporary architect Arata Isozaki's description of the differences between Japanese and Western conceptions of space-time helps to illustrate what Odamura refers to as 'immeasurable space-time':

> While in the West the space-time concept gave rise to absolutely fixed images of a homogenous and infinite continuum, as presented in Descartes, in Japan space and time were never fully separated but were conceived as correlative and omnipresent... Space could not be perceived independently of the element of time [and] time was not abstracted as a regulated, homogenous flow, but rather was believed to exist only in relation to movements or space.... Thus, space was perceived as identical with the events or phenomena occurring in it; that is, space was recognized only in its relation to time-flow (Isozaki, 1979, p.13 cited in Pilgrim, 1986, p.256).

As an experiential subject, *ma* can be thought as an interval or gap between objects or events which reveals a rich reality of presence. Odamura describes *ma* in this line as 'a negative space filled by imagination which contains a wealth of emotion' and 'illuminates a positive space by its existence'. In other words, *ma* is an experiential space which evokes a heightened sense of reality—the simultaneous awareness of the unification between form and its absence, which is perceived through the immediacy of experience.

B. Structure

i. Framing

ma【間】 interval; space

門 gate; door

日 day; sun

Figure 1: kanji description of 'ma'[ii]

As Pilgrim indicates in his essay, one of the significant aspects of this conceptual term can be found in a particular mode of experience for perceiving two different types of events or phenomena simultaneously. *Ma* is represented as in kanji consisting of the character for gate, a fixed object, and the enclosed character for sun shining through the gate which pre-supposes something invisible and indefinable yet somehow concrete (Pilgrim, 1986, p.258). The gate, therefore, functions as the framework to illustrate the existence of something unstable or indefinable.

ii. Transition

in-ei 【陰影】 shadow; gloom; shading; hatch; hatching

陰 shade; yin; negative; sex organs; shadow

影 shadow; silhouette; phantom

Figure 2: kanji description of 'in-ei'[iii]

The indefinable or shadowy/invisible quality of *ma* can be further described through the related term 'in-ei' showing how *ma* indicates not merely estranged negative/positive events or phenomena, but it also points out the gradation or transition from something negative to positive, positive to negative. These two kanji characters which both mean 'shadows' or 'shading' [figure 2] form the word 'in-ei' which can be translated into dark and light shadow in English; that is, the concept of 'shadow' in Japanese and as it relates to indefinable phenomena in the aesthetics of *ma* encompasses both light and dark. *Ma* is not polarized around an idea of 'the invisible' or 'the indefinable' as pure negative space but can be perceived in a more graduated area between positive and negative. In a sense, it is the quality of transition rather than any steady state that is at the heart of this aesthetics.

iii. Interpenetrated identity

Behind this concept, there is the creation of an 'interpenetrated identity' – a fluctuating boundary between the subject's and object's identities. The linguistic scholar Takao Suzuki points out the character of Japanese subjectivity as an 'open status' which has no clear figure unless the distance or nearness between the object is specified: the subject's recognition of the object and valuation of the quality of the space between the object defines the subject's being (Suzuki, 1973, p.198 cited in Berque, 2008, p.43). 'Interpenetrated identity' is polarized

around the subject's personal acts of perception, realization and specific situation—being aware of some changes in the internal state of the body brought about by external objects—, and measures the distance from the object by means of impressions made upon the sensory system. The scope for these subjective perceptual acts is grounded in the state of affairs that are described by situation, mode or context. Therefore *ma* can be understood as an individual cognitive space which is created by an interaction of subjective/internal and objective/external worlds within a framework given by the state of affairs (Berque, 2008, p.43).

C. Compositional approach

What particularly fascinates me with the concept of *ma* is that ambivalent statuses—'positive and negative space' 'fixed and unstable quality' and 'subjectivity and objectivity'—can be merged at this space. In investigating the aesthetic phenomena indicated by the term *ma,* thus I find the following analogues and challenges focusing upon the creation of 'mediatory' or 'interpenetrative' space in my musical projects. Some aspects of *ma* can be found in:

1. Performer's open receptiveness for the ever-changing moment in which the performer's inner sensibility is the indefinable aspect of the 'negative' of *ma*.

2. Transitional phenomena between positive to negative space which could be defined as changes between states of energy—energy of density of activity, or dynamic qualities—, a continuum between sound and silence, and changes between timbral states. An awareness of transitional states can be mapped onto these performance phenomena and they provide a sensitized 'space' which can register very fine nuances of interpretative subjectivity.

3. Creation of interpenetrated identity in which space quality relies on an act of individual cognition or valuation brought by an interaction of internal and external space.

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My challenges for creating a musical language reflecting these concepts can be summarized as the following:

1. Musically framing a situation in which subtle changes in performance mode can reflect the performer's changing sensibility

2. Creating a musical language which foregrounds transitional phenomena

3. Organizing spatio-temporal structure

2. Questions about spatio-temporal relations – a manifesto

The following is a concise form of assertions about the central questions about spatio-temporal relations in investigating musical language.

<u>Nature of positive and negative space</u>

1. Positive and negative space are connected by time

2. Negative space can be defined as a space just before or after a unit of performance, as positive space is produced by the dynamic activities of sounds (performers).

3. The qualities of these two spaces have an interaction in terms of orders

<u>Relation between determinate–indeterminate durational space</u>

1. Performer's sense of time is modified by the locations of determinate and indeterminate durational space, in particular at the space of contact between two distinctive types of time:

    A. Counting on a measured space just after an indeterminate durational space which can be understood as the performer's own negotiable space

    B. A non-measurable space just after a countable space, in this case, the speed of the gestural movement on the positive space is a key component

2. A compound of these two types of durational spaces allows the performer to consider time in relation to other phrases. Factors here include:

    A. Where the same fermata symbol is used and what that relation represents

    B. Where the same gestural movement appears and how those phrases are modified in terms of duration

    C. Additionally, where those positive/negative spaces are reversed to negative/positive

These structural components serve instrumentalists to play following their memories. This is why *ma* is located as an aesthetic of spatial-temporal organization rather than merely spatial or temporal.

<u>Further consideration</u>

By extension, the following are the issues which I aim to consider in future works

1. What do locations of links of phrases, in connection to how the phrases are modified in terms of dynamics, playing technique, decoration and shift to other instruments, bring to musical performance?

2. How those links affect the instrumentalist's physicality: if negative space is defined as physical emptiness just before and after a unit of performance and what it brings to my compositional thought

3. Narrative dissolution and determinacy-indeterminacy in '*Lizard*'

tokage【戸陰】shade of gate

戸　　door; gate

陰　　shade; yin; negative; sex organs; shadow

Figure 3: kanji description of lizard (tokage)[iv]

A. Concept

One of my compositions in which I sought to find musical analogues with the aesthetics of *ma* is *Lizard* for clarinet in B flat, viola and koto which was premiered by OKEANOS ensemble on 21st of January 2011 at St. Pauls, Huddersfield, UK[v]. The *Lizard* is the title for this work about silence: one of the possible Japanese descriptions of the animal of lizard consists of the kanji characters for gate and for shade which metaphorically represents something being kept secret but somehow concrete. This 'shade of the gate' or, in my terms 'shaded emotion' or 'choking inarticulacy' alternately colored by an audible/inaudible form was something central to this composition's conception.

B. Silence: narrative dissolution

Figure 4: *Lizard* revised ver., fragment XI

The work consists of twelve fragments – one complete silence [figure 4] and eleven sound pieces. The significant use of silence is key to my exploration of narrative dissolution, or deconstruction of the cause/effect of narrative order (Pilgrim, 1986, p.260). While all players use the common score where each fragment is on the facing two pages, these fragments are bridged by silence in association with score page-turning. Rather than construct linear narrative order—construction of a certain directionality from a singular point of beginning toward a singular point of completion—, what I intended to create is 'a series of overlapping and associated, discrete image worlds' that are separated by space called *ma*. In a sense, such silence is a device opening the space up for the players'/audiences' own narrative constructions in connection with situational, conditional energies. This is a framing of individual space realization and for me, a compositional analogue to the aesthetics of *ma.*

C. Determinacy - indeterminacy

i. Indeterminate durational space

Figure 5: *Lizard* **revised ver., fragment XII**

The idea of narrative dissolution or abstraction of directionality is also triggered by indeterminate durational space, or rather the relations between determinate-indeterminate durational spaces. In *Lizard*, the score is notated in standard Western notation where three fermata symbols—shorter, normal and longer—are used. While determinate space is defined as counting, measurable, standardized or objective time as notated time is countable, the space indicated by those symbols offer the players the opportunity to define 'what is shorter, normal or longer' within a framework given by a context. The general pause at the very end of the work is another immeasurable space enclosing the exit from the composition [figure 5]: the space's duration depends on the performers' collaborative decision of what is the ending or how the composition can be ended. In a sense, the space of indeterminate duration is encompassed with an individual act brought about by an interaction of subjective and objective aspects which leads to a more sensitized space which can register very fine nuances of interpretative subjectivity.

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ii. Space of contact

Figure 6: *Lizard* revised ver., fragment II

The koto is an instrument which Odamura describes as the 'instrument of "*ma*"'. As the concept of *ma* operates the collapse of two distinctive worlds, what I wanted to draw out in this work for the koto and two Western instruments is the interplay of ambivalent expressions – subjective and objective, silent and violent which are identically, alternately formed in spaces. Looking at the nature of positive and negative space, negative space can be defined as a space just before or after a unit of performance produced by dynamic activity of performer: silence, for example, is a space just before or after sounding space. The qualities

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of these two spaces have an interaction in terms of context.

One of the important components which define space's quality is sense of time: the performer's internal sensation of time is modified by the locations of determinate and indeterminate durational spaces, in particular at the space of contact of two distinctive types of time. The fragment II [p.19, figure 6], for instance, consists of two parallel phrases which are bridged by immeasurable silence which interrupts the performers' successive counting. What is prompted by such a 'disruption' of a continuous time-flow is another construction of inner counting which is brought about through the gap between the performers' subjective and the objective measures of time. That is, sense of time, or rather quality of space which encloses the performers'/ audiences' sensation is influenced by how the space contacts with other spaces.

iii. Memory architecture

However, not only the spaces contacting each other but also the spaces across the phrases, fragments and instruments can have interactive qualities in terms of context or location. A compound of determinate-indeterminate durational spaces allows the performer to consider time in relation to other spaces. In *Lizard*, what emerges to the players from the performances of, for instance, the fragment IV [p.21, figure 7] and the fragment IX [p.21, figure 8] where the materials are shared, is the act of linking the fragments through being given clues either by direct or intuitive considerations of where the same gesture/fermata symbol appears, and what the meanings of such relations are.

In the fragment IX, the performer's/audience's inner silences are intensified through reversing of positive/negative spaces and use of noise: the countable silence or the measurable space with the clarinet's subtle breath tone only shifts to immeasurable sound spaces filled with the noise produced by irregularly stroking/strumming on the short string

length at the end of the koto. What is articulated by being provided 'immeasurable duration' and such irregular pulsing noise is a keen awareness of the absence of the presence brought about through the mediation of individual's internal/external spaces. That is to say, what such a 'fragmental' structural pattern evokes is the performers'/audiences' inner acts of realization of spacing: the space presents itself not only at the moment but also in the past and future. These individual and shared or collaborative acts of engagement makes the performing spaces interpenetrative and intimate, and this memory architecture can allow the spaces to be the conjunctions of space and time, rather than merely being understood as spatial or temporal organization which is at the heart of the concept of *ma*.
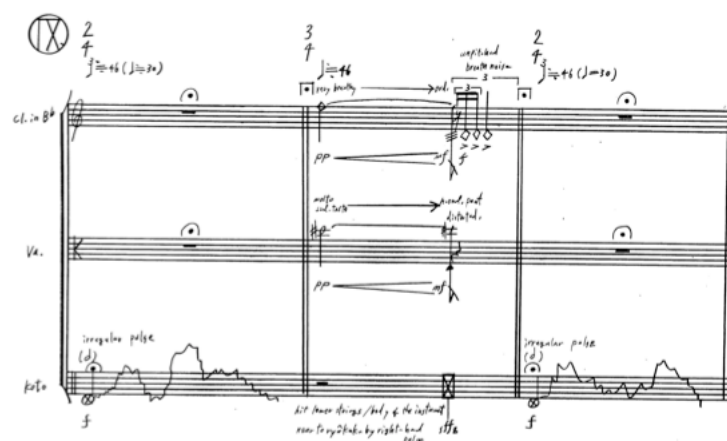

Figure 7: *Lizard* revised ver., fragment IV, bar 4-6
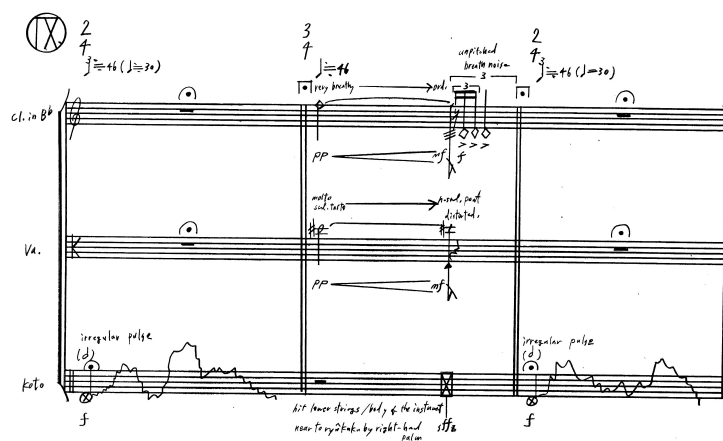
Figure 8: *Lizard* revised ver., fragment IX
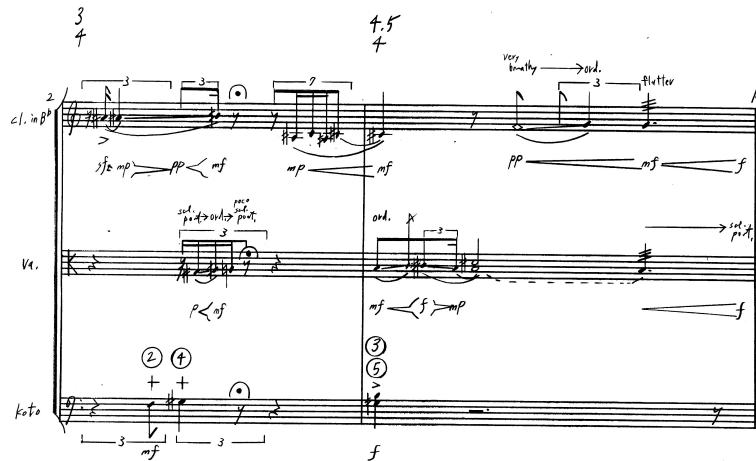
Figure 9: *Lizard* revised ver., fragment I, bar 2-3
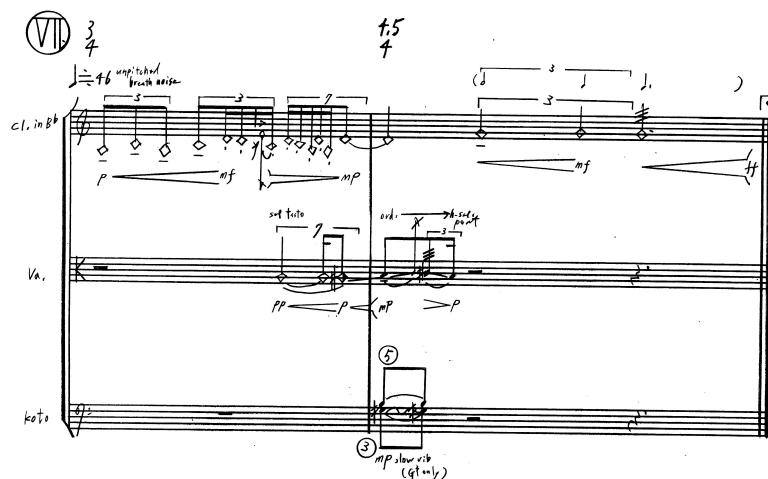
Figure 10: *Lizard* revised ver., fragment VII

The figures 9 and 10 show another type of memory act triggered by transformation of material quality and tactility. The complex hierarchy among the instrumentalists is changed into simpler relations in which the clarinet's sounds are all breathy tones while the koto's plucking sound only has a sonorous quality as if 'articulated' world reverses into the world of 'inarticulacy'. Such a phrase's/ fragment's hidden connection appears in various ways in this compositional work.

iv. Transition: interpenetrated identity

Figure 11: *Lizard* revised ver., fragment VII, bar 1-2

By extension, spatio-temporal structure is also led or modified by transitional quality, in particular the fluctuating hierarchy among the instrumentalists. Through the whole work the three instruments' sounds are intertwined maintaining a quality of timbral flux. What their frequent shifts of functions—foregrounding and backgrounding—or changes of initiative or hierarchy of leadership amongst the three players brings to the music is a keen awareness of each others' presences. This is an interpenetrated identity, the creation of an intimate quality in the performative space which serves to create a heightened sense of reality for the players.

D. Summary of 'Lizard'

Silence is intensified by hidden acts of linkage which allows us to address the creation of our own narrativity. In *Lizard*, the framing devices which create this intensification are created by the use of silence, the relations between determinate and indeterminate durational space, and unstable instrumental functions or fluctuating hierarchies of leading and listening. These enable the musical performance to be coloured by the players'/audiences' own sensibility, offering space for an individual interaction between subjective and objective

worlds, that is, something 'hand-made' and unique to the moment which is core to the experience of *ma*.

4. 'Hair' variations – variation of sensibility

A. Concept

The architecture of enclosure and disclosure is a central thought of the work called *'hair' variations* for solo alto saxophone [vi] that was commissioned by hyb. project and premiered at café olimpico in Tokyo on 19th of June 2010[vii]. This is a thirty minutes solo performance work on which I collaborated with Timothy O'Dwyer, the saxophonist of ELISION Ensemble.

'Hair' variations consists of an independent piece *hair* for solo alto saxophone and six variations. Each of the original piece and variation correspond to six human sensations – Mind (Longing), Tongue, Nose, Eye, Ear, Body and Mind (Will) which gradually transforms a composition developed from an observation of instrumental practice into improvisation. The project explores the spectrum from notation to improvisation: *<variation.0>* is a fully-notated piece and *<variation. 6>* is a fully-improvised piece with the numbered pieces in between allowing for greater or lesser proportions of the performer's creative input [p.25, figure 12].

||Setting||

The scores A&B (A3 size) are on (five) music stands and the score C (A3) is on a side desk.

Variation0: **Mind (longing) ***score A

Play the piece *hair <variation0>.* After the performance, remove the score A from the music stands.

Variation1: **Tongue ***score B

Play the piece *hair<variation0>* as followings: **blue notes** should be played without alterations; **green sections** should replace the score with something new but that belongs to the same musical world as the original's; **sections without colour highlights** are free spaces: it could be same as the original, something new or silence. The performing orders are free. After the performance, set the score C on the music stands.

Variation2: **Nose ***score C

Play the phrases indicated on the score at least once in any tempi and dynamics. Phrases are repeatable and the performing orders are free. The performer is allowed to add his/her music. After the performance, remove the score C from the music stands.

Variation3: **Eye ***without score

Close the eyes and play the radiance of the piece *hair <variation0>* in your memory. The performer is required to add his/her music.

Variation4: **Ear ***score B

Play the piece *hair <variation0>* without a reed. After the performance, remove the score B from the music stands and set the reed in the instrument again.

Variation5: **Body ***without score

Play the piece *hair <variation0>* with your own musical language. After the performance, remove all music stands.

Variation6: Mind (will) *without score

Improvise the ending piece of *'hair' variations.*

In the composition, scores and instructions are given to the performer as the 'input' devices while the performer's creative output tool is an improvisation. The three scores define the performer's dynamic activity and indicate the distance from the original piece: the score A [p.27, figure 13] is the original work *<variation.0>* which is a fully notated and practice based piece; the score B [p.27, figure 14] is basically the same as the original score A but annotated with colour indications; the score C [p.27, figure 15] consists of a few phrases only which were selected from *<variation.0>*.

Each variation's instruction [p.25, figure 12] provides the performing information in association with the scores which frames the composition's temporal direction and how the performer can structure the spaces – the spaces between the performer and the original piece (play or improvise), the performer and the scores (alteration, numbers of repeat, area to be interpreted, to see or not see the score), the performer's language and composer's language (allowing or requiring to put the performer's own language, presence or absence of the materials, orders, tempi and dynamics), the performer's physical body and the instrument (with or without reed) , and between the performer self and substantial materials (set or remove the score and music stands).

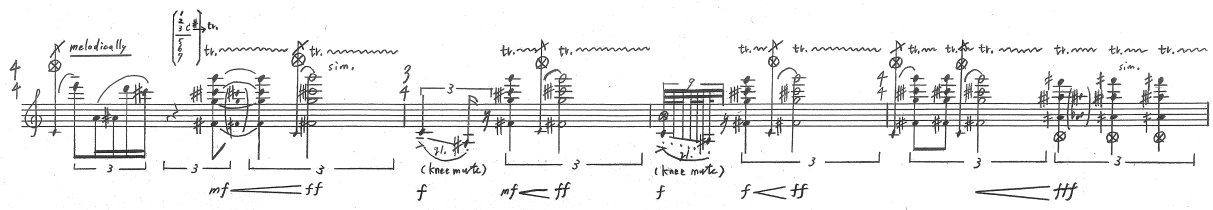**Figure 13:** *'Hair' variations* revised ver., score A for *<variation.0 & 4>*, bar 39-42
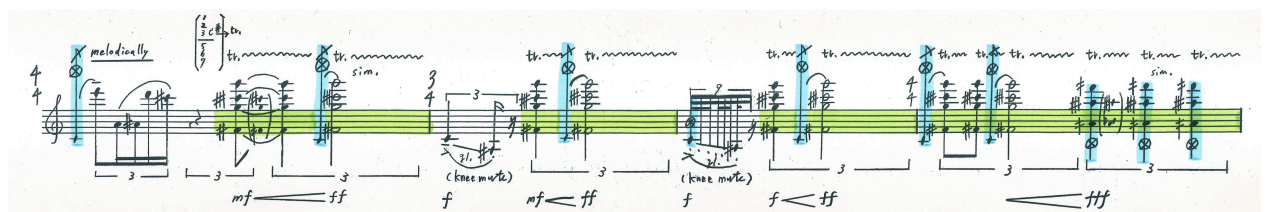

Figure 14: *'Hair' variations* revised ver., score B for *<variation.1>*, bar 39-42

Figure 15: *'Hair' variations* revised ver., score C for *<variation.2>*

My question underlying this project with O'Dwyer who is an interpretator, improviser and composer, was the issue of music's identity – what defines the compositional work's and performance's identities: when musical form or quality of energy enclosed by the music's form are entirely transformed and thus whether the composition/performance still can be recognized and sensed as the same work? There is a traditional Japanese belief that 'hair' is a symbol of longing—trajectory of yearning or emotion having a particular direction—and one's innermost memory is being kept in it. Another way of describing it might be to say that hair is a container of each of our sensation and emotion. In the Japanese classical literature *Essays in idleness,* Kenko Yoshida describes 'woman's hair' as storage of 'passion' in which I found the idea of 'invisible force enclosed/disclosed by visible form which never lose strength' very provocative and suggestive for my compositional thought.

> Verily the roots of passion are deep, and remote its sources. Though the lusts and appetites of the six defilers (the mind and senses) are many, yet may they all be banished save this one alone…Therefore it is said that with a rope in which are twisted strands of a woman's hair the mighty elephant may be bound, and that the deer in autumn will fail to gather to the call of a pipe carved from the clogs a woman wears (Yoshida, 2009, p.6).

B. Determinacy – indeterminacy

I. Memory architecture
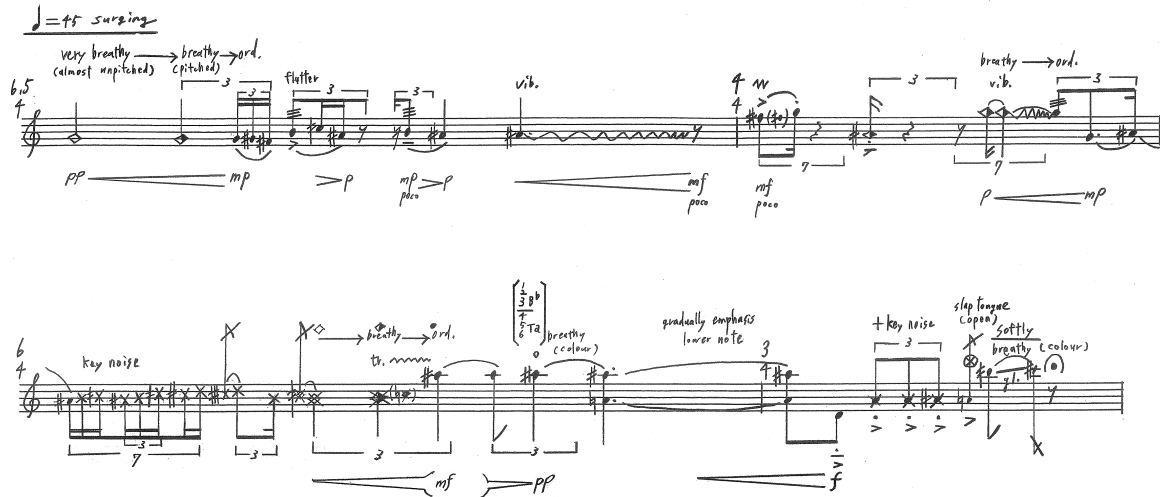
Figure 16: *'Hair' variations* **revised ver., original piece** *<variation.0>*, **bar 1-4**

'Hair' is an emblem of surging of desire – the original piece *<variation.0>* or an individual piece *hair* is made up of trajectories which are alternately illuminated and thrust into shadow by the use of several articulations (vibrato, trill, accent, flutter tongue, knee mute), key noise (key noise only, sound with/without key noise), transition between different degrees of breathy tones (very breathy: almost unpitched, breathy: pitched, normal) and multiphonics. The composition describes the transformation from the world of 'instability' into 'stable, sonorous and rhythmicised' world which eventually unfolds into a place of continuity.

Figure 17: *'Hair' variations*, links between original piece and variations

In *'hair' variations*, all pieces are delivered from *<variation.0>* which defines the key dynamic activities of the composition in terms of gestural patterns and types of energies.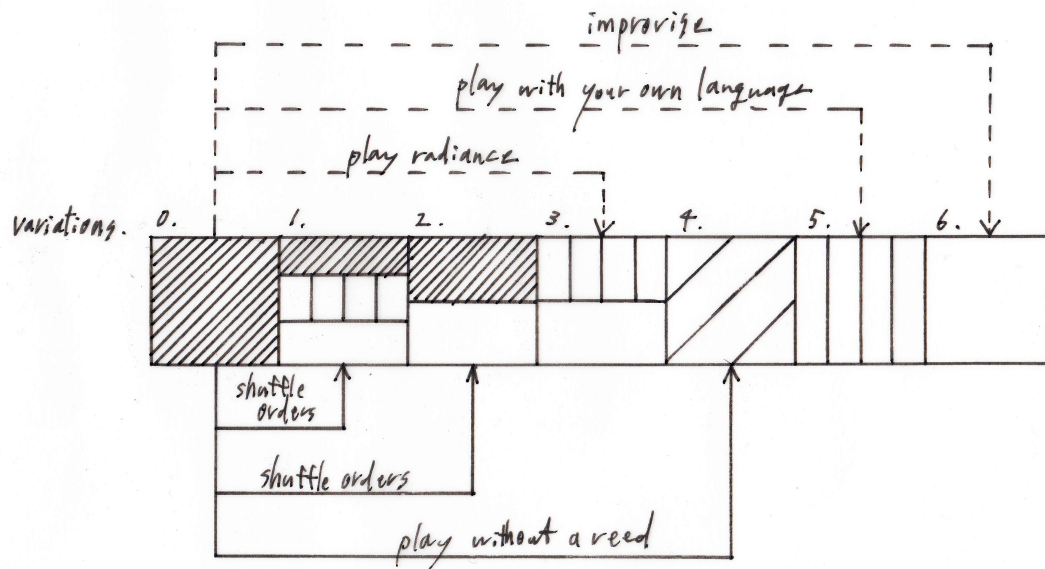 Figure 17 shows how the original piece links with, transforms and reverses to each variation in time flow: the sections of slanted lines are the same as the original's or slightly altered; the sections of vertical lines have the indications which should be individually interpreted then played; the sections without highlights are the performer's free spaces [see also p25, figure 12].

One of the significations of this structure pattern is that the exit from the work is fully opened for the performer. While the opening is fixed with the composer's language in the course of the piece, space is opening up for the performer's own spatio-temporal construction, that is, the memory architecture of this variation work is made up of both the composer's and the performer's creative constructions. It is an interpenetrated identity brought about by a dialogue of the performer's internal and external languages.

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ii. Fluctuating framework

The framework of this composition has a fluctuating quality. Through instructions, the performer is allowed/required to/not to entirely/partially put their own language in the indeterminate spaces such as the figure 12 indicates [p.25]. The ratio between determinacy and indeterminacy can be thus changed by an individual interpretation of musical spaces and situations, that is, determinacy and indeterminacy in the *'hair' variations* is not polarized around two clearly distinguished worlds, it can be understood as a more graduated area just as the concept of 'shadow' in Japan implies both dark and light qualities and mixtures between both.

iii. Presence

What this fluctuating framework reveals and conceals is the performer's presence. Each variation has a different proportion of the performer's creative input given by the scores and the instructions which are about performer's dynamic activities and ways of connecting with performing spaces. Greater and lesser degrees of alignments with otherness reveal performer's different oscillations of presencing: various degrees of openness or closeness to the moments of change, the moments of transition. In a sense, the varying ratios between the composer and the performer control/input associated with the idea of memory architecture, enclosure and disclosure, are affected by the performer's dynamism brought by diverse ranges of interactions with non-replicable factors such as the musical situation in the moment and the quality of time and place. That is, the variations are about the changes of the performer's and perceiver's sensibilities and presence rather than merely variable sound worlds.

D. Collaborative research session

> I think each person has to discover dance on his or her own. One cannot give advice. Each one has his or her way of choreographing. Of course it is very beautiful to have a rich variety of possibilities, something linking the different arts. But I cannot tell if this is or not the best way; it can be many things together in harmony. To form school is dangerous, because it stops the fantasy. It seems important to me that people change the moments of their lives. The feeling about what is happening in the world is always a new moment.—Pina Bausch (Fernandes, 2002, p.1)

The project was part of my creator-in-residence program at Tokyo Wonder Site Aoyama from June to July 2010[viii] where I had collaborative research sessions with O'Dwyer from 14th to 19th of June consisting of three stages: two days for my revision of the original piece following an investigation into the instrumental mechanism of the alto saxophone and exploration of his performance techniques, two days for rehearsing his interpretation and the performance quality of the original piece, and two days for working on the variations together and then[ix], he gave two performances at the end of the week[x].

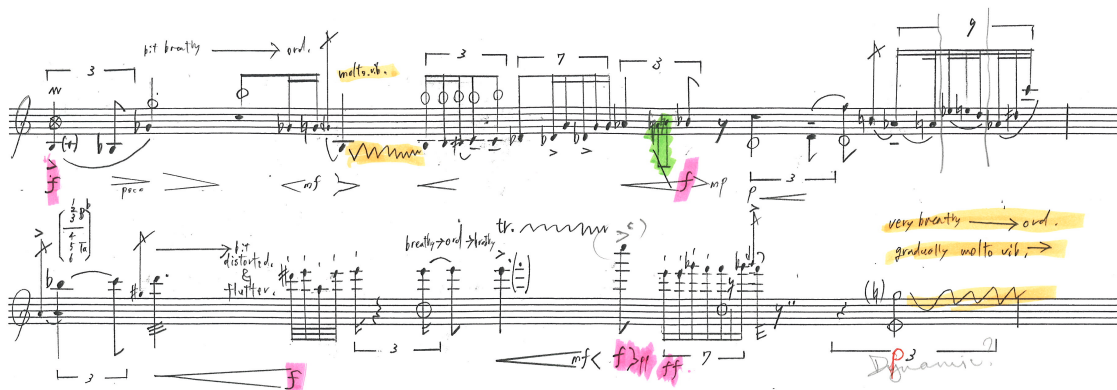**Figure 18: *'Hair' variations*, O'Dwyer's rehearsal score colored by the player,**

***<variation.0>*, bar 13-14**

All variations were developed in a-week-long workshop session and it reflects O'Dwyer's interpretation of the original piece, for instance, all phrases in *<variation.2>* are ones that he found specific meaning for through his practice performance of *<variation.0>*

which are the pulsing gestures functioning for him as reference points between unstable linear movements [p.27, figure 15].

The quote at the top of this section is from the late Pina Bausch, dancer, choreographer and artistic director of Tanztheater Wuppertal, who had been described as a person 'seeing each dancer's moment of change'. Her approach to choreography—transforming the dancer's personal memory into symbolic form—is something I find unique, compelling and provocative, and what I try to create through my own collaborative creation process with players.

D. Summary of 'Hair' variations

Through the collaborative process, I am beginning to develop my musical language so that I can reflect on variations of sensibility and energy – the energy of the performer and quality of place which is given a framework within varying degrees of improvisation or ratios between composer and performer control/input and through which I seek to give visible form to invisible qualities.

This structural pattern of 'fixed opening' and 'open ending' with the numbered pieces allows the performer to construct their own narrativity contextualized with pre-fixed materials and practice based physical gestures. What I intended to create with such a fluctuating language is the performer's/audiences' realizations to the moment of transition in which I used improvisation as a tool, mechanism or framework to elaborate indefinable aspects of musical performance. For me, this approaches and is related to the aesthetics of *ma*.

5. Symbolic language – future direction

> The human body is a locus of the relation between passion and action, between impression and expression, between perception and movement. It is projection screen for imaginary obsessions and the proximate instrument of fantasies pressing for incarnation and realization. The body oscillates; it is not solely a field, not solely a medium. It can be described and it can speak. It fluctuates between symptom and symbol. The oscillation probably describes the figure eight of a Mobius strip. It is never visible in its entirety.—Dietmar Kamper (Fernandes, 2002, p.12)

The composition *'hair' variations* has been developed into an installation work and exhibited in Tokyo[xi] and Berlin[xii] as part of gallery exhibition. The installation project arose from the composition's focus of the visual aspects such as to use score and music stands as visible symbols of distances between composer and performer: the in-time process of their removal corresponds to the degree of notational indication.

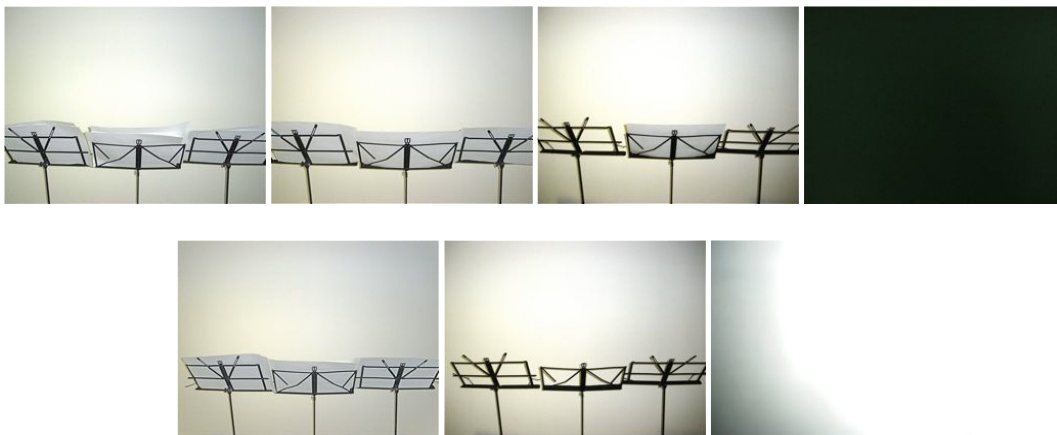**Figure 19: from *'hair' variations* instruction sheets**

The installation work consists of a video screening of O'Dwyer's performance and the score/instruction on display. What particularly fascinated me were the comments from members of the audience who attended both the live performance and installation (the non-live performance): one said that he felt 'being part of the performance' in the live while he

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appreciated the detailed physical gestures, especially varying breath articulations in the gallery exhibition. Another member described her different experiences between the live and non-live performances as 'sensing' variations of energies and 'understanding' about the composition's structure. Screening the performance on a flat screen standardizes the distance between performance and perceiver: the aspects of 'sight' or 'understanding' are intensified through such a standardization while 'listening' 'sensing' experiences are moderated.

After these experiences, what I am seeing as rich in possibilities is to explore the relation between sensibility, physicality and music's form. Just as there is the Japanese traditional belief described by Yoshida about 'hair' as storage of 'innermost feeling', for me, the physical body is a memory place where personal history and dynamic gestures resonate. This new bloom of my interest is going to be examined in future works including the pieces for ELISION ensemble, clarinet and saxophone duo of Richard Haynes and Timothy O'Dwyer, clarinet and piano duo of Heather Roche and Kate Lodgers, and several solo pieces and an installation project.

Conclusion

For me, the research into a musical engagement with the Japanese aesthetics of ma has allowed me the examination of my cultural space and the investigation of how I might approach musical structure, specifically the framing of events or phenomena. One useful definition of the Japanese cultural pattern of *ma* is the quality of 'interpenetration' understood as an experiential space where ambivalent statuses and opposite worlds are crossed, merged and interpenetrated.

In *Lizard*, the performer's own narrative construction is framed by silences, the relations of determinate-indeterminate space and fluctuating hierarchies between

instrumentalists. It enables a music made up of interplays between performers'/audiences' subjective and objective worlds to be unique to the moment.

In *'hair' variations*, this idea of 'interpenetration' pertains to the framing of musical situations through the use of improvisation or instructions for various alterations to a score in a sliding scale of determinacy-indeterminacy thus allowing the performer's own creative sensibility to interact with the musical space. The various oscillations of performer's presence enclosed/disclosed by the fluctuating framework transform the work into a collaborative composition of variations of 'sensibility'.

This process, seeing significance in something called 'dual identity'—being influenced by both Japanese and Western culture—is not the fundamental point of my composition, however, this first stage had to be passed through to be aware of my own situational, conditional and productive energies in relation to sensation, perception and thought. To discover the way of crossing boundaries is something that points to the transcendent experience just as the aesthetics of a heightened sense of presence called *ma* points out an experience beyond the worlds of ambivalence.

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[i] 20 Nov 2009, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Bates Mill, Huddersifled, UK.

[ii] Bober.G., *tangorin online dictionary* (Accessed 6 July 2011)

[iii] Bober.G., *Op. cit.,* (Accessed 6 July 2011)

[iv] Bober.G., *Op. cit.,* (Accessed 2 August 2011)

[v] 21 Jan 2011, The University of Hudderifield OKEANOS Ensemble Lunch time concert, St. Pauls, Huddersifeld, UK.

[vi] The title *'Hair' variations* can be alternatively described as 髪 *variations*

[vii] 19 Jun 2010, hyb. No.2—ritual—, café olimpico, Tokyo, Japan.

[viii] 1 Jun - 17 Jul 2010, Tokyo Wonder Site Aoyama, Tokyo, Japan.

[ix] 14 - 19 Jun 2010, Tokyo Wonder Site Aoyama, Tokyo, Japan.

[x] 19 & 20 Jun 2010, hyb. *op.cit.*

[xi] 26 Jun 2010, Tokyo Wonder Site Open Studio, Tokyo Wonder Site Aoyama, Tokyo, Japan.

[xii] 27 May 2011, Kunstraum Kreuzberg-Bethanien Summer Festival, Kunstraum Kreuzberg-Bethanien, Berlin, Germany.

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1. '"Ma" – heart of silence' (2010), *CeReNem Journal issue 1*

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http://www2.hud.ac.uk/mhm/mmt/research/cerenem-journal/issue-1.php

 2. 'Tokyo Wonder Site: creator in residence' (2011), *CeReNem Journal issue 2*

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