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Improvised Itinerations:
Performed Recordings In Urban Interstice Sites

David Birchall

4th April 2022

Abstract

This portfolio consist of two pieces of recorded musical work *Pomona Itinerations (2021)* and *7/M60/7/11 (2021)* and a written commentary. The research presents an innovative model of using improvisation as a compositional device for creating new work in a specific set of urban outdoor settings. Defining this type of place as interstitial, I discuss how the interstice offers a site rich with new creative possibilities for the improviser. This draws on the imagined possibilities of this type of site as described in Smithson (1996), Foucault's (1984), Sola-Morales Rubio (1995), Debord (2006) and Wood (2007) who all suggest that these places can create complex sites which have the potential to allow for us to operate creatively outside our usual norms. I suggest there are parallels between this and the experiences of free improvisers in performance.

I propose that the performed recorded works made during the research can themselves function as interstitial recorded objects. They are part improvisation, part soundwalk, part ethnography, and part documentation of changes taking place in the site. Making multiple recording visits to the same site and routes gave rise to what I call an itinerative improvised practise. This gave a deep knowledge of the small changes in each place which drew on Ingold's (2013) view of improvisation as an itinerative process. Further considering the work in relation to Brighenti (2016) and Foucault's (1984) idea of the heterotopia as a continually shifting site, we see how issues around the politics of access and use of the sites are contested both by human and environmental factors over the repeated visits. These changes are themselves embedded in the recordings; in the sounds and form present in the material and viewed over time, they give us a creative way into hearing the processes at work in each site.

The recorded pieces Pomona Itinerations (2021) and 7/M60/7/11 (2021) show the process of performing recordings through acts of improvised itineration at two contrasting interstice sites and demonstrate some of the rich potential this approach offers the improviser in making material for performed outdoor compositions.

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Pomona Itinerations

1. Pomona itineration July 2020

2. Pomona itineration January 2021

3. Pomona itineration April 2021

Sampler, Voice, Recording & Editing: David Birchall

7/M60/11/7

1. David & Richard

2. David, Alex & Helen

3. David, Richard, Alex & Michael

4. David, Richard, Alex & Michael

Voices: David Birchall, Helen Brealey, Richard Harrison, Alex Pierce and Michael Perrett

Recording & Editing: David Birchall

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1. Introduction: The first two times I learnt to improvise

My practice is rooted in improvisation. Derek Bailey suggests improvisation "enjoys the distinction of being both the most widely practised of all musical activities and the least acknowledged and understood" (Bailey, 1992, p ix). Improvisation manifests itself in my work in three ways. Firstly, it appears as an ongoing experiential learning process; the border between developing new knowledge and applying it in performance is a porous one in my practise. Secondly, improvising is a method for performing in real time within the field of free improvisation. Thirdly, improvisation occurs alongside fixed elements in making solo and collective works. The works created during this Masters involve overlaps of all three of these areas.

To go back to the very start; I've learnt to improvise three times in my musical life. I'm going to outline the first two times below as way of introduction to my practice as this context is vital to understand the research. Discussion of the third time I've learnt to improvise will come in the following parts of this commentary where I discuss the two projects *Pomona Itinerations* (2021) and *7/M60/11/7* (2021) which together with this text complete the portfolio of work for this Masters by Research.

Initially my discovery of improvisation was embedded in the self-taught process of learning to play the guitar. Part of the steady fascination I developed with the instrument and my own journey into improvising was bound up in the discovery that the scales and chords I was learning could be recombined in almost any number of ways.

As soon as I had the most basic skills on the instrument I moved quickly into writing music with friends in a band. Here we developed a method of writing and performing collectively through improvisation. We developed a performance practice that used a limited amount of agreed upon decisions to maximise the amount of what I'd now describe as improvisation on the material. At the time we understood it as how we played the song. Each song would have written materials and specific sections and structures that could be triggered, worked through collectively or defined by specific individuals agreed in advance, but the majority of the detail of the music was generated through improvising collectively. This model of valuing the contribution of improvisation to learning processes and how it can operate as a central element of educational experience has been detailed in the work of Simon Rose (Rose, 2017). This reflects my own experience that within informal music learning contexts the use improvisation as a learning and composing tool is widespread. I would now understand this situation as the implementation of a methodology where a small amount of agreed upon decisions allows for a large space for improvisation to develop details. An early example of this process is visible in my second band *Our Beautiful Ridiculous Plan* (David Birchall: guitar & Olie Brice: double bass). In the group's final stages, performances consisted of open improvisation led by the tonal framework of tunes which either member could introduce triggering changes and movement to new territory (Our Beautiful Ridiculous Plan, 2003).

This process is still a current one in my practise; the band *Historically Fucked* (Greta Buitkute: voice, David Birchall: guitar, Otto Willberg: bass, Alex Pierce: drums) uses a performance premise of improvising song length pieces that fit within the context of rock music (Historically Fucked, 2017). This relies on everyone's knowledge of the grammar of playing music both in rock bands and also in free improvised performance to create an inbetween space which provides a stable group context to play with expectations of genre and performance in rock music. These processes of using open improvisation as a means to explore genre defined starting points are discussed further as an educational and creative model in *Feral Pop: The Participatory Power of Improvised Popular Music* (Bramley & Smith, 2016). The authors posit similar conclusions to my experience as to the creative potential and offer of agency to the participants in creating works which rely on improvisation to explore a destabilisation of a genre-bound situation. In the pieces developed in this research an application of this process of fixing certain parameters while allowing the majority of details to be developed through improvisation was a foundational approach.

Around 2009 I started playing freely improvised music. Initially I did this at The Noise Upstairs night for free improvisation in Manchester where I met Philip Marks (percussion) and Richard Scott (synthesiser) and began to regularly play with them. Through them I was introduced to the work of British improviser John Stevens. His work has been most visible in the various iterations

of the group Spontaneous Music Ensemble (SME), his community music workshops and the book *Search & Reflect* (Stevens, 2007) which gathers this workshop material together in a published form.

Practise sessions and conversations with Marks would involve informal explorations of how he understood and applied approaches to improvising that are based on those in *Search & Reflect.* We would often practise exploring variations of Stevens' 'Click Piece' "the aim of this piece is to produce the shortest, most precise sound possible" (Stevens, 2007, p63) as a way into open improvising but with the formal constraint of working with very short blocks of sound. This was augmented by Scott's knowledge from having attended workshop sessions with Stevens and the joint aesthetic Marks and Scott had developed in the group Bark!

This learning process gave me a deep understanding of the SME approach to free improvisation as filtered through Mark's and Scott's experience. This consists of players collectively building a complex vertical shared line with individual instrumental timbres that are often made indistinguishable (Richard Scott's Lightning Ensemble 2016). Scott has further developed a sense of this aesthetic and his conception of this collective playing as "molecular". This is an approach to free improvisation that prioritises the vertical interaction of a group building lines collectively using the smallest molecules of sound to destabilise both hierarchy amongst instruments and the ensemble itself (Scott, 2011). This same aesthetic appears in many of the initial 'Rhythm Section' exercises in Stevens' *Search & Reflect* where performers are given methods of collectively building spontaneous rhythmic patterns and more complex pieces in the second 'Improvisation Section'.

Marks' and Scott's understanding of this practice and ability to communicate it with me revealed a huge landscape of musical possibilities. This continues to be the informing improvised aesthetic in Bark! and in Richard Scott's Lightning Ensemble (RSLE) of which myself and Marks are key members. This work raises a point which reaches deeper into how improvised music is understood and discussed. I came to realise that many of Stevens' exercises: 'Scribbling', 'Click Piece', 'Sustained Piece', '1 2', and 'Triangle' (Stevens, 2007) contained formal ideas that deeply inform much of the recognisable language of free improvised music in the UK. The experience I had exploring the Stevens related ideas with Marks and Scott gave me a clear idea that we were in fact working with some quite clear parameters which were fixed, but which gave rise to a large amount of improvised material in the detail of the performance once a collective language was established between the musicians. The non-hierarchical approach arose from a collective agreement to fix some parameters of the playing so the use of these small molecules of sound can build detail in the ensuing improvising. This led me to a position where I came to consider the fixed instructions in the Stevens' workshop pieces as creating open compositions that facilitate improvisation. These compositions define certain parameters and then act as a spring board to allow a large degree of freedom to improvise in an open setting. Simon Fell's research explores in some detail the context and interplay between free improvisers and experimental composers in the late 60s and early 70s including looking in some detail at Stevens contemporary Derek Bailey (Fell, 2017).

Looking at the context in which Stevens' pieces themselves occur as recordings we see an album issued under the name Spontaneous Music Orchestra (SMO, 2016) which features recordings made in 1973 which credits Stevens as composer and lists 'Sustained Piece', '1 2' and 'Triangle' in the titles issued on the record. The record *Birds of a Feather* (SME, 1972) lists '1 2' and 'Albert Ayler' as pieces performed on the recordings. All these pieces are published in *Search & Reflect* as workshop exercises but are presented on the records themselves as compositional frameworks for improvising authored by Stevens. This reflected my experience with Scott and Marks, that in fact, we were immersing ourselves in becoming collectively familiar with a specific set of parameters; compositional ideas and opening gambits that once absorbed could led to a situation of collective improvising. Reflecting on this experience again pointed me towards considering how fixed, consciously defined parameters interacted with improvisation in my work; and how I could use my new understanding of this relationship to develop new work.

Drawing on this engagement with particular modes of free improvisation I continued to develop my own work in ongoing groups and ad hoc combinations performing and touring widely including visiting established venues in the field of improvised music: Cafe Oto in London, Les

Instants Chavires in Paris, Ausland in Berlin, Ftarri in Tokyo and ABC No Rio in New York. This work started to produce some performances that took on a special significance. They were all moments when the improvisation respond to the particular site in which they took place. These performances produced both extremely vivid and satisfying experiences for both musicians and audiences and when recorded produced complex ambiguous recorded objects which I refer to in this project as interstitial recorded objects. I will discuss two examples below.

The first was a solo performance at the Fasanerie in Saarbrucken, Germany in 2014 where I worked with extremes of feedback and silence. The barrel vault shape of the venue meant that the feedback moved physically round the room in a unique fashion, with completely different harmonic qualities emphasised at different parts of the room. In the silent sections the open loft windows in the roof of the space brought in the distant sound of birdsong and traffic. This made for a unique performance where the combined extremes of high and low volume shifted the focus of the listeners attention from background to foreground continually within the performance. This possibility of shifting focus between background and foreground material through the addition and withdrawal of material became a strong element in both the pieces which are submitted here as part of this MA portfolio *Pomona Intinerations* and *7/M60/11/7*

The second is a trio performance with Sam Andreae and Otto Willberg in the RentRec store in Beppu, Japan (Andreae/Birchall/Willberg, 2018). The store itself is under railway arches and has a long pedestrian walkway running outside so both the sound of trains passing overhead and people passing by outside are strong components of the RentRec soundworld. In this performance the trio makes the choice to subsume their improvising deep into the locations soundworld; so the improvisations emerge out of the sound of the place with extended periods of listening. The practice that emerges here; being an active improviser listening carefully to the totality of a site becomes an important part of both *Pomona Itinerations* and *7/M60/11/7.*

Another element of my practice is organising concerts and performances for visiting artists to Manchester. This both provides the opportunity to become a node within the wider global networks in improvised music and to see a wide range of improvisers perform live. In particular a concert featuring American percussionist Sean Meehan at The Britons Protection in Manchester in 2007 stands out. In this performance Meehan generated high sine wave type tones using a combination of rosined dowel, snare drum and cymbal. Five of these drones were interspersed by Meehan over the performance period of thirty minutes with the rest of the set consisting of whatever noise came from outside in the city centre and in the room itself (Meehan, 2005). This was the first time I came into contact with a post-Cageian performance practice which foregrounded the background sounds of place so significantly. Within this research, videos of Meehan's outdoor Summer NYC duo's with Tamio Shiraishi were also an important example of seeing improvisers working in outdoor sites.

In this initial section I explore how my knowledge as a free improviser is embedded in personal pedagogical processes and how this has developed in different musical situations, including considerations of fixed and non fixed elements in free improvisation. We also hear of initial experiences of improvised performances being affected by the type of site they take place in and how this developed an interest in interaction with site with and an increased awareness of how performance with external sounds in the field could be developed.

2. The third time I learnt to improvise

The third time I learnt to improvise will be described in detail below in the approaches I took to making the pieces *Pomona Itinerations* and *7/M60/11/7*. The fixed element I wanted to use in these pieces were the sites themselves; Pomona Island and the area around Junction 7 of the M60. Both partially abandoned semi-wild areas within the urban spread of Manchester. These two places would be explored over the period of a year and half as fixed locations to improvise with. The interest to work outside in this type of site was driven by my own experiences performing with an awareness of the wider sound environment in Germany and Japan, as outlined above, and by the ongoing processes of gentrification and enclosure of space in Manchester. As an artist living and working in the city I had experienced the shifting matrix of studio moves and closing venues as the city centre gentrified and the spaces available to artists moved out of town. The idea that it was important to try and work outside in specific locations before their original qualities and multitude of uses was lost to flats and privatised public space (Stavrides, 2016) became central to the research.

First I want to outline some background to the processes of gentrification and enclosure of space in Manchester as this informs the initial position at the beginning of the research. The IRA bombing of the centre of Manchester in 1996 has been seen as the practical impetus for the redevelopment of the city centre. Much of the city centre was flattened and the stimulus to rebuild also brought many derelict buildings back into use. This had many positives in economic and social terms. However, as Joanne Massey observes, even this initial regeneration process sought to exclude smaller traders from locations they had previously occupied. She notes that multiple areas of smaller shops that had previously created social gathering spaces for young people were replaced by sites dedicated exclusively to consumption (Massey, J, 2005). Throughout the process of redevelopment in Manchester we can repeatedly observe this enclosure of space in the city centre, designed to foreground consumption and exclude other activities (Gillespie, T & Silver, J 2021).

During this initial period of gentrification it was still possible to easily access and rent buildings to rehearse and present concerts/exhibitions in the centre of Manchester in both commercial and artist-led spaces. Active as a musician and gig organiser from 2003 onwards I was in a good position to observe changes in access to these places (Castles Built in Sand, 2013). From 2010 onwards I observed spaces both shutting down or stopping hosting live events. Much of this is due to previously available space in old Victorian mills being transformed into housing on a large scale with previous users displaced into suburbs. This runs in parallel to the transformation of previous music/performance friendly spaces in Manchester into 'artwashed' spaces (Fitzpatrick, 2012) which no longer welcomed experimental musical performance. Observing these processes taking place with buildings in the city centre, it also became clear that vacant lots that were previously lying fallow and unused were also being filled in as the pace of development picked up. Artist Robert Smithson discusses similar processes with reference to Passaic in New Jersey,

> Passaic seemed full of "holes" compared to New York City, which seems tightly
> packed and solid, and those holes in a sense are the monumental vacancies
> that define, without trying the memory-traced of an abandoned set of futures.
> Such futures found in B grade utopian films. (Smithson, 1996, p 72)

As these holes are filled in with new buildings as part of the regeneration process it struck me that the vacancies themselves contained not only any number of abandoned futures but also represented a wide variety of *possible* futures which were now eradicated with densely packed high yield rent spaces leaving no space to imagine the more complex and diverse alternate visions of the city we might have seen in Smithson's "B grade utopian films". The present city centre of Manchester is a monolithic space focused on consumption where a medium to high income is necessary to live and work. This of course by its nature excludes certain groups; younger people and adults without wealth (Massey, J, 2019). This idea is central to the research and helps to form the starting point for the pieces made during the research; both considering the "holes" as sites that offer us possibilities hard to consider in other types of place and the recordings as both "memory trace(s) of abandoned futures" and ways to imagine possible futures for these places.

Seeing this unfolding in Manchester I planned to research how the unenclosed sites still existing in the city could be explored with the process-based knowledge from my practice as an improviser. The term 'unenclosed site' here refers to land which is accessible, not fenced off and is treated by its users as common shared space. I planned to make new work that engaged musically with these places while embedding political and social elements within it that explored what the spaces mean, who has access to them and what authority/agency users have there. I wanted to use my existing knowledge as an improviser to develop work by learning to improvise with a particular form of unenclosed public space. Alongside this I was also keen to investigate developing my practice as an improviser to include mobility and itineration; moving away from, guitar, the instrument I had spent 20 years with, and to explore flexible conglomerations using voice, sampler playback and found objects.

This led me to formulate the research questions below:

• How can the knowledge of the free improviser be utilised while performing at unenclosed outdoor sites?

• What is offered by these sites when making creative work there?

• How can recorded performance contribute to making a multi-layered work which addresses social and political elements through the embedded improviser working in a site?

• How can contingency of instruments, recording apparatus, bodies and access/movement be explored in response to each site?

The method of carrying out the research involved moving through each location on a fortnightly cycle to improvise and record. The recording and experience of the visit would then be reflected on, with emerging elements to explore further or disregard identified. This led to the specific approaches discussed at length in the relevant sections below; using multiple voices in the tunnel under Junction 7 of the M60 and playback of samples and voice at Pomona. As the project proceeded and a firm aesthetic emerged for each of the sites I started to lightly edit the recordings to make up the two sets of pieces in the portfolio; *Pomona Itinerations* and *7/ M60/11/7.*

3. Exemplars of artists working with improvisation and site

At the start of the research I examined the work of other artists using improvised performance that considers location as a means to making recorded work. This was to provide me with an overview of current and historical practices in the same area as I wished to situate my work.

Field recordist Davide Tidoni actively performs within the field he is recording to further illuminate it, using balloon bursts, playback of sound, creating fires and physical actions (*The Art of Field Recording,* Carlyle & Lane, 2013). He is an active participant in the field recordings he makes using improvised actions and the sound of the body to give a listener a clear idea of the reverberance and sonic character of the location by activating it with extremes of sound and silence. This idea of the audibility of a body moving through a site in a recording became an important part of the final pieces submitted in this portfolio. In the text *A Balloon for the Barbican-Politics of Listening in the City of London* (*On Listening,* Carlyle & Lane, 2013) Tidoni presents what I take to be a transcription of an actual encounter with police officers and management while he is working within the Barbican complex on a commissioned piece which involves balloon pops. The text highlights the policing of developed public spaces especially where non-normative behaviour is present; Tidoni is stopped from popping balloons on the basis that someone *might* complain about the noise from it but it is clear in the transcription that no one actually has complained about his activities. This highlighted for me how the very presence of sound in public can immediately bring into focus questions around access and authority which was something I was interested to explore in my research. Tidoni's work was also the first place I came across using balloon pops to measure reverb and illuminate the acoustics of a site which was a technique I later used in the tunnel under the M60.

Viv Corringham's recorded work *On The Hour In The Woods* involved improvising in the same woodland area in upstate New York every hour of the day over a two week period (Corringham, 2018). This provided an example of an embedded improvised practice exploring the same location in an iterative way. In this work we see Corringham move between improvising with the woodland sounds as a background and then engaging directly with specific incidents and sounds that arise in the woods in her improvising. This gave a me a model that reflected my own experience of being embedded in a site while improvising and moving between the background and foreground, in terms of what I responded to or added as an improviser. Corringham also describes her MA project where she walked the same route, recording it repeatedly over a period of months to make many versions of a final piece. From this work she developed her *Shadow Walks* methodology. In this ongoing series of works Corringham asks people to take her on a walk they know really well and discuss what they love about the walk with her. Corringham then returns alone to make a solo recording of the walk, the 'shadow' that draws on the individual's relationship with the walk, meditated by Corringham as the performer. This gave me the initial idea in my research that repeated recorded walks could be a useful methodology for exploring a site over a drawn out period of time (*The Art of Field Recording,* Carlyle & Lane, 2013).

Sean Meehan and Tamio Shiraishi carry out a once a year outdoor summer time performance in NYC in locations have included car scrap yards, under bridges, the garden of the squatted social centre ABC No Rio and the winter road salt depot for NYC (Meehan & Shiraishi, 2002 & 2013). This is a clear example of improvisers working regularly in outdoor locations comparable with Smithson's "holes". Again the improvised approach the duo presents is one in which the improviser and the sounds they make are deeply embedded within the sound fabric of the site; sounds emerging gradually from within the context of the performers listening to the surroundings. The duo's tour collaboration with Denis Wood in Scotland (Wood et al. 2007) also saw performances in a number of urban locations which enacted the same embedded improvised aesthetic concerned with site. Shiraishi has an ongoing practise performing in NYC subway stations (Shiraishi, 2015) creating embedded performances which combine the sounds of the space, other subway users and trains. These performances often take place late at night when the subway network is less busy allowing more space sonically for Shiraishi's playing, while at the same time offering a suggestion of an alternate imagined use of the station as a performance space. Taken together, the work of Meehan and Shiraishi presented me with a useful model of improvisers who have been engaged with performing in outdoor unenclosed sites over a

significant period of time and understand the political and social implications of doing so (McCowen & Meehan, 2020).

Bow Gamelan Ensemble who lived and worked near the former docklands at Bow in East London, made site-specific instruments and performances out of found industrial material on the dock (Bow Gamelan Ensemble, 1987 & 1988). This work drew on the groups knowledge of art and sculptural practice but also on Paul Burwell's depth of performance knowledge as an improviser. (Toop & Beresford, 2016). The combination of a sustained engagement with a particular type of docklands site resonated with me as Pomona is part of the old Manchester Ship Canal docklands. The performance of the group includes embedded improvisation with sound making objects alongside theatrical pyrotechnics. The group gives a clear model for making creative work via a long term engagement with a specific type of abandoned post-industrial space which could then be translated to other similar types of docklands environments.

4. Identifying the unenclosed site

Before I move on to discuss the creative work in the unenclosed sites, I want to present a personal criteria for identifying the type of place I planned to work in. This is useful to share as I spent a significant part of the early stages of the research both revisiting sites I knew which I thought would be ideal for the project and seeking out new locations. I later realised that I needed to focus on two places to allow myself time to carry out in depth research with each location. This meant some areas I found were disregarded. The type of unenclosed site I considered is often indicated by:

- (a) buddleia and other plants growing wild with no sign of human management
- (b) evidence of a mixture of activities taking place there at different times. For example, daytime users might be walking dogs, jogging, mountain biking, flying drones or working in the vicinity. In parallel to this, night time activity at these can be inferred from the presence of campfires, makeshift beds, discarded laughing gas canisters, graffiti, industrial and household flytipping.

The two sites I choose to work in; Pomona Island and Junction 7 of the M60 encompass many of these uses. Although it is possible to easily generalise a method of identifying sites of interest, each one can be diverse as places, with different uses placed on top of one another; "rubbish tips and warehouses, superstores and derelict industrial plant, office parks and gypsy encampments, golf courses, allotments and fragmented, frequently scruffy, farmland." (Shoard, 2002) (Farley & Roberts, 2012).

Figure 1. Buddleia growing wild at Pomona

Figure 2. Flytipping at entrance to Pomona

Figure 3. Undergrowth and graffiti at Junction 7
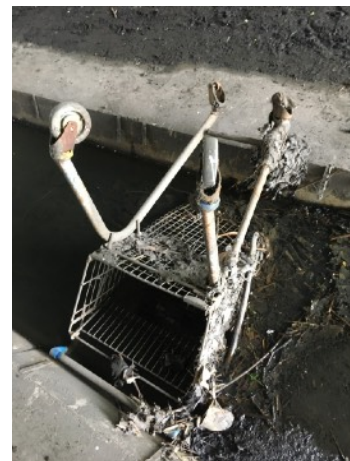

Figure 4. Flytipping under Junction 7

5. Interstice as site

So far I have used the word 'unenclosed' to describe the type of site I worked in during the project. This draws on the historical weight of the idea of unenclosed land in England being accessible to all people for subsistence and its gradual withdrawal through acts of enclosure from the middle ages onwards (Linebaugh & Rediker, 2000). This process of the privatisation of common space continues up to the present day and there has been a recent focus on how it is currently enacted in the urban context (Stavrides, 2016 & Lee & Webster, 2006). In the case of the places I am working with complex situations are at play; Pomona has always been privately owned, but its abandonment over a period of thirty years has given a deep sense of public ownership and access which is now at odds with the owners wish to redevelop it. The tunnel at Junction 7 has been designated part of a public national cycling network but due to environmental degradation has very limited general public use.

I have also used Smithson's (1996) conceptual idea of this type of site as a "hole" which by its existence shows us the "abandoned futures" once thought possible there. The presence of these "abandoned futures" also contains the offer to let our current use of the site shape its actual future. This is done extensively in the Manchester Metropolitan University produced book *Reimagining Pomona* (Cocchiarella et al. 2016) which collects together writings from a diverse group of scientists, artists, students and members of the public. In the book we see the how the suggestions for Pomona's future and the planned redevelopment are at odds each other. Ideas for bringing Pomona back into use presented in the text include a public nature reserve, a city park, an Eden Project for the North and housing which takes into account the biodiverse nature of the place. The final plan for redevelopment is for housing which keeps none of the existing character of the place. Within the pieces made in the project I wanted to capture a reimagining in sound of the site which presents yet another way of using it.

However, while both the idea of the unenclosed site and Smithson's site as "hole" remain important to identifying and thinking about these spaces, I want to nuance the understanding of them further. To do so I want to introduce the term 'interstice' to describe the type of place in which the research was carried out. This idea of the interstice, literally "in-between" from the Latin, can both function as a literal marker of physically how these sites manifest as left over space in between other places in cities (Smithson's idea of "holes") but also that by this "in-betweenness" we can indicate a place that can contain a multitude of uses for different people at different times. There is the implication of a place in transformation or in an inbetween state, alongside the idea of one continually made into an inbetween space by different people's use of it. For example, in making *Pomona Itinerations,* when I was on Pomona in the day time, other users were exercising, engaging in hobbies or working. It was also possible to observe the evidence of more "lawless" (Shoard, 2002) night time activity. This relates to Foucault's concept of the heterotopia, a category of place which "is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (Foucault, 1984, p6). The interstice here can be both a refuge for nature, somewhere to carry out artistic research, a dog walking route, somewhere to sleep rough, a rubbish dump or a quiet place to take drugs in with no interference. All these activities are incompatible sets of behaviours which would create considerable social friction if the different users were to engage in them at the same time and place but if they are juxtaposed either in real time or in the process of the interstice becoming different places through the day and night rhythms of activity (D. Massey, 2015) (Lefebrve, 2013) we see how the site can support a multiplicity of uses and behaviours.

For Foucault the heterotopia involves this juxtaposition of several incompatible places into one, alongside "a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable" (Foucault, 1984, p7). In my various itinerations there I recognised a shifting pattern on Pomona as attempts were made to restrict access to the island. At the very beginning of the research Trafford Council and developers fenced off previous commonly known access points in an attempt to restrict access. As the research developed, Pomona was continually shifting as regular users displayed a collective agency by cutting back fences and removing railings to maintain access. Information was also shared orally about changing access points (see very beginning of 'Pomona Itineration July 2020' and 14:20 onwards in 'Pomona Itineration January 2021' for examples of this. See Figures 5 and 6 below for examples of this shifting access.

Figure 5. Fenced canal step access to Pomona Island July 2020

Figure 6. Canal step access to Pomona Island with fence unbolted by unknown user January 2021

Figure 7. Exit from tunnel under Junction 7

A final example of this shifting access is heard from 18:30 to the end of 'Pomona Itineration July 2020' when I try to leave the along an old known route only to discover that I'm stuck on the wrong side of a gated garden belonging to new flats from which you need a residents key fob to leave. In the recording you hear a passing resident spot me and open the door to the foyer so I can leave and access the street.

In *7/M60/11/7* the access to the site is not contested by human agents but by a stream that runs through it, rendering the tunnel inaccessible on occasions due to sticky mud and deep water (see Figure 7). This is again embedded in the recordings where we often hear footsteps in water (*7/M60/11/7* '1. David & Richard' 7:26 onwards) and the sound of a performer losing their shoe (*7/M60/11/7* '2. David, Alex & Helen' 5:10-5:30).

Again in the tunnels under the M60 where *7/M60/11/7* is made we see evidence of wide range of uses; frequently changing graffiti, abandoned tents, horseshoe prints, mountain bike tracks and fly tipping.

This plurality and shifting of use and access which is folded into the recordings is part of what gives rise to the interstical site; we see how "we begin to recognise that interstices cannot be known in advance: the interstice is not simply a physical space, but is very much a phenomena 'on the ground' (Brigenti, 2016, pxix). The interstice is always being reconfigured by parallel users; traces of the different activities that happen there are folded into the final submitted recorded works. For example, conversational snippets about access points to Pomona between myself and a construction worker ('Pomona Itineration July 2020' 0:00-0:17) and another person using the site ('Pomona Itineration January 2021' 14:20-14:50) mark points where access is in flux so that entering Pomona becomes a collective "phenomena' which is brought into being "on the ground" through sharing current knowledge with other users. This builds a sense of collective agency generated by users maintaining knowledge of access to it. This complexity of interaction, with other users and how my presence and the sites sound textures come together on the recordings *Pomona Itinerations* and *7/M60/11/7* were important elements of what emerged in the research as I explored what it meant to explore my knowledge as an improviser in a new situation to my regular experience of performing in conventional venues.

There is also something else specifically that draws me to this type of place; the sense of freedom, possible danger, the openness to act, transgress, the ability to imagine and live those "sets of futures" Smithson suggested previously. I want to examine what this might be, as it is a fundamental part of the attraction of the interstice and a vital part of why creative research in those particular sites is of value. Shoard suggests directly that, "it would be interesting to see artistic expression of the dynamism that the interface enshrines, rather than simply the decay and redundancy with which artists usually identify it" (Shoard, 2002) making the point that creative research would be a valuable way to generate knowledge about these places. She encourages us to value these sites both practically as a haven for nature and as location for services we need but don't want to see; like the scrapyard on the edge of Pomona Island. She also suggests there is a sense of "lawless(ness)" (Shoard, 2002) present in the in-between space. This sense of a suspension of the usual norms of what is acceptable is what gives the sites their potential as places to do creative research which can begin to tease out the complexities and ambiguities present. As an improviser I felt liberated from the usual limitations of a performance space and forced to confront a wider idea of improvising which both encompassed sound making in real time but, also dealing with all the contingent possibilities that could arise in such a place. This conception is explored by Ignasi de Sola-Morales Rubio (1995) who picks up on this in-between state of possibility in the description of a "vague" space within the fabric of the city: "indeterminate, imprecise, blurred, uncertain" a sense of "mobility, vagrant roving, free time, liberty" (Sola-Morales, 1995, p120). The idea of the "indeterminate, imprecise, blurred, uncertain quality" gives rise to a sense of openness and possible danger. The use of the word "vagrant" gives us the idea of someone beyond the law or drifting beyond the fringe of acceptable society. Alongside the more positive ideas that "free time" and a sense of "liberty" can flower easily in these sites, it's this idea of the "lawless" and the offer of a utopian "vagrant liberty" that begin to suggest an idea of transgression from norms that is allowed by the complexity of the interstice. From this position we begin to consider the potential for making work in these spaces that goes beyond our usual means and approaches.

The potential for transgressive joy alluded to in Sola-Morales description also occurs in Guy Debord;

> "slipping by night into houses undergoing demolition…wandering in subterranean
> catacombs forbidden to the public, etc. - are expressions of a more general sensibility
> which is no different from that of the dérive" (Debord, 2006, p65)

Here we see how Debord acknowledges this transgressive urge to enter interstice spaces as one that most of us will have understood the attraction of, even if we stop at the entrance and go no further. Debord also acknowledges how the derive itself opens up another way of interacting in which,

> "one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and
> leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action,
> and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters
> they find there." (Debord, 2006, p62)

This sense of openness and stepping away from the everyday into another type of space is an element of the experience for me in entering these locations. The experience of responding to the place and the encounters we find there in the moment suggests to me a similar process is at play as in the immanent performance experiences described by practitioners of free improvisation (Bell, 2012) (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). Eddie Prevost emphasises this aspect of free improvisation: "It's what you gain from it in the moment that's important" (Hopkins, 2009, 52:00). This process of the vitality of being in the moment while making creative work is recognised by various scholars (Ingold, 2013) (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). I'd like to suggest that this sense of being able to drop the usual everyday motivations for interaction and instead rely on following a moment-by-moment course of action is present both in the musical spaces created by free improvisers and in the way we are drawn to exploring interstical locations. Coming back to John Stevens; and Smithson's idea of the possible "utopias" generated by these places, Evan Parker recalls,

> "John Stevens talked about free improvisation being his 'other little life'. When I close
> my eyes and I am just playing with other people in a free situation, where we can
> all do what we want, I am in a utopian space." (Lee, 2010)

This idea of accessing another parallel life through the performing processes of free improvisation seems akin to the experience of entering a physical space where free time is the norm and you can operate outside social norms with a strong degree of indeterminacy. I would like to suggest there is a degree of correlation between the in the moment behaviour possible in the utopian imaginative space Parker suggests free improvisers can create while playing and the sense of freedom for anyone to do what they want that is experienced in the interstice. In the next chapter I will discuss further my own experience of these similarities drawing on the ideas of Ingold (2009).

Denis Wood offers a description of the interstice; "they are the deeper recesses of abandoned lots cut off from view by screens of kudzu or the ramparts of long forgotten dumps" (Wood, 2007, p3). His view is that the interstice or "shadowed space" as he terms it, offers an area for private acts to take place in public. While for Wood these acts are often sexual in nature, the focus of my research is on improvising with sites. However, Wood's comments points towards the common conception of the uniqueness of interstical spaces; which can open up a wide range of possible activities which can transgress the norms of usual activity in public space. One element I recognised from Wood's idea of the private act taking place in public was that when improvising on site, I often felt comfortable to try things making the recordings that I would not have done in a performance in a venue; in this way it felt the space between private ideas I might test in practise or rehearsal could emerge comfortably in the public space of the interstice. This folds back to Foucault's considerations that heterotopias can provide legitimate spaces for specific sets of behaviours which would be erroneous elsewhere. This correlated with my own experience of a certain freedom to act openly in these interstice sites which was different to the expectations of how free one could be within a freely improvised performance situation in a venue. The expectations of instrumental use and the fixed elements I have described in the introduction are removed alongside the performance taking place in public space when any number of factors can enter to destabilise it. This sense of freedom was combined with a slightly tantalising fear of not unknowing what might be encountered in the unstructured space.

We see how Foucault's conception of the heterotopia can feed into an idea of the interstice site as a shifting complex with changing barriers and openings. The physical restriction of access and removal of barriers to entry as part of the localised struggle over the use Pomona is manifested in the actual form and sounds on the recordings for *Pomona Itinerations*. The changes to mud depth and water flow that change access to the M60 tunnel is a key element of the form and sound of the *7/11/M60/7* recordings. Comments from a number of writers (Shoard 2002) (Sola-Morales 1995) (Debord 2006) (Wood 2007) start to give us an idea of both the atmosphere and imaginative possibilities of these sites and how that sense of freedom, danger and departure from norms offers unique possibilities for creative work. It can be suggested that there is a relationship between the interstitial space and what can be imagined there and how free improvisers articulate elements of their knowledge of what musical and social space is created in the performance of free improvisation.

6. Interstice improvisation as recorded object.

Having identified Pomona and Junction 7, from April 2020 onwards I began to make repeated itinerative walks of the two locations. The idea of the itinerative appears in the work of Tim Ingold (Ingold, 2009 & 2013) who suggests that; "to improvise is to follow the ways of the world as they open up" (Ingold, 2009, p97) and that this process of following becomes a "matter not of *iteration* but one of *itineration*" (original italics) (Ingold, 2009, p97). This resonated with me as the implication of itineration implies repeated visits to an already known circuit which is precisely the methodological approach taken in my repeated visits to Pomona Island and Junction 7. These routes exploring access points to the sites were one of the fixed elements that the improvisation process was embedded in. However, the contingencies arising in the changing access gave rise to a clear sense that the "form giving" (Ingold, 2009, p97) nature of the "following" process was playing out in a special way in the recordings. The improvised decisions taken in each itineration were giving rise to specific breaks, continuities and incidents in the recorded material which could be used as the "form giving" elements in the final edits of both sets of pieces. It became clear that several new developments in my work were taking place.

The first development was in thinking about how an improviser interacts with their surroundings in the wider terms of trying to improvise on site (, 2017). I had started to consider how this could work previously when I reflected on how the improvisations I had done in Saarbrucken and Beppu had worked. In Saarbrucken the shift between a foreground of very loud feedback in a room alternated with background sounds from outside indicated how an improviser could manipulate the perception of space to create radical shifts in foreground and background. The possibilities I needed to explore to achieve this were simple; by allowing decisions like stopping playing, leaving pauses and opening windows to become valid ones within the improvisation it was suddenly possible to make a performance that included both dramatic interventions from the performer alongside moments where both performer and audience were engaged in listening to the wider field of sound.

In Beppu working with Andreae and Willberg, the improvised approach was much more engaged with this idea of collective listening to a sound environment, both from musicians and audience. Musical elements added to the soundscape by the trio emerge from a position of embedded listening and responding to the space. This idea of improvising with the totality of a site is touched on by Japanese improviser Toshimaru Nakamura, who suggests that an improvisation does not involve just the musicians present but that it involves a much more complex field of interactions; "I play with the space including the musician… I play with all the elements around you, around us" (Gottschalk, 2018, p208). A performance situation for improvisers always contains many unknowns and (as Nakamura acknowledges) a large part of this can be the player's mediation of idiosyncrasies in the performance space and the sounds from beyond the space itself. Looking more closely at what Nakamura might be referring to here, we can consider this description of the conditions at Off Site Gallery space which was an important space for the development of 'quiet' improvised music in Tokyo in the 1990s and early 2000s,

> "Nakamura has commented on his appreciation of the sounds in the surrounding
> alleys, which filtered in through the often-open door. Live performances in the tiny
> street-level room became a mix of performed and environmental noises, of
> which Nakamura cites particularly localized sounds such as "the whistle of
> the tofu vendor and the wooden clappers of people calling 'beware of fire' as
> they walk through the neighborhood" (Novak, 2010)

This description is of a very culturally specific location, but from it we start to get a sense of what Nakamura may mean by some of the "elements around you". We also get a clear sense that this is improvisation taking place within the wider sound of the place, encompassing the street outside and elements entering from the wider neighbourhood. From this we can start to consider how improvisation within a place works as an embedding process, with the performer aware of their own sonic presence within a wider field of sounds. My initial thinking about how improvisers relate to the space they operate in was to contemplate an expanded field of listening and interaction as I have described experiencing in Saarbrucken and Beppu. This thinking places site as a central point of reference, as Nakamura does here and I attempt to do in the pieces made in this

research. In the individual sections below 'Pomona Itinerations' and '7/M60/11/7' I discuss this phenomena in more detail with regard to each location.

Further, drawing on Vijay Iyer's conception that, "music is born of our actions" (Iyer, 2016, p87) I began to see the improviser in the context of these works as a figure whose actions and itinerative movement through the interstice sites was embedded into the recordings by their movements and sound making. This gives rise to a form of music which results from specific actions on the site which the listener experiences as a recorded object. While Iyer is referring to the act of using an instrument to make music, this idea that music making as we hear it on *Pomona Itinerations* and *7/M60/11/7* can involve "action" which is performed with voice and sampler but also that the action of the body moving through the environment is part of what is creating this music by both changing location and choosing the focus of the microphone. Max Eastley gets to the core of the idea moment when he says, "I've always been interested in sound, painting, drawing and music… but the third thing I've been involved with is movement, which is a kind of ghost, which unites them" (Gibbs, 2007, p47). From my movements on site, a performed recorded object starts to emerge which leaves a ghostly trace of my actions. As I repeated this process I realised that the improvised performance walks I undertook were making recordings which reflected the complexity of the location and my own interaction with it as a performer. Some of this complexity can be heard in the different recordings at Pomona generating very different forms of recorded object depending on the changing nature of access at the site. The interaction with the different people active at Pomona captured in the recordings also reflects this complexity of place; builders working there, people living in the existing flats and casual indeterminate visitors drinking in the day.

This break in my practice between the recorded work being presented as the piece itself to, rather than as a document to listen back to, was a new development for me in terms of how I understood the relationship between improvisation and the recording. Previously I would have considered a performance to have been the main element of a work with the recording as a document of that work. Now I was entering a new area where the performance and the contingencies encountered within itinerative journeys through interstice sites created a recording which was the work itself. This also relied on using a radically different palette (voice and/or 6 samples which could be pitch shifted were the only material) to my usual approach of guitar/preparation/effects.

This new process of performing with the end of making a recorded object brought out a whole new set of considerations as an improviser. Improvising in the wider sense of making decisions in real time (for example: about when to add or subtract sampler playback in response to other sounds on site, the microphone placement; when to add my voice to explain or narrate or the route to be taken) was a hugely expanded approach compared to how I had previously conceived of improvising. The shifts between background, foreground and the addition of shifting layers of sound created an interstical recorded object. That is an in-between sonic space where we can trace four elements which, when juxtaposed create "in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (Foucault 1984, p6). These elements are;

a). The interaction of the environmental sound of the place captured through my subjective microphone placement
b). Live sample playback which diffuses and blends with the sound of the site itself
c). My use of voice as a descriptive and anecdotally narrative element
d). The presence of bodies (both mine and other) in the environment as sound moving through the site

These elements combine together in the form of the recorded interstitial object as can be heard in *Pomona Itinerations* and *7/M60/11/7*. We see how considering the idea of the itinerative as a route following method gives rise to interesting complexities in the recordings as these routes are disrupted. This disruption and shifting is then reflected in the form we hear in the recordings form different days at each site in the final pieces. The consideration of the embedded improviser on site and the improvisers responsiveness to site (Hayes, 2017) start to bring into view new applications of the improvisers knowledge. These include in this case the contingency of a body moving through space, my own speaking voice adding descriptive and personal inner narrative as I moved through the site, the decision making around adding and subtracting sampled sound in

real time and when to manipulate the pitch of this material and real time decisions about the orientation and focus of the microphone making the recording itself. I would like to suggest that the complexity of real time decision making required in making the pieces draws on the existing knowledge of the improviser in making split second musical and practical decisions within a real time performance process. All these parallel activities contributed to a new mode of multi-layered recorded performance which draws on the nature of the site and the improvisers previous knowledge. Here we can again follow Brighenti when he says, "the interstice is not simply a physical space but a phenomena 'on the ground'" (Brighenti, 2013, xvii). In our case, a recorded interstitial phenomena which is rooted in an experience of the site itself, but one which through the process of juxtaposing the elements above creates a complex, imaginary place out of a composite of materials.

7. Pomona Itinerations

i. Historical overview
Pomona lies in the borough of Trafford, east of the former Salford Docks redeveloped as Media City and west of Manchester City centre. The Ship Canal marks the boundary with Salford. Originally part of the Duke of Bridgewater's estate, the Bridgewater Canal that forms the southern edge of the island was built in the 1760s. Pleasure gardens and a concert hall were built on the site in the Victorian era. The docks were built as part of the Manchester Ship Canal development in 1894 and were in use until the 1970s after which the site began to naturally re-wild. Discussion over its renewal has grown in the past 20 years with various models for an Eden Project type model and a nature reserve proposed (Cocchiarella et al, 2016). The plan finally approved was one for housing and this development has now begun on the eastern and western sides of the island. This onset of character changing development was one of the pertinent reasons for starting to work on the research in this period while it still exhibited multiple characteristics and uses.

Figure 8. The remaining deep water dock at Pomona

Figure 9. View across Pomona to building work on the Salford side of the Ship Canal

ii. Use of the site
As noted before, current use is extremely varied: dog walking, rough camping, drone flying, mountain biking, running/fitness, art projects, drug taking and fly tipping all take place there. The land is owned by Peel Holdings who own much of the waterside in Greater Manchester. Over the thirty years of it laying empty users have established many paths and access points. Regular users have a strong sense of the right to access and use the land as if it were a public space. This has led to attempts by the owners to enclose the site being actively resisted by users.

iii. Overview of sounds present on the site
It's an open area one mile by one quarter of a mile so sound is travelling from distance.
There are various notable sounds often present which are audible in the recordings:
- wind coming down the ship canal activating plants, trees, bushes, rubbish
- trams pass by in both directions
- mechanical/crushing sound from scrap metal merchants
- building/hammering on metal sounds from around half a mile away, from Trafford, Manchester and Salford building sites
- traffic sounds
- bird sounds
- other users: bikes, talking, phones, music, motion running/footsteps

iv. Improvising in fixed locations

The initial approach was to find a static location and test different improvising strategies for recording there. This involved improvising with guitar, sampler, objects and found materials. On listening back to the results, this approach was abandoned as I felt the resulting recordings were not showing sufficient engagement or responsiveness with sounds of the place. It felt like I was simply playing there in parallel to it rather than being actively engaged with the surrounding sounds. From this it became clear that I needed to explore movement rather than remaining in a static position (see Appendix Two for example of these recordings).

v. Itineration

Drawing on Ingold's conception of an itinerative, line following approach (Ingold, 2009) the research at Pomona began to explore repeated visits to a circuit of known access points to Pomona, recording real time improvised responses on foot, while using playback of samples and voice to narrate what was happening. From the recordings I would lightly edit the itineration, keeping the events and journey linear while removing excess wind/handling noise and longer periods of walking. This was the same over overall process used to make all three *Pomona Itinerations.*

Figure 10. Map of overview of access points to Pomona Island July 2020

In the first Itineration 'July 2020' we hear an initial encounter in the piece (0:00-0:15) where I am talking to one of the builders about alternative ways on to Pomona, as a gated building site is now blocking a former access point (marked in red as 'road at Pomona tram stop' in Figures 10 and 11). This initial point of failure to access the site gave me a clear transition point as this first part is recorded on my phone while the later sections are recorded on my Zoom. You can hear in the piece this transition as a slow crossfading till 0:20 when we reach the access point at Woden's Bridge. (Woden's Bridge is visible on the map, towards the top right hand corner, to right of the

points marked 'dockside' and 'canal side via carpark'). I continue exploring at Woden's Bridge and by 3:00 it becomes clear this access point is now also gated as part of a development. This failure provides another part of the musical form as we crossfade to the walk back down the Bridgewater Canal to another access point at steps up from the canal (marked as 'canal steps') but as we hear within the fabric of the piece from 6:00 onwards, this too has been fenced over.

Finally, by 13:55 we hear how access to Pomona is finally possible through a remaining gap in the fence near Cornbrook tram stop (marked in green). The final part of the piece (18:30 onwards) records an attempt to exit via the inside of the flat complex found near Woden's Bridge but again this ends in failure and a resident of the flats had to assist me in leaving the complex (20:00). I realised from the experience of this first itineration that using this same circuit of previously known but now closed or contested access points would provide a useful formal structure in embedding the issues around access and user agency as formal points of change in the pieces. The way that information about access was shared between different users and how this is present in the pieces is another thread which weaves through affecting the form of the pieces as the conversations impacted the course of my itinerations through the site. The example at the very start of the 'Pomona Itineration July 2020' (0:00-0:15) is relevant, as is the conversation with another user about an access/exit point in 'Pomona Itineration January 2021' (14:30-14:50) which gives rise to being able to explore an area I'd considered inaccessible. This sharing of information and active collaboration around the entry and exit points highlights the shared agency that very different users of Pomona Island build together to maintain access to the place.

What occurred at the access points on the next two visits which generated the pieces 'Pomona Itineration January 2021' and 'Pomona Itineration April 2021' became really interesting as it takes us straight back to Brighenti's conception of the interstice as a "phenomena on the 'ground' (Brighenti 2016). When returning to make the same itinerative circuit to Pomona in both January and April, I discovered that other visitors had used power and hand tools to remove fencing in two places which meant you could now travel one end of the island to the other without
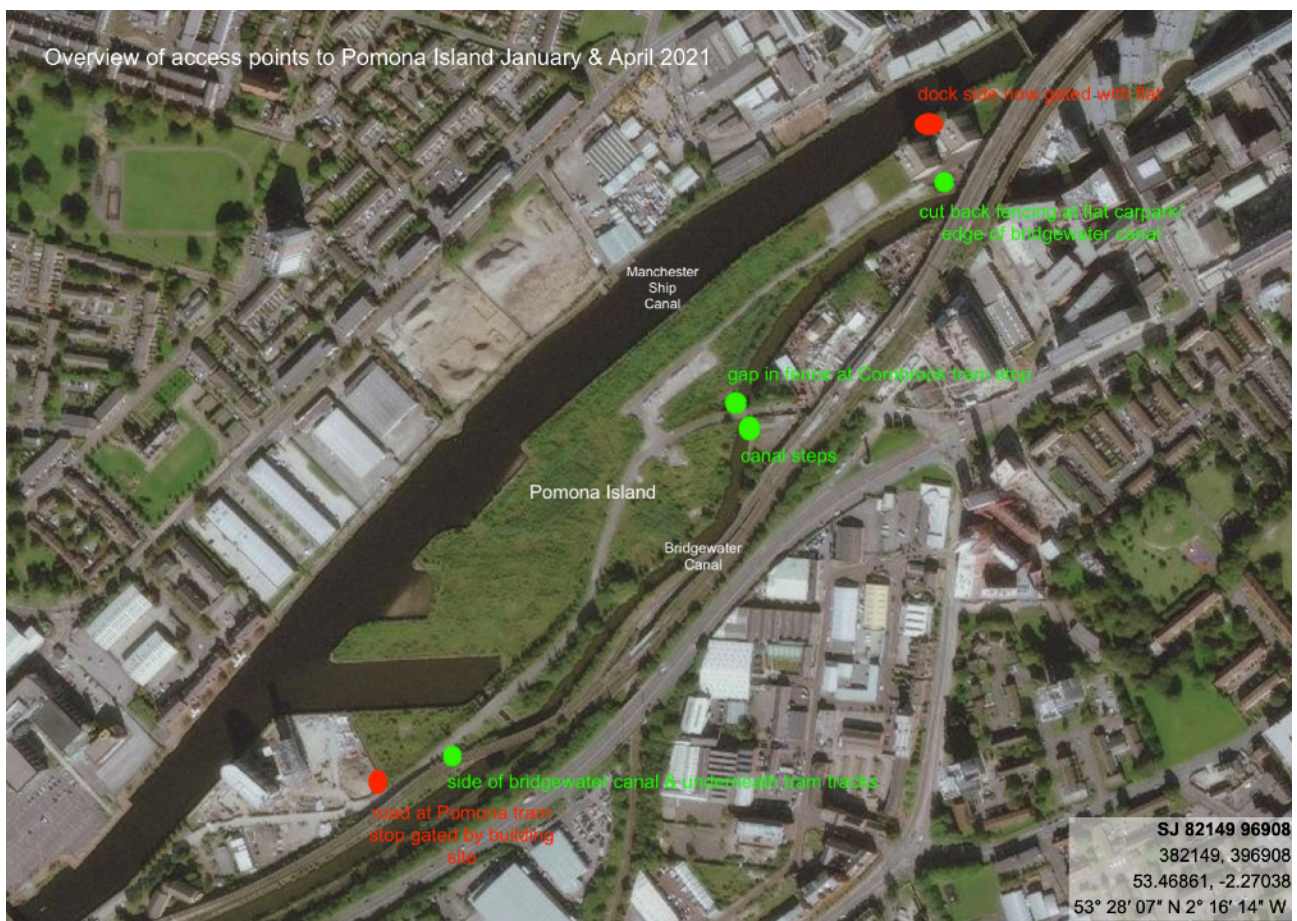

Figure 11. Map of overview of access points to Pomona Island January-April 2021

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difficulty. As you can see in Figure 10, which illustrates the access points to Pomona in the summer of 2020, there is a single point of access. Compare this to Figure 11, from spring 2021, which now shows four open access points. Pomona exists as an unstable phenomena continually being reshaped on the ground by the different parties interested in it. This also takes us back to Foucault's conception of the heterotopia as a place subject to "a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable" (Foucault, 1984, p7). The site being physically closed off with fencing is taken as a challenge to the agency of users, who contest the presence of the fencing by reopening the known access points again.

In the pieces this act of agency with unknown users reinstating the old access points dictates a complete change in the form. In 'Pomona Itineration July 2020' the need to crossfade and heavily edit recordings together as a result of the broken and piecemeal access to the site meant that this Itineration is clearly stitched together, making a composite piece from distinguishable elements. In the January and April Itinerations, given that the old access points are now accessible, we hear longer flowing explorations of Pomona which unfold much more slowly. The listener is given the opportunity to really follow the itineration through the site and the embedded improvisation that is part of it.

vi. Playback of samples

At the start of the research I was already using samplers and small electronic sound generators to enable extremely mobile sound production. As a result of this, I already had a small Bastl sampler in use as part of the initial fixed location improvising stage. A big development in the use of this new instrument came in the making of the piece *Murky Sovereignty* (Taku Roku, 2020) commissioned by Cafe Oto's Taku Roku label during March-June 2020 (please see Appendix One for links to this work). In making this piece I worked with colleague Otto Willberg exchanging recordings of two similar reverberant places in Manchester and London, which were taken from interstical spaces associated with large roads. I worked in the tunnel under the eleven lanes of the M60 in which *7/M60/11/7* was made, and Otto's recordings came from under the dual carriageways leading into the Thamesmead Estate in South East London. We then swapped recordings, each treating the other's as new source material, playing them back, manipulating them and recording them again in the parallel site. So, I played the Thamesmead recordings at Manchester, activating that space and Otto recorded at the Thamesmead location with the Manchester recording playing back within it. Each of the recordings then went on to become one final track in the release.

Here, the idea of using the sampler as the simplest means to play and manipulate sound while staying mobile, and the idea of recording playback in an acoustic environment were both developed. Playing back samples which could be pitch-shifted while recording the site opened up possibilities for me to explore blending foreground and background sound together with my own voice in performance in real time. This combination of environmental sound, added sound and voice and how they can all shift between the background and foreground gives a sense of ambiguity about what we are hearing and how it is presented. This process was important in how both *Pomona Itinerations* and *7/M60/11/7* were made. Examples, of this kind of process can be found in the work of Graham Lambkin (2018 & 2018). Lambkin creates pieces by playing back pitch-shifted recordings of existing material within domestic environments and re-recording them. Small bodily movements and incidental sounds in the domestic space then create dramatic shifts between foreground and background. This approach to creating different densities of foreground and background material through the manipulation of sampled material played back into the environment was one which I developed my own application of in *Murky Sovereignty* and developed further in *Pomona Itinerations.* In 'Pomona Itineration January 2021' for example, we see a pitch-shifted sample appear around 2:25, alongside huge clanking sounds from the scrapyard and the sound of my narrations. Over a period of several minutes my movement into the middle of the docks has taken me away from the scrapyard and a gradual increase in volume allows a transformation and shift as the background onsite sounds (birdsong, scrapyard, my voice and footsteps) slowly recede; by 4:40 the sample has pushed to the foreground of the piece but is embedded in the wider field of sound.

vii. The Narrator

An element of what is audible on the recordings is my own voice narrating what I see and do. In the narration I also make connections between things I'm seeing, what I'm thinking and changes to the site. This stream of thought aspect of the pieces began as a means to easily document a location and what is audible on the recording as an aid when listening back. I realised that this was adding another layer of information to the recording which was both useful and engaging for the listener. One can discover things through the narration that would be impossible to know without it. For example, between 11:30-12:10 on 'Pomona Itineration January 2021' I describe the system of tall pipes which release dangerous gas build ups where the docks have been infilled with waste. This is over the general background sound and a warbling drone I am adding with the sampler. Without the explicit narration a listener would never gain this detailed insight into the layered industrial nature of Pomona. This idea is of using self reflexive narrative to add extra meaning to field recording processes is explored by Anderson and Rennie (2016).

Using narrative added in the studio is an established method within electroacoustic music (Ferrrai, 2012) (Westerkamp, 1989, 1996). In these pieces the use of description of place and autobiographic narration about a relationship to the place helps illustrate what is happening in the audio in a similar way to *Pomona Itinerations*. The main difference in the *Pomona Itinerations* narration is that it is captured within the recording itself as part of the process of improvising. With this in mind it is worth examining the presence of stream of thought narratives connected to place and memory within the free improvised tradition. In the video *Playing for friends on 5th Street* (Bailey, 2001) we see Derek Bailey improvising in the Downtown Music Gallery shop in NYC. At the same time as he plays, he jokes with the audience and free associates stories about record shops he's familiar with. Drawing on personal experience, I've seen improvisers Lol Coxhill, John Tchicai and Maggie Nicols use narrative based on place and memory during improvised performance[1]. I'd like to suggest this practice of using narrative and association with place is a one that is present but not often recognised in free improvised practise upon which *Pomona Itinerations* draws.

viii. The Improviser at Pomona

On my first visits to Pomona I was using similar materials to perform as I would at a venue; guitar and objects. As I reflected on these initial recordings I could hear this was producing performances that were in parallel to sounds on site rather than being embedded in the aural environment (see Appendix Two). Partly I felt this was due to me playing a familiar instrument which was shaping my own expectations of what I should be doing there. The guitar, a machine that usually feels like an extension of me was starting to feel like a barrier to improvising with the wider site. It felt like I was relying too much prior knowledge of what I could do with the instrument. Another part of this sense of being in parallel to the location rather than being embedded in the site was that I was immobile. Usually I was sitting still with the instrument and a recorder on a tripod facing me, while all around I could hear sound moving. I realised I needed to be part of this movement of sound that I could hear around me. I started to make recordings improvising while walking. Thus, moving in the moment while performing emerged as a vital step in developing the performance approach. I decided to focus on using the sampler with a speaker placed in a rucksack to allow me to move freely while using my hand-held Zoom H4 with a shock-mount to record. Please see the video in Appendix 3 for a clear idea of how the process of using the sampler, recording and moving through the site worked.

After carrying out several itinerative recordings with the sampler as the main instrument I realised that that long droning samples were much more useful as musical elements than short loops with varied musical content. The short loops sounded overly static and did not allow the longer evolution of site sound with added samples I was seeking in the pieces. The longer drone type of sample was easier to blend into the sound environment. The longer droning samples could be pitch-shifted up and down to allow me to make careful decisions in real time about how they could be embedded within the sound of the site. The sources for the samples are my own guitar and Korg Monotron playing and accordion played by Adam Fairhall. I found that drone samples with some slight timbral change and shift in harmonic content over the course of the sample were

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[1] Lol Coxhill at The Britons Protection, Manchester 2001 (?), John Tchicai/Tony Marsh at The Carlton Club, Manchester 2010 & Maggie Nicols at Cafe Oto, London, August 2021.

most useful as these subtle shifts echo the slight variations in sound on site. Drones with more static timbre and harmonic content didn't create the same sense of ongoing movement and created a similar sense of being stationary to the shorter loops. With samples which had a subtle change in qualities over time, especially when pitch-shifted downwards, a sense of unfolding and forward movement was offered which suited the itinerative approach.

This process of being on the move while improvising provided a breakthrough in my practice, as the frame of what I was having to consider as part of the improvisation was expanded. Alongside the careful listening and moment-to-moment decision making with sound I would normally focus on while improvising in a venue, I became aware of a wider range of decisions needing to be made that were part of the process of improvising at the site. While I followed the same route to see what access points were available on each itineration, the first improvised decision was often in response to contingencies arising around access. For example, I might be forced to consider what to do if any entry point had become blocked. Then, once following a route across the Island, I would often feel drawn to stop and comment on a new detail and to change the microphone focus to allow this detail in the soundscape to emerge clearly on the recording.

Alongside this, I would be continually listening to what I was adding from the sampler, making improvised decisions in the moment to adjust the volume or pitch of a sample depending on what other sounds were present. For example, at the start of 'Pomona Itineration January 2021' we hear a sample bubbling into life and being pitch-shifted as I enter the site. Alongside this there is the sound of cars being crushed from the scrapyard and my voice narrating. Following this I make the decision to reduce the volume on the sampler to allow the mechanical sounds and my voice to stay at the front of the recording (0:00-0:15). Between 0:30-1:40 I decided to allow a different droning sample to emerge but pull this back to allow the mechanical sounds to emerge before cutting it altogether. I recall being unhappy with using this fixed oscillating sample against such a varied and complex sound as the cars being crushed. From 2:30 we hear the glitch and initial shift of a new sample emerging. This becomes the main embedded feature in the first 10 minutes of the piece. I make the decision to varying the volume level of the sample over this period as there is a lot of dense background sound from the scrapyard, building work, trams and other bodies on the canal path which I want to give space to in the recording. Here, I wanted to explore the difference between the sampled sound in the foreground fading away to reveal a really dense background field of sound with many different activities going on within it. Within this, an incident of note occurs when I move the orientation of the microphone about 45 degrees at 3:30 to capture the sound of a loose bell chiming rhythmically on a bike rode on the canal path.

The sample which entered at 2:30 has faded out by around 10:25 and we hear the wider field emerge again with building, tram and traffic sounds. At this point in the itineration I can make the decision to either leave Pomona by the entrance that is always open near Cornbrook tram stop or continue on to the western side to see if any access points are open there. I make the decision to keep going west and my improvised response is to cue up a new sample to embed within this section. We can hear at 10:59-11:05 this sample enter and then me very quickly making a decision to pitch-shift it down so it is embedded more comfortably within the wider sound picture. At a higher pitch the tone stands out more as being added to the sonic environment whereas the lower tone is able to emerge from similar frequencies as the tram rumbles and distant traffic. At 13:50 I fade the sample out and we hear a silence as I try to evaluate whether to speak with a man sat on a barrier who I think has waved at me. He is drinking a can of strong lager in the middle of the day so I am unsure whether to approach him or not. In the end I decide to ask him how he's got on to the site and receive useful information about a new access point (14:30-.14:45). This is followed by a section (14:50-15:40) where I concentrate on climbing down a steep bank emerging into the area under the tram bridge just as a tram passes. As the tram sounds fade away I recall considering bringing a sample in at this point but then become aware of a huge leak under the tram bridge (15:25) which makes an interesting running water sound so make the decision to hold back with bringing in the sample until I have moved past the leak. The sample appears at 15:49 and then is rapidly pitch-shifted down at 15:52, the moment decision to lower the pitch helps the sample embedded within the site, with my voice narrating over it. The final decision we hear in the piece is from around 18:00 to the end where the continual passing rumble of a long goods train is used as a masking device to slowly allow the fade out of the sample, leaving only the disappearing sound of the train and the sound of my body walking by the very end of the piece.

As we can see here, in making the piece I can recognise my decision making process as a free improviser in play, helping shape the outcome of the sounds heard in the recording. Similar decisions as might be found in an improvised performance in a venue occur throughout; when to play and when not to play, how loudly to play and how to respond to other sounds or bodies inside of and entering the performance space. The key difference is the additional contingent elements that may require a decision within the recording process which then ends up folding into the piece; the route, negotiating the terrain, carrying the equipment, blocked access, encounters with other users and the weather conditions. Due to the improvising process at Pomona taking place outdoors in a publicly accessible interstice, the number of decisions I needed to make varied noticeably from moment to moment. Often, I did not make any clear decisions for minutes at a time, with me simply letting what was already happening unfold while I listened and observed. However, this could then escalate very quickly into needing to improvise on a number of fronts; for example, I might need to climb a steep bank, alongside continuing to decide on the focus of the microphone, while playing back samples and consider the next part of the route. The nature of improvising in the site also brought about a different set of aesthetic considerations. Rather than relying on the faster paced moment-by-moment way of playing I was familiar with from my own experience of free improvising in the UK I began to make slower decisions and explore a more granular improvised aesthetic. This in turn helped to inform my choice of the long tonal timbre shifting samples which suited this new aesthetic consideration.

The three pieces that make up *Pomona Itinerations* use the site itself as a fixed element to improvise in. Pomona is in flux, with redevelopment taking place on its edges already so the repeated visits and different recordings embed the changes to access in the form of the piece itself. The itinerative process of exploring the site using the same set of fixed access points provides a variable but formal structure for improvisation.

The combination of these make an interstitial work, an impossible recorded place that contains a personal documentation of interaction with the site while proposing a new version of the place through sound. Attention is drawn to how this process is working in the pieces themselves by making audible the movement of different elements between the foreground and background; the actual ambient sound of the place, the sounds I add through sample playback live and my voice are in continual flux and tension. As artistic research the pieces represent a new method of understanding my knowledge as an improviser by working in completely new environments and consciously pushing the boundary of my practice to make a new type of work within my oeuvre.

Pomona is now being redeveloped from its unenclosed state where users had a high degree of autonomy of use to a new area of housing which will be less welcoming to a complex number of uses. The way in which this access and use is still being contested and how this is folded into the recordings on *Pomona Itinerations* is one of the successes of the research.

8. 7/M60/11/7

i. Historical overview

The site consists of two tunnels underneath eleven lanes of Junction 7 of the M60 motorway. It follows the path of Kickety Brook, a stream feeding the River Mersey. One of the tunnels has a concrete trough in place to funnel the brook through it. The initial function of the tunnel was as part of the coast to coast N62 cycle route. This observation is based on conversation with one of the performers, Richard Harrison who remembered cycling through the tunnel twenty years previously. The tunnel is shown in Figure 12 as the dotted red line marked 'Stretford 4' running
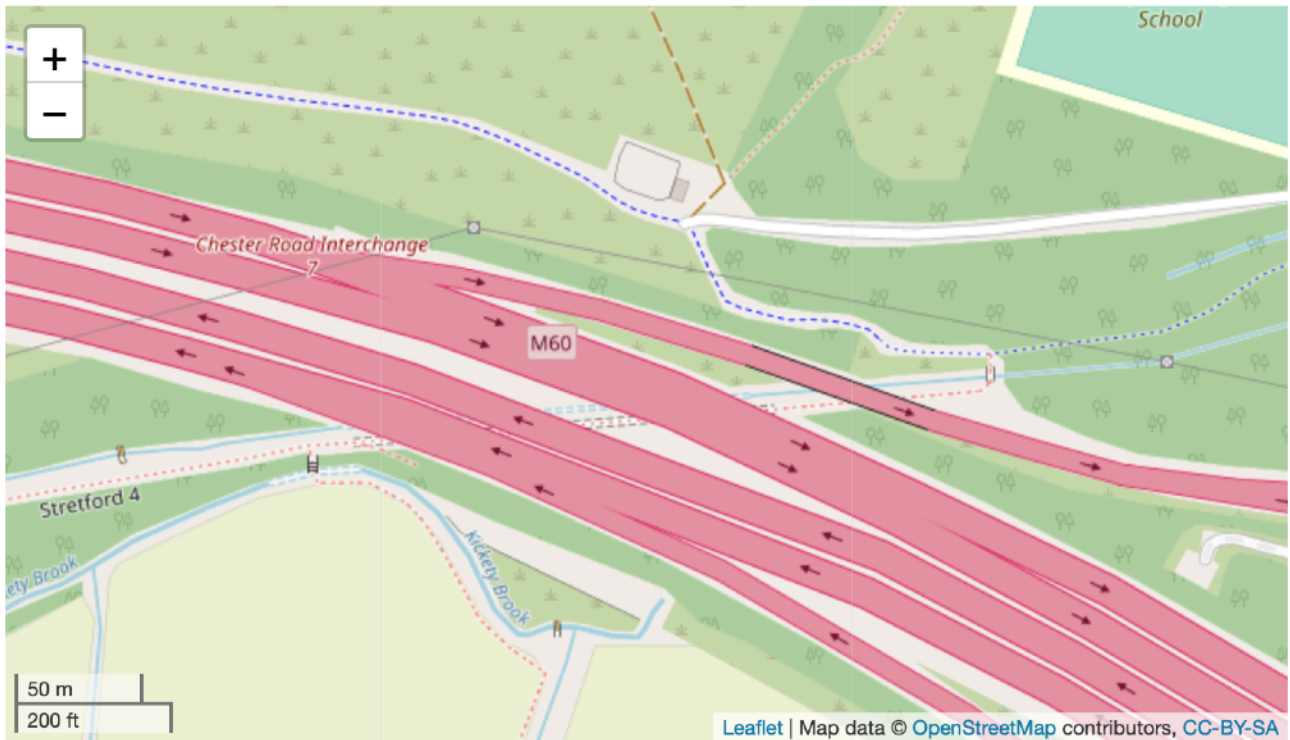

Figure 12. Map of Junction 7 of M60

under the M60 running parallel to the trough part of Kickety Brook. Unfortunately, due to the general flow of water draining through Kickety Brook the tunnels are too waterlogged to be passable and have started to clog up with deep thick mud. A new bridge has been added further along the N62 to carry bikes and pedestrians over the M60.

ii. Use of the site

From regular visits, the main other users appear to be graffiti artists who come regularly to use the hidden tunnel walls for painting. There is some discarded drug paraphernalia; laughing gas canisters and rizlas, as well as, a long abandoned tent in one of the tunnels. Cycle and horse tracks indicate that people must pass through on occasion but generally when I visited the there were no other users present. There is dumping of waste from the motorway above. The site is one in which there is a public right of way and it is mapped as part of a national cycling route. However, it has fallen into disuse and while it is still in theory a public space only marginal users currently appear to visit it.

iii. Overview of sounds present on the site

The dominant sound is the motorway. There is a short section of tunnel (see Figure 13) then a break then a a very long dank, dark tunnel (see Figure 14) which can be difficult to access due to it being waterlogged.
There are various notable sounds often present which are audible in the recordings:

- dense sounds of traffic resembling white noise[2]
- the reverberance of the tunnel[3]
- birdsong[4]
- mud and water sounds activated by footsteps

Figure 13. Approach to tunnel under Junction 7

Figure 14. Deep inside the tunnel under Junction 7

iv. Use of voice

Initially this arose through carrying out DIY impulse response tests by shouting into the tunnel while recording to get an idea of the reverb length. This was eventually done a little more methodically using a balloon test. As part of the process of narrating what I was doing for documentation purposes, it became apparent that some of what was making it on to the recording here was actually thinking about the psychology of being alone in the site. This particular interstice is really quite a lonely one and the sense of the "uncertain" (Sola-Morales, 1995, p120) was really tangible there. This borders on a feeling of concern for ones safety due to the isolation.

Continuing to explore solo voice it became clear that voice was an ideal thing to use in the space because the complexity of access and keeping ones balance with mud and water underfoot meant that handling other equipment/instruments was risky. An experience taking part in Phil Minton's Feral Choir in February 2020 also provided me with an example of how to consider working with multiple voices in the space. When it became apparent from ongoing visits that a

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[2] There is a specific resonance from traffic. This changes a little on how wet or dry the road surface is. There are also huge clanks and crashing sounds where larger vehicles are catching potholes or joins in the carriageway.

[3] This is about 10 seconds as measured with a balloon burst test. Some of the volume of the reverberation is filtered by the presence of the white noise from traffic. Everyone I've worked there with has commented on the need to work harder than expected with their voice in order to hear the reverb of the space. There is a definite sense of a sound travelling away from you down the length of the tunnel after it has been made.

[4] This enters from either end of the tunnel as both ends are located deep in the edgeland and greenbelt surrounding the River Mersey so are heavily wooded.

single voice was going to struggle to activate the space, I started recording visits with groups of two, three and then four people improvising, with the group attempting to walk from one end of the tunnel to the other improvising with voices on the move. The psychology of being there in larger groups gave everyone a feeling of safety and confidence as well as giving rise to some new and unusual elements to the performance. Various colleagues commented on the strangeness of the tunnel situation and use of collective voices creating a space that gave rise to them doing and trying things they would not have done in other performance circumstances. Again, we find ourselves back with Debord considering the "attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there" (Debord, 2006, p62). In this case the terrain is a bleak interstice that both hints at cave like primal qualities and has a real sense of isolation. Approached in a group this can act a heterotopia where new and different behaviours can be safely explored. One can hear such aspects in the music in the vocal sounds between 4:50-7:00 made by Richard and myself in track 1 of *7/M60/11/7.* These are not sounds either of us would have made as part of performance in another location. Firstly, neither of us would normally be comfortable performing a vocal duo in a traditional venue, and secondly, this links back to the idea in Wood of the private action being carried out in public. The gargling and demented child type sounds we make in this section feel like they are crossing a boundary between what a performer might do and the kind of open play that children engage in. Richard Harrison himself commented on the "primal" nature of performing in the tunnels and suggested he felt a connection to our "troglodyte past" when performing there (personal correspondence with author July 2021). This hints at the site giving us access to making sounds within the vocal improvisation that maybe drawn from unconscious "primal" places we would not usually access in a venue-based performance.

v. Use of body/sound of body
Use of bodily sound became an interesting adjunct especially considering the idea that "music is born of our actions" (Iyer, 2016, p87). On all the *7/M60/111/7* recordings there is the strong sound and presence of the mixture of water and mud as people move down the tunnel. It provides a rhythmic textural presence but also directly maps the "actions" of the singing bodies itinerating through the site. See track 1 6:25-8:18 as an example of the way water and mud movement and sound from footsteps is embedded in the recording.

vi. How access shaped the pieces
Similar to the *Pomona Itinerations,* in the *7/M60/11/7* pieces, variable access to the tunnel offered a sense of form to the pieces. The nature of the tunnel offered an obvious itinerative route; passing from one end (embedded in the urban edgelands of Manchester) to emerge out the far end (spying the first few fields of Cheshire). However, the nature of the site, with Kickety Brook running through it and layers of mud and water, meant that even during the driest periods it was nearly impossible to pass from one end of the tunnels to another. On one early unrecorded attempt I ended up falling into the stream. Generally, the pieces are shaped by the group being able to move so far down the tunnel before reaching a collective impasse of mud and water which no one is prepared to go beyond, staying to sing at that deep point of the tunnel, and then returning. This form is the one heard in all the pieces. Another extreme example of the nature of the place disrupting the performers and this folding into the recorded object is heard between 5:00 and 5:20 in the second piece where one of the performers; Alex Pierce completely loses his boot in mud and has to be supported to regain his footing and footwear.

vii. The Improviser at Junction 7
After my first visit to Junction 7 it was obvious that I could not approach improvising in this site as I might at a regular venue due to the thick wet muddy ground and dominant sound of traffic. Initially, as part of the process of making *Murky Sovereignty*, I started exploring what it was like to use samples there, exploring the difference between playback in different areas of the tunnel. This was where I developed the setup of sampler with speaker and hand-held shock-mounted recording device that became standard across the submitted works. Ultimately I felt that the early recordings with sampler were only able to show the difference between the material with the tunnel reverberation and without it, as a result of me moving in and out the tunnel. Due to the traffic noise much of the detail of the samples was missed. This led to the idea of using voice as a way to both activate the space and create greater variety in musical texture.

As outlined above, the idea of using multiple voices in the space immediately made being there much more comfortable for everyone performing. In terms of improvising it also places everyone

in a familiar context as, there is always at least one other body making sound in the tunnel site that one can relate ones own sounds to. While the site maybe extremely unusual, having the interaction in performance with colleagues give some sense of similarity to performing in a regular venue. There was less moment-to-moment decision making about what route to take. The tunnel simply runs east to west and we would always enter from the eastern side at Stretford and attempt to follow the tunnel all the way under the motorway until it reached the western side. Contingent decision making and responses inside the tunnel were usually related to the extremely boggy conditions which would almost always stop progress through the tunnel and render the performers unsteady on their feet. This is clearly a large difference to improvising in a venue situation where performers rarely need to deploy a large part of their concentration to maintain there balance. This disrupted the performers in an unexpected way, meaning they needed to rely more on unconscious musical thinking to continue performing, or alternatively had to stop vocalising altogether with their sound contribution being reduced to bodily movement only.

The four pieces that make up *7/M60/11/7* use the site itself as a fixed environment to improvise within. This is a static location in terms of redevelopment. The main factor is the failure of the previous attempt to positively regenerate the two long tunnels as part of the national cycle network. This failed due to the existing environmental factor of a stream running through the tunnel which deposits mud and standing water, making access to the site difficult at times and to pass completely through the tunnel impossible without getting wet and covered in mud.

It became evident that multiple voices would utilise the reverberant features of the spaces best; both in terms of the volume needed to activate reverb and also because multiple voices allowed us to play with the densities of white noise and attacks in sound from traffic passing overhead. The tunnel reverb was measured with a DIY impulse test at 10 seconds. As noted above, some of this reverb is being mitigated by the presence of white noise. Drawing on various classics of performance/improvisation in spaces with unusual reverbs Oliveros (et al, 2021) and Suzuki/Butcher (2017), I was interested to see what could emerge from this site considering the reverb present but also the psychological factors of the cave like dankness (Gissen, 2009) and the intensity of the motorway noise overhead. One of the richest elements to emerge from this curious mix occurs at 9:00 to the end in the fourth piece where the shifting chordal patterns between all four voices are supported by the reverb of the space and shift between the foreground and background of the motorway noise.

The sound of bodies improvising in negotiation with the physical factors of mud, water and traffic noise is also a significant element that affects how individual performers improvise. Concentrating on your physical movements while singing pushes the performer to be in an unconscious state regarding the material they are producing and on various occasions the group collectively entered what felt like a specific collective 'other' state. I would like to suggest that this relates to the shared utopian place which Parker (Lee, 2010) describes entering as part of practicing freely improvised music. However, this sense of shared other states also evokes Foucault's conception of the heterotopia as ritual space (Foucault, 1984) and Woods (Woods, 2007) idea of shadowed spaces that can be transgressive arenas. There was a strong element of different group members picking up on the kernel of an idea and helping develop it very quickly, both by replicating the idea and also by suggesting variations and avenues leading on from it. The rich chordal patterns mentioned above were one of these moments, which arose from all four performers moving towards the same frequency while exploring a wide range of timbral variation and beating patterns which then evolves over the course of the final four minutes of the piece. Another, similar moment that appeared to reflect an unconscious collective sense of action, was an improvisation where the quartet focused on using branches found in the tunnel to activate water sounds from the trough stream. Very quickly we moved from a focus on sound to begin to use mud scooped up from the bottom of the stream to make primitive splatter paintings on the walls of the tunnel. (see Figures 15 and 16). This collective primitivist painting continued for around twenty minutes before the group came to a halt.

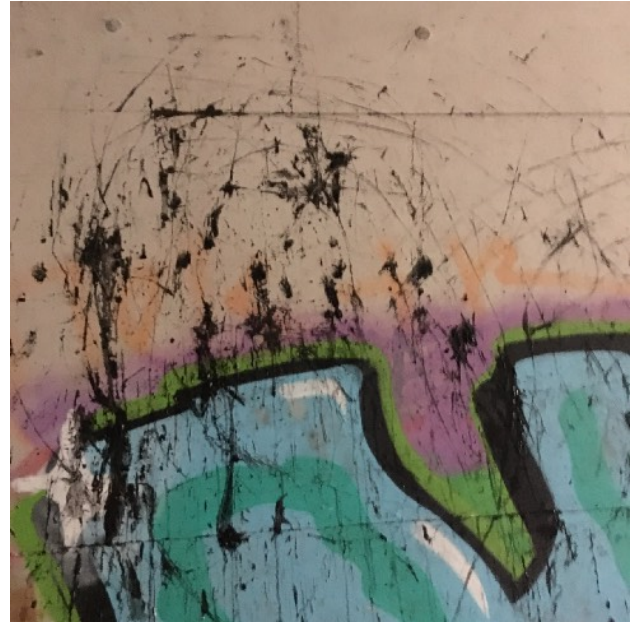**Figure 15.** Painting with branches in the tunnel

Figure 16. Painting on the tunnel wall

These unusual improvising experiences in the tunnel point towards the isolated dank cold muddy cave type environment as providing an intensity of experience and sense of being able to follow each other's performance behaviours in a way that might not be possible in traditional venues or sites with observers. Again this ties back to Wood's idea of the interstice type of site giving us access to behave in way we might only do in private in a nominally public place. David Gissen on discussing subterranean projects in experimental architecture suggests that this type of place "enable us to see that the seemingly undesirable quality of dankness can be filled with pleasure" (Gissen, 2009, p 42). This mix of qualities was experienced and commented on by the other performers. Helen Brealey described the experience as "unsettling but thrilling…you don't know what you're going to find there, it felt there was an element of danger" and added that it "felt like anything was possible performing in the space" (personal correspondence July 2021). Richard Harrison emphasised the "primal" feeling offered by the space when performing and enjoyed the dank, cave nature of the tunnel saying it felt like a link to our "troglodyte past" (personal correspondence July 2021).

9. Conclusion

The research developed in this project presents an innovative model of how improvisation can be used as a compositional device for creating new work in a specifically defined set of urban outdoor environments. Defining this type of place as an interstice, I discuss how it offers a site rich with new creative possibilities for the improviser. Drawing on the imagined possibilities of empty space in Smithson (1996) and Foucault's (1984) idea of the heterotopia we start to see how new conceptions and categories of space can arise from the leftover and the inbetween that might allow many complex uses. In discussing the writing of Sola-Morales Rubio (1995), Debord (2006) and Wood (2007) we see how they draw on their experiences of these types of place to paint a complex picture of how the undeveloped interstice site gives rises to a specific atmosphere that both offers freedom, openness, transgressive possibilities and dangers. These places give many different people free space in our increasingly privatised cities to both do everyday things and activities that fall outside our usual norms and would not be possible in more controlled public space. I suggest there are parallels between this and the conceptual experiences of free improvisers discussing the creative and imaginary zones that are opened up in the process of freely improvised performance.

The research also proposes that the performed recorded works made through the process can themselves function as interstitial recorded objects. They are part improvisation, part soundwalk, part ethnography, and part documentation of changes taking place in the site. Making multiple recording visits to the same site and routes gave rise to an itinerative improvised practise. This gave a deep knowledge of the small changes in each place which drew on Ingold's (2013) view of improvisation as an itinerative process. One is both following a route that is know and at the same moment creating that route in the moment. This process is one which is written into the differing forms created through recording at both sites over a period of time. Further considering the recorded work in relation to Brighenti (2016) and Foucault's (1984) idea of the heterotopia as a continually shifting site, we see how issues around the politics of access and use of the sites are contested both by human and environmental factors over the repeated visits. These changes are again embedded in the recordings, in the sounds and form present in the material and viewed over time, they give us a creative way into hearing the processes at work in each site. This reading points to the unique characteristics that these places offer and how their use is contested in the contemporary cityscape and the unique perspective this work gives in making this visible to us.

The recorded pieces Pomona Itinerations (2021) and 7/M60/7/11 (2021) show the process of performing recordings through acts of improvised itineration at two contrasting interstice sites and demonstrate some of the rich potential this approach offers the improviser in making material for performed outdoor compositions. I suggest that the complexity of decision making that involves route following/finding, narrative additions, musical decision making with sampler addition and subtraction and recording; all in parallel to each other draws on the knowledge of the improviser in being comfortable making multiple complex musical and practical decisions continually in performance in real time.

The two distinct musical outcomes arising from the research indicate this is a useful approach to take in working with this type of site, which could be used as a basis for further research. It would be of interest to consider further research at other sites laying fallow or under going processes of redevelopment where the same itineration improvising practise could be applied. In particular, expanded studies developing this approach by working alongside researchers in urban planning, human geography, architecture, psychology or legal studies would generate insightful and unique research and offer the potential to develop a new multidisciplinary interaction between interstice sites, their use and musical practice.

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Appendix One

https://www.cafeoto.co.uk/shop/otto-willberg-david-birchall-murky-sovereignty/

Appendix Two

Early recording from Pomona.

Made in April 2020 this documents my initial approach improvising in a static location using guitar pickups, metal objects, samples and amplifier.

Appendix Three

Short collaborative film made at Pomona with film maker Huw Wahl which demonstrates the working method with sampler and recording devices I used at Pomona.

https://youtu.be/SU6Yxp3oKws