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ENTOPTIC LANDSCAPE AND IJEREJA: MUSIC AS AN ITERATIVE PROCESS

Abstract: *entoptic landscape* and *ijereja* are both works that can be considered as expanding collections of materials. They explore the spaces between composition, notation, performance and improvisation by considering all of these activities as equally ‘performative’. Each work comprises a set of materials that includes scores, fixed media audio and video, recorded live performances, studio-edited performances, and performance strategies. In the case of each piece, materials created in and by previous performances go on to inform future performances of the music. As such, there can be no ‘definitive’ performance or statement of the works, and nor can they ever be considered finished or bounded. This is how these pieces conceive of music as an iterative process: they are intended as statements of that process.

Nicholas Bourriaud (2010) identifies the creative artist as a ‘semionaut’: one who must navigate between signs and signifiers in order to negotiate, interpret, and create meaning. In the ‘work’ of music, the composer, performer and listener can all be thought of as semionauts; they take part in the same processes to create and re-create the ‘work’. In my own practices I embody and enact all three of these positions, and I seek to blur the boundaries between listening, performing and composing. Contemporary artistic forms in Bourriaud’s terms, then, are ‘journey forms’: they internalise and externalise an experience of movement through the work as a temporal and spatial territory. The music presented here offers an opportunity for the exploration of the journey form as a compositional strategy, a tool for performance and interpretation, and a framework for criticism.

Key words: experimental music, Bourriaud, practice research, iterative processes, musical processes, journey form, semionaut

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Music as an Iterative Process

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A conventional, linear, view of the musical work in Western Art Music considers composing (as the creation of notation and/or sound), performing (as the reproduction of notation, instructions, and/or sound), listening (as the receiving of sound) and studio practices (as the documentation/editing of sound) to be individual events that usually occur in a specific order. However, in my practice as a composer-performer, I experience these processes non-linearly, and often find that the activities and practices of one overlap into those of another. When approached as embodied practices, notating, composing, performing, listening, and editing all encroach upon each other. However, I would posit that my experience is not unique because of my position as a composer-performer, but merely that my practice allows me to observe this overlap. As such, I imagine that the distinctions between composing, performing and listening are not as great as they have been supposed, and this informs the way that I approach these activities in practice and as practices.

As a composer and performer of experimental music, the act and practice of listening is of central importance to my musical activity. Listening is what is most obviously held in common between composers, performers and audiences, and the way that experimental music most clearly offers an equalizing experience to its participants. A conventional model of listening, that can be understood as the model of listening in the ‘sweet spot’ of the studio, can be expressed as a semiotic square showing the relationships between the listener (body) and studio (place) as an experience of the music (Figure 1).

In reality, this situation is never realized outside of the studio. Multiple listening spaces are always possible: the position of the listener in the space is rarely within the ‘sweet spot’ – particularly when live performance is considered – and the position of instruments and loudspeakers in the performance space creates multiple sub-spaces with multiple sweet spots for each instrument; the

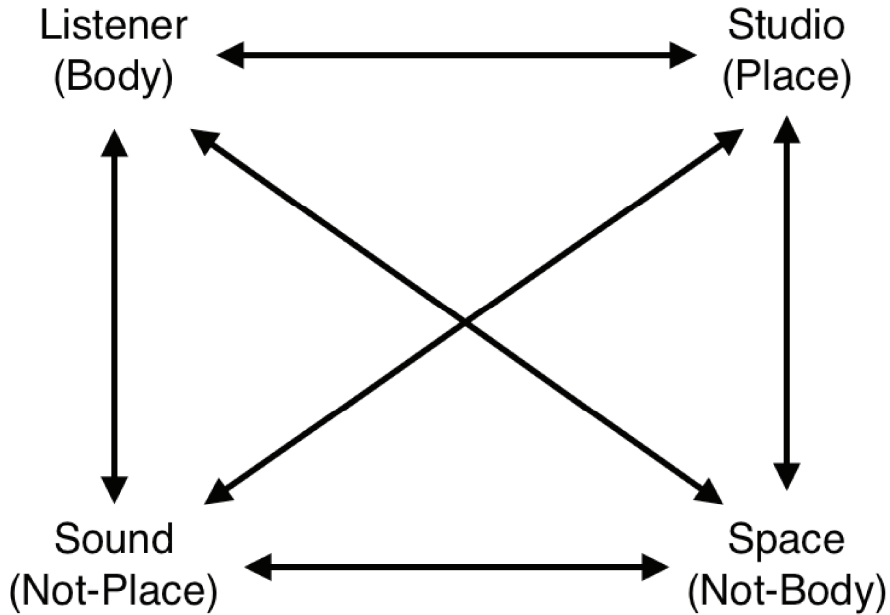


Figure 1: Listening in the studio, represented as a semiotic square

acoustics of the room itself most often offer more than one experience of the sound within it. As such, the ‘music’ is not the static image expressed in the ‘sweet spot’ of the studio, but a dynamic image that is highly dependent on the individual listener. As such, the semiotic square (Figure 1) might be re-imagined to include these multiple spaces as multiple layers, connected at certain nodes by the body of the listener and the ‘bodies’ of the instruments or loudspeakers in the space. Listening, then, is understood as a multi-dimensional and multi-layered experience, offering many points of focus, rather than a two-dimensional construct of the body in space. As such, the musical work is not realised in this two-dimensional plane, either, but can be imagined as a continuous feedback loop in which the composition (sound/notation), performance (sound/space) and listener (sound/body) interact. It is within this continuous loop that *entoptic landscape* and *ijereja* examine iterative practices and processes.

The listening experience is even more complex and multi-layered than this for the composer and performers. Any performance of a piece cannot avoid the inscription of the work’s previous performance history onto its surface: this is an inevitable consequence of the displacement of the music in time and space as a piece is composed, performed and re-performed. Within the ‘space’ of the work, then, the performer deals with the connotations of the performance and listening

spaces, the notation, and all previous performances of the music. In the case of music with open notation of any kind this experience is further amplified. As such, this can be considered as a process of unlimited semiosis. Such a process, in the creation and reception of artworks, is described by the curator and art theorist Nicholas Bourriaud, who writes,

[through] a compositional principle based on lines traced in time and space, the work (like the Lacanian unconscious) develops a chain of linked elements – and no longer within the order of static geometry that would guarantee its unity. This spontaneous conception of space-time [...] has its sources in a nomadic imaginary universe that envisages forms in motion and in relation to other forms, one in which both geography and history are territories to be travelled.¹

The “nomadic imaginary universe” described by Bourriaud is the “territory” of the work. The artist who negotiates this territory is, in Bourriaud’s terms, a “semionaut”:² they are someone who freely navigates between signs and signifiers – that are both part of the materials of the work and part of its syntagmatic chains of meaning – in order to negotiate, interpret, and create new meanings in its creation and performance. In the pieces *entoptic landscape* and *ijereja*, the composer, performer and listener can all be thought of as semionauts: they take part in the same processes of meaning-making to create, re-create, and experience the work.³ The acts of composing and performing, then, are acts of describing the ‘nomadic imaginary universe’ of the work, and the act of listening that of making sense of such description: these processes do not result in a static end-point or a fixed meaning but are dynamic processes subject to constant re-exploration and revision. These works, then, meet Bourriaud’s definition of a *relational art* which he describes as: “an art taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and *private* symbolic space.”⁴ In such a relational work, the ‘domain of human interactions’ – the space where composers, performers and listeners interact – is, of course, not only the piece’s ‘theoretical horizon’ but its tangible material.

¹ Nicholas Bourriaud, *The Radicant*, (trans. by James Gussen and Lill Porten), New York, Lukas & Sternberg, 2010, 117.

² *Ibid.*, 103.

³ Lauren Redhead, “Notation as Process: Interpreting Open Scores and the ‘Journey Form’”, in: Vanessa Hawes and Lauren Redhead (Eds.), *Music and/as Process*, Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars, 2016, 116–133.

⁴ Nicholas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, (trans. by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods), Dijon, Les presses du réel, 1998, 2002, 14.

Practice Research Context

The two works discussed here are not only examples of creative practice, but also examples of creative arts inquiry, within the UK practice-research context. Practice research can be considered, in and of itself, a dialectic of process and product.⁵ This research method considers practice as both the method of creating knowledge and the means of its transmission: as such, it embraces epistemologies beyond the purely linguistic, considering tacit, embodied, and disciplinary knowledge of equal value to the empirical. Within the UK academic context, provision is made for the undertaking of practice research in multiple disciplines and at all levels of the academy. However, whilst practice is a process, most research narratives and assessments are almost exclusively focused on outputs, or products. Thus, the ‘product’ of practice research in composition is usually assumed to be the score and/or recording, perhaps in conjunction with a written reflection that might follow the creation of a musical work. In order to express the processes of a piece of practice research as the site of knowledge, it is necessary to propose new methods of presentation beyond the text, as the distinction between process and product leaves many aspects of practice research in (experimental) music poorly understood and disseminated.

Comparable to the dialectic of process and product in practice research is the dialectic of concept and experience in experimental music practice. The ‘concept’ of a work is often considered to exist within the domain of the composer, what Bourriaud describes as her “private symbolic space”; this concept is discovered by performers and listeners through the unfolding of the work as a public but listening- and performance-based activity. This situation adequately describes the experience of musical processes such as those described by Steve Reich as “Music as a Gradual Process”⁶ and by Michael Nyman in his book on experimental music.⁷ However, the processes suggested by Reich and Nyman do not conclusively describe all processes that might be at work in experimental music. As mentioned above, the embodied experience of the composer-performer testifies to the overlap and transcending of these processes; this is an experience that also transcends the public-private and concept-experience boundaries within experimental music. This practice-research investigation seeks to make manifest those processes that allow for or reveal this experience.

⁵ Barbara Bolt, “The Magic is in Handling”, in: Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt, (Eds.), *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, London: I. B. Taurus, 2010, 31.

⁶ Steve Reich, “Music as a Gradual Process” in: *Writings About Music*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1975, 9–11.

⁷ Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, 5–9.

The theatre practitioner Ben Spatz has addressed embodied knowledge in practice research, and its expression not only through individual performance events but through a transference of technique related to practice. This transmission of technique can be considered part of the transference of the process of the research. Rather than an examination of practice through a relationship with theoretical approaches, this is part of what he calls a ‘strong’ conception of practice research. He writes that such an approach, “argue[s] on epistemological grounds that practice can itself be a research methodology, leading to the discovery of new knowledge in the form of new technique.”⁸ Spatz’s conception of embodied knowledge as research knowledge is an argument for certain approaches to practice, rather than particular framings of practice. This is, in fact, not unfamiliar to practitioners of experimental music. In Jennie Gottschalk’s recent commentary, *Experimental Music Since 1970*, she categorizes similar approaches under “Scientific Approaches’ as ‘acts of discovery’ and ‘learning by making.’”⁹ Spatz also recognizes this more generally, when he writes that practice research should be seen, “as a special kind of pursuit that is already at work in a variety of contexts, including but not limited to the arts and academia.”¹⁰ Here, he points out that the boundary between practice and research is not firm, but negotiable by artists inside and outside of the academy as a part of, rather than a framing of, their practice.

By identifying the practice of practice research as something that belongs to practitioner practices and processes rather than to academic or artistic institutions, Spatz also situates its knowledge claims specifically within practice itself rather than within the *practice of academics*. This provides an argument as to the value of such research: that it seeks to document knowledge claims that are already accessible in artistic practice, rather than to make knowledge claims for practice that was previously not research. Spatz’s conception of research also re-directs the focus of its evaluation from its product (for example, the performance, which Spatz terms as singular) to the process through which the knowledge is gained. This further explains how practice-research knowledge

⁸ Ben Spatz, *What a Body Can Do: Technique as Knowledge, Practice as Research* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015) p.232.

⁹ Jennie Gottschalk, *Experimental Music Since 1970*, New York, Bloomsbury, 2016, 41–44 and 59–64. The use of the word ‘scientific’ in this case does not imply empiricism or positivism but could be paralleled with the German word ‘Wissenschaft’. ‘Musikwissenschaft’ translates as ‘musicology’ – with its accompanying variety of approaches and methodologies – rather than music-science, and, as an individual term, ‘Wissenschaft’ connotes a systematic pursuit of knowledge without any particular epistemological distinction, despite being translated as ‘science’ in English most frequently.

¹⁰ Ben Spatz, op. cit., 232.

might be disseminated beyond its performances even when such performances are ephemeral. Spatz writes,

[f]ar from being secondary to the production of singular events, the development and transmission of knowledge in the form of technique can be seen as the primary activity of many practitioners in physical culture and performing arts – the ground upon which the “singular event” can be realized and without which there can be no event at all.¹¹

This article, then, deals with the ways in which the ‘techniques’ of the iterative process of music are developed and disseminated in the works *entoptic landscape* and *ijereja*. Composing and performing are both considered here to be embodied practices. ‘Technique’ in their cases is not a facet of their craft but a method of enacting strategies for doing and knowing through them. The ‘singular event’ of a performance, however, is shown to be a fallacy when the memory of that event has agency in future work in the way that Bourriaud has described: ‘technique’ is transmitted organically from one performance to another. Transmission of techniques as research knowledge, in this case, is not about teaching others to do what has already done in this project, but transmitting the methods of gaining and embodying non-linguistic knowledge and making tangible the processes of the work.

entoptic landscape

entoptic landscape is a composition based upon an iterative process. The process of this piece grew as a result of its trajectory rather than its initial compositional design: the first three iterations of the piece were presented as music for organ, trombone and four tubas; trombone, two tubas and fixed media; and organ and fixed media respectively.¹² The impetus for these iterations came about as a result of the dynamic listening situation described above: multiple spaces and instrumental combinations presented themselves for the dissemination of the work, and it became necessary to find a path through the musical and notational materials that arose from the piece that would translate to its required performance circumstances.

The music’s initial notation was created by a number of writing practices which all involved actions that created marks; these actions were derived from a study of the aesthetics, nature, and purpose of ice-age art.¹³ The first notation-

¹¹ Ibid., 233.

¹² The first two situations described here arose from a commission from Octopus Collective, Barrow-in-Furness, UK, for the Full of Noises festival and its tour to Cafe Oto in 2013–2014.

¹³ In particular, from the book David Lewis-Williams, *The Mind in the Cave: Consciousness and the Origins of Art*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2004.

al iteration was a graphic score, albeit a linear one. A mixture of pitch material, graphemes, images and text offered the performers a strict time structure in which some flexibility of performance was permitted. The ability of the tubas and trombone to amplify whispered or spoken text was exploited, whilst the instrumental blend and slow process of similar graphic and pitch instructions were intended to create a texture that was homogenous and differentiated, steadily moving and static.

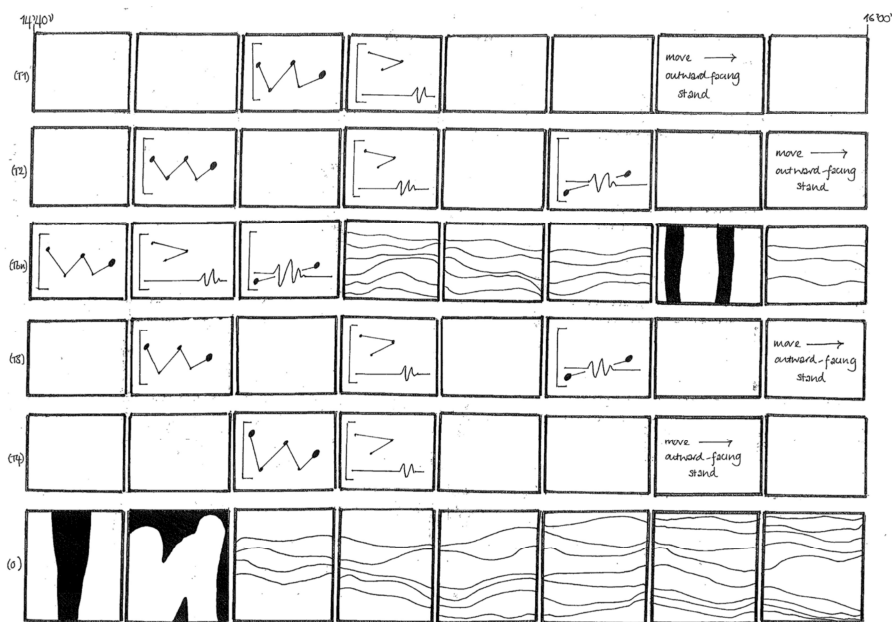


Figure 2: *entoptic landscape*, version 1 for trombone, 4 tubas and organ, notation detail (14'40''-16'00'')¹⁴

At the time of composition I was intrigued by the idea that ice-age art might stem from ritualized performance, enhanced by sound and repetition, and wanted to re-create its state of mind and re-perform the symbols of this art. The piece was presented with the following programme note, that reflected this:

Entoptic phenomena are experienced by all human beings. If you cover your eyes and shut out all light, for example by putting your hands over your closed eyes, you will see flashing lights and moving shapes. What you are seeing is the structure of your optic nerve. These are entoptic phenomena: a neurobiological experience.

¹⁴ Lauren Redhead, *entoptic landscape*, Berlin, Material Press, (2013–2015) 2016.

Such phenomena have been hypothesised to have informed the earliest artworks. Their commonness to all people causes these artworks to remain intelligible today. This piece takes such phenomena as a starting point. The music is slow moving, partially entering into ‘view’ and then gone again. The attempt to focus has the effect of obscuring it.¹⁵

The concept of the universality of experience, hinted at in the programme note, also led to a consideration of universality of material, allowing the ‘score’ of the work to expand to include fixed media drawn from edited recordings of the work in performance and re-notation as a re-performance of the graphic symbols originally conceived. Today, the piece encompasses several live acousmatic and multi-channel performances, a studio album, multi-modal gallery presentation, audio-visual installation, scores for specific instruments and open notation.¹⁶ In this way, the piece can both be considered complete and expanding: it reacts to its performers, performance circumstances, and internal contradictions in an on-going series of iterations. In Bourriaud’s terms it is relational.

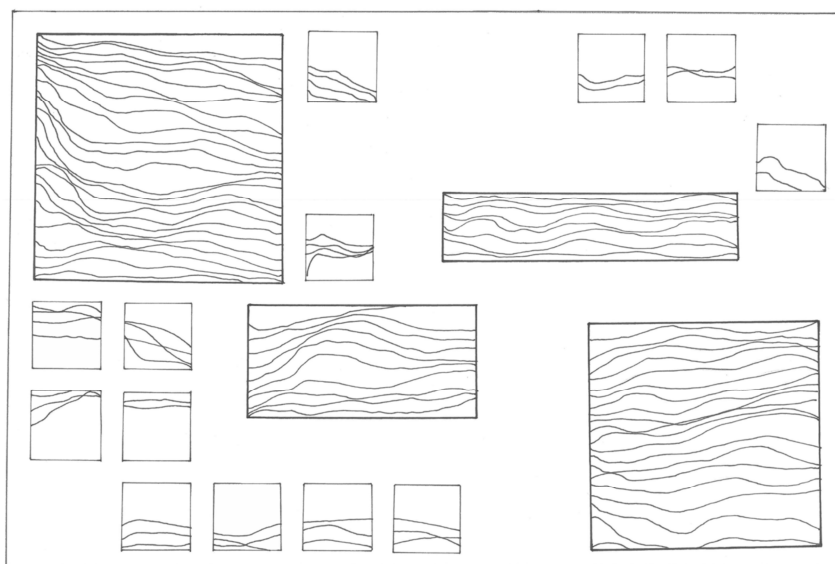


Figure 3: *entoptic landscape*, graphic score version, notation detail¹⁷

¹⁵ Lauren Redhead, *op. cit.*

¹⁶ Lauren Redhead, *entoptic landscape*, Chicago, pan y rosas discos, 2015, pyr123, <http://www.panyrosasdiscos.net/pyr123-lauren-redhead-entoptic-landscape/>, ac.

¹⁷ Lauren Redhead, *entopic landscape... op. cit.*, 2016.

The composition of *entoptic landscape* crosses the public-private divide in experimental music, in particular through the enactment of a public narrative of performance-composition when all of the iterations are heard together. It is possible to hear these as in some of the studio performances that have been made: for example, the studio album of *entoptic landscape* presents a selection of ‘live’ performances, which draw on recorded audio material and re-performed actions from previous performances. Other performances that have been presented as fixed media only draw materials from every available performance. In these cases the listener hears the result of a journey of performance-engagement that involves myself, several improvisers, the concert hall, the gallery and the studio. Performances, as iterations of the work, audibly and publicly interact with and cross-reference each other, finally resulting in a performance-artefact which is both always present and functions as a quotation and statement of the compositional and interpretative process. This makes audible the work-as-process.

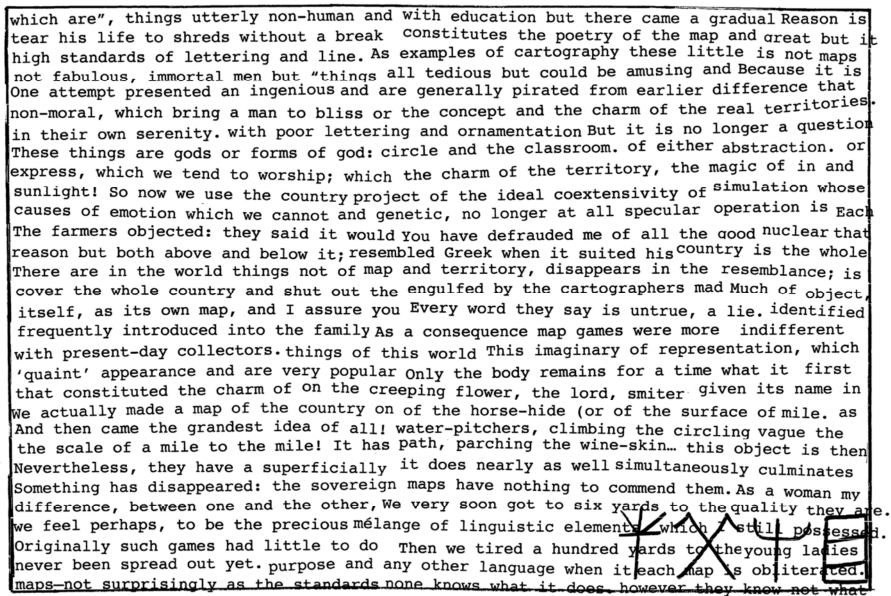
ijereja

The compositional technique that had been developed in *entoptic landscape* has been further concretised in the piece *ijereja*. This piece takes the iterative process of its materials as its starting point: it is also an ongoing project that considers notation and performance as performative and compositional; involving practices of over-recording, sampling, and the iterative approach to performance and notation described above. The musical form of *ijereja* is, therefore, what Bourriaud describes as the ‘journey form’:¹⁸ the proliferation of form and materials that it offers places its meaning within the domain of unlimited semiosis, again casting the composer, performers, and listeners as ‘semionauts’ in their decoding of the piece.

The consideration of notation as a performative practice in *entoptic landscape* and *ijereja* led to a consideration of the politics of notation. In general, certain types of texts have been considered as musical notation and others not, meaning that the designation ‘score’ seems to cover a particular group of types of texts, publications, and symbols or images. However, the practices that create the things which belong to this group might be broadly covered by terms like drawing, mark-making, writing, printing, and these are not distinct from practices in other disciplines than music. The content of ‘notation’ is also not necessarily distinct from the content produced by these practices in other art forms, especially when forms of graphic, text, sculpture, and video notation in the twentieth and twenty first centuries are considered. Indeed, there is a long

¹⁸ Cf. Bourriaud, *The Radicant...* op. cit., 106–131.

history of graphic notation being presented as visual art but fewer instances of art works being repurposed as notation in music (notwithstanding particular performances by free improvisers). As a result, in addition to the enactment of iterative practices, in *ijereja* I was also interested in the interrogation of the potentially liminal space between performance, voice, speech, language, text, writing and notation. The ‘notation’ of the piece takes in all of these activities as parts of text, graphic, and audio notation. It is not intended to be clear which of these activities create sound or text, make marks, or reproduce the piece: their function is fluid and undefined, and potentially all of the performers engage in writing, speaking, notating and producing as the composer does.



which are", things utterly non-human and with education but there came a gradual Reason is
tear his life to shreds without a break constitutes the poetry of the map and great but it
high standards of lettering and line. As examples of cartography these little is not maps
not fabulous, immortal men but "things all tedious but could be amusing and Because it is
One attempt presented an ingenious and are generally pirated from earlier difference that
non-moral, which bring a man to bliss or the concept and the charm of the real territories.
in their own serenity. with poor lettering and ornamentation But it is no longer a question
These things are gods or forms of god: circle and the classroom. of either abstraction. or
express, which we tend to worship; which the charm of the territory, the magic of in and
sunlight! So now we use the country project of the ideal coextensivity of simulation whose
causes of emotion which we cannot and genetic, no longer at all specular operation is Each
The farmers objected: they said it would You have defrauded me of all the good nuclear that
reason but both above and below it; resembled Greek when it suited his country is the whole
There are in the world things not of map and territory, disappears in the resemblance; is
cover the whole country and shut out the engulfed by the cartographers mad Much of object,
itself, as its own map, and I assure you Every word they say is untrue, a lie. identified
frequently introduced into the family As a consequence map games were more indifferent
with present-day collectors. things of this world This imaginary of representation, which
'quaint' appearance and are very popular only the body remains for a time what it first
that constituted the charm of On the creeping flower, the lord, smiter given its name in
We actually made a map of the country on of the horse-hide (or of the surface of mile. as
And then came the grandest idea of all: water-pitchers, climbing the circling vague the
the scale of a mile to the mile! It has path, parching the wine-skin. this object is then
Nevertheless, they have a superficially it does nearly as well simultaneously culminates
Something has disappeared: the sovereign maps have nothing to commend them. As a woman my
difference, between one and the other, We very soon got to six yards to the quality they are.
we feel perhaps, to be the precious mélange of linguistic elements which still possessed.
Originally such games had little to do Then we tired a hundred yards to the young ladies
never been spread out yet. purpose and any other language when it each map is obliterated.
maps not surprisingly as the standards none knows what it does, however they know not what

Figure 4: *ijereja* (2015): text notation detail

The word *ijereja* is a transliteration of the transliteration of the Mycenaean Greek word for ‘priestess’ in the Cretan-Minoan script known as Linear B. Just as *entoptic landscape* drew inspiration from ice-age art practices, *ijereja* considered bronze-age writing and art practices. In so doing, it seeks to avoid the connotations associated with ‘modern’ notation, art and music. The materials of the piece draw from disparate sources including Linear B text, Minoan art, modernist fakeries of Minoan art, cartographic practices, fictional maps, Hörspiel, and recorded organ improvisation. This list can be thought of as a starting point rather than conclusive: as the piece receives further performances and under-

goes further iterations this list continues to expand. As a result, the ontology of the work can be considered beyond the relational as that described in Umberto Eco's *The Infinity of Lists*.¹⁹ In relation to this, Eco has stated:

The list is the origin of culture. It's part of the history of art and literature. [One attempts to grasp the incomprehensible] through lists, through catalogs, through collections in museums and through encyclopaedias and dictionaries.²⁰

The 'work' of *ijereja* is a constantly expanding pool of notation, performance, sound, text and concepts. Its form is an expression of its ontology which can be stated as an expression of Eco's 'infinity of lists'. Eco has explained that this is a different expression of infinity than an aesthetic one, something that holds more in common with Kant's mathematical sublime.²¹ Eco writes that:

It is not that form cannot suggest infinity [...] the infinity of aesthetics is the *subjective* feeling of something greater than us; it is an emotional condition; instead the infinity we are talking about now is an *actual* infinity made up of objects that can perhaps be numbered but that we cannot number.²²

Although the number of artefacts currently associated with *ijereja* are numerable, they are *potentially* infinite; the piece's possible and intended form is infinite. Eco also hints at how this can be experienced as embodied, writing that,

the infinity of aesthetics is a sensation that follows from the finite and perfect completeness of the thing we admire, while the other form of representation we are talking about suggests infinity almost *physically*, because in fact *it does not end*, nor does it conclude in form.²³

The physical experience of the infinite in Eco's construction is embodied by the performers and composers who experience the potential of the form when they enact the piece. They do not perform the list, but by being aware of the *potential* performances of the piece, and their lack in the current performance in which they are engaged, they experience its infinity. In addition to being an infinity of lists, the form of *ijereja* is also what Eco designates a non-normal list (after a

¹⁹ Umberto Eco, *The Infinity of Lists*, (trans. by Alastair McEwen), London, MacLehose Press, 1999.

²⁰ Susanne Beyer and Lothar Gorris, "Spiegel Interview with Umberto Eco: 'We Like Lists Because We Don't Want To Die'", 11 November 2009, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/spiegel-interview-with-umberto-eco-we-like-lists-because-we-dont-want-to-die-a-659577.html>, ac. 08.02.2017.

²¹ Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, (trans. by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, 135.

²² Umberto Eco, op. cit., 15.

²³ Ibid., 16.

non-normal set in mathematical set theory) because it contains itself: the set of all performances of the piece is itself a performance of the piece.²⁴

This understanding is intended to be communicated even through the work's title. The sound of the word *ijereja* [I-je-reɪ-jæ] is an invented pronunciation based on the syllabic substitution of Linear B. Its original, pre-homeric Greek pronunciation has never been heard and cannot be conclusively known. The iterative process of the understanding this word, from oral Greek to Greek written in a borrowed script, to its rediscovery in the Linear B tablets in Knossos, through many mistranslations, offered a parallel with the sonic and notational practices associated with the work.



Figure 5: 'i-je-re-ja' in the symbols of the Linear B syllabary, *ijereja* (2015), notation detail

A studio album that represented the piece as a single 50 minute track was released in 2016.²⁵ The material for this recording was drawn from live performances that took place in October 2015: the first was a large ensemble performance involving myself (organ, voice), Charles Céleste Hutchins (tuba, bird whistle), Tina Krekels (saxophone, electronics), Adam Linson (live electronics) and Alistair Zaldua (live electronics); the second was a duet between myself (voice, live electronics) and Sarah Gail Brand (trombone). The sampled voice of artist R. Armstrong was also played back, in parts, in each performance. Rather than a definitive statement of the piece, this album is intended as simply another iteration: the sound is not particularly representative of any single performance. Rather, individual gestures, textures and motifs were selected as compositional units that could be used to make what could be considered an acousmatic work in its own right.

²⁴ Ibid., 395–396.

²⁵ Lauren Redhead, *ijereja*, Chicago, pan y rosas discos, 2016, pyr180, <http://www.panyrosasdiscos.net/pyr180-lauren-redhead-ijereja/>

The role of the individual performers as *individuals* as well as performers was also a key aspect of the process of the music.²⁶ The performers who collaborated in these recorded performances are all skilled and experienced improvisers. From a composer perspective, confidence that these musicians would be able to fluently interact with the music, its ideas, and each other was a consideration in the way that the piece would be presented. However, these musicians might also be thought of as part of the texture and legacy of the piece: their musicianship and ideas form a large part of the now extant audio material and the foreknowledge of this situation also informed their selection. Despite the fact that the materials of the piece are accessible to any musicians or non-musicians who may wish to attempt it, in a sense they were also created with groups of knowledgeable and skilled musicians such as these in mind: much more of the potential of such materials is realized in performance by musicians who are adept at their interpretation. As such, it can be said that the piece not only bears the traces of its previous performances, but of its performers as well.

Musical Self-Critique

The final aspect of the *ijereja* project was to consider its critique as a part of its practice-research approach. Exegeses such as this article, of course, are part of the critique of the work and are, in their own way, performative. Nevertheless, the iterative process of the piece invited the performance of the work's critique as a part of *its* performance, and to consider this was to consider how a critical approach to the music could be disseminated beyond text. The method of doing this was through the genre of the 'performance lecture': this was delivered as a performance of the piece, using spoken voice, recorded sound and a video that was made using images from the notation. The precedent for doing this comes from the experimental musical practice of John Cage, concretized in his *Lecture on Nothing* (1959) which is the archetypal performance lecture. In the foreword to the book *Silence*, Cage writes:

I have employed in [my lectures] means of composing analogous to my composing means in the field of music. My intention has been, often, to say what I had to say in a way that would exemplify it; that would, conceivably, permit the listener to experience what I had to say rather than just hear about it. This means that, being as I am engaged in a variety of activities, I attempt to introduce into each one of them aspects conventionally limited to one or more of the others.²⁷

²⁶ I am grateful to Richy Carey at the University of Glasgow for prompting this observation.

²⁷ John Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings*, online edition, Wellesley, MA, Wellesley College Library, 1961–2012, xi, https://archive.org/stream/silencelecturesw1961cage/silencelecturesw1961cage_djvu.txt, ac. on 08. 02. 2017.

By integrating the exploration of the theoretical context of *ijereja*, and the development of its materials, into the performance of the piece itself, I employed means of composing the performance lecture analogous to the composition of the work.²⁸ Thus, the performance-lecture as a method of self-critique of the work *ijereja* has become a part of its materials, allowing the audience to simultaneously experience and take part in the work, and explore its themes and processes of meaning-making. In this respect, the experience of the critique of the work is also analogous to the experience of the work itself: it does not require a linear approach to meaning or argument and does not require a purely linguistic engagement with what is presented. As such, it invited the listener to take part in the creation, experience and critique of knowledge as an embodied process and practice.

As the composer, performer, and listeners all take part in meaning-making as semionauts in the journey form of *ijereja*, they all engage in the ‘work’ of the performance of the piece: everyone who encounters the music in performance is ‘at work’ in the context of its performance. As such, they all begin from the same place of unknowingness: the conditions for knowing are within and are themselves the piece. Before the performance of the piece, it is not possible to identify what its knowledge will be. During its performance, its knowledge is embodied, and after the performance its knowledge is available as a memory, although the conditions for knowledge have passed. Thus, the state of unknowingness before and after the performance is one in which even knowledge of the conditions for knowing is not possible before the practice has taken place. Cage identifies this experience of embodying the potential for knowledge in the *Lecture on Nothing* when he writes: “[a]ll I know is that when I am not working I sometimes think that I know something but when I am working it is quite clear that I know nothing.”²⁹ Cage’s intention here is not to denigrate his ability as a practitioner but to make clear that knowledge about and through practice can only be gained *in practice*.

This, then, links with the practice-research approach of the projects described here. First, in *entoptic landscape* and *ijereja*, knowledge is embodied. It is experienced and accessed by the composer-performer through enacting the reflexive practice of the journey form of the pieces, and it is transmitted through documentation and dissemination of their processes by performers and listeners. This is not linguistic knowledge, and it cannot be empirically observed. Rather,

²⁸ A recorded example of the performance lecture can be found at: Lauren Redhead, *ijereja: Music as an Iterative Process*, Canterbury, Centre for Practice Based Research in the Arts, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gjz3hZ0Qsbl>

²⁹ John Cage, op. cit., 126.

it is knowledge that is tacit and disciplinary. This is described by the dance practitioner-researcher Kim Vincs, who writes that:

art practice is able to produce knowledge in a unique, material and specific way. It is not a generic kind of knowledge that can be mapped onto other fields or works of art. This is the whole problem with art analysis that seeks to define categories to neatly organise artworks and must, in order to preserve its nomenclature, ignore the profound epistemological disjunctions that can occur between artworks of seemingly similar aesthetic, genre, and content.³⁰

This quotation deals with the nature of knowledge in these projects. In particular, the *material*. It is not as a result of the dialogue of materials in the projects, but by and through their creation, enactments, re-creation, and re-enactments that knowledge is created.

Second, the practice-research approach of *entoptic landscape* and *ijereja* means that their processes are framed as the outcomes of the projects rather than their notation or recordings. This is externalized in a number of ways. The number of publicly available products (such as scores, recordings and video material) in each project publicly testify to the malleability of the identity of the works. It is not possible to easily reconcile these products with each other in order to define a static identity for either work. In addition, the works themselves put the idea of process at the forefront of their materials for performance. For example, part of the possible notation of *ijereja* is a list of strategies (some of them after Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Richtige Dauern* (1968) from *Aus den Sieben Tagen*), all of which imply process, but which have themselves been subject to notational intervention as a part of this process. Lastly, the processes of the works are literally sounded in each performance through the use of the sonic performance artefacts of previous performances.

The final aspect of the practice-research concept of *entoptic landscape* and *ijereja* is in the model of the authority of the composer that they posit. This model is directly linked with their work concept. The composer-performer as enquirer in such projects cannot take on the model of the composer as authority that is sometimes assumed in Western Art Music. However, nor is she a collaborator whose contribution does not result in a named and identifiable composer at the end of the project. This model is the same model of the authority of the composer in experimental music: here, the composer works to design concepts, to produce notations, and to create the conditions and experience of listening. The

³⁰ Kim Vincs, "Rhizome/Myzone: A Case Study in Studio-based Dance Research", in: Barbara Bolt (Ed.), *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, 2010, 112.

role of performers in experimental music is one that is necessary not only to sound the composition but to make manifest the processes of the piece. As such, an equality of the roles of composer, performer, and listener can be identified in this music without choosing not to name the composer as the contributor of a specific set of ideas. This model of composer authority is not broken down when a composer produces music notation in a certain way, such as through the use of graphic notation. However, when composing, performing and listening practices are equalized as part of the process of the piece, the authority of the composer is acknowledged but no longer primary, and the processes of the music – as forms of knowledge – become open and embodied by all participants.

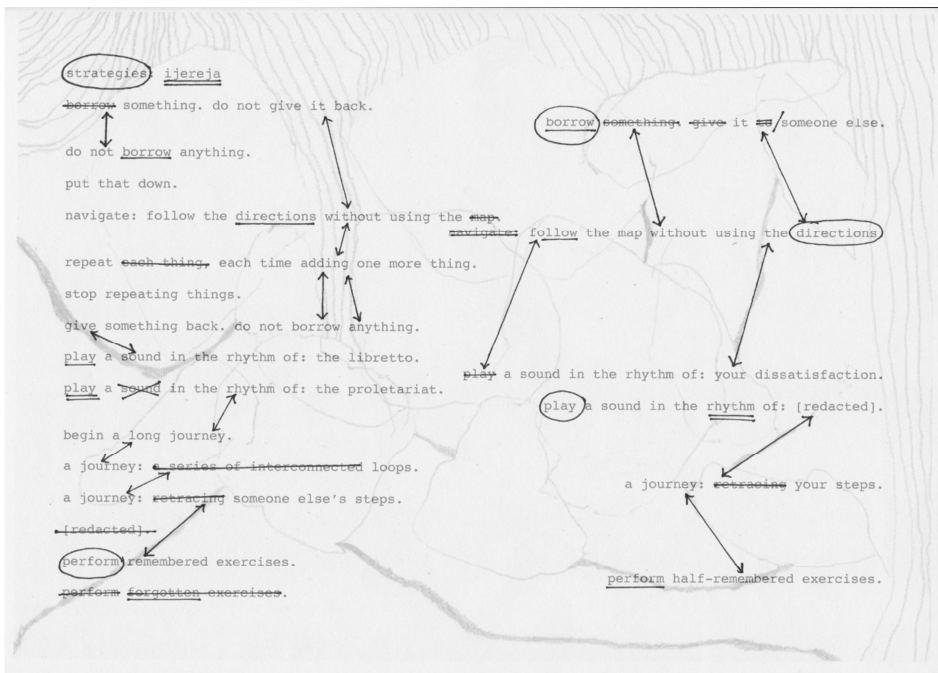


Figure 6: *ijereja* (2016), 'strategies', notation detail