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**PAPER.**

**Creating and Performing an Ethnography of Listening.**

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***ABSTRACT.***

*This paper explores the expression of listeners’ significations after listening to a piece of orchestral music. It describes the dialogical creation and performance of an ethnographic evocation of the experience of listening – a Performance Ethnography of Listening. 40 members of 4 Listening Groups listened to a four-movement piece for string orchestra “Photography” by Errollyn Wallen and gave their responses which were taped and transcribed. A Source Text was created from the raw responses from which was written a Performance Script for two ‘voices’. The script was set within the time signature of the piece. A Listening Event was designed to enable, an audience including the Listening Group members, the composer, the conductor, the ethnographer, and the ‘voices’ (60 people) to listen to, and discuss a ‘triptych’ performance of the work – the central panel being the performed ethnography with the music. This paper describes the ethnographic process, includes the Performance Script and audio examples of the performed ethnography. It theorises our practice in terms of the work of: Nicholas Cook (1998) on the relationship between words and music; Anthony Gritten (2017) on intermedial practice; Lawrence Kramer (2011) on criteria for ekphrastic practice; and in the light of existing explorations in the HARK Project on, listening habitus, and listening repertoire – ‘auditory play’.*

**Creating a Performance Ethnography.**

The HARK Listening Project, a collaboration between the Dept. of Social Anthropology and Music Research in the University of St Andrews, Scotland, recruited 4 Listening Groups from concert-goers and amateur choral singers from the town and University. No members were professional musicians. The groups, 40 listeners in total, listened to varied curriculum of musical works, and all listened to “Photography” – a four-movement, 14 minute, instrumental composition for string orchestra by Errollyn Wallen.

The self-managed groups developed a way of working – listening to pieces, giving quick reactions and then discursive sharing of impressions and experience[[1]](#endnote-1). What was recorded was what they said when they talked about the music. Some structure was introduced in the case of Photography. Members listened first without knowing what the piece was and gave their reactions to each movement; having heard the whole piece and learnt something of its provenance they gave further responses; after further listenings outside the group setting, some made further posts on the website. A transcript of all these reactions, responses and discussions was made. From this *Source Text* an *Ethnography of Listening* was written *–* an attempt to evoke, phenomenologically, the experience of listening to the piece.

The ethnographer listened again to the piece and made notes and impressions. The text fragments: images; descriptions of feelings; word-pictures; metaphors; and short narratives, from the 40 listeners, and from the ethnographer were arrayed in a time series, as a *Source Text*. This text was then written as a narrative ‘poem’ as a *Performance Script* within the time signature of the piece. The text was placed so that the musical motif that stimulated the listeners’ imaginations would precede their verbal responses as heard by the audience.

An ethnographic account is an attempt to describe and evoke the character of an everyday experience. In this case listening to a performance of a musical composition. This ethnography is a detailed, phenomenological, in–depth ‘thick description’ of a cultural practice – listening to music. This ethnography has five features, it is: *dialogical –* derived from many voices; *performative –* intended as an imaginative re-enacted evocation of a listening experience; *intermedial –* combines with different media,and *ekphrastic –* creates a new work of imagination as a response to an art-work[[2]](#endnote-2). Whilst it was not intended to be representational or programmatic of the music it could be thought to be *hermeneutic* in the sense of offering an interpretation of the significance of the music to listeners.

The *Source Text* – raw material from first and subsequent listenings – was in the present tense (reactions) and in the past tense (responses). These strands were expressed in in two voices, male and female. The conversational, antiphonal aspect of two voices seemed to work but the result of gendered present (female) and past tenses (male), or vice versa was too static and did not. The immediate and reflective material was therefore reworked between the two voices. This created a relationship and a ‘conversation’ (not quite a duet) between two voices (not characters) and between a sense of reactive immediacy – often in questions – and more discursive descriptive commentary – feeling like a reply or answer. This also meant that each speaker could deploy these two registers: immediacy and reflection, in their expressive repertoire. More voices were added but later discarded because it made the performance too busy, so finally 40 listeners are represented by two voices.

It was, and is, an open question as to whether the ethnographer was perceiving order in the imaginations of others or imposing order on these raw material fragments. What was clear was that the material was intelligible and showed coherent clusters of metaphors, and a word-picture-driven narrative. The ethnographer used his responses to provide connective material between the flow of the fragments. Two short poetic fragments came to mind during this process which are quoted in the script. The performance script became about 75% dialogical group material, 15% ethnographer’s connective material, and 10% poetry quotation. By cutting and pasting a *Performance Script* was written into the musical score and bar-line cues were provided for the voices for performance.

**Theorising the Performance Ethnography.**

What kind of relationship has been created between the Performance Ethnography and the piece of music “Photography”? Our interest in the relationship between words and music is twofold. First what words emerged from the listening process. Second how do those words relate back to the music when they are linked in live performance?

To explore these questions we consider the claim that we have created a free-standing work of ekphrasis engendered by the music and standing as a hermeneutic statement. A test here would be if we read out what listeners said, apart from the music, does it amount to something intelligible like a ‘prose-poem’? Is there a novel ethnographic genre here, ‘music poetics’ creating a dynamic relationship between listening-music-words (imaginative generation) and words and music and listening (performance)?

We also examine what other, prior, ways are there of conceptualising the relationship of words to music that add to, or challenge this account? Do the words ‘complement’ the music? Do they add new significations to it? Do they change it in interesting ways or simply compromise or obscure it? How does our script fit within Nicholas Cook’s (1998) framework of words and music – *complementation; contest; and conformance,* or exemplify Gritten’s interpretation of Lyotard’s description of words/music relation?

On the first claim, we can suggest what the Performance Script is not intended to be: commentary; representation; or description. The key to understanding its status and function is to consider how it emerges as an intelligible intersubjective account, not primarily **of** the music but of listening to the music. Let us examine the intelligibility of the Performance Script as ‘prose-poem’ by looking at the coherence of the metaphors in the first movement. Readers may wish to refer to the script attached to this paper.

In the first movement, *Vivace,* we find a cluster of images: of ‘calling’, ‘conversation’, ‘message’ and ‘echo’. They establish cumulatively a metaphor of ‘communication/connection/engagement’. To this is added metaphors of bodily movement: being ‘pulsed’, ‘caught’, ‘soaring’, and ‘dance’. These seem intra-musical, what Spitzer (2004) calls analytic metaphors. Then we see the first of what Spitzer calls cross-domain cognitive metaphors – reference to landscape, the ‘rocks and rapids of a river’, a ‘plateau’. This combines with a series of bodily movement images and culminates in a ‘flight’. This is what Spitzer may mean when he speaks of ‘kinesthetic image schema’. The script then includes a short quotation form a poem by Gregory Corso which takes further the metaphor of ‘flight’ and panoramic gaze. The landscape metaphor reappears later in an ‘arctic winter’ and the movement creates an ‘arrival’ at the vantage point of the ‘plateau’.

The listeners also locate themselves in this narrative space – when the ‘sky and earth’ is calling, when the movement of dance ‘scales up’ to ‘flight’ across landscapes ‘our interweaving flights’ are ‘held’ in the landscape in ‘bigger harmonies’, a sense of immersion. If I were to characterise the music of the first movement I would say that it is insistent in certain repetitive patterns, energetic, with a driving quality linked to a sense of resolution.

What seems clear is that there is a word-picture narrative in these responses which is intelligible and coherent, with clusters of inter-relating metaphors. It seems these are responses to the music rather than descriptions of it.

The other movements show similar features – the second movement marked simply *Quite Slow* evokes a sense of intimacy in an encounter. It was described by listeners as a plangent ‘love dance’. The two ‘dancers’ look into each others eyes, there is a sustaining, unseen ‘presence’ referred to and the short movement ends with the lingering memory of the other’s ‘face’. In the third movement marked *Slow Trance-like* the script/voices offer an invitation to explore an unsettling ‘mystery’ with a sense of one person leading the other ending in an inability and a refusal to see or look at some image or presence.

The forth movement marked *Moderato, keep rhythmic* begins with a wake-up call, ‘curtains’ are drawn back. There are passing images as if from a ‘window of a moving train’, a ‘gallery of what happens’. The images include: work; holidays; calendar days; and the pulse of life. The mood then changes to a sombre sense of some kind of ‘human traffic’ and ‘gathering’, and an unsettled feeling of something forgotten. It culminates in a triumphal arrival, via entry into the ‘ark’, on an ‘upland’ – an echo of the first movement image of a ‘plateau’. The metaphor of ‘flight’ reappears as the ‘world below’ is viewed from above and the visual metaphor of the gaze ends the piece echoing the invitation, injunction to Behold! from the first movement.

So on the first concern it seems that the script is of itself intelligible, imaginative and coherent. It reads in a narrative sense and not simply as jumble of words from reverie or ‘free association’. We suggest that this feature is inherent to the collective responses as well as being shaped by the ethnographic writing – that the semantic content suggests intersubjective coherence. If this claim is allowed then the Performance Script could be thought to be a hermeneutic statement, engendered by the experience of listening and can stand alongside the music as appreciation, evocation and even homage, remaining however dependent on the music for its significance.

To claim the script’s coherence in this way is to suggest that the artistic status of the script is ekphrastic – that a work of the imagination has been engendered by a prior art work. This does not however determine it’s performative relation to the music – when the script is performed with the music does it combine with it, inflect it, amplify it, mask it or change it? Should it be judged by aesthetic criteria as a performance? It is here that Cook’s taxonomy is relevant.

Nicholas Cook asserts that the idea of ‘music alone’, as autonomous, abetted by notions of ‘pure’ and ‘absolute’ instrumental music, is vacuous, ‘pure music ….is an aesthetician’s (and music theorist’s) fiction: the real thing unites itself promiscuously with any other media that are available’ (Cook. 1998:92). He calls this ‘the ideology of musical autonomy’.

Cook (1998) notes:

…there is an enabling similarity that facilitates the transfer of attributes from one medium to the other, such that the perceived significance of one is in some way changed – nuanced, perhaps widened, deepened. In this way, music does not simply reproduce an existing meaning ‘in’ the words with which it is combined, but makes possible the perception of fresh meanings. Without similarity we *couldn’t* bring words and music together, without difference we *wouldn’t* bring them together. (Quoted in Begbie 2013 :188)

Michael Spitzer would agree (Spitzer 2004.), as would Lawrence Kramer and Roger Scruton:

Kramer (2011:71,112,248-51,256, and 2001:11-28) notes:

Sooner or later we have to talk about music, even if we think it is impossible to do so. When we give in and speak up what kind of language should we use? What claims should we make for it? How can we trust it? Can we be inspired rather than deterred by the difficulties that language constantly creates in the course of making meaning? These are questions about the capacity of one communications medium to transcribe the meanings expressed in another. The most venerable forms arise in conjunction with the literary genre of ekphrasis, the verbal description of a picture. Ekphrastic practices offer a good preliminary model for musical hermeneutics. (Kramer:2011:248).

Scruton, speaking to those who espouse incommensurability between words and music, and the elevation of wordless ‘meaning’ notes ironically:

I am currently reading a mercifully short book by Vladimir Jankelevitch, Music and the Ineffable, in which the argument is stated on the first page – namely, that since music works through melodies, rhythms and harmonies and not through concepts, it contains no messages that can be translated into words. There follows 50,000 words devoted to the messages of music – often suggestive, poetic, atmospheric, but words nevertheless, devoted to a subject that no words can capture. (Scruton 2010)

Cook also asserts that music is never alone, is always perceived in a multimedia context – is irreducibly multimedia ‘in nature’ (1998:23). This is reinforced by his reference to reception theory where meaning and significance is ‘the product of an interaction between the sound structure and the circumstances of its reception’ (1998:23). The musical score is not closed but an open field of meanings, inseparable from the contingencies of its composition and its reception. Therefore there will be interaction between these media and this will produce fresh meanings. Music and words become co-generators of new meanings. Therefore this mutual inter-animation creates:

An ‘enabling similarity’, a similarity that facilitates the attributes from one medium to the other, such that the perceived significance of one is in in some way changed – nuanced perhaps, widened. In this way music does not simply reproduce itself ‘in’ the words with which it is combined, but makes possible the perception of fresh meanings. (Begbie, J. 2013)

This interaction draws out signification by the interaction of similarity and difference, both are needed for the tension and contestation that generates new and emergent meaning – without similarity we *could* not bring words and music together: without difference we *would* not bring them together. Julian Johnson (2010) notes here:

It is the gap between music and language that becomes a question for the philosophy of music, not the similarity. But the similarity ensures that this gap is not characterised by non-relation; instead, it makes for a highly charged space, which sparks across tension between like and not-like, between the assumption of linguistic manners and the myriad ways in which they are displaced, deformed, undercut or ignored. (Johnson, J. 2010 in Begbie, J, 2013)

So in the script we are reminded that we are dealing with not just the relationship of words to music but the way in which our articulations take us to the ‘edge of words’ (Williams 2014) and opens up questions about language itself. Cook’s model of words/music relations is threefold: of *conformance, contest* or *complementation.*

In *conformance* the words and music align either in ‘dyadic’ conformance where neither predominates and there is balance, or in ‘unitary’ conformance where one medium clearly takes the lead. This would be exemplified in a song, lieder, libretto where the words are embedded in the musical line. A reading of Bostridge (2015:27) description and performance of *Gute Nacht* from Schubert’s *Winterreise* would illustrate this well. There he notes the series of associations of the word *fremd*, in *fremd bin ich eingezogen,* in thephrase *‘a stranger I came, a stranger I departed.* Not only is this word held within the falling melodic line on its ‘journey’ it emanates multiple associations through word associations that Bostridge mentions: someone else’s; different; foreign; alien; strange; outsider; other; all in ones own land. Here is not only dyadic conformance between words and music but the singers preparation (before the performance) is analogous to a listener response (during and after the performance) in implicating extended significations and meanings through word association.

In *contest* words and music are ‘regarded as incommensurate and contradictory, such that they vie for the same territory: each attempts to ‘deconstruct the other, and so create space for itself’’ (Cook. N. 1998 in Begbie, J. 2013:183). Rather than see this as collision and contradiction the tension may be a contest for different modes of signification where incommensurability is certain. This tension produces the ‘sematic energy’ and emergent new meanings. This is clear in the script when poetry, another independent art-work, is quoted over the music.

In *complementation* words and music are operating in discrete zones or spheres. *Essentialising complementation* suggests some unique properties of the medium, whereas *contextualising complementation* allows one medium to fill in gaps left by the other. Here we can imagine film scores where an image is amplified in intensity by music. This latter seems to describe much of the performance script, with the response words appearing after the musical motif in a kind of tracking evocation.

We will give brief examples of each type as they arise in our performance script and then suggest sketch our additional concept.

***Conformance***: The beginning of the 2nd movement begins with a melodic line, a quotation from J. S. Bach taken up by the composer as the tensive and plangent harmonic relations are stretched out with in. The text/first voice speaks of a ‘line drawing’ suggesting a graphic line, and then the other voce responds ‘drawing me out’ as a rely, then following the contours of the music ‘sweet possibilities’ are spoken of and as Bach and Wallen inflect each other so the two voices have the exchange: ‘our eyes met….but only in intersecting….. and culminate in a question ‘are you a hymn, a prayer, and interlude’. The relationship between the words and the music tracks the musical relationship between two composers and expresses itself in the intimacy of the two voices. Here we hear both conformance between words and music and also the nature of *conversation.* We note that *conversation* was the word that the composer used of her impression of the performance.

***Contestation***: In the first movement we hear the drive, pulse and energy of the music and the repeated bowing of the strings urging forward, we have had a series of bodily metaphors about movement, images from nature of landscape, the visual metaphor of a music as painting, and the trope of the call and message. There is then a musical shift and the text moves into a quotation from the poet Gregory Corso. The poem takes the narrative into flight, ‘Peter-Panning the sky’ the meaning of the poem is itself illusive, it seems it is a warning of some impending crisis slow and creeping, calm and sad, in this skyful dungeon of things’, and Hermes the messenger seems inactive ‘rests old in China’. It combines the panoramic sight of light with the ‘shadow’ of some ‘troubling presence’ which arises in various parts of the music/script. Here the words are taking up the music, rather than responding to it, and giving it, in another previously free-standing art-work, another series of images and metaphors to ellucidate it. This is a generative process and fall short of being an imposed explicit interpretation. The contest is for our primarily for our attention of something more rather than a substitute for the music.

***Complementation***: At the end of the First movement the voices seem buoyed up and sustained by the intensity of the music and they say so…’I am hurtling with the clouds…. And as the music gathers to its strong statement of harmonic density and sustaining repetition, vigorous recursive bowing by the players, the voices express an arrival and a vantage point whilst not exerting energy in movement. It is as is if they are accepting the wonder of the gift of the panorama as the music sustains them they say: ‘….and this is the plateau, Behold!, this is where we are. This is what I told you’, and they repeat this with the music. Here is a side-by-side relationship of the text to he music, it could be thought to be superimposed to make the text filmic, yet it seems closely related to the culmination of the music in the movement. It is sufficiently connected to the mood and feel of the music to risk, as it were, its interpretive pretensions, which in turn feel authentic, but in no way representational or programmatic.

So it is not only a question of what happens between words and music, as described by Cook, but also how the relationship comes about, how words and music seek out each other to interact by how they are placed in relation. In short we might agree that the performance script is in *unitary conformance* with the music, the latter taking the lead; that there is minimal *contestation* with the possible exception of the poetry quotes; and that *complementation* takes place but not to the extent that ne medium amplifies the other. We could suggest an addition to Cook’s framework, that of a form of *conversation* with the music.

A wholly different take is provided in a recent paper by Anthony Gritten (2017). Here using the work of Dayan and Lyotard, Gritten tries to, as it were, get behind the very concept of ‘relation’ between words and music, and indeed between music and all other art media, to some prior and shared source of creative energy.

He begins by asserting that music underpins other media and all intermediation:

Music is the rhythm between relations conceived of as beyond meaning, beyond analysis, beyond interpretation, beyond hearing, its essential quality is that which is simply present in its sound. (Gritten 2017)

Gritten, quoting Dayan is presenting a paradox, that behind any particular piece of music there is some transcendental sense of Music (caps in original) and that being the case:

One can write nothing interesting, true of useful about what music is and does without simultaneously subscribing to two contradictory beliefs: that music embodies something absolutely and endlessly beyond words; and that music expresses something that can be translated into words (Gritten 2017)

Dayan asserts that ‘Music” ‘embodies by its very definition the wedding of form to content which distinguishes art per se’. “Music” as the paradigmatic case of art. Lyotard similarly notes:

What is significant is music’s unarticulated breath, a timeless voiceless lament which manages to slip through the articulated form of the work – the beauty is in the breath not the material. (Lyotard in Gritten 2017)

So rather than talking of relations between media (words/music) Gritten suggests a common source of ‘energy’ beneath them. He claims it is a misnomer to talk of relations that words and music are ‘siblings traceable back to a common family and bloodline via their DNA’. Perhaps a useful metaphorical image here is the running together of oil and water, intermingling and yet separating out.

How does this debate inform our examination of what the words of the performed ethnography of listening are and are doing? And, what are listeners doing, expressing, embodying when they use words about music? We are already making the case that the words, images, metaphor clusters that we have found are capable of intelligible intersubjective organisation as performance script, expressions and ‘place-holders’ of of states of being, and thereby embody interpretation. We also contend that the performance script is best understood in the light of how the process of perception to language works in the practice of listening.

Words are already sounds, they have tones, pitches, cadences, inflections. amplitude, pauses and silent gaps. Cries of pain, grunts of satisfaction, and ‘sighs’ (Lyotard) and the raft of illocutionary aspects of language carry both meaning and express states – they have both an epistemic and interpretive function as speech acts. Words in music are frequently intrinsic to the sound than cognitively relational. Opera arias move from vowel sounds to vowel sounds, the actual words being presented in sur-titles; ritual sacred music uses texts which become part of the fabric of incantatory sound and often have no independent verbal communicative function. Singers subtly alter the articulation of vowel sounds to create tonal qualities rather than to communicate meaning. Listening is not listening for a relation but to a whole sound-world of *both* words and music. Perhaps the relationship between the ethnography and the music in this instance in one in which music expresses in some way the ‘sound of thought’ and the words that arise, the ‘sighs’, ‘cries’ and associations are a modal shift which adds to that the ‘thought of sound’? Scrutton (1999) expresses this as follows:

In listening to music the same experience takes sound as its object, and also something that is not and cannot be sound – the life and movement that is music. We hear this life and movement *in* the sound, and situate it in an imagined space, organised, as is the phenomenal space of our own experience. (Scruton,1999).

Therefore though Cook suggests a taxonomy of relations between music and words his account omits the listening process. Lyotard provides a phenomenology of listening, complementing that of Nancy (1995):

To be listening is always to be on the edge of meaning, or in the edgy meaning of extremity, and as if the sound were precisely nothing else other than this edge, this fringe, this margin – at least the sound that is musically listened to, that is gathered and scrutinised for itself, not merely as an acoustic phenomenon but as resonant meaning, whose sense is found in resonance." **(**Jean-Luc Nancy 1995)

Listening is however a ‘tense, attentive, or anxious state’ which is ‘straining’ towards meaning and this posture is at an ‘edge’. Listening to musical sound, to the resonance of sound for itself is a marginal experience, liminal, taking place at a threshold where ‘exterior’ sound is also ‘interior’ resonance. Listening is a disposition where ‘sense not be content to make sense (or to be logos) but that it want also to resound’ (Nancy, 2007:6). Therefore to hear, is to understand the perceived meaning, sense (*sens sense*) in contrast to listening for the ‘perceiving sense’ (*sens sensible*). So, to be listening is to be on the edge of meaning, the sound being nothing but the edge. Listening is an active bodily experience concerned with sense and sensation. (Nancy, 2007 in Lloyd-Richards 2017)

Lyotard describes an ‘impossible kind of attention’, forms of suspension, ‘inattention’ also noted by Humphrey and Laidlaw, (1994) a ‘negative capability’. Lyotard speaks of; suspension; interrupting; pausing; the unexpected; displacing; live eventness; slowing and losing time; freezing time, which culminate in ‘a minimal unarticulated, unlimited absolute feeling’, ‘creating a disturbance through new desires and sensations, rather than merely through new artistic forms’.

On these accounts listening and articulating that experience is an imaginative, generative compositional embodied activity that is both intrinsic to the music and also reflecting the engagement. What emerges is what Kramer calls ‘open interpretation’.

Open interpretation is the vehicle of subjectivity in a strong sense, not of private sensation or idiosyncrasy, but of intelligent agency, it is fundamentally the capacity to interpret: subjects make interpretations; interpretations make subjects. (Kramer)

So in theorising the performance ethnography we have distinguished various elements and relations. Key to understanding the function and status of the performance ethnography is to understand how it was generated – by the resonant practice and experience of listening which gives rise to its ekphrastic status and also as an intelligible, intersubjective, hermeneutic act.

We will return to these issues after we now sample the actual performance event.

**Excerpts from the Performed Ethnography of Listening.**

First we will read a small section of the Performance Script just as words, then play the music that it relates to and then play them both together.

**A: Presenter reads a short section from the script of the second movement?**

**B: Play the orchestra only playing that second movement**

**C: Play second movement with both music and the words.**

On hearing those excerpts you will have formed some impression of the Listening Event. Let is share some of those from people who were present.

**Responses of Listeners to the Performance Ethnography and the Music.**

**The Conductor.**

The findings of the recent study by Halpern et al. that investigated audience responses to repeated performance of the same work on a concert programme revealed: ‘on average perceived understanding… enjoyment and desire to hear the piece again [increased] in most cases.’ (Halpern, Chloe. Mullensiefen & Solboda 2017) Their study also touched on some performers’ perspectives of repeated performance, which is something that I would like to discuss just now. An integral part of the design of HARK’s performance of *Photography* was the triptych presentation that my colleague Huw outlined just a moment ago. I am fond of giving multiple performances of a work in a programme, it is not often done but it is far from uncommon. I nearly always feel that the ensemble and myself are more satisfied with the second performance, and knowing that there are two chances to get a piece right does relieve some of the pressure of performance. I myself had never before conducted the same piece *three* times attacca in a concert however, and I had no way of knowing how the players and I might respond to that – let alone how the addition of voices to the second of the three performances would influence the performance.

In summary, my experience from the podium was that it didn’t feel like we were starting from the beginning when we went back to the 1st bar for second and the third performances: each performance was successive to the last and the cumulative energy carried through in an uninterrupted line of intensity. My sense is that the ‘intensity curve’ (Rink & Berry DATE) of the performance as a whole was not only a result of the players and myself having multiple chances to settle into the score on stage. Had had have voices not been included in the second performance my experience of the intensity curve would have been different: their inclusion changed what Nicholas Cook would describe as the ‘combinatorial emergence’ of the performance, that is to say that the presence of the voices in the performance event caused everyone on stage to adapt in an unpredictable way. From my perspective, their presence was striking but so too was their absence in the third and final performance. I myself felt that in the third performance there was something shared between the stage and audience that was absent in the first performance. I apologise for this mystic description – conducting and conductors are far too prone to them. Future performed ethnographies could of course gather audience feedback about how their experience of the music changed during and subsequent to the performed ethnography.

One other perspective I can add to from the podium is my own experience of the relationship between the words and the music. The structure of the words exhibits a structure that matches the intensity curve of the music, this of course should be no surprise and only evidence of their symbiosis with each other. By ‘structure’, I mean what I call a ‘synoptic view’ (Cone 1968) of the music: music can be memorised in terms of its architecture and perceived atemporally as a ‘shape’. The music and the text, when viewed synoptically, exhibit to me the same shape both locally and globally. For example, the musical climax at the end of the first movement reflexively proclaims ‘and this, this is the Plateau. Behold, and this is where we are! Behold!’ Similarly, the Bach inspired counterpoint of second movement starts with the text ‘line drawing… drawing me out,’ and later asks, perhaps even of itself, ‘Are you an interlude? A hymn? A prayer?’ During the second performance I felt engaged with the way the music and text, or rather the instrumentalists and voices, animated each other in several such moments. Though the text was written subsequently and in response to the music, and the music not written for text; they did not exist in parallel during the performance.

**The Composer.**

Errollyn Wallen responded to the performance by saying that she was pleased and surprised by it and that it seemed new, like a ‘new genre’. She then spoke of the compositional process, the way in which the title ‘Photography’ was a kind of heuristic device to free her imagination to work with fragments and snap-shots but not in a literal or representational way. She spoke of the melodic line and Bach quotation in the second movement saying it began with Bach and ‘then became me’. In answering questions about the never ending sense of her relationship to the composition and it’s ‘finishedness’ as a work, she introduced a sense of its constant provisionality, as open to further interpretation and change, almost as a fluid ‘hyper-text’, and this clearly related to the relationship with the performance text. She was struck by the coincidence of the second movement images of a ‘love dance’ in the script between two people, noting that she had written it for the wedding of two of her friends as something in that mood. She described the relationship of the music to the words as ‘like a conversation’. She linked this to composition saying that ‘the words are now part of a conversation with the piece – this is a way of getting close to how things are made as well as how things are listened to..’ She emphasised how ‘atmosphere, place, texture’ which were features of the listening responses are important aspects of her compositional perspective.

**The Audience and the Listening Group Members.**

A lively discussion took place. In it the following observations were made:

The words ‘expressed the physicality of the music since I had a strong physical resonance with the sound’ (JT). The words had a ‘musicality as sounds themselves and they need not be thought of as having conventional meaning, but might be thought of a ‘place-holders’ – expressions of emotional/mental states or moods’. The words seemed sometimes ‘after-images’ of the sound (ND). It felt like a ‘collage’ representation of the listening group, it did not feel as if it had been assembled (PA). One listener spoke of the sense of time and space that the music and words created, and that this creates shifts in the perception of these verities, both the words and the music extending in time and space, and this has implications for the attention we give in listening (JP). For some it raised questions about ekphrasis, and the possibility that images could have ben chosen as the conversational medium (VT). Some picked up on the composer’s observation about the ‘intertextuality’ of all art-works and suggested that further music could also be engendered by listening to the piece. It was noted that we could now turn the ethnography into images to place with the music, adding another medium to the mix.

**The Voice/Singing Teacher.**

The singing teacher present made the following observation:

When you put words to music you are making something ‘other’, the music changes its function, it takes a ‘back-seat’ to the words, it, the music, becomes the commentary or accompaniment to the words. It is like watching a film the music adds intensity to the words….the music become an entirely different piece from the orchestral version, and I find it difficult to look at it in the same way….

There followed a lively discussion on whether the words had been ‘superimposed’, ‘put’ on to the music. It was noted that the relationship was not as a libretto where the words are in a direct relationship to the musical line and other musical elements. This led to a link with the visuality of the performance and its balance with the music. Several listeners spoke of the visual aspect of the performance and therefore a sense of watching music as well as hearing it.(JM) One person talked of the images it evoked for her and found them contrasting with those of the spoken responses (EC). One person simply felt that the words ‘got in the way of the music’ (BD).

This leads to some observations about the performance itself.

**Performance Values.**

In the ‘tryptich’ performance the audience first heard the piece played by the orchestra. After a period of silence, two ‘soloists’, the ‘voices’ took their places out front. They performed the script within the time signature of the piece, then the whole piece was be played again. This triadic structure was intended to retain the integrity of the musical composition and its autonomy; allow the overlay of words derived from listening responses to be brought into relation with the music in a middle section; and enabled those in the audience who had not heard the piece before to do so. It was also designed to allow the words from the second playing to as it were ‘be in the air’ in the third playing, so there was in that sense no repetition but more influences for further interpretations.

Two experienced student opera singers then worked on the script under my direction. In rehearsals we made changes and deletions to improve the flow and the exchanges. The feel I was attempting to achieve was of a sense of intimacy, exploration and opening. I had in mind the interiority of a radio play, specifically *Wings* by Arthur Copet, in which we hear the thoughts and sensations of a women whose speech as been lost through a stroke. I hoped by this approach to have the words, as it were, softly embedded in the sounds of the music and taken along with them, as if this was a reverie. Unfortunately the balance between the voices and the orchestra was such that the voices had to become loud and declamatory, and the subtle expressiveness I had hoped for became assertive and in competition with the orchestra. The performative aspects of the ethnography therefore worked best in the inner slower quieter movements. This matter of balance did have an effect on the sense of the relationship between the words and the music, making it sound rather more competitive whereas it was intended as a conversation.

**Theorising the Performance Ethnography as Ekphrasis.**

We now turn to the question posed by Lawrence Kramer of whether this relationship between words and music in the performance ethnography works as ekphrasitic practice. This may be a hermeneutic question as well as potentially implicating an aesthetic response.

In the discussion with the audience, the Listening Group Members, the performers, the composer, the voice/singing coach, and the conductor it was generally agreed that we had made ‘something new and different’ by adding words to the music. We explored what the appropriate criteria might be that could apply to a ‘new genre’, described as a ‘performance ethnography of listening’. It could be conceptualised as a ‘dramatised ekphrasis’, that is, an evokation and (re)imagining of one art-work in another media.

Kramer argues that for ekphrasis to be successful it must be ‘genuinely revealing, not merely fanciful’. It has to be a mode of cognition. Ekphrasis suggests a series of criteria for cognitively rich descriptions, Kramer calls these ‘constructive descriptions’ which become part of what they describe and yet remain distinct from it. He moves the focus from the hearing of the music to what ‘we might hear in it’. He then poses the key question, which also exercised our audience at the listening event: ‘*What descriptive criteria do such ekphrastic comments invoke and seek to satisfy?”* In our terms, ‘*what are the conditions for the possibility of an authentic generative conversation with a piece of music in an ethnography?’*

Kramer proposes three criteria for authentic and effective ekphrasis, to which from our experience we might add a forth. The first criterion is ‘descriptive distance’. By this Kramer means:

This distance (historical, cultural or moral) must be acknowledged in the act of address. It allows the description to speak its own fallible and contingent voice, not in the supposed voice of the work. It does not ventriloquise a relationship with the music in which it is ‘given to speak’. This ‘historicality of understanding’ our explicit situatedness becomes apparent as what we say ‘unfolds the implications of the distance from which it operates’. (Kramer 2011)

The second criterion is:

Ekphrasis must move continually between two boundaries each of which is touched rarely. On the one side there is identification with the object of description – creating the conditions for absorption and unchecked phantasy: on the other clinical detachment – creating the conditions for inventory and taxonomy. (Kramer 2011)

He concludes that continual movement in the space between these is required – ekphrasis, ‘just *is* the motion between the two’ (italics in the original).

The third criterion is: ekphrasis must: evoke a ‘sense of disclosure’.

This effect, which belongs to interpretive language in general, Kramer notes ‘is the hardest to characterize precisely’.

We might speak of a situation in which the language becomes the medium in which the musical event reveals itself. The discourse should reach a point, perhaps several points, of matching or overlapping between its own illocutionary force and the expressive force of the music. At such points (and not throughout, which would collapse the description into pure absorption), what the music performs as expression the text performs as trope. (Kramer 2011)

Kramer here raises the possibility that not only is ekphrasis a new genre, but that a new medium or ‘music words’ (what we have called ‘music-poetics’ elsewhere; Lloyd-Richards, 2016) might be conceived. This relates to comments by the audience concerning the sounds of words themselves. It also relates to our speculation below that perceptual transfigurations in listening to music can be conceived as music ‘expressing the shape of thought: thought expressing the shape of music’. It is these aspects of these ‘disclosures’ as a part of the hermeneutic task, and the nature of fluid inter-textuality, combined with an ethos of interpretability (Williams, 2017) that leads us to prefer the use of the concept ‘signification’ rather than the concept ‘meaning’ (Robinson 2005).

There is an emergent exploratory and questioning turn in Kramer’s criteria, and this reinforces our contention that ekphrasitc ethnography is interpretive, generative of new significance in relation to the music and not accurately defined as representation or pure description.

Kramer argues that this in itself is a semantic description of musical meaning and that following the work of Cook (2001) notes that the balance between sensory, potential meaning and verbal expression is tilted towards the semantic. Kramer argues:

Cook rightly associates the experience of potential meaning in music with the effects of ineffability and immediacy. These effects have enormous power; a listener swayed by them might well feel that the limits of both language and thought have been left behind. But potential meaning as such is not a musical phenomenon. It more properly belongs to discourse, or more properly to temporalization, the streaming of performative utterances and /or their equivalents in other media. This streaming which has breaks, backcurrents and eddies as well as onward flow, is what generates potential meaning. (Kramer, 2004:74).

Kramer also includes features here of performance and eventness, and these elements are addressed elsewhere in our research as aspects of listening events where listeners in co-presence both constitute the musical event and are constituted by it.

To Kramer’s exploration of ekphrasis, and to Cook’s framework of the relationship between words and music we can now add our concept, and ekphrasitic criterion of ‘*conversation’****.*** In our ethnographic performance we can see this structurally. The ‘conversation’ metaphor refers to all the elements of the event: to the composer and the listener; the music and the listener; and the speakers/voices and the music.

The connection between the concept of ‘conversation’ and Kramer’s concept of ‘disclosure’ takes place through the way in which as Kramer notes, ‘the text performs the tropes’. In this case how the conversations take place and what they engender. We can illustrate this.

In the deployment of the trope of conversation we can see two kinds of metaphor. In the 1st movement (bar: 98) after a series of landscape images and a reference to ‘birds’ the music evokes: *Our interweaving flights/are held in the landscape/Our lives/In bigger harmonies/the calls of sky and earth.* This is an *epiphor* type of metaphor (Hopper:1992:287ff.) in which there is a sematic, cognitive movement from one source, in this case the music, to the listener. The effect of sense is that we are caught in the music, our responses ‘flights’ are held in the music ‘as landscape’ and by a musical element ‘harmony’ which is metaphorised as ‘sky and earth’. It is a metaphor, a trope that returns to itself in its circularity and contained relationship with the music.

However In the 4th Movement (bar:40) and different kind of metaphor, relating to Kramer’s ‘sense of disclosure’ arises. The text at this point has been suggesting the movement of ‘human traffic’, it develops this metaphor using the symbol of a ‘flag’ being carried up a hill towards some ‘gathering’. Then this mimetic metaphor in which there is semantic movement (phora) from one term over on to another – the music having evoked these images – as in the epiphora type above, changes. It does so as follows: the text continues as a conversation between the voices as: *never completely leaving/this feeling/that there was something else/I had forgotten, not heard/Did I miss it?/Find it?/Or invent it?* Here we have the reflexive creation of curiosity, questioning and doubt, about the very activity of listening. Here the trope of something lost or absent invites a movement through (dia) to a new perceptual state. This is metaphor in its *diaphoric* mode (Hopper: 1992:287ff.) creating ‘the production of new meaning’ in an embodied sense. This shift we can call ‘perceptual transfiguration’, whereby a difference becomes palpable and embodied. Openings, ‘disclosures’ and ‘hermeneutic windows’ in Kramer’s terms may be created by these perceptual transfigurations, which are separate and even prior to the cognitive functions of metaphor. They take us through, *dia* and disclose a new sense and potential signification.

**A Performed Ethnography of Listening: Summary**

***In Practice***

A group of 40 listeners were able to produce imaginative and rich responses in words having listened to an orchestral piece of music – Photography by Errollyn Wallen. Listeners’ responses could be read as intersubjective, intelligible metaphor clusters, as a ‘prose-poem’ and were able to be authored into a dialogic ethnographic performance script capable of performance in *conversation* with the music.

The responses, and the performance script were not primarily descriptive, representational or programmatic to the music. In Cook’s terms they were in *unitary conformance; non-contestation; and complementary*. The performance script fulfills the criteria for effective ekphrasis in terms set out by Kramer. The performance ethnography was therefore an intersubjectively intelligible, hermeneutic, ekphrastic art-work engendered by and derived from a collective experience of listening to the music.

The ethnographic performance script structured as two ‘voices’, together with other features of the relationships between the participants in the event (listeners, audience, composer, conductor, ethnographer, voice-coach, words and music) can be described and conceptualised as a relationship, between words/music, composer/listener, as *conversation.*

The performance itself created new interpretive opportunities for the conductor and the players in the forms of repetition and the inflection between the performed words and the third, music only, rendition of the piece. The performance surprised the composer who felt a resonant conversation had taken place which also opened up the compositional process as well as interpretive possibilities. Technical challenges of balance between the ‘voices’ and the orchestra drew some members of the audience towards a preoccupation with aesthetic performance criteria and away from the distinctive aspects of the emerging new genre.

***In Theory***

This project allowed a series of conceptual and theoretical issues to be opened, which are the ongoing focus of the HARK Listening Project:

We theorise that we have identified and amplified a listening *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1997,1990, Coessens, Frisk & Ostersjo in Crispin and Gilmore 2017). Features of this *habitus* are:

1. Sound/music resonates in the composed bodyin listening practices (Nancy, J-L. 2007) through modes of attention such as ‘intentional unintentionality’ (Humphrey, C. & Laidlaw, J. 1994) and within listening regimes (Szendy, P. 2008).

Listening is however a ‘tense, attentive, or anxious state’ which is ‘straining’ towards meaning and this posture is at an ‘edge’. Listening to musical sound, to the resonance of sound for itself is a marginal experience, liminal, taking place at a threshold where ‘exterior’ sound is also ‘interior’ resonance. Listening is a disposition where ‘sense not be content to make sense (or to be logos) but that it want also to resound’ (Nancy, 2007:6). Therefore to hear, is to understand the perceived meaning, sense (*sens sense*) in contrast to listening for the ‘perceiving sense’ (*sens sensible*). So, to be listening is to be on the edge of meaning, the sound being nothing but the edge. Listening is an active bodily experience concerned with sense and sensation. (Lloyd-Richards, 2017)

2. Sound/music resonates, resounds and rebounds in listeners’ ‘sighs’ (Lyotard in Gritten 2017), affect and movement: vocal, illocutionary, and in words carrying significance prior to sematic meaning, yet noetic.

3. Words and images emerge as creative imaginative responses as text ‘fragments’. Words are place-holders for states of being, as such they carry significance prior to semantic meanings. These fragments are the material of a ‘music poetics’. (Lloyd-Richards, 2017). These music poetics emerge from this *habitus* of listening conceptualised as Auditory Play (see *A Taxonomy of Listening: A Repertoire for Auditory Play* in Lloyd-Richards 2017 p.113). Semantic meanings emergent from significance and:

Meaning does not inhere, it emerges, its acts. Meaning is an event, the occurrence of something singular. The event is something that “occurs to’ a subject in both senses of the term, “befalls’ and “comes to mind”. Its primary media are verbal, including paraphrase, ekphrasis, troping and metaphor…(Kramer, 2011)

4. Dialogically, metaphors constellate/cluster as intersubjective shapes, as word-pictures/narrative, and these are valid and significant interpretive response to the sound/music:

Informal interpretations of music, phrases just blurted out – unsystematic, freely metaphorical, not especially articulate – are important far in excess of their apparent lack of substance. They have both social and cognitive value even if they do not rise to the level of the imaginary colloquy on Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto *(note: this was a highly sophisticated formalistic analysis peppered with terms of art).* They activate shared assumptions about subjectivity; they foster feelings of alliance and identification; they participate in the hermeneutics of everyday life that maintains our intuitive, pre-critical sense of the world. Sharing in them is a form of world making. And it is also a form of music making, and echo of the music of that sphere. These ascriptions, these semantic improvisations, are not only habitual, they are inevitable; it is hard to imagine music without them. The strange thing is why we have so often tried. Just imagine, in the style of Wittgenstein, a ‘tribe’ that has music but is unable to speak about it, either aloud or in thought. In what sense would such a people really ‘have music’? (Kramer,2011:66)

These four movements are interpretive and represent a first ‘hermeneutic window’ (Kramer 2011).

Hermeneutic windows tend to be located where the object of interpretation appears – or can be made to appear – explicitly problematical. Interpretation takes flight from breaking points, which usually means from points of under or overdetermination: on the one hand, a gap, a missing connection; on the other, a surplus of pattern, an extra repetition, and excessive connection. (Kramer, 2011).

5. A dialogic and authored ethnography of listening may be crafted as an ekphrastic art-work of evocation and homage to the sound/music.

The ‘meaning’ of music to a large extent inheres not within the notes themselves but within a concept we apply to them. “hearing as“, like “seeing as” mixes knowledge and perception. (Spitzer, 2004:10)

6. The sound/music and words may be brought into conversation with the sound/music in performance – in the listening cycle this represents the second hermeneutic window in which:

Words allow what is there to be heard, to be heard more fully. Words allow what is heard to be brought into relations that on their own sounds could not make.  Ethnographies of listening can realise differently the potentiality for meaningful relations within sound and thereby enrich the range of music’s being. Participation is all. (Nicholas Davey. Personal Communication.)

7. Open Interpretation and its generative continuity is given energy by these processes of listening and articulation.

Open interpretation is the vehicle of subjectivity in a strong sense, not of private sensation or idiosyncrasy, but of intelligent agency, it is fundamentally the capacity to interpret: subjects make interpretations; interpretations make subjects. (Kramer).

8. The creation of these interpretations can be conceived as entailing in some cases ‘perceptual transfigurations’ in the process of listening (Hopper: 1992:287ff.)

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**An Ethnography of Listening: Performance Script for Photography by Errollyn Wallen.**

**First Movement: Vivace. 4 mins 26 secs.**

***1st Listening Voices 2nd Listening Voices***

**Wait for 3 secs:**

Calls

Are you calling me?

 clarion calls,

Coming and going

a conversation

 an echo layer

a message

**At bar: c. 20 secs……**

Dropping, dropping

somebody else is treading in

Listening here to there

 captivated?.. captured?

**At bar: c 25 secs…..**

Flashing, Scaling up,

I am pulsed, soaring

I am caught in it.

what’s coming next

a dance, for me

I am a part of it.

spring-like bursts of urgency

industrious energy,

I see a river coming,

dancing down a hill

jerking round rocks and rapids.

like a painting, someone was applying different colours. With a brush.. a bright red colour over here, or a dark green around here. The sounds were becoming more colourful. You were seeing somebody paint.

I see the instruments dancing.

 dancing together

 they have their own spirit

The dancing bows

**At bar: c.57 secs**

I am sliding back

I am falling backwards

**At bar: c.1 min 05 secs**

 ticker tape messages

Calls keep coming

 A morse code

**At bar: c.1 min 08 secs.**

**25 secs. to read till next phase.**

One Day while Peter-Panning the sky

I saw a man,

A man dying over the Eastern Gulph,

And I said to this man:

 – The light that makes us a friend of eagles

Has made our poor wounds an interval of clouds,

Slow and creeping, calm and sad,

In this skyful dungeon of things –

**At bar: c. 1 mins 33 secs.**

A shadow falls in answer

now laborious, presaging,

anxious,

* The sky is awful! The sky undarkens!

Hermes his wing-ed foot, rests old in China!

Rests uncontested while cloudbuds burst

And windleaves fall!

 my tired hands hold back

The violent skirt of night!

 my moss-covered feet crush

the seaports of day!

**At bar: 2 mins 05 secs.**

But, a jester, prancing, fiddles, defies the game,

is gone…

from dance from energy,

untamed to the unsettling

and a creeping coexistence

An insistent plucking

There is no breaking free

**At bar: c. 2 mins.17 secs**

But soon a more troubling note is sounded, more disjointed, jarring, perhaps a little sinister. But the dance is still there.

These intense images of stalking, of predatory menace, can only end in death.

**At bar: 2 mins 34 secs.**

after the darkness of arctic winter, brilliant sunshine and warmth hits the wide open landscapes of arctic Scandinavia… vigorous growth….gamboling reindeer calves…everywhere life in abundance…...growling bears emerging from their winter dens..…bird life.

Our interweaving flights

 are held in the landscape,

our lines live in bigger harmonies

The calls of sky and earth,

the flickering frames from the window of the train

washed with cloud and water, blurring, compressing

**At bar: c. 3 mins 19 secs.**

Its limbs are rising, Am I running away from it

 or is it running towards me

the shape is waking,

pulling itself together,

Angel of the North.

And I am hurtling with the clouds

**At bar; c.3 mins 40 secs.**

And this is the plateau!

This is where we are!

This is what I told you!

This is what is show you!

(Each voice in turn, keep repeating till end)

like the film broke

I am just dropping, coming down in silence….

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Second Movement: Quite Slow. 3 mins 02 secs.**

***1st Listening Voices 2nd Listening Voices***

**On the 5th note of the opening phrase:**

Line drawing…

Drawing me out

Intimate,

conflicting relations

of ‘wooing’ harmony

 too close

sweet possibilities

exiguous

and plaintive.

**26 secs:**

Our eyes meet

[But only] in intersecting

We gaze

 (in expectation)

It looked like love

 but was not

We stare inside

I will look for you

**Bar: 49 secs**

Are you in an interlude?

a hymn, a prayer

These instrumental tales of wandering

Through tree-lined avenues

Curious crossings of the sedate dance

Unable to breathe, corseted

In the wistful bitter sweet

Dance,

cast a wandering gaze

On some vantage point

lost in the stepping

 of my backward glance

“Look not in my eyes for fear you see the sight I see, and love it and get lost like me”

I will give you a white border

 I, you, a trace

you dropped something

 a nutshell

(containing all I know)

at the summit :

of a pause………

**At Bar: c. 1’49secs.**

I left the dying man,

and he must always die,

For Solitude refuses to lower a gentle hand

Upon his long sad face.

**2.09 secs.**

along the top

of what is concealed below

Of what moves unseen but heard

its presence

It holds me

it keeps me from falling

away

leaves me

not loud

as an absence

reliable

 liable,

liable

to reappear

What developed?

Another image

not the photograph you took

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**Third Movement: Slow, trance-like. 2 mins 09 secs.**

***1st Listening Voices 2nd Listening Voices***

I am going to show you a mystery

In a darkened room

even darker

without the blindfold

There is no trance

**27 secs.**

Come with me…………

 arresting/arrested

Give me your hand………………………………..take my hand (spoken as one)

This way

Do not be afraid

Come towards the gaps

between the notes

 bring us the next note

that never comes

**At Bar: 1 min 02 secs.**

Oh, fear

What impending

Surrounds me

Things are getting out of control

 to as high and to as low

Troubling images

Dark forces

Rising up

Growing figures

My crescendoing nightmare

Forming a circle

**21 Secs**

Step up

Look, look!

I can’t see

I won’t look

 you will not see

This silence

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**Fourth Movement: Moderato, keep very rhythmic. 3 mins 11 secs.**

***1st Listening Voices 2nd Listening Voices***

**On the 12th note of the melody. At 6 secs.**

Wake up**.** (softly)

Open the curtains

**10 Secs.**

on a train?.

Morning presses on

Frames shape the sky

**23 secs.**

Wake up! (louder)

look out

the desolate industry

in the countryside

smooth machinery

springs in spring

**37 secs.**

Poles string by

 threaded

 sleepers in the sky

Dreams fly

traces for the day of

chasing

musing in the gallery of ‘whatever happens’

Miro,Chagall

**Bar: 51 secs.**

The days tramp begins

habitual demands

Walking to work

Walking me to work

dreams

In my slippers

As Calendars days flip by

**Bar: 1’05 secs**

open spaces

reindeer crossing

broad rivers,

over stony ground to linger

 on new grass…

everywhere the pulse of life….

escaped the wolf,

the reindeer, fully grown,

 back with the herd.

Swirling, mingling

through the oncoming

 crowd

 with the flow

Head up

In rain

**Bar: 1’26secs.**

The demand

polarity

 fateful attraction

Repeats itself

Gaining beat

military

The human traffic flows

it crowds

it suffocates

closes

 as it disperses

The flag is carried up the hill

Pulled towards some gathering

never completely leaving

this feeling

that there was something else.

I have not seen or heard

Did I miss it?

find it?

Or invent it?

Look! over your shoulder

**Bar: 1’59 mins.**

The image!

The hieroglyphs (whispered)

The figure?

The inscription!

**Bar: 2’06 secs.**

The sunlit uplands

The plateau

This is where we are

Point, line and plane!

The world below

with a white border

Wave!

Take flight!

Dilate

My ears

hold the image

in my pupil

**Bar: 2’30 secs**

Welcome to the Ark

Two by two

Heroic by

Just Being here

A triumph

B**ar: 2’54 (6 seconds to the end)**

Huw Lloyd-Richards. 19/9/17.

1. **End Notes**

 The listening habitus for this study has the following features: the prevailing listening regime constituted by these listeners in their regular attendance at live music events in St Andrews; this, harnessed in the format of face-to -face Listening Groups; solitary listening in a ‘Headphones Group’; the specific guidance given to the groups when listening to Photography. The general outlines of the prevalent listening regime are apparent: highly conventional audience behavior; high knowledgability and attention to Programme Notes; and conservative musical taste. In terms of listening style, modes and repertoire we have theorised that these will be wide ranging but with dominant preferences (Lloyd-Richards, H. 2017 *Ways of Listening: Ethnographies of Listening, Auditory Play and Music Poetics.* HARK.org.uk.). 30 Listening Group members were interviewed, taped/transcribed, on the subject of ‘How they listen to music’. This data is in the process of analysis. The findings will enable us to consider the two-part thesis: a) that listeners have a range and repertoire of embodied resonant listening modes, and b) that they deploy these knowingly as Auditory Play. Listeners were also interviewed on the topic ‘How is music significant to you?’ which encouraged them to talk about how they describe music, and in what ways they express its significance and meaning to them. This data is also under analysis. Here we have theorized that both social and solitary listening can be articulated by listeners in words which carry significance, where metaphor is ubiquitous, and where intersubjective interpretations create intelligible word-pictures and narratives. This paper describes a further exploration of this second question. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. There is an extensive range of art-works which could be considered to have ekphrasitic aspects, if we define ekphrasis as ‘the re-imaginging of one art-work in another medium, producing a new art-work’. A spectrum would include:

a) simple quotation and reference

b) a new work which has a dependence on content derived from an original, for example Chaucer and Shakespeare’s use of Boccaccio’s *Decameron*

c) reordered original content, as in William Burrough’s cut-up technique – The ‘cut-up technique’ (or *découpé* in [French](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_language)) is an [aleatory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleatory) [literary technique](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary_technique) in which a [text](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Writing) is cut up and rearranged to create a new text. The concept can be traced to at least the [Dadaists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dada) of the 1920s, but was popularized in the late 1950s and early 1960s by writer [William S. Burroughs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_S._Burroughs), and has since been used in a wide variety of contexts. A precedent of the technique occurred during a Dadaist rally in the 1920s in which [Tristan Tzara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tristan_Tzara) offered to create a [poem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poem) on the spot by pulling words at [random](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Random) from a hat.

d) Implicit content of an original extracted and edited as in Tom Phillips *Humument,* where he ‘finds’ the ‘ghosts of other possible stories ‘ in an original source text, in this case W.H. Mallock’s Victorian novel *A Human Document.*

e) Art-works reimagined in another medium, as in R.S. Thomas Poetry collection *Too Brave to Dream. Encounters with Modern Art.* (Brown, T. and Davies W. 2010. Bloodaxe Books). Thomas did not see his ekphrastic writing as secondary to his main work, however he did comment on the incommensurability of particular media: ‘Remember Eleonora Duse’s retort when asked to explain what her dance meant: If I could explain it in words, why do you think I would go to the enormous trouble of dancing it?’ The poems in the two ekphrastic collections Thomas noted, are ‘attempts to comment and to draw out extended meanings….’

For a fuller discussion of these matters see:

Sanders, J. 2006. *Adaptation and Appropriation*. Routledge.

Hutcheson, L. 2006. *A Theory of Adaptation*. (2nd Ed) Routledge.

Bruhn, J. Gjelsvik, A, Hanssen E.F. 2013. *Adaptation Studies. New Challenges, New Directions.* Bloomsbury.

One might make the case that the largest and most enduring example of eckphrasis is the Book of Psalms, a fluid hyper-text that has continued to be re-translated, rewritten as poetic forms. (Vassar, J. 2007. *Recalling a Story Once Told. An Intertextual Reading of the Psalter and the Pentateuch*, Battles, M. 2015. *Palimpsest. A History of the Written Word. W.W. Norton &Co.).*

In our case of a *Performed Ethnography* there are two aspects to the ekphrastic approach, first the creation of the ‘prose poem’ from the collective responses to music, giving rise to the possibility of a reader encountering the text anew without having any knowledge of the music, and the performative aspect of the work an its relationship in real time to the musical source. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)