

Audiovisual Constructions

Audiovisual Constructions

Material Interrelations in Live Rock
Performances

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Abstract

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This dissertation examines and analyzes audiovisual constructions in live rock performances from the perspective of material interrelations among four key materialities. These materialities or modes, as they are referred to in the context of this research project, are: musicians' bodies, screens, screen visuals, and sound. In the frame of this study, an audiovisual construction is understood both as a process that describes the confluence of a performance's modes and as a momentary result of their interrelations that creates the performance as a whole. Applying an interdisciplinary approach, this dissertation explores how the interrelations among the four key modes are constructed in the performance, how their material potentials are activated and engaged with each other, and how their materiality is renegotiated by means of these interrelations.

To examine and analyze the material interrelations in live rock performances, this dissertation focuses on three case studies. Each case study consists of a song performed by a rock music band. The specific performances are: "Angel" by British band Depeche Mode, "The Handler" by British band Muse, and "Óveður" by Icelandic band Sigur Rós. Through the detailed analysis of these examples, this dissertation shows that the material potentials of the performance's modes and the interrelations that take place among them in the performance's continuum play an important role in the construction of the performance's audiovisuality and thereby constitute a central part of live rock performances.

KEYWORDS: live performance, performance, rock music, audiovisual, materiality, Depeche Mode, Muse, Sigur Rós, performative materiality, multimedia, scenography, screen, performance space, sound, screen visuals.

Посвящается маме

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Chapter I Introduction

By and large, a live rock performance is a complex construction, a grand-scale mechanism for entertainment, created to be perceived by an audience in a variety of ways. In its production and presentation, a live rock performance is the result of simultaneous labor by a vast number of people who are responsible for every small aspect of the performance, from sound to the screws that hold a stage structure together, insuring that, in the end, it works as a harmonious machine. On the perceiving end, it can be an overwhelming experience linked to a diverse range of emotions and thoughts. It can be either profound or utterly disappointing to each and every person witnessing it. Further, as part of the global entertainment industry, to compete and pay off, a live rock performance needs to both meet the audience's expectations and impress them with something new and unexpected.

A live rock performance is an amalgam of many different performance traditions, drawing upon theater, opera, classical music performance, dance, with, arguably, a short cultural history, that nevertheless displays a wide diversity of technological, creative, and conceptual aspects. It both borrows and develops, referring to traditions and creating something completely new and, as a result, the complexity of the subject provides fruitful ground for a variety of analytical and theoretical approaches. In this dissertation, I specifically focus on implementation of one possible way of looking at and exploring live rock performances, which is, in the first-place, focused on material aspects that come together to create the audiovisuality of the spectacle. In addition to investigating the specific case studies discussed in the following chapters, this research project creates a precedent for analyzing other live music performances from the same perspective, creating tools, methodologies, and opportunities to thoroughly examine them.

Aims and Questions

I deliberately choose to refer to a live rock performance as a performance, instead of using a term perhaps more familiar in the context of live music – concert. To call a live rock performance a concert, while not incorrect, is to narrow its whole distinct complexity as a spectacle, which is the core of this study. A live concert is often primarily associated with the presentation of music

and does not emphasize the intrinsic aspects of a spectacle, its visual part.¹ The term performance, in turn, has a complex definition, which simultaneously points to what happens and how it happens, indicating the act itself, rather than the hierarchy of its components, aural over visual or vice versa. Thus, to highlight the essential complexity of the spectacles analyzed in this dissertation, I choose to refer to them as performances.

Further, in the context of this research project, I treat a live rock performance primarily as a complex audiovisual medium. It is true that various disciplines provide different and sometimes overlapping definitions of what a medium is and, as media scholar Katerina Krtilova rightfully notes, in a broad sense, anything can be considered a medium.² For instance, in the fields of art history and visual studies, scholars traditionally see a medium both as a type of art and as a material that constitutes a work of art.³ Consequently, new kinds of materials provide ground for new forms of art, including a widening understanding of the term and overlap with media studies, where a medium is primarily referred to as a technological agent for communication. As W.J.T. Mitchell remarks, referring to Raymond Williams, media should not be seen as just material, but rather as “material *practices* that involve technologies, skills, traditions, and habits.”⁴ Having considered the diverse uses of the term, in the context of this study, I regard the medium of a live rock performance as a pathway for information and distinct forms of aesthetic experience that creates a complex structure of material and sensory relations.

Accepting that a live rock performance is a medium, this research project examines the performative aspects of an audiovisuality of a performance,

¹ Different dictionaries of the English language provide different definitions of the word concert. For example, Oxford Dictionary defines it as “a musical performance given in public, typically by several performers or of several compositions.”

The Oxford Dictionary of English, 3rd, s.v. “concert,” accessed March 26, 2019, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/concert>.

² “The anthology *Was ist ein Medium? (What is a Medium?)* presents a list of examples of what has been described as a medium by Marshall McLuhan, Vilém Flusser, Jean Baudrillard, Niklas Luhmann, and others: a chair, a football, a waiting room, a street, an elephant, the election, system, faith or love (Münker and Roesler 2008:11).” See: Katerina Krtilova, “Media Matter: Materiality and Performativity in Media Theory,” in *Media | Matter: The Materiality of Media | Matter as Medium*, ed. by Bernd Herzogenrath (New York, London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 28.

³ See: David Davies, “Medium in art,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*, ed. by Jerrold Levinson (Oxford University Press, 2003), 181–191, accessed April 5, 2019, <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199279456.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199279456-e-9>.

⁴ W.J.T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 198.

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seeking to decipher the processes of its construction.⁵ More precisely, the aim of my research lies in the investigation of relations between what I consider the four key materials of performance. These four materials or *modes*, as I will refer to them further and explain in detail in the next chapter, are: the musicians' physical bodies, screens, screen visuals, and sounds. I see the material potentials of these four modes, their interrelations and mutual influence, as central to the functioning of the audiovisual construction of a live rock performance. Consequently, as the nature of a live performance lies in the simultaneous continuity and immediacy of its presentation, my use of the term *audiovisual construction* bears a double meaning. In the context of this study, I understand an audiovisual construction both as a process that describes the meeting of the performance's modes and as a momentary result of their interrelations that creates a performance as a whole. Audiovisual construction is a process that is never really finalized and at the same time a structure that exists every given moment, as the modes of the performance function in a constant collaboration with each other.

Based upon the focus on the audiovisual construction of a performance and the diverse roles of a performance's modes, my main research questions are: How are relations among the four key modes of a performance activated on stage? How do the material potentials of the performance modes influence their interrelations and their engagement in an audiovisual construction? How does the materiality of performance modes become renegotiated during a performance?

Undeniably, there are numerous possibilities for looking at the construction of audiovisuality and for considering the processes it undergoes, just as there is a diverse range of elements of a performance that need consideration. Thus, I do not claim these four modes are the only aspects of a live rock performance to be considered when discussing the audiovisual construction. Furthermore, nor do I treat these four modes in complete isolation from other elements of a live rock performance, for instance, light. However, what will become clear in

⁵ Using the term audiovisual and its offshoots, i.e., audiovisuality, underlines the relationship between sound and image and expands the somewhat limiting concept of visuality in relation to different media. Commonly used in film studies, most prominently by film theorist and composer Michel Chion, the term is now widely used in visual studies to refer to works that employ aural elements along with visual. See: Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, trans. by Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); See *This Sound: Audiovisuology Compendium: An Interdisciplinary Survey of Audiovisual Culture*, ed. by Dieter Daniels et al. (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther Koenig, 2015).

the analysis of the selected case studies is that these four modes take central place in the presentation of various forms of materialities in a live rock performance and the relationship among them allow the performance to unravel as a process. For instance, the physical body of a musician presents a solid materiality; the screen constitutes a physical frame, as well as a changing surface upon which the haptic materiality of images emerges; the materiality of sound reconfigures how the audiovisuality is distributed through the space of the performance. My research considers each mode of a live rock performance as a part of a set of constant interrelations, without hierarchical predisposition, offering the understanding that the modes generate the audiovisual construction when they act in agreement with each other.

In the case of live rock performances, analysis entails examining something that is made to be apprehended by the audience. A performance is an aesthetic object which is created by means of connecting the artists and performers' intentionality, realization of the spectacle in the space of performance, and comprehension by the audience. While, on the whole, all the links in this chain are important, my analysis does not focus on how the performance is intended to be apprehended or how the audience perceive it. Acknowledging the fact that the performance is always undoubtedly directed towards the audience, with the intention to affect, trigger, challenge, or make sense, my central focus lies primarily in the simultaneous creation and display of the audiovisuality of the performance. However, recognition of the audience's presence becomes an important aspect of defining *live* in the context of my research. Thus, in the frame of this research, a *live* rock performance is understood as the simultaneous presence of musicians and audience in the performance's venue during the presentation and reception of the spectacle.

Case Studies

The three case studies that I focus upon constitute the core of this dissertation. Each case study concerns one song performed by a selected music band in various places and on various occasions. I approach each selected song as an independent performance, despite the fact that in some cases, it may be understood as a conceptual part of the entire performance.

In the first case study, I address the live performance of the song "Angel" by British band Depeche Mode. Played for the first time during the band's *Delta Machine Tour* in 2013-2014, the performance of the song was directed by the

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band's long-standing collaborator, Dutch photographer and video director Anton Corbijn, and executed by XL Video.⁶ The second case study is the live performance of the song "The Handler" by British band Muse, which was repeatedly performed live during the band's *Drones World Tour* in 2015-2016. The visual presentation was created by lighting and visual designer Oli Metcalfe, video director Tom Kirk, multimedia director Bruno Ribeiro, and executed by creative team Moment Factory.⁷ The third case study is the live performance of the song "Óveður" by Icelandic band Sigur Rós. The song was performed during the band's *European Tour* in 2017 to open the second part of their performance. The visual presentation was created by video content director Damien Hale in collaboration with lighting director Bruno Poet and his creative team.⁸

I specifically choose these performances as they cover the time span of five years during which the major part of this research was conducted. Beyond this, they were performed in large-scale venues that allowed for a complex stage setup, unhindered use of advanced video and audio technologies and, as a result, a more elaborated audiovisual construction.⁹ In general, they represent a significant trend in live music performances, according to which the use of progressive technologies, complex visual effects, and multifunctional stage structures are in favor and a diverse range of screens and imagery becomes important and anticipated.

These three cases are central to this research as they are representative of a change in live rock performances in the terms of how their creators' approach and apply advance technologies. Their audiovisual construction centers upon a complex collaboration between the live performance on stage and mediated imagery content on screen, which directly affect how the materialities of the four key modes of these performances engage with each other. In the selected cases, advance technologies provide new possibilities for audiovisual

⁶ See: Light Sound Journal, "XL Video Can't Get Enough of Depeche Mode," *Light Sound Journal* (June 22, 2013), accessed February 10, 2019, <https://www.lightsoundjournal.com/2013/06/22/xl-video-cant-get-enough-of-depeche-mode/>.

⁷ See: PLSN, "Muse 'Drones' World Tour," *PLSN: Projection Light & Staging News* (February 20, 2016), accessed March 20, 2019, <http://plsn.com/articles/designer-insights/muse-drones-world-tour/>.

⁸ See: Bruno Poet, "Road Diaries. Bruno Poet: Lighting Director for Sigur Rós," *tpi: Total Production International*, (20 January, 2017), accessed December 10, 2017, <https://www.tpimagazine.com/bruno-poet-lighting-director-for-sigur-ros/>

⁹ They were all performed in middle- or large-scale arenas or stadiums.

construction, primarily by negotiating the physical and mediated presence of the musicians' bodies in the space of the performance.

In general, the screens in large-scale performances are used to transmit live documentary images for the audience, which is located far away from the stage, that is, as technical support.¹⁰ In words of musicologist Kimi Kärki, “so that the people in the back of the arenas could achieve at least some contact.”¹¹ In the performances I examine, the screens and screen visuals do not mediate the performers' bodies in order to merely bring them closer to the audience, but rather permit them to become integrated into the construction of the audiovisuality of the performance in a new way. Thus, new methods for applying technology in these case studies allows for problematizing, challenging and reconstructing the role of the musicians' bodies on stage, activating and deploying them as material in the audiovisual construction.

Even though a live rock performance no longer necessary requires musicians to be physically present, for example, in the case of virtual bands, this research project focuses on cases in which musicians are present on stage during performances, and music and vocals, while mediated and amplified, are produced live.¹² Despite the extensive use of advanced technologies in the

¹⁰ According to musicologist Leif Finnäs, audiovisual presentations during live music performances can be generally distinguished into three categories: simple documentary; TV-type documentation, and non-documentary. Simple documentary, as Finnäs interprets it, presents an “exposure of the live performance, showing the performer(s) from one or a few more or less static perspectives without special visual effects.” Following his explanation, I name this type of screen images as live documentary. Screen images transmitted in the live documentary mode allow the spectator to have access to the performance, in the sense that they identify clearly who is present on stage and follow the presentation as if they were positioned right in front of the stage.

Leif Finnäs, “Presenting Music Live, Audio-Visually or Aurally – Does It Affect Listeners’ Experiences Differently?” *British Journal of Music Education* 18, no. 01 (March, 2001), 56, accessed February 18, 2015, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/british-journal-of-music-education/article/presenting-music-live-audiovisually-or-aurally-does-it-affect-listeners-experiences-differently/C0D55C281390C6354DA8FE26BDDDCB45#>.

¹¹ Kimi Kärki, “Turning the Axis: The Stage Performance Design Collaboration Between Peter Gabriel and Robert Lepage,” in *Peter Gabriel, From Genesis to Growing Up*, ed. by Michael Drewett, Sarah Hill, and Kimi Kärki (Aldershot: Ashgate Press, 2010), 226, accessed September 12, 2017. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329694067_Turning_the_Axis_The_Stage_Performance_Design_Collaboration_Between_Peter_Gabriel_and_Robert_Lepage.

¹² Along with virtual bands, where the absence of musicians' physical presence is deliberately underlined as a creative concept, recently a new form of live music performances has appeared, which employs imagery of deceased musicians. Their virtual co-presence with physical bodies on stage and in the audience is called to evoke the cultural memory of the participants or even underline the romantic notion of immortal nature of art. For example, in their latest performance, British rock band Queen used footage of Freddy Mercury's performance integrated into the live performance on stage, as if he is singing along with the band's original guitarist Brian May. This form of performance ought to recall presence, rather than underline absence.

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selected cases, the bodies of the musicians are still able to mark the time *now* and the space *here* with their physical presence on stage. This is why it is crucial that the performances I selected for my case studies simultaneously employ different forms of bodies. All three cases engage in some form of extension of the physical body on stage, using avatars, body images, or filmed bodies as a part of the pre-made video content. The co-presence of physical and mediated bodies allows for the revelation of the potentials of the body's materiality in relation to the modes of screen, sound, and visuals.

While all three performances employ screens, their technical qualities and, as a result, their material potentials and relations to bodies, images, and sound, varies. For instance, in the case of "Angel," a large solid background screen dominates the stage and provides a platform for streamed images of live action on stage, presenting the mediated and manipulated visuals of the lead singer's body simultaneously with his physical body on stage. In the case of "The Handler," screens are made of semi-transparent material on which pre-made content is projected and interacts with the physical bodies of the musicians on stage. Finally, in the case of "Óveður," the performance takes place between two screens that possess different material qualities, as the one of them is semi-transparent and the other is solid. Thus, the selected case studies complement each other, allowing for broad analysis.

These are the major factors that influenced my choice of these three specific performances, allowing them to stand out from other live rock performances. I do not claim that these are the only performances to use screens, screen visuals, and bodies in this particular way. But considering that in live rock performances, the main focus still lies on authenticity, accessibility, and performers, these cases represent an important angle to the study of live rock performances that has not been explored before.

Framework and Limitations

The specificity of the subject of this research project provides a certain level of flexibility and it can be argued that every performance contains distinct, unique qualities. The performance is displayed to a different audience every time; each location has its own atmosphere; and performances change over the course of a tour. Thus, I do not claim that there is one single way of looking at the specific case studies or any other live rock performance. Neither do I claim that each and every performance, however well-structured and controlled, is identical to

the previous performance. Rather, I acknowledge, what media artist Grayson Cooke calls “a dialectic between control and uncontrol” that persists in live performances, affecting each new understanding of the constructive processes in the space of a live rock performance.¹³

Nevertheless, the performance is still a construction which is developed before the performance is set into motion and there is always a framework of core audiovisual elements and relations among them around which the spectacle is organized. During every live performance, there is a designated way in which these elements act together and in which the relations between them unravel in the process of presentation. This is especially relevant in the case of performances that use advanced technologies. The more complex the technologies involved, the greater the need for control and precision in how the performance is constructed and presented and how its modes act in accordance to each other.

Contributing to a new field of knowledge means having new choices and opportunities to develop an academic discussion. Limiting and defining the range of analysis always leaves something out. By focusing, as explained above, on live rock performances that employ the musicians’ bodies as one of the modes of their audiovisuality, I significantly narrowed my selection of available case studies. For instance, I chose to avoid live performances that accentuate choreographed movements and dance sequences or those performance that use exaggerated and complicated costumes that could influence the visible presentation of the musicians’ bodies.

Genre

While this research project has a clearly stated focus on live *rock* performances, I do not base my analysis on an understanding of genre as a fixed set of musical characteristics. Rather, I follow the claim of musicologist Robert Walser that “nowhere are genre boundaries more fluid than in popular music.”¹⁴ Walser has approached genre as discourse, thus enabling researchers to consider and understand “not only certain formal characteristics of genres but also a range of understandings shared among musicians and fans concerning the

¹³ Grayson Cooke, “Start Making Sense: Live Audio-Visual Media Performance,” *International Journal of Performance Art and Digital Media*, Vol.6, Issue 2 (2010), 201, accessed November, 25 2017. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1386/padm.6.2.193_1.

¹⁴ Robert Walser, *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Hanover, N.H.: Wesleyan University Press, 1993), 27.

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interpretation of those characteristics.”¹⁵ I follow Walser’s approach to include social aspects in the definition of a genre. Therefore, I see the characteristics of the genre of rock in relation to my case studies as directly connected to meaning-making practices and social construction rather than to the specific, objective criterion of music. As art historian Ina Blom emphasizes, “what unites ‘rock’ is not so much a strictly musical idea as it is specific engagement with the media machine of production and distribution.”¹⁶

I consider the genre affiliation of the music groups analyzed in this dissertation similarly. Rather than focusing on musical characteristics, I acknowledge that the definition of this music as rock is to a great extent dependent on the understandings of musicians and fans and constructed by music journalism and fan culture. For instance, Depeche Mode, the band with the longest musical career among the three cases, have had various positions in popular music, developing from synth-pop to dance rock and further to alternative rock. These precise definitions of genre are never clearly expressed by the musicians themselves, but rather accorded to their music by their influential fan community and journalists.¹⁷ In a similar way, Muse are often assigned the role of an alternative or progressive rock band, which later changed into “arena rock.”¹⁸ The band’s affiliation with the genre of rock music is likewise supported by the context in which it is placed by music journalists, who compare Muse to historically acclaimed rock bands, i.e. Pink Floyd and Queen.¹⁹ Sigur Rós, however, are positioned in another corner of the broad field of rock, referred to as post-rock.²⁰ The band’s affiliation with post-rock is connected to both their records and live performances, which feature long musical compositions characteristic of the sub-genre, atmospheric sound, and focus, as musicologist Simon Reynolds remarks, “on mood and ambience rather than

¹⁵ Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 28.

¹⁶ Ina Blom, *On the Style Site, Art, Sociality, and Media Culture* (Berlin; New York: Sternberg Press, 2007), 170.

¹⁷ Kory Grow, “Are Depeche Mode Metal’s Biggest Secret Influence?” *Rolling Stone* (August 11, 2015), accessed March 20, 2019, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/are-depeche-mode-metals-biggest-secret-influence-56191/>.

¹⁸ Greg DeTogne, “Arena Rock In The Round,” *ProSoundWeb* (January 15, 2016), accessed March 26, 2019, https://www.prosoundweb.com/channels/live-sound/arena_rock_in_the_round/.

¹⁹ Jenny Stevens, “Muse: ‘This Tour Will Be Our Version of Pink Floyd’s The Wall,’” in *NME* (October 10, 2012), accessed 24, 2019, <https://www.nme.com/news/music/muse-152-1253996>.

²⁰ See: Lawson Fletcher, “The Sound of Ruins: Sigur Rós Heima and the Post-Rock Elegy for Place,” *Interference/ A Journal of Audio Culture*, Issue 2 (2012), accessed March 13, 2017, <http://www.interferencejournal.org/the-sound-of-ruins/>; Ethan Hayden, *Sigur Rós’s ()* (New York, London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

climax and catharsis.”²¹ Their affiliation with post-rock is also affirmed by Sigur Rós’ distinctness both geographically and linguistically, compared to the majority of rock music bands and musicians.

Gender

I chose to focus my attention specifically on all-male bands to make the discussion and analysis of the cases more consistent, especially concerning the aspect of physical bodies on stage. As emphasized above, in relation to musicians’ bodies, I focus primarily on their material properties and potential on stage and on screen, and analyze the processes in which the bodies partake as a part the audiovisual construction. Thus, as my main focus lies in the role of the bodies as tangible entities, rather than in their gender performativity, the question of gender does not play an important role in my discussion.²²

As Walser underlines, it is not only a musician’s body or his or her persona that defines gender identities, but that “notions of gender circulate in the texts, sounds, images and practices.”²³ I am primarily interested in the analysis of the creation and presentation of the performance, rather than on the meaning it possibly conveys, which also means that questions of gender and its performative aspects are insignificant. That is, I do not ask how the *masculine body* is made present or apprehended, but rather how the *tangible body* takes part in the audiovisual construction.

One important aspect of this research is investigating how the body as a materiality becomes integrated into a network of material interrelations in the audiovisual construction, without placing it hierarchically above these interrelations. Thus, I look at a body on stage from the angle of its *original corporeality* and not from the perspective of socially constructed gender,

²¹ See: Fletcher, “The Sound of Ruins,” unpaginated.

²² There are already a noteworthy number of studies that deal with the question of gender in general and masculinity in particular in relation to rock music. See, among others: Walser, *Running with the Devil; Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender*, edited by Sheila Whiteley (London: Routledge, 1997); Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: Evaluating Popular Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Jason Lee Oakes “‘I’m a Man’: Masculinities in Popular Music,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Music*, ed. by Derek B. Scott, 221 – 239 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); *The Routledge Research Companion to Popular Music and Gender*, edited by Stan Hawkins (London: Routledge, 2017).

²³ Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 109.

performed masculinity, or its cultural and political power.²⁴ The choice of all-male bands is in many ways dictated by the additional critical issues that a comparison of all-male, all-female or mixed gender or gender identity bands would introduce, which could possibly detract from the aims of the research. However, the construction of audiovisuality in live music performances applies equally to all music groups or individual performers, regardless of gender. Thus, the openness of this analytical approach, which allows for reframing the focus on the body in the context of a live rock performance's audiovisuality, increases the contribution of this research project to a broader range of case studies, not specifically to live music performances of all-male bands.

Material and Data Collection Methods

As mentioned above, my main interest lies in the exploration and analysis of the modes, their materialities and material processes that constitute audiovisual construction in three live performances. In many ways, the empirical material for this study dictated its method, which was primarily grounded in firsthand observations of the selected case studies. I attended a variety of performances, searching for cases that were challenging and complex in both their technological construction and conceptual realization. Familiarity with the performance history of the selected music groups and knowledge of their performance potential allowed me to narrow my focus prior to seeing them live and choosing them for my case studies.

Furthermore, important to my method from the very beginning was the possibility to observe each performance more than once. In this way I could see the performed songs at different venues and from different positions, for instance, standing close to the stage or sitting far away. Repeated observation allowed me to examine the selected songs more than once and to create a more detailed and focused description after each performance, as well as to observe if there were differences in relations between modes during subsequent performances.

²⁴Theater scholar Mieke Wagner refers to the existence of the original corporeality of an actor on stage in terms of his or her "natural human flesh," which in her words, "can be distinguished from its medial representations."

See: Meike Wagner "Of Other Bodies: The Intermedial Gaze in Theatre," in *Intermediality in Theatre and Performance*, ed. by Freda Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt (Amsterdam – New York (NY): Rodopi B.V., 2006), 126–127.

Audiovisual Constructions

Exploring the case studies from within the audience means always having a certain degree of physical distance from the performance. I was not able to touch or even come close enough to see the elements of the performances in detail. I was not able to see everything at once and, at moments, parts of the stage were blocked from my view. I was, therefore, placed exactly in the vulnerable and shifting position of the spectators for whom the performance was intended, in a position that created the possibility for me to become affected by the performance and, at the same time, allowed me to ask the question, *why* does it feel like it does to perceive the performance? Thus, while attending performances, it became important to my method to navigate between undoubtedly personal observations of the performances and my role as a researcher capable of asking questions and analyzing processes that take place in their audiovisual construction. Constant awareness of my position as a researcher made it possible to frame the cases from a perspective different from that of a casual spectator or even a fan, differentiating among what was visible in the performance, what happened, and what was sensed or perceived on a visceral level. Since my analysis does not center upon my personal emotional experiences or audience perception, atmosphere, environment, and venue did not play the significant role they undoubtedly would in another form of analysis.

An important aspect of my method included making notes, taking photographs and videos during the performances. This method of data collection, when it comes to exploration of the live rock performance, has flaws. It is often impossible to take notes during the performance and it has to be documented afterwards. The performances usually unravel at high speed and lighting is limited, often interfering with taking photographs or filming videos. Also, due to corporate law, no professional equipment is allowed at the concert venue without accreditation. Even then, professional photographers are allowed to film only first three songs of each performance.

My own photographs and videos of performances comprised my private archive that allowed me to grasp and to fix the performances for analysis, supporting written notes and reconstructing memories. For this reason, I also used sources other than my personal observations and documentation. That is, in my analysis I employed images and videos made by people at other concerts, which were part of the same tours, as well as visual material available from official sources. These include both professional and amateur photographs and videos that often act as a memory trigger and also help me to present the material to my peers.

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To date, there is no public archive that collects materials that I use in this dissertation. Instead, I employ sources that are available on different internet platforms and create my own network of information. This requires me to approach additional materials from diverse sources critically by understanding possible manipulations and corrections applied to live performances when they are professionally filmed and edited. Additionally, images and videos, whether amateur or professional, will always affect how the materiality of the performance's modes is captured. For instance, a naked eye will experience a semi-transparent screen and interplay of screen visuals on its surface different from how this is depicted in a photograph.

It can be argued that one does not have the same perspective when seeing a concert live or on video recording. Yet, the live perspective and memory based on it can be as exclusive as the work of a cameraman who films a concert. In the analysis of a temporary event, something will always be missing due to the performance's constant flow. However, it is exactly that flow that makes the event possible, and it should also be considered as a part of the production and display of the audiovisuality of the performance, not as something that destroys it. Illustrating the analysis of the case studies is an active part of my method, which allows me to invite a subjective reading without damaging an objective analysis, while images act as evidence that the performance took place.

Sources

When it comes to information on live rock performances, sources are both limited and endless. Performances by major bands receive numerous reviews and critiques in a variety of public platforms, including print magazines, online journals, and radio programs, which in many ways construct a critical discourse around them. Thus, performances by Depeche Mode and Muse are often commented in different sources that vary from short concert reviews to interviews with the bands' members, focusing both on their music and live performances. They are prominent in such well-established music journals as *Rolling Stone*, *Q* and *NME*. The same applies to artist and creative teams that work to produce the bands' live performances. Published interviews conducted with Anton Corbijn and Oli Metcalfe are important sources of information for my research.

However, Sigur Rós, a band of small scale, usually receives less attention and is not discussed in detail in comparison to other two bands whose performances

I studied. Therefore, an interview I conducted with the band's video content director, Damian Hale, provides the necessary details for the discussion concerning "Óveður."

The online, specialized publications *Live Design* and *tpi: Total Production International* are rich sources for my study that present the technological developments in stage design for different forms of live performances and public events. They provide fresh information about contemporary stage design, artists and creative teams, sound engineers, and performance technologies.

Previous Research

The number of studies that in one way or another deal with the subject of live rock performances is not overwhelming, but still quite substantial. There are enough to create a sense of the possibility of an emerging of a field of studies or an interdisciplinary crossroads that deals specifically with the subject from different perspectives. However, the number of studies that focus specifically on audiovisual construction or engage with the aesthetics of live rock performances is still insufficient. This is especially the case considering the diverse scales and formats of performances, the level of creativity that artists and musicians display, as well as their interest in rapidly developing technologies. This can be explained by the inherently interdisciplinary nature of the subject, which makes it difficult to locate a specific field of knowledge in which to place a discussion concerning the audiovisuality of live rock performances. Beyond this, the domination of the strong commercialism of nearly all large-scale live rock performances may be why they are placed at the margins when it comes to academic disciplines, as their aesthetic qualities become somewhat diminished by this.

The topic of live rock performances appears here and there, sporadically and often with a very precise focus, for example, on the musician's persona, stage set-up, or as a part of historical narrative about a band or performer.²⁵ In general, the main discourse around live performances constructed by review

²⁵ Especially about music groups like Depeche Mode, which has been in the music industry for decades, are there biographical works written by different authors or the musicians themselves. These works usually approach the band from a personal perspective and support a general narrative of its history, rather than focus on their live performances' audiovisuality. See: Steve Malins, *Depeche Mode: A Biography* (London: André Deutsch, 1999); Johnathan Miller, *Stripped: Depeche Mode* (London: OMNIBUS PRESS, 2008).

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articles, and short remarks in the daily press or specialized musical journals, where there is a certain tendency to focus on the result, on the final grand picture that a live rock performance presents when all its elements come together in perfectly rehearsed and executed harmony. These articles do not allow the space for in-depth, critical analysis, but nevertheless generate a discursive frame in which live rock performances are discussed and perceived.

As a result, the actual productive mechanics of performances' materialities, not exclusively in the technological sense, but also in how the performance becomes what it is in the processes of presentation and how its modes function together in the performance space, are rarely addressed. Instead, scholars and journalists gravitate towards a focus on particular musicians or music bands, tending towards a biographical or popular writing format rather than considering the live rock performance in itself.

It is important to emphasize that in the following review of works relevant to my subject I do not limit my discussion only to the genre of rock, though it is still my main focus, but also take a look at the general trends in the field of popular music in performance.

Rock Music as Performance

Rock Music in Performance, by drama and theatre art scholar David Pattie, is one of the most prominent books engaging specifically with live performances of rock music.²⁶ Reflecting on the field of live rock performances, Pattie underlines that there are few studies in which “live performance is treated as performance, rather than as an expression of sub-cultural solidarity or as an incidental part of the industrial process of popular culture.”²⁷ Departing from this statement and engaging with the existing body of research, Pattie explores the paradox between authenticity and theatricality in live rock performances. The first part of the Pattie's comprehensive study pays extensive attention to already-existing theoretical discussions of authenticity, gender, or sexuality and genre in rock music, specifically in relation to live performances, tracing the evolution of rock performances as a genre. The second part of the book presents an overview of different examples of live rock performances from the 1960s onwards, with thorough descriptions of iconic and some lesser known performances, which

²⁶ See: David Pattie, *Rock Music in Performance* (Hampshire England; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

emphasize Pattie's point concerning authenticity and theatricality. While the work provides good ground for further, more focused discussions, Pattie does not look deeply into the complexities of how performances are created in the process of presentation, which is central to this research and resides beyond the sociocultural aspects of live rock performances.

While Pattie looks at the general scope of live rock performances, more commonly the subject is a specific example, such that an author chooses to focus on one particular music group or performer. For instance, *In the House of the Holy: Led Zeppelin and the Power of Rock Music* the work written by professor of English and Cultural Studies Susan Fast.²⁸ Fast's study engages in a thorough discussion of Led Zeppelin's recordings, live performances, and public image which she primarily addresses from the perspective of gender, ritual, performativity, and sexuality.

Works written by Kimi Kärki have a similar orientation but are even more explicitly concerned with performances in rock music. For example, in the chapter "Turning the Axis" Kärki explores the technological and designed nature of the performance in relation to audiovisual experience by focusing on the collaboration between musician Peter Gabriel and stage designer Robert Lepage in *Secret World Tour*.²⁹ Another of his notable works available in English is "Matter of Fact It's All Dark," in which Kärki focuses on the live performances during *The Dark Side of the Moon* tour by British band Pink Floyd.³⁰ Kärki explores the technological, meaning-making and performative aspects of the performances, while considering the position of the group as "a definer of the stadium rock aesthetics."³¹ An important aspect of Kärki's works lies in the fact that while he specifically focuses on the technological side of these performances, he simultaneously underlines the value of artistic creativity in relation to their presentation and production.

Another body of research concerns the documentation of live performances. These works often focus specifically on the physical presence of musicians as a kind of connective tissue that holds the performance together. One such example is *Playing to the Camera* by communication scholar Thomas F.

²⁸ See: Susan Fast, *In the House of the Holy: Led Zeppelin and the Power of Rock* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

²⁹ See: Kärki, "Turning the Axis," 225–240.

³⁰ See: Kimi Kärki, "Matter of Fact It's All Dark?: Audiovisual Stadium Rock Aesthetics in Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side of the Moon* Tour 1973," in *Speak to Me: The Legacy of Pink Floyd's Dark Side of the Moon*, edited by Russell Reising, 27–42 (Aldershot: Ashgate Press, 2005).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 28

Cohen.³² Cohen analyzes different forms of musical performance documentaries, emphasizing how filmed performances provide access to the actual production of music. Another such example is “Spectacle and Intimacy in Live Concert Film” by musicologists Lori Burns and Jada Watson.³³ Burns and Watson analyze American pop rock singer P!nk’s *Funhouse Tour* live concert film, exploring the complexity of multimedia performance and contradictions between “(public) presentations” and “(private) representations.”³⁴ In their analysis, Burns and Watson draw upon theoretical approaches borrowed from theatre studies, literary criticism, and film theory. By doing so, they thoroughly explore different expressive levels, focusing on “the narrative, aesthetic, thematic and musical” aspects of the performance in its entirety, emphasizing how “[t]he aesthetic qualities and technical features of film production” influence these aspects in the concert film.³⁵

Liveness, Authenticity and Persona

In his influential work, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*, Philip Auslander addresses the position of live performances in the contemporary media environment.³⁶ Exploring different forms of live events, including live rock performances, his main focus lies in discussing the ideas of live and mediatized in the frame of cultural economy, deconstructing the assumption that “the live event is ‘real’ and that mediatized events are secondary and somehow artificial reproductions of the real.”³⁷ Defining a mediatized performance as “performance that is circulated on television, as audio or video recordings, and in other forms based in technologies of reproduction,” he suggests that the mediatized character of the performance needs to be at the center of analysis of any live event, as “mediatization is now explicitly and

³² See: Thomas F. Cohen, *Playing for the Camera: Musicians and Musical Performance in Documentary Cinema* (London and New York: Wallflower Press, 2012).

³³ See: Lori Burns, Jada Watson, “Spectacle and Intimacy in Live Concert Film: Lyrics, Music, Staging, and Film Mediation in P!nk’s *Funhouse Tour* (2009),” *Music, Sound and the Moving Image*, Vol.7, Issue 2, Autumn 2013, 103–140, accessed November 12, 2014, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/536547>.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 104.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 137; 112.

³⁶ See: Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

implicitly embedded within the live experience” and that it is mediatization that gives a live event its clear definition of liveness.³⁸

While Auslander pays considerable attention to the subject of live rock performances, he uses them as examples to support his argument rather than explores the complexity of their performative aspects. He claims that “[l]ive performance now often incorporates mediatization to the degree that the live event itself is a product of media technologies,” focusing specific attention on the screen.³⁹ He emphasizes that the use of screens in live performances affects audience understandings of intimacy and their experience of performance, asserting that audiences now experience a performance by reading it “off a video monitor.”⁴⁰ Hence, the *live* of the performance can no longer be prioritized over the mediatized. Valuable as they are, his arguments inevitably diminish the value of screens and the complexity of their potential in the space of performance. Focusing on the role of a screen as a mediating tool, Auslander does not consider the examples in which a screen does not mediatize a live performance per se, but, for instance, becomes an interface for conceptual visual presentation, as in the case studies in this research project.

Auslander’s other central assumption concerning live rock performances is that they are essentially created to contribute “to the processes of authentication” in the frame of rock ideology.⁴¹ He claims that, to be authentic, a rock band should have “a history of live performances” and only a live performance can validate authenticity by providing “the visual evidence of the sound’s production.”⁴² He also suggests that live rock performances reproduce what has been already seen on television, for example, in music videos, claiming that the reproduction is necessary for the audience and allows for authentication of what they know and expect to see.⁴³ As a result, Auslander ranks live performances secondary to a band’s music, records and television appearances, suggesting that they are only a highly elaborated reproduction what fans have already seen. As with the role of screens, these assumptions undermine the complexity of live rock performances and their audiovisuality, leaving no room

³⁸ Auslander, *Liveness*, 4; 35.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 88–91.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 7.

for understanding the creative and productive processes that lay the ground for each performance.

Scholarly discussions concerning musicians' personae and their physical presence on stage also refer to live rock performances. For example, Auslander contributes to this topic in an article called "Musical Personae."⁴⁴ Here, Auslander focuses upon musical personae, a complex construction that musicians create, that includes, as he underlines, "not only musicians' techniques but also their facial expressions and gestures, the attitude they convey, what the audience knows of their lives outside the performance context, and so on."⁴⁵ He continues to investigate and develop this in another work, "Performance Analysis and Popular Music: A Manifesto."⁴⁶ Similarly, socio-musicologist Simon Frith, in his book *Performing Rites*, addresses live music performances as a part of an interdisciplinary exploration of the popular music.⁴⁷ Particularly in the chapter on "Performance," Frith explores the socio-communicative nature of live music performances, emphasizing aspects that, in his opinion, define the performance as a performance act. There, he examines the role of musicians' bodies and their physical, emotional, and performative traits in the construction of the performance and how they influence audience perception.

Audience Research

Despite the fact that I do not pay specific attention to the experience of the audience in the context of this dissertation, it is still relevant to acknowledge studies conducted on audience research, if not for methodological reasons, then for outlining the big picture of the current state of research. One issue of *Rock Music Studies*, called "The Live Concert Experience," contains research by scholars from a diverse range of disciplines, who deal explicitly with different

⁴⁴ See: Philip Auslander, "Musical Personae," *The Drama Review*, 50:1, 2006, 100–119, accessed December 16, 2014, https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/stable/4492661?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴⁶ See: Philip Auslander, "Performance Analysis and Popular Music: A Manifesto," *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 14:1, 2010, 1–13, accessed December 15, 2014, <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/doi/abs/10.1080/1026716032000128674>.

⁴⁷ See: Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: Evaluating Popular Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

approaches to the study of live music performances.⁴⁸ The issue includes articles on audience research, an ecological approach to live music experience, and recorded performances that never took place in front of the real audience. For instance, in their contribution to the issue, musicologists Anne Danielsen and Inger Helseth explore the relations between auditory and visual dimensions in a live music performance that employs pre-recorded and synthesized sounds.⁴⁹ Employing participant observation and interviews with audience members at concerts by Suzanne Sundfør, Danielsen and Helseth examine the issues of authenticity and immediacy in technology-based performance. As they observe, “the audience’s experience of liveness seems to revolve around aesthetic rather than technical aspects of the concert,” emphasizing that “[t]he way in which the musicians present, convey, and express the musical content” influences the audience more than the relationship between the soundscape and its technological production.⁵⁰ Their findings provide a fresh understanding of liveness, empirically challenging Auslander’s assumptions concerning the relations between the audience and mediatized nature of the performance.

Bridging the Interdisciplinary Gap

Taking It to the Bridge: Music as Performance, edited by musicologist Nicholas Cook and performance studies scholar Richard Pettingill, creates a connection between musicology and performance studies.⁵¹ The collection strives to bridge the gap between a specifically musicological approach, that views music as “something written down” and performances as “more a matter of correctness than of artistry or creativity,” and performance studies, where the focus is on “the act of performance.”⁵² The chapters are written by scholars from different disciplines that, in one way or another, deal with music in performance or performances of music, exploring a range of examples from opera to interactive music video games. Of especial interest is Susan Fast’s chapter, in which she

⁴⁸ See: Thomas M. Kitts and Gary Burns, eds., “The Live Concert Experience,” *Rock Music Studies*, 3:1, 2016, accessed June 14, 2017, <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/toc/rms20/3/1?nav=toCList>.

⁴⁹ See: Anne Danielsen and Inger Helseth, “Mediated Immediacy: The Relationship between Auditory and Visual Dimensions of Live Performance in Contemporary Technology-Based Popular Music,” *Rock Music Studies*, 3:1 (2016), 24–40.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 36

⁵¹ See: Nicholas Cook and Richard Pettengill, eds., *Taking It to the Bridge: Music as Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013).

⁵² *Ibid.*, 2.

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questions perceptions of live performances and their recorded representations in a discussion of U2's first 3D concert film in cinema theatres.⁵³ Though she does not explicitly write about the live performance itself, she conceptualizes the concert experience as a distinct form of performance art.

The Oxford Handbook of New Audiovisual Aesthetics, likewise published in 2013, and edited by musicologist John Richardson, film and media scholar Claudia Gorbman, and scholar in music video research Carol Vernallis, includes studies from a wide range of disciplines and explores different forms of audiovisual media phenomenon.⁵⁴ The publication's subjects include cinema, television, music videos, installation art, and gaming. Auslander's chapter, "Sound and Vision: The Audio/Visual Economy of Musical Performance" pays specific attention to live music performances, primarily focusing on psychedelic music and art performances in the 1960s and 1970s.⁵⁵ Auslander makes use of Nicholas Cook's theoretical structure of instances of musical multimedia (IMM). He discusses the relations between visual and sonic elements in psychedelic performances, with special focus on the use of lighting, and analyzes the affective influence these relations have on audience perception.

An earlier volume, *Music, Sound and Multimedia: From the Live to the Virtual*, edited by film scholar Jamie Sexton, also contributes to the discussion of live music performances.⁵⁶ Specifically the chapter, "Pop Music, Multimedia and Live Performance," written by performance artist Jem Kelly is beneficial. Kelly focuses on intermedial live performances, in which the live presence of performers is combined with or replaced by some form of virtual representation.⁵⁷ Much like Fast's work, the main focus of Kelly's work lies in what actually defines live performance, separate from questions of authenticity, and what impact it has on the audience perception in its intermedial context.

⁵³ See: Susan Fast, "U2 3D: Concert Film and/as Live Performance," in *Taking It to the Bridge: Music as Performance*, ed. by Nicholas Cook and Richard Pettengill, 20–36 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013).

⁵⁴ See: John Richardson, Claudia Gorbman and Carol Vernallis, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of New Audiovisual Aesthetics* (New York (NY): Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁵⁵ See: Philip Auslander, "Sound and Vision: The Audio/Visual Economy of Musical Performance," in *The Oxford Handbook of New Audiovisual Aesthetics*, ed. by John Richardson, Claudia Gorbman and Carol Vernallis, 605–621 (New York (NY): Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁵⁶ See: Jamie Sexton, ed., *Music, Sound and Multimedia: From the Live to the Virtual* (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2007).

⁵⁷ See: Jem Kelly, "Pop Music, Multimedia and Live Performance," in *Music, Sound and Multimedia: From the Live to the Virtual*, ed. by Jamie Sexton, 105–120 (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2007).

Despite the works mentioned above that engage with live rock performances from different disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives, there is a significant lack of work concerning the subject in the field of art and visual studies. For example, a volume that serves as a meeting point between the visual and aural in contemporary culture, *The Routledge Companion to Music and Visual Culture*, edited by musicologist Tim Shephard and art historian Anne Leonard, does not consider the subject of live rock performances, where the meeting of the visual and aural plays an important role.⁵⁸ Although it provides an overview of different forms of *hybrid arts*, a term used for, inter alia, dance performances and musicals, live rock performances are not included in this category.

A focus on live rock performances is also lacking in the field of performance studies, especially in the rapidly developing area of scenography studies, where the material aspects of the performance are relevant. For instance, *Scenography Expanded: An Introduction to Contemporary Performance Design*, edited by Joslin McKinney and Scott Palmer, a collection of international contributions from scholars and practitioners, explores different aspects of performance culture and scenography in the 21st century.⁵⁹ With a diverse range of examples, the volume examines the visual, technological, and material aspects of contemporary performances. However, it does not include exploration of the aural dimensions of scenographic context, which, in turn, excludes the possibility of discussion of live rock performances, or any form of music performance, for that matter.

Moving Forward

The above works provide perspective upon both the attempts to create a bridge between different disciplines in relation to the subject of live rock performances and an existing gap in understandings of where discussions of live rock performances should be placed, what analytical approaches can be used, and why their audiovisual constructions are not considered in discussions of contemporary audiovisual culture. I outline how, in work by different scholars and practitioners, the subject of live rock performances finds its niche in an interdisciplinary context of socio-musicology, musicology, film studies, and

⁵⁸ See: Tim Shephard and Anne Leonard, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Music and Visual Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

⁵⁹ See: Joslin McKinney and Scott Palmer, eds., *Scenography Expanded: An Introduction to Contemporary Performance Design* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2017).

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audience research, and how little attention is paid to it in art and visual culture, as well as its unsteady position in performance studies.

To approach a subject from interdisciplinary perspective means to acknowledge its versatility and to take into consideration links between different disciplines that allow the subject matter to exist. Proceeding from a practice crucial to art history and visual studies of *looking at* and *analyzing* an aesthetic object and productive processes that constitute it, this research study focuses attention upon the audiovisuality of live rock performances and the material relations among its elements, thus enabling the meeting of different disciplines and simultaneously exploring insights that have not yet been considered.

The complexities of producing work that explores live rock performances and classifies the preceding research on the subject also lies in the real complexity of the question – what do we study when we study a live rock performance? One can study issues of authenticity and the controversy between live and mediated performances or explore musicians' different personae. One can research audience perception and meaning-making and the affective processes tied to them. Or one can take apart the stage set and the physical construction and technological foundation of a performance. As I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, this dissertation is an exploration that shifts the subject towards the interrelations among the performance's materialities. My intention is to simultaneously build on the existing body of research and develop it further, engaging theoretical and methodological pathways that have not yet been employed in the exploration of the subject.

Thesis Outline

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. Chapter II is primarily focused on the theoretical and methodological approaches that constitute the framework for the analyses of the selected case studies. Its aim is to define the subject in relation to different disciplines and theoretical applications, as well as to provide coherent terminology for this research.

The three following chapters are focused on the specific case studies that constitute the core of the research. The case studies are discussed in chronological order and each chapter presents an in-depth analysis from the perspective of my main research questions, as well as specific case-oriented discussions.

Audiovisual Constructions

Chapter III presents my analysis of the performance “Angel” by Depeche Mode. I focus on the different forms of relations that are constructed in the performance. I analyze the relations between onstage and onscreen presentational spaces, as well as those between the lead singer’s physical body on stage and his body-image on screen. I also focus on the structural codependency between sonic and visual presentations in the performance and analyze how this codependency realizes material interrelations between these two modes during the performance.

Chapter IV focuses on Muse’s performance of “The Handler.” It analyzes the relations between the bodies of the musicians, the surface of the screens, and the avatars of the musicians. It examines how the material qualities of the screens influence audiovisual construction and investigates what possibilities these create in the audiovisual narrative.

Chapter V analyzes the performance “Óveður” by Sigur Rós. Proceeding from the main questions of this research, this chapter investigates the potentials for mutual influence among the bodies of the musicians, surface of the screens and screen visuals in the specific setting of this performance. Subsequently, it pays specific attention to the agentic capacity of the voice’s materiality in the audiovisual construction.

Chapter VI comprises the conclusion of this research project, in which the analyzed cases are examined together in relation to the main questions of this research project.

CHAPTER II Theory and Methodology

This chapter precedes the analysis of empirical material and defines the main theoretical approach, conceptual framework, terminology, and methodology of this research project. As the previous chapter indicates, I regard a live rock performance as a complex medium that accommodates different forms of material interrelations. Primarily, I focus on those interrelations that take place among the four key modes that together constitute the audiovisuality of the three selected cases. Therefore, this chapter clarifies theoretical and methodological aspects of the potentials of the performance's modes and an overall understanding of the audiovisual construction in the context of this study.

Theoretical approach and concepts

Considering the interdisciplinary nature of this research and its subject in the theoretical application I do not limit the choice of concepts and approaches to one specific discipline but rather integrate relevant aspects as they are presented, developed and applied across different fields of studies.

Media and Materiality

Multimediality and the Ontologies of Performance

As became clear in the previous chapter, in the context of this research project, I approach a live rock performance primarily as a medium capable of transferring different sorts of information, for instance, and central to this study, interrelations between the key modes of the performance. Furthermore, I wish to emphasize the multimedia aspect of live rock performances. Multimedia performances, in all their varieties, are best defined by theatre and performance scholars Rosemary Klich and Edward Scheer, who refer to them as encompassing media that assimilate both “real and virtual, live and

mediatised elements.”⁶⁰ Considered in relation to live rock performances, this definition emphasizes the characteristics of the performance and its complexity as a medium, which includes both live forms, such as the bodies of performers, and media technologies, such as screens. Accordingly, theatre scholar Patrice Pavis underlines that in the contemporary cultural landscape, multimedia performances are no longer “an accumulation of arts” but rather “merging of technologies in the space-time of representation.”⁶¹

Understanding a live rock performance as a multimedia performance decentralizes the clash of different ontologies that lie at the core of its formation and is based on two opposed understandings of the performance’s essence, namely, *the live* and *the mediated*.⁶² As Klich and Scheer emphasize, it is not the distinction between which elements of the performance are live and which are mediated that plays the central role, but rather “the real-time interaction and experience of these elements.”⁶³ In the context of my research, this understanding provides a framework that allows for the analysis of live rock performances without creating a clash between live and mediated, but instead suggests that, within the performance, “all media and systems of communication can be non-hierarchically integrated.”⁶⁴

Aligning the two ontologies that lie at the base of a live performance, Klich and Scheer argue, the significance of a multimedia performance resides in its ability to acknowledge “the circumstances of its own mediation and aim to achieve an immediacy of presentation.”⁶⁵ They emphasize that the medium specificity of a live multimedia performance is not “designed to represent an alternative reality,” but rather “to shape a certain experience of the immediate space and time of the performance.”⁶⁶ Thus, in order to explore the potentials of a performance’s modes and their interrelations, I do not see performances’

⁶⁰ Rosemary Klich and Edward Scheer, *Multimedia Performance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 2.

⁶¹ Patrice Pavis, *Contemporary Mise en Scène: Staging Theatre Today*, trans. by Joel Anderson (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 137.

⁶² The core of this ontological opposition is often connected to frameworks developed by Peggy Phelan and Philip Auslander. As Klich and Scheer explain, Phelan’s understanding of the live performance’s authenticity is based on the fact that it is “essentially non-reproducible” and “cannot be re-experienced.” In his turn, Auslander points out the opposite, claiming that “liveness exists only as a result of mediatisation” and live events that employ media technologies are never purely live. See: Klich and Scheer, *Multimedia Performance*, 68–69.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 69

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 135.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

live and mediated aspects as standing in opposition to each other, but rather explore their mutual influence upon the audiovisual construction. I do not compare the live with the mediated, but instead use, in the words of performance studies scholar Steve Dixon, “the doubling of space synergistically to demarcate a new, unified ‘mixed reality’ space.”⁶⁷

Material Modality and Its Modes

In his work on the modalities of media, comparative literature scholar Lars Elleström argues that a major problem in the discussion of material relations lies in a general lack of distinction between the materiality of media and the perception of media.⁶⁸ He claims that to understand the core of relations between diverse media, it is important to draw a theoretical distinction between *the material* and *the perception of the material*.⁶⁹ To be able to create this theoretical distinction, Elleström suggests four media modalities that he defines as “the essential cornerstones of all media,” namely, a material modality, a sensorial modality, a spatiotemporal modality, and a semiotic modality, which can each be divided into modes.⁷⁰ Comprehension and analysis of all four of the modalities Elleström suggests could prove itself useful to a study that would simultaneously focus on productive, perceptive, and meaning-making aspects of a live rock performance as a medium. However, following the aims of my research project to explore the material processes that create the audiovisuality of live rock performances, I do not attempt to dissect each selected case study into its respective modalities, but rather focus on material modality and analyze a complex system of interrelations among the modes of performance and its materialities.

Elleström defines material modality as “the latent corporeal interface of the medium” and further distinguishes three categories of modes that comprise material modality: human bodies, “materiality of a demarcated character,” and the “material manifestation of a less clearly demarcated character.”⁷¹ As I outlined in the previous chapter, there are four distinct elements of

⁶⁷ Steve Dixon, *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theatre, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2007), 410.

⁶⁸ See: Lars Elleström, “The Modalities of Media: A Model for Understanding Intermedial Relations,” in *Media Borders, Multimediality and Intermediality*, ed. by Lars Elleström, 11–48 (Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 2010).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

performances that I refer to as modes: the musicians' bodies, screens, sounds, and screen visuals. According to Elleström's definition, the first three modes fit directly into the categories of the performance's material modality. A musician's body as a "very specific corporeal interface" belongs to the first category, while screens and sounds to the second and the third, respectively.⁷²

However, this leaves screen visuals somewhat unidentified. Elleström claims that images, which is what screen visuals are, "are *not* seen as modalities or modes."⁷³ He does not expand further to provide a specific category for images. Therefore, I suggest considering screen visuals as a complex form of an additional mode of the material modality, taking into account that the material manifestation of screen visuals is directly dependent upon their interrelations with the three other modes. Furthermore, the exact potentiality of the materiality of screen visuals emerges in presentation, primarily in relation with the mode of the screen. All four modes of a performance possess unique material potential and qualities, which impact interrelations among them and influence the audiovisuality of the performance.

In this regard, another complexity reveals itself. As it is stated above, I approach the screen as one of the modes of the material modality of the performance. However, the screen inevitably acts as a technical medium, which is defined by Elleström as "any object, physical phenomena or body that mediates."⁷⁴ This dual position of the screen, which is discussed in detail later in the chapter, underlines the material qualities of the screen as a mode and its role as a technical medium in relation to its own materiality and the materiality of the three other modes.

Performative Materiality and the Vitality of Materials

Following the discussion above, in order to explore the audiovisual construction of live rock performances, I recognize connections among the four key modes that constitute each selected performance as grounded in their materiality. These materialities stabilize the live rock performance as the product of a creative activity and, at the same time, generate a certain level of fluidity, which is the main requirement for a performance's immediacy. To understand how materialities engaged in the audiovisual construction and how

⁷² Elleström, "The Modalities of Media," 17.

⁷³ Ibid., 16.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 30.

interrelations between them are executed on stage, I introduce two concepts important to the analysis of the selected case studies: *performative materiality* and *the vitality of materials*.

The first concept is extensively addressed in the work of a visual theorist Johanna Drucker. In her exploration of the materiality of digital media, Drucker suggests shifting attention from identifying material objects as “*what they are*” to “*what they do*,” that is, to the performative potentials of the objects’ materiality.⁷⁵ Although, Drucker’s main interest lies in exploring digital artifacts and therefore strengthening the material properties of screen visuals, I propose extending the understanding of performative materiality to all modes of a performance, thereby expanding the limits of the framework in which interrelations among them are created and understood. In her definition of performative materiality, Drucker underlines that it “suggests that what something *is* has to be understood in terms of what it *does*, how it works within machinic, systemic, and cultural domains.”⁷⁶ As she explains further, “[m]aterial conditions provide an inscriptional base, a score, a point of departure, a provocation, from which a work is produced as an event.”⁷⁷ In relation to the audiovisual construction of a performance, the concept of performative materiality emphasizes that the material modality of a performance does not act as a fixed entity, but is actualized through the cooperation, connection, contradiction, and even the possible assimilation of its modes. Possessing their own intrinsic materiality, the modes activate each other’s material qualities and communicate in the flow of the performance, thereby creating the processes that comprise it. As Drucker further underlines, “[d]escription of material properties puts in play a series of interpretative events in which the performative dimensions of these properties are actualized in complex inter-relations, dependencies, contingencies, and circumstances.”⁷⁸ Consequently, the performative processes that constitute the audiovisual construction of a performance allow its modes to create a flexible network of interactions that can potentially actualize their material properties.

As the focus of my research is on understanding the materiality of both human and non-human entities as it manifests itself in the process of a

⁷⁵ Johanna Drucker, “Performative Materiality and Theoretical Approaches to Interface,” *DHQ: Digital Humanities Quarterly*, Vol.7, Number 1 (2013), sec. 4, accessed March 1, 2017, <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/7/1/000143/000143.html>.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., sec. 8.

⁷⁸ Ibid., sec. 15.

performance, another important aspect emerges, namely, the vitality of materials. In my research, I primarily relate the analysis of my case studies to how this concept is framed and developed by political theorist Jane Bennett. The vitality of materials resides in their agentic capacity or, as Bennett calls it, in their *thing-power*, which allows for recognition of the objects' material forces and their potential powers extending beyond human agency.⁷⁹ Understanding the vitality of materials minimizes “the difference between subjects and objects,” which, in turn, elevates “the status of the shared materiality of all things.”⁸⁰

Furthermore, as Bennett continuously emphasizes, the agency of even the smallest element always depends on “the collaboration, cooperation, or interactive interference of many bodies and forces.”⁸¹ This introduces another important aspect related to the vitality of materials, namely, *the agency of assemblage*. Bennett defines assemblage as “groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts,” in which each element with its “certain vital force” adds to “an effectivity” of the group, that is, to its agency.⁸² As Bennett emphasizes, “to form alliances and enter assemblages: it is to mod(e)ify and be modified by others,” and this process of modification “is not under the control of any one mode.”⁸³ Thus, the interplay of materials in the context of a performance's material modality is treated as a form of assemblage, in which no single element is positioned above another, but each partakes in the audiovisual construction by means of its own potentiality. Correspondingly, when the modes come into contact with each other, their latent material qualities, which otherwise would have stayed dormant, are activated.

Space and Scenography

In order to explore a live rock performance in the context of its presentation, my research addresses two important concepts that exist in constant negotiation with each other. These concepts are space and scenography. Approaching a live

⁷⁹ See: Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 23–24.

⁸³ Bennett adopts Spinoza's concept of “modes,” which also relevant to how I employ the term in the context of this study. Bennett elaborates, “Spinoza's conative, encounter-prone body arises in the context of an ontological vision according to which all things are ‘modes’ of a common ‘substances.’” See: *Ibid.*, 22.

rock performance as a scenographic spectacle and analyzing the potentials of the space in which it takes place bolsters analysis of the interrelations between the four modes.

Space

In her work on theatre performance, Gay McAuley, a scholar of theatre studies, differentiates among the overlapping forms of space in which a performance can take place. She defines the difference between the performance space, the stage space, the presentational space, and the fictional space.⁸⁴ The performance space, according to McAuley, is a broad, comprehensive concept, which denotes the space where performers and spectators meet. The performance space includes the presentational and perceptual sides of a spectacle and can be constructed anywhere where performance occurs.⁸⁵ Further, McAuley interprets the stage space as an actual “physical space” that becomes extended and renegotiated by the presence of an actor in the duration of a performance.⁸⁶ According to her, the stage space is defined by its “physical characteristics, width, depth, its degree of separation.”⁸⁷ It is the domain of presentation, which is clearly separated from the audience space and serves as a medium that allows different forms of information to be channeled toward the audience.

The presentational space, in turn, is defined by McAuley as “the physical use made of this stage space in any given performance.”⁸⁸ Thus, while the stage space can be understood as a fixed structure that frames the performance, the presentational space appears in the process of the performance when all the elements involved in its construction are activated. These elements do not simply adjust to the physical properties of the architectural frame, but instead produce the performance as an event. The fictional space in performance, according to McAuley, refers to “the place or places presented, represented or evoked onstage and off” and can be presented physically through the performer or “simply spoken.”⁸⁹

⁸⁴ See: Gay McAuley, *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theater* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999).

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 26–27.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

In accordance with the case studies that I analyze for this research project, I wish to extend McAuley's definition of the concept of presentational space and to emphasize that the multimedial character of a performance produces a new dimension of space – a screen space, which is activated when the screen adopts the role of a technical medium. The screen space is simultaneously a part of the stage space and its extension, which, when activated in the performance's continuum, inevitably creates a threshold into another form of presentational space. This new, extended form of presentational space can be seen as working along with, together or, in some cases, in contradiction to the presentational space of the stage.

To differentiate and support analysis of the case studies, I recognize the two main presentational spaces as on-stage and on-screen. When I indicate on-stage presentational space and an on-stage presentation, I refer to the tangible reality of the stage and how this is used and mediated by the stage during the performance. Equally, when I refer to on-screen presentational space and an on-screen presentation, I address the use of the screen space from the same perspective. As will become clear from the analysis of the selected case studies, inside the complex setup of the performances, the on-screen presentational space and on-screen presentation become a part of the on-stage presentational space and on-stage presentation, intertwining with each other in the process of audiovisual construction.

Scenography

Understandings of scenography, a concept originating primarily in the fields of theatre and performance studies, have been, for some time now, developing and expanding towards new forms of representational and analytical thinking. The corner stone of these changes can be best summed up in the words of Joslin McKinney and Scott Palmer, scholars and practitioners of theatre and scenography studies, who underline that scenography “has outgrown its function as a technical and illustrative support,” which inevitably changes theoretical and practical approaches to scenography.⁹⁰ A new understanding of scenography has made it possible, as McKinney and Palmer emphasize, to realize, consider, and introduce “the action of the scenographic materials themselves,” in all their diverse forms, which allows for the creation of “a set

⁹⁰ McKinney and Palmer, *Scenography Expanded*, 2.

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of potentialities rather than a singular message” in the construction, presentation, and perception of the performance.⁹¹

Specifically, in this study I acknowledge scenography as no longer simply bound to the performance’s dramaturgy or meaning-making processes, but instead closely associated with the interrelations that take place among a performance’s modes. My recognition of a live rock performance as a scenographic spectacle is somewhat limited, for I choose to divert attention away from questions regarding how a performance’s scenography channels meaning, affects, or is affected by the audience. Instead, I wish to focus on what possibilities the recognition of a live rock performance as a scenographic spectacle can provide for the understanding of the potentialities of the material interrelations in the performance, that is, to primarily consider the scenography’s ability, in words of McKinney, to orchestrate “materials and constructions” in the performance environment.⁹² Scenography allows for a broad understanding of the materiality of a performance, not only binding it to tangible elements, but also including materials that are harder to grasp and comprehend, such as, light, sound, textures, and colors.⁹³

In the opening to *The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography*, McKinney and theatre scholar Philip Butterworth underline that scenography “is defined in its realization and performance rather than its intentions.”⁹⁴ While *mise-en-scène*, according to Patrice Pavis, “groups and systematically organizes the different materials” in a performance, the scenography of a live rock performance, in turn, triggers and maintains relations among the performance’s materialities in the flow of the performance.⁹⁵ While the rock performance’s *mise-en-scène* bridges the live and the mediated, scenography continues further to insure the construction of the presentational space, when all the modes of the performance are activated and engaged with each other. Thus, scenographic

⁹¹ McKinney and Palmer, *Scenography Expanded*, 10.

⁹² Joslin McKinney, “Empathy and Exchange: Audience Experience of Scenography,” in *Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices*, edited by Dee Reynolds and Matthew Reason (Bristol, Chicago: Intellect Ltd., 2012), 221.

⁹³ Joslin McKinney, “Vibrant Materials: The Agency of Things in the Context of Scenography,” in *Performance and Phenomenology: Traditions and Transformations*, ed. by Maaïke Bleeker, Jon Foley Sherman, Eirini Nedelkopoulou, 121-139 (London: Routledge, 2015), 121.

⁹⁴ Joslin McKinney and Philip Butterworth, eds., *The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 4.

⁹⁵ Patrice Pavis, “The State of Current Theatre Research,” *Applied Semiotics/Sémiotique appliquée* 1:3 (1997), 205, accessed April 14, 2017. <http://french.chass.utoronto.ca/as-sa/ASSA-No3/Vol1.No3.Pavis.pdf>.

understandings of performance play an important role that undergirds Drucker's notion of performative materiality and Bennett's concept of the vitality of materials, setting a framework of possibilities for the modes of a performance to engage with each other in its audiovisual construction.

Modes

While the analysis chapters of this study are based on the discussion concerning the interrelations between the four key modes and their materialities, the theoretical sections need to clarify the different aspects of every mode involved in the audiovisual construction of a performance separately, highlighting their individual properties and potentialities.

Bodies

As outlined in the review of existing research, in work on live rock performances the understanding of the musicians' bodies as the markers of authenticity prevails; it is towards their bodies the attention of the audience is directed, with specific focus on the bodies' unique narrative, its persona. The performer's body on stage can be defined according to McAuley as "the most important agent in all the signifying processes," as it activates "the contributing systems of meaning" in the space of a performance.⁹⁶ Thus, as the actor's body in theatre, the musician's body on the stage is staged, act, and perceived through the spatial-temporal parameters of the performance, in which it is marked as being present here and now with the audience.

The conditions under which musicians' bodies act in live performances are changing in alignment with changes in the entertainment industry and technological development. The musician's bodies on stage are constantly challenged and their performance is shaped by amplification and mediation. The amplification of sound, primarily of vocals, and the mediation of a body by means of screens enables musicians to reach out and become accessible for the audience, thus allowing them to authenticate their physical presence using amplified sounds and mediated images. However, these manipulations complicate the position of the body considering that, as Pavis emphasizes, "in the competition between the filmic image and the 'real' body of the living

⁹⁶ McAuley, *Space in Performance*, 90.

actor,” its “inanimate” form could easily win out over its “living” form.⁹⁷ Thus, the amplification, aural or visual, can potentially redirect the audience’s attention away from the physical body on stage towards what is more easily accessible – its mediated form. This understanding often leads to a critique, in both scholarly and journalistic works, that emphasizes how mediation downplays and decentralizes the physical presence of a human body on stage, diminishing the value of the live performance.

Rather than disagree with or support this argument, in the context of this research project and its aims, I propose to examine musicians’ bodies and their positions in mediated live rock performance from a different angle. I intend to focus on identifying the position of the body’s materiality, its engagement, and its relations with the modes of screen, screen visuals, and sound in the audiovisual construction. Thus, I do not propose to neglect the role of the body as the marker of authenticity or downplay the complexity of its position in live performances, but rather to suggest analyzing a different aspect of the presence of physical bodies on stage, not as a sociocultural, political, or semiotic body, but rather the body as an active materiality. I propose to regard the body as something towards which other elements of a performance gravitate and the material properties of which are engaged in the audiovisual construction.

Recognizing the body only as a marker of authenticity and a human agent can potentially position it as hierarchically dominant over other modes of the performance. However, shifting focus allows for consideration of interrelations between the performance’s modes, without creating a clash between the live and the mediated, as well as acknowledgement of the body as both a subject and a material of the performance. Thus, the challenge that, according to Pavis, the musicians’ physical bodies meet in the space of a multimedia performance as technologies reframe their presence on stage, becomes a cornerstone in the audiovisual construction.⁹⁸

In the context of the case studies that I analyze here, the musicians’ bodies on stage are presented in two states: as physical bodies and as mediated one. The first state is a body in the on-stage presentational space, whose materiality is simultaneously comprehensive, haptic, and affective, even if it is removed from direct engagement with the bodies in the audience. Moreover, it is importantly a breathing, moving, tangible materiality. In the mediated state, the

⁹⁷ Pavis, *Contemporary Mise en Scène*, 134.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

musician's body is presented as a part of the on-screen presentational space and screen visuals. In my case studies, the image of the body is introduced into the frame of the screen as a technical medium and becomes incorporated in spatial reality and affected by the material qualities of that medium. Thus, the body's haptic materiality and the material manifestation of its image are challenged and renegotiated in the production of the performance's audiovisual construction.

In the system of material interrelations in the performance, the musician's body, especially in the case of the lead singer, possesses another quality that is important in the context of my research. That is, the body has an ability to manifest itself through *vocalizing*.⁹⁹ As musicologist Richard Middleton underlines, the voice is central in popular music because of its ability to attest to "the presence of a human body," which he claims, marks "a certain 'humanizing' project."¹⁰⁰ At the very foundation of the voice-body relationship lies the understanding of the voice, as sound scholar Mickey Vallee formulates, as "the most fundamental testimony of one's corporeality."¹⁰¹ The role of vocals, especially relevant to the case study of Sigur Rós, underlines the ability of the musician's physical body to extend its presence on stage by aural means, which influence interrelations with other modes in yet another way. The voice in the performance is the tool of what sound studies scholar Stephen Connor calls an "acoustic persistence," which means that a singing body is capable of producing itself as a "vocal agent" as it gives a voice to a self that can reproduce itself.¹⁰² Through the voice, the singing body has an agency to produce specific sounds and signs.

Screens and Screen Visuals

In this dissertation, I address screens and screen visuals as two modes of a live rock performance that, despite their close relationship in the audiovisual construction, are not the same. The analysis of the interrelations between these

⁹⁹ An empirical study conducted by Anne Danielsen and Inger Helseth shows that, even in a heavily mediated live performance, the voice of the musician and her actual presence on stage is a main focus of the audience's evaluation of authenticity. See: Danielsen and Helseth, "Mediated Immediacy".

The term "vocalizing" is taken from the work of Richard Middleton. See: Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Milton Keynes, Philadelphia: Open University Press 1990).

¹⁰⁰ Middleton, *Studying Popular Music*, 262.

¹⁰¹ Mickey Vallee, "Technology, Embodiment, and Affect in Voice Science: The Voice is an Imaginary Organ," *Body & Society*, Vol.23(2) (2017), 86, accessed February 12, 2018, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1357034X17697366>.

¹⁰² Connor quoted in Vallee, *Ibid.*, 84.

two modes is often complicated by how they are perceived in relation to each other. In most largescale live performances, screens are acknowledged as technical media, tangible objects, that play a significant role in the construction of the performance's mise-en-scène. They are, in many ways, supporting tools for presenting imagery.

Arguably, any form of a screen possesses a certain level of attractive power, especially on the scale of a live rock performance, where the value of its entertainment quality is prominent. In her work on multimedia installations, art historian Kate Mondloch emphasizes the power of the screen, identifying it as a medium which carries hypnotic and even seductive qualities that make one look at it, and which is capable of capturing human attention by glowing, usually in darkness.¹⁰³ Mondloch's statement makes clear the realistically strong position that a screen can occupy in the audiovisual construction.

From the perspective of perception, by means of its seductive qualities, the screen is expected to govern the audience's attention and reduce the distance between the performance and the spectator, possibly diminishing the influence that the real, physical performance on stage has on the spectator, as noted above in relation to the performer's body. Furthermore, preselected, transformed and modified data provided by the screen may structure the audience's experience rather than give it freedom in visual choice. Due to its dominant position, the screen is able to extend the visual presentation much further than the actual physical construction of the stage, therefore allowing on-screen space to overshadow the stage and to take over its presentational space.

While this is true to a certain extent, these are qualities that are more relevant to the screen as a medium than as a mode. A screen provides a platform for creating something along with the on-stage presentation, changing spatio-temporal relations between the elements of the performance, and acting as a technical medium and a part of the architectonic structure of the stage.¹⁰⁴ However, the actual complexity of live rock performances lies in the ability of their scenography to organize the materiality of their modes to make them work across different forms of the stage's and screen's presentational fields. I proceed from the perspective that a screen in a live rock performance is often understood as a space for an image that adds a new dimension to the reality of

¹⁰³ Kate Mondloch, *Screens: Viewing Media Installation Art* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 23.

¹⁰⁴ Guiliana Bruno, *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 93.

the performance, as an environment and interface between on-stage and on-screen presentational spaces. Beyond this, I propose to regard screens as one of the modes of a live rock performance in order to examine its surface, as theorized in visual art scholar Guiliana Bruno's *Surface: Matters of Aesthetic, Materiality, and Media*.

Bruno's central proposition is acknowledging the "tangible and material" when it comes to the surface of a screen.¹⁰⁵ The main objective of viewing screens as surfaces is to allow for examination of possible shifts in relations between the performance's modes in the space of the screen, without overlooking the screen's own material properties. Bruno approaches different kinds of screen surfaces denoting "the mediatic refashioning of visual fabrics," thus recognizing the role of the surface as a materiality that partakes in the processes of visual communication.¹⁰⁶ She suggests that when attention is shifted from images to surfaces, one can perceive how "the visual manifests itself materially on the surface of things" and to notice "the actual *fabrics* of the visual."¹⁰⁷

Her approach does not advocate ignoring images to focus only on the surface of the screen, but rather opens up the possibility for extended analysis of how visuals and screens mutually manifest in the audiovisual construction. Reiterating the close relationship between the image and the screen as a surface, Bruno writes that "[m]any changes affected by the migration of images happen on the surface and manifest themselves texturally as a kind of surface tension, which affects the very 'skin' of images and the space of their circulation."¹⁰⁸

Simultaneously, screens in live rock performances operate according to a logic of hypermediacy. As media scholars J. David Bolter and Richard Grusin, who first introduced the concept of hypermediacy, define its logic and underlines that it makes "the viewer acknowledges the medium as a medium and to delight in that acknowledgment."¹⁰⁹ Owing to the rapid development of technology, the variety of screens used in live concerts has expanded considerably. Screens are still used as massive components of the constructed stage, revealing the complexity of the medium. At the same time, they are

¹⁰⁵ Bruno, *Surface*, 3.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ J. David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1999), 41–42.

reduced to a thin, semi-transparent fabric that is integrated into performances. Different technological innovations, such as voiles that create an illusion of three-dimensionality, expand a performance's affective qualities. My case studies include a diverse range of examples and in which the surfaces of screens play an important role and affect the material interrelations among the performance's modes.

In its turn, I use the term screen visuals as to encompass all images projected onto or emitted from the surface of a screen during a performance. Two main types of screen visuals are used in my case studies. The first type of screen visuals are those transmitted live from the stage. The second type are pre-produced videos or interactive content, that are generated beforehand and delivered during the performance. How these types of images are employed varies among the case studies. Furthermore, screen visuals are highly dependent upon the material qualities of the screens on which they appear, inheriting their properties and entering a complex system of material exchanges.

As Paul M. Leonardi rightfully notes, “materiality seems to imply tangibility,” which significantly complicates how the materiality of screen visuals may be approached.¹¹⁰ However, relying on performative materiality as an approach, I propose considering the material potentialities of screen visuals as they appear in the process of their interrelations with the musicians' bodies, screen surfaces, and sounds. That is, I acknowledge how the materiality of screen visuals can manifest through specific practices.¹¹¹

Sound

Sound, arguably one of the most important elements of a live rock performance, proves to be the hardest to grasp. It is undeniably there, even if there is a certain, as stated above, less demarcated materiality to it. On the one hand, the perceptive materiality of sound indicates its source, for example, the instrument or voice that produces the sound. On the other hand, in the space of a performance, the materiality of sound is often defined by its relation to the perception of an individual when sound waves resonate and are carried through

¹¹⁰ Paul M. Leonardi, “Digital materiality? How artifacts without matter, matter,” *First Monday*, Vol.15, no.6–7 (June 2010), unpaginated, accessed March 1, 2017, <https://firstmonday.org/article/view/3036/2567>.

¹¹¹ Ibid., unpaginated.

space by means of amplification, coming in direct contact with the perceiver's body.¹¹²

The complexity of a clear understanding of the coherent relations between the visual and sonic elements of a live rock performance lies in their spatial separation from each other in the performance's space. Usually, studies that examine the relations between sound and image, for instance, in film and television, address examples in which these two elements exist in the same on-screen presentational space. Sound is seen as diegetic or non-diegetic in relation to an image, as long as it is framed by the screen acting as a presentational space.¹¹³ However, in the space of a performance, sound, produced on stage, does not directly belong to on-screen presentational space.¹¹⁴ It is produced and perceived as external to the screen, occupying on-stage presentation space, audience space, and performance space. That is, sound is not tied to one specific presentational field. Therefore, the audiovisual construction must provide the possibility of a meeting point between sonic and visual elements, to allow them to engage with each other and result in their combined intensity, directed towards the audience.

In my analysis of the materiality of sound in the context of this study, I rely on a concept of perceived congruency. The concept thoroughly explored and presented by sound scholar Shin-ichiro Iwamiya, provides an opportunity to literally trace sound during a performance, as well as to explore its potential in relations among a performance's modes.¹¹⁵ Following empirical studies, Iwamiya argues that perceived congruency consists of two aspects, namely, *formal congruency* and *semantic congruency*. The first aspect is defined by "the

¹¹² See: Olivia Lucas, "Maximum Volume Yields Maximum Results," *Journal of Sonic Studies*, 6 September 2012, Accessed April 20, 2017, <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/84314/87805>.

¹¹³ As film scholars Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White explain, the most common distinction made in film in relation to sound is "diegetic sound (which has its source in the narrative world of film) and nondiegetic (which does not have an identifiable source in the characters' world)." They clarify these definitions further, emphasizing that "the source of film sound is actual soundtrack that accompanies the image, but diegetic sound implies an onscreen source." See: Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White, *The Film Experience: An Introduction*, 5th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, Fifth edition, 2018), 217.

¹¹⁴ The only possible film analogy is early silent films screenings, when sound and music were produced live to accompany a film. But even then, ideally, the purpose of the produced sound was to support the image, rather than for the image to develop along with the sound.

¹¹⁵ Shin-ichiro Iwamiya, "Perceived Congruency Between Auditory and Visual Elements in Multimedia," in *The Psychology of Music in Multimedia*, ed. by Siu-Lan Tan et al. (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2013), 141, accessed September 10, 2018, <http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199608157.001.0001/acprof-9780199608157>.

matching of auditory and visual temporal structure,” while the second aspect is characterized by “the similarity between auditory and visual affective impressions.”¹¹⁶

While semantic congruency is closely related to affective qualities of simultaneous presentation of aural and visual elements, formal congruency, in its turn, closely related to structural relations between sound and a performance’s modes, specifically the mode of sound. According to Iwamiya, the synchronization between audio and visual elements creates a temporal structure in which the two become perceived together, creating a sense of unification.¹¹⁷ The temporal structure of synchronization generates a readable pattern of relations between a performance’s sonic and visual elements. This can be traced regardless of spatial relations between, for example, the modes of sound and screen visuals. Thus, understanding the formal congruency that appears in the process of “the transformation of a visual image and the changing pattern of sound,” for instance, in its intensity, yields a comprehensive pattern of the interrelation between sound and visuals in performance.¹¹⁸

Methodology

In this section of the chapter, I address the research methodology to analyze the case studies in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the subject. It is important that my analysis of live rock performances follows the performance’s continuum. Thus, my methodology relies on approaches that allow for this kind of flow, with the intention of understanding the relations integral to the audiovisuality of performances.

The Content-Oriented Approach and Reconstruction Analysis

To strengthen my role as a researcher and, at the same time, to ground my own experience as a viewer, this section addresses the content-oriented approach developed by art philosopher Noël Carroll in the context of his study on aesthetic experience of the work of art. In *Art in Three Dimensions*, Carroll proposes four different approaches to the study of aesthetic experience, namely,

¹¹⁶ Iwamiya, “Perceived Congruency Between Auditory and Visual Elements in Multimedia,” 141.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 142.

the affect-oriented approach, the epistemic approach, the axiological approach, and, what is important in the context of this study, the content-oriented approach.¹¹⁹

The content-oriented approach is a valuable methodological tool because it turns towards, in Carroll's understanding, the unifying aspect of all aesthetic experiences of art, that is, towards the object.¹²⁰ Content orientation is grounded in an understanding that the object of an experience can to a certain extent define the experience itself. Carroll argues that if one's attention is directed towards "the form of the artwork, and/or to its expressive or aesthetic properties, and/or to the interaction between these features, and/or to the way in which the aforesaid factors modulate our response to the artwork, then the experience is aesthetic."¹²¹ This approach permits me to turn towards what Carroll defines as, "the work's formal and aesthetic properties and their interaction with each other and with our sensibilities and imagination," and therefore to navigate the blurry line between the performative processes, relations among the performance's modes, and my own understanding of the performance.¹²²

Another part of my methodology that relates to Carroll's approach is a somewhat modified and extended version – *reconstruction-analysis* – common in performance studies. Patrice Pavis defines *reconstruction-analysis* as a form of analysis that approaches a performance through existing material, as he calls it "*post festum*," based on documents and clues.¹²³ This is relevant when it comes to descriptions of stage setups and the structures of performed songs, where I, as I explained in my introduction, refer to photographic and video material. However, Pavis elaborates further, stating that in the frame of this analysis, a researcher becomes involved in "a mediated and abstract relationship with the aesthetic object and aesthetic experience."¹²⁴ Thus, his main critique of reconstruction-analysis lies in the fact that it lacks an understanding of aesthetic experience. He states that a performance is "lost forever" and "we can no longer have an aesthetic experience of it nor have access to its living materiality."¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ See: Noël Carroll, *Art in Three Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 101.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*, 105.

¹²³ Pavis, "The State of Current Theatre Research," 206.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 206.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

While the actual aesthetic experience is not central to my research, I nevertheless follow Pavis's critique and extend the interpretation of the audiovisual construction of the performances, combining reconstruction-analysis with my firsthand accounts of performances, to ensure that their complexity is not lost. Exploration of the performances' materialities requires me to follow the flow of the performance, which makes reconstruction also the result of my comprehension. Along with a content-oriented approach, engaging in a modified reconstruction-analysis permits me to link descriptions of case studies, their analysis, and my subjective understanding in the space of the performance, in order to focus on the specific questions and hypothesis centered in this research.

Reading *with* the Performance

The concept of reading *with* the performance is derived from an approach developed by Tim Ingold in his work, "The Textility of Making." In it, he proposes "look[ing] *with* it [a work of art] as it unfolds in the world, rather than behind it to an originating intention of which it is the final product."¹²⁶ Remaining open to a performance as a series of processes, rather than viewing it as a result enables me to read and analyze the interrelations among its modes in its duration, as they are set into action by the performance's scenography. Further, it permits me to approach analysis of the case studies from the perspective of the performative materiality and agentic capacity of the performance's modes, as they manifest in its audiovisual construction.

In the context of *reading with*, Ingold proposes accepting *material flow* as a driving force, which one should follow when approaching the construction and comprehension of a work of art.¹²⁷ Thus, a methodology that reads with opens up the possibility of studying the complex interrelations among the performance's modes from the perspective of their incompleteness. Following the materials means acknowledging that, in the process of the construction of a performance's audiovisuality, materials acquire some sort of agency, that is,

¹²⁶ Tim Ingold, "The Textility of Making," *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 34, (2009), 97, accessed November 13, 2017, <http://sed.ucsd.edu/files/2014/05/Ingold-2009-Textility-of-making.pdf>.

¹²⁷ Relying on Deleuze's and Guattari's approach to "matter flow," which according to them one can only follow, Ingold proposes replacing it with material and hence "material flow," therefore emphasizing the idea of following the material in a performance rather than examining its final form. See *Ibid.*, 94.

they become “things” that are capable of being involved in the action.¹²⁸ An object, for instance, the surface of a screen, becomes a thing when it is entwined with, in Ingold’s words, “several goings on.”¹²⁹ The screen’s surface is pulled into a process in which it interacts with other *things*, images that emerge on its surface, light that pierces or reflects off of its surface, or the physical bodies of the musicians on stage.

¹²⁸ Ingold, “The Textility of Making,” 95.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 96.

CHAPTER III Depeche Mode “Angel”

In this chapter I discuss and analyze the first case study of this dissertation, the song “Angel” by British band Depeche Mode. The song was recorded for Depeche Mode’s 13th studio album *Delta Machine* (2013) and performed regularly during their *Delta Machine* tour in 2013–2014. At each performance, the song was accompanied by the same imagery, based on a concept created by Dutch photographer, filmmaker, and the performance’s artistic director Anton Corbijn.¹³⁰

In this chapter, I first explore the implementation of spatio-temporal potentials in the on-stage and on-screen presentational spaces, focusing on their relations and how they are constructed in the duration of the performance. Secondly, I analyze how the body of the lead singer can be seen as a subject and as material in the audiovisual construction of the performance, and how this affects the body’s relations to the modes of screen and screen visuals. And thirdly, I focus more specifically on the interrelations between sound and screen visuals. The analyses in this chapter are based on observations made during three different performances of the song “Angel” at three different venues. Additionally, I rely on footage and recordings that appear in a live concert documentary filmed by Corbijn during the band’s performance in 2014 at the O2 Arena in Berlin.¹³¹

The Case of “Angel”: Stage Setup

The architecture of the stage setup for the performance, which employed a large end-stage with a catwalk, allowed space for a dominant main screen located at the back of the stage and two supporting screens positioned on either side of

¹³⁰ Anton Corbijn is the band’s long-standing collaborator, who, for more than 20 years, has created concepts for Depeche Mode’s album art, music videos, and live performances. He is often solely responsible for the visual content of the performances since the members of Depeche Mode leave all the visual work to him. See: Malins, *Depeche Mode*.

¹³¹ *Depeche Mode: Live in Berlin*, directed by Anton Corbijn (Venusnote Ltd., 2014).

it.¹³² The visual content for “Angel” was originally developed for big arena performances and the arrangement of the screens enabled the audience to see their content regardless of their position in the arena. The screen visuals were constructed from live-streamed footage of the stage and performing musicians, with particular focus on the Depeche Mode’s lead singer Dave L. Gahan. The musicians were mainly located along the wide background screen with the keyboards of Andrew Fletcher and Peter Gordeno elevated slightly above the main stage level. Dave Gahan and lead guitarist Martin Gore were able to move across the stage during the performance of the song. Thus, the cameras had to follow the lead singer’s movements closely to be able to transmit the images of his body to the screens.

The screens at the sides of the stage were used, for the most part, to deliver live documentation of the performance and meant to capture the performance in an immediate playback loop while, at the same time, increasing visible access to it for audience members located at a distance from the stage. These screens delivered an ideal, undisturbed, and closely positioned view of the stage to the audience, adding complicated angles and close-ups, to create a sense of immersive presence. Despite the complexity of the camera work, the imagery on the side screens showed real-time documentation of the performance, which meant that these screens played a role of a supporting device to extend the scale and accessibility of the performance. By contrast, the large screen located at the back of the stage was used specifically as a surface for transmitting conceptual screen visuals. Thus, it acted as a space for an on-screen presentation in parallel to the on-stage presentation.

Two different forms of screens generated the performance’s multilayered presentational structure, in which not only was the stage mediated by screens, but also the main screen was constantly visually duplicated by the supporting screens. Although this complex structure is significant by itself, in this chapter, I direct my attention only to the visual presentation that took place specifically on the main backdrop screen. My analysis focuses on the conceptual imagery and interrelation among the performance’s various modes, but exclude the

¹³² End stage in theatre means that the stage is located on one end of the performance space, with the audience positioned in front of it on one side. In cases of end stage construction in arenas and stadiums, the stage’s backdrop separates a portion of the arena’s space, thus creating extra space for backstage.

See: The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre & Performance, s.v. “stage.”

discussion on the role of the supporting screens and the visual documentation they provided.

The main screen was a solid rectangular surface of approximately the same width as the stage and occupied the whole background of the setting.¹³³ Active during the performance of the song, it was divided into geometrical shapes by color fields and functioned as a constellation of a few smaller screens, rather than as one solid surface.¹³⁴ It also continuously functioned as a strong source of light that affected the stage setting by creating a vibrant and everchanging background. It was additionally supported by light beams located along the stage at the base of the screen.

Case Description

“Angel” was the second song performed in the entire performance and the band members were already on stage prior to its start. During a short pause taken after the first song, the main screen was deactivated and left to dominate the stage as a solid black rectangular surface. In contrast to the two other case studies, that will be discussed further in this dissertation, the screen was located behind the musicians, at a distance from them and did not permit a direct haptic communication between their physical bodies and its surface.

The meaning of the song and the accompanying screen visuals could not be easily comprehended. Seemingly narrated from a first-person perspective, the song can be understood as describing either a profound religious experience or bear a romantic connotation. While the musicians never really specified the song’s meaning, the article on Depeche Mode in *Q* magazine mentioned that the songs refers to Martin L. Gore’s memory “of church-goers ‘talking in tongues.’”¹³⁵ In the context of the performance, the meaning of accompanying screen visuals can be understood as depended on the audience’s knowledge and personal interpretation of the song’s lyrics.

¹³³ According to information from *Light Sound Journal*, the screen was 17.4 meters wide and 8 meters high. See: *Light Sound Journal*, “XL Video Can’t Get Enough of Depeche Mode,” *Light Sound Journal* (22 June 2013), accessed February 10, 2019. <https://www.lightsoundjournal.com/2013/06/22/xl-video-cant-get-enough-of-depeche-mode/>.

¹³⁴ The geometrical shapes that divided the main screen and were employed in the stage setup visually refer to the album art of the “Delta Machine” record and images in the band’s tour book, which were also created by Anton Corbijn.

¹³⁵ Phil Sutcliffe, “Mortal Combat,” *Q*, June 2013, 57.

Audiovisual Constructions

The screen was immediately activated with the commencement of “Angel,” which instantly created a formal connection between all four modes of the performance’s material modality. The format of the song followed a defined musical structure that consisted of two main sections, (A and B), and an instrumental section, which alternated in the song, with a simultaneously increasing intensity of aural and visual elements. [Fig. 1] The song began with a short introduction (Intro) and quickly proceeded to the first section of the song (A1), when the lead singer’s vocal was introduced. Live streamed images of his body started to radiate from different parts of the screen, emerging and fading away sporadically, emphasizing the inner segmentation of the screen’s surface as a combination of independent video segments. [Fig.4] The inner division of the screen’s surface into independent segments had an impact on how the images of the singer’s body were transmitted. Because the screen consisted of a few small video fields, it allowed the images to be displayed simultaneously without any direct connection to each other, one replacing another when they slowly faded away from their respective parts of the screen.

As the song played, with a perceivable parallelism in a process of increased intensity between the visual and sonic presentations, the formal division of the on-screen fields also continued to change. After the first instrumental section (Inst.1), the central triangular segments of the background screen began to transmit imagery without interruption, while the fields around it continued to show flickering and fading images of the lead singer’s body. [Fig. 5–6] The visual presentation of the central segment became more focused and prominent during the next two sections (A2 and B1). Closer to the end of the section (B1), the intensity of the sound decreased, while the visuals in the smaller segments of the screen disappeared altogether.

In the following instrumental part of the song (Inst.2), the sonic intensity increased significantly. Simultaneously, the screen’s surface changed structure and became transformed into a different constellation of presentational fields. At first, the surface of the screen fully lit up with red light, canceling the previous segmentation. [Fig. 7] Then it became reduced to one central presentational field flanked by geometrical forms. After this transformation, the screen’s central triangle became the space where screen visuals were presented, while the rest of the screen continued to glow red for the duration of the performance, acting as a strong source of light. This demarcation framed the main on-screen presentational field and generated a strong contrast between the screen visuals and the bright red frame.

Chapter III Depeche Mode “Angel”

For the duration of the song, the body of the lead singer remained the main focus of the screen visuals, only occasionally mingled with shots of the other musicians on stage. [Fig. 8–9] As mentioned above, the audiovisuality of the performance did not follow any specific plot and the focus on the lead singer’s body became the main concept of the on-screen presentation. This aspect partly relates this performance to the two other case studies, in which presentations of the musicians’ bodies were also central to the screen visuals, even if in a different way. In the case of “Angel,” the images were montaged together in parallel with the presentation on stage, presenting the lead singer’s body from different angles. The transformation of the on-screen presentational space and the images of the body mirrored the progression of the song, and sonic intensity increased and decreased in relation to the visual presentation on screen.

As the performance progressed, the imagery continued to change with the rhythmic and spectral intensity of sound and the visuals appeared more frequently and stayed on screen longer. While the actual physical body of the lead singer was rather small in relation to the main screen, its image on the surface of the screen was magnified and deliberately distorted. The modifications to the body’s footage and the rapid movements of the lead singer’s body, created screen visuals in which the figure of the lead singer was hardly recognizable. [Fig. 10]

In the last part of the song (B2), visual and sonic intensity decreased, and with it, color slowly faded away from the screen. [Fig. 11] The screen did not resume the live documentary mode of imagery transmission, still applying color filters to the visuals. As they gradually changed to black and white the focus on the lead singer’s body sharpened, presenting him in a close-up. [Fig. 12] In the end, the on-screen presentation, following an already established formal connection with the sound, came to a logical conclusion when the song ended and the main screen was switched off, changing back into a solid rectangular shape.

Meeting Place: On-Stage / On-Screen

As described above, in the stage setup of “Angel,” the large background screen dominated the stage located in front of it. In its passive state, the screen’s dominant and solid surface appeared flat in its lifelessness, functioning primarily as an architectonic construction that created a border between the stage and what was located behind it. However, when the screen was activated at the

beginning of the performance, it went through the transformation that renegotiated its affixed materiality and turned the screen into a flexible material threshold leading to a new form of presentational space. The transformation triggered by the activation of the screen's surface brought into action the complexity of the performance's scenography, in which the on-stage and on-screen presentational spaces became permanently bound together for the duration of the song.

With the activation of the screen, the on-stage presentation became a complex, almost infinitely layered construction. It was generated from the bodies of the musicians, screens, and screen images, which were placed into the physical frame of the stage, and sound, which was not bound to the stage specifically, but nevertheless existed in relation to it. In turn, the on-screen presentation was developed from footage of the stage and transmitted to the screen. In transmission, the footage was manipulated and appeared on screen in its new, altered form that bore only a slight resemblance to the on-stage presentational. Thus, the on-screen presentation was not just a part of the on-stage presentation, but also built upon it, and it renegotiated the relationship between the physical space of the stage and the mediated space of the screen. The two spaces existed in constant negotiation with each other, as the screen acted simultaneously as an extension of the on-stage presentation space and as a new representational space in its own right.

As performance studies scholar Sigrid Merx points out, the use of video technologies allows for the construction of different space and time in a performance, with the help of "camera movement, camera framing, montage and digital manipulation."¹³⁶ When the screen became activated at the beginning of the song, its solid surface instantly broke into geometrically shaped segments. The segmentation did not affect the physical structure of the screen per se, but only became visible when visuals started to appear and disappear on its surface. Thus, the material properties of the screen visuals became somewhat forced upon the surface of the screen, restructuring its solid materiality. Images of the lead singer's body, filmed from different angles and distances, constituted the content of each image segment of the screen. His mediated presence on screen multiplied, distinguishing each segment into an individual field and marking its depth and proportional scale. The visuals appeared on a neutral black

¹³⁶ Sigrid Merx, "Swann's Way: Video and Theatre as an Intermedial Stage for the Representation of Time," in *Intermediality in Theatre and Performance*, ed. by Freda Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt (Amsterdam – New York (NY): Rodopi B.V., 2006), 71.

background that masked the original shape of the screen. As a result, divided into segments, the screen became a multilayered and multifaceted extended space that acted simultaneously as both a mode and as a technical medium.

As the performance progressed and the middle field of the screen became the only surface where screen visuals appeared, the screen’s flatness disappeared and gave way to a contrasting depth of corresponding light fields, where red color fields framed the area where the imagery appeared. While the darkness of the arena framed the stage, the red glowing triangles framed the on-screen presentational space.

The on-screen presentational space acted as a multiplier of the stage in front of it, thus adding infinitely to the depth of the stage set and changing its spatial characteristics. As a result, while the construction of the stage remained unchanged, visual manipulations expanded the spatial parameters of the on-stage space by creating a sense of depth and extension into the background screen. Therefore, in the audiovisuality created by means of feedback imagery transmission with the active screen and screen visuals complementing the tangible reality of the stage, the two presentational spaces did not contradict each other, but rather functioned in harmony. This made the screen’s potential domination of the stage irrelevant. Instead, it emphasized the collaborative essence of the relations between two presentational spaces.

Expanded Spatio-Temporal Relations

In scenography of “Angel,” the approximate location and interdependency of the two presentational spaces in the frame of the stage produced circumstances in which the live action on stage existed parallel to its own mediated and manipulated representations on screen. The on-stage presentation continuously generated its own matching on-screen presentation, which followed the same linear progression and was governed by the same timeframe of the performed song, fully dependent on its duration. It was not pre-made, as are some of screen visuals in the other two case studies, but built on the here and now of the ongoing performance, making the body of the lead singer the main focus of its visual presentation.

As Merx remarks, video “can take place in the absolute now, but not in the absolute here of actor and audience,” meaning that on-screen visuals can share the time of on-stage presentation, but not its exact physical space.¹³⁷ As a result,

¹³⁷ Merx, “Swann’s Way,” 71.

both presentational spaces of “Angel” can be seen as separate spatially, since one was mediated only by the stage and the other was additionally mediated by the technical medium of the screen, but not temporally, since the performance on screen was presented and perceived simultaneously with the performance on stage. However, the interdependency of the on-screen and on-stage timespans and presentations enhances and challenges the *absolute now* and the *absolute here*, by mediating them directly into on-screen presentational space. The *absolute now* and *here* of the on-stage presentation became sources for the on-screen presentation.

However, despite its dependence upon the on-stage presentation, the on-screen presentation did not act as its exact double. First, as media choreographer Johannes Birringer points out, when the stage and the bodies are “reconfigured/rematerialized elsewhere” through a process of mediation, the physical space becomes dematerialized.¹³⁸ In the process of mediation and transformation of the on-stage presentation into an on-screen one, the physical space of the stage was dematerialized to be rematerialized in a different mediated form that reconfigured its material properties. Second, when footage of the on-stage presentation was transmitted and projected into the space of the screen, it was edited, modified and adjusted in real time, which generated a new form of visual presentation and space.

At the beginning of the song, when the screen surface divided into geometrical shapes, each segment generated its own form of spatial relations with the on-stage presentational space and each other, making the mediated body of the lead singer a vector for each visual segment. The objective reality of the stage was then segmented, mediated, and presented on the screen multiple times. While the division of the screen’s segments changed over the duration of the performance, the on-screen presentational space continued to be dissociated, as if belonging to some other, unidentified place.

The process of dissociation was also maintained by the connection of the physical body of the lead singer to his mediated images on screen. In the beginning, while the presence of his physical body on stage was constant, his mediated presence continuously appeared and disappeared, looking as if it were coming closer to the surface of the screen and then fading away into its depths. Even though the physical body of the lead singer was filmed against the

¹³⁸ Johannes Birringer, “Dance and Media Technologies,” *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, Vol.24, no.1, Intelligent Stages: Digital Art and Performance (January 2002), 87, accessed May 18, 2017, <https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/abs/10.1162/152028101753401811?journalCode=pajj>

backdrop of the screen, his mediated form was displayed against a neutral, unrecognizable background. This created an effect like a bad signal transmission and disconnected the mediated body from the on-stage presentational space and placed it in a new, unidentified one. Later, when the imagery presentation changed (Inst.1), and the lead singer’s body was constantly displayed on screen, the manipulations applied to the screen visuals altered the presentation and surroundings unrecognizably. [Fig. 6] Thus, while the on-stage presentation and the tangible materiality of the body remained unchanged, the visual transformations created a new form of space and body in the frame of the screen.

Equally, these manipulations affected temporal relations between the on-stage and on-screen presentations. The on-stage presentation followed a specific linear progression, which developed sonically and visually around the performed song. Simultaneously, in the process of mediation and transformation into the space of the screen, the on-screen presentation became a cut out, stretched, turned, and shifted version of the on-stage presentation. As a result of these manipulations, the on-screen presentation broke its temporal connection to the real-time flow of the on-stage presentation, introducing, in Merx’s words, “a different dimension of time.”¹³⁹

It was clear that, in one way, the on-screen presentation continued to exist within the frame of the physical time of the entire performance, limited by the beginning and the end of the song. It could not, for instance, move forward, contradicting the real-time performance. Thus, it could not break the boundaries of what had already happened or was happening or would be happening. Yet, even though the screen visuals and the stage were bound together by the simultaneity of the presentation, the transmission and manipulation of the imagery flow created a disruption in temporal relations between two presentational fields, just as they created a spatial one.

Although the screen as a medium created a link between the physical reality of the stage and the mediated reality of the on-screen presentation, through the complex system of visual transformations, it simultaneously became, as Bruno

¹³⁹ The term as Merx uses refers to a different dimension of time that can be introduced into the space of the performance if, for example, the on-screen presentation is constructed from pre-made content. In her writing about the performance of *Proust 1: Swann’s Way*, Merx elaborates on how this technique can affect the presentation of memory and remembering in multimedia performances. In this case, a dimension of time is created different from that of the real-time performance, that is a simultaneous result of mediation. See: Merx, “Swann’s Way,” 71.

emphasizes, “the site of expression of new materiality.”¹⁴⁰ Becoming such a site, the screen became capable, in Bruno’s words, of “hold[ing] different forms of material relations and convey[ing] their transformation.”¹⁴¹ The space of the screen provided possibilities for new forms of interrelations among the performance’s modes that the actual physical space of the stage lacked. As a result, the on-screen presentation simultaneously referred to the on-stage presentation and remained independent of it.

Body: Transformative Interrelations

In his discussion on theatre as “the art of the performer,” media scholar Chiel Kattenbelt asserts that the main focus of this understanding lies in a specific form of “human creativity,” which is defined by individuals “who stage themselves in words, images and sounds.”¹⁴² As in theatre or any other form of performance where the body on stage is called to convey the meaning of the performance or deliver its affective qualities, musicians in live rock performances, very often specifically the lead singers, stage themselves to channel the performance for the audience.

While in the two other case studies, all members of the bands were more or less equally involved in the relations with the modes of screen and screen visuals, in the performance of “Angel,” the lead singer was undoubtedly positioned as a main vector of the performance’s continuum. He was both a trigger for the audience’s attention and the primary focus of the screen visuals. Throughout the performance, the mediated image of the lead singer’s body was only seldom replaced by images of the other musicians. This happened mostly at the beginning of the performance, when the song’s vocal section was replaced by the instrumental section. As a result, one of the major aspects of the audiovisual construction of “Angel” lies in the material interrelations built between the mode of the lead singer’s physical body on stage and the mode of his imagery representation on screen.

In *Performing Rites*, Simon Frith introduces Noël Carroll’s aesthetic approach to the meaning of performance art and the role of the artist. First, Frith approaches the performer as a subject. The performer is defined as the subject

¹⁴⁰ Bruno, *Surface*, 94.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Chiel Kattenbelt, “Intermediality in Theatre and Performance: Definitions, Perceptions and Medial Relationships,” *Culture, Language and Representation*, vol.VI (2008), 20, accessed March 13, 2017, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/39085592.pdf>.

of a performance when what takes place on stage can be seen as “determined only by the nature, shape, technique, body, and will” of the performer.¹⁴³ Secondly, Frith emphasizes that when the performance itself becomes “something living, moving, and, by its nature, changing,” the body of the performer becomes an object or, what is more relevant to “Angel,” a material of the performance.¹⁴⁴

In the space of the performance’s multimediality, where the physical body on stage continued to perform along its mediated representation on screen, both performative aspects of the body were mobilized simultaneously. As a result of the constant loop of ongoing negotiation between the on-stage and on-screen presentational spaces, described above, the audiovisual construction of the performance was built on the cyclical transformation of the body from the subject of the performance to its material. This transformation, activated by the scenography of “Angel,” allowed for the potentialities of the physical body’s vital materiality to act on the performance’s audiovisual construction, regardless of its human agent. As a result, throughout the performance, the body of the lead singer became part of the performance’s assemblage and the performative potentials of the body’s materiality became activated, extended, and reconfigured in collaboration with other modes.

Performing the Body: Persona

The musician’s body as a subject of the performance can be viewed through the prism of his persona. According to Frith’s distinction, a musician’s persona can be perceived through three layers of performative representation and there are three types of musician’s persona that may be presented on stage, namely, a real person, a star personality, and a song character.¹⁴⁵ In his work on musical personae, Philip Auslander expands upon Frith’s categorization by claiming that “[w]hat musicians perform first and foremost is not music, but their own identities as musicians, their musical personae.”¹⁴⁶

The first form of persona, according to which the musician is presented as a real person, however private it may be, is still refined by the perception of the audience, in that audience members decide what is it that they see in each and

¹⁴³ Frith, *Performing Rites*, 205.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 204.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ Auslander, “Musical Personae,” 102.

every representation. The second representation is a star personality, which is a complex representation of the musician on stage, where he or she adopts stage and public performance traits, expressed using outfits, behavior, typical movements and gestures, as well as through publicity and appearances as a star personality. In relation to this, for instance, Dave Gahan's performance is often very specific and distinguishable. He has an easily recognizable set of movements that is by now strongly linked to audience expectations and his performance persona. While singing, he often gesticulates expressively as if addressing the audience, despite the fact that he rarely speaks to the audience between songs. The third persona form represents the musician as a character in a song. In this case, the performer's own personality fully depends on the song's context and presents the musician as a mediator between its content and the audience's ability to comprehend it.

Apart from these three personae, there is a fourth, more specific form, namely, a vocal persona. The vocal persona strives to break free from the meaning, that is, the song's character transmitted through the lyrics. As Richard Middleton describes it, "the voice is taken to represent a 'personality' (a unified subject, body and soul)."¹⁴⁷ It is a complex form of performance persona that nonetheless relates to both personal and public aspects of the musician in a performance.

The role of the musician on stage is that of an actor, in a broad sense of the word, who delivers the performance by different means. For example, a text persona refers to the possible narrative of the song; a vocal persona refers to the visceral qualities of the musician's abilities to sing and present his own body, which regulate the process of authentication; a stage persona refers to presentation based on paratext, e.g., photographs, previous performances, or music videos. The persona presentation is often an integral part of every live rock performance, which is responsible for how the performance is produced and delivered to the audience.

However, in the case of "Angel," the role and significance of the lead singer's persona were directly affected by his body's mediated transformation into the on-screen presentational space. Reconfigured in the space of the on-screen presentation, the lead singer's physical body became an inscriptional base for the mediated body that now became part of the screen visuals. Through this transformation, the mediated body became a new form of bodily presentation,

¹⁴⁷ Middleton, *Studying Popular Music*, 264.

which was transformed into a new form of representation – the on-screen persona, that no longer possesses traits of the musician’s subjectivity, but was fully integrated into the audiovisual construction as a material.

Reframing Materiality: The Mediated Body

It is obvious that while the image of Dave Gahan’s body was transmitted into the on-screen presentational space, his actual physical body did not change. As Dixon states, in relation to a mediated body in performance, “it is not an *actual* transformation of the body, but of the pixelated composition of its recorded and computer-generated *image*.”¹⁴⁸ Dixon emphasizes that manipulations applied to the mediated body do not directly affect how the physical body is presented on stage. Instead, in conditions when the physical and mediated bodies act simultaneously in the same performance space, the original corporeality of the physical body on stage becomes an inscriptional base for the mediated body on screen. Thus, the materiality of the physical body enters into dialogue with the new form of materiality, which now belongs to the domain of on-screen presentational space.

The vulnerability of the body’s physical presence is dictated by a certain sense of surveillance and control, which allows for it to be continually filmed, mediated, and transferred onto the space of the screen. At the same time, like any performer on stage in his situation, the lead singer is certainly aware that he is being filmed. Moreover, since the same process of conceptual visualization is repeated at all the performances, he is aware that his body is being reconfigured in the space of the screen. During the performance, the lead singer did not play a musical instrument, which gave him a certain freedom of movement and allowed him to navigate his movements according to the song’s progression, and to embrace the physical tension of the singing process, as well as to coordinate himself in relation to the other bodies on stage.

Simultaneously, his movements, that appeared both spontaneous and choreographed, were captured by the cameras and immediately transferred onto the surface of the screen to become transformed into a new form of

¹⁴⁸ Dixon, *Digital Performance*, 212.

presentation.¹⁴⁹ Thus, the lead singer did not perform his body to create its mediated double or navigated this new mediated body in the on-screen presentational space. The musician's body was not involved in direct interaction with the on-screen presentational space but was connected to it through an active process of mediation. The body continuously existed as a tangible physical unit on stage and as a new modified presence on screen, as a subject and as material simultaneously.

As Birringer asserts, when a body on stage is filmed and transferred onto the space of the screen, "all safe parameters of the body's relationship to space, time, and place" are shifted.¹⁵⁰ In the process of transmission onto the on-screen presentation, the mediated body was renegotiated through the conceptual matrix of screen visuals, which regulated how the mediated body appeared on the surface of the screen, and moved in accordance with the screen's presentational rules. As a result, the agentic capacity of the bodily materiality became reconfigured by the medium of the screen in accordance to the on-screen presentation, creating a newly choreographed material body-image. Furthermore, the performative materiality of the mediated body became closely connected to the materiality of the screen's surface and, as will be discussed further, with the materiality of sound.

As the main screen in "Angel" became a space where the physical body on stage transformed into his mediated double, not in the form of repetition, but as a new bodily materiality, both forms of the body became involved in a dialogue through their material exchange.¹⁵¹ The dialog is between the original corporeality of the physical body and the mediated materiality of the body-image, which in turn, acts in connection with the surface of the screen. As a result, the audiovisual construction of the performance became dependent on the form of the body's symbiotic existence as a haptic materiality on stage and its new extended materiality on screen.

¹⁴⁹ Frith emphasizes that the actual live of a live performance creates binary ground for the way a musician's actions can be understood. He explains that in the space of a performance, "we are drawing attention to a situation in which thinking and doing are simultaneous: we are watching willed activity in which it is the will that is active, so to speak." He continues, "*all* live performance involves both spontaneous action and the playing of a role. See: Frith, *Performing Rites*, 207.

¹⁵⁰ Birringer, "Dance and Media Technologies," 91.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Material Potentialities of the Mediated Body

In the words of performing arts scholar and dancer Susan Kozel, the mediated body, or as she calls it, “a dispersed corporeality,” can potentially lose “the inherent vulnerability and fragility that makes a body human.”¹⁵² In the audiovisual construction of “Angel”, while the relationship between the physical body and the mediated body on screen was established through an understanding of one as an inscriptional base for the other, the captured body rematerialized into the completely new environment of the screen. As a result, the on-screen presentational space of “Angel” possessed the physical body of the lead singer in its new re-materialized form. It allowed for the limits of his body to be extended in ways that are impossible on stage because the mediated body of the performer shed qualities that can only be attached to a defined physical body on stage. The body was filmed, zoomed in upon, and presented on a screen, so that the materiality of its physical presence became multiplied and images of it were layered on top of each other. Manipulations applied to the mediated body during the performance rendered its appearance such that the body on screen became a material stripped of the physical qualities belonging to its original corporeality. It was no longer what theatre and performance scholar Andy Lavender calls “the human figure as both actual and expended,” but rather a new form of materiality that appeared when it entered the on-screen presentation, becoming a part of a new form of assemblage of material interrelations.¹⁵³ As Kozel argues, in the process of mediated transformation the body becomes “diffused across materialities.”¹⁵⁴ That is to say, the body-image transferred to the space of the screen turned into new material which in its new form became part of the assemblage, acquiring a new form of independent material agency and vital force.¹⁵⁵ Estranged from the physical body, the mediated form became more flexible in the interplay of material interrelations in the on-screen presentational space than the physical body in the on-stage presentational space was.

¹⁵² Susan Kozel, *Closer: Performance, Technologies, Phenomenology* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007), 267.

¹⁵³ Andy Lavender, “Mise-en-scène, Hypermediacy and the Sensorium,” in *Intermediality in Theatre and Performance*, ed. by Freda Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt (Amsterdam – New York (NY): Rodopi B.V., 2006) 62–63.

¹⁵⁴ Kozel, *Closer*, 267.

¹⁵⁵ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 23.

While, as described above, the physical body of the singer on stage moved according to his own choreography, traveling from one location of the stage to another, the mediated body did not follow its own choreography. While on stage it was a combination of the body and its movements that created a choreography, in the space of the screen, transformative and modifying processes created the special choreography of a mediated body that became the base for the construction of screen visuals. The location of the image of the body on screen was dictated by mediation, that in some ways created a new composition of the physical performance that unwrapped along with the real-time physical performance and the body on stage.

The Body and the Surface

In the process of imagery mediation, the surface of the screen became closely intertwined with anything that became depicted on it. In the case of “Angel,” it was the mediated body of the lead singer, the image of which, when transferred to the on-screen presentation space, inherited qualities of the screen’s surface. The interrelations between the surface of the screen and the surface of the mediated body led to a dissociation of the former from the original corporeality of the physical body on stage. Instead, the image of his bare skin and clad body became entangled with the texture of the screen’s surface.

Connection to the grooved and pixilated fabric of the screen’s surface transformed the mediated body into a different sort of surface and the mediated skin acquired the characteristics of the screen’s surface becoming a new form of skin. Mediated flesh engaged with the screen’s material structure and, while being visually manipulated, created a new form of the surface, which could be perceived not only as tangible when it intertwined with the actual haptic surface of the screen, but also ephemeral when it only existed in this form in the on-screen presentational space. While a close-up of the body of the singer in a live performance should suggest some sort of telematic intimacy which cannot be achieved in the physical space of the stage, in the case of “Angel,” it only intensified the material distortion of the corporeality of the physical body.

The color and movements that changed the imagery, visually opposing the body on screen to the body on stage, made it unrecognizable in the fast flow of the presentation. The on-screen presentation modified the body to the extreme; close-ups, color changes, and shifting movements destabilized the representation of the physical body of the performer, at times depriving the

mediated body of any resemblance to the original. It was not just the corporal presence and its mediated other that existed in the performance space simultaneously, but also the lead singer’s real physical body and its new form as shaped into a different form of bodily presence in the space of the screen. In the on-screen presentational space, the mediated body became entangled in a chain of material correlation that brought it close to the surface of the screen and the visual transformation of the mediated body on screen created a constant grotesque contrast in relation to the physical body on stage.

There was also no obvious connection between the movements of the physical body and its mediated form, as in, for example, the case with the Muse performance that will be discussed later, where movement created a link between the performer’s body and its avatar. The movement on the screen, achieved by a montage of images from the stage into new sequences, did not refer back to the physical presence on stage, but instead manipulated the image of the body so that it became something else. As will be discussed later, movement in the screen visuals was closely connected to the sound, rather than to the movements of the physical body.

The transformation of the body on screen emphasized the screen’s role as “a space of affordances and possibilities,” in Drucker’s words.¹⁵⁶ The screen became a meeting point for different forms of materialities and space that provided a ground for flexibility and exchange among the performance’s modes. It entailed a complex transformation of the musician’s body on screen, from the physical presence to the mediated co-presence, the animated surface of the screen and the on-screen presentation as another present space.

Locating Sound

Most of the time, the materiality of sound in a live performance is revealed in intimate proximity to the audience, whether this is caused by source specification, that is, by an instrument that produces a sound, by the speakers’ location, or by acoustic characteristics of musical sound, such as pitch, timbre, tonality, or volume. Sound in live performances is not located in any specific place; it pulses and runs through the space of an arena, amplified for the sake of creating an immersive environment, resonating inside the audience members’ bodies. As Marshall McLuhan noted in relation to acoustic space, sound

¹⁵⁶ Drucker, “Performative Materiality and Theoretical Approaches to Interface,” sec. 31.

“comes to us from above, below, and the sides [...] it passes through us and is rarely limited by the density of physical objects.”¹⁵⁷ The sound has to reach out and grab the audience, enveloping it and breaking through any possible obstacle.

Acknowledging sound’s materiality, it is important to consider its potential to construct the audiovisuality of a performance, namely, the performative aspects of its materiality as they are revealed in the interrelations among the performance’s modes. In the case of “Angel,” as will be discussed below, it is especially relevant to the analysis of the interrelations between sound and screen visuals, as the perceived congruency places these two modes in close collaboration with each other.

Potentials of the Audiovisual Materiality

In the case of “Angel,” the length of the song created a defined temporal frame for the audiovisual construction and determined the durational perspective of the performance continuum. As described at the beginning of this chapter, the connection between sound and screen visuals was established when the visuals appeared on the screen simultaneously with the first notes of the song, which allowed for formal congruence between these two modes, as they matched in temporal structure. It is important to note, as will become clear in the analyses of the two other case studies, formal coordination and simultaneity of the visual and sonic modes is a uniting feature of all three cases.

The interdependency of sound and visuals continued through the entire performance of “Angel,” with perceivable changes in the audiovisual intensity. For instance, during the third instrumental (Inst.2), when the main change in screen visuals occurred and the screen lit up bright red, the sound’s intensity coincided with an increasing intensity in the visual presentation, strengthening an effect of perceived congruency and generating a distinguished moment when the modes of sound and screen visuals met.

Sound does not exist in a specific space. It is external to the image and to the surface of the screen. However, a structural relationship of formal congruency can create a connection between sound and screen. The pattern of changing intensity that united sound and visuals in “Angel” allowed for the performative aspects of these two modes’ materiality to activate each other in

¹⁵⁷ Marshall McLuhan, “Visual and Acoustic Space,” in *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*, ed. by Christoph Cox and Daniel Watner (New York: Continuum, 2004), 68.

the audiovisual construction. The structural relations that were established between the song and the visual presentation affected the reciprocal influence of the sonic and visual elements on each other, when the surface of the screen became their meeting point. The interface of the screen provided a platform for a material exchange between images and sounds, giving space for their interactive textures and emphasizing the coherent coexistence of sonic and visual elements and their mutual impact during the performance. As a result, the imagery, as it was carried by the sound, simultaneously located the sound on the space of the screen through its connection to the image, allowing for a new form of interrelations. In her work on music videos, Carol Vernallis highlights the connection between sound and image that is based on the ability of an image to approach sonic qualities. She notes that “[w]hen images imitate sonic qualities, they can approach sound’s quality of diffusion, transformation, continuity, and motion.”¹⁵⁸ Transformation, montage, and editing of a visual presentation enable screen visuals to match sonic qualities, creating movement in the image, pulsing, shaking, and flickering disturbances in accordance with sonic intensity.

In her definition of material relations in a live performance, theater scholar Erika Fischer-Lichte states that “the performance brings forth its materiality exclusively in the present and immediately destroys it again the moment it is created, setting in motion a continuous cycle of generating materiality.”¹⁵⁹ Thus, the visuals-sound assemblage entails a continuous process of creation and destruction of a perceived synchronicity between these two modes. Sonic and visual intensity creates a moment of encounter in the flow of the performance, constructing, what musicologist Juraj Lexmann terms an “impressive counterpoint,” which is defined by those instances when sound can be comprehended as imprinting its qualities upon an image.¹⁶⁰ Thus, while the temporal relations of sound and visuals are fragile, the immediacy of their meeting brings forth their vital force and “the creativity of agency,” in Bennett’s words, and demonstrates “a capacity to make something new appear or occur.”¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Carol Vernallis, *Experiencing Music Video: Aesthetics and Cultural Context* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 182–183.

¹⁵⁹ Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, trans. by Saskya Iris Jain. London: Routledge, 2008), 76.

¹⁶⁰ Juraj Lexmann, *Audiovisual Media and Music Culture*, trans. by Barbora Patočková (Frankfurt am Main, Land, 2009), 60.

¹⁶¹ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 31.

In this combination based on formal congruency, sound's characteristic three-dimensionality and spatial extension enhance the images with depth and triggers its potential affective qualities. The formal congruency of sonic and visual elements activates a process in which the material potentialities of sound intertwine with the material potentialities of screen visuals. As a result, the image acquires a new form of a material force that is directly connected to the audience's perception of sound in the space of the performance, and creates a possibility for a tactile or haptic experience. A haptic iteration of the sonic rhythm became prominent in the screen visuals when they were manipulated to approximate the sound's qualities, as was mentioned before. [Fig. 11]

In the formed assemblage the image inherited the sound's haptic qualities, while the sound appears to adopt visible traits of the visuals, bringing forth the capacity of their materialities. As the performance came to an end, accentuating the simultaneity of sonic and visual intensity, the image slowed while its color started to fade away. The sound mirrored the imagery. The phenomenological perception of fading sound, seemingly spatially receding from the perceiver, became imbedded in the screen visuals.

As a result, the presentation of the imagery and sound was likely to create a multisensory overload, trying to reach the audience from as many points as possible and contravening a fixed position in the space of the stage. The connection between the two modes was strengthened when there was increasing intensity and semantic congruency between visuals and sound. It was not the *visualization* of sound per se, but rather the structural intensity that allowed for the visuals and sound to create mutually reinforcing patterns of relations.

Conclusion

The scenography of "Angel" brought together the immediacy and mediation of the performance when in the construction of its audiovisuality, on-stage and on-screen presentational spaces were consistently bound together in a visual feedback loop. The visual presentation on screen and the physical performance on stage were simultaneously presented live, filmed, and transmitted to the screen. Throughout the performance, the screen that occupied the most of the stage space acted as both an extension, new representational space, and a flexible material threshold that expanded the material frame of the stage and

Chapter III Depeche Mode “Angle”

simultaneously created an interface for interrelation among the performance’s modes.

In the audiovisual construction of “Angel,” the medium of the screen became a platform for material interrelations among performance modes. These included interrelations between the singer’s body and its mediated image, between the screen visuals and surface of the screen, and between visuals and sound. Meanwhile, the material interrelations that took place on the surface of the screen recast this surface. For example, the performative dimensions of the screen visuals’ material properties restructured the surface of the screen, activating its intrinsic qualities as a mode of the performance’s material modality.

The moment when the mediated form of the lead singer’s body became transferred to the space of the on-screen presentation, it became inevitably entangled in a complex system of the material interaction with the surface of the screen, entering, as described above, a new form of assemblage. The footage of Gahan’s body was transmitted onto the surface of the screen and transformed in the process, collapsing the physical relationship between the body and the space of the stage. In the flow of the performance, the on-screen body was not recognizable as such through facial expressions or physical gestures. It was not an image of a body per se, but a new image of a new form of bodily presence that appeared when the materiality of the original tangible body on stage became fully integrated into the construction of the performance’s audiovisuality. The image of the singer’s body in the on-screen presentation space did not enhance the sense of his physical presence, but created a different form of co-presence, a sort of mediated body-image. It was the same physical body, that as a result of mediation became part of the interrelations between the surface of the screen and the sound, modified to the point that it no longer belonged to itself. Furthermore, when placed in the on-screen presentation, it inherited new qualities provided by the space of the mediated presentation.

While the physical body of the lead singer navigated the presentational space of the stage, its mediated double navigated the space of the screen, where the materiality of the screen visuals, the screen’s surface, and sound meet. The skin of the mediated body, as much as the surface of the screen, became an interface through which the material relations came together in the construction of the audiovisual presentation. The tension of color and sound did not only create tension on the surface of the screen, but also on the surface of the mediatized

skin. Thus, the image of the body, inserted into the space of the on-screen presentation, became a meeting place for the materialities that constituted the construction of the audiovisuality.

The on-screen mediated presence also became detached from the lead singer's persona. The persona the audience could expect to appear on stage in the course of a live rock performance, became renegotiated in the space of the screen during the performance. The performance could not fully rely on the performer's persona, since it became transformed in the process of the audiovisual construction. In the process of a close alliance with the materiality of the screen's surface and the visual and sonic structural relations, the on-screen body became a new form of persona – the on-screen persona.

When the image of the physical body was transmitted to the space of the screen, fully deploying its material flexibility by engaging with other materialities, the materiality of the body-image shed all the expected presentational schemas. The mediated body on screen was not a direct representation of the physical body, but a new form of transformative materiality based on the physical body that simultaneously expanded the limits of the body's corporality. The body's individuality, attached to its personae, became renegotiated. When it became the musician's on-screen persona, it acquired new material potentialities in relation to the performance's modes.

Equally, the construction of the performance's audiovisuality provided ground for interrelations between the modes of sound and screen visuals, revealing the potentials of their materialities through mutual influence. The relationship between sound and image in "Angel" were grounded in a formal congruence between these two modes that allowed for the creation of an assemblage between them. The screen visuals and the sound, as both materialities of a less demarcated character, as discussed in Chapter II, triggered the intrinsic material qualities of each other when they engaged in the complex system of interrelations, primarily operating in connection with the surface of the screen.

CHAPTER IV Muse “The Handler”

In this chapter, I investigate and analyze the second case study of this dissertation the song “The Handler” by British band Muse. The song was recorded for Muse’s seventh studio album *Drones* (2015) and played at every concert on *The Drones World Tour* in 2015–2016 as one of its key songs.¹⁶² Different from the two other cases analyzed in this study, Muse employed an in-the-round stage setup. This stage and the location of the screens allowed the audience to have better and a more homogeneous visual access than the viewers of the Depeche Mode performance had, and, as a result, significantly enhanced the audience’s experience and simultaneously technologically complicated the audiovisual construction of the performance.

My analysis of “The Handler” develops around the complex set of interrelations and connections created by the modes of the performers’ bodies and screens, with a specific focus upon the screens’ surface, the performance’s interactive video content, and the musicians’ avatars. Furthermore, I explore how the material qualities of screens influenced the performance’s presentational space and how relations between the musicians’ bodies and their avatars developed during the performance and influenced the construction of its audiovisuality. I investigate the possibilities for the construction of an audiovisual narrative created and realized in the process via interrelations among the performance’s four key modes. Also, in this particular case study the use of light is highlighted in the analysis as, in contrast to the other two cases, its presentation is directly connected to the properties of the screens and the intensity of sound.

My analysis in this chapter is based on observations made at Muse’s performances during the band’s tour in 2016. Additionally, I rely on footage made during the performance by the audience members and professional photographers and available on diverse online platforms, e.g., the Moment Factory home page, as well as on a live concert documentary filmed during the tour and shown in theaters worldwide in summer 2018.¹⁶³

¹⁶² The entire performance was based on the concept of the album *Drones* and a number of the songs played during the performances were linked both through their text and by means of the visual presentation on stage and on screens.

¹⁶³ Moment Factory, accessed August 10, 2016, <https://momentfactory.com/home>. The concert officially premiered in theaters worldwide on July 12, 2018. It may be released on DVD as well, but the date had not yet been announced at the time of writing.

The Case of “The Handler”: Stage Setup

The visual concept of “The Handler” developed gradually as the band performed at European festivals in 2015. Originally, it followed the record’s album art, which was created by American artists and illustrator Matt Mahurin.¹⁶⁴ The content of screen visuals used during this period often referred to the original music video. Later that same year, the band started their world tour, playing large arenas, where together with an elaborate, new stage setup, the performance also presented a new visual concept. My description focuses on the new audiovisual construction for “The Handler,” as it was presented during the band’s 2016 tour.

To accomplish the complex scenography of this ambitious audiovisual spectacle, which Muse’s members and a group of artists and engineers planned for the tour, the main in-the-round stage was located directly in the center of the arena. As the musicians explained in an interview with *tpi: Total Production International*, this setup provided the performance with maximum floor space, both on stage and around it.¹⁶⁵ The in-the-round stage was flanked by two wide runaways that led to two smaller square stages. This arrangement made it possible for Muse’s lead singer and guitarist Matt Bellamy and bass guitarist Chris Wolstenholme to exit the main stage and use the stage setup to make the performance accessible to the largest number of people possible. The drum set was positioned in the middle of the main stage on a circular mobile platform, which rotated and moved up and down, giving the audience 360-degree visual access to the band’s drummer, Dom Howard. Apart from the keyboard player, Morgan Nicholls, hired exclusively for the tour, who was mostly hidden from the view, the band performed in their usual format of three musicians.

The upper part of the stage was dominated by two heavy platforms situated above the catwalks. They held all the technological equipment. The stages were thus free from bulky constructions, which made them spacious enough to accommodate interactions among screens’ surfaces, screen visuals, and light. The elevated platforms supported a round LED screen that was located right above the main stage, echoing its round shape and also giving the audience all-round visual access. Four semi-transparent surfaces, special screens referred to as *voiles*, unfurled over each of the two runaways during the performance of the

¹⁶⁴ Matt Mahurin, official web-page, accessed April, 8, 2016, <http://www.mattmahurin.com/>.

¹⁶⁵ “Muse: Drones Tour,” *tpi: Total Production International*, accessed August 10, 2016, <https://www.tpimagazine.com/muse-drones-tour/>.

song, providing additional visual field together with the LED screen space.¹⁶⁶ Despite being massive in size, the voiles appeared lightweight in comparison to the LED screen, as they extended down from the platforms and practically touched the floor of the runaways. As the performance’s production designer, Oli Metcalfe, explained in an interview with *tpi: Total Production International*, the voiles were made of a special material that “did not defuse or polarize light,” which made it possible to see an equally sharp image on the both sides of their surface, while they still allowed for a certain degree of transparency.¹⁶⁷

Case Description

“The Handler” was played in the middle of entire *The Drones World Tour* performance and, although it was a part of its overall sequential continuum, the audiovisual construction was based on the particular narrative of the song’s lyrics. As mentioned above, the entire performance referred to the band’s most recent album, *Drones*. The concept of the record, according to Muse’s front man, developed around “the journey of a human, from his abandonment and loss of hope, to his indoctrination by the system to be a human drone and eventually defection from his oppressors.”¹⁶⁸ “The Handler” referred to the point in the album’s narrative where the protagonist recognizes this oppression and attempts to overcome it by rising up against the domination by an unknown, controlling force.

While the title of the song and the visual content on the screens referred to the main subject of *Drones*, they still left space for metaphorical interpretations, disconnected from the album’s concept. For instance, the relationship between the protagonist and an oppressive force can be related to abusive relationships between two people, carrying a semi-romantic connotation. Regardless of one’s reading of the song’s meaning, its lyrics laid out a foundation for the visual presentation, focusing on the struggle between an oppressed person and unknown handler, which was visualized in interactive relations between the controlling hands of the generic puppeteer figure and the avatars of the

¹⁶⁶ The voiles are custom-made, roll-drop screens, three meters wide. During the performance of “The Handler,” they were expanded above the runaways to create additional area for showing screen visuals. “Muse: Drones Tour,” *tpi: Total Production International*, accessed August 10, 2016, <https://www.tpimagazine.com/muse-drones-tour/>.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ “Interview: Muse on Their New Album, *Drones*,” John Kennedy, aired June 10, 2015, on Radio X, accessed August 20, 2016, <https://www.radiox.co.uk/artists/muse/albums/drones/>.

musicians, projected on the surface of the voiles, referring to the themes of state control, domination, and oppression of the individual.

The performance of “The Handler” directly followed the instrumental composition “Isolated System.” The image of the hands started to form on the surface of the voiles a moment before the song was introduced with the rough sound of an electric guitar. [Fig.2] With the beginning of the instrumental introduction (Intro), strings extended from blue bandages on the puppeteer’s fingers toward the musicians’ avatars, which appeared simultaneously on the lower part of the voiles, located at the same level as the musicians’ bodies.¹⁶⁹ Right from the beginning, this simultaneity established a connection between the musicians producing sound and the handler’s controlling hand. An image of the puppeteer’s glowing eyes took shape on the LED screen above the stage. The sound of drums followed shortly. With the introduction of the drums, a stroboscopic light started to shine from below the LED screen onto the drummer in the center of the stage, generating a formal connection between sound and light. For the rest of the performance, the light on the stage and in the arena as a whole reflected the sound of the drums, its use intensified when the drumming’s rhythmic density increased.¹⁷⁰

The instrumental section progressed into the song’s first vocal section (A1), which followed the same tempo. In contrast with Depeche Mode’s performance of “Angel,” where the lead singer was primarily in the center of the audiovisual construction, there were two performers that were the focus of Muse’s performance. The lead singer and the bass guitarist each took over a runaway, standing on opposite sides of the curtain created by the surface of the voiles. [Fig.13] Since the voiles divided the catwalks into two parts, each musician faced only one half of the audience, while the other half could only see the musician’s avatar, not his physical body. One half of the audience was able to see the lead singer and the avatar of the bass guitarist, while the other half saw the physical body of the bass guitarist and the avatar of the lead singer. The lead singer and the bass guitarist were filmed by 3D cameras that closely followed their movements and instantly transferred them to the musicians’ avatars. Thus, the avatars copied every movement the musicians’ bodies made,

¹⁶⁹ The strings and avatars were generated and synchronized in real time, while the hands of the handler were filmed and generated prior to the performance. The pre-recorded content that was constructed into the handler’s hands was made from footage of a pianist playing.

¹⁷⁰ This method is widely used in large-arena performances of different genres, which allows the musicians to intensify the effect of the performance in large open spaces.

without giving away what actually made it possible. The strings extending from the puppeteer’s fingers followed the avatars’ movements. According to Metcalfe, all the members of Muse wore trackable beacons which were recognized by the BlackTrax cameras and allowed tracking information to be passed from the bodies to the screens to create an interactive effect. Thus, whenever the body moved the strings attached to it moved as well.¹⁷¹ [Fig.14]

During this part of the performance, the puppeteer’s hands continued to move across the upper section of the voiles, tugging on the strings attached to the avatars. The movements of the hands did not attempt to imitate the movements of the musicians, but rather moved along with the sound. The LED screen showed the puppeteer’s eyes, which lit up rhythmically following the tempo of the drums.

The performance progressed to the second part (B1), with a perceivable increase in intensity of the vocal presentation. Simultaneously, the movement patterns of the hands changed. At the same time that the sonic intensity grew, the hands started to move more slowly than before, appearing as if they were conducting the singer’s vocals, rather than the sound produced by the drums and the guitars.

The intensity of the performance continued to increase, introducing the next part of the song (C1), together with changes to the lead singer’s vocals, which continued to build toward a sonic climax. His voice, now in falsetto, was hard to distinguish from the music and also lacked a comprehensible articulation of words. The use of light also intensified, as it was now turned from the stage towards the audience. Beams of light, similar to those used to connect the drummer with the LED screen, flickered irregularly across the arena floor, picking out members of the audience at random. The surface of the LED screen now displayed the puppeteer’s mask face, while the movements of its hands on the voiles appeared sharp and controlled, in contrast to softer movements from the previous part. [Fig.15]

The performance continued, repeating the same sonic and visual presentation (A2–B2–C2) and following the same pattern of increasing intensity until the bridge section. Throughout the first part of the performance, the location of the musicians did not change, and even while he was moving, the bass guitarist never left the space of the voiles, so that his avatar could

¹⁷¹ “Muse: Drones Tour,” *tpi: Total Production International*, accessed August 10, 2016, <https://www.tpimagazine.com/muse-drones-tour/>.

continue to be present on the voiles' surface. After the last iteration (C2), the song advanced to the bridge section, that supported a significant change in the visual presentation and a new level of sound intensity. The screen visuals changed to kaleidoscopic imagery of the puppeteer's hands, turning and twisting, following the high rhythmic density of the sonic presentation. The use of light intensified accordingly. Beams of light moved across the arena's floor and the stage at a fast tempo that emulated the intensity of the guitar sound, while the light that continued to illuminate the drummer flickered rapidly in coordination with the rhythmic density of the drum patterns. The LED screen did not present any visual content and was deactivated until the face of the puppeteer returned closer to the culmination of the performance.

The bridge created an intermission that allowed the lead singer and the bass guitarist to change their locations on stage. They moved across the central stage and at the end of the instrumental part took up positions on opposite runaways. The singer played an arpeggio on his guitar that created a double tempo with the bass guitar, intensifying a sonic presentation. The same sonic intensity continued through the following part. A new vocal part (D1) introduced yet another change in the visual presentation while repeating the increase in intensity of the first part of the performance (A1–C1; A2–C2), but in a shorter period of time. The avatars, which for the first part of the performance of “The Handler” occupied only part of the voiles' surface, positioned in close proximity to the musicians, now occupied the full length of the on-screen presentational space. [Fig.16] The avatars remained there until the final vocal part (C3) was introduced and the tempo and intensity returned to the previous pattern of this section (C2). Then, the puppeteer's hands reappeared on the voiles and its face appeared on the LED screen. While the hands moved frantically in accordance to the sound of the drums (Outro); the strings no longer seemed to be attached to the avatars. The hands continued their frantic movements for a while. Then, the song ended abruptly with the puppeteer's face disappearing from the LED screen and the hands dropped down to the bottoms of the voiles. The lights in the arena went off, while the flickering light of the bandages on the fingers was still visible.

The Voiles and The Stage: Structure and Fluidity of Space

As described above, the voiles, which in “The Handler” occupied most of the stage space, were the main surface for the realization of the performance’s visual presentation. Their proximity to the musicians’ bodies and the lightweight quality of their material created an active surface that expanded the minimalist stage setup and enlarged the performance, by serving as a surface for both pre-made and interactive content.

In his exploration of the use of new media in theatre, Steve Dixon emphasizes that there are two distinct ways in which a screen can be used in a multimedia performance. On the one hand, he argues, the screen is used “to highlight a marked separation between the relative times and spaces of stage and screen,” thus creating some form of fictional space in the performance. On the other hand, the screen is used to merge stage and screen space, “to create (the illusion of) an integrated time and space,” allowing for two forms of presentation, on-stage and on-screen, to meet.¹⁷² Accordingly, performing arts scholar and practitioner Dorita Hannah underlines a similarly dual understanding of the screen, emphasizing that it can be perceived as a surface that “divides and connects” as much as it “reveals and conceals.”¹⁷³

A screen’s purpose in the production and presentation of a performance often depends on how it contributes to the process of a performance’s meaning-making. As Tobias Ebsen remarks, the medium of a screen can be seen as a material metaphor, that “may be changed to express specific meaning or, in contrast, create ambiguity that blurs the meaning.”¹⁷⁴ Consequently, the meaning a performance is intended to produce determines the construction of relations between the mode of the screen and the other modes of performance’s material modality. As the audiovisual construction of “The Handler” evolved during the performance, the voiles were both ambiguous and versatile, fulfilling both possible functions that Dixon and Hannah attribute to screens.

¹⁷² Dixon, *Digital Performance*, 336.

¹⁷³ Dorita Hannah, “Scenographic Screen Space: Bearing Witness and Screening Performance,” in *Scenography Expanded: An Introduction to Contemporary Performance Design*, edited by Joslin McKinney and Scott Palmer, 39–60 (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2017), 40.

¹⁷⁴ Tobias Ebsen, *Material Screen: Intersections of media, art, and architecture* (Ph.D. diss., Aarhus University, 2013), p.73.

Material Surface

The visibly translucent texture of the voiles created a contrast with the heavy platforms suspended over the catwalks from which they hung and, as well as with the solid structure of the upper LED screen. While the purpose of both the LED screen and the voiles was to provide space for visual content, their technical qualities and intrinsic materiality functioned differently. The LED screen, resembling a TV screen, was situated high above the stage, thus removed from close connection with the physical bodies on stage. Since the pre-made imagery content was projected from the LED screen, it was not directly affected by light in the performance space and continued to deliver images of the handler's eyes and the mask of its face, undisturbed throughout the performance.

By comparison, the voiles appeared to be weightless curtains of ghostly matter, which hovered over the runaways, behind the musicians' bodies. Their textural structure was responsive to the light on stage and the qualities of their surface depended heavily on the interplay between the darkness and light. In his study on light in theatre and performance, Scott Palmer defines light as "the material substance harnessed for dramatic use," that enables visibility on stage, "contributing to an audience's experience of the event."¹⁷⁵ In "The Handler," the use of light not only allowed for visibility on stage, but also influenced the appearance of the objects that emitted light. Thus, light had a direct impact on the surface of the voiles. Stroboscopic light, matched to moments of sonic intensity and used extensively in the performance, influenced the haptic materiality of the voiles, making the fabric of their surfaces appear completely transparent for brief moments.

As a result, despite their impressive size and being the most important component of the stage when it came to executing the performance's audiovisuality, the voiles did not enforce what Bruno calls "the gravity of enclosure."¹⁷⁶ They did not serve as part of the stage's architectonic structure, but rather operated as a form of "intersubjective transfer" that allowed the materiality of the presentational space of stage and screen to intertwine in the process of the performance.¹⁷⁷ Following the logic of hypermediacy, the performative materiality of the voiles, activated in the process of the

¹⁷⁵ Scott Palmer, *Light* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), XIII.

¹⁷⁶ Bruno, *Surface*, 73.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

interrelations between on-stage and on-screen presentations, allowed for the augmentation of the stage’s physical environment, without overaccentuating their own tangible presence as a part of the stage construction.

The Voiles and The Visuals

The play of light on the surface of the voiles regulated how their material properties revealed themselves in the song’s audiovisual construction and which properties were activated at particular moments in the performance. The voiles offered a responsive surface, “a space of affordances and possibilities,” as Drucker refers to it, that continuously dissolved and reappeared in the interplay between light and fabric, extending their thing-power as material objects.¹⁷⁸

Whereas in “Angel,” the screen’s surface intermeshed with the visuals to the extent that the surface’s haptic characteristics became imprinted upon the image, in “The Handler,” the surface of the voiles permitted the projected visuals to be displayed differently. While the material qualities of their luminous texture appeared flexible in relation to the light in the performance space, the fabric of the voiles still did not defuse or polarize the light emitted from the video projector. Thus, the visuals projected on the surface of the voiles appeared sharp and were visible from both sides. While the objective material qualities of the voiles’ surfaces dissolved during rapid interplays of visuals and light, it simultaneously created an optical illusion of three-dimensionality and made the screen’s presentational space seem tangible. This directly influenced the screen visuals projected on the surface, as they moved beyond the frame of the voiles. As a result, the visuals depicting the puppeteer’s moving hands appeared more concrete than the voiles’ surface, which revealed the performative potentials of their own materiality.

Woven into the rapid pace of the performance, the surface of the voiles did not create a barrier between the physical space of the stage and the space where the screen visuals appeared. Nor did it navigate the degrees of separation that exist between the on-stage and on-screen presentational spaces, blurring the spatial boundaries between them. As a result, the voiles served a second function, emphasized by Dixon, creating an illusion of integrated time and space in the two presentational spaces.

¹⁷⁸ Drucker, “Performative Materiality and Theoretical Approach to Interface,” sec. 31.

However, despite their adaptable visual qualities, the voiles were acknowledged as a tangible presence, corresponding with the first quality Dixon ascribes to a screen, according to which it is always present and always separates the relative time and space. The voiles moved slightly, disturbed by the air currents the musicians' movements on stage created. While this movement made the voiles appear lightweight, as something airflow can move, it also accentuated their tangibility, disturbing the illusion of their disappearance in the process of the audiovisual construction. Thus, their haptic tangibility was accentuated when they connected with the singer's body. At the beginning of the bridge section, he changed his position on the runaway and walked between the voiles, moving them aside and accentuating the voiles, acknowledging their material presence through the act of touch.

Since a performance is not static, the interrelations among its various modes develop continuously and rapidly. Thus, the potentials of the voiles' versatile materiality became fully realized during the course the performance. Simultaneously uniting and separating the on-screen and on-stage presentational spaces in the performance continuum, the voiles provided the possibility for different forms of interrelations to emerge between the materiality of their own surfaces and the screen visuals, and as I will discuss below, between the musicians' bodies and the screen visuals. Thus, the vitality of the voiles' materiality, evoked during the performance's processes, increased the agentic capacity of the audiovisual assemblage that governed its construction.

The Body and The Avatar

The core of the audiovisual construction of "The Handler" lay in the interrelations that evolved during the performance between the physical bodies of the musicians on stage and the content of the on-screen presentation. These interrelations were dependent upon the spatial orientation of the bodies on stage and the technological processes involved in creating the visual presentation on screen. If in "Angel" the background screen was positioned somewhat at a distance from the musicians' bodies, as discussed in the Chapter III, the voiles used for "The Handler" were placed right in the center of the on-stage space, increasing direct interaction among the various performance modes. The close proximity to the musicians' bodies permitted the voiles to act simultaneously as a technological medium for transmitting visuals, as a mode

of the performance’s materiality, and as a haptic background surface for the musicians’ bodies.

A part of the performance’s technological production, the avatars in “The Handler” were created by the controller that linked 3D cameras capturing images of the bodies of the lead singer and bass guitarist and instantly transmitted them onto the surfaces of the voiles.¹⁷⁹ The avatars were projected onto the voiles from the side opposite to where the musicians stood, so that the projections would not interfere with their physical bodies. Thus, while for “Angel,” the cameras filmed the singer’s body and transferred the footage to the screen, in “The Handler,” cameras filmed the bodies of the musicians and their movements to recreate them as new forms in on-screen space. Where in the first case it was the manipulated and reconfigured image of the body that appeared on the surface of the screen, in the second case – it was a trace of the bodies that emerged on the surface of the voiles, reconfigured in the process of transmission and presented as avatars.

Thus, the operation of the scenographic potentials of “The Handler” depended upon the technological realization of the performance. For the avatars to appear correctly on the surfaces of the voiles, the musicians had to align their bodies with precision. Where they stood on stage was determined prior to the performance and they had to remain in position during it. Based on the musicians’ physical characteristics and specific movements, the avatars were calculated to allow for perfectly composed interactions with the content of the visuals. Consequently, the interrelations among performance modes were strongly dependent on a complex and fragile choreography that bound together into the song’s audiovisual construction the physical bodies, the surfaces of the voiles, and the visual content.

Constructed Connections and Performance Instances

In “The Handler,” it was not the footage of the bodies per se that was captured by cameras and projected on the surface of the voiles, but the bodies as tangible shapes that acted as a part of the performance’s flow. The instant connection between the musicians’ bodies and their avatars was created by means of “movement information” and “gestural expression.”¹⁸⁰ Characteristics of the

¹⁷⁹ The only time that the avatars are not present on the surfaces of the voiles was during the bridge section, when those were occupied by the kaleidoscopic images of the handler’s hands and the musicians were walking across the stage, exchanging places.

¹⁸⁰ See: Birringer, “Dance and Media Technologies,” 88.

material bodies on stage, their shapes, movements, and positions, were collected by the medium of the camera and transferred to the avatars in the spaces of the on-screen presentation, creating a link and generating a symbiotic relationship between the modes of physical bodies and their avatars.

Yet, despite the connection of the bodies' captured movements to their avatars, the physical bodies' corporeality was reduced to a schematic visual representation in transmission that bore only a slight resemblance to the originals. Thus, in the on-screen presentational space, the avatars were neither exact replicas of the musicians' bodies nor of entirely someone or something else.¹⁸¹ They were what Dixon calls a "projected after-image," not a human double, but a new form of representation that was based on the body as an index.¹⁸²

As the performance developed, the avatars' orientation in the on-screen presentational space and their spatial relations with the musicians' bodies changed constantly, generating different instances of interrelations. One of these instances was signified by the close proximity of the bodies and the avatars when the avatars were projected on the voiles on the same level as the musicians in the part of the performance before the bridge (A1–C2) and during its culmination (C3–Outro). Due to the stage setup's visual accessibility from two different sides, the appearance of this instance was also divided into two parts, depending on the musicians' exact location in relation to the voiles. The avatars were either projected on the voiles behind the musician's bodies or represented them on the opposite side of the voiles.

Located on the same horizontal plane with the musicians, behind their backs, the avatars operated as vibrant and unstable shadows, which only vaguely resembled the shapes of their physical bodies. They served to minimize the distance between the physical bodies and the interactive content of the voiles, supporting the visual coherence of the bodies, strings, and the hands of the

¹⁸¹ This is a practice common in, for instance, gaming, where an avatar can be any form that represents a player in the virtual world of a game. In live rock and pop music performances, this kind of avatar is often used in performances of virtual bands, where musicians are completely replaced by on-screen representations. One example is, Gorillaz, an English virtual band that relies on the musicians' fictional, animated avatars, even in their live performances. Examples of a fictional avatar and musician being present on stage simultaneously are less frequent. One example is the representation of Bono, the lead singer of Irish band U2, as his alter ego MacPhisto during the band's most recent *eXPERIENCE+iNNOCENCE* Tour in 2018. During the performance, Bono turned into his alter ego by means of visual manipulations and communicated with the audience from the screen, while the image of his face was unrecognizably altered.

¹⁸² Dixon, *Digital Performance*, 250.

puppeteer. However, on the opposite side of the voiles, where the avatars were presented without a direct visible relation to the physical bodies, they became independent in their relationship with the interactive content of the visuals. They no longer connected the strings and puppeteer’s hands to the tangible bodies but became integrated in the on-screen presentational space without relating to the on-stage presentation.

Another instance and a distinct shift in the interrelations between the physical bodies and avatars occurred when the latter dominated the former. The transformation took place after the musicians exchanged places on the runaways following the bridge section, and their avatars were projected along the full length of the voiles, replacing the images of the puppeteer’s hands and strings. [Fig. 16] If in the previous instance, when the avatars were positioned on the same level with the musicians, they interacted with the pre-made video content of the visuals, in this new instance, the large-sized avatars replaced the puppeteer’s hands and strings. The avatars, projected over the full length of the voiles, were depicted as clusters of light threads that mimicked the outlines of the musicians’ bodies. The visual resemblance between the movements of the physical bodies and the avatars became more visible due to the avatars’ size. The avatars dominated the performance space and were no longer positioned as close to the physical bodies as they were at the beginning of the performance, thus further dissociating themselves from their role as a connecting tissue between the on-stage and on-screen presentation.

According to Dixon, an avatar is generally understood as “a graphical stand-in for the human body within virtual words” and the term originally comes from Hindu scriptures where it means “the bodily incarnation of deities.”¹⁸³ Phenomenologist Gernot Böhme suggests that the avatar allows the body “to enter a space of representation through a representative.”¹⁸⁴ Thus, when the avatars were projected onto the screen’s surface at the same level as the musicians, located in a close proximity to their bodies, the avatars became thresholds through which the bodies could enter the on-screen presentational space and interact with the pre-made video content.

¹⁸³ Dixon, *Digital Performance*, 259.

¹⁸⁴ Gernot Böhme, “The Space of Bodily Presence and Space as a Medium of Representation,” in *Transforming Spaces. The Topological Turn in Technology Studies*, ed. by Mikael Hård, Andreas Lösch and Dirk Verdicchion, online publication, 2003, unpaginated, accessed March 15, 2016, <https://www.ifs.tu-darmstadt.de/fileadmin/gradkoll//Publikationen/transformingspaces.html>.

However, as the performance developed, while the musicians' bodies and the on-screen space were connected by the avatars, the bodies did not enter the on-screen presentational space *per se*, to become fully integrated into interactive relations with this space. As artist and performance researcher Koski notes, in performances that employ avatars as extension of physical bodies, the relationship between the performer and the avatar is defined by "the experience of agency."¹⁸⁵ For this experience of agency to happen, the performer has to control the avatar's actions in the space of representation. In "The Handler," while the connection between bodies, avatars, and pre-made visual content bridged the on-stage and on-screen presentational spaces, the movements the musicians' bodies produced were not directed toward the on-screen presentational space. As the avatars continued to repeat what the musicians' bodies did on stage there was no direct embodied exploration of the on-screen presentational space, as the musicians were engaged in the performance of the song, rather than in the performance of their avatars.

There was no apparent experience of agency, as there was no "action-reaction" connection between the bodies and the avatars, that would appear if the physical bodies were engaged in interaction with the on-screen presentational space through the avatars.¹⁸⁶ Instead, the bodies functioned as "the model for the interacting vectors" upon which technologies rely, in Birringer's words, for "the (re)drawing of movement in a virtual environment of force and motion."¹⁸⁷ The musicians engaged in producing music for the audience, while their bodies were extended and *used* by the technologies that constructed an on-screen presentation parallel to the one occurring on stage. The musicians' bodies provided the material, consisting of their clothed surfaces and flesh, for generating the avatars. Though the physical bodies were represented by their avatar, they did not engage with the on-screen presentational space, but instead were placed in it, as their vibrant matter turned into a new form of the on-screen presence.

The link between the on-stage and on-screen presentations that occurred in the first instance, when the avatars were projected on the voiles in close proximity to the musicians' bodies, was instead crafted from the precise technological synchronization of the projected and pre-made content, that is,

¹⁸⁵ Kaisu Koski, "Instance: Performing an Avatar: Second Life Onstage" in *Mapping Intermediality in Performance*, ed. by Sarah Bay-Cheng et al. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 50.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ Birringer, "Dance and Media Technologies," 89.

the avatars, the strings, and the puppeteer’s hands. The connection between the movements of the bodies and the avatars was close to instantaneous and in the rapid pace of the performance, slight discrepancies were impossible to detect. In the instance when the avatars were positioned directly behind the musicians and barely visible, they did not represent the physical bodies in the on-screen presentational space, but rather created the illusion of the extension of the on-screen presentation into the on-stage presentational space. The combination of the flexible materiality of the voiles, which allowed for the visuals to appear haptic and three-dimensional, coupled with the close proximity of the musicians’ bodies to the voiles, shaped the illusion that the puppeteer’s hands controlled these bodies.

Material Avatars

The connection of the avatars, bodies, and on-screen presentational space described above only occurred at one specific moment in the performance, when the musicians and their avatars were positioned at the same level on the horizontal plane and on the same side of the voiles. On the opposite side of the voiles, where only the avatars were visible, they were only remotely connected to the musicians’ bodies through the technology by which they were created. Instead, they alone occupied the presentational space as the representatives of the bodies in the latter’s absence. Thus, the avatars continued to represent the physical bodies on screen – they still incorporated the bodies’ original corporeality and movements – but no longer connected the on-stage and on-screen presentations.

Each avatar became what Koski refers to as “a counter performer: a character in its own right.”¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, appearing on the opposite side from where the musicians were standing, the avatars did not only become counter performers but also created a counter-materiality when the performative potential of their materiality developed fully as part of the audiovisual construction. The potentials of their activated materiality developed from the extended original corporeality of the musicians’ bodies and the tangible surface of the voiles on which they were projected and in contrast to the pre-made video content.

The dissociation of the avatars from the musicians’ bodies and their integration into the mode of the screen permitted the emergence of what

¹⁸⁸ Koski, “Instance: Performing an Avatar,” 54.

Drucker terms “contingent materiality” as opposed to “literal materiality.”¹⁸⁹ Drucker explains that while literal materiality denotes that the “specific properties of material artifacts or media” can be read as self-evident, contingent materiality reveals the “performative dimension of use.”¹⁹⁰ Thus, in the construction of the performance’s audiovisuality, the avatars acquired material potential, which was manifested by the performative aspects of their interrelations with the musicians’ bodies and the surfaces of the voiles. Since the actual physical bodies were nonetheless visible through the voiles, they appeared to exchange places with the avatars. Located directly behind the voiles, the physical bodies became barely perceptible shadows of the avatars projected into the on-screen presentational space, traversing the material interrelations between body and avatar.

Audiovisual Narrative

Among the three cases discussed in this dissertation, “The Handler” is the only one where the on-screen visual presentation was directly based on an interpretation of the performed song. As described at the beginning of this chapter, “The Handler” presented the story of an oppressed individual, controlled by an unknown puppeteer, who at first accepted the puppeteer’s despotism but eventually rebelled and dissociated himself from oppression.

In verbal discourse, narrative is traditionally understood as a sequential progression of connected events that develop in relation to each other in order to create meaning. In the complex setting of a multimedia performance, its narrative could be potentially comprehended through the song’s lyrics, that is, some form of verbal narrative, and visualization.¹⁹¹ Arguably, the former relies heavily on the spectator’s ability to understand and decipher the language of the song, as well as on possible prior knowledge of the song’s context. The latter, in this case, was generated through the interrelations of on-stage and on-screen presentations, where the performative potential of the musicians’ bodies, screen visuals, and the voiles’ surfaces acted as connective tissue in the audiovisual construction.

¹⁸⁹ Drucker “Performative Materiality and Theoretical Approach to Interface,” sec. 12.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, sec. 14–16.

¹⁹¹ Here I consider that the lyrics of a song in the space of a live rock performance can play the same role as a text in a theatrical performance.

The lyrics and the semantic relationship between the visual presentation and the context of the song played an important role and laid the ground for realizing the performance’s narrative and meaning-making for the audience. Furthermore, the creation of an audiovisual narrative was enhanced by the interrelations among the performance modes, as well as, specific to “The Handler,” light.

Sonorising the Narrative

As Sodja Lotker and Richard Gough state, spatial dramaturgy “uses positioning, orientation and spacing as the main tool” in the construction of performance.¹⁹² Thus, they emphasize the ability of scenography to *edit* and *curate* as an essential part of “dramaturgical strategy.”¹⁹³ Regarding the construction of the audiovisual narrative of “The Handler” as a scenographic strategy of spatial dramaturgy makes it possible to analyze the ways in which the different modes of the performance partake in the construction of the narrative through their material interrelations. The position of the musicians’ bodies in relation to their avatars, which was primarily established by complex technological processes, gave the performance’s scenography power. This power was established by means of complex interaction among the bodies, voile surfaces, and avatars that generated interactive potentials that, in turn, created the performance’s narrative continuum and constructed different meanings.

However, in the case of “The Handler,” it is especially relevant to regard the role that sound plays as an active part in the construction of the narrative, hence turning it into audiovisual narrative. Referring to Andrew Bucksbarg, Crayson Cooke writes that with relation to sound, a live multimedia performance narrative should be considered “not in terms of chronological ‘events’ that combine to create a story” but rather “in terms of ‘intensities’ that ebb and flow with changes in rhythmic tempo and visual complexity.”¹⁹⁴ In this performance, the relationship between sonic and visual elements emerged from the intensity of the visual expressions’ changing patterns. For most of the performance, sound served as a sonic clue to changes in the relations between the on-stage and on-screen presentation. For instance, while there was no exact

¹⁹² Sodja Lotker and Richard Cough, “On Scenography: Editorial,” *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, vol.18, Issue 3 (2013), 5.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Cooke, “Start Making Sense,” 202.

synchronization between the visuals and sound, the imagery of the puppeteer's hands moved in concert with the musicians' bodies and their avatars, changing pattern every time the sound intensity increased or decreased (B1; B2; Bridge).

In comparison with "Angel," during which a formal congruency between the sound and visuals allowed for their materialities to create a coherent connection to the point that both modes inherited the material qualities of each other, in "The Handler" there was no clear congruency between the on-screen presentation and sound. During the performance, the bridge was the only moment when the interrelations between the sound and visual modes approached something close to formal congruency. At this moment, the musicians changed places while the screen visuals depicted kaleidoscopic images of the puppeteer's hands, moving rhythmically and matching the growing intensity in sound.

Light and Sound Interrelations

Besides sound, light also contributed to the construction of the audiovisual narrative of "The Handler." Due to the construction of the stage and its immense size, an empty expanse between the floor and upper platform dominated the stage space. Emanating from above and the wings of the stage, light enhanced the otherwise-empty space and produced a link between the space of the voiles and that of the arena, accentuating what Scott Palmer calls "a dynamic virtual architecture of the performance space."¹⁹⁵ As often is the case during large-scale, live rock performances, the intensity of sound for "The Handler" was directly coordinated with the use of light.

Palmer states that, in contemporary performances, light is the most complicated "sign" to grasp.¹⁹⁶ In the specific context of "The Handler," light may be comprehended in its role as a connective tissue among the performance modes of the audiovisual construction. As mentioned above, for most of the performance, sound and visuals were not formally congruent. However, light was directly connected to sound and created a link between the modes of sound and voiles' surface. Every time the intensity of the sound increased, the light intensified too, which, in turn, influenced the surface of the voiles. The bright light made the voiles' surface almost invisible at moments and gave way to the performative potentials of the materiality of the visuals. Thus, the light

¹⁹⁵ Palmer, *Light*, 88.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 68.

supported the visuals’ three-dimensionality, affecting the material surface of the voiles that no longer created a border between the on-stage and on-screen presentations.

Furthermore, light contributed to creating the spatial dramaturgy of “The Handler,” operating in congruency with the drummer’s body, allowing it to become part of the audiovisual narrative. Due to his position on stage and in relation to the voiles, the drummer was kept outside the primary interrelations among bodies, visuals, and surfaces of the voiles. Light served the purpose of connecting the upper LED screen and the visuals depicting the puppeteer’s face or the eye of the drummer, who was positioned directly underneath it.

The light beams extending from the LED screen towards the drummer not only drew the attention of the audience, but simultaneously mirrored the strings projected on the voiles. Following the rhythmical progression of the drums through the song, the beams of light that emanated from below the LED screen made manifest the same control as the strings in the on-screen presentation. When light illuminated the contours of the drummer, the elusive materiality of their beams shifted closer to the materiality of the strings on the voiles’ surface. Light not only made the drummer visible, but also made his body part of the narrative, communicated the latter through imitation.

Conclusion

In Muse’s performance of “The Handler,” a complex, in-the-round stage gave the band’s members and associated artists the opportunity to create and realize a large-scale performance, in which technologically elaborated visuals created a three-dimensionality that determined the relationship between the on-stage and on-screen presentational spaces, while the physical bodies of the musicians acted in tandem with pre-recorded interactive video content. The audiovisual construction of “The Handler” was directly dependent on the interactive qualities, material potentials, and flexibility of the performance modes.

The precariousness of the voiles’ materiality strongly contrasted with the bodies of the musicians, the bulky construction of the stage’s frame, and the solid surface of the LED screen. The ambiguity of the voiles, as both haptic surfaces on which the screen visuals were projected and as an ephemeral fabric that made it impossible to differentiate between the on-stage and on-screen presentational spaces, became a center of the audiovisual construction. During the performance, the function of the voiles’ surface changed continuously. They

acted both as a dividing curtain and a transparent, translucent space, while serving as screens for the visuals, as they neither defused nor polarized light.

As a part of the performance's scenography, the active space of the voiles organized the core visuals of the narrative as they developed over the course of the song. The voiles extended space into the structural relations of the stage set, and their specific material qualities allowed for the meeting of two presentational spaces. Thus, the imagery presented on their surfaces achieved new material status. When the tangible matter of the voiles' surfaces deviated from the formal construction of the performance's physical frame, the on-screen presentation was no longer bound to the voiles, but approached the on-stage presentation and the physical reality of the musicians' bodies. The images of the puppeteer's hands appeared more solid than the fragile surface of the voiles, thus adding to the effect of their presence in the on-stage haptic three-dimensionality. The on-screen presentational space achieved unity with the on-stage presentational space to develop the narrative, bridging the borders between the two presentational spaces as if they did not exist. The musicians' physical bodies created a sharp contrast with the surfaces that intensified the discrepancy between them and the white luminous fabric of the voiles. Due to this contrast, the musicians' bodies appeared more material than the voiles.

The same was true for how the material potential of the musicians' avatars developed. The interrelations between the musicians and their avatars changed over the course of the performance, according to the logic of the audiovisual narrative. One instance occurred during a moment of close proximity between the musicians and the avatars, while the other was signified by the domination of the avatars' projections over the physical bodies. Despite the direct connection between the bodies and the avatars, the musicians did not interact with the on-screen presentational space, as their movements, which were repeated by the avatars, comprised part of their stage performance.

The audiovisual construction of "The Handler" was further defined by the musicians' bodies' dependence on the modes of screen and screen visuals. This was primarily dictated by the location of the musicians in relation to the voiles. For the production technology to function properly, the musicians had to choreograph their bodies in coordination with the voiles. To create a sense of metaphorical reflection, the avatars acted like the musicians' shadows in the first half of the song, and to enable coordination of their bodies with the projections of the puppeteer's hands and controlling strings, they had to be placed in close

Chapter IV Muse “The Handler”

proximity to the screens. Thus, the movements of the musicians’ bodies were limited for the sake of constructing comprehensible imagery.

Often in a live rock performance, a camera is used to record an objective reality of the stage, to bring it closer to the audience. In the performance of “The Handler,” a camera filmed the musicians to create their avatars in the on-screen presentational space. However, it altered their original corporeality in the process of imagery transmission to generate a new form of visual presentation that existed along with the tangible bodies, but did not resemble them exactly. How the avatars were depicted and how the interrelations between them and the musicians’ bodies were constructed by the spatial dramaturgy of the performance should be understood in relation to the audiovisual storytelling of the song.

Though in “The Handler,” sound did not engage in the relations of formal congruency with the visuals, it played an important role in the construction of the performance’s audiovisual narrative. As the performance of “The Handler” followed the specific narrative of the song, the sound, together with the light, unfolded the audiovisual narrative based on the changing patterns of intensity that coincided with the changes in the visual presentation.

CHAPTER V Sigur Rós “Óveður”

In this chapter, I address the third and final case study of this research project, the performance of the song “Óveður” by Icelandic band Sigur Rós. As with the two previous case studies, this live performance was based on a set of complex interrelations among its modes. Also, as with the two previous cases, in Sigur Rós’ performance, screens played an important role in the architectonic construction of the stage. Yet, this time the location of the screens on stage created a uniquely framed space that, one way or another, subordinated all the elements of the performance’s scenography. Unlike the two previous case studies, where the musicians were positioned in front of the screens, the song “Óveður” was performed with the musicians placed between two active screens, one located in front of them and the other behind them. This arrangement significantly influenced the role that the musicians’ bodies played in the performance’s audiovisual construction, revealing new forms of interrelations among performance modes.

In this chapter, I explore the interrelations that take place among performance modes in the context of the specific scenography for “Óveður.” I analyze how the material qualities of the screens manifested themselves in the audiovisual construction and how they influenced the presentation of the musicians’ bodies and screen visuals, projected on or emitted from their surface. Also, the specificity of the stage setup of “Óveður” allows me to focus more closely on the material qualities of the lead singer’s voice and investigate how it acted in relation to other modes in the performance.

The Case of “Óveður”: Stage Setup

The performance of “Óveður” that I examine took place as part of a European tour Sigur Rós launched in Autumn 2017. Different from their previous live performances, the band decided to perform this tour as a small group of only three musicians. In an article in *tpi: Total Production International*, the band’s lighting designer Bruno Poet pointed out that, instead of employing a larger group of musicians, the three members of Sigur Rós wanted to be submerged

in their visuals “more than ever before.”¹⁹⁷ He wrote that visual support from the screens helped to render and adjust the effective scale of the performance, transforming it from “tight and intimate” to “huge and epic,” without changing the actual physical setup.¹⁹⁸

For this tour, the band also moved away from the traditional format of a rock performance by choosing not to have a supporting musical act, instead performing a two-act concert with an intermission.¹⁹⁹ The thirty-minute intermission gave the stage crew an opportunity to make changes to the stage and, as a result, the full complexity of the performance’s scenography emerged in the second half of the performance.

The difference in the stage setup of “Óveður,” in comparison to the two other case studies, was that two large screens occupied most of the stage, placed one in front of the other, and were active simultaneously throughout the performance. [Fig. 17] The position of the screens transformed the stage into a construction within which the bodies of the musicians, located in its middle, became enclosed. The screens also had unique material traits. The surface of the front screen had semi-transparent qualities. It did not display the same flexible qualities as the voiles in “The Handler” and images were emitted from its surface, rather than projected onto it. However, it was positioned close to the edge of the stage, obstructing any form of visual access other than through it. The back screen was a solid LED construction that, during the performance, also played the role of a source of bright light.

The use of screens with different material qualities allowed for a reinvention of the stage space by adding to its dimensionality. “Óveður” was the only song in the entire performance that the musicians performed in the interspace between the two screens. Taking full advantage of the changes in stage setting, their bodies became submerged in the interplay between on-stage and on-screen presentational spaces, which substantially affected the interrelations among and mutual influence of the performance’s modes in the audiovisual construction.

The stage located between two screens was not large, especially when the musicians took their places, and crowded with different kinds of props and

¹⁹⁷ Bruno Poet, *tpi: Total Production International* (20 January, 2017), accessed December 23, 2017, <http://www.tpimagazine.com/bruno-poet-lighting-director-for-sigur-ros/>.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Commonly, large-scale live music performances consist of one long performance section with a short break before one or two encores in the end.

technological equipment responsible for the visual and sonic presentation, and with poles of different sizes placed alongside the screens. These poles held stage lights and LEDs in the shape of small tubes, that were activated during the song. Together with the microphone stands these poles and LEDs made the stage appear incomplete, as if it were in a state of construction or even demolition. The stage space appeared even more densely packed when the screens and lights became activated during the performance.

All these constructions limited the space in which the musicians could move. During the performance they stayed in one place, almost immobile, except for some slight and barely visible movements of the keyboard player's and drummer's hands. Clad in dark clothing and surrounded by equipment, at times they were impossible to distinguish from their surroundings. That aspect also set "Óveður" apart from two other case studies, in which the musicians were capable of moving across the stage and attracting the audience's attention. By contrast, the members of Sigur Rós sought to attract as little attention to their presence as possible, intentionally subverting the dominant role of the musicians' personae in rock music.

On the whole, the construction of the stage had an impact on the size of the performance. In comparison with the other two case studies, the performance of "Óveður" was certainly on a smaller scale. Yet, it occupied the entire stage, enveloping all its elements and functioning close to the audience. The density of the stage set, the location of the screens in relation to the bodies of the musicians, the light, and the sound coordination amplified the effect of the enclosed space in which the performance's modes intertwined, generating the audiovisual construction.

Case Description

As with the other two case studies, the screens, visuals, and sound were activated simultaneously, signifying the beginning of the performance through this unification. Due to the semi-darkness of the stage space and the active screens, visual access to the space in-between was minimized, making the stage appear visibly empty of any human presence and diverting attention from the fact that the musicians were already situated in the center of the enclosed stage setup.

As with "Angel," the performance of "Óveður" did not follow a specific narrative structure, with the imagery only vaguely referring to the lyrics of the

song. The screen visuals could be possibly understood in the context of the song, as in translation from Icelandic *óveður* means *storm*. However, even if interpreted directly from its title, the song’s lyrics may not refer to “storms” as a weather condition, but instead have a metaphorical connotation, alluding to a person’s inner psychological state. The semantic relations among the name of the song, its text, and the audiovisual construction could be potentially comprehended by the audience, but would require preexisting knowledge of the song or at least the ability to understand the Icelandic language. As the song itself is open to diverse interpretations, the scenography of “Óveður” was focused primarily on the creation of an atmospheric, immersive environment, on stage and off, rather than on constructing an unambiguous meaning.

With a clear distinction between an instrumental and a vocal section, the song was divided into four different vocal sections with one bridge. [Fig.3] At the same time, based on changes that occurred in relations among the visual and sonic elements, the performance of the song can also be divided into two parts. The song was introduced with an electronic drumming noise [Intro], supported by a rhythmic flickering of two beams of light located on the floor next to the musicians that illuminated them from below. The flickering lights, while responding rhythmically to the drumming sound, gave little visual access to the musicians’ bodies, allowing them to continuously appear and then fade away into semi-darkness. Simultaneously, a video of smoke patterns appeared on the front screen, enveloping its surface, repeatedly fading away and reappearing.²⁰⁰ [Fig. 18] The movements of the smoke patterns were not adjusted to the rhythmic sound of drums, but swirled on the surface of the screen according to their own tempo. The first vocal section [A1], was introduced to the performance without any significant change to the on-screen presentation. Jónsi Birgisson, Sigur Rós’ singer, did not emphasize his presence in any way, but instead allowed his voice to enter the performance space in the flow of the audiovisual construction.

During the first half of the performance, the back screen did not generate a contrasting visual field, but mirrored the smoke patterns in muted brightness,

²⁰⁰ There can be different interpretations as to what these patterns actually were. If one refers to the title of the song, they can be seen as clouds. However, during the performance their movement created an illusion of clouds of smoke, rather than simply meteorological phenomena. To simplify the description, I will refer to them as *smoke patterns*. This description emerges from my own personal experience of the performance and how Damian Hale, the video director of the performance, referred to the images in the personal interview.

which nevertheless added to the illusion that the space between two screens was filled with real smoke. [Fig. 19] Only with the introduction of the bridge [Bridge] did the interrelations between the two screens change, signifying the visual shift that divided the performance in two parts. The video content on the back screen developed and its surface became a stronger source of light, competing with the intensity of the imagery on the front screen.

The imagery and light emitted from the back screen also influenced the space between the two screens. That is, each time they were activated, the musicians' bodies turned into distinctly pronounced silhouettes. While the front screen continued to display the same weightless smoke patterns, the back screen presented solid imagery. It displayed a surrealistic video that showed heads detached from their bodies, slowly floating across the space of the screen while being pierced by stakes that resembled the poles on stage.²⁰¹ [Fig. 20] The floating heads were not meant to be clearly visible and mostly just hinted at whom they represented. Damian Hale later clarified that the graphic images were scanned and modified pictures of the heads of the members of Sigur Rós created prior to the performance and used as pre-fabricated content for the back screen.²⁰² The video was constructed in such a way so as not to show any specific face for too long; instead they changed constantly, fading away and replacing each other, acting as ghostly hints of the physical presences on stage. In the interims between the short clips, when the image of one head was replaced by another, the screen went black, leaving the musicians in almost complete darkness. [Fig. 21] As a whole, the video content did not have any particular connection to the sound or the visuals on the front screen, but rather created a grotesque figurative imagery, which was positioned to contrast with the physical presence of the musicians' bodies on stage.

Another significant change that took place during the instrumental section of the song concerned the relationship between sound and light. While two beams of light continued to flicker rhythmically, halfway through the second instrumental part, a new dominating sound became audible. A whipping, piercing, synthesized sound resonated through the performance space at

²⁰¹ In his interview to the author, Damian Hale mentioned that the images had a “voodooistic” quality to them, as if the images of the real band members had been subjected to some sort of ancient ritual.

²⁰² Damian Hale, Skype interview by the author, 1 December, 2017, Gothenburg, digital recording.

unequal intervals. Simultaneously, the vertical poles located across the stage lit up in rhythm to this new sound.²⁰³

During the vocal section [C2–D4], the use of sound effects increased with the intensification of the singer’s voice. Whipping sound and flashes of light continued all through that section, vanishing only at the end of the song, when the back screen was deactivated. Throughout the second part of the performance, the visual presentation of both screens continued to develop without any perceivable formal congruency with the sound. The only perceivable connection became apparent close to the end of the song. The voice of the lead, which was rising to a climax all through the song, started to fade away together with the on-screen presentation. At the very end of the performance, the back screen was completely deactivated, leaving little visual access to the musicians’ bodies. The smoke patterns on the front screen continued to move gradually, disappearing with the song’s final notes.

Presentational Spaces and Vibrant Surfaces

As described above, from the very beginning, screens took a dominant position in the audiovisual construction of the performance. First, the physical properties of the screens, their material frame and position, structured the space of the stage, allowing the musicians to perform between two active surfaces. Second, their technical qualities shaped the performance. The semi-transparent front screen gave visual access to the space in between them and the solid surface of the back screen provided a strong source of imagery and light. Third, when the surfaces of the screens became activated, their role changed from being merely part of the stage setup to becoming a vibrant surface and active space, thereby mobilizing the on-stage presentational space.

Structuring Space: Front Screen

Located close to the edge of the stage, the front screen divided it into two zones, becoming a permanent filter imprinted on the bodies, screens, props, and light located behind it. When the screen visuals activated its surface, it simultaneously started to emit light and allowed a modicum of light on stage to travel through it, emphasizing its volatile qualities. The semi-transparent, changeable quality of

²⁰³ The visual coordination of sound and light in this particular moment can be seen to refer to the sound of thunder and the flash of lightning. However, they appeared simultaneously, in accordance with each other, rather than one after the other.

the surface transformed it into an interface for visual patterns and released light, activating the performative potentialities of its materiality, as the screen became “a substantial plane of relational transformation that has texture and depth.”²⁰⁴ The smoke patterns distributed on the entire surface of the front screen emerged and disappeared sporadically, simultaneously making the space between two screens appear uneven and illusive, obscuring the physical bodies of the musicians.

However, despite the created effect, the patterns never completely concealed the space behind the front screen and gave visual access to the visuals on the back screen. During the first part of the performance, the visuals on the front screen were mirrored by similar smoke patterns on the back screen. This visual exchange created an illusion of the in-between space being filled with smoke that enveloped the musician’s bodies and part of the stage. The movement of the smoke patterns expanded the screens’ tangible borders, creating an illusion of smoke breaking through the frame of the screen, blurring the boundaries between on-stage and on-screen presentational spaces.

The constant movement of the visuals projected on two screens and the semi-transparent quality of the front screen allowed for the integration of the visuals on both screens. This exchange added dimensionality to the front screen’s presentational space, thus expanding the smoke effects not only backward, toward the area in between the screens, but also forward, toward the audience, promoting the sense of the visuals’ haptic three-dimensionality. The screens generated a presentational space, that, while existing parallel to the physical reality of the stage, expanded the potentialities of on-stage presentational space by altering the subjectivity of the tangible physicality of the audiovisual construction.

Throughout the first part of the performance, the front screen visuals engaged the screen’s surface with its translucent qualities in what Bruno has called a “subtle play of transparency and shadowing.”²⁰⁵ By revealing and overcasting the space between the screens, it created a presentation that partly belonged to the physical reality of the on-stage space and partly to the on-screen space. The screen, following the logic of its own hypermediacy, revealed a tension between being understood as a medium and as “a ‘real’ space that lies beyond mediation.”²⁰⁶ The front screen simultaneously existed as a surface *to*

²⁰⁴ Bruno, *Surface*, 108.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

²⁰⁶ Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, 41.

look at and *to look through*, manufacturing uncertainties and collapsing the boundaries between the physical materiality of the stage and the performative materiality of the screen, allowing two presentational spaces to merge continuously.²⁰⁷

Restructuring Space: Back Screen

When the video content of the back screen became transformed into a new form of visual presentation during the second part of the song, interrelations among the performance’s modes developed further, initiating a shift in the audiovisual construction. As a stronger source of light than the front screen, the back screen instantly dominated the otherwise dimly lit on-stage space. Overwhelming the semi-transparent surface, the light from the back screen partly consumed the images of smoke patterns from the front screen, revealing instead its texture. The remaining patterns on the surface of the front screen, not exposed to the back-screen’s light, moved to the side, forming a translucent frame.

The light produced by the back screen created a strong contrast with the diluted patterns on the front screen, affecting the bodies of the musicians and changing spatial relations in the space between the two screens. If before, the materiality of the musicians’ bodies was strongly influenced by the front screen, now they visibly sank into the light produced by the back screen which appeared to absorb them; their corporal presence was now reduced to silhouettes.

The simultaneous activation of different forms of visuals on both screens in the second part of the performance created a new interplay of mutual influence and dependency between the two surfaces. Due to its transparent qualities, the front screen was influenced by the imagery and light of the back screen, while the imagery content of the back screen was continuously displayed through the material filter of the surface of the front screen. For the duration of the performance, the stable physical characteristics of the space between the screens, as well as the objects and bodies located within it, were constantly challenged and renegotiated, giving power to the performative potentials of their materiality. As a result, it was not the tangible setup of the stage, per se, that constituted the performance, but the interaction between and mutual

²⁰⁷ Bolter and Grusin refer to Richard Lanham, underlining that he addresses the tension “between looking at and looking through” as “a feature of XX century art in general and now digital representation in particular.” See: Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, 41.

influence of the two screens that emerged in the flow of the audiovisual construction and affected the encompassing space of the performance.

Additionally, it was not only the screens that influenced the audiovisual construction and interplay between the performative materiality of the on-stage and on-screen presentational spaces. The flow and tension of the performance's audiovisuality were also influenced by the vertical poles located alongside the screens. These were both constructions needed as a technical support for the presentation and haptic intruders in the process of audiovisual construction. The arrangement of the poles vertically divided the space of the stage, interfering with the fabric of the screens. They visually disturbed both presentational spaces, influencing the content of the screens and the presentation of the bodies, contributing to the relations between the on-stage and on-screen presentations, alternating what was subjectively real and tangible with something objectively haptic and elusive.

Throughout the performance the front screen never lost its semi-transparent quality, but it also never was completely free from visuals. Therefore, it interchangeably provided and prevented the audience from having visual access to the musicians' bodies, which, in turn, made evident the existence of the tangible space behind the screen. The bodies were simultaneously placed in the in-between space and created it, functioning as a vector for the physical characteristics of the stage. Yet, the bodies' tangible and seemingly stable materiality was constantly challenged by the interplay among the screens, visuals, and lights, which activated the performative potentials of their materiality, extending their role beyond that of solid markers of the physical space they occupied.

In-Between Bodies and Shifting Materialities

As described above, during the performance of "Óveður," the musicians stood practically still. Apart from necessary movements made by the guitarist and keyboard player and a slight shifting of the singer's hands, they did not change position on stage, and were compactly gathered around the keyboard right in the middle of the enclosed space. In this static position from the outset, their bodies adopted what seemed a passive role in the performance's audiovisual construction. The effect of their immobility was intensified by the interplay among imagery, light, and sound on stage, which shifted around them, enclosing their bodies.

Whereas in the case of “The Handler,” the musicians choreographed their bodies to assure their correct coordination with the surface of the screen and the screen’s interactive content, the members of Sigur Rós allowed the audiovisual construction to take over the performance space. That is, the musicians did not govern their own visibility, for instance, by moving to spots on the stage where the screens or imagery could have had less effect on displaying their bodies. Instead, they allowed the audiovisual construction to develop around them, using their materiality as one of its modes.

However, their seeming choreographed passiveness was only relevant to a certain extent, primarily referring to their lack of movement. A strict opposition between static versus active did not exist. Rather, the choreography emphasized a sense of subordination of the musicians’ human agency and a lack of domination of human actors over nonhuman actors in the audiovisual construction. The spatial positioning of the musicians’ physical bodies and the limitation of their movements, which was clear during the performance, allowed for the vital materiality of their bodies to come forward in material interrelations with other modes in the audiovisual construction. As a result, the bodies of the musicians, located in a middle of an interactive crossroads between surfaces and screen visuals, entered “a reactive-power state,” defined by Bennett as “a process of self-alteration” or becoming “out of sync” with the body’s previous self.²⁰⁸ This state allowed for the materiality of the musicians’ bodies to become engaged in the new form of assemblage, characterized by material interrelations in which no single mode of audiovisual construction dominated the other.²⁰⁹

As Bennett emphasizes, the affective qualities of relations among materials depends on “the collaboration, cooperation, or interactive interference of many bodies and forces.”²¹⁰ This allows for the treatment of the bodies of the musicians not as autonomous or passive, but as a thing-power that becomes activated in the audiovisual construction.²¹¹ Furthermore, placed in the middle of the performance’s material interrelations, the musicians’ bodies became the interface of these interrelations and acquired a new form of *in-betweenness*. They were not only located in an in-between place, but also became themselves an in-between place. The bodies of the musicians, their skin and their clothes were as much a surface as a screen. Yet, unlike the surfaces of screens, the surfaces

²⁰⁸ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 35.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 21–22.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

of their bodies did not generate light, but rather reflected it, accumulating and channeling the results of the material interrelations. Thus, the in-betweenness of the bodies of the musicians on stage was not only defined by their actual spatial position between two screens, but also by their constant interlacing with the performance's other modes, maintaining the construction of the performance's audiovisuality in the process.

Absorbsion, Texture, Tension

As described above, the semi-transparent quality of the front screen both made the space behind it visible and hampered visibility, creating a certain degree of optical uncertainty. Since the musicians were meant to be seen through the front screen, their bodies became inevitably engaged with the screen's semi-transparent surface. In the first part of the performance, the bodies were affected by the material qualities of the screen's surface, becoming engrossed in the continuous interrelation of two forms of performative materiality, one their own and the other the screen's. The strongly pronounced structure of the front screen's surface was in a certain sense forced upon the bodies of the musicians, creating a surface tension between the bodies and the fabric of the screen. This tension made the bodies appear imprinted into the texture of the screen and the screen visuals, causing them to lose their corporeal three-dimensionality and distorting their position in the on-stage presentational space. The spatial relations that constructed the on-stage presentational space became deformed in the flow of the performance and the surface of the screen became entangled with the surfaces of the musicians' bodies.

However, while the presentation of the musicians' bodies was filtered through the structure of the front screen, they were not completely transferred to the on-screen presentational space. Instead, the performative potentialities of their materiality underwent a process of "absorbsion." Drawing on Deleuze, Bennett refers to his notion of absorbsion as it suggests "part-whole" relationships among the elements in an assemblage. She sees absorbsion as "a gathering of elements in a way that both forms a coalition and yet preserves something of the agential impetus of each element."²¹²

Absorbsion collapsed the objective differentiation between the position of the bodies in the physical reality of the stage and their immersion in the space of the on-screen presentation. The semi-transparent, pixelated fabric of the

²¹² Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 35.

front screen seemed to absorb the bodies, renegotiating their agency and emphasizing their material plasticity, allowing them to overcome the domination of the “fixed stability” of their materiality.²¹³ These interrelations with the mode of the screen allowed the bodies to expand their material traits and to become different forms of materiality, more flexible than the bodies’ original corporeality.

During the second part of the performance, when the presentation on the back screen changed, the constructive relations among the mode of the musicians’ bodies, screen, and screen visuals changed as well. The solid texture of the back screen made the visuals on it, a pre-produced video, appear more multidimensional than the physical bodies of the musicians. As the visuals moved, the musicians’ bodies stayed still. The intense light emitted from the surface of the back screen reflected on the bodies and turned them into silhouettes. Along with the screens and screen visuals, the flickering light that illuminated the musicians’ bodies throughout the performance added to the distortion, making the bodies appear like holographic projections, rather than physical entities. The light, together with the smoke patterns and the ever-changing imagery on the back screen, reinforced the uncertainty of the presentation of the bodies. The bodies, presumed to assume a permanent place on stage due to their physical presence, flickered and disappeared, reduced to shadows or silhouettes in the material interplay among the performance’s modes.

When the stable corporeal presence of the bodies shifted, the on-stage presentation shifted with it. The physical properties of the on-stage presentational space changed in the process of the material interrelations between the screens and visuals. The musicians’ bodies, which appeared and disappeared in the constant flow of the audiovisual construction, lost their quality as markers of physical space. The affective scale of the on-stage presentational space changed without any tangible rearrangement. On the one hand, the space in-between appeared flat or two-dimensional, as if there was no actual physical space there, but rather another screen on which the bodies of the musicians were projected. On the other hand, when the in-between space adopted the imagery interplay between the two screens, it gained new spatial qualities. As with the illusion of smoke and light-filled space, the actual physical space did not produce light, nor was it ever filled with smoke.

²¹³ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 20.

The material interrelations of the performance's modes both activated the performative traits of the materiality of each other and reinvented the on-stage presentation space as a set of potentialities, rather than fixed entities and relations. The material exchange that took place among the elements of the performance in the construction of its audiovisuality traveled back and forth, from one mode to another, intertwining with the stage space through the duration of the performance.

The aforementioned process of releasing the bodies' *previous self* so that they became part of the relations in the assemblage accentuated not only the bodies' performative materiality, but also their vulnerability. On the one hand, they were physical bodies located on stage, which relied on the audience's perception and its awareness of their corporeal presence. On the other hand, they were reduced to ghostly and precarious presences. As they became locked inside the enclosed space, their original corporeality was restricted and renegotiated, engulfed by the processes that constructed the performance's audiovisuality, and likewise made vulnerable by it.

The Other Presence

Unlike in the two other case studies, the screen visuals that appeared on the back screen in the second half of the performance, were not directly connected to the on-stage presentation. They were neither produced from live footage transmitted from the stage, as in the case of "Angel," nor did they interact with the musicians' bodies in any direct way, as in the case of "The Handler," for which pre-made video content was connected to the on-stage presentation via interaction between bodies and their avatars.

The pre-made video on the back screen was not only constructed outside the performance space, but also somewhat forcefully introduced into the audiovisual construction of the performance by the medium of the screen, creating an ambiguous situation in which the images took over the physical bodies. Since it was filtered through the material texture of the front screen, the grotesque floating heads acquired a three-dimensional quality, and seemed to occupy the space between the screens, at moments appearing more solid and tangible than the physical bodies of the musicians. The presence of the tangible bodies extended to the space of the screen, in a manner that was removed from their physical presentation on stage. The bodies in the space of the scenographic action were no longer only three.

The visuals depicting floating heads bore no relation to the live performance itself; they were simply present in the same performance space as the other elements of the constructed audiovisuality. They did not adjust to the sound or mimic the actual musical performance. The doppelgangers hindered the bodies’ presence by means of the screen’s active light surface. The imagery on the back screen, thus, became intertwined with the imagery of the front screen, while in constant communication through the musicians’ bodies. As a result, in the audiovisual construction, neither the pre-rendered bodies on screen, nor the physical bodies on stage appeared tangible.

The Sound of “Óveður”

As described at the beginning of this chapter, the interrelations between the screen visuals and sound did not follow a clear-cut pattern and the perceived congruency between these two modes was not apparent. Both types of screen visuals, the smoke patterns and pre-produced imagery, followed their own pace in the performance continuum, sometimes even seeming contradictory to changes in the sound production’s intensity. As music and media scholar Lawson Fletcher remarks, “Sigur Rós’ music seems to move in a post-representational space, evoking forms of affect and spatiality rather than fixed meaning.”²¹⁴ Thus, the strategies used to create the performance’s scenography could potentially stem from the musicians’ and artists’ wish to create an atmospheric performance, manipulating the audience’s affective experience.

The precarious visuality of the audiovisual construction of “Óveður,” in which the performative materiality of the physical bodies was challenged and renegotiated in relation to the screens and screen visuals, allowed for the voice of the lead singer to take up a leading position in the audiovisual construction. As the corporeality of the singer’s body continuously traversed the border between presence and absence, his voice acquired a dualistic position in which it was simultaneously a mode of body and a mode of sound. This allowed for the voice to both vocalize the body and acquire its own agentic capacity in the audiovisual construction.

²¹⁴ Fletcher, “The Sound of Ruins”, unpaginated.

Vocalized Body

The performance of “Óveður” is different from the previous case studies because of the specific construction of the stage. The material interrelations among the modes in “Óveður” created circumstances in which the performative materiality of the lead singer’s body was able to manifest itself in the audiovisual construction in a unique way. While there were three musicians performing on stage simultaneously, their bodies manifested themselves differently from each other in the audiovisual construction. Though the performative potential of their materiality in their interrelations with the modes of screen and screen visuals were the same, the balance of material interrelations changed in relation to sound. The vocalized presence of Sigur Rós’ singer had the power to manifest his physical body through his voice, while the physical presence of two other musicians, the bassist Georg Hólm and keyboard player Orri Páll Dyrason, was dependent on the screens and visuals, relying on them to reveal or hide their presence.

With regard to *mise-en-scène* in contemporary theater and performance, Patrice Pavis underlines that “presence is no longer bound to the visible body.”²¹⁵ As an example, he refers to the simple act of a telephone conversation, where a person is mediated by the device and not present in a physical sense, but presented through different means. The body on the phone is not entirely absent and can be considered as live, as it is not a recorded voice that emerges through the medium, but a slightly delayed sound from a body at a remove. The voice is able to confirm bodily presence, despite its mediated character and distance from the physical body on stage.

In his work on sound poetry, Brandon LaBelle refers to the voice as an “expressive signal announcing the presence of a body and an individual.”²¹⁶ The electronic sound produced by the bassist and the keyboardist during the performance did not directly signify their physical bodies. It lacked even the slight sense of movement preceding the sound that might refer to the physical body: instead, the sound referred to the musical instruments and the process of the mechanical sound production. Even if their materiality was involved in the audiovisual construction, they did not possess the same power of presentation as the vocalized body of the singer.

²¹⁵ Pavis, *Contemporary Mise en Scène*, 134.

²¹⁶ Brendon LaBelle, “Raw Orality: Sound Poetry and Live Bodies,” in *Voice: Vocal Aesthetics in Digital Arts and Media*, ed. by Norie Neumark, Ross Gibson and Theo van Leeuwen (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010), 149.

In “Óveður,” the presence of an individual, or a “vocal agent” as discussed in Chapter II, made central the physical presence of the lead singer’s body. His corporeality was extended through vocal agency and thus made capable of claiming space beyond the limits of the visual presentation. The singer’s voice led back to his body, making his presence more significant than the other band members’, albeit equally invisible.²¹⁷ When the voice was projected forward as a key aspect of his bodily presence, it shifted the relationships between different forms of active materialities, creating an imbalance among the physical bodies on stage.

The singer’s voice, as opposed to his body, was distributed across the performance space by means of amplification. That is, while the materiality of the physical body was continuously involved in the assemblage of material interrelations with the screens and screen visuals, the voice extended beyond the confinement of those material interrelations. Discussing the role of the voice in postdramatic theatre, Hans-Thies Lehmann remarks that in an unconventional setting, the voice, which was previously defined as “the most important instrument of the player,” can be considered “a matter of the whole body ‘becoming voice.’”²¹⁸ Thus, in the setting of “Óveður,” apart from being continuously involved in the interrelations with other modes, the body of the lead singer becomes the voice.

While his voice extended the singer’s bodily presence, it simultaneously revealed a more specific aspect of the body-voice relationship: its grain. The concept of *the grain of the voice*, introduced by Roland Barthes, defines the grain as “the materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue.”²¹⁹ The voice is treated in a similar way by sound and media artist Norie Neumark, who, referring to Susan Back-Morss, emphasizes that we can hear the voice “aesthetically bearing the mark of the body.” Back-Morss calls the voice the “expressive face,” which together with its grain, returns to the physical origin of the voice.²²⁰ In the case of the vocal quality of Jónsi’s voice, which is a falsetto or countertenor, the voice identifies not just a body, as an extension perceived through visual elements, but also a persona. The voice, in combination with the

²¹⁷ This specific performance did not use pre-recorded samples of the singer’s voice.

²¹⁸ Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 149.

²¹⁹ Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, trans. by Stephen Heath (Fontana Press: London, 1977), 182.

²²⁰ See: Back-Morss quoted in Norie Neumark, “Introduction,” in *Voice: Vocal Aesthetics in Digital Arts and Media*, ed. by Norie Neumark, Ross Gibson and Theo van Leeuwen (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010), XVI–XVII.

Icelandic language, which for most listeners creates a flow of emotions rather than meanings, is a mark of his specific body, and not of the body in general.

Based on Barthes' approach to the voice, Vallee emphasizes the role of the voice as a "vibrating intermediary" that creates a link between the "body's first-order physical presence" and its "second-order representational presence."²²¹ Following this argument, moving away from the singer's physical presence, the voice became capable of advancing the vocalized body, thereby renegotiating its spatial position in the audiovisual construction. By being viscerally attached to its own voice, the singer's body acquired new material qualities and became involved in a new form of assemblage, one generated between the body and its voice.

Agentic Capacity of the Voice

As established above, the role of the voice in relation to the mode of the lead singer's body in the audiovisual construction was as an extension of the body's *affective immateriality* beyond its physical presence on stage.²²² Yet, as the scenography of "Óveður" negotiated the material interrelations in the flow of the performance, the voice's performative potential, as a mode of sound, gained new possibilities. Namely, the voice acquired its own agentic capacity.

Since the voice, as much as any sound in the space, was not involved in any fixed spatial relations in the performance, it became capable of traveling beyond the boundaries of the stage setup. Amplification of the voice gave it a certain degree of spatial freedom in relation to the on-stage presentational space because the voice could be perceived as located all around the audience space, affecting the perception of listeners without giving away the precise location of the musician's body. The voice did not confirm the spatial relations established between the on-stage and on-screen presentational space and it was not located in one specific place, but rather occupied the space beyond the limits of visual presentation.

The amplification and spatial freedom of the voice in the performance did not deny its connection to the singer's body, but rather accentuated the dualistic position of the voice as a part of the performance's audiovisuality. This duality lay in the simultaneous ability of the voice to serve as an extension of the body's affective immateriality and to have its own agentic capacity. Vallee addresses

²²¹ Vallee, "Technology, Embodiment, and Affect in Voice Science," 84.

²²² *Ibid.*, 83.

the voice as an “object that is real but not actual,” which indicates its plasticity in performance when the voice’s vital materiality becomes actualized.²²³ When acting as a vibrating intermediary between the body’s physical presence and its representational presence, the voice continued to belong to the domain of the body’s affective immaterialities. However, when the voice became an active agent in the audiovisual construction, receiving spatial freedom, it became a vital materiality in and of itself.

While bearing traces of bodily agency, the voice was still capable of acquiring its own materiality. When the physical body of the singer disappeared, its performative materiality entangled with the materiality of the screens and screen visuals, it became impossible to visually trace the voice to the body. While it still bore the body’s mark, as discussed above, visual dissociation allowed the voice to take a new position in the construction of the performance that emphasized its own agentic capacity. Furthermore, the visual dissociation from the body allowed for the voice to connect to other materialities and to build new forms of assemblages, for instance, between itself and the screen visuals.

The agentic capacity of the voice as an independent entity in the audiovisual construction can also be seen in the qualities attributed to the singer’s specific voice. Due to the strong relationship between Sigur Rós’ music and the singer’s voice, his voice is often referred to as capable of creating atmospheric feelings. Fletcher refers to Jónsi’s voice as “sentimental” and capable of creating an “imaginative space for the listener.”²²⁴ Thus, his voice, apart from being a signifier of his physical presence in the performance space, is also defined as possessing certain extended affective qualities. However, this is not based on the meaning of the voice, but rather located in its performative abilities as an agent in the assemblage, in what Bennett calls the “creativity of agency.”²²⁵ If the voice is capable of generating an affective atmosphere, it can only do so as part of the material assemblage that constitutes the audiovisual construction.

The presence of the singer’s body was apparent at the times when he was visible on stage. His body did not leave the stage and where the body was – there was the voice. Yet, when his physical presence became engaged in the material process of the audiovisual construction, manifesting both its presence and simultaneous absence in the eye of the perceiver, the voice kept the body from slipping into complete absence and endowed the relationship between the

²²³ Vallee, “Technology, Embodiment, and Affect in Voice Science,” 86.

²²⁴ Fletcher, “The Sound of Ruins,” unpaginated.

²²⁵ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 31.

voice and the body with a new dimension. The invisibility of the body deprived the voice of an observable source and location. The role of the voice changed as it was now able both to signify itself as a material part of the audiovisual construction and also to serve as the aural representation of the body's corporality.

When a voice occupies the dualistic position described above, it does not create a discrepancy in the material interrelations, but rather underlines the complexity of those relations among the performance modes. The voice's one role in the audiovisual construction does not automatically cancel out the other. The material plasticity of the voice is equally important as a marker of the presence of the disappearing body and as an active agent in the constructive processes of the performance. What happens to the singer's body in the process of the performance and how his tangible presence becomes intertwined in the audiovisual construction grants the voice an ability to make the body visible and present, expanding the limits of both presentational spaces. At the same time, it grants the voice a power that it might not have acquired in a different situation. It allows the voice to have its own agency in the audiovisual construction.

Conclusion

A performance is always a flow and none of the processes that constitute its audiovisuality is fixed. The moment the modes of a performance become engaged in material interrelations with each other, the performative potentialities of their materiality become activated. In the performance of "Óveður," the surface of the two screens displayed different material qualities. The semi-transparent front screen filtered the space behind it, where the musicians' bodies were located, and affected the presentation of the enclosed space with its pixelated quality and the flow of its imagery. The smoke patterns on the front screen, emitted sporadically during the performance, interchangeably revealed the musicians' bodies and obstructed the audience's view of them. The back screen served as a solid surface, as well as a strong source of light, which created tension between the bodies on stage in front of it and the screen's imagery.

The images projected on two independent screens changed the integrity of the on-stage presentational space, making it appear flexible, shifting, and fluid, which affected the material interrelations among the performance's modes.

These modes no longer belonged to the initial domain of the action, that is, the images to the space of the screen and the bodies to the space of the stage. Each mode of the audiovisual construction was activated during the performance in its own role, which generated the effect of constant fluctuation, simultaneously creating a solid visual flow and a contradicting feeling of spatial disorientation.

The audiovisual construction of the performance, in which the screens and screen visuals were in constant interplay, influenced the presentation of the musicians' bodies by creating different forms of *in-betweenness* that the bodies inhabited. The vibrant materiality of the screens' surfaces, their imagery, and the bodies merged, not in the sense of physical collusion, but through the performative potential of their materiality. In the process of the audiovisual construction, the surface of the front screen imposed its material qualities on the bodies performing behind it and on the back screen. Similarly, the back screen imposed its qualities on the bodies, changing their agentic status through the interplay of screen visuals, surfaces, and light, and reaching toward the front screen.

The haptic materiality of the performers' bodies and the screen's surface acted in intimate proximity to each other, reducing both the physical and ontological difference between the material modality of the human body and the screen's surface to a minimum. The physical bodies became subjects to be sensed and perceived in a completely new way. This placed the audience in a precarious position, where there were more questions than answers. In this exchange of materialities, the musicians' bodies became part of a process imposed by the screens and their imagery. The bodies were revealed when the front and back screens acted in coordination with each other, showing the space in between. They disappeared when the imagery presentation intensified and neither light nor front screen allowed them to be seen by the audience.

The bodies on stage became a void that was present and absent at the same time, strongly connected to the process of the audiovisual construction through the performative potentials of their materiality. Therefore, the in-between state seemed to travel through the performance's representational spaces, creating a constant sense of fluidity and a lack of clearly defined spatial orientation in the audiovisual presentation. Since space during the performance was already defined by different forms of material relationships that made it fluid and interchangeable, the position of the musicians' bodies was destabilized. With the active position of the screens, their bodies became interwoven in the

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process of audiovisual construction, engulfed in the continuum of the process. Their original corporeality became vulnerable in the flow of the performance.

All the performance's elements, including the necessary technical tools, i.e. a microphone stand, became subsumed by the relationship between screens, images, and bodies, producing a sense of a mechanical structure where no single materiality was dominant. The precarious position of the musicians' bodies in the performance space shifted the relations of the scenographic action, decentralizing even the role of the stage as a key place for audiovisual presentation. As a result, when the body of the singer disappeared into the audiovisual construction, his voice acquired the ability to become an active agent and expanded its vibrant materiality beyond the physical subjectivity of the body that produced it. The voice not only signified the body, but also manifested its own material properties, becomes a vibrant matter in and of itself. The space in the performance was constructed by means of disorientation, as much as by connections among the modes of the performance's material modality.

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A live rock performance is a complex multidimensional construction of interrelations of diverse forms of components that have to function together to create a performance in a specific moment in time. Each element of the performance, just like each thread of its audiovisual fabric, plays its own role. They can wave smoothly, can go astray, create tension, or resolve contradictions, as a result generating an ongoing transformation of an audiovisual construction in a constant process of negotiation and renegotiation of materialities and their interrelations.

Throughout this dissertation, I explored and analyzed interrelations among the modes of the three selected live rock performances and investigated how these interrelations constructed the audiovisuality of these performances. More precisely, my focus lays primarily in what I suggest as the four key modes of a performance, namely, the musicians' bodies, screens, screen visuals, and sound. The central discussion of this research project revolves around three main questions: How are relations among the four key modes of a performance activated on stage? How do the material potentials of the performance modes influence their interrelations and their engagement in an audiovisual construction? How does the materiality of performance modes become renegotiated during a performance?

This study proposes to first and foremost consider performative potentials of the modes' materiality as they emerge and develop in an audiovisual construction. As explained in the introduction, I understand the term audiovisual construction both as a process that describes the confluence of a performance's modes and as a momentary result of their interrelations that creates the performance as a whole. Therefore, the analysis of the case studies does not focus on the materiality of each mode per se, but explores their potentiality as a part of an assemblage of diverse materialities, in which modes interact with each other and together construct a performance's audiovisuality.

As my detailed discussion of the case studies has shown, the performances' technological realization is one of the main influences upon how material interrelations between the performances' modes are activated and realized. This primarily concerns the use of screens, which, while more than "merely the means of representation," act both as a medium and as a mode of the

performances.²²⁶ In the analyzed performances, diverse forms of screens expanded the limits of the on-stage space, while simultaneously creating an environment intertwined with complex interrelations between on-stage and on-screen presentations.

The distinct qualities of the screens in each example significantly affect how the material potentials of their surfaces and the screen visuals became realized in each audiovisual construction. In “Angel,” the solid materiality of the background screen emitted visuals that reconfigured its surface, turning its haptic materiality into a constellation of diverse video fields. Located at a distance from the physical bodies on stage, the screen became an interface for interrelations between the visuals emitted from its surface and sound, which were intertwined in formal congruency. In “The Handler,” the screens were placed in close proximity to the musicians’ bodies. The volatile materiality of the surfaces specific to voiles created an ambiguous situation in which the voiles acted simultaneously as a separating and as a connective tissue between the two presentational spaces. The surfaces of the voiles, while being sensitive to it, did not defuse or polarize light, and allowed for the screen visuals projected on its surface to be visible on both sides, without interfering with the audience’s view of the musicians’ bodies. The performance of “Óveður,” in turn, adopted two types of screens similar to those used in “Angel” and “The Handler.” The screens involved in the construction of the audiovisuality of “Óveður” possessed distinct qualities that not only allowed for a renegotiation of the on-stage and on-screen presentational spaces and influenced the presentation of the musicians’ physical bodies, but also influenced each other during the performance. The semi-transparent quality of the front screen enabled visual access to the space between it and the back screen and made it possible for the light and imagery emitted from the surface of the back screen to intertwine with the front screen’s surface and the screen visuals on it.

As my analysis of the case studies shows, the screen – engaged in the material interrelations among the performance’s modes – surpasses its role as “a creative tool” and turns into an intrinsic part of the performance’s audiovisual constructions.²²⁷ Thus, my approach to the subject underlines that the role of a screen cannot be simply reduced to its quality as a technical tool but a screen should always be considered both as a medium and as a mode.

²²⁶ Ebsen, *Material Screen*, 8.

²²⁷ Birringer, “Dance and Media Technologies,” 85.

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Furthermore, with my analysis, I wish to emphasize that the entertaining or even seductive qualities often attributed to screens, as discussed in Chapter II, aid to the construction of a performance's audiovisuality, rather than simply govern the audience's attention, overpowering other modes of performances, especially the mode of a body. While there is a considerable interest in the conceptual application of screens' qualities and potentials among different fields of artistic practices, for instance, media installation art or media dance performances, there is still a significant need for a more thorough discussion of the subject, particularly in analyzing live rock performances.

My analysis of each particular case study has shown that a constant process of audiovisual construction creates particular conditions in which the performance's modes continuously trigger and renegotiate each other's diverse material potentials, while forming new scenographic assemblages of vital materialities. In the construction of the audiovisuality of "Angel," the screen's surface became an interface that provided space for interactive textures for the modes of screen visuals and sound. Their formal congruency placed these two modes in close collaboration, forming an assemblage of image and sound that brought forth the performative potentials of their materialities. As a result, the visuals inherited the haptic qualities of sound, while the sound, in turn, appeared to adopt visible traits of the visuals. In "The Handler," the material plasticity of the voiles, which was manifested through the voiles' interaction with light in the performance space, enabled the screen visuals to realize the potentials of their performative materiality.

In "Óveður," the musicians' position in relation to the screen, which placed them in the middle of the interrelations between the on-screen and on-stage presentational spaces, renegotiated the objective materiality of their physical bodies. The texture of the front screen's surface created a surface tension between the bodies and its visual fabric, while the screen visuals emitted from the back screen reduced the bodies to silhouettes making them appear as if deprived of their haptic tangibility. Furthermore, the singer's voice acted both as a mode of the body, serving as the aural representation of the physical body, and as a mode of the sound, acquiring its own material capacity in the construction of the performance's audiovisuality. In the audiovisual construction of "Óveður," the interrelations of screens, screen visuals, and musicians' bodies challenged the modes' performative potentials and allowed

the singer's voice to expand its materiality, acting as both a mode of the body and a mode of sound.

An important aspect of the interrelations among the modes of a performance that has emerged from my analysis concerns musicians' bodies and their placement and role in constructing the selected performances' audiovisuality. As emphasized in the previous research and theoretical discussion, in the discourse on live rock performances, an understanding prevails that musicians' bodies on stage are markers of authenticity that can command the attention of the audience. However, as I have shown with my various case studies, the sheer scale of a live multimedia performance can potentially place performers' physical bodies in a vulnerable position in relation to the stage setup with its complex configuration of equipment, including screens, as, for instance, emphasized in the discussion on "Angel" and "Óveður" in Chapters III and V. Additionally, many scholars have regarded mediation in live performances as distracting and contradictory with regards to what a live rock performance is supposed to be, when screens, for example, fully capture the audience's attention.

As I already emphasized above, this study highlights the importance of reconsidering the role of screens in the construction of a live rock performance's audiovisuality, so does it propose further to reconsider the role of physical bodies. In my analysis, I have demonstrated the material significance of musicians' bodies as active participants in the audiovisual construction of live rock performances by analyzing their materiality. My approach does take into account the role of performers' bodies as markers of authenticity and, at the same time, underlines their potential to play a dual role in a performance, simultaneously acting as subject and as material. However, the role of physical bodies in a performance space can shift in the process of the audiovisual construction such that they do not always occupy a dominant position in relation to other materialities. While the musicians on stage perform their personae and play music, their physical materiality extends beyond their human agency and becomes engaged in a complex system of interrelations of performance modes, thus becoming an equally active agent in the audiovisual construction.

In "Angel," due to the direct connection between the on-screen and on-stage presentational spaces created by the constant feedback loop of imagery, the body of the lead singer simultaneously existed as actual and expanded, as

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the subject of the performance and as its material. In the duration of the performance, a new form of body, its on-screen persona, entered into dialogue with the on-screen presentational space, expanding the limits of the body's original corporeality. Thus, the audiovisual construction of "Angel" became dependent upon the body's symbiotic coexistence as a haptic materiality on stage and its new materiality on screen. The scenography in the performance of "The Handler" renegotiated the musicians' bodies in a different way, as they became connected to their avatars and through them integrated into the performance's audiovisual narrative. "Óveður," in turn, differed from "Angel" and "The Handler," as in that performance, the musicians were intentionally hidden between two active screens and their physical presence was not as prominent as that of the musicians during the other two performances. In this case, the musicians' bodies did not play the role of subject in the construction of the audiovisuality, but rather allowed the performative potentials of their materiality to become fully integrated in the performance.

* * *

The focus of this dissertation on the audiovisual construction and material interrelations in live rock performance also raises more general reflections concerning the questions what a live rock performance is and how we can comprehend it. As I emphasized in the introduction to this study, the documentation of live rock performances is often either private or limited to very specific data and consists of, for instance, photographs and videos on social platforms or official web-pages of musicians. An important reason for this, as discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, is that the discourse concerning live rock performance is primarily constructed by music journalists, where the entertainment qualities of rock performance and the commodity value of an artist's music often prevails over its potential cultural value. As is the case with most of the Sigur Rós performances, not all live performances become publicly available as professionally filmed live performances. Furthermore, if a live rock performance is filmed and distributed, the aim of the film is often to create an immersive and affective experience of the performance and not to document it as a live rock performance. The performances are filmed alternating close-ups and bird's-eye views, shots of the audience or particular musicians. Thus, these commercially distributed DVDs, a live rock performance becomes a different sort of medium, a film, that possess its own performative strategies.

As I already emphasized in the discussion of my method of material and data collecting, it was important for me as a researcher to see a performance live and in person to be able to compare it with the later version issued on the official concert DVD. However, in the frame of the analysis of live rock performances from the perspective of the constructed audiovisuality and material interrelations, I consider the understanding of the performance's ontology to be an important issue which also places live rock performance in the broader context of performance studies that has been dealing with the issue of documenting for decades and has studied live performances, including, among others, happenings and site-specific performances.

While filming does preserve a live rock performance, even if as a new medium, a live performance's parts, e.g., plans of the stage setup and live or pre-recorded visuals, which document different aspects of a live performance, often leave no publicly available evidence when the performance is over, as they are not understood as possessing cultural value and only considered relevant in the context of the actual live performance.

The specific focus of this dissertation on interrelations between the four modes of a live rock performance can be also seen as relevant for practitioners – and not only theoreticians – in the field of live music performances. An understanding of the complex systems of material relations that construct live rock performances would enable practitioners in various related fields, such as stage and costume design, sound and lighting engineering, and the visual artists, to adopt different approaches to developing the audiovisuality of live rock performances in relation to a variety of rapidly developing technological innovations. As this study shows, when examining live rock performances, it is important to consider the scenographic potential of performative materiality, which can develop beyond intentionality and bring forth new audiovisual solutions.

Thus, the analysis of live rock performance from the perspective of material interrelations between its modes, does not only show a need to attend to the complexity of preserving them as part of a cultural and artistic heritage but also raises the necessity to consider the general attitude toward the subject. For instance, the exhibition *Their Mortal Remains* that took place at The Victoria and Albert Museum in London in Autumn 2017 shows an importance of the shift in the approach toward live rock performances. The exhibition was dedicated to the iconic English rock band Pink Floyd and provided, as the museum's official web-page described it, an “audio-visual journey through Pink Floyd's

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unique and extraordinary worlds, chronicling the music, design and staging of the band, from their debut in the 1960s through to the present day.”²²⁸ The inclusion of audiovisual materials of Pink Floyd into V&A indicates a rising interest in the recognition of artistic value of live rock performances in general and the value of its collected elements in particular.

To conclude, relying on the discussion of interrelations between the four modes in the three specific case studies, this dissertation provides an insight into the complexity of the audiovisuality of live rock performances and calls for negotiations among different disciplines to initiate thorough and comprehensive research on this subject. As my analyses have shown, each performance possesses its own distinct qualities, which allow for diverse interpretive possibilities of relations among the various modes that comprise the construction of each performance’s specific audiovisuality. This dissertation develops a precedent for analyzing different forms of live music performances’ audiovisuality from the perspective of material interrelations between its modes. This approach provides extensive opportunities for theoretical and methodological discussions of live rock performances as a growing field containing diverse forms of artistic practices, which extends beyond already existing discussions and analytical approaches.

²²⁸ V&A, official web-page, accessed April 15, 2019, <https://www.vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/pink-floyd>.

Swedish Summary

Sammanfattning på svenska

Den här avhandlingen undersöker hur audiovisuella konstruktioner konstrueras i liveframträdanden av rockmusik. Mer specifikt så analyserar den materiella interrelationer inom fyra modus - musikerns kropp, skärmen, skärmbilden, och ljudet - i tre valda liverockframträdanden. Den materiella potentialen hos dessa fyra modus anses centrala för det audiovisuella konstruerandet av ett liveframträdande, vilket kan förstås både som processen som beskriver mötet mellan framträdandets modus, och som det tillfälliga resultatet av deras interrelationer som tillsammans skapar framträdandet som helhet. En audiovisuell konstruktion är en process som aldrig helt slutförs och samtidigt är den en struktur som existerar vid varje givet ögonblick, eftersom framträdandets modus befinner sig i konstant samverkan med varandra.

Baserat på detta fokus på ett framträdandes audiovisuella konstruktion och de mångskiftande rollerna hos ett framträdandes modus, är mina huvudsakliga forskningsfrågor: Hur aktiveras relationerna mellan ett framträdandes fyra nyckelmodus på scenen? Hur influerar de materiella potentialerna hos framträdandemodus varandra i en audiovisuell konstruktion? Hur omförhandlas materialiteten hos framträdandemodus under ett framträdande?

Detta forskningsprojekt befinner sig i ett teoretiskt och metodologiskt mellanrum, vilket nödvändiggör ett tvärvetenskapligt förhållningssätt till ämnet. Dess ramar utvecklas från en förståelse av liverockframträdandet som ett komplext medium som rymmer olika former av interrelationer inom de fyra nyckelmodusen som är förankrade i deras materialitet. Johanna Druckers koncept "performativ materialitet" (performative materiality) används i analysen för att understryka att materialiteten hos framträdandemodus inte agerar som en fast entitet, men istället förverkligas genom samverkan, anslutning, motsägelser och till och med en möjlig assimilering av dess modus. Genom sina egna inneboende materialiteter, kan de olika modusen aktivera varandras materiella egenskaper och kommunicera inom framträdandets flöde, och på så sätt skapa de processer som framträdandet utgörs av. Ett annat viktigt koncept i analysen är Jane Bennetts begrepp "materias vitalitet" (the vitality of materials). Materias vitalitet ligger i dess agentiska kapacitet, eller som Bennett uttrycker det, i dess "tingkraft" (thing-power), som möjliggör ett erkännande av

objektens materiella och potentiella krafter bortom mänsklig inverkan. Inom ramarna för avhandlingen uppfattas liverockframträdanden dessutom som scenografiska skådespel. Detta synsätt skapar ett ramverk av möjligheter för framträdandemodus att samverka med varandra i framträdandets audiovisuella konstruktion. Avhandlingen uppmärksammar utöver dessa huvudperspektiv även specifika aspekter som relaterar till de olika modusen var för sig. Genom att undersöka två olika former av kroppar i de analyserade framträdandena - en fysisk kropp på scen samt dess förlängning i rummet som utgörs av skärmen - kommer denna studie att fokusera på att identifiera hur kroppen positioneras genom sin materialitet, dess engagemang, och dess relationer med skärmen, skärmbilden, och ljudet i den audiovisuella konstruktionen. Den här avhandlingen poängterar även skillnaden mellan de materiella potentialerna hos skärmarna och skärmbilderna i framträdandena. Guiliana Brunos synsätt på skärmen som ett material för det visuella bekräftas här i och med att studien identifierar skärmen som både ett medium och ett modus som aktivt deltar i de materiella interrelationerna i konstruktionen av ett framträdandes audiovisuella presentation. Därmed kommer avhandlingen att behandla skärmbilder som materiella manifestationer, vars performativa potential förverkligas i de interaktiva processerna mellan de olika modusen. Samtidigt kommer studien att behandla ljudet i framträdandet, i ett försök att upptäcka dess roll i konstruktionen av den audiovisuella presentationen genom den formella kongruensen mellan ljud och bild i framträdanderummet.

Avhandlingen är upplagd kring tre analyskapitel, där varje kapitel fokuserar på en fallstudie som undersöks utifrån perspektivet av de huvudsakliga forskningsfrågorna. I förhållande till materialet i denna avhandling, baserar jag min analys på förstahandsobservationer av fallstudierna. Jag närvarade vid alla tre framträdanden ett antal gånger, vilket möjliggjorde att jag kunde dokumentera dem i form av anteckningar, fotografier och videoinspelningar. Utöver mitt egna samlade material hänvisar jag till bilder och videor tagna av andra människor vid andra konserter i samma turnéer, samt visuellt material som finns tillgängligt från officiella källor. I första fallstudien behandlar jag liveframträdandet av låten "Angel" av det brittiska bandet Depeche Mode. Låten spelades första gången live under bandets Delta Machine Tour år 2013-2014, och framträdandet av låten regisserades av bandets mångåriga samarbetspartner, den nederländska fotografen och videoregissören Anton Corbijn och utfördes av XL Video. I detta framträdande undersöker jag de materiella interrelationerna mellan de fyra modusen i den specifika bakgrunden

där scenframställningen och skärmframställningen förenas med hjälp av medialisering. Det vill säga, scenframställningen blir en grund för skärmframställningen, när sångarens kropp på scenen filmas och bilden samtidigt manipuleras och överförs till skärmytan. I "Angel" blir skärmen som medium en plattform för materiella interrelationer bland framträdandemodus. Dessa inkluderar interrelationer mellan sångarens kropp och dess medierade bild, mellan skärmbilden och skärmytan, samt mellan bild och ljud. Dessa interrelationer i sin tur omförhandlar den konkreta skärmytan, och förstärker därmed dess materiella egenskaper.

Den andra fallstudien behandlar liveframträdandet av låten "The Handler" av det brittiska bandet Muse, som ofta framfördes live under bandets Drones World Tour 2015-2016. Den visuella framställningen skapades av videoregissören Tom Kirk, ljusdesignern Oli Metcalfe, multimedieregissören Bruno Ribeiro, och utfördes av det kreativa teamet Moment Factory. I det här framförandet ger en komplex rund scen bandets medlemmar och övriga artister möjligheten att skapa och genomföra ett storskaligt framförande. I "The Handler" skapar teknologiskt avancerade bilder en tredimensionalitet som bestämmer förhållandet mellan framställningsrummen på scenen och på skärmen, medan musikernas fysiska kroppar agerar i tandem med på förhand bandat interaktivt videoinnehåll och deras avatarer är projicerade på skärmytan. Den audiovisuella konstruktionen av "The Handler" är direkt beroende av de interaktiva egenskaperna, materiella potentialer samt flexibiliteten hos framträdandemodusen. Till exempel möjliggjorde den performativa materialiteten hos de semitransparenta tunna dukarna (the voiles), de specialtillverkade skärmarna, en interaktion inte bara med de projicerade bilderna på deras yta utan också med ljuset i föreställningsrummet.

Den tredje fallstudien behandlar liveframträdandet av låten "Óveður" av det isländska bandet Sigur Rós. Låten framfördes under bandets European Tour år 2017 som inledning till andra delen av deras framträdande. Den visuella framställningen skapades av videoregissören Damien Hale i samarbete med ljusregissören Bruno Poet och hans kreativa team. I just denna framställning är scenupplägget konstruerat av två skärmar med olika visuella egenskaper som skapar ett omgärdat rum i vilket musikerna befinner sig. På så sätt är den audiovisuella konstruktionen av framträdandet, i vilket skärmarna och skärmbilderna är i ständig samverkan, influerat av hur musikernas kroppar presenteras. Den livfulla materialiteten hos skärmens ytor, deras bildframställning, gör att kropparna sammanfogas, inte rent fysiskt, men genom

den performativa potentialen hos deras materialitet. Den haptiska materialiteten hos musikernas kroppar och skärmens yta agerar i stark närhet till varandra, och minimerar på så sätt både den fysiska och den ontologiska skillnaden mellan den mänskliga kroppens materiella modaliteten och skärmytan.

Dessa tre fall är centrala för den här avhandlingen eftersom de representerar en förändring av hur skaparna av liverockframträdanden förhåller sig till och tillämpar avancerad teknologi. Deras audiovisuella konstruktion centreras kring en komplex samverkan mellan liveframträdandet på scen, och den medierade bildframställningen på skärmen, vilket har en direkt inverkan på hur materialiteterna hos de fyra nyckelmodusen samverkar med varandra. I avhandlingens fallstudier förser avancerad teknologi den audiovisuella konstruktionen med nya möjligheter, framför allt genom att förhandla musikernas kroppars fysiska och medierade närvaro i framträdanderummet.

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Appendix

The Delta Machine Tour (2013-2014) by Depeche Mode

Lead vocals: Dave Gahan

Guitar, vocals: Martin L. Gore

Keyboard: Andrew Fletcher

Drums: Christian Eigner

Keyboard: Peter Gordeno

Artistic director: Anton Corbijn

Video director: John Shrimpton

Lighting designer: Paul Normandale

Realization: XL Video

XL Video LED Screen Technicians: Jim Bolland and Joe Makein

XL Video Head of Cameras: Darren Montague.

The Drones World Tour (2015-2016) by Muse

Lead vocals, guitar, piano: Matt Bellamy

Bass guitar, backing vocals: Chris Wolstenholme

Drums: Dom Howard

Keyboard: Morgan Nicholls

Production designer, lighting director: Oli Metcalfe

Multimedia director: Bruno Ribeiro

Lighting Co: Neg Earth

Video content/creator: Banoffee Sky/Moment Factory

Video director: Tom Kirk

Drones: Motion Buisness

European Tour (2017) by Sigur Rós

Vocals, guitar: Jónsi Birgisson

Bass guitar: Georg Hólm

Drums, keyboard: Orri Páll Dyrason

Creative director: Sarah Hopper

Light director: Bruno Poet

Lighting programmer: Matt Daw

Video content creator: Damian Hale

Video programmer: Ray Gwilliams

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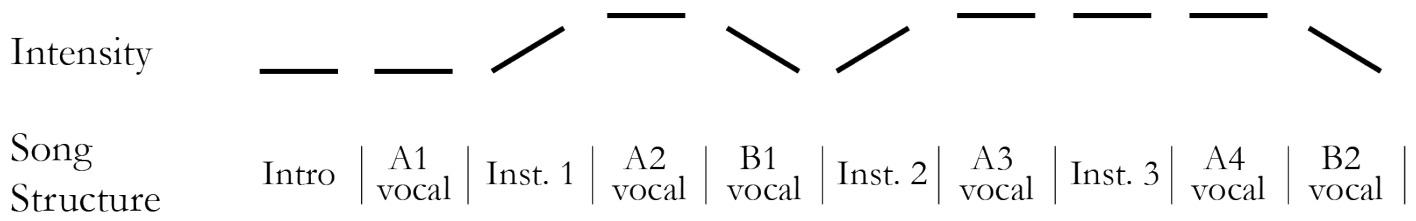


Fig.1: Depeche Mode, *Angel*, song structure, intensity.

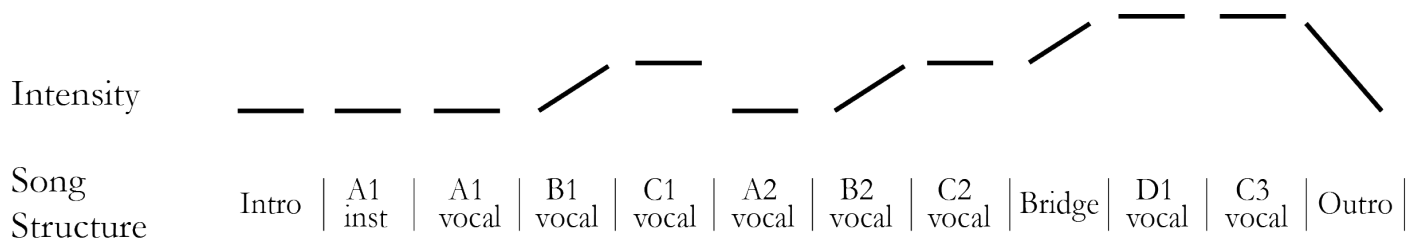


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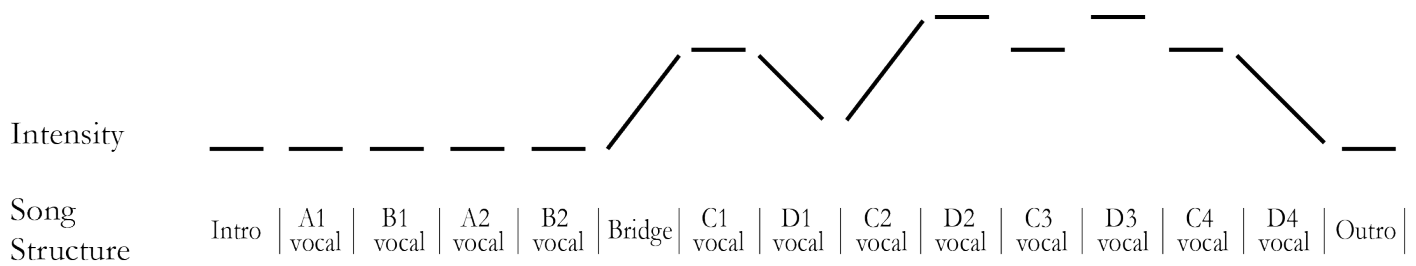


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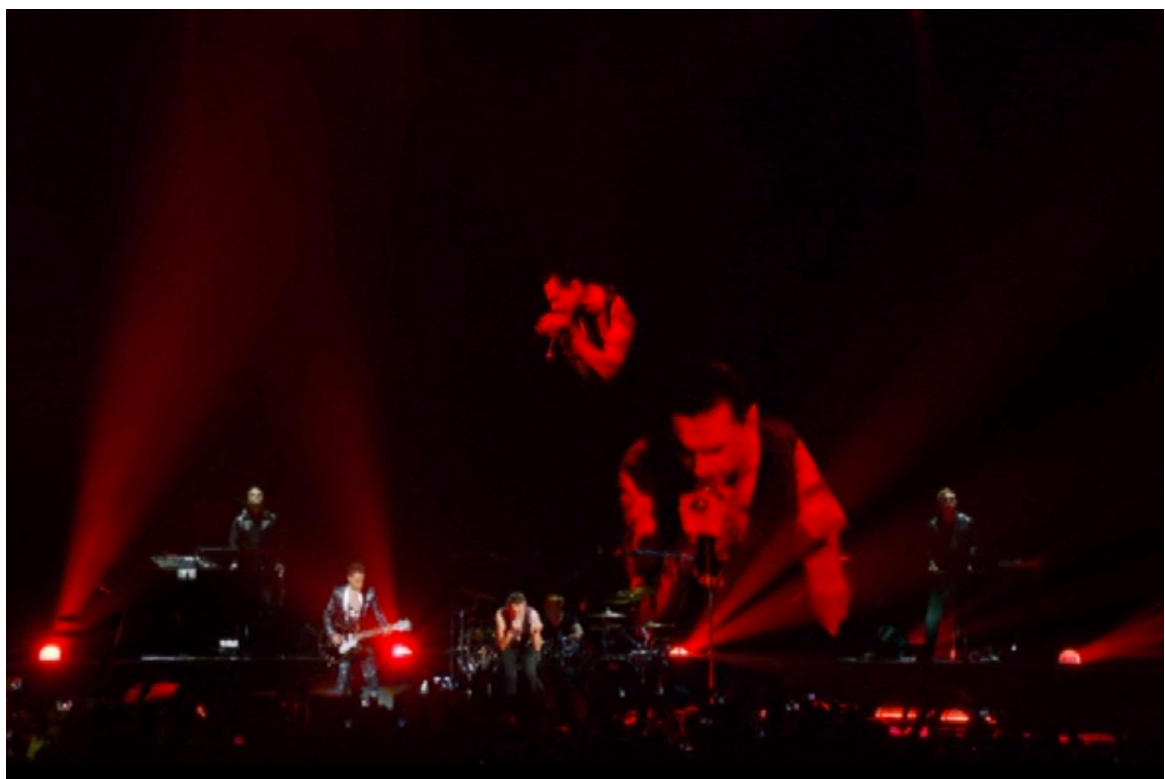


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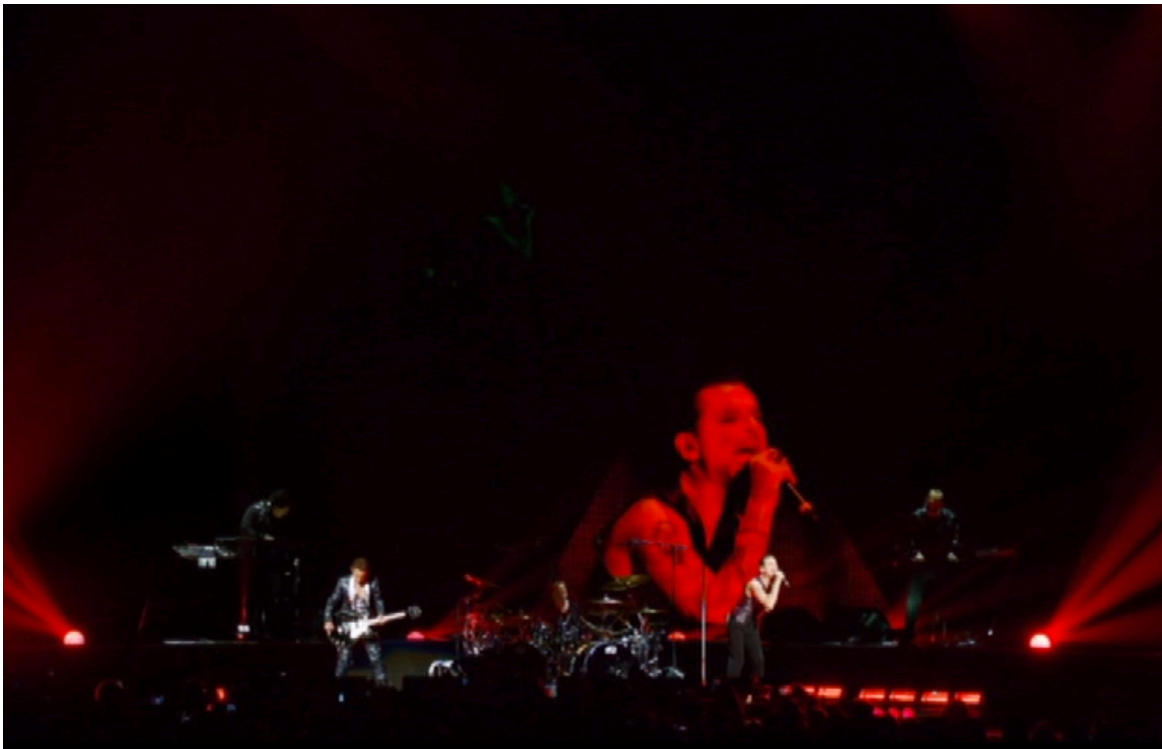


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Fig.7 *Angel* by Depeche Mode, The Delta Machine Tour (2013-2014). Screenshot, *Depeche Mode: Live in Berlin*.

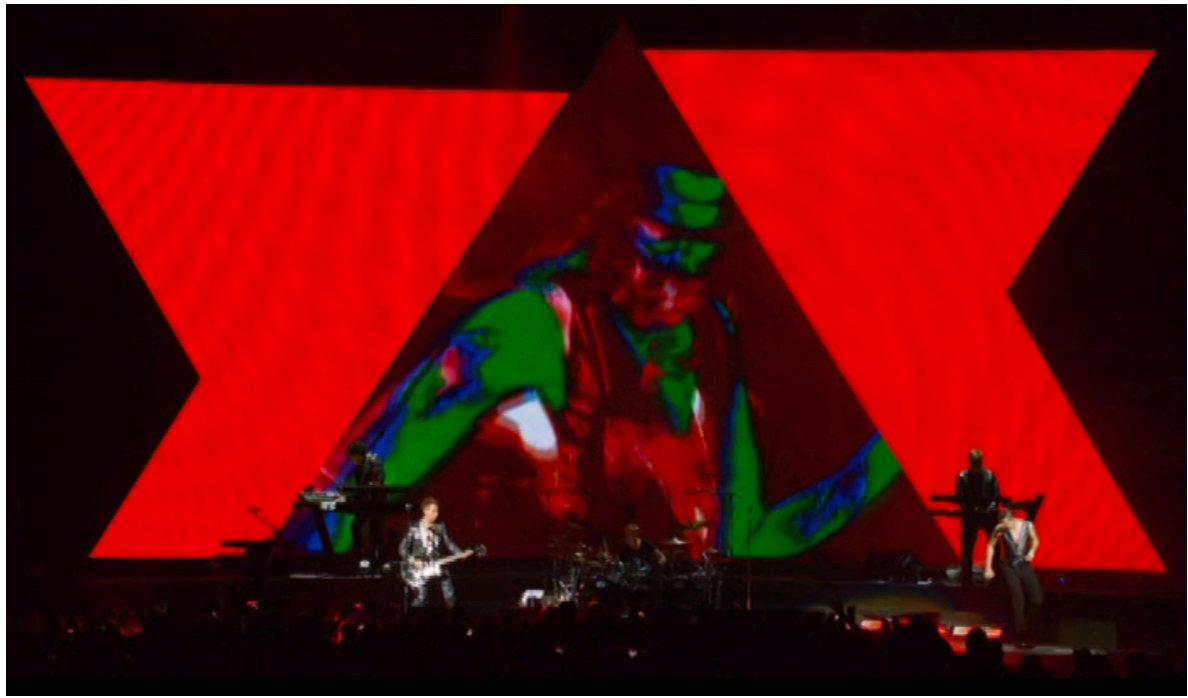


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Fig.11 *Angel* by Depeche Mode, The Delta Machine Tour (2013-2014). Screenshot, *Depeche Mode: Live in Berlin*.

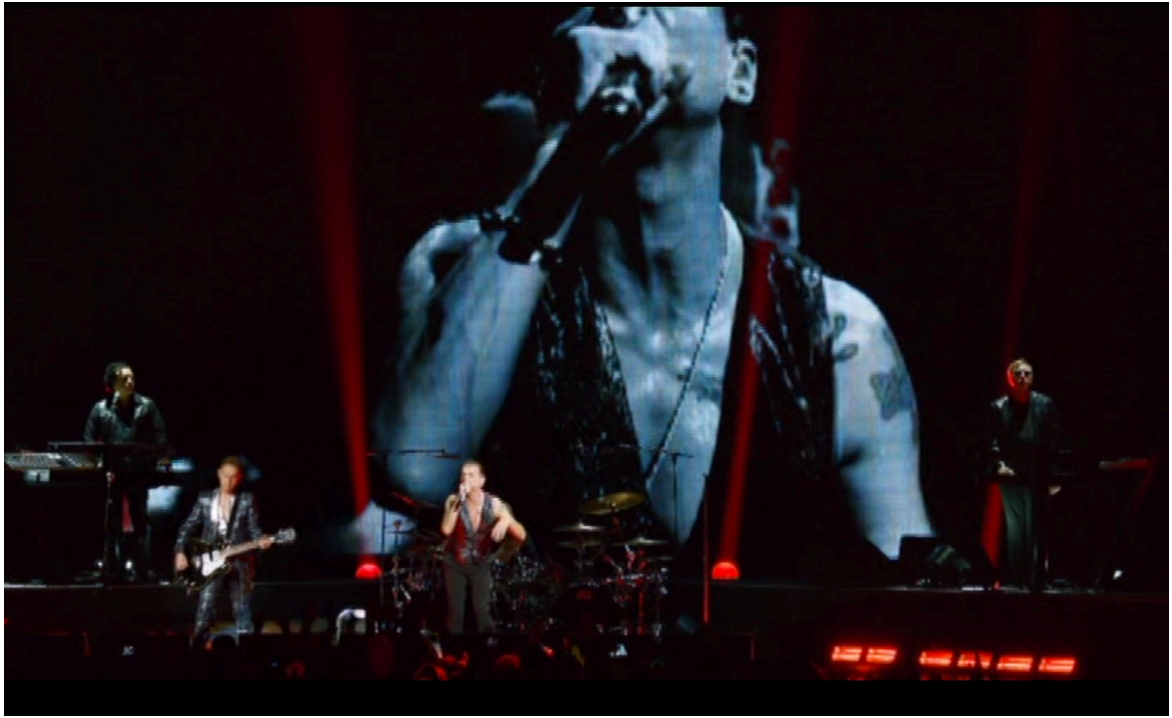


Fig.12 *Angel* by Depeche Mode, The Delta Machine Tour (2013-2014). Screenshot, *Depeche Mode: Live in Berlin*.

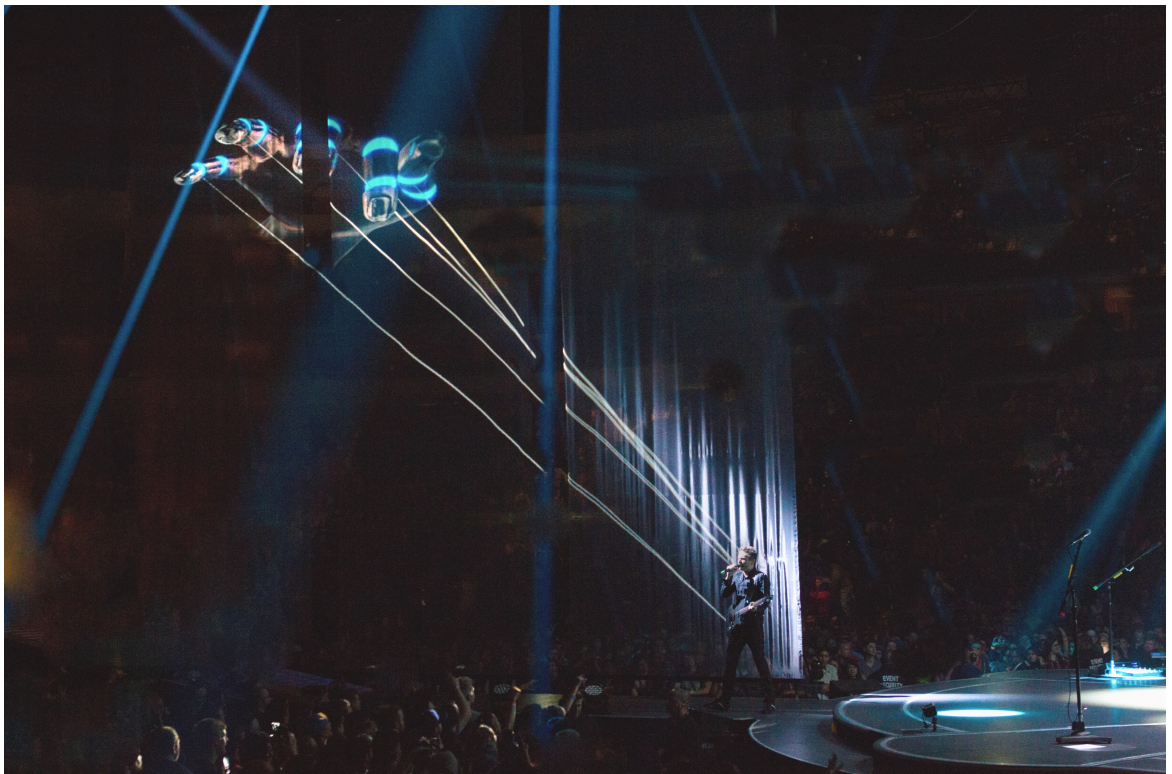


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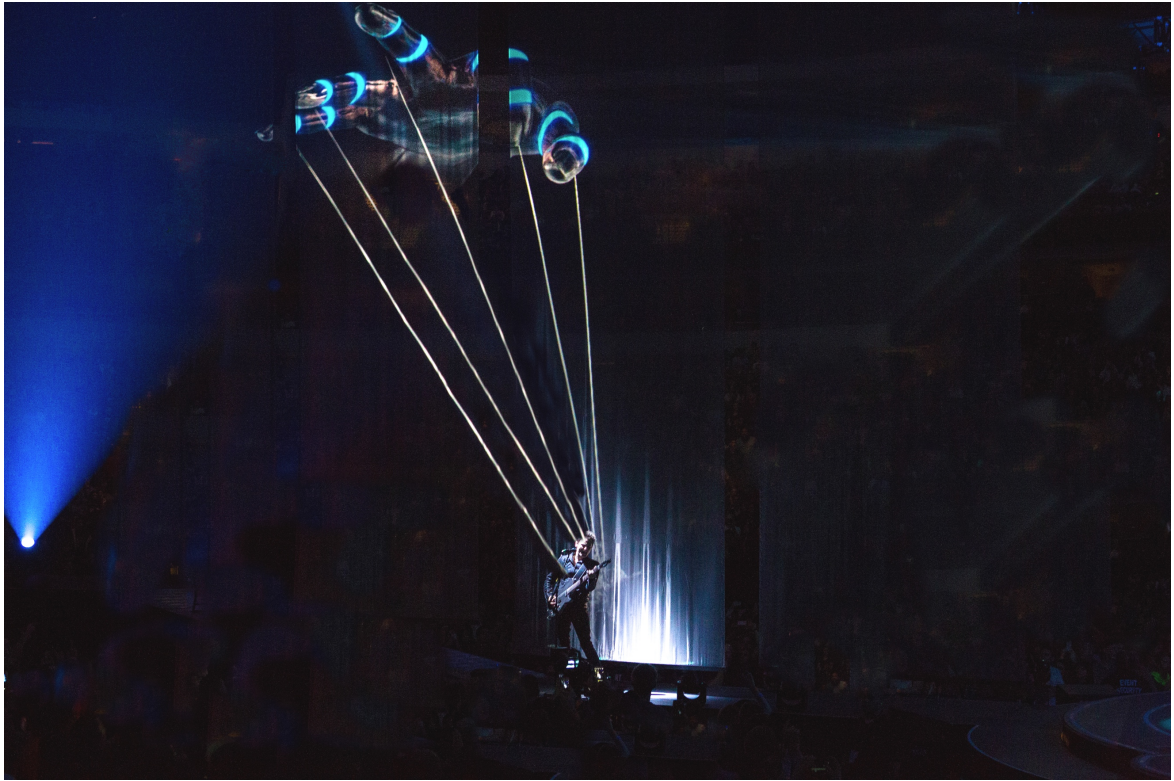


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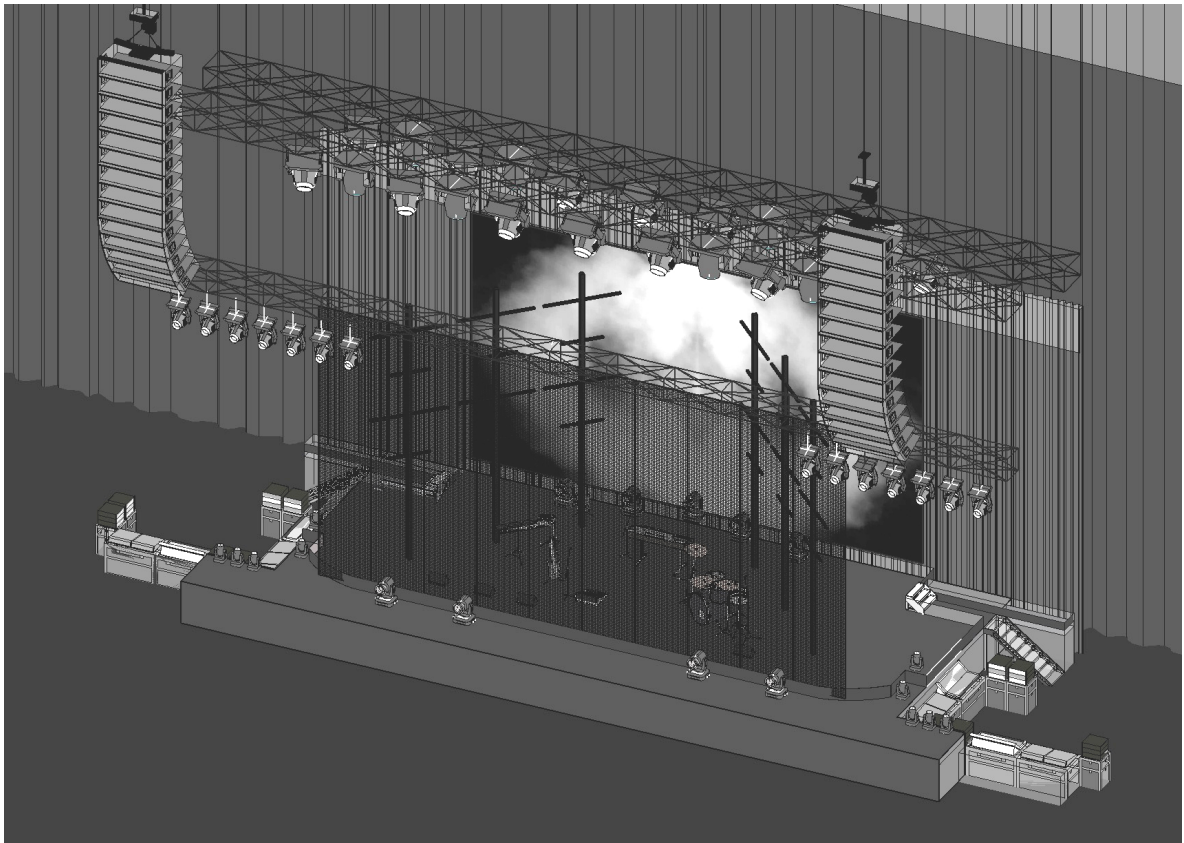


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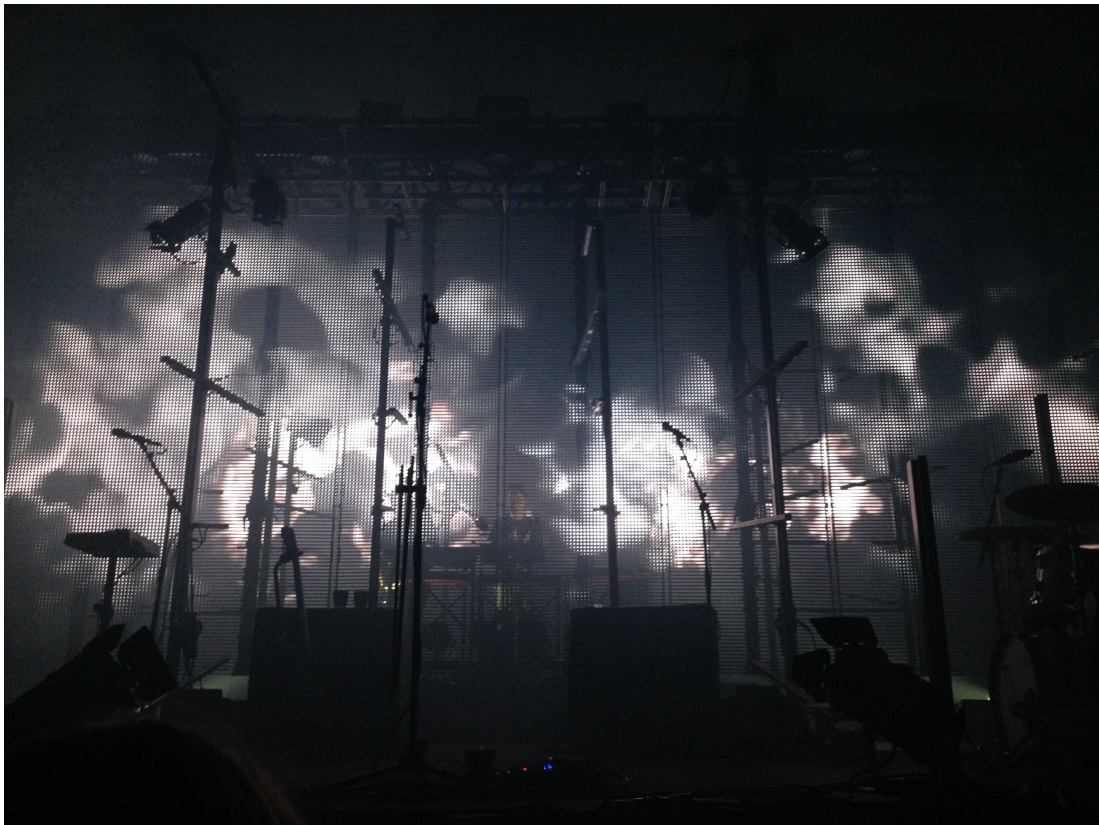


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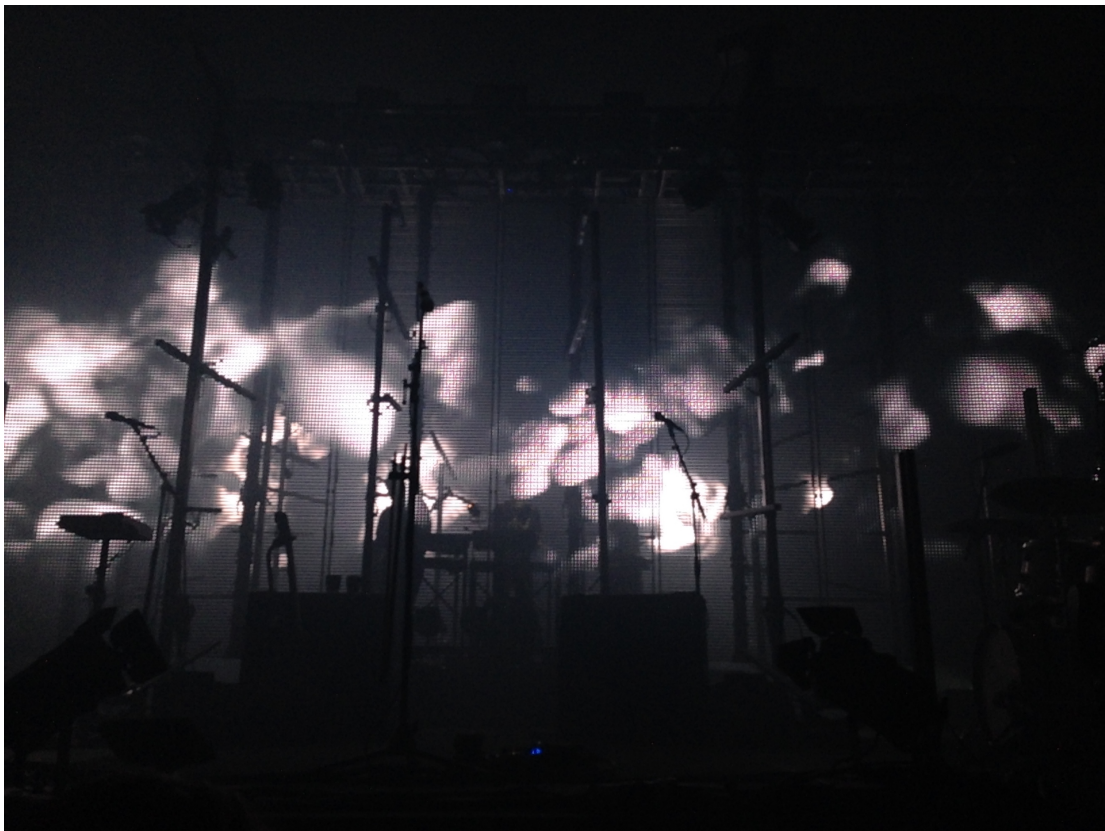


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