



ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND DRAMA

New Eyes: searching for an identity in music through voice and text

A psychological and creative journey

Mathias Aanundsen Hagen

Independent Project, 30 higher education credits
Master of Fine Arts in Improvisation
Academy of Music and Drama, University of Gothenburg
Spring semester, 2019

Author: Mathias Aanundsen Hagen

Title: New Eyes: searching for an identity in music through voice and text. A psychological and creative journey.

Supervisor: Per Anders Nilsson and Anders Jormin

Examiner: Joel Eriksson

ABSTRACT

In this thesis the concept of artistic and personal identity is explored. It sets out to understand an existential crisis and how to resolve it. The thesis draws perspective from psychological theories on creativity and mental development. In its core it explores the unification of the creative self and the intellectual self in regard to artistic expression. The thesis is divided in three main chapters that each explore the three phases of the physical work and psychological process beneath. A central theme is connecting to the inner child and a child's view of the world and creative expression. Voice and text are the two main elements that are used in creative exploration as means to work from a different platform and change framework in artistic practice. The thesis concludes that disciplinary freedom, honesty and letting go of control is important in order for the creative and intellectual self to co-exist and interact. It is presented as an experimental interactive PDF (read digitally) and is in itself a piece of creative work. It should therefore be read as such.

Key words: identity, creativity, aesthetic, message, psychology, syncretism, saxophone, voice, lyrics, transdisciplinary, honesty, composition



New Eyes

by

Mathias Aanundsen Hagen

Table of Contents

Reading Instruction4

Acknowledgements.....4

Preface5

Home

Roots.....7

Crisis.....9

Intertwined.....14

My Voice.....20

Killing the Father

A Theory of Creativity22

In the Forest27

A First Time for Everything.....29

A Gift from Above.....32

The End of the World.....34

Something to Say.....37

The Journey is the Destination39

New Eyes

Back to the Beginning44

Seeing is Believing47

Balance.....51

One-All.....53

A Road that Comes to Meet You.....57


Epilogue.....61

List of References.....63

Media List.....64

Appendix: Scores (see separate file)00

Reading instructions

This thesis is presented as an interactive PDF and should be read on a digital platform using Adobe Reader or Acrobat (for more information see file “NB! Read First”). The idea is for the thesis and its content to reflect itself. I want the thesis to be an artwork. During the reading you might have many questions. I had many questions when going through this process and since I want the thesis to reflect this search, the whole picture might only become clear upon reaching the end. My artistic work has had focus on writing text. Text is easily presented in a visual manner. Other central parts of my work, for instance sound, are not. I have therefore chosen to include all media within the text. I want my reflections, texts, photos, paintings and music to flow together in one expression. Throughout the text you will find buttons () that can be clicked in order to listen to music or sound that is being written about at that point in the text. The language shifts between abstract poetic writing, reflective writing and concrete factual writing. I want you the reader to be able to step into my world while reading the text, so I have chosen to use different writing styles at different points in order to attempt this. This thesis is an attempt at using an alternative to the standard academic setup in order to explore academic documentation of artistic work.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to Troels Boberg for all your dedication, time and invaluable lessons on psychology and creativity.

Thank you to all the great musicians and friends I have met and played with during my time at NoCom.

Thank you to Anders Jormin and Per Anders Nilsson for all you help and guidance during the writing process.

Thank you to Anders Hagberg, Thomas Strønen and Bendik Hofseth for inspiring conversations and reflections.

Thank you to Sophie Ziedoy and Beate Lech for teaching me about the voice.

Thank you to Oskar Karlsson for your lessons in mixing and helping me prepare the documentation for this thesis

Thank you to my parents Maybritt and Egil, my sister Kaja and girlfriend Oda for all your love and support.

Preface

Presented below is an account of a process. A journey of sorts. An attempt at presenting the findings of the artistic work that I have undertaken in the two years that I have been part of the NoCom master program at the Academy of Music and Drama in Gothenburg. It is always a challenge to account for a process where a lot of the work and reflection has already taken place in the past. I am trying to present what I've done, how I've done it and why, but my perspective in this moment is a product of all the experiences I have already had. I feel that in order to account for my choices and this project in general I need to step back into the past and try to see my work from the perspective of myself in the past.

In my work I have explored ideas of quite a personal character and how it relates to my artistic expression. It all started, like many processes do, with a crisis. A turning point, which I will get into further down in the text. The thesis is called «New Eyes». New Eyes is about changing perspective on your own process but also your perception of existence. It is about trying to form a deeper and truer understanding of identity and how this relates to your artistic process and personal life. The words platform and frame

appear multiple times in the text, in regard to artistic work and expression. I view platform in this context as the foundation from which an artist creates their expression and frame as the limitations of that expressions artistic and disciplinary mobility. I have often visualized this artistic work as a circle. There are many examples in society and nature of processes moving in circles. The ever-turning wheel of the seasons for instance. You, the reader, will see that this is a recurring theme in the following account. I had a conversation with one of my professors about the idea of a circular process. He was conflicted as to the implications of this and said that it would have to be more like a spiral, and I have to agree with him. I feel that our existence or rather our perception of it moves in a circular motion. But every time we once again reach the point where we started, we realize that, although we are back where we were some time ago, the position has shifted - our perception of it has changed. This is also what makes it so challenging to account for a process that has had a changing perspective throughout its development. I therefore find it necessary to present my work in a somewhat chronological order with the findings and reflections I had at the time, complemented with reflections by the voice of my present perspective.

The project is divided into three phases. The first phase is called «Home» and is concerned with developing an understanding of who I am and what my process looks like in light of events that occurred at the time. The second phase is called «Killing the Father». Here I try to let go and explore the findings of the first phase in different ways in order to understand them and take them into practice. The third and final phase bears the name of the whole thesis: New Eyes. Having addressed my crisis, explored my identity, put it into my process and worked it from different angles, I once again reach the point where I started. But my perception has shifted, and my understanding has broadened and deepened. I now see it all with New Eyes.

Since the topics explored in this thesis are of a personal, emotional and psychological nature it felt unnatural to present it in a strict academic form. I have therefore drawn inspiration from the style of academic essay which is a form of academic writing that has been chosen by many writers working within the artistic field. Essay comes from the French word «essayer» and means to try. I feel this is very compatible with artistic work where we are always searching, fumbling in the darkness, moving slowly step

by step, searching for the path in front of us. In the essay form there is room for a personal voice which it would be hard to go without when writing about personal matters. The open form of the essay also allows for a certain degree of freedom in how the format is set up. The continuous text may help to form a flow for the reader so that it is easier to follow the train of thought throughout the text. Although this thesis is about music and art it is not oriented around musicology. It is a thesis about artistic work within a masters in performing arts. It has therefore been important for me that the music and artistic work speak for itself as much as possible. The text is therefore not mainly focused on analyzing the music but rather describing and reflecting on it. I urge you to take the time to listen to the music within the text as you go along and draw lines between it and what is written.

I want this text to reflect my findings in a concrete, and perhaps a bit mysterious way. It will include both my work and an account of the process. Hopefully with a hint of something poetic and with abstract air that might become clear only when you reach the conclusion. The text portrays my search for answers, and I want you the reader to take part in this search.

«Home»



Roots

I cannot sit on the floor. I live my life on the surface, moving from my bed to the couch and once in a while, find myself behind the desk of my work space. The floor is a wild place. It's not rational to venture there. We have chairs, beds and sofas to sit on, so we should use them. I shouldn't sit on the floor.

It wasn't always this way. The floor was once my home. A space of play, only to be avoided if by chance it happened to be made of lava. There was always music there, in my childhood. Memories of mysterious lullabies sung by my parents. The captivating imagery of my imagination as the story unfolded.

I remember my first CD. My father coming back from the petrol station, opening the side door and handing it to me. It was brown and depicted two young men against a brick wall and staircase, posing for the camera. "Simon and Garfunkel: Tales from New York" was the title. I've listened to it more times than I can count. The music was magic. In the beginning I didn't understand the words, but I made up my own on top of them. A mysterious language still unknown to me. As I started to understand it, the

stories came alive. Drawing me into new worlds. From my stationary motion in the backseat of our Toyota HiAce, against the backdrop of fjords and mountains, it transported me.



Later music took a new form. Something that was to be understood and practiced. I learned to read music in the marching band. I think it's my first memory of being afraid to be wrong.

Sitting in the saxophone section of the band I would play as soft as possible so that no one would hear me. Sometimes I would even go as far as to just mimic the movements of the others without actually producing a sound. After a few years I quit.

In 2003 I moved to Nepal together with my family. Little did I know that it would be here, on the other side of the world, that my musical life would get a fresh start. We got word that there was a Spanish saxophonist in Kathmandu who was starting up a music school. Again, I started taking instrument lessons, but this time it was different. The school was called Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory. I had never heard of jazz and didn't really know anything about the genre or its history. In the beginning my lessons were similar to those I had experienced in the marching band, focusing on instrument technique and reading music. However, as it developed, I started to learn about scales, chords and improvisation. Eventually I was put in an ensemble together with some other students at the school. This was the first time I had played in a band. We started to learn about interplay. This was a profoundly different experience to the one I had in the marching band. There was a different focus. We were taught to communicate with each other and also with the audience. We also

started to work with interpreting the melodies and listening to each other to react with the movement of the music. Eventually we developed to the point where we started playing concerts around the city. Being on stage in this way was completely new to me and I liked it. It was around this time that I decided that I wanted to become a musician. Of course, I didn't really know what this meant, but I had decided none the less.

And the decision stuck. In the following years I focused much of my spare time on practicing. Returning to Norway I attended a high school music program, followed by a year at a folk high school and a four-year bachelor in improvised music. Through these years I worked hard to become a better instrumentalist and improviser. The focus was always on playing music, which I had plenty of opportunity to do in various big bands, ensembles led by my peers or myself, and numerous projects, concerts and tours in a number of countries. Even though I was given all these opportunities I always struggled with motivation. I had high expectations of myself and never seemed to reach the goals I had set for myself. There was something missing.

Crisis

I have always experienced a need to create. To explore ideas that have formed in my head. Take apart electronics, hide away in my parent's woodshed to tinker on my inventions or search for hidden worlds along the forest bed. This was a central part of my childhood. The need to create. The need to explore. The world, to my mind, has always had an underlying mystique to it. Hidden away in dark corners are traces of all who came before us. The ancient tales of dragons and hidden caves of treasure. Even today I find myself searching for mystery. Looking for hidden symbols in the margins of books. Taking unknown paths through the forest to see what I might stumble upon. Mystery forms the rich tapestry that makes the world so beautiful.

The British psychologist Donald Winnicott writes: *"It is in playing and only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self"*.¹ This statement supports the idea that the creative activities of my childhood have formed a basis for who I am. Identity can be defined as «the fact of being who or what a person or thing is».²

¹ Donald W. Winnicott, *Playing & Reality* (London: Tavistock Publications Ltd, 1971, REPRINT, New York: Routledge, 1991,92), 54

² *The New Oxford Dictionary of English, s.v. «identification.»*

This definition might seem simplistic, but it does in a basic form sum up the elements of our view of identity and sheds some light on its meaning as well as its inherent complexity. At first glance the definition states that identity is the fact of being what someone is. In these terms it is the simple idea that someone or something exists in a certain manner, and the manner in which it exists is its identity. The issue with the idea is that “matters of existence” is a complex matter. The manner our existence both incorporates our internal emotional and psychological life as well as our external features, which include both our bodily characteristics and way of being, as well as our social standing in society and other contextual characteristics.

What the defining characteristics of identity are, seems to be quite a subjective matter. In the concept of identity there is both the idea of what identifies us but also how we identify ourselves. People will probably have opinions on «good» versus «bad», when it comes to what we choose to identify with. For instance, someone might say that wealth would be a «bad» thing to have as a defining characteristic of your identity. This might be because it is something external that can easily change or be lost. In my own

experience, placing parts of your identity in elements you are not in control over, and subjecting yourself to its rise and fall on the behest of others, can be dangerous. As I developed as a musician, I placed more and more of who I was in what I was doing. My own value became dependent on my ability to perform musically. My identity as an individual and my identity as a musician started melting together until one day, they were inseparable. Working a lot as a sideman in other composers’ projects meant that I was stretching the concept of who I was in order to fit the needs and visions of others, trying to be everything to everyone. Gradually the anxiety came creeping. An anxiety of being left behind. To fall out of favor. And one day my fears caught up with me. I was on my own.

The word crisis comes from the Greek word «krinein» which means decide. From the early 17th century it has had the general meaning of a «decisive point» and in medical terminology refers to the turning point of a disease where the result will either be recovery or death.³ Up until this point I had focused my time on becoming a versatile and skillful musician. Moving away to a new city I started to lose positions in the bands that I had previously

³ *The New Oxford Dictionary of English, s.v. «crip.»*

worked in. Facing this was a challenge. The platform I thought I would work on in the foreseeable future faded before my eyes. What was left was just me. But who was I?

Having spent most of my time focusing on the performative side of music I had worked very little with composition. The aspect of creating music was not something I had felt a need to do, which was in stark contrast to the need to create which I have expressed earlier. In jazz and improvised music there is a lot of freedom, both in the act of improvisation, and in interpretation of compositions. These two elements were something that drew me in when I first started to learn about the music. Perhaps I had been able to satisfy this creative need there. Through working in this manner for many years I feel that I had developed a certain voice as an instrumentalist. There were identifiable characteristics to the way I improvised and interpreted. A kind of musical identity. That being said, I feel that also this identity had been affected by the pursuit of adaptation. Having less and less opportunity to perform other composers' music and therefore less opportunity to interpret and improvise in the manner I had previously done meant that I was starting to see

my "voice" in a new context. There was no point in trying to adapt anymore because the challenge was not to fit in but to find a new context. A natural part of this was to start composing. As I see it, composition is a sort of manifestation of the composer's aesthetic. In the same manner I see improvisation as a kind of real time compositional process. The performer reacts to what is being played around him or what she herself has just played and makes choices or reactions based on aesthetic preferences.

As I started shifting my focus towards composition I was quickly met with challenges and frustrations. At the time, I was writing music in a riff-based style which was constructed by multiple melody lines that interacted with each other vertically to form the harmony and melodic structure of the pieces. Idiomatically there was a link to middle eastern music but also early European polyphonic styles. I was working quite exclusively within notation software and there was a growing sensation that the music didn't come from me. It felt externalized - something that was created out there, beyond the borders of who I was. There was of course some connection to my aesthetic in the sense that I was choosing



how the music developed, but it felt as though the source was something or someone else.

Another frustration was that I found myself confusing composition and arrangement. Since I was working in notation software, I could compose in multiple layers simultaneously and also compose for a set instrumentation from the start. The consequence of this was that the foundational elements of melody, harmony, rhythm and form weren't always present. This became evident when I wanted to take one of my pieces and re-arrange it to a new constellation. In this case I would need to compose more material for the piece because the composition would only sound complete if all the voices of the original arrangement were present. Both the composition and the arrangement were incomplete, so both suffered at behest of the other. Another issue was that once a musical choice had been made it felt as though the die had been cast, meaning that I became overprotective of ideas that were still in the development phase. Since it was already notated on the computer and I could hear it in playback from the software, it felt as though this melody, riff or chord structure would have to remain the way I had written

it. I felt locked by my own choices in a process that ideally should be a free and creative one.

I felt as though I didn't know who I was anymore. Since my identity as a musician and my identity as a person had melted together over time, the existential crisis of my musical life quickly spread to the personal side as well. We as creative individuals are an exposed group in that the line between who we are and what we create is often thin or non-existent. I started doubting my reasons for doing music at all. It came to a point where I said to myself that I would rather never play music again than continue along the path I was on. And so, we reach the turning point. Recovery or death.

*«I don't know who
I am,
or what I think is real.
And where I can find the
what
and how I can become the
who
I am»*

Three questions arose in this time which I feel formed the basis for what was to come. The questions all focus on identity but not just from a personal point of view. They also addressed my musical identity. The questions were: Who am I? What do I want to say? How do I want to say it? I feel that these three questions address three sides to music although the two latter questions could be considered not to be part of the theme of identity. I feel the first questions addresses identity. The second addresses message and the third aesthetic. I came to realize that I didn't really know what «my» music was or sounded like. I also didn't know what I wanted it to sound like. I had, for the duration of my musical journey that far, been conforming to different pre-existing ideals in regard to sound and improvisational language. I started to feel the need to belong in the music I created. To feel at home in my own expression. I needed to find my identity in music - what my music sounded like - my voice. I needed to find my way of working - my process. I also needed to find what I wanted my music to say, to express - my message. Being quite new to the idea of composing and in general to being a creating musician, there was no real foundation for me to work on.

I realized that there had been a split between myself as a creative individual and me aspiring to become a successful jazz saxophonist. The creative need from childhood had never become part of my musical life. I realized that I had boxed myself in and said: "This is what you should be doing. Don't do that! That's not right." Cutting away desires and ideas I wanted to explore because I thought it wasn't needed in order to develop as a musician. The Danish poet Inger Christensen says.⁴

«...It is probably something that is the same all over the world - that there is something that is the end of the world. Meaning the border between civilization and something that is too wild and strange, that simply is a space we as humans don't venture in...It is exiting to explore this outer limit, which later in life can be found in all sorts of strange places...»

I had neglected my childhood. Barricaded myself in the soothing comfort of civilization. The platform for my musical expression had been limited to the saxophone. I didn't allow myself to explore my impulses. I could no longer sit on the floor. This wild and strange place was no longer accessible to me. I would need to venture inwards. To find the source. The missing link. To reunite my inner creative child with the strict aspiring saxophonist. Where was the foundation for my aesthetic? Where was the origin

⁴ Inger Christensen - *Cikaderne findes*, dir. Rex, Jytte, Denmark, Statens Filmcentral, 1998 [DVD], 05:50-06:40, translated by Mathias Hagen

for my inspiration? Composition became the starting point. Instead of being something of the moment, the creation would now become something concrete. It would be a more permanent manifestation of my artistic expression. Since I would be performing in and interacting with this manifestation, it would need to be somewhere I felt that I belonged. Somewhere I could call home.

Intertwined

There were two pivotal events in the first phase of this project that shaped what it would eventually come to encompass. Coincidentally they happened around the same time. One event was the process of composing a piece of music for a project with the European Academy Ensemble (EAE) in Parma, Italy. The other was a trip back to Nepal. Having spent a large portion of my formative years there meant that going back for the first time as an adult was a challenging experience. Being sheltered from the harsh realities of human existence when I was first living there meant that I was now seeing my childhood paradise in a very different light. I was in the country to explore music and mental health by visiting different organizations, hospitals and people

working within the field. A part of this work was also to play a few solo concerts at the institutions I visited.

This trip came right at the peak of the initial crisis. In contrast to the realities of life in a developing country the seemingly large questions I was struggling with now appeared trivial. I realized how self-centered my reasons for working with music were. Another experience was the profound power of music in these settings both in therapy, comfort and entertainment. It felt as though I had only touched upon the surface of what music could be, and that I might also only have touched upon the surface of what I wanted my music to be. I realized how important message was in what I create. I now understood that one thing I was seeking was substance. I wanted what I created to be more than just notes on a piece of paper that was played by some musicians. During this trip I started to form an understanding of my values as both a person and an artist. These values had for years been stretched and neglected in the fight to fit in. During this trip I was also working on the composition for the EAE. For this project each band member was tasked with composing a piece of music based on the literary works of the American writer Henry David

Thoreau. Prior to the trip I had been in the process of selecting a piece of his to work from. I did this by reading a collection of his poems.⁵ A challenge in this process was to connect with the material. I wanted to find a poem that «spoke» to me. It felt important that if I was to spend time writing music based on some text, it would have to be inspiring to me. Something I found aesthetically pleasing. This was more challenging than expected. Thoreau writes in an older style of American English with vocabulary that was perhaps common in his time but that now seems almost archaic and overly romantic (think Shakespeare) for someone used to watching modern American entertainment. I was struggling to relate to his imagery and metaphors. In the end however I found a piece that I could relate to. It is called «Friendship».

It is only partly true that I actually found a whole poem that «spoke» to me. In the collection the poem consists of eleven verses. Since many of Thoreau's works were unpublished in his lifetime, a number of his poems including many of the ones in this collection are gathered from various manuscripts and journals. This means that the poems are presented as an accumulation of information from different versions. What I ended up doing was

selecting the two final verses which were originally omitted from the final version and another cancelled verse (which had originally functioned as the opening verse) that I found in the textual preface of the collection.⁶ Together with the first verse of the poem I constructed my own version of it. Although I omitted a sizable part of the original poem, I did not change their order or structure of the verses, so I felt it was an acceptable approach. The full version of the poem with the cancelled verse found in the preface can be seen below.⁷ The verses I selected are in *italics*, the lines indicate a separation of the omitted or cancelled verses as presented in the collection. Omitted or changed words are in **bold**.

⁵ Carl Bode, *edit., Collected Poems by Henry Thoreau (Enlarged Edition)* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1964).

⁶ Bode, *edit., Collected Poems*, 303, 353

⁷ Bode, *edit., Collected Poems*, 89-91

*That love of which I purposed to sing,
(It sings itself I ween)
Is quite a different thing,
For neither needs to cling
When both can stand*

*I think awhile of Love, and while I think,
Love is to me a world,
Sole meat and sweetest drink,
And close connecting link
Tween heaven and earth.*

*I only know it is, not how or why,
My greatest happiness;
However hard I try,
Not if I were to die,
Can I explain.*

*I fain would ask my friend how it can be,
But when the time arrives,
Then Love is more lovely
Than anything to me,
And so I'm dumb.*

*For if the truth were known, Love cannot speak,
But only thinks and does;
Though surely out 'twill leak
Without the help of Greek,
Or any tongue.*

*A man may love the truth and practice it,
Beauty he may admire,
And goodness not omit,
As much as may befit
To reverence.*

*But only when these three together meet,
As they always incline,
And make one soul the seat,
And favorite retreat
Of loveliness;*

*When under kindred shape, like loves and hates
And a kindred nature,
Proclaim us to be mates,
Exposed to equal fates
Eternally;*

*And each may other help, and service do,
Drawing Love's bands more tight,
Service he ne'er shall rue
While one and one make two,
And two are one;*

*In such case only doth man fully prove
Fully as man can do,
What power there is in Love
His inmost soul to move
Resistlessly.*

*Two sturdy oaks I mean, That **(which)** side by side,
Withstand the winter's storm,
And spite of wind and tide,
Grow up the meadow's pride,
For both are strong*

*Above they barely touch, but undermined
Down **(to)** their deepest source,
Admiring you shall find
Their roots are intertwined
Insep'rably.*

The text I ended up with might not reflect what the writer had intended, but I feel that the way I assembled it gave it a new and quite clear message. For me it spoke about unhealthy relationships where there is an unbalanced or unhealthy amount of dependency from one or both parties. I found this very interesting and it touched me on a personal level. The naturalistic metaphors were beautiful and strong. When I look back on it, some of the aesthetics of this poem stuck with me. Below is the poem as it looked as I entered the compositional process:

*That love of which I purposed to sing,
is quite a different thing,
for neither needs to cling
when both can stand.*

*I think awhile of Love, and while I think,
love is to me a world,
Sole meat and sweetest drink,
and close connecting link
tween heaven and earth.*

*Two sturdy oaks I mean, that side by side,
withstand the winter's storm,
and spite of wind and tide,
grow up the meadow's pride,
for both are strong.*

*Above they barely touch, but undermined.
Down their deepest source,
admiring you shall find.
Their roots are intertwined
insep'rably.*

In the way that I had initiated this process there was already an understanding that I wanted to work thoroughly with this piece of music. I now had a text that «spoke» to me. The next step was to create the music. As mentioned earlier, there was a growing frustration with my way of working. It felt distant and externalized. For this compositional process I decided that I wanted to change course and work against this tendency. I also wanted to explore my aesthetic in an honest way; trying to not conform to the perceived expectations of my peers but really try to connect with what my ear wanted to hear. I started thinking of something that I called the «Causal Drawing Method», it sounds a lot more intricate than it really is. I had noticed how I could, while I was on the phone, start drawing some geometrical shape on a piece of paper. A completely subconscious projection onto paper. What I had found was that as it developed, I would start associating it to a something I knew. An object or something else.

It would be an abstract link between the two. I found that whenever I started drawing one line, there would be one that followed it and eventually it would become a picture in the context that emerged. I realized that the way I worked or at least the way I wanted to work with music was similar. I could make a musical line or a combination of a few notes and a chord and then build that into a piece. I do realize that this is not a revolutionary method of working and I believe this is probably how most composer work but nonetheless this was how I visualized my process. Later I saw a few videos of Pablo Picasso painting and how he could draw a line that became an image he related to, and how he could then transform it into a number of different objects until the result was a multi-object consisting of different animals or other images that we as the viewer have a strong perception of, even in an extremely abstract form. I realized that this method would be a good way of connecting to my aesthetic because I would always be following where the music would lead me (like in improvisation). Where it would lead me would be where my aesthetic found it pleasing to go - where I could connect the dots into something that I associated with a memory or emotion, either consciously or subconsciously.

To approach the actual physical process of composing in a more tactile and internalized way I decided to stop using my notation software when developing the foundational elements (melody, harmony, rhythm and form) and only use it when I moved on to arranging. The ensemble I was writing for was an eleven-piece orchestra consisting of voice, trumpet, two saxophones, bass clarinet, guitar, two pianos, two basses and drums. I decided that the way I wanted to approach the compositional process was by developing the music using only my voice and piano and notating the music using only pencil and paper. This was the first time I had ever worked with text in a compositional process. I consulted my professor Anders Jormin for some tips regarding writing music based on text and one of the concepts he introduced me to was to let the rhythmic qualities of the text as it is read, form the rhythm of the music. This is also how I started out writing the piece. Although I did abandon it after a while it formed in my head an understanding of how I wanted to relate to text as a composer. I realized how important it was not to work against the text, but to compose in such a way that the music complements and supports the text. As I mentioned, this was the first time I had ever worked with text, but it was also the first time I had ever written for a

singer. To hear someone singing the piece I had composed, with the text I had developed was a new experience for me. I felt strongly connected to the music. It felt meaningful.

Working in this manner and suddenly approaching the idea of message in music in such a concrete way was a new experience and against the backdrop of my trip to Nepal it all came together. There seemed to be a connection. There was something with this way of working and this aspect of expression that was a part me. Upon further reflection I realized that song and text had always been fundamental sources of inspiration in music for me. This trip to Nepal and the compositional process made me form a new understanding of my own process and aesthetic and represented the turning point of my artistic work. I had found something that felt like me. Something that seemed associated with my aesthetic - my identity. I felt that it had substance. I felt that I was saying something. Later on, I found that in terms of the confusion between composition and arrangement, this new method had worked. In 2018 I went back to Italy to play a concert in a trio format and for this I rearranged "Intertwined" as part of the set list. This process was quite simple, and the piece was easily

translated into the new setting because all the foundational elements were present.



My Voice

I call this first period of my work «Home». The reason for this is that it explores the fundamental starting point of my creative work: my vision, aesthetic and message. Who I am and where I belong? At the end of this first phase (which also represents the first semester of my master studies) I had reached an understanding of what my project was about and what I wanted to explore. With the experiences of writing for voice and working with text I had realized that I had been able to connect with my own aesthetic in a new way. I felt that the text gave the music a context and a meaning. This was something that I craved in my artistic expression. Looking back on my childhood I could see that there were two competing aesthetics in my musical work. One was a product of my process to become a professional musician, the other was based on what had inspired me before I ever dreamt of becoming a musician; the self that had developed by being creative through playing and exploring, as Winnicott writes. I realized that I would have to consolidate the two in order to find my home. This meant that I would need to soften the grip of the

learned aesthetic and find the essence of my inner child's aesthetic and bring that into my adult view of art and music.

I am seeking substance, message, honesty, and meaning and I realized that I wanted to search for this by exploring the integration of voice and text into my expression. I would need to break the boundaries of my ego by broadening my expressive platform beyond the saxophone. I wanted to draw closer to myself, my body and my musical intention. I felt the best way to do this was to start exploring the voice, both by including other vocalists in my projects and by starting to sing myself. Text would work as a tool for working with a concrete message in my music but also to try to give a context and a direction to my musical expression both in the set composed material and the improvisation associated with it. As an instrumentalist in jazz I have often played standards that have originally had text.⁸ It has always been important for me to relate to this text when interpreting the melody so as to not interpret it to an unrecognizable state. I realize that text is always something I've been drawn to and that has provided a context when performing

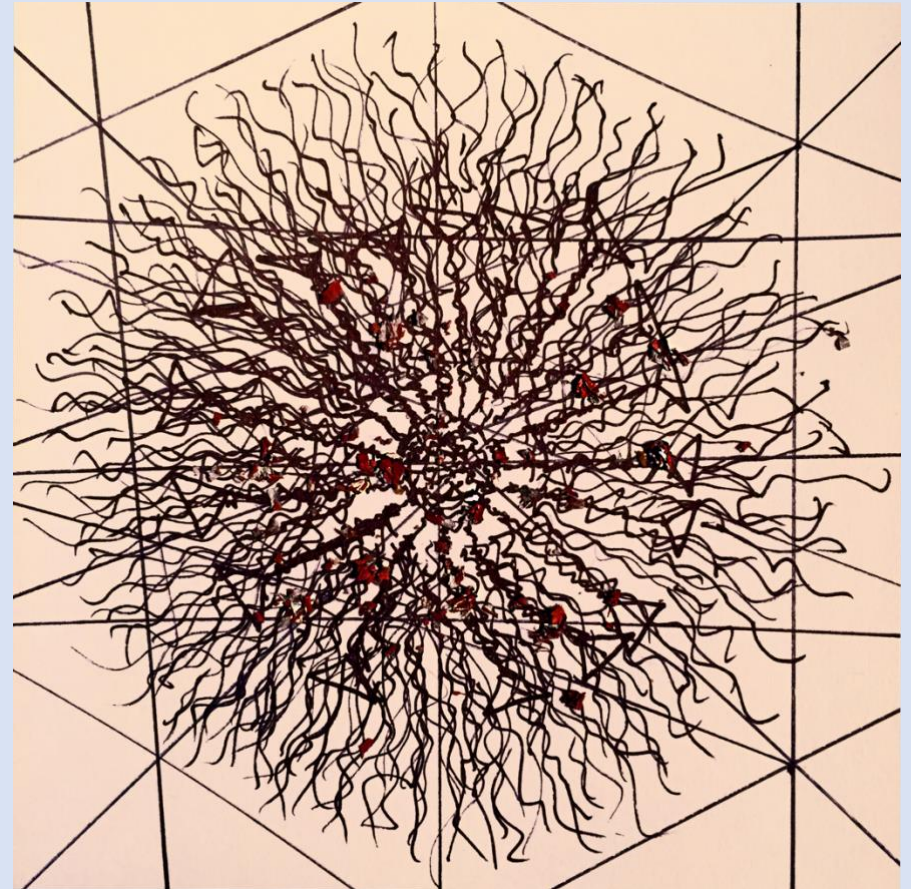
⁸ *Standards are compositions that are part of an indefinite repertoire among jazz musicians. These pieces are widely known among musicians and listeners and have been played and recorded in a multitude of versions, by different musicians through the years. The compositions are composed by famous jazz composers from different eras, but the list also consists of tunes from the Tin Pan Alley production of popular songs as well as Broadway shows, the Great American Songbook, traditional melodies and ethnic music.*

but also when listening. Text in music has also been part of music's mystical appeal that has drawn me to it.

As previously mentioned, this project is about switching frame to see yourself and your artistic process from a new angle in order to form a deeper understanding of it. I want to undress the layers of conventions that I have put on my expression and work towards reaching a more honest expression based on both my identity as an individual and my aesthetic as a musician. This master project seeks to address the split between the creative person and the aspiring saxophonist. Exploring identity in music, aesthetic, message but also states of mind and the psychology of the creative process. Using the voice as a frame for expression and text as a frame for creation - aiming to find my voice, understand my aesthetic, connect with what I create and feel at home in my process and expression. I want to reinforce the idea that the music I create is not a product of my instrument but rather of me.

"To find one's voice is also about undressing (conventions), not just putting on (clothes, layers), to emerge in a more natural way."

- Bendik Hofseth ⁹



⁹ Quote recorded during lesson on 13th of December 2018, translation by Mathias Hagen, translation and use approved by Bendik Hofseth

“Killing the Father”



A Theory of Creativity

The title of this phase may seem a bit cryptic. «Killing the Father» is quite a dramatic statement that will probably be associated differently by every individual that is presented with it. With the meaning that I intend it to have, however, it captures the essence of what this period of the project is about. This second phase, as with the rest of the project, has two dimensions. It focuses on both the tactile work process and the psychological process beneath. This became evident as I started to dig deeper into the crisis and my search for an identity in music. I started to ponder the difference between an artist and a musician. It seemed to me that a musician is someone who reproduces and interprets others work, much like I had previously done, and that an artist was much more concerned with their own expression. Of course, the meaning of words is often viewed as subjective and people associate their own definitions based on experience. But it felt as though the difference between the two labels were important. I had realized that I might only have touched upon the surface of what I wanted my music to be. I had never thought of myself as an artist or composer. This idea was never any part of how I viewed Questions like: «what is my genre? », «who is my audience?»,

and «what do I want to express? ».

A big part of my discoveries in the first phase was regarding the split between the aspiring musician and the creative individual. It seemed that I would have to reunite the two in order to find my real identity. To find my honest aesthetic in music. A part of this would be to connect with my inner child whom had developed into the self through play and creativity as theorized by Winnicott. I would need to understand the mechanics of my psychological struggles in music as well as work on exploring means of artistic expression that could assist the search. For the reason of wanting to explore the psychological I applied for a course at the Rhythmic Conservatory in Copenhagen called «The Psychology of Creativity and Art». The course was taught by the psychologist Troels Boberg.¹⁰

My psychological struggles with music and the different aspects of my work had long been a point of interest for me and I had sought help where I could from various literature in the self-help category and in books such as «Effortless Mastery» by Kenny Werner.¹¹ Even though these books (especially the mentioned

one) present many good ideas and solutions to psychological issues with different aspects of creative and musical work, they felt too abstract. They focused on the symptoms of the problems and ideas on how to work through them without describing or trying to analyze the mechanisms behind. Kenny Werner writes about the problems of having a «fear-based» approach to creative or performative work. He presents methods for unlearning the mechanisms that have been put down in us through repeatedly working from «unconstructive» frames of mind. I remember that reading this book really helped me understand certain aspects of what we sometimes call flow, transcendence or «the zone». It also made me realize certain aspects of the way I worked and the problems I was facing. I have talked about conventions and how the expressive platform of the saxophone was psychologically linked to something locked. I was conforming to other people's ideals and aesthetics in music instead of being honest towards my own. I remember the book made me realize that these issues came from psychological issues. That it was my frame of mind and my «fears» that were limiting my creative freedom. I am by no means a scholar of psychology and I do not claim to possess a wide or deep knowledge of the historical placement of these theories and

¹⁰ Psychologist and teacher at Rhythmic Conservatory of Copenhagen. Theories discussed in this chapter were first introduced to me by Boberg through the mentioned course and private lessons. For further reading about his view of these topics please see reference list for his master thesis.

¹¹ Kenny Werner, *Effortless Mastery* (Indiana: Jamey Aebersold Jazz, 1996)

how they relate theories and psychologist that preceded or followed them. I want to include and discuss these theories because knowing about them changed my understanding of my process and in the end helped me reach an answer to the questions I asked at the beginning of my artistic work. I strongly believe that their inclusion will help you the reader form a deeper understanding of my project and my findings, and hopefully be able to relate it to your own work in some shape or form.

When we look at the idea of «Killing the Father» in the history of psychology it stems from Freuds theory of the Oedipus complex. Although this theory has been highly debated through the years it seems to still be widely used as a means of understanding psychological development in early life. The Oedipus complex occurs in the third stage of psychosexual development, also known as the phallic stage. In this third stage, which occurs around the age of three to six, a triadic relationship between the child, father and mother starts to form. In the theory of the Oedipus complex the child develops an unconscious sexual desire towards the opposite sex parent and a hatred for the same sex

parent (which is the one who sex with the opposite-sex parent). In the case of a male child there is a conflict between the father and child for possession of the mother. The child's id (basic instinctual drives) wants to kill the father to unite with the mother. In the myth of Oedipus Rex, Oedipus unknowingly kills his father and marries his mother which is why Freud chose this name for his theory. The Oedipus complex is a conflict between the id and the ego, and it is also at this point of development that the ego defenses start to form as a means of resolving or at least subduing the conflict.¹²

To understand how the Oedipus complex relates to the psychology of creative work, we need to look at the theories of another psychologist. In his book, «The Hidden Order of Art», Anton Ehrenzweig presents his theories of creativity. Ehrenzweig was an Austrian born psychologist, writer and painter. His book spent twelve years in the making and could be considered his “magnum opus” where he presented much of his research into the psychology of art and its symbolism. A central idea in his writing is that of differentiation. To differentiate is «to recognize or

¹² Wikipedia, s.v. “Oedipus Complex,” last modified 12 April 2019, at 11:02 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oedipus_complex
Information found under subtitle «the Oedipus Complex». Although Wikipedia’s validity as a source is highly disputed, I have chosen to use it in this case because I have not been able to find a single source where all the information I required was available in one place. I have however read about these theories in various other books and encyclopedias and believe the information in this part of the article to be correct.

ascertain what makes (someone or something) different».¹³ Anton Ehrenzweig separates the functions of the ego into two categories: the surface features (functions) and the in-depth sensibilities (functions). He presents it as «the two kinds of attention».¹⁴ He writes that: «The creative thinker is capable of alternating between differentiated and undifferentiated modes of thinking, harnessing them together to give him service for solving very definite tasks. ».¹⁵ He describes the alternation between the two modes or functions as an oscillating process. The surface functions are described as our logical and rational way of thinking. They also include our differentiating functions: our ability to separate and analyze the sub-elements of wholes. The in-depth functions are our unifying and holistic functions. It is the opposite of the surface functions. It incorporates our intuitive and emotional thinking and our ability to draw lines and see complex relationships between seemingly unrelated knowledge. The idea of undifferentiation is described as the opposite of differentiation making it the state of not identifying differences but rather seeing the larger picture and how all the dots relate to each other. Further he introduces the term of de-differentiation as the process of moving from the differentiated mode to the

undifferentiated mode.¹⁴ In terms of the relationship or dynamic between the two modes has been described as oscillating one could visualize it as a circular movement from the surface down to the depth and back. There is then a de-differentiation process from the surface functions down to the in-depth sensibilities and a «re»-differentiation process moving back to the surface functions.

An interesting aspect of Ehrenzweig's understanding of creative work is that the idea of differentiation is central to Donald Winnicott's understanding of a child's early development. The ability to distinguish or differentiate is understood as what mental development is. Winnicott's understanding of a child's early development falls into three stages of dependence. The stages are: absolute dependence (0-6 months), relative dependence (6-24 months) and growing independence (24 months and on). Winnicott says that «there is no such thing as an infant». By this he means that the child at this first stage of absolute dependence is unable to exist separate from the nurture of the mother. It only exists as part of the mother-child relationship. The child is absolutely dependent on the mother but

¹³ *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, s.v. «diffuse.»

¹⁴ Anton Ehrenzweig, *The Hidden Order of Art* (California: University of California Press, 1967), 19-31

¹⁵ Anton Ehrenzweig, *The Hidden Order of Art*, xiii

has no recognition of this. The child is unable to differentiate between me and not-me. The mother is called a subjective object at this stage. When the child has a need it experiences that it creates the mother that satisfies it, in this way it feels that it is equipped with magical abilities. When the child experiences again and again that it can create its own satisfaction, this results in a series of «I am»-experiences. These experiences, which are affected by every child's individual style of interaction with its surroundings, are ultimately linked together to form what Winnicott calls «the true self». Gradually from this point on the child starts to differentiate between me and not-me. When this differentiation is established, we enter the second stage of development which is one of relative dependence. The child is now able to start acknowledging the mother's separate existence and its dependence on her. It also has to endure the feeling of powerlessness that these experiences entail.¹⁶ Following this stage is a stage of growing independence. Winnicott focuses primarily on the earliest development in children. However, the final stage in terms of differentiation takes place around three years of age with the start of Oedipus complex. We can see a link here. Ehrenzweig theorizes that the creative process moves

between two functions of the ego and that the dynamic between them is the movement between high levels and low levels of differentiation. Similarly, a child's early psychological development is a gradual process of learning to differentiate in which process the ego and its defenses gradually develop. Interestingly Ehrenzweig writes this later in his book:

*"In creative work we are constantly delving back into lower levels of mental imagery. There, the triangular Oedipus situation of father, mother and child which evolves during infancy is again dissolved. The father figure recedes behind the mother, who as the White Goddess unites in her undifferentiated image both male and female powers, love and hate, life and death."*¹⁷

In terms of the understanding of the dynamic between the ego's surface functions and in-depth sensibilities we can here see that there is a link in the two theories regarding the idea of Killing the Father. The father is not killed, but he «recedes behind the mother» and becomes part of her. We can link the movement from high levels of differentiation to low levels of differentiation, to a movement back through the child's early development. The ego-structure and defenses are dissolved, and the child moves back to

¹⁶ Ole Andkjær Olsen and Simo Køppe, *Psykoanalysen efter Freud 1-2* (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1996), 553-556

¹⁷ Anton Ehrenzweig, *The Hidden Order of Art*, 182

its unity with the mother. Existence and creation are once again one and the child is capable of creating its own satisfaction.

In a child's early development, the «killing» of the father is a subconscious instinct of the id. But as we see in the theories of Anton Ehrenzweig it can also be viewed as the process of dissolving the ego and its defenses in order to reach the lower levels of differentiation. In regard to my artistic project, the concept of «Killing the Father» is working to peel away the conventions and limitations I have put on myself. To «undress» as Bendik Hofseth says in order to emerge in a more natural way. The aim is to break the learned and developed ego-structure and delve into the embracing freedom of the singular existence where creation and being are one. As I came to realize, much of my musical development had been related to very high levels of differentiation while the creative individual had always been freer and had strong connection to the in-depth sensibilities. I would need to kill the father and dig deep through creative musical work and psychological exploration in order to reunite the split that had hindered my expression. I would need to

connect with my inner child and search for the larger picture in the realms of undifferentiation.

In the Forest

Again, I found myself there. Among the trees. The suffocating air, a desperate search for light. I had found it before. Reached that open place, where the fresh ocean air greets you with a cold embrace and fills your entire being with calm and wonder. But I lost my way. Stumbled back into the forest where I once again was lost among the roots and branches.

For as long as I had studied improvisation there had always been this vision of the moment of improvisation, where out in front of me there would be a pool of notes and all I would have to do is stretch out my hand and pick out what I needed from the calm blue. There was an idea there that the musical choices I make come from me and are a product of my musical and creative self, reacting to something external either made from another source or sound waves that were of my own conception but had travelled and once again returned to strike the tiniest of drums hidden away in a small cave where only cotton swabs and the occasional finger had ventured. I didn't want what I said to be a victim of

coincidence. I wanted it to be something I had intended. On the other hand, and in contrast, was the wish to let go and achieve freedom of expression. To break the chains of my own ego and rediscover the joy of creating.

The method that was discovered in the process of writing «Intertwined» had been important. It had been able to solve some of the issues with working in notations software and I felt that I had come closer to finding a way of working that fit me. During the second phase this work continued. Notating with pencil and paper and developing ideas with voice and piano, I created the first composition named “Through the Trees”. The process of composing this piece was quite simple. It started, like most of my compositions do, with a small idea that I recorded on my phone. As I developed it a simple waltz emerged. It was the first time since writing «Intertwined» that I again wrote music with this method and the result felt honest. The way I developed the compositional ideas was using what I previously called the «Causal Drawing Method». There are parallels between this method and the idea a «pool of notes». The composer reacts to stimuli and makes choices based on aesthetic preference. I

realized that there were similarities between my vision for composition and my vision for improvisation. The finished result gave me a similar feeling to the one I had when hearing and playing «Intertwined». The piece wasn’t revolutionary. It wasn’t hip. It wasn’t anything special at all really, but I felt connected to it. It felt as a product of me, something that was connected to my aesthetic. However, as I continued working with this method I was struck with hopelessness. I was struggling to find connection to the music. Although these new compositions felt connected to my aesthetic, I couldn’t help feeling lost. There was no context to the melodic and harmonic material. No purpose. No direction. They just existed and there wasn’t any reason for it. The title of the first piece could indicate a deeper meaning or the story behind it, but I felt that I couldn’t communicate the deeper message and story of the piece with notes alone. The music I was writing at the time were inspired by or tried to portray the emotional or psychological state I was in when writing them.

During a tour at the time, the band I was with was playing an old composition of mine. It had since become a tradition that a poem was read, which reflected the theme of the piece. The poem I had

written depicted a moving landscape through the window of a train. The recitation of the poem happened in a freely improvised prelude to the piece. During the concerts I realized that the inclusion of this text changed the entire atmosphere surrounding the composition. During the performance it gave me a sense of purpose when improvising. It was something concrete but still abstract to relate to. It gave substance and direction to the music.

A First Time for Everything

To kill the father requires conviction. It is in some ways an attack on the self or at least parts of it. The infant, as Donald Winnicott writes, must be able to endure the feelings of powerlessness caused by the revelation of its dependence on the mother. Change is painful. To understand and admit to yourself that you may be wrong and that a part of yourself is destroying another is demanding. The second phase of my project was painful. It was filled with doubt and fear. I was constantly doubting my reasons for wanting to sing or to write texts. Was I really undressing myself or was I in fact putting on new layers? Layers that would make me more interesting or desirable as an artist. What if in fact I was not going against my fears but actually giving in to them. Music is generally looked upon as an auditory medium. We listen

to music. But music has other dimensions too. One of the more interesting is the physical. We can feel music on our bodies. The bass vibrates in our bodies. I have often times felt myself caressed by the music surrounding me. A warm blanket of vibrations that resonates my entire being. One of my best experiences with the power of vibration was sitting in the saxophone section of a big band. To feel and hear your instrument and body resonating together with the other instruments is really special. You feel that you are part of a larger organism of sound. I wanted to explore this further.

The saxophone is seen as monophonic, meaning that it traditionally can only produce one note at a time. This is a limiting factor that makes it demanding to create a diverse musical expression on your own. During my time in Gothenburg I had played a solo concert in a church. This had been my first time doing so and the first where I had used electronics. The electronics came in the form of small loop pedal. In this performance I had composed some small melodic ideas and written a poem and in the end-result I knitted these elements together to form a twenty-minute performance.¹⁸ During the

¹⁸Score with poem can be found in appendix under "The Bethlehem Suite"



process of experimenting I ended up layering different high notes and a riff in the loop. I found this idea extremely aesthetically pleasing and I wanted to develop it further. There was something tantalizing about the way it resonated in the church room during the performance. There was a connection to sound mass pieces where the individual note is no longer the most important but rather the timbre and sound of the moving resonance. What would a sound mass piece for solo saxophone sound like?

During the first part of the second phase I was tasked with playing a twenty-minute solo performance. My idea was to create this sound mass piece for solo saxophone. I would need to be able to layer multiple notes on top of each other but also fade in and out singular notes in order for the «sound mass» to develop seamlessly throughout the performance. The solution came in the form of a patch in the programming software Max that a colleague of mine created, it would be controlled by a MIDI-footswitch. The plan was to compose a long continuously moving layer of notes that would change gradually over time.

During the first phase I had composed a short chorale for three voices that was inspired by two field recordings of flight alarms. These two elements became the foundation for the performance. The sheer power of flight alarms is immense. I remember being scared of them as a child. They have a dissonance. They also vibrate and resonate with everything around them. They felt like a good match to what I wanted to achieve with my performance. During the process I found myself becoming freer in my creative work. I was drawing inspiration from multiple sources. Knowing that it might become overly ambitious within the time frame I decided to limit its elements. The project marked my first attempt at writing text for a piece of music. I wanted to add this dimension to the opening chorale.

*Settle down,
calm your mind,
and see what's inside.
Are you there,
or have you
let go again.
Running, hiding,
From your real life
Doubt. Hope. Faith. Fear.*

The project became one of many firsts. The first time I had written lyrics. The first time that I used my voice in a performative setting. It was also the first time I had used computer electronics and also mixing and editing audio to use in a performance. I was becoming freer. It marked an important step in the progression of my work. The poem was a message to myself about a wish for change, so that I could become free from my restraints. It tries to portray what I myself was struggling with in the process of this solo performance but also the entire artistic project. Struggling to free my mind and be clear and calm. Struggling with doubt and fear and how close they are to hope and faith. Of course, it also became a message to the audience.

One person in the audience gave feedback that she felt frustrated that I was in a way pushing my own ideals on the listener or demanding something of them. There were also several comments on the introduction to the performance which had been pre-recorded. They felt it was a strong statement to just stand there while the pre-recorded audio played. I had not thought about this during the process and it made me reflect on my own presence on stage and the larger picture of

communicating message, and how the audience views you. Generally, I would say that in the world of jazz and improvised music it is seldom for there to be theatrics on stage. It is common for the musicians to be «in their own world», closing their eyes and not really interacting with the audience during the performance. Since this was a major part of my background, I had never put that much thought to these aspects of a performance.

It was interesting to explore so many different forms of expression and combining them in one performance. It felt as though moving my focus towards text and singing had opened up the possibilities of my artistic expression. In my first solo performance I had explored different elements, but it had all been based around the saxophone. With this second performance it felt as though my expressive platform had widened and it was no longer a matter of finding creative ways to make the saxophones expression more diverse. I could tap into other sources of inspiration and expression to form the vision I had for the music. I felt that I was connecting to my childhood creativity. Exploring the unknown and allowing myself to do so. Searching for a clearing in the forest of my mind.



A Gift from Above



Up above I heard melancholy song. A monotonous cry of loneliness and hope. Calling out for someone to hear. For someone to care, about him. But when I looked up, I saw an empty branch. There was no one home and I was all alone on the outside looking in. The song continued from all around. The dove was there but also gone. It sang its song from a distant tree. Too far away for me to see. But it was there, and the song remained, a source for something unrestrained. A gift that I could carry with me. A song that one day would find and lift me.

Artists often romanticize inspiration from nature. The purest muse. I am no different. But this morning it really struck me. Nature came and gave me a scent of something I wanted to explore. A rhythm, a song, a cry. Anton Ehrenzweig writes about the two functions of the ego and he doesn't say that one is bad, and the other is good. Both are important and both are needed. They form a balance and in creative work we move between them. The problem, as I discovered, with an unbalanced orientation towards the surface functions is that you end up killing your ideas before they have time to form. I feel that there was a similar problem when working with notation software as mentioned

earlier. I was seeking a finished result too soon and as a result the product feels unfinished and perhaps «unsuccessful». If I had given it time to grow it might have formed into something that resonated with my aesthetic. During this second phase I found myself opening up to inspiration from new sources. Recording bird song to base a composition on seems cliché but as this song developed it transformed and turned into meaningful piece of music that I find aesthetically pleasing.

As I started to focus more on composition, I quickly learned that it is easier to create something if there is a starting point; an idea to develop; a small seed that can grow into something more. The song I heard came from a wood pigeon which are quite common in most European cities including Copenhagen, where I was at the time. After hearing it I recorded myself singing my impression of the rhythm and then I quickly moved to a piano and started developing it. The result was a song called «The Dove». Together with the melody, chords and rhythm came the text. In contrast to the lyrics for the solo performance the lyrics here came together with the melody, almost facilitating it. It was as though the tones

and rhythms that came from the bird song had always had the text that was now appearing on paper.

*Away from
everything known.
Alone, out here.
Moving on
slowly.*

*A sense of
something lost there.
A word.
A prayer.
To be loved
truly.*



*All of the things
you have done.
Where do you
really belong.
Where is the place
you seek.
The place called
home.*

Adding the dimension of text to the music gave it a new purpose. It gave it substance which I found helped me connect with it. Since I was also in many ways communicating my feelings and the process that I was in through the text, it seemed to serve a purpose. Moving forward I decided to write more texts, both with new compositions and to ones previously composed.

The End of the World

In my dreams I saw it. The end of the world. At the edge of the forest. On a cliff higher than any. A solemn throne. Bellow only darkness. A deep darkness. You could only sense it, the ocean bellow. It's heaving bosom. Slow and heavy. Churning at the cliff far down in the abyss. A mighty roar, but to the ear only a faint whisper almost overpowered by the leaves rustling in the cool night air. I stand in among the trees. Observing the lonely shadow. At the end of all things. Its solitude is absolute. Its existence untainted. I know it all too well.

A reoccurring dream in the second phase of my master. I had many a time stepped into this internal space. Almost a memory but still not real. I felt that I had been there in real life but alas I

have never found it. It was the inspiration for the first two pieces I wrote at the start of the second phase: «Through the Trees» and «First Snow (later renamed Winter Morning)». «Through the Trees» was inspired by this internal space or memory which I have tried to put into words in the passage above. As I mentioned previously, I was struggling with the pieces I had composed at the start of the second phase. They were based on something very personal and I wanted to portray this message, but I didn't feel that I was able to, just using the notes I had written. There needed to be a clearer message. I wanted to bring the listener into my world. To create this mystique that I myself was drawn to. I had written an intro to «Winter Morning» which can be found at the start and the end of the recording.

The song was inspired by the general state of solitude and isolation which I found myself in at the time. The feeling of having to start again. Losing all that you have built up. Having bent yourself for years to fit in - to be loved. I felt that these emotions were linked to the internal space I described above. I decided to write a text that described this scene in the intro and then describe my feelings in the text that followed.

For many weeks I had struggled with writing this song. I had made many versions of it where I tried to make it less simple. I wanted it to be «hip». What I in the end ended up with was in many ways a simple pop song. To this day I still have an ambivalent relationship with this composition. I feel that it is too simple. Almost banal. Yet it is also a statement of trying to break down the strict ego-structure that was telling me what to do and not to do. I wrote the following text as a description of the scene, which became the intro of the tune. Whether or not this translates my internal image I don't know. I also don't know if that is something I myself am striving for. When I read it, I am instantly back in that space. There is a sense of something dark and mysterious.

*Past the trees
and far below my feet.
Violent and dark
The ocean flows
far beyond my reach.*

As with «The Dove» the text was written to the music, but it also came to change certain parts of the melody. Both parts worked together in shaping the piece. Underneath is the final text. The final verse carries the same melody as the intro above.

*Lost for words and out of time
Hoping change will once be mine
A sense of peace, just to be*

*Caged and bound, without control.
Burnt and tested, put in molds.
Afraid to leave, to be free.*

*The past colors all I see.
I'm bound by my reverie.*

*Waiting quietly right here
in the midst of my despair.
The world moves on.
I am gone.*

*The past colors all I see.
I'm bound by my reverie.*

...

*White and grey,
a barren land ahead.
Morning is here.
A cold and dark
start for all to share.*

The Danish poet, Inger Christensen talks in an interview about something she calls the «End of the World, I have referenced some of it previously in this text.¹⁹ I was introduced to the interview by



¹⁹ Inger Christensen - *Cikaderne findes*, dir. Rex, Jytte, Denmark, Statens Filmcentral, 1998 [DVD]

Troels Boberg. Boberg has some very interesting interpretations of what is said by Christensen, in light of the theory that I have touched upon. In the interview Christensen says:

*«There is always something that people call the end of the world. At least there was in my childhood. One could go to the end of the world. A quite specific place, out behind a forest. That was the end of the world. It is probably something that is the same all over the world - that there is something that is the end of the world. Meaning the border between civilization and something that is too wild and strange, that simply is a space we as humans don't venture in. As a child this place lies just beyond the city limits somewhere. It is exiting to explore this outer limit, which later in life can be found in all sorts of strange places. Philosophically and poetically, when we write, there is a certain limit that we might always strive to exceed, but for every step you reach further out, you know that you have come further back to yourself.»*²⁰

Through interpretation of unconscious symbolism after Carl Jung, Troels Boberg has associated the imagery of Christensen with the theories of creativity that I presented in «A Theory of Creativity».²¹ Boberg associates the movement from civilization with the dissolvment of the ego-structure and a movement back to unity with the mother. The link is at the same time a movement from high levels of differentiation to low levels of differentiation. The surface functions of the ego are linked to civilization or the city. The movement down towards the low-level sensibilities is

linked to the forest and finally (although Christensen does not mention it specifically) the state of undifferentiation is linked to the ocean. Anton Ehrenzweig and others reference this state as an oceanic phase and there is also the link of returning to the mother's womb as mentioned earlier. It was astonishing to learn of this link because it so closely resembled my internal space and the process that I was trying to reflect on through the texts I was writing. Having my own experiences linked in such an abstract way to someone else's ideas was very mysterious and I felt that there was something to explore here - a universal truth perhaps. Some deep knowledge that was hidden. I could picture myself standing in among the trees, with my back to civilization and facing the deep and dark ocean in front of me. It felt inexplicable that I should have this reoccurring dream or memory that was so closely linked to the subconscious imagery that represented the process I was in. Since I had originally written «Through the Trees» as a tune directly linked to the experience described at the start of this chapter, I wanted to write a text that reflected this. This was the first time that I wrote a text to a completed tune. Here there was a set frame that I was going to fill with words. As I started writing,

²⁰ Inger Christensen - *Cikaderne findes*, dir. Rex, Jytte, 05:35-07:02, translated by Mathias Hagen

²¹ Interview and interpretations introduced in the course "The Psychology of Creativity and Art" and discussed further in private lessons.

it seemed as though the composition had always been waiting to receive words. It was already built up to fit the message that I wanted it to have. The final version of the text became as follows:

*Looking for routes
on a path that's hidden.
Stumbling along through the darkness.
Searching for truth
something that can lead me,
to reach the light that is seeping
through the trees.*

*Deep in the forest
the light shines sparsely.
Thin silver streams forming rivers.
Carrying me through
the green damp darkness,
to find what's there in the clearing
past the trees.*

*Reaching the edge
where it ends.
Here at last, now, fully.
Gone is doubt and fear.
Through the trees I've come.
Overlooking where land meets sea.
Crashing waves, hear my plea:
Let me once again
find this place for when
I'm there
in the trees.*



It describes the journey. The want to reach the place in my dreams or perhaps to step out from the trees and join the shadow at the edge as the intro to «Winter Morning» describes. It was evident that in this second phase of my research, my texts were reflecting the process of their own conception. The artistic expression was a sort of healing process. A way for me to form a deeper understanding of myself in music and where I was heading. A way for me to reach «the end of the world» and further out still and by doing so come further back to myself.

Something to Say

In my forest there is a tree. Standing at the center of a clearing. A brook runs past it. It's an apple tree. A wild one with deep roots. Its fruit is sour and long before it ever gets sweeter it is spoiled by hungry insects and birds. No one eats the fruit. So, it remains there. Without company. Without solace. Alone at the center of all that surrounds it.

The trace of a process was emerging. Often times I would have a certain melodic idea churning in my head or perhaps a small piece of text for months before it became a finished piece of music. The following tune was like that. Almost since the start of the second

second phase there had been this idea of writing a text about a lonely tree. In my mind it was a very specific tree. One that stands at the center of a clearing on my parent's farm.



This tree has always been part of my internal space. In my mind I can always picture it. I wanted to write a song about this tree but as I started to write and got past the first line, I realized that the song wasn't about the tree. It was what the tree represented. The loneliness and the solitude. The melody and text came together and developed each other, as had been with many of the songs I had written. As the text came together, I saw that it contained nature-inspired metaphors for people I knew and values I had. The idea of wanting to connect with the inner child was central. If the child was restricted and held back it would suffocate and die.

If the ego-structure was too strict the child would have no room to express itself. I had seen this happen in other people's lives and I was afraid it would happen to me. The child needed to dissolve the ego-structure and kill the father in order to catch its breath. I believe that it is extremely important to bring with you the inner child into adulthood. If it is left behind it might eventually be buried so deep down that it will be near impossible to regain contact with. A person without contact to their inner child is incomplete to my mind.

*The lonely tree
Stands its ground
The wind her only friend
Safe and sound
Pretending to be strong
But underneath the ground
She's hurting.*

*The rugged cliff,
solid stone.
A mass of pain and fear
seldom shown.
Protecting what's inside,
a child, a lonely one
who's dying.*

*The rugged cliff
fades away.
The child is left to roam
free to play.
Now dancing in a field
of green. A joyous scene.
He's singing.*



Like with the poem I wrote for the solo performance at the start of this second phase, there again was something I wanted to say. I was perhaps also saying it to myself, but there were values and

ideals presented in the text that were honest and directly associated with the discoveries of my values in the first phase. I felt that with this composition, as opposed to the previous ones, the message was moving towards something more universal. It felt as though the message was not as private anymore. It was personal but perhaps more relatable to the audience.

The Journey is the Destination

A sentence that often appears in various literature and has almost become cliché. I remember a time when I thought I had come up with an original idea when I uttered these words but of course as always there is nothing new under the sun. Perhaps as much as this title tries to give a hint to the topic of the following text, it also illustrates this point. There is nothing unique about my search. There is nothing new about what I'm trying to accomplish. It is an exploration of a crisis. A search for an identity; a true self. My journey is one that many have, and many will go through. That is perhaps also why it is so important to write about. Killing the Father is about breaking the chains of your own ego. During this phase I had explored what I wanted to say and how I wanted to say it. There had been a focus on the compositional process and

working with text. I have given some insight into how using voice helped me connect to my musical intention when composing.

Audiation is in simple terms melodic imagination. It is referenced in a number of written works by the American music researcher and educator Edwin E. Gordon. It can be defined as «The comprehension and internal realization of music by an individual in the absence of any physical sound».²² I bet you could sing the first half of a children's song and then finish it in your head, right? When producing a tone on voice there is a need to imagine the tone before you produce it. In contrast you can in theory play a tone on the saxophone by simply blowing through it while holding down a combination of keys. Of course, the quality of said tone in terms of timbre and intonation might not be great but you could still produce the tone. While singing there is a greater need to have an intention and I found that when improvising you needed to be able to imagine the tone before it was sung. I spent time trying to integrate the voice in my daily practice and found it helped me achieve a greater connection with my tonal intention on the saxophone precisely because it demanded I imagine a tone but also consciously know what that tone was in relation to the

previous one or the harmonies supporting it. In the compositional process I was able to associate more freely to melodic ideas because I was not referencing patterns in my muscle memory in the way I would on the saxophone. I found that this helped me connect with my musical intention and distance myself from the learned aesthetic of the aspiring musician. It was a way of moving closer to the vision of "The Pool of Notes" in my process.

During this second phase I started taking voice lessons. The goal was to play a concert at the end of my time in Copenhagen where I myself would be singing. Part of the idea behind composing with text in this phase was to have something to sing. The two elements of this artistic process could draw on each other. Learning to sing gave me a new perspective. Apart from learning techniques for controlling the different parameters of the voice in sound production, I also learned about and connected with my body. When singing the body is the instrument. This requires you to be in contact with it. This way of thinking about an instrument was quite different from the saxophone. In my world the instrument had always been an external element that needed to be mastered so that I could execute the ideas I heard in my head. I'm not saying

²² Wiktionary, s.v. "audiation," last modified 9 March 2019, at 18:44, <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/audiation>

Although Wikipedia's validity as a source is highly disputed, I have chosen to use it in this case because it has proved difficult to find a good definition outside of the authors own works. I have checked some of the primary sources for the definition and believe it to correspond with the authors idea.

that it doesn't require an enormous amount of skill to be able to execute ideas on voice, but it is still different. When singing you yourself become the instrument and what you express is a part of you. This had been one of my reasons for wanting to explore it. Since I was trying to connect with myself and find my identity it seemed natural to explore the one instrument that is truly unique to each individual.

Connecting to my body through singing also translated to the saxophone. I found myself understanding more about how my body played into sound production on the saxophone, especially in regard to breath and support. I felt that my sound on the saxophone changed in this period. It became more open and lyrical. I had always admired the sound of the Norwegian saxophone players such as Jan Garbarek and Trygve Seim. Many of them favor a looser embouchure which changes the focus in timbre control from the mouth and lips to the throat and breath-support. Through lessons with the saxophonist Bendik Hofseth in the third phase I learned about his ideas surrounding this. The quote that is mentioned earlier in the text is in regard to this. He is of the opinion that the traditionally tighter embouchure is a way

of adapting and putting on layers of conventions in regard to the historical saxophone idiom. In order to find our own voice, we need to let go of the control we are trying to achieve through a tight embouchure; it needs to be loosened up. When this is achieved, we find that the focus when developing tone shifts towards breath and throat. Hofseth's idea is that we in this way make use of the unique characteristics of our individual bodies and in this way find our own voice. When learning about his technique I saw that what I had been starting to explore in this second phase was similar. I tried to implement what I learned during my voice lessons onto the saxophone. We all have a unique voice as singers because our bodies have differences. No two bodies are the same. If we let go of control and let our bodies resonate and work in harmony with the instrument we might find our voice. This also serves as a metaphor for the psychological aspect of this artistic work. In order to find our true self, we need to kill the father and dare to let go of control so that we can let our true selves emerge. Opening up to the idea that our artistic expression might be more than we first thought. Allowing myself to explore something new without a concrete plan to master it, opened up new possibilities in who I could be as an artist. My

reasons for working with voice were not performance driven. It came out of a want to explore. It wasn't the saxophone that was the source or platform for my musical intention and aesthetic it was me. I have often found that when switching between different types of saxophones, I play differently. It seems that this change of «voice» shifts the point of reference.

As the final concert drew near however, I found myself again becoming strict in regard to singing. Although I wanted voice to be a new and freer platform for musical expression, I found myself moving back into the mindset of wanting to control and master every aspect of it. I was making elaborate plans for practicing and in many ways approaching as I had the saxophone for so many years. Even though I was not a trained singer I wanted to sing like one. I wanted my «sound» to be controlled and confident. I found myself becoming very critical of my own lacking ability to perform on the level I expected of myself. It felt as though my learned aesthetic from the saxophone had been transferred to the voice. This became apparent as I performed my final concert. I had placed myself in the role of a professional singer and that was an impossible goal. Standing on that stage was a success. It didn't

matter whether the audience or jury liked it. My own feelings about it was not based on their opinion. This was an important step in the process of standing up for what I wanted to do regardless of what my peers thought.

In contrast to this success was the feeling of grief that I had not been able to reach a personal expression on voice. When listening to the recordings it became clear that I had a long way to go to be able to perform on voice in a manner that was satisfactory to my own expectations. Failure and success felt closely linked at this point. There was also a studio session booked in this period. In the same way it felt like a success to be there in the studio recording on voice, but I found myself coming short to my own expectations. Instead of feeling free and having fun I was judging myself harder than ever before. I felt like a fraud. Looking back, I see that my problem again came down to putting on layers. My fear that singing would just become another layer I put on, that it wouldn't be honest, was coming true. I was trying to be a great technical vocalist instead of trying to just explore singing at the level I was at. These two experiences came in contrast to the creative freedom I had felt during this second phase. I was in the

middle of my journey. I had come far but the end was not in sight. I was striving to reach a goal that was unknown.

The final concert was entitled «Home». I was searching for a home in music. A home that was slowly emerging. In my texts and in my melodic aesthetic I felt that I was coming closer to what I was searching for. Very few of the pieces in the second phase were written without text. One turned out to be important. As it unfolded it revealed something new, something I was searching for. I named the piece «Home» because it was just that. The other pieces composed during this phase all had elements of an aesthetic that I was searching for, but it felt as though this composition was an accumulation of it all - a manifestation of my melodic and harmonic aesthetic. The texts written were all reflective. They were a way of dealing and expressing the thoughts and emotions about the artistic process. The understanding of this manifestation would become central in the final phase of the project. It also formed a basis for the theme of the final concert. Two other small compositions came together with «Home». One was entitled Prelude and the other is a small melodic phrase that is without a name, it suited a solitary existence, so I let it be. These three musical elements became the

frame for the concert. The small melodic phrase became the idiom and the Prelude became just that, a slow melancholy introduction to the concert. The idea was that this small melodic phrase and «Home» could be played at different times during the concert to form a red line for the audience to follow. I have always been drawn to the conceptual. Thinking back to some of my first compositions I was always concerned with the back story of the piece. Dividing it into multiple parts with a story. Using concepts could tie together music that seemed unrelated and put it all within one expression that suddenly fit together. Giving the music a context gave it a deeper meaning. I wanted to tie together the compositions I had written during the semester into one concert and for them all to relate to each other. For them all to tell one story. For the music to be more than just music.

*Peeling away,
layer by layer,
until you reach the core.
The honest truth,
past your doubts and fears.
Finally coming home.
Home to yourself.*



“New Eyes”



Back to the beginning

New Eyes is about changing perspective. If we picture a spiral on a graph paper and view the starting point of this project as where the pencil first touches the paper, we can form an understanding of its development. The first part of the project was not home but rather a lack of it which was the issue that first started the crisis. Moving circularly, we come into the second phase where we try to dissolve the strict ego-structure by killing the father and seek the creative freedom of the undifferentiated state. Moving further we again reach the same point on the x-axis, but the position is further in on the y-axis and in a three-dimensional plane also further down or inwards on the z-axis. In one dimension we are at the same place as we started but when viewed in multiple dimensions, we see that the position has changed. «...for every step you reach further out, you know that you have come further back to yourself.”²³

In a way this third phase is the point of returning to the start; the point of entry to the artistic process. The German philosopher Hegel uses the word dialectic to describe «the process of thought by which apparent contradictions (which he termed thesis and

²³ Inger Christensen - *Cikaderne findes*, dir. Rex, Jytte, 05:35-07:02, translated by Mathias Hagen

antithesis) are seen to be part of a higher truth (synthesis)».²⁴ In terms of this artistic process we could see the two opposing sides of my identity in music, that presented themselves at the start of the crisis, as the thesis and antithesis of this project. The two opposing ideas of who I am and how I work within music and art. One is concerned with achieving a high level of skill and becoming a versatile musician, the other is concerned with expressing himself and creating. As the dust settled and I entered the third phase of my work I started seeing that the two opposing sides weren't as contradictory as I had first believed. Both were perhaps a part of my identity. Perhaps uniting the two sides of my split self could form a synthesis and through it a higher truth would emerge.

The compositions or rather the texts of the previous phase had been self-reflecting. They had tried to express the state I was in when writing them and so they were also in a way describing their own conception. The lyrics had been written together with the melody or after the composition was finished. In the third phase the focus shifted in order to separate the two processes more. I wanted there to be complete focus on writing the text first and

then complete focus on writing the musical elements. The first composition I worked with was based on a poem I had written years back. I have mentioned this poem earlier. It reflects the stationary motion of sitting on a train, watching the passing scenery. The process of composing the piece, which eventually was named «Stationary Motion», was quite similar to that of the second phase. The difference lay in that the starting point was the text. Working in this manner meant that the text was instructing the development of the melody and also the rhythm and form. Working from text gave the compositional process a frame. The whole composition ended up being just one page, but I felt that it was enough. I didn't need more information in the music. The process of writing this composition felt like a manifestation of the process I had been exploring during the master. A pure example of the «Causal Drawing Method».

²⁴ *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, s.v. «diagonal.»



*Flickering trees
concealing the vastness beyond.
A myriad of scenes
interrupted by darkness.
The world in motion
through a looking glass.
Going nowhere.*

*Shades of green,
colors of the season.
Resting in rich soil,
pondering its next move.
While I sit here alone in a crowd,
contemplating
my stationary motion.*



Seeing is Believing

«Stationary Motion» is a visual text. I've always been drawn to the visual. Both the «causal drawing method» and the «pool of notes» are visual representations of its abstract musical reference point. I have often reflected on how expression in music differs from other mediums that I feel drawn to explore. It's always given me great pleasure to work with wood. The smell of fresh sawdust or the surface of newly sanded oak. It seems to me that working with wood as opposed to music is a very tactile process. What you're working with is right in front of you. It can be smelled, seen, touched and even tasted and listened to. A piece of music is there on a piece of paper and it comes to life only when played or when imagined or listened to. It seems quite abstract in comparison. Perhaps this is why I often find myself trying to create a visual representation of an idea concerning music. I generally favor symmetry. There is a mystery to it, an everlasting search for hidden systems or messages. Symmetry also contrasts non-symmetry to form variation in the world around us. In light of Hegel's idea of the term dialectic we could view symmetry and non-symmetry as the thesis and antithesis of the visual world. The

synthesis then being the higher truth of the importance of variation.

There seems to be a link between the visual and auditory. I have personally experienced that music can generate subconscious imagery or trigger visual memories. In the second phase of this project the texts I wrote often had a very specific imagery attached to them. Part of the goal was to communicate this imagery but in the way that I perceived it. This is of course difficult or perhaps impossible due to the subjective nature of language. The combination of different forms of expression like text and music enhance the possibility of communicating something concrete. Artists working within different disciplines can have similar goals of expression. The difference being the form in which its presented and the senses required to grasp it. So how does this relate to identity and aesthetic? Would there be an aesthetic link between the art works of a painter who also composes in music?

The first time I saw a painting by the Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky it immediately captured my attention. His work, especially in the last periods of his life are truly captivating.

There is something about his strong symmetrical black lines and minute black details in contrast to rich use of color. There is both a focus on symmetry and non-symmetry at the same time. To my eyes the paintings appear concrete and abstract simultaneously. Until recently I was unsure as to what it was about these works that was so attractive. I now understand that it relates to my childhood. There is a link between his work and the way I viewed the world around me as a young boy. As I had been attempting to unite the two opposing sides of my identity, I had realized that there was a link between the expressive desires of them both. In a recent tv series by the Norwegian broadcasting channel (NRK) entitled «Oppfinneren» (The Inventor) the protagonist has a truly inspiring mantra. It roughly translates to that he wishes to re-enchant the world. In the midst of my own process this spoke to me on a deeply personal level. Was I not perhaps trying to do the same? Was it not perhaps the mystic aspect of music that had attracted me to it in the first place? The captivating imagery of my imagination when hearing a lullaby. I wanted this expression in my own music. For my music to be connected to the desires of my inner child. In «The Hidden Order of Art» Anton Ehrenzweig says

the following about child art and the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget:

«Piaget has given currency to the term 'syncretistic' vision as the distinctive quality of children's vision and of child art. Syncretism also involves the concept of undifferentiation. Around the eighth year of life a drastic change sets in in children's art, at least in Western civilization. While the infant experiments boldly with form and colour in representing all sorts of objects, the older child begins to analyse these shapes by matching them against the art of the adult which he finds in magazines, books and pictures. He usually finds his own work deficient. His work becomes duller in colour, more anxious in draughtsmanship. Much of the earlier vigour is lost.»²⁵

Here we again see the contrast between types of creativity and artistic expression. In relation to psychology «syncretism» can be viewed as «The process of fusing diverse ideas or sensations into a general (inexact) impression; an instance of this.»²⁶ Ehrenzweig draws a clear line between this syncretistic vision and the undifferentiated state ego-function. He writes «*The child does not*

²⁵ Anton Ehrenzweig, *The Hidden Order of Art*, 6

²⁶ *The Oxford English Dictionary, Second Edition, s.v. «syncretism.»*

break down the shape of some concrete object into smaller abstract elements and then match the elements to his drawings one by one. His vision is still global and takes the entire whole which remains un-differentiated as to its component details. This gives the younger child artist the freedom to distort colour and shapes in the most imaginative and, to us, unrealistic manner. But to him - owing to his global, unanalytic view - his work is realistic.»²⁵ "He (the child) may neglect abstract detail, yet his powers of recognition may be superior to the duller vision of the adult."²⁷

Perhaps what attracted me to the later works of Kandinsky was his ability to connect with this syncretistic view and also for me the viewer to feel invited to access this imagination while observing it. Ehrenzweig acknowledges the power of the child's potent imagination and abstract view of the world around him. «We have to remember that the early work is better in its aesthetic achievement than the timid art of the older child. More important, syncretistic vision is never entirely destroyed and can be shown to be a potent tool in the hands of the adult artist.»²⁵ I have stated before how I wish for what I create to be a product of me rather than my saxophone. Perhaps I had been going about it the wrong

way. Perhaps the saxophone and my intellectual knowledge of music could be a resource and wasn't just some layer I had put on but rather a part of me. For long I had thought that the creativity I was able to access while working within disciplines that I had no formal training in, came from that I didn't have any expectations on what I would or should achieve. Kandinsky had been able to tap into, at least in my opinion, his syncretistic vision. He was able to combine his intellectual knowledge and craft with an abstract creativity. His paintings would often include, to my mind, small worlds and in similarity with Picasso, present it in an abstract way so that you needed to step into the world of the painting in order to fathom it. Ehrenzweig describes this well when he writes: «Yet syncretism can be as precise, if not more so, than the analytic matching of detail. Picasso's incredibly convincing portraits defeat all analytic matching by jumbling up and distorting all the details of a face. But we can judge the likeness of the portrait only if we have become attuned to this kind of representation. We then no longer judge the verisimilitude of the portrait by analyzing single features, but intuitively grasp the portrait as an indivisible whole»²⁵. Attempting to dissolve my ego-structure and explore undifferentiation, I had almost started to discard the other part. I

²⁷ Anton Ehrenzweig, *The Hidden Order of Art*, 7

had forgotten that when I first set out to explore my crisis it had been with the goal of uniting my split self. Perhaps by doing so I would be able to create the mystic expression I was desiring. I had already read it in «A Hidden Order of Art»: «*The creative thinker is capable of alternating between differentiated and undifferentiated modes of thinking, harnessing them together to give him service for solving very definite tasks.*»²⁸ It was a dynamic between the two functions. But in seeking contact with my inner child and an undifferentiated creativity I had started to oppose my adult self. The aspiring musician.

The child does not have the reflective capabilities to choose how she interprets and reproduces the world on paper or in other forms of expression. Ehrenzweig writes that «*It is the privilege of the artist to combine the ambiguity of dreaming with the tensions of being fully awake.*»²⁹ The artist requires both functions of the ego to perform the definite creative tasks. As a child I would imagine small worlds with thousands of inhabitants in a piece of wood or in the cracks of the floor. How could I communicate this in music? How could I create a complex world of hidden message

and symbolism? Or at least move in that direction. It started to become clear that moving towards working with text and extending my performative platform with the voice was perhaps only the first step. I had been able to add a more concrete message to my music. It was no longer just a title that indicated something hidden behind the melody, rhythm and harmonies. There was a story going along with it. Interestingly enough Kandinsky often utilized very non-descriptive titles for his pieces like «Composition 8» or «Small Worlds II». Of course, in a way these titles or at least the second one is very descriptive and intriguing, but I had always felt opposed to this way of naming composition in music. I felt that it was pretentious or not personal in a way. Like the composer was distancing himself from his creation. As I started exploring this feeling, I understood that it was perhaps just my fear of letting the music speak for itself. I was afraid that without a deeper meaning in the title the piece wouldn't mean anything. To my eyes Kandinsky's paintings were extremely deep but their titles didn't have to reflect this because they spoke for themselves. Perhaps this is what I wanted for my music. For it to give itself a context.

²⁸ Anton Ehrenzweig, *The Hidden Order of Art*, xiii

²⁹ Anton Ehrenzweig, *The Hidden Order of Art*, 12

Balance

Another piece that came to be during the third phase is called «David and Goliath». Similarly, to «The Lonely Tree» I had had a sentence with a melody in my head for almost a year: «Small, yet unafraid to show what joy could be». I wanted to write a text about marginalized people in society. People who are different and therefore excluded. There was a concrete memory from my childhood. As I started developing the text, I saw that the memory and the text also reflected my own inability to include or show compassion for the protagonist of the poem, at this moment in my childhood. It was a sense of grief that struck me as I realized that even though I consider myself an empathic person, I had not been able to show love to this person out of my own fear for that which is different. The impact of this was even stronger since I quite recently had traveled back to Nepal and visited a number of organizations working with people who are cast out from society because they are perceived to be lesser people. I wanted the text to carefully indicate that these people perhaps possess qualities that we as a society neglect and should strive to appreciate more. It took me almost a year to write the text. When composing the music for the text I tried to balance my critical differentiated view

and the free undifferentiated state. Even though this is a subconscious process I tried to let both come forth with their ideas. Not being too critical when my aesthetic seemed childish or banal to the differentiated part and letting myself change parts of melody and harmony to make the music more complex and consequently interesting to my ear. Both with «David and Goliath» and «Stationary Motion» I felt that I was connecting to a balanced and therefore more honest expression. It was a synthesis of my split self, expressed in music.



*Small yet unafraid
to show what joy could be.
Small yet unafraid
to dance for all to see.*

*There among the giants
in some other world.
Hoping to be understood
fighting to be heard.*

*Met with laughter
filled with fear.
Fueling hatred.
No one dares.*

*To step in,
to understand.
This world of his
the promised land.*



One-All

When working with text there is a new dimension that comes into play. We can talk about different genres or musical styles and also, especially in jazz and improvised music, idiomatic trends from different eras of the musical history. It is common for jazz musicians to switch «language» when performing within different historical styles. When working as a studio musician you are also often required to have this ability in order to meet the needs of a give situation. Working with text is different. Up till this point I had written all my texts in English. It is a comfortable language for me, and I often find myself feeling freer in expression in English than my mother tongue of Norwegian. That being said there is a certain distance in its use. I have been living in Norway for the past ten years and so it's use in the day to day is less than it once was. I have reflected on the reason for my favoring of it. Is it perhaps a way of distancing myself from the message? Something to hide behind. Of course, there is also the idea that using English as a primary language in my music makes it more accessible. During the third phase I decided that I wanted to write a text in Norwegian. The reason for this was simply enough that I couldn't say what I wanted to say in English. Up till this point it had been

the other way around. I had felt that writing in Norwegian would limit my ability to communicate what I wanted. The song which was eventually named «Fallet» (The Fall) came out of wanting to write a text with the phrase «venter på å sparke fra i bunn» (waiting to kick off from the bottom). The phrase didn't work in English. It sounded corny. In Norwegian however it reflected what I wanted to say. It was a concrete image in my head. A picture of being stuck in a free fall. Waiting to reach the bottom where you can kick off with your feet and use the momentum to ascend to the surface. I bet most of you have experienced diving into a pool or the sea and found it easier to get back to the surface if you use your feet to kick off from the sea bed as opposed to trying to swim back up. Of course, this poem is about the abstract metaphorical aspect of this. Instead of changing course we wait for things to get so bad that there is only one way we can move and that is back up. In a way this poem tried to describe my state of mind during large parts of this project.

To accompany the poem, I wanted to illustrate the mental imagery that went with it. I felt that if I could give the listener both the actual text with music and combine it with a visual

representation, that I could be able to communicate the message more clearly. During the process of creating this painting I found myself tapping into the creativity that I had been experiencing in other parts of my life with other mediums. The interesting thing was that I was now creating something that was related to my expression in music. I was creating something in another discipline, but it was part of my artistic expression. Viewing artistic disciplines from an undifferentiated perspective we can see that all can be viewed as a part of the same thing. It's just different frames or platforms of expression. Couldn't we just as well improvise a painting in music or paint a musical improvisation? Couldn't we express grief, love or hate in a number of different ways?

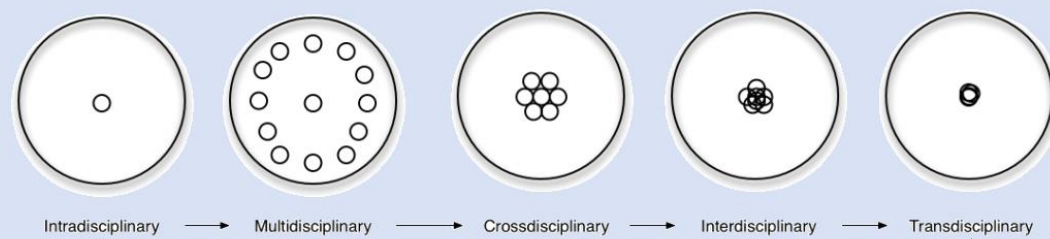
Kandinsky was known for being inspired by music. His close relationship with the Austrian composer Arnold Schönberg was important in his development as a painter. They both published their first theoretical works within days of each other, both dedicating their proof copy to one another. *«Both suggested a necessary fusion of painting and music made possible by the analogy between auditory and visual elements. A unit of sound gave*

articulation to time, and a graphic unit gave articulation to space...».³⁰ Here we see a link to the spiral-representation of this project. A multidimensional movement in space and time that evolves the artistic expression and our perception of it. In this period, I came across a model created by the Norwegian researcher and musician Alexander Refsum Jensenius.³¹ With it he is trying to illustrate ways of collaborating between different disciplines, but we could also see it as something else. Alexander Refsum Jensenius defines the five disciplinaries by summarizing points made by Marilyn Stember in her 1990s paper «Advancing the social sciences through the interdisciplinary enterprise». He summarizes the points as follows:

- Intradisciplinary: working within a single discipline.
- Multidisciplinary: people from different disciplines working together, each drawing on their disciplinary knowledge.
- Crossdisciplinarity: viewing one discipline from the perspective of another.
- Interdisciplinary: integrating knowledge and methods from different disciplines, using a real synthesis of approaches.
- Transdisciplinary: creating a unity of intellectual frameworks beyond the disciplinary perspectives.

³⁰ Phillipe Sers, Kandinsky, The Elements of Art, (New York: Thames and Hudson Inc., 2016), 86

³¹ Model and definitions found on authors blog, <http://www.arj.no/2012/03/12/disciplinarity-2>, Accessed 4th of May 2019, used with permission from researcher and musician Alexander Refsum Jensenius



This definition and model are more concerned with collaboration within research fields. But if we view the central circle of the model as a representation of an artist with her main artistic discipline, we could see the five disciplinaries a bit differently. There is an artist working within a field, for example music. Then we see the artist opening her eyes to the disciplines around her. Further she draws them nearer and starts relating them to her own expression. She then starts experimenting with trying to integrate the disciplines with her own. Finally, she is able to see that all the expressions are a part of the same aesthetic and expression. The model can be viewed as a movement from high levels of differentiation to lower levels. In the undifferentiated state all disciplines become one and the artist can freely express herself as she wants. There is no need for restriction. The starting point and therefore also the red line connecting it all stems from the artist and is therefore connected. I believe that this freedom can help the artist find an honest expression. The goal is to express something, so as long as that is achieved it is perhaps not so important how we get there. The creative self should be

allowed the freedom it needs. Moving on to performing «Fallet» it was a new experience to express myself in my mother tongue. In a way it felt as though another layer had been undressed. The composition itself also incorporated a mix of different aesthetic directions that I had explored during my artistic work. It had some of the more riff-based and technically demanding elements from the start of the first phase while having some of the harmonic and melodic musical elements that had become part of my expression during the second and now third phase. Going into the studio to record the composition was a contrast to the recording session in the second phase. It felt unrestrained to sing. I was not preoccupied with trying to sing correct but rather to sing honestly and focus on communication. The result was honest. I feel that my true voice had emerged. As the infant views the world in a syncretistic manner we also see, as we delve into the undifferentiated state that all manners of artistic expressions have a similar goal when stemming from the same aesthetic - the same self. A united self that is no longer forced to split itself in order to survive.

Langt her nede.
Lengre ned enn før.
Faller sakte.
I det stille mørket.

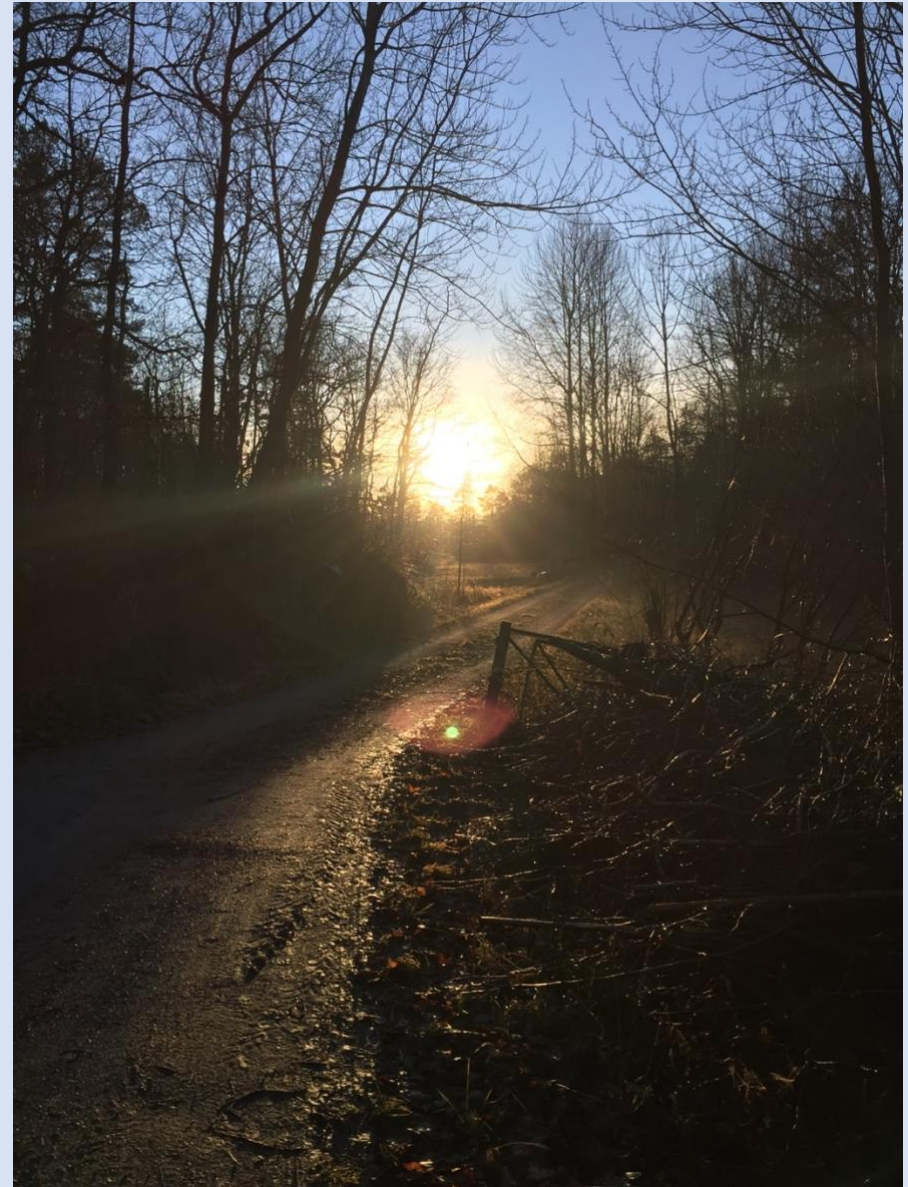
Velger fallet.
Ut fra klippens kant.
Alt er stille.
Tiden slipper taket.

Tålmodig venter her.
Lyset det er borte,
enn så nær
Venter stille,
uten tårer eller skrik.
På å nå frem,
det endelige svik.

Langt her nede.
I den endeløse stund.
Venter stille.
På å sparke fra i bunn.



***“A road
that comes to meet you”***



The objective of this thesis and artistic work has evolved as it has been explored. Although there have been several findings and realizations throughout, I merely see these as small steps in a process to arrive at what I am searching for; a resolution to my crisis and an understanding of my true artistic identity. I have found that disciplinary freedom, honesty and letting go of control is important in order for the creative and intellectual self to co-exist and interact. This split in my own self was a defining factor in the initial crisis. It started with a crisis that led to a turning point. Although it manifested itself around the start of this artistic work it seems to have come much earlier. I have previously stated that the musical existential crisis manifested itself in my personal life due to the fusion of my personal identity and my musical identity. Through this work I have seen that it is probably the other way around. My crisis as an artist was a symptom of not knowing who I was as a person. Having spent the past ten years stretching and bending the concept of who I was into something that was no longer recognizable.

My goal has been for this thesis to reflect its own conclusion throughout. I wanted the thesis to reflect my own identity as an

artist, as it is today; at the end of this artistic work. Through it I have been able to explore different means of expression. Combining my music with reflections, poems, photographs and paintings. We as people are multi-faceted and complex. We have lived through many experiences and developed through interacting with the world around us in various ways. If we limit ourselves to an expressive frame that is narrower than our creative selves, we are cheating ourselves. We should be true to who we are as people and artists. I for one aim to encompass more of all that I am into what I create.

This artistic work has been a healing process. It has been a way for me to reconcile my creative self with my aspirations as a professional musician. Instead of giving up my dream of working with music I now feel motivated to continue exploring it. It no longer feels like something I have to do, but rather something I want to do. For years I had an ambivalent relationship with the word amateur. At certain points I was even critical towards people who chose to continue working with music as a hobby. This might seem immature, and in a way it is. The reason for my feelings towards it, as I discovered during this work, is fear. I was

afraid that if I could not work with music professionally; be it on stage; on tour, and so on, I would not have the motivation to continue. I found that many of my reasons for working with music were purely based on recognition from my peers and society. Music had become a layer that I had placed on my identity. It had been a way to cope with the anxiety of not knowing who I was. Perhaps the most important thing that has shifted is in regard to this. I now feel that I have a want and a need to explore music out of curiosity. My childhood creativity has re-appeared in music.

This project has had many sides. In terms of its composition it has, as previously mentioned, explored the physical work process with music and the psychological process beneath. In terms of the actual work with music it has both had a focus on the compositional and the performative. NoCom is a master program in improvisation with focus on composition. A modern musicians' creative efforts must be multi-faceted. Through this artistic work I have explored what my process as a composer looks like, my aesthetic and message in music; who I am as a composer. It has also explored who I am as a performer. I feel that these two sides together form my identity as an artist.

The psychological process has addressed my existential crisis. Exploring who I am both as a person and how this relates to me as an artist. Early on in this work I realized that one of the main issues surrounding this crisis was the lack of connection between myself and what I created in music. Through exploring theories of creativity and opening up my perspective I started seeing how it all fit together. From a differentiated point of view, it could seem like a spread-out project. As we view it with a syncretistic vision, we see that the different parts belong together. The two sides form a synthesis unveiling the higher truth of my personal and artistic identity. The physical and psychological are two dimensions of the same thing. My identity as an artist is also encompassing my identity as a person. I see art as an abstract image of the self. As I reach the end of this work, I see that whatever I create is a part of me and I am a part of it. Letting my creative self be free to explore is important to me. In order to form a complete artistic expression, we need to allow ourselves to be free of any restrictions we have put on ourselves.

Moving in the direction of a transdisciplinary expression is a goal I strive for. My aesthetics do not only relate to notes and chords,

it also relates to what clothes I wear, how I furnish my room, the manner in which I walk down the street or how I say hello. Art as an abstract image of the self draws on all these elements. In this way I am able to let both sides of myself have room to breathe. The two sides have been in conflict. Although the surface functions and in-depth sensibilities are a way of describing two functions of the ego, we can also view them as two sides ourselves. If the ego is too oriented in differentiation as has been the case with my intellectual pursuit of music, or too oriented in the undifferentiated as it might have been during the second phase of this project, the two cannot co-exist. They misalign and both are too strong. There needs to be a balance. The frames of both must widen so that they are interconnected. In this way my true artistic identity can emerge containing the values I want to portray; being caring, adventurous and creative.

Returning to the beginning we see the rough surface of what has been created with our differentiated view. We have journeyed out from ourselves but the further out we have come, the further back to ourselves we have ventured. The true self. I now see myself with New Eyes. I have found home within myself. New Eyes is a

road that came to meet me. The thin silver streams have illuminated my path as I have fumbled my way through the forest. I have time and time again reached the end of the world only to be forced back in among the trees. I have left the comfort of civilization to explore the hidden worlds along the forest bed. Sometimes I find myself on the floor. Its world is opening up to me now. Slowly but surely, I am allowed to once again enter that wild place and become one with creation.

Epilogue

This thesis has been a reflection of my work. There has been reference to multiple psychological theories and theories about music and art. Most of all it has been an effort to create a thesis that portrays the outcome of my work. Could we view aesthetic as identity in music? I believe aesthetic is only part of it. In terms of message it does relate to how you say something, but perhaps it doesn't necessarily relate to what the message is. Perhaps that is something that comes from another part of who you are, your values and experiences. This thesis has been highly subjective in its reflection and movement. Art is in many ways subjective. We can on some levels judge and define art as good or bad but in the end most of it comes down to aesthetic preference or context. It would be hard to write a completely objective thesis on performing arts. There are so many aspects of it that come down to the subjective. This artistic work has explored text or message which is very subjective both from the artists view and the audience. Language is after all subjective. We might like to think that we can say objective things with language, but in reality, we never really know what we have said until we see the response in

the recipient. It is important to write about art, and the reflections and "answers" are part of societies cultural development. Through reflection and academic pursuit on art we are able to expand our understanding of the subjective. This thesis has reflected a lot on my own process. The learning experience in this work has initially been meant to benefit me but I believe that this is important because what benefits me might also benefit someone else - to read that you are not alone in your own crisis or search for identity. I have mentioned how this thesis is nothing unique and, in a way, it isn't, but the way I deal with it might vary from the next person and that is valuable. This contrasting experience is yet another dot on a graph that you can draw a line through to see the larger picture. Moving forward I believe that the potential is in the reintegration of playing saxophone and composing. To reunite the sides has been both a practical and psychological process but there is a long way to go on the both sides. Although I feel that this thesis has arrived at a conclusion and answers to my questions, it is also just the first step in a longer process - my career and continued work with music. I have many ideas I want to explore in regard to transdisciplinary expression. It is important for me to continue the pursuit of fusing

the tactile and visual with the auditory. In my continued work I want to explore animation. Trying to create these small worlds that music can be one part of, telling a story that caters to many of our senses. I want to re-enchant the world. We as a society today are, to my mind, too focused on the intellectual; that everything is to be analyzed and understood. Amidst it all we forget the joy of not knowing; the mystery of that which is still unknown. I for one would like to live in a world where magic still happens. Another aspect of this work that will be continued is the exploration of mindset in regard to my creative work. I believe this is also an interesting aspect of this thesis that has potential for further study. We as musicians spend so much of our time working to hone our skill and intellectual understanding of what we do. I feel that we often forget about the emotional and psychological aspects of this. It is not an unknown fact that artists are an exposed group when it comes to mental illness and substance abuse and I think that if we become more aware of these aspects and take them into account when practicing, performing, doing creative work and teaching, we might be able to counteract this destructive trend.



List of References

Books:

Bode, Carl, *edit. Collected Poems by Henry Thoreau (Enlarged Edition)*.
Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1964

Ehrenzweig, Anton. *The Hidden Order of Art*. California: University of
California Press, 1967 (paperback edition)

Olsen, Ole Andkjær. and Simo Køppe. *Psykoanalysen efter Freud 1-2*
Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1996

Refsum Jensenius Blog, Alexander. Model and definition of disciplinaries,
<http://www.arj.no/2012/03/12/disciplinaries-2>, Accessed 4th of May 2019

Sers, Phillipe. *Kandisky, The Elements of Art*. New York: Thames and Hudson
Inc., 2016

Winnicott, Donald W. *Playing & Reality*. London: Tavistock Publications Ltd,
1971, REPRINT, New York: Routledge, 1991,92

Werner, Kenny. *Effortless Mastery*. Indiana: Jamey Aebersold Jazz, 1996

Thesis:

Boberg, Troels. *Fugl Fønix: en psykologisk undersøgelse af transcendens i
forbindelse med kreative processer*. Master thesis., University of Copenhagen,
2013

*Although his thesis is mainly concerned with the phenomena transcendence and its
relationship with creative processes, it does introduce the theories that I have
discussed in this thesis. Boberg's thesis also forms the basis for what he later
developed to become the course: "The Psychology of Creativity and Art".*

Documentaries

Inger Christensen - *Cikaderne findes*, dir. Rex, Jytte, Denmark, Statens
Filmcentral, 1998 [DVD]

Interviews

*Statement recorded during lesson with Bendik Hofseth on 13th of December
2018, translation by Mathias Hagen*

Dictionaries

The Oxford English Dictionary, Second Edition

The New Oxford Dictionary of English

Wikipedia/Wiktionary

Wiktionary, s.v. "audiation," last modified 9 March 2019, at 18:44,
<https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/audiation>

Wikipedia, s.v. "Oedipus Complex," last modified 12 April 2019, at
11:02 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oedipus_complex

Media List

Audio (in order of appearance in text)

All recordings used with permission from the musicians involved

Audio 1 The Pilgrim, page 11

Recorded - Spor 5, Stavanger, 15.06.17, mixed by Arne Martin Nybo

Mathias Hagen – saxophone

Jørgen Krøger Mathiesen – violin

Arne Martin Nybo – guitar

Håvard Erslund – piano

Vidar Starheimsæter – bass

Trond Martin Tanke – drums

Audio 2 Intertwined, page 19

Recorded - Casa della Musica, Parma, 30.11.18, mixed by Oskar Karlsson

Karoline Wallace – voice

Mathias Hagen – saxophone

Anders Gleditsch – piano

Audio 3 Excerpt from “The Bethlehem Suite, page 30

Recorded - Betlehems kyrkan, Gothenburg, 27.04.17

Audio 4 Vibrations, page 31

Recorded - RMC, Copenhagen, March 2018, mixed by Oskar Karlsson

Audio 5 Field recording of European Wood Pigeon, page 32

Recorded – Oslo, 04.05.19, by the author

Audio 6 The Dove, page 33

Recorded - Casa della Musica, Parma, 30.11.18, mixed by Oskar Karlsson

Karoline Wallace – voice

Mathias Hagen – saxophone

Audio 7 Winter Morning, page 35

Recorded - Casa della Musica, Parma, 30.11.18, mixed by Oskar Karlsson

Karoline Wallace – voice

Mathias Hagen – saxophone and voice

Anders Gleditsch - piano

Audio 8 Through the Trees, page 37

Recorded - NMH studio, 05.05.19, mixed by Oskar Karlsson

Mathias Hagen – voice

Anders Gleditsch – piano

Audio 9 The Lonely Tree, page 39

Recorded - Casa della Musica, Parma, 30.11.18, mixed by Oskar Karlsson

Karoline Wallace – voice

Mathias Hagen – saxophone

Anders Gleditsch - piano

Audio 10 Prelude + Home, page 43

Recorded - Brorsons Church, Copenhagen, 07.06.18, mixed by Oskar Karlsson

Anna Serierse – voice

Mathias Hagen – saxophone

Kjetil Mulelid – piano

Petter Asbjørnsen – bass

Halym Kim – drums

Audio 11 Stationary Motion, page 46

Recorded – Levinsalen at NMH, Oslo, 14.11.18, mixed by Oskar Karlsson

Karoline Wallace – voice

Mathias Hagen – saxophone

Anders Gleditsch - piano

Audio 12 David and Goliath, page 52

Recorded at Casa della Musica, Parma, 30.11.18, mixed by Oskar Karlsson

Karoline Wallace – voice

Mathias Hagen – saxophone

Anders Gleditsch - piano

Audio 13 Fallet, page 56

Recorded at NMH studio, 05.05.19, mixed by Oskar Karlsson

Jakob Eri Myhre – trumpet

Mathias Hagen – voice and saxophone

Anders Gleditsch – piano

Images

“Deep in the Forest”, photograph, page 1

“The City”, edited photograph of painting, page 7

“Roots”, photograph from Hagen Family Archive, page 8

“Intertwined”, photograph, page 19

“Home”, photograph of artwork, page 21

“The Forest”, photograph of painting, page 22

“The Dove”, edited photograph, page 32

“The Lonely Tree I”, edited photograph, page 38

“The Ocean”, photograph of painting, page 44

“Stationary Motion”, photograph, page 46

“David”, digital artwork, page 52

“Fallet”, photograph of artwork, page 56

“La din vei komme deg i møte”, photograph, page 57

“The Lonely Tree II”, photograph, page 62

“Violent and Dark”, photograph, page 66

