REIMAGINING THE PERFORMANCE OF SONG IN LIGHT OF PEDAGOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS AT THE NORDIC SCHOOL OF VISA: A SONGPOETICS

by

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Abstract

This thesis reimagines contemporary notions of song performance based on research conducted into the experience of instructors and students at the Nordic School of Visa.

In the opening section, song performance is redefined as a relationship of attention between attendees and performers. This relationship is then modelled as an interpretive relationship, in which the performance activity engaged in by the singer becomes the subject of the interpretive activity of the attendee.

The purpose of this interpretive activity is found, in the second section, to be the derivation of ludic and subjective value by the attendee from the performance relationship. The interpretive process through which the attendee derives value from their interpretation of song performance is deconstructed, and shown to consist of interpretive activity on five different levels: pretext, text, supertext, subtext and context.

The final section re-examines the role of the singer in song performance, linking the attendee's five levels of interpretive activity to five performance tasks. The execution of these tasks is shown to depend upon twelve key competencies which are brought together in the conclusion in a model of a singer's curriculum.

For Hanne, Sture, and Ruth, who pointed the way.

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Introduction

This thesis offers a poetics of song performance which is rooted in the pedagogical practices developed at the Nordic School of Visa in the period 1987-2017.[1] The discussion in Section A redefines song performance, moving from a situational model towards an understanding of performance as a dynamic relationship between the performer and the individual attendee. Section B considers the ways in which song performance can be meaningful or valuable, arriving at a model of the interpretive process through which the attendee derives value from the performance relationship. The final section explores the role of the singer within the performance relationship, modelling their performance tasks and the essential competencies required to carry them out.

Aims

The central aim of this thesis relates to the need for a cross-disciplinary platform from which to consider issues of song performance. Until now, song performance has largely been treated as a function of music performance, taught in music schools and conservatories, studied with the tools afforded by music theory, according to conventions of musical genre (Hellström 5). In the Nordic countries, however - and particularly in Sweden - a discourse has begun to develop which recognises that song performance is not primarily a musical activity, but one which consists of the interplay of language, music and narrative, and which transcends divisions of musical style. This discourse found its first clear articulation in 2016, when a

[1] Hereafter known as the NSV. The author was a student of the NSV during the academic year 2016/2017. For a brief history of the NSV, see appendix.

conference was held bringing together Scandinavian academics from a range of performance disciplines to discuss ‘the sung word’.[2] They concluded that researchers concerned with song performance ‘lack a forum which crosses the boundaries of performance genres’ (Strand 3). This study seeks to redraw the boundaries of performance genres in order to open the space for a discussion of song performance on its own terms, rather than as an ‘interartial’ performance activity (Mossberg 19). Song performance - or ‘songpoetry’, in the terms of this study - is here presented as a performance discipline in its own right, existing ‘in the space between music, theatre, and poetry’ (Kristersson 330). This songpoetics seeks, therefore, to demarcate where music, theatre, and poetry end, and songpoetry begins.

As well as reframing songpoetry as an independent performance discipline, this study seeks to go further, and to stimulate the development of a body of ‘song theory’, analogous to music theory for musicians, or colour theory for painters. At present, our theoretical understanding of song performance remains underdeveloped, and both practitioners and pedagogues are largely reliant on ‘tacit knowledge’ which is ‘embodied in the artistic process of individuals’ (Kristersson 31). This study aims to show how songtheoretical models can be established through the ‘uncovering and articulation’ of the tacit knowledge which accrued at the NSV in the period 1987-2017. During this period, a confluence of influential Scandinavian musicians, singers, theatre practitioners and poets at the school gave rise to a cross-disciplinary pedagogy of song performance, which fed into the developing song performance discourse in academia referenced above. Editor of the ‘Sung Word’

[2] The author is responsible for all translations unless otherwise specified.

conference, Karin Strand, for example, has both taught and studied at the NSV, and NSV course director Hanne Juul contributed to the conference directly. The theoretical models derived from this pedagogy will, it is hoped, provide a useful resource for singers, singing teachers, and researchers interested in the field of song performance.

Definition of Terms

The concept of ‘songpoetry’ lies at heart of this study. This is a new usage in English, and refers here to language-based song, which is to say songs with words, the linguistic and narrative content of which are integral to performance. This excludes, for example, practices such as the joik, which is traditionally wordless, as well as choral singing, where language and narrative do not play a prominent role. Examples of language-based song traditions which are covered by this term include classical romances, jazz standards, folk ballads, popular songs, musical theatre and opera, as well as a range of non-Western forms. This concept is therefore useful as an umbrella term, bringing what Eigtved calls ‘classical, folk, and popular’ song traditions under the same roof (128).

Whilst performance practices in these songpoetic traditions diverge significantly, the notion of songpoetry is predicated on the idea that these diverse forms are composed of the same basic elements: language, music, and narrative. ‘Language’, in the above formulation, refers to the words of the song as they are manifested by the singer. ‘Music’ refers in the first instance to the singing of the melody, and in the

second to the musical accompaniment.[3] 'Narrative', here, is a translation of the Swedish term *berättelse*, which is used in Swedish performance discourse to refer to the dramatic content of the linguistic text (Järleby 18). This can form one continuous story - a Brechtian 'fabel' - or consist of the juxtaposition of fragments of unrelated narratives (Barnett 267). Where these three elements are integral to the performance of a song, then it is here defined as songpoetry. A more nuanced discussion of what does and does not qualify as songpoetry falls outside the scope of this study, but would provide an interesting topic for further research.

The term 'songpoetry' itself is a translation, the form of which has been taken from the Swedish word *sångpoesi*. '*Sångpoesi'* was coined by Ludvig Rasmussen in order to refer to international performance traditions of language-based song, such as French *chanson* and Greek *rebetika* (25, 226). This form of words has been adopted here because the compounding of the nouns 'song' and 'poetry' embeds the linguistic and narrative aspects of the performance of language-based song into the term used to describe it. This provides a way of distinguishing between language-based and non-language-based song practices.

The content of the term 'songpoetry' has been derived from another Swedish word: *visa.* The precise definition of *visa* remains the subject of debate. *Visa* can refer to a particular Nordic tradition of songwriting and performance (Rhedin 11); the term has also been used to describe language-based song traditions in other cultures, such as the 'German' or 'American' *visa* (Rasmussen 81, 192). Of greater relevance for this

[3] Musical accompaniment is not explored in detail in this study, since, as shown in Section B, the basic elements of songpoetic performance continue to exist even where no accompaniment is provided.

thesis, however, is the broader definition of *visa* developed at the NSV, which moves beyond particular genres or traditions. The NSV was the first institution to offer formal training to performers within the Nordic *visa* tradition, and yet the school's policy of allowing students to choose their own repertoire opened a pedagogical space where songs from across the generic spectrum came together. During my own time at the school, for example, fellow students performed repertoire ranging from urban rap to nursery rhymes. The concept of *visa* expanded to reflect this diversity, and came to refer more to a general way of thinking about and working with songs than a particular performance genre. According to this philosophy, any language-based song can be treated as a *visa* by foregrounding its linguistic and narrative elements in performance (Juul). It is this broader definition of *visa* which provides the foundation for the concept of songpoetry presented in this study.

Implicit in the concept of songpoetry is the idea of 'song theory'. As mentioned above, song theory is conceived of here as analogous to Western music theory: musicians of all kinds use music theory as a potent tool in their music making; singers of every genre should have recourse to a body of song theory in a similar manner. Like music theory, song theory should clearly define the basic elements of the art form and place them at the disposal of the performer. The distinction drawn here between song theory and music theory is that whilst music theory is concerned only with the artistic devices of music, song theory also encompasses those of language, narrative, and performance, insofar as they are related to the performance of song.

The notion of song theory is rooted in the pedagogical innovations of the NSV, but impulses in this direction are also apparent in the literature of song performance. At the NSV, Hanne Juul has distilled her thirty years of pedagogical experience into a four-part theory of song performance - consisting of ‘manifestation’, ‘dynamics’, ‘semantics’ and ‘presence’ - which has provided a point of departure for the songtheoretical models developed in this study (Juul). Beyond the school, Gunilla Gårdfeldt’s recent work applies Stanislavsky’s acting theories to the performance of song, thereby highlighting the possibility of an integrated song theory which incorporates the non-musical aspects of song performance (Gårdfeldt). Outside of Scandinavia, H. Wesley Balk thought along similar lines, exploring the role of the ‘singer-actor’ in musical theatre by developing a ‘theory of opposites’ which unites the theatrical and the musical elements of song performance (37).

A number of works can also be found in the field of theatre studies which move into the space claimed here for song theory. Kim Kowalke’s treatment of Brecht’s relationship to song, for example, explores the tensions between poetry, music and narrative in song performance by looking at the collaboration between poet and dramatist Brecht, composer Kurt Weill, and singer-actress Lotta Lenya in the performance of Brecht’s ‘Alabama Song’ (64-78). Zachary Dunbar’s short study, *The Anomalies of Acting Song*, uses Stanislavsky’s work with opera singers to explore the interplay between the musical-technical demands of singing and the imaginative-emotional demands of presenting a narrative (Dunbar 68). The studies mentioned above, however, are all, as Zachary’s title suggests, anomalies within their disciplines; this thesis holds that they in fact belong together within the discipline of songpoetry. One purpose of the concept of song theory introduced in this study is

therefore to draw this diffuse body of work together, and weave the loose insights contained within them into a new fabric of academic knowledge.

Research Methods

The research which underpins this study has been conducted according to three research methods. The qualitative research interview has been employed extensively in order to gain access to the store of tacit knowledge which accrued at the NSV; this is supported by autoethnographic reflections upon my own experience as a student of the school. Secondly, a multi-disciplinary approach has been taken towards the use of supporting literature which crosses the boundaries of both academic and performance disciplines. Lastly, the models presented in Sections B and C make wide-ranging use of deconstructive analysis.

The qualitative research interview has been applied in this study in order to document the pedagogy and philosophy developed at the NSV which, until now, have remained unwritten and unpublished. This method was chosen for two reasons: firstly because the author, as a former student, was well placed to organise and conduct such interviews, enjoying privileged access to the school's central figures; and secondly, in the hope that a qualitative approach would make space for the nuances and contradictions within this body of ideas to emerge. Whilst a more quantitative, standardised interview process would have made it possible for a greater number of students to participate in the study, a quantitative interview format would not have provided the detailed, reflective responses which this thesis required. A more detailed account of the interview process can be found in the appendix.

The application of the qualitative research interview in this thesis has been heavily influenced by two studies. The first is Birgitte Abu-Asab's report on trends in Swedish theatre pedagogy through the second half of the twentieth century. Abu-Asab demonstrates how an informal, conversational style of interview can feed into critical debate: in her study, personal reflections from individual practitioners are framed and sequenced in a way that allows their more general relevance to shine through. This can be seen, for example, in the way in which she juxtaposes the - often contradictory – remarks of various practitioners in order to illustrate changes in the use of dialect on the stage (31-45). This thesis has sought to frame participants' individual reflections within the context of a broader academic debate in a similar manner.

Lucy Green's seminal work, *How Popular Musicians Learn*, has also served as a model for this thesis for the way in which it bridges the gap between institutional pedagogy and the experience of the individual student. Green conducted a series of interviews with musicians exploring their experiences of formal music education. Extracts from these interviews are woven into her argument in such a way as to root her criticism of existing pedagogical practices in lived experience. This is evident, for instance, in the way she highlights a 'disjunction between learning and teaching' by citing the testimony of interviewees whose 'informal learning practices were discounted' by their instructors (180). Following Green's example, this study discusses the pedagogy and philosophy of the NSV not as an abstract system, but as the result of a real-world interaction between instructors and students.

Autoethnographic reflection has been employed in this thesis to provide a counterweight to the subjectivity of the research interviews, and in order to leverage my own experience of the NSV's philosophy and practice. Reference is made throughout to unpublished lecture notes and journals compiled during my time at the school, and numerous examples are drawn from teaching at which I was present. The limited use of autoethnographic methods in this thesis has been modelled on the approach taken by Phillip Zarrilli in his book *Psychophysical Acting*. In this work, the boundary between experience and insight remains fluid, revealing a research process within which the realities of Zarrilli's creative practice are constantly flowing into and enriching his academic theories and ideas. Zarrilli articulates, for instance, the idea of the total commitment of the body with reference to - and a striking image of - his own martial arts training (3). A second important influence here is Sven Kristersson's dissertation *The Singer in the Empty Space*. In this work, Kristersson frames his performance poetics within a critical discussion of three of his own performances, interspersed with reflections from his training with practitioner-pedagogues such as Ulla Sjöblom (157). Whilst the present study does not go as far as this in placing individual experience at the centre of academic discussion, it has followed Kristersson in bringing personal experiences to bear in order to support the development of particular points.

The choice of a multi-disciplinary approach to supporting research follows from the aforementioned principle that the performance of song involves musical, poetic and performative elements inseparably woven together. The very concept of song theory rests on a multi-disciplinary foundation, in that it seeks to adapt and integrate concepts drawn from literary theory, music theory, performance studies, voice

pedagogy, and other fields. The main advantage of this approach is that strains of thought and theory which have developed in parallel can here be cross-fertilised and take on new relevance. For example, this may be the first time that elements of narratological theory - which, according to Huhn, have only recently been applied to lyric poetry – are applied to the performance of song (18). Conversely, as Alicia Juarrero notes, interdisciplinary research can make it difficult to engage with a topic in depth (qtd. in Rynell 19). This is a challenge with which this study is forced to contend, since the existing body of research in this area remains divided across several performance disciplines. Here, it is the work of the NSV, rather than the critical traditions of a particular academic discipline, which forms the centre around which the research referred to in this study coheres. This is consonant with the central aim of the thesis, which is to stimulate the development of songpoetry and song theory as a new area of academic enquiry.

The analytical method applied throughout this study is one of deconstruction. What is meant by this is not deconstruction in the Derridean sense, which involves a detailed analysis of a text in order to assert that its ‘meanings’ are subjective and depend on arbitrary signifiers (Zuckert 336-338). Rather, this is deconstruction in its more traditional usage, defined in the dictionary as ‘the act of breaking something down into its separate parts in order to understand its meaning, especially when this is different from how it was previously understood’ (‘deconstruct’). This approach has been chosen as a way of opening up complicated, integrated, and highly subjective processes to academic inquiry. In Section B, for instance, the analysis of the attendee’s interpretation of the performance activity proceeds from a basic deconstruction of the broad notion of ‘interpretation’ into five different levels of

interpretation, each of which is then deconstructed further to arrive at a model of the constituent elements of the attendee's interpretive process. The deconstructions attempted in this study aim at utility, rather than objectivity, and it is hoped that the models which result from this approach will provide useful conceptual tools for those who wish to enrich their understanding of songpoetic performance.

Sources

The analyses in this study are underpinned by a range of sources which can broadly be divided into two categories: NSV sources and non-NSV sources. A survey of the central NSV sources is included in the appendix, for although an awareness of their pedagogical and artistic profiles may prove helpful in understanding the references made to their work, it is not integral to the logic of this thesis. The appendix also contains a brief introduction to the NSV's distinctive *vistolkning* instruction, from which numerous examples in the text have been drawn. The word *vistolkning*, pronounced '*veese-tolkning*', remains untranslated in the thesis text, as there is no equivalent term in English; 'instruction in the scenic interpretation of songpoetry' is a clumsy approximation.

The non-NSV sources to which this study makes reference are drawn from various fields of study. There is the young discipline of Nordic *visa* studies, as well as the broader literature of song performance and song pedagogy, which, as noted above, is largely divided along the lines of musical genre. Theatre and acting studies feature heavily, as do musical studies, and reference is made throughout to strands of both linguistic and literary theory. The passages below outline the individual strains of thought which are of particular importance to the argument as it unfolds.

The discussion of the songpoetic performance relationship in Section A runs parallel to a similar discussion in the field of performance studies found in Michael Eigtved's 2007 book, *Forestillingsanalys* (Performance Analysis). Eigtved's influential work attempts to identify the basic mechanics of performance, the essence of which he finds in the relationship between performers and spectators (14). This study owes to Eigtved its definition of songpoetic performance as relational rather than situational, as well as the broader direction of its analysis: like Eigtved, this study takes up and considers in turn various existing models of the scenic relationship, before recommending a model of its own. Eigtved introduces his work as part of the 'renewal of the theoretical basis of theatre studies which has taken place in recent decades' (7); this study calls for a fresh approach to the study of song theory and songpoetry in a similar manner.

The interpretive model of the scenic relationship advocated in Section A builds on the foundation laid by two major works in the field of *visa* studies: Frans Mossberg's *Visans Continuum - Ord, Röst och Musik* (The Continuum of Voice, Words and Music), and Sven Kristersson's aforementioned book, *The Singer in the Empty Space*. Mossberg's work is an in-depth study of the artistry of *visa* performer Olle Adolphson, focussing on the interplay of language, voice and music in *visa* performance. In the latter part of the study, Mossberg explores the way in which the individual attendee creates '*betydelse'* - 'meaning', or 'significance' - through their interpretation of a performance (248). This principle, of the attendee generating significance through an interpretive process, underlies the present study's discussion

of the attendee's role within the performance relationship, as well as its enquiry into the value of songpoetic performance.

The Singer in the Empty Space expounds a poetics of song performance which presents the singer as an Orpheus-figure whose performances unite poetry, music, theatre and religion. It contains both a detailed analysis of the process of preparation for performance, as well as acute observations on the mechanics of performance itself. The present songpoetics overlaps frequently with Kristersson's work and makes reference to it throughout. In particular, his concept of the listener as '*medskapare',* or 'co-creator', of a performance underpins this study's conception of the role of the attendee (278). Moreover, this thesis owes its basic form as a poetics to Kristersson's example.

The exploration in Section B of the ways in which songpoetic performance can be meaningful or valuable builds on cultural historian Johan Huizinga's seminal work *Homo Ludens*: *The Play Element of Culture*. Huizinga identifies an element of play in all forms of cultural interaction; he goes on to suggest that one of the defining characteristics of this 'ludic' element is that participation in play is inherently valuable (35-36). This study applies Huizinga's terminology when discussing the ludic value of performance, which is said to derive from participation in the performance relationship. Huizinga's work also appears in other forms in this thesis, most notably in its metaphoric description of songpoetic performance as a game of interpretation.

The deconstruction of the attendee's interpretive process attempted in the latter half of Section B draws together a wide range of different sources in an attempt to model

the entire spectrum of the attendee's interpretive activity. The Berry-Rodenburg school of voice pedagogy, which focuses on the actor's manifestation of language, informs considerations of the attendee's interpretation of the linguistic text. The attendee's interpretation of the musical text is dissected with reference to the notion of the temporal and spatial dimensions of music developed in H. Wesley Balk's book *The Complete Singer/Actor*, which could be described as an operatic songpoetics. The passages treating the attendee's interpretation of narrative are rooted in literary theorist Lars Lönnroth's influential study *Den Dubbla Scenen* (The Double Stage), building on his suggestion that the imagination of the attendee projects the scenes of the narrative over the actual scene of performance. For the sequence relating to the attendee's interpretation of voice, the point of departure is provided by Thomas Hemsley's idea that 'vocal modifications' are the singer's primary artistic device (60). This notion was put forward in Hemsley's re-appraisal of classical singing practices *Singing and Imagination*, to which this thesis makes frequent reference. Lastly, the consideration of the attendee's interpretation of the inner life of the performer refers, inevitably, to a body of scholarship relating to Konstantin Stanislavsky, most notably Rose Whyman's wide-ranging exploration of his legacy and influence. The logic of this section integrates these diverse strains of thought with the concepts and theories developed at the NSV.

The attempt, in Section C, to formulate a 'singer's curriculum' by identifying the essential competencies of the singer has been heavily influenced by Anders Järleby's study of the development of theatre pedagogy in Sweden. In his analysis of the actor's '*grundutbildning'* or 'basic curriculum', Järleby considers the specific demands theatrical performance places on the actor, as well as the particular skills

which enable the actor to meet them. He then goes on to document the ways in which these skills have been incorporated into the pedagogy of Sweden's five state theatre schools since their inception in 1964 (5). A similar line of enquiry has been followed here, which moves from a deconstruction of the performance tasks of the singer to a re-appraisal of the singer's basic skills. Whilst it is framed as a pedagogics, Järleby's work amounts in practice to a poetics of acting, and as such has been used to inform this work in the many areas where songpoetic and theatrical performance overlap.

It is evident in the foregoing passages that there is a clear weighting towards the use of Scandinavian sources to substantiate the argument of this thesis. This is due, in part, to the fact that Nordic research in this area is particularly well developed, but it also represents a conscious choice to bring the fruits of this research into the forums of international debate. Many of the ideas and concepts referred to in this study are here brought into English for the first time. It is hoped this will provide an impetus to new thinking around issues of song pedagogy and performance, as well as a degree of recognition for the ground-breaking work of those academics, pedagogues and practitioners whose influence has hitherto been limited to the Nordic language area.

Section A - The Performance Relationship

As outlined in the introduction, Section A of this thesis redefines songpoetic performance in terms of the relationship between performer and attendee. In the following passages, songpoetic performance is initially characterised as a relationship of attention linking the performers, the performance activity, and members of the audience. The discussion then turns to different ways of modelling this relationship: existing expressive and communicative models are challenged, before an interpretive model is recommended. This is a preparatory analysis, the main purpose of which is to establish a conceptual framework within which to conduct the more detailed examination of the roles of the attendee and the singer within the performance relationship in Sections B and C. The line of analysis runs parallel to that followed by Michael Eigtved in his book *Performance Analysis*, in which he redefines the 'theatrical event' in order to develop theoretical models applicable to both contemporary and classical forms of theatre (Sauter qtd. in Eigtved 9, 25). This redefinition of songpoetic performance attempts, in a similar manner, to lay the ground for songtheoretical models which can be applied to all forms of songpoetry, regardless of musical genre.

The need for a relational definition of songpoetic performance can be seen most clearly by considering its opposite: a situational model. The classic example of a situational model can be adapted from Eric Bentley's famous definition of theatre: 'A impersonates B whilst C looks on' (qtd. in Eigtved 39); in songpoetic terms, this could read: the singer, A, performs a song, B, in the presence of C. The main problem with this is that it is an oversimplification, which conceals far more than it

divulges. A singer is not, for example, just an individual standing on a stage, but - as later passages in this study will show - represents an ‘artistic persona’, who is further transformed into a narrator of and participant in the song they are performing (Suhadolnik 180, Eigtved 54). A song is not just a linguistic and musical composition - a ‘songtext’, in the terms of this study - but also the songtext’s living, resonating embodiment by the performer; a ‘live song’, created afresh for each performance (Rasmussen 14-15). In order to arrive at a model of songpoetic performance which takes these nuances and complexities into account, it is necessary to define performance not in terms of the fixed, static elements of the performance situation, but in terms of the dynamic relationship between them.

One effective means of modelling dynamic relationships is by measuring their movement between poles along a scale or continuum. Balk, for instance, defines the relationship of the operatic performer to music and to theatre in this way (37-43), as does Mossberg, in his conception of the relationship between ‘voice, words and music’ (1). The performance relationship in songpoetic performance can similarly be conceived of as a scale running horizontally from left to right. On the left end of the scale, the situational elements of performance are present - you have a performer, standing in a performance space, singing a song before an audience - but they are unrelated. The singer exhibits no engagement with the song, the audience show no interest either in the song, or the performer; there is no performance relationship, nothing is binding them together. At the opposite end of the scale on the right, you have the same situational elements - a performer, standing in a performance space, singing a song before an audience - but here, both performer and audience are completely engrossed in the world of the song, which transforms the space around

them. The performance relationship can be visualised as movement from left to right between these two extremes.

Balk provides an example, describing his experience of a solo performance of Florestan's aria from *Fidelio*, on a bare stage without props or lighting, which midway through became 'absolutely riveting and emotionally overwhelming' (71). For Balk, the singer, for a portion of the song, 'was *in that dungeon,* he *saw* Leonore, he was *there* in every way'. Here, Balk's participation in the performance relationship deepens: he moves to the right along the scale from distanced admiration of 'superb' singing, to imaginative and emotional engagement with the narrative of the song. What this suggests is that the dynamic factor in the performance relationship, which shifts it along the scale from left to right, is the degree of participation. The greater the participation, from both singer and attendee, the greater the extent to which the situational elements of performance are integrated into an immersive aesthetic experience.

The Social Basis of the Performance Relationship

One way of exploring this notion of participation further is by identifying the rudimentary elements of the performance relationship, in order to examine what binds them together. On its most basic level, a songpoetic performance relationship is founded upon a simple social encounter between human beings: before you have songs, stages, audiences and performers, you have people gathered together in a room.[4] This basic human encounter first takes on a performative character,

[4] The human basis of the performance relationship is highlighted by Sven Kristersson when he writes that listeners are not merely 'spectators', but 'participants in social interaction' (130); it is also reflected in the terminology of the NSV, where performance was frequently portrayed as a 'meeting' between

according to Eigtved, with the division of the individuals present into two groups: performers, and attendees (14). Sherman defines attendees as those who are paying attention to the performance activity (11-12); it is possible to extend Sherman's logic in order to define performers as those individuals conducting performance activity to which attention is paid. This definition, however, is not complete without recognising the existence of a third group, omitted by Eigtved: non-participants. Here, non-participants are those who are physically present, but not involved in the performance relationship, who are not paying attention. This may include, for example, staff and security personnel, or a group of friends engrossed in conversation.

In this model, the boundaries between these groups remain fluid throughout a performance. An attendee who ceases to pay attention thereby becomes a non-participant, a non-participant who begins listening becomes an attendee, and performers who are not actively performing become either attendees, or non-participants. Looked at in this way, the performer is not a performer by dint of some inherent personal characteristic, but becomes a performer through carrying out performance activity on the stage. An attendee, by the same token, becomes an attendee through the act of paying attention to the performance activity. This represents a relational, rather than a situational, understanding of performance. Here, it is the degree of attention given to the performance activity, rather than

individuals (Juul). This characteristic of performance as a social relationship is evident in practice in situations where the performance relationship is suddenly broken off. As soon as the fire alarm sounds, for instance, performers cease to be performers, the audience ceases to be an audience, the live song vanishes into the air, and all you are left with are human beings.

simple physical presence in the arena of performance, which is the dynamic factor determining the degree of participation in the performance relationship.

Before moving on to consider the nature of the performance activity, it is important to recognise the shift in terminology which follows from this move to a relational understanding of performance, away from the generalising term 'audience', and towards the more specific 'attendee'. 'Audience' is a problematic term, referring to a collective of individuals, but often referred to as having an independent existence, as a living entity which participates in and responds to a performance. Hemsley, for example, writes of a 'magnetic thread which binds (the singer) to the audience' (174). Whilst it can be illustrative to speak of the audience as a collective in this manner when describing the experience of performance, it is an inadequate term for use in an analysis of the mechanics of the performance relationship because of the way in which it conceals the individuality of each person's participation and response; as Kristersson writes, 'each person interprets the performance text with the greatest degree of individuality' (8).[5] The word 'attendee', by contrast, is an adaptation of Sherman's term 'attendant', which he uses to refer to those individuals who are actively paying attention to a performance (12). 'Attendee' is preferred here for the reason that 'attendant' has other, conflicting definitions, and can imply that the

[5] This shift of the terms of the debate from the level of the collective to the level of the individual reflects a broader shift in performance theory away from the notion of the audience as a passive group - of what Goodall calls 'empty vessels waiting to be filled with the vital energy they lack' (88) - towards recognition of the attendee's dynamic role in shaping and creating a performance. Sherman's recent study, *Stage Presence and the Ethics of Attention,* for example, focuses on the ways in which the attendee's perception and interpretation of a performance is influenced by the quality of attention they themselves contribute to it (9-15). This study's conception of the attendee as an active participant in a relationship rather than a situational observer, which is developed further in the following section, can be understood as a contribution to this discursive shift.

act of paying attention is secondary, whereas here it is integral to participation in the performance relationship.

The Performance Activity

This model of a participatory relationship of attention can be developed further by defining the nature of the performance activity which is carried out by the performers, and paid attention to by the attendees. This is the point at which the songpoetic performance relationship becomes distinct from the performance relationship in other disciplines, for in songpoetic performance, the central performance activity is the production of the live song.[6] Karin Strand characterised a song as consisting of an audible 'phonotext', which has a continuous existence between two periods of silence (qtd. in Wirtén 356). To this could be added that the visual *gestalt* of the performer on the stage during the performance of a song also becomes an integral part of the performance activity. Typically, songpoetic performances consist of a series of live songs, each of which is complete within itself and retains its essential character in isolation from the others.

In the intervals between live songs, songpoetic performance includes - or admits - a second form of performance activity: the singer's direct address to the attendees. There are few circumstances in other performance disciplines where a performer has licence to go off-script and speak directly to their attendees, yet in many forms of songpoetic performance, this is the norm. In the context of the Nordic *visa*, for

[6] The epithet 'live' has been added to 'song' in this case in order to avoid the general conflation of the compositional material of a song - the 'songtext' - with its manifestation in performance. On this point, Jimmy Ginsby from the NSV suggests that the difference between the live song and the songtext is analogous to the difference between a written recipe and a sugar cake: the songtext itself is not meant for consumption (Ginsby).

example, this is known as *mellansnack;* literally ‘in-between speaking’. As Sid Jansson taught at the NSV, some *visa* performers, such as Cornelis Vreeswijk and Evert Taube, were celebrated almost as much for their interpolated speeches as for their songs (Jansson). Recordings of Vreeswijk show how he used these speeches as an opportunity to introduce characters, set scenes, link live songs to political or social issues, or simply to tell an anecdote or a joke (Vreeswijk). The prowess of these practitioners in the use of the direct address shows that this is an aspect of songpoetry which can shape the performance experience almost as much as the live songs themselves.

This can be framed in theoretical terms to suggest that, between live songs, performers and attendees enter into what Dahlsveen calls a ‘naked rhetorical situation’. In this situation, the performer can deliver a short speech - prepared or improvised - and the attendees are able, through the crude means of heckling, cheering or applause, to respond (21). Song performance pedagogy does not generally cover the composition and delivery of these short speeches; the NSV, however, viewed them as integral to performance, and employed professional storytellers to provide training in this area. If, as this thesis suggests, interpolated speaking can be considered an integral part of the performance activity in songpoetic performance, provision of this kind of training should, in fact, be the norm.

One inference which can be drawn from the foregoing discussion is that the songpoetic performance relationship is not a binary relationship between performer and attendee, but a tripartite relationship in which the attention of both performer and attendee is centred upon the performance activity. This is evident in Sture Ekholm’s

metaphor of songpoetic performance as light passing through a prism (*vistolkning*). In this image, the vital energy of the performer's body is the source of white, colourless light. The singer focusses this ray of light through the prism of the live song, where it is refracted and disperses, shining as a broad shaft of multicoloured light upon the attendees, who absorb the rays which are on their own wavelength. This bears many similarities to Balk's conception of vital 'energy'. For Balk, energy is generated by the performer, focused and structured through the act of singing, and projected towards the attendees, who convert this energy through the medium of their imaginations (66-82). Both models show clearly that the attendee and the performer do not relate to one another directly, but through the medium of the performance activity.

This definition of songpoetic performance as a tripartite relationship where both singer and attendee are focussed on the performance activity poses a challenge to older models which place the singer and the attendee in direct binary contact. The following passages seek to lay bare the insufficiency of existing binary models of scenic expression and scenic communication, before contending that songpoetic performance can more accurately be conceived of as an interpretive relationship between performer, performance activity, and attendee.

Theories of Scenic Expression

Theories of expression in song performance occur in two forms: 'self' or performer expression, and expression of the artistic 'substance' of a composition or songtext. In self-expression, the performer supposedly transmits some part of their own inner lives directly to the attendees, literally 'pressing it out' of their bodies through the act

of performance. Through performing a song where the narrator laments the death of a close friend, for instance, the singer would be thought to be giving expression to their own private grief at the loss of somebody close to them. This notion is prevalent amongst singer-songwriters, for whom the dominant ‘confessional’ mode of songwriting blurs the boundary between the performer’s private life and the characters of the songtext (Wise qtd. in Williams 2). David Shumway goes so far as to suggest that attendees at singer-songwriter performances expect this kind of ‘authentic individual expression’ from the performer (2), and Till outlines an ‘aesthetics of authenticity’ which, he claims, defines singer-songwriter performance (296).

Both Shumway and Marc, however, conclude that this is a ‘perceived’ authenticity, based on an illusion formed in the mind of the attendee (16, Marc 26). This illusion is evident in practice in the way in which some attendees have readily assumed that one of my own songs, which narrates the journey of a refugee crossing the Mediterranean, must be based on personal experience; whereas, it is, in fact, a work of fiction. These attendees mistakenly assumed that my performance constituted an act of self-expression. This suggests that, whilst attendees may *imagine* themselves to be partaking directly of the singer’s inner life and experiences, they are, in fact, doing nothing of the sort. For whilst the boundary between song character and performer can be blurred, it can never be completely erased. As Henri Schoenmakers makes clear in his discussion of actor identity, a human being is a ‘role player’ in all of his social interactions, and the performance relationship is no exception. The singer on the stage can only ‘play him or her self’ as a character, equivalent to any other character, and thus even autobiography on the stage

becomes a form of ‘storytelling’ (233-237). This leaves no room for notions of what Marc calls ‘unmediated self-expression’ (25).

This is not, however, to suggest that songpoetic performance is in no sense self-expressive; for the singer, like the actor, utilises their own body and inner activity as instruments of performance. The central instrument of songpoetic performance is the voice, and the voice is, according to Eigtved, a ‘sonic representation of the body’, which refers back to the performer themselves and is inextricably linked to their concrete, physical existence (81). The singer, in other words, necessarily involves their physical self in performance through the very act of singing. This thereby reveals certain aspects of what Schoenmakers calls their ‘private personhood’, such as gender, age, or linguistic and cultural background to the attendees in a limited act of self-expression (233). Additionally, singers frequently draw from the resources of their own private lives in order to animate their performances. The mechanics of this personal engagement are discussed at length in Section B, but the principle can be illustrated with reference to the pedagogy of Kjell Fagéus. Fagéus claims that in order to avoid ‘empty theatricality’, a singer should strive to perform with a degree of ‘vulnerability’ (92), which is to say personal engagement. Similarly, at the NSV, performers who committed their own emotions to a performance were praised for having ‘offered a little of themselves’ to the attendees (*vistolkning*).

Although the commitment of the body and inner resources of the singer to performance can fairly be called self-expressive, this form of self-expression is limited to the relationship between the performer and the live song, and does not include the attendee. A striking example of this can be taken from Sture Ekholm’s

vistolkning instruction at the NSV. During one particularly illuminating session, he requested that performer after performer approach their song material with *ilska* - anger, or rage - derived from a personal source, not necessarily related to the narrative of the song. The result, almost invariably, was an enlivening of the performance, verified in the post-performance feedback. Crucially, however, none of the attendees experienced the performances as expressing in any sense the anger which the performers claimed to be experiencing, instead describing what they had witnessed with reference to a far broader spectrum of emotions. Here, the expression of anger was refracted through the prism of the song, transformed to such a degree that what reached the attendees was unrecognisable to the singer, even though it had originated within their own inner lives (*vistolkning*). This suggests that the songpoetic performance relationship between singer and attendee is not, in its essence, self-expressive.

Theories of expressiveness which relate, not to the performer, but to the songtext are based on the idea that some form of artistic substance is inscribed into the compositional materials themselves by the poet and the composer. Such theories are common in Western classical music, where there has been a long-running debate as to the extent to which performers can discern the composer's intentions for performance from a written score, and how far these intentions themselves constitute the artistic substance of the work. On the one side are traditionalists such as Thomas Hemsley, who writes that the performer must first express the intentions of both poet and composer, as represented in the details of the score, before defining their individual contribution (142-143, 149). On the other are critics who dispute that the composer's intentions can be determined at all, and hold that, even if

they could, they are irrelevant for the audience and contain no substance in and of themselves (Dipert 205-206).

In the context of songpoetic performance, the latter view is of greater relevance. Many traditions of songpoetry are not based upon the reproduction of stable, written compositions at all; Lars Lönnroth, for instance, demonstrates that the Nordic *visa* is rooted in an 'oral tradition', in which songs had passed from performer to performer through generations before they were ever written down (7). In traditions where the roles of composer and performer are carried out by one and the same person, many contemporary songtexts lack even this slim foundation; prior to performance, they may not exist anywhere except in the mind of the individual who has created them. It is difficult to see how such proto-songtexts, which have no physical manifestation whatsoever, can be said to possess artistic substance. It is also difficult to see how there is any essential difference between a songtext which exists in the mind of the performer, and one which has been written down; for whilst written scores allow for greater intricacy of composition, even the most detailed score remains a songtext, not a song. As NSV pedagogue Jimmy Ginsby's 'sugar cake theory' suggests, compositional materials, or songtexts, are but the recipe for the live song in performance, and have no flavour or substance in and of themselves (Ginsby).

Having rejected the idea that songtexts contain inherent artistic substance, this thesis goes one step further to claim that not even live songs can be said to possess substance which can be expressed. For live songs consist, in physical terms, only of patterns of sound and light waves which travel through the arena of performance, are perceived by the attendees, and disappear; they possess no more inherent

substance than ink dots on a stave. A second important point here is that each rendition of a songtext requires the creation of a new, unique and unrepeatable live song. In the words of Sture Ekholm, each manifestation of a songtext as a live song constitutes a ‘new creative act’ (*vistolkning*). This means that there is simply no such thing as a pre-existing live song, the substance of which can be expressed through performance. With this in mind, it can fairly be said that the relationship between performer, live song, and attendee is not expressive, either of the performer’s inner life, or the inherent artistic substance of the song.

Theories of Scenic Communication

On the face of it, there is a stronger case for suggesting that this relationship is essentially *communicative.* The term ‘communication’ has long been part of the working vocabulary of both singers and actors. Järleby suggests, for instance, that ‘the source of acting is the need to communicate’ (17); Peter Brook writes of the ways in which ‘scenic communication is established’ (qtd. in Kristersson v); Hanne Juul at the NSV speaks of communication as the objective of performance (Juul). In an academic context, Lars Lönnroth has applied communications theory to oral poetry and song using a model adapted from linguistics, where four elements link a transmitter - the performer - to a receiver - the attendee. These are: context, message, channel, and code. He defines context as the performance situation; channel as the means of transmission - in this case, music and language; code as the semantic rules and conventions in which both transmitter and receiver must be fluent if the message is to be transmitted effectively; and message as that which is to be communicated (10-11).

This model was designed, however, for the communication of semantic information, not for the highly subjective experiences which give rise to songpoetry. It is difficult, and often reductive, to define a poetic text as a series of ‘messages’, and it is all but impossible to deduce clear transmittable content from a musical composition. The ‘code’ according to which this songpoetic communication would have to be deciphered is also extremely subjective. There may be rules of grammar that enable us to understand the semantic content of a sentence, but there is no corresponding set of rules that enable an attendee to accurately decode the messages transmitted by a performer’s facial expressions or voice. As a result of this subjectivity, the messages the performer may believe they are transmitting can diverge so radically from what attendees are actually receiving - as in the example of the angry singers given above - that the term communication loses its meaning, and Lönnroths communicative model ceases to apply.

A more nuanced theory of scenic communication has been put forward by theatre scholar Willmar Sauter. Sauter understands scenic communication as occurring on three levels simultaneously: the sensory, the artistic, and the symbolic. Sensory communication refers simply to the attendee’s perception of the sound and light waves which constitute the performance activity. Artistic communication involves, as with Lönnroth’s model, the transmission of coded material by the performer, to be deciphered by the attendee. In symbolic communication, the attendee ‘ascribes significance’ to their sensory perceptions, and to what has been communicated to them through artistic forms (qtd. in Eigtved 96).

The process whereby the attendee ascribes significance to their perceptions of performance is of central importance to this study's conception of the role of the attendee, and is discussed at length in the following section. The problem with Sauter's model here, however, lies in its use of the term 'communication'. There is nothing in this model to suggest that the significance ascribed to a performance by one attendee is in any way related to the significance ascribed to it by any other attendees, or by the performer. The inference is that significance is ascribed individually; and if significance is ascribed differently by each individual, then it is misleading to suggest that this significance is 'communicated' from one individual to another. It is more accurate to say that each attendee - and each performer - forms their own 'interpretation' of a performance by ascribing significance to it through an interpretive, rather than a communicative, scenic relationship.

An Interpretive Relationship

It is the attendee's interpretive activity which gives the songpoetic performance relationship its essential character. Although songpoetic performance can be described as expressive in a limited sense, and involves elements of communication, it is first through the attendee's interpretation of what is expressed and what is communicated that the songpoetic performance relationship becomes significant, substantial and meaningful. This view is supported by trends in Nordic *visa* studies, exemplified by Frans Mossberg and Sven Kristersson. In his study of the artistry of *visa* performer Olle Adolphson, for instance, Mossberg presents an interpretive model of performance whereby the attendee applies their own 'unique interpretive apparatus' to their perceptions of a song, ascribing '*betydelse'* - significance, or substance - live during the performance (248). This tallies with the conclusion drawn

above that *betydelse* does not exist, either in the performer or the songtext, prior to the performance encounter. Similarly, Sven Kristersson's Orphic poetics explores how each attendee forms a unique, individual interpretation of a performance through the use of their 'interpretive imagination' (8-9). Kristersson stresses that attendees are 'participants' in a 'social relationship' rather than passive 'observers,' and that the interpretive activity through which they participate in this relationship is a creative act in its own right (130). The attendee's interpretive activity makes them '*medskapare'* - 'co-creators' - of the performance (278).

Kristersson's concept of *medskapare* highlights an important duality which arises when the term 'interpretation' is applied to song performance. Until now, the notion of interpretation has typically been used to refer to the singer's manifestation of the compositional material of a songtext as a live song; at the NSV, for instance, a singer was held to produce a '*tolkning*' - an interpretation - of a song through their performance (*vistolkning)*. This is linked to Sauter's notion of artistic communication outlined above, as it deals with the encoding of compositional material in the artistic forms of performance, and as such could be called the performer's 'artistic interpretation'. The interpretation engaged in by the attendee, on the other hand, is of a different character. The interpretive activity through which the attendee ascribes significance to their perceptions of a performance, as in Sauter's symbolic communication, can be understood as an exercise in 'hermeneutic interpretation', the object of which is the derivation of meaning or *betydelse* from the performance activity. Looked at in this way, the live song becomes the point of contact at which these two different forms of interpretation come together: the consummation of the performance relationship, if you like.

Herein lies this study's definition of songpoetic performance. Songpoetic performance can be understood as an interpretive relationship of attention between performers and individual attendees. The performer participates in this relationship by creating live songs based on their artistic interpretation of compositional songtexts, as well as through their direct rhetorical addresses to the attendees. The attendee participates in this relationship by attending to and interpreting hermeneutically the live songs and addresses of the performer. On the basis of this definition, this study will proceed in the following section to analyse the role of the attendee within the performance relationship in greater detail, exploring the reasons why attendees enter into a performance relationship, the ways in which a live song can be hermeneutically significant for them, as well as the mechanisms of the attendee's interpretive process.

Section B (i) The Attendee

The following section develops an understanding of the role of the attendee within the songpoetic performance relationship by considering the ways in which participation in this relationship can be considered meaningful or valuable; this leads into an examination of the mechanics whereby attendees derive value from songpoetic performance. The analysis opens by identifying the attendee, as opposed to the performer, as the arbiter of value in songpoetic performance. This moves the discussion onto the motives behind the attendee's participation in the performance relationship: a transactional model, whereby the attendee attends to a performance in expectation of deriving value from it, is contrasted with a model of participation based on the performer's scenic presence. Within the framework of this transactional model, a distinction is then made between two forms of value - the subjective, and the ludic - before a scale is drawn up which models the derivation of these forms of value from participation in the performance relationship. On the basis of this scale, some concluding remarks link the attendee's degree of participation in the performance relationship with their ability to derive value from it, as well as on the relationship between entertainment and art in songpoetic performance.

Towards an Attendee-Centred Understanding of Performance

Throughout the twentieth century, there was a tendency in the dominant schools of performance theory to focus on the relationship between the performer and the performance activity. The relationship between the performance activity and the attendee was considered secondary, if it was considered at all. The theories of Stanislavsky provide a typical example: his acting system begins with the actor's

‘mind, will and feeling’, which is channelled through the performance activity of the ‘role’ towards the play’s ‘supertask’ (Whyman 40-42). Here, the attendee is held outside the fiction of the performance, beyond an imaginary fourth wall between the stage and the auditorium, leading some critics to remark that Stanislavsky’s methods ‘are only for the actor, not the audience’ (Hornby qtd. in Rynell 30). This has been taken further by the Method Acting approach, which purports to present attendees, not with a performance, but with ‘real living within a set of imaginary circumstances’ (Brunetti 1-4). Here, the value of performance is thought to reside in the fidelity of the performer to the inner ‘truth’ of the drama; or, as in Brunetti’s adaptation of Method Acting for singers, to the inner truth of the song. In all of these cases, the performer is the locus of performance, and the attendee is situated on its periphery.

The attendee-centred approach taken here diverges from these theories by focussing on the other half of the equation: the relationship between the performance activity and the attendees. The development of an attendee-centred approach follows from the foregoing statement that the performance relationship is essentially interpretive. If, as claimed above, songpoetic performance first becomes meaningful through the attendee’s hermeneutic interpretation of the performance activity, then an analysis of the attendee’s interpretation of the performance activity must precede and frame any consideration of the role of the performer. This line of analysis can be traced back directly, through four generations, to the acting theories of Bertolt Brecht.[7] Brecht’s theories revolve around the impact of the theatrical experience upon the attendees. He suggested, for example, that the success of the modern

[7] The author of this study was a student of Hanne Juul at the NSV, who was a student of Torsten Föllinger, who was a renowned German-language interpreter of Brecht’s songs. Föllinger’s pedagogical approach bore close resemblance to that of Brecht, as well as to the song pedagogy of Berliner Ensemble stalwart Gisela May (Järleby 155-156).

theatre should be measured by its ability to interest the spectator in the world around them, and, ultimately, to affect change in that world (Unwin 5). Here, it is the attendee, rather than the performer, who is the arbiter of the value of performance.

Building on Brecht's foundation, attendee-centred approaches to performance have gained ground since the turn of the century in what could be described as a broad discursive shift. Michael Eigtved, for example, writes that the whole purpose of performance analysis is to investigate what value an attendee can derive from their experience of a theatrical event (15). In a similar manner, Jon Foley Sherman introduces his performance ethics by considering the attendee's 'world of perception', and how this is altered by the attention they train upon the performance activity (27). By framing its discussion of the role of the singer around the attendee's derivation of value from the performance relationship, this thesis makes its own small contribution to this discursive shift.

Motivations to Participate in the Performance Relationship

In considering the attendee's derivation of value from the performance relationship, it is useful to begin by examining what it is that induces an attendee to participate in this relationship in the first place. One model, which has a long history and has given rise to fierce debate, suggests that the attention of the attendees, and thereby their participation, is secured through the performer's exercise of a particular quality known as 'stage presence'. It is worth considering the development of this concept in some detail, as it contains a microcosm of the shift from a performer-centric to an attendee-centric understanding of performance outlined above.

The classical idea of stage presence is that of a blind force, not unlike gravity, which pulls attendees into the orbit of the performer. This is described by Sherman, for example, as ‘something about performers that makes attendants react with fascination and attraction’ (2), and by Goodall as a mysterious quality with ‘connotations of divinity and the supernatural’ which enables performers to attract and hold attention (cover copy). This view attracted criticism, however, for its conception of presence as something unknowable, as an ‘unsolvable mystery’ (Sherman 32), prompting a number of scholars to attempt a ‘demystification’ of stage presence in the latter half of the twentieth century (Goodall 9). One prominent example is the work of Eugenio Barba, who sought to relate presence to the physical energy of the performer’s body. He viewed ‘scenic bios’, or presence, as deriving from the exercise of a set of predominantly physical skills underpinning the performance activity, each of which could be cultivated by the individual actor (qtd. in Sherman 34). For Barba, ‘pre-expressive’ stage presence, as the result of rigorous training, is what makes performances ‘compelling’ for attendees, and attracts their attention.

In more recent scholarship, there has been a turning away from the view of presence as a skill or attribute of the performer. This is, in part, a reaction to the way in which this view removes agency from the attendees in the performance relationship. Sherman notes, for instance, that the twentieth century vocabulary of presence was one of ‘uni-directional power’ - attendees are ‘compelled’, ‘commanded’, ‘captured’ and ‘struck’ by performers; their attention is not given freely, but taken from them (14). The suggestion that the performer’s scenic presence gives them the power to control the attention of their attendees is clearly untenable; for, as Johan Huizinga

points out, the ‘first characteristic’ of any cultural interaction is that it is engaged in voluntarily, on the basis of free will (35).

In contemporary notions of presence, however, this valid criticism has come to obscure the fact that the physical presence of the performer is undoubtedly an important factor in attracting the attention of the attendees and *inviting* them to enter into a performance relationship. Notions of performer presence can, to an extent, be rehabilitated by couching them in the language of participation rather than of command. At the NSV, for instance, Ruth Wilhelmina Meyer taught that the physical *gestalt* of the performer alone, divorced from any performance activity, sends important visual signals to the attendee about the *‘troverdighet’* of the performance (Meyer). *Troverdighet* means, literally, the quality of being worth believing in, but in this context, could be taken to mean the quality of being worth paying attention to. Here, the performer, through their use of the body, makes a pitch for the attendee’s attention, issues a wordless invitation to them to enter into a performance relationship. As Meyer suggests, whether or not the attendees consent to give their attention does to an extent depend on the skill and competence with which this physical appeal is made, or, in other words, on the stage presence of the performer.

Whilst acknowledging the importance of the performer’s physical appeal to the attendees, it should be recognised that this is but one of a range of factors which influences the attendee’s participation in the performance relationship. This is in line with contemporary performance discourse which frames presence as a quality of the attendee’s experience of performance, as in Willmar Sauter’s recent *Aesthetics of Presence*. Sauter describes presence as manifesting itself in a ‘many-layered

relationship between appearance and beholder' (9-11), which is broadly similar to this study's conception of the interpretive relationship between the performance activity and the attendee. However - as with Sauter's use of the term 'symbolic communication' above - it can be questioned whether this term 'presence' is the most appropriate word to describe this web of relationships. 'Presence' is, after all, a binary concept, referring to a 'fact or condition' (Merriam-Webster); presence is either present, or it is not. This makes the term ill-suited to describe a web of dynamic relationships. In attempting to define complicated aesthetic experiences in terms of the attendee's 'feeling of presence', it can be argued that Sauter stretches the term too far (17).

One way of continuing this debate whilst leaving the term 'presence' to one side is to frame the attendee's participation in the performance relationship as essentially *transactional*, by suggesting that an attendee participates in expectation of being able to derive some form of value in return. This builds on the concept of 'economies of attention', introduced in Sherman's recent contribution to the discourse of presence, which he uses to analyse the distribution of attention within a performance (12-15). Sherman notes that the attendee 'pays' attention, which is to say pays for something with their attention; and not just with their attention, but with their time and money as well. Hanne Juul at the NSV taught that, since attendees give of their time in order to attend to a performance, the performer is under an obligation to ensure that the attendee's experience of performance is worthwhile (*vistolkning*). The attendee's participation in the songpoetic performance relationship can therefore be conceived of as a transaction which weighs up, on the one hand, the attendee's

time, money and attention; and the value which the attendee is able to derive from their experience of performance on the other.

The Value of Songpoetic Performance

Developing this transactional model into a fully-fledged theory of the value of songpoetic performance requires a more detailed interrogation of the notion of 'value'. In considering what, as Eigtved puts it, the attendee may hope to 'get out of a performance' (15), this thesis identifies two forms of value, two distinct ways in which songpoetic performance can be meaningful or valuable for attendees: the ludic, and the subjective. Ludic value is here thought to relate to the inherent value of participation in the performance relationship; subjective value to value which is specific to the individual attendee.

The notion of ludic value rests on the principle that participation in a songpoetic performance relationship is inherently valuable. This is an idea which was propagated by cultural historian Johan Huizinga in his seminal work *Homo Ludens*, which first introduced the adjective 'ludic', derived from the latin '*ludus',* meaning 'to play'. Huizinga's central idea is that there is an element of play which is found in, and characterises, every form of cultural interaction, from poetry and music to religion and jurisprudence. He defines play - 'cultural play' just as well as the play of children, and even animals - as occurring 'outside of the process of the satisfaction of needs and desires', as an expression of freedom, as 'freedom itself' (35-37). Accordingly, he viewed participation in play as valuable for its own sake, as possessing a form of ludic value (45). Whilst Huizinga does not discuss performance at length, this ludic element is clearly represented in our performance lexicon: we 'play' music, we go to

the theatre to see a ‘play’, actors have historically been referred to as ‘players’. The inherent ludic value of play is manifest in the NSV’s term ‘*spilleglede’*, which was used to mean ‘the joy of performing music’, but translates literally as ‘the joy of playing’.

Huizinga’s theories can be adapted in order to frame songpoetic performance as a game of interpretation, engaged in by performers and attendees. Here, the rules of the game are that the performers present the attendees with a live song, derived from the performer’s artistic interpretation of a songtext, which the attendees then interpret hermeneutically in relation to their own inner lives. The game ends with applause, before beginning again with the introduction of a new song. This game fulfils each of Huizinga’s four definitions of play: that participation is voluntary; that all parties remain conscious of the fact that they are playing; that the play occurs within clearly defined boundaries of space and time, sequestered from the outside world; and that it is repeatable (35-37). Looked at in this way, the attendee can be seen to derive a form of ludic value just from playing this game, separate from any subjective value which they may derive as a result of their participation. The characteristics of this ludic value are explored in more detail in the discussion of the scale of relevance, below.

Subjective value, in this connection, refers to the value which each individual attendee derives from their participation in a performance relationship which is specific to them, which can only be understood in relation to their own personality, experiences, and value systems. To put this into a formula, it is the value which results from the layering of the individual attendee’s hermeneutic interpretation of a

performance over their phenomenological experience of human life. Whilst the term was originally used in classical economics to highlight the discrepancy between the price of an object and its value to the individual consumer (Ricardo), the use of the term here is rooted in the Swedish concept of '*beröring'*. In Swedish performance discourse, the attendee who is able to derive subjective value from a performance, who experiences their interpretation of that performance as significant to their own life, is said to have been *berörd* - touched, or moved - by the performance (Kjellson 27, Fagéus 15, Kristersson 56).

The subjective value which results from *beröring* manifests itself in practice by exerting an influence upon the inner life of the attendee. At the NSV, for instance, Sture Ekholm taught that a moving performance can induce attendees to 'see things in a new way, think differently, feel differently, and act differently' (Ekholm). This can be interpreted to mean that songpoetic performance can broaden and enrich the attendee's relationship to themselves, to others, and to their environment; as Viglietti suggests, song performances can 'awaken a consciousness which deviates from the norm… (and) enrich the listener emotionally' (qtd. in Rasmussen 180). This enriching, this refining, of the individual's relationship to themselves and the world, can reasonably be said to possess an inherent subjective value, in that it enriches the attendee's experience of human life itself.

According to the philosophy of performance developed at the NSV, this influence of the live song upon the inner lives of the attendees represents the central purpose and objective of songpoetic performance. Hanne Juul taught, for instance, that 'it is paramount that you reach people, move people (*beröra*) with your song' (Juul). At

the school, every sort of technical proficiency was held to be a means to this end, rather than an end in itself, and every aspect of the singer's training and preparation was framed by this overarching goal. One of the NSV's most important pedagogical innovations was the creation, in *vistolkning*, of a forum where the highly individual experience of being moved by the performance of a song could be shared, discussed, experimented with, and related to the specific creative devices of the song performer's art.

This can be seen in practice in the way in which sessions of *vistolkning* typically began with an indifferent performance, unengaging for the attendees, and ended, by way of a series of pedagogical interventions, with a performance of the same song material, by the same singer, which at least some of those present experienced as moving. NSV pedagogue Ola Sandström, for example, describes four different *vistolkning* performances, with four radically different interventions, each of which led to an experience of *beröring* (Sandström). Regardless of whether the intervention related to the singer's imaginative activity, voice production, emotional commitment, or even their guitar playing, Sandström contends that the end result was the same: the performance became moving. The attendee's ability to be moved, to derive subjective value from their participation in the performance relationship, was thus held to be the measure of the success of an intervention, and the success of a performance.

At the NSV, there was, however, a tendency to consider the generation of subjective value to be the *sole* object of songpoetic performance. Whilst this may be more true in some songpoetic traditions, such as the Nordic *visa,* it is manifestly not the case

for others, such as in popular song, where the ludic value of participation plays a much greater role. Rather, as the following passages seek to demonstrate, it is in the combination of ludic and subjective value, and the shifting balance between them, that the essential value of songpoetry resides.

The Scale of Relevance

These notions of ludic and subjective value can be integrated into a wider model of the songpoetic performance relationship using the NSV's concept of '*angelägenhet',* which is translated here as 'relevance'. This term was used by the school's current director Maud Lindström to convey the degree of importance or urgency which the attendee ascribes to a performance, as well its perceived relevance to their own inner lives (Lindström). This concept is useful here because it is not a static, binary term like '*beröring'*, which refers to an end result, but rather a dynamic term which refers to a relationship between variables. This is in line with the broader drive in this thesis from a situational to a relational understanding of performance.

Relevance, according to Ola Sandström, can be conceived of as a 'scale', running parallel to the scale of participation outlined in Section A (Sandström). On the one end of this scale, the performance is completely irrelevant to the attendee, no attention is paid to it, no value derived from it, no performance relationship is established. On the other, the performance is experienced as life-changing and epoch-defining, full attention is given, and participation is total. It can even be suggested that at the far end of this scale lies songpoetic performance as spiritual experience. This is implicit in Sven Kristersson's remark that songpoetic performance can link a 'mystical-religious aspect of human life with a concrete

scenic, literary and musical expression' (340). It is also evident in Mossberg's portrayal of songpoetic performance as 'the most potent expression of the will of the individual to achieve communion with that which is greater than itself' (62).

Movement from left to right along this scale can be understood with reference to the concept of '*angelägenhetsgrader'*, or 'degrees of relevance', which has recently gained currency in Swedish performance discourse (Vallgårda qtd. in Bjerstedt 98, Gårdfeldt 87, Sandström). A model of four degrees of relevance is expressed graphically in the diagram below.

The Scale of Relevance

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0 INTEREST ENJOYMENT UNDERSTANDING SIGNIFICANCE 1

Fig. 1 The Scale of Relevance

At the first degree of relevance, 'interest', the attendee pays superficial attention to the performance activity and is entertained, or at least not bored, by it. At 'enjoyment', the second, the attendee derives pleasure from the performance relationship. An attendee who is able to construct a hermeneutic interpretation of the of the live song is here thought to have moved to the third degree of relevance, 'understanding'; whilst a fourth degree of relevance, 'significance', is reserved for those attendees who are able to relate their hermeneutic interpretation of the performance activity to their own inner lives, as in the formula of subjective value given above. Looking at this scale, it is evident that the first two degrees of relevance

- ‘interest’ and ‘enjoyment’ - relate to the ludic value of performance, and the latter two - ‘understanding’ and ‘significance’ - relate to subjective value, to *beröring.*

This model can be used to explore the ways in which ludic and subjective value are intertwined in songpoetic performance by making an intervention in the perennial debate as to whether songpoetic performance is a form of art, or of entertainment. Historically, as Hanne Juul points out, most songpoetic traditions have fallen between these two stools (Juul). Performers of the Nordic *visa*, for example, have fought, unsuccessfully, for the recognition of their practice as an art form for more than a century (Rhedin 150); and yet on the other hand have struggled to integrate into the ‘heavily-commercialised entertainment industry’, precisely because of the more ‘artistic’ qualities of their work (Rasmussen 259). Similarly, in the Anglophone world, there is an ongoing and heated debate around the literary value of the popular music lyric, exemplified by the mixed response to the awarding of the Nobel Prize for Literature to songpoet Bob Dylan in 2016 (Borgström 29-30).

Sture Ekholm, however, when asked whether *visa* was an art form or a form of entertainment, replied laconically that he ‘didn’t see the difference’, and that ‘entertainment is art that you can understand’ (Ekholm). What this implies is that the whole entertainment-art debate revolves around a false dichotomy. Looking at the scale of relevance, it can be seen that interest, enjoyment, and the ludic value which they represent correspond to songpoetic performance as a form of entertainment; whilst understanding, significance, and subjective value correspond to songpoetic performance as an art form. Here, art and entertainment are by no means exclusive. It is fully possible for an attendee to be interested in, to enjoy, to understand, and to

derive significance from a performance of the most banal pop ballad, as well as the most refined classical song. Indeed, one of the most striking aspects of songpoetic performance, and one which has sustained it as a form of cultural practice for so long, is that it combines these two forms of value so effectively: it entertains and it moves, it blends the subjective with the ludic, the artistic with the pleasurable, the sublime with the vulgar, just as these elements are blended in human life itself.

Having said that, when the scale of relevance is viewed parallel to the scale of participation, it shows that the attendee can derive ludic, entertainment value from a performance at a lower degree of participation in the performance relationship than subjective, artistic value. This links in to Sherman's notion that the quality of an attendee's attention influences the quality of their perception of a performance (14). Building on Sherman's idea, it can be suggested that the attainment of each degree of relevance requires the application of more concentrated attention in order for its value to be realised. Thus, 'interest' demands only passive observation; 'enjoyment' requires a level of critical awareness, an appraisal of quality; 'understanding' is the result of an active process of interpretation; whilst 'significance' can only be achieved through the engagement of the attendee's subjective inner life.

The upshot of this is that 'understanding' and 'significance' - as well as the subjective value they represent - are reserved for what Rasmussen describes as 'the listening audience' (201); those attendees who are paying concentrated attention and participating actively in the performance relationship. This is corroborated by Sven Kristersson, who writes that, in order to derive subjective value from the performance relationship, it is necessary for the attendee to 'open the senses', to 'participate', and

not ‘passively observe’ (92, 130). What this implies is that, firstly, songpoetry becomes an art form as well as a form of entertainment only when the attendees are actively engaged in interpreting the performance. It also shows how the degree of participation in the performance relationship is directly proportional to the value which the attendee is able to derive from it.

These principles can be illustrated with reference to *vistolkning,* for this form of instruction did not simply teach singers how to hold moving performances; it taught attendees how to be moved by a performance as well. Students who were not performing were instructed to ‘listen actively’ at all times, often for several hours at a stretch (Juul). My own experience, and the experience of many of my fellow students, was that, although it was draining and demanding to maintain this level of attention for so long, the very intensity of our participation heightened our experience of the performances of our classmates. Tellingly, when former students were asked about their recollections of *vistolkning,* almost all of those who were interviewed referred to performances they had witnessed, rather than those they had delivered (student interviews). Many also stressed how valuable their experiences of these performances had been for them, not only as performers, but as people. This suggests that these interviewees had derived a high level of subjective value from the *vistolking* performances, out of all proportion to the artistic qualities of the performances themselves - which, given that they were held as part of a pedagogical process, often left much to be desired. This subjective value was created, not by the performer, but through the attendee’s intense participation in the performance relationship.

Section B (ii) The Attendee's Interpretive Process

The remainder of this section explores in detail the mechanisms whereby attendees derive subjective value from songpoetic performance. A corresponding investigation into the derivation of ludic value falls outside the scope of this study, for the reason that this relies more on intersubjective, circumstantial factors, as well as that most irreducible of variables: taste. This could, however, provide a fruitful topic for further research.

The point of departure for this exploration becomes clear when the model of the scale of relevance is linked to the formula for subjective value given above.[8] Putting these two together, it can be said that 'understanding', on the scale, is achieved through the attendee's hermeneutic interpretation of the performance activity, and 'significance' through the layering of this interpretation over the attendee's phenomenological experience of human life. From this it follows that 'significance', by its nature, depends on 'understanding'. In other words, if an attendee is to derive subjective value from a songpoetic performance, they must first form a hermeneutic interpretation of the performance activity. The following analysis looks at the ways in which the attendee constructs a hermeneutic interpretation of the performance activity in songpoetic performance, before considering the ways in which they can relate this to their phenomenological experience of human life.

In line with the broader thrust of this thesis towards a dynamic, relational understanding of songpoetic performance, the first step in this analysis is to shift the

[8] Subjective value was formulated above as resulting from 'the layering of the attendee's hermeneutic interpretation of the performance activity over their phenomenological experience of human life'.

focus of enquiry away from the notion of a fixed ‘interpretation’, to concentrate instead on the attendee’s participation in an ‘interpretive process’. This runs parallel to developments in literary hermeneutics charted by Tomasz Kalaga. Kalaga describes a discursive shift from essentialist approaches, which aim to ‘unveil’ and ‘recover’ a concealed authorial message in a text and thereby reconstrue its ‘meaning’, to theories which place greater emphasis on ‘the hermeneutic processes which are put into play in the act of interpretation’ (1-2). The main difference between a fixed, essentialist interpretation and the interpretive process invoked here is that an interpretation is an end product, existing independently of the object of interpretation, whereas the attendee’s interpretive process is integral to the wider performance relationship. Songpoetic performance simply does not afford the attendee the time or opportunity to construct stable, free-standing interpretations of every song. This means that the derivation of subjective value depends principally on the attendee’s participation in an interpretive process within the performance relationship.

In scientific terms, this interpretive process can be thought of as a series of interwoven sensory-cognitive processes within the brain of the individual attendee. An examination of these processes would therefore seem to invite the application of a cognitive analytical approach inspired by what McConachie and Hart identify as the ‘cognitive turn’ in literary and performance studies (vii-xiv). This line of thinking seeks to apply advances in neuroscience to academic enquiry in the humanities, based on the claim that ‘science - specifically the science of the brain - is now poised to respond afresh to central concerns of human life usually reserved for the liberal arts: consciousness, language, art, morality, love’ (Hauk qtd. in Ty 205-206). It is questionable, however, whether the interpretive process of the attendee admits

of meaningful cognitive analysis, given its complexity. As the following passages will show, interpretive activity occurs on many levels simultaneously, below the threshold of consciousness, and extends over a far greater timespan than the performance itself. Whilst it may theoretically be possible to relate such a tangled web of perceptions and relationships to concrete neurological processes, such an undertaking falls far outside the ambitions of the present study.

This analysis seeks to understand the attendee's interpretive process in relation, not to the cognitive processes of the attendee, but to the performance activity. The analytical approach applied to this task is, as outlined in the introduction, one of deconstruction: the attendee's interpretive process is deconstructed below into its constituent interpretive activities. As well as offering insight into the attendee's derivation of subjective value from songpoetic performance, this lays the ground for the discussion in Section C of the singer's role within the performance relationship by linking the attendee's interpretive activities to concrete elements of the singer's performance activity.

This deconstructive analysis proceeds from an initial division of the attendee's interpretation of the live song into three distinct areas of interpretation, here referred to as 'textual', 'supertextual', and 'subtextual'.[9] Textual interpretation describes the attendee's interpretation of a songtext's linguistic and musical compositions as they are represented in performance; supertextual interpretation covers the interpretation

[9] There is, unfortunately, no room in this thesis to consider the attendee's interpretation of the second form of performance activity - the use of the direct address. This admits of so many variations and permutations that it would be a fitting topic for a study of its own. The following model of the attendee's interpretation of the live song could, however, form the basis of such an analysis, with only minor alterations.

of narrative; and subtextual interpretation relates to the performer's physical and vocal embodiment of both text and supertext. To this will be added two further categories which relate to the framework within which these interpretive activities occur. These are 'pretext', referring to the attendee's interpretative activities in advance of the performance, and 'context', referring to the post-performance integration of the attendee's interpretation of performance with their experience of the phenomenal world. This forms a cross shaped model, depicted below.

Pre Performance	Performance	Post Performance
	SUPERTEXT	
PRETEXT	**TEXT**	**CONTEXT**
	SUBTEXT	

Fig. 2 Initial Deconstruction of the Attendee's Interpretive Process

The purpose of this model is to provide a framework within which to discuss the various levels of interpretive activity engaged in by the attendee. These five areas are treated separately in the following passages, leading into a discussion about how they integrate into the broader interpretive process within the performance relationship.

The Attendee and the Linguistic Text

'Text', at the centre of the cross, is the starting point for this analysis, for the reason that the songtextual composition is the most stable, objective factor involved in the attendee's interpretation of the performance activity, and therefore provides a firm

basis for further investigation. A songtext, as defined above, consists of two parallel compositions which are integrated in performance but treated separately here: the linguistic, and the musical. The linguistic text is discussed first, since language, as Michael Eigtved remarks, refers to the phenomenal world beyond the performance space, and is therefore the more concrete and objective of the two (qtd. in Ståhl 5).

The Formalistic Interpretation of Language

In order to approach the attendee's interpretation of the linguistic text, it is important at the outset to distinguish between interpretation of the forms of the language, and interpretation of its semantic content. It is the former which is under discussion here, the latter reserved for the passages on supertextual interpretation, to follow. The interpretation of a text's linguistic form is the main concern of a branch of literary theory known as formalism. As Jim Hansen recounts, formalism fell out of favour in the 1950's and 60's, when it came to be viewed as overly simplistic, but a renewed interest has been shown by some scholars in recent years (663). In his 2018 article, for example, Herman Rapaport acknowledges that 'naive, direct references' to language are inadequate as a basis for literary interpretation, but seeks to open a space for direct linguistic analysis to contribute towards a broader 'speculative' mode of criticism (Rapaport). Building on this neo-formalist view, the following passages suggest that the attendee's interpretation of a songtext's linguistic form is a fundament which underlies their more involved interpretive activities. In order to explore this topic in greater detail, the linguistic forms of the songtext are here deconstructed further into four categories: words, grammatical structures, thought structures, and literary devices.

The importance of the individual word to the attendee's interpretation of songpoetic performance is often undervalued. Thomas Hemsley, for example, writes of a tendency amongst classical singers to become so concerned with their representation of a songtext's music that individual words are rendered incomprehensible, and thereby meaningless (83-89, 111-113). This is hardly unique to classical singing: two of the most common shortcomings observed during *vistolkning* at the NSV were the dropping of consonants and the flattening of vowels, which, as Sture Ekholm was at pains to point out, made it difficult for the attendee to understand what was being sung (*vistolkning*). The quality of diction was, in general, so poor, that many *vistolkning* instructors requested a paper copy of the linguistic text to assist them with basic comprehension. This is a greater problem than it may seem, for, as Sven Kristersson points out, a song-poem is a content-rich form where 'every word is significant' (137): if the attendee is unable to comprehend individual words, then large parts of this significance are lost to them.

Beyond the basic comprehension of words, it was a tenet of both Hanne and Sture at the NSV, as well as voice-pedagogues Berry and Rodenburg, that the individual word possesses an 'integrity' (Rodenburg 38); a resonance for the attendee which moves beyond its semantic definitions. Sture, for instance, demanded constantly that students give individual words in the text their full articulatory 'value' (*vistolkning*). Hanne took pains to make students aware of the onomatopoeic qualities of words, which Cicely Berry suggests can evoke a primitive 'physical response' in the attendee (20). An instructive example of this can be drawn from a session of *vistolkning*, much of which was devoted to work on the phrase '*nyss kysst'*, meaning 'recently kissed'. Having rushed these words in the initial performance, the singer

was helped to open enough space within the musical phrase for the long continuant consonants ‘n’, ‘s’ and ‘sh’ to be fully pronounced, in order, ‘to manifest the sensual qualities of the language’. When executed successfully, this transformed a somewhat bland description of a bridge in Stockholm into a charged and physically intimate encounter between two lovers. This focus on what Berry calls the ‘muscularity’ of the words imbued them with resonance and power (43).

Yet it is not just words, but, as Cicero once put it, ‘words and their arrangement’, which form the raw material of a linguistic text (234). This is evident in an exercise in text interpretation which the author of this study has adapted from Cicely Berry, wherein the practitioner first speaks only the verbs of the text, then only the nouns, only the prepositions, and so on, focussing the imagination on, or even physically embodying, each word (Berry 110-114). This exercise reveals how each of the different parts of speech contribute different qualities to the attendee’s experience of the language. Applying this to the first line of one of my own songtexts, for instance, the nouns ‘place’, ‘guns’ and ‘battle’ set the scene; the verbs ‘comes’, ‘burn’ and ‘rage’ indicate the quality of action and movement which animates it’; the pronoun ‘he’ brings the first suggestion of character; and the adjectives ‘blazing’ and ‘red’ introduce colour and nuance. Here, as well as evaluating the words themselves, the attendee also interprets their grammatical arrangement as parts of speech within a sentence; this provides vital clues as to the ways in which the semantic content of individual words interact.

The arrangement of these parts of speech into clausal and periodic structures is a further aspect of grammar which shapes the attendee’s interpretation of the linguistic

text. Berry, for instance, held that the varying proportions of the grammatical structures within a dramatic text provide ‘a very useful guide’ as to the quality of the thoughts which motivate the speech (107). Sture Ekholm’s teaching offers a practical example of this: he frequently exhorted students to ‘sing the punctuation’ of a songtext, and in particular to ‘sing to the full stop’ at the end of a period (*vistolkning)*. This helped to make the grammatical structures clear and their semantic content more comprehensible, but also, more importantly, served to activate the silence between the words, and thereby situate the language within the wider thought processes to which it gives expression. The attendee’s interpretation of grammatical structures can, therefore, be thought of as bridging the gap between language and thought.

The attendee’s interpretation of thought processes and thought structures is, however, subtly different from their interpretation of grammatical structures. Whilst the two frequently overlap, developments of thought can occur on a sub-clausal level - even within individual words - or be protracted over several periods. This can be seen in Berry’s ‘ladders of thought’ which extend across whole Shakespearean soliloquies (89); she analyses in detail the structures of thoughts within these speeches in order to ‘plot the emotional state of a character’ (108). Whilst songpoetic texts do not often exhibit the elaborate patterns of thought which can be found in Shakespeare, Berry’s ‘stool’ exercise for quantifying thought structures remains effective when applied to songpoetry. This involves placing two stools opposite one another, two metres apart, sitting on one of them and beginning to sing the text, then pausing to walk over and sit on the other every time a new thought occurs (104-110). The physical movement of the performer in this exercise runs parallel to the

interpretive activity of the attendee as they negotiate, thought by thought, the cognitive structures of the text. The attendee's appraisal of the balance and movement of thought provides them with vital information about what Rodenburg calls the narrator's 'process of thinking', which in turn informs their interpretation of the narrator's character and their role within the narrative (129-130).

Songpoetry, like other forms of poetry, makes extensive use of literary and rhetorical devices. For reasons of space, this study cannot examine the influence of each particular device on the attendee's interpretive process in detail, but must confine itself to noting that the use of these devices in songpoetic performance serves two broad functions. Firstly, as former NSV student and current professor of literature Eva Borgström points out, rhetorical devices are used to assist the attendee in comprehending and interpreting a live song at the first hearing; she emphasises the role of repetition, antithesis, and rhyme in particular (Borgström). The importance of repetition, for example, can be seen in one session of *vistolkning* where the singer, performing a popular song where the refrain was repeated numerous times, was asked to sing each repetition with a different mood. The result was that each chorus became not merely a repetition, but an opportunity for the attendees to focus their interpretive attention anew upon the same key phrases, appreciating their various shades of meaning, and enriching their overall interpretation of the song.

Rhetorical devices are not employed in songpoetic performances to persuade or influence the listener directly, as in rhetorical speech. Instead, like thought structures, they function as a window into the narrative world of the text, giving the attendee insight into the song characters' motivations and the relationships between

them. Berry's analyses in *The Actor and the Text* are again instructive here: she highlights, for instance, the way in which the metre 'enhances the meaning' in passages from Romeo and Juliet (55-61). In particular, she notes that the name 'Romeo' sometimes takes a full metric stress, and at other times is subservient to the sense stress, reflecting the conflict between Romeo's identity as Juliet's lover, and his position as a member of a rival family (55-61). Hanne Juul at the NSV also highlighted this link between metre and narrative during *vistolkning*, by asking singers to speak a line, then sing it immediately afterwards, preserving the spoken metre. Her point was that these metric stress patterns helped the attendee perceive the words of the text not just as language, but as speech, which implies a speaker, which implies a rhetorical situation, which implies a narrative. This is one example of how the attendee's interpretation of rhetorical devices can provide them with a way to probe beneath the surface of a linguistic text.

The attendee's interpretation of words, grammar, thoughts and devices lays the foundation for their further interpretive process. The fundamental importance of these interpretive activities is evident in Birgitte Abu-Asab's study of trends in Swedish theatre, which demonstrates what happens when this formalistic interpretation of language is impeded. Abu-Asab's interviewees describe how a fashion for naturalistic speech took hold in the 1960's and 70's. Practitioners turned away from the clarity of diction cultivated by previous generations and focused instead on achieving 'authenticity' through *inlevelse*, or establishing a connection with the inner life of the character (Henrikksen qtd. in Abu-Asab 11).[10] This resulted

[10] It is worth noting the parallels with the contemporary singer-songwriter's 'aesthetic of authenticity' mentioned above.

in ‘an impoverishment of the scenic language’, where actors attracted criticism for ‘mumbling’; critics complained that they struggled to understand the speech, and, consequently, to follow the development of the narrative (7-14). Here, the attendees’ whole interpretive process was stymied by their inability to interpret the language of the play.

It can be argued that songpoetry is even more dependent upon the attendee’s formalistic interpretation of language than theatrical performance. As Sven Kristersson points out, songpoetry is an ‘ascetic’ form, which occurs on an ‘empty stage’, and does not regularly make use of props, scenery, costumes or other actors to represent the narrative of the text (131). Lacking these physical aids, the role of language in the construction of songpoetic narrative becomes more prominent; the attendee’s interpretation of the words, grammatical structures, thought structures and literary devices of the text form a correspondingly greater part of the raw material of narrative construction. The formalistic interpretation of language is therefore the first of the central interpretive activities which make up the attendee’s interpretive process in songpoetic performance.

The Attendee and the Musical Text

In songpoetic performance, the linguistic text is sung, not spoken, and is therefore experienced by the attendees not just as language, but as an integral part of the music of a live song. This links into a centuries-old debate about the relationship between the linguistic and musical texts in song performance. Within the classical tradition, for instance, Mozart’s claim in the 1700’s that ‘the words should be the obedient servant of the music’ (Meyer) was disputed in the 1800’s by exponents of

Bel Canto singing such as Gaetano Nava, who found that ‘the music has no other function than to express what arises from the words (qtd. in Hemsley 111). In the early 1900’s, classical practice again became more oriented around the musical score, for which language came to be viewed as a vehicle (Hemsley 84); before pedagogues such as Hemsley, May and Föllinger sought, in the latter half of the century, to re-assert the primacy of language in song (Järleby 155-156). More recently, a consensus has emerged that the musical and the linguistic aspects of a songtext are in fact ‘indissoluble’, springing, as Mossberg expresses it, from an ‘underlying textual-musical idea’ (183). Both Balk and Ståhl imagine this relationship as an axis, with musical development occurring along the vertical plane, linguistic development along the horizontal (37, Ståhl 15).

None of these perspectives, however, distinguish sufficiently between the attendee’s formalistic interpretation of the language of the songtext and their interpretation of its supertextual narrative. Rather than a linear relationship which sets up music and language as a duality, this study proposes a triangular relationship, with narrative at the point, and music and language at the base. This is an inversion of Mossberg’s ‘textual-musical idea’, suggesting that, instead of music and language springing from the narrative, the attendee interprets narrative from music and language. As NSV pedagogue Ruth Wilhelmina Meyer remarks, the words and the music ‘tell the same story’ (Meyer); in the telling of which ‘contrasting musical and textual elements underline and strengthen one another’ (Mossberg 183).

One example of this triangular relationship can be drawn from Kim Kowalke’s analysis of Kurt Weill’s musical setting of Brecht’s Alabama Song (69-73). Kowalke

highlights the ways in which Weill re-interpreted Brecht's linguistic text by linking concrete musical devices, such as the use of chromaticism or the expansion of melodic range, to the events unfolding in the narrative. It is clear in this example that there are three contrasting elements, not two: language, music, and narrative. Kowalke formulates the relationship between them succinctly when he suggests that Weill utilises 'the means of musical expression' in order to 'to establish contact between the text and what it is trying to express' (67).

In order to explore this relationship in more detail, it is therefore important to establish what these 'means of musical expression' consist of, and how they are interpreted by the attendee in the context of songpoetic performance. In approaching this topic, this thesis eschews the established division of the elements of music into melody, harmony, rhythm, and timbre. These categories have been developed as a way of understanding musical performance from the perspective of the performer, rather than the attendee, and are therefore rooted in the performer-centric discourse from which this study departs. From the attendee's perspective, Jimmy Ginsby's sugar-cake theory once again dictates that an attendee does not perceive the diverse ingredients of music individually, but rather experiences music as an integrated whole (Ginsby). This can be understood with reference to what Dunbar calls the 'predetermined temporal-spatial frameworks' which are established by the music (67). The implication here is that attendees experience music as movement or motion within alternative dimensions of time and space. The following passages deconstruct this idea in an attempt to arrive at an understanding of the basic elements which comprise the attendee's interpretation of the musical text in songpoetic performance.

The notion that an alteration of the attendee's perception of space and time occurs during songpoetic performance is widespread, and often linked to the experience of being moved or touched by a performance. In interviews with students from the NSV, for example, moving performances were described repeatedly as so absorbing that 'time and space were forgotten'; this is also the form of words chosen by music performance pedagogue Kjell Fagéus to describe the experience of a successful concert (15). Till argues that good music 'stops time, and makes us feel that we are living within a moment'; he contrasts regular, chronological time - 'kronos' - with musical, experiential time - 'kairos' (301). These descriptions, however, imply that musical time is static and stands in binary contrast to experiential time. This does not adequately describe the fluid, dynamic character of the dimensions of music.

In accordance with the broader shift in this thesis from a static to a dynamic understanding of songpoetic performance, the model of musical space-time developed here builds instead upon Balk's representation of musical time as a continuum. Balk writes that the musical illusion of time 'spans the complete continuum of time flow, from accelerated time, to real chronological time, to total suspension of time' (9). Here, Balk places the dimensions of music and those of physical experience in a dynamic relationship, rather than in contrast or opposition to one another. Whilst Balk's model of the dimensions of music has two layers - the musical and the physical - the attendee's experience of the alteration of time and space in songpoetic performance can better be understood with reference to *three* distinct temporal-spatial frameworks which are layered over one another in the attendee's interpretive process. Firstly, there is the actual space within which the

performance is held, as well as the chronological time which elapses during the performance, which could be called physical space-time. Secondly, there is the temporal-spatial dimensions of the music, which is the present topic of discussion. Lastly, there is the temporal-spatial framework of the supertextual narrative, to be discussed below.

It is important to note that these three layers are distinct from Michael Eigtved's conception of the three functions of music *within* the narrative. Eigtved suggests that music can be used to 'present ideas symbolically, to externalise feelings and intentions, and to act as an aural marker of time and space' (85). These can more accurately be thought of, however, not as functions of music, but of sound, and what Rasmussen calls 'sound effect', where there is an aural, rather than a verbal representation of the narrative (128). Music is here distinguished from sound by the presence of an independent temporal-spatial framework, distinct from that of the narrative.

Interpreting Musical Time, Space, and Movement

A full discussion of the layers of musical temporality would take this thesis beyond the bounds of songpoetry and into the domain of music, and so has been omitted from the present study. A rough deconstruction of the temporal dimensions of music into six different levels of rhythm can, however, be found in the appendix. There, it is suggested that the attendee's interpretation of musical time rests upon their interpretation of tempo, metre, the rhythms of the accompaniment, melodic rhythm, pulse - which Hemsley describes as the rhythm of musical phrase, consisting of breath units (171-181) - and harmonic rhythm. The interplay of musical events on

each of these levels is shown to create an alternative temporality for the attendees which can be both more fluid and more regimented than experiential time. This alternative temporality frames the attendee's whole experience of the live song, and as such exerts a powerful influence on the attendee's interpretive process. This provides a way of understanding the phenomenon of 'an alteration of time' experienced by attendees in songpoetic performance.

Running perpendicular to the attendee's interpretation of musical time is their interpretation of the dimensions of musical space. That music has a spatial dimension is evident from Morgan's suggestion that attendees perceive music as possessing a quality of 'volume', or 'density' (528). This is supported by Di Bona's remarks that attendees experience pitch as 'ascending or descending' through space, and that even rhythmic elements are perceived according to their 'distance' from one another (93). As these citations show, it is difficult to describe the experience of music on any level without employing spatial terminology.

There is a debate amongst musicologists about the extent to which the spatial dimension of music is what Macedo calls 'metaphorical' (qtd. in Di Bona 93) - a way of thinking about music - or what Andrew Kania calls 'imaginative' (157) - a way of perceiving it. This thesis holds, with Kania, that musical space is an 'imaginative' construct interpreted by the attendee from their direct perception of musical events, on the grounds that, as mentioned above, the alteration of space is a recurring theme in attendees' reports of their experience of songpoetic performance. During one of my own *vistolkning* performances, for example, an attendee remarked that it was as though a vast space had opened up around the stage, far larger than the

physical dimensions of the room. That this was a purely musical alteration of space, unrelated to the narrative, can be inferred from the fact that the majority of the narrative played out within a cramped prison cell. This demonstrates how the dimensions of musical space are layered over the scenes of the narrative, which are layered over the physical performance space, forming three layers of spatial awareness which frame the attendee's interpretive process.

As with musical temporality, a full deconstruction of the spatial dimensions of music falls outside the scope of this thesis. However, the appendix contains a brief exploration of the spatial characteristics of the musical parameter of pitch, and the arrangement of pitches into harmonic and melodic structures. This concludes that the attendee's interpretation of musical space is founded on their interpretation of individual pitches, of pitch relationships, and of tonality. Morgan describes the way in which these diverse interpretations of pitch are woven into an 'aggregate' or 'totality', which provides the attendee with an impression of the music's overarching spatial framework (529). This is then layered over the physical performance space and the attendee's interpretation of narrative scene to form the spatial framework of the attendee's interpretive process.

Just as with physical space and time, however, musical space and time are, in the last instance, 'inseparable' (Morgan 530). As Morgan writes, 'any meaningful concept of musical space must, at some level, incorporate the factor of musical time; and equally, a meaningful concept of musical time must incorporate that of musical space'. This study suggests that, as in Di Bona's metaphor of a musical journey invoked above, what unites the dimensions of space and time in music is the

perception of *movement.* This is not a literal movement - the only literal movement in music is the vibration of sound waves through the air - but musical movement interpreted and imagined by the attendee.

What is significant for the attendee's interpretive process is not the perception of movement itself, which is too subjective to measure and quantify, but rather the qualities which this movement is perceived as possessing, such as 'plodding', 'running' or flowing (Kania 157). One example of this are the Italian terms written into classical music scores describing the quality of movement which the composer wishes to convey, such as *agitato* (agitated), *animato* (animated) *or grazioso* (gracious). Moreover, self-contained parts of classical compositions are typically referred to as 'movements', and distinguished from one another by markings such as '*andante'* (at a walking pace), or '*allegro'* (brisk)*'* which describe the movement's quality. The widespread use of these terms indicates that the qualities of musical movement are defining for the attendee's experience of musical performance.

The impact of the attendee's interpretation of the qualities of musical movement upon their broader interpretive process will be explored in more detail in the passages below considering the relationship between music and narrative. At this point, the conclusion to be drawn is that the attendee's interpretation of the qualities of the movement of the melody of a live song through musical space-time is the second of the primary interpretive activities which make up the attendee's interpretive process in songpoetic performance.

The Attendee and the Supertext

Having discussed the interpretive activities pertaining to the formalistic interpretation of language and the interpretation of the qualities of musical movement, focus now turns to the apex of the triangle: the attendee's interpretation of narrative. Supertextual narrative is presented here as an imaginative construct established by the attendee through engagement in the textual interpretive activities considered above. The aspects of narrative which are derived from the interpretation of language are considered first, before the discussion moves on to the relationship between narrative and music.

Language and Supertext

The attendee's formalistic interpretation of language is the bedrock upon which narrative is constructed in songpoetic performance. As Peter Brook writes, language and words are 'small visible portions of a gigantic unseen formation' (15), implying that it is through language that narrative becomes visible. Corroborating this, Sven Kristersson holds that 'a linguistic text opens a world above the text' to the imagination of the listener (12). It is this 'world above the text' which is referred to here as the supertext. The following passages explore the mechanisms by which the attendee develops the textual interpretation of language into a supertextual interpretation of narrative.

The role of narrative in songpoetic performance is a new topic of academic enquiry. According to leading narratologist Peter Huhn, scholars of narratology have only recently taken an interest in printed poetry, which implies that both spoken poetry and songpoetry have also been neglected (18). One reason for this, suggested by

Du Plooy, is that short poetic forms have been thought to possess inherently ‘low narrativity’, being built instead around ‘aesthetic’, formal elements, such as the use of literary devices (10). This thesis seeks to challenge this view by suggesting that whilst it is true that the semantic content of a songtext or lyric poem is manifestly less than in other forms of writing - since fewer words are used - its corresponding narrativity is consequently *greater*. Precisely because less information is given semantically, there is greater scope for the attendee to interpret the implications of the semantic content of the text, and thereby to establish its narrative for themselves.

This claim builds on Du Plessias’ concept of the reader’s ‘creation of meaningful sequence by the negotiation of gap’ (qtd. in McHale 50). Here, the gaps are the interpretive space not covered by the semantic content of the text, which are greater in poetry and songpoetry than in prose. Negotiating this interpretive space through their interpretive process, attendees create ‘meaningful sequence’, which is to say, narrative. Moreover, in songpoetry, narrative derived from language is reinforced by both the musical composition and the performer’s embodiment of the narrator, as later passages will show. It can therefore be said that songpoetry is an artistic form with high and highly concentrated narrativity, where the attendee’s interpretation of narrative plays a central role. The brief investigation of this process included here will, it is hoped, provide a stimulus to further narratological research.

One consequence of the lack of scholarly engagement in this area is that established methods of narratological analysis are ill-suited to the consideration of songpoetry, having been designed for the analysis of printed prose texts. This is evident in the example given in Section A, where Lars Lönnroth’s model of communication,

borrowed from linguistics, was shown to be inadequate for a close analysis of the performance relationship. Rather than adapting existing narratological models to songpoetic performance, this analysis continues the deconstructive approach taken throughout this section, seeking to identify the basic elements of narrative as they are interpreted by the attendee.

The first step in this analysis is to establish a working definition of the concept of narrative; for, as Marie-Laura Ryan notes, even narratologists lack a definition which is ‘complete and self-sufficient’ (24). The definition employed in this thesis is deconstructive, derived from the basic grammatical division of language into parts of speech. When it is considered that nouns and adjectives refer to objects, verbs and adverbs to actions, pronouns to people, and prepositions to time and space, it becomes clear that language, through its grammatical properties alone, contains the building blocks from which all narrative is constructed: the interaction of objects and people in time and space. And yet, the sum total of all the interactions of objects and people in time and space described by the language of a text amounts only to its semantic content, and not its narrative, since the narrative also includes Brook’s ‘unseen formation’ which is inferred, rather than stated directly.

Narrative is here defined as the interactions of objects and people in time and space *implied* by the semantic content of a text. This is significant, because it suggests that neither the person who composed the text, nor the person who performs it, retains control over its narrative. Rather, in keeping with the broader discursive shift from a performer-centred to an attendee-centred understanding of performance, it follows that it is the attendee who extrapolates narrative from the semantic content of the

text. This approach provides an answer to Du Plooy's question as to whether narrativity resides in the text itself, the mediator of the text, or in its reception (4-5); it also gives substance to Sven Kristersson's principle that the attendee is the 'co-creator' of the performance (336).

On the basis of this definition, the attendee's supertextual interpretive activities are modelled here as expanding outwards from the semantic content of the text to establish four levels of narrative. These are: action, character, scene, and realm, or narrative universe. Action, here, refers to the sequence of applications of will or force implied by the semantic content of the text; character relates to the people, or other beings, whose existence within the narrative is suggested by the action; scene encompasses the physical or metaphysical environments through which these characters move; and realm describes the fictional universe from which all of the above are derived.

Narrative Action

In approaching the topic of narrative action, a distinction needs to be made at the outset between embodying an action, and describing it. In Swedish performance discourse, two distinct terms are used which makes this division clear: *'att gestalta'* means to embody, *'att berätta*' means to narrate, or describe (Strandberg qtd. in Järleby 289).[11] In songpoetic performance, the possibilities for the singer to physically embody the actions of the narrative are limited, since the performer's body is engaged in the act of singing, and often also of providing a musical

[11] In English, the corresponding terms 'epic' and 'dramatic' suggest themselves - Rhedin employs the Swedish '*episk'* and *'dramatisk'* in a similar capacity (171) - but these terms can be misleading as they have been widely used in other contexts, notably by Aristotle and Brecht (Järleby 288-289).

accompaniment. Operatic scenes, for example, are typically structured such that the singer embodies the action of the narrative when they are not called upon to sing; here, the singer is performing in a hybrid role, as what Balk calls a ‘singer-actor’ (ix). These passages deal, therefore, principally with *berättandet*, or the representation of narrative through speech, although the contribution of the singer’s vocal and physical *gestaltning* to the attendee’s interpretive process is a topic to which this study will return.

The leap from verb to action is a short one: if the performer sings ‘jump’, the attendee thinks ‘how high?’ Yet the attendee moves beyond the actions described directly in the text in their interpretation of the underlying action of the narrative. Exploring this distinction between verbal action and narrative action, Gunilla Gårdfeldt, who has taught at the NSV, applies Stanislavsky’s notion of ‘undertext’ to songpoetic performance. She suggests that a narrative action can be quantified by a single active verb (167-172); for instance, the line ‘I brought you some flowers’, could be quantified as an action by the verbs apologise, surprise, charm, or condole. For Gårdfeldt, it is this ‘undertext’, rather than the act of giving flowers, which constitutes the narrative action. The interpretive possibilities become clear at once: any of these four undertexts alter the significance of the act of giving flowers dramatically, thereby influencing the entire narrative superstructure. Since the undertext, by definition, is not stated, it follows that each attendee interprets narrative action individually. It can therefore be said that the first step in the attendee’s interpretation of the narrative of a live song is from stated action to implied action, or undertext.

Interpreting Character

In his discussion of the relation between script and scenic action, Eric Rynell notes that actions never occur in a vacuum, but depend on ‘situations and objectives’ (31-32). He finds that the two questions inherent in the consideration of an action are: ‘what is the situation’ within which the action occurs, and ‘what does the character want to achieve’ through their intervention. By considering these questions, the attendee begins the process of construing character and scene from narrative action.

Rynell’s thesis focused on theatrical performance, where one actor is typically taken to represent one character at a time; in songpoetic performance, where the singer is often the sole performer, the attendee’s interpretation of character is much more fluid. Notions of character in songpoetry begin with a primary character, the narrator. This is the person or being who performs the ‘narrative act’, and thereby lifts the narrative into the ‘third dimension’ (Huhn 19). For the duration of the narrative act - that is, the performance of the live song - the narrator is a constant, stable presence on the stage, a base layer of character around whom the attendee’s interpretation of the wider narrative revolves. In the words of Sven Kristersson, the narrator is ‘visible behind every other role in a song’ (334).

This leads into an important principle of songpoetic narrative, which is that the attendee, in their interpretation of the narrative of a live song, perceives the singer, not as a private individual, but as the embodiment of the song’s narrator, as a participant within the narrative. One striking example of this can be drawn from an ‘open mic’ performance event in Brighton, where a young woman sang a song narrated by the ghost of Hamlet’s father. Her performance was convincing, in the

sense that, whilst she was singing, the ghost was more present, more physically tangible to me, more *embodied* than the performer herself, whose private existence receded into the background. In this example, the distinction between singer and narrator are clear, yet the critique of the concept of authenticity in Section A revealed that, even in cases where the narrative of the song appears to be autobiographical, the figure of the narrator still separates the singer from the attendee in their interpretation of narrative. Schoenmakers suggests that the act of performance itself is sufficient to turn a singer into a 'storyteller', a narrator (237). There is thus an element of acting, of the embodiment of character, involved in all songpoetic performance.

In addition to the primary character of the narrator, the narrative act itself implies the existence of a secondary character, or characters: the narratees, the beings to whom the narrator is addressing themselves. In his application of the principles of Method Acting to musical theatre performance, Dave Brunetti suggests that the entire narrative of a song can be constructed around the interaction between narrator and narratees. He contends that the narrator's underlying 'objectives' - and thus their 'undertexts' or narrative actions - are conditioned by the presence and competing objectives of the narratees (19-20). What this implies is that narrative actions are rooted in the motivations which drive the act of narration itself, and are thus a product of the narrator-narratee relationship.

This was seen in practice during *vistolkning*, where instructors frequently posed the question 'to whom are you singing?' and the follow-up question 'why?' During one memorable performance, the singer's initial interpretation of the narrative of '*Dansa*

på min Grav' (Dance on my Grave) by Bo Kaspers Orkester was of a dialogue between two friends, the one admonishing the other not to give in to the pressures of conformism (Kasper). In response to these questions, however, the singer came to realise that the refrain 'you shall dance on my grave' could be interpreted as suggesting that the narrator was no longer alive, thus giving the narrator-narratee relationship an entirely different character. The result was a transformation of the song from a rebellious punk number to an uplifting elegy, with a spiritual, even metaphysical dimension. This demonstrates the degree to which the narrator-narratee relationship is open to interpretation, as well as its profound influence on the broader interpretation of narrative in songpoetic performance.

Beyond the narrator and narratee, there is a third layer of character in songpoetic performance consisting of those beings to whom the text refers directly, here called tertiary characters. Tertiary characters are not perceived directly by the attendees, for although they may be represented through direct speech, they are, as Sven Kristersson points out, mediated by the narrator (334). Yet the existence of these characters serves to situate the narrator within the social environment of the narrative, at the centre of what Huhn calls 'a web of dynamic relationships' to other beings (28). Their presence invites the attendee to question the narrator's 'narrative authority', and opens the space for a critical interpretation of their intentions and motives (Kristersson 273). This is a common device in satirical songs such as Allan Edwall's *När Små Fåglar Dör* (When Small Birds Die), which is narrated from the perspective of a factory director seeking to justify industrial pollution to the inhabitants of a small town. He claims that 'there's nothing we can do about the death of small birds - that's just what small birds do' (Edwall). The small birds, here,

are tertiary characters, yet their death is a detail which leaves the attendee in no doubt that the director's justifications for industrial expansion are dubious in the extreme.

Already, the number of characters can be well into double figures, but this increases dramatically when the fourth level of song-character is also taken into account: those characters whose existence is not verified by the language of the text, but which can be inferred from its semantic content. The presence of these characters can be clearly felt in the line: 'she held the child, and remembered her husband's words: 'I'll come back when the war is over.'' Here, the narrator and narratee are unspecified; the husband, mother and child are tertiary characters; and the quaternary characters are those whose existence is implicit in the single word 'war'. The line loses most of its interpretive significance if the thousands of soldiers and their families, on both sides of the imagined conflict, are not taken into account. This shows how quaternary characters provide the attendee with a vital link between the characters embedded in the language and the wider world from which they are drawn. They are the extras in Frans Mossberg's 'invisible troupe of actors' who are directed by the singer across the stage of the attendee's imaginations in songpoetic performance (240).

Interpreting Scene

Just as actions imply the existence of characters, characters imply the existence of the environments and spaces through which they move. Scene, like character, is more fluid in songpoetic performance than in theatre, where scenes can be represented visually on the stage through the use of costumes, props and lighting. In

songpoetic performance, the ‘visual elements of the narrative are called up within the audience’s imagination, instead of being shown on the stage’ (Brook qtd. in Kristersson 7). Peter Brook’s seminal idea that the ‘empty space’ on the stage can be transformed through language is nowhere more relevant than it is to songpoetry: ‘the singer in the empty space’ is able to shift the scene of the action between live songs, and within them, with complete freedom, as the narrative of the song demands (Kristersson i). One song the author performed during *vistolkning*, for example, moved through no fewer than six distinct environments, ranging from a drug squat to a police cell to heaven in the sky. Feedback was given that at least some of the attendees had palpably experienced the progress from one scene to another, which had ‘transformed the space’ behind me in the room. This shows how vivid the attendees’ interpretation of scene in songpoetic performance can become, in spite - or perhaps because - of the lack of visual aids.

This last example implies that, in order to experience these imagined environments, the attendee layers the scenes of the narrative over the physical performance space, forming a ‘double stage’ (Lönnroth 9). As Lars Lönnroth notes in his influential work with this title, oral traditions of poetry ‘seek to call up a fictional world where the physical world - the arena of performance - already exists’. Anders Järleby describes the same phenomenon with reference to Stanislavsky’s concept of ‘the magic if’, which establishes a hypothetical, narrative scene over the physical scene on the stage (257). Here, the physical scene of performance is the stable and unchanging base from which the scenes of the narrative emerge, and to which they return at the end of each song.

This notion of a double stage opens the way for a more dynamic understanding of the attendee's interpretation of scene, whereby narrative scenes are not constant, but are imagined individually by every attendee, and perceived with different degrees of vividity at different times in the performance. The dynamic factor here is, once again, the attendee's degree of participation in the performance relationship. An attendee who is not participating at all sees only another person singing on a stage. At a lower level of participation, they might experience snapshots from the narrative, or 'inner images' as they were called at the NSV (Ekholm). As participation becomes more intense, the scenes become coherent and absorbing; and the attendee whose participation is total sees only the narrator situated within the scene of the narrative. The narrative, for them, has become more real than reality itself.

Realm, or Narrative Universe

Narrative, however, is more than the sum total of the actions, characters and scenes implied by the semantic content of a text; for it is only when these factors are interpreted in the context of an entire fictional universe that they cohere. This can be understood with reference to Johan Huizinga's theory of play. Huizinga writes that play occurs within a 'temporary world', a 'second, fictional world' of the imagination, in which the rules of the game supersede both physical laws and social conventions (37, 32). In literary studies, this is known as 'the world of the text' (Ricoer qtd. in Rynell 37); in songpoetic performance, it can be called the narrative realm.

The significance of the interpretation of narrative realm for the attendee can be seen from a session of *vistolkning* where the narrator was a time-travelling cyborg from the future, and the central action was the delivery of a dire warning about what would

happen if humanity refused to change its ways. Interpreted from the perspective of the phenomenal world of experience, these dire warnings lose their potency and are reduced to jeremaic doom-mongering. Interpreted within the narrative realm, on the other hand - a science-fiction dystopia where everything has *already* gone horribly wrong - the cyborg's warnings take on the character of a message from a higher being, and are much more resonant. Here, the attendee's interpretation of realm provides them with the context within which to understand the events, peoples and places of the narrative.

The crucial difference between narrative scene and narrative realm is the fact that, whilst the attendee can observe a scene as an outsider, looking in from beyond a fourth wall, a narrative realm can only be imagined as surrounding and encompassing them: through the act of interpreting the narrative realm, the attendee thereby assumes a role within it. This is inherent in Balk's concept of 'the ideal audience'. Balk recommends that performers do not try to second guess the actual responses of the attendees to their performance, but imagine instead that the attendees respond in whichever way their role in the narrative requires (75). In so doing the singer is, in effect, projecting the narrative realm over the attendees.

Gunilla Gårdfeldt develops Stanislavsky's concept of 'imagined circumstances' along similar lines, encouraging singers to address themselves to an imagined audience implied by the narrative, rather than to the attendees as private individuals. She recounts that, in her experience, this makes the performance more moving (88-92). Gårdfeldt's experience can be interpreted as suggesting that the singer's projection of the narrative realm invites the attendees to actively take on the role of narratee.

As a narratee, they can then form a direct personal response to the events of the narrative, rather than an empathetic response from the perspective of an observer. Having witnessed a performance of the aforementioned *Ballad of Cecilia Lind,* for example, a fellow NSV student - a young man - remarked that the performance had 'made it feel like I *was* Cecilia Lind, like you were singing for *me*'. This attendee had entered into the narrative realm and responded to the performance from the perspective of the narratee, rather than as a private individual.

By entering the narrative realm of a song, the attendee moves into an imaginary universe whose laws and conventions differ, sometimes dramatically, from those of the phenomenal world. This has an important function in the attendee's interpretive process, for by taking up a position within a second, imaginary world governed by different forces, even for just three-and-a-half minutes, the attendee is able to step outside of their own world and appraise it more critically. In the context of theatrical performance, Brecht referred to this as the 'alienation effect', which he utilised in his plays in order to inspire attendees to seek change in the political organisation of society (Unwin 47-55). In songpoetic performance, the alienating effect of the attendee's interpretation of realm has a broader application, in that it opens up psychological and emotional distance between the attendee's private life and their role as a narratee within the narrative.

This can be seen in practice in the way in which Hanne Juul, introducing *vistolkning* to her students, stipulated clearly that neither singer nor attendees were implicated by the narratives of the songs to be performed. To this end, she insisted that the boundary between the 'personal' and the 'private' should be observed at all times

(*vistolkning*). In interview, several former students described how this created a safe environment within which personal and emotionally charged topics could be explored through songpoetry without performances becoming either confessional or therapeutic (student interviews). This implies that the psychological distance inherent in the interpretation of narrative realm functions as a buffer which protects the attendee from exposure to elements of the narrative which could potentially be harmful to them. Counterintuitively, this allows the attendee to engage more intensely with the performance. The twin facts that the narrative realm is distinct from and independent of the phenomenal world, and that it ceases to exist once the performance is over, enable the attendee to commit emotionally to the performance relationship to an extent which, if the events of the narrative were occurring in real life, would be impossible.

Before moving on, it is important to note that, not only is the narrative realm governed by different laws to those of the phenomenal world, but it is founded upon radically altered dimensions of time and space. Given that each narrative realm is only called into being for the duration of a song, the attendee's whole interpretation of narrative is compressed within this short window of chronological time. Within the narrative realm, however, these three minutes can begin with the big bang and end with the apocalypse, or vice versa. As the example of the time-travelling cyborg demonstrates, narrative time is completely free from the constraints of sequential, chronological time. The same is true of movement through space: the distance covered by the performer through the arena of performance can often be measured in centimetres, but the narrator's movement through the narrative realm is limitless.

Narrative in songpoetic performance is, after all, a fiction, and, in the realms of fiction, the imagination knows no bounds.

Music and Narrative

If the attendee's interpretation of language in songpoetic performance enables them to imagine a sequence of specific interactions between objects and people in the context of a narrative realm, their interpretation of music furnishes them with something much less concrete, and yet, paradoxically, more tangible and affecting. The contribution of music to the interpretation of narrative can be understood with reference to Anton Chekhov's concept of 'atmosphere' (48). Chekhov claims that every environment, every 'phenomenon and event' has an atmosphere. In the theatre, he writes, the atmosphere is an integral part of the performance which serves the function of 'deepening the perception of the spectator', as well as stirring and awakening their feelings. He makes the link between atmosphere and music, noting that musicians have an important role in creating an atmosphere, and exhorting actors to 'listen' to atmospheres as they 'listen to music' (55). In the context of songpoetic performance, where music forms the framework for the delivery of the linguistic text, Chekhov's remarks could be taken to suggest that the attendee's experience of atmosphere is interwoven with their interpretation of musical time, space, and movement.

The link between music and atmosphere has recently been explored in detail in the book *Music as Atmosphere: Collective Feelings and Affective Sounds*, which compiles a body of scholarship exploring the notion that music can be understood as an aural representation of atmosphere. Both music and atmosphere, notes Torvinen,

are ‘ineffable’ and abstract, and yet, according to Riedel, both are perceived by attendees as ‘a homogenising mood’ which ‘cannot be reduced to an individual’s feelings or experience’ (qtd. in Bozelka 123-125). This tallies with the result of the foregoing discussion, which found that, since movement in music is imagined rather than literal, the qualities of musical movement interpreted by the attendee are similarly abstract and irreducible. If, as these parallels suggest, music can indeed be understood as an aural representation of atmosphere, the implication is that the attendee’s interpretation of music in songpoetic performance furnishes the concrete narrative structures established through their interpretation of language with abstract atmosphere and mood.

The notion of atmosphere derived from the interpretation of music can be illustrated further with reference to the concept of ‘*grundkänsla’*, or ‘elemental feeling’, which was central to the pedagogy of the NSV (Juul). Singers were taught to select one underlying, elemental feeling for their performance of their song. This was held to determine the range of interpretive possibilities available to them; during *vistolkning,* singers were frequently recommended to change the elemental feeling they were using in order to explore alternative interpretations. For example, I once performed a song narrated by a young traveller extolling the virtues of a carefree, unfettered existence. After my initial performance, one attendee commented that they had interpreted the narrator as a ‘tragic’, homeless old man. I was instructed to sing again with a different *grundkänsla*, more in tune with the youth’s irrepressible *joie de vivre*. After the second performance, the same attendee remarked that they now saw the narrator as a ‘completely different person’. Here, the overlap between the concept of *grundkänsla* and the idea of musical atmosphere becomes apparent,

since the only aspect of my performance that had actually changed were the dimensions of the music. The tempo was quicker, there was greater dynamic variation, the metre was more pronounced, the movement of the melody through musical space-time became at once more aggressive and more graceful - more youthful, in a word. What this shows is the power of elemental feeling, or musical atmosphere, to completely transform the attendee's interpretation of narrative.

From the preceding discussion, it has become clear that the attendee's third central area of interpretive activity in songpoetic performance is the interpretation of the actions, scenes, characters and realm of the narrative based on their formalistic interpretation of the linguistic text. This is supplemented by the attendee's interpretation of atmosphere based on their interpretation of musical space-time and the qualities of musical movement.

The Attendee and the Subtext

The fourth area of interpretive activity in this model of the attendee's interpretive process relates to the subtextual elements of the performance activity. This is understood here as interpretation focused on the performer within the arena of performance, uncoupled from the linguistic and musical forms of the text or the narrative constructions of the supertext. In other words, the attendee's interpretation of the singer, as opposed to the song. This area of interpretive activity is deconstructed within the four categories of body, voice, intention, and engagement. The singer's physical and vocal modulations are explored in order to investigate the link between the internal activity of the singer and the attendee's experience of the live song. The singer's embodiment of the narrator is shown to contribute a

subtextual layer of narrative to the attendee's supertextual interpretation of narrative discussed above. Focus then turns to the singer's private intentions with their performance, and the impact this can have upon the performance relationship.

The Singer's Body

The singer's body is the foundation of all performance activity in songpoetic performance: the body generates the voice, which articulates the linguistic and musical texts from which the supertextal narrative is constructed. Beyond this basic function, however, the physical *gestalt* of the performer is the object of the attendee's interpretation in its own right. This is an interpretive factor both on what Barba terms a 'pre-expressive' level, outside of the narrative, and within it, in the embodiment of characters and actions (9).

Outside the narrative, the attendee begins to interpret the movement and the stance - in physiological terms, the 'static and dynamic posture' (Rizzato et al.) - of the singer from the moment they appear on the stage, providing them with information about the singer's degree of alertness, dynamism, and readiness to perform. The teaching of Sture Ekholm at the NSV provides a powerful first-hand example. When he was ready to begin a session of *vistolkning*, he dilated his posture and centred himself on his chair, such that it looked as though he could spring up and begin singing at any moment. He then waited until this small adjustment alone had attracted the attention of his students (*vistolkning)*. This links in to the conception of songpoetic performance as a game of interpretation: as Lena Klarström taught at the NSV, the singer should comport themselves physically in the attitude of a person who is 'ready to play' (Klarström). If the singer shows themselves, through their static

and dynamic posture, to be engaged in the game, ready at any moment to enact something unexpected and exciting, it invites the attendees to pay attention, to take up their role in the performance relationship and play along. Thus the attendee's interpretation of what Phillip Zarrilli calls the 'energetics of performance' can have an immediate impact on the attendee's degree of participation in the performance relationship (1).

The singer has a limited ability to embody the actions of the narrative directly, thereby representing the narrative physically to the attendees. Actors or dancers utilise their whole body for this purpose, but the singer is reduced to the more modest range of physical modulations which do not disrupt their ability to sing; this includes small gestures, postural shifts and facial expressions. The singer's relative stillness upon the stage, however, means that these smaller movements attract a greater share of the attendee's interpretive attention. Eigtved points out, for example, that the 'direction of the gaze' is important, in that it helps the attendee to establish the location of objects, people and events within the narrative scene (286). Fischer-Dieskau remarks, in a similar vein, that 'the face is the singer's stage', suggesting that singers' facial expressions are closely monitored by attendees for information about character identity and attitude (qtd. in Kristersson 286).

This link between the physical modulations of the singer and the attendee's interpretation of narrative is evident in the way in which Sture Ekholm, himself an actor, taught at the NSV that any movement which the singer makes during a performance that does not relate to the act of singing should relate to the narrative of the song (*vistolkning*). Frequently, during *vistolkning*, the singer would be asked to

justify their gestures in relation to the narrative, and to eliminate small movements which had become habitual or unconscious, such as foot tapping or swaying. One performer, for instance, had to sing with Hanne Juul treading - gently - on his foot in order to hold it still; there was a consensus during post-performance feedback that this intervention had made the narrative of his song more prominent. Hanne explains this by suggesting that unmotivated and irrelevant physical activity by the singer 'leaks energy', and 'pulls the focus' of the attendees away from the performance activity, thereby disrupting their interpretive process (Juul). The physical modulations of the singer, therefore, can have a significant impact upon the ability of the attendee to interpret and derive significance from the performance.

The Singing Voice

The voice, writes Michael Eigtved, is a 'privileged element in a theatrical event' (81); this is true to an even greater extent in songpoetic performance, where the attendee's interpretation of the singer's use of voice has far reaching consequences both within and beyond their interpretation of narrative. Outside of the narrative, as Frans Mossberg writes, the attendee's 'sonic evaluation of… what is heard is decisive for the will to partake of the performance' (10). Couched in the terms of this thesis, Mossberg is suggesting that the attendee's participation in the performance relationship is heavily influenced by their interpretation of the qualities of the singer's voice. To an extent, this is an extension of the idea of pre-expressive physicality discussed above, insofar as the voice consists of a 'sonic representation of the body' (Eigtved 81), of 'bodily movements which are hidden from the eye' (Sundberg qtd. in Kristersson 250). Corroborating this, Hemsley notes that voice quality and posture are inextricably intertwined (35-37): a posture which enables the singer to produce

tone effectively is necessarily ‘dilated’, and a dilated posture, according to Brown, is the foundation of scenic presence (11).

Professor of acoustics Johan Sundberg puts forward a subtly different view when, summarising a range of studies in his field, he concludes that the attendee’s interpretation of voice is based primarily on an assessment of the singer’s voice *production*, or ‘glottal mimic’, rather than the voice’s sonic characteristics (203, 197). This, he implies, is the root of the description of vocal timbre as ‘tense’ or ‘relaxed’. Sundberg demonstrates that attendees are highly sensitive to the degree of vocal tension - that is, muscular tension - which inhibits the vibrations of the vocal cords and the resonating chambers of the body. He even goes so far as to suggest that attendees can themselves experience a degree of tension and tiredness in their vocal apparatus when they have been listening to a particularly strained type of voice production (204). Whether or not this is in fact the case, Sundberg’s work implies a link between the singer’s voice production and the attendee’s willingness to participate in the interpretive process.

This hypothesis was borne out time and again in practice during *vistolkning.* During one memorable intervention, a singer had delivered a tender ballad addressed to his little brother in an audibly strained voice, which one attendee described as ‘shouty’. He was asked to drop a raised shoulder, place a foot which had been dangling squarely on the floor, and adjust his standing posture in order to address vocal tension in the upper chest and throat. These adjustments resulted in a more rooted voice production, with much greater diaphragmatic support. In the feedback, the class was in agreement that the second rendition had been a great deal ‘easier to

listen to' than the initial performance; some attendees also remarked that the relationship between the narrator and his little brother 'made more sense' to them, which is to say that their interpretation of the narrative had deepened. This gives credence to Sundberg's idea that the singer's glottal mimic impacts upon the attendee's ability to participate in and interpret a performance.

Beyond their interpretation of voice production, the attendee in songpoetic performance interprets the singer's application of voice to the creation of the live song. This is what Hemsley describes as the 'modification' or modulation of voice (59-61), which he claims is 'one of the most important aspects of singing'. Hemsley's claim is justified, for, whilst the attendee builds a supertextual narrative gradually from their interpretation of the musical and linguistic texts, the modulation of the singer's voice can convey, 'in the course of a few seconds, an impression of the person who is speaking: their age, gender, social class, mental and emotional state' (Mossberg 231). As Cogan writes, voice modulations, unlike language, have 'direct communicative power' (qtd. in Mossberg 77). This uncanny ability of the voice to intervene directly in the attendee's interpretive process can be linked to suggestions that the singer's modulations of voice are rooted in the 'primary processes of human vital activity' such as sighs, moans, or cries, rather than in musical parameters such as rhythm or pitch (Zak qtd. in Mossberg 253). Sundberg goes further, comparing singers' vocal modulations with the vocal modulations of animals in their expression of primary states of being, such as relaxation, fright or aggression (201). This suggests that modulation of voice can be thought of as making a primal, animalistic, subtextual appeal to the attendees, which cuts right to the heart of their interpretive process.

Given their importance, it is worth pausing to consider the types of voice modulation which are most relevant to songpoetic performance. The dictionary definition offers a starting point, defining vocal modulation as variations in the 'loudness, pitch, or tone' of the singer's voice ('modulate'). Modulations of volume - known in music as dynamics - are affected by increasing or decreasing the volume of air that passes through the vocal cords (Sundberg 76). Modulations of pitch are brought about by the lengthening or shortening of the vocal cords, which determines the frequency with which they vibrate. In songpoetic performance, Sundberg writes that pitch modulations can occur on the level of macro-intonation or micro-intonation (187). Macro-intonation is largely determined by the pitches of the melody, although macro-intonational modulations do occur in the form of melodic improvisation. In his review of research into singers' micro-intonation, Sundberg draws the striking conclusion that the micro-intonational pitch modulations employed by the singer are the same as those employed by the speaker or actor (195). This lends weight to Sture Ekholm's description of songpoetic performance as 'reading aloud in song' (*vistolkning)*.

Modulation of the tone colour or timbre of the voice is, according to Cogan, 'the most paradoxical of music's parameters' for the way in which, historically, it had evaded critical analysis (qtd. in Mossberg 77). Sundberg, however, writing twenty years later, demonstrates clearly how vocal timbre depends upon which combination of the body's resonance chambers are used to amplify the original vibrations produced in the larynx, as well as the shape and position of the larynx itself (Sundberg 31-33). To these could be added a range of articulatory modulations, including variation in the

balance of consonants and vowels, as explored by Cicely Berry (143-148), as well as in the muscular movements employed by the jaws and tongue during the formation of words (Fonagy qtd. in Sundberg 198). It is beyond the scope of this study to look at the impact of each of these voice modulations individually, but this would provide a fruitful topic for further research.

What is significant for the attendee's interpretive process about the singer's modulation of voice is not the changes in vocal quality themselves, but the internal activity they represent. As Hemsley makes plain, vocal modifications are, in essence, 'bodily changes associated with changing emotions, feelings and moods' (59). Interpreting these modifications thereby provides the attendee with impressions of the inner activity of the singer, both as an individual and as a narrative character. This is evident in the way in which vocal modifications which are *not* related to internal activity are liable to be interpreted as artificial and contrived. At the NSV, for instance, one singer, performing the 'Berlin Blues', mimicked several voice modulations from the popular recording, including the extensive use of glissando ornamentation (Phoebe-Lou). The instructor requested that these 'mannerisms' be left to one side, suggesting that they did not represent an organic, personal response to the song itself, but rather an attempt to imitate an admired model (*vistolkning)*. The adoption of purely external voice modulations is here portrayed as inhibiting the ability of the voice to represent the internal activity of the singer, thereby breaking one of the key points of contact between the performer and the attendee.

The attendee's interpretation of the singer's modulation of voice does not, however, provide them with clear, objective information about either the singer or the narrator.

This study rejects the claim made by Barthes, and adapted to songpoetic performance by Mossberg and Rhedin, that voice - and thereby voice modulation - has ‘a meaning in and of itself’; that it is possible to ‘study the text of the voice in the same way as it is possible to study linguistic material’ (qtd. in Rhedin 28). Just as with Lönnroth’s model of scenic communication discussed above, Mossberg’s suggestion that the ‘paralinguistic content’ of the voice can be ‘decoded’ by attendees with the proper ‘competence’ is problematic because there is not, and could not be, an agreed cipher for the meaning of particular voice qualities and voice modulations (231). Moreover, in this model, the supposed ‘content’ or ‘meaning’ of the voice in songpoetic performance consists only of intangible developments in the inner life of the singer, or of an imagined character. This ‘content’ is so subjective, so transient, that it can hardly be described as ‘content’ at all. Rather, as the following passages will show, the attendee interprets the significance of these voice modulations in relation to the inner activity of the narrator within the narrative on the one hand, and the rhetorical intentions of the singer beyond the narrative on the other.

Interpreting the Narrator

Whilst supertextual narrative is built upon the attendee’s interpretation of language and music, there is a subtextual layer to the attendee’s interpretation of narrative which is based on their interpretation of the singer’s body and voice. Michael Eigtved goes so far as to contend that voice alone is sufficient to call a ‘fictional universe’ into being (81). He suggests that the voice provides the attendee with hints as to the age, gender, location and underlying personality of the narrator, and helps to situate them within the events of the narrative. This is a more nuanced view than that of Barthes

and Mossberg, in that it recognises the highly subjective nature of the impressions generated by the attendee's interpretative activity on this level: the interpretation of voice modulations provides hints and clues as to the details of the narrative, but not objective information.

Of greater importance for the attendee is the way in which the singer's modulation of voice can provide a sonic representation of the inner life of the narrator as it develops through the progression of the narrative. This is a highly variable and dynamic aspect of the interpretive process. In certain cases, the narrator will remain distanced from and unmoved by the narrative throughout. Sid Jansson at the NSV, for instance, invoked '*Malin Häggström's Lullaby'* - in which an unidentified narrator relates the story of a girl who took the life of her newborn child - as an example of a song in which the narrator's internal activity is extraneous to the content of the story being told (Jansson). In this case, the singer's modulations of voice provide attendees with at most a commentary upon the narrative, since their interpretive process is centred around the song's linguistic text.

Conversely, where the narrator's participation in the narrative is direct and immediate, developments in the narrator's inner life can themselves become narrative events.[12] This can be seen in the popular Swedish *visa 'Trubbel'* (Trouble), in which the narrator, who sets out to take revenge upon a love rival, is overwhelmed

[12] This distinction between the narrator as storyteller and the narrator as participant corresponds to the basic division of songpoetic vocal styles into 'epic' and 'dramatic' proposed by Martia Rhedin (171), as well as to the distinction between *berättandet* and *gestaltning* outlined above. Rhedin suggests that the decision to employ an 'epic' or a 'dramatic' vocal style is an aesthetic choice on the part of the singer. This thesis, however, in line with its shift to an attendee-centred understanding of performance, contends that voice modulations are ascribed an epic or dramatic character by the attendee, depending on the degree to which they adjudge the narrator's inner life to be directly involved in the narrative.

by their generosity and ends up becoming ‘best friends’ with them in the course of the song. Here, the narrator’s change of heart is the development upon which the whole narrative of the song turns. During one *vistolkning* performance of this song, the instructor sought to help the singer understand that they needed to reflect this development in their modulations of voice in order for it to become tangible and convincing for the attendees. ‘We won’t believe you’, she claimed, ‘if you sing “we became inseparable best friends” in the same angry bark as you had sung “I stormed in with a hammer under my jacket” half a minute before.’ What this suggests is that, here, the singer’s modulation of voice is the central means of providing the attendee with insight into the inner life of the narrator, and thereby right into the heart of the narrative.

Attitude, Intention, Emotion

The attendee’s interpretation of the development of the narrator’s inner life through the modulation of voice can be conceived of as taking place on three different levels: attitude, intention, and emotion. ‘Attitude’ is a term which is prominent in the performance lexicon of H. Wesley Balk, who compiled an extensive list of attitudes for singers. He relates that, when he asked performers to adopt attitudes chosen from the list at random whilst singing an aria, attendees experienced their performances as more ‘specific’ (61, 131-133). Looking into this further, it is possible to suggest that what becomes more specific for the attendee through their interpretation of attitude is the narrator’s own positioning of themselves relative to the events and characters of the narrative. On this point, Hanne Juul used an example from the jazz standard *Cry me a River* to demonstrate how, if an attitude of disdain is audible in the singer’s voice when delivering the opening line - ‘and now you say

you're lonely' - this specifies to the attendee, before any further information is given, that the narrator in this song is a scorned lover responding to the entreaties of their former partner (*vistolkning)*. This interpretation cannot be derived from the language alone, but depends on the attendee interpreting the narrator's attitude from the singer's modulation of voice.

Beyond the contextual clues provided by the interpretation of attitude, the attendee's interpretation of the narrator's motives and intentions can imbue a narrative with tension and excitement. Brunetti suggests, for instance, that a singer can generate narrative intensity through identifying a narrator's motives, the 'obstacle' to the fulfilment of these motives, and the strategy whereby they seek to overcome this obstruction (19-25). At the NSV, Maud Lindström worked with the concept of '*motstånd*' or 'opposition' in a similar manner. She encouraged students to link their performances to a remembered or imagined conflict in order to raise their 'temperature' (Lindström). The underlying assumption in both cases is that if this generates narrative excitement for the singer, it will also do the same for the attendees.

This was born out in practice through one session of *vistolkning*, treating the song *Too Late for Edelweiss* by Håkan Hellström, the text of which indicates anger and burning regret over the loss of a former partner. The initial performance was quiet and subdued, and the instructor sought to breathe life into the song by confronting the singer with the motives of the narrator. She posed a series of questions: 'what does he want?' - the answer, 'to be together with a person he loves' - 'why can't they be together?' - 'because their relationship is over' - 'so what is he doing about it?' -

‘he’s giving voice to his regret.’ After this exchange, the performer sang again, and, quite unconsciously, modulated her voice to reflect her new awareness of the narrator’s motives and the conflicts within the song. The difference in the room was palpable. The notes of sincerity and bitterness in the singer’s voice - her micro-intonational modulations - gave the attendees insight into the narrator’s inner life, enabling us to interpret and imagine for ourselves his turmoil and unhappiness. Here, the attendee’s interpretation of the singer’s modulation of voice formed the basis for their interpretation of narrative intention and conflict, and the performance became much more engaging as a result.

The narrator’s emotions are of a fundamentally different character to, and interpreted on a different level from, their attitudes and intentions, even though all three are conveyed principally through the modulation of the voice. The distinction between them is that attitudes and intentions are subject to the will of the narrator, linked, as Penciulescu points out, to their chosen course of action, whereas emotions are essentially reactions, and thereby beyond their control (qtd. in Järleby 175-176). The narrator’s emotional developments represent organic responses to external events. They are, as such, extremely difficult to falsify, unlike attitudes and intentions, which can be adopted at will. In order to illustrate this point, Balk coined the term ‘vocal indicating’ to describe singers’ attempts to artificially manipulate the sound of their voices to represent emotion. He claims that this ‘almost always involves some form of sustained glottal tension’, implying that this tension inhibits the modulations of the voice which are the result of real emotion (56-59).

Those vocal modulations which are the result of real, experienced emotion have been explored by Johan Sundberg. In his meta-analysis of studies dealing with the vocal representation of emotion, he shows the impact of particular emotions on the functioning of the vocal apparatus, identifying ‘typical’ modulations of voice for ‘every register of feeling’ (199). In studies cited by Sundberg, attendees who listened to particular voice modulations were able to recognise the underlying emotion with a remarkably high degree of accuracy, regardless of language, culture, or background (189-190). What this implies is that attendees are able, to an extent, to interpret the emotional development of the narrator from the singer’s modulation of voice directly.

If these emotions, and the vocal modulations which follow from them, cannot effectively be simulated, it follows that they cannot be the emotions of the narrator - who is, after all, an imagined character - but must be those of the singer as an individual. This was a principle of Stanislavsky, who held that the only emotions with which an actor can animate a character are their own, and this is no less true in songpoetic performance (Whyman 45-52). Torsten Föllinger, for example, claimed that, even whilst singing or acting, ‘I cannot be anybody other than Torsten Föllinger’ (Globögat). The precise nature of the singer’s emotional engagement will be explored in Section C, but what is relevant here is the implication that the attendee’s interpretation of the emotional development of the narrator depends on the live, unsimulated emotional activity of the singer.

This is a crucial area of the interpretive process, for it is through the attendee’s interpretation of the narrator as a sentient, emotionally responsive individual that the whole narrative realm is animated and comes to life: what is otherwise a dry universe

of ideas becomes a world of flesh and blood and feeling. In the Håkan Hellström example given above, for instance, the attendees were able to interpret the basic content of the narrative during the first, emotionless performance. However, it was the emotional activity of the singer during the second which stimulated the attendees to interpret the narrator, not as a fictional character, but as a human being. This, in turn, awakened the attendees' own emotions, demonstrating how, as Balk contends, 'the total emotional commitment of voice to the singing of words is what makes the art compelling for the audience' (11).

It follows that, in order for the attendee to interpret the narrator as a living individual, rather than just a character, it is necessary for them to experience the narrative act as being driven by live, real-time emotional engagement from the performer. This quality of live engagement has many names: it has been referred to as a form of 'presence' (Bjerstedt 100); of vulnerability (Fagéus 19); Kristersson borrows the Italian '*sprezzatura',* which he translates as 'the ability to embrace the unknown' (78); Rasmussen puts forward the Spanish term *'duende'*, which is used to describe a performer's blend of intensity, insight and responsiveness (159). This thesis contends that the best term to describe this quality is 'spontaneity'. This is a term which foregrounds the important contrast between the performer who is engaging with the performance, and the performer who is presenting a disengaged reproduction of what they have prepared or experienced beforehand.

Attendees are highly sensitive to the degree to which a singer is performing with spontaneity. Sture Ekholm taught - and demonstrated through *vistolkning* - that they can tell at once whether a singer is exhibiting spontaneous engagement, or whether

they are thinking about ‘what they are going to have for dinner’ (Ekholm). During one of my own performances of a lullaby, for instance, Sture complained that he ‘couldn’t see the baby’ for whom the narrator was singing, and claimed - rightly - that I couldn’t either. He gestured to the space in front of me and made the shape of a cradle with his arms, as though to magic up a baby from thin air - and it worked. I sang again, directing my voice downwards into the space Sture had indicated, and, this time, the presence of the imagined baby stimulated my own engagement with the narrative act. What had begun as a disengaged ‘repetition on the stage’ became thereby a spontaneous performance, which awakened my own emotions; responding to this emotional activity, my voice became soft and soothing. For the attendees, the narrator of the song was thereby embodied, through me, as a human being, which brought the narrative of the song to life. This shows how a reproduction of the vocal modulations derived from prior engagement with the songtext was insufficient to stimulate the interpretive process of the attendees. This required the live, spontaneous engagement of the singer throughout the performance.

Rhetorical Intention

This links into the final area of subtextual interpretive activity to be discussed in this section, which is the attendee’s interpretation of the singer’s personal intentions and motives, outside of the narrative. These are here termed ‘rhetorical intentions’, in order to distinguish between the intentions of the singer and those of the narrator. Their influence on the performance relationship can be understood by returning to the conception of songpoetic performance as a game of interpretation. In his study of play, Huizinga introduces the notion of the ‘false player’. The false player is not spontaneously engaged in the game or deriving ludic value from their participation,

but rather is pretending to play for the attainment of ulterior motives (39). If an attendee begins to suspect that the singer is a false player, whose actions are motivated by anything other than the will to participate in the performance, the foundation of trust which is the very base of the performance relationship is corroded. This can lead to the attendees withdrawing their own participation.

The degree to which attendees are alert and active in their interpretation of the singer's rhetorical intentions can be seen through the numerous *vistolkning* interventions in this area. There were repeated occasions, for instance, when the instructor challenged the singer with the observation that they were seeking to win approval or admiration for themselves through their performance, rather than engage in a performance relationship with the attendees. At other times, when interpreting songs by popular artists, a similar challenge was made that the performer's primary motivation was to imitate the original performer of the song rather than to perform the song themselves, as in the example of 'Berlin Blues' given above. Perhaps the strictest criticism was reserved for performers whom instructors suspected of singing for their own sake, enjoying the sound of their own voices without any regard for the attendees whatsoever. They were accused, in a word, of 'egotism' (*vistolkning*).

In each of these cases, it was suggested to the student that they relinquish any ulterior motives and instead make it their objective to provide the attendees - who had given of their time and attention in order to make the performance possible - with a moving, valuable aesthetic experience. This represents, in effect, a shift in the intentions of the singer from a 'egoistic', or performer-centred, to an 'altruistic', or attendee-centred approach to performance. The repeated success of these

interventions demonstrates the important point that an attendee-centred approach to performance on behalf of the singer facilitates the attendees' derivation of value from the performance relationship.

The Attendee and the Pretext

The textual, supertextual and subtextual interpretive activities outlined above, taken together, form the core of the attendee's interpretive process. Yet there are two further areas of interpretive activity which remain to be considered: the pretextual, and the contextual. Unlike the areas already discussed, which pertain to the attendee's interpretation of the performance activity in the arena of performance, pretextual interpretation includes all interpretive activity from the point at which the attendee becomes aware of the possibility of a performance to the point at which the performance activity begins. Contextual interpretation extends beyond the end of the performance activity to encompass the attendee's attempts to relate their interpretation of a live song to their own subjective inner lives, and thereby derive subjective value from it. Given that these two areas of interpretive activity are not confined to the arena of performance, but are rooted in the phenomenal world beyond, they invite a far broader discussion of influencing factors than this study, for reasons of length, is able to offer. The following passages are therefore confined to a few brief remarks on the attendee's interpretative activities in these areas, before the discussion moves on to consider the total interpretive process and its implications for the performance relationship in songpoetic performance.

The attendee's pretextual interpretative activities are loosely deconstructed below into the four categories of: venue, arrangement, programme, and performer. The

venue of performance, the type of arrangement which frames the performance encounter, the programme of songs to be performed, and the identity of the performer, or performers, are touched upon as the four key factors upon which the attendee's pretextual interpretive activity is focused. This analysis explores the ways in which these factors condition attendees' expectations, which, Hans George Gadamer suggests, form 'an essential part of the audience's experience of performance' (qtd. in Eigtved 125). Most relevant here is the way in which these expectations shape the interpretive framework within which the attendee approaches their interpretation of the performance activity.

Regarding the venue of performance, it is straightforward to suggest that an attendee will approach the interpretation of the same performance differently if it were held in a church, a rehearsal studio, a bombed-out building, or an opera house. Looking into this further, Coppola has explored the way the migration of jazz concerts from clubs to concert halls has led to a 'renegotiation… of musicians' and audiences' social behaviour', and he concludes that this has had an impact upon the 'musician-audience relationship' (135). His findings imply that the attendee's pretextual interpretation of venue affects not only the interpretive process, but participation in the performance relationship itself. Rémi Mencarelli has gone further still, developing an entire 'framework of analysis designed to apprehend the role played by the venue of live performances' (4). He suggests that the venue itself can contribute to the 'value' of a performance for the attendee. In the terms of this study, this could be subjective value, derived, for instance, from attendance at a venue where admired singers have performed in the past. It could also be ludic value: the venue's particular atmospheric and acoustic qualities, for example, facilitating

participation in the performance relationship by fostering a sense of intimacy, or alternatively of ceremony and grandeur, before and during the performance.

The type of arrangement at a particular venue has a considerable influence on the framework of the attendee's interpretive process. Factors such as whether an event is free or ticketed, public or private, formal or informal, pre-arranged or spontaneous all contribute to determining the manner in which, as Schoenmakers puts it, the attendee applies the 'theatrical frame' to the performance, which 'activates the interpretation and evaluation of the actions on the stage' (226). On this point, one interesting criticism of the NSV's pedagogy from a former student was that the school left students ill-prepared to perform at what he called 'real world' arrangements (student interviews). This interviewee suggested that, in his experience, *visa* performances in contemporary Sweden are often free, public, and highly informal. As a result, he claimed, they do not afford the same levels of concentrated attention and participation from the attendees as he had experienced at the NSV, where performance events were carefully curated. Whilst my own experience does not accord with this criticism, it does imply that certain types of arrangement facilitate the establishment of performance relationships from which value can be derived, whereas others are inhibiting in this regard.[13]

The two previous points relate to the *where* and the *why* of songpoetic performance; to these should be added the twin factors of *what* is going to be performed, and *who* will be performing it. The influence of performer identity on the attendee's

[13] Students at the NSV were provided with the opportunity to participate in a great many performances, ranging from the spontaneous and informal through to concert-hall style recitals. This stemmed, I believe, from the pedagogical motive to prepare the students for 'real world' performance conditions as thoroughly as possible.

interpretation of a performance has been explored in studies dealing with popular music. In this field, it has been suggested that the performer's 'artistic persona' is interpreted by the attendees in advance of the performance from recordings and promotional material (Suhadolnik 181). For the attendee, this persona appears to bridge the gap between the singer and the narrator, facilitating the illusion of authenticity and direct expression explored in Section A. This idea could be broadened to suggest that an attendee forms a pretextual interpretation of a performer's persona based on any information about the performer which they have available to them. Hanne Juul, for instance, told her students, in advance of their first large-scale concert, that, when they walked out onto the stage, the attendees would see the word 'student' written across their forehead, and would interpret their performances more sympathetically as a result (Juul). Here, the 'student' persona invites the attendee to adjust their expectations and frame their interpretive process differently than they would for a performance delivered by a respected professional.

The importance of the programme, or the sequence of songs to be performed, to the attendee's ability to derive value from a performance is often overlooked. At the NSV, students were allowed to choose their own repertoire, but Hanne Juul taught that the chosen songs ought to be carefully considered in relation to the prospective attendees, as a mismatch could impact both their willingness and ability to interpret the performance (Juul). The students' second public concert, for example, was held at the local *visa* club for an older audience. Their interest in the contemporary English popular songs which one student wished to perform was, for both linguistic and cultural reasons, extremely limited. After a lengthy debate, the pop songs were excised in favour of *visa* classics - which were, in the event, enthusiastically

received. Thus the composition of a programme for performance became a pedagogical exercise in its own right, reinforcing the attendee-centred approach to performance cultivated both at the NSV, and in this study. Reading into this more deeply, it could be suggested that song choice is a negotiation between what the performer wishes to perform, and what the attendees may or may not wish to interpret, and be able to derive value from. Where this balance is misjudged, the attendee's interpretive process may be severely inhibited.

The Attendee and the Context

If pretextual interpretive activity refers to interpretive activity which occurs before the performance encounter, contextual interpretive activity refers to those aspects of the interpretive process which continue long after the last notes have died away. 'When the play is over', Huizinga remarks, 'its influence does not end, but continues to shine upon the world outside' (42). This can be read as implying that the interpretive activity of the attendee continues beyond the span of the performance activity, in what Eigtved calls a 'contextualising' process which has the object of rendering the attendee's interpretation of performance 'useful' to them (22). This notion of utility can be understood by inverting Rynell's portrayal of the actor interpreting a script or play 'in order to investigate reality' to suggest that it is, in fact, the attendee who uses their interpretation of performance to investigate the phenomenal world in which they live (15). Looked at in this way, the attendee's contextual interpretive activity can be seen to focus on the integration of their interpretation of the performance activity with their broader interpretation of human life. As such, it is this aspect of the interpretive process which is primarily responsible for shifting the scale of relevance to the right,

beyond ‘understanding’ and into the realm of ‘significance’, where subjective value can be formed.

The three variables in this contextualising process are therefore: (i) the attendee’s interpretation of the performance activity, (ii) the attendee’s interpretation of the phenomenal world, and (iii) their ability to bring these two together. The first of these has been discussed at length above, and consists of the total outcome of the attendee’s pretextual, textual, subtextual and supertextual interpretive activity. It is important to recall at this point that these interpretive activities do not result in a finalised, static interpretation of performance, such as may be derived from the kind of literary analysis applied by Lönnroth to the work of *visa* performer C. M. Bellman (140-173). Rather, as argued above, the results of these activities cannot effectively be separated from the interpretive process within which they occur. As such, the purpose of these interpretive activities is not to construct a clear and presentable understanding of a performance, but rather to facilitate the derivation of subjective value from the performance relationship. As Hanne Juul suggests, attendees approach a performance ‘with a thousand antennae outstretched’ (‘philosophy of visa’), receptive to what Mossberg calls the infinite ‘possibilities for interpretation’ inherent in each performance which may allow them to be moved (248).

The two remaining variables in this contextualising process fall outside the bounds of this study. It is for philosophers and psychologists to debate the nuances of an individual’s interpretation of the phenomenal world. Here, it is simply worth noting that each attendee has their own unique interpretation of human life, which means that the possibilities for them to derive subjective value from a performance are

similarly unique to themselves. The attendee's ability to integrate their interpretation of the performance activity with their interpretation of human life, and thereby to derive subjective value from the performance relationship, is also highly individual, and varies significantly within the same individual over time. Illness, tiredness or preoccupation are all examples of temporary factors which inhibit the attendee's ability to interpret and contextualise a performance. It is noteworthy, however, that this ability does, to some degree, appear to be subject to development and training. Several former NSV students reported that their ability to derive significance from the performances of others had benefited greatly from their training at the school (student interviews). This tallies with my own experience: we became, through our participation in *vistolkning*, more adept at interpreting and deriving subjective value from songpoetic performances. We became, perhaps, better attendees. Whether or not this would hold true also for non-performers in some form of "audience training" would make an interesting topic for further research.

The Complete Interpretive Process

The model of the attendee's interpretive process presented at the beginning of this section is depicted again on the following page, with each area of interpretation now deconstructed into its constituent interpretive activities. Whilst this model is only an outline, it does provide a way of understanding the attendee's experience of performance, and their role within the performance relationship. This model shows that the attendee is far from the passive receiver of the performer's transmission, whose only endeavour is to understand what they are being presented with like students in a lecture theatre. Instead, the attendee is depicted here at the centre of

the performance, as a co-creator who transforms the arena of performance in their imaginations and enlivens it with their experiences and emotions.

It should be emphasised that not every attendee engages in interpretation on every one of these levels for every song to which they attend. Rather, each song and each performance stimulates a different range of interpretive activities and a different balance between them. This depends above all on the attendee's degree of participation in the performance relationship; the greater the participation, the greater the range of interpretive activities which are called into play. As such, this is not a prescriptive model of how an attendee *should* interpret songpoetry, but a model of how an attendee *can* be moved by songpoetic performance; can interpret, understand, and derive subjective value from it. In practice, this is the exception, rather than the rule, but my hope is that a greater understanding of this process will enable the experience of attendees to be placed at the heart of songpoetic performances in the future, and that a more valuable, more moving experience of performance will result.

In the course of its deconstruction of the attendee's interpretive process, the discussion in this section has modelled the basic elements of songpoetic performance, as well as the mechanisms by which the attendee derives significance from them. The ground is now prepared for an approach to the final area of inquiry in this thesis, which involves a reappraisal of the role of the singer within the performance relationship.

		SUPERTEXT Action Character Scene Realm		
PRETEXT Venue Arrangement Programme Performer	**MUSICAL TEXT** Musical Space Musical Time Musical Movement		**LINGUISTIC TEXT** Words Grammatical structures Thought Structures Rhetorical Devices	**CONTEXT** Interpretation of Performance Interpretation of Human Life Integration
		SUBTEXT Body Voice Inner Activity Intention		

Fig. 3 Complete Model of the Attendee's Interpretive Process

Section C - The Singer

The final section of this study reconsiders the role of the singer in songpoetic performance. The logic of the thesis thus far has shown that, in general terms, the singer's role is to facilitate the attendee's derivation of subjective and ludic value from their participation in the performance relationship. In order to explore the implications this has for the singer in practice, this section embarks upon a deconstructive analysis which moves from this general statement towards an understanding of the specific performance tasks of the singer, as well as the skills and competences required to carry them out.

Towards a Singer's Curriculum

Performing a song, Balk suggests, is 'the most complicated possible performance task' (9). It is, however, fairer to say that performing a song is an amalgamation of a number of distinct performance tasks rather than a single undertaking. As the preceding analysis has shown, the singer is simultaneously maintaining a performance relationship, producing a linguistic text and a musical composition, embodying a narrator within a supertextual narrative, and engaging spontaneously with both the narrative and the attendees - in addition to any ancillary activities they may be carrying out such as dancing or providing a musical accompaniment. By deconstructing these performance tasks further, this section seeks to arrive at an understanding of the core skills which underpin the performance activity of the singer in songpoetic performance.

This line of analysis follows the contours of Anders Järleby's attempt to formulate the '*grundutbildning'* or 'curriculum' acquired through Swedish actor training

programmes, and thereby to establish a *'grundteknik'* or 'foundational technique' relevant to every genre of theatrical performance (21-24). Through identifying the basic areas of skill and competence required by the singer in order to respond to the performance tasks of songpoetic performance, this section arrives at an analogous model of a singer's curriculum. As in Järleby's study, this model is not prescriptive - designed to suggest acceptable or preferred styles of performance - but enabling, designed to furnish the individual singer, the song-pedagogue, and the researcher with the conceptual tools to approach the problems and challenges of songpoetic performance practice.

An initial model of the performance tasks of the singer can be directly inferred from the foregoing analysis of the interpretive process of the attendee, and can therefore be discussed under the same headings of pretext, text, supertext, subtext and context. The findings from Section B which relate to the performance activity of the singer, and which form the starting point for this analysis, are presented in the diagram below.

	SUPERTEXT Projecting the Narrative	
PRETEXT Establishing the Performance Relationship	**TEXT** Producing the Live Song	**CONTEXT** Relating the Performance Activity to the Attendees
	SUBTEXT Embodying the Narrator	

Fig. 4 Initial Model of the Performance Tasks of the Singer

The Singer and the Pretext: Establishing the Performance Relationship

This study has defined songpoetic performance as a relationship between performer and attendee; this relationship, however, does not come into being by itself, but must be prepared and initiated by the performer before the performance activity commences. As Sven Kristersson suggests, the singer ‘works towards this meeting’ with the attendees ‘from the very first moment’ of their preparation (335). Viewed in this light, the establishment of the performance relationship can be seen as a pretextual performance task which covers the same span of time as the attendee’s pretextual interpretive activities: from the moment at which the performance is conceived, to the point at which the performance activity begins. This broad task is here divided up along a timeline, which begins with the initial conception and organisation of the performance, moves on to the curating of its programme, through the initiation of the performance relationship in the arena of performance, and ending with the introduction of the live song.

As shown in Section B, the venue and the type of arrangement which frame a performance can either facilitate or inhibit the establishment of a songpoetic performance relationship. The singer’s influence in this area can be understood with reference to Hansson and Carpenter’s notion of ‘relational competence’, borrowed from psychology, which encompasses the ‘characteristics of the individual that facilitate the acquisition, development, and maintenance of mutually satisfying relationships’ (75). This is adapted here to suggest that the singer can employ an understanding of the backgrounds, needs and expectations of their attendees in

order to arrange performance conditions conducive to the establishment of a performance relationship from which they can derive value. For example, as part of an NSV performance tour, I had been asked to organise a concert for a class of young school children in a small hamlet in Finland. It quickly became clear that our standard one-hour sit-down-in-the-hall type arrangement would not be suitable, due to relational factors such as the language barrier, the reduced attention span of this age group, and their unfamiliarity with this form of cultural encounter. Instead, we invited them on a 'school trip' style excursion to their local library, where song performances were interspersed with storytelling and sensory activities. The glowing feedback we received from the librarians and the class teacher suggests that we were able, through adapting our framing of the performance, to facilitate the establishment of a mutually satisfying performance relationship. This shows how the first point of influence at which the singer can begin to shape the performance relationship is through the organisation of the performance encounter, by making use of relational competence.

Whilst it is true, as one former NSV student points out, that singers are not always at liberty to organise their own performances, greater agency is typically afforded to singers in curating their programme of songs (student interviews). The importance of song choice to the singer became evident during *vistolkning*, where one fellow student was pressed to define what had motivated them to prepare a particular song. The singer replied, without conviction, that he 'liked the melody', which exposed his choice as poorly motivated; Sture Ekholm, the instructor, then prompted him to find a reason to sing which was so well-grounded that the singer should feel as though this song 'was the most important thing the audience had even heard' (*vistolkning*). After

some reflection, the singer sang again, and now the class sat up in their stools and listened, for the physical and emotional commitment of his performance was striking. Here, as Hemsley puts it, a well-motivated song choice allowed the 'raw material' of the singer's physical energy and motivation to surface in a form which could be hermeneutically significant for others (25). Song choice thus provides a vital link between the singer's own motivation to perform, and the outcome of the attendee's interpretive process.

At the NSV, the ability to make well-founded song choices was cultivated through dedicated sessions of personal-philosophical discussion known as '*visliv',* or 'the songpoetic life', where students were prompted to explore the root of their own relationship to songpoetry. Through debating questions such as 'why do I wish to perform?' and 'where do I stand in relation to the songs I choose to sing?' students learned to reflect more deeply upon the motivations which drive their own creative practice. This in turn allowed them to select songs which could tap into this motivation and help them achieve a greater intensity of personal and emotional engagement in their performances. These are referred to by Ola Sandström as 'conceptual skills', relating to the singer's understanding of the nature and mechanics of their art form.

A second area of conceptual skill which the singer draws upon in making song choices can be seen through the lens of the example given above, where an NSV student wished to perform English contemporary popular music for an audience of elderly Swedes. My own contribution to that performance was a modernised translation of *visa* a classic called '*Min Polaren Per';* my version contained cockney

rhyming slang, graphic innuendos and some very foul language. Halfway through the first verse, I became aware of how ill-judged my song choice had been, and proceeded to sing the remaining six verses as politely as I could to an audience of frowning, disapproving faces. What I had failed to appreciate was that this group of attendees was unwilling to engage with a performance which exhibited a lack of respect for both their *visa* tradition and their social mores. What this implies is that song choice depends not only on activating the singer's motivation to perform, but also on the ability of the singer to make an accurate judgement as to which songs particular groups of attendees would be able to interpret and derive value from. This should be considered a core conceptual skill in songpoetic performance.

The actual initiation of the performance relationship in the arena of performance is not as straightforward as simply stepping out onto the stage. During *vistolkning*, an often-heard admonishment, directed at performers who had entered and begun singing without first engaging the attendees, was 'make contact with the audience!' - students were taught that initiating the performance relationship meant making an active claim to the attendees' attention (Juul, Løseth 4). Jimmy Ginsby provides an example: he relates that one of his students was a highly competent musician, yet struggled to engage the attendees in a performance relationship due to her acute stage fright. Over the course of numerous sessions of *vistolkning*, he asked her to shift her gaze slowly from a point on the floor at her feet, to the feet of the attendees, to a point above their heads, before finally engaging them directly, face-to-face (Ginsby). What the singer is in fact cultivating here are the practical aspects of relational competence: the ability to physically and verbally present oneself as a performer before a group of attendees. Ginsby went to such lengths to address this

issue because this is a vital skill which directly impacts the attendee's degree of engagement in the performance relationship, and thereby their ability to derive value from the performance.

The final intervention the singer can make to shape the attendee's interpretive process before the performance activity begins is to introduce the live song they are about to perform through a direct address. This is not mandatory, but there is, as noted in Section A, broad scope for employing the direct address in order to 'create the preconditions for the active participation of the attendees' (Kristersson 276). Whether this takes the form of an anecdote, a polemic, a story, or an informative bulletin, the skills required are the same basic skills involved in rhetoric and presentational public speaking. A closer analysis of these skills falls outside the bounds of this study, but they have been explored elsewhere by a range of speakers and scholars, for example Michael Weiss' wide-ranging 2015 book *Presentation Skills* (Weiss).

Whilst it may seem counterintuitive to include rhetorical skills in a model of the singer's curriculum, it should be stressed again that these direct addresses are a form of performance activity in their own right. The singer who employs interpolated speech should therefore do so with artistic intention and an awareness of how this can shape the experience of the attendees. For instance, a number of my fellow students at the NSV objected that they were unable to derive value from the concert of a highly-respected guest performer due to certain comments made in his introductory remarks which they had construed as discriminatory. Conversely, as in the example of the time-travelling cyborg given above, there were many occasions

during *vistolkning* where performers delivered an introductory direct address in character, in the role of the narrator, thereby projecting the narrative realm before the song had even begun. These examples show that the singer who employs the direct address performs not only as a singer, but as a rhetorician and an actor as well, whose speech has a significant influence upon the outcome of the performance relationship.

A preliminary conclusion which can be drawn from the preceding discussion is that the pretextual performance task of establishing the performance relationship requires a range of conceptual skills, rhetorical skills and relational competence. The application of these skills enables the singer to frame the performance, curate a programme, initiate a performance relationship, and introduce their live songs in such a way as to facilitate the attendee's derivation of value from the performance relationship.

The Singer and the Text: Producing the Live Song

In Section B, the attendees' interpretive process was found to centre upon the linguistic and musical structures of the live song, which formed a basis for further super-, sub-, and contextual interpretive activity; this implies that the singer's primary task in songpoetic performance is the production of the live song. Deconstructing this performance task begins, as in Section B, by making a distinction between the singer's manifestation of a song's linguistic text and that of its musical composition. Whilst, in performance, these two are welded together in an integrated whole, they are discussed separately here as they rely on the simultaneous application of two distinct sets of skills. This runs parallel to a distinction made in Nordic performance

discourse related to the term '*gestaltning*', which translates as 'manifestation in performance': both at the NSV, and elsewhere, '*språklig*' or linguistic *gestaltning* is frequently differentiated from musical *gestaltning* in the performance of song (Helander 9).[14]

Whilst, on the surface, the musical activity of the singer appears to be limited to singing the melody, the discussion of musical text in Section B makes clear that a melody does not exist in isolation, but is interpreted according to its movement through musical time and space. This means that the task of singing the melody also includes the task of establishing the temporal-spatial framework of the music.[15] The ability to layer rhythms and pitch relationships to form the dimensions of music, and to adapt the quality of melodic movement within them, are skills which fall under Roger Treece's term 'musical fluency' (Treece). The importance of musical fluency to the singer is demonstrated by Ola Sandström, who relates that his three years of conservatory study in classical song were devoted entirely to building up skills in these areas, to the exclusion of almost any other form of training (Sandström). Whilst this clearly represents a pedagogical imbalance, it nevertheless highlights the degree to which musical fluency is a prized quality for singers, which has a profound positive impact on the ability of the attendee to pay attention to, and derive value from their performance.

The particular skills which enable the singer to firmly and flexibly establish the dimensions of music and to manipulate the movement of a melody within them are

[14] To avoid misunderstanding, it is important to note that the term '*gestalt*' has been employed in English to carry other meanings, notably by Phillip Zarrilli (49-50).
[15] The issue of musical accompaniment will again be set to one side, for, as argued in Section B, the accompaniment is not integral to songpoetic performance.

well understood and largely encompassed by existing music theory. As such, they do not warrant detailed consideration here. An informative account of these skills can, for example, be found in Philip Lambert's work, *Principles of Music* (Lambert). These musical skills go hand-in-hand with the vocal skills required in order to represent musical structures and relationships with the human voice, consideration of which is reserved for the discussion of subtextual performance tasks, below.

The manifestation of a song's linguistic text, on the other hand, is a performance task which has been widely undervalued in contemporary song pedagogy. Its importance to the attendee became clear in Section B, when it was shown that the interpretation of narrative rests upon the formalistic interpretation of language. This was in turn shown to depend upon the attendee's ability to grasp the language of the live song at the first hearing. It is therefore, as Sven Kristersson implies, incumbent on the singer to produce language which is 'immediately comprehensible for the attendees' (8).

In theatrical performance, the cultivation of clear speech has long been considered an essential part of actor training. This is shown by the recent rehabilitation of formal speech training at acting schools in Sweden, for instance through the introduction of Cicely Berry's methods at the Stockholm School of Dramatic Arts (Helander 17). In songpoetic performance, however, this is an area in which, according to Hemsley, 'there has been a steady decline' since the early twentieth century (84). It is my understanding from conversations with former students at leading British institutions such as the Brighton Institute of Modern Music, the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance, and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, that they offer singers no formal training in this area whatsoever. This is pedagogically indefensible, for

clear diction is not less, but more important for singers than for actors. Singers' manifestation of language takes place within predefined musical structures, and the singer must therefore work harder to make their language understood, as in the example in Appendix (v) where the singer had to balance the linguistic metre with the melodic stress in the word '*solen'*. The importance of this basic linguistic skill to the singers' curriculum ought to be much better reflected in songpedagogical practice.

As important to the attendee as clear articulation is clarity of structure. For the singer, achieving clarity of structure involves not only representing the grammatical divisions of the text - 'singing the punctuation' (Ekholm) - but also manifesting what Rodenburg calls the 'verse structure: the skeleton that holds that shape of a poem together' (153). This skeleton is analagous to the dimensions of music, in that it is constructed of metric, clausal, periodic, rhetorical and stanzaic structures layered over one another in the composition of a text. The singer's task is to lift these structures off the page and manifest them within the macro-intonational patterns established by the melody. One example of how this works in practice is the way Bertolt Brecht notated his songs using a self-devised system without time-signature or bar lines, which fixed the 'rhythm, stress, pitch, timbre, pauses, phrasing, dynamics, tempi and intonations of his poetry in a musical setting' (Kowalke 59). He thereby, as Rodenburg puts it, erected a 'linguistic scaffolding' around the pitches of the melody (154). For the singer to build this scaffolding for themselves, they are reliant on the poet's ability to recognise the presence and function of grammatical structures, thought structures and literary devices in the composition of a songtext. Singers ought therefore to be trained in the rudiments of poetic composition.

A singer's training should not, however, be limited to the separate cultivation of linguistic and musical skills, but also cover the integration of language and music in performance. This can be seen in contrasting two sessions of *vistolkning*. In the first, an instructor intervened in the performance of an adept and musically fluent singer to make her aware that her musical stresses were rendering words, phrases - and thereby narrative - incomprehensible. Conversely, during one of my own performances, I was praised for the clarity of my handling of the language, but it was pointed out that this overly-linguistic delivery was obscuring the contours of the melody, and thereby flattening the music and the atmosphere of the song. In both cases, the musical and linguistic texts were poorly integrated; in both cases, the instructor helped the singer re-negotiate the balance between them, such that the attendee could interpret both together and thereby lay the foundations of narrative. This shows that the singer must work actively to integrate language and music in performance such that, in the words of Ruth Wilhelmina Meyer, they 'point in the same direction' (Meyer).

In order to achieve this balanced integration, a particular set of integrative skills are required which combine a poet's appreciation of the music of language with a composer's understanding of the language of music. On the one hand, the singer should be able to work with the musical properties of language, which Bjerstedt refers to as its 'musicality' (86). Sven Kristersson highlights, for instance, the importance of the 'musical parameters of verse: rhythm, sound, tempo, (and) melody' (158); Mossberg notes that the 'musical importance of metre in sung poetry cannot be overlooked' (11), and that even sub-verbal patterns of vowels and consonants can be treated as 'compositional elements' which the singer can use to

bring the language and the music together (Traven qtd. in Mossberg 75). Conversely, the singer must employ the linguistic - or, as Zbikowski terms them, the ‘grammatical’ - aspects of music in fulfilling this same task, striving actively to weave the syntax of the music and the syntax of the language into an integrated whole (1).

The foregoing paragraphs reveal the need for a broadening out of songpedagogical practice to focus on achieving a more stable balance between language and music in performance. In addition to the musical skills which are already well-cultivated, singers should be trained to work rigorously with language, and to combine these two disciplines in the way they are uniquely combined in the performance of song. Cultivating these musical, linguistic and integrative skills would better equip singers to fulfil the textual performance tasks of manifesting a song’s linguistic text, manifesting its musical composition, and of integrating them together in performance.

The Singer and the Supertext: Projecting the Narrative

As shown in the initial model drawn up at the beginning of this section, the basic supertextual performance task of the singer is the imaginative projection of the narrative of a live song through time and space. This follows from the contention in Section B that the spatial and temporal dimensions of narrative are layered over the dimensions of music and those of the physical world in the attendee’s experience of performance. In order to deconstruct this performance task further, the singer’s preparatory interpretation of narrative is considered first, leading into a discussion of the singer’s projection of narrative live in performance.

The central importance of the singer's projection of narrative in songpoetic performance can be seen through one of the most frequent of all *vistolkning* interventions. Time and again, instructors would intervene to pose questions which stimulated the performer to define and interpret the narrative, such as 'who is speaking?', 'what's actually happening in this scene?', or 'why is the narrator telling us this?' (*vistolkning*). This resulted, almost invariably, in the narrative actions, characters and scenes becoming more tangible to the attendees in the room, as the singer began to project the narrative through time and space. In actor training, 'answering questions' in this way in order to stimulate narrative interpretation is a widely-used technique which can be traced back to Stanislavsky (Järleby 311); applied to songpoetry, it represents a pedagogical innovation which should be carried further. The implication which can be drawn from this exercise is that the attendee's interpretation of narrative depends to a large extent on the singer's own interpretation of narrative.

In a real performance situation, however, the singer does not have the opportunity to stop and consider the narrative of what they are singing, as in the interventions above. It follows that an important aspect of the role of the singer is to conduct a preparatory interpretation of narrative in advance of performance. On this point, Kristersson recommends that singers undergo a 'gigantic textual analysis' as a 'starting point' in their preparations (273). Keve Hjelm describes a similar process of 'deep reading', whereby the singer interrogates the text in order to explore its narrative possibilities (qtd. in Järleby 38). One of my own *vistolkning* performances demonstrates this in practice. In advance of the session I conducted a detailed close reading of the songtext, using analytical tools from my studies in linguistics and

literature. This involved, for instance, plotting the entry and exit points of the different characters, and identifying precisely how each character's role was anchored in the language. The result in performance was the only session of *vistolkning* I witnessed where the instructor felt they had nothing to add to the performance, and no interventions were made. I was asked simply to repeat the song, and having done so, received feedback from the attendees that the space around me in the room had been transformed into the scenes and realm of the narrative. This reveals the degree to which the singer's narrative preparation underlies their projection of narrative in performance. It also shows that the skills of musical and literary interpretation cultivated by academics are not limited to scholarly application, but can be applied with great benefit in preparation for performance.

At the centre of the singer's preparatory interpretation of narrative is their interpretation of the figure of the narrator. This became apparent in Section B, when it was noted that the narrator is the only aspect of narrative which is physically embodied on the stage. One approach to the task of interpreting the narrator, pioneered by Stanislavsky and adapted to song pedagogy by Gunilla Gårdfeldt, is for the singer to take up the role of the narrator and improvise answers to a series of general questions, ranging from basic identifiers such as 'who am I? Where am I? What do I want?' to more nuanced enquiries such as 'what secrets do I have?' or 'how do I vary the means I employ to achieve my objectives?' (176-179). What is significant here is not so much the responses themselves, as the fact that formulating them stimulates the singer to imagine the narrator as a living character with an existence beyond the scenes and actions of the text. This thereby prepares the singer to embody the narrator within the song.

The singer's interpretation of the narrator is complicated, however, by the fact that the songpoetic narrator has a dual function, as both communicator of and participant in the narrative. A songpoetic narrator can move freely from describing a scene to speaking within it, and is also able to shift fluidly between first person speech and the embodiment of tertiary characters; as Kim Kowalke puts it, the 'poetic persona shares the stage with the protagonist(s)' (75). This has important implications for the singer, for in order to enact this dual role, they must, as shown in Section B, blend what Anders Järleby calls *'berättende*' (narrating) and '*gestaltende*' (dramatic, or embodying) theatrical forms (287). In order to manifest these narrative shifts in performance, the singer needs to be able 'to recognise where narration ends and embodiment begins' (289).

The need for the singer to navigate the boundary between narration and embodiment can be seen from one *vistolkning* performance in which the narrator was a policeman who, for the first three verses, tells the story of how a heroin addict had been locked up in a cell overnight, in the first person plural. In verse four, however, the policeman begins reading out a letter written by the addict, thereby embodying him as a tertiary character through to verse eight. At this point, the letter ends and the narration of the story continues, now in the first person singular. Manifesting these developments in performance requires both a shift of character - from the policemen to the addict and back - and a corresponding shift from narration to embodiment and back, in the middle of the song. It also requires the narrator to shift from speaking on behalf of a whole police corps to speaking on behalf of himself as an individual. The song loses much of its potency if these narratological shifts are

neglected, for the dramatic tension between the lawless junkie, the sympathetic policeman, and the police as a collective force depends upon them being embodied on the stage together. The ability to recognise and manifest narratological shifts in performance is thus shown to be a central interpretive skill for the singer in songpoetic performance.

The singer's live embodiment of the narrator in performance will be considered in more detail under its own heading, below. Focus now turns to the way in which the singer brings their preparatory interpretation of narrative to bear on the stage through the projection of the scenes and actions of the narrative. As in the foregoing discussion of the dimensions of music, distinction is made here between the projection of narrative through space, and projection through time, since these require the employment of two distinct sets of skills.

The singer's projection of narrative through space, and the imaginative skills which underlie it, can be understood with reference to Kristersson's concept of the performer's '*upplevelsesförmåga'*, which could be translated as their ability to experience imagined sensory stimuli (229). If, for example, the narrator is protesting in a crowded square, the singer, in order to project this narrative through space, should be able to feel the press of bodies, smell the sweat in the air, see the banners and placards, to hear the chanting. Whilst Kristersson seeks to relate this sensory activation to the performer's 'stage presence' (229), an alternative reading is that the singer's imaginative projection in performance stimulates the imaginative activity of the attendees. This then gives scenic life and presence not to the singer, but to the narrator within the narrative.

This idea can be developed further by considering one *vistolkning* intervention relating to a narrative which involved a lover confessing infidelity to his partner. After an unfocused initial performance, the instructor set up two chairs opposite one another a metre apart on the stage, placing the singer on one and an attendee on the other. The performer was instructed to sing directly to this attendee, imagining her to be the narratee to whom he was confessing; the immediate result was that the parallel between the situation on the stage and the narrative situation at once made the narrative clearer and more specific. Thereafter, the stools were withdrawn and the singer was instructed to address their song to an imagined narratee, with comparable results. Here, the degree of the singer's imaginative activity corresponded directly to the degree to which the characters and scenes of the narrative became tangible for the attendees. This suggests that the ability to experience imagined sensory stimuli whilst performing should be considered one of the singer's key imaginative skills.

The projection of narrative through time is intimately related to the singer's ability to maintain concentration. During *vistolkning,* it was possible for the instructor to pinpoint with a surprising degree of accuracy the moment at which a singer had lost focus, which suggests that the level of the singer's concentration and the level of the attendees' engagement are intimately linked. Conversely, one of my own examination performances at the school provides an example of what happens when concentration intensifies. For the first three verses, my imaginative activity was diffuse, limited to scattered images and sensations. In verse four, however, these diverse impressions cohered for me into an imagined experience which ran parallel

to the song's narrative for the remainder of the performance. This was clearly reflected in the post-performance feedback, where various attendees reported that, halfway through, the song appeared suddenly to 'come to life'. What this suggests is that the singer's projection of narrative involves not only experiencing imagined sensations, but weaving these stimuli together into a coherent sequence, and thus maintaining concentration upon them.

Some approaches to acting demand that the performer 'experience the dramatic circumstances of the narrative throughout the entire performance', concentrating upon them to such a degree that 'fiction becomes reality' (Järleby 305, 279). In songpoetic performance, this can be thought of as an ideal rather than a standard of practice. The object, after all, is not for the singer to experience the narrative as fully as possible, but for the attendee to do so: for the singer to concentrate fully on this one performance task would involve neglecting the others, and thereby inhibiting the attendee's interpretive process. There is even evidence to suggest that the singer's concentration level itself influences the attendees, regardless of whether or not the singer is experiencing dramatic circumstances. Gunilla Gårdfeldt shows, for example, that carrying out arbitrary concentration tasks whilst performing, such as counting the number of chairs in the auditorium, can heighten the attendee's experience of a narrative (193-194). This can be taken as a reminder that, in the last instance, it is the attendee, and not the singer, who constructs narrative in songpoetic performance. The singer's projection of narrative can thus best be understood as an aid to the attendee's interpretive process.

In any case, one conclusion which can be drawn is that the ability to maintain concentration is integral to the projection of the narrative in songpoetic performance. Taken together with the ability to experience imagined stimuli, as well as the ability to interpret the narrator and the narrative from the compositional text, these comprise the singer's supertextual performance skills in songpoetic performance.

The Singer and the Subtext (i): Manifesting the Live Song

The discussion of the textual performance task of producing the live song focused on the integration of the linguistic and musical structures of the songtext. This, however, can only be properly understood with reference to the subtextual manifestation of these structures through the singer's body and voice. This is subtextual in the sense that, as shown in Section B, the basis of this manifestation is the physical and vocal apparatus of the singer, rather than the compositional text itself. The following passages focus on the singer's use, firstly of their body, secondly, of their voice, in the manifestation of live songs in songpoetic performance.

All language and tone which is produced in songpoetic performance is, in essence, the result of a sustained application of the singer's physical, muscular energy channelled through the vocal apparatus; this is what Hemsley calls 'the raw material of singing' (19). Balk expands upon this by suggesting that the 'first, basic' physical skill of the singer is that of 'energising' the performance activity, summoning up the reserves of physical energy which can then be used to manifest the performance text (51). It is therefore crucial that the singer has access to these reserves of physical energy in the first place; that they are neither exhausted, nor unwell. Looked at in

this light, the maintenance of a singer's physical wellbeing and vitality can be considered a core performance skill in its own right.

Balk develops this idea further by claiming that the application of physical energy alone is liable to result in inhibiting muscular tension, and that the singer must therefore be able to separate 'physicality, voice, and emotion' (65). In practice, this means that a high level of physical energy applied to a performance should not automatically result in an increase in emotional intensity and vocal dynamic, or that softer passages should not become listless and flaccid. During *vistolkning*, for instance, instructors frequently intervened to make students aware of the point at which their physical focus wavered and the energy levels of their performances dropped. Ruth Wilhelmina Meyer likened such a loss of energy to a bridge abutment collapsing in upon itself, bringing the structure of the song down with it (Meyer). Reading into this, the implication is that the singer should be able to maintain a high level of physical energy throughout the performance, regardless of the textual character of the song, which is to say, subtextually. Maintaining the physical intensity of a performance from start to finish should therefore be viewed as an essential competence.

Achieving physical intensity in performance involves not only the activation of the muscles which are working to produce tone and language, but also the relaxation of those which are not in use. This is a central aspect of the Integrated Mental Training (IMT) programme for competitive sportspeople developed by Lars-Eric Uneståhl, adapted to music performance by Kjell Fagéus, and recommended by Maud Lindström at the NSV. The aim of IMT is to achieve the 'relaxed effectiveness' of the

muscles in a performance situation, such that the singer's entire body is held free from unnecessary, habitual muscular tension, and is thereby available to be committed to the performance activity (Fagéus 85). At the NSV, this was described by the verb '*nolställa*', meaning literally to 'turn the dial down to zero', and figuratively to release the habitual tension in the body before performing.

The distorting effect of habitual muscular tension on voice production has been noted above, but Järleby goes further, suggesting that the release of habitual tension is a 'precondition' for both the performer's 'imaginative activity' and their capacity to engage in 'scenic action' (215, 199). In practice, this view is represented by the acting pedagogy of Andris Blektis, which focuses almost exclusively on the release of tension (Järleby 152); he considered this vital for the attainment of 'scenic presence' (Helander 108). This is reminiscent of the way in which, during *vistolkning,* instructors continually sought to '*skala av'* or to 'divest' performers of their habitual tension. For instance, during one session, my British stiff upper lip was likened to a curtain obscuring both the language and the emotion of my songs. It took many hours of practice before I was able to maintain suppleness in my facial muscles whilst singing, but my own experience bears out Hanne Juul's suggestion that this is linked to a greater clarity and emotional honesty in performance (*vistolkning)*. The ability to perform in a state of relaxed effectiveness is thus not only relevant to actors and sportspeople, but is also a core competence for singers in songpoetic performance.

Channelling the physical energy of the body through the apparatus of the voice in order to manifest the music and language of the songtext - in short, singing the song

- is in many ways the singer's central performance task in songpoetic performance. This link between body, voice, and song is at the heart of the debate around what is commonly referred to as 'vocal technique'. Many established forms of vocal technique are prescriptive, aiming at the attainment of what Fagéus calls an 'ideal sound' or timbre which is faithful to generic convention (48). Ola Sandström, for instance, describes his conservatory-level classical song training as promoting 'normative' vocal expression in pursuit of an ideal 'classical voice' (Sandström). The dangers of such a normative, prescriptive approach to voice technique are made plain by Torsten Föllinger, who relates that his own voice was 'heavily damaged' by a rigid classical pedagogy which took no account of the individual singer's 'body, voice, music, traditions, and artistic will' (Globogat).

In Scandinavia, by contrast, there has been a shift in recent decades towards a problem-solving approach designed to facilitate the artistic choices of the individual singer. Katrin Sadolin, the pioneer of Complete Vocal Training in Denmark, expresses this succinctly when she suggests that 'there is no reason to work with singing technique unless you have technical singing problems' (5). Having completed his classical training, Ola Sandström came to the NSV, where he was taught to let go of any preconceptions of how his voice 'should' sound, and work with applying his actual voice to his chosen song material (Sandström). This resulted in a development in singing style so dramatic that I had to ask him whether I was, in fact, listening to recordings of the same person. In the early recordings, he sounded like a classical singer; in the later, he sounded like himself. This Nordic shift points the way towards a more humane and personal approach to voice technique which recognises that, whilst the basic anatomy of voice production is the same for everyone, and

whilst an understanding and command of these anatomical processes will in many cases prove beneficial for a singer, the uniqueness of the individual voice is such that the individuality of vocal technique must be respected.

In terms of the singer's curriculum, the conclusion which can be drawn is that it is fruitless to compose a list of vocal skills and techniques that the singer employs in songpoetic performance. Instead, each singer should be encouraged and supported to develop the vocal skills they need in order to successfully negotiate between their body, their voice, and their chosen songs. The physical skills which underlie this negotiation, on the other hand, are universal; and the ability to maintain physical intensity and focus, as well as to perform in a state of relaxed effectiveness, should be considered foundational skills in songpoetic performance.

The Singer and the Subtext (ii): Embodying the Narrator

Whilst the singer manifests the live song through their own body and voice, the act of singing first becomes relevant to the attendee when it is interpreted as an aspect of the song's narrative, as evidence of the singer's embodiment of the narrator. This follows from the analysis in Section B which found that the singer adopts the role of the narrator within the narrative for the duration of the live song. Embodying the narrator is a subtextual performance task in that, once again, it calls upon the resources of the singer, as opposed to those of the song. This is evident in the way in which a singer can deviate freely from a linguistic or musical text - for example by interjecting comments or ad-libs between verses - without interrupting their embodiment of character. The following passages explore the mechanics of this embodiment in greater detail, developing a model which links the 'external' aspects

of embodiment - the singer's modulations of body and voice - to the singer's 'internal' processes - their imaginative and associative activity (Balk 32-33).

The singer's ability to make use of physical modulations in their embodiment of the narrator is more restrained than the actor's, who is free to employ the whole body to execute what Anders Järleby calls 'objective actions' (177). As shown in Section B, the singer is engaged throughout in the act of the singing, and therefore restricted to the more modest devices of facial expressions, postural shifts and small gestures in order to convey impressions of attitude and character. This is similar to the use of the body in the 'narrative theatre' practised by Dario Fo, in which an actor 'sketches and personifies' a whole range of characters, rather than carrying out the actions of a single role (Järleby 307). Hemsley is critical of the use of such 'non-singing activities' in order to achieve physical characterisation and suggests they should be avoided (4). It could be argued, however, that his criticism is rooted in the generic conventions of classical singing rather than an understanding of the performance tasks of the singer. This thesis holds that the singer, in the spirit of Fo, should use, or at least be competent in the use of, 'every available means' at their disposal in their embodiment of the narrator and tertiary characters (Järleby 308). This represents an embracing, rather than a shying away from Rasmussen's conception of songpoetic performance as 'one man theatre' (238).

The impact of physical characterisation can be seen from an NSV performance in which the singer shifted seamlessly from embodying a narrator fleeing through the streets of Helsinki - through hunching the shoulders, drawing in the neck and widening the eyes - to embodying the flesh-eating Moomin who was in hot pursuit -

through opening the chest, lengthening the neck, lowering the brows and opening the jaws. It is worth pointing out that these physical modulations had an immediate and significant impact on the timbre of the voice, which further undermines Hemsley's distinction between singing and non-singing activities. This example shows how the ability to use facial expressions, posture, and gesture to embody the narrator and the song characters is an important physical skill for the singer in songpoetic performance, which helps them to remain active on the stage when their mobility is restricted by the act of singing.

Whilst the singer's ability to embody the narrator through the use of physical modulations is limited, the singer's primary means of embodiment is through the modulation of the voice. The analysis of this topic in Section B concluded that vocal modulations are not significant in and of themselves, but take on significance for the attendee when they are interpreted as a manifestation of developments in the narrator's inner life. This is evident in Sven Kristersson's recommendation that the use of the voice be 'subordinated to' and 'concentrated on the substance of the text' (281-283). What this requires of the singer is not only the ability to modulate the voice - which is an essential vocal skill in its own right, demanding careful cultivation - but the ability to do so in accordance with the attitudes, intentions and emotions of the narrator as these develop through the narrative of the song. Hemsley corroborates this, asserting that 'bland', 'beautiful' singing, however well-modulated, amounts to 'mere vocal noise' if it is divorced from the 'inner forces that direct and control it' (4, 20-24). One reading of Hemsley's comments is that, by uncoupling the modulation of the voice from the inner activity of the narrator, the singer is neglecting the task of embodying the narrator and thereby stymying the attendee's

interpretation of the narrative. This underlines Hemsley's broader point that what he calls 'imagination', and what in the terms of this thesis is referred to as engagement with the narrative, is not 'an optional extra' in songpoetic performance, but integral to the production and modulation of voice itself (cover copy).

On this point, the foregoing analysis of the attendee's interpretive process has shown that attendees are highly sensitive to the degree to which the singer is engaging spontaneously with a songtext's narrative, exhibiting an 'interlaying of personal, emotional, and imaginative responses' to it (Dunbar 65). In the example of the lullaby given above, Sture Ekholm prompted me to imagine the physical presence of a baby during my performance, in order to stimulate my spontaneous engagement with the narrative. In this case, my preparatory narrative interpretation alone was insufficient. It was only once I had begun engaging with the narrative live in performance, and once my engagement was manifested through a unique, unrepeatable combination of physical and vocal modulations, that the narrative became tangible for the attendees. What this implies is that the singer is not only tasked with presenting an embodiment of the narrator, but of executing a live and spontaneous embodiment which integrates their preparatory interpretative activity with the imaginative stimuli generated in performance.

The importance of this spontaneous engagement to the singer was underlined by Sture Ekholm at the NSV. He taught that a singer should always be prepared to surprise themselves during a performance; to leave the safety of preconceived mannerisms, and, trusting to their creative intuition, treat each performance as a new creative act (*vistolkning*). It was striking how often singers would stress, in post-

performance *vistolkning* feedback, that the aspects of their performances which had attracted praise were completely unpremeditated. This suggests that the singer should approach the task of embodying the narrator with a degree of improvisation. In much the same way as jazz musicians improvise a solo by combining and re-combining their repertoire of 'licks' - short, pre-rehearsed musical phrases - Sture recommended that the singer prepare a whole range of possible interpretations of a songtext, which can then be intuitively and spontaneously recombined in performance. Looked at in this way, executing an improvised and spontaneous embodiment of the narrator is shown to be a complicated performance task, requiring the simultaneous application of the singer's interpretive and imaginative skills, linked to their ability to modulate the body and voice.

A still greater degree of spontaneity can be achieved through the generation of associative responses to the live song during the performance. The term associative here refers to the internal activity of the singer which is rooted in their own personal experience, as distinct from imaginative activity which focuses on the narrative. Järleby models the activation and application of the individual's subjective experience in performance using the notion of 'impulses' (278). Impulses, for Järleby, are spontaneous responses generated by the performer which can take the form of memories, associations, thoughts, or upsurges of emotion. Their form, however, matters less than their inherent quality of live engagement and spontaneity: as Schoenmakers' 'task emotion theory' has shown, the degree to which the singer's impulses correspond to the actual content of the narrative seems to have little bearing on the attendee's interpretive process (225-230). Reading into this more deeply, it can be suggested that impulses are derived from a process whereby the

singer's spontaneous interpretation of narrative becomes contextualised within their own inner lives. Here, impulses and associations move beyond the imagining of a fictional narrative into the domain of the personal and subjective - beyond understanding, into significance. This links into one of the main tenets of the NSV's performance philosophy - which dates at least as far back as Cicero (185) - that if you wish to move others with your song, then you must be moved yourself.

The notion of associative impulses is useful in this regard because it provides the singer with a tool which can be used to stimulate this contextualising process, rather than adopting a passive role and hoping that internal responses arise by themselves. Järleby describes in detail the process of impulse training which acting students undergo in order to learn to stimulate live subjective engagement (277-278). Keve Hjelm describes this as 'the kernel of the art of acting', yet the NSV's application of the notion of 'elemental feelings' touched on above seeks to activate the singer's internal responses in much the same way (qtd. in Järleby 279). It should therefore be recognised that this associative skill is no less important for singers in songpoetic performance, and should be cultivated as an essential aspect of song pedagogy.

The ability to generate associative stimuli can only become significant for the attendees, however, when these stimuli have a tangible impact upon the singer's modulations of body and voice, for attendees have no way of perceiving the singer's internal activity directly. For Hemsley, the 'activating of the impulse' is only 'a preliminary to singing' (44). He writes that an impulse experienced by the singer exerts a direct influence on the voice during the musical up-beat at the beginning of a phrase, the 'anacrusis' (49-50). In Hemsley's model, the impulse thereby

determines the vocal character of the whole musical phrase, before a new impulse is formed at the anacrusis of the next phrase. It is, though, difficult to see how a singer can condition themselves to experience spontaneous impulses within such rigid predetermined structures. As in the case of the Method actor who supposedly imagines the dramatic circumstances of the narrative continuously throughout the performance, this appears to be an ideal, rather than a standard of practice.

Yet Hemsley's principle, in any case, is sound when he writes that the 'sole purpose of training for the profession of singing is to improve the connection between the imagination and the sounds that eventually issue from the singer's mouth' (111). Forging this connection was one of the overarching aims of the pedagogy at the NSV. During the early stages of my own training at the school, for instance, I would experience a rich range of impulses and associations whilst performing, yet received feedback from attendees that this inner activity was not reflected in my singing: in a reversal of the example given in Section A, I was informed that the diverse range of emotions I was experiencing were all manifested as anger. As my training progressed and I learned to bridge the gap between imaginative stimuli, associative impulses, and the voice, there was a much greater degree of consonance between my own experience of a performance and that of the attendees. This links back in to Balk's theory, invoked at the start of this section, that the 'highly stylized' nature of the songpoetic form requires the singer to actively coordinate their subjective 'internal' activity with the 'externals' of body and voice (32-33). The ability to maintain coordination between internals and externals should therefore be considered a vital associative skill for the singer in songpoetic performance.

One inference which can be drawn from the preceding discussion is that contemporary songpoetic performance pedagogy should be expanded to include dedicated training to enable singers to activate their own subjective resources in the form of impulses, as well as to cultivate a spontaneous, improvisatory approach to the use of body and voice. This is standard practice in some forms of Nordic theatre training, as noted above, and similar methods could be employed, with only slight adaptation, in the training of singers. These associative skills, coupled with the ability to freely modulate the body and voice from a neutral state of relaxed effectiveness, can be said to constitute the subtextual skills of the singer in songpoetic performance.

The Singer and the Context: Relating the Performance Activity to the Attendees

The foregoing passages have deconstructed the performance tasks of establishing the performance relationship, producing the songtext, projecting the narrative, and embodying the narrator. To these must be added one final, overarching task: that of relating all of the above to the specific attendees at each performance.

The discussion of the value of songpoetic performance in Section B concluded that the purpose of songpoetry lies in the attendee's derivation of value from the performance relationship. It follows that the attendee must be the ultimate focus of the singer, and the object of their entire performance activity. It is not, in other words, sufficient to perform a song with virtuosity and intense spontaneous engagement; Hanne Juul remarks that this awakens admiration rather than participation, which can only keep attendees entertained 'for about fifteen minutes' (*vistolkning)*. In an

example given above, Jimmy Ginsby helped a highly proficient singer to overcome her stage fright, directing her gaze - and thereby her performance activity - outwards towards the attendees. Here, there was nothing amiss with the singer's performance activity, yet what was required for the establishment of a performance relationship was for the singer to address their song *to* the attendees, in the context of their attempts to derive value from the performance.

Where a singer neglects this aspect of their relationship with the attendees, even their most impressive or sincere performance is liable to be 'meaningless' and without value (Kristersson 131). This can be seen in practice in the account of one interviewee, describing a session of *vistolkning* in which an experienced performer delivered a polished rendition of a song in which the narrator invited the narratee to lay aside their inner barriers and inhibitions in order to 'fall together like snowflakes' (student interviews). The initial performance was, as the instructor remarked, very 'impressive', and yet hardly significant or moving. It was only when the singer was asked to set down their guitar, take a step closer to the attendees, and address the opening line to them directly - 'I am only a simple person, a simple person, no different from you' - that these words became resonant. The veneer of a skilled performer exhibiting their craft fell away, and a direct performance relationship between human beings was established, mirroring that between narrator and narratee. The distanced admiration awakened by the initial performance was replaced by an intimate participation, and the effect was so stirring that four other interviewees referred to this performance when asked which sessions of *vistolkning* had been most significant to them. This demonstrates how the singer, through

themselves engaging in a performance relationship and seeking contact with the attendees, facilitates their derivation of value from a performance.

The mechanisms through which the singer relates their live song to the attendees can be understood using the Stanislavskian notion of '*anpassning*' invoked by Anders Järleby, which translates as 'adjustment', or 'adaptation' (280-281). In Järleby's usage, this refers to the ways in which the individual actor's performance is influenced by that of their acting partner, but in songpoetic performance, the term can just as well be taken to refer to the ways in which the singer's performance is influenced by their attempts to relate it to the attendees. For, just as attendees form an interpretation of a singer's intentions within the performance relationship, the singer forms a corresponding interpretation of the development of the attendee's engagement and participation levels throughout the performance. This is a largely intuitive assessment derived from physical stimuli - 'eyes, faces, voices, gestures, and movements' (Järleby 280) - layered over the singer's contextual understanding of the attendees' background. In light of this judgement, the singer should then be able to adapt or adjust their performance activity in order to better facilitate the attendees' derivation of value from the performance.

In practice, a straightforward example of adjustment would involve, for instance, a singer injecting greater physical energy into a performance where attendees show signs of losing focus. A performer might also articulate more clearly and employ a greater range of non-verbal modulations if they know attendees are not fluent in their language or dialect - as I did whilst on tour with the NSV in Finland. A more involved example can be taken from *vistolkning,* when an instructor intervened in an

otherwise lively and competent performance by suggesting that, although the attendees could perceive that the singer was engaged in and moved by the narrative, they were not moved themselves. The singer, it was suggested, had neglected to include the attendees in the performance, to share it with them. The result of this intervention was only a slight change in the singer's mental attitude, of the way they conceived of their relationship with the people around them. But this, in turn, led to an opening out of the body, a clearer projection of the voice through the room and a more engaging use of the face. The effect on the attendees was immediate: we were at once drawn into the performance relationship and into narrative. Instead of a singer singing, we witnessed a narrator opening up and including us in their moving, living story.

This endeavour to actively share the performance activity with the attendees is, it could be argued, the very essence of what it means *to perform*, as opposed to simply carrying out various activities whilst standing on a stage. The example given above demonstrates that this is a skill which can be acquired with careful training, and should therefore be included as a performative skill in the singer's curriculum. Indeed, without this subtle ability, the other forms of training suggested in this thesis may never bear fruit. More than anything else, it is this ability to relate the performance activity to the attendees on which the establishment of valuable, mutually satisfying performance relationships depends.

The Singer's Curriculum

This section has attempted to deconstruct the basic performance tasks of the singer in songpoetic performance. Using the results of this deconstruction, it is now

possible to return to and complete the initial model of these performance tasks presented above, and thus to arrive at an integrated model of the singer's performance activity in songpoetic performance, as in the diagram below:

	SUPERTEXT **Projecting the Narrative** (i) Interpret the narrative (ii) Interpret the role of the narrator within the narrative (iii) Project the narrative through space (iv) Project the narrative through time	
PRETEXT **Establishing the Performance Relationship** (i) Frame the performance (ii) Curate the programme (iii) Initiate the performance relationship (iv) Introduce the live songs	**TEXT** **Producing the Live Song** (i) Establish musical space-time (ii) Sing the melody (iii) Articulate the language (iv) Integrate the linguistic and the musical compositions	**CONTEXT** **Relating the Performance Activity to the Attendees** (i) Interpret the socio-cultural background of the attendees (ii) Interpret the behaviour of the attendees during the performance (iii) Adjust or adapt the performance activity to facilitate their interpretive process
	SUBTEXT **Embodying the Narrator** (i) Maintain physical intensity throughout the performance (ii) Modulate the voice and the body in accordance with a spontaneous interpretation of the narrative (iii) Generate and respond to spontaneous subjective impulses during the performance	

Fig. 5 Complete Model of the Performance Tasks of the Singer

In the foregoing passages, these performance tasks have been linked to twelve areas of skill or competence, which, taken together, comprise the singer's curriculum modelled in this study.

Pretext - Establishing the performance relationship

Conceptual Skills - the ability to apply a developed understanding of the mechanisms whereby the attendee derives value from songpoetic performance to the organisation and execution of specific performances.

Relational Skills - the ability to frame, initiate, and uphold a performance relationship.

Rhetorical Skills - the ability to engage in direct address with the attendees and present both the performance and the live songs effectively.

Text - Producing the live song

Linguistic Skills - the ability to comprehend the linguistic structures of a songtext, and to manifest them in performance.

Musical Skills - the ability to produce a melody and to vary the quality of its movement through the musical dimensions of space and time.

Integrative Skills - the ability to maintain a balance between musical and linguistic structures in the production of a live song.

Supertext - Projecting the narrative

Interpretive Skills - the ability to generate a range of interpretations of the narrative of a songtext from its music and language, and to combine them into a unique, spontaneous interpretation live during a performance.

Imaginative Skills - the ability to experience imagined stimuli generated spontaneously in performance, and to maintain concentration upon them.

Subtext - Embodying the narrator

Physical Skills - the ability to maintain a consistently high level of physical intensity throughout a performance, as well as to alter posture, gesture, movement and facial expression to reflect internal imaginative and associative activity.

Vocal Skills - the ability to manifest the musical and linguistic structures of the songtext through the use of the voice in accordance with the artistic will of the singer, as well as to modulate the voice to reflect internal imaginative and associative activity.

Associative Skills - the ability to generate and respond to spontaneous subjective impulses throughout the performance.

Context - Relating the performance activity to the attendees

Performance Skills - the ability to relate and adapt every aspect of the performance activity to facilitate the attendee's interpretive process.

Fig. 6. Model of the Singer's Curriculum

It is in the gap between the singer's performance tasks and the competences which enable the singer to fulfil these tasks that the role of the singer in songpoetic performance becomes apparent. The singer's role is to find their own unique and individual way of utilising their core skills and competences in order to fulfil their performance tasks. This endeavour requires every one of a singer's artistic, creative resources, for there are an infinity of ways in which this can be achieved; and yet, amidst the wealth of possibilities, the singer must formulate and execute their own response to the tasks of each individual performance, of each individual song. This is the opposite of the prescriptive, genre-bound, one-size-fits-all approach which - as this study has shown - holds sway in certain forms of songpedagogical training. As Järleby suggests, the purpose of a curriculum is not to prescribe a particular style or treatment, but to 'liberate' the individual singer to take and then to execute their own artistic decisions (21). The competences drawn up above can therefore be thought of as a pool from which the singer can draw, in order to meet the diverse requirements of songpoetic performance.

One implication here is that each song, and each performance, requires individual treatment. For instance, a song may have only a diffuse and fragmented narrative, but may be of great cultural and contextual significance to a particular group of attendees, and possess particularly strong subtextual associations for the singer. In this case, the singer's associative and performative skills are more important than their interpretive and imaginative abilities. Another song may have a songtext which is well crafted and aesthetically pleasing, yet vocally challenging for the singer, with limited contextual relevance; here, the singer's vocal and musical skills come to the fore. Building on this, it can even be suggested that determining which aspects of a

song to focus on and which competences to apply is itself an exercise of the singer's interpretive skills, in that it requires making an assessment of the interpretive possibilities afforded by a particular song.

Looked at individually, each of these songpoetic skills is fairly straightforward, but, taken together, what is most striking is their breadth: this model shows how the essential skills of the singer combine those of the musician, the actor, the orator, and the poet. As Balk puts it, the singer is the person who 'has good vocal technique *and* who sings with musical sensitivity *and* good diction and dramatic understanding and who acts well, projects emotion well, moves well and gestures well and is physically and emotionally sensitive and who is imaginative and flexible and, most of all, who can combine all these skills in a single coordinated act' (23). This breadth has important implications for song pedagogy, for it demonstrates that a singer who undergoes training in only a few of these areas remains ill-equipped to meet the requirements of songpoetic performance. This is not to deny that a singer who does not possess all of the above competences can, on occasion, deliver moving, meaningful performances; but rather to suggest that the cultivation of the full range of these skills enables the singer to move beyond the 'strictly limited domain' prescribed by their talents (Rasmussen 177). In practice, following the expanded curriculum outlined above would help the individual singer to develop from 'an artist of circumstance' into a 'conscious artist', able to consistently meet the demands of a wide range of songs across a variety of performance situations (Järleby 18).

Whilst the breadth of the competences included in this curriculum may seem initially to complicate the act of singing, for the attendees engaged in interpreting and

deriving value from a performance, they have the opposite effect: the successful application of these competences makes a performance appear simple and effortless. This echoes Sven Kristersson's claim that 'my poetics has simplicity as its goal' (338), as well as the words of Rabindranath Tagore, that 'that training is most intricate which leads to the utter simplicity of a tune' (qtd. in Mossberg i). Tagore's remark implies that what Hamilton calls an 'aesthetic of simplicity' on the part of the attendee demands an ethic of hard work and training from the singer (24). This is reminiscent of one of the founding principles of the NSV: that - as this thesis has sought to show - any and all of the singer's fundamental competencies can be cultivated through a combination of training, experience and individual practice. The singer who has acquired these competences and can apply them to songpoetic performance will, in the words of Balk, be able to 'fuse the energies of words and music', and, in so doing, 'touch the very core of our collective being' (10).

Conclusion

As outlined in the introduction, the theoretical models presented in this study should be seen as an early effort to establish the contours of a body of song theory. One of this study's main contributions to song theory has been to map the web of relationships which underlie songpoetic performance, linking the performer, the performance activity, and the attendee. This revealed that songpoetic performance is, in its essence, relational; that performance itself occurs through the establishment of a relationship of attention between performers and attendees in which the dynamic factor is the degree of participation. This notion of the songpoetic performance relationship provides an encompassing conceptual framework within which song theory could be developed further.

This thesis found the attendee, rather than the performer, to be the arbiter of value in songpoetic performance. As a result, the models developed here frame the role of the singer in terms of the attendee's endeavour to interpret and derive value from the performance activity. It is this notion of the attendee who derives value from songpoetic performance which gives motivation and meaning to the development of song theory. For if song theory can deepen our understanding of the processes whereby songpoetic performance becomes meaningful and valuable, it can thereby equip us to hold valuable performances, and better to derive value from the performances of others. Song theory should, therefore, be attendee-centric in its very foundations.

Through deconstructing the basic elements of the attendee's interpretive process, this thesis arrived at a more precise understanding of which elements of the singer's

performance activity are subject to the attendee's interpretive attention. The model of the attendee's interpretive process drawn up here is valuable for song theory for the way in which it makes plain the points of contact between the singer and the attendee in the performance relationship. It allows songtheoretical focus to be trained on those aspects of the performance activity which have a fundamental impact upon the attendee's ability to derive value from a performance; on the essentials, rather than the accessories, of songpoetry.

In its exploration of the role of the singer, this thesis found that the singer's performance activity involves elements of music, poetry, acting, and even oratory. In these areas of overlap between songpoetic performance and other disciplines, however, the performance tasks of the singer were shown to differ in many important respects from those of the musician, the poet, the actor, or the orator. It follows, firstly, that songpoetic performance merits consideration as an artistic discipline in its own right, supported by its own body of song theory. Moreover, the boundaries of song theory can thus be said to overlap with those of music theory, theatre studies, and literary studies, whilst at the same time encompassing an area which is unique to the singer and the performance of song.

One consequence of the interdisciplinary breadth of this thesis is that, far from being an exhaustive study, the discussion has passed briefly and heuristically over a range of important topics, many of which merit a more rigorous analysis. One of the next steps in the development of a body of song theory could therefore be to consider in greater detail the possibilities open to the singer in applying their songpoetic competences to their performance tasks. Another line of inquiry would be to explore

the boundaries and mechanisms of the songpoetic performance relationship in practice through a series of experiments and case studies. A third area of investigation could be to survey attendee's responses to particular performances and examine how these correlate with the areas of interpretive activity modelled above. Song theory is an uncultivated field of research, the greater part of which has long lain fallow. I hope that this study has shown that this is fertile soil, in which further study will bear rich fruit.

Beyond academia, the models presented in this study pose a challenge to dominant methods of song pedagogy, both Anglophone and Nordic. Without embarking on a critique of existing methods, it is sufficient to remark that these theoretical models could provide a framework for the development of a more attendee-centred song pedagogy. This would aim, not at the reproduction of generic or stylistic conventions, but at the establishment of songpoetic performance relationships which are meaningful and valuable for their participants. The consideration of the role of the singer in this thesis provides a blueprint for a pedagogy which is more specific about the tasks of the singer in performance, and is therefore better able to equip the singer to fulfil them. More broadly, this thesis highlights the potential for the emergence of a song pedagogy founded on a developed and articulated song theory. This would run parallel to the fundamental shift in actor training described by Järleby from a 'master-apprentice' pedagogy of subjective experience to a pedagogy which revolves around a more objective curriculum (61).

Lastly, these songtheoretical models offer a range of possibilities for practical application by the individual singer. Most obviously, the models in Section C provide

the singer with a means of evaluating their artistic development in the twelve areas of competence. This could help individuals to identify strengths and weaknesses, and focus their practice and training accordingly. In addition, the understanding of the songpoetic performance relationship developed in Section A and the model of the attendee's interpretive process in Section B offer the singer an overarching conceptual framework within which to orient their performance activity, and thereby to develop the conceptual skills which are integral to songpoetic performance. If this study can be a source of inspiration for any performer, and be of any assistance at all in the herculean task of standing up on the stage to sing before an audience, then it will not have been written in vain.

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Appendix

(i) The Nordic School of Visa

The Nordic School of Visa - hereafter referred to as the NSV - was an educational institution founded in 1987 as part of the *Nordiska Folkhögskola* (Nordic People's High School) in Kungälv, Sweden. The school offered a one-year full-time programme in Nordic *visa* performance at the level of the *folkhögskola*, which lies between further and higher education in the UK. In its later years, the school also offered a part-time continuation course, as well as hosting workshops and seminars for the general public. The school attracted students of all ages from across the Nordic countries, and operated a low threshold admissions policy which mixed experienced performers with those who had never previously stood on the stage. The school's teaching was conducted by practising *visa* performers who were drafted in to hold workshops, few of whom had formal pedagogical training. Course Director Hanne Juul ran the school from 1987 until her retirement in 2017. The NSV remains active under new leadership, but has undergone a change of name and

profile. The author of this study attended the school as a student in the academic year 2016/17.

(ii) NSV Pedagogues and Pedagogy

The NSV drew together a wide range of practitioners and pedagogues, many of whom have provided valuable contributions to the present study. Three individuals, however, have played an instrumental role in forming the school's philosophy and practice: Torsten Föllinger (1922-2010), Sture Ekholm (1952-), and Hanne Juul (1950-).

Torsten Föllinger was a prominent - often referred to as a 'legendary' - Swedish song and theatre pedagogue who pioneered a teaching style and philosophy which, in many important respects, prepared the ground for the work of the NSV (Bremnes). He was the son of a classical violinist who ran a music school in Sundsvall, and his own education encompassed both classical song, from the Academy of Music and Arts in Vienna, and theatre, from Calle Flygare's Theatre School in Stockholm (Globogat, Föllinger). In the course of his life Föllinger accrued vast pedagogical experience, instructing professional singers and actors, students of higher education at Sweden's leading institutions, as well as amateur performers, including those at the NSV, where he taught from the school's foundation until the very end of his life.

Föllinger's teaching was significant for the way in which it broke new ground by rejecting a classical song pedagogy based on the imitation of famous performers and the ability to reproduce stylistic norms, which he claims had damaged his own voice as a young man. Instead, he sought to frame song performance as an activity rooted

in the individual's artistic will to share aspects of their inner life, and to 'tell a story' (Globogat). In spite of Föllinger's considerable influence on the performing arts of his time, his teachings were never published, and comparatively little has been written about him. This thesis draws from the scattered commentary which does exist, including a Swedish-language documentary film, anecdotal evidence from interviews with his students at the NSV, as well as the unpublished record of an extended interview conducted shortly before his death.

The foundations laid by Föllinger were built upon by his pupil - and, later, colleague - Danish *visa* performer and song pedagogue Hanne Juul. Hanne was the person who took the initiative for the foundation of the NSV, and led the school as Course Director until her retirement in 2017 (Jangelöv). She devised and delivered a significant part of its curriculum, bearing sole responsibility for the daily running of the school, as well as its broader pedagogical development (Ekholm). The influence of Hanne's philosophy and practice runs through every facet of this songpoetics, and the reader of this thesis will encounter her views on too wide a range of topics to mention here. The author has had extensive discussions with Hanne in the process of compiling this study, as well as recording three hours of interview material covering the whole scope of the thesis. In addition, reference is made throughout to her instruction at the NSV, and she features heavily in research interviews with the school's former students. Hanne situates herself within the Nordic *visa* tradition, where she is a renowned and respected figure, as well as a longstanding member of the Swedish *Visa* Academy. She does not view other pedagogical or artistic traditions as having had a decisive influence on her work (Juul).

The third central figure at the NSV was Fenno-Swedish theatre director, actor, *visa* performer and pedagogue Sture Ekholm, who taught at the school from its inception until his retirement in 2017. Sture was the person who first devised the school's trademark *vistolkning* instruction (see below). As with Hanne Juul, both his views and examples from his teaching are referred to repeatedly throughout this thesis. Hanne and Sture's pedagogical practice, as well as their theoretical understanding of the mechanics of songpoetic performance, diverge in a number of key aspects, sometimes radically. This reflects their different cultural backgrounds, and to a certain extent the differences between the theatrical and the musical aspects of the song performer's art. Sture has claimed that his views are based on experience, rather than theory, and does not view himself as part of a broader theoretical tradition (Ekholm).

Beyond these central figures, this study makes reference to a host of other pedagogues and performers associated with the NSV. They represent the wealth of expertise and experience which came together at the school, drawn from fields as diverse as songpoetic, musical, and theatrical performance, voice pedagogy, written and oral literature, and performance history. These pedagogues have considerable professional authority - a number of them are leading practitioners in their fields - and yet it is significant to note that there are very few direct links between the NSV and the realm of academic theory and research. This is partly related to the pedagogical decision taken at the school to focus on the practical issues of song performance, and to employ instructors who were practising performers, rather than trained pedagogues (Juul).

This disconnect between the NSV and the academy is also related to the ambiguous position of the Nordic *visa* in Scandinavian cultural life. *Visa* is neither considered to be an art form comparable to theatre or classical music, nor entirely a form of popular entertainment. Frans Mossberg contends that this ambiguity is one of the main reasons why *visa* itself has only recently been taken up as the subject of academic enquiry (10). This study therefore seeks throughout to bridge the gap between the expertise and knowledge of NSV's pedagogues and the parameters of academic debate.

(iii) *Vistolkning*

In addition to citations from students and pedagogues, this study makes frequent reference to the *vistolkning* instruction which was the cornerstone of the NSV's pedagogical programme. The first half of this compound term, '*vis*', refers to *visa*; the latter half, *'tolkning'*, is the Swedish word for interpretation. *Vistolkning*, therefore, involves training in the scenic interpretation of *visa*, or songpoetry. As a pedagogical practice, this is an adapted form of masterclass instruction which involves a singer, an instructor, and an attentive audience of any size. The singer enters the performance space, performs one song without interruption, after which the instructor proceeds to guide them through a series of experimental interventions which are applied to excerpts from the same song material, designed to highlight the possibilities and shortcomings of their performance. Each session lasted roughly half an hour, after which the singer returned to the audience, and the next participant was called up. *Vistolkning* was conducted four-to-six hours a day, four days a week, approximately once a month.

The pedagogical interventions applied during *vistolkning* are not selected in advance, and do not target predefined learning outcomes. There was a consensus amongst the instructors who participated in this study that the use of pedagogical intuition in selecting interventions is an essential aspect of *vistolkning.* One consequence of this is that it demands a high degree of spontaneity and responsiveness from both performer and instructor. This, together with the presence of an attentive audience, means that *vistolkning* instruction retains many of the qualities of a live performance situation, and is therefore a highly effective form of performance training. This study's references to *vistolkning* are drawn either from personal experience as recorded in the lecture notes I kept throughout my time at the school, or from the experience of interviewees, who were asked to describe their recollections of *vistolkning* in as much detail as possible.

(iv) Interview Process

In order to access the store of tacit knowledge which accrued at the NSV, thirty hours of interview material with the school's former students and pedagogues were recorded in preparation for this study. Participants were given a short list of questions one week in advance and instructed to reflect on them without preparing any responses. Questions varied from interview to interview based on participants' experiences and areas of interest; they were formulated with the aim of opening a field of discussion rather than soliciting information. This then formed the basis for an informal, free flowing conversation, lasting roughly one hour, which was recorded electronically.

All of the leading pedagogues were approached for interview, and a call was put out digitally for the participation of former students. Students participated anonymously, whereas teachers consented to be named in the study; this was in order to allow students to reflect critically on their experiences at the school. As with the interviews conducted by Karin Helander at the Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts, the purpose of the student interviews in this study was not to obtain a representative sample of the views of the school's student body - which would, in practice, have been impossible - but rather to establish a 'student voice' in the thesis text, to function as a counterweight to and critical commentary upon the views put forward by instructors (11). The students who did volunteer to participate in this study form a heterogeneous group with an age range of more than forty years and an even gender balance, whose experience with the school spans the whole of its thirty-year history. It should be noted that their voluntary participation in this study suggests that members of this group share the bias of being more engaged in the school and its practices than the majority of its students.

(v) Musical Time

The following brief discussion of the attendee's interpretation of musical time proceeds from an initial deconstruction of the temporal dimensions of music into six different levels of rhythm which are incorporated in the performance of the live song. These are: tempo, formed of a continuous series of beats; metre, consisting of patterns of stressed and unstressed beats; the rhythms of the accompaniment; melodic rhythm; pulse, which Thomas Hemsley describes as the rhythm of musical phrase, consisting of breath units (171-181); and harmonic rhythm, which is

determined by the pace of the movement of the music towards and away from its tonal centre.[16]

The most basic temporal framework of music, the tempo, has a direct physical influence on the attendees. Studies in music psychology have shown, for example, that tempo alone plays a significant role in triggering attendees' autonomic nervous responses to music, as well as influencing their heart rate (Krabs et al.). This implies that there is a link between musical tempo and the tempo of biological processes, particularly those of the heart and lungs. It is possible to speculate that tempo thereby affects the attendee's participation in the interpretive process on a primal, physical level, akin to that of the resonance of individual words discussed above.

Tempo can, in addition, be considered an interpretive factor for the attendee in its own right. Slower tempi can suggest rest, repose and reflection, quicker tempi excitement, tension and action. For example, one exercise at the NSV involved singing a nursery rhyme in a variety of imagined settings. One of the most obvious ways in which variations in the imagined setting were manifested by the performer was through variations of tempo: asked to sing as though at a funeral, performers sang more slowly, asked to sing at a party, the tempo increased. Fluctuations of tempo also invite the attendee to adapt their interpretation of narrative, such as when a ritardando - a gradual slowing of the beat - is used during a scene of high drama to create an illusion of time similar to that of slow-motion in film.

[16] It is important to note that tempo is not necessarily articulated directly in the music, but can be implicit, existing as what Duke calls an 'intellectual abstraction in the mind of the listener' (19).

Metre, the second level of musical temporality, provides the attendee with what Vuust and Witek call an ‘expectancy structure underlying the perception of music’, which allows for ‘rhythmic expectation’ (1). If, as this implies, the rhythms of both accompaniment and melody are perceived in relation to the metre, then attendees can derive interpretive significance from the degree of consonance between their expectations as conditioned by the metre, and the actual rhythms articulated in the music. The distinctive rhythms of jazz, for example, are based to a large extent on the shift of the metric stress to beats two and four, which creates rhythmic tension with melodic phrases focused on beats one and three. For the attendees, this instils a sense of forward motion in the music. As with tempo, different metres suggest different qualities of rhythmic activity, which can be interpretively suggestive for the attendee. The physical action of walking or marching, for example, occurs largely in 2/4 metre, and, reflecting this, music in 2/4 is often vigorous and striding, whereas tertiary metres such as 3/4 or 6/8 have a more flowing quality, suggestive of certain styles of dance.

Melodic rhythm - the rhythm of the individual tones and musical events within a melody - is of particular importance to songpoetic performance because it forms the framework for the delivery of the linguistic text. This is evident in one recurring *vistolkning* intervention, in which Hanne Juul used the word ‘*solen*’ (the sun), taken from the opening couplet of a well-known Danish *visa*, to illustrate the tension between the linguistic stress, which falls on the noun ‘sol’, and the melodic stress, which falls on the suffix ‘-en’. This was used to illustrate to students how the tendency to let the melodic rhythm dominate by singing ‘sol-EN’, as opposed to ‘SOL-en’, obscured both the sound of the word, and its full poetic significance for the

attendees. Similar parallels between melodic rhythm and language have been highlighted by Spiro. He writes that the musical phrase - the primary unit of melodic rhythm - is analogous to the linguistic sentence, possessing an 'identifiable beginning, middle, and end' (1). Thus, as in Hanne's example, the attendee's interpretation of grammar and thought structures can be impeded if there is tension between the phrases of the melody and those of the language. This suggests that the attendee's formalistic interpretation of language is, to an extent, conditional upon their interpretation of melodic rhythm.

The broader rhythm of phrases within a melody - its 'cadential rhythm', or 'pulse' - is, according to Thomas Hemsley, significant for the attendee's interpretive process as a unit of attention (175). For Hemsley, the attention of the attendee follows the progress of the melody from phrase to phrase, being renewed between phrases together with the breath of the singer. At the NSV, Ruth Wilhelmina Meyer offered a similar conception of phrasal rhythm as a 'wheel' within the music, invoking the Nordic image of a 'snake eating its own tail' to describe the movement of one phrase into the next (*vistolkning)*. This implies that phrasal rhythm is a layer of musical time which provides fluency and continuity to the attendee's interpretive process. A jolt in the wheel, or a missed step in what Hemsley calls the 'march of the song' can serve to break the concentration of the attendee, impacting both their participation in the interpretive process and the wider performance relationship (171).

Encompassing the rhythmic layers of beat, metre, melody, and phrase is the rhythm of harmony within the music, referring to the pace of movement towards and away from a tonal centre. According to Swain, this engenders some of the most important

'perceptions moulding the experience of the listener' (5). Austin T. Patty builds on this, relating harmonic rhythm to perceptions of tension and abatement within the music; she suggests that harmonic rhythm can be measured by musical 'climaxes' (325-326). In practice, these climaxes are often significant interpretive events for the attendee, and frequently correspond to climaxes in the narrative. For example, in the popular Swedish *visa*, *The Ballad of Mr. Fredrik Åkare and Sweet Cecilia Lind*, there is a poetic *volta*, or turn, between the first three lines of each verse and the fourth. This is reflected in the harmony by a pronounced V7/3rd, which hangs in suspense for a whole bar at the end of line three, before completing a im-ivm-V7-im resolution back to the tonic.[17] Here, for the attendee, the impact of the harmonic and narrative climaxes are felt and interpreted together.

As far as musical accompaniment is concerned, it is difficult to articulate anything concrete about its influence upon musical temporality in songpoetic performance for the reason that it is subject to such enormous variation: accompaniment can mean the jingle of a tambourine or the thunder of an orchestra. In either case, as outlined in the introduction, this thesis takes the view that musical accompaniment is not integral to songpoetic performance. The songpoetic performance relationship can be established and value derived from it without any musical accompaniment whatsoever. Whilst this is not typical of contemporary songpoetic performance practices, *a capella* performances were a regular occurrence during *vistolkning* at the NSV. They were subject to the same range of interventions as accompanied

[17] Whilst harmonic development is often articulated most clearly by the musical accompaniment rather than the singer, most melodies do imply underlying harmonic structures, and therefore possess a degree of harmonic rhythm. A similar V7-im harmonic cadence at the climax of each verse was clearly perceptible, for instance, during one *a capella vistolkning* performance of Mikael Wiehe's *The Girl and the Crow*.

performance, with comparable results. Additionally, as *visa* scholar Karin Strand makes clear, unaccompanied singing was far more prevalent in historical songpoetic traditions such as the '*skillingtryck'* or 'broadside ballad' (Strand). On these grounds, further discussion of the influence of musical accompaniment has been omitted from the present study, although this would provide a fruitful topic for further research.

The six levels of temporality identified here provide a way of understanding the phenomenon of 'an alteration of time' experienced by attendees in songpoetic performance. Their interpretation of the fabric of musical time is woven through the interplay of musical events on each of these levels, creating an alternative temporality which can be both more fluid and more regimented than experiential time. This alternative temporality frames the attendee's whole experience of the live song, and as such exerts a powerful influence on the attendee's interpretive process.

(vi) Musical Space

The attendee's interpretation of musical space is inseparably linked with the musical parameter of pitch. On the most basic level, Kania points out the obvious yet counterintuitive phenomenon that we experience sound waves which vibrate faster as 'high', and slower ones as 'low' (158). The first factor in determining the attendee's perception of musical depth and volume is therefore the range of pitches it employs, known in music theory as 'register'. Hanne Juul made a point during instruction which illustrates this, contending that one popular melody, which had a register of just half an octave, lacked the 'depth' of a melody with greater dimensions (*vistolkning*).

It is not only individual pitches, but also the intervals between them which are experienced spatially. This is evident in the language of music theory, which describes an interval between two adjacent notes of a scale as a ‘step’, whereas any larger interval is considered a ‘leap’. When several pitches sound together to form a chord, the chord seems ‘widely spaced’ or expansive if the intervals between the pitches of a chord are large, and cramped or ‘clustered’, if they are small (Kania 157). From this can be seen that the attendee’s experience of the musical dimensions of space within a song builds upon their interpretation of pitch relationships.

Pitch relationships are not experienced in isolation, however; in most songpoetic traditions, they are interpreted as part of the organisation of musical space within a tonal system. This is effected in Western music, as Morgan points out, by a basic division of pitches into octaves, and further into semitones (529-530); musical scales are then formed of different groupings of semitones within an octave. Morgan argues that it is impossible to describe the features of a tonal system ‘without invoking spatial terminology’; the word ‘scale’ itself, for instance, means to climb or traverse - the Dutch word for scale, *toontrap*, means literally a staircase of tones.[18] Di Bona asserts that the pitches of a melody are experienced as ‘ascending’ or ‘descending’ these scales, in a navigation of musical space on a journey towards and away from a tonal centre (93). For the attendee, this melodic journey runs parallel to the journey of the narrative, providing a kind of interpretive counterpoint. This is evident in the way in which narrative resolution at the end of a verse or a song frequently occurs

[18] It is reasonable to speculate that also the English term ‘scale’ is derived from the verb ‘to scale’, meaning to climb or traverse, rather than ‘scale’ as a noun, which refers either to a flake of skin or a weighing apparatus.

together with a return to the tonal centre, as in the example of *Cecila Lind* given above.

The foregoing passages imply that the attendee's interpretation of musical space in songpoetic performance is founded upon their interpretation of individual pitches, of pitch relationships, and of tonality.