

Bleeding through...

**Compositional processes in the Integration of Middle Eastern and
Western Art music**

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I declare that the 10 musical compositions and the accompanying commentary that constitute this submission are my own work and that the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

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Abstract

This thesis consists of a portfolio of 10 compositions accompanied by a written commentary with audio and video recordings of my works. These compositions span a wide variety of instrumentations from large orchestral works to solo instrumental works, of both Western and Eastern traditions, as well as vocal and live art installation pieces.

Throughout the commentary I explore the continuum of how Eastern traditional idioms and Western art music play a role in the creation of my musical language. This includes an overview of the history of bi-cultural integration and an exploration of the motivations for integrating musics, both in my own work and that of other composers. I explore particular parameters within my works, focusing on the spectrums between composition and improvisation, the concepts of translation and transcription and collaborative practice with Western classical and musicians of Eastern traditional music. Additionally, I examine how my application of Eastern musical parameters and techniques are filtered through four of my other interests and influences: namely, my development of a gestural and timbral language which stems from an engagement with my approach to pitch and harmony.

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CHAPTER 1

Background

European festivals and orchestras have always expected 'non-Western' composers to make explicit the music of their cultural origins. When asking festivals why a certain composer of, for example, Middle Eastern origins was not commissioned or invited, the answer is often that their music is not 'Arabic' enough or 'too Western'. Commissioners do not always know the traits that make up a musical culture; they do not realise that these often go far beyond a composer's use of modal systems, and into the character, gestures, feel, phrasing, finesse, textures and articulations. These musical parameters are not always apparent to the non-indoctrinated ear.

Unfortunately, this Western assumption and perception of Eastern composers is all too common. A clear example of this thinking is expressed in the following article by Ivan Hewett, music critic of *The Telegraph*, with the title, 'Can Eastern and Western music ever mix?'¹. It was written ahead of Param Vir's *Raga Fields* concerto premiere², questioning whether the East and West can ever mix artistically, or musically. In his article, Hewett puts forward a Eurocentric view, in which he challenges integrating Western European art music and Indian classical music. More specifically, Hewett suggests that the word 'music' actually differs in meaning to 'us' (Europeans) and 'them' (Indians), similarly to the differing values of hygiene. To emphasise the superiority and imperialism of 'us' Europeans, Hewett compares the 'poor Indian peasant's cleanliness as symbolic' to the American's notion of cleanliness, using soap, alcohol wipes and hand-dryers. This article, perhaps shockingly, reinforces Edward Said's argument in his book, *Orientalism*, on how the Occident's

¹ Hewett, Ivan. "Can Eastern And Western Music Ever Mix?". *Telegraph.co.uk*. N.p., 2014. Web. 1 December 2015.

² Hewett, Ivan. "Can Eastern And Western Music Ever Mix?"

representation of the Orient was manufactured for dominance and power over it - by boxing the 'silent oriental'³, as he puts it.

The muddled East/West dichotomy

But the situation is far from black and white. The East-West dichotomy is muddled with aspects of Eastern culture permeating the West, just as the West seeps into the East. Even defining Europe can be troublesome, containing, as it does, multiple cultures, a history of migrating empires and cultural occupations that do not themselves possess a linear trajectory in history. There has always been a history of cross-fertilisation, complicating assertions of 'otherness' and 'local expression' ⁴. Rather than an opposition I would argue that the situation can better be represented by a continuum running from East to West.

³ Said, Edward W. (2003) *Orientalism*, 3rd ed. London, Penguin Group, 4

⁴ Burkhalter, Thomas, Kay Dickinson, and Benjamin J Harbert. *The Arab Avant-Garde*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2013. Print., 2

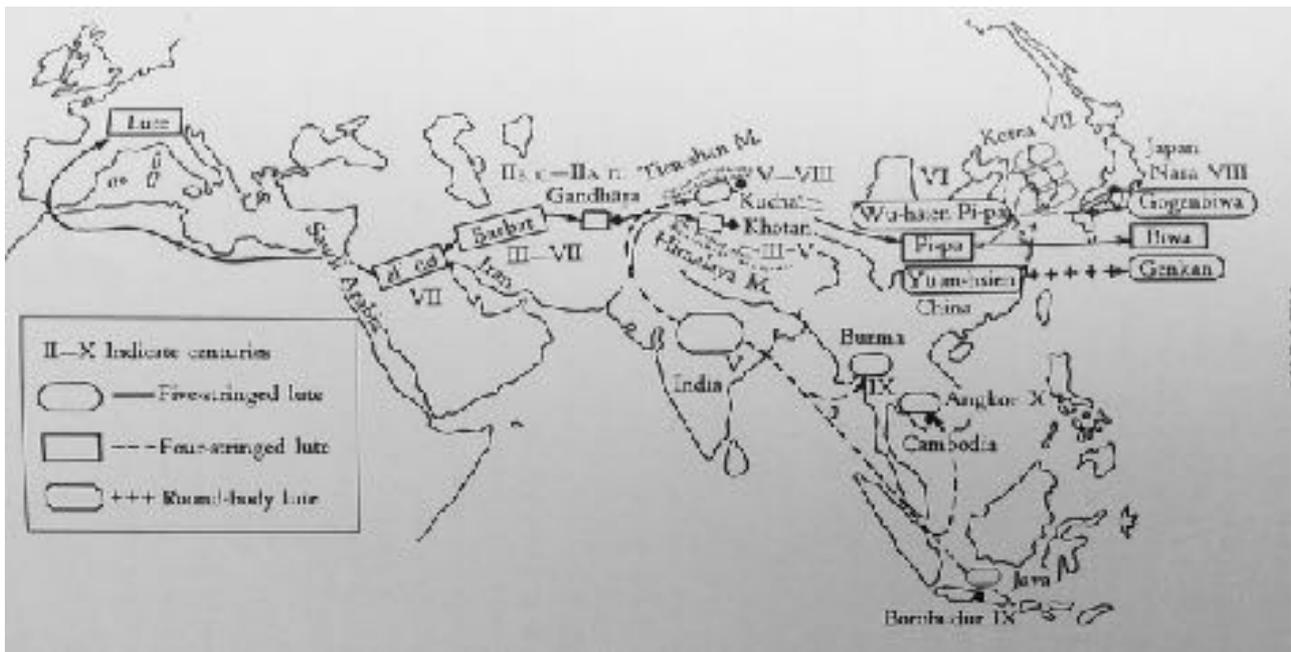


FIG. 1.1 Map showing the streams of musical influence, with a focus on the lute, across Asia and from the Middle East into Europe⁵.

Historically, Western composers have often been inspired by, what is now so often called ‘The Other’. Conversely, Eastern composers, particularly during the early part of the 20th century, often looked to eradicate much of their own culture, by embracing the Western⁶. This makes terms such as ‘inter-cultural’, ‘hybrid’ or ‘fusion’ difficult to imagine in simple terms. Complex motivations - cultural and personal - lie behind these headline words. Furthermore, a composer’s intention of fusing East and West becomes fraught as the meaning of East and West continues to shift today – while equally, from a historical angle, it is noteworthy that the origins of aspects of the musical parameters of Western music used in composition had already betrayed the influence of Eastern music hundreds of years ago. As the composer Mauricio Kagel points out in reference to his piece *Die Stücke der Windrose*,

⁵ Kishibe, Shigeo. (1984) *The Traditional Music Of Japan*. Ongaku No Tomo Sha ed edition, 5

⁶ Pappé, I. (2005) *The Modern Middle East*. London: Routledge, 10

*'What's always stimulating is the relativity of compass points: what is north, what is south? What is south for you, what is north for me, west for an Asian? It's worthwhile considering these questions because then one can expose the results of thinking in fixed categories. Just as we regard our own musical culture as a dynamic phenomenon, we should mistrust rigid and static conceptions of others.'*⁷

Here, Kagel explains the dangers of pigeon-holing musical cultures. He argues that these perspectives are almost entirely relative. Just as Europe's identity does not have one linear trajectory in history and is in flux, he urges us not to be drawn by the Eurocentric assumptions on the fixity of Eastern identity.

Born Into Alterity

As the following quote from *Intercultural Performance Reader* encapsulates, no one culture is pure.

*'How are we to group intercultural when cultural itself is already so difficult to imagine in all its senses?'*⁸

And yet, music of a specific culture can contain distinguishable characteristics, making it *sound* different to other music. This is the basis from which I ask: what are the intentions behind composers integrating music of different cultures and how do we attempt to synthesise musical cultures removed from each other?

My own perspective on integrating Eastern and Western idioms is highly personal, and different to that of Kagel mentioned above. I find myself as an Other in both the UK and Lebanon. I am the child of diasporic Lebanese, an outcome of the country's civil war (during the years 1975 to 1990), I was educated in the West, feeling alien to my parents' idea of home, and alien to their idea of what being of 'our culture' (i.e. Lebanese) should

⁷ Heile, B. (2005). 'Transcending Quotation': *Cross-Cultural Musical Representation in Mauricio Kagel's Die Stücke der Windrose für Salonorchester*. *Music Analysis*, 23(1), 58. Web.

⁸Pavis, P. (1996). *The intercultural performance reader*. London: Routledge. 2

be. Not only is my alterity a result of being born in a land different from my parents', my ambivalence relates to their assumptions of what being of a 'Lebanese culture' should entail.

My perspective echoes that, it seems to me of Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu:

*'without being fully at home in either (traditions)'*⁹

European motives for integrative composition

Complexities of cultural synthesis do not only come from an Eastern composer affected by the west: they also flow the other way. Looking back to the medieval period¹⁰, we can see the impact the East Mediterranean culture had on Europe permeated through Spain's Andalusia (since the 8th century). During the 13th century in particular, King Alfonso X el Sabio of Spain promoted a symbol of tolerance between cultures and religions. The existing cultures were integrated specifically in the Cantigas de Santa Maria, a genre of Galician poetry, which fused different musical parameters used by the three mono-theistic religious communities in Andalusia - the Muslims (or Moors), Christians and Jews. Conversely, during that time, the Mwashshahat, a genre of Arabic poetry made into songs¹¹, for example, were affected by the meters of Spanish poetry. The Arabic poems had longer phrases initially and eventually had shorter phrases which had an effect on the music and created irregular time signatures.

⁹ Langenkamp, Harm, *Close Encounters of Another Kind: Strategies of Intercultural Composition 1960s-2000s*, *Dutch Journal of Music Theory*.

¹⁰ though this is not the earliest example of musical fusion. and considered one of the important pillars of classical Arabic music, studied at conservatoires in the Arab world.

Much later, the 18th Century experienced a rise in Orientalism¹² as a result of the presence of the Ottoman empire. The perceived 'Turkish style' in Europe was inspired especially as a result of 'battle music played by Turkish military bands outside the walls of Vienna during the siege of that city in 1683,' according to the musicologist Jonathan Bellman¹³, though he states that few actually knew what it sounded like. What was perceived as the Turkish style was actually a 'product of the European imagination'¹⁴ – and therefore inevitably a simplified distortion of the original.¹⁵ Subsequent to this Turkish style, the lines became still more blurred in the style known as *Hongrois*, a mixture of music by Gypsy bands from Eastern Europe with the Turkish style. Technically-speaking, the augmented second was a characteristic interval in both the the hijaz maqam from Turkey and beyond and in the phrygian-dominant Gypsy mode.

Two pieces to be taken as exempla of these tendencies are:

- 1) Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila* (1877) in which the *Bacchanale* of Act 3 extensively uses the hijaz tetrachord¹⁶, namely D, E flat, F sharp and G, as a marker of the 'wild oriental'.
- 2) Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sheherazade*.

More recently still, Pierre Boulez expressed the importance of absorbing other cultures: 'not only in terms of musical content but also in terms of the way they are

¹² Bons, Joel. *The Other As Inspiration*. 2014. Presentation.

¹³ Bellman, J. (1993) *The style hongrois in the music of Western Europe*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, pp.13-14; see also pp.31-2.

¹⁴ Bellman, Jonathan, *The Style Hongrois in the Music of Western Europe*, 14

¹⁵ Exploiting the music was not only for entertainment: The imagined sense of the Turkish style also reinforced the Europeans' sense of superiority over the Turks.

¹⁶ Locke, R. (1991) *Constructing the Oriental 'Other': Saint-Saëns's Samson et Dalila*. *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 3 (03). 267. The work cited is Francis Affergan, *Exotisme et altérité: Essai sur les fondements d'une critique de l'anthropologie* (Paris, 1987), pp.103-4.

transmitted - and hence, in terms of sound.' He sought 'another world'¹⁷ in part as a means to go beyond what he saw as the excessive conventions of the Second Viennese School. A pivotal piece for him in this was his *Le Marteau sans Maître*¹⁸, which drew precisely on metallic sounds of the Balinese gamelan, the wooden sounds of African percussion and the breath sounds of Japanese shakuhachi in combination with post-serial pitch practice.

Similarly, the Dutch composer and artistic director of Atlas Ensemble, Joel Bons urges composers to explore instruments¹⁹ not merely as sound sources but also in terms of their cultural background in order to surpass the superficiality. When different cultures are truly integrated, the very vocabulary of our music is enriched according to Bons.²⁰ And yet what is true integration?

Rooted routes

Arab composers of Western classical music are split in terms of usage of 'native' materials. Some present themselves deeply connected to their roots; others attempt to sever them. The Egyptian composer, Halim El Dabh, for example, claims to write his music from the perspective of an insider, being a former agriculturalist and so close to Egyptian rural folk music, which he has recorded. Another Egyptian composer, Nahla Mattar, describes the use of material from her culture as 'inheritance'²¹. Closer to 'home', Lebanese composers, most of whom live in Paris since the Lebanese civil war, are also divided into those who integrate their own Lebanese traditions and those who do not. Zad

¹⁷Music, U. (2016). *Universal Edition: Pierre Boulez "About the Music"*. [online] Universaledition.com. Available at: <http://www.universaledition.com/Pierre-Boulez/composers-and-works/composer/88/aboutmusic> [Accessed 22 May 2016].

¹⁸ Music, U. (2016). *Universal Edition: Pierre Boulez "About the Music"*. [online] Universaledition.com. Available at: <http://www.universaledition.com/Pierre-Boulez/composers-and-works/composer/88/aboutmusic> [Accessed 22 May 2016].

¹⁹ Regarding his ensemble, Atlas, which encompasses traditional musicians from different traditions, often with Western classical musicians.

²⁰ Langenkamp, Harm, *Close Encounters of Another Kind: Strategies of Intercultural Composition 1960s-2000s, Dutch Journal of Music Theory*.

²¹Burkhalter, Thomas, Dickinson, Kay, and J Harbert, Benjamin,. *The Arab Avant-Garde*. 167

Moultaka is a prominent composer in Europe who utilises Lebanese idioms and dramatic forms in many of his works, whereas composers such as Karim Haddad, currently very active in IRCAM, uses mainly Western contemporary techniques in his music, and avoids any explicit reference to his musical origins.

The Ethics of Fusion

There are composers, too, who think that integrating cultures challenges the very ethics of artistic production. The Jordanian composer, Saed Haddad, feels no need to 'reconcile the different cultural streams that have shaped his identity'²². He sees that such integration has the danger of leading to disrespect. Harm Langenkamp in his article *Close Encounters of Another Kind* goes further and asks if it is even possible to "understand" one's own single culture "authentically", any culture being too complex and layered. He writes:

'Does the very notion of 'authenticity' not impose a uniformity on a culture which in reality is constituted of individuals of various persuasions - the one having more power than the other to determine how a culture should perceive itself and its "others"?''

Langenkamp may well be right in terms of cultural theory. But, as a practicing artist, it is the very complexity that forms the fabric of my work. I agree with Haddad in that we should be respectful of Others' cultures in music-making. Still, I feel that our limited capacity to understand, in all senses, Others' cultures should not stop our curiosity and desire to experiment with the different threads of inter-cultural dialogue. This is certainly the case for me. Overall my sound-vision is an expressive rawness of sound - and as I will detail below, my focus is as much, if not more, on character than specific pitch. I am trying to make it by fusing a European avant-garde vocabulary - exploration of texture (closely allied with extended technique), and concepts of harmonic dissonance - with the microtonal inflections, richness and depth of expression in the single melodic line alone of

²² Langenkamp, Harm, *Close Encounters of Another Kind: Strategies of Intercultural Composition 1960s-2000s*, *Dutch Journal of Music Theory*.

Middle Eastern tradition, as well, vitally on aspects of improvisation, again drawn from Eastern tradition, and many nuances of ornamentation. The cultural dialogues and tensions, whatever they may be, are contained in the sound.

CHAPTER 2

ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

In my portfolio, I include pieces that involve both an integration of Eastern and Western musical elements solely written for Western classical musicians and pieces that involve musicians from different traditions - often with Western, Middle Eastern and Chinese traditional musicians in the same ensemble. Integrating musical cultures when composing for each type of ensemble poses different challenges, thus placing them on a point on the East/West continuum.

Expressing Eastern musical ideas to Western musicians

In writing for Western classical musicians, I have to communicate my Eastern aspects in notated form according to the tradition of Western classical music. I do this by transcribing Eastern improvisations and investigating the qualities found within the Eastern sound; whether it involves different tunings, phrasing, dynamics or the change of timbre within the stroke of a bow or the way a flute is blown. In this way I 'borrow' my material.

At the same time, it is clear that by using notation alone it is very difficult to capture the character and especially 'the feel'²³ of the Eastern Other. John Roeder, a specialist in theory and analysis of music outside the classical Western canon, puts the issue well:

*'Transcriptional accuracy may be limited by failing to discriminate significant differences, by imposing foreign conceptions of pitch and time, or by the limitations of the recording itself, which as Levin and Nettl caution, can distort timbre and form.'*²⁴

²³ Bailey, Derek, (1992), *Improvisation - In Nature and Practice in Music*, London, Da Capo Press, Inc., 4

²⁴ ed. Tenzer, Michael and Roeder, John, *Analytical and Cross-cultural studies in World Music* (2011), Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 12

Similarly, Issam El-Mallah ponders that ‘perhaps no kind of notation is really capable of being completely faithful to the (Eastern) traditions’²⁵, particularly due to Western notation’s rigid rhythmic quantisation. This continues to be a productive challenge in my work.

Writing for Eastern musicians - Atlas Ensemble

When working with Eastern musicians, on the other hand, particularly the relationship I built with musicians of the Atlas Ensemble in Amsterdam over five years, I have had to learn to deal with musicians who mostly learn music aurally, and who in general can only read simple Western notation. This means, then, that I have to use a very different approach to communicate my ideas.

One tactic is to have musicians elaborate on a skeletal melody, which I may well ~~need~~ need to put across by singing or by explaining my musical ideas verbally. Furthermore, since most musicians of traditional Eastern musics are masters of improvisation, I have to accept a divorce from authorship and relinquish control over my music to an extent. The author becomes a mediator, rather than ‘only’ author²⁶. The eminent sarangi player Dhruva Ghosh²⁷ suggests that a composer’s notation acts as signposts only, while the musician acts as a kind of consultant. A creatively different relationship is established, with (in this case) the Indian performer searching out the ‘song-ness’ or ‘essential perfume of the Western composer’s musical idea’.²⁸ This challenge gets close to the heart of the divide between the ‘untouchable’ written score of the West and the

²⁵ El-Mallah, Issam, (1997). Arab music and musical notation. Tutzing: Hans Schneider Verlag. 19

²⁶ Langenkamp, Harm, *Close Encounters of Another Kind: Strategies of Intercultural Composition 1960s-2000s*, *Dutch Journal of Music Theory*.

²⁷ Atlas Academy Amsterdam, (2014). In: *Bridging the Aural/Written Divide*.

²⁸ Atlas Academy Amsterdam, (2014). In: *Bridging the Aural/Written Divide*.

'moving' music of the East. And yet perhaps the score is still only a set of movable signs, as the Belgian composer, Wim Hendrickx, implies here:

'There is a big difference in playing the score and playing the music'²⁹

Writing for the multi-cultural ensemble - Ensemble Zar

Within the context of a multi-cultural ensemble, I have to adapt to a method that speaks to both genres of musicians. This involves writing pieces that integrate improvisation with notation, to a lesser or greater extent. In particular with my own cross-genre ensemble, Ensemble Zar, I have looked to formulate a visual language for the improvisatory sections which allows me as director to 'orchestrate' and shape a piece while performing live.

Below is an illustration of the different hand signals to represent different musical gestures and textures I used with the ensemble for the animation film *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*:

²⁹ Atlas Academy Amsterdam, (2014). In: *Bridging the Aural/Written Divide*.

Hand Signals for <i>The Adventures of Prince Achmed</i> live score (see Annex)		
<p><i>Conflicting/Imitation/ Stretto</i></p> 	<p><i>Harmonics</i></p> 	<p><i>Solo</i></p> 
<p><i>Darker, more dissonant chord (with evil facial expression)</i></p> 	<p><i>Percussive (which implies extended techniques, col legno, etc)</i></p> 	<p><i>Octave higher</i></p> 
<p><i>Five seconds before next section</i></p> 	<p><i>Clusters</i></p> 	<p><i>Octave lower</i></p> 

FIG. 2.1. *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* - Hand Signals for live score

I have found (in this work and others) that this system works particularly well in conjunction with a list of musical themes and motifs produced before the final live-scoring. For a core pragmatic challenge of a piece of music that is mostly created through controlled improvisation is that improvisation can impede the unity of composition³⁰. Had I not pre-assembled such a pool of thematic material, the piece would have suffered from being quite directionless. There also need to be temporal frameworks and cues with which

³⁰ Langenkamp, Harm, *Close Encounters of Another Kind: Strategies of Intercultural Composition 1960s-2000s*, *Dutch Journal of Music Theory*.

to work, especially regarding starts and stops. Such work is rare in contemporary composition, but it is comparable to, for example, that of Penderecki's *Actions*, in which an ensemble of top European free jazz musicians respond to the 'actions' and notational stimuli in the score³¹.

Culturally-speaking, my work, and indeed Penderecki's, also highlights the fundamental issues of musical tension that can occur when one improvising tradition is juxtaposed or superimposed with another (notated or improvised), as the percussionist George Barton explains:

*The exploitation of musical parameters that provide a key part of the interest of one music may cut across the interest of another; one musician's desire to explore the melodic possibilities of a single mode conflicts cacophonously with another's long-term harmonic plan; one musician's supporting line is, to another, a deleterious and impertinent distraction from their expressive melody.*³²

But one person's distraction can be another person's positive stimulus. And in my experience, performing Arabic taqsim within the structures of jazz, fusion or, most often modernist Western musical structures - in essence recontextualising it – more often than not there results a new, transformed version of taqsim³³. With the musicians of Ensemble Zar, I find it stimulating and fresh to place, say, an improvising ney solo over a device such as a gradually ascending glissando - and to observe how the ney player finds his 'home' in the improvisation.

Such a search for 'home' is not necessarily straightforward for musicians who appear to be from similar traditions. Intonation, I have found for example, can be an issue when Turkish and Arabic musicians play together: the 'same' maqam is inflected differently and 'compromised' tuning needs to be sought.

³¹ We learn this from the composer's own account that accompanies the recording of the work: "Actions For Free-Jazz Orchestra". Ninatoka.pl. N.p., 2016. Web. 4 Oct. 2016.

³² Barton, George. *Finding One's Voice In A Cross-Cultural Ensemble*. Institute of Composing. N.p., 2016. Web. 10 Feb. 2016.

³³ Racy, A. (2000). *The Many Faces of Improvisation: The Arab Taqasim as a Musical Symbol*. *Ethnomusicology*, 44(2), p.302.

I have also crucially found that when working with Western and Eastern musicians in the same ensemble, there is the tendency for the Eastern sonic aspects to dominate and 'pull the music' towards its identity. I have found too that an increasingly important aspect that I must accept is that I am writing for different personalities, rather than writing for the instruments. This means that each musician brings his or her different strengths, personal and stylistic interpretations on given material, expression markings and set structures. In addition, it has become crucial to select musicians who have the curiosity of the genres of their colleagues in the ensemble and the curiosity to widen their sound palette (including to explore extended techniques). A work such as *Prince Achmed* becomes an orchestration of personalities.

CHAPTER 3

DEFINING FUSION

Others' Ideologies vs Musical parameters

Does a piece of music have to sound Eastern for it to be positioned towards the East of the East/West spectrum?

The American composer, Henry Cowell, for example, once said that he was interested in 'thinking African, not sounding African'. He studied the musical elements that make up African music and he deduced that the three elements are: polyrhythm, call-and-response and inter-locking voices. These structural elements, he concluded, distinguished African music from other kinds of music,³⁴ not only the surface of sound.

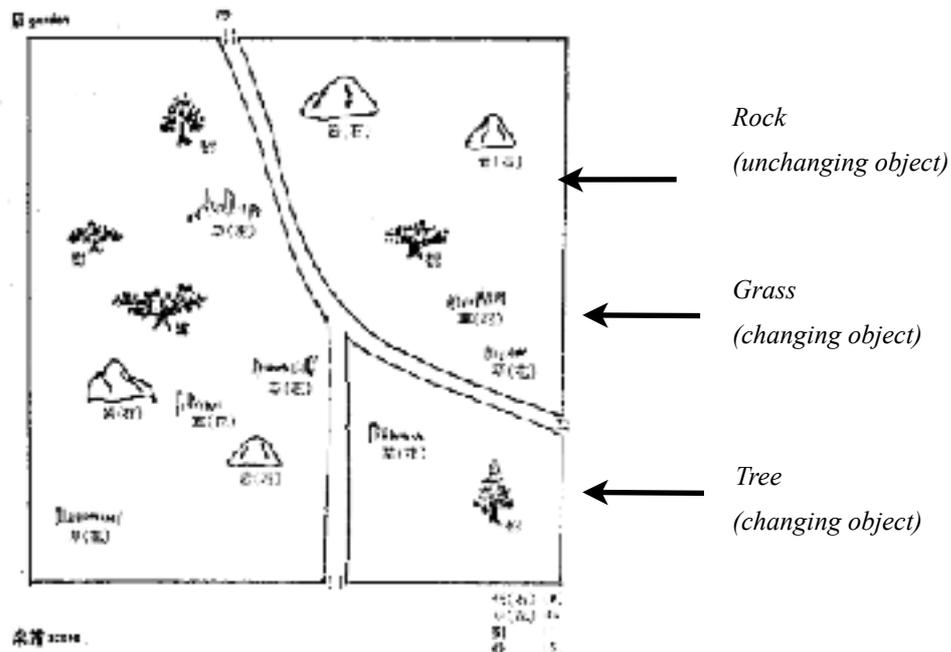


FIG. 3.1. Takemitsu, Toru, Japanese garden³⁵

³⁴ Moreford, James B. *A Study of the Pedagogy of Selected Non-Western Musical Traditions in Collegiate World Music Ensembles* (West Virginia University)

³⁵ Takemitsu, Toru, *Takemitsu Toru no Sekai*, trans. *The World of Toru Takemitsu*, Tokyo: Shueisha, 1997, 176.

Comparably, Cage and Takemitsu both, 'transformed the Japanese ideology into their music'³⁶ rather than directly incorporating the aural result of traditional idiomatic pieces. Both were especially drawn to the precision and form of the Japanese garden, Cage for its relations to Buddhism, Takemitsu for its relations between changing objects (flowers and trees) and unchanging ones (rocks and stones) (see FIG.3.1). In his piece *Arc for Piano and Orchestra*, Takemitsu even manipulates the spatial arrangement of the orchestra (see FIG.3.2). As a direct consequence of his engagement with garden structures, splitting it into four mixed ensembles next to a group of strings and one of brass with each group having its own time structures.³⁷

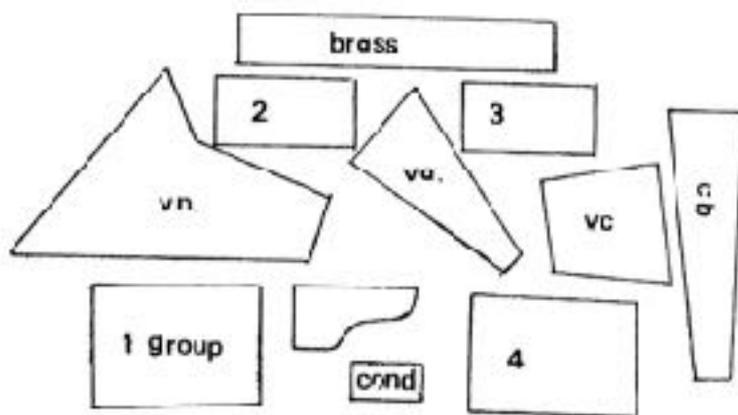


FIG. 3.2. Takemitsu, Toru, *Arc part I*, Paris: Salabert, 1963³⁸

Furthermore, Japanese culture challenges our very notion of aesthetic value. In Japanese music, beauty is found in the single, harsh sound (called *sawari*)³⁹, whereas Western or European music finds beauty (at least conventionally) within a purer timbre.

³⁶ Sakamoto, Mikiko. "Takemitsu And The Influence Of "Cage Shock": Transforming The Japanese Ideology Into Music". Ph.D. Faculty of The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska, 2010. Print.

³⁷ Sakamoto, Mikiko, 43

³⁸ Takemitsu, Toru, *Takemitsu Toru no Sekai*, 176

³⁹ Sakamoto, Mikiko, 28

My own music, both in terms of structures and aesthetics, draws from such models. Indeed the point of departure in my work, *Murmurations* for sinfonietta ensemble, is a single, harsh sound, very much influenced by the Japanese Gagaku ensemble. As the piece unfolds, this sound gradually consumes the harmonies associated with it to produce harshness on a single note.

I may not go quite as far as the Dutch composer, Ton de Leeuw, who has spoken of including the sounds and structures to transcend one's own limiting subjectivity⁴⁰. Nevertheless, I am struck by his powerful thought that in order to create a 'true' synthesis we should 'no longer think of the various musics of the world as being "outside of us" .

Styles of Fusion

How are we able to measure how well 'fused' the Eastern and Western elements of a piece of music are? This is a question which I have returned to repeatedly during the course of my PhD. And I have found it useful, up to a point, to adopt Benjamin Brinner's three types of fusion to address this question.⁴¹

The three types he puts forward are: Contrast, Dominance and Blend.

- 1) Contrast: a piece featuring two musical styles combined that are dichotomous
- 2) Dominance: are styles, he asks, given equal attention or does one style seem more superior to the other?
- 3) Blend: This is the most difficult to achieve. It is where aspects of musical idioms blend well.

⁴⁰ Langenkamp, Harm, *Close Encounters of Another Kind: Strategies of Intercultural Composition 1960s-2000s*, *Dutch Journal of Music Theory*.

⁴¹ Brinner, Benjamin (2009), *Playing Across a Divide - Israeli-Palestinian Musical Encounters*, Oxford University Press, 217

An example of a 'contrast' piece is Takemitsu's *November Steps* for biwa (pear-shaped lute), shakuhachi (vertical bamboo flute) and orchestra. Here, Takemitsu avoids 'solving fusion' but (instead) sets out to confront (cultures), to intensify them'.⁴² He saw that Western instruments and the shakuhachi carry a different set of overtones to each other, 'making them difficult to fuse the two',⁴³. Consequently in this piece, he positions the sounds, even dividing the orchestra, to contrast the Japanese soloists from the Western orchestra; rarely sounding together and only occasionally do the rough high string textures bleed into the shakuhachi's sustained long notes.

A good example for me (and directly related to my own work), conversely, of 'blend' is the Lebanese composer Zad Moultaka's *Zajal* - an Arabic opera (2010)⁴⁴. This work interestingly and grotesquely exaggerates the *Zajal*, an Arabic improvisatory poetic dual, in both the music and the stage set-up. While we see and hear the female singer interspersed with old stars of the *Zajal* on video, we also have on stage the 'poets' or 'commentators' seated in a line in traditional fashion, represented by a largely dissonant brass band and forming a kind of 'chorus' or 'refrain' in between the declamatory poems. East and West are difficult to untangle here, layered in provocative ways. At the same time one can argue that the piece is also representative of the 'dominant' strain of fusion because the Lebanese *zajal* form - ABABABA determines the way the piece develops.

⁴² Langenkamp, Harm, *Close Encounters of Another Kind: Strategies of Intercultural Composition 1960s-2000s*, *Dutch Journal of Music Theory*.

⁴³ Nakano, Toru *Takemitsu, his music and philosophy* (Accessed [25. November 2005]), <http://www.2a.biglob.ne.jp>

⁴⁴ *Zajal* - an Arabic opera (2010) for female singer, comedian, a little 'harmonic ensemble' of brass players essentially, percussionist, electronics and video.



FIG. 3.3. captured excerpts of the opera, *Zajal*, from Youtube⁴⁵



FIG. 3.4. Pierre Sadek's caricature of an evening of *zajal*⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ Rougier, William, (2010) *Zad Moutaka / Zajal - opéra arabe (extraits)*, Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0QSHDYHzxg> (Accessed: 18th June 2016)

⁴⁶ "LAU | News | Celebrating The Intangible Lebanese Heritage Of Zajal". *Lau.edu.lb*. N.p., 2016. Web. 12 July 2016.

Synthesis

How can one create the possibility of a 'true' synthesis of cultures and styles? This portfolio does not propose a single answer to the question. Nevertheless I try to explore various ways to help pose the question more precisely, and in particular to look for ways to identify better the kinds of relationships I, and others, are investigating.

Stockhausen's technique of 'intermodulation' has been a useful metaphor and practice for what I am doing. Just as he considered the parameters of music separately and then brought one into specific relations with another⁴⁷ (e.g. rhythmic structures joined with the harmonic structures of different samples of music⁴⁸), so I have identified a set of musical components, with which I work, assigned them poles and analysed each piece with reference to these poles. Though this may seem reductionist and simplistic (particularly in regard to the complexity inherent in any culture along with East and West having much in common from their respective histories) this is a necessary starting dichotomy, which 'on the ground', piece by piece, is always nuanced, particular and changing. Additionally, it is a subjective dichotomy and, I would say, relating to the musical styles or cultures as they are perceived now. These opposites see the 'Near Eastern' music tradition at one pole and 'Western' at the other, and each piece is placed in the spectrum of values between one pole and the other, according to different components. Often, indeed usually, different elements are at different points in the range within a single work as can be expected in an ephemeral medium.

In order to place these poles – and how my music moves, and explores commonalities, between them - I must first define what I mean by 'Western' and 'Near Eastern'. I primarily define each by how music is made and, to a degree, the substance of

⁴⁷ with his pieces, *Telemusik* (1966) and *Hymnen* (1967)

⁴⁸ Langenkamp, Harm, *Close Encounters of Another Kind: Strategies of Intercultural Composition 1960s-2000s*, *Dutch Journal of Music Theory*.

the music itself. What I mean by 'Western' is the focus on a detailed score in order to express a musical idea, the use of complex harmony and atonality, the use of a conductor when necessary and the use of 'free' improvisation (to the extent that it is 'free' that is), as opposed to idiomatic improvisation. By 'Near Eastern', with regards to music-making, I mean the oral transmission of music and a less refined notation system. With regards to the music itself: a modal system, functional use of a drone, use of improvisation and their varying types (taqsim, irtijal). These are the elements of each genre that I have chosen.

These spectra cover: notation and improvisation, free melody to modality, harmony to monody/heterophony. The spectrum tables I have created will support most pieces in my commentary of each piece in the portfolio, as well as the works of others who incorporate Eastern elements within Western contemporary classical structures. Additionally, when helpful, I will also refer to Brinner's categorisations.

CHAPTER 4

WORKS

DRAMATICULE IV

Dramaticule IV is a mono-dramatic playlet in one act, *dramaticule* being a Beckettian term. It is part of a series of *dramaticules*, including a piano duo, a clarinet trio and another, as here, that combines both Eastern and Western instruments, written for the Atlas Ensemble. This work, as the others, involves elements of 'instrumental' theatre and dramatic form. It also explores ideas about transcription and improvisation, paraphrasing in particular, especially in relation to aspects of orchestration and heterophony.

The piece uses my own transcription (and analysis) of a recording⁴⁹ of an improvisatory taqsim⁵⁰ and mawwal⁵¹ of Sabah Fakhry in *Qoul Lil Mali Hati*, taking the skeletal melody from both. It begins with, and is predominantly in, maqam Sigah, modulating to other maqams during the mawwal. See the maqam written below:

⁴⁹ Sabah Fakhry (Date unknown), *Sigah Qassidat Qoul Lil Malihati*. [mp3] Unknown: Anon.

⁵⁰ A taqsim is a solo instrumental improvisation within the Eastern Arab maqam system.

⁵¹ see next chapter for explanation of genre



Key: E quarter-tone flat - modern notation used in Arabic music

FIG. 4.1. Maqam Sigah

The establishment of the maqam is begun assertively by the Chinese zheng on a tremolo G, followed by the descant recorder in bar 7, and then the duduk on E quarter-tone flat later in the same bar⁵². Melodic duologues (such as those between an erhu and violin) subsequently develop over a bed of drones and are occasionally disrupted. In classical Arabic music practice, the drone would normally be on an E quarter-tone flat if that is the 'tonic'.

In bar 15, the skeletal melody (see FIG. 4.2), borrowed from the qanoun improvisation section of the recording is presented in its simplest form and paraphrased on the Iranian setar and other traditional instruments in the ensemble. I was very interested in the various ways this skeletal melody could be interpreted, how each Eastern musician would ornament, enter and close a phrase - and how they listen and respond to each other. Traditionally in classical Arabic music, skeletal melodies are paraphrased at the musician's own discretion, idiomatically interpreting a simple phrase⁵³. And so also in a sense, the

⁵² *Tmesis* (see below), uses the same Fakhry material and a similar maqam unfolding as its starting point, beginning with tremolo trumpets (which is coloured by other instruments), followed by 2nd flute on F flutter-tonguing, and E flat on oboe (which was originally on E quarter-tone flat in the first version).

⁵³ It is interesting to consider the parallel in the paraphrase mass or motet of the Renaissance, wherein an original plainsong melody was subject to rhythmic or melodic alterations without making it too recognisable.

interest in *Dramaticule IV* is as much or more in the notes that were *not* written, but which were played by the performer while ‘interpreting’ the notation.



FIG. 4.2. *Dramaticule IV*, bar 15, Setar, Skeletal melody

I took this further too in the various dues present in my work: over a bed of drones, and occasionally disrupted by dramatic gestures, they arrive in bar 62 at what I conceived of as the most ‘haunted’ soundscape of the work, involving an improvisatory, cross-cultural, dialogue between the Armenian blown duduk and the ancient Indian bowed sarangi.

And there was a further challenge in terms of orchestration, namely to bring together a large number of instruments traditionally used only in chamber settings. One aspect of my solution was to distinguish carefully between solo and accompanying instruments. The oud and the other lute instruments, for example, were easily overwhelmed in the sea of drones (as in bar 53), and were best used playing direct gestures together.

Where *Dramaticule IV* lies on the spectrum

West														Near East
<i>No drone</i>										X				<i>Drone</i>
<i>Free melody</i>												X		<i>Modality</i>
<i>Detailed Notation</i>										X				<i>Oral Transmission/ Basic notation</i>
<i>Conductor (Western)</i>		X												<i>Unconducted</i>
<i>Harmony</i>										X				<i>Monody/ Heterophony</i>
<i>'Free' improvisation</i>													X	<i>Idiomatic improvisation</i>

Table 1 - spectrum between Western and Near Eastern for *Dramaticule IV*

In terms of *Dramaticule IV*'s position in the East to West spectrum, as can be seen in the above table, most of the values are towards the East. On the spectrum between broken and static drones, the role of the drone is, for the most part, typical of its function within classical Arabic music, that is of being a supportive, fertile backdrop to an improvised melody, despite the fact that it moves away from E quarter-tone flat quite quickly. For monody/heterophony to harmony, the position is largely due to the resulting effects that many Eastern musicians collectively produce, as each interpret their lines. In both free atonality to modality again the musicians' idiomatic and decorative interpretation of the given phrases weight the music towards the East. However, this kind of accumulation and ensemble situation, one should argue, is a Western conception.

The relationship between composed and improvised is that much more complex as it changes according to the place in the work. At most times, the musicians adhere to the basics of the transcribed, skeletal musical phrases – but from bar 62 you will hear in this recording that the Indian Sarangi and Armenian duduk musicians felt more comfortable

ignoring the designated skeletal melody. I, in effect, allowed the various Eastern musicians to colour the skeletal melody according to their own idioms and personalities. The Chinese and Japanese instrumentalists could be treated as Western musicians since they were able to read complex notation and were given less of an improvisatory role.

Using Brinner's styles of fusion definitions, *Dramaticule IV* falls under all three styles in different parts of the piece. It is a blend between the intricately-written harmonies and textures which are quite Western and the web of different Eastern traditions improvising on (or departing from) the set skeletal melody. Importantly, these improvisations and departures are allowed to include different Eastern traditions: in the early part of the piece these traditions are given equal weight within the labyrinth; in the latter part (from bar 62) the piece is dominated by a North Indian-style improvisation and then (from bar 72) one from Armenia.

In terms of working procedures with the musicians, I saw each of them individually in advance of group rehearsals, which allowed a more relaxed and less 'dictatorial' relationship with them. This gave me the opportunity to verbally express my musical ideas, try out various extended techniques, hear their suggestions, see what was possible on the instrument in more detail and find alternative ways of writing and playing certain passages. For example, the way the Azeri kamancha player angles his bow and instrument when playing makes it less possible to play the ricochet gesture in bar 50 to 59. We found a gesture that produced a similar effect. This working procedure helped me to retain some element of control over my materials and direction of the improvisation, bringing the point on the spectrum a little closer to composed music.

MAWWAL

Mawwal was written as a response to Berio's Folk Songs⁵⁴. *Mawwal* literally means 'affiliated with', 'associated with' or 'connected to'. It is a traditional genre of improvisatory vocal music in classical Arabic music that is usually performed before the actual song begins. In a typical *mawwal* the vowels of the subsequent song are dwelt upon in a much longer and leisurely fashion (see example below) typically spells vowel syllables longer than usual. My piece begins this way (from bar 13) but with a melody more associated with *zajal*, even though that in turn is less declamatory than a typical *zajal* would be, held as it is against ever changing dissonant backdrops, played by the ensemble, giving new meanings and colours to the melody's tonal centre.

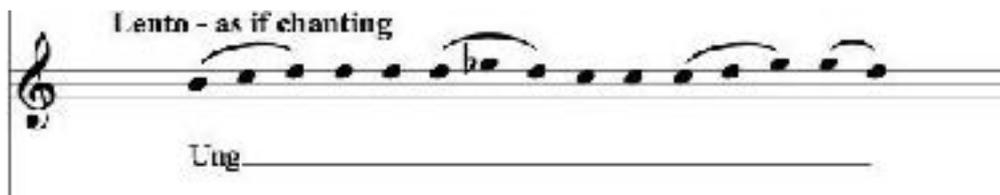


FIG. 4.3. *Mawwal*, b.13, melody taken from typical *zajal*

Different kinds and uses of drones are basic to these harmonic backdrops. One type functions as a continuation of the same note played, another as additional intervals towards a dissonant harmonic backdrop, a third as a tonal centre to accompany a melodic line, similar to the function used in Arabic music to establish a tonic. In addition, I introduce drones by using different timbres and performance techniques. For example, in bar 15 and 21 (see FIG. 4.4.), the harpist vocally sustains the notes he plucks ; while the clarinettist in bars 30, 34 and 45 (see FIG. 4.5) has a multi-toned drone from using different fingerings and hole-openings.

⁵⁴ as a commission to open the new Bramall Music Building as part of the Bramall Festival in December 2012.



FIG. 4.4. *Mawwal*, b.21, harp



FIG. 4.5. *Mawwal*, bar 30-31, clarinet

I have come to agree with the following observation about popular music in general: "Of all harmonic devices, it [a drone] is not only the simplest, but probably also the most fertile,"⁵⁵ for melodic development.

Despite the use of drones, the extent of harmonic thought in the piece places it more West than East. Here, and in other works, I am interested in combining vertical dissonance with horizontal monody and heterophony. With this in mind I treat the instruments and voice as extensions of one another, something which features too in *Tanit* in this portfolio and in other previous works⁵⁶. At times too the instrumentalists themselves are asked to sing. For example, in bars 13 and 19, the 'cellist accompanies herself vocally and in

⁵⁵ van der Merwe, Peter (1989). *Origins of the Popular Style: The Antecedents of Twentieth-Century Popular Music*, p.65. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 65

⁵⁶ This was the case in works previous to this PhD, for example in *Ta'attalat Loughatul Kalami* (2006) for singing 'cellist and piano, *The Elephant's Tooth* (2007) for solo clarinet and wind orchestra and *Marionette* (2008) for flute and piano and *Rapture*(2009) for flute, violin and piano. It is also present in *Tanit*.

heterophony to the melody she plays. I see this as connected too, though fundamentally different from *layali*, a genre of Arabic vocal improvisation, in which the singer accompanies her or himself on the oud (or by the ensemble). Such 'extensions' of convention are seen elsewhere too: melodically *Mawwal* borrows from the *zajal* melody but adds *Ad libitum* passages to it, while the conductor too though mostly beating in conventional Western fashion occasionally is asked to lead improvisation.

Where *Mawwal* lies on the spectrum

West								Integration							Near East
Free Melody									X						Modality
Detailed Notation				X											Oral transmission/ Basic notations
Conductor (Western)		X													Improvisation leader
Harmony			X												Monody/ Heterophony

Table 2 - spectrum between Western and Near Eastern for *Mawwal*

During the rehearsal process I discovered that, despite having written for Grade 8 standard musicians, the subtleties and detail in the musical material and improvisatory sections, particularly in the cello part, made them feel quite exposed.

TANIT

Composition process, communication with artists

I was commissioned by the London Sinfonietta in 2012, with three other composers, to write a solo work in collaboration with performance artists from the Central School of St Martins for Art and Design.

Our first session was at the School where a workshop was given by the tutors, in order for us to introduce our music to the students and to allow them to form some sort of relationship with contemporary classical music. I played them an excerpt of my piece 'Mosaic' for orchestra and they were instructed to write three words that described the piece. I chose *Mosaic* because, to me, it felt like it was my most visual piece. It is visual in the sense that the piece's sonic world with its spluttering strings, timbral density, musical narrative and direction, would entail a hook for vivid visualisation. Each student uttered their words one by one, some saying three words, most saying ten words, very few were indifferent. Some described my piece exactly as I had envisioned it.

Their first task was to spend two weeks working in groups to create an installation, still or performed, in response to the pieces we presented to them. When we came back after two weeks we watched each installation in a dark room.

Groups reformed and it was time for their second task. We had to write a solo work closely working with the artists, resulting in *Tanit*. I was introduced to my soloist, the violinist/violist Miranda Fulleylove, a Western classically trained musician with no experience of improvisation, except for the improvisation idiomatic to Baroque music. Furthermore, she had no previous experience in the Middle Eastern sound world. Communicating with Miranda, opening her up, working on her pre-conceived ideas of improvisation and using the voice as an extension to the instrument was an extremely challenging yet very creative experience. It led eventually to a piece not about sounding perfect, but of character, and of gesture somewhat akin to that of the Arabic sound world.

Using a similar approach to composition as I would with a traditional Middle-Eastern musician, I was curious to see how far this method would go with a Western classical musician.

We had a four-hour session experimenting with a sound that imitated the *duduk*, come across by chance on my own 'cello. I wanted to encapsulate the wispy sound world of the Armenian or Azerbaijani kind and Miranda and I tried together to achieve it. We tried to emulate it with aluminium foil, paper clips, and the like. We needed a prop to reach that world before introducing her to the world of maqams. The sound she eventually produced on the prepared viola helped her get into the mindset for the piece. To add to this, the concept of improvisation was another battle to fight. Even with the experience of Baroque music improvisation, she was improvising in a different context, and though I was very hands-on in directing her exactly how the piece should be shaped, she was very uncomfortable with this technique of music-making and the level to which she had to be creative herself. Nevertheless in time, the process bore fruit.

Tanit is based upon maqam Saba (see FIG 4.7). But just as the process of making the piece was about putting one culture up close to another and experiencing conflict as well as integration, so the theatrical balloon pops in the piece, juxtaposed strongly with the unfolding viola line which uses 'one of the emotionally moving and melancholic of modes'⁵⁷ - maqam Saba. Nevertheless these interruptions are only part of a piece which plays out an 'integrated' form of three sections, a climax point at the end of the second section and then a sense of release in the third section (in system 6).

⁵⁷ the author, A.J. Racy states in his book, *Making Music in the Arab World: The Culture and Artistry of Tarab*.

Structure of *Tanit*

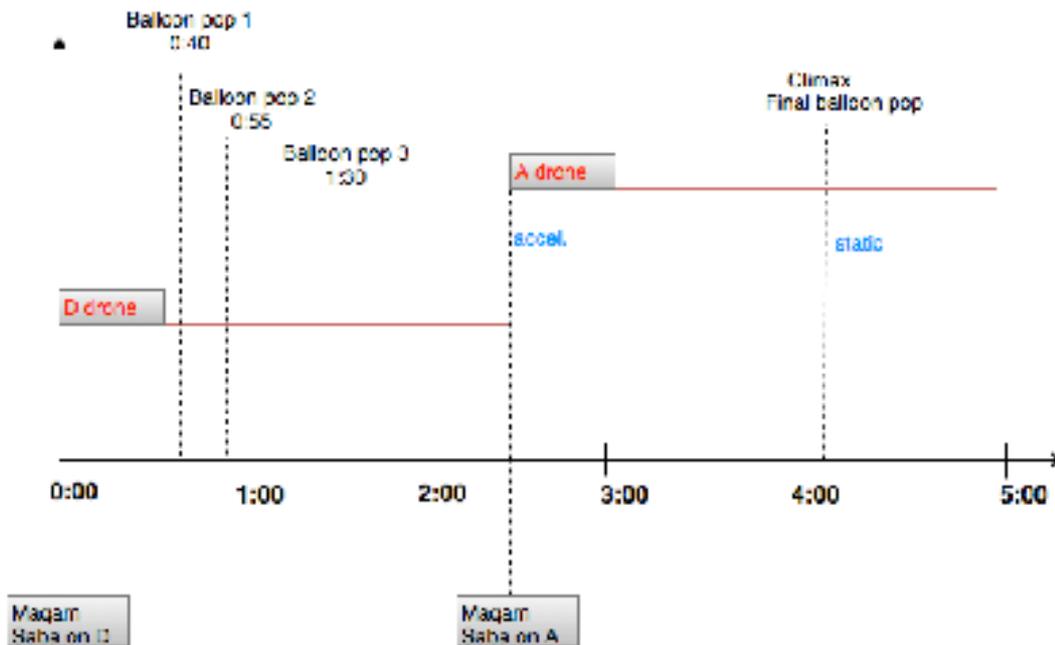


FIG. 4.6. *Tanit*, Structure

The maqam used is Saba on D which is shown below:



FIG. 4.7. Maqam Saba on D

In the second performance of *Tanit*, I gave Miranda the Egyptian violin taqsım as a prop to integrate into the current melodic fragments written. (See *Taqsım aala Taqsım* for cello solo for the transcription) This is because I wanted to give her some material to work with since I could not be there to direct her the second time round.



FIG. 4.8. photo from London Sinfonietta performance at New Music Show 2 Festival at the Southbank as part of the Hidden project.

Where *Tanit* lies on the spectrum

<i>West</i>							<i>Integration</i>							<i>East</i>
<i>No drone</i>													X	<i>Drone</i>
<i>Free melody</i>												X		<i>Modality</i>
<i>Detailed Notation</i>												X		<i>Oral Transmission/ Basic notation</i>
<i>Harmony</i>													X	<i>Monody/ Heterophony</i>
<i>'Free' improvisation</i>						X								<i>Idiomatic improvisation</i>

Table 3 - spectrum between Western and Near Eastern for *Tanit*

On the East to West spectrum, *Tanit* lies towards the Eastern end, though not precisely following the methods set out by some taqsims/Arabic improvisations. Here, I am

orally transmitting my musical ideas upon a Western classically trained musician making it more in line with Eastern methods of music-making. In terms of improvisation, I have placed the X left of centre towards 'Free improvisation' as she is improvising outside the taqsim system of development but borrowing some of the material as a prop. That being said, the fact I was very hands-on in the development of the improvisation and essentially imposing my voice as a composer, this approach brings it more in line with Western thinking.

TMESIS

BACKGROUND/CONCEPT

As with *Dramaticule IV*, though this piece is fully notated, I have paraphrased the improvisatory *mawwal* of Sabah Fakhry in “Kulli mali hati”. In *Tmesis*, a work for large symphony orchestra, I playfully encapsulate the character and mildly use heterophonic gestures and textures of the accompanying instruments of a *mawwal* that occurs in the large takht ensemble employed in post-1920s Egypt in classical Arabic music, gradually metamorphosing into a grotesque version of itself.

The image shows a musical score for four staves, likely representing flutes and oboe. The notation includes various dynamics such as *p* (piano), *f* (forte), and *pp* (pianissimo). There are also markings for *rit.* (ritardando) and *rit.* (ritardando) above the staves. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines, and there are slurs and phrasing slurs indicating the flow of the melody. The melody is a *mawwal* melody, characterized by its improvisatory and heterophonic nature.

FIG. 4.9. *Tmesis*, bar 6 to 9, a *mawwal* melody across the flutes and oboe

Essentially, the *takht* ensemble that accompanies a singer who sings a *mawwal*, features heterophonic textures primarily. There are two types: the overlapping and the simultaneous type⁵⁸. The overlapping type involves a typical vocal improvisation which would be accompanied by an instrument as if echoing it, and so slightly delayed. The simultaneous type involves the ensemble members playing the same material at the same

⁵⁸ Racy, A.J, *Making Music in the Arab World*, 80

time, but with each one paraphrasing the basic melody a little differently either by leaving out some notes, ornamenting them, syncopating them, playing them slightly earlier and so on.

Post 1920's Egypt, however, used a larger ensemble with duplicating string instruments, with the stage seating of a *takht* ensemble exemplifying a European symphonic model. This restrained the heterophonic gestures of the traditional *takht* ensemble through the use of parallel octaves and unisons, the performer and composer being more defined entities. As a result, it also provided for me a perfect starting point for a piece for Western orchestra. In *Tmesis*, I express the use of parallel octaves and unisons in the first Arabic section in bar 19, in bar 37 and in fragments within the 'Grounded, aggressive and funky' section from bar 41 in the strings and in the winds. The six exposed viola soli from bar 67 to the end, meanwhile, comprise a distorted version of what would have been a unison 'Arabic' section. I wanted the violas to be in heterophony but, interestingly, when they perform it, they sync up *naturally*.

STRUCTURE - DISRUPTION AND CONTINUITY

The title of the piece may be an unfamiliar word but the concept it describes is certainly familiar: the interruption of one word or phrase by another, before the original one resumes. 'Abso-bloody-lutely' is one colourful example used in Australian slang! Musically-speaking it served as a way of thinking about disruption and continuity within *Tmesis* on both micro and macro levels.

An example of micro level thinking can be heard in the sudden but brief metamorphosis towards an ornamental, maqam-based phrase-ending born out of the mono-tonal stuttering or broken drones at bar 19 and again at bar 37. This is, in effect the emergence of an Arabic sound. On a macro level, each of the three sections disrupts the

one before: the second section, starting at bar 41 breaks into 'grounded, aggressive and funky' character, while itself giving way in bar 67 to something 'Lost at Sea'.

This diagram shows the different strata of structures including the overall structure in black (bars 41 and 67); the broken to the sustained drones in green and the 'Arabic' moments in blue:

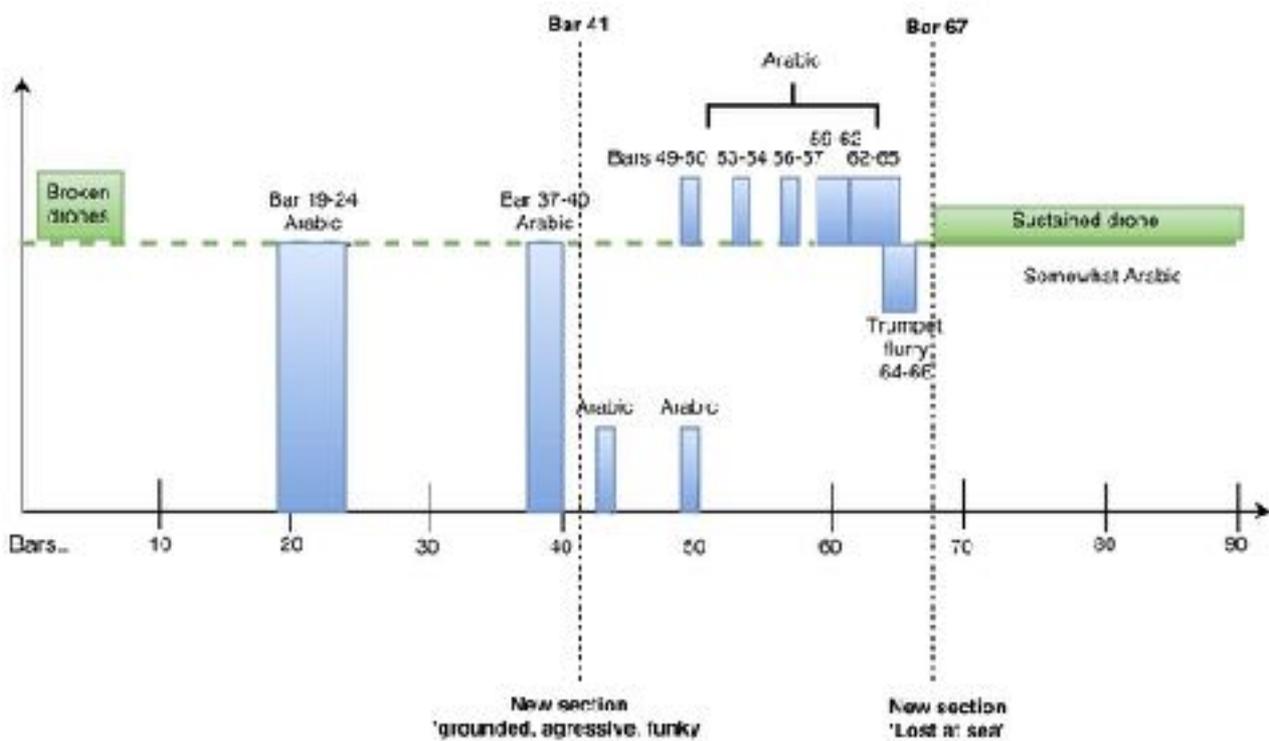


FIG. 4.10. *Tmesis*, diagram to show the different strata of structures that occur

Such defined flagpoles and 'breakages' are common to a number of my works before and after *Tmesis* (even while I have tried to move away from this). Whether a piece of three minutes such as this is too broken, I am still not sure, and I am caught, perhaps, between the following two views about short literary works of art:

*'The effort involved in writing a short story is as intense as beginning a novel, where everything must be defined in the first paragraph; structure, tone, style, rhythm, length, and sometimes, even the personality of the character.'*⁵⁹ - Gabriel Garcia Marquez

*'Short pieces can have in them just as much as long pieces can'*⁶⁰ - Edwin Denby

Stylistically-speaking though, *Tmesis* remains for me, poised satisfyingly between East and West. Though the majority of the musical parameters reside closer to Western art music in terms of writing a detailed score, using a conductor, using a large ensemble, and largely atonal melodies and structures that are far from Arabic song structures, the use of heterophonic gestures, drones and maqam-based phrase-endings bring the piece towards the centre of the East to West spectrum - the broken-up G-drone at the start is a foreground aspect of the piece in the trumpets' tremolo. This is played out in a similar way to that of the start of a *mawwal* before the singer begins to sing, as if establishing the maqam - though in *Tmesis*, the flutes and oboe in bar 6, the G, F and E flat is placed, instead of E quarter-tone flat typically used to establish maqam Sigah. Additionally, the drone of a *mawwal* in Sigah maqam would normally be on the tonic i.e. E quarter-tone flat. This then triggers colourful details, stammering and punctuations at the beginning of the piece, exploring the orchestral palette in a somewhat pointillistic way. The drone then becomes a sustained pedal-tone backdrop to the Arabic section that begins in bar 19, therefore changing its function and becoming a background element.

The issue here lies in the fact that what represents the 'Eastern' or 'Western' in the music are clear distinct blocks in a game of structural inter-play. This means that we may

⁵⁹ García Márquez, Gabriel. *Collected Stories*. New York: Harper & Row, 1984. Print. ix

⁶⁰ Pritchett, James. 1993 *The Music Of John Cage*. Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press. Print., 29

have to ask the questions: do the two musics (if I had to use this concept) blend, dominate or contrast? Predominantly, the musics contrast but they blend in the end after bar 67.

Interestingly, the Lebanese dialect as it is spoken today often contains three languages in the same sentence. One can say *Tmesis* is an expression of this.

Moreover, a table like the one below, becomes redundant and simplistic, but again, it is able to provide a starting point towards measuring the integration of styles between East and West.

Where *Tmesis* lies on the spectrum

<i>West</i>														<i>East</i>
<i>Free melody</i>					X									<i>Modality</i>
<i>Detailed Notation</i>	X													<i>Oral transmission/ Basic notation</i>
<i>Conductor (Western)</i>	X													<i>No conductor</i>
<i>Harmony</i>						X								<i>Monody/ Heterophony</i>

Table 4 - spectrum between Western and Near Eastern for *Tmesis*

Panufnik Workshop February 2013

The workshop was in front of an audience. Some interesting issues arose out of my notation choices. These included the ambiguity of the mordent symbol as used in Baroque music, but within the context of this piece. They preferred that I wrote it out as it could be interpreted in so many different ways, which could potentially be beautiful if I had made it a recurring theme.

From bar 41, referring to the 2+2+2+3 bars, they preferred to see smaller bars such as 3/4 and 3/8. As it stood, when that section was played, they could not engage with my request for 'more grit with frog of bow' to create an edgy, dirty sound as part of the groove which was also absent. Could any other way better explain to them how to play a groove?

The conductor challenged the tempo of the piece which was apparently too fast for the bassoon gestures. He also challenged the tempo marking preferring that I write 'Vivo' instead of 'Tight, Gritty and Punctuated' at the start of the piece. I found his suggestion ineffective in determining the true character of the piece.

In addition, the process felt very much like a 'Them' (the orchestra) against 'Us' the composer, and less of the idea of comrades making music and ideas for suggesting alternatives. For me, it felt like the ultimate 'Western' music-making experience and it made me think deeply about the music-making process and inherent relationships. This was partly a catalyst towards creating my own ensemble.

The outcome was a very slow, characterless version of the piece.

MANNEQUIN LOSSES

Written for a workshop with the Belgian Hermes Ensemble *Mannequin Losses* was inspired by a Fernando Pessoa poem entitled *I heard it told that once in Persia*. The text conjures a picture of ongoing brutal war and plotting by indifferent dictators, seen much like a game of chess. If my work does not directly represent the poem, its mixture of aggressive gestures economically arranged derives in some sense from it. Having written very complex pieces prior to this, in process and product, I wanted this piece to be stripped down. It is a short, obsessed study exploring how far I can go in a composition's development with only 5 notes in the same order and in, predominately, the same register. What do I need to do with pitch being the constant in order to create dramatic effect? Different sonorities are explored through static harmony, based on the cluster of the four notes - C, Db, Eb and Fb - and its disrupting D natural. The piece appears inert and even sacred at first, before mutating into harsher material.

Though the poem talks of Persia, I quite deliberately here wanted to avoid any elements I considered Eastern. As can be seen from the chart below, this took the form of writing a fully notated piece that had harmony, though static, as its focal point. There may be a remnant of the idea of drone, but the 4-note cluster chord, as a musical language, pushes the music in my mind toward the west. Furthermore, the function of this harmony is far removed from conventional drone support for monodic melody. I aimed too to attain a purity in sound, meaning no decoration, only with slight timbral directions. These happen specifically with three playing techniques:- *sul pont*, *molto sul pont*. and hard scrape.

Where *Mannequin Losses* lies on the spectrum

West								Integration							Near East
<i>No drone</i>									X						<i>Functional Drone</i>
<i>Free melody</i>	X														<i>Modality</i>
<i>Detailed Notation</i>	X														<i>Oral Transmission/ Basic notation</i>
<i>Conductor (Western)</i>	X														<i>Unconducted</i>
<i>Harmony</i>	X														<i>Monody/ Heterophony</i>

Table 5 - spectrum between Western and Near Eastern for *Mannequin Losses*

TAQSIM AALA TAQSIM

This piece was commissioned by the cellist Maria Zachariadou and in it I returned to the form of the taqsim used in *Dramaticule IV*, but now in a more explicit fashion. The taqsim is ‘the prime translator’⁶¹ of the maqamat, being a ‘purely modal’ piece of music. A lack of text, metre, rhythmic mode and repeating sections all contribute to its pure form. Essentially in Arabic improvisation, there is no melodic theme, that can be named in Western analytical terms, that is improvised upon as such. There are related maqams that performers often travel to in a taqsim. The art form is truly mastered not by hypothetical rules, but by the ‘practice of practice’⁶². The ultimate aim for a taqsim is to reach ‘al-sultana’, meaning a state of ecstasy. The performer can follow a set of systems and study to achieve this but, ultimately, if she or he does not have an ‘Eastern soul’ (also known as ‘rouh’ or Arabness, Easternness) or ‘nafas Sharqi’ (meaning Eastern breath), then, according to Ali Jihad Racy, it is claimed that it is difficult to reach this state⁶³.

This piece is based upon my own transcription of a taqsim by the Egyptian violinist Abu Ahmed Ali, as below:

⁶¹ Racy, Ali Jihad. *The Many Faces Of Improvisation: The Arab Taqsim As A Musical Symbol*. *Ethnomusicology* 44.2 (2000): 302. Web.

⁶² Bailey, Derek. *Improvisation*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1993. Print.:xi

⁶³ This is close too to what the Western improviser Derek Bailey means by capturing ‘the feel’ of a piece, *Improvisation*, 4

2

0:58

Falling from upper octave with help of note: B flat and Nahawand tetrachord on G

1:02

Hijaz tetrachord with its A flat inserted for pre-cadential colouring

1:16

Briefly returning to similar to 1:01 with Nahawand tetrachord on G

1:17

5

1:21

Falling to tonic

Arriving at 1:30

1:31

Firm 'octave qala' begins with octave leap to note C to fall here

Brief rise to 5th degree

Before closing on tonic

Rast maqam

Nahawand tetrachord on G

Hijaz tetrachord on G

The figure displays a musical score for a Rast maqam taqsim. It consists of seven staves of music in treble clef, 4/4 time. The first staff (0:58) features a melodic line with a bracketed section annotated as 'Falling from upper octave with help of note: B flat and Nahawand tetrachord on G'. The second staff (1:02) is annotated with 'Hijaz tetrachord with its A flat inserted for pre-cadential colouring'. The third staff (1:16) is annotated as 'Briefly returning to similar to 1:01 with Nahawand tetrachord on G'. The fourth staff (1:17) shows a melodic line with a bracketed section and the number '5' above it. The fifth staff (1:21) has two annotations: 'Falling to tonic' pointing to a specific note and 'Arriving at 1:30' pointing to the end of the staff. The sixth staff (1:31) has three annotations: 'Firm 'octave qala' begins with octave leap to note C to fall here' pointing to an octave leap, 'Brief rise to 5th degree' pointing to a rising interval, and 'Before closing on tonic' pointing to the final note. Below the main score, the title 'Rast maqam' is centered. At the bottom, two tetrachord diagrams are shown: 'Nahawand tetrachord on G' (G, A, B-flat, C) and 'Hijaz tetrachord on G' (G, A-flat, B, C).

FIG. 4.11. an analysis of a taqsim performed by the Egyptian violinist Abu Ahmad Ali ⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Marcus, Scott. (n.d.) *Music in Egypt, Expressing Music, Expressing Culture*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2007, 38

The analytical annotations show the typical progression of how a taqsim begins and ends with the same maqam, while traveling to different but related maqams in the middle.

The aim of *Taqsim aala Taqsim* was to use the transcription as a musical prop that contributes towards an original work, maintaining the essence of a taqsim while deconstructing it with the inclusion of Western elements. I do this from the beginning of the piece with the intervals I introduce, the notes of the broken drones that are unidiomatic to classical Arabic music, the use of one instrumentalist playing octaves as well as using extended techniques. Moreover, the original violin taqsim of which this piece is based is just 1'39" in duration. The performance by Maria Zachariadou is, instead, circa 6' in duration. Her performance certainly had a rubato feel which took the unmetered feel of the original taqsim to another level.

My view on transcription also echoes that of the composer Luciano Berio, writing in the introduction to his *Introduction for Folk Songs II* for viola and two instrumental groups⁶⁵:

The act of transcription (like that of translation) may imply three different conditions: the identification of the composer with the original musical text, the turning of the text into a pretext for analytical experimentation and, finally, the overpowering of the text, its deconstruction and its philological "abuse". I believe that an ideal situation occurs only when the three conditions come to blend and coexist. Only then may transcription become a truly creative, constructive act.

Unpicking Berio's viewpoint - the transcriber's affinity to the object of study, its use as a 'jumping off point' and a pulling apart of materials with little regard for original intent - we come to understand his view that too much reverence for the original stifles the creative process.

⁶⁵ Introduction, Universal. "Universal Edition: Luciano Berio – *Voci* (Folk Songs II) | For Viola And 2 Instrumental Groups – Work Introduction". Universaledition.com. N.p., 2016. Web. 6 Aug. 2016.

Where *Taqsim aala Taqsim* lies on the spectrum

West							Integration							Near Eastern
<i>No drone</i>							X							<i>Functional drone</i>
<i>Free melody</i>													X	<i>Modality</i>
<i>Detailed Notation</i>			X											<i>Oral Transmission/ Basic Notation</i>
<i>Harmony</i>									X					<i>Monody/ Heterophony</i>

Table 6 - spectrum between Western and Near Eastern for *Taqsim aala Taqsim*

This piece largely uses found material from a Near Eastern source. Despite this, we have to accept that accuracy is unreliable. This is due to the subjectivity of transcription. Tempo changes, timbral definition and ornamental details all add to the challenge in this aspect. Therefore, there will always be something of the transcriber in the transcription.

MURMURATIONS

Murmurations was written for Birmingham Contemporary Music Group. It was inspired by a photo which consisted of a flock of starlings dancing in the sunset. I was struck by the way the birds danced in the air together in a beautiful, graceful synchronicity and yet, within their make-up each bird was flapping in a highly-charged relentlessness. I was awed by a similar grace and charge in *Gagaku*, Japanese court music. The earlier part of my work adopts some of the materials and gestures of this ritual - namely, the harmonies of the *sho*, heterophony and *Gagaku*'s particular use of pace. Nevertheless the second and third sections of my piece increasingly depart from these elements and distill out its essence, much in the same way as a photographic negative relates to the positive image. This became an exercise of musical striptease, so to speak, moving from the notion of the Other to the self, i.e towards my own voice.

Analysis

As with other works in this portfolio - *Tmesis*, *Dramaticule IV*, *Tanit* – *Murmurations* is in three sections. The first section is up to bar 55, the second from bar 56 to 104 and the third from bar 105 until the end. Against cyclic harmonic backdrops, the three sections present different dronal and textural variations based on embellishments of the note C and of the basic 'nuclear melody' line. This is taken from the same Arabic violin improvisation by the violinist Abu Ahmed Ali that I used in *Taqsim aala Taqsim*. And it is married to the smallest piece taken from the *Gagaku* sequence, whose sections are 'repeated in da capo style'⁶⁶. A piece of this length would normally begin with a flute solo with the rest of the ensemble following after it; *Murmurations* follows the same pattern.

⁶⁶ Shigeo, Kishibe (1984), *The Traditional Music of Japan*, 41

The following graph shows aspects of orchestration and timbre and how these parameters broadly articulate the work's structure:

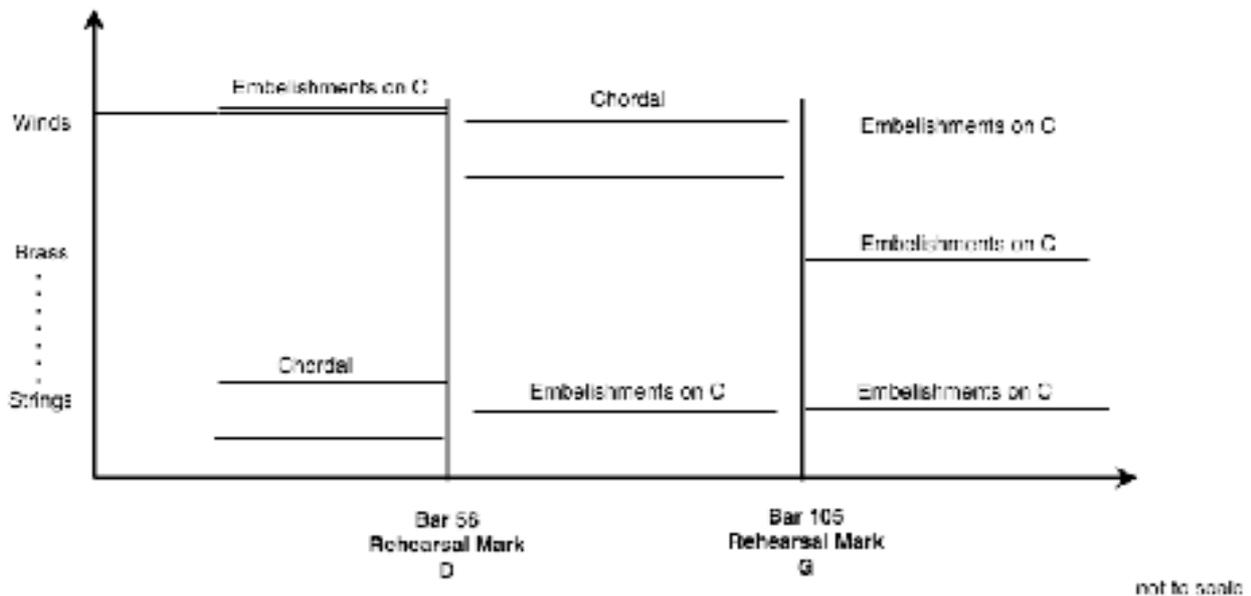


FIG. 4.12. *Murmurations*' orchestration and timbral structure, graph

There are further details in my work, which evoke the sound of Gagaku. The piccolo represents the *ryuteki*, for example, while the clarinet played non vibrato, together with the buzz of oboe and bassoon reeds imitates the *hichiriki*. In the first part of the piece (bars 11 to 55), meanwhile, a non vibrato string quartet takes on the *sho* with its piercing, swelling static harmonies, using major and minor seconds shaped by a circle of fifths.

The image displays two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Strings' and features a treble clef with a 'non vib.' instruction above it. The notes are primarily quarter and eighth notes, with dynamic markings of *pp* and *f* alternating. The bottom staff is labeled 'Str.' and also uses a treble clef. It contains more complex, multi-measure rests and notes, with dynamic markings of *f* and *pp* alternating. Both staves show a series of dynamic shifts across the measures.

FIG. 4.13. *Murmurations* - Harmonies as performed on sho and which are exploded onto the string quartet

Where *Murmurations* lies on the East to West spectrum

What is especially significant here is that, despite *Murmurations* being heavy in gestures, harmonies and instrumental features that draw the sound close to that of Japanese Gagaku, these Japanese traits share, for me, many of the Western-end traits. There are evidently different kinds of ‘Easts’ and ‘West’s’. Composing this piece has shown to me even more than I previously realised how rich and complex blending different cultures can be.

ZWAREEB

Zwareeb is the Arabic word for alleys. A piece for-string trio of different traditions - for Western violin, Chinese erhu and Azerbaijani kamancha - It is a development of a violin and erhu dual from bars 20-23 of *Dramaticule IV*.



FIG. 4.14. *Dramaticule IV*, bar 20-23, a violin and erhu dual

Although I normally begin writing a piece with a set of pitches and harmonic structure, this piece was actually conceived first with ideas for its instrumentation and textures. This was especially important as I was dealing here with instrumental colours and techniques so closely related at first glance. The diagram below shows the beginning of the compositional process and how I begin with the violin 'octave' joined soon after by the erhu. Each major gesture is numbered, including their dynamics. Number 11 on the plan (see FIG. 4.15.), which represents the improvisatory episode in the piece, corresponds to bar 22 on the score. Number 12 on the plan is bar 28 on the score and so forth.

This is the instrumental textures plan:

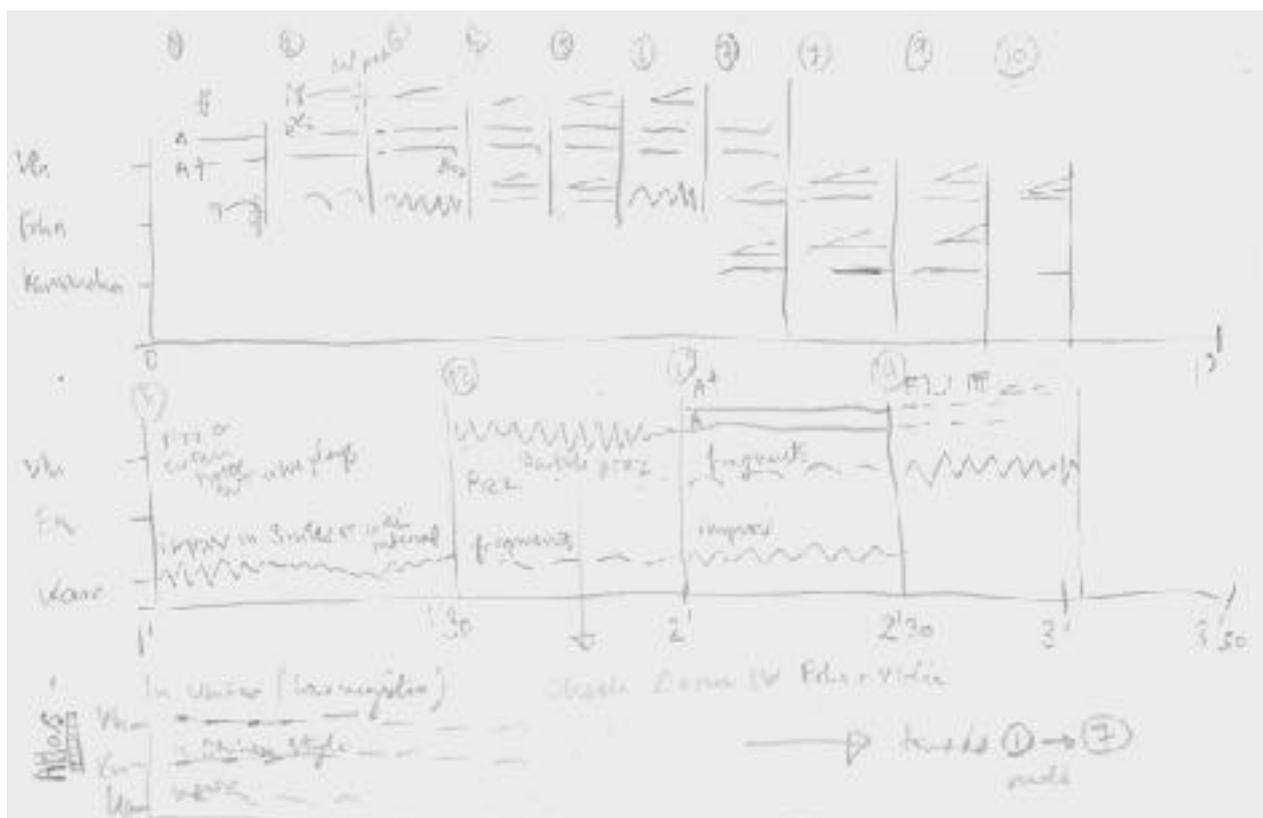


FIG. 4.15. Zwareeb - initial instrumental textures plan

Zwareeb is also a further exploration of the monotone/one-note idea I had been using in previous pieces in the portfolio, here focusing as much on movement rather than stasis. There is a long static drone early on, but this is different to the traditional drone on one note as it gradually glissandos upwards in pitch from bar 22-27 on the erhu and bar 28-32 on the violin. There is also a reciting tone which evolves from the gestures at the beginning of the piece towards its full form in bar 11 and gains momentum in the violin from bar 34. The drone's role in the piece also changes, with varying levels of prominence - i.e. from background to foreground. With a background role still in bar 34, the broken drone then takes on a higher level of importance as an additional recurring motif, centring around the first three notes of the D major scale) from bar 50. And held against the intertwining

ferociousness of the erhu part, it takes on still greater importance and momentum from bar 55.

Issues encountered during workshops

The particular issues encountered in preparing this piece were:

- a) the entry points
- b) the peaks of the piece to give it direction
- c) who of the three string players would be foreground, middle ground and background at any one time.

The first two workshops led to the realisation that a conductor who could direct but with suitable understanding of Eastern improvisatory nuance was needed. Someone had to manage and shape the improvisation sections. The composer Wim Hendrickx took hold of the final workshop, recording and conducting the piece in the most 'un Western' sense possible. He sat with the musicians and 'invited' them to play through open hand gestures. Ultimately, it was the combination of his method of 'conducting' Eastern musicians and the clarity of where the peaks signposted the music which changed everything for the better. The following became the realised form of the piece:

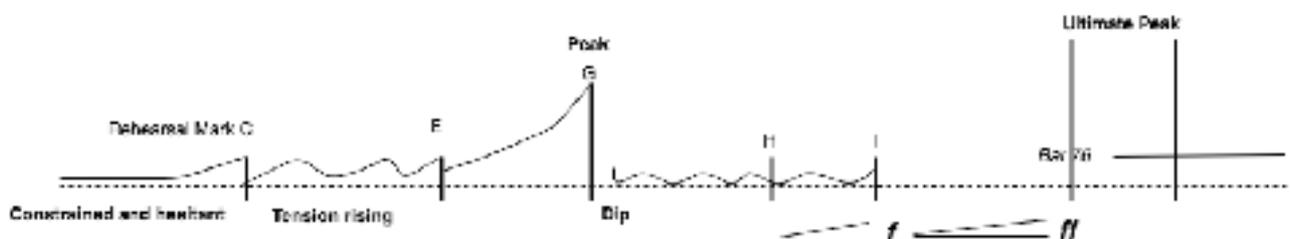


FIG. 4.16. *Zwareeb* - Peak and troughs diagram

Beginning to C - contained and hesitant

C to E - tension rising (C to D cresc. And D to E cresc.)

E to F - Fiery - the ritenuto is a peak. At **E**, the kamancha is an octave lower.

G dips - it is contained and bubbling underneath.

- After which point, the scurry of D-E-F#-E-D is playing peak-a-boo

- Peak

H gradually cresc. to forte at **I**

Bar 76 is the ultimate peak.

Where *Zwareeb* lies on the spectrum

West							Integration							Near East
<i>Reciting tone</i>			X											<i>Functional drone</i>
<i>Free melody</i>							X							<i>Modality</i>
<i>Detailed Notation</i>						X								<i>Oral transmission/ basic notation</i>
<i>Conductor (Western)</i>							X							<i>Improvisation leader</i>
<i>Harmony</i>												X		<i>Monody/ Heterophony</i>

Table 7 - spectrum between Western and Near Eastern for *Zwareeb*

We can see from this diagram that *Zwareeb*'s position on the East West spectrum is somewhat scattered. On the Eastern side, it is heavily ornamented and more about the monodic and heterophonic lines. The drones are mostly like reciting tones and pull the piece from their usual function in Near Eastern music. The special conductor's role, including a form of improvisation leading, places it in the centre. And it is poised there too between free melody (violin) and modality (kamancha). *Zwareeb* also lies somewhere in

the middle in terms of detailed notation versus oral transmission/basic notation since the improvisation is deeply woven within the notated textures and the processes involved in transmitting some of my musical ideas were, therefore, done orally. The violin is mostly notated, except when responding to the kamancha's improvisation. The kamancha improvises idiomatically in response to the notated music. The semi-notated erhu bridges the two, with Chinese musicians of traditional instruments typically treated like Western musicians in terms of their ability to read music and absence of improvisation in their usual musical practice. When the kamacha player improvises, it is to be done stylistically, and the violinist and erhu player shadow him in his improvisations.

LISANIKI

Lisaniki (trans. your tongue in Arabic) was commissioned by the Latvian Radio Choir and Ensemble Saraband (of Turkish instruments) as part of a project entitled 'Canticum Canticorum'. It consisted of three workshops with six composers (four from the Nordic countries and two that represented the Middle-Eastern countries) spread over two years, took place in three cities (Marseille, three times in Riga, and world premiere in Oslo) and received two performances. The performances consisted of the original works meshed with the Turkish ensemble's improvisations, forming what might sound like one large piece lasting just over an hour.

Lisaniki's sound world has echoes of my Lebanese heritage and childhood, and in particular memories of my parents taking me to Maronite and Byzantine Greek Catholic mass. This is expressed in the chosen languages for this piece, Arabic and ancient language of Syriac (dialect of Aramaic) and in the chants, quick mutterings and whispers in the textures and melodic content of the music. The words themselves are taken from The Song of Songs of the Old Testament, part of the commission brief. The singer, claimed to be the last of Ottoman style singers, improvises on Turkish words because this is his native tongue and is restricted to perform in this language.



FIG. 4.17. Bartók, Béla, *Mikrokosmos*, No. 142, *Diary of a Fly*, bar 1 to 5⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Bartók, Béla, 1926-1939, *Mikrokosmos Sz 107, Vol 6, No. 142, Diary of a Fly*, London: Boosey & Hawkes.

Structure of *Lisaniki*

Pitch-wise, the music takes its starting point from Bartok's use of interlocking pitches and 'hanging tones' in his 'The Diary of a Fly' in *Microcosmos* Volume VI (see Fig. 4.17). In the opening section Bartok-inspired motivic ideas lead to notes sustained or hanging within knotty clusters. The main melodic line becomes broken between the voices and the hanging notes feed into the next section.

From Bar 11 (letter A), rhythmic ideas were based on two rhythmic exercises from the Lebanese Conservatoire *Darbouka Methode* book (see FIG. 4.18⁶⁸). As discussed in Chapter 3, I have taken an Arabic component or concept, here rhythm, but which does not translate into an Arabic *sound* in itself. In the choir, this section is isorhythmic, with the pitches of their melodic line restarting their cycles before the rhythmic pattern does. Notes in one voice hand on to another voice which sustains it as a temporary drone. This thickens the texture as it becomes more complex.



FIG. 4.18. *Lisaniki* - sketches from bar 26, as based on the Lebanese Conservatoire *Darbouka Methode* book.

⁶⁸ The top staff in the sketch is taken from the *Darbouka Methode, Manhaj Eqaa Sharqi (Tabl), Ta72ee2 wa ta2leef*, ed. Lebanese National Conservatoire Superieur de Musique, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st Edition, 1996 - No.6, 183.

The stems pointing down represents the right hand on the darbouka and the stems pointing up are the left hand. The notes on the third space of the staff is the 'dum' (bass resonant sound of the darbouka) The second staff represents my own rendition of the upper staff, all beamed up. The third staff was a mistake because I had accidentally missed out notes. The fourth staff is how it turned out when applying the melodic pattern onto the rhythmic, and where the new cycle begins.

The kemence and qanoun, meanwhile, hang off the singers' notes, gradually giving these instrumentalists more and more creative freedom towards idiomatic improvisation, while the frame drum provides textural enhancement to the score.

By bar 58 (letter E), we reach a developed example of the combination of choir and instrumental soloist: the words 'is like the fragrance of Lebanon' are dispersed in a clustered murmuring, each syllable across the female voices, while the *kemence* improvises on a D pedal tone. At bar 60 (letter F) the female voices now monotonously murmur clusters with gradually added glissandi; while from bar 65 (letter H) the choir uses residues and fragments of what has happened previously. The Turkish ensemble, in this section, meanwhile, has taken an ever freer approach to idiomatic improvisation amongst the choral clusters. This culminates in the final section of the piece from bar 81 (letter L), wherein the Ottoman singer (Dogan) is 'released' into a new maqam colour and mood. He improvises until the end with an underpinning of choral textures with murmurings in Syriac.

Here is a diagram of where and what happens in *Lisaniki* with regards to the choices I made for modulating from one maqam to the other:

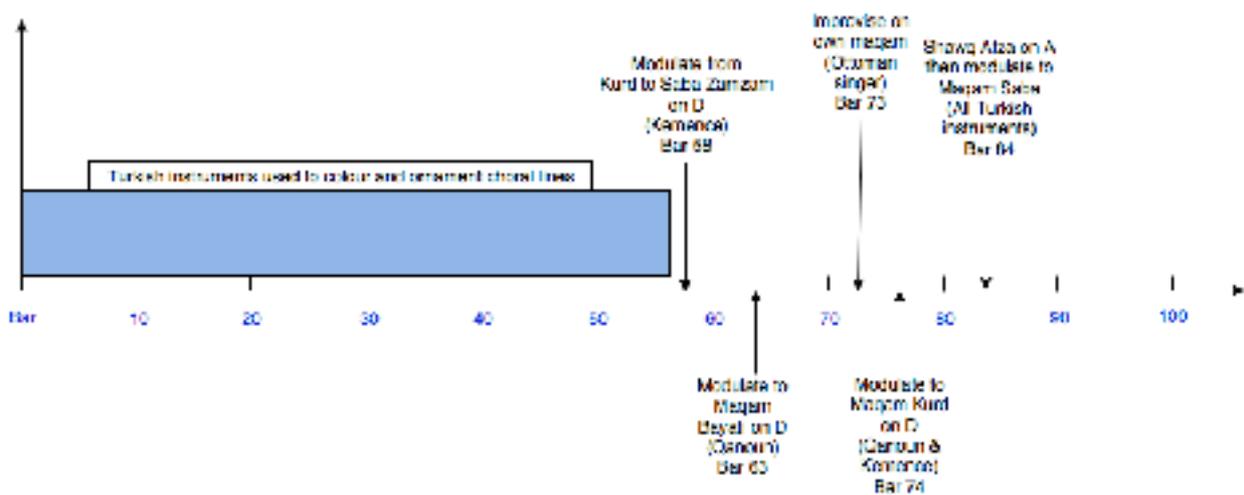


FIG. 4.19. *Lisaniki* - Diagram to show overall structure and choices of maqam modulations

Process, Issues and Strategies for *Lisaniki*

Since writing for an ensemble of Eastern musicians is more like orchestrating personalities, I have had to study each musician's strengths and challenges. Much in the same way I did for *Dramaticule IV*, I met each of Ensemble Saraband's musicians' individually. This allowed me to understand how they thought, what they were used to reading, hearing and it also helped me understand the difference between the Arabic and Turkish modulations from maqam to maqam. Much to my surprise, they were quite different and the qanoun player, of Palestinian origin, had to teach the other instrumentalists the thinking behind my specific modulation instructions. In the following section, I present my discoveries from the three workshops:

WORKSHOP 1 (Riga, July/Aug 2014)

Four different personalities and one conductor

- Dogan (Ottoman voice) thinks maqam when he sees a single note, where he will travel with it, where it comes from and where it goes to. He needs me to establish the tonal centre or maqam world before he enters. He can improvise given Turkish words only. He forgets entries, re-entries.
- Salah (Turkish qanoun) works best when there is a starting and end note which is useful for him to aim at something pitch-wise. We discovered that I, the composer, have to give more detailed instructions in the score regarding the kind of ornamentation and to what extent it becomes an improvisation, in bars 34-54 for example in the kemence's long notes and in bars 54.
- It would help Socrates (kemence) to know when to finish an improvisation in duration rather than counting bars. He also wanted to be given the freedom of when to end an improvisation, rather than having designated stops.

- Regarding the conductor, it would help the improvisation phrase-ending to know when to stop, to give an idea with a hand gesture, gradually knowing when to end a phrase.
- Vladimir (percussion - director of *Saraband*) tells me that if you write for Saraband, don't lose the spirit of Saraband. He says that they are traditional musicians who 'do what they do. Try not to lose it.'

From this workshop, generally, I learnt to give more specific directions regarding improvisations - the notes, maqams, etc. I discovered how the piece could travel more harmonically since it was often stuck and rigid.

Workshop 2 (Riga, 19th –21st October 2014)

In this workshop I worked more on pacing and a feeling of space in *Lisaniki*. These aspects were particularly important for the players in terms of establishing a maqam. Especially complicated in the piece is the change at bar 82; leading up to this point Socrates, the kemence player, has to establish the maqam for Dogan to take over, one maqam giving way to another and *not* a typical modulation.

These workshops led me to ask a number of pertinent questions:

1. Where is the middle point between cultures, namely the choir and the Middle Eastern ensemble?
2. Can collaboration be culturally equal?

In this case, I ended up writing a piece which kept the choral and Turkish ensemble's traditions apart, only meeting a few times in the piece. A sense of unity was lost due to the

Turkish musicians' improvisations. I asked the kemence and qanoun player, especially, to try to unify the piece by bringing in the three notes that the sopranos sing at the beginning of the piece as a starting point for their improvisations. But although this works from a Western perspective, such thinking was incompatible with how these Eastern traditional musicians thought; it was especially restrictive for the kemence player.

3. Can one contain a Western-style conductor from being too dictatorial in this situation?

Traditionally, Middle Eastern musicians do not normally have a conductor. They usually have equal say within the ensemble with regard to any artistic decisions. It took, in this case, a good while for a language to be established between the Turkish ensemble and the conductor. Since the ensemble had to learn how the conductor and the choir normally communicate through the conductor's standard gestures, the ensemble were, I felt, pulled towards this Western way. The fact that the pieces were composed based on Western structures also made an impact on this. Does this also mean that the Western conductor unconsciously treats the Eastern musicians as the lesser musical culture? It remains a concern, though this is not necessarily the case. Here, a large amount of space and freedom to roam within the piece was still given within the structure of the work.

4. How do I as composer work to the improvising musicians' strengths and spirit without compromising my own musical voice?

This was and will remain at the heart of my questioning. I found, though, that since improvisation can destabilise the unity of a piece, as Harm Langenkamp says in his article⁶⁹, the written material that surrounds the improvisations is a good way to hold onto my musical voice, therefore allowing an open door for the written material (in this case, the choral materials) to feed into what the improvisers play.

⁶⁹ see Chapter 2.

since the musics are quite contrasting and idioms mostly integrated on a vertical level, I would say that the types used is mostly contrast with some elements of blend.

SILKMOTH OPERA

Background

Before I began planning the opera's language, I took a step back and wrote down the elements of the previous pieces in the PhD which I wanted specifically to explore further. *SilkMoth* became in particular a development of the three pieces I wrote in 2014 - *Lisaniki*, *Zwareeb*, and *Murmurations*.

Lisaniki was a starting point with regard to the textures used, especially the idea of an oriental melody over a textural backdrop. *Murmurations* was a starting point with regard to the rawness of sound I wanted to encapsulate in *Silk Moth*. *Zwareeb* was the starting point in terms of structural coherence, the mix of static and broken drones, and the ways I used the spectrum of notated to improvised as idiomatic to the personalities of each musician in the ensemble. I also embedded the 'cello technique from *Taqsim aala Taqsim* in *Silk Moth*, which brings a fresh dronal backdrop to the melodic lines it supports.

Noting these musical gestures down allowed me to better visualise the opera's sound world, to give myself the constraints with which to work, and build a language with which to establish an equilibrium between the Eastern and Western idioms.

Synopsis

Who is to blame when a family kills one of their own?

12 young women every year in the UK are the victims of honour killing. This site-specific performance piece explores questions around honour violence and its perpetrators while giving voice to its victims. The work was shaped from a series of workshops and interviews in partnership with IKWRO, the Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation, that has collated material and grown into a very real multi-dimensional tableau vivant.

The librettist, Eleanor Knight, created a scenario about a mother who contemplates her daughter's life, looking through her daughter's laptop, finding a documentary about the silk moth that her daughter made as a school project.

Eleanor writes, 'The idea is that we think the mother is addressing is the daughter. We assume the daughter has already been killed by the men in her family and she is mourning her, but towards the end we realise that the daughter is still out there. In fact, the 'you' on the phone is the daughter's father, to whom the mother ultimately gives the nod to do the deed and kill her daughter in the name of 'honour'.

The tweets – messages from the daughter - are an anglicised attempt at Pashto landays, two-line poems that are part of an oral tradition of resistance amongst Afghan women and which have latterly found a natural home on Twitter. Landays are short and sharp, funny and subversive. They are poisoned darts thrown hard at male authority.'

We find the parallel in that both the silk worm in the documentary and the daughter do not reach adulthood before they die.

The concept and collaborative process

The brief to the librettist was to use the tragic case of Banaz Mahmood, a Kurdish woman living in London, who is killed by her own family for choosing a life for herself, as seen on the documentary 'Banaz - a love story' by Deeyah Khan, to create an immersive performance containing the following idea:

bleeding through and blurring, in all its forms

- blur between the factual and poetic/abstract/ethereal/haunting/absurdist/fairytale
- blur between the Eastern and Western musical elements
- blur between the notated and the improvised

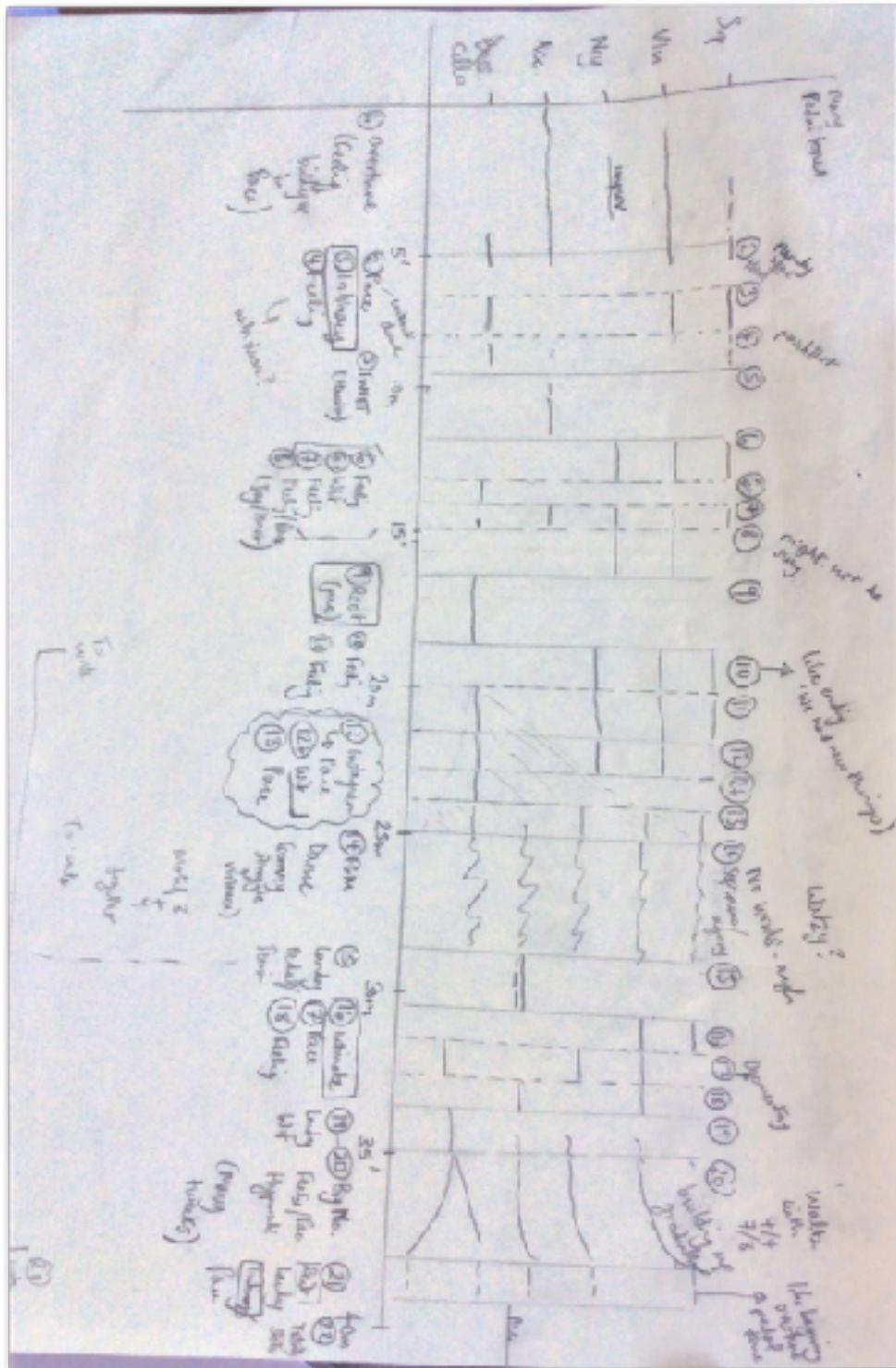


FIG. 4.20. *Silk Moth Opera* - Orchestration outline map

The creative team explored the dual character of the mother through her restrained yet angry gestures, bubbling underneath. She was conditioned to suppress all her desires and be the 'good' wife, 'good' sister, 'good' mother. Nothing is black and white as the nature of honour killing suggests. The mother mostly appears complicit and this is reflected in the monotones of the soprano line, though there is a lot going on, or 'bubbling underneath' as we said, in the instrumentation.

The librettist and I made the following table of emotions or pace of the music - as feeling, intimacy, pace, wit, tension - which I normally do when I program the order of pieces in a concert; this helped us structure the narrative and emotional arc of the opera, and served as another set of constraints to work with. In addition, it allowed me to measure where the drones would be static or more broken up, and how much the vocal lines would stay on the same note as opposed to having more distance between its constituent intervals.

No.		<i>Pace/ Emotion</i>	<i>Narrative from line...</i>	<i>Musical description</i>	<i>Orchestration</i>
1	<i>Overture</i>	<i>Feeling</i>			
2	<i>Aria</i>	<i>Pace</i>	<i>How we stood in line...</i>		
3	<i>Phone rings</i>	<i>Intimacy</i>	<i>Her phone rings</i>		
4		<i>Feeling</i>	<i>How did we live?</i>		

Table 9 - an excerpt of the plan showing the emotional arc of *Silk Moth Opera*

The table above is only an excerpt but it shows the numbers going down referring to sections of the opera and are paralleled in the instrumentation structure diagram I also used in the planning process.

At the beginning of the three-week rehearsal period, the creative team, the soprano and conductor sat round and read through the whole libretto discussing the staging of the piece as the director was at a crossroads with interpreting the piece and making it clear for the audience. There was one singer on stage but there were many 'unsung voices' so to speak. There was the husband on the phone, the daughter who she was singing about, the daughter communicating through her tweets and the parallels of the story coinciding with the daughter's silk moth documentary representing the life of the silk worm 'which does not always reach the adult stage' similarly to the life of the daughter. Were we to stage this opera in the mother's kitchen where the audience was invited for tea and dates or were we aiming for a more stark portrayal as if mother is being interrogated? After a week of rehearsals, having experimented with the mother picking lentils or dealing with chick peas as with a lot of Middle Eastern dishes, we chose the more stark version as all the props were a distraction.

We found the London-based Palestinian soprano Enas Massalha as the best fit for this role for her ability to sing opera as well as the Arabic style. Not only this, she had a deep understanding and insight of the character and the issues raised in the opera as she unfortunately hears about them everyday where she is from, a bit too close to home. Interestingly, despite being able to sing in both styles, it was difficult for her to switch from the classical Arabic-style mawwal to the opera voice in bars 113 to 132. This may be because I had written it out a bit too prescriptively which jars with the mind-set one needs to sing in the Arabic style perhaps. In addition, I found it difficult to express the need for a non-vibrato transparent type of voice at the start. Something clicked on the day before the performance. What helped here is to describe the feeling and colour of the room for this to happen rather than a suggestion for how she should sing it, so it stemmed from the character.

Additionally, finding a language of communication was challenging between the conductor and the ney player. The ney player was used to various conducting techniques but somehow he was always lost by this conductor's cues. There were particular moments for re-entries when he kept coming in too early. I forget which, but, as a solution, they both decided that the conductor should give a big smile to cue him for a specific section.

Analysis

There are three main motifs in the instrumental parts of *Silk Moth*.



FIG. 4.21. *Silk Moth Opera, Overture, 3 motifs*

The first is bar 1 in accordion, the second bar 4 in accordion, the third bar 10 in the strings. The first motif is also hidden after the third motivic gesture ends, for example in bar 18, starting in the violin on C, then Bb on the accordion and A on the 'cello.

The musical notes in the instrumental parts are very often close together in clusters to represent claustrophobia and imprisonment. Particularly important examples of tension created later in the work are found in the clustered drones in the strings in bar 228 (letter P) and the accordion at bar 308 (letter V). Similarly, the soprano's monotones can also suggest imprisonment, though against different contexts, the monotones can also have a more freeing meaning, of childhood and liberation. The spectrum between broken and sustained drones appear, then, throughout the opera not only in the instrumental parts but also in the soprano. The Arabic ney early on brings their importance to attention in the

overture (at bars.13-14), while the vocal part explores them especially in the context of the *mawwal* genre.

Where *Silk Moth Opera* lies on the spectrum

<i>West</i>							<i>Integration</i>							<i>East</i>
<i>No drone</i>							X							<i>Functional Drone</i>
<i>Free melody</i>							X							<i>Modality</i>
<i>Detailed Notation</i>					X									<i>Oral Transmission/ Basic notation</i>
<i>Harmony</i>							X							<i>Monody/ Heterophony</i>

Table 10 - spectrum between Western and Near Eastern for *Silk Moth Opera*

The list below shows something of the range of drones used:

Bar 25 drone

Pulsating drone starts in bar 34

Bar 39 - drone is hazy on the cello

Bar 73 –81- dissonant drones in a floating 3/4

Bar 155 - in the mawwal with pulsating violin and microtonal divergence, which continues in bar 174 on the cello.

Bar 197 - the FGM section has broken drones on the violin, which the cello fights against

Bar 228 - dissonant drone

Bar 238 - ney broken drone

Bar 241 - broken drone

Bar 284- broken and clustered swarming climatic section

Bar 308 - cluster in accordion

Final bar, 336 - with pulsating high violin over accordion cluster which turns into one note.

All these types of drone are used in *Silk Moth* not only to develop musical structures but also to express the dramatic tensions of the work. I was able to do this too with other idiomatic aspects, especially with heterophony. The functions of the heterophony of *Silk Moth* are similar to that of the classical Arabic *Takht* ensemble, the musicians valued as much as individuals as a tightly-bound group.⁷¹ The tension between the group and the individual heterophonic gestures are also typical of *mawwal* (as I explored in *Tmesis*), while in *Silk Moth*, they add to the tension, for example in the way the violin shadows the soprano in bars 49 to 53, or in the *mawwal* section itself, where the ney shadows and imitates the soprano (especially from bar 122). And the tensions are further played out in terms of pitch, in particular with the use of indeterminate intonation and microtonal inflections in my harmonies underneath Arabic modalities. One example out of many is at bar 123, where the 'cello plays an A quarter-tone sharp, the violin an A and the ney improvises on maqam Saba on A:

See the maqam below:



FIG. 4.22. Maqam Saba on A

⁷¹Racy, A.J. (2004) *Making Music in the Arab World*, 77

AFTER-THOUGHT

Looking back, though initially liberating to have a libretto, I found it very rich as a text to need any music! This felt crippling at first but I found it helpful to meet with the librettist to go through each scene and stanza to mark each section with either 'pace' or 'feeling' or 'intimacy' etc. The overture was more of a breeze to write and this helped me establish the musical language of the opera. In addition, I would re-write the opening after the overture. I found it very difficult to set the first scene just as I found it difficult for the opera, *Woman at Point Zero*, I wrote after this post-PhD.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

Working on the portfolio, it has become increasingly clear to me that integrating Eastern and Western musical idioms is not something that is clear cut and definable. The line between East and West has and always will continue to shift - similarly to my idea of home - making it harder to differentiate between cultures, let alone fully understand other cultures or our own due to a culture's inherent complexity.

This idea and my introduction of the (multi-)spectrum table of musical parameters has helped me to make sense of where my compositions lie on the East/West continuum; to question the validity of the 'sound' of a piece as a result of its musical parameters; and to interrogate the ideologies of East and/ or West as they have been adopted in a composition. It has also made me more aware of the area in between the two extremes on the spectrum, and how to more consciously work in this rich middle ground. Using Brinner's theory of fusion – involving blend, contrast and dominance - has been equally significant in defining how two styles are integrated together. Furthermore, I have come to realise, both intellectually and in my compositional practice, how one piece of music can be an ever-changing stream, including more than one style of fusion.

Throughout the portfolio, I have had to adapt my compositional approach to the various types of musicians and ensembles I have been working with, at times relinquishing creative control, questioning the importance of authorship while trying to maintain my creative voice. Ensembles such as the Atlas Ensemble or Ensemble Saraband use the score as merely a suggestion. Where improvisation is integrated into a piece of music according to the idioms of the musicians at hand, I discovered the importance of setting

the foundations and writing the basic thematic material for the sake of unifying a composition, but alas, I have become aware that not all traditional Eastern musicians think in these ways and find it quite restrictive. On the other hand, working with ensembles such as the London Symphony Orchestra or Birmingham Contemporary Music Group who adhere closely to the score, I found that I had to resort explicitly to writing my 'Eastern ideas' into the score as much as I could, even with the full knowledge that I would not get even close to writing the character I wanted to achieve for the piece. Further research is certainly needed for these kinds of forces. But in *Zwareeb* and *Silk Moth Opera*, I was able to find a satisfying balance between Eastern and Western idioms. In these two works more than the others, I found a way to work to make the most of the strengths of the musicians. In so doing, I found the coalescing of style and idiom to flow quite naturally. As a result of this PhD, I find myself to be, as Edward Said puts it so well, 'a cluster of flowing currents':

*'I prefer this to the idea of a solid self, the identity to which so many attach so much significance. These currents, like the themes of one's life, flow along during the waking hours, and at their best, they require no reconciling, no harmonising. They are 'off' and may be out of place, but at least they are always in motion, in time, in place, in the form of all kinds of strange combinations moving about, not necessarily moving forward, sometimes against each other, contrapuntally ye without one central theme. A form of freedom, I'd like to think, even if I am far from being totally convinced that it is. That skepticism too is one of the themes I particularly want to hold on to. With so many dissonances in my life I have learned actually to prefer being not quite right and out of place.'*⁷²

- Edward Said

⁷² Said, Edward W. (1999) *Out Of Place*. New York: Knopf, Print.

Appendix 1 – Scores in Portfolio

ORCHESTRAL

Tmesis (2013)

for symphony orchestra

3 minutes

Dramaticule IV (2012)

for 28 Western and Traditional Asian instruments

6 minutes

VOCAL

Mawwal (2012)

for soprano, violin, cello, flute, clarinet, harp, percussion

4 minutes

Lisaniki (trans. *Your tongue*) (2014/5)

for mixed voices and Middle Eastern ensemble

(kemence, qanoun, daff, Ottoman voice)

7 minutes

OPERA

Silk Moth (libretto by Eleanor Knight, dir. Michael Moxham, Maria Koripas) (2015)

for soprano, violin, cello, accordion, ney

LARGE CHAMBER (9-15 PLAYERS)

Murmurations (2014)

for large chamber orchestra

10 minutes

SMALL CHAMBER (1-8 PLAYERS)

Tanit (2012)

for viola

6 minutes

Taqsim aala taqsim

for cello

6 minutes

Mannuquin Losses (2013)

for 6 players

2 minutes

Zwareeb (2014)

for erhu, violin, kamancha

5 minutes

Notes regarding *Tanit* score

The portfolio contains the first edition of the score, premiered in December 2012, compared to the recording which was adapted to new material I gave the performer for the Dance Umbrella festival performance which took place in October 2013.

APPENDIX 2 - Recordings in Portfolio

CD

1. **Dramaticule IV** for 28 Eastern Traditional and Western instruments (2012).....06:23
Atlas Ensemble (cond. Jussi Jaatinen)
2. **Mawwal** for soprano, violin, cello, flute, clarinet, harp, percussion (2012).....07:14
Birmingham New Music Ensemble (cond. Daniele Rosina)
3. **Tmesis** for Symphony Orchestra (2013).....04:11
London Symphony Orchestra, (cond. Francois Xavier-Roth) LSO Panufnik Legacies II CD (2016)
4. **Mannequin Losses** for 6 instruments (2013).....02:19
Hermes Ensemble
5. **Taqsim aala Taqsim** for solo cello (2013).....05:57
Maria Zachariadou
6. **Murmurations** for Sinfonietta ensemble (2014).....10:20
Birmingham Contemporary Music Group (cond. Christopher Austin)
7. **Zwareeb** for Chinese erhu, Azeri kamancha and violin (2014).....04:25
Atlas Ensemble (cond. Wim Henderickx)
8. **Lisaniki** for Mixed choir and Turkish Ensemble (2015).....07:47
Latvian Radio Choir and Ensemble Saraband (cond. Kaspars Putnins)/Canticum Canticorum CD

DVD

1. **Tanit** for solo viola (2012)
London Sinfonietta (Miranda Fulleylove)
2. **Silk Moth Opera** (2015) for soprano, violin, cello, accordion, ney
Soprano Enas Massalha, Ensemble Zar, (cond. Toby Purser) libretto: Eleanor Knight, dirs. Michael Moxham and Maria Koripas
3. **ANNEXE - The Adventures of Prince Achmed** (2013) live score, performed in the Purcell Room, Southbank as part of Birds Eye View Film Festival. Ensemble Zar (cond. Bushra El-Turk)

EXTRA TRACKS

3. **Tmesis** for Symphony Orchestra (2013) Excerpt
London Symphony Orchestra, (cond. Francois Xavier-Roth) LSO Panufnik Legacies II CD (2016)
4. **Zwareeb** for Chinese erhu, Azeri kamancha and violin (2014)
Atlas Ensemble (cond. Wim Henderickx)

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