

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

The Double Bass and Theatricality:

Technique as Choreography

and

Approaching a Theatrical Work

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Masters of Arts

in

Music

by

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

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## EPIGRAPH

Part of the strategy of being an artist is,  
How do you create an experience for people  
that allows them to see and hear in a new way?  
It opens up the possibilities of perception,  
so that when you go back into your life  
you might be more open to the moments of life,  
and see things you haven't been aware of before.

*Meredith Monk*

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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Master of Arts in Music

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This thesis will delve into the possibilities available to the solo double bassist that transform a mere musical performance into one that embodies aspects of composite theatre, a form of performance coined by Meredith Monk. Along with Monk's ideas, François Rabbath's *La Nouvelle Technique de la Contrebasse* shows a pedagogy that facilitates a way of playing for the contemporary bassist. Various pieces will be looked at that integrate characteristics of theatre and/or dance, so to create a new and more complete experience for the audience and performer. Lastly, the thesis will look at *ZAB: ou la passion selon St. Nectaire*, composed by Philippe Boivin, and how one might approach the theatrical work for solo double bass, using the ideas and motives explored in the first half of the paper.

## **Introduction: Music as Theatre**

When one sees the word “music”, the sensations that immediately come to mind are that of an aural nature. Yet, ask any music lover, and perhaps he will tell you his love for music stems from the all-encompassing power it has in affecting much more than one’s ears. He might tell you how music paints a picture, or evokes a vivid movie in his mind’s eye. Over the course of Silver Screen’s history, we’ve seen many musicians experiment with an acting career. From Elvis to Sun Ra, and more recently, David Bowie, have all had their moments on the big screen. How is it that a musician can shift the entire nature of his or her profession as a performer without, it would seem, much effort at all? When training to be a musician, one learns how to facilitate their instrument with proficiency, read music, and perform from memory, among other things. However, one could argue that being a “good” musician comes from the ability to do more than just playing what is on the page.

It is a warranted belief in classical music doctrines that every non-vocal musician should strive to emulate the human voice - the most natural and emotive sound. It is also widely accepted that a singer’s *entire* body, not just the lungs, diaphragm, and vocal chords, is his or her instrument. The American composer, musician, dancer, film maker, and artist, Meredith Monk takes this idea one step further. Having spent her entire childhood immersed in both movement and singing, Monk came to realize, only once she began combining both dance and the voice, that the voice and body act as one; that singing cannot be separated from physical expression in her identity as an artist. Monk states, the voice can indeed act and move just as the body does; it can jump, run, it has landscapes and characters, both male and female, within it (Inner Voice).

A singer will use her hands, posture, and facial expressions to convey the emotions and storyline of the piece she is singing. These tools are, unfortunately, not as readily available for someone who must engage more or all parts of his body to make an instrument sound. Be that as it may, let us accept that an instrumentalist strives to utilize all modes of expression, just as a singer would, and that an instrumentalist's bass, trumpet, computer, etc., is an extension of his or her body and mind, a means to create sonic diversity. Consequently, making the body every musician's true instrument, as well as the singer's; the instrument being an entity utilized for expressing and communicating non-vocal sonorities. We can now approach the musician's relationship with his instrument as a partnership between two beings, a dance, or an act, making every musician inherently theatrical.

## Choreography

The use of choreography in performance is not restricted to dance alone, as was seen in traditional, full-staged operas, as well as Shakespearean productions. It continues to appear in straight theatre, operatic, and musical theatre settings today. Both opera and musical theatre productions utilize the theatrical element of language, however, individual languages are not universal. If the crux of an opera's storyline depends on the words the characters are singing, anyone who doesn't speak the language being used will lose an essential element of the work. Meredith Monk states,

I don't really have contempt for 'the word'. I have contempt when the word is used as the glue of something, which has happened in theatre... and a lot of film. I really don't like... that one has to sit, and listen to words all the time. When, really, all the other faculties aren't being used... I think the word has its own beauty, and also should have its own integrity; stand alone just as much as any of the other elements (Four American Composers).

Monk developed the term "Vocables" so she could remove spoken language nearly altogether from her work, leaving only the language of music to be interpreted by everyone listening and watching. Vocables are sung syllables that connote no specific meaning, but are often familiar sounds across languages. Syllables such as, "wa," "la," "ma," "lee," "hey," "ho," are strung together to create a sung language that Monk believes to be universal (Inner Voice). Vocables have become an integral element in Monk's evening-long, operatic works, such as *On Behalf of Nature* (2013) and *Songs of Ascension* (2008). Uncharacteristically, in these performances instrumentalists are expected to also be stage performers, where one would expect to see them placed in the wings or pit of a stage. This is, in part, due to Monk's belief that the body is an artist's true instrument, and what one does with it, whether it be of physical, musical, or any other nature, is an extension of expression, equally comparable across art forms; leaving

movement, physical interaction, and acting no longer to the roles only played by vocalists.

To remove her work even one step further from being pigeon-holed into any form of exclusivity, Monk drew from her expertise in dance, music and composition, and film to create a new form of performance that she calls composite theatre. Composite theatre is a medium that blends voice, music, movement, costume, film, and environment; in which all parts work together to form an organic whole. Offering unity of music and movement, and creating a total experience for the audience (Conversations with Meredith Monk). Using the ideas of *Vocables* and composite theatre, a door is now opened for instrumentalists, and singers, to join the realm of theatrical performance. Now, as more than just accompaniment, but rather, as part of centre stage.

One of the first things anyone notices about the double bass is its size. Not only is it equally as large, if not larger than its musician, but also, the instruments in the string family, particularly the bass, mimic the human form closer than any other instrument or family of instruments. Terms we use to describe parts of the human body are paralleled when explaining the structure of a bass, i.e., body, ribs, neck, head. Due to its size, playing a double bass is extremely physically demanding, more so than many other instruments. Achieving the most desired, fullest, and largest variety of sounds from the bass requires the use of the entire body. This is where, perhaps more than most other instruments, a double bass performance can start appearing like a dance between two beings.

Performing a piece of music and performing a dance have many similarities. When observed from a grand point of view, the process of reaching each end are quite similar in execution. First, one must decide on which technique, school of teaching, or

genre he or she is going to perform. For this argument, let us assume that both the dancer and double bassist are well versed in the genre each ends up choosing. For a dancer, the choice might be a traditional ballet, salsa, or modern style of dance. He might choose to perform someone else's pre-existing choreography, or to create his own. A bassist also chooses from various styles; whether to implement the use of the German or the French bow, and whether to choose a piece that is partially or entirely comprised of pizzicato. As it is for a dancer, the bassist has a vast repertoire to choose from - one that spans centuries, or he might decide to compose his own piece to play.

Once the groundwork has been decided, a dancer will then begin to learn the choreography, synchronizing his body, with steps and gestures, in time with the music, if there is any. 'Choreography' is defined as "the technique of representing the various movements in dancing by a system of notation" (Choreography). A dancer's score is a prompt, a set of loose instructions. A dance score is not so concretely set, and may look entirely different than a musical score, and each choreographer has his own way of notating gesture and movements. However, despite whether this musical score is notated, graphic, or has text instructions, the function of both scores serve the same purpose. As a dancer must learn a piece's choreography, the double bassist must also learn to execute the musically notated demands of his piece. However, simply being able to hear the notes in one's head in order to facilitate learning the notes is not all that is required to perform a piece.

The double bassist, in addition to learning the notes, must also make his own choreography. In most cases, there is more than one way to play a passage of music. He must decide which of the four strings on the bass will provide his desired sound, he must choose which fingers to use to play each of the notes, he must decide on bowings

and bow placement. A dancer is required to memorize the choreography, and while the bassist has the option of playing from the music if he wants or needs to, he is still required to internalize the movements he choreographed for himself, just as the dancer must. In the case of an improvised performance, both the dancer and bassist have a lexicon of movements to perform and choose from that have been practiced and internalized. The main difference being they are decided upon on in the moment, rather than having a pre-meditated or pre-composed nature.

Once each respective choreography has been internalized, both the dancer and bassist have the same steps to finish before the performance can take place. One must decide on the venue he will perform in, what attire he will wear, what kind of lighting will best fit the desired mood of the piece. In the case of the double bassist, he may choose to be amplified.

## Technique as Choreography

An example of a contemporary double bass technique becoming choreography can be clearly seen in the playing of François Rabbath (b. 1931-), and his *Nouvelle Technique de la Contrebasse* (Nouvelle Technique de la Contrebasse). The Rabbath method takes advantage of both the body's and the instrument's natural weight and movement, so that the bassist may produce the fullest, most desirable sounds. In early life, Rabbath was a body builder, and he learned to harness the ability of using the least amount of energy while optimizing stamina and endurance in a performance setting. Stemming from his experience as an athlete, Rabbath has fully integrated that same idea into his approach towards playing the double bass (Private Lesson). Rabbath believes it is crucial to work in tandem with the bass; letting the weight of the instrument and gravity do the work for you, and moving with the instrument in a partnership in which the player is the lead.

A main tenet in the Rabbath technique is to begin all major movements on the bass by using and engaging the largest muscle groups in the body first, to inflict the least amount of strain on the small, refined muscle groups and tendons that are responsible for the finesse and detail required to play an instrument. During a group lesson demonstration, given at the International Society of Bassists Convention, held at Ithaca College June 5-10<sup>th</sup>, 2017, Rabbath began a morning warm up class by leading the participants in an exercise playing long tones on the open D-string, while mimicking the movement of the bow arm on the left side (Morning Warmup). The choreography involved in this movement, was to create large circles with both arms, moving from resting position outwards, with the right arm circling counter clockwise, and the left clockwise. The left arm did not depress a string to produce a stopped note, and the right

arm drew the open string with the full length of the bow before both arms circled upwards and out again. Rabbath instructs his pupils to originate their bow strokes from the ground, to imagine the energy used to pull or push the bow coming from the legs, up through the back, and into the arm. The reasoning is to, again, engage the entire body, diminishing strain on smaller muscle groups, and preventing injuries, such as Repetitive Strain Injury and tendonitis. This exercise has two purposes; to wake up and stimulate the large muscle groups in the back and shoulders, and to catalyze the instrument into full, open vibrations – essentially, to “wake up” the instrument as one simultaneously warms up the body (Morning Warmup).

Although most bassists remain stationary while playing, whether standing or sitting on a stool, one can correlate these exercises taught from *La Nouvelle Technique de la Contrebasse* to the warm up exercises a dancer performs in a *barre* class. In a traditional ballet *barre* class, one starts by stretching and warming up the body, as does a bassist that studies under the Rabbath Technique. To further warm the body and joints, a dancer will move through the five major ballet positions, and then integrate small exercises into each position (Positions of the feet in ballet). Establishing strength in these fundamental positions lays the groundwork for any and all movements a dancer will encounter in a professional work. The teachings of *La Nouvelle Technique de la Contrebasse* are a direct correlation to these ideas. As traditional ballet has its primary positions of the feet, as well as the arms, Rabbath has also mapped the fingerboard of the bass into its own six positions, and instructs his pupils to begin each day of playing by warming up each of the six positions before moving on to rehearsing repertoire.

After a bassist warms up the instrument and the body’s large muscle groups, he will then move to warming up the smaller muscles that control a player’s finesse, by

moving through the six positions of the bass, which, when put all together, complete three octaves, the range of most double basses. First position begins at the nut of the instrument; the player will place his index finger at the first half-step on the fingerboard, the second finger is placed on the second half-step, and the ring and pinky fingers are placed on the third half-step, setting up a whole-step to fall under the entire hand. The ring and pinky fingers are placed at the base of the neck for second position of the fingerboard. In other words, second position lays between C and D on the first (G) string of the bass, on a D-neck instrument. Third position, the index finger is placed in the saddle, or on D on the G string.

Fourth position and on moves into thumb-position; instead of using the index, middle, ring, and pinky fingers to depress the strings, as in the lower positions, the player will now use the thumb, index, middle, and ring fingers, swapping the thumb for the pinky finger, but leaving each finger to act independently, whereas the ring and pinky fingers act in tandem in lower positions. The spacing between thumb and pointer fingers now typically spans a whole-step, having only been a half-step in lower positions. The spacing between pointer and second fingers is equally split between half and whole-steps, and the ring finger typically plays a half-step above the second finger. This sets up a basic hand position to play fourth from thumb to ring finger. Rabbath continues to use major landmarks on the instrument as the home base of each position (the nut is used to indicate first position, the saddle for second and third positions). Position indicators for the fourth, fifth, and sixth positions lie on the fingerboard or string, instead of on the body of the instrument. The thumb is placed at the second partial harmonic in fourth position, which would fall on the octave G on the first string; the third partial (D on the first string) for fifth position, and the fourth partial (G on the first string) for sixth

position. In the same way ballet dancers begin their day at the *barre*, once a bass player warms up through the six positions of the bass his body and instrument are ready for a day of rehearsing and performing.

A major tenet that sets *La Nouvelle Technique* apart from bass schools of earlier generations, e.g. the teachings of Franz Simandl and Henry Portnoi, is the use of the pivot, a tool he adopted from the dance world (Private Lesson). The conception of *La Nouvelle Technique* sprung from Rabbath's frustrations with the lack of priority placed on solo playing on the double bass, primarily due to players' inability to effortlessly access the higher positions of the bass' fingerboard. In addition to having developed a new set up for the bass' relationship to the position of the player's body, Rabbath uses landmarks on the bass to indicate each position to facilitate familiarity of the instrument. However, when played chromatically, not every note is represented between the basic hand formations in each position. In order to access all the notes on the fingerboard, Simandl's *New Method for the Double Bass* applies the term "half-positions" to hand placements that increase by half-step (New Method for the double bass);  $\frac{1}{2}$  position begins with the index finger at the first half-step, 1<sup>st</sup> position at the second half-step, 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  position at the third half-step, and so on. In addition to creating a somewhat cumbersome system that involves numerous positions, this method, for the most part, fails to address the upper half of the fingerboard, and thumb positions, for it is a method based solely around classical orchestral playing.

From the generation of double bass playing that succeeded the Franz Simandl school emerged Henry Portnoi's *Creative Bass Technique*, whose teachings are built from the progressive and increasingly more demanding orchestral bass playing of the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as virtuosic solo playing. Portnoi does not use half-

positions, however, in this method, Portnoi addresses what he calls “rocking,” a technique that uses micro-shifts to quickly move between positions that differ by a half-step on the fingerboard to help facilitate playing in keys with high numbers of accidentals, as one might find in the music of Richard Strauss, and/or the serial and atonal music of Arnold Schönberg or Igor Stravinsky (Creative Bass Technique). However, since half-positions are not used, the Creative Bass Technique still poses the problem of reaching positions in the double digits before ever reaching thumb position.

The Rabbath method uses only six main fingering positions, and applies pivots to both low and thumb positions to allow the player’s fingers to smoothly dance over the entirety of the bass’ fingerboard. The use of pivots reduces the number of full shifts a player needs to maneuver through different positions, aiding the player in the demands of virtuosic playing. The principle movement of a pivot remains the same in both low and high positions; the idea is to leave the thumb anchored in one position and to open the hand, primarily, but not exclusively, in an ascending motion, at the hinge created between the fingers and the thumb, as a dancer pivots around one anchored foot. This allows the player to play more notes in one position, instead of shifting the entire hand to a new position, therefore facilitating a smooth connection between the Rabbath positions. In the low positions - 1-3 - the pivot allows for a player to play a whole step between the first and second fingers, as well as the second and fourth fingers, so that a position can span a major third instead of only a major second. In thumb positions, a pivot can be applied between the first and second and the second and third fingers, as it is in positions 1-3. However, due to the nature of a string and the fact that spacing between notes decreases as one ascends the fingerboard, the hinge between the thumb and index finger can also be opened to span much more than a whole step. Depending

on the size of the player's hand, the index finger can pivot a fourth, and sometimes a tritone or a fifth, away from the thumb in fourth position, the largest of the thumb-positions. Thus, allowing the player to play through the position his thumb is anchored in, and into the next, without ever shifting.

With the introduction of *La Nouvelle Technique de la Contrebasse*, François Rabbath has paved a new road for double bassists of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The initial use of this virtuosic technique was seen when Rabbath became the first bassist to add J.S. Bach's *Cello Suites No. 1-6 BWV 1007-1012* to his repertoire, a feat no one expected him to achieve (Private Lesson). However, in the past century and, perhaps, due to the proficiency exhibited in Rabbath's now 6 decade-long career, we have seen the role of the double bass shift from being used primarily as an accompanying instrument in large ensembles, to stepping out into the limelight of both small ensemble and solo playing; seen in the works of Sofia Gubaidulina - *Five Etudes for Harp, Double Bass, and Percussion (1965)*, György Kurtág – *Einige Sätze aus den Sudelbüchern Georg Christoph Lichtenbergs, Op. 37a (1996-99)*, Iannis Xenakis - *Theraps (1975-76)*, Luciano Berio - *Sequenza XIVb pour contrebasse (2003)*, to name a few. These works, being written specifically for the double bass, demand a level of playing never previously seen before in the lexicon of double bass repertoire, and have now been made approachable, thanks to the contemporary techniques of Rabbath that teach the player to move with ease and agility, in synchronistic partnership with the instrument.

### *Pas de Deux*

*Pas de Deux* is a term used most frequently by ballet performance to describe a duet, usually for a male and a female performer, in which they dance in synchrony. However, the literal definition of the term is “a dance or figure for two performers,” or “an intricate relationship or activity involving two parties or things” (Pas De Deux). This latter definition is a perfect way to view the relationship between a bassist and his instrument. If we return to the *pas de deux* in a ballet setting, the male performer is traditionally the dominant character in the pairing; he guides his partner, who is often dancing on point, through the choreography, offering stability for the female partner, so that she may execute more extravagant and ornamented gestures. We can see this clearly in Lev Ivanov’s choreography for the well-known *pas de deux* in Tchaikowsky’s ballet, *Swan Lake* (Swan Lake *pas de deux*). When we look at the two halves of the dance separately, the male part usually isn’t much on its own, and the female part would be incredibly difficult, if not impossible at times, to execute as a solo. Coextensively, if we relate a bassist to the ballerino in a *pas de deux*, and his bass to the ballerina, the bass relies on its musician to produce sound. Additionally, performing the movements without the partnership of an actual instrument would render the musical performance futile, perhaps.

A contemporary piece that exemplifies the idea of solo bass performance presented in the form of *pas de deux* is *Menada – for voice and double bass*, performed by and composed for Bulgarian bassist Irina-Kalina Goudeva. *Menada* encompasses aspects of both composite theatre and the use of its own version of *Vocables*. In program notes about distinguished composer and professor, Julia Tsenova, and her

piece, Goudeva states *Menada*, utilizing the combination of voice, double bass, and choreography for one performer:

... is scored in a multi-layered way, requiring an active theatrical presence. The *mise-en-scene* and compositional decisions are dictated by the physical and spiritual transformation of the mythological Snake into the goddess Menada. Unpredictable and dangerous, in a state of trance, Menada communicates with gods and mystical beings, capricious satyrs and ordinary mortals.

In an act of ecstasy, she transcends the limits of life... to discover, with curiosity or disillusionment, her own painful presence in the realm beyond. This is a provocation for Menada and she, consciously or not, accepts this sacrifice. Her body [the performer] is the sound – its projection, energy, speed, vibration, dynamic and colour. She discovers Him/the masculine energy, represented by the double bass. Twisting herself around Him, she tries to find a way of communication, inventing [and discovering] a language of different sound combinations; E [representing] (creativity), I (live aspects), U (universal harmony), O (roots of life), A (the invisible energies), M (the spiritual vibrations).

Further in the process, she transforms herself from the mythical/mystical level to the terrestrial/ physical one in order to reach and seduce Him. They are becoming very charmed with each other in this game... reaching extremity in trance, they are devoured by the explosive erotic energy and the desire to find a new dimension and liberty beyond limits (Recomenzar el Infinito).

In this piece, the double bass embodies its own character - man/humanity. *Menada* begins in a theatrical manner, with the performer slithering and dancing, as a snake goddess would, up to the instrument, and exploring its form as she discovers it, before sitting down with the bass and beginning to play the musical material. By the end of the piece, the two characters' interactions culminate in the demise of Him (the role played by the double bass). The instrument is laid to rest, and the goddess once again leaves the stage. The conglomeration of theatrical, narrative, and dance aspects, on top of the notated material in this piece, and due to the nature of the piece being composed for only one performer, makes it impossible to distinguish the piece as being of either theatrical or musical natures; it is both.

### **Approaching a Theatrical Work: ZAB ou la passion selon St. Nectaire (1981)**

We have come to expect theatrical productions to follow, at least, a semblance of a storyline. However, when observing the work of Samuel Beckett – for example, *Act Without Words* (1957), or *Quad* (1981), a play for television – we are shown staged plays with no plot, sometimes no costumes, nor setting, nor even dialogue. When compared to musical pieces, *Quad* and *Act Without Words* are to absolute music as Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is to *programme* music. Consequently, if we look at *Menada* as a piece of *programme* music, we can determine that *ZAB ou la passion selon St. Nectaire* is a piece of absolute music.

The composition of *ZAB* began in 1981 by French composer Philippe Boivin, with extensive collaboration with bassist Jean Pierre Robert (Håkon Thelin A New World of Sounds). It is a three-part, graphically and conventionally notated, theatrical piece for solo bass, with no narrative or plot. Instead, the piece explores the use of the body and the entirety of the instrument to create a multiplicity of sonorities. In his notes, Boivin writes, “De ton GESTE nait le SON / De ce SON vivra ton GESTE” – from your gesture, the sound is born / from the sound, lives the gesture. He goes on to say, “ZAB” is as much a piece to see as to hear... Therefore, without seeking to be excessively theatrical, the performer must endeavor to integrate the least of his actions into the musical discourse, including, and above all, functional actions, such as; removals and holds of bow or plectrum” (*ZAB*). One might ask, how a piece can be theatrical, when the composer implicitly pleads,

“...please just play the piece and corporal movements as indicated but never add any theatre attitude! ...audiences generally feel humour and sometimes smile in the particular situations you've already found in the score... If you attempt to exaggerate a comic situation, the audience will not listen anymore and the piece will become poor. Here is the ambiguity of the piece, at the same time very serious and not at all... (Håkon Thelin A New World of Sounds).

The player must find a way to uphold the integrity of the piece and do it justice, while not overacting or assigning a character to his role. This poses somewhat of a paradox, which, unfortunately, has played its part in rendering the piece unapproachable for many players; one of the sole factors as to why the piece has remained unknown and unplayed, for the most part, since its completion.

To become approachable, one must start looking at *ZAB*, and pieces of the same likeness, to be characterized as a new type of music and/or performance. Noah Creshevsky, in his chapter in part of *Arcana II* introduces a musical style called Hyperdrama, “.. in which hyperrealistically extended palettes, and/or restricted palettes, in conjunction with superhuman performance capabilities express a larger-than-life level of emotional intensity” (*Arcana II*). He then breaks down hyperdramas into two genres; 1) sounds of traditional instruments, pushed beyond traditional tonalities, that are executed by virtuosos who transcend limitations of individual performance capabilities; 2) music that integrates vast and diverse sonic elements to produce an expressive and versatile language. Hyperrealistic music is primarily electroacoustic music, and while *ZAB* is entirely acoustic, many of its characteristics are in conjunction with this new form of composing and performing. Without being overly emphatic, the bassist must perform all the notes *and* larger-than-life gestures in *ZAB* with precision and, all-the-while being convincing to the audience. Boivin utilizes the entire bass for producing sound, including drumming patterns on the ribs, top, and back, playing the tail piece, tapping with both hands on the fingerboard, plucking the strings above the nut and below the bridge, etc., as well as employing the performer to use his/her voice, clapping, and tapping various parts of his/her body, to create for the piece an expressive and versatile language of its own.

Many of Boivin's notations take the performer across the stage, as well as across the landscape of the bass. The piece begins with the performer playing the bass while it is laying on the ground, and this won't be the only time the bass lays down. Within the first section, the bass reaches the ground once more; this time with the performer underneath the instrument, continuing to strike the strings with the bow, ad libitum. The performer will also leave the bass on two occasions throughout *ZAB* (ZAB). These moments are not in between movements, and the player must keep the audience from thinking the piece has ended. There are written instructions in the third section of *ZAB*, that tell the performer to violently shove the pages from the stand. Due to the nature of *La Nouvelle Technique* bringing awareness and consciousness to the entire body while playing the bass, a performer that plays under this school of thought is given an upper hand in navigating through *ZAB*'s choreography with ease and agility.

As the contemporary-classical and third stream genres continue to evolve and expand, so does the double bass repertoire continue to expand and evolve out of the typical orchestra or jazz combo settings. Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we have seen the double bass step out of the shadows and into the limelight. Playing its part in both chamber and ensemble roles, as well as being given the chance to step out of the customary stage-black's and put on a new colour, by exhibiting its vast range of notes, overtones, tonalities, timbres, and functions as a soloist.

*"Before, when I didn't know what colour to put down, I put down black. Black is a force: I depend on black to simplify the construction. Now I've given up blacks. The use of black as a colour, in the same way as the other colour – yellow, red or blue - is not a new thing.*

*Like all evolution, that of black in painting has been made in jumps. But since the Impressionists it seems to have made continuous progress, taking a more and more important part in colour orchestration, comparable to that of the double bass as a solo instrument."*

- *Black is a Colour/1946, Henri Matisse*

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