

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

In Search of a Sonic Democracy: Tracing Feminist Genealogies through the Percussion Works of  
Lucia Dlugoszewski, Maryanne Amacher, and Eleanor Hovda

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements  
for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts

in

Contemporary Music Performance

by

Rebecca Louise Lloyd-Jones

Committee in charge:

Professor Steven Schick, Chair  
Professor Julie Burrelle  
Professor Anthony Burr  
Professor Amy Cimini  
Professor M. Myrta Leslie Santana

2024

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2024

## EPIGRAPH

I don't have the sense that I play percussion, that I am a percussionist. This choice of instrumentation was made because this medium lets me feel free, even though there always is a degree of burden.

Lê Quan Ninh

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dissertation Approval Page .....	iii
Epigraph .....	iv
Table of Contents .....	v
List of Figures .....	viii
List of Tables .....	x
Acknowledgements.....	xi
Vita.....	xiii
Abstract of the Dissertation .....	xiii
Introduction.....	1
0.1 Chapter outline .....	7
Chapter 1: Points of Departure: Framing Percussion Practice within Feminist and Anti-Racist Discourse.....	11
1.1 Post-humanist entanglements.....	16
1.2 Feminine Sensibilities .....	20
1.3 Percussion as a Gendered Practice .....	23
1.4 Percussion as a Speculative Practice.....	28
1.5 Companion Thinking .....	32
Chapter 2: Reimagining the Percussion Works of Lucia Dlugoszewski: A Feminist and Historiographic Inquiry.....	35
2.1 Feminist Methodologies.....	41
2.2 Origins of Everyday Sounds .....	50
2.3 Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds .....	54
2.4 Geography of Noon.....	68
Chapter 3: Spectral Listening: Maryanne Amacher’s Adjacencies .....	77
3.1 Adjacencies .....	84
3.2 Approaching Creative Development.....	90
3.3 Preparation and Rehearsal Process.....	92
3.4 Deconstructing Adjacencies.....	94
3.5 Percussion logistics and Stag .....	104
3.6 Harp Material .....	108
3.7 Key Moments .....	112
3.8 Questions of a Fragile Archive .....	116
Chapter 4: Embodied Sound: Exploring a Feminist Subjectivity in the Percussion Music of Eleanor Hovda .....	118

4.1 Cymbalmusic Series .....	126
4.2 Labyrinths .....	140
4.3 Closing reflections on an embodied practice: 40 Million Gallons of Music .....	144
Chapter 5: Navigating Between Structures: Reflexive Explorations and Practice-Based Research .....	148
5.1 Dust .....	153
5.2 Thought Sectors .....	161
5.3 Between Structures .....	169
Epilogue .....	177
Appendix.....	180
Appendix #1: Score of Between Structures .....	180
Appendix #2: Creative Portfolio .....	189
References.....	190

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Mountain Chief, Chief of Montana Blackfeet, in Native Dress With Bow, Arrows, and Lance, Listening to Song Being Played On Phonograph and Interpreting It in Sign Language to Frances Densmore, <i>Ethnologist</i> MAR 1916 .....	28
Figure 2.1: Michael Avedon, photographer. Erick Hawkins and Dana Madole in his <i>Geography of Noon</i> , with Lucia Dlugoszewski providing music on percussion instruments that she designed, circa 1964. Box 128, folder 1, Erick Hawkins and Lucia Dlugoszewski Papers, Music Division. ....	41
Figure 2.2: Lucia Dlugoszewski, <i>Dynamic Scale</i> . Sourced from The Erick Hawkins Modern Dance Technique. ....	45
Figure 2.3: Lucia Dlugoszewski, <i>Radical Quidditas for an Unborn Baby</i> (1991), Page 1 of Score .....	46
Figure 2.4: Lucia Dlugoszewski invented instruments: Wooden Tangent Rattles. Designed by Ralph Dorazio .....	49
Figure 2.5: John Cage, <i>Water Walk</i> , score example .....	51
Figure 2.6: Lucia Dlugoszewski, <i>Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds</i> .....	57
Figure 2.7: Lucia Dlugoszewski, <i>Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds</i> .....	60
Figure 2.8: John Cage, <i>27'10.554 for a Percussionist</i> .....	64
Figure 2.9: Lucia Dlugoszewski invented Ladder Harps and Skin Tangent Rattles, Photograph by R.P Kaplan .....	68
Figure 2.10: Lucia Dlugoszewski playing on her invented percussion instruments. Photographer and date unknown, publicity photo, Erick Hawkins and Lucia Dlugoszewski Papers, Music Division, Library of Congress.....	70
Figure 2.11: Lucia Dlugoszewski, <i>Geography of Noon</i> .....	71
Figure 2.12: Lucia Dlugoszewski, <i>Geography of Noon</i> , drawing of percussion set-up .....	72
Figure 3.1: Maryanne Amacher, original tape for Remainder with Adjacencies text .....	84
Figure 3.2: Maryanne Amacher, <i>Adjacencies</i> score, Page 1.....	95
Figure 3.3: Maryanne Amacher, <i>Adjacencies</i> score, Page 2.....	95
Figure 3.4: Maryanne Amacher, <i>Adjacencies</i> score, Page 3.....	96

Figure 3.5: Maryanne Amacher, <i>Adjacencies</i> score, Page 4.....	96
Figure 3.6: Maryanne Amacher, <i>Adjacencies</i> score, Page 5.....	97
Figure 3.7: Maryanne Amacher, <i>Adjacencies: Score and Performance Instructions for Sound Diffusion</i> .....	98
Figure 3.8: Maryanne Amacher, <i>Adjacencies: Score and Performance Instructions for Percussion Instrumentation</i> .....	100
Figure 3.9: Maryanne Amacher, <i>Adjacencies: Score and Performance Instructions, Frequency Spectrum</i> .....	102
Figure 3.10: Maryanne Amacher, <i>Adjacencies: Score and Performance Instructions, Negative Notation Example</i> .....	103
Figure 3.11: Maryanne Amacher, <i>Adjacencies</i> , live performance photo .....	105
Figure 3.12: <i>Adjacencies</i> , diagram of player 1 set-up .....	106
Figure 3.13: <i>Adjacencies</i> , diagram of player 2 set-up .....	107
Figure 3.14: Maryanne Amacher, <i>Adjacencies: Score and Performance Instructions, Harp Notation</i> .....	109
Figure 3.15: Maryanne Amacher, <i>Adjacencies</i> , Page 3 harp motif example.....	110
Figure 3.16: Maryanne Amacher, <i>Adjacencies</i> , <i>Adjacencies: Score and Performance Instructions, Bowing Notes</i> .....	111
Figure 4.1: Eleanor Hovda, <i>Lemniscate</i> , score example.....	125
Figure 4.2: Eleanor Hovda performing <i>Cymbalmusic Series</i> .....	127
Figure 4.3: Eleanor Hovda, <i>Cymbalmusic Series</i> , program notes example .....	128
Figure 4.4: Eleanor Hovda: <i>Cymbalmusic Series, II</i> , score example.....	132
Figure 4.5: Eleanor Hovda, <i>Ariadne Music</i> , score example .....	136
Figure 4.6: Eleanor Hovda, <i>If Tigers were Clouds... then reverberating, they would create all songs</i> , score example .....	139
Figure 4.7: Eleanor Hovda and Maria Artemis, newspaper picture of <i>Labyrinths</i> installation ..	141
Figure 5.1: Rebecca Lloyd-Jones, <i>Between Structures</i> , score example.....	153

Figure 5.2: Rebecca Saunders <i>Module 5: Metal</i> , example of performance notes .....	154
Figure 5.3: Rebecca Saunders <i>Module 5: Metal</i> , score example .....	155
Figure 5.4: Rebecca Saunders <i>Module 3: Object 1</i> , score example.....	155
Figure 5.5: Personal photo of the instrumental set-up of Rebecca Saunders <i>Dust</i> , outlining performance area of modules .....	157
Figure 5.6: Order of modules outlining my personal form chosen for Rebecca Saunders, <i>Dust</i>	158
Figure 5.7: Sarah Hennies, <i>Thought Sectors</i> , score example.....	162
Figure 5.8: Rebecca Lloyd-Jones, lay out of <i>Thought Sectors</i> percussion set up .....	163
Figure 5.9: Rebecca Lloyd-Jones, <i>Between Structures</i> , instrumentation and set up .....	171

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: <i>Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds</i> , Percussion 1 and 2 instrumentations.....	59
Table 2.2: <i>Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds</i> , chronological score instructions .....	61
Table 5.1: Rebecca Saunders, <i>Dust</i> , Order of Modules .....	159
Table 5.2: Sarah Hennies, <i>Thought Sectors</i> , Movement 1 Active/Receptive analysis .....	165
Table 5.3: Sarah Hennies, <i>Thought Sectors</i> , Movement 2, Active, analysis. ....	167
Table 5.4: Sarah Hennies, <i>Thought Sectors</i> , Movement 3, Active/Receptive, analysis .....	168
Table 5.5: Rebecca Lloyd-Jones, <i>Between Structures</i> , instrumentation .....	172
Table 5.6: Rebecca Lloyd-Jones, <i>Between Structures</i> , score analysis .....	173

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I begin by acknowledging that this dissertation was written on the sovereign land of the Kumeyaay peoples and the Yuggera and Turrbal peoples, respectively. I recognize that my thoughts and aspirations for change are woven into the enduring traditions of First Nations peoples, who have been storytellers, musicians, and community builders for tens of thousands of years.

I extend my deepest gratitude to my committee. Without the invaluable contributions of Anthony, Julie, Myrta, Amy, and Steve, this work would not have come to fruition. I highlight the unwavering support and guidance from Amy and Myrta, who consistently made me feel heard and supported. Steve, your steadfast support throughout this journey has been life-changing. Your mentorship, compassion, and camaraderie in all matters related to music and life have profoundly impacted me, and I am forever grateful.

To my collaborators in music, especially my colleagues at Red Fish Blue Fish, I am immensely grateful for the musical memories and wealth of knowledge and experiences shared. A particularly poignant mention goes to Michael Jones, who started this journey with me—a friendship, support network, and partnership that has enriched my journey beyond measure.

This journey would not be possible without the women in my life —Juliana, Illana, Tere, Ashley, Aiyun, Yvonne, and Jodie—for their trust, truths, and unwavering emotional support throughout this endeavor.

Lastly, I thank my family, who have been my constant pillars of strength, support, and reason. Particularly to Theocharis and Ida, my successes are yours; your enduring support and love have been the cornerstone of my perseverance.

## VITA

- 2010 Bachelor of Music, Performance, Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University
- 2013 Bachelor of Music, Honors, Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne
- 2017 Master of Music Research, Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University
- 2024 Doctor of Musical Arts, University of California San Diego

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

In Search of a Sonic Democracy: Tracing Feminist Genealogies through the Percussion Works of Lucia Dlugoszewski, Maryanne Amacher, and Eleanor Hovda

by

Rebecca Lloyd-Jones

Doctor of Musical Arts in Contemporary Music Performance

University of California San Diego, 2024

Professor Steven Schick, Chair

In its pursuit of a sonic democracy, this dissertation seeks to disrupt, critique, and redefine historical narratives. Reflecting on the historically gendered nature of percussion within Western Art Music, this dissertation converges sonic speculation, feminist and post-humanist theory, historiographic and musical analysis, companion thinking and anti-racist discourses, to explore the complexities of gender dynamics and narratives of historical exclusion within the percussion canon. Woven throughout and anchored in literary texts from scholars such as Audre

Lorde, Karen Barad, Julietta Singh, and Donna Haraway, I challenge dominant narratives of mastery and historical representations of percussion performance practice throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Tracing feminist genealogies and reimagining the works of composers Lucia Dlugoszewski, Maryanne Amacher, and Eleanor Hovda, this dissertation elucidates their often-overlooked contributions to the percussion canon, highlighting their entanglements with metaphor, perception, and feminist sensibilities. I focus on illustrating their informal and personalized percussion disciplines as a means of liberation, showcasing how, as outliers, they fearlessly challenged traditional power structures.

As I trace feminist genealogies, I contextualize my own artistic endeavors, envisioning my composition *Between Structures* as part of an evolving narrative of feminist creativity. Furthermore, adopting a self-reflexive tone, I investigate the intersection of kinship and feminist subjectivity, employing a practice-based research methodology to analyze the intricate musical layers of *Between Structures*.

## INTRODUCTION

“I want to write to you like someone learning.”

Clarice Lispector, *Agua Viva*, 1973

During my time at UC San Diego, I took part in a course called *Unpacking Anti-Blackness and Dismantling Systemic Racism in Educational Practices: An Action-Oriented Learning Community*. This course was designed to probe the problems caused by systemic racism in educational institutions, particularly disparities in higher education, and how, as a teacher, to be more aware of these inequalities when teaching and provide possible ways to mitigate harm in the classroom. Bettina Love’s work was introduced to me through this class. Her book *We Want to Do More Than Survive* is grounded in abolitionist teaching and discusses how abolitionist work requires an individual to be a co-conspirator. During a live interview in 2019 discussing the themes in her book, Love was asked to explain what it means to move from allyship to being a co-conspirator, stating, “Allies know all the language – but to be a co-conspirator is to put something on the line for someone...to take a risk for someone...use your privilege, not just you white folks, but also you cis folks.”<sup>1</sup> These words stuck with me. Belinda Love’s presence and sense of unwavering commitment to advocating for more than just words of allyship forced me to reflect upon my own failings. I began to question, what I was putting on the line and for whom? These enquiries compelled me to reconsider how I approach the practice of percussion, the communities I inhabit as a musician, my role as an educator, and how I use pedagogy to empower others.

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<sup>1</sup> Love, Bettina, interview by Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz. 2019. *Co-Conspirators*.

My trajectory as a musician, has been anything but linear, mirroring the non-linear nature of my research journey. Upon commencing my academic pursuits at the University of California, I was thrust into a world of critical enquiry and interrogation, which felt natural, yet filled me with curiosity, as I had not engaged in such rigorous critique of my personal practice as a percussionist, or the canonical and social fabrics of percussion as an artform. This was a daunting and exhilarating time for me. It felt urgent, as if I was unearthing something that would be a catalyst of change in performance practice, and solve the riddles of patriarchy, misogyny, and inequities through playing a drum. By situating my research outlook from that of a woman, mother, improviser, and individual who engages with notation and virtuosity in male dominated environments, these monikers made me question the interfaces of my work - the why, who, we and where of my artistic practice.

When contemplating the practice of any art form, one of the fundamental lines of inquiry involves reflecting on the historiography and examining the origins of the Canon. Posing questions regarding the genesis of solo percussion and identifying the critical figures engrossed in shaping this discourse constitutes a recurrent and pertinent theme within percussion research, so while this line of inquiry is not particularly unique, it served as a foundational point of departure in my exploration of the subject. During this period, a recurrent theme surfaced - the prominent absence of solo works, composed by women. The genesis of the solo percussion Canon in Western Art Music, commencing approximately from the 1950s, highlighted luminaries such as John Cage, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Morton Feldman, and Helmut Lachemann as the protagonists with their compositions having a significant impact beyond the percussion community, expanding the realms of notation, resonance, and acts of listening during the late

20th century.<sup>2</sup> Despite the compelling and exciting auditory landscape that percussion was evoking during that era, it remained challenging for me to concede that there were no women creatives engaging with this art form.

While I dutifully engaged in learning the early music of the percussion canon and appreciating these works for the languages they exposed me to, the persistence of the lack of diversity weighed on my conscience. Were no women composing for percussion during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, or were their contributions overlooked and buried in obscurity? This line of inquiry evolved into a pressing concern of why; driven not only by my identity as a woman navigating a complex industry, but also by my complicity in heteronormativity and homogeneity by reproducing the same male-dominated narratives of classical music. Percussionist and composer Sarah Hennies observes that the predominant system in the percussion community is “so brutally homogenous,” primarily consisting of straight, white, cisgender males. To test this observation, Hennies, conducted a cursory Google Image search for “percussion quartet,” discovering a strikingly uniform collection of photos, revealing a “depressingly consistent series of photos of groups of men wearing the same clothes and doing the same things.” Hennies further highlights that “If you’re young, into percussion, and female or weird or both, you look at what’s around and you subconsciously learn that you are not ‘one of them.’”<sup>3</sup> Hence, my sense of urgency concerning the absence of women in the early canon evolved into an unexpected journey of self-discovery—a quest I hadn’t anticipated and didn’t realize I needed—prompting an exploration to highlight and trace feminist lineages in percussion. This endeavor enabled me

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<sup>2</sup> An example of the first percussion solos to emerge in the classical canon, 1956: John Cage, *27'10.554" for a percussionist*. 1959: Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Zyklus*. 1964: Lucia Dlugoszewski, *Geography of Noon*. 1964: Morton Feldman, *The King of Denmark*. 1965-66: Helmut Lachenmann, *Interieur I*.

<sup>3</sup> Hennies, Sarah. 2018. “Queer Percussion.” *Queer Trash: The Symposium*. Brooklyn, New York: ISSUE Project Room

to see myself represented within this tradition, fostering a profound sense of purpose, connection, and belonging. During this same period of personal and academic development, another line of inquiry intersected my path - the discovery of composer Lucia Dlugoszewski. I distinctly recall my professor assigning me an assignment task that involved delving into the archives. At that point, my perception of archival research was somewhat antiquated, seemingly detached from the realm of experimental and contemporary music—an inherent bias that this assignment/experience promptly shattered. My professor sent me to the archive with no direction other than the prompt to “find something that talks to you.” The true significance of this directive eluded me at the time.

I embarked on an archival research journey with no preconceived notions or objectives, except that I would look through the archive of Pauline Oliveros which is housed at the Geisel Library at UC San Diego. As I probed into the archives, I discovered that archival research is a solitary and meditative experience that requires patience, care, curiosity, and reciprocity with primary sources. My love for Pauline Oliveros’ music (and the assignment task at hand) drew me to her archive, and as I read through her correspondence with friends, composers, and artists, I gained deeper insights into her connection with other composers, her commitment to exploring listening and meditation, and a glimpse into the many lives she touched. One particular document that caught my attention in the Oliveros archive was a quarterly magazine/journal from the 1970s, detailing opportunities exclusively for women composers, including commissions and performance opportunities. I was still profoundly obsessed with my search for women writing for percussion in the early canon, so I transcribed all the women composer’s names on this magazine list. I began investigating each one, their works, and their collaborations. During my investigation, I came across the names of numerous women whom I was not familiar

with, and their works have introduced me to some of the most exquisite pieces of music.

Although I cannot recall if Lucia Dlugoszewski's name was on that specific list, or a by-product of my search, the name 'Dlugoszewski' caught my attention through this process and piqued my curiosity.

From this pivotal juncture, I embarked on an exhaustive quest to delve into the complex milieu of Lucia Dlugoszewski. As of 2018, her available corpus of published sources was regrettably scant, with only one dissertation, a handful of recordings, and dance articles or New York Times reviews. What emerged for me from this work was the revelation of a remarkable woman - an artist who, despite her formal training in classical music, boldly embraced experimental composition and had a distinctive personalized feminine practice. Dlugoszewski's oeuvre, primarily confined to the realms of unpublished manuscripts and archives, her life, intricately woven with threads of solitude, love, and loss, mirrored the complexity of her compositions. Astonishingly, she crafted over 100 musical compositions and handcrafted more than 100 uniquely designed percussion instruments. What set her apart was not only her departure from the conventions of classical music but also her unparalleled flair as a performer. Remarkably, Dlugoszewski deployed her percussion instruments with an unmatched virtuosity, more remarkable considering her absence of formal training in percussion. Additionally compelling to me were the limitations of conventional recognition of her work. This was a catalyst for me to take an earnest and urgent inquiry into my practice, to the work of women in the canon, and to speculate on potential feminist futures for percussion.

Through my investigation into the work of Lucia Dlugoszewski, I have become more attuned to tales of exclusion within the Western Art Music canon and the 'slagheap' which can

fall under diversity work and women's work.<sup>4</sup> When looking objectively at a historiography of percussion, it is simple to identify what is missing – the voices of women and BIPOC artists. However, expressing a nuanced critique into why marginalized groups are excluded from the canon, can be more challenging as there are many complex social and political layers to unfold. To call on the words of Walter Benjamin, “The chronicler who narrates events without distinguishing between major and minor ones acts in accord with the following truth: nothing that has ever happened should be regarded as lost to history,” history as being written by the victors.<sup>5</sup> However, why, were women - performers and composers – a rarity in the history of percussion discourse? I believe there is no single reason as to why women were excluded, but rather I speculate that there was a plethora of social and political reasons, such as sociocultural perceptions of women, socioeconomic restraints, domestic labor division, and racist and misogynistic sentiments. Additionally, I believe that the masculinized conceptions of virtuosity which developed in percussion contributed to the work of women within the canon not being respected, and subsequently forced women to exist on the fringes of the percussion practice.

Virtuosic traits in percussion practice are synonymous with the mastery of challenging repertoire – a repertoire that necessitates years of privileged access to privileged sources. Throughout the course of my study and woven throughout this dissertation, I attempt to disrupt these structures, leaning into feminist methodologies, engaging with discourse from sound studies, feminist, anti-racist and decolonial theory and their interfaces with performance practice. This work is at times analytical, speculative, and self-reflexive, with a politics of care and reciprocity at the center of its purpose. Additionally, I endeavor to present an unthinking of

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<sup>4</sup> McClary, Susan. 1990. “Towards a Feminist Criticism of Music.” *Alternative Musicologies / Les Musicologies Alternatives* (Canadian University Music Review /Revue de musique des universités canadiennes) 10 (2): 9-18, 15.

<sup>5</sup> Benjamin, Walter. 2003. *Selected Writings Volume 4 : 1938-1940 : On the Concept of History*. Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 319.

masterful traits within performance practice, and to break down the walls to privileged and gatekept sources. Furthermore, throughout this dissertation, I see my work as a companion and co-conspirator, attempting to envisage a future for women in percussion led through focus on the individual's capacity, rather than traditional approaches to mastery and canonical expectations.

## 0.1 Chapter Outline

Chapter One, *Points of Departure: Framing Percussion Practice within Feminist and Anti-Racist Discourse*, lays the groundwork for the ensuing research, adopting the framework of a comprehensive literature review, serving as a departure point with a primary focus on critically examining percussion as a historically gendered male practice within the context of Western Art Music. My research is situated within the paradigms of feminist and anti-racist discourse and methodologies, drawing inspiration from the writings of influential scholars such as Audre Lorde, Julietta Singh, Karen Barad, Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, Eunjung Kim, Jasbir Puar, Sarah Ahmed, and Donna Haraway amongst others. Through synthesizing feminist methodologies and percussion practice, I critically engage with Thomas Siwe's *Artful Noise: Percussion Literature in the 20th Century*, drawing parallels to Rohsanak Khesti's exploration of the feminization of sound in *Modernity's Ear*. Additionally, I center my examination on the inherent tensions and exclusions in post-percussion and post-instrumental practice, a concept highlighted by scholars such as Håkon Stene and Louise Devenish. Through integrating existing literature, a rigorous examination, and a critical interrogation of prevailing narratives, Chapter One is a deliberate endeavor to disrupt, critique, and contextualize the established perspectives on percussion.

Chapter Two, *Reimagining the Percussion Works of Lucia Dlugoszewski: A Feminist and Historiographic Inquiry*, embarks on a speculative exploration, re-envisioning Lucia

Dlugoszewski's role within the percussion canon. This chapter employs a synergistic approach, blending feminist theory and historiographic methods, to conduct a thorough musical analysis of Dlugoszewski's compositions for everyday sounds, with a central focus on the 1952 unpublished manuscript *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds*. Additionally, I trace the historical juncture of Dlugoszewski's transition into instrumental design and creation, highlighting her notable collaboration with Erik Hawkins Dance Company in 1964 for the solo composition of 100 invented percussion instruments, *Geography of Noon*. Reimagining Dlugoszewski's position within the percussion canon illuminates her works through a feminist lens, contributing to broader discourses addressing the complex interconnections of gender dynamics, musical practice, and historical representation.

Chapter Three, *Spectral Listening: Maryanne Amacher's Adjacencies*, offers a comprehensive musical analysis of Amacher's 1966 composition for two percussionists and quadraphonic sound diffusion, *Adjacencies*. A sequential, page-by-page analysis of the composition provides insights into the preparation and performance of *Adjacencies* and attempts to interpret the complex and extensive program notes that accompany the composition. Through emphasizing *Adjacencies* significance as a departure from conventional concert music within the broader context of Amacher's oeuvre, I also highlight its importance as a sonic disclaimer, shaping the perceptual and aural narratives that Amacher would continue to explore throughout her life.

Chapter Four, *Embodied Sound: Exploring Feminist Subjectivity in the Percussion Music of Eleanor Hovda*, explores the pioneering sound excavation techniques that emerged during the 1970s and 1980s within Eleanor Hovda's practice, specifically focusing on the development of 'bowing strides' for bowing of suspended cymbals. Prominently featured in works such as

*Ariadne Music* (1984) and *Cymbal Music Series* (1982-1985), this innovative soundscape serves as a cornerstone in Hovda's percussion explorations, marking a pivotal departure point that guides the intricate aural and sonic landscapes she passionately pursued throughout her compositions. An analysis of *If Tigers Were Clouds... then Reverberating, They Would Create All Songs* (1994) provides insights into Eleanor Hovda's conventional compositional approaches to percussion, coupled with an examination of her forays into interdisciplinary mediums beyond percussion, such as her collaborative venture with artist Maria Artemis on the 1994 installation entitled *Labyrinths*. *Labyrinths* underscores Hovda's innovative approach to percussion, showcasing her utilization of multipurpose and invented percussion instruments that she designed and played. The chapter concludes with a brief reflection on the 2001 improvisational and site-specific work in Fayetteville, Arkansas, *40-Million Gallons of Music*. Recorded from within the confines of a 40-million-gallon water tank, Hovda employed various handheld percussion instruments, including taxi horns and water gongs, to explore the unique acoustic qualities of the reverberating site-specific environment, unravelling a rich and immersive soundscape. This chapter highlights Hovda's percussion compositions as a consistent pursuit of the connection between breath and movement, embodying a profound exploration of the interplay between perception and the ineffable.

In Chapter Five, *Navigating Between Structures: Reflexive Explorations and Practice-Based Research* I employ a practice-based research methodology to highlight the compositional design in my solo for percussion and electronics, *Between Structures* (Appendix 1). I open the chapter by drawing inspiration from Clarice Lispector's unconventional 1973 novel, *Agua Viva*. As a companion text, *Agua Viva* serves as a lens to explore the disorientation of temporality and post-humanist thinking. Within this framework, I celebrate the influence of Sarah Hennies 2020

work, *Thought Sectors*, and Rebecca Saunders 2017/2018 work, *Dust*, and their impact on my compositional journey. Through these works, I aim to identify departure points within my artistic practice, revealing how the collective feminist discourse and diverse musical languages outlined throughout this dissertation have shaped both the foundation of my interpretative practice and my compositional language in *Between Structures*.

Beyond the central narrative of this dissertation, there are supplementary appendices. Appendix 1 contains the performance score of *Between Structures*, and Appendix 2 comprises a creative portfolio. The creative portfolio serves to contextualize and enhance the discussions within this dissertation by providing hyperlinks to performances and realizations of creative works by Lucia Dlugoszewski *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds*, Maryanne Amacher *Adjacencies*, Eleanor Hovda *CYMBALMUSIC II – Centreflow II*, Sarah Hennies *Thought Sectors*, Rebecca Saunders *Dust*, and my own composition, *Between Structures*. Appendix 2 provides a holistic understanding of the interdisciplinary discourse woven throughout this dissertation. In conclusion, this dissertation embarks on a journey through historical narratives, feminist lineages, and contemporary practices, weaving reflexive artistic inquiry and narratives of creative expression in pursuit of a sonic democracy.

## CHAPTER 1

### Points of Departure: Framing Percussion Practice within Feminist and Anti-Racist Discourse

“The old definitions have not served us, nor the earth that supports us. The old patterns, no matter how cleverly rearranged to imitate progress, still condemn us to cosmetically altered repetitions of the same old exchanges, the same old guilt, hatred, recrimination, lamentation, and suspicion.”

– Audre Lorde, *Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference*, 1984.

I am accompanied by co-conspirators—companion texts that aid me in interrogating, rupturing, and speculating on new approaches to building a sustainable practice. As I explore my practice and define my purpose within the communities I inhabit, my emphasis shifts away from reinventing or redefining concepts of mastery and possession over my instruments. Instead, I center on discovering new ways for my musicking to be felt - a “project of disarmament,” an active methodology involving dismantling gender and performance practices. This is an urgency to the in-between, a pliability and re-inventedness toward new relationships and entanglements with bodies and social fabrics.<sup>6</sup> In the essay *Poetry is Not a Luxury*, Audre Lorde asserts that originality lies not in new ideas but in innovative ways of expressing them and “making them felt”- subsequently, a rupturing of Western thought. Lorde critiques the mentality that sees life as a problem to be solved, highlighting the resultant dependence on ideas for freedom and affirmation. She argues that our emotions cease to endure within structures marked by profit, linear power, and institutional dehumanization, resolving that “our feelings were not meant to survive” in such settings.<sup>7</sup> Lorde forewarns against the exclusive reliance on ideas, stressing their

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<sup>6</sup> Russell, Legacy. 2020. *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto*. Londo: Verso, 10.

<sup>7</sup> Lorde, Audre. 2017. *Your Silence Will Not Protect You*. UK: Silver Press, 85.

greater significance when liberated from the narrow perspective of life as a problem to be solved. Lorde's wisdom has granted me permission, a liberating mandate, to redefine my place in the world, reshape my artistic expression, and reconceptualize the reciprocities I share. Embarking on a comprehensive inquiry into my role as a musician, and as a point of departure for this dissertation, I will frame and interrogate the practice of percussion within feminist and anti-racist discourse, guiding me to rupture and speculate new futures within, beyond and alongside the paradigm of Western Art Music.

*Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements*, by Julietta Singh, is a work that interrogates the urge towards mastery over oneself and others through intellectual and linguistic means, demonstrating how the concept of mastery is rooted in histories of violence and power. Singh writes, “to unthink mastery requires either a radically different understanding of what it could mean to be human or perhaps a thinking of the human that would not be human at all.”<sup>8</sup> Singh intimates that reconsidering the concept of mastery requires a profound shift in our understanding of humanity - an evolution that involves reimagining ideas beyond the category of human. In deconstructing the category of human, one must examine the intricate intersections and profound ramifications stemming from the nexus of intergenerational trauma, privilege, and pervasive violence, which not only negates the recognition of the BIPOC community but also leads to a subsequent denial of marginalized communities within the broader category of humanity. Frank B Wilderson III conceptualizes the impacted individual as “an object positioned by gratuitous violence—a sentient being for whom the prospects of recognition and assimilation become unattainable.”<sup>9</sup> This deconstruction reveals an absence of acknowledgment for non-

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<sup>8</sup> Singh, Julietta. 2018. *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements*. Durham: Duke University Press, 14.

<sup>9</sup> Wilderson, Frank B. 2010. *Red, White, and Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms*. Durham: Duke University Press, 55.

white suffering; therefore, the Human, as conceptualized in Western thought, is founded on the exclusion of blackness. Mirrored in the voice of Sylvia Wynter, “the struggle of our times is the struggle against the overrepresentation of the Western conception of Man that pretends to be the human itself,”<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the Western Art Music canon and avantgarde genres are not exempt from social justice issues relating to race, class, and gender, and despite the idealized notion of music as a global language, music theory, and classical/contemporary programming frequently uphold a ‘white racial frame,’ structures rooted in colonialism, capitalism, and white supremacy.<sup>11</sup>

Dissecting the notion of human within the confines of Western Art Music also requires challenging the prevailing idea that written texts are primary artifacts and custodians of historical narratives. Lê Quan Ninh emphatically states that “it is as if art has been hijacked by writing, by inscription, denying centuries of oral tradition. And it is as if we can’t conceive of art except as a producer of objects with all the clutter they create.”<sup>12</sup> By examining the musical score as an artifact and delving into its inherent purpose and clutter, I raise questions about the fidelity preserved and lost in acts of interpretation. Furthermore, I dissect the traditions maintained through this process of engagement and its complicity in bringing precariousness to historical narratives. Lisa Brook’s work, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast*, is embedded in highlighting the Native networks of what is now the Northeastern United States, demonstrating that First Nations peoples had complex notational systems, including phrases for the metaphor of writing, such as the book, the map, and reading the waterways, etc.<sup>13</sup> This

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<sup>10</sup> Wynter, Sylvia. 2003. "Unsettling the coloniality of being/ power/ truth/ freedom: Towards the Human, after Man, its overrepresentation – an argument." *The New Centennial Review* 3, 257-337.

<sup>11</sup> Ewell, Phillip. 2020. *Music Theory and the White Racial Frame*. September. Accessed January 10, 2021. <https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.20.26.2/mto.20.26.2.ewell.html>

<sup>12</sup> Ninh, Lê Quan. 2010. *Improvising Freely: The ABC's of an Experience*. Guelph, Ontario: PS Guelph, 21.

<sup>13</sup> Brooks, Lisa. 2008. *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

suggests that writing was a core concept for First Nations peoples, more so than what European traditions dictate, highlighting entanglements within rich oral traditions that are sometimes difficult to translate into Euro-Anglo terms. Brooks' summons the reader to expand the idea of the book, the map, and the historical narrative, investigating place-making, focusing on 'what happened here' rather than 'what occurred then' and recognizing that First Nations peoples are not part of a static tradition but rather active participants in one. By engaging in interrogating the precarious historical fortitude of musical dissemination, Brook's work compelled me to rethink my relationship to a musical score, the life of a text, its purpose, the level of fidelity I afford it, and the traditions I may unknowingly perpetuate by upholding such an artifact.

Having dedicated my career to achieving mastery in my performance practice and fidelity to the artifact of the musical score, the themes of deconstructing mastery mentioned prompt me to embrace self-reflexive methodologies to reassess my performance practice. Through this, Julietta Singh's concept of vulnerable reading serves as a transformative methodology that alters the parameters of knowledge production, redefines tools for research and dissemination, and prompts a re-evaluation of precarious historical realizations. According to Singh, vulnerable reading, is a critical engagement with literature as a way of "becoming other to myself, of becoming myself differently," stating,

Vulnerable reading as an open, continuous practice that resists foreclosures by remaining unremittingly susceptible to new world configurations that reading texts—literary, artistic, philosophical, and political—can begin to produce. Vulnerable readings resist disciplinary enclosure, refusing to restrict in advance how and where one might wander through textual engagement.<sup>14</sup>

I have harbored the desire to redefine virtuosity, to interrogate its function, and to envision it anew. However, I find myself grappling with fatigue and trepidation, wary of inadvertently

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<sup>14</sup> Singh, Julietta. 2018. *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements*. Durham: Duke University Press, 22.

recolonizing and re-prescribing established modes of doing. In my quest to undo masterful traits, I instead return to vulnerable reading, coupled with the words of Audre Lorde in *Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power*. Positioning oneself within a poetics and politics of the erotic, Lorde urges a reconsideration of the art of discipline and joy, emphasizing the constituent relationship that evolves alongside and in reciprocity with one's work. This approach fosters a personalized discipline of joy, contributing to the authentic pursuit of transformative change within practices, work, and relationships, resisting neoliberal modes of capital and linear power structures. To quote Lorde, "Recognizing the power of the erotic within our lives can give us the energy to pursue genuine change within our world, rather than merely settling for a shift of characters in the same weary drama."<sup>15</sup> I liken vulnerable reading and the *Uses of the Erotic* to a politics of care for which I explore through the work of Maria Puig de la Bellacasa in *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More than Human Worlds*. A politics of care slips between aesthetic categories - with and in conflict with verbiage. Situated in a syntax of speculation yet of urgent concern, Bellacasa stresses that "caring thinking needs to resist an idealized version of knowledge politics."<sup>16</sup> Care work and diversity work, like vulnerable reading, move within aesthetic classifications, connecting with and contradicting language, such as "labor/work, affect/affections, ethics/politics."<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, integral to this research is interfacing these collective discourses with percussion, highlighting that percussion has existed as a gendered masculine practice and through the above methodologies, advocate for a transformation in dialogue and dissemination. Through vulnerable reading, and within this dissertation I interact with gender through a lens of care and capacity, questioning conventional notions of the body,

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<sup>15</sup> Lorde, Audre. 2017. *Your Silence Will Not Protect You*. UK: Silver Press, 30.

<sup>16</sup> Bellacasa, Maria Puig de la. 2017. *Matters of care : speculative ethics in more than human worlds*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

mastery, and virtuosity. Moving away from fidelity and exploring the possibilities of capacity in practice, I draw upon the definition given by David J. Getsy, featured in *Transgender Studies Quarterly*. Getsy writes, “a capacity manifests its power as potentiality, incipience, and imminence. Only when exercised do capacities become fully apparent, and they may lie in wait to be activated.”<sup>18</sup> By advocating for a change in knowledge production and the term capacity as a plurality to mastery, I am exploring how capacity can interface with notions of able-bodiedness and gender, and how this exploration of capacity leads to contemplate feminist subjectivities as an analytical tool to interrogate the practice of percussion.

### 1.1 Post-humanist Entanglements

The concept of femininity, when approached as a practice, serves as a versatile placeholder for many things. Seldom static, and inherent in its nature, feminism involves probing social fabrics and cultural practices, facilitating the diffusion of knowledge, and interrogating divisions of labor. The methods of engaging with feminine practices are malleable and individualized, and by deconstructing standardized ideas of femininity and embodiment in percussion practice, I draw upon Eunjung Kim’s work, *Unbecoming Human: An Ethics of Objects*. In her search for themes of feminist embodiment and feminist subjectivity, Kim states that, “embodiment has often been narrowly imagined as able-bodied—characterized by willed desire, speech, seeing, refusal, mobility, purposiveness, intelligence, desire, and connection rather than by unintentionality, speechlessness, unseeing, acquiescence, immobility, inertness, incompetence, asexuality, and disconnection.”<sup>19</sup> Therefore, by examining non-conforming bodies, and non-conforming concepts of the feminine, and their interface with percussion, I

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<sup>18</sup> Getsy, David J. 2014. "Capacity." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly: Keywords* (Duke University Press) 1 (12), 47.

<sup>19</sup> Kim, Eunjung. 2015. “Unbecoming Human: An Ethics of Objects.” *GLQ 1 June* (2-3) 295-320, 302.

strive to explore the convergence of percussion practice with themes of vulnerability, compassion, the erotic, and ephemerality, which may be the antithesis of a historically masculinized canon of Western percussion traditions.

To augment this approach, I lean into the work of quantum physicist and feminist theorist Karen Barad and her theory of intra-action, as detailed in chapter four of her book *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*.

Traditionally, the concept of interaction suggests maintaining independence between objects or ideals; however, within the Baradian framework of intra-action, Barad argues for an alternate perspective where the materialization that emerges from collaboration establishes a co-constituency with one's work. Therefore, through intra-action, collaboration manifests as a vulnerable, non-hierarchical relationship. This emphasizes the individual's responsibility to reciprocity, asserting that responsibility is an ongoing relationship and dialogue inherent to intra-action and not a "calculation to be performed."<sup>20</sup> Barad's ideals underscore the mutual constitution of entities through their entanglements; entities are not separate but co-constitute with each other in the process of becoming. As a result, temporalities, the boundaries between the human and non-human, subject and object, become blurred, portraying reality as an ongoing process of differentiation and entanglement. In Barad's words,

Temporality is constituted through the world's iterative intra-activity...As the rings of trees mark the sedimented history of their intra-actions within and as part of the world, so matter carries within itself the sedimented historicalities of the practices through which it is produced as part of its ongoing becoming – it is ingrained and enriched in its becoming.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Karen Barad; On Touching—the Inhuman That Therefore I Am. *differences* 1 December 2012; 23 (3): 206–223, 215.

<sup>21</sup> Barad, Karen. 2007. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham N.C: Duke University Press, 180.

By applying Barad's theory to music, my focus centers on exploring the relationships within collaboration, composer performer dynamics, and a broader reciprocity that extends to the ontology and relationships one has with their instruments. Given the fragmented and complex lineage of instruments in the percussion family, through envisioning an ecosystem where instruments and art forms are not possessed but engaged in a dialogue as 'mutually entangled agencies,' there is the potential for spawning new forms of musical expression, phenomenological understanding, and object-orientated ontologies.<sup>22</sup> This approach challenges conventional notions of ownership and hierarchical relationships, fostering an environment positing objects as entities with independent existence, distinct from human perception, challenging anthropocentrism, and inviting a reconsideration of the agency inherent in objects, instruments, and practice. Furthermore, Barad's posthumanist framework interrogates the delineations between the human and non-human and the distinctions between matter<sup>23</sup> and discourse, challenging the prevailing colonial act of language and naming as the essence of reality.<sup>24</sup>

By rejecting the reduction of everything, including material bodies, to mere words, Barad suggests that language and other forms of representation have been granted "too much power" in shaping our ontologies, with performativity challenging the excessive influence of language in determining what is real.<sup>25</sup> Barad examines the practices that establish, stabilize, and disrupt performativity and language, stating,

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>23</sup> In physics, matter refers to the physical substances surrounding us, encompassing anything that occupies space and possesses mass.

<sup>24</sup> Hooks, Bell. 1994. *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge.

<sup>25</sup> Barad, Karen. "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter." *Signs* 28, no. 3 (2003): 801–31, 801.

A *performative* understanding of discursive practices challenges the representationalist belief in the power of words to represent preexisting things. Performativity, properly construed, is not an invitation to turn everything (including material bodies) into words; on the contrary, performativity is precisely a contestation of the excessive power granted to language to determine what is real.<sup>26</sup>

Therefore, in this context, Barad interrogates performativity, questioning the belief that language alone constructs reality. Rather, Barad entangles understanding reality as an ongoing, performative process where entities and phenomena are co-constituted through their intra-actions - highlighting the limitations of language and representation in capturing the complexity of lived experiences and phenomena. Furthermore, in the discourse of deexceptionalizing language and human bodies, Barad argues that matter is an active participant in performativity and signification, with bodies manifesting in diverse forms of matter beyond human, encompassing bodies of water, structures, cities, and institutions etc.<sup>27</sup> This perspective challenges the notion that matter merely emerges through signification, language, human interpretation, and representation, further departing from anthropocentrism ideals. This viewpoint, advanced by Barad, finds resonance in the ideas articulated by Jasbir Puar in *I would rather be a Cyborg than a Goddess: Becoming-Intersectional in Assemblage Theory*. Like Barad, Puar challenges conventional perceptions of performativity and the category of human, emphasizing that matter is not a mere outcome of signification but is fundamentally embedded within the ongoing processes of becoming. Puar highlights that, “Matter is an actor. Following Karen Barad on her theory of performative metaphysics, matter is not a ‘thing’ but a doing.”<sup>28</sup> Matter actively engages in the processes of performativity and signification, taking on an instrumental role in

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 802.

<sup>27</sup> Puar, Jasbir K. 2012. “I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess: Becoming-Intersectional in Assemblage Theory.” *philoSOPHIA*, 49-66, 58.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

shaping and expressing meaning. As percussionists, we embody Barad and Puar's concepts by awakening our performances through matter, through mass, space and volume, wielding instruments as tools of activation and expression - a dynamic form of doing. In this dynamic exchange, our instruments and their legacies cease to be passive components of a tradition; instead, they become active participants within that tradition, forming a symbiotic relationship with their users. This dynamic interplay leads to mutual sonic entanglements, wherein the instruments and their practitioners engage and evolve together – a process of becoming. By interrogating the feminist and posthumanist theories mentioned above, I deploy these ideas within my research to engage in dialogues that reimagine my relationship with my instruments and interrogate acts of collaboration in composition. Furthermore, I seek to disrupt institutional modes of power and advocate for an inclusive and emancipatory discourse within performance practices by questioning the conventional understanding of what it means to be human and how it shapes my relationships with action and identity.

## 1.2 Feminine Sensibilities

In *Agua Viva*, Clarice Lispector introspectively declares, “In my core I have the strange impression that I don't belong to the human species,” thereby encapsulating a central aspect of this dissertation: to unravel the enigmatic nature of identity, physicality, and the inherent estrangement experienced by those who are ‘othered.’<sup>29</sup> Throughout history, women<sup>30</sup> have been dehumanized, perpetuating the notion that a woman is an unfamiliar and unsettling entity - an embodiment of man's fears and anxieties, thus subjected to ‘othering.’ In the 2010 work

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<sup>29</sup> Lispector, Clarice. 1973. *Agua Viva*. 1.ed. Rio [de Janeiro]: Editora Artenova.

<sup>30</sup> Regarding the term women, I remain uncertain about the most appropriate usage and implementation. Some may find 'women' to be restrictive; alternatives such as womxn or womyn aim to create a more inclusive environment, acknowledging and supporting the presence of trans, queer, and non-binary individuals.

*Movimientos De Rebeldía Y Las Culturas Que Traicionan*, Gloria Anzaldua writes, “Woman is the stranger, the other. She is man’s recognized nightmarish pieces, his Shadow-Beast. The sight of her sends him into a frenzy of anger and fear.”<sup>31</sup> Historically perpetuated and rooted in the depiction of women, the contemporary framing of a woman’s identity continues to be objectified within the confines of patriarchy, where the inequitable practices in Western Art Music have long endured being indiscriminately lumped into a dysfunctional collective, perpetuating a sense of othering. Feminist musicologist Susan McClary echoes this sentiment in her article *Towards a Feminist Criticism of Music*,

We cannot afford to focus solely on obvious instances of gender – to be one issue critics – but we must also be alert to the politics of race, of class, of subjectivity, of pop culture: those elements that traditionally have been relegated to the “feminine” slagheap.<sup>32</sup>

*Feminism* is a term that has not always served all women equally. Defined as the “belief in, and advocacy of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes,” feminism has often fallen short of its ideals, particularly in its commitment to BIPOC women and the LGBTQIA+ communities, with scholars and activists calling for feminist intersectionality to shed light on the complex tensions of white feminisms and patriarchal institutions. Feminism also often lives as an able-list discourse. With voices such as those of Alexa Schriempf, arguing that the paradigms which women feel objectified under conventional feminism do not apply to women with disabilities, because non-able-bodied women are removed from the category of sexuality and femininity, emphasizing the inequitable application of feminism to all women.<sup>33</sup> Hence,

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<sup>31</sup> Anzaldua, Gloria. 2010. “Movimientos De Rebeldía Y Las Culturas Que Traicionan.” *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts* (Indiana University Press) 4 (1): 1-7, 3.

<sup>32</sup> McClary, Susan. 1990. “Towards a Feminist Criticism of Music.” *Alternative Musicologies / Les Musicologies Alternatives* (Canadian University Music Review /Revue de musique des universités canadiennes) 10 (2): 9-18, 15.

<sup>33</sup> Schriempf, Alexa. 2001. “(Re)fusing the Amputated Body: An Interactionist Bridge for Feminism and Disability.” *Feminism and Disability*, November: 53-79, 55.

endorsing a singular feminist interpretative methodology in music is not feasible, as individuals interact with feminism in distinctive ways shaped by their circumstances and privilege.

Sara Ahmed describes feminism as a ‘fragile archive,’ assembled from shattering and splattering, whose fragility imparts responsibility: ‘to take care.’<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, in line with feminist scholarship, Ahmed characterizes diversity work as a transformative process to gather knowledge about institutions to enhance accessibility, emphasizing that “access is pedagogy.”<sup>35</sup> Echoing this sentiment and highlighting issues of access in Western Art Music, Sally Macarthur argues that the title of composer has been largely inaccessible to women and predominantly controlled by men, suggesting that the norms and conventions within classical music are inherently gendered male.<sup>36</sup> Consequently, introducing the idea of percussion as a gendered male and fragmented practice in scholarly discourse has the potential to rupture established realities of gender. However, emphasizing either a masculine or feminine perspective doesn’t imply adherence to binary tropes; rather, it can propel the dialogue beyond a binary framework. Given the significant influence of male perspectives on the discourse surrounding the historiography of percussion, the reconceptualization of the interplay between gender and performance practices has the potential to transform discourses of gender - once perceived as tensions and limitations in the discourse - into avenues of growth.<sup>37</sup>

Percussion is not simply one instrument, one definition, or one identity; it is a fractured and fragmentary practice, owing to its multitudinous and polymorphic origin. In its multitudinous nature, percussion is also an ableist practice that demands control and freedom

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<sup>34</sup> Ahmed, Sara. 2017. *Living A Feminist Life*. Durham: Duke University Press, 17.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 109

<sup>36</sup> Macarthur, Sally. 2002. *Feminist Aesthetics in Music*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 5.

<sup>37</sup> Cimini, Amy, and Bill Dietz. 2021. *Maryanne Amacher: Selected Writings and Interviews*. Brooklyn, New York.: Blank Forms Editions, 5.

over one's body to participate actively in the classical paradigm. Certain levels of physical precision are obligatory to become an interlocutor of the practice; therefore, percussion is not always a diverse communal activity – at times struggling to evade the influence of neoliberal tendencies in community building. Generalized depictions of the body, centered around able-bodiedness, have thrived on an exclusionary system. Marginalizing black and brown bodies, smaller bodies, non-conforming bodies, and those with non-able capabilities; perpetuating masculinized ideals of mastery, subtly ingrained over generations in ableist ways. The individual's body, intrinsically linked to activation and sound production, not only influences the arrangement and selection of instruments but also determines access to them. Moreover, it plays a crucial role in defining the physical dimensions of the body engaged in executing the repertoire. Thus, the individual's body shapes the lived experience of canonical repertoire and percussion histories. Yet, in the perpetuation of the canon and the dissemination of innovative techniques specific to percussion, is the world of classical percussion bestowing not an informed and diverse legacy but rather a tradition rooted in generalized and homogenous conceptions of the body? Therefore, as I shatter and splatter the fragile archive that is our relationship to feminism and the body, I lean into Legacy Russel's sentiments "So, what does it mean to dismantle gender? Such a program is a project of disarmament; it demands the end of our relationship with the social practice of the body as we know it."<sup>38</sup>

### 1.3 Percussion as a Gendered Practice

Percussion rapidly ascended as a dominant discipline in the 20th Century, undergoing an explosive surge in documentation, discourse and dissemination that has inundated and empowered the percussion canon. Thomas Siwe's 2020 publication, *Artful Noise: Percussion*

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<sup>38</sup> Russell, Legacy. 2020. *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto*. Londo: Verso, 10.

*Literature in the 20th Century*, suggests a comprehensive survey of influential composers and performers who brought percussion to prominence in the 20th Century. Siwe emphasizes that his survey encompasses formative works by prominent figures who contributed to the development of new percussive discourses, stating that *Artful Noise* “will cover representative works by important composers who, over the century, helped create this new body of musical literature, and it will demonstrate how events, both private and public, influenced their writings.”<sup>39</sup> Despite the titles assertion of a comprehensive historiographic perspective of ‘important’ protagonists, it exhibits a noticeable absence of female representation, with page 45 marking the first recognition of a female performer or composer in the text.<sup>40</sup> Apart from a divergent subchapter on marimba soloists that feature female trailblazers such as Vida Chenoweth, Karin Ervin Pershing, and Keiko Abe, Siwe’s text overlooks the documentation of another female figure engaged in contemporary percussion practice until over 100 pages later – that of Polish/American performer and composer Marta Ptasińska.<sup>41</sup> While it is understandable that a survey cannot encompass the entirety of a practice, *Artful Noise* illustrates the prevalent gendered male practices that tend to overshadow the contributions of nondominant voices assimilating to the dominant paradigms of the 20th Century.

Separate to the modernist percussion repertoire of the 20th Century outlined in *Artful Noise*, the Marimba emerges as a divergent subchapter, featuring several female artists, inadvertently highlighting the development of Marimba as a feminized discipline. Similar to the

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<sup>39</sup> Siwe, Thomas. 2020. *Artful Noise: Percussion Literature in the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1.

<sup>40</sup> The early 1900s saw the rise of the percussion ensemble. Notable and innovative works such as Bartok *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* (1937), George Antheil *Ballet Mecanique* (1924-25), Amadeo Roldan. *Ritmicas No.5, No.6* (1930), Edgard Varèse *Ionisation* (1931), Henry Cowell *Ostinato Pianissimo* (1934). Additionally, the works of John Cage during 1935-1940. Johanna Beyer composed seven percussion ensemble works between 1935-1939 and was the first female mention in the book on page 45.

<sup>41</sup> Siwe, Thomas. 2020. *Artful Noise: Percussion Literature in the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 141.

feminization of the piano during the romantic period, where women belonging to the middle class were urged to acquire proficiency in playing the piano at home yet discouraged from pursuing it as a professional career, I draw parallels to this ideal by highlighting the process of the feminization of the marimba throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>42</sup> Meghan Aube highlights that “the marimba was historically the most readily acceptable instrument for a woman to pursue. The approval of women as marimbaists came earlier than that of women as performers on other percussion instruments.”<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, Aube, notes that the marimba has progressively developed into a “feminine” instrument in popular culture, being associated with accomplished female musicians and in pop culture references stating,

From Keiko Abe—the first female inducted into the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame—to a marimba-playing Miss America, Carrie Lee Davis, the instrument is largely considered in pop culture a “feminine” instrument.<sup>44</sup>

Within this gender bias, certain notions persist, suggesting that attributes like strength and the ability to play loudly or virtuosic are inherently masculine aptitudes. This perception, in turn, often positions the marimba as a domain seemingly more aligned for women, confined to equal temperament and their supposed ‘tender’ physical capabilities. For example, prominent percussion pedagogue, George Lawrence Stone articulates that although “it is rather hard for members of the tender sex to play” it should not discourage ‘them’ from “the profession of drumming” as within the profession, “there are many other engagements open which are a good deal easier from a physical standpoint.”<sup>45</sup> Stone’s comments highlight that gender within

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<sup>42</sup> Ellis, Katharine. 1997. “Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris.” *Journal of the American Musicological Society*.

<sup>43</sup> Aube, Meghan. 2011. “Women in percussion: the emergence of women as professional percussionists in the United States, 1930-present.” DMA dissertation : University of Iowa, 24.

<sup>44</sup> Aube, Meghan. 2011. “Women in percussion: the emergence of women as professional percussionists in the United States, 1930-present.” DMA dissertation : University of Iowa, 65.

<sup>45</sup> Stone, George Lawrence. 1923. “For Ladies Only.” *Jacobs Orchestra Monthly* (8): 91-92.

percussion practice functions akin to a scaled economy: gender governing, overseeing, and influencing social roles, behaviors, and identities. This framework, facilitates the solidification of processes, the allocation of labor, and the exchange of value, all under the influence of capitalist structures, and in doing so, it mirrors broader power dynamics, wherein homogenous narratives prevail, dictating the participation and contributions of individuals within the practice.<sup>46</sup> Thus, the feminization of the marimba has involuntarily developed into a distinct subset within percussion, underscoring the gendered distinctions prevalent in percussion historiography. However, it also brings to light the juxtaposition of the marimba's evolution in the 20th Century as a platform of opportunity where women could assert their agency and build community.

Like the feminization of the Marimba, Roshanak Khesti's 2015 work, *Modernity's Ear*, highlights the emergence of the feminization of sound as a phenomenon in comparative ethnomusicology. Although not directly related to classical performance practices, in her work, Khesti endeavors to outline the same process I do with the Marimba, but with the feminization of listening in folk music and its documentation in modern America as catered to white women of comfortable class standing. Throughout *Modernity's Ear*, Khesti explains that women were excluded from early academia, with the phonograph becoming a primary tool in twentieth-century ethnographic research, with white female comparative musicologists as technicians, subsequently leading to women becoming ethnographers, and in turn the fetishization of the other. To quote Khesti,

The phonograph emerged as the preeminent tool in ethnographic research, alongside the white female comparative musicologist as its technician. While women played an important role in twentieth-century American ethnography and folklore in general, it was specifically white women with comfortable class standing who were initially recruited to make phonograph recordings.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Russell, Legacy. 2020. *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto*. Londo: Verso, 63.

<sup>47</sup> Khesti, Roshanak. 2015. *Modernity's Ear: Listening to Race and Gender in World Music*. NYU Press, 19.

Khesti argues that not only was music feminized through female-led documentation but again further feminized through the role of modern marketing, stating that “listening became constructed as a feminized practice that craved exotic sounds and mythologized the ‘other’ that made them.”<sup>48</sup> Khesti affirms her opinions through a dialogue surrounding the image of ethnomusicologist Frances Densmore and Blackfoot Mountain Chief (Figure 1.1). Khesti notes that the female gaze was infused and reflected in the capture and dissemination of Densmore and Blackfoot Mountain Chief’s photo interaction, stating,

Comparative musicology’s epistemological role is both to record and archive sound for posterity’s sake to later be heard by an imagined future listener and to render a modern representation of Indianness for the Indian who must hear himself through modernity’s ear.<sup>49</sup>

Khesti outlines the dual epistemological role of comparative musicology is firstly, to document and preserve sound for future generations, facilitating an imagined audience’s experience; and secondly, to provide a modern portrayal of a subject, enabling individuals within that group to see themselves through the lens of modernity. In the context of percussion, as women forge non-linear paths, they emerge as agents of change, glimpsing themselves through the lens of modernity, yet also dismantling entry barriers and rendering opportunities more discernible for succeeding generations. In parallel with Khesti’s arguments, the transformative journey toward inclusivity and empowerment exists in juxtaposition with a complex historical framework, acknowledging the presence of a traditionally constructed, feminized practice, that bestowed othering. By acknowledging subset representations as outlined in Khesti’s text and drawing parallels with the marimba’s role in percussion discourse, I highlight the importance of embracing the marimba as a pivotal entry point for women while also reflecting on its historical

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 9

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 27

association with feminization of sound. While the historiography and politics surrounding the marimba do not constitute the focal point of my study, I assert that its inclusion assists in outlining tensions in gender constructs within the historiography of percussion.



Figure 1.1: Mountain Chief, Chief of Montana Blackfeet, in native dress with bow, arrows, and lance, listening to song being played on Phonograph and interpreting it in sign language to Frances Densmore, Ethnologist MAR 1916.

#### 1.4 Percussion as a Speculative Practice

In addition to examining the intersection of the feminization of the marimba, it is imperative to delve further into tensions within neoliberal and capitalist structures disguised as entrepreneurial endeavors within the percussion community. This influence is evident through the term Total Percussion, as interrogated by Michael Jones' 2020 publication *Universalism and Fragmentation in Percussion Practice*. Primarily deployed in North America, the term Total Percussion attempts to encapsulate a systematic and foundational standard for percussion in the pedagogical/institutional setting, promoting a benchmark of technique on all the instruments of the percussion family. According to Jones, Total Percussion is primarily a market-driven effort

focused on scalability first and universality in the pedagogical approach second, and over time, these two factors have combined to shape the mainstream percussion culture occupied by young percussionists today.<sup>50</sup> Jones advocates for an alternative approach, steering away from capitalist tendencies in community building, proposing the concept of ‘Fragmented Percussion’ or a ‘Percussion of Difference,’ suggesting that the most meaningful artistic and personal connections occur on small, individual scales, driven by agency, choice, and a process of dialogue.<sup>51</sup> When considered alongside the discourse presented by Barad, Jones’s arguments emphasize the significance of phenomenological and ontological inquiry in influencing how we approach our subjects of study, elucidating how these subjects become active participants within a given tradition and establish a symbiotic relationship with their users. This dynamic interplay gives rise to mutual sonic entanglements, wherein the instruments and their practitioners engage and coevolve in dialogue, understanding their relevance through processes of transindividuation and reciprocity, delving into the exploration of “what ‘things’ or ‘objects’ enable bodies to do.”<sup>52</sup>

Percussion embodies a complex lineage characterized by a continual evolution of the instrument and its bodily entanglements. Recognized in formal discourse for almost a decade but deeply rooted in generations of experimental practice is the emergence of the genre of post-percussion and post-instrumental practice. In post-instrumental practice, the creation process becomes a collaborative act where performers and composers merge in interdisciplinary explorations of sound, design, theatricality, and organology. Further inspired by Jennifer Walshe’s *The New Discipline: A Compositional Manifesto*, post-instrumental practice is an

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<sup>50</sup> Jones, Michael David, “Universalism and Fragmentation in Percussion Practice” (Masters diss., UC San Diego, 2020), 3.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>52</sup> Stover, Chris. 2024. “A Living Force Constantly Creating New Conditions: Feminist Strategies for the Music Theory Classroom.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Music Education*, edited by Marissa Silverman and Nasim Niknafs. Oxford University Press.

emerging and fragmentary practice, with notable publications specific to percussion from renowned scholars and advocates such as Jennifer Torrence, Håkon Stene, and Louise Devenish.

Embedded in the nuances of language, critical inquiry, and interdisciplinary exploration, the authors above scrutinize the ontology and interplay between the self and the object/instrument. Devenish articulates that post-instrumental practice propels the “continuing expansion of the definition of ‘instrumental’ or ‘musical’ material beyond sonic instrumentality.”<sup>53</sup> This practice, along with new discipline movements, challenges conventional ideas of virtuosity, questioning authorship in performance practice and actively working to subvert the Romantic notion of the composer. Norwegian percussionist Håkon Stene’s *This is Not a Drum: Towards a Post-Instrumental Practice*, delineates the origins and emergence of post-instrumental practice, specifically introducing his personalized term, ‘post-percussion.’ It establishes a historiographic connection between the increasing prominence of percussion in classical music and the avant-garde movements of the 20th century while emphasizing that this movement not only fostered a new genre of performers but also gave rise to multitasking percussionists who embraced unconventional instruments and concepts of noise, reshaping Western music and breaking from the romantic tradition.<sup>54</sup> Stene observes that percussionists acquired skills previously unmatched in classical music through “extra-musical objects such as household implements, and electronic devices such as radios, tape recorders, and turntables” expanding the definition of instruments beyond traditional boundaries. Stene writes,

Percussion emerged as a fresh medium for expansion and alteration of Western music’s building blocks, perfectly suiting an escalating quest, characteristic of the period, to break new musical ground and move beyond the romantic tradition and mainstream conformism. This movement also fostered a new breed of performers.

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<sup>53</sup> Devenish, Louise and Hope, Cat. 2024. *Contemporary Musical Virtuositities*. Edited by Louise Devenish and Cat Hope. Vol. 1st ed. Abingdon UK: Routledge, 3.

<sup>54</sup> Stene, Håkon. 2014. *This is Not a Drum: Towards a post-instrumental practice*. The Norwegian Academy of Music, Oslo, 9.

Emerging first as multitasking percussionists within the classical orchestra, these performers developed in the works of European and American experimentalists of the 1950s and 1960s into co-creators of a new genre.<sup>55</sup>

The strengths of post-percussion and post-instrumental practice reside in its interrogation of percussion instruments and their deployment, the development of personalized performance practices, and active engagement with practice-based research. Louise Devenish and Cat Hope exemplified these attributes in their 2024 edited collection, *Contemporary Musical Virtuosity*, exploring contemporary instrumental practices and concepts of virtuosity through an in-depth compendium. This comprehensive text, enriched by the perspectives of various contributors, attempts to redefine, re-prescribe, and re-deploy virtuosity, establishing 1989 as the starting point for their critical contemporary inquiry, pledging its alignment with Tim Rutherford-Johnson's methodology in *Music After the Fall: Modern Composition and Culture since 1989*. Devenish states that "we engage 1989 as a starting point for a discussion of the evolution of contemporary definitions of musical virtuosity," further outlining three overarching categories chosen for examination: 1) Applied virtuosity, focusing on contemporary techniques and their practical application; 2) Conceptual or philosophical interpretations of virtuosity to redefine its relevance for modern musicians; 3) Viewing virtuosity as a social construct.<sup>56</sup> Although I understand the need for temporal boundaries when outlining 'contemporary' knowledge production, I grapple with the temporal constraint imposed by 1989, as it excludes incorporating composers such as Lucia Dlugoszewski, Maryanne Amacher, and Eleanor Hovda into the frameworks discussed in *Contemporary Musical Virtuositities* - reinscribing their precariousness in historical narratives. Donna Haraway contends that "without sustained remembrance, we cannot learn to live with

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Devenish, Louise and Hope, Cat. 2024. *Contemporary Musical Virtuositities*. Edited by Louise Devenish and Cat Hope. Vol. 1st ed. Abingdon UK: Routledge, 4.

ghosts and so cannot think.”<sup>57</sup> In contemporary practices, neglecting or forgetting these ‘ghosts’ - the musical legacies and influences of predecessors - impedes the ability to contemplate music and its evolutionary journey. As I will elucidate in the subsequent chapters, Dlugoszewski, Amacher, and Hovda, akin to numerous outliers in experimental practices, have been reshaping notions of virtuosity and object-oriented ontologies across generations, intricately weaving and eluding categorization, with percussion as a center in their practice. Through their efforts to disrupt institutionalized norms of practice, as outliers, these composers laid the groundwork for concepts of unmastery and post-practice through their everyday doings and musicking.

### 1.5 Companion Thinking

Throughout my research, I have sought to champion forms of action that empower individuals and their practices, particularly those that probe traditional notions of virtuosity. While I have engaged with redefining mastery, I approach this endeavor cautiously to avoid inadvertently perpetuating neoliberalist ideologies through what Bell Hooks calls the ‘privileged act of naming.’<sup>58</sup> Instead, I embrace companion thinking methodologies, as elucidated by Rottle and Reardon-Smith.<sup>59</sup> Companion thinking, or “thinking-in-company” entails actively participating in an ongoing process of recognizing and embracing potential possibilities within existing relationships. While musicking in the context of companionship is often viewed through improvisation and real-time interaction, in this dissertation I employ this perspective to explore retrospective forms of kinship. My commitment to companion thinking is evident in my attempts

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<sup>57</sup> Haraway, Donna J. 2016. *Staying with the Trouble : Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham: Duke University Press, 39.

<sup>58</sup> Hooks, Bell. 1994. *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge.

<sup>59</sup> Rottle, Jodie, and Hannah Reardon-Smith. 2023. “Companion Thinking in Improvised Musicking Practice.” *Contemporary Music Review* 42 (1): 82-99.

to give voice to the women who have been marginalized and excluded from the historiography of the percussion canon, as “it matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with.”<sup>60</sup> Rottle and Reardon-Smith stress the responsibility, the duty to actively respond, to acknowledge and collaborate with companions, whether human, non-human, or more-than-human entities, asserting that “Companion thinking is a recognition that thinking - before making, creating, doing, or any further action—is always-already done not alone, but rather in relation, in-company.”<sup>61</sup> When employed as a musicking practice, companion thinking emphasizes the importance of the process over the outcome. This methodology, in conjunction with vulnerable reading, the erotic, and intra-action, become co-conspirators and companion texts, ways of reimagining, doing, and fostering community building, guiding me to stay with the trouble of practice when navigating the complex landscape of feminist discourse.

In her concluding chapter of *Terrorist Assemblages*, Jasbir Puar writes, “intersectional identities and assemblages must remain as interlocutors in tension,” and in the forthcoming chapters, I will lean into the tensions of gender and assemblages of historical narratives, deploying and weaving the authors and theories mentioned above to underscore, outline, and speculate feminist subjectivities through percussion.<sup>62</sup> I resolve that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to enacting a feminist interpretive methodology in a repertory or one way to decolonize a practice. Instead, I lean into companion texts, inviting them as collaborative companions on my research journey, weaving their insights into the fabric of my pursuit for sonic democracy. As I

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<sup>60</sup> Haraway, Donna J. 2016. *Staying with the Trouble : Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham: Duke University Press, 12.

<sup>61</sup> Rottle, Jodie, and Hannah Reardon-Smith. 2023. “Companion Thinking in Improvised Musicking Practice.” *Contemporary Music Review* 42 (1): 82-99.

<sup>62</sup> Puar, Jasbir K. 2007. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Duke University Press, 213.

delineate my work through the lens of a practitioner and co-conspirator, I acknowledge I am attempting to envisage a non-authoritarian future for all. An approach that advocates for developing a personalized discipline in joy, avoids neoliberal pursuits, and demonstrates awareness of precarity yet refrains from appropriating the traditions of experimental music for institutional purposes. A future that moves away from a narrative that strives and centers the individualistic mastery that has been generated from patriarchal dominance in performance and discourses, and acknowledging that feminism, like anti-racism and diversity work, necessitates continuous personal development and reciprocity as it is a work that is never completed.

## CHAPTER 2

### Reimagining the Percussion Works of Lucia Dlugoszewski: A Feminist and Historiographic Inquiry

“Our task is to make kin in lines of inventive connection as a practice of learning to live and die well with each other in a thick present. Our task is to make trouble, to stir up potent response to devastating events, as well as to settle troubled waters and rebuild quiet places.”

– Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble : Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, 2016.

In the opening remarks of *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Donna Haraway articulates the imperative to make kin within practice, learning to live and “die well with each other in a thick present.”<sup>63</sup> To make trouble, to settle and rebuild, emphasizing the importance of not avoiding provocations and prioritizing reciprocal actions to reshape our current ways of being and doing. Through investigating historical manifestations of kinship, I explore narratives as a practice of caring and thinking as “it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties.”<sup>64</sup> Therefore, it is imperative to recount Lucia Dlugoszewski’s narrative of musical practice through her kinship with percussion, as her influence serves as a cornerstone for divergent trajectories in percussion performance. Dlugoszewski’s enduring legacy invites a re-evaluation of historical manifestations of kinship, challenging the established norms within the practice of percussion and its canonical

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<sup>63</sup> Haraway, Donna J. 2016. *Staying with the Trouble : Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*,12.

foundations. My exploration extends beyond Dlugoszewski's innovative instrument design, also emphasizing her unique compositional framework and theoretical reflections on sound and orchestration. By re-imagining Dlugoszewski's place in the expansive historical context of the 20th-century art music paradigm, and in dialogue with feminist and speculative methodologies, I explore how to deconstruct concepts of mastery and knowledge production and enact Haraway's call of staying with the trouble, rebuilding quiet waters, and reshaping historical narratives.

As I began my research in 2018, I found that only a few remnants of Lucia Dlugoszewski's music were open-source and publicly accessible. I encountered several published recordings of her later compositions, including her 1971 work for brass quintet entitled *Angels of the Inmost Heaven*, released on label, New America Music.<sup>65</sup> This work begins with the rich cascading timbre of trumpets in robust interlocking counterpoint, to suddenly shift to the intricate nuanced chords from varying low brass instruments, at the absolute extremes of pitch and dynamic, from the highest to the lowest of the brass spectrum. The use of such extremes and variations in timbre fascinated me, propelling me to delve deeper into the scholarship of musicologists who had been working on Dlugoszewski's oeuvre.

Even though Dlugoszewski was an autonomous artist who wrote and engaged in various institutional and informal worlds in New York City between 1949 and 2000, it wasn't until the early 2000s, with the comprehensive cataloguing of her creative and life partner Erick Hawkins archive at the Library of Congress, that her work received earnest preservation and became accessible. In 2018, I engaged in dialogue with Kevin Lewis who published the 2011 dissertation *The Miracle of Unintelligibility: The Music and Invented Instruments of Lucia Dlugoszewski*,

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<sup>65</sup> Dlugoszewski, Lucia. 1975. "Angels of the Inmost Heaven/Densities." *New American Music, Volume FW33902, FTS 33902*.

and Kate Doyle, who, alongside Libby Smigel, was responsible for the archiving of the Erick Hawkins and Lucia Dlugoszewski papers at the Library of Congress, with both individuals graciously filling gaps in my curiosity through specific archive materials and broader observations about Dlugoszewski's life and work. As the years unfolded, many artists and musicologists expressed heightened interest and appreciation for Dlugoszewski's contributions.<sup>66</sup> Amy Beal's 2022 publication, *Terrible Freedom: The Life and Work of Lucia Dlugoszewski*, stands as a significant milestone in this trajectory, reflecting a meticulous historiography that offers crucial chronological clarity, assisting in understanding Dlugoszewski's life, compositions, and the complexities of her interpersonal and professional encounters.<sup>67</sup>

Subsequently, there are two perspectives through which one can examine Dlugoszewski's body of work: the pieces she composed and performed in and those she was commissioned for or formally composed for others but did not perform in. Within these two categories, distinct approaches to the documentation of her work emerge, significantly influencing the clarity and fidelity of her legacy. The works she performed in, whether for timbre piano, percussion, or dance, often adopt a shorthand style of notation that is more than often illegible and not easily reinterpreted or understood by another individual. Conversely, her more formally notated compositions, which were composed not for percussion or timbre piano, exhibit a conventional notation structure, generally in line with those of standard Westernized compositional practice, ensuring clear and legible knowledge transfer, as would be seen in common place composer-performer dialogues. Another complex intricacy surrounding the works Dlugoszewski performed in, is their persistent state of being unfinished or in a perpetual state of evolution. Consequently,

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<sup>66</sup> For Example, Ensemble such as Hashtag Ensemble (Poland), Klangforum Wein (Germany), MusikFabrik (Germany), Bowerbird (USA).

<sup>67</sup> For instance, discrepancies in her birth date, her disputes with Cage were unclear, but with Beal's comprehensive work, a lot of these things are now clarified/factual.

the titles of these compositions are redeployed in varying forms, and elements from specific scores become repurposed and reimagined, creating differing and contradictory manuscripts. Due to this, the chronological order, and the definitive identification of percussion pieces she completed and performed during the 1950s and into the 1960s can only remain speculative. This uncertainty arises from the nuanced yet chaotic nature of her artistic vision, execution, and documentation, adding yet another layer of complexity to the understanding of Dlugoszewski and her body of work.

Dlugoszewski's compositional presence has been documented in fragmentary instances within interdisciplinary and archived media, notably within contemporary dance archives. Collaborating extensively with her creative and life partner, contemporary dancer and choreographer Erick Hawkins, may have contributed to this isolation; however, despite this, I believe Dlugoszewski's work plays a crucial role in shaping and reimagining radical and speculative ideas of the art of percussion during the 1950s. I contend that the gendered perception of percussion as a male-dominated practice in the 20th century limited Dlugoszewski's inclusion in mainstream dialogues within the discipline. Despite facing persistent challenges, Dlugoszewski exhibited an unwavering commitment to her artistic vision, boldly creating her ecosystems of practice as an outlier. Dlugoszewski's unique relationship with percussion, cultivated through an informal discipline developed over five decades, prompted me to re-evaluate the prevailing paradigms in percussion practice; particularly resonant to me was her critical examination of percussion as a traditionally gendered and masculine pursuit. Although Dlugoszewski gravitated toward the vivid and rich sonorities of percussion, she also

states that “traditional percussion instruments . . . [are] so masculine in the wrong sense.”<sup>68</sup> After comparing the often-aggressive nature of their traditional employment in the Western classical music settings, Dlugoszewski endeavored to explore sounds that were “devoid of extra-musical connotations, and that would foster a dialectic with Eastern philosophies”<sup>69</sup> This prompted Dlugoszewski to explore percussion in radically speculative ways, where the investigation of everyday sounds catalyzed the crafting of her own percussion instruments, which she, in turn, performed upon. Dlugoszewski embraced a politics of care that aimed to “resist an idealized version of knowledge politics” forging new concepts of capacity informed by her body, femininity, and a personalized connection to her instruments.<sup>70</sup> This co-constitute framework, shaped by the mutually entangled sonic agencies emerging from the design of her unique percussion instruments, fostered the emergence of new forms of musical expression, deepened phenomenological understanding, and played a significant role in developing her personalized percussion ontology. This enigmatic approach to percussion as a visceral conduit starkly contrasts and ruptures conventional concepts of authorship, with Dlugoszewski embodying the role of composer, performer, inventor, and collaborator simultaneously.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, this highlights her fearless ingenuity, warranting acknowledgment at a level commensurate with other instrument designers and organology discourses of the 20th Century.

In my previous academic work, *A Space for Women as Women: Exploring a Gendered Feminine Practice through the Work of Lucia Dlugoszewski*,<sup>72</sup> I advocated for a feminine subjectivity through the analysis of Dlugoszewski’s dynamic scale, and the 1991 solo percussion

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<sup>68</sup> Dlugoszewski, Lucia, interview by Cole Gagne. 1993. *Soundpieces 2* The Scarecrow Press, 62.

<sup>69</sup> Lewis, Kevin. 2011. *The Miracle of Unintelligibility: The Music and Invented Instruments of Lucia Dlugoszewski*. (DMA Thesis, University of Cincinnati), 10.

<sup>70</sup> Bellacasa, Maria Puig de la. 2017. *Matters of care : speculative ethics in more than human worlds*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 19.

<sup>71</sup> That is, being the composer, the performer and inventor.

<sup>72</sup> Presented at the Transplanted Roots Percussion Research Symposium, Guanajuato, Mexico, 2019.

work, *Radical Quidditas for an Unborn Baby*. Although I will re-mention these seminal works, throughout this chapter, I will primarily focus on the period of creative output dating from 1949 to 1964, detailing Dlugoszewski's compositions for everyday sounds and self-designed instruments. Although woven throughout, this dissertation refrains from a comprehensive biography of Dlugoszewski's life; instead focusing on her interrogation of percussion, commencing with her pivotal 1949 work, *Moving Space Theater Piece for Everyday Sounds*, which serves as the inception of her creative exploration into everyday sounds. Complementary to this is a detailed musical analysis of the 1952 unpublished composition, *Song of the Poetics of Everyday Sounds*, interrogating its origins and engaging in a speculative realization of her work. I will assert that this set of compositions is the inaugural manifestation of her philosophical principles of the feminine in percussion and her distinctive approach to the interplay of 'suchness' within her compositions. This examination will underscore Dlugoszewski's artistic evolution, highlighting pivotal artistic junctures and the subsequent limitations she developed with everyday sounds, concluding with highlighting her transition to creating idiomatic instruments through her 1958 series of Suchness Concerts and the 1964 collaborative work with Erik Hawkins, *Geography of Noon* (Figure 2.1).<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Suchness, derived from Zen Buddhism is a key term used in Dlugoszewski's practice. Used to describe how the true nature of existence is thought to be ineffable, beyond explanation and understanding.



Figure 2.1: Michael Avedon, photographer. Erick Hawkins and Dana Madole in his *Geography of Noon*, with Lucia Dlugoszewski providing music on percussion instruments that she designed, circa 1964. Box 128, folder 1, Erick Hawkins and Lucia Dlugoszewski Papers, Music Division.<sup>74</sup>

## 2.1 Feminist Methodologies

An academically gifted and highly proficient pianist, Lucia Dlugoszewski (1925-2000) moved to New York City in 1949 to study music, commencing a revolutionary aesthetic shift that led her to work with Edgard Varèse as her composition teacher.<sup>75</sup> The period of study she shared with Varèse was during his gathering of sounds for the tape sections of *Deserts* in 1953-54, with Dlugoszewski speaking fondly of his influence and maintaining a lasting friendship with him until his death.<sup>76</sup> Dlugoszewski visited several composition teachers during her origins in New York City and recounts the realities of the industry during what she considers her first

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<sup>74</sup> Stevens-Garmon, Morgan. 2021. *Erick Hawkins and Lucia Dlugoszewski: An old partnership gets new light*. April. Accessed April 30, 2021. <https://blogs.loc.gov/music/2021/04/erick-hawkins-lucia-dlugoszewski/>.

<sup>75</sup> She studied at Wayne State University in 1942, majoring in Chemistry, while also maintaining her passion for piano and achieving success by winning several awards in local competitions (Beal 2022, 23)

<sup>76</sup> Dlugoszewski, Lucia, interview by Cole Gagne. 1993. *Soundpieces 2* The Scarecrow Press, 58.

real composition lesson, observing each teacher criticize the other, stating, “These are Masters, and if one Master fights another Master, what does it mean?”<sup>77</sup> Recalling her first encounters with Edgard Varèse and John Cage, Dlugoszewski remarked,

I remember going to John Cage, and I think he would have liked me to be his follower that way, but I just thought that whole chance direction wasn't for me; I felt I saw flaws in it philosophically. And he wasn't too happy about that. But I remember when he wanted to know who else I was going to see, and he said, “Oh, you're not going to see Edgard Varèse! All he does is write wrong notes.” And when I went to Varèse, he said, “You're not going to go to John Cage! He has no form!”<sup>78</sup>

Throughout her compositional career, Dlugoszewski received numerous awards and accolades, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, commissions and performances from Pierre Boulez and the New York Philharmonic and was the first woman to receive the Koussevitzky International Recording Award in 1977. However, it has become evident that Dlugoszewski would take artistic license in the factual elements of her story and downplay the avenues of support she received in her origins in the industry. To quote Beal “Dlugoszewski created a mythical origin story about herself, making no mention of the multiyear support provided by the Berkshire Foundation, while downplaying the companionship and encouragement she received from ‘the artists’ in particular, the friendship and mentoring she enjoyed with John Cage.”<sup>79</sup> Dlugoszewski demonstrated awareness of the competitive and ego-driven nature pervasive in Western music and navigating the tensions of not being included in the ‘New York School’ circle of composers would be a recurring theme in her life.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>79</sup> Beal, Amy. 2022. *Terrible Freedom: The Life and Work of Lucia Dlugoszewski*. Oakland: University of California Press, 45.

<sup>80</sup> Feelings of isolation were common for Dlugoszewski, stating, “I was brought up not only in an atmosphere of intellectualism but also of isolation: the isolation of the Polish community, a separate island within American culture; the isolation of the winter ambience of the Great Lake country. A further isolation was contributed by the intense poverty brought on by the depression.” (Ewen, 1999, p.180)

In the 1950s, percussion asserted its prominence as a solo instrument, giving rise to pivotal and celebrated compositions that catalyzed an explosive creative evolution in the ensuing decades.<sup>81</sup> However, Dlugoszewski's instruments and compositions are absent in the documented historical manifest of 20th-century percussion. Dlugoszewski's interrogation of percussion was intimate and distinct, diverging from conventional Western music theory and practices, fixating on suchness and its manifestations through concepts of threshold, perception, and vulnerability, consistently interfacing with metaphorical language. This is evident in her compositional titles, which draw inspiration from spiritual notions, such as eros, duende, and quidditas, reflecting the profound influence of these ideas to her creative expression. Taken from Eastern philosophy, Suchness was a fundamental notion in Dlugoszewski's compositional practice, stating,

Suchness, not events: suchness is personal, unique, vulnerable, bewildering, the hole in the wall – ultimately, perception. Form is how the ears listen. Sound that is not denotative, connotative, casual, postulated – is therefore pure suchness. Transparency – in terms of ground, of non-motivic durations, of non-tonal music, of emotional threshold.<sup>82</sup>

Through metaphor, Dlugoszewski ruptures Western systems of thought, engaging with a 'mutual constitution of entangled agencies' in an act of reciprocity from within the art she is making, rather than a possessive or transactional approach to performance and composition.<sup>83</sup> Interaction implies the maintaining of independence between objects or ideals when collaborating, whereas, through the Baradian framework of intra-action, Dlugoszewski materializes within the collaboration of her work and ideas, creating a vulnerable, non-hierarchical relationship and co-

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<sup>81</sup> An example of the timeline of origins of percussion solos to emerge in the classical canon, 1956: John Cage, *27'10.554" for a percussionist*. 1959: Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Zyklus*. 1964: Lucia Dlugoszewski, *Geography of Noon*. 1964: Morton Feldman, *The King of Denmark*. 1965-66: Helmut Lachenmann, *Interieur I*.

<sup>82</sup> Dlugoszewski, Lucia. 1973. "What is Sound to Music?" *Main Currents in Modern Thought*, 3-11, 8.

<sup>83</sup> Barad, Karen. 2007. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham N.C: Duke University Press.

constituency in her work. To quote Dlugoszewski, “Virtuosity is competitive work, is achievement rather than perception...It may be clever but is it worth the trouble!”<sup>84</sup> This rejection of mastery and acknowledgment of social capital can be further contextualized through Dlugoszewski’s *Dynamic Scale* (Figure 2.2), highlighting the non-hierarchical relationship and co-constituent concepts in dialogue with Barad’s methodologies. Dlugoszewski’s *Dynamic Scales* are intertwined with the exploration of timbre and perception. Her interrogation of temporality and listening in this uniquely developed notational system, centers on the experiential aspect of the musical experience, with Dlugoszewski stating,

When we listen, we discover timbre. We discover that our ears are on either side of the head, that duration is not an image, that rhythm is not durational but kinesthetic and gravitational, that music is the making and hearing of a sound-is thus a form of theatre, really the most exquisite of theatres.<sup>85</sup>

Dlugoszewski developed the *Dynamic Scale* to conceptualize a scale of intensity that correlated to choreography through referential metaphors of intensity, instructing the artist (dancer or musician) to think in terms of perception, states of being, rather than loud and soft.<sup>86</sup> In contrast to homogeneous terminologies like piano or forte, Figure 2.2’s left axis refers to amplitude, delicacy, and power capacities. In the *Dynamic Scale* Dlugoszewski’s evocative linguistics work to rupture standardized concepts of music theory by giving care to non-standardized ways of thought, fostering new dialogues between bodies, and creating a praxis of care centered on sonic vulnerability through acts of doing. For example, by asking the performer to implement and activate aesthetic states such as “the yellow of a blue jay” or “the silent flight of an owl,” Dlugoszewski summons new modes of Operandi, advocating for the dismantling of

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<sup>84</sup> Dlugoszewski, Lucia. n.d. “Can Art be Necessary?” New York, 6.

<sup>85</sup> Dlugoszewski, Lucia. “Writings” (unpublished manuscript, 1963), 24.

<sup>86</sup> Lewis, Kevin. 2011. *The Miracle of Unintelligibility: The Music and Invented Instruments of Lucia Dlugoszewski*. (DMA Thesis, University of Cincinnati), 40.

elitism associated with complex notation in musical manuscripts.<sup>87</sup> Originally designed as a tool for accompanying dance, the *Dynamic Scale* evolved in various forms manifesting as a provocative sonic and linguistic tool. It acts as a lens through which performers can question their perception of the capacity for dynamics and intention, fostering agency and reciprocity within a practice, over mastery.<sup>88</sup>

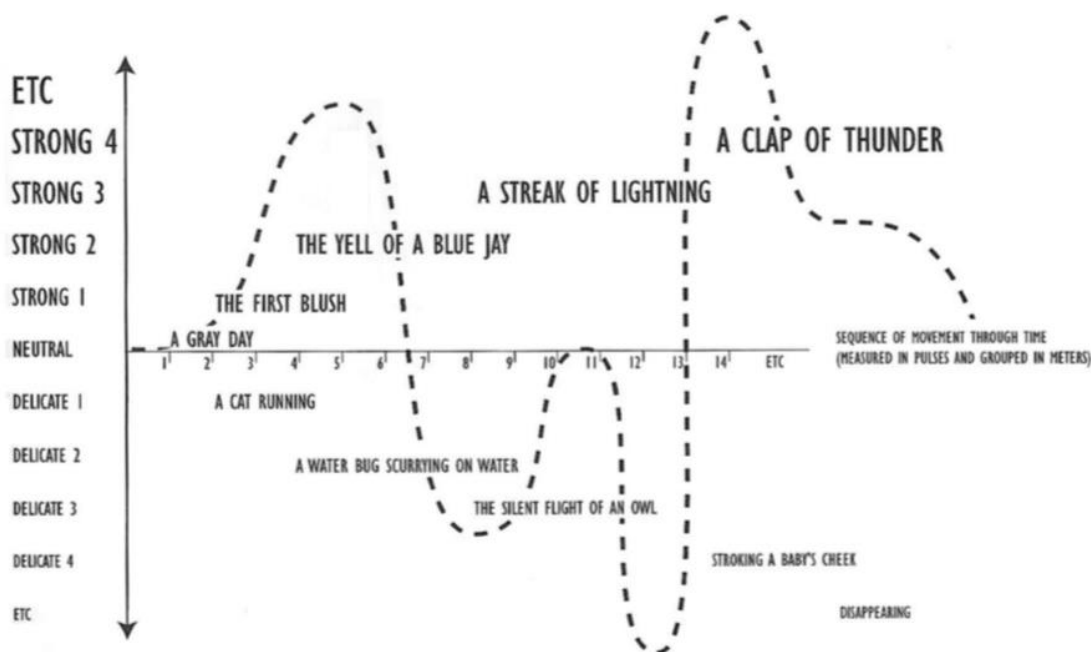


Figure 2.2: Lucia Dlugoszewski, *Dynamic Scale*. Sourced from The Erick Hawkins Modern Dance Technique.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>87</sup> An additional example of Dlugoszewski's perceptual and timbral development is the creation of "curtain of timbre." (Beal, 2020, 65)

<sup>88</sup> In personal correspondence with Kate Doyle who was responsible for Dlugoszewski's archive, she advised me that this dynamic scale was one of many found within her life work. (Doyle, 2018)

<sup>89</sup> Celichowska, Renata. 2000. *The Erick Hawkins Modern Dance Technique*. Highstown NJ: Princeton Book Co, 75.

Dlugoszewski frequently integrated her philosophies and metaphors, within her compositional titles, such as “*Radical*, which means extreme...*Quidditas*, just for the purity of each sound.”<sup>90</sup> Dlugoszewski also deconstructs formal notation systems by adopting text instructions as her notational framework, outlined in her 1991 composition *Radical Quidditas for an Unborn Baby*. Providing a score as a collection of instructions may be viewed as an act of resistance - a form of defiance to dominant compositional paradigms, asking the performer and composer to materialize the artistic product in reciprocity rather than hierarchy. From bowing a crotale to walking across the stage to play metal or wooden rattles, Dlugoszewski purposefully explored orchestration that focuses on the mutual entanglements of the body and acoustic perception (Figure 2.3). While the writings may be perceived as cryptic, her choice to use instructional notation challenges authorship, and engages in music as a quasi-oral tradition.

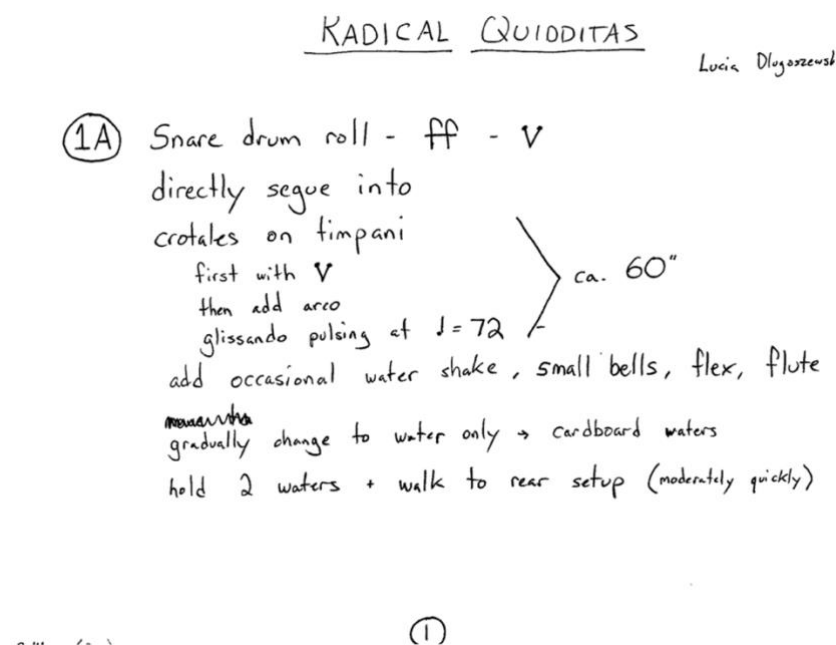


Figure 2.3: Lucia Dlugoszewska, *Radical Quidditas for an Unborn Baby* (1991), Page 1 of Score<sup>91</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Dlugoszewska, Lucia, interview by Cole Gagne. 1993. *Soundpieces 2* The Scarecrow Press, 80.

<sup>91</sup> Dlugoszewska, Lucia. 1991. *Radical Quidditas for an Unborn Baby*. (unpublished manuscript).

Her public appearance in 1991, at the premiere of *Radical Quidditas for an Unborn Baby*, marked Dlugoszewski's first since 1983. This hiatus was a result of mental health challenges and her caregiving role for her parents in Detroit and Erick Hawkins before his passing in 1994. Her return to the public life was marked by the premiere of *Radical Quidditas for an Unborn Baby*, with the work receiving a scathing review from New York Times Reviewer James Oestriech, stating,

Lucia Dlugoszewski's 40-minute "Radical Quidditas for an Unborn Baby," for solo percussionist, got the concert off to a slow, agonizing start. For all its high-flown program notes (discussing the work's ineffables") and title, the piece amounts to a charmless Young Unperson's Guide to the Percussion Section. It was left to the other composers to show how real music could be made with so formidable an arsenal.<sup>92</sup>

This critique exemplifies the frequent misunderstanding of Dlugoszewski's compositional style, with her aesthetic being deemed too feminine or not virtuosic enough, encountering challenges with being taken seriously in conventional circles. Reflecting upon the opening of *Radical Quidditas for an Unborn Baby*, Dlugoszewski stated,

I was trying to bring a feminine point of view of tenderness into music, the element of tenderness. The funny thing is with me is that I can get very excited, and I can become very reckless and explosive, and I don't know why, but people only hear that, and they don't hear the tender parts.<sup>93</sup>

This quoted passage from Dlugoszewski underscores the exploration and mystique of the feminine as outlined in the work of Eunjung Kim's *Unbecoming Human*, revealing the nuanced and often misunderstood nature of the feminine that cannot be fully encapsulated within its generalization. Conceptions of recklessness seldom align with conventional notions of mainstream femininity. The lexicon concerning feminine attributes and embodiment typically

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<sup>92</sup> Oestriech, James R. 1991. *The New York Times*. June 29. Accessed March 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/06/29/arts/music-in-review-335891.html>.

<sup>93</sup> Dlugoszewski, Lucia, interview by Cole Gagne. 1993. *Soundpieces 2* The Scarecrow Press, 75.

confines itself to monikers like “mobility, purposiveness, intelligence, desire,” overlooking a broader spectrum of descriptors that could more comprehensively capture its essence. Kim asserts that this conventional narrative frequently omits descriptors such as “unintentionality, speechlessness, unseeing, acquiescence, immobility, inertness, incompetence, asexuality, and disconnection,” highlighting the inadequacy of the prevailing language in encapsulating the entirety of the feminine experience – and in Dlugoszewski’s case, her desire for a reckless feminine.<sup>94</sup> Advocating for an understanding that the feminine encompasses broader concepts, such as recklessness and explosiveness in addition to tenderness, Dlugoszewski asserts that her perspective on the feminine and tenderness was ‘another very beautiful thing that music can do’ stating,

For instance, the beginning of *Radical Quidditas for an Unborn baby* was very delicate and very tender. One of my best friends was having a baby – not that I was thinking of the baby; it was the piece – but that sense of tenderness I think is just another very beautiful thing that music can do.<sup>95</sup>

*Radical Quidditas for an Unborn Baby* was performed by Bill Trigg, a long-term collaborator, and professionally trained percussionist. Although Trigg was a conduit for the realization of this work, Dlugoszewski crafted this composition through her embodied, idiomatic, and informal practice as a percussionist, presenting alternative approaches to musicking in the search for recklessness and suchness. When asked if her years of building a discipline of percussion playing influenced *Radical Quidditas for an Unborn Baby* during an interview with Cole Gagne, Dlugoszewski replied,

Oh yes, of course. I’m not a professional percussionist, Bill Trigg has this terrific stick technique, so I was enjoying that, with him using traditional instruments like the marimba, mixing them with the other instruments of mine. So, in a sense that piece was mixing those two things together. And sometimes my instruments sounded more reckless than his sounded. But then you had to make those other

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<sup>94</sup> Kim, Eunjung. 2015. “Unbecoming Human: An Ethics of Objects.” *GLQ 1 June (2-3)* 295-320, 302.

<sup>95</sup> Dlugoszewski, Lucia, interview by Cole Gagne. 1993. *Soundpieces 2* The Scarecrow Press, 75.

sounds reckless, and I hope I succeeded that way...I was trying to make the marimba sound as reckless as those tangent rattles. And do you think a marimba could have suchness?<sup>96</sup>



Figure 2.4: Lucia Dlugoszewski invented instruments: Wooden Tangent Rattles. Designed by Ralph Dorazio<sup>97</sup>

Although not declaring to be a professional percussionist, Dlugoszewski's time enacting and developing her discipline of percussion provided her the openness to approach instruments like the marimba with recklessness or with suchness – creating a new sonic democracy. As an outlier of mainstream practice, Dlugoszewski nurtured speculative approaches to sound and listening. She focused on metaphor and storytelling rather than being understood, emphasizing an individualized and enigmatic practice. Salome Voegelin's perspectives on acts of listening in *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*, mirror Dlugoszewski's, emphasizing interpretation as a subjective, metaphorical, and phantasmagoric practice, distancing itself from a comprehensive pursuit of meaning. Voegelin highlights sounds evanescent and fragile nature, acknowledging its vulnerability in the creative process, stating, "Sound narrates, outlines and fills, but it is always ephemeral and doubtful."<sup>98</sup> I assert that the vulnerabilities outlined in Voegelin's approach, are present in Dlugoszewski's methodological

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Lewis, Kevin. 2011. *The Miracle of Unintelligibility: The Music and Invented Instruments of Lucia Dlugoszewski*. DMA Thesis, University of Cincinnati, 55.

<sup>98</sup> Voegelin, Salomé. 2010. *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*. New York: Continuum, 5.

stance toward sound, where her outlier status allowed her to develop a subjective discipline and percussion practice grounded in feminist sensibilities and sonic subjectivity.

## 2.2 Origins of Everyday Sounds

*Moving Space Theater Piece for Everyday Sounds* (1949) marked Dlugoszewski's initial venture into the poetics of everyday sounds, with this work signifying an exploration of sound and task, evoking methodologies akin to those observed in the Fluxus movement of the 1960s. Reminiscent of performance art and devoid of formal notation (score), Dlugoszewski employed banal tasks such as "bouncing balls, shattered glass, pounding nails, water sounds, clattering teacups, tapping on blocks of wood, pots and pans, the twisting of a doorknob, matches being lit, a whistling teakettle, radio and typewriter, and more" utilizing everyday sounds as a sonic and temporal experiment.<sup>99</sup> I posit that *Moving Space Theater Piece for Everyday Sounds* marked Dlugoszewski's formal origins in experimenting and composing for percussion. Regrettably, like many works from this period, the absence of audio or visual documentation denies her works its place in historical manifestations, leaving solely archival references to the existence of the performance. Therefore, I draw commonalities between Dlugoszewski's *Moving Space Theater Piece for Everyday Sounds* and John Cage's celebrated composition *Water Walk* (1959), asserting that Dlugoszewski's composition predates the later acclaim of *Water Walk* and the subsequent admiration garnered by her male counterpart.

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<sup>99</sup> Lewis, Kevin. 2011. *The Miracle of Unintelligibility: The Music and Invented Instruments of Lucia Dlugoszewski*. DMA Thesis, University of Cincinnati, 5.

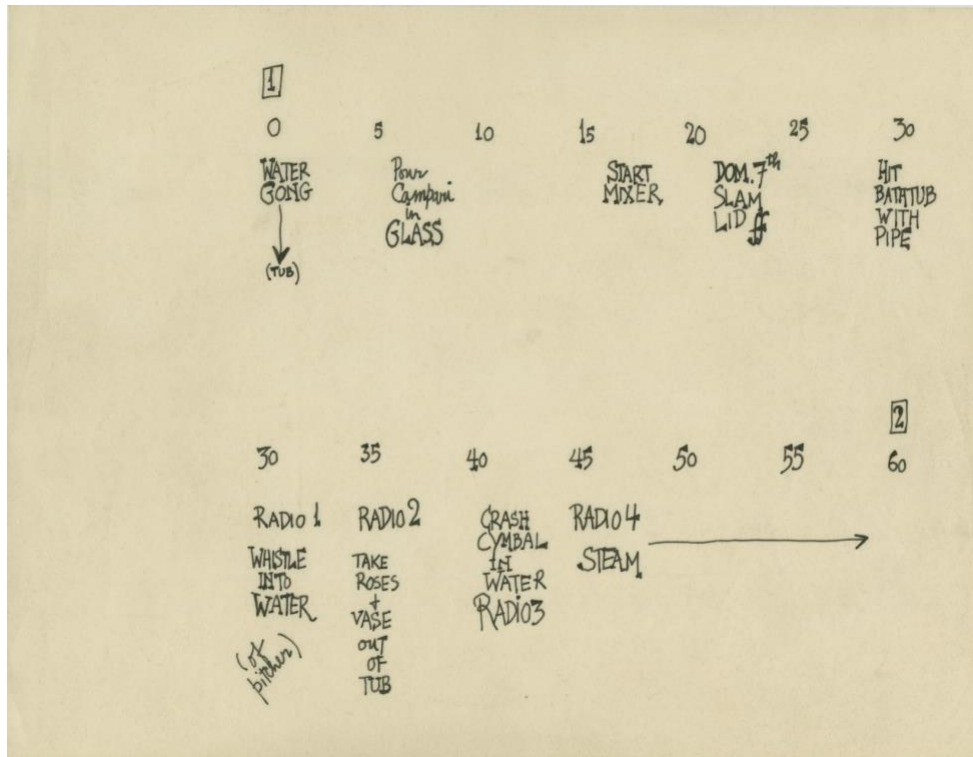


Figure 2.5: John Cage, *Water Walk*, score example

John Cage's *Water Walk* (Figure 2.5) stands as a seminal work in the 21st-century experimental music canon; its 1960 televised performance on CBS's *I've Got a Secret* acted as a sonic catalyst, influencing mainstream artists, and earning international acclaim, thereby leaving an enduring legacy on experimental music. Although John Cage's approach to percussion popularized the use of found objects, Dlugoszewski worked with everyday sounds and conceptualized them as compositional forms before John Cage made them lucrative and well-known.<sup>100</sup> *Moving Space Theater Piece for Everyday Sounds* premiered in Detroit in 1949 for other progressive artists at the University of Michigan, however the work was eventually revised and performed in New York on November 26, 1952, under the title *Structures for the Poetry of*

<sup>100</sup> Found objects, a common feature in the early percussion works of Cage, are prevalent in the practices of aleatoric and indeterminate composers throughout the 20th century.

*Everyday Sounds*. Dlugoszewski notes that *Structures for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds* was an “extreme experiment into the suchness found in Zen Buddhism.”<sup>101</sup> The New York performance took on the same compositional form as *Moving Space Theater Piece for Everyday Sounds*, yet it was performed behind a large white screen so that the audience could not see Dlugoszewski’s actions. Premiered at the loft of long-term collaborator and sculptor Ralph Dorazio,<sup>102</sup> the entire New York school of artists, poets, and composers were present, including John Cage and Morton Feldman. Dlugoszewski commented that Cage expressed his love of her work, however that the night of the premiere “Morty [and Cage] had a fight over it that night, because they both came and Morty obviously was very possessive about John and was determined to put me down.”<sup>103</sup> The history of this work demonstrates that Dlugoszewski invented and utilized aesthetics of the banal long before she would more formally deploy them in notational forms. By incorporating percussion through the poetics of everyday life, Dlugoszewski drew attention to intricacies - the capacities of elusiveness, recklessness, sounding bodies, and the gesture of doing, stating,

Whether it’s using bodies or sounds or words (which are three areas that I have done), I think sound has the capacity for the most elusive, subtle recklessness \_ and that attracts me...the subtlety, the elusiveness the recklessness - all those things about sound attract me.<sup>104</sup>

Showcasing a unique co-presence in her creative process by composing and performing her works, Dlugoszewski fosters a profound connection to acts of doing, promoting a phenomenological sensory-motor engagement with the auditory experience. This individual sense-making transcends collective norms, reflecting a personalized and intuitive approach to understanding. In this context, listening becomes a means to establish reciprocal

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<sup>101</sup> Dlugoszewski, Lucia, interview by Cole Gagne. 1993. *Soundpieces 2* The Scarecrow Press, 9.

<sup>102</sup> Ralph Dorazio was a close friend and helped design and create Dlugoszewski percussion instruments.

<sup>103</sup> Dlugoszewski, Lucia, interview by Cole Gagne. 1993. *Soundpieces 2* The Scarecrow Press, 59.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, 74.

intersubjectivity, where the auditory self becomes an integral part of the experienced world.<sup>105</sup>

Consequently, I argue that virtuosity and mastery were not constraints or considered in Dlugoszewski's practice with everyday sounds, and according to Dlugoszewski, "Western forms were actually mental clichés, just 'safe' ways to keep things from falling apart."<sup>106</sup>

In *Moving Space Theater Piece for Everyday Sounds*, Dlugoszewski manifests radical feminist expressions and companion thinking with her non-human subjects, fearlessly embracing the inherent 'recklessness' in everyday sounds. Dlugoszewski was genuinely committed to the mindset of an actively engaged and disciplined practice of everyday sounds, viewing it as an extension of her life and seeking out new points of convergence between life and art. In her own words, Dlugoszewski emphasized the importance of fearlessness in facing dialogues of divergence, unpredictability, totality, and ambiguity, stating,

In this intense dialogue of life versus art the fearlessness before divergence, unpredictability, totality and ambiguity is, of course, marvellous; but really mean it or get off the stage! Somehow the ritual of doing and engaging in a discipline of awareness and new convergence seems the only way to keep this dialogue clean.<sup>107</sup>

Therefore, through *Moving Space Theater Piece for Everyday Sounds*, percussion emerges as an empowering and liberating divergence, rupturing historical junctures in the percussion canon, and offering Dlugoszewski sonic rituals of unpredictability and totality, and in turn, percussion acted as a medium for Dlugoszewski to realize and facilitate her experimental practice.

Percussion, as a practice, is not only able-bodied but demands either personal privilege or institutional support to obtain access to, or wealth to purchase instruments, and due to this, the

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<sup>105</sup> Voegelin, Salomé. 2010. *Listening to Noise and Silence : Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*. New York: Continuum, 11.

<sup>106</sup> Dlugoszewski, Lucia, interview by Cole Gagne. 1993. *Soundpieces 2* The Scarecrow Press, 66.

<sup>107</sup> Dlugoszewski, Lucia. n.d., *Are You Tired of Being Avant Garde?* (unpublished manuscript)

emergence of percussion as an exclusive, insular, and institutionalized art form in the 20th Century arises. Did Dlugoszewski use unconventional percussion instruments because she lacked access to traditional forms of percussion, highlighting the strongholds of privilege and elitism in percussion? Or rather, was her decision to utilize everyday sounds such as paper, marbles, rice, and water instead of conventional instruments a deliberate departure from traditional forms and an adherence to the instruction received during her mentorship with Edgard Varèse, to “go to the direct exploration of sound?”<sup>108</sup> I speculate that both scenarios mentioned above are plausible explanations for the catalyst of Dlugoszewski’s practice with everyday sounds, subsequently mirroring an anti-ableist approach to musicking, in dialogue with what Kim characterizes as an ethics of queer inhumanism - a departure from conventional human-centric perspectives.<sup>109</sup> Therefore, reconsidering the connections between human and non-human entities, Dlugoszewski prompts a realignment of her modes of engagement with the sonic world, centering companion thinking as her mode of inquiry, with this sonic reorientation persevering and becoming an integral thread woven into her creative oeuvre.

### 2.3 Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds

Challenging the origins of *Moving Space Theater Piece for Everyday Sounds* and *Structures for the Poetics of Everyday Sounds* is the presence of an additional composition in Dlugoszewski’s archive that distinguishes itself due to its comprehensive notation, sharing aesthetic alignment with the previously mentioned works, but is entitled *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds* (1952). On the last page of the score, Dlugoszewski explicitly writes that *Song*

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<sup>108</sup> Beal, Amy. 2022. *Terrible Freedom: The Life and Work of Lucia Dlugoszewski*. Oakland: University of California Press, 47.

<sup>109</sup> Kim, Eunjung. 2015. “Unbecoming Human: An Ethics of Objects .” *GLQ 1 June* (2-3) 295-320, 302.

*for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds* was completed in Christmas of 1952, coinciding with her loft performance of *Structures for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds*. Dlugoszewski may not have intended for her work on the poetics of everyday sounds to be interpreted strictly as a conventional score or composition presented in a traditional format. Rather, this series of works could be viewed as speculative musings, acting as contemplative explorations of an ongoing investigation into the meanings of authorship and phenomenological sense-making. Despite the lack of definitive evidence substantiating the identity and interrelation of these specific compositions, the discourse suggests that all three pieces constitute a singular work presented in unfinished and perpetually evolving forms. Although the 1952 manuscript of *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds* represents a more formally notated manifestation of her compositional process, I will persist in treating these three compositions as distinct and autonomous entities/events for this research. Due to its standing as the most complete and comprehensive artifact within her archive from this period, I have employed speculative methodologies to analyze *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds*. In contrast to other fragmented scores from Dlugoszewski during this period, this work's realization demands relatively minimal artistic intervention, with Dlugoszewski providing explicit instructions for the percussionist and features comprehensible drawn/graphic notation. As a result, Dlugoszewski's creative intentions can be codified to a level of fidelity in corroboration with the score that allows speculative listening and realization, which has been previously unavailable.

*Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds* establishes a contemplative and unyielding atmosphere for two percussionists and spoken word. The form of the score is structured graphically through instructional symbols and text, enclosed within meticulously outlined temporal boxes in which the percussion events unfold. Complementing the percussive elements

is spoken word, set to the text of E.E. Cummings *luminous tendril of celestial wish* from his 1950 publication *XAIPE*.<sup>110</sup> Dlugoszewski disseminates the poem in distinct fragments, and at the end of the score, there is a concise directive indicating that the voice should only be spoken when contained within a box (as illustrated in Figure 2.6), therefore, not all of the text would be expressed in performance, only fragmentary moments. The question persists whether the spoken word constitutes a distinct entity separate from the percussionists. Through speculating other performances during this period, particularly of timbre piano, Dlugoszewski herself recited texts without involvement from another participant. Therefore, it is plausible to speculate that the percussionists assume the role of the spoken word; however, in other compositions where poems are incorporated, the intention is not always vocalization but rather to elucidate the metaphor of sound or to convey the purpose of the text through sound. Conversely, it is also feasible to speculate that a third participant is necessary for reciting the spoken word, given the percussionist's focus on synchronizing events, which demand precise alignment to adhere faithfully to the score's temporality.

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<sup>110</sup> Cummings, E.E. "Xaipe." In *Selected Poems*, edited by Richard S. Kennedy, 130. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994.

voice written: the Keen <sup>voice spikes</sup> illimitable secret of begin

perc 1: slowly tear paper, swiftly tear paper, silence, typewriter, wind bell, slowly tear paper, bubble cardboard, drop brass

perc 2: softly rattle paper, slowly crush paper, rattle brass, beads on Zuni bell, silence

lyrics: luminous ~~touch~~ of ~~delicate~~ wish  
 (with my ~~diminutive~~ bright deathlessness  
 to these my not themselves believing eyes  
 adventuring, enormous nowhere from)  
 querying affirmation; virginia!  
 immediacy of precision; ~~more~~  
~~and ponderably, more, more ethereal!~~  
 silence through twilight's mystery made flesh—  
 dream slender exquisite white firstful slaw  
 —new moon! as (by the miracle of your  
 sweet innocence related) clumsy some  
 dull cowardice called a world vanishes,  
 teach disappearing also me the Keen  
 illimitable secret of begin

IN VOICE  
 box around, spoken word  
 [ ] = pause for voice between phrases

IN MUSIC  
 black box = sound complex born before the lifetime of music  
 red box = sound complex born within the lifetime of music  
 red + black box = double birth in the lifetime of music

Structure of multiple asymmetry going forward - Christmas 1952

Figure 2.6: Lucia Dlugoszewska, *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds*, score excerpt

In the percussion writing of *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds*, Dlugoszewska employs red and black boxes of temporal durations to signify the ‘lifetime of music’ as outlined in Figure 2.6. The precise interpretation of this designation remains ambiguous; however, when elements are encapsulated within a ‘black box,’ Dlugoszewska signifies that the sound is a “sound complex born before the lifetime of music.” Conversely, when confined within a red box, the indication is that the “sound complex is born within the lifetime of music.” Notably, the amalgamation of a red and black box implies a “double birth within the lifetime of music,” adding a layer of complexity to the temporal context of the composition. I speculate that Dlugoszewska’s use of red and black boxes to delineate the ‘lifetimes of music’ suggests an exploration of thresholds of perception and audibility. Within this framework, Dlugoszewska

employs various indications related to types of touch and dynamic spectrum, representing an initial attempt at what would later evolve into a more coherent manifestation within her dynamic scales. These boxes represent an endeavour to formulate a new notation system for dynamics, activation, and the temporal elements intricately intertwined within metaphorical constructs.

Dedicated to capturing the poetics within everyday sound sources, Dlugoszewski's score for *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds* utilizes a unique three-line stave, bisecting the page, with the composition spanning four pages. The instrumentation for each percussionist is almost identical, yet the timings and verbiage for activation are different, creating a compelling, collaged, binaural, and multisensory experience. The sonic landscape of *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds* is delivered to the performer via instructions, tasks, and actions, analogous to the earlier-discussed *Radical Quidditas for an Unborn Baby*. Dlugoszewski guides the percussionists with directives such as "as slowly as possible tear one sheet of paper the longest way" and "crush paper as slowly as possible" while instructing them to manipulate beans, water, and rice between pans through experiential and haptic modalities. Her methodology of touch was characterized as spiritual and idiomatic by conductor Joel Thorne, an esteemed advocate of Dlugoszewski's work, observing that "What she did with paper was a very spiritual statement as well, because she was very drawn to Zen."<sup>111</sup> The subsequent list/table delineates the requisite sound sources allocated to each percussionist:

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<sup>111</sup> Beal, Amy. 2022. *Terrible Freedom: The Life and Work of Lucia Dlugoszewski*. Oakland: University of California Press, 66.

Table 2.1: *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds*, Percussion 1 and 2 instrumentations

Percussion 1		Substitutions
1.	Wind Bell	
2.	Silver	Small coins or silver jewellery
3.	Balloon	
4.	Cardboard	Bubbled, required use of straw
5.	Brass Wafer	Thin brass sheet or thunder sheet
6.	Rattled Keys	
7.	Beans in a Pan x2	Baking pan or frying pan
8.	Water	Glass/Jug and bowl with straw
9.	Pencil	Dropped in Cardboard Box
10.	Paper	Multiple types
11.	Plastic	Bottle, or utensils
12.	Tin Cans	
13.	Cellophane	
14.	Glass Rolled on Frying Pan	Glass jar or cup
15.	Hairbrush	For brushing hair
16.	Cardboard Box	To be thrown
17.	Balls	For bouncing
18.	Typewriter	
Percussion 2		Substitutions
1.	Beads	
2.	Silver Zuni Bell	Brass bell
3.	Brass Wafer	Thin brass sheet or thunder sheet
4.	Paper	Multiple types
5.	Glass Rolled on Frying Pan	Glass jar or cup
6.	Rice in Pan x2	Baking pan or frying pan
7.	Water	Glass/Jug and bowl with straw
8.	Typewriter	
9.	Wind Bell	
10.	Cardboard Box	To be thrown
11.	Balloon	
12.	Ball	For bouncing

While some notations within *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds*, like those regarding the utilization of paper, are clear and detailed, others exhibit ambiguity and personalization, requiring greater specificity regarding instrument types or the way the sounds should be actioned. This absence of detail gives rise to speculative interpretations, as percussion instruments vary significantly in timbre and design from one performance to another. For

instance, as depicted in Figure 2.7’s initial designated temporal red box, this particular sequence outlines four distinct and comprehensive methods for activating paper, followed by a subsequent period of silence. Then, the following red temporal box directs Player 1 to ‘type,’ concurrently synchronized with Player 2’s instruction to ‘rattle brass’ which are less clear and exact instructions for the performer to action. Notably, from this point in the score, until the culmination of the composition, no temporal boxes are designated; however, the percussionists are still provided with instructions to activate sounds. These instructions, while moderately specific, still contain a degree of ambiguity, enabling variation and interpretation. Consequently, a given performance of *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds* may significantly deviate from Dlugoszewski’s original intentions or the specifics outlined in her score.

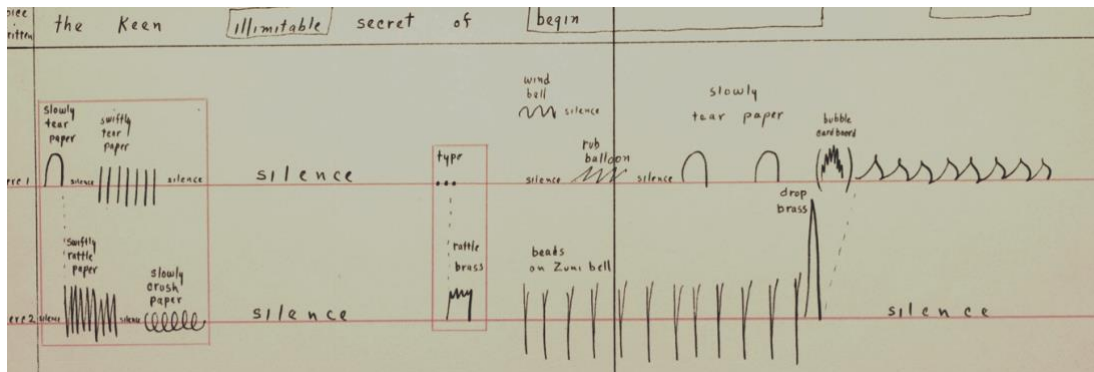


Figure 2.7: Lucia Dlugoszewski, *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds*, score excerpt

The Table 2.2 below, delineates the chronological instructions, as actioned within the score, for Percussionists 1 and 2. Each row corresponds to a specific event or action, systematically organized by the respective page on which it transpires. The “Action” column provides explicit details regarding the musical instruction. The “Enclosed in Box” column specifies whether the action is confined to a designated colored box on the score, employing

annotations such as black, red, or black and red to signify the box type. Communal moments of silence and “long silence” are distinctly highlighted in blue in the table, enhancing their visibility within the chronological sequence.

Table 2.2: *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds*, chronological score instructions

Page	Percussion 1: Action	Enclosed in Box	Percussion 2: Action
1	Wind bell	Black	SILENCE
	SILENCE		Delicate beads rubbed on silver zuni bell
1	SILENCE		SILENCE
1	Drop silver		SILENCE
1	SILENCE		Drop brass wafer
1	Rub balloon		SILENCE
1	SILENCE		As slowly as possible tear one sheet of paper the longest way
1	Tiny cardboard bubbled	Black	SILENCE
	SILENCE		Without attack roll glass back and forth on frying pan
1	Swiftly rattle brass wafer		SILENCE
1	Keys rattled	Black	Silence, zuni bell trembled, silence
1	Beans poured from one pan to another (each one as slowly) as possible; water poured from one pan to another	Black	Rice poured from one pan to another (each one as slowly)
1	Drop pencil and roll up and down in the box		SILENCE
2	Rattle paper as fast as possible, SILENCE, crush paper as slowly as possible	Black	Silence, tear paper in fastest strokes, silence, rattle paper fast, silence tear paper fast, silence
2	Drop plastic		SILENCE
2	Water bubbled slowly, swiftly water splashed	Black	Slowly water poured, bubbled
2	Delicately rattle tin cans		SILENCE
2	SILENCE		Type
2	Bounce Balls		SILENCE
2	Wind bell, silence, keys rattled, wind bell	Red	Silence, beads on bell, tremble bell, silence, beads on bell
2	LONG SILENCE		LONG SILENCE
2	Crush cellophane		SILENCE

Table 2.2: *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds*, chronological score instructions, continued

Page	Percussion 1: Action	Enclosed in Box	Percussion 2: Action
2	SILENCE		Throw box around, silence
3	Drop brass, SILENCE, Glass rolled on frying pan	Red	Tiny cardboard bubble, silence
3	Beans poured, silver dropped, water poured, (each one very fast)	Red	Silence, rice poured, silence (each one very fast)
3	Rattle brass wafer, silence, crush cellophane, bubble tiny cardboard, silence	Red and Black	Silence, rub balloon, silence, balloon, rattle brass, drop brass, silence, roll glass on frying pan
3	SILENCE		SILENCE
3	SILENCE		SILENCE
3	Brush hair		SILENCE
3	Rattle tin cans, slowly water poured, rub balloon	Red	Slowly water bubbled, swiftly water splashed
3	SILENCE		SILENCE
3	Throw box around	Red	Silence, rattle paper slowly, bounce ball
3	Drop plastic	Red	Drop and roll pencil in box
4	Slowly tear paper, silence, swiftly tear paper, silence	Red	Silence, softly rattle paper, silence, slowly crush paper
4	SILENCE		SILENCE
4	Type	Red	Rattle brass
4	Wind bell, silence, rub balloon, silence, slowly tear paper, bubble cardboard		Beads on Zuni bell, drop brass, silence

Table 2.2 acts as a visual guide to provide insight into the metaphorical nature of Dlugoszewski's verbiage and its linkage to perception. Each action articulated through text instruction is accompanied by a hand-drawn motif or figure, introducing a visual layer to the instructions (as seen in figure 2.7). These figures elucidate intention, featuring distinctive shapes such as zigzags, circles, pointed jagged Vs, and circular rounded forms. I speculate that sharp contours and jagged motifs may signify urgency and heightened intensity, while circular and spherical shapes and long sweeping lines evoke a more delicate and contemplative quality and add a nuanced dimension to the dynamics of the performance. This connection between visual

representation and the intended emotional or sonic quality enriches the interpretative possibilities for the percussionists. Additionally, a quasi-counterpoint is hinted at, juxtaposing silence and sound, with one player often active while the other accompanies. This reveals a deliberate interplay and balance between the performers, with communal moments of silence requiring synchronization, a shared temporality, and coordination. Overall, the integration of visual motifs with the textual instructions contributes to the multi-sensory and expressive nature of the composition, inviting performers to engage not only with the auditory aspects but also with the visual and metaphorical elements embedded in the score.

Dlugoszewski's exploration of sensory and tactile forms and her departure from equal temperament gained recognition within specific circles of the New York avant-garde; however, she worked in relative isolation for most of her career. To emphasize the similarities in thought and process with her male counterparts, who were documented and celebrated in historical narratives, I draw parallels between Dlugoszewski's methodology in *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds* and John Cage's 1956 composition, *27'10.554 for a Percussionist*. In line with his 1952 provocation of *4'33*, the score of *27'10.554 for a Percussionist* is also a sonic provocation, predominantly recognized as the first solo percussion composition within the percussive canon and is a testament to Cage's departure from conventional practices. With a duration of 27 minutes and 10.554 seconds, Cage intricately delineates categories of sounds to choose the instruments from: skin (s), wood (w), metal (m), and all others (a), with the number and quality of instruments at the discretion of the performer. Alongside timbre, Cage establishes a temporal axis guiding when to play, articulating timings to the minute and second for the

duration of the composition, as shown in Figure 2.8.<sup>112</sup> What is present in Cage's composition, comparatively to Dlugoszewski's, is the use of explicit instruction and delineation of time, where the exact sound world and precise striking along the time axis postulate a delicate balance of authorship, creating a guided interpretive context, establishing clear boundaries between the role of composer as bearer of information, and performer as activator.

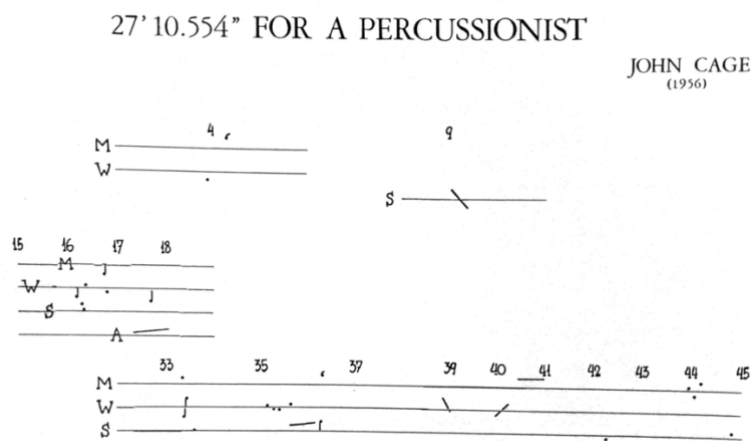


Figure 2.8: John Cage, *27'10.554 for a Percussionist*, score excerpt

Within Dlugoszewski's score, she specifies the percussive actions, describing the sound source, contour, and intent, with the accompanying boxes denoting the temporal spacing but not providing and guide for the specific duration. Dlugoszewski's shorthand is indistinct, requiring performers to exercise sonic and temporal agency, inviting interpretation and reciprocity with the duration of events, while Cage's notation offers a controlled dictation, resulting in a controlled interpretation. Although both composers signify a departure from traditional composition

<sup>112</sup> Additionally, Cage incorporated methods of chance and I-Ching into the development of the temporal delineation of his compositional process. However, Dlugoszewski was strongly averse to the practice of chance, as noted in her unpublished writings, *Can Art Be Necessary* and *Art You Tired of Being Avant-Garde*.

techniques, these divergent approaches expose tensions between specificity and ambiguity in graphic notation.

Dlugoszewski's aesthetic approach in *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds* involves an examination of banality, poetics, and a phenomenological sensory engagement with sonic experiences, where structure emphasizes timbre through percussion - "the poetry of natural sound."<sup>113</sup> Therefore, I further contend that Dlugoszewski's approach mirrors innovations observed in *musique concrète*, as evidenced by Dlugoszewski's use of collage and fragmented layering compositional techniques. In 1953, Dlugoszewski's methodologies of sonic collaging emerged through her collaboration with Marie Menken for her 1945 four-minute black-and-white film, *Visual Variations of Noguchi*. Through *Visual Variations of Noguchi*, Dlugoszewski departed from her customary compositional methods, recording, and working with tape at the avant-garde Barron Sound Studios, owned by Louis and Bebe Barron. In a curious parallel, this is the same space where John Cage recorded his renowned piece, *Williams Mix*, the year prior in 1952. Additionally, other composers from the New York School, including Morton Feldman and Earle Brown, also utilized the Barron studios for their creative work, with it becoming a crucible for avant-garde innovation, shaping the distinctive tape pieces of pioneering composers of the time.<sup>114</sup> Despite Dlugoszewski's aversion to electronics and avoidance of tape-based processes throughout her career, *Visual Variations of Noguchi* emerges as a soundscape resembling techniques of *musique concrète*, with Beal stating that "Dlugoszewski created a soundscape that was as close as she ever got to the sound of the tape-manipulation-based compositional technique of *musique concrète*: an array of crashes, vocalizations, percussion sounds, and inside-

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<sup>113</sup> Beal, Amy. 2022. *Terrible Freedom: The Life and Work of Lucia Dlugoszewski*. Oakland: University of California Press, 60.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

of-the-piano effects assault the ear with cacophonous force.”<sup>115</sup> Given this context, I contend that Dlugoszewski’s approach aligns not only with the tape-manipulation-based techniques of musique concrète but also with Helmut Lachenmann’s conceptualization of ‘musique concrète instrumentale’ as a formalized tool for orchestrating timbre.<sup>116</sup> Lachenmann’s theoretical framework advocates for a musical lexicon embedded in both sonic exploration and the organization of acoustic sound, akin to structuring materials in musique concrète, stating,

Sound events are chosen and organized so that the manner in which they are generated is at least as important as the resultant acoustic qualities themselves. Consequently, those qualities, such as timbre, volume, etc., do not produce sounds for their own sake, but describe or denote the concrete situation: listening, you hear the conditions under which a sound- or noise-action is carried out, you hear what materials and energies are involved and what resistance is encountered.<sup>117</sup>

Through techniques of musique concrète instrumentale, Dlugoszewski delicately transforms and collages timbre, manipulating a spectrum ranging from tones to non-melodic textures of percussive strikes and vocalizations. In addition to her explorations of everyday sounds and musique concrète instrumentale in *Visual Variations of Noguchi*, Dlugoszewski also engages with the potentials of the inside of the piano, manifesting as her invention of the *Timbre Piano*. While not the focal point of this study, it’s important to note that the development of her personalized technique, the timbre piano, played a crucial role in Dlugoszewski’s creative and compositional practices throughout her career. In contrast to the work of Cage and his development of the prepared piano, Dlugoszewski’s approach involved tactile interactions with the piano’s strings as sound sources, deviating from Cage’s method of employing screws and bolts between the strings to function as mutes and dampers. Dlugoszewski played directly on the

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Hurt, Dustin. 2023. “Personal Correspondence.” November.

<sup>117</sup> Lachenmann, Helmut. 2008. *Slought: Musique Concrète Instrumentale*. Accessed October 1, 2023. [https://slought.org/resources/musique\\_concrete\\_instrumentale](https://slought.org/resources/musique_concrete_instrumentale).

strings, using a diverse range of “bows and plectra crafted from a wide array of materials such as wood, plastic, metal, glass, string, wire, bone, porcelain, paper, hair combs, fingernails, brushes, and more.”<sup>118</sup> Similar to her exploration of percussion, Dlugoszewski developed the sonic landscapes of timbre-piano and everyday sounds to distance herself from pitch material and its “ego-centric connotations.”<sup>119</sup> Initially, Dlugoszewski embraced everyday sounds and timbre piano within a framework she termed ‘radical empirical immediacy,’ an approach that prioritized unmediated firsthand experiences, allowing Dlugoszewski to break free from preconceived structures and theoretical frameworks, aligning more closely with the empirical world. However, upon introspection, Dlugoszewski highlighted the constraints associated with the sonic landscape of everyday sounds, noting that, when heard repeatedly in our daily lives, can become descriptive and lose their inherent essence, stating “how quickly noises escaped the ineffable act of hearing to become the denotative pointer readings of our practical common-sense life!”<sup>120</sup> Therefore, I conclude that the convergence of the aforementioned techniques—musique concrète instrumentale, timbre piano, radical empirical immediacy, and thresholds of perception, collectively played a significant role in shaping and influencing Dlugoszewski’s exploration of everyday sounds. Hence, *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds* emerges as a mythical, yet liberating musical artifact, establishing a vulnerable, non-hierarchical, and co-constituent relationship that highlights Dlugoszewski’s distinctive approach to sound exploration.

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<sup>118</sup> Beal, Amy. 2022. *Terrible Freedom: The Life and Work of Lucia Dlugoszewski*. Oakland: University of California Press, 54-58.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

## 2.4 Geography of Noon

The integration of everyday sounds and their performance techniques shaped a feminist sensibility and a phenomenological inquiry in Dlugoszewski's practice. However, the inherent limitations of everyday sounds prompted a significant shift in Dlugoszewski's work toward the creation and design of instruments, transforming her interface with percussion. Toward the end of the 1950s and through her evolving interface with percussion, Dlugoszewski conceived of an evening-length solo work called *Suchness Concert/Otherness Concert* (1958). This work would metamorphose into her collaborative composition with Erik Hawkins Dance Company entitled *Clear Places*. These series of works prompted Dlugoszewski to design an extensive array of percussion instruments under the monikers of tangent rattles, square drums, glass chimes, and ladder harps (Figure 2.9).



Figure 2.9: Lucia Dlugoszewski invented Ladder Harps and Skin Tangent Rattles. Photograph by R.P. Kaplan.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Dlugoszewski, Lucia. 1973. "What is Sound to Music?" *Main Currents in Modern Thought*, 3-11.

Though radical in construction, some of these instruments did not exhibit particularly revolutionary sonic outcomes and often resembled existing versions of woodblocks, chimes, or skinned drums. However, creating one-of-a-kind percussion instruments was more than a gesture toward new practice; it was a profoundly personal and political response to what I believe is a feminine sensibility to percussion's physicality. Having designed over 100 instruments with sculptor Ralph Dorazio, Dlugoszewski elaborated on the reasons for moving away from traditional instruments,

I began to look at the percussion instruments, but our traditional percussion are so...what? So masculine in the wrong sense. Remember the contemporary orchestral pieces with all that 'aggressive' percussion? It made me think, the way they treat those drums, that they're really beating up women with their mallets.<sup>122</sup>

In addition to expressing concerns about aggression and negative tropes of masculinity, Dlugoszewski further explains how percussion instruments acted as an opportunity to detach from the emotions and familiar connotations created by tonal harmony (and subsequently everyday sounds), explaining, "I invented those different percussion instruments because I wanted something non-intervallic so that emotions would not interfere."<sup>123</sup> Dlugoszewski's methodology mirrors Audre Lorde's assertion that the master's tools are inherent to an oppressive system and are insufficient for dismantling it; that change requires the radical development of alternative modes.<sup>124</sup> Dlugoszewski's pursuit of alternative modes, through instrument design epitomize Lorde's ideals, as Dlugoszewski not only ruptures the conventional notion of percussion instruments but also disrupts the established paradigms of knowledge creation and mastery. Through Dlugoszewski's ethos of 'percussion suchness' she highlights her

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<sup>122</sup> Dlugoszewski, Lucia, interview by Cole Gagne. 1993. *Soundpieces 2* The Scarecrow Press, 62.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Lorde, Audre. 1984. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches: The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House*. Berkley: 2007: Crossing Press.

unwavering commitment to developing a personalized practice, reflecting a conscious consideration of gender-related tensions and a persistent quest for new sonic possibilities informed by feminist sensibilities.



Figure 2.10: Lucia Dlugoszewski playing on her invented percussion instruments. Photographer and date unknown, publicity photo, Erick Hawkins and Lucia Dlugoszewski Papers, Music Division, Library of Congress.<sup>125</sup>

*Geography of Noon* carries poignant significance, marking the vivid initiation of my research journey into Dlugoszewski's work in 2018. Upon realizing that *Geography of Noon* was composed in 1964, the same year as one of the foundational pieces of the percussion canon, Morton Feldman's seminal percussion work, *King of Denmark*, I felt a profound obligation, a sense of duty, to readdress Dlugoszewski's relationship to historical manifestations of kinship in the percussion canon.

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<sup>125</sup> Miller, Cait. 2016. *Discovering the Music within our Dance collections: Composer Lucia Dlugoszewski and the Erick Hawkins Dance Company*. September 9. Accessed January 5, 2021.

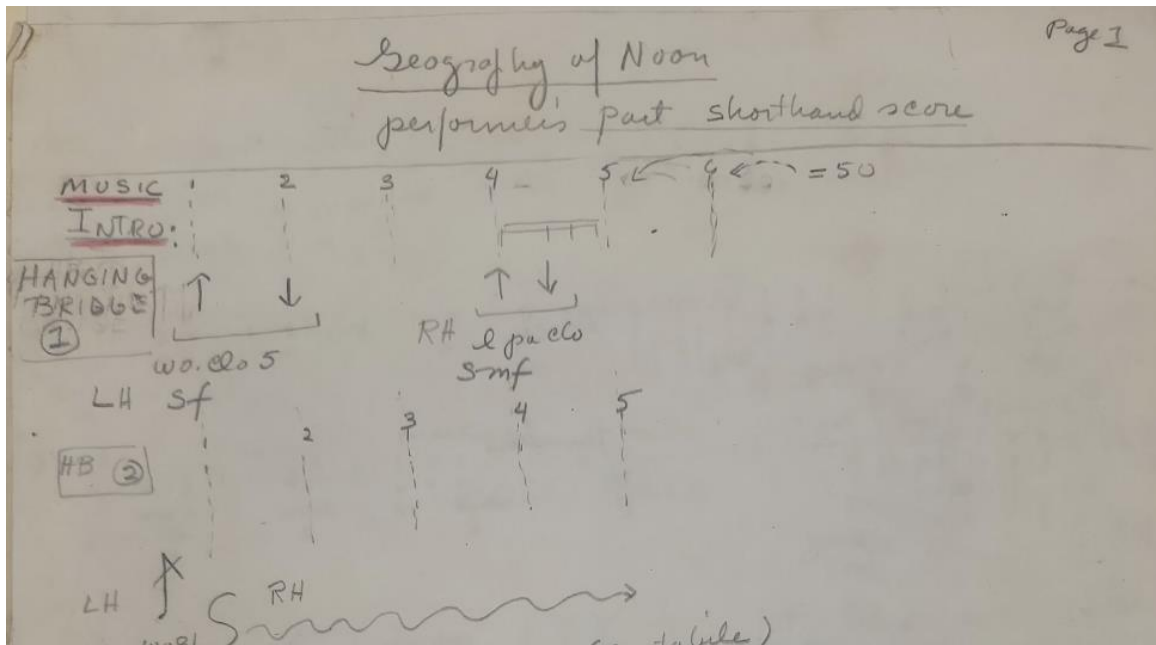


Figure 2.11: Lucia Dlugoszewski, *Geography of Noon*, score excerpt<sup>126</sup>

*Geography of Noon*, for four dancers and one hundred invented percussion instruments, premiered on August 13th, 1964, at the American Dance Festival, Connecticut College, New London. The work was a collaboration with choreography by Erick Hawkins, and subsequently, the work toured with the Erick Hawkins Dance Company. Illegible sketches and notes of this work exist within Dlugoszewski's archive, constituting shorthand and drawings indicating sound sources, pitch contours, intensity or temporal durations, and their correlation to her created instruments, as seen in Figure 2.11.<sup>127</sup> Through her work, Dlugoszewski sought to deviate from conventional percussion practices, specifically the aggressive act of striking instruments. She embraced the development of 'extended' techniques such as bowing and employing pianistic

<sup>126</sup> Dlugoszewski, Lucia. 1964. "Geography of Noon." Library of Congress, Special Collections, Music Division. *Erick Hawkins and Lucia Dlugoszewski Papers*. Washington D.C. (L.C).

<sup>127</sup> I acknowledge the scholarly pursuits of Dustin Hurt and the Bowerbird organization, thereby endowing me access to and listening to the archival recordings of *Geography of Noon*. This scholarly inquiry encompasses a meticulous examination of chosen segments from the Erick Hawkins and Lucia Dlugoszewski papers housed at the Library of Congress, and in turn, allows me to engage in musical analysis and speculation of this work. (Hurt 2023)

fingerings on surfaces, with the intention to achieve exceptionally delicate dynamics, moving away from her perceived aggressive playing methods. This shift favored poetics, as articulated by Beal; it was an attempt to “remove the aggression and brutal playing practices common among percussionists, in favor of perceptual and poetic values.”<sup>128</sup>

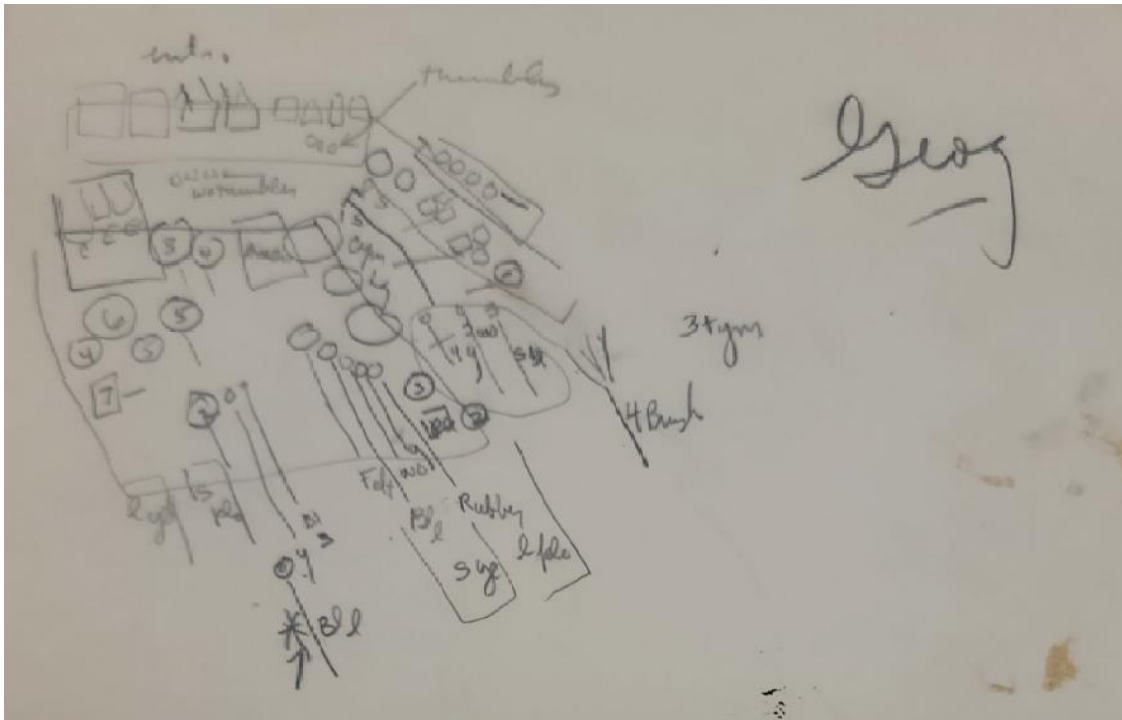


Figure 2.12: Lucia Dlugoszewski, *Geography of Noon*, drawing of percussion set-up<sup>129</sup>

Figure 2.12 presents an informal yet meticulously crafted diagram by Dlugoszewski, illustrating her percussion setup for *Geography of Noon*. Outlining, documenting, and indicating instrument placement is a customary practice among percussionists, serving as a valuable visual guide and aiding in assessing spatial arrangements and distances. Furthermore, it frequently serves as a practical guide during the resetting of performance, helping Dlugoszewski to

<sup>128</sup> Beal, Amy. 2022. *Terrible Freedom: The Life and Work of Lucia Dlugoszewski*. Oakland: University of California Press, 94.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

remember the placement of elements within the work. Dlugoszewski's diagram serves as a primary source, giving insight into the layout of instruments in *Geography of Noon*, incorporating shorthand notation representing specific mallets, such as brushes, rubber mallets, and felt mallets. This visual representation provides a tangible insight into the intricacies of Dlugoszewski practice, offering a comprehensive understanding of the tools and configurations integral to this work.

Engaging in a speculative listening of *Geography of Noon* reveals a captivating array of sonic events.<sup>130</sup> Underscoring principles of organized sound, the composition takes on an ambiguous and non-linear form. Through-composed, the listener embarks on a journey juxtaposed with material, from forte strokes on wooden surfaces to delicate glissandi across multiple sound sources. Nuanced pitch contours traverse various designed wooden instruments, with the thresholds of perception (reminiscent of the aforementioned *Dynamic Scale*) playing a pivotal role in the soundscape.

The listener experiences sound at varying intensities throughout. From loud accents of Peking cymbals to disorderly rattles blending with rattling metal thunder sheets. The rattles assume a significant role, featuring various materials such as wood, glass, and metal. They introduce a range of pitches and timbres reminiscent of timpani glissandi, contributing to an ethereal quality throughout. Surprisingly consistent is the texture of silence, prompting inquiry into whether this is a logistical consideration, such as changing instruments, mallets, choreography, or serves as a deliberate orchestration tool as noted in *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds*. Intermittently, distinct rhythms and moments reminiscent of conventional

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<sup>130</sup> Hurt, Dustin. 2023. "Personal Correspondence." November.

percussion techniques surface, allowing Dlugoszewski to embody the role of a traditional percussionist, utilizing mallets to produce rolls, play triplets, and execute rapid rhythmic motifs over wooden drums.

*Geography of Noon* may not adhere to a formulaic development for the listener, yet it unfolds as a captivating series of sonic events. Paradoxically, the composition introduces a metaphorical contradiction through the occasional powerful forte strikes produced by Dlugoszewski. These forceful moments, appearing aggressive and abrupt, stand in stark contrast to instances of extreme softness. This duality might be influenced by recording quality or rather highlight the inherent tensions in Dlugoszewski's perception of percussion as an intrinsically aggressive practice. In Dlugoszewski's 1964 diary entries, she hints at a growing disillusionment with percussion, a sentiment that became more pronounced during the creation of *Geography of Noon*. Dlugoszewski grappled with profound ambivalence throughout the composition and performance of the piece, with her internal struggle stemming from her perception that percussion, inherently marked by beating and striking, carried an inescapable aggressive quality. Beal underscores the significance of Dlugoszewski's characterization of "aggressive" percussionists, with Dlugoszewski equating them to "beating up women with their mallets."<sup>131</sup> This characterization sheds light on the extreme and conflicted feelings that Dlugoszewski harbored regarding the role of percussion in her artistic pursuits.

In summary, *Geography of Noon* represents a highly personalized sound world and organology - a sonic trajectory diligently pursued by Dlugoszewski throughout her career. From her early forays into everyday sounds, poetics, and timbre piano, to ventures of instrument design, Dlugoszewski consistently eschewed mainstream conventions, unwaveringly adhering to

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<sup>131</sup> Beal, Amy. 2022. *Terrible Freedom: The Life and Work of Lucia Dlugoszewski*. Oakland: University of California Press, 94.

the integrity of her artistic vision, even if its clarity eluded mainstream understanding. *Geography of Noon* might not align with conventional perceptions of a percussion solo or resemble the foundational solos of the canon; however, considering the impact of its inclusion and documentation, how might the trajectory of percussion have differed? What would the landscape of percussion look like today if Dlugoszewski's unique instruments and exploration of thresholds in audibility and perception had received institutional support, documentation, and preservation? I speculate that acknowledging and incorporating Dlugoszewski's work could have played a pivotal role in transforming gendered economy in performance practice and the percussion canon. This recognition may have contributed to the diversification of percussion repertoire and discourses, breaking institutional boundaries, altering gendered perceptions, and fostering a more inclusive environment for female participation in percussion practice.

Throughout this chapter, I have underscored the profound impact that acts of exclusion can have on historical narratives. Dlugoszewski's life and practice, like many of her male counterparts, were not linear. To illuminate her ingenuity in design and composition, I have critically examined structures of power through feminist methodologies, with this inquiry focusing on both formal and informal frameworks within Western art music, revealing how these paradigms have hindered the deserved recognition of Dlugoszewski's work. Through engaging in analysis and speculative realizations of *Song for the Poetry of Everyday Sounds*, I have interrogated the intricate relationship Dlugoszewski shared with concepts of perception, audibility, and aggression, and their interface with percussion. Researching Dlugoszewski's work has highlighted the isolation and lack of support networks available to her during her lifetime and, subsequently, the effect that has had on the fidelity of her chronology. However, as

I continue to radically speculate her relationship to percussion and champion her oeuvre, I embark on a journey that honors her innovative artistic pursuits and encourages re-examining established norms within the percussion landscape, fostering manifestations of kinship and companion thinking.

## CHAPTER 3

### Spectral Listening: Maryanne Amacher's Adjacencies

“I sit and listen and I hear things, then I discover how I can expand them or increase them and try to understand them.  
I think of them as perceptual geographies actually.  
‘Ways of Hearing’ - how we hear things far away; how we hear things close.  
How suddenly in your head there almost is sound, continuing and continuing.”

– Maryanne Amacher, *New Music USA*, 2004

Maryanne Amacher (1938-2009), a visionary theorist and futurist storyteller, stands as a revered and elusive luminary in experimental music and sound studies. An enigmatic character, Amacher dedicated her life and career to interrogating the complex connections between sound, space, and the human body - rupturing the boundaries of traditional music theory and practice in search of a meta sound. Her entanglements with science, feminism, and the avant-garde were synthesized with theories on neurology, physiology, and psychoacoustics, inviting her audiences to traverse perceptual landscapes and the intricate interplays between sound, space, and the human psyche.

In her creative endeavors, Amacher's unique methodologies made her work and persona enigmatic, resisting conformity to mainstream institutions, recognitions, and dissemination. Nevertheless, Amacher's enduring and unwavering commitment to exploration permeated the essence of her entire life. Rooted at times in a sense of isolation, her work arose from speculative approaches to musicking, with close collaborator and associate Bill Dietz avowing that “the work she was fabulating was paradigmatically incompatible with the world as currently

structured along gendered, racialized, temporalized, capitalized fault lines.”<sup>132</sup> Amacher is commonly recalled as difficult or self-contradictory,<sup>133</sup> however, Dietz challenges this view by advocating that her work transcends the confines of conventional genre expectations, asserting that her complexity stems from a deliberate effort to bring her work to fruition on her own terms.<sup>134</sup>

Amacher emphatically asserts that conventional composition techniques often relied on pre-established themes and borrowed methods of others, vexedly stating, “The unsettling truth was that most approaches to creating music began with existent figures-melodies snatched from the great fragments of musical memory.”<sup>135</sup> Perceiving the void and limitations within mainstream compositional practices and institutional environments, Amacher embarked on a pioneering career on the periphery. As an outlier, she created sonic virtual realities that deconstructed the boundaries of sound studies - an aural architecture that disrupted the transformation of time and form. In John Cage’s “The Future of Music: Credo,” he asserts that percussion music signals a shift towards an “all-sound music of the future,” however, Amacher aptly envisions an evolution toward what she terms an “all-time” music, stating that,

As the possibilities of the ‘all-sound music of the future’ were to Cage, the possibilities of ‘all-time music’ are to me. In the twenty-first century, new time worlds will be explored just as composers in the twentieth century explored new sounds.”<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Cimini, Amy, and Bill Dietz. 2021. *Maryanne Amacher: Selected Writings and Interviews*. Brooklyn, New York.: Blank Forms Editions, 4.

<sup>133</sup> Kaiser, Paul. 2014. “The Encircling Self: In Memory of Maryanne Amacher.” *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 36 (1 (106)), 10-34.

<sup>134</sup> Dietz, Bill. 2019. “Maryanne Amacher.” *Tutorial Diversions*. November 12. Accessed October 3, 2023. <http://www.tutorialdiversions.org/Documents/MA%20BD.pdf>.

<sup>135</sup> Mumma, Gordon, Allan Kaprow, James Tenney, Christian Wolff, Alvin Curran, and Maryanne Amacher. 2001. *Cage’s Influence: A Panel Discussion. In Writings through John Cage’s Music, Poetry, and Art*. Edited by David W. Bernstein and Christopher Hatch. University of Chicago Press.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

Amacher's speculative methodologies of temporality and perceptual experience led her to formulate the concept of 'structure-borne sound.' This intentional departure from the term installation, led to the creation of spectral and immersive auditory landscapes, meticulously shaped and deployed into distinct three-dimensional profiles through the circulation of sound within architectural frameworks. Recording and the placement of loudspeakers became a crucial element to her practice, with sound spanning individual rooms, entire buildings, and interconnected spaces; with this innovative approach becoming a hallmark of her projects, exemplified in works like *Music for Sound Joined Rooms* (1980-) and the *Mini Sound Series* (1985-). Amacher's desire and fixation on temporal bodies extended to large-scale projects such as *City Links* (1967-1981), where she connected long-duration recordings to urban sites using telematic methods. Dietz remarks that Amacher's exploration in her large-scale works, revolve around deciphering formations of consciousness and presence, stating, "what she's figuring out in such works is just how notions of 'presence' are constructed."<sup>137</sup> Amacher also challenges how one listens, as touched on in the epigraph of this chapter: "I sit and listen and I hear things, then I discover how I can expand them or increase them and try to understand them."<sup>138</sup> Amacher asserts that developing ways of hearing, is as crucial as the fundamental and familiar elements that make up the sound, such as pitch, timbre, and rhythm, stating,

Ways of hearing become as important in shaping an aural architecture as the acoustic information, such as frequencies, tone colors, and rhythms. How certain sounds are to be perceived in an immersive sonic environment is as important as the sounds themselves. Ways of hearing - how we locate, sense and feel sonic events.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Dietz, Bill, and Amy Cimini, interview by Kate Galloway. 2021. *The Memories and Materials of Maryanne Amacher: In Conversation with Amy Cimini and Bill Dietz* Flash Art, March 26.

<sup>138</sup> Oteri, Frank J. 2004. *Extremities: Maryanne Amacher*. May 1. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://newmusicusa.org/nmbx/extremities-maryanne-amacher-in-conversation-with-frank-j-oteri/>.

<sup>139</sup> Mumma, Gordon, Allan Kaprow, James Tenney, Christian Wolff, Alvin Curran, and Maryanne Amacher. 2001. *Cage's Influence: A Panel Discussion. In Writings through John Cage's Music, Poetry, and Art*. Edited by David W. Bernstein and Christopher Hatch. University of Chicago Press.

Through this methodology, Amacher invites speculative listening, vulnerable listening, and sense-making – attempting to invent and locate sound perceptually. In parallel to Voegelin’s acts of listening outlined in, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, Amacher, as a listening subject, fabulates modes of listening that intricately construct her world through a phenomenological sensory-motor engagement with the heard. Amacher’s auditory self becomes integral to the heard sounds in this dynamic process, fostering reciprocal intersubjectivity where phantasmagoric perceptual environments underscore the crucial role of how ways of hearing are perceived, sensed, and experienced as sonic events.<sup>140</sup>

Through decades of theorizing and excavating sound, Amacher posited to establish radical modes of listening, where the physics of sound would take on visceral shapes and characters, and the listener’s aural anatomy, particularly the science of the inner ear, intersected with the inner recesses of the mind. Subsequently, Amacher developed a profound interest in otoacoustics (OAEs) while exploring the phenomena that can occur within cochlear function. Otoacoustic emissions refer to physical sounds generated in the ear canal when vibrations transmitted backward through the middle ear from the cochlea reach the tympanum. Amacher characterizing OAEs as integral to her concept of “perceptual geographies, defining them as modes of hearing primarily perceived on a subliminal level.”<sup>141</sup> Within this speculative and audiological landscape, sounds unfurl and evolve, giving birth to what Amacher pertinently referred to as ear tone music, human response tones, and the music of the third ear. Though often misunderstood, Amacher’s lifelong research and theorizations on the inner ear reflect her

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<sup>140</sup> Voegelin, Salomé. 2010. *Listening to Noise and Silence : Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*. New York: Continuum, 10.

<sup>141</sup> Kirk, Jonathon. “Otoacoustic Emissions as a Compositional Tool.” International Conference on Mathematics and Computing (2010).

persistent effort to develop a vocabulary for the intricate intersection of auditory perception, thresholds of timbre, and psychoacoustics. In the 2020 publication, *Wild Sound: Maryanne Amacher and the Tenses of Audible Life*, Amy Cimini interrogates concepts of biopolitics and feminisms and tentatively introduces the radical methodology of cochlear feminism in exploring the importance Amacher attributed to cochlear function. This highlights the intricate intersections of femininity, science, and their interface with sound studies in Amacher's life. Cimini emphasizes the book's intention to excavate historically situated engagements and their constitutive frameworks, stating that while *Wild Sound* doesn't explicitly formulate cochlear feminism, it excavates and fabulates how "historically situated engagements with cochlear function link up with constitutive frameworks in research environments as well as Amacher's compositional and fictive elaborations."<sup>142</sup> Additionally, Cimini effortlessly outlines the symbiotic relationship between Amacher's writings and the profound influence of Donna Haraway's cyborg feminism. By poignantly drawing phenomenological parallels between Haraway's provocative 1991 statement, "I want a feminist writing" from *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*, Cimini imprints upon the reader Amacher's reinterpretation as "I want to make a music...". This comparison vividly captures Amacher's unwavering pursuit of a transformative vision encapsulated in her compositional aspirations and echoing Haraway's foundational desire for a feminist discourse.<sup>143</sup>

Born in Kane, Pennsylvania, in 1938, Amacher studied at the University of Pennsylvania from 1955 to 1964 and, throughout her career, was involved in collaborations with influential figures in the arts, such as John Cage and Merce Cunningham, holding fellowships at institutions

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<sup>142</sup> Cimini, Amy. 2022. *Wild Sound: Maryanne Amacher and the Tenses of Audible Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 35.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

like the University of Illinois' Studio for Experimental Music, MIT's Center for Advanced Visual Studies (1972-76) and SUNY Buffalo (Creative Associate 1966-7). Amacher's compositional origins followed a somewhat conventional framework within the moniker of concert music; however, by the 1970s, her involvement in the avant-garde scene, intense focus on structure-borne sound, and reimagining temporal bodily structures, played a pivotal role in Amacher moving away from concert music. This journey of exploration led to a constant theorization on sound, resulting in a plethora of unpublished treatises like her *Inharmonic, Space, Timbre, and Additional Tones Workbook* (1975-1977/rev. 1987). Additionally, some of Amacher's works were published during her lifetime, allowing others to delve into understanding her philosophies, notably her manuscript in John Zorn's *Arcana III: Musicians on Music* (2008), titled *Psychoacoustic Phenomena in Music Composition: Some Features of a Perceptual Geography*.<sup>144</sup> Amacher's work in the 1990s with the Kronos Quartet and her engagement with the DAAD Artists-in-Berlin program showcased her continued exploration of her craft; however, Amacher's distinct and solitary approach to composition also extended to her performances, and post the 1960s, she almost exclusively was the composer and performer of her works. Compounded by the spectral complexities of Amacher's compositions, her unique methodology inadvertently contributed to the scarcity of her archive, rendering her extensive legacy almost inaccessible. However, thanks to the Maryanne Amacher Foundation, Supreme Connections, and their devoted scholars, navigating the complexities of Amacher's legacy has become less opaque, and I extend my sincere appreciation to Amy Cimini, Bill Dietz, and Woody Sullender for their invaluable assistance throughout the artistic process and development of my research and realization of *Adjacencies*.

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<sup>144</sup> Cimini, Amy. 2022. *Wild Sound: Maryanne Amacher and the Tenses of Audible Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 273.

A performance of *Adjacencies* not only resists but also liberates. Stemming from “a fragile archive, a body assembled from shattering, from splattering,” this chapter is an interlocutor with the fragility and fragmentation of *Adjacencies* and its precarious departure for Amacher from the traditional concert setting.<sup>145</sup> Decoding the fragility of the score and its accompanying notes was at times a thorny and porous process, marked by uncertainty and receptivity. However, our work into realizing *Adjacencies* was centred in care, recognizing that we were not only reassembling a body of work and creating a space of encounter, but also paying homage to a multifaceted yet often misunderstood artist. Alexis Pauline Gumbs states, “She who refuses to reproduce the status quo threatens to produce a radically different world” – thus, I believe this constituted Amacher’s world: a radically different existence, a narrative created by her unwavering commitment to her artistic vision.<sup>146</sup> However, formalization, dissemination, and interpretation become fraught within this hyper focused, stalwart dedication. Therefore, it is crucial to highlight that my approach and analysis of *Adjacencies* does not claim to be the definitive or correct method for realizing this work. I firmly believe that an authoritative interpretation is elusive because Amacher’s work inherently resists formalization and dissemination. With Haraway’s reminder that “without sustained remembrance, we cannot learn to live with ghosts,” and in earnest to Amacher’s musical legacy, my focus on centering *Adjacencies* serves to bring forth historical manifestations of kinship and sustained remembrance, fostering acts of musicking that celebrate and interface with Amacher’s futuristic theorizations of sound.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Ahmed, Sara. 2017. *Living A Feminist Life*. Durham: Duke University Press, 17.

<sup>146</sup> Gumbs, Alexis Pauline. 2010. *We Can Learn to Mother Ourselves: The Queer Survival of Black Feminism 1968-1996*. PhD Dissertation. Duke University, 13-14.

<sup>147</sup> Haraway, Donna J. 2016. *Staying with the Trouble : Making Kin in the Chtulucene*. Durham: Duke University Press, 39.

### 3.1 Adjacencies

“Since a suitable recording does not exist for the enclosed score ADJACENCIES, I include this tape, originally made to accompany ADJACENCIES, as a model for the musicians.”

– Maryanne Amacher, *Remainder*, 1976

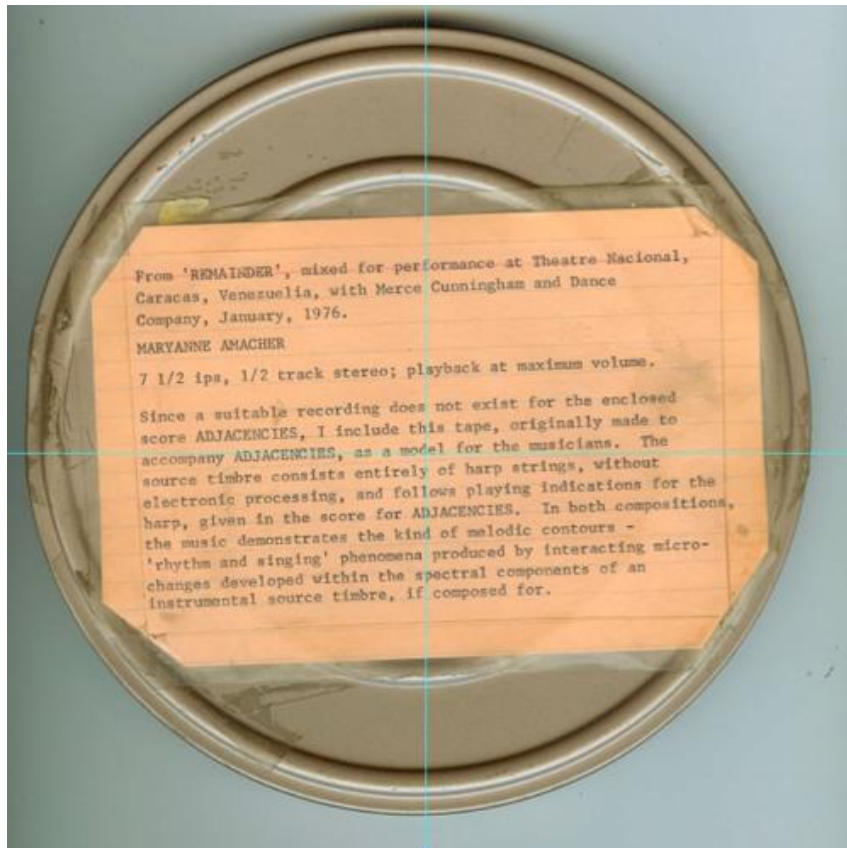


Figure 3.1: Maryanne Amacher, original tape for *Remainder* with *Adjacencies* text<sup>148</sup>

Created in 1976 for a collaboration with Merce Cunningham, and assembled for performance at the Theatre Nacional, Caracas, Venezuela, Maryanne Amacher’s tape composition *Remainder*,<sup>149</sup> features exclusively the timbre of acoustic harp. Devoid of electronic processing, the melodic subtleties and cantabile phenomena are influenced by micro changes of

<sup>148</sup> Amacher, Maryanne. 2000. *Remainder*. *Music for Merce 1952-2000*.

<sup>149</sup> In Cimini (2022), She refers to this work, in its earlier form, *Here*, suggested time of composition 1966.

pitch and timbre, conjuring an ethereal shimmer. Amacher intimates that the harp sounds captured on *Remainder* embody the sonic proponents she desired for the harp material in her earlier composition *Adjacencies*, stating that “since a suitable recording does not exist for the enclosed score ADJACENCIES, I include this tape, originally made to accompany ADJACENCIES, as a model for the musicians” (Figure 3.1).

Resembling shapes and characters in motion through space, *Remainder* evokes a spectral listening experience, with a vibrant interplay of pendulating pitch contours unfurling from all directions. These ‘shapes’ can be inferred to parallel the sound characters Amacher would explore and seek to articulate in her later works. Much like Dlugoszewski, Amacher’s compositions embraced dynamic and evolving titles and functions - a practice marked by a constant state of evolution yet hindered by tendencies of perfectionism. Despite existing within the confines of conventional modernist compositional techniques and notation, *Adjacencies* was no exception to Amacher’s fluid and transient approach. Cimini outlines that the origins of *Adjacencies* were conceptualized within a broader vision and set of compositions, termed *Audjoins*, highlighting Amacher’s pre-existing fixation on sounding large-scale spaces, stating,

*Adjacencies* was to be part of a multipart collection of works from the early to mid-1960s titled AUDJOINS, a Suite for Audjoined Rooms. The suite would have staged ensembles in built space. (“Adjacencies” is the only known extant score of that series.) Indeed, Amacher’s added “u” to the word suggests architectural jointures and contiguities held in place by sound, listening, and their coupling in the aural.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Cimini, Amy. 2018. *Supreme Connections meets Video City in Maryanne Amacher’s Intelligent Life*. December 23. Accessed July 1, 2022. <https://www.anthropocene-curriculum.org/contribution/supreme-connections-meets-video-city-in-maryanne-amachers-intelligent-life>.

*Adjacencies* (1965-66), composed for two percussionists and sound diffusion, debuted at Carnegie Recital Hall on November 8th, 1966. The premiere showcased percussionists Ed Burnham and Jan Williams, who similarly to Amacher, were affiliates at SUNY Buffalo's Centre for Creative and Performing Arts.<sup>151</sup> Standing starkly in contrast to a shared program of Possuir, Webern, and Wuorinen, Amacher's 14-minute quadraphonic and metallic exploration stood out as a provocative departure, noting in the published program her intention for an interplay of multi-frequency-intensity fluctuations, situated in unpredictability and possibility, writing,

In *Autonomy #1 and #2*, tapes made at the Studio for Experimental Music, University of Illinois, Urbana, I composed to magnify the audibility of the "music", i.e. the contouring which autonomously begins to organize itself within the multi-frequency-intensity fluctuations common to inharmonic characteristics. At the same time, I wanted to explore for further findings here where the instrumental sense begins to disappear and the spectrum is left to freely yield its own singing (because of the vowel-consonant format groupings) and made playing and listening instructions, "Adjacencies" for two percussionists. The sound material - frequency areas activated through the kind of playing activity, combined rates and regularity of tone, interval, and speed fluctuation etc. is also organized for its self-creating potential. The two musicians are asked to explore for findings here, to further observe and reveal in their playing, by giving special attention to the more discreet irregularities within broad frequency bands, the contouring they hear within the interacting energy of the material. The score sets up the possibilities for finding; the findings are indeterminate, differing according to the combined selectivity of the two performing musicians. M.A.<sup>152</sup>

Situated within a Euro-American modernist context, within *Adjacencies*, Amacher encapsulates a romanticized perspective on the potential of mid-century percussion, underlining an unwavering trust in the percussionist as a catalyst and nurturer of unexplored sounds. Despite an initial positive reception, there's a possibility that the artistic intent of the work was misconstrued, as indicated in Leighton Kerner's review in the Contemporary Series dated November 17th, 1966. His assertion of similarity to Varèse's later works and that the strength of

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<sup>151</sup> The work also had a prior performance at the Albright-Knox Gallery in Buffalo in 1964, facilitated through a collaboration organized by Julius Blum. (Cimini, 2022)

<sup>152</sup> Amacher, Maryanne. 1965. *Program Notes: Adjacencies from Audjoins Suite*.

*Adjacencies* lay not in its sonic potential but rather its form, suggests a misunderstanding of the importance of frequency spectra within *Adjacencies*, with Kerner's analysis potentially stemming from a convenient comparison with the well-established and formidable aesthetics of a male figure of stature like Varèse. Kerner writes,

The percussionists worked from chart-scores that dictated, as I understand it, approximate sequences of timbre, pitch, touch and so forth. As in much of Varese's later work, the strength of the music lay not so much in the sound at any given moment but in the great tension built up from accumulations, contrasts, and, as the title would have it, adjacencies.<sup>153</sup>

The tensions within male-dominated practices, where women are consistently relegated to secondary roles or compared to men, not only underscores the power afforded to language and naming, but also highlights the limitations of language and hegemonic modes of assessing and appreciating music. This process also highlights how language is complicit in persistently impeding the potential expression of the bold artistic ideas of women, in what McClary describes as a "deep-seated belief in hierarchical difference," which has been historically exploited to deny women.<sup>154</sup> However, the creative development of *Adjacencies* involved a robust dialogue and collaborative spirit with percussionists Williams and Burnham, yielding a rich and descriptive verbiage, focused on 'ways of hearing' and 'ways of doing.' This process involved a thorough exploration of large-scale metal objects and frequency spectrums and is extensively detailed in Cimini's analysis, drawing parallels with the emergent spectral and quadrophonic concepts evident in Karlheinz Stockhausen's 1964 composition *Mikrofonie I*, composed for six players, tam-tam and live electronics diffused in a quadraphonic system.<sup>155</sup> Although brief and at the

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<sup>153</sup> Amacher, Maryanne. 2012. *Supreme Connections Reader*. Edited by Bill Dietz. Kingston/Berlin: Unpublished.

<sup>154</sup> McClary, Susan. 1991. *Feminine Endings: Music Gender and Sexuality*. Minnesota : University of Minnesota Press, 79.

<sup>155</sup> The figures and block-like notation across the five pages of materials in *Adjacencies* may be seen as reminiscent of the expressive freedom in Stockhausen's *Zyklus no. 9* (1959). The duration of these elements implies adaptability, dependent on the performer and venue, showcasing a deliberate engagement with resonance and spatial considerations.

origins of her academic life, Amacher spent her formative years studying composition with Karlheinz Stockhausen, contending that her traditional music education did not provide a sufficient framework for exploring perceptual geographies. Further crediting Stockhausen with initiating her exploration into sound, Amacher stated that,

My conventional/traditional/academic background in music provided no approach to understanding or investigating what mattered most to me about the physical nature of sound, our responses to it perceptually, and the creation of the sonic worlds I imagined...All of this began with Stockhausen. How to communicate in a few words the unique treasure of these studies!<sup>156</sup>

Like Dlugoszewski, Amacher dedicated her career to formulating new vocabularies that intertwined concepts of perception and audibility with metaphor and explored phenomenological entanglements to percussion. Dlugoszewski and Amacher expressed a communal curiosity for the evolution of mid-century percussion; however, they diverged in their approaches, showcasing diverse paths in their creative endeavors. Dlugoszewski manifested her inspiration by crafting instruments borne out of her imagination and a commitment to fostering a feminine practice; in contrast, Amacher utilized mid-century percussion as a catalyst for extensive experiments in perception, spatialization, and futurist technologies. While acknowledging the distinct contrast in sonic outcomes between Amacher and Dlugoszewski, I posit that Amacher also mirrors a Baradian framework of intra-action, materializing within the co-collaboration of her work and ideas, creating a vulnerable and co-constituent feminist sensibility centered on temporality and perception. Barad conceptualizes that temporality is produced through the enfolding of phenomena, emphasizing that intra-actions are temporal and that ‘time has a history.’ Therefore, Barad argues that “it doesn’t make sense to construe time as a succession of evenly spaced

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<sup>156</sup> Amacher, Maryanne. 2008. “Thinking of Karlheinz Stockhausen.” Edited by Bill Dietz. *Artforum* (Supreme Connections Reader) 46 (7): 219-222.

moments or as an external parameter that tracks the motion of matter in some pre-existing space.”<sup>157</sup> Barad’s statement suggests that linear interpretations of time, commonly observed in Western classical art music notation, inadequately grasp the intricate interplay of timbral phenomena. Therefore, Barad’s arguments support and advocate for the distinctive approaches to timbre, perception, and temporality found in the works of Amacher and Dlugoszewski.

Alongside *Adjacencies* lives a 28-page theoretical compilation of writings entitled *Space Notebook*. Within this treatise, Amacher fearlessly articulates her thoughts on spatial architecture and the perceptual experience, emphasizing the scientific principles governing sound diffusion. Amacher envisions the possibilities inherent in transforming quadraphonic sound into distinct shapes and densities, elucidating how spectral shapes emerge within and beyond the quadraphonic array, thus, the *Space Notebook* anticipated her later theorizations of spatial characters and shapes.<sup>158</sup> Ardently advocating her viewpoint, Amacher states that she “wanted to create a kind of music where the listener actually has vivid experiences of contributing this other sonic dimension to the music—the music that their ears are making.”<sup>159</sup> Although I will not unpack the countless methodologies of the *Space Notebook*, structure-borne sound or human response tones, their recognition within this dissertation is integral to understanding the framework of Amacher’s oeuvre and its interface with *Adjacencies*.

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<sup>157</sup> Barad, Karen. 2007. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham N.C: Duke University Press, 180.

<sup>158</sup> Cimini, Amy. 2022. *Wild Sound: Maryanne Amacher and the Tenses of Audible Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 64.

<sup>159</sup> Oteri, Frank J. 2004. *Extremities: Maryanne Amacher*. May 1. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://newmusicusa.org/nmbx/extremities-maryanne-amacher-in-conversation-with-frank-j-oteri/>.

### 3.2 Approaching Creative Development

The score of *Adjacencies* and the extensive accompanying annotations implies incompleteness; within the semblance of sketches, the manuscript invites speculative interpretations of the performance. Despite Amacher's detailed specifications for the desired sounds (particularly her use of harp), delineating sounds by a defined frequency spectrum and articulating instruments via timbre characteristics brings a level of ambiguity to the instrument selection process. Additionally, Amacher intentionally refrained from providing explicit instructions on sound production (how to strike), opting instead for idiosyncratic linguistic expressions and graphic descriptors, affording percussionists the freedom to interpret and implement the instructions in reciprocity with her annotations. This approach is underscored in Cimini's description of the productive working relationship between Jan Williams and Amacher during their creative development, expressing that Amacher accepted "whatever techniques would dramatize the spectral region and encouraged whatever adjustments would enable a player to explore its ambitus more deeply."<sup>160</sup>

Initial encounters might prematurely label *Adjacencies* as a mere graphic score reminiscent of the structured frameworks in 20th-century modernist compositions. However, rather than confining the piece to such classifications, *Adjacencies* could be perceived as a sequence of speculative sonic junctures, enabling the introduction and interaction of sounding events. Within *Adjacencies*, sounds materialize, converge, or diverge within quadraphonic spatial arrangements, highlighting the significance of resonance, attack, and decay, with sounds uniting percussive attacks and sound diffusion. Consequently, *Adjacencies* challenges a straightforward categorization of form, with Amacher's conceptualization of the work also

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<sup>160</sup> Cimini, Amy. 2022. *Wild Sound: Maryanne Amacher and the Tenses of Audible Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 55.

hinting at the unpredictable and fragmentary nature of the materials. Amacher uses conjectural language in her notes, such as ‘I imagine’ and ‘I’m expecting,’ underscoring the hypothetical and fabulative methodology of her creative vision, stating,

This compositional plan is designed to explore possible micro changes within inharmonic timbral units; I’m expecting different simultaneous activities in the same frequency area to include micro changes because of the function I imagine (at this point) they have in the building up a more complex timbral unit.<sup>161</sup>

Within *Adjacencies*, sound functions as both a meeting and departure point, with percussionists and their materials serving as sonic manifestations that shape the soundscape. Therefore, spectral listening assumes the role of a wayfinder, with the percussionist’s complicity on this journey, excavating and organizing sound, manipulating the materialization and deployment of sound. Thus, Amacher collaborates with the percussionists in reciprocity, in acts of companion thinking. Amacher entrusts the percussionists with decision-making, relying on their embodied knowledge, structuring the percussive dyad on “how the players imagine sounds as much as how they generate them.”<sup>162</sup> This departure from traditional composer-performer hierarchies, as highlighted by Cimini, sheds light on how Amacher, transformed spectral listening into a dynamic focal point for the unruly subjectivity of sounds, with Cimini stating, “Fragments from the archive illuminate how at this early stage Amacher materialized spectral listening as a supercharged locus for sounds unruly subjunctivity.”<sup>163</sup> Therefore, comprehending Amacher’s sonic oeuvre and methodology of listening became a crucial process in our interpretative journey to effectively navigating the intricate and, at times, nauseating performance notes. With the support of Amy Cimini and the materials provided by Supreme

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<sup>161</sup> Amacher, Maryanne. 1965. *Program Notes: Adjacencies from Audjoins Suite*.

<sup>162</sup> Cimini, Amy. 2022. *Wild Sound: Maryanne Amacher and the Tenses of Audible Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 51.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

Connections and the Maryanne Amacher Foundation, their comprehension assisted in grasping the subtleties within the score of *Adjacencies* and contributed to making informed creative and logistical decisions in our realization of the work.

### 3.3 Preparation and Rehearsal Process

On January 9th, 2023, our performance of *Adjacencies* took place at the UC San Diego Experimental Theater, featuring Dustin Donahue and myself as the percussionists, with the role of sound diffusion executed by David Aguila and Theocharis Papatrechas. Complimenting *Adjacencies* on the program was Netty Simons 1967 composition *Design Groups I*, performed as a trio with Dustin Donahue and Steven Schick. Preceding our performance, Amy Cimini generously conducted a pre-performance talk, offering valuable historical context and introduced speculative listening methodologies to the audience.

Preparation for *Adjacencies* unfolded as a complex and layered process over several months, involving extensive conversations and dedicated creative development rehearsals. The initial steps in this intricate process involved engaging in discussions with Amy Cimini and the Maryanne Amacher Foundation to secure permission for our performance. Following this, it was paramount to assemble a dedicated team driven by an interest in preserving Amacher's legacy, as mentioned above, comprising fellow percussionist Dustin Donahue alongside electronic music specialists David Aguila and Theocharis Papatrechas.

Navigating Amacher's extensive program notes initially presented challenges due to their chaotic nature. The notes included over 20 pages of writing, multiple pages detailing frequency spectra, some with crossed-out sections or rewritten portions, handwritten annotations, and a continuous repetition and refinement of a single idea across numerous pages. Therefore,

collaborating closely with Amy Cimini proved invaluable, as her in-depth knowledge facilitated cross-referencing and fidelity in decision-making. As the preparation process involved numerous layers, the following outline offers an overview of the step-by-step actions and methods integral to the preparation process, presented in chronological order:

1. *Critical inquiry and score analysis:* As an ensemble, we engaged in a robust, communal discussion of the intricacies of the notational material, seeking to comprehend its significance within the broader context of Amacher's oeuvre.
2. *Comprehension of sonic monikers and discernment of the frequency spectrum:* A thorough understanding of the notation and frequency spectrum, subsequently resulting in instrument choices. Additionally, we focused on delineating the timbre capacities of the specific instruments and made decisions about their usage, emphasizing the strategic placement of harps within the percussion set-ups.
3. *Mallet choices:* Dustin and I considered the selection of mallets to create distinctive attacks and spectral layers aligned with Amacher's sonic vision.
4. *Temporal delineation and approach to form:* Collaboratively, we discussed a tentative form for performance and allocated the order of the five pages of the score. Additionally, we assigned parts and delineated the general concurrence of events, making speculative decisions on temporal proportions.
5. *Establishing a cueing system:* A pivotal element in our preparation was enabling coordinated attacks within the percussion and sound diffusion, ensuring a cohesive and synchronized performance.

6. *Determining logistical aspects of staging:* We collectively discussed instrument placement, performer positioning, seating plan, and quadraphonic arrangement to optimize the performance space in the UC San Diego Experimental Theater.
7. *Considering the impact of sound diffusion on form and time axis:* Recognizing the significance of the immersive and spatial elements, Dustin and I engaged in dialogue with David and Theocharis to discuss how resonance and decay would impact the percussion writing's overall form and time axis, designing a plan for how to approach this in the rehearsal process.

While this example does not encompass the full breadth of actions taken to achieve our realization, it serves as a comprehensive illustration of the rigorous approach guiding our realization process.

### 3.4 Deconstructing Adjacencies

“I made AudJoins [Adjacencies] so that worlds of sound could be joined. They receive each other, interrupt, interact, and bring the unexpected to each other.”

– Maryanne Amacher, *Program Notes: Adjacencies from Audjoins Suite*, 1965

After establishing the parameters outlined above, I embarked on stage one of the rehearsal process, meeting with Dustin to play and experiment with fragments of the score. Throughout this initial phase, we finalized the order of pages, choosing the following form outlined in Figures 3.2 to Figure 3.6.

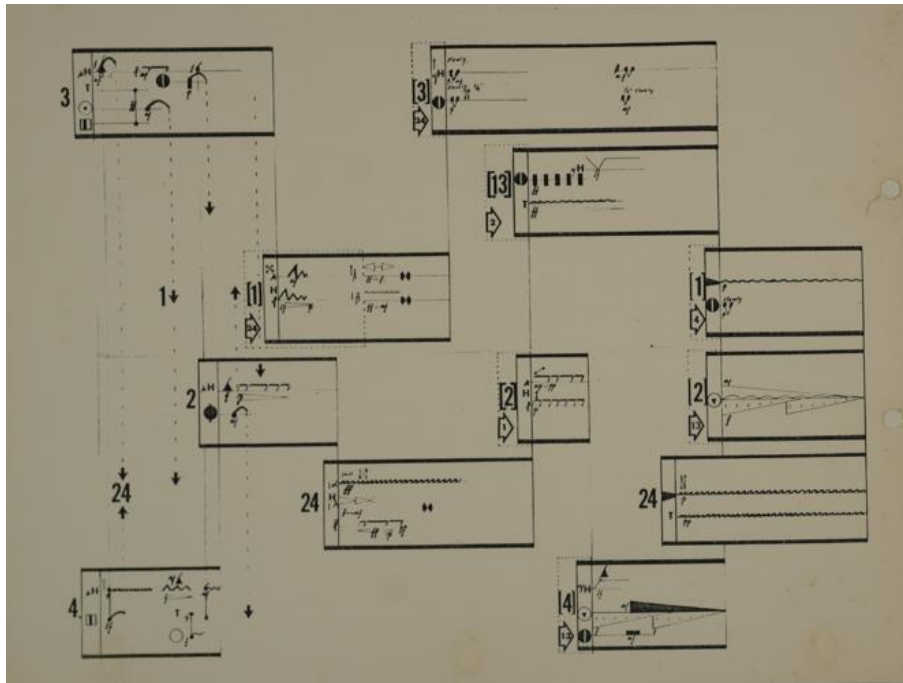


Figure 3.2: Maryanne Amacher, *Adjacencies* score, Page 1

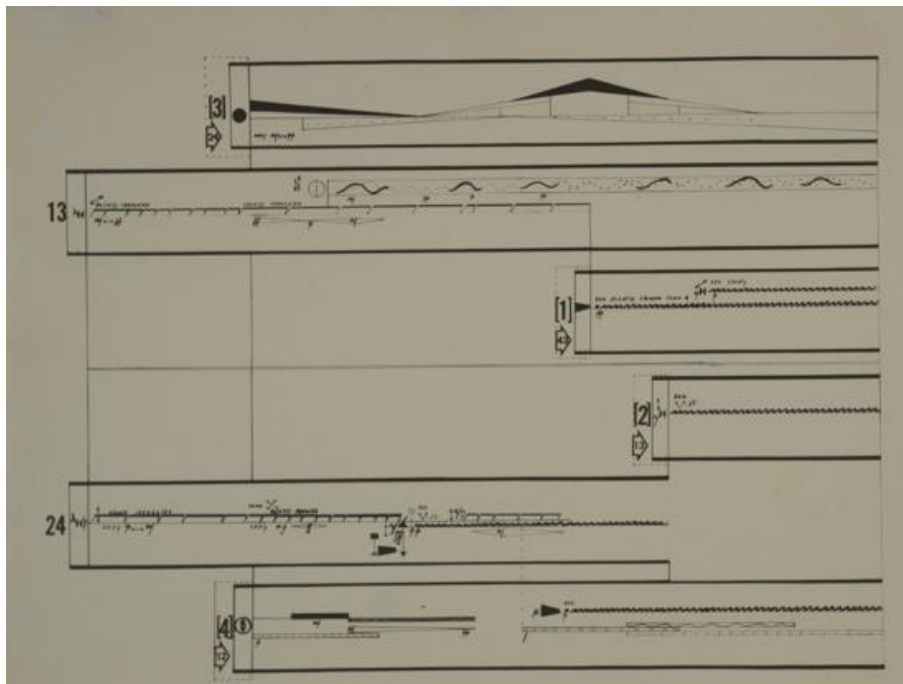


Figure 3.3: Maryanne Amacher, *Adjacencies* score, Page 2

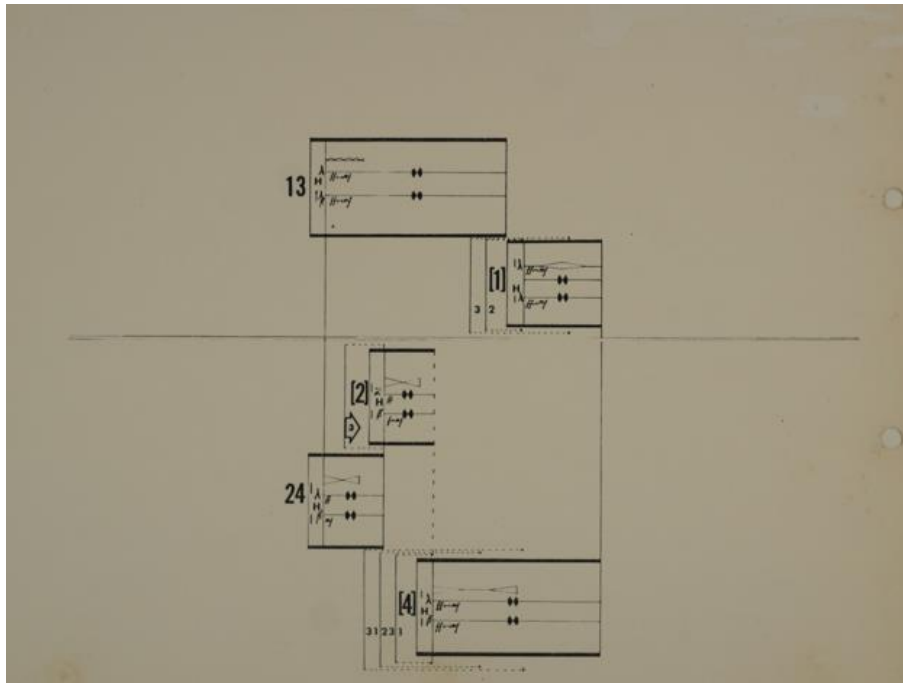


Figure 3.4: Maryanne Amacher, *Adjacencies* score, Page 3

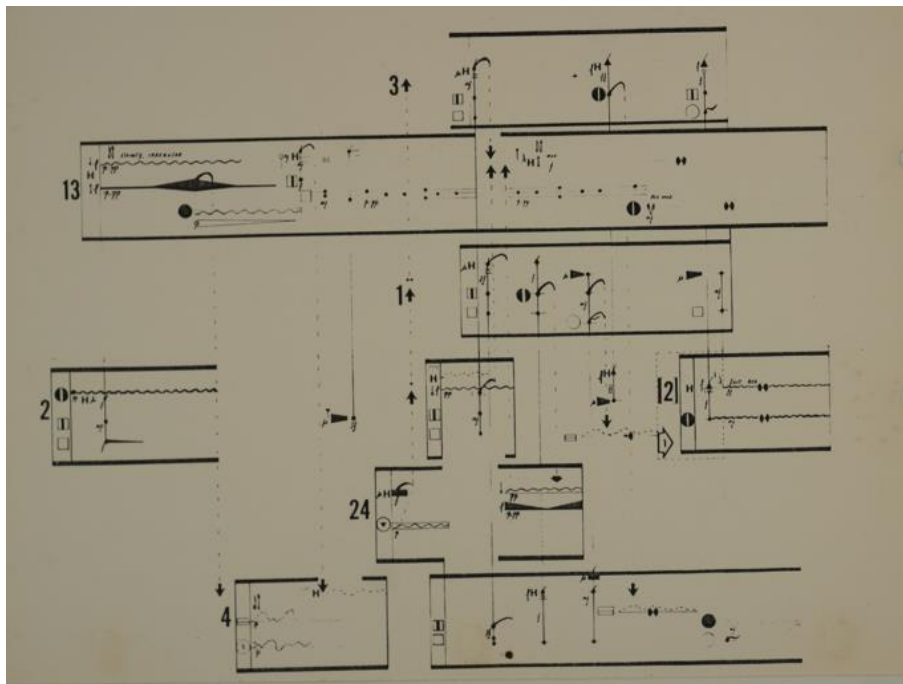


Figure 3.5: Maryanne Amacher, *Adjacencies* score, Page 4

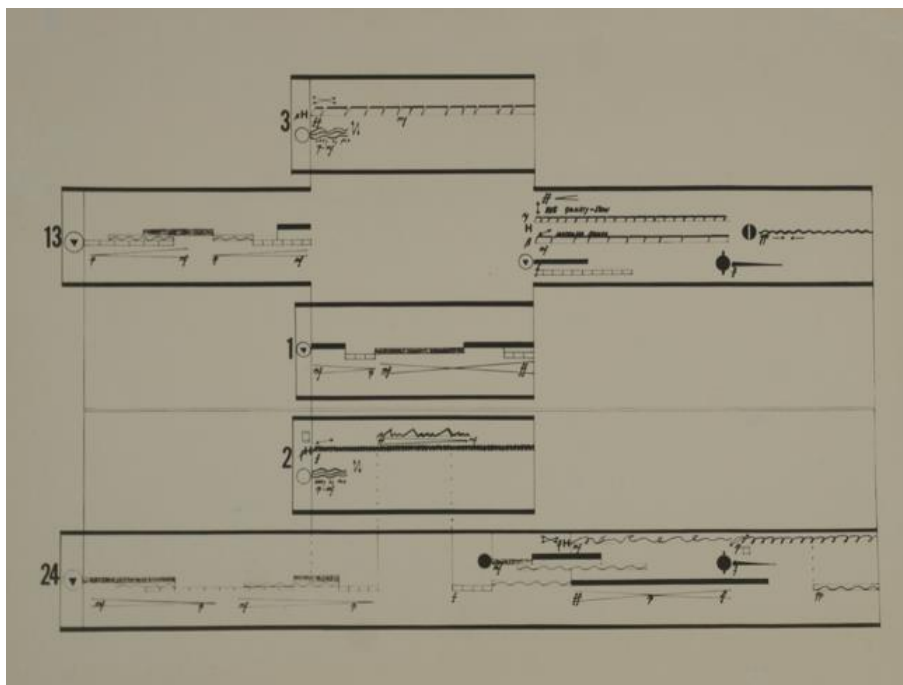


Figure 3.6: Maryanne Amacher, *Adjacencies* score, Page 5

During our collaborative rehearsal sessions, Dustin and I coordinated unison cues, fragments of solo and duet motifs, and a profound interrogation of the possibilities of Amacher's frequency spectrum. While Amacher emphasizes intuition<sup>164</sup> as a possible performance directive for *Adjacencies*, our process involved the eventuation of calculated decisions about instruments, unison attacks, and spatial considerations to create a comprehensive, yet organic interpretation.<sup>165</sup>

Amacher designated four directional microphones, two assigned to each percussionist, and a minimum of four loudspeakers dispersed in the performance space. The score instructs the direction of the percussionists' sounding material toward the predetermined loudspeaker

<sup>164</sup> As explored in the present discussion, the concept of intuition and a methodology for sound making finds parallels in works such as *Zyklus* and *King of Denmark*. Stockhausen and Feldman similarly navigate the realms of intuitive expression and methodical sound creation.

<sup>165</sup> Cimini, Amy. 2022. *Wild Sound: Maryanne Amacher and the Tenses of Audible Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 61.

locations, triggered by the two electronic musicians in accordance with the score. The diagram and text in Figure 3.7, outline the spatial arrangement and loudspeaker locations for the performance. The loudspeakers encircle the audience, creating a dynamic binaural environment, with the large block numbers seen in the score adjacent to the boxes, correspond to a specific loudspeaker location (for example, 1, 2, 2-4, 3, 1-3, 1). Performers are instructed to direct their sounding material within the allocated boxes, with the sound following the indications for each location, with this element being triggered by the electronic musicians.

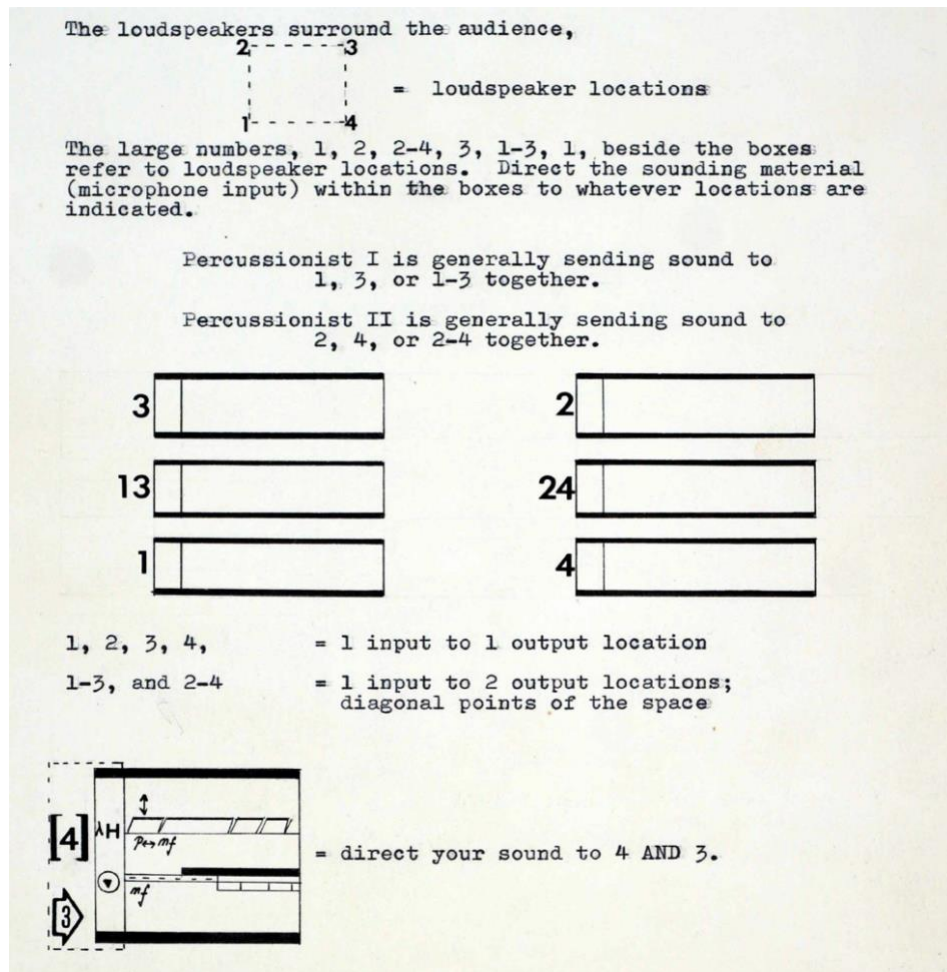


Figure 3.7: Maryanne Amacher, *Adjacencies*: Score and Performance Instructions for Sound Diffusion<sup>166</sup>

<sup>166</sup> Amacher, Maryanne. 1965/66. *Adjacencies: Score and Performance Instructions*.

The diagrams in figure 3.7 illustrate various relationships between the percussionists and the allocated loudspeaker locations. Percussionist I typically directs their sound to loudspeaker 1, 3, or 1-3, while Percussionist II primarily sends sound to 2, 4, or 2-4. Certain combinations, such as 4-3, suggest collaborative efforts where sound should be directed simultaneously to multiple locations, with symbols, such as arrows and lines, further clarify the directional relationships between inputs and outputs. For instance, diagonal lines indicate directing sound to both indicated locations simultaneously. Outlined below are some possible examples of how the directional sound is activated in the score:

1. The sound begins at position 4 and extends to position 3 when reaching the end of the dotted line within the notation.
2. While consistently sounding material at position 4, it transitions to 1, then moves to 2 and 3, skipping 2 and 3 before returning to location 1, creating a continuous pattern.
3. The attack or starting point of the sound is at location 2, and a switch ensures that the central portion and decay are heard at location 3.

This arrangement allows for the development of melodic and illusionary motifs between the beginning and ends of the sound, blending and blurring sound sources at their new heard location. Furthermore, the attack of a sound is often concealed at the originating location, with the spatial distribution emphasizing this auditory illusion, making sounds seem like they appeared or spawned in new locations.

The musical score is interpreted vertically, progressing from left to right. Player one is assigned the musical fragments corresponding to numbers 1 and 3, while player two undertakes the fragments of numbers 2 and 4. This division effectively bisects the page, with the upper half designated for player one and the lower half for player two, with the musical motifs executed

sequentially. Amacher delineates the orchestration of instruments using graphical symbols, as outlined in Figure 3.8. These symbols serve as visual cues, guiding performers to identify and execute specific instruments and attacks.

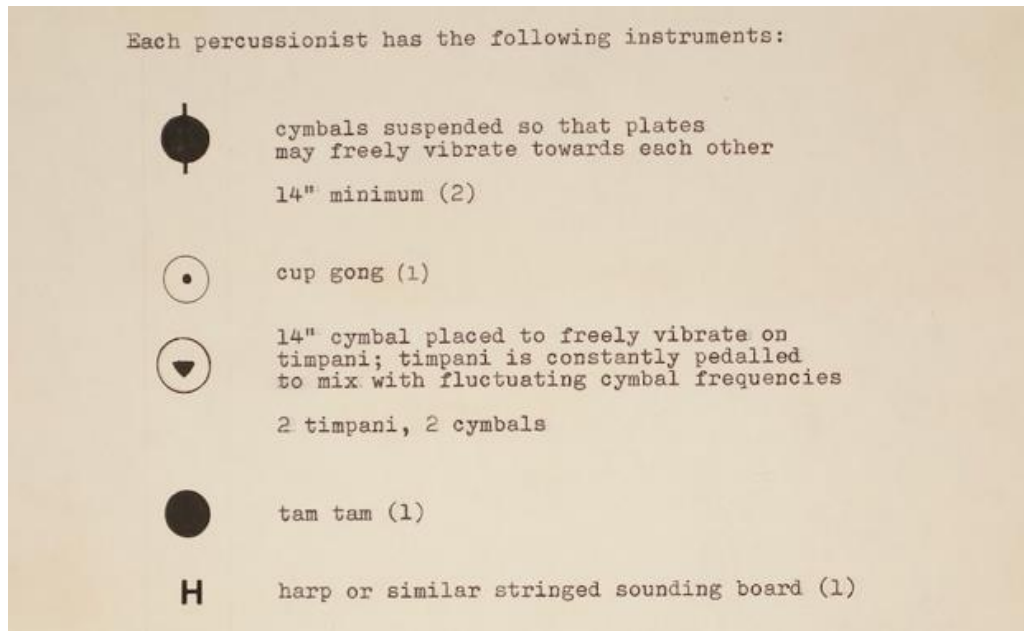


Figure 3.8: Maryanne Amacher, *Adjacencies: Score and Performance Instructions for Percussion Instrumentation*<sup>167</sup>

The details of the symbols and the required instruments are as follows:

**Cymbals:**

1. Suspended cymbals (2) – 14" minimum size, freely vibrating towards each other.
2. Cymbal (1) – 14", placed to vibrate on timpani freely, constantly pedalled to mix with fluctuating cymbal frequencies.

**Gongs:**

Cup gong (1)

**Tam-Tam:**

Tam-tam (1)

**Stringed Instruments:**

Harp or similar stringed sounding board (1)

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

**Metal Hoops:**

Large heavy metal hoop (1)

**Drums:**

Steel drums (1)

Brake drums (3)

**Metal Tanks:**

Heavy metal tanks (2) - helium, nitrogen supply type, close to the same pitch, to be sounded together always.

**Timpani:**

Timpani (2) - with cymbals

Timpani (1) - without cymbals

**Toms-Toms:**

Toms-toms (4) - attached to wood sounding board to make otherwise inaudible sounds audible.

**Marimba:**

Marimba (1)

**Ribbed Metal:**

Ribbed metal (1) - similar to refrigerator shelves, producing low sound.

**Door Springs:**

Door springs (1) - to be played with pipe cleaners, producing non-metallic but low voice-like sounds.

In addition to understanding Amacher's instrumentation, decoding the frequency spectrum, detailed in Figure 3.9, becomes imperative to understanding how to move forward in the interpretative process. This spectrum delineates various timbral qualities, ranging from H+ (high plus), H (high), -H (negative high), L (low), to L+ (low plus). Each designation (H+, H etc), correlates with a distinct boxed graphic (all black, dashed line, flowing line), elucidating the metallic attributes requisite for achieving the desired timbre in the musical composition. This nuanced approach underscores the multifaceted nature of the score, requiring performers to navigate both visual and timbral information to develop an interpretation.

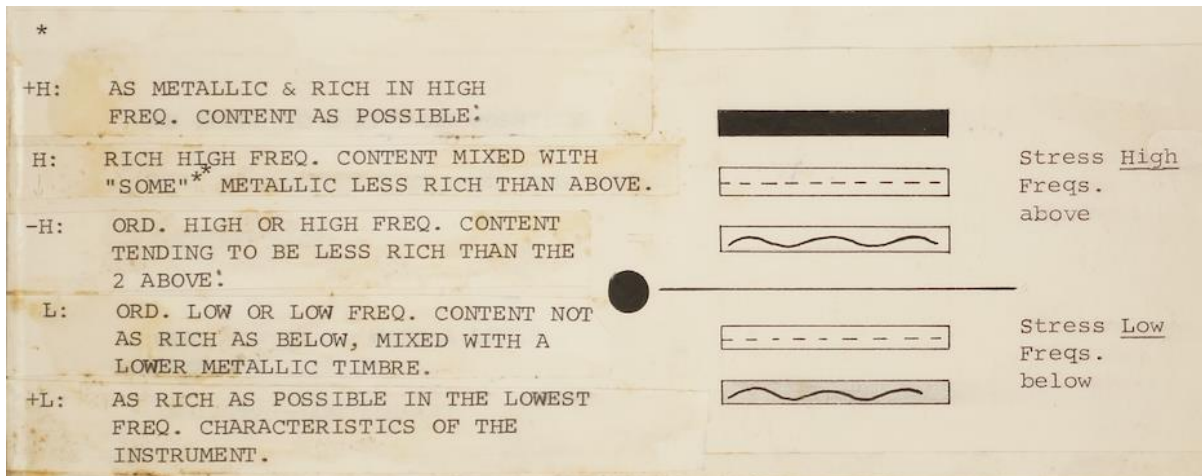


Figure 3.9: Maryanne Amacher, *Adjacencies: Score and Performance Instructions, Frequency Spectrum*<sup>168</sup>

Within this framework the various symbols of ‘H’ and ‘L’ signify an increase or decrease in the audibility of potential ‘self-organizing characteristics’ (timbre), showcasing the highest and lowest frequency collections of that instrument/timbre. For instance, in the example ‘H’ (High) in Figure 3.9, the description reads “RICH HIGH FREQ. CONTENT MIXED WITH ‘SOME’ METALLIC, LESS RICH THAN ABOVE,” suggesting a complex timbral instrument to be chosen by the percussionist, characterized by a substantial presence of high-frequency content in the chosen sound. This richness is tempered by Amacher by including the adjective of ‘SOME’ metallic elements, indicating a fusion, and layering of sonic outcomes, resulting in a nuanced and textured auditory experience. Furthermore, “LESS RICH THAN ABOVE” implies that while the chosen timbre maintains a high-frequency richness, the metallic components are not as pronounced or abundant as supposedly found in the chosen H+ sound. Therefore, the descriptions outlined by Amacher provide the performers with guidance on achieving a timbral frequency spectrum; a specific balance between high and low frequency richness and metallic

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

spectra, constituting the overall timbre of the composition. It is important to emphasize that Amacher's characterization and indication of high and low frequency richness and finding nuanced metallic elements in timbre is a highly subjective process, varying dramatically based on the percussionist, the available instruments, and their understanding of the score.

Consequently, a performance of *Adjacencies* can vary drastically from one performance to the next, reflecting the individual interpretations and instrument choices of different percussionists.

The notation system showcased in Figure 3.10 indicates detailed listening and playing instructions as would be found in the score of *Adjacencies*. In this hypothetical example, Player 2 (who is allocated fragments 2 and 4), would bow the harp (H) within the specified pitch set range ( $\lambda$ ), employing the irregular bowing energy frequency (outlined by the irregular boxed notation), while transitioning between soft (p) and moderately loud (mf) dynamics. Additionally, simultaneously to playing the harp, indicated below the harp line, is a cymbal placed on a timpano, delineated by several modular boxes of the potential frequency timbres as outlined previously in Figure 3.9. Additionally, the number 3 in the arrow box, indicates the direction of the sound diffusion for that fragment of the score. Unlike conventional graphic notations, which typically use shapes to imply musical or acoustical interpretations, Amacher uniquely labelled this complex notation system 'negative notation.'

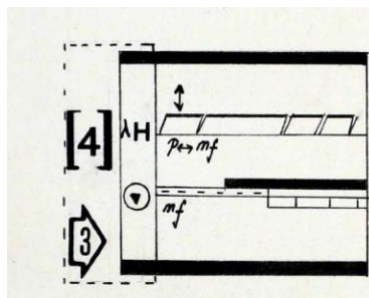


Figure 3.10: Maryanne Amacher, *Adjacencies*: Score and Performance Instructions, Negative Notation Example<sup>169</sup>

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

Amacher contends that the power and efficiency of this notation lies in its immediate recognizability, enabling performers to quickly grasp instructions for the development of spontaneous and engaged interpretations.<sup>170</sup> Amacher deems that once performers become familiar with the signs, they can navigate the score with minimal reliance on prolonged reading. The overarching objective is to cultivate a heightened state of concentration, allowing for attentive listening throughout the preparation and performance of the music. By emphasizing the efficiency and immediacy of her notation system, Amacher sought to create an immersive performance environment, fostering a profound and spontaneous connection with the music. However, in my experience, navigating this notational system proves to be complex. Even after spending extended periods with the score and becoming intimately familiar with all the symbols and spectra, I remain uncertain about my ability to facilitate an impromptu performance where the score is entirely new and based in intuition. Considering the intricate and dense nature of the symbols, I anticipate that maintaining fidelity to the notation while discerning timbre and form in real-time would pose an exceptionally challenging task.

### 3.5 Percussion logistics and Stage

Figure 3.11 below, taken from the live performance on January 9, 2023, outlines the stage placement, featuring Player 1 positioned on stage right and Player 2 on stage left. The stage setup includes a quadraphonic array of four loudspeakers strategically placed around the theater. In the centre of the stage, situated in front of the audience, are the two electronic musicians responsible for triggering the sound diffusion. This visual arrangement strategically positions performers and electronic musicians for optimal sound and immersive audience engagement.

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<sup>170</sup> Like intuition as a methodology for sound making, as previously outlined, Stockhausen and Feldman similarly navigate the realms of spontaneous interpretation as a methodology in their early percussion works.



Figure 3.11: Maryanne Amacher, *Adjacencies*, live performance photo

Below is an outline documenting the instrument and mallet choices chosen in our performance for Players 1 and 2:

**Mallets for Both Players 1 and 2:**

- 1x Tam-tam beater
- Pair of hard yarn mallets
- Pair of soft yarn mallets
- Wire brushes
- Soft timpani mallets
- Pair of hard plastic mallets
- Triangle beaters
- Metal rod beater
- Bow
- Superball
- Brush (like one used to broom)
- Horsehair bow for harp techniques

**Player 1: Instrument List and Setup (Figure 3.12)**

- Marimba
- 2x Tom-toms
- Metal hoop
- Metal tank
- Large tam-tam
- 2x Suspended cymbals mounted
- 2x Suspended cymbals on the timpani
- 1x Temple bowl on the timpani
- Anvil
- Harp
- Steel drum
- 1x Stick tray

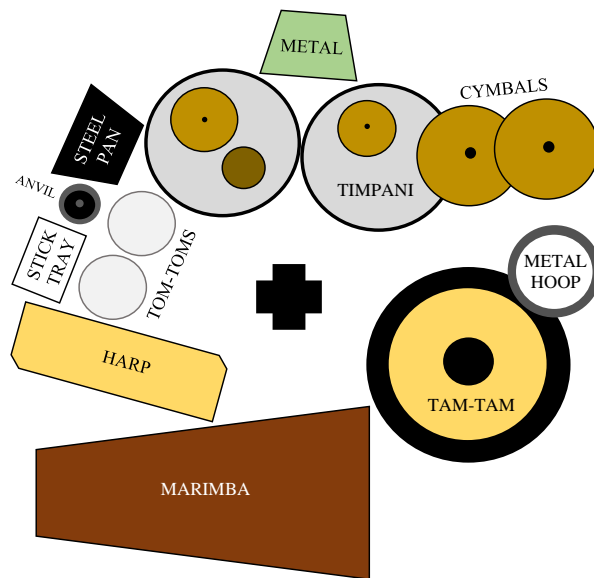


Figure 3.12: *Adjacencies*, diagram of player 1 set-up.

**Player 2: Instrument List and Setup (Figure 3.13)**

- Vibraphone
- 2x Tom-toms
- Metal tank
- Large tam-tam
- 2x Suspended cymbals mounted
- 2x Suspended cymbals on the timpani
- 1x Temple bowl on the timpani
- Anvil
- Harp
- Steel drum
- Spring drum
- 1x Stick tray

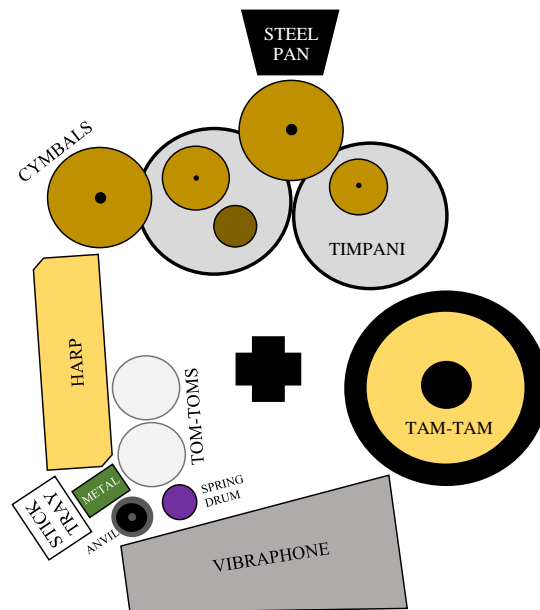


Figure 3.13: *Adjacencies*, diagram of player 2 set-up.

### 3.6 Harp Material

Amacher cultivated a speculative, personalized, and informal harp practice, as sonically outlined in her work *Remainder*, and proved to be the most complex element of the score to decipher during our creative development. The harp's unique sonic qualities held great significance to Amacher, playing a crucial role in shaping the composition's shimmering and spectral contours, occasionally taking the forefront of the sonic landscape. Amacher encourages the percussionists to draw out nuanced sonorities from the harp, exploring ways to highlight the timbral mixings, creating a dynamic interplay with the percussive elements. As illustrated in Figure 3.14, Amacher details extensive instructions on pitch sets, octave placements, attack types with specific mallets, and intricate bowing techniques. For example, the notation ' $\lambda, \beta$ ' designates the frequency area for performance, and this instruction applies to both the harp, harp frame and marimba/vibraphone. Additional instructions specify how to prioritize playing higher or lower frequencies within the harp strings, reflecting Amacher's preference for specific frequency ranges and guiding the intended scope for sounding within those designated frequency areas.

Harp or String board

BASIC FORM OF NOTATION

frame  
strings  
frame

$\beta H$  ←

$\beta H$  ↑

$\alpha, \lambda, \beta$  indicate frequency area in which to play. Apply also to harp frame and marimba.

$\lambda H$  favor higher frequencies of the area,

$\lambda H$  favor lower frequencies of the area,

←, ↓ indicate the scope of a given frequency area to be sounded.

Figure 3.14: Maryanne Amacher, *Adjacencies: Score and Performance Instructions, Harp Notation*<sup>171</sup>

In addition to conventional harp techniques like plucking chords, the score calls for unconventional approaches such as knocking the harp frame, using a superball on the strings, employing wire brushes, utilizing triangle beaters, yarn, and timpani sticks on the strings.

Additional instructions for plucking tones on the harp include:

- Pluck a single tone.
- Pluck a handful of tones.
- Pluck a tone out of a cluster: either while the cluster is made (e.g., in continuous motion, bowing, sawing) or sounding shortly after the attack.
- Pluck a handful out of a cluster involving as many as five strings,
- start, stop, start, stop, start pattern.
- Freely damp the indicated sounding material.

<sup>171</sup> Amacher, Maryanne. 1965/66. *Adjacencies: Score and Performance Instructions*.

- Damp soon after the attack.
- Create a ‘no’ sound to suppress fundamental energy as much as possible and reveal partial energy at low intensity.

A pivotal harp feature unfolds on Page 4 of the page sequence, as denoted in Figure 3.15. This section marks a comprehensive exploration of harp processes within a page-long harp solo, prominently featuring the development of a tremolo technique, timestamped at 9 minutes, 12 seconds, in the corresponding performance video found in Appendix 2. This technique, created collaboratively by Dustin and myself, produces a distinctive beehive-like swarm with spectral shimmering glissandi. Achieved through an extremely fast tremolo executed by the triangle beater between the strings, dynamically moving up and down, the tremolo plays a crucial role in shaping both the timbre and spectral pitch contour. The deliberate placement of this event in the middle of the piece enhances its dramatic impact, amplified by the surrounding silence of the harp material. Notably, this material persists for a concise yet impactful duration of 2 minutes.

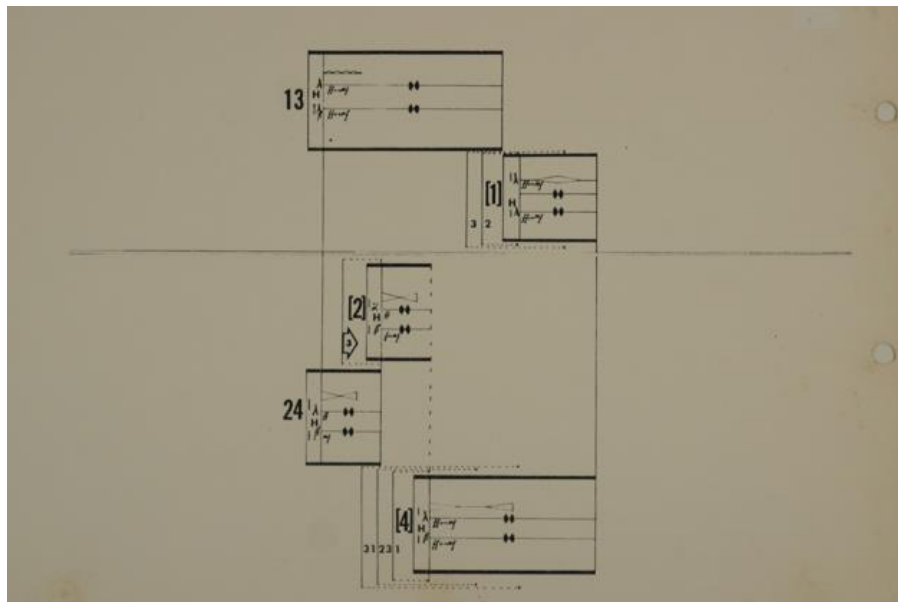


Figure 3.15: Maryanne Amacher, *Adjacencies*, Page 3 harp motif example.

The BOWING NOTES instructions (Figure 3.16) offer detailed insights into distinguishing between irregular and regular bowing movements, elucidating their distinct timbral functions. These instructions specifically assign timbral functions to a bowing technique, with the percussionists encouraged to carefully observe the amalgamated timbral possibilities of both bowing types, treating timbre as their primary goal.

Amacher’s specified bowing techniques were initially challenging, primarily feasible only on the lowest string of the harp where there is sufficient space for the bow. To address this limitation, we innovatively devised a technique by cutting the hair from a bow, taping each end of the hair for tension, resulting in no space restrictions as found with traditional bow, allowing us to weave this makeshift bow between the harp strings. This inventive approach created density across multiple pitches and contributed a melancholic wailing to the soundscape. Additionally, Dustin and I collaborated to interpret instructions like the ‘RUBBING continuously’ symbol found in Figure 3.16, which directs the rubbing of strings, both regularly and irregularly, using an “object of at least 47 inches in length and 2 inches in width, typically a felt-like material such as a blackboard eraser.” Subsequently, we experimented with various brushes and playing styles before settling on a thick, coarse-haired broom-type brush.

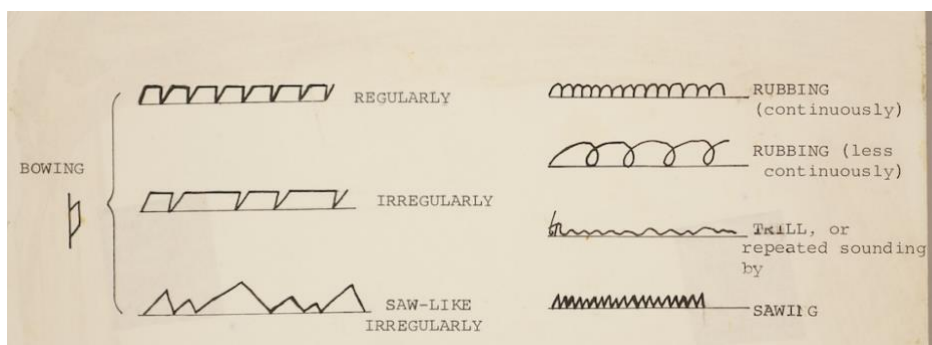


Figure 3.16: Maryanne Amacher, *Adjacencies: Score and Performance Instructions*, Bowing Notes<sup>172</sup>

<sup>172</sup> Amacher, Maryanne. 1965/66. *Adjacencies: Score and Performance Instructions*.

Additionally, Amacher incorporated the concept of energy function into her harp writing, particularly in the context of regular and irregular bowing techniques. The energy function associated with these techniques leads to distinct timbres based in bow tension. For example, irregular bowing energy encourages a variation in bow speed and tension, with the ability to isolate specific tones within the frequency area and alternate points of stress, with a longer and more pressured bowing technique contributing to a denser timbre. By employing speculative sonic methodologies, we successfully addressed challenges related to bowing, plucking, and striking techniques on the harp. These experimental approaches allowed us to fully engage with the harp's expressive potential within *Adjacencies*, surpassing limitations present in previous interpretations.

### 3.7 Key Moments

By highlighting the pivotal moments in our interpretation through a sequential analysis of each page, I aim to illustrate the application of speculative methodologies that shaped and informed our performance. This approach underscores the culmination of the techniques and concepts delineated in this chapter, employing a self-reflective tone to highlight the intricacies within Amacher's spectral and perceptual geographies. The 'key moments' are recommended to be read after listening to the performance and reviewing the score analysis. This approach allows for further understanding and conceptualization of the decisions made during the development process.

### **Page One** (Figure 3.2)

**Duration:** Approximately 5 minutes

**Description:** The intention of commencing with this page stems from the diverse series of events it unfolds, providing an overarching sonic profile, aptly establishing the ambiance for the performance. The intentional and measured temporal pacing contributes to stoic articulations and attacks, showcasing resonance and the layering of various striking techniques within the percussion orchestration. Within this single page, there are ten discernible techniques used in the execution of the harp material, each corresponding to the notation mentioned above. The page's climax, positioned in the middle of the temporal axis, features a pronounced fortissimo tremolo on the metal tank by player 1, juxtaposed by assertive attacks on the steel drum. The latter half of the page highlights multiplicities of resonance, incorporating multiple layers of cymbals, marimba, vibraphone, and metals, each played with varying mallets and tempi. The auditory resultant is a captivating blend, encompassing the scraping of metals, the rolling on steel pans, and deliberately slow, soft tremolos.

### **Page Two** (Figure 3.3)

**Duration:** Approximately 4 minutes

**Description:** Beginning with a unison harp melody, a whaling motif is distinguished by the unique irregular bowing notation. This is created through varying techniques of bow pressure, energy functions, dynamics, and tempi. A notable complexity in this score, especially evident on the current page, lies in the surplus of motific lines, surpassing the practical capabilities of the two performers, and is compounded by the additional task of accommodating multiple lines of variation in the frequency spectrum. We incorporated a strategic transition to

address this challenge, shifting from harp materials to metallic high-frequency sounds earlier than indicated - we chose not to continue with the harp line, with both performers engaging with the frequency spectrum material instead. In this passage, Player 1's material takes on a solo role, adhering to the score's directives for a high-frequency peak in the middle of the page. This peak is achieved through a mandolin roll on the tam-tam, executed with extremely hard plastic beaters, accompanied by a simultaneous rubbing action performed by the metal rod on the metal hoop. Simultaneously, Player 2 contributes dulcet bowing and tremolo motifs on the harp to complement and accompany Player 1. The section concludes as both performers simultaneously roll on their respective mallet instruments, delicately rubbing the harp strings with their hands.

**Page Three** (Figure 3.4)

**Duration:** Approximately 4 minutes

**Description:** The notational content of page three consists of a succinct collection of harp motifs, distinct from the prevailing material in the composition. Despite its brevity, Amacher intricately details over ten precise playing techniques exclusive to the harp on this page, deliberately excluding the sounding of any other percussion instruments in this section. This sonic moment creates an ecosystem characterized by a continuous hum that envelops the harp's entire  $\lambda$  and  $\beta$  spectrums of the frequency range. This timbral quality is juxtaposed with unpredictable attacks originating from the strings and triangle beaters, contributing to the cumulative swarm effect. The notational material for this passage spans just under 2 minutes, and visually, the score suggests deliberate temporal space on each side of the harp material, centrally positioned on the page. Consequently, in our interpretation, we introduced moments of

silence to underscore this temporal spacing. Incorporating both the harp material and intentional silences it extends the duration of the page to approximately 4 minutes.

#### **Page Four** (Figure 3.5)

**Duration:** Approximately 5 minutes

**Description:** The motific material on this page diverges significantly from that of previous pages, boasting the highest degree of synchronized events and cues in the percussionist's writing. This presents the most densely notated section of the composition, showcasing a plethora of events in sharp contrast to the sparseness observed on other pages. However, the resulting sonic effect is ironically static, primarily due to the intricate process of changing instruments and mallet logistics. Dustin and I devised nine precisely synchronized cues strategically crafted to catalyze motif development and sound diffusion. For instance, player one executes a simultaneous strike on the frame and strings of the harp, while player two strikes the marimba and an anvil, yielding layered chords that unveil a captivating interplay of attacks. Departing from a natural arc or peak within the page, as seen previously, the temporal axis assumes a more even and subdued structure. The conclusion of this page is distinguished by a sustained tremolo, with the musical peak unfolding and seamlessly transitioning into the preparation for the beginning of page 5.

#### **Page Five** (Figure 3.6)

**Duration:** Approximately 6 minutes

**Description:** The concluding page stands as the lengthiest segment, encompassing three distinct sections. The initial section is distinguished by the resonant rolling of cymbals placed on

the timpani, incorporating an element of improvisation between the two players. This is the first instance in the piece where the percussionists have more spatial and timbral material to explore, and improvisation seamlessly complements this, with the only previous deviation from specific adherence to the score occurring on page 2, (initiated by Player One during the tam-tam and metal hoop material). The second section of this page transitions seamlessly from the first, illuminating the intricacies of the harp through regular and irregular bowing functions. Gradually, this builds up in density and dynamic, leading into the third and final component of the work. A notable decrescendo-to-crescendo effect is meticulously crafted within this fragment, culminating in the penultimate point—a powerful unified suspended cymbal crash between the two percussionists. Dustin and I approached this moment as the finality of the work. The concluding resonance marked by low rumblings on the harp and steel drums, gradually fades out to create a soundscape that allows the listener time to for contemplation – to immerse themselves in the lingering spectral wonder of Amacher’s work.

### 3.8 Questions of a Fragile Archive

“But how then to address a body of work that exists in the gap between idea and manifestation?”<sup>173</sup> How does one embark on a comprehensive analysis of a work such as *Adjacencies* when it resides in a nebulous in-between, an incompleteness, between conception and materialization, where touch and tangibility remain elusive? In this liminal space, the ‘fragile archive,’ Amacher becomes an interlocutor of tension, with her persistent reluctance to perceive her compositions as definitive or fixed further accentuating the mythical and ambiguous nature of her sonic identity. Furthermore, how does one capture and analyze the impact of a work like

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<sup>173</sup> Cimini, Amy, and Bill Dietz. 2021. *Maryanne Amacher: Selected Writings and Interviews*. Brooklyn, New York.: Blank Forms Editions, 5.

*Adjacencies*? Should *Adjacencies* persist in incompleteness and speculation, remaining unsounded—existing on its own terms? Or should *Adjacencies* be subjected to rigorous musical and conceptual analysis, as explored in this chapter, as an act of sustained remembrance? Was Amacher’s departure from the conventional concert setting influenced by the hierarchical and institutionalized nature of Western forms of composition, or was it shaped by her resistance to conform and disseminate her ideas during her lifetime? Although the answers remain elusive, I can posit with certainty that the ideas presented within *Adjacencies* are not part of a static tradition; they are fluid and evolving, aligning with Amacher’s consistent interrogation of sonic perception. Therefore, in my attempt to realize and pay homage to Amacher’s work, I seek not to claim ownership or establish authenticity over *Adjacencies*, but rather to offer visibility and foster renewed curiosity. I end this chapter with more questions of a fragile archive than answers, and I offer no solutions; however, I aspire to provide sustained remembrance, to act as an interlocutor, allowing Amacher’s visionary contributions to persist in companionist thinking and collective awareness, inviting ongoing exploration and appreciation.

## CHAPTER 4

### Embodied Sound: Exploring a Feminist Subjectivity in the Percussion Music of Eleanor Hovda

“Because ‘shunned the spotlight’ is an overused phrase, it may be better to think of her wending her way, as she often would, across the stage toward the instruments. Sometimes the literal spotlights would be on, but not yet set, leaving pools of bright and darkness, Eleanor rambling along in her way, looking at her collection of sound producers (instruments, noise makers) which she herself had assembled as if she were seeing them for the first time. This is a little odd only because we knew that she had spent dozens of hours with that assembly, deciding if the gong should be struck with a knitting needle or a chopstick.”

– Jack Vees, *New Music Box*, 2010

Born on March 27, 1940, in Duluth, Minnesota, Eleanor Hovda emerged as a versatile creative force, seamlessly blending the roles of composer and dancer while pioneering and fabricating her distinctive milieu. A stalwart resistor of the status quo, Hovda dedicated herself to crafting ethereal sonic landscapes with acoustic instruments that introduced radically speculative modes of doing. Holding an attentiveness to the intricate entanglements of the physicality of bodies, storytelling, and how they gain intelligibility, Hovda bore the mark of the alternative. Her approach embraced visceral methodologies dedicated to the embodiment of sounds, emphasizing their unfolding and being—processes she termed, ‘being in the sound,’ ‘sound around the sound,’ and ‘sound excavation.’<sup>174</sup>

Hovda’s compositions materialized in wonder, rejecting clear beginnings and endings, and while hinting at the repetitive nature of minimalism in her scores, she resisted traditional

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<sup>174</sup> Gardner, Alexandra. 2012. “Sounds Heard—Eleanor Hovda: The Eleanor Hovda Collection.” *New Music USA*. February 21. Accessed October 10, 2023. <https://newmusicusa.org/nmbx/sounds-heard-eleanor-hovda-the-eleanor-hovda-collection/>.

formulaic musical structures. Hovda instead leaned into an ‘embodied minimalism,’ where musicking was centered in cyclic tasks and states of consciousness. Through this, sounds converge, phasing in and out of audibility, creating unique, holistic, and immersive sonic experiences. Her long-term collaborator, James Pritchett eloquently describes her music as “an ever-present force: a sound that proceeds from its own unknown premises and continues in its own elusive way. The music doesn’t so much start and stop as it emerges and recedes, phasing in and out of audibility.”<sup>175</sup> Hovda was an extremely private person, and after a decade-long battle with illness that led to her withdrawal from public life in the early 2000s, Hovda passed away on November 12, 2009, in Springdale, Arkansas. Despite her private nature, she remained resolute in her determination to create and explore the intersections of music and wonder, leaving behind a legacy of compositions and co-conspirators. However, notwithstanding her significant contributions to the late 20th-century avant-garde scene, her legacy and work often remain overlooked. Known primarily within her dedicated circle of advocates and collaborators, Jack Veas, an enduring friend, and creative collaborator remarked, “She was known and loved by a close-knit circle of people...It seemed that it was only a matter of time before everyone else beyond that circle caught on.”<sup>176</sup>

Hovda demonstrated an unwavering commitment to exploring the interdisciplinary and interconnectedness of music and its manifestation within the tangible world. Her compositions serve as sonic visualizations of natural acoustic phenomena, embodying a politics of the body and breath that weave perceptual realizations beyond equal temperament. Alexandra Gardner

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<sup>175</sup> Hovda, Eleanor. 2012. “The Eleanor Hovda Collection.” *The Eleanor Hovda Collection (2012)*.

<sup>176</sup> Veas, Jack. 2010. *New Music USA: Remembering Eleanor Hovda*. March 4. Accessed March 11, 2021. <https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/remembering-eleanor-hovda/>.

reinforces this by stating that Hovda's primary intent was "To explore the outskirts of the sonic possibilities inherent in instrumental sound and how they relate to the physical world."<sup>177</sup> Mirroring movements such as spectralism, Hovda's pioneering work anticipated the rise of immersive genres like ambient, drone, and trance music, predating and coinciding with their popularization by mainstream composers like Steve Reich and Brian Eno. By embracing embodied minimalism and delving into the harmonic spectra present in acoustic phenomena, akin to Amacher, Hovda cultivated a practice centered on sounding bodies – encompassing structures, spaces, and individuals alike. This approach can be exemplified in her 1983 composition *Breathing*, composed for nine flutes. Designed for a space encouraging roaming and wondrous listening at one's own pace, *Breathing* challenges the traditional concert hall setting, unfolding a mysterious soundscape where layers of sound gradually reveal, creating constant auditory illusions. The 15-minute composition incorporates vocalizations, sequential pitches, and resonance, focusing on the breath's sonic and life-bearing properties. René van Peer supports this by observing, "Her compositions deal with the placement of sound: the distribution of sounds in a space; the position of pitches relative to each other; and the interrelationships between instruments in a piece."<sup>178</sup> Throughout her oeuvre, Hovda recurrently explores breath's visceral qualities, inviting listeners into her auditory fixations through gestures of familiarity and reciprocity.

Like Amacher and Dlugoszewski, Hovda's musical output was a feminist voice of resistance. Hovda consistently eluded temporality - manipulating and re-imagining temporal

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<sup>177</sup> Gardner, Alexandra. 2012. "Sounds Heard—Eleanor Hovda: The Eleanor Hovda Collection." *New Music USA*. February 21. Accessed October 10, 2023. <https://newmusicusa.org/nmbx/sounds-heard-eleanor-hovda-the-eleanor-hovda-collection/>.

<sup>178</sup> Peer, René Van. 2012. "Eleanor Hovda. The Eleanor Hovda Collection." *Music Works*. <https://www.musicworks.ca/reviews/recordings/eleanor-hovda-eleanor-hovda-collection>.

notation through exploring qualitative concepts of time. This approach liberated Hovda's music from the confines of meter and numerical sequences, in efforts of musicking the entire "breathing human body."<sup>179</sup> Collaborator David Gilbert emphasizes Hovda's passion for feeling and exploring sound in a corporeal capacity, noting, "Her sound-art is one of gesture, energy, and breath. It comes from the body's impulse to move. Her motion impulses were ecstatic. She often said that all she ever really wanted to do was run and leap."<sup>180</sup> In a curious parallel to Dlugoszewski's collaborative journey with dance, Hovda consistently engaged with the dance community throughout her career. Collaborating with luminaries such as Nancy Meehan, Erick Hawkins, Mikhail Baryshnikov, and the White Oak Dance Project, Hovda's passionate collaborations showcased a deep commitment to the intersection of music, and auditory perception, fostering a holistic engagement with the human body.

*I Resound Press*, founded by Professor Linda Dusman in 2009 with research support from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), is a dedicated digital archive that facilitates public access for scholars, performers, and the general audience, of scores not previously accessible, intending to promote the study and programming of music from women in the late 20th century. Dusman's motivation for establishing *I Resound Press* arose from the recognition that the history of women composers faced the risk of being lost due to limited inclusion and publishing opportunities. During her Liptiz Professorial Lecture in 2014, Dusman explicitly states, "I became aware that we were losing our history, that because women composers still have not attained parity in the classical composition world, many of their works

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<sup>179</sup> Dusman, Linda. 2009-2024. *Eleanor Hovda*. Accessed August 2022. <http://iresound.umbc.edu>.

<sup>180</sup> Hovda, Eleanor. 2012. "The Eleanor Hovda Collection." *The Eleanor Hovda Collection (2012)*.

are infrequently published and performed, and as a result are not preserved.”<sup>181</sup> Furthermore, during her Liptiz professorship, sponsored by the Drescher Center for the Humanities at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Dusman became the documentarian of Eleanor Hovda’s archive, subsequently digitizing her works through *I Resound Press*. Highlighting the intricate nature of Hovda’s music, Dusman underscores Hovda’s attention to corporeal and visceral experiences, noting that despite the apparent improvisatory quality of Hovda’s oeuvre, her compositions are intricately entangled with orchestration and psychoacoustical phenomena. Dusman states that Hovda’s music was “choreographing the whole breathing human body. On the surface, it sounds almost improvisatory—emotional, multifaceted, and searingly intense—partly due to her use of extended techniques that highlight the overtone series, breath, resonant spaces, and psychoacoustical phenomena.”<sup>182</sup> Through this statement and her unwavering dedication to Hovda’s legacy, Dusman illuminates Hovda’s adeptness at intricate scoring, showcasing her compositional expertise and its interface with corporeal and visceral experiences.

Hovda’s academic journey began with a Bachelor of Arts from the American University in Washington, D.C., followed by a Master of Fine Arts in Dance from Sarah Lawrence College. Hovda credits Mel Powell, Kenneth Gaburo, and Karlheinz Stockhausen as her composition teachers and Bessie Schoenberg, Erick Hawkins, and Merce Cunningham as her dance teachers.<sup>183</sup> Her music gained prominence both in the U.S. and abroad, performed by esteemed ensembles such as the Netherlands Wind Ensemble, KlangForum, Cassatt, and Kronos Quartet. Hovda’s compositions have graced prestigious venues, from Carnegie Hall to the WDR in

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<sup>181</sup> Dusman, Linda. 2014. “Linda Dusman, Liptiz Professorship Presentation.” *UMBCtube, Youtube*. May 9. Accessed July 1, 2023. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dL0LF7jcp\\_4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dL0LF7jcp_4).

<sup>182</sup> Dusman, Linda. 2009-2024. *Eleanor Hovda*. Accessed August 2022. <http://iresound.umbc.edu>.

<sup>183</sup> Zeitgeist. 2003. “If Tigers Were Clouds.” *Zeitgeist New Music Library*. January 1. <https://zeitgeistnewmusiclibrary.com/eleanor-hovda-if-tigers-were-clouds/>.

Cologne and the Holland Festival in Amsterdam. In the late 1990s, Hovda took on short-term faculty positions at esteemed institutions, including Bard College and Yale University. Jack Veas remarked that during her tenure at Yale University, Hovda's students recognized and valued her innovative philosophy, appreciating her unique interdisciplinary approach to composition. However, Veas also observed Hovda exhibited signs of weariness and withdrawal toward the conclusion of her time at academia, declaring, "When she taught at Yale in the 1990s, her students knew that she was bringing a very different perspective to the scene, and they loved her for that. Yet by the end of her time there, she seemed tired, even withdrawn."<sup>184</sup> Like Dlugoszewski and Amacher, Hovda's legacy slips between categories, moving through canonical and pedagogical circles in diverse contexts. Through sharing and cultivating a personalized practice within the pedagogical space, free from expectations of mastery and technical hierarchies, Hovda's academic experiences in the late 1990s provide insights into the nuanced undercurrents faced during her academic engagements. Hovda, alongside Dlugoszewski and Amacher, were women intimately acquainted with the structures of traditional music institutions and, to some degree, were products of conventional pedagogical origins. However, neither received mainstream recognition or support during their lifetimes. Instead, each existed as an outlier, ensuring autonomy in their practices, and maintaining agency over their works integrity, yet leaving remnants of fragile archives, that resist linear modes of inquiry.

Akin to Amacher and Dlugoszewski, Hovda also theorized on sound and metaphor. This was particularly evident in the extensive and comprehensive program notes accompanying her compositions. Her notes always told a story, serving as narratives, providing valuable insights

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<sup>184</sup> Veas, Jack. 2010. *New Music USA: Remembering Eleanor Hovda*. March 4. Accessed March 11, 2021. <https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/remembering-eleanor-hovda/>.

into the speculative workings of Hovda's creativity and outlining the profound interconnectedness of metaphorical concepts that informed her use of sound. For instance, in her work composed for the Kronos Quartet, *Lemniscates* premiered at New Music America in Miami in December 1988, Hovda methodically speculated with the thresholds of audibility and conceptualized what could become of the barely audible range of the string quartet, stating, "I am interested in magnifying stillness so that the 'sounds around the sound' can be more clearly experienced."<sup>185</sup> In mathematics, *Lemniscates* refers to the figure-of-eight shape, defined as "the locus of the foot of the perpendicular from the center of a conic on its axis."<sup>186</sup> In Hovda's interpretation, *Lemniscates* signifies 'ribbons of sound,' vividly depicted and culminated through the desired bowing techniques of the ensemble. She also states that "Lemniscates can imply many concepts," serving as a metaphor for the multiplicity of the spatial motion of sound ribbons, as indicated in her handwritten manuscript in Figure 4.1.

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<sup>185</sup> Hovda, Eleanor. 1988. "Lemniscates." *Innova: The Eleanor Hovda Collection*. Unpublished.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

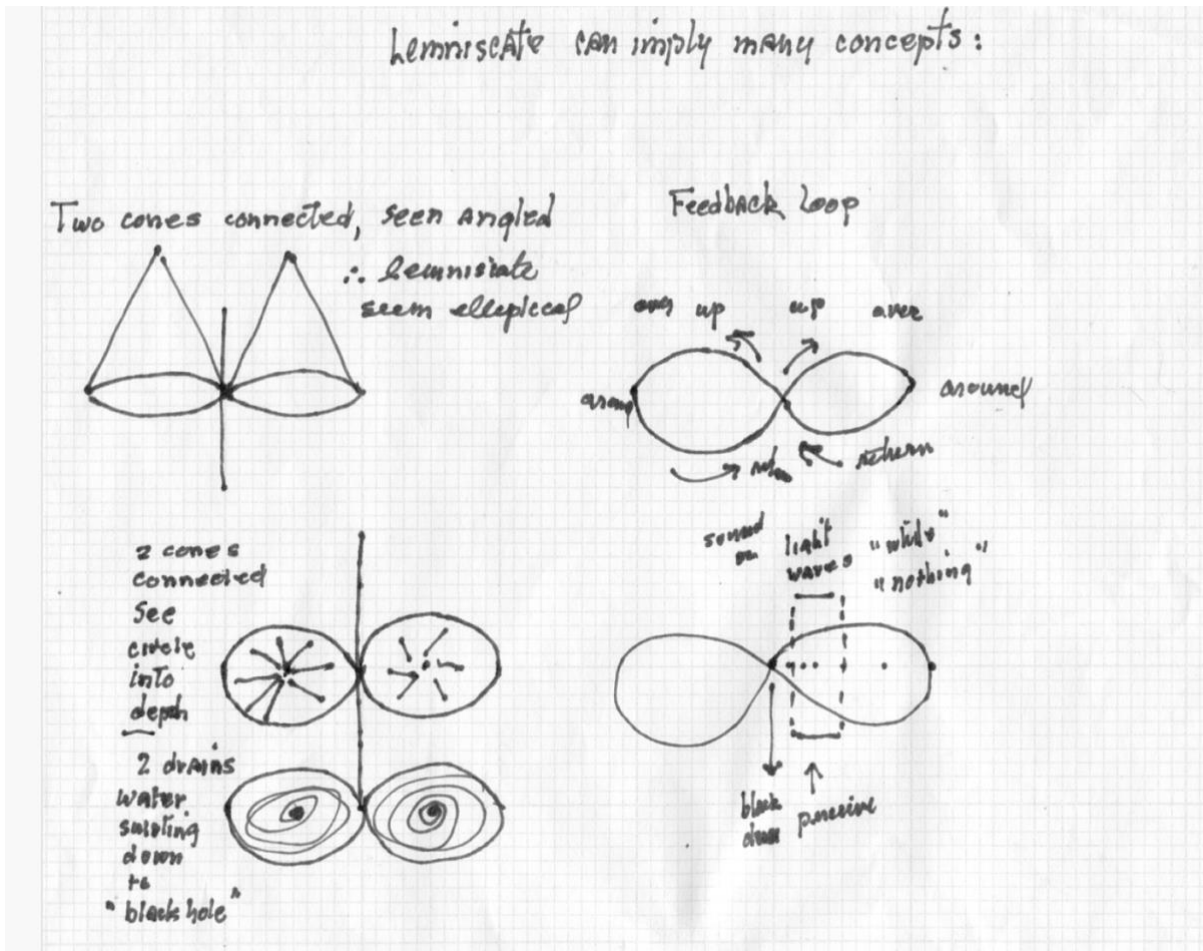


Figure 4.1: Eleanor Hovda, *Lemniscates*, score example

In addition to conceptualizing the music of *Lemniscates*, Hovda was also conscious of the influence of structures and rooms on the resultant outcome of her work, indicating that the ideal performance space for *Lemniscates* is an enclosed, resonant environment devoid of mechanical and ambient sounds. In this setting, the listener and performer are immersed in an experience designed to discern the intricate variations in bow speeds, pressure, and placement on and around the instruments. These intricate and innovative tactile motions act as a tool to magnify stillness, interrogating the role of equal temperament and fundamentals of pitch upon stringed instruments, illuminating the work as a sculptural sonic cluster.

Throughout this chapter, I hold Hovda's scores close, approaching her compositions with care and reverence. Due to the scarcity of writings by or about Hovda and her subsequent private nature, I refrain from speculative commentary. Instead, I focus on celebrating her musical legacy with inquiry and fidelity to the primary source – her compositions. Consequently, I will engage in musical analysis, detailing the perceptual intricacies of Hovda's *Centerflow/Trail II*, the second movement from her esteemed *Cymbalmusic Series*. I aim to articulate my speculative realization of this work, offering insights into Hovda's innovative approach to developing an informal percussive discipline. Furthermore, I will interrogate Hovda's use of percussion orchestration in *If Tigers were Clouds... then reverberating, they would create all songs*, her 1994 collaborative installation *Labyrinths*, and to culminate the chapter, I will briefly reflect on her immersive site-specific soundscape, *40 Million Gallons of Music*. Through this multifaceted analysis, I seek to highlight the artistic nuances that define Hovda's musical contributions and, through care and kinship, provide insight into her extensive oeuvre.

#### 4.1 Cymbalmusic Series

*Cymbalmusic Series* (1982-1985) is a five-movement composition converging energy flows and states of consciousness for a cymbal soloist. The soloist utilizes bass bows to develop 'bowing strides' and 'friction' (superball) mallets to excavate sounds from two mounted metal cymbals (Figure 4.2). In the score, Hovda encourages vocalizations from the performer and the audience, encouraging whistles, hums, and vowel/consonant 'breath' shapes. This invitation encourages a communal and companion musicking experience, where the vocal elements complement and extend the potential spectra of the cymbals. Embracing the principles of repetition, meditation, and embodied minimalism, the *Cymbalmusic Series* intricately weaves the

performer's internal and external consciousness. Hovda articulates that the work is designed to generate both external and internal effects of engaging with sound continuously over an extended duration, with *external* pertaining to “what happens to the sound that the audience can experience” and *internal* referring to “what happens to the player in the process of performing the piece, which of course, affects what happens externally.”<sup>187</sup> This unique sound world is a recurring motif for Hovda, featured in her ensemble works since 1972, leaving an iconic and lasting imprint on the sonic landscape of her entire career.



Figure 4.2: Eleanor Hovda performing *Cymbalmusic Series*<sup>188</sup>

*Cymbalmusic Series* contains a rich array of markings and is devoid of formal musical stave and traditional notation systems. Hovda states that while this work borrows from minimalism's aesthetics by integrating repetition and energy shapes that shift over time, she

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<sup>187</sup> Hovda, Eleanor. 1982-1985. *CYMBALMUSIC SERIES*.

<sup>188</sup> Hovda, Eleanor. 2012. “The Eleanor Hovda Collection.” *The Eleanor Hovda Collection (2012)*.

rejects notation and the desire to be perfectly consistent, repetitive, or rigorously minimal, as “those [are] ends of themselves.”<sup>189</sup> This underscores that Hovda’s work was not preoccupied with genre or virtuosity but rather centered on perception and audibility, consciousness, and the overall listening experience.

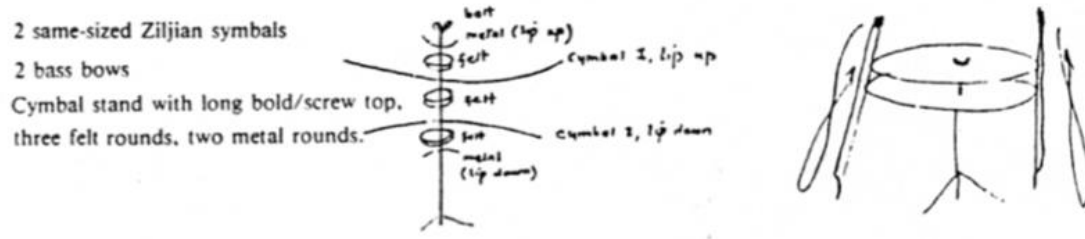


Figure 4.3: Eleanor Hovda, *Cymbalmusic Series*, program notes example<sup>190</sup>

In Movement Two of the series, entitled *Centerflow/Trail II*, Hovda explicitly explores the dynamics of ‘mind and body’ energies that inspired her during the process of cross-country skiing. Drawing from her experience, she crafted a distinctive ‘bowing stride’ on the cymbals, influenced by the visceral style of skiing, allowing sounds to organically evolve, grow, and dissolve over an extended period of activation. Through the physical act of bowing strides, the composition’s temporality becomes intricately intertwined with the performer’s physicality and approach, resulting in a malleable sense of time that varies depending on the performer’s interpretation. However, it places the responsibility on the interpreter to regulate the bowing stride, providing the freedom to choose energy levels and variations in metric phrasing. Hovda’s notational approach fosters a collaborative dialogue with the performer, where the cymbal

<sup>189</sup> Hovda, Eleanor. 1982-1985. *CYMBALMUSIC SERIES*.

<sup>190</sup> Hovda, Eleanor. 1982-1985. *CYMBALMUSIC SERIES*.

spectra create melodies and long tones, finding echoes in both the audience and performer through humming or whistling, therefore seamlessly interfacing the cymbal and vocal sonorities.

In a live audio recording of Hovda performing *Centerflow/Trail II* at the Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis in 1983, later released posthumously on Innova as part of the *Eleanor Hovda Collection*, she speaks, sharing insights into the profound impact cross-country skiing had on her creative process. In this dialogue, Hovda invites the audience to an act of trust, to embark on a journey with her, encouraging them to hum or sing and to engage with the auditory tones based on their perceptions, all at their discretion. Gary Davis of the avant-garde zine *Arcane Candy* aptly described the outcome as nothing short of fascinating: a “nine-minute shimmering ‘n’ screeching mist on nothing but double-bowed cymbals accompanied by a humming audience!”<sup>191</sup>

The notation system employed in the *Cymbalmusic Series* consists of lines representing ‘energy flow,’ meticulously mapped across multiple pages. Comprising of five distinct movements, the score presents a fusion of visual and verbal ethereal instructions. The duration of the entire five movements is flexible, spanning from 10 to 60 minutes, contingent on the performer’s inclination and real-time musicking.<sup>192</sup> Through her departure from Western classical notation systems, Hovda crafts an expansive perceptual experience, using terms such as ‘strides,’ ‘energy shapes,’ and ‘trails’ to guide the interpreter’s imagination, as illustrated in Figure 4.3. The lines depicted in the notation of *Centerflow/Trail II* (Movement Two), are to be visualized by the performer, serving as a speculative guide to represent the internal energy flow

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<sup>191</sup> David, Gary. 2012. “Eleanor Hovda – The Eleanor Hovda Collection.” *Arcane Candy*. Accessed November 1, 2023. <http://arcanecandy.com/2012/06/30/eleanor-hovda-the-eleanor-hovda-collection/>.

<sup>192</sup> Additionally, Hovda notes in the performance instructions that if the work is completed in less than 15 minutes, the artist will need to address matters of pacing.

during the performance. Additionally, the dashed lines within the notation present opportunities for incorporating whistling. Furthermore, the performer is tasked with discovering and exploring subtle shifts in accent and meter within the harmonic frequencies of the cymbal. Hovda utilizes the embodied act of bowing, integrating it with reciprocity and exploring temporality within sounding bodies, resulting in a personalized performance centered around a politics of co-presence, effectively synthesizing the instrument, performer, and listener.

*Centerflow/Trail II* demands a level of intricate precision that sets it apart from the skill set typically associated with an orchestral percussionist. However, despite the differences in approach, the execution of this piece is no less challenging than the demands placed on traditional percussionists. At first glance, bowing a cymbal for an unspecified duration may seem mundane compared to the intricacies of complex tonality and rhythm. However, executing the bowing stride technique required in *Centerflow/Trail II* demands concentration, commitment, and development akin to refining a violinist's bowing technique. Additionally, the unique physical and mental discipline necessary for this task is not commonplace within mainstream capacities, aligning more closely with the nuanced performance modes found in Wandelweiser or minimalist genres. Furthermore, while percussion inherently involves proficiency across various instruments, dedicating time to refine the sonic landscape and technique specific to a single bowed instrument, such as the suspended cymbal in *Centerflow/Trail II* constitutes an outlier discipline. This demands an embodied approach developed through specialized arm, back, and hand muscles—a touch exclusive to this piece.

Building on Hovda's vision to craft a musical experience that captures both external and internal perceptions, *Centerflow/Trail II* unfolds in stages of consciousness. The initial stage involves the cultivation of a continuous bowing stride, exploring variations, and eventually

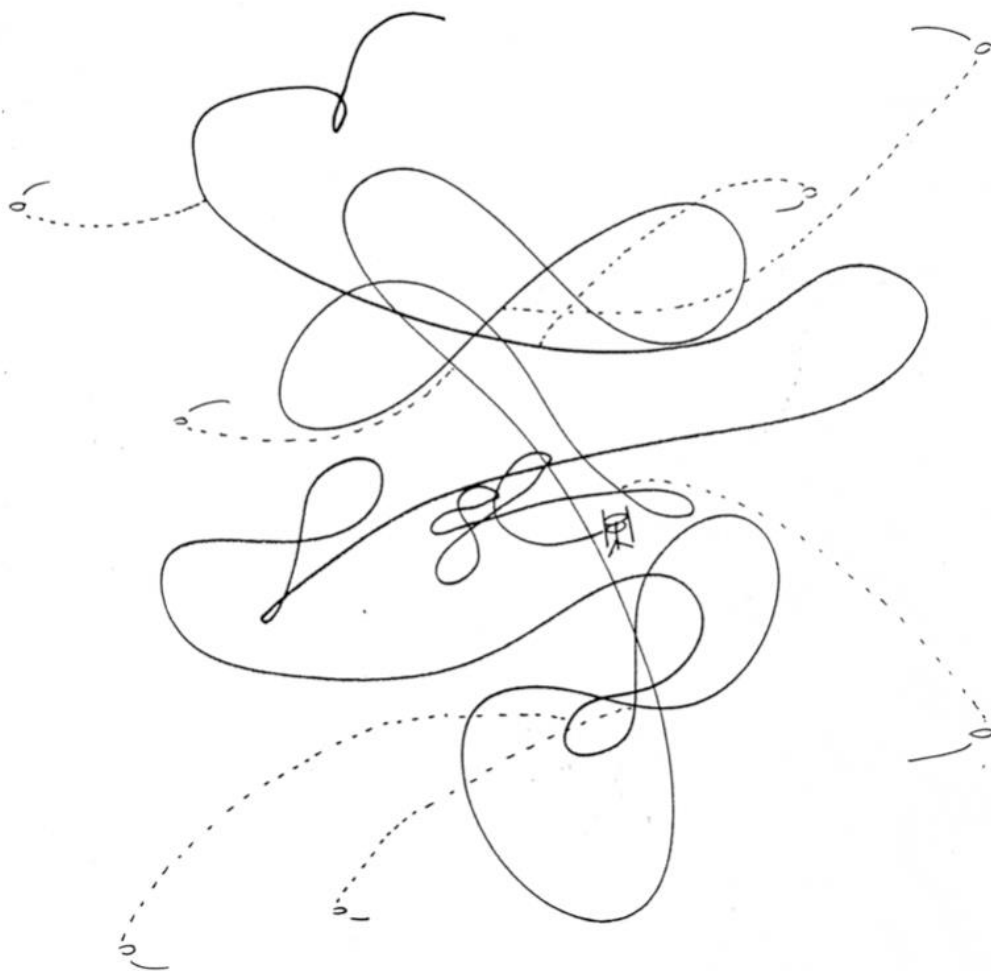
reaching a plateau where effort diminishes, allowing the sound to flow, and the piece seemingly “plays itself.” As the performer delves into a prolonged period of bowing, identified by Hovda as the second stage, a distinct characteristic emerges—the performer experiences a combination of “tiredness/boredom/preoccupation with the physical labor of bowing.”<sup>193</sup> This stage implies that the physical exertion of bowing the cymbals over an extended period may result in fatigue, underscoring the challenges linked to prolonged, introspective bowing. Subsequently, this fatigue leads to transitioning to the ultimate stage of consciousness, where the emphasis on breath becomes paramount. It guides a shift beyond the interaction between the instrument and the activator, instead evolving into a spontaneous flow that Hovda fittingly labels the “centerflow.”<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Hovda, Eleanor. 1982-1985. *CYMBALMUSIC SERIES*.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

*Cymbalmusic Series: #2 - (un)flow with Audience*



.... Audience hum/whistle unisons  
— cymbal trail

© Eleanor Hovda, 2003, Duluth, MN

Figure 4.4: Eleanor Hovda: *Cymbalmusic Series, II*, score example<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

Through embarking on a speculative realization of *Centerflow/Trail II*, I interrogate Hovda's theories on sound and being, cultivating an embodied reciprocity with my instrument—the resonant metallic spectra of the cymbal. The live performance that ensued (found in Appendix 2), with a duration of 10-12 minutes, emerged from a dedicated preparation phase centered on refining my bowing stride techniques.<sup>196</sup> For this performance, I selected a 20-inch cymbal for the bottom and a 19-inch for the top cymbal, spaced approximately 7-8 centimeters apart on a singular cymbal stand. The strategic decision regarding spacing the cymbals allowed me to navigate and experiment with various angles fluidly, providing a canvas for uncovering diverse timbres and an immersive exploration of different frequency spectra. To bring my interpretation of “Centreflow” to fruition, I engaged in a nuanced and deliberate exploration of bowing techniques, developing a spectrum of bowing styles to evoke the desired sonic textures from the cymbals. This process involved refining techniques such as an up-and-down motion with moderate tension, experimenting with a gentle oscillating pressure to evoke higher fundamentals, yielding a screechy, ethereal quality. Additionally, on the other end of the spectrum, I employed very firm tension with a 45-degree bow angle on the bottom cymbal to generate a deep, resonant tonality reminiscent of a bass drone. Each bowing technique developed as a unique language, fostering communication with the cymbals, and unveiling a nuanced interplay of distinct sonic textures. Outlined below is an analytic categorization of how each technique contributed to this sonic exploration:

1. *Precise Up-and-Down Motion with Moderate Tension:*

Description: Emulating the fluid motion of skiing, this technique involved a precise up-and-down motion at a moderate tempo with moderate tension applied on the cymbal.

Outcome: Produced a balanced fundamental tone and moderately steady pitch.

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<sup>196</sup> Creative Portfolio, performance link found in Appendix 2.

2. *Light Pressure for Higher Fundamentals:*

Description: Applying light and oscillating pressure with a faster up-and-down motion to bring out higher fundamentals.

Outcome: Created screechy and ethereal tones from the higher end of the frequency spectrum, adding a layer of complexity and grit to the sonic palette.

3. *Very Hard Tension with a 45-degree Bow Angle:*

Description: Employing very hard tension, with the bow touching the cymbals at a 45-degree angle at a slow tempo to produce deep and resonant tones.

Outcome: A rumbling and profound bass tonality, introducing a sense of ponderous depth.

In addition to developing specific bowing techniques, experimenting in the moment with variations of bow speed and tension became an imperative musical parameter, enhancing the contours and melodies of the performance. The aforementioned bowing approaches provide a platform for exploring diverse pitches across the frequency spectrum, spanning fundamentals, harmonics, and ambient noise. This exploration facilitated the development of contrapuntal melodies; however, the performance is unpredictable; even a minor shift in bow angle can alter the sonic intention. Consequently, maintaining openness and adaptability during performance was crucial – it was imperative to adopt a state of listening rather than searching, not embedded in control or mastery.

The sonic accessibility of percussion empowered artists like Hovda and Dlugoszewski to radically speculate and conceptualize percussion in their compositions, without being bound by the constraints of genre and style. This exploration created new, informal disciplines, emerging alongside the Western Art Music canon. Therefore, enacting percussion without formal training was not a barrier, but a departure point that allowed both women to do hands-on work. This hands-on work, the development of sonic bowing strides and spectra, also features prominently

in Hovda's 1984 composition, *Ariadne Music*, created for the Boston Musica Viva under the direction of Richard Pittman.<sup>197</sup> Drawn from Greek mythology, the title and metaphor of *Ariadne Music* references Ariadne's provision of a ball of thread to Theseus, enabling him to navigate the labyrinth and escape the Minotaur. The composition unfolds with an emphasis on the concept of breath and personalized temporality. Akin to process music, Hovda expresses that the temporality of the piece is based on "the time it takes to do something."<sup>198</sup> This refers to the motific durations being an organic and malleable process in which they occur at the discretion of the performers, with Hovda stating "the continuity is maintained as the sound-skein, with its dynamic interplay of loosening and tightening, altering texture and resonance, navigates a multi-directional path."<sup>199</sup> At its core, *Ariadne Music* explores the transformation of sound and energy into a resonant thread, unwinding from its source and deviating from conventional metric notation. Hovda introduces the iconic bowed cymbals thematic material throughout the piece, gradually building their presence to a climatic point. The cymbals emerge prominently at this juncture, resting atop the ensemble's texture—a shimmering frequency spectrum. Moreover, Hovda's program notes detail specific striking areas and mallet placement, underscoring her inquiry-based hand-on approach to playing the cymbals, which she actively developed during her career (as outlined in Figure 4.5).

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<sup>197</sup> The premiere of *Ariadne Music* took place on March 13, 1984, at Jordan Hall in Boston, in collaboration with the Concert Dance Company of Boston.

<sup>198</sup> Hovda, Eleanor. 1984. "Ariadne Music." *Innova, The Eleanor Hovda Collection*. Unpublished.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

PERCUSSION Heavy (ca. 1½ lb) Double Cymbal Assembly:

2 (14" Ziljian cymbals

2 bass bows (synthetic hair)  
(use bass resin)

Cymbal stand with long bolt/screw top, 3 felt rounds, 2 metal rounds

2 (½") superballs on metal rods  
(small exacto knives work well)

The most comfortable way to play is by adjusting the stand so that the cymbals are just above the lap. Player can lean forward and bow at a comfortable arm level.

The bowing action is up and down, as though one were cross-country skiing. In this case, the bowing "stride" should aim for "two strokes = 80 m.m." It is important to relax and breathe while bowing. (see (a))

(b)  
The superballs, drawn across the radius (see diagram) will elicit a sonority that can be continued indefinitely. draw the superbball (friction mallets) very gently and slowly at first. If there is no utterance, keep the steady, light friction. Very soon the sound will begin to happen. In this piece, there is plenty of leeway about getting the sound going before it has to be resounding very loudly.

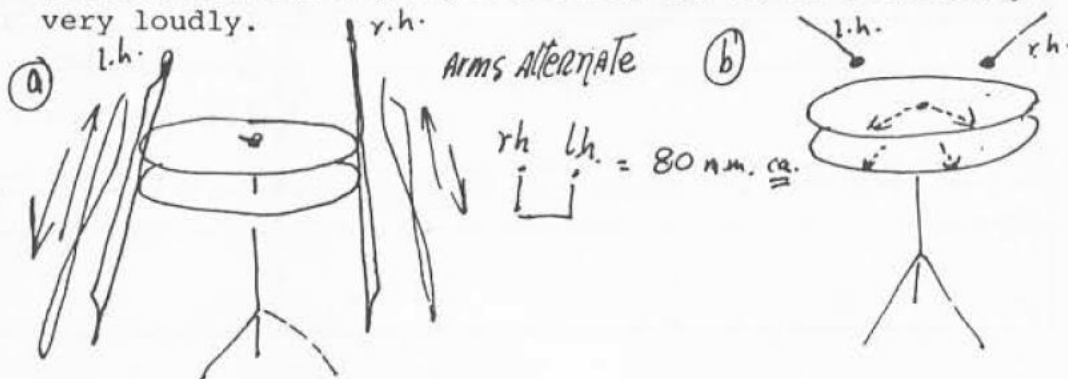


Figure 4.5: Eleanor Hovda, *Ariadne Music*, score example<sup>200</sup>

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

Showcasing her meticulous attention to detail, Hovda's handwritten notes on the *Ariadne Music* score include specifics of the timbre and type of cymbals she desired, such as 14-inch 'heavy cymbals,' with detailed drawings depicting the mounting process, and directional instructions for suspending the cymbals. Additionally, Hovda offers suggestions based on her embodied knowledge, addressing player comfort, and playing position with notes such as "Player can lean forward and bow at a comfortable arm level."<sup>201</sup> Furthermore, Hovda speculates the radius and type of tension for using the friction/superball mallets on cymbals, underscoring her intimate knowledge and the evolution of an informal percussion practice.

Hovda's notable percussive techniques, developed in the 1980s through works such as *Ariadne Music* and the *Cymbal Music Series*, left a lasting imprint on many of her compositions from that era, however, her versatility in orchestration and exploration of percussion are further explored in the 1994 work for the Zeitgeist Ensemble, entitled *If Tigers were Clouds... then reverberating, they would create all songs*. Developed during a Music in Motion Residency at the Fleisher Art Memorial, Philadelphia in collaboration with the musicians of Zeitgeist, *If Tigers Were Clouds* exemplifies Hovda's adeptness in navigating traditional percussion constructs with the composition prominently featuring instruments such as the marimba, vibraphone, crotales, and temple blocks. Composed for a quartet consisting of two percussionists, a pianist, and a Bb clarinetist, *If Tigers Were Clouds* engages in a nuanced exploration of acoustic phenomena, delving into reverberation, resonances, and the harmonic complexities intrinsic in equal temperament and the overtone series. Hovda notes the creation and composition of this work as a collaboration, occurring alongside the ensemble, stating,

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

“During that time, I was able to work with *Zeitgeist* in a process akin to that of a choreographer fashioning a dance upon a specific ensemble of dancers.”<sup>202</sup> Imbued with metaphorical richness, the composition title, *If Tigers Were Clouds*, originates from Hovda’s contemplation of the symbolic implications of tigers and clouds. These symbols, representing strength and mystery, evoke fantastical realms that captivate the imaginations of both children and adults alike. Free from time signature and temporal indications, the composition opens with repetitive intervallic motifs performed on the vibraphone and marimba. Hovda utilizes the high register of the instruments, played as fast as possible, to create unpredictable pitch combinations and a dense, flurried soundscape. The score guides the percussionists to emphasize specific ad-lib pitch sets, allowing for bursts of textural color to emerge, as shown in Figure 4.6. The temporal delineation of the composition is a collaborative and communal effort, fostering reciprocity among ensemble members. Actions and events unfold either sequentially or concurrently in an entrusting dialogue amongst the players, with the result a seamless convergence of sounds, creating an immersive array of textures.

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<sup>202</sup> *Zeitgeist*. 2003. “If Tigers Were Clouds.” *Zeitgeist New Music Library*. January 1. <https://zeitgeistnewmusiclibrary.com/eleanor-hovda-if-tigers-were-clouds/>.

for Zeitgeist  
Developed during Music  
in Motion Project

*If Tigers Were Clouds*  
... Then Reverberating, they would create All songs

Eleanor Hovda

ff

use these pitches *ad lib* to color texture

ff

use these pitches *ad lib* to color texture

ff

ff  $\frac{1}{2}$  pedal

muffle strings with leather wallet

ff

© 1994 Eleanor Hovda

Figure 4.6: Eleanor Hovda, *If Tigers were Clouds... then reverberating, they would create all songs*, score example<sup>203</sup>

Creating breath-like textures through bowing on the marimba, vibraphone, and crotales, the percussionists constantly interpose notes of prescribed pitch sets in different octaves and voicings across the various tonal instruments. Additionally, extensively explored by Hovda in various compositions from the 1990's, the timbre of the inside of the piano also emerges as a prominent characteristic in her method of sound excavation, wherein she treats it as an additional percussion instrument. After a robust ensemble climax featuring sequential and repetitive motifs, the ensemble gradually recedes, shimmering into a soft recapitulation of the opening themes. The piece concludes in a tranquil, unperturbed state, evoking a sense of wonder akin to the fleeting appearance, marvel, and retreat of tigers and clouds. Hovda's intuitive orchestration techniques

<sup>203</sup> Hovda, Eleanor. 1994. "If Tigers were Clouds... then reverberating, they would create all songs." *I Resound Press*.

were rooted in her comprehensive understanding of percussion and its potential within an ensemble setting. This revealed her profound knowledge of the instruments she composed for, subsequently empowering performers with the agency to be in dialogue and contribute to the sonic landscape she envisioned.

## 4.2 Labyrinths

In the same year as the premiere of *If Tigers Were Clouds*, Eleanor Hovda collaborated with Georgia-based artist Maria Artemis on a multimedia installation entitled *Labyrinths*. Debuting at the TULA Foundation Gallery in Georgia from June 10 to July 9, 1994, Hovda engaged in sonic dialogue with Artemis' two-dimensional sonic sculptures spread across various rooms and spaces in the gallery. Together, they crafted a vibrant array of percussive soundscapes, incorporating unconventional elements such as “redwood planks used as marimba keys, copper or PVC tubes blown like trombones, copper plumbing joints struck like bells, metal rings tossed on the floor, metal sheets shaken to mimic thunder, and glass beakers rubbed with wet fingers or blown.”<sup>204</sup> Infused with anatomical and architectural symbolism at the core of its design, *Labyrinths* was meticulously designed to foster intricate awareness of the objectification of our bodies and the nuanced phenomenon of the human bodily experience. This immersive creation invites contemplation on the reception and perception of our bodies within a broader existential context, with Artemis and Hovda stating, “There is no fixed locus or source of human perception, but rather ongoing flows of sensory, intellectual, emotional, biological, and spiritual energies which create awareness and understanding that are also in constant flux.”<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Bickerton, Jane. 1994. “Maria Artemis and Eleanor Hovda: Labyrinths.” *Art Papers*. July. Accessed November 15, 2023. <https://www.artpapers.org/maria-artemis-and-eleanor-hovda-labyrinths/>

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

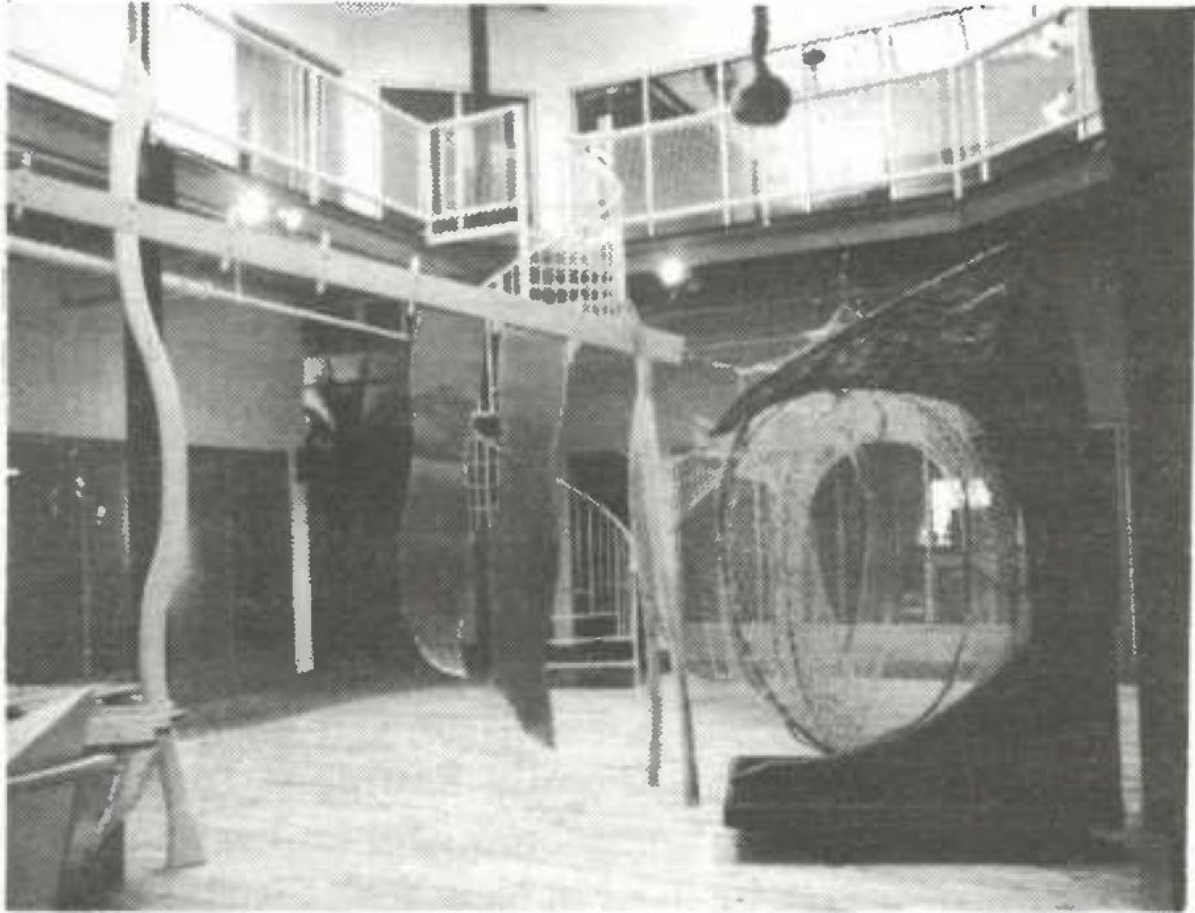


Figure 4.7: Eleanor Hovda and Maria Artemis, newspaper picture of Labyrinths installation

Artemis' mother, a physician, was a source of inspiration in this installation, with Artemis drawing from the autobiographical notes in her mother's copy of Henry Gray's *Gray's Anatomy*. Artemis employs red, black, and yellow as the central colors of the exhibit, and through sculptures and 'framed studies' (framed art works), Artemis brings attention to the anatomical objects of the pelvis, atria, cranium, and inner ear. Artemis and Hovda adopt a feminist mode of inquiry, aligned with Sara Ahmed's queer phenomenology, questioning what things or objects allow bodies to do, exploring how our subjective orientations toward objects

and phenomena contribute to shaping the meanings and roles we assign to them.<sup>206</sup> Furthermore, Hovda and Artemis explored a transindividuation with the analytical and structural forms they created, acknowledging that music, like sculpture, is not passive but an alive entity that posits an active role in mutually influencing the actions and experiences of individuals.<sup>207</sup> Critic Jane Bickerton describes Hovda's composition as "the connective tissue" throughout the exhibit, manipulating and mixing "sounds obtained from playing the objects in the exhibition."<sup>208</sup> In addition to Hovda and Artemis, also playing were musicians John Lancaster and Peter Sawyer, creating a sonic ecosystem that featured a blend of taped and acoustic sounds, encapsulating what Hovda described as "both the inner and outer soundscapes which might occur when one traverses a labyrinth."<sup>209</sup> One of the installation's central features was located in the exhibit's atrium - a marimba meticulously sculpted by Artemis and Hovda to coexist as a sounding body. The spacing of the marimba bars was not designated by tone or equal temperament but by visual form. Crafted from fiberglass, birch plywood, pine, and flat redwood bars of various sizes, Bickerton describes the marimba as "a vertical extension resembling a harp or a mast, from which two galvanized sheet metal teeth extend horizontally. These, along with the redwood bars, are used to create sounds."<sup>210</sup>

Within *Labyrinths*, listening serves as a nexus, a feminist mode of inquiry, intertwining the personal encounter of the installation and the experience of the presented sounds. This interplay manifests as a symbiotic and speculative process. As one engages with the auditory

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<sup>206</sup> Ahmed, Sara. 2006. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. . Duke University Press.

<sup>207</sup> Stover, Chris. 2024. "A Living Force Constantly Creating New Conditions: Feminist Strategies for the Music Theory Classroom." In *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Music Education*, edited by Marissa Silverman and Nasim Niknafs. Oxford University Press.

<sup>208</sup> Bickerton, Jane. 1994. "Maria Artemis and Eleanor Hovda: Labyrinths." *Art Papers*. July. Accessed November 15, 2023. <https://www.artpapers.org/maria-artemis-and-eleanor-hovda-labyrinths/>.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

stimuli, the resultant perceptual outcome gives rise to objectivity, creating a medium where objectivity and subjectivity converge. Voegelin underscores this by stating, “Sound invites the body into experience and reciprocally makes the object physical. Listening to sound is where objectivity and subjectivity meet.”<sup>211</sup> Therefore, public spaces and installations such as *Labyrinths* foster the convergence of ideas and companion thinking, presenting spaces that act as sources of storytelling. Spaces capable of rewriting historical narratives and challenging conventional power structures, and subsequently, through *Labyrinths*, Hovda explores feminist subjectivity through sound and place, prompting inquiries into one’s connection to the body and the symbolism of sonic entanglements.

In summary, I posit that *Labyrinths*, a feminist act of resistance, positions its audience as subjective and speculative listeners, requesting of its observers an inquiry into not only the objectification of the human body but interrogating sounding bodies of structural forms. The incorporation of designed and creative sound sources, influenced by or through percussion as an artistic medium, allowed Hovda to appropriate and alter symbolic social fabrics, re-imagine the delineations between public and private spaces, serving as an act of disruption. Furthermore, Hovda inadvertently underscores the importance of subjective listening through sensory engagement by engaging in an interdisciplinary practice of creating instruments from both made and found materials. In developing methodologies where purpose is constructed through perception and touch rather than mastery and traditional knowledge creation, Hovda emphasizes the significance of the sensory experience in music-making.

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<sup>211</sup> Voegelin, Salomé. 2010. *Listening to Noise and Silence : Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*. New York: Continuum, 14.

### 4.3 Closing reflections on an embodied practice: 40 Million Gallons of Music

Eleanor Hovda possessed an enigmatic gift for storytelling. As she embarked on her sonic journeys, her listeners became companion thinkers, drawn into a world where breath, perception, and timbre intertwined with structural and physical bodies. Hovda sculpted sound through people, instruments, and spaces, akin to a choreographer shaping a dancer's movements. Hovda's compositions became vibrant narratives, inviting her audience to explore wonder and the depths of sonic possibility in reciprocity alongside her. Although Eleanor Hovda's scores and archives are accessible through UMBC, *I Resound Press*, and the Innova release of *The Eleanor Hovda Collection*, her name and legacy remain obscure to many. Whether this obscurity is due to her solitude in debilitating health, her queerness, or her intense privacy, this chapter has been assembled with care and respect for the fragility of her narrative.

Throughout this chapter, my inquiry has remained close to primary sources and traces of fidelity through Hovda's manuscripts. In the opening of this chapter, Jack Veas' poignant epigraph outlines Hovda's inquisitive and speculative temperament. And, as I conclude, I am drawn to his warm remembrance of the beauty of her scores, the scores woven and centered throughout this chapter:

Oh, and those scores, the grafitus that reminded us what to do, where to put our hands...there's no need for a neat grid, impressivist penmanship or third-party body of theoretical explanations. Things just grow out of each other and then recede back into their surroundings.<sup>212</sup>

Hovda's work, scores, and sounds positioned her as an outlier, and as I trace feminist genealogies in my pursuit of a sonic democracy, this chapter endeavored to provide sustained

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<sup>212</sup> Veas, Jack. 2010. *New Music USA: Remembering Eleanor Hovda*. March 4. Accessed March 11, 2021. <https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/remembering-eleanor-hovda/>.

remembrance of Hovda's work, recognizing her sonic potential to "threaten to produce a radically different world."<sup>213</sup>

My fascination with Hovda's work began with my wonder and inquiry into performing *Cymbalmusic*. Serving as a sonic and motivic foundation, *Cymbalmusic*'s iconic sound world permeates many of Hovda's early compositions, and throughout this chapter, I have traced *Cymbalmusic*'s evolution into other methodologies of sounding percussion, highlighting the development of Hovda's percussion writing. Subsequently, as I conclude this chapter, I reflect upon Hovda's departure from concert music, Western notation, and formal modes of musical dissemination through her site-specific soundscape entitled *40 Million Gallons of Music*, crafted during her gentle retreat from public life.

As the title suggests, *40 Million Gallons of Music* was an experiment in sounding, meticulously recorded in a 40-million-gallon water tank in Arkansas in September of 2001. Janine Weager, Hovda's life partner and a prominent musician and conductor, recounts a pivotal moment in 2001 when the mayor of Fayetteville, Dan Coody, urgently summoned her (and Hovda) to come and hear the colossal 40-million-gallon water tank from the inside. Typically cleaned every 50 years, it stood empty. Weager vividly describes the journey as they crawled into the murky depths of the tank, initiating experiments with sounds and chants, stating, "Dan began to chant. Eleanor and I were absolutely enthralled with the sound. The tank was circular, with no angles to distort the harmonics. Any sound created within the tank had a reverberation of about 60 seconds. There were no objects inside except us."<sup>214</sup> Building upon the concept of recording music within this unique environment, Hovda, Weager, and Coody enlisted the

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<sup>213</sup> Gumbs, Alexis Pauline. 2010. *We Can Learn to Mother Ourselves: The Queer Survival of Black Feminism 1968-1996*. PhD Dissertation. Duke University, 13-14.

<sup>214</sup> Hovda, Eleanor. 2012. "The Eleanor Hovda Collection." *The Eleanor Hovda Collection (2012)*.

expertise of recording engineer Darrin Crisp, capturing the diverse resonant soundscape, using instruments from Hovda's collection, such as "a taxi horn from Pakistan, water gongs, flutes, percussion instruments, harmonicas, a melodica, and zithers."<sup>215</sup> The expansive and resonant space served as a canvas for sonic exploration, giving rise to a 30-minute soundscape distinguished by its nearly unedited and spontaneous nature. Evolving purely through improvisation, this work is unique within Hovda's oeuvre, as it stands as the sole opus devoid of a formal score, being completely improvised. Additionally, the recording coincides with the tragic events of September 11th, which occurred only days before Weager and Hovda flew to Fayetteville to record this work. Witnessing the horrifying events from a neighbor's window, just a mile away from where they lived in New York City, this experience left an indelible mark, forever etching the terror and darkness of that time in their memories. Weager later reflected on the impact of these events upon *40 Million Gallons of Music*, stating that,

It was a surreal time, approximately 10 days after 9/11. At one point a crow flew into the water tank and cawed, flew out, and then flew back in again. This was followed by an airplane flying overhead, eerily reminding us of the terrorist attack we had just experienced.<sup>216</sup>

Consequently, *40 Million Gallons of Music* exists in contemplation - a unique testament to Hovda's practice of care and profound sonic explorations. It cannot be remade, re-specified, or realized; existing as an autonomous event, a soundscape rooted in a specific place and time, possessing beauty and an intangible finality. Yet, beyond its singular manifestation, it finds an inimitable place within Hovda's fragile archive – a musicking driven by wondrous curiosity and boundless imagination, traversing a journey that culminates in the soundings of structural, metaphysical, conceptual, and physical bodies.

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

Collaboration lay at the heart of Hovda's artistic endeavors, whether involving dance, performers, soundscapes, or simply engaging in musicking with friends and loved ones; her body of work stands as a profound testament to a dedicated collaborative and companion thinking, one exemplified through the realization and reflection of *40 Million Gallons of Music*. In closing, *40 Million Gallons of Music* resides and ruminates within a dichotomy of finality and fragility. I conclude this chapter, similar to as I began, staying close to the sounds, the primary sources of Eleanor Hovda's oeuvre, highlighting her persistent malleability as an artist, presenting her work as both an offering and a provocation, with her legacy emerging as a beautiful outlier of artistic possibility.

## CHAPTER 5

### Navigating Between Structures: Reflexive Explorations and Practice-Based Research

“I have a confession to make: I’m a little frightened, for I don’t know where my freedom will lead me. It is neither arbitrary nor libertine, but I am unbound.”

– Clarice Lispector, *Agua Viva*, 1973, p.13

Clarice Lispector’s 1973 novella, *Agua Viva*, begins with the introduction of a narrator - an unnamed protagonist. Having previously been engaged in painting, she now sets aside her brush to write – to speak directly to her reader, attempting to capture her relationship to time, life, and death:

I divide thousands of times into as many times as the number of instants running by, fragmented as I am and the moments so fragile – my only vow is to live born with time and growing along with it: only in time itself is there room for me.<sup>217</sup>

The declaration of a vow to live within the framework of time suggests a dynamic and symbiotic coexistence, wherein the narrator finds her place and significance in temporal precarity.

Lispector’s writing in *Agua Viva* goes on to intricately dismantle the fabric of the human experience, challenging established boundaries between subject and object, human and non-human. A rigorous interrogation of language, Lispector disrupts linear thought through rupturing conjunctions, unsure repetitions, obscure verbiage, and disengaging the self through the deliberate ambiguity of arbitrary objects - flowers, chairs, apples - constantly re-represented in the text to disorient the reader. This stream of consciousness renders both the human and the non-human visible. Entities lacking a physical presence and concepts of reality become

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<sup>217</sup> Lispector, Clarice. 1973. *Agua Viva*. 1.ed. Rio [de Janeiro]: Editora Artenova, 4.

disorderly, contributing to an immersive and disorienting reading experience. Hélène Cixous aptly observes that “*Agua Viva* is a text that can produce resistance and anguish in the reader because it is governed by a different order.”<sup>218</sup> Rather than seeking to create absolute representations of life, Lispector embraces fragmentation - undertaking the ambitious task of capturing the unrepresentable through language – a re-evaluation of existence. Lispector’s literary thoughts and feelings cease to be mere abstractions; they become living entities, materializing within the intricate threads of her work, encouraging a co-presence with them - an intimate engagement with the acts of grief and doing. Woven throughout the pages of Lispector’s non-narratives is sense-making. Metaphors and perception cease to be mere linguistic devices; they transform into portals, inviting readers to immerse themselves in the nuanced shades of joy, sorrow, and everything in between.

Reading *Agua Viva* encapsulates a profound state of becoming within me. Within its prose, I am immersed, experiencing nausea to joy, feeling fragmented and deeply connected to the interplay of arbitrary subjects and objects - the intangible. Lispector persuades me to ponder the totality of existence and the boundless nature of nothing, aptly stating,

I could say of the ‘everything.’ But ‘everything’ is a quantity, and quantity has a limit in its very beginning. The true incommensurability is the nothing, which has no barriers, and where a person can scatter their thinking-feeling.<sup>219</sup>

In this reflection, Lispector challenges my notion of ‘everything’ as a quantifiable concept with inherent limits, emphasizing the immeasurability of nothingness. In contemplating the abstract ideas of nothingness, boundlessness, recklessness, and precarity and their relevance to my role as a musician, I find myself navigating disoriented realities in the pursuit of sense-making within

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<sup>218</sup> Cixous, Hélène. 1990. *Reading with Clarice Lispector*. NED-New edition, vol. 73. Edited by Verena Andermatt Conley. University of Minnesota Press, 11.

<sup>219</sup> Lispector, Clarice. 1973. *Agua Viva*. 1.ed. Rio [de Janeiro]: Editora Artenova, 82.

my artistic practice. How do these existential concepts, akin to the reflections of Lispector and the collective discourse detailed in this dissertation, shape the contours of my creative endeavors? How does a vulnerable reading of *Agua Viva*, as a companion text in tandem with my artistic expressions contribute to a deeper understanding and connection to my practice? Woven throughout *Agua Viva* is acts of listening, “I see that I have never told you how I listen to music - I rest my hand lightly on the turntable and my hand vibrates, spreading waves through my whole body.”<sup>220</sup> These interspersed acts of listening beckon an escape from the confines of the tangible, inviting a departure into nothingness, an ethereal reality, serving as a compelling muse for my own artistic endeavors. Furthermore, echoing Amacher and Haraway, ‘I want to make a music...’ I search for a feminist sensibility in music, a listening and doing, that invites departure, nothingness, governed by a different order, interspersed with my grief and joy, that spreads “waves through my whole body” – a music that is between structures.

Consequently, I began to conceptualize a music. A music that eluded traditional structures of form and acoustics. I found myself adrift: caught between performing other people’s music and pursuing my creative practice. Navigating the structures of music-making within the academic institution and resisting neo-liberal tendencies while staying active in the industry left me wondering about the direction of my path. Amidst this, I paused to reflect on my research, my companion thinkers - Lucia Dlugoszewski, Maryanne Amacher, and Eleanor Hovda. The preceding chapters in this dissertation diligently highlighted the extraordinary journeys of three women practitioners who discovered the joy and sonic possibilities of percussion. Outliers, undeterred by adversity, Dlugoszewski, Amacher, and Hovda fearlessly persisted with steadfast artistic integrity, sharing a commitment to creating a space for women as

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 5

women. Tracing these feminist genealogies of percussion, I glimpse myself, shaped by their artistic languages, and envision my place woven within a rich lineage of creative feminist expression. Borne out of my conceptualization, this music, which is meant to be felt, meant to ‘wave through my whole body,’ started to emerge. With a conscious connection to its lineage and founded in a politics of care and sonic curiosity, this music evolved into my long-form percussion solo *Between Structures*.

Throughout this chapter, I will outline the working methods behind my composition, *Between Structures*. Through a detailed exploration of the score, I aim to illustrate my approach to composition, examining my choices of notation, orchestration, and acoustic stimuli. Moreover, by engaging in a reflexive analysis, I will navigate contemporary soundscapes, incorporating the companion texts of Sarah Hennies *Thought Sectors* (2020) and Rebecca Saunders *Dust* (2017/2018), as these works have been pivotal in shaping the orchestration and conceptual consciousness underlying *Between Structures*. Through practice-based research and an alignment with the preceding chapters in this dissertation, this collective discourse endeavors to trace the impact of searching for a feminist sensibility within the discipline of percussion.

*Between Structures* is a composition for solo percussionist and electronics. With a minimum duration of 25 minutes, the work is adaptable and influenced by the unique attributes of the performance space and the individual performer. Consisting of five modules, referred to as structures, each structure represents a unique consciousness and acoustic stimuli. Each structure (page) features notated musical material and text instructions outlining how to produce sound, the desired form, and electronic triggering requirements (Figure 5.1). Seamless transitions, connected through *attaca*, facilitate a continuous overlap of structures, where sounds have no

clear beginning and ending, converging, and materializing for the duration of the piece. This intentional design immerses the listener in a perpetual ‘between’ state, allowing the performer to manipulate the temporal duration of material at their discretion. The electronic component involves live processing, acting as a looping mechanism, capturing real-time sound, and sending it in a quadrophonic array. This illuminates the intrinsic psychoacoustic pulsations and oscillations that occur when the acoustic and electronic elements converge. *Between Structures* conceptualizes transition, encapsulating the visceral experience of bodies of sound between structures. The module/structure-based approach to notation draws inspiration from Rebecca Saunders’ work, *Dust* (2017/2018). Deliberately choosing this stylistic approach over a conventionally notated score, I aim to align my artistic objectives with flexibility and performer agency, where entities and phenomena coalesce through intra-actions, crafting a dynamic and co-constituted musical experience. Additionally, through my immersive engagement with Saunders’ work, my evolving connection to *Dust* has led me to recognize it as a co-conspirator. Hence, by modelling my ‘structures’ after Saunders’ modules, the sonic junctures within *Between Structures* foster allyship, tracing, and exploring feminist genealogies and sensibilities through percussion.

## STRUCTURE 1

<p><b>Performer:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Very soft yarn mallets.</li> <li>- Create very soft, ripple-roll-type clusters using pitch sets of three notes. Minimize sound of attack.</li> <li>- Start from the lowest notes of the vibraphone.</li> <li>- Slowly ascend to the specified pitches.</li> <li>- Always add one more pitch at a time.</li> <li>- As much resonance as possible, pedal always down.</li> <li>- Pause on pitch sets that create the most natural phenomena, pulsation, and oscillation.</li> <li>- When at the top of the indicated pitch clusters, transition to 1.2.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Place vibrators in the middle of the instrument between the natural and accidental keys so that the vibrator touches both the natural and accidental keys, in the approximate indicated pitch area.</li> <li>- Gradually turn on and manipulate the volume as appropriate.</li> <li>- Create a shrill and constant swarm.</li> <li>- Once sounded, subtly move the vibrators in ascending and descending motion, creating subtle fluctuations in pitch.</li> <li>- Trigger electronics when ready to transition to Structure 2.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Electronics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>1.1.a:</b> capture sound till 1.1.b</li> <li>- <b>1.1.b:</b> before reaching the highest cluster of the given range, trigger to play back captured sound pitch shifted 1va + a minor 3<sup>rd</sup> higher w/ gradual fade out over 3 minutes overlapping with physical playing of 1.2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>1.2.a:</b> capture sound till 1.2.b</li> <li>- <b>1.2.b:</b> before being ready to transition to Structure 2, trigger to play back captured 1.2.a sound w/ gradual fade out over 2 minutes overlapping with physical playing of 2.1</li> </ul>

Figure 5.1: Rebecca Lloyd-Jones, *Between Structures*, score example (Appendix 1)

### 5.1 Dust

In the winter of 2021, alongside my colleague Michael Jones, I presented the American premiere of *Dust* at the University of California, San Diego. Originally commissioned by Saunders' long-term collaborators Christian Dierstein and Dirk Rothbrust, *Dust* is characterized by Saunders as 'a solo for two people, each on their own.' Saunders emphasizes that "Each performer creates their own version, defined by their own instruments and the chosen juxtaposition of up to eight separately composed modules."<sup>221</sup> Outlined in Figure 5.2 is an

<sup>221</sup> Saunders, Rebecca. 2017/2018. *Dust*.

example of how Saunders delineates each module with extensive and detailed instructions on notation, instrumentation, and mallet choices. Inspired by Saunders' approach to the malleability of temporal delineation, instrumentation, and performer agency, these elements guided the conceptualization of orchestration and notation for the structures in *Between Structures*.

*dust* (2017/2018)

**5. Metal**

**Instruments**

Crotales 5 crotales upside-down (lowest octave) on skin of Timpani 2 - C#, D, D#, F, F#5.

Nico. Large bass micophone diagonally on Timpani 2 across 2 edges. On pieces of black compressed rubber (*Mossogummi*).

Temp. 2 32", scordatura pegs ca. fourth lower.


Alu. 4 solid aluminium strips ca. 220 x 5 x 0.3 cm. Hung horizontally at both ends with thin plastic wires at 4 different tensions for 4 different pulses.  
Pitches intersect with those of the crotales, ideally\* B, C, E $\frac{1}{4}$ -flat, E5.  
\*Microtonal possible, as it is hard to make the Alu. Strips exactly at notated pitch. Further if necessary, either B5 or C5 up or down  $\frac{1}{4}$ -tone, or the two Es can be raised  $\frac{1}{4}$ -tone.


Coil 4 old flat car coils of different sizes and complex resonances and timbres. Laid flat on 2 side drums on pieces of black compressed rubber or styrofoam for maximum resonance and timbral differentiation.


SDs 2 side drums on stands without snares for coils.


Cym. Medium Chinese cymbal with big spectral resonance, on stand.  
Bowed, ossia: trem. at edge.


**Legende**

 Nicophone contact points: 1. top guiro-like rills a. fast guiro-like stroke along full length b. hit staccato; 2. on the side slats

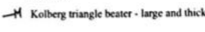
 Alu. strips contact points: 1. at end for clear notated pitch; 2. on length of strip for complex spectrum

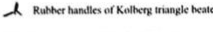
 Finger gently hits strip downwards setting off a regular pulse.


 Explore resonances with timpani pedals

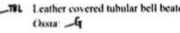
 Seek out complex buzzing and hold



**Beaters:**


 Kolberg triangle beater - large and thick


 Rubber handles of Kolberg triangle beater


 Medium gong beater

 Leather covered tubular bell beater

 Ossia 

 Soft large bass drum beater

 Hard wood beaters

*\* In particular in the fast pulses but at "forte" keep  at all times*

**Beaters:**  
change and adapt as you need: bring out lower spectrum (coils/micophone etc.) whenever possible for max. contrast.

**Set-up:**  
At front facing audience Flat Coils on SDs around Temp. 2 and under Module 1 bells.  
Alu.Strips ends hang over Flat Coils, Nico. + Crotales on Temp. 2.

**Alu. Strips:**  
central contact point 2 is notated only once (in penultimate bar) for *non-pitch* specific tones. Optional: add x2/x3-times in other pauses/resonances if you like.

**Pauses/resonances:**  
explore acoustic result of crotale and micophone with timp. pedal, and mix with alu. strips resonances.  
Keep high tension, never stagnant - sound in motion!

**Tempo:**  
is fast, although partly decided by logistics of getting from one sound source to the other.  
Keep maximum tension.  
Speed up for the loud pulse sections e.g. 5. + 6.  
Extreme dynamic energy.

**General**  
This is a high melodic line and a series of full complex resonances.  
The score is *only* guideline, which may be deviated from!  
Final, April 2019

Figure 5.2: Rebecca Saunders Module 5: *Metal*, example of performance notes<sup>222</sup>

*Dust* explores the subtleties of register and timbre. Each module encapsulates a distinctive sonic state, where the convergence of register and timbre generates unique sonic characters. For example, Module 5: *Metal* (Figure 5.3) incorporates various combinations of metal instruments focusing on high-frequency spectra, while Module 3: *Object 1* (Figure 5.4) exclusively employs large, oversized triangles. Moreover, in alignment with mainstream Western

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

musical composition, Saunders utilizes notational motifs to facilitate theme development, counterpoint evolution, and material exploration.

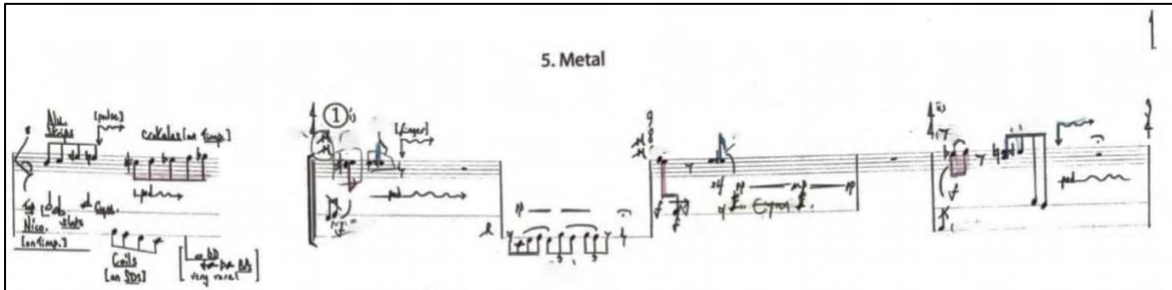


Figure 5.3: Rebecca Saunders Module 5: *Metal*, score example<sup>223</sup>

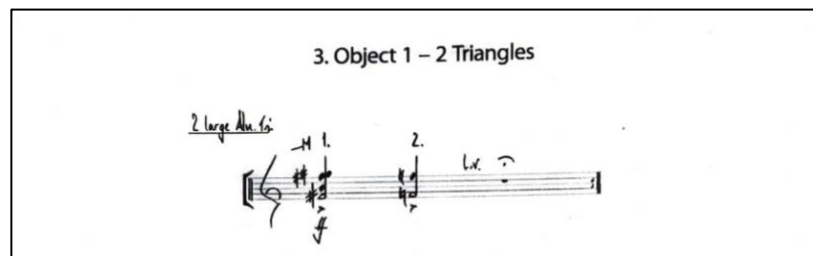


Figure 5.4: Rebecca Saunders Module 3: *Object 1*, score example<sup>224</sup>

Although inspired by Saunders' approach, *Between Structures* diverges in its sonic evolution. While each structure represents a unique acoustic state, *Between Structures* refrains from the traditional motif development seen in *Dust*. Instead, the structures unfold gradually, in a more static, slow-moving capacity, allowing the sonic states to unravel and transpire, emphasizing the resultant effect rather than the sequential or motific progression. However, like *Between Structures*, *Dust* slips between categories and transitions, through canonical circles as needed. *Dust* embodies a hybridized sense of belonging, with Saunders, as an insider to the Western canon, and reflecting this in her notation scheme. The score for *Dust* is partially notated, but

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

centered in choice, demanding intricate layers of dialogue, knowledge, and interpretation from the performer. For instance, the performer has the freedom to choose the form and module sequence. The material can be interrupted mid-module, allowing the performer to selectively omit elements and modules, thereby wielding significant influence over the work's form and outcome. Yet, despite this flexibility, each module is meticulously notated and precisely dictated, ensuring *Dust* maintains its connection to Western notational and modernist lineages.

Furthermore, within *Dust*, the boundary between the composer as the originator of ideas and the performer as a translator is consistently blurred. Personally, grappling with the distinction between fidelity to the score/composer and the creative act of interpretation was an intense yet joyous struggle in my preparation. For me, every stage of *Dust* required intervention and interpretation. From establishing the setup, to learning motivic material, to determining the form, I was required to make intervening choices. As Saunders indicates this piece is designated as 'a solo for two,' I embarked on the learning process alongside my colleague Michael Jones. We shared the basic instrumental setup for Modules 1, 3, and 5 (as shown in Figure 5.5). I performed Modules 2, 4, 6, 7, and 8 separately from the main instrumental setup. This allowed me to add personalized nuances, experience freedom from the large instrumental structure, and create an intimate connection with my listeners—drawing listening closer to my sounds.



Figure 5.5: Personal photo of the instrumental set-up of Rebecca Saunders *Dust*, outlining performance area of modules

Navigating heights and distances posed initial challenges, particularly adapting to the central instrument structure designed communally with my male colleague. Given the suboptimal arrangement for my body, having to cover long distances/stretches, therefore, I developed innovative methods to engage each instrument effectively. Recognizing the crucial distinction between my body and the sounds it produces, I embrace concepts of phenomenology and embodiment to emphasize that my sonic expressions are not solely auditory but intricately linked to my body's lived experience and actions, therefore underscoring the subjective and embodied nature of the creative process. In *Glitch Feminism*, Legacy Russell states, “the concept of body houses within it social, political, and cultural discourses, which change based on where the body is situated and how it is read,” therefore, how my body interacts within the setup determines my ability to facilitate (to do) and to what capacity.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Russell, Legacy. 2020. *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto*. Londo: Verso, 8.

Saunders empowers the performer with significant control over both the micro and macro forms of the piece, thereby influencing the outcome of the listening experience. As Dlugoszewski aptly states, “form is how the ears listen,” therefore, delineating and analyzing the structure I developed for *Dust*, as illustrated in the order of modules below (Figure 5.6), assists in facilitating a thorough examination of my choice of sonic structure.<sup>226</sup>

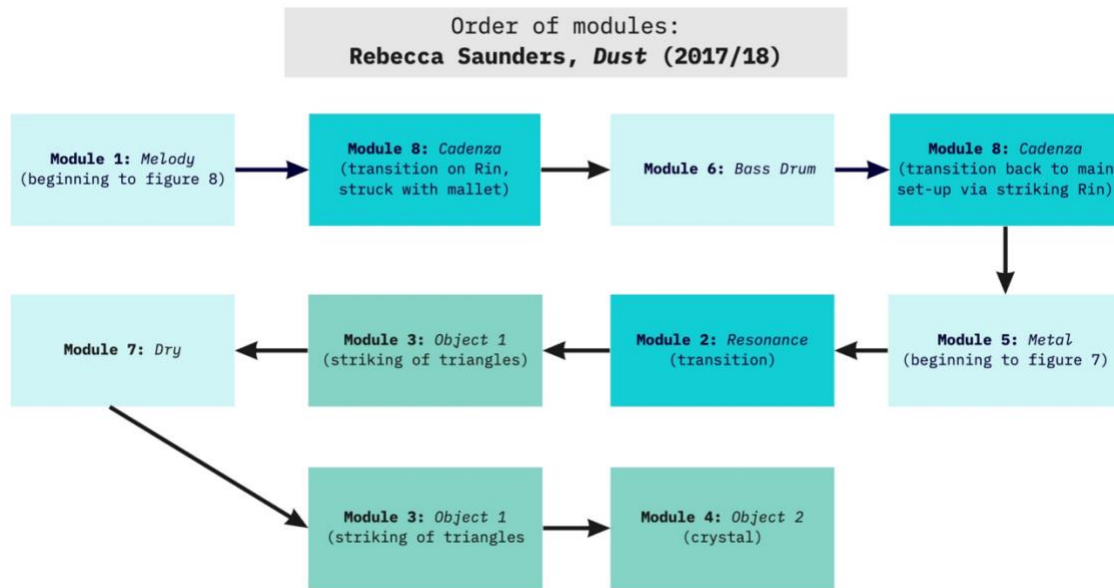


Figure 5.6: Order of modules outlining my personal form chosen for Rebecca Saunders *Dust*

The order of modules outlines how I interspersed the eight modules over ten separate occasions to shape the overall form, strategically employing specific modules as transitional elements. Additionally, the table below (Table 5.1) provides a detailed breakdown of the main eight modules with corresponding timestamps, offering a self-reflexive and musical analysis of my artistic process.

<sup>226</sup> Dlugoszewski, Lucia. 1961. “Manifestoes on the Music and Dance of 8 Clear Places.” New York.

Table 5.1: Rebecca Saunders, *Dust*, Order of Modules

Timestamp	Form
<b>0'00" – 5'10"</b>	<b>Module 1: <i>Melody</i></b>
	I initiated the performance with Module 1: <i>Melody</i> , captivated by the simplistic melody introduced by micro-tonal pipes. The music provoked a profound stillness, causing my perception of timing and placement to stretch and become malleable.
<b>5'10" – 5'50"</b>	<b>Module 8: <i>Cadenza</i></b>
	Upon completing Module 1 (of which I only played until Figure 8), I developed Module 8: <i>Cadenza</i> into a transitional movement to subsequently execute Module 6. Walking to the bass drum while simultaneously holding and striking the Rim, I crafted this transition intuitively yet purposefully to ensure coherence and temporal lucidity in the overall performance.
<b>5'50" – 9'45"</b>	<b>Module 6: <i>Bass Drum</i></b>
	As I elected to take a more structured improvisatory approach to Module 6, I chose very sparse and fragmentary pieces of the material offered by Saunders in the score. This module necessitated the most interpretive effort on my part. I had to try various portions of the score to arrive at the material I would give in concert, and I included my own personal, improvisatory ideas in this process.
<b>9'45" – 12'55"</b>	<b>Module 5: <i>Metal</i></b>
	Following this, I return to the main setup to play Module 5: <i>Metal</i> . The change in amplitude and velocity within Module 5 introduces a new metallic density. The pace is rapid, dynamics tightly controlled by the notation, and the sounding attack is angular. This demands heightened awareness of my body—being conscious of its movements around the setup. I adopted a more conservative approach in this module, adhering precisely to the notation without intervention.

Table 5.1: Rebecca Saunders, *Dust*, Order of Modules, continued

Timestamp	Form
12'55" – 14'20"	<b>Module 2: <i>Resonance</i></b>
	As Module 5 concludes, a sense of release permeates – the loudest and densest moment in the composition. To enhance the transition, I strategically inserted Module 2: <i>Resonance</i> . By striking the bell plates and activating the snares on the snare drums, I aimed to create an immediate and urgent sound, creating a deliberate sense of recklessness to generate dense textures.
14'20" – 16'20"	<b>Module 3: <i>Object 1 (Triangles)</i></b>
	Additionally, as the resonance of Module 5 faded, I activated Module 3: <i>Object 1 (Triangles)</i> . Allowing these sounds to play until they naturally faded into silence, I embraced the courage required to sit in quiet reflection. This was especially poignant after orchestrating numerous events and flows of energy in a performative and robust manner.
16'20" – 22'50"	<b>Module 7: <i>Dry</i></b>
	Emerging from the preceding silence, I sought for Module 7: <i>Dry</i> texture to appear subtly. Following the loud and resonant elements heard earlier, my goal was to draw the listener in close, both aurally and physically, allowing them to experience the subtlety and immediacy of the tactile sounds I was creating. Small muscles delicately execute minute quasi-electronic sounds reminiscent of musique concrète, creating an extreme sonic contrast with the prior sonorous metal. This stark shift leads the listener into a new sonic landscape, where tasks such as the circling of a brush or a stone on a tile, to the incredibly gentle touch of a nail gliding around the timpani's circumference are equally demanding on capacity, albeit in different ways.
22'50" – 24'49"	<b>Module 4: <i>Object 2 (Crystal)</i></b>
	After completing Module 7, I returned to Module 3: <i>Object 1 (Triangles)</i> , letting the triangles resonance persist as I walked to the front and center of the stage to conclude the work. As a gesture of intimacy, I finished the performance by sitting on the floor and enacting Module 4: <i>Object 2 (Crystal)</i> .

While navigating the intricacies of Saunders notation, I encountered moments of tension—sometimes contending with the juxtaposition of an excess of composer control and, at other times, too little direction, and freedom of choice. Nevertheless, learning and preparing *Dust*

proved a formative experience, deepening my understanding of my capabilities in fostering companion thinking towards and alongside a text. Furthermore, by drawing on Audre Lorde's notions of embodiment of the erotic as power, it was elemental to approach the process of preparing *Dust* as a discipline of joy. Subsequently, this thought process has been instrumental in reshaping my relationship with modernist percussion solo repertoire, assisting in reimagining my approach to performance, and instilling a newfound sense of reciprocity in the discipline of preparation and execution.

## 5.2 Thought Sectors

In her work *Queer Percussion* Sarah Hennies illuminates the personal and fragmentary nature of our connections to objects and instruments as percussionists. Hennies recounts her compulsion to acquire 'cheap little bells' from thrift stores or flea markets. Despite the seemingly arbitrary choice of bells, which lack significant monetary value and often come with unclear origins as second-hand items, Hennies suggests a profound connection between herself and the objects, one that defies explanation. Through this unconventional fixation, Hennies challenges the traditional notion that musicians are defined by their instruments. She argues that contemporary percussion encompasses a wide range of instruments and objects, with percussionists expected to handle almost anything in modern music compositions. Consequently, Hennies asserts that through this uniqueness, percussionists actually possess "the power—if you want to and realize you can—to define yourself."<sup>227</sup> As Hennies started gathering these bells, she was already aware of their capacity to convey something about herself even before she consciously acknowledged it, underscoring the mutual entanglements between the artist and her

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<sup>227</sup> Hennies, Sarah. 2018. "Queer Percussion." *Queer Trash: The Symposium*. Brooklyn, New York: ISSUE Project Room.

chosen instruments. Hennies intuitive ability to create a personalized practice, undefined by genre constraints, is evidenced through her 2020 percussion solo, *Thought Sectors*.<sup>228</sup> Parallel to my interpretative journey with *Dust*, I view *Thought Sectors* as a companion text, profoundly influencing the timbral and temporal aspects of *Between Structures*.

A work characterized by constant tension and dichotomy; Hennies describes *Thought Sectors* as inspired by psychologist Ernest Hilgard’s term ‘divided consciousness.’<sup>229</sup> This theory posits that the human brain is divided into distinct components rather than a single unified consciousness. *Thought Sectors* encapsulates this dichotomy by pushing the extremes of audible and inaudible, propelling the soloist to the edge of virtuosity while simultaneously occupying the banal. Spanning almost 60 minutes, *Thought Sectors* is composed in three movements. It consists of traditional musical stave notation and text instructions, with the form and temporality dictated to the performer by indications of minutes and seconds (Figure 5.7).

The image displays two musical staves from Sarah Hennies' *Thought Sectors*. The top staff is marked with a time signature of 8'00" on the left and 11'00" on the right. It begins with the instruction "bowl w/rubber mallet" and a dynamic marking of *ff*. Below the staff, the text "B.D." is written. The notation consists of a series of eighth notes on a single staff. Below the staff, a dotted line connects two circles, each containing a single dot. The text "gradual exploration of all possible locations" is written above this dotted line. The bottom staff is marked with a time signature of 11'00" on the left and 12'00" on the right. It begins with the instruction "bowl" and a dynamic marking of *f*. The notation consists of a series of eighth notes on a single staff.

Figure 5.7: Sarah Hennies, *Thought Sectors*, score example

<sup>228</sup> Commissioned and premiered by Steven Schick at UC San Diego in May 2022.

<sup>229</sup> Hennies, Sarah. 2022. "Personal Correspondence." San Diego, April.

The timbres and orchestration of *Thought Sectors* are meticulously curated, blending conventional percussion instruments like the vibraphone and bass drum with an array of found and obscure percussive objects, including a flour sifter, a stapler, a water jug, and pebbles, as outlined in my chosen setup detailed in Figure 5.8. This distinctive orchestration exemplifies the continuous reimagining of the boundaries of percussion and its auditory possibilities.

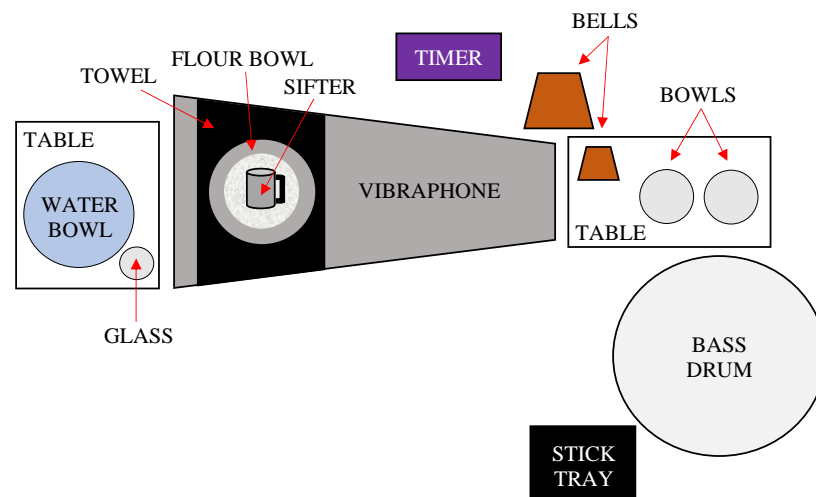


Figure 5.8: Rebecca Lloyd-Jones, lay out of *Thought Sectors* percussion set up

Similar to H  l  ne Cixous' analysis of *Agua Viva*, attempting a traditional musical analysis of a text like *Thought Sectors* yields "resistance and anguish... because it is governed by a different order."<sup>230</sup> *Thought Sectors* eludes traditional forms of analysis applied to equal temperament and temporality; hence, I have delineated key events (timestamps) to showcase the gradual changes within each movement and motivic cell, emphasizing the nuanced shifts in

<sup>230</sup> Cixous, H  l  ne. 1990. *Reading with Clarice Lispector*. NED-New edition, vol. 73. Edited by Verena Andermatt Conley. University of Minnesota Press.

timbre and temporal delineation (Figure 5.7). Each motif in the composition functions as a cell, repeated for a specific duration, contributing to a harrowing and, at times, nauseating sense of space and time. *Thought Sectors* resides in a dichotomy of virtuosity and banality, tension, and cohesion, continuously navigating between structures of comfort for the listener and performer.

The analysis in Tables 5.2 to 5.4 outline instrumentation, timestamps, mallet choices, dynamics, and rhythm, highlighting moments of materialization, emphasizing simultaneous occurrences, and underscoring repetitions and incremental changes in timbre and motif. The first movement, titled ‘Active/Receptive’ (as outlined in Table 5.2), commences with stoic simplicity – a bass drum struck rhythmically with a chopstick. Unlike conventional drumsticks or bass drum beaters, the use of a chopstick allows the natural overtones of the drum to unfold. However, this motif is soon interrupted by the purposeful yet intermittent dropping of pebbles into a bowl. These seemingly mundane and hypnotic tasks collide, creating an enigmatic tone for the work’s opening and leaving listeners in contemplative uncertainty. In the temporal unfolding, Hennies establishes a sense of disorientation for the listener, navigating between cells marked by regular quarter-note strikes at 60 BPM and 100 BPM, juxtaposed with cells featuring irregular rhythmic patterns. Time becomes fragile and almost illegible. Amidst this continual distortion of time, Hennies gradually alters the timbre by incorporating subtle hits on the bass drum and continuously adjusting the playing position around the drumhead. Throughout the ensuing twenty minutes, listeners experience nuanced and gradual shifts in tempo and dynamics, culminating in a pivotal moment of silence accentuated by the delicate strike of a bell. The overtones of bells one and two eventually blend, creating microtonal beating and signalling a new section of the composition.

Table 5.2: Sarah Hennies, *Thought Sectors*, Movement 1 Active/Receptive analysis.

I. Active/Receptive				
Timestamp	Instrument	Mallet	Dynamic	Rhythm
0'00" – 2'00"	Bass Drum	Chopstick	<i>mf</i>	Regular
2'00" – 3'00"	Bass Drum	Chopstick	<i>mp</i>	Irregular
3'00"– 6'00"	Bass Drum, Drop Pebbles: Mixing Bowl	Chopstick	<i>mp</i>	Irregular
6'00" – 8'00"	Bass Drum	Wood mallet	<i>f</i>	Regular
8'00" – 11'00"	Bass Drum and Mixing Bowl	Wood mallet, Hard plastic mallet	<i>ff</i>	Regular
11'00"–12'00"	Mixing Bowl	Hard plastic	<i>f</i>	Regular
12'00"–16'00"	Mixing Bowl, Bell 1	Hard plastic, Hard yarn	<i>f, gradual decrescendo</i>	Regular
16'00"– 19'00"	Bell 1, Bell 2	Hard yarn	<i>p</i>	Irregular
19'00" – 20'00"	Mixing Bowl	chopstick	<i>mp</i>	Regular

Table 5.3 represents the transition to movement two, ‘Active.’ Within ‘Active,’ the primary motivic material is tonal, coupled with nuanced and varying rhythmic motifs introduced on the vibraphone that demand robust stamina from the performer. Commencing with a gradual build-up from a single struck bell and progressing into combinations of rhythmic patterns, a sustained roll emerges on the vibraphone, transitioning into persistently recurring sixteenth notes. Each of these musical cells extends for 2-3 minutes, presenting a significant physical challenge for the performer as their muscles engage in repetitive tasks over an extended duration. As a performer, I observe a discernible shift in my mental state during this phase of the composition. It becomes a conscious decision to internally slow down, effectively managing both fatigue and the potential monotony of the repetitive strokes. Turning inward allows me to delve deeper into concentration and connect more profoundly with the material, focusing on

action rather than outcome. I liken this approach and consciousness to that outlined in Eleanor Hovda's *Cymbal Music Series*, where, through repetitive actions and ideals of embodied minimalism, one reaches the 'centerflow.'

Despite minimal changes in each cell's motif, the composition generates complex melodies and 'difference tones'—acoustic phenomena where simultaneous tones create the illusion of additional pitches for the listener. The composition undergoes a significant transformation at the 30'00" timestamp, breaking into complex polyrhythmic structures on the vibraphone. The listener once again experiences temporal and tonal disorientation, resulting in a challenging yet mesmerizing sonic landscape. As the climax approaches at 38'00", sudden silence and calm ensue. However, this calm is shattered by the subtle and heart-wrenchingly beautiful sound of hands moving in a circular motion through the water, acting as a distant cleansing effect as the piece transitions to its next section.

Table 5.3: Sarah Hennies, *Thought Sectors*, Movement 2, Active, analysis.

II. Active				
Timestamp	Instrument	Mallet	Dynamic	Rhythm
20'00" – 23'00"	Bell 1, Bell 2 Vibraphone	Hard Yarn	<i>mp</i>	Regular
23'00" – 25'00"	Bell 1, Bell 2 Vibraphone	Hard Yarn	<i>mp</i>	Regular
25'00" – 28'00"	Vibraphone	Hard Yarn	<i>mf</i>	Regular
28'00" – 30'00"	Vibraphone	Hard Yarn	<i>f</i>	Regular
30'00" – 33'00"	Vibraphone	Hard Yarn	<i>ff</i>	Polyrhythm
33'00" – 37'00"	Vibraphone	Hard Yarn	<i>ff</i>	Polyrhythm
37'00" – 38'00"	Vibraphone	Hard yarn	<i>ff</i>	Irregular
38'00" – 38'30"	Fermata			
38'30" – 40'00"	Water in Bowl	Hands		Single circular motion

In Movement Three, 'Receptive' (Table 5.4), the sonic mood shifts inward, deviating from the previous persistent, slow accumulation of material to explore the mysterious timbres of a bass drum rim, stapler, and mixing bowl. The chosen instruments unveil a beautiful and ethereal ambiance, yet it is melancholy and fragile. Bowed vibraphone and flour sifter are gradually introduced into the texture, incorporating agonizingly slow and static repetitions. Developing a deliberate pace, this melancholic combination establishes a new sonic disposition, evoking an elusive and somewhat euphoric state. The composition concludes with a gradual and careful release of pebbles into the water bowl until the sound fades into silence, providing a poignant and inaudible ending to *Thought Sectors*.

Table 5.4: Sarah Hennies, *Thought Sectors*, Movement 3, Active/Receptive, analysis

III. Receptive				
Timestamp	Instrument	Mallet	Dynamic	Rhythm
40'00" – 42'00"	Stapler, Bell, Bass Drum	Soft Timpani mallet, Medium Yarn	<i>pp</i>	Regular
42'00" – 44'30"	Stapler, Vibraphone	Bow (arco)	<i>p</i>	Regular
44'30" – 47'00"	Flour Sifter, Vibraphone	Hard Yarn	<i>mp</i>	Regular/Polyrhythm
47'00" – 50'00"	Flour Sifter, Vibraphone	Bow (arco)	<i>mp</i>	Regular
50'00" – 52'00"	Water into bowl	Water/glass		Regular
52'00" – 55'00"	Vibraphone, Drop Pebbles in Water	Fingertip,	<i>ppp</i>	Regular
55'00" –	Pebble	Continue dropping pebbles until gone/ending with Fermata		

In the preceding analysis, I have endeavored to illuminate *Thought Sectors* captivating sonic and temporal qualities. I emphasize *Thought Sectors* intrinsic obscurity and Hennies profound ability to enact feminist methodologies, by manipulating sounds, and creating new ways of ‘making them felt.’<sup>231</sup> Governed by its distinctive sonic and temporal order, *Thought Sectors* defies classification, embodying a unique musical identity that actively redefines conventional boundaries and performance practices.

<sup>231</sup> Lorde, Audre. 2017. *Your Silence Will Not Protect You*. UK: Silver Press.

### 5.3 Between Structures

In the opening remarks of this chapter, Clarice Lispector contemplates her own freedom, candidly revealing, “I have a confession to make: I’m a little frightened, for I don’t know where my freedom will lead me.”<sup>232</sup> This sentiment mirrors a pivotal phase in my personal and professional development—a period marked by the preparation and performance of *Thought Sectors*. This event served as a profound moment of transition from a graduate student to a professional academic, symbolizing a quest to discover my voice and purpose. Similar to the immersive experience developed through Rebecca Saunders’ *Dust*, and Sarah Hennies’ *Thought Sectors*, each composition I engage with becomes a unique extension of my artistic self—a transformative journey of acquiring new languages. Tracing and recognizing the historical manifestations of kinship and narratives within the compositions throughout this dissertation, has in turn, bestowed upon me a profound sense of freedom. Intentional acts of interpretation and engagement with musical scores, alongside companion thinking, have catalyzed my sense of liberation. This mirrors Lispector’s sentiment: “I don’t know where my freedom will lead me. It is neither arbitrary nor libertine, but I am unbound.”<sup>233</sup> Not only am I unbound, but, as McClary states, “I am no longer sure what MUSIC is,” and this uncertainty is not just acceptable but inherently liberating.<sup>234</sup> Therefore, *Between Structures* marks a precarious juncture where I navigate my meaning amidst structures in academia, practice, and life—embracing the challenge of materializing in reciprocity with the act of musicking.

Situated within a lineage influenced by composers such as Saunders and Hennies, *Between Structures* additionally pays homage to the oeuvres of Dlugoszewski, Amacher, and

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<sup>232</sup> Lispector, Clarice. 1973. *Agua Viva*. 1.ed. Rio [de Janeiro]: Editora Artenova, 13.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>234</sup> McClary, Susan. 1991. *Feminine Endings: Music Gender and Sexuality*. Minnesota : University of Minnesota Press, 19.

Hovda. In formulating my artistic endeavors, I lean into Lucia Dlugoszewski's words, "It takes a special courage to try to know what beauty is... like rituals of immediacy, into that sense of aliveness."<sup>235</sup> Like Dlugoszewski's work, *Between Structures* demands a deliberate and direct connection with the present moment, emphasizing the immediacy of the ritual of action and practice. The sonic material of *Between Structures* contributes to its multiform aesthetic intention—a synthesis of diverse influences. The title, *Between Structures*, is a manifestation of the interplay between sonic material, contemplation of materialism, and engagement with liminal space, primarily deriving its inspiration from Sara Ahmed's interpretation of Audre Lorde's advocacy for intersectionality. In the introduction to Lorde's *Your Silence Will Not Protect You*, Ahmed pays homage to Lorde, recognizing her early advocacy of 'intersections,' of the 'between structures,' and that Lorde's writing voices "the brutalizing and devastating structures of racism, sexism, classism, ageism, and heterosexism."<sup>236</sup> Therefore, *Between Structures* serves as a rupture within the myriad structures of oppression, echoing the imperative calls for intersectionality.

As a practice, percussion also resides between structures, as Stene elucidated through principles outlined in post-percussion and post-instrumental practice. With its complex cultural and geographical lineage, percussion is a hybrid discipline, eluding possession, and self-ownership. Hortense Spillers describes the absence of self-ownership as a gateway - an intimate experience without interference that materializes through the reciprocal exchange between subjects - in this instance, through the relationship of the activator (performer) and the sounding body/source (instrument).<sup>237</sup> Acknowledging the absence of self-ownership in musical practice,

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<sup>235</sup> Dlugoszewski, Lucia, interview by Cole Gagne. 1993. *Soundpieces 2* The Scarecrow Press, 74.

<sup>236</sup> Lorde, Audre. 2017. *Your Silence Will Not Protect You*. UK: Silver Press, vii.

<sup>237</sup> Spillers, Hortense. 2018. "To the Bone: Some Speculations on Touch." *Youtube*. March. Accessed September 21, 2023. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AvL4wUKIfpo>

goes beyond recognizing one’s place within an interconnected framework of existence, extending beyond the confines of personal identity – rather, it signifies a consent to embrace a cosmic corporeality.<sup>238</sup> Embracing the visceral intangibility of percussion, presents the potential to delve into the intricate and layered systems of abandoning self-ownership and control, and rather, engage in a praxis of understanding of complex ontologies, and the subtle interplay of how conscious experiences manifest in phenomenological interactions. Moreover, by relinquishing the need to control or possess objects, things, or artifacts, through *Between Structures*, I attempt to reimagine the inherent reciprocal exchange within musical performances, highlighting percussion as a complex and diverse activity involving various layers of knowledge and personal experiences.

An exploration of sound and consciousness, *Between Structures* deliberately employs a minimalist instrumentation, emphasizing timbre and the art of transitioning between acoustic materials. Figure 5.9 below illustrates the recommended performer setup, detailing the suggested arrangement of instruments for optimal execution.

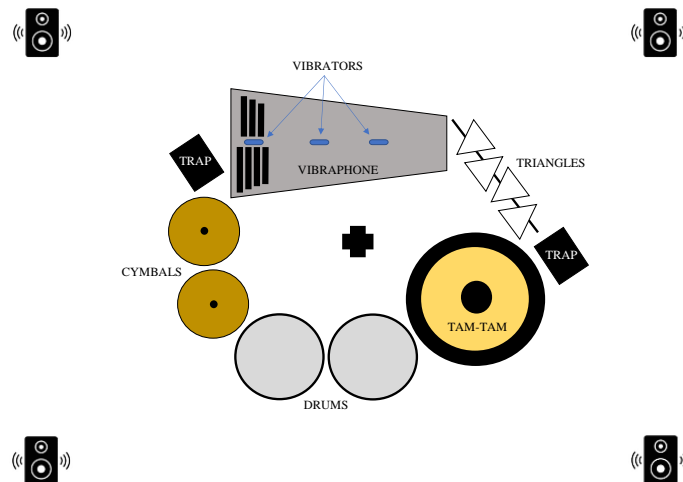


Figure 5.9: Rebecca Lloyd-Jones, *Between Structures*, instrumentation and set up

<sup>238</sup> Russell, Legacy. 2020. *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto*. Londo: Verso, 69.

Within *Between Structures*, I emphasize two distinct timbres: high metallic frequencies and low drone-like motifs. Inspired by the instrumentation of Amacher’s *Adjacencies*, the high-spectrum instruments include the vibraphone, cymbal, triangle, and specific overtones of the tam-tam. These elements are juxtaposed against the low-frequency spectra of the tam-tam and bass drum. Additionally, I manipulate both ranges of the spectrum with vibrators, bass bows, and various mallets to expand the instruments’ timbre potentials. Table 5.5 outlines the correlation between each instrument and the corresponding mallet or object used in its execution.

Table 5.5: Rebecca Lloyd-Jones, *Between Structures*, instrumentation

Between Structures	
Instrument	Mallet Used
Vibraphone	Very soft yarn mallets, Vibrators x3
Bass Drum	Super Ball, Yarn
Drum 2 (Small BD, Tenor, or Tom-Tom)	Vibrator
High Suspended Cymbal	Bow
Low Suspended Cymbal	Bow
Large Tam-Tam	Medium yarn, Soft Tam-Tam beater
Four mounted Triangles	Thin long chain, rubbed lightly across all four simultaneously
Large Triangle (struck/swung)	Triangle beater

I immerse myself in a single timbre within each structure, allowing it to unfold and transition slowly. In the initial three structures, I focus on a single instrument—vibraphone, triangle, and tam-tam—utilizing various mallets and tools of activation to explore timbral variations. As the composition progresses to Structures 4 and 5, more events are introduced within a single structure, creating a busier and denser temporality, building momentum.

Moreover, in the first three structures, the emphasis lies on high-frequency spectra; in contrast, the final two structures incorporate lower-frequency melodic motifs, concluding the work with a constant quarter-note bass drum motif until inaudible. I detail each structure in Table 5.6 below, including the correlating timestamp, instrumentation, and general actions.

Table 5.6: Rebecca Lloyd-Jones, *Between Structures*, score analysis

Between Structures			
Structure	Timestamp	Instrumentation	Action
1	0'00" – 8'45"	Vibraphone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create soft, rippling, rolled clusters starting from the lowest notes of the vibraphone, ascending.</li> <li>- Overlap with vibrator.</li> <li>- Keep the pedal consistently down.</li> </ul>
2	8'45" – 11'35"	Triangles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hold the chain shoulder-width apart and gently rub it over the triangle simultaneously, using a side-to-side motion.</li> <li>- Overlap with the striking of the triangle, swinging or moving it to produce a binaural effect.</li> </ul>
3	11'35" – 14'45"	Tam-Tam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Initiate at a constant quarter note pulse of 160 BPM and explore the contour of the tam-tam, gradually building to a peak.</li> <li>- Fade out while simultaneously slowing down the tempo.</li> </ul>
4	14'45" – 19'15"	Bass Drum Drum 2 High Suspended Cymbal Low Suspended Cymbal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using either the vibrators or the super balls, exert pressure on the drumheads to produce interlocking melodies.</li> <li>- Simultaneously, it overlaps with the development of the cymbal melody.</li> <li>- Maintain a static position with up bows to ensure clear pitch or consistent partials.</li> </ul>
5	19'15" -	Vibraphone Bass Drum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recapitulation of vibrator material on vibraphone from Structure 1, but now secco.</li> <li>- Initiate constant quarter note pulse at 160 BPM on the bass drum, gradually decreasing speed and volume until inaudible.</li> </ul>

Embedded within a practice of reciprocal listening, the compositional development of *Between Structures* unfolded in three distinct stages. Firstly, I focused on creating the material and form; secondly, on the performance and recording of acoustic material; and lastly, on the notation of a score. This sequential approach allowed me to compose and perform before formulating a score and notational directions. This intuitive order enabled me to prioritize timbre and possibility over notation. While this approach may challenge traditional composer-performer hierarchies, I also recognize my active participation in the exchange and dissemination of information, fitting into and perpetuating parameters aligned with Western art music theory and notation. My heightened self-awareness and resistance to complicity in reproducing formal notions of composition have led me to question whether my actions genuinely disrupt conventional musical forms and provide agency, or if I am unwittingly re-prescribing ways of doing. The questioning of my artistic approach intensified my commitment to let go of form in *Between Structures*, shifting towards a more fundamental focus on practice, action and listening. This shift is highlighted through the deliberate allocation of minimal compositional content and temporal freedom per structure. Lê Quan Ninh succinctly captures this perspective by asserting, “if we abandon the idea of form, then we are left to deploy actions whose ends we cannot predict, endings founded in the act itself. There’s no longer an oeuvre, work: just a practice, an action.”<sup>239</sup> Consequently, *Between Structures* takes on this simplicity; it is centered in practice, and in action. By attempting to unlock “acoustic and tactile potentialities – coming into fruition without being held or lost,” my creative journey navigates the intricate balance between form, high and low-frequency spectra, structure, and fluidity in sonic expression.<sup>240</sup> Composed

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<sup>239</sup> Ninh, Lê Quan. 2010. *Improvising Freely: The ABC’s of an Experience*. Guelph, Ontario: PS Guelph, 43.

<sup>240</sup> Ettinger, Bracha. 2006. *The Matrixial Borderspace*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 19.

intuitively yet influenced by my body of work as a percussionist, *Between Structures* is a multiform composition that evokes vulnerabilities, intimacies, and ambivalences.

As I conclude this chapter, I must confess: “I don’t know where my freedom will lead me.”<sup>241</sup> Despite its uncharted nature, I navigate a creative path unbound by linearity, disrupting prevailing power structures while steadfastly embracing feminist sensibilities. Central to my practice is a profound commitment to listening: “I vanish because I am present in listening, present *to* listening.”<sup>242</sup> This poignant statement encapsulates the profound connection between presence and consciousness, indelibly shaping the discourse throughout this chapter. Furthermore, listening, when viewed as a participatory act, establishes a connection with both human and non-human entities. Whether prescribed, chosen, active, or involuntary, personal experiences intricately shape our listening. Therefore, moving forward in reciprocity, I prioritize acts of listening over the inclination to express what I already know – “listening, as an act that might let each other in - psychically, physically - to another’s ways of inhabiting the world.”<sup>243</sup>

Throughout this chapter, I’ve endeavored to listen and to trace the feminist genealogies of Sarah Hennies and Rebecca Saunders, examining their profound impact on my creative journey within the framework of *Between Structures*. These compositions have acted as artistic conduits, shaping the outcome of my work and offering companionship as I navigate the intricate landscape of the ‘in-between.’ Much like Lispector concludes *Água Viva*, my reflection concludes as enigmatic as it began. The narrator remains elusive, and time is ambiguous, uncertain if it has passed or if time itself has ceased. Streams of consciousness converge and

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<sup>241</sup> Lispector, Clarice. 1973. *Água Viva*. 1.ed. Rio [de Janeiro]: Editora Artenova, 13.

<sup>242</sup> Ninh, Lê Quan. 2010. *Improvising Freely: The ABC’s of an Experience*. Guelph, Ontario: PS Guelph, 68.

<sup>243</sup> Singh, Julietta. 2018. *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements*. Durham: Duke University Press, 27.

manifest over pages of unpredictably yet heart-wrenchingly poignant post-humanist prose. The conclusion is solemn, declaring, “What I’m writing to you goes on, and I am bewitched.”<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Lispector, Clarice. 1973. *Água Viva*. 1.ed. Rio [de Janeiro]: Editora Artenova, 88.

## EPILOGUE

“Years passed. The seasons came and went, the short animal lives fled by. A time came when there was no one who remembered the old days before the Rebellion, except Clover, Benjamin, Moses the raven, and a number of the pigs.”

– George Orwell, *Animal Farm*, 1945

As time passed and seasons changed, the women within these pages faded from history, their contributions relegated to fragmented, misunderstood narratives. However, many comrades persisted, listening, and advocating when others forgot or failed to remember. It is within this spirit of perseverance and remembrance that this dissertation exists.

I embarked on *In Search of a Sonic Democracy* with an informal, self-reflexive introduction, inviting readers to understand the personal journey that led me to explore my identity within my practice and its interface with the communities I inhabit. I acknowledge that this research found me as much as I sought it out, highlighting my earnestness and urgency to advocate for the voices of women within the early percussion canon. What unfolds within these pages is a celebration of three remarkable figures, all taking on the moniker of composer, performer, and theorist - whose names often still evoke puzzled, unknown reactions in experimental or classical music circles: Lucia Dlugoszewski, Maryanne Amacher, and Eleanor Hovda. Subsequently, I have endeavored to center their work, paying homage to their legacies, and extending a hand of kinship to future endeavors that will celebrate their narratives in robust, forward-facing ways. Although this document and my words are static, enclosed within these pages, is music. My accompanying creative portfolio brings to life the methodologies of practice and explorations I speak so passionately about throughout this dissertation. For me, performance and research are not separate entities but part of a holistic journey.

Throughout this dissertation, I have explored various types of bodies—structural bodies, bodies of sound, metaphysical and physical conceptions of the body, and the way these bodily constructs occupy spaces, as well as the privileges afforded to them. I have scrutinized the perpetuation of a canon and percussion culture that bears a history of gender imbalance, questioning what the historiography of percussion would resemble if the protagonists were not depicted as a “depressingly consistent series of photos of groups of men wearing the same clothes and doing the same things.”<sup>245</sup> Additionally, I have engaged in introspection, questioning my own complicity in perpetuating harmful narratives within performance practices. Specifically, I have reflected on the historically gendered masculine nature of percussion, acknowledging that this bias has, at times, influenced my musicking. Yet, through my reflexive inquiries, I have sought to unearth feminist sensibilities and explore feminist perspectives in percussion. I also acknowledge that I don’t have answers and do not wish to prescribe solutions to fractured histories. Instead, in my closing chapter I focus on fabulating new futures and fostering companionist dialogues with my practice by exploring and detailing my composition, *Between Structures*.

*Between Structures* resides within temporal precarity—a time and timbre disturbed and disoriented, where the composition becomes a conduit for my consciousness, blurring boundaries between self and sound, but eventuating in freedom. Born from the desire to not only trace feminist genealogies but also to settle and rebuild myself, the sound world of *Between Structures* manifests from the women who have inspired me, acting as an homage to the languages of Lucia Dlugoszewski, Maryanne Amacher, Eleanor Hovda, Rebecca Saunders, and Sarah Hennies. Reflecting on my opening epigraph from Lê Quan Ninh, “I don’t have the sense that I play

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<sup>245</sup> Hennies, Sarah. 2018. “Queer Percussion.” *Queer Trash: The Symposium*. Brooklyn, New York: ISSUE Project Room.

percussion, that I am a percussionist. This choice of instrumentation was made because this medium lets me feel free, even though there always is a degree of burden.”<sup>246</sup> He speaks of a freedom, like that found in the informal percussive practice of Dlugoszewski, Amacher and Hovda. One not interested in the percussionist, but rather centered in sound and action over outcome. I too do not feel like a percussionist or that I play percussion, but rather that this medium of sound and musicking, gives me a sonic and liberating freedom where the burden keeps me humbled and on course to advocate for an inclusive, sustainable practice. Therefore, moving forward, I hope that this dissertation can act as a catalyst for contemplating a sonic democracy - one centering sound and outcome over individualisms, inspiring words, sounds, conversations, performances, and actions of reciprocity. I am eager to participate in that process, standing in solidarity as a companion thinker to my fellow co-conspirators.

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<sup>246</sup> Ninh, Lê Quan. 2010. *Improvising Freely: The ABC's of an Experience*. Guelph, Ontario: PS Guelph, 64.

## APPENDIX

### Appendix #1: Score of Between Structures

REBECCA LLOYD-JONES

Between Structures (2023)

for solo percussionist and electronics

## Between Structures (2023)

*Between Structures*, composed for solo percussionist and electronics, explores the nuanced interplay between acoustic and electronic material, emphasizing the transitions and experiences of sounding bodies between structures. Comprising five interconnected structures, each representing unique consciousness and acoustic stimuli, the continuous overlap of sounds converges, blurring the lines between clear beginnings and endings, fostering a perpetual 'between' state. Real-time sound captured through a quadraphonic array morph with acoustic material, granting the performer flexibility to manipulate temporal durations throughout each structure.

### Instrumentation

Vibraphone  
Bass Drum  
Drum 2 (Small BD, Tenor, or Tom-Tom)  
High Suspended Cymbal  
Low Suspended Cymbal  
Large Tam-Tam  
Four mounted Triangles  
Large Triangle (struck/swung)

### Mallets

Very soft yarn  
Medium yarn  
Tam-Tam beater  
Triangle beater  
Vibrators x3  
Superball  
Bow  
Thin long chain, rubbed lightly across all four triangles

**General Structure**

Each structure serves as a distinct sound world and consciousness, aiming to encapsulate a unique sense of calm and curiosity. The transition between structures is attaca, characterized by subtlety and control.

**Duration**

The performer holds discretion over the duration of material within each structure. The total duration of performance should not be less than 25 minutes.

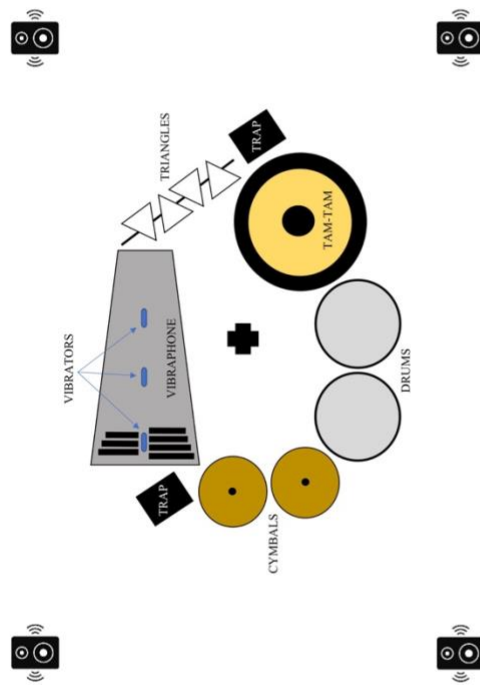
**Electronics**

The electronic component involves live signal processing, with events labelled 1.1a, 1.2b, etc., executed through MAX/MSP.

**Setup**

Microphone placement, quadraphonic array configuration, and percussion setup are left to the performer's discretion, allowing for an optimal arrangement in the given performance space.

**Suggested performer set up:**



# STRUCTURE 1

1.1 Vib.

1.1.a

1.1.b

1.2 Vib.

1.2.a

1.2.b

## Performer:

- Very soft yarn mallets.
- Create very soft, ripple-roll-type clusters using pitch sets of three notes. Minimize sound of attack.
- Start from the lowest notes of the vibraphone.
- Slowly ascend to the specified pitches.
- Always add one more pitch at a time.
- As much resonance as possible, pedal always down.
- Pause on pitch sets that create the most natural phenomena, pulsation, and oscillation.
- When at the top of the indicated pitch clusters, transition to 1.2.

## Electronics:

- 1.1.a: capture sound till 1.1.b
- 1.1.b: before reaching the highest cluster of the given range, trigger to play back captured sound pitch shifted 1va + a minor 3<sup>rd</sup> higher w/ gradual fade out over 3 minutes overlapping with physical playing of 1.2

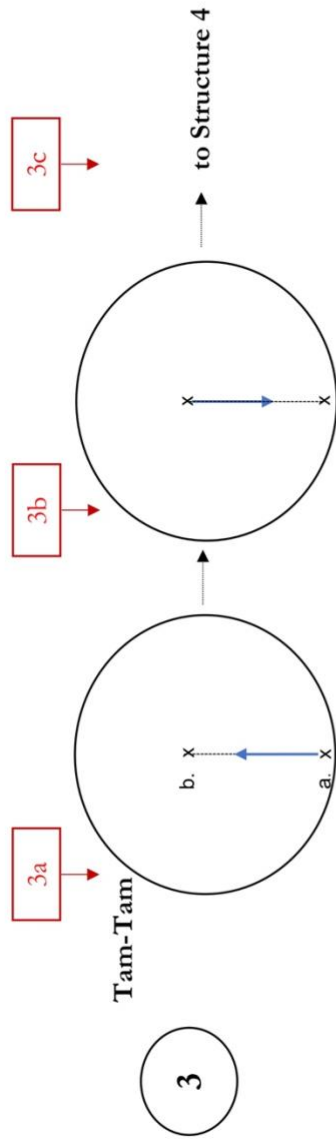
- Place vibrators in the middle of the instrument between the natural and accidental keys so that the vibrator touches both the natural and accidental keys, in the approximate indicated pitch area.
- Gradually turn on and manipulate the volume as appropriate.
- Create a shrill and constant swarm.
- Once sounded, subtly move the vibrators in ascending and descending motion, creating subtle fluctuations in pitch.
- Trigger electronics when ready to transition to Structure 2.

- 1.2.a: capture sound till 1.2.b
- 1.2.b: before being ready to transition to Structure 2, trigger to play back captured 1.2.a sound w/ gradual fade out over 2 minutes overlapping with physical playing of 2.1

## STRUCTURE 2

<div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>2.1</b> Triangles</p> </div>	<div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>2.2</b> Triangle</p> <p style="text-align: right;">→ to Structure 3</p> </div>
<p><b>Performer:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use four mounted triangles.</li> <li>- Hold thing chain shoulder-width apart.</li> <li>- Gently rub the chain against triangles in a horizontal side-to-side motion.</li> <li>- Create a sound that blends and manifests out of the vibrator material from Structure 1.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When the sound of the mounted triangle motif has developed, transition to large triangle.</li> <li>- Strike large triangle, swinging or moving it as necessary to produce a binaural effect.</li> <li>- Repeat this attack, with intervals of silence, approximately five times.</li> <li>- Once ready, transition to Structure 3.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Electronics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>2.1.a:</b> capture sound till 2.1.b</li> <li>- <b>2.1.b:</b> a minute after triggering 2.1.a, trigger to play back captured 2.1.a sound + loop overlapping with physical playing of 2.2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>2.2.a:</b> fade out played back 2.1.b over 2 minutes overlapping with physical playing of Structure 3</li> </ul>

## STRUCTURE 3



### **Performer:**

- Begin with a steady and curious quarter-note pulse set at 160 BPM.
- Follow the contour/direction of the tam-tam material indicated, actively seeking unique timbres on your journey.
- Gradually increase dynamic levels, reaching a peak at the centre of the tam-tam - never too loud.
- Once at the peak, initiate the transition to Structure 4.
- As you transition, gradually slow down tempo and dynamic levels to niente.

### **Electronics:**

- **3a:** capture sound till 3b
- **3b:** play back captured 3a sound and loop
- **3c:** fade out and slow down over 2 minutes overlapping with physical playing of Structure 4

# STRUCTURE 4

<p>4.1</p> <p>Bass Drum</p> <p>Drum 2</p> <p>4.1.a</p> <p>4.1.b</p> <p>4.1.c</p> <p>1' Ca.</p>	<p><b>Performer:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use either vibrators or superballs.</li> <li>- Apply pressure/friction on the drumheads/skin to produce interlocking low-frequency melodies with drums 1 and 2.</li> <li>- Never busy, always smooth.</li> <li>- Once ready, transition to 4.2</li> </ul>
<p>4.2</p> <p>Cymbals</p> <p>4.2.a</p> <p>4.2.b</p> <p>4.2.c</p> <p>to Structure 5</p>	<p><b>Performer:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Execute one single up-bow or down-bow for each cymbal.</li> <li>- Apply moderate bow tension.</li> <li>- Strive for a consistent pitch/frequency spectrum from each cymbal, creating a static dyad melody.</li> <li>- Never excessive, always contained.</li> <li>- Once developed, transition to Structure 5.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Electronics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4.1.a: capture sound till 4.1.b</li> <li>- 4.1.b: a minute after triggering 4.1.a, trigger to play back captured 4.1.a sound + loop</li> <li>- 4.1.c: when ready to transition, fade out and slow down over 2 minutes overlapping with physical playing of 4.2</li> </ul>

# STRUCTURE 5

## 5.1 Vib.

5.1.a →

5.1.b →

5.2

5.2.a →

$\text{♩} = 160$

5x

30" ca.

5.2.b →

$\text{♩} = 160$

gradual decel. till end

5.2.c →

### Performer:

- Recapitulation of the vibrator material from Structure 1, but with secco pedal.
- Gradually fade in each vibrator, introducing one at a time.
- Once the sound has developed, transition to Structure 5.2; do not linger in Structure 5.1.

- Simultaneously trigger 5.2a and begin a constant quarter-note pulse at 160 BPM on the bass drum.
- Repeat 8/4 bar up-to five times.
- Once completed, trigger electronics (5.2b) to cease 5.1 material.
- Anytime within the following 16 quarter notes, trigger 5.2c to initiate dueling bass drum material.
- Allow electronic and acoustic quarter notes to fade in and out of sync.
- Gradually decrease speed and volume until inaudible.

### Electronics:

- 5.1.a: capture sound till 1.1.b
- 5.1.b: before being ready to transition to 5.2, trigger to play back captured sound pitch overlapping with physical playing of 1.2

- 5.2.a: capture sound till 5.2.c
- 5.2.b: stop abruptly 5.1.b playback
- 5.2.c: about 30" after 5.2.b, trigger to play back captured 5.2.a sound, loop and gradual fade out

## Appendix #2: Creative Portfolio

This creative portfolio contextualizes the collective discourses and compositions centered within this dissertation. Hyperlinks are provided for each composition, allowing access to audio recordings, video performances, and realizations of creative works by Lucia Dlugoszewski, Maryanne Amacher, Eleanor Hovda, Rebecca Saunders, Sarah Hennies, and my composition, *Between Structures*.

### Chapter 2: Reimagining the Percussion Works of Lucia Dlugoszewski: A Feminist and Historiographic Inquiry

- Lucia Dlugoszewski (1925-2000) | *Song of the Poetry of Everyday Sounds* (1952)

### Chapter 3: Spectral Listening: Maryanne Amacher's Adjacencies

- Maryanne Amacher (1938-2009) | *Adjacencies* (1965)

### Chapter 4: Embodied Sound: Exploring Feminist Subjectivity in the Percussion Music of Eleanor Hovda

- Eleanor Hovda (1940-2009) | *CYMBALMUSIC II – Centreflow II* (1983)

### Chapter 5: Navigating Between Structures: Reflexive Explorations and Practice-Based Research

- Rebecca Saunders (1967-) | *Dust* (2017-2018)
- Sarah Hennies (1979-) | *Thought Sectors* (2020)
- Rebecca Lloyd-Jones (1989-) | *Between Structures* (2023)

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