

Reviewing of Audio Paper: Found in Translation

An audio paper by Henrik Frisk and Nguyễn Thanh Thủy

Comments are outlined under the criteria provided:

a. A clear research question or clearly defined topic.

A research question is not clearly defined, it is more a case of some topics being explored. Issues of translation are raised, as well as things like the relationship of sound to the meaning of text, approaching poems creatively as sound, authenticity etc. However, by the end of the audio paper it is not entirely clear how much has been gained. What is 'found in translation' exactly? There is some retrospective reflection, but what about exploration of the actual creative process? It is revealed in the audio paper that the two artists did not really have much discussion during the making of the work, including about the themes of cultural translation and meaning etc, which seems strange from a research perspective.

b. Relevance and originality of the paper in the defined context.

Engaging, original music work. However, context not entirely defined and what is original about the issues being discussed is not spelt out.

c. A thorough argumentation and exploration of the research question or topic.

The audio paper is quite short, which makes thorough exploration difficult to achieve. The abstract is short too. It does not clearly outline an argument as such, rather it raises some issues. The abstract could be longer with more detailed contextualisation of the aims of the audio paper and of the comments from the artists' conversation that are included in it.

d. Appropriate and thorough references in the accompanying text (abstract and bibliography) and/or in the audio production.

Abstract seems to have some errors (e.g. penultimate sentence has part missing 'The influenced by'). Not clear how the writings in the bibliography (about musical empathy etc) relate to the abstract.

e. Coherence between dramaturgy, aesthetic means and content.

The format has coherence, oscillating between sections of the recorded piece connecting with some snippets of conversation between the artists. One of the most compelling uses of the sonic properties of the audio paper format related to Nguyen Thanh Thuy's heightened recitation of the poem and how the meaning of words only becomes evident as the vocalisation of the word progresses (because of the tonal nature of Vietnamese). This could be taken further with more focused discussion of the connection between the sound of the recitation and the

meaning of the text for Vietnamese audiences, as well as potential responses from non-Vietnamese speakers who have no knowledge of the text's meaning. This includes Frisk himself who seems, surprisingly, to have not had any knowledge of the text's meaning when working on the electronics for the piece. The shifts in the meaning of poem when it becomes translated into Vietnamese, and vocalised and set to music in particular ways, would have been interesting to reflect on more.

At the moment, the paper seems more in line with experimental audio paper criteria below. Perhaps the existing audio paper and accompanying text could be supplemented and oriented around more focused arguments.

If qualified for publications as an experimental audio paper, you'll find:

- a. Clear definition of topic.
- b. Meaningful investigation of sound as medium, the content and the experimental format.
- c. Coherence between dramaturgy, aesthetic means and content.