Docentansökan

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1 Introduction

Themes: Interaction, Improvisation, The self, Ethics, Technology, Collaboration, Politics

The main threads of my work since my dissertation include:

- **Self and otherness**: reconfiguring the binary relation between self and other: Allowing the Self to "be informed by what is now going on in the process rather than by what has traditionally shaped it" **frisk2013**

- **Artistic research as an actor in social and political thinking**: "placing the artistic work in the light of a particular social, theoretical, cultural, or philosophical framework [...] causes the political dimension to surface" **frisk-ost13**

- **Expanding the field of improvisation** reconsidering the impact of individuality, habit and freedom: "The impact of freedom, being such an essential concept in the understanding of improvisation, is closely related to some of the more social and political topics [...] and can be understood in a number of ways, such as freedom *of the self* and freedom *from the self*" **frisk12-improv**

- **Artistic research methodology**: In **frisk-ost13** we claim that it is necessary to question replacement terms such as 'silent knowledge', 'narration' and 'new knowledge' "and trust the power and efficiency of the artistic practice to be solid enough to withstand the impact of established and hybrid qualitative research methods without losing its qualities as art while displaying its potential as research."

2 Work since dissertation

One of the sections taken out from my 2008 PhD dissertation "Improvisation, computers and interaction" **frisk08** was the one concerning the Self. From the beginning the idea of the Self as the defining difference between man and machine seemed to me one of the more important aspects of the investigation I was carrying out. Due to the way the project had developed, however, in the end it proved to be less important. The topic of human-computer interaction and improvisation had taken new and unexpected turns and cutting this section out was part of the often common process of narrowing down a thesis to give

it more focus. After the dissertation, however, I wanted to approach this vast and difficult area of the Self and its constitution in art and improvisation and it became the focus of my post doc research within the project *(Re)Thinking Improvisation.*

The self influences so many aspects that I have already explored, such as the concept of *control, autonomy,* and of the *work in motion.* In almost all my works during the five years that has passed since my PhD defence, the notion of the Self and its relation to the work, the collaborators, the audience, and the field has been a central aspect. I have been aiming for an expanded context for artistic production and research in which the 'author' is distributed among several agents. What I am discussing here is not to outsource parts of the work creation, nor to remove myself from the creative process. Rather, it is about taking responsibility for a relation with the other (listener, co-musician, co-artist, etc.) where *listening* is one of the key components. It is about the acceptence that control and result is less interesting than process and about giving up ownership and authority in an attempt to open-source the musical work. Henry David Thoreau, a main character of the development of the objectivist view, whose work became an important inspiration for John Cage, speaks of the transparent eye-ball and the objective I **thoreau2004** However, objectivity is not the main matter here. Rather, it is the space for subjectivity that holds the key to the success of important aspects of collaborative practicies:"Validity then is fundamentally a matter of making the subjectivity of the artist visible in the research design. The need for creating a multi-layered understanding of subject-positions does come out clearly in studies of collaborative creativity" **frisk-ost13** In collaborative practicies negotiation and sharing are at the center, as is the general philosophy of being open to the perspective of the other, a generally phenomenological approach, and giving priority of eye over I.

The ethical dimension grew out of the artistic projects, in particular out of the Vietnamese-Swedish group The Six Tones and the different projects we engaged in. Its inter-cultural context made it necessary to probe the questions of identity, belonging, difference, otherness, ontology and epistemology in relation to our work, to music and to the inter cultural context we are situated in. In this dimension the important question of identity has to be investigated. The psychologically charged relationship of identity and Self has a special meaning in post-colonial theory as many of the common components for constructing identity are rooted in us-and-them binary relations. The hypthesis that I have been developing throught this work is that the identity of the Self as described in a binary relation to the other (as in soloist-accompanist, composer-performer, performer-listener, art music-traditional music, Westerner-foreigner, etc.) may be deconstructed in artistic practicies through the tools I developed in my thesis. These are primarily the ideas concerning the distribution of the creative process. The primary artistic contributions with reference to the self are the double CD Signal in Noise **sixtones13** and the composition *The Transparent I* **frisk-transparent** and in *Improvisation and the self* **frisk12-improv** the social and political aspects are discussed:

> We must also include and consider the fact that the self is continuously constructing the other, and similarly, how the dynamics of the self is influenced by social and political powers. Finally, it is important to remember that the social and political domains themselves

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may be influenced and even altered by how the self and the other is
constituted.

In a complex interplay between music, improvisation, consciousness through
reflection, experimentation, methodological rigour, practice, the social and the
political I have begun to deconstruct the Self in a way that makes an alternative
understanding of the other possible.

The work Stefan and I did in The Six Tones while preparing for the already
mentioned recording of *Signal in Noise* turned out to be the beginning of a
new direction for the group we started in 2006. The Six Tones had done a few
projects but the way we engaged with different aspects of the diversified musical
life of Hanoi was an idea whose artistic influence we had not anticipated. We
boldly emerged into quite radical improvisations with the traditional flute play-
ing of xxx and we brought our own acoustic expressions to the studio with the
contemporary electronic playing of Tri Minh and Vu Na Than. These sessions
exemplify the potential complexity of artistic work. In music it is often speak of
that which is natural, or that comes naturally, as something that is effortless-
ness is meant to be. Our playing in these sessions was effortless but to me there
was a considerable resistance involved, a resistance that had to be overcome.
Hence, though we quickly arrived at a satisfying result the process was anythin
but effortless to me. This double experience of easyness and resistance was

Even the Integra project whose initial aim was to fuse technology and music
contributed to the shift in my artistic activities. Music technology, as much
technology, has long been focussed on a rigid epistemology firmly based on the
scientific field rather than the artistic. Though many of the artworks that em-
manate from this field certainly are not scientific in their nature (such as Stock-
hausen's earlier work, Alvin Lucier's brilliant conceptual pieces or John Cage's
low-tech electronic pieces) the discipline has since long been situated in an aca-
demic context where music technology specialistts are distinct from artists. The
electronic music studio in Paris, IRCAM, developed the term *musical assistant*
who would contribute technical knowledge to composers. An essentially mod-
ernist idea of labour division where composers could not, or should not, deal
with the technical issues in works containing technology. This may seem as a
logical and pragmatic solution, similar to those made in theaters, opera houses,
film productions, e.g. However, it is also one in which the technology is treated
as an auxillary tool as compared to the main artistic work. In reality the *mu-
sical assistant* became as much of an artist as the composer having to come
up with creative solutions to impossible problems, albeit always a second grade
artist never recognized for his or her contribution. The artistic impetus of the
composer made the auteurship remain with him or her.

The goal of the integra project however was not primarily to counteract the
authority of the creator but to facilitate for musicians and new music ensembles
to work with electronics. Part of the task was to build tools for musicians
and composers that were sophisticated yet easy to use. As a consequence,
along with the work Stefan Östersjö and I did with *Repetition Repeats all other
Repetitions* and the studies entitled *Negotiating the Musical Work* (all part of
my dissetation) Integra further fueled my ideas concerning the *work in motion*,
a distributed work with no beginning and no end, an open sourced work of art
that almost anyone can fork and continue to work on. In the end, there is much
work yet to be done, and, obviously, not all projects are suitable for this method.

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Instead, the model can be seen as a guide, a method to consciously counteract the tendency for artistic expressions to fall back on modernist structures, closed for listener participation **friskcoessens2013** Towards the end of the project the Swedish composer Kent Olofsson and I, both of us involved in the scientific aspect of the Integra project, joined forces with chamber group Ars Nova, part of the artistic side of Integra, and created the digital chanber group *Switched-On*. Five musicians all playing electronic, or electronically enhanced versions of their instruments. Both Kent and I wrote music for this ensemble and the setup, technically incredibly advanced, was inspired by the ideas developed in the Integra project.

My contribution to this ensemble was the composition *The Mystic Writing Pad*:

> *This piece is an improvisation based on the structure of the American composer Harry Partch's 43-tone Just Intonation scale; a division of the octave in 43 unequal steps. The 43 notes of the scale have been distributed among the five instruments, and it is only together that they can explore the full potential of the scale. The collaborative aspect of this piece is further explored by its meta-instrumnts: instruments that are hidden under the surface and for which the players need to join forces in order to control.*
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> *The title, The Mystic Writing Pad, refers to Freud's 1924 paper in which he lays out a hypothesis about the inner functionlity of human perception. Though much can be said about his hypothesis (and much has been said about it, not the least by French philosopher Jacques Derrida) my resons for choosing this title is much more practical and metaphorcal. The functionality of the technology upon which Switched-On relies can often be very mystical, but the ease with which it can be used to register the phrases played by the musicians is truly akin to a writing pad: great at quickly taking notes (in two senses of the word), but terrible at making thoroughly thought through statements.* **frisk-mystic**

The piece is in three parts where the first part is a structured improvisation, the second a purely electronic fixed media part and the third is an ensemble passage for midi-saxophone solo.

3 Förteckning över arbeten

1. **frisk-re_improv13**

   (a) **frisk-transparent**
   (b) **frisk2013**
   (c) **friskostersjo2013b**

2. **frisk12-improv**

3. **frisk_better**

4. **frisk10**

5. **frisk-mystic**

6. **frisk-ost13**

7. **frisk-cobussen09**

8. **frisk08**

4   Konserter

2013 *Saxophone and computer* Hanoi Sound stuff and Tour in Vietnam.

2013 *Saxophone* Lennart Åberg Group featuring Peter Erskine, UKK, Uppsala.

2012 *Soxophone and computer* Frisk/Frendin, Musik i Halland.

2012 *Soxophone* Stroman/Jönsson group, London, UK, and Sweden.

2012 *Saxophone* KOPAorchestra on tour, Sweden and Denmark

2011 *Saxophone and computer* International session on artistic research, Malmö.

2011 *Saxophone* KOPAorchestra on tour, Sweden

2011 *Saxophone* Stroman/Jönsson Vocal project feat. Lena Willemark, KOPAfestival, Lund, Sweden

2011 *Saxophone and computer* Kalvfestivalen, Kalv, Sweden

2011 *Computer* Summerfestival, Ensebmle Midt Vest, Herning, Denmark

2011 *Computer* Integra Festival, Copenhagen, Denmark

2011 *Saxophone and computer* re:New festival, Copenhagen

2010 *Composition* Repetition Repeats. . . in Ghent, Bruxelles

2010 *Saxophone* Frisk / Beirach / Mogensen trio, tour in Sweden and Denmark.

2010 *Saxophone and computer* EarZoom festival, Lubljana, Slovenia.

2010 *Saxophone and computer* The Six Tones concert at Green Space Festival, Hanoi, Vietnam.

2009 *Computer* - Performance of Anne LeBaron's cyberopera *Sucktion*

2009 *Saxophone and bandleader* - Premiere of the 10-piece band Henrik Frisk's Pli at Kopasetic Festival, Malmö, Sweden.

2009 *Computer* - Performances of *Continuous Breach* at Copenhagen and Aarhus jazz festivals.

2009 *Computer* - etherSound in Stockholm at Nybrokajen 11.

2009 *Saxophone* - performances in Malmö and Lund with lim.

2009 *Computer* - Tour in Sweden and Denmark with The Six Tones

2007 *Saxophone* - Performances with lim and Marc Ducret.

2007 *Saxophone and computer* - ICMC Copenhagen

Since 2006 *Computer* - Performances with Stefan Östersjö (guitar) in Vietnam, China, USA, UK and Sweden.

Since 2003 *Saxophone* - Performances in Sweden and USA in duo with Per-Anders Nilsson (laptop).

Since 2002   *Computer* - Performances in Sweden, Iceland, USA, Canada and Germany in duo with Henrik Frendin (viola).

2002   *Saxophone* - Tour in Mexico.

2002   *Saxophone and computer* - ICMC, Gothenburg, Sweden

2001   *Saxophone and computer* - ICMC, Habana, Cuba

2001   *Saxophone* - Bell Atlantic Jazz Festival, New York.   *Michael Formanek Northern Exposure.*

2000   *Saxophone* - Scandinavian tour as well as New York performances.   *Michael Formanek Northern Exposure.*

1996-2005   *Saxophone and computer* - Several installations and performances in Scandinavia, Germany and Bellarus with Swedish visual artist Stefan Lundgren.

1997   *Saxophone* - Tour and recordings with Blue Pages, nominated Swedish Jazz Group of the Year.

1996, 97, 98   *Saxophone* - Tours and recordings with pianist Richie Beirach.

1995   *Saxophone* - Swedish tour with David Liebman.

1992   *Conductor, saxophone* - Montreux International Jazz Festival.   *The Orchestra*

5   Publikationer

2013   **frisk12-improv**

2013   **frisk2013-2**

2013   **friskcoessens2013**

2013   **friskostersjo2013**

2013   **friskostersjo2013b**

2013   **frisk2013**

2013   **frisk-ost13**

2012   **frisk2013c**

2012   **frisk12-improv**

2011   **frisk11:ELIA**

2011   **frisk11**

2011   **frisK-bull11**

2010   **frisk10**

2009 **frisk09**

2009 **frisk09:improv**

2008 **frisk08**

2008 **frisk-bullock08**

2007 **frisk-bull07**

2007 **frisk07**

2006 **frisk-ost06**

2006 **frisk-ost06-2**

2005 **frisk05**

6   Bibliografi