

ACADEMY OF PERFORMING ARTS IN PRAGUE

**THEATRE FACULTY**

Performing Arts

Directing for Devised and Object Theatre

**M.A. Thesis**

**MUSIC AS THE PROTAGONIST**

**Bård Bjørknes**

Supervisor: MgA. Lukáš Jiříčka, Ph.D.

Opponent: MgA. Jiří Adámek, Ph.D.

Date of defence: June 2017

Allocated academic title: M.A.

Prague, 2017

AKADEMIE MÚZICKÝCH UMĚNÍ V PRAZE

**DIVADELNÍ FAKULTA**

Dramatická umění

Directing for Devised and Object Theatre

**DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE**

**HUDBA JAKO PROTAGONISTA**

**Bård Bjørknes**

Vedoucí práce: MgA. Lukáš Jiříčka, Ph.D.

Oponent práce: MgA. Jiří Adámek, Ph.D.

Datum obhajoby: červen 2017

Přidělovaný akademický titul: M.A.

Praha, 2017

## Declaration

I declare that I have prepared my Master's Thesis independently on the following topic:

MUSIC AS THE PROTAGONIST

under the expert guidance of my thesis advisor and with the use of the cited literature and sources.

Prague, date: .....

.....

Signature of the candidate

## Warning

The use and public application of the findings of this thesis or any other treatment thereof are permissible only on the basis of a licensing contract, i.e. the consent of the author and of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague.



## Foreword

This MA thesis is marking that my 2 years of studying at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague is coming to an end. I would like to thank Lukáš Jiříčka and Jiří Adámek for all guidance and help as my supervisors for this thesis and my performances.

I would also like to thank Sodja Lotker and Kateřina Dolenská for being very helpful regarding my final year of Damu.

I want to thank the people who I have collaborated with in the performances. Maëlane, Vláša, Lise, Klára, Natálie, Šimon, Fedir and Václav!

At last I want to thank Hege, my family and my friends for being helpful, supportive and encouraging.

## **Music as the Protagonist**

This master thesis is a research on the Music Theatre genre. My intention is to examine how the use of music and sound as main components can open for new structures and methods in a theatre process and performance. The genre is in a situation of constant exploring which is resulting in artists finding new methods for their artistic work.

I am starting the thesis with a smaller research on hearing and the function of the ears in a theatre context. In this part I am aiming for a basic knowledge on how we are using our ears while attending theatre. I continue by writing about the genre, music theatre, from a historical point of view. Starting with the music theatre in the ancient Greece until the music theatre of our time, I am focusing on different forms, artists and happenings that have been of importance for the music theatre and its development. Further I write about the term music theatre and its many definitions, before ending the chapter with introducing the directors/composers Nikolaj Cederholm and Heiner Goebbels. I am analysing two different music theatre performances, one by Cederholm called "Teaterkoncert Beethoven" and one by Goebbels called "Stifters Dinge", to get a deeper understanding of their methods and visions regarding music theatre. I am looking at differences and similarities in the two performances.

The next part of my thesis is about my own experience of making music theatre. I am sharing my thoughts and reflections around the two processes and performances I have directed in my final year of studying. The last part is a discussion and reflection around the research I have done, and experiences I have had regarding music and sound in theatre and how it can open for new structures and methods in a theatre context.

## Hudba jako protagonista

Tato diplomová práce je výzkumem žánru hudebního divadla (music theatre). Mým záměrem je prověřit, jak může využití hudby a zvuku jako hlavních komponent inscenace otevřít nové struktury a metody v divadelním procesu a výsledné inscenaci. Tento žánr je v situaci neustálého zkoumání, což vede k tomu, že umělci nacházejí nové metody pro svou uměleckou práci.

Tuto diplomovou práci začínám menším výzkumem o sluchu a funkci uší v divadelním kontextu. V této části se zaměřuji na základní poznatky o tom, jak používáme své uši při návštěvě divadla. Pokračuji psaním o žánru hudebního divadla z historického hlediska. Hudebním divadlem ve starém Řecku počínaje a hudebním divadlem naší doby konče; zaměřuji se na různé formy, umělce a události, které jsou pro hudební divadlo a jeho vývoj důležité.

Dále píšu o pojmu "hudební divadlo" a jeho mnoha definicích, a ještě předtím, než ukončím tuto kapitolu, představením režiséry a skladatele Nikolaje Cederholma a Heinerja Goebbelse. Analyzuji dvě různé hudebně-divadelní inscenace: Cederholmovu s názvem "Teaterkoncert Beethoven" a Goebbelsovu "Stifters Dinge", abych získal hlubší pochopení jejich metod a vizí ohledně hudebního divadla. Zaměřuji se na rozdíly a podobnosti obou inscenací.

Další část mé práce je věnována mé vlastní zkušenosti z tvorby hudebního divadla. Děním se o své myšlenky a úvahy o dvou procesech zkoušení a inscenacích, které jsem režíroval v závěrečném ročníku studia. Poslední část práce tvoří diskuse a úvaha o výzkumu, který jsem udělal, o zkušenostech, které jsem ohledně hudby a zvuku v divadle získal, a také o tom, jak to může otevřít nové struktury a metody práce v divadelním kontextu.

# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>10</b>
1.1	Clarification of terms.....	11
1.2	Method.....	11
<b>2</b>	<b>The art of looking with the ear .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Music Theatre.....</b>	<b>17</b>
3.1	A historical overview.....	17
3.2	The term Music theatre.....	24
3.3	Nikolaj Cederholm and Theatre Concert.....	26
3.4	Heiner Goebbels and Composed Theatre .....	27
<b>4</b>	<b>Music Theatre Performances.....</b>	<b>31</b>
4.1	Analysis of Teaterkoncert Beethoven.....	32
4.2	Analysis of Stifters Dinge.....	36
4.3	Dramaturgical differences and similarities .....	41
<b>5</b>	<b>Making Music Theatre.....</b>	<b>44</b>
5.1	Headless man.....	44
5.2	Cleaning Disk – theatre concert .....	47
5.2.1	Methods and exploring during the process .....	47
5.2.2	The form and structure of the performance .....	56
<b>6</b>	<b>Research result and discussion.....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>61</b>
	<b>Bibliography:.....</b>	<b>63</b>
	Other sources:.....	64



## List of Attachments

- 1: Picture from “Teaterkoncert Beethoven”
- 2: Picture from “Stifters Dinge”
- 3: Picture from “Stifters Dinge”
- 4: Picture from “Headless man”
- 5: Picture from “Headless man”
- 6: Rite of spring – Score
- 7: Theatre concert – Score
- 8: Theatre concert – Poster
- 9: Metronome – Instrument
- 10: Music Stand – Instrument
- 11: Concert Chair - Instrument

# 1 Introduction

*“Music Theatre is the oldest and newest of theatre forms”<sup>1</sup>*

This is what Eric Salzman and Thomas Desi are claiming in their book “The new music theatre: Seeing the voice, Hearing the body”. In this sentence lies the fact that music within a theatre context dates back to the ancient Greek theatre traditions. It also indicates that this theatre form has been through many different eras, explored by various artists and given several new genres and terms during the centuries. The music and its function in theatre have been on a journey of constant changing and exploring, and artists today are still experimenting. This have resulted in Music Theatre becoming a wide used term and not easy to define. It is based on the fact that the Music Theatre has such a long tradition and all the exploring and experimenting within it that motivates me to make a deeper research and write this master thesis on this particular subject.

My intention with this thesis is to research the function of music and sound within theatre. I want to look at how the quality of music and sound can offer new structures and methods for a theatre process and performance. My curiosity is also focused on how different directors and composer take use of the music and sound as a strategy for their theatre art.

*In what way can music and sound open for new structures and methods in a theatre context?*

By researching the history of Music Theatre, the artists who worked and work with it, how sound functions in a theatre context and my own experience regarding both attending and making music theatre, I am aiming for a best possible answer to this thesis question.

---

<sup>1</sup> Salzman and Desi, 2005, p. 7.

## **1.1 Clarification of terms**

When I write about structure in this thesis I use the term in a theatre context. I use structure as a term for how the different elements of the theatre process and performance are related to each other.

When using the term method, in a theatre context, in this thesis, it is with the meaning of a procedure for approaching a theatre process or performance.

## **1.2 Method**

When doing a research about music and sound in the theatre I see it as necessary to also research the function of hearing and the human ears. I find it helpful to understand more about how the ears are processing sound and working during a theatre performance and made this the starting point of my research. Of this reason I have chosen to write chapter 3 as a smaller research on hearing and sound in the theatre, "The art of looking with the ear".

In chapter 4 I am writing about Music Theatre from a historical point of view. I am writing about the history and development of Music Theatre during the centuries to form a base that will be helpful while researching the Music Theatre of our time. The first part of this chapter is of this reason about important and influential people and events in the history of Music Theatre. The second part of chapter 4 is focusing on the term Music Theatre as well as the discussions and opinions regarding it. Because of the wide used term Music Theatre, it is a very big task to write about all the different structures and forms within it. Of this reason I have chosen two different genres that I am focusing on in the end of this chapter, Theatre Concert and Composed Theatre.

In chapter 5 I am doing a deeper research on these two genres, by writing about two different artists, Nikolaj Cederholm and Heiner Goebbels, that work with these kinds of Music Theatre. By analysing their performances and researching how they work, I

want to get a deeper understanding of the use of music and sound in the theatre of our time.

As a part of my research I have also been working with music and sound in my own theatre performances. My experiences and reflections around making theatre with music or sound as the main component is of this reason the topic of chapter 6.

In chapter 7 I will make a discussion around the research results before the final chapter 8, where I will make a conclusion based on the results.

## 2 The art of looking with the ear

In the book “Sound and music for the theatre” Deena Kaye and James Lebrecht are using the words “the art of looking with the ear”<sup>2</sup>, a description I find suitable and interesting for this smaller research on sound and hearing in the theatre. In the book they use the phrase to specifically explain how sound-designers of our time are working, but I find it highly relevant for all elements in the theatre. Sound has always been an important part of the theatre. Theatre spaces have been built with a focus on the functionality of the sound since the very beginning of their existence. During the antiquity, open theatres, like the Theatre of Epidauros<sup>3</sup>, were mainly used for staging drama theatrical performances so that their acoustics were tuned for speech intelligibility allowing very large audiences to hear clearly the actors and singing chorus. Music, voice techniques and articulation of the performers have been of importance as well. All these different aspects of sound are given focus to stimulate the audience regarding what they are hearing.

Theatre is a complex work of art where you, as a theatre maker, have to focus on and work with several senses at the same time. I believe that this part of the theatre is something all theatre makers should concentrate on and work with on a level of detail for a best possible outcome. Theatre makers are constantly exploring and finding new and alternative ways to reach out to and stimulate the different senses of the observers. My curiosity is directed at how the sense of hearing work and affect us during a theatre performance. I want to make this smaller research on what actually happens in the theatre when the function of the eyes, becomes a quality of the ear. I want to find the elements that make hearing and listening of such importance in a theatre context and the unique qualities the sense of hearing is bringing to the experience of a performance.

“Hearing, listening and close listening” is a chapter in the book “Composed theatre” by Matthias Rebstock and David Roesner. In this text they write about that history

---

<sup>2</sup> Kaye and Lebrecht, 2009, p. xxi.

<sup>3</sup> Designed by Plykleitos the Younger in 4th century BC.

can tell us that the sense of hearing was highly esteemed already back in the ancient Greece. They explain it further by writing:

*“This seems physiologically plausible since the sense of hearing shows a particular perceptiveness for temporal processes and is capable of paying attention to the smallest dynamic differences”<sup>4</sup>*

The possibility to pay attention to the smallest dynamic differences and a sense that has a particular perceptiveness for temporal processes are obviously two qualities that will be useful and helping while attending a theatre performance. The value of the sense of hearing is probably as important in theatre today, but how is its importance compared to seeing and the eyes? It is not possible to ascertain that one sense is more of importance than the other, but that the different functions of the senses will affect the experience of a performance in different ways. The phenomenologist and neurologist Erwin Straus describes the difference of hearing and seeing in his book “Vom Sinn der Sinne” like this:

*“In seeing we detect the skeleton of things, in hearing them their pulse”<sup>5</sup>*

This description tells us a difference, but also how the two senses are completing each other. In a theatre performance there usually are both something to look at and sounds for the ear to process. Straus is giving the sense of hearing a highly important position in his statement above. He is saying that the hearing is what give things pulse, in other words our sense of hearing is what makes something alive. It is also possible to interpret it as if he is saying that without hearing it, we cannot say if the thing is alive. Straus is also saying that by seeing we detect the skeleton of things. As an audience we can see everything that is happening on the stage with our eyes in a frontal way, but we are able to hear the sounds all around a given space, even sometimes sounds outside the theatre space. Based on the quote by Straus and the fact that our sense of hearing can take in a larger amount of a space, we can question if listening is a bigger part of a theatre performance than what you

---

<sup>4</sup> Rebstock and Roesner, 2012, p. 85-86.

<sup>5</sup> Straus, 1956, p. 398.

actually see. If we go back to Roesner and Rebstock, they write: *“If the eye is particularly responsible for grasping static situations, the ear is for dynamic processes”*<sup>6</sup>. Further they write that from a psychological point of view, the sense of hearing records spatial-temporal situations like no other sense. This makes the sense of hearing the most important quality of a human being regarding time and space. Rebstock and Roesner also say that the ear is for dynamic processes. Hearing is a sense made for dynamic processes with an expertise on time and space, obviously a sense that would be appreciated while attending a theatre performance. Compared to the act of seeing, hearing is more able to recognise minimal changes in a space. An example they use in the book is that the eyes can see a given space, but the ears can determine the size of a space with help from for instance echo. Another quality the sense of hearing has regarding time and space is that it can differentiate simultaneous acoustic sounds in a given space. This is a function we take use of constantly in our everyday life without even thinking about it. The book is referring to “the cocktail party effect” to explain how it works.

The cocktail party effect<sup>7</sup>, named by Colin Cherry in 1953, is the phenomenon of being able to choose focus for our auditory attention, by filtering out the sounds we don't want to focus on. It is a quality we would use in a cocktail party when wanting to focus on one specific conversation among several, thereof the name. The cocktail party effect can also describe a similar phenomenon that occurs when you may immediately detect words of importance, for example by hearing your own name in another conversation. Both phenomena are referring to the fact that the auditory system is able to localize sound sources. As soon as the auditory system has localized a sound source, it can extract the signals of this sound source out of a mixture of interfering sound sources. The sound of your name will therefore be very easy to localize among several other sounds.

Based on the phenomenon in the cocktail party effect and the rest of the information above, there are obviously some functions our ears and sense of hearing have, that are more difficult to achieve with the sense of seeing. The possibility to pay attention

---

<sup>6</sup> Rebstock and Roesner, 2012, p. 85.

<sup>7</sup> Blauert, 2005, p. 8-10.

or not pay attention to situations behind you or even in a different room can in many situations turn out as a good quality, but then again you are never able to completely stop the sense of hearing. The ears and the sense of hearing will constantly work on processing sounds around us. This means that our hearing is easier to interrupt and distract. The eyes, on the other hand, function in a way that makes us able to close them if there is something we don't want to look at. Somehow this makes the sense of hearing more fragile and maybe more important to work with on a level of detail in the process of making a theatre performance. Sound and hearing are obviously important in every theatre performance, but there are some theatre forms where it is given more focus and importance. Music Theatre is a form where sound has a highly important part. After this smaller research on the sense of hearing in a theatre context, I would like to bring this knowledge into the deeper research of this master thesis about the music and sound in a theatre context.



### 3 Music Theatre

With this chapter I want to focus on music theatre from a historical point of view. First I am looking at how the theatre form has been explored and changed through the history. Then I research the term music theatre and the last part of this chapter is about the two directors/composers I find most interesting in the field of music theatre.

#### 3.1 A historical overview

Music has been an important part of the theatre since the very beginning of its existence. In the book “The new music theatre: Seeing the voice, Hearing the body”, Eric Salzman and Thomas Desi writes that Music theatre is the oldest and newest of theatre forms. They explain it further by writing:

*“If you go far enough in any direction, historically or culturally, you eventually arrive at some form of theatre based in music and dance. The origins of theatre in ritual, religion, and myth have been extensively explored and surviving examples can be cited from many cultures. Given the antiquity and ubiquity of these forms, it can be said that singing accompanied by physical movement is at the base of the performing arts family tree.”<sup>8</sup>*

The music in theatre was there from the very beginning of theatre, but it is the Opera that is considered the first theatrical form that combined theatre and musical composition in the modern European theatre. In the book “The Oxford illustrated History of Opera”, Roger Parker is writing that the first through-composed music drama that appeared on a stage happened in the middle of 1590’s in Florence. The very first opera conductor tried to recreate the way music was used in the ancient Greece. It did not work out, but it resulted in the new genre, Opera. Parker writes that *“The Opera raised crucial problems concerning the aims and effects of music, drama and indeed the arts in general that could not be ignored”<sup>9</sup>* and that these problems

---

<sup>8</sup> Salzman and Desi, 2005, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Parker, 2005, p. 1-5.

remain as valid today as they were to the first composers, librettists and patrons of Opera.

As opera established its independence from religious ritual, from spoken theatre and other presentational forms using music, it started to spread outside of Italy. It also became an art form that represented the wealth and the accomplishments of the sponsoring court, town or society. Both the spreading outside of Italy and the high position it got, resulted in several new forms of opera. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century the French Vaudeville appeared. Vaudeville was a form where the song often replaced the dialogs and it became the start of what later evolved to be the comical opera. In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the first Operetta was made, a lighter and more comical version of Opera. Its structure and form was closer to the comical opera than the original opera, but the text was usually spoken and not sung. The Operettas was entertaining and should have a happy ending.

At the same time as the Operetta spread, a new form of music theatre called Variety grew in England and America. The Variety started as a result of saloonkeepers in cities and towns of every size wanting to offer entertainment for their customers, to make them come back for more. The performances often took place in the middle of a barroom floor and usually included comedians, acrobats, clowns, jugglers, animal acts or singers. The Variety became very popular and in the 1860<sup>th</sup> the form was moved and performed in the theatres and developed to what we today call musical theatre.<sup>10</sup>

The German composer and theatre director Willhelm Richard Wagner was also an important artist in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Wagner was primarily known for his operas and his works that later were called "Music drama". His works were and still are considered as a revolution in the field of opera, this because of his concept "Gesamtkunstwerk". Wagner's Gesamtkunstwerk was a concept where he idealised the unifying of all art forms through the theatre. In his book "Opera and Drama" (Oper und Drama) Wagner is writing about how he angered many people with his utterances on art and his new way of thinking. He writes the preface of the book as

---

<sup>10</sup> Parker, 2005, p. 48.

an answer to the people who disagreed with him and starts the introduction by writing:

*“No phenomenon can be completely grasped, in all its essence until it has itself come to fullest actuality; an error is never done with, until all the possibilities of its maintenance have been exhausted, all the ways of satisfying a necessary need within its bounds been tried and measured out.”<sup>11</sup>*

He continues by writing that it is how he sees the opera and all other art forms. He explains that the opera would not have developed to what it was, at the time when he wrote the book, unless people explored it. Wagner made history by demanding greater realism in a reconceived theatrical space. When he did the Bayreuth Festspielhaus, he demanded a classless theatre like how he imagined the once in ancient Greece.

*“Wagner’s theatre did not have a conventional box, pit and gallery division. Thirty tiered rows ran without aisle from one side of the auditorium to the other. To improve sight lines, 1745 seats fanned out from the stage. The orchestra pit below the stage floor wafted music out an opening where a pit should have been. The space between the opening to the orchestra and the proscenium arch was known as the mystic gulf.”<sup>12</sup>*

In the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and during the 20<sup>th</sup> century it started an ongoing interest of composers to approach the theatrical stage and its means of expression as musical material. In the book *Composed Theatre*, David Roesner is naming a few examples<sup>13</sup>, here ordered by year of birth:

Arnold Schönberg (1874 – 1951)

- Austrian Composer – for instance known for his work with atonality, the Twelve-tone technique and for musically composing all elements of a performance.

---

<sup>11</sup> Wagner, 1893, p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> Kuritz, 1988, p. 263.

<sup>13</sup> Rebstock and Roesner, 2012, p. 9.

*“If we look at the complementary movement and look for music-theatre forms that start off by making the music itself theatrical or that which apply compositional means to theatrical elements, we inevitably find ourselves returning to the visions of Arnold Schönberg, and in particular the famous music of lights in his Die glückliche Hand op.18 from 1913”<sup>14</sup>*

Schönberg was convinced that the effect a piece would have on the audience did not depend solely on the quality of the music, but that all elements of a performance contributed equally to the effect, and of that reason he, as a composer, also organised the visual elements and fixed them in the score. He composed lights as he would compose music and in a score he would very precisely describe it as the *“crescendo of the stage lights”*.<sup>15</sup>

John Cage (1912 – 1992)

- American Composer, for instance known for his “non-standard use of musical instruments” and his performance “4’33”. This is maybe Cage’s most famous composition. It was first performed in 1952 in New York. The title is referring to the clock-time duration of the composition. The performance is 4,33 minutes of silence. It is composed for any instruments and the score is instructing the performers to not play their instruments during the performance. It is 4,33 minutes of silence, but also the same duration of time with sounds of the environment.<sup>16</sup>

Dieter Schnebel (1930)

- German Composer, for instance known for his experimenting with vocals. Rebstock and Roesner are using Schnebel’s performances to illustrate the application of compositional procedures to theatrical material:

*“...Körper-Sprache (1979/80) and Der Springer from the Zeichensprache cycle (1989), both by Dieter Schnebel. Körper-Sprache. Organkomposition für 3-9 Ausführende is the first composition by Dieter Schnebel in which he completely renounces the acoustic dimension. Körper-Sprache, like Schnebel’s more famous*

---

<sup>14</sup> Rebstock and Roesner, 2012, p. 29.

<sup>15</sup> Rebstock and Roesner, 2012, p. 35.

<sup>16</sup> Fettermann, 2010, p. 69.

*Maulwerke, is less a composition than it is a set of directions or handouts to the performers for the creation of a composition. Such a performance – and this is interesting in the context of Composed Theatre – does not necessarily lead us to believe that it has anything to do with music. An uninformed spectator, unfamiliar with Cage’s broad definition of music, would probably say that it was a form of abstract dance or theatre.”<sup>17</sup>*

Mauricio Kagel (1931 – 2008)

- Argentinean Composer, embraced multiple serialism, aleatory technique and electronics, but he is best known for his pioneering explorations in music theatre, radio play, film and mixed media. One of his known performances is for instance “Pas de Cinq” where all the sounds made are from the performers walking on different material. His performative language in this performance is stylized. There are no words. The performers are given a specific stage and path of materials to walk on. The only sounds in the performance are coming from the different materials they are walking on. He is exploring with tempo. The performers take use off different tempo and speed regarding the walking, which is resulting in different aspects of sounds from the same material.

Hans-Joachim Hespos (1938)

- German Composer of avant-garde music. He created pieces in an invented genre that he called “scenes”, endowing them with fancy titles. Various combinations of performers and musicians are involved in for instance Fulaar for “things in a room”(1989) or Black Beauty for snare drum (with snares on). The academic music scene did not know where to put this man and his work.<sup>18</sup> Hespos scores very frequently employ graphic notation, verbal instructions, and traditional music notation or a kind of combination.

---

<sup>17</sup> Rebstock and Roesner, 2012, p. 40.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.hespos.info/>

### Georges Aperghis (1945)

- Greek/French Composer. He was able to create a laboratory for theatrical and musical work with musicians and actors, an ideal situation that has rarely existed before or afterward. He discovered music theatre in 1971 when he wrote *“La Tragique histoire du necro-mancien hieronimo et de son mirror”*, a piece that includes two female voices that sing and speak as well as a lute and a cello. Text, music and scene come together to create the musical dramaturgy of the piece. Known for his experimental musical theatre. He is fascinated by the possibilities of the human mouth to generate sound. Speech, language and text are just some possibilities. The gestures of the physical body as it creates sound and the social ritual within which all this happens are essential elements in his work.<sup>19</sup>

### Manos Tsangaris (1956)

- German Composer, installation and performance artist. It is characteristic of Tsangaris approach that his works consist of individual stations in different rooms through which one migrates – an approach that has for some time been called “Processional Theatre. What is important for his processional theatre is to keep perspectives flexible. At each performance, visitors can give up their chosen direction of movement in favour of another.”<sup>20</sup>

Roesner is explaining how these artists are working with music theatre:

*“They treat voice, gesture, movement, light, sound, image, design and other features of theatrical production according to musical principles and compositional techniques and apply musical thinking to performance as a whole.”*<sup>21</sup>

In the same period of time, more specific 1927, the Czech artist Emil Frantisek Burian directed the first of his “Voiceband” productions. His voiceband was choral

---

<sup>19</sup> Salzman and Desi, 2008, p. 154.

<sup>20</sup> Rebstock and Roesner, 2012, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Rebstock and Roesner, 2012, p.10.

rendition of poetry based on the harmonic and rhythmic syncopations of jazz, a mix of musical expression and poetic text. It was without formal musical notation. He wanted a greater freedom and variety of vocal expression, including hissing, whistling and other non-traditional vocalization, with percussion accompaniment. The voiceband form evolved over the years and Burian added more elements that shaped the form into more traditional staged productions.<sup>22</sup> The year after Burian's Voiceband, in 1928, Bertolt Brecht premiered his world known "The Threepenny Opera" in Berlin. The performance was referred to as a "play with music" and the discussions regarding it being an opera or not became unavoidable. In his book "Det populære musikkteater" (The popular music theatre), the Danish Professor Michael Eigtved is writing that the music theatre developed after 1968 as a direct result of what later was called the revolution of pop. Artists started, in a larger scale, to take use of popular elements in their theatre work, both in the narratives and the musical structure. The structure in Music Theatre became fragmental and the Artists took elements from other peoples work, rearranged it, and put it into their own. It was the start of many new genres, structures and styles in the Music Theatre. Eigtved continues by writing that the common element for all the performances was the minimum use of spoken dialog. The music was never underscoring, but the main component. Performers started to actively relate to the music, which became the element that combined the performance together.

All of these artists written about above have been exploring the field of music theatre and come up with their own definitions, structures and methods. Their thoughts and visions for the music theatre have been highly important for the development of the theatre form.

Regarding my own experience with attending Music Theatre, I still find the genre in an experimental and evolving situation. The music and sound are always used in very different ways and as an audience I never know what to expect before attending a Music Theatre performance. I have attended performances of artists who have done this for a lifetime as well as younger artist, and my experience is that they all are exploring around new ways to use sound and music in a theatre context.

---

<sup>22</sup> Burian, 2002, p. 37.

Because of this constant exploring of the genre and the new methods always made, the genre gets more difficult to define and the term Music Theatre does still not have a clear definition.

### 3.2 The term Music theatre

The term “Music Theatre” is relatively new and not easy to define. When looking it up in Encyclopaedias, most of them cannot give a definition and are suggesting “Musical theatre” as an option. The Norwegian Encyclopaedia<sup>23</sup> (Store Norske Leksikon) can tell that it is a generic term for all the kinds of theatre performances that take use of music as a main component. It follows up with examples like: Opera, ballet, musical and cabaret, but the definition also ends with saying that the term has become more widely used as a consequence of the development in direction of borders between the various dramatic genres becoming impossible to define.

This above is what the common man would know about music theatre, but the artists and people working in this field have an updated and highly relevant definition of music theatre of our time. Salzman and Desi write a definition of what they call the new music theatre:

*“(...) When we say new music theatre in this book, we use the term in a way that is almost always meant to exclude traditional opera, operetta and musicals. This meaning is partly historical but mostly categorical. New Music Theatre can be compared to modern dance (...)”<sup>24</sup>*

They are comparing the new music theatre to modern dance in terms of how they both are “breaking the rules” of the classical and traditional structures. The new music theatre absorbed the musical and artistic revolutions of the early twentieth century as well as the technological innovations of stagecraft and stage design, machinery and light, audio and video. The new music theatre is more about sounds,

---

<sup>23</sup> <https://snl.no/musikkteater>

<sup>24</sup> Salzman and Desi, 2008, p. 5.



their functionality while interacting with the other elements of the performance and about looking for the musicality in all things, not only the obvious once like for instance musical instruments. The artists are exploring around the sounds, and not necessarily just looking for a perfect musical harmony they can play. There are several different forms and structures within music theatre. As written above the Norwegian encyclopaedia is saying that the genres are becoming impossible to define as a consequence of the theatre always crossing borders. Salzman and Desi also write in their book that the terminological problems seem unavoidable. In English, Music Theatre is taken from the Germanic Form Musiktheater, which can refer to a building. Musiktheater was also used to describe a kind of instrumental/vocal avant-garde performance associated with composers like Karlheinz Stockhausen and Mauricio Kagel. Like for instance the “Pas de Cinq” by Kagel, written about earlier in this chapter. Music theatre, in English, was first applied to small-scale sung theatre in the Brecht/Weill tradition.

After 1968 when the political and artistic avant-gardism merged with a new and serious interest in popular forms and non-western art, artists returned to the strategies of earlier music theatre artists. The appearance of performance and concept art, the new tonalities of the minimalists, and a broad expansion of the idea of vocalism all set the stage for the development of a new music theatre in the final decades of the twentieth century.<sup>25</sup>

The term music theatre may be hard to define, but important artists like Brecht, Burian, Kagel, Cage and several others have been exploring the field and come up with new concepts and structures of using music in the theatre. Some are focusing on the vocals only and exploring the possibilities of the voice. Others are more directed to materials and how they can make compositions out of them. Some are exploring the musicality of language, others the theatre space where the sounds are made. The artists have been questioning the previous way of conducting/directing music theatre and developed their own structures and methods. I have chosen two of the many existing forms of music theatre that I want to research deeper, Theatre Concert and Composed Theatre.

---

<sup>25</sup> Salzman and Desi, 2008, p. 9.

### 3.3 Nikolaj Cederholm and Theatre Concert

Theatre concert is a known and used term in Europe. Artists have different opinions and definitions of what a Theatre Concerts should be. When I write about Theatre Concert in this thesis, I mean the form invented by Nikolaj Cederholm.

Nikolaj Cederholm<sup>26</sup> is a Danish playwright, actor and director, born in Allerød, Denmark in 1963. He started making theatre as a teenager and took his acting education at Odense Theatre in 1986. In 1992 he became the director of Aveny Theatre, which became one of the influential theatres in Denmark during the 1990s. Cederholm invented the term, genre and form “Teaterkoncert” in 1994 together with the composer twins Jens and Peter Helleman. The idea came when the artists in the theatre company “Momoland” had a discussion about how to work with music in the theatre without just using it to underscore the plot and without the artificial elements of a musical. On the company’s webpage, Cederholm describes the outcome of the conversation like this:

*”From this conversation sprang the idea of making an interpretation of the work of a rock band (in our case, the Danish group Gasolin’), just as theatres do Shakespeare and classical orchestras do Beethoven. To that end, we would take all the interesting genes from theatre history and cross-breed them with the rock concert. And what we got from this process was the theatre concert, a healthy F1 hybrid born from Father Theatre and from Mother Music.”<sup>27</sup>*

In an interview done by Mette Thomsen<sup>28</sup>, Cederholm is giving a definition of what a theatre concert is. He describes Theatre concert as a performance where theatre as a method is applied to music. It is of importance that the music does not function as underscoring the story. He explains it like a concert with theatre elements, rather than theatre with music. It might be situations and characters in the performance, but

---

<sup>26</sup> [http://denstoredanske.dk/Kunst\\_og\\_kultur/Teater/Danske\\_teaterfolk/Nikolaj\\_Cederholm](http://denstoredanske.dk/Kunst_og_kultur/Teater/Danske_teaterfolk/Nikolaj_Cederholm)

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.momoland.dk/read-me/>

<sup>28</sup> Thomsen, 2011, p. 30-35.

as a base it should not be any story, when the most important component is music. Cederholm takes no use of spoken words in his theatre concerts, only singing. He use already existing music, and explains that the reason for this is that people know the songs from before. This gives him the opportunity to make people re-experience the songs they already know in a new and different way. He explains that the existing music can give the audience an extra dimension because of the materials history. Even if Cederholm choose to make the theatre concert with existing music, because he wants this extra dimension, he does not exclude a theatre concert with new-composed music from his form. Regarding the song style and the visual expression he says that they both are very open and can be interpreted in different ways. The only requirement regarding the stage is that the musicians are on it and not hidden away. He sees it as important to see what and who the music is made from. In the end of the interview with Thomsen, Cederholm is saying that the Theatre concert concept is still changing and does not have a clear definition. He is explaining what inspired him to come up with this new concept. He was looking at the musicals, rock-operas and other music theatre productions in Denmark at the time and understood that he wanted to go in the other direction with his work. He describes them as commercial musicals and says that they all are focusing more on the story then the music.<sup>29</sup> Today they have made 8 successful theatre concerts with music from for instance “The Beach Boys”, “Mozart” and “Beethoven”.

### **3.4 Heiner Goebbels and Composed Theatre**

Heiner Goebbels is a German composer and director. He is considered one of the most important artists of the contemporary music and theatre scene. He was born in 1952 in Neustadt an der Weinstrasse. He studied sociology and music in Frankfurt am Main. Goebbels is known for performances like for instance “Songs of Wars I have seen”, the staging of “Harry Partch: Delusion of the Fury”, “Eislermaterial” and “Stifters Dinge”. He has received several awards for his performances and in 2012 he won the International Ibsen Award. Goebbels has made several different structures

---

<sup>29</sup> Thomsen, 2011, p. 30-35.

and forms while making music theatre and in the book “Composed theatre” he is explaining how he works:

*“I direct like a composer: I work very formally and consider theatre as a very musical process. I firmly believe in the musical space of an aesthetic experience and rather think about the rhythm of scenes, the harmonic or contrapuntal relationship of the theatrical elements and the different levels between a visual and an acoustic stage. Once I have chosen a text I reflect the sound of the language – the sound in different languages, the rhythm, the melody of a spoken text.”<sup>30</sup>*

Goebbels is taking use of different elements as inspiration for the performances he is making. In a lecture that he gave at Archa Theatre in Prague, 14.11.2016, he gave some examples of these elements. He is often working with text as a base and has collaborated a lot with Heiner Müller and his texts. Goebbels has also used texts by Gertrud Stein, Robbe-Grillet and Søren Kierkegaard. But he has also been inspired by an idea, like in “Stifters Dinge”, where his starting point was to make a performance without any performers. In the lecture he also spoke about how he is fascinated by language and how he use the musicality in languages in his performances. He explained that working with languages he does not understand enables him to discover the musical quality of a spoken text. Goebbels is also writing about forms in the Music Theatre and its importance:

*“The best way to define a musical approach on theatre is to be conscious about form, to undertake research on forms. It doesn’t mean it is formal – forms always mean something, forms always have a very strong impact on our perception, more perhaps than the perspective reduced to semantics and topics.”<sup>31</sup>*

I have attended one performance directed and composed by Heiner Goebbels, Songs of Wars I Have Seen. It was performed in Archa Theatre, Prague in 2015. Berg Orchestra functioned as performers and Peter Vrabel was conducting. On

---

<sup>30</sup> Rebstock and Roesner, 2012, p. 114.

<sup>31</sup> Rebstock and Roesner, 2012, p. 114.

Heiner Goebbels webpage this performance is categorized as a Staged Concert.<sup>32</sup> I find this a suitable term for the performance. The stage looked like a classical concert stage, with some unusual elements. The orchestra was placed on the middle of the stage surrounded by a lot of lamps and the conductor was standing in front of them, conducting. Another theatrical element in the performance was reading of text by Gertrude Stein. In “Composed theatre” Goebbels is writing:

*“Songs of Wars I Have Seen, for example, was very much dedicated to the personalities of the musicians; not only, because in this composition the (female) musicians were asked to speak texts by Gertrude Stein during the performance of the music, but also because of the way they were able to treat their instruments.”<sup>33</sup>*

Here we can understand it as if Goebbels had a clear vision of wanting to work with the personalities of the musicians and stage both them and the music and text. This is one of the structures Goebbels has used while making a performance, but he uses very different terms when he is explaining his performances. Some performances are called Music Theatre, others Staged Concert, Opera or Performative Installation. The common element for all of them is that Goebbels is directing his pieces as a composer. Matthias Rebstock and David Roesner use Composed Theatre, as an umbrella term. They use the term for performances where the artists are approaching the theatrical stage and its means of expression as musical material – artists that treat the voice, gesture, movement, light, sound, image, design and other features of theatrical production according to musical principles and compositional techniques and applies musical thinking to performance as a whole.

David Roesner is giving a very concrete example of a musical structure used on theatre in his book “Musicality in theatre: Music as Model, Method and Metaphor in Theatre-Making”. He writes about how jazz improvisation can be seen as a model for creating/or performing theatre.<sup>34</sup> Further he is quoting Clive Barker:

---

<sup>32</sup> [https://www.heinergoebbels.com/en/archive/works/music\\_theatre\\_staged\\_concerts](https://www.heinergoebbels.com/en/archive/works/music_theatre_staged_concerts)

<sup>33</sup> Rebstock and Roesner, 2012, p. 113.

<sup>34</sup> Roesner, 2014, p. 171.

*“The aim is to develop a sense of play within an ensemble, which, as Littlewood pointed out, is less like being an orchestral player under a conductor, and more like playing jazz which gives more scope for improvisation but it also requires more sensitivity to the other players. There is much more give and take.”<sup>35</sup>*

What Barker is writing above can also be seen as composed theatre, but composed the same way as you would compose jazz music. It would be more free and open for improvisation than if you would compose theatre as classical music. As Goebbels is writing, he claims that the musical approach to theatre is highly about form. Music and sound has a different form than theatre, but there are also a lot of different forms within both music and sound.

---

<sup>35</sup> Barker, 1977, p. XVII.

## 4 Music Theatre Performances

To get a deeper understanding of how music is used in the theatre today, I have chosen two different music theatre performances that I want to present and analyse. The first performance is a theatre concert, Teaterkoncert Beethoven, made by Nikolaj Cederholm and the other, Stifters Dinge, directed and composed by Heiner Goebbels. The reason I have chosen these two directors is because they both have inspired me with their way of working with this hybrid theatre form. The reason I want to highlight the two performances I have chosen is because they are both considered new music theatre, but they do have a very different way of taking use of music as a main component in a theatre performance. My first meeting with the Teaterkoncert, as Cederholm defines it, was at Rogaland Teater in Norway in 2013. I had never attended a performance using this term before and was very curious about how it would work with combining these two art forms. After attending “Teaterkoncert Beethoven” I got inspired by the dramaturgical structure they used. The fragmental dramaturgy of the performance was the clearest element taken from the concert. My first meeting with Heiner Goebbels work, which is considered as theatre concerts, composed theatre or staged concerts, was at Archa Theatre in Prague in 2015. I attended a lecture that Goebbels gave about his own work and his performance “Songs of Wars I have seen”. I also attended another lecture Goebbels gave at the Archa Theatre in 2016. What inspired me regarding these lectures and the performance is the way Goebbels is combining music and theatre. The different methods and structures he is using while working with music theatre gave me a new perspective on theatre and how it can be made. I am fascinated by the way Goebbels focus on the musicality of sounds and languages in his work.

The two directors and their methods inspire me in different ways, that’s is why I find it interesting to make an analysis of each performance and look at the differences and similarities. In these two analyses I will focus on three different aspects of the performance:

### Sound and Music

- What kind of sound or/and music do they use and how is it made?

## Performers

- What function do the performers have in the performance?

## Dramaturgy and structure

- How is the use of sound and music affecting the structure of the performance?

I have chosen these three elements as a main focus in the analyses because they are what I find most interesting regarding work with sound and music in the theatre. I will also choose certain elements of the performances that I think is suitable to research deeper.

### 4.1 Analysis of Teaterkoncert Beethoven

This analysis is based on my experience of attending Teaterkoncert Beethoven and the reflections I have made after this.

Teaterkoncert Beethoven had its premiere the 21 of September 2013 at Rogaland Teater<sup>36</sup> in Norway. Nikolaj Cederholm is the director. In this performance they have taken use of music made by Ludwig Van Beethoven, modernised it and made new lyrics to the old compositions. In "Teaterkoncert Beethoven" they use known, influential and important people and their life stories as inspiration for the story. Rogaland Theatre describes it like this:

*"You'll meet a deaf composer, a blind painter, a jailed freedom fighter and a self-censored scientist. The composer is Beethoven, who wrote some of his finest works after he lost his hearing. The painter, William Turner, who became a forerunner of Impressionism after losing much of his sight. Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years, yet he emerged without bitterness to unite his country. And Charles Darwin*

---

<sup>36</sup> Rogaland Theatre is one of Norway's leading theatres placed in Stavanger.



*decided to publish his revolutionary theory of evolution only after his beloved daughter had died.*<sup>37</sup>

The performance is done in a theatre, a classical theatre stage with a traditional audience and stage relationship. There are thirteen performers, six musicians and seven actors. The theatre concert consists of 27 different music numbers. The main characters in the performance are the four men, Ludwig van Beethoven, William Turner, Nelson Mandela, Charles Darwin and the important women in their life.

The music used in this performance is, as written above, Beethoven's music. It is rearranged and given lyrics that fit the story of the performance. All the music presented is made by the musicians and actors on stage. The musicians are placed on stage with instruments in costumes. Teaterkoncert Beethoven is taking use of both the known and world famous music, but also the less known compositions Beethoven made. All the music numbers are used to tell the different stories of the characters in the performance, through the song and the lyrics. The new made compositions are all very different, but the fact that it is well known music by Beethoven, makes them connected. Most of the audience will probably know some of the music from before and have a relationship to it already. This makes it interesting when it is suddenly given a text and a concrete meaning. Cederholm is working with this as something he wants to achieve with his performances and this is clearly used in Teaterkoncert Beethoven. They use instruments like: piano, drums, cello, guitar, bass, woodwinds and vocal. Instruments and vocal mostly make the music in the performance, but they also take use of sound from other materials. One of the music numbers is a song by the character, Nelson Mandela that is hanging in a human sized birdcage from the roof. While he is singing, the cage is moving around in the room. This make a sound of wind and movement and gives the audience a feeling of what is outside the cage. They also take use of paper as a material. One of the scenes in the performance is where the performers are breaking through a wall of paper, a symbolic picture on breaking out of a struggle, which is the common story

---

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.rogaland-teater.no/program/teaterkonsert-beethoven>

for the main characters. Even if they take use of sound as an element, the music is still the more important component of the performance. The music is highly important and necessary in Teaterkoncert Beethoven, but it is still underscoring the story. It is rearranged and given lyrics to build up the story of the performance.

All the thirteen performers are on stage. There are no separation of the actors and the musicians. The fact that they all wear costumes also makes it difficult to separate who is what. They all function as equal performers and do both music and theatre on stage. There are very clear characters in the performance and the performers have build up strong personalities on stage, which makes the whole performance theatrical and fictive. They are presenting important and influential people of the world and retelling their stories through music and theatre.

In the very first scene of the performance, the whole story is being told to the audience. This brings the performance closer to the epic theatre form. The whole performance is built up similar, as a concert would have been. The different stories that are told during the performance are making it fragmental. Each one of the scenes or music pieces could have worked as a smaller performance. The scenes where the four main characters are telling their story or their situation could also have worked as solo-performances. In this way we can say that the performance is using the same structure, as a "typical" concert would have. The musicians in a concert are often playing a chosen amount of songs, that not necessarily has anything to do with each other. All the songs tell different stories and have its purpose and are not necessarily aiming for a whole. It is the same with the dramaturgy in Teaterkoncert Beethoven. Each scene has something different to tell and its own way of telling it. There is a connecting thread with the similar situations of all the characters and their stories that makes a whole out of all the fragmental elements.

I have chosen one specific scene from this performance that I want to analyse deeper and go into the details of how they work with the different elements on stage.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Attachment 1

## Blacker than Black (Cederholm) – La Marmotte, 8 Lieder – Opus 52 (Beethoven)

The stage is completely dark and the only things the audience can see are some stones in the front of the stage. The woman who plays the cello is walking slowly and tired across the stage while pulling the cello after her. The metal shaft of the cello against the floor makes a high and sharp sound. She is dressed in black. She starts to play the cello. The melody is melancholic and dark. Light appears behind her on the stage and so does the character, painter J.M.W. Turner<sup>39</sup>. His eyes are covered with a blindfold, a symbol of him not able to see anymore. In the middle of the stage there is standing a long paintbrush on its own. Turner is sitting on the top of it and trying to hold on to it even if he struggles. This can be a symbol of him wanting to hold on to his work and passion after getting blind. Turner starts to sing with a dark and rusty voice and the paintbrush he sits on is lifted up in the air. He is connected to the roof with wires and is standing on top of the shaft, balancing, while singing. He is desperately singing about how afraid he is now that he lost his sense of seeing while trying to hold on to his most important tool, the paintbrush.

In this scene they only take use of three performers, and a paintbrush as stage-design. The use of the cello that is pulled to make this uncomfortable sound in the beginning is setting the mood for the whole scene. It is a long and sharp sound that is telling us from the very beginning that something bad is going to happen. The sound is in big contrast to the music the same instrument starts playing few minutes later. This is an interesting way to take use of the different aspects of one instrument. The long paintbrush becomes the main object in this scene. Using the paintbrush in this impossible way that it is standing on its own in the middle of the room is also an interesting element. Turner has to follow the direction of the paintbrush now that he cannot see anymore, whilst before he was the one to direct the paintbrush. The performers are highly connected to the object and it is easy to see what the object means to the performers. The cellist that almost don't have any energy to play the music on her object and Turner who is in desperate need to stay in physical contact with his paintbrush. Then when they start singing and playing together it makes a contrast or disharmony between the slow cello and the fast Turner, whilst the

---

<sup>39</sup> Romanticist landscape painter (1775-1851)

harmony in the music is there. The strong and classical instrument cello becomes a slow and tired object because of the performers relationship to it, whilst Turner is making the simple paintbrush a highly important and necessary object.

Beethoven's music is in this scene used to tell Turners story and desperate need of staying connected to the art of painting. Compared to many of the other scenes in this performance, this one is unique regarding the stage. The stage is completely empty other than the performers and the paintbrush. This makes all the small sounds and details more of importance in this scene. Several of the other scenes are with many performers and a lot of stage elements. In this scene you are able to put all your focus on how the musician is using her cello and how the turbulent relationship between Turner and his paintbrush is evolving. In the beginning of the scene it is only Turners singing voice and the cello together, but the music is escalating accompanied by his desperation. The structure of this scene is similar to how a song would be preformed in a concert. The music and song becomes the main component regarding the dramaturgy.

My personal experience of this performance was highly positive. I have never seen any performance like this before. As written earlier, the structure and dramaturgy was the most interesting element. The fact that the performance could have work as several solo-performances as well as a whole Theatre concert is an interesting choice from the director. The use of already existing music is not very unusual in the theatre, and I found the performance close to the Musical theatre genre.

## **4.2 Analysis of Stifters Dinge**

I did not attend this performance, but I have seen recordings of it and heard Goebbels talk about the process and the performance in two different lectures. I am therefore basing my analysis on this.

Stifters Dinge is a 70-minute long sonic performance landscape composed and directed by Heiner Goebbels. The performance is inspired by the writings of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Austrian romantic novelist Adalbert Stifter and his detailed descriptions of

nature, thereof the title, *Stifters Dinge*. It had its world premiere in 2007 at Lausanne's Theatre Vidy and has been played in several other countries after.

Goebbels made a music theatre performance where all the instruments and stage elements worked by themselves by use of machines. The performance does not have any performers, a non-man show. As an audience you are entering a room with several different installations. In the performance he takes use of five pianos, as a part of a big installation. Trees without leaves surround the pianos. Other prominent elements are water and sand. Goebbels takes use of three smaller pools placed on a row in front of the installation with the pianos. He also takes use of recorded songs and spoken stories of natives from New Guinea. Goebbels describes it almost like a meditative experience.<sup>40</sup> In an article about the show in *The New York Times* it is described like this:

*"Stifters Dinge begins with delicate sounds from the five pianos, operated through computerized player-piano mechanisms, producing gentle patterns of steady beats, scraping noises, melodic bits and hints of cosmic harmonies."*<sup>41</sup>

Goebbels himself composes all the music and sound he takes use of in this performance. The instruments are playing themselves. The pianos do not have any pianist, but still making music and sound with help from the complex machinery Goebbels has made. It is all constructed with creative solutions on how to make the non-man show work. Recordings are also used in the installation performance. Goebbels uses, as written earlier, spoken stories of natives from New Guinea as a part of the soundscape. This element becomes as much sound as the rest of the instruments, when not understanding the spoken language. The tonality and musicality of the language blends in with the rest of the soundscape.

In the lecture that Goebbels gave in the Archa Theatre in Prague he talked about how he worked with sound. One of his interests is the musicality of languages. He explained that he in some performances take use of languages that the audience

---

<sup>40</sup> Attachment 2

<sup>41</sup> *The New York Times* – DEC.17, 2009.

don't understand, for them to give focus to other elements than just the spoken words and their meaning. He continued by saying that text has to have several qualities, musical qualities, and spoke about how he wants the audience to experience the musicality, tonality and rhythm of the language. This is very visible in Stiffers Dinge. The language and spoken words becomes an instrument.

*“ That is how I listen to language, especially to languages I do not understand, while working with French actors, with Greek, African, Japanese or English musicians. It enables me to discover the musical quality of a spoken text.”<sup>42</sup>*

Goebbels is writing that the not understandable language gives him the possibility to see the musical qualities of a spoken text. There are no performers in this music theatre piece, but it is still a very much alive performance. The machinery makes a lot of movement on the stage and as an audience you constantly have something interesting to observe. The spoken words are also making the performance less machine-like. The directorial choice to not use any performers on stage is making the sound and stage-design the most important elements. As an observer you are able to fully concentrate on these two elements. It is not a clear story being told in the performance and it is made in a way that opens up for subjective interpretation. All the sounds, music and movement can make it easy for an audience to interpret and make meanings out of the situations. The stage-design somehow becomes a character, with all its movement, sound and changes. The directorial choice I find most interesting in this performance is the non-performers element. The fact that Goebbels has made a Music Theatre performance without any performers is a brave and interesting starting point for a performance. The use of musicality in language and spoken text is another interesting element that gives the human more of an instruments quality.

I find it more difficult to choose one part that is more interesting to research deeper than the other in Heiner Goebbels Stiffers Dinge. All the elements are so connected and precisely put together, but I have chosen a scene that starts with the piano

---

<sup>42</sup> Rebstock and Roesner, 2012, p. 114.

installation in focus and then continues with water as the main component. I have chosen this part because of the contrasts in the sound and music.<sup>43</sup>

This part of the performance is first focusing on the installation consisting of five pianos, three without leaves; smoke machines and other electronic devices. Then it continues to the installation of the water pools in front of it. It starts with the pianos playing themselves, not in the usual way on the tiles, but on the strings inside it. There are machines in front of the pianos playing on the strings. Each piano is played in a different way. One piano has only one machine playing on it, while another has three machines playing in sync. The sound is different from piano to piano. As an audience you can see the machines and how they are working on the instruments. Each movement, both inside and outside the piano is visible. One of the pianos is also playing on the tiles. You almost get the feeling like someone is playing it, without seeing any musician. The machines are also connected to the smoke machines, which make a very different sound than the instruments. The spray sound of the smoke machines gives the whole installation more of an industrial touch. The machines, three without leaves, a metal plate and smoke can be seen as a symbol of nature dying. The sound and music made in this part is also making a dark atmosphere by using a lot of low tones from the pianos. A sequence where the machines are playing on the strings of the piano is almost making a feeling of a thriller movie. The piece ends with the smoke machine spraying out smoke. From these hard and strong sounds, it continues with a piano being played in a more classical way together with rain. It starts to rain from the roof down in the water pools that are placed in front of the installation of the pianos. The whole atmosphere is getting more melancholic and softer than the previous scene. The rain together with the nicely played piano makes a completely new world. The light is turned off at the piano installation and put on the water pools. As an audience you can see how the rain is hitting the water in the pools and hear the sound. The natural sound of the water dripping is in a big contrast to all the machine and instrument sounds from before. Now the soundscape is getting closer to a meditative experience. As an audience you get to listen to the sounds of nature, which becomes almost like a relief after the industrial sounds. The sound of water is functioning as a calm element in

---

<sup>43</sup> Attachment 3

the performance and can be helpful for the audience to interpret a meaning behind it. It is a sound that people have a relationship to and experience with, compared to the machines playing on the piano in an unnatural way. The objects, instruments, machines and other elements on stage are in a way living their own lives. The sounds they make and the composition of the elements are telling a story without words.

Goebbels is also taking use of spoken words in terms of recordings. He is using early 20<sup>th</sup> century recordings of Papua New Guinea chants, Greek folk songs, the voice of William Burroughs<sup>44</sup> and extracts from interviews with Claude Lévi-Strauss<sup>45</sup> and Malcolm X<sup>46</sup>. The words become another musical element in the performance. The fact that the language is not understandable (to me as an audience) makes my ears focus on the tonality and musicality of the language. It becomes a sound element like all the others. As written earlier this is an element Goebbels likes to use in his performances.

In David Roesners book<sup>47</sup>, he is writing:

*“Music creates a different time, which is neither real time, nor fictitious time”<sup>48</sup>*

This is a quote that I find suitable for this performance by Heiner Goebbels. In Stifters Dinge, the sense - making and time dissolves in a way. With no story or performers the audience are left with the sound and music to follow. The sound is becoming what we as the audience want it to be. They are created and dissolved and we can choose what to do with them.

My personal experience is that this performance has a lot of highly interesting elements. The method of not using performers is a very interesting and unique element in the performance. It makes the sound and installation function as its own

---

<sup>44</sup> American writer (1914 – 1997)

<sup>45</sup> French anthropologist and ethnologist (1908-2009)

<sup>46</sup> African-American minister and human rights activist (1925 – 1965)

<sup>47</sup> “Musicality in theatre – Music as a model, Method and Metaphor in Theatre-Making”

<sup>48</sup> Roesner, 2014, p. 157.



living organism. I get the feeling of witnessing another world or something extraterrestrial. The machines are independent; making the sounds that are the main component of the performance and controlling the whole fictive, but still real, world that Goebbels has created. The combination of the physical elements on stage and the sound and music they create are working together on a highly detailed and precise level. The way Goebbels work and explore the field of music theatre is highly inspiring and motivates me to never stop the exploring of the field.

### **4.3 Dramaturgical differences and similarities**

Both of the performances I have written about are fitting under the term Music Theatre. They have very different approaches, structures and ways of presenting the form, but there are also some similar elements in the two of them. With this chapter I want to look at these differences and similarities.

In Teaterkoncert Beethoven, the music is a rearrangement of already existing music, whilst in Stifters Dinge; Goebbels has composed the music himself. Still Goebbels is also taking use of already existing materials, such as recordings with spoken words. Musicians make the music in Beethoven on stage, while in Goebbels performance all the sounds are made from machines or recorded. One of the performances use musicians and actors and the other no performers at all, but they are both still considered to be under the Music Theatre genre. Teaterkoncert Beethoven is a very theatrical performance with a clear story being told. The performers have characters they are presenting to the audience. Stifters Dinge is less theatrical, directed more as an installation. The sound and music is working together with the installation, whilst in Beethoven it is more about the connection between the performers and the music. The non-performers in Stifters Dinge gives the sound a higher position then the music sung and played in Beethoven. The songs and the text in Beethoven is telling a story to the audience, whilst in Stifters Dinge it is more open for the audience to interpret and make up their own storyline to follow. In an Interview about Stifters Dinge Goebbels is saying, "*Only the watchful eye can make a play out of it*".<sup>49</sup> This

---

<sup>49</sup> BWW news desk – Stifters Dinge

we can understand as if he wanted to make a performance where the audience should get the opportunity to interpret. In Beethoven on the other hand it is a very clear story they want to tell the audience, through the music and lyrics. The two performances are very different in how they are approaching the audience, but I would say that both of the directors/composers use a fragmental structure or dramaturgy in their work. Beethoven is fragmental in the way of having an opening and ending for every scene, whilst Stifter's *Dinge* is fragmental in the transitions from one installation or element to another. Still both of the performances have some kind of a combining element. Beethoven uses the common elements in the stories of the characters and in Stifter's *Dinge* the stage elements and the installation becomes the binding element.

I find it interesting how these two artists are explaining their entrance methods while working towards a music theatre performance. Cederholm is saying that he is taking use of theatre as a method on music, whilst Goebbels says that he directs like a composer. With these two descriptions of how they entrance a process, we can say that they are doing exactly the opposite of each other. One is starting with the theatre, whilst the other takes use of the music as a starting point. They both claim that they work with all the elements on stage as equal, even if they have a different approach to making Music theatre. Considering the fact that Goebbels is making all the music himself, it seems logical for him to have the music as a starting point. For Cederholm who is using already existing music, it may be more interesting to start with the theatre and search for the theatrical elements within the music. It may be of importance, when working with hybrid theatre like this, to have a clear understanding of which form you are putting into another and not just work with the two of them equally from the very beginning even if this is the preferable outcome in the end. I understand it as if this is an important element for these two artists. The starting point may also affect the final result of the performance. Cederholm is using the same strategy or method for all his performances, taking already made music and turn them into a theatre performance. Goebbels on the other hand makes very different performances every time. I would say that all the different performances I know and have seen by Goebbels have a different structure and dramaturgy. Maybe the use of music as a starting point and to direct like a composer is opening up for new ideas regarding structure of a performance in a bigger scale than the opposite. If you start

with the theatre as a method on music it may be easier to fall into a “typical” theatre structure with an Aristotelian dramaturgy. Based on the performances and the research I have done on both the artist, my point of view is that Goebbels is constantly exploring the field of music theatre, whilst Cederholm found one structure that he takes use of in all his Theatre Concerts.

Another interesting element is that Goebbels is starting with the objects in this performance. In his lecture he talked about how he wanted the objects on stage to be the main element. This was also the reason why he chose to do a performance without performers. His process evolved around the objects and the possibilities they gave, whilst in Cederholms performance he focused on Beethoven’s music and the story of the characters he used. I think the quote used earlier by Goebbels is explaining the difference between the two performances and their structure quit on point. Goebbels says about his own performance that only the watchful eye can make a performance out of it, whilst Cederholm is making a clear story presented in a performative way.

## 5 Making Music Theatre

Making theatre with music and sound as the main components is as we can read above done in many different ways. Artists are constantly finding new structures and methods to use while working with combining music and theatre on stage. The two artists written about in this thesis are both artist that have inspired me in my work on my performances. Dramaturgical structure, use of sound and music, performers, language and staging in the two performances are highly interesting to me, but in very different ways. In the following pages I want to write about the two performances I made during my last year of the master degree. The first one, Headless man, is my first experience with making a performance with sound as the main component. I will write some reflections around my experience of the process and performance. The second one, Theatre concert, is my final performance of the MA-degree and I will write a more detailed chapter about my reflections and thoughts around the process.

### 5.1 Headless man

My vision with this particular project was to make a theatre performance with a main focus on sounds. I wanted to try out different ways of using sound and its qualities to tell a story. In my earlier performances, music and sound have always been important components, but this is the first time I have chosen to have them as the main focus while directing. We were four people working together for this project, two actors, one French (Maëlane Auffray) and one Czech (Vládimir Pokorný), a stage-designer (Klára Fleková) and me as a director. We made the performance in school, as a final for my third semester of the MA -Directing in DAMU.

Short summary: A man and a woman are sitting by the breakfast table in a kitchen. It looks like a normal day and they are making food and doing their morning rituals. They are both facing the audience. They are communicating in a frontal way, without looking at each other. During the cooking and morning rituals the woman gets more and more irritated at all the sound and noise the man is making, it is interrupting her

rituals. She tries to keep calm, but in the end she cannot handle it anymore. She cuts the head of the man and continues her morning rituals.

The original idea for this project was to make a staging of a radio-drama. I was aiming for a performance with focus on sound and as little acting as possible. The story was supposed to be told by sounds made by the actors. The chosen theme for the performance was war, inspired by a panorama painting I experienced in a gallery. In this painting we could see a lot of violence, death and sorrow. In all this mess, my attention was drawn to a man whom had his head cut of. This contrast of all the movement around this silent body gave the painting sound.<sup>50</sup>

The wide topic, war, was very quick narrowed down to a “war” in a relation between two people. We started by devising with sounds, how the fight between them could be told by use of sounds. We decided to put the couple in an everyday life situation, the breakfast table. This we did to be able to work with all the sounds and tools one use while cooking. All these kitchen tools became the base of all sounds made during the performance. We found small sound sequences during the improvisation and devising that we chose to develop to longer sound pieces. Some of them ended up as rhythmical structures and others without any other structure then the sound itself. A water boiler for instance worked very well as a sound that escalated. The dramaturgy of this sound from the heating of the water to the boiling point fitted the dramaturgical structure of the performance. After some rehearsal with only using sound to tell the story, I experienced that it was a bigger challenge then expected. I chose to let the actors use words, but in their own language, Czech and French. In this way I felt like the attention was more drawn to the musicality and tonality of the language, as Heiner Goebbels spoke about in his work, and not the actual words that were spoken. The two different languages on stage also underscored the dysfunctional relationship and became a symbol of not listening or talking nonsense to each other. This directorial choice made the vision of using only sounds changing to a vision of making a performance where sound should function as the most important component. This also resulted in making the actors a lot more visible on

---

<sup>50</sup> Attachment 4

stage. For me it suddenly became important to see the action of the actors while making the sounds.<sup>51</sup>

After working with the sound in this performance on a level of detail, I got feedback from several of the audience that they did not think a lot about the sound during the performance. This may be a result of the fact that we during the process started to focus more on telling the story to the audience. In retrospect I can see that to start the process of a performance with sound as the main component with a chosen topic or story, not necessarily is of importance. The sound could have been the topic itself. We worked very much with the sounds, each one of them, but somehow they all ended up underscoring the story we told, even if they had a more important part for us who made the performance. I experienced that the story we told, functioned as a stopper for all the opportunities that sound give.

The sound did not have any effect on the outcome of the dramaturgy or structure of the performance, as I wanted to in the beginning of the process. The performers became actors, and did not function as human instruments, as a result of me giving to much focus on telling a story. I had an idea of the performers to be almost invisible on stage during the performance, a choice that could only work in this performance if I were able to make sound the main component.

For me the most important lesson I learned and what I will take with me in future projects, is to trust the objects and the sounds. I should rely on the fact that the sound is telling enough by itself and do not need any story or other components to underscore or help it. The objects are also able to tell a story and make a dramaturgy or structure without any other elements. I am happy with the outcome of the process and performance "Headless man". Most because of what I learned and experienced during the process. I think the main factor that made the process challenging was the fact that I had chosen several elements that I wanted in the performance before we started the rehearsal process. Instead of starting with only sounds as material, I took use of elements like topic, story and situations from the very beginning. As written above, this can have taken away interesting elements and situations that could appear during the improvisations if we did not work with a specific topic.

---

<sup>51</sup> Attachment 5

## **5.2 Cleaning Disk – theatre concert**

My starting point for this particular performance was to make a performance with sound as the main component. The fact that I did not manage to achieve this at the level I wanted with my previous project “Headless man”, made me think differently and try another entrance method. This time I will not approach the project with an already made story or other strong elements that can make the sound become an underscoring component. I only made a frame for the performance in advance.

The creative team for this project consists of two actresses (Maëlane Auffray, Lise Grimelund-Kjelsen), two actors (Fedir Djudja, Šimon Dohnálek), one stage designer (Natalie Rajnišová), one producer (Václav Šindelář) and me as a director. The performance will take place in Divadlo Disk, the theatre of *The Theatre Academy of Performing Arts in Prague*.

Theatre Concert is a sound performance about preparing the theatre space, in this case “Divadlo Disk”, for a concert. The sound of all the equipments and objects one use to prepare a given space for a concert will be the main component of the performance. I want to explore these sounds, and how they can be used in a theatre context. Together with actors and a stage-designer we are going to explore and find new structures and methods to use in the theatre through the sound of these objects. The performance will start with an empty stage and end up as a fully set concert space. My purpose is to fill in the elements and situations that will appear in between these two points with sound structures and compositions.

### **5.2.1 Methods and exploring during the process**

In the beginning of the process the stage-designer and I had several meetings where we discussed the concept and structure of the performance. We had a lot of ideas and many different concepts, but ended up with the concept explained above. The most important for the two of us was to have a main focus on the sound in this performance.

After a short first rehearsal with one actress, stage-designer and director, we all got a clearer picture of how the performance will be structured. As an entrance method to this project I want to give the actors an instrument, in this case cleaning equipments, each for them to explore and later become a kind of “specialist” on. For example one of the performers will get “Bucket” as their main instrument for the performance and then I want them to explore this specific instrument. In the beginning of the process, I see it as necessary to really explore all the sounds and tools, to find out all possibilities.

After the first meeting with stage-designer and the actress I also decided that I want the Theatre concert to be in two parts. The first part will be focusing on the structures and sounds of cleaning the theatre space whilst the second part will only be focusing on the building and set up of the concert stage. By making it in two parts, it can open up for use of different scenic expressions and soundscape. The light and easy moveable cleaning equipments in the first part will function as a contrast to the bigger elements like chairs, piano and note stands in the second part. This can be an interesting turn in the dramaturgy of the sound.

The instruments/equipments we use in the rehearsals are:

- Mop

It is a cleaning tool that most people have a relationship to. It is mostly used to clean the floor. Regarding sounds, it gives many opportunities. When the mop is dry, it gives a hard and sharp sound, while a wet mop sounds softer. It also gives the possibility to make sounds with the plastic shaft. The mop is easy to manipulate and move.

- Sponge

The sponge is a very small cleaning tool. Not very visible on stage and does not make high sounds. The small sounds it can make are still interesting. It is also a tool that one can easily use a high amount of, without it being difficult. The sponge has the same function as the mop, regarding different sounds when adding water to it.

- Bucket



This is an interesting object to use in a sound performance. It is also often used in this setting. We are working with both metal and plastic buckets. The sound is very different on the two of them, but the qualities are very similar. The sound of the bucket does also change when adding water. An empty bucket has a hollow sound with a kind of echo, whilst a bucket with water has a sharper sound. The bucket can function as a drum to make rhythmical structures with. This is probably the most used quality of a bucket on a stage.

- Spray bottle

A spray bottle has a very unique sound. The sharp sound of water pressed through the tiny holes is very often associated with spraying. It also has a good quality regarding the visuals. The water that is sprayed is a nice element to for instance put light on.

- Broom

Broom is very similar to the mop regarding sound qualities. It gives the possibility to make stronger and harder sounds than the mop.

- Washing gloves

The rubber gloves are interesting visually. You usually put them on before touching something you don't want to touch or use it as a protection. The gloves can make a creaking sound. It can also be filled with air or water in the same way as a balloon.

- Concert Chairs

The purpose of a concert chair is to be sat on while playing an instrument during a concert. It is shaped and has the function of every other "normal" chair. It is made from plastic and metal. The sounds it can make are mostly hard and loud.

- Note stands

This object has a very specific function. It is a stand where one is supposed to have the notes while playing an instrument. It is probably the object in the performance that least people have a relationship to. It consists of a metal shaft and a plate for the notes to be put on. It has some functions that makes it able to be shorter and taller,

to make it suitable for the performers size. This also gives it the possibility to make smaller sounds from the screws.

- Platform for the conductor

The platform of the conductor is basically as any other platform only smaller. The interesting sounds with this object is appearing while walking/hit on it or moving it around.

- Platforms for the orchestra

These platforms have the same function of the one described above, only in a larger scale. They are bigger and more difficult to handle.

- Cleaning trolley

The trolley gives a lot of opportunities. It has the function of rolling on its wheels, which makes a silent but interesting sound. It is packed with several different cleaning tools, which makes it somehow to its own rolling orchestra.

- Metronome

Mostly musicians use this object to practice playing to a regular pulse. It is a device that produces an audible beat, very often a click.

All of these objects will be seen as instruments in this performance. They will function both in the way they usually are used and in completely new and different ways. I want to explore them and find out how the sound of these objects can give something new to the theatre regarding structure of a performance and the method one is using in a process.

Rhythm and tempo becomes important issues in this process. Rhythm has been important in theatre training for a long time, focused on the body language and speaking. An example is Stanislavsky's "Tempo-rhythm" which is focusing on the tempo and rhythm of the character, body or other elements on stage.<sup>52</sup> We are not just focusing on the tempo or rhythm of the body or tools, but also the rhythm and

---

<sup>52</sup> Benedetti, 1998, p. 80.

tempo of the group as a whole. When working with sounds on this detailed level, I have experienced that it is highly important that the performers have a common understanding of what they are doing on stage. It is also very visible from the outside if the group of performers don't have a common rhythm as a base in the performance. Of this reason, we work a lot with improvisation and communication without words in the rehearsals.

After the third rehearsal and meetings with supervisor, we concluded that there should be something to clean from the very beginning, not just the empty space of Divadlo Disk. We had several ideas and ended up with deciding that it will be a mess from the concert that took place in the theatre the day before. It will be note stands, chairs, platforms and paper with notes on everywhere. This can give the performers more to explore and work with. This means that instead of making the Theatre Concert consist of only two parts, it will now have three. Part one will be cleaning the mess from the previous concert. Part two will consist of cleaning the empty space and the third part will be focusing on building the concert stage. We also want to try out how it will work when giving the performers a deadline by using an element that will give them time pressure. How will it function on stage if the performers and the audience know that everything has to be cleaned and built in 30 minutes? We want use a metronome as the element that functions as the time pressure. Another discussion that came up in the rehearsal was whether to use only non-electronic cleaning tools or to take use of electronic tools like for instance vacuum cleaner as well. Until now, we have only used non-electronic tools, but maybe it can give something new regarding sounds with the electronic tools.

The rehearsals we have had until now have been focused on exploring the sound and qualities of the tools. I use a lot of improvisation when working with the performers. I want them to take use of the instruments in a way that comes natural and feels personal. The improvisation with the objects works quit well. It takes a lot of time and sometimes we get completely stuck on one small sound or situation, but it makes us try out a lot of different possibilities.

Regarding the performers, we are still trying out different opportunities. We are playing with them having a character or some personal qualities that can open up for

a more interesting relationship between them and the objects. Not having any characters, just function as a musician would in a classical concert, is also an option that we are exploring. The only “rule” I have made for the performers while rehearsing is that whatever they do while cleaning, they always do it knowing it is the best way of doing it. All of the performers are functioning as highly professional cleaners. In one rehearsal one of the actors put the yellow rubber gloves on her feet and started cleaning the floor with them in a rhythmical way which made her look like she was skiing. This suddenly opens up for a new method of using this everyday object.

An object that I want to use in the performance, as mentioned earlier, is the metronome. In the rehearsals it has the function of a conductor. It is placed on the front of the stage and makes a rhythm that the performers must relate to. They are allowed to choose whether they want to follow its rhythm or not, but they should relate to it. The ticking sound of the metronome is easy to associate with a clock and time running out. Of this reason I want to take use of it at the point of the performance where the performers really have to get serious about the cleaning, to be able to prepare everything before the concert.

We have started on making a structure with the mops. It is a rhythm piece where the performers are swinging the mops from side to side in the rhythm of the metronome. It makes the mops look like big metronomes on stage. The performers are changing on being synchronised and desynchronised. They clean the floor in the rhythm. I also want for the performers to have different styles or structures in their way of cleaning. For instance I would like to make one performer clean in a hard and static way and another on with soft and slow movements, in the same way people would use instruments in different and personal ways. In a rehearsal I gave two of the actors different music in their ears while doing a run-through of the scene. This was to make them feel the musicality and rhythm of their cleaning. One actor got some quick and rhythmical music and the other one a slow classical piece by Bach. This became a quiet interesting scenario. As an audience I could not hear any of the music because of the performers using headphones. The movement of the two of them became much stronger, but in different direction, and made the contrast between the performers more visible.

The stage in the scenario of the mops will be split in four parts. Several sponges are making the lines between all the four parts. Each performer will be responsible of cleaning one of the parts. Also because I want the performers to have different structures, I want all the performers to have their own score to follow. The score will be created by improvisation through the rehearsals. Even if they all have their own score and structure of cleaning, there will be some rules in the scene that they all have to follow. One of the rules is that every time someone is going to the bucket to wet their mop, all the others have to slower their movements and lower their sound. Immediately when the person is done with the water, they can start with their original cleaning again. This gives the performers the opportunity to be in their own flow or structure, but also makes sure that they actually are listening to what is happening around them on the stage.

A list of the actions, sounds and how we are thinking about structure of the performance at this point of the process:

#### Part 1 – Cleaning away the mess

- Entrance
- Picking up notes and scores
- Moving the note-stands
- Taking away the chairs

#### Part 2 – Cleaning with tools

- The performers are now done with moving away all the stuff from the stage
- They are getting prepared to clean the stage
- Yellow gloves are found and put on
- Hundreds of sponges are falling from the roof
- Performers take their sponges and starts to look for spots at the floor to clean
- In the end it turns into a sponge fight, they a throwing sponges
- Metronome is starting and they begin to build a structure with the sponges and divides the room into four parts
- They get a mop each and start to clean their own part
- Sound sequences with the mops, together and solo

- Ending up in a synchronised metronome movement with the mops
- Putting the mops back in the bucket

### Part 3 – Preparing the stage for a classical concert

- Putting the chairs back in a set-up suitable for a concert
- Set the note-stands up in front of the chairs
- The platform for the conductor is placed in the front
- Put the metronome on the platform of the conductor

In a rehearsal with the supervisor present, a discussion regarding the acting and characters came up. The idea of the performers not having any specific character and only to function as musicians was taken in consideration. At this point of the process it seemed necessary to make a directorial choice regarding this topic. The discussion was concentrated on whether the actors should have a funny approach or more of a serious way of performing. The fact that this performance is focusing on the sound as a main component is pulling me more in the direction of the serious approach. Comical characters or funny scenarios should not dominate the sounds and music that will be made during the performance. This does not necessary mean that all comical elements are excluded, but that the main focus of the performers should be concentrated on the sound. We took use of an exercise where the performers got the task of improvising with the objects accompanied by classical music. We took use of this exercise to help the performers find more serious, elegant, precise and proud characters. The characters should be focusing on the sound they are making and work with them on a level of detail. Preferably it should show during the performance that they are professionals and have long experience in the field of cleaning. Still the musicality should be found in everything on stage. The performers, stage-design, room and sound should all function as musical elements in the performance.

One of the rehearsals we decided to do in complete darkness. No lights at all. This we did to be able to only concentrate on the auditory experience of the performance. The performers seemed somehow more able to listen to each other and paying more attention to the sounds made. In the previous rehearsals they have used body

language and the eyes to communicate more, but in this rehearsal it was no other option than paying attention to the sounds made and follow each other based on this. Another issue regarding the sound is that it is on the border between very normal sounds from cleaning and constructed and directed sound sequences. I think that if I were to let one of these different uses of sound out of the performance, it will easily become a monotone structure with less contrasts and exploring. In the group there are discussions around this. Some of us would like only to work with the natural or realistic sounds of the cleaning, whilst others want to explore and develop the sounds till the point where they not necessarily are realistic for cleaning sounds to be. I am thinking that the realistic sound of the cleaning and preparing should be the base of all the sounds made in the performance, but I also think it should be developed and explored without any limits or rules at this point of the process.

At this point of the process we are starting to think about the score. We have been improvising and exploring the tools and the sounds for a long enough time to start focusing on the structure in each part or sequence. The way we are planning the scores is functioning in the same way as a partiture for any other kind of music. We are making our own symbols and the meaning of them. In this way the performers can follow the same structure by reading the score. All the improvisations in rehearsals have made the performers listening to each other and able to work together as a whole in a larger scale then earlier. Also the focus on the sounds is clearly growing stronger in every rehearsal. As written about earlier, Roesner is writing about the jazz music as a model for a theatre process. He claims that this can make the group get a deeper understanding and realise the importance of listening to each other. Our process until now have functioned more in this direction, then in a strict way with me as a conductor with all the rules. Somehow this gives both the performers and me a common understanding of the project. We make the frame and rules within it together as a team, devising and improvising with the sounds. In the rehearsals where we have arranged a structure for a scene with a score to follow, I have the experience that the performers don't have the same collective feeling, rhythm or tempo. They become focused on their own structure as well as the score that they have to follow and forget about listening to the group as a whole. Of this reason I want to make the scores more open. Even if they have to follow a score, it

does not have to be a very strict and complicated one, if this takes away the focus and group dynamics.

In rehearsal we tried a new strategy regarding the scores. We took use of a famous classical music piece, more specific Igor Stravinsky<sup>53</sup> and his "Rite of spring", and followed the scores with our instruments/tools. This inspired us to make our own structure and score for the performance.<sup>54</sup> We take use of elements from the score, such as pause, tempo, crescendo and staccato.

### **5.2.2 The form and structure of the performance**

The performance has a main focus on sound. This has resulted in a new and interesting way to work with both method and structure. The sounds have a structure or dramaturgy their own and will also make the structure of the whole performance. Of this reason we have worked specifically with the structure of the performance as a whole, but also the small structures in different sequences of the performance.

In the first part of the performance the performers are cleaning up the mess from the concert from the day before. They start with picking up the scores that are spread out on the stage. In this sequence they all have a different structure to follow. An example from this sequence is:

Performer 1: Picking up the paper from one place very slow and speeding up (crescendo) until he puts it somewhere else. This is repeated.

Performer 2: Entering the stage, picking up one piece of paper and leaving the stage.

Performer 3: Searching for the broken papers, crunch them and throw them away. This is repeated.

Performer 4: Coming in later and starts to pick up paper in an authentic way.

With this sequence described above it shows how the structure is similar to how a classical concerts score would look like. If you see these four performers as instruments and their action as the music or sound from the instrument, it would be

---

<sup>53</sup> Russian composer, pianist and conductor.

<sup>54</sup> Attachment 6.



more or less the same. This is how we are working with the structure of this performance. We are using an already made score as inspiration and interpreting with our own sounds. Each performer is following one of the instruments on the score. For example, one of the performers is always following the score written for the flute. We are making our own score, based on the same principles as Stravinsky's score.<sup>55</sup> In the second part we use the same method as inspiration, but with new instruments, cleaning tools. And in the last part, where the performers are preparing for a new concert, metronomes will control the concert. The metronome will function as a conductor/director of this part. This will be the first and only time in the performance that any element, not used by the performers, is giving a rhythm or sound. We want to have this element as contrast and change in the structure for the last part. The other stage elements we use in the performance are non-instruments that we use as if they were instruments.<sup>56</sup>

When I am delivering this thesis, we still have one week of rehearsals left before the premiere. Of this reason I will not be able to finish the writing about the final part of the process. The same week is also when we move in to Divadlo Disk, where we are performing, so an important part of the final rehearsals will be to work with all the sounds and structures that we have made in the new space. We have to try out if the different elements of the performance need changing regarding sound, space, lights etc. The rehearsals have all been in much smaller rooms than the theatre and since the sounds behave different in different rooms, this will be something that I would like to work with in detail.

---

<sup>55</sup> Attachment 7

<sup>56</sup> Attachment 8,9,10,11.

## 6 Research result and discussion

Heiner Goebbels and Nikolaj Cederholm take use of very different methods while working with or making music theatre. They both use the music or sound as a main component for their process and their performances. Kagel, Cage, Aperghis and the other artists written about in this thesis have also explored and found their structures. I myself have as well taken use of my own methods, to find my why of doing music theatre. Approaching theatre with music or sound as the main tool can of this reason, the different starting point, have very different outcomes. Goebbels, who very often starts a project with different materials, is always making completely different shows. None of his performances look the same or have the same approach. Cederholm on the other hand found a method of how to take use of already written and known music and make it into theatre. He found a structure of a performance that he use, almost like a recipe, over and over again. Georges Aperghis focus on the human body as an instrument and a tool for making sounds, specially the voice. Cage used silence and “no sound” in one of his performances, and sound of an instrument, but not the sound it is supposed to make, in another. All these different structures and methods are based on the fact that the artists have taken and take use of music or sound as the main component. Some of the music theatre performances made are very much following the Aristotelian dramaturgy and structure, like for instance the musical theatres. But based on all the research in this thesis we can say that the music theatre has evolved both in dramaturgy, structure and methods. The exploring of music theatre makes it constantly change and develop. What David Roesner says about music creating a different time, is something I find interesting regarding new structures and methods in theatre. Time is important in theatre. The length of situations, duration of the play, year or era and the timing of the performers and other elements on stage are all of importance. We can say that sound and music has a different time of several reasons. All the elements in theatre that usually relates to time or makes us think about time is maybe not as present in music or sound. People can have a music experience where they use the phrase: Time stood still. I do not say that this is not possible without music or sound, but maybe sound has a stronger quality of capturing the audience then other art forms. In the two performances I have analysed it is a clear difference regarding the time. In the theatre concert we are

following lives and stories, while in Stifters Dinge we are not given anything more than sounds and stage-design. This makes Stifters Dinge more interesting to look at when it comes to the question of time. There are no timeline to follow, nothing that tells you if you are getting close to the end of the performance. The dramaturgy of the sounds and music are leading you through the performance. The rhythm is also an interesting element when it comes to open up for new methods in theatre. As written earlier, Stanislavski is famous for his method of tempo-rhythm. This is a very direct and often used example of elements of music used as a method on theatre. Regarding my own methods in the process, I have taken use of these elements, rhythm and tempo, to make a functional and dynamic group. Also the fact that sound has its own dramaturgy and structure is something I have been taken use of in my process. The experience of a specific sound can open up for a specific memory, feeling or mood. The subjective experience of it becomes highly important. This can open for the audience to have completely different experiences of the same performance or sound. With now specific topic or story, you are more open to interpret and make your own definitions or meanings, which can be easier to achieve while working with sounds or music. The example by Roesner, using jazz music as a model in a theatre process, can give a very concrete picture on how music and sound can open for new structures and methods. Even if improvisation, jamming in jazz, is a common and known structure in a theatre process, it can be seen differently when you look at it as music. It is more about listening, rhythm and tempo. It is not of importance to improvise a story or situation, but about feeling the other performers and their tempo. The two performances I have analysed are both very constructed and planned, in different ways. The machines in Stifters Dinge are programmed very precisely and are making the sound and music they are suppose to in the very correct moment. In Theatre Concert Beethoven everything is directed and the songs are sung like they have been planned to, but with more openness to improvisation because of the performers acting live on stage. In my performance we have parts that are completely left open for improvisation and others that are more constructed. The improvisational parts can only work if the performers listen to each other, like one would do in a jazz jamming session.

Music and sound have different rules, laws and structures. This will one way or another, when being the main component, result in a performance with a different

structure. The method and model for the process will also be affected by the fact that music and sound function as the base. The fact that I have taken use of an already existing score for classical music and interpreted and adapted it to a music theatre performance, shows how it can open up for both a method for the process and a structure for the performance. When one takes use of sound or music as the main component, one also has to follow the rules with it. As a director, one can make all the rules for the performance as a whole, but when the sounds are the most important element, it somehow also becomes the leader of the process. The exploring around them, how to use them, find out where this specific sound can fit or make harmony with the other elements of the performance, are all parts of a bigger challenge. The composing or directing of sounds as a theatre performance is making new structures and methods in several different ways. Schönberg was exploring and researching the musicality of the light. He composed the light in harmony with the music. For instance: A crescendo in the music could equal a crescendo in the light. This, composing of the light, is also an interesting method to use without any music involved. The musicality of the light can also be explored by only using the rhythm and the musicality as an inspiration or structure for the design. In all the previous performances I have made I have always used sound as a tool for expressing or underscoring a meaning. With this information I now have and the experiences I have done while working with sound as the main component, I can now see how much more it has to offer in a theatre context. In the Theatre Concert, my final performance, the sound is functioning the leading part of the performance. It qualities have opened several new methods that I will definitely use in my future projects.

## 7 Conclusion

Music theatre is a theatre form that can be difficult to define. There are many different structures and methods used both in the process of making it and the performances. Music has been an important part of the theatre since the very beginning of its existence in the ancient Greece. What is common for all forms of music theatre is that the music or sound function as the main component in the performance. I start the thesis with asking: *In what way can music and sound open for new structures and methods in a theatre context?*

Artists have been developing and exploring the field over the years and found new structures and methods in how to make music theatre. Some of them describe their way of working as directing like a composer or looking at theatre and all its elements as music, while others are finding the theatre elements in already existing music. Elements from the music and sound can bring several new possibilities of structure and methods in theatre work. Sound has its own structure and dramaturgy that can open up for different opportunities in a process. Concrete examples are for instance, Nikolaj Cederholms *Teaterkoncert Beethoven* where he uses the structure of a concert as the method on the dramaturgy of a theatre performance. Another is Heiner Goebbels who takes use of music and sound as the starting point for his compositions and performances. He is also exploring the musicality and tonality in languages and uses this as an element in his performances. John Cage made a concert by taking away the music and focusing on the sounds that appeared as a result of that directorial choice. Artists are also using the structure of music or sound as a method on different elements in the theatre. Arnold Schönberg used it specifically as a structure for the light-design. In my own work with music theatre, I have had the experience of sound and music as interesting components to start a theatre process with. The use of musical elements like rhythm, tempo, scores and sound has opened for new methods. Examples are that we used Stravinsky's score, as an inspiration for the structure of the performance, the movement and sound of a metronome became a cleaning session with mops and we found the musical qualities of objects like: chairs, mops, music-stands, paper and others. In the process we worked devised with the performers as musicians in a jamming session. There are many methods and structures explored during the years and the research and

experiences I have made during this study can give us several different examples on this. Artists are still exploring the field of music theatre and of this reason new methods and structures are constantly appearing.

## Bibliography:

Barker, C. *Theatre Games – A new approach to drama training*. London: Methuen/drama. 1977.

Benedetti, J. *Stanislavski and the Actor: The method of physical attention*. New York: Routledge. 1998.

Blauert, J. *Communication Acoustics*. Netherlands: Springer – Verlag Berlin Heidelberg. 2005.

Burian, J.M. *Leading Creators of twentieth-century Czech theatre*. London: Routledge. 2002.

Eigtved, M. *Det populære musikteater. Fra rockritual til popmelodrama*. Copenhagen: Multivers. 2003.

Fetterman, W. *John Cage's Theatre Pieces – Notations and Performances*. New York: Routledge. 2010.

Kaye, D., Lebrecht, J. *Sound and music for the theatre*, Oxford: Elsevier. 2009.

Kendrick, L., Roesner, D. *Theatre Noise: The sound of Performance*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 2011.

Kurtiz, P. *The Making of Theatre History*. London: Prentice Hall College. 1988.

Leonard, J.A. *Theatre Sound*. New York: Routledge. 2001.

Parker, R. *The Oxford illustrated history of Opera*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1994.

Rebstock, M., Roesner, D. *Composed theatre – Aesthetics, Practices, Processes*. Bristol: Intellect 2012.

Roesner, D. *Musicality in theatre – Music as a model, Method and Metaphor in Theatre-Making*. Ashgate Publishing. 2014.

Salzman, E., Desi, T. *The New Music Theater: Seeing the Voice, Hearing the Body*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2008.

Straus, E. *Vom Sinn der Sinne*, Berlin: Springer-Verlag. 1956.

Wagner, R. *Opera and drama*. London: University of Nebraska Press Lincoln and London. 1893.

### **Other sources:**

Notes from the Heiner Goebbels lecture – Divadlo Archa - 14.11.2016

Bjørn Lense-Møller, Me Lund: Nikolaj Cederholm i *Den Store Danske*, Gyldendal. Found 19. april 2017 from <http://denstoredanske.dk/index.php?sideId=55191>

<https://snl.no/musikkteater> (Norwegian Encyclopaedia) 09.01.2017

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BqZILDP95E> (Pas de Cinq – Mauricio Kagel) 13.04.2017

<https://www.britannica.com/science/ear/Auditory-pathways#ref531964> (Cocktail party effect)

<http://www.heinergoebbels.com/en> 15.04.2017

<https://www.heinergoebbels.com/download.php?itemID=16> (BWW news desk) 13.04.2017



<https://vimeo.com/134605443> (Video of Stifters Dinge) 15.04.2017

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/18/arts/music/18heiner.html> (The New York Times - 2009) 3.02.2017

Mette Thomsen 2011  
[http://library.au.dk/fileadmin/www.aestetik.au.dk/uddannelse/specialer/DRA\\_mette\\_thomsen\\_speciale\\_udlaan\\_www.pdf](http://library.au.dk/fileadmin/www.aestetik.au.dk/uddannelse/specialer/DRA_mette_thomsen_speciale_udlaan_www.pdf) 01.03.2017

<http://www.momoland.dk/sho/> (Theatre concert Beethoven) 07.03.2017

<http://www.rogaland-teater.no/program/teaterkonsert-beethoven> (14.02.2017)

## Attachment 1



Photo: Stig Håvard Dirdal (<http://www.rogaland-teater.no/program/teaterkonsert-beethoven>)

## Attachment 2

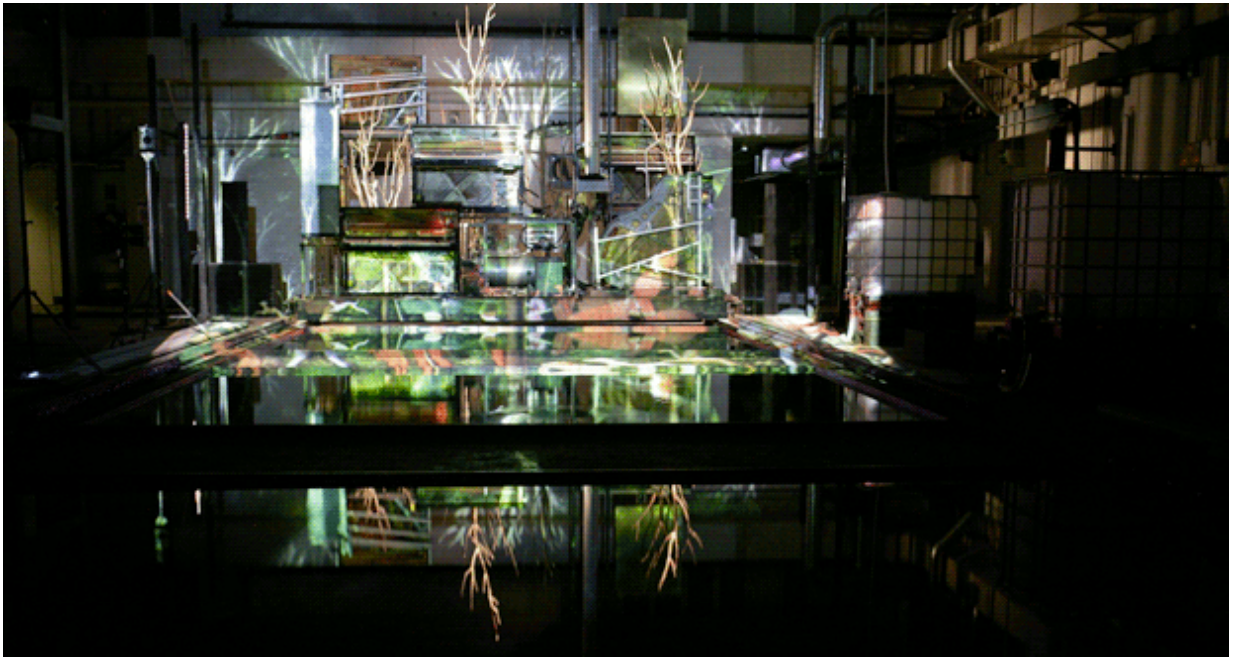


Photo: Nick Cobbing (<https://www.iconeye.com/404/item/3104-review-heiner-goebbels-stifter%E2%80%99s-dinge>)

## Attachment 3



(<http://www.germanjoys.eu/2011/01/bleg-heine-goebbels-stifters-dinge-on-dvd.html>)

**Attachment 4**



**Attachment 5**



"Headless Man"

# Attachment 6

The Rite of Spring  
Le Sacre du Printemps  
First Part  
ADORATION OF THE EARTH  
Première Partie  
L'ADORATION DE LA TERRE

INTRODUCTION  
Lento  $\downarrow$  50 tempo rubato  
colla parte

Clarinetto 1 in La  
Clarinetto basso 2 in Sib  
Fagotto 1  
Corno 2 in Fa

IGOR STRAVINSKY  
Revised 1947  
New edition 1967

poco accelerando  
a tempo

Solo (un poco en dehors)  
Solo  
p press.

The Rite of Spring - Score (<https://fuocoso.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/rite.png>)

# Attachment 7

Theatre Concert

Tools: mops, chairs, music stands, papers, sprays, gloves, brushes, buckets, vacuum

chronologie

I papers  
II chairs  
III music stands  
IV gloves  
V spray + sponges  
VI buckets  
VII mops  
VIII brushes

VII' metronom  
VIII' vacuum

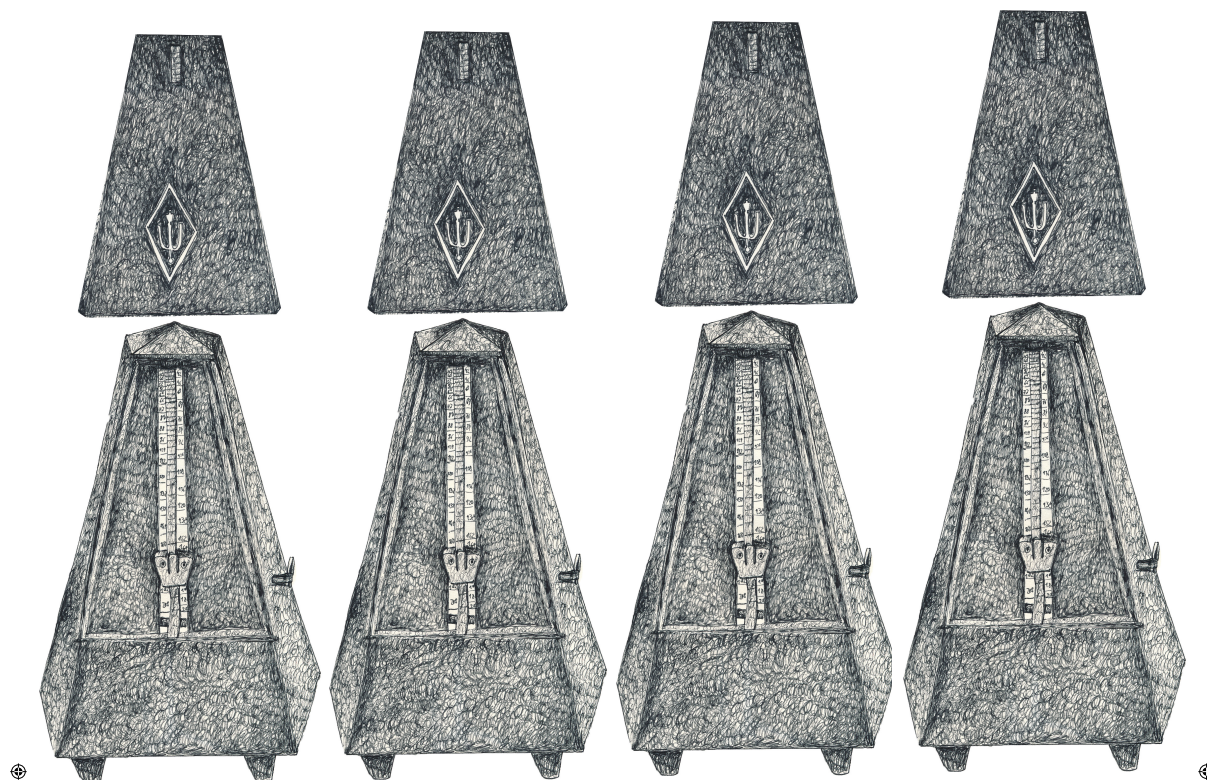
±/- 7 min. ±/- 5 min. ±/- 5 min.

moving chairs for mops & going to music stands

CONCERT

Theatre Concert - Score

## Attachment 8



Lise Andrea Marie  
Grimelund-Kjelsen

Šimon Dohnálek

Maëlane Auffray

Fedir Djúdja

theatre

concert

direction

Bård Bjørknes

scenography

Natálie Rajnišová

production

Václav Šindelář

premiere

26.5.2017

repeat

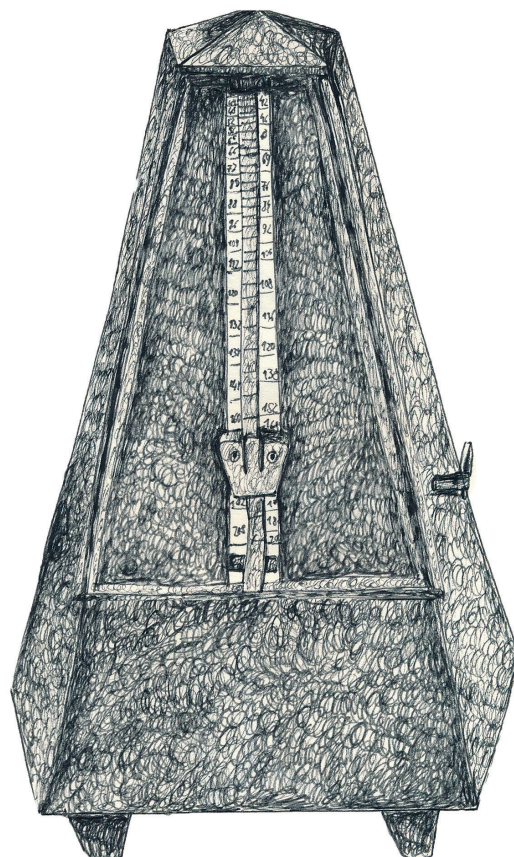
28.5.2017

19.30

divadlo Disk

Made by Natalie Rajnišová

Attachment 9



Made by Natalie Rajnišová

**Attachment 10**



musical instrument stand

Made by Natalie Rajnišová



**Attachment 11**



musical instrument chair

Made by Natalie Rajnišová