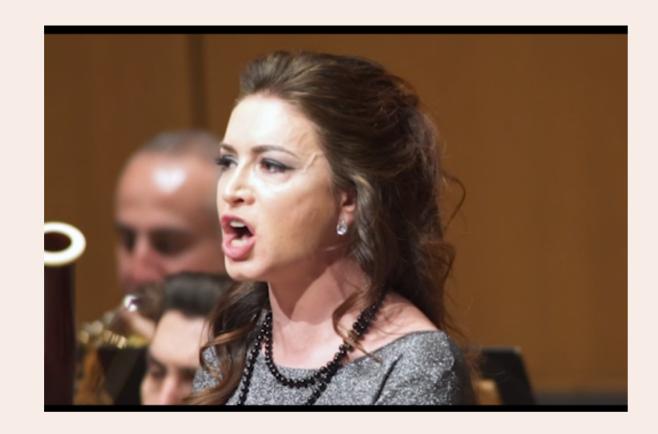
THE GLASGOW SCHOOL: PARE

Music as Model: orchestration, counterpoint and transposition

This output comprises 4 collaborative music-related concerts, film and installation works, responding to the refugee crisis resulting from the Syrian Civil War:

- Symphony of Sorrowful Songs (orchestral concert), 2017
- Lento (three-channel HDV, 30min), 2017
- Fugue (composition for solo violin), 2017
- Triptych (moving-image, site-specific installation), 2018





Project Details

Documenta 14 provided EUR 45,000 to cover the costs of the Syrian Expat Philharmonic Orchestra (SEPO); a further EUR 40,000 was provided by the Megaron to cover the costs of the 70+ Greek musicians and Russian conductor for one week, including an in-kind support in the form of venue and technician provision. Edinburgh Art Festival contributed approx. £10,000. **TOTAL FUNDING**: £83,615

Symphony of Sorrowful Songs, 2017

Recital of Henryk Gorecki's, Symphony No. 3, Opus 36 (1976), opening concert of documenta 14, Megaron Concert Hall, Athens, 8 April 2017. Performed by the Syrian Expat Philharmonic Orchestra (SEPO) and Athens State Orchestra (KAO). Soprano: Racha Rizk, Conductor: Daniel Raiskin.

Commissioned by documenta 14 and developed in collaboration with David Harding.

Project was funded by documenta 14 covering travel, fees and accommodation of Racha Risk and 12 musicians of SEPO

In-kind support was received from Athens State Orchestra (KAO) Lento, 2017

Three-channel film (HDV Dur: 29min), directed and edited by Birrell, focused on the Syrian Soprano, Racha Rizk's recital of the first movement (Lento – Sostenuto tranquillo ma cantabile) of Gorecki's Symphony No 3: Symphony of Sorrowful Songs (1976), performed at Megaron Concert Hall, Athens.

Commissioned by documenta 14

Directed and edited by Ross Birrell

Director of Photography: Hugh Watt

Camera: Ross Birrell; Samuel Devereux; Hugh Watt

Camera Assistant: Mark Wallis

Fugue, 2017

A composition for solo violin: Quatrain for Solo Violin after Paul Celan's Death Fugue (dur. 20 min) developed by Moraly from an initial theme by Birrell, and music score (including contextual writing by Birrell, 'Musica Activa').

Fugue was performed as the opening recital of the 'Symphony of Sorrowful Songs' concert.

Commissioned by documenta 14

Collaborators:

Violinist & Composer: Ali Moraly

Triptych, 2018

Site-specific installation, Trinity Apse, Edinburgh Art Festival 2018. This three-part installation consisting of *Lento*, three-channel video installation (29min); 2 x A4 printed music scores, two 'stained-glass' window chromatic mosaics.

Plus concerts at Trinity Apse and The Scottish Parliament with Ali Moraly, Racha Rizk, Damascus Sting Quintet of SEPO, and members of the GSA Choir.

Tryptych and concerts commissioned by Edinburgh Art Festival



Research Question

How might a collaborative process of polyphonic orchestration with professional musicians who are refugees offer insights into political questions of conflict and coexistence?'



Ali Moraly, performing Fugue, Megaron Concert Hall, Athens, 8 Apr 2017

Research Output

Symphony of Sorrowful Songs (concert)

The opening concert of documenta 14, 8 April 2017, Athens. A recital of Henryk Gorecki's, Symphony No. 3, Opus 36 (1976) also known as *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*, performed by the Syrian Expat Philharmonic Orchestra (SEPO) in collaboration with Athens State Orchestra (KAO). Soprano: Racha Rizk, Conductor: Daniel Raiskin.

Lento (three-channel film, HDV, 30min)

Film based upon the first movement of Gorecki's Symphony No 3: Lento (Sostenuto tranquillo ma cantabile), performed in the Megaron Concert Hall, Athens, 8 Apr 2017. The film comprises close up shots of the powerful performance by Syrian Soprano, Racha Rizk (Damascus), currently living as a political refugee in Paris and shots of the orchestra (16 members of SEPO). Subsequently exhibited in the Remise of Palais Bellevue, Kassel, June-Sept 2017; Triptych, Trinity Apse, Edinburgh Arts Festival, Aug 2018; and Charged!, MoCA Virginia Beach, Sept 2019 - Feb 20.

Please watch 'Birrell_7529_Music_Model_Film_1_Lento.mp4' on the USB stick now:

Ross Birrell/David Harding, Lento (2017) (HDV: 16:9, Single Channel edit of 3 Channel installation, Dur. 30min)

Fugue (composition for solo violin)

A collaboration between Birrell and Syrian violinist and composer, Ali Moraly (Damascus, now living in Germany), developed in response to the shared etymology of fugue and refugee: from the Latin fugere, meaning 'to flee.' From this initial theme, Moraly developed a 4-part composition, Quatrain for Solo Violin after Paul Celan's Death Fugue. Fugue opened the Symphony of Sorrowful Songs concert and was performed at the press conference for the opening of documenta 14 in Kassel, 2017. Fugue was subsequently presented at Trinty Apse and at a concert with SEPO at The Scottish Parliament as part of the Edinburgh Arts Festival, 2018.

Please watch 'Birrell_7529_Music_Model_Film_2_Fugue.mp4' on the USB stick now:

Ross Birrell/Ali Moraly, Fugue (2017) (Recording by Megaron, Athens, Dur. 22min)





Research Output

Ross Birrell/David Harding, Triptych (2018)

(site-specific installation)

Commissioned by Edinburgh Art Festival 2018 for historic Trinity Apse, Triptych was a three-part installation which consisted of *Lento*, a three-channel film, the two music scores developed as part of *Fugue*, two 'stained-glass' window chromatic mosaics, which transposed lines by the Palestinian poet, Mahmoud Darwish into colour.

Concerts with the Syrian musicians involved were held at Trinity Apse and The Scottish Parliament.

Triptych subsequently exhibited in Charged!,

MoCA Virginia Beach, Sept 2019 - Feb 2020.







Ross Birrell/David Harding, Triptych, Trinity Apse, Edinburgh Arts Festival, 2018



Context

Music and conflict

The current research emerged from previous music-related site-specific film projects responding to situations of political conflict and social tension, including Guantanamera (2010) filmed in Cuba and Miami, Quartet (2012) with Orquestra Esperanza Azteca de Ciudad Juarez (both in collaboration with David Harding) and Duet (2012), with Israeil and Palestinian musicians. However, in contrast to these others which developed in the political context of 'sustained antagonism,' this recent body of work explores a non-hierarchical politics of listening in tandem with methods of orchestration, transposition and co-existence.

Music as a model for tensile co-existence was embodied in *Fugue*, developed in collaboration with Syrian violinist and composer Ali Moraly (Damascus/Germany).

As Daniel Barenboim notes: 'In a fugue ... [s]ubject and countersubject complete each other and depend upon one other for their existence in the world of sound.' Daniel Barenboim, Everything is Connected: The Power of Music (Phoenix, 2008), p. 123.



Ali Moraly, performing 'Fugue', Kongress Palais, Kassel, 10 Jun 2017



Context

Music as Cultural Diplomacy

As music-related projects which respond to contexts of political antagonism or social tensions, this body of research contributes to the context of 'cultural diplomacy' (also called 'audio diplomacy' in the context of music), and what has been acknowledged as 'the acoustic turn in international relations' (Bergh & Sloboda, 2010).

In contrast to simplistic notions of music as an unproblematic promotion of 'social harmony,' Bergh & Sloboda remind us that 'music is not inherently peaceful and groups and individuals who want to create or maintain conflicts have often made good use of music to further their agenda' (5). They also regret that projects within the field of music as cultural diplomacy 'have generally been ad hoc with little theoretical underpinning specific to the use of arts and the academic research that focus on the intersection of music/art and conflict transformation is rather limited' (Bergh & Sloboda, 2010: 4). In the context of this diagnosis of 'the lack of theoretical foundations' of many projects in the field of music as cultural diplomacy, my projects seek to continuously and rigorously investigate their theoretical underpinnings.

Bergh & Sloboda, 'Music and Art in Conflict Transformation: A Review,' Special Issue: Music and Arts in Conflict Transformation, Music & Arts in Action, Vol. 2 No. 2 (2010 1-17)



Raed Jazbeh, founder of Syrian Expat Philharmonic Orchestra (SEPO)

The Center for Cultural Diplomacy, Berlin, Feb 13-16, 2019

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL: ARE

Context

Approaches to Art as Cultural Diplomacy

Banu Cennetoğlu, The List (Liverpool Biennial, 2018)

'Compiled and updated each year by UNITED for Intercultural Action, an anti-discrimination network of 550 organisations in 48 countries, *The List* traces information relating to the deaths of more than 34,000 refugees and migrants who have lost their lives within, or on the borders of Europe since 1993. Since 2007, in collaboration with art workers and institutions, Banu Cennetoğlu has facilitated up-to-date and translated versions of *The List* using public spaces such as billboards, transport networks and newspapers."

https://www.biennial.com/2018/exhibition/artists/banu-cennetoglu

Cennetoğlu's public work invokes the list of names from war memorials. In particular it invites reflection on Walter Benjamin's 'Thesis on the Philosophy of History' (1940):

'It is more arduous to honour the memory of anonymous beings than that of the renowned. The construction of history is consecrated to the memory of the nameless.'

Cennetoğlu's list functions as an archive of names as a testimony to those victims who would otherwise remain nameless.





Banu Cennetoğlu

The List of 34,361 documented deaths of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants who have lost their lives within or on the borders of Europe since 1993. Documentation as of 5 May 2018 by UNITED for Intercultural Action. Facilitated by Banu Cennetoglu. Presented at Great George Street, Liverpool Biennial 2018. Photo: Mark McNulty

Work Vandalised by anti-immigration protesters



Context

Approaches to Art as Cultural Diplomacy

Ai Weiwei, Human Flow (initial release 16 November 2017)

Human Flow was filmed across 23 countries, including Turkey, Greece, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine and includes interviews with refugees, activists and experts. With its emphasis upon the politics of flows of movement and migration, in its representation of a diaspora of the living, Weiwei's film arguably contributes to the 'kinopolitics' (Thomas Nail) of mass migration. However, as the film attempts to reflect the epic scale of issue with an epic approach - characterised by spectacular aerial drone footage which arguably objectifies refugees, migrants and their conditions, alongside the voices of refugees - the film reproduces a regime of representation which serves to render the figure of the migrant as subject to their conditions.

In contrast, the refugees in *Lento* are collaborating in their capacity as selforganised, classically-trained professional musicians. The scale of suffering is present in the 'symphonic' scale of *Lento*, which nonetheless responds to this symphonic context with an intense and intimate close up of the performance of soprano, Racha Rizk. The method of close up is, however, undercut by a framing that means Rizk is absent from the screen for almost 75% of the film, a factor which also introduces a layer of tension and suspense echoed in the growing swell of the music.







Ai Weiwei, Human Flow (2017)



Methods

Literature Review (theoretical soundings)

My methodology is informed by critical theories on music harmony, counterpoint, fugue and orchestration, in the context of political conflict. The literature survey undertaken throughout the development of this research included examining the theory and philosophy of music in relation to politics and society (Schopenhauer, Hegel, Nietzsche, Rilke, Adorno, Badiou, Deleuze & Guattari, Nancy, Serres); music in the specific context of the Arab-Israeli conflict (Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said); a study of fugue and counterpoint (Mann, Oldroyd, Walker, Uexküll); bare life and Civil War (Agamben); political antagonism (Mouffe); orchestration, collaboration and co-existence (Bakhtin, Bishop, Haraway); and music and cultural diplomacy (Bergh & Sloboda).

I read theories of composition and counterpoint in relation to theories of biopolitics with specific reference to the writings of Jacob von Uexküll and Giorgio Agamben. For Uexküll (whose concept of 'umwelt' influenced Heidegger) musical composition and counterpoint are central to his understanding of nature and animals, and of humans and objects, which form 'contrapuntal relations' (Uexkül, A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans, with A Theory of Meaning, p. 191). Uexküll's work informs Deleuze & Guattari's concept of 'becoming-animal' and Agamben's theory of 'biopolitics'. For Agamben 'the refugee causes the secret presupposition of the political domain – bare life – to appear for an instant within that domain' (Agamben, Homo Sacer, p. 131).





Methods

Orchestration and Co-Existence

This research draws on the method of 'delegated performance,' employed by artists such as Santiago Sierra (Bishop), but by foregrounding collaboration as the principal relationship to other professionals and experts, it instead advocates a process 'polyphonic orchestration.' Although initiated by Birrell & Harding, the project could only be realised through dialogue with Raed Jazbeh, founder of SEPO (Bremen). The Gorecki symphony requires 86 musicians, which necessitated collaboration with SEPO and the Athens State Orchestra (KAO) of the Megaron Concert Hall. With d14 curatorial team, Birrell negotiated the collaboration, recording and filming rights with the Artistic Director of KAO.

Similarly, Fugue took the form of counterpoint of two voices; Birrell's and Moraly's. Birrell sent an initial short theme transposed from a single line of Paul Celan's poem, Death Fugue, to Moraly which formed the basis of the first movement of Moraly's composition for solo violin, Quatrain (2017), performed in Athens, Kassel and Edinburgh.

This research emerged 'through and as part of ... entangled intra-relating' (Barad) — through a process of dialogue and listening. The method of orchestration embraces ethical principles of polyphony, listening and the 'dialogic' as elaborated by the literary theory of Bakhtin (and later by Eco and Kester). The intra-related music projects apply Dostoevsky's dialectic of polyphony and orchestration as identified by Bakhtin.

The Close-up shot

As a live concert before an audience of approx. 2000 people the method of filming was single take close-up of Rizk's performance which would be combined with a wide shot of the orchestra (facing towards the conductor), again in a single take. When Rizk stands up into shot, she effectively takes the stand as a witness to history; the human voice as living testimony to the suffering and resilience of the refugee.





Methods

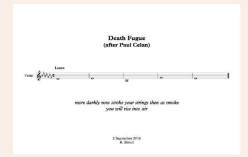
Transposition and chance composition

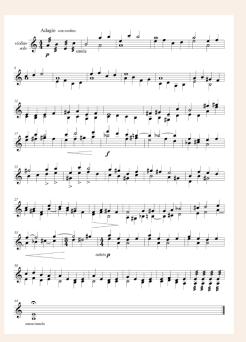
In terms of 'composing' the music score for the initial theme for Moraly, I employed an aleatory method of transposing the 7 letters of the alphabet which correspond to musical notes (a, b, c, d, e, f, g) where they happen to appear in lines of poetry; lines selected for their emotional or conceptual resonance (and which themselves may have been translated e.g. from Arabic or German into English), into musical patterns, phrases or 'refrains.' This method, employed in previous music-related projects, including Sonata (2013) deliberately introduces chance composition into the orchestration of projects. In the context of Fugue, the method employed was to prepare an initial theme by transposing a line from Paul Celan's poem Death Fugue into musical notation. This theme was sent to Moraly and became the basis for the development of the resulting composition, Quatrain.

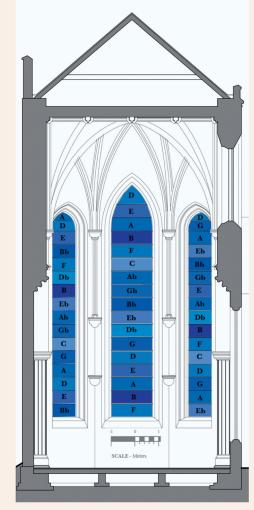
The methodology employed in the development of *Fugue* was thus one of contrapuntal 'polyphony' and transposition of different aesthetic modes or artistic 'voices' (poet/artist; letter/note; artist/composer).

A similar method was employed in the preparation of the 'stained-glass window' installation in Trinity Apse which formed part of *Triptych* where lines by the Palestinian poet, Mahmoud Darwish, were transposed into a twelve-tone musical notation and corresponding numerical grid, and subsequently translated into fields of red and blue tones to form chromatic mosaic grids: 'I learnt all the words and broke them up / To make a single word: Homeland' (Mahmoud Darwish, *I Come From There*).

This method, previously employed in the design of chromatic 'stained-glass window' installations for the solo exhibitions (with David Harding) Winter Line, Kunsthalle Basel, 2014 and Where Language Ends, Talbot Rice Gallery (2015), is informed by Rosi Braidotti's reading of the method of 'transposition,' which is inspired by music and genetics and refers to 'an intertextual, cross-boundary or transversal transfer, in the sense of a leap from one code, field or axis into another, not merely in the quantitative mode of plural multiplications, but rather in the qualitative sense of complex multiplicities' (Transpositions [Polity, 2006], p. 5).







Ross Birrell, Theme for Fugue for Ali Moraly, 2016

Ali Moraly, 'I - Rauch in der Luft', Quatrain for Solo Violin after Paul Celan's Death Fugue, 2017



Contribution to the field

The body of research comprising *Music as Model* builds on Birrell's previous music-related projects, responding to situations of political conflict. It contributes to the field of 'art as cultural diplomacy,' examples of which include: Banu Cennetoğlu's *The List* (2018), recording the deaths of more than 34,000 migrants on the borders of Europe since 1993; and Ai Weiwei's film *Human Flow* (2017) on the 'kinopolitics' of mass migration. As part of 'the acoustic turn in international relations' (Bergh & Sloboda, 2010), and in contrast with other studies that attempts to speak for or about the refugee, Birrell's research deploys musical forms that present a model of listening to the other to posit the necessary relations of subject and counter-subject in addressing contemporary humanitarian crises.



Ross Birrell/David Harding, Triptych, Trinity Apse Edinburgh Arts Festival, 2018

Exhibitions

documenta 14, Remise of Palais Bellevue, Kassel (2017)
Triptych, Trinty Apse, Edinburgh Arts Festival (2018)
Charged!, Museum of Contemporary Art, Virginia Beach (2019-20)
*EQ Gallery, France (2020).

Screenings

*mumok kino, alongside work of Susan Hiller, Museum of Modern Art, Vienna, 1 Apr 2020

Live concerts

Symphony of Sorrowful Songs, opening concert of documenta 14, Lambrakis Concert Hall, Megaron Mousikis, Athens, 8 April 2017. With a 2000-seat auditorium, Megaron is the largest concert hall for classical music in Athens. The concert was also presented as the opening concert of the Athens State Orchestra Adagio season for Spring 2017. Fugue was also performed at documenta 14 Press Conference, KongressPalais, Kassel, 10 Jun Fugue, Trinity Apse, Edinburgh Arts Festival, 24 Aug 2018

Keep me like the echo, Ali Moraly, Racha Rizk, Damascus String Quintet of SEPO, GSA Choir, The Scottish Parliament, 25 Aug 2018

Talks

'The Parliament of Bodies: Strategy of Joy,' documenta 14, Fridercianum, Kassel, 8-9 Sept 2017
Artist Talk with David Harding, Edinburgh Arts Festival, Institut Français, 18 Aug
Conference Keynote: 'Posse, Parasite, Polyphony: Morphologies of the Multitude', No Commons Without
Commoning, ERG, école de recherche graphique, École Supérieure des Arts (ESA), Brussels. 30 Jan - 1 Feb
2018 (31 Jan 2018)

*Postponed due to Covid 19 lockdown









Symphony of Sorrowful Songs, Megaron Concert Hall, Athens, 8 Apr 2017; Lento, 3 channel video focused upon Racha Rizk, Syrian refugee Soprano, 2017, dur. 30min; Ali Moraly, performing 'Fugue', Megaron Concert Hall, Athens, 8 Apr 2017 Ross Birrell/David Harding, Triptych, Trinity Apse, Edinburgh Arts Festival, 2018

SEPO Concert at Eleonas Refugee Camp, Athens, 6 Apr 2017

A performance of Syrian music performed by Racha Rizk and members of the Syrian Expat Philharmonic Orchestra (SEPO) at the Eleonas Refugee Camp, situated in the south of Athens.

The Eleonas Camp was the first refugee camp to be opened on mainland Greece and is home to approximately 1700 refugees from several countries including Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Interested refugees were also offered complementary tickets to attend the concert by SEPO at Megaron Concert Hall, Athens, 8 Apr.

The SEPO concert at the Eleonas Refugee Camp was organised by documenta 14 with the support of the Greek Ministry of Migration.









Concert of Syrian Music by SEPO, Eleonas Refugee Camp, Athens



documenta 14, Athens & Kassel, 2017

Symphony of Sorrowful Songs, Fugue and Lento were commissioned for documenta 14, Athens & Kassel, 2017. documenta is recognised as one of the world's most important exhibitions of contemporary art.

Exhibition of *Lento* (single-channel video) and *Fugue* (music score) documenta 14, Remise of Palais Bellevue, Kassel (10 Jun- 17 Sept 2017)



Lento (single-channel video) and Fugue (music score), Remise of Palais Bellevue, Kassel (2017)



Ross Birrell/David Harding, Triptych, Trinity Apse, Edinburgh, commissioned by Edinburgh Arts Festival, 2018.

Site-specific installation, Trinity Apse, Edinburgh Art Festival 2018. This three-part installation consisting of the centrepiece work, *Lento*, a three-channel installation (29min); 2 x A4 printed music scores for *Fugue*, including Birrell's Musica Activa and Moraly's Quatrain for Solo Violin after Paul Celan's Death Fugue; the installation also included two large 'stained-glass' window mosaics, which transposed lines by the Palestinian poet, Mahmoud Darwish into chromatic fields of red and blue.



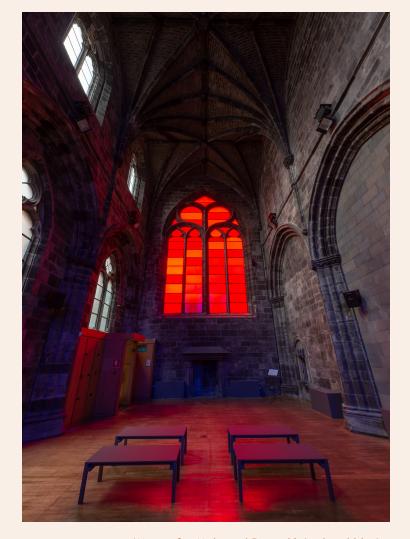


Ross Birrell/David Harding, Lento (2017) 3 channel video (video still); Ross Birrell/David Harding, Triptych, Trinity Apse, Edinburgh Arts Festival, 2018

Ross Birrell/David Harding, Triptych, Trinity Apse, Edinburgh, commissioned by Edinburgh Arts Festival, 2018

Site-specific installation, Trinity Apse, Edinburgh Art Festival 2018. This three-part installation consisting of the centrepiece work, Lento, a three-channel installation (29min); 2 x A4 printed music scores for Fugue, including Birrell's Musica Activa and Moraly's Quatrain for Solo Violin after Paul Celan's Death Fugue; the installation also included two large 'stained-glass' window mosaics, which transposed lines by the Palestinian poet, Mahmoud Darwish into chromatic fields of red and blue.





'Mosaic for Mahmoud Darwish', (red and blue) Ross Birrell/David Harding, Triptych, Trinity Apse, Edinburgh Arts Festival, 2018

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL PARE

Dissemination

Fugue

A collaboration between Birrell and Syrian violinist and composer, Moraly, in response to shared etymology of fugue and refugee.

Work consists of a composition for solo violin: Quatrain for Solo Violin after Paul Celan's Death Fugue (dur. 20 min) developed by Moraly from an initial theme selected by Birrell, and music score (including contextual writing by Birrell, 'Musica Activa').

Performed as the opening recital of the Symphony of Sorrowful Songs concert at Megaron Concert Hall, Athens, 8 Apr 2017, opening of documenta 14

Performed at the press conference for the opening of documenta 14 in Kassel, at Kongress Palais, Kassel, 10 June 2017.

Performed at Trinity Apse and The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, as part of the Edinburgh Arts Festival, 2018.

The music score Fugue - including 'Musica Activa' text by Birrell - and the score of Moraly's contrapuntal composition Quatrain for Solo Violin after Paul Celan's Death Fugue, was exhibited in Remise of Palais Bellevue, Kassel, Triptych, Trinity Apse, Edinburgh, and Charged!, MoCA Virginia Beach.

Fugue is also presented on Moraly's you tube channel and Sound Cloud site:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cOoF2zZR6z0

https://soundcloud.com/ali-moraly/ali-moraly-violinist-composer

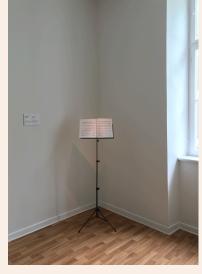




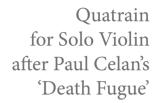




FUGUE



Ross Birrell Ali Moraly





Ali Moraly

Keep Me Like the Echo, The Scottish Parliament, 25 Aug 2018

Concert by Syrian musicians and composers at The Scottish Parliament as part of Birrell & Harding's commission Triptych for Edinburgh Arts Festival.

The title of the concert is from a line by Syrian poet Adnan Alaoda (Rotterdam) from a poem composed specifically for SEPO.

The concert, introduced by Sorcha Carey, Director Edinburgh Art Festival, featured works by Moraly (including excerpts of *Fugue*) and contemporary Syrian works performed by Rizk and the Damascus String Quintet of SEPO (with guest cellist, Atzi Muramatsu).

Ali Moraly

Quatrain for Solo Violin after Paul Celan's 'Death Fugue', by Ali Moraly Part 'I - Smoke in the air' and 'II - Black milk we drink'; Shatatt/Diaspora; Psalmus Syriacus, with Racha Rizk and members of the GSA Choir

Ross Birrell/David Harding/Ali Moraly/Racha Rizk

(Poetry Readings in Arabic and English)

I Belong There, by Mahmoud Darwish

Do not speak farewell ... by Adnan Alaoda

Damascus String Quintet of SEPO with Racha Rizk

My Beautiful Homeland, by Jehad Jazbeh; Ya Ghazali, Racha Rizk; Jorjina, by Elias Aboud; Ya Toyour (Oh Birds), Nuri El Ruheibany; The Lovely Girl, by Salah Namek; Ya Zalama El Sejni, Racha Rizk; Sea Waves, by Maias Alyamani.

Presented by Edinburgh Art Festival by kind permission of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body. Supported by British Council Scotland.











Extract from 'Never Liked Goodbyes Anyway: Naeem Mohaiemen & Didem Pekün in conversation,' e-flux conversations, 4 May 2017

Didem: It was a night of supreme beauty, which similarly explored the question of exile. It was a project by Ross Birrell and David Harding based on the Polish composer Henryk Górecki's *Symphony No. 3. Opus 36* (1976), also known as *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs.* The concert brought together the Athens State Orchestra and the Syrian Expat Philharmonic Orchestra (SEPO). Górecki composed the piece, a lament on loss and separation, as a consequence of war.

The concert opened with a piece for solo violin titled Fugue: Quatrain for Solo Violin after Paul Celan's Death Fugue, by violinist and composer Ali Moraly, which was developed in collaboration with artist Ross Birrell. Fugue, from Italian fuga, means literally 'flight,' from Latin fugere, 'a running away, act of fleeing,' hence a word whose origin can be traced to "refugee." Moraly is a virtuoso violinist from Syria who fled Damascus in 2012. He performed the piece outstandingly:

https://soundcloud.com/ali-moraly/ali-moraly-violinist-composer.



Ali Moraly performing Fugue: Quatrain for Solo Violin after Paul Celan's Death Fugue (2017), developed in collaboration with Ross Birrell. Performed as part of Ross Birrell & David Harding, Symphony of Sorrowful Songs concert for documenta 14, Megaron Concert Hall, Athens, 8 April 2017. Image credit: Ross Birrell.

Extract from 'Never Liked Goodbyes Anyway: Naeem Mohaiemen & Didem Pekün in conversation,' e-flux conversations, 4 May 2017

continued...

Didem: The encore that followed the performance of Gorecki's Symphony No. 3 was called My Beautiful Homeland, and it was composed by Jehad Jazbeh (brother of Raed Jazbeh, founder of the Syrian Expat Philharmonic Orchestra), whose joy was undeniable. It received even louder applause than the Górecki.

As the concert finished, I walked out in a trance state. Leaving the hall, I saw a number of friends who were personally wounded by the political problems of their geographical locales, and we looked at each other quietly.

Naeem: The role of the exhibition is not only to memorialize pain, but to think of ways to live together again. How to conjure impossible optimism, even when many would insist that we are at the end of hope.

Didem: Indeed. And it is for this aspect alone that I wanted to take the time to look into the works that did manage to create that. And I think that effect was what d14 tried to achieve with this Athens outing, and one of its crystallizations were with Moraly and the two orchestras' performance put together by Birrell and Harding. It was a liberating experience from the usual routines of major exhibition openings

https://conversations.e-flux.com/t/never-liked-goodbyes-anyway-naeem-mohaiemen-didem-pekun-in-conversation/6587never liked goodbyes anyway: Naeem Mohaiemen & Didem Pekün in conversation



Ali Moraly performing Fugue: Quatrain for Solo Violin after Paul Celan's Death Fugue (2017), developed in collaboration with Ross Birrell. Performed as part of Ross Birrell & David Harding, Symphony of Sorrowful Songs concert for documenta 14, Megaron Concert Hall, Athens, 8 April 2017. Image credit: Ross Birrell.



Media previews and reviews

https://news.artnet.com/art-world/adam-szymczyk-press-conference-documenta-14-916991

https://freshartinternational.com/2017/08/09/sounds-documenta-14/

SOUNDS OF DOCUMENTA 14—A TALE OF TWO CITIES, August 9, 2017 / 1 Comment / Fresh Talk, Radio

https://www.sfar.org.uk/syrian-musicians-play-the-scottish-parliament/

https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/programmvorschau.282.de.mhtml?cal:month=12&cal:year=1991&drbm:date=05.08.2017&xtor=AD-254-[]-[]-[]-[dkultur-mobil]-[]-[]

https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/programmvorschau.282.de.html?drbm:date=05.08.2017

https://www.documenta14.de/en/artists/12797/ross-birrell

https://www.edbprojects.com/artists/ross-birrell/ross-birrell-work/sepo/

https://www.megaron.gr/en/event/the-symphony-of-sorrowful-songs/

https://www.avopolis.gr/articles/streaming-stories/59845-streaming-stories-documenta-syrian

https://newpost.gr/moysikh/5c125dd956dccb7e13e445be/symfwnia-twn-thrhnwn-apo-thn-k-o-a-kai-syroys-moysikoys

https://www.elboletin.com/noticia/150091/contraportada/arranca-una-documenta-14-centrada-en-la-huida-y-la-incertidumbre.html

https://www.koa.gr/en/events/easter-concert-2017/

https://www.koa.gr/en/news/symphony-of-sorrowful-songs-henryk-g%C3%B3recki/

https://www.ekathimerini.com/217524/article/ekathimerini/whats-on/adagio--music-for-easter--athens--april-8

https://www.lifo.gr/guide/music/11597



Media previews and reviews

https://www.clickatlife.gr/citylife/story/97653

https://www.culturenow.gr/h-symfonia-ton-thrinon-toy-xenryk-gkoyretski-sto-megaro-moysikis/

https://artandpress.gr/archive/megaro-mousikis-symfonia-ton-thrinon-tou-chenryk-gkouretski/

https://www.tanea.gr/2017/04/07/lifearts/thrinoi-anthrwpwn-apo-syroys-moysikoys/

https://www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do/latest-news/archive/2018/05/edinburgh-art-festival-announces-2018-commissions-programme

https://greece.greekreporter.com/2017/04/07/international-exhibition-documenta-14-opens-in-athens-on-april-8/

https://greeknewsagenda.gr/index.php/topics/culture-society/6367-%E2%80%9Cunlearning-from-athens%E2%80%9D-documenta-14-opening-in-athens

https://thegreekobserver.com/blog/2017/04/06/much-awaited-international-exhibition-documenta-14-kicks-off-athens-april-8/

http://www.sepo-philharmonic.com/

https://www.artnews.com/art-news/market/documenta-14-opens-in-kassel-with-fiery-combative-press-conference-as-curators-pledge-to-fight-neo-fascism-8469/

https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/politics-and-performance-take-centre-stage-at-documenta-14-in-athens

https://www.artnews.com/art-news/artists/what-happens-on-tour-stays-on-tour-at-an-exhausting-documenta-an-underwhelming-venice-biennale-an-enthralling-skupture-projekte-092517-9036/

 $\frac{\text{https:}//\text{daryavonberner.net/learning-from-athens-ross-burrell-ali-moralyhenry-gorecki-symphony-of-sorrowful-songs-a-powerful-lament-members-of-the-syrian-expat-philharmonic-documental4athens-athens/}{}$

http://coffeetablenotes.blogspot.com/2018/05/ross-birrell-transit-of-hermes.html



Media previews and reviews

https://nen.press/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/EDINBURGH-ART-FESTIVAL-2018-EVENTS-PROGRAMME.pdf

https://www.sfar.org.uk/syrian-musicians-play-the-scottish-parliament/

https://gsachoir.com/2018/08/08/keep-like-echo-edinburgh-art-festival/

https://www.parliament.scot/SPCB/2018/SPCB(2018)Paper 041.pdf

https://www.theartbassador.gr/en/events/view/h-sumfwnia-twn-thrhnwn-tou-henryk-gorecki

https://www.edinburghartfestival.com/images/uploads/Archive/2018/EAFLeafletRossBirrellDavidHarding_18_7_2018.pdf

https://www.scotsman.com/whats-on/arts-and-entertainment/edinburgh-art-festival-reviews-shilpa-gupta-adam-lewis-jacob-ross-birrell-david-harding-melanie-gilligan-269063

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/art/what-to-see/edinburgh-art-festival-2018-review-still-looking-spotlight/

https://www.list.co.uk/articles/ross-birrell/

https://www.heraldscotland.com/arts_ents/16378830.arts-news-new-show-cample-line-edinburgh-art-festival-begins-beano-show-glasgow/

https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2018/jul/20/what-to-see-this-week-in-the-uk

https://www.heraldscotland.com/arts_ents/16362213.galleries-edinburgh-art-festival-highlights/

http://coffeetablenotes.blogspot.com/2018/08/ross-birrell-and-david-harding-triptych.html

https://www.pressreader.com/uk/the-herald-magazine/20180825/283622465954504

https://artdaily.cc/news/106607/Edinburgh-Art-Festival-2018--Commissions-programme#.YAMK6ZP7SGQ

https://thedailybrit.co.uk/edinburgh-art-festival-announces-2018-pop-ups-and-events-programme/

https://veermag.com/2019/11/charged-is-electrifying/



Acknowledgements

| | | | | |
|-------|-----|---|--------|-----|
| v | ۱ | | \sim | ns |
| v | ۱ı. | • | | 115 |
| | | | | |

Ali Moraly, Composer and Violinist (Damascus/Mannheim)

Racha Rizk, Soprano (Damascus/Paris)

Raed Jazbeh, Artistic Director, Syrian Expat Philharmonic Orchestra (SEPO) (Aleppo/Bremen)

Jehad Jazbeh (Violinist, SEPO/Damascus String Quintet (DSQ) of SEPO) (Aleppo/Bremen)

Falko Hönisch (Executive Director, SEPO)

Daniel Raiskin, Conductor, Athens State Orchestra, Megaron, Athens

Aliki Fidezi, Deputy Director of Administration, Athens State Orchestra, Megaron, Athens

Stefanos Tsialis, Artistic Director, Athens State Orchestra, Megaron, Athens

Atzi Muramatsu (Cellist, Edinburgh)

Jamie Sansbury (Choir Master, GSA Choir)

The Glasgow School of Art Choir

Curators

Adam Szymczyk (Artistic Director, documenta 14)

Marina Fokidis (Head of Artistic Office in Athens, documenta 14)

Eleanna Papathanasiadi (Assistant to the Office of the Artistic Director, documenta 14, Athens)

Melina Spathari (Curatorial Assistant, documenta 14, Athens)

Adrianos Trikas-Pandis (Curatorial Assistant, documenta 14, Athens)

Sorcha Carey, Director, Edinburgh Arts Festival

Jane Connarty, Programme Manager, Edinburgh Arts Festival

Alison Byrne, Director, Museum of Contemporary Art, Virginia Beach, USA

Heather Hakimzadeh, Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, Virginia Beach, USA

Geoff Lucas, EQ Gallery, Pays de la Loire, France

Matthias Michalka and Naoko Kaltschmidt, mumok kino, Museum of Modern Art, Vienna

Artists

David Harding, Collaborating Artist

Hugh Watt, Artist / Director of Photography Lento

Samuel Devereux, Camera Assistant Lento

Mark Wallis, Camera Assistant Lento

Funding/Support

documenta 14, Fridericianum, Kassel, gGmbH

The Glasgow School of Art, Research Development Fund

Edinburgh Arts Festival

Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund

British Council and British Council Scotland

The Scottish Government

Scottish Chamber Orchestra

Institut Français

Museum of Contemporary Art, Virginia Beach, USA

Hope Scott Trust (EQ Gallery France)