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MUSICALITY AND THE ACT OF THEATRE: DEVELOPING MUSICALISED DRAMATURGIES FOR THEATRE PERFORMANCE

BY

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To Paula

Musicality and the Act of Theatre:
Developing Musicalised Dramaturgies for Theatre Performance

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature: _____

Sections of Chapter III have been used for an article entitled 'Embodied Musicality: Nietzsche, Grotowski, and Musicalized Processes in Theatre Making'. The article is awaiting publication.

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PERFORMANCE

SUMMARY

This research project is aimed at investigating musicality and theatre, and seeks to develop "musicalised dramaturgies" as dramaturgies for performances that venture beyond representation. The musical dimension is approached as an ontological aspect of theatre manifested in the work of the performer and in the process of dramaturgy as developed kinaesthetically with respect to the audience. The somatic dimension of the theatre act is investigated in terms of rhythmic and melodic associations which are proposed as sources of action in musicalised dramaturgies. The study looks at the conditions of musicality as dramaturgy by exploring the possibilities of developing performance processes generated by rhythms, tempos, and melodies as elements of the musical condition.

The study acknowledges important developments that took place in the wake of theatre reforms at the turn of the twentieth century that gave more space to the presence of the actor in the creation of performance. These led to a 'turn-to-performance' in theatre which, since the 1960s, characterised practical research where practitioners challenged traditions and pushed boundaries in order to develop non-representational practices. Gradually the theatre event shifted from serving as a basic means of communication of messages to a process where experiences are shared by performers and audiences. Contemporary scholarship acknowledges these developments in terms of a postdramatic critical framework where hierarchies and subordinations in the organisation of the work give way to equality and simultaneity of means. The postdramatic context serves as a theoretical foundation around which this study is set.

Investigations were conducted via practical and theoretical analysis. Practical research was done in collaboration with Italian professional theatre ensemble *Laboratorio Permanente di Ricerca sull'Arte dell'Attore* (Permanent Research Laboratory on the Art of the Actor), and followed two complementary strands, *viz.* pre-expressive and performance work. The pre-expressive strand had two levels: i. daily work with the actors where the research issues were put into practice and developed with professional actors, and ii. workshops and stages for University students, amateur actors, and laypersons interested in the work. The performance strand developed as a theatre work entitled *Welcoming the End of the World*. The piece was premièred in

Malta in July 2011, and served as context where musicalised dramaturgies were put into practice and used creatively as foundations for performance.

Theoretical considerations are discussed in a written document accompanying video documentation of *Welcoming the End of the World*. The written part examines the work of Konstantin Stanislavsky on rhythm and tempo-rhythm, and contributions made by Jerzy Grotowski with respect to what I argue are ideas of "embodied musicality" in his theatre making. The work of Grotowski is discussed in light of the claim for an Apollonian-Dionysian bond proposed by Nietzsche in his *The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music*, published in 1872. The research also refers to recent developments in theatre practice including the work of Eugenio Barba, and critical discourses expounded by Henry Lefebvre, Gilles Deleuze, and Jean-Luc Nancy. In various ways their ideas inform the investigations and provide this research project with a critical foundation with respect to which musicality is proposed as dramaturgy for theatre performance.

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Introduction

> Music is the art of the hope for resonance: a sense that does not
> make sense except because of its resounding in itself.
>
> Jean-Luc Nancy, *Listening*

At the turn of the twenty-first century, theatre has been facing some intriguing

challenges and transformations that have developed as consequence of incredulity

towards certain metanarratives of recent, and not so recent, theatre histories. These

metanarratives include in particular dramaturgical assumptions based upon linearity,

logocentricity, and hierarchy of theatrical elements. The effects of these challenges are

evident in differences that emerge between structured forms of organisation of

performance and other less apparently coherent approaches that deflect theatre away

from its long established habitat of language-oriented poetics to seek other alternative

non-textual and body-centred approaches. This has led to the development of various

nomenclatures and labelings of such theatre activity, including some recent examples

like physical theatre, devised theatre, visual and musical theatre, amongst others. These

labels are aimed at underlining aspects of theatre practice that would have been perhaps

neglected, bypassed or just temporarily underestimated during different periods, under

the different circumstances, and according to the particular necessities of individuals

and communities that needed and created theatre activity as a means of expression.[1]

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[1] As Simon Murray and John Keefe claim in the opening sentence of their critical introduction to Physical Theatre, '[t]his is a book about intersections, cross-overs and spillages. It is a book which is trying to understand some key features of contemporary Western theatre practice, but at the same time striving to unearth and [re]articulate modes of theatre history which often seem to have been hidden from view or subject to a strange amnesia' (Murray and Keefe 2007: 1).

After shifting the weight of the theatrical act towards the actor at the turn of the twentieth century – incorporating her/him in what Alison Hodge in her account of actor training in theatre during the past century argues was 'a revitalised role as a theatre maker' (2010, xxii) – various theatre practitioners in the West continued to give more space to the performative dimension of their work. With their practice they challenged categories and developed a resistance to compartmentalising performance practices into genre and media. This attitude led to a continuum of interdisciplinary activity which also saw the emergence of a new wave of non-representational aesthetics that veered away from literary foundations so long considered central to the construction of dramaturgy in theatre. A paradigm shift was inevitable, one that led to a reality where practitioners develop performance expressions that challenge us with their intrinsic, and arguably ontological, hybridity.

The outcome of this process was a 'turn to performance' in theatre which Hans-Thies Lehmann, in his articulation of the postdramatic critical paradigm, considers as one of its conditions. The shift implied by the turn to performance is framed, amongst other things, around the de-hierarchisation of the different layers that constitute theatrical performance. The postdramatic context advocates non-hierarchy of means thus quashing Aristotelian notions of subordination. Lehmann, in fact, argues that beyond dramatic theatre the process is different:

> [P]ostdramatic theatre is *not simply a new kind of text of staging* – and even less a new type of theatre text, but rather a type of sign usage in the theatre that turns both of these levels of theatre upside down through the structurally changed quality of the performance text: it becomes more presence than representation, more shared than communicated experience, more process than product, more manifestation than signification, more energetic impulse than information.
>
> (2006: 85, emphasis in the original)

This framing responds to assertions made by various theatre practitioners in the West who, rather than approaching theatre as a multimedia activity, adopt an inter- and intra-relational dynamic to the various layers that constitute their work. This is an important distinction which will be given attention in my research, in that it promotes a practice that feeds on what I am calling the "relational dynamics" of processes, rather than the delineation of the different layers. By the principle of relational dynamics I understand work on dynamics – therefore processes of change and transformation – based on the relationship between different elements. Following this understanding, different layers and/or ideas are not approached individually but rather as relationships, thus transforming binaries like tempo-rhythm (discussed in Chapter II) into unified phenomena. In the course of my study the principle of relational dynamics will be applied to various binaries and will have a direct effect on the way my research develops.

Another aspect of the postdramatic condition which leads to practices of non-representation, making it particularly relevant to my research, is that emphasis is shifted from the literary basis to performance action. Indeed, as Italian theatre maker Eugenio Barba argues, 'all the relationships, all the interactions between the characters or between the characters and the lights, the sounds and the space, are actions. Everything that works directly on the spectators' attention, on their understanding, their emotions, their kinaesthesia, is an action' (Barba and Savarese 2006: 66). Barba, in fact, speaks of 'simultaneity' as an important dimension which, together with the linearity of the plot, gives life to the 'actions at work' in a performance.[2] This attitude adds a vertical dimension to the traditional linear accepted norms in the construction of dramaturgy that has a direct relevance to the way I will frame my investigations and understandings.

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[2] Eugenio Barba expounds on the idea of concatenation (or linearity of the plot) and simultaneity in dramaturgy in his article 'Dramaturgy' in Barba and Savarese 2006: 66-71.

The 'turn to performance' paradigm also resonates with the effects that recent developments in performance studies are having on the theatre event. As reaction and in response to these developments in the theories of performance and contexts of practice, I propose an investigation of musicality in terms of the performative dimension of theatre, which foregrounds the somatic dimension of the performer in the course of devising dramaturgies for performance. By 'performative dimension' I mean the doing of an activity rather than the conceptualisation or writing of it. It is what James Loxley in his account on performativity and its relevance to theatre and performance calls the 'quality something might have by virtue of being a performance' (2007:140).[3] With respect to theatre, I am referring to the means whereby something is performed, i.e. both the processes the actors go through in order to present their activity to an audience, and the activity of the spectators when sharing what the actors present. Rather than positing a binary between literature and performance, my aim with this research is to question the function of the actor as simply interpreter of authored texts, and to show how musicalisation can be adopted to establish alternative means of generating non-literary approaches to theatre.

Music has often been important in Western as well as in in non-Western theatre. The Nō dramas of Japan are but one example of the foundational role of music in many non-Western theatre practices. Japanese actor and playwright, Motokiyo Zeami (1363-1443) in his treatises on Nō performance practices, made constant references to music

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[3] While I acknowledge the 'double history of performativity' (Loxley 2007:141); one stemming from J. L. Austin and the other related, via Judith Butler, to performance theory, I will be using the term in the way it is used within the context of the latter. With respect to the former James Loxley argues that performativity 'has not necessarily been borrowed from Austin, […] nor from the intertwined traditions developed in response to his work; or if it has been thus borrowed, it is the term rather that the concept that has been transplanted' (2007:140). In performance theory, performativity denotes 'the performance aspect of any object or practice under consideration' (140). By performance I acknowledge Richard Schechner's understanding that 'performance is the whole event, including audience and performers' (Schechner 2003: 84). Schechner's understanding is important in that musicalised dramaturgies are effective only when addressed in terms of performer-audience interaction.

and how musical elements, including song and rhythm, are inseparable from drama. In his accounts, Zeami went into detailed explanations of ways how actors should use their voice in relation to the pitches and modes of songs used during performance, and underlined that during the working process, 'rhythm must be understood throughout, at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end' (Zeami and Hare 2008: 441). Furthermore, Zeami advised actors how, before approaching the dramatic text, they should first master these musical elements. When giving instructions concerning the initial stages of apprenticeship, which according to him starts at the age of seven, Zeami was clear: 'You should not […] instruct the child to do things apart from singing or Sparring or Dance. Even if he is capable of dramatic imitation, you should not teach him such techniques in any detail' (27). While still referring to a dramatic text, Nō Drama is a form of theatre where musical elements are an important foundation for the generation of dramatic procedures.

In the West, the obvious example is opera, in which music plays the dominant role in conveying the drama. However, the music is still based on a literary text – the libretto – and the musical score creates another fixed text, one that is arguably more fixed than a spoken dramatic text. Although Richard Wagner (1813-1883) in his idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* sought to make the constituents of opera more coherent, they remained nonetheless subservient to the originating dramatic idea. Wagner's own naturalistic approach to theatrical production, however, clearly contradicted the symbolism of his dramatic ideas. It took the Swiss theatre maker and visionary Adolphe Appia (1862-1928) to recognize that the *mise-en-scène* could be treated as abstractly and lyrically as the music. A musical dimension is also evident in the way Russian director Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1940) used music as a means of control for both the actor and the director during rehearsals. Meyerhold, as Robert Leach explains, 'paid

particular attention to each scene's internal rhythm and to the whole production's

through rhythm' (2003: 165). His musical approach, like Appia's, is the result of his

rejection of naturalistic styles of acting. Nevertheless, as with Appia, music remained

largely in the service of dramatic texts, rather than being developed as an independent

dramaturgical method. For Samuel Beckett (1908-1989), musicality was also a way of

presenting theatre in a more formal manner. Beckett's texts are full of repetitions,

pauses, rhythms, and other quasi-musical nuances that became Beckett's main

preoccupation when staging his plays. Yet again, Beckett's musicality started with the

literary text, whereas my interest, in this research project, starts with the musicality of

the physical body, and with the development of embodied musical dramaturgies.

This interest acknowledges what Murray and Keefe consider as one of the

elements that define the difference between physical theatre forms and text-based

theatre, namely, 'a distinctiveness, rooted in the performer's body as starting point, in

the compositional and dramaturgical strategies employed in the composition of the

emerging performance text' (2007a: 18). In a contemporary context where the

performative dimension has developed as a foundation for action, I therefore ask: is it

possible to use musicality in order to develop dramaturgies for theatre performance that

venture beyond textual and narrative structures? Is it possible to use musicality to delve

beyond rational associations and develop alternative associative means as foundations

for action? What praxes are needed to develop effective non-representational

dramaturgies around the musical condition? In the course of my investigation I will

argue that through musicality it is possible to address the sensorial dimension of

performance in a direct manner and promote the theatre event as experience rather than

just a context of communication of messages.

By the term 'musicality' I mean an approach that adopts some of the essential elements of music including rhythm, tempo, and melody to theatre making. This understanding of musicality is directly related to the physical dimension of performance, and is applied to the performers' somatic presence. "Musicalised dramaturgies" will be developed around the idea of rhythmic and melodic associations (discussed and explained further later on in Chapter V section 5.1), which I propose as alternatives to rational or logocentric approaches. Musicalised dramaturgies are not authored texts. They do not refer to preconceived literary narratives, as was the case with practices of practitioners mentioned above. Their function is different from that of the musical score and the dramatic text as developed in opera in the West. Musicalised dramaturgies arise from the kinetic bodies of the actors through performative procedures. This, in fact, responds to other body-oriented perspectives mirrored in Lehmann's reflection when he argues that:

> Despite all efforts to capture the expressive potential of the body in logic, grammar or rhetoric, the aura of physical presence remains the point of theatre where the disappearance, the fading of all signification occurs – in favour of a fascination beyond meaning, of an actor's 'presence' of charisma or 'vibrancy'. […] The body becomes the centre of attention, not as carrier of meaning but in its physicality and gesticulation.
>
> (2006: 95)

Processes of musicalisation, therefore, have to do not only with the way the work unfolds over time (as a musical composer might arguably assume). Rather, they are developed in terms of spatial relations and physical manoeuvers, including gestures and movements, performed by the actors. Here the energy contained in any moment of the performance is a quasi-musical energy generated by the actors.

The aim of this research project is to develop a discourse around musicality as dramaturgy within a contemporary Western context, combining practical laboratory research and theoretical reflection on that research. The laboratory research was

conducted with Italian theatre ensemble *Laboratorio Permanente di Ricerca sull'Arte dell'Attore* (Permanent Research Laboratory on the Art of the Actor) of Turin, Italy, and their director Domenico Castaldo.[4] My direct input in this collaboration functioned at various levels. Firstly, by setting the research agenda (discussed and explained in Chapter I) for the course of our collaboration. My roles here included, articulating the perspectives of my enquiries, leading sessions of work designed to respond to these perspectives, documenting them, and investigate their outcome. Secondly, I acted as the 'outer eye' during working sessions, which complemented Castaldo's activity of coordinating the work from the inside. This role gave me the opportunity to gauge the process as observer, where I would give indications related to my research needs. My third input was that of co-director of a devised performance structure we called *Welcoming the End of the World*. The performance structure, which started to develop at a later stage in the course of this research project, was intended as a platform via which the research could be extended further. In this role I was responsible for composing dramaturgical structures arising from musical processes. My input here lay rather than in prescribing the dramaturgy of the piece, in responding and reacting to the work of the actors and their director. From within, they were constantly proposing dramaturgical ideas which, together with my structures, would constitute the over-all dramaturgy of the performance. In this respect, my approach towards the composition of the work mirrors other devised practices in contemporary theatre making that are by their very nature collaborative. As Murray and Keefe argue,

> any account of contemporary forms of body-based theatre is at the same time a history of
> devised work generated through various models of collaborative practice. Arguably, the
> key line of distinction between the range and nature of physical actions within text-based

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[4] For practical reasons throughout this document I will refer to the ensemble as LabPerm.

theatre, and those forms we might with some confidence label as 'physical theatre', lies around notions of authorship, authority and the creative role of the actor/performer.

(2007a: 17)

The collaborative element of my practical work was evident at various levels, including between directors (in our case between Castaldo and me), between directors and performers, and between directors, performers, and audience. The performance structure presented with this document, rather than being intended as an end product over which I claim authorship, was one of the pathways that contributed to the development of the research perspectives and the conclusions I draw at the end of this study.

Processes of embodiment, and the ways in which musicality affects these processes, will be investigated via a critical analysis of the work of Konstantin Stanislavsky (1863-1938) and Jerzy Grotowski (1933-1999). According to Italian scholar Franco Ruffini, in his account of Stanislavsky's laboratory work, 'the discovery of music was the true revolution of the "system"' (in Schino 2009: 107). Ruffini argues that 'the constant clarification of the notion of Tempo-rhythm […] is what constitutes the authentic revolution' (2009: 66, my translation). I will discuss the work of Stanislavsky on rhythm and how rhythm, as an essential element of the musical condition, was an important tool in his work on the embodiment of dramatic activity. The work on physical actions and musicality as constitutive, rather than referential, aspects of the dramaturgy of a performance will, however, have to wait until Grotowski. Grotowski's work will be articulated as an important development of Friedrich Nietzsche's (1844-1900) framing of the ontological dimension of music in theatre. From my discussion on Stanislavsky, Grotowski, and Nietzsche three relational dynamics emerge as direct influences to my development of musicalised dramaturgies: Stanislavsky's tempo-rhythm, Grotowski's body-voice, and Nietzsche's Apollonian-

Dionysian. Through these relational dynamics I frame the performative dimension of musicalised dramaturgies, my understanding of which will be expounded following a critical evaluation of dramaturgy during the second half of the twentieth century. This evaluation leads me to the notion of multiple dramaturgies, as developed by Eugenio Barba, and their relation to the musicalisation of dramaturgical processes.

Musicalisation of theatre is considered as one of the 'postdramatic theatrical signs' (Lehman 2006: 91-93). Arguably one of the reasons for this musicalisation in theatre is the incredulity shown towards language as a fully adequate vehicle of communication. Various critiques of language and language-centred mechanisms and practices led to an awareness that triggered Artaudian non-representational and non-text-based approaches to theatre. As Matthias Rebstock argues, when framing the field for what he together with David Roesner propose as 'Composed Theatre',

> [t]he fundamental criticism of text and language as primary elements in the theatre has been leveled since the end of the nineteenth century. This critique led to a crisis of the psychological character and linear uninterrupted dramaturgy and has given rise to forms of theatre that were forced to secure the coherence of their works on the basis of other non-textual, non-dramatic approaches, integrating principles of structure and form that contributed to compositional approaches and ways of thinking.
>
> (Rebstock and Roesner 2012: 28)

My argument, in fact, is that one of the ways that one can enhance non-textual and non-representational approaches to theatre is through musicalised processes. This argument acknowledges French phenomenologist Jean-Luc Nancy's understanding that 'music […] never stops exposing the present to the imminence of a differed presence, one that is more "to come" *[a venir]* than any "future" *[avenir]*' (2007: 66). I propose, therefore, that a musicalised approach to theatre has the potential to activate processes that are not referential to an 'other' outside the work. It propels, instead, a presence that is self-referential, existing within the work itself, developed through a process of 'becoming',

i.e. a process of affirmation related to self-referentiality which is an innate musical quality.

> [Music] calls to itself and recalls itself, reminding itself and by itself, each time, of the birth of music, that is to say, the opening of a world in resonance, a world taken away from the arrangements of objects and subjects, brought back to its own amplitude and making sense or else having its truth only in the affirmation that modulates this amplitude.
>
> (Nancy 2007: 67)

An environment where the performers can develop dramaturgies that venture beyond the 'arrangement of objects and subjects' is the basis of my interest in investigating the potential of musicality as dramaturgy in theatre. Nancy, who critiques representation via a phenomenological account of the act of listening, makes the point that music, because it refers to itself, is beyond the subject-object binary upon which the Cartesian construction of knowledge is based. In view of this understanding I argue that when developed as a non-representational process via musicality, theatre has the potential to reach beyond this binary. While reference to subjects and objects remains possible, it will not be a determining factor in the development of dramaturgies. Through musicalisation alternative means of non-representation will be adopted for a process of composition of action framed around the postponement of the moment of closure in performance, and articulated in terms of what I refer to as the embodiment-experience relational dynamic which emerges as a paradigm for musicalised dramaturgies. This process will be made possible through the flux generated by the musical condition.

Chapter I

Contextualisation and Methodology

> Whatever is imperceptible demands precision.
>
> Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre*

1.1   Contextualisation

Musicality as an approach to theatre making affects the various moments of creation which constitute the act of theatre. By musicality I do not understand a particular aesthetic or a direct outcome in a formal sense, nor a category or genre of theatre performance. My intention with this research project is not to outline a manifesto for musicality or to establish new paradigms.[5] Rather I will propose the musical condition as an ontological component of theatre by developing practices derived from musical elements. Musicality can be foregrounded during different moments of the theatre-making process, including the preparation phase and the execution phase when actors meet the audience in performance. During the preparation phase musicality can be adopted in different instances including: i. the pre-expressive – when the individual actor is not yet developing specific performance-related material but is working upon her/his body [6] – and, ii. the rehearsal process – when the actors are working directly on the composition of a dramaturgy for a specific theatre piece. During the performance

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[5] For musicality as a paradigm for theatre see Roesner 2010a.

[6] The pre-expressive state is when the performer focuses on *how* to develop her/his technique. According to Eugenio Barba, the pre-expressive is framed around a 'process logic' which is complementary to a 'result logic'. 'According to "process logic", it is possible to distinguish between and to work separately on the levels of organisation that constitute the performer's expression' (Barba and Savarese 2006: 218). The pre-expressive is a state that precedes cultural and personal interpretation. 'It is a level that deals with *how* to render the actor's energy scenically alive […] with how the actor can become a presence that immediately attracts the spectator's attention' (218, my emphasis). For a detailed account of the pre-expressive see Barba and Savarese 2006: 216-234.

phase musicality affects the execution of the act by the actor as individual and in relation to her/his companions. It also affects the perception of the spectators who through their presence relate and react to the performers' activity.

When I speak of elements of the musical condition I am referring primarily to rhythm, and its relation to tempo, and melody. According to Andy Hamilton, when discussing the 'concept' of music with respect to music's aesthetics, 'conceptualisations of music have changed historically and varied across culture' (2007: 46). Indeed there is no one universal dimension of music, and different understandings of the musical are subject to cultural, social, even religious and/or political constructs. A case in point is the importance given to harmony in the West and the way harmony is conceived as a system of organisation in terms of rhythmic, tonal, and melodic relations. For other musical traditions harmony is not necessarily an essential element of music. In Arabic music for instance, heterophony, rather than harmony, is accepted practice. Notwithstanding, rhythm and melody are still primary elements of the Arab musical conception. Arabic music theorist Habib Hassan Touma explains how the *maqām* (tonal-spatial component) and *wazn* (rhythmic-temporal structure) are developed independently without attempts to attain harmony, to the point that 'foreign listeners unfamiliar with this music regarded maqām performances as formless improvisation' (Touma 1996: 39).[7] Clearly this lack of form is in the perception of listeners who do not share the same cultural conventions shared by the musicians and the music they perform. Rhythm, tempo, and melody exist before conventions and constructs. Furthermore, they possess kinaesthetic characteristics which, as I will expound later, are particularly relevant to this study. While acknowledging that musicality cannot be

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[7] In Arabic music, the term 'maqām' is used to refer to the tonal dimension (which corresponds to the Western mode) and also to refer to techniques of improvisation used by Arab musicians. For more on Arab music theory see Touma: 1996.

confined to rhythm, tempo, and melody, this understanding is my justification for focusing on these elements in my research.

This explanation in part responds to Christopher Hasty's argument, in his scientific study of rhythm and its metric and temporal dimensions, that the rhythmic and the musical are so intimate that 'we could […] define music as the rhythmization of sound (thus the "musicality" of speech or verse)' (1997: 3). Rhythm is part of the very nature of the musical event and cannot be distinguished from it. Because of its relation with the temporal dimension, rhythm informs an activity without predetermining its outcome, 'to the extent that it suggests process rather than product, dynamic becoming rather than static being, a *fait accomplissant* rather than a *fait accompli* […], rhythm stands as a reminder of the reality of temporal passage' (Hasty 1997: 4, emphasis in the original). With respect to tempo, rhythm gives the musical condition its properties of a process of becoming rather than a static activity. The temporal dimension of rhythm is reflected also in Henri Lefebvre's analysis which I use in order to delve beyond the uses of rhythm within the context of music. In the course of my discussion I will frame arguments around Lefebvre's understanding of rhythm as a key condition of the socio-biological fabric and rhythm's effect on everyday life. Instead of everyday life, I will apply Lefebvre's articulation of rhythm to the context of performance.

Similarly, melody is considered in my practice not only as a composition of sounds and tones, but also and more importantly as an activity of the body in terms of vocal expression. The physical dimension and the dynamics triggered by the kinaesthetic mechanisms at play with respect to rhythm and melody give more currency to my attention for these elements when approaching theatrical activity from a phenomenological perspective. Rhythm and melody, therefore, constitute the foundation of my investigation, and will allow me to frame a discourse around a musicality beyond

aurality. They will also give me space to develop a key aspect of my research, namely, rhythmic and melodic associations which I propose as alternatives to rational association when working on the creation of action for dramaturgy. The intentionality that transforms movement into action in dramaturgy will be shifted from rational logic to sensorial rhythmic and melodic associations. I consider this as an important development of my research which gives weight to the kinaesthetic dimension of performance.

My understanding of musicality, in fact, acknowledges Jean-Luc Nancy's take on the difference between hearing and listening which in turn is informed by his own phenomenological perspective. He links being to listening by asking 'what does *to be* listening, *to be* all ears, as one would say "to be in the world," mean?' (2007: 5). This leads him to distinguish hearing from listening:

> If "to hear" is to understand the sense (either in the so-called figurative sense, or in the so-called proper sense: to hear a siren, a bird, or a drum is already each time to understand at least the rough outline of a situation, a context if not a text), to listen is to be straining towards a possible meaning, and consequently one that is not immediately accessible.
>
> (2007: 6)

Nancy promotes listening to the level of a process of creation of meaning rather than an act of receiving a given outline of what to understand. Following Nancy I argue that musicality as an approach to theatre making renegotiates our acknowledgement of meaning as result and relocates it as process of perception within the fabric of the act of theatre. Via musicality, meaning in performance is postponed and has the potential of becoming an embodied element that is experienced, through presence, by those involved in the act of theatre.

Musicalisation of theatrical activity is the process of giving dramaturgy a musical dimension by adopting, at the level of construction and composition of action,

musical elements that would otherwise feature later in the process. Through musicalisation, musical processes are manifested as embodied practices that inform the creation and performance of an act and the perception of it by an audience. A musicality of approach feeds on an ontological musical condition which is, therefore, a state of being, rather than a point of reference, embedded in the nature of the act of theatre.

1.2   Methodology and Structure

As a practice-as-research investigation on the musicality of theatre performance, the present study is not an historical account of music and theatre or musical activity in theatre. Nor is it intended as an encyclopedic overview of practitioners and instances of practice where musicality was attempted and/or adopted, or when musical elements were utilised within the context of theatre performance. Instead, due to their relevance to and influence on my work, I will concentrate my analysis on Nietzsche, Stanislavsky, and Grotowski, with references to Eugenio Barba, as I have indicated in the introduction.

The practical research developed within the framework of laboratory investigations with professional actors, alongside workshop sessions with students and critical seminars with both students and actors. A theoretical critique was expounded around the practice and is presented in this written document. In the process I was constantly aware of establishing a balance between the critical/theoretical foundation of my study and the performance/practical dimension it possessed. I was very cautious about 'the necessity to align performance events in the academy with the "always-already self-authorizing critical texts"' (Allegue 2009: 20). While I was not expecting,

as Simon Jones puts it, to 'erase the differences between the textual practices of criticism of and of creativity in the theatre' (in Allegue 2009: 20), I was deliberately working on trying to reduce the impact of these differences on my research. I was working with actors whose aim was that of creating performances to share with audiences. My aim, on the other hand, was to study the processes leading to the performance by focusing on certain particularities related to my research interests. This difference was developed into an oscillation between 'idea' (emerging, as it were, from a critical approach and research requirements) and 'event' (developing as performance practice whose ephemerality was at times admittedly frustrating). In retrospect I consider this oscillation as an important formative aspect of the development of my study, and an important outcome of practice-as-research methodology. I did not want musicality to be something I import, critically, from elsewhere or from someone else. I wanted my understanding of it to develop through my work in the studio with actors within the context of practice. In the process I opted to focus and investigate other critiques and praxes which directly affected my research.

The attitude established for this project followed a logic of processing knowledge rather than communicating and accepting ready-made and comfortably packaged results. In so doing I was consciously addressing some essential differences between textual and embodied knowledge. This was partly the aim of my research, namely how to develop a working ethic that is effective and productive without letting either the critical dimension or the practical work take the lead. I wanted the two to be mutual agents of development and growth that would allow me to delve as deep as possible into my research, allowing creativity and enquiry not only to coexist but to leave their mark on the research. One case in point, considering the importance of rhythm to my research, is the idea of the 'universality of rhythm'. It is critically

acknowledged that rhythm possesses a universality manifested in the fact that 'we are surrounded by rhythm' (Hamilton 2007: 119), and, as Lefebvre claims, that there is a general concept of rhythm 'and everyone posses it' (2004: 5). Indeed, while the universality of rhythm may be acknowledged critically and theoretically as idea, in practical situations it is not always the case that rhythm is evident as a 'universal' phenomenon. I would argue, following my own practical work with actors during this research project, that on the contrary, rhythm at times emerged as a very personal (with respect to the performers) and idiosyncratic (with respect to the dramaturgy) element. This made us design training approaches and exercises that we had to develop to address rhythm's complexity. The critical 'universality' of rhythm – as idea – and its specificity in the practical process of our work – as event – was an issue I had to deal with in order to be able to address tangible problems that were developing in the workspace. Albeit when presented in this manner this problematic sounds rather conceptual in nature, in the studio it was a most concrete and tangible aspect of our research: *viz*. to work on the intra- and inter-rhythmical dynamics of the work and the actors.

The above required a methodology framed around the mutuality of the practical and theoretical aspects of my work. The main aims of the research, namely the investigation of musicality in theatre via rhythm, tempo, and melody, and the development of performance situations based on musicality as dramaturgy, were addressed within these two frameworks.

1.2.1   The Practical Framework

As indicated in the Introduction, the practical element was developed in collaboration

with Italian theatre practitioner Domenico Castaldo and his ensemble LabPerm.

Following a series of initial discussions with Castaldo, we agreed that the best way to

conduct this research was by adopting the laboratory ethic where the work would be

simultaneously framed within a research/analytical framework and performance

environment. We wanted to develop a working ethic that bridges the pre-expressive

with the expressive. This would give the research a better grounding in terms of a

practice-as-research motivated by performance.

The theatre laboratory dimension we developed acknowledges Mirella Schino's

understanding, in her study of the theatre laboratory dimension in Europe, of an

environment which 'does not designate an external point of reference or model to be

followed. Rather it points to an interiorised radar […] which may indicate very different

paths' (2009: 7). It was exactly this characteristic of developing a working ethic that

would follow 'different paths' as a process of 'becoming' rather than a process of

'returning' or 'referring', that I wanted to develop with my research. This responded to

my needs to investigate the possibilities of generating non-representational dramaturgies

based upon musicality. Eventually it was agreed that the laboratorial work would be

geared towards a performance, the thematic of which would not be pre-determined but

would emerge from a dramaturgy that would be developed musically. Any matters

arising from the work and issues that emerged from it, which we thought would need

further didactic attention, were to be approached within the context of workshops and

stages organised for laypeople and students.

The workshops and stages were conducted in different countries including,

Poland, Malta, Chile, and Italy. Sessions were organised during the course of this

present study under two strands: stages open to the general public, and workshops for students. For the general public LabPerm developed what they call *The Garden Project*, an ongoing educational project subtitled *a journey of practical and theoretical discovery of the self through the art of the actor*. The sessions, conducted by Castaldo and members of LabPerm, introduced participants to the context of working upon oneself as presence within a community in a context of performance. The aim therefore was not to enter into difficult and/or complex practices of dramaturgy, but rather to introduce participants to a context of practice over a period of usually five to seven days. Although Castaldo and the actors of LabPerm never imported their professional research and performance work into the *Garden Project* environment, it was obvious that there was a default spillage of it onto the workshop. Although this was not encouraged it was neither arrested. Musicality was clearly present but never directly referred to. This was, in a way, a residual process of our laboratorial work which informed the workshop content without being actually imposed on the participants.

For me this context of work was beneficial in that it gave me the possibility to gauge the nature of the musicality I was proposing for our process on a group of practitioners who were not involved in my research. It was a 'superficiality'– by which I mean lack of direct involvement in the working process – comparable to that of an audience. Although stage participants and audience members are clearly different presences, they share an amount of superficiality with respect to the process which goes into the creation of a work, that I found beneficial. My question was whether the participants of a stage or the audiences during a performance would share the musical elements we were proposing as foundations for dramaturgy: *viz*. rhythm, tempo and melody.

The second strand consisted of workshops with students usually within a University context. In this case the research was presented directly as musicality in theatre practice. The workshops were entitled *Musicalised Dramaturgies* and were presented as a 'research [that] looks at the possibilities of musicalisation as process for the construction of theatrical performance, and musicalised activity undertaken by the actors within a postdramatic context [focusing] on how musicality in theatrical performance is embodied by the performer rather than only serving as sonorous background to action'.[8] The aim was to engage with a more inquisitive participant. I welcomed this relatively vulnerable context in that it put us in a situation where we often had to justify our activity and approach. Constantly questioning the nature of the work and the forms it was developing was important especially within the practice-as-research context which 'persistently asks – what is a body of work? Of knowledge?' (Jones in Allegue 2009: 25).

In retrospect I believe that the twofold dynamic of the practical work was pertinent in that my research proposal to Domenico Castaldo and his ensemble posed a series of challenges that called for the creation of training practices that were not always readily available. In fact, the workshop situations often led to unearthing certain problematics that professional actors, because of their in-depth knowledge of the mechanisms of performance, would not envisage. One particular example was identifying the reason for lack of synchrony between collective and individual rhythms of a particular action or situation. This was a crucial aspect of the research considering the importance I was giving to rhythm as one of the musical elements I was focusing on. It was easier to delineate the problems when looking at a student working in front

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[8] From a press release published on *The Malta Independent* on March 6th, 2011 announcing the workshops that were held at the Theatre Studies Department, University of Malta (http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2011-03-06/news/practical-theatre-workshop-by-domenico-castaldo-288665/, accessed on 16 November 2012).

of a professional actor rather than when looking at two professional actors opposite each other. This workshop dynamic was giving me the opportunity to identify the sources of certain problematic issues which would then be addressed within the laboratorial context with trained professional actors. Alternating the context of practice between one of seasoned professionals and one of beginners and lay persons allowed me to better critique the processes we were adopting, which processes were framing the other part of my research, *viz*. the development of a dramaturgy based on musicality. The seasoned-actor/beginner dynamic was also instrumental in helping me to investigate the roots of what we were proposing: was it possible to start a working process by only focusing on rhythm and melody? To what extent can rhythm be decontextualised from its context without risking loosing the very dynamics that constitute that rhythm? To what extent is rhythm an emerging phenomenon? And, to what extent is it a controlling factor?

1.2.2   The Theoretical Framework

These were the foundations of the research I proposed to the actors. My aim was to create a performance structure not triggered by linguistic and/or rational association but framed around musical associations via rhythm, tempo, and melody. I wanted to investigate the relationship between rhythm and tempo and critique the very Western conception of this association. I wanted to address the issue of logocentrism in theatre through musicality. More importantly, I wanted to research, through a performance process, the validity of a claim for a musical ontology in theatre practice. These considerations justify both the choice of critics and practitioners I analyse in this document and the structure given to the discussion.

In Chapter II I discuss the work of Russian theatre director Konstantin Stanislavsky who believed that through music he could tackle various issues related to the craft of acting in the theatre. His autobiography *My Life in Art* is full of references to and comments about music and musicians that left a mark on his professional development. More importantly, he believed that music ought to be a key element of the development of his system, and often spoke of the system that he was developing and of rhythm as almost synonymous to each other. This emerges clearly in a particular instance, while describing the syllabus developed for the Bolshoi Opera Studio, where he actually claimed that 'my closest assistants in work on the *"system" and rhythm* were two people with whom I had began my artistic career in my youth, my sister Zinaïda and my brother Vladimir' (2008b: 332, my emphasis).

In this chapter I will argue that Stanislavsky came to acknowledge, towards the end of his life, that the performative dimension in theatre was accessible via a musicality manifested in tempo-rhythm. I will propose that one crucial achievement of Stanislavsky was his shift from music to musicality by focusing on rhythmic and tempo elements, rather than utilising music as supportive platform to dramatic action. Through this shift Stanislavsky was reformulating the traditional mimetic and/or diegetic use of music in theatre (as was the case, for instance, with melodrama) to one where music is utilised as a means of embodiment of action by the actor. Tempo-rhythm emerged as a neologism, combining a time related (therefore periodic) dynamic with an intensity related (therefore behavioural) dynamic. I will argue that from a neologism, representing, as it were, the synthesis of two elements *viz*. tempo and rhythm, tempo-rhythm will be transformed, in the course of Stanislavsky's research on the system, into a relational dynamic. As relational dynamic, tempo and rhythm will function in relation to each other as mutually inclusive agents for action rather than a synthesis of two

different layers. As relational dynamic, tempo-rhythm would become a key element of the actor's craft and of Stanislavsky's theatrical legacy. I will conclude that although Stanislavsky's work was still located within a context which considered the text as central to the theatre event, through tempo-rhythm he managed to uncover the potential of a radical physicalisation of dramatic action by the actor who had, for centuries, at best played second fiddle to the authors' scripts.

As I already mentioned in this introduction, language was definitely one of the metanarratives that were being questioned in the quest for a theatre beyond subordination. In Chapter III, I will discuss the work of Polish theatre maker Jerzy Grotowski, and the way he shifted the performative dimension of theatre making towards an embodied activity framed around musicalised processes. He would achieve "embodied musicality" in the performer via the use of song. This happened as a result of constant renegotiations with the linguistic layer in theatre performance. In the process he would address the nature of the theatre's poetics in terms of its ethics and aesthetics. I will argue that Grotowski's work was framed around a body-voice dynamic that would replace the pen-voice dynamic that visionaries like Antonin Artaud (1896-1948) critiqued during the first half of the twentieth century.

Artaud had 'urged theatre artists to reject the dramatic masterpieces of the Western tradition – in fact, to throw out all text-based theatre – and embrace instead performance involving music, dance, and spectacle' (McConachie in Zarrilli 2010: 367). I have always considered Artaud as an important intersection between the work of Stanislavsky and Grotowski. In his essay 'Metaphysics and the *Mise en Scene*' published in 1938 as part of his seminal collection of essays *The Theatre and its Double*, Artaud made reference to a painting at the Louvre Museum by Dutch painter Lucas van Leyden entitled *The Daughters of Lot*. According to Artaud, there is in the

painting an 'idea of Becoming [*sic*.] which the various details of the landscape and the way they are painted – the way their planes and perspectives are blotted out or made to correspond – introduce into our minds with precisely the effect of a piece of music' (1958: 36). The essay is about language and the 'dictatorship' of speech in theatre. It resonates with the author's call, in his first manifesto for the Theatre of Cruelty, for a new language for the theatre. According to him, from van Leyden's painting various ideas emerged and reached the viewer notwithstanding the absence of language. One of these ideas was actually 'the impotence of Speech [*sic*.] whose uselessness this supremely material and anarchic painting seems to demonstrate' (1958: 37). Artaud insisted that what theatre needed was 'a language intended for the senses and independent of speech, [that] has first to satisfy the senses.' For him 'there is a poetry of the senses as there is a poetry of language, and that this concrete physical language to which [he] refer[s] is truly theatrical only to the degree that the thoughts it expresses are beyond the reach of the spoken language' (37). Although at times serendipitous – namely with respect to his interpretation of Balinese performance – Artaud's critique of language and speech in Western theatre was valid within its contemporary theoretical and practical contexts.

Artaud's vision for a new 'language' that would unleash the logocentric hold would later be reflected in post-WWII theatre practices. Furthermore, his idea of a 'kind of unique language half-way between gesture and thought' (1958: 89) resonated with the Nietzschean Apollonian-Dionysian dynamic. Nietzsche's idea of 'becoming' was also an important association to musicality beyond linguistic communication which would develop into an important paradigm in theatre performance. Artaud's visions in this respect emerge as a relevant interface between Nietzsche's critique of tragedy and Grotowski's embodied praxis. The importance of Artaud's vision is located in the

'knowledge that spontaneity and discipline, far from weakening each other, mutually reinforce themselves', something which, according to Grotowski, was only anticipated by Nietzsche (2002: 121).

In Chapter III I will argue that the Nietzschean Apollonian-Dionysian bond was a key performative premise and I will expound on how it is reflected in the nature of Grotowski's praxis. The link between Nietzsche and Grotowski will be made via an investigation of Nietzsche's critique of tragedy in his *Birth of Tragedy Out of the Sprit of Music*. I will conclude that the work of Grotowski was a tangible manifestation of Nietzsche's conception of the Apollonian-Dionysian dynamic reflected in the performative spirit of music that lay at the foundation of proto-dramatic activity. Grotowski would leave a legacy that pointed at a musical ontology in theatre manifested in the embodied musicality of the performer.

Stanislavsky and Nietzsche will not be placed in chronological order for reasons related to the logic of my study as framed around my practical research. My aim is to investigate the conditions of musicality as dramaturgy within the context of developing a performance process by focusing on rhythm and tempo on the one hand, and the shift beyond language and the development of alternative vocal procedures on the other. The methodology adopted here of investigating them separately determined the decision to place them in two separate chapters. The chronology, rather than following the person discussed, follows the developments made in the practice of theatre. The breakthrough made by Stanislavsky on rhythm and tempo-rhythm preceded the shift of theatre activity beyond the territories of literature and language made later during the second half of the twentieth century. Nietzsche's critical analysis of tragedy is used as theoretical framework with respect to this development and was therefore placed in the third chapter together with my investigation of Grotowski's work.

While I acknowledge that links between Nietzsche and Stanislavsky are possible, especially in view of the latter's growing awareness of the importance of embodiment when representing a literary dramaturgy, I will not attempt to establish any within the context of this dissertation. Nietzsche and Stanislavsky are discussed with respect to their involvement with music and the musical dimension of the theatre event, which, I will argue, left a direct mark on their work. Placing the three in chronological order would have not been beneficial to the general structure of this study. The methodology adopted here allows me to develop my arguments in a more coherent manner and to better investigate the theoretical foundations and implications of rhythm, tempo-rhythm, vocal sonority, and dramaturgies beyond literature.

In Chapter IV I will develop a theoretical framing for my idea of musicalised dramaturgies. A critique of established dramaturgical procedures leads me to address new approaches advocating a multiplicity of dramaturgies in performance. I will argue that because of their musical nature, musicalised dramaturgies are multiple dramaturgies. Through musicalised dramaturgies the performers and the spectators will be in a position to generate emergent narratives that replace a priori plots. Emerging narratives are informed by a dramaturgical framework organised around rhythmic and melodic associations. These associations help the director to develop the sequence of events, and the actors to organise and work on their actions which constitute the events at play.[9]

In Chapter V I outline the process that led towards the creation of the

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[9] By 'play' I do not mean the literary text performed by the actors but rather the nature and quality of the interaction of the activity taking place between all the elements that constitute the activity and between the agents producing that activity. The characteristics of this quality are ambiguous, flirtatious, double-edged, moving in several directions simultaneously etc. (see Schechner, 2002: 89). With this understanding, which acknowledges Richard Schechner's understanding of the term, I endorse not only the linear activity of a piece but also the broader simultaneity of the narrative of the event which is a central argument in the development of musicality as dramaturgy.

performance *Welcoming the End of the World*. I will do this by discussing the dramaturgical process of the composition of one scene. This will allow me to show how musicalised dramaturgies function in practice during the process of creation. The aim of the project was to investigate how musicality may be used to develop an act of theatre beyond representation. The process triggered by musicalised dramaturgies led to the generation of 'performance personae' that replaced characters found in literary a priori dramaturgies. In fact, I argue that the whole idea of a performance persona which transcends the notion of character within a *fabula*, is possible at all because musicalised dramaturgies exist only as performance dramaturgies. The idea of performance persona can be related to Philip Auslander's notion of the musical persona. Auslander, in an essay where he proposes the idea of musical personae generated by musicians in performance, argues that '[w]hat musicians perform first and foremost is not music, but their own identities as musicians, their musical persona' (2006: 102). This is close to my idea of self-referentiality. The rhythmic and melodic associations we were working with could only refer to the actors' own identities and presence as actors engaged within an extra-daily context which is, however, non-representational.

The research process presented in this doctoral study was directed towards the development of musicalised dramaturgies as alternative dramaturgies, where musicality serves as foundation for the organisation of the situations and events that constitute the performance. Music was not approached only as another layer supporting the performers' actions or yet another text framing their activity. Instead, musical elements became the source of the actors' actions and were embodied forth in performance. Rhythm and melody were not metaphors that refer to an 'other' but concrete associations that constituted the foundations of action. I consider this associative dynamic which I am attributing to rhythm and melody to be one of the main

contributions of my research. With it I am proposing the possibility of alternative sources for the creation of action in theatrical dramaturgy that drift dramaturgy away from logocentricity. Through this research project, dramaturgy is renegotiated via rhythmic and melodic associations as a process of transformation and manifested as an affirmation of presence.

The work of Stanislavsky on rhythm and tempo-rhythm, Nietzsche's critique of tragedy, and the way Grotowski used song as a tool in the creation of action constitute a legacy which is intimately related to musicality and which, as I shall propose, outlined the potentiality of musicalised processes. These legacies, which are critiqued and investigated in this dissertation, constitute the foundations of my work.

Chapter II

Stanislavsky's Tempo-Rhythm: Towards Performativity in Theatre through Musicality

> Stage action, like the spoken word, must be musical.
>
> Stanislavsky, *My Life in Art*

In theatre, music is a double-edged sword. It can unleash the actors' creative potentials or reduce their work to mechanical activity, becoming a restrictive straitjacket rather than a productive tool. Investigations into the approaches taken by theatre makers and their attitude towards music in theatre at the turn and early decades of the twentieth century reveal the complex nature of the music/theatre debate and practice. These approaches range from music used as background to action utilised to enhance the dramatic element, to a musicality located at the heart of the act of theatre as an intrinsic aspect of performance. The latter led to praxes where musical elements function as tools for the embodiment of action. The awareness of the possibility of a musicality that is embodied by the actor in performance, and the potentials of the approach that developed with it, were emerging parallel to the theatre's shift from a literary to a more performative activity.

In this chapter I will discuss the work of Konstantin Stanislavsky by focusing on the musical dimension of his practice with particular attention to rhythm and tempo. This investigation is conducted in view of the relevance of rhythm and tempo in the development of my own research and in view of the fact that rhythm is one element via which associations will be developed in musicalised dramaturgies as utilised for the

creation of *Welcoming the End of the World*. I will argue: i. that Stanislavsky was a key

player in the paradigm shift from music as a supportive framework for dramatic action

to a musicality that is an intrinsic element of the act of theatre, and, ii. that tempo-

rhythm is the main focus of this musicality. During the development of the system,

rhythm was a nodal element for Stanislavsky and his research on the nature of the

actor's craft which gradually and consistently progressed as a praxis that promoted the

performative dimension of theatre. Within this process tempo-rhythm emerged as an

essential dynamic for the actors when working on the embodiment of action.[10]

Stanislavsky believed that in the actors' profession 'everything must become

habitual, so that the new is transformed into something organically [their] own, into

second nature' (cited in Benedetti 2000: 38). Stanislavsky's revolution in theatre

practice was manifested in a musicality which promoted acting as process of

embodiment rather than just an imitation of scripted actions. Musicality for Stanislavsky

had to become a 'habitual' force for the actor, and rhythm would be a crucial element in

this process. My discussion on the musical dimension of Stanislavsky's work will, in

fact, be framed around a main question: Why did Stanislavsky consider rhythm and the

relation between rhythm and tempo as central to the development of the system?

In one of the lectures delivered to singers at the Bolshoi Theatre, Stanislavsky

described the difficult task of the actor:

> It is quite impossible to act any feeling, for every feeling is by its very nature so sensitive
> that it hides away at the touch of your thought. All you can do is to learn thoroughly the
> nature of the feeling, analyse the substance of each thought, find out what shape a

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[10] Stanislavsky's system is 'a mode of preparation for the actors […] to which there was, in the history of
the European theatre no real precedent' (Milling and Ley 2001: 1). It is Stanislavsky's lifetime work on a
grammar by means of which actors could work on their craft, and came as a reaction to his own failures
as actor. Stanislavsky's foundational question was: 'Is there a technical way to establish the creative
state?' (2008b: 257). The system had various phases where different approaches were experimented by
Stanislavsky, including work on emotive memory, the magic 'if', round the table analysis, the Method of
Physical Actions, and Active Analysis. The key to the emergence of the system is discussed by
Stanislavsky himself in the chapter 'Discoveries of Truth Long Since Known' in *My Life in Art*. For other
accounts on the system see Benedetti 2000 and Merlin 2003.

> physical action takes under the influence of certain reactions. […] But to set out certain conditional external rituals according to their different points and once and for all […], is quite impossible in an art in which the element of time plays so important a part.
>
> (1980: 250)

The complexity of the actor's craft here is located at the point where the actor attempts to act the feeling. This, for Stanislavsky, was impossible since the actor can only access feelings via a process of embodiment rather than reproduction. Embodiment of action would, in fact, develop as priority for him. The relationship between the rhythms and tempos of a given circumstance an actor is involved in (as fictional character within the context of a plot) and the activity which that same actor is engaged in (as physical presence), were neologised as tempo-rhythm. For Stanislavsky '[t]empo-rhythm helps express one's feelings on the stage, it is a direct, immediate, sometimes almost mechanical agent of emotional memory, and consequently, of the inner experience' (Novitskaya 2012: 101). Tempo-rhythm functioned as the connection between the psychological dimension and the physical disposition of the actor, and was an important interface that helped bring together the different situations that constituted the dramatic progression of performance. With respect to this I propose that instead of considering tempo-rhythm as just a neologism, we approach it through the principle of "relational dynamics". Following this principle, within the context of Stanislavsky's praxis, tempo-rhythm would develop into an important aspect in the process of embodiment of action that transcends notions of music understood as a score intended as background to action.

A musicality beyond sound was further manifested when towards the end of his life Stanislavsky developed the Method of Physical Actions, considered as his 'final response to the literature/theatre debate that had dominated his relationship with Nemirovich [Danchenko]' (Benedetti 1999: 356). Tempo-rhythm remained an

important node when Stanislavsky, following the work on the Method of Physical

Actions, was developing the radical and innovative approach of Active Analysis of the

text intended for performance.[11] Active Analysis was aimed at replacing traditional

readings of texts framed around rational analysis and, as explained by actress Maria

Knebel, at '[breaking] down the wall between analysis and embodiment' (in Carnicke

2009: 195).[12] During the same period, while developing the Method of Physical Action

and Active Analysis, Stanislavsky was also underlining the importance of rhythm and

its relation to the physical dimension of performance: 'any physical action is

inextricably linked to rhythm and is characterised by rhythm. So you cannot master the

method of physical actions, if you do not develop a sense of rhythm' (Novitskaya 2012:

102).

Stanislavsky was not the first to speak about music in theatre. Neither was he the

first to address the issue of music and its effects on staging productions. He was,

however, the first to investigate scientifically the actor's craft and processes of

performance within the context of a studio. In 1935, just three years before his death in

1938, Stanislavsky set up what would eventually be his last Studio, the Opera-Dramatic

Studio. It is indeed difficult to entertain the idea that the opera-drama bond was

coincidental at this point in Stanislavsky's life. Rather, the Opera-Dramatic Studio, as

context of praxis, was the consolidation of the belief 'that music and singing would help

me find a way out of the blind alley into which my research had led me' (Stanislavsky

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[11] There is lack of definite agreement on whether Active Analysis is part of the Method of Physical
Actions or a different approach altogether. Both were developed during the Opera-Dramatic Studio,
Stanislavsky's last studio, between 1935 and 1938. Bella Merlin and Sharon M. Carnicke 'agree there is
significant difference between the two', while Jean Benedetti 'uses "the Method of Physical Actions" to
refer to the play's "active analysis on the rehearsal-room floor" thus combining the two into one'
(Carnicke 2009: 192). For an account on the differences between the two approaches see Carnicke 2009:
189-202.
[12] Maria Knebel, together with Irena Novitskaya and Vasily Toporkov (both quoted in this document),
was among the eleven actors chosen by Stanislavsky to assist him during the work at the Opera-Dramatic
Studio of 1935 which I will discuss later in this chapter in section 2.2.

2008b: 334). Stanislavsky spent the last three years of his life investigating the dynamic

relationship between music and theatre in the most direct manner by working within a

context framed around the belief that the key for an enhanced performative experience

was in the music-theatre dynamic.

Although not a musician himself, Stanislavsky frequented the Muscovite music

environment since his childhood. His relationship with music was surely not flirtatious

and was distinguished by various working encounters with musicians of note. These

included composers Peter Tchaikovsky and Sergei Taneyev, concert pianist and

conductor Anton Rubinstein, and one of Moscow's best singers of the time Fiodor

Komissarzhevsky, with whom Stanislavsky studied singing during his youth. While still

a student of Komissarzhevsky, Stanislavsky actually discussed with his master the

possibility of setting up a musical-dramatic group 'where young people could develop

their talents more "scientifically"' (Benedetti 1999: 21). The initiative never

materialized – it only took shape as a short-lived Amateur Music-Dramatic Circle in

1887, without the involvement of Komissarzhevsky – however the whole idea was an

early indication of Stanislavsky's awareness of the potentials of working in theatre with

music. This awareness was not only an anticipation of the setting up of the Opera-

Dramatic Studio in 1935 but, more importantly, a clear manifestation of Stanislavsky's

belief that a craft for the actor was needed and that music would have to be part of it.

2.1   Rhythm and the Bolshoi Opera Studio of 1918

Stanislavsky's research into the musical dimension of theatre based upon the music-

theatre dynamic took a decisive twist when in 1918 the Moscow Art Theatre was

approached by the newly set up State Academic Theatres to work with the Bolshoi

Opera in order 'to raise the level of acting in opera at the Bolshoi' (Stanislavsky 2008b: 328). Stanislavsky's collaborator at the Moscow Arts Theatre, Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, agreed to direct a scheduled opera while Stanislavsky proposed the organization of an Opera Studio. Under his direction the Studio would train young people as future 'actors-singers' by following a programme devised by Stanislavsky himself. The Studio was divided into different departments including voice, music, speech, movement and dance, and theatre. Important singers, musicians, speech experts, and choreographers were invited to direct the classes. Stanislavsky was in charge of the theatre department where the focus of his work would be 'the "system" and rhythm' (Stanislavsky 2008b: 332). One of the objectives of the syllabus was 'developing the inner and outer techniques of experiencing and also for diction, movement, rhythm' (332).

The work during the Opera Studio period addressed some of the key issues and concerns that Stanislavsky had with respect to the development of a system. Rhythm, together with the inner-outer concern was one of these issues. Earlier, in connection with personal incidents as actor, Stanislavsky had pointed his finger at the inner-outer division as a major hurdle for acting. Unless the inner-outer division is resolved the work of the actor would still suffer chronic shortcomings. Within the context of the newly set up Opera Studio, Stanislavsky was able to directly address the division by focusing his attention on rhythm and the rhythmic elements of the work. The process from the inner to the outer dimension was equivalent to the process of physicalisation of emotions that would materialise through rhythmic awareness via respiration. The involvement of respiration was a significant development in view of the physical dimension of respiratory activity. The way this process works is via the individual's behavior in a given situation, characterised by a peculiar respiratory behavior that is

mirrored in the rhythmic framework of the breathing activity. As physical activity, the manoeuvers of breathing are decipherable and visible from the outside. In the case of the actor this process takes place in full view of the spectators. The relevance of breathing is, therefore, its direct relation to the human being's body as living presence. The rhythm produced by an individual 'originates from his breathing and consequently from his entire organism, from his first need, without which life is impossible' (Stanislavsky 1980: 93). Rhythm was essentialised by Stanislavsky because of its being a physical and organic manifestation of breathing and therefore a condition for life.

Furthermore, mind and body would, through this process, be active as a unified unit. Stanislavsky argues that there is analogy between attention and respiration and that 'the one as well as the other function of our "I" is subject to rhythm' (Stanislavsky 1980: 143). Stanislavsky was making rhythm and the system inseparable, something that is also reflected in his description of the process at the Opera Studio when he spoke about it in his autobiography. Rhythm was not only being addressed as an interface for the intra-relational activity within the actor as self in performance (the inner dimension of the performer), but also with respect to the inter-relation between the actors and the environment around them (the outer dimension of the performer). He argues that the student-actors after grasping the inner rhythm by working with their breathing in relation to their activity, will move to the next phase where they acknowledge that 'everything that lives is an eternally moving rhythmic entity. You […] will yourself, as you analyse a part, be able to detect the rhythm of every part and of every performance as a whole' (Stanislavsky 1980: 144). Rhythm was being proposed by Stanislavsky as the matrix of the inner-outer condition of the actors' work in performance through which the actors develop their performative axis. This was an important development in that it already hinted at what would become the kernel of the system as it developed

during the last years of his life, namely a process intended to enhance the performative dimension of theatre.

Some might argue that the elimination of the notion of music as text – i.e. a score composed by a composer that serves as background to dramatic action – was not thoroughly achieved by Stanislavsky during the Opera Studio period. Indeed there was never any attempt to denude the opera genre of its aesthetic which included the very fact that music in opera had a textual/dramatic function. Stanislavsky's problem was that music in opera was often considered by singers as the be-all and end-all of the work. This was not different from the way actors considered the literary text in theatre. Music was treated by the singer as the text of performance or, to use Stanislavsky's own description, the '*what*' they perform. What he found relevant, instead, was the multiple dimensionality of opera which as genre was framed around different layers including; music as text but also as foundation for the actor's behavior and physical presence, musicality of the text but also of the performers' body via their vocal presence, and theatricality of the music and of the text. The awareness by the singer-actor of the existence of *all* the layers was considered by Stanislavsky as crucial, not only because it addressed the various issues of the operatic dimension, but also because it shed light on the dynamics of acting in theatre, including the inner-outer dilemma and the text-to-performance issue: 'The opera singer has to deal with three arts simultaneously, i.e. vocal, musical, and theatrical. […] The problem is that he has to study three arts in that process but once they have been acquired, the singer has far greater possibilities to have an effect on the audience than we, straight actors' (Stanislavsky 2008b: 330). Simultaneity was, paradoxically, problematic but at the same time a condition for the creative and performative state. Indeed, Stanislavsky was seeing the roots of the actor's

craft in the opera singer's craft because of the way the singer had to integrate different arts into one creative expression.

I argue that the simultaneity issue as presented here by Stanislavsky had considerable weight on the text-to-performance shift mirrored, as it were, in the shift from music as text (in view of its dramatic function) to musicality as process (in view of its performative dimension). The '*what*' and the '*how*', i.e. the content element and the performative dimension, mutually informed each other, thus functioning as a relational dynamic. Stanislavsky discusses the task and explains;

> how difficult it is to achieve the complete freedom of the body and all its parts; how long it takes to control and develop one's attention and to learn to transfer it entirely – at one blow – and instantly from one group of muscles to another before you even get to psychological problems; how difficult it is to develop a sense of rhythm in oneself and change it in the most extraordinary way to the rhythm of the music before you even start on your exercises for collecting your energy and distributing it in different directions.
> (1980: 161)

Through the music-musicality – therefore text-process – relational dynamic, the content element and the performative process it entails were developed into a mutually inclusive axis of the work of the actor. The quote above refers to the complexity of the whole process. It acknowledges the inner-outer problematic and frames it around the difference between the inner body rhythms and the outer rhythms around and in relation to the performer. Above all it indicates how in this relational dynamic Stanislavsky saw the physicalisation of the content that will clearly and tangibly be obtainable through rhythm as the physical interface between dramatic action and its performance by the singer-actor.

The simultaneity issue brought into the equation the relationship between tempo and rhythm which would constitute the crux of Stanislavsky's research after the Bolshoi Opera Studio experience. Stanislavsky argued that balancing between what the

performers are singing and what they do and say was essential. However 'to bring music, singing, speech and action into a single whole, you need more than outer physical tempo and rhythm, you need inner mental tempo and rhythm' (Stanislavsky 2008b: 332). Inner and outer tempo and rhythm must be brought as a relational dynamic into the activity of the performer in order to develop the work into a whole. One of the outcomes of his research during this period was that of generally utilising musical elements to address the problematics of performance, particularly rhythm as interface in the physicalisation process.

Later, while on tour in America between 1922 and 1924, Stanislavsky started developing ideas of working on a play through the logic of action but framed around notions of musicality manifested in harmony and rhythm. He wrote to Nemirovich-Danchenko explaining how he envisaged directing Shakespeare: '…as he appears in my dreams, as I see him with my inner eye and hear him with my inner ear, Shakespeare based on harmony, phonetics, rhythm, on the feeling for words and diction, on the natural sound of the human voice' (cited in Benedetti 1999: 324). This was indicative of a visible musical awareness that was developing into a key node in the work on the system. This musicality would continue to develop within the context of the Opera-Dramatic Studio of 1935-38, which was also the context where Stanislavsky started to propose ideas that would develop into the Method of Physical Action and Active Analysis.

2.2   Tempo-Rhythm and the Opera-Dramatic Studio of 1935

During the Bolshoi Opera Studio period, Stanislavsky often referred to the system and rhythm in one breath so as to indicate the importance of the latter in the development of

the former. Before 1918, there were, obviously, references to rhythm in Stanislavsky's

work, however in-depth research and eventual understanding of rhythm in relation to

the actor's work, especially with respect to embodiment of emotions, was clearly the

outcome of the Bolshoi Opera Studio phase. The neologism tempo-rhythm was coined

by Stanislavsky after 1922. During the well-documented Bolshoi Opera Studio period,

tempo-rhythm featured neither as concept nor as practical element. The absence is

rather significant in view of the fact that a series of talks delivered between 1919 and

1921 to the singers during the Bolshoi Opera Studio period 'represent the first tentative

account of the "system"' (Stanislavsky 2008a: xv).[13]   The first time it was mentioned,

addressed, and discussed by Stanislavsky was in Part II of *The Actor's Work* which only

appeared in print posthumously in 1953. Although material for its content was being

compiled since the late 1880s, Stanislavsky only started to work on this material as a

book in 1928.[14] Whatever the case, there seems to be agreement that tempo-rhythm

developed as a consequence of the Bolshoi Opera Studio research. Stanislavsky scholar

Mel Gordon explains how 'in the summer of 1925, Stanislavsky added new physical

acting drills to supplement his textual breakdowns. He called this work Tempo-Rhythm'

(Gordon 1988: 196).

Tempo-rhythm as 'a physical acting drill', to use Gordon's description of it, was

developing during a time when Stanislavsky's attention continued to drift insistently on

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[13] Although Stanislavsky never attempted to publish or at least gather these talks, notes taken by one of the students were published in a translation by David Magarshack as *Stanislavsky on the Art of the Stage*, in 1950. Apart from the Magarshack translation of the Bolshoi talks, Pavel Rumyantsev, a student at the Opera Studio from 1920, took detailed notes of the work with Stanislavsky that were edited and translated by Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood and published as *Stanislavski on Opera* in 1975.

[14] Stanislavsky's intention was to publish a book about the system with a first section dealing with experiencing, or the inner feelings of the actors, and a second section dealing with embodiment, or the outer physicalisation. He was not comfortable with having the two sections published in separate volumes because of the risk of one of them missing publication. According to Stanislavsky, this would give a completely wrong impression of the system, an impression that would be the opposite of what he intended. He insisted that the psycho and the physical should never be separated otherwise his system of actor training would be hugely misunderstood. For an account of the publication of a book about the system see Chapter 26, 'An Actor's Work', in Benedetti 1999: 318-332.

the relationship between opera and theatre. Between 1921 and 1925, Stanislavsky

worked directly on three operas, Massenet's *Werther*, Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*

and Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio Segreto.* Between 1924 (after Stanislavsky's return from

America) and 1928 various opera-theatre studios were established until in 1928 the

Stanislavsky Opera Theatre was set up. This interest is worth underlining particularly in

view of Stanislavsky's incredulity towards his own earlier methods of theatre-making

processes that usually consisted of long periods of prolonged discussions on and

readings of the written texts at the start of a rehearsal period. Stanislavsky's uneasiness

with these approaches was such that it would cause the irreparable break in the long-

time collaboration that existed between him and Nemirovich Danchenko. According to

his biographer Jean Benedetti, Stanislavsky believed that:

> Too much preliminary discussions cluttered the actors' minds, [and] inhibited their
> creative energy. Their minds were so stuffed that their bodies could not move. The surest,
> simplest way into a play was to examine the action, what happens to act out the dramatic
> situations in sequence so that they could discover what they had to do. Actors thus begin
> with what they could best control and direct: the simplest physical actions.
>
> (1999: 355)

Although Stanislavsky's work remained within the context of literary dramaturgy,

where the kernel of action remains the *fabula,* the actor was constantly being promoted

to the level of creator and artist. This further complicates the matter, as Maria Knebel

explains: 'actors must […] work from their own individualities. That means, analyzing

oneself as a human being/actor in the given circumstances of the play. But precisely

because these circumstances are not at all those that formed the actor's personality in

life […] the actor learns what he must discard, what in himself he must overcome'

(cited in Carnicke 2009: 203). The importance Stanislavsky was giving to *how* the actor

develops the given circumstances as put forward by the dramatic text was to be

confronted with the 'inner' and the 'outer' dimensions, not on one, but two levels,

namely: i. the actor in relation to the literary text – therefore, how the actor 'plays' the story of the author – and, ii. the actor as presence – therefore how to approach the human being/actor dynamic. Here we are dealing directly with the inner-outer dynamic which is to be approached, among other things, through the tempo and rhythm dynamic which Stanislavsky started to refer to as tempo-rhythm.

This was an alternative approach that acknowledged associations beyond the rational and that would, throughout the twentieth century, develop into a focus on 'a model of the actor's work based not on acting as representation, but on an "energetics" of performance' (Zarrilli 2008: 1). Indeed, the energertics and dynamics of performance through tempo-rhythm were one of the most substantial breakthroughs made by Stanislavsky. All this would develop within the newly established Opera-Dramatic Studio of 1935, the last Studio Stanislavsky worked within before his death in 1938.

The Opera-Dramatic Studio was of extreme importance for the work on the system. Proof of its importance for Stanislavsky and the diligence and precision with which he intended to engage in the work was manifested in the 2:1 ratio between students and professional actors. From a staggering 3500 applicants his eleven handpicked actor-assistants selected only twenty students for in-depth work with the master. What developed within the context of the Opera-Dramatic Studio, namely the Method of Physical Actions and Active Analysis, would remain among the most important contributions to the actor's craft and to theatre in general, constituting a proper legacy for future theatre practitioners. The Studio was also a breakthrough in the music-theatre relationship. Italian scholar Franco Ruffini argues that the Opera-Dramatic Studio's 'present was its future. […] The name in itself was the expression of its intent. […] With the name Stanislavski meant that the actor-who-sings would no longer be the missing half of the actor-who-speaks. They would be the same thing, […]

only under the guidance of different forms of music' (cited in Schino 2009: 108). With the setting up of the Opera-Dramatic Studio, Stanislavsky consolidated the totality of his vision which saw a musical dimension – concentrated on the tempo-rhythm relational dynamic – informing the aesthetics of the work.

Stanislavsky's intuition was developed into a scientific research that would debase any claims of coincidence with respect to his attention to the musical fabric of the actors' work. In his innovative approach, the starting point for the actors would become their own body with which they were to engage into an Active Analysis of the play. The source of emotions for the actor was body rhythms. He insisted that '[e]ach physical action is inseparably linked with the rhythm which characterises it' (cited in Toporkov 1998: 170). What was emerging in the Opera-Dramatic Studio was a context of praxis that disposed of the boundary between the rhythmic dimension of the action and the actor's physical disposition: 'By acting, [the actor] gives the play *from the first moment of rehearsing*, a physical rhythm, and even a pattern of muscular movement in himself. It is, as it were, embedded in his being as a physical feature' (Leach 2003: 182, emphasis in the original).

The process of Active Analysis which developed during this Studio saw the actors experiencing with their physical presence the situation of the play prior to memorising and understanding the lines of the text. As Sharon M. Carnicke explains in her twenty-first-century reading of Stanislavsky's work, 'Active Analysis fosters memorisation of a text through a deep experiential understanding of the play's underlying dynamic structure' (2009: 196). Rhythm was the interface of this experiential memorisation through the actor's body and was developing into a physical element embodied by the actor. In one particular instance during his work on Moliere's *Tartuffe*, the very last process of work before his death, Stanislavsky commented:

> None of you is sitting in the correct rhythm! Look for the true rhythm. […] I beg each of you, while sitting in your place, to find the true inner rhythm, an agitated rhythm, that expresses itself in small actions. No … no, that is all wrong. Really, can't you do such a simple thing? Where is your technique? As soon as your text is taken from you, you lose everything, I want you, above all, to learn how to act, to act *physically*.
>
> (in Toporkov 1998: 168, emphasis in the original)

For Stanislavsky finding the 'true rhythm' was not some metaphysical or mystical endeavour, but a purely technical matter the tools of which the actor must acquire in order to be able to act. He spoke of truth, by which he meant *theatrical* truth, and was concerned about the lack of technique that was evident when an actor was simply trying to reproduce a given text. However, notwithstanding these developments, Stanislavsky was aware that rhythm on its own could still lead to unnecessary shortcomings when dealing with the inner-outer dynamic. Actor Vasily Toporkov, explains how rhythm was one of the main issues when addressing the inner-outer problematic: 'I often saw tense moments on the stage achieved by purely outward rhythm, but, if this remained only *external*, it never produced the required effect. The ability to lead the actor to an inner justification of a rhythm is one of a director's most difficult jobs' (1998: 147). Rhythm had to be located within a dynamic that would make it effective in addressing the problem. Tempo-rhythm was Stanislavsky's reply.

As neologism tempo-rhythm combines two elements of a different nature. In a musical work tempo indicates the speed at which a phrase is to be performed, while rhythm is a dynamic manifested in the relationship between notes that make up a phrase. Stanislavsky himself explained this in musical terms: '*Tempo* is the rate at which equal, agreed, single length values follow each other in any given time-signature. *Rhythm* is the quantitative relationship of active, agreed, length-values in any given tempo or time signature' (2008a: 463, emphasis in the original). Tempo is a dynamic

which indicates the relation between an event and the time that event takes to be executed.

I argue that notwithstanding its potential problematic nature as neologism, the notion of tempo-rhythm leads to a deeper understanding of Stanislavsky's praxis and concerns with respect to the actor's craft if denuded of the context of music in its formalistic sense, and is reconsidered, instead, within a context of musicality, where tempo and rhythm are also related to the actor's somatic experience. This would resonate more with Stanislavsky's struggles to unearth the dynamics between the inner and outer dimensions of the actor's behaviour. In fact I propose that tempo-rhythm was Stanislavsky's response to this binary. Stanislavsky was interested in the association between the psychic and the physical dimensions of the actor's activity. A 'good' act ought to emerge from this relationship rather than from an imitation of an outer form. With tempo-rhythm the actor could develop a relationship between the outer tempo and the inner rhythm of a physical action, thus establishing a dynamic relation between the inner and the outer.

It is in response to this analysis that I apply the principle of relational dynamics to tempo-rhythm. The principle qualifies tempo-rhythm as *one* dynamic developed as the relationship between tempo and rhythm, and puts the two elements in a relationship of mutual benefit to each other. Indeed, the principle of relational dynamics makes even more critical sense when applied to other aspects of Stanislavsky's work. Psycho-physical, inner-outer, Opera-Dramatic (used for his last studio), music-theatre (since his youth, as we have seen), actor as character-actor as self, experience-embodiment, are all binaries that were addressed and more importantly problematised by Stanislavsky. The validity and effectiveness of these binaries is accentuated when approached as relational dynamics in view of which I argue that relational dynamics were an important

characteristic of the work of Stanislavsky on the system. As a relational dynamic

tempo-rhythm emerged from the attention Stanislavsky gave to the inner-outer issue as

a psychophysical process, conditioned, as it were, by the physical rhythms of action.

The actor does not work on one aspect of the activity, but on the relationship between

the elements that constitute it. The actor works on the liminal dimension of the elements

in relation to each other, and how to transform that liminality into a tangible

physicalised state.

2.3   Physicalisation

What is of importance for my analysis of tempo-rhythm as condition for physicalisation

is how Stanislavsky addressed the inner condition of the actor and shifted from

intangible emotions to the actor's inner rhythms that inform a particular activity. But

what are these 'inner rhythms' that ought to phase the uncontrollable emotions with the

controllable nature of physical actions? Phillip B. Zarrilli in his account on

psychophysical acting since Stanislavsky, explains that 'what Stanislavski meant by

"inner action" and "feelings" were not exclusively informed by Ribot's psychology, but

also by Stanislavski's adaptation of yoga exercises, principles and philosophy' (2008:

14).[15] From yoga Stanislavsky borrowed the concept of *Prana.* He explains: '*Prana* –

vital energy – is taken from breath, food, the sun, water, and human auras […]. Pay

attention to the movement of *prana…. Prana* moves […] the movement of *prana*

creates, in my opinion, inner rhythm' (cited in Carnicke 2009: 178). Rhythm is related

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[15] For more information about Stanislavsky and French psychologist Théodule Ribot (1838-1916), from whom Stanislavsky borrowed the term 'affective memory', see 'Emotion and the Human Spirit of the Role: Psychology', while for Stanislavsky's encounters with yoga see 'Emotions and the Human Spirit of the Role: Yoga', both in Carnicke: 2009. Stanislavsky himself makes various references to Ribot in his *An Actor's Work: A Student's Diary* (2008a).

to energy (*prana*) – an arguably intangible element – through movement – a most basic tangible element. Energy is transformed into rhythm and physicalised through movement. The movement is internal and moves 'from your hands to your fingertips, from your thighs to your toes' (Carnicke 2009: 178). Movement of energy is a tangible element expressed through change and transformation within the body which establishes, through the tensions created by the changes, an inner rhythm. The actor is aware of these inner rhythms and 'registers' them as physical activity in order to work with them in relation to her/his own tempo as human being involved in an activity.

Focus on rhythm as an internal activity aids the actor to address another important aspect of the craft namely the difference between the self and the fictional character s/he plays. Work on rhythm via the movement of energy and the distribution of tensions within and without transcends this difference without, however, negating it as difference. It would be impossible to solve the problem of the real self against the fictional self by means of working on emotions. As Phillip B. Zarrilli argues, '[t]here is no clear articulation of the distinction between emotional life of the actor-as-person and that of the character. The result can be self-indulgence to the neglect of the physical side of the acting equation' (2008: 17). On the other hand when focusing on the movement (*kinēsis*) of energy, the actor can work on the changes of the movements which establish rhythmic formations. The process here is from internal energy to physical movements which lead to the possibility of developing physical actions through direct intervention on one's own body.

Such a process in no way distinguishes between the psycho and the physical dimensions of the actor. It simply avoids the assumption that rational construction is the *only* way to the development of action. One understands why rhythm remains an important element in the work of the actors when working on an active analysis of the

text, in that now it is through physical activity that the actors approach the material they will eventually perform. It is a sensorial encounter with the text in order to immediately develop a psychophysical disposition with respect to the text instead of only developing a rational understanding that will later lead to movement. The energies of the movements outlined in the text are made tangible, or better physicalised, through rhythmic practices.

Stanislavsky's paradigm gathers even more momentum with the tempo-rhythm relational dynamic. When the actor has established the rhythmic disposition of the activity by becoming aware of every single difference, change, or transformation of movement within her/himself, the work moves onto another level where rhythm is developed in relation to the tempo of the movement that generated it. At this point of the process, through the tempo-rhythm relational dynamic, the intention of an action starts to develop. Not through rational logic or imitation, but through the dynamics of movement itself. Here we are within the realm of kinesis. At another, not necessarily chronological, level the actor could also operate within the realm of mimesis, in that s/he works with respect to a given circumstance. Establishing a difference between kinesis and mimesis is important albeit it should not be interpreted as promoting a division between the physical and the psychic in the work of the actor. As discussed earlier, such a division would emerge as impossibility when the psycho-physical are approached as a relational dynamic. It follows that the association to given circumstances and the work on tempo-rhythm are neither mutually exclusive nor in spite of each other. Rather, as Bella Merlin argues, there is 'no *divide* between body and psychology, but rather a *continuum*' (2001: 27). In fact she continues that the task is '*to condition the muscles of the body* in readiness for *expressing the spirit of the character*' (31, emphasis in the original).

The 'continuum' argument put forward by Merlin is indicative of the fact that the work on tempo and rhythm when approached as a relational dynamic becomes more akin to a process of becoming rather than as simple imitation of outer rhythms and tempos. Repeating, in the sense of redoing what was done previously, was not what Stanislavsky was after. Indeed, as Stanislavsky scholar Robert Leach argues, 'this freedom – perhaps one should say, this imperative – to recreate at each performance, rather than merely to repeat what was achieved in rehearsals, is the final touch in the Method of Physical Actions' (2003: 188). This procedure was central for Stanislavsky when attempting to address issues of embodiment. Leach explains how 'with the line, or score, of physical actions clear and a complementary pattern of inner life alive within him, with also a sensitivity in the rhythmic configuration of the playing, the actor is ready to "embody" the part' (187). The inner tempo-rhythm could be accessed by the actor through work on the outer tempo-rhythm, not in a chronological order but in simultaneity, as Stanislavsky himself explains:

> I should have talked about inner Tempo-rhythm much earlier when we were studying how to achieve the creative state in *performance*, because *inner Tempo-rhythm* is one of its main features […]. It is much more convenient to talk about inner Tempo-rhythm at the same time as *outer Tempo-rhythm*, because then it is observable in physical actions. At that moment it can be seen as well as sensed rather like inner experiences which are not visible to the eye.
>
> (2008a: 463, emphasis in the original)

The relationship between what is visible, therefore seen by the audience, and what is sensed, therefore not seen but still accessible to the audience, is a crucial node in theatre activity. Stanislavsky's concern with this fact was often discussed with respect to the theatre's diverse nature from the newer art form, cinema. For him the major difference between the two was 'that contact of feeling that unites actor and audience with invisible threads' present in theatre but absent in cinema. He argued that '[i]n the theatre it is a *living* man who delights us, saddens us, disturbs us and calms us but in the cinema

everyone and everything is *only apparently real'* (cited in Benedetti 1999: 203, emphasis in the original). Furthermore, he associated this diversity to what later on during the twentieth century would develop into an important debate in the hermeneutics of theatre, namely representation, and commented: 'You want to see the difference between the art of representation and the art of lived experience? – go to the cinema' (cited in Benedetti 1999: 203).

Stanislavsky was interested in the sensorial dimension of performance as a means to avoid imitation of an outer form, and as a means to unleash the creative potential of the actor as physical presence. I, therefore, conclude that the idea of working on the inner sensorial dimension and the outer visible dimension via a musicalised process framed around the tempo-rhythm relational dynamic was an important development and a significant breakthrough for the actor's craft. Earlier Stanislavsky had told opera singers 'not to sing a single word to no purpose. *Without the organic union of words and music there is no such thing as the art of opera'* (Stanislavsky and Rumyantsev 1998: 24, emphasis in the original). For him, purpose, or intention of action, was related not only to rational logic but also to musical elements. In this particular situation quoted here, Stanislavsky was talking to opera singers, therefore informed performers with direct knowledge of music, who could relate to the actuality of his musical approach. For Stanislavsky it was important to develop this same approach with his actors, i.e. an attitude towards musicality that transcended not only technical terminology, a natural hurdle for non-musicians, but more importantly the barrier of treating music as only support and background to language and rational processes.

Stanislavsky's shift from music to a process of musicality was instrumental in his research on the nature of rhythm as a formative element in the physical dimension of

action. This in turn led to the development of tempo-rhythm as a relational dynamic that informs the work of the actor and directs her/him towards the development of a kinaesthetic dimension so central to theatre performance. The only condition which, arguably, kept Stanislavsky attached to the literary dimension of theatre was that for him the ultimate aim of the performance remained the given circumstances created by the author of the script. His position was that 'Given Circumstances evoke Tempo-rhythm and Tempo-rhythm reminds us of the relevant Given Circumstances'. (2008a: 473) These 'relevant Given Circumstances' are the logocentric pole from which Jerzy Grotowski will later distance himself, as I will discuss in the next chapter.

Notwithstanding the importance Stanislavsky still gave to the author's preconceived *fabula,* the breakthrough of tempo-rhythm as a relational dynamic that informs the work of the actor and directly affects the physicalisation of action would constitute the legacy that saw the development of embodied musicality in Grotowski half a century later. The performative element generated through rhythm and tempo-rhythm would also have a direct effect on the emergence of "kinaesthetic infrastructures" in the process of developing musicalised dramaturgies for my own creation of *Welcoming the End of the World*.

Chapter III

Dislocating the Logocentric Hold: Nietzsche's Critique of Tragedy and Grotowski's Embodied Musicality

> I would only believe in a god who knew how to dance.
>
> Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Stanislavsky's work on rhythm and its relation to the body of the actor and her/his behaviour in performance and, later, the development of the relational dynamic of tempo-rhythm, marked an important leap forward with respect to the physicalisation of performance. However, notwithstanding the musical dimension rhythm and tempo-rhythm gave to the physical process, the actor's work remained referential to the given dramatic circumstances. These given circumstances still retained a literary and language-oriented dimension that would, during the course of the twentieth century, be questioned and challenged.

In this chapter I will investigate the displacement of language as a logocentric force in theatre practice through a discussion of Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*, published in 1872, and Grotowski's praxis almost a century later. Nietzsche and Grotowski established, in their own different ways, strong and direct links with music that would develop into a musicality that functioned as an important foundation for their discourses and/or praxis. In the course of my discussion I will address the performative dimension of their respective projects by looking at the shift from the literary text, as pre-condition for action, to performance situations where the source of action lies beyond language. I will argue that rather than imitation through discursive practice we

are in front of a theatre activity promoted as a process of becoming through a musicality

presented as embodied expression. This is done through physical movement and song.

In my analysis I acknowledge Friedrich Nietzsche's understanding that language

and music are two different phenomena and share Philip Auslander's concern that

'comparing music to language and vice versa, is always dangerous'.[16] Instead I will

frame my discussion around the idea of a dislocation of the logocentric hold in theatre

and will propose that an embodied musicality is one of the processes that would make

this dislocation possible. While Stanislavsky's work was developing into a legacy that

would enhance and inform the shift, Nietzsche's critique of tragedy in his *The Birth of*

Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music had already emerged as an important discourse that

pointed at a possible embodiment of action through music. I will discuss basic

arguments put forward by Nietzsche giving particular attention to the way he

approached notions of musicality, and will propose that implied in Nietzsche's

arguments were subtle references to sensorial and physical awareness that feed not only

on rational processes but also on embodied activity.

The debate developed in Nietzsche's analysis already possessed an ontological

musical dimension that would be reflected in the practice of Grotowski during the

second half of the twentieth century. My reading of Nietzsche's text will be framed

around contemporary postdramatic theoretical developments. In turn, Grotowski's

practice will be investigated with respect to Nietzsche's discussion of tragedy in order

to articulate its musical dimension. Similar to my discussion on rhythm in Chapter II,

the arguments put forward in this chapter are aimed at facilitating an understanding of

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[16] Personal notes of a keynote address by Philip Auslander entitled *Music as Performance: The Disciplinary Dilemma Revisited [musicperformance ≠ music + performance]* delivered on 4 October 2012 during the Sound and Performance Conference 2012 organized by the German Society for Theatre Studies at the University of Bayreuth between 4 and 7 October 2012.

the way language, verbal activity, and the vocal dimension will be used in musicalised dramaturgies, particularly in view of my development of melodic associations for *Welcoming the End of the World.*

3.1   Towards the Performative: The Nietzschean-Grotowskian Claim for Embodiment through Music

Grotowski's laboratory experimentations on the physical dynamics of action were posited upon a musicality that was embodied by the performer. The nature of Grotowski's praxis lay in a meta-representational dynamic that echoed the Nietzschean Apollonian-Dionysian bond which, I argue, is a key performative premise. The Apollonian-Dionysian bond is central to Nietzsche's understanding of tragedy. According to Nietzsche, when 'Dionysius speaks the language of Apollo; and Apollo, finally, the language of Dionysius; […] the highest goal of tragedy and of all art is attained' (2000:130). This 'intricate relation between the Apollonian and Dionysian in tragedy' (130), resonates with the aporiatic nature of the actors' activity when they attempt to 'represent feelings', something which according to Stanislavsky was impossible unless approached via the actor's body through psychophysical activity. As we have seen in Chapter II, a lifetime of research led Stanislavsky to give significant weight to musicality as an important tool that bridges the gap between motion and emotion. Stanislavsky addressed the issues by working on rhythmic procedures and physical practice. In my attempt to establish Nietzsche's critique as an interface between Stanislavsky's work and developments during the second half of the twentieth century around musical embodiment, I will argue that similar to tempo-rhythm, the Dionysian-Apollonian bond is a relational dynamic.

The work of Jerzy Grotowski since his early productions manifested a music-oriented physicality that often prompted commentators to underline the musical dimension of his performances. About his *Akropolis* of 1962, Robert Findlay wrote that 'the production was almost operatic because of the strong musical elements throughout the piece' (in Slowiak and Cuesta 2007: 106).[17] In my investigation I will refer to the work of Grotowski in order to locate a practice where a musicality which transcended notions of aurality was adopted as an approach for praxis. Grotowski, through musicalised processes, redressed some important aspects of theatre-making activity and its reception. Rather than approaching music and theatre, as distinctive media, Grotowski united the two in a musically embodied awareness framed around the activity of the performer. Musically embodied awareness functioned as a dramaturgical tool since Grotowski's early Theatre of Productions phase, and was epitomised in his last opus *Action*.[18] The operatic that Findlay saw in *Akropolis* would be developed by Grotowski into a sort of 'ur-operatic moment' located, as Nicholas Till argues when discussing the nature of the operatic, in 'mythic narrative structures, ritual forms, or pre-symbolic vocality' (2004: 20).

If it is an ur-operatic moment we are looking at we must locate the moment of unity and investigate its nature. At that primordial moment the ontological dimension of music is evident. It presupposes no a priori distinctions and delineations between the

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[17] *Akropolis* was one of the first works of Grotowski intended for an international audience. Premiered in 1962, the piece remained part of the Teatr Laboratorium repertoire for eight years during which it was performed to international acclaim. For an account on *Akropolis* see Slowiak & Cuesta 2007: 100-112, and Kumiega 1985: 59-65.

[18] The Theatre of Productions phase was Grotowski's first phase of work between 1959 and 1969. *Action* was a performance structure which developed over a decade as part of Grotowski's final phase of work Art as Vehicle between 1986 and his death in 1999. These two phases were separated by another three phases of work each investigating different aspects of performance work: Theatre of Participation/ Paratheatre (1969-78), Theatre of Sources (1976-1982) and Objective Drama (1983-1986). For an account on Grotowski's different phases of work and his last opus *Action* see Slowiak and Cuesta 2007. For *Action* see also Lisa Wolford's '*Action:* The Unrepresentable Origin' in Wolford and Schechner 1997: 409-431.

different expressive media that constitute the theatre event. Rather this ontology supports an idea of oneness between these media. From its genesis the act of theatre emerges as a phenomenon devoid of binary structures. Indeed as Nietzsche warned before the publication of *The Birth of Tragedy*, 'here is where the unfortunate consequence happens, if we make an unnatural separation between heart and mind, music and action, intellect and will, each separated part wastes away' (cited in Liébert 2004: 68). What finally betrays delineations and divisions, as they were established linguistically, is the concrete authenticity of the act of performance, manifested in the performative dimension as experienced by performers and audience.

Interestingly, the attributes of the operatic which Till underlines, including 'lyricism, spectacle or ritual' (2004: 17), are not only the sources of tragedy according to Nietzsche but also essential attributes to the development of musicalised processes in theatre within a postdramatic context. It is within such a framework that the work of Grotowski becomes valid for a discourse on the unity of music and theatre and the elimination of borders. Grotowski's work did consist of the attributes which Till links to an operatic beyond the boundaries of drama. Ideas that literary sources suffice as foundations for performance dramaturgies are questioned and challenged within the context of late twentieth-century and contemporary theatre practice. As Till puts it, 'nineteenth-century dramaturgies no longer serve as vehicles with which to engage with life in the twenty-first century' (2004: 18).

In light of these claims an analysis of Nietzsche's arguments in *The Birth of Tragedy* is befitting, especially when considering that these arguments appeared on the threshold of a period that ushered in a fresh interest in the performative dimension of the theatrical act. Theatre practitioners started to develop practices framed around the actors' presence and their performances rather than limiting themselves only to

literature-based processes. I argue that it is within the context of these processes, when theatrical activity develops beyond the written word, that music and musicality gain the potential to become an essential part of the act of theatre. What started in 1872, when *The Birth of Tragedy* was published as an attempt to reconsider tragedy as performative rather than only literary practice will be, by the end of the twentieth century, manifested in the work of theatre practitioners who transferred the weight of theatrical experience onto the embodied awareness of the performer.

The idiosyncrasies of musicalised processes develop an awareness that dramaturgies created for performances venturing beyond the singularity of language ought to reflect. The 'turn to performance' paradigm questions the discursive nature of theatrical dramaturgies and promotes, instead, the interplay between the linear language of literary texts and the complex vertical and physical dimension of theatre as performance event. The processes undertaken to transcend the logocentric hold – manifested, as it were, through language as prime communicator in theatre – materialised in a manner which reformulated the body-voice dynamic in performance. This, I will argue, is a third crucial relational dynamic, following Stanislavsky's tempo-rhythm and Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian bond. These three relational dynamics were an important foundation for the performative function that informed the claim for embodiment through music that will have direct effect on my work on *Welcoming the End of the World*.

3.2 Nietzsche's Musical Perspectivism in *The Birth of Tragedy*

Nietzsche's bond between the Apollonian and the Dionysian is as much of a critical shift as it as a vision for the theatre. With it Nietzsche hints at a poetics for theatre that

include the activity of the actor as physical presence in performance, shifting the weight

beyond the written text to also include performed activity. In *The Birth of Tragedy*

Nietzsche critiques a literature-dominated perspective of theatre that was not

acknowledging the performative dimension of the activity, not even in terms of ancient

Greek tragedy as a 'synthesis' of different media. Nietzsche's investigations into the

nature of tragedy are obviously informed by his respect (transformed later into bitter

antagonism) for Richard Wagner. Wagner's notion of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* was

definitely an important source for Nietzsche's retrospective of the tragic dramatic

tradition. However Nietzsche also addresses some crucial lacunae that Wagner, with his

synthetic approach, evidently did not manage to avoid. These include the fact, noted

also by Swiss theatre maker Adolphe Appia in his 1899 account of music and art of the

theatre, that in his project Wagner 'neglected the role of the body' (1962: 4).

In the opening chapter of *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche refers to the dithyramb

as basis for his body-oriented perspective via which he develops an initial association

with a musicalised physical disposition that preceded the tragic genre and was arguably

a precondition for it:

> In the Dionysian dithyramb man is incited to the greatest exaltation of all his symbolic
> faculties […]. We need a new world of symbols; and the entire symbolism of the body is
> called into play, not the mere symbolism of the lips, face, and speech but the whole
> pantomime of dancing, forcing every member into rhythmic movement. Then the other
> symbolic powers suddenly press forward, particularly those of music, in rhythmics,
> dynamics, and harmony.
>
> (2000: 40)

For Nietzsche music is not considered only as an aesthetic commodity. Similar to

Stanislavsky, Nietzsche points at a broader musical dimension which includes a

musicality beyond sound manifested in a 'musical discourse' that would become a

'model for all discourse, even for philosophical discourse' (Liébert 2004: 3).

Nietzsche's musical perspective outlines the problematics of language in theatre

practice when theatre is approached as performance. The idea of a birth of tragedy (i.e. of a Western genesis of theatre) out of the spirit of music is suggestive of a musical ontology that would enhance the performative poetics of the art of the theatre. Nietzsche's vision, of a theatre that untwists the *logos* in order to unleash the *bios* of theatrical performance, is based upon his Apollonian-Dionysian thesis.[19]

From this thesis two main arguments follow. Firstly that language is not entirely sufficient to fulfill artistic expression. Nietzsche insists that we transcend the boundaries of language since language is not universal but dependent on constructs. Secondly that what precedes language is the spirit of Dionysian music. Through music Nietzsche delves into aspects of physicality in performance by way of the dithyrambic chorus and argues that 'the [tragic] chorus is the only "reality" and generates the vision, speaking of it with the entire symbolism of dance, tone, and words' (2000: 65). He links tragic expression to embodied awareness rather than to a literary text through a discussion of the activity of the chorus as a community event, and what constitutes it, namely song and dance.

The birth of tragedy in ancient Greece represents one of the most important moments in Western theatre histories. As it emerged in its early days, tragedy was a theatre form based on dialogue, which eventually developed into one of the essential elements of Western drama. When Thespis distanced himself from the rest of the chorus – the body of individuals that together performed as an ensemble – he was establishing

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[19] Eugenio Barba describes *bios* as 'the performer's life' (Barba & Savarese, 2005: 8) and explains that 'the first steps in discovering what the principles governing a performer's scenic *bios*, or life, might be, lies in the understanding that the body's daily techniques can be replaced by external daily techniques, that is, techniques that do not respect the habitual conditionings of the body (7). However, *logos* and *bios* are not necessarily diametrically opposite concepts but can actually be mutually inclusive. Grotowski explains: 'There is *logos* and there is *bios*. *Logos* is linked to descriptive, analytical reasoning. […] The Asian performer, rooted in his tradition [which incidentally acknowledges the musical ontology paradigm] uses his body to express words, sentences, speeches… and is therefore logos. But it is as if, due to the strengths of his tradition, his *logos* has preserved certain principles of *bios*' (Barba & Savarese, 2005: 269). Therefore the *bios* of a performance is experienced via the bodily presence of those involved.

a form that would eventually become orthodoxy in Western theatre. We have all the

reasons to assume that before becoming a literary form, tragedy was a performative

activity. Aristotle in his *Poetics* already claims that tragedy, or the performance of it,

consisted of various elements including music and spectacle. The problem, theatrically

speaking, is that with time one aspect of the performance of tragedy, namely the verbal

dialogue exchanged between the characters, was established as a literary form. Still

today, even within theatre environments, tragedy is referred to as 'a literary genre

having its own rules' (Pavis 1998: 414). This in turn led to the events and resolutions of

tragedy, together with the consequential cathartic outcome, to become possible

exclusively through processes of thought rather than through physical activity. This was

not the case with the proto-dramatic dithyramb, dependent, as it were, on song and

dance. It is exactly here that Nietzsche's contention with the orthodox image of tragedy

is located:

> The poems of the lyrist can express nothing that did not already lie hidden in that vast
> universality and absoluteness of music […] all phenomena compared to it, are merely
> symbols: hence language, as the organ and symbol of phenomena, can never by any
> means disclose the innermost heart of music; language, in an attempt to imitate it, can
> only be in superficial contact with music; while all the eloquence of lyric poetry cannot
> bring the deepest significance of the latter one step nearer to us.
>
> (2000: 56, emphasis in the original)

This statement leaves little space for doubt about Nietzsche's position, and that he

considers language as not completely adequate for artistic expression. Music delves

deeper and moves the performer into an unconscious bond with their environment,

including with the other members of the community. Words tend to push ineluctably to

individuality, potentially hindering primordial immediacy between human beings.

Elsewhere Nietzsche warns that words, when used to describe a virtue, are violating that

same virtue. Words can only describe those experiences that have been made

conscious.[20] What lies before the conscious cannot be named. Verbal dialogue, develops only after an experience has been subjected to inevitable social constrains, hence after other processes had taken place which lie in a territory beyond the reach of language.

For Nietzsche a musical environment is one that enhances human experience beyond communication and where meaning is already possible. In an essay discussing the relation between music and language in Nietzsche, Kathleen Higgins argues that 'the human capacity to experience music, according to Nietzsche, is something like a transcendental precondition for the possibility of language' (1986: 663). As a precondition for the possibility of language transcending the conditions of the conscious, music falls under the Dionysian spell. Music informs 'symbolic imitation' and allows the 'symbolic image' to emerge. In fact, for Nietzsche, the essence of tragedy 'can be interpreted only as a manifestation and projection into images of Dionysian states, as the visible symbolizing of music' (2000: 92). From this he infers that it is music that gives birth to myth (103). In other words, through Dionysian music the myth becomes flesh and is made visible through the performer. This is what we call embodied awareness through which the act of theatre emerges and is made experience. Body awareness is one of the essential aspects of theatre, in that any energies, information, and experiences generated by and/or taking place during the theatrical act are transferred kinaesthetically through the bodies of the performers and the community.

For Nietzsche what lies between the performers and spectators of Greek tragedy is not the verb but indeed a process of musicality. Music could restore the Dionysian awareness of a communal sharing of experience that qualifies theatre as an experiential event that ventures beyond mere communication. Nietzsche therefore, considers music

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[20] Nietzsche expressed these thoughts in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* which was published after *The Birth of Tragedy*.

as an effective medium through which bodies could be fully engaged in performance. Indeed his relationship with music was intense. Similar to Stanislavsky's, Nietzsche's was not a fleeting infatuation but a lifetime endeavor that affected his life and work. As George Liébert claims in his account of Nietzsche's encounters with music throughout his life, 'music was not just present in Nietzsche's work in an explicit way, in the form of critical analyses and commentaries [but] like the "golden thread" to which Marcel Proust compared it [...], it constitutes a constant reference as well as an invisible framework' (2004: 2). For Nietzsche '*in comparison to music* all communication through *words* is shameless. The word diminishes and makes stupid; the word depersonalizes: the word makes what is uncommon common' (cited in Liébert 2004: 3, emphasis in the original). His strong position with respect to music as *the* effective agent of communication was also reported by people close to him. Lou Andreas-Salomé noted that he 'often listened to tones when he wanted to listen to thoughts' (cited in Liébert 2004: 208).

Nietzsche's deep and intense relationship with music stemmed from the fact that he was not just any other 'lover' of the art. Although not a professional musician, he played the piano well and was active during his youth as an amateur composer. His knowledge of music was therefore that of an insider who has access not only to outer aesthetics but also to the grammar that frames technical musical processes. Although his musical compositions are virtually unknown today, and were probably equally so during his lifetime, he actually managed to get some of his music published. In a draft letter of 1872 intended for composer Hans von Bülow, Nietzsche wrote: 'I have written masses of fugues, and I am capable of a pure style – up to a certain degree of purity' (cited in Liébert 2004: 23). Admittedly, this is by no means indication of any outstanding musicianship. It is, however, proof of a more than superficial understanding of an art

form of which Nietzsche knew the grammar and had acquired a certain level of

technical ability which allowed him to compose fugues and other works. His knowledge

of music, therefore, was enough to make him aware of how composition functioned,

amongst other things through the organisation of rhythm and melody.

Nietzsche knew of the importance of rhythm and melody as essential musical

elements that gave shape to the composer's expression when composing musical works.

This knowledge he applied even to his writings, and used to admit that he often

struggled 'before finding a phrase worthy of being printed, before being fully satisfied

with its melody and its rhythm' (cited in Liébert 2004: 4). Humans have access to

melody not only through thought processes but, more importantly, through physical

awareness. It is primarily through the senses that humans respond to music, mainly, but

not only, by means of the auditory mechanisms of the body. The body also responds to

music via the rhythms which address directly the physical qualities of the respondent.

Nietzsche's awareness of embodiment was actually close to Stanislavsky when the latter

related rhythm to breathing, as discussed in Chapter II. In *Beyond Good an Evil*

Nietzsche refers to ancient Greek practices of public reading:

> At that time, the rules for written style were the same as those for spoken style, and those
> rules depended in part on the astonishing development and subtle requirements of the ear
> and larynx, and also, in part, on the strength, endurance, and power of the ancient lung.
> What the ancients meant by a period is primarily a physiological unit insofar as it is
> combined in a single breath. [...] Those were a delight for people of antiquity who knew
> from their own training to value the virtue of the rarity and difficulty involved in
> performing periods like these.
>
> (2002: 139)

Here references to 'larynx ' and 'ears' are indications of body awareness as is the

reference to the endurance of the lung. For Nietzsche, this physical awareness which,

according to him, ancient Greeks possessed and used with respect to their writing via

public reading, was possible at all because of a musical understanding that came

through reading with 'a resounding voice'. In *The Birth of Tragedy* it is by transferring weight to the Dionysian aspect of performance that Nietzsche attempts to initiate a discourse pointing in this direction, namely that in performance sensorial and physical processes are activated which directly involve body awareness.

This idea of embodied awareness is further pronounced in what he considers as the seed of tragedy, the proto-dramatic dithyramb. This understanding obviously has its source in Aristotle's observation that tragedy came from the dithyramb. Nietzsche's acknowledgement of tragedy's association with the dithyramb is of particular importance for my argument. Firstly, because the dithyramb, in view of its very nature, i.e. an activity involving the whole community, implied a surrender of individuality that transports the body of performers as a collective into another state of being. A state distanced from the reality of everyday life. The activity itself is not the creation of an individual author prior to performance but, as even Aristotle indicated, 'began in improvisation' (1987: 30). The elimination, via improvisation, of a centre of authority or an author of words, is interesting. The idea of a community event is explained by Nietzsche: 'At bottom, the aesthetic phenomenon is simple: let anyone have the ability to behold continually a vivid play […] let anyone feel the urge to transform himself and to speak out of other bodies and souls, and he will be the dramatist' (2000: 64). Secondly, because Nietzsche is proposing that the performance of dithyramb is the activity of the body of singers/dancers which constitute the dithyrambic chorus, engaged in a physical activity. This jeopardises the idea that the dithyramb is a literary event. The dithyrambic chorus, as a collective body, consists of the performers as creators of the text. Since it was a proto-dramatic activity they were involved in, this text could not have been a literary text, but what in retrospect we refer to as a performance text. It is through the musicalised dimension of the dithyrambic event,

consisting of song and dance, that Nietzsche arrives at a truly physical activity as foundation for performance. The dithyrambic dramatist who Nietzsche in his fourth *Untimely Meditation* describes as the actor, the poet, and the musician, is not an individual but rather the chorus as a body of individuals that together compose that activity.

The dithyrambic chorus, one of the most Dionysian of Nietzsche's conceptions, manifests itself through a crystal clear musicalised activity. This activity is an important musical dimension that Nietzsche believes ancient tragedy possessed. A musical condition, therefore, equipped tragedy with the 'veils of illusion' that music intrinsically possessed. The chorus was central to this illusion: 'The satyr, as the Dionysian chorist, lives in a religiously acknowledged reality under the sanction of myth and cult. That tragedy should begin with him, that he should be the voice of the Dionysian wisdom of tragedy, is just as strange a phenomenon for us as the general derivation of tragedy from the chorus' (Nietzsche 2000: 59). Tragedy, the birth of Western theatre, was the expression of a community of people through dance and song. That body of individuals that survived the shift from the ritualistic dithyramb to the dramatic tragedy is for Nietzsche what kept illusion, that important layer in art, alive in tragedy. For him 'knowledge kills action; action needs the veils of illusion' (2000: 60), and what created illusion was the dithyrambic chorus. Because of its nature, reminiscent of the proto-dramatic dithyramb, the chorus kept song and dance consistently present in tragic performance. The tragic chorus, because of its song-dance dynamic, was not congruent to real life practices. It was not possible through the chorus to create a copy of the real. Therefore, choric activity, through its musicality, manifested in rhythmic movements and melodies, made tragedy retain its liminal dimension between discursive practice and embodied activity. The 'veil' created by the chorus via its musicality was therefore

an important element in order to retain that distance from a reality which Greek tragedy was in no way attempting to emulate.

For Nietzsche tragedy, indeed all art, is dependent on the bond between the Apollonian and the Dionysian. He argues that '[the] continuous development of art is bound up with the *Apollonian* and the *Dionysian* duality – just as procreation depends on the duality of the sexes, involving perpetual strife with only periodically intervening reconciliations' (2000: 33, emphasis in the original). The Apollonian for Nietzsche is order, beauty, delineated boundaries, self-control, perfection, and individuality. The Dionysian is chaos, intoxication, celebration of nature, the instinct, pertaining to the sensation of pleasure or pain, dissolution of all boundaries, excess, and individuality dissolved. The argument that Nietzsche develops based on this thesis is that tragedy cannot function if solely based on language. Language falls under the domain of the Apollonian and therefore within the context of clarity and reason. Tragedy needs the spirit of Dionysian music, the element that transcends reason, and is therefore closely related to the activity of man beyond the borders of logic.

For Nietzsche the problem lies in the fact that tragedy, at least the way it arrived to him, seemed to feed on the supremacy of language. Instead he argues that tragedy should be the bond of chaos and order, as a relational dynamic, the source of which is a musical condition. It is through the spirit of music, through musicality as an activity of the body, that Nietzsche transports tragedy from a literary to a performance event framed around the activity of the performer in action.

3.3   Grotowski's Praxis: Song and Musicality as Tools for Action

The dithyrambic dramatist that Nietzsche refers to in his writings was, therefore, not an

individual solitary author of words but a collective body of individuals who through

their physical presences engaged in a performance event. Each of these performers was

the actor-poet-musician who together with their peers, in a collective effort, 'composed'

the work and performed it. As practice this was not far from what Jerzy Grotowski

started developing as early as 1959.[21] Theatre with Grotowski would go through a

transformative process that would see the activity being generated via the use of song

and movement. Zygmunt Molik (member of the Teatr Laboratorium who played the

leading part in *Akropolis,* the same performance Findlay described as 'operatic')

explains the process:

> For the first time we tried to compose the performance, not to play it following this or
> that convention, but to compose it. So it was a challenge for us, to find a new expression,
> a new means of expression. There was very little normal speaking there, rather a sort of
> singing, half singing and half speaking, and the speaking was very rarely natural because
> just a few sentences were spoken in a natural way, since everything was totally
> composed. So the speaking was never natural, maybe there were a few, a very few
> sentences spoken normally, and all the rest was like a *partitura*, like a musical score.
> Everything was expressed as if there were notes to follow, very specific notes, and this
> was new for us. […] it was like trying to create a living composition of notes.
>
> (Molik and Campo 2010: 129)

Indeed, the actors, poets, musicians who create a 'living composition of notes' are those

who while acknowledging language as one of the layers of performance, search for the

appropriate ways of *how* to perform that language as part of a broader context, *viz.* the

theatre performance. The performativity of language here is addressed via a 'musical

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[21] Grotowski's first theatre in Opole, Poland, called the Theatre of the Thirteen Rows was set up in 1959 together with Ludwic Flaszen. Actually it was the latter who was asked by the Polish authorities to direct a small theatre made up of literally thirteen rows of chairs. Flaszen, a respected theatre and literature critic, approached Grotowski to team-up with him and direct the theatre together. In 1962 the name was changed to Theatre Laboratory of the 13 Rows and in 1966 to Teatr Laboratorium. All this happened between 1959 and 1969, the decade known as the Theatre of Productions Phase. The Teatr Laboratorium was officially closed down in 1984.

partitura' that helps the actor to avoid speaking naturally. Musicality is utilised as a tool in the process of generating the performance process.

Arguably, 'speaking naturally', and indeed moving naturally, were never part of the theatre's ontological design. Rather, speaking and moving naturally were a consequential development triggered by the Apollonian-Dionysian divorce, by which, following Nietzsche, I mean the division between the order of the rational and the apparent chaos of the sensorial element. It is a division that Nietzsche aims at rectifying with his reference to a bond between the two, via which, as I have argued earlier, the performative dimension of tragedy will be promoted. The Apollonian-Dionysian divorce brought with it a context that related to a referential dimension which functioned via rational channels. These channels gradually led to a logocentric grand design that would affect the practice and hermeneutics of theatre performance. Aristotle's taxonomy in his *Poetics*, where music and spectacle, i.e. song and movement, were placed at the bottom of the list of the essential components of tragedy, is a good example of the consequences of that divorce. His taxonomy not only did not help musicality's case, but actually dislocated the structures of performance by way of developing dialectical, rather than pragmatic, processes based on a subjective hierarchy. Within the context of the Apollonian-Dionysian relational dynamic the voice and the body were constantly engaged into an activity that sought to involve, through a musical gesture, doers and receivers of action.

In proto-dramatic activity, before the development of tragedy as a dramatic form, the dithyramb was still framed around a body-voice dynamic. This gradually shifted to a pen-voice dynamic when dramatic activity started to be recorded in writing. As Peter Wilson argues when discussing music in Greek tragedy, 'the importance of music is submerged from sight […] by the historical development of the genres towards

the increased preponderance of dialogue and speech' (in Hall and Easterling 2002: 41).

With his practice since the early days, Grotowski sought to synchronize back physical

and vocal activity by developing a working ethic framed around the body-voice

dynamic, a dynamic that was musically organised through song and movement.

In *The Constant Prince,* a performance Grotowski directed in 1965, a unity

between music and theatre was convincingly attained. If by composed theatre we

understand 'something that may be said to exist between art forms, so that an

interdisciplinary approach is required to describe and account for it' (Rebstock and

Roesner 2012: 21), then the piece was truly a fine example of the genre; a composition

of sounds, movements, words, and images. The way the performance was sung rather

than delivered in a declamatory manner, and the way the actors reacted in a dance-like

manner to the music created by their own singing should suffice to support this claim.

These characteristics, already entertain the idea of a dramaturgy that ventures beyond

mere subordination to the scripted text. Musicality in *The Constant Prince* was a

physical experience developed through vocal activity, a process of transformation from

language, to song, to life. This rather concrete method of working musically was an

important process which Zygmund Molik, who played the part of Tarudante in the

production, later would describe as essential for his own personal work. Molik explains:

'the meaning of the words is nothing for me, something else is important: what Life is

given, the Life the person brings out with these words. What sound, what feelings with

this sound, what colour with this sound, what rhythm with this sound' (in Campo and

Molik 2010, 16). This practice of composing sound through the body that Molik refers

to here was present in *The Constant Prince*. For this work, based on a Polish adaptation

by Romantic poet Juliusz Słowacki (1809-1849) of Spanish renaissance playwright

Calderón de la Barca's (1600-1681) text, Grotowski's approach clearly delved deeper into vertical dimensions of montage and deliberately searched to transcend linear dramaturgy.[22]

The dramaturgical work on *The Constant Prince* was complex, albeit not much more complex than what happens in a musical composition where a piece is composed and interpreted (not necessarily by different parties), and eventually listened to, where a montage of meanings is developed depending on experiences and constructs (cultural, social, religious, political etc.). Ryszard Cieslak, the actor who played the part of the Constant Prince, worked alone with Grotowski for months before meeting the other actors. During this period, 'nothing in his work was linked to the martyr that, in the drama of Calderon/Slowacki [*sic*.], is the theme of the role of the Constant Prince' (Grotowski in Richards and Grotowski 1995: 122). The work of Cieslak was developed around a concrete personal memory of his which lasted only 'tens of minutes', and was based on 'minute actions and *physical* and *vocal* impulses of that remembered moment (122, my emphasis). The content of the Calderon/Słowacki script suggested otherwise. While retaining this dramatic script as source of action for the performance by the company, the actor was working on different parameters than those established by the author. Cieslak's actions were developed via vocal and physical relations. When the other actors later joined the process they worked with personal experiences that were immediately contextualised within the Calderon/Słowacki narrative. According to Grotowski, the performance of *The Constant Prince* actually 'appeared not on stage but in the perception of the *spectator*' (124, emphasis in the original). What the actors did,

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[22] Grotowski gives a detailed account of the montage for *The Constant Prince* in the article 'From the Theatre Company to Art as Vehicle' published in Richards and Grotowski 1995:122-124. The article is a transcription of two conferences Grotowski gave in Modena, Italy, in 1989, and at the University of California, Irvine, in 1990.

what the script narrated, and what the spectators developed as montage were completely different stories.

I argue that the performance process of *The Constant Prince* was an ontologically musical process. In fact, I propose that the complex nature of the dramaturgy of *The Constant Prince* was addressed, and indeed made accessible to the audience, via a liminality in the work of the actors related to the processes through which physical actions were generated. Song and dance were never clearly visible during the performance. The body-voice dynamic was deliberately never delineated in terms of accepted codes and norms. The voice work was clearly not of an opera singer nor, however, that of every-day speech. Flaszen explains how,

> [p]eople considered that Grotowski's performances were sung. Indeed, the vocal aspect was one of their distinguishing features. Yet these were not the musical effects of vocal acrobatics. There was no singing yet the actors did sing; no incantations and psalmodies yet they incanted and psalmodied the text; no '*Sprachgesang*', yet the border between speaking and singing was intentionally fluid – it was acting with sound, acting with the voice, reacting with the voice placed within precise structures.
>
> (2010: 175)

A theatrical quality was attained through the tension between singing and speaking, a not-quite-here-nor-there manner of voice work. A 'fluid' or liminal state which created the right tensions and rhythms that gave a uniquely musical quality to the work. Liminality was also reflected in the dance quality of the actors' performance. They moved in ways which resembled dance movements albeit they were not quite so. Considering the importance Grotowski gave to structure and precision, it is clear that everything was well choreographed, not to a music coming from a foreign body, but to the musicality of the performance itself as embodied by the performers.

The boundaries between music and the act of theatre were already being questioned in *The Constant Prince*. This was mainly due to the fact that music was

produced by the same performers that related to it. These processes led to a musically embodied awareness manifested already in *The Constant Prince* and further developed in *Action.* The work on *Action* – which Grotowski himself described as a 'performative structure […] not destined for spectators' (Richards and Grotowski 1995: 131), hence underlining its investigative dimension – was a constant search for that primordial unity between music and theatre which echoed Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian relational dynamic. Hence my argument that *Action* would establish Grotowski as a proto-dramatic practitioner, aware of the importance of the unity that promotes music in theatre as ontology.

Action was an opus whose dramaturgy was based on song and the way song was musically embodied by the performers. My collaborator on this research Domenico Castaldo, who worked with Grotowski and performed in *Action* between 1995 and 1996, expounds on the importance of song and musicality in the work:

> We never really spoke of music. It was only later that I realised that knowledge of music would help me achieve certain results. This awareness developed as consequence of the work, and was not a precondition. It did not precede the work we were doing. The term 'music' was actually used by those who listened to our work not by those who did it. What was important, more than music, was chanting. For us 'doers' there were three principal points on which we focused our attention with respect to the songs we sang: i. the pulse – the rhythm and the tempo – of the leader who sang, ii. the melody that the leader was singing, iii. the internal movement of the activity – what Grotowski called verticality. This verticality is the movement of the song within the body of the actor, and within the bodies of the other actors, therefore the movement of the song in space.
>
> (2012: unpublished interview)

Here Castaldo refers to a very important dimension of musicality which within the context of musicalised dramaturgies as we will develop them for *Welcoming the End of the World* will become a precondition of the work. In Grotowski's case, while working on *Action*, musicality informs the work of the actor but was neither a precondition for dramaturgy nor the source of action. For Grotowski musicality functions as a process of

embodiment that will be utilised as tool by the actors during dramaturgical organisation. The verticality mentioned by Castaldo is related to a sensorial dynamic that displaces notions of linearity in dramaturgy. It is therefore an approach through which Grotowski with his practice was framing a recontextualisation of the act of theatre.

Dramaturg and scholar Lisa Wolford, who worked recurrently with Grotowski since 1989, explains how 'the essential aim of the work [was] to facilitate a special process that can occur within practitioners performing with and around certain songs taken from African and Afro-Caribbean ritual traditions' (in Schechner and Wolford 1997: 409). Wolford makes reference to Grotowski's claim that songs function as tools in ritual/performative practices. Grotowski also suggests that 'examples of such tools can be found not only in African rituals, but in embodied practices connected with Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, and Judaic traditions' (in Schechner and Wolford 1997: 499). Grotowski's suggestion reflects his interest in song as embodied practice. In fact in *Action*, after a lifetime of research on the nature of theatre and performance centred on the work of the performer, Grotowski arrived at a plausible and convincing unification of the elements which constitute performance. It is not possible to analyse *Action* in terms of delineations between song and movement. The two become one act of performance.

It is within a process of musicalisation of action while working on song as an essential building block of performance that embodied musicality becomes central. For Grotowski song has to be embodied by the performer becoming a physical activity, hence transcending its aural dimension. This means that the way the song is performed is as important as the way it sounds. The performative dimension of the agent producing the song is related to the song's sonorous and vibratory qualities. The vibratory qualities of song are manifested by the performer as physical qualities to which the audience

relates kinaesthetically. It is here that the shift to embodied musicality (as opposed to a music which supports or surrounds action) occurs. Furthermore Grotowski attributed meaning to these vibratory qualities. He explained that 'song becomes meaning itself through the vibratory qualities: even if one doesn't understand the words, reception alone of the vibratory qualities is enough' (Grotowski 1995: 126). With this Grotowski permeated meaning onto the performer's activity and presence, through a process of embodied musicality as an element of the dramaturgy.

By the end of his life, as manifested in the performance structure *Action*, bipolar delineations between music on the one hand and the theatrical act on the other were annihilated. Hence my claim earlier that the work of Grotowski represented an 'ur-operatic moment', a moment where music and the act of theatre are unified through the performer. Musicality functioned both and at the same time as a physical and sonorous quality. The performers were not demonstrating song; neither were they representing song as if it was dependent on external sources. Grotowski managed to arrive at an important unity between music and the theatrical act after a lifetime of research in the essence of performance as an activity centred on the work of the actor. His work was a concrete expression of Nietzsche's claim, almost a hundred years earlier, of the Apollonian-Dionysian bond reflected in the performative spirit of music that lay at the foundation of proto-dramatic activity. Grotowski left a legacy that points at a musical ontology in theatre manifested in the embodied musicality of the performer. With my research project I continue building on the performative weight that this legacy carries and develop Grotowski's embodied musicality from tool for the actor to source of action that generates dramaturgy, something which Grotowski never approached systematically. Via musicalised dramaturgies the musical embodiment paradigm is used

within a context of practice where musicality becomes dramaturgy and therefore

foundation for the creation of the act of theatre.

Chapter IV

Musicalised Dramaturgies

> I wanted performances which could give the actors, the spectators
> and me the experience of overturning the world we knew.
>
> Eugenio Barba, *On Directing and Dramaturg: Burning the House*

The aim of this research project is to develop a practice based on musicality as foundation for dramaturgies framed around the embodiment of action, as alternative to traditional dramatic representation where imitation and interpretation serve as means of communication of pre-conceived texts. The research is directed towards the development of musicalised dramaturgies, where musicality serves as foundation for the organisation of the situations, events, and bodies that constitute the performance. Music is therefore not approached as just another layer supporting, or as yet another text framing the performers' actions. Instead, the musical condition becomes the source of the actors' performance actions. It will be argued that with musicalised dramaturgies, via embodied musicality, the claim for a musical ontology is further underlined.

Musicalised dramaturgies differ from any practice or vision discussed in Chapters II and III in that they are performance-based processes with no direct or initial association to literary sources. References to, or inclusion of external, including literary, sources are obviously possible, however these will take place at a later stage in the dramaturgical process, as will be the case in *Welcoming the End of the World*. Musicalised dramaturgies are multilayered, complex in nature, and cannot exist in script. Fundamentally, they are non-representational dramaturgies based on the

embodiment-experience paradigm and feed on the relationships of all the individuals involved in the process of performance.

In a brief afterword to his *Theory of the Modern Drama*, Peter Szondi claims that '[t]he history of modern dramaturgy has no final act; the curtain has not been lowered on it yet'. He concludes that in order 'to make a new style possible, the crisis of Drama as well as that of tradition will have to be resolved' (1987: 96). Szondi's critical evaluation of modern dramaturgy was published in 1956. Only three years later, in Opole, Poland, Grotowski initiated what would arguably be modern dramaturgy's final act, and gradually started to lower the curtain down on what throughout the centuries in the West had been transformed into a literary exercise. By the time Grotowski produced his last theatre production of his first decade of work, he had moved completely away from traditional dramaturgy and was adopting an approach more akin to our contemporary notions of devised composition. For *Apocalypsis Cum Figuris* of 1969 Grotowski explains how together with his company they had 'departed from literature. [The performance] was not a montage of texts. It was something we arrived at during rehearsals, through flashes of revelation, through improvisation' (in Kumiega 1985: 90). With his theatre productions Grotowski had developed a dramaturgical approach which depended heavily on physical presence and the relationships shared by performers and audience.

Notwithstanding the important dramaturgical changes brought forward by Grotowski's approach over the decade-long Theatre of Productions phase, the title given to his last production was taken from a literary source, *viz.* Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*. In her account of the performance Jennifer Kumiega refers to Zbigniew Osiński who 'quotes from Mann's own notes on the writing of the novel, concerning Adrian Leverkühn who, "as a man of thirty-five, under the influence of the first wave of

euphoric inspiration, composes his main work, or first great work *Apocalipsis Cum Figuris*"' (1985: 91). Osiński argues that the relevance of Mann's literary opus with respect to Grotowski goes beyond just using the name that Leverkühn uses for his first great work before he falls into madness. Mann's novel had direct influence on Grotowski, to the effect that Osiński draws parallels between Grotowski and the fictitious composer created by the author.

Through the development of musicality as dramaturgy I propose that processes where actions emerge as non-referential phenomena are possible. This happens when these actions are created via rhythmic and melodic associations. In my previous two chapters I investigated the theoretical issues that led me to this research process. Via Stanislavsky I discussed rhythm and tempo and concluded that Stanislavsky's work on tempo-rhythm, as a relational dynamic, was an important development for the physicalisation of dramaturgy. The function of rhythm in the development of actions and the way rhythms generate the physical disposition of the actors, is a central premise of my research as a nodal aspect of the embodiment-experience paradigm. Language and the verbal in performance, together with the dislocation of the logocentric hold were discussed via Nietzsche and Grotowski. The critique of their work led me to articulate my position with respect to the way language will be readdressed when developing musicalised dramaturgies in terms of vocal utterances and sensorial dynamics. The logos is axiomatic to Western dramatic aesthetics (Lehmann 2006: 41). The moment we venture beyond the centrality it presupposes the basic principles of theatrical performance are transformed. The drama-imitation-action paradigm is not applicable any more.

In this chapter I will discuss the way I developed musicalised dramaturgies and how they emerge as performance-based processes as opposed to literature-oriented

dramaturgies. I will look at how to give space to a plurality of possible narratives to emerge as a result of a performance process, and how the musical condition via rhythm and melody can be used not only as tool in the process of a dramaturgy based on other sources, but as actual source of action upon which a dramaturgy is constructed. I will start by contextualising my practice within a postdramatic critical framework, and move on to a critique of contemporary dramatic practice. Next I will formulate a discourse framed around Eugenio Barba's idea of 'a plurality of dramaturgies' in order to propose musicalised dramaturgies as multiple dramaturgies rather than linear procedures. The complex nature of my reformulation will be acknowledged and will be used as justification for adopting musicality as foundation for a new approach to dramaturgy. In the process I problematise the idea of *mise-en-scène* within the framework of musicalised dramaturgies. I will conclude by outlining the dynamics of musicalised dramaturgies that will provide me with the appropriate framework with respect to which dramaturgical decisions are taken in the process of performance.

4.1   The Postdramatic Context

The postdramatic scenario is the theoretical framework with respect to which I can best articulate my ideas on musicalised dramaturgies. Essentially two main principles that emerge from a postdramatic critical viewpoint are central to my research: i. the turn to performance – a primary paradigm of the postdramatic which challenges the primacy of the text and accentuates more the potentials of the performance matrix – and, ii. non-hierarchy, which Hans-Thies Lehmann in his framing of the postdramatic describes as 'a universal principle of postdramatic theatre' (2006: 86). The two principles directly affect the very structures of composition of performance.

The performance matrix tilts dramaturgical responsibility towards the actors and director without a buffer zone between them and authorship. The creation of action as a basic element of dramaturgy takes a completely different twist when performance is accentuated. As element of performance, rather than drama, action is approached immediately by the performer. With musicalised dramaturgies, I do this by relocating the means of association from rational sources to rhythms and melodies framed around sensorial impulses, as I will explain below. The turn-to-performance principle triggers de-hierarchisation which, as Lehmann argues, 'blatantly contradicts tradition, which has preferred a hypotactical way of connection that governs the super- and subordination of elements, in order to avoid confusion and to produce harmony and comprehensibility' (2006: 86). Indeed, in view of the elimination of a central authority and a preconceived dramatic centre, subordination will only generate undesired results in terms of performance dramaturgy. The turn to performance, in fact, leads to the abandonment of interpretation. 'Just as the dream demands a different concept of the sign, the new theatre demands a "sublated" semiotics and an "abandoned" interpretation' (Lehmann 2006: 84). The absence of a pre-written text makes interpretation difficult and the reading of signs a conflictual paradigm. The theatre event shifts from an exercise in the creation of meaning via representation and interpretation of texts, to a process of sharing embodied experiences (figure 1).

The postdramatic questions the foundations of traditional dramaturgy with 'the main idea no longer being a narrative, fabulating description of the world by means of mimesis' (Lehmann 2006: 69). Referentiality, or reference to an 'other' outside the activity itself, would be replaced by an accentuated emphasis on presence where 'musical-rhythmic or visual-architectonic constructs of development; para-ritual forms, as well as the ceremony of the body' (69), become key elements of the construction of

the work. While indicating a paradigm shift in the practice of theatre, the postdramatic

is itself not a paradigm in the sense of model of behaviour and/or technique, but rather a

critical dimension that acknowledges different approaches to theatre making and the

emergence of new aesthetics. Musicalisation is one way to effectively develop a new

aesthetic. The turn-to-performance advocated by the postdramatic context directly

affects the dramaturgy of a theatre performance. Instead of the scripted text

contemporary performative dramaturgies are framed around the notion of performance

text. The performance text is an emergent text that exists only as performance and

cannot be scripted. It is not an a priori text and therefore cannot be represented which

makes it a non-referential process. To the notion of rational interpretation practitioners

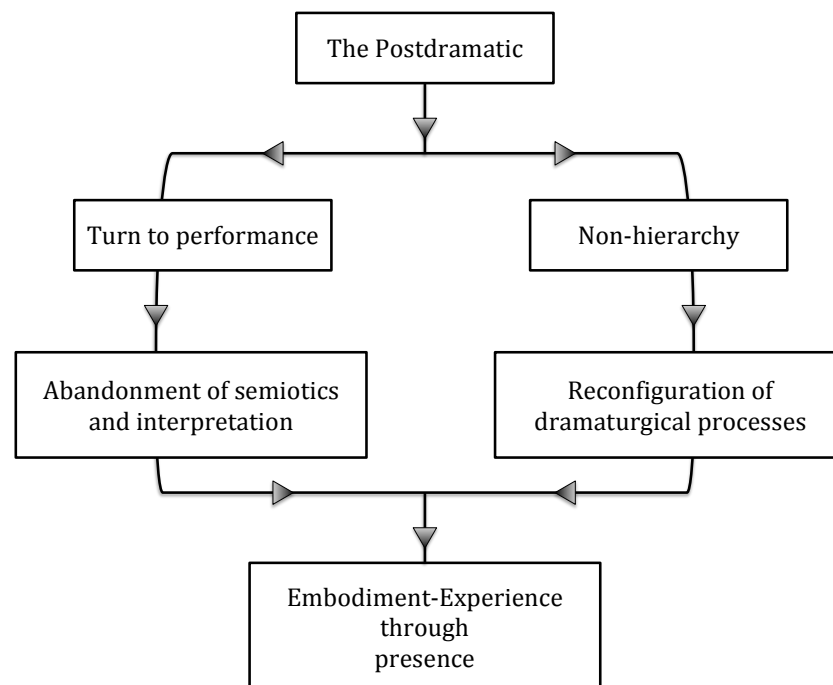are adding and giving more weight to embodied practice.

Figure 1: Elements of the postdramatic as outlined with respect to the development of musicalised
dramaturgies

Musicalisation of theatrical means is often considered as a manifestation of 'otherness vis-à-vis the dramatic theatre' (Lehmann 2006: 92). Lehmann argues that '[f]rom a methodological point of view it is crucial to consider [musicalised] phenomena not merely as […] extensions of dramatic theatre'(2006: 93). I interpret the 'otherness' mentioned by Lehmann as an alternative dimension which makes the de-dramatisation process possible. This happens through "body poetry", where the physicality of musicalised dramaturgies is accessed through rhythms and melodies as foundational elements of dramaturgy. These constitute the fabric of a "kinaesthetic infrastructure" upon which dramaturgies will be weaved and developed as a performance process.

Performance becomes a process of becoming where meaning is not the sine-qua-non of the work. Catherine Bouko, when discussing musicality and the flexibility of the postdramatic paradigm, cites postdramatic playwright Koffi Kwahulé who claims that the meaning of a word is not his priority: 'It will come by itself […] if the sound is true, if the rhythm is good' (2010: 78), where good and true are not ethical values but aesthetic qualities developed during the process of performance. With musicalised processes, meaning goes through a process of postponement where spectators, via their presence and perception, 'play' with the actors and determine the way meaning emerges as experience. Therefore, the organisation of the material at play in performance is a prerogative of the performer in relation to the audience. As Barba puts it, the creation of meaning is decentralised and now lies at the 'organic interaction between the different levels of organisation' (in Zarrilli 2008: 99). Postdramatic theatre acknowledges a dislocation of meaning form a central source and places it instead at 'the liminal space between performance and reception' (Brown 2010: 65*).*

These developments in theatre consider the spoken text as only one of the layers that constitute the fabric of performance. The dynamics of the performative process transcend 'word, sentence, talk, speech explanation, language, discourse, story argument, rational account' which David Roocknik in his account on 'logos' acknowledge as elements that function as the proper translation of the term (1990: 12). The shift towards the performative dimension of the theatre demands a reconsideration of the way we organise the various layers at play in a theatre performance. These layers, visual and auditory, generate other dramaturgies which not always and necessarily follow a given drama and the meanings it presupposes, but generate and develop their own dynamics.

4.2   Redefining Dramaturgy: From Script to Performance

There are various interpretations of dramaturgy in Western theatre. Generally these interpretations are related to literary procedures. Dramaturgy is often referred to as 'the art of composing plays' (Pavis 1998: 124), with the main task of trying to 'understand how ideas about human beings and the world are rendered in a form, i.e. in a text and on stage' (125). This is done by transferring stories on a stage and presenting them, via a *mise-en-scène*, to an audience. The situations and events that constitute the theatrical fabric in classical dramaturgy are related to the *fabula*, the organisation of which lies within the remit of the author and is established before the performance work commences. Traditional dramaturgy has a particular 'magnitude' which, following Aristotle, is manifested in the beginning-middle-end linearity. Eugenio Barba clarifies this point: 'Usually, in the European tradition, dramaturgy is understood as a literary composition whose model is: proposition of the theme [beginning], development,

peripeteia or reversal [middle], and conclusion [end]. Dramaturgy is a horizontal narrative thread' (2010: 8). At a later stage, distinctive from the work of the author, the actors work in relation and with reference to the literary dramaturgy handed over to them.

At the dawn of Western dramaturgy in Ancient Greece, the playwright was also an actor who acted in his own plays. Oscar G. Brockett and Franklin J. Hildy, in their historical account of Ancient Greek theatre, explain that '[o]riginally the actor and the dramatist were one. Separation of the two functions did not beginning until early in the fifth century [BCE] when Aeschylus introduced a second actor. Playwrights continued to act in their own plays, however, until Sophocles stopped acting in about 468 [BCE]' (2010: 19). This event established a definite break between text and performance. Eventually, dramatic theatre continued its development following the dialogic path. As Szondi explains, '[t]he absolute dominance of dialogue – that is, of interpersonal communication, reflects the fact that the Drama consist only of the reproduction of interpersonal relations, is only cognizant of what shines forth within this sphere' (1987:8). Interpersonal communications, which constitute the only aim of drama, are carried forth via the dialogue, whose medium is the verbal form (Szondi 1987: 7). Dialogue is prepared by the dramatist who, according to Szondi, is absent from the drama. 'He is not the one who speaks, he institutes discussion' (1987: 8).

The institutional position of the dramatist and its effects on the performance of theatre were well manifested in the eighteenth century. In Paris dramatist Carlo Goldoni (1707-1793) and actor, writer, and theorist Luigi Riccoboni (1676-1753) started raising eyebrows at Commedia dell'Arte actors whose improvised dialogues Goldoni and Riccoboni thought were becoming unworthy of the great Italian traditions. As a reaction Riccoboni 'asked a friend named Atreau to write a play in French using the traditional

characters of the Italian comedy' (Duchartre 1966: 115). On his part, Goldoni started

writing down the dialogues that were otherwise improvised by actors in the Commedia

dell'Arte tradition as it had been established in the sixteenth century. Goldoni

eventually moved on to complete fully written scripts for the actors. He 'rejected what

he felt to be outworn materials and methods of the improvised comedy, condemning the

tendency of "mask" elements to dominate performance' (Richards and Richards 1990:

285). This solution of Goldoni and Riccoboni arguably led to the decay of Commedia

dell'Arte whose very essence was the performance.[23]

Later on, during the twentieth century, continuous attempts were made to

renegotiate the importance of discursive dialogue in theatre. Various theorists and

practitioners (Meyerhold, Copeau, Craig, Artaud, Living Theatre, Grotowski, Brook,

Mnouchkine, The Wooster Group) adopted attitudes and practices aimed at de-

institutionalising not only the author's role but also that of the dramatic text.

Notwithstanding, the written text remained a reference for the dramaturgical process. As

Pavis argues, 'in order for the characters to move within a single dramatic universe,

they must share at least a portion of the universe of discourse. Otherwise, they will be

engaged in a dialogue of the deaf or will be unable to exchange any information' (1998:

121). What emerges as a consequence of these considerations is a lack of awareness

with respect to the relationship between performer and spectator in theatrical

performance.

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[23] For a more detailed account on the Goldoni-Gozzi debate see Duchartre: 1966, Richards and Richards: 1990, and Taviani and Schino: 1992. This debate was triggered when the use of the Italian language by Italian actors in Paris for French-speaking audiences started becoming problematic. Eventually attempts by Italian actors to improvise in French were leading to rather mediocre outcomes hence the reason why Riccoboni and Goldoni started to prepare dialogues for their actors. This led to fierce antagonism between Carlo Gozzi (1720-1806) and Goldoni, with the former accusing the latter of 'having betrayed the *commedia dell'arte* and the national characters' (Duchartre 1966:118).

The importance attributed to the author in classical dramaturgy puts the spectator in a position of relative distance from the performance. The spectator is silent 'with hands tied, lamed by the impact of this other world' (Szondi 1987: 8). The same fate goes for the actor whose art 'is subservient to the absoluteness of the Drama' (Szondi 1987: 8). This rather strict position with respect to the centrality of the dramatic text was exactly what theatre makers and visionaries were questioning. As I explained in my previous chapters, the dislocation of the logocentric hold (Grotowski) and attempts at physicalisation through rhythm (Stanislavsky) were important developments that directly addressed the form-content dialectic. Szondi argues that the 'form-content relationship turned to productive use' in the attempt to address dramatic problematics (1987: 4-5). However, the postdramatic actually distances itself from issues of form and content and is often framed around the embodiment-experience paradigm. As process of performance, dramaturgy is the prerogative of all those involved in the performance process, including playwright, director, performers, and audience, in no order of importance. Non-hierarchy, therefore, is not only applied to the individuals (humans) involved but also to the layers (things) that constitute the activity of theatre including, texts, scenery, sounds, music, lights, smells, etc. A dramaturgy beyond drama, a theatrical expression beyond the interpretation of texts, is the direction taken by many alternative theatre practitioners over the past five decades. Dramaturgies that lie within the remit of the performer are an important development.

If the inclusion of the performer in the dramaturgical process is significant, the inclusion of the audience and the positioning of them as active participants in the process of dramaturgy is an even more compelling phenomenon. Lehmann argues that '[a] *disposition of spaces of meaning and sound-spaces* develops which is open to multiple uses and which can no longer simply be ascribed to a single organizer or

organon – be it an individual or a collective (2006: 32, emphasis in the original).

Dramaturgy becomes a process of multiplicity, rather than singularity, that needs to be

organised in ways that transcend linear scripted notions. Multiple layers constitute not

one dramaturgy but a series of simultaneous dramaturgies all weaved within the

'texture' of performance. Eugenio Barba calls this process 'a weaving together' and

argues that 'in this sense there is no performance which does not have "text"' (in Barba

and Savarese 2006: 66). This understanding of text is indeed a critique of a concept of

drama understood, as Szondi articulates it, as 'a time-bound concept [which] stands for

a specific literary-historical event' (1987: 5).

4.3   Eugenio Barba's 'Plurality of Dramaturgies'

Eugenio Barba refers to his dramaturgical approach as 'a plurality of dramaturgies'

(2010: 8). These dramaturgies, which need not always be all present in the process of

composition and preparation, develop in relation to each other and never independently.

Barba admits that his initial understanding of dramaturgy, as something which belongs

to the writer, started to change when he was developing an idea of theatre where as

director he 'could provoke personal reactions in the actors and orchestrate these in a

performance which didn't imitate life, but possessed a life of its own' (2010: 8). The

horizontality of traditional dramaturgy was to make way to a 'new' verticality that

ventures beyond notions of narrative composition:

> Gradually I began to assume that what I called dramaturgy was not the thread of a
> narrative composition, the horizontal sequences of the various phases in the evolution of a
> theme. […] My dramaturgy also dealt with the multiple relationships between the many
> parts of the performance. […] it concerned the relationships between various
> components in a *vertical dimension*. It was a way of observing the different layers or
> levels of work, independently from the performance's meaning.
>
> (Barba 2010: 9, emphasis in the original)

This approach to dramaturgy is concerned with the relationship between different layers and how these layers mutually inform each other, problematising, in the process, the fixity of meaning in performance. Here I apply the principle of relational dynamics to establish the ways in which the different layers are organised. It is a matter of determining *how* these different layers unfold into multiple dramaturgies and are organised into an organic whole. Multiple dramaturgies call for an understanding not only of how the individual components work but more importantly how these work in relation to each other. This promotes the verticality premise.

Barba proposes three levels of dramaturgy: organic dramaturgy, narrative dramaturgy, and evocative dramaturgy. This set of dramaturgies affects the levels of organisation of play. I will call them "organisational dramaturgies". Each of these dramaturgies is related to the actor, the director, and the spectator respectively. The evocative dramaturgy is related to the spectator. As perceiver of action, the spectator enters into a direct relationship with the performance of the actors. This relationship triggers an evocative process. Neither the actors nor the director have access to evocative dramaturgy. Only the spectators, through their presence and experience, shape the evocative dramaturgy which qualifies the audience as an active presence. Barba explains that 'the evocative dramaturgy works at a deeper level. As a director, you see that what an actor is doing has one effect on certain spectators and a completely different effect on others. And here you are facing a mystery' (2012, unpublished interview). The evocative dramaturgy has a direct effect on the outcome of the performance. Narrative dramaturgy is where events are interwoven and the platform for different possible meanings is laid. Here, the director has to find a way to intervene on the relationships at play. The organic dramaturgy is a basic level concerned with 'the

way of composing and interweaving the dynamisms, the rhythms and the physical and vocal actions of the actors in order to stimulate sensorially the attention of the spectators' (Barba 2010: 10).

The three organizational dramaturgies are put in relation to each other in order to develop the process of performance. Barba argues that this way of working is effective in order to 'demolish, disarrange and destroy logics and links suggested by texts, my own actors and my own themes' (2010: 11). Barba's incredulity with themes, even his own, and any direct logic in the unfolding of the performance process is another essential premise I share in the development of musicalised dramaturgies.

Organisational dramaturgies are paralleled by another dramaturgical triumvirate: the actor's dramaturgy, the director's dramaturgy, and the spectator's dramaturgy. I will call these the "executional dramaturgies". Similar to the organisational dramaturgies the executional dramaturgies, as developed by the director(s), the actors, and the spectators, work in relationship to each other. However, they also work in relation to the organisational dramaturgies (figure 2). Barba explains how at Odin Teatret, the theatre ensemble he established in 1964, it became normal practice for actors to approach him with different narratives and threads that he, as director, had to organise into an organic whole. In performance the spectators are presented with all the possibilities that emerge from his and the actors' work. This happens while the spectators, as perceivers, develop their own dramaturgies. These multilayered dramaturgical processes lead 'to create a performance which could assume a shared sense and at the same time might whisper a different confidence to every spectator' (Barba 2010: 13). The multiplicity which constitutes the dramaturgical processes of a performance is framed around an idea of establishing relationships between layers at play. All layers must be balanced with none of them possessing hints of superiority above the others.
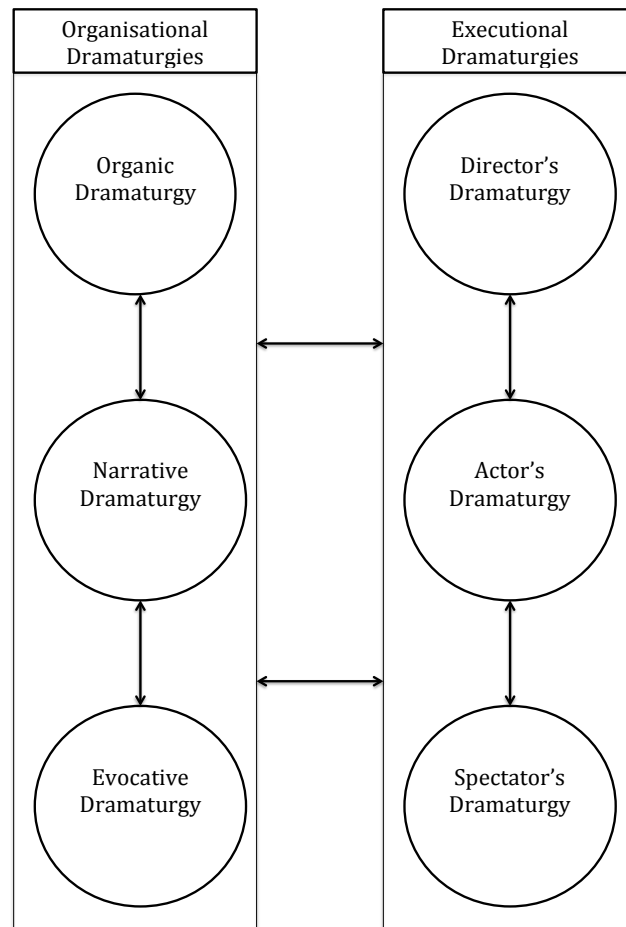
Organisational Dramaturgies

Organic Dramaturgy

Narrative Dramaturgy

Evocative Dramaturgy

Executional Dramaturgies

Director's Dramaturgy

Actor's Dramaturgy

Spectator's Dramaturgy

Figure 2: Barba's paradigm of 'a plurality of dramaturgies'

4.4   Musicalised Dramaturgies

What triggered the process of *Welcoming the End of the World* was a dramaturgical premise framed around musicality and the actor's physical presence, rather than a dramatic plot of a literary nature. The shift is a central premise in the reconsideration of dramaturgical processes framed around non-representation. Via embodiment, the ontological dimension of music in theatre becomes evident. Music is shifted from support for action to an intrinsic part of the process of dramaturgy.

With the idea of embodied musicality we shift from the realm of reception through reason to that of perception. Perception, and the implied active involvement of the body through its sensorial mechanisms, brings me to Barba's notion of 'a plurality of dramaturgies'. Barba admits he 'always associated physical and muscular changes to changes in music, where instruments and melodies have the possibility to even play against each other; changes which are important for creating a sort of symphonic environment' (2012, unpublished interview). With my research on musicalised dramaturgies I transform Barba's metaphor of instruments and melodies into actual physical embodiment. Musicalised dramaturgies pose the challenge of the complex order that emerges from the simultaneity of the different layers at play in performance, even when these are put 'against each other'. Musicalised dramaturgies acknowledge these multiple layers and absorb the tensions they pose because of their intrinsic simultaneity. Such a scenario needs an alternative infrastructure based on the sensorial awareness of the agents involved in the performance process, which accounts for the new complexities that emerge as a result of multiplicity and musical embodiment.

In musicalised dramaturgies the actors are the source of action. Every single minute behaviour and movement is shaped by internal motivations related to their presence. Physical rhythms and tempos, together with melodies made up of sounds, utterances, and vocal resonances, become the intentions and motivations of the actions. Actions, therefore, remain the generators of dramaturgical activity. However, they are not produced rationally as ideas and communicated as signs via interpretative procedures. Instead, they are developed as rhythmic and melodic associations. Reception of the activity becomes a matter of perception rather than understanding. Via somatic means the actors develop a sense which is not necessarily related to any

linguistic signified. Through the rhythmic qualities of the body meaning is suspended

and transformed into a process of perception.

Perception, or listening with the body, is an essential premise for musicalised

dramaturgies. As Jean-Luc Nancy suggests,

> Listening opens (itself) up to resonance and that resonance opens (itself) up to the self:
> that is to say both that it opens to self (to the resonant body, to its vibration) and that it
> opens to the self (to the being just as its being is put into play for itself). […] Thus, the
> listener (if I can call him that) is straining to end in sense (rather than straining toward,
> intentionally), or else he is offered, exposed to sense.
>
> (2007: 25-26)

Nancy's understanding of listening provides me with an appropriate critical frame in

terms of which I address the complex nature of the suspension of meaning in

musicalised dramaturgies. The 'opening' Nancy refers to is achieved through the

relation to the self via which the actor reaches for the others (performers and audience)

in order to be able to share the actions that are being transmitted through her/his

presence. This listening to the self – 'the resonant body' – in order to reach to the

audience expands the potentials of performance. Nancy in fact continues that 'to be

listening is to be inclined toward the opening of meaning' (2007: 27). The suspension of

meaning is therefore not an arrest or a holding back of the emergence of meaning but

rather a process of expansion of meaning.

What I am proposing via musicalised dramaturgies resonates with current trends

in performance research manifested in what research practitioner Frank Camilleri, when

discussing his praxis, describes as 'a resistance to the moment of closure announced by

performance' (2013: 4). Musicalisation and the alternative rhythmic and melodic

associations that generate musicalised dramaturgies call for a recontextualisation of the

infrastructures of dramaturgies. This recontextualisation addresses, i. the structures that

support the fabric of the composition process and how all the layers are intertwined into

a performance event, and ii. the generation of meaning in terms of its postponement, which I will return to and discuss further in the Conclusion. In the case of dramaturgies framed around pre-conceived material as stories, scripts, characters, etc., the process of construction of performance is referential to a fictional premise. In *Welcoming the End of the World* I worked on developing a kinaesthetic infrastructure which replaced the traditional literary infrastructure that comes with the pre-conceived text.

The foundations upon which musicalised dramaturgies develop are sensorial rather than rational which call for a relational dramaturgical dynamic. The principle of relational dynamics, which I already utilised for my analysis of Stanislavsky's tempo-rhythm, Grotowski's body-voice dynamic and Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian principle, returns here as a principle for musicalised dramaturgies and will be applied to the embodiment-experience paradigm.

4.4.1   From Causal to Relational Dramaturgies

Causal dramaturgies are dramaturgies where the sequence of events and the way they are developed into a dramaturgy follow a cause and effect procedure. This procedure is evident both at the content level – the story of the play – and at the staging level – the *mise-en-scène*. Something happens which leads to something else; A leads to A_1, where A_1 is the effect of cause A. A_1 is therefore dependent on A. There cannot be A_1 without A taking place before it. In most cases when a dramatic text is interpreted the cause and effect paradigm is also adopted for the performance procedure. The story prepared by the author is taken on board by the director and the actors and put on stage for an audience. The process of putting a story on stage, the *mise-en-scène*, leads to the development of the performance text which the audience relates to and interprets. This

is a causal process where the story (A) leads to the *mise-en-scène* (B) which in turn

leads to the performance text (C). Causal dramaturgies are characterised by sequential

dependence manifested in a series of hierarchical interpretations.

In these causal procedures, rational associations play a central part. This happens

on two levels. Firstly, in terms of the rational understanding by the ensemble of actors

of the actions in the text taking place in each scene and act. These actions generate the

over-all dramaturgical logic of the play and their understanding is imperative. In Anton

Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*, it is the postponement of leaving for Moscow which

transforms Moscow into an impossible quest for the three sisters and their brother.

Secondly, in terms of the rational understanding of a particular dramatic action by the

individual actor who will perform that action. This understanding takes place before the

dramatic action is actually transformed into a performative action by the individual

actor. Again in Chekhov's *The Three Sisters,* when in the second act Natasha '*Goes to*

open another door, looks inside and shuts it' (2002: 223). Here the actress playing

Natasha has to rationalise the procedure of what is proposed by the author by

establishing a logic for doing what she is instructed to do, i.e. open a door, look inside,

and then shut it. Following this rational procedure, the actress will transform the given

instructions into performed action. These rational processes feed the author-to-

performer-to-audience directionality which is characteristic of causal dramaturgies.

Based on the embodiment-experience paradigm, musicalised dramaturgies differ

from dramatic dramaturgies which essentially follow the understanding-interpretation

premise. The process of work adopted for *Welcoming the End of the World* locates the

dramaturgical process in terms of a relational rather than causal dynamic. As an effect

of their relational dynamic, musicalised dramaturgies open up to a 'reversibility' that

replaces the directionality of causal dramaturgies. By reversibility here I mean the

potential of the performance-audience dynamic to also work the other way round, manifested as a performer-to-audience/audience-to-performer interplay. As Jean-Françoise Lyotard puts it '[t]his reversibility from A to B [in my case the performer-to-audience reversibility] introduces us to the destruction of the sign, and of theology, and perhaps of theatrality [sic]' (in Murray1997: 282). I interpret the theatrality that Lyotard refers to here as the directionality of causal dramaturgies which characterised Western dramatic procedures for centuries, and that contemporary theatre makers question with their poetics of performance. In view of this interpretation I qualify musicalised dramaturgies as "relational dramaturgies", i.e. dramaturgies where the process of development of events in performance depends on the relations established by all those involved in its creation. The essential difference between causal and relational dramaturgies is the directionality of the former which is replaced by the relationality of the latter (figure 3). This difference led to important reconsiderations of the way musicalised dramaturgies are presented in performance.
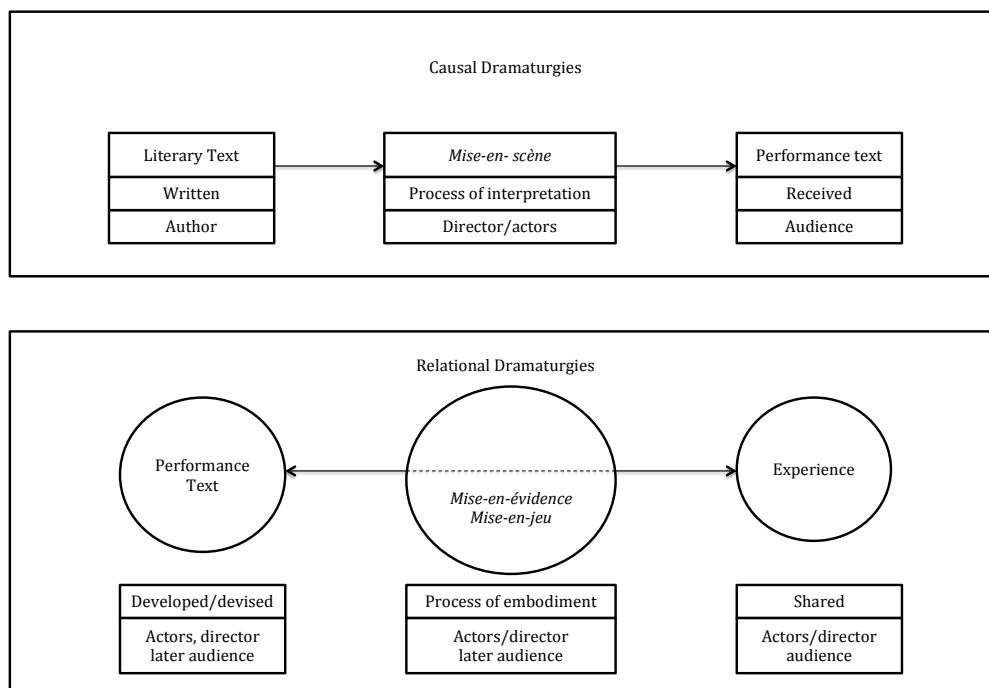

Figure 3: Causal and relational dramaturgies – comparative chart

4.4.2   Problematising the *Mise-en-Scène*

While working and developing the idea of musicalised dramaturgies as relational

dramaturgies, I soon became aware that the *mise-en-scène* process, a fundamental part

of any theatre production following a causal dramaturgy, was not possible in our case.

We had no a priori text to refer to, and therefore nothing to represent and/or interpret.

Mise-en-scène, or the staging process, has various definitions depending on the period

one is referring to.[24] Generally speaking, within the context of dramatic processes, the

mise-en-scène implies the translation of a literary text to the stage. An appropriate

description of the term would be that of translating a text from one aesthetic medium to

another – literature to performance – altering, in the process, the form of the transferred

subject. The form of the subject is not the only layer affected by the transferring

process. Lyotard articulates his understanding of the *mise-en-scène* in terms of space: 'I

should make clear what I mean by the word *mise-en-scène*. *Mettre en scène* (to stage) is

to transmit signifiers from a "primary" space to another space' (in Murray 1997: 163).

Albeit definitions of the *mise-en-scène* differ according to the critical and practical

perspective adopted, however, they all tend to contain referential undercurrents that are

related to the translation of signifiers.

Practitioners operating beyond the realm of dramatic conceptions of dramaturgy

often voice their concern with respect to the idea of a *mise-en-scène*. Barba addresses

the issue and states that he considers his performances, because of the plurality of

dramaturgies discussed above, more as a 'composition' and 'not as a *mise-en-scène* (of

a text, a story, a plot, an idea)' (2010: 13). The acknowledgment of the impossibility of

the *mise-en-scène* for musicalised dramaturgies was an important awareness which led

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[24] For a list of possible definitions of *mise-en-scène* according to practitioners and theorists and the period
when they practiced see Pavis 1998: 363-366.

me to the alternative procedure of "putting in evidence" the material that will be shared by all.

Putting in evidence, or *mise-en-evidence,* is a non-representational process framed around the presence of those involved in the performance process including actors, director, and audience. I borrowed the term from Jean-Luc Nancy who describes it as a process of highlighting as opposed to *mise-en-scène,* which he describes as dramatising (2007: 51). Although Nancy is not speaking about theatre when he uses the term, (he is actually speaking about music, dance, and architecture as arts of expansion), I find the phenomenological dimension of 'putting in evidence' more akin of a musicalised process. The difference between translating (*mise-en-scène*), i.e. changing the medium and highlighting (*mise-en-evidence*) i.e. making evident through presence, mirrors the difference between the causal and relational dynamics discussed above. Performers highlight – therefore suggest rather than state – via embodied processes the elements that are put into play – *mise-en-jeu* (another term borrowed from Nancy, see 2007: 38) – during the performance. This procedure generates dramaturgies that are informed, rather than determined, by the relationships established between actors and spectators. Musicalised dramaturgies as developed for *Welcoming the End of the World* follow this procedure which essentially gives space to the work to open up to the potentials of those involved in the process of performance, therefore postponing the closure attributed to traditional dramaturgies.

4.5   The Dynamics of Musicalised Dramaturgies

Musicalised Dramaturgies are framed around the following dynamics:

i. Musicalisation: as a process where musicality is adopted by directors and actors, triggering relationality through the embodiment-experience paradigm.

ii. Kinaesthetic infrastructures: where the work of associations at the sensorial level is activated, replacing literary infrastructures. An important dynamic with respect to the self-referential nature of musicalised dramaturgies.

iii. Body Poetry: where somatic elements are framed around rhythmic and melodic associations, and whereby actions are created and developed.

The motivations that generate dramatic tension feed on the rhythmic dimension and the tempos of the activity together with verbal utterances and vocal gestures. They are part of the kinaesthetic infrastructure where associations are established and where actions are developed. Musicalised dramaturgies feed on the tensions generated by these associations and by the inter- and intra-relational dynamics taking place between and within the actors, with the environment, and later, with the spectators. Theatre and performance practitioners often refer to these tensions as creative tensions. Barba refers to them when speaking of order and disorder as two poles that coexist. Rather than oppose each other they 'reinforce one another reciprocally [and] the quality of the tension created between them is an indication of the fertility of the creative process' (2000: 58). These tensions are important. They generate the dynamics of difference around which the dramaturgies developed for performance are framed and from which narratives emerge. These tensions are the seeds of potential actions waiting to emerge. We can call these tensions sources of energy.

A musicalised dramaturgy cannot be written. It can never exist as a scripted score. A musicalised dramaturgy exists only as 'performance'. Eugenio Barba argues that '[t]he actions of the actors should possess a coherence independent of their context

and their "meaning"' (2000: 62), while North American choreographer Merce Cunningham (1919-2009) explains how he wanted his dancers to 'depend on their own legs, instead of the music. […] [I]nstead of coming from an outside source – prompted by music – the dance comes from the movement itself' (quoted in Goodridge 1999: 121). With musicalised dramaturgies I adopt a similar strategy where actions are developed from within the activity of the performer. At the genesis of action there are no foreign references. The source of action for musicalised dramaturgies is pure kinesthesia. Consisting of *kinesis*, Greek for movement, and *aesthesis*, Greek for sensation, the term brings together movement and sensorial activity through physical awareness and presence. Kinaesthesia is a sensorial interface that operates within and between the performers during their work on the creation of actions, and between the performers and the audience during performance. The kinaesthetic infrastructure of a dramaturgy operates at a primordial level of the actor-director-spectator dynamic and is therefore functional prior to the emergence of narrative.

The process would be as follows: The actors develop a kinaesthetic infrastructure consisting of their rhythmic and vocal work where actions are created. Via the kinaesthetic infrastructure they then orchestrate the actions into a dramaturgy. This dramaturgy is transmitted in terms of kinaesthetic signals to the audience during performance, where the network of physical stimuli is projected via the musicalised process of the dramaturgy. Dramaturgical decisions from my part as co-director of the performance were always taken following rhythmic and melodic associations with respect to tempo. Rhythmic and melodic associations and the training procedures around them will be discussed in Chapter V, however, for the purpose of a better framing, I will conclude this chapter by outlining the basis upon which dramaturgical decisions are made within the context of musicalised dramaturgies.

An action qualifies as appropriate to be retained if it possesses the rhythmic and melodic qualities one is looking for. Within the context of our process, I based these qualities on pure self-referential associations. I was asking questions including: How does the action emerge from the actors work? How does it flow? How are the actors using their movements and vocal activity in order to relate to each other? Actions in a literary-based dramaturgy follow and refer to the logic of the plot. In our case, actions did not follow an outer logic but referred to their own performative state – *viz.* the action's state of being, obviously manifested in the presence of the performer. This self-reference is qualified in terms of rhythmic and melodic associations. This is the musical dimension which generates the activity of the actors and is transformed into actions by the actors. The quality of the rhythmic and melodic dimension of an action, and whether it has the potential to be developed further, is based on two elements: difference and repetition. An action is usually retained when I see it recurring during training sessions and in its recurrence I see elements of difference that keep the action 'new' and 'alive' every time it appears. Although this was obviously not a rule and much less of an instruction to the actors to repeat their material, it was common that actions and sequences of movements return. These actions could be direct and deliberate suggestions/proposals from the actors or just actions that return without deliberate intention from the actors' part. This procedure was possible because of the nature of the training that we developed around the research. A retained action must posses enough difference within it to generate tensions with which the actors, and Castaldo and I as directors, could play in order to generate a dramaturgical process. A dramaturgical process is therefore generated through a play of differences. Since we had no a priori rational associations, whatever we chose to keep was based on the level of difference that it intrinsically possessed.

This approach acknowledges a Deleuzian perspective of difference, where difference is ontological to a thing. As Ian Buchanan argues when discussing Gilles Deleuze's approach to music, 'difference is not something we uncover like a lost sock under a bed, it is what we produce through the act of living itself' (in Buchanan and Swiboda 2004: 5). An action, to be considered as appropriate, interesting, or having potential for our dramaturgy, had to possess difference. A difference that emerges and is refreshed through its repetition. Every decision taken with respect to whether an action or sequence of gestures was to be retained followed this rationale. I will return to difference and repetition later on, where I will discuss them further in view of their relevance to my research as qualities of the performative dimension of actions upon which musicalised dramaturgies are composed.

The physicalisation achieved by Stanislavsky through his work on tempo-rhythm was the starting point of our dramaturgical process for *Welcoming the End of the World*. From an early phase in the process, although not yet working on a final aesthetic or form, our practice was framed around body poetry and design. It was a poetry that started with the inner motivations of the actor before addressing the outer design of the act. Our work on the poetry of the body was a process where rhythmic and melodic associations help the actor generate action. From a dramaturgical perspective this process is an important aspect of my research project. It is what marks the difference between musicalised dramaturgies and other dramaturgical approaches between Stanislavsky and Barba, developed by practitioners who, while acknowledging the importance of rhythm and melody as tools that aid their processes, never considered these musical elements as actual sources for action. Within the context of musicalised dramaturgies these elements are at the basis of every dramaturgical decision taken in the process of the composition of performance.

Chapter V

Creating *Welcoming the End of the World*

> The body? Your body? It consists in a bundle of rhythms.
>
> Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis*

The performance structure *Welcoming the End of the World* was triggered by a dramaturgical premise whereby actions are generated via rhythmic and melodic associations and developed into a performance text. These associations constituted the motivations of each action in the absence of a preconceived literary text. The infrastructure of the work was based on kinaesthesia rather than direct rational understanding. The non-hierarchical approach and our attention to the performative dimension gave a multi-layered quality to the dramaturgies we wanted to present in performance. Musicalised dramaturgies as relational dramaturgies were at the basis of the composition of *Welcoming the End of the World*.

The aim of this chapter is to explain how musicalised dramaturgies function in the process of creation of performance. I will start by discussing rhythmic and melodic associations and contextualise my understanding within a contemporary critical framework. I will proceed by articulating the context of praxis we adopted around rhythm and melody as musical elements upon which associations are developed, and discuss how these elements can be worked upon by the actors in a concrete manner. Following the pre-expressive contextualisation I will discuss the way we worked on one of the scenes for the performance. Here I will outline in detail every step in the creation and development of the scene and justify the dramaturgic decisions I was making with

respect to the premises indicated in the conclusion of Chapter IV.

Welcoming the End of the World was created in collaboration with LabPerm, an ensemble of professional actors based in Turin, Italy. The ensemble is led by actor/director Domenico Castaldo, a theatre maker with decades of experience in both traditional and research theatre. Before setting up LabPerm as his permanent research and performance studio, Castaldo worked with various theatre makers including Luca Ronconi at the *Teatro Stabile* of Turin, and Jerzy Grotowski at the Workcentre of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards in Pontedera, Italy. Castaldo's two-year spell at the Workcentre was definitely one of the main reasons why I decided to collaborate with LabPerm for my research on musicality. The fact that Castaldo's approach to theatre making was close to the ideas I wanted to investigate made it relatively easier to initiate a discussion around notions of musicality in theatre that eventually led to our collaboration. It was agreed that the process should lead to a performance, however, the aim was primarily to develop a platform where we could investigate the research questions I was putting forward. LabPerm made themselves available for a period of twenty-four months during which I would conduct, together with Castaldo, a series of research encounters focusing on the development of musicalised dramaturgies.

The performance structure started to emerge after the first year of our collaboration, when Castaldo and I decided to work on material that was developing during pre-expressive sessions which had the potential to be transformed into a performance process. By 'potential to be transformed' I mean that the material available had enough contrast with which as director I could play in order to compose scenes. Contrast is understood in terms of the differences that emerge from the repetition of the actors' activity, which activity would posses enough tension in order to be developed further into scenes for performance. This was the basis for our choices at this point in

the process. We still had no story lines in mind and any decision was taken purely with respect to the rhythmic and melodic dynamics developed by the performers. 'The end of the world' as theme, and eventually name for the piece, was established only during the last twelve weeks before the work was premièred in Malta in July 2011. When the theme emerged, most of the scenes were already fully developed. This inversion of procedure, where the 'dramatic' theme is developed at the end instead of being established at the beginning of the process, was already a clear indication that my idea of a dramaturgy based on musicalised processes was working. Musicalisation could lead to a performance structure without the need of having a priori rational associations around which to frame a dramaturgy.

Welcoming the End of the World was, therefore, not the point of departure of this research project. When I approached LabPerm and Castaldo, I did so in order to have an ensemble of practitioners with whom I could work practically on my research. The path towards performance was determined by our practical research that was gradually developing into material that Castaldo, the actors, and I thought could be developed into a performance. At this point we needed to establish what we meant by action in a context which lacked a literary or dramatic reference. An action is a physical disposition made up of a series of body movements and vocal gestures that have an internal motivation. Internal – because it has to be the actors, i.e. the individual doers, the first to establish the intentions and motivations to qualify as appropriate for action. Body and voice are given equal importance because I consider the body and the voice as part of the somatic apparatus of the actor on equal terms. I wanted to avoid subordination at the very emergence of action and decided to adopt an approach of non-hierarchy already at this very early stage. Body and voice enter into a relational dynamic in order to develop internal motivations based on rhythms and melodies.

5.1   Rhythmic and Melodic Associations

Rhythm and melody are the elements through which associations are created when working with musicalised dramaturgies. Within the context of musicalised dramaturgies melody is approached as an embodied phenomenon where the melodic dimension is addressed through "chant", *canto*. When referring to the melodic framework we preferred to use the Italian term, *canto. Canto* is not to be confused with *canzone,* Italian for song. Underlining the difference between song and *canto* is important within the context of my research and with respect to the development of training mechanisms for the actors working on musicalised dramaturgies. Song is a Western musical form involving vocal activity in relation to the word. Geoffrey Chew in his entry on song in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* clarifies:

> There seems some justification in treating it [song] as a unit: nearly all post-Renaissance song may be judged according to its fidelity to the declamation of the text and according to its expressiveness [...]. A new attitude developed during the 15th and 16th centuries towards declamation (i.e. the mirroring in the musical setting of the rhythm of the text as it would be declaimed), which tended to make song texts more comprehensible to listeners.

<div align="right">(1980: 510)</div>

In song the music is created following verbal and language-related sources. Both the tempo and the rhythmic patterns of songs are affected either by the meaning of the words or by their disposition in terms of length, stresses, and accentuation of the syllables that constitute the words. Chant, on the other hand, is a body-related activity that follows repetitive rhythmic structures. Chant is a vocal activity organised musically following a tempo and in rhythm. It is not essential for a chant to be associated to words. Establishing this distinction for us was important in that we wanted to make sure that melodies do not serve as support or emotional background to the actors' activity. Melodies, through chanting, were intended to inform the physical work of the actor

while working on the creation of action.

As Alexander Ringer argues when defining melody and positioning it within a socio-cultural context in order to frame its origins, '[m]elody, defined as pitched sounds arranged in musical time in accordance with given cultural conventions and constraints, represents a universal human phenomenon traceable to pre-historic times' (1980: 118). In my case, with respect to the need to develop melodic associations, I was interested in how these pitched sounds affect the physical disposition of the body in terms of presence and perception. What mattered most was the biological dimension of melody when developed by a human being. The production of different pitches which constitute a melody are generated by different resonators in the body of the actor. Physical resonators are important tools for the actor when working on the production of sounds. They are the parts of the body where sounds produced by the voice are amplified and made to vibrate. Barba explains that 'the task of the physiological resonator is to amplify the carrying power of the sound emitted. Their function is to compress the column of air into the particular part of the body selected as an amplifier for the voice' (in Grotowski 2002: 153). Barba also lists the resonators an actor has at her/his disposal, including, the head, chest, nasal, laryngeal, occipital (back of the head), and maxillary (back of the jaw) resonators. Other resonators can be located in the abdomen and the central and lower parts of the spine (153-155). As a physical element, resonators can be utilised by the actor in order to play with the textures and qualities of the sounds produced by the voice. As a technique, the work with resonators is similar to the way a violinist would know how to maneuver her/his bow in terms of pressure exerted with the right-hand fingers and the position of the hair on the strings, in order to give the desired effect and texture to a particular note. Grotowski speaks of 'anything belonging to the quality of the vibration, the resonance of the space [and] the resonating chambers

of the body' (in Wolford and Schechner 1997: 299), as existing beyond notation.

Physical resonators, therefore, belong to the performative layer of the work of the actor.

A deliberate and composed organisation of these resonators will not only give the

melody different textures and sounds. It also gives the body producing the different

pitches a particular presence that will determine the way that body appears. This is

directly linked to the kinaesthetic infrastructure and to the idea of body poetry. As

director working with a musicalised dramaturgy, I was not interested only in the

melodies produced as sound, but more importantly in *how* these melodies were

produced by the actors. It was common during our process for me to change a particular

note or a whole phrase because of the physical disposition adopted by the actor

producing it. What mattered were not only the shape of the melody and how it sounds,

but also the totality of the physical and sonorous aesthetic that was developing with that

melody. As director, this totality provided me with the differences I needed in order to

play with the material developed by the actors.

A good example of how lack of association between body and melody would

hinder the dramaturgical process was when in one particular scene, later called *The

Searcher and the Founder* (DVD 00:27:17), one actress (Katia Capato) was singing a

melody in dialogue with Castaldo who was reacting to her with another melody. To her

melody Capato was singing a text she had chosen earlier. The scene consisted of Capato

and Castaldo in front of each other with the rest of the actors around them producing a

kind of bass drone. The sequence of actions for the scene emerged from a *Chanting*

session.[25] I had decided to keep the sequence because of the way the singing between

the two was developing over a drone. I thought there was already enough rhythmic and

melodic tension between the two actors singing in front of each other, further

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[25] The *Chanting* exercise will be discussed in section 5.2 below.

pronounced by the drone produced by the rest, to make the sequence worth working on and develop into a scene. From here we continued working on the way Capato and Castaldo developed a physical dialogue based entirely on minute gestures informed by the melodies and rhythms the two were producing. Later, when we introduced lights to the work, I sat on the lighting console with the lighting designer and played with the intensity of the lights by responding to what the duo was generating. With the scene I wanted to create a level of intimacy that plays on the fragility of intimacy itself. I wanted to explore how a moment of extreme dramatic tension can be developed with the smallest possible rhythmic inflections. The working process consisted of developing the appropriate rhythms and textures with both voice and body to keep this fragility at breaking point without actually breaking.

A problem emerged when with her singing Capato started paying attention to the text without any consideration to her physical disposition. Even worse, the text she was using was having an emotional effect on her that was hindering her physical control. From the outside I could feel there was no communication either with Castaldo, with whom the actress was developing this scene as duet, or with the other actors around her. Clearly this was a dramaturgical problem that needed to be addressed otherwise the scene would have to be completely discarded. To solve it I asked the actress to eliminate the text she was using and continue singing the melody as if it was a chant. This meant that now she had to work on the singing through her body not through the meaning of the words in the text she was using before. The actress was instructed to focus on the resonators that were producing the different tones and pitches that constituted her melody and how the textures of these sounds changed according to which physical resonator she chose. From Castaldo's end we decided that he should help the process by proposing sounds that were deliberately generated via a play with

body resonators. Capato's physical disposition started to change and her relationship with Castaldo in terms of physical dialogue became more dramaturgically engaging and committed. This improvement was triggered by the physical rhythmicity that Capato was generating – in terms of differences and repetition evident in her physical disposition and gestures as result of the melody produced. In fact, before my instruction, Castaldo, as director from the inside, was complaining that her emotions, as they were thrown at him without control, were hindering any attempt on his part to 'play' and compose. This was happening because there were no physical tensions coming from Capato to which Castaldo could relate, hence the decision to intervene with a play of resonators. When I saw that the work with the chanting of Capato was developing without emotive interference I asked the actress to insert a text. She chose *Cave Birds* by Ted Hughes. The text was retained. Later I asked Capato to remove the melody completely and retain, i. the resonators she was using to produce the melody and, ii. the physical disposition generated by the melody. At this point, after weeks of working on the scene, the melody had been embodied and the actress could perform it without actually singing it. The melody was now functioning as association and motivation for her actions.

Improvement in this case is gauged in terms of differences generated by the way the actress was singing and moving. Because now she was using different resonators and was aware of the 'differences' as articulated by these resonators, the gestures and shapes created by her body became sharper and more pronounced. The dramaturgical work consisted of a period of time working on defining and sharpening the differences between each resonator, and composing the sounds and movements that the actress was creating. This composing included direct intervention from Castaldo and me together with the actress' own input. The 'sharpness' made it possible for Castaldo

as her companion in the scene, and me as director on the outside, to articulate better the tensions between the two actors who were now more aware of the delineations of each gesture and sound they were producing. This is similar to the way a musician must be precise with her/his tempos and rhythms before being able to play around with them, i.e. slowing them down, accelerating them, inserting *rubati*, etc. For a musician, being precise with a rhythm is being fully aware of the differences that rhythm is made of, and to make sure these differences are clearly pronounced when performed. This is not only a conceptual understanding but a performative awareness of difference through which we were developing our dramaturgy in real time.

I call this the phrasing of body designs within a scene, where I work not only on the sounds produced by the performer, but also on the visual impact generated by those sounds. This phrasing is different from creating static tableaux, or, to use a traditional term, blocking. The way we were phrasing the scene depended on the continuous mutations of the melody being chanted. Later, as was the case with *The Searcher and the Finder* scene, when and if a text is added on top of the activity, the singing of the melody may be removed altogether. Here the performer retains only the physical movements that emerged from the melody via a process of embodiment. In such a scenario the musical dimension remains intact even though the music is eliminated. The performer would have only eliminated the sounds of the melody and retained the rhythms and tensions of the melody within her/himself as residual physical awareness. This constitutes one way how melody is utilised as association within the context of musicalised dramaturgies, and how dramaturgical decisions are taken with respect to what melodies generate.

Rhythm is the other key element in the construction of action and development of intentions and motivations for the actors. From the Greek *rhythmos*, related to another

Greek word *rheuma* or flow, rhythm relates to the flow of events. Within the context of

musicalised dramaturgies I interpret rhythm as the differences generated by the various

layers that constitute the act of theatre (including the actors, the audience, the lights,

sounds, scenery etc.). From this perspective rhythm implies change, therefore a process

of difference in space and time. However, rhythm also implies repetition. At the basis

of my understanding of rhythm and the way it was approached within the context of

musicalised dramaturgies there is the difference-repetition paradigm that acknowledges

French sociologist Henry Lefebvre's analysis of rhythm. My interest in Lefebvre's late

study of rhythm which appeared in his *Rhythmanalysis*, published posthumously in

1992, is related to the way he articulates a conception of rhythm beyond music.

Lefebvre approaches various aspects of rhythm including biological, social, and cultural

rhythms in everyday life. However, what emerges as a most important element from his

study is that central to an understanding of rhythm is the human body, not the body as

an anatomical or functional reality, but as a bundle of living polyrhythms (2004: 67).

Within the context of my research, where I am using rhythm as one of the sources of

action for performance, an understanding of rhythm in its broadest manifestations,

including Lefebvre's idea that 'the understanding of rhythm is founded on the

experience of the body' (67), is an important critical foundation for the development of

my practice.

 Lefebvre argues that there is 'no rhythm without **repetition** in time and space,

without *reprise*, without return, without **measure** (*mesure*). But there is no identical

absolute repetition, indefinitely. Whence the relation between repetition and difference.

When it comes to the everyday, rites, ceremonies, fêtes, rules and laws, there is always

something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitive: difference'

(2004: 6, emphasis in the original). According to Lefebvre difference is not an option, a

choice, or a decision, but a condition of repetition. In fact he continues that 'not only does repetition not exclude differences, it also gives birth to them; it **produces** them' (2004: 7, emphasis in the original). The production of difference through repetition is an aspect that I adopted especially in the way we devised training mechanisms to prepare the actors in order to approach rhythm in terms of associations that lead to the creation of action. For me rhythm is a process of difference through repetition in time and space. It is not necessarily related to a preconceived idea, a text, or a narrative, but to an activity done, performed in space and time, i.e. irrespective of the *thing* which that activity may potentially represent. From a Lefebvrian perspective, '*Things* matter little; the *thing* is only a metaphor' (2004: 7, emphasis in the original). Musicalised dramaturgies locate rhythm as a process of difference and repetition and distance it from just being an outcome of a reference to an 'other'. To rhythm an action (to use Lefebvre's inflection of the term), is to articulate the differential potential of that action as it is manifested in its recurrence, and use that potential as a dramaturgical element.

Lefebvre's idea of rhythm as process of difference in time and space mirrors the Derridian concept of *différance*. While the repetition of an act is important for the establishment of a rhythmic gesture, the fact that the act is performed in a flow is indicative of process, and a sense of postponement of definition or closure. We speak of rhythm in a painting, by which we mean the potential of the painting to appear in motion as opposed to a static fixed object. The painting flows and possesses a quality which gives it life. It is via this quality that we, as viewers, relate to the painting somatically. The painting arrives to us as something still open to change through the way we relate to it. Its rhythmic flow postpones its closure. Similarly, in a theatre performance, rhythms defer the moment of closure. The way difference is framed as a deferral which eliminates the possibility of a fixed difference is important. 'As Derrida

puts it […] difference [sic] refers to the "systematic play of differences, or **traces** of differences, of the *spacing* by means of which elements are related to each other"' (Lucy 2004: 26, emphasis in the original). The idea of 'spacing' as put forward by Derrida, is particularly relevant to the way I am framing rhythm within the context of musicalised dramaturgies. The rhythmic awareness of the actors is essentially the awareness of the spacing (in terms of time and space) of the differences at play in their activity, and the way the actors deal with these differences in terms of behaviour and presence, which affect their physical disposition. This awareness defines the motivations and intentions which the actors use to create their actions. Eventually it is to these differences that the audience relates via kinaesthetic processes. Rhythm as *différance* is also related, as Duncan Jamieson argues in his attempt to define an encounter between Derrida and Grotowski, to the way that'*[d]ifférance* refers to the production of meaning through the interaction of expressive units […] and their repeated grafting into different context, preventing a definitive signification based on those units (deferral)' (2007: 62). There is a sense of prevention of meaning which is particularly relevant to my context in that the deferral of meaning is related to rhythm as process generated by the performance of the actions which constitute the dramaturgies at play.

Rhythm is manifested in the tensions generated by the intra- and inter-relational dynamics going on in performance and is evident in their differences within a context of flow and repetition. *Différance* gives the performance its rhythmic qualities which in the case of theatrical activity are organic rather than mechanical in that they are related to the activity of the actors. Lefebvre expounds on this: 'We easily confuse *rhythm* with *movement* [*mouvement*], speed, a sequence of movement [*gestes*] or objects (machines, for example). Following this we tend to attribute to rhythms a **mechanical** overtone,

brushing aside the **organic** aspect of rhythmed movements' (2004: 6, emphasis in the original). The etymology of organic, leads to the root word 'organ'. Via the Greek *ergon,* 'organ' relates to 'work'. However, 'organ' refers also to a part of the human body. The etymologic connotations of the biological with a work activity are of relevance. The organic is that which works through sensorial human engagement. Eugenio Barba explains how for him organicity is a key aspect of dramaturgy. As a director working with a group of actors that spoke and performed in different languages, he needed to organise their work in a different manner than traditional approaches. Barba was 'obliged to devise an arrangement of vocal actions and peripeteias which could enthrall the spectators independently of their comprehension of the words' (2010: 40). While this has now developed into an aesthetic, when he started in the 1960s it was more of a practical need that sought to provide accessibility to his audiences. To address the problem Barba developed the idea of an organic dramaturgy that is 'constituted by the orchestration of all the actors' actions which are treated as dynamic and kinaesthetic signals' (2010: 24). This organic dimension is also at the foundation of musicalised dramaturgies, and is generated via embodiment of action.

Melody and rhythm within the context of musicalised dramaturgies are embodied phenomena. Actors are expected to embody melody rather than just sing it to be heard as sound. Melody has to become an extension of the actor's body and should never seem (or sound) as if it is distanced from the body that is producing it. Similarly with rhythm. There are no rhythms which the actors refer to in our process. The actors generate rhythms with their activity. They generate rhythm while responding to the rhythms of the others and the environment around them. This is a process of embodiment which is complex and takes time to develop. For this reason we developed exercises that could help the actors sharpen their awareness with respect to melodic and

rhythmic associations in order to push our research further.

5.2   Practical Work: *Chanting*, *Motions*, and *Training*

The way we approached musical embodiment was by developing training mechanisms

that directly addressed the melodic and rhythmic dynamics of the actors' work.

Embodied musicality is the process of making rhythms and melodies part of the

performer's scenic *bios* (see footnote 19 in Chapter III). This attitude relates to

Lefebvre's understanding of rhythm when he argues that the hypothesis of

Rhythmanalysis is that the body 'consists in a bundle of rhythms' (2004: 80). However,

the *bios* of a performance is not dependent on just the presence of one actor. In view of

the multiplicity of the dramaturgical process that we adopt for musicalised dramaturgies

the *bios* of performance is the simultaneity of presences of other actors and spectators

who all have their own scenic *bios*. Therefore, the individual performer's rhythms have

to be developed with respect to the other performers, and also with respect to the

spectators that will be present in performance. Lefebvre articulates this problematic:

> There is a long way to go from an observation to a definition, and even further from the
> grasping of some rhythm […] to the conception that grasps the simultaneity and
> intertwinement of several rhythms, their unity in diversity. And yet each one of us is this
> unity of diverse relations whose aspects are subordinated to action towards the external
> world, oriented towards the outside, towards the Other and to the World, to such a degree
> that they escape us. […] It is in the psychological, social, organic unity of the 'perceiver'
> who is oriented towards the perceived, which is to say towards objects, towards
> surroundings and towards other people, that the rhythms that compose this unity are
> given.
>
> (2004: 77)

We needed to develop means of practice to make the performer aware of her/his

rhythms with respect to all other rhythms at play in performance, including rhythms at

play within the melodies, and the 'action towards the external world' that Lefebvre refers to. However, we wanted to avoid subordination to this action and to develop the possibility of simultaneity also in this respect, keeping in mind that the play between the internal and the external is a condition of performance. This could only be achieved, as Lefebvre proposes, if we are aware, among other things, of the 'organic unity of the perceiver', therefore the sensorial dimension of the spectator who although not present during the working process will be an active presence in performance.

With these ideas, aims, and challenges in mind I started, together with Castaldo, to adapt the training of LabPerm to my research. Mainly our process of work was organised around three basic exercises or practical structures of training:

- *Chanting*: the work on the relationship between vocal and physical activity and the creation of *partituras* of melodies which are embodied by the actor. This leads to melodic/vocal action, i.e. the shaping of sounds and vocal gestures with precise intentions.
- *Motions*: the work on the inter-relations amongst the actors with minute and very precise micro-actions.
- *Training*: the work on the individual's intra-relational activity as body in space within a collective.[26]

These three exercises were part of the daily training sessions of the group irrespective of which performance they were working on. Castaldo learned these exercises at the Workcentre of Thomas Richards and Jerzy Grotowski during his two-year spell working

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[26] *Training* is the name of the exercise. It does not refer to the general activity of training but to a particular exercise used during a training session. Although this terminology might appear confusing here, for Italian-speaking actors who use the Italian word *allenamento* for training, the name *Training* for a particular exercise is not at all confusing.

on *Action.* Over the years they changed according to the needs of LabPerm. The description I am giving here is again a further elaboration which reflects the way these exercises were utilised during the period we were working on the development of musicalised dramaturgies.

Chanting – giving shape to action

In *Chanting* the actors focus on the production of vocal elements. A *Chanting* session can have various forms, including the actors sitting down, standing up, in a circle, in a straight line, in different places around the studio, moving around the space, fixed in one position, etc. Establishing which form to adopt depends on the needs of the actors and what they want to address in a particular session. The basic aim of a chanting exercise, irrespective of the form adopted, remains for each actor involved to let the vibrations of the chant to work on her/his body. This happens while s/he listens (with the body) to the rhythms of the vibrations produced by the others, attempting, in the process, to embody these rhythms. A kind of circular procedure, therefore, where a sense of wholeness is achieved via the continuum of being aware of the self with respect to the others.

During a *Chanting* session, the actors work on vocalisation as a body- rather than language-related activity, where the body is engaged in the production of sounds. The eventual creation of a musical phrase or motif is therefore considered as a physical activity. The activity of the body and the sonority of the voice are part of the generation of meaning as a process of postponement, in that now the melodic dimension is constitutive of the creation of action. The awareness developed in *Chanting* will have its effects even in situations when texts are added later to the physical work of the actors. This approach is not dissimilar from the way music may have been used by Ancient

Greeks in tragedy in order to give direction and 'shape' to the words uttered by the actors. As Edith Hall argues in her investigations of the singing processes of actors performing in Ancient Athens, 'tragedy [...] offered the dramatist a palette of vocal techniques with which to paint his sound pictures, and certain patterns can be discerned in the way he handled them' (in Easterling and Hall 2002: 7).

This physical awareness is developed mainly thorough associations related to particular resonators in the body. A tone produced using the head resonator is different from a tone produced using the chest resonator. The physical dimension of production of sounds and utterances is taken to aesthetic/musical levels in our work by focusing on the different timbres and textures of the tones produced according to the different resonators used. Here we are literally working on the body of the actor in order to 'compose' actions through the difference in pitches/sounds produced by the voice. Eventually, differences produced by different parts of the body are worked upon using rhythmic awareness and treated as elements for 'play'.

Motions – the search for organic unity

Establishing and creating rhythms while developing awareness of the rhythmic dynamics within and without oneself is important for the actor, especially in a context where there is no a priori text to which the actor refers. *Motions* is one way of working on the rhythmic dimension of the actor. The exercise, developed by Grotowski during the Theatre of Sources phase, is a complex one where the main requirement is 'not [to] react to any one thing but [to] fully perceive all that there is to see and hear' (I Wayan Lendra in Wolford and Schechner 1997: 326), and where 'the participant is not allowed to respond emotionally to what she sees [...]; she simply observes what is out there' (322). Notwithstanding the huge difficulties of *Motions,* after each session the actors

'usually have the feeling of distilled energy and oneness in [their] body' (326). This is exactly the type of exercise we needed in order to work on the rhythmic dynamics of movement.

The actors arrive at the working space. They have different energies and different states of mind and body. Irrespective of their state they start working. In order to start the work on *Motions* the actors have to immediately distance themselves from the external world and work in the extremely slow tempos of *Motions*. Therefore, the actors must forget the rhythms and tempos of daily life, and embody instead the new tempos and rhythms of the working environment. These are rhythms that each actor will now establish and develop in relation to the other actors around her/him. It is important to point out that the 'new' rhythms are not pre-set rhythms that the actor imitates in order to be in sync with other actors. They are emergent rhythms that will be established in relation to the other actors. Therefore, the shifting of rhythms is a process of translation where the faster rhythms the actors had when they arrived are not simply disposed of but transformed into shared rhythms. This is done via the way the actors listen with their bodies to the minutest mutations of the other actors. The listening I refer to here is close to Nancy's understanding of the term (quoted earlier in Chapter I), by which I understand the opening up of oneself to the resonances of the presence of the others via the sensing of differences. In fact, *Motions* consists of following, without imitating, the activity of the other actors not by looking at them but by kinaesthetically absorbing the differences generated by their movements.

In *Motions* the actors work on external shared rhythms without negating the self or one's own rhythms. The outcome of this process is important in the development of musicalised dramaturgies in that the emergent rhythms will be *new* rhythms. Each individual actor is amplified into something beyond the self. In *Motions* the actors

search for the conditions of possibility to position themselves in a situation to 'listen' with their bodies. The actors listen, then create, and are eventually amplified.

Training – the search for organic diversity

Training, like *Motions*, is a collective activity that seeks organicity. This is done, however, through establishing diversity instead of seeking unity. With it the actors work on developing their own individual rhythms in relation to the rhythms of the other actors and the rhythms of the environment around them, aiming at a kind of interpretation of all possible rhythms. The difference between the two exercises is important. In *Training* the organic is within the actor as a body in space whereas in *Motions* the organic is without. During *Training* the actors work on the awareness of listening to the rhythms of the outside world in order to put these rhythms in relation to their own rhythms.

The actors arrive at the working space and start working on *Training*. They have different energies and different states of mind and body similar to what they had prior to working on *Motions*. However, for *Training* the actors are expected to retain the rhythms brought from the outside world. The rhythms of each actor will not change. Rather, from internal rhythms they are translated into external rhythms manifested in what each actor does. These rhythms are transformed into movements and are therefore given concrete and visible forms. A rhythm that takes a form is a rhythm that is given shape via direct intervention by the actor. Here the actors are doers with intention. The outcome of this exercise is a counterpoint of rhythmic structures aimed at unearthing organic difference and promoting it as a creative force.

The three exercises are performed daily by the actors, and help the actors to develop motivations and intentions that give direction to their work. As director of the

performance, I followed these daily exercises and from them, together with Castaldo

and the actors, chose the material to develop in our dramaturgies for the performance.

Actions, which are developed into scenes and later composed into a performance

structure, emerge from the work on melodies and rhythms as developed in *Chanting,*

Motions, and *Training.* The singing body generates an activity of differences that are

manifested in movements, gestures, vocal utterances and vibrations. These are the

agents of perception. When the appropriate levels of embodiment are reached, i.e. when

we see that each actor is not just manifesting rhythm and melody, but has actually

become rhythm and melody, then the work on the development of a scene can start.

5.3   Development of a Scene: *The Boat Scene* [27]

Mostly all material used in *Welcoming the End of the World* was generated during the

exercises described above. Material from these exercises was transformed into scenic

motives that were incorporated into the dramaturgies that constituted the performance

structure. The material chosen was worked out and developed into scenes in the manner

that I will explain in the following account on the development of *The Boat Scene.* The

order of the scenes was only established around eight weeks before the première. It was

based on the theme of the end of the world which Castaldo and myself decided to adopt

for the performance and on the nature of the differences, rhythms, and tensions that

each scene possessed and generated. *The Boat Scene*'s location in the dramaturgy for

the Malta première was determined by the way it provided us with contrast (therefore

difference) with the scenes preceding and following it. Even when a particular scene

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[27] The actors involved in the scene were Castaldo (Cas), Katia (Kat), Francesca (Fran), Marta (Mar), Pablo (Pablo), Patrizio (Pato) and Felipe (Fel). For ease of reference I included a shortened version of their names in brackets which will be used in the figures accompanying my discussion.

worked with respect to the theme, if rhythmically and melodically it did not fit we would relocate it or in some cases discard it completely.

A scene would continue developing irrespective of its position in the structure. This gave us the possibility to 'play' around with our dramaturgies and leave them open until we finally decided to establish a structure. Even when the structure was finally set and ready to be presented to an audience, most scenes still had the potential to continue developing and changing, as indeed they did for the second run of performances in Turin in October 2011.[28] The reason for this was the way they were based on rhythmic and melodic associations that depended on the presence of the performers and the audience.

***

The Boat Scene is the working title given to one of the first scenic motives that we started developing.[29] For the première of *Welcoming the End of The World* in Malta in July 2011, *The Boat Scene* motif was divided into three scenes, *The Little Man's Proposal – Building a Boat* (DVD 00:12:12), *My Ship is on the Ocean – 'why do you want to avoid the end?'* (DVD 00:13:37), and *The Little Man's Revenge – 'I always wanted to kill somebody!'* (DVD 00:15:54). The three scenes were placed fourth, fifth, and sixth in the order established for performance. The names to each scene were assigned by me during the week before the première in order to provide scene

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[28] The presentation of *Welcoming the End of the World* in October 2011 in Turin will not be discussed in this thesis in that it does not form part of this research project. Major transformations were made to the dramaturgy after the July performances including changes in the order of the scenes. This was possible because of the musical dimension of the dramaturgy and the rhythmic and melodic nature of the associations that generate it.

[29] Sections of *The Boat Scene* and the way these developed in rehearsals are featured in *Development of a Scenic Motif* in the accompanying DVD (00:52:50). See Appendix IV.

information for the programme notes in the official printed programme (see Appendix I). These names were not used during the second run in Turin in October in view of changes the performance and the dramaturgy went through between July and October. What follows is, in fact, a detailed account of the dramaturgical process of the scene during which I will never discuss narrative content. As I explained earlier, in musicalised dramaturgies narrative is emergent and depends also on the way spectators relate to the work. This is clear in the two reviews of the performance that appeared on *The Sunday Times of Malta* where the reviewers give different readings of the performance's narrative (see Appendix II) including assigning different characters to the actors according to their respective interpretations. In one review, Castaldo was reported as playing 'an energetic Everyman' while in the other he was assigned the role of 'a presenter' with the rest of the actors 'a motley cast of characters'.

The material for the scene started developing during a session of *Chanting* (DVD 00:53:03) when an initial action emerged following a direct impulse by Castaldo. The action consisted of Pablo being pushed away from the others by Castaldo (DVD 01:01:39). We decided to keep the action and work on it. Since this was one of the first actions to be retained and transformed into a scenic motif, it also served as testing ground for the working strategy that as directors we eventually adopted. We decided that Castaldo would direct the work from the inside by giving physical impulses to the actors while I would work from the outside and shape the work following a musicalised approach. I did this by focusing on the rhythmic and melodic elements that the actors were proposing. Direct verbal instructions to the actors were kept to a minimum and used only for specific technical instructions, suggestions, and direct dramaturgical indications to individual actors. In order to make this possible we adopted a methodology whereby, after each session Castaldo and I discussed the work. I would

then give Castaldo my dramaturgical suggestions in terms of musical indications that he would translate into embodied practice during the practical session, and pass on kinaesthetically to the others. At no point was any reference made to a particular narrative or theme. Any narrative, if present at all, would be the individual actors' and directors' prerogative which we were not sharing.

When the Castaldo-Pablo action emerged, the genesis of it was suggestive; a physical impulse from Castaldo that proposed action. This positioned Pablo outside the chanting group. The others continued with the chanting while Pablo had to develop an act. This motif was repeated and we continued to return to it during *Chanting* sessions. Eventually it became a sort of recurring moment in the work. We started referring to it as the *Split* (figure 4).
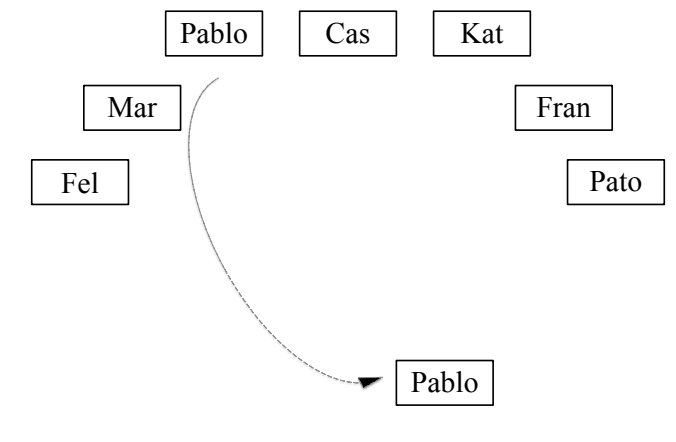

Figure 4: The *Split*

With the *Split* a new dynamic developed. Its source was a rhythmic and melodic impulse. Within the context of musicalised dramaturgies we call this impulse an association which constitutes the intention and motivation of the action. From here the action will be developed and worked upon via interventions on its rhythmic and melodic qualities. What is important is that the action refers to itself and not to a 'given

circumstance' outside the work. Where it will go from here is not pre-determined. Its

path depends on how the dynamics that are being generated through rhythm and song

will be developed.

At this point the relationships between the rhythms and tempos of the situation

have to be renegotiated. The work on *Training* is therefore called into play. After the

Split, Pablo's dynamics of presence were changed (DVD 01:01:50). The actor was on

his own and needed to *do* something. This was affecting the inter-relational dynamics of

the situation (Pablo and the others), and the intra-relation dynamics going on within

each individual actor. Pablo needed to develop some sort of activity with respect to this

new dynamic (figure 5), and started playing with his body rhythms and vocal utterances

in relation to the others. From a musical point of view this development is not

uncommon. We find the solo-*tutti* combination in Western classical music, in rock and
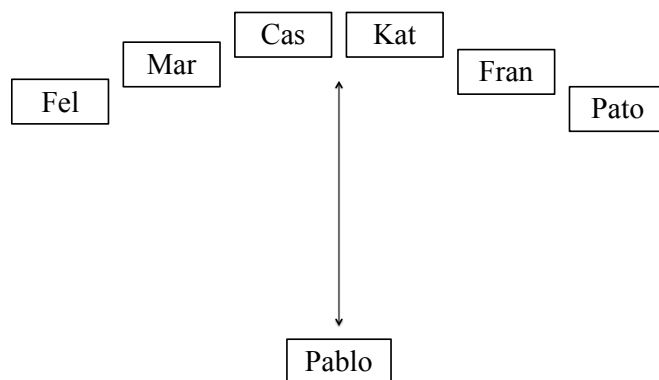
pop music, and in jazz.

Figure 5: Initial dynamic – solo-*tutti*

After a short while the actor started uttering a text while reacting physically to

the chanting of the others in a sort of dance that included vocal and body activity. This

activity consisted of new material but also of a residue of that same chanting he was

part of before the *Split* and reacting to now. This residual awareness is important. It is

retained by the actor as body memory and is manifested in the actor's physical

disposition. It is never announced verbally, hence existing only as a performative

element that plays an important part in the composition of the scene. The actor's 'task'

is to retain this physical awareness and use it. More than task, the 'retaining' of this

awareness is a technical manoeuver (therefore part of the actor's craft) via which the

rhythmic and melodic associations can develop as kinaesthetic infrastructure similar to

the way a rational association is carried forward as logic in traditional dramaturgies.

I started to intervene from the outside giving indications related to the dynamics

that were developing. I was composing the scene by playing with these dynamics

including the actors' spatial dispositions, their bodily presence and shapes, and their

vocal actions. I took note of the changes and developments that were taking place

following the *Split* and as a consequence of the new solo-*tutti* combination that

emerged. I noticed that as soon as the solo-*tutti* dynamic appeared whenever we

returned to the *Split*, two formations kept recurring in space: formation A made up of

Castaldo, Patrizio and Felipe, and formation B made up of Marta, Francesca and Katia.

Pablo positioned himself within formation B (DVD 01:03:20). Within formation B there

were elements of discreet subdivisions which consisted of Marta and Francesca teaming

up and working mainly in relation to Katia with just hints of contact with Pablo.

Similarly, Pablo was mainly establishing contact with Katia with fleeting attention to

Marta and Francesca (figure 6). Castaldo and I decided to retain this dual configuration

and return to it. This dual configuration was the first variation to develop from the *Split*

action. From now on the scenic motive continued developing in three sections.
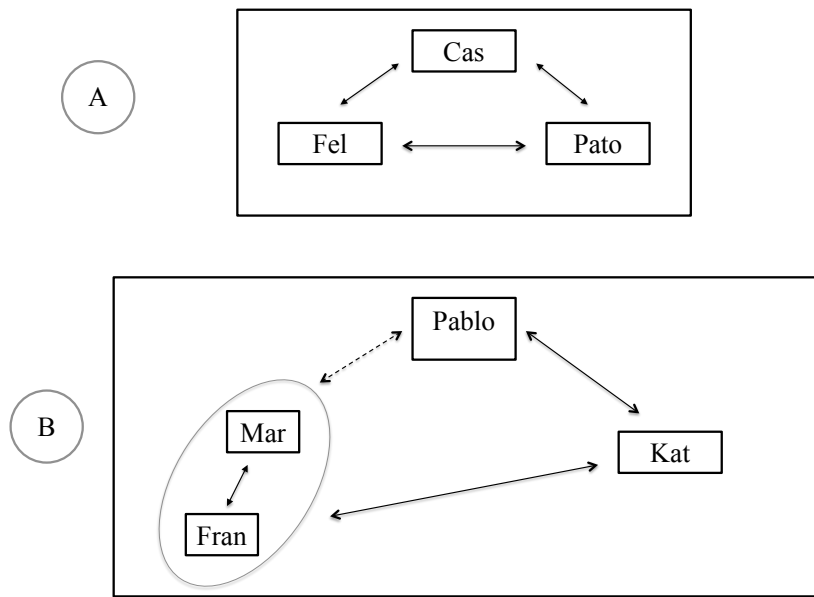
Figure 6: Dual configuration following the *Split*

Section 1 – Contrapuntal Structure

The way the dual configuration developed made me think of what in musical terms

would be referred to as counterpoint. I therefore started adopting a contrapuntal

approach to work on the first section of the scenic motif. I was not happy with a two-

part configuration. I felt it was becoming too safe for the actors, something which was

hindering the dramaturgical flow. I needed to break the dual configuration and develop

a third layer. I asked Pablo to break away from formation B and start establishing new

associations with both formations A and B (DVD 01:09:48). This instruction was aimed

at initiating a tripartite configuration. I thought that if Pablo remained absorbed in one

of the formations, the structural development would weaken. My decision was based on

the way the actors where establishing their presence in relation to each other and in the

way they were shaping their activity rhythmically and melodically. I wanted tension and

thought that this could be obtained if Pablo was put in a situation of having to deal with

the different rhythms emerging from the two formations. Pablo soon started to play with this new dynamic by situating himself in the middle between A and B and seeking to establish rhythmic and vocal association with both formations. This gave an interesting twist to the whole scene. It was a dramaturgical decision purely related to the rhythms and melodies produced by the actors.
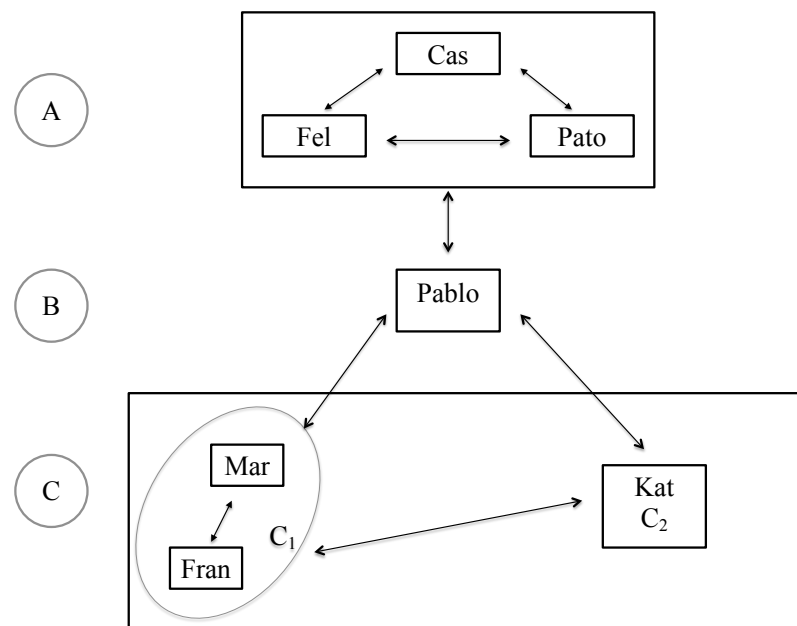

Figure 7: Tripartite configuration

We decided to retain this tripartite configuration (figure 7) and from it continue to develop the scene. Its dynamics were complex but interesting. From a musical form point of view I was working contrapuntally by letting the three formations (lines) develop in relation to each other without in any way trying to stop or deviate any of them from taking its course. In order for this to develop further the actors needed to be constantly aware what each other was doing and proposing. Since this was not a narrative-led dramaturgy indications to the actors could work only if they followed a

relational attitude.

The structure of the tripartite configuration developed as follows:

Formation A: Castaldo, Felipe, and Patrizio

The actors in this formation continued with the original chanting. Eventually they started developing melodies and rhythms independently from Formation B of the dual configuration.

Formation B: Pablo

Pablo was instructed to establish a difference with respect to Formation C of which he previously formed part. This difference was to be manifested in his rhythms and vocal work, which now included a text. The text was not a pre-written script but something that the actor improvised based on a childhood memory. More than the content the dramaturgy needed the text's musical dimension. His task was to 'play' with the other three actors. Confront them with his rhythms and develop rhythmic tensions through difference.

Formation C: Katia, Marta, and Francesca

Formation C was divided into C_1 and C_2

C_1: Katia: Her task was to directly confront Pablo – she would start by developing different rhythms to Pablo and by developing a counter melody to his voice work. (Although not a musician, Katia is the most musical of the ensemble. I could therefore ask her to develop a counter melody.)

Initially her melody followed the general rhythm as established before the *Split*. I suggested she should risk more with her singing and venture beyond the notes. The counter melody improved when Katia started to develop a physical counter disposition to Pablo. Later I told Katia not to prepare the melody outside the work and insert into the practice. Whatever she sings must develop while

working physically with the others. For the way we were working this instruction was crucial. For the dramaturgy to develop the actors needed to generate their material during the practice.

C_2: Marta and Francesca worked together as a duo in relation to Katia and in relation to Pablo. Their tension with Pablo should not result from direct confrontation, but rather as residue of a difference (similar in concept to the free part in a fugue).

The C_1- C_2 formation was a development of the discreet subdivisions already apparent in the dual configuration.

This contrapuntal structure was never divulged to the actors. It was my own structural configuration in order to work on the scenic motif. The structure also provided me with a contextual framework within which I could play with the differences and tension generated by rhythms and melodies. Therefore the contrapuntal element informed the dramaturgical decisions I was making.

As director I was giving directions related to the way the actors were to establish and develop associations. From the inside, Castaldo was working directly on these associations. The rhythms of the three formations were different. Chaos would be avoided via the organic dimension of the work i.e. the sensorial element that was addressed in the actors' daily work with the three exercises we developed around our needs. I was interested in the way the "performance persona" of each actor was developing with respect to the rhythmic and melodic associations they were generating. The notion of performance persona emerged in view of the fact that we had no narrative upon which a character could be developed. Notwithstanding, the actors were developing personae that from the outside, as first spectator, I could relate to. Although

these personae could not be configured as characters, yet each had their own qualities
determined by the rhythms and vocal actions that the actors were developing. These
qualities were visible in terms of the actors' physical dispositions. Following the *Split,*
Pablo, who before that moment was an actor working on an exercise, started developing
qualities which determined his behaviour and my perception of it from the outside. It
was with respect to these qualities, which were shaping the persona that Pablo was
developing, that I was directing my dramaturgical propositions in terms of the
contrapuntal structure (and other structures) described here. Performance personae are
one of the major developments that emerge from musicalised dramaturgies. The idea of
a performance persona is directly related to the fact that what the actors were generating
was qualified via its rhythms and melodic nature when performed. This contrasts with
what happens with characters within a plot that are 'conceptualised' a priori and made
to function within a story-line before they are performed. These characters are
eventually represented by the actors, something which in the case of performance
personae is not possible. Performance personae cannot be represented but can only
develop as performed presences.

Section 2 – Concerto Structure

Following the initial section the scene developed into what I thought was close to the
idea of a concerto in Western music. For Section 2, formation A and formation C
merged leaving formation B (Pablo) on its own (DVD 00:15:29). This was similar to
the moment prior to the tripartite configuration. Now, however, I was letting the dual
structure develop and taking its course. A new dynamic was established where *tutti*
would work in relation to Pablo and vice versa. The *tutti* did not retain the differences
that had been established before when they were part of two different formations (A and

C). Any differences would only remain as residual awareness within each actor.

This dynamic was objectively simpler than the tripartite configuration of Section 1. The two sections contained qualities and rhythmic differences which the scene needed in order to develop further. The complexity of Section 1 and the relatively less complex nature of Section 2 that followed it (figure 8), equipped the scene with the appropriate rhythmic tensions without which it could not move forward. Pablo's task was to play with different rhythms. He worked on acknowledging the differences between his solo work and the *tutti*. One way of doing this was for Pablo to deliberately oppose and confront the rhythm generated by the *tutti*. *Tutti* would accept Pablo's rhythm and Pablo would again confront their convergence. This play continued for a while before the scene proceeded to a third section.
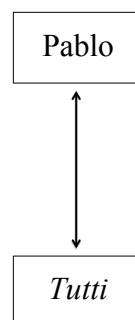
```
┌─────────┐
│  Pablo  │
└─────────┘
     ↑
     │
     ↓
┌─────────┐
│  Tutti  │
└─────────┘
```

Figure 8: Concerto structure

Section 3 – Choral

In this section all parties were united in a kind of choral or communal gathering. While there would be a deliberate attempt to establish harmony, this did not mean that tensions between actors would be quashed. All actors were aware of the different rhythms and vocal gestures which had developed throughout the scene, both within them and in relation to the others. They would now play with all these differences and attempt to

diminish the divergence between them. The actors were instructed to play with looks and gazes and to absorb the tensions with their eyes, thus transferring rhythms to one part of the body. In this way, these tensions go thorough a transference process, where the different physical rhythms would not be discarded but relocated. The process of relocating the rhythms was different for every actor and had direct effects on the melodies they were chanting, in that now these melodies developed new qualities which the actors had to retain. This process was opening up the potential of the material and led us to further transform the choral dimension into a series of brief solos based on the material each individual actor was doing in the choral (DVD 00:17:27). This was done by relocating, once again, the rhythms that were previously transformed into looks and gazes. The transferring process is in itself a process of play which the actors use in order to generate new actions, as was the case in this particular situation. In the end the choral element was therefore hidden although its melodies and rhythms were retained as associations.

Throughout the three sections of the scene the associations suggested by the directors and developed by the actors were purely rhythmical and melodic. This approach was adopted for all the other scenes that made up the performance structure. A musicalised dramaturgy is a dramaturgy that broadens the possibilities of the performative element. Musicality expands the possibilities of the performance text and opens up to the potentials of emergent narratives. Narratives emerge as a process of the collaboration between those involved in the creation including performers and audiences. With musicalised dramaturgies the closure of representation is postponed and gives way to the potentials of change and mutations. In this way the performance becomes a process of 'becoming' very much in a musical sense, where the musical is not presented as text but is ontologically located as a process of performance.

Conclusion

> There is a sense also in which all the arts of the West, including
> music […] aspire to the condition of the theater.
>
> Christopher Small, *Musicking*

In my research I have sought to identify musicalised dramaturgies as one of a range of alternatives to dramaturgies of representation. I am, therefore, not making an exclusive claim that musicalisation alone has the potential to challenge representational methods of theatre making. Other possible strategies exist that may result in open narrative structures not dominated by literary texts, including physical theatre forms which I referred to in my Introduction. The study presented in this research project was, in fact, not aimed at underlining the importance of physicality in theatre. As Frank Chamberlain argues, when seeking to develop a better vision for and definition of physical-based performance, '[w]hat would it mean for a piece of theatre to be non-physically based? As soon as it's theatre it's physical' (in Murray and Keefe 2007b: 151). Rather, the aim of my research was to contribute further, via the application of musicalised processes, to ongoing investigations into body-oriented theatre practices that venture beyond the representation and interpretation of scripts.

Musicalised dramaturgies were investigated in practice through the performance structure *Welcoming the End of the World* and developed as a theoretical discourse based on the practical element. Both theory and praxis were articulated as a critique of theatrical practice understood as means of representation. Behind the development of musicalised dramaturgies there lay from the beginning an incredulity towards ideas which hindered the non-representational potential of theatrical expression. With my

proposal of musicality as dramaturgy I wanted to explore the means whereby alternative paradigms of practice can replace the very structures which make the performance of theatre a moment of closure through the representation of an 'other'.

The idea of developing dramaturgies of non-representation was framed around a Deleuzian critique which formulates a conception of representation in terms of a causal process. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze develops amongst other things a critical method against representation. He argues that '[w]ith representation concepts are like possibilities, but the subject of representation, determines the object as really conforming to the concept, as an essence' (2004: 240). The cause and effect dynamic which Deleuze uses to formulate his understanding of representation, is mirrored in my analysis of traditional dramaturgies which in Chapter IV I referred to as causal dramaturgies. At the end of the causal process of representation Deleuze locates knowledge as result. He wants, instead, to promote the idea of 'learning' as process and argues that learning has a different nature to knowledge in that it 'evolves entirely in the comprehension of problems as such, in the apprehension and condensation of singularities and in the *composition of ideal events and bodies*' (2004: 241, my emphasis). Knowledge, on the other hand, 'is *realised* by the recollection of the thought object and its recognition by a thinking subject' (240, my emphasis). Deleuze's understanding of knowledge as 'realisation', therefore a moment of 'closure', was revelatory and had a direct effect on the development of my research. Deleuze considers representation as an 'element of knowledge' (240), placing it in the trajectory of closure. My approach to develop musicalised dramaturgies as relational dramaturgies, instead of causal dramaturgies, was a consequence of the urge to avoid the closure of representation, which, as I pointed out in the course of my discussion, is a concern shared by various contemporary theatre practitioners. Musicalised dramaturgies avoid

the realisation of a final result by means of the postponement of meaning. This is achieved via a reconsideration of dramaturgy which is now proposed as the relationship between actors and audience, a proposal made possible by the relational dimension of musical dramaturgies. As process this is similar to Deleuze's understanding of 'learning'. Musicalised dramaturgies are processes of composition of events and bodies that are concretised only in performance, and cannot therefore be either referred to or represented.

The main argument of this research was framed around the question of whether musicality as dramaturgy has the potential to address these issues. I channeled musicalised dramaturgies as processes aimed as a critique of the metanarratives that arrest the development of the non-representational in theatre, but also, and more importantly, as alternative to dramaturgies of representation. My research responds to Deleuze's idea of

> a new theatre or a new (non-Aristotelian) interpretation of the theatre; a theatre of multiplicities opposed in every respect to the theatre of representation, which leaves intact neither the identity of the thing represented, nor author, nor spectator, nor character nor representation which, through the vicissitudes of the play, can become the object of a production of knowledge or final recognition.
>
> (2004: 241)

Indeed, musicalised dramaturgies are dramaturgies of multiplicities which, because of their very nature, cannot represent *a* thing. Furthermore, throughout my investigation of the conditions of possibility of musicality as dramaturgy I addressed all the elements which according to Deleuze will not be left intact with the emergence of a 'new theatre'. Musicalised dramaturgies directly question the relevance of the author via the avoidance of starting from a given a priori literary text. Authority leads to hierarchies which musicalised dramaturgies are alien to. The creation of characters was also a matter of critique in view of the fact that the plot within which characters develop and

with respect to which they function is not a generative element. With musicalised

dramaturgies, narratives and stories are emergent elements not sources for action.

Characters have been replaced by performance personae that each actor develops with

respect to the musical elements around which her/his work is framed. The postponement

of narrative, related, as it were, to the postponement of meaning, is also possible

because of the way the spectator is recontextualised as an active element of the

performative matrix. Musicalised dramaturgies acknowledge that the presence of the

audience will have a direct effect on the way dramaturgies develop. All these

reconsiderations question the identity of the thing represented via a critique framed

around the non-referential quality manifested in the musical condition. Musicality in

terms of 'its resounding in itself' (after Nancy) provided me with appropriate tools to

develop a practice based on self-referential processes where the *presence* of those

involved in the process of performance is of primary consideration. Musicalised

dramaturgies cannot exist as representations in that they do not refer to something

outside of them. Via the development of rhythmic and melodic association as

kinaesthetic processes I developed a way to create dramaturgies that respond to the non-

representational call of contemporary theatre practices framed around a postdramatic

critical context.

The very core of musicalised dramaturgies is in fact the shift from rational

associations – which trigger the process of *mise-en-scène* in dramaturgies of

representation – to rhythmic and melodic associations, i.e. the sources that generate the

development of action in musicalised dramaturgies. Melodies and rhythms in

musicalised dramaturgies are developed as kinaesthetic elements articulated in terms of

repetitions and differences. The difference-repetition paradigm around which

musicalised dramaturgies are framed also put me in line with Deleuze's critique of

representation. As James Williams argues, according to Deleuze 'true difference and repetition are excluded by representation' because 'representation privileges identity, analogy, opposition and similarity over pure difference and repetition' (2003: 120). The non-representational dimension of musicalised dramaturgies is possible at all because associations are shifted to musical elements.

The practitioners and observers discussed in this dissertation all influenced my work. All of them, in one way or another, approached issues related to non-representation. Stanislavsky is perhaps the practitioner who appears to have been the least directly involved with a non-representational approach. Indeed he was still operating within a context which, prior to Artaud's call for a new language for the theatre, did not yet consider the literary dimension and the weight it carried as detrimental to the performative dimension of theatre. However, as I argued earlier, Stanislavsky was the first theatre practitioner to acknowledge the importance of physicalising the act of theatre. He did this by focusing on rhythm via which the actors could develop a kinaesthetic framework for their actions. Stanislavsky's input with respect to physicalisation at such an early stage in the course of the twentieth century, in fact, determined my decision to discuss him on his own before Nietzsche and Grotowski.

Nietzsche was aiming at a critique of the referentiality of theatre in view of what theatre stood for in his day, *viz.* an expression justified as a medium to interpret literary masterpieces of great authors. This was clearly not Stanislavsky's agenda, since his work was in support of the interpretation of dramatic texts of this nature. Nietzsche directly addressed language in theatre and via his Apollonian-Dionysian bond ushered in a critique that pointed at a musical ontology in theatrical expression. This critique is one of the issues at the centre of twentieth-century contemporary theatre approaches and

scholarship. In fact as Deleuze argues, '*The Birth of Tragedy* was not a reflection on ancient theatre so much as the practical foundation of a theatre of the future' (2004: 10). The theatre that Nietzsche promoted was a theatre located beyond representation, and started to emerge as practice during the 1960s. Jerzy Grotowski was one of the first proponents of this approach hence my decision to develop a critique of Grotowski's work with respect to Nietzsche.

Musical ontology, via embodied musicality, and the dislocation of the logocentric hold on theatre practice led me to develop musicalised dramaturgies as alternative dramaturgies whose source is not language or discursive practices. Musicalised dramaturgies are not based on literary texts or a priori narratives, something which in turn makes the very process of a *mise-en-scène* virtually impossible. In conclusion, I claim that the main contribution of my research and the justification of my arguments lie in the fact that as processes of composition, musicalised dramaturgies follow a trajectory which is triggered by kinaesthetic infrastructures that replace literary ones. Musicalised dramaturgies transcend notions of putting something on stage. Instead, practitioners using musicalised dramaturgies develop a practice where the material created is put into evidence and shared with an audience. Rather than interpreting the activity of the performers, the audience partakes in it actively, thus becoming an agent in the generation of meaning. Musicalised dramaturgies are alternative dramaturgies in that they recontextualise both the sources of action and the way actions are presented, rather than represented, in performance. As processes, musicalised dramaturgies postpone closure and open up a path leading to a theatrical act developed as shared experience through presence.

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Appendix I: List of Scenes in *Welcoming the End of the World*

The following is the list of scenes as it appeared in the programme distributed for the première of *Welcoming the End of the World* as part of the Malta Arts Festival in Malta, Valletta on 10th and 11th July 2011.

Scenes:

1. Welcoming Party
2. The Monkey Master — Yellow Jungle Scene
3. The Tree
4. The Little Man's Proposal – Building a Boat
5. My Ship is on the Ocean – 'why do you want to avoid the End?'
6. The Little Man's Revenge – 'I always wanted to kill somebody!'
7. The Voice of Humanity
8. Vibrations 'from the beginning of time'
9. Ohm! – 'I'm afraid!'
10. The Lecture – 4 steps
11. The Searcher and the Finder
12. The Medusa – Blackout Scene
13. Torches...and a Candle
14. Apocalypse – 'I have seen the beginning of the End!'
15. Let's play – *Somos niños en un cuerpo; jugando*
16. I don't know how to play!
17. Madness – Standing in the Doorway
18. The Prayer – O*mmna Marija*
19. Recognition – 'We are a dancing group of atoms…singing and dancing among the stars.'

Appendix II: Texts used in *Welcoming the End of the World*

The following texts were referred to, with some material drawn loosely from them, in the process of creation and during the performance of *Welcoming the End of the World*:

Auster, P., (2010), *In the Country of Last Things*. London: Faber and Faber.

Capra, F., (2000), *The Tao of Physics*. Boston: Shambhala.

Hughes, T., (2003) 'Cave Birds' in *Collected Poems*. Paul Keegan (ed.), London: Faber & Faber.

The Book of Revelation in *The Jerusalem Bible*, (1968), Alexander Jones (ed.), New York: Doubleday & Company.

Appendix III: Newspaper Reviews

Two reviews of the performance *Welcoming the End of the World* appeared on the Sunday Times of Malta following the première. 'Endings are but New Beginnings' by André Delicata was published on the online version of the newspaper on 13th July 2011 at http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20110713/arts-entertainment/Endings-are-but-new-beginnings.375329. 'A Dancing Group of Atoms' by Paul Xuereb was published on 17th July 2011. It can be accessed electronically at http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20110717/arts-entertainment/A-dancing-group-of-atoms.376177.

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Endings are but New Beginnings

By André Delicata

When things appear to be imploding and our world comes crashing down around us, it's not uncommon to feel as though all that we know and believe in has lost its meaning and we begin to question our existence while concurrently trying to save or maintain it. This is what happens to the seven characters presenting the performance art piece Welcoming the End of the World, a production by Laboratorio di Castaldo Theatre Ensemble. Presented as part of the Malta Arts Festival, this theatrical company, which is known in Italy as the Laboratorio Permanente di Ricerca sull'Arte dell'Attore, is not

new to Malta, having performed here in previous editions of the Arts Festival and Notte Bianca and given workshops in collaboration with the University of Malta.

Understandably, their vision is very much a technical-educational approach which combines the study of theatre as an academic subject as well as adopting and expressing specific genres and methods of doing theatre. Thus it is a combination of physical theatre, rhythm and song, with Grotowski's techniques based on Peter Brooks's notion of "art as a vehicle" which "allows man to have access to another level of perception is to be found in the art of performance". This idea of enhanced perception was foremost in their construction of this performance piece, which was devised around four texts – F.J. Capra's The Tao of Physics, T. Hughes's Cave Birds, Paul Auster's In the Country of Last Things and St John's Apocalypse.

The seven actors – Katia Caputo, Marta Laneri, Francesca Netto, Domenico Castaldo, Felipe Arellano, Juan Pablo Corvallan and Patricio Yovane executed their parts with ease and grace in their fluid movements and their choral chanting worked well to evoke the random development of events which our lives often have. When the characters they play give seven points of view on the end of the world – with Mr Castaldo playing the presenter, while the others play a motley cast of characters with their own quirks and foibles; their perspectives often clash, exposing friction and conflict spread over nineteen short scenes.

Religious, scientific and agnostic ideas rub shoulders with each other in an experimental version of theatre that focuses perhaps rather too much on substance and not very much on plot. The interesting use of multiple languages reflected the confusion experienced by the characters – with Italian, Spanish and the occasional smattering of French and Maltese woven into the longer excerpts in English – creating a sense of internal conflict struggling for a resolution at the end. When presenting a piece like this

to a general audience, one must bear in mind that not everybody's perception is attuned to understand the art of such a performance and this was its greatest set back. It is true that the experimental nature of this production was presented in this form. However, a certain regard for the audience type ought to be taken into account. What was particularly hard to follow for some were, strangely the excerpts in English.

This is because when you do not understand a language (like Spanish for instance), you allow the words to wash over and around you, taking in their musicality and picking up on tone and interpretation. However, if you find yourself struggling to clearly understand a language you know, then you make a greater effort to follow and lose the external lyricism of the linguistic tone. What was very much in evidence was the hard work that went into the production in terms of the technical nature of the performances, in conjunction with the stunning lighting effects from dramatic backlighting to candles and torches during a gripping blackout scene. At this point the use of silhouettes and shadows on the courtyard walls and the massive well-arch in the centre of the courtyard, created an ethereal effect which was reminiscent of an oriental deity.

These led towards the final scenes of realisation that the world will never truly end because time is in continuous flux and, in the presenter's concluding words of wisdom, "when time is over, you go somewhere else…", thus implying that there are infinite gyrations of existence carefully coiled in man's strong resistance to annihilation, and acting as the one element which ensures the survival of the human spirit.

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A Dancing Group of Atoms

By Paul Xuereb

Welcoming the End of the World (Laboratorio di Castaldo at the Malta Arts Festival, Auberge d'Italie) is a work based on the collaborative work of its directors, Domenico Castaldo and Mario Frendo, and its Italian/Spanish cast.

The text includes quotations from Ted Hughes, F.J. Capra and P. Auster and also from the book of the Apocalypse, and the texture as a whole is vaguely poetical.

The narrative is based on the frequently recurring predictions and fears that the end of the world is nigh.

Castaldo, one of the two co-directors, also plays a leading role as an energetic Everyman figure, desperately trying to amuse the audience and begging them to ditch their worries and be ready to admit new ideas.

In fact, the audience is invited to be active about what is said and done, to join the cast in their preparation for the supposed end, and to create individually their own interpretations of what they are experiencing.

The performers then lead the audience a merry dance involving scenes of monkey gods in the jungle, violence, apocalyptic darkness and chaos, madness, and desperate prayers to the Maker and to his Mother.

Of course, the world does not end, but has this occurred through divine intervention? The last episode of the production comes out with the poetical suggestion that we are "a dancing group of atoms, dancing among the stars."

I am not sure if these atoms are also powered by the soul that the audience are humorously supposed to have brought along with them to the show.

Like some other members of the audience, I sometimes had problems

understanding what some of the members of the cast were saying in English spoken with a very noticeable Italian accent.

This did not prevent me from getting the general drift of what was being intended in some cases if not in others, an example of the latter being the episode The Searcher and the Finder, in which Ted Hughes' Cave Birds is spoken and yet I could not make it out.

I have learned from one of the co-directors, Frendo (who is also chairman of the festival) that the production is for him part of his academic doctoral work exploring musicality as an alternative form of expression to the traditional verbal one.

While I have no doubt the production sometimes succeeds in breaking the linguistic barrier and creating vital dramatic moments through music and choreographic movements, I must also admit there were episodes where I could follow what was happening only in the most superficially perceptive mode.

I have also yet to learn how to perceive the 'vibrations' to which we are asked by the play to listen, vibrations "that have been there since the beginning of time". The production, performed in the Auberge d'Italie's old courtyard, is colourful and musically attractive. The Laboratorio's training schedule for its students from many lands produces actors who are athletic, physically expressive and able to sing. Castaldo certainly does a good job.

Appendix IV: Accompanying DVD

The accompanying DVD consists of two features: *Welcoming the End of the World* and *Development of a Scenic Motif*.

1. *Welcoming the End of the World*

Full performance documentation of *Welcoming the End of the World* performed in Malta, 11th and 12th July 2011.

Actors:

Katia Capato, Marta Laneri, Francesca Netto, Felipe Arellano, Domenico Castaldo, Juan Pablo Corvalan, and Patricio Yovane.

Lighting Design:

Paula Castillo

Directors:

Mario Frendo and Domenico Castaldo

Performed in English, Italian, Spanish, and Maltese.

Welcoming the End of the World was commissioned by the Malta Arts Festival (Malta). It was supported by The Grotowski Institute (Poland), Comune di Torino, Circoscrizione 7 del Comune di Torino – Regione Piemonte, and the Villagio Ecologico di Granara – Granara Festival (Italy).

2. *Development of a Scenic Motif*

The feature shows the development of a section of *The Boat Scene* motif. It covers Section 1 of the description given in chapter 5.3, and starts with a particular situation in a *Chanting* session, where the actors work on vocalisation and body rhythms, from which the *Split* emerged. The rest consists of various sessions of work in January and April 2011 showing how the scene was developing. The feature ends with the section as it was performed in Malta in July 2011.

Weblink to *Welcoming the End of the World* and *Development of a Scenic Motif*:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OO7VTTTZVPY