Thinking is Playing is Thinking. And how do/can you listen?

12-13 December

Street Noise Orchestra, Innsbruck, Austria

The central guiding principle of this workshop series can be stated in the words of David Elliott which he expressed in *Music Matters: A new Philosophy of Music Education* (1995, p. 97) : "… the basics of MUSIC are the practice-specific thinking processes that musicers and listeners use to construct musical patterns in their auditory, artistic and contextual fullness."

During these four workshops, participants (with **AMBO** as guides and collaborators) will work out co-creatively how an exploration of Elliott's statement can impact their own current praxes. Activities will be based upon AMBO's work in Embodied Cognition and Improvisation, while ideas regarding the strong connection between thinking/playing and listening will form the foundation.

In short, we will play together and find out how time is timed, how space is spaced, and how shapes are shaped.

1) It's about time

What is meter for? What is entrainment, and how is an understanding of this useful for musicians?

Our basic concept will be 'time-fields'. We will work on strategies to start and end them, to position one after the other, and to join them in a variety of ways. We will explore how the sounds that we put into time-fields shape the characteristics and relationships of time-fields, and we will find out how the content of time fields (specifically rhythmic patterns) can be organised and transformed.

Related terms: tempo, beat, phrase, motive, theme

2) All the space you need

What phenomena do we hear when we hear sound space(s)? Let's start to clear our confusion…

Our basic concept will be 'layers'. We will explore the functions of layers, how they start, continue and end, and what general characteristics they have, as well as how they can be transformed. We will examine our understanding of the construct of 'sound space' to see what lies underneath superficial understandings.

Related terms: pitch, contour, melody, interval, chord, cadence, tendencies of tones

3) When shapes become FORM

When does the over-all shape of a composition, improvisation or song convince and interest us? How do we create wholes out of parts?

Our basic concepts will be 'dynamic forms' and 'directional forces'. We will explore how various musical dimensions (such as register, tonal forces, harmonic tensions, thematic content, tempo changes, changes in volume and mass) interact with the ways that our attention is shaped by the sounds in order to create a form. We will re-visit and refine the experiences that we gathered in the first three workshops regarding Simple ←→ Complex; Part ←→Whole; One ←→Many; and Distinctive ←→Anonymous.

Related terms: development, coherence, contrast, transformation, variation

4) Play-think Sessions: playing processes that play

During the final workshop, we will rehearse the song *Last call to the moon* (by Hannes Taljaard) to find out how the concepts that we developed during the first three workshops can be useful. We will then work on a sound improvisation that can introduce the ideas and feelings expressed in the lyrics of the song. The workshop will close with a recorded video and sound performance of the sound improvisation and the song by all participants: One take, that's all!

Each of the workshops starts with structured **experiences**. You will reflect on these experiences, in order to determine what skills, knowledge and insights you need to develop as **foundations** in order to cultivate the practice-specific thinking processes related to musical actions of active listening, performing, composing and improvising. During the last part of each workshop we delve deeper into our experiences, and reflect in order to see which distinctions (let's call this **differentiations**) we need to hear and understand in order to become better at what we love. We will aim to close every workshop with a performance that will gather and display some (maybe most) of what you learned during that workshop.