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Embodied Composition: The Creation of Enriched Interactional Experiences Through Music Composition

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By

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ABSTRACT

Music is a form of embodied interaction through which people can synchronize their motor, sensory, and emotive systems. Anthropologists and developmental psychologists suggest that elements of music provide the groundwork for verbal interaction and interpersonal relationships (Aiello, 1996; Dissanayake, 2000; Mithen, 2006). When people interact with each other through music, the bases of community are formed. Phenomenological descriptions of individual's experience of music and the role music plays in interpersonal interaction have been documented. However, there is little literature describing the embodied experiences of music composers as the architects of embodied interactions through music. Through this study, I address this topic by answering the following research questions: (1) How is composition an embodied experience? (2) How does music generate embodied interactions between composers, performers, and audience members?

To answer these research questions, I interviewed five music composers (four males and one female). I analyzed these interviews using Smith's (1996) Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Using IPA, I worked to understand and describe the participants' embodied experiences of music composition. Through my analysis, I came across the following three themes: (1) "Composition: Creating Music through the Embodiment of Inspiration, Intuition and Craft"; (2) "From Inception to Reception: Enriched, Transcendent Interactions through Music"; and (3) "Self of Composer: Development of Musical Expression through Compositional Experience".

The descriptions of the aforementioned themes highlight several key findings. First, music composition involves the interplay of inspiration, intuition, and knowledge of

music. These embodied experiences of the composer become the nexus of interactional experiences for performers and audience members. Second, music composition enriches a composer's intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions as music provides a more direct way of conveying sensory and emotional experiences (compared to conventional interactions). Third, the composer's embodied experiences become the nexus of community for the performers and audience members who participate in the composer's music.

This study describes the role a composer has in the embodied, interactional experiences of music. Through my analysis, the composer can be viewed as the protagonist of community—joining people together through their music in different spaces and different times.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

> "…if music begins, as I have suggested, as a stirring of the body, we can recall the state in which it was conceived by getting into the body movement of the music and so feeling it very nearly as the composer felt it." –John Blacking (1973, p. 111)

On the evening of February 20th, 2015, I attended my first Minnesota Orchestra concert at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis. Minnesota Orchestra was celebrating the 150th birthday of Finnish composer Jean Sibelius by performing his Symphony No. 3, Violin Concerto, and Symphony No. 1. To punctuate the occasion, world renowned American violinist, Hilary Hahn, guest performed as the violin soloist for Sibelius' Violin Concerto.

I anticipated a moving performance, but I had not previously considered how intrinsically, embodied Ms. Hahn's violin performance would be. She was not merely playing her violin; she was *dancing* with it. Ms. Hahn leaned inward and outward with her core during each musical phrase. As I watched, I was memorized by the way her whole body swayed in and out with each stroke of her bow. She gracefully pivoted her hips while springing up and down from her knees—to manipulate the momentum and intensity of her sound. Her right arm flowed in and out of its full extent as her left hand fluttered effortlessly through the fingerings. During the performance, it became clear to me that to play the violin solo to its full extent, Ms. Hahn needed to perform from her entire body. Lest the emotions of the concerto fall flat.

Even though I was yards away from where she was standing on the stage, in that moment I believe I was experiencing some of the same emotions Ms. Hahn was. Throughout my entire body. As I look back on that moment, I find myself wondering

what Sibelius himself had experienced while he composed this music. Was I experiencing some of the same feelings he was? Was Ms. Hahn? Were the other performers in the orchestra too? What about the rest of the audience? Jean Sibelius composed his violin concerto over a century ago, yet here we were, hundreds of people from hundreds of different places sharing this experience. A transcendental experience that had been architected by Sibelius in the early 1900s.

Anthropologists and developmental psychologists speculate that human interaction and language stem from musical influences (Fernland 1991; Aiello, 1996; Dissanayake, 2000; Mithen, 2006). Humans rely on melodic and rhythmic elements of vocalization to communicate intent and emotion in speech (Fernland, 1989). As human infants are preverbal, caregivers rely on melodic qualities of speech to communicate with infants (Mithen, 2006). These melodic elements of communication are also used to modulate emotion for others (Falk, 2004).

Music can be phenomenologically viewed as an embodied experience. Rather than being a punctuated, symbolic interaction, embodiment encompasses communication as an ongoing, interactive experience. The individual and their knowledge develop as the body encounters objects (or other bodies), in specific spaces, during specific times (Sekimoto, 2012). Through practice (or habitual interactions, with other people and objects, in specific spaces, during specific times) a person develops knowledge, a sense of self, and a sense of others.

The embodied experience of music begins within the body of the musician. The nervous and motor systems of the body rhythmically coordinate to create and modulate sounds (Benzon, 2001; Perry & Szalavitz 2006). When performers join with each other

and the audience through music, their bodies synchronize to receive and respond to each other's interactions according to the composer's direction (Condon, 1986; Benzon, 2001). When people synchronize in musical interaction, they develop a sense of cooperation and unity (McNeill, 1995; Benzon, 2001; Mithen, 2006; Perlovsky, 2010).

Composers attempt to replicate natural, sensory experiences through their compositions (Sessions, 1950; Negrotti, 2012). The composer's goal is ultimately to create a specific embodied experience for performers and audience members. Overall, there is a lack of literature focusing on the embodied experiences of composition, compared to the literature regarding general embodied experiences of music.

Purpose of Study

Music offers modes of interaction where performers, audience, and composer can connect through synchronized exchange of sensory experiences. This form of interaction challenges the traditional views of communication in which communication is symbolic, punctuated. Within the field of communication studies, there is a lack of research which focuses on music as communicative interaction. Empirical descriptions of the composer's embodied experience within musical interactions appear to be particularly limited.

To address these areas of research I chose to examine the ways in which composers use their embodied experiences to construct embodied experiences for others to interact within. Through this inquiry, I seek to answer the following research questions: (1) How is composition an embodied experience? (2) How does music generate embodied interactions between composers, performers, and audience members? To answer these questions, I interviewed five music composers and analyzed these interviews using Smith's (1996) Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. Smith's method

requires the researcher to inquire, interpret, and reflect on the nature of the participants' lived experiences. My aim in using this methodology was to attempt to understand and describe my participants' phenomenological experiences of composition.

This research provides a phenomenological understanding of the embodied experience of music composition, an area research that does not seem to exist at this point. Most of the existing phenomenological descriptions of music describe people's general experiences of music, but do not focus on the unique experiences of the composer. This is an important phenomenon of focus as the composer is the architect musical experiences for others. Furthermore, phenomenological descriptions of people's embodied experiences through music help us understand the ontological significance of music. This study sheds light on the adage that "music is a universal language" in clarifying the role of music in interpersonal interactions.

In the following chapters I, first, review the existing literature regarding the role of music in interpersonal relationships, phenomenological understandings of embodied experience, phenomenological understandings of music as an embodied experience, and the embodied experiences of the composer. Second, I describe the methodology I employed in this study, including a description of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis and profiles of the participants I interviewed for this inquiry. Third, I present the themes I discovered through my analysis of the interviews I conducted. Finally, I address my research questions, implications from these findings, limitations, and directions for future research in the conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Music offers its participants (i.e., composer, performer, and audience) a means of embodied interactionism that precedes linguistic communication. While shared symbols are used in conventional language to convey shared meanings, acoustic elements (e.g., rhythm, speed, intensity, and pitch) are characteristics are used to articulate an individual's embodied experiences (Mithen, 2005). These same acoustic elements are driving elements of music. As I will explain further on in this chapter, anthropological and developmental psychology research theorize that language has its developmental roots in music.

Research has been conducted to describe the embodied experiences of participants in music, and the ways music allows its participants to join to reconceive and reconstruct their relationships with the world (Benzon, 2001). However, not much attention has been placed on the embodied experiences of the composers of music. For this reason, I examined what the composer's embodied experience of composition. This review will, first, explore how music can become the impetus of interpersonal interactions; second, describe the concept of embodiment as phenomenological communication; third, examine the embodied experience of musicians; and finally, review the existing literature on music composition as an embodied experience.

Music as the Root of Interpersonal Interactions

Spoken language and music share the similar multifaceted phonetic and auditory qualities; both utilize the manipulation of sounds to more fully articulate human experience. Fernland (1989) described the term *prosody*, the melodic and rhythmic elements of (e.g., stress and intonation) spoken language which are used to contextualize

words. In their research, Fernland further explained that listening to prosodic cues allows the audience to identify authentic communicative intent and emotion, cues that that the speaker does not offer through the verbal content of speech. Overall, Fernland argued that, at times, the *melody* of speech is the message, rather than the words themselves.

Music, whether it contains lyrics or not, is created through the manipulation of melodic and rhythmic elements. From this perspective, spoken language is a form of music and music is a language; both consist of performances of rhythmically and melodically constructed sounds to convey an experience. The connection of language and music appears to be much deeper this though. Anthropologists and neuroscientists indicate that the development of language relies on the development of musical properties.

Evolutionary origins. How is it that humans have developed language to interact, but other animals have not? To answer this question, anthropologists have turned to examining the physiological evolution of humanoids. Mithen (2006) and Aiello (1996) highlight evolution to bipedalism as one of the key changes in humanoid body structures to allow the production of music and language. Early ancestors of humans did not initially walk on two legs; once humanoids became bipedal, the anatomy of the skull and spine changed. Rather than the spine emerging from the behind the skull (as it does in most animals), Aiello explained that the spine now emerged from below the skull. Thus, the larynx became less constricted and lied lower in the throat, allowing for greater control and variety of vowel and consonant production. Mithen also explained that further changes in facial structure, dentition, diaphragmatic air support, and an increased nerve flow to the tongue allowed humanoids greater control over and variety of sound

production. With expanded vocal capabilities and greater control over the sounds they could produce, humanoids gained the vocal finesse to expand their melodic abilities to begin creating music and linguistic interaction.

Human development. Previously I highlighted the concept of prosody, the melodic and rhythmic qualities of utterances. Exaggerated prosody is essential in prelinguistic communication, be it humanoid communication prior to the development of verbal language or communication with prelinguistic children. Much of the research on the development of human language comes from language acquisition among infants. The prosodic qualities of infant directed speech (IDS) are exaggerated compared to speech directed between two adult humans. Fernland (1991) explained that across Asian, European, and African cultures, prosody in IDS is exaggerated (i.e., compared to prosody in adult directed speech); containing higher pitches, wider ranges of pitch, and repetition of sounds.

The melodic qualities of speech are emphasized to more effectively communicate with the prelinguistic infant; allowing adults to regulate infant attention, highlight and teach specific words or phrases (Fernland), modulate an infant's mood (Mithen, 2006). Mithen explained that because infants do not understand language, caregivers will speak to them with higher pitches, wider ranges of pitch, hyper articulated syllables, repetition, frequent pauses, and shorter phrases. Infants will respond to and understand the nonverbal qualities of language before they can begin to master verbal language itself.

Because caregivers cannot accurately communicate with or logically reason with an infant, they rely on prosody as a means of expressing while interacting with infants. Through the melodic and rhythmic elements of IDS, caregivers and infants learn how to

communicate their emotions to each other and modulate the other's feelings as a way of interaction and form a prelinguistic bond (Dissanayake, 2000). Therefore, infants not only rely on prosody as a basis to acquire language, but melodic qualities of speech serve to form the foundations of a child's first interpersonal relationships with others.

Because infants are more receptive to melodic and rhythmic interactions than language itself, music can play an important role in emotional modulation of infants. Looking back to humanoid, evolutionary roots, Mithen (2006) explained that when humans evolved to become bipedal, the structure of the pelvic bones changed to support bipedal mobility; which became limiting for the size of newborns to be birthed (Falk, 2004). Therefore, Mithen (2006) explained, much of the physical development an infant goes through, compared to many other animals, occurs postpartum. This delay in development leaves human infants vulnerable and dependent on caregivers for mobility; compared to other animals which have more mobility at birth.

Falk (2004) stated that infant dependence on caregivers for mobility and sustenance gives an evolutionary explanation to why babies become fussy or anxious when they are put down or separated from their caregivers. Early humanoids likely created the first "lullabies" as a way of soothing infants to put them down (or to get infants to sleep) so that the caregivers could perform other tasks such as hunting or gathering (Mithen, 2006 & Falk, 2004). Fernland and Mazzie (1991) also explained that humans often use melodic in low, falling pitches in speech to decrease arousal and calm young children. Musical sounds, in general, can be used to modulate emotion of prelinguistic children. Therefore, melodic and rhythmic elements of language and music become essential the development of emotional regulation among children.

Overall, language relies on melodic content to convey contextual details the words alone cannot address. Anthropologists and developmental psychologists believe that melodic elements of human sounds are the basis on which language and relationships are formed. Language is musical and music by itself is an interactional language. In this sense, humans are musical beings, and the use of musical elements in communication permeate cultures across the world.

Embodiment as Phenomenological Communication

Before I can explain the embodied experience of music, I must detail define what embodiment is. Embodied experience can be viewed as the impetus of communication; the nexus of the body, mind, the outer world, and other people. Embodied experience is fluid, unfinished, and ontologically unique to the individual person. My conceptualization of embodiment is informed by Sekimoto's (2012) multimodal approach to theorizing identity. Sekimoto viewed identity as lived experience, in flux with the "intertwined-ness" of embodied social, political, and symbolic interactions. In this perspective, identity is not a finished product, but an ongoing embodied experience, and it can only be understood through the interaction between intrapersonal forces and external agents.

Embodiment deconstructed. In this study, I view embodiment is as an ontological aspect of being. Communication and identity are both created and practiced with and through the body (i.e., physical movement; cognitive processing; internal, emotive experiences; etc.). Embodiment consists of corporeal and material units of identity. Sekimoto stated that a person's ontological reality develops through interaction with external material and symbolic elements; as objects are habitually brought into contact with one's body (and in contact with the spaces the body occupies), and as body

is used to express experience. For instance, a musician's identity is shaped through rehearsal and performance with their instrument. Before the musician practiced with their instrument, rehearsed, and performed in front of an audience, their body had no phenomenological, first-hand constructs of being a musician. As the individual joins with their instrument in performative spaces, the musician develops an identity rooted in phenomenologically embodied experience. This is not to suggest that 'becoming a musician' is an instantaneous, sudden experience, but rather a gradual process of identity development. A musician's embodied experiences are the nexus of their identity and interpersonal interactions.

The body as the source of knowledge. Embodied experience is what leads to the development of knowledge. The process of habitually joining specific objects to the body, or enacting the body in specific ways in specific places, according to Sekimoto, becomes the impetus of knowledge. Practice is a prime example of the development of knowledge. As the musician habitually practices their instrument, technique and skill are developed. Ultimately, habituated, embodied experience creates a fusion of subject and knowledge "...the knower and the known are indivisible, and therefore knowledge is rearticulated as perceptual and embodied" (Sekimoto, p. 231). The body then becomes a source of knowledge that can then be shared with others. From this perspective, Sekimoto explained, knowledge is both a way of *being* and a way of *doing*—the impetus of sense of self and awareness of the spaces an individual occupies.

Spatiality. Embodiment exists within space; therefore, spatiality is the context in which lived experience occurs. Sekimoto explained space as the area where the body is enacted, constituted, and reenacted. Through Sekimoto's view of identity, elements and

agents which occupy a given space influence the body or bodies that interact with the space. From a phenomenological view, the physical space is a mediator (or like a canvas) through which musical experience is conveyed.

Music is performed in physical space, and different elements of the space where the sound travels will influence the sound. Bandt (2006), stated that acoustic elements of the space (e.g., shape, height, length, width, construction materials, etc.) as well as placement and density of audience influence the way the sounds are experienced. Therefore, Brand stated, the artist is in constant tension between spatial elements while attempting to actuate a desired artistic experience. The sounds contained in a musical composition are physically altered by the space they are performed in; therefore, the same piece of music can sound different when it is performed in different spaces.

Spaces are also subject to political influence by individuals who occupy given spaces. For example, under Stalin's regime in the Soviet Union, composers had to work within state-imposed limitations on what was "acceptable" music (Bernstein, 2000). As within any form of art, the zeitgeist influences reception of a composer's works—for instance, norms within the music industry, composer's discipline, and culture of the audiences influence reception and accessibility of music.

Temporality. Sekimoto (20112) explained that time mediates relations between the body and the world; the present self is constantly being negotiated by the nonlinear intersections of past and present forces. For instance, a musician’s present identity is pushed by their past performances and the abilities they have developed, and is being pulled by the possibilities of their future. While we can view identity in the present tense, we cannot understand it fully without its past and future influences. From a temporal

perspective, identity is unfinished, it flows like a river; form materializes from spaces and elements of past interactions and is moving to toward interactions with spaces and elements in the future.

Music, per Kirby (2015), is organized and modulated by the composer through intervals time. Kirby also explained that music is experienced through *chronometric time* and *perceived time*. Chronometric time is the absolute, objective duration of time in music (e.g., tempo and duration). Although time exists objectively, the individual's experience of time is subjective; which is how Kirby defined perceived time. For example, one person might describe their day as being long or slow, whereas another person might experience their day as short or fast. While individuals experienced the same length of chronometric time, the events which occurred within their day alters their perceived time. Kirby stated that the same principle applies to music, composers can manipulate an audience's perception of time within music with elements of duration, tempo, and rhythm.

Music: An Embodied Experience

Previously I stated that human development and interpersonal relationships are formed on musical elements. I now want to take some time to view music as an embodied experience both intrapersonally and interpersonally. The following sections will explain the creation of music from the body, as well as the ways in which music becomes an interpersonally embodied interaction.

The rhythmic self. When broken down to its base elements, music consists of sounds existing in intervals of time. While rhythm and tempo are used as key elements to sculpt the sounds which become music, rhythm and tempo are also intrinsically found in

embodied movements in general. As Benzon (2001) stated, rhythm is essential for human movement; walking and running, for instance require complex, coordination between nervous system and muscles. The brain must signal specific muscle groups to rhythmically flex and extend in various intervals. The human body begins to internalize rhythms for basic motor control at a young age; as Perry and Szalavitz (2006) speculated that the internalization of rhythm could begin in utero as a developing child begins to sense the rhythm of their mother's heartbeat and bodily functions. Because external movement relies on internal rhythm, the creation of music begins within the body; as internalized rhythms create externalized movements, the body rhythmically modulates sounds. The experience and production of music becomes more complex when multiple performers and/or audience members become part of the same interactional experience.

Rhythmic synchrony with others. When one person speaks, or performs, Condon (1986) stated, their body synchronizes in congruence to the intentions or emotions of their language (i.e., conventional language or music). When two or more people interact, their bodies rhythmically react and respond to each other; like a dance. These rhythmic, preverbal interactions reflect rapport in humans, as Condon stated, "Human communication is fundamentally synchronous and rhythmic. Synchrony and rhythm are primary aspects of individual and interactional behavior" (p. 75). Benzon (2001) explained that these same interactional processes occur when musicians perform with others in the same space. When multiple performers and/or audience members experience a musical event, the music becomes embodied by everyone who shares the performance space.

When multiple people participate in music (i.e., participating in music as performer or audience), a space of communicative interaction occurs; the coupling of minds which can influence the other participants' internal states (Benzon). Participating in music offers embodied interactions which connect participants' minds and bodies. As an illustration, imagine vocalists singing in a choir. Each performer is attuned to the other performers and the conductor; responding and blending to each other's shaping of vowels, intensity of sound, duration of pitches, and articulation of consonants. A pristine choral performance is one in which the performers can attain synchrony with their bodies and minds to produce uniform sounds. With each musical utterance of their fellow performers, the vocalists adjust their sound to match or to bring their different parts together to create the whole.

The adjustments each individual makes during interactional synchrony in music, are minute and intentional. Benzon cites Wiener's (1848) concept of adaptive control to illustrate this process. In conventional interpersonal interactions, participants are attuned to each other's verbal and nonverbal cues, attending and responding to meet their communicative needs. Wiener likened this process to driving a car; the driver is constantly attuned to the road and their surroundings, as the driver receives cues of the vehicle drifting towards the edges of the road, they make subtle adjustments to the steering wheel to keep the vehicle on the desired path. Adaptive control occurs the same way in music, performers attune to motor and emotive output from other performers and adjust their motor and emotive parts accordingly. As Benzon (2001) stated, "...by attending to one another through musicking, performers attune their nervous systems to one another, restructuring their representations of others…" (pp 81-82). Likewise, when

the audience attends a performance, their emotive and motor systems are also responding to the music (e.g., feeling the happiness expressed in the melody or dancing along with the beat).

Embodied interaction with music: The basis of cooperation. Embodied interactions through music offer shared sensory, emotional, and motor experiences which aids in social bonding. On one hand, music can induce specific moods and emotional states for both performers and listeners (Mithen, 2006). As I highlighted previously, melodic and rhythmic sounds (in speech or music) are used to influence moods in infants. Music is used to induce or manipulate moods for adults as well as children. Perlovsky (2010) elaborated on the emotional utility music offers, stating that music is created through emotional mechanisms originating from "primordial connections between voicing and emotions" (p. 23) (i.e., music and language both originated from human melodic and rhythmic utterances). These emotional mechanisms in the melodies and rhythms that underlie music, Perlovsky stated, can be used to differentiate and modulate emotions, restore "the unity of self" (p. 23), and "maintain a sense of purpose of one's life" (p. 23). Therefore, music can be used to manipulate one's emotional experiences or induce emotional states in others.

Several writers have discussed the use of music as a utility to bring people together and to create preverbal interactions. When individuals experience musical events together, endorphins are released in their brains, stimulating pleasure/reward sensations (Mithen, 2006 & McNeill, 1995). Thus, boundary loss occurs as social tensions or nerves that would otherwise prevent individuals from interacting are put at ease, as people begin to interact with each other through music. Mithen (2006) and Benzon (2001) reflect on

this boundary loss process when multiple people interact with each other in the context of music. The participants develop a sense of "we-ness" as their neurological systems synchronize and respond to each other's musical gestures. In this process, the music participants reconstruct their sense of self, their relationship with others, and their relationship with their environment. With embodied musical experiences, participants' phenomenological realities are shaped.

Composition: Crafting Embodied Experiences

The literature indicates that participating in music creates embodied experiences that allow humans preverbal interaction and modulation of emotional experience. However, the literature primarily focuses on music participants as performers and audience members. The literature describing the embodied phenomenological experience of composers is sparse. While composing, the composer is not (usually) actively engaging with the performers or audience members. Although they are not always present for the performance, the composer's embodied experience is the nexus of the interactions which occur during a music event. This final section of the literature review will examine embodied experiences of composers and how composers use music to recreate these experiences for others.

The composer's embodied experience. Within this research, I view embodied experience as multidimensional, involving cognitive, emotive, and behavioral constructs. Literature regarding the phenomenal phenomena of composers highlights their functioning on a sensory level. For instance, Negrotti (2012) claimed that composers exist in a "…sense-based reality, drawing from it mental states and emotions that trigger [their] musical inspiration, drawing from it mental states and emotions that trigger [their]

musical inspiration…" (p. 273). Agreeing with Negrotti, Sessions (1950) wrote that composers think in sensory-based, musical terms, with tones ruminating in their consciousness at all times. Their sensory-based consciousness provides composers with a unique way of observing, interacting with, and making sense of the world, compared to non-musicians. Sessions states that in this state of musical consciousness, composers are sporadically driven to contemplate and engage in experiential inspiration through musical and sensory-based manners, rather than in logical, syntactical, vernacular terms.

This literature describes the composer's embodied experience of perception and thought. What about other physical elements of the composer's experience? Up to this point I have stated that music originates as rhythm and emotions from the body. Blacking (1973) shared these sentiments. He stated:

> Perhaps there is a cross-cultural understanding after all. I do not say that we can experience exactly the same thoughts associated with bodily experience; but to feel with the body is probably as close as anyone can ever get to resonating with another person. I shall not attempt to discuss the issue of musical communication as a physiological phenomenon, but if music begins, as I have suggested, as a stirring of the body, we can recall the state in which it was conceived by getting into the body movement of the music and so feeling it very nearly as the composer felt it. (p. 111)

Perhaps the goal of composition is to attempt to construct the architectures of embodied experiences for others. In this research, I want to explore what these bodily experiences are for composers and how they attempt to communicate them accurately enough for performers and audience members to also experience them.

Crafting embodied experiences for others. In his essays on "The Musical Experience," Sessions (1950) overviewed how musical elements are used to craft an embodied experience for music participants:

> "...music "expresses" something very definite, and that it expresses it in the most precise way. In embodying movement, in the subtlest and most delicate manner possible, it communicates the attitudes inherent in, and implied by, that movement; its speed, its energy, its élan or impulse, its tenseness or relaxation, its agitation or its tranquility, its decisiveness or its hesitation. It communicates in a marvelously vivid and exact way the dynamics and the abstract qualities of emotion, but any specific emotional content the composer wishes to give to it must be furnished, as it were, from without, by means of an associative program. Music not only "expresses" movement, but embodies, defines, and qualifies it. Each musical phrase is a unique gesture and through the cumulative effect of such gestures we gain a clear sense of quality of feeling behind them." (p. 23-24)

Sessions' statement indicative of the emotional facet of music in the sense that music is not a signifier of emotion. Rather, music conveys emotion by encapsulating and qualifying it through sensory input. Ultimately, music provides a qualitative avenue for the composer to externalize emotional experiences for performers and audience to participate in.

Composition creates embodied experiences through reproduction of elements of emotional and sensory experiences. According to Negrotti (2012), music replicates natural phenomena; moreover, instead using *illusion*, music *alludes* to natural sensory experiences. In other words, music is not a symbolic language, music communicates by

providing sensory experiences that reproduce the composer's original image, event, or experience.

The concepts generated and conveyed through music, are messages which cannot be translated explicitly through language. Long (2013) explains, the complex and ambiguous nature of emotions are centered in sensory experiences in the mind and body. Therefore, elements of emotional and sensory experience cannot be textually conveyed through syntactical, structured narratives. Instead of conveying messages through symbols, music *replicates* elements of sensory experiences, allowing performers and audience to participate in these replications. Russian musicologist Boris de Schlözer said (as cited by Negrotti, 2012), "...music, thanks to the overlapping of signifier and signified, has no sense, because it is a sense" (p. 272). In this perspective, music is more of a direct way of conveying experience, compared to verbal language, as elements of embodied experience are conveyed through sensory input rather than symbols.

In Summary

Music can play a role in facilitating interpersonal interactions, in a way that preludes verbal interactions. This is because music *is* an embodied experience—it begins within the body and is externalized to join other participants together. Composers play a unique role in participating in musical interactions as they can architect the experience of music for others. However, there is a lack of research which describes the phenomenological experience of composers as they write music.

In the next section I review the methodology of this research. Within the methodology section, I, first, discuss how I recruited my participants. Second, I describe

how I used interviews as a form of data collection for this project. Finally, I give an overview of how I analyzed and presented the data collected through the interviews.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Within this research, the term phenomenology encompasses both a lens to conceptualize and guide my investigation, as well as a method of analyzing the data I gained through interviews with my participants. The method of data analysis I used was Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) from Smith (1996). Through IPA, researcher(s) interview participants and attempt to interpret and make sense of participants' inner-worlds in terms of their meaning-making systems and embodied experience (Smith & Eatough, 2007). This method resonates with me as my aim with this research was to gain an in-depth understanding of the experience of being a composer.

As Smith and Eatough stated, the role of the researcher, through IPA, is to attempt to understand the experience from the participant's perspective; which includes interpreting participant's cognitive and affective states based on what the person says during the interview. Additionally, Smith and Eatough assert that the researcher must also take time to examine the participant's narrative from a distance to ask themselves questions about the accounts. Both forms of interpretation can lead the researcher to a rich analysis of the participants' lived experiences.

Participants

I recruited participants through the help of colleagues in music composition departments at various Midwestern Universities—I requested my colleagues to send a recruitment email (see appendix A) to potential participants. Sample sizes for phenomenological analyses tend to be small (Smith & Osborn, 2008). The reasoning behind this, per Smith and Eatough (2007), is that the aim of IPA is to consider the data theoretically rather than in generalizable terms; larger numbers of participants can

distract from the depth of analysis gained through phenomenological research. I limited my participants to composers of traditional/classical styles of music composition for choral and/or instrument ensembles. As there are countless genres, styles, and traditions of music, I felt it necessary to narrow my focus to ensure a more homogenous group of participants.

I interviewed a total of five participants for this research: Gustav, Johann, Franz, Clara, and Jean (four males and one female). Each participant was a music composer who had at least one advanced degree in music composition or a related discipline. At the time of the interview, the first participant, Gustav, lived in the northwestern region of the United States. Gustav was the only participant who did not have an advanced degree in music composition. Though he had been composing music for 16 years and completed four advanced degrees related to composition. His degrees included a master's degree and doctoral degree in music theory and a master's degree and doctoral degree in choral conducting. Gustav stated he primarily composed choral music, but also has written for opera, wind symphony, concert band, and chamber music.

Johann, the second participant, was from the Midwestern region of the United States. He had 30 years of compositional experience and had both a master's degree and doctoral degree in music composition. Johann said he primarily composed concert music, his primary instruments being organ and piano. Third was Franz, also from the Midwestern region of the United States. Franz completed both a master's degree and doctoral degree in music composition. At the time of the interview, Franz had been composing for 14 years, and described himself as a "generalist" composer. Franz's

compositions included music for orchestra and choir, and he had specialized in writing for instruments such as trombone, bassoon, and contrabassoon.

The fourth participant was Clara, who lived in the Eastern region of the United States at the time of the interview. She had completed a master's degree in music composition and had been composing for 8 years. Clara stated that she specialized in composing band music, but had also written for choir and instrumental ensembles such as woodwinds (particularly flute), and piano. Jean, the final participant, lived in the Midwestern region of the United States. He had been composing for 23 years, and had completed both a master's and doctoral degree in music composition. Jean stated he primarily composed for choral and jazz ensembles, but also enjoyed writing hymnody, sacred music, and had written for musical theater. While all of the participants reported composing in multiple areas and styles, they all have had experience writing for vocal and instrumental ensembles, and primarily composed music within Western-European traditions.

Data Collection

I chose to interview my participants to gain an in-depth understanding of their phenomenological experiences. Using interviews as a method of data collection allows a researcher to (1) investigate phenomena which cannot be directly observed, (2) gather historical information, and (3) direct the focus of the investigation (Creswell, 2014). First, phenomenological experiences cannot be directly observed as they involve intrapersonal, cognitive components. I gain better access to these descriptions through engaging in dialogue with the participants. Second, through interviewing I gain in-depth access to a participant's past, present, and projections of their future experiences. As temporality is

an integral component of embodied experience, I needed to examine the ways in which the past, present, and future interact to influence the composer's experience. Finally, interviewing allows me to direct, hold, and deepen the focus of the inquiry to areas in the participant's experience that are relevant to this investigation.

The interviews were semi-structured in nature—each interview followed a guide of topics and open-ended questions (see appendix B). The interview questions prompted the participants to elaborate on their composition process and explore the phenomenological, embodied experience of music composition. The interviews were conducted either over the phone or video conferencing technology (at each participant's preference) and were recorded with an audio recording device. The audio recordings were used to transcribe the interviews for data analysis.

Data Analysis

After an interview was transcribed, I read through the transcript several times to familiarize myself with the content. Following these initial read-throughs, the analysis process occurred in three main stages. First, I identified initial themes in the participant's account. Second, I organized the themes by refining, condensing, and making connections among other themes. Themes were first extracted and organized for each interview separately, then were comprehensively compared for a final organization themes. Finally, once all of the themes were refined and organized, I wrote-up a description of the themes, drawing content from the original interviews to support and illustrate these findings. Overall, using IPA helped me gain an in-depth understanding and interpretation of the participants' experiences, and ask critical questions regarding the embodied experience of music composition.

Identifying initial themes. After reading through each transcript a few times, I took notes regarding my impressions and senses gained from the participant's account in the margins of each transcript. For instance, Smith and Eatough (2007) recommended paying attention to the participant's use of language styles or forms, and asking questions about the participant's account. If certain words or phrases struck me as significant to interpreting the participant's account, I made note of them. Throughout the process, I adopted the participants' language as a way of keeping my interpretation of their accounts congruent with their worldviews.

Once I documented my initial impressions of the interviews, I looked back over the notes to note emerging themes. Smith and Eatough stated that themes can be described through phrases used by the participant and/or abstract terms that capture the phenomenological or communicative quality of the participant's account. Through identifying initial themes, I continued to ask myself questions and take notes of my impressions as I made sense of each participants' account.

Organizing initial themes. Once the initial themes were identified, I begin the organization stage. Smith and Osborn (2008) recommend beginning this process by organizing themes chronologically as they appeared in the transcript. With this timeline, I began considering ways to meaningfully organize the theme through relationships and patterns. For instance, a certain cluster of themes could describe how cognitive and kinesthetic elements of the body engage in the creation of music. After completing this step, I grouped the themes for each transcript, to coherently depict these initial themes. Smith and Osborn emphasize that throughout these processes, the researcher should

periodically compare themes and organization with the original transcript to maintain fidelity to the participant's account.

Refining, condensing, and connecting themes. Once the themes were created and grouped for each of the transcripts, I compared themes between each of the transcripts. Through this process, I condensed and organized all the themes into a unified, coherent set. Smith and Osborn suggested arranging themes not solely on prevalence alone, but paying attention to the richness or salience of themes. For instance, an idea may have only been brought up by one of the participants, but helped give insight to elements of other participants' accounts. Again, it was helpful for me to refer to the original transcripts to look at the participants' language and original descriptions to maintain fidelity and congruence in my analyses.

Write-up. Smith, Jarman, and Osborn (1999) stated that the final themes can then be used as the architecture for the write-up. In the results section I will describe each of the themes I discovered in the transcripts, and how certain themes connect with one and other. Then in the discussion and conclusion section, I will describe how the themes helped me answer my research questions—how the themes describe the participant's embodied experience of music composition and how composition influences embodied interactions for music participants.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS

Through analyzing my interviews, I synthesized the data into three themes to describe the embodied experiences of music composition. My first theme is titled "Composition: Creating Music through the Embodiment of Inspiration, Intuition and Craft". Here, I explore embodied experiences, which constitute the composition process for the composer. The second theme is titled "From Inception to Reception: Enriched, Transcendent Interactions through Music". In this theme, I describe how music enriches intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions during the composition process and the performance of the composition. My third theme is titled "Self of Composer: Development of Musical Expression through Compositional Experience". In this theme, I examine the ways in which a composer's style and abilities develop through experience.

I acknowledge that these themes do not describe the embodied experiences of composition in their *totality*, nor do they describe how *every* composer experiences composition. Two things that became very clear to me through this research were that (1) each composer has their own unique ways and styles of engaging in the composition process; and (2) different compositional processes may be used within a composer's repertoire. While these themes are not generalizable to *all compositional experiences*, they do describe experiences of composers within these interviews.

Composition: Creating Music through the Embodiment of Inspiration, Intuition, and Craft

When the composer is writing their music, they are searching for and developing their musical ideas; articulating thoughts, sensations, and emotions into performance instructions (i.e., through musical notation) for other musicians to understand. This part

of the compositional process involves musical inspiration, physical embodiment of musical elements, and tedious cognitive processing to translate their musical ideas into music notation. In this section, I will explain the role of inspiration in composition, and how the composition is developed through interplay of intuition and craft.

Inspiration. The experience of inspiration is phenomenological in nature, and can occur different stages during the compositional process. Through analyzing the interviews, I came to understand that a composer might experience inspiration as the impetus of a composition. A composer may unwittingly experience inspiration amid composition, which can then be used to inform the writing process; a composer might get stuck in their writing process and choose to immerse themselves in an environment or activity where they hope to be inspired; or a composer may not experience inspiration at all while writing music at all.

In composition, inspiration can spur a musical idea. Sessions (1950) defined a musical idea as a fragment of music (e.g., a motif, a piece of a melody, etc.) from which the composer departs in the reproduction process. Franz describes inspiration as follows:

> ...sometimes inspiration doesn't come to you as a whole unit. You get little pieces of the picture. It's almost like a dream. Like in the most vivid dreams that you have. You only see pieces of the picture; you just get glimpses of it. And that's how inspiration strikes me too, I'm given little glimpses of the picture. And then I have to fill in the rest of the picture using craft.

Inspiration, no matter how vivid, will (typically) not inform the piece to its totality. Where inspiration may lack holism, coherency, or meaning, the composer must rely on their craft to develop the music. Craft is a compositional term used to describe the

composer's use of compositional skills and crystalized knowledge to develop and structure music. In other words, craft to a composer is like writing conventions are to a writer. The role of craft in composition will be explored in further detail later in this theme.

Furthermore, a composer cannot rely on inspiration alone due to its fleeting nature. Early in our interview, Franz explained that inspiration is brief and fleeting—it comes to the composer when they are not expecting it, and can leave their short-term memory before they are able to fully process the musical idea. Franz further explained that when inspiration "strikes" him, he would hurry to his piano and experiment with the inspiration to figure out what the notes are (or how to translate the inspiration into music, if the inspiration does not come to him in sounds).

Clara agreed with Franz that the nature of inspiration is fleeing. Both Clara and Franz stated that when they are not near a musical instrument, they can rely on their smartphones to record voice memos of themselves vocally working through the inspirational (i.e., through singing or humming the notes). Prior to having a smartphone, when inspiration would strike Franz when he was not close to a piano, he would attempt to sing out the inspirational idea, repetitively, in hopes he could remember it later. Franz also reported that there have been times where inspiration came to him and escaped him before he could memorize it, record it, or develop it out on the piano. Several of the other composers I interviewed also explained that they need to use external ways to record and keep track of their initial inspirations or musical ideas. Johann and Jean, for instance, stated that they rely on note-taking to keep track of their initial musical ideas.

There are instances where the inspiration does not initiate a composition (or inspiration will not occur at all during the compositional process). Franz and Jean explained that in these instances, the composer might begin working from previously conceived musical ideas and/or utilizing craft to develop the process altogether. Regardless of how the composer conceives of a musical idea, the next task the composer has is to develop the music.

Developing the music. Developing fragmented musical ideas into musical language involves techniques that are unique to each composer. For instance, some composers will attempt to "sketch" out their ideas, while others will take notes to describe different parts of the music or sit with an instrument and improvise music. As stated earlier, Negrotti (2012) described that a composer's mind is "sensory-based", from which they draw mental states and emotions to insight inspiration. Given that composers create sensory experiences through their music, it makes sense that they may live in a sensory-based reality—much of their work revolves around conveying or translating diverse sensory experiences into music.

The process of translating sensory experiences into music can differ per each composer. Gustav's process typically involves the use of visual imagery to develop ideas. He will spend time sketching shapes and the movement of images on paper to "chart out" and develop the characteristics of the piece. As Gustav explained:

> I'll draw how I want the wind to blow, how I want the tree to grow, or how I want the water to flow… I can translate visual imagery [into music] pretty easily. Like a painting, also is in music—the darkness and light. I think it is pretty easy, for instance, to represent water in music. You write something that flows, that is in a

> pattern. It can sound like a river, or it can sound like a lake, it could sound like an ocean… I'm also a little of a synesthete, so, I associate color with keys, not with pitch, but with keys. So, for a certain key I'll hear it as red or purple or blue. For me those keys help me as a visual image... I also utilize the color wheel, so, colors that are opposite of each other are also keys that are opposite of each other. If you modulate these keys you get contrast, like the colors.

Other participants did not report experiencing the composition as a visually driven process to the extent that Gustav did. Clara explained that she does not use visual imagery to develop the characteristics of her music, instead she sketches out her initial ideas by contemplating characteristics of a human subject or performer's character (i.e., mannerisms, behaviors, identity). She then takes notes (i.e., through written verbal language) to describe sections of the music is working on. Therefore, rather than using visual, shapes to sketch out her music, she contemplates intrapersonal and interpersonal facets of other people and transforms these facets into sound. For example, Clara described a piece she was currently working on for a performer she knows. She stated:

> …a piece that I am working on is a solo horn and piano piece. And this person [I am writing it for] has lots of different faces she puts on for people, and she is a very dramatic kind of person and she is charismatic and she also likes puns.

Clara further explained that this piece would comprise of several vignettes, to represent different faces and attitudes the performer exudes. Through examining facets of a person's identity and personality, Clara finds inspiration to guide her compositions.

Most of the composers I interviewed, such as Johann and Jean, reported that they primarily conceptualize their initial ideas through sound (i.e., notated through musical

notation) and/or their own shorthand, vernacular-based notations to describe the sounds they want to work with. Whether the composer is using visual imagery, sounds, and/or translating visuals or sounds into vernacular shorthand, this stage of composition involves conveying their sensory experience into audio-based sensory experiences for others. This embodied experience pivots the recollection of or immersion into sensory experiences and the use of cognitive processing to translate diverse sensory experiences into music.

Developing the musical ideas (whether starting from visual imagery, verbal notations, or pure inspiration) also involves translating, sketching, or testing the music out as sounds. Composers will differ on what tools they use to carry out this process. Several of the composers I interviewed prefer to use a piano (or the instrument(s) they are composing for) to play around with their ideas and structure their music. Others rely on their voice as an instrument to work through musical ideas. Jean spoke about the importance of using the voice in writing any type of music:

> …the voice was the first instrument. All other instruments are sort of modeled mostly after what the human voice does in terms of breath, in and out, and shaping phrases. So, when I am writing for voices I will sing all of the parts as I'm writing them or right after. If I'm writing for instruments, I'll kind of sing those too and that's how I kind of know if it's going to be good or not. If it's singable and works for the voice I'll know it's probably gonna work for most of the instruments, with a few exceptions and technical differences.

Most of the composers I interviewed acknowledged they typically utilize both piano (and other instrument) and/or their voice (to some extent) as they develop the music. Whether the composer uses an instrument or their voice, this stage of the process involves

physically engaging their body (itself, or with other objects) in space to perform the music as a way of testing out their creations. To further elaborate on these embodied experiences, the participants I interviewed indicated two embodied mechanisms, which guide the development of a composition: *intuition* and *craft*.

Intuition as a mechanism of development. Whether they are working from visual imagery, notes, or working directly with more abstract inspiration, the composer physically engages with the music and use their body to organize the music. These embodied experiences heavily rely on the composer's use of intuition to guide the process. Jean puts this process into perspective when he said:

> I think of kind of like the Mozart model—his melodies seem so effortless. They sort of just spill out of him as sort of a natural consequence of his musicianship. Rather than a thing where he sat down was like, "Okay, the first four bars are going to do this. Then the next four bars will…" …the music I wanna write and the music I wanna listen to is the stuff where I feel like it's just flowing really naturally and organically out of the composer's brain… Other than that, I would just say it's a process of sort of letting those intuitive initial musical gesture kind of spill out and quickly organize them on the fly.

Composers will vary the amount of control they want to have over shaping and developing the music. When a composer allows their intuition to take over in the compositional process, they can find they lose control over how the ideas manifest themselves. Franz compares using intuition to drive the process to wild dog sledding:

> I know that I need the dogs, I know how to rope them up, I know what direction I want to go, and I hopefully know where I'm gonna end up. But you jump on the

> sled and they pull you. Your kind of at the mercy of where they are going to take you. That's the best analogy I can think of at the top of my head, it's kind of what composition is like for me. So rarely does [a composition] ever turn out 100% like I initially envisioned it.

Recall my previous discussion of limitations; some composers prefer to adhere to a predetermined structure and others, like Jean and Franz, prefer to "let go" and allow the music and intuition to take over as a way of generating material. This idea is reminiscent of Sessions' (1950) commentary that the composer's work is just as much conscious as it is subconscious (or impulse). At times, the composer may need to distance themselves from cognitive, logical processes and access intuitive, sensory organs of their bodies as driving forces of creativity.

To initiate one's sensory-based intuition, a composer may need to physically engage their body to stimulate the generation and experience of musical ideas. For example, Johann described how he engages his body in the composition process. As he stated:

> I am very physically active when I'm composing. My wife…always makes me write when she is not at home, because she calls it my "stomping and crying!" That's because whenever I'm writing I am pacing around the house and making a lot of gestures and noises and singing through stuff and trying out stuff… I find it important to be very physically active and physically involved in the composition process because I am trying out ideas that are going to be manifested physically. So, I don't want it to be some sort of abstract intellectual exercise in that sort of sense. …It's more of a thing where I'm just not hindering something that would

> naturally occur… You feel [emotions and feelings] in your body… between your chest, stomach and your guts, and we feel all those things there and that's why historically, classical we use terms like "heart" and "gut" to mean something much bigger than some mechanical device that's working in our body. This is the area of our bodies where we feel things, and so, I believe it is essential to have that part of the body engaged, while you are doing the creative work. That is the part of the body that I want the performers to engage when they [perform the music] … So, engaging the body is part of engaging the emotions. Always, always, always, that's one of the rules for performers—and so, I don't see why it shouldn't be any different for composers.

As I previously noted, it seems important for some composers to be able to place their logical, cognitive faculties aside and intuitively engage their bodies in music for the ideas to manifest. Other composers cited movement as essential to composition as well. For instance, Gustav likes to walk for hours as he tries to generate ideas. He stated that constant movement is important for him in certain phases of his compositions. Franz, Jean, and Clara allow the music to spill out through bodies (not their minds) through their instrument(s) as they improvise as their motions intuitively generate musical ideas.

The idea that intuitive, movements can be crucial to the composition process connects to Sekimoto's (2012) notions of (1) the body being the source of knowledge, and (2) the knower and the known being indivisible. From this perspective, it makes sense that intuitive stimulation of the body will provide the composer access to their musical knowledge. I also previously elaborated on Benzon's (2001) statement that internalized rhythm is essential to human movement. As Blacking (1973) stated:

> …it seems to be that what is ultimately of most importance in music can't be learned like other cultural skills: it is there in the body, waiting to be brought out and developed, like the basic principles of language formation. (p. 100)

Perhaps the impetus of music lies within the body's innate, internalized rhythms; as these rhythms are externalized (through physically engaging the body), the composer converts these impulses into the modulation sounds.

Based on these findings, composition is not merely a cognitive process, but rather a process, which involves physical, emotive, and cognitive faculties. Knowledge or creative intellect is not exhibited through the mind alone; these are inseparable experiences manifested in the rest of the body as well. Once the composer arrives upon musical ideas through engaging their physical and emotive faculties, they then use their craft (i.e., cognitive, logical faculties) to organize and structure the music.

Craft as a means of development. Previously, I included a segment of my interview with Franz to explain that inspirations are not fully-fledged compositions on their own. Rather, inspirations are fragments of ideas or experiences, and are uniquely the composer's experience. To make musical sense of inspiration and/or musical ideas, the composer must have the skills to convey their ideas into a shared musical language for the performers to understand (i.e., music notation). The compositional skills and knowledge that the composer develops (with experience) are known as *craft*. Franz described the role of craft here:

> … [the composition] can't be 100% inspiration, because then it comes out random and it wouldn't make sense for anyone except for the person who wrote it. Where the craft comes in, you take your life experience, the very specific thing that

> you're writing about…and your feelings with that and combine it with the element of craft, because you have to be able to form complete sentences. That's what music is, it's a language. So, you have to form complete sentences, so, people can understand what you're saying. Not only that, but if you don't understand the craft, you don't have the tools at your disposal to be able to say what you want to say. You can hear [inspiration] in your head, but what happens if you have no idea what those notes are, what those chords are that you're hearing. You just sit down, and pick it out of the piano for hours and hours and maybe never figure it out until the inspiration is fleeting and it leaves you. It's good to be able to when you hear [inspiration or an idea] in your head to have the craft, the knowledge to be able to…take advantage of the inspiration and then take the craft to flush it out.

Several of the composers I interviewed echoed Franz' sentiments. Johann, for example, recalled a time when he was less experienced as a composer and did not have the skills he needed to be able to write what he wanted to compose in his music. He used the analogy of attempting to write a love letter to someone who spoke a different language. Without the vocabulary, grammar, and cultural understandings of the other person's language, the writer would not be able to communicate their feelings to their love interest.

At times, a composition might begin with craft rather than inspiration. Inspiration is not necessarily an effortful process. It cannot be forced. Therefore, in instances where composers are working under a deadline, they cannot always rely on the fleeting nature of inspiration alone to compose. As Franz explained, "Sometimes it's a matter of allowing my craft introduce me to a piece and then my feelings and intuition take the

piece where it ultimately will go." For the most part the composition process involves, in no particular pattern, moving back and forth between inspiration, intuitive development, the use of craft, and testing out ideas. Gustav explained the process with the analogy of setting parts in motion like a mobile sculpture. He explained:

> And then there's a fair amount of sitting in front of the piano or computer and kind of experimenting. A lot of trial and error. There are a lot of tests that fail. You know, if you write a progression and you want to see how far it goes it's also the case that you can write something, or outline a pattern. Sometimes the pattern works out sometimes it doesn't. Things that are in different phases, just to watch them interact with each other. Just to start circle things in motion, like a mobile sculpture. If you have something spinning at different rates you can watch them. In music, you can do the same thing. Set things at motion in different rates and see how they interact. And for me that's also very beautiful, it's mesmerizing in a way.

Most of the participants did acknowledge that craft takes up most of the composition process. Whereas inspiration and intuition are effortless processes, the use of craft is effortful and can be taxing. As Jean explained:

> There are definitely times when it's hard and there are times when you have to power through, and you know the old cliché, "1% inspiration 99% perspiration!" I think that's true in the sense that compared to the creative stuff, where the creative ideas are coming to you naturally, for every minute you spend with that, there are 99 minutes where you have to be making more practical decisions like

orchestration and like how those creative musical ideas are gonna sort themselves out into the form of the piece. I don't think of that as being super creative work.

The practical decisions (e.g., orchestration) and sorting of creative musical ideas are elements of craft. The logistical portion of composition can be a lengthy process. Gustav, for example, said that when his mind is in the right place, he can compose up to three minutes of music a day. He acknowledges that even three minutes is a great deal of music to write in a single day, compared to other composers. Based on what my participants reported, using craft is a more cognitive and effortful part of the development phase, not relying on as much physical stimulation as intuition. In using craft, the composer still relies on knowledge faculties within the body, but these faculties seem to be less sensory-based than intuition is.

The composer's utilization of craft in composition appears to require sustained attentional efforts and mental energy. All the composers I interviewed spoke about focus, distractibility, or the need to refresh the mind/body, depending on the individual's attentional needs. Most of the participants stated that they pace or take walks at some point during the process. As I mentioned previously, Gustav values walking in his compositional process. He said he takes walks to "clear [his] head" when he needs a break from composing. For Franz, getting outside and immersing himself in nature helps him work off distracting emotions or stress that can build up during the process, or if he is stuck and is hoping to find inspiration. Previously I quoted Johann, when attributed his "stomping and crying" time to lift any sort of inhibition of ideas, to allow the music to flow with the movement of his body.

A composer's focus and cognitive energy can rely heavily on the qualities of their environment as well. For instance, Clara reported needing a clear working space and empty room (or ideally an empty house) to work in while composing. She does not like anyone to be able to hear her music in an unfinished state, and she cannot work while wearing headphones. Jean said that he works best when he changes up his environment, and the objects he interacts with during the composition process. In the interview, he stated:

> I think it was Stephen Sondheim who said something like, "There's something about a piano you've never played before that brings out the greatest creative ideas." …like if I go to a different town for a show, and if I get a free hour I like to go into a room that I've never been in with a piano I've never played. The ideas just pour out every time. It's automatic, I don't know how it works, but there's something about a fresh space that's really helpful. I've told my students that if you get writer's block then you should rearrange the furniture in the room you compose in. That works for me too.

Jean also stated that he might switch from using the piano in his home, to using the piano in his office, and back and forth again several times within a single day of composing. Changing his environment is one of his primary ways of keeping his focus and allowing himself to generate new ideas. Therefore, it appears that the composer can diversify their interaction with objects and/or different spaces as a way of refreshing their attentional or creative efforts.

Aside from movement and changing up one's environment, several of the composers I interviewed talked about the importance of recognizing their level of focus

and mental energy. Clara stated that sometimes she must force herself to take a break, because she recognizes that once her mind gets over-worked, she does not work efficiently. Franz explained that it is easy for him to spend less time sleeping at night when he is in the middle of working on several projects that have impending deadlines. He realizes that he needs to pay attention to his body and get the right amount of sleep; otherwise, he will not compose at his best.

In summary. Inspiration, although not a guaranteed experience, can occur at any stage of the composition process. Composers may rely on inspiration as the DNA of a musical composition, or at times when inspiration is not readily available, they may rely more on their craft to develop a composition. Whatever the case, composers rely on their craft as knowledge in practice to intelligibly articulate their composition. Intuition also plays a key role in developing the composition as it allows the music to organically develop. Composers can incite their intuition through engaging their physical, embodied faculties (rather than cognitive faculties) during the compositional process. By engaging the body in the composition process, the composer can entice greater authenticity and fidelity in the way they articulate their composition. Cognitive faculties (which require more intensive attentional effort) are often then engaged, substantiated by using craft, to make musical sense of the composers' intuitively generated ideas.

From Inception to Reception: Enriched, Transcendent Interactions through Composition

During the interviews, several of my participants referred to music as a language. By language, they meant that music was a way they could express ideas or experiences to other people (i.e., performers and audience members). Franz, for instance, said that

composing music makes him "bilingual" in a sense; not only can he communicate his experiences through conventional language, but he can also convey his experiences through music.

Aside from viewing music as a language, several of the composers described composition as the creation of interactional events. In other words, the composer constructs discursive opportunities through musical language (i.e., an embodied discourse in which the performers and audience will participate). As the performers physically interact with each other to convey the musical language, the audience receives the sounds, synchronizing their minds and bodies with the music and responding to the musicians. To effectively create their desired interactive experience, the composers must have the skills (i.e., craft) necessary to communicate their compositions to performers and audience members. Within this theme, I describe how music composition creates enriched, transcendent interactional experiences for composers, performers, and audience members. I will also discuss compositional and performance components that influence performance outcomes.

Enriched interactions with self and others through composition. When I asked my participants *why* they compose music, several of them had trouble answering the question. To their credit, the question of *why* requires a broad answer rooted in their earliest encounters with music, and spanning across their compositional career. Reframing the question to ask what their *intentions* are in composition still required complex answers, but lead me to the understanding that they all compose to create an experience. An experience to, first, immerse themselves in, and then to share with their performers and audience members. Each level of experience, be it individual experience

during composition or shared experience through performance, enriches the composer's intrapersonal and interpersonal connections.

Beginning with the composer's individual experience during composition, Franz and Clara stated that they use composition as a way to enhance their own interpersonal competencies. For instance, Clara stated that she likes to begin her composition process by studying the characteristics of her performers to generate ideas for her compositions. In our interview, Clara said, "[I am] not always super great with socializing." Clara explained that as she approaches a person through a compositional lens, compared to conventional interpersonal interactions, she feels more "at ease" and able to approach the people she incorporates into her music.

For Franz, dealing with intimate and emotionally-charged situations interpersonally can be difficult, especially trying to communicate these experiences through conventional language. As Franz stated:

> ...expressing feelings is really uncomfortable. I only really have one or two people in my life that I can do it with at all…and with no one it is comfortable. …when I experience something beautiful, I am uncomfortable talking about that. But can I write [music] about it. ... most of the time I use composition for that outlet. …there are a lot of times where if there's something that I need to express, it will come out in my composition. And it's not just my feelings either … it's other people's feelings too. For example, … there's a guy that I'm writing this concerto for right now who has terminal cancer, and he literally only has six months to a year to live. So, part of this is my own feelings about that. And, you know, what would my responses be to that? What would my reactions be to that? So, it's

> difficult. Especially when it's my own feelings it's difficult to put to words. So, I guess composition is my way of putting it into words.

Franz acknowledged that even trying to explain this much to me was difficult for him to do. Nevertheless, Franz suggested that composition allows him to better approach himself, work through his internal experiences, and express himself to other people. Clara's and Franz's stance that music aids in their ability to interpersonally connect with others is congruent with the anthropologists' theoretical assumptions I reviewed previously: music can function as a foundational component in the formation of interpersonal relationships (Dissanayake, 2000; Fernland & Mazzie, 1991; & Mithen, 2006).

I probed my interviewees deeper to figure out *why* music can useful in conveying human experience. When I asked Johann how expression through music compares to expression through conventional language, he stated that music is "more direct." He elaborated by suggesting that music does not need additional context to convey an experience (as conventional language does). This is because music *is* both an image of the artist's experience as well as an experience itself (both signifier and signified). Johann further explained:

> Most people believe that when it comes to communicating ideas or emotions that words carry a lot of great content and music is sort of abstract. However, it's actually the opposite that is true. Music is unbelievably specific when it comes to describing our emotional states of being and in comparison, words are sort of like blunt instruments when it comes to describing the same sorts of experiences of our inner life with that. So, I would say when we are communicating things with

> music, it's just—the tools are so much finer and subtle that it's much more accurate than when you're doing it with words.

Turning back to some of the literature I reviewed, Negrotti (2012) believed music can be a more "direct" or "specific" way of communicating, because music replicates natural sensory phenomenon. In other words, it can be easier to convey a sensory experience to an audience through music because music *is* a sensory experience. While shared symbols (i.e., in conventional language) have a high degree of generalizability in their meanings, they are not uniquely crafted by the individual to convey their phenomenological experience.

If music is created from an individual's experience, can the audience fully understand the composer's experience through listening to the music? Jean did not believe so. He elaborated that even if music has a specific purpose, the audience will never fully understand the composer's experience. To him, that is not the purpose of music anyways:

> I think it's really about the notes, rhythms—it's about finding the musical elements in a compelling way so that everyone can listen to it and tell their own story, or not have one at all. When I listen to symphonies or whatever, I'm not thinking about—I'm not trying to create a story in my head that goes with it. I'm just trying to experience the musical elements in time and enjoying the creative ways that the composers combined notes and rhythms. If there's no text that's pretty much all my goal is. It's to make it interesting musically. If someone listens to it and they can sort of put some other meaning on it, I'd say, "More power to

> ‘em.” Certainly, one of the powerful things about music is that someone can do that. But that’s not usually something that I’m trying to prescribe.

According to Jean, the purpose of composition is not to convey specific meanings, but create an experience; yet, the participant’s (i.e., composer, performer, audience member) perception of the experience will qualify their understandings of the event. Blacking (1973) would support Jean’s statement, as he contended, “to feel with the body is probably as close as anyone can ever get to resonating with another person” (p. 111). Perhaps some composers turn to composition because they recognize that creating music is one of the best ways to share an experience with another person—through synchronizing the bodies of performers and audience, the composer can more effectively convey an experience.

Clara specified that each performance has a unique outcome, as the outcome is a combination of the composer’s intentions, the performer’s musical interpretation, and the audience’s response (and interpretations). Therefore, music is shared, but also becomes an individualized experience for the composer, and individualized for each performer and audience member as well. The performers, audience, and composer can all share a shared, embodied experience, but their individual experiences of the music will be phenomenologically unique.

When the composer says that they want to create and *experience* for their performers and the audience, what do they mean? For Johann, he means that he wants to create a space for the music participants to share catharsis and beauty. As Johann explained:

> I absolutely do intend to give people cathartic experiences when they listen to my work. … I want them to encounter some kind of, you know, emotional state that they didn't—I want them to experience some moment of beauty. There's so much lack of beauty in our world right now, where beauty is not valued in the same way that it was in a sort of more classic sense where beauty itself was considered a moral value. So, I do want people that live in a world that's largely devoid of beauty, and where it's not valued, to experience beauty in all of its weirdness and deformity.

All participants echoed the idea of sharing an embodied experience with performers and audience. Gustav, for instance, stated that he likes to find stories and voices that are not accessible to certain audiences (i.e., because these voices/stories have been marginalized or exist in foreign cultures in foreign languages) and use music as a platform to connect these experiences with a wider audience. Other participants, such as Johann and Franz, discussed using composition as an avenue to share their own personal experiences with the audience. Each individual experience becoming an opportunity to enrich the composer's connection to themselves and everyone who participates in their music.

Whatever the specific details of composer's intentions are, it appears the ultimate intent of composition is to create spaces for the composer, performers, and audience to engage in shared experience. Clara summarized this by elaborating on her experience of being able to attend performances of her compositions. She stated that some of her best experiences of her career occur when she gets to participate as both the composer as well as an audience member. She stated:

> …having the experience as an audience member and as a composer, you know, the triangle…composer, performer, audience member and then it's like I am two sides of the triangle. When I am reaching myself as an audience member, but that I also reached the performer…and they are also reaching me as an audience member.

Previously I reviewed the notion that music can be viewed as the nexus of interaction, synchronizing participants' sensory, emotive, and motor systems through a bonding experience (Benzon, 2001; Condon, 1986; McNeill, 1995; & Mithen, 2006). Although it was not an explicit focus of my interview questions, it became clear through analyzing the data that part of the composer's intent in composition is to join people together. Through the composition, the composer opens a space for performers and audience members to share sensory and emotional experiences. The composer does not need to be present for this interaction to occur, but if they are, the composer can experience an intensified experience of their composition—as they synchronize their sensory, emotive, and motor systems with the performers and audience members in real time, to their original music.

Components that influence performances. For a composition to be performed the way the composer initially envisioned the music, the composer needs to be able to effectively articulate their ideas to the performers. It became clear to me that successful communication of performance instructions requires experience and knowledge of craft to translate musical ideas into shared symbols for others to understand. As I discussed previously, once composers develop their ideas, they transcribe their ideas into musical notation for other musicians to read. As several of the participants explained (e.g., Clara

and Jean), once the music is transcribed and printed out on paper, it is in the hands of conductors and performers to interpret. With years of development, musical disciplines have developed a shared system of symbols (i.e., music notation) for musicians to communicate performance instructions to each other. However, even this system leaves room for ambiguity, which can lead to nuanced misinterpretations of how to perform the music. As Clara explained, she never truly knows if her composition was successful until hearing the final product being performed. Here, Clara elaborates on attending a performance of her piece that turns out well:

> ...knowing that you wrote a piece effectively enough that someone else was able to play it and correctly capture your intentions as well as include their own musically accurate interpretations of the piece. And that marriage of intentions and applications of their knowledge resulted in how I as a composer envisioned the piece being played. It was really me being an effective communicator to their interpretation and then me having the experience as an audience member and as a composer…

Similar to Clara's statement, Jean said that he always hopes that the performers will understand his "intent" and "style" when they "reproduce" his music. As he said, "it's not a great feeling" when the performers are not able to accurately understand the composition. Based on Clara and Jean's statements, the composer not only has to know how to communicate their ideas, but the performers also need to be able to accurately interpret the material. Both conditions are necessary for an experience harmonious with the composer's intent. Poor performances (i.e., when the musical experience does not occur the way the composer desired) can be a result of many different factors. Several of

my participants recalled having experiences early on in their composition careers where they felt they lacked the skills needed to effectively communicate their musical ideas.

Along with needing adequate experience/knowledge, composers also need to understand the abilities and limitations of a performance. For instance, any instrument will have a limited range of sound pitches it can produce, therefore a composer needs to know pitch limitations of the instrument they are writing for (otherwise, they may need to find a way to adapt the instrument or create a new one). Aside from inherent limitations of instruments, the composer needs to be aware of the limitations of their performers. Johann explained that during the composition process, he would often communicate with the performers to ensure playability of music. Referencing a specific piece he wrote, Johann stated:

> ...when we got into the actual practical aspects of playing I liked what I had written. And the percussionist came back to me about the marimba part I had written and said, "This is not playable by a human being and I will break my ankles if I try to run back and forth this much." So, I had to make some adjustments to the marimba part...

Idealistically, Johann believed that this movement of the piece was excellent and would sound great. However, a person would need super-human abilities to perform the music.

Another element in the equation to a successful performance is the degree to which the performers are invested in the piece of music they are performing. Recall earlier when I quoted Johann's statement on how important it was for the performers to engage the same emotional centers of their bodies that he had engaged while writing the music. If the performers are not invested in the music or that performance, the

performance can suffer as a result. Clara described several compositions, earlier on in her composition career, that were performed poorly because the performers were students who were not invested in her music. These experiences have led her to be more selective in who she allows to perform her music. Clara gave an example of a piece she wrote that was initially performed poorly. After this performance, Clara reworked the composition (in case there was anything she had not clearly articulated) and gave to her husband to perform. Given that she and her husband have a close, intimate relationship, he more accurately understood her compositional style and intent in the music. Clara stated that she feels better when she knows and trusts her performers, because then they are more likely to accurately perform the music.

In summary. The experience of music, be it the composer's experience of the composition process or the participants' experience of a performance, enriches interpersonal interactions. Composers may experience their compositional process as a means for them to better understand and approach their own internal experience. Additionally, composition provides an outlet for composers to better approach and express their experiences to other people.

When composers write music, they are essentially creating enriching interactional events for performers and audience members to participate within. In participating in these events, the performers and audience members join or synchronize their embodied experiences with each other, forming interpersonal connections that prelude conventional linguistic interactions. As the performers and audience members connect with each other through the embodied experience of the music, they also form a transcending relationship with the composer. In other words, they are phenomenologically experiencing an

experience the composer wished to share with them; emotions and sensations the composer originally experienced in a different space and time. The performers' and audience members' perspectives and contextual factors will also result in unique phenomenological experiences for each musical participant.

Composers recognize that their compositions will be received subjectively, and they aim to create a cathartic, sensory experience for their performers and audiences. To create an effective sensory and emotional experience for others, composers must have an understanding of craft (including music notation) and performance limitations. With this knowledge, the composer can more effectively articulate their musical ideas to performers and audience members. The performer's level of understanding of the composer (including the composer's style and manners of expression) and investment in the performance will also influence the outcome of a performance.

Self of Composer: Development of Expression through Compositional Experience

This final theme describes the ways in which a composer's compositional abilities develop through experience. With years of training, compositional experience, and feedback from other musical participants, the composer develops their own unique styles and ways of approaching composition. With this development, also, comes the development of enhanced compositional skill. Within this theme, I examine how composers develop their own, unique musical language, and the development of heightened compositional skills. With these developments, the composer becomes more competent and confident in their compositional endeavors.

Development of musical language. All my participants spoke to some degree about the development of unique or different styles within their music. Most of them

referred to this as the development of their own *voice* or *musical language*. Just as a person has unique collections of mannerisms, quirks, and vocabulary through which they express themselves in conventional interactions, so do composers have in their compositions. Artists in general have unique ways of using their media (whether consciously or unconsciously) in creating their expressions, music composers are no exception.

Whereas the experienced composer is likely to have developed their own, unique musical language, the novice composer is more likely to write music based on what they have been exposed to. As Gustav explained:

> …someone once told me that all the music that we write is music that we've already heard before. So, when we sit at a keyboard, when we compose, we're just replicating what we like or what we hear. And we're just writing the same songs over and over again. So, I like setting systems up that make me write music that I haven't heard before.

Several of the composers I interviewed stated that when they were younger, others more transparently influenced their work. For instance, Jean said that young composers tend to consciously and/or unconsciously "…wear [their] influences on their sleeves a little more…" compared to those with more experience. Franz explained that the musical language of young composers is usually similar to that of their first composition teachers and that of other musicians they admire.

The development of a one's musical language is not necessarily an intentional process. Depending on the composer's life experiences, unexpected circumstances can influence development as well. Clara provided an example of a time she went through a

personal crisis between her undergraduate and graduate career. Here, Clara described this life transition and how it impacted her compositional work:

> …I just started questioning everything that I previously learned… I didn't know if what I had been doing in terms of writing music was right. And when I got there everything I was writing just didn't feel correct. Like nothing felt the way I wanted it to feel in terms of what I was actually writing. And it was just a matter of working through that. I think that changing it up with a different teacher and trying different styles of learning and being more tactile with composition, I think all of these things helped me to kind of feel comfortable with this new style that I was writing in.

Compared to her previous style, Clara described her newer music as being more dissonant and less pleasant sounding. Clara does attribute her compositional work to helping her sort through her personal crisis and how it impacted her life.

Sessions (1950) believed that most composers experience points in their career where their compositions will "...either lapse into self-imitation or strike out boldly into new territory (p. 61)." From a temporal perspective, the composer's style and knowledge is generated through the compilation of their past works, or works of they have studied from other composers. The composer's future work either imitates their past style(s), or peaks into a new style or form, that may then influence their future works. As Jean described:

> Part of [developing your own language involves] just writing more pieces because you maybe kind of use up the mimicry ideas early on and you know when you're second piece, there are a lot of things you can kind of lean on, but when you're

> writing your 30th piece in a style, you kind of have to like start coming up with more because you don't want to just write the same thing over and over. So, just the repetition of it gets you away from those initial models, more or less. But I think it's really gradual. Like for me it's like every time I write something I try and do something that's a little bit different than anything I've ever done…

As a composer gains more life and compositional experience, they gradually develop their own unique musical language and ways to ensure their music is unique—gradually being the key word here. Jean also explained that developing one's own music language is a constant process going throughout composer's lifetime. As Jean speculated, in 30 years from now, he anticipates that his musical language will sound more unique than it does now.

The process of developing one's own musical language is not always smooth either. There can be instances where the composer plateaus in developing their own style. Composers may find ways to challenge themselves by imposing restrictions on their writing style, to avoid replicating previous compositions. Johann described how this has happened to him in the past:

> The danger now for me, and for so many people is, especially once you've had some success you can just keep cranking out that same stuff and cease to explore a new language, and cease to explore or cease to push yourself at all. Just because it takes so long to figure out to say what it is you want to say with your own language… I remember when I was trying to change my harmonic language one time I was inspired—this happens often to you—you inspire yourself by giving yourself restrictions or giving yourself rules. Death, creatively is when you can

> absolutely do anything, because you don't know what to do. So, most often you can find inspiration by limiting yourself.

In this instance, Johan challenged himself by not allowing himself use with any "accidentals" (i.e., any pitches outside of a set scale of pitches) in his composition. Within these parameters, Johann worked to find new, unique ways to make a composition that is both "exciting" and "emotional" without needing to rely on any "spicy notes". Like Johann, Gustav said that he utilizes specific systems and/or rules that he has put into place to ensure his compositions are "fresh each time". Gustav described these systems as his own "trade secret", which he did not wish to divulge further than this. Most of the participants spoke about how they are compelled to challenge themselves and continue to develop their own musical language further. With further development of musical language, composition becomes an even greater individualized process allowing for more individualized and enhanced ways of expressing the self.

Development of advanced compositional abilities. Part of developing heightened compositional ability involves composers developing a better sense of themselves and their own musical language. Aside from the development of individuality, a composer will develop more efficient and advanced use of craft and ways of developing a composition. As the composer gains more experience and develops a deeper knowledge of musical elements, they develop the ability to work and conceptualize music in more abstract and personal ways (Sessions, 1950). My participants attested to this, generally explaining that with experience their compositional thinking has become faster and more abstract. As Johann described:

> With less experience [you are] sort of going from sentence to sentence. And you don't have the technical ability to look and back away enough to see the big picture. Because you're struggling to figure out how to develop your material. As you go on, you can find that you get really fast at developing material. …now I'm much faster at seeing all of the potential that an idea has to be developed. I can kind of look at an idea for a few minutes and know if I can turn this into what I need to turn it into—if it will serve the expressive ends or is there some deficiency in the idea. And as I matured I found out that because I could develop ideas much faster… So, in the beginning where I was just adding measure to measure to measure until I got to the end… I can now sometimes write whole pieces but there will be a section left out of the middle. And I'll go back and write that section in the middle later because I know what it's going to be.

Not only is Johann saying that he can compose much faster than he used to be able to, but he can look at and develop ideas more abstractly than he could earlier on in his career. Early on in his compositional career, Johann said he would focus on smaller, segmented ideas to piece together for a composition. As he developed his abilities, he now finds it easier to be able to work on larger, more abstract scales. Johann said that this allows him to compose more efficiently and quickly when he composes.

Furthermore, on Sessions' idea of developing more abstract ways of composing, Johann explained that with experience, he has learned how to more abstractly convey specific emotions through music. In other words, Johann finds he does not always need to be physically experiencing the emotions in the moment to convey them through his music. Whereas earlier on in his career, if he wanted to write sad music, he would need to

be feeling sad to know how to write sad music. (This is not to say that Johann does not experience emotions while he is writing, he still thinks it is an important element of composition.) Johann has enough experience composing emotions into music that he does not need to physically put himself in specific emotional states to effectively capture a given emotion in the music.

Several of the composers I interviewed described ways their experience has allowed them to overcome limitations in their compositional abilities. Several of my participants (Clara, Johann, and Jean) described a *gap* existing between the desires of the composer to write and the outcome of the composition or performance. A composer may never be able to compose music (or performers may not be able to perform the music) in a way which is identical the way in which the composer initially envisioned or experienced the musical ideas. As Jean described this process as it relates to jazz performance:

> Improvising [in jazz] is sort of like fast composing. I consider myself a B+ jazz pianist. I'm really strong on like the harmony and I can do it in slow motion and I can comp chord changes along with a group, but I'm not like a heavy solo player… I can hear in my head what the great jazz pianists would do, but my brain and my fingers can't work at that level. So, there's like a gap.

Jean acknowledged that conventional composition is different from jazz improvisation, in the sense that the composer has more time to think and edit what they write. However, Jean's analogy helps us understand the idea of the gap. The composer can envision what they want to write, but if their skills and understanding of composition is limited, the gap becomes greater.

Johann and Clara explained, too, that the larger an ensemble that the composer is writing for, the larger this gap between the composer's intent and the performed outcome will be. With more years of training and technical exercises, Johann stated, the more a composer can close this gap. Clara cited compositional software/technology by using a computer as a way she can work to compensate for this sort of limitation. Compositional software allows the composer to input different parts for different instruments/performers. The computer then allows the composer to explore how the different layers of sound can merge, more efficiently than some composers can envision without software.

Jean and Johann also stated that they have learned to "close the gap" by keeping the creative process "in dialogue" with the "imaginary finished product." As Jean stated, with experience he is better able to think more abstractly, and envision elements of performance with his music to determine how an initial idea might sound as a finished product. This constant "dialogue" with the finished product allows the composer a system of checking in with the composition, before a performance, to anticipate what might work and what might not work with the composition. Jean stated that he needed some years of experience to develop this ability.

In summary. Whereas the novice composer is likely to compose music similar to their influences, the seasoned composer begins to develop their unique musical language. The development of one's own musical language occurs gradually, through intentional and unintentional changes in composition and life experiences. This development reinforces the composer's self, knowledge, and abilities as an artist. With experience, composers develop heightened, abstract compositional abilities and individualized tools

for their craft. These enhanced skills allow the composer to compose more effectively and quickly, compared to less experienced composers.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

As I stated previously, the composer's embodied experiences (in the composition process) become the nexus of the embodied interactions when performers and audience members participate in music. Performers attempt to recreate the experience initially embodied by the composer, providing both performers and audience members the opportunity to actively participate the composer's embodied experience (regardless of whether the composer is physically present or not). These interpersonally embodied experiences, then, transcend space and time as the composer's music is performed in places and times outside of the composition's inception.

In this section I will address my research questions with the findings within my analysis. My research questions were: (1) How is composition an embodied experience? (2) How does music generate embodied interactions between composers, performers, and audience members? After addressing these questions, I discuss the theoretical implications of this study. Finally, I discuss the limitations of this study and areas this study opens for future research.

Composers Use Their Bodies to Create and Articulate Embodied Experiences for Others

How is composition an embodied experience? Composition involves the interplay between inspiration, intuition, and craft—which are interactively embodied experiences of cognitive, sensory, and emotive faculties with one's self and their environment. Inspiration is not an experience the composer can accurately predict or control, but more readily occurs through happenstance. The composer arrives upon inspiration through their sensory and/or emotional experiences while interacting with specific objects or

others, in specific spaces, during specific times. Once inspiration incites a musical idea, the composer draws out the idea and develops it using intuition (physical, emotive, and sensory faculties) and craft (cognitive faculties).

As the composer internalizes the inspiration, they can develop the musical ideas by intuitively engaging rhythmic, emotive, and sensory centers of their body. From this perspective, music is composed by, first, internalizing the musical ideas within these centers of the body, and then externalizing the idea through the modulation of sounds through embodied rhythms, sensations, and emotions (e.g., through vocalizations or sounds produced with musical instruments). This use of intuition becomes a way through which the composer can engender and develop their musical ideas.

The composer will also, intermittently, use their cognitive faculties to temper the music as they compose. This is where they employ the use of craft (i.e., knowledge of the functions and syntax of music) to intelligibly structure the composition for other musicians to understand. As the composer utilizes craft to develop their music, they also use it to translate the music into musical notation for performers to reproduce. Performers and audience members can then have access to the composer's embodied experiences through the reproduction of the compositions.

The composer's embodied experiences, during the composition process, become the nexus of embodied interactions of performers and audience members through music. As Blacking (1973) stated, "…if music begins…as a stirring of the body, we can recall the state in which it was conceived by getting into the body movement of the music, and so, feeling it very nearly as the composer felt it." (p. 111). Therefore, music (if performed with fidelity to the composer's interpretation) *is* both a representation of the composer's

initial experiences, as well as the composer's embodied experience itself (both signifier and signified). In this sense, music can provide a more direct avenue of expressing emotions and sensations than the use of conventional language alone. Music, then, becomes a phenomenon which not only expresses an embodied experience, it encapsulates the experience. The performers and the audience get to ontologically experience the performer's experience in an embodied fashion. For instance, a requiem does not merely represent sorrow or remembrance, the individuals who participate in performing and attending the requiem join together for a visceral experience sorrow and remembrance through the music. The composer's message (i.e., the music) *is* a sensory experience in itself.

Music Joins Participants through Recreating Shared Emotional/Sensory Experiences

How does music generate embodied interactions between composers, performers, and audience members? Music can enrich a composer's intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions. Communication through verbal language alone cannot convey the essence of sensory and emotional experience. When composers write music, they work directly with embodied sensory and emotional experiences. Rather than relying on symbols to represent or signify these experiences, the composer creates a sensory experience through their music.

As Johann stated, music is more "direct." The directness of music as a medium of communication allows the composer to create a viscerally simulated experience for the performers and audience, rather than attempting to represent the experience through symbols (e.g., verbal language). This sort of interaction can be beneficial for individuals

who struggle to approach or express intimate intrapersonal or interpersonal experiences. Furthermore, music composition offers these individuals a more approachable way to convey intimate, emotionally laden experiences—rather than relying on verbal communication to do so. Intuitively sharing these phenomenologically intimate, embodied experiences through music allows others to engage in these experiences with their bodies as well, yielding a form of expression which can be more liberating for the composer.

Composers not only create a way for themselves to connect with other people through their music, but they create an embodied, nondiscursive dialogue through which the performers and audience members can interact within. As Condon (1986) and Benzon (2001) explained, during music events, the performers are synchronizing their minds and bodies with each other and responding to each other's movements and musical gestures. When the music is performed for an audience, the audience members, too, synchronize their minds and bodies with the music. As the audience members experience the music within their bodies, they join with the performers in sharing this interactive, embodied relationship—a relationship which does not weigh itself on verbal interaction or cultural understandings.

In conventional linguistic interaction, the persons participating in the communication process rely on their mastery of the language (which also includes understanding cultural understandings that qualify the words being used). However, the communicators cannot fully express the nature of phenomenologically embodied experiences through symbols (i.e., language) alone. This is where people rely on prosody, viscerally emotive qualities of interaction, to share their experiences with others. When

using these sensory-based, emotive communicative cues, a person is not *representing* an embodied experience, they are *recreating* the experience for themselves and others. For example, when a person is conveying a frustrated experience, they will engage their body in the experience of being frustrated (e.g., changes in pitch, tempo, intensity, etc.) to convey this embodied state. This same process occurs with music.

As in my previous example of the requiem, the performers and audience members *experience* the visceral qualities of sadness and remembrance, rather than passively *referencing* these experiences through verbal language. This experience creates a more direct, embodied understanding of the phenomenological experiences among the individuals who attend and/or participate in the musical experience. Furthermore, the performers and audience members are not only connecting with and sharing these experiences with each other, but also with the composer (regardless of whether the composer is physically present at the performance or not). When the composer's music is being performed with fidelity, the performers and audience are approaching an experience of the music as the composer initially experienced it with their body. This forms a unique relationship between performers, audiences, and the composer which transcends space and time. The composer's music can be shared in different geographic performance spaces, and in spaces even after the composer's lifetime. In this sense, the composer's music becomes a shared, embodied legacy which many people from many backgrounds join within.

Theoretical Implications

This study provides the disciplines of communication studies and music with a phenomenological view of music as a communicative experience—a basis for embodied

interactions (with the self and/or others) and an impetus of embodied, interpersonal relationships. When individuals share sensory and emotive experiences through participating in music, they join their rhythmic, sensory, and emotive systems as an embodied collective. A community which is formed through prelinguistic, visceral connections—not necessarily reliant on cognitive or cultural understandings.

This study illuminates the role the composer contributes to the process of joining people in the shared, embodied experience of music. In this process, the composer is the protagonist of community. The community is seeded when the composer encounters and/or conceives of an intimate experience of sensory and emotional value. In engaging their intuitive and cognitive knowledge of music, the composer reproduces their initial embodied experience through their composition. When a composition is created, performers and audience members can converge and join in on the reproduction of the composer's embodied experience.

The newly formed community does not end with a single performance though. As the composer's music is performed for other audiences, by other performers, in different spaces, at different times, the community amalgamates. Elements of the composer's initial experiences (i.e., their initial experiences during the compositional process) transcend the initial people, spaces, and times in which they were conceived. Spanning across the world and generations more people enter the community centered around the composer's work(s), sharing the same (or at least similar) embodied experiences of these performances. This happened to me in February of 2016 when I shared an intimate, embodied experience of Jean Sibelius' music—with Hillary Hahn, the Minnesota Orchestra, and countless other people across time and geographic locations. Within my

body, I shared a visceral understanding of music by Sibelius with the larger community who has performed and/or attended Sibelius' work. Sibelius' (and other composers') legacy is rooted within the communities he fashioned through his music.

Music is a unique medium of communication in the sense that communities emerge through the shared embodied experiences of it. The maxim 'music is a universal language' holds truth here, because communities form through music with shared physical interactions, rather than shared verbal, cognitive understandings. From this perspective people from diverse backgrounds can join tougher and share emotionally-based and/or sensory-based connections, connections which are not hindered by culture, developmental levels, abilities, etc. Perhaps this is why music is such a prevailing element in human societies. Whether music is used between adults and young children, at first-of-the-year college social gatherings, or at a funeral, music provides a way for people to connect with each other when there are barriers to verbal interaction. Communities innately emerge through the shared embodied experience of music, and composers hold a unique position to initiate these communities.

This study provides an additional understanding the music composers as a culture, and unique communication of individuals who belong to this group. Within the larger culture of musicians, music is a language and form of communication that is used to interact and share meanings. Music composers have a unique position within the larger music culture because they create and construct the language musicians (and audience members) share. The experiences and communicative tendencies of a music composer (e.g., embodiment of intuition to develop musical ideas, recreating their experiences through music, forming communities through their music, etc.) also shape a culture

unique to music composers. In this sense, composers participate to the larger culture of musicians, but also differentiate themselves as a unique sub-culture.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

As I mentioned previously, composers have their own unique ways of approaching and experiencing the compositional process. While I attempted to establish commonalities within this study, it is possible that some of my findings cannot be generalized to the experiences of all music composers. Furthermore, the experiences of each individual music composer are much more complex than I have been able to describe here. Such is the nature of phenomenological descriptions—the researcher attempts to understand the subject's experience as best as they can, short of having the ability to first-handedly experience phenomena within the subject's body.

This study is also simplified in the way I framed the process of composers attempting to recreate their embodied experience. Some composers may have the goal of allowing others to share a precise embodied experience, the experience of a performance is entirely a subjective process. Therefore, performers and audience members are likely to all have unique embodied experiences of a composition. There are also additional variables that will influence the way in which a performance of a composition occurs (i.e., performer ability, performer interpretation of musical notation, acoustics of the performance space, size of the audience, etc.). Composers are likely to realize that performers and audience members will never fully experience the music the same way the composer initially envisioned it. Furthermore, the subjectivity of embodied experiences of music could be something that drives the artistic process of a composer. In

other words, a composer might approach their work wishing that their performers and audience members will all have a unique experience and/or understanding of the music.

This study is further limited in the sense that the participants were composers who primarily compose music rooted within European, Classical traditions. I am curious to know how my analyses might differ if my participants composed music rooted in non-Western, non-Classic traditions. For instance, I wonder how my analysis might differ if my participants composed music based in Eastern traditions, contemporary pop, or rap music. A few of my participants had mentioned that their works will deviate into modern jazz styles, but most of our conversations focused on music with European, Classical traditions. Therefore, some of these findings might only be descriptive of compositional experiences within the traditions of these participants.

With these limitations in mind, this research opens potential for future research. Future inquires could replicate the methodology of this study to expand these descriptions to the experiences of composers who compose within other genres and traditions. My additional areas of curiosity lie within (1) how the experiences of music composition influence a composer's ways of being in the world, (2) gaining deeper understandings of the "communities" composers create through their music, (3) examining the semiotics and the processes of communicating the composer's intent through musical notation, and (4) replicating this methodology to describe embodied, interactive experiences created by other types of artists.

First, this research has piqued my curiosity in how embodied experiences can influence the ways in which composers interact with the world. As Negrotti (2012) and Sessions (1950) stated, composers exist in a "sense-based reality" and are highly in-tune

with emotional and sensory experiences—both internally and externally. I am curious to know these experiences with composition influence the ways in which the composer interacts with and engages with the world, even when they are not in the process of composing. Are they more sensitive to sensory and emotional experiences? Do they conceptualize the world in different ways than individuals who do not compose (or do not engage in artistic endeavors)? These areas of inquiry could deepen phenomenological understandings of the embodied experiences of composers.

Second, I am curious to further explore the nature of the communities or embodied legacies composers create through their music. Inquiries regarding this phenomenon could examine the collective, phenomenologically embodied, experiences of performers and audiences as they share the composer's experience through the composer's music. Researchers could also examine the transient nature of a composition as the music is performed (and attended to) by different people, in different spaces, and at different times. How is a composition affected as it amalgamates different performers, audience members, performance spaces, and time? How is the composer affected with these amalgamations? How are the larger communities of performers and audiences affected? Furthermore, what sort of intricacies or nuances might temper the composition, composer, and community over time?

Third, as I stated in my analysis, composers need to be able to effectively communicate their musical ideas through musical notation for performers to effectively recreate the music. As musical notation is essentially a code or language in itself, there is area for communication studies research to understand the semiotics of musical notation. Several of my participants mentioned that communicating the integrity of a composition

through musical notation can be difficult. As with any language or system of symbols, translating ideas into musical yields some level of ambiguity when the performer attempts to interpret the composer's intent. Can the essence of the composer's experience be effectively communicated through musical notation? How does musical notation nuance the performer's ability to reproduce the experience the composer wanted the performers and audience to share? Furthermore, what factors temper with the performer's ability to interpret the composer's intent through musical notation?

Finally, future research can use the methodology of this study to gain insights to the embodied experiences of different types of artists—ceramicists, painters, photographers, architects, script writers, film directors, choreographers, tattoo artists, comedians, graffitists, chefs, jewelers, typographers, etc. Do other artists create communities through their creations, as music composers do? How are their embodied experiences different than those of music composers? How audiences (or other participants) experience and influence these artists and their arts? These phenomena are extremely broad, but could provide deeper understandings of how creative expressions can be used as a basis of non-linguistic interaction. Interactions which can connect people, regardless of cultural and individual differences.

Final Thoughts

In this study, I have framed the body as the medium for musical experience. Whereas linguistic communication is also body-mediated, music accentuates bodily experiences of rhythm, modulation of sounds, melody, etc.—more innate, viscerally generated elements of human interaction and experience. Music manifests from and is experienced within the body. It begins with the rhythmic coordination of our movements,

qualified by our sensory and emotive experiences, and reproduced through sounds. Composing music allows a person to enrich their ability to interact with themselves and other people. Music also serves as a coupling function, synchronizing individuals with each other through shared sensory and emotive experiences. Therefore, a composer is not only enriching their ability to interact with themselves and others through music, but also creating occasions for people (i.e., performers and audiences) to form new relationships with each other through. With this perspective, music becomes an impetus of community and constructs the experience through which interpersonal relationships are formed. This, in part, describes the ontological significance of music in human societies.

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APPENDIX A

Recruitment Email

Dear (Name),

I am conducting my thesis research for my M.A. in Communication Studies at Minnesota State University, Mankato. (Name of contact) referred me to you as a potential candidate who might be interested in participating in my research.

For my research, I am interviewing music composers to gain an understanding of how their artistic expression influences their knowledge and ability to express themselves. The interviews will take place via phone or video conferencing applications such as Skype or Google Hangouts. I anticipate that our interview would will take anywhere from 30 - 60 minutes.

Your participation in this research would be entirely voluntary, and your identity will be kept anonymous in my data reporting. If you would like to participate in this research, please let me know so that we can find a time that works for both of our schedules.

Thank you for your time.

Aaron Geringer

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide

What made you start composing? When did you begin composing?

What type of music do you compose?

What sort of training have you had in composition?

How much experience do you have composing?

How has your music changed/evolved since you began composing?

Can you walk me through your composition process? How does it generally go?

What is the experience of composition like for you?

How do you use your mind in the composition process?

How do you use your body in the composition process?

Probe experience of audiation.

(Do you compose in long sessions or do you break up the process throughout the day?)

Do they have the all the skills they need to compose what they want?

What are your intent or motivation in composition?

How is sharing these stories through music different than if you were to share them just through spoken language?

What are your general experiences of finishing pieces like?

How did the final composition compared to the way you envisioned the music?

How do your finished compositions typically compare to how you envision them?

What factors influence this process?