VOLUME ONE

Towards the Artistic Moment: A Personal Exploration at the Nexus of Improvised Inter-disciplinary and Cross-cultural Collaborative Performance through the Metaphor of Ma

An exegesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree
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*In Search of the Artistic Moment, Charcoal Drawing by Yantra de Vilder, 2012*
Abstract

My exegesis explores how the Artistic Moment can inform and penetrate the meeting place between collaborators of cross-cultural and inter-disciplinary performance practices, leading to increased feelings of connection between those present, to enhance the experience and creative outcome of the work.

It investigates and analyses the processes that can be used in recording, rehearsal and performance to create a state that goes beyond time and personality – a between place, a space I refer to as the Artistic Moment and view through the lens of the Japanese concept of *Ma*.

My theory is that through reflection on one’s practice, analysing what works and what does not, a creative artist may devise individual tools that increase successful navigation to this destination of the Artistic Moment framed by the notion of *Ma*, where it is *the space between* that defines the moment, happening or event. This between place can include the context of people, locations, music, sound and vision. I believe that connecting and integrating collaborative inter-disciplinary arts practices through the Artistic Moment can take an event – be it live or recorded – far beyond the limited strength of the individual components.
Acknowledgement

I am deeply indebted to my supervisors, Associate Professor Bruce Crossman, Professor Michael Atherton, Doctor Ian Stevenson and Associate Professor Diana Blom for their academic support during the period of my candidature.

Also, to my mother Faith Reid, who has stood by me through thick and thin.

Deep gratitude goes to all my artistic collaborators, with a special thanks to Kathryn Puie, Andrew Worboys, David and Gillian Helfgott, Venerable Robina Courtin, Inga Liljestöm, Jane Rutter, Patrick Thaiday, Gavi Duncan, Lisa Haymes, Helen Polkinghorne, Meredith McGowan and Jess Graham.
Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this exegesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.
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**VOLUME TWO**

**The Artistic Moment: Creative Folio**

PART A: Recordings

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Chapter 1. Towards the Artistic Moment

Figure 1.1: The Gateway, photo by Yantra de Vilder at Le Fontaine, France, 2013
1.1. Artistic Cogency and the Moment

Even though the ineffable nature of the Artistic Moment is impossible to define exactly, glimpses of it are possible through the prism analogy of Japanese culture within a creative journeying towards the moment. I consider that the positioning of the Artistic Moment is a valuable connecting place in collaborative arts practices, and that this ‘gateway experience’ can be viewed as an embodiment of the Japanese philosophical aesthetic known as Ma.

My argument is that the Artistic Moment, analogous with the notion of Japanese Ma, contains in-between spaces charged with tension and revelation (Snodgrass, 2006, p. 223), similar to the collaborative interactions that can arise in creativity. My adaptation of Ma tension and revelations towards artistic collaborations works through the juxtaposition of collaborative entities and results in an artistic and spiritual emergence that comes from this initial interaction. I believe that the Artistic Moment can inspire the nexus between inter-disciplinary collaborators adding value to the creative process and production. Through reflection on one’s practice, analysing what works and what does not, my theory is that a creative artist may develop processes that connect and integrate collaborative meetings, identifying that there is a deep resonance in the space between people, events and places that allows something new and original to emerge. This space between is held within a gateway position, as shown in Figure 1.1. and I have chosen to frame this perspective around the aesthetic of Ma.

In practical creative terms, the Artistic Moment works firstly through conceptual modes, operating in a fluid creative processes, an eclectic border-crossing philosophy and structured journeying of artistic materials; secondly, by a juxtapositional approach involving personal interactions, differing transient performance approaches and contrasting cultural traditions; thirdly, through a reflexive-practice analytical mode (Schön, 1983) utilising harmonic principles and interdisciplinary convergence, to shape the Artistic Moment; and finally, by applying primary conceptual modes around collaborative processes and visual controls, facilitating the moment in practical terms. The specific details of this Artistic Moment can be broken down into
a number of creative concepts working with a series of juxtapositional approaches that are shaped by reflective analysis principles and primary conceptual modes.

Creative Concepts

Process

An auto-ethnographical non-rule-book approach informs my collaboration processes, where there is a flux of roles, working styles and leadership melded through principles of inter-personal connection and musical feel. This hybridity is framed within a self-reflective perspective.

Philosophy

An inter-cultural organicism that allows for notions of fractured hybridity (Nuss, 2002, p. 38) and framed by the aesthetic of Ma defines my artistic cogency (Schön, 1983, p. 276). My internal dialogue is influenced by a European insiderism that is informed by my Dutch background, juxtaposed with my Australian lifestyle and sense of belonging.

Materials

My studio production standards define the calibre of the output of sound and vision for my work, whereby I use synchronised audio visual connections which I term ‘interlocks’ as a foundation for my processes across media and nature, sound and vision. The material of musical modes becomes one of the sonic landscapes that define the journey of travelling to the Artistic Moment.

Juxtapositions

People

The process between collaborators from different disciplines can be a juxtaposition that allows a meaningful meeting to occur in the potency of the present moment: this nexus can also occur between artists and audience as discussed by performance artists Meredith Monk (Monk, 2009, ) and Pauline Oliveros. (Oliveros, 2016).
Transience/Presence

In my projects sound and emergence are defined through ritualised spaces (Rouget, 1985) of musical sonorities, dance (Reynolds, 1998), theatrical performances, video projections and spiritual emanations.

Culture/Traditions

My creative work presents an exploration of culture and tradition through collaborations that flesh out unusual meetings. This is demonstrated in Unfinished Symphonies as a juxtaposition between classical notated musical practice and improvisation. Haiku, Latitude 33 and Devotion articulate the between space that arises in my collaboration with tradition bearers of Darkinjung, Mapuche, Kalahari and Tibetan Buddhism. These meetings inform an inter-cultural ‘border crosser’ (Nuss, 2002, p. 44) unfolding in an aesthetic of Ma focusing on the space between things and people.

Analytical Tools

Interdisciplinary Convergence

In my work I pay attention to the interdisciplinary convergences that are exemplified through a technological meeting of sound and vision, a nexus of different musical genres (classical, improvisatory, contemporary world music and popular culture) and an intersection of a range of artistic disciplines, which include but are not limited to dance, poetry, calligraphy, music, and film.

Harmonic Principles

Harmonic principles are also an analytical tool, whereby I focus on the use of a range of scales, modes, textures, sound colours and melodic contours as a critical assessment. Modes and moods are a constant thread that weave through my harmonic structures. These modal plateaus (modes as landscape) become a ‘road that can be travelled’ (Takemitsu, 1993, p. 47) exemplifying a place of textural metamorphosis through a developing soundscape.
Primary Concepts

The concepts that unite my work are: firstly *Ma* as a gateway phenomenon; secondly, the Artistic Moment existing within the frame of *Ma*; thirdly, ritual as a means of transcendence, fourthly, collaboration between practitioners; and finally, the interlock that exists between sound and visual dimensions. These collaborative meetings that facilitate and expand the moment contain reverberant in-between zones imbued with pressure and release. These juxtapositions of tension and surrender can result in a spiritual and creative emergence that arises from this initial interaction.

Understood from this perspective, the Artistic Moment relates to *Ma* as an expression of ritual across examples of collaboration in cross-cultural and inter-disciplinary performing arts. In my practice, the eclectic sources that I work with expand this notion of *Ma*, ritualising the Artistic Moment to bring about, what scholar Adrian Snodgrass describes in reference to the Japanese concept: ‘*Ma* [which] brings together and fuses space and time’ (Snodgrass, 2006, p. 223). This ritualised zone is designed as a place where both audience and performer can undergo a transformative experience, as Joseph Campbell has discussed in relation to the hero’s journey (Campbell, 1949). This sojourn has the potential to be a numinous event that is beyond the everyday constructs of time and personality, imbued with a sacred dimension. In my practice, this spiritual emergence is supported by an immersive media interlock of sound and vision and the ephemeral spaces of Japanese gardens.

1.2. Spiritual and Creative Intersections Perspective

My aesthetic drawing on spiritual and creative intersections in the Artistic Moment is written from the perspective of a ‘reflective practitioner’ (Schön, 1983), drawing on the approaches of other composers and creative artists, and ideas from Schön, Csikzentmihalyi and Takemitsu. It explains my process primarily from inside the artistry, rather than presenting an objective analysis of my work.

The perspective is based in articulating how the Artistic Moment is analogous with the relational *Ma*. It unpacks diverse aspects of the moment through a methodology of processes and ‘tool kits’. My exegesis acknowledges that while there is a distinction
between creative arts and spirituality, there is also a continuum between the two, each present in each other, manifesting in a series of gateway moments, which I align with the Japanese aesthetic of Ma. Lisa Lim has also discussed this intersection between creativity and spirituality in her work as a composer, recognising ‘a deep interrelationship between realms of the visible and invisible’ (Lim, 2009, p. 1).

At the heart of this exploration is an examination of the fragility and power of the creative process viewed from the intersection of inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural arts practices in a collaborative performance context. I am aiming to uncover meaningful systems and examine the ways that these elements affect and influence rehearsal and performance.

The notion of the Artistic Moment and its associated numinous qualities of timelessness (Crossman, 2008, p. 29) formulate my own personal ecology and artistic cogency (Schön, 1983, p. 276). I hope to demonstrate some of my creative processes, which may be of particular interest to composers, performers, artists and theatre makers. My folio investigates a series of ways in which the Artistic Moment occurs through a range of compositional models, sonorities, instrumentation and media intersections. This exegesis is concerned with discovering how to uncover this Artistic Moment by illuminating the governing factors, which can be described as a type of flux within an inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural artistic practice where the conditions flow towards optimum creativity in collaboration. I aim to show that the Artistic Moment investigated reveals an aesthetic richness across cultures along the lines of a ritual synergy. These intersections are seen through Japanese, Australian Aboriginal, South African, and South American as well as European ‘flow of creativity’ ideas (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p.109).

The exploration comes from a creative voice that is distinctly unique to myself – an Australian perspective influenced by a Dutch heritage embracing improvisatory, cross-cultural and inter-media practices centred aesthetically within the Asia-Pacific and engaging beyond this. In other words, it is a ‘border crosser’ (Nuss, 2002, p. 44) attitude towards creating the Artistic Moment in multimedia and musical collaborative interactions. The personal approach towards uncovering the Artistic
Moment is unpacked in my creative credo which is explored in Chapter 2, Creative Credo and Context.

I am aware that the term ‘spiritual’ tends to be a overloaded term and can encompass religious spirituality, environmental spirituality, and non-religious spirituality. I consider that my focus is drawing an intersection with creativity and spirituality as discussed by Lim (2009) and Takemitsu (1992). My own spirituality has an eclectic foundation, however, in my arts practice I can identify a bridge between the Buddhist and Christian practices that inform some of my work. This is fleshed out in more detail in Chapter 2.

1.3. Belief, Process, Analysis and Experience Structure

Following the revelation of the Artistic Moment through belief, analysis and experience, I have based the discussion of my search and experience of this immediacy of experience in a three-part structure: credo in Chapter 2, process in Chapter 3 and analysis in Chapter 4.

I view the Artistic Moment as a valuable connecting place in collaborative arts practices. The exploration of this elusive and yet ever present moment takes place from the point of view inside the composer’s creative process. It is my own story told using material from journaling, diary recollections and reflections on the creative process, filming and recording. Formal musicological analysis is used sparingly. The predominant methodology is reflective practice and generally I choose to work outside traditional boundaries of notation. My exegesis also outlines and provides a practical context for how I have achieved the key components of this state of being – the Artistic Moment – and the impact it has had on me as a performer.

In Part One, Chapter 2, entitled Creative Credo and Context, my creative arts practice is explored through a discussion on my credo principles – the places and people that inform it – and is followed by a ‘reflection-in-action’ (Schön, 1983, p. 68) analysis that unpacks its techniques and processes. It illuminates aspects of my creative process, from a research perspective, and explores how, as a performer, I aim to achieve the Artistic Moment – both for the audience and myself. I discuss my
understanding of the Artistic Moment as a guiding philosophy, and I draw parallels to other states of being that reflect those numinous qualities. I explain my view of the relationship between creativity and spirituality and how the Japanese aesthetic of Ma informs much of my work. I also show how my practice is based in inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural techniques and how certain theories of collaboration and improvisation have informed the search.

In Part Two, Chapter 3, entitled Creative Process: From Wide Latitude through to Intimate Ritual Spaces, the context deals with the process of my creative output and methodology. I discuss my practiced-based research methods, shedding light on my personal creative history, demonstrating how my compositional strategies and techniques are used to create the intended result. I reveal how collaboration and improvisation practices are at the heart of my work, and define and expand the specific performance works in my creative portfolio from a process-method perspective. *Latitude 33* and *Haiku* are both seen through a ritualised context – *Latitude 33* occurring in a public sphere and *Haiku* manifesting more as a spiritual place as depicted in Figure 1.2. *Unfinished Symphonies* and *Devotion* are both analysed in a personal/interrelationship frame. These major works are seen as places that, for me, contain the Artistic Moment, a transcendent zone that is primarily expressed in these compositions through a range of cross-cultural instrumentation, orchestrations and arrangements.

Part Three, Chapter 4, entitled Analysis of the Creative Works concludes with a reflection on the imaginative and transformative aims to achieve the Artistic Moment. The analysis focuses on the major creative works *Latitude 33*, *Haiku*, *Unfinished Symphonies* and *Devotion*. This section discusses the actual creative media itself as a revelation of theory and practice, identifying the salient points in each work that can be seen as ‘the peculiar force of epiphany that can attend a presencing’ (Lim, 2009, p. 1), or as I call it, the Artistic Moment. The beginning of this artistic process towards the Artistic Moment lies within the personal beliefs and the questions underpinning them. These ideas are unpacked in my credo statement.

In Chapter 5, I draw conclusions regarding the gateway moment, the personal transformation of collaboration and arrival at the Artistic Moment.
Figure 1.2: Jane Rutter recording for *Haiku*, Pantheon de Boudhique, Paris 2013, photo Yantra de Vilder
PART ONE

Chapter 2. Creative Credo and Context

2.1. Personal Creative Credo

I believe artists always tackle such questions as: what am I saying, how do I want to say it, and why do I want to say it? These questions are recurrent in my creative practice, and formulate a personal creative credo that is addressed in the context of each project I am involved with, whether it be a performance, film, theatre event or recording. They are central to my artistic expression. My aim in this discussion is to crystallise my noetic experiences – to bridge the gap between the theory and practice by articulating the forces behind my creative drive. Digging deeper, into the substratum of my personal credo, I find my key creative impetus resides in the experience of the Artistic Moment, as an intrinsic guide to my arts practice. These forces are the ones that define the Artistic Moment. Using the Artistic Moment as a lens in which to view my aesthetic impulse implies a context of spirituality, however, as I do not ascribe to any one particular ethos of spiritual or religious tradition, I find that describing this aspect of myself is challenging – like trying to pour an ocean into a teacup. And so it is, with this context in mind, that I will attempt to flesh out this notion of the Artistic Moment (Laliberté, 2012) but through the lens of Japanese Ma as an analogous way of glimpsing this moment. My broader spiritual understanding is based on an eclectic philosophy, which feeds directly into my arts practice. My personal history has informed this eclecticism and I flesh this out in more detail here. My intention in experiencing the Artistic Moment is driven by a search for a place where I can be a ‘cultivator of infinite time’ (Takemitsu, 1995, p. 45). This is the fundamental force at the heart of my personal creative credo.
Ma Space

Metaphorically, I see myself inside a gateway, standing as a bridge between places, a ‘border crosser’ (Nuss, 2002, p. 44). The notion of the space between, the space between the breath, the space between eastern and western modes of spirituality, the space between the notes, informs my thinking. This between place has strong resonances with the Japanese aesthetic of Ma, from the Zen Buddhist Honkyoku tradition (Franklin, 2008, p. 93). Indeed, viewing my collaborative relationships from a Ma perspective, I have come to identify the salient qualities that pertain to what lies between people, providing the driving force of connection in the working process – those of trust, respect and listening.

Meditative Process

As a result of my deep interest in Buddhist and Christian theologies, I have developed an inner spiritual enquiry that informs my arts practice, whilst crossing the borders between these two philosophies. At its essence is my own quest for peace and inspiration. Some of the tools I use to prepare and guide me are the Christian based Centering Prayer (as taught by Trappist Monk Father Thomas Keating1) and the Buddhist practice of chanting, which I present as a recorded work for my creative portfolio, Devotion, a collaboration with Tibetan Buddhist Nun, Venerable Robina Courtin. Based on this background, whenever I am entering the recording studio, rehearsal room or before performance, there are certain exercises or rituals that I regularly perform to prepare the ground for the Artistic Moment. I will discuss these in this chapter and Chapter 3, which details my creative process.

I consider that my intention with my compositions and collaborations contains a numinous vision that blurs the boundaries between arts practice and a spiritual context, which includes (but is not limited to) a final performance outcome.

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1 I was first introduced to Keating’s teachings at a Centering Prayer Retreat held at the Mercy Retreat Centre, Tornoto, New South Wales in May 2014.
Ritualised Performance

Ritualised performance inhabits a space in contemporary culture, which crosses a number of boundaries. In my earlier research, I refer to the socio-religious context that references a profound sense of connectedness inhabiting communal and tribal sensibilities existing within the Trance Music Culture (de Vilder, 2005). I discussed the similarities between pre-modern (traditional) trance cultural practices and contemporary Trance Dance events that are achieved through a let-go state of dissolution, achieved by the applied principles of space, music, volume, dancing, crowd intensity and intention (Atma, 2000; Cole, 1990). I also researched examples in the context of dance, mysticism and music, and was informed by Schafer’s writings (The Tuning of the World, Schafer, 1980) dealing with issues of sacred sound, pertaining to the followers of Jalala-ud-din Rumi working themselves into a mystical trance and whirling in slow gyrations. I also examined the work of Gabriel Roth and her Five Rhythms program as a frame of reference for contextualising my research into a paradigm that I named The Spiral Principle, outlining the five movements of my creative work Evolution Journey. This framework contains specific delineations of the sonata principle of exposition, development and recapitulation, also depicting a measurement (deciphered musically as a moment in time) of the occurrence of the golden section. Within this there are particular strategies of musical devices of repetition, duration, beats per minute and drones, all contributing to the experience of the Artistic Moment. I designed The Spiral Principle as a way of interpreting and demonstrating the links between the different forms of Contemporary Trance Music practices (rave events, Trance Dance workshops and Gabriel Roth’s Five Rhythms) and the more traditional forms of sonata and golden section (de Vilder, 2005). This research formed a foundation of my continued work in inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural performances imbued with a spiritual meaning for myself as the creator of the work in search of the Artistic Moment.

Within this context, I am uncovering and refining an existential element of process – the so-called Artistic Moment, which encompasses a physiological, emotional, spiritual and mental state of being. What arises in this nexus that intersects spiritual and creative practice is elements of ritualised enactment.
Focusing the lens on my creative impetus gives me an opportunity to reflect on my own human and spiritual identity and the subsequent creative zones that I traverse through time, space and place, all encapsulated in the essence of a series of Artistic Moments.

**Physical and Spiritual Immediacy in Improvisation**

My experience is that live performance, collaborative and solo music making, and particularly the act of improvisation, can offer an opportunity of being impelled into the immediacy of the present moment, which brings a spiritual dimension into the experience.

This ‘waking up to the moment’ through the power of performance is central to my artistic vision, and therefore I am aware that, in this context, I am transcending mere music making and diving into a place imbued with spiritual qualities that have pertinent resonance for me.

…the quality that one seeks is the spiritual quality, which incidentally sometimes breaks the rules… So what Cage did that was so important was to say, ‘Look when you make music you are acting as a philosopher’. (Tamm, 1995, p.18)

When looking broader afield for spiritual and cultural parallels, I find that the Artistic Moment is analogous to the Zen painter, who spends all day practicing for the perfect circle, and then at sunset executes it in a moment of intrinsic clarity of perception and skill. This discipline of mental, spiritual and artistic vigilance is the raison d’être of process – anchored in an awareness of the present moment, beyond judgment, absorbed into the purity of being ‘present’ in the form of the moment. This place of timelessness and spiritual receptiveness that is beyond internal criticism has been referred to as the moment form.

There are precedents for this in twentieth century thought, such as the Moment form – concept propagated by Karlheinz Stockhausen in his works of the 1960s and beyond. (Franklin, 2008, p. 97)
Eclectic Cultural Space

There are many names for the Artistic Moment depending on one’s cultural background or personal ecology. Taoism refers to nothingness, yet, it is known to contain everything – a place where all is ‘one’. Distinguished Professor, Buddhist practitioner and composer Chinary Ung from the University of San Diego has described it as the ‘void’ (Ung, 2008, p. 16). Bruce Crossman has described it as ‘essence’ (Crossman, 2008, p. 20).

Glimpsing the Moment Beyond Words

I share an interest with Lisa Lim in ‘cultural patterns that are in some way about the controlled revelation and also concealment of spiritual power, of the numinous’ (Lim, 2012, p. 2). I believe that the Artistic Moment is a happening, pertaining to the numinous… a place that goes beyond the realms of our limited human vernacular. As the Zen Patriarch Bodhidharma 2 wrote in the Hsin Hsin Ming:

The more you talk and think about it

The further astray you wander from the truth. (cited in Merzel, 1991, p. 40)

Naming this state, reducing it to the limitations of words, is to do it a disservice, a dumbing down of sorts. For me it is as Chinary Ung has described, a spiritual process not talked about. It is my challenge to attempt to articulate it, not as a finite definition, but through the use of words as a gateway for glimpsing the moment.

2.2. The Artistic Moment

My work becomes more about creating ritual. One useful definition of ritual for me that it is a mode whereby rhythmicised elements that is repetition or the collection of actions into habit, offer a framework to observe moments of change, moments of transition towards and away from more unbounded states. (Lim, 2012, p. 2)

This research project is a personal Australian exploration aiming to uncover and define the Artistic Moment through creative collaboration and identifying the ritualised contexts that arise through these meetings. My argument is that there are

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2 Bodhidharma bought Buddhism from India to China in the sixth century. Hsin Hsin Ming is known as the first Zen poem.
particular criteria and strategies that offer the optimum conditions for achieving this moment on an individual and collective level. It is this term, the Artistic Moment, but taken beyond the original’s physical moment and used as a more generic term, that embraces the creative process (a personal, auto-ethnographical space) and states of consciousness, especially with regard to the Japanese *Ma* aesthetic and Buddhist thought, paralleled in Csikszentmihalyi’s flow theory of creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 107).

My main focus is to examine my work in four collaborative projects, seeking aspects and incidents that contribute to a sense of flow, or Artistic Moments. The primary focus for this exegesis in identifying the Artistic Moment is based in examining the fragility and power of the creative process. By identifying the strategies required for successful collaboration, I aim to uncover the elements that give rise to Guy Laliberté’s term Artistic Moment, (Laliberté, 2012) or as Csikszentmihalyi describes it, ‘the flow of pure creativity which results in positive performance outcomes’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, p. 20).

I first came across the expression of the Artistic Moment in an interview with Guy Laliberté, creative director of Cirque du Soleil, Canada’s leading multimedia physical theatre circus company. Laliberté was using it as a way to define the moment of lucidity and timelessness that transpires in creative endeavours (Laliberté, 2012). This governing Artistic Moment in my creative work can be described as a type of flux within an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural artistic practice where the conditions flow towards optimum creativity in collaboration providing a point of meeting where all these ideas can come together. I experience it in my arts practice as a state that is constantly in existence, it is just a matter of uncovering it, as referred to in Michelangelo’s approach to carving where he actually looked inside the stone to find the image he was seeking to create, needing only to chip away at what was not the image, to reveal the masterpiece (Schuman and Paxton, 2007).

The quest for experiencing the Artistic Moment is driven by a search for a place where I can be ‘a cultivator of infinite time’, where ‘time and space are equivalent’ (Takemitsu, 1995, p. 45). This waking up to the moment through the power of improvisation, performance and immersive experience is central to my artistic vision,
and therefore I am aware that, in this context, I am transcending mere music making and diving into a place imbued with spiritual qualities that has pertinent resonance for me.

The experience of the Artistic Moment has similarities to flow theory, which Csikszentmihalyi describes as the state of total involvement in an activity:

I like to think of flow as being a continuum, a combination of dimensions of experience, beginning with a challenging activity requiring skills with clear goals and feedback. The person becomes utterly absorbed in the activity, concentrating so intently he or she drops all self-consciousness and loses the sense of time. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1995, p. 73)

My project is taken from the point of view of inside the composer’s creative process. It is my own story told using material from journaling, diary recollections and reflections on the creative process, informing the development of filming and recording. This experience is uncovered, through Laliberté’s concept of the Artistic Moment in the creative arts, in particular multimedia collaborative arts.

It is intended that the inclusion of Zen aesthetics in *Haiku*, improvisation in *Unfinished Symphonies*, traditional and contemporary visuals, dances and songs in *Latitude 33* and the cross-cultural nuances of Tibetan chants in *Devotion* provide a portal of entry for the Artistic Moment to occur, not only for the performers but the audience alike.

The notion of the Artistic Moment and its associated numinous qualities of timelessness (Atherton and Crossman, 2008) formulate a personal ecology and artistic cogency (Schön, 1983, p. 276). This governing Artistic Moment in my creative work can be described as a type of flux within an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural artistic practice where the conditions flow towards optimum creativity in collaboration. This moment of flow, which is subconscious in nature, has a series of ritualised cross-cultural nuances that combine through a technical interlock system (a musical and collaboration system) that allows the paradigms to unite. Even though the Artistic Moment may be seen as having subconscious qualities, there are particular practices or rituals (some may call prayers) that I consciously employ to gain access to this state. As Takemitsu states:
Music is a form of prayer. Musical acts of mine, also (if we were to express them in an orderly fashion with words) consist of the several layers of emotion that support such acts, and might be construed as prayers. We may justly say they cannot be explained by any other word. However, by prayer I really mean something which cannot be formed with words. (Takemitsu, 1995, p. 65)

Whenever I am about to perform or rehearse I prepare myself by placing a conscious intent on allowing myself to go into a space beyond time – where I may be used as a channel for music, that it may flow through me, unencumbered by negative thoughts. I am preparing myself to change into sound in the sense that Takemitsu defines listening – ‘Listening probably means changing into sound itself by existing within it’ (Takemitsu, 1995, p. 39).

The Artistic Moment can be viewed as a broad, Zen-based flow theory connected concept that goes beyond the physical intersection to examine states of consciousness. These are the moments which make being an artist a rich and rewarding experience and which show an artistic richness in cultural relations, and an ‘interlock’ going across media structures and elements of nature. By ‘interlock’ I refer to characteristics that fit together, such as rhythmic and melodic elements or synchronicity between visual and musical media, that ‘interlock’ thereby creating a connected artistic cogency. Underpinning these elements, my aim is to identify a meeting place – a nexus of intersection, a place where things and people come together, a space of significance – imbedded in a collaborative happening.

This Artistic Moment can be seen as working through cross-cultural artistic richness using interlock systems across its materials; its key supporting concepts include connection/nexus, cross-cultural influences, ritualised contexts, and blurred boundaries. This nexus can occur in the rehearsal room, on stage or in the recording studio – it can be cultural, geographical or time based, and it can have spiritual and/or physical qualities. ‘There must be a hidden interface where people without common language can touch one another’ (Takemitsu, 1993, p. 48).

Through these perspectives, my project demonstrates that Artistic Moments are generated through the zones of ‘connection’ and ‘feel’ aligned with specific practices,
for example improvisation, communication with self and the other, mutual respect, trust, listening and creating.

Ritual is a concept arising from the cross-cultural/spiritual influences in my creative works (Atherton and Crossman, 2008; Takemitsu, 1992). Many aspects of traditional indigenous music and dance form a ritualised context within a shamanic matrix, evoking a quality that can lead to transcendent moments (Rouget, 1985; Reynolds, 1998). These moments are explored in *Latitude 33* through Kalahari and Mapuche songs and dances. Following on with the idea of ritual as containing elements of the Artistic Moment, in my project *Haiku*, the qualities that are evoked in a Japanese garden are steeped in a meditative Zen aesthetic, giving rise to moments of timelessness – Artistic Moments framed by the gateway concept of *Ma*. The Zen aesthetic of the Edogawa Japanese Gardens defines the environmental ambience and the performative moment (Franklin, 2008, p. 93), which has a direct impact on audience and performer alike. In the words of Takemitsu:

> Performing arts seek time and spaces fit for their performance. These have the important function of acting upon the human imagination accurately. (Takemitsu, 1993, p. 40)

Operating in a matrix of blurring boundaries, the notion of improvisation connected to Artistic Moments and leading to feelings of timelessness is not new, especially in a cross-cultural musical context. For example, North Indian classical music has shaped many of Keith Jarrett’s improvising strategies (Blume, 2003, p. 118). Khan (1991) states that in Indian music there are over three hundred modes and five hundred rhythms that form the many different ragas, which are also influenced by seasons and times of the day and night (Khan, 1991, p. 61). This rich palette of sonic possibilities can become a source of inspiration for a composer who wishes to cross musical and cultural borders. Keith Jarrett’s creation of modal plateaus has been a major influence on my work. By breaking up tonal centres and abandoning repeating chord patterns (Blume, 2003), Jarrett uses elements of North Indian ragas to establish a place that goes beyond cultural ‘insiderism’, as Werner Sollors calls it (Sollors, cited in Nuss, 2002, p. 39), uncovering new systems of meaning in the music (Smith and Dean, 1997, p. 36). Rhythmic riffs and melodic cells become springboards for elaboration and have become some of the strategies that I incorporate in my improvisation techniques. Modes are connected to moods (Khan, 1991, p. 63), moods are connected
to emotion, and therefore directly linked to establishing the ‘feel’ in the music. If used correctly they can become an important connection in the sonic landscape upon which to travel to the Artistic Moment. As Japanese composer Takemitsu puts it:

A mode is a road along which a man may walk, and it is never-ending. An infinite number of, like the veins of a leaf, will join, at the end, your soul into the one cosmic mode. (Takemitsu, 1993, p. 47)

When I am working as an artist/composer/theatre maker, I have found that enabling and establishing the Artistic Moment lies primarily in the zones of connection and feel. These might be expanded as:

**Connection** – Emotional context, shared personal ethics and aesthetics of collaborators form the underlying links. As Robert Le Page (2011) says, ‘By freely associating ideas, the creative team can discover poetic connections.’ Inevitably this connected approach in my practice tends towards cross-cultural border crossings (Nuss, 2010, p. 44) that create a multicultural artistic richness in the work.

**Feel** – What moves people in the sound/music composition. As (Schön, 1991) says:

When good jazz musicians improvise together, they also manifest a ‘feel for’ their material and they make on the spot adjustments to the sounds they hear. Listening to one another and themselves, they feel where the music is going and adjust their playing accordingly. (Schön, 1991, p. 55)

Inevitably, this ‘feeling approach’ at the heart of the Artistic Moment amongst the materials results in an ‘internalised system’ (Berkovitz, 2011) in my practice that tends towards identifiable ‘interlock systems’ across the inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural nature of the work. Music is at the heart of this shared language.
Figure 2.1: Ma The Space Between, Albert Cant Japanese Gardens, Paris 2013, photo by Yantra de Vilder
2.3. Theories of Collaboration

We work together to find this emerging entity. (Armiger, 2012)

The species that survives is not the most intellectual or strongest, but the one able best to adapt and adjust to the changing environment in which it finds itself. (Pearlman, 2013, p. 5)

The articulation of the Artistic Moment – a Ma like revelatory space between entities – requires discussion of the interaction between people. Collaboration can be understood in a number of different ways. Sometimes the word has negative connotations for example, if you were called a collaborator in the war it meant that you were someone who had betrayed their friends, allies, or country to protect themselves, or worse to profit (Pearlman, 2013, p. 5). In other contexts, creative collaboration is seen as a kind of Holy Grail, a sanctified concept, hopefully a place where we can forget power struggles in order to listen to the unique momentum that the work generates (Pearlman, 2013, p. 5). In this sense collaboration implies a sharing of a vision, however, the organic process of creativity and interaction means that one must be ready to adapt to an ever changing environment.

Successful collaboration is a place that acknowledges difference – a nexus where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. (Vagg, 2012)

Soft Collaborations: Improvisatory Play

Fleshing out the term even further, there is also the notion of soft and hard collaboration. Hybridity can be seen as a form of soft collaboration. New Zealand film director Jane Campion is known to practice soft collaboration in her filmmaking. She says that one of her principles is to, ‘be strong about vulnerability’ (Campion, cited in Pearlman, 2012, p. 7), to make it clear that during a shoot she and her actors are there to explore and possibly make mistakes. Collaboration as improvisatory play is at the heart of this soft collaboration where there is openness to the collaborator’s instincts and half-formed ideas, with no hard creative boundary between director and actors (Pearlman, 2013, p. 52).
It is also worth contrasting the words collaboration with co-operation, where there is a subtle difference in the meaning. Co-operation implies working with someone else in order to help them create their vision, without complaint or challenge. Collaboration is a riskier and more intense working relationship – where two or more people create and produce a piece of work (Dogoplov, 2012, p. 123).

**Creative Isolation and Collaborative Interaction**

More often than not, the traditional view of composers is that they tend to work by themselves in an isolated sanctuary of their own making. But what of the composer who wishes to collaborate? Can this be a difficult transition? Hayden and Windsor believe that the independent composer can have some challenges collaborating. They state:

> Composers ... appear to be individualistic, have a capacity for solitude, and are attracted to complex and ambiguous symbolic enterprises. (Hayden and Windsor 2007, p. 28)

Although, I believe humans are social creatures. This concept that we are not alone, but interdependent is clearly demonstrated in the Japanese word for human being – *ningen*, which graphically has two calligraphy strokes leaning up against each other (de Quincey, 2010). This combines the characteristics of human and betweenness – implicating that to be human is to be among other people. In this context *Ma* represents the in-between space-time of the world in which humans interact – the site of collaboration. However, *Ma* does not just represent a spatial betweenness – it also has temporal connotations, representing a space or pause that stops a flow of sound, music, narrative or communication. All of these principles are deeply imbedded in a collaborative context.

In Japanese theatrical arts the talent of the actor is judged by their ability to enliven the *Ma*, the pause and the success of this delivery is accompanied by the presence of those in the creative team and how they listen.

> Listening to one another and themselves, they feel where the music is going and adjust their playing accordingly. (Schön, 1983, p. 55)
Filmmaker Ted Hope believes that ‘The way we build it better, is to build it together’ (Hope, 2012, p. 22). In his essay, ‘Ruminations on Collaboration’ he discusses the importance of establishing and respecting boundaries, combined with the challenges of vulnerability and necessity of transparency and openness.

If change only occurs when the pain of the present outweighs the fear of the future, to get to that change perhaps we also have to make sure that the process is not solitary and by sharing with others we can help others recognise we are in it together. We have to embrace transparency and openness in all we do and adopt a community focus to our endeavours. (Hope, 2012, p. 23)

Martin Armiger, head of Screen Music for the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS) believes that co-operation is necessary for survival, but communal efforts do not happen spontaneously. He states: ‘Composing by committee can make you crazy.’ (Armiger, 2012, p. 38) However, Armiger also believes that it is worth the struggle:

We collaborate because we believe that from the combination of our efforts there is something coming into being that will be worth the struggle, that will make sense of the confusing shadows, and will make evident the pattern in the randomness and happenstance of life. (Armiger, 2012, p. 49)

Generative Collaboration: Mind Meld through Openness

At the heart of generative shared creativity is the concept of the ‘mind meld’ (Pearlman, 2012, p. 51) that grows through collaboration – an unspoken communication that is felt through the bodies of collaborators, not discussed or processed cognitively. I have found that often these non-verbal domains of connection and feel can give rise to the Artistic Moment. This unity of purpose is strengthened by the creative decisions intuitively arising out of an embodied process and sensitised awareness.

The contemporary performer Björk sits at the helm of many ground-breaking works, where she navigates the pathway for her creative team. Collaboration for her is an organic process, where ideas are discussed, researched and revisited each day, ‘in a very exploratory way, incorporating life and work, reading, writing, talking and
listening’ (Biesenbach, 2015, p. 9). It is interesting to note the success of her work and how Björk continues to maintain openness with her collaborators, a place where she can push them to come up with new creative directions that they might not have done themselves. As Biesenbach observes: ‘She is a muse, but also a midwife: a co-artist/catalyst who is clear in her vision and yet invitingly vague as to the exact visual form it will take’ (Biesenbach, 2015, p. 10).

**Relational Dynamics: Belief in Others**

A deeper look into the emotional context of collaboration underlies Vera John-Steiner’s writings: *Creative Collaboration*. In this book, she analyses the creative process at play in collaboration and uses examples of a range of collaborative relationships to demonstrate how creative people think. By focusing on relational dynamics, she challenges the western notion that romanticises the solitary creative process. Some of her case studies include Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, Martha Graham and Erick Hawkins, Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, Aaron Copland and Leonard Bernstein, and the larger ensembles of The Guarneri String Quartet and The Group Theatre. Steiner believes that making oneself known and heard is central to emotional survival and growth in any relationship:

> Belief in a partner's capabilities is crucial in collaborative work, as marginality, estrangement, and self-doubt frequently plague creative people. (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 126)

One of the great powers of collaboration is that it provides for an expansion of skills, roles, leadership, and working styles by close partners (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 145). Steiner presents a theoretical framework where a number of conditions come together – including social, cultural, historical and biological – to contribute to the realisation of human possibility. The principle that humans come into being and mature in relation to others is at the core of this theory (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 187).

In this discussion on collaborative relationships, the notion of the space between elements and people is of interest here, and is epitomised in the Japanese concept of *Ma*, as a space-time interval (Snodgrass, 2006, p. 223).

*Ma* has become a constant thread that weaves through all my projects in this research. Enframement becomes relevant in this context, as discussed by Hebdige:
The tension gathered at the edge of the enframement, the tension established, in other words, between the economy of the means deployed in the execution of the piece and the openness of the horizon against which the work is thrown. (Hebdige, 2001, p. 336)

**Individuality, Identity and Cultural Fracturing towards Mutual Ground**

Individuality and identity play an important role in any discussion on collaboration and there are times when successful collaboration can transcend geographical, cultural and stylistic boundaries through its amalgamation of the collaborators ‘cultural baggage’ (Nuss, 2002). The different influences from each collaborator’s unique musical voice dissolve into each other’s, reforming into a united entity. Individuality of each collaborator is forgotten as a new, group identity is realised:

During collaboration with an international artist, the most important thing is not to express your traditional culture, but to work together. I believe that collaboration is an organic joining of forms from different cultures. When you work in international collaborations, it is more important to draw the spirit of your tradition and bring something else to explore. (Kuning, cited in Ito, 2002)

In collaboration, no matter what discipline or cultural difference, for a successful communication to be achieved we all need to be on the same page, (figuratively speaking) to achieve any kind of harmonious activity with a goal of ‘artistry, mastery and right action’ (Hebdige, 2001, p. 336). To that end, Hayden and Windsor discuss the importance of shared aesthetic goals in collaboration:

A shared aesthetic goal seemed important: incompatible aesthetics can impede successful collaboration by promoting conflicts in working methods and artistic aims. (Hayden and Windsor, 2007, p. 15)

**Collaborative Models: Wide Space Interdisciplinary Interaction**

A multi-disciplinary approach has wide spaces for much to evolve and present itself in the *Ma* sense as opposed to an individual isolated space. In terms of my own research, I am particularly interested in following the collaborations of other composers, filmmakers and choreographers. For example, Tan Dun with Ang Lee, Lisa Gerard and Ridley Scott, Merc Cunningham and John Cage, Phillip Glass and
Twyla Tharp, Graeme Murphy and Iva Davies, Stephen Page and David Page and the numerous projects of Rafael Bonachela who has reinvigorated Sydney Dance Company with a series of exciting collaborative exchanges. In terms of film and music, recently Australian audiences have experienced a unique collaboration between Richard Tognetti (artistic director of Australian Chamber Orchestra), Ian Grandage (composer) and Mick Sowrey (film director) in *The Reef*. This project brings together musicians, surfers and cinematographers on a musical voyage to the surf coast and desert landscape of northern-western Australia. A documentary entitled *Liquid Notes – The Making of the Reef*, is a lead up to the performance, *The Reef*, which was performed at the Sydney Opera House in 2012 and 2013. There is a tangible excitement at the crossing of boundaries that is emerging in this production. Grunge meets classical meets surf culture in a uniquely Australian production.

**Technology as a Bridge across Space**

The analogy of *Ma* as spatial interaction can be extended through technological bridges to emergence. Through the power of technology and the internet, our world can be seen to have become smaller with international connections, just the press of a button or Skype away. In contemporary art practices there are many platforms of global connection through media. *One Giant Leap (What About Me?)* is a recording and film project based on a similar concept to *Latitude 33* in that it links people from a wide range of countries through the power of music. With the use of portable recording techniques, and a shared song, Jamie Catto and Duncan Bridgeman travelled to more than fifty countries around the globe, proving that music is an international language and we can all sing from the same song sheet. They documented the process in a feature film and CD recording. This project was nominated for two Grammy awards, and encompasses a TV series, film and album, plus YouTube phenomena. It features a diverse range of collaborators including Noam Chomsky, REM, Carlos Santana, Baaba Maal, K.D. Lang and many others. It has been described as ‘a time capsule of humanity’ (Bridgeman and Catto, 2004).

Collaborations exist in a multitude of forms, and in today’s world where space travel has become a reality, we are now capable of extending collaborative projects beyond our own planet. In September 2009, Guy Laliberté, founder and creative director of
Cirque du Soleil became the first artist to explore space. His Poetic Social Mission in Space is an innovative project that uses art and culture to raise international awareness of the necessity to protect our water. From a space station, he created a two-hour online program uniting various artists, politicians and activists, who either read poetry or shared a performance. Performers and speakers included Peter Gabriel, Cirque du Soleil, Al Gore, U2, and David Suzuki. The event took place simultaneously in Montreal, Moscow, Santa Monica, New York City, Johannesburg, Mumbai, Marrakesh, Sydney, Tokyo, Tampa, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Paris, London and the International Space Station. Poetry, music, dance, visual arts and photography served as the connecting thread for Guy Laliberté’s project. In each of the cities, an Artistic Moment unfolded in the presence of artists and world-renowned personalities. Central to the concept was a poem written by Canadian author Yann Martel. The Artistic Moment became defined within this space context as a particular ‘physical moment’. I am interested in stretching notions around collaboration. This could be seen as a contextualisation of Ma into an expanded form of collaborative relationships in ‘space’ and as the space between the artists.

In each of the cities, an Artistic Moment will unfold in the presence of artists and world-renowned personalities. During the past 25 years, my travels on earth have allowed me to meet extraordinary people: artists, leaders and friends. I am deeply touched that they have accepted to contribute their voices, their talent and their creativity to my artistic project. They have done so because they share my concerns about water and my belief that through art and emotion we can convey a universal message. (Laliberté, 2013)

There have been other precedents in global/space artistic collaboration. In 2003, Laurie Anderson became NASA's first artist-in-residence, which inspired her performance piece, The End of the Moon. Her work with NASA was unique in that she was the first artist to be chosen by NASA to be artist-in-residence for their space program. In terms of collaboration, she is keenly interested in the relationship between audience and performer:

I’m trying to bridge this gap between the audience and the performers, to include the audience so that they become a part of the event, a part of a shared experience. (Anderson, 2013)

For four decades, Anderson has been immersed in inter-disciplinary practices using a variety of media: sculpture, music, video, spoken narrative and projected imagery. Her name has become synonymous with pushing the boundaries of art. Although an
undeniably unique individual performer, collaboration has been one of the main threads of her career. Anderson has collaborated with William S. Burroughs, Jean Dupuy, Arto Lindsay, Bill Laswell, Peter Gabriel, David Sylvian, Jean Michel Jarre, Brian Eno, Phillip Glass, Nona Hendryx, Bobby Mc Ferrin, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Dave Stewart, Adrian Below and Lou Reed, producing a wide catalogue of audio recordings.

Art Space for Collaborative Relationships

The *Honkyoku*³ sonic (Franklin, 2008, p. 93) *Ma* space between performer and listener (Snodgrass, 2006, p. 223) can be compared to a seen space between visual artefact and viewer in Lim’s shimmering moment (Lim, 2009, p.3) and Morishita’s notion of how ‘sounds float in space’ (Morishita, 2010, p. 1).

Collaboration was the key word for the 2012 Sydney Biennale, entitled *All Our Relations*. I was interested in the various audio/visual installations that were exhibited using collaboration as a part of their frame of reference. Curators of the event, Catherine de Zegher and Gerald McMaster, describe the 18th Biennale of Sydney as being based on a new collaborative framework. In relation to connection and the world we inhabit, the art critic John McDonald writes:

> The current Biennale rejects separation, negativity and disruption as strategies of change. Instead it posits, a renewed attention to how things connect, how we relate to each other and the world in which we inhabit. (McDonald, 2012, p. 12)

All of my artworks are concerned with space in one way or another – whether it be the venue in which the event occurs, the spaces between the people or the artistic pauses and silences that accompany a musical or theatrical work. In the Japanese Garden environment, I have come to recognise ‘pattern languages’ (Lim, 2009, p.1) that deal in transformation and journeying. The natural unfoldment for performers and audience as they travel through the discreet zones in Japanese Gardens can produce an aesthetic experience imbued with spatial awareness. These moments of revelation in the Japanese Gardens are guided by the architectural spaces of *Ma*, as discussed by

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³ Original *Shakuhachi* pieces played by Zen monks for enlightenment.
Adrian Snodgrass (2006), and informed by the meditative impulse arising in the tranquil zones that permeate each site.

Collaboration as Narrative

Traditionally, the Zen monks of the Honkyoku faith experienced travels that found expression in the Ma spaces journey of sound in the Honkyoku repertoire. It is this notion of journey that places collaboration as narrative. In this sense I am also interested in brothers David and Stephen Page of Bangarra Dance Theatre as collaborators. David Page has been a major influence in the way that I compose, weaving Aboriginal language, sound design and source audio samples from nature into the soundtrack for their dance performances. I recently watched Stephen Page on Creative Minds, a Studio TV production, and was interested in some of his reflections on his artistic process and collaborations. He sees himself as a caretaker of stories, and says:

You want to let the stories be the power. You want to let the art be the weapon. You want to let the theatrical experience be the consciousness shifter... I try to bring the essence of the land into dance theatre. (Page, 2012)

Australian audiences experienced a unique collaboration in The Reef and Liquid Notes, the lead up documentary. Liquid Notes is a deeply revealing look inside Tognetti’s artistic and collaborative process, producing an auto-ethnographic context arising from Tognetti’s interest in surfing. It is a film that captures the heart of site-specific work, combined with collaboration between film makers, composer Iain Grandage and Tognetti. It was shot in an up-close and personal way, with many interviews from the leading collaborators involved. One of the best aspects of this project is the great leveller that being in the site-specific of natural wilderness can be. The concept of The Reef is simple, although the production and composition process is complex, involving weeks of shooting in a remote environment, and the layering process of music composition. The Australian Chamber Orchestra plays music on stage and there are surfing, ocean, sky and desert projections behind them. Tognetti believes that there has always been an identifiable connection between the surfing and music world. This project is innovative as it uses the power of orchestral music with the majestic cinematography of the ocean.
I think if you are going to be associated with creativity whether you are creating as in composing or writing, or performing (which is interpretive art), unless you try to evolve and push yourself, you’re rotting. (Tognetti, 2012)

More often than not surfing films are associated with contemporary popular and rock music rather than the classical music genre. In the reef there is a tangible excitement at the crossing of boundaries that is emerging in this production. Grunge meets classical meets surf culture. Tognetti describes the so-called creative place:

You can't force the creative genesis. There are two ways that I can enter into the so-called creative place. One is by entering into the creative process by doing the hard work and the other way is finding space for that creative genesis to occur. For every creative artist – that emptying of the space – that void that you've got to have to allow the creative urge to rise, is important and sometimes you've got to force yourself to calm down, and this does it to us all. (Tognetti, 2012)

*Liquid Notes* is an inside look at a unique collaborative process. One that breaks the rules of traditional surfing music genres and brings to life a dynamic multimedia performance created by an inventive team.

This narrative approach to collaboration can have its issues in terms of seeing artistic needs in multiple narratives. Often composers utilise their talents across a broad range of mediums, covering bands, (contemporary music ensembles), theatre, music dance and film, as seen with the work of Tan Dun, Nitin Sawhney, Nick Cave, Lisa Gerard, Philip Glass, Iva Davies, David Hirschfelder, David Bridie and Roger Mason. Many composers comment that the process of collaborating with a film director is often far removed from that of working with a band. Collaboration is more often than not about finding common ground. Roger Mason, ex-keyboardist with The Models, Icehouse and Gary Numan, and now an award winning Australian screen composer, describes the film director as the lead composer of the band, which can have its own set of challenges in terms of shared vernacular:

It’s like two people collaborating to create something that communicates emotion and narratives – without actually having a common narrative. (Mason 2012, p. 8)

In this sense following a pattern and layering architectural multiple system approach, (Liotta, 2012) several systems can serve the Artistic Moment.
Collaboration as a Tool: Studio Process

Analogous to the Zen tradition of the Honkyoku performer in the moment of transcendence, is the collaborator’s intimate engagement with the recording studio instead of a large group of people. It can be a stark contrast for a composer, going from the touring focused nature of a pop career into the private, more isolated world of the film composer. David Hirschfelder says he misses ‘The real-time feedback and palpable spiritual energy of the live audience’ (Hirschfelder, 2012, p. 8). However, Hirschfelder believes that he was already thinking like an orchestral film composer when he was a young pop musician. Hayden and Windsor articulate this tendency - they believe that a composer is usually a self-contained entity, which can give rise to collaborative challenges:

...it is probable that collaboration, whether within music or with other artistic or technical disciplines, may prove even more difficult for composers than for other individuals. (Hayden and Windsor, 2007, p. 28)

But are all of us composers just control freaks, isolated individuals working in collaboration with the machines of their studio as a compositional tool? Are we searching for ‘connection’ in the wrong place? This is one of the challenges facing the composer who moves between collaboration and solo work. However, motivated to enter into collaborations he or she may be, there may be tacit or explicit resistance to the idea of giving up creative control (Hayden and Windsor, 2007, p. 29). Performer and writer David Byrne (2012), in his recent book What Makes Music Work, views his writing process as collaboration with himself, framed by the Jungian perspective of the dialogue between the unconscious and the collective conscious. He believes that when we write we access different parts of ourselves, different characters, other elements of ourselves:

As in dreams, it often seems as if a hidden part of oneself, a doppelganger, is attempting to communicate, to impart some important information... Don’t we always work by editing and structuring the outpouring of our many selves? (Byrne, 2012, p. 201)

Collaborative Spirit of Project

Collaborations from a Ma framework can manifest as fluid relationships ranging from outer-space to inter-disciplinary space to the mutual space – inclusively across
personal and group attributes. These collaborative spaces include areas of soft collaborations; isolational; relational; mutual ground; inter-disciplinary wide space; technological space; visual space; solo space and outer space. Thus, the successful collaborator becomes attuned to the spirit of the project, mind melding into the group consciousness whereby the force that directs the project is one that is navigated by a numinous power greater than the individual parts, and united in the Artistic Moment.

2.4. Theories of Improvisation

Improvisation: As Substantive Difference and Structural Consequent

Ma as a gateway where improvisation occurs has different theories of practice in my own collaborative philosophy, where the Artistic Moment is experienced as a receptive attitude.

Some definitions of improvisation in everyday speech carry a temporal dimension, as in acting on the spur of the moment or as in performing ‘from the materials and sources available without previous planning’ (‘Improvisation’ in Collins Dictionary, 1988).

The unforeseen and open-ended qualities of improvisation can combine to create an experience of being at ‘the dynamic centre of an unfolding activity, acting in the moment while sensing the whole’ (Coessens, 2012, p. 2).


It is for this reason that I believe that the immediacy of improvisation is inextricably linked with the Artistic Moment, whereby ‘the movement of each moment has consequences for the next’ (Coessens, 2012, p. 2), each moment framed by the flow that leads to the next moment – a bridge that connects musical places – a gateway of Ma. In relation to improvisation and sound experienced in time, Norwegian jazz pianist Tord Gustavsen discusses the phenomenon of ‘scenic consciousness’ (Gustavsen, 1999, p. 4) describing a field of theory, which emphasises a ‘radical acousmatic approach’ (ibid, p. 4). This paradigm, which includes such qualities as tonality and harmonic structure, is subordinated to the emergent qualities that rely on
a listening experience. In his discussion on improvisation, Gustavsen considers the negotiation and juxtapositions of moment versus time, difference versus sameness and stability versus stimulation (Gustavsen, 1999, p.4). As a receptacle of suddenness and presence, improvisation is a place where ‘invisible forces spill into an embodied visibility’ a phenomenon which can give rise to the ‘peculiar force of epiphany that can attend a presencing’ (Lim, 2009, p. 1).

**Spontaneous Connections: Neural and Physical**

It appears that improvisation inhabits a zone where neural pathways ignite with the physical techniques of musicianship in a moment of numinous reverberation. Recent work in neuroscience and music explores the role that music plays in human evolution and development. The research of Harvard University neuroscientist and concert pianist, Aaron Berkowitz, has explored both the history of improvisation and its neurological basis. In his book, *The Improvising Mind*, he states:

> We actually are with the artist as they are creating in real time, before our ears, before our eyes...we feel part of something that's never happened before, and something that's never going to happen again. (Berkowitz, 2012)

Berkowitz’s research builds on work already done on music and language, a form of improvisation we do all the time. In an ABC radio interview Berkovitz discusses improvisation and the importance of spontaneity:

> Across cultures people describe something similar, and ethnomusicologists that have interviewed musicians across cultures come up with a similar answer: that people aren't taught explicitly to improvise; they are taught a musical system, they do a lot of playing, they do a lot of practicing, they do a lot of listening. And over time they've internalised the system to a point where they can move within it spontaneously. (Berkovitz, 2011)

The creative flow is a state that may arise in improvisation and has resonances with the Artistic Moment. This notion of group flow can inspire people to play things which they would not have done when on their own – this is the power of group improvisation, as opposed to solo improvisation. Hungarian theorist Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi has discussed how when an individual is in the creative flow, their

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4 Taken from an interview with Aaron Berkowitz, Ros Bandt and Tony Gould conducted by Natasha Mitchell for ABC’s All in the Mind Radio Program – *The Precipice of Creativity: The Improvising Mind*. 
skills are perfectly matched to the challenges of the task; action and awareness become phenomenologically fused. He states:

When challenges are in balance with skills, one becomes lost in the activity and flow is likely to result. (Csikzentmihalyi, 1975, p. 44)

Timelessness and Inspiration

It is on the razor’s edge of the timeless immediacy of improvisation in performance that I believe the Artistic Moment can appear. Receiving rather than conceiving inspiration is at the heart of my improvisatory practice.

Aaron Berkowitz, Tony Gould and Ros Bandt on ABC Radio National’s All in The Mind discuss creativity and improvisation, and its association with timelessness in a program titled The Precipice of Creativity – The Improvising Mind.

A lot of what we do as improvisers is just in the air for now and that's the beauty of it, the present moment and we're not trying to freeze it. (Bandt, 2011)

Yet, these spontaneous attributes of presence (Lim, 2009) are not just limited to the creation of music, Hebdige believes that the aesthetic of spontaneity are grounded in a number of modalities from Zen Buddhism to Jungian psychology:


The timeless quality that emerges through the practice of improvisation is directly linked to the fact that it is a moment by moment occasion; thus when the participant is totally absorbed in each moment, a sense of durational time transforms into the Artistic Moment, where silence and space become the frame or the in between of Ma for the next moment.

Artistic improvisation time is fleeting and constraining; movements unfold, succeed, and even silence or immobility is but a tension or preparation of the embodied, bound for the next movement or sound. Nothing is ever in isolation. (Coessens, 2012, p. 8)
Emergent Chaos of Simplexity

Ethnomusicologist and Professor of Music at the University of San Diego, David Borgo, looks through the lens of contemporary science to illuminate the process of improvising music and explores the ability of improvisation to engage viscerally with emerging scientific thought on complexity and chaos. He makes the distinction between ideation and evaluation stages of the creative process.

In the ideation stage the non-conscious brain produces novelty through divergent thinking, and in the evaluation stage, the conscious mind decides which new ideas are coherent with the creative domain. (Borgo, 2005, p. 3)

Chaos as we know it in an every-day sense can be understood as random disorder, however, in a scientific sense it can be observed as an orderly disorder – as in a series of unpredictable behaviours arising from simple rules.

The Australian jazz trio, The Necks, follow a similar method of simple rules and unpredictable textures. In their album, Mosquito their music occupies a plateau that I consider encapsulates a refined sonic intelligence, whereby out of a series of somewhat simple keys, they are able to unlock further layers that are revealed through the doorway of a foundation motif. For example, an ostinato piano pulse from pianist Chris Abrahams, repetitive and trance like, gives birth to a sympathetic communication with the bass player, Lloyd Swanton, whose sense of immediacy in grounding the frequency spectrum in the lower range impels the drummer, Tony Buck, to reveal the hidden rhythms within the subtler divisions of beats per minute.

Borgo has described this phenomenon as simplexity (Borgo, 2005, p. 3), that is, the immediate nature of improvisation focuses attention on the emergent qualities of performance, even producing qualities of what may be referred to as orderly disorder where unpredictable elements may emerge. It is often the case that players cannot even predict how or when an improvised piece will end until it is has reached its own natural conclusion, complete in its narrative and successful in its dialogue. This randomness of outcome both in a durational and compositional sense places the act of improvisation in a reciprocal interaction between members whereby social networks may be facilitated in a seemingly, somewhat chaotic process of unpredictable behaviours arising from simple rules – simplexity as Borgo refers to it. (ibid p. 3)
These ‘systems poised on the edge of chaos’ (Borgo, 2005, p. 17) can produce a deeply felt aesthetic response. This is often characterised by the inherent permeability of uncertainty, articulated and defined by the improvisation process itself as a means of unravelling and journeying to the Artistic Moment – in short, a form of composition detection in terms of a real-time composition application. The notion of ‘reverence to uncertainty’ (Ibid, p. 13) in both the audience and performer is at the heart of Jason Stanyek’s definition of free improvisation, allowing for:

A fertile space for the enactment and articulation of the divergent narratives of both individuals and cultures. (Stanyek, cited in Borgo, 2005)

This fertile space of artistic cogency (Schön, 1983, p.276) emerging from a seemingly chaotic structure is not just restricted to musical improvisation. Fractal diagrams, Mandelbrot sets and spirals in nature such as ferns and seashells arise as an example of a complex structure unfolding from the application of simple rules, which is the method I adopt when improvising. As in the spiral, it is a process that builds on itself, starting from inception (seen visually as the centre of the spiral) working out to more complex permutations. Fractal spiral images from nature, as seen in Figure 2.2 represent the perfect visual definition of the process of unfolding that occurs when I am improvising and guides the notation music properties of Bartok as discussed by Lendvai (1971, p. 27).

Figure 2.2: Spiral Garden, Avoca NSW, photo by Yantra de Vilder
The difference with my work is that it is a natural process of intuitive improvisation as real-time composition, not score based as with Saxton and Bartok. By connecting these processes of uncertainty, creation and chaos, that are the foundations of improvisation, I am linking the worlds of music, art, nature, mathematics and cosmology in one broad, brush stroke. I am identifying a place where I can recognise that art is linked with nature as an outcome of ‘profusion’, (Grosz, 2009, p. 22) transforming the primordial forces of chaos into a creative reinterpretation guided by an artistic cogency. Profusion can be understood as a rendering of the ‘invisible in visible form’ (Lim, 2009, p. 2) whereby the creative urge becomes ‘an unleashed force that transforms the body along with the world’ (Grosz, 2009, p. 22). This process of sonic rendering is multi-dimensional in collaborative improvisation.

**The Swarm**

Musical improvisation has been compared with the swarm of a beehive, ‘engaging all the participants whilst distributing responsibility and empowerment among them’ (Borgo, 2005). A growing number of researchers in the scientific community are exploring ways of applying swarm intelligence to diverse situations including the social and cultural dimensions of network systems and human hierarchical interaction. Swarm theory maintains that the distributed and co-operative approach used by many social insects can have resonances for our understanding and development of social clustering and unfoldment in a group musical improvising context.

One’s abilities to synchronise intention and action whilst maintaining a keen awareness, sensitivity to and connection with the evolving group dynamics. (Borgo, 2005, p. 5)

The notion that musical systems can be organised in a complex way without a conductor or composer is hard for some to grasp, particularly for those who have adhered to rigid classical training based on reading music. However, this lack of hierarchical command can and has proved to be a fertile ground for my improvisations – the secret lying in the inter-communication between the players (the swarm).

Borgo, in his book *Sync or Swarm* discusses the emergence of swarm like qualities that may occur in improvisation, where individual parts may travel in different directions and yet the musical whole develops with a collective purpose. What is
important to retain in this process are the qualities of connection and feel amongst the players. Viewing the group dynamic of improvisation in terms of swarm, Borgo offers several ways in which musical connections of an improviser may be related to the swarm. Firstly, in the sonic resonance of the complicated and dense sound landscapes that can be produced through improvisation, literally sounding like a swarm; secondly, the way individual improvisers may be heard engaging in a shared body of modern techniques; and thirdly, the way participants follow their own creative direction whilst staying attuned to the group dynamic (Borgo, 2005, p. 10). These ideas locate improvisers in a system that is similar to a bee colony operating as a type of super organism, behaving as a whole, maintaining its identity in space.

Swarm theory has played a role in improvisation performances; even the sound of a swarm can fascinate human ears. Contemporary artists are exploring this dynamic: In The Bee Project multimedia artist Miya Masaoka placed a glass enclosed bee hive of three thousand bees in the centre of the stage, amplified, manipulated and blended the swarm sounds with those from an ensemble of three improvisers, all according to instructions in her score. The audience was then able to perceive the sonic architecture and design created as a space located within a swarm, immersive and emergent. I interpret this swarm relationship in the sense of Japanese Ma where the borders allow for meetings to emerge as a construct for societal relationships and I apply it to felt intuitions amongst the performative swarm.

In the Australian connection, swarm theory operates within innovative dance theatre. Tess de Quincey is a choreographer and physical theatre practitioner. In her essay Swarm Bodies, she discusses how she created the work Dictionary of Atmospheres in the Australian Central Desert (1999–2001). De Quincey develops her performances from an improvisatory foundation, citing Danish biochemist Jesper Hofmeyer’s thinking around swarms, whereby the human body is seen as a series of overlapping swarms, working with juxtapositions that create a striking resonant harmony:

- living systems
- interconnected
- implicit in the dots are multiple meanderings on different planes

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5 The original Bee Project #1 premiered at the Oakland Museum as part of Sound Culture 1996. Performers: Wendy Reid; violin, Gino Robai; percussion; Miya Masaoka, koto.
multi-dimensional body-mind
overlaps of a swarm intelligence
collectively detailed dynamics
floating brain of the non-self
millions of receptors
interconnected webs of sign-relations many cell generations back in time
substrata
pulling sustenance through the soles of our feet
readings in the sky and in the terrain
vigilance and instinct heavings and shudderings
multiple places of being and non-being
rolling in an ephemeral dance
held in the net of relations
(de Quincey, 2005, p. 3)

**Gateway of Reverie: Musical Archetypes and Collective Consciousness**

Just as swarm theory operates in dance theatre, it also works as a gateway, a type of *Ma* enlightenment, where improvisers are immersed into a space where relationships produce rupture moments. Ravetz puts it this way:

> Reverie opens up a richly paradoxical space between improviser and improviser, as well as between improviser and improvised, producing (shared) moments of rupture in which failure itself can signal new beginnings. (Ravetz, 2012, p. 8)

In this space the swarm’s collective approach emerges, as Burrows puts it:

> The collective consciousness achieved by improvisers is a higher state of consciousness, which can be shared through an intense focus on the medium of sound and the activity of listening. (Burrows, 2004, p. 14)

Canadian composer and educator, Jared Burrows’ research focuses on cognitive theories applied to improvisation framed by Confucian, Taoist and Sufi philosophies. He suggests that musical archetypes based in spiritual and emotional resonances can carry meaning among participants. He argues that improvised musical dialogue and narrative are developed through these archetypes whereby experienced improvisers often ‘feel a sense of unity of purpose and even emotional state’ (Burrows, 2004, p. 14). He believes, as I do, it is all about connection and feel between the participants – in other words an interpersonal connection that creates a gateway of *Ma* as a between space located in the atmospheric and connected zone between participants – a place
that gives rise to the Artistic Moment and the ‘fundamentally mysterious power of improvised music’ (Burrows, 2004, p. 14). Burrows suggests that the process of creating improvised music with others is about being and becoming, and within this context it can give rise to a deep interpersonal connection imbued with a sense of a higher collective consciousness, or in the words of composer Liza Lim ‘the peculiar force of epiphany that can attend a presencing’ (Lim, 2009, p. 1). The literary scholar Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht describes this kind of immediacy of experience as a ‘presence effect’ (cited in Lim, 2009, p. 1) accentuating the intensification of the moment.

This gateway is not just restricted to an external level – it can also be viewed as an internal utopian happening within the individual experience as an outcome of active contemplation or reverie. Digging deeper into this gateway in terms of reverie, one can view the improviser’s relationship to the improvisation as a form of Ma operating as a bridge between internal psychological and spiritual worlds, where the intention is to go to a better place or a ‘new world’. Ravetz suggests:

The possibility of appreciating, even embracing, the paradoxical way reverie as a type of improvisation plays out: as a relationship between the improviser and the improvised, and between the improviser and (his or her desire for) a new world. (Ravetz, 2012, p. 8)

Ravetz argues that improvisation unfolds in spaces of uncertainty, creating and recreating dialogues with the self (reverie, self-reflection) and other through the process of unrepeatability. She believes that it is a dimension of ‘beginnings and rebeginnings, that leads to the development of aesthetic taste and to the certitude of an artistic outcome’ (Ravetz, 2012, p. 1). This artistic cogency that arises from improvisation forms a basis for musical archetypes to be represented through a series of individual and group qualities such as freedom, connection and self-reflection. These higher archetypes could be viewed as having a spiritual dimension.

**Improvisation as a Matter of Spirit**

Academic and composer Bruce Crossman believes that within the physicality of the musical gesture there is a spiritual essence of sound (Crossman, 2008, p. 29). When discussing the qualities that emerge through notions of a spiritual essence, the associating atmosphere of ecstasy that is created in the space has resonance (ibid,
German philosopher and author Gernot Böhme defines atmosphere as something that is ‘objectlike and subjectlike’, and its presence is articulated through the ‘ecstasies’ of a thing or person – the going forth of their objectlike and subjectlike qualities (Böhme, cited in Ravetz, 2012, p. 1). Head of Music at the Conservatorium, Brussels, Kathleen Coessens (2012) argues that improvisation is an aesthetic that is not just confined to art but also informs our life as a way to negotiate circumstances in an on-the-run problem-solving style, a method which in itself has connections with practice-led research. As Coessens puts it:

In music, improvisation is often a matter of choice. The unexpected situation is created, set up, purposively leading to an improvisatory encounter between body and environment. The musician knows he/she will improvise in the next hour. But it can also resemble life, by way of sudden unexpected moments, which even the musicians did not anticipate. (Coessens, 2012, p. 1)

The matter of whether improvisation is an artistic construct and/or a life technique may be understood by framing the experience in a transcendental perspective, whereby it embodies a mystical experience with a sense of revelation. The American composer and virtuoso musician Frederic Rzewski believes that improvisation transcends into the sublime: ‘great improvisation exploits the fantasy of the mere human who, godlike, defies the limits imposed by nature, flying over the heads of the audience’ (Rzewski cited in Coessens, 2012, p. 106).

Does it then produce a spiritual music? Australian academic and musician, Richard Vella, published A–Z of Spiritual Music: A Users Guide (Vella, 2006) discussing phenomena and concepts underpinning the western spiritual ethos and describing techniques used by composers and musicians to evoke this ethos. He believes that each moment in life can be a musical event:

Each moment in our daily life can be expressed or understood through a musical event. This event or ‘phenomena’ can be a moan, a cry, a moment of joy, and a sense of something impending. Through these sonic human experiences one develops a deeper relationship with the other, that other being a beloved, our environment, or God. (Vella, 2006)

Interestingly in this user’s guide to spiritual music he does not include improvisation as one of the elements for definition, although he does comment on the word ‘resonance’ as being the perfect metaphor for spirituality; ‘Invisible connections are felt and experienced through sympathetic vibrations’ (Vella, 2006). These invisible
connections as felt vibration I believe are at the heart of collaborative improvisation, taking it into a realm beyond language into a mystical sphere of sound and resonant emergence. It is a place of Ma as Chikako Morishito describes in the *Heart of Silence*:

‘...An opening or emptying of oneself into the immediacy of the ever-changing moment beyond distinctions and in between the ‘this and that’ world. (Morishito, 2010, p. 1)

**Summary: Spirit and Matter as Intellectual Artistic Cogency**

I consider that improvisation is a place where spirit meets matter in an act of intention imbued with the physicality of performance technique and the artistry of presence. This artistic cogency can be represented through a series of solo and collaborative conditions whereby freedom, connection and self-reflection may give rise to an Artistic Moment. In improvisation, the universal conditions of timelessness and flow are generated by which participants are able to experience their arts practice from a spiritual perspective imbued with mystical moments. Although self-directed by the individual participants, when a successful collaborative improvisation is occurring it can be paralleled to the movement of the natural ebb and flow that is demonstrated in a swarm of bees, each bee with their particular tasks, still, moving in the one direction. There is knowledge to be gained from improvisation practices that can help us understand the complexities of our contemporary world, social networks and cognitive development. In a larger sense, improvisation within the Artistic Moment allows for spaces where enlightenment emerges within the gateways of sound (see Figure 2.3) as in the metaphor of a dreaming gateway.
Figure 2.3: Ma Dreaming Gateway, Kariong, Australia, photo by Yantra de Vilder
PART TWO

Chapter 3. Creative Process: From Wide Latitude through to Intimate Ritual Spaces

Continuing on this journey of the exploration of the emergent Artistic Moment within spatial tensions of collaborative performances, it is important to examine the process behind this to shed light on what is revealed. The creative process journey moves from the planet size, spatial connections of *Latitude 33*, to the north and south discreet garden space of *Haiku*, through to intimate duo collaborations in *Unfinished Symphonies* and finally to the sacred studio space of the Buddhist *Devotion* recordings. This chapter looks at the centring of the small intimate relationship from micro to macro spaces, through the lens of reflective practice (Schön, 1983, p.68); revealing of musical/artistic materials, through the iterative cyclic process of creating (Smith and Dean, 2009); to a realised creative genesis idea. The intention with this chapter is to take the revelatory, undefinable and analogous concepts of *Ma* and the Artistic Moment and situate them within a practice-based research, personal history and creative practice that is compositional, collaborative and improvisational.

3.1. Practice Based Research

The intellectual context of this Artistic Moment project follows a practice-based research method – the conceptual components developing out of the empirical aspect of my composition process. By becoming aware of the intuitive forces at work I am constantly finding new ways to evolve and adapt my practice within its shimmering (Lim, 2009, p. 1) moments of artistic revelation. I draw on theoretical sources to

**Reflection-in-action**

I have been informed by Donald Schön's (1983) reflection-in-action theory, which is based on the premise that when practitioners reflect during creation, they become more aware of the intuitive processes involved in their work and find new ways to evolve their practice. As Schön explains, the knowledge found in the creation process is unique to the individual:

> When someone reflects-in-action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case. (Schön, 1983, p. 68)

I consider reflection-in-action in terms of five dimensions: outside the rule book, technological experiment, syncretism, collaborative reflection and indeterminism, and artistic cogency.

1. **Outside the Rule Book**

As a creative artist, I am experimenting all the time, creating a dynamic cogency that does not necessarily follow a rulebook – and is not easily defined (Schön, 1991, p. 54). With this in mind, I have chosen the method of practice-led research supported by auto-ethnography to discover and document the unpredictable cogency as knowledge within the exegesis. Brydie-Leigh Bartleet, auto-ethnographic researcher, believes that ‘a wave of self-reflexivity is sweeping across the music profession’ (Bartleet, 2009, p. 6). At the heart of my self-reflection is an exploration that comes from a creative voice distinctly unique to myself – an Australian attitude embracing improvisatory, cross-cultural and inter-media practices, in other words, a ‘border crosser’ (Nuss, 2002, p. 44). In real time, I am investigating the organic growth of creativity generated through the connections and feel that exist between elements and people. By closely examining and analysing my creative practice in my collaborative projects I aim to uncover how a practice-led research approach contributes to knowledge in the performing arts arena. Smith and Dean have discussed how uncovering ‘systems of meaning’ (Smith and Dean, 1997, p. 36) can lead to
advancements of knowledge in a chosen field of research. They state that this shift in approach towards reflective practice is a revolutionary step within the academy:

The turn to creative practice is one of the most exciting and revolutionary developments to occur in the university within the last two decades and is currently accelerating in influence. It is bringing with it dynamic new ways of thinking about research and new methodologies for conducting it, a raised awareness of the different kinds of knowledge that creative practice can convey and an illuminating body of information about the creative process. (Smith and Dean, 2009, p. 1)

Scholar, pianist and composer Diana Blom’s discussion on reflection in practice reveals ‘a larger universe of possibility’ (Blom, 2006, p. 114) in relation to her documenting her process of preparing *Kumari* for performance and recording, a work for solo piano by Ross Edwards. Blom believes practice-led research is an important aspect of keeping the work alive and dynamic revealing ‘a larger universe of possibility’ (Cook, cited in Blom, 2006, p. 114).

The reflection reinforces my understanding of being an active and ongoing part of the creative process of the work and this keeps the preparation and performing process interesting, dynamic and alive. (Blom, 2006, p. 114)

Visual artist and researcher, Barbara Bolt gives pre-eminence to the material aspect of art in the context of research-led practice. Bolt argues that the quest for new knowledge and originality within the academy can be a burdensome pressure to the researcher and can produce contrived outcomes. She believes that the new knowledge involved with creative arts research is determined by the relationship of the artist to their materials, methods and tools of practice, whereby the distinctive artistic practice evolves through the tactile understanding and relationship of an artist to their mechanics, thus opening up a way for originality and uniqueness. In terms of academic knowledge, Bolt argues that the exegesis offers a critical role and remarks that rather than just operating as a contextualisation of the artistic process, it also plays a complimentary role in revealing the artwork and connected insights, adding a new dimension to the creative expression (Bolt, 2007, p. 31).

Grounding my methodology in reflective practice means that my artistic process becomes the basis for my discourse. I reflect on how I am creating the work and find new ways to connect and develop my approach. In this way, I am undergoing a type of controlled experimentation in discovering and analysing my creative practice. An
example of breaking rules is in my project *Haiku* in terms of its ‘concert to ritual’ perspective crossing over a number of different forms including film, installation, performance, orchestral work and ritual theatre.

(ii) **Technological Experiment**

Imbedded in my practice is the use of technology whereby the recording studio becomes a composition tool, as valid as pencil and score paper or sitting at a piano. Indeed the gathering of digital media in the form of recordings and film throughout the course of my research has become another strand of practiced-based research, allowing me to view the process (or data) from a new perspective outside of the rehearsal room. Technology has altered the way music sounds, how it’s composed, and how we experience it (Byrne, 2012, p. 137). My work as a composer often tends to begin in the recording studio, as a quick way of recording ideas and improvising sessions. This process was fundamental to the evolution of *Haiku* moving towards the performance with the Sydney Youth Orchestra, which included sketches and collaborative interaction. The mechanics of my studio practices have been driven by a wide range of technology and new music/hybrid art forms. At times it can be a challenge to keep up with the ever-changing face of technology whilst maintaining and deepening my artistic integrity.

(iii) **Syncretism**

These practice-led research approaches exemplify the dialogical relationship between making and writing. I am interested in processes and methods of composition that maintain a personal and innovative music, which develops in an organic way. As Michael Atherton states:

> If I design music that reveals diverse, seemingly disparate sound sources, it is not to produce musical syncretism for its own sake, but to find and maintain a personal music, nurtured by osmosis...The ‘lateral’ and the ‘innovative’ are always enticing, and with music and dance – so often inseparable in play, recreation and ritual – the exploration of both simultaneously becomes an extreme type of performance. (Atherton, 2012, p. 3)

In my inter-cultural work with a Tibetan Buddhist nun in the studio, we were informed by the compositions of Hildegarde of Bingen. These lateral processes that
have their roots in ritual and osmosis form a syncretism that is at the heart of the collaboration.

(iv) Collaborative Reflection and the Indeterminate Process

Throughout the course of my research, I have had an important ongoing reflective-process conversation with my principal supervisor, Bruce Crossman. These Skype and face-to-face weekly meetings have been invaluable to the development of my work – above all he has supported me in my vision and encouraged my experimentation into new works framed by the qualities of the Artistic Moment. We have discussed my work at length, in terms of theory and aesthetic, which has helped me articulate my creative process and develop my ‘artistic cogency’ (Schön, 1983, p. 52). My ongoing discussions with Kathryn Puie during the course of the work together provided valuable insights into our mutual collaborative reflections. In terms of visual reflection, my initial mind-map (see Figure 3.21, The Matrix of the Artistic Moment) provided a starting point – visual trigger, for my musings and methodology concerning my practice. This will be discussed further in Chapter 3, The Performance Works from a Process Method of Work Perspective.

Yet, it was not always easy – during the last few years, I have found that the method of practice-based research can be somewhat random and indeterminate, the structure often difficult to define as the creative process does not necessarily unfold in a linear way as I experienced on the Haiku project as it morphed between gardens, gallery and concert hall. As Schön writes:

...The problems of real-world practice do not present themselves to practitioners as well-formed structures. Indeed, they tend not to present themselves as problems at all but as messy, indeterminate situations. (Schön, 1983, p. 4)

(v) Artistic Cogency as Meaningful System

The key concept here, and the thread that I am following in my practice-based research, is that the Artistic Moment is based in an experience of connection and feeling, which is unique to each individual, and is synonymous with an experience of timelessness and going beyond a personal identity. My practice-based research shows
that these qualities can arise through collaboration, improvisation and performance – the zones of connection and feel being the uniting thread. By reflecting on, documenting and writing about my creative practice in collaborative projects, I aim to demonstrate how a practice-led research approach contributes to knowledge in the performing arts arena. Ultimately, I am aiming to uncover meaningful systems and examine the ways that these elements affect and influence rehearsal and performance with a unifying artistic cogency (Schön, 1983, p.276). This results in a clarity of internal logic that provides a solid foundation for the concept of ‘interlock’ – an aesthetically appropriate inter-connection between elements. I use this system of inter-disciplinary interlock to express the tension of physical, artistic and spiritual space, for example, music-theatre (Latitude 33) and improvisation/classical (Unfinished Symphonies) and medium to small spatial tensions (Haiku and Devotion). (i.e. Latitude = big; Haiku = medium; Unfinished Symphonies and Devotion = small).

**Auto-ethnographic Site for Collaborative Experimentation in the Moment**

Much of the impetus for my reflection in action comes from an auto-ethnographic perspective, that is, through my own personal reflection on the Artistic Moment and my experience of it, I experience an artistic richness in cultural relations, and an interlock going across media structures and elements of nature. This interlock is demonstrated through site-specific works based in Japanese gardens that I filmed in France, Japan and Australia. The artistic cultures and my friendships with collaborators from South Africa, South America and Australia lying on latitude 33 degrees south reflect a cross-cultural richness that informs our collaborations together. This is also represented in the intimate project with Venerable Robina Courtin in the recording of ancient Tibetan Buddhist chants and harmonically arranging them in a European style reminiscent of the medieval structures of Hildegarde of Bingen. Through the inspiration of the use of vertical, dronal spaces in Hildegard’s Christian Plainchant music, I discovered that the drone itself could be an underlying principle in the work: which became an important unifying element.

The interlock of media structures whereby sound and vision (projections, audio processing, recorded and live performance) provide the technical direction of each
creative endeavour, is at the heart of all my works. Through this method I am uncovering systems of meaning (Smith and Dean, 1997, p. 36) that are unique to my practice, and yet capable of being transferrable to other artist’s applications. These systems have resonance and meaning to me as a theatre maker and composer whereby they enable me to harness the technological convergence (in my studio) with the collaborative context of rehearsal and performance that is substantiated in my methodology. In this way, I am able to analyse and produce a theory that is derived from my practice, through reflection in action. This locates my work in a cogency that has meaning for myself, but also through its articulation can provide a framework that is advancing the knowledge in the field for other practitioners.

Inter-disciplinarity, as a means of connecting and integrating distinct creative methodologies, is prominent in this research and as such, this ‘artistic cogency’ (Schön, 1983, p. 52) has become identifiable in my individual practice through a practice-led exploration of artistic agenda, which is driven by collaboration, improvisation and reinvention. In real time, I am navigating my way through the organic growth of creativity generated through the ‘connections’ and ‘feel’ that exist between elements and people that give rise to the Artistic Moment.

3.2. Personal Creative History

I have spent most of my life at the nexus of various disciplines – music composition and academic pursuits have been the through line. Even though my focus has been eclectic, upon reflection I am able to unpack a journey in relation to my creative practice and its artistic credo of the tension of space as the collaborative moment that sparks creativity. Inter-disciplinary, collaborative performance and recording projects have always been a major part of the creative aspect of my academic work. Underlying this, the links between music and spirituality/consciousness has also been a strand that has woven through my research.
Early Training: Intellectual and Spiritual Beginnings

The composer Brian Eno states that the art of composition is akin to gardening, where a seed is planted, and its ongoing development process is subject to a range of external forces, as well as the composer’s original momentum, where ‘old ideas don’t go away, new ideas get added’ (Eno, 1996, p. 4). My personal ecology has grown organically from a colourful and creative home life, where house concerts and soirees were a regular occurrence. My mother, being involved with the early days of Australian radio and television as a presenter and broadcaster, was pivotal in creating this environment. I remember well her involvement in the Argonauts Club, one of the ABC’s most popular programs running six days a week from 1941–1961. It had over fifty thousand members who were encouraged to submit writing, music, poetry and art, and as my mother was one of the broadcasting team, this was the beginning of my cultural life.

I attended a Rudolf Steiner school (Glenaeon) where languages, gardening, woodwork, music, mythology and art were instilled in us from an early age. Creativity was high on the agenda, however, academic performance was somewhat neglected, so my parents decided to send me to Abbotsleigh, a private girls school in Sydney to complete my matriculation. I believe I had the best of both worlds in my education – a strong foundation in creativity and spirituality at the Steiner school, refined in my later school years by a more academic environment under the tutelage of the engaging and forward-thinking headmistress Betty Archdale.

After school I spent most of my time exploring music as a career, working in the industry composing music for film, theatre and as part of many contemporary music ensembles including Do Re Mi, and my performances with Robyn Archer. Then after the age of thirty, I decided that I wanted to try academia. I enrolled in the contemporary music course majoring in composition at Southern Cross University. For my undergraduate degree, I produced a major work entitled The Twelve Caverns of the Underworld. This multimedia music theatre production was based on Amduat, an Ancient Egyptian funerary text of the New Kingdom, considered a guide for the stages of the afterlife. My interest in music and ritual had begun.
My Masters research degree focused my enquiry into the place of Trance Music in contemporary culture. I received an overseas scholarship and travelled to Europe interviewing trance practitioners and participating in associated musical events, culminating in the production of a sixty-minute recording, *Evolution Journey* and written exegesis, *In Search of Contemporary Trance Music*. It was through these projects that I became familiar with the use of certain musical elements that have been known to add to a sense of timelessness, for example drone and repetition. Drone may be understood as a sustained sound and also a repeating phrase played by several instruments. This provided a musical illustration of the concept of space as a division of time (Maceda, 2008, p.11). I employed the use of drones and repetition in my future projects for my Doctor of Creative Arts. These techniques became the musical foundation that invoked a ritual space in my performances. Many aspects of traditional indigenous music and dance form a ritualised context within a shamanic matrix, evoking a quality that can lead to transcendent moments (Rouget, 1985; Reynolds, 1998). These moments are explored in *Latitude 33* through Kalahari and Mapuche songs and dances. Following on with the idea of ritual as containing elements of the Artistic Moment, the qualities that are evoked in a Japanese garden are steeped in a meditative Zen aesthetic, giving rise to moments of timelessness – Artistic Moments. The Zen aesthetic of the Edogawa Japanese Gardens defines the environmental ambience and the performative moment (Franklin, 2008), which has a direct impact on audience and performer alike.

**Scientific Collaborators**

Following on from this research, which involved music, consciousness, ritual and transcendence, I produced a series of *Surroundscapes*, a multimedia wellness program designed for use in hospitals and healing modalities using an interlock of sound and vision. This project was a collaboration with a number of cinematographers and consisted of pristine wilderness footage and my original music. The compositions were based on my findings after completing my research into Contemporary Trance Music (de Vilder, 2005). I developed a collaborative relationship with Deborah Hodgson of the Neuroscience Faculty of Newcastle University and Elizabeth Bragg of *Sustainable Futures*, Australia. I was keen to explore the effects of *Surroundscapes* on the human physiology, and through the Neuroscience department we were able to
run experiments to test the physiological and emotional responses to *Surroundscapes*. This project led to an invitation for me to be one of the speakers at the CSIRO Futurist Conference in Melbourne 2010, and subsequent involvement with medical practitioner Kathryn Crock from the Melbourne Children’s Hospital and the Australian Institute for Family Centered Care.

**Theatre Collaborations: Personal Awareness and Reactions**

In the early 80s I was involved in the Theatre Research Laboratory. This was a very tight knit company operating in Bellingen, New South Wales and was a somewhat radical project based on the principles of Polish Theatre director Jerzy Grotovski. Our ensemble was led by French theatre director Igor Person. An integral part of our training was an exploration of the notion of ‘landscape’ as an internal and external force. Our ‘territories’ were comprised of a series of questions including, ‘what is our animal? What is our impossible exercise?’ Our training sessions were comprised of what was for me at the time, revolutionary ways of seeing and being. Suffice to say, we underwent many challenging explorations in order to navigate and claim our own ‘territory’. Indeed, this work was not for the faint hearted, and many dropped out. However, I hung in there for a number of years, at times being pushed to my absolute limits by the demands and rigours of the training. In my work with the Theatre Research Laboratory, the spiral was an important symbol for our work on a physical and intellectual level, and became a recurring theme in many of our practices, particularly my internal landscape work. I again revisited the spiral in my Master’s thesis, exploring the notion of the Spiral Principle as pertaining to contemporary trance music. I discovered connections between the mapping of a spiral, the Fibonacci series, the golden mean, the sonata form and contemporary trance musical composition (de Vilder, 2005). The spiral still holds relevance for me in providing a framework for mapping the terrain or territory of an artistic/musical/performance work on a number of levels including duration, narrative arc, melodic and rhythmic contour, musical arrangement and collaborative process.
Analogy of *Ma* and Artistic Moment

I have become increasingly interested in fleshing out this notion of territory in collaboration, both in a cultural and artistic context. This shared collaborative space has expanded from the notion of territory to include the aesthetic of *Ma*, which frames the relationship in a gateway experience focusing the intent on what lies between rather than the individuation of the separate entities. The Artistic Moment has become the governing lens through which to view these experiences.

Professional Standards

Performance and recording are the essence of my music and composition practice. I use my recording studio as a composition tool, which means that I have to be adept, not only with the technical skills that accompany being a multi-instrumentalist (piano, guitar and percussion), but also to keep up to date with the latest technology.

In terms of my career in the industry, a high standard of production is of utmost importance to me in whatever I do. I have been fortunate to work with many fine Australian and international film directors on over thirty projects for film and television. As a composer for television and radio, my background of working with clients such as the BBC World Service has meant that the bar is automatically raised to meet high international technical specifications. Working with the BBC in Afghanistan, Burma, Bangladesh, London and Thailand has demanded that I have had to keep up to date with the latest in mobile recording technology as well as maintaining efficient file and data management systems of large recording projects.

I have broad experience working with musicians across diverse ethnographies; fusing traditional instrumentation and unique community voice with contemporary instrumentation, new music technologies and soundscapes sampled from community or place. My compositions have been part of many works broadcast on the national television networks as well as internationally. For example, for the Discovery Channel, I have composed scores incorporating African sound sources including Massai tribes, Ethiopian ullulators and Menelik warriors.
Collaboration towards Artistic Awareness

My creative journey has included the following aspects: inter-cultural; scientific; theatrical; conceptual (Ma – Artistic Moment analogy) and professional. My life has taken a circular (spiral) route from cross-cultural interests through multiple inter-disciplinary media techniques back to inter-cultural and East Asian influences with growing technical standards. This inter-disciplinary approach within spatial/artistic nuances giving rise to a revelatory moment. This background in performing arts, film and television has created a personal history that I believe provides a solid foundation for my reflective practice in my research. I am now focusing the lens more acutely on my own artistic cogency as a collaborator, particularly in inter-disciplinary arts practices with a focus on cross-cultural elements. With a keen interest on the Artistic Moment and its attributes in a collaborative context – this feels like the right time at the right moment, after a lot of preparation, to flesh out this notion.

3.3. Compositional Strategies and Techniques: The Space Between

My compositional strategies are based in an eclectic organicism in the moment where I employ an inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural hybridity, which informs my artistic cogency. Even though the ineffable nature of the Artistic Moment is impossible to define fully, nonetheless, my hypothesis is that the Artistic Moment is analogous with the notion of Ma, therefore I am particularly interested in exploring the space between things as a compositional strategy. This involves different spaces such as the space between the notes, the space between the media, the space between sound and vision, the space between collaborators and the spaces that occur in site specific performance zones such as Japanese gardens and art gallery installations. Juxtaposition and hybridity form a common theme in the way I work and are reflected in my impetus as a composer and theatre maker, and this is fleshed out in a number of ways in my arts practice including juxtapositions between sound and emergence, the relationship between collaborators, and the space between the audience and performer. These juxtapositions form an emergence that is framed within a Ma aesthetic highlighting the immanence of the space between things. As scholar Adrian Snodgrass puts it: ‘Ma thus brings together and fuses space and time’ (Snodgrass, 2006, p. 223).
(i) Production Spaces

In terms of music production and composition, my technique is primarily based in studio practice, which involves a media interlock through sound and vision. Focusing on *Ma* as a strategic tool, through a range of audio processing and editing techniques, I am able to flesh out this notion of the space between the notes in a spatial sound context – where the audio spectrum places emphasis on the space between the notes. I achieve this through reverberation, delay, panning and stereo imaging. I discuss this in more detail in the processes and analysis section. My work as a composer often tends to begin in the recording studio, as a quick way of recording ideas and improvisations. The studio practice hybridises and is informed by technology and new music/hybrid art forms. By having a wide platform of sonic possibilities open to me my studio becomes an extension of my creative impulse, a place where I can extend and stretch, spatialise and texturise, shape and mold my sound.

(ii) Performative

This notion of metaphysical ‘sounds’ which the ear is unable to sense, cannot, in effect, be considered apart from ‘active sounds’. (Takemitsu, 1993, p. 62)

In terms of production physicality, another important process in my preparation for performance and rehearsal is the finger warm up. This is purely physical and related to the dexterity of my fingers so they may be able to go wherever the muse dictates without the limitations of stiffness. I always practice a series of exercises, which includes scales, modes and rhythm exercises. This warm up not only serves to lubricate my fingers, but also sets the scene for a certain readiness, and a deeper way of listening\(^6\) that goes beyond the physical, realm of muscle memory into the more transcendent realm of metaphysical sounds.

Whether I am collaborating or working alone, preparation of the physical\(^7\) and psychic\(^8\) space is an important element in constructing a contained zone. The

\[^6\] Takemitsu believes that the substance of art is already in existence. He states that ‘One whom we recognise as a poet is, then, one who is able to read, to perceive, and make available to us the poetry which is already inexistence in the world. Music, too, exists everywhere around us, but laziness inhibits most of us from hearing it; the composer can. We live in a world full of music and poetry to which we are generally insensitive. The function of the artist is to overcome this laziness’ (Takemitsu, 1992, p. 76).

\[^7\] Room or environment.
mechanics of this are connected to a personal aesthetic of beauty and harmony whereby I am preparing myself to change into sound in the sense that Takemitsu defines listening – ‘Listening probably means changing into sound itself by existing within it’. (Takemitsu, 1992, p. 39)

Whenever I am about to perform or rehearse I prepare myself by placing a conscious intent on allowing myself to go into a space beyond time – where I may be used as a channel for music, that it may flow through me, unencumbered by negative thoughts. It is as Björk says:

\[
\text{In a way art is the opposite of collecting, because it must be more like listening to something one can’t quite hear – it’s an old idea of channelling, sort of non-violently allowing things to beam themselves down. (Björk, 2014, p. 27)}
\]

I also set the premise firmly in my mind that the Artistic Moment already exists, it is just a matter of using the right tools to uncovering it – as in Michelangelo’s notion of revealing the image that lies embedded in the stone (Schuman and Paxton, 2007). Seen from this perspective, the statue of David is already there. As Michelangelo in translation puts it:

\[
\text{With chiselled touch} \\
\text{The stone unhewn and cold} \\
\text{Becomes a living mould.} \\
\text{The more the marble wastes,} \\
\text{The more the statue grows (Michelangelo n.d cited in Schuman and Paxton, 2007, retrieved from the web).}
\]

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8 My mood.
3.4. Collaboration in an Artistic Moment Practice

My approach to collaboration arises first and foremost from friendships with key colleagues; a place where we can be ‘trading in imagination – not cultural domination’. I see myself as a border crosser moving through cross-cultural and inter-disciplinary hybridity into a shared language. Through my friendship and collaboration, I am enabled to cross a border boundary into a place where I can hear, see and participate on a new ground (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2).

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9 I first came across this concept in a conversation with Bruce Crossman, referring to a conference organised by Merinda Bobis entitled Trading in Imagination (Bobis, 2001) at the University of Wollongong and mirrored in his dissertation discussing orientalism (Crossman, 1999, p. 76).
Opening Personal Creative Borders in Collaboration

I frame this opening out of collaborative relationships as border crossing between personal boundaries leading to cultural sharing and fracturing (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2). As Nuss puts it, this border crossing by collaborators disturbs the knowledge paradigm of each collaborator to subtly create change:

The assimilated and residually unchanged characteristics that enable the border crossers to be ‘in but not only of’ are elements of change, fracture, internal tensions, that ensure that, though it now passes as unnoticed, things within are not as they were, something new has in fact been created, something in which both sides can participate in thoroughly. (Nuss, 2002, p. 12)
Though my domain as a composer is often a solitary one, I have consciously chosen collaboration as an integral strand in my research and creative practice. It has been well documented that the issue of collaboration is a potentially problematic domain for the composer (Hayden and Windsor, 2007; Mason, 2012), and it has not been without its challenges however it is through these relationships that my work has deepened and I have transformed my identity of self.

As all of the projects in my research have grown from an initial idea that I have conceived, I assume the role of creative director where I see myself as a navigator, striving to maintain connection and feel between the collaborators whilst steering the project in the direction that I have envisaged. Granted, at times there is a constant need for re-evaluation that pervades the collaborative environment and dictates a certain amount of letting go in my role, as I find that certain things, processes or people do not fit as well as I or my collaborators would have liked. So there is always the need for spontaneity, honest communication and open mindedness. I have discovered that this relationship needs the basic fundamentals of connection in place – trust, listening and respect – the building blocks of friendship. I have found that it is the collaborative experiences arising from these meaningful friendships between colleagues that link my composition and performance processes during my period of candidature.

A shared aesthetic goal has become a vital target. In my projects, the frame for collaboration is through this shared aesthetic goal and an eclectic attitude aimed at communicating objectives and narratives (Mason, 2012, p. 8) whilst always considering the emotional context between those involved (John-Steiner, 2006, p. 145). In my practice, this collaborative methodology works through the dynamics and juxtapositions of artistic partnerships, and a recognition and response to similarity and symbiotic practices. This process forms a unique hybrid blending and unification of purpose, sound and meaning, with its own ‘artistic cogency’ (Schön, 1983, p. 52).

Collaboration as Cauldrons of Tension

I am interested in this organic growth of creativity that is cooked up in the heat of what I call ‘the cauldron of collaboration’ and the juxtapositions that arise between
sound and emergence, musical spaces and dance; performance and immanence; present culture and tradition; and classical (notated) versus free form improvisation; seen through the lens of a *Ma* aesthetic. My aim has been to dig deeper into my collaborative performances and projects and from that place look outwards and investigate how my practice-led research contributes to knowledge in the performing arts field driven by the search for the Artistic Moment.

The relevance of this ‘space between’ place of *Ma* is also reflected in my cross-cultural collaborations of *Haiku, Latitude 33* and *Devotion*. Through the crossover of performers into new cultural genres, psychological, cultural and intellectual boundaries or ‘biological insiderism’ as Werner Sollors calls it, is dismantled, and a new-shared language is devised. How we define cultural and/or biological and racial notions of ‘us and them’ becomes framed in a new way when the universal languages of music and dance forge connections through rhythmic and harmonic interlock. Nuss would describe this process as ‘fracturing’ with the ‘cultural baggage’ of the bordercrosser (Nuss, 2002).

Throughout the course of my research, my collaborations have been characterised by an international flavour, which Nuss has described as ‘fractured hybridity’ (Nuss, 2002, p. 38) – the blending of disparate influences in order to revitalise them with a new, hybrid unified meaning. Through these relationships, I have learnt much about working together and the other, in terms of expression and listening:

> During collaboration with an international artist, the most important thing is not to express your traditional culture, but to work together. I believe that collaboration is an organic joining of forms from different cultures. When you work in international collaborations, it is more important to draw the spirit of your tradition and bring something else to explore. (Kuning, cited by Ito, 2002)

Working with a style of music that is not from one’s original culture has been challenged by some on the grounds that it is not culturally respectful. However, I would argue that cultural interest and respect lies at the heart of these friendships of symbiosis and mutual benefit. For the majority of my inter-cultural collaborative ventures, I have spent considerable time researching the traditions and music in order to be culturally sensitive. My work in Burma, Afghanistan and Bangladesh with the BBC World Service as a film composer and audio consultant also trained me in this
regard. As a counter argument I also draw here on Foucault’s theory of ‘thinking Chinese’ – ‘What is impossible to think?’ (Foucault, cited by Nuss, 2002, p. 43). One does not have to be Chinese in order to think Chinese. Similarly, in order to create the theatre work *Latitude 33*, I do not have to be South African, South American or even pure Australian (I am from a Dutch background) to create this work. Indeed, it is my friendships and collaborations that form the vital strands of *Latitude 33*.

**Collaboration in *Latitude 33***

The process of researching and developing *Latitude 33* was dependent on my collaborations with specific people, where intercultural ideas and cross-genre techniques provide the fuel for collaborative interactions. This collaborative methodology works through stimulation of a range of artistic partnerships, which are enhanced by principles of similarity and symbiotic practices.

My earliest ideas for this project were informed by discussions with producers David Healy and Suzanne Jones. I also worked with Australian writer/director Rodney Fisher and theatre maker David Clarkson fleshing out ideas and stagecraft elements. Producer Julie Brooks was also there at the early stages helping with production and planning. In the early stages of researching and writing *Latitude 33*, I collaborated with Pauline Wright and we looked for the connecting links of the places: culturally, botanically, historically and with their indigenous inhabitants. Rather than look for the elements which separate us, we looked for those that connect us. We were interested in identifying elements of belonging and group identity, transforming those aspects into an uplifting performance. The conversations that I had with these people formed a necessary development from the seeds of my initial ideas.

One of the most important collaborative relationships in *Latitude 33* was with choreographer and performer Kathryn Puie.\(^\text{10}\) As we were working with projected imagery and the relationship of the body in that space, Kathryn had a big task to

\(^{10}\) Kathryn Puie is one of Australia’s leading physical theatre performance artists. This year she has been working with *Legs on The Wall*, Australian Opera and Tess de Quincey (amongst the many).
navigate the challenges that arose – she did an amazing job, and we went on to continue our work together in Haiku.

Andrew Worboys \(^{11}\) was a vital member of the team, handling all the video art. The gathering of visual material for Latitude 33 was a big undertaking, and Andrew and I spent many hours together developing the look for the project. I have great respect for Andrew’s sensibilities – not only is he a talented filmmaker, he is also a versatile musician, performing in Latitude 33 as a musician and singer. The projected images were a blending of archival footage, graphic design and specific footage that we shot for the project. So successful was this collaboration with Andrew that we went on to work together in Haiku.

Gathering media was a crucial process in the early stages of Latitude 33. Cinematographer Glen Threlfo \(^{12}\) was another important collaborator in this work. Through his friendships with indigenous people of South Africa, Glen Threlfo was permitted to record and document the Kalahari Bushmen of Latitude 33. Through my collaborative relationship with Threlfo, I was able to access these recordings and films for use in Latitude 33. I am also indebted to Jenny Cornish from One Word Media who granted me access to her media collection of recordings and photographs from the Mapuche in South America. Even though these people were not actually what I would define as creative collaborators, nonetheless I view them as vital links in the chain that underlies the artistic cogency of Latitude 33. So, too was the input of David Warth and David Hannan in terms of visual media. I had developed relationships with all of these people over the previous years by my work as a composer for film and it was through their generosity I was able to develop the inter-cultural hybridity, which became the technological convergence that was one of the characteristics of Latitude 33. This permission to use this media allowed me to incorporate a major element of sound and vision in the performance, whereby the

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\(^{11}\) Andrew Worboys is what I would describe as a multi-dimensional artist. From directing music theatre, to conducting Florence and The Machine at the Sydney Opera House, pianist, singer and video artist – some would call him a polymath. I call him one of my most inspiring collaborators to work with – full of energy and creativity.

\(^{12}\) Glen Threlfo is one of Australia's most sought after wildlife photographers – but he is hard to catch. Mostly he is based in the pristine wilderness of the Australian rainforest of north east Queensland at O'Reily's sanctuary, where he works as a wilderness guide and film maker. I originally met Glen when I composed the music for the internationally awarded film, Rainforest The Secret of Life and we went on to collaborate on other wilderness films together.
interlocking rhythms and songs of South Americans, Kalahari Bushmen, Darkinjung Aboriginals and South African Mapuche Shamans were laid upon a tempo grid and analysed in the recording studio, then woven into a new composition that inter-relates rhythmic and vocal performances.

*Latitude 33* has many Aboriginal elements in the performance. My collaboration with the staff and students of National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) Dance College, Darkinjung man Gavi Duncan and Torres Strait Islander, Patrick Thaiday are pivotal relationships in this project. The early stages of this project were also informed by my many discussions with Gavi Duncan, a member of the local indigenous Darkinjung tribe within the Central Coast, New South Wales, who was able to advise me on local cultural sensitivities and practice. He is an artist, musician, dancer and teacher of Aboriginal philosophy, as well as being the manager of cultural services and tourism co-ordinator for the local Aboriginal corporation, Bara Barang. I was privileged to be taken by Duncan to sacred sites in the Kariong 13 area, when we first started working together, where he showed me an enormous rock carving of the sacred whale, the totem of this area. Gavi Duncan was very supportive of the* Latitude 33* concept from the moment I first told him about my idea, so it was only a matter of time before he became my creative collaborator and cultural advisor.

For the First Nation scene in *Latitude 33*, I recorded Gavi’s original song *Neiya Nayawa*, which involved a track of him singing accapella, leading into him on the didgeridoo. I then wove this into other soundtrack elements of the performance, combining it with sounds from nature and electronica. Gavi and I have collaborated on several other projects since *Latitude 33*, including an installation at Gosford Regional Gallery, 14 and a subsequent performance art piece at Avoca Theatre entitled *Spirit of the Whale*. We have also begun recording an album together.

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13 Gavi Duncan is an Aboriginal Cultural and Heritage Advisor and provides cultural training at Aboriginal Youth Connections, Kariong, Central Coast New South Wales. He is an artist, painter, musician, dancer and story man of the Darkinjung clan.

14 Gosford Regional Gallery is an innovative art gallery on the Central Coast of New South Wales which hosts a traditional Japanese Garden – The Edogawa Gardens, which were gifted from the city of Edogawa twenty-one years ago in a sister city relationship collaboration.
My collaborations with ex-Bangarra principle dancer Patrick Thaiday\(^{15}\) immersed me in a context of collaboration, whereby I engaged in his stories and teachings driving his cultural imperative as a Torres Strait Islander. These all inform my compositional practice and sound design. Patrick and I have collaborated together on *Latitude 33*, *Morning Star* (NAISDA end of year performance) and at the *Uplift Festival* (Byron Bay, 2012) where we presented a new work entitled *Encounters*, which was streamed, live on the internet. This performance was one of the highlights in my life, as Patrick initiated me on stage by painting my forehead with red ochre. He told me that he considered me family and this was the right thing to do as part of our performance for the world to see. Through my friendship and collaboration with Patrick I was enabled to cross a border boundary into a place where I could hear, see and participate on a new ground. Steven Nuss’s ideas sums up this border collaboration:

> The assimilated and residually unchanged characteristics that enable the border crossers to be ‘in but not only of’ are elements of change, fracture, internal tensions, that ensure that, though it now passes as unnoticed, things within are not as they were, something new has in fact been created, something in which both sides can participate in thoroughly. (Nuss, 2002, p. 12)

**The Challenges to Collaboration**

Due to the nature of the venue being primarily a cinema, *Latitude 33* was not without its challenges. The Avoca Theatre is primarily set up as a cinema, with a very small stage and limited accessibility. For the performance, we hired a stage and removed the first couple of rows of seating. We also had to install rigging points from the roof for the aerial performance, which meant cutting a hole in the ceiling. The lights and sound system had to be brought in – all of this on a shoe string budget. We had virtually no back stage area at all, and our rehearsal times had to be around the cinema program, which began at 10 am and ended at 10 pm. We had one full day to rehearse in the theatre. One of our other rehearsal spaces was provided by Gosford Council in a small room in Laycock Street Theatre, and another in the dance studio at NAISDA. These rehearsal rooms were not set up with the same specifications as we had at Avoca: no screen or sound system, so we had to bring in our own audio-visual gear.

\(^{15}\) Patrick Thaiday is an aboriginal man from the Torres Strait Islands. He began his training at NAISDA and then went on to work with Bangarra Dance Theatre, Australia’s foremost indigenous dance company as a principle dancer for over ten years.
Also the screen size was much smaller than the one we were going to be using in the cinema, so that created challenges in terms of special orientation between the dancers and the projections. Our choreographer Kathryn Puie was also under enormous pressure where she was not only choreographing the show, but she was also dancing in it and doing all the aerial work. I actually remember one day when she was under so much pressure that she vomited after doing her aerial rehearsal, but she continued working – up in the air, challenging the limitations of her physicality. As creative director I sat in on the entire dance rehearsals and I was there to support Puie in every sense, creatively and emotionally. Even though I was very clear about the vision I had for the production, I wanted Kathryn Puie to have a sense of ownership over her creative input, so I saw my role as very much a support for her. I would say that the main challenges came about with the physical interactivity of the show – rehearsals and physical space limitations.

Even though there were challenges, I consider that the creation of the music and film for *Latitude 33* was a very successful undertaking (please see appendix for the full list of team). Upon reflection I can see how the challenges actually enhanced a deeper understanding of collaboration, and how fragile the creative process and experience of the Artistic Moment can be. This big team aesthetic, or swarm relationship (Borgo, 2005, p. 15), within a large space had a strong sense of theatrical gesture in *Latitude 33*, the ensemble moved together as if in a swarm, guided by their own inherent artistry. In my next collaboration the space intensified into the small garden and gallery space of *Haiku*. It manifested without the large scale in a more ritualised way, but still with global connections.
Collaboration in *Haiku*

*Haiku* creates a bridge between creative collaborators and gardens in Japan, Australia and France. It has been presented in a number of different forms – an immersive installation, a performance, a film and also an orchestral performance. All these elements emerged from a site-specific work that provides an opportunity for a meeting of artistic disciplines in a way that affords each discipline its own unique creative voice, whilst contributing to the major performance collective. It forms a collaborative exploration between dance, contemporary western and eastern music, visual arts and text that is underpinned by the environmental influence of the Japanese Gardens, which inform the narrative arc of the performance and composition. For me as a composer, *Haiku* was an opportunity to further develop my collaborative work with choreographer/dancer Katherine Puie who I worked with on *Latitude 33. Haiku*, with its strong Japanese elements of the ancient form of *Haiku* text, and *Taiko* instrumentation, and the influence of *Butoh* dance elements, created the exciting possibility of unearthing new artistic ground for me as a performer, composer and collaborator.
Personal Familial Vision

At the heart of this project was my collaboration with my mother, Faith Reid who is the author of the *Haiku* poems, which I used as an inspirational source for the music composition and also as the central projection surface in the installation room. Faith has been writing *Haiku* for the last fifty years, and the sense of belonging and identity that is imbedded in this creative collaboration with my mother lends a certain poignancy to my role in *Haiku*. Alongside this connection there is a fragility attributed to my aging mother’s state of impending blindness (see Figure 3.4) necessitating a sense of urgency in the creation of this work. These are the moments that make being an artist a rich and rewarding experience and that show an artistic richness in cultural and familial relations.

Figure 3.4: Faith Reid at Gosford Regional Gallery *Haiku* Opening, photo Lisa Haymes

Team Connections

I had a great team working on the installation. Rommel Chavez, my production manager was invaluable, handling so many details that were essential to the smooth
running of the installation, and more often than not he would think of things before me – he just understood what to do without me having to spell it out. The success of this relationship was due to a number of factors: his experience in producing large-scale events; regular meetings in the pre-production phase whereby I was able to inform him of my vision, from an artistic and technical point of view; mutual respect; his ability to come up with solutions before presenting me with a problem; and finally, his care and concern for me, whereby he would be the buffer between myself and a range of technical and people problems, allowing me to concentrate on the artistic vision.

Collaboration with the creative and technical personnel was at the heart of *Haiku*. With a great team of volunteers from the gallery, and my wonderful friends who gave their time on a voluntary basis to support my project, we were on schedule for the whole event (please see appendix for full list of the team).

Staff at the gallery had to learn how to operate (what they considered to be) a highly technical installation. In reality we had it set up so that it was a simple process to operate, yet, as we all know, with technology and people, it is not always a successful Artistic Moment, and in the cyber-space between, things go wrong. On numerous occasions I would walk into the gallery during the exhibition and the middle screen would not be working, or else it would have SONY written across the space in bright blue incandescent lighting – not exactly the Artistic Moment.

Interestingly enough, a week before we were due to open, the gallery, knowing that I was a performer, asked if I could put some sort of performance on for the opening. Bare in mind that I was flat out doing the installation at the time, but one thing I have learnt in the arts is that you have to strike while the iron is hot, so I said, ‘yes of course I’ll do the performance’. I consider this a perfect example of Schön’s theories around experiment in the moment and improvising solutions in knowledge creation (Schön, 1983, p. 68).

I was fortunate to be able to get most of the creative team that was involved in the film shoot in Australia involved in this performance (and some others), and ultimately I was able to realise my vision of a performance in the gardens. This became the
opening ceremony for the installation. On opening night we had eight hundred people attending\textsuperscript{16}, which was well over the number of people that could be in the installation room, so we had to divide them into two groups balancing the amount of people in the installation, and at the performance at the same time. The installation was in the main studio in the art gallery. The gardens performance became a moving journey as people wandered through the different discreet spaces – the stone garden, teahouse, pagoda and bridges. The collaborative team that emerged out of \textit{Haiku} was what I would call ‘the dream team’. We all seemed to work together in a really smooth and seamless way. Indeed, for the performance we only had one walk through the outdoor garden space together before a highly successful performance the following evening. There was a trust that I had in everybody’s abilities that I was working with. For example, I knew I could say to Rendra Freestone ‘Just go into the Tea House, improvise on this scale while Ren is doing his calligraphy and see where the moment takes you’. I had no doubt in my mind that these artists would deliver a beautiful performance. Both men knew exactly what do as they were doing what they do best – diving into the Artistic Moment. So, it is about choosing the right team to work with, those who can listen, but also speak with their own creative voice – but fundamentally in order for those moments to occur, they are greatly enhanced where there is a spirit of trust and mutual respect.

\textbf{Navigating the Process of Leader and Team: Sympathetic Resonances}

As far as the process goes, as my title would suggest, I aim to be navigating the way for the team – I can see where we are going and the overall picture. So in a way I am directing them, with very clear instructions, and in another way I am responding in real time to the immediacy of each new moment in time and space that is cultivated by being in that place, as if for the first time. As I am a performer as well as creative director, it is important to be able to retain the big picture while adhering to the immediacy of the task at hand, whether it be playing the Tibetan bowls, harp or merely navigating through the environment.

\textsuperscript{16} Email correspondence with Chris King Manager Arts and Culture 7.3.16
I believe that there is an undeniable influence of the different people in that space, and to their own personal happening in there, which translates as performance and direct collaborative inspiration. In this performance context in the gardens, and as an improviser, I take on the role of team leader, asking them to reveal their Artistic Moment to that set of specific limitations from my Haiku vision.

Similarly, Kathryn Puie, who I worked with on Latitude 33 as one of my major collaborators, was someone I developed a symbiotic relationship with. We have been through some challenging times together, with a lot of pressure coming at us through the restrictions we faced in Latitude 33 with venue, rehearsal times, availability of dancers and so on. Haiku was great for our creative collaboration because it was such an expansive experience, Kathryn Puie and I really flew together, indeed the promo picture for Haiku is Puie flying in the sky. Once I had the original vision for Haiku, and presented the idea to Puie as a collaborative project between us, where she would be the main dancer and movement designer, we were keen to let the site inform our creative juices. Puie and I spent many hours just wandering through the gardens together, coming up with ideas that we merged into the work. By the time we got to filming and performance there was a historical element to our experience that had relevance to the final outcome of the work. We had developed our listening together, of each other and the space. Also, in terms of the opening ceremony performance, the fact that we had done three nights of filming in the space meant that there was already a relationship between space and performer, a gateway location – a Ma context that meant a certain familiarity with the site or stage that served to enhance the performance.

Now after a few years working together, I can sense that Puie and I have a similar aesthetic in terms of creative practice, combined with a mutual trust and respect. This has become the foundation for a very fruitful collaboration.

**Conflict, Stimulation and Inventing in the Moment**

It would be remiss of me not to mention the emotional climate surrounding this work, which had a strong influence on my ultimate artistic expression. There was a strong tension within me due to a difficult divorce that I was going through at the time. This
space between grief and shock played out in some of the scenes in *Haiku*, particularly in the night shoot where The Navigator and Traveller are wrestling with a long piece of material that we projecting images onto. The music for this scene has a haunting quality, indeed it is through this tension of opposites – the calm and the tortured, the groundless and the expansive, that *Ma* finds a dwelling place. In this sense as Schön, discusses the search for artistic cogency, (Schön, 1983, p.276) indeterminate situations force improvised solutions, which in this case strengthen the work through suggestive vital flow.

This raw confrontation is also played out in the scene on the bridge and in the Pagoda where the black and white elements (The Traveller and The Watcher) are dancing an evocatively intense duet, with elements of battle and reconciliation underlying the narrative. This environment allowed the space for a matrix of support and highly charged creative breakthroughs to arise within the collaborative context, an often inarticulate place that I was going through, as discussed in John-Steiner’s writings on creative collaboration.

The importance of mutuality and ‘a matrix of support’ are acknowledged by psychologist Howard Gardner. He considers these connections influential at times of creative breakthroughs: My claim, then, is that the time of creative breakthroughs is highly charged, both affectively and cognitively. Support is needed at this time, more so than at any other time in life since early infancy. The kind of communication that takes place is unique and uniquely important, bearing closer resemblance to the introduction of a new language early in life, than to the routine conversations between individuals who already share the same language. The often inarticulate and still struggling conversation also represents a way for the creator to test that he or she is still sane, still understandable by a sympathetic member of the species. (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 123)
In this sense, the personal support from Puie (see Figure 3.5) stimulated creative outcomes of a ritualised nature. These type of personal interconnectedness are also important in the formal concert ritual of *Unfinished Symphonies* – my collaboration with David Helfgott.

![Figure 3.5: Kathryn Puie and Yantra de Vilder, photo Lisa Haymes](image)

**Collaboration in Unfinished Symphonies**

This exploration into improvisation is a collaborative project with classical pianist David Helfgott. In 2012 after an extended rehearsal period where we explored improvisation, and recorded and filmed our process together, Helfgott and I did a concert tour of New South Wales called *Unfinished Symphonies*, performing in Bellingen, Byron Bay, Dubbo and Avoca. There are three sections to each performance: the first part is my solo performance including a series of improvisations set to visual imagery, which is projected on a large screen behind me. Then Helfgott performed from his classical repertoire, including Rachmaninoff,
Debussy, Mozart, Chopin and Liszt, and in the final section, Helfgott and I sat at the same piano and improvise together, our interaction being captured live on film and projected on the screen.

**Media Interlock**

In my concerts with David Helfgott, my entire performance was based around improvisation. In the first half of the concert, I improvised around themes inspired by visual projections – creating a media interlock. By media interlock, I refer to the synergy of mood or ‘feel’ between the sound and visual media, which occurs during the improvisation. At the end of the concert David Helfgott and I play from the same piano.

**Rule and Complexity**

This media interlock is gained by applying simple rules to produce complex results. Our one rule together, following in the notion of Borgo’s Swarm Theory (2005) and the rule and complexity paradigm, is to be connected in the moment with a spirit of adventure and spontaneity. We make this intention explicit between us as a verbal agreement, whether it be in rehearsal or performance. In order for the audience to have an increased understanding and experience of the unique collaboration between David and I, we set up a camera in the ceiling above the piano. These images, combined with a camera at the end of the keyboard, were projected in real time onto a cinema size screen behind us.

**Rule as Friendship**

My collaboration with Helfgott is a unique opportunity whereby I am immersed into a musical world suffused with classical influences. When we sit together at the piano there is a listening that happens between us, which informs the space between – The *Ma* (see Figure 3.6). This palpable awareness that goes beyond words is an organic and sometimes random event that can be difficult to control. At times it works and at other times I can feel like I am bashing my head against a brick wall. It is largely dependent on our ability to tune into the space between us. My collaboration with
Helfgott began over ten years ago and it is a special relationship I have nurtured and continue to develop. I first came across David Helfgott when I saw his life portrayed in Scott Hicks’ film *Shine* and was immediately impressed by the portrayal of the depths of personal agony to the peaks of artistic success.

Helfgott’s life inspired the Academy Award-winning film, with Geoffrey Rush playing Helfgott, and showed that this renowned Australian pianist has not had an easy life. He has had a lifelong struggle with a psychological condition known as schizoaffective disorder. Having spent twelve years in mental institutions, David and his wife Gillian now live in The Promised Land, a peaceful Bellingen Valley in northern New South Wales. My collaboration with him has involved many hours at his piano in their home, and mine at Avoca Beach, New South Wales. Rehearsing with David is a somewhat random affair – even though he likes to have a plan, I have had to learn an extraordinary amount of patience in order to produce a successful working relationship. He has a brilliant intellect and no inhibitions. The short film that I have made as a part of my creative portfolio entitled *Unfinished Symphonies* is designed as an intimate portrait of my collaboration with David Helfgott. Not only are duo levels of collaborative relationships implicit in the ritual concerts, they are also implicit in the most intimate of *Ma* spaces – the ritualised sounds of the studio. This

Figure 3.6: David Helfgott and Yantra de Vilder, photo by Suzanne Jones
The film presents a synthesis of what collaboration means in the context of this work: a place of simple rules, spontaneity, adventure, patience and friendship producing complex results. Our concerts together are a visual display of these rules being enacted using live video to enhance audience engagement.

**Collaboration in Devotion**

My collaboration with Venerable Robina Courtin has grown from a meeting at a meditation retreat in the Blue Mountains, where I first heard her sing Tibetan prayers. Almost immediately I knew that this woman had a trained classical voice and that I could contribute in a meaningful way to the archiving of her prayers as a recorded work. This developed into a three-year project of recording, refining, reworking and producing an album of Tibetan Buddhist prayers and chants.

**An Ancient Tradition**

The origins of Buddhist studies can be traced back to the nineteenth century with a founding figure of Eugene Burnouf. There have been some pioneering scholars since then, including Jeffrey Hopkins (Hopkins, J. 1999), who created the first program of Tibetan Buddhist studies and Robert Thurman (Thurman, R. 2005) who was the first chair of Tibetan Buddhist studies in the United States. Courtin is from the Gelug tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Within this tradition, Mahamudra, the great sealing nature, refers to systems of meditation and chanting that can reveal both the conventional and the ultimate nature of the mind. Tibetan Buddhist chanting involves repetition, particularly the form of mantra, and in general, meditation, to the Tibetan Buddhists of the Gelug tradition, means to build up a beneficial state of mind or attitude through attentive repetition.

One of the interesting things about this project was that Courtin had no experience in a recording studio. She had never had a pair of headphones on her head and she was not used to the process of music production. I on the other hand am a fast worker in the studio, and I am used to working with music professionals. However, Robina had something special and I was keen to explore the dynamics of this collaboration. From the start I could see we were coming from different directions – I was more pre-
occupied with finding the right approach for the musicality of the project and also attending to technical details; for example, laying a tempo and pitch tone down for her so that I would have room to develop the sound and instrumentation if needed after she had laid her vocals down. Although, she insisted on not working with any of these sound cues – in fact they disturbed her. She wanted to keep it pure. So too was her feelings about reverb in the early days – she did not like the sound that it was creating. I knew that to get a cathedral like sound I was going to need a fair amount of audio processing, but in the early stages, she was averse to this. It was only through the collaborative process where she began to trust me and my methods that she began to understand the necessary requirements in terms of technical production.

**Style and Connections**

Throughout the recording sessions we listened to many other influences, from Tibetan Lamas to Hildegarde of Bingen, an eleventh century Christian mystic who was a composer and visionary, who is now understood to be a polymath, practicing as an artist, healer, astronomer and musician. ‘All of creation is a symphony of joy and jubilation’ (Fox, 2012, p. 1). We certainly seemed to be bridging the worlds of Buddhism and Christianity – a potent Ma space. Courtin also loved jazz music and was a friend with Pearly Black, a Melbourne jazz singer who also practices Buddhism. Pearly Black became a trusted ally in the recording process whereby we would send her recordings for feedback. As Pearly is a professional, she understood what I was aiming for in terms of production, and though we never met face-to-face, the feedback Pearly gave us provided a bridge between the worlds of Robina and I.

Now at the end of three years I can honestly say that the mutual trust and respect between Robina and I has grown immeasurably. She calls me her music guru – a title I aim to live up to. In fact, when we discovered that there was more recording to do on the album, I suggested that she lay down her vocals in New York (where she was at the time). I knew there were plenty of studios there that she could work in. But she would have none of it – she insisted that we had found a way of working together that was unique and she only wanted me to produce and record her. Suffice to say when she returned to Australia in April 2016, we laid down the final tracks of her vocal parts. The artistic cogency that Robina Courtin and I formed was directed by the inter-
cultural hybridity that suffused the project, imbedded between culture and tradition, where the Artistic Moment arose as a *Ma* between us, honouring the Tibetan prayers whilst bringing forth new studio production techniques, fusing space and time into a sonic emergence resulting in the production of a unique cross-cultural recorded work. My work with Robina followed the flow process of collaboration where an initial spark between us led to a final studio outcome (see Figure 3.7).

![Figure 3.7: Venerable Robina Courtin and Yantra de Vilder in Cape Three Points Studio, Avoca Australia](image)

**Ideas: Collaboration as Intensifying Space and Indeterminate Solutions**

I consider collaboration as a gateway in my practice that is informed by:

- theatrical gesture
- discreet garden rituals
- concert ritual, and
- intimate spiritual ritual.
My arts practice is defined through the non-rule-book association of friendship and complexity, triggered by the familial and indeterminate into an intensity of collaboration, improvisational spaces and Artistic Moments.

Cyclic Spiral

Figure 3.8 represents the spiral of processes in my composition practice for multimedia works *Latitude 33* and *Haiku* and demonstrates how each stage leads to the following action, beginning from the centre with the initial creative spark and spiralling outwards to the realisation of the project.

![Figure 3.8: The cycle of process in composition for multimedia productions *Latitude 33* and *Haiku*](image-url)
Figure 3.9 represents the spiral of processes in my composition practice for collaborative projects *Unfinished Symphonies* and *Devotion* and demonstrates how each stage leads to the following action, beginning from the centre with the initial creative spark and spiralling outwards to the realisation of the project. Figure 3.8 and 3.9 differ slightly as the process for *Latitude 33* and *Haiku* involved a high level of multimedia production, whereas in my work with *Unfinished Symphonies* (Helfgott) and *Devotion* (Courtin), the focus was on the intimate collaborative relationship.

Figure 3.9: The cycle of process in composition for collaborative productions *Unfinished Symphonies* and *Devotion*
Auto-ethnographic Spaces

In reflecting on this personal relationship with Robina, I realised that much of my research comes from an internal dialogue grounded in an auto-ethnographic perspective\textsuperscript{17}. Bartlett defines auto-ethnography as, ‘an autobiographical genre that connects the personal to the cultural, social, and political’ (Bartlett, B. 2009, dust cover).

Through an auto-ethnographic perspective I am aiming to discover moments of ‘connection’ where ‘systems of meanings intersect’ (Smith and Dean, 1997, p. 36) and to examine the ways that these moments affect and influence rehearsal and performance. The joy of music composition whether it be for theatre, dance, film or TV is always at the heart of my work and I share a belief with Laliberté that ‘through art and emotion we can convey a universal message’ (Laliberté, 2012). Many of the core creative ideas for my folio come from an initial spark of an idea that has a certain element of intrinsic power and direction whereby I feel I may be able to convey a universal message. For example, the idea for Latitude 33 came when I was sitting on the beach at Avoca wondering what songs and dancers existed on this latitude. With that question came the direction for the ethno-musical research – indigenous music of South Africa, South America and Australia became the first focus, branching out into contemporary influences. The universal message that I was interested in for this project was connected to the slogan for the Five Lands Walk Festival for which Latitude 33 was commissioned – ‘Connecting People to People and People to Place’.

José Maceda has discussed this notion of connecting people to place and materials from place (bamboo, bronze) in his essay, A Concept of Time in Music of South-East Asia (Maceda, 1986) and the profound connection of people of South-East Asia and India who were absorbed in a concept of the world that was steeped in metaphysical power. A society whose profound respect and connection to nature formed a life that was full of ritual and ceremony. Their philosophical concepts of respect for nature

\textsuperscript{17} Bartlett states ‘Usually written in the first-person voice, auto ethnographic work appears in a variety of creative formats; for example, short stories, music compositions, poetry, photographic essays, and reflective journals’ (Bartlett. 2009, dust cover).
infinity and the divine are an intrinsic part of life in their world – permeating all activities from music making to cooking.

**Collaborative Spaces**

Relationships with key collaborators also drive the birth of projects. In the *Haiku* project, my mother, Faith Reid, provided the initial impulse. Faith had been writing *Haiku* for over fifty years and this knowledge of her work was imbedded in my consciousness. Thus when I walked through the Edogawa Gardens in my local town of Gosford, I immediately caught the vision for the performance and installation of *Haiku* inspired by my background of the many years I had witnessed my mother writing and teaching me how to write *Haiku* as a form of poetry. I use the word *caught* in this context as I feel that the idea for this project was already floating in the air – organic site specificity if you will, that I am able to capture or unearth by being in the right place at the right time with the right attitude. It is times like this which reaffirms my belief that the substance of art is already in existence – one just needs to have the listening to hear it and the vision to see it.

**Reflective Space**

One of my strategies in developing a new work is to be guided by a series of questions that I set for myself. I see my collaborative practice through the metaphor of the journey, and my role as a navigator, and I am interested in the following questions that occur in thinking about the Artistic Moment, through the lens of reflective practice and in the context of three major performance works, *Latitude 33, Haiku, Devotion* and the *Unfinished Symphonies*. I use the following questions that occur in thinking about the Artistic Moment:

- What are the essential ingredients for a well-charted navigation of the Artistic Moment?
- In what interior and exterior landscape does this journey occur?
- Who are the passengers and crew?
- What and where is the resultant environment?
- What are the shared languages that a dancer/musician/visual artist/film maker use to convey their ideas?
- Where do these artistic processes meet?
• How do a choreographer and composer map out the landscape\(^{18}\) ahead?

• What are the indicators, if any, for the optimum creative process and Artistic Moment to be revealed?

• How can we see what terrain lies ahead, and furthermore, following on with the idea of a journey and subsequent destination, how does one navigate the landscape and the associated weather patterns that may occur during the voyage?

• How do all these questions inform and relate to a rehearsal, recording and performance context?

**Dreaming Beyond Space**

The notion of going beyond time and personality is an important aspect of the Artistic Moment. To induce a sense of timelessness in the composition, I incorporate various musical structures as compositional devices inducing an elasticity of the time moment. For example, through drones, static harmonic languages are conveyed, establishing a dream-like plateaux.

This dreaming space has connections with Aboriginal mythology, and as two of my major works – *Haiku* and *Latitude 33* – include Aboriginal performers, I have been interested in the points of intersection between Dreaming and the Artistic Moment. The Dreaming conceives of a universe that is unchanging, hence free of time. The search for a timeless quality, where the music and the music making is taken out of a Western sense of goal orientation and into a transcendent Zen meditative frame of mind occurs in Australian composer Anne Boyd’s music. She draws connection between Aboriginal Dreaming and Japanese aesthetics. Boyd, in her essay, ‘Dreaming Voices: Australian and Japan’ identifies the connection between the sacred ‘other’ of Japanese ritual music and the vast open spaces of the Australian landscape:

> Japan continues to provide a context for my ‘dreaming’… I have become obsessed with listening to the earth – rotate those letters just once to produce the word ‘heart’. (Boyd, 2006, p. 10)

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\(^{18}\) By landscape I am referring to the metaphor of the interior landscape of emotions/‘feel’ and the exterior landscape of place/environment.
According to ethnologist Ted Strehlow, the basis of indigenous Australia’s worldview was that human socio-cultural existence was established in the Dreamtime. Due to his lifetime in the field with the Aboriginals of Central Australia, his work remains of immense value to any discussion on Dreaming (Strehlow, 1947). Covering more than seven thousand gruelling miles of Australian desert, he witnessed and recorded sacred ceremonies dealing with totemic acts, firmed with the publication *Aranda Traditions* in 1947. His humanistic position that accepted cultural diversity and human possibility focussed his gaze on language and myth – a multiplicity of languages that each carried a people’s own spirit and intellect.

Inspired by Strehlow’s model of engagement with ritual, I have developed my own approach through research in my master’s degree into the nature of trance music, (traditional and contemporary). I discovered that repetition of rhythmic and melodic structures could induce a trance-like quality in the performer and listener, so these are methods, which I incorporate into the composition (de Vilder, 2005).

**The Spiral**

In the early eighties as I mentioned earlier (p.53), I was involved in The Theatre Research Laboratory. In my work the spiral was an important symbol of our process. Again, in my masters’ thesis, I explored the notion of the ‘Spiral Principle’. These ideas I amplify here as a frame for various performance parameters matched to spiral visual proportions. (see Figure 3.10).
The spiral (see Figure 3.10) still holds relevance for me in providing a framework for mapping the terrain or territory of an artistic work on a number of levels:

- duration
- narrative arc
- melodic and rhythmic contour
- musical arrangement.

The layout and design of the installation space as seen in *Haiku* floor plan was based on the spiral (Figure 3.11).
Mentorial Meeting Spaces

As mentioned earlier under Practice Based Research, one of the most important strategies to my creative process is the ongoing creative dialogue and mentorship role that I have with my principal supervisor Bruce Crossman. Our regular Skype meetings embody a frame of reference that can act as an anchor point holding me to the *Artistic Moment* through *Ma* vision of my research and portfolio. Donald Schön (Schön, 1983, p. 37) has discussed how students learn by taking on projects that stimulate their practice, under close supervision. The projects that I have produced throughout the course of my research have been accompanied by regular conversations with Crossman where musical and conceptual ideas have been refined and developed. Similarly, at the outset of my research with my original supervisor Michael Atherton, I was encouraged to keep an ongoing journal of my process. This journaling process has allowed me to reflect on my compositional and collaborative process and by sending in my journal entries every week to Atherton, I developed a relationship where I was able to bounce ideas back and forth, as a reflective process stemming from my journaling (see appendix).

Braided River of Collaborative Spaces

In summary, my compositional strategies and techniques form a system that begins with an initial creative spark, which then flows out from this conception, generating new ideas and processes towards the realisation of the vision. My strategies and techniques are determined by the practices of the inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural forms that I work with creating an interlock across media and nature. I use *Ma* and the *Artistic Moment* as a space where the personal (individual and relational) spins out into collaborative and reflexive interaction to isolate an aesthetic moment of organicism and Dreaming. My practice forms a braided river of ideas, which include auto-ethnographic and collaborative processes imbedded in an organic, mentorial and reflective sense of space.
3.5. Improvisation in my Practice

*Improvisation* – The practice of reacting in the moment and in response to the stimulus of one's immediate environment and inner feelings. Creating music 'on the spot' as it is being performed. (Hutchison Concise Dictionary of Music, 2012)

Improvisation forms a common thread underlying my research projects and my practice has been informed by a large range of influences, from neuroscience (Berkovitz, 2012), through to Buddhist concepts as taught to me by Robina Courtin, and musical contexts (classical, improvisation, cross-cultural and inter-disciplinary). I consider improvisation to be a gateway condition manifesting as a portal to access the numinous essence of music making, (Ung, 2008, p. 12) imbued with both physically sensual and spiritually transcendent qualities (Crossman, 2008, p. 20).

The Spiral Journey of Improvisation

I view my practice of improvisation similar to the principle of a spiral, whereby the unfolding moment is framed by a gateway as in the Japanese aesthetic of *Ma* – the preceding and oncoming stages of development informing each movement. Each moment on the spiral journey (see Figure 3.12) has the potential to transform to the next. Within this context, I identify my practice of improvisation as a spiritual journey echoed by the mythical form of a hero’s journey as discussed by Joseph Campbell that includes aspects of attachment, detachment, inversion, surrender and transformation (Campbell, 1949). A musical example of this journey can be found in the sonata form of exposition, development, recapitulation and coda/closure as discussed by academic and composer Richard Vella (2006). This cyclic development has resonances with the Indian tala system, whereby the performance derives its shape from an agreed upon rhythmic cycle in use and the piece usually ends at the beginning of a cycle –but taken to another level, simplexity. A breakdown analysis of this cyclic spiral of improvisation shows the beginning of spiritual and physical preparation. This is perceived through a nine stage process as illustrated in Figure 3.12.
Improvisation as a Spiral

Figure 3.1: Improvisation as a spiral

Figure 3.13: Yantra de Vilder improvising at Shakespeare and Company Bookstore, Paris, June 2013, photo by Jesse Blackadder
**Spontaneous Invention: Can the Moment be Captured?**

In focusing on improvisation as a performance technique, I believe I am garnering the qualities of adherence to the present moment, whereby I aim to absorb the atmosphere of the audience and environment into my performance, providing both the parties (audience and performer) with an experience of the Artistic Moment. An example of this was the off-the-cuff performance in a Paris bookstore where I responded to the artistic clientele of the space (see Figure 3.13). Improvisation is an immediate experience – and one that can never be exactly repeated. I consider it as a process of spontaneous invention. In my practice, improvisation provides the perfect recipe for attainment of this state of the Artistic Moment. The essential idea is that the Artistic Moment, this point of the emptiness (Ung, 2008) takes the experience of the composer–improviser to a point that is bigger than the isolated individualism of technique and practice, thus opening a storehouse of fresh ideas and momentum.

Listening to other improvisers and reading about their experience has been a constant source of inspiration for me in my practice, and I have come to realise that not all musicians are improvisers, indeed many feel quite lost without a score to refer to. Granted, there are offshoots with aleatoric and indeterminacy impulses in much contemporary notated music, and I have included some of these elements in my score for *Haiku*, however, most of my practice involves a more spontaneous non-scored invention that occurs between players as we are creating in real time. Even though improvisation can include many types of musical styles such as non-idiomatic, free improvisation, without a modal pre-plan, my practice is predominantly based on a modally underpinned, idiomatic improvisation where spontaneity is a vital element, and a key to connection of the Artistic Moment in ‘an unleashed force that transforms the body along with the world’ (Grosz 2009, p. 22). This experience of vigilance to the present moment as an aspect of impermanence as associated with Buddhist teachings, (Ung, 2008, p. 14) gives rise to feelings of timelessness in my own improvisations, whereby I can become so absorbed in the experience of the Artistic Moment that time stands still. And yet I believe that this noetic quality is often difficult to capture, even with the most sensitive recording devices. In fact, I question whether the subtleties and magic of the moment can ever be comprehensively recorded.
These notions about the ethics and limitations of recording (even dangers in some cases) through possible loss of presence or cultural theft are present within a range of indigenous cultures. Many Aboriginals believe their spirits can be stolen by taking photographs. This issue arose in conversation with Aboriginal collaborator Patrick Thaiday and cultural advisor Gavi Duncan in my work with them on *Latitude 33*.

Viewed from the perspective of the essential nature of time being beyond a transient event, there is a belief within Australian Aboriginal culture that there is an infinite time, which is eternal, and from which all phenomena arise; this is referred to within the cultures as Dreamtime (Mellick, 2011, p.1). This Dreaming has been referred to as ‘everywhen’ to represent its timeless nature (Hume, 2004, p.4). Emeritus Professor Jill Mellick has discussed whether the Aboriginal preferences possibly having more to do with a sense that, ‘by using a material medium and producing a material result, the spirit is concretised – and therefore stolen’ (Mellick 2016, email correspondence with author).

Mellick raises the interesting question of what we are about when we create art for collective or individual purposes:

> There is the bright side of it, the transcendence of barrier, the collective experience, the objective correlative as T. S. Eliot called it (rather unimaginatively). There is also Jung’s injunction to ‘objectify’ that which is within so one can come into relationship with it. However, in so doing, what is within undergoes a sea change. If that sea change is not desired, then it is a violation and rightly feared. We are all familiar with situations that we would prefer not to have recorded. The witnessing act itself changes the field. Physics experts have observed this in experiments for 100 years; the presence of the observer changes the observed before anything else is added to the mix. (Mellick, email, 2016)

In regards to considerations and taboos around recording, perhaps this way of thinking is also influenced by my background in Steiner education based in Anthroposophy, a philosophical system that is founded on the teachings of Rudolf Steiner (2005). I consider that recordings can be important documents or milestones in an evolving career but as to whether it is the best possible performance of an artist – or merely the documenting of one’s own playing on a particular date - remains to be seen. Be that as it may, it is often a practice of mine to record improvisations, more as learning and listening tools for my development as a composer and collaborator, such as ideas for *Latitude 33* on the piano at Avoca and *Haiku* with Jane Rutter on flute at the Japanese Gardens in Paris.

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19 Conversation with Gavi Duncan at Avoca 2012

20 Steiner believed that recording was an anathema to the practice and performance of music.
Environment as Inspiration

Improvisation in site-specific places has informed my research. The seed of *Latitude 33* was planted when I first performed an improvised piece on the beach for The Five Lands Walk Festival in 2009. I was invited to play piano at the event, and I said, ‘if you can get a piano on the beach, I will play’ (see Figure 3.14). This improvised performance was the birth of my creative process for *Latitude 33*, whereby I began to wonder what were the other songs, dances and rituals happening globally on latitude 33 degrees south. Similarly, with the *Haiku* project, improvisation in specific Japanese Gardens in Paris such as *Boudhique Pantheon* and *Albert Cant Gardens* was a fundamental element in the creation of the project.

Figure 3.14: Yantra de Vilder improvising on the beach at Avoca, Five Lands Walk Festival, photo Pauline Wright 2009
Influences of Modal Plateaus

One of my main sources of improvisational influences is the pianist Keith Jarrett. In terms of modal systems, Keith Jarrett’s improvisations for solo piano have become a major influence on the way I approach piano playing and composing. Although he never formally studied North Indian classical music, it became a central component to Jarrett’s musical exoticism (Blume, 2003, p. 117). His concerts have stretched the traditional concept of jazz and provided a global cultural backdrop to his compositions. These cross-cultural modal threads are a process that constantly weaves through my music making and improvising, whereby I incorporate eastern modal systems. These include the Indian hexatonic Raag Marwa and the oxatonic Raag Gaud-Sarang, Tibetan bowls, Indian harmonium and the Hirajoshi Japanese scale (Haiku score).

The Japanese composer Takemitsu has discussed modes as being a long road on which you may travel (Takemitsu, 1992, p. 47) and frequently referred to Debussy as his great mentor. In Debussy’s compositions the flexibility of rhythm and richness of harmony emphasise the colour, light and shadow of the moods created. Takemitsu’s interest in Debussy also extended to Debussy’s own interest in Japanese Art. For the artwork of the album La Mer, Debussy used the famous Japanese wood block print, Under the Wave off Kanagawa by Katsushika Hokusai (see Figure 3.15). These impressionist Japanese and French sensibilities can also be heard in my solo piano improvisations, and my collaborative projects, for example ‘Japanese Garden’ with Helfgott and the score for Haiku, set in Paris (Boudhique Pantheon and Albert Cant Gardens) and the Edogawa Gardens of Japan and Australia.
Improvisation usually forms the foundation of the first stages of my composition process in each creative project. Improvised performances, whether they are collaborative or solo can offer many of the elements conducive to fostering the Artistic Moment and I have found that exploring collaborative improvisation through the lens of the Artistic Moment can lead to profound connections between performers. These connections that I speak of are vehicles of communication – whether they be between musicians in a collaborative context, or with oneself, in a solo environment.

Canada’s leading inter-disciplinary theatre company Ex Machina is led by Robert Le Page, and he believes that the performing arts – dance, opera, and music – should be mixed with recorded arts – filmmaking, video art and multimedia. Le Page instigates collaborations between scientists and playwrights, set painters and architects, and artists from Québec and the rest of the world to establish what he calls ‘poetic connections’ in an environment of communion (Le Page, 2011).
Over the duration of my research project, I was interested in exploring a similar effect, where fragments of connection appear unexpectedly in places, transforming systems of meaning into shared inter-disciplinary languages. As a composer, theatre maker and performer, I am always searching for ways to achieve an integrated performance, where the diverse elements may be woven into a seamless production.

Composer, singer, filmmaker, choreographer and director, Meredith Monk has been creating inter-disciplinary works since the 1960s, that combine theatre, music and dance, and recording exclusively for ECM Music. In her improvisatory work she questions the separation between art and spiritual practice, ‘striving for theatre as a transformational experience and also as offering’ (Monk, 1960, p. 31). Monk defines her entire performance process as composition, saying:

I think of the whole thing as a composition: how to weave together or distil the perceptual elements. (Monk, 1960, p. 31)

Life Challenges Informing Arts Practice

Viewing doubt and failure as a generative opportunity in art can challenge ideas and perspectives about what improvisational forms should and can be. Improvisation may act as a conceptual lens in order for one to understand particular qualities of challenging experiences from different perspectives. I consider that the interval between art and life can prompt new forms of experimentation and improvisation. As Ravetz suggests: ‘All three positions – failure, doubt, and certainty – offer different discursive and artistic tactics’ (Ravetz, 2012, p. 2).

In April 2013, as mentioned earlier in the discussion about my divorce, I was beset by this debilitating major trauma in my life, whereupon grief and shock permeated all aspects of my being. This difficult stage of my life continued on for three years, and even though I would never like to repeat it, without doubt this experience has informed my artistic practice and collaborations, revealing a level of deeper internal scrutiny and an emergence of a new ground of being in my performance and improvisation. During this difficult period, I challenged myself in regards to my ideas

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21 ECM is an independent European record label home to Keith Jarrett, Jan Garbarek, and Ralph Towner amongst others.
about my arts practice, methods of improvisation and collaboration. The week after the traumatic event occurred I had a concert with David Helfgott booked. There was no question of not doing the performance: the show was a sell out and quitting was not an option. Fortunately, the Helfgotts arrived at my front door within days of what I call ‘The Transforming Event’ and without their love and support at this time, I do not believe I would have been able to continue. My life had created a situation where there was a revelation of sympathetic difference, whereby a deeper layer of reciprocity could emerge in our improvisatory relationship through my vulnerability and openness.

My practice with Helfgott is based in improvisation and the format of our concerts is thus: I would begin the concert with a twenty-minute solo improvisation, and then we would come together on the same piano and improvise together. Fortunately, I had already prepared my visual imagery, so all I had to do was be on stage as a solo and collaborative improviser.

The first stage of my solo improvisation I entitled *Fragile Creation* based on the fragility of the act of creation and also our delicate eco systems. I collaborated with Australian artist Janet Laurence to come up with a poignant display of visual themes from nature, which demonstrate the exquisite poignancy and tragic devastation of endangered species. I too felt like an endangered species – I had lost a great deal in my life, indeed the very foundation of what I considered my reality had been rocked. I was unsure as to how I would even play the piano – let alone improvise in front of three hundred people. When the moment arrived to come on stage, I felt as if I stood outside, or above my body. Fortunately, I had been practicing the technicalities of physical playing, including scales and arpeggios, so this meant I was ‘match fit’, however, emotionally I was bereft. I knew that improvisation provided a platform for revelation and emergence of the Artistic Moment – in short, a moment of truth, and I was concerned that the truth of my fragility would render me useless in such a setting.

I experienced my improvised performance as a state of emptiness. My previous notions of the Artistic Moment had encapsulated ideas of peace and reverie; this time it was not a comfortable place – I sensed a disassociation with myself as personality, and an immersion into a field of consciousness that took me out of time and place. It
was a strange juxtaposition where on one hand I felt plugged into a higher source and
the audience, and on the other I was watching the whole event, untouched and
immovable – a place beyond feeling. Nonetheless, I am indebted to my audience. I
believe that there can be a tangible circle of reciprocity between audience and
performer, which may play a major role in determining the narrative arc of a
composition/improvisation/performance. Indeed, I often tell my audience that without
them, this specific performance could not occur, a parallel with Keith Jarrett’s Koln
Concert (Blume, 2003, p. 117). Essentially, it is the old adage of the observer
changing the object of perception merely by the act of witnessing. On reflection, this
audience, without them even knowing, grounded me into a world where I could
understand my role as a musician – a transmitter of divine energies if I allow those
forces to be my dominant principle. I now understand that the Artistic Moment can
arrive in all shades of the human experience.

Improvisation in *Latitude 33*

The idea for *Latitude 33* came when I was on the beach at Avoca NSW, performing a
piano improvisation for the Five Lands Walk Festival in 2010. I consider this moment
as the birth of the project in which I inhabited a zone where the emergent qualities of
presence and spontaneity gave rise to an unfoldment that became a continuation of
that moment on the beach, re-envisioned as a multimedia theatrical production. What
was once a solo intimate gesture transformed into a cast and crew of around forty
people for the final theatrical outcome of *Latitude 33* in 2012.

Moments of problem solving on the run as an element of improvisation frequently
come up when collaborating with others. For me, improvisation is not just about
sitting behind a piano, it is about working with the space between people - the *Ma* in
my role as creative director/navigator. Oftentimes one must have a keen listening to
an awareness of the qualities inhabiting this space of *Ma*, and be able to navigate any
pitfalls that may come up in this terrain.
Improvisation as a form of Problem Solving on the Run

On the afternoon of the opening night performance of *Latitude 33* in June 2012, much to my dismay, one of the principal dancers, Aboriginal man Albert David, (conversation with Albert David, Avoca Beach Theatre, 2012) informed me that he was not happy with some of the indigenous references. From the outset of my creation of *Latitude 33* I was very aware of political incorrectness; indeed, some feedback I had from a European colleague as I was developing the work was that I did not attend to the genocide story (conversations with Lindi Harrison, Avoca Beach, 2012). I maintained my position on this point: I was deeply saddened about the massacre of Aboriginals, as I was about many races, however, my intention with this production was to celebrate and devise my own artistic response to the songs, dances and rituals of people living on latitude thirty-three degrees south. I was not interested in discussing the genocide issue; I considered that it was being addressed in other ways, slowly but surely. I had been very aware to include indigenous consultation all the way with *Latitude 33* through the involvement of Aboriginal artist and teacher Gavi Duncan and Darkinjung elder Phil Bligh. Gavi was involved in the production as a dancer and musician, and Phil’s son Jesse was also involved. When I discussed the project with Gavi Duncan he said to me ‘it’s all about connecting and collaborating to heal the wound’ (Conversation with Gavi Duncan, 2012 22). So it came as a great surprise when Albert David announced that we had it wrong in our statement, in regards to Homo sapiens emerging from the Fertile Crescent. He was angry and concerned about his Aboriginal friends and relations coming to the performance. Trying to problem solve on the run, I asked him as to what he would have preferred and he directed me to the writings of Robert Lawlor, *Voices of the First Day, Awakening in the Aboriginal Dreamtime*. Lawlor states:

> Mitochondrial DNA puts the origin of Homo Sapiens much further back and indicates that Australian Aborigines arose 400,000 years ago from two distinct lineages, far earlier than any other racial type. (Lawlor, 1991, p. 26)

However, I did not have Lawlor’s writings on hand at that stage, and the show was about to go on in less than three hours. This was a difficult position to be in, and had

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22 Gavi Duncan was a major collaborator in *Latitude 33* not only as a dancer and musician but also as indigenous cultural consultant. We had an ongoing series of discussions between January and June 2012 at my home in Avoca Beach NSW.
come as a shock, in a particularly stressful time on the day of opening night. Albert David had been rehearsing with the material for over two weeks, I had shown him the full story, which included narration, when we first commenced working together and he had no problems with going ahead with the project and accepting payment for rehearsals and performances. Kathryn Puie was also part of these conversations and she found it very distressing. Adopting a problem solving on the run solution and improvising the best way forward I assured Albert David that I would access the writings he was discussing and attend to the situation, however, as the media for the production was already locked off I was unable to make any changes for opening night. Nonetheless, as creative director I did improvise – for future performances I decided to delete that statement as to the origins of mankind as I deduced this was a highly contentious issue and there would always be differing opinions – for me I was creating a work that celebrated inclusion and points of intersection, rather than focusing on differences. The show went on, I improvised the changes to avoid further confrontations – and considered this an important learning curve in my collaborative improvisatory realm.

Even though Latitude 33 went smoothly for most of the performances, I was glad that I had improvisation in my tool bag of skills, as one night we had a major accident backstage. I was on stage at the time, about to leave for the next scene, however, as I prepared to exit, the stage manager alerted me that there was a problem, and that I would have to create more time on stage, and she instructed me to keep playing – so I performed for another ten minutes. The whole concept of stretching time on stage through improvisation is an interesting notion, and it serves well in circumstances where emergencies arise. I did not know what had happened backstage, I just knew that ‘the show must go on’, and I was on the spot to create something there and then. I had no idea how long I was going to have to play for, I just knew that I needed to create something that thematically tied into Latitude 33, but could also stop at any given moment, as the next scene including eight dancers was about to commence.

The key of the preceding song was in C major. I knew that the next piece coming was in F#minor, so throughout this improvisation I journeyed between the keys, arriving at the resolution of F#minor ready for the next piece. Feedback from audience members after the performance was that this moment was one of the highlights of the
show as it had a certain magic and immediacy to it – and from that moment on, this new piece of music became an instalment in the performance. A moment of solo piano improvisation, which had not existed before, birthed through the unpredictability of a backstage accident.

**Improvisation in Haiku**

The unplanned improvisation of Latitude 33 music-theatre work was good preparation for improvisation within the planned and unplanned spaces of *Haiku*. *Haiku* was planned as an installation for Gosford Regional Gallery to commence on 7 February, 2014.

Prior to installing the exhibition, I had asked the curators of the gallery as to whether I might present a performance as a part of the opening, although they insisted that due to Occupational Health and Safety restrictions, a performance in the gardens was out of the question. I had taken this matter up with council members including Bob Ward, Chris King and Mayor Lawrie Mc Kinna, yet my requests fell on deaf ears. Bureaucratic red tape stopping me at every direction (Meeting at Gosford City Council with Mayor Lawrie McKinna, October 2013). I resigned myself to accept their decision and got on with the major task of installing the exhibition. This was a huge logistical venture including multimedia sound and vision, designing a spiral with three tons of white pebbles, and sewing and hanging three layers of veils. However, the week before the installation opened, when I was totally absorbed in the installation managing both my team and the gallery team, Chris King (entertainment and cultural officer for Gosford Council) informed me that indeed they would like me to create an opening ceremony. I had mixed feelings – on the one hand I was delighted that my original vision was going to manifest, on the other, I was stressed out as to how I was going to pull off a performance as well as an installation.

This performance opening was going to take all the improvisational skills that I had – to act fast with what I had. My first task was to assemble a team of performers. I had already outlined a performance narrative for those gardens so I was clear on my vision – the challenge would be to confirm the availability of performers at such short notice. But I could not contract any performers – due to the lack of time constraints I
knew that the performers needed to be people that could respond quickly to the project. They needed to be people I could trust to maintain their artistic cogency in an improvised context in a format that suited my artistic direction and narrative arc for the gardens. Fortunately, all the people I contacted were available and were happy to work with me – they believed in me and the project. Although we had all played together many times before, under many different conditions, at this late stage we only had one rehearsal for this performance, which involved a walk-through of the gardens and a discussion of the vision that I had for the project. As many of the performers had already been involved in the four-day film shoot for the installation, they were aware of the spaces with the garden. Although some of the performers (Carmella Bainey and Rendra Freestone), had not been part of this filming process. This is where the swarm theory that Borgo discusses played out (2005). I chose people whom I knew had a strong improvisatory element to their performance and as in a swarm, (ibid, 2005. p. 6), each of us were driven by our own artistic cogency. However, there was the broader picture of the performance, which we saw as a whole (inhabiting a space in time and through time) that held us united. As the audience travelled through the different zones of the garden, following the performance, a new scene would appear, revealing an emergent story of becoming, in the Ma spaces of the Japanese Garden. I consider that the Edogawa Gardens themselves were a vital part of the team as the gardens themselves became the conduit for the direction of the performance, revealing discreet spaces and sites of happenings. This importance of ‘between spaces’ in Japanese Gardens is also discussed in architectural theory (Belfiore, 2012, p. 66).

**Improvised Movements through Space and Time**

The evening before the exhibition opening, the gallery alerted me to the fact that we had well over seven hundred people booked in and that we were going to have issues with moving people through the spaces of the gallery and the gardens in an artistically aesthetic way. Kathryn Puie and I immediately began discussions, improvising solutions and outcomes collaboratively. We decided to split the audience so that half would be attending the outdoor performance and half attending the installation. This meant that we would have to create Group A and Group B, which we did by assigning Group A with a wrist ribbon upon entering the gallery. This is where improvisation
spreads out to reveal practices of formation and spatial design, including the flow of audience and event (see Figures 3.16 and 3.17).

I consider that at the heart of the success of *Haiku* is my relationship with dancer and choreographer Kathryn Puie, where improvisation to us is second nature. We had already developed a relationship together in *Latitude 33*, however, *Haiku* took us to another level of ritual in the landscape. Also another relationship was important, the discussions I had in the early stages with video artist Andrew Worboys were based on improvisatory elements, where I showed him my original vision in various documents for the project and we then creatively drew out the essential elements through the perspective of a camera gaze.

![Figure 3.16: Inside the Gallery, Haiku Installation, photo Lisa Haymes](image)
Improvisation in *Unfinished Symphonies*

Moving from the planned external improvisations of *Haiku* to the internal concert spaces of *Unfinished Symphonies* presented a different challenge – that of genre constraints between classical and improvisation approaches to sound. In my concerts with David Helfgott, my entire performance is based around improvisation. In the first half of the concert I improvise around themes inspired by visual projections – creating a media interlock. By media interlock, I refer to the synergy of mood or ‘feel’ between the sound and visual media, which occurs during the improvisation. At the end of the concert David Helfgott and I play from the same piano. Our one rule together is to be connected in the moment with a spirit of adventure and spontaneity as an interlock of improvisatory Debussian harmony and classical interpretation. This can transform us in a seemingly mistake driven flow, as Brian Eno says: ‘ Honour thy mistake as a hidden intention’ (Eno, in Tamm, 1995, p. 145).

In improvisation there are no mistakes. One moment leads to another and the notion of ‘mistake’ is converted to a synchronicity of mysterious musical unfoldment.
Through an unexpected slip of the finger and change in course during the performance, or a random unforeseen moment in the environment new ideas emerge. This force of uncertainty can take the piece to another level from which a so-called mistake leads to a new development, entirely unplanned in the compositional forecast. This locked into free interpretation of a Debussian classical pianist and free flowing impressionist improviser, creates a ‘mistaken’ flow, as Debussian sound enabled synchronicity and reciprocity.

At Dubbo Regional Theatre in March 2012, during my concert tour with David Helfgott, I was performing a solo piano improvisation to an audience of five hundred people. Suddenly I felt the strangest feeling in my head. I had no idea what it was. As I was in full improvisatory flight, it was hard to take any fingers away from the keys, however, I chose an opportune moment and briefly brushed my hand through my hair, but could not feel anything. I then decided that maybe I was having some kind of seizure or stroke and was about to die on stage. All the while I kept playing. I was on the razor’s edge, at the heart of the Artistic Moment with an added element of mystery. Suffice to say that I did not die – I completed the performance all the while with a very strange feeling running up and down my spine and into my head. When I left the stage, my producer immediately pulled a large insect off my back, and then said to me ‘How on earth did you keep playing?’ (Little did I know that there was a plague of grasshoppers in Dubbo at the time!!!) A perfect example of the discipline of mental and artistic vigilance in one’s own internal landscape whilst improvising.

It was through an improvisatory act that David and I first began our collaboration together, during the encore to our first performance in Bangalow, New South Wales in 2007. For this performance Helfgott and I were staying true to our separate fields of practice, me as a contemporary improviser and he as a classical pianist. However, when we took our bows and jumped onto the piano together, a rare moment that informed many new moments occurred in which we explored a playful childlike world of spontaneity, adventuring into a place neither of us had ever been in before. The beauty of this first dual improvisation was that we were free and had no preconceptions about what we were supposed to be doing. We were not even trying to improvise – we were just playing together with an innocence that had such a powerful

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23 Shines Out West Concert Dubbo Regional Theatre March 3rd 2012.
poignancy that I consider this event was a turning point and an important milestone in our improvisatory relationship. Also, the reaction of the audience to this happening provided encouragement for this birth of a new way forward. As we were playing in a garden setting, the audience gathered around us, much like they did in the restaurant scene in Scott Hicks film *Shine*, *Shine*, (Flight of the Bumblebee, Shine, 1996) and cloaked us in a garment of protection, encouragement and assurance. I believe it was not just about us individually as performers and collaborators at that point. It was the essence of the *Ma* between the audience and us in the magic of spontaneity and improvisation that set the pathway for many years to come (see Figure 3.18).

![Our first improvisation together, Bangalow, NSW 2007, photo Suzanne Jones](image)

**Figure 3.18**: Our first improvisation together, Bangalow, NSW 2007, photo Suzanne Jones

**Improvisation in Devotion**

Expressing spiritual enlightenment within temporal sound is at the source of *Devotion*. What results is a harmonic space joined with European cathedral traditions framed in the Buddhist *Ma* of ‘eternity space’ (Ung, 2008, p. 9). As far as the music for *Devotion* goes, the melodies and words of the prayers and mantras are traditional and essentially set in stone – however, in the harmonic arrangements that I compose there is a context of improvisation. As Robina Courtin sings her melodies over and over again, in the intimacy of my studio, I immerse myself in the meaning of the
words and I start singing along with her searching for melodies that can counterpoint from the original line. This is a form of improvisatory problem solving on the run as I have to function musically and technically on a few different levels at the same time. I had never worked intimately with a Tibetan Buddhist nun before, indeed I hardly knew Courtin at all, other than from attending her teaching retreats.

**Improvisation as a Fluid Tool**

I consider that improvisation elements infuse all the different areas that my work covers with this project. Improvisation informs my works as a producer since I attend to the needs of the artists in an emotional and musical sense. This includes making sure that she is happy, well cared for, meals are cooked, the fire is laid and she has enough free time to do her rituals associated with her Buddhist practice. Fortunately, my studio offers accommodation as well as recording facilities. Improvisation also informs my collaborative ideas in the studio as administrator and project manager involving attending to schedules and studio requirements, timelines, and management of files for international approvals. As Courtin’s international teaching schedule was a busy one, planned a year in advance, we usually locked in our sessions together well in advance. I then upload worked-on files from the session to Dropbox so that she could hear the work I had done while she was away, which was anywhere from New York to Nepal. A willingness to be flexible on my part was vital at many stages of this project. Constantly having to rework and re-edit files was a challenging aspect to the project: I knew that a lot of this was based on Courtin’s lack of experience in the studio, where her ideas changed constantly. In fact, due to her wanting more changes, the project stretched out over a much longer time than I anticipated pushed out the length of the doctoral candidature. Fortunately, Courtin wrote a letter to the university supporting my request and an extension was granted. Ultimately I knew that Courtin wanted the best for the project, so I allowed time and space for its development. In fact, the whole process took over three years. The improviser’s role also extends to formal organisations of sound as an arranger and composer. Being able to research and understand the harmonic and rhythmic elements of Tibetan chants and develop a new and original approach to their development using influences from Hildegarde of Bingen and Gregorian Chants were vital to this work. The decision to approach this project in this way came out of many weeks of frustration where I was trying to
understand the direction that Courtin wanted to go. I was at a loss in deciding on the instrumentation and in the spirit of improvisation and throwing all that I knew out the window, I started to play Courtin sacred music from other areas (medieval Christian predominantly), which introduced a previously unconsidered element into the recording process. This then set our direction for a purely accapella style, but with complex audio production utilising all the skills that I had developed in the last twenty years of my recording, engineering and producing in the studio (see Figure 3.19). As an improviser I consider the studio as a compositional tool for experimentation incorporating elements of sound design, drone theory, editing, audio processing and layering. These processes have been fundamental to this project and even though these are highly complex elements, my method of working with them was in an improvisatory way where I would try things out in the moment, as a spontaneous development of the intimate studio practice. It is as if my real time colour and tonal processing is improvising with my compositional studio processing. This process involved an internal improvisation, reflected on a collaborative studio space and refined in a Buddhist meditative music process. It utilised distilled experiences of sonority and mystical moments of Buddhist and Christian spirituality.

Figure 3.19: In the studio, Yantra de Vilder and Venerable Robina Courtin, photo Lisa Haymes
Improvisation as Collective Attitude

In summary, the different areas I inhabit as a creative artist inform improvisation in my practice. These include composer, performer, creative director, producer, and navigator. Improvisation is not just limited to a purely musical expression but it also comes into play in the dynamics of relationships between collaborators, council members, and venue operators. I view improvisation as a form of on the run problem solving, and this can occur in the creative zone and also the organisational level. I consider that life challenges can inform and deepen the improvisation process prompting new forms of experimentation and meaning. I question as to whether the Artistic Moment can ever be truly captured using a recording device, however, I believe that documenting and recording is a useful process for glimpsing the moment and can be used as a learning tool to dive deeper into one’s own arts practice.

3.6. The Performance Works: From a Process Method of Work Perspective

In this process discussion, the points are related to various aspects of $Ma$ relationships tracing a journey of collaborations from the large–global connections to the intimate–spiritual interactions. $Latitude 33$ involves large scale relationships of music theatre collaboration; $Haiku$ incorporates garden like structures defining the narrative arc, medium sized multi-disciplinary relationships and personal meetings; the Helfgott duo relationship explores improvisation versus classical personas of different genre processes; and the intimate cathedral-like association with a Buddhist nun and a studio sound artist is made manifest in $Devotion$.

Research Principle for Collaboration

Although much of these processes are characterised by a non-rule-book approach, I am always informed by the traditions surrounding each musical strand that I work with. At the commencement of each cross-cultural project I spend a considerable amount of time researching relevant aspects of the traditional and contemporary music of each location relevant to the work. By examining the day-to-day workings of these projects, using an auto-ethnographic approach through journaling, documenting,
recording and filming, I have discovered a range of insights into the resolution of the fundamental questions of what drives successful collaboration and achievement of the Artistic Moment. This informs the processes and methods which guide the way I collaborate and create. In this research I move from Aboriginal/Kalahari/Mapuche inter-cultural sounds to East-Asian Buddhist/Australian Christian ritual spaces, all within differing genre explorations of music-theatre, ritual installation, improvisational/classical concerts and sound art studio recording spaces.

**Musical Feeling and Connection: Operating Modes**

The key perspective that drives the methods of work is that the Artistic Moment is based in an experience of connection and artistic feel, and is synonymous with an experience of timelessness and a going beyond a personal identity into a non-dualistic\(^{24}\) and at times ritualised space. These qualities can arise through collaboration, improvisation and performance. The zones of connection and feel being the uniting thread underlying each practice, whereby I ‘look for the sense of freedom and of real connection’ (Schön, 1983, p. 300). Ultimately, my process is to uncover and articulate meaningful systems and examine the ways that these elements affect and influence rehearsal and performance in my collaborative projects. These processes include:

\(1\) **A non-rule-book approach**

My creative practice extends beyond composition to include collaboration through a range of cross-cultural multi-platform arts practices, media interlocks and technologies. When I am developing a new work, although I take note of a variety of ethno-musicological cultural forces, media applications and peer influences, my processes arise from an internal dialogue (in a Jungian\(^{25}\) perspective) that is characterised by ritualised processes that include prayer and meditation, within a reflective practice methodology. This is reflected for instance in my work with Buddhist nun Venerable Robina Courtin, who is from the Tibetan Gelugpa tradition.

\(^{24}\) Non-dualism is a Buddhist principle that proposes that ultimate reality is beyond the binaries of judgements such as good and evil (Conversation with Venerable Robina Courtin, Buddhist Nun 2015).

\(^{25}\) Carl Jung’s central theory was individuation – a psychological process of integrating opposites, as seen in non-dualism as practiced by the Buddhists.
and lineage of Lama Yeshe and Lama Rinpoche. At the beginning of every session together, Courtin insisted on wearing her robes, doing a specific amount of prostrations, holding the bell and dorje\textsuperscript{26} in a particular way and reciting prayers to begin the recording session. My processes are usually more flexible and less rule-driven than traditional forms of ritual, where I like to leave space for creative interpretation between collaborators and audience members. For example, in *Haiku* I created an opening and closing ceremony for the installation. This ceremony involved a collaboration with six other performers, each of them directed to create their own form of ritual that could be applied to a theatrical context in a Japanese Garden – performance/ceremony that could be witnessed by audience members whilst offering quiet moments of reflection in order to appreciate the beauty and sacredness of the Japanese Garden. These spaces include a journey through the Dry Stone Meditation Garden, the ceremonial Tea House and the Pagoda.

\textit{(2) Eclecticism as an Expression of Ritual}

The ritualised practices that I use to inform my decision making and state of mind are based in an eclectic non-denominational spirituality that includes the Centering Prayer (Keating, 1986) – a modern form of Christian contemplative prayer as taught by Father Thomas Keating\textsuperscript{27} and Tibetan Buddhist chants as taught to me by Venerable Robina Courtin. These form a foundation which enables me to prepare myself before and during my creative endeavours. Another process is the preparation of the space where I am about to work, create, and/or rehearse. This includes a range of elements that induce a sense of ceremony and reverence, for example the lighting of candles and incense, the ringing of a Tibetan bell three times, and an internal statement of intention about the benefit of the project to all involved.

\textsuperscript{26} The bell and dorje are ritual instruments from the Vajrayana Buddhist tradition. The dorje held in the right hand represents skillful means, and the bell held in the left represents wisdom. Together they represent the inseparability of wisdom and compassion in the enlightened mind. (Conversation with Venerable Robina Courtin, Buddhist Nun 2015).

\textsuperscript{27} Father Thomas Keating (born March 7 1923) is a Trappist monk (Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance) and founding member and spiritual guide of Contemplative Outreach Ltd.
(3) *Intercultural hybridity*

There must be a hidden interface where people without common language can touch one another. (Takemitsu, 1992, p. 48)

A common thread through much of my work embraces a universal approach when dealing with intercultural aspects. In the recording studio this may manifest as a dialogue or meeting of symbiotic sound sources fleshed out and developed through audio processing and editing. For example, for *Latitude 33*, I composed a piece titled *Kalahari*. This was based on media (sound and vision) sourced from the San people, a relatively small group of people scattered throughout the Kalahari desert. My creative process involved using the studio as a composition tool (Tamm, 1995; Byrne, 2012) by the following methods: after writing the narrative arc for the performance and understanding the different elements that were involved, I assembled the media I gathered from the film. I then analysed the rhythmic and tonal sound artefacts by creating a separate audio mix and laying it on the time line of Pro-tools²⁸. Once I had a section of the soundtrack lined up, I would then choose relevant sonic aspects that would dictate the direction of the piece. For example, clapping, feet stomping, vocalization and percussion elements. I would then divide these elements into separate tracks isolating specific beats that would become the basis of the percussion sound bed, through a process of editing and looping. Once the initial sound bed is produced and there is a musical congruency in the beats per minute, looping and textural nuances, I would then analyse the pitch of these tracks. I would then base the composition on this as a tonal centre, bringing in western instrumentation and song elements whilst all the time being driven by the original source material from the Kalahari. The diagram below illustrates the media interlock process for creating the Kalahari soundtrack to *Latitude 33* (see Figure 3.20).

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²⁸ Pro Tools is a digital audio workstation production software (http://www.avid.com)
Figure 3.20: Media interlock process for *Kalahari* soundtrack in *Latitude 33*

Field recordings
With the Kalahari
In South Africa with
Glen Threlfo
To capture
Sound and image
Permissions granted

Add acoustic instruments in
the studio, vocals, western
instrumentation,
programming midi
arrangements using virtual
sounds including Kontakt,
Sample Tank, East West

Lay soundtrack on to
film timeline and edit film
to specifics of musical
elements using hit points,
and synchronization.
This becomes the master
backing track
and film projections for
*Latitude 33*
which is then used
in rehearsals and performance.

Analysing rhythmic
And tonal elements
Laying on the
Pro-tools timeline
Identifying BPM
and pitch centres as a guide
for composition

Develop structure of
composition and arrangement
using elements of analysed sound
media. Creating loops using
samples of rhythmic elements,
vocalisations, hand clapping

Studio analysis
Separating sound
from vision.
Identifying sonic
Quality and isolating required
Audio samples.
Create sound files to be used in
composition.
(4) Juxtaposition as a process between collaborators

Yantra’s project is something that interests me, the exploration of ‘the moment’ of creation, being influenced by the environment, and ties in nicely with my own musical projects, having received grants in the past for my yoik project of channelling places or people, and my grant for exploring places in Paris and conjuring the spirit and history of the place. (Liljeström 2013, email correspondence to author, 31 July)

When choosing the right collaborators to work with, I consciously aim to determine the juxtaposition constructs that are enabled by setting up the relationship in terms of a shared concept akin to a form of creative collage – a place where we are all on the same page. I am aware of identifying the grounds for the nature and qualities of the space between us, the *Ma*, and how this could possibly define the characteristics of our Artistic Moment together. For example, when I was choosing to work with Inga Liljeström in Paris for the *Haiku* recording, I had preliminary discussions through which I was able to find a ground beneath us – a place where we could both stand as creative entities in our own right whilst having a direct experience of the search for the Artistic Moment. We both came from a music composition/sound art background and had originally met at Southern Cross University, so I was keen to explore our collaboration further because of the synergies. For the duration of the project this becomes a relationship based on a shared concept in an environment where we could both develop as artists and convey meaning through artistic creative processes, in this case using the challenge of recording sound, and improvising on the spot as a form of fluid problem, within the site-specific location of the Japanese Gardens in Paris. I was interested in revealing and recording how Liljeström’s ‘sounds float in space’ (Morishita, 2010, p. 1) in the Japanese Gardens within the busy metropolis of Paris – a place where we could ‘meaningfully participate in, engage, hear, in cultural sites’ (Nuss, 2002, p. 39).

My interest in the evocation of a mood or atmosphere translated into Debussy’s use of colour as a musical term, thus leading me into field excursions whilst in Paris of the Impressionist movement in both music and art. Debussy was the one I turned to in musical terms, Monet in visual arts. The Japanese/French visual arts tradition also was a frame of reference at this time, and I spent considerable time visiting places in Paris that revealed this juxtaposition, including Monet’s Garden at Giverney and the art movement le Japonaisse demonstrating Monet’s woodblock work.
Leadership Collaboration

When I am working as an artist/composer/theatre maker, I have found that enabling and establishing the Artistic Moment flows out of a collaborative experience incorporating roles, working styles and leadership. As each project for my creative portfolio has come from my original idea, I maintain a role of leadership, which is juxtaposed with symbiotic personal connections. This is a locus where I trust that each collaborator has reached a point in their own practice whereby they may be able to express their creativity through the project that I offer them in a way that may be beneficial for all involved, thus providing an opportunity for individual expression within the team. I choose the people that I work with very carefully, making sure that there is a mutual respect and artistic cogency in the space between us – the Ma. By maintaining my role as leader, (or what I prefer to call ‘navigator’) I am able to infuse the vision that I have through a range of techniques including broadcast studio production standards, interlocks across media and natural environments, and improvisation methods all juxtaposed by an organic eclecticism. Communication in the form of pre-production meetings and ongoing dialogue during the creative process are integral in my methodology. These communications involved Skype, phone calls or face-to-face meetings. These dialogues will often bring forth new knowledge that comes from seeing things in a fresh and surprising way – thus the working together creates a synergy where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Connection: Context and Artistic Feeling

Essential to this process is the necessity to retain and foster connection and feel between those involved (see Figure 3.21, The Matrix of the Artistic Moment). I define connection and artistic feel as:

(i) Connection – Emotional context, shared personal ethics and aesthetics of collaborators to form the underlying links. As Robert Le Page puts it: ‘By freely associating ideas, the creative team can discover poetic connections’. Inevitably, this connected approach in my practice tends towards cross-cultural border crossings that create a multicultural artistic richness in the work (Le Page, 2016).
Artistic Feel – What moves people in the sound/music composition. Schön places emphasis on artistic ‘feeling’ as essential for the collaborative ‘out of rule-book’ explorations:

When good jazz musicians improvise together, they also manifest a ‘feel for’ their material and they make on the spot adjustments to the sounds they hear. Listening to one another and themselves, they feel where the music is going and adjust their playing accordingly. (Schön, 1991, p. 55)

Moment as Workable System

Inevitably, this approach amongst the artistic materials results in an ‘internalised system’ (Berkovitz, 2011) in my practice that tends towards identifiable ‘interlock systems’ across the inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural nature of the work. These systems become manifest in a technological convergence of sound and vision, modes and moods, where modal plateaus become sonic landscapes in an interlock across media and nature. Figure 3.21 is my hand written artistic expression of the matrix of the Artistic Moment. It illustrates some of the links I have referred to which are informed by:

3.2 – personal history
3.3 – compositional strategies
3.4 – collaboration
3.5 – improvisation
3.6 – process.

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29 ABC Radio Interview All in the Mind presenter Natasha Mitchell
Schön (1991) describes how the method of reflection in action becomes a form of on-the-run problem solving, experiencing situations that are unique and new, and responding spontaneously to the requirements of the moment. This perspective underlies all the projects in my creative portfolio. For example, working with Kathryn Puie and Patrick Thaiday on the duet for *Latitude 33*, we forged new ground together in our rehearsal period through going to creative places where we had never been before simply by structuring our rehearsal methods to be based on the premise of discovering new possibilities through improvisation. In the end our collaborative process became so inextricably linked by the sounds of the piano and the gestural
movements that the dancers were creating that at times it was hard to define who was leading whom. We inhabited a zone where we were responding to each other, in an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect and listening.

(i) Research: Gathering Material

Fundamentally at the core of the musicological research for Latitude 33 is my background in world music, particularly my experience with a range of cross-cultural projects for the BBC World Service working for over ten years on projects, as I mentioned earlier under professional standards, in Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Burma, London and Thailand. I have always been interested in how to combine traditional and contemporary music, in a way which pays respect to the original culturally, based innovators and style creators whilst aiming to break down barriers of genre restrictions.

In the early stages of Latitude 33, I began researching the shared musical and visual languages that exist between a South American Mapuche Shaman, a Kalahari Desert song man, a contemporary Xhosa singer and a Darkinjung Aboriginal. I was interested in the songs and dances – the cultural lines of intersection across the planet on the parallel of latitude 33 degrees south. The interlocking rhythms and songs of South American Mapuche Shamans, Darkinjung Aboriginal and South African Kalahari Bushmen became one of the fundamental connecting elements in the performance. My aim was to unearth the connections that arise from this shared ground specific to Latitude 33 degrees south.

All of the people involved in film and sound archives were collaborators from projects that I had worked on before Latitude 33 and we had built a relationship over years of working together. I gained permission to use film and sound archives in Latitude 33 through my previous collaborative projects with filmmakers David Hannan, Glen Threlfo, David Warth and Jenny Cornish. Through my association with cinematographer Glen Threlfo I was granted permission to use footage and songs recorded from the Kalahari living on Latitude 33 in South Africa. Glen Threlfo was fortunate to be able to attend Kalahari ceremonies, and it was an honour to be granted permission to use this footage through Threlfo’s friendship with these people. Jenny
Cornish from *One World Media* was able to access and provide me with Mapuche images and recordings, which were vital to the South American aspect of *Latitude 33*. Cinematographers David Warth and David Hannan provided me with all of the Australian wilderness and underwater footage. I also worked with local Darkinjung elder Gavi Duncan in my studio on recording didgeridoo and traditional aboriginal songs, which we wove into the soundtrack. The sound design contained elements of sounds from nature such as birds and environmental elements. These I either accessed from my own substantial library of sound effects or I extracted the relevant audio straight off the films I had been given.

(ii) *Outside the Rule Book Accidents*

The first steps in my collaborations with Kathryn Puie and Patrick Thaiday usually began in the rehearsal room, improvising our way through to find that perfect moment of mutual harmony, connection and feel. This was a place where we all were expressing what we want to say with a sense of collaborative autonomy, which had its final resolution in performance. There is always a context of feel and narrative impulse, that is, a mood or concept of some sort that we want to convey, such as the unity and diversity of multi-culturalism in ‘Duet’ Act 3 of *Latitude 33*. However, underlying this is always an exploration of going somewhere in collaboration that we have never been before in a spirit of spontaneity and adventure based in the reflective practice of problem solving on the run in both rehearsal and performance. This can be seen, for example, in the performances where we had an accident backstage and I was instructed to keep on playing. The improvisation proved to be a great asset. This accident created a new section in the work, which became a part of the project.

My collaborations with Torres Strait Islander Patrick Thaiday immerse me in a fascinating world in which I engage in his stories and teachings that drive his cultural imperative. These all inform my compositional practice and sound design. Patrick and I have collaborated together on *Latitude 33, Morning Star* (NAISDA end of year performance, 2012) and at the *Uplift Festival* (Byron Bay, 2012) where we presented a new work entitled *Encounters*, which was streamed, live to an international audience. This performance was a highlight in my life, with strong ritual elements as Patrick initiated me on stage by painting my forehead with red ochre. He told me that
he considered me family and this was the right thing to do, as part of our performance, for the world to see. Through my friendship and collaboration with Patrick I was enabled to cross a border boundary into a place where I could hear, see and participate on a new ground.

…Things within are not as they were, something new has in fact been created, something in which both sides can participate in thoroughly. (Nuss, 2002, p. 12)

(iii) Techniques and Music Composition: The Studio as a Composition Tool

The score for this project is a soundtrack imbued with potent and symbolic sonic references and meanings designed to support the story of Latitude 33. The musical form is based loosely on the sonata principle of exposition, development and recapitulation with the climax of the piece occurring at the two-third or Golden Mean point.

The composition is based around a melodic theme that re-occurs in different permutations and influences. At times it is a solo instrument and other times it is a fully fleshed out orchestration depending on the accompanying narrative arc. The score for this project seeks to bind historic and contemporary moments in a chronological time line of discovery by unearthing the sounds and whisperings of each moment and place. It morphs from scene to scene – tempo, mode, phrasing, instrumentation and genre are all subject to the dictates of the changing landscape of latitude 33 degrees south which are fleshed out in a narrative arc that is divided into three different acts, the past, the present and the future.

For instance, I incorporated historic indigenous elements particular to the specific location of latitude 33, in Australia using the traditional instrumentation of Aboriginals, in South America the Mapuche sounds, and in South Africa the Kalahari rhythms and sounds. These are all linked by a melodic motif that appears throughout the performance as a continuous thread providing a familiar sonic landmark and place of reference for audience and performers alike.

30 Lendvai has discussed the music of Bartok in relation to the Golden Mean (Lendvai, 1971, p. 27).
As in a soundtrack for film, *Latitude 33*’s score aims to be a seamless blend of sound design, instrumental music, song and spoken word in a range of languages, Mapuche, Aboriginal, African, South American, English and Portuguese. The intention is for the spoken word to weave in and out of the musical composition as another sound source or instrumentation, rather than an unrelated disembodied voice on its own with no reference to the overall sonic tapestry. My musical influences for *Latitude 33* include cross-cultural musical dialogues such as Brian Eno and David Byrne’s use of beats and vocalizations in *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (1981), Peter Gabriel’s score for *Rabbit Proof Fence* (2002) incorporating indigenous and contemporary orchestrated elements, Hans Zimmer and Lisa Gerard’s composition for *Gladiator* (2000), and the ethno musical film project *One Giant Leap* (2004).

The final soundtrack for *Latitude 33* was defined by the narrative arc of the performance. Once I had the idea of the different scenes I composed the soundtrack. After the field trips to South Africa and South America were completed to record film and audio, the ritualised songs and dances of the indigenous cultures were woven together in the studio developing a musical system that channelled ideas and artistic feelings from a specific time and place. These became elements of percussion and song beds. I edited and programmed the music in Pro-tools using on board native instruments, including mainly *East West* and *Sample Tank* virtual instruments, as well as accompaniment by acoustic instrumentation.

When the majority of the music was completed the film was then edited to this soundtrack. After the film was finished I returned to the music studio to do a final music and sound synchronisation to picture. For example, in the film studio we laid in specific moving images that needed associated foley and music. At this stage the process was very similar to scoring to a film, with specific hit points. Most of the film editing was done in Andrew Worboy’s studio using *Vegas*, the remaining film editing was done in my studio using *Final Cut Pro*. After all film media was edited I then returned to my recording studio where I would lay in other musical and sound

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31 Virtual instruments
32 Film editing software
33 Film editing software
design elements that were inspired by the latest film edit. So it became a process between studios – an interlocking system between sound and vision.

\textit{Process in Haiku}

From the wide global spaces of \textit{Latitude 33} music-theatre to medium-sized ritual events, \textit{Haiku} has seen a number of incarnations – an installation, a film, a soundtrack and different versions of the performance.

\textit{(i) Collaborative Context of Haiku}

\textit{Haiku} opened with a performance in the Edogawa Japanese gardens to eight hundred people at Gosford Regional Art Gallery in February 2015. It continued as an on-site installation in the gallery for five weeks attracting over ten thousand people through the gallery during that time\textsuperscript{34}. In June 2015, \textit{Haiku} was re-worked into a fifteen minute composition and dance performance for the launch of the Five Lands Walk, (a local cultural festival) and then was edited to a five minute composition for the Noise and Silence event at the Western Sydney University as part of a collaboration with Sydney Youth Orchestra in October 2015. I am planning to do a re-edit of the visuals for \textit{Haiku} and work with them as the backdrop for my next concert with David Helfgott on August 27th at Avoca Theatre. This form of re-working the material in multiple formats is an important aspect of the process as a method of work that informs the outcomes in each instance.

\textit{(ii) Outside the Rule Book changes to Collaboration}

At the heart of this creative endeavour was my interest in developing a cultural event that enhanced the sister city relationship between the regions of Gosford (Australia) and Edogawa (Japan), thus many of the initial processes involved with this project included meetings with council and Sister City committee members. The first stage of this project was the inspiration process, which I believe, came from being in the site itself. It was as if I saw and heard all the elements for the project in an Artistic

\footnote{34 Email correspondence from Chris King Manager Arts and Culture Gosford City Council 7.3.16}
Moment that informed me with the elements of *Haiku*. Once I had the initial vision for the project, I developed a narrative arc that was based on travelling through the Japanese gardens in Gosford. This became the process for developing the production schedule for the film shoot, which contained the visual media elements for the main wall of the gallery. The opening performance began in a meditation garden. This aesthetic set the tone for the performance, whereby the meditative elements of Tibetan bowls and bells were the soundtrack for a stillness that is encapsulated in the choreography. The aim was to settle the audience into a space beyond time – a zone that is enhanced by the sweet smell of cherry blossoms, the fragility and beauty of nature, which was then accompanied by the slow meditative movement of the dancer. The research method for this project involved examining a number of Japanese scales and then finally settling on the *Hirajoshi* scale, in order to maintain an East Asian thematic context. My site-specific process entailed filming and recording in Japanese gardens in Paris, Australia and Japan. The diagrams and figures on the following pages represent stages of the process for the installation and design of *Haiku* (see Figures 3.22–3.28).
(iii) Techniques: (a) Cycle Process of People Interaction

Choose musicians to Work with based on Their ability to improvise and sensitivity to the project. Jane Rutter and Inga Liljestrom

Research Japanese gardens in Paris and gain access. Identify and select Japanese Hirajoshi scale. Pre-production meetings with Jane Rutter and Inga Liljestrom in Paris

Choose Haiku words To give to Liljestrom. Define quality of performance Needed, articulate Hirajoshi Scale for Rutter and Liljestrom. Setup separate recording times Using film, stills and zoom recorder for audio

Add acoustic instruments in the studio, vocals, western instrumentation, programming midi arrangements using virtual sounds including Kontakt, Sample Tank, East West

Collate and file recordings in Paris. Once all recording and filming is completed in Australia, Japan And Paris, analyse elements of Recordings and lay on timeline in Pro-tools when back in Australia. A

Lay soundtrack on to film timeline and edit film to specifics of musical elements using hit points, and synchronization. This becomes the master backing track and film projections for Haiku which forms the main projection screen in the installation.

Figure 3.22: Process of research and data gathering in Paris
Figure 3.23: Installation process *Haiku*

Research multi-media gallery installations in New York, Paris, Amsterdam and Japan.


Sew all muslin, hang and check projections in rehearsal space. Create bamboo hangers for calligraphy. Create sound design for the space re speaker and sub woofer placement. Paint and make lanterns for installation pathways.


Access floor plan for Gosford Regional Gallery. Design Haiku installation based on gallery specifications and spiral forms. Lay out spiral floor plan on Avoca oval designed on space specifications. Research, Design and build light boxes.

Access physical needs for space, i.e. three tons of white Japanese Pebbles, pumice, bamboo, three layers of muslin veils to insert at doorway. Design projection surfaces – Paris gardens for veils, interior of spiral for Haiku poetry, main wall for main projection.
Figure 3.24: *Haiku* initial designs
Figure 3.25: Haiku Gallery floor plans
Figure 3.26: Avoca oval, NSW designing the spiral for floor plan

Figure 3.27: Gosford Regional Gallery NSW, Yantra de Vilder laying spiral
Figure 3.28: Gosford Regional Gallery NSW, Rommel Chavez installing veils
(iv) Techniques: (b) Media Interlock Process

The Figure 3.29 outlines the cyclic process involved with the sound and vision elements that form the main media interlocks for Haiku. It also lays out the development of the music composition from inception and media gathering… through to completion.

**Figure 3.29: Media interlock process**
Process in Unfinished Symphonies

(i) Intimate Relationship

Since it is clear that a sonic or visual artwork can sometimes transmit knowledge in non-verbal and non-numerical terms, we believe that any definition of knowledge needs to acknowledge these non-verbal forms of transmission. (Smith and Dean, 2009, p. 3)

From the wide space of latitudes (literally the earth) my focus shifts to the more intimate space of two people in a concert and garden. There is a process that happens between David Helfgott and me that involves a transmission of sorts – an interaction that is beyond verbal definition. My best experiences of Artistic Moments with him occur when we are in front of an audience – there is a palpable reciprocity that is evoked. It is the space of *Ma* as a duo relationship between Helfgott and myself, and also between the audience and performer. *Ma* has been described as a space-time relationship between people, ‘a place where human interrelationships are acted out in time’ (Snodgrass, 2006). This space-time relationship is at the core of my collaboration with David Helfgott, invoking patterns of music making and a metamorphosis of ideas and techniques.

In my collaboration with Helfgott the notions of *Ma* and patterns of improvisation influenced by environment are integrated into a methodology mediated by the concepts of connection and artistic feeling underlying the Artistic Moment.

(ii) Outside the Rule Book Childlike Innocence

The first time we played together was in 2006, Bangalow, Northern New South Wales. Our improvisation happened in a very spontaneous way, as I touched on earlier. The format of the concert was thus: I began with a thirty-minute solo performance of piano improvisations. David then commenced his more traditional classical repertoire. When we were having our final bows, in a moment of excitement we both jumped on the piano – we were almost like children together adventuring in a play land we had never been in before. This was the beginning of our unique collaborative association.

A major attraction for not only David and I as performers but also the audience is the witnessing and experiencing of the intimate improvisatory space of communication
between us (the Ma of the Artistic Moment). With this in mind we decided to set up a camera above our heads (on the light truss of the theatre overhead) for future improvisations. This image was then projected in real time on the screen behind us so that the audience could have a birds-eye view of what is happening, not only with the four hands on the piano, but also in the communication that is occurring between us.

In terms of our rehearsal process together, using this situation as practice-led research (Smith and Dean, 2009), I have found that through our many hours of playing and recording together the best results came about when I deemed a certain structure for us to work with, be it a chord progression, or a mood/feeling associated with a place, time or happening. Japanese Garden, Water, Open Spaces are just some of the names of our improvisatory pieces together, each of which pertain to a certain frame of reference. For example, Japanese Garden is influenced by my walks with David in the Japanese Garden at the Helfgott’s’ home, as well as by a series of East Asian scales that David and I cyclically return to as an underlying motif. Throughout the rehearsal process I became interested in the link I could recognise between imagination, environment, nature, patterns and music making.

An offspring of the imagination, pattern is a vision of what is mirrored by intuition, perception and instinct, through feelings and not via analytical or logical speculation. The intellect can understand only a part of the whole, but intuition can grasp the whole. From nature to pattern there is a metamorphosis, a reincarnation of the spirit in a new shape. The significance lies in the metamorphosis itself. (Liotta, 2012, p. 12)

Many of the melodic ideas that David would come up with in our sessions were hurriedly scribbled onto a notepad, not as a score direction, but rather as a way of memorising patterns. Another one of our processes involved the physicality of two people being at the piano at the same time. David was very influenced by Cyril Smith, his teacher at the Royal Academy of Music in London, who had a paralysed left hand. This relationship is highlighted in the film Shine. So almost in tribute to Smith, David would sit on my right with me at the bass end. Often times he would just play with his right hand, his dexterity and skill with fast modal scales complimenting my chordal progressions. These progressions were often based in elements from classical pieces, such as Debussy’s Claire de Lune (1905) and Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto No. iii (1936), which were some of our favourites. I would study these pieces and then extract what I deemed to be pivotal chordal progressions from these works and
we would use this as a basis for the improvisation. I was also in charge of the sustain pedal.

I recorded all of our rehearsals using these recordings as a guide to analyse what was working and where we were getting lost. Bear in mind, however, getting lost is part of the process, as these are also the roads that leads to the Artistic Moment which is important – whether it is manifested in modal directions, rhythmic inventions or new forms of communication.

I also filmed a number of events. At times being involved and documenting can be an arduous task, as it requires the technical and emotional aspects of myself to be all working at the same time. I am used to this when I am alone in my studio, but when I am dealing with someone like David Helfgott who has a random fluidity and adventure about his demeanour, I had to be constantly ready for anything – camera poised, recording device on, fingers at the piano, and engaging with David. Part of our process when we were working at his place was regular dives into his swimming pool. David has an absolute love of water – somehow it has a very soothing effect on him. It was good for me too. We were also in an absolutely magical environment. The Promised Land in the Gleniffer Valley, Bellingen northern New South Wales. The piano room looked out over Japanese gardens and the swimming pool was circled by majestic purple mountains of the Dorrigo plateau. A perfect place encapsulating Ma, with the surrounded and protective layers of the spatial depth reminiscent of the Japanese aesthetic, Oku creating a dialogue between environment and subjective perception (Lippa, 2012, p. 146). There is no doubt in my mind that this environment informed our work, suffused our senses and grounded the musical venture in a place and time that will always have special resonance for me. Fortunately, filmmaker and colleague John Considine (who I collaborated with on Latitude 33) happened to live across the road from the Helfgotts, so I was able to have his assistance with some of the filming in The Promised Land. We then went on to edit a short film together in John’s studio in the rainforest by the river – all in walking distance from the Helfgotts. This film forms part of my creative portfolio and as such is intended as more of a snapshot of our time together rather than a one-off concert performance.
This collaborative journey with David Helfgott has been a significant process tracing a journey of intimate and spiritual significance for me. Watched over by the Dorrigo mountain, next to the Never Never River, set amidst a Japanese Garden, I cannot help but feel that my destiny with David Helfgott was one of the major collaborations in my life. It was carved out in the crucible of adventure and risk – a place where we were both willing to let go of our preconceived notions of what our music should be when determined by the restraints of genre, such as classical and contemporary improvisatory. And what we discovered was a meeting space – a Ma, an Artistic Moment that was at times elusive and other times so rich that you could almost touch it. As this is a quality that is quite ineffable, its emergence was something difficult to always capture on film, therefore the documentary included in my portfolio is aimed to represent the quality of our connection together and its effect on my creative practice.

*Process in Devotion*

(i) Context: Tradition Bearer

The album *Devotion* that I recorded with Venerable Robina Courtin was produced over a period of three years, with much time and space for reflection, listening and analysing. My ethnomusicological research involved intensive inter-cultural hybridity, listening to traditional Tibetan Buddhist chants and also the compositions and liturgical songs of Hildegarde of Bingen. Hildegarde was a twelfth century German Benedictine abbess and composer whose soaring melodies pushed the boundaries of traditional Gregorian chant. This western European influence created an interesting juxtaposition, which worked well with the unusual characteristics of the Tibetan style. Over the years I have developed a way of working where I use the recording studio as a tool of composition, influenced by the likes of Brian Eno and Lisa Gerard. *Devotion* was to take this method to another level. Previously I had created vocal works that had some kind of instrumental backing tracks, although this album was to be accapella – with my direction to create the sound of creating a thousand voices (a description given to Robina by her spiritual teacher, Lama Yeshe). My technique to achieve this was by intensive multi-tracking of her vocals, audio – processing, editing and arranging.
(ii) Outside the Rule Book: Difficult Discussions

Our usual method of working was that Courtin would sing me the melody, as sung by her teacher Lama Yeshe. We would then listen to his singing from various recordings and youtube clips. Often the intricacies of the melody would be hard to decipher as the quality of his vocal technique was somewhat blurred. After this process, she would then sing this prayer to me, and explain the meaning of the words. It was very important to her that I understood the meaning and why a specific chronology had to be used. We would then lay down a track of her vocals singing the main melody, and then for extra depth to the sound I would direct her to sing the same part over again, usually up to three times. I would then work out the harmony lines, sing each one to her and we would repeat the same process for each line. Those harmonies that she found difficult to reach, for example the high soprano lines, I would sing instead. Once Robina had sung all her parts, I would then add my vocals being careful all the while to have Robina’s voice as the main lead, with mine as a backup. I would multi-layer my voice as well, using different panning and reverb to create more depth. This part of the process usually occurred when she was away on tour.

(iii) Techniques: Drone and Studio Audio Processing

For this project I used what I describe as The Drone Technique – a method of editing and audio processing that I had developed in music production that is unique to my methodology. My technique is to use multiple layers from a simple idea. For example, I would record Robina singing an ‘aah’. I would then get her to sing this same tone and syllable tripled. Then two harmonies above and one below would be added. Her usual primary tone was in the tenor range. I then would have a SATB part multiplied by four. Once I had this drone produced, I would treat it with reverb and delay and create a stereo sub mix. This would then be bought back into Pro-tools as a new track (sub mix 1). I would create sub mix 2 as a separate stereo channel and place the track at the end of the previous mix. I would continue doing this until I had a seamless drone that continued throughout the duration of the piece (see Figures 3.30 and 3.31).
I could alter the harmonic density of the drone by going back into the original mix at any time. For example, if I wanted to create a drone that was a lighter, airier sound, I would just include the alto and soprano parts; for a thicker, denser sound I would adjust the SATB parts accordingly.

![Figure 3.30: Pro-tools screenshot](image)

This snapshot of a Pro-tools session shows the unmixed edit of all the voices. It contains ten mono tracks of vocals labelled a–j. This is an SATB recording which has 4 tracks (a,b,c,d) recorded for the main line.

![Figure 3.31: Pro-tools screenshot](image)

This snapshot of a pro-tools session shows the stereo vocal sub mixes lined up to create the final drone.
Intimate Collaboration Drives Artistic Moment across Spaces

I consider my collaboration with the Venerable Robina Courtin to be akin to a cathedral–temple space – a place of devotion and reverence that occupies a transcendent zone interlocked with complex studio audio production techniques. The process of our work together required a level of intimacy through the many hours we spent in the studio together. However, the work did not just stop in the studio, instead our many meals together became a place of discovery and renewal. This Tibetan Buddhist tradition bearer passed on her knowledge to me in this informal setting around my dining room table. It is these intimate moments around the production of the ‘work’ that frame the experience and imbue it with qualities that pertain to the Artistic Moment – a place of trust, listening and respect. Even though Courtin at many times was identified in her role as teacher, I would also argue that ultimately it was a balanced relationship reciprocated by the wealth of experience from my production knowledge. It was this balance of field knowledge that we both bought to the table – in an atmosphere of inclusion and with a prayer to the benefit of us both, and hopefully, ensuing audiences.

Summary: Process as a Creative Language

In my role as navigator of my collaborative processes I am able to identify the salient meeting points and processes which are driven from a range of factors. My personal history informs my present moment awareness and fuels my trajectory into the future. My compositional strategies form a spiral that circles over the top of my work practices, creating a zone that is solid and yet transforming itself all the time. These compositional principles are based on elements gleaned from my personal history as a music maker and through cross-overs with collaborators. My creative process begins from an initial creative spark that impels the fundamental connection and relationship within my meetings articulated as an ever growing creative language. Improvisation forms a continuing thread to these processes – I consider it has a numinous quality which not only informs the artistic output but is capable of defining an internal spiritual pathway of alchemy and transformation.
PART THREE

Chapter 4. Analysis of the Creative Works

From the macro to the micro spaces of the Artistic Moment within the spaces of Ma, the diverse groups of cross-cultural relationships and multidisciplinary approaches at the heart of Latitude 33, Haiku, Unfinished Symphonies and Devotion are revealed. These projects are imbued with moments of ecstatic revelation born through the Artistic Moment and framed by the gateway of Ma to encapsulate a threshold that transforms itself through the creative act.

4.1. Latitude 33: Analysis

Latitude 33 connects three places in a journey through time and space with an eclectic composition of Australian, South American and South African elements. It creates an interlock between mixed media and electro-acoustic music, in a cross-disciplinary project based in visuals, music and dance. It encapsulates a wide historical frame. I consider that my collaborative practice in Latitude 33 works on an artistic level comprised of visual and musical dimensions that engages through rhythmic and harmonic interlocks shared by the collaborators to create a type of Japanese Ma interaction space between people where creativity can emerge. This emergent creativity with multiple artistic levels (music, visual, movement) between collaborators goes beyond time, personality and rehearsal/cultural contexts in Latitude 33 to a dimension that I consider to be the Artistic Moment. In this sense the space of Ma and the Artistic Moment are considered from the broad canvas of earth within the large form of music-theatre. In Latitude 33, the collaborative relationships set up
paradigms of interaction within music-theatre through the journey metaphor for this moment to emerge in the following spatial relationships:

(i) **Journey of Time and Place**

(ii) **Cultural Premise of Insiderism (Indigenous, European)**

(iii) **Cultural Premise of Border Crosser as Eclecticism, and**

(iv) **Interlock Principles that Transcend Space to Emerge as Artistic Moment**

(a) Personal Collaborative

(b) Structured Macro Interlock

(c) Micro-media Interlock.

![Figure 4.1: Yantra de Vilder and Hans Awhang in rehearsal, photo Suzanne Jones](image)

**Background of Project**

*Latitude 33* is a multimedia dance theatre performance connecting three places on latitude 33 degrees south – Australia, Chile and South Africa. It was performed over two nights at Avoca Beach Theatre in June 2012. It was a collaborative project involving a creative director/composer, choreographer, eight dancers, two video artists, three cinematographers, and six musicians.

This project explores some of the geographical, musical, cultural and botanical links that exists between South Africa, Chile and Australia. It is my own artistic expression of a journey through time and space, based in an eclectic musical composition incorporating both acoustic and electronic elements inspired by the indigenous and contemporary world and popular music of these three places.
The performance of *Latitude 33* came out of an original idea that I had on the beach at Avoca, New South Wales, Australia. In the early stages of the project I discussed my ideas with theatre director and writer Rodney Fisher, and together we devised the following words to illustrate a narrative arc within four structural premises. Succinct quotations from the document by Fisher sum up the concept:

(i) *Time Concept and Numerical Link*

A woman sits on the beach – Avoca Beach – watching the waves trace their timeless ebb and flow… She sees three vast, tumultuous oceans and three majestic, sprawling continents. One by one, she envisages landmarks along *Latitude 33* and her music reflects the cultures of four intriguing countries – Australia, South Africa, Argentina and Chile – as she marvels at their turbulent, diverse histories. (Fisher, 2012, lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

(ii) *Origin of Life*

Since the Big Bang, at the beginning of time, these lands have existed in the Southern Hemisphere. (Fisher, 2012, lines 14, 15)

(iii) *Cultural Interactions*

Their arrival inevitably provoked a seismic cultural clash. The many and varied original inhabitants of these three Southern continents – including the Mestizo of Argentina, the Mapuche of Chile, the Bushmen of the Kalahari and the Darkinjung people who dwelt on the land surrounding Avoca Beach – found themselves sharing a slow death by dispossession, loss of identity, poverty, hunger and social rejection. (Fisher, 2012, lines 21, 22, 23, 24, 25)

(iv) *Media Interlock of Artistic Vision*

The woman’s magical thinking not only entwines itself in her own evocative music but also in the dazzling images she conjures up to chart the progress of humanity from the earliest scattered seeds of community to the present-day melting pot of cultures. (Fisher, 2012, lines 30, 31, 32)
Structural Premise: Journey Through Time and Place as a Cycle of Life

The premise for these latitudes of connection is the concept of journeying through time and place as a cycle of life. This time/place journey is the broad unifying premise for this multi-dimensional work. Presented as an hour-long performance, *Latitude 33* features visual, musical and dance influences from a wide-ranging historical time frame. The performance begins and ends in the stars, commencing with the big bang, travelling through the oceans and birth of life, the cradle of civilisation, through the arrival of the first nations, the splitting of the continents and ending with a futuristic exploration into space, returning to the stars where we first started. It has a subtle underlying narrative context that is echoed in the words of Toru Takemitsu:

> Man as an organism has been through the infinite steps of evolution. But where is he heading? (Takemitsu, 1992, p. 37)

The narrative of the performance follows a trajectory through time and space, linking the cultures that lie on latitude 33 degrees south, ‘identifying the same ground stirring under our feet’ (Foucault, cited in Nuss, 2010, p. 35). It is from this perspective that I am exploring the shared and connected cultural places that contribute to our sense of belonging, memory and identity. The element of time is considered in the zones of longitude and latitude and also in a narrative context through visual and audio referencing of the past and future of our planet and its subsequent birth and growth of civilisation. The recording features the whales and birds of places on latitude 33, and singers Leigh Carriage, Andrew Worboys, Pamela Ives, Gavi Duncan, Gyan Evans, Richard Valdez, Mapuche Shamans, Kalahari Bushmen and Massai Warriors.
Cultural Premises: Insiderism and Border Crossing

I use music as examples of cultural premises. Traditional and contemporary moments of song and dance inhabiting three cultures of South Africa, South America and Australia across time are some of the connecting links driving *Latitude 33*. It was my aim in this project to open up psychological and cultural boundaries through the crossover of performers into new cultural genres, whilst honouring their innate differences. The phenomenon of cultural enclosure has been described as biological insiderism by Werner Sollors (cited in Nuss, 2010, p. 39) and it is a theme that I have endeavoured to explore in *Latitude 33* juxtaposed with Nuss’s border crosser notions (Nuss, 2010, p. 39). Through this project I have seen that when the diverse cultural expressions of music and dance forge connections on musical and visual levels through rhythmic and harmonic interlock, a new shared language can be devised, redefining racial notions of us and them. I argue that it is possible for elements to become framed in a new way within this environment whereby the optimum conditions for the Artistic Moment can be achieved – a moment that goes beyond time and personality in a performance and rehearsal.
The Music

The music for *Latitude 33* comprises a soundtrack that I produced as a limited edition CD. The following Figure 4.4 and Table 1 are an analysis based on a unifying principle operating through recurrence of types ‘A’ and ‘B’; and a forward action through ‘C’, ‘D’, and ‘E’. I have analysed the CD recording of *Latitude 33* based on the accompanying track list, describing the cultural interlocks that define the narrative arc of the music. ‘A’ represents the revelatory moments and a framing structure based on a time arc as in *Ma*; ‘B’ depicts the border crossing elements combined with Insiderism that is connected to Indigenous travellers; ‘C’ represents forward action in reference to global travelling and the intrepid voyages of the early mariners; ‘D’ shows the European links, and ‘E’ is the arrival of the cultural travellers in the contemporary world.
### Table 1 Analysis of *Latitude 33* CD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRACK TITLE</th>
<th>CULTURAL INTERLOCKS</th>
<th>TYPES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Overture</td>
<td>Cycle of Life – Outer Space to inner space</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Darkinjung</td>
<td>Insiderism: Indigenous cultures and border crossers</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Mapuche</td>
<td>Insiderism: Indigenous cultures</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Kalahari</td>
<td>Insiderism: Indigenous cultures</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Spirit of Adventure</td>
<td>Border Crosser: Cultural traveller journey forward action</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Spanish Adventure</td>
<td>References to sailing, intrepid voyages, compass, maps</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Flying Dutchman</td>
<td>Based around Bach’s Praeludium No.1, providing another link with European cultures.</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) The Sea Shanty</td>
<td>The Aeolian mode of the Sea Shanty creates an interlock with European cultures.</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Number 33</td>
<td>Media interlock through number 33 connections – Revelation <em>Ma Artistic Moment</em></td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) South America Now</td>
<td>Border crosser: Cultural traveller</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Eyes in the Sky</td>
<td>Piano, guitar, percussion with drop out into Nieya neyawa Aboriginal chant border crosser:</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Xhosa</td>
<td>Arrangement of Qungqothwanea from the song by Miriam Makeba</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) The Future</td>
<td>Jouneying</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Film

The sixty minute film is a documentation of the live performance that took place at Avoca Theatre in June 2012. The timings indicated in the table *Latitude 33 Analysis* below (Table 2) refer to this film. The six-minute film is a promotional clip for the project.

The analysis is based on the following categories:

(i) *Insiderism: Indigenous Cultures*

Working with people from the culture to ensure authenticity of cultural knowledge complexes (Nuss, 2002, p. 38).

(ii) *Insiderism: European Tradition*

My Dutch basis of self extends to Irish (*Sea Shanty*) and Spanish cultures (*Spanish Adventure*, *Flying Dutchman* and *South America Now*) in terms of my European heritage informing my creative ideas and sensibilities. The Dutch trade routes of the East Indies and the story of the Flying Dutchman became anchor points for some of the journey tales in *Latitude 33*. The aeolian mode of the *Sea Shanty* also creates an interlock with European cultures. The lyrics represent the intrepid voyages and the ‘tooralie’ in the chorus brings in the historical colonial element. The *Flying Dutchman* piece is based around Bach’s Praeludium No. 1 in C major providing another link with European cultures in reference to the iconic German composer.

(iii) *Cultural Traveller*

As a cross-cultural artist, I embody an eclectic attitude and future language. By mixing culture and newness I am combining forces that can contextualise a new relationship to Insiderism, informed by the transformation that occurs through my collaborative meetings.
Media Interlock Through Numerical 33 Connections

\(a\) Personal Collaborative 33 Conception

The spatial paradigms between insider and border crossing collaborators and time-space dimensions reveal an emergent moment, beyond its sources, into a new paradigm with artistic media interlocking, centred around a numerical focus. Choreographer Kathryn Puie and I created a media interlock section on *The Number 33*, where we explored aspects of connections of the body with the number thirty-three. This occurs at around 37.52 in the film and is track entitled *Number 33* on the CD recording. I recorded the dancers’ voices speaking about thirty-three bones in our hands, feet and spine. I treated their vocals with delay and reverb which created a conceptually unified yet eclectic soundscape that accompanies the dance work. We also brought in shadow work on that section too, using the screen and lighting for different effect rather than just projections. In my multimedia work I have been made aware of clarifying the line between where the projections and the bodies interact, and the places where they need to be recognised as separate entities.

\(b\) Ma Emergence of the Artistic Moment as Structural Media Interlocks

The media interlocks that predominate this multi-disciplinary project form an interwoven space uniting border crossers and time/space dimensions, operating through a number of contexts. The first principle of media interlock is a global structural conception to unify cultural clashes; secondly, structural media interlocks break down into time/space and cultural dimensions of the collaborators which include cycle of life (time/space); thirdly, indigenous and European elements are contextualised in the sense of border crosser journey; fourthly, an Emergence interpretation operates through time frames whereby indigenous cultures manifest in the present as dream and European ‘locater’; journeying across borders through the geographic position that provides ‘theatre’, and finally presenting emergence of the Artistic Moment as a form of micro-media interlocks.

Spaces of Specific ‘micro’ cultural interlock points are located as:

(i) *Spaces Between Indigenous Interlocks*

(ii) *Spaces Between European Interlocks*
(iii) Spaces Between Euro-Indigenous Interlocks
(iv) Spaces Between Cross-disciplines (dance, music, visual).

Figure 4.5: Albert David, Pamela Ives, Kathryn Puie, Latitude 33, photo Hilda Bezuidenhout

Cultural and Time/Space

An emergent philosophy reveals cultural dream and conquer properties in a time frame outside of place in a ‘large scope’ of geography – in other words, a journeyer moving between things as ‘border crosser’ (Nuss, 2002, p. 39). That is, large relationships within culture/time/geography which ‘border crosser’ moves amongst as in The Way or Tao (Crossman, 2006, p. 25).

Artistic Dimensions

Physical media interlocks that unify through recurrence but vary through change. Differing types represented within figure 4.6:

- Frame (A + A);
- Reciprocal balance (B + 1/B);

Sections a and a2 bookend the performance and provide a frame for the overall structure
Sections b1-3 provide the indigenous perspective which is balanced by the European perspective in sections 1/b1-3

- ‘Dreamtime’ travellers (Indigenous spirit of adventure/border crosser) (B + C); Sections b and c encapsulate the notions of border crosser through a travelling and ‘becoming’ perspective
- Revelation moment (D)

This revelatory moment is heralded as the point of epiphany where there is an emergence towards a unifying field of intersections – the Artistic Moment.

The following diagram defines the analysis through the context of Ma (A) as a frame with emergent, reciprocity, dreamtime traveller and a revelation moment.

Figure 4.6 is an analysis of Latitude 33 demonstrating the Ma frame (A ➔ A); dreamtime travellers (indigenous) B ➔ B; European travellers C ➔ C; and the revelation moment, synonymous with the Golden Mean and number thirty three – D and the Artistic Moment. It differentiates different elements of the B section as an Indigenous category, through numbering of 1–5; the C section contains C1, C2, C3, C4 and C5 which represent the European cultural influences.

Figure 4.6: Analysis of Latitude 33 through the Context of Ma
Table 1 outlines the chronological sequences in *Latitude 33*. It is made up of seven sections: time; music/scene; music elements; visuals; cultural premise; cultural interlocks and analysis.

The time column references each scene according to specific minutes and seconds on the film. The music/scene section shows how each act in the performance is divided into sub scenes, for example Gondwanaland includes First Nations, and Continental Split also includes First Nations, and this subsequently relates to the principles of the narrative of the performance; the third column describes the musical elements that are used to compose the music; the fourth column illustrates the visuals that accompany each scene; the fifth column contains information for the cultural premise that is contained within each scene including insiderism, border crossing, Indigenous and European elements; the sixth column defines the cultural interlocks that occur between cross disciplines of music and sound; dance and theatre; time and spatial sensibilities; and the analysis is the alphabetical summary that formulates the conclusions.
Table 2: Latitude 33 Performance/Film Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>MUSIC/SCENE</th>
<th>MUSIC ELEMENTS</th>
<th>VISUALS</th>
<th>CULTURAL PREMISE</th>
<th>CULTURAL INTERLOCKS</th>
<th>ANALYSIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>OVERTURE</td>
<td>Earth Spinning in space, sound effects, high strings, deep reverberations, deep space, arrival at birth of life in oceans</td>
<td>Earth spinning in space, galaxies, oceans, whales, rainforests</td>
<td>Insiderism: Indigenous cultures and border crossers</td>
<td>Cycle of Life – Outer Space to inner space</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>GONDWANA LAND</td>
<td>Fusion of cultural sounds Didgeridoo, Mapuche voices, Kalahari and Massai</td>
<td>Aboriginal, Kalahari and Mapuche</td>
<td>Insiderism: Indigenous cultures and border crossers</td>
<td>Indigenous Interlock</td>
<td>B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.15</td>
<td>CONTINENTAL SPLIT</td>
<td>Didgeridoo, seismic earth moving sounds</td>
<td>Time and spatial sensibilities represented in continental split</td>
<td>Border crossers</td>
<td>Time and Spatial Sensibilities</td>
<td>B2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.58</td>
<td>DARKINJUNG</td>
<td>Neiya Neyawa, solo voice developing into layers with sound design, foley from nature (birds, crickets) didgeridoo, percussion elements. Pitch determined by bull roarer didgeridoo and vocals and then percussion created around Duncan’s vocals and didgeridoo.</td>
<td>Solo dance piece by Albert David, Aboriginal elements, face painting, rituals</td>
<td>Insiderism: Indigenous cultures and border crossers</td>
<td>Spaces between Indigenous interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
<td>B3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: *Latitude 33* Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>MUSIC TITLE</th>
<th>MUSIC ELEMENTS</th>
<th>VISUALS</th>
<th>CULTURAL PREMISE</th>
<th>MICRO-CULTURAL INTERLOCKS</th>
<th>ANALYSIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.23</td>
<td>MAPUCHE The First Nations</td>
<td>Mapuche shaman singing, children laughing and birds from the rainforest demonstrates the use of voices determining pitch centre, combined with pan flutes, guitar, keyboards and percussion.</td>
<td>Images of Mapuche Shamans from Chile</td>
<td>Insiderism: Indigenous Cultures</td>
<td>Spaces between Indigenous interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
<td>B4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>KALAHARI The First Nations</td>
<td>Rhythmic elements of clapping, foot stomping and vocalisations provide the foundation bed track as a percussive element, dictating both the beats per minute, tempo and pitch of the composition creating a music dance device for an interlock.</td>
<td>Kalahari desert, flora and fauna, Kalahari bushmen dance featuring Kathryn Puie and Albert David joined by company</td>
<td>Insiderism: Indigenous cultures Journey</td>
<td>Spaces between Indigenous interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
<td>B5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.27</td>
<td>SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE The Spirit of Adventure</td>
<td>Piano and vocal improvisation, Debussy impressionism influences</td>
<td>Silk acrobatic performance</td>
<td>Border Crosser: Cultural Traveller Journey</td>
<td>Spaces between European interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
<td>C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME</td>
<td>MUSIC TITLE</td>
<td>MUSIC ELEMENTS</td>
<td>VISUALS</td>
<td>CULTURAL PREMISE</td>
<td>MICRO-CULTURAL INTERLOCKS</td>
<td>ANALYSIS</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.21</td>
<td>SPANISH ADVENTURE</td>
<td>Spanish style guitar with samba grooves, percussive elements and vocals singing of adventure</td>
<td>References to sailing, intrepid voyages, compass, maps</td>
<td>Insiderism: European tradition</td>
<td>Spaces between European interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
<td>$\frac{1}{B^1}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>FLYING DUTCHMAN</td>
<td>Based around Bach’s Praeludium no.1, providing another link with European cultures.</td>
<td>Nautical elements, Flying Dutchman, East-Indies spice trade</td>
<td>Insiderism: European tradition</td>
<td>Spaces between European interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
<td>$\frac{1}{B^2}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.31</td>
<td>THE SEA SHANTY</td>
<td>The Aeolian mode of the Sea Shanty creates an interlock with European cultures. The lyrics represent the intrepid voyages and the ‘tooralie’ in the chorus brings in the convict colonial element.</td>
<td>Voyages across the sea – ‘my boat it is strong as I sail neath the sun’</td>
<td>Insiderism: European tradition</td>
<td>Spaces between European interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
<td>$\frac{1}{B^3}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.49</td>
<td>SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE</td>
<td>Debussian solo piano</td>
<td>Dance duet representing multi-cultural aspects of contemporary society</td>
<td>Insiderism: European tradition /border crossing between Indigenous and European</td>
<td>Spaces between European interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
<td>C2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5: Latitude 33 Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>MUSIC TITLE</th>
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<th>CULTURAL PREMISE</th>
<th>MICRO-CULTURAL INTERLOCKS</th>
<th>ANALYSIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37.52</td>
<td>NUMBER 33 SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE</td>
<td>Dancer’s voices speaking about 33 bones in our hands, feet spine etc. and treated their vocals with delay etc.</td>
<td>Shadow work using the screen and lighting for different effect rather than just projections</td>
<td>Media interlock through number 33 connections – Revelation Ma Artistic Moment</td>
<td>Spaces between European interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
<td>D Revelation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.33</td>
<td>SOUTH AMERICA NOW SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE</td>
<td>Contemporary samba groove, funky bass guitar and percussion</td>
<td>Contemporary life in Santiago, Chile and Valparaiso, <em>Latitude 33</em></td>
<td>Border crosser: Cultural traveller</td>
<td>Spaces between European interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
<td>C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.51</td>
<td>EYES IN THE SKY</td>
<td>Piano, guitar, percussion with drop out into Nieya neywawa Aboriginal chant @ 46.02</td>
<td>Full company performing</td>
<td>Border crosser: Cultural traveller</td>
<td>Spaces between Indigenous interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
<td>C4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.52</td>
<td>XHOSA SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE</td>
<td>Arrangement of Qungqothwanea from the song by Miriam Makeba</td>
<td>South African contemporary images – Xhosa, Cape Town, Nelson Mandela</td>
<td>Border crosser: Cultural traveller</td>
<td>Spaces between Indigenous and European interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
<td>B6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.31</td>
<td>AUSTRALIA FREE</td>
<td>Contemporary popular culture song</td>
<td>Diversity and life style of contemporary Australia- surfing beach culture, political issues</td>
<td>Revelation and emergence</td>
<td>Media interlock Cycle of Life</td>
<td>C5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53.17</td>
<td>THE FUTURE</td>
<td>Drum and bass beats, arpegiated synth ostinatos, processed vocals ‘I see the future’</td>
<td>Futuristic video art</td>
<td>Border crosser: Cultural traveller</td>
<td>Cycle of Life – Outer Space to inner space</td>
<td>A2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2. *Haiku* Analysis

Just as *Latitude 33* explores spatial relationships within collaboration and geographical space, so too does *Haiku*; but with a shift from cosmos space to contained ritual space related to gardens. *Haiku* specifically focuses on the collaborative relationship and artistic practice as the nexus between self-contained inter-locking unit forms. I recognize these spatial relationships as *Ma* revelations within discreet gateway spaces, spanning out into creating cultural richness across multiple landscapes/places and contexts to form an experience of the Artistic Moment. This cross-cultural richness is an underlying essence guiding my creativity and is reinforced by engagement: firstly, with the Artistic Moment framed by *Ma* perspective with Zen, presence, timelessness and transcendent qualities; secondly, with ritual in terms of the social and spiritual connections of European, Australian, Japanese and Zen; thirdly, in collaboration through friendship, *Ma* and communion; fourthly, within the visual context of the Japanese Gardens, from France, Australia and Japan in a site-specific performance and installation; and finally as a micro summary of *Ma*.

![Image of Faith Reid writing Haiku, Gosford Edogawa Gardens 2013](image)

*Figure 4.7: Faith Reid writing Haiku, Gosford Edogawa Gardens 2013, photo Yantra de Vilder*
**Haiku Project Overview**

*Haiku* is a collaborative venture, therefore this document is intended to identify and outline the people and processes involved in the accompanying media. This series of intimate collaborative spaces are within the revealed *Ma*-like spaces of literal and metaphorical Japanese Gardens as discussed by Matteo Belfiore in regard to patterns and layering within Japanese spatial culture, nature and architecture (Belfiore, 2012, p.66). It is through this frame of *Ma* that I identify the emergent the Artistic Moment.

The *Haiku* complete film for this submission is a fifty-minute archive designed to give the viewer a sense of what it was like to actually be in the original space of the installation at Gosford Regional Art Gallery\(^{35}\) – however as it was an immersive environment where spatial design, scents and travelling through the space were important elements for its full appreciation, it is intended that this film is a representation of the experience – not the experience itself. The soundtrack remains the same, nonetheless, in the installation as on this film.

*Haiku* Orchestral Live is a five-minute film clip of the performance of *Haiku* for the Noise and Silence Symposium\(^{36}\) with Sydney Youth Orchestra percussionists, Jess Graham, Holly Harrison and Yantra de Vilder. The film originated in The Playhouse space of Western Sydney University. Both spaces – Gosford/Edogawa and Western Sydney are interpreted within the spatial dimensions of the multimedia films.

**Artistic Moment as Ma**

The *Haiku* analysis table describes the pertinent sonic and visual hit points that I consider identify Artistic Moments, *Ma* sensibilities and moments of self-reflection (Schön, 1983). The *Ma* spaces work in three ways: architectural, sonic and biochemical. It transitions from the solid to the transitory, to the hidden sonic revelation.

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35 Gosford Regional Art Gallery is located on the central coast NSW and is home to the Edogawa Japanese Gardens, gifted to the region from the sister city of Edogawa.

36 Noise and Silence was a Sydney Youth Orchestras Composition mentoring project, which was held on 10th September 2015 at The Playhouse, Western Sydney University, and Penrith. The creative frame for the project was the Japanese Concept of *Ma*. 
Interpretation Points of *Haiku* Analysis

*1. Architectural Ma and the Visual Context*

The visual context in *Haiku* presented by the projections, lightboxes, and physical elements in the space, creates a gateway to show the possibility for emergence in a physical virtual garden sense within the space of the installation in the Gosford Regional art gallery. This visual context goes through physical dimensions of veils; tea houses (Japan and Australia); canvases; stone gardens; Parisian Japanese gardens; singing bowls; bridges; bamboo and walkways. These spatial dimensions of *Ma* work within large structures (tea house, gardens) to transitional spaces (bridges, bamboo, walkways) and to intimate objects of human interaction (bowls, veils, canvas). The gateway of *Ma* is also seen in the juxtaposition of Indigenous Aboriginal Dancer Ayesha Blanco (The Watcher) moving through and watching (insiderism, border crosser) in a Japanese garden in regional Australia.

*Figure 4.8: The Veil of Ma Gateway – Haiku, Gosford Regional Gallery, February 2015, photo Yantra de Vilder*
2. **Ritual**

*Haiku* has ‘biochemistry’ spaces as a form of *Ma* – a type of organic ‘gateway’ of experiences between nature and people (dancers, traditional Japanese performers, Western performers and Aboriginal performers). It is in this space that sounds of nature and culture emerge (Japanese and Western cultures) as a creative expression of ritual. The gestural ‘attacks’ of traditional Japanese sounds (plucks, percussion) merge as rhythmic interlocks with dancer movement, percussive motion and ritualised sounds of drones, bells and gongs in the meditation gardens.

3. **Sonic and Visual Spaces**

The musical *Ma* is present through dronal and spatial qualities in the large secure spaces moving to rhythmic patterning within movement space and transitory sounds which include bell resonances, *Shakuhachi* breath, plucking of *koto* strings and human level sounds as in vocals. Here *Ma* is at its most elusive, where sketchy visual spaces (shadows, reflections, smoke) are juxtaposed with hidden sonic dimensions (bells, drums) as suggestive spiritual emergence. As in Franklin’s eloquent suggestion of this with the Zen Buddhist *Honkyoku* tradition (Franklin, 2008, p.93), the drones, bells, audio processing reverb and delay creating spatial dimensions for the sonic space of *Ma* – the Artistic Moment encapsulated beyond time and personality.

4. **Collaboration**

The Haiku team was a collaboration of people working on the film, installation at the gallery, the opening and closing performance, and involved the physical spaces of gardens and performers from Japan, Australia and France. The collaborative spaces form *Ma* gateways between Indigenous, European and Japanese media interlocks with the cross-disciplines of music, dance and visual arts.

Specific friendships are at the heart of the collaboration in terms of sound versus dance, friendship versus personal mentor in: de Vilder – Rutter; de Vilder – Puie; de Vilder – Worboys; and de Vilder – Liljeström.
Micro Summary of Ma

Whilst the macro version of Haiku with its large fifty-minute span seems an oxymoron, given that the haiku literary form is inherently brief, – the large spaces are built up of smaller units, so that they in fact form a series of discreet spaces, which fit the Haiku aesthetic. However, Ma also appears within a literal micro structural form in the short version of Haiku.

(i) Micro Haiku Overview

Haiku Orchestral Live is a five-minute film clip of the performance of Haiku for the Noise and Silence Symposium with Sydney Youth Orchestra percussionists working with Jess Graham, Holly Harrison and Yantra de Vilder.

The Haiku Score in this submission was used in this performance. There are directions for the orchestra and soloists included in the score submission section. It exists in the metaphorical garden of five-minute space within the Playhouse at Western Sydney University.
This music won the 2015 Western Sydney University APRA Music composition award37.

(ii) Micro Philosophy

The Asian philosophy of Ma imbues the sound of Haiku, where there is the potential for something to emerge through the frame of East Asian philosophy seen through the lens of the Artistic Moment, a condition creating a sense of timelessness that goes beyond personality. Ma is a Japanese aesthetic, which represents the space between – and in this case is encapsulated by what lies between – whether it is the spaces between the notes, the space between people, the space between the orchestra and composer/piano player, and the space between the audience and performers. The lyrics in Haiku, ‘See through My Eyes’ represent the important elements of collaboration (mutual, trust, respect and listening) in a Ma context defining the space that exists between collaborators/players.

The musical composition for Haiku incorporates both soundscape and score, and is set to visuals, creating a live orchestral soundtrack. The music cues are directed by descriptive visual hit points on the score. These hit points mark the beginning of a scene and are outlined on the score in Part numbers, (from 1–12), minutes and second (00.00 – 5.01) plus a descriptive text.

Haiku is written for six percussionists, a piano player, violinist and two vocalists. The percussion parts are divided into two parts for each player, for example, Percussion 1A and Percussion 1B is player one doubling on at least two instruments.

(iii) Micro Grasp of Relationships

The micro relationships exist within strictly scored percussion parts and the improvisation frames, and occur within the media interlock of Japanese modalities, sound and vision.

37 Haiku for Orchestra was awarded the 2015 Western Sydney University- APRA Music Composition Prize, 2015 in a ceremony on July 6th 2016 at Western Sydney University, Bankstown Campus.
The score is based around the *Hirajoshi* scale, a Japanese scale that was originally used in *Shamisen* music\(^{38}\).

The formula for this scale is $1, 2, \flat 3, 5, \flat 6$, which means:

- $1$ = root,
- $2$ = major second,
- $\flat 3$ = minor third,
- $5$ = perfect fifth, and
- $\flat 6$ is a minor sixth.

The main piano melody is based around this scale, however the aleatoric element is important throughout the composition, and this scale is used as a springboard for improvisation, not a prescriptive delineation (see Figure 4.10). The sensitivity of the pianist is crucial to this work – it must be played with a gentle and yet confident touch. The transparent chordal quality in the piano score is based on Debussy ideas of the sonorous moment. The extended use of sustain, holding the chords in elongated space, determines the colours of chords as described by Messiaen. This level of sound as vision contributes a spiritual significance, and the Buddhist culture of no mind (through watching the breath), adds to this higher state. Embodied in these musical moments is the resonance of sound that is produced by the recurring plucking of the sustained piano string, which provides a rhythmic dronal quality.

![Figure 4.10: Aleatory section of SYO Haiku version](image)

**Percussionist Theatricality: Improviser Theatricality and Freedom**

*(iv) Technicality: Technology, Live Performers and Score:*

The score uses a mixture of live processing and free interaction of the performers within it. This composition requires audio processing for the vocals, violin and bowed instruments. These directions are listed as Technical Requirements (p. 4 score instructions). In order to enhance the sense of space required in this piece, amplified violin with delay, and reverb is necessary.

\(^{38}\) The Hirajoshi scale was developed by Yatsuhashi Kengyoo in the seventeenth century and was adapted from Shamisen music.
The use of ‘always similar (with variations)’ or ‘sempre sim.’ (con variazioni) instructions for players is employed in the design of *Haiku* with the intention of producing a more natural sound of non-classical contemporary traditions performance, rather than a more artificial compromise of presenting the player with bar after bar of rhythmic vernacular to decipher. The violin is to take their cues from the piano player, and together they form an important improvisational communication, which becomes a collaborative *Ma* frame for this work. There is a repeated motif for the drum pattern, which provides the basic ‘groove’ or feel for the piece, however this can be ornamented with other drum accents, for example snare, toms and hi hats. 32 and 26-inch timpani drums are used.

The soundscape is created by a range of instruments including Tibetan bowls, rain stick, bells and piano drone and is designed as ‘appassionato e libero’ or impassioned and free, with phrasal breaths left to the discretion of the performers, yet compositionally structured enough to suggest a contemporary notated musical art form. The score is guided by a combination of aleatoric improvisational elements and conventional metric notation to achieve the freedom in sound.

This work is influenced by the simplicity and spaciousness of the *Haiku* form, which refers to an ancient Japanese form of poetry, based on a 5–7–5-syllable form within a 3-line stanza. The intention is to imbue this work with meditative qualities, and embody the *Haiku* structure, thus the use of awareness of breath is employed for the musicians in specific places, (which are determined by time and visual frame cue) that occupy a 5-7-5 equation to reflect the *Haiku* structure. This is awareness of breath procedure commences by the practice of rubbing the hands together vigorously. The cupped hands are then placed over the eyes whilst the player is watching their breath. These instructions are as follows:

- Breathe in and out for 5 breaths.
- Breathe in and out for 7 breaths.
- Breathe in and out for 5 breaths.
Tables 5–10 represent the points of analysis on the fifty-minute *Haiku* film. As in the Latitude 33 analysis, I have divided the sections into differing types:

(i) *Frame* – $A + A$

(ii) *Reciprocal Balance* – $B + 1/B$

(iii) *Travellers/ border crossers* – $B + C$

(iv) *Revelation Moment* – $D$

However, unlike *Latitude 33*’s single revelatory D section, *Haiku* has four discreet revelatory moments as befitting the many moments of revelation within a Japanese garden. The table is divided into six areas of specialisation; time represents the hit points on the film deciphered as a moment in time by minutes and seconds; music title states the name of the musical piece and musical elements describes the instrumentation in each piece; the fourth column entitled visuals shows the corresponding visual that is seen on the film; column five is an interpretation describing the symbolic references and cultural sensibilities contained within the work such as border crossings and cultural travellers; column six delineates the interlocks that occur in *Haiku*, including cultural, time and spatial and cross disciplines.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>MUSIC TITLE</th>
<th>MUSIC ELEMENTS</th>
<th>VISUALS</th>
<th>INTERPRETATION Analysis</th>
<th>INTERLOCKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>The Veils</td>
<td>Jane Rutter's flute recorded in Japanese Garden in Paris, deep drum tuned down</td>
<td>Masked figure walking through veils in the installation</td>
<td>A Gateway symbol – Ma as veils revealing moments inside space</td>
<td>Ceremonial, ritual – global recordings Paris, Australia, Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>The Bell ringer</td>
<td>Bells, drone, Tibetan singing bowl, gong</td>
<td>The bell ringer (navigator) and the tea house</td>
<td>A Beginning of Journey Ma in architecture – movement space and transitory sounds</td>
<td>Ritual and the gaze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>Flying spirit</td>
<td>Percussive elements, marimba, <em>hirajoshi</em> scale</td>
<td>Kathryn (spirit) flying down walkway</td>
<td>A Ma in architecture – Gateway symbol entering space</td>
<td>Time and Spatial Sensibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>Witness</td>
<td>Deep <em>Taiko</em> drum detuned, bells, gongs, depth charges and drones</td>
<td>The eye of indigenous performer Ayesha Blanco superimposed over dancer</td>
<td>B Witness and perception – the observed – border crosser/insiderism</td>
<td>Spaces between Indigenous, European and Japanese interlocks with cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>Stone Garden (i)</td>
<td>Drones, bells, audio processing reverb and delay creating spatial dimensions</td>
<td>Dry stone meditation garden with two performers, navigator and spirit</td>
<td>B Ma the space between collaborators and garden space. Spiritual connection of Ritual – movement space and transitory sounds</td>
<td>Spaces between gardens and people cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.49</td>
<td>Stone Garden (ii)</td>
<td>Panning left to right of timpanis creating sonic dimensions</td>
<td>Dry stone meditation garden with two performers, navigator and spirit</td>
<td>B + C Sonic space of Ma – the Artistic Moment encapsulated beyond time and personality-movement space and transitory sounds</td>
<td>Time and Spatial Sensibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.13</td>
<td>See Through my Eyes (i)</td>
<td>Haiku words spoken by Inga Liljeström</td>
<td>Dry stone meditation garden with two performers, navigator and spirit</td>
<td>B + C Border Crosser: Cultural Traveller</td>
<td>Spaces between European and Japanese interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.07</td>
<td>Tea House</td>
<td>Piano, sparse indigenous dancer Ayesha Blancos' eyes observing (the watcher)</td>
<td>The concept of perception altering what we see</td>
<td>A Gateway – movement space and transitory sounds</td>
<td>Spaces between Japanese, indigenous interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 7: Haiku Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>MUSIC TITLE</th>
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<th>VISUALS</th>
<th>INTERPRETATION Analysis</th>
<th>INTERLOCKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.26</td>
<td>Reflections</td>
<td>Piano and voice transparent chordal structures influence of impressionist Debussy elements</td>
<td>Playing with reflection</td>
<td>B + C Hidden visuals-spatial dimensions of Ma. Rhythmic patterning for movement space and transitory sounds</td>
<td>Emergent spaces revealing the Artistic Moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.14</td>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>Piano and voice transparent chordal structures influence of impressionist Debussy elements</td>
<td>Stretching the fabric – the space between, struggle</td>
<td>B + C + D Observation changes the observed. Reflective practice. Does watching oneself change one’s self? Reflection of perception. The tension at the enframement and gateway of Ma</td>
<td>Ma and the Artistic Moment Revelation emergent with selfreflective practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.45</td>
<td>Peewee call</td>
<td>Sound of nature incorporated in score – The Peewee bird</td>
<td>Playing with reflection</td>
<td>B + C Site specific ecological element – the fragility and spontaneity of the environment/garden/planet</td>
<td>Site specific interlock, nature, music, vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.51</td>
<td>The Space between Australia and Japan</td>
<td>Flute, koto, gongs, audio processing reverb to create sonic depth cross-fade with Inga's singing</td>
<td>Koto players, fish in lake filmed in Edogawa Japan</td>
<td>B + C; B+1/B Insiderism: Japanese tradition juxtaposition</td>
<td>Time and spatial Sensibilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 8: Haiku Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
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<th>MUSIC ELEMENTS</th>
<th>VISUALS</th>
<th>INTERPRETATION/Analysis</th>
<th>INTERLOCKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15.48</td>
<td>Edogawa Tea House</td>
<td>Jane Rutter’s flute recorded in Japanese Gardens in Paris then repositioned as soundtrack for Tea Ceremony</td>
<td>Traditional Tea Ceremony</td>
<td><strong>B + C</strong> &lt;br&gt; <em>Ma</em> space between locations Japan, Paris and Australia – hidden sonic meanings – gateway</td>
<td>Spaces between interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.46</td>
<td>Ritual</td>
<td>Flute, audio processing reverb to create sonic depth</td>
<td>Holding bowl turning – what is contained within</td>
<td><strong>B</strong> &lt;br&gt; Insiderism: Japanese tradition</td>
<td>Time and Spatial Sensibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.48</td>
<td>Turning</td>
<td>Rutter playing flute over traditional elements, then cross fading into bells and gongs highlighting space between notes</td>
<td>Relationships between collaborators, watching, listening, turning, journey through the space</td>
<td><strong>B + C</strong> &lt;br&gt; Insiderism: European/Japanese tradition/border crossing</td>
<td><strong>Ma</strong> and the Artistic Moment Revelation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.09</td>
<td>Ceremony</td>
<td>Flute, spacious bells – the space (<em>Ma</em>) between the notes</td>
<td>Relationship between tea ceremony and ritual actions</td>
<td><strong>B + C</strong> &lt;br&gt; Insiderism: European/Japanese tradition/border crossing</td>
<td><strong>Ma</strong> and the Artistic Moment Revelation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.08</td>
<td>The Circle</td>
<td></td>
<td>Depicting levels of enframement – Calligraphic image of Enzo (circle) and Tea House</td>
<td><strong>D</strong> &lt;br&gt; The Enzo is a visual metaphor for the Artistic Moment</td>
<td><strong>Ma</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.09</td>
<td>The Watcher</td>
<td>Flute</td>
<td>The Spirit walks slowly through the ceremonial space of the Tea House whilst the Aboriginal WATCHER gazes through the bars.</td>
<td><strong>B</strong> &lt;br&gt; The notion of who is in and who is out of a space/region. The observer transforming the observed – layers of pattern making</td>
<td><strong>Ma</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME</td>
<td>MUSIC TITLE</td>
<td>MUSIC ELEMENTS</td>
<td>VISUALS</td>
<td>INTERPRETATION/Analysis</td>
<td>INTERLOCKS</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.34</td>
<td>Taiko</td>
<td>Taiko drums, flute. Sonic juxtaposition of staccato against previous and surrounding drone</td>
<td>Dance and Taiko performance – film overlaying and edits as juxtapositioning of space</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Revelation Ma Artistic Moment – rhythmic patterning for movement space and transitory sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.48</td>
<td>Calligrapher</td>
<td>Flute, deep drum, singing bowl</td>
<td>Overlays of calligrapher and spirit – the observed and the space between – the navigator on bowl</td>
<td>B + C</td>
<td>Border crosser – time traveller mixing cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.38</td>
<td>Moment in Time</td>
<td>Taiko drums</td>
<td>Dancer suspended space of sound and vision</td>
<td>B + C</td>
<td>Border Crosser: Cultural Traveller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.31</td>
<td>Calligrapher</td>
<td>Sound design deep reverberations, flute deep drum</td>
<td>The Artistic Moment includes preparation and execution superimposed over an abiding sense of witness</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Gateway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.48</td>
<td>Moments</td>
<td>Drums flute</td>
<td>Flashes of film edits to coincide with drum beats</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Hidden sound emergence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.15</td>
<td>Witnessing</td>
<td>Singing bowls, detuned Taiko drums, flute</td>
<td>The Navigator (Yantra de Vilder) superimposed over The Spirit (Kathryn Puie) witnessing. Flashes of film edits with drum cues</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Hidden sound emergence – rhythmic patterning for movement space and transitory sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME</td>
<td>MUSIC TITLE</td>
<td>MUSIC ELEMENTS</td>
<td>VISUALS</td>
<td>INTERPRETATION/Analysis</td>
<td>INTERLOCKS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.46</td>
<td>Spirits travelling</td>
<td>Singing bowls, detuned drums</td>
<td>Emergence out of the darkness. The dark and the light</td>
<td>D Symbolising the elemental balance of opposites as seen in nature – <em>Tao</em>. Hidden and emerging revelations</td>
<td>Time and Spatial Sensibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.26</td>
<td>See Through My Eyes (ii)</td>
<td>Vocals, syntheses, audio processing, <em>koto</em>, chimes, drone</td>
<td>Flying in the air – stretching of material – the space between – tension</td>
<td>D The Space between – perception, tension and juxtaposition – reflecting how we can perceive through other's lens while remaining witness to the ever changing phenomena</td>
<td><em>Ma</em> and the Artistic Moment Revelation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.12</td>
<td>Enframement</td>
<td>Vocals audio processed and pitched out of key for juxtaposition of tonal qualities and chordal resolutions</td>
<td>Projection of calligraphy onto performers – the hand of the artist painting in space through light. Australian artist Jane Gilling’s painting Japanese calligraphy</td>
<td>A Stretching the space between <em>Ma</em> – architecturally, filmically, emotionally and artistically. <em>See through my eyes</em>. There is a battle going on whilst the creative act unfolds. Revelation of the emergent moment.</td>
<td>The tension created in the search for the Artistic Moment and the relationship between entities – the <em>Ma</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.34</td>
<td>The Bridge</td>
<td>Drone, flute, bells, gong</td>
<td>Meeting of the Watcher and The Spirit</td>
<td>B Film edits cut to black to intersperse the vision with no thing – no mind. Border crosser – time traveller mixing cultures Indigenous meets European in black and white symbolism with Japanese aesthetic. Cross-cultural, shared languages of the body, hesitation and curiosity emerging, tension gathering at the edge of enframement – <em>Ma</em>.</td>
<td>Spaces between Indigenous and European Japanese interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.38</td>
<td>In between the bamboo</td>
<td>Flute, gongs, sound design, breath, drone, backward detuned <em>Taiko</em> drum</td>
<td>Watching, following, smoke and shadows, indigenous Aboriginal Australian juxtaposed with European. In and out of the shadows</td>
<td>A, B + C The space between light and dark – between bamboo stalks, cultures, people, light and dark. Stretching the space between <em>Ma</em> – architecturally, filmically, emotionally and artistically</td>
<td>Spaces between Indigenous and European Japanese interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 10: Haiku Analysis*
Table 11: *Haiku* Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>MUSIC TITLE</th>
<th>MUSIC ELEMENTS</th>
<th>VISUALS</th>
<th>INTERPRETATION Analysis</th>
<th>INTERLOCKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>Meeting place</td>
<td>Detuned vocals, staccato flute, sound design percussive subs</td>
<td>Dancers weave in and out of the shadows – the light and the dark. Elements of meeting, following, stalking, perceiving the space between – the <em>Ma</em></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Spaces between Indigenous and European Japanese interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.13</td>
<td>The Bell Ringer Navigator</td>
<td>Bells, drone, Tibetan bowl, gong, sound design depth charges reverb, delay, panned drums</td>
<td>The Bell ringer walking backwards towards the light. Reflection in the water of The Spirit dancer</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Arrival at the Artistic Moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.14</td>
<td>Artistic Moment</td>
<td>Bells, drone, Tibetan bowl, gong, sound design depth charges reverb, delay, panned drums</td>
<td>The Watcher looks and leaves Spirit Dancer leaving space closing gateway on entrance</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>No-mind ritual spaces between Indigenous and European Japanese interlocks and cross-disciplines (music, dance, visual)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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4.3. *Unfinished Symphonies*: Analysis

My projects form a braided river of collaborative spaces. Just as *Haiku* and *Latitude 33* explore collaborative relationships so too does my project with David Helfgott, but with a shift from geographical and ritual space to a more intimate space of rehearsal and the broader context of concert formats. *Unfinished Symphonies* specifically focuses on the collaborative relationship as akin to *Ma* whereby our differences and connections form a gateway to encapsulate the Artistic Moment as an emergent quality in improvisation.

![Diagram of Ma](image)

**Figure 4.12: Ma**

In this sense the space of *Ma* and the Artistic Moment are considered from the perspective between two collaborators, which goes beyond time and musical genres. It is a meeting of a classical virtuosic pianist and a contemporary improviser in a place of adventure and risk. *Ma* can be seen as a space-time relationship between people, a place where human interrelationships are acted out in time. This relationship is at the core of my collaboration with David Helfgott, invoking patterns of music making and a metamorphosis of ideas and techniques.
The friendship that has developed through our collaboration forms an important strand to the success of our work together, and is an underlying essence guiding the connected feel of our improvisations. This is reinforced by a number of factors: firstly, honouring our mistakes as hidden intention to the unfolding composition; secondly, collaborating in an environment of trust, listening and respect; thirdly, in our operating modes, being driven by feel and connection in a non-rule-book approach; and finally, using the moment as a workable system as illustrated in Figure 4.13.

Figure 4.13: *Unfinished Symphonies*

*Unfinished Symphonies* is characterised by interlock principles that transcend space to emerge as the Artistic Moment. These include:

(a) personal collaborative;
(b) sound and vision interlock;
(c) inter-genre interlock of traditional/classical and contemporary/improvisatory;
(d) Ma emergence of the Artistic Moment as collaboration locator; and
(e) emergence interpretation.

The accompanying twelve-minute film is intended to give a snapshot into this unique collaboration with Helfgott. It shows the format of our concerts and discusses the background of our work together.

Table 12 represents the points of analysis on the twelve-minute *Unfinished Symphonies* film. As in the *Latitude 33* and *Haiku* analysis, I have divided the sections into differing types:

(i) Frame – A + A
(ii) Reciprocal Balance – B + 1/B
(iii) Travellers/border crossers – B + C
(iv) Revelation Moment – D

Again, as in the garden based *Haiku* work, *Unfinished Symphonies* has multiple reveal moments (D) that fits within Helfgott’s garden meetings and his mercurial nature.

Table 12 *Unfinished Symphonies* Analysis, shows the pertinent hit points on the film that correspond with emergent and interlock properties. The table is divided into six sections; time representing the hit points on the film associated with pertinent analysis elements; music title gives the name of each piece of music; musical elements describes the instruments involved and quality of the work in terms of improvisation or composed work such as Debussy’s Claire du Lune; the fourth column (visuals) describes the accompanying scene visually on the film; column five is a combination of alphabetical analysis and interpretation; and the sixth column is a description of the interlocks that are contained within the film.
Figure 4.14: David Helfgott and Yantra de Vilder Avoca Theatre, photo Norman Hunter 2013
### Table 12: Unfinished Symphonies Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>MUSIC TITLE</th>
<th>MUSIC ELEMENTS</th>
<th>VISUALS</th>
<th>INTERPRETATION Analysis</th>
<th>INTERLOCKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>Crossing Borders</td>
<td>The sound of travelling</td>
<td>Travelling to the Promised Land</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Improvisatory piano and ukulele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Beginning of Journey – A Gateway symbol – Entering the space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>A New Way</td>
<td>Piano</td>
<td>Mountains of Promised Land, Bellingen cross fading to de Vilder and Helfgott improvising together, on the same piano</td>
<td>A+B</td>
<td>Inter genre interlock of traditional/classical and contemporary/improvisatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal collaborative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>Solo Improvisation de Vilder (i)</td>
<td>Piano</td>
<td>Performance in front of screen at Avoca Theatre – music and visuals inextricably linked</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Sound and vision interlock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emergence interpretation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>Claire de Lune Debussy</td>
<td>Piano</td>
<td>David Helfgott at the piano with film projections</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Media interlock sound and vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Witness and perception – the observed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>Fragile Creation</td>
<td>Solo piano improvisation</td>
<td>Improvisation set to images of Fragile Creation – close up of de Vilder explaining the creative process and the Artistic Moment</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Music and vision interlock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Movement space and transitory sounds – emergence of the Artistic Moment. Revealing the fragility of the creative act</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>The Promised Land Sessions</td>
<td>Piano duet Helfgott duet</td>
<td>Wandering through the Helfgott's Japanese Gardens, de Vilder and Helfgott playing piano together</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Time and Spatial Sensibilities. Ma as garden space as well as collaborative zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sonic space of Ma – the Artistic Moment encapsulated beyond time and personality movement space and transitory sounds. Visual Context: Gardens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.09</td>
<td>Structure and Freedom</td>
<td>Improvised piano duet</td>
<td>Avoca Theatre with projection of performance as a live stream</td>
<td>B + C + D</td>
<td>Media Interlock sound and vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sonic space of Ma – the Artistic Moment encapsulated beyond time and personality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4. Devotion: Analysis

Music makes a place for the transcendent: that music contains something of the transcendent, and makes a place where humans can make a connection with the transcendent (MacLean, 2009, p. 14).

Out of a braided river of collaborative landscapes, from the large global sphere of *Latitude 33*, through to the international garden spaces of *Haiku*, the rehearsal and concert spaces of *Unfinished Symphonies*, my final collaboration dwells in the intimate, transcendent zones that arise in the studio through the recording of *Devotion*, a series of traditional Tibetan Buddhist prayers with Venerable Robina Courtin.

**Juxtaposition of Elements**

Ordained into Buddhism in 1977, editor of Buddhist magazine *Mandala Wisdom of Tibetan Buddhism in Contemporary Life* and a regular guest on programs such as *Compass, Q and A* (ABC TV) and recently featured on *Spiritual Journey* with Judith Lucy. Venerable Robina Courtin stands at the nexus of tradition (Tibetan Buddhism) and contemporary life. *Devotion* represents a musical view of this intersection, steeped in the juxtaposition of ancient traditions of Tibetan Buddhist prayer whilst being immersed in cutting edge audio processing whereby the studio becomes a tool of composition with no other sonic source than the voice. The human voice – probably the most ancient tool of song and music, yet in this context reinvented through the studio as composition tool to create a cathedral like sonic canopy which maintains its presence throughout the journey of *Devotion*. And a journey it is – a vocal soundscape that has specific meaning for those interested in a new sonic experience of Tibetan Buddhist prayers.

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39 This program can be viewed on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5U0lU8Cf8IQ. It screened on ABC television as part of Judith Lucy’s series Spiritual Journey.
Tradition Bearer

Venerable Robina Courtin comes from the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism, whose emphasis is on ethics and monastic discipline as the focus for spiritual practice. Sequential manner is emphasised in this tradition, and as such it was of vital importance that as the producer (as well as musical director and singer) for this project, I understood the chronology and meaning of the narrative arc of the prayers. In this way, Courtin was passing on knowledge as a tradition bearer.

It was important for Courtin that we got it right, in terms of approval from her lineage of teachers, so the starting point for most of our sessions and musical ideas usually came from listening to Courtin’s teacher Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Lama Yeshe. Most of these recordings were very difficult to decipher in terms of melodic contour, as the nature of the Tibetan male monastic voice is very low and gravelly with distinct delineations of pitch and rhythm, which were at times challenging to interpret. However, Courtin has a remarkable ability to tune into the specific qualities of the sound, she is well versed in the style, and between the two of us we managed to isolate the necessary correct intonations.

Ritual was a constant companion to our practice. At the beginning of every session she would do prostrations and prayers. She always wore her robes in the studio and I consider that we created a sacred space together through the many hours of listening, singing, interpreting, editing, mixing and talking together.

The process involved a three-year undertaking – this included ethnomusicological research, recording sessions, harmonic arrangement, involvement of a small group of peers for feedback, and a high level of audio processing in the studio. Courtin had never been in a recording studio before. I believe that this factor slowed up our progress whereby I was in a teaching role to her. This was an interesting turnaround, as her international role is one of a spiritual teacher, however, in the recording studio she referred to me as her music guru – an honour I aimed to live up to, in leadership and musical ability. This created an interesting juxtaposition of professional and non-professional expertise in the recording studio.
Intensity of Collaboration

The aesthetic of *Ma* as the space between in *Devotion* is characterised by a complexity triggered through an indeterminate intensity of collaboration.

At the heart of this project is the notion of generating Bodhicitta\(^40\) – creating positive works, as sung in the Bodhicitta prayer:

\[
\text{Dag Dang Zhän Don Drub La Du}
\]
\[
\text{To accomplish my own and others aims}
\]
\[
\text{Dag gi jang chub sem kye do}
\]
\[
\text{I generate bodhicitta}
\]

\[
\text{Dag zhän gen am jang chub chhen por ngo}
\]
\[
\text{I dedicate my own merits and those of all others to the great enlightenment}
\]

Our work together represents a number of different factors:
- tradition bearer passing on knowledge;
- juxtaposition of professional and non-professional expertise in the studio;
- role of teacher and disciple;
- arrangement of complex harmonies;
- traditional Tibetan prayers;
- nexus of Tibetan Buddhist and Medieval Christian harmonic sensibilities;
- interlock of traditional musical sources and contemporary studio practices; and
- non-rule-book approach to developing ideas together in the studio.

Reflection-in-Action

Reflecting on and during my work with Courtin allowed me to make intuitive decisions regarding the shaping of the sound. I would think of the resonances that

---

\(^{40}\) Bodhicitta is a spontaneous wish to attain enlightenment motivated by great compassion for all sentient beings, accompanied by a falling away of the attachment to the illusion of an inherently existing self.
express the notion of transcendence and ritual. Do I use higher vocal sonorities to express an angelic quality? How do I express heavenly overtones (a Christian perspective) in a Tibetan Buddhist format? As I ask myself these questions I was reminded of Schön stating that when we experiment in our practice we come across unexpected surprises and through reflection-in-action we make decisions about our process and materials (Schön, 1983, p. 55). There were many times in this process where I felt frustrated and confused. It was a new area for me to be exploring as well as a new relationship with Courtin. There were many times where I had to make difficult decisions in regards to discarding material. Reflection-in-action allowed me to address these issues, as Roger Dean and Hazel Smith state:

The creator must choose between the alternative results created by iteration, focusing on some and leaving others behind (temporarily or permanently). (Smith and Dean, 2009, p. 19)

**Hildegarde of Bingen**

Listening to references from Hildegarde of Bingen was an important part of my reflective research process whilst working on *Devotion*. Even though most of Hildegard’s compositions were for unison melodic structure, the transcendent nature of the sound, with its cathedral-like reverberation was a sonic influence that Courtin and I both aspired towards. YouTube was a vital research ingredient in this mix, and the vocal quality on these recordings was an integral audio reference for my treatment of the vocals in the recording studio.

Examples of these influential pieces which we accessed through Youtube were: Spiritus Sanctus; Canticles of Ecstasy; 11,000 Virgins, Chants for St Ursula; and Kyrie EleFormat

**Format**

The prayers for Devotion are divided into the following sections:

- Taking Refuge and Generating Bodhicitta
- Cultivating Four Immeasurable Attitudes
- The Seven Limbed Prayer
- Short Outer Mandala Offering
• Mantras – Shakyamuni, Chenrezig, Manjushri, Green Tara, Medicine Buddha.

The track list is as follows:

1) Morning Prayers - Refuge
2) Seven Limbs
3) a) Prostrations
   b) Mandala Offering
   c) Offering of Practice
4) Remainder Seven Limbs
5) Special Request
6) Blessing Three Places
7) Verses of Auspiciousness
8) Shakyamuni
9) Chenrezig
10) Tara
11) Medicine Buddah

Tracks 1–9 are prayers. Tracks 10–13 are mantras that have a repetitive format.

A detailed track list in Tibetan with English translation, and a full score of Morning Prayers are in the appendix.
Table 13 represents the cultural and musical elements that resonate with the principles of the Artistic Moment and *Ma*. Rather than representing specific sonic events as in a track list this analysis demonstrates the salient points of my collaborative process on the *Devotion* album. As in the preceding analysis of creative works tables, I have divided the sections into differing types

(i) *Frame* – A + A

(ii) *Reciprocal Balance* – B + 1/B

(iii) *Travellers/border crossers* – B + C

(iv) *Revelation Moment* – D

Interestingly here, the revelatory moment is not solo but in connection with other materials perhaps befitting of linkage idea between people in Buddhist oneness. As the music for Devotion is predominantly a highly processed vocal arrangement that
retains a consistency of style and sound throughout, rather than focus on individual tracks, I have chosen to concentrate this analysis on the qualities that imbue our collaboration. Those essential moments that crystallised our experiences of the Artistic Moment and the frame of Ma. I have divided Table 13 into four sections which encapsulate the relevant areas of analysis. The first column, Ma identifies those places in our collaboration where ‘the space between’ became a profound experience of connection and musical feeling, that was greater than our individual entities, and informed by the ineffable zone that is created in the recording studio between two people. The second column, Artistic Moment is dedicated to examining and revealing those moments and sensibilities where the immanent Artistic Moment guides the work. Column three, Ritual delineates the processes and events that occur during the production that have a ritualised component to them and finally, column four contains the alphabetical analysis placed within the context of the musical elements.
Table 13: Cultural and Musical Elements resonating with *Ma*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MA</th>
<th>ARTISTIC MOMENT</th>
<th>RITUAL</th>
<th>ANALYSIS/ MUSICAL Element</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Space between tradition and technology</td>
<td>Cathedral like sonic qualities</td>
<td>Studio preparation</td>
<td>A +B Repetition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space between collaborators</td>
<td>Repetition and drone providing transcendent qualities to recording and listening experience</td>
<td>Wearing robes</td>
<td>B + C Drone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist/ Christian harmonic gateway</td>
<td>Emphasis on the transcendent and beneficence to all beings</td>
<td>Traditional Tibetan Buddhist practices, gathering water bowls, lighting candles, flower arrangement – devotional activities</td>
<td>A + A +D Micro-tonal melodic elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two English speaking collaborators singing in Tibetan</td>
<td>Prayer as a conduit to the divine – The Artistic Moment as a spiritual emergence</td>
<td>Traditional Tibetan Buddhist prayers</td>
<td>A +B + C +D Harmonic layering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The space inside the studio</td>
<td>Interlock principles of Buddhism and Christianity transcend space to emerge as Artistic Moment</td>
<td>Feel and connection as the operating modes within a ritualised context of prayer, mantra and collaboration</td>
<td>A +B + C +D Studio as a composition tool</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Morning Prayers (see Figure 4.16) is the first track from the album *Devotion*. It contains four different sections, Refuge (which is repeated three times), Bodhicitta (repeated three times), Purifying the Place and Invoking the Holy Beings to come here. It is traditional in Tibetan Buddhist prayers to begin each section with a low ‘oo’ This is usually sung alone by the Umze, the ritual and musical director, as a way of introducing the chant, as seen in the following diagrams:
The Tibetan prayers in *Devotion* have been compiled by Venerable Robina Courtin from traditional Tibetan Buddhist monastic sources. There is no known author of tracks one and two. Tracks three to seven are from *Lama Chöpa*, composed by Losang Chökyi Gyältsän, the First Panchen Lama, 1569–1662, at Tashi Lhünpo, Tibet. The tunes were received by Ven. Robina from her teacher Lama Zopa Rinpoche, who, in turn, received them from his teachers in the oral tradition typical in Tibetan monasteries. The chants of the Sanskrit mantras in tracks eight to eleven are variations of traditional chants. The English translation of the prayers in tracks one to seven are by various members of the education office of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition, using, for *Lama Chöpa*, translations of Alex Berzin, Thupten Jinpa, and Martin Willson.

The score for Track 1, *Morning Prayers* (see Figure 4.17) is divided into a series of one bar phrases, wherein each bar reflects each individual passage of the track (as
opposed to using various time signatures). The harmonic arrangement of three voices and a drone develops slowly with voice one leading throughout, then voice two and three entering as an emergent quality.

![Figure 4.17: Devotion score](image)

I used the drone principle throughout these recordings. The drone is built on a rich layering of voices, which I recorded in the studio, by multi-tracking each line four times, then repeating this process with harmonies in thirds and editing it together to form a continuous bed of sound. This sound bite was then audio processed with reverb, delay and stereo imaging to spread the sound and forms a continuous ambient bed that grounds the arrangement in A♭ and E♭ as seen in Figure 4.18 which is a screen shot from the Pro-tools file showing the stereo sub mixes of drones layered upon each other to create a seamless sonic bed. Figure 4.19 shows this on the score.

![Figure 4.18: Devotion multi-track](image)
Summary: Analysis

From *Latitude 33*, through *Haiku* and *Unfinished Symphonies* to *Devotion* there is an overarching gateway that frames large to intimate spaces. These projects are seen from a *Ma* perspective, allowing a journey between classical motives, cross-cultural, multi-disciplinary forms, through improvisatory acts and spirit persona, to the fluid chants of spiritual songs and prayers. *Ma* defines the spirit emergence of these main ideas, which are located beyond a time/space continuum in the numinous territory of the Artistic Moment.

Through reflection and analysis of the four creative works in my portfolio I have been able to understand and clarify how the Artistic Moment emerges in a gateway position within a *Ma* perspective. This ‘space between’ things, people and events is at the heart of my artistic cogency, operating in practical creative terms through collaboration, musical spaces and a range of performance outputs. Throughout my analysis I have maintained a juxtapositional approach involving contrasting cultural traditions and physical interactions framed by a multimedia systems interlock. These systems of meaning are driven by a forward movement towards a recognition of semi-
permeable artistic and spiritual gateways that have informed my collaborations. By examining harmonic principles and interdisciplinary convergences through a reflexive-practice analytical mode, I have identified a synthesis of the primary concepts around collaborative practice. Through the introduction of a number of ideas related to a journeying of artistic materials in an eclectic border crossing philosophy, I have recognised a nexus of potent resonance – a place that goes beyond time and personality, informing the individual participants and the project as a whole with new ideas and impulses. I have come to regard this polymorphous flow as analogous to a swarm, whereby the collaborators manifest their own individual potential within a collective environment whilst all moving towards the same goal, merged as a singular entity.

I stand at a gateway between analysis and reflection – a place that informs my arts practice and transforms my being. Through a series of analytical tools and adopting a simplicity approach I have been able to clarify complex conceptual layers into a summary of diagrams and tables – demonstrating how a multifaceted idea can be synthesised and revealed through simple structures. These processes have refined and facilitated my articulation of an experience that ultimately I consider to be beyond words – the notion of the Artistic Moment and its spatial emergence within the frame of *Ma*. 
**Chapter 5. The Gateway Experience**

5.1. **Conclusion: Arrival at the Artistic Moment**

This exegesis is an attempt to identify the processes, philosophies and materials that have been brought together in the realisation of my portfolio of creative works. My intention has been to examine and articulate the experience of the Artistic Moment as an emergent principle that runs through my arts practice framed by the perspective of the Japanese aesthetic of *Ma*. I consider that the Artistic Moment informs the nexus between collaborators of cross-cultural and inter-disciplinary projects, enhancing the experience and outcome of the performance. In practical terms, I view the Artistic Moment through four different lenses: firstly, conceptual ideas; secondly, by a juxtapositional approach; thirdly, through a reflexive attitude; and finally, by applying conceptual modes around collaborative processes and media interlocks.

In my arts practice I am seeking a sense of meaning and experience, which goes beyond the realms of human vernacular. I am looking for a sense of connection and feel that is imbued with a resonance that transcends time and personality, and opens up a space of immanence which has a lasting impact on the work and those involved in the process – not just the artistic collaborators but the audience as well.

I believe that art can be a portal to transcendence and that it is situated within a numinous threshold, which is in existence all the time – it is just a matter of uncovering the space. This is the job of the artist – to strip away the clutter and noise
of human reality to reveal an expression of ritual journeying through artistic materials that goes beyond time and space.

I see this experience of the Artistic Moment as located within a gateway, (contextualised within the Japanese aesthetic of *Ma*) whereby immanent states of consciousness may be accessed and recognised in the potency of ‘the space between’ that exists between people, places, creative elements and cultures. This betweenness is the receptacle for a ‘tension that is gathered at the edge of enframement’ (Hebdidge, 2001, p. 36) and travels through a space-time interval that becomes the backdrop where the creative expression is made manifest.

For me the artistic designs in my portfolio are based in the form of a series of interlock principles whereby sound and vision form a technological convergence as a means of travelling to the Artistic Moment. This nexus of hybridity in my personal exploration is seen through the perspective of improvised and cross-cultural collaborative performance and forms a symbiotic eclecticism that runs like a braided river through the work.

**Credo and Process Discoveries**

In writing the creative works for my portfolio and reflecting on their processes and outcomes within Part One: Creative Credo and Context and Part Two: Creative Process from Wide Latitude through to Intimate Ritual Spaces, I have found that my understanding of the Artistic Moment has deepened and with that has come an acceptance of the ‘complexity, uncertainty, instability and uniqueness’ (Schön, 1991, p. 39) that accompanies my human condition. Seen through the lens of *Ma* I have realised the importance of the ineffable quality that occurs in the silent spaces between elements as a relationship between creativity and spirituality. I have become more aware of the intangible connections between collaborators that I consider to be the source of a sacred potency. I identify this as a locus whereby collaborative arts practice can take an event beyond the predictable and known into a realm of discovery and renewal. In my creativity, the threads of this artistic cogency are based in a colourful organicism that is beyond the rulebook of pre-determined theoretical constructs. They are radical and spontaneous impulses, which can become manifest in
artistically dangerous moments, such as the practice of improvisation where there is no safety net – only an ongoing vigilance to the revelatory moment of here and now. This creative tapestry serves as a gateway of Ma, manifesting as a locator to a direct experience of creative transcendence: the Artistic Moment.

**Discovery through Analysis**

Through analysis of the cross-cultural projects of *Latitude 33, Haiku* and *Devotion* in Part Three: Analysis of the Creative Works, I have come to identify myself as a border crosser, my process being driven by a search for a place where I can be a ‘cultivator of infinite time’ (Takemitsu, 1995, p. 45). These works together make up a collective sound and vision that goes beyond transitory time-based art, into a space that invites the audience and performer to dig deeper into a ritualised global context that connects us all, rather than dividing us. This space or context is a place where we can recognise permeable cultural boundaries in order to experience ‘the same ground that is once more stirring under our feet’ (Foucault, cited in Nuss, 2010, p. 35).

My projects have encouraged me to uncover systems of meaning within an internalised view of creativity – a ‘feeling’ approach that informs the collaborations across the inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural nature of the work. I have come to understand my leadership role as that of a navigator, where I am able to see the big picture that equips me to prepare for the terrain of each creative landscape that I envision and traverse to lead my team through. I have applied a self-reflective, auto-ethnographic focus through my friendships with collaborators that has allowed me to slip between the competitive cracks of a professional arts career and find a place that is imbued with meaning and deep connection based in trust, listening and respect. A place where we can function as if in a swarm (Borgo, 2006), all moving towards the same goal, however, with our own self-determining set of nuances to provide colour, spark and differentiation.
Poetic Gateway: The Personal Transformation of Collaboration

I am a practice-based researcher. I am not ‘dependent on categories of established theory and technique’ (Schön, 1983, p. 68), but am interested in designing and articulating a new theory based in my own unique creative understanding. I stand inside a gateway framed by the meaningful systems, people and events that constitute my world, made manifest through the tools, materials and methods of practice in a constantly evolving pattern of emergence. This pattern of emergence is best expressed in poetic form to end this portion of the journey:

The Artistic Moment
I stand at the Gateway
Where heaven meets earth
Where silence meets sound
At the precipice of birth
Colours dissolve
All time melts away
I arrive where I started
Transformed in a new way
(Yantra de Vilder, 2016)
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