

Essay

Something you would balk from thinking about: Fiction as a mode of reflection

by

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Fiction as a mode of reflection

En essay av Eivind Buene

I
'Writing is not so much an activity that is "about" or pursued alongside architecture as it is a way of critically thinking, reinventing and experimenting with architecture.' These are the words of architect critic Brett Steele, and one of my favourite examples of how writing can work in artistic research. Substitute 'architecture' with your given field of work in this sentence, and the point becomes clear. For my part, the field is music. Writing is not so much an activity that is 'about' or pursued alongside music as it is a way of critically thinking, reinventing, and experimenting with music.

When I was a student in the mid-nineties, it would still be *comme il faut* to claim that everything is language. Today, we have moved to the opposite end of the spectrum, closer to a belief that everything is body. The truth probably lies somewhere in the middle; our experience of the world and our ways of being emerge in the meeting between language and body. And it is a fact that, in art practices, much of our knowledge is situated in our bodies: what we do in our artistic practices, how we move, the way we process information through the touch of our fingertips. This is also where our words are when we write. Writing is a physical practice, whether we type with a light touch on the laptop keyboard, press a pen to the creamy pages of a Moleskin, or even engrave letters on paper with the obsolete technology of a typewriter. Handling words is a physical act, and committing words to a white surface is intimately

connected to our thinking and feeling. Dylan Thomas phrases this duality beautifully:

I make one image, though 'make' is not the right word; I let, perhaps, an image be made emotionally in me & then apply to it what intellectual and critical forces I possess; let it breed another; let that image contradict the first, make, of the third image bred out of the other two, a fourth contradictory image, and let them all, within my imposed formal limits, conflict.

Obviously, thinking and feeling happen all the time, without the involvement of writing. But writing is an opportunity to explore practices and scrutinize presumptions, and to examine our relationship to the matter of our investigations. For many of us, writing is a necessary tool for prying open our practices and getting a glimpse of ourselves as we do what we do in our artistic practices. To me, this act of opening up is at the core of artistic research. It also involves sharing what we find with other practitioners in the field, and sometimes also with the general public. If we believe that one of the basic functions of artistic research is to give access to processes that would otherwise be carried on within the black box of art making, writing is a super power.

In artistic research, this opening and sharing finds its place in a reflective mode. In the Norwegian Artistic Research Programme, the reflection – not necessarily written – is a compulsory part of the outcome of the research. One of the delights – and difficulties – of the reflection, is that

it has no pre-determined form. It must be defined anew each time, with each new project and each new text. A reflection is not second-rate academic writing; it is something else, and this is what makes it difficult. A PhD has formal expectations and certain defined requirements. The reflection, however, has no boundaries. We need to set these up ourselves, not in order to shut off and enclose, but to have something to push against – in line with Martin Heidegger's statement that '[a] boundary is not that at which something stops, but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing'.

“For many of us, writing is a necessary tool for prying open our practices and getting a glimpse of ourselves as we do what we do in our artistic practices

Without boundaries, we are helpless. An important part of writing is setting up – acknowledging – these boundaries, in a process of definition, in order to let something become present in our words.

Did I infer that artistic research writing is not scholarly? Let me rephrase that: Writing in artistic research exists on a continuum between literature and thesis, with

scholarly writing falling on one extreme, and literary forms like poetry, short stories, and novels on the other. Later in this text, I will propose fiction as a possible set of – admittedly wide – boundaries. I will propose the novel as a place to explore within artistic research. But the novel is a big, messy, time-consuming endeavour, and it quickly becomes an end in itself. So, at this point, let us remain with the idea of the fleeting, transient quality of writing without a goal. Let us imagine that there is no road, only the journey. Playwright and poet Lars Norén writes in his diary about a new poem that he writes ‘without other motivations and goals – for the sheer joy of listening to what is said inside me in the moment I write’. Many writers know this feeling of introspection as they delve into the silence, or turmoil, within. Writing is a stethoscope. Hold it against your chest, and listen.

Writing means opening a door

between the self of the practitioner and the Other, with language as a mode of communication. But writing is so much more. Writing is a technology of the mind. It is a tool that allows us to think, reinvent, and experiment. Sometimes you don’t write to communicate – sometimes you write to discover. Penning a text that no one else will read can be a crucial element of a research process, because any experienced writer will tell you that you don’t write your thoughts as they exist; you think what you write, as you write. This is productive writing. The act of writing itself, the way words and mental images meet, produces something that was not there before. Something that you could not have accessed through thinking alone. It is a process that creates insights native to the act of writing. The Swedish poet Stig Larsson (not to be confused with the mystery writer Stieg Larsson) writes that ‘It is not until you write that your thoughts become, how should I phrase it, clarified. You discover something you would balk from thinking about.’ Larsson admits to an implicit danger: Writing may take you places you didn’t want to go. Or where you didn’t know that you wanted to go. The Norwegian novelist Vigdis Hjorth writes along

similar lines, ‘I could give numerous examples of decisive and painful, but at the same time liberating insights that have come while I was writing, often not understood before I read my text the following day’.

One of my favourite pastimes is reading about how novelists work, hearing them talk about the methods of their craft. I don’t read in order to learn how to do it, but to be reminded that there are as many ways to good writing as there are writers. There is no how in writing. There is a myriad of hows, and to be a writer, you have to find the ones that resonate with your own needs. You need to invent your own tools. Some writers look at the blank screen and wait until a good sentence emerges and then they write it down. Then they wait, and write one more sentence. And wait. Others write faster than they can talk, uninhibited, uncritical, like transcribing a train of thought that you can only hear in the far distance. Then they rewrite, coolly and methodically. Write, and write again. And again. Either way, every writer needs to build their own method. Bad writing can be good writing. No size fits all. However, Marguerite Duras has good advice: ‘... one needs to let it happen, one must not restrain oneself, but give free rein, because one doesn’t know everything about oneself. One doesn’t know what one is capable of writing.’ She is the fourth writer I have quoted who has emphasized that writing is a means of discovery – you don’t know what you know until you have written it. Sometimes your writing is smarter than you. Or bolder. Your writing can take you places you would not dare to venture within the formats of academic – or even essayistic – writing. This means leaving the comfortable constraints of academic writing, the paper, and experimenting with genres generally thought of as creative writing. Of course, this moniker is meaningless. All serious writing is creative. Writing creates something that wasn’t there before. But for the sake of clarity, let us adhere to the convention of creative writing, and go even further, into fiction. Fiction is a place where you can think, reinvent, and experiment with your life – the life you have lived, the life you are living, the life you imagine.

II

All writing has an element of fiction to it – not necessarily in the shape of storytelling, but as an act of invention. I have found it useful to follow this lead all the way and write fiction as part of my artistic research. I have invented characters, imagined scenes, and constructed plots as a way of digging into the matter of art. During a fellowship at the Norwegian programme for artistic research, I wrote two novels, published by Cappelen Damm, that gave important impulses to my project. Of course, in the process of publishing a novel, you have to move beyond what is useful as artistic research; You get caught in the delightful and messy business of novelism. (Later, I continued to write novels, but that’s a different story). The two books became works of literature, art on their own terms, but the process of thinking, reinventing and experimenting that went into them took my thinking to other places than my essayistic writing could do. I discovered thoughts that I would not dare to air within the realm of my other writing, but which I eagerly explored in fiction. One example is the figure Tristan Szabo, an elderly conductor figuring in my first novel *Enmannsorkester*, with whom I could leave the tempered air of institutional critique and explore outright disillusionment.

It has begun to rain. Something has let go in the heavy air that has lain across the city all day, perhaps it is the air itself that has disintegrated and is falling back to earth in myriads of tiny pieces. Tristan Szabo is still holding the telephone receiver in his hand; the water hasn’t yet begun to gather in streaks on the windowpane in front of him. He has just asked his agent to quit his job as principal conductor of the provincial orchestra in Hungary. He doesn’t want to go home. The reaction was predictable; she tried alternately to unearth the reason for his decision and to persuade him to reconsider. He had quite simply declared that he was going to see out the freelance contracts he had for the remainder of the year, that she didn’t need to worry about the good name and reputation of the agency, but that

he would be staying here in Oslo. Or Gothenburg. Or Helsinki. Anywhere, really. Then he had hung up.

The hotel room overlooks a busy shopping street that winds its way narrowly to the city centre. The trams waver as they pass poorly parked cars, blonde women run across pavement seeking shelter from the rain. Some drag enormous paper bags with flashy brand names on the side. Tristan Szabo looks at the time – it is a little too early to head to the wine bar on the first floor. On the bed are the scores that he is going to work with in the months to come, collections of note symbols, codes that he will decipher. Immense orchestral works, thick volumes full of small characters. The names are on the covers and intricate garlands twist between the letters. Dead men. Old, white men. Like himself. Old, dead, white men. He picks up one score after another, weighing them in his hands. This is his job. To give a voice to the dead. He lives in the ruins of other times, after lives have been lived, exhausted and left in these paper time capsules. He lives amongst monuments and stone people, and it is his task to give them life. To rub note against note, phrase against phrase, wave the wand at the orchestra in order to conjure up a golem, to create life from dead matter. Week after week, new places, new people, but always the same quivering desire for the same towering shadow to rise up out of the orchestra. All the hard work, all the trial and error, all the memorised passages. And then, suddenly, under the crystal chandeliers, a spark of life, unmistakable, which rises up above the orchestra, floating out into the hall to all who want to listen. Every single concert is a ceremony, a ritual, an exorcism with just one purpose: to raise the dead.

Tristan Szabo drops the score onto the bed. Perhaps it's the other way around. Perhaps it is he who is slowly turning to stone, as in the story of Lot's wife who looked back when she left the city God was going to destroy, even though God had forbidden her to do so, and was turned into a pillar of salt. He lives with his gaze directed at the past, and inexorably he is turning, cell-by-cell, to bitter, coarse salt. Maybe that was why he got so irritated at the

young composer in Bergen. He had made him feel the taste of salt in his mouth. This youngster doesn't know it yet, but he too will one day turn to salt, if he allows himself to be caught by the sorcery of the orchestra. It isn't possible to create the future with an orchestra; one can only recreate the past. Even if the music has never sounded so new and unheard, provocative and wild, full of youthful brutality, it is just a beautiful dream, an illusion. The reality is that the symphony orchestra relentlessly devours its worshippers – not even the witch doctors, the high priests and ceremonial masters – the conductors and composers – can avoid becoming part of the same petrified matter.

In this passage, literary devices like metaphor and hyperbole are put into play. The imagined disintegration of the air is a metaphor for the disintegration of self; the identification with the dead points to a bleak state of being; the juxtaposition of 'spark of life' and 'raising the dead' betray an inner ambivalence. Et cetera. These devices gather momentum and reality from the fact that the reader is in a process of getting to know this character, of living with him and feeling with him. In a reflective essay, I would deal with critique of the symphony orchestra in a very different way, one that does not offer access to the emotional directness that a fictional character can display in a scene in a novel. In an essay, I would not make bombastic statements like this one, from the last paragraph: 'It isn't possible to create the future with an orchestra; one can only recreate the past'. Even in a strongly critical passage, I would look for multiple viewpoints and mediate between different positions. As in my essay 'Excavation, Exhumation, Autopsy. The Symphony Orchestra as Site', it can look like this:

It seems more difficult than ever to re-negotiate the terms of the orchestra, especially from the position of the composer. Ironically, this may bring the attention to new ways of looking at the situation. The petrified nature of the orchestral structure may well serve as an opportunity to examine it as a basically historical object. A petrified redwood-pine is a

giant, but there is no organic growth in it. Or, to switch to my main metaphor for this essay: the orchestra has dug itself in so thoroughly over so many years that it ought to be a tempting site for the musico-archaeologist. In this text I will try to map out methods for excavating some of the energies and objects to be located in this place, and to see if this work can be helpful in an attempt to situate the orchestra within a historical and social context.

In Enmannsorkester, the figure of Tristan Szabo is linked to another character, Johannes Hellweg, who is a violin virtuoso preparing a performance of Berg's violin concerto. With him, I could go into the world of the 'classical superstar' and try to imagine what is there beyond the curtain calls and the gilded concert halls:

A large, sparsely furnished flat a few blocks from the palace in Oslo. The flat is light and is dominated by a polished grand piano in the middle reception room of three. Through the double doors one can see into the adjacent room, empty, with the exception of some cardboard boxes in a corner. From this room one enters a long hallway with a succession of doors on one side of it. The door out, the bathroom, the kitchen, the bedroom. The flat seems to be more or less uninhabited, which is the case most of the time. The few traces of life to be found are neutral, secretive, almost invisible, as if they were part of the styling in a real estate advertisement. A dark overcoat on a hook in the hallway. A large pot filled with dried twigs. The bathroom doesn't divulge who is using it. A green toilet bag stands by the washbasin. A unisex deodorant is on the glass shelf under the mirror along with a glass, a toothbrush and an unopened tube of toothpaste. A simple, white bar of soap lying in the soap dish. The kitchen is clean and tidy – only a steaming espresso percolator gives away that it has been in use at all. There are a few bottles towards the back of the kitchen counter – olive oil and balsamic vinegar, as well as a spice rack and salt and pepper mills. There is little to suggest, however, that food is ever prepared in this kitchen.

A large American-style refrigerator emits a low growl and gives a dark materiality to the silence. A small suitcase is standing inside the bedroom door and a travel bag and ironed shirt are hanging on the wardrobe door handle. The rooms are white: walls; ceilings; doors; the high quality bed linen.

The only colours to be found in the flat are in the third reception room, which is furnished from floor to ceiling with well-filled bookcases. A Persian rug covers the yellowing floorboards and by the window there is a music stand. Otherwise there is only a worn wing chair covered in a floral fabric and a dark brown sideboard. An open violin case is lying on the sideboard and sitting in the wing chair is Johannes Hellweg.

He is motionless with an open score in his hands. Occasionally he changes page. A low humming can be heard – at times it can be perceived as a melody. Now and then he gets up and goes to the middle room to play a few notes on the grand piano. Fragments of a phrase, perhaps a chord. He remains there for a few moments before returning to the chair, while all the time the score remains in his hands. He is deeply concentrated and seems to have forgotten about the coffee cup standing on the sideboard by the violin case. After a couple of minutes silence, however, he stretches out his hand, grasps the handle between two fingers and brings the cup to his mouth without taking his eyes off the score. [...]

The notes that flow through the eyes of Johannes Hellweg embody everything he has dreamed of expressing through his instrument: an Italian baroque violin that has inexplicably survived as it has passed from musician to musician, hand to hand, for over 250 years. The instrument is priceless and since money is the yardstick for everything in Johannes Hellweg's era, the value of the violin is reflected in the amount of money paid by a stinking rich Norwegian savings bank foundation to an equally stinking rich Japanese investor in order to acquire ownership of this low-tech instrument with four strings stretched between

a thin wooden stick and a wooden box, in order to place it in the hands of Johannes Hellweg and thereby tell the world that this is their valuation of his art.

But the instrument isn't in the hands of Johannes Hellweg just now. The violin is lying in its velvet-lined bag. Instead he is holding the score to Alban Berg's Violin Concerto. On the title page is the dedication: To the memory of an angel. He holds the manual, the recipe, the symbolic description of an acoustical chain of events, which for him is the greatest thing produced by Western musical culture. Of all the music that has passed through his head, body and hands, why is it this music he holds in highest esteem? If someone had broken the silence surrounding him right now and asked him this simple question, he would not have been able to answer.

[...] but he does know that the day is approaching when he will, for the first time, play the work in concert, soaring like an angel above the rumbling surf of the orchestra. It has been almost two years since he received the request from his agent asking whether he wanted to play the violin concerto with the Konzerthausorchester in Berlin. The orchestra isn't quite world class, but he hadn't given it a second thought before responding. So here he is, sitting in the worn wing chair, with the score in his hands, only a few months left until the concert. And when he presents his Berg to the world, it will be a transparent, thoughtful, heartfelt and in all respects personal interpretation that the world hears. He folds up the score and grasps the slender violin neck, lifting the instrument to his chin. Then he takes a deep breath before setting the bow in motion against the strings.

Whereas the first passage with the disillusioned conductor stages a character in turmoil, this passage reflects the cool, controlled side of the classical music industry, a certain cynicism, even, lurking behind the love of music. Not so much in the words, but in the style: a flat language describes a sterile apartment, a stage for the pursuit of perfection.

This is the reader's first meeting with the character Johannes Hellweg, and the careful scrutiny of the sanitary items in the bathroom, the disused kitchen, might betray traces of his personality.

The novel ends with a fictional staging of Berg's concerto, where the format of the novel allows (even demands) a development, in this case, towards an affirmative view of the orchestra. The motifs of death and devotion come together in a long passage that mimics a fugue, but which is written with an algorithmic technique borrowed from my composer's toolbox of contemporary techniques. This fictional work involving Alban Berg became important for me not only as reflection on the orchestra: The act of writing through, as it were, Berg's concerto gave me crucial impulses beyond the research project, and the concerto became an unavoidable obstacle for my own violin concerto that I would write two years after finishing the research project. In this sense, fictional writing in artistic research can create recursive loops that feed back from reflection into a new process of artistic work. A similar thing happened with the songs of Schubert that I was in the process of discovering with my own, untrained voice, trying to make them my own. This process was fuelled by writing a third fictional character in Enmannsorkester, Sondre Sæter, a history student that has a breakdown accompanied by Schubert's Winterreise. When writing about this now, ten years later, I no longer know which impulse came first, the idea of writing this character or the act of singing Schubert myself, with my amateur voice, in what evolved to a project called Schubert Lounge. (Initially, it was only a concert at my home, with some invited friends, but ten years later it has grown to a full evening performance with ensemble and two classically trained singers in addition to myself.) This interest in the voice came as a surprise, not out of nowhere, but, I suspect, out of my fiction. I doubt if I would have been able to develop the project without all the creative writing that went into writing Sondre Sæter's fictional character in the book.

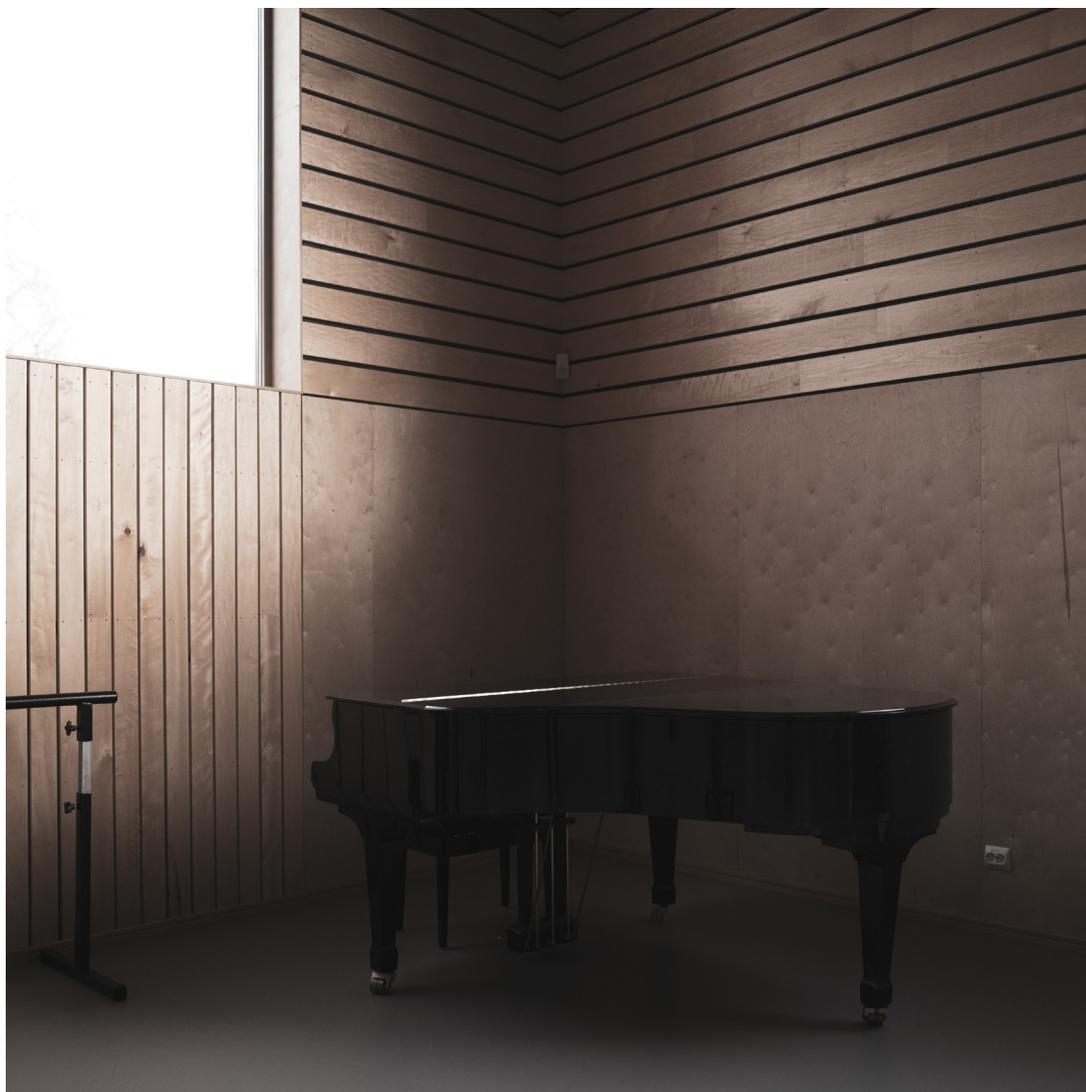


Foto: Tord F Paulsen.

“ Even the first verse in the first song sums it all up, he thinks.
Fremd bin ich eingezogen, fremd zieh' ich wieder aus.
Sondre Sæter stares at the notes and tries to put them into context
using the music in his ears. Sometimes he fancies he can do it



Foto: Tord F Paulsen.

He has placed the notes for **Winterreise in between the stacks of photo albums** and loose sheets of paper.

Franz Schubert's opus 89. Not that Sondre Sæter can read music, but he likes to sit and look at the mystical symbols while the music plays in his head. Graphic structures, esoteric, full of incomprehensible meaning. He has refreshed his schoolboy German in order to learn the text; a German-Norwegian dictionary lies beside the notes on the kitchen table. It says "Poems by Wilhelm Müller" at the top of the first sheet of music. Originally published in 1823 as "Gedichte aus den hinterlassenen Papieren eines reisenden Waldhornisten". But for Sondre Sæter, these poems are nothing but Schubert's Winterreise, the story of a man wandering aimlessly through snow and ice while stumbling over half forgotten memories and suppressed

desires. Even the first verse in the first song sums it all up, he thinks. Fremd bin ich eingezogen, fremd zieh' ich wieder aus. Sondre Sæter stares at the notes and tries to put them into context using the music in his ears. Sometimes he fancies he can do it. He can hear the piano becoming the wind in the linden tree and the murmuring of the brook. He can hear the tears of ice, the post horn's signal and the mournful strumming of the barrel organ. But it isn't the words that touch him, nor the harmonic twists and turns or the flowing melodies. It's the voice. The round, warm, male voice that has followed him and will follow him every day, until he knows every breath, every nuance in diction, every single phrasing. It is Franz Schubert who is singing, thinks Sondre Sæter. Schubert has invited him to his home in Tuchlauben, on the

outskirts of Vienna, the house he shares with his friend Franz von Schober. They are in the music room – Sondre Sæter is sitting in a soft armchair with a glass of wine in his hand and Schubert is at the piano singing his most recent songs for him. He doesn't have more than a year left to live, but they don't care about that. The afternoon light slants through the latticed windows. Soon, Schober will be home and then they are all going to Zum Grünen Anker to celebrate Schubert's election to the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, aged just thirty years. But, right now, it is just the two of them, Schubert singing, now and then looking across to Sondre, his eyes asking whether he likes it, if he thinks it's any good, and Sondre nods, giving him a thumbs up. Yes, he whispers. Sing for me, Franz.

“ But what is a ‘beautiful sound’? It’s completely dependent on which context the voice is performing in

I continued to explore my newfound interest for the voice in my second novel, which is set in a counterfactual story involving the new opera house in Oslo that had opened a couple of years earlier. This setting opened up an array of discourses around the voice (and it also turned out to be an ideal setting for a love story, plus a possibility to pursue my fascination with Händel’s castrato arias.) In the following passage, we meet a group of young and ambitious opera students who discuss ideas about the voice, led by the male protagonist Ivan Brun:

RECITATIVE

December darkness and icy pavements in Oslo. Fog glimmers in the neon light and car headlights down on Bogstadveien. It is just after closing time at the Valkyrie, Ivan squeezes up to Marie and Jonas on the narrow pavement, their faces warm from drink and loud discussion. Oda and the others have gone ahead and have already passed the crossroad at Valkyrie Plass.

IVAN
That’s just mumbo-jumbo, Jonas. There’s no such thing as the natural singing voice.

JONAS
No indeed?

IVAN
You know quite well what I mean. The human voice is culture, not nature. The idea of naturalness, the natural voice, is just part of an illusion – part of the fiction. Especially the classical singing voice.

JONAS
You always have to make things so difficult, Ivan! Can’t you just agree

that there are more and less natural ways of performing an aria? That human physiognomy imposes certain constraints on how we best produce a beautiful sound?

IVAN
But what is a ‘beautiful sound’? It’s completely dependent on which context the voice is performing in. When you sing in an opera, the laws of opera apply – what you call naturalness is simply the most effective way of implementing these laws. Opera is just one of many ways to use the voice. And it sounds very unnatural to a lot people, to say the least! It’s a use of the voice that comes to be in a certain time and place, with a very special purpose. We use the cavities in our heads to enhance the timbre of the voice – to be heard over the symphony orchestra. The more empty space there is in the head, the greater the voice, right?

JONAS
The world’s oldest singer joke. Don’t laugh Marie! You’ve heard it a hundred times before.

IVAN
Other cultures have other ways of dealing with the voice. But all use of the voice is rooted in context, that’s my point. If the context changes, the meaning of the voice changes. And the view on what is natural changes. The voice of classical music is grounded in the narratives of classical music – a song cycle is a story, isn’t it? For example, take Schumann’s Dichterliebe: The singing voice tells the story of Heinrich Heine’s text, a story about harrowing love. It’s a song cycle where the different songs together form a sequence of events, using the simplest means. Almost dogma-like,

don’t you think? A piano. A text. Possibly some facial expressions and gestures. So it should be performed in the most natural way possible.

JONAS
Nodding lethargically, pats himself on an emerging potbelly under his winter coat. Yes, that was what I was thinking about. The natural voice comes from down here.

IVAN
But here’s my point: the management of these stories, the great classic song narratives, is subject to the very strictest controls. Schubert, Schumann, Wolf – they are reserved for voices that through physical and aesthetic training have learned to master the instrument that this music requires.

JONAS
Of course professor! You know what you’re talking about ...

IVAN
Continues as if he hasn’t heard. The singer is a shaman, right. He’s in the privileged position of keeping alive the legacy of the past, creating links between matter in the present and spirit of the past. It’s about giving life to the past. In this respect, song performance is shamanism, opera is shamanism – let’s call it voice shamanism, a ritual where the voice becomes an action. Right, Jonas? Jonas doesn’t answer; he has joined the group in front. Ivan shakes his head and turns to Marie.

MARIE
It’s all a little too cerebral for me. The voice isn’t something you do; it’s something you are.

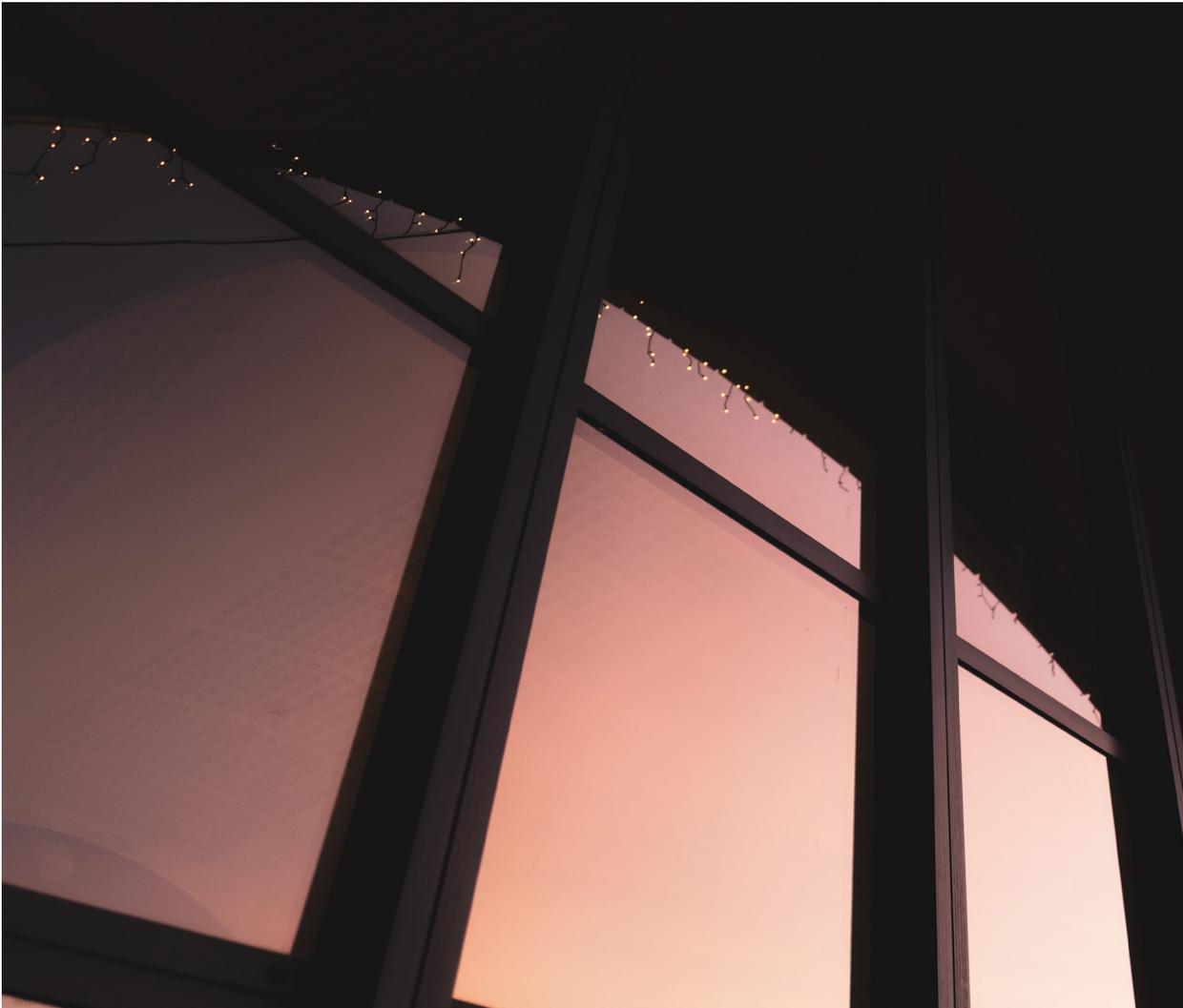


Foto: Tord F Paulsen.

The conversation goes on for several pages, and the ideas that these singers discuss relating to authenticity and the natural voice are key ingredients in my reflections on Schubert Lounge. When I read this passage again, I realize that Ivan arrives at a similar image as Tristan Szabo in the first excerpt, but with an attitude of affirmation, as opposed to Tristan's disillusionment. The reflection on the voice also feeds a recursive loop in my musical work, as I have developed the Schubert Lounge methodology in other projects with untrained singers. In a dialogue like the one above (where I borrow the form from

the operatic libretto, in line with the novel's subject matter), I can let opposing points of view conflict without trying to mediate between the two. I can even let the characters say things that are stupid, obvious, or outright wrong – if it rings true within the fictional universe. This is a delicate matter. One of the scenes in *Allsang* that is closest to actual truth, a master class scene taken from real-life experience, turned out to not work as well as I had hoped as

“If there ever was a play space for the mind, it is in fiction”

fictional truth. But now we are deep into the mechanics of literature; creating fictional truth is a different ball game than reflecting on artistic research, and it is not necessarily the goal of all fiction. Fiction might be well be the means to an end, ways of opening up perspectives in our artistic research. It needn't be published, or even read by anyone else than the writer, but, if there ever was a play space for the mind, it is in fiction.

Peter Eisenman, Rem Koolhaas, and Brett Steele (eds.), (2010) : *Supercritical* (London: Architectural Association, 2010), p. 104.

Dylan Thomas in Paul Ferris (ed.) (1985), *The Collected Letters* (New York: Macmillan, 1985) p. 397.

Quoted in Kenneth Frampton, (1983) "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance" in Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetical* (Winnipeg: Bay Press, 1983), p. 26. See Eivind Buene, "Tre objekt i den nya musiken, eller: ljudets utopi" in Nutida Musik 273 for more on boundaries and technology in performance situations (Swedish only).

Lars Norén (2020): *En dramatikers dagbok* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 2020) unpaginated -12. Juli 2016. [My translation. Original text: "utan andra åsikter och ändamål – för blotta glädjen att lyssna på vad som sags inom mig I det ögonblick jag skriver."]

Stig Larsson (2012), *När det Känns at det håller på ta slut* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 2012). [My translation. Original text: "Det är först när du skriver som dina tankar blir, hur ska jag säga, klargjorda. Du upptäcker något som du skulle ha dragit dig för att tänka på."]

Intervju. [My translation. Original text: "Jeg kunne gi utallige eksempler på avgjørende og smertefulle, men samtidig befriende erkjennelser som har kommet mens jeg har skrevet, ofte ikke forstått før jeg leser min egen tekst neste dag."]

The Paris Review's series *Art of Fiction*, running from 1953, is a treasure trove in this respect.

Marguerite Duras, trans. Silje Aanes Fagerlund, *Om å skrive* (Transit, 2016). [My translation from Norwegian. Original: "... man må la det skje, man skal ikke beherske seg, man skal gi fritt løp, for man vet ikke alt om seg selv. Man vet ikke hva man er i stand til å skrive."]

Among other artistic researchers using literary forms of reflection, I would like to mention Caroline Slotte, with her polaird-like, sharp prose with images from childhood and the atelier in *Second Hand Stories* (KHIB, 2011), and Thomas Kvam, who published his artistic research reflections as *Homo Sacco* (KHIO, 2014, later published by Cappelen Damm, 2017)

Eivind Buene (2010), *Enmannsorkester* (Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2010) p. 168–171.

All excerpts from *Enmannsorkester* and *Allsang* are translated by Ian Giles.

Eivind Buene (2018), *Again and Again. Music as Site, Situation and Repetition* (Oslo: NMH, 2018)

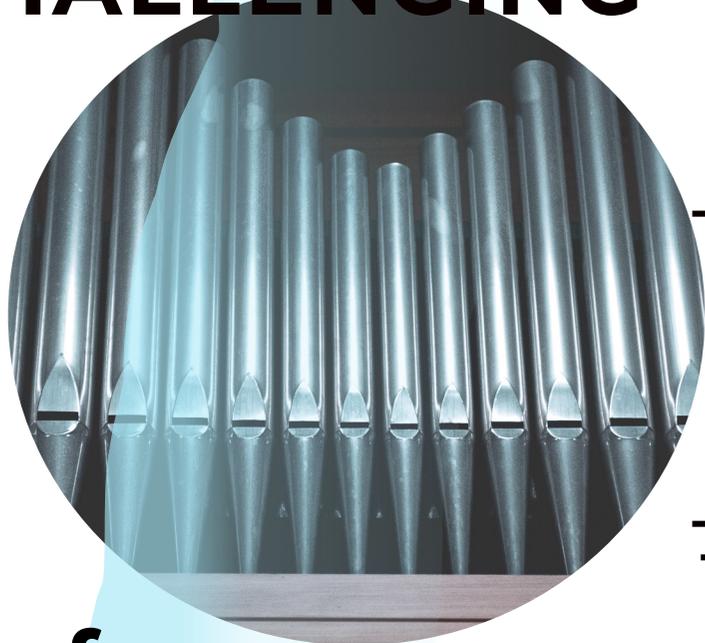
Buene, *Enmannsorkester* p. 28–34.

I write more about this process in the exposition "Telescopic Listening" in VIS – Nordic Journal for Artistic Research, 3, 2020. (<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/639287/639288>)

Buene, *Enmannsorkester* p. 125–126.

Eivind Buene (2012), *Allsang* (Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2012) p. 119–123.

CHALLENGING



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