

## **Reflective Report for *Portals*: Performance**

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This document adds to the previous reflective report by commenting on the performer's improvised musical response through interactions with the video score. The report considers the performance space and audience reaction to the work as well as the performer's approach and concerns.

### **Key Issues**

- The score succeeded in creating a musical response through arrangement of video stimulus.
- Structure was clearly projected: each section was framed by a blank screen identifying clear in and out points between phrases and sections which were reflected in the sonic interpretation.
- Miekeo had a very clear and methodical approach to analysing the piece which was focused mostly on the bowing. She noted that the bowing in the video was particularly detailed and was compelled to copy it as exactly as possible. In this task Miekeo was unfaltering, with a fantastic degree of accuracy.
- Miekeo created a transcription of the score which she used during rehearsal and the live performance. In future pieces I will request that transcriptions should not be made as more spontaneity would be revealed through the interactions with the video score.
- Post-processing effects of the bowing movement was ignored entirely, with information only being extracted from the literal image itself.
- Post-processing did affect interpretation of the left hand. This manifested as width and intensity of vibrato as the circle changes size. No other relationships were established.
- Miekeo informed me that she watched and listened to the video clips I had included in the performance notes. This is something I need to be mindful of as I only included the notes as an ethical consideration. Miekeo commented that the videos had a folk-like style which she attempted to replicate in her performance.

### **Literal elements of the video score**

The interpretation of the video footage was very literal and resulted in music which sounded as though it could have been written using a more conventional model of notation. This problem could be overcome by creating original footage using camera

angles to mask the descriptive information, such as from behind the musician, rather than relying on found footage.

### **Live performance of the audiovisual work**

During the performance I was able to observe some of the audience's faces and what they were looking at. Many were engaged in watching the screen almost exclusively. I feel as though this is acceptable as Mieko was solely responsible for the sound production and therefore was not redundant in the performance. However, it did seem similar to the way a TV screen in a public space seems to draw the attention of those within its vicinity, even if there is no sound. This needs consideration and might result in the image of the performer being integrated into the score in real-time which an app called CamTwist could enable. This definitely requires further investigation as this phenomena might reveal something interesting or important for future audiovisual pieces.

Further consideration of the performance space is essential during the conception of the work. Considering the space as an installation might provide some solutions by considering how the piece deals with physical space. A system from Matrox makes it possible to split one graphics output into three which could enable the use of multiple screens for an installation.

### **Conclusion and Summary**

I am relatively happy with how I engaged with a truly talented performer like Mieko and believe she worked very hard to create a transcription she felt happy with. However, I am unable to deny my disappointment at the piece not becoming what I had intended and understand the need to work hard to deal with the errors and issues thrown up by *Portals*.

Found instrumental footage may need to be abandoned as I believe it can only lead to literal interpretations of the images. A different perspective on performative gesture could be taken which considers bodily movement away from the instrument as stimulus. Using familiar non-instrumental gestures should allow me to present something far more open-ended rather than creating a scenario where literal interpretations are likely. Complexity may then arise from the meaning attached to a gesture by each performer.

I am very keen to generate my own footage. The use of keying technology would provide the chance to create bespoke footage with all unwanted footage removed. This will further enable the concept of gestural material to become removed from any concept of instrumentation, allowing for physical gestures which are common in verbal communication to be used, if desired.

Considering the space and how the performer will interact with it is essential from the start of the composition of each piece. The performer could be presented in person to the audience, or only be presented as an image on a screen, as could their sonic realisations.

The next stage in the investigation of video as musical score is to discover what creating my own footage using keying technology will allow and to begin to compose with this. Further considerations of the music to be composed through use of a video score is essential as this is tied to discovering the type of performance space which should be considered prior to composing. However I do feel that the conventional concert hall is a space which could yield some very interesting results.