



EVEN!

a remount of kelley-gander-floyer

with
Brennan Olver,
Taiga Blake,
Kokomi Blake,
Ada Williams Kriegler,
Henry Williams Kriegler,
Matali Riley,
Elise Smith,
Charlie Thompson,
Xuan Valmorbida,
Ivan Cheng,

zero i i

Youth-is-company Dorian Šilec Petek + Ivan Cheng 27/08/2014 08:09 Dorian Šilec Petek trees, grass, weeds, herbs and fucking motherfucking snails that ate my long anticipated lettuce 27/08/2014 08:09 Ivan Cheng oh no! iceberg lettuce? that sounds so idyllic 27/08/2014 08:09 Dorian Šilec Petek yes!!!! 27/08/2014 08:09 Ivan Cheng i can hear the roar of rain 27/08/2014 08:09 Dorian Šilec Petek uu nice i like rain i can agree 27/08/2014 08:10 Ivan Cheng i have a friend who puts the snails on a shovel and flings them against 27/08/2014 08:10 haha well i use salt to do that I feel sort of post 39' but its effective 27/08/2014 08:11 Ivan Cheng ouch hey, you were going to come with 'when the mountain changed its clothing' right? i had a mentor who loved goebbels 27/08/2014 08:11 Dorian Šilec Petek i was going to come but no more yeah? 27/08/2014 08:11 Ivan Chenc 'he's so handsome, and his music is so incredible 27/08/2014 08:12 Dorian Šilec Petek goebbels is incredible 27/08/2014 08:12 Ivan Cheng i'm wondering if you observed his interaction with children. you work with the ensemble that performs it, yes? 27/08/2014 08:12 Dorian Šilec Petek hahaha i was photographing the performances in the beginning, I've been on some projects and am assistant to director of Carmina Slovenica, - performance group... mhm and they're not kids they're approximately 10 to 22 Ivan Cheng

oma

i'm curious if you'd want to contribute some writing to the program for the

'remount' i told you about

27/08/2014 08:15 a short essay or letter or communique around the idea of adults working with children 27/08/2014 08:16 Ivan Cheng right now I'm not so sure I'll work with kids anymore. I was thinking about the equation of working with child actors, people who train and are used to direction, but I've been offered a really different group which means I'm suddenly thinking about the community that surrounds the situation... community is inescapable, but that's interesting i guess. it's a big choice /////// and i have a phone call about it in 2 hours time I think that working with kids is impossible if it is not done under ideal circumstances.. 27/08/2014 08:17 Ivan Cheng so i'm thinking that an alternative performance is to somehow lay out a hypothetical new structure parallel to the time flow of the older work. it would be interesting to convey the potential of what it could have been, through my own body??? as in goebbels could not do the project without all of the performers being in Carmina Slovenica for 5,6,7, years and being absolutely converted in to performing with absolute focus, absolutely questionless, absolute dedication, through lots of experiences, regularly performing staged performances with movement and drama... 27/08/2014 08:17 Ivan Cheng yes! we've been discussing some kids who are under 10, without experience as an ensemble, through an artistic associate of the company that is a different challenge 27/08/2014 08:18 Ivan Cheno and while i work with in ear directions and that makes it easier, the project isn't really conceived with 'holiday workshop' in mind i just want to do the work so maybe i do a solo performance: present new score and the original score in temporal parallel ...with maybe some assistance from others so, what you would do is you would "conduct" little children in parallel to 27/08/2014 08:19 Ivan Cheng hmm not auite maybe we can skype about it i'm supposed to go eat some toast now ----->

27/08/2014 08:15 Dorian Šilec Petek meaning?

27/08/2014 08:15 Dorian Šilec Petek

27/08/2014 08:16

Dorian Šilec Petek

27/08/2014 08:17

Dorian Šilec Petek

27/08/2014 08:17

Dorian Šilec Petek

27/08/2014 08:19

Dorian Šilec Petek

professionals?

27/08/2014 08:19

Dorian Šilec Petek

alright!

yeah

hmm

sure

Id love to, if you think I could actually contribute...

27/08/2014 08:38 Ivan Cheng

that was great toast

27/08/2014 08:40

Dorian Šilec Petek

i finally have some great white wine to accompany my sleepless nights, cos of jetlag 27/08/2014 08:41

Ivan Cheng

what time isit there?

27/08/2014 08:41 Dorian Šilec Petek

0041

reuters just posted this



27/08/2014 08:44 Ivan Cheng

o me o my

well, i'm adjusted to jetlag

i drink huuuuge amounts of water on

so i sleep about 11 and get up at 6ish

27/08/2014 08:45 Dorian Šilec Petek good boy...

I prefer to work in the night though...

i can sit outside and its completely silent

27/08/2014 08:46 Ivan Cheng

what are you werrking on?

27/08/2014 08:46 Dorian Šilec Petek

im drawing up sketches for an opera im assisting..

27/08/2014 08:46 Ivan Cheng

27/08/2014 08:47 Dorian Šilec Petek

so, about the thing with kids, wanna tell me more about it? skype?

or some other time?

27/08/2014 08:49 Ivan Cheng

we could skype now

i'm still figuring it out myself, so i won't

be clear but that's okay

27/08/2014 08:49 Dorian Šilec Petek yeah, sure...

is that you?

----?----

28/08/2014 00:12

My darling, i understand No, not a lot has changed at all ...I've been out for the first time since

getting home.

28/08/2014 00:13 Dorian Šilec Petek

ah thats right, you are in the evening mood now 28/08/2014 00:16

Ivan Cheng

Evening mood

28/08/2014 00:16 Dorian Šilec Petek

but, just so i make sure, it is not a problem, if i curve around the subject of goebbels?

28/08/2014 00:19 Ivan Cheng

Zero problem

My interest is not in goebbels Its just a context and entry point

28/08/2014 00:21 Dorian Šilec Petek

OK good

28/08/2014 00:21 Ivan Cheng Great!

28/08/2014 00:21 Dorian Šilec Petek

GrEat

29/08/2014 01:56 Dorian Šilec Petek

starting to write

but im bothered by the idea of wanting to kill my hairdresser 29/08/2014 07:31

Ivan Cheng Picture?

29/08/2014 08:35 Dorian Šilec Petek

I attended a performance with only kids performing by philippe quesne

Check him out

Perhaps interesting 30/08/2014 22:41

Ivan Cheng

when did you attend?

http://www.ruhrtriennale.de/en/programm/ produktionen/romeo-castellucci-le-sacre-du-

printemps/



30/08/2014 23:12 Dorian Šilec Petek

Nooo. I want to so badly... But i might write about it... It's incredible what he did..

The machinery and all..

And its interesting subject matter in terms of performer - live factor

.,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,

03/09/2014 10:56 Ivan Cheng

are you still in milano? mm mint chocolate milanos

04/09/2014 00:36 Ivan Chena

hey saw your hair on ginte's instagram... it looks

04/09/2014 01:36 Dorian Šilec Petek

I love you ivan. finally over the The border of slovenia How are you<3? Whats up?

05/09/2014 22:15 Ivan Cheng how's your text? can i read it? i had a skull shaped drink tonight 'voodoo' with dry ice

05/09/2014 22:21 Dorian Šilec Petek

uff

sure its not at all finished

i am not satisfied with it cause it doesn't postulate at all

05/09/2014 22:22 Ivan Cheng haha ok fair enough



Dear Ivan.

In the short time we have known each other I grew rather fond of you and now I sit here, thinking about what to write. I am wondering whether you remember the very first conversation we ever had.

I was sitting in the dining tent and you sat down next to me on the edge of the table, where smokers were exiled. You sat there, we were introduced, I enquired: "What do you do, Ivan?" To this you gave me perhaps the most revealing answer, in terms of who you are, but certainly not about what you do. You said, with this peculiar sincerity: "I don't know." Naturally I was shocked; I think I even rolled my eyes, "God, what is this supposed to mean?" Exchanging some replies we came to the conversation, no, to the beginning of a conversation that was the first insight in your question of reproducing art, perhaps your obsession but definitely your fascination with "Repetition".

After managing to get some concreteness in terms of human interaction from you, I started perceiving you as an extremely specific but genuinely good and honest individual (and I still do). The kind that would argue that cinema in its purity is not something that is simply re-played night after night - this repetition alters. Perhaps we could say we clashed on the question of whether films are re-played like a theatre piece is, you spoke about performances on digital versus analogue media, but you know how the conversation went...

What might be more interesting is how a theatre piece might lose its stability in being re-played: somewhat the same way as that of the premiere or perhaps the last rehearsal, the last repetition. What happens to a piece when the performer is more than an actor – a performer for his own life and not the life he could portray. To such types of a performance perhaps the term re-enactment could replace repetition, as we stop speaking of repeating and start creating many pieces that are in core similar but intentionally different, intentionally re-developed, re-proposed and re-purposed. While writing this I have in my mind a couple of theatre productions.

I would like to refer to a theatre piece I saw a couple of days ago, where the director Philippe Quesne used nothing but 14 children in an environment that resembled an abstract playground. The notion of children performing reminded me of you and our talks, so I went. Those children performed, showing off an incredible arsenal of skills, dancing, playing music, and perhaps most importantly, performing on a stage that surpasses those of family recitals in elementary school. It was really beautiful. But under the movement, under the happening on stage there was no logic to be seen, there was no anticipated moment, there was no direction, there was only wandering from point to point, from direction to direction. (This is no critique, I believe it was the intention of the director, it is just an observation of illustration.) It was like talking with a person who knows only some English, but not enough to express what he wishes. The performance was strongly based on the use of music and dramatization and could easily be categorised as a piece of Music Theatre. But besides the scarce structure of cues: event a, event b, etc. there was a hole, nothing was truly applied in terms of, perhaps, order or simply stated: the body lacked bones. I found it odd and interesting to observe, as I had never encountered this lack of order in any other piece of Music Theatre.

What becomes interesting here for me is: what syntax needs to occur between text and music for it to become a genuine work of Music Theatre and not be a misspelled variation of either component.

It made me wonder how to define your work, as I remembered that you spoke of remounting your piece with very young children; to what extent can a reprise of such a piece still be considered as repetition of a performance and not solely a new stage setting or re-enactment.

The second performance I would like to bring upfront here is a piece I saw a couple of years ago, so overwhelming that I went to see it three nights in a row. I do not wish to compare, nor compete the performances against each other, but I do wish to expose an incredible phenomenon that came to life on stage during this second piece: film-like precision of the event and momentum that is carried out from performance to performance; it was rich, it was aware of where it is going and from where. It was guided by both the music it produced and by the text that accompanied the soothing sounds. I will somewhat drift away from explaining every detail, but what I believe might interest you is, how there was truly no recognisable structure. I found it really amazing how scenes and happenings drifted as though on a smooth drive; the momentum was known by the performers and they followed the line it set. (This reminds me of your objections to how a path we built at Watermill did not follow the desire lines of geography. This desire line was followed without deviation of any kind in this piece and it was truly beautiful.)

Both performances chose to expose youthfulness as somehow magical, tragic or perhaps terrifying. There is no doubt that the structure of the second performance was being re-played night after night. It was performed again and again without losing a beat, tract, comma or an end. With such work we can speak of *repetition* and I believe this is something you wish to speak about. But why is the perception of repetition more powerful than the idea of re-enactment?

Thinking 'out loud' here, perhaps it's because every moment of every repeated performance could be perceived as a precisely notated moment inside a concrete context, and not as a configuration of actions that are trying to be re-enacted, re-visited in blank space. Remembering our joint fascination with Cage, let me refer to his words: "These silences are nothing to be afraid of, they are solely an absence of words..." And it is this holistic perception of what's happening on stage, where moments of not performing are still incorporated in the gesamtkunstwerk like structure, becoming a mechanism, a silent monument for structure. What is so interesting to me is the ability through notation to discard of our liberal wish for spontaneity and self-created unique action for every reprise of the work (thus rendering it re-enactment). Instead we achieve 'catharsis' through order, and through the emotion that arises from small sidesteps from order and deliberation/repose when stepping back in order. Or maybe through finding your own freedom in a vast clockwork of movement, to truly feel empowered by the movement around you and your position in it.

Perhaps this is a consequence of our release from totalitarian liberalism, where one is forced to be spontaneous over and over, the spontaneity of whatever was embodied on opening night. Such liberalism is not only tiring; it is a recipe for frustration and inevitably a visible instability because, while it's not a law, there will always be moments in big groups when someone will lose the inspiration, will lose the determination, will lose the will, or someone will forget. With repetition and restaging in the image of the premiere or last rehearsal we admit to being on familiar ground, and it is at this point develop a need - a genuine and truly spontaneous need - for personal enrichment of our actions. (For it is once you truly master driving that radio becomes an enjoyable companion, cycling becomes interesting once you can ride without holding the handles etc.) After all, once you find yourself in familiar field, you know how one will counter your actions and vice versa. And it is here; once you sidestep order, one can start to direct a truly liberal piece, a piece that is triggered and triggers emotions.

You have probably guessed where I'm heading or you are by now completely lost, but I shall continue. I would now like to refer to your incredible work (remember my amazement after you showed me your work for the first time). The Written Score, if that is how it can be called, is how I saw it while reading parts of it. Charged to be absolutely precise in time-flow through the work, it thus resembles the precision of notation. kelley-gander-floyer somehow follows Cage's "this is poetry as I need it". Perhaps this kind of musical/dramatized writing is the closest these two elements can come to combining them without crossing in to an already established field of a libretto or a drama. It is because written, score-like writings/compositions (eg. Cage's Lecture on Nothing) direct the duration of the silences and hence suggest rhythm, but do not dictate colour, timbre or any other parameter that it is expressed through classical perception of notation in words. As form, it is a very categorical, visual way of dictating the spoken word, but repetition (restaging) with children will change in strength and meaning. Will you or they be frustrated with its coherence whilst following the notated text? Of course there is charm to that, but at the same time there is innate rapture bound to happen on stage from the virtue of your performers. This is a strange crossroad you are stuck in, my friend. 'Inappropriate' text or 'inappropriate' performers.

But such writing is incredibly interesting as it appears to be the most appropriate way of writing text for Music Theatre (at least in the abstract reading I have undertaken). Music Theatre is bound to face trouble in recording all that happens on stage - music and drama are traditionally notated in such particular ways. The former is so strict while the latter so liberal. We've observed that problems might arise in restaging (fear of re-enacting a piece rather than repeating one), as the way of reading will change from one individual to another or from one venue to another. With notating text, but not enclosing it in rigidity of scores, we can still talk of dramatically charged elements but not individual elements. But why is such rigidity important when staging Music Theatre? Why so much obsession with repetition? Just remember how proud Bob was when he talked about his associate directors and their incredible ability to script down what he improvised with absolute precision, to then reproduce and repeat in a certain style...

kelley-gander-floyer - It is not drama nor comedy, not opera or operetta and certainly not cabaret. It can be received as a performance art, as a recital and for me the most admirable; Music Theatre. For me it is through Music Theatre that one can relate to precision as well as to emotion. Castellucci's Sacre du Primtemps, Goebbels's Stifter's Dinge and many more works in the field of Music Theatre rely on mechanical reproduction of performing elements. In stifter's Dinge, pianists are absent, there are only machines, the narrator is recorded and replayed etc. and yet

theatre and music happen that are not limited to the mechanism of replaying a digital recording in a movie theatre. Each of the performing elements, dead on its own, becomes a performer. Is it the physical presence of objects and their motion? It perhaps touches you the same but is much more, perhaps real is the word or maybe we could say *Real*. (If you are mentioning Lacan I can hardly restrain myself from some comments on it.) What I mean is that each of the performing elements, dead on its own, becomes a performer the inanimate object becomes something live but perplexed because it is still dead.

Castellucci's piece, *Sacre du Printemps* is insanely interesting in terms of defining the post dramatics of theatre. What he did is, he removed all dancers or actors leaving just the music and 40 colossal and I mean really colossal machines that became "dancers". Furthermore, using dust made from cow bone dust, he composed this elaborate choreography of literally dead elements and managed to make them alive again. It was all mechanically reproduced and thus inherently bound to a cue-by-cue form, staged to Stravinsky. And it was Music Theatre, and it animated the dead. What can happen if human performers are bound to such precision? In Music Theatre, human performers have doubled guidelines, those of dramatic elements and those of musical. I'd love for you to see *When the Mountain Changed its Clothing* by Heiner Goebbels and Karmina Šilec because it is directed to absolute precision in terms of almost every beat, every bar and yet it is as alive as a jazz jam or an improvised play. But why is that? I believe it may be because performers are oriented and forced to be more balanced, to not give way to one element of the stage, but to, through their individual lines intertwine all happening on stage so it holds up with a clear and touchable structure. Perhaps like a Fugue where the structure is extremely evident and variations in music are innate to the structure...

Lastly, to rapidly touch upon the topic of necessity of this rigidness in repetition in Music Theatre which might also be called the fascinating trigger of emotion: Operating in a field between drama and between music, might be similar as to thinking between the worlds of the Symbolic and the Real (if I may briefly touch upon inspiration for your text.) It is not about using music, stopping to use music and starting to use drama or vice versa; it is about not separating the two, thus creating a new language of expression. And for such language to be understood it must be spoken clearly, as it is not a language of tradition. One can truly operate with archetypes and the somewhat subconscious way of choosing the story that is interesting – desire lines. What I mean is, for me Music Theatre is the one way of expression, that can (if done with such purpose) distance itself from any kind of semantic meaning and create a somehow landscape-like structure onto which something can be mounted, curated by the director or performers during the development. This is why a rigorous reprise is key in Music Theatre, such strict demand of repetition is the one that for me poses the predisposition for an undisturbed performance, for a performance that can develop archetypal landscapes, or settings for spectator's ideas.

Dearest Ivan, it is with great joy that I exchange this correspondence with you. And for my final, final sentence in this letter let me quote a poster that has been on a café's wall in front of me as I write. I see Hugh Laurie's face, and next to it is written: "Acting is largely about putting on masks; music is about removing them." This I believe is the perfect (somewhat ironic) conclusion of this letter.

Sincerely,

Dorian Šilek Petek



Dorian,

It's the eve of my father's birthday, and I didn't spend it with him. I went to see my friend Marcus, had dinner with my friend Eugene, and picked up the gift I will give my dad – a diptych of gouaches by Anna John called *Wet Shapes...* have just had a shower, like I told you I would. I had a drink with tequila in it and dad has just sniffed me – he smells white wine. He is exercising his equipment as an 'audiophile' and what I hear are a few versions of Andrew Lloyd Webber songs *don't you think it's rather funny I should be in this position I'm the one who's always been so calm so cool no lover's fool running every show...*

I'm beginning directly after you send me the first draft for your text, and our editing process of this exchange has continued constantly since, a confusing mix of documents with tracked changes – you call it '100pplpiece1/2/3/4/5' whereas I work with our surnames and the date. (*Reader, it's intact, but the messages are altered for crude colloquialisms and the body of text for grammar and spelling.*) My first response after quickly reading it was that maybe it should be more militantly personal, a program note in disguise as a formal dialogue, and that I might be dishonest and write a 'first letter'. I don't want to lie/I don't want to do that. I'll give in to sincerity.

My interest was in your experience with Heiner Goebbels and Carmina Slovenica, who are touring When the mountain changed its clothing to Melbourne Festival this year. You grew up working with this ensemble since your mother directs it, and when we skyped and I invited you to write this text, I loved how you were talking about the bridges between Goebbels' vision and the mechanics of realising this with the ensemble, how important the history of the ensemble was if not only for the focus that has been bred. You spoke about the post-socialist country, and the discipline required for choral practice, if not for music. On first skim, your text eluded that, but it's clearer now, I've read it many times by now. It's there. I guess it was always there and I had to find it, or want to see it. I guess that's the fascination with reading for me.

I think that's a point of interest in 'repetition' for me. The defiance and ability to form interpretations, and, just as you refer to Music Theatre as your background and education, I'll refer to my training as a clarinettist to illustrate – the ability to pose on the pedestal of my technical ability, of looking at new works, choosing to commit hours and hours to new works and hence being responsible for their public recitation and representation. The language of performance can too easily be employed to be efficient, to 'trigger emotion'. I was scared at how efficiently I could convince an audience of fidelity, while I knew I wasn't the precise executor of the gestures - the departures from score that sometimes came from the sheer difficulty of them, insufficient rehearsal time. I've spoken a lot about how interested I am in insufficient rehearsal time, the failure to be faithful and the inability to accurately translate what is most perfect in hypothesis.

I'm sceptical about what you say about the solidity of notation. I feel like that's what I want to challenge – that thread to credibility just by its printing or incantation into real time or space. What I mean is that you have particular experiences and tastes, and to come back to that talk about the repetition of cinema, that was talking about the way images transfer into reality from conception, and then back from reality into different forms. You're engaging with my methods of documentation, and with your geographic distance, that's probably the only way you ever will. But my work is only partially interested in the live event, and really quite invested in the mythologies and oeuvres constructed around us. This is why I constantly speak with support and examples, tethering myself and providing context. You know also about my desire to detach and maintain dignity, to not namedrop crassly or succumb to desire to prove myself.

So the crossroads I see myself at is different – I'm not worried about the fidelity to my 'score', because it has already failed to translate onto a page successfully. If one is interested, the body of thought is easily accessible, and deliberately formatted in a way that it is effective on the page than in performance. In my situation, I feel privileged to work with young performers, to be able to enact a quasi-exploitative economy and have their sheer presence begin to resonate with the constructs about lust for youth and our gazing into the uncertain future. In our future do we want precision, replication, even if it does have the ability to bring emotions and feeling to the fore? I could talk about machines for forever, and not very long at all. The material I'm using for this work *EVEN!* is patently different, but is a continuation of the same thought – to repeat/paraphrase Robert Wilson: Einstein is asked to repeat a statement but says it's all the same thought.

twelve thirteen

I'm influenced by the statements of people I admire. I remember a soprano, Deborah Kayser talking about being a young parent, of a dramaturge, Ellen Hammer telling me how to structure my days, on how to bury her, on the importance of fidelity. You've been an audience to see me standing, walking, being silent for long durations. I wonder what I am besides myself in those moments/how faithful am I in those silences? I know my reverence, my participation in hierarchical structures, and am suspicious and guilty for the space and time I occupy with my thoughts – the space and time of others. The crossroads is the fidelity of enactment versus the ways we look and look at in arenas outside of performance seasons - contexts with infinite specificity in parameters and no clear beginning or end.

You speak about landscapes of Music Theatre, and I think I know exactly what you mean, but what can an audience do when the work isn't palatable, isn't understandable, when it fails to reach the ideal. There have been many times I've seen work that is more interesting in its inadvertent collapse than in its proposed ambition. So many people I meet think that certain things aren't for them and I think poor 'performances' have burnt bridges as they fail the notations they are bringing into dimension. My mother performed and simultaneously was the primary audience for a four hour work I made for four women about youth. In the car on the way home she told me that she thought my ideas were interesting, but the audience wants a type of entertainment. I know I'm spoilt for the time I have to think about things, and am trying to do it better.

Part of my interest in using words and names like Lacan was concerned with how ideologies are absorbed into work – what use does this referencing have, what resonance or dulling does its inclusion cause. My blandly basic understanding of epoché is as a systematic criticism, a suspension of reality to further understand consciousness. To me language is tyrannous, perpetually extinguishing complexity in meaning, continual extinction. We build plinths, displays, pages, vitrines for the remains.

But then there's us. I'm fond of you too! We are so young and we have so much to learn. I read the texts that have been selected for print in *kelley-gander-floyer* and I felt a resistance to what was there, a kind of shame as well as pride. I know them so well, having read them out for recording, continuous, falling asleep in my studio as the words detach from meaning and each recording was deleted, so I begin to understand them and then begin to stop understanding. When I emulate a machine, when I try to stop thinking and just do, I'm not sure what's left.

You end talking about that poster. I can't bear that quote. I published a difficult text called *architecture as mask/mask as architecture* earlier this year which arrives to having nothing to say about a mask because a mask says enough. It's so noisy, it's all so noisy.

Can we think about rhythm in a way that doesn't relate to our bodies?

RHYTHM-ZERO



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C H A M B E R M A D E O P E R A













zilla & brook

SWEET

