

**Publishing as a Musical Practice  
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Publishing as a Musical Practice

**Abstract:**

This portfolio of work explores the idea of publishing as a musical practice within a new music context. Many of the works are publications that do not require a performance to be considered complete and others engage with elements of publishing from a critical standpoint.

In the commentary, I seek to define publishing in this context and examine its impact on modes of presenting music, before looking at how publishing can be harnessed as a creative practice. I claim that a musical practice based on publishing allows the composer to sound out new territories within the possibilities afforded by the current technological climate by exploring the relationship between the digital and the physical. Informed by modern and historic publishing practices, experimental music and visual arts, I outline the frameworks for the practice presented in the portfolio. I then explore the themes of publishing evident in the works including the medium, domesticity and publishing as a business.

### **Research Questions**

How can music publishing be an artistic practice?

To what extent can you merge publication and compositional processes in the creation of published works?

To what extent can the focus be shifted from the content to the media itself?

### **Research Aims**

To create a body of work that solidifies the grounds for a musical practice based on publishing.

To engage critically with current practices of music publishing.

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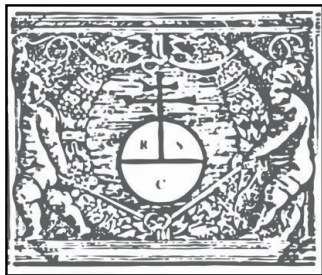
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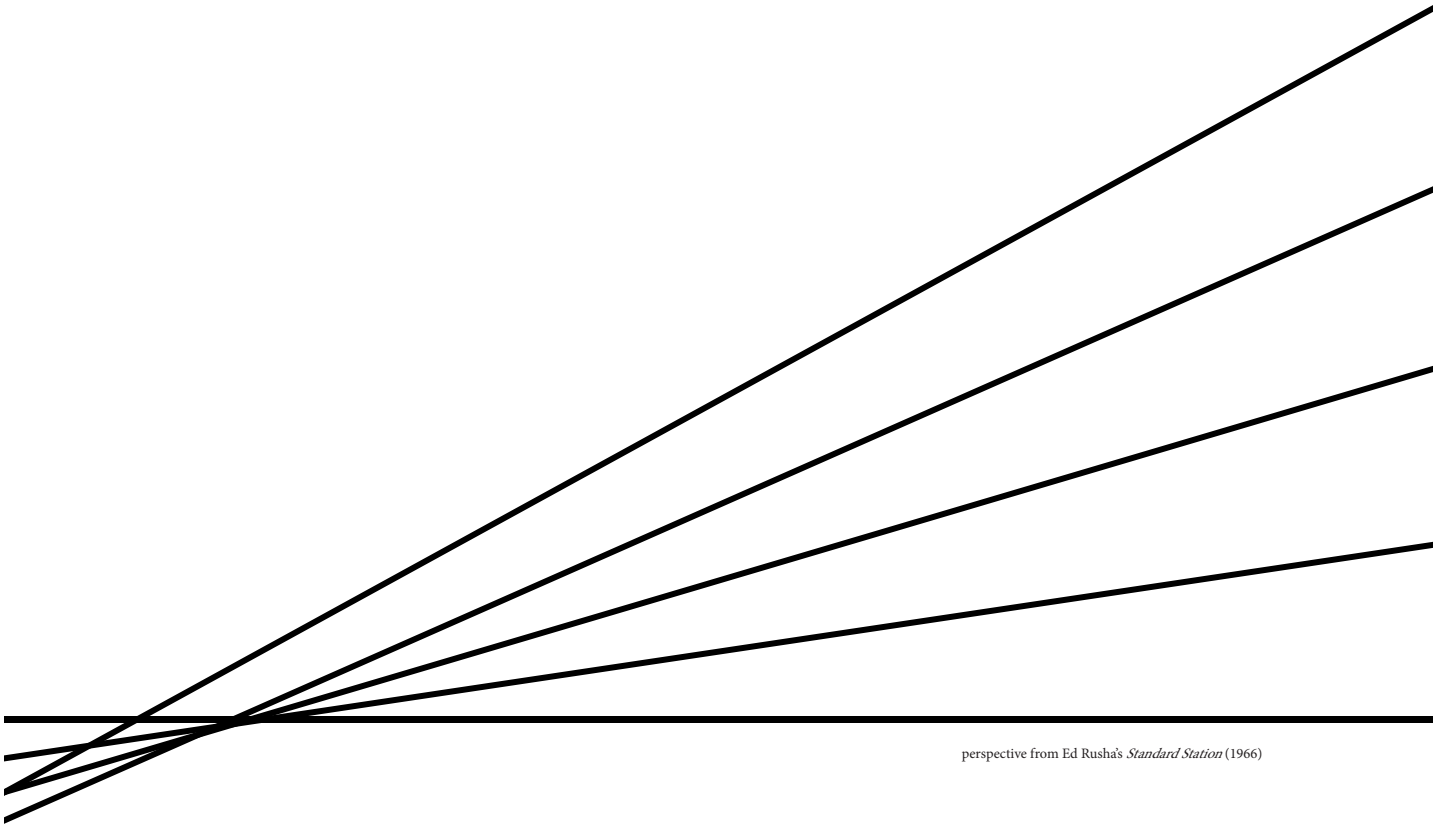
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# 1.1

## FOLIO CONTENTS

Title	Medium	Physical Contents
Forever Grey	Book	spiral bound square table book
Nomad	Book	one perfect bound a5 landscape book
Grey Literature in Blue	Printed document	envelope and document bag with 20 loose sheets
Linden Tree	Book	300 page full colour book
YT blue	AV livestream	none
o745 (for harpsichord)	7" vinyl	7" transparent vinyl in sleeve
Concept Font	Digital Prints	one example print on computer paper and one a3 poster.
Publishing	Game	resources sample
Publishing as Musical Practice	PhD commentary	60 page book



perspective from Ed Risha's *Standard Station* (1966)

# 1.2

## ADDITIONAL MEDIA CONTENTS

Work associated with	Included digital media
Forever Grey	TV advert
Nomad	TV advert
Linden Tree	Video of script running
YT blue	Running sample video + live link
o745	Digitisation of record sound

# 1.3

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank:

Isabelle Galwas for her love, support and help throughout the project.

My parents for their long term support of my musical and academic pursuits.

My supervisory team: Dr. Michael Wolters, Howard Skempton & Dr. Carrie Churnside for their invaluable advice and guidance.

also in no particular order:

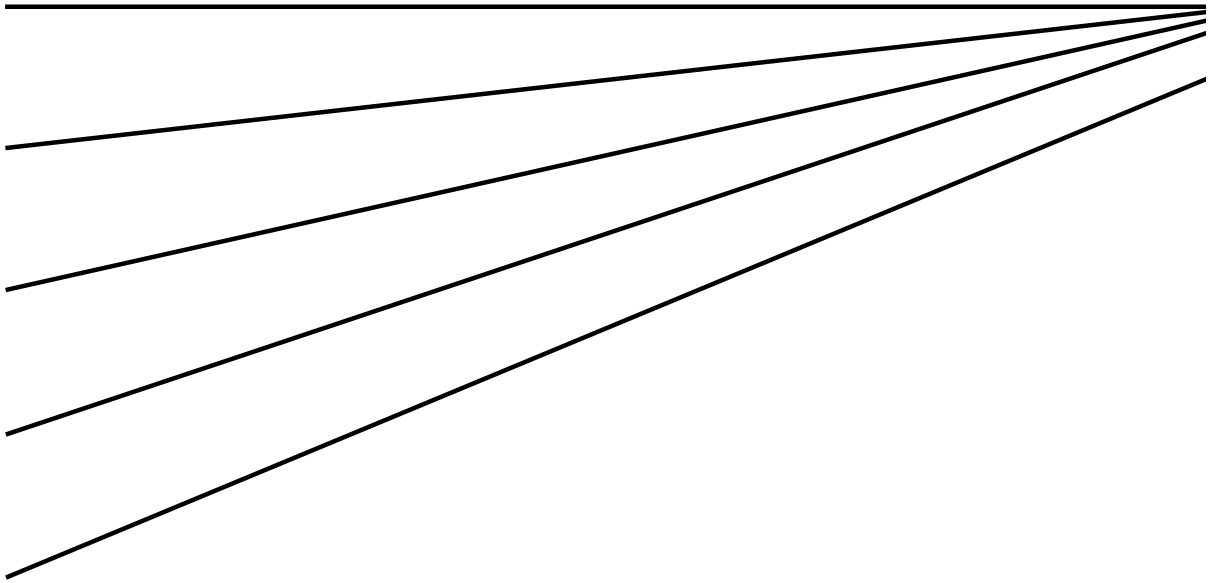
Maya Felixbrodt  
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Ryoko Akama  
Cameron Dodds  
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Zach Dawson  
Vlad Costache  
Jacqueline Taylor  
Paul Zaba  
Sam Taylor  
Lola de la Mata  
Marko Ciciliani

& anyone who bought a publication

# 2

## PROJECT RATIONALE

$$d = 120$$



# 2.1

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## BEGINNINGS

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### AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT.

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In his article ‘Portrait of the Artist as a Publisher: Publishing as an Alternative Artistic Practice’, Antoine Lefebvre tells an anecdote of the French artist Bernard Brunon’s move to Texas from France. One of the jobs Brunon did to make money was to paint houses. Whilst painting houses, he had the realisation that this type of work was closer to the artistic practice he was looking for than anything he had previously produced. He wasn’t painting a representation of something but, as Lefebvre puts it, he was ‘painting the world’ (Lefebvre, 2016: 60).

I have always had an issue with the disconnect between the modes of new music presentation and real life. I often cannot help but see concerts as representational of something in the world, be it a thing or an abstract idea, rather than something unto itself. I have always found it difficult to work with structure in concert music, due to having a reluctance to take the audience on a fictitious journey from A-B for the sake of some kind of effect. Rather, I would like to make something real and living with my work that goes out and interacts with the world.

Lefebvre (2016) likens his idea of ‘painting the world’ to the creation of artist’s books, claiming that an artist who hangs a painting, places a sculpture, or makes an installation in a gallery is creating a representation of something in the real world, whether it be a literal object, a social issue or an abstract thought. In contrast, the artist’s book goes out into, and becomes part of, the world through its being sold, bought, read, discussed etc.

Through reading Jane A. Berstein's book *Music Printing in Renaissance Venice* (1998), I became interested in the culture surrounding musical print during the Renaissance period. This culture revolved around a domestic market, where composers wrote music specifically for publication, with editions being bought by amateur musicians for the purpose of their own entertainment within the home. The idea of making and printing music for domestic consumption provided me with an approach that dealt with the reservations I had with composing for concerts, for it allowed me to create musical works which become intertwined with people's lives. Publishing enabled me to make a kind of music that exists in the world on its own terms rather than portraying a reflection of the world.

Through my combined interests in artist's books, Renaissance print culture and my experimental music practice as a composer, I began to navigate a practice that explored issues of publishing as a musical practice.

Prior to the beginning of the PhD, I began exploring ideas of publishing through my artistic work. I had purchased the domain name stenton.press which, at first, was just a domain for my own work. I later made the decision to sign my publications as alias/publishing house/domain stenton.press (later becoming stentondotpress). I made this decision for two reasons. Firstly, I wanted to create publications that invite the idea that any interaction is as valid as any other. The use of a publishing house name, more akin to a company name, rather than attributing the work to a composer, emphasises that the publication is a product in itself and can be used for any purpose rather than purely as a concert work. Secondly, the activities of a publishing house, for example editing, printing, advertising, etc. were all assimilated into my

creative practice. Therefore, the alias acts as a statement acknowledging the processes and frameworks I used to create the works.

The first publication signed in this way was *100m* (2015), a blank manuscript book containing exactly 100 metres of blank staff lines. The second was titled *10 hours of sad music for synthesised choir in 50 books* (2015), editing randomly generated music into 50 twelve-minute individually-bound printed scores. The practice outlined in this project is a continuation of this work and ideas; I attempt to critically interact with ideas of music publishing through my own artistic practice.

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## 2.2

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### CONTEXT

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#### CONTEXTUALISING THE PRACTICE IN THE WIDER FIELD

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Throughout the Doctoral project I have interacted with artistic works from the field of music composition alongside media arts and theory and fine art. The following discussion of key works and practitioners outlines some of the points of reference and context for the project. I will also discuss works by current composers Ryoko Akama, Robert Blatt, James Saunders, David Pocknee and Jennifer Walshe that have a direct correlation to ideas of publication, alongside further references from the field of visual arts.

The lineage of the book and printed formats used for the distribution of musical/ conceptual art works from the 1960s is still present today in a select number of composers and artists practices. The influence of seminal works such as George Brecht's *Water Yam* (1963) in fig.1 and Yoko Ono's *Pineapple* (1964) runs deep through the tradition, despite the onus on the score as an object having diminished greatly since then. The technological changes of the mid- twentieth century that facilitated such work, namely the release of the first Xerox photocopier in 1949, still operate as a cheap means of duplication of works for artists. Seth Siegelaub's *Xerox book* (1968) most famously marked this by using the new technology to generate a cheap space for artists to exhibit in the form of a photocopied book.<sup>1</sup> The *Xerox book* included work by artists such as Lawrence Wiener and Sol LeWitt. Ryoko Akama's object score works carry this aesthetic into the modern era, for example in her work *koso koso* (2014), a book of text scores shown in fig.2. The book is filled with economic and simple black text paired with hand-folded pockets holding extra material. The blend of the cost-

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<sup>1</sup> *Xerox book* was actually not produced for distribution using a photocopier due to a large edition being more economical in a standard print run.





Fig. 1 Water Yam (1963) - George Brecht (Source: MOMA)

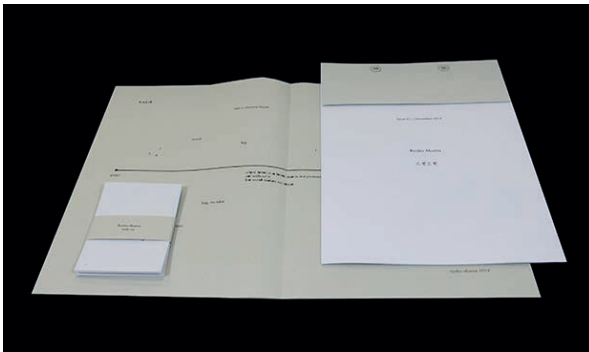


Fig. 2 koso koso (2014) - Ryoko Akama (Source: Bore Publishing)

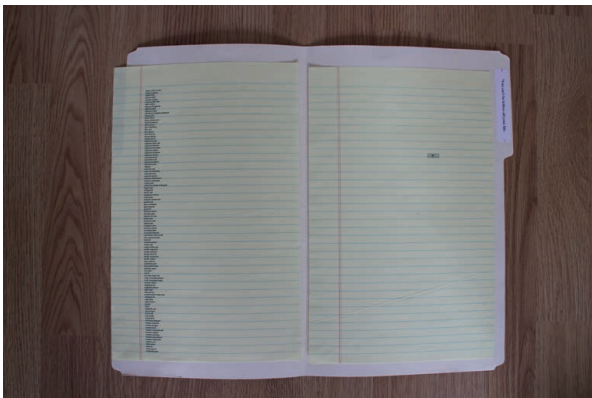


Fig. 3 You can't be killers all your life (2014) - Robert Blatt (Source: personal collection)



Fig. 4 Ingredient Projects for Demulcent Cake (2004) - Jennifer Walshe (Source: ddmmyy)

effective print and the handmade additions is an interesting and timeless combination that gives the work a genuine and grassroots feel. The live performance of the instructions displayed in Akama's work is very important to her practice, whether it is an accompanying performance to an exhibition or a recording, for example with her book *places and pages* (2016) which was released by Another Timbre in 2016. The function of the instruction in a published score is something that I have challenged in my work through focusing on the process of publication and the medium. I have therefore looked to other composers who move more in this direction. Akama's work does, however, along with others discussed below, inherently invite the idea that they do not need a performance (or perhaps a public performance) to be appreciated. The idea that a work does not need a performance to be complete is a well-established tradition from conceptualism and musical works such as the series *Imaginary pieces* (1998-) by Amnon Wolman, text-based work that invites the reader to imagine sound and visuals.

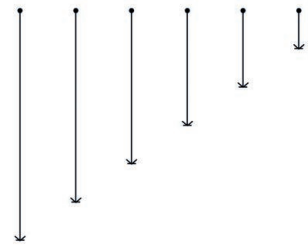
A similar aesthetic to Akama can be seen in the work of Robert Blatt. Blatt's scores are also performed and recorded, but they often have a much stronger relationship with the medium and the choices made in the creation process of the physical object. For example, in Blatt's work *You can't be killers all your life* (2016/18) which is presented in a document folder on two sheets of graph paper (fig.3), he lists the names of trees alongside a two-note chord. Here, he is making a statement about the existence of the paper itself as a medium by referencing the material's origin. This is not just a reflection on the availability and history of the production of printed materials, but also a comment on it. Blatt's approach to dealing with the physicality of an edition of scores as the subject matter for the work itself makes his work closely aligned to my investigation into publishing.

In Jennifer Walshe's early works, one can also see a play with the medium and the way in which her scores were disseminated. Although engaging with the idiom of instruction-based art, hailing from the 1960s, Walshe departs from the visual aesthetics of the era, creating a score in the form of a t-shirt in *THIS IS WHY PEOPLE O.D. ON PILLS/AND JUMP*

*FROM THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE* (2004), or spinning dials (fig.4) in *Ingredient Projects for Demulcent Cake* (2004). Walshe's design flair can be seen through her use of extensive colour and the complex form of the physical objects. These decisions are taken in line with the concepts of the work. For example, in *THIS IS WHY PEOPLE O.D. ON PILLS/AND JUMP FROM THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE*, the choice of presenting the score as a t-shirt is a representation of the importance of clothing in skate culture. In this work, the distinct lack of typewriter fonts and standardised paper sizes are in many ways a refreshing change from a default experimental music presentation format that was constructed from the technological constraints of the 1960s.

The work *with paper* (2006/8, 2009-) by James Saunders (fig.5) introduces a very particular distribution model for printed scores. In the piece, the paper is both the instrument and the score, giving performance directions with which to carry out with a pencil, scissors or your hands. They are available as a free PDF online for anyone to print and perform. This is not only an interesting link between digital distribution, print and performance, but also its ability to be consumed domestically as a printed artefact relates strongly to the history of music publishing. The content of the work is crafted through the permutations of how the performer can interact with the medium and the distribution method is both cost effective and far reaching.

The relatively new idiom of print-on-demand books showcases the latest way in which technological advances have had an impact on print. The efficient services, offered by companies such as LULU.com, have become standard in artists' publishing due to the extremely low set-up cost and copy price. Only a handful of musical works, however, have been created with this new platform, none of which explore it past its cost effectiveness. An example of a project



repeatedly trace index finger along lines in any sequence with each tracing taking the same amount of time

Fig. 5 with paper (2006/8, 2009-) - James Saunders (Source: James Saunders)



Fig. 6 Dear LULU (2008) - James Goggin & students (Source: P-DPA)

f  
o  
n  
t



Fig. 7 FONT (2015) - Fiona Banner (Source: Ikot Gallery)

which provoked my interest in the platform is the 2008 book by design students from Hochschule Darmstadt (no relation to the summer course) *Dear LULU, Please try and print these line, colour, pattern, format, texture and typography tests for us* (fig.6). The print file consists of a series of test images and graphics to determine the capability of the new platform. It creates a work of art that sets out an instructional performance for LULU.com, which anyone can trigger for a price, whilst highlighting the properties and process of the medium.

In Pocknee's *MG3250 Performs Cornelius Cardew's Treatise* (2015), Pocknee prints Cardew's well-known graphic score and deems the sound of the printing to be the performance. The performance is published simply as an audio recording with explanation. Pocknee states that "in this interpretation, every line is rendered. And more importantly, each rendering directly generates a sonic outcome" (Pocknee, 2015). As well as being a correct way of performing the piece<sup>2</sup> it succinctly explores the idea of a printing performance and the process of object creation having the potential to be given that value. This idea of the communication between the published object and the digital technology that brought it into existence is explored in depth in works by artists such as Luigi Amato or Stephanie Syjuco, alongside other artists whose work can be found in the Post-Digital Publishing Archive (P-DPA) which was a source of references for my own work.

Fiona Banner's body of work deals extensively with the subject of publishing as a fine artist. Banner's vast array of artistic works and publications not only use publishing as a vehicle to distribute but also a subject to engage with. Her works such as *FONT* (2015), shown in fig.7, a hand engraving of the word 'font' on a marble baptismal font in her own font (which is also available as a free downloadable typeface) were very influential to my project as they seek to engage with the topic of publishing from a comprehensive and rounded standpoint.

Whilst the wider artistic context discussed above is of clear relevance to my practice, due to the musical language (notation and graphic) and musical references used in some of my work, it would not be accurate to say that it resides in this broader field but instead appropriates some of the ideas and trends for use in a musical sphere. Other works such as *Linden Tree* could be perceived as interventions into media arts. The practice is intended to interweave these larger contexts into a dialogue about how music and sound is published.

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<sup>2</sup> It is generally considered that an interpretation of *Treatise* involves pre-determining how the graphic parameters will relate to the sonic interpretation before faithfully performing according to rules you have set out. Pocknee's performance does this with extreme accuracy due to its mechanical nature.

## 2.3

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### PRACTICE

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#### OUTLINING THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND METH- OD INVOLVED IN THE PRESENTED PRACTICE

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#### Definition

It is clearly important to define what is meant by the term ‘publishing’ and the implications of this for the present research project. I was first excited by the idea that publishing could be defined purely as ‘to make public...’ (OED, 2007), as this reductionist idea seemed to offer infinite possibilities for a creative practice. Despite this, through the course of the project, I narrowed my definition of the term down to a more direct and useful understanding that relates more closely to my work. It is easy to see that, in line with the Oxford English Dictionary’s third definition of the term, eight out of the nine works are made ‘public through print or the internet’ (OED, 2007). This definition, however, ignores the wider concept of publishing that I interact with and fails to make any distinction between a publisher and someone who has a printer or a social media account. Within a musical context, it is easy to claim that anything, including a concert, is a form of publication or that a performer is a publisher, however my interest in publishing moves away from such thinking, focusing instead on interacting with publishing as a nuanced historical practice and trade. Such a definition is argued by James Bridle in his article ‘The New Value of Text’ (2011). He argues that “contrary to popular thought, everyone is not a publisher. When you hear a publisher say it, it’s even sadder. Publishing is a complex and well established collection of knowledge, competencies and processes, refined over time, practiced under

forever difficult circumstances in a frankly indifferent market” (Bridle, 2011). Engaging with this more nuanced understanding of publishing is, therefore, at the heart of the project.

The scope of the definition can be narrowed by defining the term publishing within a music publishing context. Edmund Poole and Donald W. Krummel in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* define publishing as “obtaining a text and working with the composer or editor, financing the printing, promoting, advertising and distributing the copies” (1980). This definition breaks down the “knowledge, competencies and processes” Bridle mentions and places them within a music publishing context. The knowledge, competencies and processes became the frameworks that I used to create much of the creative work for the project. Adopting them into my creative practice provided me with a method to undertake the work as well as a framework to explore and pass comment on. The Grove definition, however, lacks the modern concept of royalty collection, which drives much of modern day publishers’ interactions with new music. It also lacks mention of the curatorial aspect of publishing which directly influences the identity of the publisher/ publishing house. Both of these concepts feature within the PhD.

I cannot rely purely on definitions of music publishing when I refer to publishing. There are many references to non-musical publishing in the artistic works in the research project, such as corporate print and artist’s books. Despite its grounding in common media and processes associated with publishing, the work is also inspired by larger questions of what it means to make something public. The most accurate way to describe this wider context comes from Rachel Malik’s assertion that “publishing precedes writing and governs the possibilities of reading” (Malik, 2008). In other words, the format of the publication needs to be in play before the content can be created for it and, after it has been

published, the surrounding decisions and processes determine the way it is interacted with. This idea embodies the process used for creating work for the project; each work started with the medium before any content was created. It is during this first step that artistic expression is implemented.

Conclusively, in this project, my interaction with the idea of publishing refers to a definition based on “knowledge, competencies and processes” of the established trade of publication, specifically those related to music publishing, whilst leaving open wider questions of the idea of publication.

### Rationale

The story of publishing is primarily a story of technology. From the invention of the printing press to Facebook, technological advances have shifted the way information has been published and interacted with through history. Musical publishing history is no different, from the influx of entrepreneurs into Venice in the 1400s to try their hand at the new art of music printing, or the advances in mechanical reproduction in the 1900s seeing a huge increase in printed music, to modern methods of rights collection from publishing companies on a global scale. An evaluation of technology’s impact on modern composition and publishing led me towards the rationale for the project.

In Harry Lehmann’s *Digitization and Concept: A Thought Experiment Concerning New Music* (2010), he examines the impact of digital technology on the compositional process within the framework of contemporary music and considers what the ramifications of this might be for the future. He stipulates that the new sound possibilities that electronic music and now digital music have afforded us have run out and that material progress is dead. There are no new sounds that we can make. He also predicts a future/present where music material can be composed

autonomously by machine and identifies the problematic position in which both of these ideas leave the human composer. Lehmann has his own idea of a solution to this problem: “eine gehaltsästhetische Wende” (content aesthetic turn) (Lehmann, 2010: 8). This is a conceptual music where neither the material, sound or the performance are necessarily the most important factors of the composition. The practice outlined in this PhD serves as an alternative approach to Lehmann’s problem, where the way in which something is made public becomes the focus of the work, sidelining the content. The use of new and old technologies combined plays to my advantage, to harness investigation into how people can interact with music and how a musical medium itself can be an artistic expression.

Despite the idea of technological progress seeming important in the history of music publishing, the practice embraces the idea that all media are equal. The parameters of each medium are valid tools for expression. Silvio Lorusso in his abstract for the Post-Digital Publishing Archive (c. 2013: online) makes the key distinction that “in the field of post-digital publishing, printed matter doesn’t belong to the past and digital tools are not inherently innovative”. It is the possibility of publication that is interesting in the present, whether you choose to use old media or new media, it is all there to be used and mixed up. It is easy to forget that most algorithmic composition, for example, is less technically advanced or innovative than the process of ordering and receiving a physical book from Amazon.com. Technological advance can also be about speed and ease, or cost effectiveness rather than merely being something completely “new”.

The project has been strongly informed by theories around use of media, from Marshall McLuhan’s well-known concept of “the medium is the message” (1964) to more recent ideas of Post-Digital publishing. In his book *Understanding Media* (1964) McLuhan states that the invention of the

telephone had a vastly greater impact on society than anything anyone will ever say on the phone. The well-established principle of “the medium is the message” is a default view in the creation of my work and I am, as many other artists do and have done, adapting this approach of ‘the medium is the message’ into the more narrow framework which I am exploring. The work explores different notions of how to use the parameters of the media as compositional tools and how the work can communicate the structure of the medium itself as part of the artistic statement.

The term Post-Digital was actually first defined in the field of computer music by Kim Cascone in 2000 in *The Aesthetics of Failure: “Post-Digital” Tendencies in Contemporary Computer Music*. Citing Nicholas Negroponte’s statement from his 1998 article in *Wired* issue 6.12 claiming that ‘the digital revolution is over’, Cascone deconstructs the state of computer music post the digital revolution. Cascone describes the democratisation of digital music tools and the ease of production and its consequent effect on music making. The ease of music creation after the digital revolution plays a large part in the practice outlined here, as an ease of content creation allows the attention of the artist to focus on the publication. Post-Digital Publishing suggests that the relationship between what might be considered as old or new media, such as digital publishing or print publishing, is non-linear. That is to say that progress is not just happening in one direction, towards a digital future, but that digital technologies are making an impact on print and older media. This is an approach I take in my work. I create printed works not to be anti-technology, but to explore how I can use digital tools to create physical publications.

Here I have outlined the rationale for the practice within a technological and idealistic framework. Through the practice I aim not to find a new music, but a new set of parameters and contexts in which to work musically. Whilst others have found

solutions to Lehman's problem, I feel that an approach through publishing flips the issues into the favour of the artist, utilising the current technological climate to explore new and old methods of work distribution as a musical practice.

### The works

The PhD project consists of nine works created under the alias/publishing house stenton.press/stentondotpress. Each of these works explores the idea of publishing as a musical practice, engaging with the subject of publishing and music publishing including the practices of creating and distributing publications. The works also represent my own creative practice and outlet for my artistic ideas. Many of the works could be considered as "publications" but this is not true for all of them. Some works exist as printed publications; others push the definition towards the use of other media. There are also works that are not in publication form, but use ideas from publishing as inspiration or a topic. The practice, however, has its roots very much in print and makes its statements very much as an extension of the idea of traditional publishing and musical publishing.

The works are largely designed to be interacted with outside of a concert performance situation. The permutations of how one can interact with a musical publication within a real life context are of great interest. However, having little data from the private experiences of interaction, I will focus on the making process and its reasons and context rather than how an audience interacts with it. In taking this stance it is important that the publication, in whatever form, exists as the work itself. Similar to John Cage's notion that his scores are "indeterminate of performance" (Griffiths, 1968: 68), I could say that my works exist independent of performance. If I consider, however, any interactions with the publications as "performances" of the work, I could apply Cage's statement

successfully to these pieces. Due to this attitude, I made the choice to not have any premier performances or public showings of most of the work presented. This was a deliberate decision influenced by the desire to not render the works relics of an event and to highlight that any interaction that someone might have with them is as valid as any other.

Through the works I explore how the act of publication and the media we have access to can exist as a unique artistic expression, whilst also engaging critically with ideas of publishing. I will focus on the themes of the medium, editing, domestic consumption and business. I will then further discuss the aesthetic references in the work before drawing some conclusions and considering the future of the project.

## MEDIUM

Publications need a medium. The processes of publishing anything involve working within the parameters of the medium. Design, editing and distributing all answer to the medium used for the publication. All the pieces presented in the PhD, therefore, have a focus on the medium of the publication itself. That is to say rather than being a vessel to deliver content in the most effective way, the publications seek to critically interact with both the physicality and the connotations of the medium. A medium can be broken down into the substrate and the frame. The substrate is what the content is printed/placed on, and the frame refers to how the content is displayed/portrayed within that medium. The social context of a medium also plays its part in the creation of a publication. The creative process behind the works represents a constant dialogue between the medium and the content. It is not right to consider the content somehow secondary to the medium, however in many of the works the qualities of the medium were the starting point. For example, in *Forever Grey* the musical structures are a result of the binding and page dimensions. The project began with the idea of spiral binding facilitating an eternal score. Expanding it into four directions then determined the paper size which in turn affected the musical content. The way in which the content is framed in this work is where the value lies and the content is designed to be read within that structure.

In many of the works, I attempt to draw attention to the physicality of the medium through the design and function of the object. If I were to present a blank book as a work for example, then anyone interacting with it would immediately notice the paper, binding and feel of the book. By reducing the functional information in a

publication I attempt to direct the reader's attention to what the object is rather than what it conveys or how it can be used. This is evident in works such *Grey Literature In Blue*, which uses censored text instead of instructions. This work also plays with ideas of framing content. The larger A4 sheets contain the bleed markings used to trim the smaller pages. Furthermore, the musical content exceeds these printed boundaries, appearing to fall off the edge of the page. In *o745* the medium, in this case a 7" vinyl, is also taken as the creative starting point. The harpsichord music used represents the domestic music-making experience of the Renaissance period, mirrored in the closer but semi-historical act of putting on a record and its performance in a domestic setting. The digital glitching of the music creatively mimics the sound of a record skipping. This acts as a reference to the physicality of the medium of the record as well as being creative parameter in the composition of the music.

## DOMESTIC

Although music publishing, especially nowadays, deals largely with printed parts for public performances and managing royalties, my own interest in music publishing lies largely in domestically-consumed music publications. Throughout the project, the strong angle towards domestic use and themes of domesticity can be seen as a by-product of the idea of creating works that interact with real life. This idea also stems from the project's relationship with Renaissance print culture. Domestic music making also exists as a theme in some of the works, alongside the attitude of how I envisaged the works being used.



As mentioned above, *o745* connects Renaissance domestic music practice with the playing of a vinyl record. The content evokes this period whilst the action of putting on the vinyl record references a recent yet albeit historical domestic music listening experience.

*Forever Grey* is based on the Renaissance idea of a table book which invites interactions between the performers. *Forever Grey* is the most purpose-built domestic book in the project, with specific reference and logistical demands for a more domestic setting. It encloses the performance space so that only the performers are the audience. Without an audience, the performers have a different set of social and musical parameters to explore during playing such as communication between players through ornamentation, page turns in different directions, etc.

Differently, *Linden Tree* functions more as an artist's book than a score, so the audience's relationship with it is as with any non-fiction book that they may own. Such publications could be seen as coffee table books or collector's items, both of which have a domestic quality.

## **BUSINESS**

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A key aspect of the work is its ongoing dialogue with the idea of a publishing company as a business. A musical practice based on publication inherently deals with the manufacturing, distribution and sale of goods. Throughout the work, I have not only used the idea of being a business to inform the aesthetics of the work but also used the works to engage critically with the idea of music publishing as a business.

There is a strong link between print, especially digital print, and the office

environment. Tools such as the photocopier, Risograph printing and plastic binding all come from the cost-effective management of paper bureaucracy present within business organisations. These technologies have been used by many artists, such as Jean-Michel Basquiat or Fiona Banner, since the 1960s to manufacture cheap books, prints, etc. My process of creation is not at all dissimilar to this and I have often chosen to make the link between the office use and the musical use very clear.

*Publishing* (the game) is the work that most obviously engages critically with the idea of publishing as a business. The game combines the use of office paperwork with a critique of music rights ownership whilst also reflecting on corporate bureaucracy. In *Grey Literature in Blue*, the loose-leaf document clearly resembles paperwork from the inner workings of a company whilst *NOMAD* utilises cheap corporate brochure printing services, as if it were advertising something to be bought. Both these works attempt to make statements about the function of a score as a bureaucratic or fetishised corporate object. The idea of such works being disseminated by a publishing house (stentondotpress) highlights the inner dialogue of my practice operating as an artistic practice through the guise of a business.

Physical publications *Forever Grey* and *NOMAD* have accompanying video adverts. These adverts act as a space to expand the ideas from the book into another medium and advertise the publication. The use of advertisements also continues the dialogue surrounding what it means to operate within a business framework as an artist.

Through the work, I also seek to engage in ideas of the future of the music publishing business/industry. *Concept Font* proposes an idea of how music could be published in the future. This is not so much a serious suggestion but more to pose the question or excite the imagination.



# 3

FOLIO COMMENTARY

# 3.1

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## FOREVER GREY

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STENTONDOTPRESS X  
ZACH DAWSON

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**Medium:** Printed Score

**Duration:** Infinite

**Edition size:** Infinite

**Pages:** 46

**Paper:** Grey, 160 GSM

**Typeface:** Engravers Roman BT

**Printing:** Digital

**Print Colour:** Grey

**Binding:** Wire, Bronze

**Instrumentation:** Open  
(four parts)

**Price:** £20

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### Included Digital media

- Video Advert

### Authorship

*Forever Grey* is a collaboration between stenton.press and Zach Dawson. Zach Dawson was primarily responsible for composing the sonic content and stenton.press for the publication's concept and the physicality of the object.

### Function

The book is based on the idea of a Renaissance table-book which would be placed in the middle of a table and read from different angles by musicians sat at different sides of the table. The book has neither beginning nor end and can be started at any point. The book can also be performed in two directions depending on who turns the pages. The title alludes to the idea that the piece can continue forever.

The work is designed for domestic use and not intended for public performance. Therefore, the performers are also in many ways considered to be the audience and so the design of their experience as players is considered to be the most important element.

### Design and Music

The eternal duration of the piece is achieved through the spiral binding and the lack of a front cover. Every page contains the information about the

authorship and origin of the book. The music is void of waymarkers throughout so that the audience/performer gets lost in the cycles. Coinciding with the title, the music's character could be described as downtrodden and sad. The repeated crotchets mark the passing of time, whilst the shifting harmony weaving in and out gives the illusion of the music going on forever.

### Other details

Each staff includes an (8) above and below the clef, suggesting that each line can be played an octave lower or higher. This is in order to maximise the possibilities of playing with different combinations, whilst still implying which parts should be lower and which should be higher.

The details of the book face in four different directions so that each performer can easily read their line. This also means there is no designated top or bottom to the book.

The book is printed in dark grey onto light grey paper with negative space forming the notes and text. The colour of the spiral and the use of an engraver's typeface are meant as a reference to the primitive print technology used in the Renaissance, whilst the rest of the design remains clinical in serving the function of a symmetrical form.



Fig. 8 Forever Grey

## Background

I came to this work by consideration of how I might use pre-existing book forms to determine the musical structure of a work. The idea of creating an eternal score using a spiral binding, which is common to many kinds of printed media (not just music), came to me very quickly. Spiral binding is, of course, favoured for scores as it allows the book to lie flat against a music stand. This quality was also useful for this book as it allows performers to have the book level on the table. Through my research into Renaissance print I had come across table books (fig.9) and had long been thinking of how I could create one. The idea of having infinite music not just happening in one direction but in four was appealing. The basic concept of a table book is that it includes all the parts needed to perform the piece of music, with each part facing a different direction on each spread, as shown in fig.9. The books were originally designed for a domestic market and can only really be used in that capacity due to having the performers all face inwards towards each other. In order to visually give the impression that the music flowed continuously across the pages, I decided that I should only have one line of music per part per page, which would, in turn, line up with the same part on the next page.

Having devised the concept, I initially did not have any idea as to what the actual music would be in the book. The project only moved forward when Birmingham-based composer Zach Dawson told me he was working on a piece called “Forever Grey” and was having an issue with how he could present it in a form which felt like it was going on forever. We then proceeded to collaborate on the work that would take this title.

The cyclical nature of the book mirrored the process of negotiating the relationship between the musical material and the presentation of the object. Decisions on musical structures became entangled with decisions on things such as paper thickness. For example, the amount of music needed depended on the number of pages, which was partly based on how long someone would have to play before they forgot where they started, but was also based on how many pages the binding could take whilst still being easy to turn the page. This in turn depended on the budget we had for each copy, which was dependent on how much we would sell them for.

We worked through multiple versions of the overall structure of the music. In the end it was decided that we would create a structure that remained largely static but was always subtly changing. This would try to ensure that there would not be a moment where the performers suddenly realise that they had played the passage before. The unintended consequence of this decision is that when people first look at the book, they often see it as having the same music on every page.

The music also had to be edited into the symmetrical bars dictated by the predetermined design of the object. This meant pushing all the music into identical time signatures and not having too many (or too few) notes in each bar, as the size was fixed. Additional design elements to the original concept came naturally following this process. For instance, the use of the grey ink and grey paper was a decision derived from the title. Also, the inclusion of the book’s details on every page provides a solution to not including a front or back cover.

The books were laser jet printed in my own studio using purely black ink to

create the grey. I sourced the gold spiral binding strips then guillotined and bound them using equipment at the Holodeck, Birmingham. We then constructed an advertisement video for the book. The advertisement contains bird's eye view footage of four musicians performing the book. For the recording we had soprano, viola, cello and synthesiser. We then styled it into the format of a TV advert (fig.10).

Our experience was that in playthroughs, players felt free to embellish and ornament their lines, feeding off each other's ideas. This is likely because the players were playing for themselves from the artefact and were not trying to achieve a particular effect for an audience influenced by the vision of a composer. These playthroughs were conducted with classical musicians and composers, most of which had some knowledge of Renaissance music practices. It is therefore possible that this had a bearing on their openness to improvisation, given the design of the book.

Creating the concept of a work around the physicality of the medium and producing printed music specifically for domestic use are two ideas at the core of the research project. *Forever Grey* explores to what extent it is possible to use these concepts in an artistic work. The book stands as a published artefact that inherently specifies domestic performance, whilst its artistic expression is based on its dialogue with the medium of the publication itself.

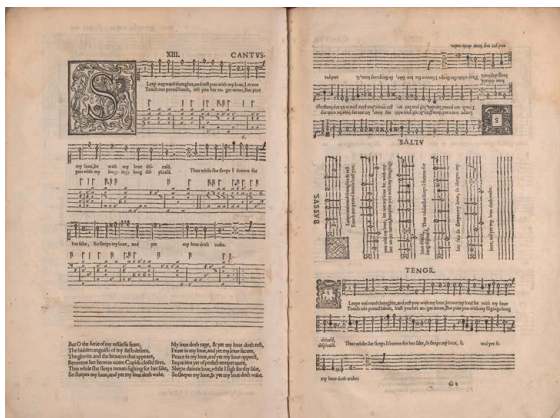


Fig. 9 John Dowland: *First Booke of Songs or Ayres* (London, 1603)  
Source: Trinity College Dublin



Fig. 10 *Forever Grey* advert

## 3.2

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### GREY LITERATURE IN BLUE

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STENTONDOTPRESS

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**Medium:** Loose Printed Document

**Pages:** 19

**Edition size:** 25

**Paper:** White 70 GSM + Blue 270 GSM

**Typeface:** N/A

**Printing:** Digital

**Print Colour:** Blue

**Binding:** N/A

**Instrumentation:** Open

**Price:** £15

The Luxembourg Convention on Grey Literature held in 1997 offered the following definition of Grey Literature (expanded in New York, 2004):

“Information produced and distributed on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in electronic and print formats not controlled by commercial publishing, i.e. where publishing is not the primary activity of the producing body.”

Grey Literature is the printed and digital material that cannot be accessed by anyone outside the institution or structure that created it. In many ways it could be seen as a kind of anti- publishing that seeks to contain information rather than disseminate it.



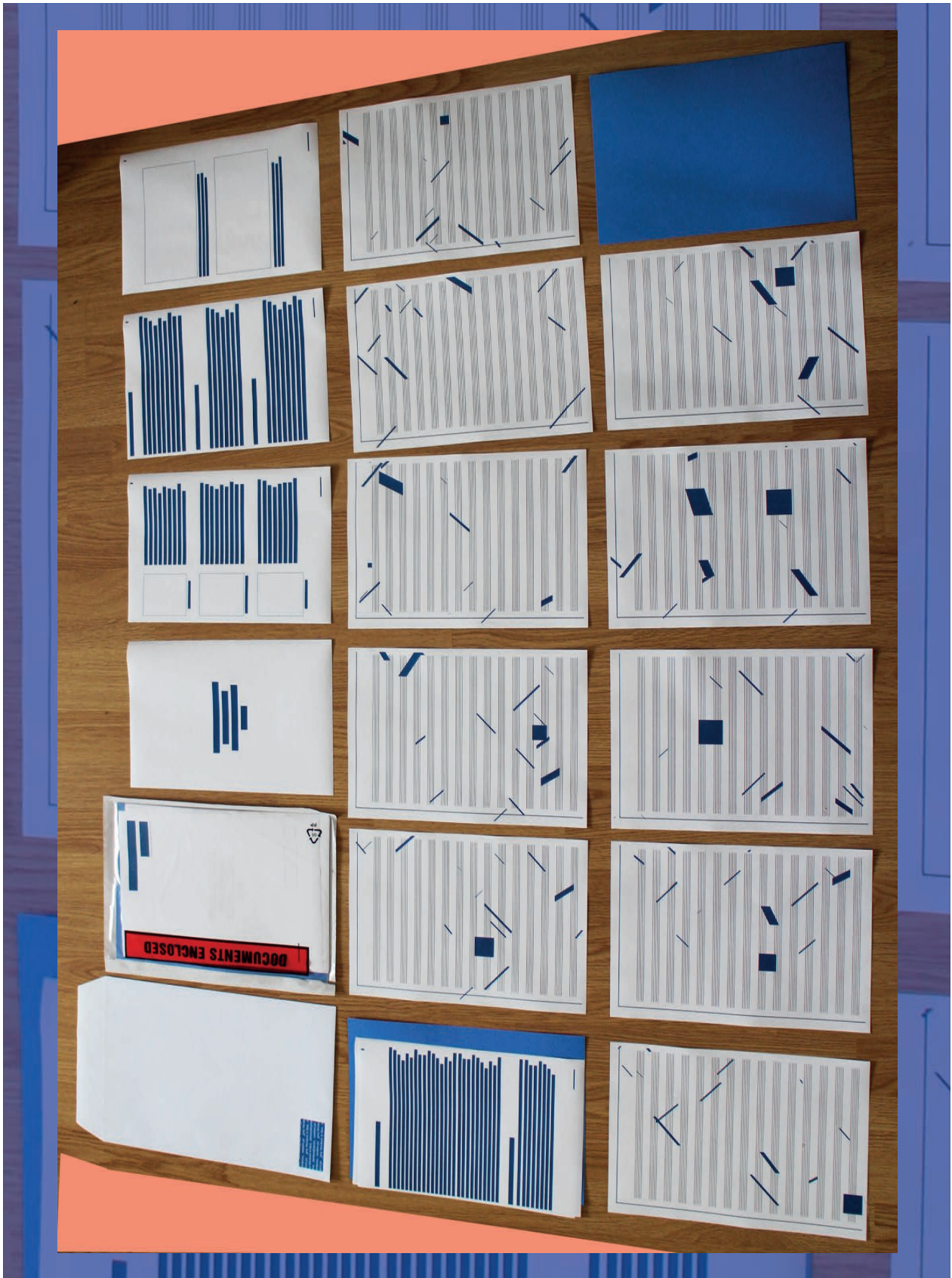


Fig. 11 Grey Literature in Blue

*Grey Literature in Blue* takes the form of a graphic score in the style of a corporate in-house document. It includes censored performance instructions followed by randomly generated graphics printed over staff paper in a uniform blue. It is presented in a white envelope with a sticker detailing the name of the piece, the author and the name of the JavaScript used to generate the scores. The loose sheets are held in a document wallet that has 'DOCUMENTS ENCLOSED' written on it. Blank sheets of blue card punctuate the sections of the score. The title and instruction pages are trimmed to 28.3cm x 19.4cm, while the scored sections are presented in A4 size. The A4 pages, however, contain the bleed marking used for the instruction's paper size. The instruction pages were generated from existing text and paragraph structures and image sizes. This material was then covered up with blue lines or deleted. Using these lines as the material, the scores were generated by running a JavaScript into the design software. The script randomised the parameters of size, shape and location with a limit on the number of objects placed per page. Objects were not confined to being placed within the page boundaries.

*Grey Literature in Blue* trivialises the musical score by turning it into an empty corporate document. Using digital processes (JavaScript and online material searches) to generate randomised arbitrary printed content, it both questions the form of the score whilst simultaneously fetishising it. Is the score just another piece of bureaucracy, controlling the way in which music is made? This publication seeks to ask that question, whilst finding also beauty in the untimeliness of printed grey literature in a digital age.

The framing of the content on the pages containing the staff lines is a particular focus. The inclusion of the printed bleed markings highlights the boundaries of the paper and how the randomised process of content creation exceeds the boundaries. The lack of information the score gives brings attention to the physicality of the edition as a medium itself rather than the reader only interacting with it to digest the content. The focus is then relayed onto the construction: the envelope, document wallet, paper sizes and ink.

## Background

People often remark on my work being a refreshing change to PDFs of new scores that are circulated via e-mail and it makes me consider how or in what form non-published new music scores exist. With such a small percentage of new music scores being distributed by any kind of publishing company, and most composers not engaging in the distribution of their scores, many scores are, in reality, internal documents for institutions such as ensembles, opera companies and educational establishments. Whether they are commissioned works or undergraduate portfolio submissions, they are often not available for purchase or public access. Scores being created as an instruction of how music should be played within an institution makes them seem like a type of grey literature relatively indistinguishable from the rest of the bureaucracy. Is there a difference between an internally-documented process to book rooms for rehearsing and an internal document that tells you which notes to play? This then begs the question: is the act of publication what gives something its value? In these institutions the form of publication is, of course, the concert and it is the composer's score that is being distributed through this medium as opposed to the rehearsal schedule, but the state in which the works exist outside of the concert hall is what fascinated me.

The idea of Grey Literature in a physical form, corridors upon corridors of metal filing cabinets full of documents, has much more poetic appeal as opposed to its more common digital metaphoric equivalent. This was, therefore, the way in which I decided to address the subject.

I wanted to create a work that focused on the corporate document as a medium, whilst making references to the similarity of a music score. In order to keep the focus on the medium of the work, I voided the document of most of its textual information. The single colour of the document highlights its printed nature by referencing older pressing technologies, which would have only been able to print one colour at a time.

I produced the entire edition from design to print and collation in my studio.



Fig. 12 UK National Archives Source: archives.org

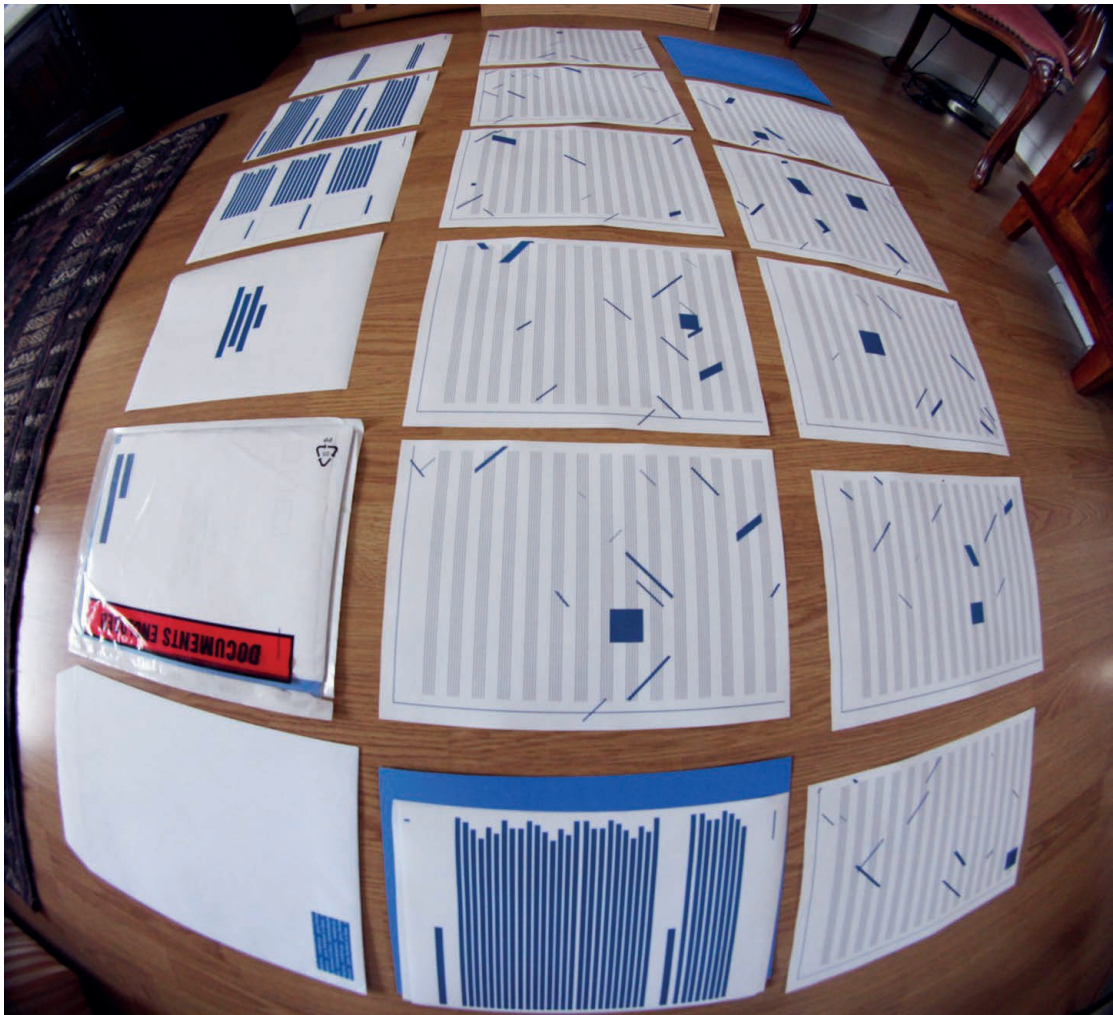


Fig. 13 Grey Literature in Blue

# 3.3

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YT BLUE

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STENTONDOTPRESS

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**Medium:** 24/7 Visual Radio station

**Platform:** YouTube

**Typeface:** Engravers Roman BT

**Colour:** Blue, White, Black

**Price:** Free

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## Included Digital media

- Running sample video
- Live link

Note: The live link cannot be guaranteed to work

*YT blue* is a visual online radio station on youtube.com by stenton.press. It runs 24/7, streaming audio and visual information. Five programmes of approximately one hour make up the radio's schedule. The schedule, which has no synchronicity with calendar days, includes elements of automation and randomised processes. The station displays a singular image as wallpaper, along with a sound wave and information such as a world clock and a listener count. There are a number of secret audio and visual features, which happen at larger intervals of time than the programmes.

The station is designed to be streamed on a TV in a domestic or work setting, whilst the listener is undertaking other tasks. The unintrusive audio and visuals create the atmosphere of the space, whilst the listener count and chat feature provide the sense of a shared experience. Audio and visual features occasionally attract attention towards the station at a frequency that does not intrude too much with the listener's tasks in the physical space. The station is streamed in real time from a server into YouTube's live streaming system.



Fig. 14 YT blue Thumbnail



Fig. 15 YT blue screen shot

In 2011, YouTube extended their ten-minute upload limit to ten hours. The trend of ‘x for 10 minutes’, where videos and audio are looped for that duration, was extended to the new upload limit ‘x for ten hours’ (taintedtapper, 2012). These videos could be divided into two categories; firstly, material that was looped to add to the absurd comic effect and secondly, music and visuals that set a certain mood and can be left to play for long durations.

Instead of being immersed in the soundworld of a film for three minutes whilst listening to the opening music, or for an hour whilst listening to the original soundtrack, and then being forced out of that soundworld when you have to interact with a streaming device to make another decision, you could safely assume that ten hours is enough to perform any domestic tasks where you might want to alter the ambiance of the space. Notable 10-hour videos include topics such as: natural sounds (sea, forest etc.), relaxing music (piano, harp etc.) and film and game themes.

The technical advances in YouTube’s ability to host increasingly large files and harness advertising revenue from the content paved the way for the YouTube radio station. The rise of live streaming capabilities within YouTube was what would take this form of content production in a new direction. The form that might be termed ‘24/7 x radio’ was born from the 10-hour legacy, forming a similar experience but with added elements such as a sense of shared experience through a watcher count and live chat facility, as well as the obvious 24/7 timeframe. The ‘x for’ format, perhaps being at its pinnacle due to advancements in YouTube and broadcast software, ironically resembles and uses an analogy dating back to 1920: the radio.

*YT blue* attempts to close this loop back to the radio, providing the listeners with a schedule of programmes of composed music inspired by music and sound looped in ‘x for 10 hours’ type content listed above. The music is randomly generated from small fragments of material, which rather than being looped are played back at randomised intervals. The

forest sound is made from a real recording of a forest, which I manipulated to sound as if it was digitally generated by degrading an mp3 conversion so the listener can hear the sine tones used to resynthesise the audio. The intentional and unintentional audio and visual glitches expose the medium to the listener, through its reference to the fragility of streaming and broadcast, whereas most ‘24/7 x radio’ stations contain a looped playlist of tracks of a certain genre or continuous sounds of an environment, the introduction of a more complex automated system gives more depth to the experience with a sense of listening to something that is live.

The station also has a focus on the digital and visual elements that sets it apart from the radio. It highlights the shared experience that radio gives through visual and audio data such as time keeping, listener counts and a welcome message.

With much of the work I am currently involved with, I am able to listen to music whilst I work. Naturally, due to my interest in how music is consumed domestically, I became aware of how engaged I was with music whilst working. I used many different methods of listening including actual radio, albums, playlists and YouTube radio stations. Alongside this I experimented with creating randomly-generated music for the purpose of accompanying work. This kind of compositional method became the basis of how I approached the music for *YT blue*. The music gives a similar impression to the looped music so often used in internet culture, but the fragmentation of the material through randomised processes gives the effect of it always being different, whilst emitting sounds relating to the same atmosphere.

The next big consideration was how to compose an experience that people could tune in and out of. If someone uses it for 20 minutes or 4 hours, what will their experience be like? I decided there was little point having more than five programmes that all last in the region of an hour, as it is unlikely that anyone would listen for over that amount of time. If they did, however, they would have to listen

for at least another two hours to know that it was repeating in the same order. I included clock pips every fifteen minutes so that a listener would quickly understand the radio's inclusion of time.

In order to maximise the complexity with a small number of elements, the programme lengths, internal timing systems and frequency of non clock-based events are all prime numbers. This offsets everything that happens against the clock and makes repetition of the same set of things happening at once extremely unlikely.

Although work in radio would normally be described as broadcasting rather than publishing, in this context the station appears as published video content within the YouTube platform as opposed to an internet radio station. Its visual component makes it slightly more akin to a publication: matching its visual aesthetic to the musical experience. I also feel that the piece represents an extension from typical published media used in my work, whilst incorporating many of the ideas developed in the project.

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## 3.4

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### CONCEPT FONT

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STENTONDOTPRESS

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**Primary Medium:** undefined

**Presentation media:** A4 computer paper prints + A2 poster

**Pages:** N/A

**Paper:** White 70 GSM + Blue 270 GSM

**Typeface:** N/A

**Printing:** Digital

**Print Colour:** Blue

**Binding:** N/A

**Instrumentation:** Open

**Price:** £15

*Concept Font* is a theoretical musical notation font. The font is three dimensional and presented as blue in colour. All the components of the font have square edges except the note head, which is spherical. It exists in an abstract form but has been realised in various forms of print as examples. These include a font poster and individual digital prints on A4+ computer paper. The landscape backgrounds on the prints are used not only for aesthetic reasons but also because they help convey the depth of 3D, as such shapes placed on a plain background look far less 3D than they do on an image with depth. They also provide clarity on the idea that a 3D font could exist in space, rather than on a 2D medium such as paper or a screen. The idea of an interface through which to use the font is hinted at in the poster with the bounding boxes surrounding each object. Bounding Boxes are typically found in design and word processing software and give the user the ability to drag the box to change the size or scale of the object, amongst other functions. However, for the time being the font exists purely as a concept.



## Background

Publishers rely on the tools and technology they have around them to publish material. Publishing has seen much change since the invention of the printing press, or the nailing of notices to a tree, to go back even further. With this piece, I look to the future to speculate what notation might look like in years to come. The font presents a future of a music notation that exists in multiple dimensions in spaces where the sound happens rather than on paper. It therefore also highlights the paradox between the transient nature of music making and the static form of the printed score that is the very basis of the classical music tradition.

The idea for *Concept Font* came from two places. Firstly, the idea of a ‘concept car’ in the automotive industry; concept cars are not created to go into production but to “test the new technologies that we imagine for the future, and accelerate their development” (Metroz, 2018). They exist purely as a concept to further the whole industry and cast light on what could be possible. Whilst looking at the industry of music publishing, I considered what kind of concept I could prototype for the future.

Fiona Banner’s *font*, which she created in the course of her artistic practice, which revolves largely around books and publishing, was another reference point. Banner’s font is, however, downloadable as a .ttf file and therefore usable in typesetting software such as Microsoft Word.

*Concept Font* has been used for a printed score of work by composer Oliver Farrow. In this edition the font was in yellow and over pictures taken by the composer. The font at present, however, remains as a concept and is not currently available in any usable format.



Fig. 16 Concept Font Poster

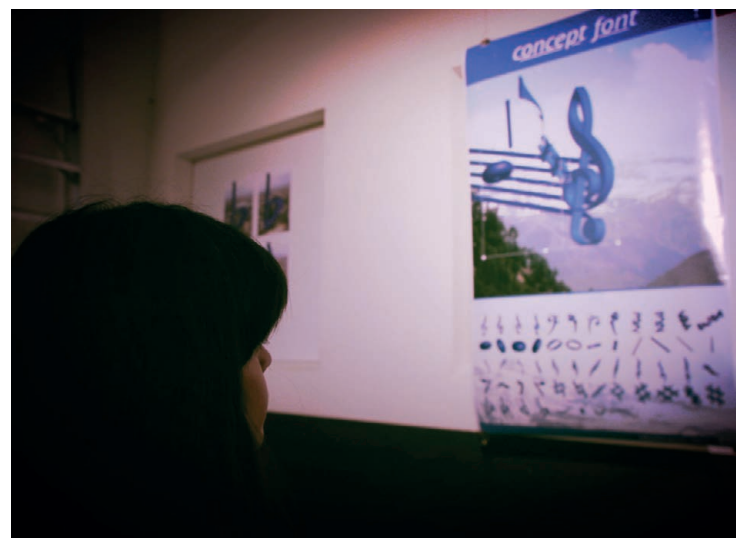


Fig. 17 Concept Font in 4v Exhibition, Amsterdam

## 3.5

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NOMAD

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STENTONDOTPRESS

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**Medium:** Corporate Brochure / Score

**Duration:** N/A

**Edition size:** 50

**Pages:** 40

**Paper:** White Gloss, 160 GSM

**Font:** Engravers Roman BT

**Printing:** Digital

**Colour:** Orange, Turquoise, Grey

**Binding:** Perfect

**Instrumentation:** Open

**Price:** £10

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**Included Digital media**

- Video Advert

*NOMAD* is an edition of graphic scores printed in the form of a corporate brochure. The book was created from free online corporate design templates. These templates are meant to be used for external materials such as catalogues, brochures etc. and come in the form of InDesign software files. The shapes provided are to be filled with text and images of the company's own choosing. The templates used in the book have been left blank and presented alongside a small amount of notated music as graphic scores. The book contains a front cover and a colophon at the back, which do, in fact, use the templates as intended. The back cover of the book shows a zoomed out perspective of all of its pages.

The book features graphics from multiple templates, however the colours are homogenised across the book. This colour scheme originated from one particular template and the cover photo was chosen accordingly to match. Some of the pages have been left as the templates came and some adapted to keep flow and consistency. There are also a number of pages that have been adapted to resemble pages from Cardew's *Treatise* (1967). This decision was made as some of the templates already had a slight resemblance to Cardew's piece and I felt that a stronger reference to historic graphic scores enriched the work's context.

*NOMAD* was made using an online printing company specialising in corporate print and has the tell-tale signs of a corporate brochure such as the glossy paper and perfect binding. The project aimed to draw attention to this common yet often unnoticed medium of corporate print and brochures by removing the content from them. As a score, the book presents a time-based reading of these graphics in the context of experimental music.

At the bottom of each page there is a chord. These chords are typical of folk songs about travelling. They follow the minor

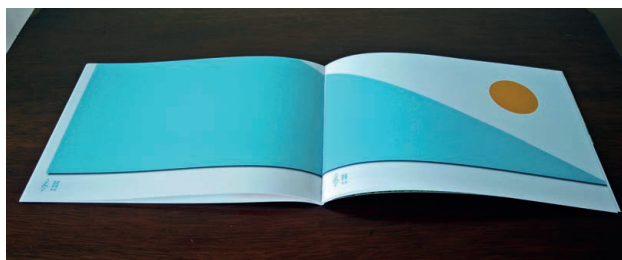


Fig. 18 NOMAD

progression: i-VII-v which can be found in songs such as *The Diamond* and *I am a Poor Wayfaring Stranger*. By giving this reference, the chords provide an indication to read the book as a score. They also provide a sonic character or trademark to any interpretation/use of the book, no matter how the pitch material is used. The imagery and the title come from the trend of organisations that deal with abstract ideas, such as banks, who use ideas of nature and travelling in their advertising campaigns.

### **Background**

As I became more interested in the idea of operating an artistic practice as a business, I began to investigate how I could produce work that commented on that relationship. At the time I was sharing a studio with the composer Andy Ingamells who gave me lots of corporate brochures from an event he had attended. These extremely glossy printed objects sat around on my desk for a long time and I was always interested in how they managed to say almost nothing through their use of stock photos and clichéd catchphrases. I then began to notice them more, outside shops, in waiting areas or even at an arts festival. It struck me that they are indeed odd artefacts: why do they even make them in the digital age? Why are they all the same? And why do I not tend to notice them? I made lots of draft ideas for publications using this kind of style, mostly playing with the idea of branding and selling music but none of them really became interesting. It was only when I found templates for designing these kinds of brochures that it occurred to me that the shapes used could be seen as scores. It was then obvious to me that by removing the text and images from the shapes I was also highlighting the frame and substrate of the medium, which everyone recognises but we tend not to think about.

When creating this book, I always conceived it as a kind of musical artist's book and did

not fully consider what it might be used for or how it might be used. I generated an advert and sold them at live events and conferences. One person, however, told me that they would put it on the piano and play the chords whilst imagining the sounds of the shapes, which I thought was an unexpected way of interacting with the material.

Despite my intention of the project being to make something visually and aesthetically unpleasant, those who interact with the book seem to find beauty in it. The bare format of the corporate print seems to be easily fetishised by the reader, who seems to buy into the design and physicality of an object that in another context, they would not even notice. Reflecting on this, I felt that the edition did in fact achieve the aims in terms of the effect it had on the reader, but perhaps to the detriment of the communication of the concept.

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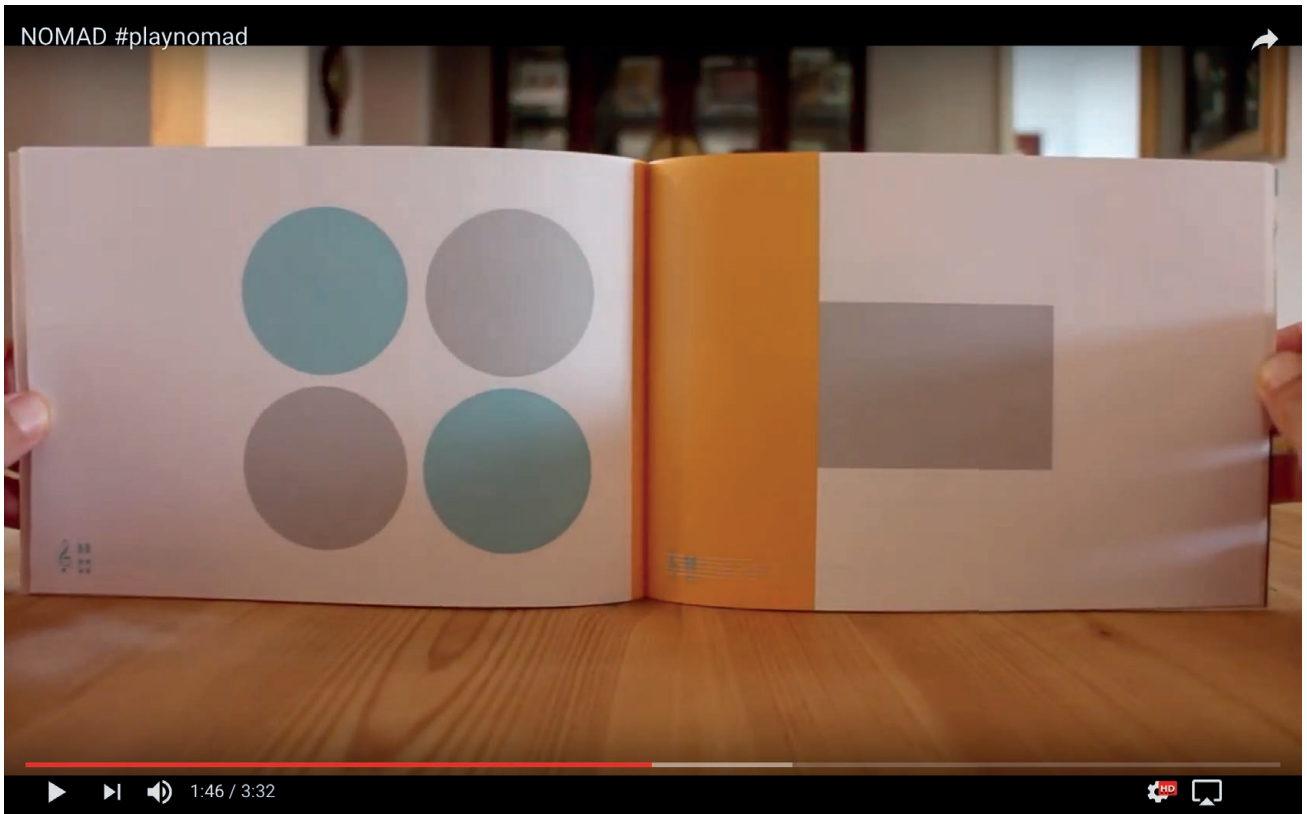


Fig. 19 NOMAD score follower video

## 3.6

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### PUBLISHING (THE GAME)

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STENTONDOTPRESS

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**Medium:** Print and play game

**Duration:** 1-3+ hours

**Edition size:** N/A

**Pages:** 44

**Paper:** Optional

**Font:** Various

**Printing:** Optional

**Instrumentation:** Pen and Paper

**Price:** Free

*Publishing* is a print and play game piece for 8-30+ players. It takes place in a single space for a duration of 1-3 hours. The piece explores the concept of rights ownership in music and its surrounding business. Players define their own goals within the system set out by the game, ultimately making decisions about what they value in the process. The piece was published as a special issue of Synzine, a zine of musical games.

The interactions between players in the game are designed by proxy through the printed materials and paperwork. Through workshopping the game, the balance was struck between a system that is functional and gives players momentum and direction, whilst also eliciting situations of confusion and conflict within the bureaucratic framework.

P001\_ 42 4c 44 45 5a 4b 54 43 58 42 45 57 52 45 46 P011\_ 54 48 46 58 42 55 42 42 48 54 59 5

P002\_ 56 52

P003\_ 47 4e

P004\_ 54 4a

P005\_ 46 49

P006\_ 42 43

P007\_ 58 48

P008\_ 59 50

P009\_ 44 55

P010\_ 43 51

2 minute

publishing  
a game by  
STENTON.PRESS

P021\_ 4e 55 4b 45 53 43 59 5a 56 4b 49 52 5a 4a 42 5a 4b 51 52 4b 4f 46 45 41 44 53 52 4

P022\_ 44 48 4e 41 49 4f 46

P023\_ 41

P024\_ 43

P025\_ 42

P026\_ 56

P027\_ 5a

P028\_ 50

P029\_ 50

P030\_ 51

P031\_ 44

P032\_ 57

P033\_ 54

PERFORMANCE FORM

This form includes sections to be completed by the rights holder and a 3rd party.

Each of these parties must complete their section of the form for the rights holder to be able to collect the royalties.

Please return this form to the registrar with D336.

to be completed by rights holder:

Piece ID \_\_\_\_\_

Rights Holder ID \_\_\_\_\_

How many times has the piece been performed? \_\_\_\_\_

Piece Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

to be completed by 3rd party:

Did the rights holder perform? yes/no \_\_\_\_\_

Is the information correct to your knowledge? yes/no \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of money received for verifying performance: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

to be completed by performer along side D336

Name of Performer: \_\_\_\_\_

Performer's ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of performance: \_\_\_\_\_

VENUE: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

to be completed by the registrar:

Time the form was received: \_\_\_\_\_

All information me records: Yes/no \_\_\_\_\_

IF "NO" RETURN TO \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR VENUE USE ONLY

This form should be returned to the venue once the performance time has elapsed to be initiated before it is delivered to paperwork needed for royalties collection. If any of the information on this form is found to be incorrect or fraudulent the declared invalid and no money can be paid out to the rights holder for the scheduled performance.

P034\_ 58

P035\_ 59

P029\_ 50

53 4f 4e

price: \*300

Performer Licence

ID: \_\_\_\_\_

valid from: \_\_\_\_\_

(the time you received the licence plus your initials @.000EDS)

(current time (completed by registrar))

Each line represents a musical piece. Use the Key you have been provided with to decode the pieces. Write the decoded piece on the score paper and then take it to the registrar to claim the rights to it. If the piece you have decoded has already been registered you will not be able to claim ownership of the piece. Rights holders can organise performances of their pieces which will allow them to claim royalties. The amount of money

### **Game opening**

Players are immediately faced with the issue that they could be decoding the same piece as someone else and if they are not first then they will have wasted their time. How they deal with this is a decision that has to be made.

Players start with 2x50 and 1x100 in currency. The first problem here is that to have a piece performed you need a licensed performer. A performer license costs 300 in currency. This forces players to interact and make some kind of deal with another player, testing their trust. Secondly, a rights holder has to pay the performer and third party. This amount of currency means that they have a choice over how much they pay each of these respective services.

### **The System**

The system itself is completely functional and all of the information needed for it to work is available to players, whether that is in the small print on a form or from asking the registrar or venue owner what to do next. Some information is made very clear and some is more difficult to find. For example, the fact that the H453 form must be taken back to the venue after a performance to be initialled is only in the small print of the form. This results in players getting sent back from the registrar to queue again for the venue. The complexity of the rules facilitates the ability for the venue and registrar to misunderstand or miscommunicate them, adding a certain unstable and chaotic edge to the experience.

### **Post-confusion**

Once players master the system, they can then make more informed strategic decisions and define more concrete objectives. Game materials such as the '3-minute piece sheet' and the 'universal bureaucracy kit' then come into play as a way of defining oneself as an individual player. In one play-through a musician's union was created; the union then decided that none of its members should perform pieces by a certain rights holder. That rights holder was then stuck in a situation where he could not make any money. He then decided to use all of his money to buy all the 3-minute piece sheets (of which there are three) and sold the rights to other players. This is just one example of how the game can develop; there have also been instances of fraud and forgery as well as political movements.

### **Foundation of the system**

The method of establishing wealth in the game is loosely based on the concept of Bitcoin mining. Bitcoin mining is the process of solving extremely complex arbitrary computational maths problems for a monetary reward. This is the basis for the generation of currency within the bitcoin system, similar to mining for gold in a gold standard currency. In *Publishing*, players decode arbitrary codes, and the first player to do it owns the rights to the musical piece. This connection is also made reference to in the idea of third-party verification, where a person who is not involved in the transaction – in this case the performance of a piece – receives money in order to verify that the performance happened.

### **Performance of form filling**

As well as addressing ideas of rights ownership in music, the work plays on the idea of form-filling being a performance. I, therefore, give the performer a lengthy form to complete rather than asking them to play any music. For any musician operating in the present day, the act of filling in forms can often feel like a larger part of the job than the actual playing of music. The fact that the game does not involve any musical performance prompts questions about the value we place on the different aspects of musical life.

### **Design**

The design is based on the idea of a fictional bureaucratic system. It references ideas of traditional bureaucratic forms and slips, but adopts its own fantasy aesthetic. Design features include renaissance printer's mark turned into a gold coin shape, meant to bring the idea of monetary value being important but perhaps problematic and early banking culture, which was run from tables in renaissance Florence. I designed the currency notes from my memory of the defining characteristics of banknotes across the world, ending up with something that resembles a note but has its own unique shape and style. I used images from different time periods and settings for the money to give the game a timeless feel and to show that it is not set in any particular era. The computer code style fonts used in the code sheets relates to the role technology plays in rights and money management.

The arbitrary value assigned to the money and paperwork inside the game relies partly on its attractiveness to the player, so the design of



the game also reflects the desire to make the players want certain things. For example, the performance forms look boring but the money that you get from completing them is appealing. Part of the design challenge was to make printed pieces of paper feel like objects with value, rather than something merely printed on a piece of paper.

### **Background**

Alongside the PhD project, I have been a co-editor for the musical game zine *Synzine*. I originally started this game as a small project, but it quickly escalated and was eventually published in its own special issue. I was keen to make a work that interacted with aspects of the rights and royalties of modern music publishing, as this is not something that is touched on in any of my other works. Although the work is critical of rights ownership and royalties through its reducing dealings to monetary and power forms of value, I also created such an ecosystem to explore other ideas such as the design of interactions through printed objects and the performance of form filling itself.

The free distribution of the game through a print-and-play PDF is an interesting addition to the catalogue of works presented within the research project, as it adds an online distribution method to physical printed objects. The game deals with publishing as a subject matter and in its own distribution as a print-and-play-game. Although the game could be played at home, in reality it actually functions more as a full-length evening event in a larger space, making it different to many of the works in this portfolio.

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## 3.7

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O745  
*for harpsichord*

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STENTONDOTPRESS

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**Medium:** 7" Vinyl

**Duration:** A: 03:25, B: 02:46

**Edition size:** 15

**Paper:** White Card Sleeve

**Printing:** Letter Press

**Record Colour:** Transparent

**Instrumentation:** Harpsichord

**Price:** £25

---

**Included Digital media**

-Digitisation of record audio

*o745* is a 7" vinyl record release with a limited edition of fifteen copies. The music on the record is not officially available in any other format (apart from for the purpose of the PhD submission). The records are presented in a white card record sleeve with the text printed using a letterpress. The record itself is transparent and contains no graphics. The work was titled *o745* with *o* representing the shape of the record, *7* being the diameter of the record, *45* being the revolutions per minute required to play a 7" record.

The record consists of digitally manipulated harpsichord music. I used found material from archive.org of a play-through of John Bull's *Walsingham Variations* and Couperin's *La reine des coeurs*. The manipulation of the sound plays on the idea of scratched records and the disruption this causes to the sound. The material is altered using digital glitches overlaid using phase-shifting processes to generate prolonged material from the short looped or 'stuck' fragments. The idea of scratched records was an inspiration for the musical processes and the work does not represent a 1-1 transfer of concept from the analogue to digital and back. I used this concept as the basic compositional starting point for the pieces and then explored the possibilities from there.

A vinyl record is not usually considered a publication, although it does bear a similarity in the sense that a record is 'pressed', also the reason for letter-pressing the cover. However, there are two reasons why I have included the work in the project. Firstly, I wanted to take

the processes and aims from my practice and apply them to a recorded music medium in order to push the project outside of print and the Internet. Secondly, I was keen to explore the vinyl record as a domestic experience and how that could relate to my other work.

Through my work with print and other published media, I developed a method whereby I would combine the early stages of the process (normally choosing the medium) with the early compositional process (usually devising the concept). This means that the work is in direct connection with the way in which it is being published. With *o745* the origin of the idea was created in tandem with the choice of pressing a record. This is a subtle but important distinction from someone who creates some music, then decides to release it, for example, on a memory stick for no other reason than because it is different. For me, both the musical material and the process are derived from my thoughts about the use and physicality of the medium.



Fig. 21 *o745*

# 3.8

## LINDEN TREE

## STENTONDOTPRESS

Medium: Printed Book

Pages: 300

Edition size: POD

Paper: White

Printing: Digital

Colour: Full

Instrumentation: N/A

Price: £25

## Included Digital media

- Video of script running

```
#include "Documents/USERPROFILE/Documents";
#include "Assets/Fonts/arial.ttf";

/alert (app.scriptPreferences.version);
var myDocument = app.documents.item(0);
var myPageWidth = myDocument.documentPreferences.pageWidth;
var myPageHeight = myDocument.documentPreferences.pageHeight;

//big in CC version so hard set it for lulu as
myPageHeight=662.995;

var imgFile = new File("Users/Richard/Documents/Project folders/winter/data/wintertree.png");
var img = imgFile.load();
var stretch = 1.0;
var maxstretch = 10;
var minstretch = 0.1;
var pagewidth = 300 * 148; //last 6 pages - needs to be on an even boundary - assumed to be in last half of book;
var pagewidth = myPageWidth * 2;
var stretch = myPageHeight;
var stretch = 0;
var width = pagewidth;
var midpage = 150;

// Convert x to a signed 32-bit integer
function newstretch(n) {
    if (n < 0) n = -n * 1;
    return n;
}

//new stretch factor up to limit
function newstretch(n) {
    n = n * stretchfactor;
    if (n > maxstretch) {
        return maxstretch;
    } else {
        return n;
    }
}

function drawimage (frame,framewidth,imgx, imgwidth) {
    //b.println("frame: " + String(frame) + " width " + String (framewidth) + "imgx" + String(imgx) + "imgwidth" + String(imgwidth) );
    frame.place(imgFile);
    var bounds = frame.allGraphics[0].geometricBounds;
    if ( frame.x > pagewidth/2 && (version == 8.1) ) {
        frame.allGraphics[0].geometricBounds = [bounds[0], imgx-pagewidth/2, bounds[2], imgx+imgwidth-pagewidth/2];
    } else {
        frame.allGraphics[0].geometricBounds = [bounds[0], imgx, bounds[2], imgx+imgwidth];
    }
}

function page1 (x, imagewidth, imageheight) {
    b.println("newpage " + String(x) + " width " + String (width));
    frame.beginPage();
    //if x is negative then we have left over image to carry over from previous page
    if (x < 0) {
        //width of segment placed on previous page
        var segwidth = width * 2;
        var topaintwidth = width * segwidth;
        drawimage (pagewidth/2 - topaintwidth, topaintwidth, pagewidth/2 - topaintwidth, imageheight * stretch);
    } else {
        x = pagewidth/2;
    }
    //image loop
    while (x > 0) {
        width = width * (1-crop);
        stretch = newstretch(stretch);
        //drawing point
        x = x * width;
        //define a frame starting at the right point
        if (x >= 0) {
            drawimage (x, width, x, imageheight * stretch);
        } else {
            drawimage (0, width+x, x, imageheight * stretch);
        }
    }
}

function pages2to148 (p, imagewidth, imageheight) {
    var x = pagewidth;
    // page loop
    while (p > 3) {
        p = p - 2;
        b.println("newpage " + String(p) + " width " + String (width));
        frame.beginPage();
        //if x is negative then we have left over image to carry over from previous page
        if (x < 0) {
            //width of segment placed on previous page
            var segwidth = width * 2;
            var topaintwidth = width * segwidth;
            drawimage (pagewidth/2 - topaintwidth, topaintwidth, pagewidth/2 - topaintwidth, imageheight * stretch);
        } else {
            x = pagewidth;
        }
        //image loop
        while (x > 0) {
            width = width * (1-crop);
            stretch = newstretch(stretch);
            //drawing point
            x = x * width;
            //define a frame starting at the right point
            if (x >= 0) {
                drawimage (x, width, x, imageheight * stretch);
            } else {
                drawimage (0, width+x, x, imageheight * stretch);
            }
        }
    }
    return x;
}

function pages152to248 (p, imagewidth, imageheight) {
    var x = pagewidth;
    // page loop
    while (p < 237) {
        p = p + 2;
        b.println("newpage " + String(p) + " width " + String (width));
        frame.beginPage();
        //imageoffset to correct for rounding errors
        if (p % 4 != 0) {
            offset = imageoffset;
        }
        //if x is negative then we have left over image to carry over from previous page
        if (x < 0) {
            //width of segment placed on previous page
            var segwidth = width * 2;
            var topaintwidth = width * segwidth;
            drawimage (pagewidth/2 - topaintwidth, topaintwidth, imageoffset + pagewidth/2 - segwidth - imagewidth * stretch, imageheight * stretch);
        } else {
            x = pagewidth - topaintwidth;
        }
        //image loop
        while (x > 0) {
            width = width * (1-crop);
            stretch = newstretch(stretch);
            //drawing point
            x = x * width;
            //define a frame starting at the right point
            if (x >= 0) {
                drawimage (x, width, x + offset + width - imagewidth * stretch, imageheight * stretch);
            } else {
                drawimage (0, width+x, x + offset + width - imagewidth * stretch, imageheight * stretch);
            }
        }
    }
    return x;
}

function page300 (x, imagewidth, imageheight) {
    b.println("newpage " + String(x) + " width " + String (width));
    frame.beginPage();
    //if x is negative then we have left over image to carry over from previous page
    if (x < 0) {
        //width of segment placed on previous page
        var segwidth = width * 2;
        var topaintwidth = width * segwidth;
        drawimage (pagewidth/2 - topaintwidth, topaintwidth, segwidth - pagewidth/2 - segwidth - imagewidth * stretch, imageheight * stretch);
    } else {
        x = pagewidth/2;
    }
    //image loop
    while (x > 0) {
        width = width * (1-crop);
        stretch = newstretch(stretch);
        //drawing point
        x = x * width;
        //define a frame starting at the right point
        if (x >= 0) {
            drawimage (x, width, x + imageoffset + width - imagewidth * stretch, imageheight * stretch);
        } else {
            drawimage (0, width+x, x + imageoffset + width - imagewidth * stretch, imageheight * stretch);
        }
    }
}

function draw() {
    b.docStroke();
    b.noMiddlePage();
    b.page(150);
    var frame = b.rect(0,width,height);
    var origbounds = frame.allGraphics[0].geometricBounds;
    var imgwidth = origbounds[2] - origbounds[0];
    var imgheight = origbounds[3] - origbounds[1];
    stretch = 1.0;
    var x = pagewidth/148 (midpage, imagewidth, imageheight);
    page1 (x, imagewidth, imageheight);
    stretch = 1.0;
    while (p < 237);
    x = page152to248 (midpage, imagewidth, imageheight);
    page300 (x, imagewidth, imageheight);
}

/alert (app.scriptPreferences.version);
page();
```

Fig. 22 Linden Tree Script

*Linden Tree* is a full colour perfect-bound book available through the print-on-demand service LULU. The book contains the result of a computer-scripted digital process on a piece of found material: a stock photo of a linden tree with its watermark still present. The process is derived from *Shing Kee*, a musical work by the composer Carl Stone from 1987. In Stone's work, he uses an audio sample of 'The Linden Tree' from Schubert's *Winterreise* (1827). He stretches the sample and cuts it to a very short duration, the sample is repeated with the silence and every time it is repeated it gets slightly longer and less stretched at the same rate, until you finally hear the full sample unstretched. It then repeats the same process backwards. *Shing Kee* does not adhere strictly to this process, but this is essentially what happens over the duration of the piece. *Linden Tree* transposes this music manipulation process to image manipulation using the left to right space of the book as the timeframe. It uses the book as the linear timeframe and the process plays out into the centre page and back again to the end. This means that the front cover is made up of thousands of very small and very stretched images and the middle spread of the book shows the complete image unprocessed.

### Background

The starting point for *Linden Tree* was thinking about how I could use a time-based automated digital process to create a book. Throughout my work I have been interested

in the relationship between the advances in digital technology and the printed form; *Linden Tree* takes this relationship to an extreme by creating something that would be almost impossible to do manually. The book was created using JavaScript, specifically tools developed by basil.js. The script places images directly into an InDesign file (a book) according to the process I outlined. It took approximately eight minutes for the script to run on my computer, with the thousands of images being manipulated and placed nearer the beginning and end taking the most time. The creation of the script could be seen as the creation of a score and the running of the script the performance. The book is then the recording of that performance.

I was keen to use the entire surface of the book, but LULU.com does not allow printing on the inside cover of a book. I therefore opted to still include the cover, but skip two pages before the start and end. I also opted to not use the spine, as I did not want to make the comment that it was a loop, more that the book represents a linear timeframe from left to right.

The publication also represents an attempt to bring my practice into a non-musical language that can be 'read' by a wider audience. Using a musical process to explore the idea of time within the physical book has, I feel, created a composition in the form of a book that can be read universally.

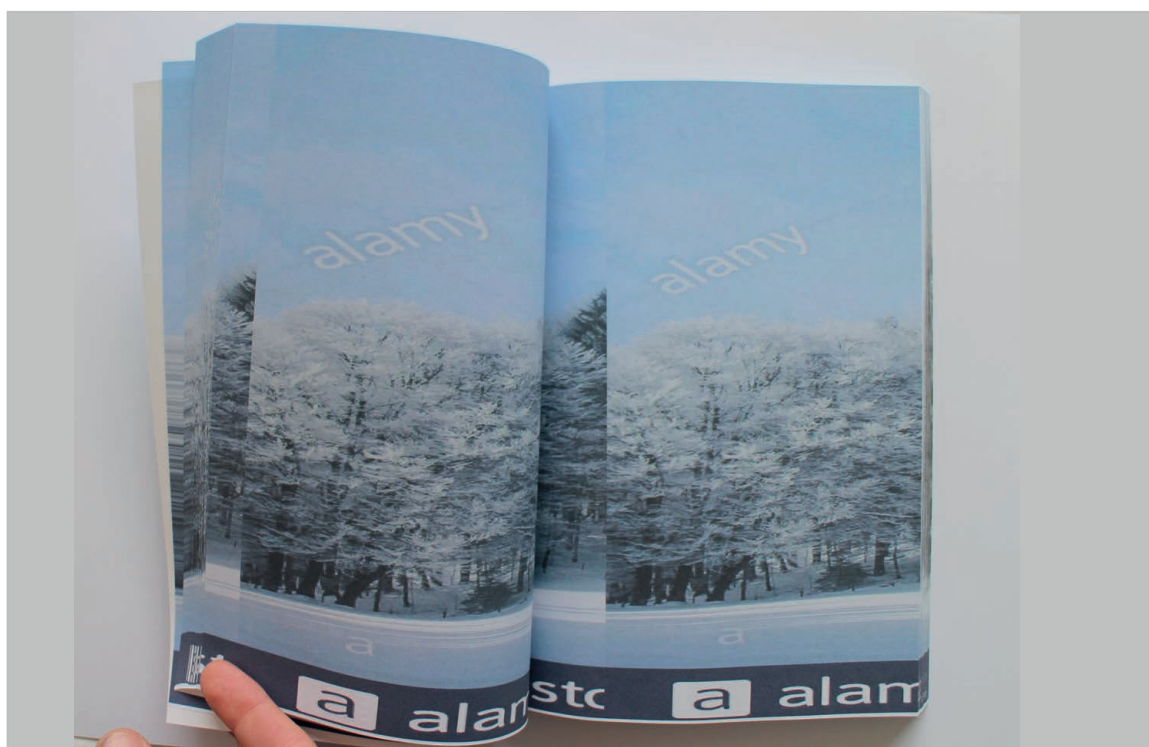


Fig. 23 *Linden Tree*

# 4

## CONCLUSIONS

The ability to understand and comment on the physicality and context of the medium is arguably at the heart of music composition and indeed any artistic practice. The sonic or contextual angle that a composer takes from the medium they choose, be it the instrumentation or the performance space, is often the fundamental characteristic of the composition. The work presented here takes the medium as the starting point. However, instead of instruments and concert spaces, I start with the medium of the publication and the subsequent processes and contexts that the medium incurs. This is the space in which I find my material, context and frameworks through which to compose with. Through this research project, I have transferred my compositional practice from the concert hall into the realm of publication and have explored the media and context of this new-found territory. In this approach the publication process merges with the compositional process, often becoming indistinguishable.

This new framework for my musical practice led me to explore questions such as “What is a score?” or “Can the score be a work itself?”. The premise that a musical score publication can function as a work without need for a performance is key to the PhD project and, although this is not a completely original idea, in the context of the research project, it serves to place the emphasis on the physicality and publication of the work, rather than its instructional value. This is, however, not without issue. A publication that is encoded in musical language or history (I would include graphic scores in this) is not accessible to most people. Whilst I do not feel this is inherently problematic, I do feel it is worth considering when undertaking the creation of such work. During the PhD, alongside the creation of scored publications, I considered how I could communicate my ideas to a wider audience and this can be seen in works such as *Linden Tree, Publishing* (the game) and *YT blue*.

My practice has led me to develop an interest in the way in which people interact with scored publications, both musically

and non-musically, outside of concert formats. From the beginning of the project, I had a particular interest in domestic music making and consumption, which I believe to be an under explored area in new music. This PhD project focuses largely on the practice of making publications under the pretence that the permutations of how the audience interacts with the publications are inherently valuable. The creation of this practice opens up the question of what these interactions are and what value they hold for the owner/user of the publication. I see this as a potential area of further research into publishing as a musical practice.

Working through the alias/publishing house/domain “stentondotpress” or “Stenton. Press”, I explored both the themes of the business of publishing and also the idea of operating my artistic practice as a business. This dialogue between my practice and operating as a business informed the project both thematically and aesthetically. Existing as a publishing house also represents the assimilation of the publishing processes, normally carried out by numerous people, into my own personal creative practice.

The current technological climate’s impact on the availability of tools and price of services and materials related to publishing has greatly affected the viability of a practice based on publishing. During the course of this research project, I developed new skills and competencies in the tools and processes associated with publishing, including use of digital design tools alongside different kinds of printing, paper sourcing, distributing, new media etc. I see the portfolio as a set of examples that explore the possibilities of a musical practice within the current climate of publishing, creating musical work centred on media other than performance. The work presented here is very much, and unapologetically, musical publishing about musical publishing. However, the creation of this work and supporting writing also sheds light on the possibilities of how the outlined approaches could be applied to a broad range of musical practices.

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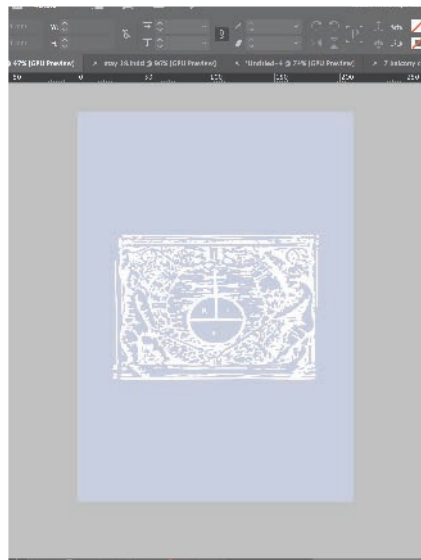
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