

Composition as Workplace Intervention: adding value to Stan's Cafe

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COMMENTARY

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Abstract:

This thesis explores the various approaches I utilised within an experimental composition residency project with British theatre company Stan's Cafe. The commentary is presented alongside a portfolio of works made in residence and provides analysis of my approaches to this task during the project.

The premise of the residency was to examine how a composer who employs experimental techniques and different genres/styles of composition/performance can impact the workings of a theatre company, beyond the traditional role of providing music for theatre productions. This research is built upon a context established by Barbara Steveni and John Latham's work with the Artist Placement Group, who implanted resident artists into businesses in the latter half of the 20th century. This context is similar to the brief of my residency, with a focus on the process of the residency over art work created from it. I specifically draw on the experiences of Hugh Davies and David Toop, who were the only composers to be utilised on a placement with the APG, alongside other placements. The work and process is evaluated through reflection on key differences and similarities between APG's successful placements. Drawing on these elements, the commentary documents the processes in making the works and critiques this situation with Stan's Cafe in relation to case studies with the APG. The result is a document that evaluates the experiment, critiques the situation and suggests a template for any other company interested in conducting a similar project.

The full thesis and portfolio of works are available at:

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/3052505/3310979>

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Abbreviations list

- APG Artist Placement Group
- CiR Composer in Residence
- HD Hugh Davies
- JY James Yarker
- SC Stan's Cafe

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1.The brief and other contexts

1.1 Introduction

Chapter one of this thesis details the brief, questions and requirements of the residency, while also looking at the important contexts of the Artist Placement Group, Stan's Cafe theatre company, my own compositional practice and my relationship to value. I also detail the situations that occurred during the residency. Chapter two contains the main portfolio and commentary. It documents my different approaches into five categories, why they were utilised and documentation of work made. Chapter three details my conclusionary findings from this projects, while suggesting changes for any potential future iterations of similar projects.

1.2 The brief

Before sharing the events, work and results of the residency, the initial brief and context around the project must be understood. The brief in full can be found in the appendices (4.2).

This project was an advertised doctoral project, a collaborative doctoral award in collaboration with Stan's Cafe (SC). The project had a brief which I applied to fulfil. The brief was to become SC's composer-in-residence (CiR), and find methods of adding value to SC.

The aim of this project is to examine the possibilities of 'inserting' a composer into the organisation of an established artistic company, so they can observe and relate to not only the artistic output of the company, but also day-to-day operational activities. The objective is for the researcher to produce and present work and the theatre company to benefit from this artistic reflection (4.2).

The emphasis was to create work that added benefit to the company in ways that were not just offering incidental music for productions. This is an experiment to see what specifically the composer could do to add value to a theatre company in ways that have not been researched before. SC's method of creating productions and how they utilise music is well documented, and this process was not my objective. I was not paid by SC for any of my work as the project was funded by M4C and the AHRC.

This brief was not created in conversation with myself. I applied to fill the brief with my interdisciplinary composition and performance practice. The residency was to start after three months of preliminary research, and last two and a half years, between January 2022 and September 2024.

1.3 My Research in Context

My practice and aesthetic are usefully contextualised by several key areas that are prominent in art making within the twenty-first century canon of music, theatre, art and technology; *The New Discipline* (Walshe, 2016), New Music Theater, devising, Imaginary Musical Radicalism, Free Improvisation, language in music/language as

music, monologists, process-based music, translation, conceptual art and “minimalism”.

Capriciousness

Matthew Shlomowitz advocates for *capriciousness* in composers, aiming that composers should write the music that fits the idea, and be open to experimentation rather than curating a very specific and fine-tuned artistic voice (Shlomowitz, 2024). I also advocate for defining my work as capricious, as I utilise many styles independent of each other through my work.

I use specific mediums and aesthetics to fit the idea for the piece. For example, I wanted to explore virtuosity and failure by miming and playing a toy drum kit in my piece (**toy drum**) *recital* (McIlwrath, 2020a). Whereas, to explore flickering between different states of being, I collaborated with a santoor player to create a devised piece with video (McIlwrath, 2020b).

New Music Theater, and The New Discipline

New Music Theatre is described as:

‘Theater that is music driven (i.e, decisively linked to musical timing and organization) where at the very least, music, language, vocalisation and physical movement exist or interact or stand side by side in some sort of equality but performed by different performers and in a different social ambiance than works categorised as operas’ (Salzman and Desi, 2008: 5).

This is a term first used to describe the music of Mauricio Kagel, and can also be used to describe works by Georges Aperghis, Heiner Goebbels and other composers working in a similar way. For me, thinking about all elements of performance is as important as the sonic output. I consider it my role as a composer to consider and control these elements: how the performer is presented on stage, where the audience are, what information is presented to them before and during the performance. Pieces of mine that demonstrate this thinking include *positions* (4.1) and *this piece isn't about you* (2019). *DeepyKaye* (Luck, 2018) and *LANGUAGE RUIN'S EVERYTHING* (Walshe, 2014) are aesthetic influences of these works, as I compose with theatre, gesture, live video and sound. These works utilise a drama, or a narrative, and that focuses the piece as it moves through different scenes or moments that are precisely choreographed and composed.

Scores are approached differently in New Music Theatre. A notated score is created in composing the piece and is then lost in performance; as Salzman and Desi suggest: "Notation is not necessary or is, at most, a mnemonic device to remind performers of 'how it goes'".(2008: 34)

Eventually the score then became superficial, and devising methods would not include using a score, instead elements would be left freer, unconstrained by a score to allow a performance to be improvised within parameters mediated in the devising process.

I like to compose with performer agency and freedom in my work, as these give space for flexibility and allow for opportunities of exciting diversion and responses to the

audience/concert situation. This is made possible by working with a script that is a mixture of ideas and precise instructions. For example, *this piece is not about teeth* (2021a) and *Rook/Bishop* (Kaniewski, and McIlwrath 2020).

New Music Theater has since been expanded into what Walshe coined *The New Discipline*, which describes a way of working with non-music materials to “activate the non-cochlear” (Walshe, 2016) meaning engaging the ear, eye and brain. This is a 21st century extension of New Music Theatre to include the eclecticism of 21st century existence: the internet, celebrity culture and other modern art forms. Walshe cites Steven Taksugi, Jessie Marino and James Saunders as composers that work in this way. I consider my works *this piece isn't about teeth* (2021a) and *this piece isn't about stock images* (2021b) as having been created with a New Discipline intent..

Monologists

By extension, in my works I perform with text, usually as a guide, lecturer or protagonist in the performance. This style of performance is backgrounded in the art of monologists, performers who are described as the following by Salzman and Desi :

A type of performer/reciter popular in the cabaret, music hall and vaudeville who reappeared in the latter part of the century as the protagonist of “performance art” performance (Salzman and Desi, 2008: 91).

In works by Neil Luck (*Bad Metropoles*, 2019), Shlomovitz (*Lecture on Bad Music* , 2015) and John Cage (*Lecture on Nothing*, 1949), this type of performer has developed a didactic role in their work, with several of the examples taking the form of a performance lecture. The lead protagonist in these cases are

composers/performers themselves. By using personas to lead narratives in works, these performers perform as themselves but also not themselves, more of an extension of themselves inhabiting a different role or personality (Schechner, 1981). Further examples of this include Laura Bowler's performance as a boxer in Walshe's piece *Training is the Opposite* (2014) and the soprano's role in *Star me Kitten* (2015) by Alexander Schubert. I utilise this style of performance in my work *this piece is not about teeth* (2021a) as a means of improvisation, utilising charisma (or the lack thereof) to entertain the audience but also to engage them to the wider question of why am I performing the way I am? Am I reliable?

Imaginary Musical Radicalism

Imaginary Musical Radicalism is Reuben's idea that once-radical forms of artistic rebellion and protest have now been assumed into contemporary performance practice, and this aesthetic is borrowed by artists without following through with the original political ideas from which the aesthetic was born (Reuben, 2015).

I place my work in this idea, as I utilise aesthetics of failure, disruption and performance without embodying protest. My work *this piece isn't about teeth* (2021a) specifically fits this description as the piece struggles with difficult concepts, problems and my inability to act on them, while using this borrowed aesthetic.

Free Improvisation and Language as Music

Free improvisation involves responding to other musicians freely with sounds and having conversations within sounds to create an abstract performance (Corbett, 2020). I utilise free improvisation as a performer in group settings, playing a

combination of instruments and objects. In my work, I also leave room for sections of freely improvised material, for example my performance of a text score from Walshe's textscore dataset (2021), *the vernacular stories of the rural family* (McIlwrath, 2022).

Free improvisation has been extended by vocal practitioners to include language as part of their instrument. Gottshalk summarises:

Language itself can be a source of music. There are many methods of focusing attention on the spoken word as organised sound. Speech patterns are full of sonic information as they are of linguistic information (Gottshalk, 2017: 175).

This duality is something I am constantly battling within my work. I play with the meaning of words and language, while also using speech as a sonic instrument in a free improvisation context. By dealing with both simultaneously, the empirical information within the language I use often gets disrupted by my sonic exploration of the sounds of the words. This is prevalent in my piece *this piece is not about stock images* (2021b).

Paul DeMarinis uses technology to analyse the melodic information within his speech to produce synthesised tones (*Songs Without Throats*, 2019). In *this piece is not about stock images* (McIlwrath, 2021b) and *several teachers describing a victorian arcade in walsall* (2.3.3), I use software that converts the pitch of live speech into midi. I then arrange this midi and speech at the same time to create the above mentioned pieces. I also use certain words for their sound and not their meaning, though this is not made clear to the audience. This aspect creates an additional reference to the genre of sound poetry and concrete poetry. These are vocal performances using syllables

and words to create sonic poems of sorts, where the empirical nature of the poem is a byproduct of the words that the performer is using for its sound (Gottshalk, 2017: 181).

Process-based or system-based music

Process-based or system-based music utilises compositional systems to create music. Akin to a paint by numbers task or joining the dots puzzles, a composer creates a system that performs itself. Changing the system slightly results in a completely different piece of music. The systems depend entirely on the composer's interest. They could be highly mathematical or translate one pre-existing non-music material into music (Gottschalk, 2017)

Matthew Lee-Knowles' piece *For Clive Barker* (Lee-Knowles, 2021) translates every letter of a novel by Barker into an epic twenty six hour long solo piano piece.

I use processes to translate non-musical data into music and processes to generate compositional material. I either use these processes conceptually, translating something like for like to represent something, like in *stan's scrap 3* (2.5.3) or I freely compose and structure generated material intuitively to create music: *og oppe ikke gråte* (2024) .

Christopher Hobbs, Tom Johnson, Michael Parsons and Howard Skempton are some composers who work with systems to create music, creating parameters and rules that generate material. Each composer operates in different systems or processes.

Hobbs in his piece *Sudoku 82* (2008) uses numbers to lead the music: “I choose the sounds I want and the overall duration, but then let the numbers determine what goes where, how many times, how long, how much silence and so on” (Hobbs, 2009).

Conceptual art

Conceptual art is defined by Sol Le Witt in his writing *Paragraphs* as:

When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art. This kind of art is not theoretical or illustrative of theories; it is intuitive, it is involved with all types of mental processes and it is purposeless (Le Witt, 1967: 79).

Michael Wolters combines process-based music with conceptualism to create experimental work. Wolters has created pieces that transcribe and translate data and concepts into music. His string quartet *I fear (4) my life* (2024) translates four graphs showing the extreme growth in reported sexual orientation related hate crime into music. In his *Antarctica Duet* (2003), Wolters takes a cross-section diagram of Antarctica and sets it to music for two recorders: one follows the bedrock line, one follows the ice line in eighth-tone steps. This way of thinking conceptually, and producing music to fit that concept, is integral to my thinking as a composer.

Wolters’ work also exists as YouTube videos, rather than just concert pieces and their documentation, which both allows work to be accessible and places it outside of the classical concert hall (Wolters, 2012)). Most of my work exists as non-concert music for presentation solely online. Some of these are edited documentations of live

performances presented as video pieces, and some are pieces made for video, i.e. *this piece is not about stock images* (2021b) and *improvisation at dont mind control* (McIlwrath, 2021c).

Minimalism

Laurence Crane's music is described as minimalism, but takes a different form from that of Steve Reich, Philip Glass and Terry Riley, instead creating music using minimal materials and not applying any changes, presenting them as they are:

Laurence's music is that of obviousness, most often using extremely familiar and well used musical building blocks, like tonic triads for example, divorced from any functional harmony, but used again like found objects; triads the sound of which have been dulled by familiarity, now being placed in simple, clear, reiterating structures, to be heard afresh. (Parkinson, 2011).

I compose music intuitively, not considering functional harmony, using small materials and not developing them further. This is present in most of my works in this thesis, and is backgrounded by the work of Crane, Martin Arnold, Matteo Fargion, and James Creed. I composed the piece *Loyal, Listens and Honest* (2.1.5.1) and *cheap chocolate* (Chamberlain and McIlwrath, 2020) in this intuitive way.

Objects

Objects create an aspect of play and curiosity in performance (Gottshalk, 2017).

Parkinson-Saunders Duo (composed of Tim Parkinson and James Saunders) state that their instruments are "any sound producing means" (Saunders, 2003), as they use

common household objects to create music in performance. Objects have been used by various composers to create extra-musical textures and performances, such as Malin Bång *Underpassing* (2018), and John Cage *Water Walk* (1960).

I define objects as anything that I use in a performance that was not originally designed for a musical performance. In *positions* (4.1), I use the objects as theatrical devices, as tasks for me to fulfil and to create an accompanying sound to an action. In *For Hugh Davies* (2.5.2), I labelled objects with food items and provided chopsticks for the audience to strike the objects with; these objects corresponded to an item of food seen on a video. By using objects, anyone can perform the piece regardless of musical training.

Before continuing to explore the brief and my initial preparations, I am now going to explore two contextual areas that have become the most relevant to my research project: the work of the Artist Placement Group and Stan's Cafe themselves.

1.4 The Artist Placement Group

The Artist Placement Group (APG) was formed in 1966 by Barbara Steveni and John Latham. They were looking to expand the artist's role within society (Bishop, 2012). Their aim was to place artists (within businesses in answer to the questions "how can artists be more engaged with society?" and "how can an artist socially engage with powerful institutions, without the art becoming instrumental?" (Toop, 2022). The artist, they referred to as the "incidental person", was defined as "someone who uses the context of the organisation as the main determinant of the work" (Steveni, 1966).

They operated placements between the 1970s and 1980s, working with various institutions and businesses including London Zoo, Ocean Fleets Ltd, the Scottish Office, Hille and co. Furniture Company, Birmingham's Department of the Environment, Department of Health and Social Care and British Steel. Artists involved in these placements include David Toop, Hugh Davies, Ian Breakwell, Barry Flanagan, John Latham, Roger Coward, and Garth Evans.

Their general working model involved orchestrating placements between artists and businesses. They had a focus on an open brief method, with no placement having the primary objective of contributing to the company's working operations or creating an art object (Steveni, 1966-88).

A placement would be organised with a host, and artists would express interest in fulfilling the residency. The host would then choose an artist and they would be invited to be in place within the company for a short time.

The APG conducted feasibility studies where the artist would be in place for a maximum of a month. The placed artists would research areas of interests, and create a report for the host organisation. This report would show possible outcomes, or areas that the artist found interesting and what potential there was for a work. The artist would get a small stipend, materials budget (or free materials depending on the company) and the experience of making the artwork.

If the host accepted the feasibility study, a longer placement would begin, usually a maximum of a couple of months. They would be paid for this time and would be allowed access to wherever was agreed. After the placement, an exhibition of the work made would be displayed in agreement with the host, but this was not the focus of the placement. APG negotiated the placements and fees and took a portion of the fee for their administrative costs.

Four examples of placements that I've researched are as follows.

Roger Coward was placed with the Department of the Environment in Small Heath Birmingham, and made a play and film with and about the residents of Small Heath (Steveni, 1974-1984).

David Toop approached the APG about organising a residency with London Zoo, as Toop was interested in Bioacoustics - sounds of animals and instruments made from animals. His residency was funded by an external organisation, not London Zoo. He displayed his work in an exhibition within the education section of the Zoo, which was not normally accessible to the public. Toop told me that the residency was very influential in developing his practice and knowledge of animal sounds, as he still uses samples collected during the residency in his work (Toop, 2022).

Stuart Brisley was placed at S. Hille & Co. furniture factory, where he engaged with the working floor of the factory, orchestrating better communication methods between sections, painting machines the same colours as football teams that workers supported, and making a sculpture out of chairs. His work galvanised him into making

more political work outside of the residency and focusing on unionising workers (Brisley, 1970-1977).

Hugh Davies was placed with the Department of Health and Social Security, where he originally wanted to get involved in music therapy, but in collaboration with Ian Breakwell and Carmel Sammons, he worked on Mick Kemp's (DHSS architectural advisor) idea on a 'nostalgia jukebox' a device that would stimulate senile residents in care homes. This turned into a project called the reminiscent aids project, which involved re-creating sound and images from elderly residents' youth to stimulate memories. This is still used in modern medicine today. (Williamson)

George Levantis was placed with Ocean Fleets Ltd, a shipping company. He was on board three ships for three different voyages lasting around six months each.

Leavantis was well liked onboard, talking with the sailors about philosophy, and offering art lessons and talks about his work. He made sculptures that he displayed on the boat; the crew onboard helped him make these and enjoyed them. His sculptures were inspired by navigation, the stars and the void, all things he enjoyed talking about with the crew. However, his third voyage was less successful as there had been another artist on board previously, specifically to help teach the crew about watercolour painting. Levantis' role was not so clearly defined, and he refused to offer lessons in watercolour painting. This left him ostracised by the crew and made his voyage quite tense. Levantis later put this down to there not being a bar on board (Levantis, 1972-1988).

The APG eventually closed in the 1980s, before rebranding as Organisation and Imagination (O+I) in the early 2000s. The APG's work did not fully take hold within the art world or within businesses, due to economic hardship in the U.K. during the 1980s. Many artists did not support how the APG were aiming for artists to become part of the corporate world; as the idea that commercial environments could integrate art threatened the status of high culture of art institutions (Duncan, 1995).

Businesses who were struggling with costs could not justify paying for an artist who was not contributing towards the profits of the company. Their role as corporate outsiders meant that they never would align with the business objectives of the companies (Bishop, 2004).

While the placements rarely led to any commissions of value for the artists, artistically artists recalled the placements were of great value in concept and to developing their individual practices.

Bishop suggests while some of the APG's projects were innovative, they did not manage to influence the broader art world or industry practices on a significant scale. Their experimental nature made it difficult to scale, and without widespread support, the group could not create the lasting change they envisioned(2004).

My research into the APG allowed me to learn what was effective in other artists' placements, and formed a working model to which I could compare my own residency.

1.4.1 APG and the brief

The key differences between this residency and residencies conducted by the APG are length, source of funding, and aims and outcomes. In the APG placements, the source of funding being the company itself led to pressure on the incidental artist from the company. Most placements were no longer than six months, my residency lasted two years. No feasibility study took place in my project, no areas of interest were highlighted in advance, so no research areas were highlighted before the placement was greenlit. However, there was an application and interview. Within the interview, I maintained I was not able to know what work I would make until I could make observations in residence.

A key part of the APG placement model is that the artist is interdisciplinary and is placed within a business or organisation that is not focused on creating an artistic product. My placement differed as SC do themselves create art.

1.5 Who are Stan's Cafe?

SC are a Birmingham-based theatre company and charity established by James Yarker (JY) and Graeme Rose in 1991. SC are governed by a board of directors

With projects that have been performed across the U.K. and around the world, SC “has built a reputation that stretches beyond UK borders” (Fragkou, 2015: 207); their output is broad, and their projects range across theatre, film, radio and live art. They see theatre as a way of encompassing many art forms: “theatre is a wonderful, playful and

elastic host that allows many media, disciplines and spectatorial modes under its one capacious roof" (Crossley and Yarker, 2017: 8)

SC is named after the Cafe that the company was formed in, near Brick Lane London hence the preferred pronunciation 'ka-ff'. They have been described as "a company of real artistic innovators who always have new things to say and new ways of saying them" (Gardner, 2011); "in a world where all the artists have claimed they are innovative, Stan's Cafe are the real thing." (Tushingham, 2007).

Education, learning and participation is also a key element of SC's work, with collaborative projects in schools and universities in the Midlands.

JY has stated that:

"Our art is trying to promote the possibility of an alternative worldview: not a specific ideology but the possibility of something that is outside of the market, outside of sporting competition, outside of conventional consumerism, an alternative way of thinking. (Yarker, 2001).

However, working in so many mediums and styles has made it difficult for SC to build its academic reputation, as venues and curators are unsure what form a new work from SC will have:

Stan's Cafe's 'Brandless brand' ethos resists the ways in which the theatre industry and the academy categorise artistic work, and this can partly account for the sporadic academic attention it has so far received (Fragkou, 2015: 207).

Although JY initiates, directs and supplies text for most projects, the company's practice remains strongly collaborative, often developed through improvisation, trial and error and collective discussion. Experimentation with form, content, and genre is frequent in search of creating an "opposition to the hegemony of the neoliberal market that permeates contemporary art" (Fragkou, 2015: 214). They find an idea and seek out the optimum way to display that idea, be that a play, radio show, installation etc. While SC were originally self funded, they have since received grants from Arts Council England, and are now a recognised National Portfolio organisation. However their work is still often restrained, maintaining a D.I.Y aesthetic across most of their productions.

Literature about SC often cites their venue space, @ A.E. Harris, as an influence on their work. This was an old factory space, which was initially used by the company to host the global version of *All The People In All the World*, before taking up full time residences there in 2009 until developers bulldozed the whole factory in 2020. They cultivated this space as a creative hub for artists and other companies for rehearsal and performances, and as a host for European festivals (Tomlin and Fragkou, 2015: 210).

In 2020, SC moved out of the A.E. Harris space and floated around various spaces in Birmingham, looking for a new permanent home that could double as an office space and performance/rehearsal space. When I joined as CiR they had very recently found such a space: an Edwardian school building on the border between Selly Oak and Stirchley. Owned by an adjoining school, the building had been left dilapidated for

some years. Renamed 'Our Facility', it now acts not just as the company's base but as a resource for the local theatre community. Classrooms are hired out as rehearsal rooms and the old school hall as a performance space. The company's unconventional introduction to the space and grindingly protracted negotiations with landlords and Birmingham City Council, towards a long term lease, has given Our Facility a semi-squatter feel.

This time period was a transition period for the company, with various comings and goings. Between 2021 and 2025, some new works have been made specifically looking at communities and themes relevant to Birmingham: *All Our Money*, a show about managing Birmingham City Council's budget (created before the council declared bankruptcy), *Precious Emily*, a show about the lives of two commonwealth winning weightlifters, *Community Service*, a show inspired by the life of Trevor Prince, a gospel guitarist and one of the first black police officers in the west Midlands, and *River Tours*, a collection of documentary storytelling theatre shows, illustrated by textile ribbon maps, that each tell the tale of a different river.

All made at Our Facility, these shows have all been presented widely across the West Midlands region and beyond. Although the company has done a significant amount of international touring in recent years, this has mostly been restricted to their long-running performance installation *Of All The People In All The World*.

SC are a small team with only five regular staff in the building. JY, the Director, Michelle Smith, General Manager, and Beth Crossley, Admin Assistant are all full time;

Craig Stephens, Associate Director, and Dominic Thompson, producer are part-time. SC has a plethora of musicians, performers and other associates who they call upon depending on the project. (2024)

1.5.1 SC and the brief

For the APG, the artist was an outsider to the company and operated in completely different disciplines. Whereas, in this project, with myself as a composer experimenting with theatrical elements within music, and SC having a very close relationship with sound in their productions, SC and I both operate in creating an artistic output with similar but different disciplines.

So here we are met simultaneously with a connecting point and contradiction. I had tasked myself with affecting the state of the company, and I felt I had to adapt my work to do this, to make as big an impact as possible. Both our practices had clear connecting points, so the possibilities of something new, unexpected, and freshly valuable were less likely. Our similar attitudes to art making would make it less likely for fresh perspectives on the process of theatre making and composition to emerge. However, SC is a company; they have resources, staff and office and have existed before I was born. I am not a company, nor have I ever worked for a company like SC, so I exist outside of the confines of what is expected of a company and offer a fresh outsider perspective.

The original APG aim was for an outsider artist to affect thinking within a business. For example, during Garth Evans' placement with the British Steel Company, workers

started being interested in the detritus of their work, offering scraps of metal they found interesting to the artist (Evans, 1969). Likewise, in Michael Atkin's placement within a quarry, a worker discovered joy in the workplace by rethinking the small rubbles pieces as an art piece (Davies, 1985). I believed it was unlikely I would be affecting things in this way within SC.

1.6 Value and expectations

- I interpreted that the brief was relatively open, except for one stipulation: works must add value, or be of benefit to SC in some way. This meant that there was a focus on my work having a use, otherwise the work would not be part of the research project. My initial research questions were: How can I add value to SC without contributing to their productions?
- What methods could be utilised to create this value?
- How, by documenting the process, can a model be created for possible future residencies of this nature?

I had many expectations of myself, SC, and the art I would make in the residency which affected all the above. SC is an exciting, dynamic and experimental theatre company. I was excited to work with them and to be deemed useful by SC. My main objective was to add value to SC. I interpreted this to mean impacting the company in a positive way which could not have been done without my presence. I related most to this definition of value "relative worth, utility, or importance" (Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, *Value*, 2026).

After researching about the positive residencies of Levantis, Brisley and others, I had high expectations for my work to make a lot of changes or create exciting knowledge about SC in a way that would alter their working processes or outlook. I had researched disappointing placements and had expectations of myself not to fail like those did or how the APG folded as their work did not generate enough income. I had expectations of my relationship with SC: I expected that I would be there all of the time, want to be there, feel like it was desired that I was there, and really become one of the team. I expected that, as this was a forward thinking theatre company, my work would be met with great enthusiasm and it would be used immediately. I also expected SC to be a busy and exciting workplace. These expectations, I have now come to realise, were unhelpful to this experiment as when situations failed to meet my high expectations I was disappointed and thus unmotivated, and very self-critical.

For example, due to the pandemic and some confusion regarding ethical clearance, I did not receive clearance to enter SC building until May/June 2022, nine months into the PhD. I felt like I was letting SC down. My first works did not lead to metamorphosis of the company, merely responded to with thanks and casual enjoyment. When I came into residence, I found that SC function mostly in routines, in 9-to-5 office work. I found myself unable to want to interrupt or intervene on regular days, to limit how much I would disturb the company. However, by not disturbing the company, I was failing in making big, altering, valuable work.

As a result of all this, for much of my residency, I was pessimistic, and isolated myself from SC activities. Later in the residency I stopped staying in my office and worked in

the main office as it was less lonely, warmer, and I felt more attached to SC, and I could observe more in the hopes of making some useful work.

These expectations revolve mostly around my perceived ideas of success when creating work in residence and are related to my definition of value. The composition approaches I implemented in making works changed as I pursued this added value.

1.7 Situations

The residency consisted of multiple situations, and these shaped my composition/intervention strategies. I started by making work that observed SC mostly from outside the building due to my lack of access. Here I was an outsider. I was always going to begin with observing SC and making works that showed my perspective on their activities, but this was an unexpected viewpoint.

Due to not being in residence and the lack of immediate impact of my work, I decided to change strategies and focus on work that would more actively engage SC in their regular activities. I was finally given an office in the building, but I was separate from the main staff and activities. Although I wanted to make work that focused on receiving input or actionable responses from SC, I limited myself due to not wanting to interrupt important SC activities, or even general mundane activities like email-writing, meetings, and trips.

As a result, not much happened until something else disrupted SC's regular activities. I then interacted with those disruptions, in an effort to repair the damage done by the

disruption, and waited for more interruptions to which I could respond. I also created installations and other work that had engagement potential, but I offered SC an option to avoid engagement.

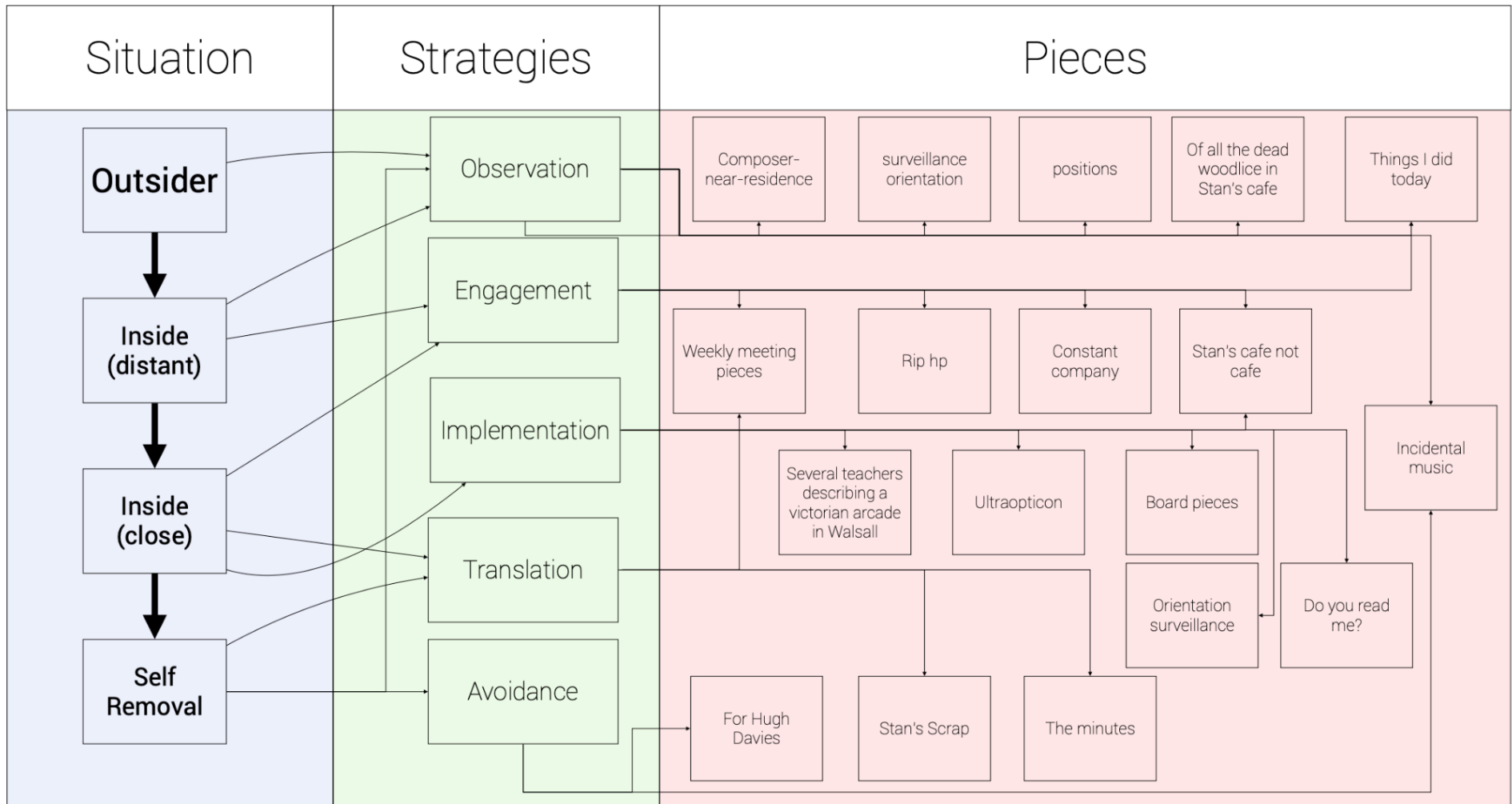
With this strategy, I also found weekly meetings as a fruitful situation to which I could respond. Here I could play with the structure of the meetings and command the attention of every SC member instantaneously without interrupting them. I was also more connected with what was happening at SC, rather than being far away (across the corridor) in my own office.

My weekly meeting interventions became commonplace and I struggled to find other interesting areas to make pieces. I also felt that my work was making no valuable impact other than casual enjoyment. I was constantly feeling negative about how I was contributing to SC, as my work was not a perceivable benefit to SC. To combat this, I instead became an implemented asset of SC rather than intervening or changing SC activities. I became a part of them. I was utilised as a composer for productions and the performer in other contexts. This was my strategy of implementation. This was fruitful but did not change SC or was valuable in my original expectations or intention. It also went against my perception of the original brief. I felt I could not operate within the building; I was scanning at all times to check if I was being a nuisance (it felt like this was entirely brought on by me, not by anything SC did). I also felt shame from failing the brief and decided to avoid my task and make work away from SC. This led to a personal and valuable piece for me by connecting to past APG artist Hugh Davies (HD).

Lastly, as a consolidation and consolidation of my efforts, I translated a regular SC process into a multi-movement work for two bass recorders. Building on the weekly meeting intervention pieces, this time the data from the meetings was taken away from SC and worked on in isolation, and then turned into a performance. This performance was the first public exhibition of my work with SC and the last piece of my involvement in the residency.

My attitude towards the residency and the works created has changed dramatically since reflecting on the residency. I will analyse the pieces based on a different form of value from the one I was focused on during their creation; I will measure which strategies led to an insight for an artistic value that could have only been created by this experimental situation. I will repeatedly talk about this added value in the following chapter in an effort for me to understand the obsession that I had with practical application as a measure for value, so that I will be able to feel and think more positively about the work created. I will obsessively talk about this added value in the following chapter in an effort for me to feel and think more positively about the work created.

See below a diagram that overviews every piece and the strategies that were utilised depending on the situation.



2 Approaches

I have grouped the work I made while in residence into five strategies/themes; Observation, Engagement, Translation, Implementation and Avoidance. These detail my own compositional approaches, and how they reacted to the evolving situation of the residency and my relationship with SC throughout the residency. The sections are roughly chronological, although there is some overlap between them. Documentation for all of the pieces mentioned can be found to the right, next to the text.

2.1 Observation

Observation is key to my practice as a composer. I intuitively respond to what I observe in making work (work here defined as music pieces, situations, ideas, scores, recordings etc.). Work has to come from something I have observed or experienced. In applying to undertake this project with SC I highlighted that I would need to be in residence in order to make work, and therefore could not make any work until I was in residence. To highlight this in my application I made a piece on what I observed about SC's website (4.3).

My position was an unusual one, an outsider with full access to SC's day-to-day activities, similar to the position of APG artists in their placements. My position would allow me to comment and make work about SC activities without being implemented in the running of those activities. I was excited about viewing things from this viewpoint and SC's openness to having me there. By being an observer, I could reflect

my viewpoint onto SC, and hope that by seeing themselves via my work, that could add value in some way - by instigating change, noticing something which is automatic and reflecting on that, or feeling pride or inspiration from something that they are already doing.

The project began in October 2021, but I was not able to be in residence until June 2022 due to the need to complete a PgCert (Sept–Jan) and delays in ethical clearance (Jan–May), partly due to COVID and misunderstandings of BCU’s policies between myself and SC. As a result, although I was technically a CiR, I was not physically in residence for some time which made it challenging to observe SC activities and build a relationship with SC. While not in residence, I created and performed my piece *positions* (4.1) in anticipation of the residency in earnest.

At this point in the residency I was testing things out before launching into work that I hoped would be deeply useful or valuable.

2.1.1 Composer-near-residence

While access was delayed, I wanted to offer some proof that I was working as SC’s CiR. I set up a tent in the park next to their building and made and painted a wooden sign that read “composer-near-residence”. I brought my composition materials and a photographer to take photos of me working. I then sent the photos to SC, demonstrating that I was nearby wanting to make work, but unable to have access to the building.

I did this also to create a tangible product of my work, photographs which could be shown to SC's partners/members, to get them excited for what I would create when I became fully in residence.

Here I added value by resisting the situation of not being allowed to be in residence, creating work about a disruptive situation that SC could use to advertise that I was an asset to them. This also showed my creative intent and desire to be in residence with SC. The work did not interrupt SC's regular activities. I reflected an observation of the situation into a piece.

2.1.2 Surveillance photos

While not having access, I wanted to make SC aware that I was physically observing them and trying to continue my role as CiR. I visited the SC building multiple times over the course of a day, and took some photos on film, utilising the aesthetic of a detective or spy looking for evidence in a stakeout. I took pictures of people leaving and entering the building and showing the building in use. Again, I then sent these observations to SC. I wanted to prove I was observing them, and see if that would add value to their work through having an asset of a CiR. I believe my value as an asset relied on me being in residence; these pieces of observing from the outside was my way of combating this issue.

I also made a presentation for my PgCert assessment with the photos, analysing the photos and what activities were happening in the photos.

This piece has a sinister tone, and is less friendly than the *composer-near-residence* photos, but is still playful with the situation. The piece reflects my position and feeling as an outsider at this time. I was so far removed from SC that the hosts of my residency were the subject of espionage. I was trying very hard to affect things or be heard. Both of these pieces were met with casual enjoyment. Creating this work showed my frustration at the situation of not being allowed in, and communicated my style of work to the members of SC, creating more value from the difficult situation. I found this approach to be successful, to create something fun that responded to a negative situation that I was a participant in.

2.1.3 Things I did today

When I was eventually in residence, the first work I made was about my to-do lists. This felt good as it was proof of me being there and making work. This is the first thing I do before attempting any task, so it felt apt to start my residency in this way.

I found it hard to start making work about any particular area of SC, given they were finding their feet in a new space and that daily life consisted of the company existing like a regular office. I did not observe any situations I could respond to specifically, as I had in the two previous pieces. Instead, I focused on observing my own activities.

I decided to build on the to-do list material, by making a video everyday for a week about what I did that day and what I then planned to do in the future. These videos, like the to-do list video, were accompanied by improvised music, and each video was sent to the members of SC every day. I also claimed another space, a disused toilet

next to my office, that I would use as a “recording studio”. I was reflecting what I was doing to SC, by making my activities more observable. My office was across the corridor from the main office. I was placed outside of the main activities. I placed myself there, and stayed there, to not interrupt the things going on in the office.

After all the build up of needing to be in SC to do valuable observational work, I made a series of pieces about my own movements in the office space they had allocated to me. Very little of these pieces showed any observations about SC, or would have been useful to them. I was not observing anything that was inspiring work. This piece also detailed all the things wrong with my office, presented in a fun way but, like the previous pieces, tinged with protest of the situation. A continuation of wanting SC to know I was trying to perform my role as CiR.

2.1.4 Of all the dead woodlice in stan’s cafe

This was my first piece that was a response to an observation within the building of SC, specifically to the condition of the building, now titled “Our Facility”. Around the building were swathes of dead woodlice, that somehow always died in quite a tragic pile. These were particularly prevalent in my office. One of SC’s most programmed and known pieces is an installation performance titled *Of All The People in All The World* ([link](#)) It has been performed countless times over the last 20 years and went viral on Instagram. This piece consists of an ensemble of actors placing piles of rice on large sheets of paper; on these sheets were the titles of population statistics; “people currently in prisons”, “population of singapore”, “people who eat at mcdonalds today globally”, etc. The rice piles have been precisely weighed so that in these piles of rice,

one person is represented by one grain of rice. The experience is unique when you find a population statistic or a pile in which you are represented by.

With my access to a resource of dead woodlice, I created my own version of this piece: *of all the woodlice in stan's cafe*. I collected piles of woodlice and put them in piles representing statistics of the most recent SC production; *Precious Emily*. I made piles for people involved in each part of the show. I then displayed this installation in a cupboard within my "recording studio" .

I documented the process of me making the installation as a video and sent this video to the members of SC. I made the piece differently from SC's production however: I included the numbers of each pile next to the words, all of the piles were on one sheet of paper rather than individual sheets, the titles of statistics were handwritten instead of typed and printed, and I drew rings around each pile.

The installation was received well, but shortly after had to be removed as my "recording studio" was claimed back by SC for use as a cleaners cupboard, to store her equipment and supplies. This, in a way, was quite a fitting end to the piece. The piece actually made SC members more aware of my presence, explained what my motivations were in being in residence and was an object that was shown to visitors when they entered the building.

Again, my approach was to make work that added value in response to a negative situation, in this case the dead woodlice in SC. By utilising this resource, I was

combating the problem as well as bringing awareness and protesting the state of the building. This work used SC's style and language to create something, and I enjoyed how SC responded to this work, as it directly related to their work and daily activity. The work was observable in SC and added value as a commodity for staff and visitors to visit. This piece could have only been made by someone in my position, existing within SC but existing outside of its daily operations. Now in residence, I was adding value within the building of SC.

2.1.5 Impingement, they nicked his trousers and loyal, listens, honest

Throughout the residency I put pressure on myself to make work that would create change within SC. To get away from this pressure I made incidental music based on observations of SC's activities via my improvisation practice. These pieces created value out of elements of the building and conversations that were had within the office. Some posters were on display from when the building was still a school. I used sentiments from a poster to create *loyal, listens, honest*.

I observed conversations within the main office of SC, wrote down quotes from these conversations, and used them as lyrics and inspiration in two pieces, *impingement* and *they nicked his trousers*. I added value by using these regular activities and materials within SC and making music from them. These also allowed me to develop my improvisation and composition practise. Having no agenda of making impactful change with these works was of great benefit to me, as I was able to work freely. I would recommend this approach as the music is both representative of my interests

and is entirely related to SC given its origin, and I regret not utilising this approach more throughout the residency.

2.1.6 Summary/conclusion

My strategy of observation was successful in making art about the situation and outsider relationship I had with SC. This outsider position was crucial in making the work and was effective in making work that added value to SC. However, at the beginning of being in residence, I did not find much inspiration and I did not want to disrupt daily activities, as this would go against my misaligned understanding of the brief that everything I did had to add value. My work developed my relationship with SC, as they understood more about my work and approaches and I learned more about how they operated. All of the work was specific to SC and the situation of the residency. *Of all the woodlice in Stan's Cafe*, was engaged with by SC and gave me a positive feeling in feeling valued. Therefore I would then focus on making work that engaged with SC's activities and building. Observation as an approach is still present in the rest of my work within the residency, but would no longer be the focus of the approaches.

2.2 Engagement

The following works were all made with the approach of engagement, in an effort to create mutual engagement between me, SC, and my work. Having reflected on my observational work, I noticed that my work had not generated much engagement from SC, and had not generated value in the way I had hoped. I decided to make works that

focused on generating interaction between me and SC in some way. Now that I was fully in residence I felt more comfortable and more confident to do this. I was also aware that the longer I was in residence, the less of an outsider I would become.

I asked them what work they would want from me that would be valuable. I was asked to explore creating music/sounds for their website. I opted to not do this, as the task did not interest me; I believed that most internet users would mute the sounds or be listening to their own music anyway. I wanted the work I made to come from my own observations, as this is where I believed I could add value.

I was interested in creating interventions that would disrupt SC, that would then lead to a valuable insight, instigate change, or improve things for SC in some way. However, I was afraid of disrupting SC in a way that would harm their activities, as this was the opposite of my intentions. I also had to maintain a professional and personal relationship with them for two more years. As a result, the work I made with the approach to engage SC was presented in a way that made engaging with the work optional.

2.2.1 Rip hp

SC rehearse productions in their space. Within their office they have a printer; this printer broke. I saw this as an opportunity to make a valuable artistic contribution in the event of something un-valuable happening within SC: losing useful equipment. I felt I could contribute to this disruption as I was not the cause. Therefore my contributions could only be positive.

I recorded sounds of the printer, as it would still attempt to print but would fail. Using these sounds I composed a piece of music, using the various samples from the printer: the error notification sound, on and off sounds, and the broken whirring of the machine.

I arranged the samples and recorded some other instruments around it to make a piece of music eulogising the printer. I then printed off a sheet of paper with a QR code that linked to the recording. I then left some flowers and a sign saying to scan the QR code to listen to a commemorative piece of music, a eulogy. To create the eulogy music I responded to the samples intuitively with improvisation. I used an organ sound synonymous with traditional western funerals, with a printer for a melancholic but amusing result.

I also left a page next to the printer for SC to write a goodbye message, sharing their favourite memories of the printer. SC members commemorated the printer and reconciled with the printer and its death.

This intervention was a response to a situation that could have happened for any office-based company. SC members did engage and found it funny, sweet and silly. Craig at this point said to me "Oh I see you need something to happen around here for you to respond to". This piece happened in August, after several months of being in the building regularly. This piece engaged SC with their own assets and made them engage with me which warmed them to me more and made them understand a bit

more what my task was of being there in residence. I had to involve myself with something noticeable, like key equipment failing, to be noticed

I added value in a similar way to some of my observation work, responding to a negative situation with a playful piece.

2.2.2 Consistent company

Being an old building, Our Facility had structural problems, and heavy rain in November 2022 led to a substantial leak in the main hall, dripping water from a height of around 20 feet. I observed that the leak was falling at a regular tempo. I saw this leak as an opportunity to contribute artistic value to this negative situation, similar to my other pieces.

First I experimented with putting different objects underneath the leak and observing the different sounds the water would make when colliding with different objects.

I then recorded myself accompanying the drip, improvising with a ukulele, treating the drip as a partner in the improvisation and as a metronome. The leak fluctuated in tempo due to fluctuating levels of rain on the roof. I played until the building closed for the day. I chose to play the ukulele as it has a high attack, akin to the leak in the cup that I had set up on the floor.

JY moved from the office to the hall to continue his work and be around the performance. He did this as an offer of support to the performance. Many other

members ignored what I was doing. SC had a visitor during this time, and JY introduced me to the visitor while I performed. I enjoyed playing with the SC building and making music with it. Like the previous piece with the printer, I was adding artistic value to something that depreciated the value of the space, and adding myself to something that was noticeable. I enjoyed having something to play with as a responding live musician rather than being in my office.

At no other time during the residency did I improvise in the hall in this way. If I were to improvise music without the leak I would fear disrupting normal SC activity.

I experimented with objects as using objects is part of my improvisation and compositional practice; I believe they create an otherness on stage. They also align with eco-consciousness, reusing and recycling and having care for the items we use on a daily basis. By using them as instruments I add value to them. I wanted to share this object-based interest with SC as it could have been a more accessible way of them making music. After my performance with the leak, I left my objects on a table with the instructions to swap the bucket with another object to observe the sound. This was ignored by SC members.

This piece continues the theme that my work involves observing loss, or an issue that needs fixing and countering with care and a positive contribution. I did not actually fix any problems, instead responding with art around that situation. That is my added value. Although I performed in the main hall, and made an interactive installation, it was important to me that this was optional. If I had forced the company to attend this

performance, I would have disrupted their work. Here, the event happened, was witnessed and still added value to the situation, without detracting from important SC work. However, SC not engaging with my installation discouraged me from attempting anything similar in the future.

2.2.3 Other pieces

I attempted other playful strategies of engagement.

- I created a virtual noticeboard that was accessible from QR codes around the building
 - I posted daily updates and posted my work.
 - There was a messaging function, so SC members could make comments, request work etc
 - I played a jingle around the building when I posted something new on the noticeboard (4.4).
 - This was not engaged with, and instead became an archive of my work.
- During rehearsals for a show, I observed everyone made a lot of hot drinks
 - I wrote note names underneath the mugs.
 - I then helped collect the mugs at the end of the day.
 - I made some music in the order I found them. (4.5)
 - The task and resulting recording was not engaged with.
- I left a package of gifts and a note to each board member in advance of a board meeting I wasn't attending (4.6)
 - Only two of the packages were taken.

My approach was passive and non-disruptive. SC chose not to engage with it and this meant I would explore different approaches. I attempted to work with their systems and set up situations for them to engage with my work, but was instead ignored. By not engaging with these efforts made me feel that my work was not valuable, due to my focus that my work should be valuable.

2.2.4 Weekly meetings

I mostly made pieces at this point that have been directly related to specific situations in SC, like my lack of access and disruptions to the building or equipment. I wanted to add value to normal, predictable situations within the workplace.

SC's weekly meetings interested me as this was a time and space that everyone met and the specific activity of talking in turn about SC problems was guaranteed to happen. I was also able to engage with everyone in the company at the same time. I was given a small time to talk about my own projects; this was my best time to engage with a functional task, add value to the meeting and learn about SC.

Over time I gained confidence in using the meetings as a method of performance. I wanted to make SC involved in my music-making as this would be a valuable contribution, making art passively as part of their functional activity. Rather than me making art as a passive observer, I would facilitate them making music, passively. However, I was keen on this art-making not disrupting the meeting.

I started by making music live in the meeting room. I assigned an object/sound to every person in the meeting. When one person had finished speaking, I would play the corresponding sound. Over the course of a meeting, sounds would combine to create sequences, thus creating a piece of music and creating fun in the meeting (a recording of this piece cannot be shared as it will involve me showing the whole meeting which would be a breach of privacy of SC, as they discussed potentially confidential things. The other recordings distort the speech so that no personal information can be heard and are sped up for the pieces to be able to be perceived on a shorter time scale.)

A selection of pieces, their recordings and a description of the pieces can be found to the right (research catalogue only).

I kept coming back to these meetings as I found them compositionally interesting. They were always similar, the same people would talk and dominate the meeting, and when other people spoke it was fresh to the meeting. I enjoyed working with different compositional techniques with similar material to get various different results. The meetings show that SC meet very regularly for a set time and have very similar discussions every week. The running of the company is regular in this way, and my contributions added an artistic value to this activity. In one meeting, one of the members actively suggested a live edit to my piece, creating the engagement I was seeking. This and the enjoyment of these pieces made me feel valued.

However, my pieces became less and less disruptive, starting from performances and music in the room, to making recordings with headphones on, performing with the meeting on mute remotely to eventually recording data from the meeting and making the music after. This was due to my fear of disrupting SC and annoying them. Even though I wanted them to engage in these pieces and maybe learn something from the meetings; i.e who was talking the most, what the content focused on, I made engaging with the pieces optional. I reduced the works' visibility by making them increasingly passive and the recordings were emailed to everyone afterwards as something to choose to listen to, rather than enforcing the music upon them.

These weekly meeting pieces capture a snapshot of SC at the time, the people in the meetings, and how the dynamics of the meetings unfolded. These works are rules/processes for creating music that could be applied to any company that has meetings, and could add an artistic output to that meeting, creating a piece unique to that group and meeting. The same rules could be applied to different groups and provide a fingerprint of that group.

Staff have since changed at SC, so repeating these pieces would offer different results. Comparing these could show a change in group dynamics.

2.2.5 Summary/conclusion

My aim here was to engage SC with my work, and have them respond and be a part of the work. This was due to my positive experience with *of all the woodlice in Stan's cafe*. I did not create this engagement in the way that I was hoping and this did affect my future approaches, but it was important for me that I did not affect the running of SC negatively, and creating work that utilised their daily activities and made music from them was effective in adding value. The weekly meetings were fun, and added something to a time that was not always very exciting for a theatre company. Again, my approach was to add something artistic to a situation.

Situations like the printer and leak were rare, and I did not want to wait around to respond to more similar situations; I wanted to be more useful and make work that SC found useful. To spare myself feeling bad, I removed the possibility of SC interacting through my work.

2.3. Implementation

This section details the works that were made as I became an implemented asset of SC and how this approach necessitated itself. I made a work in response to a prompt for SC, and this led to fulfilling functions for specific tasks by the company, leading to my position as an outsider weakening as I became more implemented within SC.

However, I did feel that I was valuable to SC utilising this approach.

2.3.1 Stan's Cafe not Café

During a zoom call that I was observing between SC and one of their partnering schools, one of the teachers consistently mispronounced Stan's Cafe (ka-ff) as Stan's Café (ka-FAY). This has been an issue throughout SC's history. During the call, I received a private message from JY about how this is something that always irks him. I saw in this message an opportunity to respond to this problem, a prompt to make something about this situation. JY had not instructed me to make something for them, but this was the first time that a piece was instigated directly by SC suggesting something to me.

I decided to make a short song, focusing positively on rhyming words with the correct pronunciation of SC. Instead of making the song a recording that could be ignored online, I wanted to confront visitors. Previously, making work optional did not work, this was a different approach to encourage engagement. To do this, I asked SC to buy a doorbell and two connecting speakers that allowed for custom mp3s to be used. I uploaded the opening of the song, so when the doorbell is pressed, the song would play, welcoming the visitor with accurate information about SC, and making it known to them that this was a creative place. The sound would play on a speaker outside of the door as well as inside the building, in the main office.

The song was composed with improvisation around a basic sequence in 7/4. Improvised recorders and synths accompany, creating a whimsical and odd feel that I believe reflects SC's personality.

The piece has a passive aggressive tone, confronting visitors with the trivial information of how to pronounce the name of the theatre company. This piece has been implemented by SC, with the doorbell still in use. The song was performed at all the Board away days and meetings: it became a theme song of sorts. Again, I responded to a negative situation without directly resolving it.

At the time of composing, none of my pieces were utilised or engaged with like this. Previous work had been enjoyed and observed, but here my work was used by SC and was valuable to them in its usefulness. This was the type of work that I thought should have been the focus of my residency, and it made me feel good and valued because SC used it and would talk to me about it. Therefore, I encouraged SC to give me more prompts. SC had a problem, they vocalised that problem directly to me, I made a piece that I thought could be valuable by addressing this problem.

However, I believe this work fulfilled a function that contributed to SC building its brand, which would be part of the company's regular aims. This prompt could have been a commission asked of any composer who had worked with SC before. This is adding additional value to SC, but benefited my feelings of self worth and SC having a product to engage visitors. The aim of my residency was to observe and create work that added value to SC, and while it did this, the process of receiving a prompt and fulfilling it would not continue to do this. As in the APG model, focus was not advised to be on functional work by the artist, but on the situation and what the artist makes from being in place. After this piece, I focused on creating functional art, as I now had a new strategy, to be prompted and fulfil the prompt. I actively encouraged more

invitations of areas to work on. By stepping into this role of making functional art, I had opened the possibility of me becoming more involved in SC's own artistic projects, not just their daily office activities.

2.3.2 Orientation surveillance

SC's *A City Adventure* (2022) is a devised training day for teachers, giving them tasks to encourage participants to take risks and try new things and look at things in new ways as essential elements of creativity. I was asked to be involved in documenting one of these days by taking surveillance photos of the activities, akin to the style of my previous piece *surveillance photos* (2.1.2). Here I was to fulfil a function, to make documentation of this event to promote the training for other schools. I was happy to oblige, as there was potential for me to be both useful and add value. I was still an outsider, as I was to remain anonymous and not help in running the event, just document it.

After developing the photos, I sent the photos to SC. I made a presentation of the photos and recorded myself discussing them. In order to anonymise the details and take the focus away from me, I removed my voice from the recording and replaced it with midi notes. A new chord would denote a change to a new slide. Here I created a piece of music that was not requested, and was surplus to requirement. This music was not used in the same way as the photos, but this act created the art from the situation. While the functional task of making documentation can be artistic, the end result is not. I made this music to reclaim some autonomy in my participation in the photo taking; my addition to the task was the value I could add. This additional art was

not met with the same positive response as *Stan's Cafe not Cafè* or the documentation. Therefore I encouraged more prompts, and became disinterested in making work or interventions in addition or response.

2.3.3 Several teachers describe a victorian arcade in walsall

At the next *City Adventure day* in Walsall, I was asked to be involved in the running of the day by performing as an agent facilitating one of the tasks. This task involved me instructing participants to record themselves describing the arcade we were in. I was then instructed to make some music with these recordings that would then be played to the participants later in the day. This music (*several teachers describe a victorian arcade in walsall*) was then used with other documentation to create a trailer for the event.

A clear boundary had been crossed here. Previously I made my own response to a prompt, the response was not specified by SC. Then, I was asked to maintain my outsider position during a SC activity, but contribute to it from my outsider position for documentation. Here, I was tasked with running the activity itself, no longer as an outsider but as an implemented asset of SC. The task included a request and utilisation for my additional response.

I acted as an implemented part of SC, not as CiR offering alternative ways of providing artistic value. I followed the instructions and did not add anything to the situation. The music I made was made by me and part of my creative practice, but for only a

functional result. This was useful for SC and enjoyable for me, but in this position I could not add any additional value to the task.

2.3.4 SC productions *Do you read me?* And *Ultraopticon*

Despite actively being discouraged within the brief of the project (4.2), I was involved in making music for two SC productions, *Do you read me?* and *Ultraopticon*. For *Do you read me?* I was originally defined as Sound Artist Advisor, advising an artist who was hired as a co-devisor and performer, but I ended up also being involved in the performance of the show. During the production week, the sound artist was not able to make the devising sessions due to technical issues with their instruments. I became a key part of devising the music for the show, and contributed my own style of music.

Here I felt useful and valued by SC, but I was not directly involved in any of the creative decisions in the show; I was an implemented asset of SC, performing the function of providing music, and offering advice to the sound artist. It felt necessary for me to be involved to keep work being made, as I was not exploring work in other areas at that time. I did not make my own response to the production, but I was a valuable asset to the production.

Ultraopticon was a show that was instigated as a collaboration between myself and SC. The preliminary idea came from SC after a situation that allowed them to use an apartment at the top of the Rotunda building in the centre of Birmingham for a show became available. I offered some ideas for the show, but I believe these did not make

an impact on the direction or production. I felt that my ideas were not very strong and I was happy to go along with the project; I made the decision not to attempt to influence the show and instead carry out my function. Here I was a fully implemented member of SC, being utilised as a performer in the production.

This is not to say that my involvement in either show had no artistic merit, or it would have been the exact same show if I was not involved. My practices and aesthetics were present within the shows, but being utilised in this role contradicted my overall objectives. This approach was valuable for SC but did not advocate for the special conditions of the residency.

Ultraopticon in January 2024 marked the end of the residency, as my role as an outsider had been compromised by a crossing of boundaries. I had been fully assimilated into a usable asset for SC's creative output and had lost my outsider positioning. I did not realise this until it was pointed out to me by a supervisor. I had the crucial element of my position in the residency as an outsider, and for the two productions I was involved with shared the same objective as SC.

2.3.5 AGM/Board pieces

Over the course of the residency, I was asked regularly to create performances for the Board of Directors. These changed over time due to my developing approach and attitude towards the tasks.

2.3.5.1 Board bios

I was prompted by SC to provide a performance at an end of year party in 2022, where the Board and friends of SC would be present. This performance was to be entertainment. I saw this as an opportunity to create an intervention in some way, by creating an unexpected performance that challenged something about SC. I had been given a platform to perform in front of SC and their Board as documented, I was anxious about doing anything that would upset, annoy or disrupt the event, given I had to maintain a long-term relationship with SC and the board. This was my first audience with the board and I wanted to make an impact.

I made a short song for every member of the Board, using only their public biographies on the SC website as lyrics. The Board do not perform in shows, nor are easily publicly identifiable as being involved in SC. I wanted to put them at the centre of SC's and their friends' attention for a short time, and draw attention to their mostly unartistic, and in-much-need-of-updating biographies - many biographies had spelling errors or were clearly written years prior. The performance situation also required it to be accessible for a deaf person who would be in attendance. I was initially affronted by SC's request for a musical performance while knowing they had invited a deaf person to the show. I reacted by focusing on the board, who had ignored me before (2.3 + 4.6). I wanted to both challenge and please SC, and found it challenging to straddle both of these agendas in the making process. As part of the performance, I had an interlude where I utilised a BSL interpreter so I could talk directly to the deaf audience member, and alienate the rest of the audience, in an effort to reverse the situation that the deaf person was in during the music. I wanted to respond to a negative situation with care.

The performance was a success, with JY describing it afterwards as “exactly correct...perfect...what was needed”. Here I was being utilised as a functional musician, but I also created a confrontational performance for SC. I found the task helpful in making something of both values, but was limited artistically by it too, knowing that SC relationships were at stake.

2.3.5.2 AGM

Given the success of this output (measured by SC’s positive reaction) I was asked two more times to provide some form of performance as part of days involving the Board being at SC.

For the Annual General Meeting in December 2023, I made a piece that was built upon the process of *stan’s scrap 3* (2.5.3) (see Translation section for more details of this process). I recorded the data of who spoke during the AGM; I did this by assigning everyone a number, and writing that number down when they spoke. I would then read the numbers as a score, assigning each number to a sample that I would trigger on a midi keyboard. These samples were based upon things from the board's bios. I printed off pictures of these samples, and upon the board’s arrival to SC for the meeting I requested that they choose any image. There would be a corresponding image in the meeting room, determining where they sit. I did this to disrupt accepted seating positions in the room, or to make people sit next to others to whom they did not normally sit. The meeting was incredibly long.

After the meeting, I performed *stan's cafe not cafe* with them. I explained my process for the new performance and then performed the piece for them. The Board and SC members were drinking champagne and expecting light entertainment. After several minutes of the performance, I interrupted myself and declared that the performance was going to be very long. I turned the volume down and encouraged everyone to chat amongst themselves until I had finished. They respectfully started chatting for the remainder of the piece, during which the chatting was so loud that the performance could not be heard.

I believe this epitomised the majority of my residency experience: making something for SC, making engaging with it optional, wanting to make an intervention but caring more about not disrupting regular activities. Art was minimised, the company's output was given higher priority over everything else. This hierarchy is seen in most APG placements, and the negotiations of failed placements, where the profits of the company, came first over any potential art.

Here I was timid in not attempting to challenge this status quo. I was unsure of my own position, my role, and my art. This made it hard for SC to engage as I did not convince them that my art was worth their time, as I was not sure if it was either. This performance made me realise that this was the problem with my other pieces, I was not confident in their value and therefore did not subject SC to experiencing them.

2.3.5.3 How is the relationship with your chair?

Lastly in February 2024, I was invited to make a short participatory performance during a day of meetings with the Board, to provide a break from the monotony of meetings. I wanted to utilise basic office equipment, given my access to it and my access to the resonant hall at SC. Chairs are a big part of meetings, and are accessible. This was also my last work made within residence, as I had concluded my position was compromised, and so I was incentivised to stop just fulfilling the task and instead add my own response to it. These meetings had a Chair who led the meeting and I wanted to play with the double meaning of this word. I entered their meeting room periodically giving each person a tiny scroll of paper. On these scrolls were provocations or questions about their chair, purposely trying to confuse their chair that they sat on and the Chair of the meeting. These provocations included:

- What is the name of your chair?
- How is your chair supporting you?
- How old is your chair?
- Have you got a good relationship with your chair?
- Has your chair slighted you in any way?
- Do you feel safe in your chair?
- How would you dance with your chair?

I wanted them to develop a closer relationship with their seat before they then had to perform with them. When it was time for my performance, I asked them to bring their chair to the assembly hall and demonstrated how to pull the chair across the floor to create a sound. I then instructed everyone to drag their chairs around the room to create a symphony of chair sounds, while dancing individual duets and also singing or whistling to their chair. They then returned to the meeting room with their

'performance partners' and carried on with the day. I was asked to provide a performance and I offered a surplus intervention to add artistic value to the meeting.

The intervention was well-received as a welcome reprieve from the day's monotony of logistics and administrative tasks. It was suggested by several Board members that this could be a performance that I offered to other businesses to break up their away days or as a team bonding exercise.

Here I was an implemented agent, providing a function that was by now a regular feature of these board days. I felt able to have fun with this final performance as by the end of the residency I no longer desired to feel useful, and wanted to explore my own interests. I found a way back to adding my own art into the situation provided.

2.4 Avoidance

I feel it is important to clarify my general feelings during the residency. I generally had a negative disposition as the residency situation was all consuming. I felt guilty when I was not making work for the residency, or when I was working with other artists on different projects, or even when pursuing leisure activities, despite my supervisors advising me consistently that I did not have to feel this way. This led to a general attitude of guilt and shame. This was due to feeling like my work was unimportant, and that I was not deserving of the funding I had received. I felt incapable of adding value.

My mental wellbeing particularly suffered when trying to make work in SC that was not for SC. My continual disappointment with SC's lack of engagement with my work, worry about disrupting SC, and dejection in failing my own preconceived idea of success led me to making works away from the SC building, and focusing on my own interests instead of fulfilling the brief. This approach was necessary given my own negative feelings towards my work, and the lack of new work being created while in residence, a needed approach in order for me to feel good about myself as both an artist and a human being. This strategy led to some intensely valuable work for me.

The following works were made with this approach and are still relevant, as without the situation of the residency it would not be possible to have made them. They are therefore of value to me, and are attached to SC by association.

2.4.1 For Hugh Davies

Throughout the residency, I spent a significant amount of time reading about Hugh Davies (HD). HD was a composer who was involved with the APG, both helping run the group and participating in two placements. David Toop suggested in our interview I look into his life and work. I discovered a lot about his involvement with the APG, his suggestions for an open brief, and the work he made. I was pointed in the direction of his uncatalogued material housed at Goldsmith's Special Collections, composed of all of the documents lifted from his office after his premature death. In reading through this man's personal effects (his notes, copies of programmes, letters to friends and colleagues) I grew quite attached to him. His placement with the Department of

Health and Social Care was inspiring and I found his work with recycled materials, instrument building and running workshops for children with Autism deeply emotional. I found his account of being mistreated at a hospital in the 1970s, mainly due to the lack of vegan food on offer. He kept all of his meal cards from his stay in hospital. I knew instantly I wanted to make a piece involving this material - I felt an immediate connection to it. This piece avoids all of my research involving HD and the APG and residencies, and how his work should have influenced my residency, and instead focused on a mundane aspect of his life experience where he was experiencing discomfort. I made this piece at home, rather than in residence.

I collated the data from his meal cards and made a video, a recreation of every meal he had while in hospital for two weeks. I then made a score from the menu of items on the hospital food tray, assigning each item a note and an instruction of how to play the note. I then instructed performers to watch the video, find the items on the video, and play the corresponding item's note on the menu (4.7).

This was to be workshopped with +- ensemble as part of a PhD composers opportunity. I did not invite SC to the workshop. I did send them the recording afterwards.

Although this piece was not valuable in a commercial sense for SC, this piece meant an awful lot to me. This was my ode to a man I connected with through his works and notes, connecting to his suffering in his placement as a reflection of my own suffering, and making something complex but joyous from that. This piece had nothing to do with SC, instead it was all about a personal relationship with HD.

I later developed this piece post-residency to be a piece that anyone could perform, as HD's work involved openness and accessibility; I wanted to include more people within a performance regardless of musical ability. I collated my favourite objects that I use in performance and composition and labelled them with the food items. I then put all of these objects on a table and instructed the audience to divide them up amongst each other, and to sound their objects when the corresponding food item appeared on screen. I also added the story of why we were looking at hospital food and who HD was for the participants. This version is a reflection of both HD and my interests; care, and creating accessible music.

My research into HD did lead to pieces involving SC, which feature in the next section (Translation 2.5). The other pieces and how they were received by SC were influential on my own feelings about the work. How this piece was received was not important to me, which made me freer to create.

2.4.2. bit pieces

During the residency period, I created an album or collection of short songs using a numerical process. These songs are devoid of an agenda or intentional meaning, they are instead an abstraction of a feeling, created by precisely choosing the materials for the process. They are experimental. I choose the material, utilise a process and perform the result.

The process involved making a structure out of a set combination of numbers, and then representing each number with an action or sound. I was specifically looking at putting all of the combinations of three numbers together, like this:

123

132

213

231

312

321

Experimenting with this formula allowed me to make pieces easily, creating small amounts of material, and utilising the structure to develop and expand that material by how each single material relates to the next. The first song I wrote was *we were certainly uncertain, at least, i'm pretty sure I am* (the title is a Modest Mouse lyric), and used four words, "no I don't know". By placing these words into a process, the sentence becomes jumbled and confused, creating multiple meanings, and playing off the fact that "know" and "no" are pronounced the same. Other songs explore the sounds of words, different ways of saying hello/goodbye, expressing good luck in multiple ways, and a jumbling of my friend's name. These songs I wrote away from SC; none of the content was influenced by SC in any way.

I performed the songs in Birmingham in a small intimate room. Works I made for SC were digital, usually videos, audio files or interventions that were optional to listen to. Although the output of *bit pieces* is a digital and physical album on tape, the performances were the original concept and method of dissemination. This work is

the only work that I asked SC to come see. I performed it for them in SC. in my office. This was a big step in making a piece with no intention of relating to SC, and showing it to them, but it was never made with the intent to only be shown to them. I invited them as proof that I was still making things when not around and the performance was short, less than 20 minutes. No setup was required from SC; I set up my office and invited them in, performed the set, and then everyone went back to work. The performance also required no context or set up. These songs were instantly accessible and understandable.

This piece, made through avoidance, led to an intimate performance, something I love to do but did not do in the residency. I believe this is because I did not want to interrupt SC's time and activities with a performance. This process required me to avoid SC to make the work. The performance of the work at SC during a normal working day added artistic value to SC.

2.5 Translation

Having reflected on my various approaches I wanted to return to the weekly meetings, this time making a bigger piece that would be performed at a scheduled time in SC, for the members of SC and the public.

This interest in making a longer work came from trying to compare my output with SC. Theatre companies traditionally do not make short form work, most of my work on the residency had been short form. Alongside this, I thought that a bigger piece

would give me confidence in myself, believing the work required to carry it out would make it worth it for SC to see. Work where I had made viewing it compulsory made more chance for engagement and possible added value.

My work with SC's weekly meetings was fruitful, creating various works. However, as documented I felt less inclined to make intervention work with the meetings, due to a lack of positive response from SC. So, I decided to take data from the meetings and use that data to create a large work. As the weekly meeting experience was very similar at each meeting, it made sense to use multiple meetings to create a bigger work, highlighting the small variations between them and turning something monotonous into a piece.

SC's weekly meetings featured the same lineup every week with occasional absentees, and the same two or three people dominated the meeting. When someone else spoke it was noticeable.

At the same time I was asked to write a piece by Lizzie Knatt, for two bass recorders to be performed by herself and Otto Hashmi. I felt that the subject of the meetings was the perfect material for this request because I would be taking a mundane subject and translating that to a piece for two recorders, an instrument most people believe to be mundane due to their experiences at school. On top of this, Lizzie and Otto are virtuosic players, so I was using a mundane and crucial function of SC's and creating something exciting and impressive adding immense artistic value to the meetings and SC.

I composed for over a year. The piece went through several iterations before the final version.

2.5.1 stan's scrap 1

Before the recorders were involved, I had already made *stan's scrap* (March, 2023).

This was a piece that combined two areas of interest to me: Hugh Davies' practice and processed based music. Through my Hugh Davies research, I was inspired by his usage of scrap materials. I became aware of SC's box of scrap paper, a box filled with old programmes, invoices, scripts, and finance spreadsheets. I linked this to Davies, and wanted to make a piece with material. I emptied this box and used its contents in this piece. I used a three number process, the same one I used for the *bit pieces* (2.4.2), which I used to organise the material from the box, utilise a basic process and make something complex from it. This led to this small experimental piece where I made a small video of myself performing actions on paper. These actions were inspired by the words and things on the paper within this box. This piece paints a picture of what SC had in their scrap paper box. Like the weekly meetings, I set up parameters for a composition and used material generated by SC to fulfil those parameters into a piece of music. This music is a translation of the original material, now with added value.

When considering a piece for the recorders it seemed appropriate to create something complex from something mundane, in this case scrap paper and the weekly meetings.

I enjoyed working with this material, as it provided a snapshot of SC's identity. The material was provided for me by SC, meaning they could influence the composition by operating normally, similar to the weekly meetings. Due to this similarity I wanted to combine these materials for the recorders, for an elevated performance situation.

I thought it best to incorporate text from the scrap paper into the composition, as this could be easily transferred into music. I experimented with speech and playing the recorder and was interested in the results. Conceptually, I thought adding words to the performance would add value to the jargon used in the meetings that was also present in the scrap box material. Lizzie and Otto were virtuosic players and I wanted to challenge them with singing and playing at the same time.

2.5.2 stan's scrap 2

Stan's scrap 2 was the first iteration of both elements coming together, but I was unhappy with the result as my taste was too involved in the outcome. However, it is important to know how the piece was created to help bridge the gap between *stan's scrap 1* and *stan's scrap 3*.

- I recorded the data of seven meetings that I attended between 2022 and 2023.
- I assigned SC members a number each, and wrote this number down every time they spoke in the meeting. I included myself in this metric and every possible member of SC, including two work experience students.

Number	Staff Member
1	Lucy
2	Craig

3	Nick
4	Michelle
5	Jess
6	Me
7	JY
8	Dom
9	Dave
10	Megan

- This led to me having a string of numbers, like the following:
3,7,4,7,3,7,3,7,1,7,4,3,4,3,1,2,1,8,9,7,9,7,4,3,4,6 etc.
- I composed cells of music and assigned them to each number and this formed a piece.

Through discussion with my supervisors, and an overhauling of the compositional materials and processes, I created *stan's scrap 3*, the final iteration of these pieces.

2.5.3 stan's scrap 3

For *stan's scrap 3* I wanted to make a multi-movement work, using the data for each of the meetings as its own movement within the piece. I created a complex system that is maintained throughout the piece with some variation per movement.

I have created a video explaining how the piece works, which can be found to the right.

This system created interesting results, as regular patterns of notes and words would occur, and would occasionally be disrupted by someone else speaking in the meeting. This would welcome different pitches and a new word would be used by someone who did speak a lot, creating change in timbre/texture. The variations per movement were small compositional/performance changes such as lining up both instrumental parts to play at the same time homophonically, or to perform the word in a scattergun style rather than metrically, and a movement where the performers whisper the words instead of singing. The variations are explained in the performance notes in the score.

In adding value to these meetings, I wanted to add variation to each meeting's translation. This was to reflect the slight differences from meeting to meeting, like time of day, who was in attendance and mood/subject matter of the meeting. If I had not done this, the monotony of the meetings would be exactly replicated. The role of this intervention was to change the monotony through variation to add value, not just repeat the monotony. To do this; I created a different pitch set. I assigned new pitches to every number. Both pitch sets were then performed simultaneously in the last two movements.

The piece was performed by Lizzie and Otto and was the main event in an exhibition/concert of my work while in residence, hosted by SC. The performance took place in one of their rehearsal rooms, with a whiteboard on stage that had various words that were used in the piece, so the audience could read those words and try to hear them performed by the recorder players.

stan's scrap 3 was described as “a seminal piece of recorder music” by Michael Wolters. The piece is an immense addition to value for SC, without them having to change a single thing about how they operate. My contribution led to an outside audience attending the performance, being introduced to SC and experiencing an interesting piece of music that was entirely related to them.

2.5.4 The minutes

I experimented with another piece using the data of the seven meetings. I wanted to try what other possibilities were to be had. In *stan's scrap 3*, I chose the pitch sets and how each movement was varied; I wanted to create a piece where SC's meetings determined every aspect of the piece. I was asked to write a long piece for toy piano by Kate Ledger. I created a process as follows:

I have seven meetings worth of data, this data was a string of numbers, with each number representing a member of SC speaking in the meeting. Each meeting would control a parameter of the music for the toy piano. The video explaining *stan's scrap 3* should help in understanding this piece.

Meeting number	Parameter No.	Parameter description
Meeting 1	1 Melodic interval (RH)	Determines the melodic interval in the right hand, number from meeting translated into semitones E.g 3 = minor 3rd, 7 = perfect 5th
Meeting 2	2 Direction of melodic interval (RH)	Determines whether the melodic interval in the right hand moves up or down. Determined by if the number is even or odd
Meeting 3	3 Harmonic interval	Similar to parameter 1, but determines a harmonic interval in the RH

	(RH)	
Meeting 4	4 Duration (RH)	Determines the duration of the dyad created by the above parameters. Determined by number in sequence into 8th notes. E.g 3= dotted crotchet, 4 = minum
Meeting 5	5 Melodic interval (LH)	Same as parameter 1, but for left hand
Meeting 6	6 Direction of melodic interval (LH)	Same as parameter 2, but for left hand
Meeting 7	7 Duration (LH)	Same as parameter 4, but for left hand

The starting notes would be C, A, F, E.

I collaborated with Barrington Brook, to create a code that would follow these parameters and create a midi score. The result is a 90 minute piece, *the minutes*.

I invited Kate to perform this piece in SC's office, as part of the final exhibition day of my residency. I invited the audience to come to the final exhibition day to see this performance, and advertised it as a co-working space, where they could bring their own administrative work to do. The audience brought laptops and books and sat at tables and desks around the office, as did Kate, performing at one of the desks, the toy piano being around the same size as a laptop. This concert situation was a reflection of my latter experience of my residency, where I had moved out of my own office and spent most of my time in SC's main office, where it was warm and where I would chat to SC members. My experience here however was that everyone quietly worked away

on their laptops, including me. I would work on my own admin, or one of my pieces, or silently observe activities in the office (2.1.5).

The piece itself does not paint SC meetings well; some intervals dominate the piece, but it tends to meander around in no direction.

2.5.5 Summary /conclusion

This approach of translation allowed me to observe functional SC activities, and without disrupting them, create two different large works, which were performed at SC, inviting an audience to experience their space and the work and engage with SC. These pieces made me realise my value to SC, making work directly relating to them, without disrupting their activities. Translating is a technique that is neutral to the proceedings, it required no emotional involvement, I presented the data as it was.

3 Conclusion

Now I shall conclude by comparing my residency with the research and output of the APG. My project and experience is not an ideal model, but by outlining my findings I believe I can provide help for similar relationships between artist and company in the future.

1) Situation/brief

“Companies were advised not to anticipate the production of a work of art, but rather to think of themselves having the benefit of a creative outsider in their midst” (Bishop, 2012: 164).

In my residency, I was a creative outsider, but I was working in a creative capacity within SC. In APG placements, the artist is an outside entity, and they would work on projects specific to them and the company that only that artist could do. Over the long period of time within the residency I lost my outsider status. Due to wanting to be useful, I lost my objective of using my outsider perspective and instead was assimilated as an extra member of SC, used to create their productions. I believe this was due to a combination of

- My similarity in working methods to SC
- My personality requiring that I thought I needed my work to be useful
- Feeling constricted by the brief
- Not wanting to disrupt activities
- Finding a way to feel useful by contributing.
- SC being in a transitory period during my residency.

However, my assimilation was valuable to SC, in that they had me as a resource in their shows. This was a success for SC, they had added value of my contributions in

their productions from a CiR, but failed in the brief directions of not contributing in this way.

Criticism was levelled at APG for having a flawed situation for the artist, as power relations were imbalanced against them, as they had to report to both the company they were placed at and to APG (Fuller, 1971). I had a similar issue, except I had to also report to BCU and AHRC/M4C alongside SC. I found, at times, that this choked the potential creative outcomes or ideas, when I had to consider all of the parties invested in my actions. For example, when I was asked to perform at the end of year party for SC's board, I wanted to create a disruptive situation to explore destabilising the norms of the traditional work party. I felt I could not write about this idea as the Ethics Board of BCU may have challenged it and it could have rattled the relationship I had with the Board/SC. Another example is, due to my attachment to BCU/AHRC, I had received a lot of pressure about the ethics of research. In an attempt to not break ethical guidelines due to SC's issues with the lease of their building, I did not enter the building until six months after the start date of my residency. The setup of M4C, AHRC, BCU and SC was too strong for me to intervene successfully. I was used to making work on a smaller scale with less consequences, this set-up stifled my artistic practice.

SC did not pay for the residency, M4C did. This is important as it contributed to SC's passive attitude towards me and my work.

The principle that the host organisation should pay for the placement is the right one. It really is the only way to ensure that placement will be treated seriously: the host organisation has a vested interest in making it work (Coward, 1976)

The wording of the brief for my residency, for me, encouraged quantitative value when, of course, art is qualitative. I was obsessed with this definition of value, and the idea that my work should alter SC in unforeseen ways, as I had been given a great opportunity and lots of time dedicated to making that work. Despite this harming my creative freedom and making works that could have impacted in a different way, I persisted with this seemingly impossible task. The APG failed in doing this, I was given an opportunity to learn from them and provide a solution to their aim of redefining the artist's role in society. Despite constant reassurances from my supervisors and SC themselves that I did not need to do this, I only realised how unhelpful this expectation was after the end of the residency in reflection. As a result of this attitude, the residency was deprived of the possibilities of other more impactful and valuable work.

In APG placements, no work would start until after observations had been made, after a process involving feasibility studies (Steveni, 1966-1988). My residency had a different process. In place of the feasibility study was my application and interview, in which I maintained I would not be able to predict, estimate or have any knowledge of what work I would make until I was in place and could make observations, as making observations is a key part of my practice. When placed in residence after delays, there

was no formal discussion of what areas I would be working in/on. This offered me freedom, but a more formal agreement of what areas that SC were keen for me to work on may have stirred up new pieces in my decision to rebel or conform to those areas. When SC did request areas for me to work on, I met these with a lack of enthusiasm.

APG artists were not trained in fulfilling the output of the residency host, for example an artist placed in a quarry was not going to quarry stone, whereas here, SC employed composers to create shows, so I technically was in a position where I could contribute to their output.

A feasibility study could be necessary as it focuses the residency and clarifies the scope. SC accepted my application in which the scope was still incredibly open, and then there was no further negotiation on what would happen within the residency.

2) Personnel specification

The very terms 'success' and 'failure' may have to be re-thought for the success of a placement cannot be measured merely by the degree of mutual back-slapping between the host organisation and the artist. **A timid artist will produce timid work and this would be acceptable to a timid organisation.** An artist with a radical attitude may well produce radical effects and this may or may not be acceptable to the host organisation, or if it is then the effects may not be acceptable to the host organisations clients. A third party might perceive, however; that the latter was a more meaningful 'successful'

placement because it brought bigger issues to the surface, even if in the process it caused trouble and turmoil” (Breakwell, 1977-1982).

While I am not suggesting that I am a timid composer, or that SC are a timid organisation (their extensive portfolio speaks for itself), I am suggesting that at times both parties exercised restraint during the residency. I did not challenge any hierarchies or make bold interventions of regular systems due to my fears, and SC knowingly directly utilised me within their shows and board meetings and did not push hard on getting more intervention-type work from me or to investigate certain areas.

APG maintains that an “incidental person” should be able to effectively cross disciplines and have an interest in the community and social aspects of artworks (Steveni, 1966). Davies suggests that an “ivory tower” composer would not be able to find new perspectives on situations that people living in those situations do not notice themselves (Davies, 1978).

This aspect of recruitment for future residents should be maintained, as placements could throw up unexpected issues to which a composer should be willing to adapt. Before this project, I had primarily composed and performed music theatre pieces, with myself talking as an improvised instrument. I did not utilise this practice very much during this residency and started composing with systems and making songs. This meant that due to my adaptability I developed new compositional skills and styles that were appropriate for use and value within SC.

David Toop's APG placement at London Zoo was financed through external funding. After the residency, he said "the work I did at the zoo is unimportant" (Toop, 1982). He pinned the potential "failure" of his residency on the lack of financial commitment to the residency from the zoo. His work resulted in a small educational exhibition in collaboration with the zoo. Toop went on to explore his areas of interest more. This is contrasted by Hugh Davies first residency with the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS). Davies undertook educational work with children, building instruments and performing with them. His first instinct was to utilise music therapy in his residency with DHSS, but he actively did not explore music therapy in order to extend his own work in a different direction. His work then was utilised by hospitals, as he focused on benefiting the company in a way that also developed his practice (Davies, 1980).

The innovative artist has always developed skills and conceptual material that he needs, different from those that they are already familiar with. The [incidental person] is someone who does this within any frame of reference" (Coward, 1976).

I am not suggesting that Toop is not an innovative artist, but his work in his residency was not innovative due to the situation. I would suggest that for any future residencies composers use the residency as an opportunity to expand their practice in different directions, so that the value of any work is doubly both valuable for the host and composer, and could lead to new avenues of exploration.

I maintained a focus that the work should be quantitatively valuable to SC, and this affected my approaches. The APG suggested that the situation itself is the artwork, and that any tangible pieces of artwork that came from that situation was a byproduct (Coward, 1975).

A relaxation of pressure on art object from all parties (the artist, the institutions, the host) would be my suggestion.

I believed throughout my residency that an artist in residence's role is to instigate collaboration and good feelings and not utilise the residency for their own gain. During my residency, I took this responsibility fully upon myself, and the enormity of this feeling stifled my work. The working relationship must be mutual, and not put too much pressure on the artist. The openness of the APG brief and placement logistics values the artist more than the company. I believe a mutual understanding should take place, for both parties to reap the benefits of a residency.

Ian Breakwell suggests that "the idea of using music for utilitarian purposes is negative and unhealthy" (Breakwell, 1972). I was focused on music that 'did' something, conveying information or enacting change with SC. This was a negative experience for me, as work I would usually be very happy to explore and make did not 'do' anything, and this made me feel that my work was inadequate. I would recommend future composers to not think of the uses of their output, but to make the output that interests them.

As per Toop's placement, SC did not financially pay for the residency. They did offer travel support and bought some specific materials for me (the doorbell system, which it could be argued was for them).

If my residency with SC were to be repeated, or if the residency were to happen again with another theatre company, I do believe a richer experience for both artist and theatre company would be the result of the theatre company paying for the residency;

The principle that the host organisation should pay for the placement is the right one. It really is the only way to ensure the placement will be treated seriously. The host organisation has a vested interest in making it work (Coward, 1978).

Having no financial stake in my placement resulted in me feeling no pressure from SC staff to do anything and that I could work flexible hours. I would enter the building sporadically.

However, it is possible that if SC had paid for the placement that I would have endeavoured more to make financially valuable work as a return on their investment. This could have led to being involved in more shows. This could potentially be mediated by careful negotiations of expectations, and a joint agreement on the open brief. A theatre company like SC having the budget to afford such a project is very unlikely, so the funding would have to come from elsewhere, which in turn changes the dynamic/outcome/tone of the project to then suit the funder.

Personal expectations should be minimised, not in terms of valuable output, but of how the residency is conducted. I had expectations of doing important work within the

residency and was let down by my efforts which led to disappointment and a lack of motivation.

George Levantis was placed on a residency Ocean Fleets Ltd, becoming an artist in residence upon three voyages of different cargo ships in one year.

“To begin with on board, I was something of an enigma. Everyone else had a clearly defined function, but my function was undefined. The undefined nature of my position proved to be the best source of my ideas” (Levantis, 1978)

However Hugh Davies, within his placement, claimed he was from the architects division rather than a musician/artist in residence, so he could be trusted and easily access the information he needed. My point here is that my role was unknown to SC members when I started, and this lack of position affected me negatively, but could affect another artist positively.

3) Recommendations for future residencies

Recommended	Not Recommended
The placement is paid for by the host	The placement is paid by an external funder
A feasibility study is undertaken, or a period of observation before any work takes place	Start the residency immediately
Emphasis is placed on open brief	Emphasis is on a desired object or

	outcome for the host
The placed composer's work is interdisciplinary	The placed composer is the traditional 'ivory tower' style
The placed composer is open to exploring new avenues to extend their practice	Composer only wants to explore what they usually do
Brief all members of the host organisation on the style of residency	Create expectations of how exactly the placed composer will work
Keep as many aspects as possible of the residency open	Have preconceived ideas of what the working relationship will be
Keep a distance between the composer and the output of the host	Use placed composer for host's objectives
Welcome the situation itself as the artwork	Focus on an outcome or artefacts
Music as a means of sonification of data	Use music as a utilitarian device
Be bold, daring and experimental	Be timid
Without disrupting activities, be confident in approach and actively share the work	Be apologetic, overly careful or limiting in approach

Finding the perfect parameters may be impossible due to the subjective nature of the people involved and the environments they are in and the unpredictable situations that arise from all of the above in combination with the open brief. This project also relies on funding that would more likely be used to help the theatre company survive, in a new production, given the state of the arts in the U.K. where funding is scarce. It is also impossible for an artist to have true freedom when the artwork comes out of interacting with a company and the network of systems, processes, and ethics that it contains. I believe an incredibly successful residency would have to exist outside the capitalist system we are submerged in.

3.4 Post-Script

Just a note on the affective dimension of the research. I struggled with the overall situation of the research, given that SC, like many other similar sized arts organisations, are focused on surviving and being economically stable in a tumultuous environment for the arts. I felt that my presence in SC undermined that struggle, plus this financial stress meant that the artistic ethos of the company did not fully translate into its organisational practices, creating a dissonance for me.

This dissonance meant I struggled to confidently make things, and I felt inadequate for the situation of the residency, particularly as my work consistently failed to meet my high standards for big additional value or change within SC. The pressure I placed upon me constrained my artistic identity, and made it impossible for me to be myself.

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