Lifting the veil on 'a good jam':

Describing the coordination dynamics of an acoustic jazz trio

by

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ABSTRACT

As a professional bass player and teacher I have experienced various instances of musicians interacting with one another in a group setting. These interactions varied from school ensembles, music students at a tertiary level, to professional musicians. Through my own teaching and playing career, I have noticed that certain groups of musicians are better than others at communicating their ideas and to coordinate as a group during a musical performance.

Meadows (2008, 2) explains that a system is "a set of things – people, cells, molecules, or whatever – interconnected in such a way that they produce their own pattern over time" while Kelso (2009, 1539) states that coordination dynamics aims to identify and describe the nature of coordination within a part of a system. With these statements in mind, Bishop (2018, 4) argues that a musical ensemble can be regarded as a system in which the individual musicians, their instruments, the audience, and the performance space, are components that are interacting as a system.

There is an apparent gap in the literature as authoritative texts on improvisation and coordination within the jazz rhythm section such as *Saying Something* by Ingrid Monson (1996) and *Thinking in Jazz* by Paul Berliner (1994) mainly focus on musicians in the United States.

This study examines the interaction and coordination of a South African jazz trio during a musical performance to address the apparent shortfall in the literature in a South African context. This lack of depth in the literature leads to the research question: What are the main methods of communication and coordination within the Charl du Plessis Trio during a performance?

A summary of the history and circumstances that led to the formation of the jazz piano trio as a group format is included in this study. It highlights the work of prominent trios and compares them to the work of the trio led by Charl du Plessis, examining the ways that his trio performs traditional jazz works and how their interaction and coordination methods differ from traditional jazz performance conventions.

I undertook to describe the main communication and coordination dynamics to determine whether a jazz group in the South African context functions similarly to their American counterparts. This

dissertation aims to contribute to the scholarly literature about the lived experience of musicians in such a trio.

The Charl du Plessis Trio, of which I am a member, was chosen as a sample group, considering its critical acclaim (see Section 2.2.4 *Charl du Plessis sample group*), its South African context, and its history of actively performing as a jazz trio between 2006 and 2021. This history is in contrast with the *ad hoc* zero history of groups studied by Bastien and Hostager (1988) in a jazz context.

This study describes the differences and similarities in each musician's viewpoint or experience in the trio, specifically examining the work of the Charl du Plessis Trio, drawing on the work by Kelso (2003, 45) on how patterns of coordinated behaviour emerge from each member's musical contributions over time.

Due to the small sample group, the research design of this study consists mainly of structured interviews with the participants using the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis framework.

The participants' interviews were transcribed and analysed to identify which of the Wittenbaum et al. (2002, 178–80) coordination methods (pre-plans, tacit pre-coordination, in-process planning, or in-process tacit coordination) were most relevant for describing the coordination between participants during a performance.

This study finds that in-process tacit coordination (members making mutual strategy adjustments tacitly while working to fit the observed behaviour of others) is the most common method of coordination during a performance within the sample group.

Other methods of coordination that were also found to contribute to the group's performance were pre-plans (members making explicit their planned actions), tacit pre-coordination (where members make assumptions about what is expected of them), and in-process planning (where members define their roles explicitly communicating their planned strategy).

Key words

Ensemble; coordination dynamics; emergence; jazz trio; improvisation; flow; group interaction;

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Aim

This study examines the interactions and on-stage communication of a South African jazz piano trio from the perspective of a participant observer. This dissertation aims to contribute to the scholarly literature about the lived experience of musicians in such a trio.

The jazz piano trio traditionally consists of piano, double bass, and drums. The traditional roles of each instrument can be summarised as follows:

- Piano provides melody and harmony (through rhythmic accompaniment)
- Double bass provides the harmonic foundation through the groove and interplay with the drums, providing rhythmic drive and support for chordal voicings employed by the pianist
- Drums provide rhythmic drive and melodic commentary by reinforcing rhythmic elements in the melody with drum fills where the music allows.

The aim of this study is to describe the coordination dynamics between members during a performance of such a trio by using an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) framework.

As a participant-observer, I plan to use the Charl du Plessis Trio as a case study for my research. The purpose of the research is to describe the differences and similarities in each musician's viewpoint or experience in the trio, specifically examining the work of the Charl du Plessis Trio, drawing on the work by Kelso (2003, 45) on how patterns of coordinated behaviour emerge from each member's musical contributions over time.

1.2. Rationale

During my years of playing professionally and teaching, it has always been exciting to experience various musical groups communicating non-verbally during a musical performance (in rehearsal or concert situations). It became apparent that particular ensembles were much better at communicating new ideas among themselves than others. This greater facility also significantly affected the productivity of rehearsals or supervising a group class in a teaching situation. When

performing in a group with effective communication skills, this creates the feeling that everyone is acting and contributing towards the same goal, functioning in a well-synchronised way and can execute their parts to their full potential.

However, shortcomings in verbal and non-verbal communication skills become apparent when observing younger, inexperienced students playing together, as their inexperience tends to work against multitasking. For example, divided attention between reading the chart (or musical score) and executing the appointed task may cause students to lose their place in the form of the piece they are playing or miss a cue from a fellow student. In my experience, a beginner improviser's attention is often exclusively focused on playing the instrument. This exclusive focus limits possibilities for the kind of extra-musical communication that is apparent in a seasoned jazz ensemble. In turn, this implies that seasoned musicians are more capable of multitasking in the moment due to more efficient cognitive off-loading (see Chapter 2.1.2 *Theoretical framework: Modes of Coordination*).

An example of an ensemble performing with good communication skills might have a bandleader cueing the rest of the band for a new section when they are reaching the end of their improvisation. The bandleader simultaneously cues the rest of the band members for the start of the next soloist or for the band to continue to the next section of the piece. There is also constant self-evaluation taking place as each ensemble member adapts their tempo, volume, and intensity of playing to match the rest of the group.

Another example might be the band following a vocalist's rubato melody line or a soloist indicating that they would like a particular type of support in the form of a specific comping style from the rest of the band.

In a teaching environment, I noticed that particular learners are unaware of these unwritten rules. Learners are often unsure how to communicate with their fellow musicians when participating in a group performance. They often seem to find it difficult to provide guidance and create a sense in the group that they are playing together. To illustrate this point, after a concert that I was involved in, a guitarist remarked: "You are the best band that I have ever played against" (personal communication, November 2015).

In many scenarios, it is easy for a group working together to discuss their tasks and strategy explicitly as they go along. Office workers might verbally confirm plans while sitting at their desks, or football teammates shout "pass the ball" at full volume during a match. However, voicings are not possible in a musical ensemble, as noted by Wittenbaum et al. (2002, 178) that "group coordination can vary on at least two dimensions: time and explicitness". Particular tasks are explicitly coordinated and discussed in person before the task at hand is set to commence, as opposed to tasks being tacitly coordinated while being executed. Due to particular group norms, ensembles are expected to keep breaks between pieces to a minimum and give the impression that they are well prepared. Thus, shouting verbal instructions and cues on stage in a live environment is not regarded as professional behaviour. Therefore, a musical ensemble falls within the niche group of people making use of 'in-process tacit coordination' (Wittenbaum et al. 2002, 179) or making tacit mutual strategy adjustments while working. Wittenbaum et al. (2002, 179) define 'in-process tacit coordination' as a coordination type prevalent among task-oriented groups and that members of such groups adjust their own behaviour tacitly in reaction to the observed behaviour of other group members. The various methods of coordination are explained in more detail in Chapter 2.1.2 – *Theoretical framework: Modes of Coordination*.

Bishop (2018, 2) highlights the idea of collaborative creativity where the sum of interaction and coordination of group members is greater than the individual contributions. A performing jazz trio is a prominent example of such collaborative creativity where the product of interactions could not have been created by an individual group member on their own.

Playing in a stable ensemble (with a consistent performance schedule with rare personnel changes for an extended period) gave me considerable insight into the inner workings of a jazz trio. Being the permanent bass player in the Charl du Plessis Trio since its inception afforded me the opportunity to observe the development of in-process tacit coordination from 2006 to date.

1.3. Statement of research problem

In contrast with well-functioning in-process tacit coordination, poor group coordination points to one of the so-called 'process losses' described by Steiner (1972, 67) causing the difference between potential productivity and actual productivity. Studying and documenting the coordination dynamics of an established jazz trio may well aid teaching methodologies in the

future. Knowledge about coordination dynamics may help develop a set of guidelines that can be introduced in a teaching curriculum and presented to students during a practical performance-based class or ensemble workshop.

Johnson (1987, x) refers to an objectivist framework or world view, seeing the world as a fixed, rational structure, independent of people's beliefs. Duby (2012, 110) argues that this framework seems inappropriate for the assessment of artistic processes that often explore more ambiguous aspects of human existence. Under normal circumstances, teachers are required to allocate a mark for an individual's performance in an ensemble setting. Duby (2012, 110–11) argues that there are indeed 'two strata of performance' that should be assessed during an ensemble performance: individual and ensemble. One might argue that a student should therefore also receive a group interaction mark for performance. This being the case, the ensemble performance cannot be assessed using a rigid objectivist approach as described above and demands a more multifaceted point of view due to more ambiguous relationships between the performing ensemble members.

1.4. Research questions

As an improvising double bass player, I agree with Berliner's (1994, 5) claim that:

> Despite the contribution of jazz as a unique musical language – one of the world's most sophisticated – the marginal existence of jazz musicians and the negative feedback to their community from some of the writings about jazz leave many of its practitioners with the perception that their skills are poorly understood, even downright misunderstood, and their knowledge undervalued by outsiders.

With this statement in mind, the need for further research about the skill of jazz musicians is clearly highlighted. The main research question to be investigated is:

> *What are the main methods of communication and coordination within the Charl du Plessis Trio during a performance?*

The related sub-questions are stated as follows:
- How do the various participants understand each other's roles?
- What conditions prompt or prevent a higher level of interaction?
- How do interactions aimed at cooperation differ from interactions aimed at collaboration?
- How can coordination dynamics as set out by Kelso (2003, 45) be used to describe the methods of communication of a performing jazz trio?

- In what way can creativity be judged using Dietrich's (2004, 1011) definition of creativity being both novel (original and unexpected) and appropriate (significant and adaptive to the task constraints)?

These research questions were investigated using recorded interviews. Each participant was presented with the same set of questions, as this study employs the IPA framework. More detail regarding the approved ethical clearance (see Addendum A – *Unisa Committee for Ethical Clearance)*, research design, and data sources of this study is discussed later during Chapter 3 of this study.

This study includes a summary of the history and circumstances that led to the formation of the jazz piano trio as a group format. It highlights the work of prominent trios and compares them to the work of the trio led by Charl du Plessis, examining the ways that his trio performs traditional jazz works and how the work differs from traditional jazz performance conventions.

During the outset of this chapter, Kelso's work (2003, 45) on patterns of coordinated behaviour is mentioned. The following chapter expands on the coordinated behaviour theoretical framework and gives a brief overview of the relevant literature.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical framework

2.1.1. Coordination dynamics

Coordination dynamics refers to the framework developed by Kelso (2003, 45) that employs "a line of scientific inquiry that aims to understand, through theory, analysis, and experiment, how patterns of coordinated behaviour emerge, persist, adapt, and change in living things in general and human beings (and brains) in particular". This concept applies to my research because musicians in the acoustic jazz trio case study must coordinate and adapt their behaviour over time to maintain the group coherence and perform at a high level. As parameters of music become less fixed, opportunities for cooperation between the various members of the trio tend to increase to minimise risk. For clarification, cooperation in a musical setting occurs from the outset of a piece. The musicians often commence the performance from a preconceived arrangement. As the music progresses, the piece develops during the performance, often into a solo section where each member is afforded the opportunity to play an improvised melody over a set of harmonic chord changes. The preconceived arrangement falls away, and each band member introduces new musical ideas. As this happens, the cooperation between the musicians tends to increase to maintain the coherence of the music.

Kelso (2009, 1537) defines coordination dynamics broadly as "the science of coordination" that "describes, explains and predicts how patterns of coordination form, adapt, persist, and change in living things". Kelso (2009, 1537) hypothesises that behaviour, mind, and life are linked by sharing a common underlying coordination dynamics. Furthermore, Kelso (2009, 1538–39) suggests that a living system whose components do not interact with each other would be without structure or function. With this in mind, coordination can be seen in almost every instance studied, from interaction among genes and nerve cells, the interaction of the fingers and brain of a concert pianist and the interaction of people, such as rowers in a racing team (Kelso 2009, 1538–39).

Kelso further explains (2009, 1540) that individual elements in a system can be grouped into synergies where the individual elements adjust to mutual or external environmental fluctuations to

sustain the system's integrity of function. Referring to musical performance, this is also illustrated by the concept of entrainment (temporal dynamics of interacting rhythmic systems) described by Clayton (2020, 136) as "interaction and coordination of human beings mediated by sound and movement". Musical entrainment is of particular interest in musical performance as it depends on essential, precise, complex, periodic, and flexible forms of coordination.

For clarification in a musical sense, during a typical performance of a musical work, the bass player and drummer might have more restraint in the way in which they accompany the pianist in the opening section of a piece. Berliner (1994, 315) refers to the jazz term 'comping'. Comping can be explained as playing an accompanying and a complementing part. The bass player typically makes note choices that outline the harmonic structure in support of the pianist, mostly using the root notes and chord tones of the harmony. The drummer might play a simple rhythmic pattern of the style – be it swing[1] or bossa nova[2] – before employing more complex variations of the style later in the piece.

In a traditional jazz setting, this first section is known as the head in jazz parlance. The head of a piece is followed by improvised solo sections, giving each member of the ensemble the opportunity to improvise over the harmonic structure of the piece. A musical example might be the piece, 'I've Got Rhythm' by George Gershwin. The structure is a common song from AABA, where each section consists of eight measures. At the start of the piece, a lead instrument plays the composed melody over the AABA section. Once the melody or head is stated, various members of the ensemble each have an opportunity to improvise over the harmonic structure of the piece. This means that the original melody is not played again by each instrumentalist, and instead the playing refers to the chord changes of the piece. The instrumentalist then improvises a new melody or solo

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[1] Kamien (2018, 542) explains that musicians "swing" when they 'combine a steady beat with a feeling of lilt, precision, and relaxed vitality' where the accents in pulse often come on beats two and four in four-four time: 1-**2**-3-**4** as opposed to the strong beats one and three in Western classical music. Jazz musicians (ibid.) also create a swing feeling by playing a series of notes slightly unevenly. E.g. the second note of a pair of eights notes will be shorter than the first.

[2] Crease (2000, 554) describes the bossa nova as a 'soft, pared-down version of the samba.' The bossa nova was usually performed by smaller groups (often with acoustic guitar as the main harmonic foundation) with the simplified samba percussion rhythms transferred to the hi-hat of the drum kit. This simplification made it easier for non-Brazilian musicians to learn this new style.

using the available notes determined by general chord scale[3] conventions. The soloist (pianist, double bassist, or drummer) improvises during these solo sections. The rest of the ensemble still comp the harmony and style of the piece and look out for musical clues and inflections in the soloist's playing that guides them as to the musical direction the soloist would like to take. This guidance can result in the whole ensemble building to a climax with a crescendo, phrasing particular rhythms in unison, among others. During such solo sections, the formal structure of the piece may be more freely interpreted in keeping with stylistic guidelines, and the ensemble is much more reliant on each other for support. Thus, cooperation between the members increases to create exciting, effective grooving and engaging music for the listener.

2.1.2. Modes of coordination

Coordination can be both tacit or explicit, resulting in four modes of coordination as described by Wittenbaum et al. (2002, 178–80):

- Pre-plan
- In-process planning
- Tacit pre-coordination
- In-process tacit coordination.

Pre-plans are be seen as explicit ways that indicate how group members interact, for example the sheet music that the musician used for the piece of music.

In-process planning is where the various musicians define their roles through communicating strategy or arrangement.

Tacit pre-coordination is where members make assumptions about what is expected of them and what they can expect of other members' contributions.

In-process tacit coordination occurs when members make mutual strategy adjustments tacitly while working. Members tacitly adjust their own behaviour to fit with the observed behaviour of others during an interaction.

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[3] Chord scale is described by Pease and Pullig (2001, 41) as "a set of stepwise pitches assigned to a chord symbol to provide a supply of notes compatible with the chord's sound and its tonal function".

Recapitulating from the rationale, the interactions and communication of the jazz trio, tacit and explicit coordination, can be viewed through the lens of cognitive coordination dynamics. Kelso (2003, 45) argues that "specific cognitive functions require coordination within and between specialised regions of the brain, retaining their individual functions while interacting to form global context-dependent spatiotemporal patterns of neural activity".

A correlation can also be drawn between Kelso's cognitive functions and musicians performing in a trio. Each of the individual musicians has a specific specialised skill set (knowledge and an ability to play their chosen instrument) as they interact and coordinate their actions in the moment.

Forming part of each musician's skill set is the act of cognitive off-loading, which Risko and Gilbert (2016, 677) define as "the use of physical action to alter the information processing requirements of a task so as to reduce cognitive demand". In a musical sense, an example of this action may be understood as experienced musicians reading chord symbols from a chart (score). The musicians can instantly reproduce the necessary notes of the scale or chord referred to by the symbol without much thought of the individual notes that make up that scale or chord. Another example might be the style indication at the top of a lead sheet that experienced rhythm section players use as a reference instead of having to read notation aimed at recreating the typical sound of the style.

Wittenbaum et al. (2002, 180) explain that members draw on the notion of anticipated interaction during tacit coordination. Members of the group adjust their behaviour in relation to expected or observed actions of another member. This adjustment is not an immediate division of labour. Instead, it is a response in accordance with each of the members' prior expectations of the role and responsibilities of their colleagues. When a group has worked together for some time, these anticipated interactions also rely on the group's past experiences.

Each musician's specialised skill set is built on a foundation of individual and shared tacit knowledge derived from life experience, numerous concerts, gigs, and many hours and years of individual practice of concerted motor action. Tacit knowledge was first attributed to Polanyi (1958) and stood in contrast with explicit knowledge (knowledge or instructions that can be written down and codified). In a way, tacit knowledge can be thought of as 'know-how' versus fact-based 'know-that' knowledge.

2.1.3. Creativity evaluation process

During my interviews and research, I include the creativity evaluation process as described by Fischer et al. (2005, 4–5), encompassing four components of creativity:

- Originality
- Expression (the externalisation of the creative idea)
- Social evaluation (the process by which others consider the creative output and judge its value)
- Social appreciation, the process of encouraging or discouraging further creative efforts.

During the analysis and interviews of the musicians of this study, I also use the framework of the 5A's proposed by Glăveanu (2013, 71) with the following components of creativity:

- Actor who engages in
- Actions that bring about an
- Artefact or creative output in the context of an
- Audience (the social environment)
- Affordances (the material environment).

2.1.4. Musical ensemble as a system

When the various frameworks outlined above are taken into consideration, one can make the case that a musical ensemble can be conceived of as a system in which the components, including individual performers, their instruments, the audience, and the performance space, are interdependent and dynamically interacting as described by Bishop (2018, 4).

Meadows (2008, 2) describes a system with respect to systems theory:

> A system is a set of things – people, cells, molecules, or whatever – interconnected in such a way that they produce their own pattern over time. The system may be buffeted, constricted, triggered, or driven by outside forces. But the system's response to these forces is characteristic of itself, and that response is seldom simple in the real world.

Complementing the above statement by Meadows, Kelso (2009, 1539) states that coordination dynamics aims to identify and describe the nature of coordination within a part of a system, between various parts of the system, and between various kinds of systems.

Sawyer (2006, 153–54) noted that when people are faced with an example of an emergent group phenomenon,[4] it may unconsciously be assumed that there is a single leader or organiser. Resnick (1994) explains that when seeing a flock of geese flying in a V-shape, one can assume that the bird in front is leading. However, this is not the case, as bird flocks rarely have leaders. The V-shape that crosses the sky emerges from the birds acting together, each responding only to nearby ones. Like creative group performances, the flock is organised without an organiser, and thus it self-organises as a system.

Regarding birds flying in a V-shape, the idea applies during performances of a jazz trio. The pianist adapts his playing in response to the playing of the drummer and bass player. The bass player also adapts his playing in response to the playing of the drummer and pianist. Furthermore, the drummer adapts his playing in response to the bass player and pianist. This creates a continuous evolving process of all the musicians adjusting their playing in real time. An analogy of group performance would be the well-known geometrical paradoxical paintings by Maurits Cornelis Escher[5]. The functions of lines overlap and serve multiple purposes that complete the picture and make the construction work.

Monson summarises the idea of overlapping roles and multiple viewpoints in a jazz trio succinctly (1996, 51):

> Each instrument may feel like the most important because it handles certain musical situations uniquely. Players of each instrument can effectively signal or initiate musical events according to these unique abilities and honestly feel that their role in certain situations is the most crucial. In the end, however, it is the balance of these complementary musical roles that contribute to ensemble cohesiveness.

2.1.5. Flow state

During a group performance, when the group is completely in sync, their collective actions are coordinated with a common goal in mind, and the group displays a strong sense of sharing and executing musical ideas at the same time. This state is group flow described by Sawyer (2006,

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[4] Bishop (2018, 9) describes emergence as a phenomenon that occurs when the collective output of a group is greater than the sum of the individual parts. Often this occurs where individual members adjust their actions based on the actions of their counterparts. The performance of the group can therefore not solely be attributed to the actions of its individual participants.

[5] Hyperlink to the website of MC Escher estate: https://mcescher.com/gallery/

157–59). The individual flow experience can be summarised by six factors defined by Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2009):

- Concentrating intensely and with a focus in the present moment
- Merging of action and awareness
- Losing reflective self-consciousness
- Sensing personal control or agency over the situation or activity
- Experiencing time subjectively as altered, a distortion of temporal experience
- Experiencing the activity as intrinsically rewarding (autotelic experience).

According to Sawyer (2006, 158), group flow is an emergent property where musicians are so inspired and focused that they can play things they could not imagine they would play on their own. In a state of group flow there is a feeling among members of a group where they feel that they are able to predict or anticipate the actions of the other members in real time during a performance.

I explored the prevalence of group flow in my case study to determine if the musicians could predict when group flow would happen or if it came as a surprise. As Sawyer (2006, 159) suggests, group flow is an emergent property of the group and different from the psychological state of flow described by Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2009). Group flow depends on the *interaction* among performers and emerges from the interaction. Sawyer (2006, 159) suggests that the group can be in flow even when individual musicians are not. However, this aspect of flow is beyond the scope of the present study.

The study of group flow is thus situated within a fundamentally social psychological paradigm. Sawyer and DeZutter (2009, 81) studied distributed creativity and notes that group creative processes generate a creative product in which no individual participant's contribution determines the end result. I proceeded by examining the coordination dynamics among ensemble members during live performances. Notably, due to editing and overdub capabilities afforded in a recording studio environment, climax moments or a sense of spontaneity can be created and manipulated until the desired effect is reached. In a live performance on stage, the ensemble has only one chance to perform and cannot 'fix' anything afterwards.

Sawyer (2006, 161) points out that improvisational coordination also becomes apparent if a mistake is made by one of the performers, when losing tempo or playing a wrong note. Musicians

refer to this as 'covering up' a mistake so that the performance can continue in such a way that the average listener would not notice the variation or deviation from the intended performance.

The various ways that ensemble members communicate in a tacit and explicit way, leading to a creative group product as described by Sawyer and DeZutter (2009, 1), can be understood through the coordination dynamics of Kelso (2003, 45). Taking into account the various ways that ensemble members communicate, I turn to the literature review in the following section.

2.2. Literature review

This study addresses a potential gap in South African literature on musical interactions. Berliner (1994) studied similar concepts in the United States, but a study of this nature has not been undertaken in a South African context.

Since the publication of pioneering texts by Berliner (1994) and Monson (1996), more recent research on jazz trios include the work by Doffman (2009) that examines the non-verbal interaction between musicians. Luebbers (2016) explores the opportunities and possible limitations of collaborative processes in a small jazz combo, while Hoffmann (2017) focuses on the coordination, production and perception of timing within a rhythm section.

In a local context it is important to note the historical account of jazz in South Africa by Ballantine (2012) discussing jazz, race politics and society in early apartheid South Africa. This work however does not speak to my research as it does not describe the coordination dynamics of musicians in a jazz trio. It is notable that a related recent study by De Villiers (2021) provides stylistic analyses of three albums recorded between 2014 and 2018 by South African pianists Bokani Dyer, Nduduzo Makhathini, and Kyle Shepherd.

2.2.1. Historical background

Jazz music has a history dating from the late 1800s. There have been many iterations of jazz music formats, including the ragtime era (1895–1905), early blues (from roughly 1910), Dixieland marching bands (roughly 1910–1920), Harlem stride piano (1920s), big band era (roughly 1925–1940), bebop quartets and quintets (1940–1960), post-bop (1960–1980), fusion and funk groups 1970–1990), new-swing (1980–2000), and contemporary jazz (2000s).

Throughout the years, the acoustic jazz trio (piano, double bass, and drums) played a central role. The piano trio adapted stylistically with every new sub-genre of jazz, forming the core rhythm section of many groups.

Well-known examples of various jazz band recordings and their personnel formats as catalogued by Cook and Morton (2002, 211, 316, 372, 379, 419, 1021, 1045, 1127, 1145) include (in chronological order):

Joe 'King' Oliver, *King Oliver,* (1923)

- banjo (Lil Hardin Bud Scott, Bill Johnson)
- alto saxophone (Jimmie Noone)
- clarinet (Johnny Dodds, Jimmie Noone)
- cornet (Louis Armstrong)
- drums (Baby Dodds)
- piano (Clarence Williams)
- bass saxophone (Charlie Jackson)
- trombone (Honoré Dutrey, Kid Ory)

Tommy Dorsey Big Band, *Tommy Dorsey 1928-1935,* (1928-1935)

- alto saxophone (Jimmy Dorsey, Sid Stoneburn, Noni Bernardi, Clyde Rounds)
- clarinet (Jimmy Dorsey, Sid Stoneburn)
- double bass (Gene Traxler, Jimmy Williams)
- drums (Sam Rosen, Sam Weiss, Stan King)
- guitar (Eddie Lang, Mac Cheikes)
- harmonium (Arthur Schutt)
- piano (Paul Mitchel, Fulton McGrath, Frank Signorelli)

- tenor saxophone (Clyde Rounds, Johnny van Eps)
- trumpet x 3 (Tommy Dorsey, Manny Klein, Andy Ferretti, Sterling Bose, Bill Graham)
- trombone x 3 (Joe Ortolano, Ben Pickering, Dave Jacobs)
- vocals (Edythe Wright, Eleanor Powell)

Charlie Parker, *The Quintet: Jazz at Massey Hall (Live),* (1949)

- alto saxophone (Charlie Parker)
- double bass (Charles Mingus)
- drums (Max Roach)
- piano (Bud Powell)
- trumpet (John 'Dizzy' Gillespie)

Miles Davis, *The Complete Birth of the Cool,* (1949–1951)

- alto saxophone (Lee Konitz)
- baritone saxophone (Gerry Mulligan)
- double bass (Nelson Boyd, Al McKibbon, and Joe Schulman)
- drums (Kenny Clarke and Max Roach)
- French horn (Junior Collins, Gunther Schuller, and Sandy Siegelstein)

- piano (Al Haig and John Lewis)
- trombone (JJ Johnson, Kai Winding, and Mike Zwerin)
- trumpet (Miles Davis)
- tuba (Bill Barber)
- vocals (Kenny Hagood)

Dave Brubeck Quartet, *Time Out*, (1959)

- alto saxophone (Paul Desmond)
- double bass (Eugene Wright)
- drums (Joe Morello)
- piano (Dave Brubeck)

John Coltrane, *Live at the Village Vanguard,* (1962)

- bass clarinet (Eric Dolphy)
- double bass (Jimmy Garrison and Reggie Workman)
- drums (Elvin Jones)
- piano (McCoy Tyner)
- saxophone (John Coltrane)

Miles Davis, *In A Silent Way,* (1969)

- double bass (Dave Holland)
- drums (Tony Williams)
- electric guitar (John McLaughlin)
- electric piano (Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock)
- soprano saxophone (Wayne Shorter)
- trumpet (Miles Davis)

The Modern Jazz Quartet, *The Complete Last Concert*, (1974)

- double bass (Percy Heath)
- drums (Connie Kay)
- piano (John Lewis)
- vibraphone (Milt Jackson)

Steps Ahead, *Modern Times*, (1984)

- double Bass (Eddie Gomez)
- drums (Peter Erskine)
- keyboards (Warren Bernhardt)
- saxophone (Michael Brecker)
- vibraphone (Mike Mainieri)

Pat Metheny Group, *Speaking of Now.* (2001)

- drums (Antonio Sanchez)
- fretless bass, percussion, vocals, and acoustic guitar (Richard Bona)
- guitar (Pat Metheny)
- piano (Lyle Mays)
- percussion, marimba (Dave Samuels)
- trumpet and vocals (Cuong Vu)

2.2.2. Significant piano trios

Looking at the list above, it becomes evident that the basic piano trio forms the core backing and rhythm section of most jazz groups. Apart from the big band, the piano trio is probably the most well-known format in the jazz field. Some well-known jazz piano trios are, among others:

- Bill Evans Trio: Bill Evans (piano), Scott LaFaro (double bass), and Paul Motian (drums), active 1959–1961. As noted by Cook and Morton (2002, 481) "the playing of the three men is so sympathetic that it set a universal standard for the piano-bass-drums setup which had persisted to this day."
- Oscar Peterson Trio: Oscar Peterson (piano), Ray Brown (double bass), and Ed Thigpen (drums), active 1958–1965. Cook and Morton (2002, 1182–83) states that "Peterson has all the technical bases covered, working in styles from early swing, bebop, stride, and near classical ideas." He adds (ibid.) that Peterson "is one of the finest accompanists in swing-oriented jazz."
- Keith Jarrett Trio: Keith Jarrett (piano), Gary Peacock (double bass), and Jack DeJohnette (drums), active 1983–2014. Cook and Morton (2002, 779) notes that Jarrett's "standards trio of the 1980s and '90s has rewritten the American songbook every bit as thoroughly as Jarrett has reworked the idiom of jazz piano."
- Brad Mehldau Trio: Brad Mehldau (piano), Larry Grenadier (double bass), and Jeff Ballard (drums), active 2005–present. An early appraisal by Cook and Morton (2002, 1014) predicts that Mehldau was "set to become one of the major voices in the music." Cook and Morton (ibid.) adds that Mehldau's "playing is structured in a familiar post-bob mode, as if he is aware of the tradition but entirely unencumbered by it."

The groups mentioned above exhibit a truly well-interwoven sound, with each musician in the trio fulfilling their role with their own personality and style. Listening to recordings of these trios, it becomes apparent that they function as individual members of a team or unit and actively contribute to what Sawyer (2006, 148) refers to as emergence,[6] defined as 'collective phenomena in which "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts"'. Sawyer (2006) suggests that emergent phenomena are unpredictable, contingent, and hard to explain in terms of the group's components.

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[6] Emergence: see footnote pg. 10

The piano trio has endured as a format in jazz music, managing to maintain its presence in jazz, although the sub-genres or styles of jazz have changed over the years. Berliner (1994, 14) states that "despite stylistic changes over time, jazz retains the continuity of particular underlying practices and values associated with improvisation, learning, and transmission. These factors of continuity, moreover, rest at the very core of the tradition, contributing to its integrity as a music system".

2.2.3. Group creativity, systems theory, and collaboration

I shed more light on the process of music making in a jazz trio format and focused on three key areas regarding group creativity as described by Sawyer (2006, 148):

- *Improvisation*: In most forms of group creativity, the creativity happens in the moment of the encounter. In music and theatre, the performers are not mere interpreters; they are creative artists in their own right
- *Collaboration*: The creativity of a group cannot be associated with any one person. All members contribute, and their interactional dynamics result in the performance
- *Emergence*: Emergence refers to collective phenomena in which "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts". Sawyer notes that these phenomena are variable, subject to change within the parameters of the chosen genre, and not explicable in terms of the group's individual components.

With regard to how Meadows (2008, 11) describes a system and its constituents, a jazz trio can also be regarded as a system:

> [A] system isn't just any old collection of things. A system is an interconnected set of elements that is coherently organised in a way that achieves something … a system must contain three kinds of things: elements, interconnection, and a function or purpose.

Meadows (2008, 11) provides the analogy of a football team, illustrating that it has elements such as players, coach, field, and ball. The interconnections are the rules of the game, the coach's strategy, the players' communications, and the laws of physics that govern the motions of a ball and players. The team's purpose is to win games, have fun, exercise, make millions of dollars, or all of the above.

I believe a similar case or analogy can be made to say that the musicians in a trio can also be regarded as the elements. Interconnections are the rules of music, the harmonic structure of the work being performed, notated music being sight-read, and communication between musicians while performing. The purpose can be to create new music as part of improvisation or to play a rehearsed piece of music during a concert.

I would like to examine this format and see if there are any similarities in the interplay between various groups of musicians in the trio format. What are the various 'traditional' roles of each instrumentalist in the trio?

Fischer et al. (2005, 4–5) indicate three ways of creative collaboration between people:

1) *Serial* is when an individual creates something in isolation, then presents their creation to others who can build on it
2) *Parallel* is when group members create things separately, then bring them together to combine them into something new, or
3) *Simultaneous* is when group members create something together at the same time.

Studying the coordination dynamics of a jazz trio contributes to understanding the three ways of collaboration, as these are present at various times of the trio's day-to-day work. A further study by Seddon and Biasutti (2009) found similar modes of communication in both a classical string quartet and a jazz sextet, namely verbal and non-verbal instruction, cooperation, and collaboration. However, they claim that the focus of research in musical collaboration during the previous three decades has been on string quartets (2009).

Many musicians often refer to the successful interplay on stage or in the studio as 'feeling it', 'vibe', or 'jamming along'. A better understanding of what happens between musicians on stage may lead to more appropriate teaching methodologies or better performance circumstances.

Multi-instrumentalist Arthur Rhames describes in an interview with Berliner (1994, 16):

> Improvisation is an intuitive process for me now, but in the way in which it is intuitive … I'm calling upon all the resources of all the years of my playing at once: my academic understanding of the music, my historical understanding of the music, and my technical understanding of the instrument that I'm playing. All these things are going into one concentrated effort to produce something that is indicative of what I'm feeling at the time I'm performing.

Monson (1996, 27) provides more context and perspective to the historical references made by Rhames:

> [T]he background issue to keep in mind is that at any given moment in a performance, the improvising artist is always making musical choices in relationship to what everyone else is doing. These cooperative choices, moreover, have a great deal to do with achieving (or failing to achieve) a satisfying musical journey – the feeling of wholeness and exhilaration, the pleasure that accompanies a performance well done.

Currently, there is a lack of research into the inner workings of the jazz rhythm section. Monson (1996, 1) notes that "the interplay among drums, bass, and piano in the rhythm section has generally been taken for granted in historical descriptions and analyses of jazz improvisation despite its importance in establishing the feeling and character of a performance".

In terms of musical analysis through a linguistic lens, Monson (1996, 97) suggests that music also has a linguistic function, as a musician might reference previous compositions in his performance by direct quotations or by imitating a particular style of playing. On the topic of collaborative musical creativity, Bishop (2018, 1) writes that:

> Much of this research has been carried out under highly controlled conditions, using tasks that generate reliable results, but captures only a small part of ensemble performance as it occurs naturalistically. Still missing from this literature is an explanation of how ensemble musicians perform in conditions that require creative interpretation, improvisation, and/or adaptation: how do they coordinate the production of something new?

Set-up experiments lead musicians to superimpose particular ideas or tailor their performance to influence the desired result. Rather, my aim was to use interviews with the musicians to determine their own experiences of real-world performance conditions.

Bishop (2018, 1) further makes the case that further research will demystify the constructs of emergence and group flow, determine how constrained musical imagination is by perceptual experience, and understand people's capacity to depart from familiar frameworks. Bishop (2018, 1) suggests that research is required into how people depart from familiar frameworks to imagine new sounds and sound structures, assess the technological developments that are supposed to facilitate or enhance musical creativity, and determine what effect the developments could have on the process underlying creative collaboration. She suggests that current theories also endorse

the idea that creativity does not function in a vacuum or within the confines of an individual mind. Rather, creativity is shaped continually, in real time, by past, present, and anticipated interactions with the external world (Bishop 2018, 1).

Bishop (2018, 6) outlines particular forms of communication between performing musicians:

> [F]luctuations in audio signals produced by an instrument, audible breathing, shifts in eye gaze, changes in posture, overt gestures, or facial expressions. The information that is transferred might relate to performer's interpretation of the music, their engagement in the task, a shift in roles, or an acknowledgement of a mistake, among other things.

2.2.4. *Charl du Plessis Trio case study*

I used a case study methodology to study the Charl du Plessis Trio during this study. The trio was founded in 2006, giving it a longevity that can be studied instead of a normal ad hoc jazz trio that may not have such a history.

As extracted from the Charl du Plessis Trio's website:[7]

> The Charl du Plessis Trio is one of the most versatile and respected crossover ensembles from South Africa. The diverse style of music this trio performs ranges from Baroque, Latin, swing, Classical to funk and sets them apart from other instrumental groups. The trio consists of Steinway Artist Charl du Plessis (piano), Werner Spies (bass) and Peter Auret (drums).

The Charl du Plessis Trio was founded in 2006. In 2007, the trio recorded their first album *Trio* with jazz standards and compositions by Du Plessis. Since their first national tour, this trio has become one of South Africa's most wanted crossover performers on radio, television, and stage with country-wide tours each year.[8] In 2009, the first international tour followed with sold-out performances in China, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. Since 2009, the trio has returned to China and Switzerland annually until 2019 as performers, teachers, and clinicians in master classes and workshops. Tours for 2020 were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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[7] Charl du Plessis Trio website: http://charlduplessis.com/bio/charl-du-plessis-trio/

[8] Dr Charl du Plessis estimates that 295 concerts were performed between 2006 and 2019, with an average of 21 shows per year.

The *Shanghai Brunch* album was released in 2011 and won the Best Instrumental Album prize at the KykNet[9] Ghoema Music Awards[10] and was nominated for a SAMA[11] award. This album featured crossover arrangements of classical music in a jazz style and is one of the trio's best-selling recordings.[12] The trio was awarded the trophy for Best New Production at the Vryfees National Arts Festival in 2010 and 2013. They regularly perform with iconic South African singer/entertainer Nataniël and recorded two albums and two live DVDs with Nataniël.

In 2013, the Charl du Plessis Trio was invited to perform at the Standard Bank Joy of Jazz Festival in Johannesburg alongside international jazz artists: Ahmad Jamal, Abdullah Ibrahim, Terence Blanchard, and Tia Fuller. In 2013, Du Plessis released his first live CD and DVD box set *Pimp My Piano*, featuring live recordings made in the Sand du Plessis Opera House in Bloemfontein. This production won a SAMA Award for Best Engineer for Peter Auret.

Du Plessis is a Steinway Artist and one of the most respected pianists in South Africa, performing across various styles and disciplines and as a soloist with some of the country's leading symphony orchestras. Werner Spies is a multi-talented bass player and teacher. Peter Auret is a SAMA award-winning recording engineer, producer, and the owner of Sumo Sound recording studios in Johannesburg.

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[9] 'kykNET' is a South African Afrikaans-language television channel that is owned by pay-TV operator M-Net. 'kykNET' was launched on the DStv satellite service in October 1999. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KykNET

[10] The Ghoema Music Awards are presented by the Ghoema Trust to recognise outstanding achievement in the Afrikaans music industry in South Africa. The annual event was established in 2012. The ceremony is held annually in March and contenders are judged on performances made in the previous year. The show is broadcast on the kykNET television channel in South Africa. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghoema_Music_Awards

[11] South African Music Awards is presented by the Recording Industry of South Africa (RiSA) that is the custodian of the awards. It is hosted on an annual basis. The South African Music Awards aim to honour and acknowledge all recording artists in various genres, celebrating the diversity of culture in South Africa. Supported by Recording Industry of South Africa (RiSA), The Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), Department of Culture, Arts and Traditional Affairs (CATA), SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation), South African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO), South African Music Performance Rights Association (SAMPRA), Composers Authors and Publishers Association (CAPASSO), and My Muze. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_African_Music_Awards

[12] Dr Charl du Plessis estimates that 4000 copies of the *Shanghai Brunch* album were sold during the time that the album was in print. Typical production volumes for artists in the instrumental music segment of the market are print runs of 1000 units per pressing. The mentioned album was therefore reprinted four times.

In July 2013, the Charl du Plessis Trio recorded their fourth album *BaroqueSwing* in Ernen, Switzerland. In 2014 the trio released the album *Gershwin Songbook.* This album features vocalist, Musanete Sakupwanya, performing arrangements by Du Plessis of compositions by George Gershwin. In October 2016 *BaroqueSwing Vol. 2* was released as part of the Charl du Plessis Trio's first European recording deal with Swiss record label Claves. The album features new interpretations and arrangements of Baroque compositions by Bach, Handel, and Vivaldi. This album won a SAMA Award in May 2017 for Best Classical/Instrumental Album.

In January 2018, the first live DVD-recording and documentary film entitled *BaroqueSwing Vol. 3* of the 2016 concert in Ernen, Switzerland, was released on the Swiss record label Claves. This album won a SAMA Award in May 2018 for Best Classical/Instrumental Album.

This sample group, the Charl du Plessis Trio, was chosen considering its critical acclaim — press coverage by Bester (2020) stating "Du Plessis is 'n bedrewe kunstenaar" [Du Plessis is a skilled artist] in his review of the trio's March 2020 University of Stellenbosch Woordfees concert. Mabaso (2019) writing, "Respect and honour for your art births greatness" in reaction to the trio's Johannesburg Musical Society concert. Opperman (2018) reports on the Charl du Plessis Trio winning a South African Music Award for Best Classical / Instrumental album. Boekkooi's (2016) review of the Baroqueswing Vol. 2 album states that "it becomes clear that Du Plessis is able to contrast the lightness and seriousness extremely effective in his arrangements" — its South African context, and its history of actively performing between 2006 and 2021. This history is in contrast with the *ad hoc* zero history of groups studied by Bastien and Hostager (1988) in a jazz context.

The two following sections are a brief summary of two authoritative textbooks from the literature. Section 2.3 Monson's *Saying Something* addresses the improvisational interplay within a jazz rhythm section of drums, bass, and piano within a jazz ensemble. Section 2.4 Berliner's *Thinking in Jazz* explains how jazz musicians learn to improvise, both as individuals and collectively. These texts also provide significant insight into the cultural aspects of the improvising jazz community.

2.3. Monson *Saying Something* (1996)

It is notable to compare the large body of work cited by Monson (1996, 2) that has gone into the description and research of jazz history and its development. She cites work done by Kenney

(1993) on Chicago jazz, Peretti (1992) on jazz in New Orleans, Stowe (1994) on the swing era, and Tucker (1989, 1993) on Duke Ellington. In addition, the writing by Radano (1993) on Anthony Braxton as a new post-modern black experimentalist offers a new direction for jazz studies.

She argues that most research focuses on the history or socio-political aspects of jazz. She points out the dearth of research on the improvising soloist (one example is Berliner's 1994 research on a trumpet player or saxophonist performing with a backing band) or an even smaller body of work on rhythm section interaction (pianist, bassist, and drummer). Monson (1996) reports that the interactions of the rhythm section (piano, bass, and drums) within the band, have generally been taken for granted, although the rhythm section is very important in establishing the feel and setting the atmosphere of the soloists' improvising.

Furthermore, Monson (1996) notes that when a musician reaches a discerning audience and moves them to applaud and praise her performance the musician enters the realm of 'saying something'. This realm highlights the communication between audience and performer and the communication that takes place within a group.

It is also important to note how Monson (1996, 2) describes the various levels on which musicians communicate about identity, politics, and race by:

- Creating music through the improvisational interaction of sound
- Interactive shaping of social networks and communities that accompany musical participation
- Developing culturally variable meanings and ideologies that inform jazz interpretation in the United States society.

Monson (1996, 2) advocates that the historical, social, and intellectual contexts of recorded history must be understood. She (1996, 3) further states that musicologists commonly undertake interdisciplinary studies in social sciences and humanities. Klein and Newell (1996, 3) explains interdisciplinary studies, as developed in the 1970s, as processes of solving a problem or addressing a question that is too broad or complex to deal with in a single discipline. Interdisciplinary studies (that are still lacking in a South African context) integrate various perspectives into a more comprehensive perspective. Jazz and African American music have not always been welcomed in the academy, and that this lack of acceptance by the establishment shaped jazz literature, studies, and public perception (Monson 1996).

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Monson (1996, 4) reports that previous studies often prepared transcribed scores from recordings and thus identified musical characteristics highly valued in western classical music. This Western view focussed on complex harmony, voice leading, and thematic integration led to the view that improvisation was less worthy of musical analysis than composition. She further mentions that these same standards were often used to disparage aspects of the jazz tradition. Thus, scholars could overlook aspects of improvisation, such as the call and response nature of interaction or the creation of new musical material in real time, not found in the Western classical music tradition. Monson (1996, 4) states that: "Musical interaction within the rhythm section and between the rhythm section and the soloist is one such distinctive musical process in jazz improvisation".

Monson (1996) further suggests that improvisation should be analysed on its own terms and that the musicians themselves are the best source of knowledge about this aspect. She (1996, 4) further reports that Berliner's *Thinking in Jazz* (1994) currently provides the most comprehensive and detailed account of jazz improvisation.

Both Monson and Berliner (1994) started their studies of improvisational interaction by focusing on rhythm section players in particular. Monson (1996, 6) notes that in every generation, non-African American students of jazz try to explain with mixed results the power of African American music. The mixed results suggest that the best person to interview is the musician themselves and not rely on an outside agent to 'speak for' them. This error can also lead to common stereotypes being reinforced and reproduced.

Returning to the rhythm section, Monson (1996, 7) argues that it is important to remember that 'interacting musical roles are simultaneously interacting human personalities, whose particular characters have considerable importance in determining the spontaneity and success of the musical event'.

The layout of Monson's book *Saying Something* (1996) features the following chapters of interest to this study: Chapter 1 where she outlines the methodology that she used for the book, Chapter 2 is interviews with musicians about the rhythms section and improvisation, Chapter 3 is an interweaving of interviews and academic debate, and in Chapter 5 Monson (1996, 9) demonstrates the "interactive construction of musical text and the development of emotional bonds through musical risk, vulnerability, and trust during the course of performance occur simultaneously".

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Throughout the book, Monson (1996) interviews and talks to musicians who had a history of playing and recording together. Importantly, this study does not focus on a zero history group, as studied by Bastien and Hostager (1988). Like Monson, instead, this study explores the interpersonal relationships of musicians in a jazz trio that developed over time. These interpersonal relationships possibly contribute to more fluent and fluid coordination during their performance.

Monson (1996, 17) notes and suggests during the writing of the book that the understanding and insight into the playing of a particular instrument (piano, drums, or bass) aided in her writing about the playing process. The interviews were greatly aided by the availability of musical examples (recordings) to play and use as references during the interview (Monson 1996, 19).

Monson (1996, 20) does warn against positive bias during a recorded interview. As musicians guard against negative comments being permanently on record, they tend to be idealistic during recorded interviews. Often more negative comments occur later in the interview when the recording equipment is turned off.

Chapter 2 of *Saying Something* focuses on groove and feeling. Monson (1996, 26) asks each interviewee to describe the viewpoint of the function of what they see as the role of their instrument in the band. Monson (1996, 27) emphasises that especially during improvised music, it is not just notes being played and is rather "musical personalities interacting". The artist is always "making musical choices in relationship to what everyone else is doing" (Monson 1996, 27).

In terms of describing groove and time, good time is playing with metronomic correctness and keeping a steady pulse (Monson 1996, 28). In addition, good time also has to do with rhythmic phrasing: the ability to absorb "rhythmic variations without being thrown". Emphasising the importance of this rhythmic phrasing, the drummer and trumpet player Ralph Peterson told Monson (1996, 29) in an interview that during an improvised solo, the rhythmic element of notes is just as important as the melodic element. If the musician misses a note but the rhythm is logical, then the musical idea still comes across. However, if the correct melody note is played, but it is played out of time, that section of the music is damaged. In the following sections of the chapter, Monson examines the roles of each instrumentalist more closely.

2.3.1. The bassist

Monson (1996, 29) interviews the bassist Phil Bowler on the rhythmic and harmonic responsibilities of the instrumental role. He mentions three interactive choices available to the bass player:

- Playing time (a walking or comping bass line)
- Interacting melodically or rhythmically with the soloist
- Playing pedal points (sustaining a single pitch in a rhythmic manner though a number of harmonic chord changes) underneath the ensemble.

In an interview with Monson (1996, 30), the bassist Cecil McBee also points out that the bassist should understand the bass' role in the trio to state the pulse, harmony, and rhythm all in one. By combining these elements, the bassist acts as a guide for the rest of the ensemble.

Monson (1996, 30) further confirms during an interview with Jerome Harris that the theoretical role of the bass in jazz music is to define the chordal movement of the music due to the bass normally being the lowest sounding note in the music and establishing the root of the chord. Thus, the rest of the music is heard in relation to that note. She acknowledges that the harmonic progression is often embellished and varied during a performance by using chord substitutions, alterations, and chromatic voice leading. The bass player and piano player should actively listen to each other to act with harmonic sensitivity toward each other.

From these interviews, Monson (1996, 43) concludes that the role of the bassist is to provide harmonic direction and a steady rhythmic pulse. There are also more musical options that have interactional implications for the rest of the ensemble: variations of "harmony, rhythm, pedal points, melodic ideas, timbre, and register [that] can be employed in a way that provokes responses from other band members and enhances or detracts from the overall musical development of the ensemble" (Monson 1996, 43).

Monson (1996, 43) concludes the section on the bassist's role by summarising that the bassist balances the demand of keeping good time and harmony, and stays inventive and creative enough to respond to musical ideas that occur. The bassist should provide musical support and aid in the creation of musical climaxes when the opportunity arises. This process of ongoing decision making

explains the saying of musicians that listening is the most important thing while playing. Musicians should respond to musical change at any moment.

2.3.2. The pianist

Monson (1996, 43) summarises the pianist's role by stating that the word most associated with the piano's accompanying role (as opposed to soloist) is comping. She (1996, 43) describes comping as the "rhythmic presentation of harmonies in relation to the soloist or the written theme of an arrangement". Comping is the skill to accompany and complement the soloist in a musical way and is often an improvised rhythmic and harmonic counterpoint to the melody or solo, adding "a rhythmic layer to the texture provided by the walking bass and the drums" (Monson 1996, 44).

During his interview with Monson (ibid.) Jaki Byard cited traditional big band accompaniments as influences on his comping style: as if mimicking the way a big band plays a shout chorus[13] or particular riff.[14] The pianist expects bass players to hear when they (pianists) vary or substitute particular chords during a jazz standard (Monson 1996, 49). Furthermore, pianists also become used to the style of a particular bass player that they played with for many years. During an interview with Monson (1996, 49), Sir Roland Hanna explained that due to him and Richard Davis playing together for a long time, he could realistically predict what might happen next in a musical sense due to their shared past experience:

> When you are talking about having been around somebody for thirty years… you're close to the way they think. Now maybe I don't know exactly … the way he thinks, but I am close enough to what he has been thinking in the past to have a idea of what he might play from one note to the next. If he plays C at a certain strength, then I know he may be looking for an A-flat or an E-flat or whatever direction he may go in. And I know he may be making a certain kind of passage. I've heard him enough to know how he makes his lines. So I may not know exactly what note he is going to play, but I know in general the kind of statement he would make or how he would use his word, you know, the order he would pot his words in … There's a curious thing about

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[13] Lowell and Pullig (2003, 149) describes the shout chorus as a section in and arrangement in which the entire band plays concerted, contrapuntal, or a combination of these, building to a climax.

[14] Lowell and Pullig (2003, 139) describes a riff as a short, repeated melodic statement that is improvised by a single player or section in a band. Riffs may be played in unison, harmonised, or answered using a call-and-response method.

musicians. We train ourselves over a period of years to be able to hear rhythms and anticipate combinations of sounds before they actually happen (Hanna 1989).

As highlighted by Monson (1996, 50)[15] the group must have a shared sense of musical style that includes the notion of the appropriate rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic responses to particular musical events. This claim underscores the importance of knowledge of the standard repertoire and sensitivity towards other musicians.

Throughout Monson's interviews, she points out that most instrumentalists think they play the most important role within an ensemble. In an interview with Monson (1996, 50), Roland Hanna states that the piano is akin to having a chord, rhythm, and bass instrument all in one and that the bass and drums only enhance and amplify what is already present within the piano. Monson concludes her summary of the role of the pianist by illustrating that each instrumentalist may feel like the most important member of the group due to their unique way of handling particular musical situations. However, she believes it is the balance between the instruments that contribute to the cohesiveness of the ensemble.

2.3.3. The drummer

The drummer is generally the most underrated by the audience and least discussed in historical and analytical literature (Monson 1996, 51). Bruford (2019, 83) highlights that the learning experience of high-level experts on unpitched instruments in nonclassical traditions has been much less examined than early career musicians playing Western classical pitched instruments. This focus imbalance is quite ironic as the individual components of a drum-set form a group of instruments on their own that encompass the elements of interplay discussed so far.

A common misconception is that many people assume that the drummer simply plays rhythm and has no participation in terms of the melodic and harmonic flow of the music. In Monson's (1996, 52) interview with the drummer Michael Carvin, he stresses that a drummer has musical interaction between his limbs that can be just as polyphonic as an interaction between various musicians in an

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[15]Gratier (2008, 101) highlights that improvising musicians go through a process of negotiation to establish what they hold in common, tacitly agreeing on their shared understanding of the musical situation and goal.

ensemble. This interaction is similar to the interaction a pianist has between their left and right hands.

As Monson (1996, 52) explains, the first objective and role of a drummer in an ensemble are that of *playing time,* which means stating the rhythmic pulse of the music, playing in the appropriate style and creating a rhythmic framework wherein improvisation can take place. In her study, she mainly focuses on swing time, which is the shuffle family of rhythms where the pulse can be subdivided in an uneven group of three notes as opposed to two notes of equal duration. She focused on swing as performed in the bebop-and-after version. During the bebop era (roughly 1945–1959), drummers moved their main timekeeping focus on the ride cymbal instead of the bass drum and hi-hat. The effect of this change was that drummers could incorporate much more variation in their playing and that the rest of their limbs were freed to include all kinds of rhythmic accents over keeping time on the ride cymbal. This style of playing has endured in jazz ever since and is the dominant style of playing in contemporary groups.

The most important timekeeping instrument in the post-bebop era has been the ride cymbal (Monson 1996, 55). This ride cymbal use frees up the drummer's other limbs and allows the addition of various kinds of accents to the music while keeping a steady groove with the ride cymbal. The rest of the ensemble, especially the bassist, interlocks with the sound of the ride cymbal, which is typically the most stable element of the drummer's playing.

Before the bebop era, during the 1920s and 1930s, the convention was to keep time and play four beats in a bar on the bass drum. This convention added support to the double bass due to the bass amplification being unavailable. The Count Basie Orchestra (prominent big band from the 1930s swing era lead by William James "Count" Basie) drummer Jo Jones is credited with moving the main timekeeping function from the bass drum to the ride cymbal. This innovation freed up the bass drum for rhythmic accents commonly referred to as 'dropping bombs'. Later, this idea was developed by bebop era drummers Max Roach and Kenny Clarke.

Another idea supporting the ride cymbal timekeeping convention is that the double bass has a very dark sound, and the cymbal is quite bright, thereby creating a good sonic balance. Monson (1996, 56) reports that drummers often base their preference for bass colleagues on how easily this synchronisation occurs between ride cymbal and double bass.

Monson (1996, 58–59) further explains that as the drummer's ride cymbal interlocks with the double bass, the drummer's left hand, and by implication snare drum, focuses on the piano. The drummer's left hand provides rhythmic variety against the stability of the ride cymbal. During interviews with drummers Kenny Washington, Roy Haynes, and pianist Michael Weiss, they commented on the important role of the piano and drum association. Drummer Ralph Petersen also mentions that it is important to focus on the music being made, actively comping in the ensemble instead of only playing time.

A further musical element available to the drummer is playing fills. Monson (1996, 59) describes fills as a moment where the drummer breaks away from playing time and plays a two-handed phrase on various drums and cymbals.

Fills can serve one of three musical functions:
- Interacting with the melody
- Providing a comping rhythm
- Indicating and setting up a new structural section within the music.

These fills can vary from a single beat or two to several duration measures with a specific target point or beat in mind, which usually is the downbeat of a new phrase.

Monson (1996, 60) also identifies various aspects regarding melody, harmony, and timbre. One of these is that drummers often rely on the difference in timbre of cymbals and drums available in the kit to inform their note choices (Monson 1996, 60). Another misconception is that drummers often only play time, but Monson (1996, 61) illustrates that drummers are keenly aware of the harmony and song form when they play. Ralph Peterson goes so far as to mention that he plays a different drum fill depending on the song's key. To dispel a lay misconception of drummers this statement by Ralph Peterson highlights the point that drummers cannot simply be viewed as playing a purely rhythmic function. Professional drummers actively incorporate melody, harmony, and timbre ideas in their playing (Monson 1996, 62).

2.3.4. *The ensemble as a whole: Grooving as an aesthetic ideal*
During the chapter subsection 'The ensemble as a whole: grooving as an aesthetic ideal', Monson (1996, 66–67) demonstrates the inherent tension and conflict within the jazz ensemble. There is a

fine balance between the interests of the individual and that of the group. The overall aesthetic of the music consists of the individual intricacies and note choices of each musician. However, at times, there should be total coordination within the group to establish a good sense of rhythmic cohesion to achieve musical climax. The opportunity arises where individuals should put the group's interest above themselves, which is especially true in improvised music such as jazz.

The glue that binds the group together and creates unity and stability for each ensemble member is the notion of groove. During interviews, most of the interviewees described grooving "as a rhythmic relation or feeling existing between two or more musical parts and/or individuals" (Monson 1996, 68). Within this framework, each individual has the opportunity to interact freely and cohesively with the others.

The idea of groove goes further. The term is also often referred to as 'feeling', illustrating that a sense of groove is also created and achieved by a group and negotiated between the various members (Monson 1996, 68). During an interview, pianist Michael Weiss further stated that particular songs have an optimal tempo for playing and do not groove if performed at a too slow or too fast tempo.

Monson (1996, 72) emphasises that it is important for individual members of a group to have a shared sense and conception of cultural musical processes necessary for making sense of a given musical genre (in the case of this study, the jazz canon). She (1996, 82) makes the argument that a jazz ensemble forms a "musical framework for participation" and the rhythm section provides a timeline against which the soloist can interact and build. The members of the rhythm section "display their hearings and understanding of musical events" by coordinating their behaviour or musical responses, such as an increase or decrease in the volume or intensity of the comping, to changes in an improviser's solo, Monson (1996, 83). The opposite is also true: musicians who do not actively listen to what happens around them may miss these musical opportunities (Monson 1996, 83). Tuuri and Eerola (2012, 137) denote listening as the intentional creation of meaning from sound instead of hearing that is receiving sound passively. Therefore, active listening incorporates the ability to respond to musical opportunities or correct mistakes.

Monson (1996, 88) also refers to musical aesthetics as informed by African American cultural aesthetics, where a musical response is just as important as verbal conversation. It is important to

respond to a musical idea for it to be further developed by the ensemble. A mentioned method to encourage participation by the group members is for the soloist to repeat a particular phrase or rhythmic figure. This repetition (or emphasis) broadens the participatory musical framework that facilitates improvisation in the ensemble.

Monson (1996, 96) notes that jazz musicians often prefer metaphorical language when talking and describing a jazz performance. These metaphors often elude more to the intangible and ethereal nature of improvisation than the more theoretical analysis of Western musical theory. The chapter concludes with Monson (1996, 96) illustrating that a soloist in a jazz ensemble can be viewed as a preacher in a gospel church and the accompanying musicians as a responsive congregation.

Chapter 4 is titled 'Intermusicality' and mainly addresses the 'double-consciousness' (Monson 1996) experienced by African-American musicians, experiencing both being African and African-American at the same time. Monson (1996, 106) highlights the work of saxophonist John Coltrane who adapted the tune 'My Favorite Things' from the Broadway musical 'The Sound of Music' into a jazz style (transforming a simple tune into a vehicle for improvisation and self-expression). The drummer Max Roach says various people projected this music, used this music, and kept it alive, such as Gershwin, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk, and Coleman Hawkins (Monson 1996, 115–16).

The paragraph above might be an interesting comparison with the way that my case study, the Charl du Plessis Trio adapts pre-existing classical works (see Discography Addendum) for jazz trio and presents his reinvented, re-interpretations and contemporary versions to audiences, keeping the compositions alive.

2.3.5. Intermusicality

Monson (1996, 128–29) addresses the idea of intermusicality and proposes that both audience and musicians on stage can only appreciate musical references from a basis of shared knowledge. This shared knowledge may include a particular type of tonal quality used by a trumpet player that creates a reference to Miles Davis, or a specific mid-range sound on the bass guitar that references Jaco Pastorius' playing style. Monson (1996, 129) reminds the reader that intermusicality is

especially underscored and emphasised in a jazz improvisation process as it is the "product of human beings interacting through music both in time and over time".

Chapter 5 is titled 'Interaction, feeling and musical analysis' and focuses on the method of analysing a jazz performance. Importantly, the way jazz music is analysed has also changed over the years. Monson (1996, 134) specifically mentions how analysis has changed since Schuller's (1968) criteria were mostly values derived from German romanticism and modernism and viewed from a hegemonic Western classical point of view. It is important to note the significant contribution of Ballantine (2012) adding historical jazz analysis of local artists from a South African perspective.

Monson (1996, 137–74) analyses the 1965 recording of 'Bass-Ment Blues' by the Jaki Byard Quartet. The quartet consists of Jaki Byard on piano, George Tucker on double bass, Alan Dawson on drums, and Joe Farrell on flute. Monson (1996, 137–74) illustrates the large-scale development of the piece, citing points of musical climax and areas where the ensemble makes a mistake and how they recover.

Particular aspects of group coordination become apparent in Monson's (1996, 137–74) analysis:
- Several climatic points occur during the performance at the end of each soloist's improvisation
- Intensification or 'taking it to another level' with changes of dynamics, rhythmic density, register, timbre, melody, harmony, interaction, and style of groove
- Flexibility and responsiveness
- Collective ability to fix mistakes that happen on stage during a performance
- Rhythm section states the harmonic structure very clearly in support of a soloist who lost the form
- Ability to adapt and change the harmonic structure, keeping the band together during performance rather than keeping a rigid form
- Call and response patterns/phrases
- On-the-spot arranging demonstrates the ability of the band to follow and support a leader's initiative to introduce a new rhythmic or melodic idea on stage
- Musical trust between ensemble members, in particular when taking a musical risk.

The musicians work together and spend time on the road and stage, leading to strong emotional bonds. These interpersonal bonds often have competition, respect, love, hate, or solidarity as axes

but are mainly formed through performance (Monson 1996, 178). Monson (1996, 185–86) suggests that the feeling in a rhythmic feel in the ensemble is gained through a combination of the elements listed above with interactive musical conversation in real-time performance.

The last chapter might not be completely relevant to my study as its main concern is with the relationship of jazz to the international African diaspora (1996, 193). However, Monson (1996, 196–97) does touch on a couple of interesting thoughts throughout the chapter regarding the kind of grooves that qualify as jazz. Stating that the more 'straight' or even the rhythmic subdivision becomes, the further it moves away from jazz and moves more towards rock and roll or contemporary funk. In recent years, both musicians and critics have begun to move away from such preconceived classifications of what jazz may or may not be with the scope being regarded much more broadly than only the rhythmic feel. Gioia (2011, 381) notes that jazz is becoming more globalised, celebrating more national, regional, and local elements outside the United States, broadening the ranges of styles and even instruments found on the band stand. Notable record labels that embrace these new sounds cited by Gioia (ibid.) are the European labels ECM, ACT, Hat Hut, and CAM.

Monson (1996, 201) also cautions jazz musicians against 'counteruniversality', where earlier jazz music was evaluated through a Western classical music aesthetic lens (as per the Gunther Schuller example earlier in the book). Jazz musicians also risk evaluating all music through a jazz aesthetic lens. The remainder of the chapter can mostly be summarised by the reference to the duo recorded by Charles Mingus and Eric Dolphy (Monson 1996, 208). Monson argues that it is insufficient to read only a transcription to ascertain the full meaning of a conversation. Her argument is that a note-for-note transcription of an ensemble performance on the piano does not convey the full meaning of what was played/meant due to various timbres of the various instruments that played in the original performance.

2.4. Berliner *Thinking in Jazz* (1994)

Berliner's (1994, 3) introduction notes that writing about jazz often falls within categories ranging from autobiographies, biographies, compilations of interviews with various artists, bibliographies, discographies, historical interpretations of the music's successive style periods, jazz criticism

textbooks, philosophical speculation on the nature of improvisation and even method books describing theoretical approaches. Berliner (1994, 3) points out that despite the availability of these resources, there is still a lack of material to describe individual and collective processes of learning, transmitting, and improvising jazz.

Initially Berliner (1994, 6) had a 25-page series of questions that he prepared for each interview. However, he quickly established that it took an immense amount of time to get through it all as the amount of time was three sessions and nine hours for the first interview. He changed his approach and chose appropriate questions from the set during subsequent interviews.

In order to have a large enough sample pool, Berliner (1994, 7) ensured asking the same set or themed questions to artists of various backgrounds. Most of these performers developed their skills between the late 1930s and 1960s during the bebop[16] and hard bop[17] eras, developing virtuosic practices still relevant in contemporary jazz.

An interesting observation came to light after most of the interviews were completed. Berliner (1994, 7) notes that there were many diverging viewpoints on particular matters, for example what a musician thinks about during an improvised solo. Answers ranged from listening to the other band members to only listening and focusing intensely on their own playing to balancing the two extreme views. Berliner (1994, 7) was the collector and interpreter of the data.

As highlighted by Monson, Berliner also notes (1994, 8) the challenge for musicians to talk about the intricacies of past performances. Explaining and reflecting on one's own thinking during a performance is difficult when talking afterwards about the performance. Even with the statement above in mind, Berliner (1994, 12) could still show a functioning pedagogy of instruction within the jazz community after collating the data from his interviews. The main structure of the work also follows the natural life cycle of a musician. Berliner (1994, 13) starts with a clean slate,

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[16] Cooke (2013, 261) describes bebop as a style of jazz that developed in the 1940s that is characterised by virtuosic improvisations based on complex harmonic progressions.

[17] Cooke (2013, 262) explains that hard bop indicates the continuation of the development of bebop in the 1950s. During this era hard-driving rhythmic characteristics, blues, and gospel mannerisms were intensified.

moving on to the learning process, various stages of development, and other aspects of knowledge acquired over time.

In the introduction of *Thinking in Jazz*, Berliner (1994, 13) highlights the work done by Monson and also mentions Keith Sawyer's work on the group aspects of improvisation (see Section 2.1.4 *Musical ensemble as a system,* Section 2.15 *Flow state,* Section 2.2.3 *Group creativity, system theory, and collaboration,* and Section 2.2.2 *Significant piano trios).*

Berliner (1994, 14) circulated a draft of the work among some of the interviewees to ensure an accurate interpretation of the various interviews. The interviewees commented and confirmed that they agreed with his interpretation and representation of the interview source material. Although Berliner's (1994) work is not a practical manual, it does contain useful advice to a young musician. Perhaps my own research can be of similar value to a young performer or educator.

A broad outline of the work is set out by Berliner (1994, 16) as follows: Part 1 looks at the areas and contexts in which jazz musicians develop their skill. Part 2 deals with individual improvisation, and Part 3 looks at the collective aspects of improvisation that enable groups to integrate their individual ideas during a performance.

2.4.1. *Jazz community as educational system*

In the second chapter, "Hangin' out and jammin' – the jazz community as educational system", Berliner (1994, 37–39) examines the various venues and artefacts that provide jazz musicians with an education. These education opportunities range from record stores, music stores, social clubs, and musician's homes to recordings, books, newsletters, films, video documentaries, nightclubs, concert halls, and music festivals. Young musicians are also often looking to find points of entry into a scene through finding peers with a similar interest in school or the local community. Young musicians further their studies by setting up informal study groups for informal socialising, giving and taking theoretical and practical advice, and giving demonstrations. Gowlland (2019, 509) refers to the idea of enskilment where skills and knowledge are not only acquired by explicit instruction but also socially by spending time in a specific workshop environment with more senior and novice peers, sharing conversations, jokes, and gossip in the group. There is also a further

undertaking by young musicians to develop an apprenticeship with veteran musicians from out of town.

An interesting observation from Berliner (1994, 41) is that jazz mentors often create a positive learning environment by stating that both mentor and student are part of a combined and ongoing learning process. This positive learning environment eases the student's tension and puts them at ease.

Jam sessions[18] are another learning environment where essential skills are acquired through active performance. As noted by Berliner (1994, 42–43), jam sessions are free from commercial constraints in terms of repertoire and the duration of a song. The jam sessions afford the performer the opportunity to take musical and artistic risks in a safe environment. Apart from the benefits of gaining performance experience and learning, the jam sessions also function as an informal showcase and audition vehicle for up-and-coming musicians.

Apart from jam sessions, veteran musicians might also invite younger musician up on stage to 'sit in' with the band for one or two pieces. Berliner (1994, 44) explains that this tradition is a great form of encouragement from a more established musician, apart from being able to perform in front of a paying audience.

A more structured environment for active learning is when musicians are active members of a band. The musicians may be active in an informal band that performs on weekends at dances, a school band, or is more professionally active. Berliner (1994, 46) observes that musicians' involvement with such bands leads to more invitations and further engagements the more senior a band member becomes.

Berliner (1994, 48) points out that explicit auditions are often avoided due to the continuous social interaction between musicians. Instead of a formal audition process for a position in a band, interactions are rather an ongoing opportunity to build or detract from (should things not go well) one's musical, professional, and personal reputation.

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[18] Musicians' term for the occasion where such informal, extended playing took place. Favourite vehicles for jamming are the harmonic forms of a twelve-bar blues or the 'I Got Rhythm' changes as explained by Carr et al. (1988, 253).

In terms of a teaching syllabus, Berliner (1994, 51) notes that the jazz community emphasises learning rather than teaching and encourages young musicians to take the responsibility to determine for themselves what they should learn next. Students are encouraged to ask for advice from mentors. They then set the topic for discussion during a lesson themselves instead of waiting for a specific lesson from a set syllabus.

Starting with Schillinger House in Boston in 1945 and later Berklee School of Music, Berliner (1994, 56) shows that formal education institutions started to take an interest in jazz education. Notably, in the South African context, formal jazz education was only established in South Africa for the first time in four higher education centres during the 1980s (Duby 2016, 282). These centres ensured the transfer of knowledge of jazz and legitimated its study. A broad outline of a typical syllabus might include performing in ensembles, a course in jazz history, theoretical aspects of improvisation, and arranging and composing in the style of the great masters like Count Basie and Duke Ellington. Students also study the core of Western classical composition, theory, and music history in the syllabus. Formal jazz education has expanded internationally through scholarships for international students to study in the United States and exchange programmes between various institutions. Berliner (1994, 56) cites the International Association of Schools of Jazz founded by David Liebman in 1989 to strengthen the pedagogical ties between institutions.

A similar organisation in the South African context is the South African Association for Jazz Education (SAJE)[19] that has the stated mission of:
- Developing jazz and jazz education in urban and rural areas
- Advancing jazz education and research
- Promoting skills development and performance
- Developing new audiences
- Documenting, preserving, and archiving the South Africa jazz heritage.

2.4.2. *Jazz compositions as vehicles for improvisation*
Chapter 3 is titled 'A very structured thing': jazz compositions as vehicles for improvisation'. Berliner (1994, 64–94) demonstrates how soloists develop and learn new material and songs. The

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[19] South African Association for Jazz Education (SAJE) website: http://www.saje.org.za

chapter mentions recordings for transcribing solos and how young musicians learn new song forms, starting with basic blues progressions, moving on to rhythm changes,[20] and learning chord progressions for jazz standards. Although this is very important to acknowledge, this chapter does not necessarily speak to or reference the specific interplay and coordination of musicians and provides a more general idea of how a soloist of any instrument learns to play. Part 3 of the text deals with collective aspects of improvisation and arranging pieces for group performance.

2.4.3. Decisions in rehearsal

There is a common conception among the public that the group improvises the music performed during a concert. This is not true. Berliner (1994, 289) explains that musical arrangements are the regulation of the members' interactions worked out in advance. The degrees of planning may vary with various levels of constraints or freedom imposed on musicians. Arrangements of songs normally provide stable precomposed elements for group interplay and provide the overall shape to a performance, with the antithesis being unrestrained collective improvisation.

The basic structure or sound of an arrangement is primarily determined by the bandleader choosing the instruments of the group. Berliner (1994, 291) points out that conventions of band instrumentation and arrangements form as newer bands often emulate successful historical groups in terms of instrumentation and arranging style, so contributing to the definition of particular style periods.

During the development of a new arrangement, Berliner (1994, 292–93) demonstrates that it can range from a strict, unadorned rendering of a tune to the most elaborate reworking, essentially creating a new work. Arrangers typically find the appropriate artistic balance on this spectrum, giving each part the opportunity for improvisation in relation to the performance of precomposed material. A common convention is that the rhythm section (bass, drums, and piano) provides the stylistic accompaniment interpreting the given harmony.

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[20] Gioia (2011, 187) explains that bebop composers frequently simply grafted an exotic name and a new (and usually more complex) melody onto the chords of earlier popular standards. For example, Thelonious Monk's '52nd Street Theme' borrowed the harmonies of 'I Got Rhythm,' by George Gershwin. The harmonic framework of this popular song is often simply referred to as 'rhythm changes'.

Berliner (1994, 293–94) explains that artists may change or reharmonise the harmony of the original piece, change the tempo by slowing or speeding up the original, or arrange the piece in a new time signature. Berliner (1994, 293–94) points out that if the appropriate duration of improvised solos is not specified by the arranger, rather the convention is that solos be the same duration as the first solo.

As noted by Berliner (1994, 297–98), soloists commonly request a specific type of comping from the rhythm section for the solo. Rhythm section players commonly do not to receive parts with specific notes written for them and rather a style or artistic reference to interpret during the performance. When the opportunity arises for a solo from either the bass or drums, convention determines that they receive fewer solos than other musicians. Berliner explains (1994, 299) that this could also add an undue burden to the musicians as they are already playing throughout the performance, accompanying the rest of the band. When they do take a solo, it is often with sparse rhythmic and harmonic comping from the rest of the band.

Further rhythmic features in an arrangement include specific rhythms in the accompaniment of a solo, solo breaks where the rhythm section suspends their playing for a set number of measures, and 'stop time' where the rhythm section outlines the harmonic progression by playing only the downbeat of each measure (Berliner 1994, 300).

2.4.4. *Transmitting arrangements*

These arrangements are mostly learned during formal rehearsals. The complexity of an arrangement is often determined by the time available to prepare for the performance. Berliner explains (1994, 301) that with little time available, minimal directions are given and the most common conventions followed. Time constraints during rehearsal are often caused by touring bands using local rhythm sections with minimal time to learn new material. Groups that work as a stable unit often have much more time to rehearse and formally set arrangements.

Traditionally, jazz musicians had varying levels of music reading capabilities, and arrangements were often taught aurally to the band. Berliner (1994, 302) demonstrates that bands such as Miles Davis' often had a combination of written parts, blank pieces of paper for note taking, or practical

demonstrations. On the other hand, particular groups such as Horace Silver's band worked from complete, written-out parts.

Importantly, however, the musicians performing an arrangement must be comfortable in that specific style. Berliner (1994, 302) notes that it is very difficult to notate small stylistic nuances and that the interpretation of the written part relies on the musician's knowledge of the relevant style. For instance, jazz musicians understand notated eighth notes differently from musicians in an orchestra. Although two consecutive eighth notes look identical in note value when notated, jazz musicians elongate the first one and shorten the second eighth note, giving the music a swing feel, treating both eighth notes as equal value as written gives the music a straight feel. On the contrary, many orchestral musicians know that it is stylistically correct to add an unwritten ritardando to slow the tempo to the end of a musical phrase, leaving many of their pulse and tempo crazed jazz colleagues confused and frustrated by their apparent lack of ability to keep a steady tempo throughout the piece.

2.4.5. Collaborating on arrangements

In terms of group collaboration on arrangements, Berliner (1994, 304) notes that various band members often contribute to the arrangement in terms of their own musical strengths. For example, one member might have a particular talent for developing chord progressions, and another might be well known for writing superior melodies. Each contributes to the best of their abilities, and the best possible arrangement emerges as a group.

In his research, Berliner (1994, 304) also observed that when musicians lacked the technical knowledge to describe an idea for an arrangement, they might often use extramusical terminology in terms of mood or emotions to convey their idea. They might reference an example recording to illustrate a type of groove, chord voicing or comping style. A soloist may request that the comping by the rhythm section members be more 'spaced out' or 'intense'.

It is also quite common to experiment with various options before a final arranging decision is made. Berliner (1994, 306) explains that groups often try different versions in a rehearsal setting and evaluate the options. The various versions often result in a give-and-take scenario between group members in terms of the suggestions that each member made during the arranging process.

2.4.6. Changing arrangements

Arrangements of pieces are also not necessarily set in stone. Berliner (1994, 307) observes that as these arrangements are played over months or years on tour, they are constantly re-evaluated and might be changed over time to keep them fresh and provide new inspiration for improvisation.

Notably, arrangements can also be quite flexible in terms of structure or number of repeats for particular sections, and Berliner (1994, 310) points out that this flexibility is often directly related to the size of the group. The larger the ensemble, the less flexible the arrangement becomes.

2.4.7. Conducting arrangements

In contrast to big bands, small groups commonly function without a formal conductor. Berliner (1994, 311) notes that small groups are mostly led by a musician in the group, announcing pieces to the audience, counting off a song, and directing the order of soloists to perform unless predetermined in the arrangement. Group cohesion is also regulated by a series of subtle non-verbal clues ranging from a tempo deduced from a soloist's introduction to a piece, particular physical gestures with an instrument, to facial expressions indicating a cue or comment on stage.

Most arrangements provide a set of guidelines as to the overall structure and musical events of the piece (Berliner 1994, 313). The arrangements often allow for improvisations or fully written or predetermined parts at particular points.

2.4.8. Conventions guiding the rhythm section

Berliner (1994, 314) points out that most musical detail is improvised by members of the rhythm section, working from given parts of arrangements to create a new musical part. A rhythm section's main collective function is to 'comp'. Berliner (1994, 315) explains that the term refers to a musician both accompanying and complementing a soloist or singer. During an interview with Berliner (1994, 315) pianist Walter Bishop Jr. referred to this way of playing as laying down a carpet under the soloist. This skill of comping has to be learnt by novice bass players, drummers, and pianists. Novice players should learn the performance conventions of the styles of music which they wish to perform.

2.4.9. The string bass

The double bass has played a central role in the rhythm section since the early jazz days. Berliner (1994, 315–16) notes that the bass' main role is to interpret and outline the harmonic-rhythmic structure of the piece. Bass parts were initially quite sparse, predominantly comprising a root/fifth two-feel and later changing to the four in a bar feel made famous by Walter Page in Count Basie's band. By the 1940s, as instrument and amplification technology developed, faster playing became possible, and the bass player started to play a more dominant role in accompaniment. Goldsby (2002, 1–2) notes that the double bass sound was rather thick and overly emphasised in the low-frequency register (boomy) on recordings before the 1940s. The individual notes also had a short duration with space in between them. During the 1950s, bassists such as Oscar Pettiford used gut strings amplified with a microphone played through the sound system. During the 1960s, as pickup technology improved further, bassists could lower the action on the bass and use more modern steel strings and produce the necessary volume by using a bass amplifier.

Nowadays, as modern contemporary bass players formulate a bass line, Berliner (1994, 316–17) explains that bassists interweave various rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic aspects to create tension and release within the music. Bassists are just as conscious and concerned at all times about harmonic and melodic features as the soloist. One example is finding the balance between stating the harmony explicitly by playing the root on the downbeat of each bar or creating harmonic ambiguity by delaying the root and playing various chord tones on the downbeat and only later (or never) playing the root.

Berliner (1994, 318–19) explains that bass players also follow a convention of strong resolutions by approaching the tonic of a new chord either by scale degree step or a skip of an interval of a fifth. Further part development can also be achieved by repeating and creating particular melodic themes within the bass part and choosing different registers of the bass to use in various sections of a piece. Berliner (1994, 319) summarises the elements that constitute a good bass part by concluding that each bass part should have musical value in its own right and not only function in conjunction with others.

Young bass players are often guided by a more experienced bass player to understand the philosophy and function of the bass rather than just learning how to play specific notes. Berliner

(1994, 320–21) explains that in addition to perfecting their skills alone in the practice room, bass players also gain and develop their understanding of what to play on the bandstand playing with other musicians. This practical experience is further aided by referencing and transcribing bass lines from famous recordings.

2.4.10. The drums

Berliner (1994, 324) describes the basic components of a drum kit. He points out that the various components of the drum kit form an ensemble of its own, as opposed to a series of separate instruments found in an orchestral percussion setting. The basic setup includes a large bass drum (operated by right-foot kick pedal), hi-hat cymbals (operated by left-foot pedal), snare drum, crash cymbal, ride cymbal, and one or two tom-tom drums. The value placed on the rhythmic elements in African American music is reflected in the importance of the drum kit in jazz groups.

Berliner (1994, 325–26) lays out a basic history and development of the drum kit and way of playing. Drummers combined march-like figures with syncopation from the ragtime era, reinforcing the band's accented phrases with cymbal crashes or kicks. In the New Orleans style of playing, drummers play with a less formal structure and improvise their parts more. In the Chicago style of playing, drummers emphasise the suspended cymbal, developing new ways of playing with brushes.

Drummers such as Gene Krupa emphasised every beat in the bar with the bass drum, supporting the groove of the bass player. In 1927, the Fletcher Henderson big band drummer Walter Johnson developed a new technique for the newly invented hi-hat cymbal. He achieved a very smooth sound by playing four beats in a bar, opening and closing the hi-hats on alternating beats.

During the bebop era (roughly 1945-1959), keeping time shifted from laying down four beats in a bar on the bass drum to keeping time on the ride cymbal. This development gave drummers and bass players more independence, resulting in more freedom on the drum kit for the drummer. During this time, the drum kit was finally solidified as a cohesive unit instead of a series of percussion instruments.

In terms of drummers' musical language and characteristics, Berliner (1994, 328) notes that drummers can add punctuations to emphasise another musician's part or to provide a rhythmic

counterpoint to the part. Drummers also further aid in marking various sections within the structure of a piece by playing three bars of normal time and then embellishing the rhythm in the fourth, which is commonly known as a drum fill, and returning to normal time keeping in the fifth bar.

Berliner (1994, 330–31) demonstrates that young drummers, like young double bass students, also learn by transcribing and copying the old masters' rhythmic patterns and phrases from recordings. This learned content includes the way to support a soloist by following the soloist's lead by building the intensity of the comping in step with the solo. In terms of personal style, drummers usually find their own balance between how much or little they support the melody and harmonic structure of a piece. Max Roach was well known for his melodic approach to rhythm instead of just playing time.

Contrasting with the Max Roach melodic school of drummers, Berliner (1994, 332) presents Elvin Jones as the polyrhythmic school leader in which triple meter patterns are superimposed over duple meter during his playing. Finally, Berliner (1994, 332) discusses the soloistic school of drummers such as Tony Williams and Jack DeJohnette. They built upon the foundation of Max Roach and Elvin Jones by almost soloing the whole time, including when comping. An example is DeJohnette's playing on Keith Jarrett's trio album, *Still Live* (1988). In this style of playing the drummer is virtually implying time and groove in what they play without ever stating it in such clear terms.

2.4.11. The piano

During the early years of jazz, the piano was initially considered a variable component of jazz groups and was often interchangeable with the guitar or banjo. Berliner (1994, 332–33) explains that since then, the piano has become a fundamental part of the rhythm section, sharing tasks with both the drums and bass. The piano can assist with suggesting the harmonic form, by playing its own bass line and laying it out more explicitly by playing full chords with both hands. The piano can also support the rhythmic elements from the drums by playing rhythmic punctuations on the piano in contrast to long sustained sounds.

In terms of comping, the pianist can utilise a block chord approach by playing a set of rhythmic patterns in which keys are struck with both hands simultaneously. Alternatives to playing block

chords would be to play a consistent rhythmic pattern with varying chord voicings or to keep the chord voicing static, but vary the rhythmic pattern. Further options available to the pianist are to create a single counterpoint line to a soloist's phrase or to play melodic fills when there is an opening in the soloist's melody line.

Another variation in the way that pianists comp, according to Berliner (1994, 334), is to use the so-called orchestral, pianistic, or choral approach. Instead of the pianist playing with both hands simultaneously, there is an interplay between the voices within the voicing while the chords are outlined in an arpeggiated style. This interplay creates movement and texture in sound and explores the full range of the instrument.

As with bassists and drummers, Berliner (1994, 333) notes that most learners of jazz piano analyse and learn from recordings, performing with professional groups, and attending concerts to watch veteran musicians interact on stage.

In developing their own style, pianists find their balance between the various options and ways of comping. Berliner (1994, 334) mentions the various styles of playing by Al Haig (using sparse voicings using root and sevenths of chords) and Thelonious Monk (using dissonance in his playing) to illustrate how pianists find their style. Berliner (1994, 334) also mentions Red Garland (using four to six-note voicings) and in the post-bebop, modal jazz era, pianist McCoy Tyner (using voicings in fourths).

Pianists often use various comping styles to delineate large structural changes in a song form. Berliner (1994, 335) explains that a pianist may punctuate rhythmic block chords over the A section of a piece and use a contrasting arpeggiated orchestral approach during the B section. This approach clearly assists the rest of the band to hear where they are in the structure of the song.

As with the rest of the rhythm section, Berliner (1994, 336) summarise the role and challenge of pianists by emphasising that rhythm section players are constantly part of a balancing act. Each musician has to create a musically artistic creative part that complements the others while still adhering to the basic conventions of the instrument's role in the band and keeping the groove alive.

2.4.12. Conventions of accompaniment associated with various idioms

In terms of comping styles in various idioms, Berliner (1994, 336–38) explains that when rhythm section players join bands that perform in a particular idiom, the conventions of that idiom shape the expectations of group interplay to guide their comping approach.

A couple of examples are provided to illustrate:

- In the bebop era, bass players were initially expected to play straight-ahead quarter notes walking bass lines.
- From the 1950s onward, bass players played without the stylistic constraints of strict time keeping. This creative freedom affords bassists the opportunity to play a role with increasing melodic and rhythmic variation in the band. Bassists such as Chuck Israels and Steve Swallow played in a style that implied the time more than the notes on the beat.
- During the 1960s, bassists played with even less constraint than before, often abandoning concepts of time signature conventions for the rhythm section.

Berliner (1994, 338) notes a common consensus that it takes some time to learn to comp in a specific style. Appropriate stylistic comping may include providing musical support for a soloist, comping in a particular style, or creating rhythmic or melodic tension aggressively while keeping within the norms of a style. With this in mind, Berliner (1994, 339) suggests that bandleaders might often hire specific performers whose personal playing style embodies various performance schools. In creating a fusion of musical styles, musicians would take the solo improvisational style and apply or adapt it to another style. This application or adaptation might also apply to the Charl du Plessis Trio in taking jazz idioms and improvisation and applying it to Baroque and so-called Classical music. Another example highlighted by Berliner (1994, 340) of this fusion of styles is where bands feature various performance schools in one song. Bebop and free jazz may be combined at various sections in a piece where a soloist plays completely free, using conventional backing from the rhythm section and then returning to the original harmonic structure, heightening the tension between parts before returning to normality. Berliner (1994, 341) presents a further example of the Miles Davis group finding the ideal balance in the 1960s between playing in the hard-bop style and blending in free jazz sections.

Berliner (1994, 342) suggests that particular successful groups with leading soloists may also develop to become the embodiment of a new style or model of playing. This embodiment of a style

may lead to bandleaders requesting their own band members to emulate those bands, such as requesting a drummer to play more in an Elvin Jones style or bass players more in a Paul Chambers comping style. Berliner (1994, 342) explains that the practice of alluding to great players become a shorthand way of referring to the original artist's original repertoire, stock phrases, performance techniques or subtle mannerisms such as touch, articulation, phrasing, and time-feel.

Ironically, Berliner (1994, 343) observes that although the jazz community places a high value on originality, bandleaders often start by choosing band members who have absorbed their predecessor's style. A highly regarded musician in a band may also have a multi-generational impact in the sense that a bandleader places musicians who can emulate the original in that role.

In terms of repertoire and rhythm sections, accompanists are also expected to have a wide musical frame of reference. Berliner (1994, 343) notes that rhythm section players are also expected to know the characteristics of a wide variety of styles to adapt their own part when called to perform a piece in a specific style.

Berliner (1994, 345) notes that rhythm section players should adapt what they play depending on the type of soloist for which they are comping. If comping for piano, sax, voice, or bass, musicians should change what they play to complement that specific instrument.

Berliner (1994) shows that rhythm section players draw upon their knowledge of interrelated performance practices and should have a wide musical frame of reference to meet the group's musical expectations. These practices continue evolving over time and emphasise that players should keep informed of new developments and ways of playing to stay relevant.

Following on from the conventions of a rhythm section as highlighted above, two examples of how the Charl du Plessis Trio performs a piece:

Ludwig von Beethoven's Sonata Pathétique Opus 13:

A sheet music sample and hyperlink[21] to a recording of the Charl du Plessis Trio's version of Beethoven's Sonata Pathétique Opus 13 (2011) is provided in Addendum B to demonstrate how the arrangements and repertoire of this trio differ from groups led by pianists such as Bill Evans, Oscar Peterson, Keith Jarrett, and Brad Mehldau as mentioned in Chapter 2.2.2 *Significant piano trios*.

The opening of the piece has a slow tempo ballad arrangement set in A-flat major and scored in 2/4 time. The piece is a set theme played by piano and bass in reference to the original work with drums joining in measure 9 with brushes as the main melodic theme is stated by the piano. In contrast to jazz conventions where the bass usually play a supporting, comping part, the bass plays a melody in the bridge section in measures 23 to 28, with piano and drums comping. The main theme is played by piano and then returns in measure 29 and concludes in measure 36. The harmonic form structure of this arrangement may be compared to other well-known jazz standards as it has a similar AABA form. Continuing in the jazz tradition, a solo section then follows the statement of the theme (the 'head' in jazz parlance). The piano is afforded the first opportunity to play an improvised solo.

A prominent distinction between the Charl du Plessis Trio's arrangement of this piece and a traditional jazz standard is that a smaller harmonic framework is repeated for the solo section instead of the full AABA form. Following in the sheet music, the solo section commences in measures 37 and concluded in measure 44. In keeping with the jazz tradition this 8 bar section has the same harmonic structure as the main theme played in measures 1 through 8 – the A section of the piece. This section is then repeated numerous times as needed for each soloist to improvise over the harmonic framework. The ballad feel of the 'head' remains during the first half of the piano solo, although it is an improvised melody.

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[21] Hyperlinks to Charl du Plessis Trio's recording of Beethoven's Sonata Pathétique Opus 13:

Apple Music: https://music.apple.com/za/album/andante-from-sonata-op-13-pathetique/476068504?i=476068855

Spotify: https://open.spotify.com/track/2ROjWvG0AJHsznQ0uJ9FDo?si=54d6c9304f284ccc

YouTube: https://youtu.be/8qXlrFb-UOg

Du Plessis employs more syncopation in the improvised melody during the second half of the piano solo, with a swing feel becoming more apparent. Once the piano solo is concluded, the bass is afforded the opportunity to play an improvised solo (eight measures). The bass solo is followed by a drum solo that features a series of two bars of comping by the piano and bass then responded to by two bars drums. This response is commonly known as 'trading fours' or 'trading twos'. Following on from the drum solo, the piece then has a recapitulation of the theme from measure 45 and is similar to jazz standard conventions. Instead of stating the complete theme like at the outset of the piece, the recapitulation commences at the B section of the form. The piano plays the melody with the bass playing a low pedal point for four measures to increase harmonic tension. As earlier in the piece, the bass once again plays the melodic theme at the end of the bridge.

The comping in the last A section and ending of the piece introduces a new 12/8 rhythmic feel in contrast with the initial ballad feel in the 'head'. The piece is then concluded with a tonic to dominant cadence cycle with an emphasised swing feel to establish a characteristic blues sound for the final moments of the piece.

Johann Sebastian Bach's *Musette* (from *Anna Magdalena Notenbüchlein*):

A sheet music sample and hyperlink[22] to a recording of the Charl du Plessis Trio's version of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Musette* (from *Anna Magdalena Notenbüchlein*) is provided in Addendum B.

The opening of the piece is solo piano playing. Du Plessis states the musical theme of the original work in its original Baroque style. This is followed by a reharmonised interlude and introduction. Spies (double bass) and Radyn (drums) enter with mostly half-notes played in a high register on bass accompanied by some light percussive effects on the cymbals of the drum kit in measures three and four on the sheet music.

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[22]   Apple   Music: https://music.apple.com/za/album/bach-friends-jazz-suite-minuet-bwv-anh-114-from-anna/1262550958?i=1262552391

Spotify: https://open.spotify.com/track/5BkhKRagetAhtNGoct36cO?si=1c97f31c64f548af

The theme is restated by the piano in measure five, but played in a ballad style and with the harmony reharmonised. The original theme is rhythmically adapted in measure twelve by some melodic anticipation and increased sixteenth note subdivisions. This phrase is emphasised by being played in rhythmic unison by the piano and bass.

Measure thirteen to sixteen is marked as 'Bridge' in the sheet music and provides a link to the upcoming change of feel in the piece. This section is still played in an open ballad style. The bass supports the harmony with long sustained root notes with minimal contributions by Radyn. The Bossa Nova style section that follows is set up with a cross-stick drum fill by Radyn.

The next four measures had a stylistic Bossa Nova style comping from the bass and drums with the bass anticipating the change of harmony (an A major triad moving to B minor seventh chord) by an eighth note in measures seventeen and eighteen. After the bridge section there is a restatement of the main theme of the piece, also in the ballad style heard in measures nine to twelve. This is similar to a conventional jazz standard having an AABA song form.

At this stage of the piece, moving on from the opening head (or statement of the theme) there is a solo section (starting at measure twenty five) that is open for improvised solos. The solo section has a first and second part. These sections are repeated until there is a gesture by the soloist to the rest of the trio that they will move on to the next section (measure twenty nine) with a contrasting harmonic progression. This second section is then also repeated until there is a cue from the current soloist for the next soloist to start his improvised solo. The second soloist's improvisation commences with the first harmonic section (measure twenty five on the sheet music) of the piece and the process of cycling the two contrasting harmonic sections until the soloist's cue repeats. The harmony of the first four repeated measures of the solo section is the same as the harmony of introduction at the start of the piece. The harmonic progression of the second part of the solo section is a newly composed progression that does not occur earlier in the main theme of the work.

On the referenced recording, the first improvised solo is played by Du Plessis on piano. To afford the soloist the opportunity the establish and develop his own melodic ideas, the rhythms section comps very sparingly during the first four to eight measures of the piano solo. This provides Du Plessis with enough sonic space to build the intensity of his solo, with the support from Spies and Radyn. During his solo Du Plessis cycles the first four bar section four times before giving a cue

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to the rhythm section to proceed to the second harmonic section as described above. This second section is cycled through three times during Du Plessis' solo before he gives the cue for Spies for a bass solo.

At this point in the piece, Spies departs from his supporting role as the comping bassist and takes over the leading role of soloist. The bass solo starts in a similar way as the piano solo where the two comping musicians (piano and drums at this point during the performance) provide enough harmonic and rhythmic space to afford the soloist the opportunity to establish his solo and build intensity over time. In this instance, Spies repeats the first part of the solo section three times before indicating to the rhythms section that he is ready to proceed to the second part. During this second part of the solo section, Spies' improvised melody in mostly in 'n high register on the double bass with increased use of sixteenth-note patterns. The rhythmic intensity decays at the end of his solo, with Spies playing two long sliding *glissando* notes at the end of his solo as a cue for Du Plessis to restate the theme (or head) of the piece.

The trio returns to measure one of the sheet music, playing through the piece in a similar fashion as at the outset. At the end of the Bossa Nova section in measure twenty, the arrangement moves to the Coda section where the melodic theme is stated a final time, but rhythmically delayed and displaced when compared to the original work.

The description above of how the Charl du Plessis Trio performs a musical work concludes this chapter. At the start of this chapter the theoretical framework described includes Kelso's (2003) coordination dynamics, modes of coordination by Wittenbaum et al. (2002), and the creativity evaluation of Fischer et al. (2005, 4–5). The work by Meadows (2008) was also noted to propose that a musical ensemble can be studied as a system. To conclude the theoretical framework section, mention was made to the flow state of individuals and groups as defined by Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2009).

The literature review section provided historical background of piano trios, introduced the Charl du Plessis trio as the case study, and provided a summary of the prominent works "Saying Something" by Monson (1996) and "Thinking in Jazz" by Berliner (1994)

The following chapter deals with the methodology, research design, data sources, ethical clearance, and schedule followed during this study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

This study did not involve large sets of statistical data or the surveying of many respondents. It was therefore not necessary to utilise a quantitative research design during this study. The focus of this study is on participants' recollection of a particular lived experience. Creswell (2007, 78) illustrates the various qualitative research design types and explains that a phenomenological study focusses on understanding the essence of an experience by studying several individuals that have shared the experience.

Due to the small group size of the participants, I employed the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) framework in my research. I checked for bias and conducted interviews using Seddon's (2005, 51) five-stage qualitative method (see *3.1.5 Interviews using Seddon's five-stage qualitative method)*. I consulted additional data sources and requested ethical clearance from the Unisa College of Human Science Ethics Committee. COVID-19 pandemic protocols were followed that minimally affected this study and timeline.

3.1.1. IPA research approach

I used the IPA research approach, which is a qualitative research approach that examines how people make sense of a particular, significant (to the participant/research subject) lived experience, Smith at al. (2009, 1). This method provides insight into how a given person, in a given context, makes sense of a given phenomenon: in this case, musicians playing in a jazz trio. Using the IPA research design helped describe coordination dynamics between the various musicians from each individual's viewpoint. The IPA research design made it possible to gain insight into emergent music from the group (the whole is greater than the sum of its parts), as described by Sawyer (2006, 148).

The IPA framework is built on seven theoretical axes:

1. It deals with a reflection through an interview on a particular experience for this particular person, Smith at al. (2009, 3).
2. IPA is engaged in hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation where a participant aims to make sense of a significant previous experience. It can also be said that

during the research process, the IPA researcher is engaged in double hermeneutics (a situation where the researcher aims to make sense of the participant's experience through an interview where the participant is making sense of their own experience). In this case, the researcher only has access to the participant's experience through the participant's own account of it, (ibid.) (2009, 3).

3. The research deals with a particular experience of a particular person and how/what sense he makes of the experience, (ibid.).

4. IPA normally involves a small number of participants who aim to reveal something of the experience of each of those individuals, (ibid.).

5. These studies explore in detail the differences and similarities between the experiences of the participants, (ibid.).

6. The sample sizes of IPA studies are normally quite small and homogeneous. The aim is often to examine the convergence and divergence of these experiences. It is of very little use to compare the experience of a drummer in Trio A with the experience of the pianist in Trio B as their experience would offer very few overlaps or touchpoints, (ibid.).

7. Data collection usually takes the form of a semi-constructed interview. Transcripts of these interviews are then systematically analysed and turned into a narrative account. An analytic interpretation of the researcher is presented in detail, with quotes from the interviews added for support, (ibid.).

The IPA research design is also apparent in the work of Monson. She confirms the challenge of the double hermeneutic as presented by Smith et al. above. Monson (1996) acknowledges the difficulty and duty of care of the researcher to interpret meaning from recorded interviews. She also notes the limitations of language when talking and describing the experience of music making. Berliner (1994, xvii) preferred the recorded interview method. Through generous grants from various institutions, he had assistants to assist with transcription of recordings and musical examples (Berliner 1994, xvii). Interestingly, neither of these influential authors used a written survey sent to musicians. I suggest that this may speak to the idea that a musician's personality and way of speaking are much easier to interpret during speech than during written answers on a survey form.

3.1.2. Addressing bias

There might be the potential for researcher bias to influence the member checks Seddon (2005, 56). To counter bias during the interview process the same set and order of interview questions

were sent to each participant. Participants were provided with an information sheet about the study and signed the necessary consent form to take part in the study. The participants were also provided with access to all recordings, transcriptions, and data analysis related to this research.

Due to stringent COVID-19 lockdown regulations at the time, participants could not be interviewed at their respective homes and thus recorded themselves reading each question out loud and answering in response. As I am a participant observer in this study, I followed the same method of recording and interview as the other participants. My own interview was recorded without any knowledge or without having heard any of the recorded interviews of any of the other participants. This ensured that my own answers in this regard are independent and not informed by any of the responses from the other participants.

3.1.3. Interview questions

With the main research question and related sub-questions in mind, the participants were requested to respond to the following interview questions approved in the ethical clearance submission:

1. What instrument do you play in the Charl du Plessis Trio?
2. What made you choose this instrument, and how many years have you been playing?
3. How would you describe your role as an instrumentalist in a trio?
4. Would you say this is a supporting or leading role and why?
5. Think of the other two musicians in the trio and the instruments they play. What do you think are they expecting to gain/hear from you during the performance of a song and concert?
6. Does the mentioned expectation from your colleagues inform your own way of playing? How?
7. Think of what you are hearing from your colleagues during a performance. What is it that you expect to hear from each of them?
8. When performing during a concert, do you view your own contribution as playing a specific predefined part, a newly conceived part, or a reaction to what your colleagues are playing?
9. If suggested that particular acts from your colleagues can be seen as creating a more, or less, positive environment in which you perform. What are the actions that you can take to increase the positive environment?
10. How can you contribute to increasing the positive environment for your colleagues?
11. Can you describe your experience of the process from initial rehearsal to performance?
12. What would you say are instances where your actions can detract from the successful group performance?

13. Are there instances where the actions of your colleagues detract from the success of the group's performance?
14. Can you describe your experience of a performance where the group did not function well? What do you think led to this resultant situation?
15. Can you describe your experience of a performance where the group did function well? What do you think led to this resultant situation?

3.1.4. Data sources

This study employs self-recorded, structured interviews with myself as bassist, pianist Charl du Plessis, drummer Hugo Radyn (2006 to 2016), and drummer Peter Auret (2016 to the present) to determine their viewpoints on the matters raised by the study. The participants recorded themselves using standard voice memo software installed on their iPhones. Each participant read the interview questions aloud before responding.

The initial transcription of the interviews was done using the artificial intelligence software Otter.ai. Audio files of the interviews were processed by Otter.ai and edited and corrected where necessary by me. All the interview transcriptions are included as an appendix at the end of the main document, with URLs given for each audio file's cloud storage address.

After the transcription of the interviews, the participants' responses were summarised and compared per question to identify commonalities or differences in the answers of the participants. These answers were then compared to the theoretical framework.

In addition, I have access to the entire body of work recorded by the Charl du Plessis Trio from 2006 to the present. Recorded works include the albums:

> *Trio* – 2008 (CD Audio)
> *Shanghai Brunch* – 2010 (CD audio)
> *Gershwin Songbook* – 2011 (CD audio)
> *BaroqueSwing Vol. 1* – 2014 (CD audio)
> *BaroqueSwing Vol. 2* – 2016 (CD audio)
> *BaroqueSwing Vol. 3* – 2017 (CD audio)
> *BaroqueSwing Vol. 3* – 2017 (DVD with pre-recorded interviews and video footage of parts of the concert)

3.1.5. Interviews using Seddon's five-stage qualitative method

For the analysis for the conducted interviews, I followed Seddon's (2005, 51) five-stage data analysis model:

- *Stage 1: Immersion.* A detailed transcript of the recordings of the proposed interviews aims to capture the rich descriptive nature of the process observed

- *Stage 2: Categorisation.* Systematically working through the data assigning communication categories[23] to the observed participant interaction, leading to the emergence of evidence of various types of communication.

- *Stage 3: Phenomenological reduction.* Similar types of communication are grouped together, forming possible themes

- *Stage 4: Triangulation.* Recorded examples are presented to participants along with the researcher's interpretations of each type of communication in a process known as 'member checks'. The participants are asked to comment on the researcher's interpretations

- *Stage 5: Interpretation.* To explain the study's findings, sense is made of the data from a wider perspective, a model is constructed, or an existing theory is used.

Please refer to chapter 4 for the summary and application of Seddon's data analysis model.

3.2. Ethical considerations

All necessary ethical clearance procedures were adhered to during the research and data collection process.

The Unisa College of Human Science Ethics Committee granted ethical clearance for this study on 8 December 2020 with certificate no. *2020*-**CHS-64096874** (see Addendum A)**.** Although the ethical clearance certificate made provision for it, no additional follow up interviews were conducted after the first round of interviews.

Excerpt from Ethical Clearance Certificate, ref: **2020-CHS-64096874**

> The ***negligible risk application*** *was* ***reviewed and expedited*** by College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, on **8 December 2020** in compliance with the

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[23] Database and categorisation of interview questions https://airtable.com/shrijdDl47JOHiL4c

Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

3.3. Schedule and COVID-19 pandemic protocols

The interviews took place between 31 March 2021 and 26 April 2021. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, interviews were not done in person.

The following chapter is a brief summary of the questions and answers by the participants.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1. Summary of interviews

The following section summarises answers to the interview questions from the sample group. The section provides the background context of participants and a general overview of the responses. Please refer to Section 4.2 – *Coordination methods summary* for a summary and grouping of the methods of coordination that refer to the main research question.

The main research question:

What are the main methods of communication and coordination within the Charl du Plessis Trio during a performance?

Question 1: What instrument do you play in the trio?

Charl du Plessis is the pianist, Peter Auret is the current drummer in the trio since 2017, Hugo Radyn was the drummer in the trio from 2006 to 2016, and Werner Spies has been the double bassist in the trio since 2006.

Question 2: What made you choose this instrument? And how many years have you been playing?

Du Plessis has played the piano for roughly 33 years and states that he was drawn to the piano as a child. He took lessons from when he was nine years old.

Radyn has played the drums for about 23 years and professionally for 16 years. He chose drums by accident as a primary school teacher said he should come for music lessons and play the drums. He went, really enjoyed it, and decided this was what he wanted to do.

Auret has played the drums for roughly 27 years. He started playing with a marching band in school when he was about 16 or 17 and then progressed to the drum kit due to an interest in rock and roll music at the time.

Spies has played the double bass for 18 years. During high school, he played bass guitar in a band with school friends. He contributes to performances but prefers to be in the background as he does not like to be the centre of attention.

Question 3: How would you describe your role as an instrumentalist in a trio?

During the interview, Du Plessis mentions that his main role as the pianist is to "keep the harmonic and melodic elements afloat". His role is dominant and supportive when the other trio members take solos.

Radyn describes his role as "keeping a steady groove with the bass player" and complementing and supporting the soloist with rhythmic ideas and dynamic changes.

Auret's view of his role is to "feed the soloist with ideas and to interact with the soloist" and the bass player.

Spies indicates that his role is first and foremost to "be the foundation of the harmony" and to establish a rhythmic foundation by creating the groove in collaboration with the drummer.

Question 3 is the first instance in the interviews where instances of *in-process tacit coordination* (when members make mutual strategy adjustments tacitly while working) and *tacit pre-coordination* (conducting oneself according to the tacit expectation of others) became apparent. These coordination methods are initially mentioned in Section 2.1.2 – *Modes of coordination* in Chapter 2 - *Theoretical framework* for ease of reference.

Question 4: Would you say this is a supporting or leading role and why?

During the interviews, the participants mostly viewed themselves as supporting the trio, although Du Plessis described his role as the pianist as "a dominant role". I think this is a fair statement as the piano carries the melody and harmony, which is the most prominent instrument the audience hears.

Auret also made special mention that he believes that the responsibility of keeping time in the trio is shared among the members and not only the drummer: "I do believe that the role of a drummer in a jazz trio is not necessarily to indicate time, as time should be something that all the musicians should be aware of".

Question 5: Think of the other two musicians in the trio and the instruments they play. What do you think are they expecting to gain/hear from you during the performance of a song and concert?

The general sense is that each musician has played in such a way that the others are aware that he is listening to them. Du Plessis describes this as support and "locking in playing together" and "having good ensemble"; Radyn that "they want to hear that I am listening to them"; Auret as "if they were to play more open they would expect me to respond to that"; and Spies as "the drummer will expect me as the bass player to really lock in with what he is playing".

As might be expected, the musicians are also conscious of the musical element that they contribute. Du Plessis expects to lead, Auret and Radyn expect to contribute by stating a sense of time and tempo, while Spies is aware that the other musicians expect him to provide a sense of "harmonic propulsion and rhythmic movement".

Question 6: Does the mentioned expectation from your colleagues inform your own way of playing and how?

All the musicians confirmed that their colleagues' expectations inform their way of playing.

Du Plessis feeds off the energy of his colleagues and that the members of the trio inspire each other while playing. Both Radyn and Auret mention that they focus on listening intently to what the rest of the group is doing. Lastly, Spies perceives much self-regulation and awareness of his own note choices in his playing.

In my view, this is a possible example of *tacit pre-coordination* as described by Wittenbaum et al. (Section 2.1.2 – *Modes of coordination*), as the musicians tailor their cooperation in response to the others' perceived expectations.

As an afterthought, Spies mentions that if the expectations of his colleagues did not inform his choices, he would probably be perceived as being quite brash and insensitive to the music and that this does not fit well with the responsibilities of a bass player's role in a trio.

Question 7: Think of what you are hearing from your colleagues during a performance. What is it that you expect to hear from each of them?

From the participants' answers, it is evident that each person has a very specific idea and expectation of what he wants to hear in a musical performance.

Du Plessis mainly focuses his playing on the musical information received from the bass and prefers to hear the drums at a softer volume than the bass.

Both Auret and Radyn mention the importance of hearing a steady and consistent bass part on which to base their playing.

Both Auret and Spies mention the importance of hearing a confident leading role from the pianist as this largely determines the musical development of the piece.

This is another instance of *in-process* coordination mentioned in Section 2.1.2 – *Modes of coordination* in Chapter 2 – *Theoretical framework*.

Question 8: When performing during the concert, do you view your own contribution as playing a specific predefined part, newly conceived part or a reaction to what your colleagues are playing?

The musicians mostly agree that in terms of the musical repertoire that this trio performs, their parts are a mixture of predefined parts and newly conceived parts. The predefined parts occur mostly during the arranged sections where the main melody or theme is stated. The newly conceived parts mostly occur during solo sections of each piece. The trio performs many set arrangements of pieces with demarcated introductions, heads of the piece, solo sections, and endings.

Both Auret and Spies agree that there should still be room for improvisation and newly conceived material within the constraints of the arranged sections, as performing their comping roles in exactly the same way, note for note during each performance, sounds very robotic.

This indicates possible instances of *pre-plans and in-process* cooperation as explained in Section 2.1.2 – *Modes of coordination* in Chapter 2 – *Theoretical framework*.

Question 9: If suggested that particular acts from your colleagues can be seen as creating a more or less positive environment for you to perform in, what are the actions that you can take to increase the positive aspects in a given playing environment?

The actions that were most prominent from the participants' answers were:

- Listening attentively to what the others are playing
- Giving partners musical space
- Being as prepared as possible in terms of knowing his own part, enabling more freedom in each musician's own playing and diminishing the pressure on the group.

Du Plessis further states that he tries to create a physical environment in which the trio can play well. This environment includes the choice of venue, the sound equipment, the staging of the trio, the lighting, and the monitor mix.

Spies adds that he also aims to look around on stage to make eye contact with his colleagues, looking for cues that he can pick up on. This contact may even be something in a colleague's posture or body language that gives him a clue as to the intentions.

This also indicates possible instances of *pre-plans and in-process* cooperation. Wittenbaum et al.'s four methods of coordination are presented more thoroughly in Section 2.1.2 – *Modes of coordination* in Chapter 2 – *Theoretical framework*.

Question 10: How can you contribute to increasing the positive environment of your colleagues?

Du Plessis states that the positive environment starts long before a note is played and includes trio members' arrival (punctuality), greeting, and catch up. These factors contribute to creating a positive environment and atmosphere. Furthermore, being able to rehearse or perform in a nice, comfortable, physical space when working is very important. All the participants interviewed concurred and emphasised this point regarding professional and polite conduct and how that improves the positive environment for all concerned.

Both Du Plessis and Auret emphasise that being sensitive and compassionate regarding the state of mind of colleagues also contributes to this positive environment. If somebody is ill or has a personal problem, then these factors directly impact the whole group.

Du Plessis adds that he can contribute to the positive environment by being well prepared by knowing his own notes or making arrangements and having scores ready before the rehearsal. Du Plessis concludes by stating that he aims to treat everyone politely, be open to new ideas, and be flexible when discussing new musical ideas.

Auret proposes that when playing, he can imply particular musical ideas that show support to his colleagues and improve the atmosphere, as the first priority remains to create music that sounds great and that the audience enjoys the performance.

Spies adds that a performance is not only just the three minutes or five minutes duration of a piece during a concert. Rather, the performance has a much longer preamble that includes the previous day or week's rehearsal, how things went, the attitude during the rehearsal, the transport, and the logistical arrangements.

Du Plessis adds that it is also important to put himself in somebody else's shoes and have a holistic view of the trio, including knowing what the drums do or what the bass does. Being able to see how the parts interlink enables him to have a better overview of his musical place. This interlink also enables him to make suggestions or ask questions rather than just thinking of his own playing.

I would suggest that the general answers from the group in this instance point to *pre-plans* and *tacit pre-coordination* playing a significant role in creating such a positive environment mentioned in the question. Please refer to Section 2.1.2 – *Modes of coordination* in Chapter 2 – *Theoretical framework* for a more detailed explanation of these types of coordination.

Question 11: Can you describe your experience of the process from initial rehearsal to performance?

Du Plessis is mainly responsible for the concept of the repertoire and is the main arranger of most of the pieces. These arrangements are often workshopped and fine-tuned by the whole group during rehearsals. When working on new material, Du Plessis describes to Spies and Auret his musical idea. Due to the musicians performing as a group over a long period, it is possible for Auret and Spies to present numerous comping options for Du Plessis' idea.

The first rehearsal of a new piece is generally quite open and a positive experience, as the manner in which the trio performs the piece live is often different from how Du Plessis predicted it would

be. Du Plessis states that most of his piano parts are improvised versions of the original piece and not written out. During the first rehearsal, he often has to adapt his playing to fit the rhythm section's playing. The arrangement of a piece takes time to settle, and thus much repetition is needed to make sure that everyone is happy with the parts.

Radyn states that the first rehearsal of a new piece was always quite confusing for him, as he did not know much of the repertoire being arranged. This lack of knowledge led to many experiments on his part before deciding on the appropriate course of action. Auret concurred with this statement and adds that in terms of sheet music, Du Plessis' drum parts often have little initial information for the drummer and that he has to come up with an appropriate part on his own during rehearsal. Auret mentions that he is not a great sight reader and that he often uses this as a reason for playing from memory and aims to identify the main rhythmic theme of a piece. This procedure assists with the initial orchestration of the drums during the first rehearsal.

Ideas evident in most of the group's answers were that repetition of new material is very important. The mentioned repetition of pieces affords the musicians the opportunity to experiment with various versions of a piece and to compare and discuss the musical choices as a group. The group also concurs that a piece takes time to develop and that each member adds something new as the piece is played during subsequent concerts and rehearsals.

My impression from the various responses from the group is that the rehearsal process is the only instance where the group can employ *in-process planning* (see Section 2.1.2 – *Modes of coordination* in Chapter 2 – *Theoretical framework*) as there is no audience present.

Question 12: What would you say are instances where your actions can detract from a successful group performance?

The following matters were raised as participants' own actions or factors that could detract from a successful group performance:

- Not being sufficiently prepared for a rehearsal or performance
- Rushing or dragging the tempo
- Not listening intently to what the other musicians are doing
- Being disorganised and not punctual
- Lack of concentration and focus

- Being uninspired due to external stress or fatigue
- Making too many mistakes during the performance
- High stress levels or anxiety
- If a participant's conduct is unprofessional and rude.

The majority of these factors point towards the importance of participants' own *pre-plans* being in place for a successful group performance or explicit ways that indicate how group members will interact.

Question 13: Are there instances where the actions of your colleagues detract from the success of the group's performance?

Questions 12 and 13 did have some overlap, and the answers put forward by the group were similar in both instances. This overlap indicates that the participants hold their colleagues to the same standard as they expect from themselves. The same matters as listed in question 12 were emphasised as colleagues' actions or factors that could detract from a successful group performance:

- Not being sufficiently prepared for a rehearsal or performance
- Rushing or dragging the tempo
- Not listening intently to what the other musicians are doing
- Being disorganised and not punctual
- Lack of concentration and focus
- Being uninspired due to external stress or fatigue
- Making too many mistakes during the performance
- High stress levels or anxiety
- If a participant's conduct is unprofessional and rude.

The majority of these factors point towards the importance of *pre-plans* of a participant's colleagues. Pre-plans have to be in place for a successful group performance.

Question 14: Can you describe your experience of a performance where the group did not function well? What do you think led to this situation?

Du Plessis mentions an instance where he did not have the correct sheet music in front of him for a piece. He attempted to play from memory, but jumping around in the form of the piece made it very challenging for the other two members of the trio to perform at their best.

Du Plessis also mentions instances when a trio member was disorganised, unprepared, showed a lack of concentration, a lack of creativity, and a lack of musical application that contributed to a situation where the group did not function well.

Radyn refers to a live performance in Ernen in Switzerland that was a very stressful event and how a misplaced note in such a situation can compromise the performance and negatively impact the group's confidence.

Auret has a similar observation as Radyn in terms of nerves that can negatively impact performance. Often, if one is overly nervous, it also points to not being sufficiently prepared for a performance. When the musicians are unhappy with how they hear each other on stage, it negatively impacts their performance.

Spies confirms Auret's notion that not being able to hear oneself or others properly negatively impacts the group's performance. He recalls an instance where the group was expected to do a recording in a room where they could not hear each other well and how difficult it was for the group to perform at an appropriate musical level under such difficult circumstances. The recording circumstances negatively impacted the musicians' confidence and attitude on the day.

Taking these answers into consideration, most of these answers point firstly towards diligent *pre-plans* (explicit ways that indicate how group members will interact), and secondly towards each trio member's parts and focused *in-process tacit coordination* (members make mutual strategy adjustments tacitly while working) (see Section 2.1.2 – *Modes of coordination* in Chapter 2 – *Theoretical framework*).

Question 15: Can you describe your experience of a performance where the group did function well? What do you think led to this situation?

During Du Plessis' interview, he did not identify a specific performance. He points out that instances where the group performs well are often preceded by good preparation by the members, being focused, listening attentively on a musical level, having good sound, and hearing and seeing each other well. Reaching flow within the group and knowing the material and possibilities leads to a more relaxed atmosphere that creates an opportunity to do something new. On a personal level, Du Plessis mentions the importance of a good piano to perform on and how such an instrument can be a source of inspiration for him.

Radyn refers to a concert in Cape Town where the drum kit supplied for the concert by the venue's owner was not up to standard. Even with this apparent drawback, the concert was still a success because the group was well prepared and had a positive 'can-do' attitude.

Auret adds to the conversation by mentioning the importance of hearing the musicians properly on stage. He adds that a sense of camaraderie among the musicians and a relaxed atmosphere also contributes to a well-functioning group. He supports Du Plessis in stating the importance of a shared focus and mindset in the group.

Spies recalls a concert in March 2020 at the Endler Hall at Stellenbosch University, where the group performed well. Regarding the highlighted concert, Spies mentions that the group had numerous previous concerts that featured the same programme of repertoire over a short period leading up to the concert in Stellenbosch. Spies proposes that having the repetition of playing through those particular set of pieces gave the group the confidence to take more creative risks during the performance.

The physical arrangement of the trio on stage was quite close together, and Spies felt the proximity added to a sense of cohesion for the band. Spies supports Du Plessis's earlier point that good acoustic qualities of the venue add to the success of the group's performance.

Spies adds that spending time together as a group, being comfortable with each other's presence, playing with enough confidence, and having a positive attitude adds to the camaraderie of the group and reduces the possible tension on stage.

Spies concludes with the thought that during a successful performance, each member acts in support of the group, and at the same time can expect support from the rest of the group.

4.2. Coordination methods summary

- In the section that follows, I highlight and categorise instances where various coordination methods became apparent during the interviews as elucidated by Kelso (2009, 1537). This categorisation (see stage 2 of Seddon's (2005, 51) model described in chapter 3) is done by systematically working through the data assigning communication categories to the observed participant interaction, leading to the emergence of evidence of various types of communication.

 A database of interview questions, participants' answers, and analysis can be viewed on Airtable.[24]

4.2.1. Pre-plans
Pre-plans can be seen as explicit ways that indicate how group members will interact, for example the sheet music that the musician will use for the piece of music or an explicit discussion among group members as to the interpretation of a piece of music. Pre-plans contribute to a positive working environment and play a significant role in musicians' preparation of their musical parts independently of one another before the rehearsal or performance (see Questions 8, 9, 10, 11, and 15).

Pre-plans include:
- Preparation of musical scores is predominantly by Du Plessis, who sends the scores to the rest of the group before the first rehearsal
- Knowledge and preparation of musical material before the rehearsal or performance
- Creating and preparing a physical environment that is conducive for a positive performance
- Having access to adequate sound equipment and instruments
- Adequate, fit for purpose lighting on stage

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[24] Interview questions, the answers and analysis can be viewed on Airtable: https://airtable.com/shrijdDl47JOHiL4c

- Making sure that the musicians can hear each other well by working on the sound balance of the stage monitoring system
- Planning logistics regarding arrival times at a venue
- Having a positive attitude ahead of a rehearsal or concert.

The lack of pre-plans and can negatively influence a performance (see Questions 12 and 14). These include:

- Being disorganised
- Not having the correct sheet music
- A musician being unprepared by not knowing their part
- A lack of punctuality.

4.2.2. *Tacit pre-coordination*

Tacit pre-coordination takes place where group members make assumptions of what is expected of them and what they can expect of other members' contributions (see Questions 3, 6, 10, and 11).

The instances of tacit pre-coordination among the group members were illustrated by:

- Each member playing a supportive role during another member's improvised solo
- The drummer keeping a steady groove with the bassist
- Each member complementing the soloist with rhythmic ideas during a solo
- The bassist being the foundation of the harmony
- Each member creating a solid groove with the drummer
- Each member self-regulating and being aware of note choices and the experience of colleagues in terms of their note-choice expectations
- Each member acting politely and professionally during rehearsals and performances
- Each member having flexible and open minds regarding suggestions from colleagues
- Each member being cognisant and sympathetic to a colleague's current state of mind
- Each member minimising glitches in the run-up to a performance
- Each member acting compassionately towards a colleague, putting oneself in another's shoes
- Each member being aware of the role and responsibilities of each instrument and knowing what each instrument does enables the members to make suggestions or ask questions rather than just thinking of their own playing and notes
- Each member having a holistic view of the trio and the interlink between the instruments.

4.2.3. In-process planning

In-process planning is where the various musicians define their roles through communicating strategy or arrangement (see Question 11).

The instances of in-process planning among the group members were illustrated by:

- Playing through a new piece during a rehearsal by reading through it and then having a group discussion about what worked and what did not work
- Workshopping a new piece, for example groove A or groove B is where the trio plays through a piece with groove A. then play through the piece with groove B, then makes a collective decision as to which works better using the A/B testing decision-making method often works well
- Changing and discussing after concerts regarding what worked and what did not work.

4.2.4. In-process tacit coordination

In-process tacit coordination occurs when members make mutual strategy adjustments tacitly while working. Members tacitly adjust their own behaviour to fit with the observed behaviour of others during interaction (see Questions 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 13, and 15).

The instances of in-process tacit coordination among the group members were illustrated by:

- Playing a supportive role for a soloist
- Complementing the soloist with rhythmic ideas and dynamic changes
- The bassist creating the groove and the rhythmic foundation in conjunction and in collaboration with the drummer
- Creating support for the soloist by locking in playing together in a rhythmically coordinated way
- Tacit confirmation of mutual support among members
- The drummer responding to the other musicians playing in a more rhythmically open way
- The bassist supporting the drummer during rhythmic fills
- Being able to lead the group without being selfish
- Be expressive in playing, attempting to challenge each other and sometimes including musical nudges or jokes
- Being able to hear instruments clearly on stage while playing

- The reaction to what each musician is playing would be most visible in the solo sections of each piece due to the opportunity to create and explore something different every time the piece is performed
- The bassist and drummer taking the lead from the pianist in terms of setting the tempo and dynamics
- Solid harmonic and rhythmic support for the soloist by the comping musicians
- Active listening to what is happing during a performance
- Responding to a new musical idea in a creative way as soon as it is introduced by anyone in the trio
- Interpreting written parts in a creative way instead of performing robotically
- Each musician listening very attentively to what the other musicians are playing
- Creating musical space for others
- Playing to afford musical space to the soloist for them to express themselves in a situation where the musical backing might become cluttered, rhythmically out of sync, or a musician has lost his place in the harmonic framework of a piece
- Creating an opportunity for the group to re-calibrate their sense of the rhythmic pulse or harmonic framework using non-rhythmic textural sounds afforded by each instrument
- Being comfortable and confident in their own part affords them the mental bandwidth to pay attention to what others are playing
- Visually confirming (through eye contact) rhythmic and dynamic synchronicity during the performance
- Being aware of a colleagues' intention behind what they are playing by paying close attention to body language
- Maintaining eye contact to create a sense of cohesion where group members feel that they are performing with the same goal in mind
- Having a shared responsibility and purpose on stage
- Achieving a sense of flow between the three members
- Having a common goal
- Sharing the satisfaction of having a good concert
- The group being in good spirits in relation to one another in the time leading up to a performance
- Repetition of playing through a set increases confidence for the trio to take more risks during the performance
- Being set up on stage in close proximity to one another

- Being quite comfortable with each other's presence.

Factors working against in-process tacit coordination and its negative influence on a performance (see Question 13) include:

- Having a negative state of mind or in a bad mood
- Having a lack of focus
- Rushing or dragging the tempo
- Playing too many wrong notes and making mistakes
- Lack of visual communication and eye contact
- If group members have doubts about the musical material to be performed in an upcoming performance
- If a performance is focused on only one person
- Not listening to others
- If there is an interpersonal issue between musicians, it becomes apparent during a performance play
- Due to the nature of a trio being so reliant on each other musically, it is important that interpersonal relationships are healthy offstage and onstage
- Instances where a member is cutting off or isolating themselves from the rest of the trio
- A musician being self-involved with his own instrument or part thereby creating the impression that they are not really listening or responding to what the rest of the group is playing
- If one of the members is too self-obsessed, it makes communication on stage difficult
- Where one is overly nervous in anticipation of a performance
- Instances during a performance where the trio cannot properly hear themselves or their colleagues
- Lack of applying themselves musically in this situation.

The summary of interviews and coordination methods are considered in the following chapter, which presents the conclusions I drew from the conducted research and the recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusions

This research was undertaken to address a gap in the literature regarding the study of group coordination within a South African jazz trio. The sample group, the Charl du Plessis Trio, was chosen considering its critical acclaim (see Section 2.2.4 *Charl du Plessis sample group*), its South African context, and its history of actively performing between 2006 and 2021. This history is in contrast with the *ad hoc* zero history of groups studied by Bastien and Hostager (1988) in a jazz context.

I undertook to determine and describe the main communication and coordination dynamics to determine whether jazz groups in the South African context function similarly to their American counterparts. The main texts in this field, *Thinking in Jazz* by Paul Berliner (1994) and *Saying Something* by Ingrid Monson (1996), are referenced and summarised in the literature review.

Coordination dynamics are explained by Kelso (2009, 1537) as "the science of coordination" that "describes, explains and predicts how patterns of coordination form, adapt, persist, and change in living things". Kelso's (2009, 1537) hypothesis is that behaviour, mind, and life are linked by sharing a common underlying coordination dynamics.

The research design consisted mainly of structured interviews with the participants using the IPA framework. This approach was suitable due to the small number (four) of participants. Each of the participants recorded their own interviews at their own homes due to government-enforced COVID-19 restrictions at the time. Each participant received the same set of questions.

These interviews were then collected and transcribed in preparation of the summary and analysis. The participants' interviews were analysed to identify which of the coordination methods (pre-plans, tacit pre-coordination, in-process planning, or in-process tacit coordination) described by Wittenbaum et al. (2002, 178–80) were most relevant for describing the coordination between participants during a performance. During the analysis of the interviews, the participants' answers were categorised into one of the four communication methods.

5.2. Trio's method of coordination is in-process tacit coordination

The main research question:

What are the main methods of communication and coordination within the Charl du Plessis Trio during a performance?

The outcome of this study confirmed my expectation that a jazz group in South Africa functions similarly to jazz groups in the United States, where most of the interviews cited in the literature review took place. The most prominent method of coordination within the group is in-process tacit coordination, when members make mutual strategy adjustments tacitly while working. Members adjust their own behaviour to fit with the observed behaviour of others during interaction. In-process tacit coordination proved to be the most common method of coordination as most instances cited during the interviews referred to non-verbal coordination during the performance.

A matter that came to the fore during the analysis and transcription of interviews is that I did not anticipate in such explicit terms was the importance and impact of pre-plans on the quality of performance of the group. In many instances, participants highlighted the important role of appropriate pre-plans in contributing to a successful group performance. These pre-plans contribute to the creation of an optimal performance environment with minimum impediments.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Adequate preparation of musical scores with pre-rehearsal access
- Preparation of musical material before the rehearsal by each musician
- Working in a physical environment that is conducive to a positive performance
- Access to appropriate equipment, including instruments and amplification
- Adequate lighting on stage to facilitate the reading of musical scores
- Well-balanced volume levels on stage to ensure adequate audible monitoring for each musician
- Planning of logistics in preparation of the concert
- Conducting oneself with a positive disposition before the rehearsal and concert performance.

5.3. Musicians' role changes in support of changing soloist

How do the various participants understand each other's roles?

It became evident from the participants' answers that each participant had a specific expectation of each of his colleagues during a musical performance. The participants understand that the various roles as being mostly supportive to the soloist, that the role of leader changes in step as the internal situation evolves over time, and that various musicians assume the role of the soloist.

As expected, I found conformity in the various views relating to the role of each instrument in the trio. If this was not the case, the musicians would have struggled to achieve Glăveanu's (2013, 71) 5A's components of creativity (see Section 2.1.3 *Creativity evaluation*) successfully. The components encompass creative output by being an actor (or ensemble) who engages in actions (musicians playing their respective instruments) that bring about an artefact (music created) in the context of an audience through the affordances of instruments, physical space, and working conditions of the venue.

5.4. Presence and engagement determine level of interaction

What conditions prompt or prevent a higher level of interaction?

The most common conditions cited by participants for promoting a higher level of interaction were:

- Active listening to colleagues
- Having a holistic idea about the music and how each musician fits into the whole
- Having an open mind for new ideas being introduced during the performance
- Providing mutual support as an instance of entrainment as described by Clayton et al. (2020, 136)
- Tacit visual confirmation of mutual support among members
- Rapid response to new musical ideas without verbal instruction
- Providing each musician with the opportunity of improvised self-expression if necessary or when it is needed
- Being perceptive of changes in colleagues' posture or body language may provide an indication to what his upcoming musical intentions are

- Having a sense of shared responsibility and purpose on stage
- Reaching a state of flow (Nakamura 2012) between the three members
- Having a common goal.

Instances that prevent a higher level of interaction and undermine tacit in-process communication as cited by the participants include:

- Being in a negative mood
- Acting disinterestedly
- Lacking focus
- Playing with an irregular rhythmic pulse and inaccurately
- Lacking tacit visual feedback between musicians
- Not listening actively to others
- Making interpersonal conflict apparent during performance
- Isolating mentally by a trio member
- Being self-involved with their own instrument or musical part and creating the impression that they are not concerned with the group performance as a whole
- Being self-obsessed
- Being overwhelmed by nervousness in anticipation of a performance
- Inadequate audible monitoring on stage

5.5. Serial collaboration

How do interactions aimed at cooperation differ from interactions aimed at collaboration?

In this particular case study of the Charl du Plessis Trio, I conclude that the main method of creative collaboration within the trio is mainly serial collaboration (See Section 2.2.3 *Group creativity, systems theory, and collaboration).* To recapitulate, Fischer et al. (2005, 4–5) describes serial collaboration as an instance when an individual creates something in isolation, then presents their creation to others who can build on it.

During the interviews, it was confirmed by the participants that the most common way of collaboration on new material is the presentation of new ideas and arrangements by Du Plessis before the rehearsal. These new arrangements are then developed collaboratively in a workshop

by the group. The group builds on these ideas in a group rehearsal setting instead of each musician adding their own contribution developed in isolation.

None of the participants mentioned cooperation versus collaboration during the interview stage of this research. Therefore, I cannot draw a definite conclusion on this matter.

5.6. Coordination dynamics requirements

How can coordination dynamics as set out by Kelso (2003, 45) be used to describe the methods of communication of a performing jazz trio?

I argue that coordination dynamics can be used to describe the methods of communication of a performing jazz trio. The roles of the individuals that comprise the trio can be viewed as structural elements acting in synergy that are constrained to act as a single unit.

Kelso (2009, 1537) states that "parts communicate via mutual information exchange and information is meaningful and specific to the forms coordination takes". Synergies are coordinated structures and are "temporarily constrained to act as a single unit" (Kelso 2009, 1537). With this statement in mind, I argue that the roles of the individuals that comprise the trio can be viewed as structural elements acting in synergy that are constrained to act as a single unit. Thus, the hallmark of synergy is where "individual elements adjust to mutual fluctuations in the external force field (and more generally, the synergy's environment) to sustain integrity of function" (Kelso 2009, 1540).

This notion of synergies of structures acting and adjusting their own behaviour to sustain the integrity of function was clearly highlighted in the interviews. The participants emphasised:

- Active listening
- Having an open mind for new ideas being introduced during the performance
- Tacit visual confirming of mutual support among members
- Rapid responding to new musical ideas without verbal instruction
- Perceiving changes in colleagues' posture or body language that may indicate his upcoming musical intentions are
- Having a sense of common responsibility, purpose, and goal on stage,
- Reaching a state of flow.

5.7. Creative outputs inconclusive

In what way can creativity be judged using Dietrich's (2004, 1011) *definition on creative outputs being both new and significant?*

I conclude that this sub-question was not answered conclusively during the interviews and that further research may be needed in this regard.

Importantly, as researcher, I found one of the challenges of the IPA framework is the double hermeneutic. The double hermeneutic makes sense of an individual's experience of an event through her description. However, I believe that by collecting multiple descriptions of similar events by more than one participant, it is possible to start to find commonalities in the described experiences.

5.8. Recommendations for further research

The coordination dynamics of a jazz trio may be viewed as a very narrow field of study. Although Seddon and Biasutti (2009) studied jazz sextets and strings ensembles, they note that the focus of research in musical collaboration during the previous three decades has been on string quartets.

Looking back at the challenges mentioned in the rationale regarding the lack of communication and coordination challenges of inexperienced music-making groups, I recommend that further research be conducted to include these findings in a practical music ensemble class.

During the research, I referenced the communication methods as described by Wittenbaum et al. (2002, 178–80). However, it could be the case that there are unexplored communication methods between members of a group that this research did not address.

During the research, the creativity evaluation process described by Fischer et al. (2005, 4–5) that evaluates originality, expression, and social evaluation has not been fully described by the participants. Therefore, I recommend further research in this area.

This research expands the knowledge base of jazz trios in the South African context and partially narrows the mentioned gap in the literature as the mentioned authoritative texts — *Saying*

Something by Ingrid Monson (1996) and *Thinking in Jazz* by Paul Berliner (1994) — mainly focus on musicians in the United States. Further studies in the South African context may be undertaken to research whether the same methods of coordination apply to groups in other music settings, such as classical string quartet, larger jazz ensembles, or choirs. Furthermore, research may also be done to compare the methods of coordination of homogenous, heterogenous groups, and other diverse demographics combinations of musicians in South Africa.

During her research on synesthetic gestures, Young (2021, 89) explains that gestures are parts of the thinking process that are transferred to the hands and that gestures "not only catches the thought in hand but also shapes and changes it". With this in mind, future research could be conducted to determine whether particular universal gestures are specific to musicking in groups and if these gestures are culture or geographic-specific.

From my teaching experience at a school and tertiary level, there is often an attitude among musicians that studying music theory, composition, technique, or the process and inner workings of a music group changes or spoils their own unique style of playing (in the case of the research undertaken in this paper).

As a rebuttal to this sentiment, Byrne (2013, 12–13) declares:

> Does asking oneself these questions in an attempt to see how the machine works spoil the enjoyment? It hasn't for me. Music isn't fragile. Knowing how the body works doesn't take away from the pleasure of living... Trying to see it from a wider and deeper perspective only makes it clear that the lake itself is wider and deeper than we thought.

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ADDENDUM A: UNISA COMMITTEE FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE

College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Review Committee approval letter:

UNISA | university of south africa

COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

08 December 2020

Dear Werner Hans Spies

NHREC Registration # :
Rec-240816-052
CREC Reference # : 2020-CHS -64096874

Decision:
Ethics Approval from 08 December 2020 to 31 December 2024

_____

Researcher(s): Mr W.H Spies   **E-mail: 64096874@mylife.unisa.ac.za**

Supervisors: Prof. M Duby   **Telephone (+27)124296895**

Title: lifting the veil on 'a good jam': describing the coordination dynamics of an acoustic jazz trio

 Degree Purpose: MMus
_____

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Science Ethics Committee. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

The ***Negligible risk application*** *was **reviewed and** **expedited*** by College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, on **08 December 2020**in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the College Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.

7. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date **(08 December 2024).** Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2020-CHS-64096874** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

Signature :

Signature : PP

Dr. K.J. Malesa
CHS Ethics Chairperson
Email: maleskj@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 4780

Prof K. Masemola
Executive Dean : CHS
E-mail: masemk@unisa.ac.za
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Participant information sheet

UNISA | university of south africa

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Ethics clearance reference number: *2020*-CHS-64096874

24 March 2021,

LIFTING THE VEIL ON 'A GOOD JAM': DESCRIBING THE COORDINATION DYNAMICS OF AN ACOUSTIC JAZZ TRIO

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Werner Hans Spies and I am doing research with Prof. Marc Duby, a Research Professor in Musicology in the Department of Art and Music towards a MMus at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled LIFTING THE VEIL ON 'A GOOD JAM': DESCRIBING THE COORDINATION DYNAMICS OF AN ACOUSTIC JAZZ TRIO.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study is expected to collect important information that could provide more practical guidelines for inexperienced ensembles in an educational setting. The study aims to achieve this by describing the ways in which members of an experienced jazz trio communicate and coordinate their musical activities within the group during a live concert performance.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

The sample group to be studied will be the Charl du Plessis Trio.

I obtained your contact details from you personally and chose you as you are a current or former member of the sample group.
There will be four participants in the sample group.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves an interview that will be recorded and transcribed. The interview will be structured with questions aiming to answer the following research questions:

How do the various participants understand each other's roles?

What conditions prompt or prevent a higher level of interaction?

How do interactions aimed at cooperation differ from interactions aimed at collaboration?

Can coordination dynamics as set out by Kelso (2003, 45) be used to describe the methods of communication of a performing jazz trio?

Can creativity be judged using Dietrich's definition as cited by Bishop (2018, 2) on creative outputs being both new and significant?

The time needed for your interview will not exceed 90 minutes.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation.   If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form.

As the study group comprises of specific individuals, it will not be possible to withdraw once you have agreed to participate in the study. As the study investigates relationships and methods of communication of specific people, it will not be possible to find a replacement participant on your behalf. You will not be required to disclose any personal information. The study and interview focus on your public musical performance as part of the Charl du Plessis Trio.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

When taking part in the study, your contribution will be taken into account to potentially develop more practical guidelines for inexperienced ensembles in an educational setting.

ARE THEIR ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

There will be no discomfort for the participant as all interviews will be conducted in a normal conversational style.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

No. The study group focusses on specific individuals, performing in public. It will not be possible to keep the identities of the participants confidential. No personal information that pertains to the interviewee's private life will be collected during the interview.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a minimum period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet at 150 Bourke Street, Sunnyside, 0002 for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer and cloud-based storage iCloud. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

No payment will be received for taking part in the study.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Human Sciences, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Werner Hans Spies on +27 (82) 482-4483 or whspies@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for 24 months after publication.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Werner Hans Spies on +27 (82) 482-4483 or 64096874@mylife.unisa.ac.za.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof. Marc Duby on (++27)124296895 or dubym@unisa.ac.za. Contact the research ethics chairperson of the COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE, Dr. K.J. Malesa on tel. (012) 429-4780 or e-mail malesakj@unisa.ac.za if you have any ethical concerns.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.
Thank you.

Werner Hans Spies

Charl du Plessis letter of consent:

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____**Charl du Plessis**_____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname………**Charl du Plessis**……………… (please print)

Participant Signature…………………………………………….

.Date.**26 April 2021**…

Researcher's Name & Surname………Werner Hans Spies……………………………(please print)

Researcher's signature……………………………………………..

Date…24 March 2021…

Hugo Radyn letter of consent:

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____Hugo Radyn_____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname……………Hugo Radyn……………………… (please print)

Participant Signature…………………………………………….

.Date…1 April 2021…………………

Researcher's Name & Surname………Werner Hans Spies………………………(please print)

Researcher's signature…………………………………………..

Date…24 March 2021……………

Peter Auret letter of consent:

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, __Peter Auret__ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

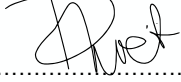I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname... Peter Auret .... (please print)

Participant Signature...

.Date... 5 Apri 2021

Researcher's Name & Surname........... Werner Hans Spies ....(please print)

Researcher's signature...

Date... 24 March 2021

ADDENDUM B: SHEET MUSIC ANNEXURE

Example 1: Charl du Plessis Trio's recording[25] of Beethoven's Sonata Pathétique Opus 13:

Figure 1: Page 1 of Charl du Plessis Trio arrangement of Ludwig von Beethoven's *Sonata Pathétique* Opus 13.

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[25] Apple Music: https://music.apple.com/za/album/andante-from-sonata-op-13-pathetique/476068504?i=476068855

Spotify: https://open.spotify.com/track/2ROjWvG0AJHsznQ0uJ9FDo?si=54d6c9304f284ccc

YouTube: https://youtu.be/8qXlrFb-UOg

Figure 2: Page 2 of Charl du Plessis Trio arrangement of Ludwig von Beethoven's *Sonata Pathétique* Opus. 13

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Example 2: Charl du Plessis Trio arrangement[26] of JS Bach's *Musette* (from *Anna Magdalena Notenbüchlein*):

Figure 3: Bass part (with hand-written rehearsal annotations) of the Charl du Plessis Trio's arrangement of JS Bach's *Musette* (from Anna Magdalena Notenbüchlein).

ADDENDUM C: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

Peter Auret (drummer)

2021_04_05 Peter Auret Interview

(https://www.icloud.com/iclouddrive/0HRXIlcuk4ZDG9iZtLLWBT18Q#2021_Peter_Auret_Int erview)

Wed, 4/7 12:03PM • 40:49

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

playing, drummer, music, performance, bass player, sound, pianist, hear, musicians, musically, guess, tune, colleagues, detract, respond, rehearsal, listen, leading, specific, trio

SPEAKERS

Peter Auret

PA 00:00

My name is Peter Auret. It's the 5th of April 2021. And I'm recording this in / from my house in Johannesburg, South Africa as part of a research project for Werner Spies' Master's in Musicology dissertation.

PA 00:23

What instrument Do you play in the trio?

PA 00:27

I play the drums.

PA 00:28

Question two, what made you choose this instrument? And how many years have you been playing?

PA 00:35

So I've been playing for roughly 27 years, I started playing marching band in school, when I was about 16 / 17, and then I progressed to the drum kit, due to an interest in in rock and roll music of the time. And I persisted in that as, as I left school, as it became more and more of an interest to me.

PA 01:13

Question number three, how would you describe your role as instrumentalist in a trio?

PA 01:21

The role of a drummer in a jazz trio, specifically, is obviously, there's the rhythmic and percussive aspect of it, which applies to all contemporary music, where the drummer plays the time and indicates the time for the audience. But I do believe that the role of a drummer in a jazz trio is not necessarily to indicate time, as time should be something that all the musicians should be aware of. So, in the trio, the drummer would rather suggest rhythmic ideas create rhythmic density. Also to feed the soloist with ideas and to interact with the soloist, and obviously, the bass player. So it's not necessarily time it's sometimes a little bit of a feature, sometimes the drummer is leading, and other times the drummer, or textures. I hope that's enough.

PA 02:57

Number four, would you say this is a supporting or leading role? And why?

PA 03:03

Well, I think it's both, I think it's definitely support, I think that the idea of a trio in terms of the rhythm section, they're always supporting the soloist, and the leader in a piano trio. And obviously, supporting the melody. And the pianist is probably the one that's got the most work in terms of improvisation and driving. So in that sense, the drummer along with the bass player is supporting completely. But often the drummer would lead and sometimes the bass player as well. But, in my experience, and from the trios that I've listened to, and what I base my concept on is that the drummer is sometimes pushing the direction of the piece of music or the intensity of the piece of music. So, so definitely, both of those roles.

PA 04:12

Think of the other two musicians in the trio, and instruments they play. This is question five, think of the other two musicians in the trio and the instruments they play. What do you think they're expecting to gain / hear from you during the performance of a song in the concert?

PA 04:32

So I think obviously, coming back to what I said before, there's definitely time, sometimes they need the drummer to state the time. But also, as I said before, the intensity and the direction of where we're going to take this. So is this going to be more open is it going to be if I play more textural and create more of a soundscape. I would expect them to respond to that. In the same time if they were to play more open they would expect me to respond to that. Even expand on that a little bit more and to bleed it out into something else. Yeah. Yeah, I guess one of the other things that would, what they would expect is specific written passages, or music, specific music figures, they would expect me to do a set up. Not just for them, but also for the audience, for the listener, that's also the other reason for doing that. So in certain cases, they would expect you to be prescriptive in terms of what the music wants. And in other cases, more creative. And I guess driving, and sometimes leading by not driving by creating space.

PA 06:48

Question six, does the mentioned expectations from your colleagues inform your own way of playing? And how?

PA 07:00

Well, of course, if their expectation is for me to, as I said before, play something prescriptive that's in the music, then I would adhere to that. And I would also respond to that in the way they are playing the specific passage or figure. And, as I've mentioned, in question five, if they are playing with more space and being more delicate and dynamically, it goes quiet, much quieter, then obviously that does inform the way I will respond. There's very few instances where I wouldn't be listening to what they're doing. And I guess, every now and again, my decision would be then to, to maybe counter what they're doing, maybe it's a rhythmic thing. So they could be playing a

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specific idea. And maybe I could counter that, but in obviously, in a musical way, and something that would make sense to them, and, you know, musically and to the audience. Not to alienate anyone at that point, that would be very unmusical, I guess.

PA 08:49

Question seven, think of what you are hearing from your colleagues during your performance, what it is that you expect to hear from each of them?

PA 08:58

Well in the case of a piano trio, so from the pianist, there is a massive responsibility on the pianist to also dictate as to where he would want to take the piece. So if it was a swing piece, obviously tempo. If the pianist was to set that up, like what sort of tempo is he choosing? Stylistically, is it going to be swing? Is it going to be more like a two feel? Is it going to be broken? Is he playing the melody quite squarely or is he playing the melody breaking it up and being playful with it? Whatever he's going to do, I would just expect him to be very clear in terms of what that is. Not to be playing very square, you know, from the page and then expect me to interpret that in a way that is free, for instance, or, you know if he was playing free, that would lead me to be freer about something not to dictate time or very specific stylistic ideas Also dynamically, I think the pianist can dictate a lot about what he wants to do. And how he wants it to go on that particular night or you know, for that particular performance.

PA 10:54

In terms of the bass player, that role can be... There can be many facets to that type of role. Either a bass player in a certain context, it's very important that he states things very clearly, and specifically, if it's something that maybe leans more on the contemporary side of things, where there's a specific groove and the freedom... if the bass player is quite solid and steady with a specific figure then it allows for freedom you know, it gives freedom to the pianist and the drummer especially, to play around that figure and to play off it, to bounce off it. Rather than to also state it. And then in another sense, and again, maybe for something different, if a bass player can be a little bit more free and especially when it comes to solo sections, once something has been established in, in the head of a tune, and specifically in the context of jazz trio. If there was a

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certain bass pattern that was prescribed, then I often feel that that pattern can be abandoned and what makes it interesting is for the drummer is if the bass player is semi understating it and also playing around with it bouncing off his own previously played prescriptive part. So, yeah, like understating it and playing around it, but obviously, what is important is just the foundation of the harmony, obviously must be adhered to, I think, especially for the pianist, but definitely for the drummer as well to know where we are and to know what sort of very important points within the harmony to accent. Drummers also play towards those points and drummers are quite aware of the harmonic rhythm and what are key points to accent or to underpin because it gives us a sense of where we building towards. So it is important for the bass player to be consistent and solid, but when the time calls for it to also be very playful, and to sometimes not state everything. And often it's a difficult thing to explain as to what maybe a drummer would need from a bass player. But sometimes a drummer would need the bass player to be quite busy, but almost to be out of the way and to leave space but to be busier and if that makes any sense. I'm gonna move on.

PA 14:37

Question eight when performing during a concert, do you view your own contribution as playing a specific predefined part, a newly conceived part or a reaction to what your colleagues are playing?

PA 14:49

This again comes back to all the other questions or at least all the other answers. When music is prescribed, when there's very set things that are written on the page, and that the arranger of the composer wants to hear, then obviously, it is predefined. So there's certain things like, certain rhythms or certain phrases that the arranger has intended and that contributes to the piece in a big way. But obviously when a pieces a little bit more open in terms of maybe a jazz standard and a tune that we all know quite well, then, I think it's more exciting if the leader just starts or just, you know, whether it starts with the piano. And we respond. So coming back to it a newly conceived part, I think a newly conceived part and reaction sort of one and the same thing. If you hear something and something is implied by the leader, or by anyone in the trio, then the idea would be to listen and to respond and react creatively. And sometimes it's a very quick decision. And sometimes you've got to sort of commit to that decision. And then I guess it's a newly conceived

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part because you might say, well I'm going to forge ahead with this idea. And if everyone listens, then this could be a great moment. And if no one cares to listen, then obviously it's not gonna work out that way. And I guess everything, even with written parts, there's always some degree of reaction, it can't just be robotic, there's got to be a little bit of tolerance for improvisation and creativity within written parts. I hope that helps.

PA 17:25

Question nine, if suggested that certain acts from your colleagues can be seen as creating a more or less positive environment for performance, what are the actions you can take to increase the positive aspects in a given playing environment?

PA 17:48

So, I guess, if I have to create an example: for instance, if a tune is played too fast, it's counted in too fast, and it sounds like it could be quite a messy situation, then I could interpret that in sort of a broken... if it's a swing, I could interpret it in a two feel or broken swing type of manner, so that I'm not hammering out a quarter note pulse over something that's very fast and could potentially be a disaster for the listener because it becomes so cluttered. Another thing could be that a tune is a little bit unsettled with the time so I guess that could also be seen as a negative to try and hammer out a pulse for the tune to settle because it can sometimes sound and feel malicious, and spiteful. I guess, that sometimes there are ways that that can help, to be very certain about something, you know that to be very confident about what you're going to do to help them correct. But that is more also in prescribed works. Another thing that one can do is, is when things aren't... positive. I'm assuming this is all about this has got to do with music and that interpersonal situations? But when something happens in music... I guess if there is a negative thing, it's never an intentional negative thing, it's just musically, maybe an unpleasant thing. And sometimes if things might get cluttered or something has gone wrong in terms of a form of a tune, I think the idea would be, if it's a bit cluttered and uncertain, to create a little bit of space, to maybe sort of lean more on the textual aspect of our instruments to create a sort of a cooldown so that we can all find our feet again, I guess that would be something that you could do. Or if something goes haywire in terms of harmony whether it's like, you know, the bass player and pianist are in different places, and everyone's unsure — this might sound counterproductive — but it could be cool to explore the

more abstract side of things, you know, rhythmically, or whatever. And if that will always help. And if that makes any sense.

PA 21:36

I want to move on to question 10. How can you contribute to increase the positive environment of your colleagues?

PA 21:49

Again, I'm not sure if I understand this right, but is the environment being the performance environment like onstage? I think that's to be very certain in myself, or to be very confident about how I'm going to approach something. And, and to be supportive of what they're playing, if someone's soloing, to be listening. And to try and figure out, where they go against the time to give them something solid to hold on, if that is sort of playing a phrase that's across the bar-line, to give them a sort of a solid pulse, but not like, enforce it. So that it sounds as if they're doing something wrong. But also to be playful around that. And to go with it, like if the time shifts a little bit, then it's got to shift, you know, you catch up. I don't think the point is to sabotage anyone or to point at someone's mistake, that's not the idea. I mean, to listen and to be sensitive to someone's playing. And also to someone's headspace, you know. When you perform with musicians, the thing that destroys great gigs or great performances, is generally nerves and lack of confidence. And that could just be basically nerves or anxiety from one or all of the players. And sometimes if you are the one that is suffering from those specific things, then it's nice when your fellow musicians are supporting you by just the way they listen to you in the way they respond to you. And I think implying stuff musically, is sometimes, you know, like, without sounding like completely ridiculous, but sometimes it can be the equivalent of a hand on the shoulder to say, you know, I've got you and I'm listening and we're going to get out of this section. And also visual cues. To cue. There's nothing wrong with stating something. To tell another musician that we're going to a B section of a song if you get the feeling that they're not clear, without doing it in a malicious way. I mean, the point is for us all to sound great. And the larger point is for us to present something that an audience could really enjoy.

PA 25:00

Okay, question 11. Can you describe your experience of the process from initial rehearsal to performance.

PA 25:20

So, generally, a rehearsal depending on if we have the music before, so normally, if there's a rehearsal with new pieces, the pieces would be sent to us. Often without an audio guide. So that's sometimes tricky for a drummer — for any drummer. But as I'm not like number one reader in the world, it is tricky to figure out what's going on. But if I get the pieces I often just mark out a sort of four bar sections for myself, because sometimes there's a lot of slashes. And I look at figures that I can't play, that I can't sight read, initially, I try and work with them out so that they're not problematic for me at the rehearsal. And then, obviously, from sheet music, there's very little to go by for drums. And often, sheet music has got very little drum information or rhythmic information as well aside from some unison parts or something that needs to be played together like a specific hit that the arranger or bandleader has intended.

PA 26:46

So that's the first step, then we go to the rehearsal, and then we'll play through it, or sort of read through it. And maybe discuss a couple of things like, try to figure it out, just to get through it. Basically, the first initial playthrough, and the initial discussions. And then, for me, I try and figure out what it is about the tune, like what is... because often there is no prescriptive drum part. I mean, so we could say it's swung, but that could mean that 1000 things, or could say Latin that could mean 1000 things, or could say African or it could say whatever. That's so vague, but then I try and figure out what is the master, there must be a master rhythm and master idea, or like a master clave, if I could call it that, that is present throughout the tune. So I try and find that thing. And then also listen to the bass part, if there's a bass part. Trying to lock on to that, like, what is that thing? And also, you can often hear by the harmonic rhythm what that master rhythm is. So to try to figure that sort of thing out. And then I guess, we play through it again, and read through it, make notes. But for me, personally, I prefer to memorise as much as I can, of music, because I don't think that reading — in a jazz context — that reading music from top to bottom, and being glued to sheet music is a good idea, whether you're the world's best reader or the world's worst reader. It's not beneficial to either of those types of musicians. Because at some point — if you're

not a great reader — it's going to stress you out and you're going to sound like you're trying to find stuff, like trying to pick up a puzzle from the floor, as opposed to organically playing music. And if you're a great reader you're never going to rely on your ears and you're always going to rely on what's on the page. So, in that rehearsal process, that's very important for me to try and figure out what it is that I want to do and also the orchestration of the drums. I mean, as grand as it sounds. It's as simple as, it's going to be like a cross stick thing with hi-hats or am I going to play the ride cymbals or am I going to you know,

PA 29:48

it's going to be all on the tom toms or whatever. Am I gonna fully explore this... this idea that I've come up with or am I going to start understating, and I can I suggest to my colleagues to understate or to maybe commit more or whatever so that that process, the rehearsal process is super important. And I guess, when it gets to the gig... the ideas are still not settled by the first gig, I don't think. I think it's only after the first gig that things start settling, and the good ideas stay and the bad ideas, you sort of dump them quickly. You often dump them after the first — or for me — after the first performance. That's normally when I figured out what really sucked, or what you know...

PA 30:58

But, I guess the rehearsal process, to the performance, there's a lot that happens. And the ideal situation would be, from the first rehearsal to the actual first performance of a particular piece, it would be great if the tune was in my head, the form of the tune, the melody, because that often tells me what I'm going to be playing more than the page because obviously, there are things on the page that are prescriptive. On a drummer's music, there's a lot of gaps, there's a lot of rests, or slashes rather, where it's basically up to me to play what is appropriate. I think it's a bit of a ramble. But anyway, I'm going to move on...

PA 31:56

Number 12. What would you say are instances where your actions can detract from a successful group performance?

PA 32:17

Well, definitely the number one thing is to not listen. And I think the thing that can detract for me personally, is if I'm not certain of the music, if it's not in my head. I know other musicians don't need that — they can just come read it. But for me, I think if I'm not familiar with a piece, then that can detract from the performance because then I sound stifled and robotic and uncertain. The other thing that can detract from it is obviously interpersonal stuff. If I have an issue with one of the guys or there's been some bad vibe, I mean, I don't know if this is relevant. But that is super important for me that the vibe of the group when we come on stage. I don't think anything beautiful is going to happen musically if there's something cool happening with the musicians, if there's no camaraderie, and a common goal. You know, because when you when you travel with people it can get tense, but the moment you step on stage, you've got to somehow let that stuff go. A thing that can detract is if I was rude or whatever. Like if there isn't a vibe, like a care, because that care comes across in the music. I've got to leave my issue at the door. And I've got to care a whole lot about how well can I make them sound? And also what sort of experience am I trying to create for the for the audience? It's, again, it's not just about us.

PA 34:37

Are there instances where the actions of your colleagues detract from the success of the group's performance? I think in any group in any band, they are sorry, this is number 13. Are there instances where the actions of your colleagues detract from the success of your performance of the group's performance?

PA 34:57

I think again, it's the same, the same thing applies. If my colleagues are not familiar with the music, if my colleagues are uncertain about the music, and also if colleagues don't believe in the performance, and the vibe, if it becomes all about one person, and not listening, it's the same, it's the same both way rounds. You know, both sides of it, like, if my colleagues have got an interpersonal issue between between us, then obviously, that's gonna... we're going to project that when we play. So... I think the instances where they can detract from the performance is the same as mine. If their heads aren't in the game. Because a trio or any group, but specifically a trio, is so reliant on responding to each other, and talking musically to each other, that it's important that that relationship is healthy offstage and onstage. Again, that's like a whole ramble.

PA 36:29

Number 14, can you describe your experience of performance where the group did not function well? What do you think led to this situation?

PA 36:39

Well, there have been with many groups, and specifically with this group, of course, there have been. Often, I think, one of the things that has made the group not performed [sic] well is when we can't hear each other. Because that is essentially, like the crux of it. If you can't hear what the other musicians are doing, I mean, you can hear yourself, but if you can't hear... If I can't hear the bass player or I can't hear the pianist, then how am I possibly going to make music in this context of improvised music, where it is about responding and a musical conversation. So that's one situation. Another situation could be where one of us is overly nervous for the gig and so much depends... anxious about the way we're going to play. Or maybe the fact that we haven't rehearsed the some particular material enough. And that has led to instead of it being organic, you know, like, "let's all hold hands and get through this." It has led to it sounding stifled and robotic.

PA 38:11

But mostly, it's when we can hear each other. That's, I would say, that's the biggest thing. And when we're not happy with the way it sounds there's a sort of a discomfort sonically for us. If that makes sense.

PA 38:28

So, for number 15, can you describe your experience of a performance where the group did function well? What do you think led to the situation?

PA 38:37

Again, the ideal situation is when the sound... we can hear each other. Well, firstly, I guess that's one of the one of the very important things. But one of the other things is when there's a great sense of camaraderie, and there's like a relaxed atmosphere backstage. Also, when we've done performances where we've been playing the repertoire, and we know it so well, that we are not really reading anything, we're just playing — and it's very organic. And it's generally when we —

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on a personal level — where we're all in a very, very good space. And we're in a very good space with each other. And, you know we've had a couple of laughs, and everyone's in a good mood and no one's anxious. I think it's when everyone's heads are... like, everyone's mindsets are almost aligned, and everyone is like, "we're all excited to be there." ""We all have a little bit of nerves, but it doesn't overpower the sense of excitement. And, and generally there was just a good vibe amongst us before, leading up to this performance. It could have happened moments before the performance or it could have happened like the week leading up to the performance where we're all in a very, very good headspace. But ultimately that is the three key things I think. I mean be able to hear each other, being able to relate to each other socially, you know, feeling, you know, like, like that sense of camaraderie. And the other thing I can't remember now, because I think I said it is three.

Charl du Plessis (pianist)

2021_04_26_Charl du Plessis Interview

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SPEAKERS

Charl du Plessis

CdP 00:04

My name is Charl du Plessis. Today is the 26th of April 2021. And I'm doing this recording at my home in Pretoria. And I'm doing this recording as part of a research project for Werner Spies' Masters in Musicology dissertation.

CdP 00:30

So, question one, what instrument do you play in the trio?

CdP 00:37

I'm the pianist in the trio. So I play piano. And I'm also the founder or the person who initiated the start of this trio.

CdP 00:56

Question two, what made you choose this instrument? And how many years have you been playing?

CdP 01:05

I grew up in a home that had a piano and was always drawn to the instrument. So I have always played on it. But only officially started taking lessons when I was nine, I'm now 44. So it's been a very long time playing this instrument.

CdP 01:34

Question three, how would you describe your role as instrumentalist in a trio?

CdP 01:48

I think in our trio, the role I play is a little bit different from just being the pianist in any trio. Because this trio is named after me, and I'm sort of the face of the trio. So musically speaking, that means that I have more pressure or more responsibility in the trio, rather than just being the pianist in somebody else's trio. And from a musical point of view, I think that my role in this trio is very much keeping the harmonic and melodic role afloat. So it's a lot of responsibility, just because the other two instruments are not always capable of taking care of the harmony and melody. So my, my role is sometimes supportive when my trio members take solos, but the rest of the time. I think I have quite a dominant role, if I can call it that.

CdP 03:25

Question four, would you say this is a supporting or leading role and why? Okay, so I've basically answered that in the previous question, but I think that my role is definitely leading. And due to the nature of the music that we play, I think that my interpretation of especially the classical music that we rearrange for jazz trio is dependent on my personality, my way of playing and that's why it's definitely more a leading role.

CdP 04:07

Question five. Think of the other two musicians in the trio and the instruments they play. What do you think are they expecting to gain or hear from you during the performance of a song and concert?

CdP 04:28

I think that support obviously, locking in playing together. Having good ensemble is one of the main things that that they expect from me. Being able to lead without being selfish. In other words, being able to follow and lock and listen but still take a leading role. That's what I think they expect. And I think that what they expect to gain is some sort of musical satisfaction, I think that all three of us have high standards. And because we have had the opportunity to play together for many years, this has enabled us to set a certain standard within the trio. So when we play, we're always expecting to reach our sort of basic level of proficiency and quality of playing. And anything above that would be obviously great. And anything below that would not be. And I think, during the performance of a song, all three of us seek some sort of expression, trying to be expressive in our playing, trying to challenge each other, sometimes with a little bit of a musical nudge, or joke, or even confirmation when we just support each other in that way, where you know, that your fellow players are hearing you, are feeling with you and are right behind you.

06:37

I think in a concert situation, like I mentioned, we have a reputation, because we've been playing together for a long time. I think that for all three of us, it's also important after a concert to feel some sort of pride in what we do, and to do justice to our reputation and keep the fans happy and keep building on our reputation and keep the customer coming back for more.

CdP 07:15

Question six, does the mentioned expectation from your colleagues inform your own way of playing?

CdP 07:25

Yes, I think that I have a definite sense of feeding off their energy. And because it's so exposed, that it's only the three of us, I'm very aware of what they give me, compared to the last time we played the same concert or compared to the last rehearsal we had. I think that even though you try and play your best every day, you're playing differs. And with three people, it means that we never play the same twice. But I like the fact that it's sort of an unspoken rule that we have a common goal to try and play well and achieve level of musical satisfaction. So the expectations we have from each other definitely influenced my way of playing because I'm inclined to respond

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musically, to what they give me. So in other words, the better my colleagues play, the better I play because I have to rise to their standard. And it's a fluid kind of process because it's difficult to quantify, in words, but I think that you inspire each other whilst playing. And this happens obviously with visual cues and looking at each other and trying to be in in the moment. So without this expectation, I think that the unspoken communication between the three of us would be far less and quite dead.

CdP 09:39

Question seven, think of what you are hearing from your colleagues during a performance. What is it that you expect to hear from each of them?

CdP 09:51

For me, the monitor mix is always a very interesting identifier of what I deem important in the trio, because what I need to hear the most in my wedge is usually the bass. I think that the, the harmonic role of the bass in other words, does it link with what I'm doing? Am I correct? Does it make sense? That's the primary reason for wanting to get a lot of bass for me to rely on when I'm playing, and secondly, the rhythmic element of the bass, especially in swing tunes, where the bass walks, that's, to me, the solid foundation of how I plan my playing. The drummer is secondary in terms of volume, because having had the opportunity to play only with drums, you immediately realise how difficult it is to sort of play anything that's not earthed, because the bass is not there. It sort of earths everything. So I expect, obviously from the bass player, that's what I'm looking for. But I expect obviously good rhythm and good pitching and good sound and solid playing and, and also a room for exploration. So in other words, not playing only the notes every time exactly the same. That would be too computerised. I appreciate any extra signs of personality and creativity and improvisation. So to me, that's, that's good. From the drummer, I expect a lot of variation in nuances. In other words, the ability to really read the situation during a song with a lot of tact and sensitivity, so that the drums never become overpowering, or dominant. I have a bit of a problem with some drummers who play too busy or too loud, and then it spoils the whole musical setup for me. So I expect to hear obviously, good solid rhythmic playing from the drummer, but also creative and in such a way that there is still space for me. I try and do the same. But I think that differs from day to day.

CdP 13:16

Question eight, when performing during a concert, do you view your own contribution as playing a specific predefined part, a newly conceived part or a reaction to what your colleagues are playing?

CdP 13:32

I think that in the bulk of the music that we perform in this trio. It's a specific predefined part for sure. Because that's how we rehearse to have things demarcated and pre-set so that we have a certain introduction, a certain outro. And, and we know exactly what's coming. I think the newly conceived part is the solo section of each tune that we play because although the duration of it might be preconceived, the content is not so there's definitely room for new material there. And the reaction to what my colleagues are playing would be most visible in the solo sections because of the freedom we have there to explore something different every time. So in the predefined part, which I would call the head of the songs we mostly play. There's not that much room for new material or creativity. Just because it's usually quite written out and set.

CdP 14:58

Question nine If suggested that certain acts from your colleagues can be seen as creating a more or less positive environment for you to perform in, what are the actions that you can take to increase the positive aspects in a given playing environment?

CdP 15:24

I think that listening very attentively to what your partners are playing is the most important thing because, as I mentioned, no two days in a row are the same and we play a little bit different every day. So, if you are not aware of how different your colleagues are playing today, and you just carry on with the way you played yesterday, that could be quite insensitive and missing a special moment. So the actions that I can take to increase this positive aspect is definitely giving my partner's musical space. And sometimes, in a pre-arranged tune, you can be in the situation where the space is quite limited for the other players, just because that is the way the song is arranged. But obviously, when I conceive these arrangements, or we workshop arrangements together, we

try and feature all three instruments equally, and allow for room to be equally active and contribute in equal parts. So creating a more positive environment also enables me to play better. But one of the factors that I think creates this positivity is consistency, I think that it's a very important thing in working as a professional musician that your level of playing is more or less, at a certain standard and never lower than that. So it would be quite strange to work with musicians who play exceptionally well, the one day and terrible the next due to whatever reason and this is something I value a lot that I try and obviously stay at a certain standard as a player myself. But it's also echoed in the approach of my two colleagues. And that adds to a positive feeling because we're all on a high level of playing. And if somebody for some reason has a bad day, then at least you know that it's not here to stay, it's just for a short moment.

CdP 18:24

I think the other aspects that I can name here in terms of actions I can take to increase the positive aspects is to try as organiser of the trio to obviously try and create an environment in which we can play well. And that is determined by the choice of venue. The sound equipment, the placing of the trio, the lighting, the monitor mix, or if there is monitor mix, being able to hear each other well, that's all actions that I can take to contribute positively to the performance. And obviously, knowing my notes as good as I can in the sense of not being under rehearsed or underprepared because that enables more freedom, the better I know my work, the better it is for my colleagues.

CdP 19:40

Question 10 How can you contribute to increase the positive environment for your colleagues?

CdP 19:51

I think that because we like each other and we've been working together for a long time and travel extensively [sic]. The positive environment starts long before we even play one note, arriving at a rehearsal arriving at a show arriving at the airport, I think it's all part of the almost musical foreplay, which happens where we see each other for the first time and we catch up. And there's a sense of camaraderie before we've even tuned our instruments. So that's really important to me, I think, although we are a professional trio, and we do this essentially for, for money and for business purposes, not just as a hobby or for fun. The enjoyment factor and being able to have a nice,

comfortable, relaxed, but productive environment, when we work is very important. So in other words, if somebody is sick or has a personal problem, then it directly impacts on all three of us, because we feel for each other. So I can contribute to increase the positive environment for my colleagues by, like I mentioned being well prepared. Whether that be just knowing my own notes, or in making arrangements and having scores ready for the rehearsal. A positive environment also entails being polite during a rehearsal, when we discuss musical ideas, I think the positive environment requires flexibility and open mind when it comes to making suggestions. And that's something we do quite a lot of, and have been doing more in the last couple of months, with some extra time on our hands due to the lockdown where we've started workshopping tunes more than we did in the past, where I would have made an arrangement and that's the way it's going to be. So that's, in my mind a positive contribution, when we can all contribute and build our own arrangements that way. I think that being able to put yourself in somebody else's shoes in the trio is quite important. And knowing what the drums do, or what the bass does, enables me to make suggestions or ask questions rather than just thinking of my own playing and my own notes. So it's almost like having a holistic view, from above seeing both me and my colleagues and how we interlink enables me to have a better overview of my musical place. So I can see where I slot in with the other two, rather than just thinking only of my playing. To me, that's a little bit of a narrow minded approach, which you sometimes find in classical music, where people just worry about their own part, and not so much how that links in with the rest of the orchestra or with the rest of the ensemble. So these are some of the contributions that I think will have a positive impact.

CdP 23:51

Question 11 Can you describe your experience of the process from initial rehearsal to performance?

CdP 24:00

So for me, before the initial rehearsal, I usually conceptualise the music and make an arrangement of the tune and prepare the charts so that with rehearsal, we have something to work from. I like the creativity of trying a new arrangement for the first time because some of the ideas in my head is sometimes not written down. Or it's not possible to write it down. But this is where experience of playing with the same people for a long time is great because you explain in words what you

want and they understand and give you a few options. And there we go. So my experience, there in the first rehearsal is quite positive and open. And also in terms of what I do because I instantly react differently when I hear the bass and drums play with me from how I would play when I'm on my own. So it's an adaption process of changing my own playing so that what I think would work with what I'm hearing happens, and also trying to establish the arrangement according to what I wrote down. So most of my piano arrangements are not written down at all, it's all in my head, or it's all improvised there and then and that's why it's easy for me to change that. So I think from the initial rehearsal, our aim is always to try and find something which makes musical sense and which we feel happy with and that's sometimes predetermined by the application of the music, if we playing with a singer, then obviously we would have her or him in mind and, and then it has a different purpose from where we just playing something as an instrumental work for the trio. Also, within a programme, I think sometimes the purpose of having some faster, comical tunes, in contrast to slower ballads, to establish a varied programme, that also makes a big difference in the process of rehearsing because you know that each song has a different function in the programme. And then repetition is definitely a big part of establishing these arrangements and these rehearsals to reach a certain musical level. So I like playing songs over and over and over again. And then the process from rehearsal to performance to me, usually takes quite a while to solidify. In other words, we have had instances where we had one or two brief rehearsals and then already performed a song. But it's not as though it ends, once you've performed it, the performance is, sort of the birth of the arrangement, and then the growing up process actually starts. It's brought into life, but that's only the beginning. So the growth and the ability to change and to discuss, after concerts, what worked, what didn't, is something I value a lot. I've found over the years, sometimes it takes months for us to change things in an arrangement, which would bother all three of us for a number of performances. And yet, it takes a while before we get to a point where we say, you know what this section has always bothered me, can we do something about this and change it? Or can I try something else. So I think that it's definitely a positive, happy and quite empowering experience to rehearse and then perform because you see something mature and you hear it mature and you feel more confident as you keep playing the same material.

CdP 28:55

Question 12 What would you say are instances where your actions can detract from the successful group performance?

CdP 29:05

I think that because playing in this trio is not the only musical job we have and coming from families and personal lives, I think this all comes into play when you perform and when you rehearse. So actions which detract sometimes has to do with external stress. Worrying about personal problems, financial problems, scheduling problems, being too busy, you know, pressure from other things to me that plays a big role and it detracts from the from the focus sometimes. And then again, this is where the professionalism within the group is quite astonishing because we each could be dealing with a number of issues on the side. And when we sit down to rehearse, we are in the moment and this is our focus. So during the actual rehearsal, actions that can detract could be being disorganised, not having the right charts, not having them in the right order, and not knowing the notes. Not being able to concentrate well and keep on making mistakes with form or having memory issues, because I often play from memory, and then that could confuse and detract from the, from the performance.

CdP 30:51

And sometimes being uninspired is something which I find, can happen, where in a tune that you've played many times and that we've played many times in the trio, it can sometimes get run down and sound old or tired. And that would detract from the success. So the the goal there would be to try and keep it fresh and playing it as though it's the first time that you are performing it.

CdP 31:37

So the next question, question 13. Are there instances where the actions of your colleagues detract from the success of the group's performance?

CdP 31:49

Yes, of course, there have been instances, and like I mentioned in the previous question, I think that because we all carry the load in equal parts. It's not a question of pointing fingers at who did something wrong or whose actions detracted from the success. It's sort of a flux situation which

keeps changing every day, but there have typically been actions from my colleagues which detract, which has to do with attitude, which could be like I said, externally, being very down, being grumpy, having a lack of focus, disorganised, late. And then musically speaking, being insensitive, or rushing or pulling or dragging is the better word and depending on the performance, but having too high level of wrong notes and mistakes can also detract. So I think, not communicating, not looking not giving that kind of satisfaction visually, would also detract from the success of the group's performance. And that has happened, but dealing with it or trying to figure out why it's happening is sometimes more important and then, usually it gets resolved.

CdP 33:43

Question 14, can you describe your experience of performance where the group did not function well? What do you think led to this situation?

CdP 33:57

There have been situations where we felt less than satisfied with our own playing. And I think there are various reasons why that happened. I remember one time when I had the wrong music or I didn't have the right music in front of me and I tried to play from memory. And it did not go well because I got mixed up. And then that forces my colleagues to jump around on the score and follow me wherever I am. So that's definitely one instance I can remember. And this obviously, in a performance situation, creates a lot of extra stress and trying to read each other to see where you're going next or why did you skip that section or what [sic] going on. So usually being disorganised or losing your place, or repeating back somewhere where you shouldn't have leads to these things not functioning well. And then sometimes there have been instances where, as I mentioned with the previous question, where we have performed the material so many times that it later becomes sort of old hat and tired and rundown, and then it's difficult to keep the spark up. And although the audience may sometimes not realise it, for us, it's quite lacking in energy or in creativity. And to me, that's also where we don't function well and the experience is rather demoralising and upsetting because it just feels not good. I think in other words, what leads to these situations, are sometimes being disorganised, unprepared, loss of concentration, and lack of creativity. In other words, lack of applying yourself musically in this situation.

CdP 36:44

Question 15 Can you describe your experience of a performance where the group did function well? What do you think led to the situation?

CdP 36:52

I think the opposite of what I just said is applicable here. Where having good preparation, focus, good sound, being able to hear and see each other well. For me, obviously, having a good piano to play on is sometimes a very important part of how successful the gig goes because it inspires me almost as a fourth partner in the trio, where I get a lot of energy from the instrument. There have been many good performances, I think more than the bad ones. And my experience of that has definitely to do with reaching some sort of flow between the three of us and the better we know the material, the longer we've played it, the more we can relax and challenge each other, and try and do something new. But with the assurance that we all know where we are, we know what we're doing, we know what's coming next so that we do not have to be on guard as to what might go wrong or read like it's the first time you've seen this music. And that's also been an aim of mine for the trio is to be able to reach a point where we can play memorised (all three of us) and not be confined to having that security blanket of reading. But leading to a good performance, I think that preparation, concentration, listening musicality having good circumstances as in sound, instruments monitor mix. And having a common goal of where a performance is sometimes very important to us, or it's a recording or something like that, that's usually been a good inspiration which leads to this situation being better than just a mere rehearsal or low profile concert.

CdP 39:27

My own experience of a performance where the group did function well is obviously extremely pleasurable. The level of satisfaction for all the work that you've put in as a group feels amazing because it pays off. It's so nice to share the satisfaction of having a good concert onstage already with my colleagues, because I can see it in their faces. And afterwards, when we discuss the gig. That's also another form of validation where we can acknowledge that it went well and what we particularly liked and congratulating each other, inspiring each other motivating each other. So, the advantage we have is because we play relatively many gigs in a year. Normally, it enables us

to create a pattern or have repeated experience of good performances which is completely different from rehearsing and playing one concert and then never again like with visiting artists or with being a dep in a trio or something like that, which obviously is completely different because we have the luxury of playing again and again, it enables us to revisit the idea of a good performance on a regular basis.

CdP 41:18

Thank you.

Hugo Radyn (drummer)

2021_04_01_Hugo Radyn Interview

(https://www.icloud.com/iclouddrive/03hB4wTyEkvxsiOKD8BAMk7KQ#2021_Hugo_Radyn_Interview)

Wed, 4/14 9:29AM • 17:27

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

playing, performance, question, soloist, trio, rehearsed, groove, colleagues, solo, instrumentalist, detract, supporting, song, drum kit, positive, environment, drummer, role, rhythmically, listen

SPEAKERS

Hugo Radyn

HR 00:00

My name is Hugo Radyn. Today is the 1st of April 2021. I am in Suzhou, China, and I'm doing this recording as part of a research project for Werner Spies' Master's in musicology dissertation.

HR 00:15

Question one, what instrument Do you play in the trio? I used to play the drums slash progression in the trio.

HR 00:24

Question two what made you choose this instrument? And how many years have you been playing? I've been playing for about 23 years and professionally for more or less 16. And I chose this instrument by accident. When I was in primary school, one of the teachers said I should come for music lessons and play the drums. And so I went and I really enjoyed it and decided this is what I want to do. How would you describe your role as instrumentalist in a trio? The role of the drummer

my role is definitely keeping a steady groove for the bass player and complementing the soloist with rhythmic ideas and dynamic changes and supporting the soloist.

HR 01:25

Question four, would you say this is supporting or leading role and why? It's definitely a supporting role. I am supporting the soloist in whatever direction he wants to go. If he is rhythmically very busy, I'll try and support him supports him by playing not as rhythmically or emulating some of his rhythms and accents. I would feed him maybe feed him some accents or rhythmic ideas during a solo and maybe follow his dynamics. Route whatever he wants to wherever he wants to go, if that if you want. He wants to play super soft, I will be there supporting him playing as softly as possible.

HR 02:18

Question five. Think of the other two musicians in the trio and the instruments they play. What do you think? are they expecting to gain slash hear from you during the performance of a song and concert? They're definitely depending on the song. They definitely want to hear some or city groove of what whatever type of song we're playing. I think they also want to hear dynamic changes and not me just bulldozing through the song on one level. They want to hear that I am listening to them. And supporting whatever wherever they want to go when they're soloing or whatever ideas they're thinking of doing.

HR 03:18

Does question six? Does the mentioned expectation from your colleagues inform your own way of playing and how? Definitely it makes me I think it makes me listen to them more intensely to what they're playing. If I want to support them, I really need to listen, for example, the soloist if he decides he's going to drop down to almost unheardable dynamic. I need to be there. So I really listen, concentrate and focus on listening on everything that they're doing.

HR 04:02

Question seven. Think of what you are hearing from your colleagues during a performance. What is it that you expect to hear from each of them from the piano obviously, is playing the main role

in the trio. So he's leading so I expect to hear the melody and a leading role so you can take the song, especially in his solo, you can take it wherever he needs to go from the bass player. Personally, I just want to hear him play quite a steady groove because I really feed off the bass player as a drummer. And if he's playing a steady groove, I'm playing a steady groove. And then the whole trio sounds really good, groovy and amazing.

HR 05:14

Question eight. When performing during a concert, do you view your own contribution as playing a specific predefined part, a newly conceived part or a reaction to what your colleagues are playing.

I think it's a mixture of all of all three of these, I definitely play a predefined part in the head or the melody of the song. For example, if it's a samba song, I'm going to play a samba piece or a samba groove in a solo, maybe I would change the groove up a little bit. Just, you know, just make it a little light instead of a two three rhumba, maybe do a three two, if it works. And also I would play a reaction. Because I'm a supporting role, instrumentalist in the trio, it's definitely a lot of reaction towards whatever the rest of the band is doing, especially during the solo sections.

HR 06:32

Question nine, if suggested that certain acts from your colleagues can be seen as creating a more or less positive environment for you to perform in, what are the actions that you can take to increase the positive aspects in a given playing environment?

HR 07:00

I think as the drummer to give the instrumentalists space, if I if I just say it's a solo section, and I just go crazy and play a lot during the solo, I think that definitely will create a not a very positive playing environment for the soloist, because he won't have any ideas or space to express his ideas. So giving, giving space to the soloists so that they can express themselves, I think is definitely a way of creating a positive playing environment for the rest of the group. How can you contribute to increase the positive environment of your colleagues?

HR 08:04

This is question 10. I think it's similar answer to question nine: giving space. But I also think interaction, in the sense of looking at each other during the performance creates a positive playing environment. I am very guilty of not looking at the rest of the band during the performances, with my old frowny face, I think smiling and interacting you know, like physically looking at the other players. showing them that "hey, I'm here I'm listening to what you're doing" creates a positive environment. Not just on the stage playing but definitely backstage or when you're off the stage as well. I think that's also a factor is that a positive environment is definitely not just created on the stage while playing it's definitely backstage as well. You know, if you're friendly, and professional, it's a whole positive environment, the working environment will be positive. And like I said, I was guilty of not doing that always. But you know, life.

HR 09:40

Question 11 Can you describe your experiences of the process from initial rehearsal to the performance?

So the Charl du Plessis trio, because it's a cross over from classical to jazz trio. For me, though, the initial rehearsal, if we decided we're doing a new, a new piece. The first rehearsal was very confusing. So for me, at the first rehearsal trying to figure out what type of groove will fit over this over this piece? It's confusing, because first of all, I don't really know the piece. Because I'm an illiterate fool. And yeah, so a little bit of confusion, uncertainty. But once we get settled, settled on a groove and rehearse it a few times, it gets easier and easier. And by the time at the performance, it's rehearsed in and then it kind of feels it's, you know, comfortable. As soon as we get comfortable with it in the rehearsals during the performance, it will sound like it's natural.

HR 11:08

Question 12. What would you say are instances where your actions can detract from the success for group performance? Hmm, I was thinking about this one.

HR 11:31

I think from my actions, if I screw up a part, you know, making mistakes, I think it probably will detract from a successful group performance. Making mistakes as a drummer, if I'm, you know, if

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I rush or drag the tempo that will definitely detract from the successful group performance. If I'm not, if I'm playing and it doesn't, it doesn't sit, you know, if I'm, if what I'm playing, is not working with the rest of the band, then I will definitely detract from the successful group performance.

HR 12:23

Question 13, are there instances where the actions of your colleagues detract from the success of the group's performance? I can't think of a specific situation where that happened. But when someone makes a mistake, so this didn't happen very often, but say if Charl, you know, screwed up the head completely. I think that that might have been an instance where he totally messed it up. And the group's performance was a little bit shook after that.

HR 13:21

Question 14, can you describe your experience of a performance where the group did not function? Well, what do you think led to this situation?

HR 13:46

Again, I can't think of a specific performance where we didn't function. Well. We were so well rehearsed, that even a bad performance, we still played pretty well. But I think if it's a high pressure stressful event, say if we did a live recording, or you know, some of those shows in Ernen, that we're all a little bit stressed. And then if there's one mistake, tiny, doesn't matter how big or tiny I think that how big or small. I think that really you know, it shakes your confidence. So I think it's, it's more external experience than the actual playing that we didn't function well. But again, we didn't we didn't. The   wheels didn't came off and we all stop playing and or anything like that. It's just I think we feel our total disaster.

HR 15:01

Question 15 Can you describe your experience of a performance where the group did function? Well? What do you think led to this situation? Yeah, I think we, most of the times, the group did function well.

HR 15:23

I think one instance when we played in Cape Town, and the owner of the club pulled out this drum kit from the roof that was total a total more like pots and pans than an actual drum kit. I think this situation of "Oh, now we just need to, you know, play the cards are dealt with". And that was, I think that was a great show. We really grooved and it was a positive environment, and semi stressful, but we just decided it's, it's gonna work. And that definitely, when everybody feels like that, it clicks. And then we'll just play well, it's a, it's definitely a positive environment situation where the band functions at its best if everybody's relaxed. We were a little bit stressed, but what can you do? So that definitely was one of experience where we did function very well. And there were there were more, you know, like I said, we were a well-rehearsed group. So when we went to a gig, it was never a situation where we thought, "Oh, we don't know the song, but we're gonna play it anyway". And just stumbled through it. So we were pretty well rehearsed. So if, you know, if you rehearse Well, you don't have to worry about the songs of what you're actually playing and just think about the song.

HR 17:22

Alright, that's me. Thank you very much.

Werner Spies (bassist)

2021_03_31_Werner Spies Interview

(https://www.icloud.com/iclouddrive/01qBkbJvm2IGH-
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Wed, 4/7 12:06PM • 1:19:04

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

playing, comping, bass player, solo, soloist, drummer, piece, performance, bass, part, trio, question, groove, charl, support, harmonic, rhythmic, colleagues, stage, piano

SPEAKERS

Werner Spies

WS 00:03

This in now 31 March 2021. My name is Werner Spies and I am doing this interview as part of the research, my own research in terms of my Master's in Musicology with Professor Marc Duby. And these are interview questions in support of the research. I've prepared these questions and all of these questions were sent to my sample group which are members current and previous members of the Charl du Plessis trio. They are Charl du Plessis, Hugo Radyn, Peter Auret, and myself.

WS 01:02

I will read the questions before each one is answered. And this will be in conjunction or transcribed when all the interviews are received, I'm doing this interview without any knowledge or without having heard any of the answers from any of the other participants. So I believe that my own answers in this regard are independent and not informed by any of the responses from the other participants. It is 10:15 in the morning, and I'm at my home in Sunnyside, Pretoria.

WS 02:03

Question one: What instrument do you play in the trio?

WS 02:08

I play double bass, mainly double bass and bass guitar.

WS 02:17

Question two. What made you choose this instrument? And how many years have you been playing?

WS 02:28

I chose initially bass guitar and then later on double bass. I think I really enjoyed making music. When I was in high school, I played in a garage band with a couple of school friends of mine, I really wanted to join the band. And they were short of the bass player as the story goes in many instances. So I was playing some basic guitar at that stage. But then because there was an opening in the band, I could then volunteer to play bass. Luckily at the school, there was an old bass guitar that was lying around there and I could sort of try out on that and then later, save money to buy my own instrument. Later on, I decided to go and study music, but maybe what actually drew me to the instrument as well was the fact that I could be onstage and perform with the band and feel that I've made a contribution to the performance etc., but actually be a little bit in the background. I think I don't particularly like to be the centre of attention in a situation. I don't like the situation where everybody is only looking at me to entertain or to be the focus of a situation. I think I prefer it to rather play a more supporting role not necessarily be (focus)... but rather see what I can do to support somebody else being in the limelight. So I think that has definitely attracted me more towards being part of the rhythm section than being an outright soloist. Maybe it was also because the notes are slower. I was never great at playing that fast. But that could just be a side implication if I can put it like that.

WS 05:27

I've been playing double bass since. Sorry, question. It's still part of question two. I've been playing double bass for the past a 18 years, I started to play double bass when I just left school. In the year that I turned 19, which was 2003. I've attended the Ernest Mothle... I studied with the South African

bass player Ernest Mothle, initially at the Vusi Mahlasela Music Development Foundation, which was situated at the South African State Theatre. Subsequently, I did my audition to be accepted at the TUT School of Music. And there I did my four year studies and completed my BTech: Music degree at the end of 2007. Since then, I've been mainly working and playing as a freelance musician or freelance bass player in various stage productions and various bands, but mainly, since 2006 as part of the Charl du Plessis trio as the bass player in that trio.

WS 07:07

Question three, how would you describe your role as instrumentalist in a trio?

WS 07:18

I think my role as a bass player is first and foremost to be the foundation of the harmony of a given song that we are playing or at any given instance. Then together with laying the foundation of that harmony comes creating, the groove and the rhythmic foundation, of the music, in conjunction, and in collaboration with the drummer. Very often, there is, quite a significant if I can put it a symbiotic relationship between the bass part and the drum part. I wouldn't necessarily say between the drummer and the bassist, but definitely between the roles. I would say that the role is in a way, a supporting role. So, the bass very rarely plays the melody or takes the lead in a trio situation. So, it mainly has to do with, in a way setting the scene for the rest of the band or for the for the soloist or the instrumentalist playing the melody. And in our trio's case, that would be the piano or the pianist. And... I think yes, it establishes that rhythmic foundation as well as a harmonic foundation. Depending on the style it could be, and the tempo that the band plays, the harmonic complexity of the bass part can be more, or less intricate, but it is always virtually a combination of starting out with the root and then outlining the rest of the chord or the harmonic qualities ... doing that by emphasising certain guide tones or chord tones to establish that harmonic context in a piece.

WS 09:52

Question four is: Would you say this is a supporting or leading role? And why?

WS 10:02

I would say it is, in the majority of the instances a supporting role as it very often... Very often the soloist, will base... not base, their solo on what I'm playing, but very often react to that or layer their playing or their solo on top of what I'm playing. So it could be that I'm supporting, giving, establishing the harmonic and rhythmic environment for the soloist to perform in. So in that way, I would say that it's a supporting role, it's no use for the bass player to play all kinds of erratic grooves or kind of melodic fills in a sense where the piano player is just trying to play through the form. So I would say, first and foremost, it should clearly state... the bass player should clearly state where we are in the form. So if the soloist or the pianist maybe lays back or keeps quiet for a moment or so or for some reason lost his place here in the form of the tune, then it should be quite, hopefully, easy for the soloist to hear, or to listen to the bass. And then find out where we are within the harmonic structure. So in that way, it's definitely supporting role, it can be a leading role in the cases where the bass player is playing solo. And the piano player and drummer then becomes [sic] or forms [sic] a comping unit for the bass player's solo. And then they will react to the bass player's solo, but I think the bass player can also be a leading role, perhaps in a solo section or in a section where a bass player might introduce a new idea whether it's stating a small little rhythmic figure during a solo section or placing certain accents, somewhere within the solo form. And perhaps the soloist will pick up on that. Or somebody else comping in the group will pick up on that. And so that could indicate some new direction. All new ideas does [sic] not always come from only the soloist. New ideas within a solo section can also sometimes, I would say, come from the bass player or another member from the rhythm section playing a comping role.

WS 13:28

Question five: Think of the other two musicians in the trio and the instruments they play. What do you think they are... Excuse me. What do you think are they expecting to gain or hear from you during the performance of the song at a concert?

WS 13:48

I think my colleagues definitely expects [sic] to hear the root at the start of the bar. And in time, that is I would say the most fundamental part is playing a consistent bass foundation in a piece. I think, because the fact is that everything the audience and the rest of the band hears are always heard in relation to what the bass plays is that it's the first priority of the bass player is to establish

the root of the harmony for the rest of the band to hear what's happening. And then after that, I would say comes the time feel, but in a way, as long as the bass player is setting the consistent harmonic foundation for the band, I would say that's the first priority. I think they would like to hear some sort of harmonic propulsion and harmonic movement are all not harmonic movement, excuse me, rhythmic movement to give them, or the pianist to play against that. That groove that the bass player is playing, whether it's a swing tune or piece with a Latin American groove, bossa nova or samba, perhaps, or it could also be a more contemporary groove, something with more of a funk feel, perhaps. But in essence, I would say my colleagues expect a consistent groove that is, in a way, to a certain degree, predictable, not necessarily boring, I would say predictable, but with expected or allowed variation. So I could be playing a certain groove. And because it's sort of predictable, they can also plan what they want to play on top of that. I would say I would allow for a certain number of variations, maybe every couple of bars do a variation on that groove. Just to indicate a new section or the end of a musical phrase.

WS 17:03

I think the drummer will expect me as the bass player to really lock in with what he is playing. Locking in does not, in my opinion, does not necessarily mean playing, for example, if it's a swing tune playing exactly what the kick drum or what the drummer is playing but definitely synchronising it rhythmically. So in a swing tune, that would definitely mean that I would link up very nicely with the drummer's ride cymbal pattern. But on a Bossa Nova tune, it could also be that we are just really in sync with playing where the downbeat is stated. So I would say that's something that the drummer would expect from the bass player, I think the drummer expects the bass player to further support and emphasise the tempo and the rhythmic feel of the piece. I think the drummer can also expect the bass player to support him when doing certain rhythmic fills. It doesn't necessarily mean that the bass player should play the fill in unison with a drummer, especially if it's an improvised fill, but the bass player can perhaps either simplify his note choices during that scenario, or he can give the drummer literally a break. When he wants to play a fill or just tries to phrase with the drummer. As soon as the bass player picks up, that drummer is doing a fill, then he can decide whether he wants to aim to, do the fill with the drummer or whether he's

going to just for example, pedal the root of the chord and then to create some space for the drummer to do that fill.

WS 19:34

If I can just come back to what the pianist expects or what I think the piano player expects, I would expect that the piano player if I'm thinking of a swing tune, expects me to play consistent walking comping bass-line and then also without getting in the way of his musical ideas, I would say that by playing a consistent groove, it sets the scene for the pianist. But then later on, perhaps, when the when the pianist is, in fact really getting into his solo, to then also support that solo, for example, when there are crescendos or decrescendos, or try and match that intensity from the from the bass player, or the bass part to match the intensity of the piano part. I would say that would aid in the support. I don't think it's necessary to always copy exact little rhythmic figures, I think that can sometimes prohibit a new idea from forming. Very often, it could also be that, for example, the piano player might just play a little figure, but then if everybody else copies him, it actually takes the time away for that musician to then introduce a new idea. So, yeah, I think that's pretty much what my colleagues expects [sic] from me.

WS 21:35

Question six, does the mentioned the expectation from your colleagues inform your own way of playing? How?

WS 21:48

I would say it does inform my way of playing that being a bass player, I think I'm very often, shall I say as I stated earlier, in support of other musicians. So I do think there is a lot of self-regulation and awareness, from what I play. Awareness about my own note choices — how that will be experienced by my colleagues. I think if their expectations did not inform my own choices, then I would be perceived as being quite brash, I would say or, unsensitive [sic] and I don't think that fits well with the responsibilities of me as a bass player. So, I would definitely say that it is a balance between finding my own voice and putting my own stamp on the piece, versus just playing a mechanical algorithmic bass part. Because if there was no room for personality in a way, then we can all just live with synth basses and drum machines and just go out and do a gig with a

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mechanical backtrack and just try and interact with that. So I would definitely say that my colleagues' expectation does inform my way of playing. So I try and match what I play on my own note choices with what they are playing or what I think they expect of me. And that could be either depending on whether it's the start of a piece or during an intense solo section, that could be holding back rhythmically or harmonically or just really engaging and, you know, maybe playing more complex material or more complex rhythmic figures, etc. So, I think it is definitely a balancing act in that way.

WS 24:49

Question seven. Think of what you are hearing from your colleagues during a performance. What is it you expect to hear from each of them?

WS 25:12

.... First of all, I expect to hear them to play the right notes. But I think in terms of the piano player's role with Charl is that I think I take my lead from him in terms of... setting the tempo you know, and very often take dynamic cues from the piano. So I try to match the dynamic level and intensity with it. It's no use the piano is trying to play something quite delicate and soft and then me on the bass just comes in and bashes through notes, I think I definitely expect to hear the dynamic lead being set by the piano. I think in terms of when I'm playing a solo and Charl is comping for me, I expect a solid rhythmic feel coming from the piano, and also, I would say, a predictable comping rhythm. If he is comping for me. I think the bass player very often provides that for other soloists. It's very often the case where as soon as there is a bass solo, then suddenly the whole band stops playing. And the bass player in a way has to try and carry both the energy and the tempo and play against that all in one go. So I think, for me, what is great is if I hear a predictable, rhythmic comping style, or comping groove during a solo, it gives me the freedom to maybe take incorporate more space in what I'm playing with, so that I can still easily hear where the downbeat and where the harmonic changes fall. I think that's perhaps a weakness in my own playing, I would say, if everybody drops out then sometimes I start to second guess where the downbeat might fall because I might not have been paying such close attention, because I was perhaps focusing more on a melodic idea. So I think it really helps me as the bass player when the pianist gives me solid harmonic reference points during my own solo. I think I can say the same from the drums. I think

definitely during a comping scenario, I expect to hear the drums also play a supporting role I expect the drums to not necessarily adapt and play with me, but I think we do need to be well synchronised and I think in the solo section, I also do need to get a consistent comping feel from the drums. I don't always enjoy absolute space and then with only melodic or rhythmic commentary on what I'm playing, but I prefer having a set sort of comping bed, if I can put it like that.

WS 30:37

Question eight is, when performing during the concert, do you view your own contribution as playing a specific predefined part, newly conceived part or a reaction to what your colleagues are playing?

WS 30:57

I think in our case, in a way, is a combination of the of the three. ... If everything was a reaction all the time, then we would end up with something more akin to what is regarded as free jazz, which I don't think we are at all. We very often perform pre- or set arrangements of pieces. So I think that is in contrast with a trio like (to a certain degree) the Keith Jarrett trio, or Brad Mehldau trio where I think very often, it's much more the trio is playing a standard in a much more head arrangement type of way, where it might be more open ended to the length of solos, as well as the solo order. and possibly even the introduction and endings. I think in our case, because we very much perform or have been performing arrangements, and versions of classical or opera pieces that we have a set way of an introduction and head or theme of the piece. And then very often I would say the majority of the pieces, there is a solo section that is thematically based on what we've been playing up to that point. Sometimes it might be a new composed solo section. But nonetheless, I would say that, especially within the head and the introduction of the piece before the solo section starts. My part is to a degree predefined. Very often we have set of rhythmic patterns, and set notated patterns. Mostly if that's not the case, then I would say I have a comping part that I play meaning that I have certain chord symbols or a harmonic structure that I follow. I still have the luxury or authority to choose my own way of playing that or my own voicings of those chords. So once again, it's not 100% newly conceived right at that point in time, I'm playing the harmony as predefined by the arrangement. But that then continues into the solo section. I don't think in our style of playing we have moments where we often venture out of the harmonic

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structure of a piece. We do have open ended solo sections or solo sections where there is space for improvisation by a soloist, and then the soloist will then rotate, or who the soloist is will rotate. But that is also once again within a pre conceived solo, or harmonic structure for the solo section, I don't think we ever really abandon the structure completely in that way where we just throw it up in the air and then see where it lands.

WS 36:05

I think we're a little bit more conservative in in that regard, which I do think audiences enjoy. I think there is, I suppose, a commercial element to that, but people enjoy coming to see the concert. So yeah, I don't think in terms of my own comping style, yes I do react to what my colleagues are playing as stated in the previous answers. I would say, yes, I do react to what they are playing, and that also comes from closely listening to what they are playing, but my reaction is still informed by how I'm bound by the given harmony. It's not that I totally abandon my preconceived framework in which I operate. For instance, whether it's melodic or rhythmic, I would react to what Peter or Charl is playing I would still, perhaps, phrase something with them but still keep within my harmonic framework, if I can put it like that. I think the most obvious reaction to what colleagues are playing could also be dynamically. ... It's important, I think, for the whole group, to match the leader's, dynamic intensity. So if the leader or the soloist is really building towards the climax, or playing really loudly, I would say that it's important for the band to support that. Otherwise... it just won't be very convincing, I suppose, if only one person does something. So I suppose there is strength in numbers if I can put it like that.

WS 38:51

In terms of our jazz tradition, we mostly try and play things at a consistent tempo. That really gives everybody an opportunity to improvise when you know there's a consistent or set tempo. That's maybe in contrast with classical orchestras, where the conductor very often has the liberty to push and pull the tempo for dramatic effect. I wouldn't really say the soloist has the luxury to push and pull the tempo but yes, if the tempo does change a little bit, yes, then I have to react and make adjustments in that regard.

WS 40:05

Question nine, if suggested that certain acts from your colleagues can be seen as creating a more, or less positive environment for you to perform in, what are the actions that you can take to increase the positive aspects in a given playing environment?

WS 40:34

I would say that, first of all, knowing the work, I think being comfortable with my own part, so that I can perform my own part with confidence, without having to rely on somebody else in the band, to carry me through in a way. Whether it's a difficult or a complex figure that needs to be played or complex groove or whatever the case may be. I think the more comfortable and confident I can be in my own part will give me the opportunity to then have the bandwidth to pay attention to what they are playing and perhaps either maybe make slight adjustments in my own playing or in my own part to just get the rhythmic synchronicity as tight as possible. And you know, as I say, the the better I know my own part, then the more attention I can actually give to my colleagues, and to listen out to what they are playing and react to what they are doing. I think if I'm constantly the one struggling or being so obsessed about my own part then my own attention span will really narrow to a degree where I can only focus on my own part. And then in a way be a little bit cut off from what's happening around me. So I would, I would say my first step would be to really know my own part well. And then yes, I would say other actions that I can take is to really also be open to what's happening around me. That is really on stage, literally, looking around and making eye contact with my colleagues. It really helps a lot. Or even just looking at somebody else, even if they're not looking right back at me. But whoever is the soloist, I really find that it's much easier for me to react whether it's a rhythmic way or just emphasising a new creative idea or a new phrase if I look at the person who is actually the soloist at that time. So whether if it's Charl playing piano and it's his solo, I would try and mainly focus my attention visually at him while he's playing. I think there's a lot of cues that I can pick up on, or something in his posture or body language while he's playing. That will give me a clue as to what his intentions are behind what he's playing. If I haven't memorised the solo section, yes, I still need to look at the chord changes, etc. And then now and then just look at Peter who's playing with me or Hugo. But mainly for me, it would be to look around and make sort of visually confirm that we're all you know, heading towards the same place. Or that we're all trying to support the same musical idea that is created by the group or

musical product, if I can put it like that. Very often I find that it helps for me to also check in with Peter, maybe at the end of a section in a piece. He might be doing a drum fill or something, but it just helps to keep that sort of channel of communication open, you know. So if I say "check in" maybe just look in his direction, because very often, when I look towards him, I find that he's already looking back at that stage. Not necessarily waving arms, etc. But just acknowledging, visually sort of that we are happy with what's going on. I would say to further the positive aspects that I can do is to not play too rhythmically or harmonically abstract parts. I think that will increase the positive environment, you know, not trying to play something that somehow shouts that I'm trying to seek the attention here. So I would definitely try and keep on playing that supporting role.

WS 47:45

Question 10? How can you contribute to increase the positive environment for your colleagues?

WS 47:51

I would say, it is definitely important to create a positive environment or a great vibe, especially during a concert and a rehearsal. And that's very often sometimes trying to make a little joke, trying to keep it light. I would say definitely arriving on time, and being punctual and all of that. In terms of knowing my part for the concert, or parts that I'm expected to play. I think that all supports the end result. I think, you know, arriving at the gig with all the correct stuff, being very punctual, I think, still adds to the positive environment. If I can put it like that: a positive atmosphere for the gig. I think it might be common sense, but to really to treat everybody in the in the trio with respect and good manners. Always. I think it's very difficult to try and have a good time on stage if offstage you're in some kind of fight or not even, but just that you're not sensitive towards the other person. So I would say you won't have a great atmosphere onstage if one of the band members is always (or sometimes) arrives late or is unorganised at the start of the gig, or there's all kinds of technical difficulties. I think that really heightens the tension, you know, during the performance, because you're constantly reminded of what could go wrong. So I think it's important to really, on the day of a concert, or even just in general in your playing life, is to really think that a performance is not only just the three minutes or five minutes, that a piece is long during that concert, but it actually has a much longer preamble in a way. You know, from the previous day or previous week's rehearsal, and how things went, and the attitude during the rehearsal, to all the transport or

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logistical arrangements. Just getting things flowing in that way that when you do arrive on stage, that everybody is still friends or that there's not all kinds of hang ups or logistical issues that first needs to be sorted out or all kinds of all kinds of little glitches. I would say if you can minimise the amount of glitches in the in the run up to a performance, all of that together adds to the atmosphere that you find onstage during the performance.

WS 52:47

Question 11 Can you describe your experience of the process from initial rehearsal to performance?

WS 53:01

We normally rehearse at Charl's house. He has a very nice rehearsal studio with actually two decent pianos. And I have a little bass amp that I can leave there so it's a rehearsal environment that we are well acquainted with. We've been rehearsing there for a number of years. And I would say normally Charl does most of the arrangements, being the artistic leader, or artistic director, it being his trio. So, quite often, Charl sends us some material to look at before the rehearsal. So very often, we can check out and practice our individual parts, or at least get acquainted with some of the melodic ideas or you know, some notes to learn or phrases etc. In my part, as a bass player, I don't always play the complete melody but very often, I have certain little solo sections within the piece. So I would look at that at home. And then our rehearsal process is very often a case where we would get together with that and then just have a read through where we would literally just say, Okay, let's just try and play through this and Charl would count it in and we would give it a bash, see if we can get through the form etc.

WS 55:09

Very often, we will stop and start and discuss the type of groove that's most fitting for this piece. We'll workshop it a bit, meaning that we'll say, for example, okay, we have groove A or groove B, we'll play through the piece with groove A then play through the piece with groove B, then try and make a collective decision as to which one works better. A / B testing of that sort is really quite often a work method that I feel works well. Sometimes I would play a piece on electric bass or I would play a piece on double bass and we would see which is the better fit. And that goes for types

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of grooves, even certain registers on the bass, in terms of comping, a certain introduction or a certain section of the piece, if there's a notated bass solo in which register does it fit well, and then stop and start and decide how that would work out the best. Very often we will do that. Once we've done all the little A/B testing, we'll run it again to see what works well for a solo section. And then run a couple of solos over that, maybe discuss what type of comping the soloist will need or prefers in a piece. Very often, I would say, Charl prefers a more open or sparse way of comping at the start of a solo section — that will give some space to develop musical ideas and not necessarily be forced into a specific approach. And then we will do that for Peter, and myself. If we were rehearsing for a performance, we might go back home, look at that again, each on our own, and then come back and have another rehearsal, and then hopefully can still remember what our decisions was and then see with that time that passed, whether the choices we made on the day is actually still a valid choice. Whether those choices still work in a musical way. I would say that's pretty much our rehearsal process. On the day, for a concert, we very seldom change a lot of the decisions that we made during the rehearsal. I think very often for pieces, we will set the solo order for a piece. We'll agree to who will be the first soloist and the second soloist or whether there'll be three solos or just one solo or sometimes we play certain arrangements with no solos, then it's just a set piece that's being played. But I think once we arrive at the concert performance, then those questions, most of them are answered. And then it's just up to us to really do our best in terms of the performance and then, hopefully, have a great soundcheck and then positive performance. And with, you know... fantastic solos.

WS 1:00:28

Question 12 What would you say are instances where your actions can detract from a successful group performance?

WS 1:00:42

I think an instance where this can detract is [sic] instances where I could perhaps not be well enough prepared, and maybe during the public performance, still too much obsessed about my playing my own part correctly, not losing my place in the music, not paying attention to what's going on around me. So, I would definitely say that, if it happens, that I'm not as prepared as I would have wished, that it then becomes difficult to really contribute a lot to the collective effort

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of the trio. I can maybe sort of get through it within the supporting part of my job or of my responsibility in the trio. But I think it's difficult to then go above and beyond that. If any musician or if I really know my part well then it becomes a lot easier to move away from the written part or the sheet music or the lead sheet that we are following to then contribute and see whether there are sort of creative opportunities around. So I would definitely say obviously going with unpreparedness, or ill preparedness. I would say that's the main contributing factor. I think other factors could be where there's a technical issue, in terms of sound balancing, etc. But that's not that's not so common. As we very often play in a fairly acoustic setting where we are mic'd up a little bit, but very often our stage monitoring is actually just acoustic. Meaning that I would hear the piano acoustically and the drums acoustically because I stand between them instead of having a complete stage monitoring system.

WS 1:04:05

Question 13 are they instances where the actions of your colleagues detract from the success of the group's performance?

WS 1:04:22

I think there could be. If any of the any of my colleagues are perhaps less prepared or not prepared enough. I think that will detract from the success. I would say it could also be whether any of the members myself included are in a way, cutting off or isolating himself from the rest of the trio. Whether it is that by way of posture or just not really during the gig, maybe just really being self-involved in his own instrument or own part and not giving the impression that he is (and that could be the drummer or the pianist) is not really listening to what the rest of the other two of the trio is playing. I think that very often that happens, or that can happen, where somebody is under a lot of stress, maybe from it being a significant performance, or something of the sorts. Where the first priority is very often where I just want to play the correct notes on my part, but almost in doing that, I'm cutting myself off from the rest of the band. So I would say sometimes, if one of my colleagues is too self-obsessed, in his part, that he's playing, that then it makes communication on stage, or just having that eye contact, the general sense of cohesion, where we feel that we are all, you know, on the same team or we are all performing with the same goal in mind, it becomes

difficult to have that sense or that atmosphere. And that shared, shared responsibility and shared purpose on stage.

WS 1:07:22

Question 14. Can you describe your experience of a performance where the group did not function? Well? What do you think led to this situation?

WS 1:07:53

I think for us a recent challenge was a case where we had to do a recording in in a venue that was not acoustically as suited for us as it could be. It wasn't ideal. And we had a lot of timing issues between the three of us. So I would definitely say that wasn't an ideal performance for us. We struggled with synchronising our sense of time. And in a way I don't think we initially realised that the difficulties we were having were because of the monitoring issues that we had, meaning that we couldn't properly hear ourselves. The room was acoustically so live that it was difficult for both Peter and myself to hear the tempo that Charl set, and then we reacted to that (tempo), but it was in a way a delayed reaction. So Charl constantly thought that we were just behind the beat. And then it really led to a situation where we tried to as a group, we each tried to compensate for this difficulty, but in a way just made matters worse, you know, so at some stage, we were able to remedy the problem which really picked it up. But I think that was a great illustration of a scenario where, in a sense, where we had a problem and then each person almost did his best in his own part, you know, trying to emphasise his own part. But in a way that worked against the collective goal in a way. So, I would say that was, for me, that was a situation where, where things didn't go well.

WS 1:10:55

And yeah, I think the logistical difficulties there... And then once again, that also then sort of snowballed into our positive attitudes etc. It really took a bit of a knock, you know, because we were really in a bit of a slump. So, it was quite difficult then, with that atmosphere, almost hanging over the day to then — even once the logistical or the technical difficulty was resolved — then we still had this, you know, emotional baggage to deal with, you know, with a lot of self-doubt. Sometimes, even though there's a logistical or a technical issue you're not necessarily aware of that

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immediately and you start to doubt that it's actually your own ability or your own way of playing that's causing the problem.

WS 1:12:29

So I think, if we had to remedy that, it would have been better or more quickly resolved if we could rectify that problem sooner than trying to live with it and play through it. But then, in the process, we actually dug ourselves in deeper into a hole.

WS 1:13:16

Question 15. Can you describe your experience of a performance where the group did function well? What do you think led to this situation?

WS 1:13:38

I think during the last year, I think there were two instances. One in the year that Hugo Radyn was still playing the trio. I think that year, we actually toured quite a lot. And we had a lot of performances with the same material or same programme that we performed. And I think the repetition of playing through that set, really gave us the confidence to maybe push ourselves creatively a little bit more or, you know, taking more risks during the performance. I think just because we knew the material really well, I think in a similar way, last year, in March of 2020, we performed at an Arts Festival in Stellenbosch. In the Endler Hall, which is a great auditorium for, well, mostly classical music, but we just performed acoustically, if I remember correctly. So we just had a piano, bass, and drums setup. I played bass guitar at the concert. But I think in terms of the atmosphere, we had quite close knit set-up on the on the day. Our instruments etc. were quite close together. I think that adds to a sense of cohesion for the band, it's difficult to play when everybody's really far apart. Especially trying to synchronise intricate rhythms or small, little millisecond grooves. And we really had a great gig. So I think the fact that we had great sound, I mean, in the venue. And we knew the material. Well, we just came back from also from another tour, or it was just off the back of a little tour that we did, I think we were really confident in the in the material that we played and it was just the fact that we were spending a lot of time together. So we were quite comfortable with each other's presence. I think that is a major contributing factor to people also getting along well on and off stage. And I think that we didn't necessarily feel that

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we had to go out and in a way, prove some big thing to someone on the day, I think it was an important gig for us. But I think we had enough confidence just to enjoy it. And I think we played well on the day. And yeah, I think we all we all played with a positive attitude. And that really supported the great vibe on stage where you would have felt that you're there to support your colleagues and they're there to support you. And I think, without being overly dramatic, I think that's the great joy of playing in a trio like that. Where it really goes in all in all directions. It's great to support your colleagues, but it's great that they support you and it's fun all around. And I think that's the end of the interview. It's now 10 to 12

1:18:56

Okay, cool.