

Resonant Bodies Festival, 2018

Parallel Composition

Parallel composition is the name I have given to the practice of placing two or more compositions alongside one another in the one performance context. The compositions do not require the other in order to be complete, but serve as complete works in their own right. Bringing them together into the same context can set up infinite possibilities for potential audience readings of their relationship to one another, or their offering to the whole work. One audience member may draw certain parallels and make connections between the works, while another may perceive other connections, or none at all. Presenting these works together sets up the potential for multiple perceptually unique experiences by suggesting, through their coexistence, that they may be connected.

I first thought about the powerful interpretive potential of this practice after [a performance of mine of Morton Feldman's Three Voices](#) at an art gallery a couple of years ago. I had been performing in front of a huge abstract painting, but had mostly been unaware of this. I discovered after the show that the audience, however, had been greatly affected by the visual work behind me, in very unique and interesting ways. Each audience member I spoke with told me about what the combination of the music with the painting was invoking for them in their imaginations; some were literally starting to see parts of the painting 'come to life' in various narratives, while others remarked upon the influence of the painting on their personal interpretation of the musical material. It was quite striking and beautiful to me how uniquely personal these recounts were, and I knew I needed to explore this as a deliberate compositional aspect in further works.

Elia Bosshard and I are realising our shared fascination with parallel composition in our upcoming show for Resonant Bodies Festival at Carriageworks. Myself and pianist Jonathan Holowell will perform a longform improvisation in front of a large-scale sculptural installation by Bosshard which embraces the unique scale of the performance space, while offering multiple perceptual perspectives through the incorporation of lighting. It will be a continuation of Bosshard and my explorations into the combination of musical performance with design. The improvised performance will be spontaneously formed by instinctive responses to the show's visual, kinaesthetic and acoustic attributes.

It interests me that, though I will sense its presence, I probably won't be seeing this sculpture during the performance as I will be facing the audience, but Jonathan will have the structure in his view due to the direction of the piano. The potential that this sets up for translation and transmission of information, between the structure and Jonathan, and between Jonathan and myself will be an exciting component to the work. The co-existence and orientation of parts onstage will serve to set up possibilities that have the potential to shape and direct both the musical performance and the audience's experience of the work.

'Ply'- performed by *Holowell* with sculptural installation 'Vertical Field' by Elia Bosshard.

September 1, 5pm Carriageworks, Sydney.