

Kent Olofsson

Composer

Teacher at the Malmö Academy of Music

Doctorate Candidate in Artistic Research at
the Royal College of Music in Stockholm

**Electronic music and sound
spatialization in contemporary
theatre performances**

Since 2009 a focus on new music theatre as a part of my research project:

- Radiophonic works
- Postdramatic Theatre
- Staged Concerts
- Composed Theatre
- Sonic Art Theatre
- ...and also classical theatre and music composition ...

Collaboration with Swedish theatre group Teatr Weimar and playwright and director Jörgen Dahlqvist

www.teatrweimar.se

Composers/Directors:
Heiner Goebbels, Georges Aperghis, Manos
Tsangaris

Directors: Katie Mitchell, Robert Wilson,
René Pollesch, Thomas Ostermeier,
Christoph Marthaler

Playwrights: Elfriede Jelinek, Sarah Kane,
Martin Crimp

Hans-Thies Lehmann

Postdramatic Theatre (1999)

(Publisher: Taylor & Francis 2006)

... is not primarily focused on the drama in itself, but evolves a performative aesthetic in which the text of the performance is put in a special relation to the material situation of the performance and the stage. Thus postdramatic theatre is more striving to produce an effect amongst the spectators than to remain true to the text. Lehmann locates what he calls 'the new theatre' as part of 'a simultaneous and multi-perspectival form of perceiving'; this, he argues is brought about, in large part, by a reaction to the dominance of the written text.

Creating....

Traditional theatre and opera

vs.

Postdramatic theatre and new
music theatre

Story as fundamental structure for organizing the
theatrical event

vs.

?

David Roesner

Musicality in Theatre. Music as Model, Method and Metaphor in Theatre-Making (2014)

(Appia, Artuad, Meyerhold, Goebbels, Mitchell)

... certain paradigms of theatre, such as mimetic representation or linear narrative have largely been rejected by the pole bearers of contemporary theatre and replaced with an astonishing variety of scenic forms and performative styles.

Musicality, I would argue, became one of the vehicles in the pluralism of solutions on this road to rejection of master narratives and their implied hierarchies.

Composed Theatre

Not a genre ...

- Organizing the theatrical event through musical principles
 - Working process, collaborative processes, changed roles

Mattias Rebstock, David Roesner

Book: Composed Theatre: Aesthetics, Practices, Processes. (M. Rebstock & D. Roesner, Eds.). Intellect.

In composed theatre, compositional thinking ... is at the heart of the creation process, articulated, for example, as an active interaction with and interrogation of musical concepts such as working with motifs and permutation, key difference criteria, musical rhetoric, rhythmical forms of shaping time, thinking in parameters such as pitch, duration, volume and timbre etc. Very often this is also expressed by making use of musical notation.

Composed Theatre is further defined as a “field of artistic practice that is situated *between* the more classical conceptions – and institutions – of music, theatre and dance” (Rebstock), it is characterized by a particular process (rather than a particular outcome), often promotes a rethinking of hierarchies between the different elements of theatre as well as the artistic roles associated with these.

David Roesner

Sonic Art Theatre

... staging a radiophonic
work ...

Indy 500 – seklernas udde

A Sonic Art Theatre piece for three actors, saxophone (alto, bass), guitar (electric, synth, banjo), percussion and electronics

Composed 2009. First performed November 2009 at Skånes Dansteater Malmö.

Concert form with costumes, lights, stage installations.



6:40 6:50 7:00

Jag vill leva så att jag ser rakt in i ljuset,
så att jag varje dag när jag vakar upp slår
upp mina ögon ser rakt in i ljuset som...

Döden som bor i hastigheten. Det är det enda verkliga. Den möjliga döden.

Det kan aldrig livet vara. Livet kan vara vara. Jag är döden och är oavbrutet, jag är det som livet inte är. Jag är livets tanke. Eller det borde jag vara. Tankens liv. Jag är det som finns när livet inte är. När livet har upphört att vara, det är jag, där är jag,

Sx.

Gtr. Byt till Variax

med stålborstar, energiskt, samspela med ljudfiler

Perc. 1

Elect.

7:10 7:20

in i ljuset, så att jag varje dag när jag vaknar upp slår upp mina ögon ser rakt in i ljuset som... Att se mig själv. Att se mig själv.

Är det enda som intresserar mig. Att komma så nära gränsen så att vi kan se varandra. Att spegla mig i mig själv. Att se mig själv. Och det krävs att man pressar sitt fordon till sitt yttersta.

alltid närvarande som dess idé, som...

Sx.

Gtr.

Perc. 1

Elect.

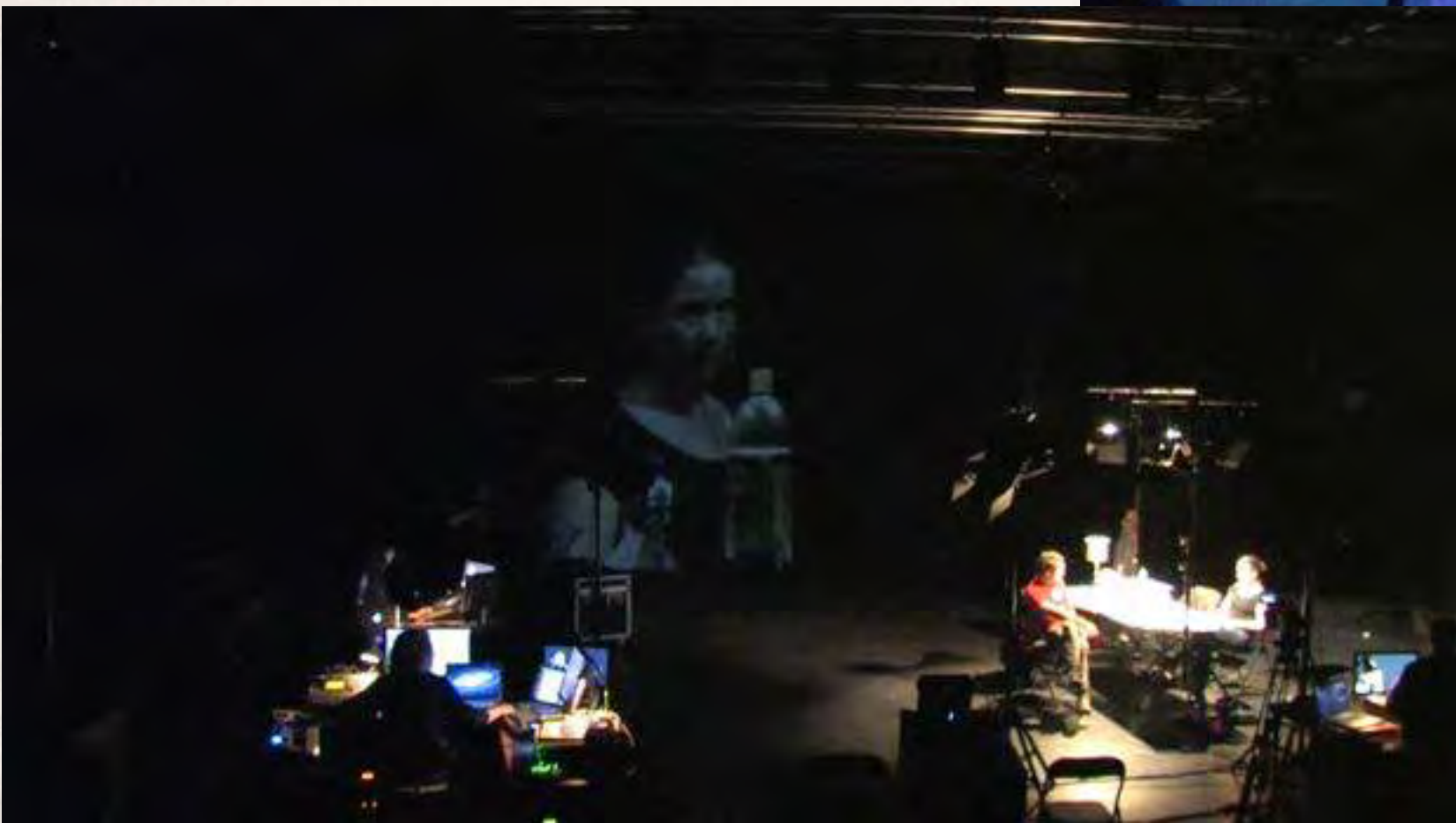
46: sfE12 47: sfE13 48: sfE14 49: sfE15

fff *fff*

Hamlet II: Exit Ghost

2010

for two actors, live electronics and live video



Hamlet II: Exit Ghost

2010

for two actors, live electronics and live video



Hamlet II: Exit Ghost



Compositional methods

Compositional methods

**Collaborations - Finding
common methods**

Compositional methods
Collaborations - Finding common
methods

Conceptual Framing

Conceptual Framing



Conceptual Framing



Conceptual Framing is the process of finding an array of ideas, themes, references, investigations and challenges that make up the frame for a new work. It is the interconnections and the relationships between all these parts that constitute the overarching concept. Furthermore, Conceptual Framing carries different functions for different stages of the creation process of a work.

Conceptual Framing

- Thematic ideas (political, historical, myths)
- Artistic ideas (music, texts, staging)
- Artistic investigations and challenges
- Other art works as references and inspiration (visual art, music, movies, theatre...)
- Given conditions, possibilities: Who are the performers? Where will it be performed? Technical limitations?

Arrival Cities: Växjö - three actors, vocal ensemble,
string orchestra, electronics, video, live filming



Conceptual Framing in Arrival Cities: Växjö

Politics: Current issues in Europe and Sweden concerning refugees, actual events

Katie Mitchell's stage works

Stage Design:
Video, placement of strings, actors, singers - movements/ formations - Video projections live and prerecorded - Film set on stage ...

Hanna Arendt: philosophy, "We refugee"

Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring (music, chords)

**Previous works
by Teatr Weimar**

Arrival Cities: Växjö
for three actors, vocal ensemble, string orchestra, electronics, video

Monteverdi, vocal music

The Rite of Spring
(the story in the ballet, the offering of a young girl)

Xenakis, musical textures

Black Sabbath:
War Pigs

The Trojan Women,
by Euripides

FÄLT

In *Fält* (Fields) we encounter a chorus of voices that revolves around the conditions of existence. The performance takes place somewhere between life and death, in a dream about something else on the other side of the field - far away from violence, heroin and glue, children getting abused, houses in ruins and the small pony toy lying around on the street waiting for a child to pick it up again. The performance is a descent into the hell that is everyday life in a war zone.

Concept:

Jörgen Dahlqvist, Kent Olofsson, Linda Ritzén, Zofia Åsenlöf, and Marcus Råberg.



...a mixture of theatre, concert, radio
play, video art, movie, performance,
soundscapes, electroacoustic
music, electronica....

Jag menar. Det är
nästan samma sak.



Polyphony

Polyphony of the elements in a
performance:
text, music, light, visuals ...

Intermedial Polyphony

David Roesner:

“...the notion of polyphony carries a sense of an autonomy of individual voices, layers, and media within a greater whole in which the structural and semantic relations can be renegotiated and form new and previously uncommon connections, hierarchies and patterns of mutual impact.”

Composed Theatre: Aesthetics, Practices, Processes. (M. Rebstock & D. Roesner, Eds.). Intellect.

Polyphony of the elements in a
performance:

text, music, light, visuals ...

Also polyphony within polyphony ...

Polyphony of Voices

Dramatis Personae in FÄLT

The writer

The journalist

The mother

The father

The young girl

The young boy

The young woman

The young man

The man

The tourist

The doctor

The mother

Please try.

The young girl

I don't want to live with dad.

The mother

Why not?

The young girl

I can't tell you.

The mother

Try to sleep. Here. You have your toys here. Make sure they can sleep. This little horse must also sleep.

The young girl

Can't you sleep with me?

The mother

I can't. You know that. You'll get sick if you sleep with me. There is no danger. You need to sleep.

The young man

What's wrong with me?

The author

The world. The story of the world. The story about me. Me.

The young man

Answer me!

The author

Me. Me. My story. My freedom. My rights.

The young man

What's wrong with me?

The man

You must run across the field. You must run and if you fall you have to get up and keep on running, even if you hurt yourself or if you're all bloody and your bones are broken you have to get up and keep on running. When you have left the woods and start running across the field they will try to find you and if they see you they will shoot you. You must run across the field. You must run and if you fall you have to get up and keep on running, even if you hurt yourself or if you're all bloody and your bones are broken you have to get up and keep on running. When you have left the woods and start running across the field they will try to find you and if they see you they will shoot you.

Polyphony of Voices

Polyphony of Situations

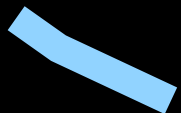
The writer



The journalist



The mother



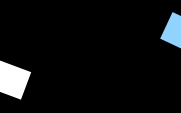
The father



The young girl



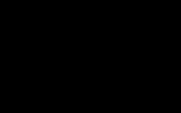
The young boy



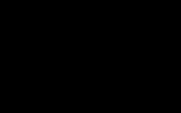
The young woman



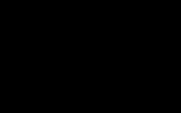
The young man



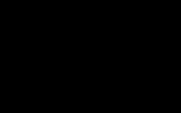
The man



The tourist



The doctor





Musical Creation - Intermedial Composition

Sound composition, tools for recording, editing sound,
doing quick sketches : Logic X (DAW)

Doing quick sketches : Ableton Live

Composing elements together (sounds, pre-recorded
voices, light, video, mixer settings), trigger system: Qlab

Composing elements together (sounds, pre-recorded voices, light, video, mixer settings), trigger system: Qlab

The screenshot displays the Qlab software interface, specifically the 'Main Cue List' window. The top bar shows the current cue, '167 - scene 10 opera', and a 'GO' button. Below this, a 'Load to time' field is set to '00:00'. The main area is a table of cues, with the following columns: Group, Number, Name, Target, Pre Wait, Action, Post Wait, and Time Elapsed. The cues are organized into a list, with the current cue, '167 - scene 10 opera', highlighted in blue. The cues include various audio files, such as 'Black', 'Haze PUMP', 'Haze FAN', and 'Du skrek och skrek', as well as actions like 'stop FÄLT 3-1 mix#1.aif' and 'Lampa 4: pedoffilen'. The interface also features a 'Done' button and a '1 Cue List' indicator.

Group	Number	Name	Target	Pre Wait	Action	Post Wait	Time Elapsed
Audio	148	Black					
Audio	149	Haze PUMP					
Audio	150	Haze FAN					
Audio	151	▼ Du skrek och skrek					
Audio	152	stop FÄLT 3-1 mix#1.aif	142				
Audio	153	Lampa 4: pedoffilen					
Audio	154	261 Ljudboll 3-3 du skrek o skrek.aif			00:41.70		
Audio	155	FÄLT 3-2 mix#1.aif			01:54.00		
Audio	156	FÄLT 3-3 mix#1.aif		00:41.00	02:23.32		
Audio	157	stop FÄLT 3-2 mix#1.aif	155				
Audio	158	Lampa 10: på gatan					
Audio	159	263 PAP du är bara barn.aif			00:01.60		
Audio	160	265 PAP inte knulla ett.aif			00:03.26		
Audio	161	267 PAP inte böga.aif			00:15.98		
Audio	162	269 PAP Ilknar henna.aif			00:03.24		
Audio	163	271 PAP här.aif			00:01.45		
Audio	164	273 PAP pengar.aif			00:02.63		
Audio	165	275 PAP inget.aif			00:05.80		
Audio	166	▼ Förlåt mig mamma					
Audio	167	scene 10 opera		00:00.00		00:00.00	
Audio	168	FÄLT 3-4 mix#1.aif			07:03.64		
Audio	169	stop FÄLT 3-3 mix#1.aif	156				
Audio	170	Lampa 10: på gatan			00:05.00		
Audio	171	279 förlåt mig mamma.aif			00:19.74		
Audio	172	278b Här. Nationalist.aif		00:20.00	00:18.90		
Audio	173	284 mix #2 Jag vill inte ha nån kondom.aif		05:05.00	00:57.77		
Audio	174	▼ Jag! JAG!					
Audio	175	JAG: JAG. Publikljus på			00:05.00		
Audio	176	scene 11 Linda snackar till publiken					
Audio	177	▼ Gör honom en tjänst					

ARRIVAL CITIES:MALMÖ (2013)

three actors, trombone, percussion,
electronics, live & pre-edited video
projections, light.



ARRIVAL CITIES:MALMÖ (2013) three actors, trombone, percussion, electronics, video, live cameras, light, staging



1. The acoustic sounds and placement on stage: actors' voices, instruments, objects ...

(example: the placement of string orchestra and actors in Arrival Cities Växjö)



1. The acoustic sounds and placement on stage: actors' voices, instruments, objects ...
2. Mono: sounds coming from one speaker, where the sound should come from.
(Voices in front of stage, placed under seats, speakers in oil barrel, pile of sub-basses as mountain ...)



1. The acoustic sounds and placement on stage: actors' voices, instruments, objects ...
2. Mono: sounds coming from one speaker, where the sound should come from.
3. Stereo: ordinary PA



1. The acoustic sounds and placement on stage: actors' voices, instruments, objects ...
2. Mono: sounds coming from one speaker, where the sound should come from.
3. Stereo: ordinary PA
4. Stereo sounds over multiple speakers:
 - a.** to gain volume and power,
 - b.** working with acousmatic diffusion techniques, eventually manually done. Acousmonium works really well.

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2. Mono: sounds coming from one speaker, where the sound should come from.
3. Stereo: ordinary PA
4. Stereo sounds over multiple speakers:
 - a. to gain volume and power,
 - b. working with acousmatic diffusion techniques
5. Surround techniques 5.1 or 7.1: requires a well-calibrated system. (Great in cinema system! ... but a lot of speakers needed for that...)

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2. Mono: sounds coming from one speaker, where the sound should come from.
3. Stereo: ordinary PA
4. Stereo sounds over multiple speakers:
 - a. to gain volume and power,
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5. Surround techniques 5.1 or 7.1
6. Ambisonics: natural sound diffusion, speakers become invisible

Arrival Cities: Hanoi

Trio of Vietnamese instruments, chamber ensemble, soundscapes, video









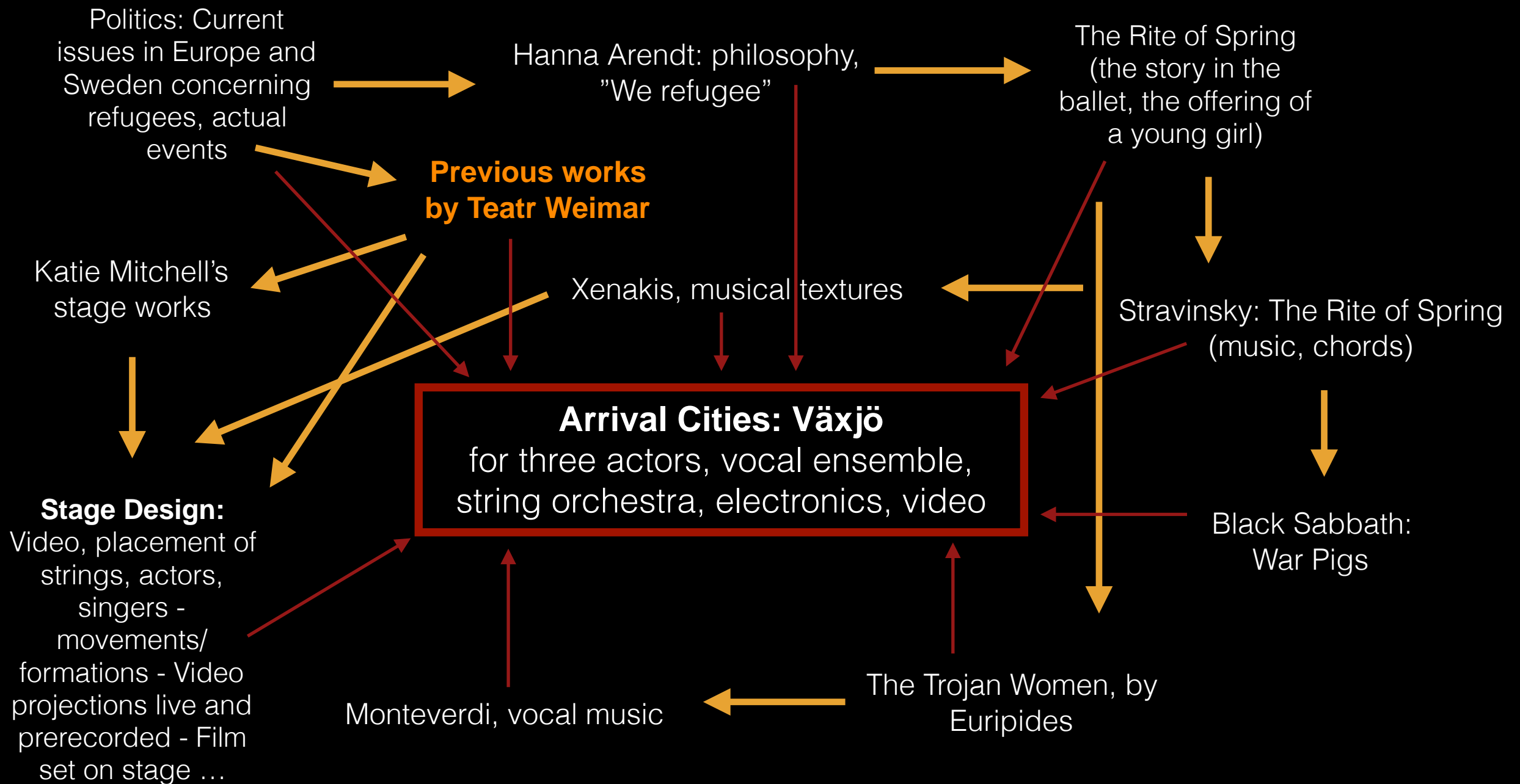
Arrival Cities: Hanoi



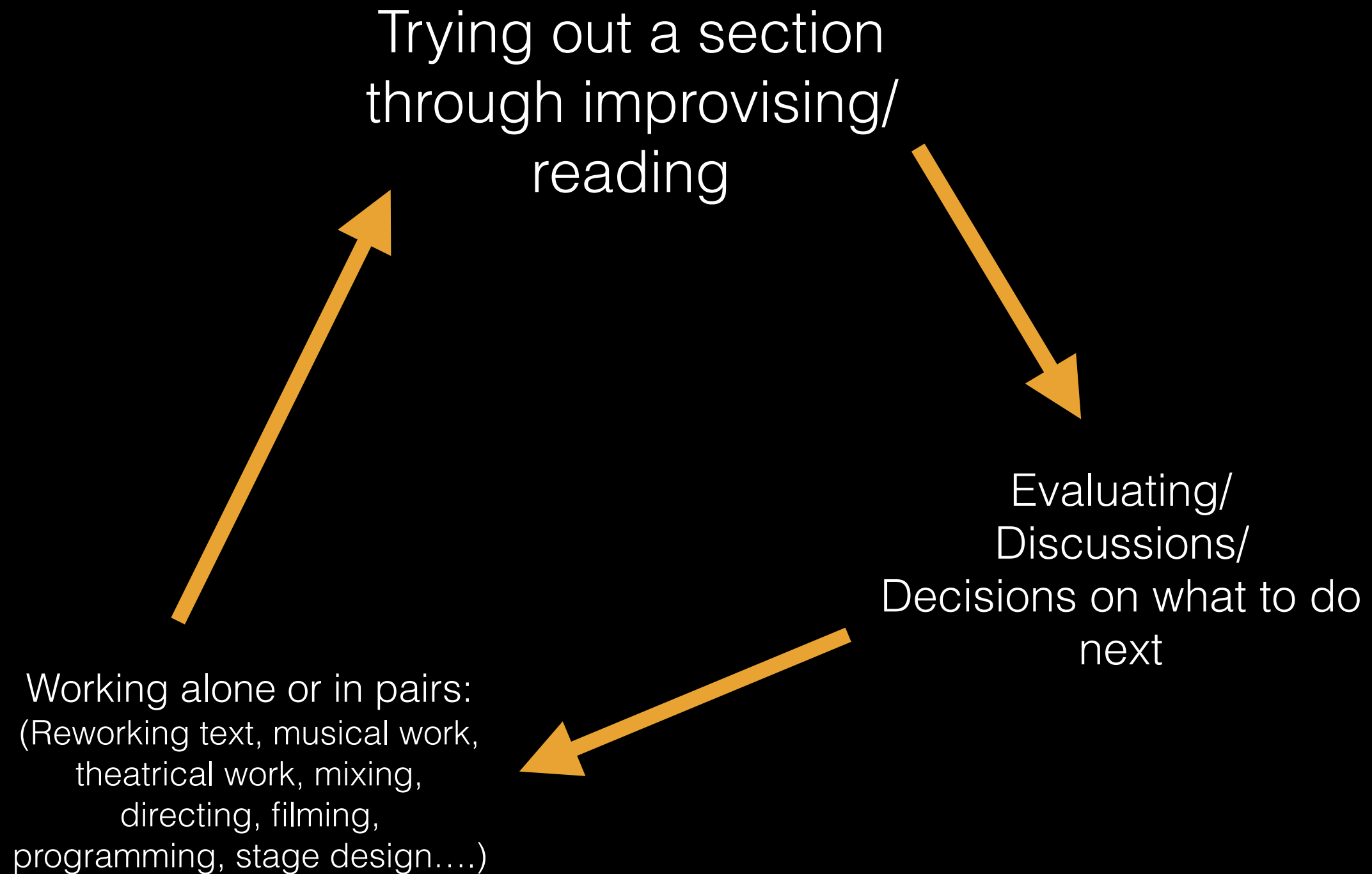
Arrival Cities: Hanoi



Conceptual Framing in Arrival Cities: Växjö, network / connections...



The Creation Loop in **FÄLT**



rehearsing FÄLT



rehearsing FÄLT



rehearsing FÄLT



Working alone or in pairs:

Linda: Acting work

Jörgen - Linda: Acting - Directing

Kent - Zofia: Song structures

Kent - Linda: Pre-recorded voices, acting - directing - editing

Zofia - Jörgen: Song texts

Zofia: Song structures

Jörgen - Markus: Stage Design, light

Kent - Jörgen: Event trigger programming in Qlab

Kent: Sound mixing

Jörgen - Linda: Filming

Jörgen: Film editing

Zofia - Linda - Kent: Musical dramaturgy in certain sections

...and so on...

Evaluating

Evaluating

From the final quarter of the twentieth century, it now seems clear that the central watershed in changing our view of what constitutes music has more to do with the invention of the sound recording and then sound processing and synthesis than with any specific development within the language of music itself.

Trevor Wishart, On Sonic Art

Musical creation

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Trevor Wishart, On Sonic Art

New Music Theatre

“In English, “music theatre” is essentially a coinage taken from the Germanic *Musiktheater*, which can refer to a building but which also come to designate a kind of instrumental or instrumental/vocal avant-garde performance associated with composers like Karlheinz Stockhausen and Mauricio Kagel. In the English-speaking world, it was first applied to small-scale sung theatre in the Brecht or Brecht/Weill tradition but it has been widely appropriated for almost any kind of serious musical theatre.”

“In short, ‘music theatre’ has come to have two opposing uses: one inclusive, the other particular and exclusive. The inclusive meaning of the term can encompass the entire universe of performance in which music and theatre play complementary and potentially equal roles.”

(Erik Salzman, Thomas Desi “The New Music Theatre – Seeing the Voice, Hearing the Body” 2008)