

# Live Versus Mediatized: The Added Value of 'Liveness' on a Music Performance



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## Abstract

*That concert is performed live is essential to its definition, particularly in contrast with non-live performances on recordings or radio broadcasts. Yet, despite the centrality of the issue, there is little research asking whether there is indeed a distinctive nature to performing live. This master thesis employs techniques of ethnographic research, analysis and qualitative interviewing to explore empirically originating understandings of how 'liveness' influences music performance from artist's perspective. The topic is highly relevant and challenging as it explores the importance of performing live as opposed to mediated performance (radio, TV broadcasts, CD recordings). 'Liveness' is a concept that applies to the theatre and music but not to the other forms of arts, such as visual arts, literature since the core of 'liveness' lies within the simultaneous presence of the artist and the audience. In terms of scope of literature in this area, this specific topic is still rather under-researched with growing interest in its relevance. Whereas there are many researchers and articles exploring 'liveness' in theatre or from audience perception, this thesis fills the niche of the impact of performing live upon the artist in the field of music.*

Live Versus Mediatised:  
The Added Value of ‘Liveness’ on a Music Performance

by  
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*Liveness became the truth of music, the seeds of genuine culture. <...> The expression “live music” soaked up the aesthetic and ethical connotations of life-versus-death, human-versus-mechanical, creative-versus imitative.*

Sarah Thornton

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction	p. 1
2. Research Method	p. 3
2.1. Qualitative Ethnography and Interviewing	p. 3
2.2. Development of Initial Criteria for Determining the Impact of ‘Liveness’	p. 5
3. Literature Review on ‘Liveness’ in Musical Performance	p. 6
4. Recorded ‘Liveness’ in the Now: Presence Transcends Time and Space	p. 11
5. Ethnographic Observation and Analysis	p. 16
6. Data Collection	p. 16
6.1. Martynas: Classical Meets Pop	p. 16
6.2. Marija Dudaite: Opera and ‘Liveness’	p. 19
6.3. Floris Onstwedder: Flight of the Dutch Bumblebee	p. 22
6.4. Alexander Melnikov and Historically Informed Performance (HIP)	p. 26
6.5. Giovanca: Pop and Power	p. 29
7. Main Findings: How TRIC Does the Trick	p. 32
8. Conclusion	p. 37
9. Bibliography	p. 39
10. Appendices	p. 43
10.1. Interview with Martynas, Lithuanian Accordionist	p. 43
10.2. Interview with Marija Dudaite, Lithuanian Opera Singer	p. 46
10.3. Interview with Alexander Melnikov, Russian Pianist	p. 48
10.4. Interview with Floris Onstwedder, Dutch Trumpet Player	p. 50
10.5. Interview with Giovanca, Dutch Pop Singer	p. 53

## 1. Introduction

Concert performance is remarkable for its element of ‘liveness’, rooted in its very definition, demarcating itself from the non-live performances on TV and CD recordings or radio broadcasts. On the one hand, there is abundant academic literature examining ‘liveness’ in performance, nonetheless, mostly in the area of audience participation studies (Phelan, 1993; Frith, 1998; Reason, 2003; Auslander, 2008). On the other hand, despite the significance of the issue, there is rather little research questioning whether there is indeed a distinct nature to performing live. Triggered by this niche in the field and lack of discourse on ‘liveness’, this thesis utilises techniques of ethnographic research combined with semi-constructed interviews with musicians to designate the **impact of ‘liveness’ on music performance from artist’s perspective**.

The topic is highly relevant and stimulating as it uniquely explores the impact of performing live as opposed to producing mediatised<sup>1</sup> forms of performance from the performer’s angle. Moreover, ‘liveness’ is a concept that applies to theatre and music but not to the other forms of arts, such as visual arts, or literature since the core of ‘liveness’ lies within the simultaneous presence of the artist and the audience. In terms of literature reviews, this topic is under-researched, there are many articles and books exploring ‘liveness’ in theatre but not in the music field. In addition, especially because the ‘liveness’ is so intensively economically marketed as compared to the mediatised performance, it even can have an impact on the behaviour of the performing artist to a certain extent (Firth, 1998). In order to bring clarity, transparency and narrow-down this thesis, it defines ‘liveness’ in music in a more traditional sense as a musical performance based on two conditions:

- 1) The *simultaneous* spatial and temporal *presence* of artist and audience
- 2) And the element of *non-take-two-ness*, or non-repeatability when performing during the delivery of performance.

In terms of structure, the thesis first grounds its theoretical framework and scrutinises striking difficulties to approaching ‘liveness’ in academic literature and reviews possible correlations between ‘liveness’ and mediatisation. What is more, in the following section it develops specific

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘mediatised’ stems all the way back from Baudrillard. Mediatisation is focused on “mass media”, a form of drawing all discourses under a unified code. Mediatisation can be applied to live performances, which become mediatised performances respectively, for example, theatre plays or concert broadcasts on television (Auslander, 2008).

criteria for assessing the importance of 'liveness' for the artist. Subsequently, the method and results of a medium-scale ethnographic observation in a live concert and a recording studio are delivered. The thesis then turns to explaining the results of the interviews conducted with five professional artists as a form of artist performance experience research. The next section connects the focal points drawn from literature review, ethnographic research and interviews delineating the impact of performing live to the artist. Finally, the conclusions of the thesis are summarised in the last section presenting major findings.

Without a doubt, this thesis faced some time and scope limitations. For instance, the extent of the ethnographic research was rather medium-scale due to twofold method of research on the impact of 'liveness': the same musicians had to be observed in live performance, such as concert, and in a mediatised milieu, in this case recording studio. A more extensive research, possibly paired with audience perception of 'liveness' could open up possibilities for a more integrated delineation of the impact of 'liveness' on performance. On the other hand, due to the subjectivity of the case, alternative ways to measure the personal experience of the artists other than ethnographic and qualitative interviewing could be applied.

## 2. Research Method

### 2.1. Qualitative Ethnography and Interviewing

Any kind of measurement in the field of social science requires a set of criteria that could be used as a reference point when drawing conclusions from research outcomes. In this thesis, the qualitative research methods were applied due to the sensitivity of the subject, to be precise, the impact of ‘liveness’ on the artist’s own performance. In its very essence, measuring the impact of live performance on a *human* performer poses a challenge: the personal perception of different artists is bound to be influenced by their personality and character. Consequently, this thesis employs qualitative research methods: qualitative ethnographic research and qualitative interviewing, which allows in-depth research under relatively easy management.

To start with, the ethnographic observation is structured in a twofold way: (1) observing musicians perform with audience (live) and (2) comparing the same artists perform during mediatised performance. In other words, same artist is observed in concert (public performance) and then in a recording studio with only technician participating. The ethical issue solved by introducing a researcher as an engineering student doing research in sound qualities of recording studios and concert halls so that the artists’ performances can be treated as mediatised and audience can be eliminated or partially eliminated or isolated as a factor (there is no possibility to completely eliminate the audience even in a recording studio, where a technician is always present and can influence the performance to a smaller or larger extent). The moment the researcher introduces oneself as a student researching her performance, one becomes audience, which can influence the artist’s performance in a recording studio. Therefore, the sound engineering student cover is used in order to directly influence the deliverance of performance of the artist. Analogically, the way it is almost impossible to completely eliminate audience in mediatisation, live performance nowadays is likewise virtually always recorded openly or secretly, whether by concert halls or audiences themselves.

Furthermore, the semi-constructed interviews are conducted after the ethnographic observation in order to determine how much the perception of the musician changes when he/she performs with or without the audience’s presence. The set list of questions for the interview have been thoroughly developed based on the criteria of ethnographic observation of the artists (elaborated on in the subsequent section) as well as literature review section. The choice for the semi-constructed interviews, i.e. verbally managed partly pre-determined set of questions, was



deliberate since they provide the essential instrument in analysing the impact of live performance from artist's perspective. Not only the semi-constructed sort was most feasible to administer, it also allowed variation in order and types of question, follow-up inquiries and elaboration by the interviewees. Overall, such integral qualitative model was reasonable and useful for the purposes of the master thesis.

Below is a list of pre-determined questions presented to all of the interviewees:

1. How long have you been performing on stage with audience being present?
2. How often do you perform concerts for public?
3. What do you find characteristic or special about performing live?
4. Do you feel any different when making a mediatised performance/recording with no public being present?
5. How does the presence of audience influence your performance? Is there any impact for your psychological mind-set or artistic or technical characteristics while performing live?
6. Regarding live performance, is there any noticeable difference in your preparation for a live versus a mediatised performance?
7. What is your personal preference: live or non-live performance?
8. To you as an artist, what is the value of live performance today?
9. Do you yourself attend live concerts as a member of the public?
10. What does the future hold for live performance? In your opinion, is it going to become more valuable than ever before or rather get extinct?

As can be observed from the order and structure of these specific interview questions, they aim to compare and contrast live and mediatised performances from the perspective of the artists, which have different performing experiences (therefore the first two questions). These questions allow to pin down the main motivations, interpretations, beliefs and feelings of the musicians at stake. The consequent step is to analyse individual perceptions and experiences of performing live and distil them in order to provide a more general overall model for the impact of performing live from artist's perspective.

## 2.2. Development of Initial Criteria for Determining the Impact of ‘Liveness’

As explained in the previous section, live performance in contrast to the mediated one can be affected by personality and individual character of the artist under observation. Therefore, the set list of criteria for measuring the impact of ‘liveness’ on a music performer is based on qualitative methods, to be precise, qualitative ethnographical observation and interviewing. The core criteria include:

- (1) Body language (i.e. any kind of non-verbal communication, expressed by physical behaviour, body posture, touch and the use of space with torso during performance)
- (2) Facial expression (eye movement and facial gestures)
- (3) Artistic approaches to gesticulation with the hands (this is specified as it is especially important for musicians, who usually use their hands when performing)
- (4) Special effects (e.g. jumping from a chair, making sounds)
- (5) Artistic and technical qualities of a performance (this criterion can be partly related to the skill level and proficiency of the musician, but in this case it specifically means the differences in the quality of musical and technical performance deliverance when playing in live or a mediated environment).

On the one hand, these were derived from the personal performance experience of the researcher as the pianist, providing several key factors that are affected during the live or recorded performance. On the other hand, Auslander’s (2008) academic discourse on theatre and ‘liveness’ were also influential in selecting these criteria to measure the impact of live performance on the musician. Even though, they stem from drama theatre perspective, they can easily be adjusted to the musical performance due to its similar *live* nature.

On the whole, the ethnographic observation has been constructed in a way to enable detection, reading and recording of stage presentation skills, such as movement, visual and sonic qualities, interaction with the surrounding milieu, artistic approach to gestures and other nuances involved in live performance.

### 3. Literature Review on ‘Liveness’ in Musical Performance

‘Liveness’ nowadays represents a powerful marketing tool, which is why many art-related institutions use it to maximise their ticket sales and attendance rates. Thom (1993), Wurtzler (1992), Auslander (2008) and Sanden (2013) all argue that the case of theatre performance specifically has been an arousing subject for many academic scholars and researchers, resulting in diverse interpretations of the significance of live performance. Furthermore, the correlation between the live and the non-live performances has surfaced as the epicentre of the audience participation research. In spite of great theoretical models, there has been relatively little practical research on the impact of ‘liveness’ on the performer, especially in the field of music. The researcher of this thesis has previously conducted a small-scale research on the audience perception of ‘liveness’ in concert performance. This thesis thus fills in the missing link in the matrix of the dichotomy between live versus mediatised form *artist’s perspective*. Having explained its research methods and measurement criteria for the data collection, it first discusses the theoretical status quo of ‘liveness’ in performance.

To begin with, Auslander (2008) has made one of the inaugural theoretical efforts in the field of ‘liveness’, which makes his work prominent and worthwhile studying in depth. He predominantly centres his writings on ‘liveness’ in the context of contemporary art culture, arguing that that the very notion of live is somewhat distorted, unbalanced and rather prejudiced (Auslander, 2008). As one of the starting points, Auslander (2008) states that the elements of ‘liveness’ are not locked in time and therefore gradually face change. In his own words,

Liveness is not an ontologically defined condition but a historically variable effect of mediatisation. It was the development of recording technologies that made it both possible and necessary to perceive existing representations as “live”. Prior to the advent of these technologies (e.g., sound recording and motion pictures), there was no need for category of “live” performance, for that category has meaning only in relation to an opposing possibility. The history of live performance is thus bound up with the history of recording media, and extends over no more than the past 100 to 150 years (Auslander, 2012, p. 3).

Just to give an illustrative example, today pervasive and prevailing mediatisation<sup>1</sup>, for instance, the use of microphones, video or sound projectors, represent a common and growing practice in a musical performance. Not only, the presence of recorded means is widely accepted, but it has also been their presence is accepted and has been successfully integrated into other live performances that concert, such a theatre or opera. Nonetheless, the blending of live with digital and recording

means in the quite recent past could have resulted in forms of antagonism or even shock (Auslander, 2008, p. 2). On the whole, it can be deduced that the term 'liveness' is by no means fixed and is continuously evolving and being constantly redefined owing to such factors as the necessity to adapt to technological progress.

Stemming from Auslander's (2008) standpoint, live performance as opposed to the non-live (mediatised) performance is commonly perceived to be of higher value. Such intrinsic prejudices emerge from diverse cultural perceptions of 'liveness' in any performance, where "the common assumption is that the live event is 'real', and that mediatised events are secondary and somehow artificial reproductions of the real" (Auslander, 2008, p. 3). Consecutively, Auslander (2008) counterattacks such arguments by confronting our today's cultural formation as "saturated with, and dominated by, mass media representations" (ibid., p. 1). Evidently, it is easily observable and acknowledgeable that mediatised forms prevail in the western contemporary performance culture nowadays. Its effects on performance unravel in contrasting ways. On the one hand, the favourers of 'liveness' argue that the key aspect of this phenomenon lies with the unique atmosphere and intensity present during a performance when both the artist is delivering a performance on stage and the public takes on the role of a spectator (ibid., p. 2). The first key point developed by Auslander (2008) on the added live of the live performance as opposed to its non-live forms, is its essential condition: the necessity of simultaneous spatial and temporal presence of both the artist and the audience while a performance takes place (ibid.). All in all, such concurrent presence of the performer and the spectator can only possibly occur during live performance making it so special and exclusive, while recordings in a studio do not satisfy this requirement.

Another argument put forward by Auslander (2008) is that live performance in its nature is not a product for the masses but rather a much more intimate experience for the audience. An interesting question could be raised at this point, namely, how does this intimacy influence the performer? There are several characteristics revolving around this term that seem to be slightly unclear or not completely accurate. Various recording techniques, for example, microphones, projectors, screens, amplifiers or recorders, surely do have an effect on the live performance. Essentially, Auslander (2008) argues that, "mediatisation is rooted within the element of reproduction, whereas live performance is virtually irreproducible, the moment it is reproduced, it converts from live to mediatised one" (p. 18). To develop this argument even more, the ephemeral element of performing live is one of causes of its uniqueness, the performance is

fragile by definition, it exists as long as it lasts, the moment the live performance is finished, it is forever gone, staying only in spectator's memory of this moment. Overall, 'liveness' in performance is unique to due to its evanescent nature and certain intimacy created by the exclusivity of non-mass-participation.

In line of the previous argument, another academic scholar Phelan (1993) should be addressed as basis for the theoretical framework of this thesis due to her contribution to the concept of 'liveness'. She states that 'liveness' in performance is essentially "representation without reproduction" (Phelan, 1993, p.146). Phelan (1993) proposes that the very definition of live performance stems from its present-ness as performance exists only in the present:

Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations *of* representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology. Performance's being, like the ontology of subjectivity proposed here, becomes itself through disappearance (Phelan, 1993, p. 146).

All in all, Phelan (1993) takes a rather negative standpoint towards the culture of mediatised performances, arguing that digital reproduction and recording of live performances eliminates or even annuls the element of 'liveness' whatsoever. In other words, she supports Auslander's (2008) argument that live performance is inherent with non-reproducibility (p. 147). However, Auslander (2008) himself does diminish the significance of mediatisation at all, especially regarding contemporary digitalised culture, rather the opposite, he argues that "live and non-live performances are not mutually exclusive rather both forms are rather mutually interdependent and live does have to be supreme to the mediatised (Auslander, 2008, p. 11).

Another aspect of 'liveness' that comes along quite obviously is its non-reproducibility. Academic scholar Boorsma (2006) argues that

Art consumers should be seen as co-producers in the total art process and advocates that arts marketing should focus on the artistic experience as the core customer value (Boorsma, 2006, p.73).

Evidently, by being a co-creator the consumer does not design the actual performance. The artistic freedom has to do with the artist. Nevertheless, the moment that the artistic idea is being shaped, is the pivotal point where the consumer steps in, playing a role in the final stages of the total art process. In other words, such contribution results in the situation where "art consumer

completes the work of art” (ibid., p. 85).

Lastly, Sanden (2013) provides a fresh and renewed perspective of the present-day ‘liveness’, arguing the concept has been transformed but is likewise flourishing more than ever before. The scope of this theorisation draws a broad horizon, ranging from the classical musicians, such as the world-famous Glenn Gould, who used to sing and stomp while performing, to the White Stripes, striving for stylistic authenticity in rock music. Even though his book “Liveness in Modern Music” is not based on any survey or experiment, the widely read author presents an eye-opening account of music in the modern. However, a slight ambiguity arises when it comes to author’s definition of ‘modern’. It does not become clear at any point whether it is ‘liveness’ in a sense of modernism, the present, or something else. Ashby (2013) takes this argument even further, questioning, “Does the author invoke the modern in terms of modernism, the contemporary, the non-traditional, the present-day, or all four?” (p. 720).

In general, Sanden’s (2013) line of thought is based on the tensions intrinsic in any form of mediatised music, human-performed sound opposed to the sonic utterances produced by machine-driven technological mechanisms. The scholar examines ‘liveness’ in mediatised music, where electronic facilitation becomes central, showing how incredibly difficult it is to disengage from the media and examine the concept of ‘liveness’ in our mediatised culture today. On the one hand, Sanden (2013) follows the footsteps of Auslander (2008), stating that nowadays live performance tends to cease presence and prominence. What is more, Sanden (2013) agrees with the dilemma raised by the latter in the debate on live being gradually more and more integrated with the mediatised:

The progressive diminution of previous distinctions between the live and the mediatised, in which live events are becoming more and more like mediatised ones, raises for me the question of whether there really are clear-cut ontological distinctions between live forms and mediatised ones (Auslander, 2008, p. 7).

On the other hand, Sanden (2013) reinforces the importance of the *human* performance in our ethos so ever deeply invested with mediatised performances, arguing that ‘liveness’ is dynamic and fluid enough and co-exist with electronic mediation, however, above all, as *human* presence within the framework of technological music intermediation. He takes one step further by assessing the influence of performing within such a mediatised milieu on the actual meaning of the music itself. By using varied examples of both the classical and popular music, Sanden

(2013) provides his account on how to infuse the importance and predominance of, first and foremost, *live* human performance in combination with mediatisation in our modern society, so overwhelmingly and preponderantly driven by technological advance.

There are advantages and disadvantages in following Auslander's (2008) legacy, whom Sanden (2013) refers to from time to time. Firstly, Sanden (2013) is essentially concerned with the role and importance of 'liveness' conveyed in the title of this book already, much more certainly and assured than Auslander (2008) he questions "why and how the word live is still used in such modern musical contexts, despite its apparent ontological inappropriateness in many of those situations" (p. 3). Secondly, an important difference between Sanden (2013) and Auslander (2008) rises with the former's dismissal of Auslander's (2008) denial of 'liveness'. In other words, to Sanden (2013), there are clear-cut distinctions between the live and mediatised performances, whereas (2008) these forms are non-ontological and rather fused.

Overall, several focal points can be derived from the theoretical literature framework section. Overall, diverse characteristics determine the nature of "live" in performance: (1) the notion of 'liveness' is non-ontological, unfixed, evolving and reactive to newly emerging developments, nonetheless centred on *human* performance, which can be assisted by electronic mediation, (2) the simultaneous spatial and temporal presence of both the *human* performer and the spectator makes a live performance unique, (3) live performance is non-reproducible and ephemeral, and (4) live performance is special due to its co-creation, the ability of audience to shape performance together with the artist. These key points drawn from thesis' theoretical framework together with the criteria to practically measure the impact of 'liveness' will be used extensively in ethnographic observation and interviewing section as well as main findings to define the impact of 'liveness' on performance from artist's perspective.

#### 4. Recorded ‘Liveness’ in the Now: Presence Transcends Time and Space

Nowadays, the cultural value of experiencing live, that is in the ‘nowness’, is peaking high. It seems as though *live* is economically more important these days than the mediated performance. There are so many scenarios, where the notion of live has been arguably transformed and adapted to our age of technology, leaving the audience with a very different experience of ‘liveness’:

Simultaneity need not be matched by physical co-presence. Liveness can be distributed across space in ways that allow audiences to gather globally without physically gathering. <...> It is not only spectatorship that has been impacted by technology, though. New interfaces and forms of networking have transformed the production of music, theatre and performance. The result is new forms of real-time intermedia interactions, the networking of remotely located performers and ever-changing forms of engagement between performer and technology, presence and absence, live and recorded (UCC Strategic Research Fund, 2015).

The following cases all illustrate how the concept of ‘liveness’ has changed in modern times:

- A. Consider a notorious rapper, appearing on a late night live television show as the guest artist presenting his brand new top single. He is accompanied by a live brass band, arguably adding some traditionalism to this live performance. At the same time, however, a well-known DJ, is launching a background beat to spice-up the rhythm of the performance using all kinds of pre-recorded materials, for instance, drum sounds, electronic music, synthesised orchestra and even a loop of mechanically repetitive and monotonous nature sound, such as a woodpecker’s drill. In the upcoming hours, a copy of this live television broadcast is uploaded online, where the links to its multiple copies are spreading like a spider web virally on the Internet, especially throughout the social media.
- B. More traditional art forms, such as opera can also score record-high, for instance, in May 2011, the New York Metropolitan Opera’s (the Met’s) series Live in HD streaming of Wagner’s “Die Walküre” was viewed by a cinema spectatorship of 175 000 people in forty countries all over the globe. The Met’s has pioneered this new form of transmitting opera live, marking its tenth anniversary season of movie-theatre broadcasts that have the arts terrain by surprise. Its most successful series Live in HD, including a Radio Program Guide, are being screened on well-over 2000 screens in approximately 75 countries worldwide. Today it is successfully followed by major operas and theatres, e.g., The



Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow, the Royal Opera in London, the Vienna State Opera and the British National Theatre just to mention a few. Undeniably, such profitable opportunities have not been unexploited in the arts as well as other fields by cinemas worldwide. The potential of live transmission and satellite broadcasts have been adapted not only to concerts, operas and theatre performances but also sports, creating an international grid of cinemas screening live.

- C. Museums are also catching up with the trends of live broadcasts: history lovers can take a video tour into the exhibitions of the British Museum in London. There are several emissions of such “private viewings” (as introduced by the museum itself), to mention but a few, “Pompeii Live from the British Museum” or the “Vikings Live from the British Museum”, which can be seen at local cinemas.

In general, as seen from all the examples above, the digital media technology today is shaping the live experiences in globalised ways never imagined before. Evidently, there are noticeable implications and consequences stemming directly from such transformations, regarding mostly the new multi-faceted practices, values and aesthetics of modern spectatorship. Regarding the scenario A., most participants of this musical performance on a late night show do perceive it as some kind of live event, regardless whether they experience it in person, on live television at the actual time of the screening, or online in the weeks or months much after the initial broadcast. The pioneers in the field of ‘liveness’, first and foremost Auslander (2008), have continually demonstrated that *‘liveness’*, or rather its perception, constitutes a non-fixed and rather fluid concept, depending on factors such as social conduct, cultural customs, and technologies to mention but a few. Sanden (2013) argues that we are living in the age where simple division between live and mediated can and should be questioned as these two rarely can be expressed in their most purest forms and frequently even blend together:

Whereas live music was once understood simply as a musical performance that was experienced in person- what I call *traditional* liveness- rather than on a recording, the current state of performance can no longer be suitably served by such a simple binary reduction (live/recorded), because many other musical contexts exist, seemingly between these poles, in which liveness plays an important defining role (p.3).

Having touched upon the issue of the non-conventionality of ‘liveness’ nowadays, it is important to put it in the context of the definition delineated in this thesis. As mentioned previously, the

two main conditions to be upheld for classification as live performances are the (1) coinciding spatial and temporal presence of artist and audience, and the (2) non-take-two-ness, or non-repeatability of such performance. Logically, Sanden (2008) states that such circumstances occur in traditional 'liveness' in its purified sense. Phelan (1993), on the other hand, would argue that live "cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations" (p.146). However, in this thesis live can embed the performances, which are not fully live, as long as there is the core element of non-take-two-ness, for example, if the live performance is televised (live broadcast or screening of the recording later), uses pre-recorded materials, or circulates on the Internet much after the initial event, this definition still sees it as a type of a live performance due the temporally and spatially continuous performance in front of an audience. This is to distinguish it from the opposite, or mediatised performance, which in its purest form typically represents a studio recording, produced after numerous hours of recording and re-recording it until polished till perfection. The diverse experience of an artist performing in these two extremes will illustratively support such understanding later on in the analysis section of this thesis.

On the whole, in the discourse between Auslander (1997, 2008) and Phelan (1993), originating in the 1990s, this thesis rethinks the performance in line with a synthesis of Auslander (2008) and Sanden (2013), as it utilises the binary distinction between live and mediatised, but evades its rigidity and allows blending to a certain extent. Evidently, rethinking is crucial in our mediatised age, in order not to overlook the essential questions concerning performance in time, space and history. It would be interesting to see, if not limited by the scope of this paper, how changing technologies and globalisation impact upon other fields of performance, such as dance or cinematography, or even beyond, for instance, sports studies. If extended further, the mediatisation of performances could likewise influence the values inherent in their delivery, whereas global access can have an effect locally, regionally and nationally upon their reception and perception in general.

## 5. Ethnographic Observation and Analysis

Academic scholars commonly define ethnographic research as ‘participant observation’ in scientific literature (McDonald, 2001; Miller, 1997). McDonald (2001) argues that this kind of ‘participant observation’ comprises the “ethnographer participating in, and observing, daily life” in the most non-disruptive way imaginable (p.78). To be precise, remaining as neutral as possible as an ethnographic observer is of major significance in conducting this type of research. From an anthropological point of view, this academic notion possesses a wider, more elaborate definition. To illustrate this with a scholarly example, Miller (1997) states that ethnographical observation consists of a “series of commitments that together constitute a particular perspective” (p.16). These commitments comprise respectively:

- I. Presence among the people under observation,
- II. Assessing “people in terms of what they actually do”,
- III. Devoting oneself to an extensive “investigation that allows people to return to a daily life that one hopes beyond what is performed for the ethnographer”, and
- IV. Involving a more ample and comprehensive perspective on people’s everyday habits and lifestyles (pp.16-17).

The reason for selecting the ethnographic approach for this thesis lies within the observational nature of this particular type of research. The root of ‘liveness’ in performance stems directly from an experience and personal insight of the performer, as explained earlier in the theoretical framework outline. To return once more to the core arguments, miscellaneous scholars have come up with several central issues attributable to ‘liveness’:

- (1) Non-fixed nature of ‘liveness’, evolving and responsive to newly emerging developments
- (2) Uniqueness of spatial and temporal simultaneity of both the performer and the audience,
- (3) Non-reproducibility and fragile ephemerality of live performance, and
- (4) Specialness of live performance owing to its co-creation, i.e. share of audience in shaping the actual performance in line with the artist.

Overall, five different musicians representing diverse musical styles (classical music, jazz and pop) have been observed and interviewed. All the research has been conducted in agreement with

the ethnographic observation model and criteria. The subsequent section provides a detailed documentation of the data collection process, which later on leads to the more analytic part of the thesis, superposing the outcomes of both ethnographic observation and qualitative interviewing. Finally, the major findings drawn from the data analysis are compared and evaluated in line with the literature review perspective leading to the consequential key conclusions of this thesis.

## 6. Data Collection: Ethnographic Observations and Qualitative Interviewing

### 6.1. Martynas: Classical Meets Pop

The first musician under ethnographic observation was a Lithuanian accordionist Martynas Levickis (stage name Martynas). Just to give a brief background dossier, Martynas Levickis is one of the most gifted young Lithuanian musicians known for his appearances on television as well as on the best professional stages all over the world. Even though his first encounters with the accordion took place at a surprisingly young age, being barely a three-year-old, he embarked upon consistent music studies at around his eight year at upon entering the S. Sondeckis Music School in Šiauliai. Today Martynas is a Bachelor graduate of the London Royal Academy of Music and has won over 30 international awards and prizes. Throughout his studies at the London Royal Academy of Music, this accordionist has also taken part in various collaborations with the top musicians and orchestras worldwide, just to mention a few the BBC Concert Orchestra, the Birmingham City Symphony Orchestra, conductor Valery Gergiev<sup>2</sup>. Martynas has also won the television competition “Lithuania’s Got Talent”, which enabled him to attract even bigger audiences and nourish growing interest in the repertory of accordion music. His debut album showed up in 2012, featuring both classical music pieces as well as famous pop music performed on the accordion.

To start with the ethnographic observation part, the concert took place at Vilnius University courtyard (open-air) in Lithuania on a Friday evening July 10, 2015. There was a lot of public (almost fully sold out) for this concert as the advertising campaign for this event was quite extensive. The ticket sales and promotion had chiefly been organised by the Lithuanian National Philharmonic. The ethnographic observation of this accordionist took place from the fifth row in the parterre. Such a relatively close position allowed me to observe not only his body language influenced by physical behaviour but also the facial expressions, and gesticulation with the hands. It felt very useful, especially for the comparison with the mediated in a studio, where one could listen to Martynas without audience being present. Other effects used during the performance, such as making sounds, dancing, jumping from a chair and so on could also be well observed during this concert. As far as the artistic qualities of a performance are concerned, it was easy to not only hear but visually observe the technical level of the musician as well as his musical personality and appeal.

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<sup>2</sup> From the Official website of Martynas.

The initial and more obvious observations stem from the individuality and strong personality of Martynas. First of all, his body posture was very convincing and self-confident. He changed the posture several times, sometimes sitting or suddenly standing up, which showed his self-confidence on stage. What is more, he appealed to the audience by using his facial expressions when performing, for instance, smiling, raising his eyebrows, or opening his eyes expressively. He would also speak to the audience when performing pop music repertory in order to involve them. In other words, a more interactive approach is an option to be pursued when performing live. In this way, the audience participation is enhanced as it feels as part of the performance.

In a studio, sitting behind the glass in the control area together with a technician, one could observe some different facets of Martynas. The recording session commenced early and was spread throughout the entire day with several break sessions. He was cold-blooded, calm and extremely focused. Only the sound check took twenty-five minutes in order to ensure precisely the acoustics, the volume of sound and the sensitivity of microphones used for a recording of Martynas brand new CD. The perfectionism was obvious in every step of the studio recording. The excerpts were repeated countless times in order to ensure the most natural flow, the clearest phrasing, the most transparent virtuoso passages. What is more, Martynas was always in a seated position, whereas in a live concert he moved a lot and most of the time played standing. On the whole, there were minimum three to five takes for each piece recorded in order to find the perfect blending of the musical, technical and acoustic performance. After the wrapping up of the day session, he seemed both exhausted and excited and was considering a possibility to make several more attempts on the tango pieces on another recording day.

Two weeks later Martynas was interviewed as one of the case studies for this thesis. Even though, his agenda was quite tight, Martynas answered to the questions extensively and deeply without any rush or indifference. He personally emphasised his goal as a performer and an innovator in the field of accordion:

I want to modify the image of the accordion but at the same time I want to show all the range I have as a performer. All the arrangements are specifically made for me and taken from a different angle. It's exciting for me to break some classical music world rules<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Martynas, p. 43

As a soloist and chamber musician, Martynas openly shares that his preference lies with live performance due to the drive and excitement performing on stage in front of a public brings to him. The perception of such performance to the artist himself changes completely, according to this young, however, undeniably experienced young musician. Whereas a live performance is the most fragile and ephemeral form of art, it is also the most engaging, present and rewarding one:

One wrong note or chord on a concert will only make it more real, more *human* and more memorable to the audience, it is the instantaneous moment of performing in the now, just this once, which makes me connect with the audience and deliver some of my best playing<sup>4</sup>.

For the most part, Martynas advocates live performing as the excitement and energy of performance in front of a public enables him to excel in playing accordion beyond his own ambitions and expectations. He has also touched upon another topic of relation, unlike the other interviewees, namely the simultaneous ease and difficulty when performing for a familiar audience. On the one hand, in this case the artist is known for a period of time thus the public can have a good overview of his development and skills, which can incline them to be more forgiving and understanding. On the other hand, the artists can feel overly stressed to perform for family and friends since those are likewise aware of his personal best when it comes to performing live, therefore, there are certain expectations involved regarding the standard and quality of performance. Overall, Martynas states that the levels of responsibility are escalated even further when confronted by familiar audiences for the purpose of delivering a top-notch performance. On top of this, Martynas has also distinguished important differences that have to do with subjectivity of individual experiences of every single artist, for example, if a professional artist is compared to an amateur artist, there are undoubtedly going to be divergences in their motivations, views, levels of excitement, mental and physical preparation and so on and so forth, whereas a more introverted as opposed to more extraverted artist are similarly bound to disagree on what the impact of live performance means to them personally.

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Martynas, p. 43

## **6.2. Marija Dūdaitė: Opera and ‘Liveness’**

Marija Dūdaitė, one of the most promising Lithuanian opera singers of her generation, has a rather lengthy record of concerts and performances on stages around the world. Born in Lithuania in 1993, she has delighted the public with many concerts, for example, in Lithuania, Latvia, the Netherlands, Italy and Germany. Her talents were first developed in instrumental sphere: Marija has been playing violin for nine years and piano for eight years. Later on, she was several times selected as a prize winner of international competitions and consequently invited to give performances on the National Television of Lithuania as well as awarded diplomas and honourable mentions from the Lithuanian president and government for her musical achievements.

Marija shaped as an artist under her renowned professors: Lithuanian opera singer, bass singer and professor Vladimiras Prudnikovas at the Vytautas Magnus University Music Academy and professor Monica Bozzo at the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory of Milan. In 2014 she has delivered singing recitals as a mezzosoprano in “Don Giovanni” by W. A. Mozart. Marija’s repertory extends from the baroque epoch up until the music of the twenty-first century. One of her special motivations is the popularisation of the Lithuanian folk music and repertory.

The observation of her concert took place at the Kaunas St Xavier Church October 23, 2015. It was a marvellous location since the acoustics brought a wonderful touch to the performance. The reverb was just rightly balanced, not too little and not unduly overwhelming. Marija as a soprano sang with an organ player and delivered a forty-minute concert. From folk songs to opera arias, she kept a highly professional and engaging performance. In terms of her facial expressions, one was caught by her versatility in every of the different pieces. She expressed the tenderness in music by moving slowly and elegantly, gently raising her cheeks and eyebrows, shaping an oval mouth, and opening up the hands half above her waist, for instance, while singing G. Verdi’s “Ave Maria”. In a more dramatic passage, she would walk faster, make a sharp turn, open the eyes more widely, gesticulate with the hands intensely and keep a direct eye contact with the public. In addition, the use of stage material (in this case, this was just a church, not an opera theatre) also played an important role in Marija’s performance. The singer would sometimes put her hand on the organ, which gave a sense of firmness and calm, whereas she would raise her dress when performing “Habanera” from the renowned G. Bizet’s Opera “Carmen” imitating a Spanish flamenco dancer. The whole impression was that Marija was delivering her role, both as a singer, actress and even a dancer. It was the amalgamation of her



voice with other means of stage expression that made her performance convincing and powerful.

In a studio, Marija was interestingly enough making an audio recording for one of the pieces performed in a concert, namely the Verdi's "Ave Maria". Such a coincidence, helped directly compare the delivery of the piece when it is intended for a mediated performance, in this case audio recording, to a live concert. Rather obviously, Marija was preoccupied with the sonic qualities and versatility in her voice rather than her bodily presence and theatrical appearance. She would for the major part stand still next to a microphone, the score of the piece on a stand on her left side, a glass of water for hydration on a chair close by. She would normally put her hands on her belly, as if this gave the music, especially excerpts in the higher register some kind of physical and even aerial support. The piece was recorded four times, with only one short break before the very last time. Immediately after Marija went to the sound operator room, listened to her performance on the headphones and gave a modest smile. She then thought for a minute and expressed she was extremely happy with the audio quality and basically her singing, however, she would like to come back the day after for one more, much shorter session to try a slightly different colour in her voice as her voice was getting tired at that precise moment.

The opera singer was interviewed October 29, 2015, in a cosy and not too crowded café in the old town of Lithuania's second largest city Kaunas. She was rather open and talkative, gave extensive and elaborate answers to most of the questions presented for her. Apparently, to her as an artist the key word was responsibility, independently of whether it is live or mediated performance. Marija did point out, thought that recordings have a different mind-set and the possibility of multiple repetition:

Believe[s] you feel more comfortable when making recordings, you can repeat it many times, polish to perfection. Maybe I can do it another time, another day, with another musicians. This does not come to mind in live performances. It is more of a lottery, performances depend on your health, physical condition, impulses, spontaneity.<sup>5</sup>

When stressing that her preference was performing live among a spectrum of reasons for this, first and foremost motivations, she emphasised the adrenaline driving and stimulating her on stage. Even though it is not a concept easy to express in verbal language, Ms. Dūdaitė ensured she would never give this valuable feeling and experience up. Regarding the live performance, the singer also stressed the importance and non-reproducibility of her connection with the

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with Marija Dudaite, p. 46

audience, which is only present when performing live. In other words, this relates directly to the simultaneous spatial and temporal presence of both the artist and the audience during live concerts (Auslander, 2008). Last but not least, the significance of performing in an ensemble with other musicians also constitutes an integral and contingent part for every opera singer, in this case Marija, as in this manner, every performance is extended to a yet another dimension, its components being artistic expression, technical skills and unity of the ensemble.

### 6.3. Floris Onstwedder: Flight of the Dutch Bumblebee

Floris Onstwedder is a trumpet prodigy, who started training at an extremely young age of four. Rather soon, at around twelve, he began his studies as a *Young Talent* at the Conservatory of Amsterdam with Frits Damrow, the principal trumpet of the Concertgebouw Orchestra. At the moment, he is finishing his Bachelor with Theo Wolters at the Conservatory of Maastricht. He has set the record in the battle for the fastest execution of R. Korsakov's "Bumblebee"<sup>6</sup>.

Floris won prizes at various music competitions such as the "Princess Christina Competition" and the first prize at the "European Yamaha Trumpet Competition" in 2009 in Hamburg. Floris occurs regularly as a soloist with several symphony orchestras, but also possesses to a great passion for chamber music and is a regular guest soloist in chamber music ensembles. Since his young days, Floris appears on television, for instance, in 2009 during the famous "Prinsengracht Concert" in a duet with soprano Danielle de Niese, and radio, for instance, the "Hall of Mirrors" program broadcast directly from the Concertgebouw Amsterdam.

Floris Onstwedder was preparing video recordings for a renowned competition "Prague Spring 2016" in the big hall of the Conservatorium Maastricht. It was a unique setting and construction of the studio concept as the video for the recording was filmed while performing on stage in the hall whereas the audio was captured by the studio of the conservatory, using the program ProTools. The end result was the amalgamation of the professionally recorded audio, quality-wise a great win compared to the recording by simple video camera. Such mixing is applied rather often whenever a musician is willing to have a specific surrounding milieu (setting) for the video file and an audio professionally captured by the studio equipment. In this fashion, the audio can also be captured with certain acoustic qualities, in this case the acoustics of the specific concert hall. The observation took place from the second row on the third floor balcony therefore the artist could hardly perceive anybody was present at all. This particular case was an extremely special one as there were some characteristics of live performance, for example, some kind of audience present (observer, camera and hall setting), however, it is virtually almost always impossible to eliminate audience completely, as there is at least a technician or sound operator in every studio. What makes it a mediated performance, however, is the possibility to have multiple takes. On the one hand, video recordings are extremely difficult to edit by means of cutting as the video and audio have to correspond perfectly, whereas in just an audio recording of a studio, the audio cuts are feasible and almost unnoticeable with the

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<sup>6</sup> De Tiende van Tijl, 2014.

technological potential of today. In other words, Mr. Onstwedder could not repeat excerpts of the piece as the trimming was not an available option. On the other hand, he could still repeat the whole piece (run-through) from top to bottom several times, which eradicated the element on non-take-two-ness.

His posture was very straight and stretched, most probably due to the technique of playing the trumpet. Even though the hall was empty (except for the observer on the third floor) his eyes kept direct contact with the seat level and camera lens. Overall, there was much stillness in the bodily presentation, virtually no motion apart from the necessary movements with the hands, such as pressing the valves in order to produce sound. Floris seemed to be completely focused on the sonic and technical qualities. In this way, the musical expression came through sound and its acoustic merits. The trumpet player took several takes for each piece, however, with the maximum of three takes per piece.

His live performance was observed October 18, 2015, in the hall of the Technical University (TU) in Eindhoven, the Netherlands. The artist was a guest soloist at the finals of the Young Soloist Competition, performing J. N. Humel's trumpet concerto with the harmony orchestra, expanded with a small string instrument section. Observation took place from slightly more distant position, approximately the tenth row, which enabled an overarching observatory angle and a global perspective of both the soloist and the orchestra. The stage presence of the artist was somewhat enchanting and magical due to his professionalism despite the young age. The performance did not commence with the first note the player produced on his trumpet but much earlier, rather with his first step onto the podium. One could observe the intense concentration and dedication coming from this rising Dutch star, expressed by freedom in posture, virtuosity in playing and easiness of engaging the public. In the opening orchestral passages, Floris was holding his trumpet with both hands crossed above the waist in an extremely relaxed and elegant way: on the one hand, a sign of experience and skill as a stage performer, on the other hand, both calming and captivating technique to arouse the public for what is yet to come. On the whole, throughout the entire live performance Mr. Onstwedder kept stillness and fixedness in the physical sense, no extra gesticulations with the arms were observed. What is more, his eyes kept uninterrupted eye contact with the audience, enhancing the artist-audience interaction and sense of commitment. On the top of this, his musical communication with orchestra was of unique calibre, as he managed to lead the orchestra in a soloist way but also exposed knowledge and experience in chamber music as the ensemble (orchestra and the soloist)

passages were polished to perfection.

Interview with Floris was conducted via Skype December 4, 2015<sup>7</sup>. The young musician was very open-minded and flexible, which resulted in several additional questions added to the initial interview structure, for instance, regarding his future plans as a musician or the necessity for perfection when performing live and making a studio recording. The Dutch trumpet player, above all, stressed the importance and difficulties intrinsic in both live and mediated performances. However, he singled out the pressure and responsibility unconditionally apparent in every live concert due to the awareness of audience being present, in the light of Auslander (2008):

The only scary thing in a recording studio is the red light that is on meaning 'recording'. This is a very scary phenomenon honestly but in a live performance there is more or less on average let's say one thousand of those red lights, and with red lights there I mean the people in the hall, who all are listening. Thus in a recording studio you can be more calm and relaxed.

The singularity of simultaneous presence of both artist and audience is further elaborated by the trumpet player as a twofold phenomenon, which can either result in musician's defeat or positive impulse. He is referring to the nervousness and stage fright that some of the artists are facing when being exposed to public. According to Floris, the performer has to be able to steer the excitement in the right direction and use it for his/her own advantage. Regarding the delivery of the actual stage performance, Mr. Onstwedder distinguished a difference, not mentioned by other interviewees, namely that there is a certain form of 'danger' involved in mediated recordings: perfection tends to get more important than the actual music and the emotions involved in performing it. In other words, ephemerality, momentariness and fragility are characteristic to live performance, which takes place in a certain time and space lap. That is to say that the audience sees any imperfection in live performance as a moment, part of a bigger picture where many elements come together shaping the overall puzzle, including the atmosphere, the hall, the stage setting and presentation, the acoustics and so on. Whereas recordings are reproduced and distributed countless times, which can put certain tension on making it perfect. However, in turn, an interesting paradox occurs regarding the necessity for perfection in a performance, perfection being a relatively subjective concept, herein standing for flawlessness in artistic and technical delivery of performance. On the one hand, the reproducibility and easiness of circulation of

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Floris Onstwedder, p. 48

mediatised recordings requires a certain standard of quality and perfection in their end product, as mentioned above. On the other hand, the non-take-two-ness of the live performance puts a strain on its quality and polish, as there is only one chance to perform.

Mr. Onstwedder expressed his opinions on the difficulties lying in the non-take-two-ness always present in live performance:

I like <...> my studio recordings because those you just polish or you just re-do it. Sometimes you need one or two takes, but sometimes you need five, you just re-do it until you are satisfied completely. A live performance has only one take but I think that actually the live performance is what really counts. We all play great in our practice rooms and in the recording studios. <...> Bringing that to the stage is surely a very different skill and one of the most difficult and important ones<sup>8</sup>.

Overall, the Dutch trumpet player rounded up his views with an interesting personal recapitulation of the value of live and mediatised music at the present day: recorded music is merely a recall of what happened in the studio, whereas a live performance constitutes creating something new on stage. Consecutively, the value of live performance is essential, as it keeps the art fresh and alive, advancing the performance culture.

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with Floris Onstwedder, p. 48

#### 6.4. Alexander Melnikov and Historically Informed Performance (HIP)

*Melnikov's playing has wonderful colour and imagination ... His pianissimos are astonishing, with long, meticulously nuanced passages often remaining very, very quiet, while, in the sculpted fugues, the intensification of volume runs to a purposeful plan ... Everything is testament to reflection and skill, yet the pianist is not lecturing, but laughing, dreaming, lamenting and dancing.*

Jan Brachmann- Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung<sup>9</sup>

Alexander Melnikov is a graduate of the National Moscow Conservatory, where he studied under a legendary professor Lev Naumov. Some of the greatest influences in his formation as an artist were meeting Sviatoslav Richter, who subsequently sent regular invitations for the young pianist to attend famous festivals in Russia and all over Europe. Alexander won key prizes at some of the world's most distinguished competitions, for example, the International Robert Schumann Competition in Zwickau (1989) and the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels (1991).

Alexander as an artist distinguishes himself by taking sometimes risky and unusual, however fabulously accepted programmatic and artistic decisions, for example, his passion for the historically informed (authentic) performance<sup>10</sup>, for example, using historic instruments and playing practices at an early age. Mr. Melnikov performs frequently appears with well-known period ensembles, such as Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Orchestre des Champs-Élysées, Concerto Köln and Freiburger Barockorchester. In addition, in collaboration with his period colleague harpsichord player Andreas Staier, the Russian pianist has established a program that connects passages from J. S. Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier to D. Shostakovich's 24 Preludes and Fugues, which has been awarded the BBC Music Magazine Award, Choc de Classica and the Jahrespreis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik<sup>11</sup>.

As a soloist, Mr. Melnikov has performed with some of the most famous orchestras in the world, among many, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Russian National Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, Rotterdam or BBC Philharmonic, led by well-known conductors, e. g. Mikhail Pletnev, Charles Dutoit, Paavo Järvi and Valery Gergiev<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> From the official website of Alexander Melnikov.

<sup>10</sup> Historically Informed Performance is a much-debated term, and both music historians and performers have difficulty defining it exactly. There are many ideas of what HIP consists of, but at its most basic level, it means performing music with special attention to the technology and performance conventions that were present when a piece of music was composed. For many years, this approach was applied primarily to music composed before 1750, from the Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque eras. In recent years, however, the drive towards historically informed performance has made musicians reconsider how they perform Classical- and Romantic-era repertoire as well. *SoHIP*, 2015.

<sup>11</sup> From the official website of Alexander Melnikov.

<sup>12</sup> From the official website of Alexander Melnikov.

His recording label is Harmonia Mundi and he cooperates intensively with his chamber music ensemble partners, such as violinist Isabel Faust and cellists Alexander Rudin and Jean-Guihen Queyras.

The observation of his live performance was carried out February 10, 2015, at the Sint Janskerk Maastricht. The observatory angle was rather unusual and stimulating, as the observer was also the page turner for the pianist. In this way, the bodily movement, posture and facial expression could be seen and recorded from a very close distance. Alexander Melnikov performed with the world-class violinist Isabel Faust, with whom he had previously recorded all ten Beethoven violin-piano sonatas and had been awarded not only the prestigious ECHO Klassiek Award but also nominated for a Grammy. The moment Mr. Melnikov stepped on stage, all the impatient whispers, observable before the start of this live performance, ceased. The silence was ear-piercing, full of respect, probably due to the reputation and high calibre of the pianist and his chamber music partner.

In this particular ethnographic observation of the artist, the element of ‘liveness’ constituted a distinctive feature, as his performance seemed to be as ever in the now or the present-ness as possible. The pianist’s body language, sparked by the presence and respectfulness coming directly from the audience, was very expressive and enthralling. Firstly, Mr. Melnikov used prolonged silences and extended pauses in music as a powerful way to capture audience’s attention. Secondly, the Russian pianist used gesticulatory movements, especially in faster tempo and virtuoso character pieces. The effect produced by such stage presentation techniques resulted in roaring and standing ovation and multiple yells “Bravissimo!” after the last note. Overall, Melnikov did not just play the piano, he delivered an extremely high level show, saturated and embellished not only with musical virtue and technical splendour but also theatrical solutions, which successfully sparked a positive and committed audience response. On the whole, the performer was very conscious of the audience’s presence and importance during the live performance and responded adequately.

The interview with maestro Melnikov took place at the Muziekgebouw aan het IJ, Amsterdam in November 2015. He elaborated on his experiences as an artist in an open and at the same time modest manner. According to the concert pianist, he is extremely used to perform in front of an audience, which can be a risky experience due to inclined tendency to automatise live performances, make them somewhat mechanical, monotonous, rehearsed and even lifeless. Alexander states that “there is a certain amount of drive every time you perform on stage, nobody



can ever get completely comfortable with one's nerves and thrill of being watched and listened to, however, one can get easily too comfortable with the same programs"<sup>13</sup>. He has developed a personal lifestyle rhythm for whenever he is on a tour, which is approximately 8-10 months a year. Alexander tries to avoid monotony by searching inspiration for performing concerts in the nature, reading philosophical books, cooking and even yoga. Mr. Melnikov is convinced that the artist has to have a great deal of charisma on stage, as that is what distinguishes a good from an excellent performer, "Nowadays people come to the concerts to be entertained, to enjoy listening and watching the artists perform *to* and *for* them". The virtuoso pianist also explains why audience presence is of crucial importance to any artist performing live:

New developments, like digital concert halls<sup>14</sup>, the Berlin one being an extraordinary successful example, have revolutionised the perception of how to enjoy *live* performances. There are, surely, advantages and disadvantages to it but I can assure you that what any musician is like a sensitive radar catching all the signals coming from his surrounding, and therefore, the audience, physically being present, being there, is what makes a performance live. We artists need you as an integral part to produce what we produce best- great music<sup>15</sup>.

Pianist Melnikov thus relates directly to the core of 'liveness', namely overlapping presence of the artist and the audience in a concert ambiance (Auslander, 2008). He likewise touches upon the co-creation or co-production advocated by scholar Boorsma (2006), as seen in the literature review section as Mr. Melnikov directly states artists in general *need* audience to deliver their end product- great music. In other words, not only theoretically but also practically from the individual artist's perspective, the moment the artistic idea takes up its form, plays an important role in the overall performing art process, thus the presence of art consumers contributes to the final work of art, or in this case music performance (Boorsma, 2006, p.73).

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with Alexander Melnikov, p. 50

<sup>14</sup> The Digital Concert Hall of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, launched in 2008, is a user-friendly active web site which stores and offers (rsp. transmits on demand) the concerts of the Berlin philharmonic orchestra to users, for passive participation with the concert quasi-online on the orchestra's stage. This is of course liable to pay costs, but these are moderate, although the quality of the transmitted concerts is very high. The transmission is via live streaming on a high-definition video basis.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Alexander Melnikov, p. 50

## 6.5. Giovanca: Pop and Power

Giovanca Desire Ostiana (stage name Giovanca), born in 1977, is a pop Dutch singer of Curacao origin, songwriter and model of Curacao origin. Having obtained her master's diploma from the Amsterdam University, she permanently settled in Amsterdam. In the last ten years, Giovanca has collaborated with well-known studios and artists and performed as a background voice with famous singers, among them, Root Riders, Izaline Calister, Roots Riders, Tribute to Bob Marley, Wouter Hamel, Benny Sings and Noisia<sup>16</sup>. One of the highlights in Giovanca's career came about with the release of her debut solo album in 2008 named "Subway Silence" under the label Dox Records. What is more, the pop diva has also featured in the album "The Mighty 8" produced by the National Pop Institute.

Regarding the media platforms, Giovanca has produced a duet with Wouter Hamel smashing the Dutch pop hit charts at the end of 2007 with their single "As long as we're in love". She also regularly appears on national television, for example, Pauw & Witteman, "De Wereld Draait Door", newspaper press ("Het Parool", "Telegraaf") and periodicals, such as "Nieuwe Revu"<sup>17</sup>. On March 3, 2010, Giovanca was awarded a Silver Harp from the world-famous singer Frank Sinatra. Her second album "While I'm Awake" was released not long after in 2010, followed by the third one "Satellite Love" in 2013.

Giovanca's live performance under observation took place on Liberation day, May 4, 2015 in Amsterdam. It was a very different setting from the other ethnographic observations carried out for the purposes of this thesis. First of all, it was not a classical music concert but a pop concert aimed at very large public gathered in person in Amsterdam. Every year, Liberation day concert festively completes the Liberation Festival in Amsterdam and is normally held on the Amstel River. Its program ranges from light classical to pop repertoire, meanwhile the Dutch royal family as well as representatives of parliament are present at this tremendous event. On a beautiful stage installed above the waters of Amstel every year different Dutch solo artists and bands entertain the huge crowd gathered in person as well as numerous viewers all over the Netherlands. In general, the May 5 concert has free access to all the public and is broadcast live by NOS television is usually watched by one million Dutch spectators.

Giovanca performed a single from her third album "Drop It", which is a popular and well-known song in the Netherlands. The observation took part from the floating tent on the river

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<sup>16</sup> From the official website of Giovanca.

<sup>17</sup> From the official website of Giovanca.

Amstel, approximately forty meters away from stage. The rest of the audience was spread over other nearby bridges or even watched the concert from their windows and balconies. In addition, the concert was likewise projected on huge screens spread over the two-stage area (one stage for the solo artists, and one for the NJO (Dutch National Youth Orchestra)). Such relatively close-by setting helped the observatory angle as the artist could be seen (not through the screens only) in detail with the naked eye.

Giovanca performed with two back vocal singers, who accompanied her during the chorus together with the NJO youth orchestra. She used her body extensively: dancing, jumping, moving her dress, walking to different parts of the stage and even to the second stage of the orchestra. There was a specific choreography built for this song with the backing singers, which made it more like a complete show performance. Giovanca seemed very experienced and balanced in combining singing and dancing together, extensive moving did not prevent her from performing the vocal part flawlessly. She was very interactive with the audience, asking them to join along in the chorus, raise their hands and wave or clap, screams and enthusiastic yells perpetrated her entire performance. Moreover, the singer of the Curacao origin used her natural charisma not only to engage the audience but likewise to interact with the musicians playing along on stage. For example, she would put her microphone next to the violin player performing the solo, or directly to the conductor, asking to sing along in the chorus. In addition, this concert was broadcast live all over the Netherlands and scored record-high numbers in spectatorship. To give a numerical representation, over 1.8<sup>18</sup> million people watched the live streaming of this Liberation day concert on their TVs or online. Giovanca, in turn showed great skill of making contact with camera, which exemplified that she was well aware of the audience present not only physically at the concert place but also seated in front of their screens at home.

Unfortunately, Giovanca was not available for ethnographic observation in the studio during the research period of this master thesis as she had just recorded her new CD and the upcoming one was due in 2016. However, she was kind enough to give an extensive interview over several phone calls in December 2015. It is important to point out that even though five artists were observed live and four out of five in the studio, such occurrence did not have serious implications on the main findings. As will be explained in detail in the subsequent section, the ethnographic observation constituted an important reference point, sort of a comparative filter or lens through which the artist were encountered. However, the qualitative interviews represent the

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<sup>18</sup> From the official website of Giovanca.

crucial epicentre in the results of this thesis, as the research question specifically focuses on the *artist's* experience of the performance. Therefore, their own motivations, delivery of performance and mental preparation can best be assessed from the in-depth individual interviews.

The interview with Giovanca was carried out December 13-14th, 2015 over the telephone. The singer kindly managed to squeeze an hour in her tight agenda and elaborate on her personal experiences of performing in a live versus a mediatised milieu. Similarly to the other interviewees, the pop singer once again confirmed the centrality of the audience's overlapping presence with the artist, stating that 'liveness' is the all about the public. Even though there are certain expectations and pressure involved, such as requirement of high musical and technical skill, it is a rewarding challenge to face. In terms of mediatisation, Giovanca further defends the value of live performance, as today "with all the means available, you can sound perfectly on a phonogram but there is anything but 'liveness' in it"<sup>19</sup>. Furthermore, the Dutch pop star synthesises her own experience of 'liveness' in performance as a shared and formidable practice:

I am very excited and eager to perform for an audience. It is like facing a great but rewarding challenge. I can really share my music on stage, the people sing along, clap together in rhythm or even dance with me. There is literally no better way for an artist, I mean a singer, to express his music rather than walking up to stage and opening up your heart for the crowd. It is a massive and overwhelming experience both mentally and physically<sup>20</sup>.

More importantly, Giovanca Desire Ostiana pin-points the crucial difference in performing live in the classical versus the popular music setting. The spectatorship reach out is incomparable in these two worlds, where especially in the pop music, singers can really address the wide masses, the broad audiences and send an important message. Therefore, the experience of the artist when performing live for five hundred people in a classical concert hall as opposed to an open-air stadium seating up to forty-thousand spectators is shaping in a slightly diverse manner. The power provided to the pop artist, in line of Giovanca's argument, can easily crystallise in the message sent being distorted, misleading or even obscene, which requires a certain amount of care, incumbency and responsibility.

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with Giovanca, p. 53

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Giovanca, p. 53

## 7. Main Findings: How TRIC Does the Trick

On the whole, the ethnographic observation both during live and studio performances, the essential elements of which have been detailed in the previous sections, combined with the qualitative interviews<sup>21</sup> with five versatile artists ranging from opera and classical to pop music, have produced a reasonable and useful method of research for the purposes of this thesis. The twofold observation model, based on initial criteria for ethnographic observation has helped to spot the outstanding differences in terms of bodily stage and studio presentation. The interviews, in turn, have helped to filter these differences and purify the main findings on what is the actual impact of ‘liveness’ on an artist’s experience of a performance. The answer to this research question is four-sided. However, before embarking upon detailing the results of the thesis, it is important to mention the following ambiguity.

In general, it can get rather ambiguous when it comes to verbally expressing artist’s experience while performing. The major cause, above all, lies within the difficulty in orally communicating any performance, in this case music-based one, as the criteria are very individual, rather partial and subjective (Reason, 2004). For instance, Adorno (1976) argues that there are certain limitation when assessing any verbal observation on one’s performance. From a sociological point of view, any academic has to be cautious when evaluating the personal experiences obtained orally from an artist:

Musical introspection is a most uncertain thing. Besides, most people who have not mastered the technical terminology will encounter insurmountable obstacles in verbalising their own musical experiences, quite apart from the fact that the verbal expression itself is already pre-filtered and its value for a knowledge of primary reactions is thus doubly questionable (Adorno, 1976, p.4).

Once again, the comparative ethnographic observation carried out in a live performance milieu and studio environment served as a systematic tool in detecting and analysing patterns of human performers, their stage presentation skills and especially as a reference point for distillation of their main motivations and experiences after the conduction of qualitative interviews. In general, in this thesis, the ethnographic method assisted in scrutinising the impact of ‘liveness’ in musical performance from five different artists’ experiences.

The principal findings of the ethnographic observation in practice correspond to the major theoretical points derived from the academic literature in the performance study field. First and

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<sup>21</sup> The transcripts of the interviews can be found in the Appendices.

foremost, the presence of the audience seemed to have played a crucial role in the artist's experience of the live performance. What is more, the simultaneous spatial and temporal presence of the audience and the human performer, as by Auslander (2008), influenced the means of expression used/applied by the artists themselves. For instance, there was much more focus not only on fine playing but likewise on stage presentation and bodily language during live concerts as compared to the studio recordings. The vast majority, namely four out of five artists have confirmed during the semi-constructed interviews that their preferences lie with performing live rather than making a studio recording due to the (1) thrill (T), excitement and drive that the presence of the audience instils in them.

Furthermore, the element of non-take-two-ness or non-repeatability, advocated by Phelan (1993), Reason (2004) and Sanden (2013), was extremely obvious having compared the live concerts to the studio recordings. First of all, there was virtually no possibility to repeat the whole of parts of the performance during a concert, whereas in a studio, the musicians had the artistic freedom to repeat certain passages of the entire piece for five or even more times, sometimes even with a delay of one day between the takes. As all the artists admitted, their mentality was also heavily influenced by (2) responsibility (R) 'liveness' brings. In turn, not only their motivations and behaviour during performance but also during the stages of preparation were heavily impacted. For example, all the artists mentioned the momentariness, or the importance of that particular moment, when performing live. In fact, the ephemerality intrinsic in 'liveness' in general, motivates the artists to polish their programs to perfection as there is only one chance to deliver that specific live performance. The Dutch trumpet player Mr. Onstwedder, for instance, states that there normally occurs a two-fold effect:

In a live performance there are much more risks involved <...> because you have this only one chance and things can go wrong, and you cannot repeat it. But this risk brings with it such an excitement actually that it can also lead to very special things that are never heard in recorded sessions<sup>22</sup>.

Another crucial finding is the awareness of the artists of the shared-ness in a live performance. The consciousness of the nowness or the presentness for the public results in a certain purpose of performing for the artist. In turn, even visually during the ethnographic observation, the artists seemed very aware and paid a great deal of attention to connecting and (3) interacting (I) with the audience in the moment by utilising eye contact, expressive gestures, theatrical elements (raising

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with Floris Onstwedder, p. 48

the dress, gesticulating with the hands, jumping from a chair, dancing, bowing etc.) and other means of engagement, apparent during the live performances.

Nowadays people come to the concerts to be entertained, to enjoy listening and watching the artists perform *to* and *for* them. <...> People who still do attend live performances want to be exceptional, culturally inspired and part of a happening, taking place in the now<sup>23</sup>.

Such interrelation is distinctively determinative in artist's motivations as well as preparation before and during performing due to the responsibility involved in living up to the standards.

In terms of 'liveness' as a notion, which is non-ontological, unfixed, evolving and reactive to newly emerging developments, nonetheless centred on *human* performance, which can be assisted by electronic mediation as by Sanden (2013), the qualitative interviews have successfully illustrated that amalgamation of the live and recorded is undeniable and the binary division between live versus mediated is too black and white. In a society, so deeply and eagerly invested in digital technologies and pre-occupied with universal access, almost every live performance is somehow captured by means of recording, whether by a video camera, video clip made in secret by a curious spectator in the audience, or even a live broadcast on tv or radio or other means of mass media. It is virtually impossible to isolate the live performance as just an exclusive event for the ones physically attending it nor is it feasible to track all the numerous reproductions that occur once a recorded version of such live performance is manifested in the social media. The Russian pianist Alexander Melnikov gives an elucidative example of this common scenario nowadays:

New developments, like digital concert halls, the Berlin one being an extraordinary successful example, have revolutionised the perception of how to enjoy *live* performances. There are, surely, advantages and disadvantages to it but I can assure you that what any musician is like a sensitive radar catching all the signals coming from his surrounding, and therefore, the audience, physically being present, being there, is what makes a performance live. We artists need you as an integral part to produce what we produce best- great music<sup>24</sup>.

Such argument gives evidence to a yet another theoretical point, advocated by scholar Boorsma (2006) that live performance is unique due to its (4) co-creation (C), the capacity of audience to shape a performance along with the artist. Mr. Melnikov openly states that musicians in general *need* an audience to be able deliver their end result: excellent music performance. In other words, not only in theory but also in practice from individual artist's perspective, when artistic idea is

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<sup>23</sup> Interview with Alexander Melnikov, p. 50

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Alexander Melnikov, p. 50

being shaped live, the presence of art consumers shapes the terminal work of art (Boorsma, 2006, p.73).

Consequentially, if all the cornerstones of the impact of ‘liveness’ on artist’s experience of performance are synergised to one, it can be expressed as thrill (1), responsibility (2), interaction (3), and co-creation (4) or simply as its abbreviated form TRIC. Live performance surely does the trick, as it is so extensively economically promoted and reproduced nowadays. On the one hand, as far as the impact from the audience on the live-performance is concerned, the Lithuanian accordionist Martynas states there exists a rather sensitive issue, which can affect the live performance, namely the composition of the audience:

It can be, honestly, both easier and more difficult to perform for a familiar audience. On the one hand, they know you as an artist for quite some time so they can have a good overview of your development and skills, which can incline them to be more forgiving and understanding. On the other hand, I myself feel very stressed to perform for my family and friends as they likewise know what my personal best is as it comes to performing, so they expect a certain level or standard from my live performance<sup>25</sup>.

On the other hand, if this argument is extended further, then several questions arise, for instance, does it make a difference for the artist who is part of the audience? That is to ask whether there is any influence on the features of live performance when there is an average spectator as opposed to an important music industry manager or talent hunter seated in the audience. The researched and interviewed artists did not specify the exact impact the professional audience can have on their delivery of performance apart from the influence of the familiar audience as illustrated above. Nonetheless, based on this scenario, it can be deduced that the levels of thrill and responsibility definitely increase, whereas interaction and co-creation can go both ways depending on the level of artist’s reputation and proficiency.

Even though this thesis is limited in time and scope, there are several exciting points of research that could be pursued in case a more extensive and resourceful investigation were to take place. For example, the difference in music styles and its possible effects on artist’s experience could be explored in more depth, especially in line with the popular music tradition culture. Obviously, versatile stylistic movements possess their own perception of live performances. Whereas classical music concerts require certain etiquette, popular music gigs and

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<sup>25</sup> Interview with Martynas, p. 43



jazz jam sessions function of another musical terrains. To give an illustrative example, the live contexts in David Bowie's glam rock<sup>26</sup> setting and the direct communication of the Hungarian national folk music are the extreme poles, where playing a certain act is juxtaposed against trying to be as nationally authentic as possible. It would be very thrilling to trace the implications of the different musical style environments, e.g. jazz, rock, or country music, on artist's experience of live performance. Alternatively, due to the subjectivity of the personal experience applied in this research, an integrative qualitative or quantitative psychologico-behavioural study could be paired with this thesis in order to find out to what extent personality plays a role in performing live.

Having scrutinised the main findings, it is essential to question them in furtherance of assessing the scope, validity and value of this thesis research. To begin with, to what extent is the qualitative method- ethnographic observation and interviewing- the best-fitting type of research for this particular thesis? Evidently, as mentioned before, the keyword *experience* of a performing artist was determinative in opting for qualitative research, which enables to explore the views, motivations, experiences, and beliefs motivations of specific participants. Even though there is a spectrum of data collection methods in qualitative research, such as observations, visual analysis and interviews, the ethnographic observation of the same artists in both live and mediatised milieu provided an audio-visual reference lens of the five artists. More importantly, the semi-constructed interviews, i.e. orally managed partially pre-determined set of questions, provided the essential instrument in analysing the impact of live performance from artist perspective. Not only the semi-constructed type was easily to administer, but it also allowed room for variation, follow-up questions and elaboration by the respondents. On the whole, such integral qualitative model was sufficient and fruitful for the purposes of the master thesis.

With regard to limitations, the sample of artists could be expanded to conduct an even more fully fledged research, especially including more varied musical styles, that is to say more pop, jazz, rock and folk music artist. In addition, as previously mentioned in line with Adorno (1962), the possibly subjective verbalisation of artists' experiences and motivations during interviews should be taken into account when assessing the objectivity of main findings, possibly drawing up a buffer scheme for partiality.

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<sup>26</sup> Almost entirely British phenomenon that became wildly popular during the first half of the '70s. Glam rock was fairly simple, crunchy guitar rock put across with outrageous theatricality. Most of the music was unabashedly catchy, with melodies drawn from teenage bubblegum pop and hip-shaking rhythms from early rock & roll. But those innocent influences were belied by the delivery, which was all campy, glitzy showmanship and sexuality. *All Music*, 2015.

## 8. Conclusion

This master thesis, having shown how the artists experience ‘liveness’ in musical performance, has come to a close. The impact on the artists can be derived from their phenomenological experience of live versus mediated performance. What is more, this thesis has provided not only a detailed contextual approach of the comprising elements in live performance, but simultaneously an analytical evaluation of both its theoretical and practical conceptualisations. Successively, through the application of ethnographic observations of the artists in live and mediated environments, combined with the qualitative semi-constructed interviews, this thesis has revealed and strengthened the centrality of *human* performer, the overlapping simultaneous spatial and temporal presence of the audience, and the unique element of non-take-two-ness in live performance.

The five artists under research have almost unanimously agreed on the importance and value of live performance due to its creative stimulus for culture. However, they have also pointed out the endless possibilities and strive for perfection in mediated performances. To summarise the argument further, some have also observed, in line with theoretical framework of this thesis, that since ‘liveness’ is a non-ontological notion and excessively economically driven nowadays, e. g. opera Live in HD series, digital concert halls or private viewings of museum exhibitions, the binary distinctions between live and recorded are overly simplistic and their borders have blended together. Therefore, the artists on contemporary stages perform in a more transcendental realm: not only for the physically co-present audience but viewing it live distributed across space by means of gathering globally. The end-result produces new longitudinal and latitudinal forms of digital media synergies, creative matrices of far-flung performers and audiences, and “ever-changing forms of engagement between performer and technology, presence and absence, live and recorded” (UCC Strategic Research Fund, 2015).

Whatever the amalgamation, within the scope of this thesis, any performance is live as long as there is simultaneous artist-audience presence and non-repeatability clause. Thus the impact of ‘liveness’ on artist’s experience of performance is spread among the four milestones: thrill, responsibility, interaction and co-creation (TRIC). The thrill, above all, relates to the escalated excitement and drive instigated by the simultaneous artist-audience presence (Auslander, 2008; Phelan, 1993, Frith, 1998) when performing live. Increased sense of responsibility, in turn, stems from the same cause and is based on non-take-two-ness and keeping

the artistic and technical bar of performance. Whereas interaction relates to the engagement of audience using skills non-related to producing music, such as stage presentation, facial expressions, or body language. Lastly, the co-creation (Boorsma, 2006) element is intrinsic and unique for any artist performing live as in this specific case the art consumer, or the audience, becomes the co-producer of the final product. Even though the spectator does not actually design the live performance, he/she contributes to the total art product, hereby the live concert.

The previous section has justified the choice of the qualitative research method, composed of ethnographic observation and semi-constructed interviews. In terms of time and scope limitations in this thesis, the span and latitude of ethnographic research could be expanded in order to conduct slightly more integrative and full-scale exploration of impact of ‘liveness’, for instance, including broader interviewee sample or possibly respondents from more versatile musical style terrains. That is to say that the sample used is sufficient, however, could be broadened and varied even more. There are additionally several suggestions for fully fledged future research projects in relation to this thesis, such as the implications of ambiguity in verbal utterance of artist’s experience of live performance (Adorno, 1962; Wittgenstein, 1922), the effect of artist’s personality and character on his/her experience of ‘liveness’, or the audience perception of live performance both as a personal experience or more holistic social, cultural and political construct.

Overall, this thesis has investigated not only the impact of performing live on artists, but on a larger scale the added value of live performance nowadays. In a society, so deeply invested with mediatisation and reproduction of performance due to the contemporary advance of digital technologies, understanding what makes live performance so special and valuable is a complex and challenging venture. More importantly, its future prospects seem rather blurry and controversial due to gradual real time improvements in top-notch quality and universal accessibility of mediatised recordings. This paper has shown new insights, in line with Sanden (2013), on ‘liveness’ representing not a “fixed ontological state that exists in the absence of electronic mediation, but rather a dynamically performed assertion of human presence within a technological network of communication” (p. 2). All in all, as long as the *human* performer is central to live performance, no electronic mediatisation technology, be it 3D or 5D, will be able to recreate its unique shared value, possibly just make it ever-more attainable, present and universal.

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## 10. Appendices

### 10.1. Interview with Martynas, Lithuanian Accordionist

1. *How long have you been performing on stage with audience being present?*

I performed my first concert at the age of six I believe. However, this took place in the salon of a huge musician's house, close friends of my parents. Therefore, the audience was mostly familiar to me, family and friends.

2. *It is very interesting that you mention the type of audience listening to you. Does the type of audience present influence your motives, behaviour, presentation and delivery of performance? And if yes, how precisely does it impact upon you?*

It can be, honestly, both easier and more difficult to perform for a familiar audience. On the one hand, they know you as an artist for quite some time so they can have a good overview of your development and skills, which can incline them to be more forgiving and understanding. On the other hand, I myself feel very stressed to perform for my family and friends as they likewise know what my personal best is as it comes to performing, so they expect a certain level or standard from my live performance.

3. *How often do you perform concerts for public?*

Nowadays, I am really busy and most of the time on tour. I attempt to base the majority of my concerts in Lithuania, where I am from, however, I regularly fly to Germany, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy and Spain. On a monthly basis, I normally play ten to twelve concerts all over Europe.

4. *What do you find characteristic or special about performing live?*

I want to modify the image of the accordion but at the same time I want to show all the range I have as a performer. All the arrangements are specifically made for me and taken from a different angle, for instance, pop songs, such as Lady Gaga's Poker Face have been transcribed for my accordion. It is exciting for me to break some classical music world rules.

5. *Do you feel any different when making a mediatised performance/recording with no public being present?*

In a studio I have to switch my thinking as my goal is different, I want to produce some of my best playing for a record and that will eventually engage the audience, whereas in a concert I attract the audience on the spot, more directly and using the whole package, sometimes presenting my program, talking to the public as the crow flies, or even dancing while playing.



6. *How does the presence of audience influence your performance? Is there any impact for your psychological mind-set or artistic or technical characteristics while performing live?*

One wrong note or chord on a concert will only make it more real, more human and more memorable to the audience, it is the instantaneous moment of performing in the now, just this once that makes me connect with the audience and deliver some of my greatest playing and best charisma.

7. *Regarding live performance, is there any noticeable difference in your preparation for a live versus a mediatised performance?*

Well, I personally love to present my own concerts. I strongly believe that this makes the public feel much more at home. The average concert lover wants to know and feel that the performer is a human being, just like himself/herself, and hearing the voice of an artist, for instance, can be a very usefully way of sparking the contact, and immediate benevolence.

8. *What is your personal preference: live or non-live performance?*

I love to make recordings for a very simple reason, you can make a lot out of them, they open endless possibilities nowadays. For example, even though I am just capturing the audio in the studio, I can make the end product sound like it was played at the Carnegie hall or the Berliner Philharmoniker. I can even adjust the sharpness, brightness, intensity and colour of my sound. Despite such technological wilderness, I must admit that there is a certain engine-like excitement, drive and charm in performing live. It is very difficult to describe it orally, in words, but it is some kind of intuition, nervousness and thrill blending together.

9. *To you as an artist, what is the value of live performance today?*

Whatever everybody says or thinks, I think that live performance is not an out-dated fossil but something of eternal value to humanity. I mean, just think about it, the visual artists do not have the luxury of connecting with their audience on the spot, unless it is a happening but then the quality and concept of the arts is transformed. I think that music and theatre uniquely transcend time and space in 'liveness'.

10. *Do you yourself attend live concerts as a member of the public?*

Surely, especially of highly acclaimed artists, you can learn so much from them and apply it to your own case. I mean I often ask myself, what makes a performance good or excellent when I sit in the public. Quite inexplicable verbally, however, anybody in the audience, music lover, proficient critic, or just accidental passer by will immediately distinguish a good performer from an amateur. How do we feel this? Is there possibly a formula, which everybody could follow and produce a guaranteed well-esteemed live performance?

*11. What does the future hold for live performance? In your opinion, is it going to become more valuable than ever before or rather get extinct?*

As I said before, music and as live form of art is quite unique form of art on itself and can go beyond temporality. So in my opinion, whatever the future does hold for it is timeless and does not obey the general nature laws.

## 10.2. Interview with Marija Dudaite, Lithuanian Opera Singer

### 1. *How long have you been performing on stage with audience being present?*

I have been already performing professionally for 5 years having live performances. This was the start of my live performances.

### 2. *How often do you perform concerts for public?*

It depends on the season. During the autumn, winter and spring seasons I do have quite a lot concerts and a little bit less in the summer, which is less of a peak season for classical musicians. I normally have a summer holiday break.

### 3. *What do you find characteristic or special about performing live?*

I believe it is a lot of responsibility and surely it provides better expression possibilities for the artist. You always prepare very well for these concerts, put a lot of effort into it, you show your abilities, skills, and it can sometimes be very overwhelming. In addition, it is a great chance to connect with the audience.

### 4. *Do you feel any different when making a mediatised performance/recording with no public being present?*

I think there are a lot of differences in non-live performance as opposed to live one. There is always responsibility present but I believe you feel more comfortable when making recordings, you can repeat it many times, polish to perfection. Maybe I can do it another time, another day, with another musicians. This does not come to mind in live performances. It is more of a lottery, performances depend on your health, physical condition, impulses, spontaneity.

### 5. *How does the presence of audience influence your performance? Is there any impact for your psychological mind-set or artistic or technical characteristics while performing live?*

It is a very good question. Maybe some people do not even consider it. But especially for soloists, we do really think how to put the piece together. You do not think only about how to sing well, in my case, but also how to express yourself correctly, to really know how to express the main knowledge and message, every word clearly to the audience, make it more artistic and likeable to the public. On stage, you do not have express only your voice, it is threefold, your artistic, and technical skills but also performing together with other musicians in ensemble.

### 6. *Regarding live performance, is there any noticeable difference in your preparation for a live versus a mediatised performance?*

I think there is a difference surely because, as I have mentioned before, when you practice with orchestra, ensemble, other musicians, you think about the unity of performance. You

consider movement with your body, your facial expressions, gesticulations, for instance, raising your dress a bit, you set it up on stage like a drama or theatre performance. It is a very different focus as opposed to the preparation for a recording when your predominant attention lies within your voice. All in all, I think it focuses more on an integrated team/group work rather than emphasis on your individual performance.

7. *What is your personal preference: live or non-live performance?*

Oh, that is a tricky one I think. Yeah, I think it depends on a person, and I personally like the live performances more. I have not done that many recordings but still I feel more like, how to say, more like in seven heaven, I feel connected to the audience. I think the emotions in the moment are unforgettable and elevating. In that time it is the most important thing, the adrenaline driving and stimulating me. You cannot express it that well in verbal language but only after performance you notice how valuable this feeling and experiences are.

8. *To you as an artist, what is the value of live performance today?*

We all know that recordings are more accessible now than ever before. People who cannot afford tickets to live concerts, can have access online, for free to audio and video performances. From artist's perspective, though, I think we still hope that the audience chooses for a live performance, you want to see you fans, public, to feel the connection. People do pick most comfortable solutions to them. But there is still that part of the loyal audience who comes to listen to live concerts and do share that joy with you.

9. *Do you yourself attend live concerts as a member of the public?*

Yes, sure, because I am interested in other artists performing, especially of my age, my generation. It is interesting for me to see how they perform, I do go to theatres, places where you can listen to the classical music performances. I would not go if I was not interested, but I really am. I even feel thrilled and nervous for them as I personally know what kind of experience is that.

10. *What does the future hold for live performance? In your opinion, is it going to become more valuable than ever before or rather get extinct?*

I hope not extinct. Instead, I think that maybe it might be the same as it is now but I hope that people will be able to understand that it is more valuable for them. Because people still do dress-up, buy tickets in advance and do try to make this occasion of live concert as a non-casual one. They try to make a celebration for themselves. It will not die out because there are more musicians than ever before and they will continue to have concerts, maybe even becoming future's Elvis Presleys and Maria Callases. All in all, it does not matter how many people will actually attend your concerts, it is more their genuine interest in hearing you that makes your career so rewarding and fulfilling.

### 10.3. Interview with Alexander Melnikov, Russian Pianist

1. *How long have you been performing on stage with audience being present?*

My official concert took place at the age of five. Since I have performed countless concerts. So I have had over thirty year of experience with on-stage performances in very different setting: solo recitals, chamber music (duo and trios with violinists and cellists), and performing as a soloist with orchestra.

2. *How often do you perform concerts for public?*

My schedule is normally planed a year and a half ahead and it is very tight and intense. I perform every around 3 to 4 times a week and the rest of time is devoted principally to travelling all over the world to reach those concert halls. Sometimes I play a concert in Maastricht one evening and the same program in Berlin the next one.

3. *What do you find characteristic or special about performing live?*

Live is what do mostly and this is every musician's biggest friend and enemy. Performing live is, above all, performing *for* an audience, involving mutual interaction. It is the magic of the moment that makes it one of a kind. Live is now and present.

4. *Do you feel any different when making a mediatised performance/recording with no public being present?*

My motivations and goals are different. In general, I enter a recording studio with a diverse mentality. It is more of hard work and polishing to perfection what happens in a studio. I care only about the end result and its level rather than the actual process of performing, which so central for live performance.

5. *How does the presence of audience influence your performance? Is there any impact for your psychological mind-set or artistic or technical characteristics while performing live?*

There is a certain amount of drive every time you perform on stage. Nobody can ever get completely comfortable with one's nerves and thrill of being watched and listened to, however, one can get easily too comfortable with the same programs.

6. *Regarding live performance, is there any noticeable difference in your preparation for a live versus a mediatised performance?*

Nowadays people come to the concerts to be entertained, to enjoy listening and watching the artists perform to and for them. It is a form of being exclusive as nowadays you can have access to virtually any kind of art form via the Internet. People who still do attend live

performances want to be exceptional, culturally inspired and part of a happening, taking place in the now.

7. *What is your personal preference: live or non-live performance?*

Live performance is where my career is rooted at since the olden days. However, I must admit that even ten two twenty years ago, live performances used to be *the* way to enjoy classical music concerts, however, the technological advance has shaped a whole new concept of access to it. Inventions, like digital concert halls, the Berlin one being an extraordinary successful example, have revolutionised the perception of how to enjoy *live* performances. There are, surely, advantages and disadvantages to it but I can assure you that what any musician is like a sensitive radar catching all the signals coming from his surrounding, and therefore, the audience, physically being present, being there, is what makes a performance live. We artists need you as an integral part to produce what we produce best- great music.

8. *To you as an artist, what is the value of live performance today?*

Performing live is continuing the tradition of the classical music practice. I am a huge fan of historically informed performance, which strives to get as authentic as possible regarding the time when it was performed. There were virtually no means of recording or reproducing such performances in a digital way in their original performances, which is why it is so important to perform them live, for an audience, like they were intended to.

9. *Do you yourself attend live concerts as a member of the public?*

To be honest, very rarely. I just do not have the luxury of time, which I spend mostly travelling, rehearsing and giving concerts and recitals myself.

10. *What does the future hold for live performance? In your opinion, is it going to become more valuable than ever before or rather get extinct?*

Live performance will continue to exist because this is a fundamental art form, and people do not underestimate fundamentals. We maybe in a crisis, we may live in a digital age laden with MP3 recordings but live performance is not at risk. As long as art exists live performance will flourish for its uniqueness and exclusivity.

## 10.4. Interview with Floris Onstwedder, Dutch Trumpet Player

### 1. *How long have you been performing on stage with audience being present?*

Oh, that is a good question. I think this took off from about more or less.... I think the first serious kind of thing was when I was ten years old. It was a very young age but it got more serious and serious by the years. Therefore, it started more for fun of course.

### 2. *How often do you perform concerts for public?*

Of course this changes, this is always a struggle of a soloist, we always have to sit next to the phone and wait till they call so it is very different on a monthly basis but the average will be maybe a couple of times a month if you would spread it throughout a year, mostly big things but also smaller things. It varies a lot.

### 3. *What do you find characteristic or special about performing live?*

Special about live is, of course, that you have only one opportunity and that is exactly what makes it so special: the difference between recording sessions and concerts is that the danger in recordings tends to lie in the fact that perfection gets more important than the real, the actual music and the emotions in the music. In a live performance there are much more risks involved, surely, because you have this only one chance and things can go wrong, and you cannot repeat it. But this risk brings with it such an excitement actually that it can also lead to very special things that are never heard in recorded sessions. There is a bigger level of excitement, which can go two ways.

### 4. *Do you feel any different when making a mediatised performance/recording with no public being present?*

There for sure is a difference and the only scary thing in a recording studio is the red light that is on meaning 'recording'. This is a very scary phenomenon honestly but in a live performance there is more or less on average let's say one thousand of those red lights, and with red lights there I mean the people in the hall, who all are listening. Thus in a recording studio you can be more calm and relaxed because I know from mine and others' experiences that recording artists sometimes come to the studio, start playing, and say: "well, sorry but this is not my day, we will continue tomorrow". This is possible to do and this is unthinkable in a concert hall obviously.

### 5. *How does the presence of audience influence your performance? Is there any impact for your psychological mind-set or artistic or technical characteristics while performing live?*

Yes, there is for sure and impact. It is a personal impact, this will change or this will be different per person because it brings pressure. There are many reasons why but obviously

for everybody there will be a common sense of pressure and how an artist deals with this is crucial. It can be your defeat or you can use it as a positive impulse, which can lead to very special performances including a high level of excitement and energy again. You have to steer it in the right direction and use it in your advantage.

6. *Regarding live performance, is there any noticeable difference in your preparation for a live versus a mediated performance?*

Yes, in a live concert you have to ensure that you will be able to have the piece safe, the play it at any occasion or any state of mind or physique. On your worst day, and I can tell you, the day you have to perform will be your worst day, that is how it works. It always feels like so because of the attention and so on. It can feel like a bad day, but even on those days the level has to be very much good enough to be a success. So the preparation has to be a bit more on the safe rather than going in extremes talking about musicality, tempo, and those kind of technical things. You can express maybe more in recordings as you can go further, take more risks, you can re-do it, push limits more. Whereas in a live performance you have to play more safe. Therefore, the preparation for this is slightly different.

7. *Live performance is ephemeral, it is very fragile and it is just a moment. The audience will see any imperfection in live performance as a moment, part of a bigger picture with atmosphere, the hall, the acoustics, etc. Whereas recordings are reproduced and distributed countless times, which can put certain tension on making it perfect, do you agree?*

This is then, the scary thing of performance because people expect certain perfection and expectations are very different. I agree that it is not really about perfection in a live performance. My teacher once said: "I prefer one or two wrong notes and really emotional music rather than just perfection and stiff, machine like playing". The perfection is not as important as the music. I am just saying that in a live performance there is no room to experiment with this and in a recording there might be, which makes a difference.

8. *What is your personal preference: live or non-live performance?*

It is a good question. Well, I like of course my studio recordings because those you just polish or you just re-do it. Sometimes you need one or two takes, but sometimes you need five, you just re-do it until you are satisfied completely. A live performance has only one take but I think that actually the live performance is what really counts. We all play great in our practice rooms and in the recording studios, which are more or less practice rooms. It will be great or minimum at your best. Bringing that to the stage is surely a very different skill and one of the most difficult and important ones.



9. *To you as an artist, what is the value of live performance today?*

This is the actual thing. Music recorded is a recall of what happened in the studio, a live performance is making something new, not something you played a thousand times, it is a new thing you are creating on stage. It is a new creation so if you want to keep art alive and keep pushing the culture then the performances have to take place. This is the most significant thing I think. A recording is just a CD or an MP3.

10. *Do you yourself attend live concerts as a member of the public?*

Of course. It is very important I think, especially to see great artist I wanted to say but this is not true. You can learn from every artist and everybody does it in his own way. Even if people do things wrongly from your perspective, you learn from this, you see what is going wrong, you are aware of this, you just think about it when you are yourself on that stage. This is really crucial apart from the fact that I really enjoy seeing people create new things with all the pieces. It is a beautiful thing. I do it as often as possible honestly.

11. *What does the future hold for live performance? In your opinion, is it going to become more valuable than ever before or rather get extinct?*

Well, because of the possibility nowadays, the easiness to make own recordings with great phones and great microphones, etc. Everybody has a personal studio in their home more or less and it is easy to record. If you see, for example, on Youtube how many recordings of the pieces there are, then a good recording becomes less special. You see tons of those nowadays. A great performance becomes something more special than a great recording. It is something rarer. Special recordings are more around and accessible today.

12. *Where do you see yourself in 10 years as an artist?*

I have a favourite piece, it is called Shostakovich Piano Concerto No. 1 and I wish very much to play this with a beautiful pianist let us say in Carnegie Hall. This is still one of the biggest dreams I still have to accomplish so I am working on it, wishing, hoping and looking forward to it.

## 10.5. Interview with Giovanca, Dutch Pop Singer

1. *How long have you been performing on stage with audience being present?*

I have been on stage since a very young age! I sang in the shower and for my family ever since I could produce my first words and the first official performance came around five years old. I performed a solo with a gospel choir during a Church service. The pop career took off from about the age of twelve or thirteen.

2. *How often do you perform concerts for public?*

Good question. My performance intensity depends on the season, obviously, just like for most of the pop musicians. The spring, summer and Christmas periods are very intense, whereas the autumn is more chilled and relaxed.

3. *What do you find characteristic or special about performing live?*

Live is all about the fun and the public of course. Anything can go wrong, which makes you double as stressed and thrilled any other format. Live is where you show what you are made of and what your skills are. Audience as well as the artist herself expect a certain level. I like to challenge myself and sing live. Today, with all the means available, you can sound perfectly on a phonogram but there is nothing but 'liveness' in it.

4. *Do you feel any different when making a mediated performance/recording with no public being present?*

Yes, huh, I feel more relaxed and calm because I know that I can let my voice come out and shine. For example, sometimes the voice is not warmed up enough in the early hours of the day or physically not completely healthy but in time you can experiment and change a lot. Normally, in the recording studio, I never use my first take, it is an important one to make as it gives you confidence, however, it is rarely perfect. Singers, who use their body, namely fragile voice, as an instrument have a very different way of dealing with performance and finding the right balance.

5. *How does the presence of audience influence your performance? Is there any impact for your psychological mind-set or artistic or technical characteristics while performing live?*

Well, umm... as I have said before, I am very excited and eager to perform for an audience. It is like facing a great but rewarding challenge. I can really share my music on stage, the people sing along, clap together in rhythm or even dance with me. There is literally no better way for an artist, I mean a singer, to express his music rather than

walking up to stage and opening up your heart for the crowd. It is a massive and overwhelming experience both mentally and physically.

6. *Regarding live performance, is there any noticeable difference in your preparation for a live versus a mediatised performance?*

Yes, very much indeed... When I am on stage, I have to move a lot, not only to cross the stage from one edge to the other, but also to interact with public, back vocals and other musicians on stage, to look at the cameras surrounding me, to dance a set of choreography made especially for that particular performance, etc. This kind of show performance requires a great deal of rehearsals obviously so the preparations is very different from that for the one for live concert. Sometimes the preparation can be less intensive, of course, if I, for example, sing a calm ballade with just an acoustic guitar accompanying.

7. *What is your personal preference: live or non-live performance?*

Live, live and once more live! There can be nothing more exciting for a musician as to share his twist of the wrist with his/her fans. I am always so thankful for the people who dedicate their time and money and come to support and listen to my music. They inspire me to write new and even better songs.

8. *To you as an artist, what is the value of live performance today?*

I think to me personally live performance is means to spread the word out there, spill my soul into the wide world and share the music sounding in me every minute of the day. In pop music especially, we as singers can really reach out to the masses, the broad audiences and send an important message of hope and love. I realise that in practice, unfortunately, the message can sometimes be distorted, misleading or even obscene.

9. *Do you yourself attend live concerts as a member of the public?*

Sometimes, if I have time in between performing myself.

10. *What does the future hold for live performance? In your opinion, is it going to become more valuable than ever before or rather get extinct?*

The future is exciting but obscure. I mean when I look what is happening in our media-soaked digital revolution and recordings it gets a bit scary. So many record shops have been closed, all the music is out there online, on YouTube, Spotify, SoundCloud and Vimeo. The CDs are becoming fossils and soon there will be nothing to physically touch in a record. Is there something like this awaiting the live performances too, I wonder? Well, let us be positive and hope that the humanity just simply follows its natural course of

evolution and there is nothing to be alarmed about. I mean after all, there are some eternal values, like love, peace and family, therefore I believe that music, and especially live music will continue to fascinate the generations to come.