



# Høgskulen på Vestlandet

## Masteroppgave

MACREL-OPG

### Predefinert informasjon

<b>Startdato:</b>	01-11-2021 09:00	<b>Termin:</b>	2021 HØST1
<b>Sluttdato:</b>	15-11-2021 14:00	<b>Vurderingsform:</b>	Norsk 6-trinns skala (A-F)
<b>Eksamensform:</b>	Masteroppgave		
<b>Flowkode:</b>	203 MACREL-OPG 1 OM-1 2021 HØST1 stord		
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# Audio visual improvisation

A study of an multimodal artistic process



PETER HANSSON

## Abstract

“Audio-visual improvisation” is a study of a multimodal artistic process in a collaboration between a draughtsman and musicians.

In this artistic research project, I drew ten drawings in collaboration with two musicians. I created four drawings with each of the musicians and two with the musicians together as a duo. There is one guitarist and one pianist participating in this project.

The empirical sessions were over three days. The first eight drawings were created over two consecutive days. Two drawings with piano and two with guitar each day. A week later we reassembled and did two more sessions.

My intention with this project is to find out more about the process of cross-discipline improvisation and try to study how such processes develop and how music and drawing might relate to each other during such a process. My motivation is also connected to the project's relevance for arts education in primary and secondary school.

I present the story of the creation of each of the drawings as a picture process story. Part of my analysis and reflection is a joint reflection with the participating musician after each picture. In the end, I present a conclusive reflection on the whole empirical work.

## Sammendrag

“Audio visuell improvisasjon”, en studie av en multimodal kunstprosess i samarbeid med tegner og musikker.

I denne oppgaven har jeg tegnet ti tegninger i samarbeid med to musikere. Jeg har tegnet fire tegninger med hver av musikerne og to tegninger er gjort med begge musikerne sammen som en duo. Det er en gitarist og en pianist som deltar i prosjektet.

Øktene har vært gjennomført over tre dager. De åtte første tegningene ble lagd de to første dagene med fire økter per dag. To økter med hver musiker per dag. Etter en uke samlet vi oss på nytt og gjennomførte to økter, nå med begge musikerne samtidig som en duo. Hensikten med oppgaven er å finne ut mer om hva som skjer i en tverrfaglig improvisasjon forsøke å studere hvordan en slik prosess utvikler seg og hvordan tegning og musikk forholder seg under prosessen. Min motivasjon er også knyttet til prosjektets relevans for kunst undervisning i skolen.

Som empiri presenterer jeg fortellingen om hvordan hvert enkelt bilde har blitt til, sammen med en refleksjon av deltakende musikker og meg etter hvert bilde. Til avslutting gjør jeg en refleksjon av den samlede empirien.



## Preface / Acknowledgement

This paper could not be written without the support and patience from my wife Signe and my daughters Linn, Sanne and Siri who have all helped me in different ways to make this come through thank you.

Teacher at the Art and Crafts faculty thank you for support and patience and sharing your knowledge. And a special thank you to prof. Magne Espeland for guidance and positive support to the end.

I like to say thank you to my participants cannot say how much I value there musical ability and positive approach to this matter.

It has been a long journey longer than expected, with the covid 19 pandemic forcing faculties to shut down. The pandemic changed the form of this research two times this until it forced me to carry it through in this final form.

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## Introduction

### Me

Drawing is something I have been doing as long as can remember. I used to draw on the back of old restaurant menus that my father brought home from work. My production of artistic creations includes drawings with charcoal and pencil, water colours, oil paintings, linoleum prints, wood and dry-needle prints and woodwork design, like a chair and electric-guitar. I have also done a few miniature statuette castings in different metals. I like to try new things and materials to explore what possibilities that are within the material or process.

I have a passion for music. I got my first guitar at the age of nine. I still play as often as I can, but my talent lays in the visual arts.

My main occupation has been as a dental technician; I made false teeth in ceramics custom made for each patient. This means to create a replica of their natural teeth, which has to blend in with the natural teeth of the patient. I did this for a very long time, until 2009, and I started on a new journey of becoming a preschool teacher at the Western Norway University of Applied Science (HVL). After finishing that and working a while I went back and to HVL and started on arts and crafts studies, something that eventually lead me to this master thesis.

### The research

Audio visual improvisation is what I call the activity I have made this master research on. I wanted to know more about the process of the collaboration in this multimodal artistic activity. In today's society we are relating to multimodal messages every day. We find it in social media, on TV and many other places. This is much due to the digital environment that surrounds us. We find this in the school as well as educational aids. My audio-visual improvisation is more old school and is performed without any digital equipment. Is there a place for this in today's school?

During ten sessions, have I together with two musicians created ten drawings. After each of the sessions, the participating musician and I talked about our experience. The sessions are recorded on video and the conversations are recorded on audio files. These audio recordings have been transcribed by me using Express scribe. After documenting the empire of the research, the participant has been asked to read it and comment on any discrepancies.

### Participants

My participants have been recruited locally at the music faculty on campus. The musicians are attending the same master program as I am, Creativity and Educational Learning. They are both in their twenties, Paul is a classically trained piano player and music pedagogue. Graham is a guitar player and a music pedagogue with his musical background in rhythmic music.

## Equipment

To perform this project there has been used different materials and equipment. For the drawing I used heavy floor protection paper to draw on, charcoal and chalk to draw with and a cloth. Paul have used a standard upright piano and Graham have used an S-type electric guitar through a fender tube amplifier and a TC electronic Hall of fame effect pedal. The session and after talks were recorded on a Zoom Q3 audio and video recorder.

## Location

The sessions took place in a classroom at the music department at campus.

## Limitations

In this research I have focused on the process in which these drawings are created. In my reflection I will try to answer what way things happened, and if I think this is relevant for today's school?

## Presentation

In the first part of this paper will I present my choice of method and some relevant theory, didactic relevance and earlier research. Then I will present my empire with a conclusive reflection at the end.

## Exhibition

As part of this master thesis are the produced drawings being exhibited. The exhibition will take place on campus ,rom or place is not decided at this moment. There is the work with mounting and framing the pictures that need to be done.

The pictures will be accompanied by QR codes. When scanning the QR code one will be directed to either You tube or Sound cloud, I am still working with this, testing different solutions. The aim is to let the viewers be able to listened to the music created during the drawing sessions.

## Narrative research

In this research have I used the narrative method to present my work. The empire is presented with stories, one story about the creation of each picture which is followed by a conversation about the process of each picture. This process has been repeated ten times.

Narrative research; the narrative is the story. A narrative method is a qualitative research method based on story analyses. This is most common in the humanities and social studies. Some researcher collect there empire from people's stories this can be life stories, or just short episodes that are collected to be put together with other short stories to a chain of stories. This collective of stories becomes a narrative. This narrative can be analysed by the researcher, who then can organise data from the narrative. The use of SMS, e-mails, interviews, photo, film, video any can of media that can tell a story with words, pictures, spoken language (Sørly & Blix, 2017, s. 25). This can all be collected and interpreted in different ways. "Both Event and experience -centred narrative research are assumed to be individual, internal representations of phenomena." (Squire, Andrews, & Tamboukou, 2021, s. 6). Narrative can be the method used in the research and it can be material to be studied. A branch of narrative research is co-constructed narratives that develops in for example, people having a conversation or exchanging e-mails (Squire, Andrews, & Tamboukou, 2021, s. 6).

*"Narrative research is multilevel, interdisciplinary field and any attempt to simplify its complexity would not do justice to the richness of approaches, theoretical understandings and unexpected findings that it has offered."* (Squire, Andrews, & Tamboukou, 2021)

## Audio -Visual Improvisation

Audio-visual improvisation, - what is it? Searches on internet give us a variety of options to choose from. Most instances of observed improvisation are either audio, visual or just improvisation. However, these days we rarely see a picture or hear sound without it being accompanied by the other. The multimodal experience is everywhere. Music-videos, commercials, videogames and much more. If we search on 'You Tube', the website that is based on audio-visuals, we find that the top results are mostly electronic improvisation video screens and electronic interface that can process sound and picture in real-time. Further down there are dancers that improvises to music. It is not easy to find literature on drawings and music improvising together. The concept of improvisation, on the other hand, is well established.

## Improvisation

Det Store Norske Leksikon lists 217 hits for the concept 'improvisation'. The common ground for most of them is "to create in the moment.". In art and music, improvisation is different from everyday improvisations to solve problems or challenges in that it is described as a concept and activity that can be learnt including preparation. The article "Improvisation in teaching and education-roots and applications" (Holdhus, et al., 2016, s. 4), describes three major roots of improvisation: oral speech, improvisation in music and improvisation in theatre. To me, improvisation seeming to be closest to my audio-visual improvisation project is what takes place in collective improvisational music making. In both cases there is participants in an improvisation take initiative and bring the improvisation into unknown territory. Participants in improvisation needs to be aware of themselves and the other as well as the environment in the moment. To me it is 'communicative interaction in the moment' that is the key words in improvisation (Holdhus, et al., 2016, ss. 4-6). Jonas Kilmork Vemøy's describes this in his master thesis as "I just play". E.F.Clark's describes an ecological approach to the perception of musical meaning which also seems relevant to my project.

*"Perception is awareness of, and continuous to, the environment, and on the basis of that general definition, the perception of musical meaning is therefore the awareness of meaning in music while listening to it."(clark,2005,s4).*

In an improvisational activity everything that surrounds the improviser give information to the improviser. Everything around us has an unknown value until the improviser makes use of it and give it a new meaning. What one senses through perception to be adapted with the knowledge of one's consciousness of one's environment. (Vemøy, 2018, s. 15)

In free jazz they are all equal but with their different sound and tonality. This means that in free jazz improvisation there is a demand of more focus on what is going on and what you are doing yourself at the same time. There is little or no time to sit back and listen to what the others are doing before one starts to contribute to the piece. In free improvisation all are equal but all are one. Free improvisation is not about soloing and backing up. It is more about leaning forward and leaning a bit back into and out of the soundspace. (Johansen, 2013)

## Earlier research

Huovinen and Manneberg published an article in 2013 about audio visual improvisation. The name of the article is "Imitation, interaction and imagery: Learning to improvise drawing with music." The article is about a project where they put undergraduate students in a beginner's drawing class together with free improvising music students. They were "to explore interaction in collective real-time Art making" in this project they discussed the findings in the contexed of pedagogical work for the future. Regarding the possibility to incorporate music with visual art to unlock students budding artistic autonomy. The project group went through a series of practise runs, like draw to live music, play music to live drawing. This way both groups got to feel how it was when someone followed their lead. At the end the participants were sent out in groups do free improvising activity. For the final week they were free to choose in what way they wanted to collaborate. Throughout the

project the art students had made abstract drawing. Except for one student who drew some faces in one assignment that the group performed at the campus mall with audience. The other groups did their assignments in closed quarters. At the end the art students that were most satisfied was the ones that drew concrete drawings in the final assignment. Even though they just illustrated the music and could not influence the music themselves (Houvinen & Manneberg, 2013).

#### Examples of audio visual improvisation

VJ:ing it is a performing art where pictures are shown to the audience. The pictures are displayed on large screens together with for example live music (Lindqvist, 2013). The Vj can through electronic interface control manipulate sound and video in real time. The pictures may be stored in a prepared library on the computer or from live video stream during the performance. The performances can be total free improvisation with other artists or as often as video improvisation to a live music act.

Soundpainting, a multidisciplinary sign system and didactic tool, for performing art and visual art. This contains more than 1500 gestures and is used to do instant composing. The system lets a leader (the composer) control an ensemble by doing different gestures. Each gesture has a predetermined meaning. All participants should be on the same level as the composer or higher to make this work. The composer cannot sign what tone to play but for example, long tone midrange. Then they can sign pitch up or pitch down. There are gestures for specifics like rock, funk, jazz and classic and many more. The system originates from the 1970<sup>th</sup> New York USA and was created by avant-garde and jazz musician Walter Thompson (Blix & Waade, 2019) (Houvinen & Manneberg, 2013).

The examples above are all in some degree examples of audio-visual improvisation. The key phrases to audio-visual improvisation to me are, communication, interaction, responsibility, trust and real time.

#### Drawing

According to prof. Højlund one may expect that the unexpected surface during a creative process, but during the making of a drawing it is particularly visible that the drawing is giving you something. So, with the focus on drawing the question is "when is the drawing completed?" (Højlund, The completed drawing, 1997, s. 1). The drawing process is constantly changing between the artist and the viewer. If you see every dot and line as an incident, then an enlargement would let you see a chain of incidents in the completed picture. While drawing we experience a continuous need to make decisions about where the drawing is heading. The artist, the source is well aware of all the changes that is continually taking place. An artist in drawing modus often say that he/she lose their sense of time. One might argue that the experience of time is different during the drawing proses. Højlund is here perusing a philosophical reasoning the finishing of the drawing. One has to ask oneself the question: a drawing, is it done when it is good? And not at any other time. Højlund advocates that the answer is no.

A good drawing lets us see and experience that we are alive, and is that not what we want? The question about when a drawing is completed, should probably be left unanswered. We



might stop drawing if we find the answer to that question (Højlund, *The completed drawing*, 1997, ss. 1-6).

Højlund does in her Ph.D. thesis debate philosophy and try to adapt and find a way to link some classic philosophic thoughts to drawing. She also writes about the language of drawing but not finding a conclusion that she finds satisfying. Instead, she finds more questions. But she keeps referring to drawings as something positive. Drawings reveals something. In the same time drawings, she says, characterise consciences both directly and indirectly. A drawing situation stages the potential of the drawing itself. The condition that there can be draught is a force. This could be a generic force, or a force connected to an ability. Being aware of ones drawing ability helps you to experience the potential of possibilities (Højlund, *The completed drawing*, 1997, s. 1)

If a draughtsman is alert and recognise a mistake while in a process, where it is possible to use the mistake, they will then gain a resistance that can be very hard to create under other circumstances. One must be aware of the power of mistakes. What is it the mistake does? Why is it so fascinating? She gives us the answer to these questions. The answer is “something is finely happening.” (Højlund, *Mind the Gap*, 2011, s. 173)  
In most cases the draughtsman has to stage the situation by themself where the drawing might be revealed to be something strange and unknown. And then sometimes the draughtsman might get lucky, and an incident happens.

We cannot separate creation from activity. Without action we will not gain any forward movement. But if we act on conventions, we lose the creative part of our result. Furthermore, she says that being attentive to one’s praxis, praxis being “the pure unintended action”, it can let you cross the boundaries of the preknown and participate to creativity (Højlund, *Mind the Gap*, 2011, ss. 173-174).

A drawing will become by drawing, obviously. But it is not without difficulties to make a picture present itself, and make it stand on its own. The draughtsman must be willing to challenge themself and the picture that has been drawn. Being open to opportunities within the drawing is a must, as well as understanding possibilities of the drawing. It seems inevitable that there will be developed a set of preferences and systems to understand the alternatives of the picture by the draughtsman during the process.

Højlund speaks of rhythm and time and referring to musical terms. There is a difference between time and rhythm. Time is setting the pace, how we count 1 and 2 and 3 and 4. Rhythm creates forms, patterns. Like the dance Cha cha, the time is 1, 2, 3, 4 but the rhythm is 1, 2, cha, cha, cha. Time is like a grid and the rhythm is forms and patterns, repetitions. In music the rhythm is made out of pauses and tone length in varies patterns. In drawing we might have a grid on the paper, or not. We can imagine a grid if we like. The different lines and dots we draw make out the rhythm. So, it is the lines and dots that makes the picture swing. But still there is a difference between rhythm and noise. If we cannot comprehend what we see in anyway, if there is not any rhythm to be seen the drawing can be described as noise. Still a drawing in making may move in and out of the noise zone. It is when the draughtsman stops drawing the viewer can see where it is at (Højlund, *Mind the Gap*, 2011) (Højlund, *Mind the Gap*, 2011, ss. 185-186).

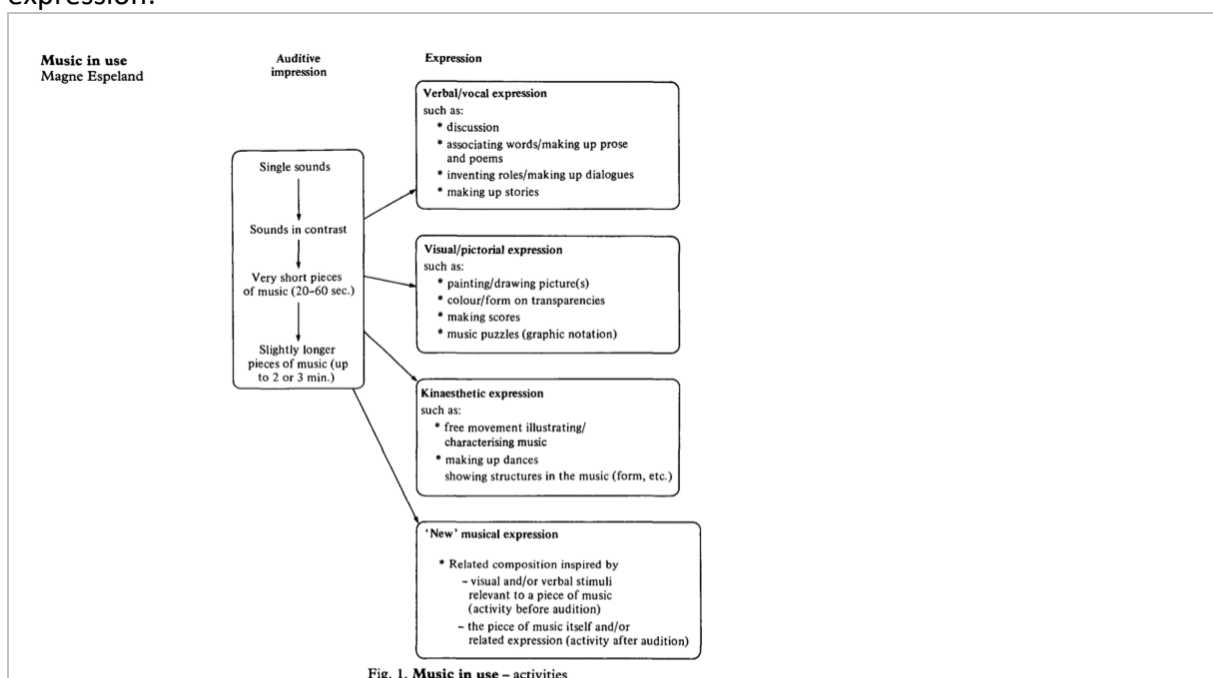
To get something down on paper there needs to be some action. If it is a motive, the draughtsman looks at the motive and then translate it into lines and dots. If it is a contraction drawing or a sketch aimed to visualise a 3D object, the draughtsman may have a picture in their mind. But what if there is no inner picture, where does the impulse come from?

At the end she says that the only thing we should consider when drawing is, whatever we are drawing we need to be attention by itself. And being conscious of that our consciousness lives and must continue. (Højlund, Mind the gap, 2011)

## Audio-visual activity in education and educational research.

Is audio-visual improvisation relevant for education? Audio-visual activities are well established in schools, but research is scarce and may not be linked to the concept of improvisation. Most of us has one time or another been given such assignment where the teacher asked us to write a poem or draw something inspired by music that was played in the classroom or inspired some other exhibited artefact. In my view these activities, which use music, can be described as examples of audio-visual improvisation because pupils are asked to create something *there and then* while listening to a piece of music.

In music education and music education research this a well-known and research-based method for music listening. An example is the article “Music in use: Responsive Music Listening in the Primary School” (Espeland, 1987, s. 283) who based his research project on an ‘impression- expression’ model where ‘impression’ is the music played and the ‘expression’ could be the pupils drawing and their reflection on the process as well as the outcome of the activity taking place. The “Music in Use” project presents the figure below to explain the relationship between composed music as impression and other activities as expression:



The figure shows the auditive impression in the left box. The four boxes to the right are activities tied to the listening exercise. From the top Verbal, Visual, kinetic expression and new musical expression at the bottom. (Espeland, 1987, s. 288). The “Music in use” program was a two-year project that prof. Espeland and his colleges developed to find new methodology for music listening, to encourage children to listen to different styles of composed music. The purpose was to bring composed music back into the Norwegian schools. The project was carried out with the cooperation of a group of primary school teachers. The base of the idea in this project is to use children’s response to music apparent by inviting them in a process that results in a product. The process and the product will be the base for teacher questions that can start a discussion between the teacher and the pupil.

This project has some obvious similarities to my audio-visual improvisation project, but it is also very different. Some similarities are for example the focus on the relationship between the audio and the visual, e.g., the impression- expression model, and the fact that drawing takes place alongside the playing of music. Differences are, first, that my project is based within a different discipline, art& craft, and the focus is on artistic drawing, and secondly that the music played is not repeated but is created alongside the creation of an artistic work. Espeland does not describe the ‘Music in Use’ activity as improvisational, even if the process described is heavily based an expressive activity aiming for a result and taking place there and then alongside the playing of composed music. To me, however, this looks very much like what I will describe as audio-visual improvisation.

## A Picture Process Story.

A picture process story is the researched based story of the process of creating a picture, a drawing. The process took place in a collaboration of a musician and a draughtsman. I will here tell the story of how each of these drawings came to be. This will include my reflection on the generation of artistic ideas and communication as well as on the actual production of the pictures. When I refer to the musician’s thoughts and what was on their mind during and after the session, I do this with the help from transcripts from our recorded conversations, referred to as the after talks. These conversations took place immediately after each finished picture/session. The length of the sessions varies from six to twenty minutes. All the sessions were recorded on video of me drawing and the musicians sitting behind the camera for sake of their anonymity.

Picture 1.

THE SUN AND THE MOON



The process of picture 1 bears all the signs of being the first one in this series of pictures. It is a very simple landscape drawing. The session lasted a mere six minutes. With the thought in mind that I might coerce Paul's music making, I was conscious as to my own body language and audible reactions to Paul's reaction. So, my movements were deliberately slow and careful. I wanted Paul to musically react to the picture we were making.

The drawing process. Episodes and interpretation 1

I

I started with a geometric figure, a circle and some vertical wavy lines. As Paul starts to play and I hear this soft flowing piano entering our collaboration. And I start drawing a landscape. I went from geometrical drawing to figurative drawing as soon as I heard the piano.

II

As I was struggling to get into the picture, Paul was trying to get some inspiration from the drawing and come up with a new musical idea. I was focusing on listening, trying to get the feel of the music. I perceive tranquillity in the music and there is a hint of space oddity in the first lines drawn on the paper. As I drew the shoreline, I sealed the theme of the drawing. Flat sea and a setting sun beyond the rolling hills. All viewed from the sea towards the shore. The music is so relaxing that the sea must be drawn without waves. Paul is playing slowly dark almost in an enquiring way as he is asking the way. When I start drawing the sea surface to his music it is natural to draw an almost flat sea. There are only the sunrays reflecting in the soft swells that gives texture to the sea. I turn to the sky to add sun rays and light to the empty space. At this point I tried a small provocation by drawing some thicker black lines witch I later soften by dragging the black and white together with a cloth. As I do this Pauls dynamic changes it becomes a little bit stronger and more intense but still an intermediate level. As I soften the last black lines Paul do a light, short and falling thrill as we go to an end.

III

Throughout the session I used a cloth to soften the lines to make them reflect the music as much as possible. There were some stress and excitement during the session on my side and still the piano playing performed by Paul is so relaxing and soothing. The sun and moon motive were unintentional. When I drew the first-round figure, I did not know the motive of the finished drawing, but I think it works.

After process reflection

The moon like figure is for me what gives the picture some magic. Like a sort of see-through celestial body. The same magic I hear in the music that accompanied me while drawing the picture. Having listened to the music several times, and though it is threading very carefully in the beginning it slowly turns into very relaxing music.

In the beginning Paul was looking for some confirmation in the drawing. He tried to see if there were any association he could recognise. At this time in the process, I associated his playing with dusk and dawn like the twilight time. Soft with a light tension and promise of something.

Paul told me after the session that he wondered how a long shoreline sound? Paul said

*“ Ka lyd har den? Det er strøget litt utøver så jeg tenkte, det er to farger så jeg spiller på en måte, det er gjerna det svarta som er det dunkla eller? Så har du det lysa, som*

*kanskje representerer lykke eller det motsatte av det svarte.”* (Paul, from after talk transcript)

To answer Paul’s question, it sounds tranquil and beautiful just the way he played it. Paul had automatically dedicated the lighter and brighter sound of the piano to the white chalk I was drawing with. And the darker and more moody tones to the black charcoal.

During the after-talk I realized that some of the musical changes came because I shifted from white to black. This was something that I did not notice during the session. I was not able to make the connection with the musical changes and me shifting colour. But the changes did influence me and the finished product. Revisiting the video, I can hear that immediately as I draw my first white line, Paul moves up the keys to a brighter sound.

Paul said that he was trying to move his playing beyond his comfort zone.

*“Det er klart jeg spiller på den kunskapen som jeg har på en måte....  
samtidig som jeg forsøker å bevege meg ut forbi feltet.... Det er en helt annen  
tilnærming i spelet enn det jeg er vant med.”*

This was a completely new way to approach music and piano playing. This gave him something to think about. Paul has his background in classical music and this type of improvisation is new territory for him.

This after talk relieved me from the thought that Paul dismissed the hold projected as waste of time. This was very much a trail run for us both. But after our first after session talk, I felt that this project has the right of life. This was utterly important for me to proceed with the rest of the project.



## Picture 2

### FOOTPRINTS IN THUNDER AVENUE



The drawing process. Episodes and interpretations picture 2.

I

This is the second picture and we have had a chance to warm up. Paul have had his first experience with this exercise. As a responsive watcher expected to express his visual impression and respond musically.

II

Paul starts playing some dark single tones, they are like footprints, so I draw footprints. Then I draw some branches higher up and then the tree trunk down from the branches. Paul inspired and helped me with the tree trunk as he stayed in the same musical landscape long enough. That way can we together move on to the branches and the crown of the tree. Shifting between darker tones and lighter melodic runs. When I draw a big, broad lightning-bolt Paul throws himself in there with more dynamic dark playing adding drama. This playing

continues as I draw black and white in the sky, mixing it to a heavy dark sky. When I reach for a piece of charcoal the music changes and goes back to a softer and lighter mode. This soft and light music goes on as I draw the figure under the umbrella and add some raindrops. As I start to draw the avenue and the horizon Pauls goes to a darker part of the piano. As I draw the row of trees along the avenue Paul starts to play more after my tempo. Short lines, short tones and the tempo increase as my tempo increase. When I am finished with the trees and start drawing on another part the playing changes. There is now a hint of jazz in Pauls playing as I draw the park bench and the little tree with the dog. He plays three tone runs like a blues guitarist but without the blues feel. As I soften the picture Paul rounds it of on the piano.

After process reflection.

The second picture Paul and I made has unfortunately not a recording of the after-talk. So, here I am relying on my memory and the video. I do remember Paul saying in the after-talk that it was a little bit easier the second time round.

There is a change in the collaboration in this picture the fact that Paul now knows what we are doing makes a major difference in his playing. It is significantly clear when the music makes a rapid change to a more dynamic and darker mode as when I draw the lightning-bolt and cloudy sky. Paul changes the music to a more caring and questioning mode when the umbrella and the little person are drawn. As I watched the video of this drawing; I was surprised that the little figure under the umbrella shows up so early in the process.

It is also easy to recognise how Paul reacts to me drawing the avenue. At the last part of the drawing, he played in the higher register, this gave me the sprinkles that make the bench and the small three and the dog. At the end I softened the lines of the picture with a cloth to make it all into the same ambience as the music.

This is a new landscape drawing and I realised when we were doing this how easy it is to go to the landscape and how difficult I found it to get an image in my head. There is a lot of ambiances, like a big open space in Pauls playing. The music gives me different feelings and put me in different modes, it does not necessarily give me images in my mind. I do dwell on the image thing because it is the one thing that gives me a jumpstart into the drawing.

Retrospectively it is easy for me to understand the choice of landscape as a motive, when listening to Paul's piano playing. There is a fullness in the sound of a piano more this time than the first session. Even when played soft its tonal spectre is wide. There is a significant change in the way Paul is participating in this the second picture.

All the way from the footprints on the path through the thunder and lightning to the bench he is adding and leading me with his music. First, he led with caucuses and later, he is more determent to make his stand.

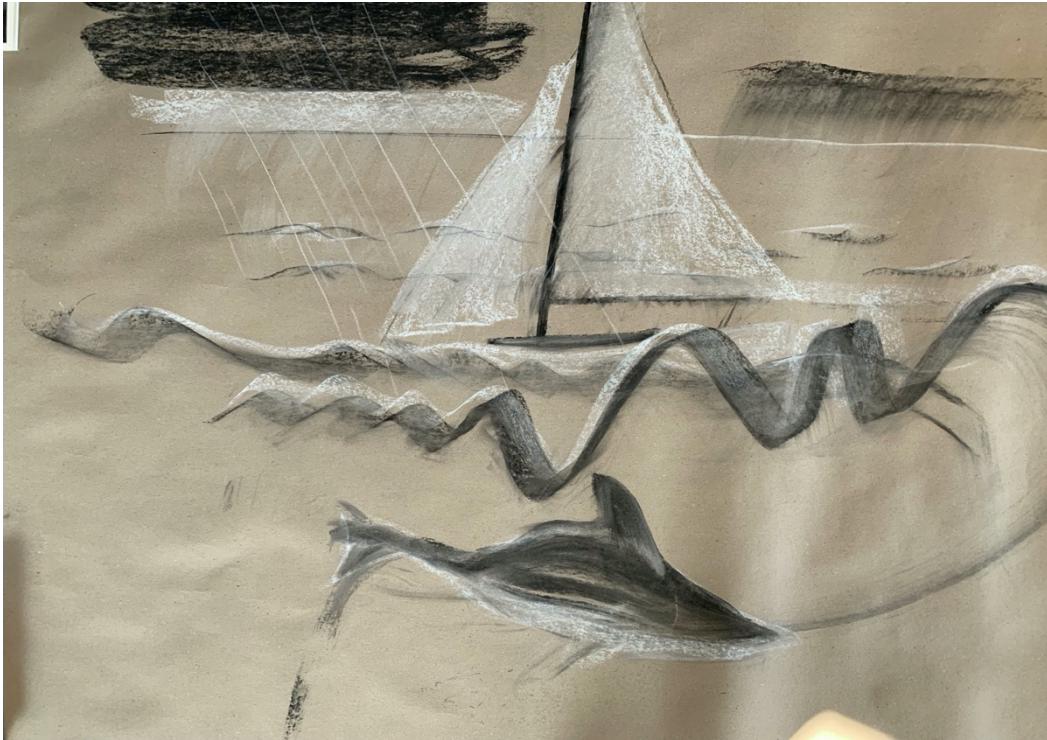


There is also more of a collective rap up at the end of this picture. That gives it a more unison feel. My experience from music improvisations is that the beginning and ending are the most challenging parts, especially when I go on stage with musicians I have not played with before. Especially the ending if there is not a collective desire to end. This ending felt natural, and the session felt completed.

It is obvious to me that Paul now feels more secure of his role in the collaboration. He adds variation of his own and at the same time reacts to my drawing. This second session lasted for twelve minutes.

### Picture 3

#### THE UNPREDICTABLE SEA



The drawing process. Episodes and interpretations picture 3.

I

Picture number three is my third drawing this day, but my first with Graham. This is his first session. I have already warmed up by doing two sessions with Paul. Graham did just arrive and does not really know what he is in for. This first session with Graham lasted about six minutes just as picture number one with Paul did.

Graham is playing an electric guitar clean through a tube amplifier. Graham asked me if I or he should start and I answered that we do as in any free improvisation. When you feel it is right you start participating.

II

Graham starts off immediately alternating bass and treble in slow four time mixed with arpeggio picking on the guitar. I start with a broad black line on the right side and follow with a white broad one on the left side. Drawing under the two broad lines comes a thin line in opposite colour which later serves as the horizon. It is a bit challenging to draw figurative to nonfigurative music. The music puts me in a mood, but I get no images in my head, this is challenging and I do not want to draw abstract. If he played a march that would be concrete. Graham plays arpeggios up and down and I draw some small waves. As he is fingerpicking my waves are small like seagulls as the dynamic of his playing increase, I draw a larger and thicker wave, in black and white softening, with cloth afterward.

There is a short pause in the playing when Graham lets the tones ring out to the end. Now I draw the seagulls in the sky and he follow with more picking and up and down. This is when I start to draw the sails and the boat.

Feeling that while I am drawing the boat Graham is accompanying me with more melodic runs. As I do the heavy thick waves the music takes a more dramatic turn. I turn my attention to the upper part and darken the sky. Paul is playing runs of tones descending from high to low, but still staying in the higher register. As we get close to the end, I draw the shark, the music is melodic and slightly darker than it was before and by the end of the shark like figure the music elegantly ends.

III

Graham used the dynamics in the playing together with minors and majors to accentuate what was happening on the paper and we came to an end together. Part of the challenge is that I lose my hearing when I draw. It is like I am only able to use one sense at the time. This is new to me and I have to be conscious of this in future sessions.

*After process reflection.*

It is different to draw with Graham, his playing drives the drawing forward. Paul plays in a more contemplating way. Even when Graham's music pauses there is still movement in the unresolved. This can be Graham's choice of tones or deliberate dissonance. The way the both of us took turns is like musicians taking turns in the driver seat. I can hear his response to what I draw. When I draw the heavy thick wavy line, the music changes. It was surprising being the first picture we do together. We do not fill the whole paper with the drawing and the music appear between the lines. It does not show in the finished picture, but I can see it in the video of the session.

As Graham said afterwards, we were playing simultaneously. It is like you are creating some sort of communication system. It was accelerating as I notice the associations and saw the changes in the drawing in time with the changes of harmony and disharmony.

*"Jeg var ikke bevist på det på en måte, gjentakende opp og ned arpeggio er på en måte, veldig sånn bølge følelse...."*

The fact that someone might experience arpeggios with major to minor shift like waves was something he realized when he saw my drawing.

Graham described the experience as a circular process, a bit like a spiral with a slow falling ratio until we reached the end.

*" .. ikke at det er linjert, utviklingen på (tanke pause) det er på en måte syklisk....jeg ser noe så må jeg tenke over hvordan kan jeg ta det videre liksom"*

The way Graham stayed in different modes and patterns allowed me to finish small parts before moving on to the next.

Graham "It is exciting to see the drawing, when I play with other musicians what's played is played. There's nothing there. Now there is a physical, evidence of the collaboration."

Graham expressed an excitement in seeing the changes that occurred on both sides. Being tone length or changes from sonance to dissonance by him. Or the shift in the lines of the drawing thin, thick and whisking from hard to soft by me.

Graham had thoughts about who was leading who and he formulated his thought like this: "So, your initiative became my inspiration, and we made this product together." This statement is of course valid for me as well, his initiative is my inspiration.

Graham had from the start a very grounded understanding of how improvisation function. I am looking forward to continuing this collaboration.

Picture 4

BIKE AND ROLLER SKATES



This are the fourth picture for me today and the second picture for Graham and this picture was drawn in short of seven minutes.

The drawing process. Episodes and interpretations picture 4.

I

This time I start off with two circles, one inside the other. Graham is laying down some variations of something that sound like 60<sup>th</sup> surf rock music on the guitar. Sustained tones are mixed with repeated riffs. I draw the iris of an eye. I continue to draw something that is going to be teardrop. Then there is a change in the music, it slows down and becomes a bit repetitive. There is still a drive and forward movement in Graham plays ascending and descending shifting back and forth, playing chords and single and multiple notes. Even with the chords he plays melodic up and down the neck. Single notes are mostly high pitched and

the chords are in the mid register. This makes me decide to draw a bicycle instead of an eye. I work on the bicycle and his playing keeps giving me new ideas. Graham plays more multiple notes almost melodic and the music becomes lighter, and I realise that the bicycle is placed too high up on the paper. There is no room for someone to ride the bicycle. Graham is playing melodic high-pitched tones as I am searching for a propulsion to the bicycle. I start to draw roller-skates and a little girl behind the bicycle. The girl is pushing the bicycle in front of her. It is the lightness and sweetness of the guitar that makes me draw the little girl. While I add some details on the bicycle Graham is playing short fast descending runs, la so fa mi re do. Starting at higher and higher tones. Then the music slows down and I draw some water that runs in the gutter. It goes through the grating down the drain. Dripping into the water below creating rings on the surface. The water dripping down is the same part that started out as the tear drop in the beginning of my drawing. Graham is playing with over tones and using his whammy-bar on the guitar pulling the pitch of tone up and down to create the sound of the rings on the water.

After process reflection.

Looking at the picture I felt that the bicycle was placed in the wrong and I somehow had to tell the story backwards. The music made me roll, there was a drive in the music that was reflected in the drawing. The bicycle is an artifact and do nothing. To add momentum to the picture I needed someone or something to move the bicycle. One might say I put the cart in front of the horse. To me this process is very much like a maze, I start out one way and it is a blind end, so I turn around and continue with something else. To me the music was more rhythmic this time than in picture three.

From Grahams point of view, he said that he had trouble playing an eye. "I thought about the eye you drew, and I realized I do not know how to play an eye." In hindsight it is sort of obvious that what he then played sent me in another direction.

Graham felt he dared more and was inspired by the sense of speed, "I like the sense of speed here, there is someone going somewhere", and he became more percussive, almost to the edge of us playing in time at the same beat.

To stay free, Graham tried to make his choices an impulse without thinking about consequence or were to go next. But at the same time being aware of any impulses from the drawing.

He explained it like this, "I am conscious of what I am doing, but I do not know if I am going left or right next. The improvisation process is not a well-oiled machinery and that makes me feel free. One has to be open to failure if result is important. Which may sound contradictive, but a bad result is a result, to be evaluated and to learn from. One must accept that the process can be a parallel process. I do one thing and you do another. But they are tied together. To make the two parallels meet, one has to use a provocation."

This is an event that require some practice was his conclusion.



## Picture 5

### TO LOVE OR NOT TO LOVE



Picture five, the first session on the second day. Paul is back at the piano. We are getting to know each other and we have had a night to digest yesterday endeavours.

The drawing process. Episodes and interpretations picture 5.

I

When I am preparing to start the session, I often have an idea of something I will attempt to draw. But if Paul or Graham starts before me, I stop and listen to hear where it takes me. It is a bit like having an opening lick or a short chord progression that you know works to start with, just to see what going to happened. Today I started drawing with the idea of a person sitting. But I just draw a few curved lines to place the body. My intention is to hear what Paul was going to play today. He added single chords to each line. Then I hear something that made me think of a little stream. I give up the person and I draw a white curvy vertical line and then more white curvy lines and then I added some black lines. The stream I drew now becomes hair on someone's head. Paul helped back to pursue the person who became a girl with flowers in her hand. If he had not continued to play the descending stream like runs there would not be a long curly hair. If he had chosen to play something else after the first

curvy line, I could not have continued to draw the rest. After the hair, I add some more texture and shadows to the body.

I then lay the charcoal flat and draw fat black lines. The fat black lines outline the profile of the girl and a darker background. Paul respond immediately with darker tones and minor modes and lots of dynamic going to a crescendo. As I shift over to the white chalk, there comes lighter tones. I work with details and Paul responds to my drawing like an accompanier. Paul gives time to do things with the drawing to make it look more complete. Now I move around without any plan, still staying true to the idea. I draw flowers and falling petals and Paul plays something to push me forward. There are dark tones and some drama going on in his music. I respond with heavy black lines and shadow of the drawing. Paul plays something hovering and tense which he then resolves in the end. While I add some white highlights in different places at the end.

After process reflection.

The session lasted for twelve minutes and today, Paul and I created this picture together. There was a drive and response that I did not feel yesterday. I feel that I sat in the driver seat a lot today and Paul responded to what I did. However, his response did have an energizing effect on me and made me move forward in the drawing. Like he approved of what I was doing and encouraged me to do more.

When Paul plays descending single notes quite fast, it sounds to me like water flowing over stones running downhill, like a stream or little creek. Long dark tone and chords are more like dramatic sky lines, tree trunks, big shadows or dark water.

Paul commented in the after-talk that he felt more coherency in the drawing and the music. He said it took a while before he realised what was on the paper. I said "(...) for example the hair came about because of something you played." Paul replayed "I noticed that (thinking pause) I am responsible for the hair. There is some negotiation going on and one have to cease the moment. I still think much of the lines of black is minor and white is major, maybe it's easier to draw to music than playing to drawing."

Paul continued "There is something about seizing the moment and react to it, like when you drew the tree trunk, if it is a tree trunk."

The sessions have become more together, we are becoming better in processing our impressions and react in an artistic way to express ourselves and communicating with one another. It shows that practice makes better.

This is the third drawing we do together but the first of the day. So, we have had time to digest our earlier expediencies. Paul is still playing dark to the charcoal and light to the chalk. But he is not as consequent as yesterday. He uses more dynamic in his playing to express himself. The shape and form of the tree trunk with the heavy lines was very much Pauls doing and think I lost pieces of chalk and charcoal several times in the last bit.



## Picture 6

### A HAPPY BULL



The drawing process. Episodes and interpretations picture 6.

I

Paul start and instantly I get the feeling of the Habanera from Mozart's Carmen. I get the image of a field with a bull and then the landscape evolved from this. I start with horns and the head, then I just continue with the bull. Paul stays in the Habanera mode with variations until most of the bull is done.

Then he starts to playing softer melodic lines. As I start to work on the background. The little stone bridge with the running water underneath. This is a reflection of the soft piano with falling thrills that Paul plays. He continues to lay down chords and melodic lines. Sometimes Paul plays tones with more tension and then he releases the tension with light melodic lines. Shifting from minor to major as I shift from black to white. I draw the waterline and Paul plays in the darker register as I work my way through the birds and water lilies. As I start to accentuate and add shadows to the drawing, Paul plays more dramatic and darker. At the end we are just sprinkling tones and lines and dots. Then Paul returns to a variation of the opening theme, I put some more black on the bull, and we are done.

After process reflection.

During this drawing, to stay in collaboration I had to throw away many ideas. Sometimes the process in my head is much more elaborate than what I manage to get on the paper. I wish I could file the ideas in my head for later use. Sadly, it does not work like that. I grab what I feel is right and the rest is gone. I might later draw something that I realize I thought of before, but that is because I have been triggered by something similar.

The dark silhouette of the windmill created some dark and dynamic tones. I feel like Paul is accompanying me with the music as I draw the mill. All the different items in the picture, the wagon, the bridge and the windmill, were just some of the ideas that raced through my head. Paul has the ability to play slow and soft and still add a little bit of tension or drama and then just as easily release it. With me being in drawing mode I get all these ideas.

It is interesting how certain rhythmic patterns suggests a specific geographic area. To me, this time it was Spain. "I don't know, but it is interesting that you say that you got Spanish associations in the start. I don't know what I got but it wasn't Spanish." The fact that we associate the same music so differently makes this activity exiting and interesting.

There is a lot going on in the picture. One challenge is that often the placement of the horizon happens late in the process. The foreground is also a very late addition to the picture. I never know what the picture will look like finished. Even if I have an idea that I start with.

I am pleased with the birds in the water. The birds in the foreground and the bridge and windmill all helps to give the drawing depth. There is something in Paul's style of playing that put me in the landscape mode. It could be that I find classical piano often sounds romantic. The heavy rhythm from the start returned before the end and that gave me the opportunity to add some heavy lines on the bull.

Paul told me he was trying to think of new things to keep from being monotonous. "It is this thing with the knowledge you have, how it put its mark on the progress. I notice I have to think new all of the time so that it doesn't get monotone." This is a challenge and something he had notice during these sessions. Paul said, "I looked down on the keys and when I looked up, I saw the horns and I knew what you were drawing." So, he continued with variations of the start theme for a while. So, I could complete the bull. Paul thought the picture was exciting and ruff. He said, "Just during one tone of thinking, I can lot of associations and one line on the paper can give me impulses to do lots of things. "Is it a happy bull?", Paul asked. "I don't know, " I answered, "but he looks happy".

This the sixth picture and the second with Paul today. This is also our last picture as a duo. This session is the longest so far and it lasted for seventeen minutes.



Picture 7  
BLACK AND WHITE ALLY



Picture seven, the third session on second day of this activity. To this session Graham has added an effect pedal to his guitar sound.

The drawing process. Episodes and interpretations picture 7.

I

The first I hear is Graham's guitar sounding like drops of something and rings on the water. One cannot hear rings on water, but it is part of the visual image I get. The pedal makes the tone hang in the air sustained with a big room ambience. Now I start with the horizon line across the paper, I have struggled before having to add the horizon at the end of the drawing. The next thing I draw is the ring's big rings. Graham is changing his playing from the dripping to a rhythmic chord based urban sound. Then he plays a hovering misty sound picking up a slightly distorted sound on top of the mist.

It is dirty cold and fragile. Unresolved tension towards Telegraph Road by Mark Knopfler sound wise. The urban street/ally grow out of the sounds from the guitar. I change my

drawing to an urban motive and start to draw a narrow street in perspective with houses on both sides. Laying down some surface on the street in black and white, at the end of the street I draw some figures. Then I start with the windows and the doorways. As each window is different, the music keeps changing. Graham's single note ostinatos gives me opportunity to do things like window-frames and corner stones. Working as fast as I can without rushing things, not wanting to disturb the feeling or atmosphere in the music, all the while using the cloth to blur the black and white lines to make a softer and dirtier expression. Graham is continuing to enhance the dirty urban atmosphere. The car is drawn as we pass the middle of the session, and we spend time here colouring and shadowing the street and houses. Graham is playing single notes mirroring my lines. The tempo is slower now as I add more windows. I do shadows and reflections and highlights. Graham increase his dynamic as I draw fatter black lines. As we come closer to the end, Graham plays something that sound like church bells with increasing dynamic and then goes into more melodic runs. This is when I start to colour the car and turn it into a police car. Adding a rooflight on the top and shadows and highlights in different parts of the picture. Graham is building up to the end and then just lets it drop and the tones fade out.

After process reflection.

In the after talks, Graham talks about creating motives to be repeated and he felt he played more melodic today. "I must say I didn't think much as I played and watched you. I tried to play on instinct, I believe I played more melodic than yesterday, several of the motives are repeated. But there are windows on both sides of the street it's like a mirror of the drawing". We also talked about the effect the sound of his guitar had in his playing, "The disharmonies from the effect-pedal lays and wake, like when I walk down the street, the impressions linger on as new ones comes along." The effect of his effect-box that kept the disharmonies lingering and let him play single tones on top.

Graham talks about the lingering, "It is like the way you see a street as you walk along, you get a new impression while you're still processing the last one." Graham said that he felt he played more instinctive today and he notice that he was inspired by both the drawing and the movements. I drew a short line he played a short note. He does not know what has the strongest influence, the drawing or the way I move when I draw.

Graham said that he had the lead in the beginning, and that I took the lead in the middle part. He was more focused on what was being drawn now, not so much of what had been drawn before.

He expresses a feeling of a tug of war going on, in a manipulative way trying to get the other to feel your way. He felt it easier today to get into the process as well as being more invested in the project.

I get a feeling that we now work together to complete the picture. It has become more than just an improvisation where we come up with new things all the time. It seems as though the musicians invest more to complete the work not just finish it.

This time I felt a bit confused in the beginning, but as soon as I found my way into the drawing it was much easier. With Graham's playing I have to move faster. He shifts his playing from fast to lingering. To be able to follow, I also have to go fast and slow. This feels good, I believe I am on the right way.

Graham played kind of repetitive, but by adding small changes it became variations of a theme. Like he said, "I don't like repetitions, they are boring. It is like watching someone draw the same box over and over again." I agree with Graham on this, repetition is good for training but boring to watch. Because of that, I prefer small variations. That is what makes a motive like this difficult to draw. Window after window, the way out of the repetitive circle is:

- To draw a different window every time.
- To draw a window, then draw something else and then go back and draw a new window.
- Or a combination of the two above.

This problem is only relevant as long as the music allows me to continue the windows. This is a collaboration and I have to react just as much to the musicians as they do to me. Total session time for this picture is 14 minutes, which makes it the longest session so far.



Picture 8

MEADOW AT DAWN



The drawing process. Episodes and interpretations picture 8.

I

Picture eight, fourth session with Graham. The last duo session and the last for today.

II

Graham begins with some rhythmic and pleasant picking. This time I struggle to get started so I set the horizon and sky. My mind is in a country kitchen, but I cannot get it into drawing. I draw a rising sun and a sky to get active and not just stand idle. After a while the music pauses and when it starts it is different and I can take the drawing outside my imaginary kitchen. After listening for a while, I start with thick vertical black lines. Expanding the thick lines to a tree trunk and branches. When I draw the crown of the tree, Graham is playing

percussive and dynamic on the guitar, so I soften the tree crown with the cloth the music softens.

I feel this urge to draw a person even if I know it takes time. I start drawing a person sitting at the foot of the tree. Now I sense more than I hear, it could be because of the way Graham played. He was backing me and did not intrude on me while I finish the person and some soft shadows.

After finishing the person sitting by the tree, I move in towards the centre of the paper and start to draw a horse. Graham is driving the music and the picture in this part. Chords and single notes in a swinging drive. I notice, while watching the video, that my drawing did set the time and rhythm as I drew the horse. I was thinking more horses and I tried to find a way to draw a flock of horses fast and simple and still with quality. But Graham drove me further out in the field. I draw a fence and a barn. Positioning this in the top left of the field gave the picture a better perspective. The missing component in the picture is a tractor. You see tractors parked out in the field everywhere in the countryside. Drawing the tractor got me close to Grahams playing. The sound of the charcoal and chalk was like a soft percussion keeping the beat. During the tractor drawing we were collaborating in a more musical way. This is probably the most country rock influenced part of the drawing with a hint of country jazz. The drawing had already set the mode, so I think that even if Graham saw the tractor, it did not give him any new impulses. It was all rhythm and driving the picture to the end. I cannot say who was leading who in the last part. As I draw the wheels going around and around, the washboard grill and the grass under the tractor short lines one after the other in black and white Graham is there by my side backing me all the way. At the end I add some more shadowing to the picture, like the tree shadow. And it folds to a short ending, with a question mark in the last tone.

After process reflection.

I realise that I have this longing to put people or animals into the pictures. So far it is only the first picture that is without living creatures. Is this because I find empty landscapes dead or is it just too difficult to make them come alive? I therefore might unconsciously try to avoid that kind of motive.

Drawing landscape with Graham is different from drawing with Paul. Graham is driving and rocking the process. At times, Graham plays like being the lead of a prog. rock concept album. Paul is hovering and sprinkling modes and feelings of open space. He plays as if this is a part of a romantic piano concert. It could be their different musical backgrounds. Graham has more of a rock approach to his playing while Paul has a classical approach. This could be why I get so different impressions from them when we cooperate.

Graham said, "When we started, I was thinking of The Lion King, an open African landscape and then when the horse came along, I am pulled from the African plains to Texas. " For a long time, I thought that I drew the horse because Graham was playing country music. But it was the other way around. I drew a horse and he started to play country. This comment from Graham accentuates my remark earlier that the horse came before the country music. I did not realize this until I watched the video a second and a third time. It

appears that Graham's response came very quickly. Together with my earlier remark that I sometimes lose a bit focus of the music when I draw, I did not notice the time lap between the two events. But felt encouraged by Graham holding the style of music while I was finishing the horse.

Graham says he never felt any disagreement about where we were going during the session. Here I agree with him. There were not any push and pull in today's session. "When you started with the tractor, I thought that this is going to take some time, let come up with a motive that last a while, because it is a collaboration right, when I see what you do, I can pave the way." Graham commented. Today there was an understanding of the picture, that someone viewing the picture cannot understand because they have not experienced the process of association while making the picture. This is Graham's remark "I think that it is hard for anyone to understand the association process from just seeing the pictures. Even if they heard the music, they would probably come up with associations of their own."

Graham felt that today he had been allowed to practise to concretise his creative ideas. So that it is not hundreds of ideas coming out at the same time. But sticking to one and develop it into to the next. He wanted to be in control of his creativity.

We both agreed that there was something honest in the process today. We did not put on a show. We felt secure in each other and we were able to let go and go with the flow. Graham had a few nice comments about the picture, he said, "A horse from far away but, far away from a horse". It was response to me commenting that I thought it was difficult to draw animals. Another comment from him was, "This picture could be an illustration for a children's book "Here lives...." I take that as a compliment. I find the picture balanced and able to stand on its own.

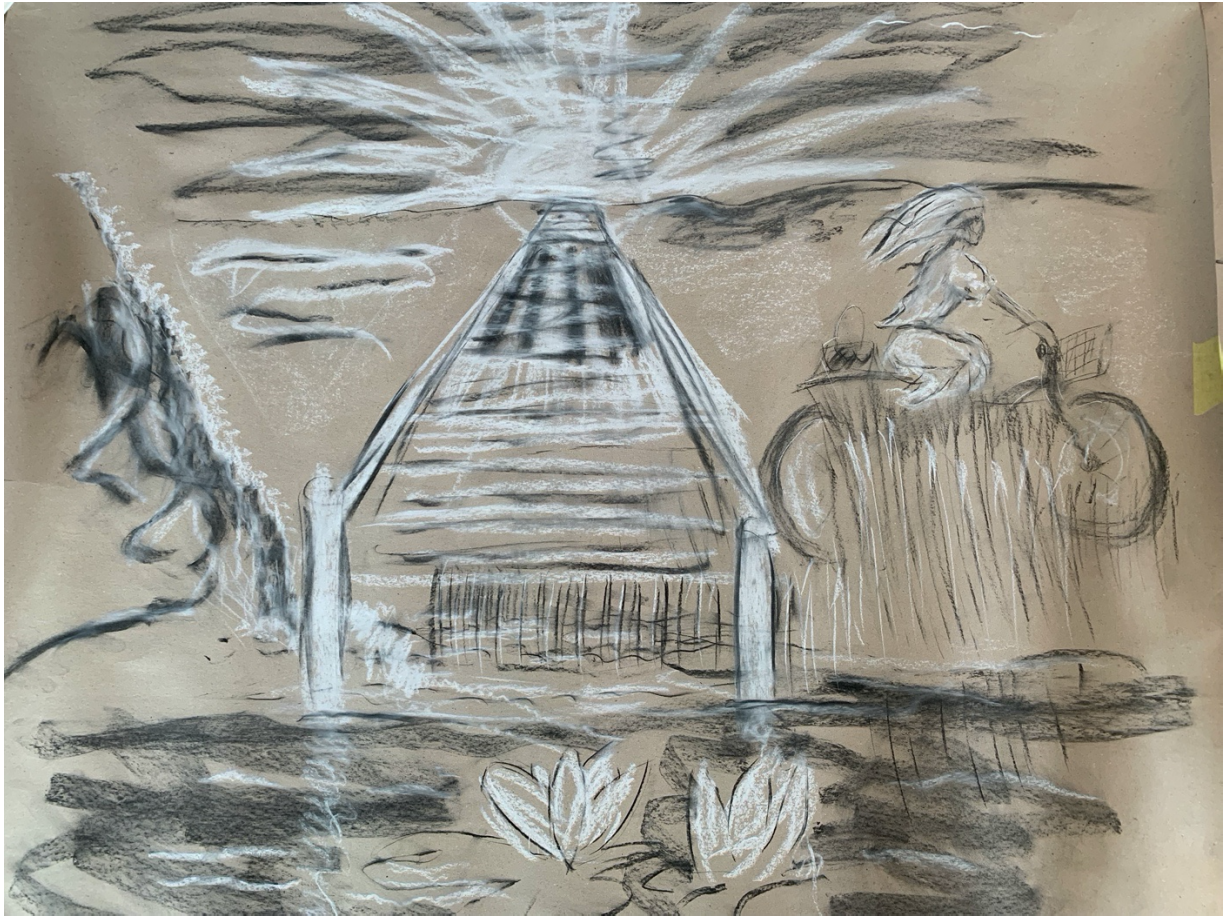
We used 14 minutes to complete the drawing. Drawing like this can be extended until every square centimetre is covered. This is not the intention in this case. And the session ends when there is an unspoken mutual understanding that the mission is accomplished. Like Graham said after the last tone rang out; I am happy if you are happy.

Watching the video afterwards I realise we spent same three minutes at the foot of the three, and the shadow runs in the wrong direction. It is hard to keep track of time during these sessions as I get invested in the process.



## Picture 9

### A GOOD PLACE TO BE



Picture nine. It is now a trio project. It is a week since we saw each other last. This is the first session I do with Paul and Graham together at the same time. There are some nerves among us before we start. Everybody is aware that we raised the bar for our performance.

The drawing process, episodes and interpretations picture 9.

When I start this drawing, I am a bit nervous, now having two musicians to listen to. The first thing I did was to draw one octave from the piano keys in a vanishing point perspective with a sun on top of it. Graham comes in immediately with single tones in a rhythmic pattern. Paul adds dark tones with small chords. I do not know where the sun came from but it is worth trying it out. The white and black keys was a way for me to kick start the musicians. Graham is leading the music with his rhythmic patterns. Paul fill in mostly with chords in a darker tone. After spending time with the sky and the sun I turn right and lay down some high grass and straws. Following up with a girl on a bicycle at full speed out of the picture. The bicycle was a most natural choice to chase the momentum. Paul and Graham are now taking turns being in front of the music. It is melodic, but there is a tension in their music. Graham now plays more in the darker tonality and Paul is a bit more lighter sounding.

After the bicycle, I find the music turns more dramatic and I go to the left to start a small waterfall. Graham plays the guitar like a mandolin when I do the falling water. As I reach the bottom and draw the pond the music softens. As the music calms, I focus on the lower part of the paper with some water flowers. Then the music turns more dramatic again, as I cover the lower parts of the paper with charcoal to create this dark surface of the pond. As I soften the charcoal, Graham once again lets it shine through the influence of Mark Knopfler. There is an open space in the centre of the picture. To change this, I start to convert the piano keys to a wooden quay. Extending it into the pond. While I was drawing the quay, Graham is in front with his guitar. After the quay, I work mostly with finishing touches as the musicians keep it going. At the last part the instrument mix, it is more even and they are both playing soft. Paul in the darker register and Graham in the higher register. At the end the music turns into a slightly romantic atmosphere. As I fix bits and pieces in the picture the music fades to the end.

After process reflection.

The duration for the ninth picture was 18 minutes. It was different to draw with two musicians. I felt I drew more from modes than single tone, chords or riffs. In a drawing like this it is hard to make everything nice and finished. Some parts are to be roughly felt and left as is.

There was a feeling of speed in the music, but it was not dark and distorted, like a jet engine or an V8 engine loud type of speed feeling, it was light and quick. So, I choose to draw a bicycle and its rider with her hair flowing behind her. When I looked at the picture, I saw a surrealistic landscape with piano keys in the centre. A project picture like this might be surrealistic, but I felt there were something missing between the piano keys and the pond. Because of that, I converted the keys to a wooden quay.

Graham asked Paul, "What did you think when we played?". Paul answered, "I thought it was difficult to play today than something on my own. There is an interaction and collaboration element here to consider". "Or is there?" I countered, "If there were any particular parts you felt changed drastically?"

Paul said, "I need to contribute with something so you can finish (...) and that stream is not finished".

I then asked Graham if he noticed this and he said, "to a certain degree did I notice it".

"Did you feel that you were accompanying him?" I asked.

Graham answered, "No, I think we took turns."

Paul suddenly says, "I found it exiting when the piano keys turned into this quay."

I can understand Paul's reflection, it did change the picture dramatically. Though I like that one can see the trace of the keyboard at the far end of the quay.

There is a sort of negotiation in this process of making a drawing between the three of us. Graham went all music philosophical on us and said, "I felt very open today, didn't think much, don't know about the others. Paul gave some discrete signs in changes more to do with texture and style than expression(...) There was something contradictive and unresolved in a forever minimalistic high tempo. There was drama, never completed or resolved. Things

happen all the time but never where you think it is going to show up. Today it was a bit us against you, or we were one component and you the other.” Referring to me as “The other”

Now I was drawn into a space where time did not exist for a while. There was only the drawing and the music. I cannot say I heard every tone that was played. But I feel the totality and the motion of the music when I draw. It is like I have said earlier, that I cannot hear when I draw. I do not go deaf, I just absorb the music, and get emotionally affected, and this is what I put on paper.

“When we started with the sky bright and light, I did the most major key sounding playing so far. After that it sort of got darker and darker all the way. Still, I would like to be there, it is a special place. I do not know if the day has past or it is the morning bath that has been done.” Graham said in his philosophical manor at the end of our talk.



## Picture 10

### TRUCK STOP BLUES



The drawing process. Episodes and interpretations Picture 10.

I

This is the tenth picture and last in this series of sessions. This is also a trio session with me, drawing, Paul on piano and Graham on guitar.

II

We start off with a call and response. I draw with both the charcoal and the chalk at the same time, one in each hand. The music is slow. Graham makes percussive noise on the guitar. Soon after things get a bit funkier. I start to draw wheels not knowing what kind of vehicle to end up with, the funky backup music makes it into a truck-like vehicle. The guitar is funky and percussive after the wheels and grill, I proceed to draw and shadow the outlines of the truck. Then I start to draw the woman to the left, the music responding both to my movements and the drawing. I work as fast as I can. Graham is repetitive and a

bit in my face while Paul pauses a bit and then enters with small soft jazzy tones. The person is large, there is much body space to fill. Then I work a bit on the truck for a while. Paul hit a chord with a gospel feel and then plays soft melodic single tones as Graham lay down backing guitar. Grahams playing is getting stronger and more dominant. Shifting rhythmic cords with single tone sole type playing.

The music now evolves to become so guitar oriented that I decide to draw a guitar player. We are in a funky country mode. Graham and Paul now take turns and Paul is soloing in a traditional manor. It is fun because Paul's playing becomes more prominent.

With a flick of the wrist the music shifts to light piano runs and high-pitched guitar dipping. As I add the male to the left, he is supposed to be a hillbilly type but ends up being more of a Fidel Castro look alike, the music becomes very still. I draw a sundown in the front window of the truck. The music is now in the jazz blues corner. As I use the charcoal to add shadows in the lower regions Graham is mimicking my movements on the guitar.

The final touch come with the gas station in the horizon. The guitar is in front with a soft mid-tone picking and Paul is backing on the piano. We do not do a fade or end this picture in unison it just stop when I let my hand down and the music stop right in the middle.

After process reflection.

We are drawing this picture together like the previous times. I draw were the music takes me. But as one often does when playing music, if you find/hear something you like you stay there to explore it. This is a spur of the moment picture. Not meant to be finished. The music to this picture was less floating and more mirror images of funky country, blues, jazz music with sprinkles of classic style piano.

Graham was tuning his guitar and we were waiting for him, as it looked as he was finished, I started to draw. Afterwards Paul said, "In the beginning I was embossed by the tuning to Graham". I said I thought he was done so we could start. Then Graham says, "When you started I bended out all the intonation on the guitar so all of a sudden string 1,2 and where out of commission for the rest of the piece."

"As soon as I saw the grill, I knew we had to get some serious upbeat blues," said Graham. "I think we were better this time. It is easier to improvise but there is the danger of getting stuck in a 12-bar blues. The man looks a bit like "Farmen Lasse". The people to the left its interesting Nashville meets rockabilly."

They ask if they played me into a corner. "No", I respond, "but the theme was set." Paul was thinking about the people in the drawing. "Wondering if they were a group of concert goers that were stranded, or they arrived at the gig."(...) The man is obviously a hillbilly(...) but I wonder if it's a tour bus or a truck " he said.

Graham said, "One tries to play, to create something. If you draw cubes a thousand times it is only fun the first two. One has to try to do new things and find new ways.

The fear of failing can often stop many from creating something. Instead of standing up and say this is what it became of my creation. I have only played one cool solo in my life, all the others could have been done better. But I cannot let that stop me from playing. because that would be counter intuitive. Graham then said, "Det er dørstokk mila", a Norwegian proverb describing how hard it can be to take the first step and do what has to be done. The closest English proverb I know is, a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step.

There is obviously a difference to improvise with two instead of one musician. To me, as a draughtsman, it is harder to influence the musician. And the smaller things and nuances in the music are harder to percept. In the last two sessions I had trouble to identify reactions in the music the same way as I had done in the earlier sessions. I also feel that my drawing was done more mode influenced than by the fine shifts in the music. Once the theme of the picture was set, we were cheering each other on. I noticed things like who is in front, Paul or Graham, and tempo changes. When I listen to the track, I can sort of understand why I can separate the two. They actually play very well together which is a testament to how lucky I am to have been able to work with these two musicians in this project.

The last picture took close to 20 minutes to complete. I think all of us were very loose and just having fun knowing this was the last one.

## Conclusive reflection.

Looking at the printout of pictures now lined up in two columns hanging on the wall, the original pictures are from 120x140 cm to 120x170cm, the use of prints is a necessity. My office is not big enough for the original pictures. Paul and mine to the left, and Graham and mine to the right. The two trio pieces are at the bottom.

The pictures were drawn in pairs 1,2 and 5,6 with Paul and 3,4 and 7,8 with Graham. There was a short break between the pictures when we sat down and talk about what we had done.

Paul and I started out with the picture called the Sun and the moon. It is a simple picture, without too many details. Here we were trying to find our place in the collaboration. The next picture, Footprints on Thunder Avenue, has a clear progression compared with Sun and Moon, here we find more items giving dept and life to the picture. The first two pictures are landscapes with deep perspective. Picture number three, Love Me or Love Not, is more elegant and romantic, and here is also a bit of progress, not as much as between one and two but it is a totally different motive with a shorter perspective, almost a portrait or an act drawing. The last picture in this series is A Happy Bull, a definite high to end the duo session with Paul. The bull in centre is timeless, but the small items in the background give the picture time and location. The pictures with Paul have an ever so slightly romantic flare.

Graham and I began with the picture called The Unpredictable Sea, it is a simple picture of a landscape with few items and details. It has the marks of a try out, like The Sun and Moon. We are feeling our way here. Bicycle and roller-skates is our number two picture. This is more exciting to look at with a slightly surrealistic tendency, a step up from the first picture. A black and white ally, making it the only drawing with an urban motive. It is a bit dark and disillusioned. There is a nakedness in the picture that makes it cold. But it still inhabits progression in the picture compared to the earlier ones. The last picture Graham and I did was Meadow at Dawn. This is a good stand-alone picture to end this duo collaboration. The pictures created with Graham do not have the same romantic element that pictures with Paul have. The Graham series is a little bit harder; the exception is the last picture which have similarities with the picture called A Happy Bull.

Both series have one picture that stands out from the rest. Picture number 3 and 6. This is interesting and I do not have an explanation for this. Motive wise, both pictures divert from the rest. Number three is close to a portrait in style and number 6 is the only urban motive. It can be that I unconsciously have felt that now we know each other well enough that it was time for a change.

As I look at the pictures the thing that is most obvious to me is the two start pictures; The Sun and Moon and The Unpredictable Sea. The simple feel of both of them, cold open landscape and the sea, one calm, the other unsettled. The marks of getting to know you is all over both of them. Let us jump to the last two pictures, both are rural calm settings, relaxed. Plenty with items in both pictures to explore. Almost timeless windmills, which could be seen in southern Europe until late 20<sup>th</sup> century and tractors in early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The rest is up to the viewer. When I drew Meadow at Dawn, I did not think of A Happy Bull. I struggled with getting over the black and white ally.

The pictures are named by me in the aftermath of the initial picture analyses. Some of the names are chosen from the motive, other names come from comments from Paul and Graham during the after talks. Picture number 3 was named after a comment Graham made on his playing after a drastic change while I was drawing the waves, "The sea is unpredictable so I played...". The picture, A Happy Bull, is named after Paul's question "Is the bull happy?". Picture number nine, A Good Place to Be, is named after Graham's comment, "I don't know if it's evening or if it's the morning bath that is over, but it looks like a place I want to be."

A Good Place to Be is my favourite picture. I like how the different elements in the picture support each other. The little waterfall that falls into the pond, the water lilies that lead you to the wooden quay, were the girl rides her bicycle through high grass. I really like the composition in this picture.

The last frame, Truck Stop Blues, is sort of a cool picture but not my best. The music was really swinging in this one. Country-rock tending to rockabilly at it most.

The music has been a crucial in this project. There are a few things that I remember from the music. The opening theme to A Happy Bull that made me think of the habanera from Carmen Paul sent me of to Spain in two bars. The cold urban "telegraph road" sound in the Black and white ally, the mode it created was tensed and ruff. The final truck stop blues,

with both musicians swinging taking turns in the driver seat. There are four groups of pictures linked to music categories, Paul's pictures, Graham's pictures, and category three. A Good Place to Be is the picture I feel combine the two musicians' styles and the last picture are to me more Graham's style but he was not alone, Paul contributed with excellent playing on the last track. Most of the music parts could live a life of their own with a little bit of editing.

I had set my mind too draw figurative during these sessions. Because my experience is that abstract drawing tended to end up as a living pictographic partiture. I wanted to see if the musicians were affected, by the images and how I was affected by the musicians. It became evident that even my attempt to try to stair away from the body directing influence it did not work. There is a good example in picture number 9, A good place to be. There is a little water fall in that picture and as I drew that Graham was playing in sync with my movements. But I think that overall, it work out.

I have heard that men cannot do two things at the same time. We are supposed to be poor multitaskers. I do not know if that is true, but I realized that I personally have trained my ability to keep two senses open at the same time. Correction, a draughtsman is multitasking from the start. First as a viewer and as someone who draws. Viewing and drawing is a simultaneous activity and then we add the listening. As I have mention earlier in this paper, I experienced that I was not able to listen and draw at the same time and because of this I missed out on musical details. The further into the project we came I felt I could absorb more of the music.

My drawing ideas developed from the simple landscape to more composed pictures. Though the later pictures are better composed, they are not pre-planned. I was influenced to so many more images while drawing the later pictures, and the practice I got from the early ones made me able to put different items in the right place, making the picture more balanced and harmonious.

In the beginning of this project, I was thinking about using a digital draw pad and project my drawing on a screen for the musicians to see. After I aired the idea with several people, I chose to do the drawing in the project on heavy floor-protection paper, using charcoal and chalk. The charcoal I bought for this project showed to be too thin and fragile for this type of drawing, so I only used it during the first day. The rest of the sessions I used the art faculties homemade charcoal. It is sturdy and more suitable for this kind of drawing. A side effect of me drawing on coarse paper is that it adds to the sound. Every line drawn makes a sound and this can be experienced as percussive at the most intense.

The major musical difference between Paul and Graham is their musical background. Graham has his roots in rhythmic contemporary music. He is used to improvise and being asked to play instrumental solos in band situations. This makes his playing more active, pushing the envelope and trying new things and as he said himself, "Go lucky, go happy". He seems to have an approach to improvisation that is "I try this and if it crashes, I just have to rescue it." It might be a social aspect; the rock music audience are often out to have a good time. They want to see the performers on the edge.



Paul is classically trained. He knows how to improvise the term ad lib. is not a known to him. But adding to a well-rehearsed piece of classical or composed music is not the same as free improvisation. It could be that the social factor applies to Paul as well. An audience for a classical resighting expects the artist to perform flawlessly, including ad libs. This may sound categorising but it is just my experience. We all have different expectations when we enter a concert, I know that I do. If I am going to listen to jazz, I have other expectation than to a rock concert. So, the approach to the task is different and I base this on their musical background.

There is one other important factor to take into account, personality. Paul and Graham have different personalities, as is expected. I would describe Paul as a shy, silent and thoughtful person. Graham is more outgoing; he opens up and speaks his mind easier than Paul would. This becomes apparent in the after-session talks as well.

I am glad that these two very able musicians agreed to take time from their own master projects to participate in mine. They have been positive and supportive throughout the whole project. I could not have done it without them. While packing down the equipment, drawing and recording gear for me and the guitar gear for Graham, we all talked loosely about what we have done. Paul says something interesting, "If we had done things like this when I went to school, I might have drawn more". To me this off the record comment (which I am aloud by Paul to use) is a testament that this belongs in school.

#### Technical comment

A technical comment: The second picture does not have a recorded after-talk. We did have the conversation, but it was accidently not recorded. Something went wrong and it was not discovered until later in the process, during the transcription of the conversations. For that picture it will be my thoughts and reminiscence and the video of the event, that makes the basis for my narrative of that picture.

All quotes from me, Paul and Graham, in the after-process reflection parts, are taken from the transcript of the after talks, done between the sessions.

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