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**Becoming One with My Instrument as A Composer**

Skriftlig reflektion inom självständigt, konstnärligt arbete

Det självständiga, konstnärliga arbetet finns dokumenterat i KMH:s digitala arkiv
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1. Introduction

When I began my project, I realized that I have never composed a full composition using my main instrument. I’ve always composed on either piano, guitar or on computer, and never on bass. So, it felt right to end my bachelor with a project where I finally embrace my instrument and use it for creating music from scratch. The reasons for why I haven’t used bass all the way through as a composing tool is because bass is generally not a chord instrument and I have a huge love for harmony, and I never felt that I could explore all harmonic possibilities when composing on bass. Also, I feel like I have too many of the same musical patterns I unconsciously use when both improvising and composing on my main instrument, and re-use too many of the same ideas. People probably don’t pay attention to that when listen to my music, but when I’m composing and start hearing those patterns it annoys me and I feel the composition is not ready to be performed. It can sometimes feel like I borrowed too much from another song I wrote, and while there is no problem with that, it can sometimes feel like a loss of creativity. The process will consist of 5 composition using 4 different methods. A scene from a movie as inspiration for the mood and feeling of the composition. A melody inspired by a memory from the past or an event happening in the present. A sequence of numbers or letters which has a significance for me. The last method will be using improvisation and how small ideas can become bigger composition. The method I feel worked the best will be used for one more composition. When the music has been composed on the electric bass, it will be arranged in Sibelius and adjusted for the remaining instruments. The songs were performed and recorded as a “Live Session” during our last rehearsal, and the process is here described thoroughly in the order of which the songs were written.

1.1 Main Question

When experimenting with different methods of composing and using the electric bass where I have many of the same patterns I normally use, will I be able to write music that feels different compared to what I have previously written?

1.2 Project Background

Usually when I start composing a song, the first idea comes from either a song, sound or concept I’ve already heard somewhere else and feel I like I want to emulate that idea. From there on I always end up using a selection of musical trademarks I have developed over the years. Some of my trademarks include; beginning the melody on the top note of the chords, melody and chord movement is usually very diatonic, b6 in major keys is usually used, use of the VI step in minor keys is always used and the minor pentatonic scale is also always present in some capacity.
2. The Band

Mikkel Hillgaard
Mikkel is a first-year master drum student at the Danish National Academy of Music in Odense who I had known almost half of my life. We have played together and been best friends since the 7th grade so I am very comfortable with his drumming. He is an exceptional drummer, pianist and composer, and much of my preferred style of playing and composing comes from working with him. Mikkel comes from a metal and rock background but has studied both swing music and jazz fusion intensely, so he is great at adapting to the styles he is presented with and plays it all with conviction.

Tuomas Korhonen
Tuomas is a pianist from Finland who I met through playing with Mikkel. He is about to start his first year as a master student at the classical department at the Danish National Academy of Music in Odense. I’ve only known him for 3 years, but we’ve already become good friends and I also trust him with this kind of music. Tuomas started out as a classical pianist but has since switched to jazz while also listen to metal and fusion music so he quickly recognized the style of music the project was. He is an incredibly talented pianist and he is also a fast learner with sight reading skills that are unlike anyone I have ever meet. So, I knew he would be able to learn the music very quickly.
3. The Compositional Process

3.1 “Crane”

The first song I started working on for the project was “Crane”. Here I used improvisation as my method of composing and came up with this 13/8 groove\(^1\).

(Ex. 1 Bass groove at 160 BPM – First idea)

I started coming up with some fills to fill out some gaps in the groove. I recorded it and started envisioning what the rest of the instruments should play. Inspired by Richard Henshall\(^2\) from the British band Haken, I tried to just focus on one small idea and then develop the rest of the song from that one tiny idea. I recorded it on a looper and started playing something that would function as a piano part. To make it easier, the groove got divided by a 7/8 and a 6/8 pattern. I used Sibelius to fill out some gaps the piano had between the accents. Already here I started to diverge from my plan of doing everything on bass. The pattern with the piano ended up being the A-section and the basis for the solo section. I wanted the song to have a big opening, so I ended up writing this fast riff\(^3\) which fitted the mood and sounded strong on both bass and on computer piano. However, when we tried it during rehearsals it didn’t work for piano, so it was later changed to something simpler.

(Ex. 2 Original piano riff)

(Ex. 3 The simplified version)

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\(^1\) A musical phrase with heavy emphasis on rhythm and feel in a consistent tempo. Doesn’t have to be predetermined and is normally more open for improvisation. Typically played by drums or bass.

\(^2\) Interview with Richard Henshall by guitarguitar.co.uk (2019)

https://www.guitarguitar.co.uk/news/140576/

(besökt 2020-28-02)

\(^3\) A melodic phrase with emphasis on power and can be seen as a balance between harmony and melody. A riff is for the most part predetermined and doesn’t leave a lot of room for improvisation. Typically played by chord instruments.
I began playing around with some chords for the B-section where the top note became the basis for the melody. To try and keep the number 13 as a guideline for the groove, the recurring time signatures became 6/4 + 7/4. All the chords were mostly within the G minor scale, but I wanted to give it some more colour, so I reharmonized the last 8 bars of the B-section using mostly the bass as a guideline for the chords with a chromatic movement. Inspired by the melody in the B-section the song ended up starting with a quiet prelude before going into the fast riff. Initially the plan was to have the bass play the first melody with a sixth below, but I felt that it would work much better with the piano presenting the melody first and then the bass would come in later to help varying the dynamics.

(Ex. 4 The prelude inspired by the B-section)

In essence, those 3 ideas are the song - The fast intro riff, the A-section and the B-section. Everything else is just ideas and passages created for a better transition to the next part, but not a crucial parts of the whole song. The C-section is the solo section, which is pretty much the same as the A section, but it just modulates in fifth and with 3 drumbeat changes. The drum solo was mostly inspired by the song ‘Flashback’ by Hiromi⁴, and makes use of another fast-pentatonic riff with ascending diatonic triads over 13/8 (3+4+3+3). After that comes some modified versions of previous passages which leads into the last B-section which is only in 6/4 to give it a more epic and anthemic feel. After that last B, it goes to the original bass groove and back to the intro, which also is the outro here with some extra content added.

3.2 "NOITT"

The second song of the project was an exercise in using cinema as inspiration for writing a song. When music is composed for a film, its purpose is to expand on the emotion and feelings conveyed to the viewer. Sometimes the music itself is written as a character or written specifically to the character in the story, where a melody represents the character⁵.

The score that is written uses the movie as its inspiration and the composer analyses what

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⁴ Hiromi – Flashback (2012, Voice – Track 2) 5:35 – 6:59
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqMzvPjT9aY (besökt 2020-07-02)

⁵ Interview with Wes Hughes by Meryl Ayres (2015)
https://wistia.com/learn/production/composing-music-for-video (besökt 2020-17-02)
elements they are being presented and uses them as ideas for basis of the score. The goal with the method is to use both as inspiration to write an original song. I chose to base the song on the ending of John Carpenter’s ‘The Thing\(^6\)’, which is about an entity that assimilates people, copy their appearance and character before killing them. So, the movie is about the lack of trust and the increasing paranoia that occurs when trapped in an isolated location with a group of people. In the end there are only two survivors, and both suspect the other to be the Thing, but it’s left ambiguous and the viewer is left without an answer. The title for my song is “NOITT” which is short for “Neither one is the Thing”, because that is my interpretation of the ending. It’s clear that the atmosphere of the scene is very tense and ominous, and the scene is just a dialogue between two characters named Childs and MacReady (Played by Keith David and Kurt Russell\(^7\)). Ennio Morricone\(^8\) composed the music for the movie and there is music in the background during the scene, but I wanted to use as little as possible from the soundtrack and make a song FROM the scene and not TO the scene. However, in the end there is played just two 8-notes F with a little bit of delay. That’s is almost close to being nothing, so I decided to use that and expand on it.

(Ex. 1 The groove from the movie)

It’s a simple scene which gave a lot of freedom to observe the part and compose my own ideas from what I am presented. I knew I wanted to use the groove and a transcription of the dialogue as a basis for the melody. This song went through 2 different structures. The first draft was much closer to the original idea, but it didn’t sound that good and was too long – So it was scratched.

The idea for the second draft came after hearing ‘It’s On’ by George Duke\(^9\). I got an idea for how I could fit the melody and the groove into a simpler composition with a funky vibe. I used the two 8-notes and made some variations with some chords and that became my A-

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\(^6\) The Thing (1982) by John Carpenter [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GA4Ozqt7338](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GA4Ozqt7338) (besökt 2020-12-02)

\(^7\) The Thing Creditlist [https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0084787/](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0084787/) (besökt 2020-17-02)

\(^8\) Ennio Morricone (Italian composer) [http://www.enniomorricone.org/the-music/](http://www.enniomorricone.org/the-music/) (besökt 2020-16-02)

\(^9\) George Duke – It’s On (1998, After Hours – Track 5) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYElTISaEo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYElTISaEo) (besökt 2020-17-02)
section. The B-section became the transcribed dialogue, but with the original the chords used as background music for the scene.

*Ex. 2 The transcribed melody and chords from the scene*

The solo section is just the B-section on cue, and then ending with the A-section two times.

### 3.3 ”95”

The third song is based on the letters of my name as a basis for the composition. I call it “95”, since it’s that year I’m born, and I also used that as my tempo. What I did was that I wrote all 12 notes, and above I wrote the alphabet but with sharps (also functioning as flats). Some refer to this as a musical cryptogram and composers has used this method before as a compositional tool, and a way to communicate with their listeners in another way. Also used by royals and military in the 17th- and 18th-century for transporting secret messages across the country which could not be intercepted by spies and enemies

I had done this method before in a composition class with Joakim Milder where I composed a song using all the same letters. I started by writing the numbers 1-9, so it would be easier to assign the notes to the letters. I ended using all of my 3 names, my phone number and my Swedish social security number.

*Ex. 1 Note Alphabet – How I found the notes*

Starting with my first name ‘Lucas’, I came up with the 5 notes – G#, F, B, A and D#.
Afterwards I basically just used those 5 notes as root for my chords and came up with this.

(Ex. 2 Lucas Chords)

I added the Gbmaj7 because it sounded as a nicer transition to Fm9.
The first ideas were built around these 6 chords. Though not pictured here, it’s actually a 7-bar period with the Ebmaj7#11 lasting for 3 bars. The reason for the 7/8-time signature is that I just added 9 and 5 together to get 14 and just divided it by 2.
With ‘Christopher’ I came up with the notes B E D F D# E B E C# D# and decided to mostly just use them as triads and use the first B the bar before as a dominant to E.
I also deleted the last E because it just didn’t sound right and added a B in the end.

(Ex. 3 Christopher Chords)

The solo section came from my last name, ‘Szczyrbak’. D# A# C A# A D# A# A G was the notes I had to choose from. I wrote it as flats instead, because it seemed theoretically correct. I used them all as 3-note chords and just changed the order of some of the notes.

(Ex. 4 Szczyrbak Chords)

Lastly, I also made a riff out of my phone number. I just jammed the notes within 7/8 and tried to figure out a rhythm. The phone number gave me the notes A# F F# B D D# G# B.
As with “Crane”, those 3 parts is the song. The A, B and solo section here is what makes the composition, everything else is just for a smoother transition. I made an intro out of the A section. It’s the same chords, just with fast piano melody in the right hand and a drumbeat, which I had drummed to myself for about a year now. I don’t normally write out specific drumbeats, but this felt like something that definitely should be played as written. The melody came from just singing over the A-section chords and I ended up hitting a lot of chord tones – So, I ended up using one of made trademarks here. The B-section melody is just the triads played as arpeggios.

3.4 “Tamaris”

Before I started writing “Tamaris” I wasn’t sure of which method I should use twice, but when I spontaneously came up with the opening riff, I knew I had to use the method of improvisation again and see how I could develop this.

The first 2 bars I came up with instantly and I played that for hours because of how different it sounded and how fun it was to play. The last 2 bars on the picture (as well as the following bars) I spend days figuring out. For this particular riff, I turned into a perfectionist. I wanted it to sound like there was a movement and not just random notes.

So, the whole concept is just add9 chord (without the third) arpeggios played constantly – That sort of became the melodic theme as well. I think I scratched 2-3 different ideas for A-sections. I then jammed on the middle section of the intro riff, and tried working that into the verse, but as a more toned-down version. The song is pretty intense, and I also wanted to bring it down at some place to create some contrast, but the only place it felt right was the beginning of the A section. The harmony is the same, but some of the notes are changed and the groupings are switched. In the intro it’s 7+9 and in the A-section it’s 5+5+6. The second A-section I had a storm of ideas that I thought were pretty cool, but it seemed like I couldn’t decide on which I should use, so I just used them all.

Even though I haven’t listened to that much ‘drum ‘n’ bass’ music I really had an urge to
incorporate the same kind of speed used in that kind of music and give the drums a lot of room. Those two A-sections also became the solo sections. The first A is the piano solo and the second A is the drum solo. The B-section came from my love for punk and pop punk music. There is a specific kind of groove that is close to my heart. It’s the simple playing of 8-notes on a few chords, which I still to this day something uses when practicing keeping time or different techniques.

(Ex. 2 The B section)

The thing about this section is also how little melody there is. I tried writing a bigger melody, but the chords and the accents dominated so much and adding more content felt as it was too much.
After the B section it goes into the piano theme with comp and then into the solo sections and back into the piano theme, but this time played only on bass with piano and drums doing some hits. Here I also managed to do a little ‘callback’ to the first song “Crane” with the time signature 13/8. I know it’s hard to talk about callbacks in music when not using melodies or exact rhythms. But here it’s in numbers. In “Crane”, when the first 13/8 comes, the groupings are 3+3+3+4. Here it is reversed to 4+3+3+3. I also added a new riff as a climatic end to the song.

3.5 ”Aya”

For this method the goal was to come up with an idea from either a memory or something inspiring occurring in the present. The idea for this came after I read an article about how Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart composed music from small phrases he had in his sketchbook. He would later come back to his sketchbook when he was looking for ideas. It has also been said that Ludwig van Beethoven would go on walks and coming up with music in his head. In the article there is also a quote from Gustav Mahler11 “Don’t bother looking at the view – I already composed it”.

In order to make this method work for this project, I had to come up with one or more melodic phrases in my head, write them down on paper, select one to work with and then bring it to the bass. I began humming this very easy four note melody. The melody in itself is probably not the most original melody, but I felt a special kind of joy when I sang it. I kept it,

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11 Article by Jon Brantingham (2011) [https://www.artofcomposing.com/02-composing-a-musical-phase](https://www.artofcomposing.com/02-composing-a-musical-phase) (besökt 2020-17-02)
and this became the song “Aya”. The first thing I did was write the melody down on paper and trying to see if I could do something with the rhythm or the order of the notes.

*(Ex. 1 The original melody on paper)*

In the beginning the melody was in G major and in 6/4, but that was quickly changed to D major in 4/4. I remembered a chapter in a book by Jerry Bergonzi called ‘Inside Improvisation, Vol: 1 Melodic Structures\(^{12}\) where he talks about when having a four-note melody, there are 24 ways of mixing the order of how you play the notes, referring to them as ‘permutations.’ Here I noticed that this melody pattern is two parts of major scale. If you start on the root and play: major second, major second and minor second. Now, if you play the same pattern from the fifth, the last note is the octave – meaning you are back to the beginning of the scale.

*(Ex. 2 The pattern)*

When I started writing this song, I felt it was difficult to separate this method from the method of improvisation. So, I decided incorporate the ideas from the Jerry Bergonzi book and I also wanted to approach this as composers do with 12-note compositions and divide the melody into the two 4-note patterns, where I can’t move on to the next pattern until I’ve used the notes in the pattern I have already begun using. Moving it around in octaves is fine and really helpful to give some more possibilities.

*(Ex. 3 The melody in the B-section)*

Here you can see an example in the B-section of how the top melody retains its system before moving on. In the fourth bar only 1 note is played but the 3 remaining functions as a chord beneath. The A-section and B-section are pretty similar, the main difference is the A-section is very minimalistic in terms of chords and energy. But they both make use of the same 4 note system in the same key. The melody in the coda hits home the idea of the system and also the power of what rhythm can do. Both patterns are played as a part of a descending D major scale and the rhythm is the thing that makes this a melody and not just a scale.

(Ex. 4 Coda melody)

4. The Rehearsals

The first rehearsal we did was on the 6th of April at Mikkel’s apartment where we hooked up both his electronic drum set and his keyboard to his speakers, and I had brought a small bass amp. Mikkel had rehearsed the songs and memorized them while Tuomas hadn’t prepared one bit – But due to his incredible sight reading he just read it for the first time without problems. We ran through “Crane” and “Tamaris” since those two are the most challenging songs. Afterwards we did “95”, “NOITT” and “Aya” in one playthrough. We played the set a second time and here we ended up playing around a bit on some of the songs for the sake of comedy and also because we were a bit tired. I was surprised to learn how short the set was with all solos and free intros included. It ended up being only about 33 minutes, which is a bit shorter than what I had hoped for.

For me the aspect of improvising became a bit accessible when I played with Mikkel due to the fact that he had memorized everything, and our history together as rhythm section. We were not using papers which gave much more room for expanding on our grooves and fills which complimented Tuomas when he was playing the chords and melodies. Sometimes when I was busy soloing Tuomas took over my role as bass player and exchanged rhythmic ideas with Mikkel, which gave room for some great improvisational dialogue. Since I used a lot of my time for composing and taking notes daily on the process, I sometimes forgot to practice myself which is something that is equally as important as the compositional aspect of the music.

“Crane”, “NOITT” and “Aya” challenges the players in their own different ways, and the solo sections can be really tricky. I made a backing track in Logic Pro X and tried some different ideas and tried composing a solo. The solo section in “Aya” has a very simple harmony and therefor offers a lot of options for different ideas, but sometimes it can be hard
to improvise if you have too many opportunities. “NOITT” was such a great opportunity to use a lot of blues licks\(^{13}\) and a lot of great ways to play around with the chords. I felt I’ve been away from the whole fingerstyle-funk soloing for way too long so the groove and tempo kind of felt new to me. “95” is the only song I really felt comfortable with soloing over even though it’s in a half-time 7/8 which is something I normally don’t play over, but the mood it sets and the three chords it uses just feels so fun to play with without it feeling difficult. I also think it’s a mental thing because I’m the only one soloing in that song so the feeling of being upstaged by the other soloist is not there. These three songs have really made it clear to me that even though I have been focused on the project the whole time I haven’t divided my time equally between writing the songs and also practicing them. All these descriptions of some of the songs solo sections are not excuses for why I had a hard time improvising; on the contrary, they are subjective observations of other reasons for what makes these songs hard and these observations might be overlooked when listening to the songs.

5. The Live Session

As an end to our project students were supposed to perform all the project songs at a concert on KMHs\(^{14}\) campus, but unfortunately due to the COVID-19 pandemic it was cancelled along with a lot of other concerts around the world. We also had to distance ourselves from any social gathering, so the school was closed, and all students were forced to stay at home. Inspired by an idea I heard from some of the other students I suggested to make a private recording of my concert and send it in for examination – The suggestion was approved by the school. Once the school was closed, I had to dismiss my Swedish musicians, ask Mikkel and Tuomas to help out, return to Denmark and do the recording there since flights were being cancelled every minute.

When I returned to Denmark on the 21\(^{st}\) of March, I was quarantined for 14 days so we arranged to have our first rehearsal on the 6\(^{th}\) of April in Mikkel’s apartment. At our second rehearsal on Sunday the 12\(^{th}\) of April I spontaneously recorded all the songs take by take with my iPad, hoping the quality would be okay. I had originally planned for a proper recording at a studio, but since our second rehearsal went so well, that ended up being our “Live Session”. When I was writing “Crane” I had a lot of ideas I didn’t get to use in the final song, so I decided to write a separate song called “Crane Reprise” which is featured in the live session as an epilogue. It features the same time signature, almost same harmonic structure and it even features the melody from the B-section, but the groove is changed, and the piano voicings were kept as written for bass.

\(^{13}\) A short melodic phrase which mostly functions as a passage during solos, melodies or other improvisation contexts. Not as powerful as a riff or as centric as a groove. Equal to a drum fill.

\(^{14}\) Kungliga Musikhögskolan i Stockholm
6. Reflection

This project was about trying to get rid of my regular patterns when composing on electric bass while still maintaining the element of improvisation. When it came time to exploring other composers and musicians experience with this subject, I had to find some material outside of my own knowledge and it wasn’t easy. I tried searching on the internet, libraries and I also asked some musicians if they could think of composers with something very recognizable in their compositions. But they said that they never noticed this when listening to the music. I had to dive into the world of film and literature to see if there were someone who talked about this. The best I could find was the popular term “Kill your darlings” – A term used when a writer has to remove or ‘kill’ the things in their work that doesn’t feel necessary or serves no purpose for the reader even though the writer want it in the story. When it comes to music, the ‘darlings’ would be the patterns a composer uses in the majority of the compositions. However, the definition may vary when translated to music. In music the reader is the listener, and for this specific subject the darlings are not ‘killed’ to please the listener, but the composer. Sometimes sections can be shortened in order to ‘trim the fat’ of the song which makes it more consistent. It’s times like these when you can benefit a lot from being critical of your own composition. Something that can be rare when you begin to form your musical routines. They might work, but is it the best version of the song? Ruthanne Reid once wrote an article on how some sentences pleases us instantly, which also goes for music. There is a reason why many hit songs make us use of the same harmony, chord progressions or melody movement – it’s pleasing to the ears and composers have the responsibility of fulfilling the listeners expectations that comes with the style of which the music is. Sometimes music is seen as a product rather than an art form and therefor it is also composed using a kind of formula and is limited to the most obvious compositional choices. Sometimes the composer can stress the process and fall into the trap of convenient musical paths and a lack of commitment to explore further what the song can be.

Doing this music as a trio was a challenge in itself and I knew I had to make the role of the bass a bit bigger since it sometimes only had the drums as a second comp instrument. Another reason was that I was hoping it would be easier to plan out rehearsals. It ended up being the exact opposite – It was actually harder than any of the previous years. I went through three piano players and two drummers. The reasons were due to the lack of communication and of course, COVID-19. In the beginning the poor responding skills was so bad that my first piano player didn’t respond to me for a whole month before I had to find a new piano player two months before the planned concert.

These were challenges I somewhat faced together with my band. As far as my own inner challenges I learned a lot about how my patterns actually still exist within me and the instrument doesn’t make that big of a difference – but it’s my way of approaching them that is

(besökt 2020-07-03)
16 Article by Ruthanne Reid (2016) https://thewritepractice.com/kill-your-darlings/
(besökt 2020-07-03)
different. I think I actually learned more from doing it on bass rather than doing the different methods.

When all the songs were composed, I felt like they were all strong songs – but when I played them with the band only “Crane”, “Tamaris” and “95” sounded strong. Both “Crane” and “Tamaris” were composed using improvisation and I think it was unintentionally that I used improvisation as my method twice. It is probably because it is the method, I am most familiar with and even though I haven’t written much on bass before this project, I came up with a lot of ideas for potential composition. But the reasons why they work so well is because of how ambitious the songs are and what they demand from the musicians. You can’t just jam these songs. They require that you take time and study the parts, and when you play them with others you have to be focused and be able to keep up with the fast tempos.

“Crane” explored what possibilities you have with a 13/8-time signature and how speed is something that is so subjective that even for a very talented musician this song could be extremely hard to play. Like any sport, speed is something you have to keep up or you will feel a loss of pace in your playing.

The tapping used on “Tamaris” really put my composing in a new perspective. A big revelation was how different bass parts becomes when translated to piano – They became very difficult and sometimes had to be adjusted a lot in order to work. It was also great that I could incorporate some of my punk influences on the bass groove and pay tribute to some of my favorite punk bands like The Ramones and Bad Religion. I think this is the one I am most proud of. That intro riff is unlike anything I have every written myself and feels like a step in the right direction for who I am as a composer.

“95” really put the idea of breaking the rules in perspective. I remember when I used this musical cryptogram method in Joakim Milders jazz composition class. There I had a hard time diverging from the patterns and it didn’t sound right even though I followed the method through without breaking it. The most important thing to be aware of when using this method is that you shouldn’t be afraid to break away from the pattern. It always feels like when you have set a specific set of rules it’s good if you can follow those rules through without breaking them. But you quickly realize how a small thing might not work and you have to change it to something that is more pleasing to the ears – thus breaking the pattern. I made that mistake with my previous composition. One of the things that didn’t work with “NOITT” was the melody which was the transcribed dialogue from the scene. It could probably have been improved with some different rhythms.

I had hoped I could find a way to compose from just the atmosphere of the scene, but it was very hard, and I just couldn’t find the right angle to make it work. The mood of the song doesn’t quite fit the intensity of the scene even though it is composed from elements which is present in the scene. It’s not a bad song per se but there were probably so many better things I could have done with this song.

The method used on “Aya” wasn’t as developed in the beginning as I had thought. The method only took shape when I started composing the song. The thing that really didn’t feel

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17 A technique mostly performed by electric guitar and bass guitar. It is commonly used to set off a chain of notes by fretting a string with your picking-hand and then using hammer-ons and pull-offs with your fretting hand.
satisfying was the melody, and it felt too cartoonish. Even when practicing it with the trio, it seemed like it was hard for them to take the melody and the groove seriously. Unlike “95” I really tried to not break the rules of the system and keep the 4-note melody rule going for as long as possible. The idea was cool, but I regret a bit that I hadn’t thought this through in the beginning. A while into the project I began to think it would have been a great idea to do one of the methods as a collaboration with the band and write a song together. It would have been interesting to see how that would turn out and see at what speed we would be able to write a song. I also completely disregarded my timeline since I began prioritizing differently from what I had imagined when I wrote it. I did all the things I had planned but I did them in a different order than what’s on the timeline.

If I were to do this project again, I would have asked the musicians a bit sooner, writing the songs easier, as well as reevaluated the composition method used on “Aya” and practiced a whole lot more on the final version of the songs. Maybe also find a better angle as far as finding literature or other sources that would have benefitted the writing material. Maybe have done an interview with a teacher at the school or maybe asked more musician about their opinion on the matter. But overall, the result was satisfying, and the learning process was really inspiring. It feels like I only explored the tip of the iceberg for how I can find new ways to compose fresh music and use my trademarks in a more exciting way.

7. Conclusion

I’ve heard a lot about projects starting one way and during the process turns into something else. This project started and ended with the same goal – Exploring new ways of composing and doing it on an instrument I normally don’t use for my composing. But the way the project was done definitely changed multiple times. Where it took a lot of turns was my constant change of musicians, as well as my endgame for the presentation of the songs. When I was in Stockholm and rehearsed with the original band, we were challenged with playing difficult music seamlessly without it sounding like you are struggling. When you haven’t been part of the compositional process and you are going to play a song that might be technically challenging, how do you take control of your part and play it effortless even though you didn’t write it? I could hear it in some of the parts in the songs. They were difficult and you sometimes felt the musicians were locked in and had a hard time playing them naturally and also improvise at the same time.

When playing these songs with Tuomas and Mikkel the challenge was more the environment, equipment and time restraint. When you only have a few weeks, a student apartment as a rehearsal space with electronic drumkit, small bass amp and cheap keyboard, how do we make these songs work? Each composition explored a different method of composing and though some of them could have been done better, the journey from nothing to a song was an experience that I am grateful for and all the things I learned during this time is something I will have with me the next time I will compose a song for my own personal projects.
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Kapitel i antologi

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9. Appendix
Coda/Jam

S. Bass

Bass

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