Kaija Saariaho’s *Quatre Instants* from a pianist’s point of view – an interpretation of the song cycle

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine Kaija Saariaho's song cycle Quatre Instants for soprano and piano and to present a possible interpretation of it. I have made an analysis of the song cycle, which focuses mainly on the relation between the song text and the piano part. This has led to forming a detailed interpretation of the song cycle. The study contains also Saariaho's biography in order to support the analysis with background information. Both the background information and the analysis have immensely influenced upon my interpretation of the song cycle.

Keywords: Saariaho, Quatre Istants, contemporary music, piano, art song, analysis, interpretation
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1 Introduction

In my degree project, I have focused on Kaija Saariaho's song cycle for soprano and piano, "Quatre Instants". My research question is: what is the relation between the song text and the piano part? By examining the topic, I am aiming to find tools for building an interpretation of the song cycle.

"Quatre Instants" according to its name consists of four "moments", four emotionally and expressively extreme songs dealing with different aspects and phases of love such as longing, intimacy and remorse. The text is written by the French-Lebanese author Amin Maalouf who has also written the librettos to many of her operas.

It is advisable to have the score while reading the analysis.

1.1 Methods and content

With this project, I have wanted to gain a thorough understanding of "Quatre Instants" and into Saariaho's style in general in order to interpret the music well. In my project, I am searching for a convincing interpretation of the song cycle and in the written part I present the analysis as one possible interpretation. The aim is to reach an artistically high personal interpretation, which stays true to the score and to Saariaho's musical aesthetic.

As I think that the song text is an important aspect of any art song in general, I feel that it sets important guidelines in how one as a pianist should treat the piano part. Because of this, my research question deals with the relation between the song text and the piano part.

I am hoping that the written part of my project could provide help and inspiration for anyone interested in Saariaho's music in general and in this particular song cycle. I hope that it would be especially interesting to pianists who are working with the song cycle.

I have used the following methods to reach my goal:

- rehearsing the song cycle with soprano Maria Turunen
- studying Saariaho's biography in detail
- finding out what Saariaho herself and other musicians, musicologists and music critiques have said of the song cycle
- personally interviewing Saariaho on the song cycle
- analyzing the score, and
- performing the song cycle to Saariaho and receiving feedback from her
As my subject deals with the interpretation of the entire song cycle, there is a limit on how far one can go with such a huge subject. I have decided to concentrate foremost on the piano part and the connection it has to the song text instead of analyzing both instrumental parts in the same detail. As the subject is still very wide, it has defined the range on the several different aspects of my analysis. I have decided to examine all the different aspects I have found but in lesser detail than I could have if I had a narrower subject.

Since we interpret the song cycle as being told from the point of view of a single person and that all of the songs are connected to the life of this person, I wanted to examine the bigger picture instead of choosing a narrower subject.

As I studied Saariaho's biography, I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of her musical style and aesthetic, compositional methods and developments as a composer. The biography I have composed for this study is mainly focused on Saariaho's vocal development. It contains both such material which has either directly affected my interpretation of the song cycle, or with which I have wanted to provide a more general understanding on Saariaho as a vocal composer. In order to create a larger perspective there is also information which isn't directly connected to Saariaho's vocal music, but which still plays an important part in forming a more complete picture of Saariaho as a composer.

In order to distinguish the different aspects of interpreting art songs I have also explained shortly the different aspects of the art form, which make it different from other musical genres.

The focal point of this study is the analysis and the reflection of the analysis since these chapters contain such information, which is most directly connected to our interpretation of the song cycle and to my research question. As the song text immensely affects my pianistic interpretation, this provides a reason for choosing to focus on the relation between the song text and the piano part.

Although the idea of this project is not how to practise the song cycle, I have also included a chapter on our rehearsal process with Maria.

The culmination point of this project was reached when Maria and I performed the song cycle to Saariaho. We received feedback on our performance and thus an evaluation of the sounding results of this project. The sounding part of my project is recorded from this very performance.

1.2 My background with art song

Art song is a piece of music for voice and piano. It is a form of chamber music where both instrumental parts are equal; it does not fit into the soloist-accompanist setting. The poem (the
song text) is very important and in this sense, art song differs from other styles of music. From the singer's point of view it differs from the bel canto style for example, in which the beauty of the tone and vocal virtuosity serve a more important part. Compared to opera the interpretation process is also freer as there are no limits of a role, but one should create the background story themselves. From the pianist's point of view it differs significantly from all other kinds of instrumental music as in art song one makes the musical interpretation to serve the poem, or more likely to serve the composer's interpretation of it. A performance of an art song is a joint interpretation of a sounding poem.

When I started my studies at the Helsinki Conservatory of Music at the age of 16, playing with singers quickly occupied most of my time. I had never played music with text before and was intrigued with the approach one had in forming the musical interpretation of a song, which differed significantly from the way how one forms the interpretation of a purely instrumental work. A crucial turning point in understanding the true capacity of art song as an art form for me was when I was listening to countertenor Philippe Jaroussky's and pianist Jérôme Ducros' CD "Opium" with French songs. When hearing Ernest Chausson's "Le Colibri" I did not know the translation of the text, but I was touched by the beauty of the music. I decided to listen to the song again, this time with the text. It turned out to be one of the most profoundly touching listening experiences I have had. Now I did not hear abstract music but instead I was experiencing a story while being transported into the world of the poem, which was brought to life with all its fragrances and shades through the use of music. The music was an embodiment of the poem itself. Moreover, this newly born, deep adoration towards art song lead for me to begin an intensive ongoing collaboration with soprano Maria Turunen in the fall of 2011.

Together we have built a large and varied repertoire including many dramatic and expressively rich songs suitable for her luscious, Wagnerian voice. We were especially drawn towards songs that dealt with the darker shades of the emotional spectrum, which explored the human mind in all its complexity. Kaija Saariaho's "Quatre Instants" really spoke to us with its vast and raw emotional scale, a combination of the most delicate sensuality and the most painful feeling of shame, melancholic longing and great erotic intensity built around a brief encounter. The song cycle is dedicated for Karita Mattila and according to Saariaho, "the huge contrasts are written with Karita Mattila's expressive needs and her dramatic soprano in mind" (Sirén 2003). We felt that this song cycle would fit our duo perfectly.

2 Kaija Saariaho: Biography

Kaija Saariaho (b. 1952) is a Finnish composer (Moisala, 2009, p. 5). In the history of Western art music she is the first woman to attain the distinction of successfully breaking the glass ceiling in her field (Moisala, 2009, p. vii). In fact, in the fall of 2019 BBC Music
Magazine recognised her as "the greatest living composer in the world" and rated her position as the 17th highest in the entire history of music (Fiilin 2019).

Saariaho has a unique imagination. As a child, she heard music coming from her own imagination and thought it was springing from under the pillow. She only later understood that it was her own imagination and that other people do not often relate to the experience (Moisalo, 2009, p. 1-2). In the same way while composing she feels she has to do purely what she believes in, and that she cannot choose it (Moisalo, 2009, p. 74), that the aesthetic to her music "can exist in only one way" (Beyer, 2000, p. 304).

Saariaho has a background in "Central European avant-garde, spectralism, and serialism" (Moisala, 2009, p. 77). Her music is noted for having "futuristic and impressionistic overtones" (Moisala, 2009, p. 77). Other features that characterize Saariaho's musical writing are "the central role of timbre; the extensions of instrumental and vocal expression; the particularization of musical form; the extreme intensity of her music; and expansions of musical conventions" (Moisala, 2009, p. 77).

Her music has also been described as having a "dream-like mysterious atmosphere" (Moisala, 2009, p. 28), "interplay of time and space" (Moisalo, 2009, p. 76), and "beauty of the noise" (Moisalo, 2009, p. 76).

As a child, one of Saariaho's favourite activities was wandering in the forest when it had rained and the moist leaves created a different acoustic environment for the bird song (Moisala, 2009, p. 2). Therefore, since the acoustics in the places where contemporary music was performed in Finland were too dry for her taste, she began to experiment with the use of electronics (Moisala, 2009, p. 69). This has led to the electronic dimensions having a visceral role in her musical production. She never uses electronics "just as an effect, but as an organic part of the musical language as well as a form-giving element of the compositional structure" (Moisala, 2009, p. 69).

When Saariaho was a child, she often listened to the music of Bach (Moisalo 2009, p. 1-2), who has always been her favourite composer and perhaps inspired the polyphonic, polyrhythmic and polysonoric features in her music (Moisalo, 2009, p. 76-77). Another important influence on her has been Maurice Ravel and their writing for piano contain many similarities (Moisalo, 2009, p. 76-77).

According to Moisala, Saariaho's career in music can be classified into seven periods. The first period covers her studies at the Sibelius-Academy, when she was looking for compositional techniques that would suit her musical ideas. The second period consists of her early years outside of Finland as she focused on finding the key elements to her expression and defining who she was as a composer. This was followed by the third period which Moisala calls the "sound laboratory" since Saariaho worked mainly with computers and sound analysis instead of instrumental and vocal music. The fourth period in the late eighties
Moisala calls the timbre period as this period consisted of examining "the interconnections between sound color, harmony, and musical forms". The fifth period was a transitional period as Saariaho investigated abrupt shifts instead of using musical transitions. During the sixth period, Saariaho's writing became more melodic and she produced many large works aiming towards operatic writing. The seventh period consists of several large-scale vocal works and the period began from Saariaho's first opera from 2000. (Moisala, 2009, p. 26-27).

Despite her later success, becoming a composer altogether was not a self-evident choice for Saariaho. She grew up playing violin, guitar, piano (Moisala, 2009, p.3), and later learned to play the organ as well (Moisala, 2009 p. 4). She secretly tried to make her own small compositions at the age of 10-11 but when reading Mozart's biography, who was at a very different stage at her age, she felt she could never become a composer, not understanding that composing was a craft one could learn by studying it (Beyer, 2009, p. 301).

Saariaho, whose work often develops from multisensory sensations and who has been called a visual composer (Moisala, 2009, p. 53), studied at the Institute of Industrial Arts and Crafts after graduating high school while taking music lessons at the Helsinki Conservatory and taking courses in musicology, art history and literature at the Helsinki University (Moisala, 2009, p. 4). She has said that "the visual and musical world are one to me" (Moisala, 2009, p. 55). She also had issues with her self-image, as she did not relate to the stereotypical masculine image of a composer she had in her mind (Moisala, 2009, p. 4-5). She found her role models in women writers instead (Moisala, 2009, p. 5).

She had still been practising composing since the age of 17 (Moisala, 2009, p. 4), and when she became obsessed with the fear of wasting her life, she realized that she had to try and compose (Beyer, 2000, p. 302) so she persuaded Paavo Heininen to take her on as his composition student at the Sibelius-Academy in 1976, although the class was already full (Moisala, 2009, p. 5).

In the beginning of her studies Saariaho composed vocal works and explored vocally produced sound qualities (Moisala, 2009, p. 26) and her first publicly performed work was called "Bruden" (Bride; 1977). It is a song cycle for soprano, two flutes, and two percussionists (Moisala, 2009, p. 29). Although many of her compositions evolve from literary impulses (Moisala, 2009, p. 53), having a literary source was also a restriction to her. She was "locked into writing vocal music" and did not manage to write abstract music (Beyer, 2000, p. 303). With the push of Heininen she stopped writing vocal music and while learning to compose instrumental music she found out that strings and the flute inspired her musical thinking best (Moisala, 2009, p. 6).

After graduating from Sibelius-Academy in 1980 Saariaho continued her studies in Freiburg with Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus Huber. There she was annoyed with the stress on intellectuality as a value on its own while she herself wanted to create "communicative, audible musical forms" (Moisala, 2009, p. 8-9). She has observed that "sometimes the
overemphasis put on the intellect irritates me, as if it would be more significant than other experiences, ways of life, and expression. In musical circles, there are many people who greatly value complex scores, although they are nothing in themselves; all that matters is whether the music touches us and on what level." (Moisala, 2009, p. 75)

In 1980 she had also been in the Darmstadt summer school where she was introduced to French spectral music, which she found fascinating and which suited well with her musical ideas. So it is natural that since 1982 she has lived in Paris, where she feels that the "intellect and senses do not exclude each other" (Moisala, 2009, p. 8-9). During her first years in Paris, she focused on computerized music and intellectual studies, not producing so many instrumental or vocal works (Moisala, 2009, p. 26). Before moving to Paris, she first enrolled on a course on computer music in IRCAM (Moisala, 2009, p. 9). There she learned to use the sound synthesis program Chant which dealt with musical and physical parameters directly, she learned about sound itself, started building sounds digitally, learning to organize them and ultimately tried to understand how she composes (Beyer, p. 306).

The roots of spectral music can be discerned in Olivier Messiaen, who is often described as a prespectralist (Begam, 2016). After he composed "Mode de valeurs et d'intensités" (1949), sound itself with its different parameters was researched thoroughly in European modern music. In the mid 1970's a set of composers in Paris formed a group called L'Itinéraire and they went further. They were “interested in the combination of sound color and harmonics as well as observing the capacity of human perception on all levels of the composition”. From these values the spectral school of music was born. Spectral compositions are "based on the overtone spectra of sound" and thus they sound "exotic, but at the same time, natural to the ear" (Moisala, 2009, p. 10). "Rather than creating works based on chord progressions or tone rows, these composers wrote pieces that were constructed on the development of a sound spectrum, working with harmonic spectra" (Cornicello 2000).

Inspired by the work of L'Itinéraire, Saariaho followed in their footsteps as she "studied different kinds of sounds in order to learn about their characteristics and to obtain material for composition" (Moisala, 2009, p. 11). She studied the physicality of different kinds of sounds as she was seeking for the theoretical background to what she could hear. She learned that "the more 'lively' a sound is, the more it varies", and that in spoken text the richest material is when the vowel turns into a consonant (Moisala, 2009, p. 12). Processing the way sounds live and change in time is an important aspect in Saariaho's musical language (Sirén 2003).

From spectralism, Saariaho found a specific method to develop harmonic material for a new work, but unlike spectral composers, she does not necessarily stay within the physical spectra, but it acts as a starting point (Moisala, 2009, p. 61). The music of L'Itinéraire "was based on slow harmonic development, and was devoid of a prominent melody or a strong sense of pulse" (Cornicello 2000), but Saariaho's music on the other hand has a "strong sense of temporal proportions" (Moisala, 2009, p. 89).
One of the main parameters in Saariaho's works is timbre (Moisala, 2009, p. 53). After studying the perception of timbre and finding ways of creating new timbres and sonorities (Moisala, 2009, p. 11) Saariaho wrote an essay called "Timbre and harmony" in 1987 in which she reflected over the possibilities of timbre outside of the traditional coloristic role it had (Wörner, Scheideler and Rupprecht, 2017, p. 259).

As a result of investigating the possibilities of timbre as a form-giving parameter (Wörner, Scheideler and Rupprecht, 2017, p. 268), Saariaho has developed her own system in which she divides sounds into two groups based on their coloristic features. One end of the spectrum consists of "pure, bright sounds" which have a harmonic overtone structure, while the other one consists of "noise", sounds with disharmonic overtones. Examples of bright sounds are "the harmonic sounds of string instruments, bird song, high metal percussion and the piccolo" while "wind, and unpitched blow into flute, a whisper, sounds of breathing, white noise and playing string instruments played sul ponticello or with overpressure of the bow" are examples of noise (Moisala, 2009, p. 78-79). The method with which Saariaho writes for voice "from whispers to singing in the high register", is also rooted to her system with sounds defined by their sound color (Moisala, 2009, p. 86).

Saariaho, who according to one of her trusted musicians, Anssi Karttunen, "looks for beauty in absolutely everything" (Moisala, 2009, p. 76), seeks "musical uses of noise" (Moisala, 2009, p. 75). "Suddenly, we find new values of beauty in this deformed [broken] sound." (Moisala, 2009, p. 81), Karttunen says. Du cristal (1988), her first big work for symphony orchestra is "a culmination of her ideas about timbre, written into orchestral texture" (Moisala, 2009, p. 27).

Saariaho has composed a lot of vocal music, mostly for the soprano voice which she relates to as if it were her "own voice, a woman's voice" (Moisala, 2009, p. 87). Her first compositions were vocal works but finding her own way to compose for the voice was a long process. She did write a few vocal works in the beginning of the eighties (Moisala, 2009, p. 86), "sah den Vögeln" [which is an "illuminating example of her sonorously rich music (Moisala, 2009, p. 78)] (1981) for example, in which she presented musical ideas further developed in the first work written in her "own musical language", Laconisme de l'aile (1982) with a flutist reciting a poem while playing (Moisala, 2009, p. 30). She then had a break of many years before composing any vocal works. In 1988, her two new large vocal works were premiered, "From the Grammar of Dreams", which studies "emotional states produced by different vocal techniques and "Grammaire des rêves", in which "the vocal lines blend into the orchestral texture in chamber music manner" (Moisala, 2009, p. 86).

Saariaho feels that the classical bel canto style is too distant from how she experiences the human voice, and in "Caliban's Dream" (1993) and in "Miranda's Lament" (1997) she wishes to hear a more simple sound formation (Moisala, 2009, p. 86-87).
Besides singing, both "Grammaire des rêves" and "Nuits, adieux" (1991) contain a lot of whispers and breathing. The latter one is "the culmination of her exactness of writing for the extreme aspects of the voice" (Moisala, 2009, p. 86). In her later vocal works, these aspects are still evident, but in a less complicated way (Moisala, 2009, p. 87).

In the beginning of the 1990's Saariaho's writing became more melodic. The major works she composed also served as practise pieces preparing to write her first opera, L'amour de loin (Moisala, 2009, p. 27).

The new style appeared first in her instrumental music as "Amers" (1993) for cello, ensemble and electronics had a more lyrical quality compared to Saariaho's previous production. Her violin concerto "Graal théâtre "(1994) was inspired by a play by Jacques Roubauld (Moisala, 2009, p. 39-40). The focus is on a theatrical conflict and melodic expressiveness and the natural continuation of this was to write vocal music (Howell, 2017, p. 208).

Saariaho returned to her roots as the human voice became more important to her; she "wanted to investigate more thoroughly the emotions that only vocal music can evoke". In "Château de l'âme" (1995) she explored different dimensions of love. It is her first vocal work with an orchestra, and her wish to experiment with having a vocal line against a recorded tape lead to "Lonh" (1996) (Moisala, 2009, p. 40). Saariaho used ideas developed for "Oltra mar" (1999) for orchestra and mixed choir - a work in which she introduced new kinds of variations in sound color and vocal texture - in her first opera "L'amour de loin" (Moisala, 2009, p. 45).

In the eighties Saariaho stated that she would never write an opera (Moisala, 2009, p. 93), but seeing Peter Sellars' production of Messiaen's opera Saint Francois d'Assise in 1992 changed her mind (Begam, 2016). The major works she composed also served as practise pieces preparing to write her first opera, "L'amour de loin "(Moisala, 2009, p. 27). Infact, she feels that "everything I've written since 1993 is directly connected to my opera" (Beyer, 2000, p. 309). Since opera combines several art forms and many different art forms have played a big part in Saariaho's composing, it was a natural continuation of her work. She has always chosen her literary texts to her works carefully from the beginning and her visual musical imagination lead her eventually to staged art (Moisala, 2009, p. 93).

Her opera "L'amour de loin" premiered at the Salzburg Music Festival in 2000 and marked the final breakthrough in her career (Moisala, 2009, p. 22) and directly increased Saariaho's international recognition in Europe (Moisala, 2009, p. 46). Since its premiere, it has been performed all over the world at opera houses such as Châtelet Théâtre in Paris (Moisala, 2009, p. 46) and the Metropolitan Opera (Tommasini 2016). The opera is a "musical presentation of the emotional process of a distant longing and love growing into mature love" (Moisala, 2009, p. 45). It relates to the "European tradition of spiritual opera" and can be compared to both "Pelleas and Melisande" by Debussy and "Saint Francois d'Assise" by Messiaen (Moisala, 2009, p. 100). The opera was also directed by Peter Sellars and the libretto was written by the French-Lebanese author Amin Maalouf (Moisala, 2009, p. 22).

After composing "L'amour de loin" Saariaho wrote a few works in a very different style. These works "move along the boundaries of silence seeking power from the clarity and depth of the idea rather than from physical energy or great sonority" (Moisala, 2009, p. 49). Thus works were born like "Sept papillons" (2000) for solo cello built from tiny details and soft sounds (Moisala, 2009, p. 47-48) and the flute concerto "Aile du songe" (2001) with delicate and transparent texture. Her way of writing for these instruments became more melodical as a result reflected in the vocal lines on "L'amour de loin" (Moisala, 2009, p. 49).

Saariaho developed the musical material of the opera further in the two versions of the song cycle "Quatre Instants" (2002) for soprano and piano and for soprano and orchestra (Moisala, 2009, p. 48), which consists of "contrasting images" and "powerful moments". It was also composed to the poems of Amin Maalouf (Saariaho 2015).


3 Quatre Instants

"Quatre Instants" (Four Moments) is a song cycle consisting of four songs written for soprano and piano in 2002. It is dedicated to soprano Karita Mattila who wished to have new music in her concert repertoire (Saariaho 2015). The song cycle consists of different phases of love. "Erotic anticipation gives way first to inexplicable sexual terror, then to an ecstatic depiction of love making." (Moisala, 2009, p. 48)

Quatre Instants has been praised for its intensity by so many people around the world. According to Moisala, "Pierre Gervasoni from Le Monde predicted that Quatre instants "will surely become a core work within the repertoire of the 21st century"" (Moisala, 2009, p. 48). Vesa Sirén from Helsingin Sanomat declares that it is a masterpiece which will be elevated to the same spot with "Vier letzte Lieder" by Strauss (Sirén 2006).

In 2002, Saariaho also made an arrangement of the work for soprano and orchestra. While she
was writing the original version for soprano and piano she composed from the point of view of the piano instead of treating the piano part as a reduced version of the future orchestral score (Saariaho 2015).

Both the poems and the translations are made by Amin Maalouf and they are taken from the booklet of soprano Karita Mattila's and pianist Martin Katz' CD "Karita Mattila - Helsinki Recital". In the appendix, both the original poems and the translations are shown in the original format. In some instances Saariaho has altered the poems by repeating some material for instance. In the tables I use in the analysis I have taken these alterations into consideration as I have slightly moderated Maalouf's translations to better fit with the way in which Saariaho uses the text in the song cycle.

3.1 Analysis

3.1.1 Attente

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal Phase:</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bars:</td>
<td>1-18</td>
<td>19-36</td>
<td>37-54</td>
<td>55-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character/Expression Marks</td>
<td>Sempre libero; calmo; dolce</td>
<td>Sempre molto flussibile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text (English translation):</td>
<td>I am the boat adrift My lover is beyond the rift And the sea is so vast</td>
<td>I am the boat adrift My lover is beyond the rift And the wind has died down</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td>piano prelude</td>
<td>first verse</td>
<td>second verse</td>
<td>third verse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first song, "Attente" (Longing), deals with a sense of anticipation and longing. An interesting formal feature of "Attente" is that as it is a part of a song cycle consisting of four movements, it also contains four formal phases, four periods. The basic material for these periods is the same as the ostinato figures, an important element in providing the foundation for its structure, are always almost the same and presented in the same order. The material is always more or less varied, but the basis is always the same. The first period encompasses the piano prelude while the three latter periods cover the three verses of the song.
Piano prelude / Formal Phase I

Since Saariaho has not composed so much for piano, she really wanted to experience the possibilities of writing for piano in this work and this is one of the reasons why the song cycle begins with a nearly 2-page long piano prelude (Saariaho 2019).

The main element that is heard in all of the periods is the rising ostinato figure. There are five different figures beginning from the notes C1, D1, D#1, E1 and Bb2 respectively. Together with the wide and open atmosphere of the ostinati combined with the flutter and purl in the accompanying voice it is easy to hear the vast ocean and wind in the music. With the openness of the ostinato figure - tones that lead upwards with a sense of direction but without making a clear ending, rather being left hanging in the air - one can sense the strong will of the woman and also her powerlessness in front of the vast sea.

Besides the ostinato figure, another important musical feature of "Attente" is the continuously repeated triplet motive, which symbolizes the waiting and anticipation of the woman. It consists either of three quarter notes or of a quarter note and a half note and is also heard in each period in different ways. In the prelude, it consists either only of the pitch c#1 or of both c#1 and d1.

The last ostinato figure is used for special musical events in the different periods of "Attente" and in the prelude it marks the dynamic climax of it. After the climax, towards the end of the prelude the music calms down and becomes more minimalistic. One could interpret this as the wind settling down, referring to the lamenting of the woman: "My lover is beyond the rift / And the wind has died down". Everything becomes so still and stagnant providing space for the woman to speak.

First verse / Formal Phase II

The second period begins as the singer enters and one learns that the woman is, as Saariaho explains, "symbolically a boat", floating in the ocean (YouTube 2011). The atmosphere is stagnant as the piano part now consists only of the ostinato figure and the triplet motive. The music is still waterlike, but without the flutter and purl presented in the piano prelude it is clear that the water is still. This also supports the interpretation according to which the music depicts the windless sea.

The ostinato figures are repeated nearly precisely in the way they were introduced. The length of the phrases are virtually the same with only a few varying notes. In the opening verse, the triplet motive consists of the c#1 note. Soon it evolves into a more melodically rich variation of the original version as it takes a life of its own in the "Grave, espressivo" -section. This change begins at the most dramatic point of this period while the music gets heavier for a while after the painful glissando in the vocal line. The friction of the polyrhythm in the short
interlude in the piano part is highlighted with the edgy auxiliary notes before the music calms down again as the vocal line continues.

One learns that the woman's lover is on the other side of the vast sea. As the woman says "And the sea is so vast", both the large interval from g1 to f#2 towards the word "vast" in the vocal line as well as the low Bb2 note in the piano part clearly accentuate the meaning of the word. The Bb2 note in the piano part marks the beginning of the last ostinato figure of the second period. In both the vocal part and in the piano part the dynamic level is suddenly very low. The suddenly low dynamic, the depth in the piano part and the heart-rending interval (M9) in the vocal line all suggest a sadness, hinting towards the powerlessness the woman experiences as the sea is between her and her lover. This is another example of using the last ostinato figure as an expressive tool for an important musical moment.

**Second verse / Formal Phase III**

The second verse begins similarly as the first but it is quickly evident that the character is very different. This time the ostinati are more varied also in the length and shape of the phrases. The woman repeats the words "I am the boat adrift / My lover is beyond the rift" in a more engaged, active and agitated way only to surrender in front of what she cannot change: "And the wind has died down". The vocal melody has more movement in it and there are sharper melodic turns. The vocal range is also wider, reaching higher. The piano part is not minimalistic anymore with the embellished, abrupt gushes highlighting the agitation of the woman and the growing energy inside her. In addition, the rise of the pitch to f#1 in the triplet motive in the piano part contributes to the rise in energy.

According to Saariaho, "In the previous phrase there was more energy and insistence but then it returns to a state of powerlessness", (Saariaho 2019). As the singer mentions that the "wind has died down", it is a sigh-like gesture (Saariaho 2019). At the same time, while the second last ostinato figure continues up towards an f#4 note, a murmuring 32th-note passage scatters silently into the low bass register to trill on E1. Both of these extreme pitches arrive simultaneously with the end of the sigh of the woman, with the words "died down" as the music slows down to a lower tempo.

An interlude follows, in which the dynamic is very low, "ppp" in the left hand and "pp" in the right hand. There is a melody consisting of the notes c#1 and d1 which were used for the triplet motive. This also contributes to the strong sense of waiting as the dynamic rises to reach its climax in "forte" as the last ostinato figure of the period begins from Bb2 again. Compared to the gentleness and softness of the use of the last ostinato figure in the first verse, the way it is presented in the second verse resembles more the dramatic climax for which the last ostinato figure was used in the prelude.

The right-hand melody blurs into a trill as the left-hand trill ends as the ostinato figure starts rising upwards. The dynamic descends towards a low level and a new kind of slower
repetitive pattern is introduced, the b2 note repeated twice in a bar. The trill turns into the triplet motive with its original pitches, c#1 and d1. In a lower register, soon ascending upwards there is a murmuring passage. The original tempo is brought back just before the fourth and last period of the movement. During the seven bars of the piano interlude although the woman is silent, one can sense her restive emotional state. Although the music is more agitated and energetic before the sigh, it is in the climax of the interlude one most strongly hears her powerful despair. She is paralyzed by the sense of losing her power and as the tempo accelerates she turns back to express herself.

Third verse / Formal Phase IV

In the fourth period, the musical material goes through several changes. While the three previous periods all consisted of 18 bars, the last period consists of only 14 bars with the exception of one bar, which is to be repeated "ad lib". The last period is varied and fluid in both instrumental parts.

In the piano part, the triplet motive continues to have a prominent role through the entire period, but the ostinati are either used as a base for different kind of musical patterns or sometimes not heard at all. The repeated b2 note introduced in the end of the third period is used also in the fourth period, where it gains a new importance.

The first ostinato figure is not heard and the three following ostinato figures are used as a basis for new musical material. A new, flickering pattern is introduced which starts first from D, then from D# and then it continues from e3. Although moved to different octaves, they are still the beginning notes of the second, third and fourth ostinato figures. The following musical material is built on top of a "tremolo" between Bb2-Bb1 and this refers to the fifth ostinato figure. As the "ad lib" bar in the end of the period is built from the note C - as is the first ostinato figure - there is a feeling of being in the beginning again. But suddenly a slightly varied version of the fifth and last ostinato figure starting from Bb1 is heard in its complete form. The fifth ostinato figure proves again to have a special significance in relation to the other ostinati. In the last period it is the only ostinato figure, which is heard, and it closes the entire song.

In addition, the vocal material is dramatically evolved from its original version. The opening melody in the vocal line in the beginning of the third verse is a highly varied version of the original melody. The text: "I have spread all my sails / For the wind to drive me" builds the phrase, which according to Saariaho is "the most dramatic phrase in the vocal line" Saariaho 2019). The rising phrase has a large range between c#1-a2 and it ends with a desperate and agitated outburst. The piano follows with its own rising material dynamically slightly behind the vocal line. It reaches a dynamic climax only as the vocal line ends. Soon after this it reaches the softest point in the entire song. These rising and descending passages - unsynchronized between the instruments - create a heavier undertone to the otherwise static music.
The phrase in the text: "I have spread all my sails / For my lover to see me" is divided in two vocal phrases. The first one continues powerfully from the heightened dynamic, still rising towards a higher level, but the atmosphere is more static. In the second one, there is no sense of despair anymore. The erotic intervals - the semitones and the tritonus - in the vocal melody together with the chromatism of the piano and the shivering "tremolo" create a more sensual atmosphere. As the last and only complete ostinato figure arrives, the triplet motive is heard for the last time as the ostinato figure ends on a trill on f#3, evaporating into silence.

3.1.2 Douleur

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal Phase:</th>
<th>I (A)</th>
<th>II (B)</th>
<th>III (A1)</th>
<th>IV (B1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bars:</td>
<td>1-59</td>
<td>60-85</td>
<td>86-151</td>
<td>152-173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Character/Expression Marks**

- **Furioso, desperato**
- Sempre agitato; dolce; doloroso; Piu agitato; Furioso; dolente

**Misterioso**

- Agitato; appassionato, piu tristemente; Furioso; libero; Grave; con tristezza; piu passionato; desperato

**Misterioso ma appassionato; furioso**

**Text (English Translation):**

- I didn't want to face his eyes - Remorse devours me - My own eyes turned towards him My eyes did not obey me.
- I didn't want to meet his steps - Remorse devours me - My own steps carried me towards him My steps did not obey me.
- That night, as I remember it The moon was full.
- My door opened to let him in And then, merrily, it closed.
- I didn't want him to embrace me - Remorse devours me - My own body drifted towards him My body did not obey me.
- I wanted so much to keep him Remorse devours me! Another day, another night, but he did not obey me.

**Notes:**

- Agnadi; remorse; shame; guilt; passion; fire
- Seminal reflections over the physical intimacy between the woman and her lover
- Middle part

The "Furioso, desperato" as the indication to the interpretation really captures the essence of the character of the song as it portrays a woman so desperate, self-hateful and obsessed with her heartbreak to the verge of losing her mind. The song is filled with tension. It is also impulsive as it contains rapid changes in direction. In keeping with Saariaho's style, the music is always evolving, with new layers added constantly and although the song is full of repetition, nothing is ever precisely the same. In the same way, the emotional state of the woman is never static; it is also as alive and in continuous transformation as she is affected by the different memories she recollects, by the powerful contradictory emotions she faces and the painful fate she is trying to survive.

"Douleur" consists also of four main verses, referring to the "four" in "Quatre Instants". All the main verses have a similar textual structure: She did not want to face his gaze, meet his path, or to be in his embrace, her eyes, steps or body turned towards him, her eyes, steps or body did not obey her. A series of events follows where one learns that the woman battles between strong contending forces. She does not want to be seduced by him but still her feelings towards the lover were so primeval that she had no option but to submit. Although
everything in her mind told her body to stop and to resist him, she was completely powerless as her body overwhelms her mind. Moreover, she is so full of regret because she still ended up in the intimate situation of being seduced. However, she probably would not regret surrendering to the calling of her body if the outcome had been different (Saariaho 2019).

Towards the end of the movement one learns that she did in fact want to be with her lover, she wanted to keep him for another day, for another night. Now the one not obeying the wishes of her mind was not her own body, but the lover. He did not want to have her anymore and the woman - who did not want to be seduced in the first place - is left alone with the burning desire towards him, the awful shame of being rejected and the incredible sadness of being abandoned. The intensity of these powerful emotions are thoroughly explored in the song.

There is a very clear dramaturgy. The preface sets the anguished and remorseful mood of the woman. She begins to tell her story. The first verse deals with the woman involuntarily looking at her lover, in the second verse she involuntarily heads towards her lover. In the middle part she remembers their intimacy and thinks of it in a sensual way. The interphase brings the shame back as a reaction to the sensual memories. The shame grows to terrified lengths. In the third verse she has reached her lover, involuntarily being in his embrace, which results in pure shameful remorse. In the fourth verse the dynamic changes: the dichotomy is not inside her anymore, but she reveals that in fact she would have still wanted to be with him, but he abandoned her. Thus the reason for her looking at her own actions from a negative viewpoint is revealed. The coda closes the story.

**Formal Phase I / Period A:**

**Preface**

In the preface, the basic mood of "Douleur" is thoroughly presented. It begins shockingly with the strike of an arpeggiated clusterlike chord in the piano part. The semitone motive - which acts as the foundation to a big part of the musical material in "Douleur" - is introduced in the piano part. It consists either of the notes g1-f#1 or d1-c#1 and therefore has a relation to the triplet motive in "Attente", which was built around either the note c#1 or f#1.

In the first part of the preface, the woman feverishly repeats the phrase "Remorse devours me". The melody in the vocal line is built upon the semitone motive and has a rising quality. This combined with the rhythmic pattern b-c1 intensifying in the piano part, which accompanies the higher version of the semitone motive (g1-f#1), and the rise in the dynamic level result in a significantly growing tension which is suddenly released as the passage ends abruptly and silence follows.

In the second part, the silence is broken with a robust piano interlude. The lower version of the semitone motive (d1-c#1) is used and enriched with clusterlike features and rapid embellishments. Towards the end of it, the material starts getting more chaotic as it quickly
spreads to a wider range and finally reaches the b2 note. The vocal line continues from the same point with a terrified shriek of the woman. It also starts from the b2 note but the pitch is lowered to g#2 as the dynamic descends as well, highlighting the suffering of the woman.

All these elements present the woman in the different levels of her suffering, obsessive and terrified. In the preface, the emotional state is presented and in the following periods, the combination of the different emotions she is going through is shown in depth.

First verse

All of the main verses have a similar structure both textually and musically. The fourth verse is significantly different compared to the first three verses but it is still heavily based on them.

The first verse deals with the woman involuntarily looking at her lover. The so-called protagonist and antagonist are presented in the first verse as the woman experiences a dichotomy inside her. Her mind and will act as the protagonist. Her body acts as the antagonist, defying the will of the woman. The woman has a similarly passive role as in "Attente", as she is again subordinate to greater forces.

The expressive palette in the first verse is extremely wide. The material travels quickly through extremely different emotional states and it is filled with dramatic twists and turns. The vocal melody has an edgy quality and the vocal material moves between frantic "shouting" in the middle register in sprechgesang manner and sensual sighs. Together these elements create a very unstable atmosphere, highlighting the woman's agitated state of mind.

The piano part continues to change gradually as the material in the beginning of the first verse is based on the interlude of the preface. The lighter texture creates a very different atmosphere compared with the robustness of the interlude and the rapid movements result in a nervous character.

The vocal material in each verse is based on a melody introduced here in the first verse. The melody is interrupted with the phrase: "Remorse devours me!" In the first verse, this is done by frantically "shouting" in sprechgesang manner in the middle register. With the material with which the piano part lead to the "shriek" in the vocal line in the preface, the piano continues. Now, instead of the b2 note, the passage leads softly on an a2 note as the singer joins in, not as a shriek but as a gentle gesture.

The pain is restored in the vocal line, which is accompanied by the bell like heartbeat motive in the bass register of the piano. Both the falling structure in the vocal line and the descending of the dynamic level in both instruments depict the surrendering of the woman as she disappointedly laments: "My own eyes turned towards him".
The disappointment leads to frustration as she says: "My eyes did not obey me". The music becomes more agitated as the unstable quintuplet rhythm in the piano part breaks the feeling of surrender. Both instrumental parts intensify again as the verse continues towards its end in total desperation with the surges in the piano part and sharp and edgy melodical turns in the vocal line. After a dramatic outburst, the music calms down for a last, painful sigh in the middle register. Both the falling figure and descending dynamic contribute to a return to a surrendering emotion as the verse ends.

**Second verse**

The story continues as the second verse deals with the woman involuntarily heading towards her lover.

While the first verse included several extreme emotions, the second verse has a slightly milder tone. This is only a gradual change, as the basic character is still very agitated. The second verse contains less surprising elements and quick changes between different atmospheres. It is not equally extreme and in this way, the battle between the antagonist and protagonist is less active. The phrase "Remorse devours me!" is sung dramatically in the higher register with a very edgy melody but it does not have the same painful quality that the sprechgesang mannered version has in the previous verse.

The piano part is again gradually changed. Rhythmically the material in the first bar in the left hand part is identical compared to how it was presented in the first verse but already from the second bar onwards it evolves into a very packed and ironlike variation where the clusterlike chords are rapidly changed. The right hand part introduces new musical material in which the notes are scattered on an about two-octave range, jumping hysterically from one place to another.

The melody in the vocal line begins precisely as it was introduced. Although agitated and shaped in an edgy way, the vocal melody is still a lot more lyrical than the piano part and this creates an interesting contrast. After this, the piano part changes significantly. It loses all its robustness, as the texture gets very thin and transparent.

In the vocal line the melody used for "My own steps carried me towards him" is a variation of the previous similar phase. Because of the melodical and dynamic changes, the surrendering quality is not as dominating as in the similar place in the first verse.

The energy rises again as the woman says: "my steps did not obey me", but the change in atmosphere is again less dramatic compared to how it was shaped before. The dynamic scale is also smaller. The music slows down leading smoothly towards period B.
Formal Phase II / Period B

Middle part

The period B consists of the middle part of the song. It introduces entirely new material both textually and musically and is placed in between the main verses.

The tempo is slower, the dynamic level is lower and the entire atmosphere is a lot calmer. The vocal material consists of slower note values, producing a rounder melody. The long lyrical lines float above the dark and misty murmuring pattern in the piano part. This gloomy matt consists of a semiquaver and a sextuplet pattern merging into each other. The chromatism in both instrumental parts is inspired by the semitone motive.

The woman reminisces of her actual meeting with her lover with nostalgia. The calm and sensual atmosphere is broken twice as the piano part shockingly introduces a clusterlike polyrhythmic pattern in "subito forte". As the woman dwells in the nostalgic atmosphere, the abrupt interruptions of the piano can be seen as portraying the underlying, disturbed emotions of the woman.

In the end of the period, the piano pattern is minimized through a short interlude until it finally only repeats the c#1 note in semiquavers. The vocal line continues quietly and slowly with the word "remorse" in a melody based on the semitone pattern. There is no rage but instead a pondering quality. A new motive is introduced in the piano part. It creates a dissonance with the repeated c#1 as it consists of the notes B1-c while the music gets slower and slower, nearly vanishing. But the notes used in the piano part in the end of the period hint towards the interphase.

Formal Phase III / Period A1:

Interphase

The interphase is a variation of the preface. The musical events are packed to a narrower time scale. The different elements, which were presented in the preface one at a time, are now overlapping each other. In addition, the musical texture is reduced to a more concentrated area. The dynamic scale on the other hand is extremely wide. These factors result in an extreme rise in energy. The feeling of remorse - which came back quietly in the end of the previous period - grows rapidly as a reaction to the sensual reflection.

The faster original tempo is restored as the interphase begins with a variation of the beginning chord of the preface. The semitone motive is used in its lower version (d1-c#1) but the accompanying rhythmic pattern consists of the original pitches (b-c1). This was already anticipated in the end of period B, as the material in the piano part consisted of the notes B1, c
and c#1. As the vocal line begins, the material in the piano part gradually transforms to the material of the interlude.

The vocal melody is also based on the lower version of the semitone motive (d1-c#1). Instead of repeating "Remorse devours me!" 5 times as in the preface, the word "remorse" is first quickly repeated 3 times. After this "Remorse devours me!" is heard twice.

The "shriek" in the vocal line begins two bars before and it is an a2 note instead of a b2 note. It starts as the material in the piano part starts getting more chaotic and the piano reaches the pitch of the vocal line slightly before. As the pitch in the vocal line is lowered to a g#2, the dynamic does not descend as it did in the preface. Instead, the dynamic level rises rapidly, ending the phrase in a furious, emotional explosion.

Third verse

The first two verses described how the woman gradually moved involuntarily towards her lover, and in the middle part, she nostalgically reminisced their actual meeting. Startled by her own nostalgic feelings her remorse returned and grew into furious lengths, as the woman is full of shame because of her own actions. The third verse continues directly from there. The viewpoint to their meeting is different as the third verse deals with the woman involuntarily being in the embrace of her lover.

Textually the third verse is faithful to the structure of the previous verses but musically there are a lot of differences. The tempo is a bit slower but the character is extremely agitated.

The piano part is completely new. During the first phrase in the vocal line the piano part consists of two voices, an a#1 repeated in 32nd notes and a semiquaver quintuplet pattern. The quintuplet pattern jumps hysterically on both sides of a#1 on the keyboard. Although it gets very close, the quintuplet pattern never reaches the pitch of the repeated voice and rhythmically the voices of the two patterns are never produced at the same time.

This contains a symbolical level as the woman also is trying to avoid being in physical contact with her lover. The text in the first phrase is: "I didn’t want him to embrace me". Vocally it is a slightly variated version of the original melody.

After this, the music in the piano part changes using material from the preface that is slightly varied. Both hands in the piano part are played simultaneously and this also depicts how the woman failed in her attempts to avoid meeting her lover.

The borrowed material from the preface acts as a bridge as the rest of the material in both instrumental parts of the third verse are completely new. Both parts begin strongly but the dynamic level rises down as the furious atmosphere turns into a sad one.
The vocal part consists of falling lines. The phrase "My own body drifted towards him" is filled with resistance but the following phrase "My body did not obey me" has a surrendering quality. Structurally the phrase does not have the same defiance as its counterparts in the previous verses.

In the piano part, the right hand part includes an embellished triplet motive and the left hand part has an even, dotted rhythm. The combination of both of these parts create a very refined polyrhythmic figure.

Suddenly the dynamic level rises rapidly and the music starts accelerating. The music has a chaotic character.

The piano part is full of dissonances. The right hand part is based on the semitone motive and it consists of pairs of f#2-g2 and e2-f#2. The left hand part is only slightly modified but it spreads on to a wider range and there is more movement.

In the vocal line the word "remorse" is feverishly and obsessively repeated several times with a variation of the semitone motive. It consists of the notes g2, f#2 and c#2. Finally, the whole sentence, "Remorse devours me!", is heard as the phrase is ended on a long f#2 note.

The piano part continues getting more chaotic. As the last note begins in the vocal line, the note pair e2-f#2 is repeated in semiquavers in the piano part for several bars. The left hand part continues to spread to a wider range and the dynamic level keeps on rising. Suddenly the verse ends as the piano part ends explosively in "fff".

A paused bar follows. Both the third and fourth verse share the same time signature, 2/4. The paused bar has the time signature of 3/8. The asymmetry of the pause maintains the unbalanced atmosphere even after the explosive ending of the third verse.

*Fourth verse*

The fourth verse is the most different from the other verses. The content is very different compared to the previous verses as it includes two turning points in the story and thus the dramaturgic climax of "Douleur".

After the "accelerando" in the third verse, the original tempo is restored in the fourth verse. It begins with what I call the confession theme. The new vocal melody is based on the original melody as the woman for the first time in "Douleur" confesses her own desire towards her lover: "I wanted so much to keep him". The piano part is a combination of two previously introduced patterns. The right hand part is the repeated a#2 from the third verse and the left hand part consisting of the notes B1-c is taken from the end of period B.
A new tempo is presented as the tempo mark is "Grave". As the repetitive pattern in the piano ends, the vocal line continues without the piano. The phrase "Remorse devours me!" has a different character compared to the previous versions of the phrase. A new variation of the semitone motive is used for it in the middle register. As the piano part is silent, it provides more space for the vocal line. The phrase in the vocal line stands out in all its simplicity and gains a new kind of importance.

The structure in the text is different compared to the previous verses as the first sentence in the fourth verse is continued: "Another day, another night". The piano material is based on both material from the preface and from the first verse.

As the great dramaturgic climax follows, the already thin-textured piano part receives a more reduced layout. The rhythmic patterns slow down providing again space for the vocal line, as it continues. The phrase "But he did not obey me" changes the entire setting. The dichotomy isn't inside the woman anymore as the roles of the protagonist and antagonist are changed. The woman is the protagonist, but the antagonist is her lover.

The dramatic melody in the vocal line is based on the similar place in the first and second movements. Together with the reduced piano part this creates a shockingly stagnant atmosphere as the woman reveals how she has been abandoned. The tension builds up until it is released as a piano interlude follows.

The original tempo is restored in the interlude. Full of pain, it is based on the place in the first verse during which the phrase "Remorse devours me!" was heard in the vocal line. First the energy grows as a dramatic outburst but it falls back again, as the interlude acts as a bridge towards the final coda.

**Formal Phase IV / Period B1**

*Coda*

The coda is a variation of the middle part of "Douleur".

Both instrumental parts are modified a lot. The notes in the vocal line are longer and the entire material is placed in a higher range. The piano part begins in the bass register precisely as in the middle part, but quickly also starts moving higher. Both instruments are reaching towards the b2 note. The atmosphere is different as the music has a more shimmering quality because of the change in the registers.

The story is closed with the phrase: "That night, as I remember it / The moon was full". After it, the piano part slows down and seems to disappear. However, suddenly the material leading to the "shrieks" abruptly breaks the calm atmosphere as it leads to the note b2 in the vocal line. The vocal line sustains the note dramatically, like an extremely long shriek. The material
in the piano part does not stay on the b2 after reaching it but instead starts rapidly moving towards the b2 several times, each time starting closer to the pitch. Finally, it starts feverishly repeating the b2 tone and continues as long as the shriek lasts. It is the last, raw expression of remorse finally closing the song.

### 3.1.3 Parfum de l’instant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal Phase:</th>
<th>I (A)</th>
<th>II (B)</th>
<th>III (A1)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bars:</td>
<td>1-15</td>
<td>16-40</td>
<td>41-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character / Expression Marks:</td>
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<td>dolce; Libero; più passionato; passionato</td>
<td>Libero; dolce; molto expressivo; dolce con tristezza; calmo, dolce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text (English Translation):</td>
<td>You’re so close to me, But I close my eyes to imagine you</td>
<td>Our lips are united, Our fingers, entwined, Our bodies, unveiled, But I close my eyes, To dream about you</td>
<td>You're the perfume of my instant, You're the skin of my dreams, And already the essence of my memories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
<td>An evocative world of scents and dreams</td>
<td>Love song, the most passionate musical events of the song</td>
<td>Waking up to reality, beautifully melancholic metaphors, atmosphere changing from bittersweet to purely sad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third song, "Parfum de l'instant" (Perfume of the moment) is the most sensual, beautiful and erotic song in "Quatre Instants". The song contains a passionate love scene. The woman is happily together with her lover, but at the same time she understands that this very moment is going to be the only one with her lover. This results in a bittersweet character.

Saariaho's musical language includes the use of glissandi (Sirén 2003), and the piano part is filled with them. "Parfum de l'instant" cannot be analyzed using traditional tools, but an interesting feature is that the entire vocal material consists of notes of the harmonic g minor scale. The dynamic is mostly very soft, resulting in an exquisite atmosphere.

**Formal Phase I / Period A**

"Parfum de l'instant" begins without the piano part. The vocal line begins with a sensual and gentle melody with the words: "You're so close to me". In the end of the phrase, the piano finally joins in with a mysterious and delicate trembling figure.

The words are repeated in the vocal line with a more passionate variation of the original melody. The range is a lot wider and the phrase ends with a four bar long a2 note. The piano part becomes more active as well. The right hand part consists of a falling chromatic figure starting also from the a2 note. The left hand part consists of rapid glissandi falling downwards.
as well. They start always from the f2 note. They are first placed in the middle register but they get gradually wider until finally the last glissando reaches the low Bb2 note.

The low, bell-like timber of the Bb2 note has a slightly intimidating quality and it wakes another kind of feeling in the woman. The vocal line continues on top of the bell-like resonance of the piano part: "But I close my eyes to imagine you". The woman has an ambivalent attitude towards her lover as she anticipates the faith of their romance.

The piano part becomes more active and moves towards the "love scene" with trembling patterns.

Formal Phase II / Period B

"Love scene"

The dynamic level in the piano part in the beginning of the love scene ranges from "pppp" to "mf", quickly travelling between an extreme softness and a more intensive expression. The love scene contains several "accelerandi" and "ritardandi". The dynamic and temporal qualities create an atmosphere, which is both intimate and tender, but also has an electric liveliness at the same time.

The material in the vocal line is placed in the middle register. The energy rises through each of the three phrases: "Our lips are united / Our fingers, entwined / Our bodies, unveiled". The dynamic in the first phrase is "mp" and "mf" in the two following phrases. The expression marks are "dolce", piú passionato" and "passionato" respectively. The last phrase ends with a slight diminuendo.

A piano interlude follows as a reaction to the three phrases. As it starts abruptly in "forte" after the diminuendo in the vocal line (reaching the dynamic climax of the song), the intimate atmosphere breaks and evolves into ardent passion. It is filled with fast movements, rapid glissandi and polyrhythmic passages.

After calming down the interlude ends on a soft trill on d2. The vocal line continues with the words "But I close my eyes / To dream about you". The soft melody is placed on a relatively high register, leading to a cooler and more shimmering quality compared to the previous passion in the middle register. After the most intense ardour, the woman faces her faith again.

As the phrase ends on a 4-bar long a2 note, the piano begins its falling chromatic figures and glissandi, as in period A. The B period ends as the piano part ends on a low Bb2 note, this time travelling back to the middle register with new material instead of staying on the note.
Formal Phase III / Period A1

The piano part consists of long trills in the middle register and new chromatic figures and glissando passages based on the material presented in period A.

The vocal line begins with the words "You're the perfume of my instant". The melody is a variation of the first phrase of the song. The following phrase is a variation of the second phrase of the song. The text is "You're the skin of my dream". The original phrase had an imposing quality as the range was wide and it ended with the notes bb1-a2. This version ends with the notes bb1-a1, resulting in a totally different, calmer atmosphere. The previous words are repeated with a more theatrical melody resulting in a stronger expression.

After this, a large falling glissando is heard in the dynamically growing piano part. The glissando ends on the low C1 note. The low note opens a new atmosphere, just like in period A. The following material verifies the anticipation of the woman being true. There is sadness as the previous sentence is continued in the vocal line "And already the essence of my memories".

The chromatic figures presented in period A are heard in the piano part, this time an octave lower. The figure starts falling down until it reaches the low Bb2 tone. It begins the ethereally beautiful postlude. The texture of the postlude is very thin as the material is placed on different registers, far from each other. According to Moisala, many of Saariaho's works end "with sounds gradually vanishing in the air" (Moisala, 2009, p. 49). This is the case with most of the songs in "Quatre Instants", but most delicately this is done in "Parfum de l'instant". After the vulnerable ending of the postlude the dream is over.
3.1.4 Résonances

The fourth and last movement in the song cycle is a collage of parts from the first three songs. All the text (except for a couple of changed words) is taken from the previous poems and the music is based on the music from the previous parts. Some parts are not modified at all while others are changed on a range from minor alterations to radical changes. According to Saariaho, the idea is to create new interpretations of the text as the material is used in a different way (Saariaho 2019).

Already the name, "Résonances" (Echoes), suggests that it is more like a collection of the voices and thoughts of past coming back than direct reflection after the events in the previous songs.

There is not such a clear contrast between the ground emotions of the three previous songs, longing, painful remorse and passionate love. New combinations of feelings are formed as the material from the previous songs blend together.

Formal Phase I

"Résonances" begins with a piano prelude. The prelude begins with a trill on c#2, escalating into a rapid 32nd note passage. The passage travels towards the bass register but stops suddenly. The pedal is kept down for a bar after the movement stops, and thus it creates a concrete echo. The material is repeated twice in a slightly varied form. The music gets louder in volume and the sound becomes more concrete.
As the trill is born from nowhere and as the musical material gradually becomes more concrete, it paints a picture of something happening far away and then getting closer. With the pauses in between, it is like gradually waking up to the memories that are brought back to life after a long time.

The prelude ends as it blends into a section taken from the B part of "Douleur". The text is "My door opened to let him in / And then, smoothly, it closed", a summary of the previous events, the core of the love story. The vocal melody is related to the original one but the notes have been changed a lot. The piano part on the other hand is nearly identical with the original version.

Formal Phase II

A long piano interlude follows, in which the musical material blends from the material from "Douleur" to material from the prelude of "Attente". The texture starts getting three-voiced as in the prelude of "Attente". There is a rhythmic pattern, which is the fastest and dynamically most dominating one of the three voices. Rhythmically it is based on a pattern used in the third verse of "Douleur". The remaining two voices refer to "Attente". The note c#1 is repeated predicting the use of the triplet motive. A rhythmic variation of the first ostinato figure is heard. As the voice used for the ostinato figure ends on a glissando, it leads to material directly taken from "Attente".

The second ostinato figure begins just as presented (apart from minor dynamic alterations) in the prelude of "Attente". The repeated c#1 note has turned into the triplet motive and the rhythmic pattern has turned into the accompaniment.

After two bars the interlude ends with a variation of the last bar from the third verse, leading to the fourth verse. The vocal line begins. Only one rhythm is slightly modified, but the text is entirely different. Instead of "I have spread all my sails / For the wind to drive me" the text is "I have spread all my sails / For my lover to see me". This text was used for the following phrase, filled with love and longing. Now the text receives a new interpretation as it is used for the phrase that is filled with desperation.

The piano part is also only slightly moderated, mainly by modifying the triplet figure in the beginning of the phrase. Instead of "c#1-d1" the notes are "C#-d1". The low C#1 creates a darker and more intimidating atmosphere, predicting the desperation.

After the end of the vocal phrase the atmosphere turns towards a more sensual one as new material is presented in the piano part. It creates a bridge to a section inspired by "Parfum de l'instant". Referring to her lover a dreamy "You" is heard on a long eb2 note in the vocal line. It is a variation of the long a2 notes used in the end of two phrases in "Parfum de l'instant" with the same word. The piano part is based on the same parts as it contains two falling figures: rapid chromatic figures and a glissandi. Still - similarly as the vocal part - the piano
part consists of new harmonic material. As the material in both instrumental parts is placed on a lower range, it becomes less passionate and instead sensual in a calmer way.

The dreamy atmosphere changes quickly as the dynamic level in the piano part rises rapidly. The music becomes very dramatic until a sudden change appears.

Formal Phase III

The desperation returns after the loving memory as the confession theme from "Douleur" begins. The vocal line is musically identical compared with the original version but in the text there is a crucial difference made by Saariaho herself (Saariaho 2019). The phrase "I wanted so much to keep him" has been changed to "I wanted so much to keep you". The woman addresses her lover directly and this makes it a lot more personal. The reason for making this tiny but simultaneously enormous change was made to connect it with the previous "You" in the text (Saariaho 2019).

The piano part begins identically compared with the original version. In the original version, the climax in the piano part follows directly the climax in the vocal part. Now the piano part is unpredictably cut sharply, creating a startling effect. The left hand part consists of the notes B1-c, the B1 acting as an upbeat to the c. The left hand part ends with a B1 leading nowhere.

After the abrupt end of the material in the left hand part the repetitive pattern in the right hand part continues. It starts calming down, leading to a large section consisting mainly of material from "Parfum de l'instant". As the woman expresses how she would have wanted to keep her lover, her thoughts travel straight to the love scene.

The new version of the love scene begins already from the middle of the original version. The phrase "Our lips are united" is missing as the vocal line begins directly from "Our fingers, entwined / Our bodies, unveiled". There are no more constant changes in tempo with several "ritardandi" and "accelerandi" and the dynamic range in the piano part is smaller, as it now ranges between "pp-mp" instead of "pppp-mf". The musical material in both instrumental parts is very similar to the original version.

At the end of the phrase "Our fingers, entwined" the triplet pattern in the left hand part is now wider in many senses. Instead of the notes g1-eb2 it now consists of the notes G1-eb1. The length of the note is also doubled. The flutter in the right hand part is identical with the original version. In the original version, the material in the right hand part was placed between the notes in the left hand part and all the material was packed to a very narrow area. Now the flutter acts as an airy purl on top of the bell-like triplet pattern, which has a haunting feeling referring to the memories from the past.
The vocal line is almost unaltered. The end of the phrase "Our bodies, unveiled" has been changed. Instead of closing the phrase gently with the notes bb1-a1 the phrase ends with a dramatic outburst with the notes bb1-a2.

The beginning of the interlude is not as abrupt as in the original version. After the climax of the vocal phrase, the beginning of the interlude is not as startling. The dynamic is also "mf" instead of "f". The shortened version of the interlude is nearly identical with the original one, but all of the a1 notes have been changed to a2 notes, predicting a greater climax to follow.

The vocal line continues at the climax and the dynamic mark in both instrumental parts is "forte". The music from "Parfum de l'instant" is enriched with elements from "Douleur". It is a combination of anguish and erotic passion as the root characters of the two songs, love and pain are mixed with each other.

In the climax the vocal line consists of the word "You" on a four bar long a2 note. This is an element directly taken from "Parfum de l'instant", but with the loud dynamic level it resembles more the shrieks in "Douleur". The loud dynamic level gives a different character to the falling chromatic figures in the right hand part of the piano part as well. According to Saariaho, the dotted rhythm in the left hand part is like a heartbeat (Saariaho 2019). Rhythmically it resembles the heartbeat motive in "Douleur".

After the climax, the music starts calming down as the pain is put behind. The material from "Parfum de l'instant" continues in the same order as in the original version, but the piano part has been enriched with new musical material. An example of the changes is that the trill on d1 under the phrase "You're the perfume of my instant" is paired with a tremolo figure with the notes C1-C. This makes the piano part stand out more. The continuous vibration in different registers creates a static atmosphere.

Under the phrase, "You're the skin of my dream", the right hand part is identical with the original version, but instead of falling glissandi new rhythmic material is introduced in the left hand part, consisting mainly of quintuplets creating a polyrhythmic passage together with the right hand. The tempo accelerates and the passage ends dramatically as the voices are pulled into different directions: there is a "diminuendo" in the right hand part and a "crescendo" in the left hand part.

Formal Phase IV

The fourth formal phase of "Résonances" is a shortened variation of the previous formal phase.

The dramatic ending of the previous formal phase leads to a variated version of the confession theme from "Douleur". The melody in the vocal line is variated and it reaches the a#2 note - the highest note in the vocal line - emphasizing the desperation of the woman. The repetitive
pattern in the piano part is modified and it follows the line of the vocal melody, this time reaching the dynamic climax simultaneously with the vocal part.

The piano part calms down and leads again to the love scene from "Parfum de l'instant". The material jumps straight into the last one of the three phrases: "Our bodies, unveiled". The melody used for the vocal phrase is the same that was presented in the previous phase. With a softer dynamic, the character is very tender and the large interval in the end of the phrase does not have the same startling quality.

The phrase is followed by a short interlude consisting of the falling chromatic figures and glissandi from "Parfum de l'instant". The energy rises rapidly but there is a turn in the atmosphere, not following the previous pattern. The last glissando leads soon to the low Bb2 note as the music calms down immediately after the rapid rise.

The words are "But I close my eyes" and the melody in the vocal line is the same one which was used for the words in period A. The rest of the sentence ("to imagine you") is missing, and the phrase is shorter. After it ends, the pedal in the piano part is kept down and the echoes of the Bb2 tone resonate freely.

Formal Phase V

The fifth formal phase in "Résonances" is based mainly on the fourth verse of "Douleur". It also begins with the confession theme. The vocal line is presented in its original form, not being as dramatic as in the previous phase. The piano part on the other hand is presented as a hysterical variation. The right hand is unstable and has a wider range while the left hand part is enriched with clusters.

The material does not directly lead to the love scene but instead the variation of the fourth verse continues. The phrase "Remorse devours me!" is heard in the vocal line with the original melody. The piano part is nearly original but contains more material. Thus, it does not provide as much space for the vocal line as in the original version and the vocal phrase does not gain a similar importance.

The following piano interlude leads into the end of the love scene. As the material from "Douleur" changes to material from "Parfum de l'instant, the end of the piano interlude from the love scene is heard in its original version. As the vocal line continues with a slightly moderated melody, the text is again shortened: "But I close my eyes". The new meaning of the words leads to a long pause that ends the fifth formal phase.

Formal Phase VI

The song cycle ends with a long sequence taken from "Attente". It contains material from the second period besides encompassing nearly the whole third period. There are minor changes
but the notes are almost the same. The material is stripped down of all lively elements and there are no special effects. The dynamics do not change as wildly but all of the material is placed on a narrower, softer range instead. The pedal is kept down through the entire formal phase reducing the clarity of the material. With all of these elements, a greyer picture is produced. The vacillating material is concretely like an echo in itself. As Saariaho summarises, "nothing is as before because of everything that has happened in between" (YouTube 2011).

The sixth formal phase begins with the interlude from the end of the second period, with the last ostinato figure. As it opens the last formal phase, it predicts the end of the song being near. The woman already knows how the love story ended. The words "I am the boat adrift / My lover is beyond the rift / And the wind has died down." contain a more fatal meaning. Her lover is far away, and she will never reach him again.

An enharmonic variation of the last ostinato figure is heard one last time as it leads to the ending of the entire song cycle. The last concrete elements start fading out. After the last notes the pedal is still kept down for 1,5 bars. Only the echo remains.

3.2 Interpreting “Quatre Instants” - a reflection on the analysis

Because "Quatre Instants" is a song cycle and not an opera, there are more options in interpretation. When composing an opera, Saariaho creates a detailed and personal musical shape to each of the characters. "Quatre Instants" on the other hand is "concert music", as she says, and in this sense she has composed the musical material more freely (Saariaho 2019).

Saariaho has said that if one thinks of the song cycle as a chronological story, then the events in the third song, "Parfum de l'instant" would take place before the second song, "Douleur" (YouTube 2011). However, when I interviewed her she also wanted to emphasize that it is not necessary to think of it as a chronological story if one wishes otherwise, leaving space for the interpretation (Saariaho 2019).

In the chapter "On my background with art song" I briefly compared the differences in interpreting an operatic role vs. interpreting an art song. In interpreting an operatic role, one already has a ready-made character, and this already sets limits to the interpretation. When interpreting an art song, there are only the words and the music. One has to create the character themselves, and there is a lot of freedom in the possibilities. Therefore, without the limits of interpreting an operatic role I believe that there is also more freedom in creating the "woman" of the songs.

As Saariaho's approach to composing "Quatre Instants" compared with her approach to composing larger operatic works is also different, I believe that it supports what I have said.
In our interpretation, Maria and I have decided to choose the viewpoint in which we view the song cycle as a chronological story, in which the songs are not presented in the chronological order. Thus, the chronological story is told in a non-chronological order. This is the interpretation, which Saariaho mentioned as one of the possibilities as I stated before.

In our interpretation the woman of the songs is the same person. Through the order in which the songs are presented, information of her life is shared from different periods of her life while jumping in time in a non-chronological order.

I think that one of the most powerful features of the song cycle is having the jumps in time. That there is a chronological story, which is not presented in the chronological order. That the longing is first presented before anything has happened, then the anguish which followed from the rejection, and that only after these several emotional layers and events in time, the actual meeting is presented.

Saariaho has been praised for her ability to control the sense of time and while associating different songs of the song cycle in different periods of the life of the woman, there is a new level of intensity in the interpretation. The analysis is also written with this interpretation in mind.

This has been our interpretative angle already from the beginning. When Saariaho stressed that this is not the only way to interpret it and that the songs do not necessarily have to have a connection with each other (Saariaho 2019), I decided that it would be wise to go through different possibilities for interpretation.

While thinking of other possible interpretations I came up with two ideas. In the first one, the three first songs could be interpreted as not having any connection with each other, that they would possibly be stories of three different people. The fourth song could be a collage of all these different experiences built into one universal experience where these experiences meet each other.

In the second one, the story would be told from the point of view of a single person, but the lovers would be different people whom she encounters in very different phases of her life. Moreover, from this interpretative angle the fourth song could be her looking back on these very different experiences and feelings and seeing how the different and unique situations she has encountered now form her past and her personal history.

I believe that there are limitless possibilities in interpreting these songs and in creating the background story. In the end, we have to choose the interpretative angle that feels most organic for us. Moreover, I feel that when interpreted in the way we do, the structure builds a huge tension. Saariaho ended up composing the songs in this particular order because she felt that the music that came to her mind from "Attente" and "Parfum de l'instant" felt too similar compared with each other and "Douleur" was put in between to create a contrast (Saariaho 2019).
One of the reasons why we still decided to stick with the interpretative angle we had in the beginning was that we want to present a story of a single person with the rich emotional palette she has experienced. We want to make connections with different events in different songs. In the fourth song, we have very strong ideas on what happens in the psyche of the woman as a part of the chronological story.

With having separate stories one does not have the possibility to investigate the person so fully, but when it is one person and the information in the score is examined in order to find information of her in every song, we hoped to build a very wholesome picture of her emotional world.

Tension is something this song cycle is full of, and when interpreting it from this angle, a reason is given to it. When the pain suddenly strikes after longing, it is a very powerful expression. She has first tried to reach her lover with such a strong will, but awful pain follows and she claims how she would not have wanted it to happen in the first place. When the last shriek of pain followed from rejection is over, it is an extremely powerful effect when the woman is suddenly shown next in the middle of her bliss with her lover. Then she also feels sadness, but in the loving state of mind has a more bittersweet attitude towards him. This emotional state is suddenly showed which is so far away from the rage.

In general, we feel that this approach is very powerful and helps in bringing the expressively extreme character of the music to life. According to Saariaho, the song cycle consists of powerful and intense short moments (Saariaho 2015) and we feel that our interpretative angle falls in line with this idea.

3.2.1 Attente

"Attente" is filled with elements of water and wind. According to Saariaho, it presents the woman dreaming of a love she has not yet experienced. She wishes for the wind to come and to drive her towards her lover, who is waiting for her on the shore (YouTube 2011). Although she is soaked in her own longing, there are darker undertones shading her dreams. The constant waiting numbs her and creates frustration. The triplet pattern symbolizes the waiting. As it is a continuous, hypnotic figure, it builds a slightly oppressive atmosphere. There is also a despair in her longing.

All of the four periods of the song have a similar structure and are based on the same musical material. This creates a sense of arriving in the same place again and again when each verse begins. This hints at either the woman having already been waiting for a long time, or at least feeling so. She has done all she can to reach her lover and to be noticed by him; she cannot do anything else to free her from the frustrating situation. Therefore, she just waits.

According to the expression marks, the music should be shaped rather freely. By doing so one can convincingly both present the woman in a passive state, depending on the happenings and actions around her - and make the music sound like the elements of water and wind.
Piano prelude / Formal Phase I

Already from the beginning of the prelude, musical means are used to show vastness and remoteness. The beginning tremolo is a very evaporate figure compared to the concrete ostinato figure. They also begin from the extreme ends of the keyboard. In this way, there are elements of both things near and far away.

For the most part the prelude is very soft and the dynamic climax in "forte" stands out. The beginning of the last ostinato figure acts as the climax in the prelude. The low Bb2 note hints already at the bleak fate of the woman.

As the piano prelude calms down, I am trying to find a very still expression, trying to play everything in a very simple manner and lead gradually towards to the stagnant atmosphere of the first verse. I interpret that the reducing of the musical activity presents the wind dying down. It is the reason for the woman's frustration, as she cannot move without it.

The switch from the prelude to the first verse is very delicate. I believe that the level of tension should be very high in the change. The timing is very important. The last bar in the prelude should be slowed down very evenly. If there is a slight gap and the vocal line does not begin as a direct continuation of the prelude, the tension breaks. And if the vocal line begins too soon, not being able to slow down the last bar of the prelude enough, the beginning of the first verse does not gain the importance it should, as it is the first moment when the woman is heard.

First verse / Formal Phase II

To create the stagnant atmosphere of the first verse I am trying to avoid sudden changes and trying to keep the sound very still. As the woman's frustration starts building in the vocal line, I want to continue presenting her pain in the piano interlude using sharper articulation and attack in the left hand part before returning to a calmer atmosphere. These musical changes happen on a relatively short time span, but I am trying to round the changes so that it is in consensus with the lazy and sensual character of the music.

At the last vocal phrase there is a large leap to the word "vast". We are slightly slowing down just before the word to highlight the vastness of the sea. The low dynamic creates a very sensual feeling, but at the same time shows the pain of the woman.

Second verse / Formal Phase III

As the woman starts getting more nervous in the second verse, this is depicted by the more active vocal part and with the quick dynamic changes and glissandi in the piano part. I am
trying to create a shivering feeling and liveliness to create the rise in energy, but still not do too much so that the expression does not get too dramatic too early.

Unlike the hysterical and impulsive character in most parts of the second verse, in the following interlude I want to create a grander expression. In the slower tempo with gradual growth with a strong sense of direction compared with the aimless impulsive minor outburst: The dynamic climax, similar to the one in the prelude, is more like external forces to which the woman is subordinate, they are the reason for her suffering.

As the music calms down and the dynamic level descends the fast movements have a vibrant feeling. I am trying to build a long line towards the woman's outburst.

Third verse / Formal Phase IV

The third verse has many shades of meaning in it. The woman says "I have raised all my sails / For the wind to drive me". The dramatic, upward heading shape of the phrase shows the strong will of the woman. She is so full of longing and she wants to do all in her power to reach out to her lover. There is also desperation as the woman has already expressed that the wind has died down.

The music gets less dramatic colours as it returns to a more sensual atmosphere as she continues with the words "I have raised all my sails / For my lover to see me". In a way, there is also contentment, as she knows she has done all in her power. However, the dynamic between her and her lover is interesting. Evidently he is out of reach, but can the last phrase be interpreted so that he does not even notice her? Or maybe he does not even know about her, and the woman feels that she cannot do anything to change the fact. The love she feels towards him is still a carrying force inside her, despite the numbness, that is why she keeps waiting. There is still a dim glimpse of light.

3.2.2 Douleur

The second song, "Douleur" (Torment), fits well into the cellist Anssi Karttunen's description of Saariaho's music: "Kaija's music is not music at all. It is pure emotion that takes the form of music" (Moisala, 2009, p. 75). According to Saariaho it is a depiction of all the feelings in the moment as the woman has been abandoned after the love and the passion. She feels pain, still longs for her lover and suffers because it can never happen again, but she is also wrought with shame for ever taking part in it in the first place (YouTube 2011). The shame and the regret are the most dominating features in "Douleur".

"Douleur" describes the mixed, primitive feelings the woman experiences after being rejected. As she often repeats the words "Remorse burns me!", her guilt stands out. She is deeply shameful for her own actions. According to Rechardt and Ikonen, shame in its most intense
form belongs to the most unbearable feelings there are (Rechardt and Ikonen 1994). The intensity of the feeling makes the woman seem like she is on the verge of losing her mind.

**Formal Phase I / Period A**

**Preface**

"Douleur" begins explosively with a surprise, the elements of water have changed to fire. The woman is shown in an unstable state, obsessed with her own remorse. As the music intensifies, it leads to an outburst.

As the piano interlude follows, the woman stops to listen to her own emotion. With the repetitive nature of the interlude, one can imagine the woman still going through the same obsessive thoughts. The shriek has a breathless feeling because of the "diminuendo". It is like the woman being suffocated by the intensity of her emotions.

**First verse**

The first three verses focus all on how the woman gradually moved towards her lover, to be with him. They have the same structure and they all express how the woman did not want to do so, but that her nature took over the rational side and she could not help it.

In the first verse, the woman starts explaining her relation to her lover from the first sight. There is an accent on the word "not" only in the first verse. With this musical element, the fact that this was against her will is highlighted.

The music in the piano part previously leading to the shriek now leads to a soft a2 note sung in "dolce". Thus, this is the contrary counterpart of the shriek and is evoked by a happier memory. For a short moment she remembers why she let herself look at him. The feeling is quickly passed and a rage is born inside her as the remorse quickly comes back in. Her last sigh is filled with guilt and frustration.

**Second verse**

In the second verse, the vocal part has fewer surprises and in the beginning it sounds relatively lyrical compared to the piano part, which has become quite robust. The piano part describes the underlying nervousness inside the woman. She has already a more active role in the second verse. Even though she says that she did not want to "meet his steps", she still made a choice to do so, which was conscious on some level. Again, she removes herself from the situation, claiming that it was an act of desire where she was a passive actor.

**Formal Phase II / Period B**
Middle part

The darkness of the piano part in the B section depicts the night the woman is referring to. In the middle of the anguish and chaos, the woman manages to distance herself from the troubling emotions and remembers gently the night with her lover. As the remorse tries to come back in the abrupt interruption in the piano part, the vocal line continues with a slightly stronger dynamic. The woman is slightly startled by the emotion and tries to stay in the more gentle memory, the remorse starts slowly coming back in.

Formal Phase III / Period A1

Interphase

As the interphase begins with a shocking chord as did the preface, the remorse completely overpowers the gentle memories, full of desire. In fact it is born from them, as the woman is shameful of her own desire. The emotion is strong and with the louder outburst of the shriek in the interphase, she is hoping to suppress the tormenting emotion. There is a comma between the interphase and the third verse. This creates tension. Sadly, the woman does not succeed in her efforts. When the third verse begins and the tension is released, she cannot escape the emotion.

Third verse

In the third verse sexual and acute shame, sadness and the feeling of rejection all blend into each other. It is her remorseful reaction to the events she reminisced so gently in the B part.

The polyrhythmic passages in the piano part reflect the woman's mental state, becoming more and more unstable. The phrases describing how her body did not obey her in the two previous verses was very dramatic both times and there was a strong will, a strong resistance. This time she surrenders over her own desire. She sadly acknowledges it without resistance, but with the insistence growing in the piano part, she experiences a mental breakdown. There is a huge dichotomy. It is between her own actions and what she feels she would have done if she had acted rationally. And then there is the contradiction between her desire towards her lover and the fact that she was rejected by him. This is not known yet, but as the verse ends explosively, she has to take a turn in her expression.

Fourth verse

The atmosphere calms down from total catastrophe to a nervous shiver. The most honest and revealing material follows. For the first time the woman says that she would have in fact wanted to keep her lover. The confession is very important in the storyline, but it is not
musically expressed in a climatic way. The biggest narrative climax is still to follow. This is still the fundamental reason why the woman is in her current mental state. She opens up more as she confesses how she would have wanted to keep him even for another night or day. Just for a little while more.

The narrative climax is staggering: "He did not obey me". Now everything is clear. Throughout the song she has so strongly expressed how her rational side did not want her to act in the way she acted. Everything lead to one night together. Then she reveals that she wanted to continue to be with him after all. Finally, she reveals that he did not want to be with her. Even if she did not want to be seduced in the first place, the reason she is so full of remorse is that in the end she wanted it so much more than him.

Moreover, for some reason she already acknowledged this quite strongly, as is seen in "Parfum de l'instant". There she already acknowledges that their story will not probably have a continuation, but there is nothing that hints at remorse, guilt and self-hate of this level. It leaves a lot of questions on what happened between the songs. As the woman phrases the words so that he did not obey her, it is a poetic choice of words, but did she maybe fall into desperation and beg him to stay? And did his cold answer make her seem as if it was completely impossible to think that anything else could happen? Whatever the interpretation, it is evident that she is deeply shameful for having such a strong desire towards her lover after being abandoned by him.

Formal Phase IV / Period B1

*Coda*

The use of the high register in the coda produces a weeping quality as the woman once more reminisces of the night with her lover. The musical material is extremely fragile. She is left with a feeling of emptiness as the vocal line ends and the piano part starts fading out. As one might think that she has managed to move from the greatest anguish, the piano part explodes suddenly and leads to a long shriek. The remorse comes back again, it is now evident that it is impossible to hide from it and like a curse it keeps tormenting the woman, causing her to scream as long as her lungs let her.

3.2.3 Parfum de l’instant

"Parfum de l'instant" moves in an intangible world, in the realm of scents and dreams. There is the dichotomy between the concrete and the ethereal. Simultaneously as the woman is in an intimate situation with her lover, while she is so concretely in contact with him, she still sees him distant, already as a memory. He is the momentary incarnation of her evaporating dream.
Formal Phase I / Period A

With the piano not being present in the beginning, the atmosphere is very delicate. The pause in the middle of the vocal phrase suggests a hesitation, a pondering atmosphere. It presents the woman in all her vulnerability. As the piano enters, I want to make the sound as transparent and evaporate as possible to reflect the mood.

The singer repeats her phrase. There is a lot more passion in the expression as the woman throws herself into the moment. The rapid falling glissandi in the piano part are like cold shivers travelling through her back. The dynamic mark is extremely low and the quick passages have to be played with the lightest of touch to execute the dynamic mark. This also contributes to the same character.

As the vivid piano section leads to the low Bb2 tone, it wakes up a new feeling in the woman and new kind of musical material in the vocal line. As the woman closes her eyes, one could first imagine her doing so as she is fully engaged in the intimate situation. But as the sentence takes a turn both in the text and in the shape of the musical phrase, another kind of interpretation follows. She closes her eyes to imagine her lover. The words "imagine you" are highlighted with tenuto lines on every syllable. There is a mild sense of unease, but the essential meaning behind the phrase is revealed later in the song.

I want to make the Bb2 tone sound fatal as it predicts the sadder side of the song, but softly, not being too self-evident but rather suggesting it in a mild way. Thus, I am aiming for a soft but richly resonating tone for the note.

The dreamy atmosphere is restored in the piano interlude. With the tenuto lines in the melody in the end of the interlude, the sound world becomes more concrete as the music prepares for the physical side of the intimacy.

Formal Phase II / Period B

The changing tempos and dynamics create different kind of levels in intensity, vividly depicting the erotic setting. The trill on each phrase builds an electric intensity. As the vocal line keeps on rising, the music becomes more passionate. There is a slightly falling ending of the last vocal phrase before the interlude in the love scene. The stormy piano interlude begins from where the words end, as they are left out for the most intimate of happenings as the passion is clearly heard in the piano part.

An important element in Saariaho's musical writing is the liveliness of the musical tones, as she feels that a static sound is not interesting. In this passage, I am aiming to create minor differences on a small scale, so that the music sounds very lively while still being very intimate and sensual. I want to keep the last trill before the interlude very mild so that the beginning of the interlude is very surprising as the sensual atmosphere becomes suddenly a lot
more heated. I want to bring the passion out in the piano part by making the glissandi very surprising, perhaps have slight crescendos as well, heightening the intensity.

As the interlude slows and quiets down the passionate atmosphere starts turning towards a more nostalgic one. After the interlude, the material in the vocal line is placed on the highest range in the song. The highest trill is also heard in the piano part. After the climax in the interlude the higher range and the soft dynamic present the woman in a calmed down, but slightly breathless state. With the cool tonal quality, the woman becomes more rational as she gradually wakes to the melancholic side of the situation. As the vocal phrase ends on the high a2 note on the word "you", it is like her still once grasping for her lover. The "accelerando" and the quick musical passages in the piano part act as the last remains of the passion before the woman entirely calms down to accept her faith.

Formal Phase III / Period A1

As the last glissandi leads to the fateful and bell-like Bb2 note, the material quickly gathers back to the middle register. After the emotionally intensive a2 note in the vocal line, the woman lets go of her lover both emotionally and physically. Her focus is turned from her own bodily experiences to her lover, outside from her own feelings. In the calmer state of mind, she can analyze the situation as she compares her lover to the perfume of the moment. The comma in the score before the following phrase is like the woman organizing her thoughts before then comparing her lover to the skin of her dream. She knows that he is present only in this very moment and predicts that he will not be there in the future. The music has a peaceful feeling and there is no resentment.

As the piano part starts getting more dramatic the woman's emotions become stronger. She repeats the words with stronger emotional engagement as the sadness grows inside her. She is painfully longing for her lover as if he would already be gone. The piano material starts getting more dramatic again. The glissando pattern ends this time on a C1 note. The gesture is the same as before, but the new tone comes as a surprise. I want to support this by slowing down the sense of time a bit in the large glissando to create a turning point and provide more meaning to the rest of the song.

After the music finally leads to the Bb2 note, the postlude begins. The thin textured piano part keeps the feeling of emptiness for the rest of the song. According to Saariaho, it is very clearly sad and it should be played very slowly (Saariaho 2019). It is also sonorously extremely beautiful. According to the philosopher Eero Ojanen we often find such things and phenomena beautiful which pass by, such as youth and the sunset, and that in this way there is often something sad and nostalgic in beauty (Ojanen, 2001). I find that the beauty and simplicity of the postlude are the most heartbreaking elements of it. I want to play the postlude with an airy and transparent touch, seeking for the most beautifully sonorous and simple touch. With the gradually vanishing music, I want to react to the vulnerability of the woman, as if it were her last goodbye to her lover.
3.2.4 Résonances

As all the three songs are very different in character, Saariaho felt that the fourth song could be a synthesis of them (Saariaho 2019).

All the three previous songs dealt with her feelings in the very moment of the events taking place in them. The synthesis in the fourth movement presents a more mature emotional scale, where feelings blend into each other and new feelings evolve. "Parfum de l'instant" is full of passion, but there is also sadness. There is no sign of guilt or grudge towards her lover. The key feelings in "Douleur" are remorse and shame. She is reacting directly to being rejected, shameful of her own desire and actions. In "Résonances" the passion and loving sensuality from "Parfum de l'instant" with the anguish in "Douleur" have merged into each other. The feeling of remorse is less present. Rather she is tormented by the longing towards her lover as she is haunted by the memories of their meeting. The anguish is born rather from the fact that it can never happen again.

Formal Phase I

The song begins with a waking trill and distant passages become more concrete. It suggests that the previous songs are placed a lot earlier on the time span of the song cycle. It also provides the reason for the more matured emotional palette. As the material turns towards "Douleur", it reminds us of the remorse in a shocking way in the more gentle part. It is a very slight reference to the remorse, but in the middle of the new musical material, it is just a memory of a feeling from the past.

The material that is directly taken from "Douleur" is a summary of everything that happened between the woman and her lover. The section acts as the woman remembering it once more. The compositionally sophisticated way of gradually moving towards the material from "Attente" presents how the thoughts of the woman are organically formed.

Formal Phase II

As the woman remembers the longing, which preceded their meeting, she is painfully reminded of how much effort she put just into being even noticed by her lover. Now that she knows where her efforts lead to, there is frustration and desperation. But she also remembers how much she wanted him and why. For the first time in the song, she addresses him lovingly, filled with nostalgia. The vocal line stays in the same character, but the piano part starts moving towards a stormier dimension. Under the nostalgia the pain comes back, they both exist at the same time on different emotional planes.
Formal Phase III

As the pain becomes more dominant, the nostalgic feeling becomes frustrated. She expresses how she would have wanted to keep her lover, and now she is frustrated for having lost him. As she goes directly to the love scene she goes through the moments she is so desperately longing for. She has a bittersweet attitude towards her memories. When she is reminded of the greater passion in the piano interlude, this however is too much for her to bear. She addresses her lover passionately. The ardour mixes with her deep anguish as her longing reaches a new level of intensity. As the comparisons to the perfume of the instant and the skin of her dream were predictions in "Parfum de l'instant", they are now just statements. She verifies that her hunch was right. As the music has reached a calmer state, this is born from her trying to calm herself down and remind of the facts she already was aware of.

Formal Phase IV

She is not calm for long as the confession theme begins abruptly again. This time the dramatic nature of the phrase presents the woman in a more desperate state of mind. As it directly continues to the most intimate part of the love scene, it is like a primitive yearning for intimacy. It is a multifaceted experience of loneliness. According to Saariaho, she wanted to use the phrase "but I close my eyes" more than once so that the meaning would be that the woman is trying to organize her thoughts in a different way, to calm down (Saariaho 2019). From the depths of her despair, she decides to actively change her experience. The emotional roller coaster has been going on for so long. She knows she cannot go back so she wants to control her desire and move on.

Formal Phase V

She fails in her attempts to do so as the confession theme begins once more. The guilt comes back, but the phrase "Remorse devours me!" does not have the same kind of significance it had previously. One more layer is added to her pain. Traumatized by the non-stopping remorse and shame in "Douleur" she finally manages to pull herself out of the loop of going through the pangs again and again. She does so by distancing herself from the emotions. Total emptiness follows.

Formal Phase VI

The returning to the music from the beginning of the song cycle has many symbolical layers in it. At the same time, the words contain the same truth: that she is still far away from her lover, he is completely out of her reach. But with the exact same words she compares the present with the past, when she innocently was hoping for something that ended up causing enormous pain and anguish to her. In the middle of the emptiness, she just expresses that she is here, her lover is far away, and they will never be together again. She does not raise her
sails, nor try to do anything to change the situation. She knows her fate and she has grown to accept that in order to remove the pain she has to move on. Therefore, there are no happy memories but no excruciating pain either. She manages to calm herself and faces total emptiness.

4 Rehearsal process

In this chapter I describe the rehearsal process with Maria and the journey we have had with "Quatre Instants".

In February 2018, we were searching for a 21st century Finnish composition for a competition. At the time, I was getting more acquainted with Saariaho’s works as I played the piano part in "Lichtbogen", a work for a large chamber ensemble. I was fascinated with its musical language and along with Maria drawn to "Quatre Instants" as I remembered hearing it performed by soprano Meri Siirala and pianist Cecilia Oinas at a concert in 2011.

We listened to the recording of the song cycle made by soprano Karita Mattila and pianist Martin Katz. Immediately while seeing the text of the second song, "Douleur", Maria fell in love with the subject and we were both overwhelmed by the composition. When we saw the score the following day we grew daunted as its complexity sank in. The piano part seemed to be more complex than anything I had ever played before. The vocal part consisted of several long and high a2 and b2 notes. The tessitura was also relatively high for Maria's current vocal phase: the previous year she was singing mezzo repertoire such as Dalila and Erda and she started her switch to soprano repertoire only half a year ago. After first really falling in love with the music and then being frightened while seeing the score we did not know what to do. We decided to leave the decision for later.

The deadline for applying for the competition was in the end of April 2018. The deadline was getting closer but we had not considered any other options or rehearsed "Douleur" in any way. Together we went through the vocal part so that I played it on the piano while Maria was sight-reading it. It seemed to open new possibilities in Maria's voice and expand her potential in a way in which the previous repertoire she was working with could not have. We knew that it would be a challenge, but it felt like it could be a challenge that would help Maria to develop as a singer and help her move in the "right" direction in terms of her vocal development. I did not play through the piano part but I was slightly terrified when looking at the score again. I decided to take a leap of faith and trust that I could learn the complex piano part by working on it a lot and so we decided to add it in our competition repertoire.

After we finished our bachelor's studies and once we found out that we had made it to the competition we started to rehearse "Douleur" in June 2018. In the beginning of the process
Maria was visibly inspired by the poem but I myself was solely focusing on learning the piano part and on trying to play together with Maria. Usually I spend more time on the interpretation of the poem in the beginning of the rehearsal process but with "Douleur" I worked in a different way since there was so many details to be fathomed to even manage to play through the piece.

During summer 2018 we both lived in Helsinki and we practised the piece together daily (with the exception of two weeks when we had music courses and other concerts) and only in August we managed to go through the entire piece for the first time. This music was so demanding to us. During this period, we focused purely on doing things "correctly". As the competition requested that the scores for the contemporary works were to be submitted to the jurors, we had an added pressure of our performance being possibly evaluated while reading the score. In our rehearsals we were rigidly trying to stay true to the score without paying so much attention on the interpretative side of things.

The other reason for doing so was that the music was so complex that we managed to go through the entire song for the first time only in August 2018. Only around this time, I really started to investigate the text and its connections to the music. I grew out from the prison of just trying to master the piano part and was so impressed by the musical ways it contributed to the story. I found the structure to be brilliant in the way it portrayed the story, it spoke to me a lot and now I could really open my eyes to what Maria was so excited about in the beginning of our rehearsal process. All the difficult things in the score seemed to have an expressive reason in the way they were constructed. Spending so much time with solving the problems proved to be rewarding as I felt they were so deeply connected to the text that I found I had learned new possibilities to express the content, not just learn how to play abstract figures which were complex for the mere sake of being complex.

As I too had fallen deeply in love with "Douleur", I decided that the next bigger project could be rehearsing the entire song cycle. As I was planning the repertoire for my master's recital (which was cancelled due to COVID-19) I decided that the song cycle would be a part of the program. I decided that the interpretation of the song cycle would be the subject of my degree project. As learning one of the songs took so long, having almost two years to prepare the rest of the song cycle seemed like the perfect time to prepare the entire song cycle. We could work with it in phases and let it rest and mature in between.

In the beginning of fall 2018, we received many lessons from our lied teacher Heikki Pellinen in preparation for the competition. We worked on "Douleur" also on Maria's singing lessons with Sirkku Wahlroos-Kaitila and with Juha Karvonen and Joonas Pohjonen at Maria's group lesson in Metropolia University for Applied Sciences, with Collin Hansen at the Sibelius-Academy and on my group lesson with my piano teacher Stefan Bojsten at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. We also performed it on five different occasions.
During this phase, our interpretation of "Douleur" grew significantly. After the first lesson, we freed ourselves from only focusing on executing the information written in the score and instead we tried to get behind the information as we tried to find reasons to shape the music in a certain way and reflected on our personal interpretation of "Douleur". We had several discussions around our interpretation with Maria and we analyzed the recordings of our performances of the song. As we rehearsed, we still concentrated trying not to let the music fall apart but on staying together. After each performance, our interpretation kept on maturing and as we had reached a certain standard with the thorough work we had done, we could concentrate more on the purely expressive side of the performance. Despite this, I still had the feeling that I was struggling with the difficult score.

Unfortunately, we never reached the stage in the competition where we were supposed to perform "Douleur". When the competition was over we did not actively practise it, we only warmed it up a couple of days before performing it again in a concert in December 2018. We noticed that it had matured during the break and this performance was the most expressively committed one so far. At the same time I felt that in order to gain a stronger accuracy in executing the piano part I would have needed more time in making my hands more used to the music again.

After this, we had a long pause from our rehearsals of "Quatre Instants". In spring 2019 Maria was busy with other projects and I was more focused on learning the biographical information of Saariaho and I tried to learn as much about her music in general as possible. In March 2019 we also travelled to Tampere, Finland, where the Kylässä Kaija Saariaho -festival was held. We attended concerts where many of her other vocal works were performed and I even had the opportunity to meet her briefly.

Maria practised the vocal part of "Attente" and "Parfum de l'instant" during the spring but I did not touch the entire song cycle before June 2019. As these songs do not contain similar difficulties as "Douleur" and as we were already more familiar with Saariaho's music, we focused on interpretative aspects early on in the rehearsal process, although I was still struggling with the score. As Maria took part in Topi Lehtipuu's masterclass in 2019 we worked with him on "Attente" and "Douleur", which we had not touched since December 2018. We performed "Douleur" in the final concert of the masterclass and again noticed that it had matured and that we were more comfortable with the music. Although it felt better compared with the previous performance in December I still had the same feeling of needing more time in practising the piano part to gain a stronger accuracy.

I started analyzing the score in August 2019 as I prepared for the interview I had with Saariaho. During this process and as a result of both the analytical work and the interview combined with the research I did in spring, my personal interpretation of the song cycle had matured significantly and I drew stronger conclusions between from what I found in the score to how I interpreted the narrative side of the music.
We did not work with "Quatre Instants" a lot in the latter part of the summer, as we were busy with other projects. In November 2019 we performed the entire song cycle for the first time and before this we had an intensive rehearsal period. I lived in Stockholm and Maria was commuting between Helsinki and Stockholm. Besides this, we had a lot going on in our studies so we did not have the same freedom we had in summer 2018. Because of this we could not practise together daily, but in most cases we could practise several times in a week. This provided also advantages as I could now use more time to learn the piano part. We were aiming in creating a performance that would be artistically as high as possible and during this process we had the lengthiest conversations around the music and our interpretation. We studied the score together and discussed in detail how we want to interpret it. We shared our own personal views with each other, which sometimes were very different. In some cases, we decided to choose one of these different angles and in some cases, our interpretation took a new turn as a new idea was born from the thoughts we shared with each other.

Our way of working in this phase was a lot more wholesome compared to the way we worked with "Douleur" in summer 2018. We started to rehearse the fourth song, "Résonances" only in this phase. As this song is largely based on the previous songs, we wanted to reach a certain maturity with them before touching "Résonances". In the end, we were surprised with how little time we had left and we only managed to go through it for the first time only 1,5 weeks before the concert in November. During this phase, we worked on the song cycle on a few of Maria's singing lessons with Robert Hyman but he concentrated purely on Maria's vocal technique. We also went through the song cycle on my group lesson with Stefan Bojsten but otherwise we were on our own. However, we had become accustomed with the musical style and our interpretation had matured a lot. Thus, we could be a lot more independent in working with the song cycle and we were also a lot quicker in our development.

During the last week before the concert, I did not practise anything else but "Quatre Instants". I focused on trying to become as comfortable with the music as possible. I also spent a lot of time in trying to polish "Douleur" so that I would not have the same dissatisfaction with treating the piano part, which I had in the past two performances.

The performance in November 2019 was a success and while listening to the recording of it we were really happy. There were some minor issues but it was surprising to us that we had managed to reach such artistic maturity in such a short time span we had with some of the material. We felt that our performance of "Douleur" had grown to an entirely new level.

A week later, we worked on "Douleur" on Anne-Sofie von Otter's and Bengt Forsberg's masterclass. We received a lot of positive feedback and interesting ideas for the development of our interpretation. Many of these suggestions dealt with the tempi and forming the architecture of the song.

After the masterclass, we had a break from rehearsing "Quatre Instants" and we resumed work with it in February 2020. During the spring, we rehearsed the song cycle a lot and we did not
pay so much attention to details but rather went often through the entire song cycle and reflected afterwards on what we had done. One of the reasons for doing so was to gain a deeper integration to the bigger picture. During this phase, we had several discussions around my analysis and we continued to deepen our interpretation of the song cycle. During our discussions, we found new details in the score that we hadn't paid as much attention to in the past and when we continued with the run-troughs of the song cycle, our musical interpretation became gradually more precise. During spring 2020 we worked on "Quatre Instants" on two of Maria's singing lessons with Sirkku Wahlroos-Kaitila and we also received feedback from our recording of the song cycle from my chamber music teacher Georg Öquist.

During the spring I also spent more time on rehearsing the piano part alone than I had done in the past. I had periods in which I did not practise anything else in my own rehearsals, as I wanted to reach the best execution of the piano part as I possibly could.

As we finally had the honour of performing "Quatre Instants" to Kaija Saariaho in May 2020 we felt that we had done what we could and that now we would receive an evaluation of what we have done. The discussion we had with Saariaho is seen in the following chapter. This performance was the culmination point of this project, but as "Quatre Instants" will play an important part in our future projects, I will conclude this chapter with how the process has continued after performing the song cycle to Saariaho.

I was generally very happy with the performance for Saariaho, but while performing I was very nervous. After the performance we took a month long break from the song cycle. After this, we performed it in a very small private concert in June 2020 and we rehearsed it only the day before. As this was not a very pressurized performance, I was very calm. The song cycle had matured during the break as we reflected on Saariaho's words and we felt stronger than ever in this performance. Usually Maria had the score in the performances although she usually did not look at it a lot. This time she performed it without the score for the first time and at the same time, she felt that it was her vocally strongest performance of this music. I noticed that I often had my eyes closed and I had never before felt such a strong presence while performing this music. As a duo, I have rarely experienced such a strongly unified feeling with Maria. It felt as if we really were a single entity, not two different musicians.

I believe that this experience was a result of the several different kind of phases we have had in our preparation process on a large time scale, the effect of Saariaho's feedback but also the relaxed nature of the event. I look eagerly forward to how our link with "Quatre Instants" will continue.
5 Performing for Saariaho – A discussion around our interpretation

On May 13th, 2020, Maria and I had the honour of performing "Quatre Instants" to Kaija Saariaho herself. After performing it, we had a long discussion around the song cycle as we received feedback from our performance. In this chapter I have collected her comments and I go through the discussion we had. The sounding part of this study is the recording of this very performance so one can easily compare the comments with the music.

Generally Saariaho said that the performance was "incredibly great, filled with different kind of nuances" (Saariaho 2020) and that the "use of dynamics was generally very good" (Saariaho 2020). She gained the impression that we have "clearly worked so much on the song cycle that I do not have any bigger observations in mind, rather some details" (Saariaho 2020).

She praised the beauty of Maria's voice and her nuanced use of it and commented that I succeeded well in executing the multilayered dynamic palette of the piano part. She also noted that the different textures in the piano part were thoroughly explored (Saariaho 2020).

**Attente**

Generally, she observed, that if some textual material was repeated then the expression should become stronger and thereby necessitate the repetition (Saariaho 2020).

In the beginning of "Attente" she suggested in treating the first two bars as an introduction and possibly playing them a bit slower and taking the main tempo only in the third bar (Saariaho 2020).

As there is a large leap in the left hand -part I asked whether one should aim directly to the "D1" in the third bar or whether one could take a little bit of time there as I did. Saariaho commented that generally the passage leads to the "D1". She said that my choice was not bad but brought up the possibility of finding a new solution without having to execute the leap in an extremely fast way (Saariaho 2020).

In bar 24 she asked a stronger emphasis on the syllable "ri" in the vocal line to achieve a more confused expression. When the words "mon amant / my lover" are repeated in bars 27-29 she wished for more insistence in addition to the dynamic growth (Saariaho 2020).

In the interlude in bar 35 she wanted the music to slow down even more so that it would become almost static before continuing in the main tempo again in bar 37 (Saariaho 2020).
She commented on the beauty of the way in which the phrase "et le vent est tombé / and the wind has died down" was executed in bars 46-47. She felt that I succeeded in creating the dynamic growth from "ppp" to "f" and stressed that one has to have courage in creating this extreme transition and that one should use a lot of pedal in it (Saariaho 2020).

She explained how the "Grave" section starting in bar 60 is where we arrive in the end, that it is the last effort the woman makes, and that it is heavy and "everything (in the vocal line) is emphasized" (Saariaho 2020) as this is the place where the frustration and despair is heard, as a preparation for the following song (Saariaho 2020).

**Douleur**

In general, Saariaho said that the performance of "Douleur" was very good and she especially liked the choices of tempi and the effect they provided. She also commented on the beauty of the ritardandi (Saariaho 2020).

She said that always when there is an accent, the consonants in the beginning of the syllable should be stronger and exaggerated as she felt that they could hardly become too strong (Saariaho 2020).

She praised the way Maria sung the glissando in bar 19 as she felt that it worked very well and had a beautiful colour (Saariaho 2020).

She said that the "subito f" in bars 69 and 73 were very good and as I remembered previously wondering how far one can go in the dynamic level she commented that one can go "as far as possible" (Saariaho 2020).

She concluded by saying that the ending was "just fantastic" (Saariaho 2020).

**Parfum de l'instant**

Saariaho said that in order to switch to an entirely different atmosphere the beginning bars could be freer as the expression mark is also "Libero", and that one does not necessarily have to have a sense of tempo there. In general she felt that in all of the "Libero" bars, the pulse is not so important but rather one could aim for a freer, more speech-like way of phrasing the vocal line (Saariaho 2020).

She noticed that the score lacks some information, which she would like to be on the score regarding the dynamics as there is a "crescendo" starting from "pppp" but that the ending point is not articulated. I imagined that the "crescendo" should be done on a very small scale but she wished for a stronger "crescendo" and expressed that the piano part could take a stronger authority next to the vocal line as the piano part is the lively part in this place. At the same time as the section in the piano part reaches its end in bar 11 the vocal part becomes a
lot lower and she said that in planning the dynamic structure one has to still keep in mind to not go too far so that the piano part wouldn't be too loud when the singer continues in the lower register (Saariaho 2020).

We discussed about the use of pedal in this place as well. The pedal is marked to be held down between bars 7-14. When I have kept the pedal down for the entire passage, the Bb2 note has become very blurry. When I have released the pedal just a little, the pitch of the note has become clearer, but there is still resonance from the previous notes. Saariaho felt that the latter option is a better way to treat this place (Saariaho 2020).

She also felt that the "Meno mosso" section in the end starting from bar 62 could be even slower (Saariaho 2020).

We went through the song again with these additions in mind and Saariaho was content with the changes as she felt that we found a dreamier atmosphere (Saariaho 2020).

In the end, she also added that while in classical singing the ending vowels are sung in words like "rêve" for example, that with her notation she wishes to have a pronunciation, which resembles more spoken French. So she wants the ending vowel to be heard very slightly (Saariaho 2020).

**Résonances**

In general, Saariaho commented that the tempi were good. She wished to hear more consonants in bars 9-10. She wanted me to play bar 50 so that I would better prepare the "toi /you" in the vocal line in bar 51. I had continued directly towards bar 51 before which she felt that one needs to take time (Saariaho 2020).

In the ending phase, starting from bar 96 she wished to have a stronger sensation of melancholy. She said, "this is where we began from, this is something we all know. It is calm, it is a sad memory, but it is final" (Saariaho 2020). So she expressed that when one arrives in bar 111, while the content has previously been used in desperate ways before, that the phrase is now just calmly repeated. "This is what happened and it is final" (Saariaho 2020).

She wished a stronger feeling of this. She said that as these are the last important words one does not have to worry about the tempo but it could rather be thought as in "Libero" and that it could also be in "Meno mosso". And that in the end "the piano drifts away in its own pace without hurry" (Saariaho 2020).
6 Discussion

In this study, I have analyzed Kaija Saariaho's song cycle "Quatre Instants". I have concentrated on how the song text is reflected in the music, focusing mainly on the piano part. In the reflective part I have explained how Maria and I have formed an interpretation of this music based largely on the analysis. My project culminated when we performed the song cycle for Saariaho and there is a chapter on Saariaho's response to our performance. I have also included our rehearsal process in the study.

This project has consisted of learning about Saariaho's music and especially the song cycle by reading about the subjects and interviewing the composer in person, listening to her music, analyzing the song cycle, forming an interpretation of it and rehearsing and performing it.

I have included a relatively wide biography of Saariaho in this study for two reasons. Learning about her different compositional phases, musical aesthetic and thinking has deepened my understanding of her music and formed the way I interpret it as a pianist. With the biography, I wanted to explain these elements and phases to show the information, which has directly influenced my analysis and interpretation of "Quatre Instants". The biography contains also information that is not as directly connected to "Quatre Instants". The second reason for including a wide biography in this study was to provide an overview on Saariaho's musical style and development. With this information, I wanted to place the song cycle in a larger context and to help understand what kind of a role it plays in Saariaho's production. One could question whether a shorter biography with only such information that is directly and concretely connected to "Quatre Instants" would work better in the study, but for the reasons mentioned earlier, I have decided to present a wider perspective.

The main goal in my project was to form an interpretation of "Quatre Instants". In the analysis I have explained which musical elements have influenced our interpretation. Besides creating a framework to the musical material of the song cycle, the idea of the analysis is to give a reason to our interpretation.

I believe that musical analysis is always subjective. As this analysis is largely based on how I explain how I personally interpret certain musical elements being connected with the text, it is very clearly subjective. This being said, in the main analysis I wanted to focus more on the less subjective elements that are clearly seen in the score and the possible emotions and atmospheres they suggest. In the end, I found it impossible to focus on these elements in order to not just state the obvious information seen in the score. In order to analyze this information I felt that I had to be even more subjective than I planned in the beginning, but not in the same way as in the reflective part.

In the reflective part I wanted to go deeper in our personal interpretation and explain how these musical findings presented in the analysis have formed the interpretation, how they have
given a reason to interpret the material in a certain way. In this chapter I used my personal imagination more than in the analysis. In the analysis, I tried to connect all of the subjective thoughts clearly to the score, but in the reflective chapter, I went a step further in forming the interpretation.

With the interpretation I mean the way how we interpret that the music reflects the thoughts, emotions and motives of the woman of the song cycle and how we interpret that the story line is portrayed in the music. This leads directly into the concrete musical choices we make, the sounding part of the emotional content of the song cycle. I have partly also explained the choices we make. To connect the written part more clearly to the sounding part, I could have analyzed our musical choices more clearly but I felt that by doing so I would just repeat in words what is heard in the recording. Instead, I wanted to explain from what kind of thoughts certain musical choices stem from. In this part, I decided to focus more on these thoughts and ideas instead of the musical choices we made for this reason. While listening to the recording the reader can also evaluate whether there is a connection with the way we present the music and the way I describe our interpretation.

Analyzing the musical material thoroughly in comparison with the song text has given so many musical ideas to Maria and me and helped us form the music in a way, which is based on our strong interpretation of the woman's life. I believe that this has led to us being able to give a performance in which we stay true to the composer's style and message and at the same time true to ourselves as artists.

As we received such a positive feedback from Saariaho on our performance of "Quatre Instants" and after fixing the details that she mentioned in her feedback I believe that I have reached my most important goal of this project: to gain a thorough understanding of "Quatre Instants" and to interpret it well. Because of the positive feedback we got I feel I have attained our objectives reached the goal with using the methods successfully to inform on our performance with a marked impact on my understanding.

The method I used for gaining an understanding of Saariaho’s music and "Quatre Instants” was studying Saariaho’s biography in detail; finding out what Saariaho herself and other musicians, musicologists and music critiques have said of the song cycle and personally interviewing Saariaho on the song cycle. As I predicted, during this process I gained a tremendous amount of information, which affected the way I approached the analysis.

The making of the analysis was a very long process. Every time I examined the score and discussed the song cycle with Maria, I found new connections between the song text and the piano part with the help of which the interpretation matured and became more multilayered. I wanted to reach a very thorough understanding of the background information before starting to analyze the song cycle.
Because of the length and nature of the analyzing process, I feel that I could have started to analyze the song cycle already before studying the background information. As making a thorough analysis needed time and many working phases and since not all information in the analysis was affected by the background information I believe that I could have concentrated on both making the analysis and learning the background information at the same time. Then I could have gradually let the analysis be impacted by the background information.

By doing so and concentrating already earlier on the analysis, which is the main part of the study, the entire process could have been more condensed. I might have been able to reach a deeper understanding of the music and perhaps narrowed the subject to concentrate on some of the many aspects I found while making the analysis.

I have similar experiences regarding my rehearsing. In my project, I do not concentrate on how to rehearse in any way, but the methods I used in this project have heavily influenced the way in which I start to rehearse music that is new to me.

As seen in the chapter where I explain the rehearsal process we spent really a lot of time in practising "Douleur" in the beginning of our rehearsal process and that I focused purely on the technical side of playing and on doing things "correctly". I believe that we have developed a lot as a duo and as musicians during this project and I believe that this very narrow oriented part of the rehearsal process was crucial in expanding our capacity to interpret the music. At the same time, I wonder now if our development would have been quicker in the beginning if we had worked with the interpretation already from the beginning along with working with the music in the way we did.

My practising has changed a lot during this project and I feel that in general I pay more attention to the score already in a very early phase. After spending so much time on analyzing the score of "Quatre Instants" my approach has also become more analytical while practising.

Since analyzing the music shaped so visibly the way in which I played the music, I believe that in the future I would not work in the same way with a new and demanding piece of music as I found "Douleur" to be. Rather I would concentrate on the different elements of the interpretation from an early stage and when I reach the stage of playing the music "correctly", I hope that I could already provide a more mature performance of the music.

During the years I have worked with Maria, our discussions of the relation between the poems and the music has played as big a part in the preparing process as the actual practising both alone and together. With "Quatre Instants" we have done this a lot more thoroughly, studied the score several times in a profound way investigating its different layers and always found something new, always found a new angle and a point of view on how we want to interpret it. Often we begin from the way we feel that Saariaho's musical writing seems to be showing what is happening psychoemotionally in the woman's mind. Then we have strongly felt what
kind of a feeling we want to present and which kind of musical means to use for having this interpretation inform the music making.

During the process I also learned how deeply the biographical information, the analysis and the interpretation are all connected with each other. I have listed a few examples:

In the biography, I mentioned both Saariaho's childhood interest in the more echoed acoustic soundscape in the forest after it had rained and her dissatisfaction with the dry acoustics in certain concert spaces. This already hints to her musical aesthetic, which can be heard as a heavy use of pedal in the piano part in "Quatre Instants". Although the concrete pedal mark in the score already directs the pianist to use a lot of pedal, knowing that this is a feature that is strongly rooted to Saariaho's musical aesthetic causes one to understand the feature on a broader scale. Thus, one as a pianist can strive for an overall "wet" and echoed atmosphere and connect the long pedals to creating such an atmosphere.

Another example is Saariaho's system of classifying sounds by their nature. According to her system in "Douleur", there are quick shifts between pure and bright sounds and noise. Understanding the compositional process shapes the way one as an interpreter executes these shifts, possibly striving to create a contrast based on the differing tonal qualities and emphasizing their difference.

One of the elements in Saariaho's aesthetic, which directly influences the way I play her music, is her interest with the liveliness of sounds. It guides me to play her music with a vivid touch even in more static and calm places in order to have an interesting tonal quality in my playing.

It is easy to say that working with this subject has led to a deeper understanding of Saariaho's music and to a wider musical capacity in interpreting it. As I have concentrated on the entire song cycle in this study, I have only been able to touch the multiple layers there are in the song cycle. To better understand the results of this project, future studies could address how the piano part symbolizes both the longing and the sea in "Attente", how Saariaho's aesthetic is seen in her writing for piano and how Saariaho creates new interpretations by repeating a previously presented text in "Résonances".
References

Literary sources


Saariaho, Kaija; composer. 2019. Interview 15 August

Saariaho, Kaija; composer. 2020. Discussion 13 May


Internet


### 7 APPENDIX

#### 7.1 Text and translation of Quatre Instants

Kaija Saariaho: Quatre Instants
Poems and translation by Amin Maalouf (1949)
Attente
Je suis la barque qui dérive
Mon amant est sur l'autre rive
Et la mer est si vaste

I am the boat adrift
My lover is beyond the rift
And the sea is so vast

Je suis la barque qui dérive
Mon amant est sur l'autre rive
Et le vent est tombé

I am the boat adrift
My lover is beyond the rift
And the wind has died down

J'ai déployé toutes les voiles
Pour que le vent me pousse

I have spread all my sails
For the wind to drive me

J'ai déployé toutes les voiles
Pour que l'amant me voie

I have spread all my sails
For my lover to see me

Douleur
Je ne voulais pas croiser son regard
Le remords me brûle
Mes yeux se sont tournés vers lui
Mes yeux ne m'ont pas obéi

I didn’t want to face his eyes
— Remorse, remorse devours me! —
My own eyes turned towards him
My eyes did not obey me.

Je ne voulais pas croiser son chemin
Le remords me brûle
Mes pas m'ont conduite vers lui
Mes pas ne m'ont pas obéi

I didn’t want to meet his steps
— Remorse, remorse devours me! —
My own steps carried me towards him
My steps did not obey me.

Cette nuit-là, je m'en souviens,
La lune était pleine
Ma porte s'est ouverte à lui
Puis, doucement, refermée

That night, as I remember it
The moon was full
My door opened to let him in
And then, smoothly, it closed.

Je ne voulais pas que ses bras m'enlacent
Le remords me brûle
Mon corps a dérivé vers lui
Mon corps ne m'a pas obéi

I didn’t want him to embrace me,
— Remorse, remorse devours me! —
My own body drifted towards him
My body did not obey me.

J'aurais tellement voulu le garder
Le remords me brûle
Un jour de plus, une autre nuit
Il ne m'a pas obéi

I wanted so much to keep him
— Remorse, remorse devours me! —
Another day, another night,
But he did not obey me.

Cette nuit-là, je m'en souviens,
La lune était pleine

That night, as I remember it
The moon was full...
Parfum de l'instant
Tu es auprès de moi
Mais je ferme les yeux
Pour t'imaginer

Nos lèvres se frôlent
Nos doigts s'emmêlent
Nos corps se découvrent
Mais je ferme les yeux
Pour rêver de toi

Tu es le parfum de l'instant
Tu es la peau du rêve
Et déjà la matière du souvenir

Résonances
Ma porte s'est ouverte à lui
Puis, doucement, refermée

J'ai déployé toutes les voiles
Pour que l'amant me voie

J'aurais tellement voulu te garder
Nos doigts s'emmêlent
Nos corps se découvrent

Tu es le parfum de l'instant
Tu es la peau du rêve

I have spread all my sails
For my lover to see me

I wanted so much to keep you
Our fingers, entwined
Our bodies, unveiled

Echoes
My door opened to let him in
And then, smoothly, it closed.

I wanted so much to keep you
Our bodies, unveiled
But I close my eyes

I wanted so much to keep you
— Remorse, remorse devours me! —
But I close my eyes

I am the boat adrift
My lover is beyond the rift
And the wind has died down.
7.2 List of Kaija Saariaho’s vocal compositions

Works with one or more vocalists and another instrument or a larger ensemble and/or electronics

Bruden (1977)
Jing (1979)
Nej och inte (1979)
Preludi - Tunnustus - Postludi (1980)
Study for Life (1980)
Kolme preludia (1981)
...sah den Vögeln (1981)
Il pleut (1986)
Grammaire des rêves (1988)
From the Grammar of Dreams (1988)
Nuits, adieux (1991)
Caliban's Dream (1992)
Caliban's Dream (1995)
Lonh (1996)
Die Aussicht (1996)
Mirandas's Lament (1997)
Quatre messages (1999)
Message pour Gérard (2000)
Ariels's Hail (2000)
Tag des Jahrs (2001)
Quatre Instants (2002)
Changing Light (2002)
Ferdinand's Comfort (2004)
From the Grammar of Dreams (2004)
Leinolaulut (2007)
Sombre (2012)
Luonnon kasvot (2013)

Choral works / Works for choir and orchestra / Works for vocal ensemble

Suomenkielinen sekakuorokappale (1979)
Oltra mar (1999)
Überzeugung (2001)
Tag des Jahrs (2001)
Lumen valosta (2003)
Kesäpäivä (2006)
Horloge, tais-toi! (2006)
Echo! (2007)

**Works for soloist and orchestra (and vocal ensemble)**

Château de l'âme (1995)
Cinq reflets de l'Amour de loin (2001)
Quatre Instants (2002)
Adriana Songs (2006)
Leinolaulut (2007)
Emilie Suite (2011)
True Fire (2014)

**Operas**

L'Amour de loin (2000)
Émilie (2008)
Only the Sound Remains (2015)
Innocence (2018)