

Kurs: **Examensarbete, master, jazz BA1002 30 hp**

2015

Konstnärlig masterexamen i musik 180 hp

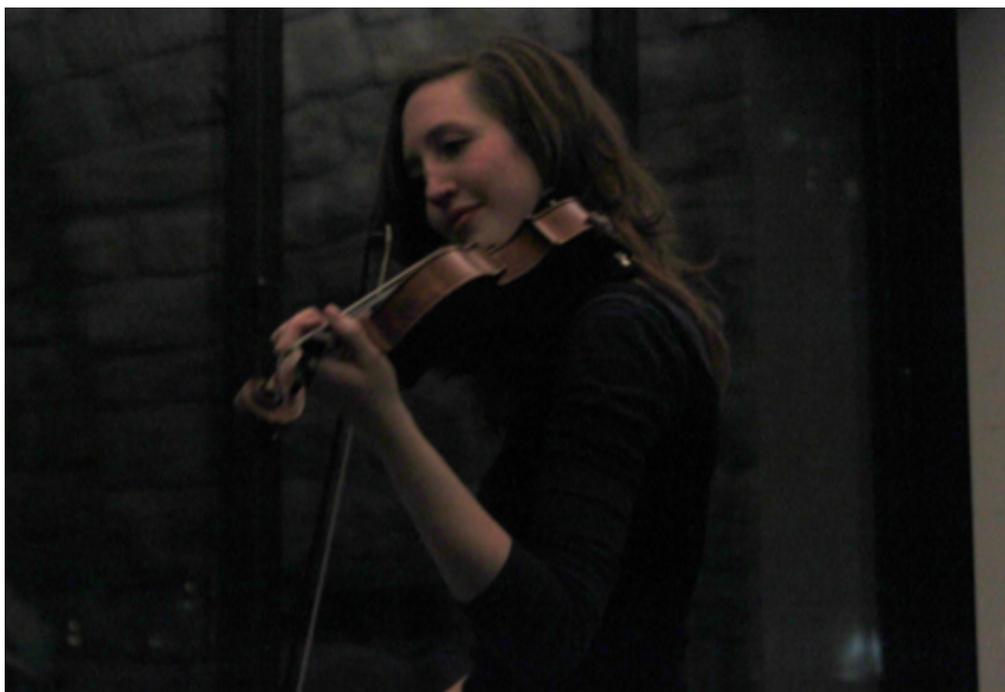
Institutionen för jazz

---

Handledare: Joakim Milder

Laura Schuler

# KRONIKOR



How do I get from the first inspiration of a composition to its performance?

Skriftlig reflektion inom självständigt, konstnärligt arbete

Det självständiga, konstnärliga arbetet finns  
dokumenterat på inspelning: **CD**



# Innehållsförteckning

<b>1) Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2) Creative process.....</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 Philosophy and inspiration of my art.....	3
2.2 From the endless imagination to the limits of realization.....	4
2.3 Intuition, intellect and “the flow” .....	6
2.4 Decision and restriction .....	8
2.5. Contrast and Polarity .....	10
2.6 Difficulties and Disturbing factors in working with the first idea until its end .....	11
<b>3) Project description of Kronikor .....</b>	<b>14</b>
3.1 Background.....	14
3.2 Finding my own style .....	15
3.4 Improvisation .....	20
3.5 Technique and exercises .....	21
<b>4) Realization.....</b>	<b>23</b>
4.1 Analysis of the compositions for Kronikor.....	24
4.2 Rehearsals .....	26
4.3 Recordings .....	27
4.4 Concert.....	29
<b>5) Evaluation .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>6) Index .....</b>	<b>32</b>

# 1) Introduction

Since the day I started to compose, the desire to find an expression for “my music” was always with me. This is probably my biggest motivation to write original music, finding real expression. My struggle is to capture the feeling of what “my music” is. I must say that I have never won it, so far. The difficulties that arise on the way from this feeling to the end result of a composition must be the reason for that fail. Or am I searching for something that cannot be found?

In the two years during my studies in Nomazz, the search for my expression in philosophy and composition was, besides the daily practice of my instrument, always very central. Especially during the last semester in Helsinki I started to think a lot about philosophical and compositional questions. I have the feeling that these thoughts are central for the understanding of the realization of Kronikor.

In the first chapter “Creative process”, I explore my philosophical and psychological background. I also explore the thoughts which have built the foundation for my self-concept as an artist and which enable me to be inspired and motivated in my work with Kronikor and music in general. I will address psychological subjects that are relevant to my creative process such as intuition, intellect and decision-making. Furthermore, I will write about the difficulties in keeping a positive mindset and avoiding the feeling of being blocked when producing music.

The second chapter is more concrete. I do a project description of Kronikor, where I explore the elements and style which represent my own language in music. In a small passage I will also mention methods and exercises I did to develop my ear and improve my writing.

In the end of the thesis I will analyze each composition I wrote for Kronikor and investigate how they were realized, from the first inspiration until the final concert.

The writing of this assignment is an important part of my achievement of a better understanding of my person as an artist, particularly related to the writing of music. The analysis will expose my state in composition, will show me my preferences, weaknesses and strengths.

The detailed exploration of my decision-making process will show me how I realize my ideas and why I get certain results. Through analyzing the music I have written for Kronikor, I will have more awareness of the stylistic elements I have chosen for the project. Furthermore, I hope to achieve a greater awareness of how I realized the compositions with the band, in the concrete rehearsals, studio and concert.

I will try to structure the thesis in a way that places the concrete realization of my work in a wider, more philosophical context. Even though my master-thesis is about composition, I will mention some aspects of improvisation. Composition and improvisation are not separable for me. They both effect and complete each other with their qualities and are important for my music.

## 2) Creative process

Each person has his/her own unique way of describing the creative process. Nevertheless, I think there are some common principles that are experienced by most. The two years in my master studies, reading and thinking about what it means to be an artist, to be creative and productive, was an important subject for me. I feel that, especially during the composing process for my master project, I improved a lot in that field. Kronikor is so to say the final product of this process (even though it never feels finished, there is always the possibility to develop the music more..).

In this chapter I analyze my creative process in writing music, always shifting along the border between broader principals and my own, individual experience. In moving between subjective perception and objective observation I try to come closer to the core of my creative expression.

Since the creation of music is not separate from my life in general, I will mention some aspects which on first view perhaps won't seem part of my composing-process as much as others, but those more concrete topics I will write about later in the research.

### 2.1 Philosophy and inspiration of my art

The first motivation to compose is the need to find "my music", to find an expression of my inner being. In thinking more about what it really means to me to express something I have the following picture in mind: "my music" is the middle of a circle and I orbit it with all my being. The wish to get as close as possible to the core is the primary impulse for me to do art. If I use this image of a circle further, the creative state would be the move between the interior and exterior of the circle. It is not possible to be close to the core all the time. In getting a distance to the middle I can get new inspiration from the exterior, as if I would breath fresh air and then dive again in to the depth of my soul. This exterior can be represented by all kinds of experiences, alone or with others, in music or something else. It is the opposite of the deep search of expression, maybe identified as positive distraction from the topic I am working on. That my creativity has its periods of tension and relaxation, of going deep and then let go, this is one of the most important insights I get about my life and creative work.

In composing as well as in performing I get the feeling more and more that the music and me as a person are two different things. Without me the music couldn't exist (at least not the music I compose or perform). But nevertheless my person as Laura disappears when I'm in a certain musical-state. Taking my person away helps me to find a strong expression on stage as well as helping me be productive in my daily practice of playing and composing.

These thoughts manifest a bigger idea of what music can be in our society. The theory of letting go of the ego as an important issue of religion and philosophy were and are common for many musicians such as John Coltrane, Keith Jarrett,

Joni Mitchell and others. I think that music can be the bridge between the spiritual and material world. It is a method that allows me to perceive and express what I usually lack the words to do. That is my primary motivation for doing art in the form of music, the need to find an expression of my interior and the desire to find a way to transform my being.

I don't want to go too deep into the topic of spirituality, this thesis is not the right place for it. However because of its effect on my work with music, it is important that I mention the spiritual aspect. For me, this dimension of art is a kind of justification for why I spend my life with music. If I don't see my work in a bigger context, I am producing in an isolated space, remote from society. As musician I see one of my roles as helping other people to perceive their interior; their feelings, spirituality and transformation.

John Coltrane was, especially in his later work, deeply inspired by the religion:

"I experienced, by the grace of God, a spiritual awakening which was to lead me to a richer, fuller, more productive life. At that time, in gratitude, I humbly asked to be given the means and privilege to make others happy through music."

Joni Mitchell says in one of her rare interviews:

"When you listen to the music and you see me, you don't get anything out of it. When you see yourself you probably start to cry and get something out of it. The moment when the audience see themselves in it, the communication is complete".

## **2.2 From the endless imagination to the limits of realization**

In the process of composing I am constantly moving between my imagination of a sound or a shape and the realization of it. I have figured out that for me it is very important to find an expression of myself, and that the struggle and also the satisfaction I take out of this work enables me to grow as a whole person. I know that this process is never going to be finished and I am very glad that I can experience it through music. Of late, a certain feeling for the importance of both, sky and earth and the connection of them through my being and my body appears often.

A big inspiration for me in the discussion about the relation between imagination and material realization of my ideas is the quantum physicist Hanspeter Dürr (He died in May 2014). He was director of the Max Planck institute in Munich and one of the modern scientists who researched the border between the material and spiritual world.

The following text inspires me:

”m Grunde gibt es Material gar nicht. Jedenfalls nicht im geläufigen Sinne. Es gibt nur ein Beziehungsgefüge, ständigen Wandel, Lebendigkeit. Wir tun uns schwer, uns dies vorzustellen. Primär existiert nur Zusammenhang, das Verbindende ohne materielle Grundlage. Wir könnten es auch Geist nennen. Etwas, was wir nur spontan erleben und nicht greifen können. Materie und Energie treten erst sekundär in Erscheinung– gewissermaßen als geronnener, erstarrter Geist. Nach Albert Einstein ist Materie nur eine verdünnte Form der Energie. Ihr Untergrund jedoch ist nicht eine noch verfeinerte Energie, sondern etwas ganz Andersartiges, eben Lebendigkeit. Wir können sie etwa mit der Software in einem Computer vergleichen.“ Interview im P.m Magazin (Mai 2007)

Translation:

“Basically material doesn't exist. In any case not in the common sense. There are just relations, permanent alteration, agility. We have a hard time to imagine that. Primarily exists only the context, the connection without any material base. We could call it spirit. Something we experience just spontaneously and can't catch. Material and energy appears secondary, as so to say clotted, frozen spirit. Albert Einstein says that material is just a diluted form of energy. The base of that energy is not another, even more improved energy, its something else. We could call it agility, vitality.”

This conception of the world and the possibilities of explaining the connection between spirit and material, between anticipation and realization, inspires me in my creative process. Composing is the process of bringing to the exterior the sounds I hear in my interior. The music which is real inside has to get real also on the outside. Somehow I have to clot the spirit (the sounds I hear) and transform it in to material in order to express myself. The idea that creative material comes out of the endless spirit seems familiar to me - that art is about the union of my endless imagination with the creation of material reality.

In one of his interviews he says that even though science maintains a point where our perception of material reality seems wrong (for example the relation between time and space, the existence of more dimension then three..), it is important for my survival in daily life to keep a focus on what I can see with my bare eye. I have to arrange myself with the reality - I have to buy food, drive a car, wash my clothes etc... For me as a composer I have to switch between the spiritual and material world. If I only live in my imagination, nothing happens. I bring out the music which is in my head and I put it to paper and bring it into the rehearsal room. It all depends perhaps, on how I manage to survive this process. Maybe this is the point, that I have to stop worrying about the loss of my first inspiration because in realizing it, it will change anyway. In thinking more about this, I have come to the conclusion that the process is more important than the result and this gives me a kind of freedom in “just doing”.

During the past weeks I have been reading the book “Free play” written by Stephen Nachmanovitch. It is a wonderful book and I got a lot of insights about improvisation and creativity in life and in music. The following passage I would like to mention because of its relevance concerning imagination. He speaks wonderfully about the limits of illusion as a natural part of creative phases:

“There is a point, or rather a long series of points, at which our innocence and free play of imagination and desire collides with reality, with the limits of is and is not, with the limits of what can and cannot be”.

“The fact is that we cannot avoid childhood’s end; the free play of imagination creates illusions, and illusions bump into reality and get disillusioned”.

## **2.3 Intuition, intellect and “the flow”**

In this chapter I would like to reflect on the role of intuition and intellect in the process of composing music. I have the feeling that these two methods of perceiving and processing are both involved when I write music or do a creative work in general. I try to figure out what are their qualities, distinctions and most importantly, how they work together and complete each other.

I found it helpful to first read the following extracts from Wikipedia articles:

“Intuition, a phenomenon of the mind, describes the ability to acquire knowledge without inference or the use of reason. Intuition is often interpreted with varied meaning from intuition being glimpses of greater knowledge to only a function of mind; however, processes by which and why they happen typically remain mostly unknown to the thinker, as opposed to the view of rational.”

“Intellect is a term used in studies of the human mind, and refers to the ability of the mind to come to correct conclusions about what is true or real, and about how to solve problems.”

When I try to imagine the relation of our consciousness (intellect) and subconscious (intuition), the image of an iceberg in the sea illustrates it very effectively. We can see only the top, sticking up out of the ocean. The bigger part is under water, and in certain situations it is communicating intuitively with us.

In the daily organization of our life, the intellect has the power of conscious perception and integration of interior and exterior processes. It helps us to learn and to solve problems. Analysis is a useful tool when used in succession with our reactions, especially when we have never experienced the situation before. Logical thinking helps us to connect new information with already saved contents in our brain and through this inference we come to a result of what is right or wrong.

Intuition on the other hand is the unconscious knowledge, or probably more the feeling, of what is right or wrong. We feel the truth immediately without being dependent on analyzing it with our intellectual capacities. In that sense we could say that the intuition works faster than the intellectual, arithmetical process .

I experience the difference between intellect and intuition often while playing in a improvised context. The ability of reacting immediately to the other musicians is

given through intuition. If I try to solve the problem of choosing the next note in a dialectical way, my reaction will be too slow. Everything we ever learned intellectually about music (and in this case about improvised music) is saved in our subconscious. In the moment I play, this information is available and enables me to react fast. Thus we can see that intuition and intellect are not separable from each other.

### About the flow in composition

In the aesthetic and artistic discussion of composition, I have figured out that intuition has another important function additional to the spontaneous reaction in the performing situation. It helps me in the decision process. In the best case I instinctively just know what the composition needs.

I feel how the possible next step might release a resonance. It just feels good to take that chord, or melody note, a new form direction or... It is possible because my subconscious is delivering to me all the informations and possibilities about harmony, melody and music in general, that I have saved earlier in my brain. In this state of writing music I am in the flow, it is absolutely clear that I am on the right path. One could also say that the music is working by itself. It grows like a plant.

On the other hand, the pure intellect can argue over and over, so that I can hardly find a solution between thesis and antithesis. To be able to decide and react it is needed to find a synthesis between thesis and antithesis. To me it seems that intuition can deliver me this synthesis, I just know what is the right thing to do.

Nevertheless the intellect also has an important role in the compositional process.

There are situations where I can't find the solution with my pure intuition. Then it helps when I start to work intellectually. I try different things out, things I probably never did before. But finally again my resonance with the music decides which option I should take.

Often, the first idea, the embryo or DNA of a piece is something totally intuitive and improvised. Further in the composing process I also have to activate the intellectual part.

### Learning new methods

If I don't educate myself in learning new possibilities and methods, every song I write will sound similar because the amount of available knowledge, delivered by my intuition, is limited. My desire is to discover aesthetic possibilities in music and experience the adventure of trying out new concepts.

This is an intellectual thing. I choose rationally what I will practice and which method I will apply on my writing. Our brain absorbs consciously new information, for example a method of how to harmonize a melody. When I do exercises regarding the new subject, the learned material sinks into the intuitive area of my brain after a while and is available subconsciously the next time I compose. It seems to me that composing is a permanent investigation of skills. The

ear is especially developing during my work with a piece. It is, in a way, a constant ear training, as I would like to learn to hear the new composition.

At the end of this chapter I would like to mention some words from Robert Henri which were very inspiring for me. He is speaking about emotion. The discussion above was about intuition and intellect defined as two forces of our mind. Emotion brings up another aspect, the feeling, settled in our heart.

I quote this text because it shows so well the collaboration of heart and mind (comparable to intuition and intellect):

“There is the heart and the mind, the Puritan idea is that the mind must be master. I think the heart should be master and the mind should be the tool and servant of the heart. As it is, we give too much attention to laws and not enough to principles. The person who wants to produce art must have the emotional side first, and this must be reinforced by the practical.

The person who has great emotions might burst in to tears – but that is as far as he will get if he has no practical side. The artist must have the emotional side first, the primal cause of his being an artist, but he must also have an excellent mind, which he must command and use as a tool for the expression of his emotions.

The idea, which is the primal thing for a picture, is all in the air; the expression on a canvas is a case of absolute science as it deals with materials. A great artist is both a great imaginer and a great employer of practical science. First there must be the person, then the technique.”

## 2.4 Decision and restriction

Julia Hülsmann a German composer whom I met once, says: “Composing means to take decision”

Another topic related to my compositional process I would like to mention is the tool to decide and work with restrictions. Often, I perceive something I would like to express. This can be a feeling, a certain experience in my life, a situation and so on. Then I stand in front of countless possibilities of how to express this inspiration. I am in a state of freedom, anything is possible in my imagination.

For creating reality it is inevitable to decide. Decision enables action. Out of the wish to create something, to make inspiration real, I decide first on a musical parameter. This can be a texture, a sound, a structure, a melody, a bass line, a rhythmic pattern and so on. The composing process has started with taking the first decision out of the desire to express something.

Sometimes I start in deciding a musical parameter because my plan is to do an exercise with a certain subject. It can be a writing-exercise like for example; the harmonization of a motif with altering chord changes, or I write a piece on a polyrhythm I want to practice, or a technical exercise to work on my violin-playing. Then the extramusical meaning can set in later. I notice that in general,

musical parameters and extramusical contents are affecting each other and form together the meaning of my compositions.

Sometimes it is not easy to decide if a certain musical pattern fits the whole composition.

It can be, that it sounds very good on its own, but somehow in connection with the whole piece it seems that it is not the right place for it. I can compare it with the painting of a picture. All colors are beautiful but when I mix them all together I get grey. A meaningful picture is generated when I work with the colors in a sophisticated way. The decision on how to use a certain musical parameter (color) influences the effect of the whole picture (composition).

I have figured out that when I start out with a specific picture, a meaning or theme which has something to do with my interests outside of music is a really big motivator. The composition can just follow the shape of the extramusical idea. I did that in two of my compositions for Kronikor, but more about that in chapter 4 where I analyze them.

Some years ago I wrote a piece about the five Chinese elements earth, wood, fire, metal and water. I put them in an order before I started to write. In this case the basic character for each part of the composition was given. It turned out very well. I was inspired by the restriction that was given through the character of each element.

Besides the decision of how to start a piece, every note I put down is also a decision. If I do a lot of thinking on every note, the composition cannot grow organically until its end. During the composing for Kronikor I noticed that somehow I just have to do, to create. To go into details at too early a point can be very obstructive for the process. In the polyphonic melodies for example (mostly violin/clarinet or violin/clarinet/guitar), some of the notes are less important than others. They work more as embellishment of the guide tone line and I try not to lose too much energy and time in arranging them. This is a process which can pass on faster with experience. It is the expression of the methods I've learned earlier (see chapter 2.3).

Restriction can come from outside. For example, I have to compose for a certain constellation of instruments, the piece has to have a specific length or the style is given.

To create a totally new project or piece needs a bigger effort.

The conflict between freedom and control, between option and decision is not easy to solve. To get more skills about the work with different musical parameters can help. But it can also confuse even more because I have more knowledge and therefore more options to think about. Nevertheless I am sure that it is important to study methods. It gives me a bigger vocabulary, I have more words to tell my story.

Generally I notice that the more limitations I have, given through circumstance or through the clear picture in the beginning of a composition and the constant comparison of the actions with it, the easier the composing-process.

The process and the end result

What is an end result? Is there actually an end result? When is a composition finished? Sometimes the length of the composition is mandated or the time to start the rehearsals is close. Otherwise it is sometimes hard to know when it is finished.

Maybe a composition is always a process? In accepting that, I can let go of the idea that a piece has to be perfect. Nevertheless the decision of when does a composition start and when does it end has to be made. I have to put a limitation- either it comes from myself or from outside. This decision can happen very intuitively, I just know, now is the time for the end. Or the form dictates where the end is (for example in the 5-element piece).

During the work I am developing my skills in technique and expression. Like I mentioned before, sometimes it seems to me, as if I am learning to hear the new music. When the piece is finished I am further developed than I was in the beginning and the composition can sound boring or not important to me.

Again Robert Henri: “Art is a process, never finished”

Joni Mitchell in her interview: “Maybe its not possible for anybody to be completely satisfied with his art”

## **2.5. Contrast and Polarity**

I would like to dedicate one chapter to the subject of contrasts and polarity. During my development as an artist and human being I have figured out that thinking of and working with contrasts along with finding a balance between them is central to me. My motivation for that is found in my thinking about duality, often mentioned in the Taoistic view of the world. Most especially in the symbol of yin and yang can we clearly see the two forces which are opposite but also related to each other. I think life (and so music) is moving between this polarity and can unfold its full power through the play with extremes and balance, attraction and rejection. This philosophical background is very helpful for me to see possibilities in creating music. In thinking about how to work with contrasts and balance I see many ways to arrange melodies, instruments, textures, improvisation, tension curves and so on. As I already wrote in the chapter about decision, I think a meaningful picture is created when I use the colors in a sophisticated way. The way I apply the colors (musical parameters) is defined by where I position myself between the extremes of something. Besides the reproduction of already existing styles of music; the creation of my own, new expression can define itself between contrasts.

In working with contrasts I can either write music within the extremes or I can search for balance between them. I can change qualities and arrange the musical parameters in a various ways within one piece.

Contrasts can be: Intuition - intellect, individual - nature, cold - warm, slow - fast, simple - complex, tonal - atonal, sound - silence, soft – loud, tension – relaxation, rhythmic – rubato, composition – improvisation, and so on.

I can try to write a piece using only either intellect or intuition. With individual versus nature I refer to the storytelling way of expressing music, for example the style of the singer-songwriter as opposed to the more aleatoric music created by chance, as in the music of John Cage for example.

Very nice textures can be created when I work with two groups of instruments and for example, one group starts to play a written part (or improvise) loudly, the other group softly. Now I can arrange it that they either suddenly change their qualities (the group playing soft changes to loud or vice versa) or I can give the instruction that they slowly morph into the opposing quality. A similar technique can be applied to slow-fast.

The contrast of tension – relaxation is omnipresent in music, already a very simple V-I progression works with it. Maybe it is the most basic polarity which underlies music (and life). A special pair is composition – improvisation. In the music for Kronikor I work a lot with these two qualities in both their contrast and similarity. I will write more about that in the next chapter about improvisation.

One method of finding balance can be to choose for example, an unusual, atonal melody and allow the other parameters like rhythm, harmony and form to be simple. Or if both melody and rhythm complex, then the others need not be too complex in order reach a balance. This, of course, is a very individual decision. Some composers write in a more complex way than others. Everyone finds balance according to his/her own taste.

When defining some common principals in relation to achieving balance, they often relate to what the majority of the people are used to hearing. An example of this can be found in the arrangement of sound and silence. Without any breaks between phrases, most melodies will suffer from lack of intention. Similar to spoken language, as listeners we need silence between sentences in order to process the meaning of them. There are also exceptions to these rules of course. The music of Steve Reich is, for example, defined through repetitive cycles of notes without any breaks between phrases. In this case it is the composer's intention to avoid principals of writing melodies with tension and relaxation.

Robert Henri: “you can do everything but it has to have a purpose”

## **2.6 Difficulties and Disturbing factors in working with the first idea until its end**

In the introduction I mentioned that so far I feel that I have never gotten to the core “my music”. It seems that every composition is another compromise between the feeling in the beginning and the finished piece. In this chapter I write about the difficulty of working with my first idea until the end result. The psychological

process which I think, influences my producing of art significantly, will be the main focus.

To find an inspiration and define the first musical parameters is relatively easy for me. The difficulties appear later in the process. Sometimes I write down a first phrase and the next day I don't like it anymore. This experience is often accompanied by a painful feeling of: "I'm not a composer", "I am not worthy", "this sounds like shit", "I am so unmusical" and all kinds of other thoughts and emotions in this direction.

Sometimes I am totally blocked because I put a lot of pressure on myself and take the music very personally. I feel expectations from the whole jazz history and society on my back. But I notice also, that I already I have gotten more self confidence and I am often able to let go of this repressive energy.

Besides learning technical methods of composing, I am acquiring skills concerning the creative process in general. First of all, getting distance from my art from time to time is very important. The understanding that the music and me are two different things always helps me when I run the risk of putting too much pressure on myself. If I want to write the best piece ever, I lose the flow. The best pieces are generated when we don't have the intention to do it. Kenny Werner writes about this in his book "Effortless Mastery".

Another book which really helped me to overcome my blocks is "The Artist's Way" by Julia Cameron.

When I think about the basics, the truth about creativity seems very simple to me. It is always about belief and trust in myself and the continuous pursuit of a (in the beginning vague) vision. I have to let the plant of my first idea grow, even if it seems too weak to be a wonderful flower one day. Like the plant needs water, I have to nurture my ideas constantly.

Like I mentioned in the chapter before, seeing that myself and the music are two different things helps me to take the whole process less personally. The work is less dependent on my current emotional opinion about myself. Furthermore, it enriches the communication I have with the musicians onstage and the audience because I'm not distracted by the need to present myself, to represent Laura. When I am composing in a selfless state the music can work through me and it is not about success or confirmation of my person. I think the need for confirmation is maybe the biggest obstruction of artistic development.

The desire to ascertain that I am right how I am is a part of human nature-probably everyone needs recognition for how she/he is acting. I think a big problem in the development of creativity is, that some structures in society and family prohibits the satisfaction of the need for recognition and confirmation. But an examination of the situation in family and society would be a topic for another thesis, so I don't want go deeper into that here.

Moving on, it is my opinion that every artist has to work on the problem of the need for confirmation if she/he really wants to approve her/his own language. Otherwise we are constantly worrying about getting confirmation for our work. This takes a lot of energy away from the actual creating and in the worst case we are totally blocked, don't dare to do our own thing and just copy others. Art is life. If I have the courage to be personal, telling stories from my own experiences, the others will appreciate it regardless, I won't have to worry about that. Another factor is of course economy. Somehow I have to sell my "art-product" and make a

living out of it. I disclaim to go deeper in this discussion, it would be a subject for another thesis again.

## Distraction

Another aspect of disturbing factors is distraction. We live in a time where media in the form of internet, notebook, smartphone etc are ever-present and can be a big distraction from ourself. To be able to create I need a certain state of emptiness and presence. If I distract myself as soon as I get into this state, strong ideas cannot appear in my overloaded mind.

I think there can exist also a kind of need for distraction because the empty state is not comfortable on its own. If I feel deeper in myself I get confronted with negative emotions which I maybe don't want feel. As creative people we have to find methods to work with our various emotions and thoughts. I think we have to cultivate emptiness and presence as a daily practice. Also the stress, for example of having too much things to do can distract me from being present in the moment. I experience myself that it is hard sometimes to just do one thing and not think already of all the other stuff I still have to do or want to do.

It is very important to learn from the past, I get my musical vocabulary, technique and methods from it. But this knowledge can be also distracting from my creative process. After I studied, I have to forget everything to be able to find my own language. I feel, after seven years of studying music, that I am getting closer to myself. As with everything, it is about finding the balance between inspiration from outside and my own direction.

A big inspiration and help in the issue of finding my own language was the book "the Art Spirit" from the painter Robert Henri:

"You can learn more from yourself then you can from anyone else."

"Perhaps whatever there is in my work that may be really interesting to others, and surely what is interesting to me, is the result of sometimes successful effort to free myself from any idea that what I produce must be art or must respond in any way to any standard.

It must be old fashioned, or new fashioned or no fashion at all. It must be what it is and must have been made because it was a big pleasure to make it.

Whatever is worthwhile I am sure must be made this way, and the influences should be all the influences, little and big, of a lifetime."

## 3) Project description of Kronikor

In this chapter I write about my background and the central musical and stylistic elements of my master project Kronikor.

### 3.1 Background

I grew up in a family of musicians. My parents often practiced and rehearsed at home.

My brother and sister and I attended most of these sessions. They played baroque music and eastern folk music. I think these two styles of music formed the shape of my musicality. In the beginning of my music studies, sometimes I was almost upset, because I couldn't write a piece without these influences. Everything sounded a bit like classical or folk music. During my years of listening to and studying jazz, the influences from my background melted together with this new musical content. I think the influences of folk and baroque music is audible in my melodies and the way I harmonize them (often with triads and their inversions).

The melodies typically move in steps or intervals of a fifth, for example the B-part of Trainstory and the melody of Räuber und Ritter). In the C-part of Trainstory I wrote a melody with sixths which sounds very classical to me, especially because I harmonize the melody with inversions of the triads. Trotzdem sounds less influenced by my background.

I think this has something to do with the chords I choose for it (I first wrote the chords and then the melody). Also here I use triads but since they move mostly in intervals of major thirds and tritones, a tonal centre is not really audible. The use of odd meters, for example 10/8 and 11/8 in Räuber und Ritter could also be influenced by my past. I was in contact with irregular meters quite early in my musical life through the playing of music from the Balkan countries. These days I don't find my background disturbing anymore. I even like it.

I feel that it is a very deep source of musicality from which I hopefully always will benefit.

In this state of my creative process it is very appealing for me to combine the influences of baroque and folk music with elements from free jazz and improvised music. I think I will continue to work with these elements.

The influences I got and still get through my studies, listening to recordings and concerts are to find in classical music as well as in contemporary jazz music. After a breaking off with classical music in my adolescence, I find it now very inspiring listening to Debussy, Reich, Bartok, Ligeti and a lot more. The persons which

influence me from the contemporary jazz scene are among others Christian Wallumrod, Fredrik Ljungkvist, Klas Nevrin, Jon Balke, Nick Bärtsch, Bill Frisell and Jakob Bro.

-

## 3.2 Finding my own style

In this chapter I would like to write about the search of my own style and how I got to the expression of Kronikor. During the last two years I was constantly working on composition regarding my final project. I have the feeling that this is kind of the fruit I can collect after my studies. Of course it is a process and never finished, but I think, that the pieces I've wrote for Kronikor are the most mature expression of music I ever did. The reason for it is probably the amount of time I spend working and the fact that I am fully responsible for the end result (I am the bandleader, we are not a working band, more about that in chapter 4.2, the rehearsals.)

The musician of our time is confronted with a huge amount of musical traditions. What I do is combine different styles and traditions. I have the picture of a cook in my mind. With every ingredient he adds to the food, the results change. Together the different ingredients create the finished meal. In finding my own language it can be uncomfortable to compare and position Kronikor within a particular genre. The reason I have to do it perhaps lies in the expectations of the audience, labels and concert-organizers. The pressure to define my music as “jazz music”, to have a kind of official title that helps the people understand what I do is sometimes disruptive to my productivity. If I have to define the style of Kronikor I would say it is contemporary jazz and improvisation.

It is very important to learn from the past, I get my musical vocabulary, technique and methods from it. But during the composing for Kronikor I have experienced that this knowledge sometimes obstruct my creative process. For example, it happen that I have too many options in my mind of how to go on with a certain situation. The learned compositional techniques how to work with form, melody, harmony and rhythm etc, allow me to go in many directions with the piece. This makes it hard sometimes to decide.

I would like to create something unique, not sounding too similar to music already done. It should be the expression of what “my music” is. Here again, the interplay of intuition and intellect is very crucial to the decision process of musical parameters. During the composing for Kronikor I figured out that as long as the piece is naturally growing I can work intuitively, and the intellect helps me to find solutions when I am stuck (see chapter 2.3).

While composing the material for Kronikor, I noticed out that it is very helpful and inspiring for me to think in sounds and shapes. If I have a raw vision about a sound world and the shape of the piece, I can follow the process and decide on the musical parameters more easily. That way I have a narrative that defines the tension curve and the events within the composition. For most of the pieces I have written for Kronikor, I had a certain sound in my head and the rough form was clear before I started to put down the first note. The extreme example for it is the piece Limbo. Here I decided on the form in the beginning. The form is so to say the first inspiration. It is constructed by a groove, starting very minimal, it develops

through adding and changing elements, it gains tension until the climax release in one soft, long note.

The imagination of the sound has a lot to do with the instrumentation. The combination of violin, clarinet and double bass with drums and electric guitar enables to create music between an acoustic sound ideal, almost classical, and parts where the music reminds more of traditional - and free jazz. I like very much this different ways of combining the instruments.

## Central musical elements

### Melody

When identifying the central elements in Kronikor I would emphasize the following aspects. First of all, I'm always looking for the "perfect" melody. The melodic motives are often at the heart of my compositions and I spend a lot of time arranging my melodies and their counter melodies. I find this part easiest to do, it feels natural to arrange different melodies with one another. This probably comes from the musical background I had as a child (see chapter 3.1). The definition of a "perfect melody" is very personal and I can hardly describe this expression. It is more an emotion than a conscious decision. I think my perception of melodic structures has changed with my studies of counterpoint and motive development (see chapter about exercises 3.3).

### Rhythmic

The second important element is the poly rhythmical aspect. For about three years I have often practiced and composed within rather complex structures of rhythm and metric. I like to put patterns of pitches to a number of rhythms which are played simultaneously with the same pitches, but with another rhythmic structure. The moment when the patterns come together on the first beat of a bar, I feel a large sense of release and order. Another part of my study is the possibility of metric modulation through the use of several rhythmic patterns played at the same time. The theme and solo of *Trotzdem* plays with this phenomenon (5/8 against 15/8)



An aspect that is quite new for me is to find a way to completely lose the feeling of having any meter at all. I tried to obtain it in *Limbo*. I superimposed a 5/8 guitar pattern over a meter 4/7 and 4/4. The other instruments are playing different rhythmic structures in that meter. At this point I started to think about applying improvisation to get the effect of time, without a fixed meter. Finally I decided to compose it put start improvising in the end of the form.

Musical score for the first system, featuring five instruments: Klarinette in B, Violine, Jazz-Gitarre, Bass, and Drum Set. The score is written in 4/4 time and consists of two measures. The first measure is marked with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The second measure is marked with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The instruments are arranged vertically from top to bottom: Klarinette in B, Violine, Jazz-Gitarre, Bass, and Drum Set. The Violine part includes a 'pizz' (pizzicato) marking. The Drum Set part includes a 'H' marking.

Musical score for the second system, featuring five instruments: Kl., Vl., J. Gtr., Bs., and Dr. The score is written in 4/4 time and consists of two measures. The first measure is marked with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The second measure is marked with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The instruments are arranged vertically from top to bottom: Kl., Vl., J. Gtr., Bs., and Dr. The Vl. part includes a 'p' (piano) marking. The Dr. part includes a 'H' marking.

2

5

Kl. Kl. staff with treble clef, key signature of one flat, and 3/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music with a repeat sign between them.

VI. VI. staff with treble clef, key signature of one flat, and 3/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music with a repeat sign between them.

J. Gtr. J. Gtr. staff with treble clef, key signature of one flat, and 3/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music with a repeat sign between them.

Bs. Bs. staff with bass clef, key signature of one flat, and 3/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music with a repeat sign between them.

Dr. Dr. staff with a drum set icon, key signature of one flat, and 3/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music with a repeat sign between them.

7

Kl. Kl. staff with treble clef, key signature of one flat, and 3/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music with a repeat sign between them.

VI. VI. staff with treble clef, key signature of one flat, and 3/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music with a repeat sign between them.

J. Gtr. J. Gtr. staff with treble clef, key signature of one flat, and 3/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music with a repeat sign between them.

Bs. Bs. staff with bass clef, key signature of one flat, and 3/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music with a repeat sign between them.

Dr. Dr. staff with a drum set icon, key signature of one flat, and 3/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music with a repeat sign between them.

9

3

Kl. Kl. staff with treble clef, key signature of one flat, and 3/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music with a repeat sign between them.

VI. VI. staff with treble clef, key signature of one flat, and 3/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music with a repeat sign between them.

J. Gtr. J. Gtr. staff with treble clef, key signature of one flat, and 3/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music with a repeat sign between them.

Bs. Bs. staff with bass clef, key signature of one flat, and 3/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music with a repeat sign between them.

Dr. Dr. staff with a drum set icon, key signature of one flat, and 3/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music with a repeat sign between them.

The intro of the song Trainstory plays with different subdivision within a pulse. If it is played very precisely you can hear the different rhythms overlapping each other. I would really like to continue my exploration of rhythmical structures. I have found out (especially through my work with Kronikor) that it is often a problem to find people who are able to play rhythmically complex structures. Especially from the drummer I sometimes would have needed more energy and steadiness in the groove, especially in Trotzdem. But I think even with very skilled musicians it needs a lot of work in the rehearsals to get the groove together in the band. It helps when everyone practices it by her/himself, but the playing of the material together is very important too in order to bring the different feelings of time together.

### Harmony

The identity of the harmonic structures in Kronikor is to found either in triads or in more complex chords like clusters, slash chords or polychords. One hardly ever finds a “normal” jazzy four note voicing. I try to find other ways to harmonize than in a traditional jazz way. These triads, also used in second or third inversions often evokes the sound of classical music or folklore. The application of polychords I have to practice more, and since I don` t play a harmonic instrument, this part lacks routine the most. I am planning to write a piece with the melody notes on the forth, minor or major seven to exercise other harmonization then the third and fifth.

I notice that in the music of Kronikor I work a lot with polarity. Especially the pieces Limbo and Trainstory work within contrast. In Limbo there is a boring, repetitive, anxious and tensed groove which is building up until its release in a single, long note. In part H of Limbo I combine the contrast between one note played by the violin with harsh interruptions from the other instruments. In Trainstory I am looking for the confrontation of repetitive, minimalistic elements with the emotional quality of a melody. I would like to combine these starkly opposing elements.

### Aesthetic continuity and divergence

The wish to obtain a balance between aesthetic continuity and divergence in a project is essential to me. It defines the mood of a composition and the elements I choose for it. Besides continuity, a good divergence between the compositions within one performance is important as well. I think the music of Kronikor has very different aspects. The divergence is given through the different combination possibilities of instruments (see above) and the choice of musical elements. After the final concert with Kronikor, I asked some people how they felt about the contrast within the material we played. I thought that maybe there where too many different styles involved (noise, beautiful melodies, solos over chord changes, rhythmic patterns..). However, everyone told me that they found it to be well-balanced because they felt that there was something strongly holding it together, probably the instrumentation and the fact that was all written by one person.

### The musicians

I didn't have so much time to cast the musician (I arrived in Stockholm in the begin of this semester). I was fortunate to meet Lisa, Emil and Andreas. All three of them are very skilled musicians in traditional jazz as well as in improvised music. With Andreas and Lisa I had already played before, then in the first week here I got to know Emil and he told me that he already played with the others, so I asked him as well. With Anatole I played a lot since he is studying also in Nomazz. It was a very good experience, when I had the pressure to decide fast on the musicians without a lot of time. It was a very conscious decision to ask this people because I knew that they have the qualities (being able to play free but also skilled in reading and playing over chord changes) I was looking for and they already played together. This constellation was motivated and allowed everyone to have a lot of fun in the rehearsals. But to really grow together as a band we will have to spend more time playing with each other (see chapter about recording and concert).

### 3.4 Improvisation

Improvisation represents an important element of Kronikor.

Improvised parts allow an intense, immediate communication within the ensemble during the performance, an effect I don't want to miss, even though it is sometimes difficult to find the right form for improvisation in a composition which is very specific. I have one demand; that the improvisation should support the message of the whole composition. Therefore I spent a lot of time thinking about appropriate instructions for the improvised parts in my pieces. It is my belief that in general, the more freely improvised a part is (giving little or no instruction), the more the result will depend on the musicians. Choosing musicians is, in that sense, a compositional act as well.

I use different kinds of improvisation. One is the traditional "jazz – improvisation", in time and over chord-changes or, more freely, over a pedal note.

The "free improvised" parts I try to structure through the order of different instrumental combinations, conducted backgrounds/interruptions by prescribing specific sounds and textures. In the clarinet solo of Rauber und Ritter for example, we developed the background together, played arco by doublebass and violin (7:59 m in the concert). Even though this background is improvised, it sometimes sounds almost like a written chorale. Another example is the transition between Trotzdem and Trainstory. After the B part of Trotzdem, clarinet and violin first improvise with the structures of the melody, and then build up a free improvisation with the intention to introduce the minimal patterns in the beginning of Trainstory. When we establish the new mood, the other instruments join and on cue we move into the composed A part of Trainstory ( 33:00m in the concert).

I see a very big field in the structuring of free improvised parts that I would like to continue to explore in the future. More and more I can see the possibilities of organizing free music and notice that there is a very big range between total freedom and composition. After playing traditional jazz, where I was getting a bit bored of the separation between composition and improvisation, I am very interested now in finding ways of combining improvisation with composition, and there is a lot of new music and theories to explore!

Each of the compositions for Kronikor have a distinguished story which I try to have continued in the improvised parts and so I have to explain to the players as well as I can, what the piece is about and where I expect the improvisation to lead. The music I wrote demands on one hand the spontaneity and freedom of an improviser and at the same time discipline and skills to play the parts (some of them rhythmically complex) as written.

In my opinion I found the right musicians in the set up for this band. One advantage is that they have already played a lot together in other projects before. However it still sometimes feels difficult to have my distinguished idea about the piece and at the same, to respect the individual expression of every player by passing over some of the responsibility. I also realize that it needs a lot of work, in the form of rehearsals and concerts, in order to allow the music to mature. Since Kronikor is a project which has existed only for 3 months, I have to accept the case that it is not a fully developed band yet.

#### Improvisation in the composing process

Another aspect of improvisation lays in the process of composing. At the beginning of every composition I first improvise on the material. Then the conscious work with the material begins, I work more intellectually. After a while I go back to the intuitive mindset of improvising. So I am constantly switching between the spontaneous invention of music and the analysis of it. The improvising gives me the free access to the music in my unconscious mind (the iceberg under the sea, chapter 2) and the act of composing puts it in the right order. In that sense you cannot separate composition and improvisation. Both are needed in a successful writing.

Sometimes I use improvisation very concretely in my compositional process. I record my improvising and then listen back to it, pick out what I like most and create a new piece with the material. I am planning to do that more in future.

### **3.5 Technique and exercises**

The possibility of developing my musical language is given through constant research. I do that first of all by listening to music. Since my childhood I have been doing that constantly.

At the beginning of my music studies, I started to analyze the music I listen to. I wanted to figure out why I like this or that. However, I think that intuitive listening deserves the same status as the conscious analysis. The creative process and music composition need both ways of discovering music in order to be released.

To get more vocabulary and techniques in composition, it is of benefit to do some writing exercises. After the first intuitive, improvised inspiration, the working process sets in- when I start to experiment with the material. The conscious application of the acquired knowledge helps me to discover different ways in which the piece can develop.

There is a huge amount of possible techniques in composing. I try to practice technique when a new composition demands it. For the sake of getting the composition to sound like it does in my imagination, it is sometimes essential to improve my skills. Often it happens that I am improving technique unconsciously namely in just doing it. Writing down the sounds I hear in my inner ear. Then trying out (intellectually) which sound/note/rhythm comes next, listening again and so on. In that sense I am practicing technique with my ear and get more musical vocabulary automatically.

For me it is important to be aware that the (extramusical) message of a composition and the emotional connection with it, should always be placed above technical issues. When studying techniques, this aspect can get lost sometimes.

Two nice phrases from Robert Henri concerning the danger with technique:

“The person who is forever acquiring technique with the idea that sometime he may have something to express, will never have the technique of the thing he wishes to express.”

“The technique learned without a purpose is a formula which when used, knocks the life out of any ideas to which it is applied.”

In this chapter I would also like to write about the following exercises I did in the last year of my studies.

### Melodic development

To learn about the development of a melody and the relation between several voices I found it helpful to study some counterpoint. I never did proper analysis of classical music and I am fully aware that the slight amount of information I gained from this huge theoretical topic is not comparable to any research of a classical composer or music-theorist. To develop my own writing it was helpful however, to understand some principals of the character of a melody and learn methods how to work with. I will write how I experienced this knowledge and how I am able to apply it on my work, regardless of the theoretic and historical accuracy.

Counterpoint mostly means the relationship between two, independent voices.

But before I think about several voices, I can already achieve a lot of counterpoint within one melody. First of all, the placement of sound and silence is essential. The length of the break after and before a phrase is crucial for the effect of it.

Through experimenting with the basic characters of intervals I have learned a lot of how I can effect the expression of a melody or parts of it. When I aim for a lot of tension and tragedy in a melody then I use rather big intervals like sixths or seventh. I think as bigger the intervals are, the more emotional expression they can

create. The opposite, relaxation and calmness I get when through the use of small steps of a scale.

Depending on how the tension-curve of the melody is supposed to be, I choose the pitch and the direction of it. A melody gets more tension if it is higher in the pitch position than the other phrases before. Often we find the highest pitch level on the climax of a piece.

This effect always has to be considered in relation to the whole piece. If the piece is located in a rather high pitch, tension and contrast can be created in using lower frequencies. In that case a deep note would probably have more capability for a climax. Again, it is all about balance and contrast.

The tonal direction of a melody can run either downwards or upwards. Especially for the end of a phrase this principle is important. I compare it to language. When I end in an upward movement, the phrase sounds like a question. Oppositely, when I end with a downward movement, I get the answer.

If I leave the thoughts about the overall melodic phrase I come to the next smaller item, the motif. The theoretical study of the possible development of a motif has only inspired me in a limited way. I like to develop motives in an intuitive way rather than applying techniques to it. I have the feeling that I am more satisfied with the result then. I know that there is mirror, cancer and the combination of them but I rarely use it in its absolute form. I did some exercises where I worked with some of these development techniques. More than likely I haven't found the right way yet, that is, how to combine these techniques with my intuitive feeling for aesthetic.

## Harmonization

Annsofi Söderqvist with whom I studied composition gave me the exercise of harmonizing a melody in three different ways. The three harmonisations of the same melody should be very distinguishable from each other in the sense that I have to choose a certain "sound-world" for every version. This exercise helped me a lot to become more aware of how different a melody can sound depending on how I harmonize it (what kind of emotional quality the chord has, but also the relation between melody note and root).

The idea of using a cohesive harmonic sound palette was very significant to the development of my harmonic hearing and knowledge. I think the most important thing concerning harmonization is to be consequential with sound. If I neglect this, and choose chords which vary in every bar, the mood of the piece moves towards arbitrariness.

## 4) Realization

In this last chapter I will analyse the compositions of my master-project Kronikor, and write about the realization of the recording and the concert. The sheet music of every piece you find in the attachment.

## 4.1 Analysis of the compositions for Kronikor

### Trainstory

Inspired by Christian Wallumrod and Steve Reich, this piece opens a new sound world I have not explored before, namely to think more in textures and timbres. As the title says, the piece is about a train. In part A, I tried to translate the sound of a driving train in to music. At first I wasn't sure if the best way to do that would be through improvisation or composition. I decided on composition. I found the appropriate sound by putting clusters into different sub divisions. After I wrote it, I became aware of the similarity to Steve Reich's "Music for Different Trains". Following the introduction of this first scene, the story starts in part B and is told through a melody on the violin with has remnants of folk music.

The C part begins with a recapitulation of the "train sounds" from the beginning. However, this time we start to improvise, continuing with as much discipline as possible, the sound of minimalistic, time-layer shifting cluster-patterns. Then the improvisation morphs into a clarinet solo over the form with changes. After a violin solo which is also played over the form, the theme is stated again.

This piece worked fine exactly how I wrote it, we didn't have to rearrange it in the rehearsals. I like the contrast of the minimalistic train sounds combined with the lyrical melody.

### Räuber und Ritter (From Bandits and Knights)

This piece originates from a chord exercise, where I was experimenting with poly-chords (two triads over each other). I divided the two triads, one for violin, the other for guitar, played pizzicato. This builds the accompaniment for the theme, played by the clarinet. Then the theme comes again, played by violin, clarinet in a second voice and accompanied by the rhythm section playing an 11/8 10/8 groove. Now the chords are played by the guitar. It was a bit hard to translate the poly chords I composed on the piano for guitar. I had to accept some compromises because it is technically impossible to play them on guitar as originally written.

My first idea for the improvisation was to do it freely but using differing scales as a guide. We tried it several times, but it never really suited the piece. The flow felt somewhat blocked if we followed my instruction. Maybe it has something to do that the restriction on one scale can inhibiting the freedom because the we have been thinking too much about wrong and right notes. I think this improvisation concept would work if we spend more time with the material, until our ears are used to it. Anyway I changed the concept and gave the instruction that the bass plays a pedal groove an F#. The meter and the scale is free. I also defined an order for the improvisation. It starts firstly with violin, bass, drums. After a while the guitar enters, then the clarinet. It morphs into a clarinet solo improvisation where bass and violin enter with an improvised background, long notes, played arco (this background sounds almost composed).

To end, the theme is played again. This time in a rubato tutti, free jazz like.

In that piece the extramusical meaning appeared later, after I developed it out of an exercise. The guitar/violin pattern in the beginning reminded me suddenly of the movie "Knight of the Coconut" from Monty Python and the story was given.

### Limbo

The first inspiration of this piece was more a psychological state of mind than something musical. I wanted to illustrate the situation when you have a carousel of having always the same thoughts in your mind which you can't get rid of it. In Christian mythology "limbo" refers to the place where you have to wait until it is decided if you are designated to enter hell or heaven. My aim was to express this uncomfortable feeling- boredom, impatience and anger. At the point when the state is getting unbearable, a sudden peace and silence occurs. But the thoughts interrupt again, this time slightly different. And so I wrote this repetitive groove which slowly grows, getting more tense and dissonant. Closer to the climax we start to improvise, first we stay in the mood of the repetitive pattern, then the music gets more hectic and fast until the climax, where everything stops except the violin playing one soft note, with the guitar slowly playing some very consonant chords. This sound world is completely opposite to the one before (again I am working with contrasts).

Eventually the chaos comes back; drums, bass and clarinet interrupt the peace. They do this three or four times, until the calmness represented through the violin and guitar finally stays. After a while, the violin starts a solo improvisation developed out of the long note.

### Trotzdem

Trotzdem means 'Nevertheless', and was written in a dark period in Helsinki out of the motivation to write a hopeful song even though the sun was not shining at all and life was hard. The realization of the core idea of the piece begins with the guitar pattern. I liked this harmony and the 5/8 figure. Because the chord E comes two times on the fourth 5/8 figure (the third time a B, which we perceive its function in relation to E) in a 15/8, so that the result is a 20/8 feel. In other words, the end and the beginning of the harmonic form is not clearly audible. Through ordering the chords independently from the structure of the metric (15/8) we get this round feeling of the form. This is the reason why I enjoyed doing a composition out of this pattern so much, the challenge being that it is not so easy to handle. To make the rhythmic structure more interesting, I decided to combine the 5/8 figure with a 15/8 feel, with the emphasis on the dotted quarter notes (the drummer plays the dotted quarter notes on the bass drum, and parts of the melody are following this groove). I started the piece to establish the groove and create a relaxed feeling before the time comes in, with a soft drum improvisation over the guitar pattern. To find a melody which fits the guitar pattern was difficult. The harmony changes quickly and there aren't many common notes between the different chords. It took me a while and I'm still not completely satisfied. The beginning is strong but in bar eleven it loses some of its strength and urgency. In the B-part, I abandon the guitar pattern and the emphasis is on the three melodies which are moving contrapuntally. For the guitar solo I decided to do whole 15/8 parts of the same chord, with the same harmony structure from the beginning. In the orchestration of the solo backgrounds, I tried to adapt a concept from the book of my teacher Frank Sikora\*. It is about the order of light and heavy chords. Light

sounds are comparable with the function of II – V progressions in functional harmony. Heaviness is generated through a tonic based feeling.

It is not easy to get a good groove with the polyrhythm in the piece *Trotzdem*. I would like it to have a sense of groove in a floating, free way, but at the same time tight and precise. The drummer needs to play not only the 5/8 pattern, but to emphasize also the groups of three eighth note triplets. My error was that I wrote only the groove (5/8 pattern over a 15/8 with the emphasis on the dotted quarter notes in the bass drum). When Andreas played this groove like it was written, it felt very stiff and unmusical. Later on I changed the part by just writing the melody with an indication above for the feel of the bar (the melody changes the feel several times). He had information about the melody and could play with and around it. This method turned out to be much more satisfying for me as a composer and also for the player.

### Complete performance

It is very important for me to find the right tension curve in the structure of the whole performance. We are playing some of the the pieces directly after each other, connected by improvised transitions.

The structure is: *Von Räuber und Ritter* - break- *Limbo* – transition – *Trotzdem* – transition – *Story of a Sad Train on its Way Back Home* – break – *Morning after a Sleepless Night*

To get the feeling for the whole concert, it is very important to play the program through several times.

## 4.2 Rehearsals

Since I play with musicians who are involved in various other projects, the rehearsal time for *Kronikor* is limited. Unfortunately the more professional a setting I work in, the less rehearsal time there is. I think that high quality music happens when the musical expression of several people melt together, until they can create as one big organism. This needs time. I really appreciate the process of arranging, and even composing together with other musicians. I don't have the time to do that here with my masters project, since I'm staying in Stockholm for only one semester. This fact was a bit hard to take for me in the beginning because I am very used to work with a project over a longer period of time. But I try to get the best result out of the more or less 8 rehearsals we have.

In that sense it is a very good exercise for me to be fully responsible for the results with *Kronikor*. I have to be prepared for every rehearsal in order to use the rehearsal time as productively as possible. There is not much time to try different

endings, forms or solos. and I have to decide which tune needs the most work, in which order we rehearse them and so on. Through the process of rehearsing with Kronikor I have gotten more and more comfortable with this situation. However. In the frame of the composition, especially because I work also with improvisation, there is always space in my music where the band members can add suggestions and comments. I try to find a balance between being strict and open at the same time. This is a big challenge and I am not always satisfied with how I manage it. Sometimes I have a certain idea and the other musicians are not exactly following it or alternatively, it can be the other way round.

The piece we had to practice the most was Trotzdem. This is because we are not used to play poly rhythm. Especially the rhythm-section should have practice it also by itself in order to get the groove. They didn't do that, so we spent quit a lot of time practicing it together. The first 6 rehearsals of 8 we have been busy in playing the written music properly. It took this amount of time until we could play the pieces through. The last two rehearsals before the studio session and the concert we played the whole program through and could concentrate more on interplay. If the pieces would be simpler in form and rhythm we could have investigate more the interaction and tension building together. Maybe this is something I would like to do different in future. To write some more simple structures in order to be able to play the compositions through from beginning without the need to practice some parts very much. On the other hand I think that in a more professional environment a big part of the work we've done in the practice room, each one do by him/herself.

In the practice work with Kronikor I have realized that the most important factor in the rehearsals is that I am positive. If I don't believe anymore that the music is on its way and that the process is positive, the whole project crashes. The second important thing is that I have to be prepared in order to be clear what we will do. In some rehearsals I was tired and busy with other thoughts. I noticed very fast how this effected the whole rehearsal process. The other musicians started to lose concentration as well and my insecurity made them insecure as well. At the end I think processes like this are very normal and to be angry with me makes it worse. Nevertheless I would like to improve my capacities being a bandleader, I think with some more experiences it will be better in future. Some of the rehearsals we did only as a quartet because not all the members couldn't make it. That was a good experience as well, practicing without drums or bass. The last two rehearsal have been difficult because first the drummer and then the bass player got sick. I try to make the best out of it, rehearse only in quartet. It worked because I had a plan of what make sense to practice without drums or bass.

### **4.3 Recordings**

We recorded the concert and also a six hour session in the studio 1 at school. We did the studio session some days before the final concert. Besides getting some demo recordings, it was a very good method to be prepared for the concert. I decided to do studio versions of the songs by skipping the improvised transitions we did in the concert.

The sound situation in the studio is quiet demanding for an acoustic project. The room is very small and dry. Nevertheless I am quiet satisfied with the result, at least in a musical way, and we have the possibility to get more out of the sound in the mixing process.

I chose to start with the most difficult song, Trotzdem. The first takes were unusable, so we continued with Räuber und Ritter. After several attempts in the beginning, we could finally manage to play it through and we got two nice versions. I chose the second because it felt more organic and whole. There are some mistakes and insecurities in the intonation but I very much like the improvised parts. I think the violin solo after the first theme works very well with the instructions I finally gave (see also chapter with the analysis of that song). There is a lot of interplay, mostly audible between the violin and guitar, and I very much like the way the clarinet enters in my solo and takes over. The arco background is maybe a little bit shaky, in the sense that the sound of the violin and bass could be much smoother and stable, like in classical music, but here I also very much appreciate the interplay between the clarinet, violin and bass. The final theme (where it is played rubato) works very well.

The next song we recorded was Trainstory. We did two takes, both of them are usable. I had the idea to merge the beginning of the first together with the second half of the second take but I couldn't find a good spot to do the cut, so I decided to just take the second version. I found it very hard to mix the first part (with the minimalistic pattern, the "train sound"). It should somehow feel very together, as if the sound comes from one instrument. I'm sure, that with some more mixing (especially panning and equalizing that part) we could gain a more appropriate sound picture. But since we didn't have so much time to do the mix, I have accepted how it is now. The theme is nice, as is the improvisation after that. During the clarinet and violin solo over the changes, I find that the rhythm section (especially drums) could do much more interplay. There is this moment at 7:09 where the clarinet and violin are kind of "freaking out", and here it could be nice to hear some more interaction from the drummer, the same during the whole violin solo. But generally I am very satisfied with the overall curve of the song.

Limbo we did record but it is not mixed yet. Because of the limited time for mixing we decided to wait with that song. I think Limbo is a piece which sounds best live, so I have resigned myself to prepare it for the demo now. We will have another studio session in June to mix the recordings of the concert, so maybe we will do Limbo then as well. I would use the second take because it has more energy towards the end. After we did all the other songs, we recorded our problem child, Trotzdem, again at the end of the studio session. Finally the theme felt kind of steady and we got a good version. I decided to overdub the backgrounds in the guitar solo. However, the 5/8 played by the clarinet and violin over the 15/8 played by the rhythm-section was still not tight, so I decided not to use the background at all in the studio version.

## 4.4 Concert

From one perspective it was a very good concert. The energy was there and we played very well together and for the people in the audience. Also the sound situation on stage was comfortable, we could hear each other well. After the performance I felt that this group has a lot of potential and I really would like to keep playing with these musicians.

It is an interesting point, that the concert situation always feels so different from the situation at the rehearsals and studio. Especially because it was the very first concert of Kronikor, it was surprising at times. For example the guitar player was playing much more concentratedly and assertively than before.

Unfortunately the themes were not always played very well. Besides some wrong notes and insecurities in time, over all the intonation of the violin lacks sometimes, for example in the first tune, Rauber und Ritter. This was much better in the studio recording. Maybe it has something to do with the excitement of playing live. I think the violin solo which comes after, is very successful in the beginning, lacks in the middle, and when the guitar and clarinet enter it is fine again. I like the way I enter. It has a calmness that I built up from, step by step. To do it like this was not only an intuitive but also a conscious decision. I think it still does sound spontaneous. Unfortunately, I missed the interaction with the drummer in this part. The interplay is not on a very high level. I think there are several reasons. First of all, maybe the bass player and drummer still feel a bit blocked because I've changed the instructions for that part many times. The last one I gave was to play a groove with time, but without meter. In having this instruction in mind, maybe they didn't dare to interact too much with my playing. Next time we see each other I will speak with them and ask about how they felt. The second reason is my playing. I think I start the solo very sensitively and give a lot of space. But in minute 4:30 I start to play more constructed, with fast lines, and this makes it hard to interact. I also change my ideas very fast and I'm not developing them. When the guitar enters it is kind of a relief, but soon we both start to play a lot and it gets messy. I remember that I was a bit irritated about what the guitar played around 5:44. It was hard for me to react to that.

One could say that this concert was just the way we played at this particular moment and it is fine because the music is improvised. However, I realize that now is the point where we should continue to play a lot together in order to develop a language and to be able to really tell a story.

The way the violin and double bass enter during the clarinet solo sounds very magical to me, I really like that part. Somehow it solves the chaos that we were evoking before. In the mixing session in June I will lower the volume of the strings a little in this part.

After Rauber und Ritter we played the suite, Limbo, Trotzdem and Trainstory in a row with their particular improvised transitions.

I think we played Limbo very well. I like the calmness in how we started and the gradual build up we made until its very abrupt transition to the long sustained note played by the violin. Again I was surprised by the guitar player, he suddenly used effects he never did before in that piece. For a moment I was upset but then I just accepted it. I had some major problems with playing the very calm, long note (minute 18:36). My right hand is shaking, probably because of excitement but also

because the part before demands a completely different bow technique and it is difficult to change so suddenly. Nevertheless I think the part with the solo violin transition into the next piece worked well.

The intro with drums and guitar for Trotsdem I found a bit long during the performance (the guitar player had usually built it up faster), but now when I listen back to it I like the way they do it very much! Also we played some major wrong notes in that theme and almost lost it completely (minute 29:25), but I think in the overall picture we played it very organic and energetically. The guitar solo brings a very nice Paul Motian/Bill Frisell style to the whole picture. Unfortunately the background is not tight. The transition into the final theme was successful and I also really like the transition made by the clarinet and violin into the next song, Trainstory. At 36:09 the violin is a bit too loud, we will have to reduce it in the mix in June.

The introduction for Trainstory is very nice, I think we represented the “train sounds” very well. Also the theme is played nicely, organically and with a floating quality. The theme is followed by a short improvisation, after which the bass and clarinet transform into playing chords and time. In the first chorus it seems that they had some problems finding each other. I think it is not an easy thing to build up chords out of an improvisation with sound. The takeover by the violin happens smoothly. Also here it would have been good to hear more interaction with the drummer. The violin solo is longer than I played it in the rehearsals but I think it doesn't become boring because I use a lot of different material.

The last tune we played was completely improvised except for the melody that I had written down, which we also play freely. I feel that I started too early with it, the introduction could have lasted longer. I was irritated at first by what the guitar player played at the beginning, it was hard for me to follow it. Maybe that's why I started with the melody quite early. The end of the piece seems very organic.

In the whole program there is not really a bass feature. I didn't think about that but next time I will put a bass solo in somewhere.



## 5) Evaluation

It is very interesting for me to see in retrospect how the process of realizing the music for my master-project has progressed. When I started to think about the subject for the thesis it was November and I was studying in Helsinki. The weather was dark and cold, I was not feeling very comfortable at the jazz department there and I had quite a difficult period of my life. I dealt with this by going more inward, reading and thinking about the philosophic and the spiritual aspects of my life. At this time I also started to compose the pieces for Kronikor. The process was quite slow and heavy and it was hard sometimes to find the motivation to be active. When I came to Stockholm for the spring semester, I knew that everything now had to be done quickly because I had only three months to finish the compositions, find the right people, set up the rehearsals, studio session and concerts. All of a sudden the process was very different, I didn't have the time for doubts and hesitation anymore. I was full of energy and enjoyed the process of the realization very much. I have tried to built my thesis from the inside to the outside, from the deepest thoughts about life to very concrete issues. Now that I have finished this work, I can tell that I have grown very much throughout this process. It is the first time I have started to think very deeply about what is important and influential to me as an artist and musician, and the fact that I had to write it down is reinforcing it even more. I think it will affect my future in terms of making me more aware of my inspiration and the realization of it.

One of the difficulties I had in writing this thesis was that it is hardly possible to define the steady principles of my creative process. It often happened to me that I wrote about something and some days or weeks after, it didn't feel right to give it that importance anymore. Sometimes it felt even wrong when I read it again. With this process, I discovered that my perception as an artist is changing all the time. When I started to write the thesis in February I got a lot of inspiration from thinking and observing my interior processes. Now, some months later I feel I get more inspiration from the exterior, for example from places, other people, sounds of nature and other art-forms. When I started to write it was winter, then spring, and this most likely effects the way I do art!

As I composed the pieces for Kronikor half a year ago, it was difficult to try and be as exact and structured as possible in describing the process of my writing and It feels a bit artificial to write in retrospect. I think it is noticeable also in the way I built the thesis. There is no part where I exactly describe step by step how the compositions originated. Perhaps I should have had a diary and taken notes every time when I worked on it in order to describe the process in an exacting way.

The biggest enrichment I have received from this work, was through the examination of the philosophical context of art and the analysis of how I work with the tools of my intellect and intuition, as well as the investigation of my creative blocks. I got the insight that philosophy and composition are not separable from each other. It is very inspiring for me to see the connection between my view of life and music.

During the examination, the problem I mentioned in the beginning of never being satisfied with the end result, has slightly changed. I have more insight now that I am constantly moving between my imagination and the realization of it. In this process I have to accept the limits of the exterior as well of my interior. Through

the examination of the philosophical aspects of my work, I can conclude that the most important thing is to continue, to DO and to never stop.

In thinking more deeply about my writing and creativity as an artist in general, I have found out that music has its own life. It is not absolutely necessary to have a complete idea of the piece in the beginning. If the embryo, the DNA of a composition is strong, the process will follow. By letting it grow I lose the need for confirmation and the need to know what is right and wrong. The idea that the piece can grow in its own way, depending of what I experience in the moment of writing, that it is a sort of collaboration between me and the music, is a perception I developed during the process of writing my master thesis. It is the idea that I can share some of the responsibility with the music itself. The desire to get as close as possible to the inner core of my art (how I described it in chapter 2) is still here, but during the process of writing my thesis I have become more and more aware that the creativity happens in moving between the exterior and interior of the circle and it is not necessary and not possible to be always close to the deepest idea of what “my” music should be. This has the effect of making me feel more relaxed. In that sense it was a big help to do this reflection about my writing.

Coming to more practical issues, I would like to mention that through the building up of this new project Kronikor in only two months; finding the right musicians, structuring the rehearsals and recordings, I gained a lot of knowledge of what it means to be a bandleader. I am more used to acting as a co-leader in working-bands, so this was a very important experience for me. Even though I had some hard times with uncertainty, I figured out that I actually feel very comfortable as a bandleader. The situation of being free in my decisions and carrying the full responsibility for them gives me a lot of energy and inspiration. Of course this is only in regards to some of the structural and compositional decisions. In the concrete situation of playing I hope that the other musicians will take some initiative and responsibility as well. I figured out, during the work with Kronikor, that this is not always that easy. There was tension sometimes when I was very clear in my instructions and at the same time waiting for some input from the other musicians. Like I mentioned already in the chapter before, this has also to do with the combination of very specific, composed parts and free improvised transitions and solos. I think this is the quality of Kronikor that I am looking for, the best way how to connect freedom with discipline. Hopefully this project will survive in future, and I will give my best in the continuation of my work for it

## 6) Index

### Websites

John Coltrane, ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Coltrane](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Coltrane))

Joni Mitchell, (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEJuiZN3jI8>)

Hanspeter Dürr, (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrgQakHPRP8>)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrgQakHPRP8>)

Wikipedia, (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intuition>)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intellect>

#### Books

Stephen Nachmanovitch 1990. Free Play, improvisation in Life and Art. 1st Edition, Penguin group USA

Henri Robert 1923. The Art Spirit. Basic Book edition 2007, Basic Books, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016-8810

Kenny Werner. Effortless Mastery. 1996 Jamey Aebersold Jazz, Inc. P.O Box 1244, New Albany, IN 47151-1244

Julia Cameron. The Artists Way. MacMillan, New Edition 1997

Frank Sikora. Neue Jazzharmonielehre. Schott Music 8th edition 2012

