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Metsän väki - *Forest Dwellers*

Creating a collaborative, semi-improvised performance that
combines music, visual art, dance and performance art

Skriftlig reflektion inom självständigt, konstnärligt arbete

Till dokumentationen hör även följande inspelning:

Professional Integration Project, NAIP 'Metsän väki - *Forest Dwellers*'

Abstract

'Metsän väki - Forest Dwellers' was my Professional Integration Project (PIP). The project consisted of creating a performance titled 'Metsän väki', which was performed on May 9th 2016 in Helsinki, Finland and of writing this thesis. The performance was a collaboration between different artists and it involved music, visual art, dance and performance art. The starting point for creating the performance was my collaboration with sculptor and environmental artist Jenni Tieaho. In addition to traditional instruments, sounding objects were used in creating the music. There were both written and improvised music as well as improvised dance in the performance. The performance took place in a former psychiatric hospital.

In the outcomes and conclusion I present my expectations for the performance and describe how those were met. I also examine the role of cross-artistic collaboration in the project. I give examples of my own artistic development as well as my development as a project leader. I also reflect on the relevance of the project to the community. The outcomes are presented through my own reflections and through discussion where I point to literature concerning the differences and similarities between different art forms. The outcomes of the project include audience feedback from the performance. This is presented in the appendices.

My conclusion shows that I was also able to create a rich and diverse performance by using simple (low-tech) methods. The performance was inspired by my experiences, interests and background. In my thesis I also show how creating and structuring the 'Metsän väki' performance can help me to develop as an artist doing cross-artistic collaboration.

Keywords: collaboration, visual art, organic music, composition, cross-disciplinary improvisation, environment

And who could compare with the stormy sounds of the forest? The forest sounded until the man was one with it, until he was it, until the man for a moment swayed as fire, as wind, as the forest.

Pentti Haanpää (1905-1955), Finnish writer (own translation)

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Introduction

'Metsän väki - Forest Dwellers' was my master project in the master programme Joint Music Master for New Audiences and Innovative Practice (NAIP) at Kungliga Musikhögskolan (The Royal College of Music) in Stockholm. This paper is written as a part of my Professional Integration Project (PIP). My PIP was developed throughout my nearly two years of studying and it resulted in a performance that took place on May 9th 2016 in a former psychiatric hospital in Helsinki, Finland. The central question of my project was *How can I create a collaborative, semi-improvised performance that combines music, visual art, dance and performance art?* My intention was to use my background, interests and values as a starting point for the artistic process. I also wanted to work together with artists from different fields and to influence one another in the working process. The performance included written and improvised music, visual artworks in the form of 'living sculptures' and improvised dance. The performance didn't have a specific target audience. The aim was rather to use an unconventional performance location and to attract different kinds of people to the performance.

Throughout my studies I saw examples of how the practices of individual artists and even art institutions are changing. The borders between different art forms and between art and science are vanishing: 'We are experiencing a renaissance in the power of the arts, even where political will is lacking. Artists increasingly make their own futures and work collaboratively across disciplines. Dimensions of creativity and innovation, empowered learning, distributed and ethical leadership, and entrepreneurship and activism, all of which are embedded within artistic practices, are being recognized as critical to contemporary societies in diverse ways' (www.uniarts.fi/arts-without-borders). My PIP aims to explore the fruitful connections between different art forms by examining the potential and challenges of interdisciplinarity. Having already developed a strong musical identity with a background as a jazz pianist, my goal was also to expand my artistic work into new territories, to establish new networks and to develop as an artist in ways that fitted my musical personality.

In this paper, I'll start by introducing important sources of inspiration for my PIP (chapter 1). In the following chapter 'Background of my Professional Integration Project' I'll discuss about my artistic identity, present a few key events that directed the project and give examples of my experiences from the NAIP studies (chapter 2). In the third chapter 'Aims' I'll present both the artistic goals as well as the personal goals of the project (chapter 3). This project belongs to the diverse field of practice-based research, where the research process is closely connected to the artistic practice itself. I'll discuss this topic in chapter 4 'Practice Based Research'. My PIP developed in several stages, which were also overlapping at times.

In chapter 5 I'll introduce the 'dwelling perspective', the theme of the project, the participants and how the concept of the performance was developed (chapter 5). In the following chapter I'll explain how the project was carried out in terms of project management, the performance location and resources (chapter 6). In chapter 7 I'll introduce the principal methods of creating the performance. The documentation of the project consists of a video of the performance and a project blog (chapter 8). Finally, I'll describe the outcomes of the project (chapter 9) and include a conclusive discussion with my personal reflection (chapter 10). In addition, I'll discuss about the further development of my PIP (chapter 11) and present the audience feedback from the performance (chapter 13).

In my thesis the main focus will be on explaining how the performance idea was developed (chapter 5), how the performance was created (chapter 7) and what kinds of interactions and conversations there were between the different participants (chapters 5 and 7). I will be discussing the following question: *How can music, visual art and dance relate to each other in this performance?* In my thesis I give both philosophical as well as practical answers to this question. An important part of my thesis is also examining the question of *How can I develop my own artistry and professional skills through creating and structuring this performance?* These themes come up throughout the thesis. I'm referring to both my artistry and professional skills, not because these are entirely different entities, but because this project required using many skills that go beyond the actual artistic process (see chapter 6). When referring to my artistry, I'm focusing on the new skills and insights I've acquired during the artistic process (chapter 10) as well as the development of my artistic identity (chapters 7 and 10). I have chosen these research questions because I believe they provide interesting information about the project and the artistic process. Focusing on these questions is also useful for the further development of the project.

The research outcomes might be interesting for other artists who want to challenge themselves and experiment with new performance concepts. In addition I believe the research outcomes are interesting for artists who work across different disciplines. As the project touches upon many areas from music to visual art and using unconventional performance locations, the research outcomes could offer something for those who have an interest in any of these areas, including institutions and organizations as well as individual people. Finally, since the theme of the project is related to Finnish tree mythology, anyone with an interest in the magical and mystical world of beliefs can find some interesting pieces of information in the thesis. That being said, we can begin our journey, a journey which resulted in a performance described by one audience member as having 'wonderful people, lovely music and costumes that surpass imagination'.

1.1 A long long time ago, somewhere in Finland

Few people today are born to an environment which gives them spiritual support. There is little we see in nature that is ours.

- Susanne K. Langer (Langer 1942)

Tracing back to the pre-Christian times, one universal phenomenon that was widely spread also in Finland, is the 'sacred grove', a place where people gathered to enjoy a ceremonial meal and to sacrifice to the great gods of nature. In this pristine environment it was forbidden to even break a branch or pick a single berry (Kovalainen, Seppo 2006:32). In Finland these places were often situated on a small hill or on a cliff, with a small pond, fountain or a stream nearby. In the grove there was a significant oak tree, birch tree or perhaps just a bush whereby sacrifices of food and beer were made. The three elements, namely wood, stone and water, symbolized the border to the world beyond, a gateway to the past and a connection to the deceased who control good fortune and wellbeing (Kovalainen, Seppo 2006:32). I find this description of the sacred grove very poetic. It conveys the deeply-rooted need for spirituality that people have expressed throughout the ages. There the stories of the origin of life and human being were told.

During recent years I've learned about Finnish tree mythology, about places that have had or still today have a special or sacral meaning. My main source of information has been the book *Puiden kansa* (Kovalainen, Seppo 2006), written and edited by photographers Ritva Kovalainen and Sanni Seppo. 'Puiden kansa' means 'tree people'. The book shows beautiful examples of how people in the past connected with their surroundings, in ceremonies and rituals but also in everyday life. I was deeply influenced by this book. Mostly I was amazed by the amount of history that I hadn't come across with before. The book also provided a lot of inspiration for my artistic work already before I started working on my PIP. Eventually this book ended up providing ideas for music as well as for other aspects of the project. One important thing which I learned from *Puiden kansa* was the fact that those words which we use in everyday language used to have rich and diverse meanings in the past. For the most part these meanings have been forgotten. A good example of this is the Finnish word 'metsä' (forest).

'Metsä' used to refer to something distant, a border or an edge. It was a distant, dark and endless kingdom with its own laws and powers that would not obey the will of man (Kovalainen, Seppo 2006:52). The lives of people

depended on the forest, therefore it was respected. It was the kingdom of the 'haltijat' (spirits), who would only grant permission for humans to enter if they behaved well. Nowadays this border has been pushed further and further. The forest has been reduced under the will of man. The names of the 'haltijat' have been forgotten, as well as the rituals needed to cross this border. What we see nowadays are just shreds, separate pieces of land spread around the build environment. With rapid advancements in technology and a new understanding of 'innovation' and 'development', huge areas of forest have been destroyed and modified during the course of only a few decades, especially in the 60's and 70's. Already in year 1915, the Finnish photographer, writer and a documentarist of folk traditions I. K. Inha wrote: 'The forest that poets have sung about, to which musicians have dedicated their hymns, has disappeared... The anxious spinning and battle of the industrial world has spread far into the main land. Even though I cannot see or hear it, I see and feel its impact everywhere' (Kovalainen, Seppo 2006:178).

I have a personal relationship to this topic through my family. Some of my grandparents have been farmers and forest workers. I also have relatives, for example my great uncle, who have been advocates of protecting and studying the natural areas. This clearly shows how the forest has many functions: On one hand it provides material wealth and on the other hand there's an immaterial or spiritual aspect to this 'green gold'. Sometimes these different aspects are in contradiction, especially in the modern world. As an artist, I feel that I've reached a moment where I need to consider the impact of my work, and even take a stand on something that I care deeply about. For me this means a process of becoming more aware, of taking small steps towards a sustainable way of living as an artist. I'm conscious about how the world and our perception of the environment have changed. Today we have much more scientific understanding and perhaps less beliefs: 'Finnish people are closer to their "forester" history than other Europeans, although this is rapidly changing' (Kovalainen, Seppo 2006:9). Also the way how information spreads, moving from local communities to the 'global village' has had a huge impact on how we see ourselves and our place in the world: 'As the forest changes, so does also our mind... People still need environments that carry meanings in order to better understand their own lives as part of history and the great current of life' (Kovalainen, Seppo 2006:9).

I believe these meanings are essential for us to feel responsible for the environment. I also believe that while the forest has become first and foremost a commodity and means of gaining wealth, the long history of being *with* nature is still very much present today. In my PIP I had the pleasure of working with Finnish sculptor and environmental artist Jenni Tieaho. This is how she describes what being *with* nature could mean: 'My mind is troubled by the beliefs that had power over people in our "forester" history. I believe there are still echoes of those beliefs present in the minds of today's people, in our subconscious waiting to be discovered. The

landscape opens up before us, the cliffs, the fields leading to the dark forest, the forest pond. Feelings of longing, power and powerlessness emerge from within. These feelings tie us to our “forester” history, to an experience of something ancient. Something that is silently present inside us, sometimes lighting up and other times fading’.

1.2 Organic Music

We often perceive art as revealing or portraying that what we cannot see, as a picture of the human imagination. What if we turn our attention to the materials that art, and in this case music is produced with? I use the term organic music to describe the overall musical concept of the ‘Metsän väki’ performance. This term is from Chinese composer Tan Dun, who is known for creating installations and performances where traditional instruments are combined with architectural designs and natural elements such as water. In the ‘Metsän väki’ performance my intention was to build a bridge between traditional instruments and sound producing natural objects. I chose these objects from the three elements that in old Finnish beliefs have symbolized the border to the world beyond: wood, stone and water. Tan Dun describes organic music in the following way: ‘Organic music describes both matters of everyday life and matters of the heart. These ideas find their origin in the animistic notion that material objects have spirits residing in them, an idea ever-present in the old village where I grew up in China’. Without knowing exactly what he means by ‘matters of everyday life’ and ‘matters of the heart’ it’s difficult to say how these two are portrayed in the music itself. But saying that material objects have spirits residing in them seems to suggest that those things are alive because they are animated by something *foreign* to them, a soul or a spirit. Needless to say, if the idea of material objects having spirits residing in them produces good art and good music, I’m certainly not opposed to it. However for me ‘organic music’ has chiefly other kinds of meanings.

When I write music, I think a lot about different sounds. For this project, I was looking for an overall ‘earthy’ sound. The first group of instruments that came to my mind was percussion. I was thinking about certain pitched percussion instruments, like the marimba and vibraphone and also a variety of other percussion instruments, like chimes, wood blocks etc. The other group of instruments I immediately thought of was strings. Finally the music ‘ensemble’ for ‘Metsän väki’ ended up being a trio with percussion, cello and piano. I was also very keen on the idea of using natural objects and elements that during the course of the performance would become musical instruments. I was interested especially in the *transformation* from sounds to music, from ordinary to *extraordinary*. This is what happens with water in one of Tan Dun’s performances. To me this transition also creates a ceremony-like atmosphere. And as I have discovered, this happens all around the world among different cultures. Many societies even have no concept or word for ‘music’ in a Western sense. According to professor of anthropology and music Steven Feld, what might be identified as the ‘music’

of the Kaluli people of Bosavi in Papua New Guinea is regarded by its makers as being but one of a variety of sounds shared to greater or lesser degrees by natural and animal agents - for example, rain, waterfalls, crickets, and birds, as well as humans (Feld 1984). Nonmusical sounds (including distress calls of a chicken dragged on the ground from house to house, gunshots, blacksmith bellows, and cacophony from striking household utensils) may be re-contextualized by the Anlo-Ewe in Ghana to become 'musical' sounds in healing and exorcism practices (Avorgbedor 2000). In a modern Western context I see a relation to *concrete music*. This concept was developed by Pierre Schaeffer in the early 1940s, and its aesthetic was '...centered upon the use of sound as a primary compositional resource' (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musique_concrète). I will return to this topic in chapter 7 (Methods) when I'm explaining how I created the music for the 'Metsän väki' performance. Using the term 'organic music' then does imply something other than only the choice of instruments. My intention was to embrace a variety of ways of creating music and to *work with* the materials that are present in the performance. The concept of 'organic music' is also related to the idea of *visual music*. How does one 'see' music? This is a question I became interested in during the artistic process. I will return to this topic as well in chapter 7.

As a conclusion, there is no definition of organic music as such. It remains open for interpretation. For me using this term has been a way of conceptualizing music in new ways. You could say that my approach to creating music has become more holistic¹. Going back to Tan Dun's notion of 'material objects having spirits residing in them', I also find something beautiful and almost soothing in this description. To me it represents interrelatedness, the idea of everything being somehow connected. However, what I find more inspiring artistically is a similar idea expressed in a different way by anthropologist Tim Ingold. In his view things are *in life* rather than life is *in things* (Ingold 2011:48). Instead of agreeing on a strong division between mind and matter, between humans and other beings, he says: 'Like all other creatures, human beings do not exist on the "other side" of materiality, but swim in an ocean of materials...' (Ingold 2011:24). And perhaps these materials, as much as humans, have their history and a *story* to tell.

¹ Holistic: Relating to or concerned with complete systems rather than with individual parts (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/holistic).

2. Background of my Professional Integration Project

2.1 My artistic identity

A few years ago I realized that I'd been asking myself the same question over and over again: How could I connect my passion for nature and my passion for music? I'd become more aware of the deep impact that nature and especially the forest has had on my identity. I wondered whether this identity is reflected in my artistic work. I grew up in Eastern Finland, in a city surrounded by forests and lakes. The forest has always had an important place in Finnish culture, Finns have even been described as 'tree people'. Johan Ludvig Runeberg (1804-1877), who is considered the national poet of Finland, wrote: 'Nothing can have a greater impact on the traveler's mind than the depth of the endless forests of the heartland. There you walk as though you were walking on the bottom of the sea...' I think Runeberg was lucky to find such forests. Nowadays those exist for the most part only in the imagination and stories of previous generations. As a citizen of a 'tree nation' I was eager to find out more about the history, language and traditions of my 'homeland'. I began a journey into the stories about forest and about people who lived there in the past. I was searching for a personal connection with nature and traces of the intimate relationship with nature that people had in the past. I wondered whether we as human beings had forgotten something important in our increasingly technology-driven society. Did we still know how to tell our story, as 'tree people'?

As a musician I feel that my way of writing music and performing it is close to storytelling. Everyone and everything has a story. A story is something that connects us, as human beings and as a part of our living environment. In the course of my studies in the NAIP programme I encountered storytelling in many forms. After hearing many stories and seeing many new places in different countries, I felt even more strongly that I wanted to know more about the story of the forest, something that was close to me, but yet a mystery. My PIP started with the desire to know what would happen if I chose to work collaboratively with a visual artist, especially an artist strongly connected to environmental art. Could this open up some new horizons for my artistic work? Going further back I could refrain the question as: Could I see myself as an environmental artist, and if so, how? Does the fact that I work as a musician restrict me to certain kinds of working conditions or formats? You could say that I was observing critically the way how I perceived myself. There was no way of knowing what would come out of the process of finding out answers to these questions. Perhaps I would find some hidden sides of my artistic identity, discover my roots or make new connections. You could say that I'd begun a journey into new discoveries, a journey that has been incredibly rewarding so far.

2.2 The mystery of the forest

On this journey I have taken different kinds of paths. I have also literally explored new paths for example in the forest areas close to where I live in Vantaa, Finland. I have noticed a very different sensation when you walk in a forest with your full awareness, paying attention to the smallest details. That can be an all-encompassing experience. Some people have described it as a 'world inside a world'. Or as one woman wrote in her blog, the forest is like a 'garment of the soul'. All of these descriptions capture something of the experience which ultimately can't be put into words. I've discovered that I feel the most satisfied when I have the ability to wonder and to be amazed. Spending more time outdoors has led me into examining closer the relationship between different senses, namely seeing, hearing, touching and smelling. All these senses can reveal something equally intriguing about the environment. Many times there's more than meets the eye. As Finnish documentary film maker Petteri Saario says in his nature documentary *Magic of Wilderness* (2016): 'In nature you can experience delight that is hidden from the eye. It's then that nature is at its most mysterious'.

It is funny how, after being in this 'world inside a world' my mind keeps on wondering along those same paths even after I've returned home. It is actually there, in the midst of a dense forest that I feel myself the most at home. This is how Jenni Tieaho describes a similar situation: 'My mind escapes to the shadowy paths of the large spruce forest, sometimes stumbling on the tree roots, covered in moss. The paths are like veins that pulsate towards the deep roots of the old tales. Here the power is not ours, the knowledge is not from us, the memories are not ours. The forest is within us, without borders'. Along my journey I have discovered many people who practice their art by engaging with the natural environment or cross boundaries between art and science. One such person was professor of philosophy and music David Rothenberg, who wrote the book *Survival of the Beautiful* (Rothenberg 2011). Reading this book was an absolute delight, especially because of the many ways how it shows that the sense of beauty is natural not only for humans but also for animals and plants. In his book Rothenberg argues that 'evolution produces results that are beautiful, not only practical' (Rothenberg 2011:254). He also suggests that art in its many forms has helped us understand the various processes of evolution: 'Survival of the beautiful, survival of the interesting, not only survival of the ingenious and the useful; aesthetic selection, not only natural selection...' (Rothenberg 2011:255).

2.3 Discovering environmental art

Among other things, from *Survival of the Beautiful* I discovered environmental art in a way I had never imagined it before. In the book there

is a photo of sculptor Patrick Dougherty's² 2003 installation titled 'Na Hale 'o waiavi'. The installation is a complex of bee-hive-like structures threaded in and around a monkeypod tree at the Contemporary Museum in Honolulu, Hawaii. What impressed me in this installation, besides the intriguing forms and materials, was the way how the sculptures blend into the surroundings, as if they had evolved there. I have always been drawn to hand-made things, whether they are artworks, handicrafts or the like. I like to observe different materials and especially in the case of environmental art there's a sense of an ongoing process: a material has been given a new form, but during the course of time that form will ultimately change again, as is the case with all materials. Many times I can sense the 'conversation' between the artist, the material and the environment. There are visible traces of the artistic process, which may have been very time-consuming. I'm also imagining this kind of artistic process as a way of getting closer to the mystery of nature. When I applied to the NAIP programme, I proposed a project titled 'Grove', which refers to the sacred groves described in the previous chapter. At the time I was thinking of a cross-art project that would have this theme and a 'community feel'. However the content of that project was yet undetermined and I didn't have an idea of possible collaborators for the project. Eventually, after many twists and turns, I ended up contacting a few environmental artists from Finland during summer 2015 for my PIP (this was after I had decided that I want to carry out the project in Finland). I would say that the book *Survival of the Beautiful* was the initial spark that inspired me to do so.

2.4 Experiences from my studies

One thing that I especially appreciated in my NAIP studies was collaboration, in many different forms. It can be a group of artists working together on an art project or designing a workshop for a community or group of people. I experienced these sorts of collaborations as a part of the NAIP studies and also as an artist-in-residence in Iceland during spring 2015 (www.johannapitkanen.com/nemophilist). My first experience of collaborative work as a part of my studies was during the introductory course of the NAIP studies in August-September 2014 in Stykkishólmur³,

² Dougherty is an 'internationally acclaimed sculptor who creates eight to ten site-specific works a year...His only materials for these large, organic sculptures are tree saplings, preferably taken from local sources, which he twists and wraps to create his unique art in harmony with other elements in the surrounding environment' (www.ecopsychology.org/journal/ezine/stickworks.html).

³ Stykkishólmur is a town and municipality situated in the western part of Iceland, in the northern part of the Snæfellsnes peninsula (Wikipedia).

Iceland. During those very intensive 10 days I co-created a short film with a live music score with a group of diverse artists: students from the programme, a teacher and a film maker. I really enjoyed that experience, and also the intensity of it. The short film was based on a folk tale connected to the area where we were. The film was performed, together with a live music score at the local church. Another important experience from my master studies was community-based creative collaboration. I took part in intensive courses of ‘Leading and Guiding’ in The Hague and in Stockholm. The objective of these courses was to learn how to plan and to facilitate music workshops for diverse target groups. These experiences gave me tools in example on how to work as a group leader. I also worked with musicians who had a very different background in music compared to mine. I came to appreciate receiving feedback from other people and doing collaborations where you don’t always have 100 percent control over the project. In short, I noticed that making art has certain magical powers, especially when you do it together with others.

While I was doing an Erasmus study exchange at the Iceland Academy of the Arts in autumn 2015 I took part in a course titled ‘Sounds of Nature and City’. This was an intensive course of concrete music and field recording led by Marie Guilleray. Prior to the course I had very little experience of recording sounds, let alone transforming those sounds in order to create music. During the course we had the possibility to stay a few days in the Icelandic countryside, in a small town called Skalholt, doing field recordings. This experience proved to be interesting and also important for me, as it opened up new ways of listening to the everyday sounds. I remember vividly one instance, when I was recording sounds in Skalholt and came across a tree with completely dried leaves hanging from its branches. Normally I would have just passed by without paying much attention to it, but this time I had my headphones on, and the portable microphone was able to pick up the tiny sounds that the leaves created, beating against each other in the wind. I was really fascinated by this sound, and eventually ended up transforming it and using it in a performance. This experience was a good example of the ordinary becoming somehow *extraordinary*. Susan K. Langer writes: ‘The auditory experiences which impress us are those which have musical possibilities, which allow themselves to be varied and developed, expanded, altered...’ (Langer 1942:200).

The experiences described in this chapter made me become more sensitive to my environment. They also opened up my mind for new possibilities. For me working as a musician many times means spending hours by myself, engaged in many different activities from practicing my instrument to writing music, project management etc. Especially my experience in Stykkishólmur showed that when you step outside your comfort zone and engage with others and your surroundings, you might end up doing something totally unexpected and learning new things about yourself in the process.

3. Aims

In this chapter I'll define the artistic and personal goals of the project. When discussing about the artistic goals of the project, I'm approaching the 'Metsän väki' performance from different sides. I'm considering the visual aspects as well as the musical elements of the performance and the role of the audience. Some of these goals are long-term goals which might not be reached in the premier performance.

3.1 Artistic goals

Beauty is an edge of becoming

-John O'Donohue (Irish poet)

My artistic goal was to create a performance that has different layers, that makes a statement or tells a story, but also leaves room for interpretation. Perhaps a good word to describe the performance would be a journey. Whether it's a journey into the past or into the future, is up to the 'traveler'. Whether it's a journey deeper into one's own being or reaching out to others, also depends on the participant. If the performance is able to create a situation where the ordinary becomes *extraordinary*, then it has already reached one goal. By coming into contact with the actual and temporal, perhaps the performance can also allow the audience to experience alternative ways of perception in our increasingly technology-driven society. One specific element of the 'Metsän väki' performance is the idea of 'bringing the outer world in'. The 'outer world' in this case refers to organic materials and natural objects that 'occupy' an indoor space. The Chinese composer Tan Dun describes a similar concept in his 'Water Heavens' performance as 'bringing the outer world in to meet with our spirituality'. In the 'Metsän väki' performance I'm tempted to refrain this idea as 'bringing the outer world in to meet with our materiality'. As Ingold writes: 'Besides humans, also animals and natural objects inhabit our living environment. Humans figure as much within the context for stones and pine cones as do stones and pine cones within the context for humans' (Ingold 2011).

The central visual elements of the 'Metsän väki' performance are 'metsän palttoot', large overcoats made out of different organic materials. These are worn by sculptor Jenni Tieaho. As Jenni describes: 'By wearing these overcoats we might find our own wiggly paths to the mysterious roots of our ancient forest tales'. When creating the music for the performance, my goal was to create different kinds of atmospheres and intensities and also unexpected moments. I wanted to use different influences in the music while keeping it cohesive. The idea was that the music leaves space for interpretation, as it doesn't represent a specific genre. The music was

structured so that the visual elements of the performance sometimes take the center stage and other times blend more into the whole performance. You might say that in this performance the music works in some ways similar to as it does in cinema.⁴ In the performance there's a dancer who also takes part in creating the music, using sounding objects such as stones. These aspects bring the visual and auditory elements of the performance together. The different senses, namely seeing, hearing, smelling and touching are also used and fused in the performance. An example of this are Jenni's overcoats which work both as visual objects and as 'musical instruments'. One goal of the 'Metsän väki' performance was also to create an open playfield, where the roles of individual performers can be shaped during the performance. The cello player can become a 'performance artist', the dancer a musician etc. These small shifts in perspective are a reminiscence of the times when the different art forms were in fact understood as a whole rather than as separate parts.

One of my goals was to create a concept. What I mean by this is that 'Metsän väki' is something that ideally will keep on evolving beyond the initial performance, finding its way into many performance venues and also to places where music and the arts are rarely being presented. This could also involve outdoor performances. During the artistic process I asked myself the question whether or not I want to create a participatory performance, involving the audience in some direct way. I decided not to take this route, at least not in the beginning stage of the project. However my aim was to create a performance that emphasizes the feeling of a shared experience. Referring to public art and conceptual art which doesn't seem to have a physical presence, Rothenberg comments: 'Art in this case became a "state of encounter"' (Rothenberg 2011:203). Perhaps, in a similar way I could describe the 'Metsän väki' performance as a 'state of ritual'. What I see as a positive force, not only in the 'Metsän väki' performance but in many other performances and acts, is that they can bring together different people, people who do not have to have similar views or backgrounds. Like the ancient myths that provided an arena where the positive things in a community could be shared. In these goals I can see a relation to the work

⁴ Possible functions of film music in a movie: 1. Commenting 2. Illustrating movement 3. Creating plot relationships 4. Create atmosphere 5. Portray emotions 6. Social/Cultural/Geographic references 7. Time/Period references 8. Connect scenes/montages 9. Manipulate 10. Alternate the perception of time 11. Imply a sense of space 12. Create unreal situations 13. Create contradictions 14. Parody 15. Physiological conditioning 16. Implying size relationships 17. Psychologically uniting the audience (www.robin-hoffmann.com/tutorials/guide-to-working-with-a-film-composer/12-what-is-the-function-of-film-music).

of Brazilian visual artist Lygia Clark⁵. For Lygia the museum goes became 'participants'. Her artwork has also been described as an 'obstacle', a material that brings people together but also stands between them, a barrier that allows you to connect.

I do also believe in the transformative power of art. Ultimately, my goal is that this performance will evoke emotions and ideas and raise questions. As philosopher Juha Varto writes: 'Art is seen as the ability to change the world, not by money or force, but by orientation, by radically transforming the "sensible", or sensory, reality of the eye, ear, taste, touch and smell, which unavoidably results in a change in ideas, understanding and insight' (Hannula, Suoranta, Vadén 2014). However these kinds of goals can be rather elusive, and not very fruitful if you focus too much on them. Instead, I believe these goals can be reached as a side product of what is described by Rothenberg as 'engagement with beauty'. Regarding the role of the arts today, Rothenberg comments: 'But where is art going today? Still trying to shock, confound, and enrage? Not only. It still wants to be beautiful. It still must grab us aesthetically before any questions it wants to raise. Engagement with art is fundamentally an engagement with beauty, even if it is strange or unfamiliar beauty' (Rothenberg 2011:255). The idea of art as an engagement with beauty is something I strongly relate to. When I'm venturing into new territories as an artist, this is one of my guiding principles, something that underlies the artistic process, sometimes on a subconscious level. For me music at its best is like 'mythology in the making'. It can appeal to our inherent sense of wanting to understand our place in the world, of creating the story of our existence. I believe any art form, or a combination of them, can do the same. And as for beauty, well that can come in many shapes and forms: 'Beauty isn't all about just niceness, loveliness. Beauty is about more rounded substantial becoming' (John O'Donohue).

3.2 Personal goals

This project also had many personal goals. In my thesis I talk a lot about different materials. One goal of this project was to experience the sheer joy of creating sounds with different materials and elements (including traditional instruments). Experimentation in many forms was also an important goal, or should I say value. This included for example writing music for new instruments, working with new people and a new kind of performance space. As a musician I was also interested in exploring the ways how music can communicate with or relate to visual artworks, in this

⁵ Lygia Clark was a co-founder of the Brazilian Neo-Concrete movement. The Neo-Concretists believed that art ought to be subjective and organic (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lygia_Clark).

case in the form of sculptures. I would say that curiosity and wanting to challenge myself were important, if not the most important motivators for the project.

4. Practice Based Research

One aim of my master studies was to increase my knowledge of what artistic research is and what it could be. While studying at the Iceland Academy of the Arts in autumn 2015 I took part in a course titled 'Practice Based Research'. The course included a lot of reflective writing and also sharing my creative processes with the other students. In the NAIP programme I was introduced to practice-based research and 'action research', two different models of research that can be applied also to artistic research. In my PIP I use the term practice-based research to describe the research component of my project. According to one definition: 'If a creative artefact is the *basis* of the contribution to knowledge, the research is practice-based' (www.creativityandcognition.com). When applied to artistic research this description lacks a lot of essential components, since it doesn't explain *how* the research is done. According to professors Mika Hannula and Juha Suoranta and philosopher Tere Vadén: 'In the inherent and internal logic of practice-based, open-ended and self-critical historical context-aware research, the one who does research does so from inside-in. The research is done inside the practice, by doing acts that are a part of the practice' (Hannula, Suoranta, Vadén 2014:3). The above definition makes quite a clear statement on what kind of qualities the research should have. It's clear that we're talking about *qualitative* research. If the research is done inside the practice, then the methods used in that practice would naturally become also research methods. This is perhaps not always the case, but in the case of my PIP this is true for the most part. Still, the artistic process in itself is not the same as research.

To me it's clear that any kind of artistic research requires a lot of time and commitment. That is why I wouldn't say that I've conducted artistic research in the full sense of the word in my PIP. However the way how I approached my PIP, in other words my *practice*, had many qualities of artistic research. According to Hannula, artistic research is 'a practice that is particular, content-driven, self-critical, self-reflective and contextualized' (Hannula 2009:1). Hannula also points out that artistic research 'is able to apply its own internal logic to deciding between what makes sense and what is invalid' (Hannula 2009:1). The freedom and also responsibility of deciding what is important and meaningful is in my view one of the key elements of artistic research. This decision making isn't always easy. In my PIP I was open to new perspectives that might affect my thinking as well as the artistic process. On one hand this is necessary if you want the research to develop: 'You should not box yourself in. Plurality, openness, complexity and uncertainty are not a problem. They are a necessity...' (Hannula 2009:5). I believe keeping my mind open for different possibilities made it

easier to collaborate with other people. In my decision making I was also considering the areas where I wanted to develop (as an artist and as a project leader) and how I could include those in my project. At the same time I recognized the importance of positioning myself, of choosing *what* I want to do and *how*. Especially in the beginning of my studies I felt I was expected to have a clearer vision of my project and research. This was due to the very practically oriented mentoring. Also later during my studies I ended up creating “projects” and research methods that would never be realized. What I learned from this exercise was that out of the many possibilities, some might prove to be less interesting: ‘Even if anything might be possible, not everything is meaningful’ (Hannula 2009:5).

In my PIP I was developing my thinking and working processes through mirroring those with the works of others, thus also creating a theoretical framework for my artistic practice. This meant using examples from other artists’ works but also ideas from anthropology, philosophy and various other humanities. This could be described as ‘thinking and reflecting in and through the practice’ (Hannula 2009:7). I was developing my artistic skills but also my vision and conceptual thinking by ‘developing a vocabulary for not only making but also writing and speaking about art’ (Hannula, Suoranta, Vadén 2014:3). As I’m interested in working across different art forms and reaching new audiences, I kept my eye on what’s happening not only in the field of music but also in adjoining fields such as environmental art and public art in its many forms. When deciding on the theme of my project and the methods used in it, I wanted to make use of what is already accessible and close to me, whether it was finding collaborators, inspiration etc. I had found a lot of interesting source materials (from history, philosophy, anthropology...) all connected to the nature theme. It seemed like a good and easy accessible topic. This was also one of the reasons why I wanted to carry out the project in Finland. One thing that was missing from the research connected to my project was the actual experimenting with and trying out of the practical outcome (performance). My original plan was to ‘test’ different elements of the performance (in public) before combining them. This would have enriched the artistic process: ‘Taking part in the practice, being engaged in an artistic process means moving back and forth between periods of intensive (insider) engagement and more reflective (outsider) distance-taking...’ (Hannula, Suoranta, Vadén 2014:16). In my PIP the outcome of the process, the performance, was tested only at the end of the process. However during the working process I’d already done a lot of reflective thinking so that I could examine the outcomes of the performance from many sides.

Practice-based research in my PIP meant examining the project from different sides, not only from the point of view of the artistic process itself. It was also a process of coming to a clearer view of *what* I wanted to do in my project and *how*. During that process I found the things I consider important and meaningful in the project. Looking back on my journey, it’s obvious that one thing has led to another: ‘Experience is a whole, in which

you cannot change one thing without changing others-generally in an unpredictable manner. Likewise, as the principle of the hermeneutic circle points out, it is not possible to understand a part of the experience without understanding the whole, and vice versa' (Hannula, Suoranta, Vadén 2014:21). The research outcomes of my PIP include both the outcomes of the project (chapter 9) as well as my reflections on my personal development (chapters 9 and 10).

5. Developing the Project

Creative ideas are like gnomes that appear from the ground. You have to be kind to the first one you see!

-unknown

The process of developing the 'Metsän väki' performance was very different than my previous music projects. Besides involving other art forms the starting point of creating a performance was concept driven. In this chapter I'll introduce some ideas behind the project. I'll also explain how the theme for the project was discovered, who were the participants and how the concept was finally developed.

5.1 The Dwelling Perspective

In his collection of essays titled *The Perception of the Environment* (Ingold 2000) anthropologist Tim Ingold describes what he calls the 'dwelling perspective'. As opposed to the 'building perspective', this means a process of *working with* materials and not just *doing to* them, and of bringing form into being rather than merely translating from the visual to the actual. When I read about this concept, I found that it resonated with many of the ideas I had for my project. The idea of dwelling, as described by Ingold, gave me conceptual tools and helped me better understand what this project could aspire to represent, for example engaging with my surroundings: 'The dwelling perspective is founded on the premise that the forms humans build, whether in the imagination or on the ground, arise within the currents of their involved activity, in the specific relational contexts of their practical engagement with their surroundings' (Ingold 2011:29). I found especially interesting the idea of *working with* materials. That is something I believe is closely linked to Jenni Tieaho's working methods.

As a musician the idea of *working with* materials might translate into having some kind of physical contact with the 'subject' to which you are giving a musical form. This could mean using field recordings, working with sounding objects or what I believe many musicians spontaneously do: Stopping to notice something in their surroundings, anything from a light breeze to an unusual pattern of light and shadow, and using this experience creatively. Ingold also explains the concept of dwelling by contrasting two

things, namely making and weaving (or building and dwelling). In his view, to use the term 'to make' is to see the process of production consumed by the final product, but if to instead use the term 'to weave', one prioritizes process over product. Furthermore, it also defines the activity by the attentiveness of environmental engagement rather than the transitivity of means and ends (Ingold 2011:29). I also thought about what it would mean to see the working process more as a process of 'weaving' than of 'making'. Maybe the focus would be more on the artistic process itself than on the final 'product', in this case a performance. Perhaps having this guide line would also entail engaging actively with the environment (whether it is working with materials, with space etc.).

5.2 Sculptures gone wild - Discovering the theme for the project

Jenni Tieaho: 'The visual objects are visions that stem from the music...'

Jenni Tieaho: 'This could be performed outdoors'.

Johanna Pitkänen: 'A forest circus perhaps?'

I first met sculptor and environmental artist Jenni Tieaho in autumn 2015. I discovered Jenni after searching online for environmental artists from Finland. I was fascinated by her artworks, all of which are made out of organic materials, such as willow. I was especially fond of the more abstract sculptures, the ones that allow your imagination to move freely, following their shapes and forms. I also felt a connection to the artworks by sculptor Patrick Dougherty mentioned in chapter 2. After the first meeting, when we'd decided that we'd like to work together, we were exchanging thoughts and ideas about the project. This dialogue was one of the most fruitful components of the project. The above quotations are some examples from our initial discussions while envisioning the project. After I'd left to continue my studies in Iceland, where I spent the bigger part of autumn 2015, we still kept in contact with Jenni, exchanging emails every now and then. And then one day it happened: I opened my email and saw a message from Jenni with a few photos attached. In the photos, she was wearing her artworks which she called 'metsänpalttoo'. To translate that roughly, it would mean 'a large overcoat of the forest'. They were made out of pine cones and fireweed. The photos were taken outdoors, so there was the effect of these overcoats blending into the environment. I really liked the photos and the artworks. To me the overcoats felt at the same time slightly intimidating and playful. That's when I decided that I'd like to use these artworks in a performance. Already in the photos I could find different elements and possible ways of interpretation. First, the combination of seriousness and play, or 'taking play seriously'. Second, the different senses that were transmitted through the images (seeing, touching, smelling). And third, the many ways of interpreting the human figure wearing those

different costumes. Was it a historical link to our 'forester' history? Or a fashion statement??? The fact that I was in Iceland at the time might have had something to do with my excitement about this topic for a performance. My experience of being in Iceland was that at any moment the usual everyday existence could take a turn into something mystical or magical.

At the same time I came up with the title for the performance, 'Metsän väki'. This Finnish title can be translated in different ways. In Finnish mythology and folk beliefs different environments and elements, and even human beings, had their own 'haltija'⁶. The 'metsänhaltijat' took care of the forest and forest animals. They could warn of a possible danger or guide you to good hunting grounds. It was best not to upset them, since the consequences of that could be serious (Kovalainen, Seppo 2006:54). The 'haltijat' presented themselves in large numbers called 'väki'⁷. In modern Finnish 'väki' can simply refer to a large group of people. 'Metsän' means 'of the forest'. When you combine these two words, it's up to the reader to decide the exact meaning. I think 'Metsän väki' is a nice title because it emphasizes the feeling of belonging to a group. To me this group entails not only the performers but also the audience. It can even refer to other beings besides humans. This is how Jenni Tieaho describes her 'metsänpalttoot' and their kinship to the 'haltijat': 'The overcoats are made out of ancient ostrich fern, fireweed collected in the autumn, dozens of pine cones or shimmering and ragged pieces of birch bark. The overcoat is like our ancient national costume that gives shelter to our naked body. Thus the forest possesses us and we become part of the great and mysterious forest kingdom, a kingdom where the "metsänhaltijat" govern'. The English title 'Forest Dwellers' came to my mind after reading about the 'dwelling perspective'. This concept also relates to the theme of the performance, where besides humans, also animals and plants can be considered 'forest dwellers'.

5.3 Participants

I was lucky to find participants for the project who share an interest to the themes of the project, whether it's nature, visual arts or most importantly working across different disciplines. I wanted to collaborate with musicians who have a different background in music compared to mine. In this case it meant that I was looking for musicians who had a background in classical

⁶ A 'haltija' (haltia) is a spirit, gnome, or elf-like creature in Finnish mythology that guards, helps, or protects something or somebody (Wikipedia).

⁷ For instance the water was believed to have 'väki' of the water etc. 'Väki' presented itself also as magical power and illnesses. The magical powers possessed by humans were also called 'väki' (Wikipedia).

music but who were open for and interested in improvisation. The participants hadn't worked together before the project. I will give a brief introduction of each participant and explain how they got interested in the project.

Jenni Tieaho - sculptures, performance

Jenni Tieaho is a sculptor and environmental artist. She has taken part in numerous exhibitions both in Finland and abroad during the past 17 years. Jenni's works tell stories about the Finnish forest, lakes, the mossy mountains and vast open fields, in an often folkloric, mystical and magical way. Jenni was interested in working together with a musician, since that's something she had not done previously.

Simona Piron - percussion

Simona Piron is a freelance percussionist and percussion teacher. She studied in Romania and in Italy, where she finished her Master's degree. During her career Simona has worked with symphony orchestras both in Romania and in other countries. Simona was interested in taking part in the project mostly because she likes to explore different ways of creating music, for example through improvisation.

Anu Keski-Saari - cello

Anu Keski-Saari is a versatile cello player, a musician and a pedagogue. She has played with several orchestras around Finland. Anu has studied in Turku, Finland and in Gothenburg, Sweden where she finished her Master's degree. Besides in the field of classical and contemporary music, nowadays Anu can be heard in various experimental and multidisciplinary projects. Anu has a strong interest in visual arts. The forest is also important for her, as a place where you can quiet down.

Eevi Tolvanen - dance, sounding objects

Eevi Tolvanen is a freelance dance artist and pedagogue, who works in the regions of Northern Savonia in Eastern Finland and Uusimaa in South Finland. Her artistic work focuses on a strong and truthful presence, encounter and cross-disciplinary interaction. Eevi describes her childhood as having grown up surrounded by forest. The forest was the scene for many childhood games.

5.4 Developing the concept

A mysterious curtain separates you from the rest of the world. You hear and see strange things. You disappear into the ground and come up again. You cannot estimate the passing of time. You might have turned into a bizarre stone, a stump or a tuffet... You have been covered by forest.

(Kovalainen, Seppo 2006:63), own translation ⁸

The central methods of developing the concept for the 'Metsän väki' performance were using a notebook, being inspired and influenced by other artists' work and very importantly the meetings and dialogue with the other participants. I got insights into concept development during my NAIP studies, especially through studying cultural entrepreneurship (15 ETC) at Södertörn's University in Stockholm in spring 2015. The course included topics such as Project Management, Branding and Innovation. There were also interesting group assignments, where the task could be to think about 'How people will consume culture in the future?' Or what might be some new trends or more stable phenomena in culture production and consumption. During this course I was given the possibility to present my own projects, some of which were really rough ideas. This experience helped me change my perspective and gave me confidence to start planning and working on a project even when you can only see some distant road marks in the foggy landscape ahead.

After I knew that my plan was to create a performance where some of Jenni's overcoats would be used, I knew I was dealing with at least 'living sculptures' besides music. I then remembered a performance by a *butoh*⁹ dancer which I'd seen in Stockholm. What I'd understood about butoh dance is that respecting nature is a central element to this dance form: 'In butoh dance the human body is like nature in miniature form... Different elements such as water, fire, earth, ashes and air are often present. A commonly used theme is also the world of animals and insects, their movement, different senses and connection with nature' (www.roihuvuori.fi/hanami/butotanssi). This led me into imagining a

⁸ 'Metsänpeitto' (lit. *forest cover*) is a phenomenon found in Finnish folklore. It was used to describe people or domestic animals who went missing in nature for unexplained reasons. The cause behind 'metsänpeitto' was usually credited to 'maahinens', who were small humanoid creatures living underground (usually translated as gnomes). Some people managed to free themselves from 'metsänpeitto' by their own means, for example by turning their jacket inside out, by switching their shoes to the wrong feet, or by looking between their own legs. This was because of the idea that everything was topsy-turvy in the lands of the maahinens. 'Metsänpeitto' greatly resembles 'kamikakushi', or 'spiriting away', found in Japanese folklore (Wikipedia).

⁹ Butoh dance was born in Japan after the Second World War. It was invented by Tatsumi Hijikata and Kazuo Ohno. The birth of butoh dance was influenced by the development of modern dance as a response to ballet and by dadaism and expressionism in visual arts. Despite the western influences butoh dance strengthened the Japanese identity (www.roihuvuori.fi/hanami/butotanssi).

dancer inside Jenni's overcoats. Eventually the idea of having a dancer in the performance took on a different form, but from the beginning I had a feeling that besides music I'd like to involve other performing arts in the performance. In December 2015 I happened to watch a documentary about modern Chinese culture. In the documentary there was a clip from composer Tan Dun's performance 'Water Heavens': 'A stream of water flows into the hall, forming a pond surrounded by the audience, creating the stage of the Water Music Hall...' (<http://tandun.com/visual-music/water-heavens>). Besides musicians there were several dancers in the performance. I was captivated by the energy created by the movements of the dancers and the sounds and strong presence of the water element. This short video clip gave me the idea of having a dancer who also creates sounds in the performance. By that time it had become obvious that it would be difficult to 'dance' inside Jenni's overcoats because of the sheer mass which they have.

My ongoing dialogue with Jenni Tieaho was important, since I had the possibility to really start developing the performance only after I'd moved back to Finland at the end of 2015. While developing the concept of the 'Metsän väki' performance I was influenced by my experiences in Iceland, I was also loosely influenced by various rituals and ceremonies which I'd read about or had the chance to see, including an inuit dance performance at a festival of arctic art in Helsinki in February 2016. This performance was introduced as an important ritual dance for the inuits. The faces of the performers were painted with symbolic colours, there were also many sexual references in the performance. Besides portraying the values important for the inuit community, namely humour, life and sexuality, this performance had a lightness and playfulness about it which I enjoyed. Other such influences were the Navajo¹⁰ concept of 'hózhó'¹¹ and the sandpaintings used in their healing rituals. After reading *Puiden kansa* (Kovalainen, Seppo 2006) I discovered various natural objects that have been used in a ceremonial or ritualistic manner in Finland. These included trees¹² marked in certain ways, stones tied with strings etc. I decided that I

¹⁰ The Navajo are a Native American people of the Southwestern United States (Wikipedia).

¹¹ In the Navajo language there is no word for religion, nor for art. The only word that could be used to describe both is 'hózhó' - a word that defines the essence of Navajo or Diné philosophy. 'Hózhó' means 'walking in beauty' - or living in a manner that strives to create and maintain balance, harmony, beauty and order (www.colorado.edu/religiousstudies/TheStrip/features/Navajo/hozho.htm).

¹² In the 17th century a habit was born in Finland to mark trees in order to remember important events or places. The tree was marked by cutting some branches from it or by

want to include some of those elements in the performance, to give some hints of our 'forester' history while also allowing free interpretation. Besides the historical context, I was fascinated by the visual qualities of the carved or cut trees and stones tied to branches¹³. Discussing the origin of art, Susan K. Langer writes: 'We see significance in things long before we know what we are seeing, and it takes some other interest, practical or emotional or superstitious, to make us produce an object which turns out to have expressive virtue as well' (Langer 1942:204).

Finally the key elements of the 'Metsän väki' performance became sculptures by Jenni Tieaho, music written for percussion, cello and piano, dance and performance art in the form of Jenni presenting her 'living sculptures'. You could say that the performance includes storytelling. As Jenni describes: 'I weave and knit like a spider. The plant roots, grasses, willow and pine cones are the materials my stories are made up of'. Rather than using words the 'stories' in 'Metsän väki' are made up of patterns of sound, movement and a variety of different organic materials. This is how I describe the performance: 'Metsän väki (Forest Dwellers)' is a performance that highlights the use of different organic materials both as an inspiration and means of creating artworks. In the performance there are artworks by sculptor and environmental artist Jenni Tieaho. The large overcoats, 'metsän palttoot', made out of different organic materials such as pine cones and fireweed, are echoes of the forest spirits, 'haltijat' of the ancient forest. The overcoat is like our ancient national costume which gives shelter to our naked body. By wearing it, the modern human being goes on a journey into his/her 'forester' history. The music for this journey is written by Johanna Pitkänen. There are both acoustic instruments as well as natural sounding objects used in the performance. The music also gives room for improvisation. In addition, the performance includes dance and performance art which examine the themes of the project through the bodily and earthy experience, influencing and being influenced by the sound environment of the performance.

creating markings by carving. These trees, called 'karsikkopuu' in Finnish, were situated near the house or in a nearby forest and they often marked the birth or death of a person (Kovalainen, Seppo 2006:94). On my visit to Koli region in Eastern Finland during summer 2015 I happened to find one such tree. The pine tree which I found had been a 'karsikkopuu' of one particular family. There used to be a sign next to the tree with information connected to the family history.

¹³ If a person or domestic animal went missing in the forest, one way of finding them was to tie a rock to a branch or place it on top of sticks (Kovalainen, Seppo 2006:63).

6. Project Settings

In this chapter I'll discuss about the practicalities of carrying out my PIP.

6.1 Project management

When I started planning my PIP, I was aware that the project would include working on many areas besides the artistic process. The first challenge was to find the right collaborators for the project. In January 2016 I had been exchanging ideas with sculptor Jenni Tieaho, but besides that I didn't have other collaborators, a performance location or an idea of how the practicalities of the project would be arranged (such as having a rehearsal space). This was a real challenge, since I didn't have the possibility to work from within the school (since my school was in Stockholm). As I mentioned in chapter 5, I had been studying cultural entrepreneurship at Södertörn's University in Stockholm in spring 2015. One of the things I learned from those studies was that when starting a new project it's always good to map out your existing network of people and think about who might be interested in the project and who could provide assistance. Together with Jenni we had envisioned a performance in a public space (such as a museum where people would have open access to). I contacted a theatre director from Helsinki whom I knew and asked her about what are the things I should consider when looking for a performance space. I explained my initial ideas for the performance and asked whether she could recommend some places. I got good advices, most importantly the advice was to work fast with finding a performance space. I also received the contact information of a producer who could possibly provide other kind of assistance. Initially I contacted the Helsinki Music Center and two museums in the Helsinki region and proposed a performance with visual art, music and possibly dance. I met the chief event organizer of the Helsinki Music Center. The performance idea was well received, but it turned out that I might have had to pay for using the performance space (an open hall) or some of the equipment there. This was not an option, so I decided to look for other performance spaces. I presented the performance idea also to the National Museum of Finland and to the Espoo Museum of Modern Art. Espoo Museum of Modern Art (EMMA) was interested in the performance, but the fact that there would be organic materials used in the performance was an obstacle. Those kinds of materials were not allowed in the museum facilities (due to possible spreading of insects etc.).

In January 2016 I had done a photo shoot with a jazz group near a former psychiatric hospital in Helsinki. I later discovered that the former hospital is nowadays run by an initiative called 'Lapinlahden Lähde' (the Well of Lapinlahti) and it's used for cultural events and activities that promote wellbeing (such as meditation, mindfulness and gardening). I decided to contact the workers of the initiative and propose the performance. I met with Katja Liuksiala from Lapinlahden Lähde on 19.2.2016. By that time I had

already found one musician and a dancer for the project, so I knew a little bit better what I was proposing. I showed pictures of Jenni's artworks (this had been my most effective 'selling point' of the performance). Katja was immediately interested in the performance, and we decided that Lapinlahden Lähde could produce the event and offer us a performance space. We discussed about possible dates for the performance and decided that the best date would be May 9th 2016 when Lapinlahden Lähde had a full day of events with an environment theme. In parallel with searching for a performance location for the initial performance I had been discussing with Jenni about possible future plans for the project. One performance location that came up was The Finnish Nature Center Haltia, which is located roughly 30 kilometres from Helsinki city centre. It is surrounded by the national park Nuuksio. I wanted to explore the possibility of doing a performance there and contacted their event organizer. A meeting was arranged in Haltia with the event organizer, Jenni and me on February 10th 2016. As a result, there was an initial plan to perform in Haltia on August 27th 2016 (see chapter 11). This performance would however require funding which I had to apply for. Finally, in February when I'd found all the participants for the project I send two funding applications. I received help in writing the applications from the producer I'd been introduced to before. All in all, this project required a lot of planning and organizing. That also took a lot of time. Spending time on these areas was a conscious decision which came out of necessity. I also wanted to develop my skills as a project leader. Networking was the most essential way of being able to carry out my PIP in a short amount of time. Networking is also an ongoing process, and as I'm working together with a sculptor who is also an environmental artist, I've expanded my network into environmental art (mainly through the Facebook group of Finnish environmental artists).

6.2 Performance location

The 'Metsän väki' performance took place on May 9th 2016 in Helsinki, Finland. The venue was the Lapinlahti former psychiatric hospital in central Helsinki. Despite the hospital area's central location in the city, it is situated close to the sea and surrounded by a large park and cemetery. There are several indoor and outdoor spaces in the environment that used to be part of Finland's first psychiatric institution. Many well-known Finnish people have been treated in the hospital, including writer Aleksis Kivi (1834-1872) who wrote the first significant novel in the Finnish language. The hospital was functioning for 160 years, until the year 2008. After that, several proposals have been made for the use of the area. At the moment some artists are renting working spaces there and many organizations and sponsors have joined the 'Lapinlahden Lähde' initiative. There's a cafeteria in the main building which is open all year round. Many volunteers are also working for the 'Lapinlahden Lähde' initiative. I was drawn to the 'roughness' of the area. It's largely under renovation at the moment. I also decided that this would be a good place to 'test' the 'Metsän väki' performance, despite the challenges that using the former hospital facilities created.

6.3 Resources

The most important resource in this project were the people I was working with. Besides the participants, I received advices and assistance from various people in Helsinki and also from my teachers in Stockholm. It wasn't easy to ask other artists to join the project when I knew I couldn't provide them payments. The only reason for asking people to join anyway was that I knew I wanted the project to continue in the future with a proper funding. Had I planned everything one year ago, I could have applied for funding from Finland for the initial performance. However, this was not the case and for me the project was also a part of my studies (which meant that I couldn't really rely on funding in order to carry out the project). I asked from the Royal College of Music in Stockholm whether there was a possibility to apply for a grant for the performance, to cover expenses. I received an answer that this was not possible. Having this premise did affect the working process. I was for example conscious of how much time I could ask the other participants to spend on the rehearsals. Luckily we could use a rehearsal space at the Helsinki Conservatory of Music, since Simona Piron had an agreement with the conservatory. I was able to borrow microphones free of charge for the performance from the Finnish Musician's Union, which I'm a member of. I did however end up spending a lot of my own money on the performance. I needed to rent the percussion instruments for the performance and use a taxi for transporting my own equipment. In addition, I had a professional photographer documenting the performance. The most expensive part was renting the instruments. Altogether I spend roughly 500 euros. On one hand I think it was completely crazy to spend this amount of my own money. On the other hand had I not done so, I would have had to significantly compromise my ideas for the performance. Jenni Tieaho made a big contribution to the performance by covering her traveling expenses (and transportation of her artworks).

7. Methods

In this chapter I'll introduce the principal methods of creating the "Metsän väki" performance. I'll start with a "preparation" phase which gave me tools for developing the performance. Next, I'll describe the music writing process and how different sounding objects were used in the performance. Finally I'll talk about the collaboration between the different participants and the shaping of the actual performance which took place on May 9th 2016.

7.1 Preparation

7.1.1 Trying out new things

Before deciding on *what* precisely I wanted to do in my PIP and *how* I wanted to do it, I allowed myself to explore new things and ways of thinking about an artistic process. Before starting my studies in the NAIP programme I had developed a routine of working with a jazz group and working as a teacher. It took some time before I could see myself doing things in different ways. Also during the first year of my studies (2014-2015) I was quite occupied with different courses and topics besides working on my PIP. At the same time I was developing a performance for which I already had an idea and a direction. This performance includes my compositions inspired by "The Magic Songs of the Finns", a collection of spells and charms collected from rural parts of Finland in the 19th century. The performance, titled "Dark Tales and Stories" has now developed into a collaboration with an accordion player and an actress (www.johannapitkanen.com/dark-tales-and-stories.html). There are some parallels between this performance and the "Metsän väki" performance. They are both thematic and one of their aims is to bring elements of old Finnish beliefs into today's context, despite in quite different ways. In both performances, literature was an important starting point for the artistic process. One important influence during my stay in Stockholm was getting in contact with electronic music and experimental music in its many forms. This happened primarily through visits to and jam sessions at Fylkingen¹⁴ and visits to Elektronmusikstudion¹⁵ (EMS). As a result, I became especially interested in field recording, which I finally got to experience in Iceland in autumn 2015. I did already try some field recording on my own during the summer of 2015. This was an important experience not because of the end results but because it made me tune into the natural sound environment.

7.1.2 Notebook and reflective diary

Ever since starting my NAIP studies, I was consistently using a (electronic) notebook. The notebook served many purposes such as writing down ideas, collecting material, reflecting and so on. This method gradually led to a more systematic approach when it comes to developing a project. Especially

¹⁴ Fylkingen is a venue and artists' society for new and experimental work in music, performance, video, film, dance, sound-text composition and intermedia (www.fylkingen.se).

¹⁵ EMS Elektronmusikstudion is the centre for Swedish electroacoustic music and sound-art (www.elektronmusikstudion.se).

in regards to my PIP, the notebook is filled with different ideas and concepts that have never seen the light of day. Yet I find this tool very useful, and perhaps some ideas will come up in a different project or later in the development of my PIP. In a later stage of my PIP I started keeping a diary as well. The diary was useful for reflecting on the working process, especially on the conversations I had with the other participants. I also developed the musical concept of the performance using this diary. The diary provided a tool for documenting my feelings, hopes, desires etc. There were quite many frustrating moments during the working process and it was good to write them in the diary, to express them somehow so that they wouldn't influence the working process negatively.

7.1.3 Developing my composition techniques, expanding my knowledge on different instruments

During my NAIP studies I received composition lessons from (the late) composer Lars Ekström and pianist-composer Ann-Marie Henning from the Royal College of Music in Stockholm as well as from pianist-composer Snorri Birgisson from the Iceland Academy of the Arts. All of these teachers enriched my understanding of composition with their unique backgrounds. Being largely self-taught as a composer, my aim was to find out areas where I needed to and could improve my skills. Lars Ekström challenged me to think of composition as a sketch or even a concept rather than for example ready melodic or rhythmic motives. The tool to do so was to visualize a piece with different parts before writing a single note. With Ann-Marie Henning I rediscovered the art of counterpoint, and went a bit further on that with various exercises. Perhaps the most unexpected input came from Snorri Birgisson. During my lessons with him I ended up exploring post-tonal theory, listening and analyzing the music of Witold Lutosławski, discussing about John Cage, Mahler, Weber and Beethoven. During these lessons we also discussed about different ways of using instruments (as “colours,” as a rhythmic or structural device etc.) and the different classes of percussion instruments. After listening to Birgisson's piano arrangements of Icelandic folk songs I found myself arranging a few Finnish folk songs too. The challenge there was to refer to the melody in various ways, not in a typical “jazz arrangement” style, but with a more contemporary approach.

Snorri Birgisson made me aware of the composer's voice which I had, but which I'd never thought about before. He described this voice as “lyrical”. Now “lyrical” doesn't mean the same thing as melodic or sentimental (even though it can be). “Lyrical” in this case was a technical term, an overall approach to composition. In the case of musical storytelling, it could mean using a musical form A, A, A, A instead of for example A, B, A, B. A lyrical approach to composition could also mean using “musical metaphors”, such as placing a single note in a new environment and by doing so creating contrast or tension. The overall texture of the music could also be very rich. Of course it's impossible to make a clear distinction between a “lyrical” approach and another kind of approach since similar

composition techniques are used in many different approaches. After processing this idea I could however see how it describes at least a large part of my music writing activities in the past. During my stay in Iceland I also wrote a few pieces for percussion and piano. Those pieces were inspired by Icelandic poems, and in addition to acoustic instruments the compositions included tapes which I'd made from my field recordings. I had a great opportunity to work with the percussionist of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, Frank Aarnink. With him I had also access to the symphony orchestra's Pandora's box of percussion instruments from around the world. I really felt like a kid in a candy store. Among these instruments there was even a "stone marimba." In the pieces which I wrote I ended up using marimba, vibraphone, xylophone, glockenspiel, various bells and smaller percussions.

7.2 Drawing, sketching, scripting, scoring - Where does the music come from?

Grave melancholy, that is the watchword of the forest. The sadness hidden in the depths of the tranquil mind, that is the mood of the forest.

Juhani Aho (1861-1921), Finnish writer (own translation)

How does one start to write a piece of music? In my case, what often happens is that I have a sensation, a compelling need to stop whatever I'm doing in that moment and *listen*. In some cases I could describe it also as a 'vision'. I had a vision for the music of 'Metsän väki'. The vision was a certain sound, a certain atmosphere. That vision stayed with me and directed some aspects of creating the music. From the start I knew that I wanted to write music for the performance, rather than for example arranging some existing music. The main reason for this was that I wanted to challenge myself in finding new approaches to writing music. Mainly this meant writing music for new instruments. In order to do that, I first had to find musicians. I contacted Tapani Heikinheimo, who teaches the violoncello and pedagogy in the Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences' music department. I had met him during the introductory course of the NAIP studies in Stykkishólmur. I asked Tapani whether he could recommend musicians (or dancers, since Tapani also works with cross-disciplinary improvisation) for the project. Tapani recommended contacting percussionist Simona Piron. This was in January 2016. Shortly after that I met Simona, and we decided that we would like to work together on this project. A little bit later, in February 2016 I found a cello player, Anu Keski-Saari, to join the project as well. This happened through a musician we both knew.

For the most part, the music for 'Metsän väki' was written during February-March 2016. During the music writing process I wanted to find inspiration from nature. I had discussed about this topic earlier with my teacher Klas Nevrin from the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. Finding inspiration from nature meant that I wanted to be affected by the 'outside', rather than just producing images of it in my mind. This could be described as living creatively in the world, perceiving things directly but also through imagination. I had a romantic idea of doing so by enjoying walks in the forest. Needless to say, this proved to be difficult in February in Finland. Luckily I had explored many forest areas during the previous summer and could recall some of those sensations. As I described in chapter 2, I had been observing the forest in a state of awareness, or in a 'mindful'¹⁶ state, responding to my observations through creative and philosophical thinking. I feel that my ability to 'live creatively' in this case had been significantly improved through discovering stories and beliefs about the forest, mainly from the book *Puiden kansa* (Kovalainen, Seppo 2006). During summer 2015 I had already written down some sketches that could be possibly used for writing the music. For the most part however I started creating the music 'from scratch'. I started by writing down many sketches and short rhythmic and melodic ideas. I also tried out different approaches from drawing (graphic scores) to improvising. At some point I was very unsure about what the outcome of the music writing process would be. The ideas didn't seem to be forming an interesting combination. I decided that rather than trying to do things in too many different ways, I would use whatever ideas came out intuitively. I finally ended up using a combination of melodic and rhythmic ideas and improvisation as a starting point for writing the music. I also gave up on the idea of writing one long piece and decided to write several shorter ones instead and to find ways how to connect them. This decision came from the limited amount of time I had both for writing the music and for rehearsing it with the other musicians. I had also decided to include improvised sections in the music. After I had come up with an initial idea for a piece, I developed it using specific composition techniques.

I started this section of my text with a quote from a famous Finnish writer Juhani Aho. I believe this quote describes better the mood of the writer himself, or perhaps of 'Finnish people' than the mood of the forest. But still I like the text. It shows how the forest truly does impact a sensitive mind. Even though I'm not that prone to melancholy, perhaps I also have a certain melancholic sensibility. Besides this, the forest has evoked all sorts of feelings, from a mysterious feeling to excitement and joy. In the music for 'Metsän väki' I wanted to emphasize this mysterious feeling while having

¹⁶ Mindfulness is a state of active, open attention on the present. When you're mindful, you observe your thoughts and feelings from a distance, without judging them good or bad. Instead of letting your life pass you by, mindfulness means living in the moment and awakening to experience (www.psychologytoday.com/basics/mindfulness).

other kinds of colours there too. Whenever I write music, I'm always influenced by my musical background and especially by my experiences of different musical cultures. Besides Classical music and Jazz, I've been exploring for example Arabic, Cuban, Indian, Spanish (flamenco) and Finnish (folk) music. These influences are imprinted on the canvas of my musical imagination, but with an invisible ink. Sometimes these influences find their way into a music piece quite unexpectedly. During the music writing process I was listening to Japanese music, both traditional and contemporary. I was looking for some inspiration for the atmosphere of the music. My attention was drawn to the court music of Japan, also called 'gagaku' which means elegant, correct, or refined music (Malm 1990:77). Listening to recordings of this music was a meditative experience, and I have to agree to its sound having 'grandeur and solidity' (Malm 1990:91). I don't think I was directly influenced by this music, but I enjoyed especially the meditative aspects of it, and hoped to have a similar element in the music for 'Metsän väki'. When writing music for the 'Metsän väki' performance I was also influenced by recent experiences of listening and analyzing contemporary music.

One important step in the music writing process was deciding on what kinds of roles the different instruments (percussion, cello and piano) would have. I had decided that I wanted to have a mallet instrument (marimba or vibraphone) as a central instrument in the performance. After meeting with percussionist Simona Piron we decided that the vibraphone would be the best choice for a main percussion instrument, due to the fact that it was easier to transport than the bigger and more fragile mallet instruments. I also thought that the sound of the vibraphone fitted nicely with many of the sketches that I had written. My initial idea was that the (sound of the) cello would be a good contrast to the vibraphone and also other percussion instruments. As a starting point, I imagined it having a 'soloist' role in many of the pieces. Eventually the cello ended up having many different roles, sometimes of a soloist and at other times more of an accompanist. I was aware that especially the vibraphone and piano could easily 'clash'. This kind of clash is not necessarily a bad thing, it can produce an interesting result. For the most part, I wanted however to avoid it. So having clear and distinctive roles for each instrument, in each piece, was the rule of thumb when writing the different parts. In some pieces, the vibraphone and piano also double each other's parts, while adding a different timbre. I wanted to give room for each instrument and find ways how they could also support each other. All in all the roles of the instruments were shaped according to the character of each piece. One of my main concerns was to find out ways how I can use this instrumentation in a rich and colorful way. For that I received some guidance from Torbjörn Gulz from the Royal College of Music in Stockholm.

It's important to note that despite introducing myself to different philosophical ideas and concepts during the artistic process, my aim was never to fill the music with some philosophical concepts. I believe music

speaks in its own language, if it speaks at all. My task was to find ways of using what Wagner described as 'orchestral language'. According to Langer, this is what Wagner meant by his notion of 'orchestral language': 'If music is a symbolism, it is essentially of an untranslatable form. Music articulates forms which language cannot set forth' (Langer 1942:190). The same idea has been expressed by 18th century German composer Johann Adam Hiller: '...Note, however, what response a certain kind of music evokes in our hearts: we are attentive, it is charming; it does not aim to arouse either sorrow or joy, pity or anger, and yet we are moved by it. We are so imperceptibly, so gently moved, that we do not know we are affected, *or rather, that we can give no name to the affect...*' (Langer 1942:191). I believe this latter quote represents well my 'hidden agenda' when writing the music. I'll describe briefly the pieces written for the 'Metsän väki' performance and tell a little bit about their composing processes.

Metsänpeitto (Covered by Forest)

Sometimes an idea seemingly distant to music can take on a musical form. This is what happened with a piece titled 'Metsänpeitto'. I was very fond of the story describing what happens when someone or something gets covered by forest. If you find yourself covered by forest, one way of finding your way back is to turn your jacket inside out, to switch your shoes to the wrong feet, or to look between your own legs... This piece is based on a chord progression and a 16th note arpeggio played on the vibraphone. The cello plays a simple melody line in a free (improvisatory) manner. The cello melody line is doubled by crotales. The piano is not used in this piece. After writing half of the piece, I decided to 'turn back', reversing the order of the chords and changing the chords so that a major chord became a minor and vice versa. To me this decision created a link to the story about being covered by forest. This piece was played in the performance while the audience was entering the performance space.

Prelude

This is a short introduction piece, inspired by contemporary music and linked to the following piece in the performance. Each instrument plays a motif in turn. All of the motifs are constructed from one set of pitches, which is then transformed in different ways. I think of the motifs as musical gestures.

Kolo (A Hole, Nest, Cave...)

Here I used the same set of pitches (namely C, D, Eb, F#, G, A) as a starting point for the composition as in 'Prelude'. The idea of using a set of pitches (rather than a melodic or rhythmic motif) came from familiarizing myself with post-tonal theory and related composition techniques. In this piece, a set of pitches was combined with a strong (repetitive) rhythm and with a chromatic motif. The piece is based on a bass line which was created using the elements described above and by developing those elements. The piece

has a percussion solo, and it ends in a resolution with a change in the melody, rhythm and dynamics. The piano and vibraphone play a lot in unison, while the cello adds colour and contrast (by playing pizzicato and by improvising). This piece could be described as slightly more 'abstract' than some of the other pieces. In this sort of a piece, I feel it's important to emphasize the roles of the different instruments, for example the role of the percussion as a 'storyteller' in the solo. As for the character of the piece, to me a repetitive, even aggressive piece represents a machine-like quality which I feel the forest also has.

Interlude

This piece starts with a melody which has a folk song character. The melody started playing in my head while I was preparing to go to sleep one evening. I had been thinking about my PIP, but I hadn't written any music that day. The melody is played both by piano and vibraphone, and the cello is supporting the melody. The piece has three different parts, each with a different character and time signature. I wanted to have contrasting parts in the piece while keeping the overall atmosphere minimalistic. Dancer Eevi Tolvanen was especially inspired by this piece and wanted to do a dance choreography for it.

Metsän väki (Forest Spirits)

This piece has a real story behind it. The piece begins with a melody line which reminds the Raga 'Bhairav' found in Hindustani music (starting from C: C, Db, E, F, G, Ab, B). The melody started playing in my head in summer 2015 during my visit to my hometown Kuopio in Eastern Finland. I wanted to see some places that I hadn't visited for a long time. I went to see one of the landmarks of the city, a tower situated on top of a hill surrounded by forest. In the forest there was a funny-looking character (elf) painted on a piece of wood. You could even say that it was clumsy-looking, but it's possible that it inspired the beginning of this piece... However, I didn't finish the piece until much later, while I was writing the other pieces. I suddenly found some melodic motifs that I'd written down, transposed them and completed the piece by using those. The vibraphone is the central instrument in this piece. The cello provides some contrast for example by playing pizzicato on top of a legato melody line played by the vibraphone. There's no piano in this piece. Instead, there is again the crotales and other percussion instruments.

Metsän kätkemä (Hidden in the Forest)

This was the last piece I wrote. I felt that I wanted to have a ballad of some sort in the performance. This piece has a very calm atmosphere, to me it sounds like a jazz ballad. I first wrote a melody for the vibraphone, using similar chords as in some of the other pieces. I then added a cello melody line by using a rhythmic canon. The cello repeats the rhythm of the vibraphone melody, but with different notes. The piano plays on top of the

other instruments in a free (improvisatory) manner. There's also a piano solo in the piece.

In addition to these compositions, the performance included a cello solo, a percussion solo and a piano solo. The solos involved interaction with a dancer and were linked to the compositions in various ways. There was also a composed 'Outro' which ended the performance.

7.2.1 Playing with sticks and stones

In chapter 2 I wrote about my experiences with concrete music and field recording in Iceland in autumn 2015. That's when I really got excited about using natural sounds and sounding objects in a performance. I was thinking for a long time about what would be the best way to do this in the 'Metsän väki' performance. At first I thought about using recorded sounds. Finally, after seeing the previously mentioned video clip of Tan Dun's 'Water Heavens', I decided that I wanted to work with objects or elements that are both audible and visible in the performance. It also felt natural that the dancer would be playing these 'instruments'. There are several sounding objects used in the performance. First, some of Jenni Tieaho's overcoats produce a unique sound, such as the overcoat made out of pine cones. When Jenni was moving her limbs, the hundreds of pine cones rubbing against each other produced a really interesting sound which was amplified by dancer Eevi Tolvanen by using a Sennheiser MD22 directional microphone. The same technique was used with another overcoat, made out of birchbark. Second, Eevi used small stones held together by a net, to produce sounds. Third, there was also water used in the performance, by simply placing a bowl of water on the stage and amplifying the sounds that Eevi produced with it. There was nothing really high-tech about this approach. I wouldn't also use the term 'concrete music' in this case. Especially with Jenni's overcoats the idea was rather to bring out the musical possibilities they were containing. Besides the overcoat made out of pine cones, which was presented almost at the beginning of the performance, all the other sounding objects were used together with other (traditional) instruments.

Using sounding objects in the performance was a way of highlighting the double meaning of the word 'play'. Pierre Schaeffer, the 'father' of concrete music, describes the word 'play' in the following way when referring to the aesthetic of concrete music: 'The aesthetic also emphasizes the importance of play (*jeu*) in the practice of sound based composition. To play is "to enjoy oneself by interacting with one's surroundings", as well as "to operate a musical instrument"' (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musique_concrète). This describes well how the sounding objects were used in the performance. The idea was that the objects grab the audience's attention first as visual elements and then become also 'instruments'. These strange 'instruments' were also quite humouristic. I believe humour is a great tool for creating an open and inviting atmosphere. Using Jenni's artworks as instruments represented to me one kind of cycle, the cycle of 'play'. Creating the artworks had necessarily involved 'play', and in the performance the

artworks provided a platform for another kind of ‘play’. As Dennis J. Schmidt writes, when referring to the hermeneutic conception of a work of art: ‘The embodiment of play in a work, needs to maintain the character of play. In other words, the work needs to be understood as the fulfillment, the perfection, of play’ (Schmidt 2013:114). The word ‘play’ in this context has also other important meanings: ‘Play describes a *movement*. Play is never static but can be only understood as an event...Play is possible only as *free*; even within the boundaries of the rules defining play, there must be an essential freedom and indeterminacy...’ (Schmidt 2013:114).

Writing and planning the music for the ‘Metsän väki’ performance was an interesting but challenging process. I needed to find elements that bring together the visual and audible aspects of the performance. At the same time I was writing music for a combination of instruments that I hadn’t previously written for. That made it challenging to imagine the actual sound of the pieces before the rehearsals. At some point during the music writing process I realized that the number 3 appears on several occasions in connection to the music. There are three musicians and three basic natural elements (stone, wood and water). At some point the idea was also that Jenni would have three different overcoats in the performance. I decided to further emphasize this by having some parts of the music repeated three times and by having three parts in the piece titled ‘Interlude’. During the music writing process I wrote a number of sketches that were not used in the final compositions, thus creating material for possible later use.

7.3 Creating the performance

Creating the ‘Metsän väki’ performance involved many kinds of collaboration. In this section of my thesis I’m focusing on the collaboration between the participants during February-May 2016. One thing that was interesting about the performance was that the whole working group met only during the day of the performance. This was because Jenni Tieaho (sculptor) didn’t have the possibility to come to Helsinki for the rehearsals. This meant that I was in charge of keeping everyone informed about the working process. I also arranged a meeting with dancer Eevi Tolvanen and Jenni, so that they could meet each other and we could plan the performance together.

7.3.1 Meetings with dancer Eevi Tolvanen and sculptor Jenni Tieaho

I met dancer Eevi Tolvanen for the first time in February, during my visit to Kuopio in Eastern Finland. I had been introduced also to Eevi through Tapani Heikinheimo. I had previously worked with dancers, but in a very different context (such as a flamenco performance). At that time I didn’t have any music ready, so the planning was more about exchanging ideas. We started approaching the performance by thinking of keywords that could give some hints to the dance aesthetics. We also discussed about a butoh-like expression. Eevi had ideas for the dance, which she described as ‘not

aiming to be beautiful'. I explained about my ideas of using sounding objects in addition to acoustic instruments. Together we thought about different ways how music, dance and visual artworks could relate to each other in the performance. There was an idea of creating a 'story' around a character as one possible way of creating structure. Finally we decided that I'd send her some adjectives that described my ideas for the performance and that we'd start working on it more when I had written some music.

In March I met with Jenni Tieaho and Eevi in Jenni's working space. We wanted to discuss about how we could use Jenni's overcoats in the performance. By that time I had also already written some music, so I could show demos of that. Mostly the focus was on the visual aspects of the performance, and it was nice to concentrate on that in this meeting. We were assisting Jenni with putting on and taking off her overcoats made out of different organic materials. Some of them were quite difficult to handle. It was obvious that if we'd do that in the performance, it would become a part of the performance. While trying on the different overcoats we were paying attention to the sounds that they produced. This was actually when the idea of using those sounds in the performance came up. The idea was to use three different overcoats in the performance. This helped me a lot in thinking about the structure of the performance, as well as the duration. My plan was to do a performance that would last roughly 30 minutes. This idea was supported by Jenni and Eevi.

7.3.2 Cross-disciplinary improvisation

On March 20th all the musicians and dancer met for the first time in Helsinki. The plan for the meeting was to do a lot of free improvisation, and to get to know each other. I also explained a little bit about the inspiration and background of the project. When we started improvising together, to me it felt surprisingly easy. Although everyone was new to each other in the group, no one was afraid to take initiative. We tried different approaches to improvising with musicians and a dancer. At one point the dancer had a physical contact with each musician during their 'solo'. This created some interesting moments and a nice 'disturbance'. We also made different 'rules' for the improvisation by for example deciding the duration beforehand or by deciding on whether the musicians are 'following' the dancer or reacting in another way to her impulses. I made videos of these improvisations and send them to all the participants. During this meeting a lot of ideas came up that could be used in the performance. Having an improvised section where the dancer has a physical or otherwise close contact with a musician was one of the ideas. We also talked about different ways of using sounding objects, such as stones or leaves in the performance.

7.3.3 Rehearsals

In April we had one rehearsal with only the musicians and another rehearsal with the musicians and dancer. In addition, I met once with Simona Piron (percussionist) to go through the music. In the rehearsal with the musicians

many interesting things came up. When I'd written the pieces, I'd used very little indicators for interpretation (besides dynamics and for example *ritardando* or *legato*). This sparked a lot of conversations especially with cello player Anu Keski-Saari. I hadn't thought about how big a difference phrasing makes on her instrument. On the other hand it gave more possibilities for interpretation. But if I'd wanted to be very efficient, I should have paid more attention to such details beforehand. The arrangements of some of the pieces were shaped during this rehearsal. Also the amount of percussion instruments grew after Simona had suggested using crotales in the performance. I had never played the instrument before, but I immediately liked the sharp but sustained sound that it created. I had thought about using bell sounds in the performance, so this seemed like a perfect instrument which had a bell-like sound. It also felt natural to play this instrument in those pieces where I wasn't playing the piano.

Shortly after this rehearsal we had another rehearsal, this time together with dancer Eevi Tolvanen. I had send demos of the music to Eevi, and she had some ideas for the performance. In the rehearsal she was trying out different things, mostly by improvising. Together we decided on the pieces where she'd be dancing. In addition, each musician had an improvised solo where Eevi was also dancing. Everyone liked the contact improvisation that we'd tried in our first meeting, and in this rehearsal cello player Anu and Eevi were also using contact improvisation. Eevi was carrying and moving around Anu's cello while she was playing it. We decided to include this in the performance too. There was quite a long break (a few weeks) between this rehearsal and the performance. I recorded a lot of videos from the rehearsal and send those to everyone, including Jenni who hadn't met all the other participants. During the rehearsals everyone got to know each other a little bit better, and also discover and clarify their roles in the performance. Of course having more time would have been useful. That would have tightened the group and allowed for more experimentation.

7.3.4 Staging and technical aspects of the performance

After I knew what kind of elements the performance would include I started planning the technical aspects of the performance. This included several visits to the former psychiatric hospital where the performance would take place. It was decided that we would use the second floor corridor of the old hospital building for the performance. This was a really long corridor, with small rooms on both sides and one bigger room in the middle of the corridor. The idea was to have the performers along the corridor and the audience on both sides of the corridor 'surrounding' the performers. I knew that I needed some help with planning the sound reproduction of the performance. I would use an electric piano and because of the shape of the performance space, some instruments would be difficult to hear only acoustically. I had skype meetings with Bill Brunson, one of my teachers from the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. In those meetings we discussed mainly about how to amplify certain sounds used in the performance and how to place the musicians in the performance space. We

also discussed about what kinds of microphones to use and how to place the two speakers and mixer that were available. These Skype meetings were really useful, since I knew that I had to take care of the sound by myself in the performance, without a sound technician.

For the most part, the actual staging of the performance was planned during the day of the performance, on May 9th. I had made a timetable for the whole day. The performance was at 18:00 and before that there was time to decide how Jenni would perform wearing her four different overcoats (she had recently finished one made out of birchbark which we also included in the performance). We decided to use the small empty rooms along the corridor as Jenni's 'dressing rooms' where she would change from one outfit to another, with the help of 1-2 other performers. It took quite a bit of pondering to come up with a plan of who would assist her at what point during the performance. During the afternoon we also made a soundcheck and a run-through of the performance. After having all the musicians in the performance space, dancer Eevi decided that she wouldn't use the choreography she had planned for one piece, due to the lack of space. She would improvise instead. I had asked photographer Alisa Javits to film the performance, so she was also there before the performance to plan the documentation. I wanted to receive audience feedback from the performance, so I had prepared pens and pieces of paper for that. In addition I had some big stones and string with me which I was planning to use as decoration. Those stones were tied with string and placed on a table to point out the place where people could write their comments after the performance. Finally, just about 30 minutes before the performance, everything was more or less ready.

Working with this group of artists was definitely the highlight of the project for me. I didn't know from the start that I would end up working with four artists, but as the Finnish saying goes: 'The will to eat grows by eating'. One of my concerns was that instead of complementing each other, different art forms would 'compete' with each other in the performance. I was willing to take that risk though, in order to experiment with having many different elements in the performance. I was curious to see whether having the different art forms presented together would affect how the audience perceived them. Perhaps the combination, and for example the transformation from visual artworks to 'instruments' would even increase the emotional impact of the performance: 'Emotion enters (or potentially enters) the scene when there is some discrepancy or change, provoking an interest. We appraise a salient or novel cue, anticipating what it means for our vital interests. Salience, novelty, and change in themselves are neither positive nor negative—they may lead to anxiety, intense fear, relief, curiosity, or delight. But an unexpected or markedly salient event seems to trigger a readiness for emotion, if not a full-blown emotion' (Ellsworth 1994:151-52). One thing I was hoping to get from cross-artistic collaboration was a framework for creating music, some 'boundaries' which are always needed in an artistic process. In the end, I was in charge of

creating those ‘boundaries’ for myself in this performance. But having visual art and dance in the performance inspired also my artistic process, sometimes in unexpected ways.

8. Documentation

8.1 Project blog

When I started working on my PIP, I created a blog for it on my website (chapter 12: Links). The main reason for this was that I wanted the project to be accessible also to non-Finnish speakers. A blog is a nice format, since I can upload there different kinds of materials (photos, videos, music, written documents etc.). Especially with a cross-art project such as my PIP, it’s essential to present the different elements of the performance, especially the visual elements, also to potential audiences. In the blog I approach the project from different sides, providing some information about the ideas and inspiration behind the project. Having a blog for the project makes it also possible to observe the development of the project over time. The blog is meant for sharing the process and outcomes of the project, whereas the previously mentioned notebook and diary are only for my personal use for developing and documenting the project.

8.2 Performance

I wanted to have a good quality documentation of the “Metsän väki” performance. I asked photographer Alisa Javits, with whom I’d worked before, to film the performance. She was using two cameras for the documentation. The sound of the performance was not recorded separately. The video material will be edited during summer 2016 and the edited video will be made available as a DVD at the library of the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. The audience was asked to write comments after the performance. You can read those comments in this thesis (chapter 13).

9. Outcomes

Creating the ‘Metsän väki’ performance and performing it to an audience were the overall goals of my PIP. I succeeded in doing so, with the help of many other people. As a result, there was a feeling of a ‘community’ especially on the day of the performance. This was one of the unexpected outcomes of the project. One of my initial ideas when developing my PIP was that the participants would have a chance to explore some new roles in a performance. For me this meant having the role of not only musician-composer but also concept developer, project leader and even ‘sound technician’. I believe some of the other participants also got to explore new roles, such as the dancer becoming a musician, a musician becoming a

'performance artist'. The performance was definitely a new experience for sculptor Jenni Tieaho, who hadn't worked previously with musicians or with a dancer. I believe the performance venue, a former psychiatric hospital, created a new kind of experience for everyone. All the participants also made a creative contribution to the performance.

I believe it was a good decision to choose an intimate performance space. The audience was in close contact with the performers. I had thought of this being important especially regarding the overcoats Jenni was wearing in the performance. Those provided visual stimulation, sound and also smell. The removal of the 'stage' was also a key element of the performance. My biggest concern for the performance was the possibility of the different elements (music, visual art, dance, performance art) not forming an artistic whole. Based on the audience feedback and the conversations I had with some audience members, the different elements were perceived as supporting each other in the performance. I believe that for many people in the audience it was a surprise to see such a performance in that place. When thinking about the structure of the performance, I think it was a good solution to not stop the 'flow' of the performance with speaking (introducing the artists or different parts of the performance). However, maybe some audience members would have benefited from knowing what had inspired the performance.

All in all, I learned a lot from the process of creating and carrying out the 'Metsän väki' performance. The process included a lot of risk taking. The artistic risk was only one of them. There was a possibility that I would not find collaborators for the project. Also, presenting a performance idea to different performance venues (including the Finnish Nature Center Haltia) without having found all the participants, was a risk in some way. I had to believe that things will work out and also convince others. I got a lot of support from Jenni, especially in the beginning stages of the project. This was one of the big benefits of doing cross-artistic collaboration. Having a collaborator who is an expert in her own field, supporting the idea and yet perhaps unaware of the all the (possible) difficulties that might occur when developing the project (such as finding the musicians, rehearsal spaces and so on). I did of course openly describe the working process to Jenni as well, but perhaps focusing more on the possibilities than on the challenges...

I received positive feedback from the other participants considering my role as the project leader. My actions were described as 'constructive and calm' despite the challenges along the way. I was also described as a 'skillful organizer' who creates a 'positive atmosphere'. Being positive was the most common feedback I received from the other participants during the project. I was slightly surprised about this, since I perceive myself more as a person who tends to process a lot of things (which many times creates hesitation). Looking back on the project as a whole, the only thing I regret is having a limited amount of time for the actual artistic process (which included writing the music, rehearsing it and developing the performance as a whole). In the future my hope would be to have a better 'frame' for the project,

including funding, help with the production etc. This would allow me to concentrate more on the artistic developing of the performance.

9.1 Outcomes of the performance

The 'Metsän väki' performance proved to be all in all successful. There were roughly 30 people in the audience. The performance was free of charge and there were other events taking place at the former hospital venue just before the performance. This, and the nice weather on May 9th helped to attract people. The organizer of the event had also advertised it. The performers had invited people on Facebook. The participants worked well together in preparing the performance, helping each other out and giving ideas (we also received a lot of help from volunteers working at the former hospital). There were also some challenges. The biggest difficulties I faced were setting up the sound system and especially getting it to work properly. I hadn't tested the sound system beforehand. When I played my electric piano through the speakers, it sounded as though I'd used an (phaser) effect on the sound. I checked all the different parameters from the mixer channels, but wasn't able to get the sound to become 'normal'. It turned out that the mixer was sending an effect to all the different channels. This was quite frustrating. I'd planned exactly what I wanted to do with the sound system in the performance, but I wasn't prepared for that sort of situation. Also, without having a sound technician there, I didn't really know how to fix the problem. The only thing I could do was just to use the sound I had.

In the actual performance things were going more or less 'according to plan'. There was some uncertainty at times and cautiousness, which I consider normal in a first performance with a new group. Despite the busy timetable during the day of the performance, I felt that in the performance there was a good atmosphere (among the performers). Together with the participants we had decided that we'll not introduce the performers in the beginning of the performance. The performance started with music that was played while the audience was entering the corridor. People could choose where they wanted to sit, some people were also standing. Eevi Tolvanen (dancer) was leading the audience into the performance space. Finally, after the performance I introduced all the artists. I also explained that this performance was a project for my master studies. It happened that the performance took place on May 9th, which was also the Day of Europe. It was fitting to explain about the European Master of Music programme. When introducing the artists I ended up 'interviewing' Jenni Tieaho. People were really curious to know about her artworks, what were the materials they were made out of and how they had been made. Some audience members also asked about the compositions.

I felt that there was a warm atmosphere between the performers and the audience. Even during the performance I felt that the people in the audience were relaxed (I had time to observe them at some point when I was assisting Jenni in the performance). I liked this overall 'casual' vibe. After all, even if

there are blood, sweat and tears in the preparation process, everything should look 'easy' in the performance. The other thing I enjoyed in the performance was the overall sound level, it felt very natural. Some instruments were amplified a little bit (in order to have them in balance with others) but the overall sound level was very moderate. All in all I'm quite happy with the performance. The most important thing for me was to 'test' the different elements (written and improvised music, visual artworks, dance) of the performance and see how they work together. It was also important to physically carry out the performance with all the preparations. It's a completely different thing to envision doing something versus actually doing it. Now I'm aware of the possible (technical) difficulties that might occur. The most important lesson for me was that in a possible future performance the sound should be taken care of by a professional sound technician, or at least with familiar (and functioning) equipment. I'm happy that we received a lot of audience feedback, this was also important to me.

10. Conclusion

One goal of my PIP was to find ways how music, visual art (performance art) and dance can relate to each other in the context of the 'Metsän väki' performance. I can conclude that during the working process I was able to find ways how these art forms can both 'stand alone' in the performance and interact with each other. The working process included thinking about the differences between different art forms. There are obvious differences between, say music and visual art. I believe we should celebrate those differences rather than try to obscure them somehow. But to say that there are real borders between different art forms is in my opinion an illusion that exists only in the mind. Langer writes:

'The import of artistic expression is broadly the same in all arts as it is in music -the verbally ineffable, yet not inexpressible law of vital experience, the pattern of affective and sentient being. This is the "content" of what we perceive as "beautiful form"; and this formal element is the artist's "idea" which is conveyed by every great work. It is this which so-called "abstract art" seeks to abstract by defying the model or dispensing with it altogether; and which music above all arts can reveal, unobscured by adventitious literal meanings. This does not mean, however, that music achieves the aim of artistic expression more fully than other arts' (Langer 1942:209).

I believe that while art forms have changed and developed throughout history, we can still find elements of producing, experiencing and conceptualizing art that have always existed. When it comes to cross-artistic collaboration in my PIP, the biggest challenge was pushing the limits of my own imagination while still aiming for something that was doable. I am aware that having different art forms presented in a performance is nothing 'new'. My intention was rather to find inspiration from the age-old tradition of combining them (such as in different ceremonies and rituals). As I mentioned in chapter 3 (Aims), one of my artistic goals was to create a 'state

of ritual'. I believe this was possibly achieved in the performance, and if so, it was due to the combination of different art forms. I was also able to create a rich and diverse performance by using simple (low-tech) methods. The performance was inspired by my experiences, interests and background. When developing the performance, there was a fruitful exchanging of ideas between the participants, especially during the final stages of the project. When thinking about the benefits of cross-artistic collaboration, I believe that despite the different challenges that artists from different fields face, there are many common interests that can be explored. One of these is creating new audiences.

What could then be the relevance of the 'Metsän väki' performance to the community, to the audience? I do not have a definite answer to this question. I believe time will show whether the performance will be further developed, whether it will find new audiences and how it will be received. Having a forest theme in the performance was a statement and important for me as an artist. Moreover, the forest theme is important for me not only as an artist but as a human being: '...the inclination to make ordinary behavior extraordinary, in circumstances about which people care greatly, is part of our biological nature' (Dissanayake 2006:6). As I explained in the Introduction (chapter 1), I had understood how very little I actually *knew* about the forest. Or more precisely, how little I knew about what people in the past had *known*. As Jenni Tieaho explains: 'The modern man is described as a restless and unfocused soul escaping his own emptiness and boredom. The reason for this is "metsänenä" (the nose of the forest), a strange sickness that makes you restless, your eyes itch and skin scabby. If you become ill with "metsänenä" you can wear one of the "metsänpalttoot" (overcoats of the forest) and experience the once lost piece of mind and depth of soul'. This is a nice example of bringing the old stories about the forest into today's context. But however important the theme of a performance might be (in my opinion) that doesn't make it good art. It's not about the *what* but about the *how* that matters. I believe that having a theme, a *subject* that the *artist* cares about can result, in the long run in a deep and original conception of that subject. This conception is something I believe can benefit a larger community. At the same time I don't wish to underrate the impact that even the 'Metsän väki' performance might have had on the audience. One purpose of creating the performance was also to share things that are not yet 'ready' and 'perfected'.

Creating the 'Metsän väki' performance was first and foremost a learning process. Here is a list of just a few learning outcomes of the NAIP programme:

'...be able to create, realize and express unambiguously to specialist and non-specialist audiences their own artistic concepts as a high-level performer, composer and/or leader, emerging as a well-developed musical personality'.

'...be able to apply, using project management techniques, their knowledge, artistic understanding and problem-solving abilities in unfamiliar and/or multidisciplinary contexts'.

'...demonstrate considerable capacity in creating and developing original musical material inspired by people, context and purpose'.

'...be able to seek and apply knowledge from other fields of research'.

I believe I have demonstrated my knowledge and skills in the above areas in my PIP. I believe my thesis adds to the performance, the first outcome of my PIP, for example by demonstrating the insights I had during the artistic process and by examining the role of cross-artistic collaboration in the project. In the thesis I was searching for a style of writing that would fit both the project and also my persona. Finally my writing became quite narrative in style. Writing this thesis was a way of thinking and discovering things that might have otherwise stayed unnoticed: 'Writing in artistic research is also, and at best, a voyage into oneself and one's social surroundings from the point of view of one's art work' (Hannula, Suoranta, Vadén 2014:30). I was selected to present my PIP in the form of a 'performance paper' at a conference titled 'Arts Without Borders? - Perspectives on Collaboration and Interdisciplinarity in and through the Arts'. This is an international conference hosted by the University of the Arts Helsinki and CERADA (Center for Educational Research and Academic Development in the Arts). The conference will take place in Helsinki during October 19–22, 2016. This is an opportunity to present my project in another form, to a new audience.

10.1 The need to experiment - Personal reflection

In my PIP I had a strong need to connect somehow with my 'Finnish' roots. When I feel a connection to something 'bigger than me' I am more ready to take risks, to form my own interpretations. The same applies to having an understanding of the history and possibilities of music as an art form: 'There is no imagination without a sense of context, a sense of structure and a sense of the inherent limitations of any activity' (Hannula, Suoranta, Vadén 2014:14). As a student I received help from my teachers both on the artistic components as well as on the research components of my PIP. This was one of the main reasons I chose to do a project such as my PIP, which was quite a crazy endeavour in some respect. Of course as an artist I'm ultimately responsible for the choices I make. But having this 'support network' allowed me to develop my *practice* in ways that were needed in the PIP. The carrying out of my PIP, and especially the 'Metsän väki' performance were pushing the limits of how many things I could experiment with simultaneously. Having so many roles in a performance was a new situation for me. After the performance I had a strange feeling, as if something was missing. It felt as if I hadn't used my creative capacity to the fullest. This was mostly due to the fact that I had limited the amount of playing the piano

in the performance. It had been a conscious choice, but I questioned that choice after the performance. I believe I'm still searching for the balance between being a musician and being a composer in the context of this performance. These are both important roles for me, but usually the balance has been more equal or leaning towards being a musician in the actual performance.

This project also made me examine my role as an artist. Some time ago I saw a speech by writer Jan Verwoert, talking about what it means to call yourself an artist. I'll refer briefly to that speech, since it touched upon many of my own reflections. Describing what I'd call the hype of being an artist, Verwoert says: 'Being an artist means that the public needs you, the cosmos needs you!!! You are in direct communication with the cosmos (as a shaman), you feel responsible for the public spirituality and health...' This is perhaps a caricature but I do have to admit that I recognize something in this description. Who am I to say what the public needs? What is spirituality today? Or health? My non-specialist observation is that especially people in big cities are finding more and more ways of practicing what I call 'secular' spirituality. Many times these forms of spirituality concentrate highly on the individual, such as the self-observing search for 'happiness'. Perhaps one of my humble goals of creating the 'Metsän väki' performance was to offer another type of 'secular' spiritual experience, a shared one. Verwoert also pointed out another specific quality of an (public) artist, that is: 'Every time you see a "stage" you think of how to fill it!' This quality was definitely increased in me as a result of the NAIP studies. But before filling each and every 'stage' I luckily received some tools for analyzing what could be fitting in which context and would there even be any audience...

What about my artistic identity? I cannot say that there was a big change in my artistic identity during this project. If anything, after the project I have even less need to 'box myself in'. It feels natural to work in slightly different ways in my different projects. The challenge is communicating my musical persona, my artistic identity to the audience. I believe being a musician, being an artist is something that runs much deeper than the artistic identity which is expressed to the outside world. As Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu said: 'Choosing to be in music clarified my identity'. For me this choosing is an ongoing process. As mentioned before, the boundaries between different art forms and between art and science are increasingly challenged today. These new developments create an interesting horizon where I can see that my personal interests, such as cross-disciplinary work and environmental issues can find their place in the current state of progress where we are (see for example www.uniarts.fi/maecp). Working on my PIP gave me tools and insights for further cross-artistic collaboration. Working on my PIP also gave me a lot of excitement and joy. For that reason I'd like to end this chapter by talking about the magic of art.

The way how ordinary things such as sounds, movement and organic materials can become *extraordinary*, to me that's the real magic of art. This is how it happens in ceremonial and other arts according to Ellen

Dissayanake: ‘Indeed one can view ceremonial and other arts as ordinary behavior (i.e., ordinary bodily and facial movements, ordinary speech, utilization of ordinary objects and surroundings, and ordinary prosodic vocalizations) made extraordinary through essentially the same operations or procedures as in animal ritualizations: formalization (stereotypy), repetition, exaggeration, and elaborations of various kinds’ (Dissayanake 2006:6). Although many art forms have become highly complex over time, many of the same principles apply nowadays. And not only humans, but also animals are able to make ordinary *extraordinary*. A stunning example of this is the satin bowerbird which Rothenberg (Rothenberg 2011) came across in the Australian rainforest. The male satin bowerbird builds a bower, an artwork to attract females. He decorates it with something blue, anything from blue flowers and shells to blue plastic spoons left over from picnics. ‘Bowerbirds, say biologists, are unique. There is perhaps no other species besides human beings that is known to create things so beautiful beyond their functions, structures that we have a hard time calling anything but art, the arrangement of objects that please us...’ (Rothenberg 2011:2).

11. Future Development of the Professional Integration Project

As I mentioned in chapter 3 (Aims) my goal in this project was to create a concept rather than a ready performance. I believe the ‘Metsän väki’ performance can be further developed using the methods described in this thesis. I also believe that the performance, as well as the music created for it, lives and breathes through its details. From the start the idea was to explore different performance spaces as potential venues for the performance. As mentioned in chapter 6 (Project Settings) one plan is to perform at the Finnish Nature Center Haltia in Espoo, Finland. I have received a grant of 3000 euros from the City of Espoo for this performance. The performance would take place on Finnish Nature Day, August 27th 2016. I have also applied to one festival in Helsinki with the performance.

Regarding the methods used in creating the performance, one aspect that could be further explored is the use of sounding objects. The different organic materials used in the performance could be made into more elaborate musical instruments. Having some financial resources would allow for using more advanced technical equipment in the performance (for example for amplifying the sounds of Jenni Tieaho’s costumes). Cross-disciplinary improvisation could also be explored more, as well as the balance between written and improvised music. I have also thought of elements that could be added to the performance and other elements that could complement the performance. It would be interesting to add video projections and recorded sounds to the ‘Metsän väki’ performance. However, this would be a different type of project and require a lot of resources.

Another idea I've thought about is a workshop (for children and young people) where the participants could create artworks (and sounds) themselves and interact with the artists. Considering the outcomes of the initial 'Metsän väki' performance, I believe it would be a good idea to provide the audience information about the inspiration for the performance as well as information about the artists. This could be done in many ways, either before or after the performance. My intention is to keep on developing the project, provided that there are the necessary resources for doing so. After all, I've just begun.

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Links

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Internet

Composer Tan Dun: www.tandun.com/visualmusic

Sculptor Patrick Dougherty: www.stickwork.net

Writer and lecturer Ellen Dissayanake: www.ellendissanayake.com

MA in Ecology and Contemporary Performance: www.uniarts.fi/maecp

Art and Environment - Connections, Community and Being:
www.newmusicbox.org/articles/art-and-environment-connections-community-and-being/

Online forum On Being: www.onbeing.org

13. Appendices

13.1 Audience feedback

After the 'Metsän väki' performance on May 9th 2016 I asked the audience to give feedback. I had prepared pieces of paper and pens, with the instruction: *Did the performance raise some thoughts? How was the atmosphere of the performance like?* Here are the answers:

'A memorable performance, stunning music, flowing, interesting, wonderful costumes and dance.'

'Thank you for a wonderful, interesting performance!'

'Thank you for the beautiful moments'

'Thank you, amazing, great!'

'The costumes and music were great'

'Wonderful atmosphere. Therapy for the mind and soul at its best. Thank you!'

'Thank you for a wonderful performance! It was great to see organic materials used in such ways and the cello fitted superbly to the earthy performance.'

'Great! Good luck in the future!'

'A great and powerful atmosphere with feeling shapes in the sound, rhythm and movement...'

'It was as if one was sitting by a forest pond on a hot summer day, listening to the meditative sounds of nature. Beautiful!'

'A great atmosphere in the performance. The environment added its own nuance. The costumes brought to mind shamanism and an ancient atmosphere. I also enjoyed the music. Perhaps I would have liked to hear the story behind the performance or some background information. Where did the inspiration come from?'

'Wonderful! Thank you. This reminded me of a performance which we did in year 2000 when Helsinki was the Cultural Capital of Europe. During the leap day the people of the "false king," Tapio the Forest God, occupied the city; We had been to the forest, listening to the sounds and collecting our materials, pine cones, bark etc. out of which we sewed our outfits (the process took several weeks). In those outfits we occupied the center of the

city and brought our forest greetings to the Parliament and to the City Hall...'

'Wonderful people, lovely music and costumes that surpass imagination.'

'Thank you to all the performers for putting themselves out there, there is power in communality.'

'Brilliant, different, beautiful music, great costumes, not many can top this. Give us more! Thank you!'

