

PAPERS 13 Sound and silence

Chair – Gareth White
FRI 11.45-13.15 | RR5

Loïe Fuller: a silence bristling with Chinese crepe

Cecile Guedon

At the turn of the last century, Loïe Fuller entranced audiences with her free dance, combining burlesque and vaudeville, wearing radical silk costumes illuminated by complex electric lighting.

Here Guedon explores the sound of movement itself, as it was performed by Fuller. In complete silence, the sound was produced by the cloth, as the absent music became a mobile piece of tissue; and this reversal made audible the movement itself, Fuller's circling gestures, through the displacement of air caused by the shifting veils. Abstraction of shape, setting, and sound gives a fully legible representation of the movement, wiped out of any specific contingency: it is made integrally general.

Play and re:play, musical echoes of Beckett's stage poetry

Danijela Kulezic-Wilson

Kulezic-Wilson looks at Anthony Minghella's film of Beckett's *Play* and Ian Wilson's *re:play* a musical piece that it inspired.

Minghella did not try to set Beckett's words to music – he instead made sure they were performed and perceived as such. He brought to the fore musical aspects of the Beckett text (the musical density and sonority of the words and the silences between them, their rich rhythms delivered *parlando* at breakneck tempo) but also, by overcoming the limitations of live theatrical performance with film technology, allowed Beckett's vision of performative audio-visual counterpoint to achieve its fully controlled, perfected stage. This inspired another piece of music – Ian Wilson's *re:play* (2007) for improvising saxophonist, string quartet, piano and double bass, which uses the melodically and rhythmically transcribed opening lines of each of *Play*'s three characters as the motivic nuclei for the piece. Which ultimately leads to the question: how is musicality defined and perceived in a “non-musical” context?

Sounding Mallarmé's invisible theatre

Danae Stefanou, Themelis Glynatsis and Ioannis Kotsonis

Stéphane Mallarmé's experiments with the musicality of language have often been considered as essentially inward and anti-theatrical. Yet for all the complexities and diversions of its vocabulary, Mallarmé's writing also evokes a theatre of latent noise and silence, perpetually mediated and constrained through linguistic articulation, and thus raising a performative challenge: the necessity to provide an appropriate real, physical and spatial utterance for figures that are immaterial, latent and invisible.

This paper explores these ideas in practice, following the development of the first ever theatre production of Mallarmé's *Igitur* in 2009, directed by Themelis Glynatsis. The project is a collaborative, sonic *mise-en-scène*, whereby the visual action of silent performers on stage is combined with pre-recorded readings of variant editions from Mallarmé's text fragments, and with pre-composed, real-time electronic, and collectively improvised music by three different musicians. The fundamental concept of the performance is the (re)presentation of the fragmented body in fragmented spaces, the juxtaposition of bodiless voices with voiceless bodies.