

Interview: Re/creating (in) a World of Uncertainty: Memories, Music, and Movement¹

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Introduction

When I first became aware of Hannes Taljaard's intentions to move to Vienna in order to commence studying a degree in music and movement, I discussed with him my idea to interview him as part of my archival series of interviews with composers. Due to the fact that Taljaard is such a versatile person with a multifaceted and complex approach to his creative processes, we covered a broad scope of topics in the interview. The articles in this cluster were sparked by some of these topics and focus on specific aspects of Taljaard's work. Readers might feel that this leaves them with merely a glimpse into the work of this fascinating composer. The aim of this interview is to publish his ideas in his own words, dealing with topics such as his background, inspiration, sketches, composition techniques, worklist, and teaching. These aspects are so well integrated that it becomes nearly impossible to separate them or focus on a single aspect. Taljaard is passionate about his work and it is valuable to read his own words.

Interview

I noticed that you have composed a number of lullabies until now. On your worklist we see Lullaby for bassoon and vibraphone (2000-2001),² Two lullabies for piano solo (2001), Thula Sthandwa for choir (2001) and two books of Wiegieliedjies (1999-2001). Is there a reason why you have been working with lullabies so often throughout your career?

Yes, there are several reasons and I thought a lot about that for the past few years. I would say that the first reason is the experience that I had when I was a

very young child with my mother who sang a lot to us. So, there is this very rich, early childhood experience which is not only musical but also interpersonal and emotional. Then, I would say what also draws me to lullabies is this 'honest musicality': when we sing to a child, we are not so much concerned about ourselves as a performer. We are taking liberties. Our intention to communicate with this child is more important than our attention to being a fantastic musician. So, when I compose lullabies or when I arrange lullabies, I try to build in this honest musicality by taking some liberties with metre or stretching certain tones a little bit or maybe changing the contour of the melody somewhat or avoiding a perfect cadence. The harmony could then become not only a structural support for the tones but could be a way to depict that feeling that the caregiver has when they are singing to the child. So it is a very clear social situation that one can take and then convey that through technical or musical means.

What I also find very interesting is the idea of lullabies as a common cultural ground. We have such a complicated cultural and political situation in South Africa, so it is useful to know that at least when we are singing lullabies from one culture into another culture or taking a lullaby from another culture and presenting it as my own work on stage; we could think that it has positive influences on our cultural situation. There are very few people who would object to hearing a lullaby or object to singing a lullaby from another culture. I haven't come across that, and I would be very surprised if somebody would. I would be less surprised with other genres of music where one could 'understand' if someone would object to it.

Another aspect that I thought about, and have written about in programme notes, is this idea of the complex psychology of lullabies. What I mean with that is: let's say a mother sings to a child, the child does not necessarily understand the words that she's singing; so often we find in lullabies words that maybe are more referring to the mother. It is a type of self-reflexivity; the mother is singing back to herself about experiences that she has had. And then, of course, one asks who is singing to whom and what is the role of the child? Then the lullaby changes again to be more directed towards the child but when the child does not really understand the verbal content of the message, the emotional content becomes more salient or important than the verbal or conceptual content. That ties in with what music often does: more the emotional or expressive content, rather than the referential content. So there is this whole rich idea of the psychology of lullabies that I find gives me a lot of inspiration and ideas to work with as a composer. I must say that I have composed a few original lullabies.³ They do not necessarily sound that original because some of them sound as if they could be folk songs. I've also arranged quite a few folk songs from this idea of the intercultural common ground or the complex psychology or honest musicality music. I think at the core of that is my early childhood years in Venda, where I was born.⁴ I might also say that this corpus of lullabies I write, and that I hope to continue to write, is in a way a tribute to my mother and the role she has played in my life.

So how did growing up in Venda influence your music?

I would say, if I think back about it, it was a kind of magical reality. The world there is full of mountains and forests and streams and lakes and all its legends. And it is spectacularly beautiful, and it changes according to the season: in dry season it's one planet and then in the rainy season it's completely a different planet. I must say that I was five when we left there, so I can't really say I grew up there. I don't have many

specific memories, rather a sort of conglomerate of vague impressions that I'm carrying along. I think it has played a very big role; it was a very happy time for our family, living there. I have those first five years.

We also lived in quite a multicultural environment. The Vendas were living there, but we also had Dutch people from the Netherlands, Dutch physicians and nurses working there. I think there were nurses from other nationalities as well and then another family – I think they were English South Africans. And that shaped me, I think, quite a bit: this idea of a multicultural background.

I think it was a privilege to grow up there. To summarise, really a magical reality. If I really were to speculate on reasons why it does influence me, I think I will be guilty of a kind of romantic recreation, as we often are when we are thinking about our childhood. But I do find that I draw a lot on that. Not specific memories but this precious store of 'I had this'. It has really built some kind of emotional energy into my work, not only as composer but generally in life.

Venda is a very inspiring place and I would like you to tell me more about the people that inspired your music?

Well, the first, of course, the first source of inspiring people are dead composers.

A little story ...

When I was maybe eight or nine years, maybe ten - I can't remember - my mother used to take all of our children to the public library in Potchefstroom⁵ and then we could choose books to read for the week. My favourite shelf for quite some time was the one with

the biographies, with the life histories of the composers. I don't know how many books there were, maybe ten – all the usual suspects: Bach, Brahms, Beethoven, Mozart and so on. But I loved reading those books. They were not very thick and were written in Afrikaans; they were about 60 pages, or so. At a very young age, the life histories of composers have been inspiring and then later also the works of the composers when I started to study them. And then there were several other people later on; getting to know living composers, performers, teachers, and so on.

You mentioned meeting composers as one of these sources of inspiration and we know that you had the opportunity to meet several composers in Darmstadt.⁶ How did you experience the Darmstadt summer course in the 1990s?

Well, first of all, I met actual living composers and not just the dead ones. So, you could interact with them to some degree. The thing that I found inspiring about Darmstadt was that there were these young composers and performers, very eager to learn. And we were hundreds, I guess maybe that year I think we were close to 300 composers, and about as many performers. That was very inspiring! Also, hearing how other composers speak about their music – learning from that, whether it was a lecture or interview or a simple presentation. Of course, we heard lots of music being performed and the performances were of a very high standard. Those that were organised by the faculty had professional musicians coming in, who had experience with performing this kind of music, but also the composition students and performers also arranged a few small concerts by themselves. At that time, I think, I was about 23, 24 ... a wonderful thing to be able to be in such an environment.

Other things that I remember included, of course, the conflicts with Karlheinz Stockhausen. One could go into that in more depth in another interview.

Also, what I picked up, what I appreciated, was that it was not a unitary aesthetic. I remember Luca Lombardi played some of his music and it was clearly not in the Darmstadt style and he could say things about that and he was not attacked by others. So I think there was an openness when I was at Darmstadt. But I must say, it was more a 'pushing away' than a 'pulling into' that happened with me in Darmstadt. I was very interested in this kind of music before I went there, from listening to recordings, studying scores. And then, when I heard so much of this music in such a short time, I realised that is not really the kind of music that was really alive in me. I loved it and I found it very interesting – and even today I can listen to many of the composers there – but I've also realised that it was not *my* music. I think that's also where Wim Henderickx⁷ played an important role, because he said that you should go to Darmstadt once. But he never said why. I don't know if he knew what would be the outcome. He was also at Darmstadt, I guess more or less when he was in his twenties. And I find that an incredibly important thing, because otherwise I might, if I had stayed here and not made that experience, I might have continued trying to write into that, let's call it 'style' or 'direction'. And then, of course, Bertha Spies⁸ has played an important role there, encouraging me to go. In a way I don't think she did it purposefully but in preparing me, getting to know some of the music and being a kind of a sound chamber when I came back and when my own ideas about music then changed. It was good to have the encouragement of people.

What was it about your studies with Bertha Spies that had such an important influence on your development?

Firstly, just on a personal or human level, to work with somebody and to learn from somebody who had a wonderful way of working with people, very high standards of integrity and ethics ... the work in the academic world, but also about my composition: how to be honest with yourself. She set really very high

standards in the ten years that I worked as her assistant. Things had to be done correctly from square one up to the end product. And it didn't matter whether you were writing a letter to a fundraising agency or whether you were setting a paper for an exam or whether you're composing or presenting something at a conference. Everything had to be done well. That, I think, is a very good thing to do for anybody who is in any career. That has shaped me. Then also, on intellectual level, it was immensely stimulating to learn from her, to work with her. Those who know her know that she knows everything about everything. She can always talk, whatever your interest is, she could always pinpoint things such as 'this is the book you must read' or 'this is the difference between this theoretician and that one'. That's on an academic level. Then, coming more closely to analysis and composition ... if one has read her doctorate on the string quartets, that kind of thorough way in which she approached the analyses.⁹ In her analysis classes we were expected to know why every single note is there. And we had to be able to formulate that in a very clear way. Not for all pieces. For some pieces we did a more cursory or summary analysis. But the Ligeti string quartets and Lutosławski first movement¹⁰ and then some of the Debussy works – we really had to know extremely well. So that shaped me lots in the way that I think about analysis but also as composer. Maybe it's a kind of disease that I caught, but I still want to know why every single note is there when I analyse or when I compose.

So, moving to performers ... Bart Meuris¹¹ is not a composer, but it is clear that he has been playing an important role in your work. What roles did Bart play in your career?

As a performer: I can say that he is the first performer that took my music seriously, Bart in Lier, in Belgium. He then asked me to write a piece, while I was living in his house, for a concert that he had in five weeks – the *Drie Nokturnes*.¹² That was a wonderful thing for me at that age, I might have been 22¹³ or something,

to have somebody from another country asking you to write a piece, then actually practising it and giving a wonderful performance of it. Then later, he came to South Africa to present my work, but also work by Wim Henderickx and I think there was a work by maybe another Belgian composer on that programme. And he worked then with Douglas Bull¹⁴ and Erica Eloff,¹⁵ who was also then performing my music. I think that was the first and important thing. But also, because he was generous enough to let me stay in the guest part of his house, I could afford to go to Belgium several times to resume my studies with Wim there. I met a kind of intellectual world around him, an artistic world. He is a fantastic piano teacher, very great improviser ... I could go to see him perform other newly composed music, some of it composed for him, some that he took over. Belgium in my twenties was close to paradise in terms of the things that I experienced there and that is one of the other treasure chests that I still take along. And even today, after 25 years, he gives a lot of advice - he did that a lot in my twenties: how does one go about being a professional musician? It is a wonderful support!

Wim Henderickx also remains a strong inspiration, right?

Yes, absolutely. Through his music, his career and the person that he is. His music ... I had the opportunity to hear it live in Belgium, when I was in my twenties. Several times, big important works like the Ragas,¹⁶ string quartet,¹⁷ some smaller pieces performed in various settings ... So, I can't say that I've studied Wim's music thoroughly through analysis. But being there with him in concerts and also during the recording, hearing him talk about his music, meeting the performers and the conductors... So, his music has been an inspiration because I've known him for such a long time, and he's always been very open and honest about this career. He has always been quite open in his discussions with me about this. I could learn a lot about how to do it and Wim is also good with what they call in Flemish *relativeren*.¹⁸ He was very cognisant of the

fact that South African composers have fewer chances, fewer resources ... I could admire his career and be excited about how things were going, but he never created a kind of expectation that my career should be similar. I think many people who know him, knows that he plays important roles, different multifaceted roles, in not only students' lives, but we know in his family and in the professional environment in Belgium. I've gained a lot.

You mentioned the Ragas. Wim Henderickx's music is highly influenced by Indian music and I know that there are also some Indian influences in your music, specifically the notion of gestures. Can you please speak about that?

We must say that the Indian influence in Wim's music and in my music are two very different things. Both in kind and degree. Wim knows Indian music very well, he's been exposed to Indian music, at least since he was a teenager; also, to Indian culture. So, he knows it extremely well and it's very much integrated in his work. There's a lot written about that. In terms of my music, there's really nothing like that. My interest or inspiration from Indian music really comes from a chance encounter: there was this Bharatanatyam¹⁹ dancer in the city hall in Potchefstroom once. I didn't know what it was and I went there and I was completely inspired by the dancing. Also the music, but it was really the dancer and the dancing that inspired me. Then I watched a few things on YouTube and read a few books or articles. I got to know it a little bit. So, for me, I can't say that there's such a strong interest in Indian music. I haven't listened to a lot of it. There was another concert, maybe a few months after the city hall performance, by a dancer and there was a singer. What really struck me was the Bharatanatyam dancer and I think that is another one of the really big important influences in my creative work. What I found absolutely staggering, was that there were completely coded, stylised movements; that were thousands of positions and gestures and they each had a meaning and they each

had names and people have to learn it over, I don't know ... ten, twelve years. They learn this whole vocabulary of thousands of things and can put them together. I remember in this first performance with the dancer she danced something, I guess it lasted 8 to 12 minutes and then she said: 'And now I'm going to tell you the story'. And she did the movements and actually spoke. And to see that this was like sign language, it's something that I never knew before.

Another thing is that because these dancers, when they are really good, they are so well trained. Somebody like Geeta Chandran²⁰ (or Padmashri Chandran), you know, the refinedness with which they move when they go from one position to another one, when they make a gesture, it is so clear and it's so rich and so strong in terms of expression, that I've always tried to emulate that with my musical patterns. Always thinking of what would a dancer do. Later, it was not just Bharatanatyam, there are I think seven classical Indian dances and we find the same thing in Vietnam and in other parts of the world. It's not unique to Bharatanatyam. But that kind of integration... We can call it well-formedness. The gestures of these dancers are really well-formed according to very strict 'criteria'. They really practise! And I always try to find that in my composition when I write sound patterns: to find similar well-formedness or constraints or rules and then work with that. So that remained a source of inspiration and joy for me, this idea of Bharatanatyam and similar dance traditions. So it was almost a chance event, this Bharatanatyam dancer that was performing here. And it had an immense influence on me. In a way interesting or intriguing to think how chance events can shape our creative lives.

What are some of the important events that sparked your creative work in music?

I would say that one has to go back quite far. When I spoke about the times in Venda: I am the

youngest of six and my mother succeeded in creating a very creative environment for us. And we were inspired to make up our own words and things. Songs were mixed in and making objects and playing with empty boxes, you know, this whole kind of thing. That was definitely a spark and something that I still take a lot from. But I was quite young when I started to compose, so if we speak about sparks, we think about the initiation, you know, that which actually came before the creative work and for me that is not so easy to find because it's bound up even in my 'pre-history': the whole creative environment. Being, creating sounds and songs and improvising was part of my life even before I can remember. One event that goes back quite early is a story that my mother told about when I was about two years. The Police Orchestra was playing in Pietersburg.²¹ I don't know what they played, but they took me there and she said that when the orchestra started playing, I went completely hysterical and she had to take me out. And for several days I was overwhelmed. One can, of course, interpret that in many different ways but I think that must have been a very important event. Up till then I heard the sounds of the Venda people singing outside the house. That was the first time that I was exposed to a bigger orchestra. After that, as I said, it was sort of just going through many events that more than sparked but that actually kept me going. I had the privilege of having really good class music teaching here at Laerskool Mooirivier.²² I loved the McLachlan *Notepret*,²³ those little books, and I would always be the first one to run into the class music class or the 'singing class' and get my little book and start singing. I don't think I paid too much attention to the teacher or to the others, I would just love that. We also, when I was about ten, eleven maybe, we had an operetta that we put up that Tommie Ferreira²⁴ wrote the music for, some Mozart that he arranged for the school kids and there was some sort of story. I can't remember the story, but I played recorder in the band and that was important to be part of something like that.

I heard the piano solo Fünf zärtliche Bagatellen

at the South African Music Concert in July 2019 in Potchefstroom.²⁵ You mentioned during the concert that this is a serial composition. Did I merely imagine the irony in your statement, or was it there? You also described sound objects in terms of toys. Can you please elaborate on this?

Yes, the irony was definitely there. But I think that is a subject for, let's call it a 'specialised interview'. I would not want to go too much into that, but there's definitely some sort of irony. For me, it's a little bit of inside pleasure, in Afrikaans 'binnepret', to write a piece of music that is actually a serial piece but that doesn't sound like it – that sounds quite tonal in fact. I did a similar thing with *Drie Nokturnes*, although it's not so strictly serial. It's the same kind of thing. About sound objects as toys: yes, that's something that I think about lots and it gives me great pleasure to think about it and work with sound objects in this way. It's this idea of when you work with sound objects to have a very open exploration, just like children with toys: they are not trying to recreate the philosophy or make a big statement. You just simply see how things can be combined and what can represent what, and what kind of story we could tell by moving these things around. Also, when I think of sound objects as toys, it allows me to think of kinds of human interaction. When you have people in a room, maybe even older people, and there are toys around, it is a very clear signal to say 'let's participate', 'let's make something together', and that's also with sound objects. We could think of it as this way, not so much a one-way of 'composer gives the orders' and others have to obey, but 'let's make this together'. There are, of course, many other things. The kind of creativity that flows from thinking in a playground—that is very different from the kind of creativity that we get when we think of, maybe architecturally, building a building. So for me this way of thinking of sound objectives as toys is in a way also an antidote to taking composition too seriously. And it gives me the chance to collaborate with people in a certain way that I can feel comfortable with. It's a metaphor in the back of my

mind that allows me to collaborate with people.

When I listened to your Arie Antiche,²⁶ I noticed that it was composed for a very specific voice, and we know that this is the voice of the soprano Erica Eloff. Please tell me more about your work with Erica.

From the first time that I heard Erica singing here in Potchefstroom as a first-year student, I was immediately – and I still am – impressed. Firstly, by the incredible beauty of the voice. It is simply such a pleasure to listen to the sounds, the sound of the voice. And then, for me, it's always been a limitless musicality ... She had very good teaching from Werner Nel,²⁷ here in Potchefstroom, but even from the beginning, it was clear that this person sings with all of the tools that a singer needed. It is a joy when people sing with a good technique.

At that concert in 2011, I also heard some compositions that are arrangements of the Tshivenda songs as well as some Afrikaans songs, which is the first book of the Wiegelieliedjies.²⁸ Thus, it seems like you can work with her in a wide repertoire?

Yes, after many years, I think twenty or so, of working with her and knowing her, I still haven't discovered the limits of what she can do. *Arie antiche* is interesting because I set out to write a piece and I told her: 'I'm going to write you a piece that you will not be able to perform. It will be so difficult that you won't be able to perform it'. And she learned it in less than a week and she performed it superbly. So, there is a very wide repertoire and I've also heard her singing other light music and so on. So it's true. I look forward to many years of cooperating with her, collaborating on various projects. And then try to maybe find that, where those limits actually can be. Both she and I will be in Austria

soon²⁹ for hopefully quite some time and I think we can explore, not only my work, but also the works of other composers.

Talking about parts of the world ... Your composition Parts of the world we can only imagine for viola and piano that was composed in 2019, is it very philosophical?

Yes, it's actually three pieces together. The first two are written, the third one I hope to write this year.³⁰ The first piece, *Parts of the world that cannot exist* is the first one, *Parts of the world we can only imagine* and the third one for cello and piano will be *Worlds as counterfactuals* or something similar. So, the three together are called *Worldsmiths*. The kind of word I've invented. It is philosophical. I would not say the music is philosophical, which it isn't. But it is more the ideas behind this. Also through the way that we make our houses and the way that we arrange buildings in space, we create certain worlds and we try to persuade others that this world is either worthy of existence or better than another world. So, there is this kind of 'while we are making worlds, we are trying to persuade others of this world', and it happens in teaching, it happens in everyday conversations. I thought that it would be an interesting experiment to see if I can create music that is not quite what people expect to hear from the piano and one string instrument. Could I create it in such a way that I could persuade or convince people that music could be like this, that it could exist like this? And in that I try what I can understand from cognition and the way that we work with sounds, to see if I could always subliminally connect with people's cognition. It sounds very, ambitious, and it is indeed very ambitions.

You mentioned in another conversation that you plan to rewrite Impromptu for solo cello, even though you've received a prize many years ago, and it was premiered by Dieter Nel.³¹ Does your need to

*rework it stem at least in part from the inspiration that you draw from the play Ohio Impromptu by Samuel Beckett?*³²

The need to revise stems from *Ohio Impromptu*, and also the original stimuli to compose was very much a direct influence from *Ohio Impromptu*. And it is indeed the presence of such a magnificent work such as *Ohio Impromptu* that gives me this feeling I want to revise this. I feel that I haven't quite reached my intention, even by a long shot, of writing something that could stand with *Ohio Impromptu*.

What about the relationships between words and music inspires you?

I must say that with *Ohio Impromptu*, it's not so much the words that Beckett uses that inspired me - that kind of inspiration is important in the other works and in my general composition - but *Ohio Impromptu*, it's more this very rich world that he creates through the staging and as I imagine the lights and then the very, almost 'denaturalised' interaction between people but in another way extremely realistic and emotionally extremely powerful as many of Beckett's stage works are. So, it was an attempt to put, not so much words and music together when I worked with that as a source of inspiration, but something of the power of that piece. I haven't seen it live; I only read it. So to come back to your question on words and music, I reflect on how we listen to natural verbal language, how we learn it, how people put natural language into a scientific article or into a poem or a stage play and I try to understand that, on the one hand, and draw similarities into the way that we work with sound patterns, musical patterns. So, this relationship between words and music again goes to a cognitive level. I am not so interested in word painting or the symbolism of words, I am more interested in the sound of words and how the sounds of words work with our neurological apparatus, if you want to say it like that. So, it has been a very important part of my composition

process. In my sketch books one would often see something that I've read about verbal language. And then it is more or less how I've imagined it works when we work with phonetics which goes at a very quick pace and these sounds are very short when we speak language. And then what will be similarities and differences when we write music which has different timbres very quickly or that changes pitches very quickly? So, trying to bring the two things together in order to, to have some sort of structure in the composition process in terms of the music that I really want to write.

Let us talk about your sketch books... I have seen some of your sketch books and I was wondering how they reflect your compositional process?

I think of my sketch books a little bit like I imagine the notebooks of Jane Goodall when she was in Gombe doing her research on the chimpanzees. You know, writing every possible thing down because you don't know what is important. You just have to make sense of a completely alien species. Except in the case of my sketch books, I am of course the observer and observant: I am the alien species here. I find composition extremely difficult and very hard, and to understand not only sound structures but also how we put sound structures together. For me, it is hard work! I find it very useful to have one class of objects, those sketch books, that looks similar that all go into my study into that cupboard. There are several cupboards filled with these sketchbooks. Just to know that everything that I am wondering about, all the questions that I have, all the things that I discover, that it is recorded and documented somewhere. I've tried various formats over many years but I find that when I am working on *Worldsmiths* number 3, I write everything about *Worldsmiths* number 3 in there but also all other thoughts and all other discoveries and things go in here. Then, at least, when I get discouraged, I can go through, you know, the sketch book of three years ago and I can see I had similar struggles and I somehow find my way out of the maze. Or if I had a good idea of how to work

with a theme or a pattern then I forget it and I can go back three or four weeks later. Or when I write my intentions or that I am going to write a piece about this and that, then I go back to it and see: did you actually more or less manage to write a piece like that? So, the sketch books are a very important part for me to keep myself going and to make sense of the whole laborious process of composing music.

Where does working with performers fit in here?

I would want many more or at least a few more, really close collaborations with performers. I had a few with double bassist, Patricio Arias in Argentina, and later Walter McTigert in Sweden.³³ I also plan the sessions that I am going to work with them. I call them workshops. In my sketch books, I make it nice and then when we get together, I say this and this and that and let's work on that. Then afterwards, when I reflect on what worked, what didn't work - I also write that into the sketch book. So, the sketch book is also a way to both plan and gather all of the information that I can get from working with performers.

I believe that your sketch books are also personal journals?

Yes, when I'm discouraged, I would write literally in the sketch book: 'today I am really discouraged' or 'I didn't sleep enough last night'. I notice certain patterns. Of course, if one doesn't sleep enough, it's very hard to pay attention to the complex working with patterns, the mind just can't do that. Or if I get a phone call when I am in the middle of composing, that can throw me out for a whole day. So, I reflect on that: exactly why it threw me out and how it threw me out, so that I have a reason to refuse to take phone calls while I am working. When you call it 'journals'... It is definitely not a day-by-day, blow-by-blow account. It's just the things I notice that are important in understanding

the way in which I work – sort-of doing self-therapy in order to keep going.

My interest in Set Theory led me to your Setudes for piano solo. You mentioned that there are ten Setudes, but I have only seen four: numbers 2, 3, 4 and 6. Where are numbers 1, 5 and 7 to 10 then?

Well, they are living a secret life, or their secret lives, in my sketch books as ideas and sketches and completed passages and even... I think number 7 has substantial parts already written. They are just living these lives waiting for the moment when I have the time and the freedom of thought and the money to do this project. And, of course, when I have a few really good pianists who are willing to try these *Setudes* out. They are there. I call them *Setudes*, they don't really work with the Set Theory in a very deep way, but there are ten because if you organise pitches or pitch classes in a certain way, one gets a super set of ten different pitch class sets, not set classes but pitch class sets, which one could relate to one another with certain voice leading principals. And then each one of these *Setudes* takes one of these PC sets as a foundational set and then ventures out into using either one or two or three or five or all of the other ones. So that's why there are ten: because there is no more than ten possible if you construct the set in this way. It's a project that I thought would have been completed by now. That's why I was so brave not to start with number 1. I thought I would be able to do it in a few years, but it's now more than ten years later and it is still only the four that are there.

I noticed that your work for saxophone and cello, Creatures they observed at the river, has two different penultimate movements.

Yes, the first movement has a longer version

and a smaller version. The longer version is for when this movement is performed on its own. The shorter version is for when, either the whole is performed or if this fourth movement is combined in different ways with the other movements. It really just happened when I composed the fourth movement. It is a question of proportion. I noticed that it's just simply too long if you take the whole piece. And then I had to make some sort of condensed version. I discussed it with the Helton-Thomas Duo,³⁴ Jonathan and Steven, and they also agreed that they would rather perform the shorter version of the fourth movement when they performed the whole piece here in Potchefstroom.

How can your music scores be obtained?

With difficulty. That's the only thing that I can say. It's something that I don't do very well as a composer. I am not very good at keeping the last versions of scores or knowing which one is the last version of a score. It's especially since I've started many years ago working on a computer. When I was still working by hand, I had some sort of grip on it. But now, when doing things on the computer, it's hard for me to know which one is the final score. If somebody wants the scores at this stage, it unfortunately means emailing me and asking for the scores. I hope to do it better somehow in future but I don't know yet how to do it. Maybe I know, but I just don't seem to do it in a very good way.

Talking about keeping track... I would like to start talking about your work list. Work lists function as a summary of composers' work and are often important to composers. However, I got the impression that you are not very solicitous about an updated work list. What are your thoughts on your own work list?

My work list, like the scores, is a bit of a lifelong struggle. It's hard for me to keep track of things,

especially because I revise and withdraw. I haven't found a good way yet to somehow manage to keep this work list in a condition that is really useful. I hope to also do that somehow better in future. But I must also say that our possibility of technology nowadays also allows for a different kind of work list. Nowadays, it is much easier to keep an updated work list with the date that this was last updated and so on. So, I think if people are really interested in a composer's work and if the composer manages to put that work list in a clear and important place where people know to just go and check the last one, it won't be such a problem if that work list keeps on changing. For me the work list is not so much a record of all the great things that I have achieved or the hundred pieces that I've written. I haven't... Maybe I have... But there is definitely not a hundred pieces on the work list. It is more just an information document. People want to know what have you written for cello or piano or whatever and then people can go on that work list and check. And then if the work list in 2020 looks different from the work list in 2023, I don't see that as a very big problem, nowadays, with the technology that we have.

Why did you withdraw so many compositions from your work list?

You are speaking in the past tense, but I still every once in a while, have a good clean-out of the work list, so the fact that something is on the work list now is not a guarantee that it will stay there forever. I still withdraw things. I would say that there's at least – if you look at the work list – a quarter of that number is withdrawn works. Not on the work list, but I mean: let's say there are forty works on the work list, then there is at least ten that has been there, or even more, some time. And then there is also a lot of things that are all sort of complete, but I don't put them on yet because I am not completely satisfied with the work yet. So they're sort of hanging in line, waiting for their chance to get onto the work list. It is, firstly, when I realise that my intention with writing this piece was not realised in the

piece – and sometimes unfortunately we only realise that after one or two performances. I realised that this is not really the piece that I wanted to write, and then I prefer to withdraw that. Or there's a chance that I hear in a piece, maybe in a performance... Some of the pieces that I wrote for Erica with a certain instrumentation, I realised: that actually could be a very great piece if I change the instrumentation or just changed the dramaturgy of the piece a little bit. And then it gets off the work list for longer and shorter time. Or sometimes there's just very clear problems in the piece. And it's not missed opportunities or lost intention, it's just in a proportion or in the material or in the structure, and I can just hear in the performance that there is a problem. And then I prefer to spend the time on revising it and then maybe put up another version, rather than having performers learning this and the audience listening to this and then just waste their time because it's not a good piece. Then I would prefer to take it back, rework it, and then present it again.

Please tell me more about the revision process in your music.

Well, I live with the carcasses for many years. They are there, they are there in the cupboard, and once in a while when I feel like it, or when I think about the work, I would take it out again, imagine it or make notes on the score or analyse parts of it. Then I would just write suggestions for myself. Things that I might want to do or quickly rewrite the passage, put it in somehow, staple it to the original somehow. Waiting for the time that there is really an opportunity for a performance... And then when there's the opportunity for a performance coming up, then I will start working with a specific piece that I want to revise. Sometimes also, if there's no performance available, I feel the urge or the dream or the intention to work on it again. But mostly it is linked with a performance or a possible performance. And then the different ways of revising are very different for the different pieces. So, I can't really say that there's more than just general things of

picking them up and analysing a bit trying to imagine them, or that there's a specific process that I can follow for every composition. The composition, depending on what are the things that I want to solve, *that* suggests the kind of way of working in the revision. But I think the most time is spent on deciding whether I want to revise it and figuring out what kind of things I want to revise. So, it's a very reflective thing.

What is the importance or meaning of your composition process to you?

I can say that composition and being involved in composition has been a very important part of my life, for many years. It has been one of the central pillars that supports many or maybe most of the other things that I am doing and that I have done in my life. It has been the activity that I have spent thousands and thousands of hours on physically just sitting down or standing up and working on this. And then also working with performers and analysing other pieces to understand composition. Also just reflecting on how this can be done and how you can teach others. So, it has just taken up such a massive amount of time in my life and has always been important. This identity of being a composer has been in many contexts the way that I present myself in the professional environment or even in more personal interactions. It has always been there. For me, I think the struggle of trying to understand this and trying to do it is the part that I'm most drawn to. I sometimes imagine that this incredibly important part of my life will stop the day when I've actually figured out how to do composing. If I could just sit down and write it on demand like a computer programme would print its own programmes... I can't now imagine that it would play any role in my life then. I think I would stop and then... Maybe I will then teach others, but I am not even so sure that I will do that.

My first music theory class with you was in a large room and we were instructed to move on

the carpet. Having had until then a conventional education in music theory, where one sits quietly at a desk, I was perplexed by the way in which you taught us music theory: through listening and movement. Later, I started to understand this Dalcroze-inspired³⁵ approach better and I could participate with more confidence. Can you please tell me more about the way in which you employ this approach in your teaching?

I've had some exposure to the Dalcroze approach, or eurythmics, but not so much that I can say I'm trained in the approach enough that I can actually employ the approach. So at this stage, it is really exploring, trying things out. I usually just try to incorporate some of the things that I learn from the approach into what I have learnt about teaching over the past thirty years of just teaching. I hope to be able to do this better in future but at this stage it's not so much employing the approach as taking what I understand at this stage and changing it. It's not just putting it into my teaching, but actually transforming my own teaching according to the things that I learn or that I notice about this approach.

And in composition?

I don't employ the approach directly yet into composition, except for a few short experiments or activities with a few students once in two or three years. So not so much in teaching, but it does play a very big role in my own development as a composer. So, when I'm working on my own, I definitely work a lot through movement, or shapes on the floor, developing some kind of skills, and the really active listening that I do. So in that way, I develop my own technique as composer. I discover things because I am working with this Dalcroze-inspired way. And then it flows, indirectly then, into the work when I teach composition.

Speaking from the perspective of my own interactions with you, music analysis and composition are two inseparable activities in your composition class. What is the importance of analysis for composers, according to you? I imagine that when one focuses on analysis, composition can easily become a reverse-analysis. Do you feel that there are other pitfalls in this approach?

In my Masters dissertation,³⁶ that was the report that I wrote about analysis and composition... So maybe one day I'll make a good version of that dissertation, then the information will be there. It would be a bit of a broad and a very long answer if I go into that, what one can gain and how these things work together. So, I will jump to the pitfalls. What are the problems? I think firstly that the problem does not lie so much in music analysis and composition, in this link, but the way in which we do music analysis. If one studies only one, let's call it 'method' or one 'approach' or has only a limited amount of techniques, and as a composition teacher that's the only thing that you teach students, or as a learning composer that's the only thing you know, the pitfalls will be many and I think it will be clear. The solution, of course, is to learn more than one technique, maybe five or six and then, when you are a composer, apply it without any reverence or adulation for the master who created the technique or so. Just take what you can and let it build your insights into music and how structures and material work. So, you just pick and take and learn and explore. Again like toys, really – to use music analysis as a serious toy. That would avoid the pitfalls. What kind of pitfalls there might be? Well, like you say, reverse-analysis. If this is the only thing you know, and if you have a very big adoration for a specific analysis technique, yes, I think as a composer one would start to write music that demonstrates the wonderful qualities of this kind of technique. And music is too rich to be limited to only one technique. So that kind of, what you call reverse-analysis, can happen.

I think another pitfall might be that you could

overload your own cognitive capacities or the capacities of your student if you insist on a kind of analysis that is not suitable or that is maybe too difficult or too unrelated to what the composer is trying to do. So, one needs a lot of mental energy and capacity to simply create. And then, if you add music analysis to that, it might be just too much. Or if the analysis is not really connected to the kind of techniques that the composer is trying to develop, the composer might not see the sense in going with this analysis or it would interfere with the automation that the composer is trying to achieve in technique. And then you put in some analysis that's not really helping, that's more pulling away from that automation. Or it might simply be that a composer is so overloaded with having also to learn analysis on the one side that the motivation to continue composing can just vanish. But having said that, I think that if analysis is taught in a good way to composers, by a sensitive and good teacher, I don't think that a strong creative personality would be harmed by music analysis. And I think that there are many basic things about structures that one could learn from studying good models in a good way, which you don't have to learn through the creative process. That one could save time and effort by learning already made compositions, rather than making numerous failed attempts at composition in order to learn the same things. But it takes a good teacher.

Analysis coupled with pastiche composition is one of your dominant approaches in your theory classes. How do composers improve their technique by composing in a specific style?

In my theory classes, pastiche is used in order to learn about music theory and not to learn about composition. So, the kind of pastiche and the approach that I do in theory teaching is not so much really aimed at composers as it is aimed at general musicians who need to learn general things about music. So, having said that, what I think pastiche composition for composers is firstly: one learns a lot by trying to emulate a good

model. If we write two-part inventions in the style of Bach... You need to think differently about the model when you make something similar, as opposed to when you are just analysing it or if you are only performing it. The other thing is learning a system, whatever system it might be – whether it's tonal music in style of Bach or whether it is Romantic tonality in style of a character piece – I think it's good for composers to notice that there is, let's call it the 'out-of-time ordering'. There is a system that exists here and there's the composition here. And when you are making pastiche you are really forced to think about the system, not just 'what do I want to do', or going according to your inspiration. You must make sure that what you are making also fits into this bigger system. And then later, as a composer, if you develop your own system - something that might even be a little bit unique or let's call it 'creative' - then you understand the relationship between system and composition. And pastiche is a good way of learning that because you don't have to make up the system, the system is already there and it's very clear when you stray from the system.

Another advantage is, simply: a composer needs to learn many things. For example, the sounds that I have in my mind or in my inner ear, I need to write them down on paper. Now pastiche helps with those kinds of things, or how to keep track of different versions of the piece. Or to revise and how to hear things that are out of place, or the things about proportion. All these things that a composer in any case has to learn, one can also learn in pastiche. Of course not exclusively through pastiche, but I do think that one can learn a lot, and that has been my own training. From a young age I had to do the normal four-part harmony, but also when I was a teenager, learning to write three-part fugues in the style of Bach, learning to write character pieces in Romantic style, and so on. I think I've gained a lot from that. I can imagine that something like pastiche as a way of teaching composition can start at a very young age, for example, after the first or second instrumental lesson, let's say piano lesson, the piano teacher can very

easily tell the child: 'Now go and make something that sounds similar to the thing that you just learned in the lesson.' And in that way, we can use a kind of pastiche-approach from a very young age to stimulate creativity, get musicians going into composition.

At many South African universities composition as a subject is only available to students from their third year, wouldn't it be better to start earlier then?

Composition, or the link composition-improvisation, can be an aspect of music education and I believe should be an aspect of music education from a very young age. One could say that it would be a normal situation if all musicians learn about composition and about improvisation right from the start, as it has been for a very long period in our Western tradition of music, as it is in many other traditions and as it's been in many traditions in parts of the world. Actually, it is a very strange situation that we are in, that creative work gets separated from learning about music. If one really starts to think about it, it's almost unthinkable how this complete separation can be. Unfortunately, we have this situation, so what I usually try to do is: if a composer informs me or a student informs me of their interest in composition or shows it here in the first year, I usually advise them or encourage them to start then as soon as possible with composition, even if it's not part of the formal academic curriculum. And then we get to the third year and we can do something. My experience is that, if students have not done composition, then in two years in a typically four-year Bachelors III and IV ... One can do things, but it is very hard then to reach a level that is presentable as the work of a composer.

Structure is an important element in composition, and you always guide your student to create well-defined structures. In which ways can well-defined structures be construed?

My first, sort of, go-to strategies are always to help students to understand the relationship between structure and what one could call the attentional, the attention of the listener or the cognitive process of the listener. So that would be the first thing that I always draw attention to: to understand musical structure as not just something that the composer understands, or created, or not something that is merely inherent in the music, but something that is taking the relationship between the music and the listener as a very basic foundation. I do that in teaching but I also do that in my own work and I also do that when I analyse. After that, the strategy is to let them experience models, mainly through active listening: pieces that I feel, and that maybe they also experience as really working, that really work as structures. So that they have, let's call it, good examples, or some concrete – as much as one can call music concrete – but something that is already made, by somebody who can make these structures.

Another strategy is to encourage and to help students to go through what I call prototypes. So, they just try something. Maybe a lot is not working but some things are working already. The whole structure is not working, but certain parts are and then you draw attention to the parts that are working and then you work on the parts that are not working. So, not try to achieve some impossible goal with the first possible attempt to just create the perfect structure. It usually doesn't work that way. Not for student composers, and I also would venture to say it doesn't work like that for experienced composers. Also learning about structures, I would encourage students to perform, the composers also to perform structures that are working. It is very useful to be a performer of pieces that are really masterfully created. So, I would encourage composers to perform existing structures; not just listening, not just analysing, but actually performing it. Bringing it onto stage and getting it across to an audience... Because you notice the things that experienced composers put into a structure to make it possible for a performer to bring it across to an audience. And lastly, I would

also encourage composers to play their own pieces, because sometimes we don't notice the problems in our structures until we are actually in the position where we have to now convey it. Then we see, well 'here is a problem with the structure that I didn't notice when I was only composing or analysing'. So those are a few of the strategies or the suggestions that I have for learning about structure.

You often talk about cognitively rich music. How can this be defined?

I haven't yet thought up a really good definition, although I like this idea. I would say, firstly, that it is music that interacts in rich ways with our cognitive abilities. I would say that it is music that has different layers of structure – even simultaneous layers of structure so that the listener can choose a path through paying attention to different things. And then on a next listening, the listener can take another path. That means that this cognitive music allows for a varied interaction on different listenings of the same listener or different listeners in the same room, listening to different things. This cognitive music has a certain complexity of patterns and relationships between patterns that makes all of these things possible, but cognitively rich music also keeps in mind some of our limitations when we are listening or when we are performing. So, if we make it unimaginably complex or put in too many layers, I wouldn't call it cognitively rich music anymore. If one really puts the time and effort into this concept and trying to come up with some sort of description or discussion or definition, it would be possible and it would be something worthwhile to do. But I also find that not all composers are equally interested in composing cognitively rich music and one doesn't have to compose cognitively rich music ever or you can only do it sometimes. It is not the only kind of valid music. It is not a criterium for 'this is good' or 'this is valuable'. It's a *possibility* in music. And if somebody would ask me for examples... Well, I think most of the complex chamber music of Brahms, I would put

into this category because of my own experience and analyses. I would put in a lot of the music that György Ligeti has written, especially the piano etudes. There would be many examples... Bach, the 48 Preludes and Fugues, especially the fugues, I would put into that category. It has been a kind of music that has been created or that composers have created for thousands of years. If a composer is interested in writing this and if that composer has a good teacher to guide them, for me it is a worthwhile thing to be doing.

What is the importance of composition teachers and how do their efforts fit with the idea that composition is largely an autodidactic discipline?

So, a student composer who has a good teacher will not be forced to be an autodidact through lack of good teaching and this composition learner will benefit a lot from having a good teacher. This benefit will not in any way be in conflict against the autodidactic nature of composition. Of course, we know that one of the pleasures and one of the joys of learning to compose is this feeling that I am the first one in the world to figure this out and I've solved my own problem. A sensitive teacher or a good teacher will be able to keep that feeling and that experience alive, even though the teacher might actually be structuring the whole learning experience in such a way that they are really guiding the student in that way. So, for me, between good teaching and autodidactic nature of composition teaching there is really no conflict. And it's not just the teacher but the whole environment, the whole supportive environment. So, there is definitely this possibility and there is no conflict between good teaching and good learning in composition.

You mention Sweden and I know that you really enjoy guest-teaching in different countries, often in Sweden. Can you compare your experiences of teaching composition in these countries with those in South Africa?

Yes, I can. Unfortunately, the comparison will not be favourable towards what we do here in South Africa and I will compare it without the intention to criticise what we are doing here in South Africa. So, I will say the good things that I've seen there because I've really seen mostly good things. I can't quickly now think of any negative things that I've seen there. So, firstly, there are much larger groups of students [than in South Africa] studying composition at the Royal College. There, when I was presenting seminars, there might be 25 or 28 composition students in a seminar and you can imagine what kind of creative environment that creates when you have so many other students studying. Then also specialised composition programmes – so students come and they study that for three years. From the first year, they are composition students – that is what they focus on. Of course, that is made possible because before going to the tertiary studies, they have the opportunity to study at certain schools that they have in Sweden, composition students go there in order to prepare to be able take the entrance exams at tertiary level.

Another thing that is there that I think is very positive is they often have a faculty of three... four...five composition teachers and in Stockholm specifically it seems quite possible to decide as a student if you now want to study with another teacher after ... I don't know what the exact time might be. And the teachers also support each other's students. So, you can imagine that kind of environment. You have all these students, but you also have all these teachers. And these teachers are without exception *active* in the professional environment as composers. You can go to concerts of all these teachers. There's institutional support for composition, as much as is needed. Then also opportunities for composition students there: they write for symphony orchestras and they perform their works. The Royal College actually has ensembles in which professional musicians come in to read and perform works by students, and these are paid for by the college and not by the students. I can just go on and on about things like recordings that are available and audiences that are interested and conductors that

you can get ... so, it is a very different environment. I saw the same kind of thing in Oslo. A very different environment that I think is very conducive to studying composition.

It becomes clear that teaching composition has challenges but do you see possibilities through which we can meet these challenges?

Yes. I spoke earlier a little bit of this possibility of including composition and improvisation from a very young age. I would that say that is our most important strategy to allow all musicians to experience the joys of composing and to learn about composing and improvising as they grow up. Then I would say the support, even if it is small, of getting opportunities for composers to either perform their own pieces or music teachers performing the pieces of composition students from a young age, so that the music that they are writing is presented live on stage. We need to do that from a young age. And then we can also support the student composers. They need some examples of some people doing what they aspire to do. It is very hard to aspire to be a professional composer when there is no professional composer around who is actually doing that at age 35 or 45 or what. So, that is something which I have been very fortunate to have here at the North-West University: that I have wonderful support. But we need many more composers, one is not enough. One at each university or two at each university is not enough. And then lastly, is also to support composers when they feel the need to learn new things. In our creative lives, it is so important to always feel that there's a challenge that you haven't challenged yet. So, to create those kinds of opportunities ... making it possible for composers to be away from their work for a certain amount of time, what we can call continued professional development of composers, will also create quite a bit of energy in the composition teachers themselves.

Talking about challenges, you are soon leaving to

continue your studies in the Dalcroze-approach in Vienna at the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst. Can you please tell me more about this?

Oh yes, I can, but I might sound too evangelical if I really start to talk about it. I have done the first semester [as in February 2020, currently continuing the studies] and it was much more than what I hoped for. It is a fantastic experience on many levels. So, the study is called Rhythmik or it is called Rhythmik MB and the MB stands for Musik und Bewegung.³⁷ It has different words, but in Austria at this stage it really goes through as the name Rhythmik. So, in Austria I would say to people that I am studying Rhythmik. I am studying with nine other first year students and then there are also second, third and fourth year students in the Bachelors programme and then Masters students for the two years of Masters, so if you were to plan to do the whole thing that is planned, it would be six years. In the first four years, the focus is more on pedagogy, on education, although there is a lot of artistic work, and then in the Masters it switches much more to the artistic side and a little bit less pedagogy although both pedagogy and artistic work are present through the whole study programme. Each of them is a specialist in a certain field or aspect of Rhythmik, although they all are of course qualified to know the whole field. It is something I am doing for myself in order to improve my musicianship, to improve the skills like performing and listening, improvising, also to be able to teach it in different ways. That's about what's going on there. I try to hold it back a little bit... If I speak about it, I speak very long and I get very excited.

How do you believe that this will enrich you as a composer and teacher?

Well, to tie my general comments down, very specifically, I find that the kind of music that I imagine that I want to write asks for very skilful, or a large skillset

of very specific techniques that I need to automate. If I take, for example, the non-isochronous metres, the metres without equal beats, that I am very fond of using, I found that, somehow, I must get it into myself in the same way that tonics and dominants are in myself. And for me this embodied way of working with music and movement and interaction and having the opportunity to try improvisation, also with other musicians... I think that what I am hoping for is to get the tools and the insights and the time and the teachers to help me with integrating many different parts of my technique that I've tried to integrate (but unsuccessfully) over the past maybe ten years or so. So, really tying it down to that aspect of working on composition technique and then also in general having the opportunity to perform music as an improviser. We already had one public concert where I've improvised with three of the other first year students. Or just have the opportunity to be practising piano... We are learning many different percussion instruments, and for my work on metre and rhythm the ability to actually play percussion instruments in a good sensible way and having the instruments in a room where you can actually go and play them – if you book the room ... Those are the very basic logistic things that I think I will benefit from as a composer. Of course, if I can do these things in my own composition, I will be able to teach it better. But then the pedagogy part, the education training and education that we get there, will enable me to be a much, much better teacher, whether I am teaching composition or theory or rudiments or whatever. So, the answer could have been much longer, but that's more or less it: to be building in myself and then having the skills to then again create and perform and teach others.

Postscript

As a student of Taljaard for more than ten years, I was under the erroneous impression that I knew beforehand most of what he was about to tell me. However, I was intrigued and inspired all over again by his work and life, as shared in his usual honest but modest way. This interview has the potential to make an impact on many

other students, academics, and composers, because knowledge is beneficial when shared. I am confident that the encouraging and open way in which Taljaard shares his knowledge will amplify this impact.

Endnotes

¹ This interview was conducted on 15 February 2020 at the concert hall of the School of Music and Conservatory of the North-West University in Potchefstroom. A video recording of the interview is available at www.jacomeyer.com/resources/composer-interview-series/4-hannes-taljaard. The transcription reproduced here has been edited for publication.

² This work was withdrawn from Taljaard's current worklist.

³ *Kleine Mensie, Liewe Kindjie, Rare Kinderjare, and Sing saam met my*.

⁴ Venda is a region in the northern part of South Africa, Limpopo. It is close to the border of Zimbabwe. Venda was declared self-governing in 1973 and became 'independent' in 1979. It became part of South Africa again in 1994. The Venda population is currently comprised of slightly more than a million people.

⁵ Potchefstroom is a town in the North-West province of South Africa, about 120 km from Johannesburg. It hosts the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University where Taljaard studied and spent the majority of his career (until 2019).

⁶ Darmstadt refers to the International New Music Summer School that is held annually in Darmstadt, Hesse, Germany.

⁷ Wim Henderickx is a prominent Belgian composer. Taljaard had the opportunity to attend classes and lessons with Henderickx in the 1990s.

⁸ Bertha Spies is a well-known music theorist, pedagogue, analyst and composer. She was associate professor of music theory at the North-West University (then Potchefstroom University from Christian Higher Education) from 1993 to 2003. Spies was the promoter of Taljaard's Honours and Masters degree dissertations. She is currently an extraordinary professor of the MASARA research niche of the North-West University.

⁹ Spies's DMus thesis, '*n Analisemetode vir strykkwartette gekomponeer van 1960 tot 1970 met spesifieke verwysing na toonformasies (An analysis method for string quartets composed between 1960 and 1970 with specific reference to tone formations)*' was completed in 1991 at the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education.

¹⁰ Here, Taljaard refers to Lutoslawski's *String Quartet* (1964).

¹¹ Bart Meuris is a Flemish pianist and piano lecturer living in Lier, Belgium.

¹² *Drie Nokturnes (1998) vir Bart se konsert in Lier (Three Nocturnes for Bart's concert in Lier)* is a collection of three short nocturnes for solo piano.

¹³ Taljaard was 27 at that time.

¹⁴ Douglas Bull is a South African bassoonist.

¹⁵ Erica Eloff is a South African soprano, residing in the United Kingdom and currently working in Austria.

¹⁶ Henderickx composed three *Ragas*, inspired by Indian music. These three works, that were transcribed and orchestrated for various instrumentations, became Henderickx's quintessential compositions. The first versions were composed between 1994 and 1995.

¹⁷ Henderickx's string quartet *Om* (1992).

¹⁸ Relitaveren is a strategy of putting events and/or insights (etc.) into proper contexts in order to understand the important differences between similar events and insights.

¹⁹ The Bharatanatyam dance is an old form of Indian classical dance.

²⁰ Geeta Chandran is an Indian Bharatanatyam dancer and vocalist.

²¹ Pietersburg, now Polokwane, is the capital of the Limpopo province in South Africa.

²² Laerskool Moorivier is an Afrikaans primary school in Potchefstroom.

²³ *Notepret* by Philip McLachlan is a series of Kodály-based booklets for class music (or general music literacy) for foundation phase learners.

²⁴ Tommie Ferreira is a music teacher who has taught piano at the Potchefstroom Gimnasium (the secondary school that Taljaard attended) for several decades.

²⁵ This work was performed by Christelle Engelbrecht.

²⁶ Taljaard's *Arie Antiche* is a work for soprano and violin. It was first performed in Potchefstroom in 2011 by Erica Eloff and Olga Korvink during a concert celebrating Taljaard's 40th birthday.

²⁷ Werner Nel is a South African baritone and was a well-known professor in voice at the North-West University for several decades. Taljaard accompanied some of the singing students in Werner Nel's classes.

²⁸ Taljaard's *Wiegelieliedjies, Boek 1* is a collection of five lullabies for soprano and clarinet, bassoon and piano.

²⁹ Erica Eloff has now been living since July 2020 in Linz as a member of the opera cast of the Landestheater Linz.

³⁰ The third work in the collection was not completed in 2020.

³¹ Dieter Nel (the son of Werner Nel) is a South African cellist, currently residing in Germany.

³² *Ohio Impromptu* (1980) is a play by Samuel Beckett from his so-called ghost period.

³³ McTigert is a double bass player in Stockholm.

³⁴ The Helton-Thomas Duo is an American saxophone-cello duo, Jonathan Helton and Steven Thomas who visited Potchefstroom in 2019.

³⁵ Dalcroze eurhythmics is also known as the Dalcroze method or eurhythmics and is an approach to music education and artistic practice that centres on connecting music and movement, and on giving a large role to social interaction.

³⁶ Taljaard's Master's degree dissertation is entitled *Analysis as reflexive and/or non-reflexive activity: the role of music analysis in the teaching of composition* and was completed in 1998.

³⁷ Music and movement