Connective Moments:
Dramaturgy of Sound in Live Performance

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About this document

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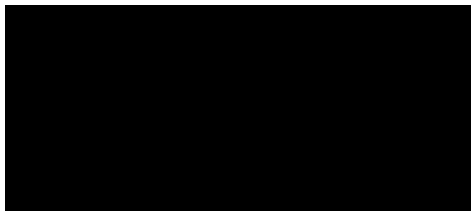
The creative component of this research is predicated on processes of bringing sonic, visual, performative and spatial elements into relationship with one another. In an extension of this practice, the submitted exegesis is an electronic book viewable on a tablet (iPad). This presentation format facilitates an ease of movement and interplay between sonic, visual and textual elements contained within. It becomes, in a sense, a new stage upon which once-live works are restaged. It is a location in which multiple voices and perspectives can meet and be heard. By engaging with the particularities of the presentation site, the exegesis continues to further shape the set of ideas about sound, technology and performance, which thread through all of the works.

Doctor of Philosophy Declaration

I, Tamara Saulwick, declare that the PhD exegesis entitled Connective Moments: Dramaturgy of Sound in Live Performance is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This exegesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this exegesis is my own work.

Signature

Date 25/04/15

Table of Contents

Abstract

This practice-led research project practically and theoretically investigates the ways in which sound functions in live performance—that is to say, the dramaturgy of sound. The research adopts Brandon LaBelle's view that sound brings bodies together, creating connective moments and deepening our sense of both the present and the distant, the real and the mediated. It considers the dramaturgical role that sound plays in the facilitation of connective moments—moments of intimacy, immediacy, association, imagination, memory, disjunction and exchange. Digital and wireless technologies have in recent years opened doors for live, mediatised and processed sound to be central players in the language of live performance. Emerging performance modes and practices see works increasingly presented outside of conventional performance spaces and delivered via digital devices and headphones.

This exegesis reflects on my own practice-led discoveries, and places them within the broader context of a movement towards sound in contemporary performance. It contributes to existing writings on the dramaturgy of sound, which have emerged from 'the sonic turn' in recent scholarly discourse. The exegesis tracks my growing attention to the dramaturgical possibilities of sound within my own practice throughout the creation and presentation of four performance works. It looks to practitioners within the field of live performance and theatre who are extending their practice through the considered use of sound, and outlines the contribution my own works make to this broader context.

The research and its associated methodologies are located in the crossover zones between postdramatic theatre, documentary theatre and site-specific and socially engaged practices; each of these having distinct preoccupations with the idea of

'the real' and divergent approaches to ways in which 'real' events may be staged. Coopting the real as 'co-player', these performance works occupy ambiguous territories existing between the real and the fictive, and the live and the mediatised. Within these live events audience/participants are drawn into relationship with other individuals, with site and situation, and with the here-and-now moment.

Four works are presented for examination—one live and the others remediated and reiterated within the boundaries of the exegesis. To facilitate a dynamic interplay between modalities, the exegesis is presented with accompanying sonic and visual materials. Whilst impossible to duplicate the live experience, it is my intention that these materials move beyond the function of mere documentation, eliciting in the reader/listener/viewer a more immediate engagement with the ideas being presented—one in which a sense of 'liveness' is to some degree maintained.

Acknowledgements

at Victoria University. A genuine trailblazer for practice-led research, the course has seen many esteemed artist–researchers pass through its doors and many inspirational staff grace its halls. It is a great shame that this work will not continue into the future.

I dedicate this research to the memory of my father, Irving Saulwick, who would have been so proud of this project and so pleased to have featured in it.

List of audio & video content

Chapter 7

Audio 7.1 Irv
Audio 7.2 Refrain

Movie 7.1 The players
Movie 7.2 Transmission
Movie 7.3 That's him, through me.
Movie 7.4 Flowers

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Sarah Walker (p. 116, 117, 127)

Introduction

Sound operates by forming links, groupings, and conjunctions that accentuate individual identity as a relational project. The flows of surrounding sonority can be heard to weave an individual into a larger social fabric ... This associative and connective process of sound comes to reconfigure the spatial distinctions of inside and outside, to foster confrontations between one and another, and to infuse language with degrees of immediacy.
(LaBelle 2010, p. xxi)

Connective moments

This practice-led research considers the ways in which sound functions in live performance—that is to say, the dramaturgy of sound. It explores ways sound can be utilised to facilitate what Brandon LaBelle calls 'connective moments', in which people/bodies are brought into intimate relationship with one another, with place, and with the passing moment 'to weave an individual into a larger social fabric' (LaBelle 2010, p. xxi). It suggests that sound in performance can be used dramaturgically; that is, to facilitate connective moments within as well as between audiences/listeners. Exploring the notion that the dramaturgy of sound can elicit acts of association, memory and imagination, this research builds on the idea that 'through processes of sounding and listening people come into relationship, they extend into the world and draw the world into them' (Chambers 2004, p. 99).

The exegesis tracks my growing attention to the dramaturgical possibilities of sound within my own practice and in the context of the creation and presentation of four performance

works. It looks to practitioners within the context of live performance and theatre who are extending their practice through the considered use of sound, and outlines the contribution my own works make to this broader context. For the most part these practitioners (and I count myself among them) come to sound not as musicians or sound designers, but as theatre makers or directors for whom sound plays a critical dramaturgical role in the rendering of their ideas.

In *Acoustic territories: sound culture and everyday life*, La-Belle asserts that 'an auditory paradigm is tacitly embedded within the contemporary condition and offers a compelling structure for elaborating what is already in play' (2010, p. xviii). This suggests that a kind of sounding/listening operation is at work, not only literally, but in the invisible, connective, inner/outer manner of networked communication. He goes on:

> *The radical transformation of global experiences, in shifting the position of the subject … initiates new trajectories and struggles across social reality. How to participate within this mass of information, to figure oneself in relation to all the presences that come flooding in each day to carry numerous identities? How to be located within the flux of multiple geographies both proximate and remote? (2010, p. xviii)*

In observing recent developments in the trajectory of contemporary performance, it is possible to see artists addressing La-Belle's questions of how to participate, how to figure oneself and how to be located. In contemporary performance practices we see the shifting position of the subject expressed in the changing relationships between performer/s, audiences and participants, as well as the insertion of 'real people' where once there were actors. We see participation being used as the guiding model for the creation of new work and new ways of working. We see technologies employed to link proximate and remote geographies and temporalities, in works that play out in real-world sites in conversation with the here-and-now. We see sound being used to cut across or through 'the flux and flooding', to provide reference points,

locations, moments of respite from 'this mass of information'; moments of reflection and connection.

LaBelle's writings and thoughts about sound provide threads that run throughout this research. They offer resonant metaphors for the function of performance and also bear direct relation to the particular emphasis placed on sound within the research itself. In the introduction to his book, LaBelle recounts a conversation heard between a father and his young son, discussing where sound comes from and where it goes. He describes the father who points to his own chest, then into the air, and then to the boy's chest. The man's gestures are

… a beautiful rendering of sound as an itinerant movement that immediately brings two bodies together; it suggests the intensity and grace with which sound may create a relational space, a meeting point, diffuse and yet pointed; a private space that requires something between, an outside; a geography of intimacy … From one body to the other, a thread is made that stitches the two together

in a temporal instant … Sound might be heard to say, This is our moment. (2010, pp. xvi–vii)

When LaBelle describes sound as a thread 'from one body to the other', I am reminded of performance. Performance, like sound, is inherently relational: it creates a meeting point connecting bodies, lives and stories together. At its best, performance might also be heard to say, *This is our moment*. This research explores the idea that when sound brings bodies together it creates 'connective moments … deepening the sense for both the present and the distant, the real and the mediated' (LaBelle 2010, p. xv). These 'connective moments' are what I consider to be the lifeblood of live performance; they are the reason we gather collectively to hear each other's stories and share an encounter in the here-and-now. These moments of connection can occur in myriad ways when our own associations are brought to bear on the works themselves; when our imaginations, memories and senses are enlivened and when we recognise ourselves in the experiences of others.[1]

Sound in performance

Over the last decade more and more performance makers have turned to sound as a dramaturgical tool to facilitate and deepen audience experience, marking sound's centrality 'as a both performative and architectural constituent of contemporary theatre' (Ovadija 2013, p. 4). Developments in digital technologies throughout this period have allowed artists unprecedented access to affordable sound recording, editing and transmitting equipment, which has in turn opened doors for live, mediatised and processed sound to be central players in the language of live performance. In many works, pre-recorded materials sit amidst live voice, live ambient sound, live processed sound and live bodies. The weaving of these sonic materials with the live performer and performance situation allows for connections to be strung from the past to the present, the live to the mediatised, and the real to the fictive; each confounding and revealing one other through mutual affect.

When I use the term 'sound' in this exegesis I refer simply to that which the practitioner intends for the audience to hear; whether it be live or recorded, acoustic or amplified, digital or analogue, or delivered via speakers or headphones.[2] This may include the sounding/speaking human voice, live environmental sound, field recordings, abstract sound, music, sound effects and/or Foley. It must be noted that the use of sound in theatre is not new. Theatre is neither silent nor mute. In this sense sound has always had a presence in theatre, yet sound has been perceived predominantly to have 'an ancillary function as regards the text or image' (Pavis, cited in Kendrick & Roesner 2011, p. vii). The dramaturgy of sound displays sound 'not only as supporting music or incidental noise but also as an autonomous stage building material' (Ovadija 2013, p. 4). As artists have engaged with the dramaturgy of sound over the last decade, new forms of site-specific practice have flourished. Freed from the constraints of traditional performance spaces, these works need no longer relinquish the intimacy and control those traditional spaces afford. As the walls of the auditorium come down, public spaces become the new stages for intimate performance encounters, mediated through digital and wireless sound technologies used in combination with headphones.

Mirjam Schaub introduces the concept of 'invisible architectures' in her book about the work of sound artist, Janet Cardiff. 'Invisible architectures' constructed from sonic materials function as 'affective frameworks' to house the associative acts of audience/participants (Schaub 2005, p. 94). LaBelle notes that 'hearing is already an associative act' (2010, p. xix). That the act of association is implicit to the process of hearing provides a clue to how sound can be used to such effect in performance. We are meaning makers. As audiences we silently produce meaning and inhabit works 'like a rented apartment' (De Certeau 1984, p. xxi). Whilst Michel de Certeau is referring to the process of reading a written text, the same principle can apply to 'reading' a performance. We connect sight with sound, and ideas and images with context. The art that interests me as a maker and as an audience member draws on this associative process and in doing so invites 'inhabitation'. This kind of work does not present a closed system, but rather, one that relies on what is brought to it by those who enter. Through associative acts of memory and imagination, audiences both inhabit, and to an extent add to, the (invisible) structures underpinning performance.

The sonic turn

This research is undertaken within the context of a movement towards sound in contemporary performance, and contributes to what scholar Adrian Curtin has termed 'the sonic turn' (2014, p. 5) in recent academic discourse around the subject. It considers the role sound plays in the creation, articulation and reception of my own works: the dramaturgy of sound. The definition of the term 'dramaturgy' varies according to the context in which it is used and to which it is applied. In a postdramatic theatre/contemporary performance context, 'dramaturgy' tends to be associated with questions of structure, the interplay of elements, and the cultural context that a particular work sits within. Often quoted on the subject, theatre director Eugenio Barba states that his 'director's dramaturgy [is] a dramaturgy of dramaturgies' (2009, p. 204). His premise is 'to think in the plural: more than one meaning, more than one story, more than one type of relationship, a multiplicity and a ramification of elements and lines of development' (2009, p. 204). Barba turns to the metaphor

of the 'weave' to describe the dramaturgical process, suggesting that 'the task of the actors [is] the creation of individual threads: materials, scores, relationships with space, text, the objects and sources of light inside and outside them' (2009, p. 204). Barba's dramaturgy is one of relationships, where discrete elements are 'woven together in ways that create interpretive frameworks' (Eckersall, Monaghan & Beddie 2005, p. 3). It is Barba's notion of a 'weave' that I apply to my discussion of the dramaturgy of sound in this exegesis, where sound is understood to be in relationship with a multiplicity of other elements, woven together to create the fabric of the live performance event. For example, in the weaving of sound and performance, elements such as space, time, proximity and scale are made newly plastic. Prerecorded, live and live-processed sound can be used variously to defy scale, create intimacy, shift proximity, create temporal shifts, conjure the unseen, act as mnemonic triggers, provoke associations, augment the here-and-now, invoke a sense of dislocation and evoke place and space.

Whilst there exists a substantial amount of writing on the subject of dramaturgy in theatre, writing regarding the dramaturgy of *sound* in theatre is notably absent from most critical and scholarly discourse. Indeed, until recently, there has been very little writing at all to do with sound in theatre, beyond the more practical 'how to' texts for sound design. One has needed to turn to the diverse fields of sound studies, music and philosophy for considered discussions of sound and its implications. These writings, however, rarely address sound within the context of theatre and performance, and even more rarely in dramaturgical terms. Interestingly, within the period of my candidature, this gap in scholarly discourse has begun to close.

Mladen Ovadija's 2013 text, *Dramaturgy of sound in the avant-garde and postdramatic theatre,* with its roots firmly in theatre practice, offers an extensive overview of approaches to sound and voice, and aurality and orality in theatre performance. His discussion traces the use of voice and stage sound by the historical avant-garde of the early 20th century, all the way through to the postdramatic theatre mak-

ers of today. Ovadija's research situates these strands of practice in counterpoint to the dominant dramatic literary tradition of yesterday and today, a tradition in which voice and sound are 'considered secondary to the primacy of the text' (Ovadija 2013, p. 3). He suggests that the 'avant-garde's focus on sound and voice as … autonomous materials [not] subordinate to linguistic sense or gesture, but as equal in every respect' paved the way for the 'theatre of the postdramatic age' (2013, p. 7). Ovadija's purview is expansive and largely historical, charting a continuous through-line in experimental theatre that extends from early modernist to contemporary works.

Ovadija, like others, tends to cordon off speech from the discussion of sound. He emphasises the voice as 'an emotional, pulsional, gestural expression in excess of speech' (2013 p. 4). He notes the avant-garde's 'recognition of the materiality of sound … and the establishment of a new aesthetic that deals with sound as matter, form, and an independent constituent of the work of art' (2013, p. 7). Unlike the artists of the early 20th-century avant-garde, I do not seek to decon-struct the linguistic sense or structures of speech. Nevertheless, the idea of the 'materiality of sound', when applied to the recorded speaking voice, has some resonance for me. I approach the voice recordings in my work as flexible and independent materials, or to use Ovadija's phrase, 'autonomous stage building materials', to be brought into play with live performance. Heard at times as fragments, echoes, textures or punctuations, I treat these voices like musical materials to be worked in unison or counterpoint to the live voice.*3*

In *Avant-garde theatre sound: staging sonic modernity,* Curtin covers similar historical territory to Ovadija. Curtin argues that theatre, unlike literature, 'is uniquely equipped to demonstrate sonic ideas and experiences', able as it is to embody and enact sonic phenomena through 'testing ideas about sound in actual sonic environments' (2014, p. 12). His chapter on the use of reproduced sound in the modernist era challenges the idea that integrating prerecorded sound on the stage is exclusively a preoccupation of the digital era. Citing Guillaume Apollinaire and Jean Cocteau as examples of artists who foregrounded sonic technologies in dramaturgy and

mise en scène, Curtin demonstrates how these artists 'took the craft of actual sound-making out from the wings and brought it onto the stage in the form of manipulated or embodied technology, making it a figurative co-performer' (2014, p. 65).*4*

Theatre noise: the sound of performance, a 2011 collection of essays investigating approaches to and understandings of sound in a contemporary performance context, 'looks in particular at the interrogation and problematisation of theatre sound(s)' (Kendrick & Roesner 2011, p. xiv). The unifying theme of 'theatre noise' (interference, friction) holds together a large and diverse set of contributions from directors, sound designers, performers, academics, musicians and researchers. Whilst too broad a collection to encapsulate here, it is worth noting certain chapters of particular relevance to my own research. For example, John Collins's chapter, 'Performing sound, sounding space', provides useful points of reference regarding the theatricality of the cause-and-effect relationship between sight and sound, using examples from his explorations working as a *bruiteur*/Foley artist for thea-

tre. In her chapter, 'Intrusive noises: the performative power of theatre sounds', Katharina Rost argues for the use of 'intrusive noises' in theatre. She distinguishes these from the more traditional use of sound as a means of illustration, or mood or emotional tone-setting. Intrusive noise in performance, Rost suggests, 'has the power to touch the listener in a direct physical way' (Rost 2011, p. 45). This is not only a momentary effect but rather 'affects the way in which the whole performance is experienced and how meaning is constituted within that performance (p. 45). 'Vocal landscaping: the theatre of sound in audiowalks' provides useful perspectives on the audio walk form: the author, Misha Myers, considers 'how the use of technology in the audio walk expands the phenomenological space in which theatre happens' (Myers 2011, p. 71) and gives particular attention to practices of listening. Myers's informative writings touch on similar terrain to my own discussions of mediated intimacy, immediacy, interiority and exteriority, proximity and the voice. In 'Radical vocality, auditory distress and disembodied voice: the resolution of the voice-body in The Wooster Group's *La Didone*', Pieter Verstraete provides some interesting perspec-

tives on the notion of the disembodied or 'ventriloquist' voice, which intersects with my own discussions, in Chapter Two, of working with recorded voices in relationship to the live voice/body and the ways in which the live and the prerecorded (the embodied and the disembodied) frame and inform one another. George Home-Cook's contribution, 'Aural acts: theatre and the phenomenology of listening', posits listening as an inherently theatrical act, in which 'we set both sound and ourselves "at play"' (Home-Cook 2011, p. 97). A phenomenological investigation, Home-Cook's discussion of the aurality of theatre 'considers the embodied and particular position of the listening-spectator' (p. 97). What happens when we listen, how our body is implicated in this act and how it shapes our perception are all questions explored by Home-Cook, as is the phenomenal relationship between listening and looking (p. 101). His discussion of attention as 'a dynamic and essentially embodied activity', with its direct implications for the act of 'listening-in-the-theatre' (p. 97), provides valuable insights into the role of the audience/participant in the dramaturgy of sound.5

Another text contributing to the closing gap in scholarly discourse on the subject of sound in performance is Ross Brown's *Sound: A reader in theatre practice* (2010), which 'aim[s] to gather together key historical texts and contemporary ways of thinking about the material crafts and practices of theatre.' (Shepherd in Brown 2010, p. xii) As suggested by the title, Brown's contribution to the series focuses on sound in theatre. An academic and professional sound designer himself, Brown draws together practical and theoretical writings about sound, both from within and outside of the field, to create an expansive overview of the development of what is now termed 'sound design' in theatre. Brown dedicates a chapter to interviews with other practitioners (predominantly sound designers) whose respective practices have changed and evolved over the last twenty years in conjunction with the development of sound technologies and the shift in the role of sound in theatre throughout that period. The discussion also draws into focus the changing parameters of the role of sound designer, revealing that traditionally the sound designer was expected to be a skilled sound engineer and operator first and foremost, and a crea-

tive contributor second, if at all. Perhaps the book's most valuable contribution to the 'sonic turn' in academic discourse of recent years, is the way in which Brown synthesises the broad array of ideas and materials through his own writings to create meaningful links and understandings between conceptual, theoretical and practical aspects of the subject.

A practitioner–researcher's perspective

I add a practitioner–researcher's perspective to the movement towards sound in live performance and the 'sonic turn' in scholarly discourse. This perspective draws from the processes of developing and presenting work, and is informed by my research and observation of the work of other performance practitioners. My discussion of the field focuses predominantly, but not exclusively, on the work of Australian contemporary performance practitioners whose work is characterised by a deep engagement with the relationship between form and content, combined with an attention to the employment of sound as a critical dramaturgical element within their work.

In this research I explore how sound can be employed to facilitate connective moments:

- between us—connecting one person to another through the sharing of stories, voices, situations and sites
- within us—through evoking imagination, association and memory
- with our surroundings—through inviting a deepened attentiveness to the physical place that we find ourselves in.

Threaded throughout the creative works and addressed within this exegesis are the following engagements with sound.

- Real voices—working with recorded interviews of 'real' people. These recordings function as sources of content (stories and ideas), text to be heard in its original recorded form and spoken live, and as autonomous sonic materials to be integrated in a variety of ways.

- Live/prerecorded—the interplay between prerecorded sound and the live performance is pivotal to each work. The emphasis of this interplay shifts in each work; however, the constant through-line is the assertion that this interplay between the live and the prerecorded brings with it a compelling, strangely alive quality.

- Headphones—delivering sound through headphones to facilitate experiences of intimacy and immediacy in real-world settings.

- Sound/vision—working with particular attention to the relationship established and/or disrupted between sonic and visual elements.

A chronology of practice-led research, 2010–15

This idea of a movement towards sound is reflected in both the shifting place of emphasis within my creative works, and within this exegesis. At the beginning of this journey, I did not set out specifically to research the dramaturgy of sound, but rather was led by my practice over time to this area of focus. My initial research questions were related to the qualities and effects of recorded first-hand accounts when used in a live performance setting. Real people. Real stories. Real voices. I was interested in what these audio documentary elements brought to the live event and how they might sit in relationship with the live body and voice of a performer. Over the course of my candidature the research focus has opened out to a broader investigation of the relationship between sound, live performance and the performance site itself. This shift of emphasis is also evident in this exegesis, where my writings begin with broader questions about my practice—what it is attempting to achieve and where it sits in the contemporary performance landscape.

The creative works presented are *Pin Drop* (2010), *Seddon Archives* (2011), *PUBLIC* (2013) and *Endings* (2015). Each work has led me to engage with new themes, new formal considerations, new performance contexts, new technologies and new dramaturgies. Each is discussed in this exegesis within its own dedicated chapter, interwoven with contextualising chapters that look to other relevant practitioners and

modes of performance practice. Woven throughout each of the chapters dealing with these creative works are sound and/or video examples/excerpts of the work or working process.

In Chapter One I articulate where I see my practice having resided at the beginning of my candidature. Bringing two quite distinct sensibilities into one performance context, I locate my work in the crossover zone between documentary theatre and postdramatic theatre practices. Both documentary and postdramatic theatre share a preoccupation with 'the real' but have divergent perspectives on what an engagement with the real means in a performance context. Documentary theatre practice is predicated on the idea of the work being connected to 'an absent but acknowledged reality' (Reinelt 2009, p. 9) existent outside of the theatre. Postdramatic theatre practice is engaged with the idea of real contiguity and/or liveness within the theatre. Working in the crossover zone, practitioners draw from both of these strands of practice to create live and mediatised events into which the real world permeates.

In Chapter Two I discuss my first work, *Pin Drop*, which resides in this crossover zone between documentary and postdramatic theatre practice. *Pin Drop* opens out a space in the darkness for our stories—real stories of threat, fear and courage—to be voiced, heard and evoked. I examine the use of multiple prerecorded voices and stories within the live performance context and in relationship to the live performer. Through an examination of liveness and mediatisation, the fracturing of corporeal and vocal unity, the multivalent presence of the performer, sound as a trigger for memory and imagination, and the slippage between the visual and the aural, I frame dramaturgical and aesthetic considerations that informed both the development of the work and its reception.

Chapter Three focuses on the use of headphones in live performance, as a kind of dramaturgical intervention used to facilitate experiences characterised by intimacy and immediacy. There has been an exponential rise in 'headphone performance' works in recent years, and I look to other artists,

both predecessors and current practitioners, who have used/ use headphones not only to amplify sound, but to shape the meaning and reception of their work.

Chapter Four introduces my second work, *Seddon Archives*: an audio walk for a lone participant equipped with an mp3 player and headphones. I discuss my approach to developing the work, as well as interests, outcomes and challenges that emerged along the way. *Seddon Archives* draws from local residents of Melbourne's suburb of Seddon and their memories, placing their stories into the sites from which they emerge. Making this piece allowed me to extend upon some of the interests present during the development of *Pin Drop,* whilst continuing to move into new territory. Once again, I worked with real people's voices and experiences, but new sounds were integrated, in addition to some of my own writings. Perhaps most importantly, the sights and environmental sounds of the locale became critical players in the piece, as did the audience/participants themselves.

In Chapter Five my focus shifts once again to a broader view of current practice, in order to provide some context for the preoccupations that arose whilst creating my third work, *PUBLIC*. I discuss participatory practices and their recent rise in popularity both in Australia and internationally (particularly in Europe and the UK). Claire Bishop's, Nicolas Bourriaud's and Shannon Jackson's analyses of this field of practice provide a useful background against which to consider the recent adoption of the term 'live art' and its associated practices within Australia. These participatory and/or socially engaged practices provide an informative backdrop to some of the shifts of focus that arose throughout the process of creating *PUBLIC*.

In Chapter Six I examine the creation and presentation of *PUBLIC*. Located in the shared space of a shopping centre food court, *PUBLIC* is an audio performance work that challenges strict divisions about where the art ends and the rest of the world begins (see Jackson 2011, p. 15). In doing so it illuminates the porous boundaries between public and private encounters. Scattered throughout the food court, audience members equipped with wireless headphones experience an audio design that recontextualises, augments and

complicates their perceptions of their immediate environment. Wireless and mobile technologies, already ubiquitous throughout the space, are employed, in a sense, to network the performance event.

Chapter Seven is, paradoxically, an introduction, a conclusion and an epilogue of sorts. It introduces the final work, *Endings.* It is a homage to loved ones lost and a meditation on life's passing. It calls on the power of recorded first-hand accounts, and uses the now-redundant audio technologies of magnetic tape and vinyl records to transmit them into the live space of performance. *Endings* privileges sound as a central player, casting the sound-making machines themselves as co-players and bringing live music and song into the sonic palette of the work. Framing the final weeks, days and moments of the lives of loved ones, *Endings* attempts to forge connections between the living and the dead, between life and its absence.

The concluding chapter articulates the significance of the artistic output of this research beyond the domain of the acad-emy. It offers an overview of the principle dramaturgies of sound employed throughout the research and in doing so contributes to the recent 'sonic turn' in scholarly discourse. It places the research within the continuum of my practice and points to future directions.

This exegesis

My creative work is predicated on processes of bringing sonic, visual, performative and spatial elements into relationship with one another. In an extension of this practice I have chosen to present this exegesis on an iPad in order to facilitate an ease of movement and interplay between sonic, visual and textual elements contained within. This platform is, in a sense, a new stage upon which once-live works will be restaged. It is a location in which multiple voices and perspectives can meet and be heard. It is a digital site for prerecorded elements to be brought into the here-and-now by you, the live body who watches and listens to them. By engaging with the particularities of this site, I continue to further shape this set of ideas about sound, technology and performance, which threads through all of the works.

With the increasing number of scholarly publications as e-books it is simply a matter of time before all PhD exegeses will be presented in digital formats. To date however, most exegeses are published as hard copies. The digital, media-rich format of this exegesis sits at the forefront of current PhD presentation models and offers a way forward for other artist/researchers looking for effective platforms to present time-based visual and sonic materials alongside their written research.

1 Whilst the emphasis of this discussion is placed upon the premise that sound can facilitate moments of connection within and between individuals, it should be noted that sound can also do quite the opposite. Sound can be used to facilitate processes of alienation, isolation, disruption and indeed, dis-connection. Certain instances of these processes are discussed in the coming pages, predominantly in terms of how they sit in relation, or in contrast to, processes of cohesion or connection.

2 I make this point about 'intended sound' to distinguish it from 'unintended noise' and its participatory potential in undoing the 'domestication of noise-making' encoded in conventional theatre practice; as discussed in Gareth White's 'Noise, conceptual noise, and the potential of audience participation' (2011).

3 This process is discussed in Chapter Two in relation to my work, *Pin Drop.*

4 This discussion is of particular relevance to Chapter Seven, in which I discuss my own coopting of sound-making technologies as 'co-players' in my work, *Endings.*

5 The role of the audience/participant is expanded upon in Chapters Four and Six.

Real, Fictive, Live, Mediatised: The Territory

'The Real'

This research began with the development of my solo work, *Pin Drop,* which is built from recorded first-hand accounts: interviews with 'real' people about their personal experiences of threat and fear. I was working with the recordings not only as the source for the performance text, but also as sonic materials to be integrated into the live event. The way in which these recorded sound materials/voices came into relationship on stage with my own live body and voice as performer—this interplay between the live and non-live—was a source of fascination to me that has persisted and evolved throughout the trajectory of my candidature.

Early in my candidature I looked to others working with interview recordings, with a view to more precisely locating my own work within the field of contemporary performance and theatre. At this early stage I was not necessarily looking to other theatre practitioners interested in sound particularly; but rather, those who used recorded interviews as an integral part of their creative process. I researched documentary and verbatim theatre practices, interrogating what it was about 'real' stories and 'real' voices that so captivated me and others in the field. However, the more I researched documentary and particularly verbatim theatre, and the artists working in the area, the less convinced I was that these aligned with my own practice. I came to realise that despite the apparent overlap in my own work with some of the concerns, techniques and processes of verbatim and/or documentary theatre makers, there were also significant points of difference. My aesthetic and formal concerns seemed more closely aligned with contemporary performance or 'postdramatic theatre' makers who, interestingly, shared a fascination with 'the real', but from an entirely different perspective.

The notion of 'the real' is a highly contested one that exists within a wider philosophical debate beyond the scope of this exegesis. Within this research I confine my use of the term to the context of contemporary performance, more specifically, to the areas of postdramatic theatre and documentary theatre. Both of these areas of practice, which are discussed in greater detail in the coming pages, provide useful frame-

works for considering the territory within which my creative practice exists. Both have distinct preoccupations with the idea of the real and divergent approaches to ways in which real events may be staged. In defining 'the real' I draw from Hans-Thies Lehmann's suggestion that postdramatic theatre engages with the idea of real contiguity inside the theatre (Lehmann 2006, p.103), and Janelle Reinelt's proposal that documentary theatre connects to a reality outside of the theatre (Reinelt 2009, p. 9).

'Postdramatic theatre', a term coined by Hans-Thies Lehmann in his book of the same name, describes a body of performance arising over the last 30 years which is concerned with the ambiguities between 'real' contiguity (connection with reality) and 'staged construct' (fiction) (2006, p. 103). Lehmann reminds us that 'without the real there is no staging' (p. 100) because 'theatre takes place as practice that is at once signifying and entirely real' (p. 102). Documentary theatre, on the other hand, seeks to provide links with an outside reality, drawing on real events to create works for audiences to witness and attend to collectively. In her book chapter, 'The promise of documentary', in *Get real: documentary theatre past and present*, Reinelt writes of the audience's expectation that 'certain aspects of the performance [will be] directly linked to the reality or experience they are trying to understand' (2009, p. 9). It is this idea of being connected to 'an absent but acknowledged reality' (p. 10) existent *outside* of the theatre, rather than concerns with real contiguity *inside* the theatre, that distinguishes documentary theatre from postdramatic theatre. *1*

I sensed that my work resided in the crossover zone between the two camps, bringing two quite distinct sensibilities into the one performance context. This crossover zone sees contemporary performance makers drawing from postdramatic *and* documentary performance/theatre practices. Such works emerge from a cultural context in which a stable distinction between representation and reality has been thoroughly deconstructed, but in which audiences are nevertheless hungry to hear their stories told, to be moved by these stories and to be drawn into relationship and moments of connection with one another through these acts of this storytelling.

Documentary theatre

Documentary theatre is a form constructed primarily from factual documents and records such as media reports, personal correspondence, public records from inquiries and tribunals, historical archives, and so on. 'The notion that public events in the past or present can be examined and reconsidered communally drives much documentary theatre,' as Janelle Reinelt notes (2009, p. 11). 'Verbatim theatre' sits inside the larger frame of 'documentary theatre' and has enjoyed resurgence, particularly in the UK over the last 15 years and in Australia more recently. It is a form of theatre that is built from transcribed interviews with individuals. It is frequently based on a specific public event and/or trauma and draws from interviews with people who have some direct connection to the event (Paget 2009, p. 12). For instance, David Hare's *Permanent Way* was created from interviews with victims of the UK Potters Bar rail crash; Alecky Blythe's *Come Out Eli* focused on those behind the cordons at the 15-day-long Hackney siege; Anna Deavere Smith's *Twilight:Los Angeles 1992* dealt with the 1992 Los Angeles riots; Michael Gurr's and Actors for Refugees' *Something to Declare* focused on the experiences of incarcerated asylum seekers in Australia; and Urban Theatre Projects' *Stories of Love and Hate*, directed by Roslyn Oades, brought new perspectives to the 2005 Cronulla riots and the people affected by them. Giving voice to the marginalised and/or disenfranchised, gaining insights and new perspectives from the people 'on the ground' and sidestepping the usual voices of authority—be they 'the experts' or the media—is commonly the stuff of verbatim theatre. In some cases productions are developed in close consultation with the community from which the material has emerged, ensuring 'that key stakeholders have a say in how they're being represented' (Makeham 2005, p. 74).

UK playwright, Robin Soans, who has written a number of verbatim theatre plays, discusses at length how the audience seems to attend differently to verbatim theatre, as compared to other plays. Speaking of his own verbatim theatre works, he surmises that the audience were '*really* listening', were 'deeply and personally' involved, and that they brought to the piece a 'different kind of attention' (Soans 2008, p. 22,

emphasis in original), in contrast to the 'disinterested detachment' he experienced in conventional theatre settings (p. 23). Knowing that the source material comes from firsthand accounts rather than the pen of a playwright/writer seems to shift the attention of the viewer, according to Soans. This is clearly conjecture on Soans' part given that it is impossible to know what the audience is thinking or experiencing at any given moment. Yet this perspective echoes my own experiences working with university students and verbatim processes, where the work they produced seemed to have a distinctive quality that set it apart from their other work. It seemed more compelling, and the audience attended to it with greater acuity.

I have also experienced the 'different kind of attention' that Soans describes, in my work as a performer with Melbourne Playback Theatre Company. The basic premise of the playback form is that individual audience members recount stories and experiences from their own lives, which are then 'played back' through improvised performance by a team of actors and musician/s. There is something distinct about hearing a non-performer giving voice to an experience in this context. To hear someone relate his or her own story in a public setting can be very powerful, for both the teller and the audience. Researcher, Rea Dennis, quotes playback theatre founder Jonathan Fox's description of playback as a form that 'enables the audience to share personal stories, to experience being listened to and heard, and in some cases experience transformation in witnessing the enactment of their story' (Fox, cited in Dennis 2004, p. 25). Dennis also talks at length about the what she perceives to be the tension arising from the ongoing invitation to share one's own story in playback theatre, where the idea that 'this could be my story' is quite literally true; whereas in verbatim theatre this remains only notionally the case. Dennis continues, 'the interaction between risking and listening requires a certain kind of sharing that represents an experience of community where Self and Other are juxtaposed.' (2004, p. 275)

Soans talks of how 'transferring a deeply personal conversation on to the stage … confers a responsibility on the audience' (2008, p. 24). This calls to mind writer/director Tim

Etchells's characterisation of the audience as witnesses, 'because to witness an event is to be present at it in some fundamentally ethical way, to feel the weight of things and one's own place in them' (1999, p. 17). This sense of feeling one's own place and witnessing is a regular occurrence in playback theatre. During a playback theatre show the witnesses/ spectators and performers become like a temporary community, with the stories emerging from within that community. Playback theatre co-founder, Jo Salas, suggests 'that [playback theatre] offers a public arena in which the meaning of individual experience expands to become part of a shared sense of purposeful existence.' (1993, p. 22) Such moments of connecting with the stories and experiences of others are opportunities to temporarily be part of something larger than oneself; to be part of a community. This connection between individuals and their social context is also the stuff of documentary and verbatim theatre, which offers its audience the opportunity to witness the experiences of others, and to sense their own relationship to those experiences. In its interest in the representation of actual events and wish to engage its audience in a 'deeply personal' (as opposed to disinterested) way, documentary theatre makes its claims on the real world.

Postdramatic theatre

In describing UK live art collective Forced Entertainment's *Dirty Work,* Karen Jurs-Munby says, 'it tells of a theatre that cannot be taken in "at once", that is not easily "surveyable" … fundamentally because the world we live in, globalized and multiply mediatized as it is, *is* less "surveyable" and manageable than ever' (Jurs-Munby, in Lehmann 2006, p. 11, emphasis in original). Postdramatic theatre is theatre of the not-easily-surveyable. It explores tensions between the real and the staged, and uses liveness (the here-and-now) and mediatisation (playback of prerecorded materials through media technologies) to make self-reflexive critical events, rendering movement between the real and the not-real the subject of the work. The burn seared with a hot iron onto a young woman's inner thigh in The Rabble Theatre's *Story of O* (The Rabble 2013) is also a red mark imprinted with make-up from the bottom of a cold iron. So, if on the

one hand we have the burn (fictive/staged) and on the other we have red make-up (real), the focus of postdramatic theatre is not the assertion of the burn as real, 'but the unsettling that occurs through the *undecidability*' (Lehmann 2006, p. 100", emphasis in original) of whether it is or not. 'The theatrical effect and the effect on consciousness both emanate from this ambiguity,' writes Lehmann (2006, p. 101). In this way, postdramatic theatre is seen to be 'the first to turn the real explicitly into a co-player' (Lehmann 2006, p. 100). This body of work has developed in counterpoint to the dramatic literary tradition of mimetic representation that has dominated western theatre for centuries (Lehmann 2006, p. 21).

The self-reflexive use of the 'real' can also be seen in the work of Back to Back Theatre, a Geelong-based company that creates original works under the direction of Bruce Gladwin. Internationally renowned, the company has blazed a unique artistic trail in the Australian theatre landscape. Back to Back's ensemble is made up of 'actors perceived to have intellectual disabilities' (Back to Back Theatre 2015), and this fact strongly influences both the content and form of their works. In *Ganesh versus the Third Reich* (Back to Back Theatre 2011), a disagreement breaks out when one actor (Scott) queries the ethics of working with a second actor (Mark) who has Down Syndrome, arguing that Mark is incapable of understanding the difference between reality and fiction. It is a striking moment in which the audience, no longer sure where fiction ends and reality begins, is forced to confront their own prejudices and presumptions. In her review of the production, Maddy Costa notes that 'in that ambiguity, the assumed intellectual superiority that places Mark beneath the "normal" people watching him quietly collapses' (2012). Lehmann uses the term 'the irruption of the real' to describe the moment when the real world asserts itself against the fictive (2006, p. 100). This scene, arguably, is just such a moment.

Liveness

Related to the idea of real contiguity and critical to postdramatic theatre is the idea of 'live' performance, defined by

Chapple and Kattenbelt as 'the simultaneous physical presence of the performer and the spectator in the same space in the same moment of here and now' (2006, p. 23). 'Liveness' is the subject of longstanding debate amongst theorists, epitomised in the conflicting views of Peggy Phelan and Phillip Auslander. Mathew Causey outlines their respective positions explaining,

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Peggy Phelan argues that performance is defined through its non-reproducibility. The nature of performance deteriorates as it is enfolded in technological reproduction. Philip Auslander counters that the live is an artifact of recording media. Liveness exists not as a prior condition, but as a result of mediatization. (1999, p. 384)

Auslander critiques Phelan's privileging of the live over the non-live in performance, with arguments that highlight the entanglement of live and mediatised performance, using examples from television, popular music and large-scale theatre productions. For Phelan, 'performance's only life is the present' (1993, p. 146). It is an unrepeatable act, implicating 'the real through living bodies' (p. 148). In the wake of this debate, or perhaps in spite of it, postdramatic theatre makers are deeply engaged with the idea of liveness and often equally engaged with incorporating new technologies to integrate the non-live.[2]

Postdramatic theatre responds to the live situation with work that is in dialogue with its own immediacy. And from this here-and-now live space, *liveness* comes to the fore as 'the provocative presence of the human being rather than the embodiment of a figure' (Lehmann 2006, p. 135). The actor of postdramatic theatre is often 'no longer the actor of a role necessarily but a performer offering his/her own presence on stage for contemplation' (Lehmann 2006, p. 135). When describing the work of UK performance maker/dancer, Wendy Houston, reviewer John Bailey tells us she 'relentlessly questions the act of performance-making and liveness … to invoke a sense of immediacy and spontaneity' (2008 p. 2). One such instance is in *Desert Island Dances* (Houston

2008), at a point where Houston stops abruptly to evaluate how the performance has gone thus far. She draws a line graph on a blackboard, much like 'the worm' in electoral debates, and describes the peaks and troughs of what she imagines the audience's experience to be: ' … *good, got off to a funny start, promising, oh dear … getting a bit too arty.*' She speaks directly to the audience and has, in a sense, joined them by viewing the work from their perspective. In doing so, she not only steps out of the staged construct but also underlines the live event, the one happening in the here-and-now with this particular audience.

Non-live

Chapple and Kattenbelt's definition of recording and playback technologies as 'mediatised' representation (2006, p. 23) provides a useful term of reference for this discussion, given how often such processes are employed in postdramatic works. Digital technology, in particular, has opened doors for mediatised visual and sonic components to be central players in the language and dramaturgy of postdramatic theatre. Tim Etchells warns, 'technology will move in and speak through you, like it or not. Best not to ignore.' (2006,

p. 95) For The Wooster Group under the direction of Elizabeth LeCompte, the use of technology could be said to be constitutive of the dramaturgy of the work (Lehmann 2006, p. 168). In the company's highly mediatised version of *Hamlet* (The Wooster Group 2007), live performers play in front of a screened version of a 1960s production of the same play with Richard Burton in the title role. Word for word, line for line, the screened original recording phases in and out as the live performers 'struggle to make the words and actions of others their own (or, rather, are inhabited against their will by the words and actions of others) … making visible the ambiguities of identity, agency, authenticity and dissimulation explored in the play' (Macgregor 2007). Tim Etchells's image of technology that speaks through us is made manifest in this production, where the mediatised and the live are in constant dialogue, to the extent that it becomes hard to distinguish one from the other. The work is like a beautifully complex dance, which travels between real contiguity and staged construct, from the mediatised to the live and back.

In summary, postdramatic theatre is a theatre that cannot be taken in at once, mirroring an equally unsurveyable world. It mines the territory between the real and the fictive, turning the real into a co-player by asking where it ends and the fictive begins. It proposes that through shifts in perspective from the real to the staged, a reappraisal of experience may occur. Its live nature underlines the real of the here-and-now in a space shared by performer/s and audience. Mediatisation contrasts its liveness; fracturing, reconfiguring, repeating and replicating Lehmann's 'provocative presence of the human' back into the unsurveyable landscape. Postdramatic theatre asks questions rather than providing answers. It presents multiple, shifting perspectives rather than a coherent or fixed point of view.

The crossover zone

The recently disbanded Australian company, version 1.0, was one of an increasing number of local groups purposefully integrating documentary elements and processes into a contemporary theatre language that could be defined as post-dramatic. In *This Kind of Ruckus* (version 1.0 2009), the company investigated the machinations of power, viewed through the lens of domestic violence in contemporary Australia. This work draws from the individual experiences of ensemble members in addition to found texts from a range of sources, including edited media interviews and court transcripts. Describing the work of the company, founding member David Williams says that 'the [real] world permeates version 1.0 performances' and that the aim of *This Kind of Ruckus* is 'to open up a fissure in the culture with the possibility for public discussion, and then ask, 'How should we behave?' (Williams, cited in Gallasch 2009, p. 45). This echoes the idea, proposed earlier, that with witnessing comes the responsibility to be present in an ethical way.

In Keith Gallasch's commentary on *This Kind of Ruckus*, he goes on to say:

> *… in This Kind of Ruckus, version 1.0 has studiously avoided making documentary theatre, instead conjuring suggestive images of the triggers*

for and aftermaths of male violence against women. Some of these are blunt and a few surprisingly literal ... most are more complex, ambiguous even. (2009, p. 45)

Gallasch seems to be proposing that the making of something suggestive and ambiguous equates with a studious avoidance of documentary theatre. His observation discloses the expectation that documentary theatre should endeavour to represent some kind of unequivocal truth: that it will provide a fixed position. Carol Martin counters this idea when she suggests that 'at its best, documentary theatre complicates the idea of documentary and of the real, of a document, and even what it means to document; documentary theatre troubles our already troubled categories of truth, reality [and] fiction' (2009, p. 88). I would suggest that what Martin describes is exactly what version 1.0 does in *This Kind of Ruckus*, and in doing so it creates openings, questions and triggers for imagination and dialogue. The work is both postdramatic *and* documentary.

Conclusion

This flourishing of two families of contemporary theatre practice, documentary and postdramatic, with apparently opposite aims and interests, suggests we are in a complex historical moment. The challenge posed by this situation is: in a (globalised, unsurveyable) world, in which 'the real' has been thoroughly deconstructed and now functions largely as a co-player in a self-reflexive critique of representation, how can we engage this 'other kind of attention'? How can we feel the weight of things and one's own place in them? Some recent theatre residing in the crossover zone between documentary and postdramatic theatre has begun to engage with this challenge. It is in this crossover zone that I see my work *Pin Drop* residing, occupying the multiply mediatised space of live performance and the ambiguous territory between the real and the fictive. Within this 'messy unsurveyable' zone, I hope to facilitate a temporary sociality built from connective moments within and between audience and performer; where the immediacy of the here-and-now is made vivid, where the audience's own imagination and memory inhabit the work, and where the diverse stories and experiences of

'real people' find voice and witness. Dramaturgy of sound—live, voiced, recorded and processed—plays a critical role in these endeavours.

1 For further discussion of 'the real' in performance and discussion of the postdramatic debate see Borowski, M. & Sugiera, M (2009), Medenica (2015), Martin (2012), Fischer-Lichte (2008).
2 For further discussion of the liveness debate see Phillip Auslander (1999), Richard Schechner (2003), Andy Lavender (2002), Cormac Power (2008), Matthew Reason (2004).

Body, Nerves, Voices, Dark: *Pin Drop*

A live work for solo performer and 11 voices
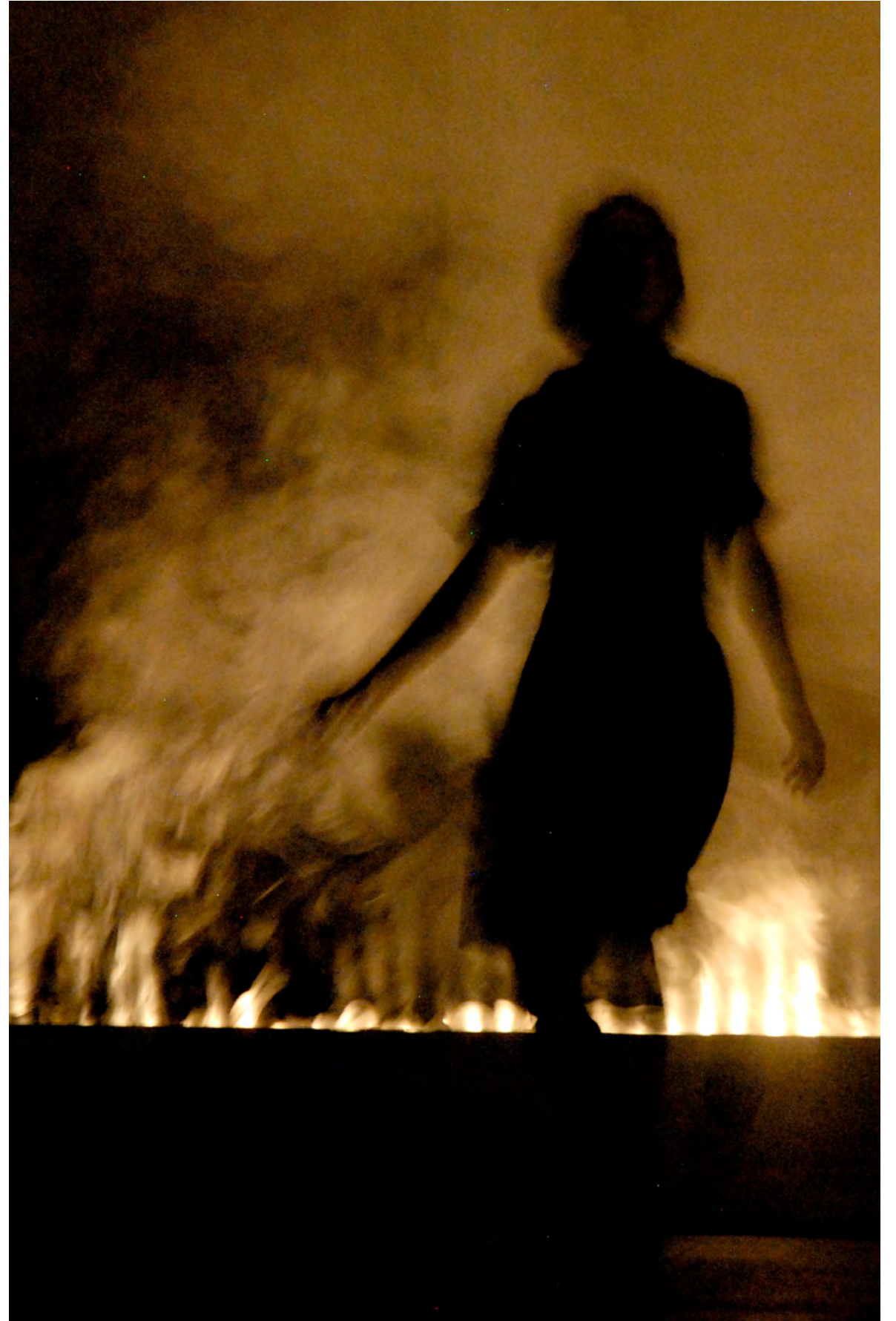
Catalyst

I want to make a solo show. I want the performance to maintain a long arc of suspense, like a suspended note. I want sound to be central to how the work is manifested, a bit like a concert. I want to tell real people's scary stories. It is about fear.

AUDIO 2.1 The Samurai

I was asked in a press interview in the lead-up to the presentation of *Pin Drop*: 'What is the message of this piece? What are you saying about fear?' I found myself thrown by the assumption that my intention would be to impart a message or lesson of some kind, or at the very least, to present a singular point of view. This is not the case. *Pin Drop*, as with my other works, functions like architecture—a holding place for multiple experiences, voices and points of view to be in dialogue with one another. It is a diverse, fragmented and contradictory conversation in which, hopefully, we can hear and recognise something of ourselves and others.

Giving voice

Pin Drop (Saulwick 2010) is about fear. It is a solo work that utilises performance, story and sound to investigate our collective responses to real and/or perceived threats. Part documentary, part urban thriller, it explores the universal phenomenon of fear in our day-to-day lives and its impact on how we choose to live. It engages with this territory through the minutiae of the lived experience, articulating a perspective that focuses on the tension arising from potential threats rather than on any actual act of violence; the threats posed by the unknown other, the stranger breathing down the phone line, the thud on the roof in the dead of the night, the danger lurking in the unlit street.
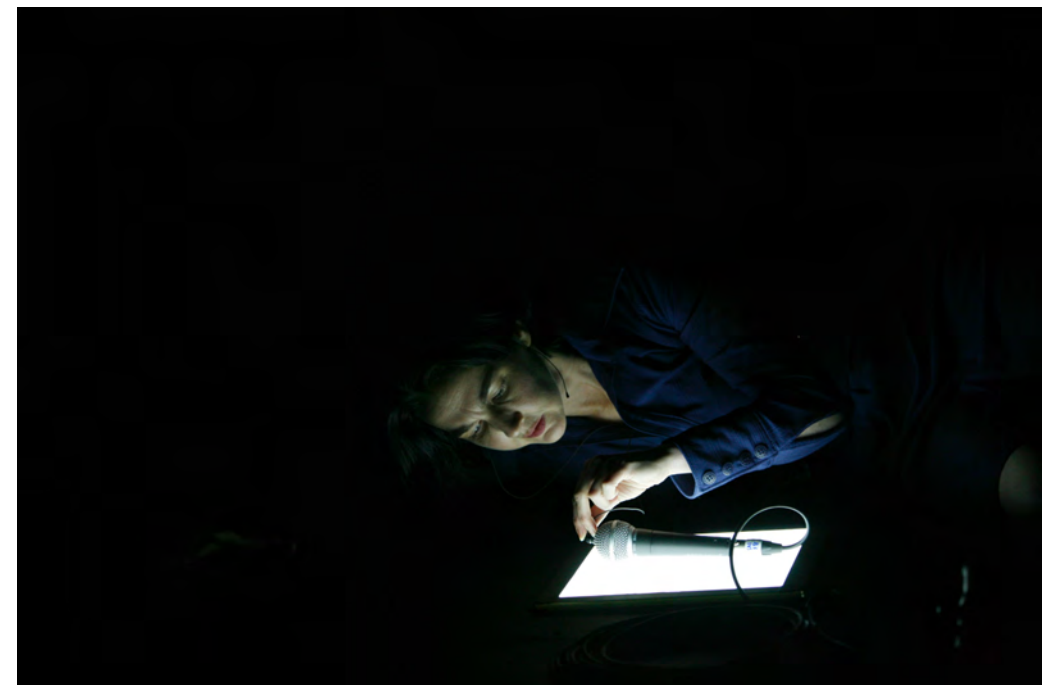
Everyone has their own experiences of real and perceived threats and sometimes our responses to threat are surprising. *Pin Drop* explores how the potential of threat plays out in the mind and body, how we can become engulfed by fear; but also how, in some instances, we manage to overcome it. *Pin Drop* captures the details of people's stories, thoughts and voices—personal accounts that have been collected and recorded through a series of one-on-one interviews—and places them within the live, physical and aural environment of performance. Told through 12 voices—one live, 11 prerecorded—*Pin Drop* presents lived stories recontextualised. There is an intimacy about the material recorded in these interviews that creates in the listener a sense that one is being taken into confidence. The interviews for *Pin Drop* were conducted with people ranging from six to 92 years of age who live or have lived in Melbourne. They provide insights into these individuals' interior worlds as they negotiate their way through this city, as they walk down its streets at night and close the doors of its houses in the evening. Their voices represent a slice of our community: they come from different backgrounds and offer differing perspectives on how it is to live through life's potential dangers. Through their diversity, and in combination with the themes and parallels that emerge throughout the piece, it is possible to start to get a portrait of sorts, of our community. Presented within the shared space of live performance, *Pin Drop* aims to create a collective space within which to encounter and connect with the voices and stories of others.

In *Dumbstruck: a cultural history of ventriloquism*, Steven Connor describes the way in which the voice 'comes from the inside of a body and radiates out through a space which is exterior and extends beyond that body'. He continues: 'in moving from an interior to an exterior, and therefore marking out the relations of interior and exterior, a voice also announces and verifies the co-operation of bodies and the environments in which they have their being.' (2000, p. 6) This echoes LaBelle's suggestion, quoted earlier, that sound 'create[s] a relational space … [where] from one body to the other, a thread is made' (2010, pp. xvi–vii). Through the act of voicing, we come into relationship with one another.

I like working with recordings of 'real people's' voices and stories. I am drawn to the particular quality they bring to works and the way their 'realness' attunes the listener's attention. Real people's voices sound 'unactorly', and the stories and experiences they recount resonate in ways quite distinct from actors speaking pre-written text. Real voices come imprinted with social, cultural and personal qualities that have not been buffed and polished by years of actor training—they retain their histories. When these recordings are played back, the singular quality of each recorded voice brings something of that person into the room in an unmistakeable and vivid way. We associate a voice with a body, a living body, a being.

Connor writes: 'Nothing else about me defines me so intimately as my voice, precisely because there is no other feature of my self whose nature it is thus to move from me to the world, and to move me into the world.' (2000, p. 7) Even when this intimate feature of self is severed from the body by technological processes of reproduction and mediatistion, there remains a perceived continuum that binds it to its source. We can't reconcile a voice without a body, so when listening to a disembodied voice we reinstate the body with our imaginations, referencing the qualities and nuances of the voice like a blueprint. For this reason, I have housed sections and fragments of the original recordings within *Pin Drop*, rather than using them exclusively as a source for text, as is often seen in verbatim theatre. It feels important that the original recordings are heard by the audience, because they carry in them a visceral link to the person from whom they originated. These prerecorded voices maintain a strong sense of their own authority and autonomy, asserting themselves in the aural space and upon me (the performer) as I work as a transmitter, of sorts. The work does not pivot on a single interview, 'but rather realize[s] a "dissemination of

voices … "' (Lehmann 2006 p. 148, emphasis in original).*1*
I am drawn to the multiple/contradictory/accumulated perspectives that many voices bring; to a collective voicing of varied viewpoints and histories that extends well beyond my own personal range of experience—it feels like a community.

<small>MOVIE 2.1</small> Opening - Home

The interviews for *Pin Drop* were conducted around the theme of real and/or perceived threat from an unknown other. These were essentially open-ended conversations in which I provided starting points, queries, and promptings along the way. There is something quite distinctive about the act of recording a conversation. It is not so much that the stakes become higher, but more that it signals that for the next hour or so there is permission to really attend to ideas and experiences, to be serious, to talk without concern for day-to-day superficialities. The interview situation acts as an invitation for deep engagement. In *Listening and voice: phenomenologies of sound*, Don Ihde talks about 'moments of fragile meeting in which there is an exchange of concentrated listening and speaking', when the single 'authentic' voice is heard (2007, p. 178). These interviews had such moments. The people I spoke with seemed to genuinely value the opportunity to share an aspect of their lives and to reflect deeply on it. By the culmination of the interview process I had collected a large number of compelling stories, divergent perspectives and distinct voices.

Working with recorded interviews proved to be a somewhat unnerving process at times. I felt a hovering, ongoing sense

of responsibility to the interview participants and I was concerned about the possibility that they may feel misrepresented by or uncomfortable with the way the material was presented. I set up the process of gathering, editing and rehearsing with the interview material so that all participants had a number of exit points available, should they choose to take them. As it turned out, no one did. That said, the participants had varied levels of involvement and interest in engaging with the final outcome of the work. There remain a number of participants who have never seen *Pin Drop* despite being happy to be involved in the interview process. One participant didn't come because she thought she would get too scared by the show; another simply doesn't go to theatre. Then there were others who came, and came again, with one participant seeing the work three times across two separate seasons. My favourite response was on opening night at Arts House, when one of the interviewees, who had clearly enjoyed the show, beamed at me, declaring: 'I really am a *very* good storyteller, aren't I?' And indeed she is. The fact that she felt present in the telling of her own story was very satisfying for me—as if something essentially 'her' remained intact despite the various mediated and performative processes that her story had undergone. I am reminded of Janelle Reinelt's idea of documentary theatre providing links to an 'absent but acknowledged reality' (2009, p. 9). In this instance, that reality was this one woman's lived experience.

MOVIE 2.2 Cyndi part III

Stories

Our lives progress by stories, and to share stories is to invite others into our interior worlds, to the aspects of self that connect us. It is to invite others to share their stories in return. And indeed, one of the most striking aspects of my experience presenting *Pin Drop* was the conversation that occurred after the performance, as people lingered in the foyer sharing their stories, with many seemingly compelled to tell me their own story personally. There was a kind of contagion of telling. I heard about peeping toms, overseas scams, break-and-enters and much more. The show acted like a trigger for this voicing. In this sense, the dialogue emergent from *Pin Drop* was a literal one. A sounding and a returning. A call and a response.

Pin Drop seems to resonate with a wide range of people, from the theatre literate to those less well-versed in contemporary performance. After its first season at Arts House in 2010, I was somewhat surprised to be offered a main stage season of the work by Melbourne's Malthouse Theatre, in the Beckett Theatre in 2011. My sense is that the relatively unconventional formal aspects of the work (given a main stage context) proved not to be an obstacle for audiences, because the stories themselves are ones that people can easily understand and in many cases relate to their own lives. It seems audiences can sense that the stories are accounts of lived experiences, and that the recorded voices are not those of actors reading a script. The fact that they are true stories matters to people; it makes a difference. It affects how people attend to what they are hearing, bringing that 'different kind of attention' to the task. Perhaps the fact that the stories are personal accounts brings an audience one step closer to them, as they imagine themselves in that situation, reflecting on whether they would make similar or different choices.

Pin Drop could be considered a verbatim theatre piece, as indeed all the words spoken are sourced directly from interviews. However, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, to characterise the piece as verbatim theatre aligns it with a body of work to which I feel relatively unconnected—one that seems aligned with the concerns, conventions and aesthetics of the dramatic literary theatre tradition. However, my approach to the work—with its interest in liveness, mediatisation, multiplicity, and the interrelationship of visual, aural and physical materials—feels far more strongly connected with postdramatic theatre.[2] I find myself located in the crossover zone between postdramatic and documentary practice; fascinated by what real voices and stories bring to the work and equally interested in the ways these stories are fractured, embedded and remediated, and speak to the live performance environment.

Live/mediatised

When beginning work on *Pin Drop*, Margaret Trail, who was working as the project's dramaturge, posed the question: 'Why not make this a work for radio?' It is true that these recorded interviews lent themselves most obviously to a radio-documentary-style format. Yet as a performance maker, my practice and interest lies in the live event. So, the question of why this work should be live rather than entirely recorded functioned as a provocation throughout the process of developing the work, and proved a strong and welcome influence on the eventual aesthetic and rendering of the piece. And from this initial question flowed others: *What is the performer's function in relation to the recorded voices? And how does the prerecorded material manifest within the live*

event? From the very beginning, I intended for there to be a sense of slippage and interplay between the recorded voices and my own live voice and presence.*3* Lehmann writes: 'Playing with the new media technologies that decompose the presence of the actor and especially his/her corporeal and vocal unity is no child's play.' (2009, p. 149) In *Pin Drop*, corporeal and vocal unity is not only decomposed, but also recomposed into new configurations.

In *Pin Drop* the interview recordings are deeply integrated within the physical, visual, performative and sonic language of the work. At the beginning of *Pin Drop* I sit in a chair, switch on my radio microphone, turn on my in-ear monitor and insert my earphones. The fact that I am wired up is declared and the process made transparent. It says: *These voices are not mine, these stories are not mine.* And with this declaration comes a shift in the actor's/my function: 'rather than being an autonomous being, a *character*, who reflects on the world from a position of privilege, the performing self is no more than one caught up in the flow of many' (Freeman 2007 p. 21, emphasis in original). The inter-

viewees' voices exert a presence in the performance space, providing sonic traces of lived bodily experiences. Lehmann asserts that 'an explicit experience of the auditive dimension emerges when the tightly sealed whole of the theatre process is decomposed, when sound and voice are separated and organized according to their own logic.' (2009, p. 149) As the solo performer, I am the flesh and nerves through which these stories and voices pass. A multivalent presence, I am the body, the axis, the transmitter, the accompanist, the medium, the victim, the protagonist, the voyeur and the provocateur. Liveness is underlined by the non-live as prerecorded voices intersect with me, as we make each other more tangible through mutual affect. I am not alone in what becomes a seemingly 'peopled' environment.

My position and role shifts. At times I physically and vocally embody the recorded voice/s, at other times I function as a conduit through which the interviewees can speak, sometimes providing one voice amidst a chorus of voices, and at other times performing as accompanist to the prerecorded voice/s. 'The boundaries between language as an expression

of live presence and language as a prefabricated material are blurred' (Lehmann 2006, p. 149) as recorded voices play in, around and with my own live voice and body. This interplay is approached almost musically with the use of unison, chorus, duet, polyphony, accompaniment, and so on. Voices and stories travel through me and out again via receivers and headphones, transmitters and microphones—mediatised stories, via a wired body, within a 'multiply-mediatized world' (Jurs-Munby, in Lehmann 2006, pp. 11–2).
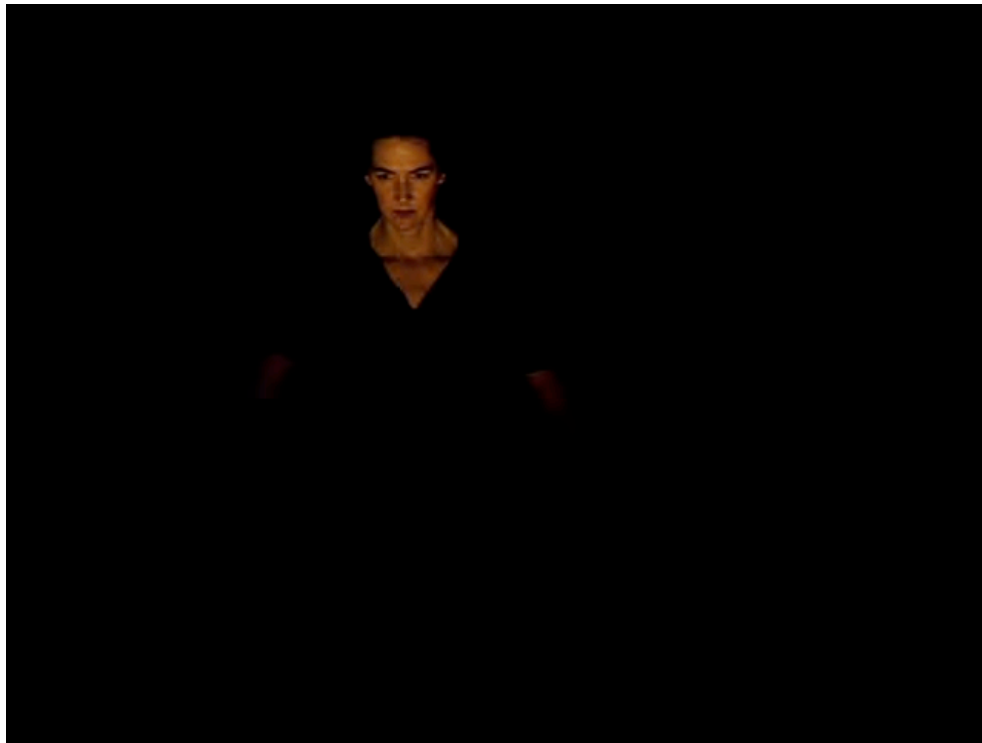
MOVIE 2.3 Honey, Honey

In *Pin Drop* I speak the text whilst simultaneously listening to the original recording through in-ear monitors (earbuds/ headphones). The recorded voices set the tempo, the pitch, the rhythm, the timbre and the intonation of my delivery. Between the three possibilities of live text delivery, playback of prerecorded text, and simultaneous delivery of live and prerecorded text lie further variants, as the prerecorded voices seemingly float into, out of and around the live body, and into and out of synchronisation with it. In playing with these elements I am interested in creating unstable zones, where the live, the processed and the prerecorded become difficult to distinguish from one another, and yet more vivid as a consequence. Lehmann discusses this phenomenon citing John Jerusun's work series, *Chang in a Void Moon* (1982), in which live performers speak in unison with their own prerecorded video selves, observing that 'the body becomes strangely machinized, and at the same time the technological image becomes strangely alive' (2006 p. 149). It is this 'strangely alive' quality—at times a kind of ventriloquism, achieved through interweaving the live and the mediatised—that fascinates me, and that I continue to pursue in all of

my works. Connor writes: 'The ventriloquial voice asks in particular to be understood in terms of the relation between vision and hearing, relations which it itself helps to disclose.' (2000, p. 14) It is the viewer/listener who connects the ventriloquist's voice with the ventriloquist's doll, or in the case of *Pin Drop*, the disembodied voice with the live presence of the performer. When the connection between vision and hearing is disrupted, audiences instinctively work to reinstate relations between the two.
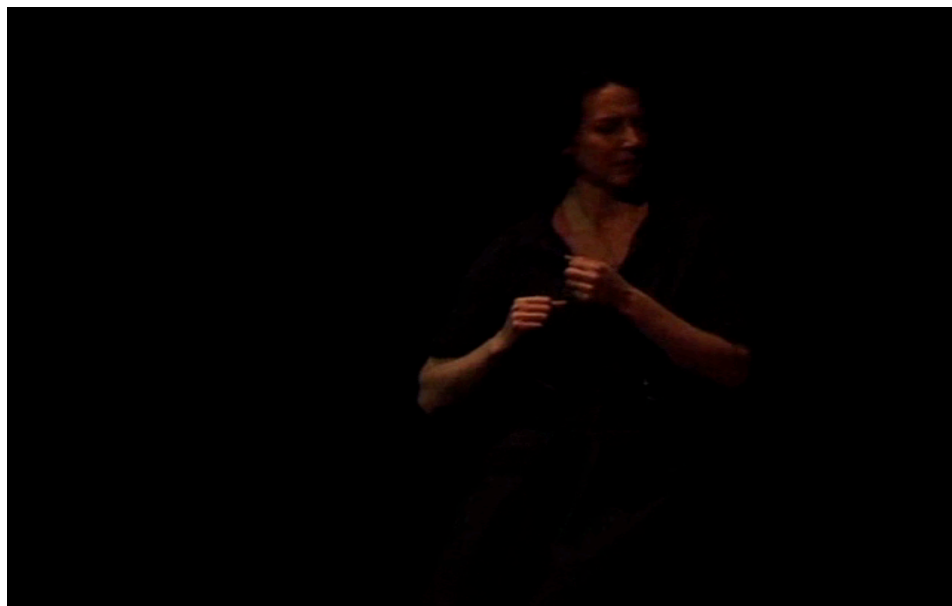
MOVIE 2.4 Hotel

Tuning in

When I reflect on the interplay between the live body and all of these prerecorded voices in *Pin Drop*, the image of tuning in to a short-wave radio signal comes to mind. As performer I receive the signal and then emit the sound—it becomes a process of transmission rather than interpretation—and with this image comes the sense of there being many, many more stories out there, awaiting tuning in. My sense with *Pin Drop* was that I could make that piece anew ten times over, simply by putting out the antenna to discover a whole new set of stories on the same theme. In *Pin Drop*, sound technology provides a pathway for the voices of others to move in and speak through me, via my ears, my senses, my voice. However, it is the undeniably human body that sits at the centre of *Pin Drop*—with its flight or fight responses, bristling hairs, listening ears and skipping heart. A solitary woman's body in a big wonky world. 'Whether a threat is actual or not, our vulnerability is real: we realise in these moments how fragile we are, how mortal, and, perhaps, how dangerous we might be.' (Croggon 2011)

The theatrical world of *Pin Drop* is one that can plunge from full light into disorienting, inky blackness, where listening becomes the primary mode of orientation. Sound is visceral,

spatial and evocative. It travels around the auditorium, enclosing the audience inside its orbit—footsteps encircling, the sound of the street at night, a passing car—and then returning back once again to the illuminated performer on stage. At other times, the performer's body (my body) is lit only in fleeting blasts of light, or so dimly as to appear apparition-like, where distance and depth become difficult to judge. Reviewer Alison Croggon writes:

> *The very simple elements employed so ingeniously here—a stage within a stage, smoke, darkness, light and sound—powerfully call up your own memories of fear or threat. The theatre becomes, quite nakedly, a kind of psychic echo chamber. (2011)*
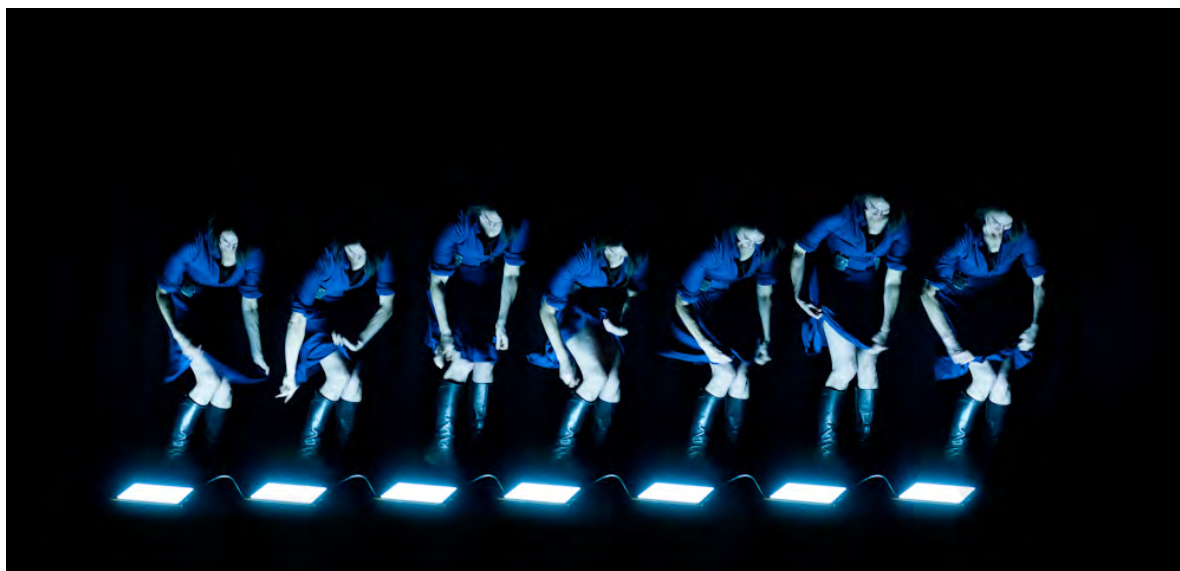
This slippage from the visual to the aural threads its way throughout the work and gently draws the audience deeper into the act of listening. Sound and light (or its absence) work in tandem to focus the attention of viewers/listeners, leading them to a place where their own imaginations and memories are triggered. Sound is used to conjure the unseen, evoke the absent, bring the past into the present, and act as mnemonic trigger.

MOVIE 2.5 Percussion table

Pin Drop dwells in the connective spaces between the real and the imagined—spaces to be occupied by the associations of the audience. As Fiona McGregor observes in her review, the work 'use[s] as few pointers as possible so the space we inhabit most of all is our own imagination. The objects and anecdotes are triggers and mnemonics into our deepest fears' (2012, p. 40). It is the sense of void space around the sonic gestures in the video sequence above that gives them their impact. With no visual or performative component to interpret the sounds for the audience in any way, listeners are free to make their own associations. And as these sounds, created live onstage, begin to intermingle with similar but prerecorded sounds and then blasts of prerecorded voice/breath/laughter, audience members begin to construct their own meanings. Sound is employed as a dramaturgical device to propel the work deeper into the associative territories of the audience's own imaginations and memories.

Conclusion

The rise of documentary performance throughout the last decade is testament to a hunger for work that bears links to the real world—to 'those indexical traces of the presence of a real past' (Reinelt 2009, p. 13). In *Pin Drop*, the real world permeates the live event as people's voices and stories open out a space to resound in and return from. In an exchange of speaking and listening, these voices mark out relations of interior and exterior, self and other, individual and community. This fragmented, contradictory, polyphonic 'psychic echo-chamber' reminds us that 'we all are frail in the house of our flesh' (Croggon 2011). The wired body, a multivalent presence caught in the flow of many voices, becomes receiver and transmitter for the stories of others—real stories of lived experiences. A strangely alive quality suggestive of the multiply mediatised world in which we find ourselves is invoked through the intermingling of the live and the non-live as the body meets technology. Sound surrounds us, draws us in, triggers our memory and 'invokes a parallel theatre in [the] mind' (Croggon 2011). From the spaces between the live and the mediated, between what is heard and what is seen, between one being and another and between memory and imagination, the work emerges. It is my hope that, through this process, moments of connection within us (association, imagination and memory) and between us (sharing of stories and perspectives) will arise.

Pin Drop

Artists
Creator/performer: Tamara Saulwick
Composer/sound designer: Peter Knight
Set and lighting designers: bluebottle—Ben Cobham and Frog Peck
Movement: Michelle Heaven
Costume designer: Harriet Oxley
Technical direction: bluebottle—Frog Peck
Technical operation: Luke Smiles

1 See Lehmann's *Postdramatic Theatre* (2006) for further discussion on the use of voice in postdramatic theatre—such as choral theatre, musicalisation and textscape.

2 My discussion of postdramatic theatre has been largely confined to liveness, mediatisation and an interest in the real as co-player. However, Lehmann writes at length about the more formal aspects of postdramatic theatre, predicated in large part by the breakdown of hierarchical relationships between text, space, sound, the body and media (Lehmann 2006).

3 Working with the live voice and body in conjunction with and in counter-point to the prerecorded or mediatised voice and body has been a through-line in my own practice for the last 14 years; and before that, with the performance company Not Yet It's Difficult, under the direction of David Pledger. In these earlier works I focused predominantly, if not exclusively, on the visual prerecorded elements. For *Pin Drop* I focused instead predominantly on the prerecorded sonic aspects, and unlike the earlier works—in which the prerecorded voices belonged to the performers—in *Pin Drop* the recordings came from other people telling their own stories, as in documentary radio or film.

Intimacy, Immediacy: Headphone Performance
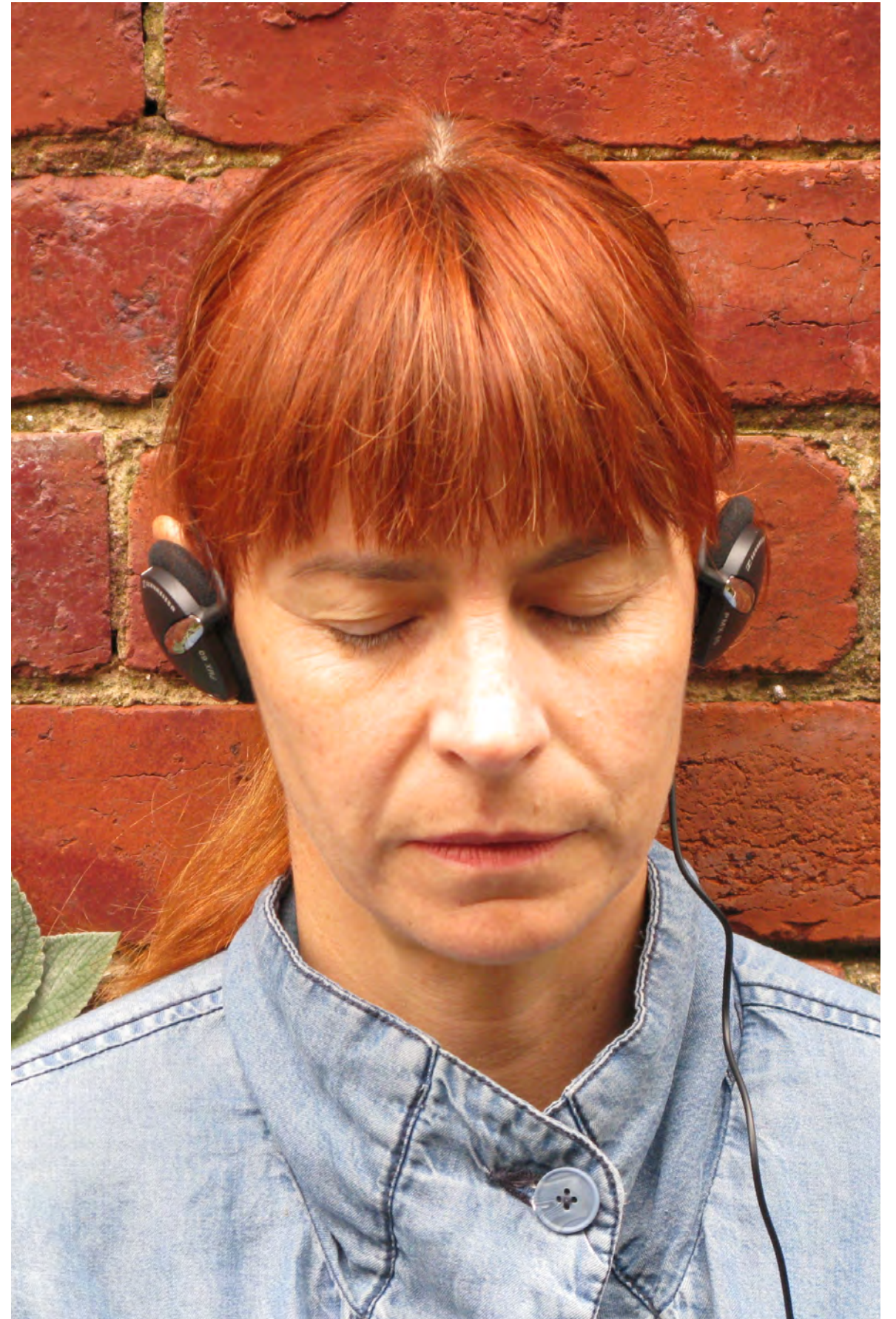
The 1980s

Let's rewind a little, back to the pre-digital days of analogue machines. If you do an internet search for 'Walkman', one of the first things you come across is a cute video of young kids being presented with a piece of outdated technology to see if they can guess what it is and how it might be operated. When presented with a Walkman, the kids struggle: 'You have to put something into it? In order to skip from one song to the next you have to press fast-forward, wait, then just guess where the next song might start? You can only have 30 songs on the whole thing?' ('Kids React to Walkmans' 2014) The enormous leaps in audio technology made since the Sony Walkman first broke into the market in the early 1980s render it virtually unrecognisable as a sound device to a child today. In his essay, 'The aural walk', first published in 1994, Iain Chambers describes the Walkman as a 'symbolic gadget for the nomads of modernity, in which music on the move is continually being decontextualised and recontextualised in the inclusive and symbolic flux of everyday life' (2004, pp. 99–100). Portable and private, this device allowed people for the first time to become sonic curators of a variety of environments, able to self-select the soundtrack for any given moment or activity. These moments were situated predominantly in the everyday comings and goings of the urban landscape.

> *The Walkman offers the possibility of a micro-narrative, a customised story and soundtrack, not merely a space but a place, a site of dwelling. The ingression of such a privatised habitat in public spaces is a disturbing act. Its uncanny quality lies in its deliberate confusion of earlier boundaries in its provocative appearance "out of place". (Chambers 2004, p. 100)*

This 'disturbing act'—the sense that the Walkman user is in another place, isolated from those around him/her—still resonates today, where there is continued anxiety associated with the notion that personal devices can become barriers between individuals, their environment and others. Interestingly though, Chambers also writes:

... a refusal of public exchange and apparent regression to individual solitude, also involves an unsuspected series of extensions. With the Walkman there is simultaneously a concentration on the auditory environment and an extension of our individual bodies. (2004, p. 99)

This sense that the individual body can be extended via a concentration on the auditory environment resonates with Brandon LaBelle's suggestion that 'the rich undulations of auditory materiality do much to unfix delineations between the private and the public (2010, p. xxi). Sound, and by extension the technologies that deliver it, can create 'intensely private experience[s]' (Chambers 2004, p. 99) whilst also weaving or extending an individual into the public sphere. Just as the sounding body (the voice) in the previous chapter marked out the relations of interior and exterior, so too can the auditory world of the Walkman. Chambers suggests that, just as the human voice draws the world back in through its call for a response, 'the Walkman … draws the world into you, reaffirms your body, and laconically signals a "diasporic identity" put together in transit … the Walkman brings the external world into the interior of identities' (2004, p. 99).

Today, portable sound devices are no longer the privileged objects of nomads of modernity, but are ubiquitous; clipped onto the lapels of schoolkids, office workers and joggers, and built into the function of any new smartphone or car sound system. Today's sonic curators have access to vast arrays of digital data: thousands of tracks played sequentially or randomly. In the final year of his life, my 82-year-old father listened to Bach and Brahms on his iPod, and now my ten-year-old son falls asleep to the random shuffling of his iPod Touch.

The 1990s

Let's rewind again, if you will, to the mid-1990s. I spent several years working with outdoor performance companies (or 'street theatre companies' as they were referred to then). A whole generation of Melbourne-based outdoor performance companies emerged around this time, largely through the sup-

port of Melbourne International Arts Festival, creating works that were striking, bold and highly visual. From the large-scale sculptural performance works of Primary Source and Strange Fruit to the visual and musical works of The Hunting Party, Five Angry Men and The Teabags, these companies met the challenges of being outdoors by being bigger and bolder than their surroundings. Those of us working with acoustic vocals and instruments faced considerable challenges in competing with the outdoor aural environment. When arriving at a new performance site, one of the first questions was always where to situate the stationary component of the performance. This decision took into account a number of considerations, but always at the top of the list was the natural acoustic of the space and how we could use it to our advantage. Eventually I became frustrated with this kind of work, feeling condemned to working with broad brushstrokes and unable to attend to performance detail and subtlety. I craved the intimacy afforded by working indoors and these works, successful on their own terms, felt anything but intimate.

Today

More recent advancements in digital sound technologies have resulted in increased access to and affordability of sound technologies. Sound can now be recorded, stored, edited, manipulated and delivered in ways inconceivable even a decade ago. These shifts have enabled performance makers in increasing numbers to seize the opportunity to work more closely and purposefully with sound. Real-time sound-processing software has allowed for the integration of improvisational methodologies into the rehearsal room, and for live processing to be integrated into performance events themselves. Sound has become a critical tool in the execution of work, embedded in its dramaturgy and delivery. It facilitates the level of intimacy and detail I craved back in the 1990s, and it has also led to new strategies for connecting with audiences.

Headphones, the natural companion to portable sound devices, and equally ubiquitous, play an important role in the ways these works function. In the relatively brief time span of my PhD candidature, there has been a seemingly exponen-

tial growth in the use of headphones in performance indoors and outdoors, for performers and for audiences. So what is it that headphones can do? They can extend us into the world and draw the world into us, create a private world for the listener in a public context, deliver sound right into our head to the potential exclusion of other sounds, facilitate a sense of immersion, collapse distance, make audible those sounds and voices that would normally remain inaudible. They can be used to connect our interior world with our exterior environment, to provide a bridge between prerecorded sound and live environmental sound and to merge the fictive and the real. The common belief that personal devices and headphones function as alienating barriers between individuals and their surroundings has been reconfigured by artists, using these same technologies to connect individuals more intimately and viscerally to their immediate surroundings, and to the people within them. Sound delivered through headphones can perform the dramaturgical function of forging connections between artistic construct, site and audience. In these contexts, the personal audio device is, as Chambers observes, 'simultaneously a technical instrument and a cultural activity … that contributes to the casting into sense, to the re-presenting, or en-framing, of the contemporary world' (2004, p. 94).

Trailblazers: Back to Back Theatre and Janet Cardiff

Director, Bruce Gladwin, from Back to Back Theatre, and Canadian sound artist, Janet Cardiff, were both well ahead of the game in the use of sound and headphones in their respective practices. Despite their similar use of non-traditional art/performance spaces, their practices emerged from discrete artistic lineages, with Back to Back's work strongly rooted in theatre and Cardiff's in sound and installation practice. In the early 1990s the sound technologies and modes of delivery that they employed extended and altered the form of their work considerably. The ongoing resonance of Back to Back Theatre's and Cardiff's innovations can be seen in the increasing body of work sitting somewhere between their practices of theatre and sound art, and is particu-

larly evident in the recent wave of headphone works of the 2010s.

The group of actors 'perceived to have intellectual disabilities' that make up the Back to Back Theatre ensemble has deeply influenced not only the content of the company's work, but also its engagement with technology and experiments with modes of delivery. Back to Back Theatre has been working with headphones in its performances for many years now, in both indoor and outdoor settings. *Small Metal Objects* (2005), the work that propelled the company into the international arena, remains the touchstone against which other public space/headphone works continue to be measured. Often artistic discoveries are born out of responses to practical challenges, as appears to be the case with Back to Back Theatre. The company's approach to sound production arrived initially as a response to countering the architectural properties of traditional theatres and 'the challenge they present for actors without extensive voice training' (Tsilemanis 2012, p. 46). By introducing the use of radio microphones, the performers could be heard at greater distances, a fact which, somewhat ironically, then freed them from the traditional theatres they were trying to adapt to. The company also equipped their actors with in-ear monitor systems as a means to communicate with them throughout the performance (Tsilemanis 2012, p. 46).[1] Unsurprisingly, these technologies and methods eventually found their way into the broader conceptual underpinnings and delivery of the company's work. What began as practical solutions eventually led to larger aesthetic choices and formal innovations.

Back to Back's *SOFT* (Back to Back Theatre 2002), which premiered at the 2002 Melbourne International Arts Festival, explores the ethical dilemmas associated with genetic technologies and the implications of genetic prenatal screening. Two actors play a married couple faced with the choice of whether or not to terminate a pregnancy, after their prenatal screening indicates that the child will be born with Down Syndrome. Their doctor (the third actor) is at pains to convince them to abort. The work's power comes in part from the casting of 'the three performers who are the physical representation of Down's Syndrome' in the three key roles

(Back to Back Theatre 2013). The original presentation of *SOFT* took place in an enormous hangar on the docks at Southbank in Melbourne. Once inside the hangar, the audience was led inside a white inflatable performance zone and seated in a raked seating bank. This inflated, womb-like space fulfilled the multiple functions of containing the first part of the performance, providing a giant screen upon which animated images and text were projected, and providing a scrim able to morph from one colour to the next. The enormity of the performance space made it necessary for the actors to work with radio microphones in order to be heard. This process of vocal delivery was taken one step further by providing each audience member with individual headphones, thus allowing for the live mediated voice and the pre-recorded sound design to be subtly and specifically modulated in relation to each other. The ensuing effect was one of immediacy and intimacy, which collapsed distance and defied the scale of the space. The way in which the enclosed sound world echoed the architectural form of the inflatable space had a satisfying sense of inevitability about it. A turning point in *SOFT*'s narrative arrives when the couple, per-suaded by the arguments of their doctor, agree to terminate the pregnancy. At this moment, the entire inflatable enclosure is released from behind the audience and sucked over and away into the distant, dark recesses of the hangar, leaving actors and audience alike stranded in the dark, cavernous surrounds. When I saw this production at its premiere season, I was completely transported by the power of this moment, in which form and content were so powerfully combined.

From *SOFT* there is a clear line of progression to the highly acclaimed and frequently performed *Small Metal Objects* (Back to Back Theatre 2005), in which the company dispenses altogether with an indoor performance venue; opting instead for a public space—be it a railway station (Melbourne), Ferry Terminal (New York City), Town Square (Dublin) or shopping centre (Toronto). The only visible infrastructure that remains is a seating bank, which is once again equipped with individual headphones for the audience. In *Small Metal Objects*, the cityscape becomes the stage; and to a degree the public become the players. *Small Metal Objects*

is an exploration of visibility, agency and power played out through a drug-deal-gone-wrong narrative. As was the case with *SOFT*, headphones are used to collapse distance and create a sense of intimacy.

At the beginning of the show, the audience members—who are seated together with their individual headphone sets—find themselves watching the world pass by; the everyday framed by the context of the event and accompanied by ambient sound. Slowly, within the constant flux and flow of the cityscape, a micro-narrative is introduced, beginning as two voices in conversation. In her review of the show, Judith Abell writes of this opening sequence, 'there is something very intimate about listening to … voice through headphones. It is as though the sound hovers in the middle of your head, making itself comfortable in your own thoughts' (2007). After listening to this conversation for many minutes whilst watching the comings and goings of the surroundings, the audience's focus is eventually drawn to two figures at a great distance, their stillness set in counterpoint to the inces-

sant flow of bodies around them. The audience becomes aware that it is their two voices being heard.

From this moment the audience members become voyeurs or witnesses to the private exchange and dealings of these two individuals. I use the word 'voyeurs' intentionally—because of the sense of eavesdropping the headphone technology brings with it, when used in combination with the personal, almost existential quality of the actors' exchange. The performers are not addressing the audience directly, yet are heard as clearly as if they were. It is eerie, intimate and compelling. As the narrative plays out, there is the sense that the audience becomes increasingly complicit in the unfolding events. They are the silent witnesses, the passive bystanders. Whilst the audience is well aware that it is a fiction being played out before them, the fact that it occurs amidst the comings and goings of the 'real world' means that the fictive and the real rub up against each other, blurring the boundaries between the two.

Hans-Thies Lehmann's notion of 'the irruption of the real' (2006, p. 100) can be seen time and time again in *Small Metal Objects*, when real-world interactions momentarily draw the audience's attention away from the central narrative or can be seen to intersect with it. The work's theme of visibility, or lack thereof, for certain individuals within our society, is manifested with stark acuity in this public setting. The prospective drug deal and the ensuing acts of intimidation take place in plain sight, occurring whilst the 'real world' turns a blind eye. Watching the narrative unfold within the grand scale of the cityscape allows the audience to watch from afar, to be distant voyeurs. Somewhat paradoxically, listening through the headphones allows the audience to feel intimately involved, as if right inside the conversation. This paradox of being both connected to and separate from an event is perhaps reflective of a larger cultural phenomenon in which we can feel simultaneously implicated by, and distant from, the social inequities experienced by those around us. The use of headphones in this work becomes no longer simply a means by which to transmit sound, but rather, a dramaturgical strategy to underline the simultaneity of intimacy and isolation experienced by the audience and witnessed in the players.

This territory of being connected-to and separate-from, intimate yet apart, inside and outside, is also beautifully rendered in the works of Janet Cardiff. The push and pull of this territory is not only expressive of a kind of contemporary condition, but is perhaps indicative of something quite fundamental in all of us as individual yet social animals. In reflecting on her works, Cardiff says: 'I think that is one of our goals in life, isn't it, to get connected' (Cardiff, cited in Schaub 2005, p. 189). Cardiff's works are expressions of her desire to connect with others, to create relationships; often one-on-one. Her own voice is an intimate presence in the works, leading audiences on cinema-like journeys through real-world sites. She draws people into intimate encounters that are 'portholes into other worlds' (Schaub 2005, p. 5).

Regarded as the foremost exponent of the 'audio walk' form, Cardiff developed her first walk after a chance experience during a residency at The Banff Centre for the Arts in Can-

ada in 1991. She describes walking through a graveyard and recording her own voice as she made observations of her thoughts and surroundings. Accidentally pushing the rewind button, she heard her recorded self on replay—the sound of her voice, her breathing and footsteps—just moments after the fact. She describes this experience of being in 'two places at once' (Cardiff, cited in Schaub 2005, p. 5) as an 'aha' moment, a 'peculiar discovery' (p. 79), which she needed to pursue in some way. She produced her first audio walk two weeks later and has made no less than 20 more in the intervening years, with sound artist and long-time collaborator, George Bures Miller.

The audio walk form can be seen to share some qualities with its more prosaic cousin, the 'audio tour', traditionally found in museums or as a historical travel guide through cities—where a person is equipped with an individual audio device with headphones, then guided through various sites by an accompanying soundtrack. If the audio tour is a historically and information driven format, then the audio walk is an artistic and experientially driven one. It is an intimate en-

counter in which the audience member, perhaps more appropriately termed, in this context, the 'participant', is required to engage physically as well as imaginatively in order for the work to come to life. In her book about the work of Cardiff, Mirjam Schaub suggests that familiar spaces develop an 'invisible inner architecture, an extremely personal and unique network of thoughts and emotions' (2005, p. 94). Cardiff uses this 'affective experience of space' (p. 94) in her walks, which function as frameworks for associative links between sound and sight, inner and outer, past and present, fictive and real, and self and others.

Cardiff's voice is present in all of her walks. It is her voice that leads participants on their solo journey. Unlike *Small Metal Objects*, where the dialogue and voices are in a sense overheard by the audience, the voice in Cardiff's walks addresses the participant directly, establishing a one-on-one relationship. Discussing the quality of intimacy in Cardiff's audio walks, Schaub speaks of a 'tolerable proximity' (2005, p. 194), describing 'a closeness that does not aim to completely close the natural gap between bodies and sexes, but

rather … is an evanescent form of closeness that engages our imagination and preserves a minimal degree of freedom and distance' (p. 194). This raises the questions: *What is an* intolerable *proximity? How intimate is too intimate? What pushes us over this notional line where we find ourselves recoiling from an experience? On the other hand, what set of circumstances will draw us in to an unfamiliar yet intimate experience?* Cardiff's tone of vocal delivery is direct and close—it feels intimate, yet not *too* intimate. Cardiff herself suggests her walks create 'a safe intimacy because of the separation through media' (Cardiff, cited in Schaub 2005, p. 193). I know, for myself, that I am more inclined to lean into the whispering of a stranger's voice in my ear if it is mediated through headphones, than one carried on the warm breath of an actual person standing close to me. The separation through media allows me to feel comfortable with the situation, not pressured to respond in any particular way. When this sense of performance anxiety is removed from me as a participant, I can be present with the situation and freer to engage with it imaginatively.

In Cardiff's audio walks, a deep engagement with sound is embedded into the work—aesthetically, formally and functionally. One of the essential tenets of her walks is that the prerecorded and the live experience should be difficult to distinguish from one another in order to 'create a new world as a seamless combination of the two' (Cardiff, cited in Schaub 2005, p. 15). I refer back to Lehmann's observation that the live and the non-live, when paired, exert a 'strangely alive' quality. This in turn enlivens something in the participant as they negotiate between the two. There is a certain kind of synaesthetic displacement that occurs in the slippage between the prerecorded and the live, or indeed between the aural and the physical environment, that elicits the description of Cardiff's work as 'physical cinema'.

As Schaub writes, in Cardiff's works, 'our surroundings seem to be recreated entirely out of sound and this acoustic animation of the material world captures our imagination. Our purview suddenly expands into a major cinematic event' (2005, p. 14). When this cinematic sensibility is evoked, it is as if our sense of the world around us becomes heightened

and the surrounding details become imbued with significance. Passers-by are transformed into potential characters representing possible sub-plots, everyday images assume an air of importance as if consciously chosen, and details seem magnified as if in close-up, simply as a result of our attention to them. The physical world seems somehow changed through the intermingling of our gaze/imagination/senses with the artwork and site. In this sense the work happens *in us* as well as around us: we are the 'channel through which voices, noises and musics travel … [the] membrane' (Connor 1997, p. 207) between interior and exterior worlds.

Whilst Cardiff's works are deeply embedded in the sites in which they occur, they function as open-ended provocations that slide fluidly between locale and imagination. Phonographic artist and researcher, Will Schrimshaw, talks at some length, in his discussion of site-responsive phonographic practice, of the 'insufficiency of the specific in accounting for the allure of the site' (2012, p. 2). He argues instead for more abstracted approaches that do 'not solely entail a documentation of place but a production of space' (p. 2). Schrim-

shaw's notion of the 'ambiguous plasticity' (p. 2) of site can be seen strongly revealed in Cardiff's work, which shifts from the historical to a dream-state within moments. Indeed, Cardiff does not aim to accurately re-render an environment through sound or indeed to 'document and investigate the role of sound in the determination of place' (p. 3), as would the acoustic ecologist; nor is the sound component of her works ever simply an abstract ambient backdrop to the experience. The works sway between specificity and abstractedness, drawing from the here-and-now of a real-world site and mixing it with the sounds of elsewhere, other times, fictions and half-truths. She resists coherent narratives, opting instead to open out evocative and ambiguous spaces into which the participant's own imagination can enter. Marla Carlson, reflecting on Cardiff's 2004 work created for New York's Central Park, writes:

> *… although as Her Long Black Hair ended I was disappointed by the lack of thematic coherence or narrative closure, I think that if the story or even the theme were coherent, then our thoughts would be organized at a level that precludes these moments of*

immersion in the present experience—a present moment that includes our reactivated memories. (2006, pp. 405–6)

Cardiff's approach to the audio walk form has been a major influence on my own, intersecting as it does with my own preoccupations with the interplay between the prerecorded and the live, between the real and the fictive, and between sound and vision.[2] The audio walk form lends itself generously to these areas of interest, with several distinct points of difference from indoor theatre: the audience/participant is now placed at the centre of the experience, in a sense replacing the live performer; the participant is mobile; and the work takes place in a real-world setting.

Next Wave

Just as throughout the 1990s and early 2000s there was a striking increase in the use of video within live performance, the last few years have seen a similar increase in the use of headphones and an emphasis on sound. Sound is the 'new black', it seems. I suspect we will look back in ten years' time to comment on the 'headphone period' of the early 2010s. The more artists explore these techniques and modes of delivery, the more sophisticated our collective understanding of their potential becomes. Today, festivals such as Next Wave in Melbourne are like hothouses for works using headphones, where (often young) artists are delivering works outside of theatres, in unconventional forms, to small audiences or one-on-one. Working with sound and headphones allows artists to make work relatively simply and cost-effectively.

Liesel Zink, a young Brisbane-based artist, brought her work *Fifteen* (Zink 2012) to the Next Wave festival in 2012. It was one of the more sophisticated of the numerous headphone and audio works I saw in the festival that year. She, like Cardiff, is interested in the interrelationship between performance/site/sound and between the live and the prerecorded. For *Fifteen* the audience, which was seated together on a balcony, had a birds-eye view into the foyer space of Flagstaff railway station during peak hour. Watching from above, we observed four dancers in the space below move

amongst the busy comings and goings of commuters. The name of the piece stems from the idea that a distance of 15 centimetres delineates the external boundaries of an individual's personal space. It would seem that less than 15 centimetres represents the intolerable proximity referred to by Cardiff earlier. *Fifteen* examines the ways by which people manage, negotiate and transgress these unspoken physical boundaries in public spaces.

Fifteen was highly choreographed; the chosen site was a transit area, filled with the passing traffic of business people on their way to catch the train home. The audience's aerial perspective on the bodies, combined with the patterned floor tiles of the space, created a formalism within the random comings and goings. Dancers traced these floor patterns and carved out their own, at times working in tempos contrasting those of the commuters, or adopting complete stillness. They would appear then disappear from sight, leaving us to watch commuters, often literally running through the space to avoid missing their train. At other times the general public appeared very much a part of the choreography as they darted through and around the performers. At times the work was less choreographic and more akin to an intervention, highlighting notions of isolation. For quite some time one performer sat limp and motionless, legs outstretched before her, head hanging over, and we observed that no one stopped to enquire about her wellbeing. At other points performers held up signs such as 'I GOT A HUG TODAY' or 'I'M REALLY TIRED' that acted as explicit and direct provocation to be noticed by passers-by. We heard a voice through the headphones capturing details from the environment: 'Red scarf. Hand in pocket. Check ticket. Head turn.' These were details we then sought and sometimes caught, as if taking part in a secret game. Later in the piece we saw the speaking performer buy a newspaper from a small station stall—we heard him (via radio mic) as he chatted to the stallholder with a familiarity that suggested they were now well acquainted. This collage-like set of events, interactions, interventions and choreographic materials was brought into cohesion largely through the use of headphone sound.

In *Fifteen* the audience members wore FM radio receiver headphones, tuned in to the bandwidth on which the sound was being broadcast. This was old analogue radio technology re-purposed. The sound design, which moved between pre-composed elements, prerecorded text, live broadcast of ambient sound and live voice, was the piece's primary framing device. Despite being a highly choreographed dance piece and unconcerned with narrative, *Fifteen* calls to mind Back to Back Theatre's *Small Metal Objects*—the busy public space, the audience seated in a bank together with headphones, performers interacting inside a real-world site, and the use of sound to frame the performance and guide the audience experience. Whilst in Back to Back's work the audience was seated with wired-in headphones, in *Fifteen* the audience had wireless headphones, which opened up the potential for mobility.*3*

Fifteen was an accumulation of events through which performers sought to make connections with others, and to breach, or create a bridge across, the 15-centimetre chasm. It was an unwitting response to LaBelle's provocation: 'how to figure oneself in relation to all the presences that come flooding in each day to carry numerous identities?' (2010, p. xviii). The performance highlighted the sense of distance, isolation and loss of identity that can be felt amongst the flooding presences of passing commuters. Counter to this were the connections that occurred between performers and the somewhat physically remote audience, and the way in which the auditory environment extended the individual bodies of the audience members into the site itself. Like *Small Metal Objects,* there was a dual sense of the proximate and the remote, of being connected-to and separate-from, of being 'joined together in a temporal instant' (LaBelle 2010, p. xvii). Headphone audio was the principle strategy in this work for connecting between bodies (audience and performers) and site.

Snapshot

By way of illustrating my point in relation to the increasing momentum in the use of headphones in performance, below is a small snapshot of the works I saw within a two-week period in August/September 2013.

- *Live View* (a creative development showing), by Sandra Parker, with sound design by David Franzke. Audience members, each equipped with a pair of enclosing headphones and seated around the perimeter of a smallish rehearsal studio, watched a solo dancer performing a very specific, yet almost pedestrian-like set of physical gestures, punctuated by moments of stillness. This live presence was accompanied by the sounds of a dense and highly spatial audio score built from prerecorded binaural field recordings of urban environments—street-sounds, passing trains, cars, shops, passers-by, fleeting interactions—which later morphed into more abstracted and ambient sonic textures.*4* Towards the end of the piece a woman's voice added spoken text into the sound mix, providing a kind of retrospective anchor or explanation of sorts, for the physical score just witnessed.

- *The Confidence Man,* by Side Pony Productions, conceived and directed by Zoe Pepper. In *The Confidence Man* five volunteer audience members, alongside one actor, make up the performers for each evening's show. Following prerecorded prompts and instructions delivered through headphones, the performers physically execute the unfolding narrative. The audience, also equipped with headphones, is divided into three separate groups around the perimeter of the performance space. Each group listens to a soundtrack containing a combination of the interior monologues of the characters, the dialogue spoken between characters and the instructions given to performers. One audience group listens to the narrative solely from the perspective of one of the main characters; another group hears the narrative from a second character's perspective; and the last group, equipped with individual switching devices, is able to choose at any moment between the audio tracks aligned with each of the six characters. For this last group, the random navigation system leads to multiple perspectives on what is essentially a conventional narrative trajectory.

- *I'm Your Man*, by Roslyn Oades. In this work, which explores questions of power and masculinity through the world of boxing, it is

the performers, not the audience, who don headphones. It is the third in a trilogy of works by Oades using the headphone verbatim technique (or audio-scripting, as Oades terms it), where performers speak recorded interviews verbatim as they hear them through the headphones. Oades is interested in the particular qualities and nuances brought to an actor's performance when they work in this way, in contrast to the conventional acting processes of learning lines and performing in a more interpretive mode.

- *Since I Suppose* (creative development showing), by One Step at a Time Like This, directed by Suzanne Kersten.[5] In this work, a solo participant, guided by a handheld audio/video device with headphones (much like Cardiff's *The City of Forking Paths*) undertook an epic journey through Melbourne's streets and buildings, on and off trams, in and out of cars, into unfamiliar spaces and live one-on-one encounters. Riffing on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure,* the piece layered a fictional dilemma and narrative over the concrete urban environment, which became transformed within the imagination of the participant. Time, space, the fictive and the 'real' were beautifully orchestrated to create a complex, visceral, exhilarating and at times disorienting experience for the participant.

- *Soundtracks* (creative development showing), by St Martins Youth Theatre, directed by Sarah Austin. Watching the final dress rehearsal of The Australian Ballet's *La Sylphide,* the small audience for *Soundtracks* was seated in the dress circle of the Arts Centre Playhouse, separate from the main audience members seated in the stalls below. The *Soundtracks* audience was equipped with individual earpieces, and watched the ballet whilst listening to live commentary from three young performers stationed in the theatre's audio description booth. The performers worked unscripted, discussing the ballet and what they could decipher of its story, its characters and themes. At times, triggered by something in the ballet or by a comment from a fellow actor, the conversation would meander off into tangential anecdotes and reflections from the actors' own lives. In a way

similar to *Since I Suppose*, albeit less complex, audience members were required to navigate between two distinct worlds, the sonic and the physical/visual; each enriching the other. Unlike most of the works discussed above where the audience were wearing headphones, the single-ear audio delivery for *Soundtracks* did not seal off the sonic ambience of the physical environment, thus allowing for the orchestral music accompanying the ballet to be fully audible. In this sense the sound world for *Soundtracks* was not an alternative world, but one that layered on top of the existing one.

· *Private Dances*, curated by Natalie Cursio. The Northcote Town Hall was transformed into something akin to a fantasy campground for *Private Dances*. Two- and three-man tents erected throughout the space housed short, intimate, live dance works performed to small audiences of one to six people. In other tents LCD screens played dance films. In the case of both the live and the screen-based works, the sound component of *Private Dances* is for the most part delivered via headphones. This

ensures that the experience of individual works is not interrupted by sonic bleed from other performances. The focused quality of sound via headphones serves to heighten the sense of intimacy in these close quarters, rather than cutting the audience off from the performers in any way.

These performances emerged from different disciplines, had varied aesthetic concerns and languages, drew from different influences, and used headphones in diverse ways to varying effect. Yet they all form part of a historical moment in which sound has gained an increased cultural currency. Two of the six principal artists are young enough to be considered part of the 'next wave' of makers; the others are established mid-career artists who have recently arrived at new ways of using sound in their work. For some, the incentive is practical, for others dramaturgical, and for many, probably a combination of the two. When I began my PhD research in 2010, headphones remained a novelty in a performance context. Now, in 2015, the wave has most definitely broken, with the use of headphones so prolific that there is the sense of having reached saturation point. Recently, during Melbourne's Festi-

val of Live Art (2014), a fellow artist working with audio somewhat mockingly described her new work to me as a 'non-headphone piece'.

Conclusion

With the accessibility of ever more sophisticated sound technologies has come an increased focus on sound as a pivotal component in the dramaturgy and delivery of live performance works. This interest in sound has seen a seemingly exponential growth in the use of headphones in live performance. At times this use transcends the purely practical to become a dramaturgical intervention that impacts on the audience experience and reading of the work. With headphone sound there is simultaneously a concentration on the auditory environment and an extension of one's individual body into the surrounding world. Real-world sites have become the new stages for artistic constructs that 'unfix' delineations between the private and the public; to explore what it is to be simultaneously proximate and remote, connected to and separate from the people and things around us. Through a separation by media, audience/participants are drawn into an eva-

nescent form of closeness that engages the imagination while preserving a degree of freedom and distance. This experience is often characterised by a heightened sense of intimacy and immediacy. The work happens in as well as around audience/participants, who become the membrane between interior and exterior worlds. The metanarrative of this body of work is expressive of a desire to get connected, to figure oneself, to become located within the flux of multiple geographies. It is essentially a relational project, with the dramaturgy of sound employed to facilitate connective processes between interior and exterior, oneself and others.

[1] In-ear monitor systems are earbuds (headphones) connected to a receiver worn by the actors, which allow them to hear any audio signal sent to them.
[2] Because Cardiff's audio walks are site-specific, when I was first introduced to her work in 2011 I was restricted to reading about it and then listening to the extracts from walks that came as an accompaniment to Schaub's book, *Janet Cardiff: the walk book.* In 2014 I had the opportunity to experience two of her walks firsthand. *Louisiana Walk* is an audio walk constructed for the beautiful, rambling grounds of the Danish visual art gallery, Louisiana, located just outside of Copenhagen. The other walk was *The City of Forking Paths*, a video/audio walk created for the 19th Biennale of Sydney in 2014, and located throughout The Rocks at Sydney Harbour.
[3] For me, it was somewhat perplexing that the choreographer chose not to engage with the potential for audience mobility that the headphones allowed.

4 The three-dimensional effect or illusion of binaural recordings (also used by Cardiff in all her walks) gives the listener a sense that they are at the centre of the sound world—they are the ones physically tracking through these environments. The juxtaposition of this highly spatial, dense and referential sonic palette with an extremely pared-back choreographic language worked to great effect. As an audience member I was able to create my own links and associations, of which there many, between the aural and visual materials.

5 This work was commissioned by Chicago Shakespeare Theater and later premiered in Chicago in 2014. Its Melbourne premiere was presented by Arts House for the 2014 Melbourne Festival.

Memory, Membrane, Chance: *Seddon Archives*

An audio walk for one

Catalyst

I want to make an audio walk. I want to find form for local people's stories. I want the audience experience to be intimate, visceral and embedded in the here-and-now. It is about memory, place and belonging.

Seddon Archives (Saulwick 2011) draws from the experiences of local residents, placing their memories and stories into the sites from which they emerged. Making this piece allowed me to extend upon some of the interests present during *Pin Drop,* whilst also moving into new artistic terrain. Once again I work with real people's voices, adding them to a broader sonic palette comprised of narration, musings, instructions, field recordings, musical composition and sound archives; all of which mix and jangle with the live ambient sounds and sights of the here-and-now real world. New for me is the integration of headphones, which are used to facilitate an intimacy and immediacy of experience for participants. They function as a dramaturgical strategy to weave together the sonic, spatial and visual elements of the work.

This weaving/intersecting/connecting process occurs via the imaginative and associative processes of the audience/participants themselves.

As I touched on in the previous chapter, in his text, 'The modern auditory I', Steven Connor suggests: 'The self defined in terms of hearing rather than sight is a self imaged not as a point, but as a membrane; not as a picture, but as a channel through which voices, noises and musics travel.' (Connor 1997, p. 207) In *Seddon Archives*, the audience/participant is the live body that sits at the centre of the work: the membrane, the listening ears through which the work passes.[1] Within the participant, the prerecorded meets with the here-and-now, and the real and the fictive meld, triggering sensory and mnemonic associations. Augmented through stories, music, sonic cues and textures, *Seddon Archives* aims to render an intimate, multi-temporal, multi-layered encounter with place. Through this process it is hoped that participants will be momentarily woven into the social fabric of this place, experiencing connective moments with the voices

of its community, the traces of its past, and the comings and goings of its present.

On the sidewalk, we meet the coming and going of others. In this sense the sidewalk is a volatile stage where the individual body takes a step and then another, to ultimately negotiate the movements of others as they shuttle pass. (LaBelle 2010, p. 87)

I like this image of the sidewalk (or in our case, 'footpath') as a volatile stage. To continue with the metaphor: it is the place where we encounter our co-players to become part of a larger cast. The audio walk form, to my mind, presents the opportunity to create an intimate encounter with others, with those whom design and chance place in our path.

Place and invisible architectures

Seddon is a small, sleepy, inner-western suburb of Melbourne. Historically working-class and lined with rows of lit-tle Edwardian weatherboard cottages, Seddon has seen many waves of migrants come and go, with the the past decade's influx of newcomers being predominantly middle-class Anglo couples and/or young families, who discovered there remained an affordable suburb within ten minutes of the CBD. Needless to say, this is no longer the case. However, whilst this latest wave of newcomers dominates in terms of numbers and presence, the area still holds multiple histories in its demographic make-up and its stories. For some time I had wanted to make a work that captured some fragments of this history. I live in an old factory, and Bob, who is well into his 70s and has lived on the corner

of my street all his life, is full of stories about the building where I live and the area in general. Kay, who lives down the road from my friend Jane, has amazing stories of grow-

ing up in the area. These stories paint a very different picture of time, place and community from my own, and have added layers and depth to my understanding and experience of Seddon. They were the inspiration and starting point for the creation of *Seddon Archives*.

Seddon Archives is an audio walk for a lone participant. Equipped with headphones and an mp3 player as guide, participants wander alone through Seddon's streets, immersed in a sound world that knits the present with the recent and distant past. From the bell-like ring of a single moment to the arc described by a person's life span, *Seddon Archives* reminds us of the constant presence of time and its passing in our lives. Starting on a park bench in a small reserve that 40 years ago was occupied by six house blocks, participants are led by the voices and sounds on their mp3 player, along streets and lanes, into quiet little nooks, through the local shopping strip and eventually back to the reserve. There is nothing of particular note about the geography or the architecture; however, when paired with story, sound and attention these very ordinary streets are transformed.

Since making *Seddon Archives*, that particular set of streets has been altered for me. Now as I walk down those footpaths I am met with accompanying images, stories, voices and sounds as the space 'shapes itself' around me (Schaub 2005, p. 94). The feeling is akin to the layers of memories and associations evoked when revisiting the streets near my childhood home: the spot where we used to cross the road to head down the beach; the Stayner Street hill where I stacked my dragster into a light pole; the hedge where Kate Daniels and I had our secret cubby; and the back lane where my brother rode his bike with his broken leg in full plaster cast. To use Schaub's words again, there is an 'extremely personal and unique network of thoughts and emotions' (Schaub 2005, p. 94) evoked by spaces that hold such familiarity. Now, when walking down unfamiliar streets in Seddon, they seem strangely mute to me. I find myself wondering about all the stories, voices and histories lying dormant and unvoiced. Mirjam Schaub's metaphor of the 'invisible inner architecture' (2005, p. 94) of familiar spaces, which I discussed previously, resonates with my own experience of place and proves a useful way to think about the process of construct-

ing an audio walk. The 'invisible architecture' of *Seddon Archives* functions as what Schaub has termed an 'affective framework' (2005, p. 94), housing a network of associations reminiscent of walking down childhood streets. The audio walk makes unfamiliar places familiar in unexpected ways.

In *Seddon Archives* the memories and stories of many people, each of whom has a unique and intimate relationship to a particular place, are brought into the present through the active engagement, the senses, the listening ears, of the participant—a stranger-become-confidante.

Whilst the form of the audio walk was new to me as a maker, I approached it with the knowledge that I wanted to bring to it several methodological processes from the performance work, *Pin Drop*. There were also several new areas that I was keen to explore.

Familiar:

- sound as a central dramaturgical thread
- the integration of prerecorded voices from one-on-one interviews with real people
- an interplay between the live and the prerecorded
- an acknowledgement of liveness and/or the present moment
- a framework constructed to provide spaces to be filled by the imagination and associations of the audience/participant.

New:

- outdoor, site-specific work
- perambulatory
- sound delivered via portable sound device with headphones
- experienced individually
- the participant to a large degree (although not entirely) replaces the role of a live performer.

Interior/exterior

There is an implicit narrative and journey in any walk, and a particular reflective space that walking can evoke in us. We go for a walk to get some fresh air, to think things through, daydream, walk something off, to shift our attention, and so on. Walking and listening go well together.

The rhythm of walking generates a kind of rhythm of thinking, and the passage through a landscape echoes or stimulates the passage through a series of thoughts. This creates an odd consonance between internal and external passage, one that suggests that the mind is also a landscape of sorts and that walking is one way to traverse it. (Kierkegaard, cited in Schaub 2005, p. 77)

Brandon LaBelle uses the metaphor of the footpath as a 'threshold between an interior and an exterior' (2010, p. 88); the line we cross by physically moving from inside our homes out into the public domain of the street. Whilst walking, our attention also shifts repeatedly between interior and exterior as we negotiate our physical surroundings—the interior sound of our own thoughts interrupted by the fleeting conversation of passers-by, or the roar of the engine of a passing car. In *Listening and voice: phenomenologies of sound*, Don Ihde describes simultaneous 'inner attention' and 'outer experience' as the 'co-presence' of perceptual and imaginative modalities. He gives the examples of driving or reading—times when we are tuned into our surroundings through a perceptual mode, whilst being simultaneously active in an imaginative mode (2007, p. 125). All drivers are familiar with the slightly unnerving feeling of arriving at a destination after having driven completely preoccupied by unrelated thoughts. Creative works that invite us to function simultaneously in both perceptual and imaginative modalities, or require us to move between them, ask us to be alive to both our surroundings and to our inner worlds, and to

make connections between the two. Janet Cardiff's work is described as 'physical cinema', and I would suggest that it is the experience of co-presence that invites this association. These kinds of works come to life through the meeting of inner/imaginative and outer/perceptual attention.[2]

Related to this notion of inner and outer attention, and critically important when working with headphone audio, are choices regarding how audible the ambient sound of the surrounding physical environment will remain for the participant. Whilst at times it can be desirable to enclose the participant in an isolated sound world, devoid of exterior sonic bleed, in *Seddon Archives* I wanted the headphone audio to blend with the ambient sounds of the immediate environment, creating a situation where the two would at times be difficult to distinguish from one another. This unstable space between the real and the mediated is one that remains a constant interest to me in all of the works developed throughout my candidature. I have spoken already of the 'strangely alive' quality achieved through interweaving the live and the mediatised, in which both are made more vivid through mu-

tual affect. In this ambiguous space, participants' senses and experiences of the here-and-now are enlivened: 'the theatrical effect and the effect on consciousness both emanate from this ambiguity.' (Lehmann 2006, p. 100)

After experimenting with multiple headphone and earbud options, I chose to give participants 'open' headphones, which allowed them to hear suitably high-quality audio without unduly blocking out exterior sound.[3] This made distinguishing between the live and the prerecorded difficult at times. Technically, it posed the risk of exposing the participant to too much noise bleed from exterior sounds, which can overpower the headphone sound and undermine the experience. The volumes at various points throughout the walk were modulated so as to ameliorate this possibility, but it is by no means an infallible system. Ultimately, the desire to have the headphone and live ambient sound intermingling outweighed the perceived risk of sonic interruptions.

Listen

MOVIE 4.1 Opening sequence with added comments from participant interview 28 Nov 2011

The opening sequence of *Seddon Archives* was intentionally designed to settle participants; to promote a shift in tempo from the busyness of their day to a quieter, slower, more reflective pace. Once settled to a point of relative stillness, participants are able to become more attuned to their surround-

ings, their senses and imaginations. In this stillness they are able to listen deeply to, and/or to drift along with, the sonic world inside the headphones, and experience the various associations evoked.

I'm more interested in the associations that seem to arise, that are possible, when we allow sound to settle us. Perhaps it's sound's ability to mesmerise us into a slower, stiller mode that promotes reflective enquiry. Opportunities for this way of being in the world are more precious than ever. (DeLys 2010, p. 95)

Sherre DeLys's idea of sound settling us sits in contrast, perhaps, to the idea of it enlivening us—as described when live and mediated sound are placed in ambiguous relationship to one another. In *Seddon Archives*, sound serves to settle *and* enliven participants at different points, for different reasons and to varying effects. If, as DeLys suggests, stillness promotes reflective enquiry, then I would posit that the ambiguous, unstable space between the real and the not-real pro-

motes another kind of inquiry—perhaps a more active one. Both are of interest. Both are filled with imaginative associations.

Seddon Archives places participants physically, notionally and sonically in the proximity of other people: their voices and memories, their houses, shops and streets. The piece, dependent as it is upon the context in which it occurs, takes form as an encounter between participant, site and artistic construct. Participants are embroidered into the breadth of a social fabric as they hear of homes built, grown-up-in, moved-out-from, died-in or still inhabited. They hear of what was, whilst they observe what now is. The voices of people of Macedonian, Greek and Vietnamese descent sit alongside those of third-generation 'westies' and newcomers. Layered with historical, social, imagined and personal references, the physical site gradually sheds its anonymity throughout the trajectory of the walk. The participant is the meeting point for these multiple threads and histories. It is through participants' engagement with the present moment—the listening, sensing, seeing present—that these stories and memories are conjured into the now and brought into relationship with the physical world around them.

And it's kind of being present with oneself as well as present with the environment in a different way to the way one would normally be with the environment. So it's this sort of intimacy and aloneness, but not loneliness. (Participant interview extract 28 Nov, 2011)

The irruption of the real

The beautiful—and admittedly at-times challenging—aspect of working in public spaces is the way incidental events become part of the work. This became a point of fascination for me throughout the process of making *Seddon Archives*, as I came to realise that the confluence of prerecorded materials with chance everyday occurrences was not only inevitable but also desirable, in the way that it heightened the sense of liveness in the work. It meant that everything and everyone had the potential to be seen by the participant within the

artistic frame, with the follow-on effect of making the here-and-now moment more vivid as a result. There is a delicious uncertainty that emerges from this possibility of everything as artifice, recalling Hans-Thies Lehmann's notion of the real as co-player and LaBelle's metaphor of the sidewalk as stage. Participants find themselves asking: 'Is this planned or is this coincidental?' Something is stirred in us in these moments of uncertainty and our answer shapes how we position ourselves in relation to what we see. It was both an exciting and unsettling prospect for me as a maker to acknowledge the way in which the site itself became a pivotal player in the piece, and the fact that, ultimately, I had no control over what it would offer up.

I discovered that serendipity can to an extent be planned for, and that the more familiar I was with the site, the more likely I was to be able to achieve this. Of course, there are no guarantees when it comes to chance, so I needed to hedge my bets by constructing an event that could function as a relatively predictable stand-alone experience that also had

the space to accommodate chance occurrences within its frame.

In participant interviews that I conducted following *Seddon Archives*, interviewee Kate talks about sitting watching the family blowing bubbles in the park as she listened to the tinkling chimes. Bec says she spoke to Dimitri, the boy from the corner milk bar, who she says is now an elderly man living in front of the block of four brown flats. Nathan sees this same man cutting up pruned sticks in front of the flats and placing them in piles, and relates it back to the pile of sticks at the foot of the corrugated iron fence. Through the gaps in the fence palings at 'No. 17' Natalie describes seeing an old man in his front yard moving at an almost imperceptibly slow rate—'like a dancer'—while she listens to the words 'houses age a bit like people subjected to the inexorable forces of gravity and time'. Mari sees a cat at the same moment that she hears the narrator say, 'There's a cat'. Arna sees two neighbours leaning on the fence and is half-waiting to hear their voices come through the headphones. All of these incidental occurrences breathed the here-and-now into

the work for the participants, feeding their imaginations with triggers that augmented the experience. They served to embed the encounter more deeply into the site and imbue the piece with an air of inevitability.

This photo shows Bec with the man she believed to be Dimitri all grown up. Whilst he was not one of the local residents that I interviewed in the making of *Seddon Archives*, it seems 'Dimitri' (as named by Bec above) was as intrigued by those doing the walk as vice-versa. There were numerous reports of him chatting with participants as they passed by.

This comment of Mari's interests me because it refers to something other than differentiating between the real and the not-real. My interpretation of Mari's idea of 'authenticity that wasn't contrived' is that the work captured or framed something that seemed essential or inevitable about the place itself. Of course the walk *was* contrived, through the construction of auditory architectures, built from sonic bits and pieces, ideas and fragments. However, it seems that in Mari's case at least, the cumulative effect of these constructed materials was the creation of a *sense* of inevitability, as if the place itself had found a voice. She goes on to say:

83

counters with passers-by. Arna quizzed Rachael about what was going on and then later that evening went online to book herself a ticket. She told me in an interview some weeks later that she had never done anything like *Seddon Archives* before, and had never walked around the streets of Seddon by herself. She found the experience quite powerful, and one of the reasons for this was the way that her own personal history seemed to intertwine with the stories in the walk.

One participant found the walk particularly compelling and moving. She stayed on after it had finished, returning to the makeshift box office and talking with others about her experience. She had chanced upon the project the previous evening while dining in Le Chien, the cafe that features in the walk. She had noticed Rachael, the single 'real' performer or 'not-real' local resident in the piece, seated in the cafe window engaging in intermittent and seemingly mysterious en-

MOVIE 4.2 *Seddon Archives* excerpt, with added comments from participant interview 28 Nov 2011

I was thrilled when I heard Arna recount this experience, because I relish the thought that people's own stories will be evoked through engaging with my work. As I have already discussed, a highlight for me when presenting *Pin Drop* was the stories that emerged amongst the audience and the subsequent sharing of those stories. When making *Seddon Archives*, it was more of a challenge to leave space for the participants' own recollections, because of the logistics involved in moving bodies from one place to the next. So Arna's recounting of her own family history and story converging with the oral histories and stories of others was particularly satisfying to hear. In this instance the work's dramaturgy has facilitated a vivid experience of connection between self, place and others. It is in moments such as these that we are sewn into the web of shared histories.

Conclusion

Shaped through the dramaturgy of sound, *Seddon Archives* creates an intimate encounter with people and place, facilitating moments of connection and deepening our sense of both the present and the distant, the real and the mediated. The participant is the live body at the centre of the work; they are the membrane, the listening ears through which sound passes. Within them the associative and connective processes of listening come to reconfigure the spatial distinctions of inside and outside, and the temporal distinctions of past and present. Stories and experiences directly related to the site itself make anonymous streets somehow familiar. Incidental occurrences and chance encounters breathe the here-and-now into the work, imbuing it with a quality of inevitability as if the place itself has found a voice. At times a folly of chance, at other times, of calculated serendipity, the audio walk provides another way of being in, out of, and with the world.

AUDIO 4.5 *Seddon Archives* - full audio version

Seddon Archives

Artists
Creator/director: Tamara Saulwick
Audio designer: Peter Knight
Performer: Rachael Dyson-McGregor
Visual artist (original presentation): Susan Purdy

Voices
R. D. Culthard (Bob), Esteban Dante, Ljubica Ilievski, Peter Knight, Quinn Knight, Man Lu, Natalia Novikova, Oliver, Kay Osmond, James Penlidis, Susan Purdy, Emma Schmidt, Sydney Austin Carlisle John Schmidt, Trojan, David Wells, Dr Evan Morris Williams.

Presentation History
Big West Festival 2011

Post-show interviews
Arna, Kate Hunter, Mari Lourey.

1 I will refer to the audience member for Seddon Archives as the 'participant' from this point on. The walk is something that you do, not something that you merely witness. Active participation is a requirement of the experience; so the term 'participant' feels more consistent with the nature of the event.
2 For reading on the subject of interiority see Charles Stankievech's, 'From stethoscopes to headphones: an acoustic spatialization of subjectivity' (2007), in which he discusses the phenomenology of interiority and the use of headphones in contemporary sound art.
3 Open headphones sit on the ears rather than enclosing them entirely.

Social, Situation, Art: Participatory Practice

Context

In this chapter I open the discussion out once again to a broader view of contemporary practice, to further identify the location in which my third work, *PUBLIC*, resides. I turn my attention here to ideas and dialogues related to participatory, relational and live art practices, which have been influential in a current wave of new work in Australia. Ideas of participation that have been only lightly touched upon in the previous two chapters come to the fore through works that place agency and participation at the forefront of their artistic and/or social agenda. However, it is with a degree of ambivalence that I embark on writing about this body of work, partly because my own works, which are for the most part strongly rooted in performance, only brush gently against the broad body of work more firmly grounded within participatory models; meaning that I write from the perspective of an outsider. This is so partly because of the contested nature of the field, and my own experience, at times, of conflicted uncertainty when engaging with it. Nevertheless, I retain a sense that my work has been shaped in curious ways by this artistic lineage. Indeed, the discussion of the connec- tions between people and their world that runs throughout this exegesis has strong resonances within the field of partici- patory art.

Participatory art

Art critic Claire Bishop's book, *Artificial hells: participatory art and the politics of spectatorship,* discusses the 'social turn' or 're*turn* to the social' (2012, p. 3, emphasis in origi- nal) by contemporary visual artists in Europe and the UK in the 1990s and 2000s; noting a surge of artistic interest in par- ticipatory and collaborative processes. Participatory art, 'in which people constitute the central artistic medium and mate- rial … desires to overturn the traditional relationship be- tween the art object, the artist, and the audience' (Bishop 2012, p. 2). The artist in this new paradigm, no longer the producer of objects for consumption in a market economy, becomes instead a 'collaborator and producer of *situations* … while the audience previously conceived as "viewer" or "beholder" is now repositioned as a co-producer or *partici- pant*' (p. 2, emphasis in original). Bishop stresses that the projects discussed in her book 'have little to do with Nicolas

Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics*, even though the rhetoric around this work appears, on a theoretical level at least to be somewhat similar' (p. 2).

'Relational aesthetics', a term coined for the catalogue of a 1995 exhibition curated by Bourriaud, is also the title for his subsequent 1998 book. Frustrated that the artists of the day were being assessed by outmoded criteria, Bourriaud called for 'more effective tools and more valid viewpoints' to critique and understand the relational sensibility and politic of their work, arguing that the completion 'of a certain aspect of the programme of modernity … has drained the aesthetic judgment we are heir to' (Bourriaud 1998, p. 11).

The possibility of a relational art (an art taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than an assertion of an independent and private symbolic space), points to a radical upheaval of the aesthetic, cultural and political goals introduced by modern art. (Bourriaud 1998, p. 14)

This upheaval is evidenced in part by the 'reconceptualising of the "white cube" model of displaying contemporary art as a studio or experimental "laboratory"' (Bishop 2004, p. 51). Rather than creating self-contained objects for display and acquisition, artists designed encounters and interactions, meaning it was 'no longer possible to regard the contemporary work as a space to be walked through … [but] as a period of time to be lived through, like an opening to unlimited discussion' (Bourriaud 1998, p. 15). Bourriaud's writings have an undeniable allure, with their implicit sense of the value of exchange and liveness. His description of art as 'a state of encounter' (1998, p. 18) can be seen to resonate with some of the preoccupations of the previous chapters, and holds particular pertinence, for example, to the audio walk form.

In observing contemporary artistic practices, we ought to talk of "formations" rather than "forms". Unlike an object that is closed in on itself by the intervention of a style and a signature, present-day art shows that form only exists in the encounter and in the dynamic relationship enjoyed by an artistic

proposition with other formations, artistic or otherwise. (Bourriaud 1998, p. 21)

Bishop's book focuses on 'projects that have emerged in the wake of Relational Aesthetics and the debates that it occasioned' (Bishop 2012, p. 2). The artists she discusses are 'less interested in a relational *aesthetic* than the creative rewards of participation as a politicised working process' (p. 2, emphasis in original). This distinction, signalling the former as valuing the lived artistic encounter, and the latter as valuing the social benefits of the process of participation, provides a clue to the ambivalence that can be felt in Bishop's critique of the 'social turn' in participatory art. Broadly speaking, the artists that Bishop discusses have, in her view, come to value process over product, or indeed process *as* product (2012, p. 19). Following on from this, the collective is valued over individual authorship, and 'active' participation over 'passive' spectatorship. Critical of the reductiveness of this binary framework, Bishop paints a picture of a participatory art that has been largely hijacked by a leftist so-

cial agenda, leaving little room for the ambiguities and nuances of artworks 'that leave behind them a troubling wake' (2012, p. 23). She articulates the need to 'discuss, analyse and compare this work critically *as art*' in order to reclaim the word 'quality', which has been rejected by politicised artists and curators as 'serving the interests of the market and powerful elites' (p. 7). She argues for the importance of acknowledging that some works are richer, more complex and nuanced than others, 'not as a means to reinforce elite culture and police the boundaries of art and non-art, but as a way to understand and clarify our shared values at a given historical moment' (p. 8). Following Rancière, she suggests that 'art and the social are not to be reconciled, but sustained in continual tension' (p. 278).

Whilst the works Bishop refers to emerge predominantly out of a visual art lineage, Shannon Jackson, who also tracks this history in *Social works: performing art, supporting publics,* speaks from the perspective of her background in performance, and highlights what she describes as the 'performative turn' seen in this body of work (2011, p. 1). She writes: 'one

way of characterizing "the performative turn" in art practice is to foreground its fundamental interest in the nature of sociality.' (p. 2) Jackson notes 'an experimental chiasmus across the arts' (p. 2) in which performance and visual art practices have moved towards the concerns of the other. The idea of 'repositioning' the audience in relation to the art and artist is seen in both visual art and performance. Jackson, in keeping with Bourriaud's relational paradigm, poses the following question regarding performance:

> *What if … the formal parameters of the form include the audience relation, casting such inter-subjective exchange, not as the extraneous context that surrounds it, but as the material of performance itself? What if performance challenges the strict divisions about where the art ends and the rest of the world begins? (2011, p. 15)*

Two related yet discrete lines of discussion emerge from these questions. The first is concerned with how audience members can become dynamic players or participants within the work, as distinct from those who observe it from the outside. The second (sometimes related to the first), which asks where the art ends and the rest of the world begins, can be seen to relate directly to earlier discussions of postdramatic theatre and the ambiguous territories between the real and the not-real.

Jackson dedicates a book chapter to the work of Germany-based company, Rimini Protokoll, regarded as a leader in the 'reality trend' in theatre ('*Theater der Zeit*'). Rimini Protokoll's work tours extensively throughout Europe, often presented in site-specific or non-traditional locations, and uses 'real people' in place of actors to articulate a personal area of expertise within a work. An ongoing discourse around reality accompanies the work of Rimini Protokoll, and within theatre circles this discourse sometimes opens out into a broader debate extending even to what constitutes a work of theatre; and indeed whether a performance work that uses real people rather than actors qualifies as such (Jackson 2011, p. 170). By borrowing from visual art terminology when referring to their participants/performers as 'theatrical

readymades' (p. 169), the artists of Rimini Protokoll quite consciously place their work in dialogue with visual art practice in addition to the theatre practice their training and work is grounded in. The Duchampian legacy of the readymade can be seen to extend to Rimini Protokoll's use of site also, where non-traditional spaces in the real world become aestheticised through the conventions and processes of performance, 'with the help of that special gaze that one has when one observes in an art-context' (Blaser 2004).

One Rimini Protokoll work that tours extensively to different cities casts 100 local residents to represent the demographic profile of each city in which it is presented. *100% Melbourne*, staged at the Melbourne Town Hall in 2011, brought dry statistics to life through 100 local residents participating as performers and sharing their views—and to some degree their stories—with the large audience. The participants' 'non-actorliness', combined with their desire to be seen, heard, and indeed perform, was intrinsic to the work's charm. Rimini Protokoll presents an interesting example of a company that is working across lineages, modalities and disciplines to engage in conversations and performative situations that frame and reveal the real world and the real people within it. Aligned to varying degrees with postdramatic and documentary theatre, as well as site-specific and socially engaged performance practices, we see encompassed in the work of this one company almost the entire sweep of the territories discussed in this exegesis. Rimini Protokoll crosses so many borders with its work that delineations are rendered irrelevant. The company's pieces are highly mediated events where participation exists within carefully structured frameworks, and the artistic and social outcomes remain held in a state of tension.

Live art

Recently in Australia, a diverse range of artists and their respective practices have gained traction and profile under the adopted UK term, 'live art'.

Live Art offers immersive experiences, often disrupting distinctions between spectator and participant. Live Art asks us what it means to be

*here, now. In the simultaneity and interactivity of a
media saturated society, Live Art is about
immediacy and reality: creating spaces to explore
the experience of things, the ambiguities of meaning
and the responsibilities of our individual agency.
(Live Art Development Agency 2014)*

This description of live art is similar to that of postdramatic theatre, with its focus on liveness, immediacy and reality within a media-saturated society; and certainly many Australian artists currently working in the area of live art have their roots in theatre and performance. Critical differences from postdramatic theatre, however, are seen in live art's preoccupation with the exploration of individual agency and disruption of distinctions between spectator and participant.

Originating in the UK in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the term 'live art' was initially 'prompted by a … desire to generate a space which brought together a number of practices … which [did] not sit comfortably under one singular funding category' (Conroy 2011). Categorising allows institutionally

directed structures such as funding, marketing, curating, presenting, networking, publishing and advocating to follow. The UK-based Live Art Development Agency (LADA), established in 1999, which engages in many of the activities listed above, describes live art,

*… not as an artform or discipline, but a cultural
strategy to include experimental processes and
experiential practices that might otherwise be
excluded from established curatorial, cultural and
critical frameworks … a framing device for a
catalogue of approaches to the possibilities of
liveness by artists … work[ing] across, in between,
and at the edges of more traditional artistic forms.
(Live Art Development Agency 2014)*

This characterisation of live art as 'cultural strategy for inclusion' rather than as an art form in and of itself, goes some way towards explaining why the question, 'What is live art?' continues to be asked. Live art resists categorisation. In an interview with arts writer Richard Watts, Angharad Wynne-Jones, Creative Director of Arts House in Melbourne, pro-

poses that 'As a genre, live art is quite an unknown quantity; by definition, it sort of defies definition'. However, Wynne-Jones flags that participation is often associated with live art when she suggests: 'some of it will be challenging for sure, and certainly it requires you to be present to it and not be passive. (Wynne-Jones, cited in Watts 2013) I infer from this that Wynne-Jones is drawing a distinction here between 'passive audience' (theatre) and 'active participant' (live art). She continues: 'that's kind of how we consume culture now anyway, isn't it? We have that expectation, whether it's online or whatever, that our input is a requirement.' It can certainly be argued that any piece of theatre or performance requires our input—that performance happens only through the presence, engagement and (therefore) input of the audience. However, the kind of input Wynne-Jones refers to in live art is a more explicit and/or actively engaged one. In many cases it could be said that the work is contingent upon participant input.

In Australia in 2009, artist Martyn Coutts, alongside a number of fellow artists/contributors, established LALA (Live Art List Australia), a website designed to draw together like-minded artists working at the edges of more traditional artistic forms.[1] At the time, the artists used descriptors for their work or role including: interdisciplinary; socially engaged; site-specific; participatory; informed by performance, installation and conceptual art; maker, pretender, facilitator who constructs compositions of social agency. The LALA website, which ran between 2009 and 2013, tracked 'the rise of live art and related practices in Australia' (Coutts 2013) and provided an online space for these artists and others to share resources, ideas, information and debate. Today the website, no longer active, exists as an archive of this period because 'the [original] reason for LALA is now over, the moment has moved on' (Coutts 2013). Coutts explains, 'When LALA began there were a disparate group of practitioners floating around in separate parts of the country wondering how to situate their work.' (2013) Six years later, the live art wave has broken, with dedicated funding and residency opportunities as well as festivals such as Proximity Festival in Perth, Exist Festival in Brisbane, Tiny Stadiums in Sydney, Encoun-

ters in Melbourne, and Touchy Feely in Hobart created to house these alternative modes of practice.

Live art has indeed found its place in the performance ecology of Australia. Melbourne's inaugural Festival of Live Art (FOLA), which took place in March 2014, was co-curated by venues/producers/presenters Arts House, Theatre Works and Footscray Community Arts Centre. The largest festival dedicated to live art in Australia to date, it comprised 42 separate events, ranging from large-scale spectacle performances to one-on-one encounters, and including curated parties, installations, forums, performance lectures, discussions and more. The FOLA consortium of venues/presenters, each of which functions principally as performance venue rather than gallery, is indicative of the fact that live art in Australia is strongly located within the theatre and performance landscape, more so than the visual arts landscape. Most of the artists who presented work at FOLA come from backgrounds in theatre and/or performance. Yet it is important to note that live art in Australia, and perhaps even more so in Britain, owes much to the broad range of performative practices

emergent in the visual arts in past decades, and the ideas related to participation and collaboration that these artists have championed.

I saw/participated in many works at Melbourne's 2014 Festival of Live Art. I snuggled in a cocoon-like bed in a darkened room, listening to an ambient soundtrack through headphones as I awaited a massage; I walked through St Kilda's streets following the instructions of someone on the other end of my mobile phone; I got to create the storyline for my alter ego, 'The General', who was a miniature figurine/avatar in a model railway set; I watched a performance/game show where the prizes were the personal possessions of the game show host/artist; I had a Skype date in a hotel room where I got to dress up and talk with a stranger about intimacy; I was herded around a space in a choreography of crowd control; and I was harassed, humiliated and infuriated in an airless underground vault for reasons that continue to elude me. In addition to this I saw other works that more clearly resembled 'performance', with the standard audience–performer relationship. Whilst I am a great advocate

for experimentation and have a genuine interest in new forms or work, despite a few notable exceptions, FOLA left me wanting for more: wanting for richer, more rigorously constructed experiences. Perhaps I share Bishop's desire for a sustained state of tension between artistic and social outcomes, and perhaps it is this that sits at the heart of my ambivalence towards some of these participatory works.

Bishop suggests that Rancière's 'aesthetic regime…shuttles between autonomy and heteronomy'(2012, p. 278), such that 'the aesthetic experience is effective inasmuch as it is an experience of that *and*' (Rancière, cited in Bishop 2012, p. 278, emphasis in original). Surely it then follows that the social experience is effective inasmuch as it is an experience of that *and.* This sustained tension also depends on the balance between process and product. Too often in my experiences at FOLA, the artistic frameworks felt insufficiently rigorous in conception and construction, and as a result the tension between aesthetic and social outcomes was not sustained. In these works, the offer made by the artist/s to audience/participant seemed too slight, as if they were abdicating re-

sponsibility by placing it too firmly in my (the participant's) hands. This meant that if the work 'failed' it was somehow due to a failing or resistance on my part, as a participant. To engage in rigorously structured participatory works can bring with it a wonderful sensation of both 'giving over' and active engagement. It is as if you are held in the accomplished hands of an artist or artists skilled in their craft, and can therefore safely commit to the task at hand. The potential social outcomes are no less pertinent, yet the artistic ones feel more assured.

Conclusion

In recent years Australia has seen an increased interest in participatory performance practices that owe much to the 'performative turn' in the visual arts. Over the last two decades, artists have sought to renegotiate the relationships between themselves, their art and their audience. Rejecting the idea of art as commodity, they have created situations or encounters to be lived through, to be participated in. The delineations between where the art ends and the world begins have become less distinct. In Australia a diverse and disparate

group (both geographically and artistically) of alternative and experimental performance practitioners has in a sense come together under the collective banner of 'live art'. During this time there has been a flourishing of interest in participatory practice, in particular from people with backgrounds in theatre and performance. This is evident in the increasing number of artists working in the live art area, as well as the increased number of opportunities for both funding and presentation that are now available to these artists. In some instances, I fear it is a case of the opportunities leading the artists rather than vice versa, as infrastructure and institutions begin to 'organise' these alternative and experimental modes of practice. In the long run, the success of this work will be determined by the artist's ability to hold the domains of art and the social in a sustained state of tension.

[1] See the LALA website: http://lalaishere.net/

Watching, Being Watched: *PUBLIC*

An audio performance work

Catalyst

I want to make a work that sits within a populated public space and integrates multiple performers. I want the real and the fictive to frame and inform one another. I want it to be audio-led, and for the audience to be free to move. I want the delineations between performers, audience and general public to be destabilised. It is about the borders between public and private.

Located in the shared space of a shopping centre food court, *PUBLIC* (Saulwick 2013) is an audio performance work that challenges the strict divisions about where the art ends and the rest of the world begins (Jackson 2011, p. 15). In doing so, it illuminates the porous boundaries between public and private encounters. As much a 'situation' as a performance, *PUBLIC* explores notions of participation by destabilising the delineations between watching and being watched, and between the fictive and the real. Framed by sound and site the real world of the food court and the people within it are integral to the work's rendering, at times becoming the material of the performance itself. Art and the social are indeed sustained in tension as discomforts, desires, prejudices and values came to the fore in a work that is essentially a reflection of people being with other people.

PUBLIC premiered at Melbourne's Highpoint shopping centre as part of the Big West Festival in 2013. Twelve performances were presented over the two weekends of the festival. Each performance took place in and around the normal daily activities of the centre's main food court and was, initially at least, largely invisible to the general public with whom the food court was shared. The only apparent element, as the piece begins, is the audience of up to 20 people wearing wireless headphones as they enter the food court then spread out to blend more or less back into their surroundings.[1] The food court itself becomes the stage, and following on from this, everyone present becomes a potential player on that stage. The immersive mode of headphone audio mirrors the thematic terrains of public and private worlds within the work itself, as the private aural space of the sound world bleeds and blends with the public space of the physical surroundings.

MOVIE 6.1 Opening

Site-specific performance, verbatim theatre and live art are all forms that increasingly draw our attention to ordinary life, shedding surprising light on familiar sites and activities. PUBLIC combines aspects of all three forms, intriguingly complicating and augmenting the food court space. At the same time—and despite some escalating performer actions that become gorgeously surreal—the work strikes me as almost 'representational'—'depicting' the space, if you will, in larger-than-life tones, with the added resonant effect of my own presence in the picture. (Dawkins 2014, p. 42)

Claire Bishop discusses the double ontological status of participatory art as 'both an event in the world, and one remove from it'. She goes on to suggest that 'As such, it has the capacity to communicate on two levels—to participants and to spectators—the paradoxes that are repressed in everyday discourse, and to elicit perverse, disturbing and pleasurable experiences that enlarge our capacity to imagine the world and our relations anew' (2012, p. 284). Unlike the works Bishop refers to, in which the participants and the spectators are not one and the same, in *PUBLIC* the audience are to varying degrees both participants *and* spectators. They are simultaneously in the event and one remove from it.

In PUBLIC, the scripted, performed text is just one element in the complex interplay of performer, 'source' and site. Whereas in Pindrop [sic] the stories themselves took thematic precedence, here the interest seems to lie as much, or more, in the shifting and often confounding merger between what's staged and what's already present in the space (Dawkins 2014, p. 42).

Shannon Jackson's discussion of Rimini Protokoll's site-specific work is a useful point of reference when she offers that 'the material that is turned up does not so much reveal the truth about a site as it does complicate what we thought we understood about it, giving us strange and often quirky resources with which to compose questions that may or may not be fully answerable' (2011, p. 171). In *PUBLIC* the tensions, humour, coincidences and conflicts arising from the marriage of an art event and a real-world site are not simply a by-product of the event but an intrinsic component of it.

AUDIO 6.1 Interview with audience member 13 Dec 2013

When I first started developing *PUBLIC*, I sat in the food court listening to ambient music through headphones and watching the people around me. I was captivated. In fact, as we began to experiment with performance materials and modes it became clear that there was no way that the performers could 'top' what was already occurring in the space.

Rather, they needed to complement, frame or augment what was already there.

AUDIO 6.2 Audio journal extract 6 Nov 2012

The eventual structure of the overall piece had an opening and closing sensibility as actors would appear and hold the attention for a while and then disappear, allowing the focus to be taken once more by the other people in the food court.

Performance as network

All through the day, every day, I move between real and virtual spaces. I communicate with people known and unknown through multiple social networks, whether they be on the street or online. I engage with my physical world through my senses. I also mediate it through numerous technologies via various platforms. None of this is in any way out of the ordinary. It's just what we do these days. Personal devices, digital technologies, internet access, wi-fi and social net-

working have changed our social and spatial navigations. They provide us with new avenues for multiple and simultaneous real-time interactions with others, both proximate and remote. And as our worlds and relationships are increasingly routed via these technologies, we reconfigure understandings of intimacy and exchange, connectedness and isolation, and public and private spaces. In *PUBLIC*, wireless and mobile technologies already ubiquitous throughout the space are employed, in a sense, to network the performance event. This is social networking on a 'micro' scale in which the people within the network are all in the same location, together and separate. The audience members equipped with wireless headphones experience an audio design that recontextualises, augments and complicates their perceptions of their immediate environment. They are sent MMS messages on their mobile phones with photos taken by performers during the show. These pictures and sounds provide new points of entry and alternative perspectives on the very site the audience members are located in. (In some instances, audience members sent pictures back in return, taken from their own vantage point.) At times the work becomes increasingly self-reflexive, as audience members watch members of the general public videoing parts of the performance on their mobile phones. The multiple layers of mediatisation become like a hall of mirrors.

GALLERY 6.1 Phone selfies and photos

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For me this was a piece about the increasingly blurred boundaries between our private lives and our public lives in the digital age. It made me think about how these days we are bombarded with snippets of information (or personal narrative) from others' lives—through Facebook or Twitter or text messaging or reality TV or talk radio or from eavesdropping on the tram or in the crowded mall— and about how we try to make sense of those stories and that information in relation to our own lives. (Prior 2013)

MOVIE 6.2 Phone call

Watching and being watched

Functioning like a kind of social experiment, *PUBLIC* reveals the dynamics arising from watching and being watched. Being the observer and being observed are modes that are built into the work's structural logic. There is the headphone audience or 'intentional audience'; then there is the general public or 'incidental audience'; and finally, the performers or 'actors as audience'. These three layers can also be applied to the performative component of the work, as the headphone audience, the general public, and actors all fall under the gaze of others. As the work unfolds and the demarcation between audience, performers and the public is destabilised, questions arise: *Who is watching whom? Who is performing? Who is the real audience?*

The headphone audience or 'intentional audience'—who have bought their tickets and come along to witness a performance of some sort—bring with them a certain level of investment and expectation. They enter the space with their gaze focused and senses alert, not only because of the sound they hear through their headphones, but because of the context that brought them to this place in the first instance. They expect and are looking for a performance.

AUDIO 6.3 Audience interview extracts 13 & 15 Dec 2013

This audience, complicit in what is ostensibly a covert event, have varying responses to the tensions and at times humour created by being cast as an 'insider'. For some this felt uncomfortable, and for others liberating.

AUDIO 6.4 Audience interview extracts 15 Dec 2013

The second layer of audience is the general public—the 'incidental audience'—who become conscious of the fact that something out of the ordinary is happening in the food court. At Highpoint, the extent to which this second group became aware of the performance, and their responses to or engagement with it, varied enormously, yet in each case their response or lack thereof fed into the dynamics and structural logic of the work itself. On occasion, members of the general public looked suspiciously or inquisitively at the people wearing headphones as they tried to figure out the various forces at play. At the beginning of the performance all the members of the headphone audience were given paper hand-

outs explaining the nature of the event, which they were able to hand to interested onlookers if/when they chose to do so. This turned out to be quite often. In some cases, onlookers managed by themselves to trace the activities around them sufficiently to understand what was occurring, thus essentially becoming 'insiders'. In one performance there was a group of young kids all banked together who turned themselves around to become almost like a conventional audience in a theatre. They laughed and cheered at times as the performance unfolded. In some performances at 'peak hour', when the food court was bursting with people, it felt like the whole thing unfolded in and around the general public almost without anyone noticing.

The third layer of audience is that of the performers themselves—the actors observing each other and the general public and then feeding those perspectives back into the material of the piece. 'In this it feels like the actors are there almost like inciting events that cause the world to take notice and look for more.' (R Reid 2012, pers. comm. from creative development, 13 November)

MOVIE 6.3 Rachael watching

As further narratives unfold and performers wander in and out of view, a feeling of real/unrealness grows. Who are all these 'real' people around me? Across the way, a woman playfully throws a screwed-up serviette at her child; a cleaner stagily pulls out a walkie-talkie amid the tables and speaks on it; a pair of elderly ladies on a bench seat look with interest around the court. (Dawkins 2014, p. 42)

Just as there are multiple strata of audience (watchers), so too are there multiple strata of performers (those being watched). Once again there is the general public, 'performing the everyday' as well as responding, or not, to the performance event unfolding around them. This all becomes potential 'material' through the lens of those watching. Then there are the members of the headphone audience, observed by one another and at times becoming the focus of the curious gaze of the general public. Then, of course, there are the 'real' performers—the actors. These varied strata of performance shift in and out of focus, moving from foreground to background throughout the work's unfolding, causing the viewer to wonder whether performance is merely in the eye of the beholder.

In this sense, the participatory component of *PUBLIC* could be described as 'dramaturgical'. The audience members, scanning the site, make choices throughout the unfolding work that fundamentally shape their own experience and reading of it. They make decisions about where to sit, whether on the periphery or 'in the thick of it'. They decide who to watch and when. They determine who is 'in it', who isn't, and who probably should have been but wasn't. After viewing a creative development showing presented in November 2012 to a handful of invited guests, playwright Robert Reid responded: 'I'd almost say in this work [that] it is like the background in *Small Metal Objects* is waking up and taking agency.' I was pleased by this remark at the time, not only because I was happy for my work to be placed in the company of Back to Back Theatre's *Small Metal Objects*, but also because my intention was that the site itself, including the people in it, would become animated in this way via the gaze of those watching.

I kept being drawn to watching the unconscious actors in the space and particularly watching the dawning realisations that "a thing" was occurring around them ... As people who aren't wearing headphones become aware of the performance, they start to try and work out what's going on, they look for the clues to meaning (people doing strange things, people in headphones watching for strange things...). In that way we the "official" audience become performers too. I was always conscious of

my presence in the space and the way it might be interpreted. What was I signaling? How was I being interpreted into the performance? This also made me conscious of the other audience in the space as well. We feel like we're quite obvious. (R Reid 2012, pers. comm., 13 November)

The audio schematic required for this complex interaction of watching and being watched, not to mention sounding/ speaking and being heard, was technically and dramaturgically significantly more complex than my previous works discussed. Multiple audiences/participants and actors needed to be able to hear the same sound source at the same time. We also needed to be able to communicate with the actors from the control desk without the audience hearing what we were saying. Some sound created by actors needed to be miked so that it could be used as a source for real-time processing. The actors needed headset microphones so that they could speak and be heard. In addition, the headphone audience and the actors needed to be mobile, which meant, of course, that all of the gear—the headphones and in-ear monitors—needed to be part of a wireless system. The wireless system needed to send a signal consistently strong enough to ensure that the audience experience wasn't interrupted by white noise interference. This needed to be achieved in a loud, enclosed public space full of other competing wireless signals. Additionally, we needed to hide the control desk used for sound operation, and had the added restriction of not being able to have *any* leads running across the floor. As is often the case with tech-heavy shows, if you knew at the start what you know by the end, you would probably never begin.

AUDIO 6.6 Audio journal extract 14 Nov 2013

MOVIE 6.4 Rehearsal Day 3 Working in the studio with food-court ambience coming through PA speakers at commensurate levels of volume.

Through considerable trial and error, modifications and boosting of our system, we eventually arrived at a tolerable, if not ideal, outcome. Whilst there is no escaping the technology involved in the execution of this work, the ultimate aim is for it to be as unobtrusive as possible, allowing the audience to be absorbed in the experience of the event rather than its mode of delivery. I think this was achieved.

Cinematic resonance

In her review of *PUBLIC*, Sian Prior writes:

> *As I was leaving the little Muslim girl to whom I lent my headphones rushed up to me and said, "thanks, that was a great movie!" And I thought maybe she's never been to see any theatre before—maybe she doesn't know this IS theatre—maybe this is her first theatre experience, and she didn't even know it. (Prior 2013)*

Others also made this reference to a cinema-like experience. Headphone sound used in combination with a real-world site is key to this comparison being drawn. Sound and imagination shift and/or heighten audience perception, whilst being in a 'real-world' location positions the experience in cinematic rather than theatrical terms. It looks like a film. In making *PUBLIC* I took this cinematic resonance further by consciously applying cinematic techniques and strategies to the dramaturgy of the event. For example, with the use of headphones it is possible to have control not only of the volume but also of the *perceived* proximity of any given sound (more like film than theatre), and in doing so to achieve, at times, an acute sense of intimacy. One can create the aural equivalent of a 'close-up'—zoom in on a sonic detail whose source might be at a physical distance that would normally mean it would go unnoticed or remain inaudible. When we home in on a sonic detail, our sense of physical proximity is altered and our field of vision and scope of concentration follow suit. To think in terms such as 'close-up' or 'wide shot'—that is, employing the language of film—makes sense for a work such as *PUBLIC*, because the process of directing the audience gaze is an essential component of the

piece due to the competing chaos of the site itself. Sound is the primary tool in this process.

The sounds of the paper bag, the crisp 'tsss' of snapped-open can are up-close in my ears. I can't tell what's 'live' or what's recorded and performed in synch with the soundscape. There's a disjunct, or perhaps an overlap, or even both: a jarring between what's 'out there'—the character, his movements, sounds—and what's 'in my head', pushed in there via the soundscape. (Dawkins 2014, p. 42)

MOVIE 6.5 Eating

When Tom bites into the carrot and the audience hears it crack and echo through their headphones like a shotgun fired in a cathedral, the broad gaze upon the food court fades and Tom comes vividly into focus. When experienced live, it is as if he were actually being *viewed* in close-up (like in the video version)—the sound serving to narrow the audience's field of concentration.

This honing of focus also occurs during Nicola's monologue, as her words slowly draw the viewer/listener closer and closer in until they concentrate squarely on her. Her voice, close in people's ears, evokes a sense of intimacy—the feeling that it is for their ears alone.

Another voiceover begins a meandering tale about an online encounter with a 'chatbot'. "You can meet him in a public room or you can tap someone and meet in a private room," says the voice. Am I present here, or am I 'lurking?' Am I in a public or a private space; participant or voyeur? (Dawkins 2014, p. 42)

MOVIE 6.6 Chat Room

The converse is also true, in that it is possible to encourage people to broaden out their focus, to create a 'wide shot'. For example, the audio heard through the headphones at the start of the piece is an ambient drone that lays a soft blanket of sound over what, without headphones, is an extremely loud, echoing concrete-and-steel environment. The slow, spacious opening sound sequence sits in counterpoint to the intensity and pace of the food court. It functions as an invitation for the audience to slow down, to be present to the site itself and the people within it—to soak it all in. After some time, the voice of a woman is added—she discusses where she likes to sit, how for some reason she feels self-conscious

when she is sitting alone, and how 'everybody is checking everyone else out constantly'. Audience members scan the environment, aware of their actions as they 'check out' others. The woman's comments are followed by field recordings from public places, to incorporate snippets of half-audible conversations that intermingle with the ambient sound from the food court itself. Audience members begin to seek out the source of the voices, wondering who is speaking and where they are located. Their gaze becomes more directed and eventually locks on to a man moving in a different time signature to the world around him. He is slower, much slower. Again, his action is somewhat reminiscent of a film sequence.

French philosopher Gaston Bachelard muses: 'To use a magnifying glass is to pay attention, but isn't having a magnifying glass already paying attention?' (1994, p. 158) By taking an image or sound and altering its scale, proximity or tempo, we can leap from the real into a place of poetics and imagination. 'Daydreams are invitations to verticality, pauses in the narrative during which the reader is invited to dream,' writes

Bachelard (1994, p. 162). When things don't quite fit, when they are slightly out of sync, or altered, when they seem too close or too far, too big or too small, too fast or too slow, our eyes and ears are drawn to them—we pay them attention. We reorient to the strange magic of these incongruities and are enlivened by them. In *PUBLIC*, when Tom crosses the space at quarter speed—drifting through the food court in his own time signature—an other-worldly quality emerges. As Tom creates the illusion that he is in some kind of parallel universe or twilight zone, the audience is transported somewhere beyond the logics of the food court. The effect is highly cinematic and strangely pleasing. A thread has been strung from the real world to a place of imagination, with each remaining contingent on the other. These incongruities are the stuff of storybooks and illusionists. They disrupt the logics of time and space. This sense of incongruity can be orchestrated by the performance maker through the ways in which sound and the live body are brought into and out of relationship with one another.

MOVIE 6.7 High on a mountain

AUDIO 6.7 Audience interview extracts 15 Dec, 2013

Cracking it open

PUBLIC is a slow burn that nudges steadily against the boundaries circumscribing private exchanges, until it eventually, unequivocally, claims the public domain in the form of a song. It is the ultimate karaoke moment, propelled by a backing track heard only by those wearing headphones. For others in the food court it is perhaps regarded as an incongru-

ous act of exhibitionism. Reviewer Cameron Woodhead describes this scene, where '[s]trangers stare at her, as … the dance between public and private shatters the conformity of the crowd' (2013). It is both excruciating and wonderful to watch Diana as she enters with joyful abandon into a performance so out of step with her surrounds.

MOVIE 6.8 I Feel Love

AUDIO 6.8 Audience interview extracts 13 &15 Dec 2013

As the ripple of awareness caused by this moment of incongruity and abandon recedes, the audience's gaze returns once again to the food court. The space remains charged with the sense of inner worlds hidden behind the veil of social protocols. The desire to attract attention and be unconstrained sits in conflict with the desire to avoid attention and conform—it is a tension everyone understands and juggles throughout their own lives. It makes the banality of the food court seem infinitely richer with possibility.

AUDIO 6.9 The Magnificent Seven

With the show over and my headphones returned, I sit back down in the food court and just watch, senses awakened to the sheer volume of people— seats occupied, vacated and immediately occupied again. Weirdly, as I prepare to leave, a man walks past me—really slowly—crumpling a Maccas bag … and he's moving just slowly enough that I find myself expecting that crumpling sound, amplified and close-up to my ears. (Dawkins 2014, p. 42)

Conclusion

PUBLIC gently explores notions of participation by integrating performers, audience and the general public alike into the performative matrix of the performance situation. In doing so, it troubles the boundaries of where the real world ends and where the art begins, as well as the boundaries between public and private behaviours. Multiple layers of watching and being watched destabilise the distinctions between art, artists and audience, drawing into focus the ways in which people negotiate, confront and accommodate one another. Wireless and mobile technologies are employed to create a temporary networked community, mirroring broader processes of connectivity in the digital age. Headphone sound transforms the experience of being in a real-world site into a cinema-like event, in which everyone is a potential player in the unfolding narrative. Cinematic techniques such as close-ups, wide shots, and slow-mo achieved through the relationship between sound and vision, have the capacity to focus the audience's attention. Using sound to play with perceptions of scale, tempo and proximity brings a strange kind of hyper-awareness to the everyday—to that which exists but ordinarily goes unnoticed—and has the capacity to string a cord from the real to a place of imagination. Throughout all of these processes people engage in connective acts: between themselves and others, their surroundings, and their imaginations.

PUBLIC

Artists
Concept/direction: Tamara Saulwick
Sound design: Luke Smiles
Dramaturgy: Martyn Coutts
Performance and devising: Tom Davies, Rachael Dyson-McGregor, Nicola Gunn, Diana Nguyen

System designer: Nick Roux
Technical assistance: James Savage
Production management: Gwen Holmberg-Gilchrist

Voice
Sophie Meyrick

Presentation History
Big West Festival 2013

Awards & Nominations
Nominated for Victorian 2013 Green Room Award:
'Outstanding Hybrid Work'

Post-show Interviews
Merophie Carr, Joanna Davidson, Michael Havir, Sophie Meyrick

1 *PUBLIC* varied considerably from one performance to the next and was strongly influenced by how crowded the space was during the performance. The headphone audience and the performers were much more conspicuous when the space was quieter. This then had repercussions throughout the piece in terms of how aware the general public became of the event.

Death, Loss, Traces: *Endings*

A performance/sound work

Catalyst

I want to work with portable record players and recorded voices. I want to play the voices on old vinyl records. I want there to be song. I want the performers to be making the sound world. It is about endings. It is about death.

Returning

Endings (Saulwick 2015) represents the culmination of this practice-led research. I present it here more as an epilogue than as an introduction to a new set of ideas. *Endings* feels to me like a returning: back to analogue, back to real people's stories and voices, back to inside the theatre, and back to performing. And yet at the same time it moves me forward in my practice and brings my personal experience of death and loss with it. It allows me to draw together and apply the understandings of the dramaturgy of sound that have accrued throughout these five years of my PhD candidature. It requires no contextualising chapter beyond those that already precede it, as it represents an extension of many of the threads that run throughout the trajectory of my research: the interplay between live performance and prerecorded sound, the sonic and the visual, the embodied and the disembodied, and the real and the fictive. *Endings* finds form for experiences both ordinary and extraordinary that cluster around death, dying and afterlife. Framing the final weeks, days and moments of the lives of loved ones, *Endings* attempts to forge the ultimate connective moments—those between the living and the dead, between life and its absence. It is a call into the void.

[With] Endings, Saulwick's work moves across borders between the fleshy and the technical, the

116

intimate and the public, the interior and the exterior. In the process, it highlights edges and end-points that are ultimately framed in terms not of opposition, but connection. (Dawkins 2015)

Death

Let me tell you a story …

When my son was three years old he came across a fly on the floor. A dead fly lying on its back. I picked it up by its little wing, opened the back door and threw it out into the winter night. My son, concerned about the welfare of the fly, asked, 'Mum, why did you throw the fly out the back?'

I said, 'Because it was dead.'

'Won't it be cold?' he asked.

I said, 'No it won't be cold because it's dead.' And I laughed.

Then later after climbing into bed, 'Mum, will I feel the cold when I'm dead?'

I said, 'No you won't feel the cold because … '

He said, 'Mum, will I be able to see when I'm dead? How will I be able to speak? Where will you be when I'm dead? Mum? How will I find you when I'm dead?'

For my young son the idea of death, of life ending, was beyond imagination. Embedded in his questions lies the very human desire to stay connected to loved ones. Always. In some ways *Endings* is an extension of that, and subsequent conversations with my son, my father and others. The work is built in part from a series of recorded conversations, or in-

terviews that revolved around the general theme of endings, and in particular that of life ending. We spoke about death—about the final days and moments of loved ones' lives— the last gaze, the last breath. We mused on what seemed changed in the moments after death. We also talked about spirits, ghosts, mediums and the afterlife. As we talked, I was struck by the way the physical and metaphysical, the pragmatic and the poetic bump up against one another when we contemplate death. The interview participants entered into the process with enormous generosity, trust and grace; and these recorded conversations combined with my own experiences, writings and experiments with sound, formed the foundations for *Endings*. In a culture where death is rarely discussed candidly, *Endings* creates a collective holding place for this most inevitable of shared experiences—a place within which multiple stories and perspectives can be voiced and evoked. *Endings* is a homage to loved ones no longer living.

AUDIO 7.1 Irv

Endings premiered at the Sydney Festival at Carriageworks, in January 2015, as part of the festival's Sound on Sound series. Perhaps more than any of the three earlier works discussed in this exegesis, *Endings* positions itself as a sound/performance work that hovers somewhere between 'concert' and 'theatre'. Integrating live music and song into the sonic palette of the work, I am joined on stage by two musicians: Paddy Mann and Peter Knight. Together, using vintage record and reel-to-reel players, we create the sound for *Endings* live on stage, at times casting the sound-making machines themselves as co-players. In working with these vinchines themselves as co-players. In working with these vin-

tage analogue players I hope to embrace the qualities of unpredictability and fragility that they bring to the piece, resonating with its overarching theme. Sine tones, static, crackle and decay are features of the work's sound world, and also function as powerful metaphors for life's passing, 'other worlds', and the uncontrollable.

Mediums

Endings picks up where *Pin Drop* left off, with the performer tuning in like a radio antenna to transmit the voices of others; not only the voices of the living, but also the dead. As the central performer, I am the live body/voice in intimate conversation with the recordings of others, and together we retrace the specifics of past experiences, conjuring absent loved ones in a call to 'the other side'. In this sense, the connections made between the live and the non-live in *Endings* extend beyond those made between live performers and prerecorded voices/sounds, to connections made between the living and the dead. 'The medium' is perhaps the privileged metaphor of the whole work: someone/thing who resides at the threshold between two worlds and who speaks for the unseeable/the unsayable. Machines as mediums, the actor as medium, the psychic as medium—each channelling the voices of the absent.

… the set … largely consists of tape and vinyl apparatus, and many of the sounds are derived from the subsidiary or unintended sounds of old recording technology … This is most apposite when you recall that recordings, right back to Edison, have often been a parallel to the disembodied voice associated with ghosts, and also a tool for fooling people that they are indeed hearing ghostly utterances, if such exist. The work takes neither side, but inspires you to think a little more deeply about this matter. (Clare 2015)


Interestingly, Sydney Festival Director, Lieven Bertels, reminds us that Edison's intention, when first patenting the phonograph, was 'to record the words of famous people and

of dying people as mementos' (Bertels, cited in Gallasch 2014, pp. 26). Bertels goes on:

Sound memory is not very precise. If I try and remember the voice of my father it's very hard. I can recognise it, just like a smell, but you can't bring it back, you can't recreate it. So that's what Tamara Saulwick is working with—all kinds of sound recordings that have to do with endings. She's cutting her own acetates and pressing the LPs she will use onstage in quite a ritualistic, theatrical kind of way. (2014, p. 26)

Endings does have something of the ritualistic about it. Remembering as ritual. Listening as ritual. Reviewer John Clare writes: 'We are not supposed to forget that this is theatre. But in sudden shocks and longer hypnotic passages we do.' (Clare 2015) In developing the work I took people's recorded recollections, edited them, and then had them cut onto vinyl records. The playing back of these voices in performance has a strangely ceremonial quality about it as Paddy Mann and I, listening with intent, 'DJ' the playback

of the recordings on four record players. We manually manipulate the records, stopping and starting what becomes an interlocking, multi-voiced narrative with our hands. The era of the players/machines is the 1960s. The solid, metallic look of the machines, with their large knobs and switches, is reminiscent of hospital machinery. It is as if Paddy and I are tending to the machines themselves as we listen to the real-world accounts that they transmit. Each machine is quite idiosyncratic and distinct in timbre, and they crackle and wheeze and at times inexplicably feed back. Their individuality, combined with their importance in the 'voicing' of the work, marks them as co-players or fellow performers; ones that, quite fittingly, exist perpetually on the verge of collapse. No one would be surprised if one simply failed to turn on.
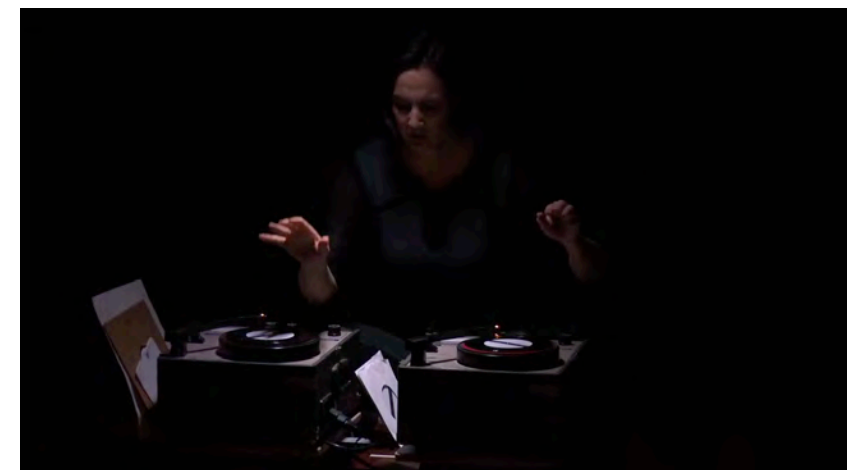
MOVIE 7.1 The players

In constructing *Endings*, I had to learn how to work with these old (but new to me) analogue technologies. I am old enough to have grown up with vinyl records and to remember the family reel-to-reel recorder, but not old enough to have ever used these machines in my art-making before. If there is anything that can make you appreciate the efficiency, responsiveness and convenience of digital sound technologies, then making a project on vinyl and magnetic tape is it. Comparatively speaking, working with these mediums is glacially slow and infuriatingly inconsistent. Yet despite this, their nostalgic resonance and the warmth of their sonic timbre continues to charm. A delicate tension throughout the creative making process emerged from the need to maximise the sonic potential of the players without losing the qualities that makes them so unique.

We devised a technical schematic for *Endings* that allowed us to use the internal speakers of each of the players, so that you hear the sound emanating from the object itself; and also to mic this sound so that it could be amplified through the larger speaker system. In this sense the players became like miked acoustic instruments, both heard directly and amplified. This contributes to the sense of liveness in the work, because the relationship between the sound making and the sound is clearly evident; it is happening in real-time, with real objects. By miking the players, all the beautiful sonic imperfections and textures created by the mechanics of the machines themselves are retained and mixed in with the recorded sound they are playing. We are able to achieve a kind of breathing quality as the sound moves from the specific location of each player to the fuller, more immersive sound of the larger speaker system.

Sonic resonances

Reel-to-reel recorders feature in *Endings* in addition to record players. In many ways they are more responsive than record players, able as they are to record as well as to play sound—meaning that we are able to record and play back material on the spot. By using tape loops (one piece of tape connected to form a closed loop) running between two players, we are able to accumulate multiple layers of recording
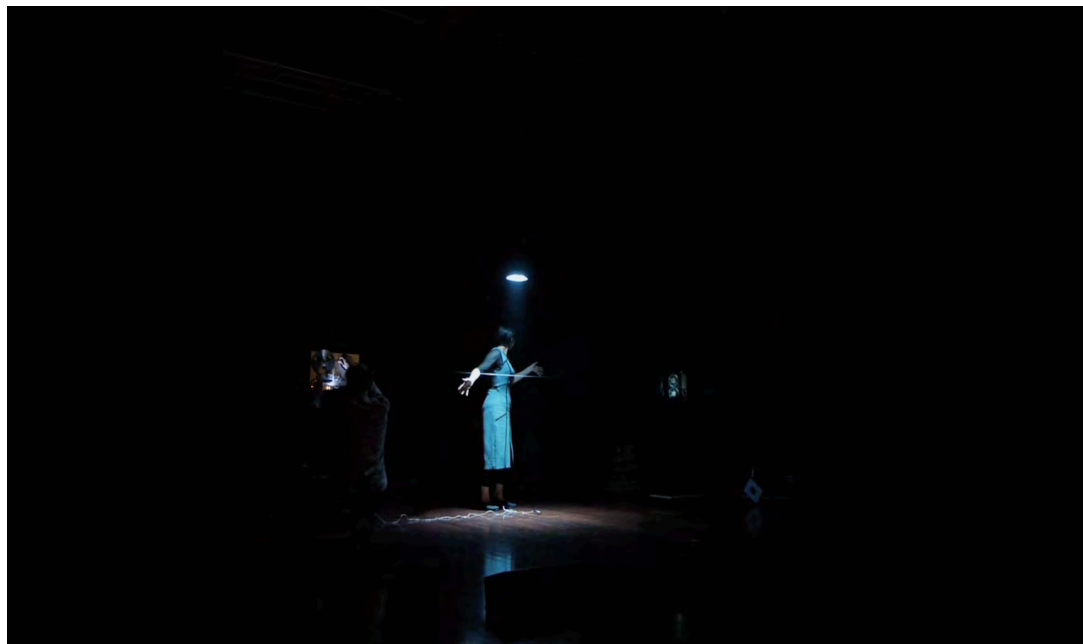
in real time. The sound world that emerges from this technique has an undeniable 1960s sci-fi feel about it. This is no coincidence, of course, given that these were the very kinds of apparatus used to create early electronic music, which became the signature sound of the 1960s sci-fi era. For example, Delia Derbyshire, from the BBC's Radiophonic Workshop, used *musique concrète* techniques of cutting, splicing, speeding up and slowing down analogue tape to realise the now famous *Dr Who* theme music (College 2010). For me, there is a loose but undeniable resonance between sci-fi themes—such as the search for alternative possible worlds, other life forms, time travel and telepathy—and the broad thematic terrain of *Endings*. This is not something I wished to underline overtly, but it is implicit in the sound emitted by these tape machines.

There are also other implicit resonances that are not stated but that I hope are captured in the work. For example, magnetic tape was used in the past to record 'Electronic Voice Phenomena' (EVP). This is the term used to describe the result when voices believed to be from another dimension, perhaps of dead people, are captured on tape. These recordings, usually of single words or short statements, are accompanied by a considerable amount of white noise. There are whole online communities of people who make these recordings, in the past on tape and now in digital formats *1*. Whether EVP is real is, of course, a matter of conjecture; as is, for that matter, whether spirits or ghosts or angels or gods are real. In *Endings* I do not take any particular position in relation to these questions, but rather, open out spaces for them to resonate within. Regardless of our beliefs and convictions, these stories, images and cultural tropes gravitate around the theme of death.

One of the ongoing questions in developing *Endings* was what to 'say' and what to 'do': that is, how explicitly to present the underpinning themes to an audience. My preference is always to find ways to communicate through the doing, rather than the telling. The following section was one such example. Originally I had scripted a monologue about EVP that was going to sit within the section. Eventually I felt that we were communicating all of these ideas through what we were doing with sound and performance, and didn't need to pin it down, and perhaps reduce it, with a spoken explanation.

The reel-to-reel players themselves become character-like throughout *Endings*, with their large turning spools as eyes. They play the voices of mediums calling in the spirits of the dead: 'Just calling you in to see if you'll come in.' In one section, the metaphor of the medium refracts in on itself multiple times. The section is built around the recording of a spiritual medium who is giving me a psychic reading. She is contacting the other side. She is seemingly making contact with my father. Her voice emanates from the single-lit reel-to-reel player. I am elsewhere on the stage, in conversation with her/it. Then, after a time, I join her in chorus, our voices working in unison. I am now a channel for the medium: her words, breath, sensations. As the scene builds, it is as if my father's spirit enters the medium's/my body: 'He's giving me something um … like a … heart pain / feels like a heart attack / and pressure in the head coming down … ,' she says. So now there is the father channelling through the medium, who is simultaneously channelling through the machine and the daughter/actor. Each one in its/their own way is acting as a bridge between self and other, between past and present, between the live and the non-live.

MOVIE 7.3 That's him, through me

The principal sound motif for *Endings* is a tape-loop refrain that was made on a Revox (a higher-end reel-to-reel player), which is operated live at the rear of the stage by sound designer/composer Peter Knight. The original sound source is a recording of Paddy playing the guitar, which was then played in reverse. Much of the sound for the work came via these kinds of iterative processes.

AUDIO 7.2 Refrain

The Revox has a rich, luscious, hi-fidelity sound, and Peter uses the player to record, manipulate and transform sounds as they occur throughout the performance. These sounds are echoes, remnants and sonic traces of the live performance as it occurs. Originally we had thought this component would be prerecorded and played back digitally. But Peter's physicality in operating the machine, and the sense of liveness that this brings to the space, ultimately led to the decision for him to join Paddy and I on stage.

Paddy's songs are the final piece in the sonic puzzle, and are for the most part sung to the simple accompaniment of his guitar. They act as moments of respite from what is at times very intense content. In one instance, a makeshift drumbeat is provided by the scratching and clicking of the stylus at the record's end. At another point the guitar part plays on one of the records as Paddy sings to it live. Elsewhere, Paddy's voice comes from the record player and he sings an accompanying harmony, adding texture and a kind of slipperiness to the meeting of live and non-live.

The only objects in the space are the sound-making machines themselves, illuminated in small pools of light amidst a vast black space. The light comes from individual lights hanging on steel cables that are attached to a curtain rail track above. Just as the sound-making process is manual, so is the lighting. When we need a light in a certain place we pull it there manually. We wanted as much as possible to be done on stage by the performers themselves, maintaining this sense of the manual. Our live, on-stage presences sit in contrast to the latter part of the piece, when the players begin to switch on and off of their own accord, seemingly without human assistance and as if moved by other forces. The

lights, hanging as they are, are able to swing and twirl. The last scene of the piece cross-fades over the voice of my father, which is heard from a small portable reel-to-reel player that I am holding, as he says, 'none of us will exist soon and in that I'm not unique. I just happen to be a strange product of evolution'.

The voice goes out into space, but also always, in its call for a hearing, or the necessity of being heard, opens a space for it to go out into, resound in and return from. (Connor 2000, p. 6)

My father's voice is drowned out as Paddy's song becomes louder and the lights that have been hanging motionless now spin in space, evoking associations with the cosmos, with stars.

MOVIE 7.4 Flowers

Conclusion

Hovering somewhere between 'theatre' and 'concert', *Endings* manifests through the confluence of sound, light and performance. Sound machines/players are central to the work's aesthetic, its rendering and its reception. Like co-players, they are integral to the way ideas within the piece manifest through 'the doing' rather than 'the telling'. Through manual physical engagement of these machines, the liveness and immediacy of the performance event and the accompanying precarious fragility of life are underlined. Reel-to-reel players facilitate iterative processes, and produce the sonic remnants, echoes and traces that sit so beautifully with the thematic terrain. Song and music provide moments of respite and spaces for reflection. It is through processes of sound that the multiple stories, experiences and voices in the work are manifested—bridging between self and other, between past and present, between the live and the non-live, between death and beyond.

Its subject matter is difficult by default and impossible to hear without grafting onto it your own fears and faces. But it is uplifting too, and

comforting, offering a sense that death is an experience shared with the living, even if only momentarily. (Hennessy 2015)

Endings

Artists
Concept/text/performance: Tamara Saulwick
Set/lighting designer: bluebottle—Ben Cobham
Composition/performance: Peter Knight
Songwriting/performance: Paddy Mann
Dramaturgy: Margaret Trail
Technical management/audio engineering and operation: Nick Roux
Costume designer: Harriet Oxley
Production management/lighting operator: Emily O'Brien

Voices
Maryanne Caleo, Neil Cameron, Lorraine Culross, Annie Edney, Christine Grace, Jane Hall, Carolyn Hanna, Hanspeter Horner, Irving Saulwick, Meri Vitas, David Wells, Faridah Whyte

Presentation History
Sydney Festival, Performance Space at Carriageworks, January 2015
Arts House, Melbourne, May 2015

Awards & Nominations
Nominated for 2015 Helpmann Award:
'Best New Australian Work'.

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1 See, for example, http://www.mcmsys.com/~brammer/ or http://atransc.org/

Endings, Beginnings: A Continuum

Dramaturgies of sound

The contribution to knowledge that is offered by this research is articulated, in the main, within the live performance works I have created. These are original works that have toured nationally and internationally, premiered in major international festivals, been adapted for radio and received numerous industry nominations and awards. They exist as artworks of significance beyond the domain of the academy and carry within them my own history of creative practice and experimentation. Their articulation of the dramaturgy of sound is far more eloquent than what can be offered with the written word in this exegesis. In this sense, live performance is my first language.

This exegesis offers a context for the articulation that the works present, and an analysis of and reflection on the dramaturgies of sound that thread through them. Each work, defined by its own processes and parameters, has resulted in a distinct approach to the dramaturgy of sound. The principle dramaturgical strategies I employ fall into the following four categories:

I.   Integrated recordings of voices

Three of the four works integrate sound recordings of 'real' people's voices and experiences. In *Pin Drop* this process brings a multiplicity of perspectives and presences into what becomes a seemingly peopled performance environment. In *Seddon Archives* these voices, and the detailed stories they convey, make an important contribution to the work's engagement with place. They allow for a layering of the distant and recent past over the here-and-now of the live event. In *Endings*, the recorded voices illustrate the themes and variations that exist amongst us as we witness the death of a loved one. They provide a counterpoint to, and a framing of, the autobiographical narrative thread that runs through the work.

II.   Interplay between the live and the non-live

Central to the dramaturgy of each work is the interplay between live and mediatised/prerecorded/processed sound.

This interplay serves to underline the immediacy of the live event and is reflective of the multiply mediatised world in which we live. It is explored in a variety of ways throughout the four works, as follows.

- Through the pairing of prerecorded voices with the live voice and body of the performer/s. Whether the live performer is speaking in or out of unison with a prerecorded voice, speaking in dialogue with a prerecorded voice, or performing a physical action in accompaniment to a prerecorded voice, in each instance the central performer exists in relation to the prerecorded voices around her in different ways; each one offering new meanings, dynamics and shape to the work.

- Through pairing the live experience with prerecorded sound (in the public space works) to create a bridge between the internal aural experience of headphone sound and the external ambient sound of the physical environment. This pairing creates disorienting effects intended to enliven the participant's sense of the present moment and attention to the physical environment they find themselves in.

- By manipulating sound in real time to springboard the work from the literal of the here-and-now into more poetic and evocative spaces. This was achieved by processing live sound via real-time audio-processing software (Abelton Live). In *PUBLIC*, for example, the hidden wireless lapel microphone taped to one of the performer's hands picked up the close and detailed sounds of their physical actions, creating an uncanny sense of intimacy amid the din and chaos of the food court. In *Endings*, the processing of sound was executed on stage through the live recording of multiple layers of voice onto audio-tape loops: this moment of live performance captured on tape was further layered, distorted and refracted as it played and replayed across the tape heads of the reel-to-reel player.

III. Headphone sound

The delivery of sound via headphones was used in the two public-space works, to create a sense of intimacy for the audience/participants, as well as a sense of slippage between the real and the fictive. In *Seddon Archives*, prerecorded

sound from a portable mp3 player clipped to the partici-
pant's lapel, played back through their (non-enclosing) head-
phones and mixed with the live sound of the physical envi-
ronment. In *PUBLIC*, multiple wireless headphones/
receivers were used to deliver prerecorded, live and live-
processed sound to the audience. This somewhat covert and
networked event allowed 20 audience members free move-
ment around the food court whilst remaining connected to
one another through a shared sound world. In each work the
cinema-like experience created by headphone sound, in com-
bination with a real world setting, enabled the framing of in-
cidental occurrences of the everyday within the logic of the
event. Translating cinematic techniques of close-ups, wide-
shots, jump-cuts and slow motion into their sonic aural
equivalents, headphone sound makes space and time newly
plastic.

IV. Interplay between sound and vision

The way in which sound and vision are paired with one an-
other is central to the dramaturgy of all four works and

greatly influences how each work is read. In these works,
sound and vision are often brought into relationship, with the
intention of heightening, focusing, privileging or inviting a
kind of deep listening by the audience/participant. At times
sound is paired with image that does not directly relate to
what is being heard, but rather sits in ambiguous yet evoca-
tive conversation with it. At other times, simple, sustained
images of the body in space provide a kind of anchor to hold
the audience's gaze, which in turn frees them up to attend
more fully to what they are hearing. The connection between
sound and source, just as in the ventriloquist's doll, is judged
largely through vision. Playing with the verisimilitude of the
relationship between sound and source, fracturing one from
the other and/or reinstating the two together, is a strategy
that I have applied time and again throughout the works; this
slightly disorienting effect invites an active engagement
from the audience. In other instances, sustained periods of
total darkness have been used to elicit a heightened sense of
listening in the audience; in these cases, vision is no longer
paired with sound, but disconnected from it.

Practice/research/practice …

The dual processes of making and reflecting on what has been made have immeasurably deepened both my practice and my understanding of it. Whilst notionally having arrived at an 'ending' in terms of this research, it is really only a momentary pause in the continuum of my practice. Already I have other works in progress that would not exist were it not for this body of research. One of these works is a participatory sound and video installation for 16 people and 16 iPads. The intention of this work, which has no performers beyond the audience that participates in it, is to create a visceral, spatial, shared sonic/visual experience for participants that is manifested via digital devices working as a collective network. The second work is a collaboration between a composer, four vocalists and myself. A choral work entitled *Permission to Speak,* it explores the spaces between speaking and singing*,* and is built in part from interview recordings with individuals reflecting on that which goes unvoiced in their lives and relationships. These new works have emerged out of a set of preoccupations that were seeded in the making of *Pin Drop* in 2010, and then grew and diversified over the next four years through the creation and presentation of the subsequent three works.

A contribution to the 'sonic turn' seen in recent scholarly discourse, this research marks out a distinct set of practice-led insights into the ways in which sound can contribute to the making and reception of live performance. It presents a performance maker's perspective (and a female one at that) as distinct from a sound designer's—a perspective that is largely unrepresented in the discussions around sound in performance. It analyses performance works that have been built from the ground up with an emphasis on the role of sound within them. It feeds into a relatively new tributary of writings on dramaturgy—the dramaturgy of sound. It places particular emphasis on how sound can be employed to facilitate moments of connection: to our imaginations and memories; to our senses and surrounds; to the present moment; and to the people around us—our community.

The research captures a moment in time, one in which the practices of theatre and performance makers are being shaped by developments in audio technologies and the freedoms that they afford. These emergent works—whether site-specific, participatory, mediated through headphones or presented in theatres—share a common interest in the creation of performance encounters characterised by intimacy, liveness and moments of connection. If, as Karen Jurs-Munby posits, 'the world we live in, globalized and multiply mediatized as it is, *is* less "surveyable" and manageable than ever' (Jurs-Munby, in Lehmann 2006, p. 11, emphasis in original), these works suggest ways to negotiate through these conditions of contemporary life. Reframing and challenging the preoccupations with and concerns regarding 'connectivity' in our wi-fi-social-networking-centric-times, artists are co-opting wireless and portable technologies to create new models for becoming connected. These works acknowledge the possibility of being simultaneously connected to, and separate from, others and our environment. They mark out relations between interiors and exteriors, between self and others, between the real and the not-real, and between auditory and visual domains. Audiences participate in the construction of these works: sometimes physically, sometimes imaginatively, sometimes dramaturgically and sometimes all three. In this way, audiences and artists together are articulating new, if ephemeral, ways of being in, out of, and with the world. This world. Now.

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Appendix 1

Information to participants involved in research

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled, 'Triggers and threads: first hand accounts in postdramatic theatre'.

This project is being conducted by student researcher, Tamara Saulwick, as part of a PhD study in Performance Studies at Victoria University under the supervision of Dr Margaret Trail from the Faculty of Arts, Education and Human Development.

Project explanation
Central to this research is the creation and presentation of a live performance work by Tamara Saulwick, which will integrate a series of recorded interviews. Tamara's research is looking at the effects/affect of prerecorded voices and stories within live performance, and is interested in the telling and hearing of first hand accounts of real world experiences within these works.

What will I be asked to do?
Participants will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview with Tamara centred around a particular theme. The interviews will be recorded (audio only) and may take anywhere from 20 minutes to one hour.

What will I gain from participating?
Participants will have the opportunity to contribute to an artistic work through the sharing of their own experiences, thoughts and opinions. In doing so they contribute to and become part of the community of voices that emerges within the work. In previous performance projects developed by Tamara using these methods, participants have found the experience both enjoyable and rewarding. Many participants have remained engaged and interested in the progress of projects throughout their development, and in most cases have seen the completed work/s. All participants who have attended the final works have had very positive feedback, with some returning on several occasions with family and friends. To date, no participants have pulled out or expressed any concerns or regrets in regards to their involvement.

There is no payment of financial remuneration for participation.

How will the information I give be used?
Following the interview session, the recordings will be logged and edited for use in the rehearsal and presentation phases of the live performance work. The recordings may be used as a source for text, and/or as a sound source to be placed in amongst an overall audio design. Performers may speak the words of the interviewee, or sections /fragments of the original interview recording may be heard directly as playback. It is most likely that only a small portion of the interview will be used in the live work, and in some cases none at all.
.
What are the potential risks of participating in this project?
This research is considered to be of low risk.

As the interviewees' voices will be recorded in the interview session, it is possible that they may be recognisable to those familiar with them. In order to avoid any risks associated with being recognised, participants will be asked to identify anything discussed that they feel should not be included or do not wish to be associated with. This material will be omitted from the live performance work.

There will be a 'cooling off' period of two weeks after the interview in which the participants are invited to express any reservations or concerns that may arise about the material being used for its intended purpose. During this time participants may choose withdraw their interview from the project entirely should they wish to. After this two-week period, the Student Investigator, Tamara Saulwick, reserves the right to use the recorded material in the project and in any future iterations of the work.

In the interview process participants will not be compelled to explore subjects they do not wish to. If any participant feels concerned about the direction of the interview they will be encouraged to express their concerns freely in order that they be addressed. Should the participant become distressed for any reason, the interview will be discontinued. In the event that participants require psychological counselling they can contact:.
Dr Harriet Speed, Associate Professor, Victoria University
Telephone: 9919 5412;
Email: harriet.speed@vu.edu.au

How will this project be conducted?
There will be a number of phases through which the project will be developed including; interview, development, rehearsal, and performance phases. Interview participants will only be directly involved in the *interview phase*. They will be invited to attend the presentation of the live performance, should they wish to.

Who is conducting the study?
Chief Investigator
Dr Margaret Trail, School of Communication and the Arts, Victoria University.

Student Researcher
Tamara Saulwick, School of Communication and the Arts, Victoria University.

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above.
If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Research Ethics and Biosafety Manager, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001 or phone (03) 9919 4148.

Appendix 2

Consent form for participants

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:
We would like to invite you to participate in a study into the use of recorded voices and first hand accounts in postdramatic theatre, conducted by Tamara Saulwick. A central component of this research will be the creation of a live performance work (as detailed on the Information for Participants form).

CERTIFICATION BY SUBJECT

I,   (Name)

of   (Suburb)

certify that I am at least 18 years old* and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study:
"Triggers and threads: first hand accounts in postdramatic theatre" being conducted at Victoria University by: Tamara Saulwick

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by:

Tamara Saulwick

and that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- Recorded interview
- Use of interview recording within a live performance work

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Whilst some participants may wish to remain anonymous, many will desire appropriate attribution for their contribution to the work. Please indicate how you would wish to be credited;
Full name ☒
First name only ☒
Pseudonym (for confidentiality) ☒

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Student Investigator
Tamara Saulwick

.

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Research Ethics and Biosafety Manager, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001 or phone (03) 9919 4148.
[*please note: Where the participant/s are aged under 18, separate parental consent is required; where the participant/s are unable to answer for themselves due to mental illness or disability, parental or guardian consent may be required.]

Appendix 3

Interview questions for artworks and feedback sessions

In all cases the interviews were open-ended conversations with questions used to prompt ideas or to delve deeper into the material. The directions of these conversations and the ground covered within each one were unique. Listed below are some of the kinds of questions asked.

Pin Drop
- How safe do you feel at home?
- Have you ever been burgled?
- What kind of security do you have at your home?
- Do you walk around the streets alone at night?
- Do you have any personal rituals or self-protective strategies that you use to make you feel safer?
- Did you do things when you were younger that you wouldn't do now?
- Have you ever had an experience where you felt your safety was being threatened by someone unknown to you? When? What happened?
- Has having children changed the way you think about these things?

Please note, the interview process for Pin Drop preceded my PhD candidature.

***Seddon Archives* —Artwork Interviews**

For this work in particular the questions varied a lot depending on the individual interviewee and their relationship to the area and specific aspects of the area. Some examples of questions are:

- What do you remember about specific places? The shops? Your house? The street? The park?
- Who used to live here?
- What is different now from how it used to be?
- What was the journey that brought you to this place?
- How do you cure olives?
- Why do you have a chalkboard on your fence? How do people use it?
- What did you discover inside that house? Describe it for me?
- What used to happen in that building before it was residence? What was in this shop before you started a café?

***Seddon Archives* —Reflective Interviews**

Each interview began with the question:
- When you cast your mind back to doing the walk what comes to mind now?

Some other questions that were sparked by their responses were:
- Do you think that there is something about physically being in the place that was being talked about that was a big part of that experience?
- And were there other moments when you asked yourself '*I wonder if that person is part of it?*'
- What was that like to not be able to tell if the sound was recorded or live?

- How did it make you listen in a different way?
- What were the things you found yourself paying attention to?
- What was that like to find your own story connected to what you were hearing?

PUBLIC—**Artwork Interviews**

A series of interviews were conducted in the development of PUBLIC. With the exception of one very short section at the start of PUBLIC, these interviews were not integrated into the eventual work.

Some of the questions asked were:
- Do you ever go to shopping malls?
- Do you ever eat in the foodcourt?
- Where do you sit? Why?
- Do you find yourself watching other people?
- Are you aware of other people watching you?
- Do you feel different from the other people there? Why?
- What do you observe of other people?
- Do you remember an occasion when someone stepped outside the boundaries of acceptable behaviour?
- What is the social contract around boundaries in a shared space like this?
- How do kids challenge those boundaries?

PUBLIC —**Reflective Interviews**
- What do you remember?
- How did wearing headphones shape your experience?
- What, if anything, did you find interesting or enjoy about the experience?
- What, if anything, did you find uncomfortable or not enjoy about the experience?
- What did you find your attention being drawn to? What did you notice? Why?
- Did you know who the performers were? Were you correct?
- How did you find yourself watching the general public?
- Did you feel conspicuous? Did you feel like you were the ones being watched?
- What was the level general sense of awareness that a performance was taking place?
- How did it feel to be the 'insider' in the situation?
- What do you think the work was exploring?

Endings—**Artwork Interviews**
In the initial interviews for *Endings* I approached the theme of 'endings' in very broad terms. By later in the process I shifted the focus of interviews more specifically on to death, dying and notions of afterlife.

- Is death something you think about much?
- What happens when you die?
- Do you believe in any kind of life beyond death?

- Have one or both of your parents died?
- Were you there? Can you describe the process in the weeks, days, moments leading up to their death?
- Did they seem different immediately after they had died? In what way?
- Describe the funeral?
- Do you still sense their presence? In what way?
- Have you ever experienced a situation in which you felt that you were communicating or were somehow in touch with someone who was dead?