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## COVER SHEET

### **At the Knot of Presence: Weaving with the embodied knowledge of my artistic palette in Liza Lim's *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)***

Karin Emilia Hellqvist

#### Abstract:

This artistic research exposition unfolds the shared work between Australian composer Liza Lim and Swedish violinist Karin Hellqvist, from the viewpoint of Hellqvist as performer and co-creator. Together, the artists have created the violin solo work *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)* (2021–22). The Swedish folk music tradition that Hellqvist has carried with her since her childhood, and especially the polska dance, serves as their point of departure. This tradition resides in Hellqvist's body and performance practice as embodied knowledge – a term introduced by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962), and it becomes their main path of research. A central concept in the reflections is the 'artistic palette' – a concept created by Hellqvist to conceptualise the skills and abilities used in creative work. Hellqvist's embodied knowledge connected to the tradition is woven into the work through explorations of elements as the specific pulse of the polska and its ornamentation. Furthermore, those embodied skills are explored as decoupled in the third movement, capturing indeterminate aspects. The main question addressed is how the embodied knowledge of Hellqvist's artistic palette serves as resource and inspiration in the shared process and how it affects the ontology of *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)*.

Topics of distributed creativity, shared work as mycelial structure, instrument-building, ownership, and temporal ecology are being unpacked in the light of the artistic palette. The artistic research exposition unfolds a compositional process whereby the performer is participating actively, thus problematising the view of where creativity may be located in compositional work. It comprises written reflections, audio examples, pictures, and video material from the creative process as well as a video of the whole work. The research context comprises historical and aesthetic perspectives, as well as recent research on performer creativity and embodiment

Keywords:

embodied knowledge, artistic palette, collaborative composition, performance practice, contemporary music, distributed creativity, ecology, mycelia, ornamentation

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# AT THE KNOT OF PRESENCE

## Weaving with the embodied knowledge of my *artistic palette* in Liza Lim's *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)*

by Karin Emilia Hellqvist

**Photos:** Two photos of Karin Hellqvist and Liza Lim looking at sketches of *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)*, during a workshop session in Berlin, Germany in 2021. Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2949362#tool-2949418> to see the picture.

## Background

From July 2021 to June 2022, Australian composer Liza Lim and myself, Swedish violinist Karin Hellqvist, co-created the work *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)* for solo violin with low octave string, hereafter called *Speculative Polskas*. Our work is a part of my artistic research PhD project at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo: *Transforming with the Artistic Palette* (2018–24) where I investigate collaborative composition and my creativity as a performer and co-creator through what I will elaborate on as the concept of the *artistic palette*. This exposition unfolds experiences, reflections, and knowledge that have accompanied *Speculative Polskas* on its journey from idea to premiere, and I describe the co-creational process from *my* perspective.

Liza Lim is one of the leading composers of her generation. She is widely commissioned by pre-eminent orchestras and soloists worldwide. Thoughts around beauty, ecological connection, ritual, transcultural ideas, and collaboration centre her practice. During most of our work on *Speculative Polskas*, Liza was a fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, where we met three times during the compositional process. I first met Liza in 2014 when working with Norwegian ensemble *Cikada* on her ensemble piece *Winding Bodies: 3 Knots* (2014). I experienced an immediate connection to the musical language of the work, as well as the ideas behind it. I remember how its phrases and gestures seemed to consort inside my body.

The cultural and symbolic meaning of *knots* that Liza explored in the work and their significance as patterns for storytelling also thrilled me. Integrated in the contemporary music ensemble of the composition was the Norwegian *Hardanger fiddle*. To me, *Winding Bodies: 3 Knots* captured Liza's interest and recognition in the folk music tradition we as a Norwegian group – explicitly or implicitly – carried. The sublime way in which Liza brought the essence of Norwegian folk music tradition and storytelling into the work sparked my idea to propose that she write a violin solo work for me. I imagined a work exploring the Swedish folk music tradition that I have carried with me since my childhood, but never used as a compositional starting point for commissions in my work with contemporary classical music. Seven years later, the collaborative journey of creating *Speculative Polskas* began. By then, I had embarked on a PhD in artistic research, and questions circling embodied knowledge and collaborative creativity were coming to the fore in my project. I explained to Liza my wish to explore my embodied knowledge connected to the folk music tradition and my will to share the compositional process.

Preceding the work on *Speculative Polskas*, I had performed contemporary music for almost twenty years and worked with numerous composers on new solo and ensemble works. I had premiered pieces by composers of different ages, nationalities, and aesthetic orientations. Despite this, I had often experienced a separation between the creative processes of the composers I worked alongside and my own role as a performer. This separation would generally manifest as a division of work in which the composer imagined and evaluated the musical materials of a work, structured them in a composition, and notated the work in a score. Then, I as performer would be interpreting it. Little attention would be directed towards what mechanisms that possibly could, and at times also would, play out in between those two separate creative processes. Even though I often knew the composers personally, there were few surfaces of contact between us during the compositional process. Over time, the separation I experienced grew into frustration. As a performer, I was the expert on my own instrument, of interpreting scores, mastering a diverse range of aesthetic musical styles, and structuring performance of music in ensembles. I was ready to contribute with this knowledge to the compositional process in order to make works idiomatic and enriched with my personal voice. Furthermore, I was curious to know more about the process of creating the works I performed.

## Context

According to music philosopher Lydia Goehr, the separated practices of composer and performer start emerging from the mid-1800s onwards. The regulative *work-concept* emerges as a consequence of several decades of societal, political, and aesthetical change from the 1770s (Goehr 1994: 206). Before this time, 'musicians did not see works as much as they saw individual performances themselves to be the direct outcome of their compositional activity [...] Rarely did musicians think of their music as surviving past their lifetime in the form of completed and fixed works' (Goehr 1994: 185–86). Furthermore, sheet music becomes available on the market as part of an economic system. The different roles that composers and performers take on become increasingly distinct with the composer assuming the role of an artist subject. The related concept of *Werktreue* (fidelity to the work or its composer)

captures the new emerging relation between performers and composers and the loyalty towards the work that performers increasingly come to adopt (Goehr 1994). It 'emerged to capture the new relation between work and performance as well as that between performer and composer. Performances and their performers became subservient to works and their composers' (Goehr 1994: 231) and performance practice becomes increasingly directed toward the truthful rendering of the score of the composer. In my research project *Transforming with the Artistic Palette*, the fidelity toward the score and composer that the concept of *Werktreue* captures is problematised through explorations of shared compositional processes and by acknowledging the contributions I make as a performer.

During the paradigm shift of the performative turn in the arts during the 1990s, human behaviour was increasingly seen as performed and socially constructed. The work of art was progressively regarded less as an essentialist unity, and rather as an object in a state of change and development through its performance. Its position as one of objective knowledge came to be challenged. Scores were increasingly seen as one element in the performance of music, not necessarily able to capture all aspects of a musical work. From the 1960s, composer and performer partnerships, such as those between John Cage and Merce Cunningham, Karlheinz Stockhausen and Kathinka Pasveer, and Luciano Berio and Cathy Berberian, had challenged the idea of the score as finished work, incorporating aspects such as indeterminacy and open notation in their works. In such partnerships, the performer had increasingly taken on a more significant role in the development of new works. Thus, despite the regulative impact that the ideal of *Werktreue* keeps having on the ecosystem of composer–performer–work, collaboration and creative exchange between composers and performers takes place. Following the performative turn, the relationship between composer and performer was consequently increasingly problematised in a growing field of research. Accounts by composers and performers outline how exchange and collaborative work unfold in creative processes.

One such account that has been important for this research is “Recercar” – The Collaborative Process as Invention’ (2007) by cellist Neil Heyde and composer Fabrice Fitch. Fitch and Heyde reflect on their work on Fitch’s *Per Serafino Calbarsi II: Le Songe de Panurge* for speaking cellist (2002–03). Fitch and Heyde’s article is written in a dialogical format, mirroring their respective contributions to the work. Together, they develop new playing techniques and explore a specific scordatura (unusual tuning) of the cello. From their experiences, they argue that when the role of the performer is viewed as a mediator not only between audience and piece, but also between piece and composer, this role is inventive, and a dialogic artistic process can unfold.

A further example is composer Sam Hayden and music psychologist Luke Windsor’s ‘Collaboration and the Composer: Case Studies from the End of the 20th Century’ (2007). The authors problematise composer–performer collaboration, drawing on ten different case studies from Hayden’s own output. Hayden and Windsor find three categories of collaborative work: the *directive*, *interactive*, and *collaborative* categories. In the interactive category, interaction, discussion, and reflection occur but the composer is ultimately the author of the work. Works in the collaborative category are seen as challenging conventional notation, and decision-making is distributed among participants and other agents such as technology.

In artistic research, we see the contributions of the performer raised in several projects. One

example is percussionist Jennifer Torrence's project 'Rethinking the Performer: Towards a Devising Performance Practice' (2018), a performer-led investigation into collaborative work. Torrence creates the 'interpreter-adviser-deviser model', a scale of performer involvement, where the *deviser* represents the co-creating performer. This model resembles the one created by Hayden and Windsor (2007) but is designed with the performer in the centre. Authorship of the works created in Torrence's project are further problematised, oftentimes resulting in shared ownership of the collaboratively created pieces.

New concepts are emerging to describe the performer's involvement, skills, and agency. Violinist Barbara Lüneburg uses the term *charisma* to describe how performers are empowered to create concert aura (Lüneburg 2013). Cellist Tanja Orning writes about the *polyphonic performer* who meets the demands of a new emerging repertoire (Orning 2019). Percussionist Håkon Stene researches the role of the percussionist in the experimental spirit of new percussion music to 'liberate or decouple the intent of percussion from the materials of percussion' (Stene 2014: 1). Cellist Marianne Baudouin Lie writes about embodied knowing in her performance practice and methods of reaching an *intensified presence* in the act of performing (Baudouin Lie 2017).

Liza Lim has a long publication record herself. Additionally, several writings by others target her works. Among those writings, Eric F. Clarke, Mark Doffman, and Liza Lim's 'Distributed Creativity and Ecological Dynamics: A Case Study of Liza Lim's "Tongue of The Invisible"' (2013) is particularly relevant to this research. By studying Lim's work with Cologne-based ensemble Musikfabrik, the authors give a social and distributed understanding of the complex mechanisms at play during the workshops with the composer and ensemble. *Tongue of The Invisible* marks out the 'rich mix of relationships required by a work that involves a considerable variety of agents and creative practices, incorporating different and simultaneous systems of creative exchange' (Clarke, Doffman, and Lim 2013: 632). The authors apply an ecological perspective as the framework for 'domains of material culture, psychological process, social interaction, and institutional context' (Clarke, Doffman, and Lim 2013: 630), domains that otherwise might be regarded as separated. An article by Liza Lim that comments on aspects of the performer's contribution in the above-mentioned writing is 'A Mycelial Model for Understanding Distributed Creativity: Collaborative Partnership in the Making of "Axis Mundi" (2013) for Solo Bassoon' (Lim 2013). Here, Lim explores fungal mycelia as a metaphor for collaborative creative practice in contemporary music.

Liza Lim has a longstanding relationship with Australian contemporary music ensemble ELISION. She has written numerous ensemble works as well as solo pieces in close collaboration with the musicians of the group. Asian traditional instruments, such as the Japanese koto, have further figured in those compositions. Aside from working with Liza for over three decades, ELISION has frequently collaborated with British composer Richard Barrett, as well as American composer Aaron Cassidy. Both Barrett's and Cassidy's output include works composed with a 'radically idiomatic' approach, a term introduced by Barrett. In the radically idiomatic approach to composition, instrumental practice is deeply integrated in the work. Researcher and guitarist Anders Førisdal writes about the radically idiomatic compositional approach in recent guitar repertoire:

In integrating aspects of instrumental practice within the structural fabric of their work – an integration which is also an explicit opening towards the contingency of practice,

indeed a traversal of the limit or margin which separates the two – Richard Barrett, Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus K. Hübler suggest a conception of music where work structure cannot be understood outside the horizon of its practical realisation and the interaction of the corporeal and technology. (Førisdal 2017: 2)

Liza herself does not use the term ‘radically idiomatic’ for her compositional technique. However, as I ask Liza about it, she tells me that her approach is indeed somewhat similar. ‘The idea of deeply investigating an instrumental performance practice and the physicality, ergonomics around that and then composing in an embodied/ dynamic way for musicians is central to my practice’ (Lim, email to the author, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024). Given Liza’s relationship with ELISION as a hub for the development of new works created through similar approaches, as well as the compositional path of our work, the radically idiomatic approach to composition is thus situated close to the compositional approach of *Speculative Polskas*. As I will elaborate on, in *Speculative Polskas*, the specific idiom explored is my heritage of traditional music. As Liza phrases it, the ‘idiomatic grain’ (Lim 2021–22) of me as performer becomes a part of the identity of the work through the integration of my performance practice.

In this exposition, I write about my *practice* as a performer. Practice can be defined as ‘something that is usually or regularly done, often as a habit, tradition, or custom’ (Cambridge Dictionary, “Practice,” def. C2). My performance practice embraces all the activities I engage in, in artistic work. It includes a wide range of activities, such as violin playing, concert performance, artistic collaboration, studying scores, ensemble work, imagining future work, writing, listening to music, and so on. During my artistic research PhD project and my exploration of the artistic palette, I see my practice transforming. In this exposition, I describe how the work on *Speculative Polskas* reveals new aspects of my practice.

Research on body and embodied knowledge is a wide, growing field, comprising several different strands of embodiment. This exposition does not map the whole field but rather focuses on how I experience embodied knowledge in my practice during the development of *Speculative Polskas*. Embodied knowledge is associated with ‘tacit knowledge’, a term introduced and explored by Michael Polanyi (Polanyi 1966). According to Polanyi, knowledge resides in our bodies that we do not always have to articulate verbally. This could, for example, be riding a bike, recognising someone’s face – or playing the violin. Polanyi considers all kinds of knowledge to be rooted in tacit knowledge. He writes that ‘we can know more than we can tell’ (Polanyi 1966: 4). The related term ‘embodied knowledge’ is derived from the phenomenology of French existentialist philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, describing a kind of knowledge where the body knows how to act, and where the body also is the knowing subject. In Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology, the body is central as it is hosting pre-reflective abilities. In *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), Merleau-Ponty writes how ‘the body is to be compared, not to a physical object, but rather to a work of art. In a picture or a piece of music the idea is incommunicable by means other than the display of colours and sounds’ (174). Embodied knowledge resides in the body, and as philosopher Shigenori Nagatomo (1992) argues, it is also acquired through the body. Our bodies develop understanding and remember the surrounding world through experiences and repeated experiences becoming habits. Practice researcher Mimi Sodhi (2008) describes embodied knowledge as ‘a contextual, experiential, and reflective process’ which in turn is based on a combination of internalised feelings created from past life experiences, internal reactions triggered by interactions, and the

processing of those internal reactions (Sodhi 2008: 4).

In artistic research, investigations of embodiment and the role of the performer's body emerge. Accordionist Andreas Børregaard (2023) has researched how the musician's body is activated through a growing repertoire of works using voice and body in ways not related to playing their instrument. Violinist and researcher Barbara Lüneburg has developed an epistemic-oriented method of uncovering tacit knowledge in the work of instrumentalists: 'Re-enacting Embodiment in Classical Instrumental Practice'. Through the method, a performer can re-enact another performer's physicality in order to uncover tacit skills and insights (Lüneburg 2023).

During my repeated engagement with the traditional music from my home region, my body registers information that over time will construct a resource of embodied knowledge. The embodied knowledge connected to my engagement with this tradition is a knowledge that resides in my body, built during thirty-five years of playing the violin. It captures the conscious as well as the unconscious way I use my body when performing. When I play the violin, my mind does not have to represent all the different actions my body needs to take in order to produce sound on the instrument. My body knows how to act owing to many years of internalised training and practice. I know *that* I perform the *polska* of traditional Swedish folk music in a certain way in terms of pulse and ornamentation. However, my body knows *how* this performance is carried out. For me, embodied knowledge in the context of the work on *Speculative Polskas* is connected to artistic knowing residing in my body, fuelling the compositional process of a violin solo work in the classical music tradition. I entered the collaboration with Liza imagining a work exploring the Swedish folk music tradition I have carried with me since my childhood. At the start of our work, I had not yet investigated this knowledge from a perspective of research or framed it with concepts or theory. Throughout my work as a performer, I had often felt how this knowledge resided in my body but had still not explicitly used it as a starting point in collaborative work. As I will describe in this exposition, my embodied knowledge is used in the compositional work with Liza and the tradition I carry in my body is inscribed into the work.

## The artistic palette

As a result of the separation I had previously experienced between my work and that of the composer, questions about how and with what I as a performer can contribute, and am contributing, to the compositional process started to arise. What do I as a performer bring into work with composers? What skills and abilities do I use in different creative contexts and how do they develop over time? Why is it important that those skills and abilities are specific for my way of performing? How can they be a resource in creative work, and act as the starting point for new works?

In my research, I develop the concept of the *artistic palette* in order to concretise and conceptualise the skills and abilities I bring into creative work. The artistic palette is a metaphor connected to my artistic identity. The skills and abilities captured by the artistic palette are personal and tied to me, including my body and practice. They are connected to areas as embodied knowledge, artistic-contextual skills, abilities connected to collaboration and intuitive feeling-based abilities. In my artistic development as a performer and on my



journey of creating an expanding practice, the concept of the artistic palette becomes central. The artistic palette helps me recognise and develop agency, empowerment, and connection in artistic contexts. Furthermore, it helps me understand how my creativity is intertwined with the creativity of other artists I engage with.

The artistic palette comprises both skills and abilities, or *skillabilities*, as I sometimes call them. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, *skill* is the competence ‘to do an activity or job well, especially because you have practiced it’ (“Skill,” def. B1) and ability ‘the physical or mental power [...] needed to do something’ (“Ability,” def. B1). In my work with the artistic palette, I view skills as specific, while abilities represent a more general competence. Examples of skills of the artistic palette are mastering the physical act of playing the violin, working with software to create music, developing new playing techniques, studying new works, and memorising musical works. Typical performer abilities would be collaborating with other artists, communicating my artistic ideas, and imagining artistic expressions.

Some skill-abilities of the artistic palette are tacitly embedded in my embodied knowledge but can be brought out through artistic or verbal language. Through my performance practice I can access and bring this knowledge forward. As an example, in this exposition I describe how I communicate with Liza by what I will elaborate on as *suggesting-by-doing*, where I take part in the compositional process with performed rather than verbal suggestions. In our shared creative process, I sometimes engage in the compositional process by playing artistic suggestions rather than verbalising them in speech. My embodied skills and abilities are being articulated and communicated through my performance.

Furthermore, I currently think of the artistic palette comprising characteristics that include being:

- dynamic – developing, and changing with my artistic encounters;
- situation dependent – I use different parts of it in different situations;
- poetic – expressing emotion, beauty, and playfulness;
- empowering and connected to the agency I have and develop;
- relational – affected by relations to different agents;
- personal and linked to me as an individual but embedded in the cultural and artistic context that I am a part of;
- connected to imagination and therefore linked to creativity and my future practice.

One way to understand more about the skill-abilities of the artistic palette is to explore the artistic palette as multidimensional. I see its skill-abilities as co-existing in the embodied, contextual, intuitive, and relational dimensions. This multidimensionality is not an attempt to organise the skill-abilities in separate groups. They all have embodied, contextual, intuitive, and relational aspects. However, depending on the different contexts of my research, different qualities of the skill-abilities can be addressed and explored.

In the *embodied dimension*, skill-abilities closely connected to embodied knowledge reside. Embodied knowledge is accumulated in my body over time by experiences preserved by the body’s memory. This pre-reflective knowledge can uncover itself through my artistic explorations. My personal way of playing trills, dynamics, experimenting with contact points of

the bow on the strings, my ability to create direction in melodic materials, evoking the 'swing' of the polska and my way of improvising are abilities intertwined between the embodied and contextual dimension of my artistic palette.

Furthermore, skill-abilities can be viewed in the *contextual dimension*. They are connected to the context of the artwork in a wide sense, including parameters such as the specific aesthetics, the composer, the situation of performance, and surrounding artistic field and society. They are linked with artistic materials, as developing specific playing techniques, the ability to find a suitable tempo, to adopt to a certain style, or to develop form. Skills in the contextual dimension are closely intertwined with abilities of the embodied dimension.

In the *relational dimension* of the artistic palette, I find skill-abilities connected to communication and interaction. As I engage in collaborative work, the relational dimension is the structure upon which the other layers are communicated. Being able to compromise, discuss, suggest, understand other's perspectives, and respond are abilities I develop through shared creative work. During the project, new collaborative territory has opened in my practice and hence also the extended and new skills of co-operation.

Lastly, closely connected to the embodied dimension, the *intuitive dimension* represents skill-abilities connected to the feelings and driving forces behind the creative projects – to my values, desires, pleasures, struggles, and fears. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, *intuitive* means 'based on feelings rather than facts or proof' ("Intuitive", def. 1 ). The intuitive dimension comprises abilities needed in order to act in line with my values to create the collaborations and practice that I imagine. Establishing connection, building trust, and acting with responsibility have been important abilities that I have cultivated throughout the *Transforming with the Artistic Palette* project. As a performer entering the territory of composition, I often have had to overcome my shyness, follow my intuitive feelings, and connect to my aesthetic preferences.

Throughout the *Transforming with the Artistic Palette* project, I have focused on different parameters of the artistic palette, and how different parts of it are active and developing in different contexts and different artistic collaborations. I have explored the artistic palette as a multidimensional concept in the exposition 'Circular Bowing – Cyclical Work', in VIS Nordic Journal for Artistic Research #8 (Hellqvist 2022). In this exposition, I will explore embodied skills and knowledge of the artistic palette in the framework of Liza Lim's violin solo work *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)*. All dimensions of the artistic palette are engaged in the shared artistic work with Liza. This exposition especially targets skills and abilities closely connected to the embodied dimension of the artistic palette and how they contribute to the work.

## About the research

A great deal of recent solo and ensemble works in contemporary music are created through collaborative processes. Research on those works provides a wide spectrum of studies on collaboration between composers and performers and a wealth of theories on collaborative work. This exposition does thematise aspects of the collaborative work on *Speculative Polskas*. However, the main focus of the exposition is targeting my contribution to the work

connected to the embodied knowledge of the artistic palette. The main research question that this exposition targets is: how is the embodied knowledge of my artistic palette active in the shared work with Liza during the compositional process of *Speculative Polskas*? As a sub-question, I further ask how the tradition I carry of Swedish folk music serves as an imaginative starting point in the piece.

The co-creative work with Liza and my background of playing traditional Swedish folk music act as the main artistic framework within which my research is undertaken. I share materials from our creative process such as recordings, pictures, sketches, video documentation from the process, and a video of the full work. My aim in this exposition is to investigate the notion of embodied knowledge in the context of this specific composer–performer collaboration. I describe how embodied knowledge is anchored in my body as well as how this embodied knowledge is explored in *Speculative Polskas*. By doing so, I aim to exemplify how awareness of the embodied knowledge of performers can act as a resource in a compositional process.

The exposition is interspersed with personal recollections, illustrating my past engagement with folk music, as well as of recent performances of *Speculative Polskas*. Those sections lyrically express in words the sensations that engaging with this music evokes in my body. They are a form of ornaments in my narrative: personal verbal embellishments in the process of explicating the tacit embodied knowledge. However, they are also sites of knowing. As such, threads from those recalls are drawn into my discussions around embodied knowledge.

[next](#)

## Music and history of my home place as starting point

*Recollection: It is mid-July and I am alone at the Stjärnsund mansion to make a recording for Liza. Just across the yard from here is Pärönbo, the house where I grew up. I see the window of my childhood room between the trees in the park. The fountain, the gravel walks, the park, they all live inside me. I have set up my recording devices and am ready to start. Listening to the room through my headphones gives me shivers. I think of the histories of this old building and its past residents. Some of them are commonly acknowledged as 'ghosts' by the village's inhabitants. I expect to hear the eighteenth-century Lady Emerentia's steps on the stairs, water running in the old pipes, and noises from the kitchen downstairs. Still as a grown-up, I feel uneasy being alone in the building and my senses stay alert until I step out in the sunshine again, closing the heavy door behind me. Stories about the mansion influenced my view of my homeplace and shaped my understanding of my time here as one unit in a long chain of lives. The chain is not only centred around stories of ghosts, it also includes music, love, sorrow, and death. Back at Pärönbo, I write to Liza about my experiences, about the portraits on the wall and the trembling feeling of listening to the past. From her reply, I know she understands what I want to tell her through those recordings. 'Enchanted, finely spun stuff', she writes. 'You are really inside this music I think. [...] I look forward to listening again and dreaming with this music [...] You know very well that I like stories'. (Lim, email to the author, July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021)*

**Photo:** Photo of the 18th century Stjärnsund mansion in the summer, seen from the fountain in the yard. Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2952264#tool-2954482> to see the picture.

I grew up in the small ironworks village of Stjärnsund in the region of Dalarna, Sweden, in one of the houses adjoining the eighteenth-century Stjärnsund mansion. In Dalarna, a central place in traditional Swedish folk culture, the polska dance is at the core of the traditional music in ceremonies and everyday life. I did not experience the cultural bloom of the traditional music I learnt as a young violinist; it happened the nineteenth century. By then, tunes were collected and notated by enthusiasts, to be preserved and passed on as cultural heritage to coming generations of players, dancers and audiences. The music's main vehicle of generational transfer, however, was oral transmission. As an effect, the identity and dialect of a specific polska came to depend on the local village it originated from, as well as on the practices of the fiddlers playing it.

**Sound files:** Four sound files of local, traditional Swedish folk music recorded by the author at the Stjärnsund mansion in July 2021: *Polska* after Näktergal, *Vals* after Risshytt Maria, *Prestlundsbäcken* after Albin Brodd and *Vals* after Erlandsson. Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2952264#tool-2952339> to listen to the audio files.

In my adolescence, I engaged with traditional music by playing with local carriers of the tradition, listening to tape cassette recordings and exploring collections of notated tunes from the region. Traditional music was an important part of my music making. It acted as a complement to the classical music I studied and became a connection to a tradition I was geographically situated in. I engaged in the folk music tradition especially together with my younger sister, Stina. From a young age, we actively performed together in various contexts: at church concerts in our village, at parties, to dance, at weddings, business conferences, in the extended setting of a folk-rock band, in music competitions, and on tour in the Swedish settlements of America. We both played classical music and studied the canonised classical repertoire along with the traditional music, often mixing in elements of classical music, tango, or jazz into our concert programmes. I left Stjärnsund and Dalarna to study classical violin in Stockholm when I was in my twenties. I never moved back, but frequently visit Stjärnsund.

Fiddler Näktergal, or Kers Erik Ersson, from the village of Dalsbyn, Säter, was a local carrier of tradition, born in the early nineteenth century (Norman 1977). The tunes Näktergal played were passed on to younger generations of fiddlers and have always served as great inspiration for me. Some of them figure in the recordings I made for Liza on that summer's day. As we will see, one specific polska played by Näktergal would come to influence aspects of the work, especially present in an abstracted way in the third movement. It does not figure as a direct musical quote in the piece and is not meant to be detected as a specific melody. Rather, recalling the tune acts as a way to access embodied patterns of ornaments and playing techniques.

Following my suggestion to Liza, the framework of the shared work on *Speculative Polskas* is my background of playing traditional music from my home region in Dalarna. As a starting point, in July 2021, I decided to record some polskas at the Stjärnsund mansion and send them to Liza. Not only did the eighteenth-century building close to where I grew up

provide a beautiful acoustic and atmosphere. For me, it also carried significance as a place of connection to my past, to the folk music tradition and to histories of lives before mine.

**Photos:** Two pictures taken during the author's recording session at the Stjärnsund mansion in July 2021. The pictures show Hellqvist's violin, some recording tools and a book of traditional Swedish folk music placed on a table in the salon of the mansion. Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2952264#tool-2952306> to see the picture.

[previous](#)

[next](#)

## Ornaments, recall, and the dance floor of the fingerboard – the embodied knowledge of my *artistic palette* in the creative process

*Speculative Polskas* is a three-movement work. The first movement explores the specific pulse of the polska and its function as music for, or with, dance. The second movement introduces a different sound-world where more lyrical sonic materials enter. The score of those two movements applies musical notation. The third movement mainly consists of verbal instructions and is a space of indeterminacy where aspects of the sounding outcome are left open.

I will first explore two different aspects of *Speculative Polskas* where Liza is weaving the tradition I carry and my embodied knowledge into the score. I discuss how my practice of ornamentation, as well as my experience of performing the polska to dance, influence the work in the first two movements of the work. Then, I analyse the third movement and the practice of recalling a specific polska as a way of deconstructing my embodied knowledge through decoupling the actions of my left and right hands.

### The dance floor of the violin

*Recollection: I'm playing from the corner of a dancefloor filled with spinning couples. It's late night in the village of Bingsjö, Dalarna. The barn's wooden floor is creaking under feet that keep moving in controlled synchronisation. Faces reveal concentration, presence, joy, and connection. Intuitively, the couples avoid colliding in the dusky room. The connection I'm experiencing with those dancers is like a two-way puppet show. Not only am I escorting them through the lineages of the polska, at the same time, their presence and actions draw strings back to me, influencing how the music unfolds. I'm inside the pulsating heartbeat of the polska. As a rubber band, it connects every cell in my body. Its heavy first beat opens the flow of melody, connecting me to the ground as my left foot taps the rhythm. Soon, the second beat responds, now expanding the pulse beyond regularity. This is an airy, elastic, and light beat, but at the same time, it is the centre of motion. It swirls up, as if caught*

*by a sudden wind. I inhale. Muscles gain tension, and for a fraction of a second, time freezes. Then, after this thrilling moment of weightlessness, the third beat falls. It injects renewed focus and direction to the pulse, it draws me back to a new first beat. The melody continues to unfold and the cycle repeats.*

As described in my recollection of playing the polska, the pulse of the music is present in my whole body. I can best describe it as a cyclical whole-body motion grounded in, and sparked by, the feet. The polska rhythm is irregular. It emphasises the first and third beats of the 3/4 bar, while the second beat is lighter and slightly syncopated. My feet and toes tap the rhythm of the first beat of the polska. During the second beat, my toes, or sometimes a whole foot, are lifted in the air. This elastic motion sends sensory signals up my legs. The muscles of my calves become tense. Tension is directed toward the third beat that falls almost as heavily as the first, but with the function to inject the pulse with energy directed toward a new first beat. Then, the cycle repeats. My left foot usually leads this movement, but the right foot and toes joins in. Sometimes, when expecting an especially heavy downbeat, the foot is lifted, and knee is bent backwards during the second beat. During this wave through my lower body, my arms are floating horizontally on the surface of the motion of feet and legs. In the typical polska cycle of three beats, I play the downbeat on a downbow, where the right arm moves the bow from heel to tip. This emphasis gives the downbow a heavy character from the weight of the arm. The second beat falls on the upbow where the bow travels the other direction. Where it starts, at the tip, there is less weight from the arm and thus the bow stroke becomes lighter. In order to move back to a new downbow for the next cycle's downbeat, the third beat makes a short down plus up bow. Beside the two cyclical movements of vertical and horizontal activity in feet, legs and arms, there is a level of movement across the left and right sides of the body too. The falling heavy beats shift irregularly between right and left sides of the body. My breathing becomes organised to fit with the pulse of the polska. The change between breathing in and out shifts on the beats. As I play the polska, my body is engaged in an internal dance-like movement.

The expression 'mindset' captures a specific way of thinking. When playing the violin, I enter an expanded mindset, embracing my whole body, a *body-mindset*. It captures a specific way of being in the body. This body-mindset feels different depending on the music I perform and the degree of how internalised the music is in my body. In contemporary classical music, works can be complex and demanding in terms of rhythm or technique, oftentimes resulting in limited focus on my body-mindset. When it comes to traditional music, my body knows how to connect to the inner, dancing body-mindset of the polska, and all body parts join in the dance. I can enter this body-mindset through the act of playing folk music but also by recalling it or imagining it. This body-mindset is necessary for me to enter in order to play a polska. Just as my bow arm needs to move the bow over the strings, the pulse of the polska needs to flow in my body. Sometimes, when I perform a difficult repertoire of classical music where the body-mindset feels stiff or ungrounded, I notice I become tense. I remind myself of the body-mindset my body has when playing a polska. I enter this body-mindset and become aware of how my breathing pattern changes and my muscles use tension in a dynamic rather than in a static



way. I cannot stay stiff or breathe shallowly when involved in this inner dance. When entering the polska body-mindset in contemporary classical music, I utilise the embodied knowledge connected to the polska in a different artistic environment.

The polska dance consists of a forward-directed walking part, the *försteg* (pre-dance steps), alternated by a clockwise *omdans* (round dance), where the dancing couple embrace each other and spin at the same time clockwise around each other and counter clockwise around the room. The *försteg* patterns of the footsteps of the polska dancers and the possibility to draw their movements onto the violin become an area of exploration. How can the specific polska dance floor be mapped onto the violin's fingerboard? In September 2021 through a first sketch, Liza introduces me to a violin technique mainly directed by the bow hand – chopping. Originally developed by fiddler Richard Greene in the mid-1960s and used in bluegrass music, today it is also an incorporated feature in contemporary music, through violinists such as Casey Driessen in his 'The Chop Notation Project' (Driessen 2019).

**Figure 1:** Score detail from the first movement of *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)*. The handwritten musical notation shows three bars of the 'chopping technique' used to represent the dancefloor of the polska on the violin's finger board. Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2952267#tool-2952512> to see the figure.

This chopping technique, Liza suggests, represents the footsteps of the polska dancers. In this sketch (Figure 1), the polska's pulse is in the first bar of the piece, represented in a triplet over two beats. The first beat of the polska-triplet is played by a dry 'chop' – or perhaps rather in this case a 'step', into the string. The bow stays resting on the violin's second and third strings. On the second beat of the polska-triplet, the bow is lifted, and the two strings are left open to give a somewhat resonating sound. The third beat again steps onto the string whereupon it is lifted half-way through its duration as an upbeat, preparing for the new first beat. While this motion of step-and-lift marks the pulse of the polska, the bow further gradually moves along the fingerboard, from the bridge of the violin toward and over the fingerboard. During the next polska-triplet the bow moves back again to the starting position. The two patterns of step–lift and movement along the string is elaborated over the first four bars of the piece. Parameters of tempo and dynamics are used to build up tension toward the fifth bar where more melodic material takes over. This step–lift–move technique provides me with a rhythmical template resembling the polska. The step-and-lift also translates the down–up–down–up bowing of the bar.

In her paper on the collaborative process of creating *Axis Mundi* (2013), Liza describes how she views the process of collaboration with performers. She writes:

I would describe these processes [of collaboration] as a reciprocal joining and weaving with, a travelling along and being caught up by, the threads and knots of a collaborative relationship with materials that are sonorous, gestural-motoric, perceptual, inscriptive and inter-social, and which arrive out of the wider 'life-worlds' of the participants. The musical work that arises is both fruit and archive of the traces of those reciprocations and itinerations. (Lim 2013: 4)

A process of weaving with the threads of the history, tradition(s), and artistic palettes inscribes the dance floor of the polska in the opening of the work. Gestural-motoric and sonorous aspects of the polska dance are combined with aspects of the tradition of bluegrass chopping. The wider life-world of my artistic palette is brought into the piece and woven together with the artistic palette of Liza.

**Video 1:** Excerpt of video documentation from a workshop in Berlin showing Lim and Hellqvist's experimentation with the chop-lift technique. The bow is 'chopped' onto the strings and lifted to let the open strings resonate. Different techniques of swiping and moving the bow along the string are explored.

**Video 2:** Excerpt of video documentation from a workshop in Berlin showing experimentation with the chop-lift technique. Hellqvist and Lim discuss the chop-lift technique as representing the dance floor of the polska and its similarities to stitching.

Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2952267#tool-2952628> to watch the videos.

*Recollection: It is the first time I am about to perform Liza's and my new work in concert. I am alone on stage in the lit-down Luxembourg Philharmonie. There's no music-stand between me and the faces I distinguish in the dusk, just me and the octave-stringed violin with its otherworldly sound. In this trembling moment, feelings are racing through my body. The joy of sharing the work with the audience collides with the nervous feeling of not knowing if I my memorisation of the piece is successful. I lift my bow and open the world of the piece through entering the dance floor of the fingerboard. Sweeping lateral bow strokes and percussive chops of friction reminds me of wooden floors creaking under the dancing couples' feet. I recall their footsteps, their knees lightly bending, how they are being inside of the heartbeat of the polska together with me. Soon, the light and syncopated second beat gains a different structure. Swirls of harmonics and fragile overtones start suggesting the ghostly presence of other bodies and time dimensions. It opens a space for other kinds of materials to enter. The further I go into the piece, the more relaxed I feel. My body remembers the polska and its sense of concentrated presence*

The beats of the traditional polska are characteristically irregular. In the notation of *Speculative Polskas*, those fine nuances of the polska's beat structure are not precisely notated. Probably, such an attempt would result in a very complex notation. The notation of a traditional polska also does not specify the uneven beat structure. Obviously, *Speculative*

*Polskas* is not a traditional polska, as the ones I recorded at the Stjärnsund mansion and sent to Liza were. Rather, it is a piece of contemporary classical music, speculating on a polska. As I play it, I relate to its detailed notational structure with several demanding playing techniques and a complex twelve-minute-long form that I have memorised. Nevertheless, *Speculative Polskas* feels significantly different to perform compared with other works in my contemporary classical repertoire. As I play it, I am situated somewhere between the polska and the contemporary piece. My feet are tapping, legs gaining tension, and my breathing adjusts: it evokes the body-mindset of the polska.

How does this body-mindset that I enter leave a mark on the sounding result of *Speculative Polskas*? What can be heard concretely musically from this experience, which is not visible in the score? As I play the first movement, I treat the pulse in a somewhat irregular way, with the template of the polska's uneven beat structure. Whenever sections of the tempo signature of 3/4 opens, I treat their notated rhythm as a polska. This means that I emphasise the first and the third beats while I let the second beat be less emphasised and lighter. When playing the polska, the second beat often evokes the sense of a different tempo in me, as if this beat suddenly has a slower tempo than the first and third beats. Consequently, in *Speculative Polskas*, I prolong the second beat slightly while shortening the third. Through connecting with the polska's body-mindset, the first movement gets a dance-like 'swing'. Through my body-mindset of the polska combined with the translation of the dance floor and the sonic language and framework of a contemporary piece of contemporary music, the sound of the piece is hybridised between the two traditions. This approach is something Liza and I explore in our workshops, where Liza repeatedly encourages me to bring in the swing of the polska in the piece. Liza does not notate the swing of the polska, because I bring it into the work through the body-mindset. Through the body-mindset of the polska, my artistic palette becomes a part of the identity of the work.

In the process of studying the work leading up to the premiere in November 2022, I send recordings of the material to Liza. She encourages me to even further embrace the 'swing' of the polska throughout the movement. Beyond the notation of the abstracted dance floor, she is aware of how I can engage with the material through the body-mindset of the polska. The swing of the polska is difficult to fix in notation. Rather, it is realised in the act of performance, from the experiences my body has gained of playing polskas. As the piece unfolds in my performance, I may sometimes fall back into a more 'classical approach', as I try to master technically difficult passages. Then, the swing of the polska is not my primary focus and my body pauses the cyclical up–down motion. Throughout the first movement, I oscillate between the two approaches.

## Ornamentation

*Recollection: I'm playing one of my favourite polskas after Näktergal together with Stina. In the acoustic of the Stjärnsund church, our ornaments are woven together with the ticking of the pendulum clock. We move in synchronisation and our feet gently tap the rhythm. The pulse of the polska is the heartbeat*

*that structures movements in my body, and the ornaments are the unique fingerprints, as a fine texture above it. The ornaments in my fingertips decorate the pulse of the polska as the tune unfolds, like patterns of sonic embroidery. They circulate its pulse; either anticipating the beat or commenting on it. The ornaments surrounding the first beat of the bar are firm, effective, and fast. The ornaments of the second beat are longer. They stretch into the space between the second and third beats, as if search for something. As a trill flows onto the string in my left hand, the right hand holding the bow at the same time embellishes the music through the contact between bow hair and string. As if mirrored in the movements of Stina, my wrist moves with an edgy snatch while the elbow has a softer movement, drawing an eight-like shape in the air. The ornaments are engraved in my body, influenced both by local traditions and by playing with others, as this evening with Stina.*

What is ornamentation in the Swedish folk music tradition, and how is my way of ornamenting connected to my embodied knowledge?

In music, an *ornament* is defined as ‘an embellishing note not belonging to the essential harmony or melody’ (Merriam-Webster, “Ornament,” def.5). Ornamentation in the traditional music of my home area is a way of lending beauty to a melody, of communicating a desire to decorate and embellish. Additionally, it is a way of expressing virtuosity, skill, and one’s personality. Ornaments are an important part of the polska’s identity, both a geographical identity and an identity created by the individual fiddlers playing it. Not limited only to embellishing notes around the melody, my view of ornamentation comprises a wide spectrum of musical decoration, including elements such as advanced trills, the use of resonance strings, bowing techniques, and microtonal intonation. Ornamentation is my unique fingerprint as a performer of the polska.

In line with Nagatomo’s (1992) thoughts, ornamentation, as an example of my embodied knowing, is not only residing in my body but also being collected by it and stored over time. By playing traditional music over the span of several years, my body acquires certain automatisations in ornamentation patterns and figures. Through repetition and refinement, ornamentation skills are personalised and engraved in my body, drawing on embodied habits. When playing traditional music, those skills partly unfold in my body on a *pre-reflective* level, through bodily processes, rather than being calculated in my mind. I do not think of where to add trills or ornaments, where to touch a resonance string or how to add elasticity to the pulse. I generally do not think of what left-hand finger would play what note in a trill or how my bow arm would need to bend in order to get the right sound. My body knows how to do it and is taking creative responsibility as a co-creator. This means that space is freed up to for example react to things in my environment that may affect how the music is performed. This can for example be the impact of the particular acoustic situation, the desired level of intensity or the communication with other musicians. Those processes are thus facilitated by the automatised repertoire of ornaments that my body creates with.

How is ornamentation explored in *Speculative Polskas*?

I will begin by analysing the role of ornamentation in the first two movements of *Speculative Polskas*. The third part of the work, with its specific approach to embodied materials, is discussed separately.

In her programme note, Liza writes:

Various aspects of the Swedish dance form and its music are reflected in the solo work's gestural patterns of stepping, lifting, sliding and turning, and in its elaborated trills, repetitions and interpolations. The music was composed by following the idiomatic grain of player-instrument arising from my observations of Karin's physical and emotional relationship to her violin as a container of stories and memories. (Lim 2021–22)

Prior to our project, the Swedish folk music tradition and its particular style of ornaments have not yet been explored in depth by Liza. The recordings I have made introduce tunes from the geographical area I grew up in, as well as communicate my personal way of ornamenting. Listening to those recordings as well as my performance of polskas as we meet serves as inspiration for Liza. The first two movements of the work both apply a form for *weaving* with aspects of my embodied knowledge combined with open interpretational spaces where ornaments are indicated but their precise execution is left open for me to perform. Threads of the polska tradition are being woven into a structure with threads of Liza's artistic palette, of the classical and contemporary music context, of blue grass influences, our past experiences, and the violin with the octave string.

**Video 3:** Excerpt of video documentation from a workshop in Berlin. Hellqvist and Lim point to the sketches of the work and discuss ornamentation, and its connection to beauty, personalization and skill. Ornamentation in the traditional Swedish folk music is further discussed as personal yet specific for the geographical area where the fiddler was active. Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2952267#tool-2952629> to watch the video.

Throughout the first two movements, Liza's weaving with my personal way of ornamenting embellishes the line of the music. One characteristic ornament I use when playing in the style of the traditional Swedish folk music from the region is a fast three-note motif that often acts as a 'transport ornament' on the way to the next note (Figure 2). This ornament is picked up frequently in *Speculative Polskas*. It is used to decorate a transport to a new pitch, similarly to how it is used in traditional folk music. In *Speculative Polskas* it is often used in a repeated form, often over several bars. It is picked up as a small module that by repetition creates a longer motif and form element. By repeating the ornament and thus placing it in a new context, it is heard in a new way. Such a repetition of an ornament is found in bar sixteen of the first movement (see Figure 3). Here, the chop–lift motif of the first bars is also applied in the bow as well as a gradual change toward bowing close to the bridge (*molto sul pont*). This is a way of decoupling the two elements of the left hand's ornaments and the right hand's 'footsteps', a compositional technique that is further explored in the third movement.

**Figure 2-5:** Details of handwritten musical notation of the first movement of *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)*. The details show different ornaments and their notation: the ‘transport ornament’, resonance strings and trills. Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2952267#tool-2952534> to see the figures.

Another frequently used embellishment in Swedish folk music is the use of open resonance strings accompanying the melody. Hence, the vast majority of polskas are played in keys where selections of the open G-D-A-E strings of the violin can be inserted to support the melody. Resonance strings are used very frequently in *Speculative Polskas*. As in folk music, they both act as the occasional adding of an open string as well as the sustained playing of a resonance string during the unfolding of a melody line (see Figure 4).

Perhaps the most typical ornament for the way I play the traditional Swedish folk music from my home region is the short ornament of adding one adjoining note above or below the main note to the line. In classical music, this is often referred to as a *mordent* (adjoining note from above) and *inverted mordent* (adjoining note from below), respectively. This is perhaps the most automatised ornament in my performance. It is unconscious to the degree that I would never be able to recall after playing a tune how many I have played or where I have added them.

In *Speculative Polskas*, trill ornaments are mainly notated with the tr sign for trill, followed with a wavy line indicating how the trill stretches over the duration of the note (Figure 5).

Occasionally, the symbol for mordent also occurs. A trill is a repeated mordent, an oscillation between the pitch of the melody and an adjoining pitch. The length of the trill depends on the musical style and the duration of the pitch. When practising *Speculative Polskas*, my approach to how I treat those ornaments is that I follow the suggested ornament structure – the specific moments where Liza has imagined ornaments to be placed. However, I treat the *style* of the ornament freely. I add the kind of trill or mordent that feels natural in my fingers at a given moment. At times, I also depart somewhat from the suggested ornament structure and add ornaments in other places. Through the co-creative process shared with Liza, I perceive it to be a tacit understanding between us that my specific idiomatic style of ornamentation is what I bring with me, from my tradition and embodied knowledge, into the work.

Within the framework of a contemporary violin piece such as *Speculative Polskas*, this is a way of incorporating a tradition through the practice that I embody. The tradition of the Swedish folk music finds a route into the classical music, just as musical genres always are influenced by each other by the practicing musicians with roots in several idioms. The influence of traditional music on classical music is noticeable throughout history in works by composers such as von Bingen, Grieg, Chopin, and Bartók, but also in more recent compositions by Karin Renqvist and Øyvind Torvund and not least Liza Lim herself. Influences flow in the other direction as well: from classical music to the traditional music. The fact that the identity of the polska has entered a contemporary classical work raises the question of, when returning to playing the traditional polska, how is my performance and body-mindset affected by my engagement with *Speculative Polskas*? The piece offers a space for exploring skills of extended ornamentation as well as providing a close interaction with Liza's

compositional work. Embodied knowledge is accumulated through the experiences we make throughout our lives; it is not a static set of abilities. Rather, it keeps developing. As I return to the traditional polska after having engaged with the more contemporary style of *Speculative Polskas*, there is a crisscross of influences. How this influence would travel in the opposite direction, from contemporary classical work back to the polska, would be an interesting route for further research.

In the first two movements of the work, aspects of the personal folk music tradition I carry are woven into the work, suggested in musical notation and situated in the context of Liza's compositional practice and a contemporary solo violin work. In this process, perceived musical key elements, such as the irregular pulse of the polska and my way of ornamenting, contribute significantly to the form of the movements. On her work with cello solo *Invisibility* (2009), written in collaboration with Australian cellist and composer Séverine Ballon, Liza writes 'I translate perceived qualities of the material into structural principles' (Lim 2013: 7). Furthermore, in the same paper describing the work on Lim's *Axis Mundi* (2013), Liza describes this process in the framework of her solo bassoon piece written in collaboration with Alban Wesley:

I go below the surface of the material and, rather than my acting upon it to create the music, it becomes the tool of perception itself; I align myself to the 'behaviours' and close-grained qualities of the material in a creative partnership. (Lim 2013: 7)

Through the act of following perceived qualities from my embodied knowledge and tradition, Liza gives her view on my 'physical and emotional relationship to [my] violin as a container of stories and memories' (Lim 2021-22). This act of going below the surface of the tradition and weaving with it stretches far into detail. However, as I have argued, not all aspects of style and tradition are, or can be, translated in the score. As I engage with the notation of *Speculative Polskas*, the creative knowing that my body holds from accumulated experiences of engaging with folk music, is also active. The pulse of the work as well as the ornamentation is affected by the embodied knowledge of my artistic palette. Those skills connect the notated score and the tradition on an embodied level. It is what breathes life into the framework of the notation.

## Recalling Näktergal

*Recollection: The chamber music hall of the Philharmonie is almost silent. I have reached the end of the work, and my hands and arms are trembling from the exhaustion of embodied materials set in motion and rubbed against each other. In the middle of the fingerboard, my two hands have ended up in a tiny but intense shivering motion. In this trembling knot I have landed at, I experience how a polyphony of times exists; I am connected both to the past and the present. Through the tradition, I sense how generations of fiddlers before me have participated in my performance tonight. Here on stage, my mind has wandered between the sense of connection to the past, imagination of future sounds, and the enjoyment of the present moment. I have brought*



Now, I will turn to the third movement of *Speculative Polskas*. If the first two movements capture my specific tradition through notation and use my embodied knowing to breathe life into it, the third movement explores a somewhat different approach.

We have seen how my whole body is engaged in the pulse of the polska through a body-mindset where cyclical movements engage feet, legs, arms, and breathing. Furthermore, we have understood how my arms and hands hold a rich repertoire of ornaments that I embellish the melody with. Those include the ornaments of the left hand – trills and mordents. Additionally, the right hand also performs ornaments, through the use of resonance strings. Furthermore, the specific stress of the first and third beats typical of the polska are largely conducted by the right arm. Through my repeated engagement with *Speculative Polskas*, the step–lift action of the right hand that was introduced by Liza and used in the first movement becomes more and more habitual. Over time, this new technique becomes an automatised skill, situated in my embodied knowledge.

**Figure 6:** Handwritten score of the third movement of *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)*, showing a combination of musical notation and written instructions. Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2952267#tool-2952548> to see the score.

The third movement opens with a notated slow motif on the two upper strings of the violin over two bars. This is Liza's *recall* of the opening bars of a specific polska after fiddler Näktergal, the first polska Liza heard me play. Since then, Liza told me, she has intentionally refrained from listening to it again, hence the act of recalling it. After this short motif, a more sketch-like notation suggests some pitches, as a vague remembrance of the polska melody. This passage reads: 'Recall of "Näktergal Polska" gradually increasingly encrusted with trills; timbre more and more worn down – either washed out (pale) or distorted (dirty)' (Lim 2021-22). At this moment, the musical notation as applied in the first two movements is left behind. From now on, the previous idea of notating the tradition into a set musical framework with a high degree of detail is replaced by focus on the embodied knowing that resides in my body, with a more unpredictable-sounding outcome.

In the rest of the movement, the fourth to ninth bars, the musical staff notation is replaced by boxes with verbal instructions. They read:

4: 'ghost version' of 1 fragment of bar 3 played with half-pressed notes and harmonics.

5: repeat 'ghost version' in left hand. Right hand (bow) plays 'dance steps' (see chops and lifts in part I).

6: develop/vary left hand. Right hand bow becomes less coordinated with left hand – add slippages (lateral sweeps) also slipping/falling onto other strings as if pushed/



possessed by another hand.

7: alternate trills of Näktergal with ghost tune, increasingly solidifying into 3/4 polska rhythm. Right hand bow however continues as a separate activity with steps/slippages gradually becoming a lateral 'trilling' motion along the strings.

8: left hand trills with fingers gliding up and down strings. Right hand – lateral bow movements are wide/sweeping, becoming narrower.

9: both left- and right-hand movements become faster and closer in position until both fingers and bow are trembling next to each other. (Lim 2021–22)

What is happening in this movement? What kind of musical material do those instructions evoke?

This movement *deconstructs* my embodied knowledge in order to create new kinds of sonic materials. The different materials that have been introduced and elaborated on in the first two movements are now being confronted with one another in new ways. Central to the movement is the action of *decoupling* right arm/hand movements. Liza's instructions describe how the left and right hands should become less coordinated with one another, busy with their respective separate activities.

The compositional technique of decoupling is frequently used in contemporary music in the output of composers such as Klaus K. Hübler and Brian Ferneyhough. Performance elements are being treated separately, decoupled, and then combined in new ways (Orning 2019). In 'The Polyphonic Performer' Tanja Orning describes how composer Klaus K. Hübler, in the solo cello work *Opus breve* (1987), 'explicitly explores the continuous tension between what is written in the score (the composer's intentions) and the performers' capabilities and intentions' (Orning 2019: 20). Orning further describes how Hübler is 'stretching the performer's reading skills, instrumental capacities, and imagination to the utmost limit' (Orning 2019: 20).

How is the decoupling of my embodied knowledge carried out in *Speculative Polskas*? In the opening, after introducing the reminiscence of the Näktergal tune and its ornaments, the material is first played in a 'ghost version' in the left hand. It is suggested that this be done by changing the timbre of the notes. Light pressure in the left generates a washed-out quality and occasional harmonics. The left hand's embodied ornaments of the *Näktergal Polska* in its abstracted ghost version unfolds *at the same time* as my bow arm gradually introduces both the 'steps' from the first movement and sweeping motions along the strings – a stylistic reminiscence of the second movement. This decoupling of the activities of the two body parts then continues in an increasingly separated and wild manner, where, by the sixth to the seventh bars, the two hands are completely occupied with their respective separate activities of trills and mordents – steps, slippages, and slipping.

As described through my idea of the body-mindset, playing the traditional polska is, for me, a full-body experience, a holistically coordinated dance-like movement that decorates the melody with ornaments of the left and right hands. In contemporary music, I had encountered the idea of separating performance parameters in order to let new sonic materials emerge. But the idea of decoupling the bodily actions of the polska never occurred to me. In an early workshop with Liza in Berlin, I remember thinking – *is it at all possible?*

Embodied knowledge, like the ability to ride a bike, frees space in our mind so that we do not have to consciously think of all the different actions our body needs to take in order to move the bike forward. Instead, we can pay attention to a car passing by or to the flowers in the verge. In the third movement of *Speculative Polskas*, the same principle applies. As I direct my attention to my left hand and how it is playing the pale ghost trills of the *Näktergal Polska*, in that particular moment, I cannot at the same time direct my full attention to the step and swipe motion that the bow executes. Moving through the instructions that Liza provides directs my attention to certain playing techniques closely related to performing a polska. My attention wanders between those instructions. As my focus is directed toward the right hand, the left hand draws on embodied patterns of trills that keep unfolding on a pre-reflective level. As my attention wanders back to the left hand to vary and develop the ornaments, my right hand keeps exploring ornaments that are engraved in the body both through my engagement with the folk music tradition and through the repeated practicing of the work's two first movements. My mind is in a constant wander between materials, and my body makes the effort to continue developing embodied materials while not being supervised in the moment of my attention. Hence, new combinations of performance techniques are emerging. In the instructions, Liza suggests that my right hand is being 'pushed' or 'possessed by another hand' (third movement, bar six). I do not regard this as the workings of a composer 'possessing' my body to perform their work through the score. I see it as an exploration of a liminal space between control and the loss of it.

The third movement is a space with indeterminate-sounding outcome, with guided instructions by Liza. Drawing on improvisatory skills, my performance of it never is the same. I never construct a detailed picture in my mind of how it sounds. Rather, my focus is on the bodily actions of performing it, of the decoupling of the left and right hands that are becoming increasingly uncoordinated. The indeterminate aspect of it makes combinations of materials and structures unpredictable and never repeated in an exact way. Furthermore, the unconscious quality of embodied knowledge contributes to the unpredictable outcome of the movement each time I play it. As my focus shifts between materials, what underlying materials my other hand creates is difficult to control. As I reach the end of the movement, I am at times also not really sure what it has sounded like. As I play, I am not occupied with the evaluative processes that often occur with notated music. The idea of aligning actions in order to create a beautiful violin sound, that much of my music-making contains aspects of, is in this context twisted. The structure of the movement suggests a different control of my actions, a rather opposite one. I embrace the loss of control of the sounding outcome when instead controlling how my arms move. In the third movement, through the focus on the act of decoupling performative elements, my embodied knowledge becomes a part of the instrumental technique of the composition and my instrumental practice is weaved into the work.

## **Notation and the voice of the performer**

*Speculative Polskas* employs two different kinds of notation. The first two movements are generally descriptive in their notational language (Kanno 2007: 232). Descriptive notation is conventional notation and describes the resulting sounds that I as a performer should create. In some parts, prescriptive notation is also used in the first two movements. Prescriptive notation describes the action taken to produce a sound, rather than the sound itself. A

primarily descriptive notational structure can include elements of prescriptive notation, for example the use of mutes or pedals. An example of prescriptive notation is the action of drawing the dance floor of the polska over the fingerboard. Liza describes how the bow chops into the string, is lifted, and at the same time moves along the string.

The third movement of *Speculative Polskas* moves further into the territory of prescriptive notation. Owing to the speculative nature of the material, suggestions of what bodily actions to take are described, while the resultant sounds they produce are left unspecified. Instructions are further poetic and thought-evoking, as the instruction to play a 'ghost version' or to 'add slippages' (Lim 2021–22). Those instructions leave space for the performer's imagination and personal way of shaping the material.

The notation of the third movement suggests a method of exploring embodied patterns of ornamentation. My embodied knowledge is in a state of constant development as my body registers information with the experiences I make in my life. Liza cannot know how this tacit knowledge may act in a given situation. She can speculate on it and she can suggest a method to explore it. But her purpose with the third movement is not to control the sounding outcome. By suggesting decoupling of the left and right hands, she offers me an indeterminate space with unknown sounding outcome where I decouple embodied performance patterns.

In his book *Listening to the Other*, guitarist and researcher Stefan Östersjö describes a collaborative process with composer Richard Karpen and how the materials the work *Strandlines* (2006–07) is built on are 'drawn from the embodied relation between performer and instrument in ways that differ substantially from a composition generated through musical notation' (Östersjö 2020: 69). He notices how materials selected for the composition that are already embodied by the performer can generate qualities in the performance that can be resembled with the fluency a performer may achieve after substantial amount of practice, leading to embodiment of the materials.

Certainly, there are countless examples of how a composer may compose a score very specifically with a particular performer's voice in mind. But, the more explicit blending of voices, which is the result of artistic collaboration in the compositional process—discussed previously by Gorton and Östersjö (2016, 2019) as a discursive voice—can in their strongest representations [...] be seen as compositions created with and not merely for a performer's voice. (Östersjö 2020: 69)

In *Speculative Polskas*, the embodied skills and abilities of my artistic palette can be seen as an equivalent to the performer's voice that Östersjö describes. The work uses my voice as a performer in the compositional process. Liza weaves in elements of my tradition of Swedish folk music and artistic palette into the score. When composing, she has my voice in mind, but I also bring my voice into the work as embodied knowledge.

## **The octave string**

As outlined in the context section, the shared work on *Speculative Polskas* builds further on the recent research field exploring composer–performer collaborations. It is beyond the scope of this exposition to unfold the co-creative process of our work in great detail. However, I will include a few features of the process that are important for the understanding of *Speculative*

*Polskas*, as well as for the discussion around ownership and temporal ecology.

**Figure 7:** Detail of the preface of *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)* displaying the specific tuning for the piece and the use of an octave string on the violin's lowest string. Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2952267#tool-2952557> to see the figure.

During 2021, before the work on *Speculative Polskas* starts, I explore octave strings on my violin. An octave string allows the instrument to sound an octave (or more) below its standard tuning. During one of our early Zoom meetings in September 2021, I mention the possibility of including this tuning to Liza, and she is interested to hear what the octave-stringed violin sounds like. I suggest using the fourth string with an octave string while the upper three are stringed in the conventional way. Liza asks me to try and record two different tunings of the low string. Combined with the regular D-A-E-tuned strings, we both find the octave scordatura of an F in the first octave to have a very unique voice (Figure 7). This expands the pitch range of the violin with more than an octave from its standard tuning. The octave string, being considerably thicker and less tense than the standard G-string of the violin, also carries different sonic characteristics. Its sound is less brilliant, yet well suited for the lateral bow strokes, which the second movement in particular will come to explore, where the bow moves along the string between bridge and fingerboard. Thus, before our first meeting in October 2021, we have already found one of the main characteristics of the piece. The octave string turns out to be so influential on our work that Liza later decides to use it in the string quartet she is composing right after, *String Creatures* (2022).

## Pockets and nested repeats

**Video 4:** Excerpt from a dialogue between Lim and Hellqvist on the musical material of the 'pocket' of the first movement of *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)*, and how the idea of inserting the pocket twice was spontaneously sparked. Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2952267#tool-2952630> to see the video.

In October 2021, I travel to Berlin to stay with Liza in the house she occupies at the Wissenschaftskolleg. The conversation that has already started to unfold online continues during three days of workshop. A first sketch exists that Liza has drawn out of the materials we have shared up to this point. This sketch is talked and played through and discussed from different angles. We listen to the sounds, techniques, and gestures together. We speak about my folk music heritage, Liza picks up threads, and ask questions. From my perspective, also eating together, talking walks, seeing concerts, and working silently on different tasks – thinking and doing things together – lends our work an additional quality of tuned-in understanding. During the days in Berlin, I am taking part in the compositional process verbally but also through suggesting-by-doing. With my violin in hand, I make imaginative and

evaluative contributions and suggestions through performing.

**Figure 8:** Handwritten musical notation of the ‘pocket’ of the first movement. Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2952267#tool-2952559> to see the figure.

In the material of the first sketch, there is a certain glissando figure, which I express that I like a lot. Liza then sits down at her desk to expand the material of the figure further and compose a section based entirely on it. She suggests that I can insert this material at will, when I find it suitable, possibly in different moments from time to time when I play the piece. She calls it a pocket (Figure 8). Notation-wise, it is left open as a separate ‘bubble’ in the score on the new page on which it was written. Thereby, it is breaking the linearity of the score and leaving the decision open to me where to place it. As I play the piece, searching for where to insert the pocket, I spontaneously decide to insert the pocket twice during the first movement. Liza is excited about this idea, and it becomes an important form element that we decide to keep. The pocket carries enough recognisability to observe its coming back, and we experience how the movement is enriched by the idea of hearing the material again. Form has emerged from my spontaneous way of reacting to the material, of suggesting-by-doing. Developed over the compositional span of the work is a refined system of short pockets. The second movement comprises two pockets that are inserted a total of seven times (Figures 9–10). When I play the second movement, I insert the pockets where I find it fitting, before navigating back to the initial path of the score.

**Figures 9-10:** Handwritten musical notation. Details from the first and second movements of *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)* displaying pocket 2 and 3 and the instruction to insert pocket 2 twice, and pocket 3 three times during the second movement. Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2952267#tool-2952567> to see the figure.

Another method of breaking with the linearity of the score is the inclusion of the nested repeats Liza introduces. In *Speculative Polskas*, repeats are unconventionally overlapping and occurring within each other. In the second half of the first movement, four different repeats as well as a pocket are inserted over the course of seven bars (Figure 11). This way of repeating creates recognisability of separate elements but not always the order in which they occur. This complex system of nested repeats and pockets becomes somewhat like a labyrinth for me to navigate. On a conceptual level, it mirrors the cyclical and messy use of materials in the folk music tradition where materials are freely used, borrowed, elaborated on, and personalised. Of course, those repeats could instead have been written out by Liza in one long narrative. It would save some confusion in the moment of performance on where to navigate in the labyrinth of repeats. However, for me, it emphasises the cyclicity of the traditional music. Elements keep coming back in the form of pockets and repeats, just as tunes, modules, and ornaments in the folk music tradition keep circulating and evolving through repetition. To me, it also reduces the rigidity of a written-out form as the one narrative of the music. By leaving

decisions on where to insert pockets to the performer and by messing up the linearity of the score through the nested repeats, my reading of Liza is how she encourages several possible outcomes of the music. The spontaneous character of the traditional music is captured in the composition. Her notation inscribes variation, uniqueness, and indeterminacy into the score.

**Figure 11:** Handwritten musical notation. Detail from the first movement of *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)*, displaying the nested repeat system during the bars 23-30. Four different repeats are nested within each other to create a complex form for repetition. Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2952267#tool-2952570> to see the figure.

[previous](#)

[next](#)

## Discussion - shared work, ownership, temporal ecology, and the *artistic palette*

In this exposition, I have outlined the background and context of the work on *Speculative Polskas* and shown what function my embodied knowledge plays in the shared work with Liza. In the following discussion, the role that embodied knowledge has had in the ontology of the musical process and work will be discussed; I will elaborate on how *Speculative Polskas* can be seen as an example of *mycelial creativity* and one of *instrument-building*. I will discuss aspects of ownership surrounding *Speculative Polskas* and I will outline how a *temporal ecological perspective* emerges from our work. Lastly, I will elaborate on the role of the artistic palette during the work on *Speculative Polskas*.

### Shared work as *mycelia*, consultative working, or as distributed creativity

The shared process of creating *Speculative Polskas* starts unfolding in 2020, in the midst of the pandemic. Liza, who is in Australia at the time, and I who live in Stockholm, start exchanging ideas over email and in Zoom calls. The online exchange before September 2021 is based on creating a mutual understanding about the framework of the Swedish folk music tradition. I tell Liza about the characteristics of the polska, how I have engaged with traditional music, as well as about significant fiddlers from the region. The specific village I grew up in, Stjärnsund, with its rich history is also touched upon.

As Liza starts her fellowship at the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin, we have three physical meetings in Berlin: in October 2021; December 2021; and June 2022. During the first of those meetings, we work closely during three days on the material of what will become *Speculative Polskas*. We explore the dance steps of the violin's fingerboard, the pulse of the polska, and start experimenting with decoupling of the left and right hands.

During this first workshop, our work has an *imaginative* character. The aim is to generate ideas and materials, and to develop those further together. This work is done with my violin and Liza's pen and paper at hand. I experience my role as one of pouring my knowledge and imagination into the work, both through trying out materials with my violin and through verbal dialogue. I try out materials on the spot and improvise with the materials we have created. I am active in non-verbal *suggesting-by-doing* or *imagining-by-doing*. Through those actions, I am actively participating in the compositional process. My imagine-by-doing generates materials

and form templates. As an example (Video 2), my performed suggestion to insert a specific pocket twice sparks the idea of a web of pockets breaking the linearity of the first and second movements.

As outlined in the introduction, the recent development of research in performance practice has generated a wealth of models and ways of describing shared work between composer and performer. One way to analyse different kinds of shared work that I have referred to in my research is musicologist and composer Alan Taylor's model to analyse types of shared imaginative working. By asking two questions – *is the imagination of ideas shared? Is the evaluation of ideas shared?* – Taylor categorises shared work into four groups: hierarchical working, cooperative working, consultative working, and collaborative working. Taylor writes how this model 'can help in the better understanding of the relationships which composers establish and can act as a stimulus to the review and further development of compositional practice' (Taylor 2016: 562).

The shared work that Liza and I engage in during our workshop is focused on the imagination of ideas. We are both active in this process. The materials of my suggesting-by-doing, our discussions and Liza's sketches of notation intertwine and develop between us. During this workshop, evaluation of those materials is not the main focus. However, I argue that the process of evaluation also is embedded in the workshop activities we are engaged in. The shared process of imagination is a pre-decisional process affecting how decisions are later made by Liza in the final score. Through our discussions, an evaluative form for decision-making happens; through my responses and suggestions I become a filter to what I consider works and not. This filter affects what materials are to be included in the score and in what way. Those decisions in turn can be seen as mainly taken by Liza between our meetings. The generated materials we find interesting are then being structured by Liza after the workshop, in what will become the first draft of the score. This means that the process of *evaluation* of materials and compositional *decision-making* happens both as embedded in the workshops and between our workshops in Liza's work.

To make a generalised analysis of our work with Taylor's model, the answer to the first question would clearly be yes – the *imagination* of ideas is shared. The second question – 'is the *evaluation* of ideas shared?' – is more difficult to answer with a yes or no. In the specific context of *Speculative Polskas*, I find that Taylor's model falls short in describing the complex creative process behind the work. As Taylor points out, there are surely intermediate states between the types of working. 'There will certainly be cases where the participants move between the different types of working relationship as they carry out different phases of the project on which they are working' (2016: 569). Through Taylor's model, questions of how decision-making in *Speculative Polskas* is undertaken are raised, but it provides limited nuance.

Another concept to describe the nature of our work is the non-individualistic concept of *distributed creativity*. According to researchers Keith Sawyer and Stacy DeZutter, distributed creativity 'occurs in situations where collaborating groups of individuals collectively generate a shared creative product' (Sawyer and DeZutter 2009: 82). The concept of distributed creativity challenges the idea that creativity is a 'mental process that occurs in one person's head' (Sawyer and DeZutter 2009: 82). In *Distributed Creativity* (2017), Clarke and Doffman describe the cultural and intellectual shifts in the discourse on classical music and the relationship



between composition, improvisation, and performance. 'Framed by conceptual developments in musicology, psychology, anthropology, sociology, computing, and neuroscience, there is increased recognition (long overdue, one might think) of the extended and distributed character of music's creative processes' (Clarke and Doffman 2017: 2). The collaborative nature of distributed creativity is further connected to Christopher Small's concept of 'musicking': the verb of *to music*. In Small's view, to music is to 'take part, in any capacity in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing' (Small 1998: 9). All agents involved in facilitating a musical performance are taking part in the act of 'musicking'.

In the case of *Speculative Polskas*, the concept of distributed creativity captures the creative acts of musicking that Liza and I are engaged in during the compositional process. The sharing of background materials and my suggesting-by-doing in our workshops are examples of how creativity is distributed between us as participants. Through the musicking process, we generate a creative product created with our respective artistic palettes.

The third way of viewing shared work that I will discuss is outlined by Liza herself in her writing on *Axis Mundi* (2013). Her article is a comment on a certain aspect of the article by Clarke, Doffman, and Lim (2013), outlining what Liza describes as a 'rather recent shift in how I view collaboration and creative exchange with performers and how this is impacting my own practice as a composer' (Lim 2013: 1). In the research, Clarke, Doffman, and Lim have interviewed the participating musicians from Musikfabrik on how they view their roles and contribution to the work *Tongue of the Invisible* (Lim 2013). In an interview about creative ownership, trumpet player Marco Blaauw compares his role as a performer to that of the deliverer of bricks to the construction of a house, where the composer is the architect. He does not claim any ownership toward the created work, saying that: 'It is really the composer's process... it is really the composer's piece...' (Lim 2013: 2). Liza describes this comment as 'particularly provocative' (Lim 2013: 1). She writes:

Marco is expressing the status quo in terms of how composer-performer collaborations are often carried out in contemporary music practice. That is, the performer-collaborator is cast as an artisan, a craftsperson providing building blocks for the architectural vision of the composer. Creative ownership is demarcated very clearly where a performer's creative contribution lies in making 'good', that is, reliable even if unusual, technical innovations that can be usefully employed in a general sense by composers. (Lim 2013: 2)

Drawing on the ideas of anthropologist Tim Ingold, Liza instead suggests the analogy of fungal *mycelia* to describe her view of the collaborative process between performer and composer in her work:

A consideration of the structure of fungal mycelia systems with their complex meshwork of catalytic transformation and an active distribution of nutrients, leads to potentially new ways of thinking about distributed creativity beyond a more mechanistic modelling of creativity as a hierarchy of levels and cogs, or even as the distributed model of a rhizomatic morphology of branching connections and nodes. (Lim 2013:1)

Thinking about creative connections, 'mycelia' is further connected to the term 'rhizome' as used by French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Through the term rhizome, ontological processes are understood as dynamic and mutating. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a *rhizome* is 'a stem of some plants that grows horizontally along or under the ground and produces roots and leaves' ("Rhizome," def. 1). Opposed to a tree root, the rhizome spread its threads in all directions and stays alive even if the plant is removed. Liza writes:

I find this [mycelial] systems model of catalytic enzymes, of bio-transformation, and the transport and distribution of nutrients rather potent as a metaphor for a way of thinking about the complexity of creative processes. It offers a useful set of conceptual relationships with which one can investigate a structure of thinking for creative collaboration that moves beyond perhaps a more mechanistic modelling of creativity as a hierarchy of levels and cogs (bricks becoming houses) or even as the distributed model of a rhizomatic morphology of branching connections and nodes (though similar to the latter especially in Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of a molecular understanding of the rhizome's decentred multiplicity). (Lim 2013: 3)

The shared work between Liza and the performers she works with is crucial in order to develop the material of the works. She writes:

Because of the non-standardised nature of the sounds I use (often focused on fluctuating, morphing qualities) and the unusual techniques required to produce them, my work does often necessitate close collaboration with performers. (Lim 2013: 6)

In *Speculative Polskas*, as the tradition of Swedish folk music is new to Liza, my knowledge is necessitated to develop the framework and sound-world of the piece. I find the analogy of mycelia fitting as a poetic description of how creativity is distributed in our process. Our creative work is a meshwork of intertwined threads and contributions reaching out in different directions. The process is not linear and possible to trace by following one thread. Rather, it is messy and made up of multiple simultaneously ongoing explorations. By working together in the same room, ideas and concrete try-outs spark routes for investigation. Liza writes:

Mycelia are the underground, vegetative part of fungi made up of networks of very fine threads forming a sort of colony that comes into an ecological relationship with everything around – trees and other plants, decomposing matter, the soil etc. (Lim 2013: 3)

The overground fungi itself could be regarded as the composition *Speculative Polskas*, but the underground mycelia are the rich web of connections between Liza and myself, interwoven with agents as the tradition, the violin with the octave string, the notation, recordings, the ghosts of the Stjärnsund mansion, the embodied knowledge and our artistic palettes. This intertwining of our respective artistic palettes is what creates the mycelial structure that the work *Speculative Polskas* is created through. The work receives its 'nutrients' from the threads of the mycelial network of the artistic palettes.

### **Creating an instrument including embodied knowledge**

Composer Helmut Lachenmann has described his compositional practice of *musique concrete*

*instrumentale* as 'Komponieren heißt: ein Instrument bauen' (Lachenmann 1996: 77), meaning to compose is to build an instrument. Lachenmann invents new extended performance techniques and through this act he constructs a new instrument for each composition. Fitch and Heyde explore Lachenmann's idea further in their joint work on the solo cello work *Per Serafino Calbarsi II: Le Songe de Panurge* (2002–03). They argue that through their joint work on building their instrument with a specific scordatura of the cello as well as through the use of extended techniques, Fitch as the composer, becomes an instrumentalist on their new instrument (2007: 16). They continue: 'The converse is also true: in the process of reshaping the instrument, the performer takes on some of the attributes of the composer in Lachenmann's model' (16).

During the work on *Speculative Polskas*, a new instrument can be said to be built with the violin stringed with the low octave string tuned to a F in the first octave. The octave string is something I bring into the work on *Speculative Polskas* and therefore is an example of how I as a performer, in Fitch and Heyde's idea, also have taken on some of the attributes of the composer. *Speculative Polskas* also explores specific playing techniques that are not altogether new to the field of contemporary music but nevertheless expanded in the sense that they challenge the conventional way of playing the violin. Examples of those techniques are the use of multiphonics on the violin (an extended technique that produces several notes on one string simultaneously, here created by playing a harmonic between harmonic nodes on the string), circular and lateral bow strokes, and bowing techniques resulting in the distortion of the sound. The characteristics of those techniques, especially as assigned to the low octave string, are explored by Liza and me. We both suggest paths of exploration, through verbal language and through my suggesting-by-doing. By exploring the scordatura of the low octave string as well as those performance techniques, a 'new instrument' is created in the compositional process. In this process, we can see it as Liza takes on attributes of a performer of the new instrument while I enter the territory of composition.

In the specific process of 'instrument-building' in *Speculative Polskas*, another main agent enters. The instrument that *Speculative Polskas* is composed for, explicitly includes the embodied knowledge of my artistic palette. As we have seen, this knowledge is the conceptual starting point of the piece as well as a part of my motivation behind it. Through my performance, the artistic palette is further used to connect the tradition and the score. In the third movement, the embodied knowledge of my artistic palette is the main object of investigation. As an influential agent, through the act of composition as well as in the score and performance of the piece, the embodied knowledge I carry from engagement with the folk music tradition is present. This means that my artistic palette is built into the new instrument Liza and I create for *Speculative Polskas*. It constitutes an important part of both the concrete and imaginary instrument and thus a part of the identity of the work.

## **Toward new ownership models**

In this exposition, I have argued that the compositional process of *Speculative Polskas* is one of distributed creativity (Sawyer and DeZutter 2009) and can be viewed as a mycelial network of filaments (Lim 2013). Furthermore, I have outlined how the work takes the traditional Swedish folk music tradition I carry as its starting point. In the compositional process, my

personal tradition is woven into the work. What happens to the ownership of the work in such a process? How is the *artistic* and *legal ownership* seen in the case of *Speculative Polskas*? What happens to the *ownership of the performance* of the work? In the case of *Speculative Polskas*, ownership is complex to discuss, as the work and process has such an explicit focus on personal embodied knowledge and where this personal knowledge of the performer is woven into a work by a composer.

I will elaborate on my perceived artistic ownership toward *Speculative Polskas*. I will also discuss how ownership is communicated through the score (representing its legal ownership) and suggest some alternative ways that can spark further discussion on how to communicate ownership as connected to a distributed creative process. I will also discuss how I perceive ownership toward the score and the performance of the work as different.

### **Perceived artistic ownership**

What artistic ownership do I experience toward *Speculative Polskas*? Liza's programme note expresses how the piece is composed 'following the idiomatic grain of player-instrument arising from my observations of Karin's physical and emotional relationship to her violin as a container of stories and memories' (Lim 2021–22). The work is explicitly based on explorations of the embodied knowledge of my artistic palette and the tradition I carry. At the same time, my artistic palette is paired with the artistic palette of Liza. Liza has a background as a string player and a longstanding compositional practice of engaging with concrete, imaginary, and constructed instruments, to follow the thinking of Helmut Lachenmann (1996). Following the reasoning of Fitch and Heyde (2007), one could also claim that in the same way as Liza engages in performance of the instrument created for the work, through the compositional process of building the instrument of *Speculative Polskas*, I am also taking on compositional tasks during the process. Through our workshops, I am active through my engagement with my instrument and embodied knowledge. By suggesting-by-doing, in the mycelial creativity that we are involved in, to use the words of Liza, my active participation in the explorations during the compositional process generates materials and suggestions for form. The indeterminate nature of the third movement is a further example of distributed creativity in which I, by using improvisatory skills, take decisions and create materials and form. All those activities surrounding the work suggest the skills and abilities of my artistic palette is woven into the identity of the work through the mycelial texture of collaboration.

Clarke, Doffman, and Lim write:

Ownership encompasses the economic power that may derive from artistic production, but perhaps more significantly it expresses affective and subjective engagements—the ways in which a musician might sense that this process or that product is 'a part of me'. (2013: 660)

To use the words of Clarke, Doffman, and Liza herself, I do experience affective and subjective engagements toward *Speculative Polskas*. To me, the piece has an emotional dimension of using *myself* – my history, embodied knowledge, and artistic palette – in the imagination of the piece and in the compositional process. I do feel that the work is a 'part of me' as Clarke, Doffman, and Lim phrase it. Rather than performing a work that is *dedicated to*

me, as the title including ‘for Karin’ suggests, I feel as if I am a part of it as I play it. Or, that the work is a part of me that I bring out in performance – I am not sure what is most true. I do not feel that I *represent* the work in my performance. My experience is that I make our collective explorations come out through my performance. Liza has woven my idiomatic instrumental practice into the work and thus, I am a part of it. The work uses my idiosyncratic practice, my artistic palette. My perceived artistic ownership is consequently immanent to the work.

### Ownership as communicated through the score

When it comes to how the score communicates ownership of *Speculative Polskas*, it bears the name of Liza as the author and legal owner, and as such she has dedicated the work to me with the inscription ‘dedicated to Karin Hellqvist’ (Lim 2021–22). The title of the work *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)* further reinforces the dedication. A dedication to a performer on a score can be seen as the composer’s way of showing their appreciation of the performer who has contributed to the process of creating the work or commissioned it, in the sense of arranging with the financial resources required. However, as Nicholas Donin argues in his study of composer Florence Baschet’s work with the French Danel Quartet, a dedication in a score can also highlight the boundary between the author and the dedicatee. In the case of Baschet’s work *Streicher Kreis* (2006–08), Donin writes:

They [the performers] did not express any particular reaction when the composer put, on the first page of the score, a dedication to a group consisting of the string quartet, the computer scientist, the computer music designer and the ethnographer. By reasserting in words a rather well-established boundary (the author *versus* the dedicatees) and the order of musical precedence (from doers to observers), the composer reminds us that in contemporary music distributed creativity generally does not correspond to distributed ownership. (2017: 87)

**Figure 12:** Two programme notes of *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)* by Lim and Hellqvist respectively. Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2952273#tool-2953104> to read the programme notes.

A further glance at the score of *Speculative Polskas* displays two programme notes of the work, one by Liza and one by me (Lim 2021–22; Hellqvist 2022). Writing programme notes usually is the task of the composer as the authority on the conceptual framework of the work. The presence of my programme note in the score suggests how I as a performer have had the need to describe the work, and how Liza has included it in the preface of the work. In my programme note, written initially as an essay in University of Chicago Press journal *Portable Gray* (Hellqvist 2022), the body-mindset of the polska is explored, as well as how I experience a temporal polyphony when performing the work. The two programme notes communicate two intertwined narratives of the process, included in the information that accompanies the notated musical score (Figure 12).

When it comes to the musical notation of the score, in the case of *Speculative Polskas* it is Liza who has done the compositional structuring of the materials in the work and beautifully

notated the hand-written score. This is the task of a composer in the traditional sense. Was this something we discussed, or did it just happen? During our process, my imaginative involvement was so profound that I never felt surprised by 'new' elements brought into the score. The structure I saw in the notation was aligned with our experimentation with materials. Liza's sketches all made sense to me following the explorations of embodied knowledge and tradition. I did not bring up discussion around the form or structure as I felt very safe in the way Liza weaved a structure with what we had found out together. In a traditional way, I felt that this part of the process was the task of Liza as the composer. Liza and I never discussed whether the compositional structure of the work could be done together. I am convinced that Liza would have been very open to hearing my thoughts on structural aspects of the composition. However, for me as a young collaborator, the already new aspects of such profound involvement and contribution in the imaginary stages of the work was a new world in itself. I was satisfied with my creative contributions, and I saw our work as a valuable experience for future collaborations where my role in the notational-structural aspect of composition could be more active.

### **Distributed ownership**

When breaking down the different aspects of ownership in *Speculative Polskas*, I would further like to make a distinction between my perceived *ownership of the score* and *ownership of my performance* of it. My feelings of ownership toward the notated score are not as profound as the emotions I feel toward the act of performing it. As I perform the work, I play it by heart. I have memorised and embodied the piece and do not need the visual framework of the musical notation in order to perform it. Through the body-mindset of the polska, it is an act of embodiment to perform it. However, I experience somewhat cooler feelings of ownership toward the notated score. The score is the vehicle that I use to enter the world of the piece in my performance. For me, it does not contain the whole work, but reflects one aspect of it. I do not feel as if I represent the score in my performance, because my artistic palette is inscribed in the work as a part of the music that is not possible to notate in the score.

As performers start engaging more explicitly in the compositional process, authorship and artistic and legal ownership are problematised, as for example in the work of Torrence (2018). Given the parameters of ownership that I have outlined above, when considering the ownership of *Speculative Polskas*, what do I consider the right way to view ownership, with my experience of the process and my contributions in mind? I feel ambiguous toward this question I pose to myself. In the field of classical music that our shared work unfolds within, despite the shared mycelial texture of the world of the work, Liza and I still identify as composer and performer. One way to look at this issue is to follow the reasoning of ownerships as directed differently toward score and performance, as described in Liza's discussion on *Axis Mundi* (2013):

The creative 'DNA' of the performer is an intimate part of the compositional work just as the compositional work becomes part of the life-history of the performer's technical apparatus and musical functioning. Whilst the notated score still gives a certain creative primacy to the composer, albeit with acknowledgements to the performer in the working process, the work in performance 'belongs' to the musician in a myriad

subtle and obvious ways – the music is quite strikingly made out of the ‘matter’ of the performer’s world in the wider sense. (Lim 2013: 12)

The discourse on authorship of composition versus authorship of performance that Liza touches on has been explored by, for example, violinist and musicologist Mieko Kanno (Kanno 2012), and cellist and researcher Tanja Orning (Orning 2019), as well as from a legal perspective by author and researcher Ananay Aguilar (Aguilar 2018). Nicolas Donin writes that distributed creativity generally does not correspond to distributed ownership (Donin 2017). However, in the case of *Speculative Polskas*, as I experience ownership of the performance as stronger than ownership of the score, this can perhaps be seen as a form for ‘distributed ownership’? I experience ownership differently toward the different parts of the complex (mycelial?) ecosystem of ‘compositional process–notation–performance’.

### **Alternative ways to communicate ownership**

Works created within the *Transforming with the Artistic Palette* project (2018–24) have applied different ways of sharing ownership between composers after collaborative and consultative work on new pieces. With pianist and composer Christian Wallumrød on the violin and tape work *Eiksmarka Omland* (Wallumrød and Hellqvist 2024), distributed creativity occurred but the notation was predominantly created by Christian as the composer. We decided to share ownership by seventy to thirty per cent, Wallumrød to Hellqvist. In a programme note on a concert featuring our two names as authors this reflects how work has been created through a shared process.

Given that distributed creativity is becoming increasingly common in the field of contemporary classical music and in my own practice, I call for new, creative, poetic, concrete, or speculative ways of communicating the distributed creative nature of works. With its two programme notes and preface, the full score of *Speculative Polskas* clearly indicates that the creative process behind it is beyond that of a dedication. However, few people engage with the full score unless they study the work. If they do so, they are also rather likely to know of Liza’s compositional practice. In a performance situation however, most audiences would probably think of the work as the creation of Liza dedicated to me. In this exposition, I have argued that there is more to it than what they see in the concert programme. The work is based on my history, tradition, and embodied knowledge. It is created ‘with my voice’ (Östersjö 2020) and I experience it as ‘a part of me’ (Clarke, Doffman, and Lim 2013). I therefore challenge musical scores to implement more nuance when it comes to ownership of distributed works. Using *Speculative Polskas* as an example, what could be written in the programme of a concert and on the first page of the score?

Liza Lim together with Karin Hellqvist?

Liza Lim, through a shared process with Karin Hellqvist?

Liza Lim, composition and Karin Hellqvist, idea and creative contribution?

Liza Lim, with tribute to Karin Hellqvist?

Liza Lim, devised with Karin Hellqvist?

Liza Lim, with the *artistic palette* of Karin Hellqvist?

As a performer in the classical tradition, there are expectations, identity-making,

responsibilities, and creative territories inscribed in our roles from the tradition. *Speculative Polskas* is a *commission* in the traditional sense in our field. To commission is defined as 'to formally choose someone to do a special piece of work, or to formally ask for a special piece of work from someone' (Cambridge Dictionary, "Commission," def. 1). As a performer, I have asked Liza about a solo work and provided the finances for her to work on it. This procedure set a hierarchical premise at the start of the work that is common in the field of contemporary music. As I view our collaboration in retrospect, I see that we have not touched on the question of authorship. I was too shy, afraid to challenge the creative partnership and new friendship that had established between us. Already before our work, I admired Liza greatly for her artistry. During the course of the work, I become very fond of Liza as a person too, and the work we engage in is meaningful to me artistically, personally, and for my research. However, questions about the fact that we never talked about ownership in such a complex process linger. Therefore, I write Liza to ask about how she looks at ownership in collaborations such as ours and whether she sees new models of ownership emerging in our field.

Our project was very directed from the first because you had such clear and focused research questions about making work that stems from your embodied knowledge and the lineages you both hold and are developing. I think what gives the work its particular energy is the way this has been activated as a partnership with my own embodied 'player's' knowledge as an ex-violinist, the work I've done with strings and string techniques, string figures which I've articulated using language from the environmental humanities literature. I do think the work is very much 'owned' by you in that it's about opening spaces for emergent expressions of who you are in a speculative way and the nature of the frame has come out of our conversations and 'thinking together'. It's not an 'identity piece' in any fixed way – that would not interest me so much – rather, the imaginary/fictional gaps, the not-knowing, the 'ghosts' are given space and in that way, the frame of the piece does also allow others to inhabit those spaces. This is the way I like to work with all performers if I have the chance [...].

Perhaps we didn't examine co-creative 'ownership' as a theme because we were practicing it in a very natural way? ie: it's part of what I do as a composer – bringing in, weaving with the embodied knowledge of musicians, instruments, institutions, traditions is so central to me which is why you asked me to be part of this in the first place. But then, yes, what does joint authorship mean – could it be like scientific papers where 200 people are listed including those who assist on experiments but don't write or analyse the results. And certainly in the more recent anthropological literature, those who were in the past 'native informants' are now credited as co-authors. That really could be a way to go. [...] So to go back to the question for our project, I hadn't considered having you as a legal co-author on the score yet of course, your name is in the title and your writing in the score so your authority is everywhere there! I just feel that the compositional frame is ultimately my responsibility but perhaps that is an emotional limitation on my part! I will certainly mull this over for future projects. (Lim, email to the author, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023)

As I read Liza's open-ended answer and how she refers to her possible 'emotional limitation' I



understand how the ‘affective and subjective engagements’ described by her, Clarke, and Doffman (2013) also are valid for her. The compositional work on *Speculative Polskas* is a process of constructing an artwork, with the sense of ownership that comes with it. It is a part of Liza in the same way as the performance of it is a part of me. Liza experiences ownership toward a score that she is the creator of. Ownership of the performance on the other hand, she regards more as in the domain of the performers. Receiving her response, I am satisfied with the fact that I have brought the topic up despite the vulnerability I experienced beforehand. Through the work on *Speculative Polskas*, I have framed authorship and ownership with a set of questions. In the future, those questions may catalyse new ways of communicating ownership of a product of distributed creativity.

In June 2024, as I am about to finish the last texts of my PhD project, I ask Liza whether we could consider communicating the authorship of the work as ‘Liza Lim with Karin Hellqvist’ and Liza is happy about my suggestion. From now on, we decide to use this new way of describing the work in articles as well as in concert programs.

**Pictures:** Four photos of Hellqvist onstage performing *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)* during the premiere of the work at the Rainy Days festival, Philharmonie Luxembourg, November 2022. Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2952273#tool-2953563> to see the photos.

### **Ghosts and the *knot of presence***

Beside the presence of the folk music tradition in my body, in the work *Speculative Polskas*, Liza and I further explore the presence of the past time by thinking about *ghosts*. This thread of conversation is sparked early on by the recordings I make for Liza at the Stjärnsund mansion. By many inhabitants in Stjärnsund, the mansion is regarded as being inhabited still by Lady Emerentia (1703–60). In a similar way as the generationally transferred tradition of the polska, the stories of Emerentia exemplify how the past time resonates in my present day, affecting how I perceive my surroundings. In the storytelling surrounding my homeplace, a polyphony of times exists. As Liza writes together with Joseph Browning in *Sonic Figurations for the Anthropocene: A Musical Bestiary in the Compositions of Liza Lim*, ‘ghosts are absence and invisibility. Ghosts suffuse landscapes with many kinds of time’ (Browning and Lim 2021). I tell Liza about the experience recording at the mansion. In an email in September 2021, Liza writes:

I’ve been thinking more about ghosts based on the photo you sent of the house where you recorded the examples. Here are some notes:

Ghosts – ancestral essences, resonances – human, animal, other – that hang around places and people perhaps because of a certain intensity/violence or attachment/devotion/love. Ghosts – repetition of assemblage of connection can also be thought ecologically – a famous example is the bee orchid *ophrys apifera* (see Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*) where the flower looks like the genitals of a female bee luring the mate for pollination. The bee is now extinct except in some Mediterranean regions, but the flower still retains the semblance, painting, art/

representation or memory of that creature. Ghosts make form.

I'm interested in how you carry really complex lineages of musical practice and would like to know more about your lineages and how you might observe that in your physical make-up, habits, emotional/conceptual associations etc. So, I'm interested in working with these forcefields of performance practices that belong to you and that come through your playing/thinking/decision making, intervening, interweaving, dancing in the fissures with some of these ghosts in a music of resonance, distortion or noise and breath. (Lim, email to the author, September 2021)

The past time is present in my performance through the tradition and in my history of growing up in this specific geographical place. Furthermore, in the act of performing, I also experience the sense of a future time being present. *Speculative Polskas* is an act of imagination. The use of the pockets in particular evokes the necessity to imagine the future outcome of my actions. Although the linearity of the score is challenged through the pockets and the nested repeats, as I play the piece, I keep the long narrative of the form in my mind. In order to make detours to the pockets, I have to know where to come back to the main form.

Thus, the work on *Speculative Polskas* generates an understanding of both the past and future as present in my performance. Liza and I develop the metaphorical picture of a figure-eight loop with a knot in the middle. This loop connects temporal aspects from the past, the present, and the future. The knot itself is the *present*. From this knot, I bring different layers of time together in the music (Figure 13).

In her programme note, Liza writes:

The first two parts of the work provide templates for navigating and evolving a performance practice derived from Karin's body of knowledge which we imagined as a figure-eight loop travelling between past, present, and future. In each present moment, elements of the past have the potential to slip out and speak, carried by the body momentum generated by repeated motions and recurrences in form; whilst the future is also always threaded into the work through elements of indeterminacy that require the performer's fantasy. This relation between possession by the past, and the futurity of invention is grounded in the violinist's body which is the sliding 'knot' in the infinite twist of the music. (Lim 2021–22)

**Figure 13:** Sketch by Hellqvist with notes from a workshop with Lim, including a drawing of the 'figure-8-loop' representing the layers of time present in the work. Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2952273#tool-2953133> to see the sketch.

## A temporal ecological perspective

Clarke, Doffman, and Lim (2013) apply an ecological perspective to analyse the surrounding framework of Liza's ensemble work. This ecology, they argue, comprises 'domains of material culture, psychological process, social interaction, and institutional context' (630). According to the Ecological Society of America, ecology is 'the study of the relationships between living organisms, including humans, and their physical environment; it seeks to understand the vital

connections between plants and animals and the world around them' (The Ecological Society of America 2022). An ecological view such as the one suggested by Clarke, Doffman, and Lim could be applied to the work on *Speculative Polskas* as well. Our ecology comprises the materiality of the violin and especially the instrument 'built' with the low octave string and my embodied history weaved into my artistic palette. Our psychological process has been one of shared work and distributed creativity. From the outset, Liza and I did not know each other apart from our work on Liza's ensemble music in 2014. Over the course of the work, we develop a shared process where Liza gets to know my history, tradition, and artistic palette at the same time as I get to know more about her compositional practice. Our process included social interaction both in the domain of artistic work on the piece as well as outside our bubble of work. There is also the framework of the artistic research project, with its institutional conditions; as a site for research, our process is explicitly being studied and reflected upon in order for others to learn from it.

However, apart from this suggested perspective of ecology in the process of creating *Speculative Polskas*, there is another dimension of ecology that stands out as important. As I engage with *Speculative Polskas*, I see myself as an actor within the figure-eight loop, closely connected with different temporal dimensions. I develop a *temporal ecological perspective* connected to the dimensions of time that inhabit my performance practice. In this temporal ecological framework of the piece, the tradition of the Swedish folk music comes alive through my embodied knowing. Through the act of bringing the tradition into our work, the tradition is carried into the future and developed through our shared work. Furthermore, my imagination in the act of performance, as I engage with the challenged linearity of the score, suggests a temporal messiness, where I use imaginative abilities of the outcome of my decisions along with the presence of the decoupling of my body parts. Through this perspective, I come to develop an understanding of how my artistic palette is far from an isolated thing. As my personal creative ecosystem, the artistic palette is connected to my larger surrounding culture and environment.

### ***Speculative Polskas* and the artistic palette**

I use the notion of the artistic palette to conceptualise the ever-evolving personal skills and abilities that I use in creative work. By engaging with the artistic palette, I can understand as well as develop the contributions I make as a performer in shared creative processes. During the work on *Speculative Polskas*, the artistic palette has been used in the shared work with Liza. Skills and abilities entangled between the different dimensions of my artistic palette have been engaged and developed.

The *embodied dimension* of the artistic palette has been our main focus during the compositional process and embodied skills connected to my heritage of the traditional music have been woven into the work. The ability to enter the body-mindset of the polska and my skills of ornamentation are examples of elements that come to constitute an important part of the work's identity. In the compositional process, I take part through suggesting-by-doing by bringing my aesthetic ideas forward through the act of playing. Additionally, new skills have been added to the embodied and contextual dimension, as my artistic palette is entangled with the artistic palette of Liza. Performance techniques of chopping, multiphonics, and decoupling

are introduced by Liza and become internalised in my body through my engagement with the piece. The repeated act of practicing *Speculative Polskas* has engaged and developed skills of the embodied dimension by physically learning how to play and memorise it.

In the work on *Speculative Polskas*, abilities in the *contextual dimension* are closely intertwined with the embodied dimension, being connected to the performance of traditional music as well as to contemporary classical music. Liza and I have brought performance skills from different contexts together in *Speculative Polskas*, resulting in a hybrid work situated somewhere between traditional and classical music. Our 'instrument-building' is a result of this weaving with the traditions. Performance techniques from different contexts co-exist and hybridise in *Speculative Polskas*.

Furthermore, the *relational dimension* of my artistic palette has developed with new collaborative skills. I have developed the ability to understand the compositional work of Liza and her motivations and interests. The temporal ecological perspective and my position at the 'knot of presence' that has developed in our work has further made me aware of my relation to generations of fiddlers before me.

Lastly, in the *intuitive dimension* of the artistic palette, abilities such as connecting to my motivation behind the work and collaboration have been active. Tuning in to my embodied knowledge is a skill situated between the embodied and intuitive dimension that has played a key role through the body-mindset of the polska. My desire to be a co-creator and sharing the compositional process with Liza has been communicated through abilities connected to the intuitive dimension. The ability of suggesting-by-doing is an intuitive as well as embodied way of communicating artistic preferences.

Through the many ways in which my artistic palette develops, the shared work with Liza has, for me, had importance beyond that of a commissioned violin piece. It has offered me new understanding of the embodied knowledge of my artistic palette. I have come to see my embodied knowledge as my unique resource, a well of materials that I can use in creative explorations. The recognition of this resource in the creative process has in turn catalysed feelings of agency and empowerment that I will bring with me in new contexts.

**Picture:** Picture of the finished score of *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)* together with Hellqvist's violin, during one of the first practice sessions on the new work. Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2952273#tool-2953140> to see the picture.

## Exploring further within external and internal geographies

*Recollection: We play the final upbow of the polska. Our bow strokes start slowly at the tip. Then, we speed up the motion and add an accent on this evening's final downbeat. In synchronised motion, we lift our bows off the*

*strings. We freeze for a fraction of a moment with our bows in the air. Our eyes meet, and we smile. We have been in this space of the polska together; walking its path of retakes, through major and minor sections, embellishing it with resonance strings, exploring shifts in intensity, losing our individual voices in intertwining ornaments, remembering other performances of it and imagining our future ones. This connection that I experience, both to my body, to the tradition, to the audience, Stjärnsund as my village and to Stina with me on stage, is a feeling I will keep searching for in my music making. It is a feeling of being immersed in the music, of complete, grounded presence and joy.*

Within the field of art, the term *site-specific* indicates that an artwork is ‘created, designed, or selected for a specific site’ (dictionary.com, “Site-specific,” def. 1). In the same way, *Speculative Polskas* is a work specifically created *with* and *for* me – it is personalised to me and is *me-specific*. It is not unusual that musical works are being composed with a specific performer’s voice in mind and notated so that others can perform it. However, in this case, as the piece is personalised through the explicit focus on my embodied knowledge, does this fact mean that other performers cannot play it? The piece is explicitly created with my artistic palette. Because of this, I believe that the piece carries challenges, but perhaps also attractions, for other performers who might want to play it. For a performer with no previous relation to the Swedish folk music tradition, this piece can serve as a way of exploring this tradition from another angle. The question of how the piece sounds in the hands of a violinist not acquainted with traditional Swedish folk music arises. When notation implicitly counts on an activation of a tradition through embodied knowledge, to what degree does the music sound different when the tradition is not yet embodied by the performer? I further wonder how a performer acquainted with the tradition through *Speculative Polskas* would engage with the polskas from my home region? I would be interested to see whether *Speculative Polskas* could serve as a framework for exploration both of the tradition of Swedish folk music and of personal embodied knowledge for others too.

The work on *Speculative Polskas* has been a process of push-and-pull with the Swedish folk music tradition, where I have not only explored my own relation to the tradition I am situated in but also perceived how our work has given something back to this tradition. Through new creative paths, we have invited the Swedish folk music tradition into our respective practices. Sharing the process with Liza has for me resulted in a unique piece of music that neither of us could have created on our own.

Thank you so much for our beautiful project – for me, this piece is a key step forward – as important to the evolution of my work as ‘Invisibility’ was for me more than 10 years ago and I’m so grateful for the collaboration we’ve had. I hope the piece has a long life and takes you to interesting places where you can play it (geographically, and also within, an internal geography). (Lim, email to the author, 2022)

**Video:** Video of *One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)*. Hellqvist performs the

three-movement work in the salon of the Stjärnsund mansion. Recorded by Oskar Kullander in March 2024. Click on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1865089/2952273#tool-2953576> to watch the video.

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[previous](#)

[next](#)

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