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Performing *Sunflower Sutra*: Merging Music and Theater in the  
Speaking-Pianist Genre

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

by

Ho Joon Kim

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Performing *Sunflower Sutra*: Merging Music and Theater in  
the Speaking-Pianist Genre

by

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Doctor of Musical Arts

University of California, Los Angeles, 2016

Professor Peter Kazaras, Co-Chair

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This paper documents a previously theatrically untrained pianist's process of preparing Jerome Kitzke's *Sunflower Sutra*, a speaking-pianist work, in the theatrical performance tradition. It explains Antonin Artaud's platform of theater and its application to *Sunflower Sutra*, and provides the author's experience researching acting and vocal techniques and their application to performance. Additionally, this document analyzes the effects of lighting design, sound design, and stage arrangements in a piano recital.

The dissertation of Ho Joon Kim is approved.

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2016

This dissertation is dedicated to my mom and dad.

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## Chapter 1: Overview

Humans experience many different sensations simultaneously. We cannot separate one sense at will and isolate another. Therefore, even when an art's medium is auditory, other senses will inevitably influence the way an audience perceives what they experience.

This multi-sensory experience is more pronounced during a performance of a speaking-pianist work than of a more traditional piano repertoire. This genre, as the name implies, requires the pianist to speak and perform at the piano simultaneously, thus requiring that the pianist determine the character of the piece's text and how to declaim it. Theatrical techniques are a requisite for a compelling performance of a speaking-pianist work.

It is no accident, then, that the speaking-pianist genre was pioneered by Anthony De Mare, a pianist who also has had theater training since childhood, and who naturally incorporated theater techniques when performing speaking-pianist works. The challenge for conventional pianists, who often lack theatrical training and technique, is to be able to perform speaking-pianist works convincingly from a theatrical standpoint.

Because theatricality is an essential element in the performance tradition of the speaking-pianist repertoire, I had to research appropriate theatrical techniques and platforms to perform Jerome Kitzke's *Sunflower Sutra*, a major work from the speaking-pianist repertoire. This quest, and its culmination in a public performance of *Sunflower Sutra*, is the subject of my dissertation.

In his manifesto *The Theater of Cruelty*<sup>1</sup>, French playwright Antonin Artaud (1896-1948) documents his vision of the ideal theater, which is to create heightened sensations for the audience. In the speaking-pianist genre, the music, extended techniques, and motion can serve as what Artaud calls “metaphysicals” and can be used to enhance the text, thus creating a sensation that amplifies the perception of the work. This unified approach, intertwining words with the “metaphysicals,” is used to create a specific *mise-en-scène* (a French term used to refer to the general look and feeling of a scene – literal translation: setting of the scene) which, according to Artaud, should serve as a point of departure for interpretation of the text. *The Theater of Cruelty* prescribes eighteen elements to create his vision of theater. These elements converge for one purpose: to deliver a powerful and intimate experience to the audience.

Since works for speaking-pianist include words that must be recited by the pianist onstage, the pianist must also deliver the words as articulately as the music. There are different levels of difficulty in the speaking-pianist repertoire. Some pieces have a handful of words to be spoken, as in George Crumb’s *Makrokosmos*; some require more training and preparation as they have long narrative texts, like Jerome Kitzke’s *Sunflower Sutra*. In any case, though, in this genre, the pianist must also function as an actor, interpreting and articulating scripted words in order to communicate effectively with the audience. As a previously theatrically untrained pianist, I have found *A Practical Handbook for the Actor* (1986) by Melissa Bruder, Lee Michael Cohn, Madeleine Olnek, Nathaniel Pollack, Robert Previtio, and Scott Zigler helpful in acquiring

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<sup>1</sup> Artaud does not use the word “cruelty” as a synonym for pain, but rather to mean immediacy to the audience. In *Theater of Cruelty*, he writes: “And the public will believe in the theater’s dreams on condition that it take them for true dreams and not for a servile copy of reality; on condition that they allow the public to liberate within itself the magical liberties of dreams which it can only recognize when they are imprinted with terror and cruelty. Hence this appeal to cruelty and terror, though on a vast scale, whose range probes our entire vitality, confronts us with all our possibilities. It is in order to attack the spectator’s sensibility on all sides that we advocate a revolving spectacle which, instead of making the stage and auditorium two closed worlds, without possible communication, spreads its visual and sonorous outbursts over the entire mass of the spectators.”

basic techniques in acting and interpreting text. This source and the application of its techniques will be discussed in detail in a later chapter.

Works for speaking-pianist require vocal training. Even though speaking is something we all do every day, speaking onstage is a very different experience than talking to a friend at a bar. During my research, I have found several studies pertaining to speaking-pianist that use Kristin Linklater's *Freeing the Natural Voice* as a major source of information. This book outlines several detailed exercises to free the voice. The book's main philosophy is that working on the exercises outlined by Ms. Linklater will assist people to have more resonant vocal production and feel more emotionally connected to their voice. Although this book gives detailed instructions about these exercises, it is advisable for those who wish to learn about this technique to work with a teacher. In my research, I have worked with Kate Wilson, a voice and speech specialist and faculty member at The Juilliard School who coaches Broadway and Hollywood performers. Because her approach is based on Linklater's work, Wilson's exercises share the same philosophy of allowing the body to work freely. This source and its use will also be outlined in detail in a later chapter.

As works for speaking-pianist are often conceived and performed by people who, based on their backgrounds, incorporate theatrical techniques for a compelling multi-sensory performance, the conventional pianist with no theater training must research these unfamiliar techniques in order to optimize the proposed performance. Even a rudimentary analysis of characters and scenes, basic vocal training, and an approach to the work informed with an Artaudian platform of theater can help a theatrically untrained pianist get closer to successfully presenting a fully immersive, multi-sensory performance of a speaking-pianist piece.

Mastering these theatrical techniques takes years to achieve, if mastery is even attainable. My attempts to learn these techniques did not make me an accomplished actor. However, these techniques exposed me to disciplines that most pianists never experience; and

working in this way has helped me refine my ideas of what an appropriate performance tradition can be for speaking-pianist works.

This paper is an account of how a pianist with no previous theatrical training prepared *Sunflower Sutra* theatrically. It is a summary of basic theater techniques and my personal application of these techniques for performing speaking-pianist works. I do not mean to suggest this is the only way of applying these techniques, but it is what I chose in order to enhance my understanding and performance of the repertoire. Many of these techniques require the performer to make personal choices that can be related to themselves. Just as in stand-alone musical performances, different people will make different choices, thus generating different performances.

*Sunflower Sutra* was written as a “coping mechanism” for the composer as his sister was in the final stages of her life.<sup>2</sup> The text is from Allen Ginsberg’s poem of the same name with some added text written by Kitzke himself. Kitzke chose this text was because it “fit perfectly my need to tell a story that affirmed my belief that there lies even at the bottom of life’s dankest [sic] and tragically sad moments, a seed of beauty, capable at any moment of bursting into a recognition of wonder.” He continues, “I recognized the power of the poem and just went with it, adding a small subtext of my own, using words and images referential to my sister.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Jerome Kitzke, *Sunflower Sutra* (New York: Peermusic, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Jerome Kitzke, *Sunflower Sutra* (New York: Peermusic, 1999).

## Chapter 2: Theatricality in Music

Jerome Kitzke's *Sunflower Sutra* (1999) for amplified pianist is one of the larger-scale works from the growing speaking-pianist genre. An auditory experience of this work is fundamentally incomplete; the work is a theatrical piece requiring text vocalizations and body movements. In *Sunflower Sutra*, Kitzke combines conventional and extended piano techniques, and vocalizations, and brings both of these elements to an equal level of importance.

Although presenting allegedly purely musical works in a theatrical manner might sound like a modern phenomenon, theatricality is not only inherent in all performances, but it also has been historically an important element in performance. One could say that all performances are theatrical, including even symphony concerts that do not have theatrical instructions. The idea of music being only auditory is a modern notion, possibly brought on by the twentieth century phenomenon of sound recording, which produced for the first time an audience experience of disembodied music. Even though purely musical works have no specific requirements for visual presentation, other sensory stimuli not only exist but are potent byproducts of physically being present at a live performance.

Despite being an inherently multi-sensory experience, musical performances are often not designed with theatricality in mind; most works for the piano neither include any stage directions, lighting designations or costuming instructions, nor do they have a history of performance practices that take theatricality into consideration. However, even those elements over which the performer has no control, such as the size of the audience, have an effect on the audience's overall experience. A performance in an intimate setting of 10 audience members in a living room is a completely different experience than listening to the same composition in the fully packed, 2,800-seat Carnegie Hall.

Audience behavior can also affect the concert experience. Consider the calm and quiet audience at a Disney Hall symphony concert as opposed to the screaming of hundreds of teenage fans at a rave concert at the LA Coliseum. (This frenzy is not a modern phenomenon; Franz Liszt created a similar atmosphere by throwing his handkerchiefs and gloves to screaming women in the audience.) Audience interaction and reception is a crucial element in performance; it is an element much discussed in theater but rarely talked about in musical performance traditions.

Though classical repertoires are often performed in traditional concert settings, in a more or less standardized manner with an expected decorum in audience behavior, today's performance landscape is starting to drift away from the traditional concert hall to alternative venues. Musicians are searching for new ways to express music by changing the context and giving the audience a new experience with music that they already know. Although venue-specific works have always existed (e.g. Wagner's *Parsifal* for Bayreuth), the phenomenon has become more common in recent decades. For example, composer Christopher Cerrone's (b. 1984) *Invisible Cities* was specifically written to be performed at the Union Station train terminal in Los Angeles, CA.

Modern composers sometimes specify theatrical settings in their compositions. For example, George Crumb includes staging directions for *Vox Balaenae* ("The Voice of the Whale") (1971) for electric flute, cello, and amplified piano. *Vox Balaenae* is not strictly a narrative work. Instead, Crumb gives the listener a vague sense of a story with distinctive movement names – and stage directions. Crumb writes: "Each of the three players should wear a black half-mask (visor-mask) throughout the performance of the work. The masks, by effacing a sense of human projection, will symbolize the powerful impersonal forces of nature (nature dehumanized). *Vox Balaenae* can be performed under a deep-blue stage lighting, if desired, in

which case the theatrical effect would be further enhanced.”<sup>4</sup> Through this theatrical presentation, title of the work, and movements named after geological eons and eras, the audience can piece together that the blue lights are meant to suggest being underwater, where the light is often blue, and to help put in context that this work is Crumb’s representation of different pre-historic periods of the world seen through the eyes of a whale living in the ocean. Even though there aren’t any elements of the music that explicitly suggest this, the work’s title, the names of each movements, and theatrically-influenced presentational instructions allows the audience to perceive the work not only as an auditory experience, but as an enhanced, multi-sensory performance.

So even though theatricality is not the most critical element in a purely musical performance, it certainly plays a large role in the concert-going experience.

Since the early 20th century, there has been a surge in the use of extended techniques in the piano repertoire. Though they were not initially conceived as a theatrical element, these unconventional techniques often are visually striking, and have the potential to potentiate a multi-sensory experience with theatrical impact.

Extended piano techniques are defined by Laurie Hudicek in her dissertation “Off Key—A Comprehensive Guide to Unconventional Piano Techniques” as “any techniques that are not played by individual fingers on a keyboard, including clusters, inside playing, prepared piano, and many other techniques”<sup>5</sup> and Reiko Ishii defines “extended techniques” in her dissertation, “The Development of Extended Piano Techniques in Twentieth-Century American Music” as “an unconventional technique of playing a musical instrument.”<sup>6</sup> Though not all works with extended

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<sup>4</sup> George Crumb, *Makrokosmos Vol. 1* (New York, NY: C. F. Peters Corp., 1974).

<sup>5</sup> Laurie Hudicek, “Off Key—A Comprehensive Guide to Unconventional Piano Techniques” (DMA diss., University of Maryland, College Park, 2002), 4.

<sup>6</sup> Reiko Ishii, “The Development of Extended Piano Techniques in Twentieth-Century American Music” (DMA diss., Florida State University, 2005), xi.



techniques are theatrical, this unusual method of performance has caused some works to become more theatrical than conventional piano works. For example, in his purely musical work *The Banshee* (1925), Henry Cowell asks the pianist to perform using the flesh of his finger and fingernails to scratch the strings of the piano directly. This technique produces a sound eerily evocative of how a wailing banshee might sound. The dynamic arm motion that this technique requires can suggest that the pianist is acting like a shaman to summon the spirit from the inside of the piano. Seeing this performance creates a wholly different experience than just listening to a recording.

The mood and feeling of a musical work can be further enhanced by manipulating lighting. Regarding *The Banshee*, for example, when the stage lights are turned off and a single light source shines on the inside of the piano, two effects are achieved. First, having a dark stage focuses the audience's visual and aural attention, which facilitates hearing the low-volume sounds created by scraping the piano strings. Second, one single light creates an unusual effect which enhances the mood of this work and helps reflect its mysterious nature.

Similar to *The Banshee*, *Accidents for electronically prepared piano ring modulator, mirrors, actions, black light, and projections* (1967) by Larry Austin (b. 1930) is a work that needs to be seen to be experienced most effectively. This work asks the pianist to use arm clusters to silently depress the keys; thus all sounds produced are "accidents." The piece should be played as fast as possible at the most hazardous pace, making accidents highly probable.<sup>7</sup> This work, described by Ishii as "concept music,"<sup>8</sup> is an extreme example of a work's being more theatrical than musical, necessitating a visual performance to fully experience it. In addition to

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<sup>7</sup> "Program Notes," Larry Austin, accessed Aug 19, 2016, [http://cemi.music.unt.edu/larry\\_austin/LAnotes.htm](http://cemi.music.unt.edu/larry_austin/LAnotes.htm).

<sup>8</sup> Reiko Ishii, "The Development of Extended Piano Techniques in Twentieth-Century American Music" (DMA diss., Florida State University, 2005), 46.

the specific black lighting required, the sheer motion required to perform this work makes this composition extremely visual and theatrical.

Considered the first work that incorporates the pianist's voice, George Crumb's *Makrokosmos Vol. I* (1972) takes the combination of visual and auditory experience to a new level by incorporating spoken words, making theatricality a requirement intrinsic to the piece. Although there are only a handful of words placed in a non-narrative way, their addition contributes greatly to the messages portrayed in each movement. The first word uttered by the pianist is "Christe!" in the middle of the fourth movement "Crucifixus [SYMBOL]." The notation is shaped like a cross, and the three harmonic notes on the first two phrases suggest to the audience the three nails in the crucifixion. The pianist's saying "Christe!" makes the audience fully aware that this work is about the crucifixion of Christ. Crumb marks "fff" over this word and instructs the pianist to "shout" it, which seems at first glance to be very specifically notated. However, the complex nature of delivering spoken words leads to any number of interpretations within the framework Crumb provides. Crumb, when asked about the effects of speech in his music, responded, "When a pianist speaks or sings, the audience is absolutely mesmerized because they don't expect it."<sup>9</sup> This statement reinforces the importance of words as an element that heavily influences the audience's perception of the work. Crumb wants to create a performance where the audience is intimately influenced on a deep level, even though they may not be able to piece together the specific linguistic vocabulary, similar to the theater Antonin Artaud advocates in *The Theatre of Cruelty*, where the *mise-en-scène* crafted through metaphysics bypasses language and affects the audience on an instinctive, rather than an cognitive level.

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<sup>9</sup> Adam Marks, "The Virtuoso Era of the Vocalizing Pianist" (DMA diss., New York University, 2012), 46.

Composer Frederic Rzewski incorporates music and text in many of his works. *Coming Together* (1971) is Rzewski's early example of weaving text with music. It is written for a large, undetermined ensemble of instruments with a narrator reciting the words from a letter by Sam Melville, an inmate from Attica State prison. Rzewski writes specific instructions as to how the words should be recited. He writes: "The speaker should try to suggest a different expressive character with each repetition of a sentence."<sup>10</sup> In a later section, Rzewski writes: "The vocalist may speak or sing the words ad lib." By asking the speaker to convey different characters and improvise, Rzewski is providing not only musical instructions but theatrical ones, too, while affording the performer some level of flexibility in expressing the texts.

A similar work by Rzewski is *Lost and Found* (1985). Though originally written for a percussionist, it can be performed by a well-trained actor who is not a musician at all. The work has no musical notation; instead, Rzewski takes words from a letter written by a Vietnam veteran Marion Lee (Sandy) Kemper of Galveston, Texas and matches them with "single actions." These "single actions" range from "slam table," "beat on breast," to "slap ass." Rzewski provides eight instructions for this work with theatrical language. He writes:

1. The performer should be naked, or nearly so.
2. You need a table large and strong enough to hold you and your weight., [sic] and a chair.
3. The throwing of the table and chair should be sudden, unexpected, violent actions.
4. The performance consists of fragments of text alternating with actions. Texts and actions should be separated by 3-5 seconds of nothing.
5. (Pause) = 6-10 seconds of nothing.
6. Texts should be delivered with no particular expression. This does not mean: without expression; but: clearly and coldly, with a suggestion of ambiguity as to the meaning and how the performer relates to them.

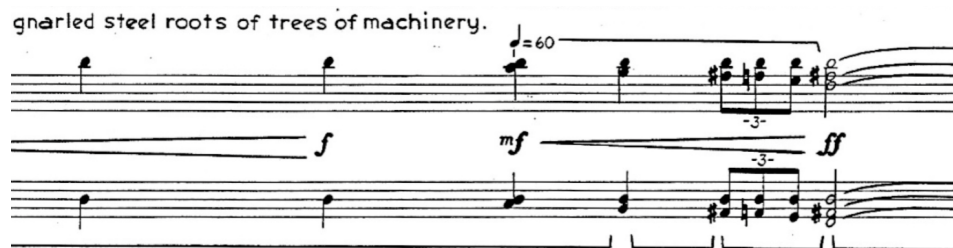
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<sup>10</sup> Frederic Rzewski, *Coming Together* (Brussels: Sound Pool Music, 1971).

7. Actions are always either: single actions (sometimes repeated) or: a sequence of events perceived as single gesture; followed by silence leading to the next fragment of text.
8. At the beginning, the performer is seated behind the table, facing the audience.

Rzewski's instructions require the performer to not only consider musicality but theatricality as well. They specify costume (or the lack thereof), stage props, the quality of actions, a specific quality of delivering text, and stage appearance.

Rzewski's groundbreaking work, *De Profundis* (1992), is the product of a collaboration between the composer and Anthony De Mare, a champion of the speaking-pianist genre who has extensive background in theater, ballet, and music. It is considered the first large work that establishes the genre of speaking-pianist by weaving a long text with music throughout the work and having one person perform music and text simultaneously. Rzewski has stated that he was inspired to choose this text after he saw Luke Theodore, a member of New York's Living Theater Company, perform a reading of Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*. In an interview with Adam Marks, De Mare confirms that his performance of Rzewski's *Lost and Found* resulted in Rzewski's writing *De Profundis* for him. *De Profundis* was conceived theatrically — it employs the pianist's breath, humming, speech, singing, grunts, and other improvised vocalizations.



In the speaking-pianist repertoire, the music often directly references the text. For example, in *Marriage* by Rzewski, the narrator asks the audience "what time is it" while playing four chords reminiscent of a longcase clock's bell ringing four, signaling the time.

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "(Sunflower Chord)". It consists of three staves. The top staff is for voice, with the instruction "FALSETTO" above it. The middle staff is for piano, with the instruction "SENZA UNA CORDE" (without a cord) and "ff" (fortissimo) dynamics. The bottom staff is for voice, with the instruction "ADD BREATHY SOUNDS AND SLIGHTLY WILD EXPRESSIONS" above it. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "ppp" (pianissimo) and "fff" (fortissimo). There are also handwritten-style annotations like "WOO" and "BVA" scattered throughout the score.

But sometimes, the music makes indirect references to the text. For instance, Kitzke’s treatment of text and music in *Sunflower Sutra* is related more to sensations rather than emotions and it’s hard to pinpoint a direct connection even when he describes what he’s referring to:

Kitzke labels a theme “Sunflower Chord,” but this musical element is only abstract and has no explicit connection to a sunflower in the way that Rzewski directly references a clock’s sound.

Although most, if not all, works for speaking-pianist incorporate music, words, and movement to create a unified *mise-en-scène* to enhance the work’s impact on the audience, Kitzke’s work differs in that his gestures and music seem to represent emotions, rather than being designed as literal representations of text. For example, when the words “gnarled steel roots of trees of machinery” are recited, the piano part descends to a minor chord on a huge crescendo, giving the audience the impression of something that is dark and ominous.

This abstract association is very close to Artaud’s vision of *The Theater of Cruelty*, which calls for a theater in which text and elements provided by the playwright are not literally represented, but the text and elements provided by the playwright also serve as a departure for

creative association, similar to the way that dreams are driven by free association and heavily influenced by sensations and emotions. *Sunflower Sutra* presents us with the music that may occasionally depict the literal meaning of the text, but also strives abstractly to convey emotions and sensations. Sometimes words are used not as recitative and Artaud's variety of choices seem to provide us fertile grounds for investigation in terms of creating a *mise-en-scène* for performance.

Declaiming a text as part of a performance presents a substantial challenge to many pianists. Pianists may be unaccustomed to presenting themselves theatrically and being responsible for delivering text convincingly. In a 2012 interview with Adam Marks, Kitzke says,

“I have had many great pianists tell me that they love the piece and would love to perform it but that they do not have the acting chops to pull it off, and so must stay away. This is one of the limiting aspects of these kinds of pieces in terms of getting more performances.”<sup>11</sup>

In this section, I discussed the often overlooked theatricality of musical performances; works that reveal their innate theatricality *through* performance, and the theatrical roots of the speaking-pianist genre. Works for speaking-pianist were conceived as theatrical compositions; performers and composers of this genre have either been trained actors or have been influenced by the theater. These works requires the pianist to speak words. Presenting them theatrically is indispensable for a successful performance. Though the score may provide guidance about the general mood of the words, a theatrically untrained performer might not have the tools to fully realize the composer's intent.

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<sup>11</sup> Adam Marks, “The Virtuositic Era of the Vocalizing Pianist” (DMA diss., New York University, 2012), 132.

## Chapter 3: Antonin Artaud — *Theater of Cruelty*

Music in the speaking-pianist genre, when seen from the theatrical platform Antonin Artaud advocates in *The Theater of Cruelty*, can be categorized as a “metaphysical.” Artaud considers everything outside of the text in theater as a “metaphysical,” designed to create a *mise-en-scène* that can affect the audience’s senses on a visceral level. These metaphysicals serve to create “The Spectacle,” a bombardment of sensory stimuli. By focusing on the “metaphysical,” works are presented in an overwhelming, multi-sensory performance, and therefore have an enhanced effect upon the audience. Because music in the speaking-pianist genre is designed to enhance the text and convey emotional content, I was interested in investigating whether works for speaking-pianist could benefit from an Artaudian presentation.

Artaud presents his own vision of the ideal theater in his manifesto: *The Theater of Cruelty*. His criticism of “Western” theater is that it is predominantly concerned with words to reveal the character’s psychology, as opposed to “Eastern” theater, in which the “metaphysicals” (gestures, words, sound, lighting, and language) play an equally important role.

Using an analogy to *Lot and his Daughters* by the Dutch painter Lucas van Leyden, Artaud explains what makes this painting appeal to the senses. He writes that the work gives the viewer a “sense something tremendous happening in the painting,” “even before you can discern what’s happening.”<sup>12</sup> The black swollen sky, Lot’s armor, the black tower, the rocks, and the road, are what Artaud calls “the metaphysical.” These metaphysical elements surrounding the main subject, Lot and his daughters, are what Artaud finds effective in conveying an emotion to the viewer. This approach of effective metaphysical is Artaud’s vision of theater. Artaud defines the metaphysical in theater as “everything that occupies the stage, everything that can

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<sup>12</sup> Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*. (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 33.

be manifested and expressed materially on a stage and that is addressed first of all to the senses instead of being addressed primarily to the mind as is the language of words.”<sup>13</sup> These metaphysicals are, listed by Artaud, “music, dance, plastic art, pantomime, mimicry, gesticulation, intonation, architecture, lighting, and scenery.”<sup>14</sup> Artaud writes: “Our theater which has never had the idea of this metaphysics of gesture nor known how to make music serve such immediate, such concrete dramatic ends, our purely verbal theater, unaware of everything that makes theater, of everything that exists in the air of the stage, which is measured and circumscribed by that air and has a density in space — movements, shapes, colors, vibrations, attitudes, screams — our theater might, with respect to the unmeasurable, which derives from the mind’s capacity for receiving suggestion, be given lessons in spirituality from the Balinese theater.”<sup>15</sup>

Because *Sunflower Sutra* fuses several disciplines together, it is an ideal candidate to realize Artaud’s vision of theater and presents us with an opportunity to apply Artaud’s techniques and vision to present *Sunflower Sutra* in its full potential.

As stated above, the combined result of the metaphysicals is called *mise-en-scène*. Mary Caroline Richards, the translator of Artaud’s *The Theater and its Double*, states that Artaud’s use of *mise-en-scène* “implies all that we call direction, production, and staging.”<sup>16</sup> The term *mise-en-scène* is a lacuna in the English language, translated literally as “setting of the scene,” and is often used to describe the scenic design. Artaud’s idea is richer and more complicated – he is interested in employing metaphysical elements to heighten the theatrical experience. Artaud supports the use of music in theater to create a *mise-en-scène*. Plunka

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<sup>13</sup> Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*. (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 38.

<sup>14</sup> Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*. (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 39.

<sup>15</sup> Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*. (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 55-56.

<sup>16</sup> Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*. (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 6.



writes “Artaud advocated using music to supplement incantatory rhythms... Thus, music was to be as important a device in enhancing the play’s rhythmic structure as was incantatory language.”<sup>17</sup>

Artaud was also fascinated by Balinese theater. He posits that unlike Western theater, which uses text as a means to expose the characters' psychology, “The Balinese have realized, with the utmost rigor, the idea of pure theater, where everything, conception and realization alike, has value, has existence only in proportion to its degree of objectification *on the stage*.”<sup>18</sup> For Artaud, these extra-textual elements included gestures and miming.<sup>19</sup>

Although we have no evidence that Kitzke was familiar with Artaud’s work, we can see elements of Artaud’s vision in *Sunflower Sutra*. His meticulous marking of specific words matching with specific chords show that the elements of music and speech are planned to work in conjunction to heighten an emotion Kitzke wants to portray. We can see this precision in the opening page of *Sunflower Sutra*, among many other sections:

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written in a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "DO DA BA DO BA DA BA DO BA DA BADO KADE DO DODEDO WUP DOKA DOKEDO BADA DADO". The piano accompaniment is written in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The score includes dynamic markings such as *fz* and *fp*, and a performance instruction "SING FALSETTO N.V." above the vocal line. The music features a fast, rhythmic pattern in the piano part and a more melodic, expressive line in the vocal part.

By starting with a fast scat-like vocalization, the performer sets the mood of the work as a bright and cheerful emotion, perhaps alluding to the happy arrival of his sister into this world.

<sup>17</sup> Gene A. Plunka, *Antonin Artaud and The Modern Theater*. (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1994), 26.

<sup>18</sup> Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*. (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 53.

<sup>19</sup> Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*. (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 55

Despite Artaud’s focus on the metaphysical, he advocates for a balanced approach where the words and action play equal roles. Gene Plunka writes that Artaud doesn’t want to suppress language but rather “indicated that language must be combined with other aspects of the *mise-en-scène* but should in no way dominate the performance.”<sup>20</sup>

In the Artaudian manner, Kitzke’s use of different elements is a balanced approach. We see a harmony of words, music, and stage directions; no single element dominates the work. Other than the words, all elements in the work — including all sounds performed, the tone of the voice, and gestures, could be considered the metaphysical.

In Kitzke’s work, we see large sections where the pianist only plays the instrument.

Sections where the words are taking center stage:

fly in its ear, Unholy battered old thing you were, my sunflower O my soul, I loved you then! Owoo -

*ff* *fz* *p* *FALETTO*

And sections where there’s a balance between music and words:

Bla — ke — my vi — sions — Har — lem and Hells of the

<sup>20</sup> Gene A. Plunka, *Antonin Artaud and The Modern Theater*. (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1994), 25.

In *The Theater of Cruelty*, Artaud lists 18 elements of theater, as follows:

1. The Spectacle
2. The *Mise-en-scène*
3. The language of the stage
4. Musical instruments
5. Lights, lighting
6. Costumes
7. The stage
8. Objects
9. The set
10. Immediacy
11. Works
12. Spectacle
13. The actor
14. The interpretation
15. The cinema
16. Cruelty
17. The public
18. The Program

Among these eighteen elements, the most relevant elements to setting Kitzke's work in an Artaudian vision, I believe, are The Spectacle, The *Mise-en-scène*, Lights/lighting, The Stage, Immediacy, and Cruelty.

### 1. The Spectacle

This is Artaud's core idea of the ideal theater. He references Balinese theater as his inspiration. According to Artaud, in Balinese theater, there is "something that has nothing to do with entertainment, the notion of useless, artificial amusement, of an evening's pastime which is the characteristic of our theater."<sup>21</sup> Artaud's idea of the spectacle is the inclusion of external elements other than the occidental idea of psychological theater that relies on text alone. "The Spectacle" is the result of employing the metaphysicals to create a harmonious presentation of words and everything else that is presented.

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<sup>21</sup> Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*. (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 60.

## 2. The *Mise-en-scène*

This term describes the general mood and the look of a scene in a painting, photograph, or on stage. According to Artaud, this *mise-en-scène* must not only be created by the playwright's prescribed text, but it must be a "point of departure for all theatrical creations." Essentially, the *mise-en-scène* must be created to not to literally reflect the scene, but to create a surreal stage by manipulating the metaphysicals. The *mise-en-scène*, in Artaud's vision, must provoke a visceral, gut reaction in the viewer.

## 5. Lights, lighting

Artaud calls for a complete overhaul in the way lights are used. He advocates methods through which light can influence sensations, and not just illuminate a scene pictorially. Lighting has evolved tremendously since the 1920s when Artaud was writing his manifesto. Although it's not an easy and simple process to execute, we have more sophisticated technologies at our disposal to create a wide gamut of colors for whatever emotions we want to instill in our audience, and even to create darkness and isolation when desirable. Artaud's manifesto instructs that lights must be used to "recover an element of thinness, density, and opaqueness, with a view to producing the sensations of heat, cold, anger, fear, etc." <sup>22</sup>

## 7. The stage

Artaud wants theater to break away from its traditional setting of stage and auditorium. He writes "We abolish the stage and the auditorium and replace them by a single site, without partition or barrier of any kind, which will become the theater of the action."<sup>23</sup> The setting which Artaud advocates is to realize full immersion for the audience. Traditional settings for piano

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<sup>22</sup> Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*. (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 95.

<sup>23</sup> Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*. (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 96.

recitals most often involve the separation of the stage and the audience. I was interested in trying to break down at least some of those barriers.

#### 10. Immediacy

Artaud warns us that all these departures and surreal recreations cannot be outside of people's experience. He still wants the subject and the experience to be relatable and relevant to people's tastes. This immediacy must be used to bring the audience into the performance so that they do not feel they're only observing it.

#### 16. Cruelty

Artaud advocates a method of theater in which cruelty is "at the root of every spectacle."<sup>24</sup> Cruelty is not used here to mean causing of pain, but rather to mean extreme intimacy. Artaud wants an assault on the senses of the audience meant to result in a deeper level of feeling and reaction caused by an unconscious response.

To synthesize Artaud's views, he wants total immersion of the audience into the performance. He wants to create a visceral reaction by carefully manipulating metaphysical elements to create an interconnected experience that transports the audience to a different mindset. Similar to a dream-like state where every element is used to enhance the effect of words and where the sensation takes center stage as opposed to words, he proposes to "bring back into the theater this elementary magical idea, taken up by modern psychoanalysis... in which the unconscious furnishes images at random," and "return though the theater to an idea of the physical knowledge of images and the means of inducing trances."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*. (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 99.

<sup>25</sup> Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*. (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 80.

Artaud suggests multiple techniques to realize this idea of a dream. Concerning “language of the stage,” Artaud urges the need for a “code language,” similar to the language in dreams. Concerning “*mise-en-scène*,” Artaud wants us to create the space not as a direct reflection of the text but as a “point of departure.” Concerning “Lights, lighting,” he wants us to create a sensation and produce emotions. Concerning “Cruelty,” “The Spectacle,” and “The Interpretation,” he wants everything to feel organic and interconnected. All these qualities, Artaud writes, are not necessary for the staging to be realistic, but rather for it to create the heightened sensations and air of surrealism that one feels in a dream. Artaud’s aim in creating “The Theater of Cruelty” is to create a world in which all the elements work overtime to give the viewer a dream-like sense of a heightened version of reality.

## Chapter 4: *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*

Acting skills are necessary for successful performances of works for speaking-pianist. I have found that preparing *Sunflower Sutra* with acting guidelines has helped me contextualize the work in a different way.

As a pianist previously untrained in theater, I have found *A Practical Handbook for the Actor* easier to understand than other methods such as Konstantin Stanislavsky's or Sanford Meisner's when performing works for speaking-pianist. Because *A Practical Handbook for the Actor* was written as a guide for acting generally, not all elements found there are relevant in preparing a work for speaking-pianist. However, this concise, easy-to-understand source introduced me to other concepts that could help my performance.

*A Practical Handbook for the Actor* indicates that, among the many elements that affect the quality of a theater performance (actor, director, technician, audience, etc.), the actor's job can be summarized as the need to analyze and prepare "action" and "moment."

"Action" is defined as something "to do, so you must always have something specific to do onstage"<sup>26</sup> and "moment" is defined as "anything set forth by the writer or director that must be adhered to by the actor."<sup>27</sup> The objective for analyzing these two elements is to "improvise within this framework of given circumstances."<sup>28</sup> "Action" and "moment" are broken down to nine items and three items respectively.

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<sup>26</sup> Melissa Bruder, et al., *A Practical Handbook for The Actor*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 13.

<sup>27</sup> Melissa Bruder, et al., *A Practical Handbook for The Actor*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 9.

<sup>28</sup> Melissa Bruder, et al., *A Practical Handbook for The Actor*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 9.

## Action

The book gives nine items to consider about an action. These are:

1. be physically capable of being done
2. be fun to do
3. be specific
4. have its test in the other person
5. not be an errand
6. not presuppose any physical or emotional state
7. not be manipulative
8. have a “cap”
9. be in line with the intentions of the playwright

## Moment

The second element that the actor must prepare is finding out what the framework is for the scene. The book provides three questions to ask:

1. What is the character literally doing?
2. What is the essential action of what the character is doing in this scene?
3. What is that action like to me? it's as if...

## Being alone onstage

Additionally, *A Practical Handbook* provides techniques for when you are onstage alone. Essentially, any item that involves another person cannot be carried out when the performer is alone. Items #4 (have its test in the other person), #7 (not be manipulative), and #8 (have a “cap”) cannot be applied because they require a second person. The way to solve the problem of aloneness on the stage is to “try and get something from the audience as if they were in the scene with you” or “to use your imagination and try to succeed with the person you are using in your as-if from your analysis of the scene.”<sup>29</sup> This act of trying to get something out from the audience during a monologue correlates to Artaud’s philosophy of giving the audience an

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<sup>29</sup> Melissa Bruder, et al., *A Practical Handbook for The Actor*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 46.



immersive experience through intimacy and immediacy. The chapter also states that the monologue “would be delivered to some point in the theatre as if you were talking to your best friend in hopes of untangling the mystery” and “use your imagination to play the scene as if you are talking to your friend.”<sup>30</sup> This section is essential to preparing works for speaking-pianist, which almost always involves the performer being on stage alone.

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<sup>30</sup> Melissa Bruder, et al., *A Practical Handbook for The Actor*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 47.

## Chapter 5: *Freeing the Natural Voice*

Unless we are disabled, speaking is something we all do. Since childhood, we learn to unconsciously speak our native language and we continue to use our voice every day to exchange ideas with other people. Though one actively thinks about the words we say, the voice, much like the act of walking, is not a result of an active thought process. We commonly use our voice unconsciously; our current physical and psychological state affects the way our voice sounds. According to Cicely Berry in her book, *The Voice and the Actor*, the voice “is incredibly sensitive to what is going on around it” and “personal relationships and the degree of ease with one’s environment and situation continually affect the individual’s voice.”<sup>31</sup>

For example, different people have varying difficulties while speaking in public. Also, each speaking situation is unique; this affects the way one's voice performs. Kristin Linklater writes in her book, *Freeing the Natural Voice*, that her approach is designed to “liberate the natural voice rather than to develop a vocal technique.”<sup>32</sup> Berry, taking a similar stance, writes that the individual’s goal should be to “open up the possibilities of your voice and find out what it can do.”<sup>33</sup> Both Linklater and Berry share the same concept for improving the voice. Both books include a series of exercises designed to focus on inhibited areas to allow the body to “open up,” thus allowing the voice to become nimble and freer.

*Freeing the Natural Voice* explains how the voice works and what these inhibiting sources. It provides exercises specifically designed to work on specific areas of the body. This book is based on works by Linklater’s teacher Iris Warren. Warren believed that her method of

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<sup>31</sup> Cicely Berry, *Voice and the Actor*. (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 8.

<sup>32</sup> Kristin Linklater, *Freeing the Natural Voice*. (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1976), 1.

<sup>33</sup> Cicely Berry, *Voice and the Actor*. (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 8.

training should never be written down as it is intended to be “conveyed orally, and it is dangerous to limit and define it in printed words.”<sup>34</sup> Linklater writes that her book is intended to be a guide to how to exercise your body.

Based on my experience working alone and working with Kate Wilson, I have found that working with someone else produced much more immediate improvement. Even though the concepts and the exercises are clearly outlined and easy to understand, Linklater writes that the book is “a poor substitute for a class” and suggests the reader to “work with at least one other person, taking turns reading the instructions and checking the results” as “mutual teaching can be very rewarding and it incorporates the central point of voice work, namely communication.”<sup>35</sup> Linklater continues that in case you have to work alone, one must “sacrifice your desire for results to the experience of causes.”<sup>36</sup> Essentially, she writes that this process is not about judging oneself, but rather feeling one’s body.

Linklater writes that everyone possesses “a voice capable of expressing... whatever gamut of emotion, complexity of mood and subtlety of thought he or she experiences”<sup>37</sup> but the emotions and complexities of mood are not always present in the voice as a result of “tensions acquired through living in this world, as well as defenses, inhibitions and negative reactions to environmental influences” that “diminish the efficiency of the natural voice to the point of distorted communication.”<sup>38</sup> Her exercises are designed to remove these “blocks that inhibit the human instrument.”<sup>39</sup> This process, in addition to producing a more a resonant voice production,

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<sup>34</sup> Kristin Linklater, *Freeing the Natural Voice*. (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1976), 4.

<sup>35</sup> Kristin Linklater, *Freeing the Natural Voice*. (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1976), 4.

<sup>36</sup> Kristin Linklater, *Freeing the Natural Voice*. (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1976), 5.

<sup>37</sup> Kristin Linklater, *Freeing the Natural Voice*. (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1976), 1.

<sup>38</sup> Kristin Linklater, *Freeing the Natural Voice*. (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1976), 1.

<sup>39</sup> Kristin Linklater, *Freeing the Natural Voice*. (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1976), 1.

also affects how the speaker feels. Linklater writes that assessing progress of one's voice "lay in the answer to the question 'how does it feel?' rather than 'how does it sound?'"<sup>40</sup>

Linklater writes that, in the 1930s, Iris Warren started to incorporate psychological understanding in addition to the physiological understanding of the actor's body. This need for understanding what the actor feels about the words correlates to the concept of analyzing the scene as outlined in *A Practical Guide for the Actor*. According to Linklater, understanding how the actor physically feels his or her voice allows the performer to better deliver the emotions to the audience as a result of losing his or her inhibitions.

Linklater points out four areas of inhibition that prevent the voice from performing. These are: 1. Breathing, 2. Vocal folds and larynx, 3. Resonating system, and 4. Articulating system. Linklater believes that by learning how to train these four areas that affect the voice, the individual can produce a better, more natural voice, even in unfamiliar and uncomfortable situations. The speaker, therefore, will ideally feel closer to his or her feeling of emotions rather than having a clear abstract thought of an emotion. In my experience from trying these exercises alone and working with a vocal coach, I have found that working with someone else gives a much more immediate result. I also have found that, after the coaching, I felt an intimate physical connection to the words through the vibrations I felt with my entire upper body as opposed to just having an intellectual connection to the words in my imagination. Even the phrase "Hey there" felt more in control and more comfortable. It is a personal experience that is difficult to express with words, but I started to feel less like I was reading words and more emotionally connected to the text. I felt more in control of my voice, I felt that it was easier for me to influence the emotional content of the text, and most importantly, I could feel the difference with my body. This physical connection provided an immediate feedback that I could perceive, whether or not I delivered the words in the specific manner I intended.

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<sup>40</sup> Kristin Linklater, *Freeing the Natural Voice*. (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1976), 3.

To research this topic, I have worked with Kate Wilson, whose philosophy is similar to Linklater's: better voice quality and emotional expression are achieved through physical relaxation. Wilson's process, however, focuses in three areas: 1. the body, breath, and voice, 2. resonance, and 3. articulation. According to Wilson, the purpose of her process is to allow the muscles to stay free in a stressful situation, or as Wilson describes, "a violent situation" in which the speaker's body might become constricted.

We began with stretches. With my back straight, I sat on my hands, palms up, and stretched the neck first, by letting the head drop down to the front. I turned my head 45 degrees to the side, feeling the stretch on my trapezius, the muscle that goes from your higher back up through the back of your neck. Next, I continued turning my head, looking up to the side. This stretched the sternocleidomastoid muscle, the long muscle that stretches from underneath the ears reaching down to the clavicle. I repeated the same process on the opposite side of my neck.

The second part of the first phase was arm swings. This exercise required me to stand up and, with my arms completely relaxed, I had to swing one arm forward until it was parallel to the ground, then change direction back, swinging my arm all the way around. While doing this exercise, the arm had to feel free, almost as if I were to throw my hands out. While doing this, I had to match my lip rolls with my motion. Ms. Wilson said to not be afraid to let the spit fly out. We repeated this several times and Ms. Wilson asked me to see the difference in the length of my arms. I noticed that the arm I exercised was slightly longer than the other arm. Ms. Wilson said that this is proof of how tense we normally are and that freeing these tensions would allow us to fully use our voice. We proceeded to mirror the same movement on my other arm.

These exercises are designed to lengthen and widen the spine and shoulders to allow your breathing to go deeper and wider. Though initially I did not imagine that there would be

much change, I noticed a vast difference in the way I felt my voice when Ms. Wilson told me to try saying “Hi there.”

For our second phase, we worked on resonance. Ms. Wilson suggested that I think of the resonance as coming from the skull, not the muscles. There were three parts to the second phase, 1. humming, 2. torso rolls, and 3. facial massage.

First I hummed with an open jaw and my lips closed. It is important to keep the jaws loose throughout this first part. I changed from humming an “M” to humming an “N.” This required opening my lips but I had to maintain an open and relaxed jaw. Lastly, I hummed on “NG.” This one was very tricky. With the same relaxed open jaw, I had to say “ah” first, then I had to close the back of my throat only using the back of my tongue and the pharynx to change the “ah” to an “ang” sound. For all these humming exercises, it is important to keep all your face muscles relaxed and to feel the resonance. The open relaxed jaw is crucial and it helped me maintain a visualization of all my face muscles as relaxed.

The second part was torso rolls. This exercise began with my arms up over my head and my body rolled down with my hands leading the way, similar to a diving motion, and coming back up to starting position. While doing this motion, I had to do pitched lip rolls from high to low and back high, in sync with my torso’s movement. This exercise had a similar effect to the arm throw exercise in the first phase but it had the added benefit of helping me feel my resonance as well.

The third part was massaging my skull. I went back to humming, but I had to massage all over my face with my fingers. I hummed on “M,” and “NG.” I proceeded to “mudslides” which necessitated my placing my palms on my cheekbones and sliding them down to my chin while gently pressing down on my face.

After this third part, Ms. Wilson asked me to say “Hi there” again. There was yet more difference in the way I felt my voice resonate in my skull. I felt more at ease using my breathing and I felt I could more readily allow my voice to come out freely.

The last phase was the articulating system. There were two parts in this third phase. First, I massaged both the top and bottom lips. With my thumb and index finger, I pinched the center of my upper lips from its sides and massaged the muscle that connected my upper lips to my skull. I repeated the same process on my lower lips. The second portion was trying to speak while pinching my tongue with my thumb and index finger and pulling it slightly out of my mouth. This was not comfortable and many words were impossible to articulate properly. I was asked to read a full paragraph with as much clarity I could. I went back to saying “Hi there” and I felt different yet again.

I had read Linklater’s *Freeing the Natural Voice* before working with Kate Wilson. While I followed Linklater’s instructions, I did not feel that I had achieved much difference in the way I used my voice. But after working with Ms. Wilson, I could understand why Iris Warren had her doubts about having her method written down. This process of freeing the voice needs to be practiced with someone who has had training in this field. It is, in my experience, almost impossible to make enough difference in order to successfully affect the individual’s voice when only learning from a written source, much like studying an instrument.

It is difficult to judge one’s own voice without the help of others. Because an individual’s own voice is heard through bone conduction, we do not perceive our own voice in the same way as others perceive it. This is one of the reasons why some people dislike hearing a recording of their own voice. In addition, Berry writes that, one’s perception is also subjective because it is “tied up with your own conception of sound, of how you would like to sound, and also tied up with what you know you want to convey, for you are on the inside.”<sup>41</sup> As a result, recording one’s

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<sup>41</sup> Cicely Berry, *Voice and the Actor*. (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 8.

own voice, according to Berry, puts the individual in the “corrective attitude” where the “voice reduces the actor to using it ‘right,’ and keeps him within the conventional trampolines of good speech” which is “inhibiting, and makes much acting dull.”<sup>42</sup> Berry writes that the voice “must be accurate to yourself, so it needs to reflect not only what you think and feel but also your physical presence.”<sup>43</sup> This non-corrective attitude is the opposite to what I have experienced learning piano, and it felt counterintuitive when working alone; but it became surprisingly easy and natural to me as I started working with Ms. Wilson.

Working with Kate Wilson allowed me to feel more comfortable with my own voice. In my experience, by exercising the body, I reached a state where I was comfortable with my own voice and was allowing my body to work unrestrained, thus producing better resonance, support, and articulation. Additionally, as someone who suffers from asthma and had to endure multiple episodes of bronchitis while working on this project, it was difficult for me to even have a conversation, let alone sing and declaim text. These techniques, among other factors, have provided me ways to cope with my condition.

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<sup>42</sup> Cicely Berry, *Voice and the Actor*. (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 15.

<sup>43</sup> Cicely Berry, *Voice and the Actor*. (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 16.



## Chapter 6: Putting It into Practice

In this chapter, I will discuss how I chose to apply the techniques outlined in previous chapters to perform Jerome Kitzke's *Sunflower Sutra*. It is not meant to be a one-size-fits-all guide to preparing this work, but rather, a record of the way I chose to perform it. Since vocal training in accordance to Linklater's "Freeing the Natural Voice" is more of a workout to be prepared in advance and not necessarily a conscious process during a performance, I will be discussing the application of Artaud's vision and analysis of action and moment according to methods outlined in *A Practical Handbook*.

### Creating Artaud's spectacle

To reiterate Antonin Artaud's vision of the ideal theater, the main goal is to create total immersion for the audience through the extensive use of "metaphysicals" to influence the audience's perception and senses, for the purpose of heightening their understanding of the work from an instinctive, unconscious level rather than from an intellectual one.

Instead of a traditional setting, where there's a clear distinction between a stage for the performer and a seating area for the spectators, I arranged for the seats to be placed around the piano in close proximity. My original plan was to book a standard concert venue (Schoenberg Hall at UCLA) where the audience would be able to see the seats in the auditorium. By placing the audience on stage around the piano, I felt that it would amplify their senses that they are in the wrong place, thus making them feel more vulnerable and more easily affected. However, this venue was unavailable due to renovation, so I had to perform in a modular space (Ostin Ensemble Room at UCLA) where there was no clear distinction between stage and audience. Although I believe it would have been more of a shock for the audience to

find themselves physically on stage in a space from where they could easily see the conventional seats, thus having them realize they were someplace they did not "belong" (i.e. onstage), my decision to place the audience in an unconventional seating arrangement around the piano was successful in instilling the audience the unorthodox nature of this recital and grabbing their attention. In a sense, I created a unique *mise-en-scène* that was outside the audience's normal expectations, which played its part in establishing their curiosity.

To increase immediacy in the performance, I placed the entire audience within a fifteen foot radius of the piano. Given this close proximity, I was only able to arrange twenty-six seats around the instrument. I also chose to place only one row of seats in order to have no object between the instrument and the audience's bodies. (Based on experience teaching a large class of seventy students, I noticed that having a podium between me and the students helped me feel a little more protected.) To try to evoke Artaud's idea of cruelty, (i.e., increased intimacy and an assault on the senses of the audience), I devised this exposed seating arrangement to place the audience in a more vulnerable state. Everyone in the audience was close enough to the piano that they could feel its vibrations, not only through their ears, but through their bodies. This close proximity created a more visceral connection than usual between performer and audience. The large majority of the audience members I spoke with after the performance mentioned that the unconventional arrangement and proximity was intriguing to them and they felt more engaged than they usually do conventional piano recitals.

The lighting designer, Eric Kim, and I decided to use three types of lighting fixtures. 1. One Electronic Theatre Controls's "Source Four Leko," worked as my key light and it was placed on my right side, casting a focused light at me; 2. One Electronic Theatre Controls's "Source Four Par" with orange/yellow gel, was working as a fill-light and placed directly in front of me; and 3. Twelve Philips's "Color Kinetics IntelliColor ColorBlast 12" LED fixtures, eleven of which were working as wall illuminators, and one was placed at the end of the piano, working to

illuminate the underside of the piano. Philips’s “Color Kinetics IntelliColor ColorBlast 12” is an LED fixture with 36 individual RGB bulbs that allowed us complete freedom to create any color combination we wished. Except for one ColorBlast 12 fixture placed underneath the piano, all other light fixtures were placed behind the audience. This was designed to increase the sense of immersion by making them feel that they were sitting onstage. The lights were controlled in real time by the lighting designer with a Chauvet Stage Designer™ 50 light controller. In accordance with Artaud’s direction for lights, we attempted to create different sensations by manipulating the colors. These modern lighting technologies, though laborious, enabled us to easily create a myriad of sensations by having full control of hue, saturation, and luminance.

In the opening pages, we employed several fully saturated hues on each of the eleven wall lights on a clockwise chase:

Allen Ginsberg (1955) Sunflower Sutra Jerome Kitzke (1999)

The musical score is for the piece "Sunflower Sutra". It features a voice part and a piano accompaniment. The voice part includes the lyrics: "There is a sto-ry to tell. BADA BE BA WUP BADA BOO BADA BADO KADEKADOKADEKADOKA DO DA BADO BA DA BADO BA DA BADO KADE DO DODEDO WUP DOKA DOKEDO BADADADO ti ti ti ti ti ti ti". Performance instructions include "WIS E AND CLEAR", "EXPRESSIVELY LIGHT AND PRECISE", "DRUM ON TOP OF PIANO ABOVE FINGERBOARD (SEE KEY)", "PEDAL-ALWAYS", "SING-FALSETTO N.V.", "WOO", "ADD.VIBR.", "SLIDE", and "RAISE HANDS SMOOTHLY UP". The score is written in 7/4 time and includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *f*, and *mp*.

This fully saturated light chase was meant to enhance the playful feeling of this section, perhaps representing Kitzke's sister's childhood. The clockwise chase was chosen to serve as a metaphor for the train's movement. The kinetic chase was triggered by sound and the different hues moved to the next fixture with each tap on the piano. This fast changing of fully saturated lights created a psychedelic environment, transporting the audience to the time of the beat generation.

For more contemplative quiet spoken sections, the wall lighting was turned off entirely and only the key light was on:

The image shows a musical score for piano and voice. The piano part is written in bass clef with a 2/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "I walked on the banks of the tincan banana dock and sat down under the huge shade of a Southern Pacific locomotive to look at the sunset over the box house hills and cry. oh Jack Kerouac sat beside me". Performance instructions include *mp* (mezzo-piano), *SEMPRE LEGATO*, *UNA CORDE*, and *SLIGHT*. There are also dynamic markings *p* and *mp* and a key signature change to one flat (B-flat) indicated by a double bar line with a flat sign.

This lighting created a stark contrast between the dark auditorium and a bright performer, which forced the audience's focus on one area. This method was used several times throughout the performance to redirect the audience's attention from the *mise-en-scène* created through the wall lights back to the performer's words and music.

In sections where the overarching emotion seemed angry and/or frenetic, we used a fully saturated red light which is often associated with passion, anger, and raw intensity:

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked as  $\text{♩} = \text{ca } 42$ . The lyrics are: "And you Locomotive, you are a locomotive forget me not!". The score includes a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment with dynamics like *mp* and *SHORT*. The piano part features a series of quarter notes in the right hand and bass notes in the left hand, with a crescendo leading to the final note.

In the section leading up to “And you Locomotive, you are a locomotive forget me not!,” the text laments the sunflower that tried to become a locomotive. My interpretation of the text here was that the sunflower tried to become a locomotive, not by choice, but because it was so heavily affected by the grime and dirt of the locomotive that it has given up trying to be a sunflower and reluctantly tried to be a locomotive. As the narrator sees the sunflower’s abnegation of self, he is angry at the locomotive that played a part in the sunflower’s surrender. Coupled with slow brooding quarter notes pulsing and increasing in dynamics, this section demanded an utterance of intense anger. The lighting designer and I decided on a fully saturated red that begins with half luminance that grew into full luminance.

In the sections where the sunflower appears, we chose a high luminance, fully saturated yellow to aggressively place the sunflower in front of the audience’s field of vision.

Even though Artaud advocates for a non-literal iteration of the text through the metaphysicals, we decided that the immediacy of seeing the entire room in a saturated yellow that matched a sunflower’s color would bombard the audience with the image of the sunflower.

The image shows a musical score for a guitar piece. The title is "(Sunflower Chord)". The score includes a vocal line with the word "FALSETTO" and a guitar part with dynamics like *ff* and *dim.*. The guitar part is marked "SENZA UNA CORDE" and "WOO". The score includes a series of notes in the right hand and left hand, with a crescendo leading to the final note.

In the more ethereal section “Canticle for Mary V.,” we chose a deep dark blue to create a sense of a introspective meditation:

CANTICLE FOR MARY V.

The musical score is titled "CANTICLE FOR MARY V." and is arranged for voice, trumpet, and piano. The vocal line begins with the word "gone." and includes performance instructions: "DE MARE TPT. OR SING ON 'OOH'" and "BLEND W/ PIANO". The trumpet part features "RAPID TREMOLOS" and dynamic markings of *mf* and *f*. The piano accompaniment includes markings for "LONG" and "SLOWLY". The score is in 3/4 time and includes a section marked "REPEAT AS PREP." and a page number "-3-".

This section is followed by the lines “So Jack, there she goes— isn’t [sic] she beautiful? the S.P. 1249, going, maybe forever, but never, gone” where the music repeats a high F that decelerates and stops completely together with the word “gone.” I believe that this decelerating high F is meant to be the sound of a heart monitor slowing down to an eventual flatline, at which point we know Mary has left this world. A “Canticle” is a hymn or a chant sung in a church, and this one is in a major mode. Major modes are often associated with joy but this contradicts the sorrowful context. Even though the major mode would suggest a display of a bright hue, because of the circumstances described at this point in the piece, we chose to use blue -- a cold

color, generally associated with sadness. We wanted to create this dissonance between music in the major mode and the desolation of losing a loved one. We wanted to encourage the audience to explore the ambiguity inherent in the situation.

Because there are a lot of sections that allude to the sound of a train moving, we decided to use the fill light (One Electronic Theatre Controls's "Source Four Par") also as a direct reference to a train's headlight.

The image displays three systems of musical notation. The top system is for a string quartet, with a tempo marking 'SUB. ♩ = ca 160-168'. It features a 'MANIC' section with a melodic line and a 'PED' (pedal) section with a sustained bass line. The middle system is a piano accompaniment with a 'SUB mf' dynamic marking, showing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The bottom system is another piano accompaniment with a 'SUB mf' dynamic marking and a '5' measure marker, showing a similar rhythmic pattern.

For this section, where the piano alludes to the train tracks, the orange glow of the fill light turned on at full power. This effect was repeated in later sections where the music imitated the train's sound.

It was also used in this section where the word "locomotives" comes as a surprise:

Although Ginsburg’s text “The grime was no man’s grime but death and human locomotives” does not contain any breaks, Kitzke adds a long pause between “human” and “locomotives.” The music in the section can be characterized as peaceful: the piano plays long open fifth chords in a soft dynamic. Reading this line as arranged by Kitzke gives a sense of calm and tranquility but it switches abruptly after “locomotives” with triple forte notes playing in quick succession of eighth notes. Right at this moment, we planned to change the light from a desaturated wall-wash to an abrupt lighting of the fill-light coinciding with the wall lights turning off. This surprise of character was written in the music with abrupt rhythmic and dynamic changes and was enhanced even further with the lights reflecting an abrupt change.

The changes of staging, seating arrangement, and the use of lights were designed to spark the audience’s curiosity as soon as they entered the hall. My goal, in rearranging the seats in an unconventional manner, was to create a specific *mise-en-scène* that would grab the audience's attention in a visceral way. By seating the audience close together with no objects between the instrument and their bodies, an intimate and immediate setting was created. The



commissioned for Andy Russo  
with funds from the James S. Marcus Foundation

# FETCH

(2 0 0 4)

Music: Derek Bermel  
Text: Will Eno

Evenly and cleanly  
♩. = 138

Piano

Measures 1-2 of the piano score. The music is in 8/8 time. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and dynamics *p* and *mp*. The left hand has a bass line with a dynamic of *p*.

Measures 3-4 of the piano score. The right hand continues the melodic line with dynamics *p*, *mp*, and *mf*. The left hand has a bass line with dynamics *p*, *mp*, and *p*.

Measures 5-6 of the piano score. The right hand has dynamics *mp* and *mf*. The left hand has a dynamic of *mf*.

Measures 7-8 of the piano score. The right hand has a dynamic of *f*. The left hand has a dynamic of *f*.

Measures 9-10 of the piano score. The right hand has a dynamic of *f*. The left hand has dynamics *mf* and *f*.

addition of lights positioned behind the audience helped to further invite intimacy and immediacy, conveying the feeling that the audience was onstage as a participant instead of as a casual spectator in a safe area where they are allowed to check their smartphones.

By moving the audience closer to the performer and his performance, seating them in a more vulnerable position, and utilizing lighting to create an abstract association to the music and words, I was trying to recreate in my performance of Kitzke's *Sunflower Sutra* some of the aspects of Artaud's theatrical platform of cruelty with increased immediacy and intimacy for the audience.

### **Analyzing "action" and "moment"**

In terms of action and moment, *Sunflower Sutra* can be a little more elusive to analyze than other, more straight-forward speaking-pianist works such as Derek Bermel's *Fetch*.

In *Fetch*, the first lines by the performer are:

*[to audience]* I think we all know how that turns out. All the same, I could probably keep it up, see it through, chase down the melody to the final....  
*[Position hands over the keys, about to play a final rousing chord, but do not play.*  
*[to audience.]* But, I don't know. Why? And for whom? Especially, you know, in this day and age, here, today, in the Age of Night.  
Mankind cocks its head, listens. Plink, plink, plink; a Piano. La la la; a Voice. Mankind furrows its brow, taps its foot, scratches, stares into nowhere, doing nothing, and doesn't change. This is us. Me, included.  
Anyway.

The section is followed by a section where the piano starts playing a consonant single voice melodic line, a second voice comes in imitating the first voice similar to the style of a fugue from the Baroque piano repertoire, a third voice comes in, at which point it slowly becomes increasingly dissonant, losing any resemblance to a Baroque piece, and the progression comes to a full stop on a dissonant tritone.

By analyzing the musical content, I was able to establish the moment as outlined by *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*. The literal action in this scene is a pianist/composer trying to play/write a Baroque fugue and failing monumentally; the essential action here is attempting to impress the audience but making a mess instead; and it is as if I started playing a piece at a recital and had a memory slip and had to stop.

Because of the music's breakdown preceding my first lines when I have to speak to the audience, I'm able to establish the literal action as giving the audience an explanation of why this happened; a possible essential action would be escaping or burying myself in the ground; and it is as if I played to a panel of juries, knowing that I blew my chance, and letting them know that I know that I didn't get the job and we're just wasting all of our time here. The pianist's interior monologue is relatively clear to articulate.

By contrast, *Sunflower Sutra* has a non-linear narrative and the actions are more ambiguous; this invites the pianist to use his imagination and invent some situations.

In the opening measure of *Sunflower Sutra*, the character is literally announcing the beginning of a story to the audience; the essential action is pulling the audience's undivided attention to me; and it's as if I'm saying "Good morning" to my class as I begin that day's lecture.

], Mad American Locomotive of the Heart 1  
WISE AND CLEAR

voice

There is a sto-ry to tell. X WAIT

$\text{♩} = \text{ca } 50$

piano

$\frac{7}{4}$   $\frac{4}{4}$

DRUM ON TOP OF PIANO ABOVE FINGERBOARD (SEE KEY)

*mf* PEDAL-ALWAYS →

In the next section, from measures 2 to 31, the character might be literally imitating a happy baby who's making noises by tapping on objects and babbling unintelligibly; or he might be a beat generation poet playing a bongo --the specific choice is not as important as the

essential action, which is to express joy. It is as if I just realized that I didn't have to show up to work today because it is a national holiday. (Since this action comes back with slight variations, I will refer this scene as “child’s play” for ease of reference.)

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system features a vocal line with lyrics "ti ti ti ti ti ti" and "woo woo" and a piano accompaniment with dynamics *f* and *fz*. The second system includes vocalizations "BVA...", "BREATHING IN", "BREATHING OUT", and "HICCUP" with a piano accompaniment at *mf* and *mp*. The third system contains the lyrics "DO WUPA WUPA WU PA WU PA PA WU PA PA BA DOKA DEKADA DIDIDI DA DO DA BADO BADA BADO BADA BADO KADEKADO KADE KADOKADEKADO KA" with a piano accompaniment at *mf* and *f*. Performance directions include "AND DOWN", "PREP. BOUNCE", "N.V.", "ACC. VIBR.", "f", "fz", "p", "mf", "mp", and "f".

Starting with the pickup to measure 32, the character’s literal action changes ever so slightly. The literal action is playing with a toy train and making train noises; the essential action and “it’s as if” element remains the same as the scene I refer to as “child’s play.”

oon cha oon cha oon cha cha oon cha cha oon cha oon cha oon cha oon cha oon cha oon cha oon cha oon cha

oon cha cha oon cha oon cha cha oon cha oon cha ho

oon chi-ka oon chi-ka oon cha cha

ho

mf cha cha cha cha

(FAST VIBR.)

(SIM.)

At measure 43, the music changes to imitate the sound of a train track and evolves into a series of chords that grows into ad-libbed chords, snowballing towards both ends of the keyboard.

*BEGIN BROADLY*  
SUB. GRAD. ACCEL.  
♩ = 44

*AD LIB - BLACK AND WHITE COMBINATION CHORDS IN INDICATED REGISTERS*

*SUB. f*

*ca 208*

*8VA*

*ff*

*PED.*

Because there are no elements other than the music that clue us into what's literally happening, and considering that this work is a metaphor for the composer's sister's life that starts as a child and ends with her death, I've interpreted this transition section as the passage from childhood to adulthood. The character's literal action here was interpreted as becoming increasingly frustrated with the adult life; the essential action is hiding your emotions from everyone. It is as if I had to yell and curse inside my car to release my pent-up anger fueled by an unreasonable customer making unreasonable demands.

Following this transition section, the music goes back to the "child's play" scene. However, in this section, the voice is distorted "like an electric guitar w/wah-wah." The character

is no longer a child, but has grown up, but is still playing with the toy train. The character realizes that the feeling is no longer the same and the scene is cut short with a sigh on measure 64. The literal action is playing with the train as an adult; the essential action is trying to convince that I'm still a child; and it is as if I went back to my favorite restaurant in college and realized that it isn't as good as I remembered.

The musical score consists of several systems. The first system shows a vocal line with lyrics: "Ah blessed be, it is the 12 for-tynine" and "we-ow". Above the staff are tempo markings: "TIRED, WILY... ♩ = 58" and "SUB ♩ = ca 112". To the right, it says "LIKE AN ELECTRIC GUITAR W/ WAH-WAH". The piano accompaniment is in 7/8 time. The second system continues the vocal line with "we-ow we-ow we-ow-ow" and "we-ow-ow we-ow we-ow-ow wow-o we-ow we-ow we-ow-ow". The piano accompaniment continues with various chords and melodic lines. The score includes dynamic markings like *f* and *mf*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs.

Again, because of the lack of words and scene directions, I've interpreted the scene from measure 65 to 72 as the character slowly coming out from a psychedelic-drug-induced dream that allowed him to revisit his childhood. He is not fully awake in experimenting with the abnormal sensations from his body that are affected by the drugs. The essential action here is counting how many new sensations I can discover; and it is as if I wake up in the middle of the night after sleeping on top of an arm and having fun with the abnormal sensation of not having any sensation on my arm and flapping it around.

WS = WIND SOUND

*GRAD. BIG RIT.* *SOTTA VOCE (SEMPRE p)* WS

8VA  $\text{♩} = \text{ca } 96$

ti to ti to ti to to ti ti to ti to

*mp* *ff*

"OH MOUTH" EXHALATION *ffz* *VERY SLOW*

SING *mp* *ooh* *CHANGE MOUTH SHAPE TO PROCEED TO LOWEST AH* *mf* HICCUP ATTACA

*ffz* *UNA CORDE* *FAST ROLL ON CHEST WITH FISTS*

Beginning in measure 73, the character seems to be literally describing in detail a dirty train yard in San Francisco. The essential action is forcing someone to see a mental image; and it is as if I had to describe to the city's sanitation department by phone as vividly and urgently as possible the sidewalk littered with used unwanted furniture that my inconsiderate neighbors left behind as they moved. This descriptive scene comes back again with small variations, so I will call this scene "painting the filth."

8VA  $\text{♩} = 60$

surrounded by the gnarled steel roots of trees of machinery. The

*mp* *f* *mf* *ff*

oily water on the river mirrored the red sky, sun sank on top of final (Erisco) peaks, no fish in that stream,

*p*



The character changes when the “Sunflower Chord” is first introduced on page 13. The character’s literal action is discovering a sunflower in the train yard; the essential action is to convince someone to also look at the same sunflower I’ve discovered; and it is as if I found out I was accepted to my first-choice school and wanting to tell my family about what I learned.

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system shows the vocal line with lyrics: "over like old bums on the riverbank ti - red and wily". The piano accompaniment includes a section marked "(Sunflower Chord)" with performance instructions: "SENZA UNA CORDE", "ff", and "12.". The second system begins with the instruction "(ELIDE INTO 'LOOK')", followed by the lyrics: "Look at the Sunflower, he said, there was a dead gray shadow against the sky, big as a man, sitting". The piano part features a section marked "UNA CORDE" and "pp". The third system continues with the lyrics: "dry on top of a pile of ancient sawdust — I rushed". The piano part includes the instruction "AWE STRUCK INHALATION" and "f". The score concludes with the instruction "SENZA UNA CORDE".

After three systems, at measure 74, the character returns to “painting the filth” scene.

The image shows a musical score with three systems. The first system features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics "up enchanted — it was my first sunflower, didi didi didi didi doo mem' - ries of". Above the vocal line, there are annotations: "A BIT RAW", "SING", and "LH RH LH". The piano accompaniment has dynamic markings like "ff" and "mf". The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics "Bla — ke — my vi - sions — Har - lem and Hells of the". The piano accompaniment continues with various rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings. The third system starts with the lyrics "East - ern riv - ers," and includes the instruction "BEGIN AD LIB MOUTH SHAPING OF SOUND-THROWING IT BACK". The piano accompaniment features a bass line with dynamic markings like "sub mf".

This description of filth continues for four pages, then this display of disgust turns into pity while addressing the sunflower.

The words “Unholy battered old thing you were, my sunflower O my soul, I loved you then!” has the literal action of taking pity on the sunflower for its damaged condition; the essential action is embracing the sunflower; and it is as if I’m trying to convince a loved one to check themselves back in to rehab.

From measure 92 to 125, the musical material shifts chaotically between different fragments of unrelated subjects. It includes a section that sounds like a bass line in a jazz trio, a haphazard laughter accompanied by seemingly disparate grotesque ad-libbed chords, a jazzy polyrhythm section that culminates with six incongruous chords that evolve into another large

group of ad-libbed chords, imitation of fluttering bird sounds, vocalization of a panting dog and a cat's "weow," a suggestion of the dog chasing the cat, after which the character simultaneously plays and vocalizes three sets of guttural "Ho" and eight "na" with increasing dynamics. This chaotic picture was difficult to contextualize, but I've interpreted this section as the return of the psychedelic-drug-induced hallucinations mentioned in measure 65. The literal action here is experiencing a desultory state where the character's thoughts and reality are blurred; the essential action is talking very rapidly; and it is as if I'm acting so erratically that other people are concerned for my mental sanity. A similar scene occurs later in the piece, so I'll refer to this character as "desultory."

The image shows a musical score for a piano and voice piece. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of 16 measures. The vocal line features a series of 'HA' and 'NA' syllables with dynamic markings (f, mf) and accents. The piano accompaniment includes a section labeled 'UPPER TWO OCTAVES' and a section labeled 'LOCO'. The score ends with a fermata and a dynamic marking of mf.

(*fff*) GRADUALLY HANDS BECOME VERY LIGHT, BARELY

ADD BREATHY SOUNDS AND SLIGHTLY WILD EXPRESSIONS

LIKE FLUTTERING BIRDS

WOO WOO WOO WOO

40

*fff*

FLICKING KEYS, UNTIL THEY TAKE OFF *ppp*

PANT LIKE A DOG

0-FAST to SLOW

di ga da di ga da ga di ga da do ga dogada do ga dogadee do ga dogadee

*pp*

TO FALSETTO

di di di di di di di di di di di di di di di di di

*sf*

PED.

Beginning at measure 126, the character's literal action is refocusing on the sunflower's state; the essential action is getting someone to realize that the problem is much more serious

than first thought; and it is as if I'm recounting to my friends how my superior has been unfair to me and I have given up trying to appease him.

4. All that Dress of Dust  
(SUB  $\text{♩} = \text{ca}132$ ) *BVA*.....

*TENDERLY*  
4/4 *SUB* *p*  
*BVA*.....

*SLIGHT RIT.*  
*SUB.*  
( $\text{♩} = \text{ca}168$ )

The  
grime was no man's grime but  
death and hu - man lo - co -

*LOCO*  
*p*  
*UNA CORDE*  
*PED.*

*LIFT*  
*SOST.*  
*PED.*

The musical score is divided into five systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piano accompaniment in 4/4 time, marked 'TENDERLY' and 'p'. The vocal line is indicated by a dashed line. The second system continues the piano accompaniment. The third system features a 'SLIGHT RIT.' marking and a tempo change to 'SUB. (♩ = ca168)'. The vocal line begins with the word 'The'. The fourth system contains the lyrics 'grime was no man's grime but' and includes performance instructions like 'LOCO', 'UNA CORDE', and 'PED.'. The fifth system contains the lyrics 'death and hu - man lo - co -' and includes a '3/4' time signature change.

At measure 146, the character changes slightly. It is still describing the sunflower with as much detail as possible; but the essential action is to scream out the truth in order to confront someone of their negligence; and it is as if I'm in a meeting with all my employees and I'm trying to show them, one item at a time, how the continuous missteps they have taken have led to a massive failure for the entire company and everyone is about to lose their jobs and I'm getting increasingly angry. This character comes back, so I'll name this scene as "angry accusation."

The musical score consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system (measure 146) features a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a bass clef. The right hand plays a steady eighth-note pattern, while the left hand plays a similar pattern. A bracket above the right hand indicates a 7-measure phrase. Dynamics range from *mp* to *p*. The second system (measure 147) continues the accompaniment with lyrics: "that veil of darkened railroad skin, that smog of cheek, that eyelid". It includes a 2-3-measure rest in the right hand, a "STOP" instruction, and a "LOCO" marking. Dynamics are *mp*. The third system (measure 148) has lyrics: "of black mis'ry, that sooty hand or phallus or protuberance of artificial worse-than-dirt". It includes an "A BIT LOUDER" instruction and ends with a *fff* dynamic. The score uses various musical notations including slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Starting at measure 147, the music becomes more playful but the words remain accusatory. So the literal action becomes sarcastically describing the sunflower's filth as a good thing; the essential action becomes to convince the sunflower that everything is in order; and it is as if I'm rebuking my employees by using sarcastic praise. This character returns, so I'll name this scene as "sarcastic praise."

and those bleary thoughts of death and

dust-y love-less eyes and ends and with-ered roots be-low, in the home-pile of sand and saw-dust,

7" STOP  $\bullet = ca 72$   $\frac{4}{4}$  *mp* *A TEMPO* *SHORT* *RIT.* *p* *POCO RIT.* *PED.*

$\bullet = ca 160$  *A BIT WACKY*

rub-ber dol-lar bills, (AAK) skin of ma-chin-er-y, the guts and the in-nards of the

weep-ing cough-ing car, the emp-ty lone-ly tin-cans with their rust-y tongues a-lack,

*mf* *R I T.* *T.*

From "What more could I name," the "angry accusation" character comes back,

what more could I name, the smoked ashes of some cock cigar, the cunts of wheel-

barrows and the milky breasts of cars,

then it switches back to “sarcastic praise” beginning with the words “worn out asses out of chairs.”

$\text{♩} = ca 72$  *RIT.* -3-

SING  
 VERY worn out asses out of chairs and sphincters of dynamos—  
 SHORT

GATO *mf* SHORT



Beginning with the trill after the words “mummied roots—” the character seems to be trying to build up the sunflower’s self-confidence by pointing out its positive qualities; the essential action is to make the sunflower take a leap of faith; and it is as if I had to tell an exhausted friend running a marathon that the finish line is just around the corner. This culminates on the word “breeze” followed by two fortissimo chords. This character returns later, so I’ll call this scene “empowerment.”

A perfect beauty of a sunflower! a perfect excellent

lovely sunflower existence! a sweet natural eye to the newhip moon,

woke up alive and excited grasping in the sun-set shadow sun-rise gold-en month-ly

*ca 84* *SLIGHT ACCEL* *sub SLOWER (p=ca 69)*

ATTACA

5. Mad American Locomotive of the Heart 3

VERY SHORT

breeze!

*ca 208* WILD-INTENSE

*f*

PED.

Starting at measure 161, the music resumes its “desultory” character, seen previously from measure 92 to 125. This lasts for five pages.

The “empowerment” character comes back at measure 172 until the words “when did you look at your skin and decide...” On page 36, I sense a slight shift towards a more angry attitude. The literal action is scolding the sunflower for trying to be something that it can never be; the essential action is forcing the audience to admit their mistake as if they were the sunflower; and it is as if my co-worker couldn’t finish his job at hand because he was unqualified and I have to ask him “What made you think you could do this job in the first place? Why did you decide to take on this job you didn’t know how to complete?” This section comes back, and I’ll call this scene “accusatory.”

when did you forget you were a flower? when did you look at your skin and decide you were an

im-potent dirty old lo-co-mo-tive? the ghost of a lo-co-mo-tive? the spec-tre and shade of a

once pow-er-ful mad A - mer-i - can lo-co-mo-tive?

musical notation includes: *mf*, *f*, *ff*, *LOCO*, *SOST. PED.*, *8VA*, *8VA BASSO*, *8VA BASSO-1*, *8VA BASSO-2*, *8VA BASSO-3*, *8VA BASSO-4*, *8VA BASSO-5*, *8VA BASSO-6*, *8VA BASSO-7*, *8VA BASSO-8*, *8VA BASSO-9*, *8VA BASSO-10*, *8VA BASSO-11*, *8VA BASSO-12*, *8VA BASSO-13*, *8VA BASSO-14*, *8VA BASSO-15*, *8VA BASSO-16*, *8VA BASSO-17*, *8VA BASSO-18*, *8VA BASSO-19*, *8VA BASSO-20*, *8VA BASSO-21*, *8VA BASSO-22*, *8VA BASSO-23*, *8VA BASSO-24*, *8VA BASSO-25*, *8VA BASSO-26*, *8VA BASSO-27*, *8VA BASSO-28*, *8VA BASSO-29*, *8VA BASSO-30*, *8VA BASSO-31*, *8VA BASSO-32*, *8VA BASSO-33*, *8VA BASSO-34*, *8VA BASSO-35*, *8VA BASSO-36*, *8VA BASSO-37*, *8VA BASSO-38*, *8VA BASSO-39*, *8VA BASSO-40*, *8VA BASSO-41*, *8VA BASSO-42*, *8VA BASSO-43*, *8VA BASSO-44*, *8VA BASSO-45*, *8VA BASSO-46*, *8VA BASSO-47*, *8VA BASSO-48*, *8VA BASSO-49*, *8VA BASSO-50*, *8VA BASSO-51*, *8VA BASSO-52*, *8VA BASSO-53*, *8VA BASSO-54*, *8VA BASSO-55*, *8VA BASSO-56*, *8VA BASSO-57*, *8VA BASSO-58*, *8VA BASSO-59*, *8VA BASSO-60*, *8VA BASSO-61*, *8VA BASSO-62*, *8VA BASSO-63*, *8VA BASSO-64*, *8VA BASSO-65*, *8VA BASSO-66*, *8VA BASSO-67*, *8VA BASSO-68*, *8VA BASSO-69*, *8VA BASSO-70*, *8VA BASSO-71*, *8VA BASSO-72*, *8VA BASSO-73*, *8VA BASSO-74*, *8VA BASSO-75*, *8VA BASSO-76*, *8VA BASSO-77*, *8VA BASSO-78*, *8VA BASSO-79*, *8VA BASSO-80*, *8VA BASSO-81*, *8VA BASSO-82*, *8VA BASSO-83*, *8VA BASSO-84*, *8VA BASSO-85*, *8VA BASSO-86*, *8VA BASSO-87*, *8VA BASSO-88*, *8VA BASSO-89*, *8VA BASSO-90*, *8VA BASSO-91*, *8VA BASSO-92*, *8VA BASSO-93*, *8VA BASSO-94*, *8VA BASSO-95*, *8VA BASSO-96*, *8VA BASSO-97*, *8VA BASSO-98*, *8VA BASSO-99*, *8VA BASSO-100*.

The character changes back to the “empowerment” character at “You were never no locomotive,”

Musical score for the phrase "You were never no locomotive, Sunflower, you were a sunflower!". The score consists of three staves: a vocal line, a piano accompaniment in treble clef, and a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The vocal line has the lyrics "You were never no locomotive, Sunflower, you were a sunflower!". The piano accompaniment features a melody in the treble clef and a bass line in the bass clef. The tempo is marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). There are dynamic markings *mp* and *FA* (fortissimo) and a *PED.* (pedal) marking. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

and then it goes back to “accusatory” character at “And you Locomotive”

Musical score for the phrase "And you Locomotive, you are a locomotive forget me not!". The score consists of two systems. The first system has a tempo marking  $\text{♩} = \text{ca } 42$  and the lyrics "And you Locomotive, you are a locomotive". The second system has the lyrics "forget me not!". The piano accompaniment is in treble and bass clefs. The tempo is marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). There are dynamic markings *mp* and *FA* (fortissimo) and a *SHORT* marking. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat).

The character changes at measure 173 where the music plays in a jocular manner. The literal action is showing the sunflower to Jack Kerouac; the essential action is excite Jack Kerouac; and it is as if I found a four leaf clover and I’m anxiously driving across town to show it to someone.

$\text{♩} = \text{ca } 96$

So I grabbed up the skeleton thick sun-flower and

*SVA*  
*BASSO*

*mf*

*SVA*

*mf*

*SUB*  $\text{♩} = \text{ca } 288$

stuck it at my side like a scep-ter, *SVA*

*mf*

*f*

*BE LIKE A DOUBLE BASS*

*mp* A 16-BAR SLIGHT *cresc* TO LISTEN

and de - liv - er my

ser - mon to my soul,

From measure 196, “empowerment” character seems to return.

sub  $\text{♩} = \text{ca } 60$  "THE POINT"

8VA lis-ten... We're not our skin of grime, we're not our dread

*f* SUBP 8VA... LOCO

PED.

bleak dust-y im-age-less lo-co-mo-tive, we're all beautiful golden sunflowers inside,

*mp* *mp* 8VA.....

we're blessed by our own seed and golden hairy naked accomplishment-bodies growing into mad

LOCO

MOVE

black formal sunflowers in the sunset, spied on by our eyes under the shadow of the

8VA.....

RAPID ROLL ON TOP OF PIANO (ALL FINGERS EACH HAND) L.R. → STOP (TO TWO STAVES)

*f* *f* *p*

$\text{♩} = \text{ca } 92$  A C C E L  $\text{♩} = \text{ca } 104$

mad lo-co-mo-tive riv-er-bank sun-set Fris-co hil-ly tin-can eve-ning sit-down vi-sion.

At measure 197, the character is literally observing the train drive into the distance; the essential action is to get Kerouac to comfort me; and it is as if I had to tell someone that I had to

give up my dogs.

Starting at measure 199, the character is literally singing a beautiful melody; the essential action is hiding the true sadness inside; it is as if I had to tell my family that everything will be okay even though I found out that I had only a few months left to live.

From measure 211, the character goes into a rage. The essential action is to destroy; and it is as if I had lost everything.

Musical score for piano accompaniment, measures 199-211. The score is written for two staves (treble and bass clef) and includes dynamic markings and performance instructions.

*BEGIN AD LIB. VOCAL SOUNDS - BE THEY HUMAN, ANIMAL, OR MACHINE*

*CONTINUE CRESC.*

*(ff) CONT. CRESC.*

*(MAKE IT JUMP)*

The score consists of five systems of two staves each. The first system (measures 199-201) begins with the instruction "BEGIN AD LIB. VOCAL SOUNDS - BE THEY HUMAN, ANIMAL, OR MACHINE". The second system (measures 202-204) includes the instruction "CONTINUE CRESC." and a dynamic marking of *(f)*. The third system (measures 205-207) includes the instruction "*(ff)* CONT. CRESC." and features a melodic line in the right hand with slurs and accents. The fourth system (measures 208-210) continues the melodic line in the right hand. The fifth system (measures 211-213) begins with the instruction "*(MAKE IT JUMP)*" and features a more rhythmic, jumping melodic line in the right hand.

On measure 236, the character is playing with the train again. The essential action here is recapture the childhood joy; and it is as if I came back home after putting my dog down, finding his old toy, squeezing it, expecting the dog to come running towards me, but realizing that it's not going to happen, and yet not being able to let go of the dog's toy.

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 236-237) shows a vocal line with a 'choo' syllable and a piano accompaniment starting with a 'fff' dynamic. The second system (measures 238-240) continues the vocal line with 'choo' and the piano accompaniment, which includes a 'DRUM ON PNO TOP W/ FINGERS' instruction. The piano part consists of a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand.

For the “final breaths” section, the character is literally sobbing; the essential action is get the attention of someone to console me; and it's as if I came home to my parents and cried.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

Preparing works for speaking-pianist proved to be a difficult challenge as it required the pianist to incorporate unfamiliar disciplines requiring rigorous training into the performance. However, I found that researching theatrical techniques and applying them to my production has improved my playing and brought it closer to the proper performance tradition.

Antonin Artaud's platform of theater has served as a guide to synthesize several theatrical elements in interconnected, compatible ways. Through Artaud's vision, I was given a guideline about how to employ lighting, seating arrangements, and the music to immerse the audience and give them a powerful connection to the work, thus enhancing their experience of *Sunflower Sutra*.

By analyzing action and moment as outlined by *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*, I was able to better contextualize *Sunflower Sutra* in ways that a pianist almost never has to do. Distilling the piece into scenes with specific actions helped me find the character and quality of delivering the words dynamically.

My research into my own body and voice with Kate Wilson gave me better awareness of how my body feels, which gave me a better connection to how certain words in certain emotional context feel to me on a physically instinctive level. Additionally, this research has provided ways to cope with my medical condition.

Though the use of theatrical techniques improved the performance, there have been omissions and failures in this study. First, in my study, I have not analyzed the text by itself. This might come as a surprise, as text analysis would be the first thing an actor would do, but as a pianist with no theatrical training, text analysis did not come to me as an obvious first choice. I



have learned from this study that preparing future performances of speaking-pianist repertoire needs to start with text analysis.

Second, the lighting, though enhancing the performance, did not have the full desired effect as a result of the time and place of the performance. My performance of *Sunflower Sutra* took place at around 7:30pm in Los Angeles, California on a sunny Monday, August 8, 2016. The venue had large windows that let natural light in. Even though the lighting designer and I tried to block the natural light as much as possible with black fabric, we could not fully eliminate it. As a result, for example, when we tried to show a bright saturated yellow to represent the sunflower, we did not achieve the desired effect of overwhelming the audience by washing the entire room in deep saturated yellow. If the performance were to take place in a completely controlled environment with all natural light blocked, we could have represented the sunflower in a more striking way.

Third, because I set out to learn this piece concurrent with my research, I did not have a “baseline” from which to compare a performance with no theatrical considerations to one with the techniques researched. Though it is certain that knowing these techniques and applying them to the performance improves the quality and helps adhere to the proper performance traditions, I cannot accurately document a before-and-after comparison of my performance.

Fourth, for my performance, voice amplification was inexpert. I employed a lavalier microphone that was amplified on a pre-amp which relayed the sound into a sound board that outputted to a 360-degree speaker, which was placed on the lid of the piano. Because of the wide range of dynamics both in the music and speech, *Sunflower Sutra* required a person to control the gain in the voice amplification. Even with these measures, vocal amplification was not sufficiently clear.

Presenting *Sunflower Sutra* theatrically enhanced the performance by immersing the audience in an Artaudian platform of theater, careful delivery of the text, and specific vocal

techniques learned for this recital. I would advise any pianist preparing a speaking-pianist work to find a director and a vocal coach as many of these techniques are better implemented with the assistance of an expert.

In today's society where we are bombarded constantly with visual and auditory stimuli, I would also consider applying theatrical techniques to conventional piano works to enhance an audience's experience. Although incorporating elements outside of the traditional performance decorum could appear gimmicky, I believe that making calculated and informed theatrical decisions can provide the audience with a new context, and thus a different and enhanced experience.

Preparing speaking-pianist works for performance, though difficult, is possible for a pianist with limited theatrical training. Although acquiring theatrical techniques is a long and arduous process, I have found that these skills, even if learned at an elementary level, give the performer new tools that add another level of depth to the performance.

While preparing this performance, I learned that text analysis is crucial; that considerable time and resources must be devoted to the technical aspect of the performance; that the performance space needs to be tightly controlled; and that to be successfully realized, sound, lights, and projections require the expertise of an experienced designer. Preparing speaking-pianist performances requires more experts, more planning and a larger budget.

The theatrical techniques I learned about are not only relevant to the speaking-pianist repertoire. Many of them can be applied to traditional piano recitals, too. For instance, Linklater's vocal exercises can serve well for the pianist when he or she has to speak to the audience from the stage, a skill that seems to be in more demand today.

Furthermore, from my experience attending concerts, musicians are already implementing Artaudian *mise-en-scène* to enhance their performances of conventional piano literature, whether or not they are aware of Artaud and his theatrical philosophy. On YouTube,

among the sea of video recordings of traditionally staged performances, one can find videos of performances with carefully chosen lighting, editing, and composition that create carefully crafted multi-sensory content<sup>44</sup>. Even live performances are increasingly incorporating projections and/or making alternative uses of performance spaces in an attempt to grab the audience's attention. Hopefully, then, this study can also assist musicians who might wish to perform conventional piano literature in more theatrical contexts.

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<sup>44</sup> See Appendix: List of Performance Videos.

## Appendix: List of Works for Speaking Pianist

Year	Composer	Title
1942	John Cage	The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs
1972	George Crumb	The Phantom Gondolier
1973	Meredith Monk	The Tale
1974	George Crumb	Makrokosmos Vol. 1
1984	Meredith Monk	Memory Song
1984	Meredith Monk	Game Masters Song
1984	John Cage	Nowth Upon Nacht
1985	Meredith Monk	One Man Cha-Cha
1986	Meredith Monk	Double Fiesta
1991	Aaron Jay Kernis	Superstar Etude No. 1
1992	Frederic Rzewski	De Profundis
1994	Jerome Kitzke	The Animist Child
1996	Michael Gordon	Hate
1997	Guido Lopez Gavilan	Caleidotropic
1997	Victoria Jordanova	Prayer
1998	Martin Bresnick	For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise
1999	Jerome Kitzke	Sunflower Sutra
2000	Christopher Fox	Vanished Days
2001	Rodney Sharman	The Garden
2001	Randall Woolf	Limbs Akimbo
2002	Frederic Rzewski	Marriage
2004	Derek Bermel	Fetch
2004	Brett Dean	Equality
2008	Jerome Kitzke	There is a Field
2009	Jerome Kitzke	Bringing Roses with Her Words

## Appendix: List of Performance Videos

Uploader	Title	Link
2CELLOS	2CELLOS - Smooth Criminal [OFFICIAL VIDEO]	<a href="https://youtu.be/Mx0xCi1jaUM">https://youtu.be/Mx0xCi1jaUM</a>
dri3s	Petrouchka for Piano	<a href="https://youtu.be/eEshnaZxmY8">https://youtu.be/eEshnaZxmY8</a>
EASTHAMA Duo	Mother Goose Suite//Maurice Ravel//arr. EASTHAMA (FULL VERSION)	<a href="https://youtu.be/xHUNZjAiDWA">https://youtu.be/xHUNZjAiDWA</a>
Eighth Blackbird	eighth blackbird- Meanwhile --- a short film by Manual Cinema	<a href="https://youtu.be/nnde8fNbmbk">https://youtu.be/nnde8fNbmbk</a>
Eighth Blackbird	eighth blackbird- Crashing Through Fences --- Timo Andres (excerpts)	<a href="https://youtu.be/k9RoxlvUH4I">https://youtu.be/k9RoxlvUH4I</a>
JuanRa Rivas	Steve Reich - Violin Fase - Violin Phase (HQ)	<a href="https://youtu.be/i36Qhn7NhoA">https://youtu.be/i36Qhn7NhoA</a>
La Blogothèque	Music Now Festival I Sharon Van Etten	<a href="https://youtu.be/nPF-L9Mqhtk">https://youtu.be/nPF-L9Mqhtk</a>
MatineeTV	NTR Podium: Lavinia Meijer speelt Philip Glass	<a href="https://youtu.be/hV2-zFh3tAU">https://youtu.be/hV2-zFh3tAU</a>
Santi Carcasona	Clapping Music for 5 Performers (by Santi Carcasona)	<a href="https://youtu.be/X2-GP6LV8DM">https://youtu.be/X2-GP6LV8DM</a>
Stone Percussion	Uptown Philharmonic - The Unanswered Question (Charles Ives)	<a href="https://vimeo.com/174864183">https://vimeo.com/174864183</a>
Vic Firth	So Percussion performs "It Is Time" by Steven Mackey	<a href="https://youtu.be/9XXhjuQuldI">https://youtu.be/9XXhjuQuldI</a>
Vic Firth	You Broke it, You Bought it - by Timo Andres	<a href="https://youtu.be/r7FdXCAQnIU">https://youtu.be/r7FdXCAQnIU</a>

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