

a “collective landscape compositions” (*Landschaftskollektivkomposition*), such as *Der Klingende Berg* (2010). Such an interpretation also fits to Brüstle’s point from the previous section regarding his persisting adherence to a compositional authority. This one-to-many concept seems to fit there too; there is still an individual, still in the end the compositional work of a single subjectivity who in the end oversees the structure. What is clear here is the persistent necessity of a schema of authority moving from composer to performer.

What most closely connects the two composers is the emphasis on bringing together and adapting to *heterogeneous* materials into a musical assemblage, whether it be a festival or a composition. This means for both of them an emphasis on individual, made-to-measure organizational and staging structures that always produce out of the composition of various parts a particular attunement of their materials, one that reimagines the relations between audiences and their surroundings. This applies as much to Ott’s coordination of different musician groups in large open spaces as it does Tsangaris’ constitution of small and intimate situations targeted at the individual audience member.

By extension, rather than seeing the biennale as a fixed frame, a supportive administrative framework, DOMTS see this mediating step as itself also able to influence the meaning of individual productions. This is because be it through setting up an experimental system in public space with *Mauersegler*, or working with the soundscape of a warehouse with *Hafenbecken I & II*, DOMTS already have significant experience and know-how working on similar kinds of large-scale projects as composers, i.e. as artists. What this means is that they already possess the proficiency for working at this scale, with all the skills and challenges that brings, while realizing their artistic goals. How these goals shift with the change from working on large-scale compositional projects to a large-scale festival will be examined in the next section.

4.6 The 2016 and 2018 Biennale Editions

4.6.1 Overview

2016 Munich Biennale for New Music Theater

The 2016 Munich Biennale for New Music Theater took place from 28 May to 9 June, 2016. DOMTS’ first biennale featured a total of 14 productions over the course of that 13-day period. The Gasteig complex and the neighbouring Muffatwerk cultural centre created a spatial concentration in which the majority of festival productions took place, with other venues either being within walking distance (e.g. Lothringer13, Einsteinkultur) or had their starting point at the Gasteig (as with the production *ANTICLOCK*). This first edition would feature also an academic sympo-

sium over the second weekend of the festival, inviting musicologists, philosophers, and also practitioners to reflect on the various definitions of music theatre, and what the festival was attempting.

The festival was centred on the theme and subtitle “Original with Subtitles,” or “OmU” in German, a term normally used to indicate films presented in their original language, but with German subtitles (instead of dubs) added. As DOMTS argue in their opening statement, the term creates a tension between original and interpretation (as translation), as well as produces discussion around the nature of the original work, or the “origin” of the work, in context of music and music theatre (Ott and Tsangaris 2016, 55). The concept of the original in music normally means a score or libretto, but thinking about the phenomenon of subtitling is a way of confounding the relationship between interpreter and author through the shift of medium and language (*ibid.*).

While they do not totally argue in their opening text for a rejection of the score in favour of other ways of doing performance, they position the score more as a tool for performers to work with in their realization of a music theatre work. DOMTS observe that it is “in the interplay of sound, scene, space, and audience” that work becomes perceivable, i.e. first in its performance, rather than in its existence as score (Ott and Tsangaris 2016, 55). This prioritization of performance can be seen as a link to their respective artistic practices as well, where in both cases the score is secondary to its realization in the world.

The prioritization of the performance is understood by DOMTS to extent to the audience as well. They claim that because of the way the festival has been programmed, each audience member will have their own experience of the festival and “[i]n this manner the member of the audience will become a co-author of an original work” (Ott and Tsangaris 2016, 59). This implies a shift towards the receiver as the final arbiter of the festival experience, positioning them and their individual experience at its centre. It however also hints at an understanding of the biennale as composed by DOMTS as a whole unit that is meant to elicit this co-authorship of the receiver, a connection to both composers’ earlier artistic compositions of music theatre events.

A further dimension of this approach is that a “subtitling” as a line of flight away from the “original” is a way of addressing the primacy of performativity without giving up using the score as an important tool for making music created by the Western classical music tradition. While the role of the score has been examined in the two composers’ respective practices, DOMTS together also discuss how it can co-exist with a performative approach to music theatre at the biennale, writing:

And as it is well-known that all translations are also inventions—because there are no explicit translations, not to mention translations faithful to the original version—the transmitters in the genre of music theatre are always co-authors who

put the existing writing system through their personal comprehension filter and enrich it, comment on it, and alter it in accordance with the translation. ... [This is also the case] when composers in the course of a so-called “scoring” transform non-musical contents into their staves. Even more so, however, in such cases where scenic or spatial considerations should be translated in to a musical system of symbols. (Ott and Tsangaris 2016, 57)

In this quote, both the translations of music theatre performers who interpret scores in their own ways, as well as the translations of composers who score non-musical contents on staves are touched on. In both cases, the translation is understood to be subjective and situated—implicitly distancing itself from the understanding of the score as absolute and immutable (see also Ott and Tsangaris 2018a, 72). However, the score is not let go of entirely, its usefulness and position within the Western music tradition is nevertheless acknowledged as an important part in the formulation of new forms of music theatre.

Further evidence of this approach can be seen in the Biennale’s decision to dedicate the entirety of its 2016 catalogue to a glossary of terms related to music theatre, compiled by writer Ann Cotton. DOMTS state in their introduction to the glossary that it is intended for

visitors ... who want to assume that the masonry is fragile and allow new species of music theatre to find nesting holes and niches. Reciprocatively bowing, compositional thinking and its terminology clear the stage for one another, watching each other closely, expectant of new moves (Münchener Biennale et al. 2016, 4)

They emphasize in this quote from the introduction to their glossary a movement back and forth that should exist between compositional practice and reflection, and writing on the same. This is an indirect but constructive criticism of the traditional primacy of both the original score, and also a musicological apparatus that is often more descriptive than receptive of artistic practice.

2018 Munich Biennale for New Music Theater

The 2018 Munich Biennale for New Music Theater took place from 2 to 12 June, and presented a total of 15 productions over a variety of different venues both in the festival’s traditional home in the Gasteig complex, as well as across various other venues across the city of Munich. This second edition of the festival under DOMTS was given the theme “Private Matters,” continuing from the first festival’s theme, “Original with Subtitles (OmU).” For their second festival, the artistic directors decided to put a greater emphasis on the adherence of individual productions to this theme. This meant that productions coming from the platforms that they ran had

to clearly relate to this theme than in the previous year in order to be selected to receive a commission.¹⁴

While the theme of the first biennale focused more on internal issues within the field of music with its emphasis on the relationship between score and performance, the second biennale's theme was more explicitly political, or relating to broader social issues. The issue of private matters was meant to address the shifting definitions of privacy and identity in light of digitization and the advent of big data. DOMTS argue that an effective way to grasp these highly complex changes to our daily reality is through the lens of artistic practice, which specializes in "abstraction and sensualisation" in ways that make these changes graspable and understandable to those they affect.

Their programming is still ultimately developed as a response to the realities of the New Music community though. As they write:

While the fine arts, cinema, documentary films, literature, and acting in many places are dealing intensively with the subject, up until now original projects in contemporary music theatre dealing with the rich impact of the metamorphosis of "private matters" have to be searched for with a magnifying glass. We would like to work against this situation with the coming biennale and therefore we are conceiving this festival as a musical-dramatic research space for researching a "private matter." (Münchener Biennale et al. 2018, 9)

While the number of projects from the other artistic traditions listed dealing with issues of privacy and/or big technology companies are too numerous to count, contemporary classical music (CCM) practitioners that create works that address these kinds of topical issues are basically non-existent.¹⁵ As a way of addressing this issue, DOMTS thus understand their role as artistic directors of the biennale to program works that will in their view fit better into the wider artistic field's engagement with topical issues.

Apart from the choice of this thematic direction, a more tangible way in which the topic was addressed structurally was in the biennale's decision to present works for very small audiences, making performances more intimate and "private." This was compensated for by raising the number of performances of each production,

14 Daniel Ott, interview by the author, Berlin, 28 October, 2017.

15 To name just one exhibition, see the large group exhibition "Globale: Global Control And Censorship" at ZKM Karlsruhe that dealt with these issues, which ran from 03 October, 2015 to 31 July, 2016. Of course examples of CCM practices addressing these issues do exist, the point is that they are however extremely few. One music theatre work dealing with the issue of the private sphere is *iScreen, YouScream* by Brigitta Muntendorf premiered at the ECLAT Festival in Stuttgart in 2017. NB Muntendorf also presented a production at the 2016 Munich Biennale, *Für immer ganz oben* (2016).

as well as keeping the average length of performances short. This meant that festivalgoers each had to navigate their own way through the labyrinth of presentations spread over the city. Additionally, as each venue was used only once, there was a lesser (spatial) concentration of activity around the Gasteig complex. Interestingly, this led to a weakening of the biennale's "festival community," in that because festivalgoers were so spread out and involved in their own (private) itineraries that they had to book in advance, it became more difficult to participate in a larger community of people all seeing the same works and discussing them during intermissions, as the festivalgoing experience was so fragmented.

4.6.2 Biennale Platforms

Both with Henze and with Ruzicka, productions mostly consisted of a chain of collaborations between specialized actors beginning with the commissioning by the festival of the composer, and ending with the performance during the biennale. This represents an interdisciplinary approach to music theatre production, in that specialists with several different kinds of expertise work together to create a coherent whole. Their interrelationships remain limited though: an essentialist, "container model" of disciplinary expertise is maintained, and the division of labour is not transgressed in any meaningful way. The score and the composer, its author, lie at the nexus of these interrelationships, and legitimate them.

A new characteristic of the revised festival has been a so-called "platform" format for developing productions. Platforms have taken place in at least 8 cities beginning already three years before the first biennale began, including twice in Munich, as well as in Stamberger See, Bern, Rotterdam, Buenos Aires, Lima, Hong Kong, and Athens (Munich Biennale n.d.). For each platform, DOMTS first invited a group of young creative talents—not just composers, but also writers, directors, dramaturgs, scenographers, etc. There is no application process, rather the directors rely on their own networks, as well as those of their contacts in the respective cities the platforms take place in to be referred the names of a number of artists who will probably stand to profit from the exercise, preferably within the target age group of potential participants of around 25–35. The goal is to have artists that know each other as little as possible beforehand condense into groups over the duration of the platform, which then have the possibility of being picked by the artistic directors to be supported in making a production for the biennale itself. The directors conceive of the platforms as a kind of laboratory, or an invitation for collaborators to come and experiment through their provisioning of a frame in which to do so.

Tsangaris has recounted in an interview with the author a rough outline of how the platforms work, though DOMTS point out that the format is constantly being adapted: A given platform begins with two days of introductions and input

on the festival topic by the artistic directors. This means getting often into technical or theoretical discussions, forming common definitions, and establishing a solid foundation for working together. Subsequently, the artists are given three days' time to interact and experiment with one another. These unstructured days are only punctuated by common plenum sessions in the evenings that focus mainly on practical considerations, such as the acquisition of necessary materials.

After this period, another group plenum session takes place, and Tsangaris says that in his experience so far, groups have always formed by themselves. Normally, around this time the platform participants have created the preliminary sketches of somewhere between two to four projects. These projects are then further supported by the biennale for a further four months, after which time there comes an internal showcase of the sketches the groups have developed. The artistic directors at this point select a certain project to be included in the biennale, though they encourage all groups to continue their work together, even if not selected.¹⁶ Selection criteria for what progresses past this stage have, according to the directors, varied over the course of the different platforms, but are based on several criteria, including the potential that DOMTS see in the project, its relevancy to the yearly theme of the biennale, and programming a diversity of different approaches and styles for the biennale. For the second biennale in 2018, the relationship of the productions to the overarching theme of the biennale played a greater role than in the first iteration. Daniel Ott says that fundamentally though, there is an interest in supporting as wide a range of projects as possible, with decision-making seeming to happen more in terms of a general feeling of quality of the group.¹⁷

The format of the platforms is not something stable that the directors are realizing in different cities with a fixed methodology. There also does not seem to be a desire among the directors to solidify it into a fixed and exportable format. Rather, the approach is one of exchange with local partners, and adapting to the needs of the particular local contexts and music theatre communities with whom they are working. The platforms are also visibly changing as the directors gain more experience doing them.

The first platforms for the 2016 biennale were very large, with the first having 30 people, an enormous number to work with, that was then reduced, particularly in the platforms for the 2018 biennale, which have been in general with much smaller groups. In another instance, after feeling that the first platform had too many directors and not enough composers, they invited no directors for the second platform, before realizing that they needed more than that, and invited more

16 Manos Tsangaris, interview by the author, Berlin, 03 May, 2017. He adds that some groups in Athens continued working together despite not being selected.

17 Daniel Ott, interview by the author, Berlin, 28 October, 2017.

for the next iteration of the platform: the platform format is constantly being fine-tuned, and adapted to suit the creative goals of the directors.

This approach offers DOMTS an alternative to the traditional programming of a fixed combination of composers, librettists, and directors set in advance of knowing what will come of it. To program through commissioning often limits directors' ability to sculpt the content of their festival and its adherence to its stated theme, which has been usually set in advance. The pair work around this limitation by pre-screening first a large pool of artists, and then inviting them to work together (in the aforementioned week-long intensives), during which time several sketches emerge. DOMTS are then able to exercise a larger amount of thematic control over the biennale through the internal showcase stage of the platforms. The groups that are formed over the week-long intensives, and who have had 2–4 months to prepare a sketch together, are then subjected to a second round of selection. This approach of delaying the official commissioning of works is unique, and allows the pair to have a better idea of the commissions before they are finalized, giving them also the opportunity to more closely tailor these to their vision of the upcoming festival. In an interview with David Roesner, Daniel Ott says that this decision was to avoid

sit[ting] at our desks with lists of names to match up in some way—let's put librettist x with composer y and stage designer z and see if it works—but instead [to] invite people to workshops ... and see who gets on or who rejects each other.” (Roesner 2017, 92)

These platforms thus put emphasis on team-building, interpersonal skills, and capacity to collaborate rather than the highly-individualist mindset of much of the older style of music theatre work, or decisions made from above. The traditional division of labour that Ott mentions above between composer, librettist, stage designer, etc., is accompanied by the mystification and essentialization of these roles, in particular those of the composer and director. Often associated with individual geniuses, they do not give insight into their working methods; they are black boxes, with clearly-defined inputs and outputs.

Thus, the decision to make platforms instead seems risky but potentially highly interesting: involving all actors throughout all stages of the production process makes it difficult to fall back on these older divisions of labour. There is a process first of working together, pooling available competencies and resources, and working as a group, rather than a clear methodology for producing performances (as in the interdisciplinary model above).

What this implies is rather radical. It means that the music theatre production has no specific blueprint for how it is created, i.e. does not always start with a score, or with a libretto, or with a staging, rather all these aspects are conceived of together by a group of people, rather than an individual. This has resulted in biennale productions often developing novel and idiosyncratic formats for presenta-

tion, for the most part rejecting the traditional operatic regime and infrastructure in favour of independent music theatre (as defined by Rebstock 2017, 523ff).¹⁸

In the 2018 edition of the festival, the work *München "Ø" Trilogie* by Trond Reinholdtsen is a decent example of this phenomenon, in that, while closely related to the traditional opera format, the relation was mostly through the means of commentary: operatic apparatus and tradition became the subject and premise of the work. However, its irreverent treatment of the same, combined with its multiple stations and level of audience engagement, mean that it should clearly be viewed as a rejection of the operatic approach instead.

Other productions consisted variously of such forms as a music theatre in the form of a developing installation over the course of an evening (*The Navidson Records*, 2016), or of a monstrous installation brought to sounding by two explorers (*Hundun*, 2016). There are also music theatre projects in the form of an exhibition and accompanying unannounced interventions in public space (*Staring at the Bin*, 2016), as well as in both a swimming pool (*Für immer ganz oben*, 2016) and a bathtub (*Bathtub Memory Project*, 2018). One took the form of an estate auction (*Nachlassversteigerung*, 2018), another reconstructed a state assassination (*Ein Porträt des Künstlers als Toter*, 2018), while yet another took place in a micro concert hall purpose-built on Max-Joseph Platz in front of the Bayrische Staatsoper (*Tonhalle*, 2018).¹⁹

Thinking about the platforms as a strategy to produce such a diversity of approaches to music theatre production from practitioners that include not just composers, but also many other kinds of artists, also from different parts of the world, can be compared with a similar situation in the field of dance addressed in Chapter 3. There, dance scholar Erin Brannigan argued that as dance in the 20th century moved away from its external reference of ballet, and by extension its historical tradition and set of references, the art form slid into a perennial crisis (understood in the etymological sense of a constant state of having to decide, an enduring trial) centred around the question *what is dance?* which becomes as crucial to answer as it is impossible to answer systematically, only situatively. Dance scholar Sally Gardner was also quoted, adding that "in ballet the ultimate point of choreographic reference is always the externally generated norms or ideals of the ballet style – what [dance scholar Laurence] Louppe calls an 'absolute reference'" (Gardner 2008, 58). The rejection of this absolute reference would take the form of so many individualized dance practices, situated in particular bodies and contexts. Far from being

18 While opera houses count among the co-producers of some biennale productions, they have been performed at the houses' "experimental" theatres, not their main stages, e.g. the Neue Werkstatt (Staatsoper Unter den Linden) or Tischlerei (Deutsche Oper).

19 Names of the commissioned individuals have been omitted for brevity, please refer to the appendix for names as well as further information about the biennale's productions per year.

unhealthy, this constant answering has led to a flourishing of extremely interesting dance practices in past decades.

In this musical context, the “absolute reference” external to the work can clearly still be seen in for instance Ruzicka’s search for the “essence” of a new direction of music theatre work in the last era of the biennale. There is for him still a modernist logic of innovation and teleology guiding his strategy for commissioning works, searching for a new path forward when the old one no longer can be followed. His experimentation with the operatic format thus carries with it an undertone of the ends (finding a new way of making music theatre, a new take on the absolute reference) justifying the means (deviating from music theatre norms).

DOMTS’ approach does not have a master plan in this way; productions are more made to be answers to the question of “what is music theatre?”, which works still as a guide, but less as a map and more as an arrow. As Tsangaris has said in an interview, it is no longer an affirmative definition, but rather a matter of exploring possibilities.²⁰ The diverse, heterogeneous productions that result from the commissioning strategy are then all in their own ways answers to this question, without the pretense of ever being *the* definitive answer, rather just *a* situated, site-specific, time-specific answer. “Right here and now, with these things and people, at this place and time of day, this is music theatre.” This is because the question must be answered by practitioners in many different ways; a diversity of answers are therefore what the duo are searching for. The question works more as an engine for experimentation, rather than a methodology for eventually finding a music-teleological solution for how to go forward, as seemed to have been the case with Ruzicka and his biennales, as explored in section 4.4.3. The commissioning process itself is no codified or specific process or method, rather many contacts, conversations, demonstrations, tests, run-throughs that lead up to receiving a final commission are what form this system. This culminates in this aforementioned meta-narrative of heterogeneity; a diversity that runs across the field of commissioned productions.

Looking at the large number of different kinds of music theatre practices, from swimming pool to bathtub to documentary theatre, it also resonates again with the view put forward in Chapter 3 that this more situated answering of the question of what the term is or can do allows for it to better interface with the interdisciplinary performing arts sphere more generally. This is because by eliminating the need for external reference, for an adherence to a specific history and tradition prescribed by the festival, music theatre projects are (*finally*) given the freedom to exist as hybrid, transdisciplinary entities. What results is a flourishing of individual combinations, of partial, situated answers to the question of what music theatre can be.

20 Manos Tsangaris, interview by the author, Berlin, 03 May, 2017.

A further aspect is the ability of this constellation to question the most fundamental assumptions about independent music theatre through the views of artists with different training and historical associations. This can be related to the concept of the productive outsider as elaborated by Marcus Miessen, described as someone who forcefully inserts themselves, as a dilettante, into a pre-existing debate, and thereby insisting on becoming an actor within a given constellation or set of stakeholders. Their outsider status means they have few internalized disciplinary norms, producing situations where knowledge is able to be created unpredictably, and where there is no care taken towards “preventing friction between certain agents in the existing force field” (Miessen 2010, 97). This allows for a “forceful injection of external knowledge” that has the possibility to produce unexpected forms of change (98).

This kind of insertion is not totally unforeseeable or alien however. Miessen continues that the outside status cannot be total, but rather that, in entering into this debate e.g. here on music theatre, they also agree to accept at least some of the rules of the game (Miessen 2010, 102). In the case of the biennale platforms for instance, the platform format and its outcome as some kind of music theatre production, however unconventional, are aspects that are to be agreed upon in advance. The mentoring role of the directors and their team, which can go so far as to intervene in productions, is further evidence that this questioning nevertheless takes place against the background of an “arena” with set rules. In other words, there are also certain conditions that are not necessarily productive to question in a particular instance, rather the focus is on the questioning of the parameters of the end product.

This system that is being described effectively enables non-composers to participate in the co-determination of the field’s future. This is a fundamentally more open system, one that resembles the transdisciplinarity of other performing arts fields, like dance and theatre, that have also begun to produce works in this way. Transdisciplinarity is understood here as that the artists are participating together in the development and constitution of the conceptual framework of the performance. They move across (=trans) the boundaries of their earlier training and associated division of labour, and focus more on holistic approach to conceiving of the work.

A similar definition can be adapted from philosopher Wolfgang Welsch’s theory on transculturality. He identifies two seemingly divergent ways of characterizing transculturality, namely the possibilities of *homogenization* and *diversification* (1999, 200–201). Homogenization would be that through this mixing of disciplines (which is replacing Welsch’s concept of culture here), as happens in the biennale platforms, the unique valuable characteristics of a discipline are lost as they move towards an undifferentiated middle. For instance, if the composer is not afforded complete creative control of their score, then they are no longer in control of the

area they know best (regarding instrumentation, harmony, etc.), and the end product will end up compromised; in other words, the composer composes better than the director. A tendency towards homogenization means that the uniqueness of the music theatre genre of the opera would thus lose the characteristics that make it special, and differentiate it from cultural offerings e.g. in the theatre or the art gallery (Welsch 1999, 200).

Welsch argues the contrary, holding that this pooling of heterogeneous competencies produces rather an *altered mode of diversification*. The singular mix of artists in e.g. a biennale platform vary in their inventory, and thus in their structure, making them unique, as stated above. Speaking of the result of these processes of self-determined alignment, he argues that they exhibit a level of complexity no less than traditional cultural models, existing simply on a different register. He writes that

it's just that now the differences no longer come about through a juxtaposition of clearly delineated cultures (like in a mosaic), but result between transcultural networks, which have some things in common while differing in others, showing overlaps and distinctions at the same time. The mechanics of differentiation has become more complex—but it has also become genuinely cultural for the very first time, no longer complying with geographical or national stipulations, but following pure cultural interchange processes. (Welsch 1999, 201)

Replacing here again transculturality with transdisciplinarity in this extended metaphor, Welsch can be read as arguing for forms of exchange that are less tied to predetermined disciplinary stereotypes, and related instead to the more complex inter-mixings that happen in the formation of artistic performances by groups of artists. Applied to the issue of music theatre, Welsch's approach allows for a self-determination of the relationship to various references, encouraging hybrid, differentiated, and highly individualistic identities for the artists. Rather than rigid distinctions driven exclusively by disciplinary traditions, and recourse to external references such as the history of the opera or Eurological music, a transdisciplinary, network-based approach is suggested. Significantly, it should be noted, this does not preclude affiliation to a specific artistic genre rich in ideas and references, it only emphasizes that this should occur non-dogmatically and in dialogue with a diverse set of other practices.

As argued in Chapter 3, the best way of navigating and approaching this network-based understanding of artistic practice is from the viewpoint of the individual receiver, who untangles the dense mix of references embedded in this web based on the situated reality of the performative encounter. These situated interpretations of music theatre works connect once again to the open, searching question *what is music theatre?* in that the plethora of partial answers to this question allow for a tailoring of answers towards the contexts in which they find themselves. This

is where the concept of curating as a practice of critical knowledge creation can be related to the directorial, organizational work of DOMTS.

This is because their approach to programming these platforms is with the goal of exploring the rich diversity of ways in which performances can be considered music theatre. They do this through inviting also artists from disciplines outside of music, productive outsiders, but also people like directors, who have experience staging music theatre but perhaps not conceiving of a music theatre idea themselves, as well as artists from different areas of the world, like Buenos Aires or Hong Kong, who for their part bring to the platforms the particular concerns and urgencies of their local arts scenes.

The many different forms of music theatrical result that this produces is the most important curatorial/critical act that DOMTS do with their biennale. This is because they are answering rich questions of definition and showing how many ways different answers can be created to it, provided one remains open to experimentation. These answers are situated within a variety of contexts, such as more from the direction of sound art, new opera, independent music theatre, etc.

They are also through their existence and presence at the biennale an attempt at provoking others to participate in this same productive crisis of definition. Presenting so many “what ifs” (in the sense of “what if this was music theatre”) within one biennale brings other artists, critics, and other receivers into asking themselves the same questions as well. This is because they are taking positive positions within the debate on the future of music (or thinking with Haraway, telling new stories about music’s future). Returning again to Miessen, the current historical constellation is such that nihilism is not enough, and the act of staking these fleshed-out positions within the debate, actually wagering something and risking it, can begin to solve problems (2010, 48–49). The way in which the biennale team do this is what is meant by shifting the frame, or creating a critical curatorial practice. However, this approach is one that is quite different from received notions of curatorial practice in music as an extension or expansion of concert dramaturgy. It is rather about setting up a specific infrastructure for music theatre works to occur.

4.7 Compositional and Curatorial Practices

4.7.1 Musical Means, Curatorial Ethos

It is easy to imagine how a work of station theatre like Tsangaris’ *Mauersegler* or even *Winzig* could serve as a methodological basis for directing a concert or festival; the various stations could e.g. be works by different composers that are chosen by Tsangaris and placed into relationship with each other using his skill in doing this in his own compositions. The composer of evening-length works of their own