

YESCOLAB #1 (29 April 2021)

Accompanying Thoughts

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Composing as Questions and Answers

One way to think about composing is this: To compose means to feel what this music (the piece on which I currently work) needs. Needs at this point of the process, at this “step” on the “way” of composing.

I consider composition mostly as this ability: To feel what my piece needs now, in this moment. And, sure, also as the ability to find methods which put out what is now needed. I consider progress in composing as growth of sensibility in feeling what my piece needs now, and as growth of knowledge about methods how to do it. This knowledge will include the experience which we already collected in other pieces, it will include what we have learned from other composers, it will include the invention of new methods, and it will include confidence to ourselves. Progress in composing means to work with more sensitivity and with less doubts.

Instead of saying: “Composing means to feel what my piece needs now”, I could also say: “Composing means to Listen to what my piece asks me now.” Instead of saying: “Composing means to find methods”, I could also say: “Composing means, to find answers for these questions.” In this perspective, composing is a permanent dialogue between my music and myself. I listen to the question which my piece asks me, and try to find a way to answer this question.

In this respect, asking and answering questions amongst composers (colleagues) in this YESCOLAB, might have a deep connection to the process of composing, and to the progress of composing: Getting new questions from others, and perhaps getting help in finding methods of answering questions.

Subjects which showed up in this session

What are possible constellations between live instruments (voices) and electronics?

How can we work with the relationship between “old” and “new”? For instance: In which way can we include traditional iranian music or traditional european music, when we work with electronics?

What is the effect of a notation which is precise, and what is the effect of a notation which lets space to improvise? Is precision the opposite of freedom, or is precision the precondition of freedom?