

Master Project Proposal
John Andrew Wilhite

Dear Norges musikkhøgskole

With the help of Håkon Thelin, I have been undertaking preliminary research about the piece «La Fine del Pensiero», by double bassist and composer Stefano Scodanibbio. I came to Norges musikkhøgskole largely to study the work of this composer with Håkon Thelin, who is considered by many to be a protégé of the late Scodanibbio.

This work, scored for live solo double bass, with 4 prerecorded tracks of double bass, is a piece for a single musician, a dancer, and a human voice. The text for the piece is by the philosopher Giorgio Agamben, and many of the musical ideas in the piece are also inspired by Agamben's writings upon technique and gesture. These are ideas that are extremely important to how I think about music and performance and I have long been interested in this philosopher's work. And so, a piece that combined my love for these two important figures, Agamben and Scodanibbio, seemed ideal as a Master project.

However, upon receiving the score a few months ago, there was a bit of confusion, and the recorded accompaniment did not seem to match up to the part written in the score. With the help of Håkon Thelin, I contacted Scodanibbio's widow, who, expressing her interest in this piece being performed again, found recordings of the rehearsals of this piece. These recordings, though they will need to be translated, offer answers to the discrepancies between tape and score. I have also contacted archives about getting video footage of the performance.

Also, I have learned that my friend the dancer and choreographer Ingrid Berger Myhre, having done her Masters at the Graduate Center in Montpellier, is connected to the original choreographer for the piece, Herve Diasnas, and Ingrid has agreed to adapt the choreography and dance for the project. Ingrid is becoming one of Norway's most sought after dancers, and we have been discussing collaboration for some time, so this is an extremely exciting opportunity for us.

The other component that I am extremely excited about is the text. Originally in Italian, we will translate the text into English for the production. My close friend Charles Cooper Francis is a translator of Agamben, his most recent translation was Agamben's work *Taste*, published by Seagull Books, and he has agreed to translate the text for this performance.

This project will be very time and research intensive, but it is a project that is extremely close to my heart and central to what I perceive to be the trajectory of my career. Therefore, even though it is challenging, I would like nothing more than to perform this work as my Norges musikkhøgskole Master project.

This project would still take an extra research year, and with Ingrid, we are applying for additional funding, even though the project will certainly be do-able without the extra funds (funding would just be for additional features for the staging, such as light design).

I would need to transcribe the rehearsals, and translate them with Ingrid and Cooper's help, and I would need to transcribe the bass parts that differ from the score. It will be very important for me to rerecord the tape accompaniment parts, as the dialogue between «live self» and «recorded self» is very important for the piece. In addition to the recorded bass part, we want to record and project 4 dance parts that will dialogue with the live movement. The piece is 45 minutes long, so this will take time, but I am very familiar with Scodanibbio's work, and it will not be an unenjoyable task, transcribing and learning all of this material. Håkon Thelin will also be an extremely valuable resource for transcribing extended techniques, and so I will most likely take many of my school lessons with him (more than my current 40%).

We would also like to meet and discuss this work with the original choreographer, and if possible Giorgio Agamben. This will mean travel to France at the very least, and studying the ideas and texts from which the work originates will be extremely important for us. I would like to write a program that will be handed out at the performance that discusses the ideas and importance of the piece.

The staging of the work will be an extremely interesting process also. Even this is some time off, I have already discussed the project with Videographer and choreographer Maja Hannisdal, and sound artist Lasse Passage to really design every aspect of the production. We are unsure where we would do the final performance, as it really depends on what external funding we receive, but ideas have been Black Box theater in Oslo, or Issue Project Room in New York, from whence I have moved to Oslo. However, everyone involved is extremely excited about the project, and from our discussions, I know that we will all give 110 percent on the project.

Sincere thanks and best wishes,
John Andrew Wilhite

