

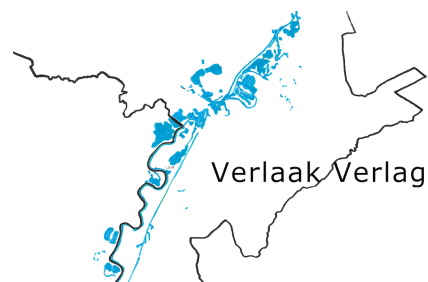
Formation de Philip

Piano & electronics

Written for Philip Thomas
Commissioned by Another Timbre, UK

February 2020

Maya G. L. Verlaak



1. Instrument & material

Piano

Electronics:

1 microphone for piano

XLR cable

Interface for microphone and computer

Stereo active speakers

Jack cables (2)

Max/Msp application on computer (attached to this document)

Pre-recorded: Voice

2. Concept

An untrained singer was asked to sing the pitches C, D, E, G, A, B (she sings them as do, re, mi, sol, la, si). She was asked to sing each pitch until it was correct, and then to continue the process with the next pitch. She was not given a starting pitch. Her only reference is a computer voice, which in response to her singing, names the actual pitch she is singing.

For instance:

She sings “Do” and the computer says “mi” which means she is trying to sing a C but she actually sings an E.

She does not know the theory of musical intervals and does therefore not have any context. For each pitch, she sang many others; higher, lower, closer or further away from the target pitch, and finally ending at the target pitch.

Her process has been recorded and implanted in a computer application. In *Formation* the pianist is required to route each sung pitch closer to the target pitch. This task is accomplished by performing chords written in a maze-structured score and in communication with the computer application. Depending on which route in the score is taken, and which note in the chord is played louder, the pianist will take the voice closer or further away from the target pitch.

The performance can stop at any moment. In the process of performing, some target pitches might have been accomplished a few times throughout the performance and others might have never found their resolution. The performer decides when to stop.