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1 Introduction

“Poetry is prose bewitched, the visual image of a thought, the sound of an idea.”
(Mina Loy 157)

The fact that music and literature are closely linked arts is hard to deny, since performance and music have been closely connected to poetry already since Ancient Greece (Garnham). Still, the topic of convergence of the two creative fields tends to be regarded critically (Kirby Smith 9); a fact that might have to do with the circumstance that performance, or to be more specific, orality, has been regarded as a danger to the elegance or nobleness of the lyric art (find source). This can be seen in the development of the relatively young subgenre of performance poetry. During the past decades, “performance poets in Britain have conquered pubs, small theatres, bars, radio programmes, literary festivals, and the internet”, as they also have in the United States (Novak 29). Still, many voices remain critical and see the subgenre as a reduction of quality and a danger to the high arts (Wheeler, 127).

Despite the fact that one of the most significant criteria of poetry performed live seems to be the development from imagined sound (in written poetry) to concrete sound (and, in performance poetry, additionally the fact that the audience has to be taken into account in whatever way) (Novak 30), the possibility of (explicit) sound being of benefit to a poem still leaves room for discussion. An especially interesting phenomenon in performance poetry in this context that can be traced back to the genre’s establishment in the 1980s is the addition of musical elements (Sfetcu, Kaleidoscope 65-66). Since performance poetry is aware of the presence of its audience like no other form of poetry, the addition of music and musical elements seems to be a natural step to connect to the listeners, since few things in life are so intuitively accessible to us as music. Pinsky remarks that “every speaker, intuitively and accurately, courses gracefully through immensely subtle manipulations of sound” leading to the impression that, without even noticing it, “[i]t is almost as if we sing to one another all day.” (3) This does not only imply that language and musicality are closely related, especially in oral speech, but also that everyone can naturally relate to and use this musical aspect of language. Furthermore, not only can we produce these manipulations of sound; we can, of course, also hear and understand them. This natural gift of musical understanding that people seem to share makes it only natural to be used in performance poetry. Therefore it becomes a powerful tool for connecting

to an audience and conveying additional meaning. Although Robinson adverts to the fact that “musical phrases and chords do not normally have conventional meanings as words and sentences in a language do”, she also argues that music still has expressive qualities (4). As a consequence, musical features become an interesting object of observation when trying to better understand the specifics of performance poetry, leading to the question to what extent music can add meanings to performed poems that go beyond the lyrics.

This thesis aims to investigate the role that music plays in performance poetry, which leads to the following specific questions: First, in what ways can musicality occur in and contribute to performance poetry in general and the poem in particular? Secondly, can general patterns of interpretation be deduced when it comes to the contribution of musical elements to meaning in performance poetry? And thirdly, to what extent can spoken word poems accompanied by music be distinguished from songs? These questions are especially important in order to get a proper impression of the role that musical elements can play in this rather young and diverse genre. For this purpose, sources from musicology as well as literary studies will be examined to provide a framework of analysis. This will be used to scrutinise specific examples, i.e. poems that belong to the genre of performance poetry and, in different ways, use elements of music, with regard to the theory compiled before. It will be argued that several elements of music, such as the use of instruments, melodies, sound patterns, singing and chanting can be used to contribute to a poem’s performance. Furthermore, it will be demonstrated that these elements do not only accompany, but also support the lyrical part of the poem and that patterns and categories of interpretation can help to investigate this matter, also with regard to a distinction from the genre of song, since the most important element in performance poetry still is literature.

Chapter Two of this thesis will try to outline the relationship between music and language in general in order to get a better understanding for the potential of musical contribution to a literary text. Chapter Three will provide an overview of the occurrence of music in performance poetry, which, in further detail, will contain an insight into the connection between poetry and music in general as well as a brief introduction to performance poetry as a genre. Furthermore, the challenge of finding distinctive features that separate musical performance poetry from the genre of song will be taken, including the consideration of problems such as how to see the genre of rap in that

discussion, which, despite differences, tends to be regarded as the most common form of performance poetry (“performance poetry” 243). However, since the lines seem to be blurred, it is not expected that a clear distinction can be made here. Chapter Five will discuss specific musical features that can be and/or are used in performance poetry and, furthermore, ways in which these can be identified via categories of analysis. This might not only help in distinguishing between the different genres but also to better understand the application of these features in performance poetry as well as their importance. Chapter Four will provide a framework of musical elements and their influence on emotional perception, which will include a specification of what usually is considered as musical in comparison to orality in general. The latter one will be crucial to specify the value of musical elements in contrast to other acoustic elements and will therefore include a definition of music as such. Chapter Five will try to put the musical terms elaborated in the previous chapter into larger context in order to find categories of techniques and methods that are used in the genre to use music as an addition to the lyric text. In chapter Six, the compiled information and theory will be used and tested on specific examples of performance poems. The selected poems will serve as a representative sample, covering various approaches to musical performance poetry. Their analysis will be expected to give better insight into the ways musical elements can be used to change, intensify and/or enrichen a performed poem; for this purpose, also a close look will be taken at a poem’s text. The last chapter will, finally, reflect on the outcome of the poems’ analysis and compare the findings with the theory discussed previously.

Due to the constraints of this thesis, certain aspects that might be considered relevant will not be included. First of all, it will not be possible to discuss the visual aspects of performance poetry. Although it is undeniable that visual elements are equally important to acoustic ones, it is not the intention of this work to cover every aspect that might be considered as distinguishing performance poetry from other lyric genres, but to identify and analyse acoustic and, to be more specific, predominantly musical elements. For the same reason, non-musical elements of voice will only be analysed insofar as they contribute to the musical analysis. Biological and/or medical aspects of voice production will not be analysed. Finally, regarding Chapter Five, it will be only possible to analyse a selected number of poems, due to the circumstance that this analysis will be a qualitative one (not a quantitative one). Furthermore, the selected poems will have been chosen for their specific features rather than their degree of

familiarity. Also, the analysis will have to be seen with respect to the relation between words and music, and therefore will probably not work as a complete analysis of the poem itself (as this, for example, would also have to include visual information).

2 Language and music – similar or different?

This chapter serves as a basis for the analysis of musical elements in the following chapters. Since it can be said that poetry in general “has as its upper limit music” (Bernstein 11), it might be argued that performance poetry, especially with its focus on oral presentation, could be considered the ultimate interface between language and music. Consequently, it will be important to take a closer look at the relation of these two in order to better understand the unique characteristics of performance poetry. Therefore, not only the general similarities between language and music will be discussed, but also their differences will be taken into account. Also, a definition of the term “musical” will be elaborated in comparison to the terms “sound” and “noise”. Also, a first effort will be made to consider the ways how music might contribute to language in general, regarding music as a meaning making process. This will serve as a basis for a closer analysis in the following chapters.

2.1 Structural similarities and more

If one looks for similarities between language and music, it is important to consider structural aspects first. For this purpose, a study by Fabb and Halle focusing on the relation of stress and rhythm in language, poetry, and music shall be closer examined. Fabb and Halle based their theory on the grouping of syllables dependent on stress and related it to the grouping of timing slots in music (5). The results showed that the element of stress in a language is a decisive factor for the rules of prosody, and that English, for example, is distinguishable from other languages due to its rules of assigning stress (9). It is further claimed that the main difference between a text in verse in comparison to prose is the grouping of words in lines in the first, since “[i]n all types of poetry the text is invariably split into lines: absent the line, the text is prose, no matter how ‘poetic’” (10). Considering the fact that according to Fabb and Halle great similarities between word stress and the metricity in a line exist, and that metrical structure also plays an important role in music, the powerful connection between language and music seems undeniable (15-16). Since their comparison between stress in words, metre in poetry, and metre in music showed similar outcome (such as the grouping of pairs and triplets of words/notes), they explained the results by alluding to the fact that “language, poetry, and music are all products of the human mind”, for which reason “it is perhaps not surprising that we find the same mechanism operating in these three domains” (20). Although the described study has been criticised by Vaux

and Myler, claiming that Fabb and Halle's approach "leaves them unable to account for many important aspects of metre", they agree on the fact that music and metre share fundamental similarities (50).

Roberts, however, looks beyond the structural aspects of music and language and sees similarities in a biological as well as cultural context (56). He points out the importance of language and music both being cultural phenomena. Music, as he notes, can be found in all cultures, while "no recognizably human group has been encountered which does not have language", whereas he also pays attention to signed languages (56-7). He also notes that both language and music are reserved for humans. Although animals, of course, do communicate, "no other species, primates included, appear to have the human capacity for mastery of a discrete, algorithmic system which pairs sounds and meanings over an infinite domain" (Roberts 57). When it comes to music, the idea of it being unique to humans has been challenged by various authors; Gupflinger and Kaltenbrunner, for example, refer to studies that have shown that

non-human species also have musical skills [...] and display entrainment to auditory stimuli [...] Animal species such as grey parrots, cockatoos, elephants, primates, pigeons, and carps have been found to be able to discriminate between different composers or different genres, prefer music to silence, or move in rhythmic synchronicity to the musical beat [...] According to further studies, some parrot species such as grey parrots and cockatoos have musical skills and a natural feeling for rhythm [...] Grey parrots, for example, can repeat musical patterns and have the ability to reproduce sounds. (Introduction)

However, Fitch also states that, although musical abilities like "learned songs in songbirds" can be found, musical capacities and distribution among animals is limited (87-89). What seems to make humans' access to music distinguishable from that of animals and their impressive abilities is the capacity of entrainment, the "coordination of action around a commonly perceived, abstract pulse" which "is a uniquely human ability intimately related to music", as well as that of group synchronisation (Roberts 57).

Another crucial similarity between language and music is that people seem to have a predisposition for both, since "both language and music are readily acquired by children without explicit tuition" (Roberts 57). Very similar to the way children acquire language in the first years of their lives in an impressive speed – a task which, theoretically, seems almost impossible, while in practice works intuitively –, music is something we learn by being confronted with it. Fitch relates this fact to Darwin's

theory of a so-called musical protolanguage, similar to that of whales or birds, from which today's language and music systems have been developed. This concept could not only explain why music is so intuitively accessible to us, but also the circumstance that it can "attract so much of our time and interest, and seem to have such deep and powerful effects on our emotions" and has always been shared all over the world (89-90).

This also leads to Roberts' last point: Although music and language can be found in every culture, plenty of distinguishable concepts and systems do exist, becoming apparent in different languages and dialects on one hand, and different musical genres and systems on the other. Although musical genres might be "generally less well-defined and less connected to political borders than differences among languages, [they] are also cultural constructs" (58); looking at Indian music shows this circumstance very clearly. Although, due to Greek influences, Indian and European music both are octave-repeating, the Indian scale is divided into 22 microtones, also called quarter tones (which is not entirely correct, since two 'quarter' tones do not equal one semitone in European music, due to different frequencies) (Beinicke 3). This division into smaller musical units gives Indian music not only a very distinct sound, but also changes the whole perception of music as such, since an ear used to chromaticism finds it hard to fully conceive these unusual nuances.

Although the question of meaning in music will be discussed to its full extent at a later point in this thesis, an aspect of it shall be mentioned here regarding the similarities between music and language. Davies points out that music can be 'understood', and "[w]e experience music not merely as a succession of notes and chords but as developing, recasting, and otherwise exploring its materials in a connected way" (121). This assumption is indeed comparable with the exploration of language, since 'understanding' a language (or a statement, to be more specific), does not merely mean to know the letters and words, or understand the phrases – understanding means to know about the relations of the chunks to each other, as well as to understand the subtext. In these aspects, music and language are very similar, although in music, there are many more questions left when it comes to the exploration of what this subtext might look like and how we are able to access it.

2.2 Differences - Potential contribution of music to language

While language and music share a wide-ranging field of similarities, or, as Roberts puts it, even identity (60), there are, of course, also basic differences. These shall be closer examined since they will later become relevant for the question of musical contribution in poems. However, only such differences will be considered that are about, deal with, or might have an effect on perception, since only those aspects will become relevant for the subsequent investigation. Therefore, the question in this chapter is not only in which ways music differs from language, but also, what can music do to a listener that 'simple' language cannot?

2.2.1 Limitations

In his attempt to compare music and language, Fitch states that "[a] major challenge confronting comparisons between language and other cognitive domains is that we know so much about language at a detailed format level, compared to other domains of human cognition" (82). Despite this fact, various experts from different fields have paid attention to the relation between music and language. According to Roberts, the probably most crucial difference between the two capacities is music's lack of referential semantics, or better said, "that music lacks the kind of meaning which contributes to our beliefs about the world". He stresses that this must not be interpreted as if music had no meaning at all, since "[m]usic clearly has 'affective' or 'connotative' meaning" (62). However, while language is able to relate to our thought systems like knowledge, reasoning and belief, music is not connected to any of them:

"Music simply does not do this: it is pointless to ask what the entailments of a piece of music are, or what any kind of music – from a simple lullaby to the greatest works of the most sophisticated cultural traditions – contributes to our beliefs about the world. Or again: there is no sense at all in which a piece of music, of any kind, can be said to be true or false." (Roberts 61)

Walton also comments on the fact that apart from explicit program music or music that is combined with words, such as opera, the music considered as 'pure' has received a very different perception in modern times than representational arts such as painting (excluding abstract painting, of course) and literature. However, despite the general view on music, he points out that distinguishing between these different forms is rather difficult, since "[t]here is no sharp line between explicit and subtle program music, or

between subtle program music and music that is as unprogrammatic as it gets, and one can be puzzled about the location even of fuzzy lines”. Consequently, the assumption that music cannot have a representational function might be considered a bit hasty (Walton 57-8). Regarding this contention, one could argue that, if music can have a representational function, it also might have a referential one, since everything that is represented also refers to some aspect of knowledge, or better said, a concept in our head for which it stands (as well as, for example, a tree on a painting refers to the concept or idea of a real tree in our head, since we know what a tree is) (Swiggers 11). Nevertheless, it must be remarked that although Walton makes a convincing point here. His argument is based on the fact that the lines between music accompanied by words are blurred. This seems to lead to the logical consequence that music can only be representational if it is, at least to a certain degree, connected to language.

Although Roberts also emphasises the “extraordinary power of music”, ascribing it a connection to emotional psychology, he immediately continues with stressing the fact that the same thing applies to language (62). This, however, leads to the question whether there is any aspect of music at all that is unique to the phenomenon in comparison to language, and therefore proves its worth to language specific mediums.

2.2.2 Opportunities of music

The observation that music must have exceptional traits that set themselves apart from other phenomena becomes clear in McDermott and Hauser’s statement:

“Music is apparently universal, being found in every known human culture, past and present. It is incorporated into a vast array of cultural events, including weddings and funerals, religious services, dances, and sporting events, as well as solitary listening sessions. It can make people feel happy or sad, so much so that music is central to modern advertising campaigns[...] Music stands in sharp contrast to most other enjoyable human behaviors (eating, sleeping, talking, sex) in that it yields no obvious benefits to those who partake of it” (29).

Hence, the remarkable thing about music is that, for ages, it has been an essential part of human life, without any obvious benefit. The fact that music all over the world manages to reach people in all areas of life, under the most different circumstances, without them understanding why or how, and without one being able to explain why music seems to be so important, has given scientists a mystery for a long time. This

discrepancy can also be seen in educational surroundings: while the importance of teaching music seems to be insufficiently worshipped by the government, as newspapers have been reporting constant cuts in financial support during the past years (NEWS; Weiss 2015; Weiss 2018), musicians whole-heartedly fight for the importance of their subject, being aware of the fact that children as well as adults strongly benefit from musical perception and education. Although it might be elusive to us why music has such a great influence in our lives, research during the past years has shown that it definitely has a great number of benefits, and even impacts on our bodies. Scientists have found that music does not only affect cognitive intelligence, like the ability to learn patterns or strategical thinking, but also improves emotional competence, empathy, coordination and memory (Unterstell 22). Furthermore, music can have an effect on our state of health; it positively affects conditions like Alzheimer's (Geist 19), can influence heart rate and oxygen level during surgeries (Libby 114), and helps cancer patients with pain management (Gutgsell 104). More than that, several empirical studies have shown that the perception and/or production of music even has an influence on language learning in early childhood (Lorenzo et al 529; Herrera et al). Hence, it is not only proven that music does indeed yield benefits (even if they might not be as 'obvious' as the ones other human behaviours might yield), but also that the acquisition of language can profit from it. It can be deduced from this circumstance that music does indeed have features that go beyond those of language.

2.2.2.1 The emotional power of music

Most musicians who are being asked about the one thing that makes music so extraordinary have a simple answer: emotions. Everyone who has ever (re)produced or listened to music (that he/she responded to), will probably argue that the reason why music affects human minds so much is because it evokes emotional reactions in the listener. Nussbaum describes this circumstance in the following words:

[M]usic seems to be profoundly connected to our emotional life, indeed perhaps more urgently and deeply connected to that life than any of the other arts. It digs into our depths and expresses hidden movements of love and fear and joy that are inside us. It speaks to us and about us in mysterious ways, [...] exposing hidden vulnerabilities and, so to speak, laying our souls open to our view. (254)

Of course, it can be argued that language, as well as other non-oral mediums of art, can also cause an emotional response in us. In language, emotions can even be expressed explicitly, while music – without the addition of words – must find other ways. Davies

notes that the problem “in claiming that emotions may be expressed in music consists in this: In the non-musical paradigmatic cases something that *is* sad *feels* sad” (135). He elaborates that, since nobody who perceives music as sad would think that the music, which is not a feeling person, can transport that feeling to us, the question arises how we can feel the sadness. Another crucial remark is made by Tan, Pfordresher, and Harré, stating that the emotional power of music might not lie in the music itself, but in associations made with it. For instance, we tend to associate a song with love if it is performed at a wedding, and that “[i]t is the association with that event or memory that may elicit emotions in a way that goes beyond music itself (and thus the emotional meaning is ‘extramusical’)” (242), an argument that appears to be similar to the claim that music cannot convey meaning as such (see 2.2.1.), which is not surprising keeping in mind that meaning and emotion are also regarded to be intertwined (see Davies, p. 134). Nussbaum also remarks that a difference must be made between “the emotions of the listener and the expressive properties itself” (250), a point also made by Tan, Pfordresher, and Harré, in which they also argue that, regarding the latter one, it is possible that “listeners may be drawing on similarities to emotional cues that are not specific to music” (247) and hence the fact that listening to music going together with perceiving emotions does not necessarily have to be caused by the music itself.

All these are valid objections that must be considered when ascribing a unique emotional power to music. However, inspecting Davies' claim, it can easily be argued that although music itself is not a feeling person, it obviously is always written by one. If it is considered unproblematic that feelings can be expressed through words from one human being to another, it seems irrational to maintain that music might not have different ways to do so, since, as already discussed previously, music and language share a great number of similarities. Regarding the problem mentioned by Tan, Pfordresher, and Harré, though extramusical associations, of course, can and will occur when it comes to music, the emotional power of music is not disputed by the authors, as they merely remark the importance of being aware of the difference. However, they also emphasise the fact that music has explicit expressive qualities which, independently from genre, music style, context, or audience, do cause a certain type of emotion, whereas other qualities have a different effect (242-4). This will be further elaborated in Chapter Four.

So far, it has not only been shown that music creates the subjective feeling in a listener to have a strong emotional power, but it also has been discussed that music has, very similar to language, the ability to convey emotion. However, the question remains if the emotional power of music might be considered even stronger than that of language. Pertaining to that difficulty, Altenmüller discusses the phenomenon of experiencing goose bumps while listening to music. He elucidates the origins of goose bumps, which originally were a primordial mechanism for thermoregulation, later being responsible for producing internal body heat. While among primates, goose bumps can be caused by a mother's cry, humans' goose bumps are known to be related to the release of dopamine and endorphin (qutd. in Unterstell 21). Concerning the relation between goose bumps and music, he elaborates,

[w]e surveyed and observed hundreds of test subjects in the hope of identifying a “goose bumps recipe”. We discovered that an interesting structural change always precedes the experience of the thrill of awe. That can be the entry of a new instrument, or a new tone colour, a change in volume or certain harmonic progressions. (Unterstell 21)

Thus, music seems to affect us on a very instinctual level. Although Altenmüller also remarks that “[s]uch a change is a necessary but not a sufficient precondition for the listener to experience goose bumps” (qutd. in Unterstell 21), it seems even more remarkable that our body responds to music in a way that we, despite extensive studies, seem to not fully understand (yet). Considering the fact that the origin of goose bumps goes back to our animalistic roots, and keeping in mind that they can be triggered by acoustic signals, seems to lead to two important conclusions. Firstly, music seems to speak to the listener in a very primitive, intuitive way that he/she does not need to understand. Secondly, music seems to exploit the potential of acoustics in a way that the mere use of human language (without the aid of acoustic elements like pitch, intonation, or the like) might not be able to. As a consequence, music must have capacities to speak to us that are unique to it, a conclusion also made by Tan, Pfordresher and Harré, who state that “even when attention is shared among several sensory modalities as in the viewing of an opera or film, the emotional power of music in its ability to represent, express, and induce emotion is clearly manifested”, basing their results on self-report, physiological, and neuroscientific methods, amongst others (260). This claim is also supported by Davies, who points to the fact that sometimes it is not possible for the listener to express in words the emotions experienced by music;

thus, music can cause sensations that cannot always be easily translated into (122). Consequently, something might get lost, very similar to the attempt of translating an utterance from one language into another. This means that even if we are not able to fully understand the connection, the bond between emotion and music is so strong that for a musician music without emotion, which basically means barely playing the written notes (among other written instructions), is not even considered real music.

2.2.2.2 Harmony as a distinctive feature?

To find a more obvious distinctive feature that language does not have, but music has, it might help to take a more structural approach. According to Robinson, the main areas of musical structure are rhythm, theme, and harmony (4). Although a theme, which is defined as “a musical idea, usually a melody, that forms the basis or starting point for a composition or a major section of one” (“Theme” 878), is a specifically musical concept that refers to the structural habits of composition, it can be compared to other areas that are set outside music. Not only is the term “theme” found in other artistic fields such as arts, it can also be found in literature. Furthermore, being the main idea of a musical piece, it could be compared to language specific utterances, even to sentences (Patel et al 3037). Although it is obvious that an utterance in speech, a theme in literature and a musical theme differ not only in their function but also in their structural conception, they still share similarities in their concepts which leads to the assumption that the theme might not be the answer to the question of musical uniqueness.

These considerations lead to the conclusion that the solution must be found in rhythm or harmony. Regarding the first area, it seems almost needless to say that although different in quality, both music and speech have rhythm. Although musical rhythm seems to follow a stricter pattern, since the concept of beat or “musical pulsation (periodic production) [...] appears to have evolved specifically for music” (Toussaint 9) and musical rhythm is thought to be more precise in its presence in comparison to spoken language, prose, and even poetry (Murby 132), it can still be defined as “a symbolic binary sequence of isochronous elements representing sounds and silences” (Toussaint 6-7). Pinsky’s remark that “[n]o aspect of a poem is more singular, more unique, than its rhythm [and] that no two syllables, no two iambic feet, no two degrees of accent or duration, are quite alike”, being “even more true of poems of free verse” (51), shows that although poetic rhythm (as the most strongly organised form of speech

rhythm) differs from musical rhythm, since the latter tends to be more accurate and/or fixed in its composition and performance, they still are closely related and it is difficult to draw the line where speech rhythm stops and musical rhythm starts. Also, it must be considered that in poetry, for example, as Pinsky points out, “rhythm is the sound of an actual line, while meter is the abstract pattern behind the rhythm, roughly analogous to the way 4/4 time in music underlies the actual dotted eights and sixteens and so forth” (52). It can be concluded that, although the rhythm of speech might be less fixed by a musical metre than musical rhythm, and despite the fact that speech rhythm might be based on the musical system, the presence of rhythm in speech appears too similar to regard it as a unique feature of music.

If musical rhythm as well as musical theme do not contain a sufficiently distinctive addition to speech, the answer must be found in the harmonic qualities of music. Hints for that are given in polyphonic harmony and are naturally accessible to every musician. Although intonation is a highly important aspect of spoken language, too, in speech harmonies do not exist as such. Further indications can also be found in neuroscientific research; Peretz refers to an investigation which tried to find a distinct processing module that distinguished musical perception and production, indicating that this module might be linked to pitch production (259). Further studies show that people classified as ‘amusic’ have “preserved rhythm but impaired pitch”, as well as an example of an opera singer who “was no longer able to sing pitch intervals but who spoke with the correct intonation and expression” (Peretz 255; 258) shows that prosody and musical intonation also might be different in their production. This is also explained in detail by Zatorre and Baum:

Although under some unusual conditions spoken speech may be perceived as sung, the two are rarely confused. One reason that song and speech are clearly different is that pitch variations in melodies are mostly discrete, compared to those in speech, which are continuous. Music from a wide array of different cultures throughout the world most often uses pitches drawn from a limited set of tones (commonly five or seven) within an octave, creating scales that have specific musical interval values; there is no counterpart of this phenomenon in speech intonation. (Zatorre and Baum 1-2)

Zatorre and Baum therefore argue that it is the harmonic structure, and with regard to that the precision of creating tones, that differentiates music from speech and makes it so special, even when it comes to the most artful form of speech, poetry. Further support in this matter can be found in Bernstein’s discussion of the matter, since he

states that “poetry cannot, and need not, compete with music in terms of acoustic complexity or rhythmic force”, and, to refer back to the beginning of Chapter Two, the close relation between music and language identifies music as poetry’s “upper limit” (11). This statement clearly supports the idea that music and language or, to be more precise, poetry, although sharing a wide range of similarities, also have different functions and capacities which, as a consequence, may lead to the conclusion that, if combined, the two areas manage to create new levels of meaning and emotion; a conclusion that is intuitively accessible to most people when listening to a song. The reason, however, why harmony should be regarded as particularly unique in this regard, cannot only be found in the concepts of consonance and dissonance (which will be discussed more extensively in Chapter Four), but also in the fact that harmonies are created by singing or playing notes simultaneously; in music, the concept of polyphony is established in a way that spoken language simply does not offer (Houtsma 110).

In summary, harmony, with its numerous opportunities and unique ways to create emotions by narrowing acoustic frequencies down to musical notes, seems to serve as a valid criterion that distinguishes the concept of music from the seemingly countless capacities of language and human speech. As a consequence, it can be said that both the gift of harmony as well as the emotional power of music bring along unique qualities that can only enrich the experience of performing poetry, which will be further examined in the following chapters.

3 Performance Poetry and Music

After the relation between language and music has been closely examined in the previous chapter, it is now time to take a closer look at the genre of performance poetry and to what extent music can and does play a particular role in it in general, before we take a closer look at specific examples. Hence, this chapter will give an insight into the relationship of the closely connected genres of music and poetry in general since, as already mentioned, poetry, in many ways, seems to be the linking art between music and language. For that purpose, it will also be examined to what extent poetry can be regarded as having emerged from the musical arts (Kirby-Smith 2). Then, the emergence of performance poetry will be outlined in order to provide a better understanding of the genre. Furthermore, the occurrence of music in performance poetry will be examined more closely and, finally, will be compared to other musical genres in order to get a proper sketch of what can be considered performance poetry, even if utilises music as a tool. It is not expected that a clear distinction can be made here; however, it seems important for further investigation to get a proficient idea of this form of art in order to better understand the interplay between musical and lyrical elements that characterise the genre.

3.1 Music and Poetry through the Ages

Music and poetry,
Sarasvati has two breasts
One's sweet at first sip—
the other, well you need to
chew it a while (qtd. in Schelling 39)

From this poem by an anonymous author rooted in India several things can be deduced. Sarasvati is one of the most important goddesses in Hinduism, “associated with speech, learning, culture and wisdom” (Kinsley 57), also identified with thought, intellect, and knowledge (59), inspiring philosophers, scholars, and artists as their devotees (62). The author of the poem ascribes this goddess two “breasts”, i.e. two attributes, namely music and poetry, while claiming that the first one is “sweet at the first sip”, therefore intuitively accessible, since “[c]hildren, animals, even plants, respond to it instantly”, while the other one, poetry, is claimed to take on more time, requiring “solitary work and study” (Schelling 39). Although this latter assertion probably will be challenged by musicians and poets alike – since the musician scholar

knows how much effort the proper study of musical theory can be, as well as numerous poets have shown that poetry can also be accessed intuitively –, the comparison still shows two important things. Firstly, the goddess of wisdom, knowledge and speech carrying music and poetry as their attributes leaves room for the interpretation that the two arts play a universal part in acquiring knowledge as well as being closely linked to language (which, of course, is true for poetry, but according to this interpretation, also for music). Secondly, music and poetry are regarded as both equal and related, which shows the importance of their connection, even if the way they are approached might differ (whether in the way proposed in the poem, in a different one, or maybe not at all, is left open for discussion here, since it does not seem to be relevant for further investigations). Although one could argue that since this is a poem of Indian origin, the understanding of the arts might differ (since it is not part of Western culture, which is the centre of this thesis' investigation), it merely gives an illustration of the importance of the two arts' connection, and this circumstance most certainly also applies to Western culture.

Moving to Western culture, however, Kirby-Smith mentions that the Greek word *mousike*, having no proper English translation, can be understood as “a fusion of word, music, and dance” (9). As he states,

[o]ur problem is that we may identify such a fusion with either vulgar or childish examples, or else with some self-conscious attempt to constrain the now-separate arts back into company with one another. The triumphal dance and lyric utterance of the young Sophokles, or the stately strophes and antistrophes of the choruses in his mature plays, seem distant from the rock musician flourishing his electric guitar, the singing and clapping games of children, Wagnerian opera, or coffeehouse poetry-cum-music happenings. Yet all these help to illuminate the idea of *mousike*, that consort of the Muses. (Kirby-Smith 9)

The author's statement suggests that in Greek culture the art of language, music, and dance was not neatly separated as it is tried today (while a neat separation, as it will be discussed later, is impossible anyway), but were seen as one art. Although today hybrids of different forms occur, the importance of separating the arts from one another seems to be especially desired. As Bachmann describes, “[w]e have stopped searching for ‘poetic content’ in music, for ‘word music’ in poetry” (139), since, although the arts are naturally intertwined, they have been separated gradually, “when the arts appear to distance themselves from one another, cast few glances toward one

another, and no longer lie in their old embraces” (Bachmann 139). While the questions to what extent music and poetry might be related and/or separable and how far this should – or could – affect the poet’s and the musician’s work already caused outrage and debates in sixteenth century Europe, the issue seems to have remained unresolved until today (Lindley 264). However, even claims that great minds like Dante achieved their exceptionality by emancipating their poetry from music can, and probably have to be, challenged, since, despite the renunciation of musical elements as such, the theme of music occurs in Dante’s poetry, at least as a metaphor (Kirby-Smith 82).

3.2 Performance Poetry as a Genre

As diverse and complex the genre of poetry is in general, equally complex and diverse is the genre of performance poetry. In order to specify the potential musical qualities of the genre, this brief overview shall merely serve as an orientation within the literary genre itself.

According to Sfetcu, performance poetry is “poetry that is specifically composed for or during performance before an audience” (234). Although this definition is widely shared, the genre being seen as “entirely conceived in relation to oral performance” (Novak 29), the distinction from other poetry is still not easy, especially for the reason that poets do not always decide whether their poem is supposed to be performed when writing it, or that they, like for example Patience Agabi or Anthony Joseph, might not even write it for performance, and still call themselves performance poets (Novak 32). Still, as Novak argues, these considerations are closely linked to the fact that among that in literary circles, there is a certain “discomfort the term causes when it is read as a prioritisation of orality over the written word”, in fear of a decay of the literary genre (Novak 32). However, as poetry began as an oral art, the influence of the performative aspect on poetry should not be underestimated and has caused a rich diversity within the still rather young genre (Holman 341). Despite its versatility, performance poetry is still clearly to be distinguished from poetry readings, “which involve the presentation of work not originally or explicitly intended for performance” (Morrison 94).

Performance poetry, or “spoken word”, which today can be regarded as another term for the same genre (Garnham; Douma), did not cause awareness as a specific literary genre until the 1980s. Still, the tradition of poems being specifically written for performance dates back to Homer’s *Odyssey* (Douma), as well as general Greek poetry,

which “was composed to be accompanied by the lyre and were performed at symposiums”, while “[s]ubjects included politics, war, drinking, money, youth, old age, all themes which are regularly explored today at most performance poetry events” (Garnham). The traces of performance poetry further lead to theatre performances in which forms such as the ode were integrated into stage pieces. Furthermore, examples of religious recitations such as chants or ghazals as well as the romantic poetry of ballads and villanelles can be found along the centuries (Douma). Modern movements include performing poets at the end of the 19th century such as William Carleton, Vachel Lindsay, and James Whitcomb Riley, as well as Dadaist and Surrealistic artists at the beginning of the 20th century, or the Harlem Renaissance, which “played an important role in the fusion of poetry with live performances of jazz and blues” (Pfeiler 153).

However, the expression “performance poetry” as such seems to date back to the 1980s, where “the term came into popular usage to describe poetry written or composed exclusively for performance and not for print distribution” (Sfetcu, Kaleidoscope 234). Morrison states,

Modern origins are sometimes attributed to the poetry/music compositions of Polish-American writer Hedwig Gorski in the 1980s, although the **beat writers** of the 1950s and 1960s were also formed for their drink- and drug-fuelled recitals, frequently accompanied by live jazz. (Morrison 94)

The question whether Hedwig Gorski really coined the term seems impossible to answer, as opinions differ on that matter mostly due to the fact that the person maintaining this is Gorski herself, probably using the expression to differentiate her specific spoken word art from that of artists like Laurie Anderson (Garnham). However, the connection of performance poetry to the works of the Beat poets seems undisputed, since they “achieved a fairly broad public interest (and partly disapproval) of live performances of poems that contained a social and political critique”. The mentioned disapproval also connected to their avant-garde, rebellious attitude being expressed in their lifestyles as well as in their poems (Pfeiler 153). The most important artists of the Beat generation were Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, Jack Kerouac, and Gregory Corso, who themselves tended to ascribe to their works a specialisation in orality and performance (Pfeiler 93). According to Douma, the Beat poets “twisted traditional chants and jazz rhythms into poems rife with social and cultural commentary, helping explode the popular acceptance of performance poetry”

(Douma). On that foundation, in the 1970s and 1980s the genre blossomed due to advances in technology, attracting huge audiences to see multimedia performances, and merging with other genres like feminist poetry, who “used performances of poetry in order to achieve a visibility of their concerns in what they view as a patriarchal society”, but also creating subgenres of its own, such as slam poetry, which “seems to merge many of the aspects of twentieth century performance poetry”, but adding new layers due to its competitive character (Pfeiler 153).

Although slam poetry, like other forms of oral poetry, was disparaged by academic circles in the beginning, it managed to gain elitist recognition over time and today can be regarded as one of the most important subgenres in contemporary performance poetry (Douma “Poetry on center stage”). According to Holman, other subgenres meanwhile include sound poetry, dub poetry, audio, film, and video poetry, trance, and performance poetry using music, only to name a few, whereas the lines distinguishing one subgenre from the other are, of course, have blurred (343-4), up to the point where the genre of performance poetry within itself and in comparison to other genres might almost seem undeterminable (Garnham). However, despite or probably even because of the fact that the “current scene is vibrant, diverse and almost unclassifiable”, performance poetry as a genre has become a voice of social and political criticism and cultural reflection, a fact that can be seen in the genre’s history over the past decades as well as today. As a consequence, “[a]s society develops and changes, so do the social concerns of performance poets, and each year the wealth of experience and the diversity of the voices adds to the attractiveness of performance poetry as a genuine artistic movement” (Garnham).

3.3 Music in Performance Poetry

In a guide for young artists who seek to master the art of performance poetry, it says:

Put on some instrumental music and try reading or reciting a familiar poem to the beat of the music. Match as best as you can the rhythm of the poem to the rhythm of the recording by stretching syllables and adding space between words. Now put a different musical selection and recite the same text to that. Note how the articulation changes. Note how the nuanced meaning of the poem may have changed. (Smith and Kraynak 94)

Even though it might be debatable whether this piece of advice can help turning someone into a performance poet, it gives an interesting piece of information about the

significance music is ascribed to in the field of performance poetry. To go even further, the excerpt of the guide shows that in performance poetry music is regarded as a meaning distinguishing element, since the underlying music influences the way the poem is performed, and hence, might change the meaning of the poem.

Since the genre of performance poetry as established form is relatively young, at first sight it seems to be quite a task to find examples of performance poetry involving music, especially due to the fact that every performance of a poet that somehow involves music before the 1980's seems to be classified as such in general. Looking to Irish art, for example, one can find that in the 19th century, numerous Irish poets writing in English emerged, while poetry in Irish "became essentially a folk art", while "this was one of the great periods for the composition of folk songs in both languages" (Sfetcu Kaleidoscope 78-80). In French, so-called *chansons de geste*, written by artists classified as poets, "were designed to be recited to music", while the *virelai*, a verse form comparable to a rondeau, "was one of the most common verse forms set to music in Europe from the late 13th to the 15th centuries", until in the middle of the 15th century, "the form had become largely divorced from music, and numerous examples of this form [...] were written, which were either not intended to be set to music, or for which the music has not survived" (Sfetcu, Kaleidoscope 108-9). These few examples, out of many more, once more show the circumstance that poetry, music, and performance have not only been closely linked to each other ever since, but also that the tendency of separation of the arts has brought about some challenges.

However, hints at earlier examples of musical performance poetry that might already be classified as such can be found in Britain in the course of the British Poetry Revival during the 1960s and 1970s, bringing forth a "wide-reaching collection of groupings and subgroupings that embraces performance, sound and concrete poetry" (Sfetcu, Kaleidoscope 65-66). During the 20th century there was a shift of emphasis in poetry towards sound, whereas poets like Basil Bunting argued that "the poem on the page was like a musical score; not fully intelligible until sounded" (Sfetcu, Kaleidoscope 236). In the middle of the century, techniques involved the spontaneous composition and recording of poems, creating poems for performances and happenings, and, most importantly, the fusion of musical and poetic performance practiced by the so-called Beat generation, which "were noted for performance events that married poetry and jazz" (Sfetcu, Kaleidoscope 236-7). Although the Beat poets, emerging in the 1950s as

part of the movement, can theoretically not be counted as performance poets since, as mentioned before, the term *performance poetry* as such only developed later, they did not only lay ground for the establishment of performance poetry with their tendency toward spontaneity and improvisation in performance as well as abandonment of poetic tradition, they also created a fusion of music and poetry on many occasions (Rahn). Allen Ginsberg, for example, consciously used the elements of music in order to support his poetry, using the harmonium for accompaniment; as a matter of fact, one could argue whether Ginsberg might not already be regarded as performance poet, despite the fact that most of his work was created before the emergence of the term. As Sfetcu writes, “[e]ven though the Beats did not use the term ‘Performance Poetry’ to categorize their work with music and audio recordings, the Beats provided an immediate model for the work of Hedwig Gorski” (237), the latter one being the first one describing her work with this term. As the first self-declared performance poet, Gorski mixed her poetry performance with the accompaniment of her band East of Eden, making an effort to distinguish its text-based quality from the musically supported art work of other performers (Sfetcu, *Kaleidoscope* 237-8).

Still, the distinction between performance poetry using music and other genres still does not only have to be considered as a challenge, but is also as an issue where lines, at the least, are rather blurred (as shall be seen in the following section). Arana, for example, mentions the genre of audio poetry as a separate genre, stating that it “is distinct from sound poetry and spoken word because it positions itself in relation to music”, whereas “music may be used as a subtext, as a way to convey other meanings, or as a soundtrack to provide a musical score to a poem in the same way that music scores a film”, but could also be seen as a genre in which “meaning is conveyed in both sound and language and, used together, they can create a different kind of aurally fused poetry” (Arana 358). Still, this sounds very much like the works of traditional as well as contemporary performance poets, be it Hedwig Gorski, Kate Tempest, or others, although the term ‘audio poetry’ does not occur together with the aforementioned names (Novak, however, refers to the fact that audio poetry is understood as being recorded in a professional recording studio (75), which does not exclude performance poetry, but is, as already revealed by the name, not its initial goal, since it is designed for performance in front of an audience). This only illustrates the difficulty in separating various forms of art, and shows that, it will never be entirely possible by using similar features.

The significance of music in performance poetry is nevertheless great, an aspect already used by Ginsberg who explained that the musicality of vowels already invites the poet to interaction between word and music, since, as Pfeiler describes, “[r]egarding the affinity of poetry and music it comes across as no surprise that poets would also make use of the more musical sounds of language in the composition of their poems” (Pfeiler 93). However, despite numerous examples of musical poetry performance before the establishment of the genre, the use of music in performance poetry as such became especially popular in the 1980s, putting forth poets such as Raul Salinas, Joy Cole, Roxy Gordon, Ricardo Sanchez, Susan Bright, Harryette Mullen, and many more (Sceftu, Kaleidoscope 235).

Since the 1980s, the quality and/or form of performance poetry has changed insofar as the possibilities of the medium have changed. As Arana states,

[t]he potential for orality to engage with language, the sonic imperatives contained within the utterance, and the textual features of form, rhythm, image, tone, and rhyme—all combine to make performance poetry an alternative site for experimentation within poetry today. The performance of poetry on the Internet has helped create another expression of poetry beyond the page. Performance poetry is an integrated, unique medium that clearly demonstrates a capacity to reinvigorate contemporary poetry. (Arana 357)

Hence, the Internet has provided a platform for performance poets to establish as well as for the genre to unfold in new ways, whereas music does not have to, but still can be a part of the performance. Matt Abott, a young performance artist who first appeared on stage in 2006, is an example for a performance poet influenced by music who has become well-known via an Internet platform (Abott). Garnham also states that “[w]ith the invention of YouTube, performance poetry has become an almost perfect medium to get a message across in three minutes or less, posted on social media platforms”, while “[c]ontemporary performance poets such as Kate Tempest and Hillie McNish inspire youngsters to get involved in writing and engage with the world in their own language and style” (Garnham). Furthermore, the use of musicality in the genre today has also changed. As Garnham states, not only “[t]here is a significant crossover with rap music, which itself is a development of spoken word and the fast-paced delivery of the Beat Poets and Bob Dylan” (Garnham); the genre has emerged into a diversity that makes anything possible – from “rap poets, [...] shouting poets, theatrical poets, musical poets” to “I’ve got a trumpet and I’m gonna blow it poets”, giving not only the genre, but also its potential musicality new possibilities and dimensions (Garnham).

3.4 Musical Performance Poetry vs. Song – Differences?

So far it has not only been discussed how closely music and poetry in general are connected to each other, but it has also been illustrated how important, natural and contributing the use of music is in the genre of performance poetry. However, as already mentioned in the previous section, the distinction of specific poetic as well as musical genres from each other poses a challenge to scholars of music and poetry due to the fact that not only the two genres in general, but also the various subgenres share similar qualities and, especially in the 21st century, partly make use of the same tools. As Lindley notes, “[m]ost people in the present day, at least once they have left school, encounter poetry or verse primarily as lyrics for music” (264). So far, an attempt has been made to distinguish musical performance poetry from other lyric genres; what is left to examine is whether this task can, at least to a certain degree, also be successful when comparing the genre to others that are considered genres of song, hence belonging to the art of music.

The problem with distinguishing performance poetry from the musical term ‘song’ arises from the fact that the latter encompasses a wide range of musical compositions, as “[c]olloquially, *song* is commonly used to refer to any musical composition, even those without vocals” (Sfetcu, *Sound of Music* 852). Given this description, it would be impossible to differentiate musical performance poetry from the concept since everything containing elements of music would be considered a song. However, looking at a more precise definition from a music-theoretical rather than a colloquial perspective, things might get easier:

A song is a relatively short musical composition for the human voice (possibly accompanied by other musical instruments), which features words (lyrics). It is typically for a solo singer, though may also be a duet, trio, or for more voices (works with more than one voice to a part, however, are considered choral). The words of songs are typically of a poetic, rhyming nature, although they may be religious verses or free prose. (Sfetcu 852)

Hence, a song as understood in music is a composition for singers, including lyrics, and limited to a certain time frame, although one might debate over what can be understood as “relatively short”. However, this definition already gives a more concrete idea of the matter and, furthermore, shows that musical performance poetry might indeed be regarded as ‘song’. Therefore, the musical characteristics of a song will be taken under closer examination by choosing what is considered to be the most fitting

representatives of the medium of song, due to the fact that similarities between them and performance poetry involving music can be found.

Three different forms of songs will be examined more closely based on their assumed overlaps with the investigated genre: rap, pop song, and musical song (as being part of a music theatre). Since, as Boss states, “rap and pop music are the popular poetry of our day” (71), these two seem to be worth a closer look. The first one is considered comparable due to the fact that it, like performance poetry, tends to make more use of the spoken than the sung word, making it stand out from other musical genres, but also turning towards poetry. The pop song can be considered sharing similarities not only due to its potential note of individuality, but also because of the sheer amount of possibilities the genre provides. Finally, although not mentioned by Boss, the musical song, as a part of music theatre, is regarded assimilable due to its performative quality, being written to be performed in front of an audience.

3.4.1 A Comparison to Rap

As already mentioned in the last section, rap and especially newer trends in performance poetry do indeed not only have a lot in common, they also are considered as having many overlaps. In the *Glossary of Literary Terms*, it is even stated that the “most widely known and practised performance poetry is rap” (“performance poetry” 243). Furthermore, newer performance artists like, for example, Kate Tempest, move between the two genres, being even referred to as ‘rap-poet’, referring to her works partially as poetry, as rap music, or as a mixture of both (David). As a starting point, it might help to look at the definition of rap by *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, describing rap as

[H]ighly rhythmicized, semi-spoken vocal style originating in African-American music in late 1970s. A typical feature of hip hop, its precise ancestry is complex and includes militant black poetry and Jamaican dub and reggae, in which MCs would ‘toast’ or chat over an instrumental beat [...] Subjects of rap lyrics may include politics, life ‘on the street’ or bragging, and may be improvised or pre-composed. (The Oxford Dictionary of Music, 368)

Although certain crossovers can also be found in looking at the origin as well as subjects of rap and performance poetry, here the similarities in form seem to be especially interesting when it comes to musical features. Rhythm is emphasised as highly significant feature, whereas, very different to other musical styles, the vocals are semi-

spoken, which is strongly reminiscent of performance poetry in general. Further similarities can be found in the fact that rap and performance poetry “may be improvised or pre-composed” (*The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 368), a fact that may also affect the lyric form of the words. Furthermore, according to Keyes, the rapping style has its stylistic roots in the West African bardic tradition as well as in reggae (18), a circumstance that seems to create an even closer connection between the two genres.

Although rap and musical performance poetry obviously share features in stylistic composition, in origin, and in vocal use, some differences can still be made. Firstly, the importance of rhythm in rap appears to be much more prevalent than in performance poetry. According to the *Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, rap music “generally relies on two components – the MC or rapper, and the DS, responsible for constructing musical accompaniment, often with the aid of ‘samples’ from other records” (“Rap”). This means that the significance of rhythm in rap is so high that it usually is even the responsibility of a second performer, who also might adapt rhythmical elements of other works. Of course, in performance poetry that operates on musical elements, a live performer will also often require the presence of musicians or a DJ, such as Hedwig Gorski always performed with her East of Eden band (Sfetcu, *Kaleidoscope* 234-5). However, the importance of rhythmical elements in rap still seems to be higher than in performance poetry, especially according to the fact that the way the latter one makes use of music is, or at least can be, different to that of rap. For that purpose, one might look at Kate Tempest’s “People’s Faces” as a representative for performance poetry with music and Eminem’s new single “Rap God” as an example for rap. Both works are contemporary pieces – Eminem’s single was released in 2013, Tempest’s album in 2019 –, and both work with musical elements that go beyond rhythm (Lehner). Despite the fact that the musical styles as well as the use of instruments, of course, differ, both pieces involve a constant rhythm that keeps the tempo (which, with regard to musical performance poetry, also does not always have to be the case, as will be seen in the analysis of further examples in Chapter Six); in “People’s faces”, this rhythm is provided by a piano, in “Rap God”, the underlying beat is composed by the combination of electronic sound elements and drums. Even in tempo (with regard to the measure/metre), the two ‘songs’ (used here as an umbrella term for contemporary pieces involving music) do not differ significantly, both pieces taking between 1.5 and 2 seconds for a single measure. However, the most significant difference seems to be how the artists present the lyrics in the foreground of the given

beat. Firstly, Eminem's vocals seem to move into the background in favour of rhythmic and sound elements, making him hardly intelligible in certain parts of the song. Tempest's voice, on the contrary, is always in the foreground; it seems almost impossible to miss a single word. Secondly, another reason for Eminem being difficult to understand is a very fast speech style, as he puts emphasis rather on sound elements of his lyrics, which is typical for the use of vocals in rap. As Edwards explains, "[a] lot of the rhythmic techniques in rapping are closer to percussion and drumming than they are to traditional poetic techniques" (8-9). The way the artist pronounces the words reminds one strongly of a percussion instrument, the way he uses volume and pitch (without singing specific notes) is reminiscent of a drum. Tempest, on the contrary, seems to emphasise every single word and phrase; it becomes evident that the spoken word is in the foreground, not the rhythmic elements of speech, not the rhyme scheme, but the meaning. This is not only due to a slower speech tempo, it can also be observed that the poet breaks out of the rhythmical structure and the tempo provided by the piano; the emphasis on meaning is given priority in order to use tempo, articulation and intonation for the transmissions of the words rather than the music. This can be observed when looking at the following excerpt:

Even when I'm weak and I'm breaking
I'll stand weeping at the train station
'Cause I can see your faces
There is so much peace to be found in people's faces (Tempest, People's Faces
1:36)

Two things are remarkable in this passage. First, the rhymes do not occur at the end of the line, and also not in any relation to the underlying rhythmical accompaniment of the piano, which especially becomes obvious as Tempest emphasises the words "weak" and "weeping", creating an alliteration on the third beat, and "breaking", "station", and "faces", creating assonances that have a different distribution on the beat. Although many of these stressed words are exactly on the piano beat, Tempest plays with the accentuation of the syllables in between and creates pauses which, naturally, are not maintained by the metronome-like piano. Also, the artist emphasises the word "your" in the third line, which does not belong to a rhyme, and creates a pause before the fourth line; in both examples, she does not meet the piano beat, making the impact of the words even greater. (Tempest, People's Faces). Comparing Tempest's way to interact with her words to Eminem's strict rhythmical recitation, the difference

between spoken word accompanied by music and rap seems to be clearer. Already in the first rapped line which says, “*I’m beginning to feel like a Rap God, Rap God*” (EminemMusic 0:25), the way the artist distributes stress among the words gives an impression of his rhythmical style, as he seems to emphasise syllables independently from the natural stress as well as from their belonging to specific words, stressing almost every single syllable, whether weak or strong: “I’m be-GIN-NIG-TO-FEEL-LIKE-A-RAP-god-RAP-God”. This is achieved mostly via intonation and placing every single syllable precisely in the rhythm, matching the syllables with quavers and crotchets within the beat. Compared to Tempest, he creates a word rhythm that almost seems mechanical, prioritising the musical presentation to the lyrical ones, be it word or sentence stress, pronunciation, weakness/strength of syllables, or other elements.

This comparison of examples intends to show how, despite the fact that musical performance poetry and rap music share several attributes and do overlap to a certain degree, there is still a discernible difference when it comes to priority of elements. Although both musical performance poetry and rap emphasise rhythm via musical elements and contain spoken, not sung, words, hence creating an interface between poetry and music, the first one appears to give priority to the lyrics of the poems while the second one seemingly puts more weight on the rhythmical elements, which might lead to a downgrade of the lyrics. Of course, one could interject that these samples do not represent a whole genre, and other artists might vary in their use of words and music. However, as already mentioned with regard to audio poetry (while, as discussed, regarded to hold true for musical performance poetry as well), “music may be used as a subtext, as a way to convey other meanings, or as a soundtrack to provide a musical score to a poem” (Arana 358), whereas rap is defined by rhythm.

3.4.2 A Comparison to Pop

As discussed in the beginning of the chapter, the genre of pop provides a wide spectrum of possibilities. Due to that circumstance, pop as such is also hard to define. However, in the *Oxford Dictionary of Music* it says that

[s]ince the late 1950s, [...] *pop* has had the dual meaning of non-classical music, usually in the form of songs, performed by such artists as the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Abba, etc.; and as a subset of this that is especially geared to ephemeral, commercial appeal (as opposed to rock, e.g.) (“Pop”)

As for the second meaning, the aspect of commerciality, one might argue that this does not have anything in common with performance poetry, musical or not, due to the fact that the genre evolved out of explicitly non-commercial movements such as the Beat generation. According to Boss, “[n]ever before has it been so easy to create and distribute vocal recordings to a truly global audience, and yet most contemporary poets continue to invest themselves in only their art form’s print aspects, reserving their presentation skills for little more than public readings” (71), a statement referring to poetry in general, and pointing out the circumstance that poetry as such may not be considered a commercial genre. However, as Sfetcu remarks, “[p]erformance poets are often not academically trained in writing poetry” and their “poetic allusions are to pop culture rather than to the great literature of the past” (Kaleidoscope 234-5), an observation that seems rather comparable to the development (and diminishment) of popular music as “non-classical music”.

However, although this already gives the impression that performance poetry in general might share aspects of popular music, it might be more insightful to look at the musical elements of the genres. Although it is not claimed that musicians like the Beatles, Abba, or the Rolling Stones are easily comparable, certain similarities seem to be shared; as Rojek states rather critically, “pop is held to designate a specific, territorialized genre: that is, music defined by the Tin Pan Alley tradition of the three-minute song formula structured around narrative typifications, basic chord structures, harnessed to powerful commercial interests” (1). Although meant as a critical remark, the statement does give an insight into specific features that are ascribed to the traditional pop song, including length, subjects, style, and chord structure. Although one could (always) argue that these considerations will not apply to all subgenres of pop music, it can safely be assumed that the pop song shares specific structural qualities, a circumstance the genre itself has picked up in the past, such as, for example, the comedy trio Axis of Awesome with their composition of the “4 Chord Song”, a medley of well-known pop songs ranging over decades of music history, in which they show that most songs of the genre tend to have a specific chord succession, namely tonic (1st step, major), tonic parallel (6th step, minor), subdominant (4th step, major), and dominant (5th step, major) (Longdon). Also, according to Sfetcu, “[p]opular songs almost always have a well-defined structure. The song is constructed using three to five individually distinct musical sections, which are then strung together to form a complete song” (Sound of Music 853). These elements include an (instrumental)

introduction, verses, a chorus (which is repeated), and a bridge which may be instrumental or accompanied by lyrics and is again followed by the refrain (Sfetcu, Kaleidoscope 853).

When looking at these characteristics of the common pop song, one already might understand that it differs strongly from the use of music in performance poetry. Looking again at the example of Tempest's "People's Faces", it becomes apparent that the construction of Tempest's work has nothing to do with the traditional construction of a pop song. Apart from the fact that the musical accompaniment is undeniably in the background, Tempest's narration, free from singing, tune, or melody, also breaks with every potential structure, including the concept of a refrain or a bridge. The accompaniment almost exclusively remains at the dominant chord (C major), merely alternating with the tonic chord (G major), hardly ever moving from it and, by merely repeating the same melody (which, again, mostly remains on the tonic note G, only briefly climbing to A and H before returning to G) with minimal variations towards the end, creating a sound cloud that serves as a support for Tempest's narration (Tempest, *People's Faces*). Of course, one could argue that the almost exclusive use of the tonic and the dominant fits into the scheme of simplified harmonic structure which usually is ascribed to the genre of pop; however, on closer consideration, it becomes obvious that also harmonically, Tempest seems to break the rules of popular music since the piano accompaniment stays on the dominant instead of the tonic for most of the time, merely returning to the tonic for 2 out of 8 measures (which is the time the theme melody of the piano takes to start over). While the tremendous effect of such a simple change shall be discussed in the following chapters, the important aspect for this investigation is the fact that usually a pop song has its emphasis on the tonic, as can be seen on the example of the "4 Chord Song". Tempest's piece having the emphasis on the dominant chord, though seemingly only a small change, is highly contrastive to the usual harmonic structure in pop.

Hence, it can be said that performance poetry combined with musical elements has features in common with the manifold pop song, among which are, of course, the tendency to reach a larger audience, the combination of voice and instrumental accompaniment, as well as the sheer size of opportunity within the genres. However, when looking at the details of words and music construction, one realises that the differences are greater than expected, due to the fact that in a pop song, words and

music usually work as equals, which can be seen in the tendency to structure words as well as music in units such as verses (as an opposite to a chorus, not as part of a poem), bridges, and refrain (also called chorus), whereas the latter ones “often sharply contrasts the verse melodically, rhythmically, and harmonically”, often in combination of the repetition of the lyrics (Sfetcu, *Sound of Music* 621). Since performance poetry as such is not only very often improvised and rather flexible in its lyrical form, it usually does not fit the pattern of the traditional pop song. Of course, as already discussed in the previous section, one could argue that there are other performance poets who are less free in their lyrical form, as there are pop singers that break with the traditional composition of a pop song. However, again the focus of the genre is relevant; in pop music, the “combination of the melody and the rhythm allows for harmony to be a driving force of the song, which can make it more pleasing to the listener’s ear” (Sfetcu *Sound of Music* 483). In performance poetry, with or without music, on the other hand, the main focus will always be on the words.

3.4.3 A Comparison to music theatre

Although this comparison might be, at first sight, a little far-fetched, the two genres have a crucial thing in common: the intention of performance. Despite the fact that, of course, pop singers and rappers as well as conventional poems may perform in front of a crowd – the musicians usually in form of concerts, the poets in form of poetry readings –, their artwork initially is created for different forms of perception. Pop singers and rappers record audios in a studio, while conventional poets use the medium of written pages. In contrast, performance poetry is regarded as “a literary genre written specifically for a live performance, which is then performed to a live audience” (Novak 30), and musical is “a form of theatre combining music, songs, dance, and spoken dialogue” derived from opera, and, as theatre in general, designed for performance” (Sfetcu *Sound of Music* 325). As musical theatre distinguishes itself from opera especially through its use of elements of popular music, but written with an acknowledgment for performance, the two genres appear to contain a few parallels. Taylor, for example, mentions that “the signification of the musical theatre text is open to a variety of readings, perhaps even more than the theatrical text, because of the additional signification of song and music in the performance” (168). This means that the way the actors perform the text becomes more flexible in its form due to the elements of music and the audience, the first one being present in musical performance

poetry, the latter being comparable to the way a performance poet also needs to acknowledge the presence of the audience (Novak 30). Taylor brings further arguments for the importance of live attendance in musical theatre:

There are two other features of musical theatre performance that result from live attendance. They are the emotional contagion of sharing the time and place of performance with the performers and with other audience members, and the physiological response to the vibrations and dynamic range of musical and vocal performance. Live performance stimulates the experience of presence [...] [I]ntimacy with the performers and witnessing the event are important to audiences in the perception of a shared unique experience[...] So audiences do not only perceive a character and plot situation intellectually, but respond emphatically to the emotions embodied by the performer/character in the plot situation. (Taylor 169)

This addresses the impact the attendance of a live performance can have, claiming that it has a physically perceptible as well as an emotional influence on the observer. According to Taylor, the fact that the audience is physically close to the performers does not only cause a more intense reaction towards the perception of musical elements, but also leads to increased empathy towards the performer (as the representative of a character, in the case of musical theatre) and thus creating a “shared unique experience” (169). This seems to apply to musical performance poetry as well; not only is the use of musical elements given, indeed evoking a “physiological response to the vibrations and dynamic range of musical and vocal performance”; the circumstance that the performance poet shares his/her personally created poems with a specific audience does create an intimacy that is difficult to compare with anything else.

However, this also leads to a crucial point that distinguishes the two genres from each other. In musical theatre, the actor or actress is (usually) not the conductor/conductress of the pieces, and also does not present him-/herself. The fact that the performer in musical theatre plays a character in a story that he/she pretends to be a part of appears to create a very different form of connection in comparison to performance poetry, where “[c]ast in the double role of author and presenter of his/her poetry, the poet-performer is the main shaper and focus of a live poetry performance” (Novak 179). This means that the audience is not only, as in musical theatre, affected by the live performance due to its physical presence, but directly addressed and involved in the presentation. Although there are also musicals that break the traditional fourth wall as defined by Diderot (Novak 58) – an example for this being

Aladin or *Elisabeth*, in which the characters Jeannie and Lucheni are frequently used to address the audience –, the performance poet stands before its audience as his/her own person, sharing his/her poetry with the audience. In musical theatre, however, the character invites the audience into a fictional world rather than sharing a piece of reality in form of a “shared experience” with the spectator (Novak 173).

Finally, there is another essential point that distinguishes a musical theatre performance from that of musical performance poetry concerning the way musicality is used. Since musical theatre is defined by containing elements of song, music, and spoken words (Sfetcu, *Sound of Music* 325), this shows that usually a clear distinction is made between spoken dialogue (or monologue) and songs, which can be seen in the circumstance that “[t]here are three written components of a musical: the music, the lyrics, and the book”, whereas the book “of a musical refers to the spoken (not sung) lines in the play”, and “[t]he music and lyrics together form the score of the musical; the lyrics and book together are often printed as the libretto” (Sfetcu, *Sound of Music* 325). It can be seen that the definition of elements building a musical theatre piece already clearly draw a line not only between dialogue and song, but also between spoken and sung words, a distinction that simply cannot be made in performance poetry, since a “poet may shout or whisper, race through a text or drawl each vowel, deliver his/her ‘lines’ in a sing-song interspersed with rhythmic laughter or recite them in a monotonous drone like a liturgical incantation” (Novak 76). This not only shows how diverse the use of the human voice can be in a live poetry performance, it also shows that the distinction between “speech” and “singing” cannot be made that easily when it comes to musical performance poetry, a circumstance that will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters. However, when looking at musical theatre,

[t]radition holds that there is a hierarchy of events in musical theatre: speak, sing, dance. These are like rungs on a ladder, lifting the performer higher and higher. To begin, the actors speak with each other [...] Then, as emotions are heightened, the stakes are raised, conflict and the dramatic moment are intensified, the characters move to a higher plane [...] They break into song! (Moore and Bergmann section 1/ overview)

What Moore and Bergmann describe is the circumstance that in musical theatre, the act of singing is ascribed a higher emotional value than that of speaking, that “when whatever a character is singing, something is going on that is too big for the spoken word” (s1/overview). As will be illustrated in further detail in the following chapters,

no matter how musical elements are used in musical performance poetry – be it the use of instruments or a mixture of singing and speaking in various gradations –, the aim is always to support the spoken word, not to downgrade it in its value.

Furthermore, since the separation between song and dialogue in a musical is (not always, but generally) clear, and the aim of this investigation has been to compare musical theatre song to musical performance poetry, it must be concluded that the song alone might not fulfil all the criteria that the musical genre as such, i.e. as a complete composition, fulfill, especially when it comes to the performative effect on the audience, whereas a performed poem with elements of music is perceived as an entity in which elements usually are not separated from each other in the same way; as Holman remarks, “distinctions between performance poem and song; poem and performance art piece; performance, poem, and monologue are all debatable and generally have everything to do with the poet or performer’s intent” (341). Hence, it can be said that, although the comparison between musical theatre song and musical performance poem turns out to be more fruitful than one might think at first, due to the way they both interact with, influence and are influenced by the audience present, for which they usually are intended, the unique way of performance poetry involving music in which it melts musical, performative, and lyrical elements, the same way the position of composer and performer melt into one person, cannot be compared to the pre-defined function of a musical theatre song.

3.4.4 Bottom line: Is a distinction possible?

Based on the representative comparisons made between rap songs, pop songs, and musical theatre songs, considering their potential crossovers with the genre in focus, it can be said that, despite the fact that similarities can be found with every genre, the distinctive factor always seems to be that the words and the lyric character of the performed poem, no matter in what way music contributes to the performance, does always have highest priority in the performance. This leads to the conclusion that musical performance poetry might be reduced by the designation of song in general, since a song is, by definition, “the natural means of human self-expression” (ODM, “song”).

Of course, one could always argue that, due the sheer diversity of the term “song” and the many forms it can take, it is simply impossible to exclude the musically supported

performance poem from it. Furthermore, there are examples like that of Bob Dylan winning the 2016 Nobel Prize in literature despite being one “to have forged a career primarily as a singer-songwriter” (Dwyer 2016) and in consequence, having started a heated discussion about whether a songwriter can be a poet and what being a poet actually means (Orr 2017). This seems to show that the demand for a clear distinction between the genres of music and poetry in general might not even be answered that easily, let alone the demand for a distinction between poem and song. However, it is not the intention here to claim that the mediums do not have anything in common. Depending on the musical subgenre, a number of overlaps will be found, not only due to the diversity of the musical genre, but also regarding the circumstance that “there are at least as many kinds of ‘performance poetry’ as there are of music” (Holman 341). However, it has been shown by the representative comparison of three types of songs that musical performance poems contain sufficiently distinguishing features to be regarded as a distinctive element not equivalent to that of song, since specific genres of music tend to follow certain rules regarding musical structure, whereas musical performance poetry involves musical elements and interweaves them into the performance, turning them into a part of the poem, a circumstance that will be illustrated in Chapter Six.

4 Meaning in Music: Musical elements and emotional perception

While it has been described and analysed to what extent music and language share similar properties and how far they differ from each other, focusing especially on the way music influences human emotion and perception, it has not yet been discussed what music, in its very nature, *is*. After realising that music can enrich the experience of language in general and of poetry in particular, the question arises whether it is even possible to define music as a term, which is considered especially important when it comes to the question how far specific elements of music can contribute to a language-based art. Therefore, this chapter will serve as an analysis of music as well as its basic elements. Furthermore, it will give thought to the question how specific elements of music can evoke emotions in the listener and therefore also contribute to meaning. Hence, this chapter serves as the basis for further analysis of musical tactics used in performance poetry in the following chapters.

Hallam argues that the definition of music as such is difficult since, despite the fact that “sound exists as an objective reality”, the realisation and acknowledgment of music is culturally dependent, and “for that sound to be considered as music we need to recognise it as such” (1). As she further comments on the importance of music being socially accepted, she also refers to the circumstance that today this matter has become more individualistic:

However, in modern, multi-cultural societies, where the music that is socially accepted varies between sub-groups and may also differ between individuals within them, a contemporary definition may be that music is sound which is organised into patterns which are socially or individually accepted. (Hallam 2).

Although the suggested definition puts forward the idea of social acceptance of music as a criterion for its qualification into perspective, two further questions have to be dealt with. Firstly, if music is sound, how can sound be defined, especially in order to distinguish it from terms such as noise? Secondly, if this sound is organised into patterns to become music, it needs to be discussed what these patterns must look like to be accepted as music.

4.1 Towards a definition of ‘musical’ - What is sound?

4.1.1 Sound vs. Noise

The problem of distinguishing noise and sound from each other is rather complex. At first sight, tendencies exist to associate sound with music and to regard sound as undefinable acoustic element that is simply everywhere. A car engine that roars loudly would intuitively be regarded as noise by most people, not as sound. The polyphony of church bells, however, would, undoubtedly, be considered sound, not noise. However, no later than when it comes to the human voice, these borders can blur. While regular speech is considered as sound production, coughing, clearing one's throat, yawning, etc. would not fall into the same category for most people. When it comes to a baby's voice or laughing, it gets even more complicated; for the latter one, the decision apparently depends on the kind of laughter (which also becomes obvious in figures of speech like "roar with laughter" in comparison to the "sound of laughter"). A likewise ambivalent issue seems to be the acoustics produced by animals. While nobody would consider the hissing of a cat a sound, and few people would, on the other end of the spectrum, doubt that a whale produces sounds, in case of the mew of a cat or the chirping of a cricket, the case might not be decided that easily.

However specific or non-specific our ideas of the terms sound and noise might be, the matter is indeed complicated. According to the world health organisation, from a physical point of view, "there is no distinction between sound and noise. Sound is a sensory perception and the complex pattern of sound waves is labelled noise, music, speech, etc. Noise is thus defined as unwanted sound" (World Health Organization vii). The latter one can therefore be everything, and lines seem to be blurred, an issue that is also elaborated by others. According to Cassidy and Einbond, the term noise as such already seems impossible to define:

The problem with noise is that it is everything. It is real, experiential, objective, measurable; it is also abstract, subjective, ambiguous, and contextual. It is both a thing and a relationship between things. It can be a state of communicative surplus, a chasm of ruptured communicative space, and also the material being communicated. It is potentially both overwhelming and reductive, both multiplicity and singularity. Every attempt at defining and discussing noise ends up somewhere in between these poles, bogged down between excess and incompleteness, avoidance and desire. (Cassidy and Einbond xiii)

The authors refer to the circumstance that noise, apart from apparently being everywhere and everything, can be, in comparison to other acoustic material, considered more and, at the same time, less than, for example, its 'relative' sound. This is due to the fact that if we consider sound to be noise in a narrower sense, noise on the one hand is more than sound, since it applies to more acoustic elements, but on the other hand also less than sound, if we consider the amount of acoustic quality. As Judkins explains, "[i]t can be difficult to draw lines between musical noise (noise resulting from the process of music-making) and regular noise, or less-musical noise and more-musical noise, or even between body and instrument" (15). This especially becomes obvious when looking at the two terms from the perspective of music theory. According to Borsche, the term 'noise' can be regarded as a collective term for all sounds that cannot be assigned to a certain pitch (40), while pitch refers to the frequency of oscillations, arranging the perceived sound in a range and making us perceive a 'high' or 'low' note (Ziegenrucker 12). A noise, however, is caused by oscillations that are non-periodical and can change in their structure (Borsche 40), a description that is already given in a similar way by Ziegenrucker, who describes noise as an irregular, non-periodical oscillation (11). Considering Borsche's definition, one could assume that sound is merely a concept subsumable with noise, very similar to the idea of a square being a special form of a rectangle. This view also seems plausible since a noise does not seem to fulfil all the criteria of a sound, due to the fact that a sound is regarded as a periodical, regular oscillation (Ziegenrucker 11).

However, even if it is possible to make a relatively clear distinction between the two terms via definition, a neat separation of the two in reality seems simply impossible, as there are noises with tonal qualities as well as sounds with noise components (Borsche 41). Since the point of defining sound in this chapter is to identify it as a musical criterion for further analysis, one might argue that the concept of sound is not sufficiently distinguishable from the concept of noise, which, according to WHO's as well as Borsche's definition, could be considered the unwanted, irregular variation of the first one, not assignable to a certain pitch and, therefore, as discussed in the preceding chapter, not considered musical. Notwithstanding these assumptions, in the course of modern musical developments the relevance of noise in music, which had not been acknowledged in West European culture for decades due to the development of polyphony (Borsche 39), the value and specialty of noise as a musical component has been elaborated further and taken into account in musical considerations (Whitehead

11-12). With regard to this, the blurred line between the concept of sound and noise might not be a diminution of sound as a musical concept, but rather an enrichment of the concept of musicality. On that topic, one might consider Judkin's remarks:

Yet, in addition to the background audience noise of any live performance, there is always some "musical noise" surrounding the means of tone production itself, even in the finest performances. Musical sounds are generated through rhythmic physical motions or air pressure applied to an instrument, and instruments (and humans) are noisy things. We might hear Andrés Segovia's fingers squeak on the guitar strings, or János Starker's bow scrape the cello strings – are these really "noises" that should be removed from a recording or minimized in performance? (Judkins 14)

Judkins strikingly describes the circumstance that noise, even irrespective of its potential musical components or possible overlaps with the term sound, can be part of musical experience and can add a characteristic element to the musical performance.

4.1.2 Sound, Tone, and Timbre

Since the conceptual delimitation between sound and noise has been discussed extensively, the term sound must be differentiated from another concept, namely that of *tone* and *timbre*. However, in contrast to the latter comparison, this one does not aim to draw a line between one term being non-musical and the other one being musical; as Sorce notes, a tone for example, even in its broader definition of "a description of an aurally perceived pitch" (199), is considered nonharmonic if it does not belong to "a supporting or implied harmonic structure" (Sorce 199), which means that, keeping in mind that harmony is an identifying aspect of music, even a tone can be seen as not meeting musical criteria to a certain extent (In this case, *tone*, as in common use, is equal to the term *note*, see Sorce 199). The distinction of the two is, in fact, important in order to better understand the richness of the concept of sound. When thinking of a 'tone', most people think of notes, of music theory, and of musical scales, de facto of the theoretical concept. When one is asked to think of a sound, this quickly proves to be a much more demanding task, while, at the same time, the question why the note "c" on a guitar sounds so different than the same note on a piano is not as easy to answer. From a musical perspective, these two would not be considered different tones, but rather different sounds.

According to music theory, a tone is a regular oscillation, but in the form of a single sine wave (Ziegenrucker 11). However, this description seems rather abstract at first

sight, and is also very rare in music practice since it only contains a single oscillation and can only be generated by, for example, a synthesizer or an electronic organ. Acoustically, the distinction between tone and sound can be made since a sound, in contrast to a tone, also contains, in addition to the always present fundamental tone, so-called overtones, which create a sound spectrum that is different for every sound, be it produced by human voice or another instrument, due to various numbers and intensities of these tones (Ziegenrucker 12-13). As a consequence, the same tone, played on different instruments or produced by different voices, can create different sounds, which is the reason why the note 'c' sounds differently on a piano in comparison to its sound on a guitar. The overtones contained in the spectrum of a sound are integral multiples of the basic oscillation and, as a result, we perceive the specific *timbre* of a sound.

While the *timbre* of a tone, being defined as “the quality of a tone as the result of the presence or absence of particular overtones (partials)” (Sorce 541), is strongly influenced by the composition of the fundamental tone and its overtones (and, of course, their relation to each other), it is more than that. *Timbre* is also defined by the build-up and decay phenomena of the oscillations (Ziegenrucker 13), which again differ due to distinctions in construction (of an instrument) or anatomy (of the human vocal tract), as well as the use of those. Furthermore, Farbood and Price stress the complexity of the term timbre, ascribing to it “aspects of sound that are not accounted for by pitch, loudness, duration, spatial position, or environmental characteristics” (419). This means that although traditional definitions of music theory and of acoustics can find an exact definition of the term *sound* when looking at the number and relation of oscillations, they seem to fail to cover the complexity of the terms sound or timbre in music practice, due to its manifold aspects and manifestations. However, the authors also state that timbre has an effect on the perception of musical tension (Farbood and Price 419-20). Even if we fail to find an exact definition for timbre (and therefore might fail to distinguish the term appropriately from *sound*), this undoubtedly shows that the concept of sound is not only highly important to musical perception, but also extremely complex in its perception and acoustic realisation, which, on further consideration, helps to better understand why it is so difficult to fully understand the versatile impact music has in our lives.

4.2 Patterns in music – structural characteristics

After the smaller units of music, such as sound, have been discussed extensively, it is now necessary to look at the way sounds are organised in relation to each other in order to be perceived as music. It needs be clarified that it is not the aim of this chapter to give an introduction to music theory as such, but to better understand how music influences acoustic perception in comparison to speech, as in a regular poem for example. Therefore, it is important to get an idea of the structural quality of music regarding its distinctive features. Basic terms such as tonality, pitch, harmony and melody will be examined, also with regard to the concepts of consonance and dissonance. Furthermore, a brief look will be taken at rhythm, regarding its musical qualities.

Theoretical aspects of music theory, such as *key*, for example, will not be fully examined since, although serving as foundation for music notation and theoretical analysis (being equivalent to the metre in rhythm, see Temperly 49), the concept does not influence the way we perceive or hear music in all aspects; for our perception of a musical piece it does not make a difference whether we know what the first note is; it does, however, make a difference in our emotional perception whether it is major or minor. Therefore, this brief glimpse into musical foundation will be focused on differences that influence our perception of music, rather than attempting to examine every detail of it.

4.2.1 Aspects of harmony: tonality, chords, and melody

Although the value of harmony for music was briefly touched upon as a distinctive feature in comparison to speech, the term has not yet been taken into closer examination. According to *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, harmony describes “[t]he relationship of tones considered as they sound simultaneously, and the way such relationships are organized in time; also any particular collection of pitches sounded simultaneously, termed a chord” (379). Scruton gives a more specific account of the concept of harmony:

[H]armony [...] is what we hear in two simultaneous pitches when we hear them as a single object. In this sense, harmony, in our tradition, takes two distinctive forms: chordal harmony, in which separate pitches sound together as a single chord; and counterpoint, in which separate voices move interdependently, creating an interwoven texture. (Scruton 31)

In consideration of this, harmony basically means the different relations between tones or pitches when directly compared to each other, which, for example, can be examined when they sound at the same time. However, Paret and Sibony state about harmony that “[t]he physiological sensations due to auditory relations between frequencies played at the same time [...] are generally expressed by the terms: consonance, wellbeing, calm or harsh, unpleasantness, dissonance, etc. Harmony lies in satisfying this wellbeing, this joy of the auditory apparatus, including the brain” (149). Paret and Sibony therefore take into consideration that harmony is not merely a relation between pitches or notes; it also goes along with a certain expectation. Cheng also refers to the Greek origin of the word, claiming that it “seems to present the primal or basic model of its meaning: Harmony is the agreement of musical notes that creates a perception of internal togetherness and mutual support among the individual notes” (11). Harmony, in its common understanding as well as in its musical sense, seems to correlate with a feeling of comfort and pleasantness, or at least the expectancy of it. When one thinks of a musical piece being harmonic, one usually thinks of this piece being pleasant to the ear. However, these expectations can be challenged. Hallam, for example, observes that

[t]here may be some basic properties of our auditory and processing systems which determine why some combinations of notes sound more harmonious than others, although it may be that we learn these as we acquire the tonal system of our culture and it is familiarity with them which makes them preferable to dissonant patterns. It has been suggested, for instance, that if we were brought up listening to atonal music, we would perceive it as harmonious. (Hallam 16)

This means that although some aspects of harmonic perception might be due to brain processing, it is rather likely that a predominant part of it is culturally instilled, as well as the perception of tone steps (see the comparison between Western and Eastern music), and other aspects of music, as will become apparent in the following examination.

It has been explained in the previous chapter that a sound is based on a fundamental tone. Very similar to that, traditional systems of music, especially that of Western music, evolve around a key note which serves as a basis for melodic and harmonic development. This concept is called *tonality* (Rings 3). As Huron explains,

[o]ne simple definition of tonality is a system for interpreting pitches or chords through their relationship to a reference pitch, dubbed the *tonic*. Once the tonic is established, the relationship of this pitch to other pitches can be designated

using scale-degree names or numbers. Each scale degree evokes a different psychological quality or character. (Huron 143)

According to Huron's definition, this *tonic* therefore serves as a 'home base' for a musical piece; it is usually found at the beginning as well as at the end, and as Huron explains, the way in which other notes build upon this tonic may cause different perceptions and reactions, be it musically or emotionally. As Rings elucidates, tonality "is tied to a set of aural habits and experiences that are so deeply ingrained and seemingly immediate among Western listeners that the concept is easily naturalized" (2). As a consequence, especially Western listeners' ears are more or less trained to certain expectations that are connected to tonality, such as the anticipation that in the end of a musical piece it will finally return to the fundamental note, leaving the listener with a feeling of relief. This, however, also means that if these expectations are not met, this circumstance might evoke emotions contrary to that, may it be unrest or dissatisfaction. In the past, many composers such as Debussy or Schoenberg played with these ideas and consciously avoided tonality to break free from "an oppressive monopoly that has restricted the creative enterprise of music" (Huron 143). This shows that, although seemingly bound to a musical concept that was perceived as natural, the urge to break the conventional rules was due to a certain attitude towards these sound relations and, back in the days of Schoenberg and Debussy as well as today, people work with these elements of surprise and expectancy towards tonality to evoke feelings in the music listener.

Furthermore, as already mentioned by Huron, other pitches build upon the tonic in different relationships to it, and the composition of these relations form structures bound to a *scale* and to *chords* and, in relation to each other, create a spectrum of harmonies. A scale can be understood as the systematic composition of discrete pitch steps, in which the latter ones all stand in a defined proportion to each other. While in Western music scales are usually diatonic (organised in full steps and half steps) and chromatic (split into 12 half steps, organised in octaves), other scales can be found especially in Eastern music, such as the Balinese *slendro* or the Indian *raga* (Hallam 15). However, in European music, while the concept of scales is rather fixed, its perception is strongly bound to the positioning of the half-steps within the scale. A shift of the half-steps therefore creates a different *mode*, such as *major* and *minor*, which

serve as a basis for today's Western music. These will be further discussed at a later point in this chapter.

Another term that has to be explained in the context of harmony and tonality is the *chord*, which, as already described by *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, is a crucial element of harmony. Paret and Sibony give a very basic definition of a chord, noting that "[a]t least three notes played simultaneously (at a given time) constitute a 'chord' and a primary notion of 'harmony'" (151). However, this description might be regarded slightly problematic, since it does not give any information about the relation of these notes to one another. Going back to Scruton's definition of harmony at the beginning of the section, he states that

harmony is to be distinguished from *simultaneity*. In certain works of atonal music [...] we hear instruments sounding together at different pitches. But we do not (or do not as a rule) hear chords. What exactly is the difference here? One difference seems to be that when two or more pitches are heard as a chord, the phenomenal space between those pitches is *occupied* by the chord. The space between two pitches that form a 'simultaneity' remains vacant. (Scruton 31)

With respect to that, chords follow a system which, again, meets the expectations of the listener. Only if these expectations are met, the listener seems to hear a chord, and therefore a harmony; otherwise, the two (or more, since two notes usually are considered an interval, not a chord, in traditional music theory, see Ziegenrucker 104) pitches may be perceived simultaneously, but not regarded as a chord and hence a harmony. Ziegenrucker also points out that, in traditional theory of harmony, the chord is not a random, but a well-organised composition of notes, based on the rules of tertian texture, while dependent on the order of major and minor thirds the structure of the chord, the harmonic perception and, as a consequence, the acoustic and emotional interpretation change (104-5). However, it must be mentioned that, very similar to the findings regarding tonality, the seemingly incontestable organisation of chords has also to be put in question, since even within traditional concepts of harmony, room for dissonance is given for example, when grouping two major thirds after each other and creating an augmented chord (which might impudently be considered breaking the rules of chord composition). Although this consideration might be a little exaggerated, it merely shows that one's perception of what is comfortable, what makes one happy or what sounds 'nice', is very much dependent on what one is used to, a circumstance that has been applied to traditional as well as

modern trends of music. Furthermore, Lahdelma and Eerola conducted a study about the perception of chords, comparing major/minor chords, seventh chords, diminished and augmented chords as well as their inversions (*inversion* of a chord means that the original order of it is rearranged and the notes it consists of are played differently; for example an inversion of a C major chord, naturally build as c-e-g, is e-g-c, where the c is shifted to a higher octave). The study showed that there are significant differences in the perception of different forms of chords when it comes to emotion, so that inversions, for example, seemed to cause a level of tension and expectation that their original chord does not, while “musicians and non-musicians perceived the chords’ emotional quality quite similarly on a broad level” (Lahdelma and Eerola 49).

This also becomes obvious when looking at another important term, namely *melody*. According to Sorce, “the perception of melody is defined by one’s cultural influences; what constitutes a melody depends upon how groups of notes are perceived by the listener”, concluding that “[a]n objective definition of melody, then, is virtually impossible simply because a melody is not an objectively perceived phenomenon. Its definition, identification, and perception are always contingent upon the observer’s *cultural influences*” (224-5). However, what can be said about a melody is that it, similar to chords, groups notes in relation to each other, but different from chords, does so with subsequent notes which form a contour (Hallam 15). Thus, a melody might be defined as a succession of notes who are perceived in musical relations to each other. However, what a melody can look like can, as discussed, not really be defined, as it, again, is subjective. Still, this does not mean that a certain level of objective interpretation cannot be achieved when it comes to emotional perception. As Lahdelma and Eerola state,

[i]n actual music, different chords can create different effects depending on musical context and subjectivity plays a significant role in music perception. However, [...] this does not mean that there are no underlying similarities to be found in regard to emotion perception, even within a highly heterogenous pool of respondents. (Lahdelma and Eerola 51)

Despite the fact that the authors are speaking of the perception of chords primarily, this still holds true for several aspects of musical composition, such as tonality, melody, rhythm, and other aspects of music. In the subsequent sections, this circumstance will be further examined in order to create a framework for analysis that will later be applied to specific examples.

4.2.2 Musical rhythm

Since it has already been discussed in chapter 2 that rhythm is difficult to be regarded as a distinctive feature of music, especially when looking at poetry, this aspect of music will only be discussed briefly and especially in comparison to its occurrence in the lyric arts. However, it still seems important to reflect upon the matter because rhythm is not only an important element of music (although, as discussed, not an exclusive one), but also is frequently used by performance poets as a characteristic element. Therefore, it is important to find a clear distinction – or at least one as clear as possible – between lyric rhythm and musical rhythm.

Brown, who also struggles with the distinction between musical and poetic rhythm, starts with the consideration that “[i]n its larger forms rhythm may be defined as any organized and intelligible relationship between the individual items of a series of sounds or motions, such relationship being organized with respect to emphasis and duration” (Ch. 3). Although this might work as a definition of rhythm in general, it does not help to distinguish between the two fields of art. It has already been discussed in Chapter Two that although musical rhythm seems to be more structured and/or fixed than poetic rhythm, this distinction is far too blurred to accept it as a valid differentiation. Brown even goes so far that, by his own initial definition, even ‘good’ prose (whatever might be considered as such) could be ascribed rhythm, since “[i]t has a certain ‘swing’ to its movement which distinguishes it from bad prose” (Ch. 3). He further considers metricity as a criterion that might make a difference (music being more metrical than poetry, an idea already discussed in Chapter Two), but points out that although traditional dance-band and orchestral music indeed is very metrical, “the earlier ecclesiastical music of Christians, Hindus, and Mohammedans is ‘unmeasured’, taking its rhythm from prose texts for which it was designed” (Brown, Ch. 3). However, he concludes that the use of metre in poetry and music has to be somehow different, finally concluding that

[i]n its simplest schematic form, the musical bar is named by means of a numerator which tells us how many notes it has and a denominator which tells what kind of notes they are. Thus 3/4 (waltz) time consists of three quarter-notes to the bar. But we do not distinguish between anapaestic and dactylic waltz time, because 3/4 time always (except for variations felt as working *against* its fundamental rhythm) has the accent on the first beat of the bar, and is hence necessarily dactylic. (Brown, Ch. 3)

This means that, although poetic and musical rhythm underlie the same basic concept when it comes to rhythm, these concepts (might) develop differently due to the element of stress. Although one might argue that stress and rhythm are to be seen as separating things, it makes sense to see the two as interwoven in this case since stress, especially in music, is, at least to a certain degree, inseparably connected to rhythm. To better understand the significance of this, it might help to look at the excerpt of Lord Byron's "The Destruction on Sennacherib":

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee. (Byron 258)

Lord Byron's poem is a well-known example for an anapaestic metre. According to Brown's remark, a 3/4 time can, by its musical nature, only be dactylic. If one tried to set Lord Byron's poem to music, two options would be available. The first, and more likely one, would be to stick to the poem's natural speech rhythm and to underlie the musical rhythm in a way that musical stress and poetic stress lie on the same words. As a consequence, however, the poem, although anapaestic in its natural form, would be given a dactylic character, since the waltz rhythm cannot be perceived as anapaestic. This would not only lead to a shift in second stress, but might also influence the way pauses and connections between phrases are perceived, which, again, might contribute to the poem's interpretation to a certain degree. The second option would be far more radical, as it would suggest trying to force the anapaestic rhythm onto the waltz time (in the following, underlined syllables present poetic stress, while bold syllables show musical stress):

The Assyrian came down **like** the wolf **on** the fold,
And his cohorts were **gleaming** in purple and gold;
And the sheen **of** their spears **was** like stars **on** the sea,
When the blue **wave** rolls nightly on deep **Galilee**. (Byron 258, my emphasis)

What is to be said in advance before following up on that thought experiment is that probably, hopefully, nobody would do this to a classic, since it seems to go against everything that is known, felt and perceived as natural in language, and causes the impression of completely ignoring the natural flow of the words. However, merely considering this idea can tell plenty about the way how musical rhythm can interfere

with, contradict or at least influence the poetic rhythm, a circumstance that can be used to add meaning to a poem. Although rather far-fetched, one could justify his/her choice of the musical setting in the example above insofar as the disturbance in the rhythmic perception should express the unrest of the fight and desolation (although, of course, the composer would have to argue that for the whole poem, and would still ignore important aspects of the poem like, for example, choice of words). In contemporary poetry as well as in performance poetry, such methods are indeed used to change the perception of a poem, very similar to the distancing from tonality that has been discussed in the previous section. This will be illustrated in Chapter Six.

4.2.3 Characteristic distinctions in musical perception

In this section, some important aspects of musical distinction will be briefly examined that change the acoustic as well as emotional perception of a musical piece. This section merely aims to cover the most important aspects with regard to what music can contribute to the lyrics; hence, it does not claim to cover all aspects of musical variation, since this is simply impossible.

4.2.3.1 Consonance and dissonance

The concept of consonance and dissonance is one of the most important ones in music, especially in Western music, since it strongly influences the way we feel about a musical piece. This is already defined in small elements of music, such as in an interval (the distance in pitch between two notes). Paret and Sibony describe that [w]e say that an interval is consonant when it produces a pleasant sensation: relaxing, calming, of wellbeing, and of resolution”, while an interval is understood to be dissonant “when it causes the ear an unpleasant sensation – a tension, which needs to be resolved” (86). Octaves, unisons and thirds are commonly perceived as consonant intervals while seconds and sevenths are regarded as specifically dissonant; however, the perception of consonance or dissonance of an interval is not a matter of being the one or the other, but rather of degree; and not an unproblematic one. Since most musical systems, especially Western ones, are based on the octave, *C4* and *C5* are, for example, seen as equivalent notes (hence both are called *c*), Since a second, especially the minor second, only makes a theoretical difference of one or two half steps, the two pitches are perceived as dissonant (since they lie close to each other); the same goes for their complementary interval, the seventh. However, “no wholly satisfactory explanation

and definition of consonance and dissonance have yet been found”; although there have been many attempts to accomplish the task, beginning from Pythagoras to Heimholtz, including others, no explanation has managed to explain why some intervals are perceived or classified in a certain way; a special case in this seems to be the fourth, which, in musical composition is considered consonant, although for at least an untrained listener (and, to a certain degree, even for a musician), it has a dissonant character (“consonance, dissonance” 201). As a consequence, it might not be useful to go into further detail regarding the theoretical background, especially since “[i]n 20th-century music the distinction between consonance and dissonance has become more or less obsolete, particularly in styles using atonality and serial techniques” (“consonance, dissonance” 202).

However, despite the theoretical challenges in defining consonance and dissonance, the concept as such has a great effect on how a listener perceives, interprets, and feels music. According to Parncutt and Hair, the attribution of pleasant/unpleasant is still current in Western music, while at the same time stating that “[t]he value judgment inherent in ‘pleasant/unpleasant’ is regrettable, given that compositional techniques of the 20th Century (many of them characterized by a high level of dissonance) generated what we consider to be some of the world’s greatest music” (130). Furthermore, they refer to the circumstance that although the evaluation of dissonance as “unpleasant” has shifted in recent and contemporary music, it has to be taken into account that the concept of consonance and dissonance “has been an important force driving the historical development of Western musical structure for at least a thousand years”, leading to musical principles such as that “intervals should resolve to consonant intervals in specific ways” (Parncutt and Hair 132). Zuckerkandl describes this latter phenomenon by stating that even in traditional understandings of the matter, “to consider a sound dissonant means to acknowledge its state of inner tension and to be responsive to its *will not to be*”, while “we hear the positive desire for a certain other sound to take its place” (154).

Considering these remarks, it can only be imagined how deeply our musical understanding – and hence, our intuitively guided interpretation and emotional reactions to music – are influenced by the concept of dissonance and consonance. Looking at only a few pairings Parncutt and Hair have gathered to describe the culturally determined sensation that goes along with the pairing, such as

“tense/relaxed”, “primary/subordinate”, “stable/unstable”, “rough/smooth”, “familiar/unfamiliar”, or “implied/realized” (129), and keeping in mind, that, as discussed above, this distinction is also a matter of degree, it becomes obvious what complexity and, as a consequence, what emotional power the nuances of distinction between the two musical concepts have. Despite modern developments in musical composition, the human ear – and above them all, the Western ear – is trained to perceive and feel certain sensations and emotions dependent on the composition of intervals, chords, and melodies dependent on the concept of consonance and dissonance.

4.2.3.2 Major and Minor

The concept of major and minor in Western music is inseparably linked to the construction of scales, modes, intervals, and keys, very similar to the way the perception of consonance and dissonance is bound to the concept of tonality and strongly influence the way music is emotionally perceived and interpreted. According to the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, major and minor are “[t]erms used (1) to distinguish intervals, [...] (2) for two types of a scale, triad, of key, which are distinguished mainly by their third, this being a major third (c-e) in the major scale (triad, key) and a minor third (c-e \flat) in the minor scale (triad, key)” (“Major, minor” 501). Although the definitive establishment of major and minor as the musical basis did not take place before the 17th century, replacing the up to then predominant system of ecclesiastical modes (“Major, minor” 501), the impact on the way we understand music is undeniably tremendous. As Kastner and Crowder illustrate:

One of the compelling expressive devices in tonal music is the use of modes to suggest emotion: For most Western listeners, the minor mode suggests a negative emotional tone while the major mode has a more positive connotation, things equal. Whether the different connotations of the two modes result from acoustic, spectral differences in the major and minor triads [...] or whether they are culturally transmitted, is an unresolved question. (Kastner and Crowder 189)

Although the origins of emotional association with the modes major and minor are debatable, the fact that they evoke a certain set of emotions in the listener has been assured for a long time. This circumstance was already studied by Hevner in 1935, with the results that participants rated minor pieces as “*pathetic, doleful, sad, dreamy, or yearning*”, while the equivalent major versions were regarded as “*merry, joyous, gay,*

playful, sprightly, and graceful” (Kastner and Crowder 190). Furthermore, although the cultural influence on musical perception has already been discussed in this paper, it has also been shown that, despite traditional neglect of the theory that young children (under 8 years) can already perceive this distinction, “even children less than half that age reliably discriminate and register culturally appropriate emotional reactions to major and minor modes” (Kastner and Crowder 198). Whether this is due to the fact that children can adapt to culturally determined preferences earlier than expected or, as Catemario puts it, “[t]he difference between major and minor keys is a strong duality that can once again be understood [...] at the instinctive level” (33), being something that, at least to a certain degree, comes naturally to humans, is, as mentioned above, still unresolved. However, the ways the duality of major and minor influences the perception of and attitude towards a musical piece, and the fact that this is used in all forms of other arts, such as in films, or, as later shall be seen, in poetry, is undebatable. The (Western) ear is strongly influenced by these systems, probably for several reasons. Not only does the use of this spectrum cause a strong emotional response, the effect might even be more intense if one leaves the field of expectation and breaks with the duality of major and minor, for example by using augmented and diminished harmonies, as is frequently done by Jazz musicians. As Levine describes, “[a] diminished triad suggests tension, agitation. An augmented triad has a floating quality, suggesting, among other things, Bambi emerging from the mist at dawn” (Levine Chapter 1). Although the description appears slightly humorous, it still shows that these different forms of harmonies do not only evoke specific emotions in the listener, they even create pictures, ideas, and meaningful associations. As has already been discussed with other aspects of musical composition, the decision whether to fulfil the expectations of the listener or to surprise them, is a powerful one. As Huron states:

Trained musicians will readily recognize some commonplace examples: *tragedy* can be evoked using predominantly minor chords played with rich sonorities in the bass register. *Suspense* can be evoked using a diminished seventh chord with rapid tremolo. *Surprise* can be evoked by introducing a loud chromatic chord on a weak beat. (Huron 2)

5 A structural model for analysis: How music is used in performance poetry

So far, performance poetry and its connection to music have been closely examined. Furthermore, the question of how to define music as well as its specific features in connection to their potential impact on perception and hence, their contribution to meaning have been discussed. In this chapter, the aim is to find patterns of categorisation that can be used to analyse the different ways used to involve music in a poetic performance. For this purpose, different ways to look at the impact music can have on a poetry performance and possible patterns of interpretation will be analysed in order to use them on a representative analysis in the next chapter. This will firstly be achieved by structuring forms of musical addition into various musical elements and methods that can be used in performance poetry and will discuss how they can contribute to meaning. A distinction will be made between vocal techniques, singing and chanting, and the use of instruments, which again will be divided into rhythmical and melodic instruments. Secondly, the potential of narrativity of music will be taken into closer examination, to provide better insight into the method of musical meaning making.

5.1 Musical techniques used in performance poetry

While the differences between musical and non-musical sound realities were examined in Chapter Four, it has not yet been discussed how these existing musical opportunities can be used by the performance poet or, to be specific, by any person – so far, the aspects of musicality have been only been examined in terms of perception. As the performance poet, very much like a musician, usually makes use of musical tools to achieve a certain effect, this section will focus on the ways of implementation a performance poet has in order to involve musical elements in his/her performance.

5.1.1 Vocal manipulations: Singing and Chanting

According to Wheeler, due to the reason that “lyric poetry is usually defined in relation to music, voice and sound are key elements of the genre” (2). Although it has extensively been discussed how music can be defined, as well as how to define a note, also mentioning that the voice of the performance poet may take many forms in performance, since he/she “may shout or whisper, race through a text or drawl each vowel, deliver his/her ‘lines’ in a sing-song interspersed with rhythmic laughter or

recite them in a monotonous drone like a liturgical incantation” (Novak 76), it has yet to be analysed what musical techniques the poet’s voice offers, how different forms can be distinguished and how they can be used. Therefore, musical forms of vocal technique need to be distinguished from those of speaking. A technique that undoubtedly can be regarded as musical is, of course, singing. However, the effort of finding a proper definition of “singing” must be met with caution. At first sight, at least the theoretical aspect of it seems to be clear:

In the purely technical sense, of course, there is [singing]; singing means producing from the human throat or voice-box a succession of tones (sounds) at definite pitches and, so far as that definition is concerned, means producing sounds that are beautiful in themselves and in perfect tune with each other. (Baker 2)

This definition matches perfectly with the theoretical aspects of sound production and our perception of harmony; singing can be defined by its success in producing “sounds that are beautiful in themselves and in perfect tune with each other” (Baker 2). However, every singer knows that by this definition, most people’s vocal realisation could not be regarded as ‘singing’ anymore since it is simply impossible to always hit sounds in perfect tune, a fact that Baker also addresses by stating that “we hear extremely little good singing in the purely technical sense of the term”. Still, despite having what might be considered a rather conservative attitude towards what “good singing” is, Baker expands his definition of the term, maintaining that “singing is a combination of voice, technique, magnetism (or personality), a sense of truth and beauty and a command of tone colour” (Baker 5). By this, Baker already gives in to the fact that the act of singing is connected to a sense of emotion and aestheticism that involves the expression of one’s personality, which is achieved by forming words, also illustrated by the description of singing as “talking on the tune” (Baker 6). According to this, the appreciation of *what* is being said also influences the way it is said – or sung. Although Kelsey generally shows concern about the comparison of singing and speaking, since the quality of articulation changes in singing due to the restricted possibility of lose intonation (219), he also seems to agree on the intuitive nature of singing, as he points out that “[t]he singer is the only instrumentalist who can change the character of his tone by an act of pure imagination” (Kelsey 225). Concerning the study of musical performance poetry, this is an important aspect regarding the fact that, as Pfeiler states, the voice of a performed poem can also take many faces in order

to express the poem, due to “the expressive quality of the voice in a live performance, as well as in a live recording or a studio recording. The voice becomes an instrument that is used to give the poem its individual acoustic soundscape for the moment it has been taken off the page” (39). Regarding Baker’s and Kelsey’s attitude towards the intuitiveness of singing, this means, considering Pfeiler’s analysis of poetry performances, that singing can be a powerful instrument for the performance poet in conveying emotions. This fact becomes even more interesting since, in contrast to the singer, the performance poet does not have to follow any rules such as sticking to stylistic features of a specific genre, singing “beautifully”, or hitting a tone “perfectly” (Baker 2), since the musical expression merely serves the presentation of the lyrical text.

What needs to be considered nevertheless is the fact that, as already discussed in regard of the inseparability of musical performance poetry and songs, as well as sound, tone, and noise, here a clear line cannot be drawn either. The best proof for this is the tradition of chanting. According to Pfeiler, chanting is a frequently used method in performing poems (26; 59; 23; 34). Gold remarks that “the difference between chanting and singing is crucial. Chanting is primarily a meditative process which requires an inward focus, on the one hand, and a sensitivity to the energy of the group and a willingness to serve the group, on the other” (Gold 29). Whereas Gold’s description of chant illustrates the intuitive and sensational character of chants, strongly connected to their long spiritual tradition, it does not really tell anything about the distinctive features that differentiate chanting from singing. However, Evans’ description seems to provide better insight on the topic:

When a poem is set to music, the rhythm is controlled by the music, but when it is chanted the musical elements are subordinated to the verbal. Chanting gives verse a hierarchic quality, removing it from the language of common speech, and it hereby increases the exhilaration of poetry, bringing it nearer to the sphere of the heroic... (Evans 115)

Therefore, the difference between chanting and singing seems to be that the more flexible character of chanting, being rhythmically and probably also harmonically less bound to structure, gives greater importance to the rhythmicity of language itself, an aspect that can also be found in other definitions, describing chanting as “musical composition, so constructed as to admit of the application of prose words, and of a ready adaption to all their irregularities”, also described as “musical recitative” or “a

kind of a tune [...] rather in the manner of good reading, than singing to a regular melody in strict time” (Salkeld 326). This circumstance also makes it more comprehensible why the vocal technique of chanting is rather frequently used in performance poetry, an art that uses musical devices to enforce the poetic experience (rather than the other way around, as it might be the case, for example, for certain musical genres).

5.1.2 Use of instruments

While the use of the voice in performance poetry has been taken into account by researchers, at least sporadically paying attention to musical tendencies of vocal use, the contribution of instrumental arrangements has not gotten specific attention so far, despite the fact that artists such as Laurie Anderson, Edith Sitwell, Hedwig Gorski, and Kate Tempest all have included instrumental arrangements into their performances, greatly differing from each other (Garnham). In the following, a brief look will be taken on theoretical possibilities of using different kinds of instruments in performance poetry. There are different ways of distinguishing between different kinds of instruments, the most common one being a categorisation due to sound production and, hence, defining *chordophones* (e.g. guitar or harp), *aerophones* (e.g. flute, accordion, or organ), *idiophones* (e.g. triangle, bell), *membranophones* (e.g. drums), and *electrophones* (e.g. synthesizer, electric organ) (Ziegenrucker 169-70). However, for the purpose of this investigation, it seems more rewarding to analyse instrumental arrangements regarding their basic function, i.e. regarding to whether they tend to be used for rhythmical or melodical arrangement.

5.1.2.1 Rhythmical arrangement: percussion elements

As already discussed in Chapters Three and Four, the rhythmical arrangement in performance poetry is not only a genre distinguishing element, differentiating musical performance poetry from music genres such as rap it also can have a strong influence on how meaning is added to a poem dependent on how it goes with or against the natural speech rhythm of a poem. The specialty of performance poetry is that “it washes over an audience and that it really rhetorically moves [them]. The rhythm drives it, and the rhythm is how it communicates” (Hirsch). Hence, many performance poets such as Kate Tempest work with percussion instruments to accompany their composition.

According to Ortiz et al, every instrument that “is sounded by striking, shaking, or scratching with the hands or with another object” belongs to the percussion section (66). Whereas instruments such as kettledrums, chimes, the glockenspiel, and the xylophone belong to those that “produce tones of different, definite pitches”, there also are others “which have indefinite pitch”, resembling a noise rather than a tone. These are “the bass drum, the snare or side drum, the tambourine, the castanets, the cymbals, the woodblock, the maracas, and the Chinese gong” (Ortiz et al 67). Generally, from an orchestra’s perspective, percussion instruments are “used to emphasize the rhythm, generate excitement and enliven the orchestral sound” (Ortiz et al 66). However, according to several studies mentioned by Chau and Horner, timbre, and pitch, as well as specific features due to playing technique such as mallet hardness, affect the emotional perception of the music as received by the listener (401). Their own study showed that the vibraphone, for example, has a versatile character, whereas the glockenspiel showed a happy and heroic connotation. Furthermore, their study showed that high registers, dependent on the instruments, tend to be associated with fear, and low pitches tend to be perceived as sad (Chau and Horner 403-4).

These considerations only provide a small insight into the possibilities percussion elements offer to a performance. It shows that not only the way rhythm is used – meaning aspects of time, tempo, or loudness –, but also the choice among different percussion elements as well as the way they are played can make a great difference in emotional perception and the meaning that is associated with the performance.

5.1.2.2 Harmonic and melodic instruments

It has already been discussed in the last section that not only music, but also the quality of different instruments as well as the technique they are used with strongly influence our emotional perception and can create meaning (Chau and Horner 401-4). While Chau and Horner’s investigation primarily focused on percussion instruments, those instruments that create pure tones and, as a consequence, melodies and/or harmonies, offer a different dimension of possibilities. Although, as already mentioned before, classification of music instruments can be made based on different matters, it makes sense to look at the distinction between harmony and melody instruments. While melody instruments can only play a succession of notes and not more than one note at the same time, such as the flute, the violin, or the saxophone, harmony instruments such as the piano or the guitar can play an number of notes at the same time and

therefore are able to create not only melodies, but also harmonies. This means that different instruments also tend to have different functions in a musical composition, such as, for example, being in the foreground, functioning as a solo instrument, or being part of the musical accompaniment. If one, for example, listens to Friedrich Smetana's masterpiece *Moldau*, one immediately recognises the well-known theme that starts after the first minute. This theme, which evokes a feeling of the majestic stream, being played by the violins, stands out against the other instruments which, underlining the theme, seem to bolster the image of water and flowing, but staying in the back, being less concrete (Koldau 89-92). The same technique can be used to musically illustrate aspects of a poem, as Kate Tempest has shown in her piece *Brand New Ancients*, since she seems to use specific themes in connection with the presence and development of the characters.

Regarding the interpretation of and association with emotions in connection with the perception of instruments, Juslin and Västvjäll have come up with the theory that the interpretation of instruments is made quite comparable to that of the human voice:

How may emotional contagion be applied to music? Because music often features expressive acoustical patterns similar to those that occur in emotional speech [...] [W]hat makes a particular performance of music on, say, the violin, so expressive is the fact that it sounds a lot like the human voice, whereas at the same time it goes far *beyond* what the human voice can do in terms of speed, intensity, and timbre. For example, if human speech is perceived as "angry" when it has fast rate, loud intensity, and a harsh timbre, a musical instrument might sound *extremely* "angry by virtue of its even higher speed, louder intensity, and harsher timbre. This aspect should render music a particularly potent source of emotional cognition. (Juslin and Västvjäll 566)

As in performance poetry, the voice of the poet is his/her strongest device to convey meaning since, like in no other lyric genre, he/she is in the unique position to mediate his/her own written words to the audience, the circumstance that instruments can be perceived as an enhancement or expansion of the human voice turns them into a powerful device. Although it probably should be taken into account that the authors' description particularly seems to fit certain melody instruments, not only because of the singular characteristic, but also in regard of illustrating the theory with a melody instrument, likewise this kind of interpretation still seems to fit for harmonic arrangements. Listening to Rimsky-Korsakov's *Flight of the Bumblebee*, one can hear the polyphony of strings creating the impression of hearing the sound of a thousand flying bumblebees; similar to that, a number of instruments can create a characteristic

impression of a musical space that evolves around singular voices like a soundscape and gives them new perspective (Hindrichs 166).

It is therefore not only the kind of instrument that is used, but also the way it is presented in relation to other instruments that create certain feelings and allow interpretations. This will be further examined in the next chapter.

5.2 Narrativity of Music

Although it has been examined in detail that music has strong emotional power, and it has also been discussed that music, in that sense, can be ascribed meaning, the question how extensive these abilities are has always been strongly debated. Robinson refers to Hanslick who thought that “[t]he beautiful in music consists in musical forms, especially melodies. We can *describe* music as fresh or graceful or melancholy, but this is to characterize qualities of the music itself, not to refer to anything fresh or graceful or melancholy in the world beyond the music” (Robinson 1). However, Mohr argues that people listening to music usually do not only make loose associations; they refer to interpretations like the laughing of a child, waves in the water, or a military invasion; they hear the story of a person, they hear the story of a certain time in history, or even their own story (Mohr 321), very much like it has been maintained in the last section that one could hear the mighty stream, or flying bumblebees.

In the past, efforts were made to create a musical-narratological definition of narration, consisting of specific elements to form a plot. These are the narrator, a setting in time and place, a structural development of events, as well as agents, to name only a few (Mohr 323). However, the circumstance that these considerations are rather problematic since it is not possible to determine all these narrative elements in music, at least not always, becomes obvious when looking at instrumental music (as a non-vocal, non-visual representation of music), a musical genre that cannot explicitly refer to time and place, or even to specific characters in the same way as literature (Mohr 323). Assertions about the narrative incapability include the one that music does not even have basic narrative qualities, the assumption that listeners mistake their associations for narrativity as well as the idea the music may convey meaning, but not a story due to its lack of narrative structure (Karl 13). However, as Karl remarks, these considerations, although understandable from a narratological point of view lose relevance due to the fact that “ironically, no major advocate of musical narratology

actually maintains that music narrates in any traditional sense, and none believes that musical narrativity depends on the kind of naïve extramusical reference” (Karl 13-4). This means that, since music is not a medium that, although being closely connected to language in many aspects, is predominantly created by words, it is only natural that different parameters of narrativity can be found when talking about music. Mohr argues that due to the special character of music, there are different levels of perception when it comes to music, the first and second being the level of musical apprehension (including pitches, timbres, durations, and in larger sets rhythms, melodies, harmonies, ...), the third one being that of musical movement, where the listener perceives music as dynamic development, and on the fourth level, “states of mind”, being perceived as behind or beyond the concrete elements and their movements, from which different narrative elements can be derived, such as gestures, actions, expressions, and mental states (Mohr 326). Karl, however, takes a different approach, defining musical plot by the following criteria:

- (1) that some of its elements can be understood to represent quasi-sentient agents and their actions, and
- (2) that the totality of such actions forms a complete and coherent unity coextensive with and inclusive of the entire musical unfolding. (Karl 16)

According to Karl’s approach, the narrativity of music is open to subjective interpretation, as it can be assumed to exist as long as it can be understood in a certain way, under the condition that the musical composition provides coherence within the interpretation.

Of course, there are many other opinions regarding the way how narrativity can be ascribed to music. Some of them are even satisfied with the fact that music, like a literary narration, has a beginning, a course, an end, and, in between, expectations that are raised and can be fulfilled or disappointed (Lehmann 248). However, these illustrations of possible interpretations show a number of important things. Firstly, musical narrativity cannot be interpreted the same way as in literature, if one decides to look at the form without the words. Secondly, this does not mean that music cannot tell a story, have a plot, or, to speak more generally, convey meaning. Thirdly, the methods of ascribing a narrative character to music are not only likely, but also natural to have a subjective side to it; however, it is important that the whole musical “piece”, that means all musical elements, are considered in order to provide coherence in one’s interpretation.

6 Music, Words, and Meaning - Analysis of specific examples

As it has already been discussed extensively, not only the genre of performance poetry is a very diverse one, but also the ways music can be and is used by the different artists in the genre. Therefore, the chosen examples in this chapter do not claim to cover all nuances of the genre or all methods of musical conception that can occur, since this would simply be impossible. Instead, the intention of the analysis of these representatives is merely to illustrate a few of the ways how musical elements can contribute to the presentation and meaning of a performance poem. For this purpose, three examples have been chosen, which, after giving a minimum of context, will be analysed on the textual as well as on the musical level, with special regard to aspects of meaning and interpretation. The observation will be followed by a brief comparison in order to assess the value of the musical elements with respect to the poem itself.

6.1 “Glitter Streets” by Hedwig Gorski

While the actual degree of Hedwig Gorski’s contribution to the genre of performance poetry seems to remain debatable (as discussed in Chapter 3.2.), she still belongs to the generation of performance poets of the 1980s that first regarded the genre as one of its own. The reason why Gorski’s work seems to be perfect for closer scrutiny is simple; while she belonged to the first popularising the term, her conception of the genre was “poems written to be accompanied by music” (d’Abdon 54). This means that, although Gorski’s idea of performance poetry in general might not fit with many views on the topic back then and today, her work is perfectly suitable for an examination of this so-called subgenre, which is musical performance poetry. The poem “Glitter streets” is part of her album “Send in the Clown”, which was released in 2008 (Hedwiggorskisite), about which the artist herself says that it “indicates my understatement of the poet in American society, shouting from the top of her lungs like an amusement [...] The poems I write express my solidarity with a hidden third world in the United states” (Hedwiggorskisite).

6.1.1 On the textual level

6.1.1.1 Formal aspects

To be able to evaluate the importance of musical elements to the poem, it is important to investigate the structural composition first. To do so, it makes sense to look at the

structure in two steps: firstly, at the mere words; secondly, at the way they are realised in spoken word. This method seems to be especially helpful to better understand the nature of oral as well as, later on, the musical realisation.

Looking at the poem in written form – provided by Gorski herself in her published collection of performance poems (*Poetique – Speak-Songbook for CD Send in the Clown*), one already realises that it is written in free verse, which is defined “by the fact that its rhythmic pattern is not organized into a regular metrical form—that is, into feet, or recurrent units of weak and strong stressed syllables”, and, apart from this, they usually have an irregular length of lines and lack rhymes (“free verse” 129). Apart from the fact that the poem in general consists of seemingly randomly combined triplets, couplets, also having stanzas with five or six lines, looking at the first stanza of *Glitter Streets*, it becomes obvious that this is definitely the case in this poem: “Loose clothes in a back light./ Around the corner, air is caressing/ the turn of the century” (Gorski 24-5). The irregularity of lines is obvious immediately; while the first line has six syllables, the second one has ten syllables and the third line has seven. Furthermore, the task of defining stress patterns seems to be an impossible one, not only due to the irregular number of syllables, but also as a consequence of the distribution of natural word stress. This would, for example, indicate a spondee at the very beginning of line one, maybe even another one at the end (“back light”), embracing a pyrrhic in their middle. Line two, in contrast, seems to invite to reading it as a iambic pentameter; however, it again is broken by the word stress of “caressing”. In line three, one faces similar problems; although the first impression might invite into a trisyllabic reading, this again is impeded by a seventh syllable.

Since, as Hartman implies, also free verse “is prosodically ordered and not aimless” (24), it is no surprise that some regularities seem to be found in Gorski’s poem; looking at the poem in general, one immediately becomes aware of the two couplets containing a repetition of the same line (“It turns out the way we want it to”; “It’s years ago since we met”; Gorski 24-5). Looking at the excerpt above, one might recognise a certain symmetry within each line that arises from an even number of syllables and, within each line, similarities in stress. The two spondees in line one have already been mentioned. The second line contains a total of 10 syllables; whereas “*around the corner*” has two stressed syllables, so does the second half of the line, “air is caressing”; furthermore, the main stress in both halves seems to lie on the penultimate syllable. In

line three, although it contains an uneven number of syllables, it still seems to be separable into two parts, namely, “the turn of” and “the century”; despite the fact that the second half, consisting of one syllable more than the first, might indicate an imbalance, the two unstressed syllables of “century” seem to equal the word “of” in the first part, an impression enhanced by the repetition of “the” at the beginning of each part. This apparent symmetry, though not free from imperfections, can be found in most parts of the poem, causing the impression of a weighing rhythm in a binary measure, whereas the second half of the line always seems to answer the first one.

Despite these considerations, it should be noted that the symmetry is hard to find in the second half of the poem, especially when looking at the following passage:

Pull the top up when it rains.
It's all surreal.
The Present.
The fire in the fireplace.
The rain goes on and on
Like music and hallucination. (Gorsky 24-5)

Although the lines above do not lack some degree of symmetry, mostly in form of parallelism, repetition, and anaphorae (“The Present”, “The fire in the fireplace”, “The rain”, “on and on”), the symmetry that can be found in the prior stanzas seems to be mostly lost here. Furthermore, it must be considered that when listening to Gorski’s performance of the poem, it becomes apparent that not only the stanzas and lines are perceived in a completely different arrangement, it also turns out that she tends to set put stress on the words in a rather unusual way. Regarding the first remark, one could, for example, rearrange the first stanza according to the pauses Gorski makes similar to this:

Loose clothes in a back light. Around the corner,
air is caressing the turn of the century. (Hedwig Gorski – Thema)

This demonstration shows that the way Gorski arranges the words and pauses in relation to each other does strongly influence the way they are perceived and hence might tell the listener more about the meaning of the poem. However, the way Gorski shifts and plays with word stress is, as assumed, connected to the musical arrangement underlying the poem and will therefore be discussed at a later point.

6.1.1.2 Story and Meaning

The fact that Gorski was inspired by Bob Dylan's surrealist images and meanings (World Heritage Encyclopedia) seems to be detectable in *Glitter Streets*, since the poem's surrealist metaphors and impressions seem to create vivid images that emerge before one's mind's eye while the actual plot, if existent, seems hardly tangible. However, the two repetitive couplets in the poem indicate that the poem at least has agents, provided by the pronoun "we" that only appears in these lines (Gorski 24-5). Furthermore, numerous cues are given that point towards a romantic, possibly sexual involvement, such as "loose clothes", "caressing", "bare shoulders made for touching", "hearts beat loud" (Gorski 24-5). Other parts of the poem suggest some kind of connection between a present incident and an event in the past, being shown in phrases like "the turn of the century", "traveling glassy-eyed in time", or "It's years ago since we met" (Gorski 24-5). From these impressions one can already deduce that there seem to be two people who have been romantically involved in the past, and seem to meet again to relive their past romantic engagement through a sexual adventure. Further hints indicate that the present meeting seems to be secret, having the flavour of forbidden lust, which can be interpreted especially due to the creation of place and surrounding, visible in phrases such as "hot-foot night", indicating a certain degree of hurry, and in the fact that there is "muttering", again hinting at a level of secretiveness, or the choice of location, including a "dark room", a "convertible", and a place "around the corner", seemingly out of sight of the "back light" (Gorski 24-5). Furthermore, the "leather jacket" as well as the "peacock feather on the floor" might be interpreted as disguises, since especially the peacock feather is a rather unusual accessory that reminds of a costume (Gorski 24-5). Considering all these aspects, it might be assumed that the lovers, who, a long time ago, had already met, meet again for a passionate embrace that is secretly held in a dark room, where it all ends.

However, several hints leave open the possibility that none of the adventure is real. From remarks that the situation seems "surreal" and hints of "music and hallucination" one might assume that what at first sight appears to be a reunion of the two lost lovers is simply happening in the narrator's mind, which could also be seen as implied by the phrase "travelling glassy-eyed in time", the term "glassy-eyed" hinting at the fact that the person closes her (or his) eyes before reality. Also, looking at the title of the poem, "glitter streets", a possible interpretation would be that glitter is a tool to deceive

someone and to make things appear differently, which, regarding the story in the poem, could mean two things: firstly, the agents in the story close their eyes before reality since they are pretending to be something they are not; secondly, the narrator is hallucinating and imagining the whole encounter (Gorski 24-5).

6.1.2 On the musical level

6.1.2.1 Instrumental arrangement

The instrumental arrangement provided by the East of Eden Band has to be regarded before the background of jazz, since many of its stylistic features do appear in the composition, such as the stylistic hot intonation, including blues notes and dirty tones, such as buzzing and other forms of adding noise components, vibrato, sliding into tones, and others (Michels 539). The composition combines the stylistic involvement of several instruments, including an electric guitar, a bass guitar, and percussion elements, the latter ones merely creating a soundscape through shaken cymbals. The rhythmical basis of the piece is a six-eight measure, which, although it is clearly perceivable, sets an emphasis on the beats one and four, which is dominant enough to support the poems swaying character mentioned in the precious section. The harmonic arrangement continuously pursues a surreal character full of dissonances and surprises, which will be briefly examined.

Before Gorski speaks the first words of her poem, the lead guitar, accompanied by the bass guitar, plays a dissolved C major chord with a D in second inversion, which results in the melodic line D4 – C5 – G4 – E4. Since the first note played is the only one not originally being part of the C major chord, namely the D, this already changes the character of the chord and leaves the expectations of the listener, who, due to the familiarity with the concept of tonality, would probably rather expect a chord that builds on the tonic and hence on the octave (see Section 4.2.1.), unfulfilled. Furthermore, as a consequence, the first interval that is heard is the minor seventh, which, again, breaks with the expectations of the listener who would, hearing two notes being relatively far away from each other in regard of melodic development, rather expect hearing an octave. As a consequence, the listener is already invited into an acoustical atmosphere of surprise, where nothing is the way it seems to be. To continue this procedure, the chord ends in a ninth, which even enforces the surreal character due to the fact that the listeners perceives the dissonant quality of the D4 and E4 lying

close to each other on the musical scale and, as a consequence, creating dissonance, but having the tones played in different octaves. The latter again works against the listener's expectations, since, melodically, it is more accessible to have the notes D₄ and E₄ played in a second to each other rather than in its complementary interval (see Section 4.2.1.), an effect which is enhanced by the circumstance that the E₅ is already audible at the very beginning of the piece, even before the first note is actively played, which, looking at the subsequent melodic and harmonic development, might be considered foreshadowing, with the consequence that the D₄ in the beginning already sounds disconcerting. As the first chord fades out, it is played again, this time accompanied with a C in the bass line and cymbals hissing as the poet is about to start the lyric recitation. The C-major chord starts alternating with a D-minor chord, also dissolved in a melodic line (D₅ – F₄ – D₅ – F₄ – A₄ – D₅), now the bass line, playing an F, being audible; this cadential development is another example for a typical jazz element, since a scale of degree 2, also called subdominant parallel (rather than the subdominant) is typical to appear in the jazz cadence due to the phenomenon of model interchange, which means that chords can be exchanged in a scale system due to parallel relations from one scale to another. This factor is distinctive for jazz music, giving the opportunity to break with the traditional I-IV-V scheme and therefore accessing a richer spectrum of emotions (Muholland and Hoinackl 117).

The further development of the musical accompaniment involves a stanza-like alternation between C major and D minor, mainly carried by the lead guitar; then, simultaneously with the couplet in the poem, the melodic line evolves towards a succession of diminished chords, starting with a minor, creating more tension by alternating the highest notes with the neighbouring minor seconds. With the line “bare shoulders made for touching”, the melody moves from a jump on the fourth to a dissolvment in a modified D major chord, whereas the purity of the chord is broken by frequencies of dirty bass lines as well as noise components due to the style of playing of the instruments. After a transition back to C major, which is achieved by moving across a modified C flat chord, the sequences are repeated, accompanying the second part of the poem (from “Lazy convertible driving” to “the rain goes on and on”). However, as the third repetition starts with the line “like music and hallucination”, the cymbals as well as the bass line perform a crescendo, until the melody leads to an alternation of a minor second (G and G flat), which leads to an unexpectedly consonant final chord, forming a major third in the higher notes, but still containing a level of

dissonance as the G flat is still audible in the base line, leaving the listener with an impression of incompleteness, since the melody does not only not return to the tonic, but it also seems to remain undecided whether to give the listener a consonant or dissonant ending.

6.1.2.2 Aspects of voice

Some non-musical aspects about the ways Gorski uses her voice have already been discussed in section 6.1.1.2. However, the most significant aspect is the rhythmical shift due to music causing unusual stress patterns in the poem, creating an atmosphere of surrealism. Interestingly enough, Gorski neither sticks to the natural speech rhythm of the lyric text, nor completely subordinates to the musical rhythm provided by the instrumental accompaniment. To closer examine this circumstance, it is helpful to look at an excerpt of the poem:

*Loose clothes in a back light.
Around the *corner*, *air* is caressing
the turn of the *century*.*

It turns out the way we want it to.
It turns out the way we want it to. (Gorsky 24-5, emphasis added)

At first sight, when listening to the poem, it sounds as if all the wrong syllables were stressed. However, looking at the first verse, it becomes clear that while all the italic syllables indeed are more stressed in terms of normal speech stress, the underlined syllables, in contrast, are emphasised via using a significantly higher intonation. With regard to that, the impression of a tug of war between the syllables is created, and, in further consequence, a dualistic tension between them. This circumstance creates, despite the underlying six-eighth metre, the impression of having a binary measure in the foreground, an impression that is even enhanced due to the fact that most of the words in verse one are spoken either on the first or the fourth quaver (the italic syllables on beat one, the underlined ones on beat four). Furthermore, although the couplet is not organised within the same tension, something even more fascinating happens here. Instead of sticking to the binary stress, Gorski consequently positions the syllables in the couplet on every second beat, giving them the impression of being borrowed division (deutsch: *Duolen*) within an artificially constructed binary measure. Like this,

Gorski seems to create two different rhythms that underlie the poem; interestingly enough, she does not follow either of them consequently.

Another important aspect regarding the poet's rhythmical organisation is the fact that only every second part seems to follow this musically-emphasised rhythmical scheme, while every other part seems to be rhythmically more based on speech rather than the musical rhythm. Looking at the example above, one can see that only the first line and the second half of the second line in verse two do meet the criteria for this structure. Again, the poet creates an organisational rhythmical duality, whereas the first part always seems to follow the musical rhythm, whereas the second part is rather based on speech rhythm.

Apart from the rhythmical aspects, Gorski also uses a very iconic mixture of singing and speaking, which is why "Gorski's spoken vocals have been described as bringing her 'eerie' voicing as close to singing as possible without actually singing" (World Heritage Encyclopedia 4). However, despite the fact that most of the poet's vocal performance can be regarded as speaking and not singing due to the fact that, although intonation is modified, Gorski avoids to actually sing specific notes, there are some parts of the poem where the performer seems to consciously meet the correct notes. This applies to the words "clothes", "corner", "of the century", "we want it to" (twice), "wild child", "in time", "since we met" (twice). Although the sung passages do occur more often in the first part of the poem, it is also noteworthy that in passages such as "glassy-eyed in time", the development from spoken to sung words begins earlier and develops until the last syllable is finally sung. Again, Gorski seems to play with a duality, this time that of speaking versus singing, while she, also here, seems to play with the line between the two.

6.1.3 Interpretation

In consideration of all these aspects, it seems plausible to say that the addition of musical elements seems to fulfil a crucial function in conveying the meaning of the poem. As discussed in section 6.1.1.1., the poem seems to play with the uncertainty of the encounter of the two lovers being an illusion or a real event. The music shows an enhanced complexity of Gorski's play with duality; this can be seen in the tension between the instrumental six-eighth metre versus the binary measure that is created through speech; it can also be observed in the tension between consonance and

dissonance, since, despite the fact that the occurrence of major chords is rather frequent, it is constantly disturbed by a succession of diminished chords, by noise components that irritate the purity of the harmony and finally end in a dissonant question for consonance. It is also shown in the tension between speaking and singing, one sliding into the other. Although there might be plenty of room for interpretation, the almost stubborn way in which unstressed syllables are stressed in order to fit into an idea of a rhythm, although another rhythm is already there, might be interpreted as an unwillingness to accept reality. Whereas the singing is more frequent at the beginning of the poem, it is reduced until it disappears, which might indicate an intensifying pressure from reality. Since the only lines that are undeniably sung are the couplets, with the words “since we met” and “we wanted to”, this circumstance might be interpreted as a desperate clinging to the illusion, insisting that “we met”, because “we wanted to”. From the major chords at the beginning arises a succession of diminished chords, creating an increased number of dissonances, which, combined with the crescendo that is enforced by the cymbals and the bass guitar, this might also be a hint towards the possibility that the encounter is indeed an illusion, and the narrator is unwilling to accept this fact, being deluded by the “glitter” on the streets.

6.2 “Music” by Rachel Duval

Although Duval (formerly Rachel ‘Rocky’ Bernstein; she began her career as a performance poet under the name Bernstein but shall be addressed here by her actual name. However, both Bernstein and Duval refer to the performance poet) today has shifted her artistic focus to opera singing, a big part of her initial encounters with a stage come from her days as a performance poet when she participated in several poetry slams in Seattle and Denver (Wan), even becoming featured performer and opening act at the German National Poetry Slam in 2011 (Carlo). Despite the fact that Duval ended her career as a performance poet years ago, singing lyric soprano roles in various opera projects, her unique style as a slam poet, combining her lyric performance with musical elements, serves as a perfect example for analysis. In her poem “Music”, she illustrates, without any instrumental accompaniment, a way to use singing in a lyric performance, using a style that strongly distinguishes itself from that of Hedwig Gorski.

6.2.1 On the textual level

6.2.1.1 Formal aspects

Duval's poem does, like many other performance poems, not meet the criteria of traditional verse, due to a lack of rhyme or regular metre (Harding 39). However, although the poem is free in its form, it might rather be considered a prose poem than free verse, since a prose poem, due to the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, is

[a] composition able to have any or all features of the lyric, except that it is put on the page—though not conceived of – as prose. It differs from free verse in that it has no line breaks, from a short prose passage in that it has, usually, more pronounced rhyme, sonorous effects, imagery, and density of expression. (Simon 664)

Although this definition primarily accounts for poetry “on the page” (Simon 664), it seems to be also applicable to oral poetry. If one considers Duval's performance of the poem, the difference is quickly understandable in, despite having rhythmical as well as other poetic devices, the poem appears to be arranged in sentences rather than in lines, which is a characteristic feature of prose poetry (Monson 6). However, the fact that the poem contains numerous poetic devices, including parallelism in stress, imagery, repetition, similes and metaphors undeniably marks it as a lyric piece.

Even if the poem does not consist of a regular metre, one can hear parallel stress patterns within. Also, despite the fact that the sentence stress seems to be prevalent, and Duval presents the poem as if she were telling a story, it appears that, to a certain degree, feet are perceivable. A pattern that frequently occurs is the iambic as well as the trochaic trimeter. Although out of context of regular lines, the trochaic character in the phrases “this is Western music”, “hungry kind of longing”, “you become the notes”, “men are sick and hungry”, just to name a few examples, create an audible rhythmical symmetry in Duval's performance, as well as the iambic character in the passages “to celebrate today”, “another day alive”, “who think that band is gay” does, the latter one also being an representative example of a rhyming pattern that, seemingly accidentally falls into place (seattlepoetryslam).

Other devices in the poem also help create a more vivid image of the words. Therefore, it helps to look at a specific example:

Scissors poised in the hands of 12-year olds ready to carve lines in their silken skin (seattlepoetryslam 1:31, emphasis added)

The phrase contains a number of consonances, whereas the most dominant one appears to be the presence of the “s” in the beginning and the end of the phrase (“**Scissors** poised”, “**silken skin**”), pointing towards the danger of the scissors who are about to scar the children’s skin. Furthermore, looking at the number of stressed syllables, one finds that the number of syllables from one stress to another rise and fall, moving from two (“Scissors”) to three (“poised in the”) to five (“hands of twelve-year-olds”), then back to four (“ready to carve”), to three (“lines in their”), two (“silken”), and finally, one (“skin”). This movement seems to enhance the dramatic image of danger, illustrating the arm that is about to cut into its own body’s skin.

Finally, the most frequent device used in Duval’s poem seems to be repetition. Firstly, one finds a number of repetitions regarding structure and diction, like in the following example:

It’s Adam, loyal to Israel, and Hamed loyal to Lebanon, and Danny, loyal to America, it’s difference, it’s dissonance, and it’s resolution. It’s me. Always loyal. To the seven-scale degree. One – two – three – four – five – six – seven... (seattlepoetryslam 2:35)

The first thing immediately recognisable here is the three-set structure of words and phrases, first in the beginning, referring to Adam, Hamed, and Danny, but also in the phrase “it’s difference, it’s dissonance, it’s resolution”. Furthermore, this effect is enhanced by the repetition of concrete words, such as “loyal (to)”, “and”, as well as “it’s”. The similarities in structure seem to refer to the poet’s intention to illustrate the commensurability of these descriptions (this, however, will be further explained in the following section). Another interesting aspect of the excerpt above is the fact that the phrase “to the seven-scale degree” has a total of seven syllables, while it is followed by a presentation of seven notes, which might be interpreted as a demonstration of the poet’s claimed familiarity with and loyalty to what she knows. Finally, the poem contains a number of repetends who seem to function as refrains, but, in contrast, “occurring irregularly rather than regularly in a poem, or to a partial rather than a complete repetition” (Perrine 699). The most important seem to be “home”, “define music”, “this is music”, as well as “seven”, all of them representing a crucial key aspect of the poem’s meaning. Whereas the phrases “define music” and “this is music” seem

to always lead back to the poem's initial aim, the functions of "seven" and "home" seem to be more subtle, a circumstance that will be further elaborated on in the following sections.

6.2.1.2 Content and Meaning

Whereas the title "Music" already gives away the central topic of the poem, the way the theme is elaborated on still seems to be unusual. Giving the impression that the poem, as already mentioned before, has narrative quality to a high degree, as its first sentences already introduce agents, actions and a change of events (see Chapter 5.2.), the poem quickly develops from a seemingly casual anecdote about a student trying to define music to a passionate statement about why it is simply impossible to do so. By the repetition of the words "define music", the poet seems to express her lack of understanding how one could ask to simplify the matter of music by asking to define the term "in two pages or less" (seattlepoetryslam 0:03). What follows is a demonstration of the complexity of the matter, starting with a definition based on a music-theoretical perspective, defining it as the following, "eight notes are in methodically certain distances apart to create a major sound. See, this is Western music" (seattlepoetryslam 0:14). The poet elaborates further on the fact that music can be regarded as the seventh scale degree, awaiting to be dissolved in the tonic (see Section 4.2.1.), and continues to emphasise the circumstance that "home" is more than a matter of definition, since home "is a hungry kind of longing that only a musician will know. It's that space where the notes become you, and you become the notes and the crescendos arc like missile fire" (seattlepoetryslam 0:42), indicating that home, very much like music, is a subjective perception, meaning different things to different people, be it a ruin, a tonic note, or defined by the absence of the feeling of safety, leading to loneliness and conflict. Very much like this, music can mean home to one person, whereas it means the feeling of shame to another. Duval manages to build a bridge from the question of what music is to the question of what home is to the conclusion that these definitions are subjective in form, depending on what feelings and thoughts one associates with the concept, ending with the conclusion that "music is a peace accord that never came into effect" (seattlepoetryslam 2:30), being "dissonance", "difference" and "resolution" at the same time, therefore being the longing for a home, for peace, for a musical tonic, and at the same time, the possibility of resolution – without the guarantee that it will ever come, which is indicated by her

last words, once again presenting the steps of the major scale, but stopping at the seventh degree, not returning to the tonic, leaving the audience with an open end.

6.2.2 On the musical level – aspects of voice

The fact that Duval uses musical devices, more specifically her singing voice, to illustrate her poem, might be interpreted as turning the poem into a calligram. Although this claim might appear bold since a calligram usually is referred to as a “word or piece of text in which the design and layout of the letters creates a visual image related to the meaning of the words themselves” (Oxford University Press), meaning that the representation of the text usually has to be in visual form, the acoustic involvement of music still accounts for a representation of the words by another medium, which, though not visual, is audible.

Duval uses this method by only singing certain parts of her performance, which is mostly reduced to the major scale. Furthermore, the singing only occurs at the beginning and at the end of her performance. Firstly, she sings the degrees of the major scale, “one two three four five six seven, eight notes” (seattlepoetryslam 0:11), returning to the lower octave with the word “notes”. She continues by singing a major seventh chord, which evokes the urge to resolve major seventh, which is also called the leading note, into the tonic, since the unresolved leading note leaves the listener with a feeling of unease, asking for transformation and resolution into a chord with harmonic perception (Dietrich 55). However, instead of resolving the chord, Duval leaves it pending in the air, using it to illustrate the “hungry kind of longing [...] [that] always leaves you wanting more” (seattlepoetryslam 0:30), even repeating it in between the spoken phrases, and finally leading into the phrase “direct me home, home” (seattlepoetryslam 0:36), in which she sings the first two notes on the seventh degree, leading further into the tonic on the eighth degree, and finishing on the octave below when singing “home” the second time. After this prelude to her elaboration on how to define “home”, Duval only sings one more time in the end of her performance, which also marks the end of the poem: “One, two, three, four, five, six, seven” (seattlepoetryslam 2:53), again leaving the scale pending on the seventh scale degree, without returning to the tonic.

Although the harmonic construction of Duval’s poem can be considered the most prominent part in her performance, one more aspect seems noteworthy. Whereas

Duval, as already discussed in the previous section, manages to emphasise her speech in a way that, at least to a certain degree, rhythmical structure partly becomes audible, there is one passage that is marked by a more dominant rhythm, in which the poet falls into a rhythm that might rather be regarded as musical than lyrical (see Section 4.2.2.):

music is the **shame** that would beset them if they **took** up the **trumpet**, and the **saliva** that might have **fallen** from well used **spit** valves falls **dry** in a **sentence** that goes **unspoken** out of **shame** (“Music” Youtube, 0:36, emphasis added)

The passage, which refers to “sixth graders who think that band is gay and orchestra is only for the retards” (seattlepoetryslam 1:17), rhythmically stands out due to two aspects; firstly, Duval stresses the emphasised syllables more strongly than in other parts of her performance, creating an audible two-level relation of stress, alternating stressed and unstressed syllables, reducing the nuances in between. Secondly, the poet speaks, in contrast to the rest of the poem, in a metre, taking approximately the same amount of time for each syllable (although the stressed syllables tend to be longer than the unstressed ones, Chun 164), creating a metre, which, although not being regular due to changing from common time to five-four-metre, and even containing elements of three-four metre, possesses musical character.

6.2.3 Interpretation

Looking at the way musical devices are used in Duval’s poem it can undoubtedly be said that they strongly contribute to the meaning of the poem. Not only do they have, as presented with the initial idea of the notes being a calligram of the poem in the previous section, a defining character as they acoustically present what the words in the poem seemingly are trying to convey; they also invite the listener into a world of musical perception, in which the acoustical demonstration of what the poet is describing serves as proof for the claims she is making. Considering the feeling of unease and the longing for resolution presented by the seventh scale degree, a feeling that probably can only be fully understood when hearing it, and that aims to demonstrate the urge for harmony, which, in reality, often remains unfulfilled, one can understand the poet’s intention to convey the power of music that can make the listener feel at home, in pain, at peace, or at war.

Regarding the rhythmical passage in the poem, referring to students who avoid musical activity in fear of feeling shame, it appears that the rhythmical expression does

represent a demonstration of the fact that, despite the fact that the children seem to reject musical participation, music still means something to them; even if it is the feeling of shame, leaving the listener to the interpretation that, whatever one thinks or feels, it seems to be impossible not to be moved by music.

Finally, the last note and word of the poem, “seven”, ending on the leading note and, as already mentioned, leaving the audience with a feeling of unease, seems to mirror the “peace accord that never came into effect”. By departing the audience, which intuitively awaits a harmonic ending, the poet one last time refers to the importance and indescribability of music, representing a reflection of society, where for too many times, people await harmony and piece, without knowing whether it will ever arrive.

6.3 “Brown Eyed Man” by Kate Tempest

Kate Tempest, as already mentioned in Chapter Three, is a successful performance poet, rapper, playwright and published author, who is well-known for blurring the lines between music and poetry, whereas the lyrics always remain in the foreground (Toerkell). Her newest album, “The Book of Traps and Lessons”, published in 2019, is different in style since it has been reduced regarding instrumental arrangement, giving more room to the poet’s voice, and hence adding new nuances to her speech, such as a certain fragility and desperation (Lehner). However, despite a reduced musical arrangement Tempest herself remarks that music and words are created simultaneously and, in the process, influence each other. Although the lyrics to “Brown Eyed Man” existed before the final musical arrangement, the latter one was, according to Tempest, intended to create a soundscape that is as overarching as, in her perception, the lyrical world is (qtd. in Lechler).

6.3.1 On the textual level

6.3.1.1 Formal aspects

Since Tempest’s verses have in common with free verse that they do not have a regular metre, but, in contrast to Tempest’s poem, free verse usually lacks rhymes, metre regularity as well as an equal length of lines, this matter shall be examined a bit more in detail. Therefore, one might look at the first stanza:

They took my friend; they cuffed his wrists
They beat him in their van

He hadn't done a thing, but when
they came, of course he ran
And they pursued, and they were rude
And he said nothing, he bit his lip
'Cause If you speak, you'll feel their feet
But if you don't, you'll still get hit (Tempest, Brown Eyed Man 0:05)

If the lines are arranged based on Tempest's speech rhythm and fall of intonation at the end of the line, one can see that, apart from some irregularities, the rhythmical metre can be considered a iambic tetrameter, although the second and fourth line of the first stanza only contain three iambic feet, and the second line of the second stanza contains an amphibrach instead of the second iambic foot. However, apart from that, the metre is rather regular. Furthermore, one can see that the rhyme also seems to follow the regular a-b-c-b scheme, containing a full rhyme in the first stanza and an assonance in the second. When looking at the refrain, in contrast, the structure becomes more complicated:

What's the matter with you
My lovely brown eyed man?
How come I can feel you shaking
When I take you by the hand?

What's the matter with you
My lovely brown eyed man?
How come I can feel you shaking? (Tempest, Brown Eyed Man 0:28)

Whereas – with respect to Tempest's performance – the second line (and, obviously, the sixth line, being its repetition) might be interpreted as a iambic trimeter, it appears to be more fruitful to separate it into an amphibrach and a molossus, due to word distribution. The third and fourth lines, however (as well as line seven), again seem to stick to a regular trochaic tetrameter, apart from the fact that in line four the last foot contains only one syllable. The first (and fifth) line, however, seem to be especially extraordinary, consisting of a trochaic foot, a spondee, and a pyrrhic – an interpretation, which, although probably debatable, becomes obvious when listening to the poet's performance. These considerations, combined with the fact that, while lines one to three are repeated but, line four is not, leaving the rhyme in the a-b-c-b scheme unanswered, might point towards the poet's intention to cause distress in the listener by constructing these irregularities.

Whereas in stanza three and four, following the first refrain, the iambic tetrameter stays widely intact, the rhyme scheme merely changes in the third stanza to a-b-c-c, whereas the rhymes in the third and fourth stanza rhyme on the same assonances (for/ want/ afford/ doors).

In stanza five and six, however, the iambic tetrameter is completely overthrown, giving way to a verse concept that is closer to free verse than to any regular metre, consisting of dactyls, amphibrachs, trochees, and others. Also, in stanza five the rhyme scheme changes to a-a-a-b, whereas the fourth line contains an inner rhyme (maiming/taking). In stanza six it changes to a more complex situation, since lines one and four build feminine assonances, while line two contains an additional impure rhyme to the previous two. Furthermore, line three also contains an internal rhyme.

A last thing that must be mentioned is the modification of the last refrain, which is shown in the following:

Now, what's the matter with you?
You're lying if you think
That my pain isn't your pain
Because when I'm hit, you flinch

What's the matter with you
My lovely brown eyed man?
How come I can feel you shaking? (Tempest, Brown Eyed Man 0:28)

As visible in the above, Tempest changes lines two to four in the last refrain, a circumstance that will be elaborated on in the next section.

6.3.1.2 Content and Meaning

The album cover of “The book of traps and lessons” is a passport, since, according to Tempest, the document represents the potential privilege to own the right papers that may decide between living and dying, a circumstance in which context “Brown Eyed Man” should be seen, being a clear statement against racism, police brutality, and social injustice (Lehner).

Already the first line, “Don’t move a muscle, stay exactly where you are”, shows an example of a situation that evokes a feeling of discomfort in the reader. As the text proceeds, the lyrical I tells that “they took my friend, they cuffed his wrists / they beat him in their van / He hadn’t done a done a thing, but when / they came, of course he

ran" (Tempest, Brown Eyed Man, 0:05), seemingly describing how an innocent is arrested by the police, being treated brutally by "them", leaving out an exact description of who "they" are, but, by various hints, indicating that some superior, hostile force is meant, be it the police, the government, or society. The narrator proceeds with the remark that the arrested does not say a thing since "if you speak, you'll feel their feet / but if you don't, you'll still get hit" (Tempest, Brown Eyed Man 0:20). already illustrating the problem that people being accused of a crime do not have any option to behave correctly, since everything they do will be considered criminal. The refrain that follows addresses the "brown-eyed man" directly (the reference supposedly being made to stress a difference in looks, in contrast to the British blue-eyed stereotype), indicating a lack of trust, possibly due to bad experience, disregarding the fact that the lyrical I seems to mean well, asking "How come I can feel you shaking / when I take you by the hand?" (Tempest. Brown Eyed Man 0:34). After the refrain, the perspective changes; while the lyrical I so far has taken the position of the observer, it now becomes the victim, which becomes apparent throughout stanza three, where the claim is made that the narrator is drawn into the expectations of society, and, as a consequence that "they want me bad, now bad I'll be" (Tempest, Brown Eyed Man 0:57), while the factitiousness of society is represented by the words "they show me rooms with furnished gold / and then they close the door" (Tempest, Brown Eyed Man 1:17). In the fifth and sixth stanzas, however, the "brown-eyed man" even goes a step further, accusing those who are in power, those that call him a "demon", to be criminals themselves, since "they plunder and they pillage, they call it liberation / [...] / they're just doing it all beneath a flag that says freedom" (Tempest, Brown Eyed Man 1:59). The last refrain, however, starts with the lyrical I still taking the brown-eyed man's perspective, seemingly asking the listener directly "What's the matter with you? / You're lying when you think / that my pain isn't your pain / Because when I'm hit, you flinch" (Tempest, Brown Eyed Man 2:39); by doing so, the poet seems to refer to the dangers of accepting cruelty and injustice to others, since these developments do not only affect the chosen victims, but all parts of a society, be it economically or in the in the light of every person being part of the human race. In the end, the refrain turns back to its original form, and the lyrical I returns to its role as an observer.

6.3.2 On the musical level

6.3.2.1 Instrumental arrangement

Although, as already mentioned before, the instrumental arrangement in “Brown Eyed Man” tends to stay in the background, the diversity of the composition is rich, possibly a consequence of Tempest’s intention to create a complete soundscape (Lechler). The combination of instruments with different timbres, played in different registers manage to create such a soundscape in a similar way as it already was mentioned in Section 5.1.2.

The first instruments that are audible are flutes, playing a G sharp in the fourth octave, while the piano joins with seemingly randomly chosen notes, moving from an E4 to a C4 sharp, then, almost casually climbing down the octaves, landing on a C2, climbing back to A4 and C4 sharp, but always climbing down to the lower octaves, increasingly adding notes not contained in the C sharp minor scale, such as F4, until with the refrain, strings start to play low notes (E1, A2 resolving in G2 sharp), playing around with the minor chord, whereas the flutes continue their play, creating a buzzing, hovering sound created by the audible resonance of the overtones that leads to a feeling of unease in the listener. As the strings become louder during the refrain, a single bass drum is heard as Tempest forms the words “I can feel you shaking” (Tempest, Brown Eyed Man 0:50). Whereas the musical arrangement of the second stanza is comparable to that of the first, the piano now progressively adds dissonances to the soundscape, jumping around between the octaves more wildly. The second refrain, however, takes these enhanced elements and mixes them to the existing combination of strings and flutes, occasionally creating very low beats on the piano that, due to its timbre, is hardly identifiable.

The last change is created in the last refrain, in which the lyrical I, describing the Brown Eyed Man’s perspective, seems to address the listener directly; suddenly, the soundscape changes, leading the flutes to the foreground, playing the notes G sharp, A sharp and C sharp, which, by adding the A sharp, accompanied by an F sharp by the strings (both being part of the C sharp major scale), suddenly give the composition a hopeful character; however, as the lyrical I changes perspective back to the observer, the C sharp climbs up to the minor third, whereas the strings resolve into an A sharp,

which, again, change the character to minor, while the strings get louder and more unsettled, leaving the listener with a feeling of unease.

6.3.2.2 Aspects of voice

Whereas the instrumental arrangement in “Brown Eyed Man” is an elaborated composition, the musical elements of voice in Tempest’s performance are strongly limited. Tempest, although showing many nuances of emotional speech in her voice, does not sing, and, as mentioned before, even the speech rhythm is not leaning towards a musical rhythm. However, despite doing so in a limited way, Tempest still makes use of one characteristic feature that, as discussed in previous chapters, is considered a musical technique, namely chanting. Considering the fact that chanting is a form of speech that can be described as being loosely based on rhythm and intonation, without ever strictly following it (see Chapter 5.1.1.), it becomes obvious that Tempest’s use of speech in the refrains – and only in the refrains – does indeed meet this criterion. Considering the first refrain, one can perceive the raise in volume and in pitch in the poet’s voice, and, listening closely, it is even noticeable how Tempest plays with her voice around the notes C sharp and E during the phrase “what’s the matter with you, my lovely brown eyed man” (Tempest, Brown Eyed Man 0:28), without ever meeting the frequency close enough to actually sing, an aspect that is likewise perceivable in the second refrain, where the impression is even intensified. The technique is used one more time in the third refrain, this time only for the phrase “you’re lying if you think” (Tempest, Brown Eyed Man 2:41), this time moving around the notes D4 sharp and C4 sharp, already foreshadowing the major character that is about to follow in the instrumental accompaniment.

6.3.3 Interpretation

Considering the explicitness of the poem, one gets the impression that the use of musical devices in the poem primarily aims to convey emotional meaning. The differences in register, using high and low notes, with regard to the fact that high pitches tend to evoke fear, while low pitches are usually associated with sadness (see Section 5.1.2.1.), seem perfectly adjustable to “Brown Eyed Man”, where the higher pitches are predominantly in the foreground at the beginning of the poem, already causing a feeling of unease within the listener that invites to feel with the stranger that is being accused and attacked for seemingly nothing. In contrast, the lower pitches,

especially the strings, come into the foreground during the refrain, evoking a feeling of sadness when empathising with the brown eyed man, afraid to hold a hand, even if there is someone willing to help.

Furthermore, Tempest's use of her chanting voice during the refrains add another nuance to the perception of the poem. During the first two refrains, her raised volume and intonation cause the impression of calling after someone, which, in the context of a stranger being isolated by the people in charge as well as the society in general, convey the feeling of that person being more and more isolated and lost in the distance. This circumstance might be interpreted as a word of caution, since, in the last refrain, the poet's words "You're lying if you think / that my pain isn't your pain / because when I'm hit, you flinch" (Tempest, Brown Eyed Man 2:41) hint at the very same aspect, possibly meaning that driving away and isolating individuals may, in last consequence, harm ourselves, an assumption which seems to be underlined by the fact that the first line of this statement is the last chanted one.

7 Conclusion

This thesis aimed at identifying the role musical elements can play in the creation and addition of meaning in performance poetry. To examine the matter in detail, it asked three questions: firstly, to what extent is it possible to distinguish performance poetry involving music from songs? Secondly, in what ways can music occur in and add meaning to performance poetry? And thirdly, is it possible to find categories of musical contribution that help analyse the construction of meaning? The questions were closely examined by means of a thorough research that combined literary and music-theoretical frameworks, leading into a representative analysis of three examples of musical performance poetry.

Regarding the first question, due to a detailed research which included the comparison to a number of musical genres, it can be said that, although a clear distinction is almost impossible, a general distinction between the genres can be made. Since musical performance poetry aims to put the lyric text into the centre of attention, the musical elements merely existing to support the poem, a song of any genre will at least regard words and music as equally important if not precluding the musical part. Although it was discussed that many genres of poetry as well as of music consciously intend to blur the lines between the two, it has been shown with specific examples that the prevalence of the lyric in musical performance poetry seems distinctive in comparison to musical genres.

Considering the second question, it can be concluded that the ways in which music can enhance, emphasise, and contribute to the meaning of a poem are numerous. Despite the fact that, due to the restrictions of this paper, only three representative examples could be chosen for analysis, this constrained investigation already managed to show that music can influence lyrical meaning in various ways. The first example of Hedwig Gorski's "Glitter Streets" demonstrated how, by using instrumental accompaniment, meaning can be added and enhanced via harmonic as well as rhythmical elements, while demonstrating at the same time how a poet can play with her voice, moving in between the definitions of speaking and singing, in order to convey meaning. The second example, namely Rachel Duval's poem "Music", served as an illustration how singing, and in association to that, harmonic structure can be used to add and intensify the meaning of a poem, even being able to link two or three seemingly different topics such as music, home, and peace/war by arranging them around a single note. The final

example, Kate Tempest's "Brown Eyed Man", on the other hand, provided insight into instrumental arrangements that strongly differed from that of Gorski's poem, dispensing with rhythmical stress, but merely creating a soundscape; it further provided an example of how chanting, used subtle and consciously, can be transformed into complex meaning, enriching a poem's complexity.

Lastly, regarding the third question, it can be said that, due to the complexity of the area of music, it seems impossible to find patterns that cover all aspects of possible methods and techniques with regard to how they can be interpreted and the possibilities they offer to contribute to a performance poem. However, within the restricted possibilities of this paper, it has been possible to provide rough categories, dividing musical contribution into instrumental (and, further, into percussion and harmonic/ melodic instruments) and vocal (singing and chanting) categories. Although it cannot be claimed that these categories cover all aspects of musical contribution that is used in performance poetry, it has been shown that certain changes in pitch and rhythm can lead to the perception of specific emotions, such as unease, sadness, or fear. Furthermore, the provided categories might serve as a basis for further analysis.

In conclusion, it can be said that the ways musical elements can contribute to the meaning of performance poems are manifold. Due to the fact that there apparently has not been much research on this topic so far, and, due to the limited possibilities of the thesis, only a small number of aspects could be covered, it would be desirable to investigate further in this matter.

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Appendix

Hedwig Gorski – Glitter Streets

Loose clothes in a back light.
Around the corner, air is caressing
the turn of the century.

It turns out the way we want it to.
It turns out the way we want it to.

Bare shoulders made for touching.
Hot-foot night asks, “What do you want?”

Lazy convertible driving, wild child.
Muttering, “Where to go?”
traveling glassy-eyed in time.

It’s years ago since we met.
It’s years ago since we met.

Pull the top up when it rains.
It’s all surreal.
The Present.
The fire in the fireplace.
The rain goes on and on
Like music and hallucination.

A lit cigarette
In a dark room.
Leather jacket on the bed.
Peacock feather
on the floor.

Pretty sweet heat,

Don't be shy.

Hearts beat loud on glitter streets.

Source:

Gorsky, Hedwig. *Poetique: Speak-Songbook for CD Send in the Clown*. Slough P, 2010.
24-25.

Rachel Duval – Music

My music history professor asked us to define music in two pages or less. The f*ck are you playing at, right? Define music? So, I wrote a paragraph: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 8 notes are in methodically certain distances apart to create a major sound, see this is western music. My thesis statement would consist of 4 notes, scale degrees 1 3 5 7. See, music is that 7th scale degree. Seven because it always leaves you wanting more, Seven, always asks a question of the listener, direct me home? Home... is a hungry kind of longing that only a musician will know. It's that space where the notes become you, and you become the notes and the crescendos arc like missile fire. Home is what my cousin Sarah-Keyla still calls the ruin that is her home town in the north of Israel. Define music. Men are sick and hungry on hospital beds in Iraq but they can still beat out a rhythm on the metal sides of their cots. Women in bomb shelters in Gaza still clap their hands late into the night to celebrate today, another day alive. I work with 6th graders who think that band is gay and orchestra is only for the retards, to them music is the shame that would beset them if they took up the trumpet, and the saliva that might have fallen from well used spit valves falls dry in a sentence that goes unspoken out of shame, see this is music, define music. Scissors poised in the hands of 12-year olds ready to carve lines in their silken skin while they listen to metal on the radio because it sounds a little too much like home for them not to. Define music. Israeli youth cutting 3 years out of their lives to make them feel what it's like to hold an M16. Like a baby, the officers say, you never let it go. American 17-year-olds who enlist in ROTC because they can't afford to learn how to become doctors, instead of saving lives they would kill. Any other way, define music. Hezbollah, (teaching a race -) teaching our youth to hate a race so strongly that they draw stars of David on the ground outside

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their houses so one must walk on 5,000 years of Jewish heritage just to get anywhere. See, this is music, define music. I've always believed what they told me music was. I've never questioned if typewriter keys, or a hammer smashing brick pavement, or telephone static on a dead line to my family in Israel were music. Music is a peace accord that never went into effect. It's Adam, loyal to Israel, and Hamed loyal to Lybanon, and Danny, loyal to America, it's difference, it's dissonance, and it's resolution. It's me. Always loyal. To the seven-scale degree. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Source:

seattlepoetryslam. "Seattle Poetry Slam – Rachel 'Rocky' Bernstein – "Music"." Online video clip. *Youtube*. Youtube, 16. July 2010. 29 Feb 2020. My Transcription.

Kate Tempest – Brown Eyed Man

They took my friend
They cuffed his wrists
They beat him in their van
He hadn't done a thing
But when they came,
of course he ran
And they pursued
And they were rude
And he said nothing
He bit his lip
'Cause If you speak,
you'll feel their feet
But if you don't
You'll still get hit

What's the matter with you
My lovely brown eyed man?
How come I can feel you shaking
When I take you by the hand?

What's the matter with you
My lovely brown eyed man?
How come I can feel you shaking?

They want me bad, now bad I'll be
They keep me poor, they make me sick
They feed me with desires for
things that I don't need or want
Stick their needles in my arms
Expensive things I can't afford
They show me rooms furnished with gold
And then they close the doors

What's the matter with you
My lovely brown eyed man?
How come I can feel you shaking
When I take you by the hand?
What's the matter with you
My lovely brown eyed man?
How come I can feel you shaking?

I'm the child of the gimme more nation
When they want something, they launch an occupation
They plunder and they pillage, they call it liberation
They're bombing and maiming, stealing and taking

But they lock me up, they paint me a demon
For trying to do right by my beautiful children
They're killing for money, they're crippling countries
They're just doing it all beneath a flag that says Freedom

Now, what's the matter with you?
You're lying if you think
That my pain isn't your pain

Because when I'm hit, you flinch
What's the matter with you
My lovely brown eyed man?
How come I can feel you shaking?

Source:

Kate Tempest. "Brown Eyed Man." Online video clip. *Youtube*. Youtube, 13. June 2019.
29 Feb. 2020. My Transcription.

German Summary / Kurzzusammenfassung

In den letzten Jahrzehnten wurde Performance Poetry im Vergleich zu traditionellen Strömungen der Lyrik kritisch betrachtet. In weiterer Konsequenz wurde den spezifischen Charakteristiken und Möglichkeiten des Genres zu wenig Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt, wie zum Beispiel der Verwendung musikalischer Elemente in der Darbietung. Diese Arbeit zielte daher auf die nähere Untersuchung der Art und Weise, wie Musikalität Einfluss auf die Rezeption eines Performance Poems haben kann, mit speziellem Hinblick auf die Deutung des Gedichts. In weiterer Folge wurden unterscheidende Merkmale des musikalische Performance Poetry-Genres sowie mögliche Interpretationsmuster untersucht. Dies wurde mittels der Ausarbeitung eines theoretischen Gerüsts, basierend auf musikwissenschaftlichen und literaturwissenschaftlichen Quellen, bewerkstelligt. Dieses wurde in weiterer Folge für zur Analyse einer repräsentativen Selektion von Performance Poems, welche sich der Musik bedienen, hinzugezogen, mit Augenmerk auf melodische und rhythmische sowie vokale und instrumentale Techniken. Die Analyse zeigte, dass der Einfluss, den die Verwendung von Musik auf eine Performance Poetry-Darbietung haben kann, nicht nur signifikant und vielfältig ist, sondern auch einen klaren Kontrast im Vergleich zu anderen lyrischen und musikalischen Genres aufzeigt. Trotz der Gemeinsamkeiten, die Lyrik und Musik miteinander teilen, zeigt sich die Art und Weise, wie Musik in Performance Poetry verwendet wird, als bezeichnend und unverwechselbar für dieses Genre.

Abstract

Within the past decades, performance poetry has been regarded as potential threat to traditional poetry rather than a contribution to the art. As a consequence, the specific characteristics and opportunities of the genre have received insufficient attention, such as the use of music as an element of performance. This thesis aimed at examining the way a performance poem can be influenced by music, considering the latter as a potential factor of meaning contribution and, in light of that, searching for distinctive features of the musical performance poetry genre and possible patterns of interpretation. This was realised by the development of a theoretical framework based on both musical and literary sources, which was used for a thorough analysis of three representative examples of performance poems involving music, taking into account melodical and rhythmical as well as instrumental and vocal techniques. The analysis showed that the impact music can have on a poetry performance cannot only be considered significant and manifold, but also contrastive in comparison to other genres of poetry or music. Despite the fact that music and poetry share similarities, the way music is used to contribute to a performance poem's meaning can be considered as distinctive for that genre.