

Research Report

Expression in my artistic musicianship

-

Intertwining the piano with my voice

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Abstract

This practice-based research investigates the impact of integrating piano accompaniment into the professional practice of a vocalist. Focusing on jazz and pop music genres, the study explores how self-accompaniment on the piano influences expressive delivery, overall musicianship, band interplay, and technical proficiency. The primary goal was to enhance my musicianship by adopting this approach and incorporating a new dimension into my professional practice. The research follows an Action Research methodology, which provided a structured and reflective framework for tracking progress within a professional context.

The data gathered for this study included album recordings, my own audio and video recordings, lesson notes, reflections after concerts, surveys, a research journal, literature, interviews, and feedback from my coaching team.

My initial findings were organized into five key elements: vocal expression while playing the piano myself, band leading trio, awareness of playing both instruments at the same time, vocal technique while sitting on the piano (posture), and intonation, timing, sound, appearance. These findings suggest that applying these elements as a concept can be valuable in developing expression in the artistic musicianship.

Keywords: expression, intertwining, piano, vocals, self-accompaniment, musicianship

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1. INTRODUCTION

In jazz performances, vocalists typically rely on instrumentalists for accompaniment. However, self-accompanying on the piano introduces a distinctive dynamic, merging the harmonic understanding of the piano with vocal delivery. This integration significantly broadens the expressive range of the performer. The interaction between singing and playing creates a more nuanced and layered performance, offering the artist an opportunity to convey deeper emotional and musical complexity.

I chose this topic for my research project due to my long-standing interest in the relationship between vocalists and piano players. The piano, which I began learning at the age of five through classical training, held particular significance for me as it was my first instrument. Although I had no serious ambitions to sing until the age of twelve, my experience with jazz music revealed distinct differences—both positive and negative—in my vocal performance when collaborating with various musicians. For instance, the voicings an external piano player played would irritate me while I was singing a solo or didn't fit the sung melody of a tune. Sometimes, there was too much playing in general, leaving no space for the melody to evolve. That would occasionally lead to insecurity during a performance, impacting my expression because I couldn't fully focus on the musical aspect. Specific tensions didn't fit my interpretation of the music. A positive aspect while playing with an external piano player was that it felt rhythmically even, allowing me to focus entirely on my vocal phrasing and expression. When the harmonic foundation of the piano matched my musical idea of a song, it was possible to be expressive as a vocalist. This research aimed to add another layer to my performance. Both scenarios could be expressive if the musicians shared the same musical vision. As a result, I became eager to take control of the harmonic foundation by accompanying myself on the piano, hoping to gain more control over my vocal expression. I believed this would allow for greater freedom in my musical expression.

In addition to exploring the expressive potential of self-accompaniment, I aimed to investigate how I could incorporate this skill into my future artistic performances. As a vocalist within a jazz combo, there were times when it felt as though I was not fully integrated into the band, but merely an added layer singing a melody. This had been part of my musical journey, though not always the case. Perhaps there was a deeper desire to transcend the role of simply singing and to explore a more comprehensive contribution to the ensemble. In today's musical landscape, vocalists could sometimes be underrated, and this project aimed to challenge that perception. I had always been inspired by the unique phrasing and timing of Shirley Horn, whose artistry served as an idol and source of inspiration for this research.

This research was crucial to my artistic development, as it provided valuable experience in both ensemble playing and in organising and leading a piano trio. By developing an independent concept of combining piano and vocals, I hoped to create more opportunities for my artistic expression within the music world. I believed that by articulating my musical ambitions more clearly, my collaborators would be better able to understand and engage with my ideas. Ultimately, this project solidified my connection to the piano in my daily practice, a key component in my continued growth as an artist. While my previous studies had focused on the development of my voice, this research enhanced my professional practice in a variety of ways, but especially getting closer to the piano as it was the first instrument I learned.

2. REVIEW OF SOURCES

As I moved deeper into this project, I found myself collecting ideas, stories, books, and recordings, not just for research, but to better understand what I was doing and why, and also what needed to be developed in my artistic musicianship. These spanned vocal technique, jazz piano harmony, improvisation, performance psychology, and interviews with experts who perform in the dual role of pianist-vocalist. I've always felt a strong connection to the piano. It's where I started musically. Singing came later, and at some point, I began to wonder how to bring these two parts of myself together in a more meaningful way. Accompanying myself seemed like the obvious next step, but it also raised a lot of questions. Musically, emotionally, and practically. So this chapter is a reflection on what I came across along the way, and how it shaped my thinking.

One of the first artists who made a strong impression on me was Shirley Horn. Watching her sit at the piano, completely in control of the timing and feel of a song, made me want to understand how she did it. Her use of space was especially striking. Boykin-Settles (2020) describes her approach as one where “restraint, phrasing, and silence become the main expressive tools” (p. 58). I was also fascinated by how she leads a big band, playing the piano as part of the rhythm section while also singing the melody, with every musician following her seamlessly. This idea became something I tried to explore in my own playing, especially when I began working on slower ballads and my own compositions in a trio setting. I also started listening more closely to Carmen McRae, especially her *Alone* recordings. Her sense of timing, and how she let her voice lead while gently supporting it with the piano, helped me realize how important balance is. In McRae's interpretations, the accompaniment isn't background. It's conversation.

Diana Krall became another important reference. Her live performances, especially in *Live in Paris*, showed me a more contemporary approach to self-accompaniment. There's something steady and confident about how she sits at the piano and leads the music from there. I found out that earlier in her career, she was advised to play less piano in recordings. In an interview, she recalled being told to “let the band carry more of the load,” a suggestion that subtly framed the pianist-vocalist as too much of a presence (as cited in Sponcia, 2018, p. 106). That made me reflect on how female artists are sometimes steered away from their instruments and toward being “just the singer.” That resonated with some of my own experiences, being in musical situations where I was only expected to sing and often felt disconnected from the rhythm section. I started realizing how important it was for me to not just be added to the music, but to be at the center of it.

This experience led me to think more about the history of the singer-pianist, especially for women in jazz. Kristina Sponcia's dissertation (2018) explores exactly that. How self-accompanied female jazz vocalists often have to carve out their space, musically and socially. She writes that “when female jazz vocalists take a seat at the piano, they

challenge not only performance norms but also assumptions about leadership and authority in jazz” (p. 93). That really resonated with my own shift: moving from being “just the singer” to someone who could lead the music from the piano. It was a subtle but powerful change. I started experimenting with trio settings, and that brought up new questions: What does it mean to lead a band from the piano while also singing? How do I communicate with the bassist and drummer when I’m focused on both hands, the arrangement, and my voice?

I didn’t find a lot of literature that addressed this directly, but conversations with musicians helped a lot. Champion Fulton, for example, said: “As the piano player in an ensemble, you always have a lot of control... I can really express what I want in my musical vision because I have the control.” That inspired me. It made me think about how accompanying myself was not just about saving resources or convenience. It was a way to create the exact musical atmosphere I wanted. At the same time, I became curious about the more subtle aspects of musical interaction. As I spent more time working in trio settings, I noticed how much depended not just on musical ideas, but on timing, posture, and emotional responsiveness. That’s when *Together in Music: Coordination, Expression, Participation* (Timmers et al. 2022) became an important source. They write that “musical coordination is shaped not just by intention, but also by bodily and emotional cues” (p. 3). This deepened my awareness during rehearsals. How I breathed, how I looked at the drummer, how I cued transitions without needing to speak. Self-accompaniment taught me to listen differently, not just to others, but to myself.

But this wasn’t just a mental or musical shift. It also had a physical side. Sitting at the piano while singing affected my posture, my breath, and even how my voice felt and sounded. I started to realize how important body awareness was. Davidson and Correia (2017) explain that “bodily behavior contributes significantly to musical meaning” (p. 62). I noticed that when I wasn’t sitting well. When I leaned too far forward, wasn’t paying attention, or didn’t support my breath, my sound changed. Working on posture became part of my practice routine. Hanjo Gäbler mentioned something similar in our interview: how self-accompanying singers need to “develop presence while seated,” since they don’t have the same space for movement as standing vocalists. That made me more conscious of how to use my upper body, eyes, and small gestures to remain expressive.

Alongside these personal experiences, I was also looking for tools to improve my playing. Mark Levine’s *The Jazz Piano Book* (2011) helped me with harmonic structure and voicings that supported the voice without overpowering it. He emphasizes the value of clarity and harmonic choices that “support the soloist’s phrasing rather than compete with it” (p. 24), which aligned well with what I was trying to develop in myself. During this research, I aimed to improve my singing but also to take my piano playing to a deeper level. Michele Weir’s suggestion is to “do yourself a favor, learn basic jazz piano” (Weir, 2005), but my objective was to work beyond that.

Emotionally, I was thinking a lot about how music moves people. David Huron's *Sweet Anticipation: Music and the Psychology of Expectation* (2006) helped frame that. He explains how emotional reactions come from managing musical expectations: "The power of music lies in its ability to lead us into states of tension and release" (p. 4). That helped me understand why certain pauses or unexpected changes could feel so expressive, especially when I had control over both the harmony and the vocal phrasing. Daniel Levitin's *The World in Six Songs* (2008) added another layer, focusing on music as a way of creating emotional connection. He writes that music "is not the universal language, but a tool for emotional storytelling" (p. 266). That quote really aligned with my ideas, because that's exactly what I was trying to develop. Using both voice and piano to tell a story that felt real to me and to my audience. Levitin's framework reminded me that expression is more than technique; it's also memory, emotion, and identity.

All of these sources, musical, academic, and personal, guided me throughout this research. Some were big influences, others just small insights, but they each helped me make sense of what I was trying to do. In the end, I realized that while there's plenty of research on jazz vocals and on jazz piano, there's still not much explored that speaks to the experience of doing both, especially from a woman's perspective, and especially from the position of leadership within an ensemble - within a trio. That's why I wanted to do this research. I felt something was missing. I wasn't just looking to learn a skill. I wanted to understand what it means to accompany myself as a singer, as a pianist, as a composer, and as a band leader. This chapter is a reflection of the ideas and people who helped me get started.

In the next chapter, I describe the aim of my research more clearly, what guided my questions, what I hoped to discover, and how these reflections helped shape the direction of my work.

3. RESEARCH AIM

The study sought to answer the following questions:

- * ***How did the integration of self-piano accompaniment influence a vocalist's musicianship?***
- * ***What was missing from the voice that the piano already had, and the other way around?***
- * ***What was the biggest difference in expression when playing in both versions – with an external piano player or by myself?***

By answering these questions, the research aimed to identify practical strategies for singers to optimize their performance by integrating pianistic skills and developing musicianship through another instrument.

(Exercises and practice approach in the Appendix).

I was motivated to conduct this research because the piano was the first instrument I ever played - starting at the age of five - and I was immediately fascinated by its sound. In 2010, my piano teacher, Waldemar Sáez-Eggers (personal communication, 2010), encouraged me to sing for a competition, and from that moment on, singing became a central part of my musical journey. However, the piano had marked my very first steps into music, and over time, I felt a growing desire to reconnect with it. This research was a way for me to explore how to combine both instruments - voice and piano - in the most expressive and personal way possible.

The main aim was to enhance my vocal performance by integrating the piano more deliberately, not only as an accompaniment tool but as a means of expanding my expressive range. Reconnecting with the piano felt essential for my self-development as a musician, both technically and creatively. I believed the piano could help me bring more color, texture, and emotional depth to my singing.

An important aspect of this research was also to support my growth as a composer and arranger. Through this process, I hoped to discover new methods, techniques, and sounds that would enrich my creative practice. A specific goal was to determine my most comfortable vocal range with the help of the piano, which would enable me to write music tailored to my voice. Ultimately, I aimed to create a new repertoire of original compositions that I could perform independently - singing and playing piano simultaneously - developing a unique sound and strengthening my artistic identity.

3.1 RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUBQUESTIONS

These are the questions I aimed to answer through my research:

I. **How did the integration of self-piano accompaniment influence a vocalist's musicianship?**

II. **What was missing from the voice that the piano already had, and the other way around?**

III. **What was the biggest difference in expression when playing in both versions - with an external piano player or by myself?**

4. RESEARCH DESIGN / METHODOLOGY

To achieve the aims of this project, I employed Action Research as the primary methodology. This approach is defined as "a process in which practitioners examine an aspect of their own work in order to improve it" (Cain, 2012). I found this method particularly suitable, as I was observing and investigating my own musical practice, supported by the involvement of other practitioners - musicians who played a guiding role in my progress.

The research followed a cyclical structure, involving continuous action-reflection loops (see figure 2 on page 7). In the sections below, I describe how these cycles were implemented. Data collection and analysis were carried out through a research journal in which I documented all exercises, findings, reflections, and personal observations (see excerpts of the journal in the Appendix). I conducted four interviews with expert musicians who accompany themselves on the piano while singing, which offered valuable external perspectives.

The main practitioners in this project were myself and two fellow students - a bass player and a drummer - who participated actively in the rehearsals and recordings. These sessions led to new insights, methods, and musical ideas that directly influenced my performance style, expression, and overall musicianship. I recorded as many rehearsal sessions as possible and later transcribed them for analysis.

In addition to solo practice, I rehearsed with an external pianist, singing jazz standards while being accompanied. This allowed me to compare how the music sounded and felt when I later accompanied myself. Throughout this process, I focused on key elements such as **intonation, timing, sound, and appearance**. All observations and progress were

systematically recorded in my handwritten research journal, which also included dated entries to track the development over time and maintain structure in the research process. To ensure the validity and reliability of my research in relation to my personal artistic development, I actively sought feedback from various teachers throughout the process. A particularly valuable opportunity arose during the third semester, when I was able to engage with musicians in New York and gain diverse perspectives on my work. In addition, performance analysis was used to track and quantify changes in my expressive abilities over time. By combining qualitative reflections with measurable data, this methodology supported a holistic and balanced understanding of the subject matter, integrating both subjective experience and objective evaluation.

Qualitative Approach: Interviews and Action Research

Interviews with experts who self-accompanied on piano explored their experiences and perceived impact on their expression. The questions focused on their learning processes, challenges, and personal transformations. The outcomes highlighted individual journeys, offering detailed narratives about the integration of piano playing into their careers (see interview transcriptions in the Appendix).

Quantitative Approach: Performance Analysis

Performance and rehearsal recordings were analysed using metrics such as **intonation, timing, sound, and appearance** to assess the influence of piano integration.

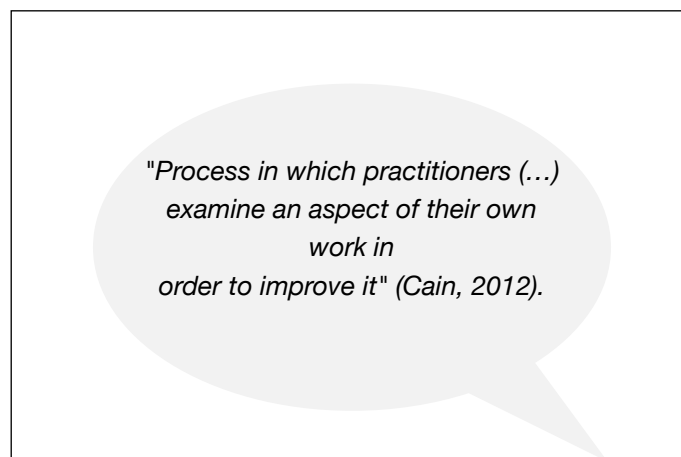


Figure 1: Reflective Practice for Professional Improvement (Cain, 2012)

4.1 USE OF ACTION REFLECTION CYCLES

The following figure illustrates the Action Research process used in my project. It outlines the five key steps of the research cycle - identifying the problem, planning and implementing an intervention, evaluating the outcome, and planning the next steps. Reflections were recorded in a research journal during practice, concerts, writing, and conversations. These insights helped guide each new cycle, allowing for continuous development and deeper artistic exploration. I chose this methodology because it aligned with my long-standing aspiration to develop and lead my own piano trio.

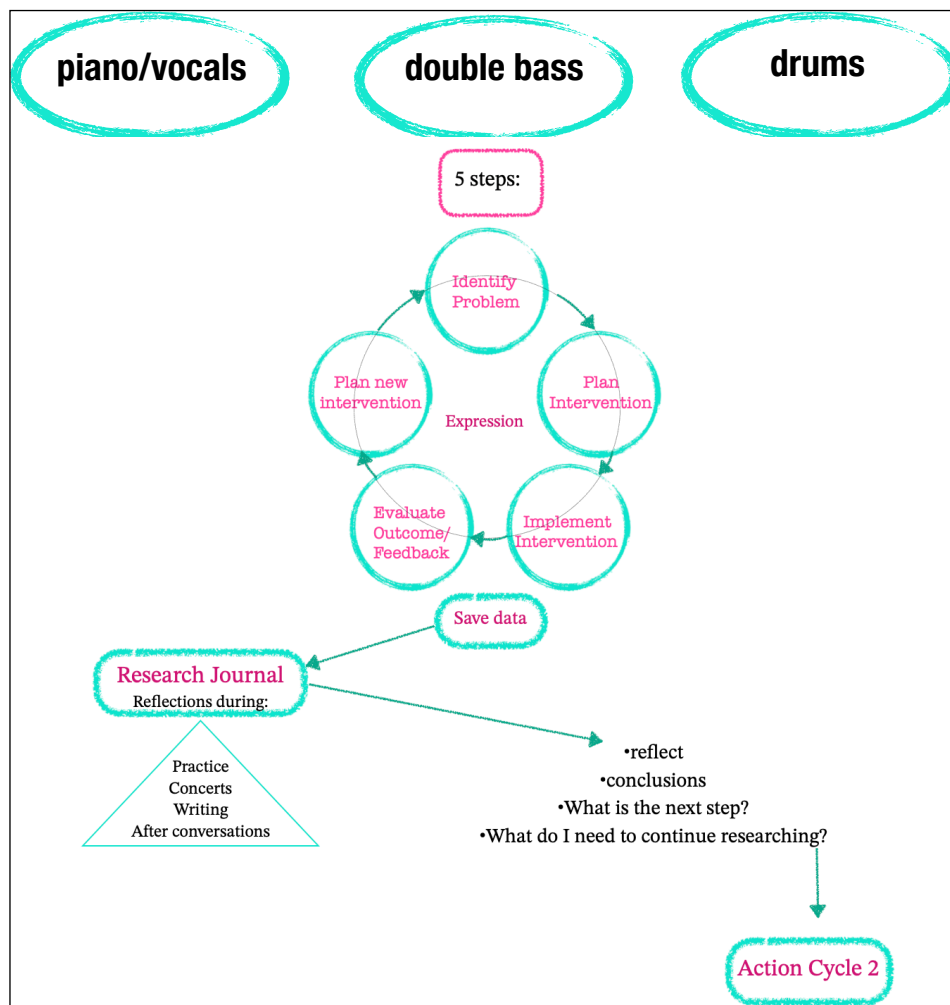


Figure 2: Action Reflection Cycles

4.2 ACTION CYCLES 5 STEPS

This table outlines the five steps of the Action Research process as applied in two distinct cycles of the project. Each cycle reflects a different phase of artistic development. Action Cycle 1 focused on exploring expression through jazz standards with a piano trio, while Action Cycle 2 shifted toward creating and performing original compositions. The structured steps - identifying the problem, planning and implementing the intervention, evaluating the outcome, and planning the next steps - allowed for continuous reflection, experimentation, and refinement of both performance and compositional practices.

Table 1: Action Reflection Cycles 5 Steps

5 steps	Action Cycle 1	Action Cycle 2
1) Identify Problem	Playing with an external pianist and on my own	Setting up a concept/ repertoire for piano playing&singing
2) Plan Intervention	Writing arrangements on jazz standards, listen to different recordings and audio record the sessions	Prepare 3 originals which can be transferred in the performances
3) Implement Intervention	rehearsals and experiments with piano trio	playing concerts and incorporate my own compositions
4) Evaluate Outcome / Feedback	Asking audience/music colleagues for feedback, transcribing audio	Asking for feedback from my critical friend/external pianist
5) Plan new Intervention	Work on the interplay to have an expressive outcome of the song	apply outcome to the next concert

4.3 TIMELINE

This figure outlines a structured timeline of musical development activities across three cycles. It spans from March to July 2024 and includes phases of listening, recording, arranging, rehearsing, and performing jazz standards and original compositions. Key milestones include recording sessions, trio rehearsals, interviews with jazz musicians (Dena DeRose, Romy Camerun, and potentially Hanjo Gäbler), and ongoing feedback integration. The process is iterative, focusing on deepening musical interpretation and preparing a repertoire for piano trio performance.

In the first cycle, I actually worked on the tunes 'I wish you love' and 'Beautiful love' in both versions - with an external pianist and when I accompany myself.

(Audio recordings in the results and research findings chapter).

Table 2: Timeline of Action Cycles (March-July 2024)

weeks 2024	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
March, April 10-15	<p>listen to different recordings</p> <p>audio record the sessions with the piano player (3 sessions à 3 tunes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Beautiful Love -Day Dream -Like someone in love -I wish you love -Blue Skies -In a sentimental mood -Round Midnight <p>feedback from pianist</p> <p>preparing the same tunes on piano by myself</p>		
April, May 16-21		<p>writing arr. on jazz standards for solo performance</p> <p>rehearsals with trio:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Day Breaks -Beatrice -Eisvogelfrau <p>practicing the tunes on piano+vocals</p> <p>(feedback from critical friend)</p> <p>preparing 1-2 originals</p> <hr/> <p>Dena DeRose Interview 23rd of May</p> <p>Romy Camerun Interview 11th of July</p> <p>Hanjo Gäbler Interview?</p>	
May, June, July 22-28			<p>setting up a repertoire for piano trio</p> <p>rehearsals and experiments with piano trio</p> <p>incorporate own compositions</p> <p>feedbacks</p>

4.4 PLANNING OF THE PROJECT

This timeline presents three cycles of musical exploration and development, including listening, recording sessions, solo and trio rehearsals, arranging jazz standards, and composing original works. Key interviews and feedback points are integrated throughout, supporting an evolving repertoire for piano and vocals.

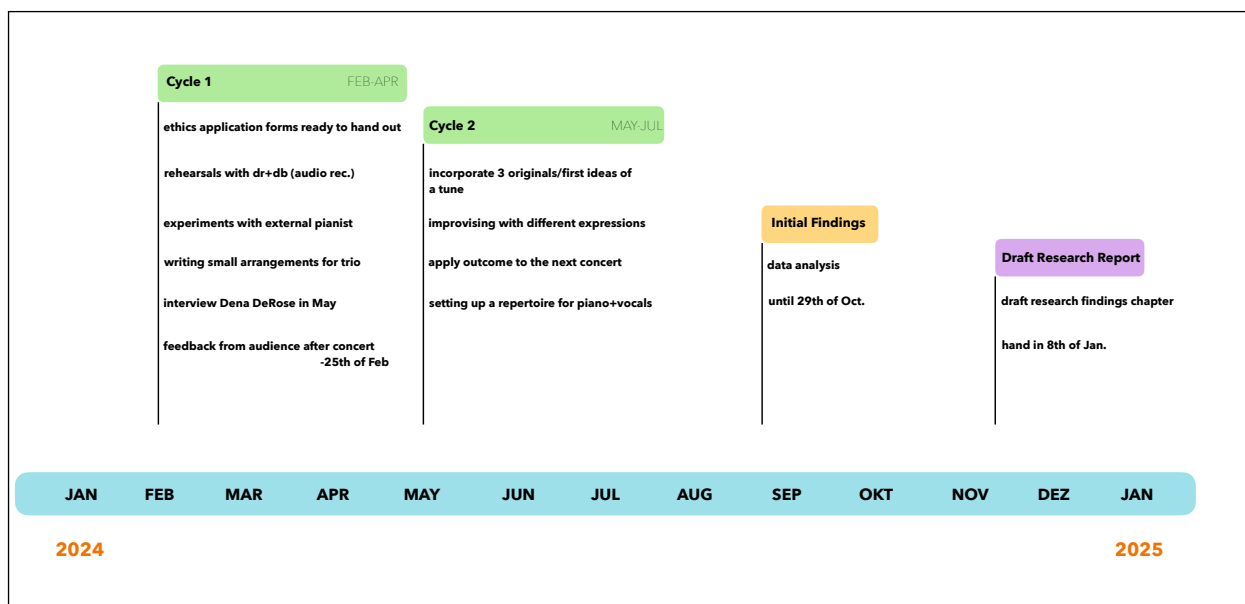


Figure 3: Overview planning of the project (Feb 2024 - Jan 2025)

5. RELIABILITY AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Learning and performing as a vocalist-pianist proved to be demanding, requiring significant time and effort. I encountered challenges in balancing technical execution with emotional delivery, as well as difficulties in maintaining vocal quality while focusing on complex piano arrangements. To ensure the reliability of my research, I recognised the importance of applying the feedback I received to my playing. I had to be clear about my goals for each rehearsal. Staying focused was crucial to my process, and I often had to push myself to concentrate on one task at a time.

The outcome of my study did not depend solely on me, as I performed with other musicians, and each performance differed from the following. I kept this in mind throughout my work. Since jazz music is improvised, I often did not know exactly what I had played and could not remember it afterward. For this reason, I recorded the sessions to have a reliable reference.

My research gained credibility as I sought out diverse feedback, since the topic was highly personal and musical expressions could be perceived differently by others. I made sure not to let my piano playing turn into standard comping, which would leave no space for vocal improvisation. I ensured that my playing did not become static but remained organic.

I focused on not spending too much time on the composition aspect and avoided trying to be overly virtuosic. Instead, I prioritised creating a clear base and exploring where it might lead. Since musical expression is a personal matter, I carefully selected the feedback that best supported my artistic development. I believed that if I did not like the performance myself, it would be unlikely that others would.

After my concerts, I conducted the audience surveys. However, I realised that the feedback I received lacked transparency. Since I was the one asking the questions, the responses were not always entirely objective.

6. RESULTS AND CENTRAL FINDINGS

Going through my data collection, I decided to sum up and analyse the following topics, because they are strongly connected with my research question and the sub questions.

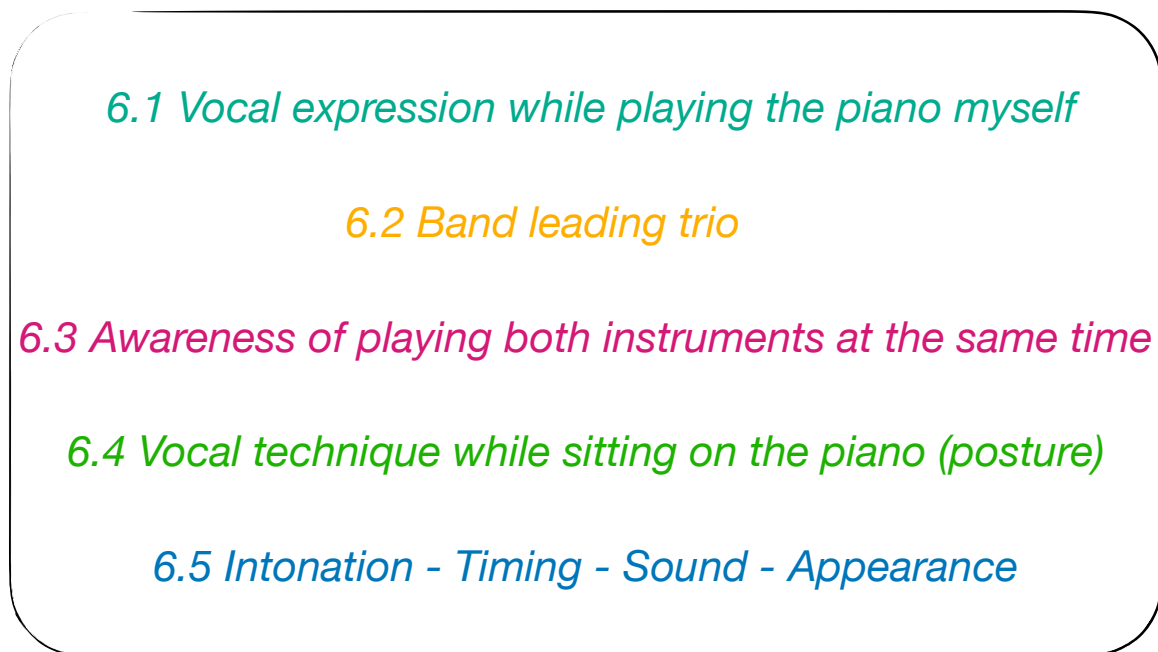


Figure 4: Topics Research Findings

6.1 Vocal expression while playing the piano myself

How does using the piano effect my musical expression during my performance?

Vocal expression while playing the piano myself

To answer the first subquestion of this research, I did two Action Cycles in which I played the jazz standard 'I wish you love' by Charles Trenet. In the first cycle, with an external piano player and in the second cycle, where I accompanied myself. In a jazz context, the vocalist often rely on external instrumentalists for accompaniment and I wanted to find out if there will be a change in my vocal expression.

Audio example 'I wish you love' by Charles Trenet external pianist:

https://soundcloud.com/larachwabe/i-wish-you-love-c-andrea/s-jwBRfGL8tOM?si=23ab24d865284fe895a144f0cddfeb2b&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing

During this recording, I had a feeling of being forced in a different musical direction than I wished for. The theme is presented 'basic' and not storytelling like. The vocals are not very much connected with the rest of the music. You can hear an uncertainty in the intonation, for instance at the transition to the B-Part 'my breaking heart..' and the written melody is not merging the piano chords. I got confused because the piano wasn't intertwining but more of distracting my musical idea. The connection to the tune is sort of missing, because the expression is minimised. I could feel that I'm not very much connected to the tune on a musical level. According to that I had some difficulties in the rhythm and parts were not being played together (0:58). That is a result of not having the same rhythmical idea of the tune itself. The piano player was playing chords which were mostly in the way of the melody because he played above it. Sometimes it is a good stylistic device to use, but in this case it irritated the melody which I sang. Also, there were a lot of piano fills in between which kind of overloaded the music and I felt like the chords being played were too harsh in my opinion and didn't fit the musical style I had in mind. The melody should always stand out and it can be hard to follow the music if there are two melodies 'working' against each other. The listener can be overwhelmed by too many notes, like in this case.

Audio example 'I wish you love' by Charles Trenet self-accompaniment:

https://soundcloud.com/larachwabe/i-wish-you-love-solo-piano-voc/s-a4bK3TcyNWG?in=larachwabe/sets/research-audio-files-klara/s-W4D2k8OrzJC&si=1b6f78927760436f8d4562762a8f7b34&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing

In this recording, I could focus on the music and my awareness of the tune was much stronger. By beginning the piece with the vocals, I could decide when to play the first chord, which gave the performance an exciting starting point for the listener. You could also hear a vibrato in my voice, because I had a more relaxed start to the tune. I knew I can play the first chord whenever I wanted. I took my time rhythmically and decided to play the first theme in rubato to give the performance a rich layer with the chords I wanted to play on piano. I did a lot of variations with my voice which means I could be flexible in the improvisation from the first moment on. Then I also played along with the notes from the singing theme on piano which might gave the piece a more structured, clear idea. When there was a part where I wanted to play the melody on piano as well, I could just play it when I thought this is the most natural timing for it. I played as basic chords as possible that I thought would benefit the melody to give the highest attention to my vocal expression.

Besides these recordings, I did a third cycle on vocal expression in combination with playing the piano. I did an audience survey after a concert I played in February 2024. I played my own arrangement of the tune 'Eisvogelfrau' by Anna Depenbusch.

The tune has german lyrics.

YouTube link performance; playing my own Arrangement of the tune 'Eisvogelfrau' by Anna Depenbusch:

<https://youtu.be/CcXcb2pglaU>

One participant commented: "You sounded great and you have a very warm timbre in your voice. The piano sound has merged with the vocals and it seemed to be a unit" (anonymous audience member, personal communication, February 2024).

This feedback supports the aim of creating a cohesive and expressive sound through self-accompaniment.

Especially in this performance, I had the same opinion on my playing as the woman I was talking to. It felt so comfortable playing the piano along with the vocals, because I had known this tune very well and came up with my own arrangement to see what fits the music best. Usually, people are not pointing out my timbre, but I heard it a couple of times

know that I'm playing the piano people are recognising it in my voice. The venue I played in was a big congress hall with a lot of reverb (most likely preferred for classical music), but for a solo performance, it suited the music in my case. That is also something to be aware of when it comes to expression. If the audience is really listening carefully, you get more opportunities to play with tools like sound, timbre and dynamics. I liked this performance a lot and after that I thought, wow this is my research topic!

Another audience member noted: "I had goosebumps when you started to sing and the echo in the room was immense! You seemed very focused and took the right amount of time for the words you were singing along with the piano. I could understand it" (anonymous audience member, personal communication, February 2025).

This feedback highlights how the emotional delivery and clarity of self-accompaniment were perceived by listeners.

When I was performing with vocals only, I never received a comment on my focus. This conversation showed me that the woman enjoyed the performance, although she could see that I was with myself in that moment. It's not always about entertaining the audience, but as this research is about expression, I think playing both instruments at the same time gave me a deeper connection to the music, because of the fact that I'm in charge of the harmonic setting as well. There seems to be no distraction for the listener as they can easily follow my musical ideas.

6.1.2 Audience Survey Outcome - Solo Concert (Piano & Vocals)

To support the evaluation of my solo performance, I conducted an audience survey focused on expression, performance appearance, and the integration of piano and vocals. The responses reflected a generally positive reception and highlighted key elements that aligned with my artistic goals. I played the piece 'Eisvogelfrau' by Anna Depenbusch.

Table 3: Audience Survey Outcome

Category	Feedback
General Impressions	The majority of participants rated the performance as excellent or good, with many describing it as emotionally engaging and musically rich. Several attendees commented on the intensity of focus and vocal timbre, which they found captivating.
Expression & Appearance	90% of respondents described the performance as very expressive, with others marking it somewhat expressive. Audience members felt that the visual focus and presence on stage enhanced their listening experience. Many commented on the authenticity and presence displayed while performing.
Piano & Vocal Integration	A strong majority noted that the piano and vocals merged into a single musical unit, with one participant stating: "It didn't feel like two elements, but one complete sound." Several commented that they would not have assumed the performer was originally only a vocalist, with one stating: "It's impressive - you don't often see vocalists who can accompany themselves so confidently."
Sound Balance	The balance between voice and piano was consistently praised. Many participants remarked on the natural blending, potentially enhanced by the venue's acoustics. The room's reverb was mentioned as giving the performance a vibrant, open quality, contributing positively to the overall sound.
Depth of Performance	Respondents shared that playing along with the sung melody created a greater sense of depth and connection. One participant noted: "The piano didn't just accompany - it added another voice that deepened the whole experience."
Additional Comments	Participants appreciated the artistic risk of performing solo, highlighting the emotional vulnerability and intimacy of the setup. There was a sense that the performance felt personal, well thought out, and deeply musical.

6.2 Band leading trio

Will I be able to set up a concept for piano trio in which I sing and play the piano?

Band leading trio

As a vocalist, I've found that being able to communicate my musical ideas clearly to other band members is essential for creating an expressive and cohesive performance. Taking on the role of the pianist while singing has given me much more direct control over the musical conversation within the ensemble. One of the main reasons I wanted to develop my piano skills was to have the freedom to shape intros, endings, and transitions on my own. This not only gave me a stronger sense of ownership over the arrangements but also helped me guide the flow of a performance with more confidence. Through this research, I came to realize how much clarity this dual role brings - especially in transitions. For example, when I play an intro myself, I feel more connected to the piece right from the start, and I can bring in the vocals in a way that feels more focused, expressive, and intentional.

Trio rehearsal moment in New York City, playing my original tune '231st':

<https://youtu.be/98DWuUmHPdY>

Improvisation on the piano has been one of the biggest challenges for me as a vocalist, especially since I was initially more used to responding to musical cues in a more intuitive and reactive way. However, through the process of developing my improvisational skills on the piano, I've gained much greater flexibility in navigating spontaneous musical situations. Learning to improvise both harmonically and rhythmically has expanded my overall musical language and given me more tools to create and respond in the moment during performances. One of the most valuable insights I've had is how learning the melody of a standard on the piano directly influences the way I sing it - I'm more aware of dynamics and intonation. That's why I believe it's essential, especially when performing both instruments simultaneously, to be able to play the melody or theme of a tune confidently on the piano.

Dena DeRose began her musical journey as a pianist, but a significant turning point came when a disease in her hand forced her to stop playing for a period of time. During this challenging phase, she turned to singing. I chose to interview DeRose not only because of her compelling story, but also due to my interest in how she approaches the simultaneous performance of piano and voice - a dynamic that adds complexity to her artistry.

In our conversation, DeRose reflected on the transformative impact that in-depth piano study had on her relationship with melody. She emphasized how deeply engaging with melodies at the piano shaped her musical sensibilities and influenced the way she interprets and delivers songs as a vocalist.

"When I started playing again I was a different piano player. The melodies were so much stronger and so soloing is just an improvised melody more or less, a new melody on these chords. Everything just was clearer. And my focused attention was more on detail just subliterally, because of learning these melodies I did learn them from the piano when I would didn't have this hand. [singing head of 'How High the Moon'] Just sit there and make sure that I had the right melodies. And I think just that whole process of really learning the melodies and singing them for really a couple of years. It took 2 1/2 years to get through all that process. And then when I went to play again - it was just a different story, it was great."

- Dena DeRose, (personal communication, May 2024, see 9.2 Appendix)

By playing the piano in a rhythm section, I experienced a significant shift in my musical focus. I was expected to accompany other band members - particularly during solos - by providing harmonic support and contributing to the overall groove. This role deepened my understanding of rhythm and harmony and significantly improved my ability to communicate musically through the instrument. Throughout this process, I became more aware of the ensemble's dynamic, which led to more effective and intuitive collaboration with other musicians.

Audio example 'Beautiful love' by Victor Young external pianist:

https://soundcloud.com/larachwabe/beautiful-love-external/s-4yzHFiwvwuX?si=522f33d81279478984f0dce4a5128833&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing

Audio example 'Beautiful love' by Victor Young piano trio Lab Band:

https://soundcloud.com/larachwabe/beautiful-love-piano-trio/s-zUj1wWepq3X?si=dd0bde3d1e6b4f2782a1770e838c51b5&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing

Through my personal experience with this particular song, I realized that performing it in a trio setting significantly deepened my connection to the music. Being part of the rhythm section provided a sense of grounding and gave me much more confidence and freedom in my vocal expression. In this context, I was able to focus fully on shaping the vocal interpretation I had in mind, rather than being preoccupied with coordinating or adjusting to the piano accompaniment.

While the pianist delivered a strong performance in this example, there were moments - particularly rhythmically - where our timing was not fully aligned (01:02). These slight

mismatches affected the overall cohesion and, consequently, the impact of the performance. Nevertheless, the experience highlighted how much more secure and expressive I feel when the rhythmic foundation supports rather than challenges the vocal line.

Taking on the role of a pianist-vocalist leader in a trio offered me an unprecedented level of autonomy. As the pianist, I was responsible for shaping the harmonic structure, establishing the rhythmic foundation, and giving melodic cues - all of which allowed me to guide the performance with a clear and cohesive musical direction. The ability to introduce the first note of a melody or to lead the group into an intro or outro gave me a clear advantage over non-pianist vocalists, who often rely on others for cues. This dual role allowed me to feel more in control and more connected to the entire performance.

Figure 5: Arranged outro of the song 'Song of life' by Fred Hersch

Audio example Figure 5:

https://soundcloud.com/larachwabe/song-of-life-outro-arr-lab?si=6f98abdf35f34404b72f5f88858d410c&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing

6.3 Awareness of playing both instruments at the same time

What is missing from the voice that the piano already has (and the other way around)?

Awareness of playing both instruments at the same time

In response to the second sub-question, "What is missing from the voice that the piano already has (and the other way around)," I found that the main differences lay in intonation between the two instruments and their respective ranges. The piano naturally offered a broader range of octaves, something the voice continually strived to match. To bring both instruments into greater balance, I spent considerable time working on playing melodies simultaneously. Through this focused practice, the intonation between voice and piano improved significantly.

On the other hand, the piano lacked the natural freedom of improvisation that the voice already possessed. In order to reach a level where both instruments could support each other more equally, I discovered that it was essential to practice the piano part separately. Once I felt secure in my piano playing, I was able to allow more flexibility and freedom in my vocal improvisation. That foundation of stability in the piano part proved crucial for unlocking more creative expression in the voice.

One of the primary findings of the research is that balancing both the piano and vocal performance requires significant cognitive and physical effort. The research reveals that even experienced musicians experience moments of insecurity or struggle when performing both instruments, particularly in ensuring perfect synchronisation between vocal phrasing and piano accompaniment. This struggle is often compounded by the need for distinct focus on each instrument's individual technical requirements - intonation, timing, and articulation on the voice, and finger dexterity and chordal navigation on the piano.

Reflecting on her early years as a self-accompanying jazz artist, Champion Fulton shared, "And I would say the first 10 years, both things were super hard all the time."

- Champion Fulton, (personal communication, October 2024, see 9.5 Appendix).

The integration of both instruments is an ongoing, gradual process that takes much longer than expected. Through the interviews with vocal-pianists, it was consistently reported that achieving full proficiency in both roles is a long-term endeavour, often requiring years of focused practice. The interviewees expressed that the process of balancing both instruments involves consistent self-reflection and acceptance of their current limitations, rather than an immediate goal of perfection.

An important theme in the study was the awareness of imperfection and its role in musical growth. Throughout the research process, I experienced a shift in mindset - from striving for virtuosic perfection to embracing imperfections as an inherent part of performance. By embracing the reality that it is difficult to be perfect at both instruments simultaneously, I felt less pressure and more freedom in my performances. This acceptance, paradoxically, seemed to enhance overall musicality and expression, as it encouraged greater focus on the emotional delivery and artistic quality of the music, rather than fixating on flawless execution.

In discussing her early experiences as a singing pianist, Dena DeRose noted the initial difficulty of coordination: "When I first started it wasn't so easy to integrate both. And I was playing too much. The multitasking part of things"

- Dena DeRose, (personal communication, May 2024, see 9.2 Appendix).

Despite the technical difficulties and insecurities, the integration of piano and voice results in a distinctive musical outcome that enhances both intonation and timing. The research shows that, while the pianist-vocalist may not be able to achieve 100% perfection in either domain, the combination of the two instruments leads to a more nuanced, self-directed performance. The piano provides harmonic support and structure, while the voice is freed to focus on expressive interpretation, rhythm, and phrasing. This synergy, even when not technically flawless, enhances the overall sound and appearance of the performance.

In my own experience of singing while playing piano, I've found that intonation and timing are deeply intertwined. I've had to train myself to listen very carefully to how my voice interacts with the harmonic structure I'm creating at the keyboard. It's a constant process of adjustment - sometimes the voice needs to adapt to the piano, and at other times, the piano follows the phrasing or timing of the voice.

I've learned that this kind of dual performance requires a high level of awareness and flexibility. Even though it's rarely possible for both elements to feel completely perfect at the same time, the interaction between the two brings something unique to the performance. The voice's natural fluidity often complements the grounded harmonic support of the piano, creating a more nuanced and expressive overall sound.

"And if you're always with that master guy at the piano... then you don't dare to sit down there and that's the thing, he just plays better and then you think playing better is also better for the music - not necessarily!"

- Romy Camerun, (personal communication, September 2024, see 9.4 Appendix).

I often found myself accompanying my voice on the piano predominantly in the middle range of the keyboard. This raised the question: why did I consistently remain in this register when the instrument offers such a wide spectrum of possibilities? My left hand typically played root notes, occasionally reinforced with octaves. Through further

exploration, I discovered that incorporating the root and the fifth (1 and 5) created a fuller, more grounded sound. However, adjusting this approach proved challenging due to long-established habits.

In contrast, the right hand has the flexibility to move into the higher register, which often aligns well with my vocal range - particularly when singing in the upper part of my voice. While not always necessary, this higher placement tends to complement and enhance the overall blend between voice and piano.

During my most recent concert, I performed a solo piece in which I accompanied myself on piano, allowing me to place full focus on vocal expression. Recording this performance highlighted the importance of setting up the tune with a tempo that felt truly comfortable and natural to me. I realized that self-accompaniment demands a heightened level of concentration, as I was fully responsible for establishing the harmony and structure - without relying on a pianist to provide an introduction or guide the flow.

This autonomy, however, also created a deeper connection to the music. Accompanying myself allowed for a more personal and expressive performance, as I could shape the phrasing and harmony in real time. I felt more connected to the narrative of the song and more capable of conveying its story to the audience. Having control over the tempo also enabled me to adjust the pacing whenever I sensed a loss of emotional connection, further enhancing the expressiveness of the performance.

Recording self-accompaniment concert:

<https://youtu.be/eXacT8cQKJU>

6.4 Vocal technique while sitting on the piano (posture)

How to intertwine the piano with my voice?

Vocal technique while sitting on the piano (posture)

Throughout this project, I became increasingly aware of how much my posture affected my vocal performance when accompanying myself on the piano. While singing in a standing position, maintaining proper alignment had become second nature - my spine stayed upright, my shoulders relaxed, and my breath support felt automatic. However, this changed the moment I sat down at the piano.

I noticed through video recordings and listening back to my performances that whenever I didn't sit straight, my vocal production suffered. It became more difficult to access the higher notes, and I often felt that my breath support wasn't as strong as it usually was. The physical act of playing the piano - reaching for certain keys, leaning forward slightly - would sometimes pull me out of alignment without me even noticing in the moment.

What stood out to me was how much more conscious I had to be about engaging my core muscles and keeping my spine upright while seated. Without that awareness, I experienced tension in my upper body, which made singing feel more effortful and restricted. It took time to re-train my body to support my voice properly in a seated position, and it didn't come as naturally as it did when standing.

I began paying closer attention to how I positioned myself at the piano - adjusting the bench height, checking in with my posture before starting a song, and reminding myself to stay lifted throughout a performance. With time and consistent effort, these adjustments started to feel more natural, and I could feel the difference in my vocal control and resonance. Singing while seated became less about compensating and more about creating the same freedom I was used to while standing.

This process taught me that posture is not just a technical consideration but a central part of expressive singing - especially when I'm responsible for both the harmonic and vocal content. Developing this body awareness at the piano helped me connect more deeply with the music and perform with more ease and stability.

Hanjo Gäbler reflected on the challenges of performing while seated at an instrument:

"I am the only one who will be sitting at the instrument. That has advantages, but of course also many disadvantages, because I have to create a different presence sitting down than someone standing up, who perhaps even has a choreographic effect. Of course, there are also protagonists who stand in front of an assembled crew and are completely lost. They hold on to their iPad and read texts, so I'm not talking about them. I'm really talking about people who can deal with an audience, who also develop a presence on stage. And you have to do that double and triple when you're doing it from an instrument. So you need to be able to dance. Sitting down. Violinists have it easier! A star violinist like David Garrett or something, he can just do it... as a pianist or a Hammond organist you don't have that advantage. So I would say that's a clear disadvantage. But there are other ways to enhance your performance, even if it's by playing well, because you're not only judged for singing but also for playing."

- Hanjo Gäbler (personal communication, see Appendix 9.3)

6.5 Intonation - Timing - Sound - Appearance

What is the biggest difference in my expression when playing in both versions - with an external piano player or by myself?

[Intonation - Timing - Sound - Appearance](#)

One of the most valuable aspects I discovered while accompanying myself on the piano was the increased sense of musical control. Having direct influence over both the vocal line and the harmonic setting gave me the freedom to shape the entire performance more intentionally. I could respond in real time to how I felt in the moment - adjusting phrasing, tempo, or dynamics without needing to communicate these changes to another musician. This dual role allowed me to express the emotional content of a song in a much more personal and connected way. I found that my interpretations became more cohesive, as the vocal expression and the piano accompaniment were coming from the same musical impulse. This integration opened up new possibilities for improvisation as well. I was able to explore ideas in a freer, more spontaneous way than I could when working with an accompanist, simply because I didn't need to negotiate or anticipate someone else's choices. That sense of independence brought a new level of depth and individuality to my performances.

My own experience of accompanying myself on the piano made me realise how much musical control contributes to expressive freedom. I found that shaping both the harmony and vocal interpretation allowed for a more personal and emotionally connected performance. This sense of independence was also reflected in my interviews. Champion Fulton articulated a similar perspective, describing how the pianist's role enables a strong sense of creative direction:

"I think one reason I like it, is that as the piano player in an ensemble, you always have a lot of control. And I think I like that, because then I think I can really express what I want in my musical vision, I can more easily express, because I have the control and then I can make the environment what I wanted to be for the voice. And I think that's the thing for me."

- Champion Fulton (personal communication, October 2024, see 9.5 Appendix)

Accompanying myself on the piano has had a positive effect on my vocal intonation. The immediate harmonic feedback I received while playing helped me stay more in tune and aware of the tonal centre, particularly during sections where I might otherwise drift in pitch. Having that harmonic frame under my control gave me a sense of security, which often translated into a more stable and confident vocal delivery. That said, this outcome likely depends on how comfortable a performer feels with both instruments, and may not be the case for everyone.

I also found that performing as both singer and pianist brought a stronger sense of **presence on stage**. Taking on both roles challenged me to stay fully engaged, and I felt that this focus carried over into how the audience perceived the performance. While I can't assume this would apply to every performer, I personally experienced a deeper connection to the material and a clearer sense of musical identity when I played and sang simultaneously. The act of balancing both elements made the performance feel more personal, and in some cases, more compelling - not because it was perfect, but because it felt more intentional.

The dual role of singing and playing not only shaped my own artistic process but also raised questions about how this combination is perceived in a professional context. In my interview with Champion Fulton, she reflected on how this skill set has impacted her career opportunities and artistic expression:

"And I think it was like, people were... it's odd you know someone who plays and sings at the same time - it's not so common. So I think that helped me to get work. And then I think also when I moved to New York it continued to help me to get work, because I could work by myself. And it was more than one person, it was like solo piano with voice but it's only one person. So in that way, I think it helped me work. And then I think artistically it also helps the presentation be sort of different"

-Champion Fulton, (personal communication, October 2024, see 9.5 Appendix).

Over the course of this project, I discovered that accompanying myself on the piano significantly influenced my musical interpretation. Having control over both the harmonic and vocal elements allowed me to shape the music more freely, especially in terms of **phrasing and timing**. I was able to respond spontaneously to the emotional flow of a piece, without needing to coordinate those decisions with another musician. This independence encouraged a more personal and intentional approach to performance.

Working in this dual role also heightened my awareness of musical structure. I became more sensitive to how harmony and rhythm interact with vocal delivery, which led to more nuanced and cohesive interpretations. Rather than relying on an accompanist, I could make real-time decisions that aligned precisely with how I felt in the moment. This not only deepened my connection to the music but also gave my performances a greater sense of unity.

Another important insight was the clarity it brought to my artistic intentions. Communicating musical ideas to another player, no matter how collaborative the process, always involves a degree of compromise. Accompanying myself removed that filter, allowing my musical vision to come through more directly.

Over time, I noticed clear improvements in my vocal stability, timing, and expressive control. Integrating the piano into my vocal practice helped expand my interpretive possibilities and gave my performances a stronger sense of identity.

While this way of performing may not offer the same benefits for every musician, in my case, it proved to be an enriching and transformative approach - one that helped me grow artistically and connect more deeply with the music I perform.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This research project has been both a practical and artistic exploration into the unique challenges and rewards of self-accompaniment as a vocalist. By integrating piano accompaniment into my vocal practice, I engaged in a process that not only expanded my technical abilities but also reshaped my interpretive approach to music-making. What began as a means of enhancing harmonic awareness and musical independence evolved into a deeper investigation of expression, collaboration, and artistic identity. The following conclusions draw from my personal experience and reflect on the transformative impact that self-accompaniment has had on my musicianship. While the journey and outcomes may differ for other performers, these insights highlight the potential for self-accompaniment to serve as a powerful tool for creative growth and holistic musical development.

I. How did the integration of self-piano accompaniment influence a vocalist's musicianship?

Incorporating self-accompaniment on the piano into my practice had a significant impact on my development as a musician. Through consistent rehearsal, I became more attuned to harmonic structures and developed a stronger sense of musical independence. Taking on the responsibility of both vocalist and accompanist required me to be fully accountable for harmonic support, rhythmic clarity, and smooth musical transitions, such as introductions and endings. This dual role deepened my connection with the music and pushed me to approach performance with greater sensitivity and expression. Over time, this process helped me shape a more personal and nuanced musical identity, blending technical control with creative expression. Additionally, improving my piano skills made me more confident in collaborative settings, where I found myself taking on more of a leadership role and engaging with the music in a more complete, well-rounded way.

II. What was missing from the voice that the piano already had, and the other way around?

Through my own experience, I found that while the voice offered a powerful means of emotional expression and lyrical nuance, it often lacked the harmonic structure and rhythmic grounding that the piano naturally provided. When accompanying myself, I became more aware of how the piano helped establish a tonal center and supported the voice through foundational elements - particularly using root and fifth intervals in the left hand. I learned to avoid playing the third in the right hand too heavily, as it tended to muddy the overall clarity of the sound.

At the same time, I realized that while the piano brought harmonic depth and rhythmic stability, it didn't offer the same expressive flexibility, emotional phrasing, or dynamic subtlety that came so naturally through the voice. Combining both instruments in performance allowed me to create a more balanced and enriched musical experience, where the voice and piano complemented each other - each filling in the gaps left by the other and contributing to a more cohesive and expressive overall interpretation.

III. What was the biggest difference in expression when playing in both versions – with an external piano player or by myself?

The key difference in expression between performing with an external pianist and self-accompanying was the level of artistic control and interpretive freedom I had. Self-accompaniment allowed me to take full ownership of my phrasing, tempo, dynamics, and timing, which led to performances that felt more intimate, fluid, and personally expressive. This autonomy created a stronger, more seamless connection between the vocal line and the harmonic accompaniment.

On the other hand, performing with an external pianist introduced a collaborative dynamic that, while enriching the overall musical texture, required me to adjust to the pianist's interpretive choices. While working together in an ensemble setting provided opportunities for dynamic interaction and musical dialogue, I found that it sometimes limited my ability to make spontaneous expressive changes. In contrast, self-accompaniment gave me a greater sense of unity and immediacy between my voice and the piano, resulting in a distinct, personal expressive character that felt unique to the performance.

Recommendations for Vocalists:

Incorporate Piano Practice into Vocal Training:

Regular piano practice enhances harmonic awareness, deepens musicianship, and strengthens a vocalist's interaction with harmonic structures. It encourages greater autonomy in arranging intros, endings, and establishing musical cues within ensemble settings.

Explore Self-Accompaniment for Artistic Growth:

In my experience, performing while accompanying myself has significantly fostered creative independence and strengthened my connection to the music. I found that this approach allowed me to take fuller control of my expression, explore interpretive choices more freely, and shape a sound that felt both richer and more personally layered. However, I recognize that this process may vary for other musicians - some may find self-accompaniment limiting or prefer the collaborative energy of working with an external accompanist. The benefits I experienced might not resonate equally with everyone, as each performer brings a unique set of preferences, strengths, and artistic goals to their practice.

Insights from the Study:

Throughout this project, developing my piano skills within ensemble settings - particularly in trio formats - greatly expanded my capabilities as a vocalist. Working on harmonizing, improvising, and comping not only sharpened my musical ear but also deepened my sense of connection and communication with fellow musicians. While piano improvisation was one of the more challenging aspects for me, it pushed me to grow and ultimately added a valuable layer of artistic flexibility to my performances.

I found that the middle range of the keyboard often became a natural harmonic anchor in my playing. Using my left hand to emphasize root and fifth intervals helped establish a clear tonal center without overwhelming the texture, allowing the voice to remain present and grounded rhythmically. The upper register of the piano, on the other hand, served as a complementary layer to my vocal line - adding brightness and harmonic richness, especially when exploring higher vocal passages.

I also noticed a tendency to gravitate toward the middle register of the keyboard, which seemed to offer a balance between harmonic depth and vocal comfort. This preference felt both intuitive and practical, influenced by muscle memory and the natural connection I developed between hand placement and vocal phrasing.

Learning to sing and play piano simultaneously has been a deeply personal and gradual process for me. It's not about achieving technical perfection, but about refining my own expressive language and developing a musical identity that feels authentic. This dual proficiency has made me more confident in ensemble settings, especially in trios, where I often found myself taking on more of a leadership role and contributing creatively on multiple levels.

Posture also proved to be a critical aspect of this journey. Singing while seated demanded a new level of awareness around alignment, breath support, and vocal freedom. Through consistent and mindful practice, I became more comfortable performing both seated and standing, maintaining vocal strength and expressivity in either position.

Future Directions for Research:

- Developing specific strategies for maintaining optimal posture during seated performance.
- Exploring methods tailored to vocalists learning piano accompaniment, particularly improvisation and comping skills.
- Investigating how self-accompaniment influences emotional delivery, stage presence, and audience engagement across genres.

Implications

From my own experience throughout this research, integrating the piano into my vocal practice has had a profound and lasting impact on my development as a musician. What began as a technical challenge gradually became a source of artistic freedom, deeper musical understanding, and greater self-confidence. Accompanying myself allowed me to connect more intimately with the music, as I was not only interpreting the vocal line but also shaping the harmonic and rhythmic foundation that supported it. This dual engagement fostered a sense of unity and artistic autonomy that I hadn't experienced to the same degree when working exclusively with an external accompanist.

One of the most significant implications of this journey is the shift it has created in my professional mindset. I now view the piano not just as a support instrument, but as a steady and essential tool in my ongoing artistic practice. As I move forward in my career, I plan to incorporate self-accompaniment into my upcoming concerts and performances, using the piano as a regular part of my professional expression. This approach not only broadens the scope of my repertoire and performance formats but also strengthens my individual voice as an artist.

Furthermore, integrating piano into my practice has greatly enhanced my stage presence. It has given me a stronger sense of control, helped calm performance anxiety, and provided a feeling of security during live performances. Knowing that I am fully responsible for both the vocal and instrumental elements has led to a deeper confidence in my abilities and a stronger sense of musical identity.

Overall, the experience has shown me that self-accompaniment is not simply a practical skill - it is a creative pathway that has deepened my connection to the music and expanded my potential as a performer. I believe this approach can be a valuable tool for other vocalists seeking greater artistic independence and a more holistic musicianship.

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9. APPENDICES

9.1 Research journal except piano practice exercises

Jazz Piano (rootless voicings)

Klara Schwabe

The exercises are organized into ten staves, each containing four measures of music. The chords and their corresponding colors are as follows:

- Staff 1 (Measures 1-4): Cm7 (blue), F7 (blue), Bbmaj7 (blue), Bbmaj7 (blue)
- Staff 2 (Measures 5-8): Cm7 (blue), F7 (blue), Bbmaj7 (blue), Bbmaj7 (blue)
- Staff 3 (Measures 9-12): C#m7 (orange), F#7 (orange), Bmaj7 (orange), Bmaj7 (orange)
- Staff 4 (Measures 13-16): C#m7 (orange), F#7 (orange), Bmaj7 (orange), Bmaj7 (orange)
- Staff 5 (Measures 17-20): Dm7 (cyan), G7 (cyan), Cmaj7 (cyan), Cmaj7 (cyan)
- Staff 6 (Measures 21-24): Dm7 (cyan), G7 (cyan), Cmaj7 (cyan), Cmaj7 (cyan)
- Staff 7 (Measures 25-28): Ebm7 (green), Ab7 (green), Dbmaj7 (green), Dbmaj7 (green)
- Staff 8 (Measures 29-32): Ebm7 (green), Ab7 (green), Dbmaj7 (green), Dbmaj7 (green)
- Staff 9 (Measures 33-36): Em7 (light blue), A7 (light blue), Dmaj7 (light blue), Dmaj7 (light blue)
- Staff 10 (Measures 37-40): Em7 (light blue), A7 (light blue), Dmaj7 (light blue), Dmaj7 (light blue)
- Staff 11 (Measures 41-44): Fm7 (pink), Bb7 (pink), Ebmaj7 (pink), Ebmaj7 (pink)
- Staff 12 (Measures 45-48): Fm7 (pink), Bb7 (pink), Ebmaj7 (pink), Ebmaj7 (pink)

Figure 6: Piano practice exercises page 1

9.1 Research journal except piano practice exercises

2

49 **F#m7** **B7** **Emaj7** **Emaj7**

53 **F#m7** **B7** **Emaj7** **Emaj7**

57 **Gm7** **C7** **Fmaj7** **Fmaj7**

61 **Gm7** **C7** **Fmaj7** **Fmaj7**

65 **Abm7** **D♭7** **G♭maj7** **G♭maj7**

69 **Abm7** **D♭7** **G♭maj7** **G♭maj7**

73 **Am7** **D7** **Gmaj7** **Gmaj7**

77 **Am7** **D7** **Gmaj7** **Gmaj7**

81 **B♭m7** **E♭7** **A♭maj7** **A♭maj7**

85 **B♭m7** **E♭7** **A♭maj7** **A♭maj7**

89 **Bm7** **E7** **Amaj7** **Amaj7**

93 **Bm7** **E7** **Amaj7** **Amaj7**

Figure 7: Piano practice exercises page 2

9.1 Research journal except piano practice exercises

05th Jan

Chord Progressions in all 12 scales

(II-V-I)

C^o7

C^{maj}7 D^m7 G⁷

C[#] / D^b maj⁷ D[#] m⁷ G[#] 7

D^{maj}7 E^m7 A⁷

D[#] / E^b maj⁷ F^m7 B^b7

E^{maj}7 F[#] m⁷ B⁷

F^{maj}7 G^m7 C⁷

F[#] / G^b maj⁷ G[#] m⁷ C[#] 7

G^{maj}7 A^m7 D⁷

G[#] / A^b maj⁷ B^b m⁷ E^b 7

A^{maj}7 B^m7 E⁷

A[#] / B^b maj⁷ C^m7 F⁷

B^{maj}7 C[#] m⁷ F[#] 7

Figure 8: Chord progression in all 12 scales

9.1 Research journal except piano practice exercises

3-6-2-5-1

Gm7 C7b9b13 Fm7/9 Bb7b9b13 Ebmaj7/9

Figure 9: 3-6-2-5-1 Chord progression

Minor 2-5-1

1,4,b5,b7 3,b13,7,b3 b3,5,maj7,9 3,b13,7,b3

Dm7b5 G7alt C-maj7 Dm7b5 G7alt C-maj7

Root Inversion

5 F#m7b5 B7alt E-maj7 Bm7b5 B7alt A-maj7

9 Cm7b5 Dm7b5

13

Figure 10: Minor 2-5-1 progressions

9.1 Research journal except piano practice exercises

5th of June

Like someone in love

minor. 2.5.11 Jimmy Van Heusen

[A] I
 Cmaj7 D7#9 | Em7 Em7 | C#67 C7 | Bm7 E7 |
 [B] I
 Am7 (C#9b7 F#7) | Bm7 | Dm7 G7 |
 [C] I
 Cmaj7 | F#m7 B7 | Em7 | / |
 [D] I
 Em7 | A7 | Am7 | D7#5 ||
 [E] I
 Cmaj7 | F#m7 B7 | Em7 | A7 Bb7 |
 [F] I
 Bm7 E7 | Am7 D7 | Gb | Am7 D7 |

[A] Lately, I find myself out gazing at stars,
 hearing guitars like someone in love.

[B] Sometimes the things I do astound me,
 mostly whenever you're around me.

[C] Lately I seem to walk as though I had wings,
 bump into things like someone in love.

[D] Each time I look at you, I'm hip as a glove,
 and feeling like someone in love.

Figure 11: Piano and vocals (lyrics) integration practice with the tune 'Like someone in love'

9.2 Appendix - Transcription written Interview

Dena DeRose, USA

1. What is it that you like most about adding your voice to your piano playing and what musical opportunities came up?

I'm gonna get some voice lessons; I felt connected to the music again (after singing at a jam). Just started singing. Put together my repertoire of usual standards and did gigs all around town. Get to know how to lead a trio. When I started playing again I was a different piano player. The melodies were so much stronger and so soloing is just an improvised melody more less, a new melody on these chords. Everything just was clearer. And my focused attention was more on detail just sub literally, because of learning these melodies I did learn them from the piano when I would didn't have this hand. *singing head of how high the moon*. Just sit there and make sure that I had the right melodies. And I think just that whole process of really learning the melodies and singing them for really a couple of years. It took 2 1/2 years to get through all that process. And then when I went to play again - it was just a different story, it was great. I didn't really decide to be a piano player or singer. I had to pay doctor bills, I had no insurance. That's why I started singing too, cause I used to going through all this and I had to pay for it. So I didn't really decide to be a pianist, but it felt natural to just sit there and play trying to get the hand going and then playing through the songs that I was singing, standing before, and transposing, learning all that, putting in my key and all that, it sort of just happened and I also had to find work. I just walked in there and I said I need a a gig. I had a little demo tape that was old with just singing. Go play some for us. I sat there and I played through a tune. I could do like 3rds and 7ths but I could walk bass lines. Cause I did a lot of walking bass lines on my little moo keyboard when I had my hand in casts. Cause I still had to work. So the putting it together I didn't really continuously do it, it just happened. And the more this hand got stronger and I was playing through these songs and I got this little gig that was 2 or 3 nights a week from 5 to 7. I could build my repertoire. I didn't want to have the same songs all the time. I had to learn a bunch of tunes and I knew that and you know I had to keep learning songs. So I just build the repertoire, played and sang and I have to say when I first started singing and playing, I sang things really pretty straight, because to combine the two was not that easy. But I could walk bass lines, so many times with this hand being so weak I just, and here I am walking bass lines and singing. And I called it hard, well that is hard. You're like doing a counter melody to your melody over here. But I didn't know, I was just doing what I could do - to work! So this hand got stronger and then of course I didn't walk so many maybe I did more stride and even that I mean I had to work it out, some of the songs I had to work out. The intro, what am I gonna do for the intro. *singing head of the more I see you'. So I listened to recordings and trying to see what the piano player was doing behind the singer and I just copied a lot of it. And the one record that I really learned how to play and sing with, was the Carmen McRae ,Alone' live at the Dug. Just her and the piano singing and playing for herself and I learned the whole record note for note pretty much. And singing, cause her phrasing was great. Great phrasing and but also how simple, I was trying to be too complex, actually. And when you listen to that record, it's just like. *plays but not for me*. You know like these little things that she does and I just took them and I tried it on other songs too, the same kind of thing. But I really did try to learn that whole record I didn't write any of it down. I probably couldn't play along with it now, all of it. I do know some of it though, I still do. I have a student or two every four year time that they really wanna learn one of those tunes, not that they're piano players or singers, but they just wanna be able to try to do that. And it always helps them.

2. Do you think that adding your singing to your practice as a pianist had an impact on your career and if so, why and how?

I know at least at that time of history like the late 80's in the 90's, as a piano player and singer there were a number of places that I could work. Especially when I moved to New York, I mean Binghamton where I grew up, I just asked people, there was always a piano, brunch, there was a grand piano over there. I said you have piano, it's brunch time, would you like to have a little Jazz brunch? And I would just trying to get work happening, And you'd be surprised even now I have students who do this in Graz, where they just go to places and ask, there's a nice corner over there I could bring a guitar player and we could to bossa novas. You gotta ask. You can't wait for the work to come to you. Especially these days that's what I met by the history, because back then there were a lot more opportunities. I was gigging pretty much you know anywhere from 7-14 times a week.

3. Can you explain a little bit about your creative concept/process of writing and arranging your music? How do you start and what is your inspiration?

I mean arranging, composition they are almost the same thing, but if I just look at arranging first, I basically learned a lot of the early repertoire by just singing along with Sarah or Carmen or Billy or whoever it was and really singing it like them, more or less, but more I would listen to like what did the rhythm section do in the intro, or how what kind of ending was that? I liked that. *singing Basie ending*. *singing Duke Ellington ending*. But I did that, I don't know who taught me, but I wanted to know, how can I tell a trio what to play for an intro, you know. So just a turn around, just give me a turn around. Cause on that recording I remember which is *singing turn around'. There we're in you know, so it's I just learned from the records pretty much everything I know, cause I didn't go to school for this. So it's really it's all there. Some people, I guess I do get this from people, cause they're like: yeah but I don't know what to take. I said well, what do you like? I liked that intro, I'm gonna take that intro and figure out what they did. And then I just plant that same one, I could see that okay this chord starts on the one chord so they did a 1 6 2 5, okay that's good. Oh this song starts like but not for me I do it, I start on the two chord, I can't do that same intro, so then I tried to find recordings that have but not for me and then listen to all the different, oh okay 1 4 3 6 or whatever it is you know. Get to the 5 of that 2 and then I figured out all the songs that I had. Oh this one starts on the one chord, this one starts on the two. And I probably repeated some of those intros on my early days. But it didn't matter, cause the melody of the song came everyone was oh that's the song. And then the endings was sort of the same story, just finding cool endings. And I mainly got a lot of it from the more classic recordings first. Because they just were easier for me to understand too. And they were strong, I mean he had Tommy Flanagan and Hank Jones and Oscar Peterson on all those things and for all the singers you know. Great, anyhow. And I was already listening to them as a piano player before. But I didn't even listen to the singers, before I started singing. I was only listening to Bill Evans, Bobby Timmons, Wynton Kelly, all of the cool piano players, Barry Harris, you know all of it. When I started to sing and listen to those recordings, I was listening to the singer and tried to learn the tunes and sing along with them, but then to learn how to arrange a little, I started going back now what's the piano player doing. And that's how the two are so together - really. So the piano player gives some intro and the singer can't hear the first note. And those kinds of things, it sounds like common sense, but you'd be surprised sometimes. I did do some bunch of gigs in New York with guitar players if there wasn't a piano I would go on and sing standards or bossa novas or something with a guitar player. Just guitar or sometimes with a bass. And sometimes they give me some intro, I couldn't tell where my first note was. So it really taught me a lot to know really how to set up what I was gonna do. And arranging wise to go deeper, besides intros and endings, time-feel, tempos, time signatures, keys, and harmony is another thing, but the rhythm and the timing and all that, I basically tried to of course listen to recordings, copy some of them. *plays intro of Lullaby of Birdland'. I would do that intro every time, and it gave me a good foundation of how to set that tune up. And for teaching I do it now, and then they know where to come in or whatever. So those intros like that, but also like the tempo, the time-feel and all that I basically started to think okay, I can play a lot of recordings and I have a lot of them in my head and I get it, but I wanted make it me sound like me. But I thought I wanna do something within myself. And mainly I started to think like a singer again. What am I singing about? What feeling comes up when I sing this song? And I tried to put that feeling, match it with a tempo, or time-feel, so sometime it's not 4/4 for me. If I try it in 3/4, like 'if I should lose you', I recorded that one. I just remembered playing that one, the Hank Mobley version mainly with horn players, as a pianist first. And then when I started to learn the tune, I remember the tune and I thought what if I just change the time signature? Cause this feeling I have is a little more melancholic and it's not *singing if I should lose you big band style*, it's not that! The lyric is what told me! 'if I should lose you, the stars would fall from the sky, I mean, pffff I gotta have a feeling for that, I gotta figure out something that, really for me, not the feeling that I think should be for the purpose of that lyric, but for me. How am I gonna match my feeling of that sound of the lyric, the sound meaning, how you even put it through the voice, you know. I have heard that song at jam sessions *singing the head of if I should lose you in bad tone of voice*, you know I'm like....really? You gonna lose some people with this attitude. So I just try to do that, and that's a big part of my arranging. If there's a certain word or phrase, a word, and there's a chord above it, if it's a word that brings a certain feeling, maybe it's an angry feeling, well I'll put a #11 or a #9 in there, that's that sound, instead of just... and if the melody allows it! That's where I learned how to what if you're gonna alter some chord you have to think about what the melody is and then I would just play around with different alterations and sounds and then, yeah that's the feeling right there! A lot of it for me came through

the lyric and the feeling of it, even colouring certain words differently, not that I did it every time, but yes, almost. You know you go back and listen to Ella singing 'two nights in France' at the.. whatever place that was, and they're doing the same songs, and she sings them similarly there's a few differences you hear them. And the Tommy Flanagan trio behind her he hears a little similar things, he does the same intro but it's just slightly different, you know. We can't do it.. always the same. So for arranging that's how I'd still do. And there are many other layers of that when it comes to arranging. But that's the first steps to get tempos and time-feels and signatures and keys! Keys sound differently. And we can go up and down a half step or two. And it'll still fit, we can make it work, but there will be sometimes one that you just have to do in original key, but usually if it's.. check it out on a couple. I tell my students to practice in a few keys, because things come out differently in different keys, there's a different feeling. That comfortable zone is just changing, shifting down, a little bit, from time to time. Compositionally though I must say, when I started composing I just did it random. I just tried to create some chords and vibes. I think on my very first recording I have a few originals and those were.. I wasn't thinking functional harmony so much, I was just sort of going from chords to chords and I was coming more of harmony. And then creating a melody over that harmony, and then the words, most of the time. Although I did have a reason I wanted to compose and that reason of course has words and feelings. So there was some intention to write a certain, like a ballad, or whatever, a lot of more ballads in the beginning, I'm all about love songs! This breakup brought that tune, you know. As I look back at those original compositions now, my composition skills have definitely gotten better and I do more think in terms of logical harmony more less, cause I like harmony I like how it moves. I'm not a modal type person so much. I just like the feeling of how harmony moves. With melody and bass and these counter points, coming maybe from classical, that's what I'm, still have those layers of being in an orchestra. Compositionally I think, I have one song also that where I really intentionally wrote a functional harmony tune and that's when it all started which was 'in the glow of the moon'. And that one really I wanted to be very pretty functional more less. There'd be some 2 5 and hear and this... but if you look at that tune it's not like 'my funny valentine' or 'my romance', that functional! I still had some different things happening. Cause I still had this coming from the feeling of something. Rather than the head of something. And that's where I'm more, anyhow. But the head comes in, I think through the years of teaching and explaining things and also having the intention of writing a functional harmony kind of tune.

4. Would you say that you can express your two instruments equally towards one another while making music?

When I first started it wasn't so easy to integrate both. And I was playing too much. The multitasking part of things. As I said, it was not so natural to have both at the same time. I think my left hand bass gigs helped. Because there was a little more second nature. But the actual playing the piano, really playing and accompanying it took a long time, but I think it took until my late 30s or so. Mid 30s til late 30s, where enough fans that I didn't really know... but then there's these fans on a jazz concert they come up to you and they think they know more than you. And that's how I thought of it in the beginning, I take Bill Evans as suggestion. Listen to the people that are not musicians, when you want to learn something about what you need to do better. Because they have ears that are different and these people told me: you sure can play that piano and you're a good singer too, but there's a lot of piano. Well of course I'm a first a pianist...! I just thought I had this chip on my shoulder a little bit, I worked hard on that! Not that I didn't work hard at the voice, but it just felt years old. And still my recordings have a little lot more piano playing than most singers recordings.. but that's being a singer pianist in some ways. Shirley Horn didn't play as much. She was playing and singing, but she wouldn't solo as long as I do. Or Diana Krall even she does solo, we're about the same age, so we're coming out of the same theme of the standards and everything but she tends to, her record companies told her: minimal piano. They told her what to do. Cause it had to be in the big label box. So her's if you listen to a lot of her, it's just a little solo and then she's back to the voice. And only on her live in Paris and stuff like that where she's playing a lot more. But for me it's just part of what I am. I tend to use the voice the way I use the voice and I tend to scat with it or whatever and sometimes like last night, I didn't really scat without it. But I do that some times too, I just try to look at it more multi-faceted rather than multitasking. Because there are options and tender options or textual options to use the two together or just this or just that. And I think in my recordings I have a variety. And yes there's a lot of piano but in the beginning there was maybe too much piano. I could just sing the song once. I never took a second vocal chorus. Never even scatted along with, that came up another some

years later. And I did wanted just play, just show what I could do. And so enough people said this and I sort of started getting the hint. Maybe I shouldn't play so much, maybe I need to sing a second vocal chorus, or sing a cappella for a little bit or only sing with the bass and then play. So it started to change up textually also through playing with a rhythm section. But yeah it took really until about my mid 30s to realise that and when I did, I feel the integration became stronger, because my mind wasn't just on trying to show people my pianistic skills and all that. I was more focused on the voice, much more the story and then the arranging went deeper, because I started really thinking about what I was singing. Certain situations make you do certain things. She speaks about her new recording where she had to play the piano in a specific part and add the vocals later, she'd never done this before. She would always live record things. So that's really the only time I never sang at the same time but I have to say it's okay. I would never said it was okay but you get a little older and I know..... singers that never record with their trio, they do scratch tracks and then they go back and they do it over and over until it's right. I can't do that! I'm in the moment, and what happens in the moment, is magic. When you do that kind of over, over and then you listen to your rhythm section: oh they're hidden there: I'll hit there too. Thats not Jazz. Maybe it comes out nicely for them, they like it, that's just not my way.

5. What is the main satisfaction that comes from adding singing to your piano playing?
Clarity of my lines! Yeah, I guess.

6. Are you always accompanying yourself?

Sometimes I get guest gigs with a big band. And the big band has their pianist. On international Jazz day... I sang two of the tunes and for two of them I stood and it's always a treat for me to just stand and sing. In big bands or at these choirs. I enjoy that sometimes, I do. On my recordings I have like Bill Charlap and we recorded 'the nearness of you' and he plays and I only sing. That's the only piano one, I tented to just be. People don't think to just call me as a singer. And also many of the budgets look at me and think: wow, a trio with a singer! It's not four people that we have to pay. So sometimes that happens, I'm sure!

9.3 Appendix - Transcription written Interview Hanjo Gäbler, GER

1. What is it that you like most about adding your voice to your piano playing and what musical opportunities came up?

Also natürlich ist es so, dass wenn man, Gesang und Klavier, wenn man das beides macht, dann ist man ja in einer gewissen Hinsicht schon Multi-Instrumentalist. Und dadurch ist es zum Beispiel in der geistlichen Musik, wo ich ja groß geworden bin, also in dieser Gospel Szene, ist das schon ein großer Vorteil, zum Beispiel wenn man Chöre leitet, dass du den Stimmen einzeln Stimmhilfe geben kannst zu intonieren, dass du ihnen textlich helfen kannst als Chorleiter. Auf der anderen Seite ist es natürlich auch als Protagonist, in anderen Genres, eine schöne Sache. Also ich bin ein Freund von hand gemachter Musik. Ich liebe Motown. Und die alten 70iger. Und da gibt es ganz ganz viele Leute, die das gemacht haben - Stevie Wonder, Ray Charles, Otis Redding, Wilson Pickett. Aber auch europäische Bands zu der Zeit wie Abba oder sowas.. also das waren alles Bandsituationen, die vom Keyboard her geleitet worden und auch protagonistisch angeleitet wurden. Und das hat natürlich auch schon große Vorteile. Du bist Artist aber auch eigener MD deiner Band. Du kannst mal kurz mal eben einen fill-in spielen und sofort weiß die Band, ok die Rutsche geht nochmal in den A part statt in den B part halt. Und das ist wie son Taktstock.

Klara: Teil der Band sein, manchmal hat man das Gefühl man ist reingestellt in das setting und hat nicht so viel input.

Hanjo: Als Sänger braucht man eine andere Resoluteness. Um eine Band musikalisch dahin zu bekommen... das geht auch, wenn man sie wirklich am Schlafittchen packt und denen einfach, das ihnen aufzwingt wo es als nächstes hingehet. Das kann man ja auch machen. Ich hab zwei mal live performances von Aretha Franklin gesehen. Das war schon besonders. Oder auch Barbara Streisand, die einfach mit ihrer Präsenz es drauf hatte ein ganzes Orchester oder eine ganze Big Band umzulenken. Das musste verfolgt werden, weil sie so resolut aufgetreten ist. Aber das bringt natürlich jetzt auch nicht jeder mit. Es gibt auch dass, dass alle jetzt ... heute sowieso nicht mehr, heute spielen alle mit backing tracks und Ableton die live shows, aber wenn's richtig um handgemacht Musik geht, dann ja ist es schon hilfreich mit Instrument dann.

(english translation)

So of course if you're doing vocals and piano, if you're doing both, then you're a multi instrumentalist in a way, you're already a multi-instrumentalist in a way. And that's why, for example, in sacred music, where I grew up, in this gospel scene, it's a big advantage, for example, when you're directing choirs, that you can help the voices individually with the intonation, that you can help them lyrically as a choir director. On the other hand, of course, it's also great as a protagonist in other genres. So I am a friend of handmade music. I love Motown. And the old 70s. And there are people who did that - Stevie Wonder, Ray Charles, Otis Redding, Wilson Pickett. But also European bands at that time like Abba or something like that... so these were all band situations that were led from the keyboard and also led protagonistically. And of course that has great advantages. You are an artist but also the MD of your band. You can play a quick fill-in and the band knows immediately, ok, the slide goes back into the A part instead of the B part. And it's like a baton.

Klara: Being part of the band, sometimes you feel like you're being put into the setting and you don't have much input...

Hanjo: As a singer you need a different kind of determination. To get a band there musically... you can also do that if you really grab them by the scruff of the neck and just force them to go where they want to go next. You can do that too. I've seen Aretha Franklin live twice. That was really special. Or Barbara Streisand, who just had the presence to transform an entire orchestra or big band with her presence. You had to follow her because she was so determined. But of course not everyone has that. There's also the fact that everybody now... not any more anyway, everybody plays live shows with backing tracks and Ableton, but when it comes to real handmade music, then yes, it helps to have an instrument.

2. Do you think that adding your singing to your practice as a pianist had an impact on your career and if so, why and how?

Ja, also hatte es schon. Also ich war als Jugendlicher schon ziemlich früh mit Berufsmusik verrohtet, weil ich eigentlich schon wusste, dass ich Musiker werden will und hab auch während meiner Ausbildung eigentlich schon den Großteil meines Unterhalts mit Musik verdient, ohne dass ich gesungen habe. Das mit dem Singen kam später, und das kam eigentlich aus versehen. Ich hab so viele Chöre begleitet damals als junger Erwachsener, dass ich irgendwann gemerkt habe ich muss denen auch chorisches vorstehen können. Dann hab ich einfach angefangen mit Sängern zu singen. Und ich würde mich heute auch nicht als Sänger bezeichnen als viel mehr als Pianist und Instrumentalist und in den einen oder anderen Besetzungen trete ich derweil als Sänger auf, aber nur... weil's so gekommen ist. Aber das hat mir schon in beiden Sachen weitergeholfen, sowohl als Instrumentalist als auch als Sänger, weil man in beide Gewerke eine Tür hat, in denen man auch beide Gewerke anbieten kann. Und das ist natürlich schon echt cool halt! Das hilft mir gewaltig weiter, also ich würde auch als Instrumentalist nicht da stehen wo ich bin wenn ich nicht singen könnte, aber auch als Sänger hätte ich viele Jobs nicht, wenn ich nicht auch instrumental mithelfen könnte oder harmonisch ne Expertise hätte wo's langgeht.

Klara:.. und allgemein mehr Möglichkeiten im Berufsfeld des Musiker seins?

Hanjo: Ja, das stimmt! Ich meine es gibt ja zum Beispiel Folk, ich meine amerikanische Musik, das geht von Amerikaner bis singer-songwriter und folk, da ist es halt die Gitarre! Da singt jeder und spielt Gitarre. Nashville ist zum Beispiel so eine Region wo alle mit Saiteninstrumenten unterwegs sind aber auch selber ihre Songs schreiben. Und da ist es halt ein Instrument aber da ist es auch unabdingbar, dass du nicht auch ein Instrument spielst. Es ist halt auch immer Genre mäßig und in der Gospel Musik muss auch jeder irgendwie Klavier oder ne Hammond spielen können.

(english translation)

Yes, that was already the case. When I was a teenager I was involved in professional music quite early because I knew I wanted to be a musician and even during my education I actually earned most of my living with music during my education, without singing. The singing came later and that was actually by accident. As a young adult, I accompanied so many choirs that I eventually realised I had to be able to lead them. So I just started singing with singers. And today I wouldn't describe myself as a singer, but rather as a pianist and instrumentalist, and in the meantime I perform as a singer in one or the other ensemble, but only... because it happened that way. But it has helped me in both areas, as an instrumentalist and as a singer, because you have a door into both professions. And of course that's really cool! It helps me, I wouldn't be where I am as an instrumentalist if I couldn't sing, but as a singer, but even as a singer I wouldn't have many jobs if I couldn't help out as an instrumentalist or if I didn't have harmonic knowledge.

Klara: ... and generally more opportunities in the professional field of being a musician?

Hanjo: Yeah, that's right! I mean, there's folk music, for example, I mean American music, from American to singer-songwriter and folk, it's just the guitar! Everybody sings and plays guitar. Nashville, for example, is a region where everybody plays stringed instruments, but they also write their own songs. And there it's just an instrument, but it's also that you have to play an instrument. It always depends on the genre, and in gospel music everybody has to be able to play the piano or the Hammond organ.

3. Can you explain a little bit about your creative concept/process of writing and arranging your music? How do you start and what is your inspiration?

Ja bei mir war es Gershwin, ganz klar. Also ich hab mich verliebt in dieses Hybride, cross-over zwischen Jazz und Klassik. Das kam bei mir daher, weil ich ja angefangen habe, am Konservatorium, in Bremen zu studieren. Und später zog es mich, Interesse mäßig, mehr in die Jazz Musik, also Berklee bei Boston. Und das Motown Konzept mit Nashville number system und diese beiden Dinge die haben mich Hybrid so begeistert, dass ich mich nicht nur mit dem kopieren beschäftigt habe, sondern auch mit dem kapiere. Wie arrangiere ich selbst mal ne Big Band oder welche Stimmen traue ich einer bestimmten Instrumentengruppe zu und wie kann man auch.. und ja dann ging das von kleineren bis zu größeren Gewerken. Also es fing an mit eigenen Melodien, eigenen Klavier Instrumentals. Und ging dann bis hin zu Chor Gewerken oder auch mal.. ja in der Filmmusik sind die Gewerke halt auch ein bisschen größer. Das fing sehr sehr klein an. Von Kleist-Besetzungen bis größere Besetzungen.

Klara: selber arrangieren? Bei upcoming concerts... eigenen Touch reinbringen.

Hanjo: Unbedingt! Total! Weißt du die Übergänge sind ja auch fließend. Wir kennen uns jetzt zum

Beispiel von einer Blues Besetzung und da fängt man ja auch schon im kleineren an zu arrangieren. Also wie ist das, wenn ich in tieferen Lagen Klavier spiele - kommt die Gitarre mehr zur Geltung wenn sie oben spielt. Und nicht auch noch in einem Frequenz Bereich wo schon der Bass oder das Klavier zu gegen ist. Also man verteilt sich auch so in einer Frequenz Staffelung und das ist eigentlich auch schon ein arrangierendes Element im Zusammenspiel und die Übergänge sind fließend zum re-arrangieren oder zum komponieren auch. Also wie kann man zum Beispiel *singt vier töne Melodie* umdeuten? *singt vier töne umgekehrt* .. einfach um es umzudrehen und schon hast du nicht copy-past gemacht, sondern dir halt etwas Neues einfallen lassen. Das kann auch keine KI! Das können halt, Gott sei Dank, nur wir! Damit fängt es an.

(english translation)

Yes, for me it was definitely Gershwin. So I fell in love with this hybrid, this crossover between jazz and classical music. That came about for me because I started studying at the conservatory in Bremen. And later, in terms of interest, I was more drawn to jazz music, so Berklee near Boston. And the Motown concept with the Nashville number system and those two things inspired me so much that I didn't just want to copy it, I wanted to understand it. How do I arrange a big band myself or what parts do I trust a certain instrument group to play and then it went from smaller pieces to bigger pieces. So it started with my own melodies, my own piano instrumentals. And then it went all the way to choral pieces or even sometimes... yes, in film music the parts are a bit bigger. It started very, very small. From the smallest to bigger instrumentations.

Klara: Do you arrange yourself? At the upcoming concerts... adding your own touch.

Hanjo: Absolutely! Totally! You know, the transitions are fluent. For example, we know each other from a blues line-up and that's where you start to arrange in a smaller scale. So what's it like when I'm playing the piano in the lower register - does the guitar come out more when it's playing at the top? And not in a frequency range where the bass or the piano is too high. This is actually an arranging element in the interplay and the transitions are fluid for rearranging or composing. So how do you reinterpret, for example, *sings four notes of melody*? *sings four notes backwards* ... just by turning it around, and you haven't copied anything, you've just come up with something new. No AI can do that either! Thank God, only we can! That's where it starts.

4. Would you say that you can express your two instruments equally towards one another while making music?

Das muss ich ganz ehrlich sagen, ich weiß es nicht. Es ist halt unique! Mal als Beispiel, in zwei Wochen gibt es den großen Gospel Kirchen Tag in Essen. Da kommen 5000 Sänger. Das ist eine große Veranstaltung und ich bin da einer der MDs der Band und da ist es tatsächlich so, dass alle Protagonisten, die dort auftauchen, vor den Leuten stehen werden. Also es sind stehend Solisten. Ich bin der einzige der sitzen wird, am Instrument. Das hat Vorteile, aber natürlich auch viele Nachteile, weil ich mir ne andere Präsenz erzeugen muss, sitzend, als jemand sie stehend hat, der vielleicht sogar choreografisch wirken kann. Es gibt natürlich auch Protagonisten, die stehen vor einer versammelten Mannschaft und sind völlig lost. Die halten sich an ihrem iPad fest und lesen Texte ab, also von denen rede ich nicht. Ich rede wirklich von den Leuten, die mit Publikum umgehen können, die sich auch eine Präsenz erarbeiten auf einer Bühne. Und das muss man halt doppelt und dreifach machen, wenn man von einem Instrument aus das macht. Also da muss man schon tänzeln können. Im sitzen. Violinisten haben es einfacher! So ein Star Geiger wie Garrett oder so, der kann einfach mal so... als Pianist oder als hammond Organist hast du diesen Vorzug nicht, von daher würde ich sagen, da ein klarer Nachteil. Aber es gibt andere Möglichkeiten dann die Performance aufzuwerten, und sei es ein gutes spiel weil du nicht nur fürs singen bewertet wirst sondern auch fürs spielen.

(english translation)

To be honest, I don't know. It's just unique! For example, in two weeks there is the big Gospel Church Day in Essen. There will be 5000 singers there. It's a big event and I'm one of the MDs of the band there and it's actually the case that all the protagonists who appear there will be standing in front of the people. So they are standing soloists. I'm the only one who will be sitting at the instrument. This has advantages, but of course also many disadvantages, because I have to create a different presence, sitting, than someone who is standing, which might even have a choreographic effect. Of course, there are also protagonists who stand in front of an assembled crew and are completely lost. They're clutching their iPads and reading texts, so I'm not talking about them. I'm really talking about people who can deal with an audience, who can develop a presence on stage. And you have to do that double and triple if you're doing it from an instrument.

So you have to be able to dance. Sitting down. Violinists have it easier! A star violinist like Garrett or something, he can just do it... as a pianist or a Hammond organist you don't have that advantage, so I would say it's a definite disadvantage. But there are other ways to improve your performance, even if it's by playing well, because you're not only judged on your singing, you're judged on your playing.

5. What is the main satisfaction that comes from adding singing to your piano playing?

Das kann ich dir ganz leicht beantworten! Es gibt manchmal, also sehr oft sogar, Titel die kann ich gar nicht aus der Hand geben. Also, die muss ich einfach selber machen weil ich genau weiß was für eine attitude ich da drauf haben will. Dann fällt es mir sehr schwer das Kind aus der Hand zu geben. Also es ist manchmal so es fällt mir irrsinnig schwer, Lieder zum Beispiel, manchmal in Hände zu geben wo ich weiß, sie werden da nicht vernünftig versorgt. Dann sing ich sie lieber selber. Aber das geht mir nur bei Kompositionen so, die ich selber gemacht hab. Und nicht bei Auftritten, Arbeiten oder so, da ist mir das egal. Da muss ich auch blutleer sein, da bin ich ja Dienstleister. Aber wenn's um Leidenschaft geht.. dann mache ich das doch tatsächlich, sehr gerne selber. Es sei denn ich weiß mein Gegenüber macht das richtig geil irgendwie, dann bin ich natürlich völlig einverstanden.

(english translation)

I can answer that very easily! Sometimes, very often, there are songs that I can't let go of. I just have to do it myself, because I know exactly how I want to approach it. Then I find it very difficult to let the child out of my hands. So sometimes it's very difficult for me to give songs, for example, into hands where I know they won't be looked after properly. Then I prefer to sing them myself. But I only do that with compositions that I've written myself. And not with performances, work or anything like that, I don't care. I have to be anaemic there too, because I'm a service provider. But when it comes to passion... then I really, really like to do it myself. Unless I know that the person I'm working with is doing a great job, then of course I'm totally fine with it.

6. Are you always accompanying yourself?

Sieht sich eher als Pianist, ist aber auch rein gesanglich unterwegs.

(english translation)

He sees himself more as a pianist, but is also a pure vocalist.

7. What instrument informs the other and how do you deal with the two instruments at the same time?

Ja, ich bin grad echt am Überlegen. Ja, ich glaube ich reagiere gesanglich eher auf das was ich spiele. Das stimmt, hast du recht! Hab ich noch nie drüber nachgedacht, danke!

(english translation)

Yes, I'm really thinking about it at the moment. Yes, I think I react more vocally to what I play. That's right, you're right! I never thought about it before, thanks!

8. What are your heroes/inspiration in addition to piano+vocals in music history?

Was ich für heroes habe? Ich würde einfach wirklich das Standardbesteck: Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder, aber auch Gary Moore, ich meine er war E-Gitarrist, aber den will ich auch mal dazu nehmen, weil er einfach einen unfassbaren Ton auf beiden Instrumenten hatte, sowohl auf Stimme als auch auf Gitarre. Den bewundere ich auch sehr, gerade wie er mit Melodien umging halt. Hybrid zwischen den Dreien, würde ich sagen.

(english translation)

What kind of heroes do I have? I would just really go for the standard stuff: Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder, but also Gary Moore, I mean he was an electric guitarist, but I want to include him too because he just had an incredible tone on both instruments, both voice and guitar. I also admire him a lot, especially the way he handled melodies. A mixture of the three, I would say.

9.4 Appendix - Transcription written Interview

Romy Camerun, GER

1. What is it that you like most about adding your voice to your piano playing and what musical opportunities came up?

Hmm, also du hast ja viel mehr Kontrolle über alles dynamische, alles tempo mäßige, du hast ja viel mehr Kontrolle wie transparent willst du ne Stelle haben, wie dicht willst du ne Stelle haben, da ist ja Klavier sozusagen die Schraubstelle überhaupt an der ganzen Musik. Und ja das ist natürlich total, ja was du ausdrücken willst, was Textausdruck angeht, das kannst du natürlich perfekt unterstützen, da müsstest du ja mit jemand anderes sehr lange drüber sprechen. Und manche Sachen lassen sich ja gar nicht besprechen, weil das ja sowas intuitives ist, selbst wenn du sagst ich möchte da so mezzo forte und das soll sich so steigern, dann steigert der ja anders als du das machen würdest. Und das ist das was der mega Vorteil ist, dass du jede Expression einfach super supporten kannst durch dein eigenes Spiel.

Klara: vor allem auch im Bandcontext?

Romy: Sicher, gerade da!

(english translation)

Hmm, so you have a lot more control over everything dynamic, everything tempo-moderate, you have a lot more control over how transparent you want a passage to be, how tight you want a passage to be, that's where the piano is sort of the screwdriver of the whole music. And yes, of course that's totally, yes, what you want to express in terms of lyrical expression, you'd have to talk about it with someone else for a very long time. And some things can't be discussed at all, because it's such an intuitive thing, even if you say I want mezzo forte and it should rise like this, then he will rise differently than you would. And that's the big advantage, that you can support every expression with your own playing.

Klara: Especially in a band context?

Romy: Sure, especially there!

2. Do you think that adding your singing to your practice as a pianist had an impact on your career and if so, why and how?

Naja, ich komme ja ein bisschen vom Klavier, also ich hab ja eigentlich erst klassisch Klavier gespielt, dann habe ich angefangen zu singen und das waren zwei ganz getrennte Bereiche. Ich würde aber sagen, dass in dem Moment, also meine Regisseurin hat gerade gesagt: Ja, aber wenn du am Klavier bist, das bist dann du. Dann bist du als Person da, im Raum. Und deswegen muss auf der Probebühne ein Klavier stehen. Also da hab ich schon gedacht, aha, das ist inzwischen so verlinkt, das Klavier mit dem Gesang, das Klavier mit dem teachen, das Klavier mit dem Chor leiten, das Klavier mit dem was vorsingen. Das ist inzwischen so ineinander gewachsen, das kriege ich gar nicht mehr getrennt, und ich wunder mich eher wie lange ich das so getrennt gelassen hab.

Klara: Vor allem, dass du vom Ausdruck her viel mehr transportieren kannst, wenn du beides machst?

Romy: Absolut!

Und es ist ja so, dass in diesen ganzen Bandcontexten, wo ich das immer so in mir so abgespeichert hab, ich hab ja im Unterricht immer gespielt, oder wenn ich mich selber begleitet habe, hab ich ja immer gespielt. Aber dass ich dann jetzt erst drauf komme, dass das auch für die Band eine gute Lösung, das hat ja gedauert. Und wenn du immer mit som Meistertypen da am Klavier... dann traut man sich ja nicht sich dahin zu setzen und das ist ja das, der spielt dann einfach besser und dann denkst du besser spielen ist einfach auch besser für die Musik - nicht unbedingt!

(english translation)

Well, I come from a little bit of a piano background, so I actually played classical piano first, then I started singing, and those were two completely different areas. But I would say at that moment my director just said: Yes, but when you're at the piano, that's you. Then you are there as a person, in the room. And that's why there has to be a piano on the rehearsal stage. So I was thinking, aha, that's the piano with the singing, the piano with the teaching, the piano with the

conducting of the choir, the piano with the singing. It's become so intertwined that I can't separate them anymore, and I'm quite surprised how long I've kept them separate.

Klara: Especially that you can convey much more in terms of expression when you do both?

Romy: Absolutely! And the thing is that in all these band contexts where I've always stored it like that, I've always played in lessons or when I accompanied myself, I've always played. But it's only now that I've realised that it's also a good solution for the band, that took time. And if you're always sitting at the piano with some master types... then you don't dare to sit there and that's the thing, he just plays better and then you think that playing better is also better for the music - not necessarily!

3. Can you explain a little bit about your creative concept/process of writing and arranging your music? How do you start and what is your inspiration?

Also so viel schreiben für den jazz context tue ich ja gar nicht. Wenn ich jetzt zum Beispiel was schreibe, dann mache ich mir den Text hin und versuche über Inspiration, was fällt mir musikalisch ein, was könnte musikalisch passen, dann komponiere ich ja sozusagen den Text aus, der schon da ist. Wenn ich selber Stücke geschrieben habe, was ja nicht so viele sind, dann war das total unterschiedlich, manchmal hatte ich eine ganz klare Textidee und hab das ganze Stück um diese Idee rumgestrickt. Es war aber auch schon umgekehrt, dass ich zum Beispiel bei 'Dreaming Ed', da hatte ich erst dieses Riff, dieses Blues Riff, was ich so erweitert habe, und hab dann sozusagen, da war die Musik fertig, da hab ich den Text einfach drauf gesetzt. Es ist total unterschiedlich was zu erst kommt. Und es ist eher so, wenn ich so arrangiere, dass ich dann eben spiele, spiele, und dann irgendwie versuche mal über so reharms oder was ist eigentlich mir wichtig an dem Text, was will ich eigentlich rausstellen, ist es besser die Harmonien die da sind zu vereinfachen oder ist es besser die reicher zu machen? Also das ist ja auch noch so eine Sache. Es ist ja schon alles um jede Ecke reharmonisiert, selbst in den real books, dass du ja immer den anderen Schritt denken musst, wie vereinfachen wir das eigentlich wieder? Wie kommt man eigentlich wieder weiter zurück an die Wurzel, wie ist es eigentlich wieder groovier oder wie ist es eigentlich wieder jazz mäßiger oder bluesiger oder klarer, ohne dieses heck meck an reharms und jetzt noch dings über dings und das aber dann ommit 3 und so... da steht ja manchmal so viel schon da, das macht mir auch manchmal den ganzen kreativen Prozess schon zunichte, weil es ist dann wie Klassik spielen, weil du bist so beschäftigt dem hinterherzukommen, dass du gar nicht mehr dazu kommst, aha wo ist da eigentlich n Fluss, wo will das Stück eigentlich hin?

(english translation)

I don't write so much for the jazz context. When I write something, for example, I write the lyrics and try to find inspiration, what comes to my mind musically, what might fit musically, then I sort of compose the lyrics that are already there. When I've written songs myself, which is not that many, it's been completely different. Sometimes I had a very clear idea of what the lyrics should be, and I built the whole piece around that idea. But it's also been the other way around, like with 'Dreaming Ed', I had this riff first, this blues riff, which I expanded on, and then I sort of, when the music was done, I just put the lyrics on top of it. It's totally different what comes first. And it's more like when I'm arranging, then I'm playing and then I'm trying to think about reharms or what's actually important to me in the lyrics, what do I actually want to emphasise, is it better to simplify the harmonies that are there or is it better to make them richer? So that's another thing. Everything is reharmonised at every turn, even in the real books, so you always have to think about the other step, how do we actually simplify it again? How do we actually get back to the root, how do we actually make it groovier again, or how do we actually make it more jazz-like or blues-like or clearer again, without this damn meck of reharmonisations and now this about this and that, but then ommit 3 and so on... there's sometimes so much that it ruins the whole creative process for me, because it's like playing classical music, because you're so busy trying to keep up with it that you don't even aha, where's the flow, where's the piece actually going?

4. Would you say that you can express your two instruments equally towards one another while making music?

Hmm, das ist ja auch ne schwere Frage. Sagen wir mal so, wenn ich nicht sänge, wäre die Klavier Performance suboptimal, dann wäre das Klavier nicht so ausdrucksstark wie mein Gesang ist. Aber wenn ich beides gleichzeitig mache, dann würde ich sagen kippt das nicht so auseinander, dann ist es mehr eins. Aber ein Klavier Trio mit nem Pflaster aufm Mund würde ich mir nicht zutrauen. Nicht Abendfüllend einfach!

(english translation)

Hmm, that's a difficult question. Let's put it this way, if I didn't sing, then the piano performance would be suboptimal, then the piano wouldn't be as expressive as my singing. But if I do both at the same time, then I would say it doesn't fall apart so much, it's more one. But I wouldn't trust myself to play a piano trio with a plaster on my mouth. I wouldn't dare. Not an easy evening!

5. What is the main satisfaction that comes from adding singing to your piano playing?

Naja, das Klavier kann ja alles abbilden. Das kann einfach alles abbilden. Das hat was von Orchester, du könntest jetzt auch arrangieren von dem Moment an. Du könntest sagen, ok ich kann hier nen drei- oder vier- oder fünfstimmigen Chor noch machen, ich kann hier n Bläsersatz machen, du bist sozusagen im Maschinenraum. Du hast alles zur Verfügung, und du kannst alles sehen. Und ich finde am Klavier kann man sich sehr gut vorstellen wie größere Besetzungen klingen. Bei Gitarre, wahrscheinlich weil ich sone Lagerfeuer Gitarristin bin, kann ich mir das überhaupt nicht vorstellen. Aber ich finde das Klavier ist sehr klar, und es ist ja nicht umsonst, dass die meisten, allermeisten Menschen am Klavier komponieren. Du hast eigentlich die komplette Musik mit dem Sound, auch mit dem tiefen Sound, mit dem mittleren, mit den hohen Tönen, du kannst den kompletten Eindruck, den die Musik auch machen wird hinterher, den hast du schon in klein.

(english translation)

Well, the piano can represent anything. It can just reproduce everything. It has something of an orchestra, you could arrange it from there. You could say, ok, I can do a three- or four- or five-part choir here, I can do a brass section here, you're in the engine room, so to speak. You have everything at your disposal and you can see everything. And I think the piano gives you a very good idea of how larger ensembles sound. With the guitar, probably because I'm such a campfire guitarist, I can't imagine that at all. But I think the piano is very clear, and it's not for nothing that most, the vast majority of people compose on the piano. You actually have the complete music with the sound, even with the low sound, with the middle, with the high notes, you can have the complete impression that the music will make afterwards, which you already have in small.

6. Are you always accompanying yourself?

Ja, das wird stärker, ich hab letztes Mal beim Soundcheck, die haben noch Soundcheck gemacht, und ich hab so in den Raum von draußen reingeguckt, und hab gedacht oh stell dir mal vor du müsstest da jetzt singen, ich meine ich muss ja trotzdem singen, aber du müsstest da stehen und singen, da käme ich mir so nackig vor und so unbewaffnet. Es ist schon angenehm also dass du auch musizierst mit den Anderen, dass du auch mal von diesem Gesangsmädel da wegstommst. Also es ist ja eine andere Rolle, wenn du da vorne stehst, möglichst schön angezogen, möglichst jung, ich kann ja die Zeit auch nicht zurück drehen, also ich finde da sind immer so viele Anforderungen, die ich zum Teil auch gar nicht erfüllen möchte und da ist so viel im Spiel. Und ich finde, wenn man am Klavier sitzt hat man's einfach angenehmer, da hast du deinen Raum.

(english translation)

Yeah, it's getting stronger, last time at the soundcheck they were still doing a soundcheck and I was looking into the room from outside and I was like oh imagine if you had to sing there now, I mean I still have to sing but you'd have to stand there and sing. I would feel so naked and so unarmed. So it's nice that you make music with the others, that you get away from this singing girl. It's a different role when you're up front, dressed as nicely as possible, as young as possible. I can't turn back time either, so I think there are always so many demands, requirements, some of which I don't even want to fulfil, and there's so much involved. And I think it's just more comfortable when you're sitting at the piano, you've got your space.

7. What instrument informs the other and how do you deal with the two instruments at the same time?

Auf jeden Fall, das geht hin und her, aber das ging ja auch in einem guten Trio, wenn jetzt ein Pianist da sitzen würde, der gut zuhört, geht es ja auch hin und her, dann ist es ja auch ein Zwiegespräch, es ist natürlich in gewisser Weise son künstliches Zwiegespräch, weil du das ja alles steuerst, du steuerst ja die Antwort, das ist ja wie ein Monolog der sich als Dialog verkleidet. Trotzdem, es ist manchmal so, dass du eine Phrase singst und merkst oh cool, und gehst mit dem Klavier dann, zitierst es nochmal oder verlängerst es nochmal und so, ich würde nicht sagen dass

es da so ein klaren.. ach ja Gesang weil's Text hat ist immer Lieder im Grunde. Also wenn du n Text.. ich hab gestern Nacht ein Konzert von Betty Carter angeschaut, und da fängt die mit som Scat Stück an, da weißt du echt nicht, es ist einfach ein Feuerwerk und die sind da alle schwer am arbeiten da hinterher zu kommen, die ist so weit vorne, da hab ich auch das Gefühl, die zieht einfach ihre Ideen da in einem wahnsinnigen Feuerwerk durch, da muss der Pianist einfach sehen, dass er an Board bleibt. Das ist nicht groß zu kommentieren, das ist einfach, gib Gas!

(english translation)

In any case, it goes back and forth, but that also works in a good trio, if the pianist is sitting there and he listens well, then of course it's also a dialogue, it's an artificial dialogue in a way, because you control everything, you control everything, you control the answer, it's like a monologue disguised as a dialogue. Nevertheless, sometimes you sing a phrase and realise oh cool, and then you go to the piano and quote it again or extend it again and so on, I wouldn't say that there's a clear... oh yeah, singing because it has lyrics is basically always songs. So if you have lyrics... I was watching a Betty Carter concert last night and she starts with a scat piece, you really don't know, it's just fireworks and they're all working hard to keep up, she's so far ahead, I have the feeling she's just pulling her ideas out in a crazy firework display, the pianist just has to make sure he stays on board. There's not much to comment on, it's just step on the gas!

8. What are your heroes/inspiration in addition to piano+vocals in music history?

Shirley Horn! Und viel später habe ich erst gesehen, dass Carmen McRae ja auch fantastisch, sich fantastisch begleitet, da gibt es ja auch ganz viel zu gucken. Shirley Horn hat eigentlich so diese Oberverschmelzung von, das Klavier ist so...ihr alter Ego sozusagen..., das ist ja wie son..ja wie son alter Ego, also die Verschmelzung ist schon Interstellar!! Besser geht's nicht! Auch so was sie für Chords greift, und so weiter. Da reicht dann so ein rich, wirklich rich chord, der reicht dann auch mal für vier Schläge, da muss sie dann nicht hampel die pampel noch was machen, weil das ist einfach so rich was sie da macht, mit ganz wenig Rhythmen, die natürlich so aufn Punkt sind. Ja das ist schon die zu erreichende Qualität, out of reach natürlich!

(english translation)

Shirley Horn! And I saw much later that Carmen McRae is also fantastic, fantastic accompaniment, there's a lot to look at. Shirley Horn actually has this melting, the piano is so... her alter ego, so to speak..., it's like... yes, like an alter ego, so the fusion is already interstellar! It doesn't get any better than that! Also what chords she chooses and so on. One rich, really rich chord is enough, it's enough for four beats, she doesn't have to do anything else, because it's just so rich what she's doing, with very few rhythms, which of course are so on point. Yes, that's the quality to be achieved, out of reach of course!

9.5 Appendix - Transcription written Interview Champion Fulton, USA

1. What is it that you like most about adding your voice to your piano playing and what musical opportunities came up?

So this is kind of funny, like I think I always loved to sing, you know cause I think children like singing, you sing with your toys, you sing when you're playing, and I loved also the piano. And I started playing piano around like age three, and then I decided I wanted to play piano and sing at the same time around age eight. And so they sort of grew together. I think I love to do both things, but I would play a gig where I only play piano, but I don't think I would enjoy playing a gig where I only sing. I don't know exactly why, I mean I really do enjoy doing them both and I really love them both, but somehow I wouldn't feel comfortable if I wasn't playing.

2. Do you think that adding your singing to your practice as a pianist had an impact on your career and if so, why and how?

Yeah I think so, I mean for one thing, I started working playing gigs when I was like 12. And I think it was like, people were.. it's odd you know someone who plays and sings at the same time it's not so common. So I think that helped me to get work. And then I think also when I moved to New York it continued to help me to get work, because I could work by myself. And it was more than one person, it was like solo piano with voice but it's only one person. So in that way, I think it helped me work. And then I think artistically it also helps the presentation be sort of different.

3. Can you explain a little bit about your creative concept/process of writing and arranging your music? How do you start and what is your inspiration?

I've written songs, but actually they are always instrumental. I haven't written any songs with words.

Klara: Why?

Champion: I don't really know why, I think somehow, I find lyrics very difficult to write. And I find the instrumental side of things easier. I think that's one part of it. And I think this is kind of funny, but I think I feel like very much like two different things, like somedays I feel like a vocalist, and then some days I feel like a piano player, you know I feel like a piano player who sings or I feel like a singer who plays piano, it kind of depends on my mood and like the day to day sort of thing.

4. Would you say that you can express your two instruments equally towards one another while making music?

I think, my goal is for them to be equal in expression. I would say, recently, like in the past few years, I feel like I am much closer to achieving that goal. For many years it felt like it was easier to express what I wanted, singing. And a little bit more difficult on the piano. And then, I would say like in the last couple of years it has become more even. I mean it's been, I just realised, as we started talking, it's been 30 years. And I would say the first 10 years, both things were super hard all the time. And they would like slowly like get a little bit easier and the voice would get better quickly and the piano would be slow, I feel like. And I feel like it has always stayed that way. But I feel recently that it's becoming, just now a little bit more even.

4.1 Would you say that *your performance* is more expressive when using both piano and singing? Is it equally expressive when using only one of the two instruments?

No, I think it's not necessarily more expressive one or the other, I feel like they are both really representations of me. And if I only play piano, I think that is still like a full representation and if I only sing I feel like it's still a full representation.

5. What is the main satisfaction that comes from adding singing to your piano playing?

I think one reason I like it, is that as the piano player in an ensemble, you always have a lot of control. And I think I like that, because then I think I can really express what I want in my musical vision, I can more easily express, because I have the control and then I can make the environment what I wanted to be for the voice. And I think that's the thing for me.

Klara: Sometimes you're feeling just being added to something...

Champion: Yeah. Right, or they don't really know what you want and then it becomes a thing about communication and like that can be difficult, but I feel like, I can really kind of like take charge with the piano to make the environment what I hear in my mind for the voice.

6. Are you always accompanying yourself?

Yeah, I'm always accompanying myself.

7. What are your heroes/inspiration in addition to piano+vocals in music history?

Well, my answer is kind of I think unusual in that. I didn't have any heroes who played and sing. My favourite vocalist from the time I was like a very small child was Dinah Washington. I would say I only listened to Dinah Washington until I was about 15 years old, and then I was like okay, now I'm gonna add in Billy Holiday and Sarah Vaughan and I also like I like Joe Williams I gotta like male singers too, but vocally that was what I wanted, and then pianistically I was really into Red Garland and Wynton Kelly. And then later, also around age 15, I became more interested in some of the straight players like Fats Waller and Erroll Garner. But I never had a hero who played and sing, I would say in recent years I'd listen to a lot of Blossom Dearie, mostly because I think she picks amazing material, like her songs are so interesting and I've been really curious about that, but that's really recently I would say in the past like three or five years.

Klara: You developed your own style!

Champion: Yeah, kind of like, I kind of had this idea that I wanted to like merge all these things together, and a lot of people told me like it's not possible, it's too difficult to do all that at the same time, and I was like, well maybe it is, but that's what I want to do, anyways...

8. What instrument informs the other and how do you deal with the two instruments at the same time?

Well, I think, it's more equal. I want it to be equal. I don't know if it's exactly equal, but it's more equal. I feel like in the beginning, like if you have 100% of your brain, I thought that I wanted to give like 80% to my voice and the other 20% to the piano, so the piano was sort of following the voice all the time. And then over time I would like push it back, so like 70% or 60% over many years until it was like 50/50. And then maybe 60% piano and only 40% singing, and I felt like that went on for very many years, and then like I said very recently, it sort of feels like all of a sudden, like now I have two things, so I have like a 100% of the voice and 100% of the piano. And they can both inform each other and they can both kind of have their own ideas. So sometimes like the voice will go somewhere and, I'm myself, but the voice will go somewhere and my piano will be like, oh, what's that?.. and surprise me, or the piano, I'll play something on the piano and I'll be really into it and the singer would be like, what is going on?... You know, so I feel like that's more recent.