

Title	<i>1:1 / =</i>
Conversationalist	Jesper Norda
Conversation number	IX
Date	8th of October 2023
Place	Long the waterfront of Copenhagen Harbor.
Time of recording	1 hour and 4 minutes.
Context	The conversation happened the day after a 12 hours and 25 minutes long performance by Jesper Norda of his piece: <i>The Goldberg Variation (Bach Clock)</i> . The Conversation took place near the site of the performance (Bådehuset) at Refshaleøen.
Note for conversation	The day before had been long, cold, exhausting and beautiful. Now we were sitting in the sun, at a windy waterfront. Conversating and listening to the waves up against a boat. The aftermath of either listening to, or performing <i>The Goldberg Variation (Bach Clock)</i> influenced this conversation in ways difficult to grasp.

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- (Lukas Lund): [] when talking about listening, when thinking about listening, is there a specific place where that starts for you? Is there something that you often return to as a situation or a starting point for listening? []

(Jesper Norda): [

] Why is listening important to me? Why have I worked for 20 years in a listening practice? And could I be satisfied with the answer that I've always done that? [

] So, all of a sudden, I woke up one day with heavy tinnitus on my left ear. [

]

- []

[] What should I do now? [

] Maybe it is that it's compensating. I don't know. I can't explain it really. Or you are very talented in listening from the start. [

]

- What do you think it means to then experience the world and the sounding of the world [

] Or as a little child?

[

] Kind of trying to sort out the layers. Kind of picking out the details, putting them next to each other. Not organizing, but putting a flashlight on every little thing, so to speak. [] And that is also a bit disturbing, because it takes... Sometimes it takes over a little bit. And I think it's very important for me to be balanced and not stressed and not being depressed. [

]

- [

]

No, the other way. That it goes on forever and it goes deeper and deeper. [

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So hearing is noticing and defining. Or? That was the question you were writing down?

Listening is living through it. For good or for worse. Is it like that?

- I don't know. But I like the idea of living through it. That layer of perhaps complexity. Like what does it mean to live? [

]

[] It was so nice the moment when I first got this hearing aid in my ear. And I think this is something to do with the difference between listening and hearing. [

] And all of a sudden I realized, okay, so we have a room tone here. There is a reverberation in this room. I didn't know about that. I kind of forgot about that because I only had like one ear. [] some kind of mixed moment between hearing and listening. Because when listening, this room quality and the overall quality that flows over you [

] I don't know if I'm that very philosophical or elaborate in that sense when it comes to listening. I think it's... I don't know really. I don't know where I was going with that.

- []

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- []

] Because what you created as the setting
could have just been hearing, but it allowed for the listening. [

]

[

] and I explained to him the end of the
piece, where I kind of surrendered a bit to the situation. [

] So I think that's when I started to
listen into the space, actually. And I really enjoyed how the piano kind of layered over and
melted into or kind of overcome the recording sometimes. [

]

- But I think, for me, all those words you just used, [
] like the idea of surrendering, allowing, enjoying,
but also overcoming, relaxing, all of that is for me part of the listening experience in
this general sense. [

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[

] That it kind of filled out the... It was like laying some kind of new paint over old paint a little bit. So the surface was a bit smoother. I really liked that.

- [

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[

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- [

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Yeah, that sounds perfect.

- []

[

] So in that sense, listening is a natural state for my output, in a way. I don't really have the talent for... Oh, never mind, that's another question.

- []

[] they have this feeling for the captured moment that means something. And I can see it, but I can never cope with it myself, get there myself. []

- []

] And I think the opposite, the idea of creating the possibility of different entry points is for me more interesting. []

] And I like that possibility of not knowing where it is, but knowing that it's there within it, and people can find it differently or at different moments, rather than pinpointing it.

And I think that is super interesting, because we haven't really touched upon the aspect of time, because the aspect of time is, I think, very important to me. []

] But I think, and maybe this is also a difference between hearing and listening, because I'm really curious of how to make my time and people's, every other person in this

world's time, valuable. I think that is something that we, to me it is an act of care, in a way.

[

] I think there is something

special to providing a space and time for someone, or finding that yourself, and being present

in that. [

]

- [

] because if

listening is to do something with living, and working with time has something to do

with making it valuable, I want living to be a question about making things valuable.

[

]

You know I never became a musician?

- []

] I really enjoyed the moment of reading the notes,

putting my fingers where to put them, and then make a sound, and then put my fingers on

another place, make a new sound, and after a while I would make that more smoothly, and in

that sense get the grip of time a little bit. [

] So I was sitting outside in the hallway, and then I had my guitar

to sound all through the...

- []

[] I was like sitting in a church or something, so it was a super reverberation. So I was sitting there, and I also liked the fact that maybe someone heard it, because it became such a nice way of having an audience, but not having an audience. [

] But when it came to doing it with perfection or playing it for an audience in a concert situation, it felt totally meaningless.

- []

[]

- []

[]

- []

[

] Do you understand?

- [

]

That's super, very well put actually, because that resonates with me. [

] I really
didn't like the fact that you are sitting there, they are sitting there, now you listen all the way
through, blah, blah, blah. [

] I
want something else to be created.

- [

] And I
think in the terms of perhaps searching for the living part, where you live through
something, I don't see how that is suitable for that situation. Because life is about so
much more, about pain, and suffering, and joy, and you exploring, connecting,
discovering, you being unsure, you, I don't know, much more things. And that concert
situation is often very sure, it's very recognizable, it's very put into social codes of
what to do, very low risk. And life is quite often, at least for me, with high risk. [

] what risk is there for you when you
listen? [

] Maybe you have
normalized a certain risk, or maybe you have made your own listening secure, in
order to actually stay in it. That was my own little wonder. [

]

[] I've been more and more interested in the concept of waiting when it comes to listening. And that maybe has become some kind of definition for me a little bit, that I didn't understand that I was doing. So the concept of waiting for something, and still being present in that waiting, this is a kind of double thing really. It's more about not just waiting until it happens, []

- []

Yeah, perceptive, and be open when it happens. []

- []

] What drifts in and out of you? []

]]

[]

] That was, now I heard what it was. This is not an answer to your question really. Maybe I walk around it a little bit. I don't know really how to answer that, how I define the waiting.

- []

] Often I use the same to understand wondering, that in some way you experience something very strange, something that you cannot really put into words, but at the same time it's also remarkable familiar in some way. Like there's two movements traversing through you.

[]

]]

[

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- [

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[

] Where the waiting can result in

something else. If you understand what I mean.

- Yeah, it's like perhaps withdrawing from a pre-described purpose. [

] But also like

the waiting position can be the purpose of itself.

And maybe it opens up, something opens up.

- [

] Having

that kind of purpose is for me also the kind of purpose that we can use to activate listening. Because if you do have a too specific goal that you are listening for, that is more becomes a kind of hearing. Because your mind and your filter is like now in this mode of just sensing and registering something specific. Because you have now put that specific purpose into the program. Whereas the listening is a different kind of program, where you don't know really what you find. [

]

[

] I made exercises sometimes about extreme hearing. [

]

- [

]

[] ok, read your list. What did you hear? Oh, footsteps. And then a lot of other stuff. Ok, let's do it again. And the next time it is, I hear shoes with gravel under it. And the next time it is, I heard footsteps, shoes with gravel under it. And this little plastic thing on the end of the shoelace, like tapping in on the shoe. [

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- [

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[

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- [

[] as an artist-composer, are you using listening as some kind of practice or methodology? Can it become that? And in what way can it become perhaps a critical way of doing and being? []

I don't know actually. To me most often, I am very much interested in the relationship between your presence and your body. [

[] to do with the fact that you are living with the body taking space in the space. And when listening, by listening, you can become aware of this. And this of course has different meanings in different contexts.

[

]

- [

] becoming aware through listening is a very complex awareness. [

] living in a space in a space, what is even that? It is hard and I think all scientific disciplines will give you very good and different answers. [

]

It's actually a kind of one-to-one experience because it can't be anything else than what it is.

- And that one-to-one is not something you get through science. [

] I think perhaps if listening becomes a methodology, it is the methodology of being in a relationship one-to-one, maybe?

[]

- [] what is then the relationship of being in one-to-one?

[]

- But that is not something perhaps we can put into words really.

Or we can say that it is a really important alternative to all the other ways of explaining things.

- []

Maybe it's a radical alternative actually because it can't really be put into words or systems or
[]

- [] with a mathematical description of one-to-one. 1:1.

[]

- [] to put something into words that doesn't work
in words.

[] And it's the most simple mathematical formula there
is.

- []

It's like two horizons. The sign, two horizons. I'm doing this here. (=) Two horizons. One for
you, one for me. []

- []

[] That we're always positioned in a very conditional truth. We have
different horizons. But the goal of being in a dialogue, []

]

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- []

[

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- [

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[

] but your eardrums are not so used to not moving. Your eardrums are still for a moment. And they have never experienced that before. That can be a little bit painful.

- []

[]

- []

[

]

- [] What are the constants in our lives? Like we are accustomed to the eardrum moving all the time. In the same way we are accustomed to gravity. Something our body is just taking for granted. Same goes for the pulse of the heart. But what happens when we then experience the lack of it? And in what way does the whole body deal with making up some kind of understanding of it, dealing with it? Some kind of acceptance of it?

[] And that is kind of a ridiculous title 'Gravity Events'. Because everything is a gravity event in some sense. [

]

- It would be a description of everything.

[]

- []

[

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] How do we facilitate a listening experience [] How do we make that extra effort into questioning the relationships maybe by focusing on these constant conditional matter like gravity or the eardrums like the things we are so accustomed to that we don't even really think about them and don't think about how they shape us. []

] not a different reality but it's just a multy layered reality. []

] now I'm just wondering how do you think a child is listening [] how is the listening of a child different from the listening of adults? []

I think for good and for worse a child has less experience of stuff and can hear, listen, can experience more stuff when listening because of that in a way. []

- []

[] this is impossible to translate to English []

- []

Yeah We have the neighbors on the other side of the wall. We can hear 'grannarna' moving.

- []

[

]

- []

[

]

For children maybe it is a problem but when trying to depict that it is something kind of beautiful, that there is more to the world in a way [

] you hear more nuances and you

hear more subtleties than when your when gravity kicks in in your ear system over time.

- [

] I just think it is

beautiful that whatever stage of life whatever filter experience or magnitude of gravity you have been through that allows you to listen somehow differently and specific. [

] How much is that worth? [

]

[] Maybe, what it is,
is a little bit more like to have the ear of an animal []

- []

[]
] they hear more. I don't think, I don't know, if they engage in listening so much but they have
this... they probably have this non-filtered highly functional ears and in a way maybe that's
kind of similar to being a child in a way. []
]

- []
] our sensual way of being in the world is also
filtered with a very complex language. []

] I can then wonder, how does my complex language disable me,
what does it steal away from me []

]]

[]
] I felt a bit out of open water.

- []

[]
]

- []

[]

- [

] You need to be two
and you need to find the right rhythm []
] and there's so many things that I don't know about
the situation []

[

] I would like to see myself as that, but maybe I
talk too much.

- [

] there's this beautiful power dynamic between the
listener and the speaker [

] that the speaker is rather powerless unless you have
the listener offering [

] for me it starts
with the listener [

]

[

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No. I'm good.

- []