

"Greatness in music is often defined as an ability of a work of music to transcend origins and historical contexts. Tonight's concert suggests several alternatives. The music heard tonight is music that deserves more than the occasional performance. It does so not because it transcends its context, but precisely because it inspires future generations to make contact with history in a way that only music can accomplish"

Conductor Leon Botstein writing on Hanns Eisler.

### Proposed Academic Paper:

Proposing a dynamic fluidity between the built environment and the inhabitants of the city, this paper is an investigation into the relationship between live performance and architecture. Drawing on Henri Lefebvres *The production of space*, this paper speculates upon the proposition that 'space and the political organization of space, express social relationships but also react back upon them'<sup>1</sup>. Reaffirming this claim, this paper contests conventional interpretations of architecture as immovable and passive, instead asserting the built environment as dynamic and active. Exploring such notions in the realm of temporal art practice, this paper pulls focus on a selection of performance based works situated in the public realm. Adopting music as the transient medium to explore intersections between art, architecture and history, this paper provides a reflection upon a series of unconventional investigative spatial performances situated within redundant and historically significant sites.

In addressing this selection of experimental projects, this paper provides a critique of a specific group of spatial practitioners whose work is often considered to be situated between disciplines. Whilst each of the projects discussed are diverse in their locations and contexts, they share common ground in a type of performative practice that seeks to produce new relationships between performers, the public and the built environment. Highlighting the idea of event and lived space-time compositions, projects discussed include the *Princess Theatre Inversion* (2014) in which a traditional theatre in Melbourne was turned inside out through a spatial inversion, *Duration* (2012) in which a redundant ballroom was reactivated through a performance after laying dormant for 30 years and a proposed site responsive performance to take place at Grosvenor Place as part of Expanded Architecture 2014.

Each of the projects addressed involves an engagement with the complexity of the urban environment with which to reposition public perception via the re-appropriation of space. Central to each project is an architectural relic in which creative intervention is able to temporally transform the relationship between architectural and social space, to produce moments of social, cultural and political significance.

Offering an explanation of such spatial acrobatics, Jane Rendell writes; 'social relations of production are both space forming and space contingent. It is not simply that space is produced, but that social relations are spatially produced'<sup>2</sup>. This dialectic interactivity between social and architectural spatial formation infer a dynamic connectivity between people and the urban realm in which the performative qualities of the built environment are apprehended and manipulated through performative practice as a means to shape the contemporary and future city.

---

<sup>1</sup> Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. Oxford, OX, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA:

<sup>2</sup> Rendell, Jane. *Art and Architecture: a Place Between*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2006.

