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INTRODUCTION



Introduction: Gertrude Stein's theatre and the *Radio Free Stein* project

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Radio Free Stein is a large-scale collaborative sound project that offers radio and music theatre interpretations of Gertrude Stein's early, lesser-known plays. The project, which I have been running for some time and is now (finally) wrapping up, has led to a series of original recordings of commissioned musical settings (available at radiofreestein.com), a handful of performances (in Vancouver, New York City, and Paris), and several chapters, article publications, and a book manuscript. Along with the goal of creating persuasive audio interpretations of Stein's plays, the project has been motivated by a set of critical questions: What might readers be able to think and say about Stein's plays after undergoing the process of staging them in the medium of sound? How might the particular constraints and conventions of sonic recording and performance lead to new affordances for understanding them and for criticism more generally? These questions have guided the project from its inception.¹

This special half-issue represents further engagement with Stein's plays, performances, and theatre poetics by some of the scholars, poets, critics, and composers who have been involved in the project as workshop participants, creative collaborators, or audience members at performances and conference presentations. Each contributor has responded to my invitation to take up questions posed by Stein's theatre in whatever ways they see fit. Two of the essays, those that bookend the half-issue, engage directly with *Radio Free Stein* and Stein's plays as phenomenological grounds for collaboration with a focus on affect (You) and temporality (Vriezen). The other four essays frame Stein's plays, opera, and theatre vis-à-vis distinct historical considerations in the United States and Europe: radio interview and jazz-cabaret vocal performance in the 1930s (Frank, Moon), Vichy France in the 1940s (Watten), and post-war American experimental music in the

1950s (Weideman). This grouping, while convenient, is not meant to oppose historicist to phenomenological approaches. Stein's writing, by insistently twining together historicity and contemporaneity, renders any such opposition invidious. Inflected by a pragmatist and radical empiricist tradition in American writing, Stein's particular modernism requires us to reflect on reading as temporal, compositional, multisensory, bodily experience.

This orientation to the compositional and the bodily may begin to account for one of the threads that winds its way through these various essays: the emphasis on the role of affect, and enjoyment in particular, in our reading and listening habits. Mia You's contribution takes this up most explicitly 'to offer a positive *defense of enjoyment*' (p. 4) in the current hyper-professionalized academic environment. Beginning with a famous excerpt from Stein's 1934 radio interview, You argues for an expanded, complex understanding of the place of enjoyment in our critical practices, one that includes frustration, irritation, and other negative feelings (which inevitably accompany reading Stein's works) but that returns to enjoyment as ground or container for experience. You listens to two *Radio Free Stein* interpretations of Stein's play *An Exercise in Analysis*, discusses the particular challenges of Dan Warner's musical setting, and brings into the foreground the pedagogical motivations of the project by way of a transcript that includes a great variety of listeners' reactions. It is gratifying to me (also, somewhat embarrassing) to see *Radio Free Stein* thought about so carefully and re-fashioned for other purposes by a listener and writer who clearly understands the project's utopian dimensions.

My contribution to this special half-issue offers context for Stein's 1934 interview on NBC radio and investigates its surrounding historical archive. The essay seeks to unfold a powerful phantasy about *radio audience* as it connects Stein to a new mass audience (given the bestselling success of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933) and her 1934–35 U.S. lecture tour) and, at the same time, frees her from it. For Stein, the experience of radio broadcasting excites her as almost nothing else does in that it permits her to focus on 'talking and listening at the same time', her definition of genius.² Radio audience becomes the state of listening itself that takes place in the protected space of the studio, while broadcasting, in this phantasy, becomes analogous to writing. My essay turns to Theodor Adorno's contemporaneous work on 'radio physiognomics' to analyse this radio phantasy by way of a Kleinian-Ferenczian approach to introjection, the interiorisation of the microphone and the studio both in production and reception. I track Adorno's (Benjaminian) attempt to separate radio from its social ideals and the uses to which it has been put in both authoritarian Europe and commercial America. The essay foregrounds the ironies of the project's title *Radio Free Stein* in relation to recent work on modernism, media, and propaganda.

In Barrett Watten's essay the multiple temporalities of Stein's writing emerge with force and clarity. Through comparative readings of her memoir *Wars I*

Have Seen (1946) and the play *Yes Is for a Very Young Man* (1946) Watten tracks the ‘folding together [of] Collaboration and Resistance to produce a narrative of Liberation’ (p. 2), a narrative, he observes, that would help to promote her celebrity after the war. Stein famously survived the war under the protection of Bernard Faÿ and offered ambivalent support for Petain’s Vichy government, but Watten helpfully orients our attention away from moralising discourse that evaluates Stein’s politics and toward her writerly development of a ‘historical present’ that navigates intensely charged wartime experience:

Stein’s “historical present” is made through the continuous reframing of events in the act of writing; it is at once prospective, seeking eventual resolution; retrospective, coming to terms with the past; and presentist, revaluating the past in the process of being in time. (10)

This coordination of historicism and presentism is central to the thematics of ‘zero hour’ that Watten seeks to unfold here (and elsewhere). Observing her interest in the young men conscripted into German and French labour battalions (*Service du travail obligatoire*) that led to the political empowerment of resistance movements in France, Watten reads Stein’s wartime melodrama as a way of affirming Liberation even while preserving ambivalence.

The final three essays offer distinct ways of thinking about the relevance of music for Stein’s writing and theatre poetics, as well as how Stein’s theatre poetics may be relevant for musical composition. Michael Moon’s essay explores the Stein-Virgil Thomson opera *Four Saints in Three Acts*, in particular Thomson’s decision to work with an all-Black cast for the 1934–35 theatrical production. Moon brings Silvan Tomkins’s affect and script theories to a discussion of vocal performance, first in relation to Stein’s appreciation of a Tin Pan Alley song ‘The Trail of the Lonesome Pine’, then to Thomson’s admiration for Jimmie Daniel’s jazz-cabaret rendition of ‘I Got the World on a String’. Moon suggests that Thomson heard in Daniel’s performance the opening up of a new subjective space, a worldly, socially and sexually empowered, queer Black voice that helped to script the sentimental modernism that Thomson was seeking in his own musical setting. Moon associates the heightened, positive affective experience of being ‘in love’, so often the subject of popular vocal performance, with the eliciting of communion in Italian Renaissance *sacra conversazione* paintings and proposes that Stein’s saints are ‘exemplary beings who are capable of enacting scripts in which they have increased or enlarged capacities for unlinking and reconnecting various emotionally charged scenes in ways that they and others may find more exciting and enjoyable’ (p. 9). As You does in her essay, and with similar theoretical resources, Moon helps us to understand the rich compositionality of affective experience in Stein’s wring.

Thomas Weideman’s essay weaves together the threads of affect and temporality central to Stein’s landscape theatre poetics in the context of post-war American experimental music. Weideman offers an important alternative

genealogy for what has often been described as an anti-expressive avant garde, that of John Cage, Morton Feldman, and other New York School composers. 'Rather than negating time', observes Weideman, 'these composers bring it to the fore, turning it into a new kind of compositional material' (p. 12). Reading against the grain of Cage's own descriptions of his music and motives, Weideman foregrounds Stein's landscape theatre poetics as they informed Cage's early compositional techniques in order to argue that 'A history of experimental music can be sketched in which a relational turn is not an about face but one with precedents in the music of the post-war experimental composers' (p. 18). Thinking with Stein's landscape theatre poetics, then, permits Weideman (in an argument somewhat orthogonal to Douglas Kahn's interpretation of Cage) to open up the experience of listening to post-war American experimental music to those social and relational elements that have come to the fore in recent decades.

Samuel Vriezen, a composer much engaged with the Cage and post-Cage tradition, composed the musical setting for the *Radio Free Stein* production of *What Happened|Plays* presented at the Hôtel de Lauzun in Paris in June 2019. Vriezen's essay offers a brilliant deep dive into Stein's thinking about varieties of time. His essay carefully unfolds Stein's meditation in her first play *What Happened* on the difference between a 'cut' and a 'slice' and offers a composer's approach to transforming her sentences and scenes into sounds and resonances. Along the way Vriezen describes aspects of our collaboration and offers context for the choices we made in composition and production. The essay serves well as a coda to this special issue.

These brief summaries introduce the individual essay contributions with their shared interests in affect and temporality. But it seems fitting to introduce the *Radio Free Stein* project as a whole, and to do that I have chosen to include here an interview that was conducted and transcribed by Sophie Barklamb and Tim Elfring, two of the student organisers of the Gertrude Stein European Network's symposium 'Beyond the Sentence – Stein as Open Text'.³ At the time, Barklamb and Elfring were Master's students in the Literature Today programme at Utrecht University. The interview was conducted over Skype on 3rd June 2019 and has been lightly edited for clarity. Interview form, dialogic and sound-based, entirely suits the collaborative nature of this audio project, and an accessible, casual conversational style also suits one of the main project goals: to make Stein's early plays more available to readers, auditors, students and scholars.

'A number of ones knowing each other': An interview with Adam Frank by Sophie Barklamb and Tim Elfring

In the spirit of radio interviews, we wondered if we could begin by asking you to introduce yourself and Radio Free Stein (RFS) in your own words,

and then to talk to us a little bit about how you got the idea for this project.

My name is Adam Frank, I teach at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, and my research areas include American literature and media, theories of affect and emotion, and non-classical psychoanalysis. I also work in science and technology studies. Those are my quasi-disciplinary backgrounds. RFS is a project that takes a handful of early plays by Gertrude Stein, mostly ones she wrote in the 19-teens, and renders them as musical audio dramas. I've been collaborating with a number of different composers and the idea is: What can we do with Stein's words, what can we do with these plays, theatrically? There's a tradition of composers setting Stein's words to music, so I suppose RFS is part of that tradition, but one thing that's a little bit different is that I'm hoping to come up with interesting interpretive insights and critical knowledge, 'scientific results', if you want to put it that way, from doing this. The project's guiding question is: what can I say about Stein's plays after undergoing the process of staging them as musical recordings or performances?

Would you be willing to elaborate further on your aims for this project? Are you trying to uncover new meanings or interpretations of Stein's writing by transforming them into aural performances?

Yes, and this comes directly out of her theatre poetics, as she explains them in her lecture 'Plays'. There she describes what she's doing in her plays and why she's doing it, how she had written many portraits, and then thought, 'Okay, well, I want not only to know or describe or make portraits of "ones"', as she calls individuals, 'but I want to make portraits of a number of ones knowing each other'. In other words: she wants to use plays to depict groups, to depict group dynamics, the way people come into relation when they're put together. For Stein, the play form itself is an exercise in groups or group psychology. My premise, then, is that I can't really understand these plays by myself. I actually need a number of people in a room to work with the plays so that we can understand what kinds of dynamics they are trying to depict.

I wanted to ask you about the collaborative nature of this project, as you're obviously working with musicians and performers, as well as other readers of Stein. You describe the collaborative nature of RFS on its website as 'necessary, enjoyable, but also fundamentally frustrating'.⁴ Could you comment on this process and what happens internally as you're adapting these plays?

Well, most writers are used to being alone. I'm used to being alone when I work, so there's something fundamentally frustrating about working with others as most of us know. There's a mix of moving back and forth

between working with the group, trying to use the group to understand something about Stein's text, then moving back on my own to do something with what I just learned. Practically, the way this works is I assemble a workshop with a number of people who I trust to read Stein with me, and we develop ideas about the play from talking about it and being in a room thinking intensively with her words for an hour or two. Then I go away and transcribe what I've learned, I transcribe Stein's play into a script, or what I sometimes call a scenario, and for that scenario I have to make any number of decisions, including how many voices there are in the play, what counts as dialogue or stage description or setting. And I have to decide on the emotional arcs or the moods, and technical theatre elements like scene structure.

Would you consider yourself the captain of the ship in this whole process?

Someone recently called me a 'dramaturg'. I've never identified myself that way, but I'm trying to help the text to get to performance, and I suppose that's what a dramaturg does.

I'm interested in what it is about the nature of Stein's work that makes it so suitable for such adaptations. What specifically about it inspired or impelled you to want to undertake this project?

There are a few different things. The first is that what I think she's doing, creating these group depictions, means that you need theatre. Something very interesting about theatre is that you can't really do it alone. You can have monologues, of course, but fundamentally I think she wants multiple voices, and so it involves other people in a way that a poetry reading usually doesn't. Second, I wanted to include composers because she's really interested in depicting the emotional relations between and among a number of people, but she's doing that without narrative, without telling stories. That's a key element in her writing of plays. She wants to depict dynamics between people without telling you what happened, and for these purposes, music is very helpful, music can access emotional states without narrative. I want the help of composers who can treat the emotional dynamics of Stein's language.

Could you give more examples of aspects of Stein's life and work that you really want to capture and express in your adaptations?

It depends on the play. Because I'm dealing with a number of plays from the 19-teens, some aspects of her historical context keep coming into the picture. There's the context of World War I for her writing: she wrote some of her first plays after she left Paris during the air raids in 1915. She went to Mallorca and ended up writing several plays, and there's a question

as to why. Why did she start writing these plays at that exact moment, and what does this have to do with the question of landscape that she later comes to as a description of her theatre poetics? The question of war is interesting, she's a non-combatant in 1915, both because she's a woman and because she's American and the U.S. doesn't enter the war until 1917. I think Stein is trying to understand something about how non-combatants are nonetheless asked to participate in or acknowledge or witness or somehow be in relation to intense wartime experiences. It comes into the plays of that moment in interesting ways.

In your article 'The Expansion of Setting in Gertrude Stein's Landscape Theater' (published in *Modernism/modernity*), you mention that Stein's plays are 'complexly interwoven with the world that Stein inhabited, and the world that we inhabit as well'.⁵ In what sense do you think that Stein's plays reflect our world instead of her own, and how do you see your interpretations as interwoven with our world and Stein's?

Stein's theatre has been approached (by Jane Bowers especially) as *meta-drama*, that is, theatre about theatre, or drama about drama. I do think that's a significant part of what's going on for her, since she's always thinking about writing, and always reflecting about writing, but she's thinking about writing as an action and as a practice, and it's always a lived practice that's happening in a time and in a place. And there are definite continuities between the time and place that she's writing in, and the time and place that I'm reading in. I'm trying to track those continuities as well as discontinuities. For the RFS project one of the most important of these has to do with the media through which we're actually communicating right now, the digital medium that has transformed so much of our experience. In Stein's moment, there aren't the same media. There's radio emerging in the 19-teens and '20s, and the intensification of photographic and cinematographic reproduction that's happening. Her writing and her playwriting access the changes in the way people perceive, in relation to these different mediations. There are continuities between the interpretations we're making now, which have to do with the intensification of perceptual regimes through digital media, and the intensifications that are happening around her own moment.

You also briefly touch upon the significance of Stein's queer identity in her plays, as well as her experiences as a queer woman in her time. Is that also something that comes into consideration in your adaptations of her work? Do you consider that part of her biography as an important factor for Radio Free Stein?

It's definitely important for her! The way I think about questions of queerness touches on the circuits of otherness and difference that are always present in her writing, the substantial densities of her text, the rejection of sexual

normativities. She's extremely sensitive in her own writing to the ways that minimal differences can have maximal consequences, and there's often a sexual context within which you can understand her writing, but that sexual context can also not be the *primary* context. It feeds into other perceptual areas.

You write in your article that 'the treatment of setting in Stein's landscape theatre shares something with modernist practices across the arts'.⁶ Could you comment on how you feel that your practices build on the concept of landscape?

Stein's descriptions of plays as landscapes does what some other modernist poetics do: it makes equivalent things that, in another context, are seen as more hierarchical. For example, story and character would be, in Aristotelian drama, the most important elements, and other elements like setting or spectacle or music would take a backseat and be subordinated to story or character. Stein uses the concept of landscape to render all of these theatrical elements equivalent: they're on the same plane of importance. That's part of her importance for twentieth-century non-naturalist theatre. There's also the concept of soundscape, as it shows up in John Cage's work, which is the idea that anything in our auditory environment could come into focus and have some kind of meaning. A poetics of soundscape or landscape becomes very sensitive to the relation between figure and ground, such that what we thought was ground suddenly becomes figure, or vice versa, and a movement back and forth or even a disappearance or modification of the distinction. A lot of modernist work is interested in this, but Stein is very, very good at it and very sensitive to it, and being in relation to it means that we are often flipping our perceptual fields back and forth between figure and ground. We are being located and immersed in the work, and then the work suddenly comes out, and we are immersing it. This movement back and forth is, I think, what Stein means by landscape.

Now I would like to discuss with you the performance aspect of your project. How do you see the relationship between an audience and your work? Is there a significant consideration of an audience (or possible audience) when you produce your Stein performances, or is an audience totally left out of the question?

First of all, the project begins from a double meaning of *audience*: audience as people who are in attendance at a theatrical performance, and audience as the act or the state of hearing. RFS is a radio project, because radio is what collapses those two notions of audience together and lets hearing be the primary form of attendance for a theatrical performance. What I'm mostly concerned with is trying to create as enjoyable a sense of audience as possible for her works. Enjoyment is very important for Stein, and it's important for my understanding of Stein, and I would like our works to be as enjoyable as

possible so that they can be heard. So my answer to the question is, I want audience and enjoyment to go together. A complex enjoyment, an enjoyment that might have its own challenges or frustrations, but nonetheless fundamentally an enjoyment.

When I first heard your work, I definitely enjoyed it, but it also required some effort on my part as a listener to make sense of what was going on. It's nice to hear that the active participation of your audience factors into your objectives as well.

I'm the first listener to this work, and I'm working with others, so I often have to say to myself when I'm listening to something that's happening, 'Do I enjoy this? Is this working in ways that I want it to work'? And then if it isn't, that's part of my reaction to the performers or to the composer. And that can easily lead to frustration as well as enjoyment ...

You're going to perform some of your work in Paris on 26 June, at the Institut d'études avancées de Paris, Hôtel de Lauzun. What goes into the preparation for such a performance?

We just came off four days of intensive rehearsal with the Dedalus Ensemble, a French group that is part of this particular project. They are performing a work by Samuel Vriezen, an Amsterdam-based composer I'm very happy to be working with, and we finally heard his composition for the first time. The featured singer is Aurélie Nyirabikali Liermann, based in The Hague right now, and she will play the role of the Writer. Samuel and Aurélie have worked together before. We all got together and stumbled through Samuel's composition, trying to understand what he's done, to work out the various ways he's treating Stein's text and my libretto or radio script. We did that, and in three weeks we're going to get together one more time for an intensive set of rehearsals to move from understanding the music to understanding the performance or theatre part of all this. How do we move from getting the music right according to the composition, and then making it presentable so that an audience can meet it? So the performance can meet the audience halfway, as it were?

What is the live line-up going to be, musician-wise and performer-wise?

Dedalus is a big ensemble where different configurations are possible. It's very flexible, and it's been great to work with such talented and adventurous musicians. We have four wind instruments (trombone, saxophone, bass clarinet and flute), they're our Chorus, sometimes playing and sometimes speaking or singing. The way Samuel has written it, when they're playing their wind instruments they're actually breathing or playing words – he's written out their parts to echo aspects of the text of Stein's play as spoken

and sung by Aurélie as the Writer. And then we also have three strings: a cello player, a viola player, and Didier Aschour, the director of the ensemble, on guitar. They're going to be supporting, although the cellist Deborah Walker will also play the role of the Audience in Act III.

I'd love to talk to you more about adaptation and interpretation now. As we've established, Stein's work is incredibly open to interpretation. In the case of her plays, for example, it's hard to determine what her words signify exactly, and what's going on, at first glance. Could you describe your process of determining the best ways of reproducing these works into radio format? How do you go from the page to the radio format?

So many things have to happen between A and B there. The first thing we do is go into workshop with a bunch of readers and try to answer all sorts of questions about the play together. I come in with a few ideas, contextual background, any critical writing on the play, then we brainstorm. How many kinds of voices are there in this play? That's a fundamental question that we need to answer, and sometimes Stein tells you. For example, *White Wines* is for five women, Stein includes this at the start. We don't know what parts go to which women, but at least we know there are five, so that's helpful. But most of the time she doesn't tell you, and you have to decide what to do. Here's another example, a play called *He Said It. Monologue*, which would imply that it's to be recited by one person. But it's very clear from the first sentences of the play that it's written as a dialogue: there's 'I' and 'you' and they're exchanging sentences, and it's utterly clear that this is a dialogue between two people. So what is the relation between the subtitle 'Monologue' and the actual form of the play? We thought about it and talked about it, and listened to the voices in the play, and I eventually decided that there are three voices in the play. Two women's voices who we called Speaker and Hearer, both of whom spoke and both of whom listened, but then a third voice that, we decided, was a male speaker who precedes the play. That is, the monologue happens before the play, he *said* it, it happened in the past, and Speaker and Hearer reconstruct this monologue through their memory. So we read the play as a reconstruction of someone else's speech, and that speech is represented by the piano. A piano plays a short piece at the beginning, then the two women reconstruct that speech, as it were. And the pianist comments on their reconstruction. That was our solution to that particular problem.

In the *Modernism/modernity* article, you also write that 'Stein's plays, in displacing story, become all setting'.⁷ How do you convey a sense of setting through the radio format?

Since I wrote that piece, I've been drawn to the idea of *situation* rather than *setting*, which is subtly different. (This is due to an ongoing

investigation into the concept of situation by Marcie Frank, Kevin Pask, and Ned Schantz.) That is to say, the voices are less *in a setting* than they are somehow *situated*. That situation could be an emotional situation, but it could also be a physical situation. Once we decide on what that situation is, a number of consequences might follow. For the piece that I played in Amsterdam that you heard, *An Exercise in Analysis*, we decided that the situation was a car drive through the countryside with four voices, two in the front seat and two in the back. Once we had the situation, then suddenly we had relations starting to emerge between the different voices. Those relations could be used to determine when someone addresses one of the other characters, or throws their line out the car window. That'll have consequences both for how the actors speak, but also for how we might add sound effects or modify the sound field. I tend to work very closely with studio engineers and come up with ways of subtly giving us an auditory setting that helps make sense of the situation of the play.

Would you argue that the situation that you determine becomes the key element that then defines the rest of these relations from the top-down? Am I on the right track there?

I don't think of it as top-down, so much as the situation emerges from working on the play, and once we settle on the situation, that helps make a lot of decisions in the scenario. It's less top-down than emergent and reciprocal.

But as soon as it's there, it helps you to make decisions that need to be made later.

Exactly, so it's a very important moment when you arrive at or decide about a situation. And, of course, another interpretation of the play would come up with a different situation, and that would totally change the way that play could be interpreted.

After we heard one of your interpretations of *An Exercise in Analysis* (where each 'Act' is actually a different character or voice), I could not go back to the text and read it any other way than how you adapted it. We could say you closed the initial openness of Stein's text, in a way. I intend that as a compliment, because your work is very convincing and effective in that regard, but is that something that you would want? Do you want to make your adaptation a definitive way of reading the text, or do you simply want to say, 'This is my interpretation, but I encourage other people to come up with other ideas'?

First of all: thank you. This what any critic wants to hear when they've offered an interpretation of a literary text: 'That makes so much sense to me, and now when I look at that text I can't read it any other way'.

Secretly I say to myself, 'Great!' But then someone could be prompted to make an even stronger interpretation or maybe a different interpretation that would be equally valid. I'm not ruling anything out, I hope, but I'm doing a lot of work to validate and make sense of this particular reading. What I'm hoping is that if you want to come along and do another reading of *An Exercise in Analysis*, you'll have to take my work into account and make your interpretation equally or more persuasive. That's just the way criticism works, to my mind. You can read any literary text, and if someone's good at doing their work, they should convince you of something. Even though two weeks later or two years later you come along and you read another interpretation, and you go, 'Oh, what was I thinking? This interpretation is so much better than the one I read two years ago and was so persuaded by'. That's just the nature of literature, and of criticism.

What would you say is your favourite part about working with these Stein texts? Is there a part of it that you really enjoy most?

There really isn't. The part that's always exciting in any research project is the beginning when everything is wide open. In this case it's going into a room with a bunch of Stein-friendly (not Stein-phobic!) people, and saying, 'What the hell? What am I going to do with this? How does this possibly make any sense at all?' That part makes me nervous, but it's also very exciting, and everything's really open at that moment. But then as you identify some things, of course, as things get decided, as certain situations get settled on, as the number of voices become clear, you start to craft something, and crafting it is also very rewarding. It's rewarding to move from that total openness to 'Here's something! Here's a thing that we didn't know what it was before and now it's something'. And to bring that all the way through to the end where the composer then gets their hands on it and makes something else out of it, which I had no idea what it was going to be, again, is both exciting and nerve-wracking, as it really is taken out of my hands in some very fundamental way. I could not have composed that music. And then listening to it at the end is also exciting, because there was no way of predicting that we could have gotten to this result, this moment, this ending. So I would say each of the parts of the project is gratifying and rewarding in its own way. Even if the beginning is the most fun in some sense, the end is very gratifying for me (and, at the same time, disappointing, so many paths not taken). And then there is, of course, the hard part of writing the criticism, and that's just writing, that's always hard.

My final question: what would you consider to be the end goal of RFS? Is it the enjoyment and understanding that you want to evoke for the listeners, or is there something else as well that you're trying to get at?

There's that enjoyment and understanding, yes. I would like for Stein's plays to be hearable, to be enjoyed, to be experienced as some kind of a performance that people can have a relationship to that makes some kind of sense to them. Trying to make a variety of senses of Stein's writing is something I'm trying to do, and I want other people to do that too. I want this to be available as a practice. I'm currently writing a book coming out of all of this, and hoping to lay out what the steps are so that it's possible that others might do something similar with this work, if they feel so inclined or inspired. I'm interested in how this is actually, perversely, a shareable technique that others might engage in as well.

Notes

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2. Gertrude Stein, *Lectures in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), p. 170.
3. This symposium was organized by Mia You and held at the experimental poetry and performance space Perdu in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, on 6 April 2019. For more information see <https://europeanstein.wordpress.com/2019/03/29/beyond-the-sentence-stein-as-open-text/>.
4. Adam Frank, "Background and Lead-up to the Project." *Radio Free Stein*, <https://radiofreestein.com/info/>.
5. Adam Frank, "The Expansion of Setting in Gertrude Stein's Landscape Theater." *Modernism/modernity* Print Plus, 9 March 2018. <https://modernismmodernity.org/forums/posts/expansion-setting>.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.

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