Experiences of prominent jazz vocalists: Exploring the collaboration between vocalist and pianist during performances

by

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Abstract

This study explored the experiences of prominent jazz vocalists regarding the collaboration between the vocalist and pianist during duo performances. The work relationship between a jazz vocalist and accompanist is a unique phenomenon due to the improvisatory and collaborative nature of jazz. Effective co-performer interaction and communication are two essential components within an improvisational music setting. A spirit of spontaneity ir required in order for improvisation and interpretation to take place in real-time and on stage; aspects which cannot be duplicated or replicated during rehearsals.

A qualitative research approach was employed by means of a collective case study, exploring the views and experiences of three prominent South African and three international jazz vocalists. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, artefacts including audio and audio-visual recordings of each of these performers were studied to ascertain aspects of the vocal-piano collaboration. Thematic data analysis presented four main themes: (1) individuality; (2) interactive relationships; (3) musicianship; and (4) the present moment.

The findings revealed that the roles of both partners within the vocal-piano duo collaboration are evenly distributed, yet have distinctive functions. Each new performance between the same vocal-piano duo is an innovative execution, a skilful and artistic equilibrium. It embodies a companionship playing out on stage in view of an audience, yet with the subtle sharing of musical messages.

Keywords

Jazz vocalist

Jazz pianist

Jazz duo collaboration

Jazz performance

‘Grounding’ in jazz performance

Rapport and collaboration in music performances

Co-performer interaction

Vocal jazz interpretation

Spontaneity in music performances

Notes to the reader

In this dissertation, text is justified to the left to lessen eye stress during the reading thereof, as suggested by Departmental Research Committee.

Proofing language was set to United Kingdom English.

In Chapter 4, participants' responses are added to support the identification of themes from data analysis. These responses were typed verbatim. In some instances, when words were stressed during interviews, such words are indicated in bold print.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

The work relationship between a jazz vocalist and accompanist is a unique phenomenon due to the nature of the jazz style of music. According to Weir (2005: 20) jazz is “a creative and interactive art form that requires finely tuned listening skills and a spirit of spontaneity”. For this reason, each new performance between the same vocal-piano duo should be an innovative execution brought on by a “spontaneous collaboration” between the pair (Seidel 1998: 104).

In my career as a performing jazz vocalist and lecturer in jazz, I have had the privilege to work with various experienced and less experienced jazz pianists. I have collaborated with some of these musicians for a longer period of time, whilst others I only met for a once-off performance. I have noticed that I share a certain close connection with some pianists while this happens to a lesser extent with others. I see the same pattern in my jazz vocal students, observing that they often struggle to select the right partner to accompany them. A technically skilful pianist who plays intricate improvisations in an instrumental setting does not necessarily make the most suitable accompanist for a vocalist. I have realised that the relationship between vocalist and pianist is not only a musical relationship but also a personal relationship. Davis (2005: 49) describes this relationship as “a delicate balance, both personal and professional, intimate yet public”. Sometimes this relationship is simply ill-fitting and a number of aspects could influence this partnership.

The main difference between instrumental and vocal jazz is that the focal point of vocal jazz is to deliver the melody and convey the meaning of the lyrics convincingly, while instrumental jazz focuses on the improvisation by instrumental soloists, which occurs only after the melody has been played (Seidel 1998: 104; Weir 1998: 70; Weir 2005: 25). The lyrics of each song have a significant effect on how the melody is interpreted by the vocalist. An accompanist plays a crucial role in order for the vocalist to achieve the desired interpretation, and the accompanist’s understanding of the lyrics could influence the way in which the vocalist interprets the music and vice versa (Charlop

2005: 106). Other than conveying the lyrics, the artistry of jazz singing comprises spontaneous melodic variation, rhythmic and phrasing changes which the accompanist should be able to instantly adapt to during a performance (Weir 1998: 70). Although improvisation is a key factor when the jazz genre is in question, not all vocalists use improvisation in the form of scat singing.[1] The technique of vocal scatting while improvising is another element that contributes to the vocal-piano duo performance (Seidel 1998: 104). Davis (2005: 49) notes that the ideal state to achieve during a vocal-piano duo performance is an "interplay of back-and-forth conversation", like a dance.

Regarding the topic of piano-vocal jazz partnerships, much has been written about piano techniques which can be used in order to enhance the accompaniment of a jazz vocalist (White 2010; Charlop 2005; Davis 2005). Several authors (Davis 2005; Weir 2005; White 2010), remark that the best accompanists in this genre are the ones who really enjoy vocal jazz music as well as the process of working with vocalists. Pianists who are more likely to incline towards the *bebop* style of music – with very fast tempo songs in an instrumental ensemble – tend to be less enthusiastic to accompany a vocalist (Bernotas 2000: 15). Weir (1998: 69) points out that there are "negative stereotypes" associated with singers. In such instances, a "singer/accompanist" division is created where the singer dominates the performance instead of an equal partnership where both singer and instrumentalist have equal roles as "musicians".

The question of 'who is in charge?' within a vocalist-pianist duo relationship is regularly discussed in research articles (Charlop 2005; Davis 2005; White 2010). Perceptions on this matter vary where some scholars view it as the pianist's responsibility to 'follow', thereby being in the supportive role (Bernotas 2000: 18), while other scholars assert that the control should be equally exchanged between vocalist and pianist during a performance (White 2010: 11). It is furthermore evident that different singers need different types of support; there is not a single 'one-size-fits-all' partnership between a jazz vocalist and pianist. The difference between the pianist and vocalist regarding their expertise and level of music knowledge is another concern, in which confidence and

[1] "A technique of jazz singing in which onomatopoeic or nonsense syllables are sung to improvised melodies" (Kernfeld 2002: 515).

experience are crucial factors (Bernotas 2000: 18; Davis 2005: 50; Weir 1998: 69). Vocal jazz pedagogy – a field which has only been introduced in the academic world about twenty years after instrumental jazz pedagogy – is widely investigated (Klug 2014: 13; Madura Ward-Steinman 2014: 347; Singh 2005: 53; Weir 1998: 70). The phenomenon of accompanying vocalists – in contrast to accompanying instrumentalists – raises different opinions. Some pianists experience the accompaniment of a vocalist as being no different to accompanying an instrumentalist, while others specifically point out that accompanying a singer should not be treated in the same way as accompanying an instrument, such as a horn (Bernotas 2000: 18). Social and co-performer interaction within a jazz vocal-piano relationship is a topic not fully represented in research literature.

Effective co-performer interaction and communication are essential components within an improvisational music setting. Research conducted by Mixon (2009: 66) with USA university jazz students revealed that the students' social interaction is affected by each individual's prior life experiences, cultural background, and former education (Mixon 2009: 66). These findings might shed light on the findings in this study, since jazz vocalists all come to the stage with unique and diverse backgrounds and life experiences, as well as from a variety of cultures. Since collaboration and interaction between the jazz vocalist and pianist have not been researched extensively, there is a need for this study.

1.2 Aims of the study

The aim of this research is to explore the views of prominent jazz vocalists concerning the rapport between a vocalist and pianist when performing as a jazz duo. The different aspects affecting this relationship will be investigated as well as the performance situation. Performing in a recording studio versus performing in front of an audience and the influence thereof on the duo will be explored. In both of these settings, the communication between the two musicians will be investigated in order to ascertain how the expressiveness of a performance is made unique. Therefore I aim to obtain a deep insight and understanding of the collaboration between the jazz vocalist and pianist during performances.

1.3 Research questions

The main research question guiding the study is formulated as follows:

What are the experiences of prominent jazz vocalists regarding the collaboration between vocalist and pianist during duo performances?

Sub-questions which provide a means to answer the main research question include the following:

- What are the factors that influence the rapport between jazz vocalist and pianist during performances?
- What is the role of the setting during jazz performances, i.e. in studio or with a live audience, regarding the collaboration between vocalist and pianist?
- How do the pianist and vocalist achieve a mutual understanding in order to portray the unique and personal expressive qualities of the text and musical intention during jazz performances?

1.4 Research methodology

An in-depth description of the methodology used to conduct this study is presented in Chapter 3. The following serves as a brief overview of the research methodology in use.

A qualitative research approach aims at describing a phenomenon within a specific context from the participant's point of view in order to understand this phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis 2011b: 51). Therefore, a qualitative approach is the most appropriate for the specific research problem explored in this study, allowing for personal interaction with the selected participants. In order to provide an in-depth investigation of the particular research problem, in this instance the collaboration between jazz vocalists and pianists, a collective case study was utilised (Creswell 2013: 99).

Six prominent jazz vocalists, three local and three international, took part as research participants. These vocalists are regarded as experts in the field of jazz performance and therefore provided insight, personal views and new perspectives which could shed

light on the research problem. Data collection strategies included semi-structured interviews as well as artefacts namely audio and audio-visual recordings of each participant performing in a vocal-piano duo setting.

The interview transcripts and observations were analysed from an interpretive perspective. Raw data was interrogated and studied to identify codes, establishing categories in a search for themes. This approach implies a thematic analysis method in order to generate main-themes and sub-themes (Nieuwenhuis 2011a: 119-120). These themes will be described and discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

1.5 Delimitations of the study

In a jazz setting there are many possibilities for vocal duo combinations other than vocal-piano. For example, the vocalist can be combined with a double bass or guitar. In jazz history there have been notable relationships between the vocalist and guitarist, in particular the work between vocalist Ella Fitzgerald and guitarist Joe Pass (David 2004: 233). Jazz vocal-guitar, vocal-bass or even vocal-drum duo recordings are frequent combinations. However, the piano can be viewed as a principal choice as accompanying instrument for a jazz vocalist and is most frequently found in performances and recordings (David 2004: 181). Therefore, my research focusses on the mutual understanding between jazz vocalist and pianist, and will not involve other instrumental duo combinations with the jazz vocalist. Furthermore, this research is based on six single case studies with individual jazz vocalists, exploring their personal and subjective experiences; therefore the findings may not be applicable to other jazz vocalists.

1.6 Value of the study

This study should contribute towards the extension of existing scholarship regarding the rapport between jazz vocalist and pianist. By identifying the aspects affecting the collaborative nature of the relationship between vocalist and pianist, this study could lead to a better understanding of duo partnerships regarding the unique possibilities for expression in jazz performance. This study could be useful for teaching practice when working with beginning jazz vocal and piano students. The outcomes of the study could add to further academic debate on the research topic.

1.7 Chapter outline

The first chapter of the dissertation included the introduction and background to the research, followed by the purpose and aims of the study. The problem statement was outlined, leading to the main research question as well as secondary questions. Lastly, delimitations of the study and the value thereof were specified.

Chapter 2 presents a review of literature, commencing with the theoretical framework of 'Grounding' to build co-performer partnerships, outlining how this relates to the current investigation. The artistry of jazz vocals – focussing on vocal improvisation and vocal interpretation – are discussed in depth, providing insight into current research regarding these aspects. Nuances of stage behaviours, stage presence and body language are explored. The role of the accompanist is discussed from the perspective of role playing and familiarity as well as a section on accompanying the jazz vocalist. Preparation for stage performances is the last theme in this chapter.

The research approach, design and data collection methods used for this study are described in chapter 3, followed by the method of data analysis. Ethical considerations which had to be taken into account are motivated and explained before the summary of the chapter.

In chapter 4 of the dissertation, the analysis of the data is presented, leading to the research findings from which themes and sub-themes emerged. Presentation of the findings includes responses from semi-structured interviews to corroborate and support emerging themes. Chapter 5 includes a discussion and summary of the main findings. Recommendations for future research are presented, followed by the final conclusion to the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

In this section, literature related to the topic of the study is discussed and compared. The artistry of jazz vocals – with vocal improvisation and interpretation as sub-themes – are reviewed. The nuances of stage behaviours including stage presence and body language follow, as well as the role of the accompanist. In addition the preparation for a performance and spontaneity in performance is also outlined. Lastly, the theory of 'grounding' as a means to build co-performer partnerships concludes the literature review.

2.2 The artistry of jazz vocals

The art of jazz vocals is a topic which has fascinated jazz academics over the past four decades (Hawk 2013; Jensen-Hole 2005; Klug: 2014, Spralding 1986; Spralding 2007; Weir 1998). To define a jazz vocalist, or to define what the artistry of jazz vocals involves, is a complex and important task with contrasting views.

A crucial aspect of the artistry of jazz singing is for a vocalist to develop a unique and personal style. Crowther and Pinfold (1997: 14), Weir (2005: 20, 25, 29, 33, 36) and Klug (2014: 19) state that the integral concepts of developing this unique style includes communicating expression, colouring the melody, improvisation (within the melody line and using scat singing), swinging[2], and the use of phrasing. A fundamental characteristic of jazz performance is that these concepts could be approached differently from one performance to another.

The delivery and interpretation of the lyrics are key elements for the development of a unique style of jazz performance. The primary melody together with the text is the main focus point of a vocalist's artistry (Walker 2005: 252). Davidson and Coimbra (2001: 43) note that the skill of the singer – regarding how the lyrics are communicated –

[2] Swinging is "a quality attributed to jazz performance […] a rhythmic phenomenon, resulting from the conflict between a fixed pulse and the wide variety of actual durations and accents that a jazz performer plays against the pulse". It is also the name given to a jazz style, originated in 1930. (Kernfeld 2002: 697).

contributes to the audience's perception of the singer's artistry. Weir (2005: 20) emphasises that a jazz singer's goal is specifically to communicate emotion through the lyrics of a song "with soulful honesty". Vocalists regard being emotionally involved with the music as a fundamental aspect in order to portray a certain "mood" (Coimbra, Davidson & Kokotsaki 2001: 24).

The above sources indicate that the artistry of singing jazz involves two main aspects namely**:**

- Vocal improvisation; and
- Interpreting the melody.

These two main facets can be deconstructed into smaller components, which will now be explored according to the literature. Components with regards to vocal improvisation include techniques and approaches, as well as factors impacting vocal improvisation achievement. Components with regards to vocal interpretation include different ideas on the style of jazz interpretation and what the interpretation conveys about the singer.

2.2.1 Vocal improvisation

Madura (1996: 253) notes that earlier research on jazz improvisation focused on the instrumentalist. However, more recent studies (Hargreaves 2012; Hargreaves 2014; Madura Ward-Steinman 2008; Madura Ward-Steinman 2014; Walker 2005) describe vocal improvisation techniques and creative approaches to vocal improvisation.

Techniques explored for the development of vocal jazz improvisation include the 'twelve-key approach' commonly used by instrumentalists (Hargreaves 2014). The twelve-key approach – devised to develop jazz improvisation skills – involves the learning of a composition or piece, together with the scales, arpeggios and themes associated with the specific piece in one key, and then to practice these scales and arpeggios in the remaining eleven keys (Hargreaves 2014: 2). This approach is trusted to enable instrumentalists with the necessary skills to master the technique of improvising over any chord changes in any key. Where a physical contact is required when playing an instrument, the senses of vision and touch are vital in assisting instrumentalists to visualise, remember and perform such intricate music patterns. Due

to the reality that vocalists rely on hearing melodies rather than seeing and feeling the scales and harmonies as instrumentalists do, the implementation of this 'twelve-key approach' by vocalists delivered an inconclusive result (Walker 2005: 241). Vocal improvisation involves the human voice, which cannot be seen or felt. Therefore, improvisation techniques are most effectively developed during the applied voice lesson. Techniques and skills learnt from professional vocalists and lecturers are considered the dominant variables in the execution of improvised musical ideas for jazz vocalists (Walker 2005: 241). One of the techniques used to enhance improvisation skills of vocalists includes the development of aural skills by listening to both vocal and instrumental jazz music (Walker 2005: 235).

Creative approaches to enrich the repertoire of possibilities for vocal improvisation delivered valuable methods. The skill to imitate vocal and instrumental improvisor's solo by intensive listening and transcription (Hargreaves 2012: 364; Madura 1996: 264) were found to enhance phrasing, note choices and the use of scat syllables in vocal improvisors. Furthermore, creativity in vocal jazz improvisors are more advanced if the vocalist is familiar with the song's melody, lyrics and chord changes (Madura Ward-Steinman 2008: 14; Walker 2005: 20).

Madura (1995; 1996) and Madura Ward-Steinman (2008; 2014) have identified different factors impacting on the achievement of vocal jazz improvisation. Madura (1995) found that these three factors are the main criteria according to which vocal improvisation is assessed:

- Tone (intonation);
- Rhythm (pulse, feel);
- Expression (scat syllables, range, dynamics).

(Madura 1995: 48)

The impact of jazz theory knowledge, imitative ability, musical experience, creativity, and gender on the above factors were investigated by Madura. Results show that imitative ability and musical experience contributes positively to vocal improvisation skills (Madura 1996: 260). A later study (Madura Ward-Steinman 2008: 15) found that jazz experience is the crucial factor in the development of vocal improvisation, reiterating the finding of Ginsborg and King (2007: 66).

The above aspects with regards to vocal improvisation are all crucial factors to consider during jazz performance. It is vital for two individual musicians forming a musical partnership, to discuss and experiment with different approaches during rehearsals (Ginsborg & King 2007: 62).

2.2.2 Vocal interpretation

It is crucial for a jazz vocalist to deliver an individual and unique interpretation of songs because of the improvisatory and collaborative nature of jazz. Tolson (2012) discusses the use of articulation and expression markings in order to achieve the jazz interpretation of swing, while Archambeault (2006: 71) is of the opinion that vocal jazz interpretation could be achieved by implementing a classical singing technique. In comparison, Walker (2005) recommends that vocalists listen to recordings in order to achieve a better understanding of jazz interpretation. Blom (2006) on the other hand, argues that vocal students are not producing their own interpretations of songs but that they are rather imitating what they hear on a recording and therefore are not developing their own identity in their performances. Although I agree with all the above strategies, there is a danger when only one of the methods is applied. Therefore, the ideal would be a combination of different strategies as proposed by Blom (2006: 164), who suggests that students should first listen to various versions of a particular song, then analyse and discuss each rendition in order to compare time, pitch, vocal timbre, lyrics, structure, arrangement, and style, in which each version has been recorded. In so doing, students will be encouraged to think about their own performances and what they want to convey with their specific interpretation of the song.

Levinson (2013) views jazz vocal interpretation from a philosophical perspective. He explains that, when a jazz vocalist sings a song in a particular way by using certain inflections, making specific choices regarding rhythm and phrasing, the singer “conveys her *feeling* about the song, expresses her *attitude* toward the song, or presents the song in a certain *light*” (Levinson 2013: 38). This author explains that the interpretation of a song could be a reflection of the singer’s own emotional state at the time of the performance. In his view, a singer’s personality is displayed through the particular way the song is sung. Levinson questions how an audience can distinguish between what a

singer's interpretation conveys about the song, and what it conveys about the singer's identity, suggesting that the interpretation always conveys something about the singer, be it his/her emotional state or personality (Levinson 2013: 39). The personality of the singer is perceived by the audience through the singer's stage behaviour.

2.3 Stage behaviour

Various studies have been conducted to find out whether creativity during performances could be measured by a combination of a singer's stage behaviour and vocal skills (Davidson & Coimbra 2001; Davidson & Coulam 2006). Davidson and Coulam (2006:184) summarise this notion, claiming that "stage presentation in the form of non-verbal information expresses musical intention, performer style and individuality".

Levinson (2013: 39) notes that stage behaviour plays a vital role in the interpretation of a song. Stage behaviour in the form of a singer's stage presence and "performing personality" is observed by an audience, and this personality includes "visual appearance, hand gestures, facial expressions, and body language".

2.3.1 Stage presence

Audiences regard presence and personality as one of the critical criteria for a vocalist to possess and describe it as the delivery of a "focused" performance where the performer's personality shines through (Davidson & Coimbra 2001: 45). Stage presence is said to be the factor that "captivate[s] and intrigue[s]" audiences (Rabie 2013: 53). Platz and Kopiez (2013) state that stage entrance behaviour – the way a performer walks on stage – is the first impression that an audience notices of a performer. This creates an anticipation, an eagerness filled with expectations in order for the audience to experience the rest of the performance. A singer's stage presence is conveyed through his/her body language and in this way perceived by the audience (Rabie 2013: 47).

2.3.2 Body language on stage

According to Davidson (2001, 2007 and 2012) and Davidson and Coimbra (2001), body language includes the use of eye contact, facial expression, and bodily movements. These aspects are essential tools for a performer to utilise in conveying expression during performances.

2.4 The role of the accompanist

The piano accompanist plays a crucial role for the vocal-piano duo to deliver a successful performance (White 2010: 1). The duo relationship could be affected by certain aspects such as authority between the duo as well as familiarity. As noted by White (2010: 2), accompanying the jazz vocalist is unique due to the nature of the artistry of jazz vocals; therefore pianists use a variety of techniques in order to support the vocalist efficiently. These techniques are discussed in the following sections.

2.4.1 Role playing and familiarity

The role which each performer assumes during a duo ensemble of vocalist and piano accompanist – especially regarding which performer should be more dominant or authoritarian – is a highly relevant topic, although limited research has been conducted in this regard. This aspect is evident in many different styles of music, including classical music, folk music, popular music and jazz. Furthermore, the type of instrument the accompanist plays may have an additional influence on these roles, for instance a melodic instrument compared to a non-melodic instrument. Napier (2007) examined the interactions between vocalist and melodic accompanist in his research on the performance of North Indian vocal music. Results of his study indicate that, although the singer holds the most authority during the “construction and direction of the performance”, the accompanist brings a separate entity to the performance (Napier 2007: 296). Napier suggests that one performer should not control or overpower the other. In his view, however, the way in which the performers switch between roles are important aspects to be considered.

Ginsborg and King (2012) examined the effects that familiarity and expertise have on vocal-piano duos. These authors affirm that, while the effect of expertise has been

examined by a large number of studies, the effect of familiarity – how well musicians know each other and how long they have played together, especially within vocal-piano duos – have not been studied directly. In their research, the social and cognitive manners between expert and student vocal-piano duos, both familiar and unacquainted, were studied through the analysis of their rehearsals. The aim of their study is to reveal the effect of "short term preparation for performance" (Ginsborg & King 2012: 153) by singers and pianists with different levels of expertise, measured by the length of familiarity. Communication in the form of verbal exchange and interaction between the rehearsal partners, and the level of preparation by each musician, contribute to a successful rehearsal (Ginsborg & King 2012: 156).

2.4.2 Accompanying the jazz vocalist

Walker (2005: 241) is of the opinion that finding an accompanist to "complement" a jazz vocalist is problematic. The musical "level" of skill and knowledge may contrast to various degrees between the vocalist and accompanist, and is considered to have an impact on either the vocalist or the pianist being "held back" by the other (Walker 2005: 241). It is noted that this issue could be confronted in applied voice lessons or accompaniment lessons for the pianist.

Sometimes the connection between a certain vocalist and pianist seems to happen naturally. David (2004) describes Ella Fitzgerald's principal accompanists throughout her career. Some of her pianists are said to have had a "telepathic and symbiotic relationship" (David 2004: 183; White 2010: 7) with Fitzgerald. It is also noted in Davidson and Coulam's (2006: 191) study that a specific vocalist was very "easy to work with" because of her "general body awareness" which seemed to correspond with the pianist as well as with the audience, even though the vocalist did not necessarily make eye contact with the pianist.

There may be an 'ideal aim' to experience a special telepathy between vocalist and accompanist, something which might happen on rare occasions. Additionally, a pianist needs to develop an effective technique in order to successfully accompany the vocalist. White's (2010) study examines the techniques, methods and the art of accompanying the jazz vocalist. I refer specifically to this study because of the lack of

studies focussing on the jazz vocalist and pianist, and because White's study includes comprehensive characteristics in this regard. White investigates how the pianist interacts with and supports the jazz vocalist in duo and small ensemble settings. White confirms that, within the jazz literature, much has been written about the improvised solo, but very few studies have been conducted in the area of accompanying another musician, specifically accompanying a vocal jazz musician.

In his study, White (2010) interviewed eight professional pianists. After establishing from these respondents that there is a noticeable difference between accompanying for the jazz vocalist in comparison to accompanying an instrumentalist, White notes important technical aspects which these pianists pointed out.

When creating a suitable introduction for a performance, it is important for the pianist to subtly set up the mood of the music by portraying the underlying significance of the lyrics which are to follow (White 2010: 20). The same author asserts that *rubato*[3] playing is one of the most challenging aspects of accompanying (2010: 26). While *rubato* playing could be worked out and planned to some extent prior to the performance, it is ideal for the accompanist to let the vocalist lead and control the pace. It is essential for the accompanist to use the melody as a guide in the accompaniment (White 2010: 48). Furthermore, it is critical for the pianist to know the lyrics in order to communicate and support the vocalist effectively (White 2010: 53).

In a duo setting, the accompanist is not only the supporter, but also acts as a collaborator with the vocalist (White 2010: 62). Therefore the accompanist needs to be able to adapt to the specific singing style of a certain vocalist. Moreover, the accompanist needs to have the ability to understand a vocalist's body language, therefore an essential aspect is that visual and musical cues are developed and refined between the two artists. These are all components which enhance a performance in order to present the music in a professional (White 2010: 67) and aesthetically validated manner.

[3] *Rubato* is "the expressive alteration of rhythm or tempo" […] of the entire musical substance […] originated as part of unnotated performing practice (Sadie 2001: 832).

Lastly, White (2010) offers some ideas on the vocalist's perspective and asserts that further research should be done to examine the vocalist's side. He refers to common problems that accompanists encounter when working with vocalists, including that they – the accompanists – often do not understand the importance of the lyrics and the emotion that the singer wants to portray in a specific song. Vocalists prefer accompanists who are "versatile and sensitive to their needs" (White 2010: 83). These facets could be attended to by the vocalist and pianist during rehearsal and preparation for performances.

2.5 Preparation for stage performances

The research of Geeves, McIlwain and Sutton (2014) highlights the significance of off-stage routines which musicians experience before and after stage performances. Such "pre-performance routines" (Geeves *et al.* 2014: 11) correspond with findings from the research conducted for my BMus Honours degree (Rabie 2013: 54). These routines include:

Physical preparation:

- Learning the repertoire and working out text for the recital (Rabie 2013:11);
- Technical preparation for example sound and lights (Geeves *et al.* 2014: 11; Rabie 2013: 54);
- Warming up (Geeves *et al.* 2014: 11; Rabie 2013: 54).

Mental preparation:

- Time to self (Rabie 2013: 54; Geeves *et al.* 2014: 11);
- Visualising the recital to establish focus (Geeves *et al.* 2014: 11; Rabie 2013: 54);
- Inspecting the performance environment (Geeves *et al.* 2014: 11; Rabie 2013: 54).

Aspects such as which foods to eat, which to avoid, and when to eat and drink before a recital, is very important in the physical preparation of a musician before a performance. Additionally, the physical appearance, grooming and choice of clothes may add to self-confidence and are regarded to contribute to both physical and mental preparation before a concert (Geeves *et al.* 2014: 11; Rabie 2013: 54).

During my honours research project, I became aware of the importance of rehearsing with fellow musicians, a process which establishes a connection between the musicians (Rabie 2013: 12). Within the rehearsal, non-verbal gestures develop spontaneously between musicians. In this process, similar musical expressions in each of the performers' rendition of the music are cultivated whilst the music pieces are studied and learnt (Ginsborg, Chaffin & Nicholson 2006; Williamon & Davidson 2002).

Geeves *et al.* (2014: 12) stresses the importance of post-performance routines which allows musicians to "detach" themselves from the performance as well as to recover from the high energy and adrenaline demand. These routines include having a "debrief" session with fellow musicians – spending time alone to reflect on the performance – as well as to interact with audience members afterwards. Pre-and post-performance routines are regarded as critical to help musicians to separate themselves from their on-stage persona to 'who they are' off stage. Additionally, these routines help to better equip musicians to handle criticism after a performance (Geeves *et al.* 2014: 15).

2.6 Spontaneity in performance

Spontaneity in performance adds a vital component to the aesthetic nature of music. Riggs (2010: 174) asserts that there is "power" in spontaneous performances. Nachmanovitch (1989) explains this power of spontaneity in performances as follows:

> There is something energizing and challenging about being one-to-one with the audience and creating a piece of work that has both the freshness of the fleeting moment – and – when everything is working – the structural tautness and symmetry of a living organism. It can be a remarkable and often moving experience in direct communication.
>
> (Nachmanovitch 1989: 4)

Csepregi (2013), who explores the notion of 'play' in a music performance setting, echoes this view by asserting that play within a music context draws on the creative abilities of the human body namely "spontaneity, sensibility and imaginative anticipation" (Csepregi 2013: 97). This author states that musicians experience more satisfaction provided by a "playful" performance and that they thereby experience the body as a "source of creative power and original performance" (Csepregi 2013: 98).

Improvisation in jazz music is often seen as a spontaneous “kind of music making” (Gould & Keaton 2000: 144). However, Gould and Keaton (2000: 145) argue that improvisation is conceptually independent from spontaneity since a player will respond to “a variety of events” during performance. These events not only include melody and harmony but also factors such as phrasing, dynamics, tone and timbre which arise during the moment of the performance. Therefore, due to spontaneous events taking place in real-time on stage, musical and communicative elements vary considerably even within the same work from performance to performance, by the same musician. Thus, it is crucial for musicians to develop effective co-performer partnerships.

2.7 Theoretical framework: ‘Grounding’ to build co-performer partnerships

Non-verbal information is a “critical communicative force” between co-performers, and between performer and audience (Davidson & Coulam 2006: 184). Authors such as Imberty and Gratier (2008) as well as Schogler (1999) indicate that non-verbal communication develops from a very early stage in human beings’ lives, which involves the mother-infant interaction. This notion is referred to by Clark and Brennan (1991: 223) as “grounding”. Gratier (2008) and Schogler (1999) studied the communication processes between jazz musicians while they are improvising. Gratier’s study involves how musical expression during an improvisation is perceived and conceived by musicians using non-verbal gestures, based upon the findings of Clark and Brennan’s theory of “grounding”. Gratier (2008: 85) indicates that, for this moment-to-moment interaction between musicians to happen, they (the musicians) need to share a “common ground”. This “common ground” involves “mutual knowledge, beliefs and assumptions”. Gratier further explains that jazz musicians who play together on a regular basis in public are more likely to have “common ground” between them, thus communication and expressive gestures are easily understood from musician to musician, creating a conversational collaboration.

Schogler (1999: 75) states that communication and “exchanging of information” occur naturally between musicians playing music. Improvised music is created by “real-time communicative temporal co-ordination” between the two musicians and that this

interaction occurs every day between “live person-to-person-communication” (Schogler 1999: 82). Gratier reiterates that there is a conversation-like interaction between musicians, as well as between musicians and an audience, and that an audience could affect this interaction (Gratier 2008: 83).

In this study, I will use the theory of ‘grounding’ as point of departure during the investigation of duo partnerships between jazz vocalists and pianists.

2.8 Summary of chapter

The literature review commenced with the artistry of jazz vocals, comprising vocal improvisation and interpretation. These aspects were discussed to emphasise the uniqueness of the nature of jazz. Research on stage behaviour in the form of stage presence and body language showed that these are vital aspects within stage performance. The role of the accompanist, focussing on role playing and familiarity resulted in crucial factors which should be taken into account within my research. Accompaniment of the jazz vocalist, specifically, was a field mentioned less off often in the literature review. The accompanist’s perspective has been touched on but not enough is known from the vocalist’s perspective. The preparation for stage performances showed important pre-and post-practice routines being pointed out with spontaneity in performance as a vital concept. Lastly, ‘Grounding’ to build co-performer partnerships was discussed.

It is marked from the literature review that the rapport between jazz vocalist and pianist is a field which has not been widely investigated. Chapter 3 explains the data method and strategies used to conduct the study of the unique collaboration between jazz vocalist and pianist.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

Considering the research problem and questions, I have selected the most appropriate research approach and design, as well as suitable data collection strategies and methods for data analysis for this investigation. Each of these aspects are motivated and described in the following sections.

3.2 Research approach

Using a qualitative research approach, the researcher attempts to collect data of a phenomenon within a specific situation or context in order to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena being researched through observer participation (Nieuwenhuis 2011b: 50). This approach involves the study of “human problems”, gathering “up-close” information by interacting personally with participants within their own natural setting (Creswell 2009: 44). Therefore, the research topic leads the researcher through its own processes. The emphasis is put on the quality of the research rather than the quantity (Nieuwenhuis 2011b: 50). Explaining a specific phenomenon requires the researcher to intricately gather data from multiple sources rather than relying on a single data source, after which the data are categorized by identifying themes and patterns in order to draw conclusions (Creswell 2009: 45; Stake 2000: 43).

In the current study, I made use of the qualitative research approach as it assisted me to focus on better understanding the unique interaction and mutual understanding between a jazz vocalist and pianist. I personally interacted with the chosen participants to ascertain their lived experiences in real-life situations. The qualitative research paradigm was applicable because of the intentional subjectivity of the research topic, which draws upon specific, subjective and individual experiences of the participants.

3.3 Research design

As researcher, I had to find an appropriate research design to organise and collect data. Case study research is a type of design within a qualitative approach, which concerns the study of a specific circumstance or situation in a real-life setting (Creswell 2013: 97). A case study seeks to answer predominantly “why” and “how” questions (Nieuwenhuis 2011c: 75). According to Rule and John (2011:4), a case study is “a systematic and in-depth investigation of a *particular instance in its context* in order to generate knowledge”. This in-depth understanding of the research topic is provided through a variety of data gathering techniques which produces detailed descriptions and analysis (Creswell 2009: 98; Rule & John 2011: 7)

In a collective case study, a specific issue is being investigated by including multiple cases, thereby illustrating the particular research topic or concern from several perspectives. In the current study, a collective case study was chosen through the selection of several similar cases serving as examples of the main phenomenon in conjunction with the qualitative research approach (Creswell 2013: 99). This design is specifically applicable in this study due to its broader approach, the emphasis on finding answers to “why” and “how” questions, and the requirement for me as researcher to be critically reflective during this process (Nieuwenhuis 2011a: 82). The specific case which has been investigated in the current study is the professional and musical relationship between a jazz vocalist and pianist during performances.

3.4 Sampling strategy

A purposive sampling strategy is the selection of specific participants according to pre-requisite criteria applicable to the research question (Nieuwenhuis 2011a: 79; Rule & John 2011: 64). According to Creswell (2013), there are three matters to consider when using purposive sampling in qualitative research:

- The participants in the sample;
- The types of sampling;
- The sample size.

(Creswell 2013: 155–157)

It is essential that the participants are chosen based on their knowledge and experience of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell 2013: 155) since this will enable them to provide intimate details and perspectives of the research problem. Therefore, the specific choice of individuals selected as participants is vital (Creswell 2013: 156). In Creswell's (2013: 157) view, four or five cases are the ideal number to include in a collective case study.

Considering the aspects referred to in the above paragraphs, and focussing on the specific research problem I wanted to investigate, a purposive sampling strategy was the therefore ideal for the current study (Rule & John 2011: 64). I included prominent jazz vocalists as research participants and chose these participants according to the following criteria namely that they:

- are regarded as experts in the field of jazz performance;
- possess extensive experience working with different jazz pianists;
- have all recorded and performed as part of piano-vocal partnerships.

In order to obtain a broader and varied viewpoint of the research topic, I included both local and international as well as male and female vocalists, because the combination of these participants had the potential to provide "different perspectives" (Creswell 2009: 100). Three South African (two female, one male) and three international (two female, one male) jazz vocalists were selected. I was able to derive ample data from these six participants due to their expertise and experience regarding the research problem.

3.5 Data collection techniques

Some data collection techniques within a qualitative approach include interviews, observations, focus groups, documents, and artefacts (Nieuwenhuis 2011a: 82). Several of these data collection strategies have been chosen in the current study to obtain a varied perspective of the research topic. These include semi-structured interviews, artefacts, and observations.

3.5.1 Individual semi-structured interviews

Conducting an interview is the most common form of data collection in qualitative research and is often found in case studies (Rule & John 2011: 64). A semi-structured interview requires the participant to answer pre-determined questions but allows for elaboration, clarification and new lines of enquiry (Nieuwenhuis 2011a: 87). The researcher needs to be responsive to the answers of the participants in order to identify and develop new ideas to the phenomenon being studied, yet attentive to keeping the focus on the research topic in order to avoid getting side-tracked by other perspectives or ideas (Nieuwenhuis 2011a: 87).

I compiled a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix A) which I used as a guide to conduct a once off individual interview with each of the six participants. Each interview took sixty to ninety minutes. *Skype* and face-to-face interviews were arranged in advance to take place at a convenient time for each of the six participants. The interviews with the international vocalists took place via *Skype* while face-to-face interviews were conducted with the South African vocalists. The participants' experiences regarding performing in a vocal-piano duo setting were explored in a conversational manner. The planned interview questions were varied and adapted according to the unique responses of each participant, which lead to "storytelling" (Rule & John 2011: 65). According to these authors, "storytelling" allows for participants to share their personal experience on a particular event.

3.5.2 Artefacts

In qualitative research an artefact can be used to assist in the understanding and reflection of a "certain humanistic phenomenon" (Thornquist 2015: 111). According to Flick, artefacts "allow detailed recordings of facts as well as providing a more comprehensive and holistic presentation of lifestyles and conditions" (2009: 241). Onwuegbuzie, Leech and Collins (2010: 719) assert that an artefact is not subjected to an interview or focus group, yet the interpretation thereof is a key facet to the lived individual. This artefact prevails physically and cannot be separated from its creator, time or source. Therefore, it enables the researcher to use the artefact for research purposes from an objective viewpoint.

Commercially available audio- and audio-visual recordings of the participants within a jazz vocal-piano duo context were utilised as artefacts for data analysis. These video and audio recordings are freely available and accessible to the public at any time. Since I was not physically present during the production of these recordings, this data collection strategy enabled me to obtain an objective and "outsider perspective" (Nieuwenhuis 2011a: 85) on the research problem. Furthermore, I could play and replay both the audio and audio-visual clips, scrutinising the data in order to determine intricate nuances and behaviours between the two performers in each case.

3.5.3 Observation

In qualitative research, observation is one of the most significant data collection tools (Creswell 2013: 166). According to Nieuwenhuis (2011a: 83) observation is the "systematic process of recording the behavioural patterns of participants", without communicating with these participants. During observations, the researcher makes use of the senses and intuition to gather data (Nieuwenhuis 2011a: 84; Creswell 2013:166). The observations are often recorded by the researcher for technical and controlled reasons. The recordings enable the researcher to ascertain aspects according to the research questions.

My role as researcher in this study was as "complete observer" where I observed the performances "from a distance" (Nieuwenhuis 2011a: 85). The purpose was to "capture the liveliness […] of behaviour" (Rule & John 2011: 67), which involved the interaction between jazz vocalist and pianist. Therefore, I attended a public performance of two of the South African vocalists, where these musicians performed within a jazz vocal-piano duo at each of the two concerts. Additionally, during my attendance of these two public performances, I video recorded each of these performances. The purpose of these recordings was to enable me to study the performances again and to reflect in more detail in case I missed some aspects during the live performances. I compiled an observation protocol (see Appendix B) which enabled me to focus on particular aspects related to the collaboration between the pianist and vocalist.

3.6 Trustworthiness, crystallisation and validity

In qualitative research the aim is to seek a human understanding of a phenomenon being studied. Thus, findings will not be measurable or calculated and deal with diverse perspectives which describe the unique experiences of different participants (Nieuwenhuis 2011a:81). It is crucial for the researcher to reflect on the trustworthiness of the research (Nieuwenhuis 2011a: 113) in order to produce findings which are credible and plausible (Tracy 2010: 843). The use of different data collection techniques (Nieuwenhuis 2011a: 113) enables the researcher to have an end goal of "rich rigor" (Tracy 2010: 843). The term 'crystallisation' is often used in qualitative studies and refers to a crystal which has countless possibilities of reflections from different sides in comparison to triangulation that is seen to have a "fixed point" (Nieuwenhuis 2011a: 81; Polsa 2013: 77; Tracy 2010: 844). The aim of crystallisation is to unlock a more intricate, yet an in-depth understanding of the issue being researched (Polsa 2013: 77; Tracy 2010: 844).

The research findings from the various methods of data collection – which in this study included individual interviews, performance observation as well as audio and DVD recordings – assisted me to obtain a deep understanding of the phenomenon of mutual understanding between vocalist and pianist, specifically the human constructs thereof. Therefore, the outcome of the study has not been "exact, measurable finding[s]", but rather the description of an "emergent reality" (Nieuwenhuis 2011a: 81), or a reinterpreted understanding of the phenomenon. Findings emerged through the "crystallisation" from the data, and therefore add to the trustworthiness of the research (Nieuwenhuis 2011a: 81).

Validating the findings of research is a vital aspect to ensure that the research conducted is credible (Creswell 2013: 124). In the current study, validity was ensured via member checking. According to Creswell, member checking transfers validity "from the researcher to [the] participants" (2013:127). A transcript of each interview was sent to the individual participants in order for them to verify the accuracy of their responses.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Participation in this study was entirely voluntary. All aspects related to ethical considerations were included in the letter of informed consent (see Appendix C), which were discussed with participants before they agreed to participate

Although the participants have all been acknowledged for their significance and contribution to the raw data collected for this study, each participant was assigned a unique code in order to ensure that their specific views are not linked to their individual identities.

3.8 Data analysis technique

The process of data analysis in a qualitative study is a complex and reiterative process (Creswell 2013; Nieuwenhuis 2011; Rule & John 2011; Tracy 2010). Other than in quantitative research, which involves the measuring of data within a controlled environment such as a laboratory, qualitative data aims at studying human behaviour and therefore undergoes an intricate analysis process (Rule & John 2011: 60) in order to identify themes and patterns (Creswell 2013: 157).

Thematic analysis involves the recognition of patterns within the raw data (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006: 89). By scrutinising the data, reading and rereading it several times, “emerging themes become the categories for analysis” (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006: 82) The first step in the process of data analysis, according to Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, is to identify codes. Thereafter the codes are further examined to identify broad themes. In qualitative research themes are “broad units of information” consisting of numerous codes to form a “common idea” (Creswell 2013: 186). The main themes therefore consist of sub-themes, including underlying themes, which are more manageable for the researcher to describe in writing.

In order to prepare the data for analysis, interviews were transcribed and observational data compiled after which all data sources were scrutinised to identify themes and categories (Marshall & Rossman 2011: 209). Thereafter the technique of “coding” was used by choosing certain “labels” through making analytical and systematic decisions about the data collected through the various research instruments (Rule & John 2011:

77). The next step was to group the labelled codes into categories in order to find similarities, differences or “code absence” (Rule & John 2011: 78).

3.9 Summary of chapter

This chapter explained and motivated the choice of research approach design and data collection methods used to conduct the study. Chapter 4 will include the results from the various data collection instruments.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the results from the transcribed semi-structured interviews as well as the observations and analysis of the artefacts which include audio and audio-visual recordings of the participants. By implementing the reiterative process of data analysis as explained in the previous chapter, “themes” could be generated, which is the core of “thematic analysis” (Rule & John 2011: 78). The main themes, sub-themes and underlying themes are described in depth in the following sections.

4.2 Results from the interview data

The main objective of the interview data was to find out what the experiences of the participants are with regards to the jazz vocalist and pianist collaboration during duo performances. I tried to find out which factors influence the collaboration on stage and how the duo achieves a mutual understanding in the moment of performance. Furthermore, the setting of the performance e.g. studio, live and rehearsal space are discussed.

Four main themes emerged from the data, which encompasses another fifteen sub-themes. Every theme is supported by direct quotations from the participants. The participants’ responses were typed verbatim. When certain words were stressed during an interview, such words are indicated in bold text.

The four main themes are:

- Individuality and identity
- Interactive relationships
- Musicianship
- The present moment

4.2.1 Main theme 1: Individuality and identity

Following an in-depth analysis of the data the first main theme to emerge is individuality and identity. This theme comprises the self-identity of specifically the vocalist, which can be regarded as a critical aspect to contribute to the duo performance. The theme presents four sub-themes with underlying themes. These include self-contentment within performances, being true to oneself, the vocalist and the lyrics, and lastly, self-preparation. Table 1 provides a summary of theme 1 with its sub-themes and underlying themes, adding raw data to support the identification of each sub-theme.

Table 1: Main theme 1 – Individuality and identity

	Sub-themes	Underlying themes	Evidence of raw data
1.1	Self-contentment with performances	• Enjoyment • Open to the experience • Face the unknown	"For me it's really just being opened to the experience…" (Participant D)
1.2	Being true to oneself	• Honesty • Inhibitions • Ego • Identity • Internal factors • Gender	"It's about staying within me, it's not about leaving myself." (Participant C) "To be able to be vulnerable and genuine." (Participant D)
1.3	The vocalist and the lyrics	• Learning method • Storytelling	"You just need to know your goddamn story very well. And tell it." (Participant C)
1.4	Self-preparation		"You want to make sure that all your ducks are in a row." (Participant F)

4.2.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1: Self-contentment within the performance

Being content and at ease with factors within the performance environment emerged as critical for the vocalist to deliver a successful duo performance.

Enjoyment

It was evident from the interview data that the enjoyment of duo performances is essential. The following examples provide evidence of this theme through the direct words of four of the participants:

> I like the piano & vocal duo combination. (Participant B)
>
> I think it's the greatest opportunity in the world to have the chance to perform like that actually. (Participant C)
>
> I had always loved doing duets, it was something that I had always done in performance, even when I had big bands I would always come and do one, at least one duet in a performance. And for me that was the highlight of the show, always. (Participant D)
>
> Some really cool things can happen there. So I do in essence enjoy playing duo. […] I love songs where I do the intro with just piano and voice. (Participant F)

One participant stated that, although he enjoys working in a duo setup, it is not his preference for performance.

> I do enjoy duo work but I do prefer playing with a band more. Simply because I like the foundation that a rhythm section gives. It gives me more freedom whereas there's a lot more responsibility on each player in a duo setting. (Participant A)

Open to the experience

It was stated that a vocalist needs to be receptive to the duo experience.

> […] for me it's really just being opened to the experience […] that is a very, very important thing. I think it is the open-ness, the feeling of being open to the possibilities of what this collaboration could be. (Participant D)

Face the unknown

The aspect of not knowing what could happen during a performance was identified as a key factor. This can be interpreted that a vocalist needs to be content within him or herself to be able to face the unknown. Three out of the six participants specified the unknown:

> It's a matter of being safe in the room of the insecurity, or not the insecurity, but in the room of the not knowing what exactly will happen – you need to feel good about that and you need most of all to just be extremely present […] feeling good about not knowing what outcome it might be. It's very much about trusting and about feeling, I think about feeling safe in the 'not knowing' a lot. See what happens. (Participant C)

> […] but you know that's the thrill of it too for me, that it's always changing. […] So a lot of the time I was really listening and thinking "Oh my gosh I don't even know, I don't know what was going to happen"! I had no idea what treatment this person was going to use, I had no idea whether they were going to do a solo or not, I had no idea if this is going to work or not…you know and I think that was the coolest part of this project, that it was absolutely just completely random and then the tape caught what it caught. (Participant D)

> I revel in the fact that I don't know how the tune is going to turn out, and I don't know what I'm going to do. (Participant F)

The finding that can be derived from data analysis is that, for the best result on stage, a vocalist needs to emerge him or herself in the unknown of the duo performance and enjoy it at the same time.

4.2.1.2 Sub-theme 1.2: Being true to oneself

The second sub-theme emerging from the data is that the vocalist should be true to him or herself as a person. One of the respondents commented as follows:

> […] it's about staying within me, it's not about leaving myself. (Participant C)

Data analysis revealed several underlying themes related to this sub-theme, which include honesty, inhibitions, ego, identity, internal factors and gender. These aspects will be discussed according to bullet points below.

Honesty

Participant C in particular expressed very passionately that, to be honest as a person within the music, is a crucial factor in stage performance. The following three quotes from this participant corroborates this finding:

> I like it to be honest you know. I think it's, for me, it's more honest when I cut it to the bone and tell the story. It's really once you've done it it's out of your hands, you can just go, [throws hands up in the air] you know. If someone likes it, it's great! But actually when you're in that moment you don't really care. Because this is it. And it's honest and some people will like it and some people probably won't. But as long as you feel that it's an honest example of **you** or how **you** would do it. (Participant C)

> […] you don't want anyone telling other people's story or what other people find interesting, we want to know who **you** are deep inside, you know. Your soul. They just want a bite of you, and whatever that is, it might be nice, it might also be ugly, who cares? As long as it's honest… it doesn't need to be pretty all the time. (Participant C)

> And it's very much about also having to some extent letting go of your fear. The more you can let go of your fear and be who you are… (Participant C)

This outlook could perhaps have influenced this participant's success as jazz vocalist, especially within a duo setting.

Inhibitions and self-confidence

For the individual to be aware of his or her own inhibitions was identified as an important factor contributing to individuality as a performer. Three participants mentioned being comfortable and having self-confidence – and the effect of this confidence on the performer's surroundings and other performers on stage:

> If somebody is uncomfortable it's going to make you uncomfortable. (Participant A)

> If you are confident the whole band will be more confident. There's nothing worse I presume than a nervous singer because the whole band would be so afraid, that they will try to support as much as they can you know. […] So the more in tune you are, or the more balanced and calm. It's about that. (Participant C)

> Because I find a lot of the time that singers are first of all, insecure, we [vocalists] get insecure and often can't communicate clearly to musicians […] (Participant F)

Instead of being uncomfortable and having inhibitions, the vocalist should aspire to be calm and to 'let things happen'.

> It's very much about being relaxed and not being pushy or not being too controlled, it will create a stiff vibe, it will be annoying you know. (Participant C)

Two participants maintained that, the less a performer is concerned with what other people and even the audience and other musicians think, the better the outcome of the performance will be.

> It's about how together am I! And how little do I care about anything, you know. [It's not about] starting to think about what someone would think about me or how do I look in this light… (Participant C)

> […] one has got to be so mindful not to be too concerned with what the audience is looking like or how the audience is feeling or what the audience [is doing], is it responding, is it not responding? (Participant F)

Ego

Participant C in particular commented on a musician's 'ego' as being a detrimental factor in performances.

> And you're trying to raise it above your ego or your, what can you say, your personal appearance, if you can say that. (Participant C)

> And to serve music best you need to leave that stuff off stage, leave your ego as well, off stage. That would definitely make the best result on stage. (Participant C)

> Not getting too caught up in your own sound, you know, filling up all the space. (Participant C)

The same participant indicated a personal perspective regarding the 'discarding of the ego'.

> I don't have to phrase a lot and I don't have to do long notes or sing very high to show that I can do that. It's not a show off thing, it's about telling the story and doing what feels right and you might succeed or you might not. (Participant C)

Identity

The following comments relate to how the participants view their personal identities or personalities, and in which way this has an impact on their musical personalities or identities:

> How you are as a person filters in to how you are as a performer or instrumentalist or a singer. So it's got to do with personality. The way somebody plays in general, even if they're playing by themselves, some of their personality comes through in what they do. So it's got a lot to do with personality. (Participant A)

> It is part of our personalities. (Participant B)

> You cannot separate the soul and the story of the singer. (Participant C)

> Most people sound like they are, you know. Someone once said, 'you look exactly what you sound like'. And I was, 'oh, I take it as a compliment!' (Participant C)

> It also depends on who you are and how you sing and how you phrase. (Participant C)

Internal factors

Internal factors influencing the performer as a person were mentioned by two participants. The participants indicated that these are factors which cannot be explained, although it influences them within a specific context, specific day or specific moment.

> Some evenings I'm not together as I can be. For some odd reason, it could be anything, you know. And it's very hard to explain why. And to me a successful evening is not a matter of number of audience [members] – of course that's nice if there's a lot of audience [members], but actually [its] about my state of, how can you say, presence-ness, I don't know if you can say that, but, even with the very best piano player, I'm not quite content with my own performance or presence – not often – but it happens! (Participant C)

> Sometimes other things are getting in the way…whether it be something internal that I am dealing with or something. (Participant D)

Gender

Gender was specified in the interviews of two participants in different ways. One participant was rather negative about the skill level of female accompanists during a specific event, although this cannot be regarded as a general finding.

> I played a gig recently with a lot of women, and it wasn't half the joy because, [although] it was lovely to play with women, […] they don't have the level of the musicians that I normally play with. And they took so much of my joy also because some of the songs were started in wrong keys and things like that. (Participant C)

One of the participants spoke about discrimination against female vocalists and the effect it could have on communication with other musicians during performances:

> [Female] singers can't communicate effectively to musicians who are often men. Like, 'this is what we want', because jazz is so male dominated, sometimes singers are not taken seriously, and this and that. So you walk into it already at a point of disadvantage […], or at a point of discrimination, because you're a woman, you're a singer, blah blah blah blah… So we tend to play it safe. (Participant F)

4.2.1.3 Sub-theme 1.3: The vocalist and the lyrics

The participants indicated that, being truly connected to the lyrics and what the lyrics mean to them as a person, is one of the key factors in performance. The method of learning a song, as well as storytelling, emerged as the underlying aspects related to this sub-theme.

Method of learning new song lyrics

Methods of learning new song lyrics were specified by two participants.

> I need to work a lot on one song, you know, when learning the song, for me it's like reading a thick novel because I go through the lyric and I speak it as a monologue for like fifty times. Until I get the Goosebumps and then I can say 'oh there I meant it, there I said it the way I would say it'. And that might take fifty or a hundred times walking in the woods, actually just talking or quoting or resuscitating the lyrics. (Participant C)

> I see them like, it's like a film, I see it like a film, like in pictures, I have pictures of all the lyrics. And then that happened, and then something flew down and the sun was shining and a bird came…you know so it's always…which is why I sometimes look really stupid when I sing because I'm like…looking to the sky… (Participant C)

> […] because I am a technical person, I like to know the lyric, and then forget the lyric. But it is still inside you, it is still informing your decision on some level. (Participant D)

> I'm constantly realising at a different level or a deeper level what they [the song lyrics] actually mean. I'm continually rediscovering songs that I think I know, you know when you really look at a lyric, and you really get inside of it and I think that's a lifelong process that I'm very happy to be part of. (Participant D)

For these performers, the time they spend with a specific song and how they experience and interpret the lyrics are the most important aspect in order to become familiar with the text. For them, this is vital in order to interpret the song. Additionally, the interpretation of song lyrics could change over time, becoming a "lifelong process" as participant D mentioned.

Story telling through song lyrics

Using the lyrics to tell a personal story was revealed as a crucial factor for vocalists to create a personal and individual musical identity.

> Because you're the one who's telling the story. I'm the custodian of the story. My voice is the custodian of the story. (Participant F)

Participant C reiterated on numerous occasions the importance for her to tell her story by means of the lyrics during performances.

> It's simply about getting the lyric and telling a story. (Participant C)

> It's just like being really connected to the lyric and the storytelling. My singing, and that's what I find great about singing, that's having the words to tell the story. (Participant C)

> It's about knowing the words, and telling the story and not skipping the essence of the words. (Participant C)

> I think the words and stories are the most [important], and the connection within that. (Participant C)

> It's telling the story, talking to them [the audience]. (Participant C)

> You don't want anyone telling other people's story or what other people find interesting, we [the audience] want to know who **you** are deep inside, you know, your soul. (Participant C)

> I like it being naked and the storytelling of it… (Participant C)

Participant C furthermore indicated that it is more important for her as a vocalist to focus on conveying the lyrics of the song rather than the technicalities of singing.

> A lot of people are very much into the techniques [vocal technique]. It's just quite, I think, boring…to listen to. […] Their focus is all: 'now I'm doing this, and now I'm going into this register'. […] It's a story! And that's what it's about. And being so technical will definitely take away the intention from telling the story. (Participant C)

Continuing the discussion, participant C indicated that, when the vocalist stops thinking about the technicalities of singing and emphasises the lyrical content of the song, the performance will be enhanced.

> That's when the music takes over, and you stop thinking, that's when it happens. When the music takes over and the story and the pictures, […then] there is nothing else to worry about. I can completely see my own pictures and tell my story. (Participant C)

4.2.1.4 Sub-theme 1.4: Being well prepared

In order for a musician to perform at a professional level, the aspect of being well prepared emerged as the next sub-theme. Two participants revealed the importance of being well prepared.

> Well you need, on a very basic level off course, you need to know your tune very well and you need to know your stuff of course. (Participant C)

> You just need to know your goddamn story very well. And tell it. (Participant C)

> You want to make sure that all your ducks are in a row. (Participant F)

Corresponding with the sub-theme of being well prepared for performances, the importance of multiple repetitions and practicing was mentioned:

> When learning the song, for me it's like reading a thick novel because I go through the lyric and I speak it as a monologue for like fifty times. (Participant C)

> Practicing and doing it over and over and over and over […] until you get better at it. (Participant F)

Through analysing the interview transcriptions, it was clear that being well-prepared was regarded as being the first step in order for a vocalist to become immersed in the music so that music making can take place on stage.

> So you have to learn, get to know, whatever you work on, get to know your stuff and then back off. (Participant C)

> Beyond being experienced, it's about being prepared. Because that enhances everything, it just makes you worry about a lot less things. And then all your energy is then put towards the music and creating the music and creating something beautiful. (Participant F)

One of the participants made a comparison between a personal life and a professional life in order to express feelings about being well prepared for performances.

> Like, in my personal life I need to make sure that my bed is made and then I can have a really great day. But if my bed is not made then I'm going to bed like 'oh my gosh my bed's not made' and I can't make creative decisions. And I think I am the same way in my professional life. I just realised that, that I am exactly the same way! I kind of want all the T's crossed and I's dotted, I want the music to be clear, you know, all of my charts are in Finale [Music notation software programme], everything is clear. (Participant D)

Warming up the voice and having a range of repertoire ready are additional aspects which relate to the theme of being well prepared for performances.

> So it is important to do the necessary, to warm yourself up, to have your repertoire ready, you know, to have an idea at least of what you want to sing and how you want the different feel and that kind of thing. (Participant F)

> In a way you need to think out [ahead], you need to vary it a little more in your singing. You need to pick out different tunes that shows different things… (Participant C)

4.2.2 Main theme 2: Interactive relationships

The second main theme which emerged from the data was identified as interactive relationships. This theme comprises the social aspect between the vocalist and pianist, outlining crucial factors which were indicated by the participants. This theme presents six sub-themes, each encompassing underlying themes. A summary of the sub-themes and underlying themes related to interactive relationships are displayed in table 2, after which each sub-theme is described.

Table 2: Main theme 2 – Interactive relationships

	Sub-themes	Underlying themes	Evidence of raw data
2.1	Mutual admiration	• Fortunate to perform with skilled pianists • Admiration and respect	"I'm very lucky. I've worked with some amazing pianists." (Participant D)
2.2	Familiarity in the relationship	• Experience through working together • Being friends	"A special knowledge you have about each other." (Participant C)
2.3	The team	• The lead voice • The supportive voice • Team work	"Or it's like a silky bed to lay down on. Supportive, and to establish the trust…It takes some extra compassion, the best pianists – they're really empathetic and they probably like to talk to you and know what is going on." (Participant C)
2.4	The two-person conversation	• The studio performance • The rehearsal	"It was just two people coming together and played for each other." (Participant D)
2.5	The three-person conversation	• The audience • Action and reaction	
2.6	Communication	• Cues, indications and gestures • Mutual listening and aural awareness • Mutual gaze • Rhythm and timing	"Jazz is all about heart, ear and foot." (Participant C quoting jazz vocalist Sheila Jordan)

4.2.2.1 Sub-theme 2.1: Mutual admiration

This sub-theme implicates that, within the most successful duo collaborations, a mutual feeling of admiration is present between the vocalist and pianist.

Fortunate to perform with skilled pianists

All six participants stated that they feel fortunate to be able to work with the pianists they do.

> I just have complete faith that John [name of pianist] is going to do exactly what I want. I don't know if it makes sense…or maybe I'm just **really** lucky! (Participant B)

> I have a pianist that I work with regularly and we don't even have to be in the same city, we can just jam something. (Participant A)

> I'm very lucky in this country because there are some really good musicians. I have two favourite piano players, […] I'm very lucky to be able to play with some of the very best. […] I'm privileged! (Participant C)

> I'm very lucky. I've worked with some amazing pianists. (Participant D)

> I was lucky enough to play with incredible musicians right from the very beginning of my career and that has made me what I am today. (Participant D)

> I was fortunate to have many years with Laurence Hobgood [Name of pianist] as my collaborative partner. (Participant E)

Admiration and respect

The participants – who are all vocalists – showed unfaltering and committed admiration for the pianists that they are currently working with.

> I have literally been looking for a pianist like John my entire career. (Participant B)

> He's the singer's first choice! […] And he's absolutely amazing. (Participant C)

> I've worked with some amazing pianists; Dave Brubeck, and Hank Jones, and Benny Green, and Mulgrew Miller, and Oscar Peterson even, and to me, every time I get to work with those gentlemen, it's special for me. It really is. (Participant D)

> What they did was so perfect! (Participant D)

> [My pianist], who's just a gifted, gifted musician and gifted pianist. (Participant F)

> He's [the pianist] just got such a keen kind of interpretation and stuff for jazz and for accompanying singers and for a mood. (Participant F)

> I am not sure if I will ever be given that level of natural sympathy again, although I shall certainly try. (Participant E)

The participants remarked on the importance of respect between the pianist and vocalist in a duo setting. Some remarks are shared below.

> So John [pianist] was a tremendous relief and I just had a huge respect [for him] because he knows exactly. Basically we just had the same idea of what we wanted to hear and then it turned out that he also liked what I was doing. (Participant B)

> The most remarkable part of the project for me was that even though these guys had tremendous careers, for decades before me. Working with me was the last thing, it would not even be on their bios [biographies]. They all gave me a hundred percent. They came in as collaborators, there was never a feeling of, 'oh I'm just going to play the tune and she is just going to do what she…' – they all supported me a thousand percent in the studio and it was remarkable. (Participant D)

The following participant expressed that a vocalist should always maintain an appreciation for the pianist and other musicians by treating them with respect.

> You need to make sure to treat them well and not be a 'bitch' singer or give them space and regard them, give them your credits…always treat them well, I always thought [this] because we're nowhere without them, you know. (Participant C)

4.2.2.2 Sub-theme 2.2: Familiarity in the relationship

Another sub-theme which relates to interactive relationships is familiarity. This refers to the aspects which both partners are acquainted with within the collaboration.

Experience through working together

The participants expressed that experience through working together as a duo allows each partner to anticipate certain aspects during performance.

> He knows because he's played with me a number of times, so he has a very strong idea of where I'm going […]. If I'm singing a certain phrase then he's like: 'oh, that's where he usually goes with this so let's go there'. So that's a more of an experience thing I suppose. (Participant A)

> But I pretty much know when the solo is over. Because it is part of my experience and we have been working together. (Participant B)

> We know each other very well through a decade now and we've been playing a lot and touring. But he always has such focus on me and he knows every breath I take and if I do like this with my little finger he will, he knows…because he's actually, he never looks into the charts […] his head is always up on you which is why I love playing with him. (Participant C)

> But I think well, definitely there are pianists who I can absolutely tell where they are in their process by watching them. But then again, it's experience with them, working with them. (Participant D)

> And so when I, I know that, because we've worked together for so many years while we were at varsity, that we have that kind of energy that transfer without having to speak about it. (Participant F)

Being friends

The participants specified that interplay between the vocalist and pianist are heightened if the pair know each other, and even more so if they are friends.

> If you're acquainted with somebody or you're friends with somebody then you're a lot more comfortable in a performance setting. (Participant A)

> He's probably one of the persons that knows me the best. He knows on stage as well, every breath I take, you know. And we have much in common, there are so much humour and knowledge between us that has been built up throughout more than a decade and you can definitely feel that. (Participant C)

> I think it's heightened if you are personal acquaintances and more so if you're friends. […] the more we became friends the better we understand each other musically as well. So there are strange things coming into play, like now we are friends, so…and that translates into the music. (Participant F)

The following participant describes being friends with the pianist as follows:

> So it's always like a neat balance. (Participant C)

Participant D elaborated on experiences that were shared by performing with various pianists:

> As people they have been through terrible things with me, they have been through great things with me. They've been on stage with me when I've had no voice and been sick as a dog and just trying to get through it. They've been on stage with me when I've had incredible triumphs, I love them. (Participant D)

For a vocalist to be in a romantic relationship with the pianist, and the effect which this has on the performance, was alluded to in the following comment:

> It could also be an advantage if you're going out, and it could also be an advantage to be on stage together. There might be funny energies going on or you might be a little allured with each other. (Participant C)

Two participants expressed possible negative effects of knowing each other.

> It is usually better [to know the duo partner] although it can certainly shade one's opinion of a collaborator if he or she has shown themselves to be unprepared for deep [musical] adventures. (Participant E)

> For me it's like, I have a relationship with you [the pianist] off the stage, but it's very different criteria for being my friend on stage. (Participant D)

4.2.2.3 Sub-theme 2.3: The team

The jazz vocalist-pianist duo comprises a team of two musicians. According to the participants, the lead voice and supportive accompanist are the most significant roles present in the duo relationship. Both partners fulfil these roles at different times within

the collaboration. Some participants referred to both the vocalist and the pianist as having 'voices', i.e. the lead voice and the supporting 'voice', although the pianist does not physically use his or her human voice in the performance.

> There is then a 'lead' voice and a 'supportive' voice. (Participant E)

The lead voice

The vocalist is most commonly seen as the leader within the piano-vocal duo partnership.

> As in any collaborative relationship of this kind there still needs to be a leader at any one time. More often than not, when the singer is actually singing he or she is that lead voice. (Participant E)

> And then one of our jobs as singers is to be the leader. It doesn't matter whether it is the piano player – when you're singing your song, you're the leader. Always. You have the microphone. Because if you don't lead it, it's going to be a mess. (Participant D)

> My belief is that, in any formation, be it a big band or be it an orchestra, a trio or duo, the moment there's a vocalist then everybody else becomes accompaniment. Especially if it's a song where there's lyrical content. Everybody else, no matter how big the ensemble is, they are accompanists. So more so, when it's just the voice and the piano. (Participant F)

Participants further described ways in which they, as vocalists, presume the role as 'leader'.

> I'm a stronger leader. I would find myself conducting even if I don't need to. Waving my arms! […] So I would often prompt something in a *rubato* section rather than wait for somebody to do it, and then react. (Participant A)

> Occasionally I will find things are too fast or too slow. And I'll say can it be, you know… [faster or slower]. (Participant B)

> Now, it's the singer's job to be very clear to the pianist. (Participant D)

> But if I feel like that's still not what I want then we'll have the technical conversation. (Participant D)

> I think you have to be firm. (Participant F)

The supportive role

The research participants, all being established and experienced jazz vocalists, all regard the pianist to be in a supportive and accompanying role, which is prominent in the following comments.

> The pianist's role is to couch, frame, follow and amplify – through harmonic and dynamic work – the choices the singer is making. (Participant E)

> A lot of the time it's [the piano] primarily an accompaniment role. […] In a vocal duo you rely big time on the accompaniment of it so the support structure that the pianist offers. (Participant A)

> Well, the pianist is an accompanist, you know, and they have to appreciate it, they have to understand that their role is to accompany the voice. (Participant F)

It is evident from the descriptions provided by the research participants that, even though the pianist is seen in a supportive role, their skills are highly regarded and are critical for the success of the duo collaboration.

> Of course, the supporting voice carries weight and demands attention of its own and is also there to inform and lead the lead voices to envision choices he or she might otherwise not have made. (Participant E)

Some descriptions of the supportive role played by the pianist follow in the comments made by participants:

> It's [the piano] like a silky bed to lay down on. Supportive, and to establish the trust… It takes some extra compassion, the best pianists – they're really empathetic. (Participant C)

> That's what you can lean back on – piano kind of carries you or supports you… (Participant C)

> I feel like when I'm working with a good accompanist it's like having a 'safety net'…or it's like being kind of surrounded by a 'soft-landing', if you will. (Participant D)

> And when you have a good accompanist, you feel, I feel anyway, that you are completely taken care of. (Participant D)

> [the pianist is like] a colouring book… like that they leave for me an imprint on what the music is, and then I can feel free to colour however I choose to colour. (Participant D)

> So I find that the most fulfilling duo gigs is where the pianist really fills and kind of provides that cushion and that support for the voice. (Participant F)

The research participants revealed that it is crucial for them that the pianist should understand his/her role in order for the collaboration to be most successful.

> You have to be firm and the pianist has to know that, if I'm going to sing *My Funny Valentine*, I'm the custodian of the story. My voice is the custodian of the story; you are the accompaniment. And you embellish that, and you support that. And I think if you [the pianist] have a grounded understanding of that, then you make a great duo. (Participant F)

> So the gigs that really weren't very unique collaborations are those where the pianist isn't listening and is rather more concerned with their chords and how many lines they can play and you know the different voicings, irrespective of what I'm doing. (Participant F)

Team work

Although the participants indicated that each partner should fulfil a specific role within the duo setting, and that the vocalist should take the lead, they revealed that in their view, the vocalist and pianist are seen as equally important.

> It's a 50/50 because you're in it together. […] in a duo setting specifically, there's no one person who takes precedence over the other because one can't survive without the other. (Participant A)

> For me, ideally, it's collaboration, it's not me as a leader versus them [the pianist] accompanying me. (Participant D)

The participants specified that decision making within the duo collaboration is an important factor that requires both partners to be open to each other's ideas, showing mutual appreciation and acknowledgement.

> But it's important that there is openness both ways, […] I'm not supposed to be the one deciding in every tune; sometimes someone else has an idea of something, we might feel that that belongs there, and hopefully we do [have openness]. (Participant C)

> Ideally, the members [of the duo] would show mutual respect and in such discussions the best idea would 'win', regardless of which partner produced it. (Participant E)

Descriptions of how the participants perceives the team work include:

> It's like a common castle – music. [A] musical castle that you are trying to build. (Participant C)

> The best collaboration is when you're giving one hundred percent to the other person. And so I think it is giving that person all of yourself, really. It's like a relationship. (Participant D)

> It's very much a question of a musical chemistry. (Participant C)

> That's the magic of collaboration; that you're so much better together than you would be apart. (Participant D)

Trust and comfort within the duo partnership were found to be variables which develop between the vocalist and pianist. Comments from the participants describing this phenomenon include:

> To build that you have to have that structure of feeling comfortable and feeling heard. (Participant D)

> And I think it requires both individuals, both the vocalist and the pianist, to be really very comfortable with each other and with themselves. (Participant F)

> And sort of a trust as well. (Participant B)

> And so it's very much a matter of trust, very much it's a matter of trusting that you can just lean back and be safe. (Participant C)

4.2.2.4 Sub-theme 2.4: The two-person conversation

Data analysis revealed that the type of interaction a duo would experience could be compared to a conversation. This conversation depends on the setting, for example in a performance or in a rehearsal. The two-person conversation is present both when the duo is performing in a recording studio, as well as during rehearsals.

The studio performance

The recording studio space was identified as being the location where the duo is only focused on each other and having an uninterrupted, two-part conversation. The participants expressed that, since there is no audience present, they can be totally immersed in the two-part conversation and collaboration.

> Well it is because you don't have the audience, all you have is each other. (Participant B)

> So when you're in a studio it is just the two of you. (Participant C)

> When we go into a studio, it really is **just** about the conversation that I am having with this person, this piano player […]. (Participant D)

The participants elaborated on the differences between a recording studio setting and a performance setting, and what they do differently in these two settings. An aspect which is more prominent in the studio setting is intense listening.

> An even deeper level of mutual listening [is possible in the studio] than is usually possible onstage. (Participant E)

> And so it's almost like a mind meld[4], you know, in the best form of the world where they [pianists] are really so focused in on what I'm giving them that's just aural. And I am just listening to what they're playing. (Participant D)

[4] A telepathic link between two individuals

The intimacy of the studio setting was stated by two participants.

> I feel like [the studio] is much more intimate because it kind of strips away the whole performance aspect of it. (Participant D)

> It [the studio] is more intimate and you don't have that audience involvement. [The pressure] is on you to kind of create that energy that is not coming from the audience. (Participant A)

On the other hand, one participant commented that she experiences the live performance as a more intimate setting than the studio.

> A studio is not really intimate. It's fun but it's not really intimate. The live space is the most intimate of all. (Participant F)

In participant A's view, the performance between the duo does not differ between the studio setting and the live space.

> It's the same relationship, you're performing on that recording. So you would approach it the same way you would as if you were in front of an audience. (Participant A)

Some participants experience the studio setting positively while others are more negative about it. Participant C and D stated what they find enjoyable in a studio.

> And then I like that the sound is so intense. And that there is nothing else to worry about, I can completely see my own pictures and tell my story. So in a way you're more undisturbed. Of course you don't get any feedback at all. But I don't mind that. (Participant C)

> And so for me it's a very raw experience, it's a beautiful experience. (Participant D)

The following comment expresses what this participant finds to be unpleasant within the studio setting.

> To get it perfect […] is an unrealistic expectation within a live environment because if it's live, it's done. But in studio, the possibility and the fact that you are able to do it again and again can be to a detriment. (Participant F)

The studio space was also described as being an intimidating experience for singers.

> So, […] studio can be quite a daunting space on its own before you even record. (Participant F)

Rehearsal

The majority of the participants stated that they very seldom rehearse with their pianist ahead of a duo performance. Participant F stated that, especially for a gig where the duo plays jazz standards, it is not necessary for the duo to rehearse if both partners know the songs.

> We don't really rehearse standards any more. Especially when you're playing duo, you just call a tune. (Participant F)

Participant C and D explained that, by not rehearsing, this could have a positive effect on the performance to come, resulting in a more organic and spontaneous performance.

> I think that for the project, I wanted it to be as raw as possible, and again, no rehearsal. (Participant D)

> With a guy like Brian it's very good to play things you haven't rehearsed, it gets another tension; it gets another energy going on. (Participant C)

Two participants stated that rehearsals are there for the duo to get to know each other better and to enable each player to become more comfortable with each other on a personal level.

> It's about us getting used to each other in rehearsal. (Participant C)
>
> You build relationships in rehearsal you know. (Participant A)

Two participants added that rehearsals are there in order to get more comfortable with each other on a musical level as well.

> Rehearsal is wonderful; it gets them [pianists] understanding where you're coming from, you know, everyone has their own point of view. With a rehearsal they will understand that like: 'oh no, no. She actually means this thing when she does this thing, when she's indicating'. It's an indication, it's absolutely a cue'. (Participant D)

> So like I said, it's about really understanding each other and rehearsing, making the other person […] know what the music is about. You've got to give context. (Participant F)

The majority of the participants explained that rehearsals are most commonly used for going through specific music parts and for arranged music.

> You're going through the repertoire and you're lining out difficult parts. (Participant A)

> In the rehearsal we establish what we want to 'say' with the song. (Participant B)

> I think rehearsals are musically to tops and tails, you know, how the song starts and how the piece will end […]. So rehearsals are for arranged music I would say. (Participant F)

The participants indicated that during rehearsals, they have to be mindful not to over-rehearse a song as they feel it could take away some of the spontaneity during the actual performance.

> When you over-rehearse it takes away a certain something, there's a spontaneity, and because jazz is so improvisational, […] it does. (Participant B)

> If I have a run through or a rehearsal ahead of a duo concert for instance, you would never play the tunes more than necessary. (Participant C)

> You can figure it [the music] out on stage, depending how liberal you are a musician. (Participant F)

The participants in general indicated that the rehearsal develops the overall interaction between the members of the duo.

> You've spent time with that player, then that camaraderie and that interplay, even just on a personal level, comes into the performance. (Participant A)

> I do think it strengthens the collaboration if you rehearse. (Participant F)

4.2.2.5 Sub-theme 2.5: The three-person conversation

This sub-theme includes several underlying themes which will be discussed according to the following bullets.

The audience

The participants described the presence of an audience during a duo performance as having a three-person conversation.

> It's a three-part thing, you know, between you, the pianist and the audience and what's going on in-between. (Participant C)

> And when you're in performance, even though you're having the same two-person conversation on stage it's really a three-person conversation. (Participant D)

Interviews with the participants revealed that the audience changes the dynamic between the members of the duo and affects the performance.

> Like I said up front, obviously, the presence of an audience immediately changes the energy, it affects the energy. (Participant F)

> I mean, that [the audience] changes the way you play. (Participant A)

The following participant explained that it is human nature to change one's behaviour when you know someone is watching you.

> Because the audience is there, watching. When people are watching you, you are doing things differently. (Participant D)

The participants revealed that, because audiences differ from performance to performance, they have a significant influence on the duo performance.

> But audiences vary. You get audiences that are quite expressive, so you know when you do really cool things they will say something like “aah, yeah, nice” or they’ll clap, and then you get audiences that are not as responsive but not because they’re not enjoying it but it’s just a different audience. (Participant F)

The following descriptions refer to the importance of an attentive and responsive audience, which contributes to the duo being more focused on each other.

> It is always good to have an attentive and energized audience. The greater the focus in the audience, the greater one’s focus can be between players onstage. They reinforce what is happening onstage with their gift of mental energy. (Participant E)

> And I don’t even mind a tiny audience. Because often that can be magical as well. It can go both ways. And then you can have 300 people who are not particularly ‘with you’. (Participant B)

> It makes you feel better if you can feel them [the audience]. Not that they need to laugh […] it’s just nice to feel them or hear them out there. And I do think that when that happens it’s a better output because it’s everything that needs to connect. (Participant C)

The following comment emphasises the importance of the duo pair being able to adjust to different types of audiences.

> That you can adapt in an environment where the audience is great and smiling and you can also adapt in an environment where the audience is completely blank faced. (Participant F)

Action and reaction

The presence of an audience could prompt certain actions and reactions during the performance.

> Because you always, in some way, when you tell something live, you know that there are listeners and there are people taking it in, so of course you react if there’s a reaction [from the audience]. (Participant C)

> You’re going to spontaneously bust out into something if you feel that somebody in the audience needs that, or if they’ve prompted it in a way you know. (Participant A)

> So it's tricky with the audience because you have to feed off whatever energy it is, be it a quiet energy, be it a lively energy, you've got to feed off it anyway. (Participant F)

4.2.2.6 Sub-Theme 2.6: Communication

One of the most significant aspects to influence the duo collaboration was identified as communication.

> But the biggest key is communication, a lot of the time. (Participant A)

The communication between the members of the duo is mostly non-verbal. The participants viewed this as an aspect that could be developed and refined, which is clear from the following comment:

> Because a lot of the time in music, the communication is non-verbal. So you'll have to develop a way of communicating which is non-verbal but that is clear. (Participant F)

Cues, indications and gestures

The participants gave examples of how they, as a performing duo, would give physical cues to each other as part of a communication strategy.

> But then along with that, you'd gesture with your head or gesture with your [body]. (Participant A)

> It is maybe just a gesture or half turn or something. (Participant B)

> 'I'll give you a little sign when we get there, don't be afraid'. He [the pianist] will just do a little something with his head (Participant C)

> […] and then you're going to use your hand a little bit…or you're going to, you know, […] I use my body. (Participant D)

Two participants elaborated on giving vocal cues. One participant explained that during a studio recording, the vocalist and pianist were not visible to each other. As a result, all cues or indications had to be given in the way the song was performed.

> I should indicate to them what I'm feeling. Let me indicate that either with my breath, or with a melody or with intention, some kind of emotion. (Participant D)

The following participant played a concert with a blind pianist which meant that no physical cues were possible.

> So, I had to kind of, a lot of the times, stick to my guns and then also, a lot of the times, feed off what he [the pianist] was doing musically. It was very challenging initially […] (Participant A)

Mutual listening and aural awareness

One of the most important factors within the collaboration which could be derived from the interview data is mutual listening.

> Listening to each other, it's a big thing. Listen to the whole thing. Listen to yourself as well. (Participant B)

> It's always, again, the ears that determine. (Participant C)

> Is the pianist listening to you? Are you listening to the piano? […] That ability to listen to each other. (Participant F)

> Active, deep, sympathetic listening is a must. (Participant E)

The following comment alludes to the idea that, in a duo partnership, listening and aural awareness should be more important than focussing on the music score.

> So the ears should always be bigger than the eyes looking into the chart, you know. (Participant C)

The following description illustrates the experiences of one of the vocalists, where various studio recordings were made without the vocalist and pianist being able to see each other.

> It was listening to my breath […] It was all cues with just my instrument and just my breathing. And the same goes for them [the pianists]. I was listening to every single nuance, you know, were they going to continue that phrase, were they going to stop the musical motive there or were they going to continue, are they giving me more space there, are they giving me less space there, I should indicate to them what I'm feeling. Let me indicate that either with my breath, or with a melody or with intention, some kind of emotion. And so it's almost like a mind meld, you know, in the best form of the world where they are really so focused in on what I'm giving them that's just aural. And I am just listening to what they're playing. (Participant D)

Mutual gaze and eye contact

Eye contact is another important factor emerging from the data, suggesting that it contributes greatly to the musical interplay between the members of the duo.

> You can't be separate from each other, there needs to be a lot of back and forth and eye contact and musical interplay, I suppose. (Participant A)

> So definitely being able to look at each other, I think that's important. […] It's about if we play something and I look at you, you know exactly what I want you to do. It's just a human interaction and a human energy. (Participant F)

The following participant explained that, because of the improvisational nature of jazz, musicians need to have eye contact with each other in order to be alert and to adapt instantaneously.

> Anything can happen abruptly. So you need to always be looking at each other. (Participant F)

Eye contact with the audience was pointed out by one of the participants as an important communication method during a performance.

> I do actually try to connect to the audience. […] But I like having my eyes open, you know. (Participant C)

Rhythm and timing

Feeling the time, tempo, and rhythm of the music together emerged as one of the most crucial aspects when performing as a duo pair.

> I think a shared synergy, definitely, […] having a shared sense of rhythm. (Participant F)
>
> All of the elements are there: the time is there, the tempo is there. (Participant D)

The reference to rhythm in the following comments alludes to the bodily manifestation of rhythm which both performers should share.

> Sheila Jordan in New York, she always said 'Jazz is all about heart, ear and foot.' And that's the thing – if you've got the rhythm, you always know you are allowed to mess about, as long as you know where one is, you've got your ears, which are really more important than anything, and of course your heart. (Participant C)
>
> Feeling the time together. (Participant E)

4.2.3 Main theme 3: Musicianship

The third theme emerging from the data was musicianship. This theme and its related sub-themes and underlying themes are displayed in table 3 below.

Table 3: Main theme 3 – Musicianship

	Sub-theme	Underlying themes	Evidence of raw data
3.1	Musical integrity		"Both partners should be in service of the song." (Participant E)
3.2	Musical skill		
3.3	Musical experience	• Performance experience • Experience through age	"The more experienced you are, always the better." (Participant F)
3.4	The pianist	• Type of player • The ideal piano accompanist • The pianist and the lyrics	"I think that there are some pianists, some accompanists who love playing for singers – that turns them on, that gets their juices flowing." (Participant D)

A few sub-themes emerged by scrutinising the data, which will be described in the following sections.

4.2.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1: Musical integrity

It was clear from the interview data that the participants feel strongly about maintaining the musical integrity of repertoire which the duo performs together. In their view it is both the vocalist and the pianist's responsibility to enhance the music performed.

> Both partners should be in service of the song to amplify its emotional resonance and import. (Participant E)

The participants stated that, although they prefer musical liberty in the interpretation of a song, it is important to maintain musical integrity while doing so.

> I want there to be a lot of freedom in that, but I also, if the freedom gets to the point where it's taking away from the feeling of the piece, then I am the first person to say something. (Participant D)

Although melodic variation is a characteristic of the jazz genre, two participants revealed the importance for them to deliver the music by adhering to the original melody and lyrics before making too many changes.

> With melodic variation, that is where you want to end up eventually, but the first time through I just want to hear how the song was intended. (Participant B)

> Learn a tune as it's written, without changing or messing about with bars, or changing the melody or the lyrics. So actually if you know exactly the tune, exactly how it's written, then you can mess it up. You always need to honour the composer in one way or the other and do it as written if you are interpreting, at least if you are doing standards. (Participant C)

4.2.3.2 Sub-theme 3.2: Musical skill

The musical skill of both the vocalist and pianist were regarded by all participants as a crucial factor to ensure successful musicianship within the duo.

> The greater the knowledge, experience, technique and innovative sense, the greater the realm of possibility. (Participant E)

> Well, obviously, each person needs to be technically proficient in what they're doing. (Participant A)

One of the participants remarked what the effect would be if a vocalist lacked sufficient musical skill.

> Not much would happen at all if the singer was no good, right? Then you are at the place most injurious to the actual singer-musician (who is not present). (Participant E)

The following quote indicates that, for vocalists, performing with a technically skilful pianist, allows for unique opportunities to develop their own musicianship skills.

> Because I know that I get so much better when I play with really good players. So the level of the musicians…well I think it's crucial. (Participant C)

The participants further expressed that the vocalist relies on the pianist as the accompanist and support. If this support structure is not present, it takes the vocalist's focus away from the performance and vice versa.

> Because it takes so much of my attention if the level is not good enough or if there's hesitation throughout the song […] because then I need to be all the time alert on the band if they remember what we arranged or if they, you know, or if they're just into the charts all the time, so they won't see if I make a sign of a kind […]. So it's very crucial, I would say, to play with some solid musicians with some solid experience. (Participant C)

The comment below refers to the technicalities which a pianist should possess, especially in the case where the vocalist improvises.

> And if you're going to improvise then your pianist needs to know first of all, they've got to have a decent ability to do a walking bass line, and that kind of

> thing and they must be able to comp well and try to keep the time […] it can work! (Participant F)

4.2.3.3 Sub-theme 3.3: Music experience

The music experience of both the vocalist and pianist emerged as contributing to the success of the duo pair.

Performance experience

Two participants commented that a pianist with experience specifically working with vocalists contributes noticeably towards the duo performance.

> John [name of pianist] has obviously many years of accompaniment experience as well as other things. So he has a very strong idea of what singers need because he's played with hundreds of singers over his career. (Participant A)

> I think in John's case his experience is quite vast. He has an aptitude for what the song requires, at what time. (Participant B)

Very strong feelings were expressed about the vocalist and pianist who both need to possess musical experience.

> It's everything, you know it's like, the more experienced you are, always the better. And that's something that you can't run away with, that's fact, it's proven. You know the more experienced you are, the better. (Participant F)

Since the vocalist usually has to take the leading role within a duo setting, experience is vital. The above participant elaborated on this aspect explaining that an insecure vocalist who depends too much on the pianist for guidance, could jeopardize the collaboration and performance.

> So if you're not that experienced you might find it, you might find some things alarming, you might find to be nervous, you might be intimidated, you might not be able to really articulate what it is that you want to do in this collaboration. And as a vocalist I think it's even more important to be experienced because you need to guide and lead the pianist. Because you're the one who's telling the story. So if you're not as experienced you might then end up kind of fading

> behind the piano and relying on the other instrumentalists to kind of hold you together. (Participant F)

Experience through age

The majority of the vocalists revealed that they work with pianists who are a little older than them. In this way the pianists are more experienced and can provide opportunities for development of musicianship, thereby heighten the experience for the vocalist.

> If I had played with inexperienced players when I was twenty, I don't think I would have grown as fast or gotten as good. But if you continually work with people who are twenty years older that you, which I was lucky enough to do, you very quickly "up your game" and it absolutely changed my life. (Participant D)

One participant commented that age is not a factor influencing the pianist's skill and experience. In this participant's view, experience is equivalent to how long a person dedicates time to his/her instrument.

> […] experience goes with how much time you spend with your instrument. You can gain a lot of experience in a short period of time if you're doing it a lot because that's exactly what it is. (Participant A)

4.2.3.4 Sub-theme 3.4: The pianist

The pianist is an equal partner in a jazz performance within a duo setting, and therefore, the specific skills and attributes of each pianist play a significant role in the collaboration and rapport between vocalist and pianist.

Playing style and technique of the pianist

The style and technique of different pianists encountered by vocalists was commented on by the majority of respondents. They revealed that the duo collaboration differs vastly according to the specific pianist they are working with.

> It is very different from one pianist to the other because each pianist has their own way of approaching things, you know. (Participant A)

Descriptions of the different types of pianists varied; from those who are skilled in different musical genres, to those who are experimental to a higher or lesser degree.

Comments on playing within different musical genres include:

> There are some players who play stride piano, which is a very specific kind of piano playing, and so they might bring that to it which would be different for me. And then there would be other pianists who are wonderful, incredible bebop players and then their harmonies would be very different from the traditional harmonies. (Participant D)

> Because Andrew Ford is a full on jazz pianist. Trained in stride and boogie-woogie, I mean everything, blues, and he's just got such a keen kind of interpretation and stuff for jazz and for accompanying singers and for a mood. (Participant F)

Comments on the pianist being experimental include:

> John is a lot more 'old school' and a lot more set in his ways, whereas Daniel for instance today, is a lot more experimental. You know he likes to play around with things and take it in a different direction. (Participant A)

> [With] someone like Brian, he's very supportive but he is also very challenging because he's got a lot of ideas and we know each other very well so if he feels like modulating, he might do that without us discussing it or changing the feel of the song. He hates playing the same programme twice. (Participant C)

It was evident from the participants' responses that a good pianist is not necessarily a good accompanist, and that the art of accompanying is a highly skilled art.

> It's a different thing, there's a lot of good piano players but there's not a lot of good accompanists you know. It's a different thing and it's a special skill being good at accompanying. (Participant C)

Participants expressed that the best accompanists really enjoy working with vocalists, and that they are tuned in to listen to vocalists during performances.

> You need the sort of passion for vocalists or for vocal sound, you know. You have to like that. If you don't mind, if you don't care if it's a saxophone or if it's a voice, well, choose the saxophone! (Participant C)

> I think that there are some pianists, some accompanists who love playing for singers; that turns them on, that gets their juices flowing. When I have played with people who don't necessarily **want** to play with singers, it is very obvious from the very beginning that they're giving you very little of themselves. (Participant D)

> I don't think every pianist makes a good accompanist. You find that pianists who listens to singers make better accompanists. (Participant F)

The ideal piano accompanist

The participants presented specific descriptions on how they viewed the ideal piano accompanist.

One of the participants gave a poignant description of the relationship between vocalist and pianist, comparing it with a colouring book shared between the two performers. As can be detected in the following direct quote, it can either be a highly stressful and daunting experience, or it can have an almost magical quality while creating a new and colourful 'picture'.

> Because, as you're performing, it's always, you know, you're putting yourself out there, you're going on that tight rope right across to the finishing line which is like the end result, the end of the performance. And when you have a good accompanist, you feel, I feel anyway, that you are completely taken care of. All of the elements are there: the time is there, the tempo is there, the phrases are there musically, and basically it's almost like […] a colouring book, like that they leave for me an imprint on what the music is, and then I can feel free to colour however I choose to colour, and, you know, depending on how great they [the pianists] are, is how good a picture it is. And I can go even crazier with the colours that I'm bringing to it. (Participant D)

The following participant explains that the ideal accompanist knows how to adjust in order to accommodate the singer:

> So I find that the most fulfilling duo gigs is where the pianist really fills and kind of provides that cushion and that support for the voice. And that includes voicing in the right range of the piano, so if the song is quite high or if I've got a high pitched voice and stuff like that, then the pianist must know where to voice, what range of the piano to use. (Participant F)

This respondent asserted that, when the pianist is not focused on the singer, the collaboration tends to be less successful.

> So, the gigs that really weren't very unique collaborations are those where the pianist isn't listening, and is rather more concerned with their chords and how many lines they can play, and you know, the different voicings, irrespective of what I'm doing. (Participant F)

The pianist and the lyrics

The participants all indicated that it is important for the pianist to have a level of understanding the lyrics. Some participants feel more strongly about this aspect.

> Well, I think it's quite crucial, actually, that they are, to some extent, into the lyrics. (Participant C)

Another participant elaborated on this aspect, noting that the best piano players know the lyrics to the songs. In this way the pianist could use a literal way of interpreting the song through subtle nuances and inflections in the accompaniment.

> Oscar Peterson and Hank Jones both knew all the lyrics to all of the songs. And they can choose to use a literal idea of what the song is and translate that into their music and I think that's incredible, I think that the best pianists do that. (Participant D)

Additionally, data analysis revealed that, in certain instances, some pianists might not know the song lyrics, although they would still support the emotional integrity of the song by providing an appropriate interpretation of the music.

> They [pianists] don't have to kind of analyse every lyric. It's more musicality, down to the mood of the piece, more than the actual lyric. (Participant A)

> I also know piano players that don't know any lyrics to any songs and they innately handicap that feel of something, they certainly are at the groove by me or other singers that they work with, and they are also bringing something very beautiful and very deep to the table. (Participant D)

> But sometimes, if the pianist is really, really good, and really, really is a good listener, they don't have to be familiar with the song; but they can listen to the story as you sing it and as you tell the story. You do get really good pianists who couldn't be bothered with what the lyric is, as long as melodically and harmonically, they're there with you dynamically and emotion, they just follow the emotion as opposed to actually listening to the tune, which is also fine. (Participant F)

4.2.4 Main theme 4: The present moment

The final theme identified from data analysis is the idea of 'the present moment' which is an integral part of every jazz performance. This theme did not present any sub-themes, but the underlying themes are provided in table 4.

Table 4: Main theme 4 – The present moment

Underlying themes	Raw data
• Here and now • Energy • External factors	The ears and the room and the present moment is the ruler of the whole thing. (Participant C)

Here and now

The participants indicated that they have all experienced a unique and special performance when collaborating with a pianist. This special moment could never be recreated because of the improvisational nature of jazz, especially during a duo performance where each new performance will always be different.

> [Every performance is] something really special and that will never happen again because it's jazz, you give it off to the world. […] Well, I mean, that's I think my favourite part and the reason why I was really drawn to jazz and to small group working because it **is** so different every night, and you can never recreate that same performance. (Participant D)

> Because in jazz there's always an alternative, there's always an alternative chord. It's never just one way of playing it so that's the beauty of it. (Participant F)

It emerged from the interview data that, because of the improvisational nature of jazz, it is possible that something might change very suddenly on stage and therefore it is important for the duo to be very alert and ready for the unknown in a performance.

> Anything can happen abruptly. (Participant F)

> So even though we might arrange something for a tune, if it for some reason goes into another direction and we all feel good about it, that's fine. That's what I think in particular in this kind of music with being really, really present and feeling good about not knowing what outcome it might be. (Participant C)

One of the respondents referred to being 'present' on several occasions. She maintained that the more 'in the moment' and 'present' the duo is, the better the outcome. Being present is seen as being alert to what is happening on stage in that specific moment.

> Well, the more present you are, the more you can melt together and grasp the moment and go anywhere! It's very much a question of a musical chemistry. (Participant C)

In order to be present and alert, listening to each other is an important factor.

> The ears and the room and the present moment is the ruler of the whole thing. (Participant C)

Another participant asserted that it is part of the duo performance to make decisions together while being very alert to the present moment.

> Make decisions artistically that are in the moment, and that are the most authentic possible. (Participant D)

The following explanation reveals that moments of being present in the music during a performance are highly valued, and that musicians are privileged to have such unique experiences.

> And we just get some really rare, very present moments in music which is so precious. We're so lucky to have that. I mean, some people don't ever get near it in a lifetime. (Participant C)

Energy

Within the present moment, there is an energy between the performers on stage, a phenomenon which is difficult to explain.

> Because the whole thing – including the music in itself – is an energetic thing, it's an energy. And you can't really explain it, you know, you can't really explain what is going on and how things happen […]. That's what I love about it, it's just an energetic thing, a magical thing. (Participant C)

> It's just a human interaction and a human energy. (Participant F)

Moreover, this energy between the members of the duo is described as being an exceptional and exhilarating experience for the performers.

> It's a bigger thing, if it's successful, music rises above everything. (Participant C)

External factors

It emerged from the data that certain external factors have an effect on the present moment between the duo pair, which affects the individual musicians on a personal level as well. The setting, and more so, the venue and the audience, were pointed out as impacting the way in which the duo experiences the present moment.

> But often [it] does depend on the setting as well. It depends on the venue, it depends on the audience, and that sort of thing because you feed off of that. (Participant A)

> Something that I am feeling, I am not getting from either the audience or maybe [from] the sound equipment. […] There are so many variables. It could be a bad sound system, or a bad stage setup, and then it is a very difficult performance. (Participant D)

Sound equipment, stage setup, and technical errors, were all pointed out as having a detrimental effect on the ability of the performers to be in the present moment.

> Actually, a very crucial thing for the outcome and the presence is how the sound is as well, also live. But definitely that is actually also very crucial, the technical part of it. (Participant C)

4.3 Results from artefacts: Audio and audio-visual material

To gain further insight and to provide another point of view of the rapport between the jazz vocalist and pianist, I used observation as a data collection technique to view commercially available audio-visual clips, and listened to commercially available audio recordings of the participants performing as a vocal-piano duo. The international participants all have commercially available vocal-piano duo audio-visual recordings, but not all the South African participants have such recordings available. Therefore, I attended, observed and filmed one live performance – in front of a live audience – of one of the South African participants. Furthermore, I was given permission to attend and film a studio recording of another South African participant, being the only observer present with the vocalist and pianist in the studio setting.

4.3.1 Results from audio-visual recordings

During the observation process of the audio-visual clips I endeavoured to identify elements of a mutual bond between the vocalist and pianist, and how the pair establish a collaboration. To do this, I focused on body language, gestures, responses, and behaviours. Additionally, I listened to what happened musically between the members of the duo.

4.3.1.1 General observations

By watching the performers' body language, the enjoyment and commitment towards a mutual goal was noticeable in every duo pair. I could identify a sense of a trust between the pair. During most of the collaboration, the musical and emotional components are performed together as a whole, without many gestures or indicators. Both partners are in control of their respective roles within the collaboration, with the weight evenly distributed between them. There is a sense of appreciation and admiration between the members of every duo.

4.3.1.2 Physical indicators

It is significant that physical indicators were minimal between the vocalists and pianists in general. On numerous occasions the vocalist and pianist performed sections which included *rubato* passages, without using physical gestures or looking at each other. Physical indicators observed include gestures, visual cues, body movements, facial expression and visual communication.

Gestures

Hand gestures were present in two of the participants' performances. Participant E indicated certain melodic phrases with a hand gesture. Participant D turned to the pianist during a 'free' phrase which led into the original tempo again, accompanied with a hand gesture to indicate the time.

The bowing of the head was present in three of the participants' performances. Participant E used a hand gesture accompanied by the bowing of the head, gesturing a new section or phrase. Participant D used a slight drop of the head at the end of a dramatic phrase, indicating to the pianist that the subtleness of the start of the song is being returned to. The third vocalist bowed her head in-between verses and used subtle head movements while singing to express the lyrics.

Behaviour from the pianists included that they were watching the breathing of the vocalists for possible gestures and indications. During Participant C's performances when a more serious song was executed, the pianist sat in a concentrated pose with bowed head, while the vocalist sang an a *capella* section. Generally, the pianists' body language suggested that they were 'into' the music, using different gestures such as the shake of the head while playing, or responding with facial expression and smiling at the vocalist.

Visual cues

Visual cues were present mainly to indicate the beginning and end of a song, and the start or end of different musical sections. Some participants would indicate the tempo at the start of the song either by clicking their fingers using arm and hand movements visible to the pianist, or counting in the song. Another participant used cues and gestures at the ending of a song to guide the pianist.

During Participant A and B's performances, the pianist would cue the end of the introduction, as well as at the beginning and the end of the piano solo, by looking up and making eye contact with the vocalist.

It is noticeable that at some point during the performance of every duo pair, certain sections, musical phrases, and dynamic changes were performed together without any visual cue or eye contact from either the pianist or the vocalist. This suggests one or several of the following components:

- a high level of mutual sharing;
- excellent listening skills in both musicians;
- well-seasoned experience; and
- an exceptional level of preparation.

Body movements

Participants B and C used body movements in the form of swaying to the music. Sometimes, Participant D would turn slightly towards the pianist during a more dramatic section of the piece, while looking towards that group of audience members.

While vocalists are free to use more space while performing, and can choose to sit, stand, or even walk while on stage, there is less freedom and opportunity for such bodily movements by pianists. Being restricted to sit in front of the piano, pianists mostly indicate or gesture by nodding or moving the head, and by using facial expression.

Facial expression, eye contact and visual communication

During the live performances I observed, the vocalists generally stood with their backs to the pianist, making very little eye contact. They would turn towards the pianist for the beginning of the song, during the piano solo, and at the end of the piece. The pianist, however, would make a concerted effort to watch the vocalist at numerous occasions, observing the vocalist's breath and body movements. The duo generally looks at each other at the end of a song, during audience responses, exchanging smiles indicating appreciation for each other.

During the studio performance of Participant A, the pianist and vocalist were setup in such a way that they could see each other at all times. For this reason, eye contact and visual communication were almost continuous between the members of the duo, creating a relaxed atmosphere between them. It was evident that they established a connection with each other, and that they were able to communicate clearly what they wanted to bring across musically.

With Participant D, the vocalist and pianist looked at each other at the beginning of the song, with the vocalist smiling and nodding, possibly indicating her appreciation and agreement with the tempo and groove provided by the pianist.

4.3.1.3 Musical indicators

By observing the performers, it was evident that vocalists and pianists are focused on what they are doing as individual performers, yet they seem to be intimately involved in what they are creating together.

Time and tempo

The setting up of the tempo of the song is generally distributed between the vocalist and pianist; during some performances, the vocalist sets up the tempo while at other times, the pianist sets up the tempo. ‘Free’ and *rubato* sections are mostly performed in synchronisation with little evidence of gesturing, suggesting that the musicians either have experience through working together and/or are listening very carefully to each other.

Phrasing and dynamics

During Participant A’s performance, it was evident that phrases were spontaneously phrased together by the duo pair, or a rhythmic pattern was simultaneously emphasised by both musicians. During the ballad piece, evident collaboration took place in terms of the dynamics being performed together with both partners conveying the same amount of energy. The pianist provided accompaniment more eagerly, especially after a mutual phrase or rhythm was performed.

During participant D and E's performances, the pianist notably listened to the vocalist to identify where a phrase was sung with softer or louder dynamics, or where it was performed with more passion and expression. The pianist added to that by either keeping quiet during softer phrases; or playing a delicate fill during a silent phrase; or building up the dynamics during a more passionately sung section.

In general, the musicians collaborate to 'build up' to a climax in a song, and to unwind or 'break it down' together. The duo partners cooperate to shape phrases together. The pianists provide depth to the performance by adding dynamic accompaniments in-between the vocalist's phrases. Both partners seem to know exactly when what is happening during the song, for example when the song goes into a free rhythmic section, when the pianist needs to drop out for a vocal line and then come back in again. The same dynamic levels are performed by both musicians throughout, suggesting intensive listening by both the vocalist and pianist.

Improvisation, encouragement and audience response

It is noteworthy that piano improvisation took place during every song in all the performances I observed, but only Participant A performed an improvised scat solo. Typically, during a piano improvisation section, the vocalist would turn towards the pianist and stand listening intensively to the solo. With more up-tempo pieces, participants A and B would click their fingers to the beat while swaying their bodies to correspond with the music. During the ballad songs, all the vocalists would stand relaxed and informally, but evidently gave their undivided attention to the pianist as the solo is being played. The vocalists would make subtle head movements while listening to the piano solo. They also look towards the pianist from time to time.

During Participant A's performance, the pianist played an improvisation section with authentic and sincere facial expression. Furthermore, this pianist smiled every now and then as a musical phrase was played, and the vocalist responded by standing closer to the piano, looking at the pianist and making corresponding body movements to the music.

The vocalists and pianists all showed appreciation and admiration towards each other. The vocalists would nod their heads while smiling, indicating that they appreciate and enjoy the pianist's contribution. Participant C would exclaim a soft 'yeah' during the

piano solo, while smiling towards the audience, sharing enjoyment of what is heard with the audience. At the end of the piano solo, another, louder 'yeah' was exclaimed, and the audience respond with heartfelt applause. Most of the vocalists would acknowledge the pianist after the piano solo improvisation section was performed, by introducing him while gesturing towards the pianist, and they would even applaud together with the audience.

When Participant A performed the scat solo – mentioned at the beginning of this section – the pianist smiled and performed in a dynamic and supportive way in collaboration with the vocalist. In this way, the pianist shows encouragement towards the vocalist. When the vocalist was done with the improvisation, a playful glance was directed towards the pianist, who in turn responded by starting to improvise in good spirit.

At the end of Participant D's performance, while the audience applauded, the pianist also stood up, gesturing towards the vocalist while applauding to acknowledge the vocalist's performance and skill.

In general, the audience would applaud after the piano solo during an up-tempo song, as well as at the end of the song. Applause after the piano solo encourages the duo to perform with more energy. It was noticeable though, that during a ballad, the audience would only applaud at the end of the song, suggesting that they are tuned in to the mood, feeling and expression shared by the performers.

4.3.1.4 Expressive indicators

A general observation was that both partners of each duo pair seemed to share a similar interpretation and sentiment of what they expressed through the song.

Mood

During every performance, the atmosphere I observed between the vocalist and pianist was relaxed and informal. Participants B and C were observed talking to the audience in a comfortable way, saying something humorous about their respective pianists, and the audience would respond with some laughter. Humour and jesting between the

vocalist and pianist also occurred during Participant A's performance. Participant C was very comfortable and intimate with the pianist and the audience.

The mood between the vocalist and pianist depends greatly on the type of music piece being performed. It was evident that, during more playful, up-tempo swing numbers, the duo's body language and presentation on stage would be light-hearted, good-humoured and fun-filled. Participants A and B 'grooved' to the music and clicked their fingers to the music. Participants B and C jested with their pianists and had playful chatter with the audience before a song would commence.

When the duos performed a more serious song, for example a ballad, the body language and mood of both musicians would change to a more focused and thoughtful state. The vocalist would stand still in comparison with a 'grooving' body language which accompanies 'swing' songs. In these more thoughtful songs, pianists would play with less energy but in a more focused way. Both performers' facial expression would change to being more serious and with less smiling.

A significant observation was that, during Participant A's ballad song, the song ended with the vocalist singing a very long note while the pianist played a beautiful chord progression. When the song was done, both partners burst out in laughter indicating that they enjoyed what happened on the spot which was absolutely 'in the moment' and very special.

Expression and the lyrics

Observing up-tempo songs, it became evident that the playfulness between the vocalist and pianist contributes to the playful expression of the lyrics. The vocalist would emphasise some words, contributing to the light-heartedness of the song. Likewise, during more serious ballad songs, the duo would portray the more serious lyrical content and emotion with sincerity and honesty. The pianist would leave a lot of space in the accompaniment in order for the vocalist to fill in, adding dynamics at appropriate places to contribute toward the understanding and interpretation of the lyrics.

During Participant E's performance, slight pauses occurred on certain words and phrases which were performed together by the musicians. The improvisation by the pianist contributed to the feel of the song. The pianist sometimes phrased lines together with the vocalist. The pianist's accompaniment during the chorus displayed a joyful and festive mood, contributing to the lyrics about a passionate love for a girl.

4.3.2 Results from audio recordings

I listened to audio studio recordings of each of the participants while they performed as vocal-piano duos. While three of the participants each have a whole studio album of vocal-piano duets available, the other three participants only have a few tracks available.

Participant D recorded a studio album, each track recorded with a different, prominent, expert pianist. Significant factors with regards to this album include that Participant D met some of the pianists for the first time in the studio. Additionally, it was explained to me, no rehearsals took place with any of the pianists before going into the studio. Furthermore, the studio where the album was recorded was setup in such a way that Participant D and the pianist could not see each other. They could only hear each other. Therefore, I found these audio tracks particularly noteworthy during the analysing process, and listened to them bearing the circumstances of the recording in mind.

In contrast to participant D's album, Participants B and Cs' piano-vocal duo albums were respectively recorded using one pianist for all tracks in each case. Moreover, in both Participant B and C's studio settings, they had eye contact with the pianist during the recording.

Most of the tracks I listened to were ballad songs with slower tempi, frequently performed with the use of *rubato* as well. Participant C performed a few very up-tempo swing songs, while Participant D performed a few moderate tempo swing songs.

Mood

The way that a song starts sets up the mood of the performance. The introduction, therefore – whether it is piano, vocals or performed together – sets up the mood of what is to come, indicating for example a melancholy ballad or maybe a playful song. I noted that during every participant's performance, the music was performed with a sense that there is a mutual understanding of musical intention and expression between them. Most of the tracks I listened to by the participants started with a piano introduction.

Some of the songs on the audio recordings of Participant C would start with vocals only, while other songs by Participants C and E would start together with the pianist. Noteworthy examples to point out include where participant C starts a song by singing directly together with the pianist. This vocalist scats the introduction, setting up the mood by using a head voice tone to create a gloomy atmosphere. The tone is then changed to a more speaking voice when singing the melody and lyrics to correspond with the minor tonality of the piece. The pianist gives support and plays sparingly to contribute to the lyrics and mood.

During another piece, Participant C starts the song with vocal only while the pianist adds some colour by playing on the strings of the piano instead of using the keyboard. The pianist gives a lot of space to the vocalist, only playing a chord here and there along with some ornamentation on the strings of the piano, thereby creating an eerie atmosphere.

The lyrics

In general, the vocalists use word stress to portray or emphasise the meaning of the lyrics. Additionally, they would use different tone colours in their voices to indicate a certain sentiment in the lyrics.

Participant C expresses the lyrics by giving a slight laugh when singing a specific word, contributing to the playfulness of the song:

> I have my faults [slight laugh]; he likes my faults; I'm not very bright [laughs]; [sings in a talkative and humoristic manner]; he's not very bright. (Participant C)

The pianist then responds with a playful fill. The vocalist ends the song with talkative phrases and a long note, ending on a 'yeah!'

A significant finding is that many of the pianists expressed the lyrics using a literal way of playing to a specific word or phrase. Examples include where Participant E sings the words 'like a falling star', the pianist supporting this by playing a downward pattern to portray the falling star to the listener. On the lyrics 'upside down' sung by Participant B, the pianist adds literal meaning by playing a melodic phrase indicative of this topsy-turvy feeling.

Accompaniment style

During the analysis of the audio recordings, I realised that – specifically with Participant D's album where different pianists were used – each pianist's accompaniment varies in subtle ways. Where some pianists clearly indicate certain cues in-between sections by playing specific turn-arounds and fills, others do not give obvious cues. Regardless of the type of cue given by the pianist, Participant D confidently executed each performance with no notable difference in singing.

During the swing style pieces in the audio-recording of Participant D, the pianist's accompaniment style sets up a very specific mood during the piano introduction, resulting in the listener's involuntary kinaesthetic responses being activated, such as tapping of the foot or clicking a finger. I presume that Participant D's kinaesthetic responses were also activated while listening to the pianist's introduction in the recording studio, as the singing starts with the same sentiment as that of the pianist.

In general, the pianists all provide a strong and solid support in the accompaniment to the vocalist without the piano overshadowing the melodic line. The pianists play fills and musical phrases, at appropriate places in-between and sometimes during the vocal line, contributing to the overall performance.

When listening to the piano introductions and endings of Participant B, it is indicative that the piano part was rehearsed or arranged and not completely improvised on the spot, as compared to the rest of the participants.

Phrasing, dynamics and time

Phrasing together as well as performing the same dynamic levels emerged as elements which duos spontaneously execute simultaneously. They achieve this mutual sharing by listening to each other and feeling the time and tempo together.

Simultaneous phrasing was observed in all the recordings of the participants. One of the pianists in Participant D's recording plays the introduction in time, then pauses, giving space to the vocalist to start to sing the song, catching some of the vocal phrases with rhythmic chords at simultaneous places. On another occasion, it becomes evident that the specific pianist listens to the vocalist, providing space for the singing of long notes, following the vocalist's phrasing and breathing to know where to play the next phrase. Because the vocalist and pianist could not see each other in the studio setting of Participant D, I draw the conclusion that some phrases are performed together in the moment, resulting from mutual listening and mutual musical intention.

A unique rendition of a song to be pointed out, as heard on the recording of Participant D, is when the pianist starts with a free introduction and the vocalist joins in by singing *rubato* with the pianist for the A-section of the song. Going into the B-section, the vocalist indicates the time by singing the pick-up phrase, swinging, rhythmically, and in time. The pianist instantly adapts to the timing provided by the vocalist.

An observation I made by listening to Participant C's recording is that a slight pause was used by both the vocalist and pianist before they simultaneously moved on to a next phrase and section. This song ends with the pianist playing a short glissando chord, with only vocals to end the last phrase, contributing to the expression of the song.

Participant E starts one of the songs with a *rubato* vocal accompanied by piano introduction. They catch phrases together, with a call and response element happening, where the vocalist sings a melisma and the pianist 'answers' by playing a piano line similar to the line the vocalist sang.

Dynamics and subtle nuances within dynamic levels, and the way in which these were performed together, emerged as another significant indication of collaboration between the vocalist and pianist. With Participant D, the pianist indicates the end of his solo by lowering the dynamic level and playing a typical jazz turn-around. In this way, the pianist is not only indicating the end of the solo; the exact place where the vocalist should start singing is also indicated. Participant E and the pianist deliver a very dynamic performance with drastic dynamics, executed simultaneously by both vocalist and pianist.

4.4 Summary of chapter

In this chapter, the analysis of the various data collection methods revealed intricate results indicating the rapport between the vocalist and pianist. The findings presented four main themes namely individuality, interactive relationships, musicianship and the present moment. Fifteen sub-themes were identified comprising several underlying themes, which were described in detail, each supported by quotations from interviews. The next chapter comprises a discussion of these themes as well as the most significant findings in order to draw conclusions.

Chapter 5: Discussion and conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The collaboration between a jazz vocalist and pianist within a duo setting is a unique phenomenon due to the innovative execution taking place between the pair during the moment of performance. There is scarcity of research which focuses on the rapport between the jazz vocalist and pianist, especially from the perspective of the vocalist. The intention of this study was to explore the experiences of six prominent jazz vocalists regarding the work relationship between vocalist and pianist. Furthermore, the study aimed at identifying the key ingredients contributing to this collaborative relationship.

5.2 Discussion of the main findings

Findings will be discussed with regards to the four main themes identified from the semi-structured interviews, namely individuality, interactive relationships, musicianship and the present moment. Furthermore, the physical, musical and expressive indicators as identified from the audio and audio-visual recordings will be incorporated into these main themes. By discussing and interpreting these findings, the current research will be situated within the larger academic debate, adding recommendations and a conclusion to the overall study.

5.2.1 Main theme 1: Individuality and identity

The first main theme was identified as individuality and identity which corresponds with Hargreaves and North's study (1999). These authors identified "self-identity" as a principle aspect for the social function of music. Hesmondhalgh (2008: 330) refers to "self-identity" as "this is who I am, this is who I'm not".

During the interviews, the six participants all expressed that the vocalist as an individual plays a crucial role in the duo collaboration and partnership of jazz performance. It emerged that self-contentment in the form of enjoyment during duo

performances, and being open to the experience and the possibilities of what could happen between the duo on stage, are two key ingredients. For the vocalist to be open to the experience, a feeling of being at ease with the innovative nature of such an improvisational setting is necessary, as well as an ability to face the fear of not knowing what the outcome of the performance would be. By watching the body language, facial expression and reactions of the vocalists during the observations, it was evident that the vocalists are enjoying their duo performances, due to their strong sense of individuality and identity, they could be totally committed to such performances.

A crucial aspect of individuality came to light that deals with the musician being true to who they are as a person. Honesty, inhibitions, ego, personality and internal factors are elements contributing to individuality and identity. This finding is in line with that of Levinson (2013), who indicated that the performance of a vocalist reveals something about the singer's self-identity, be it the emotional state or the singer's personality. During the observations, all participants revealed their unique personalities and identities through bodily movements, body language and facial expressions.

Walker (2005:252) explains that the melody together with the lyrics of a song comprises artistry of the vocalist. All the participants – with the exception of Participant A – stated that they regard the lyrics and the storytelling in songs as crucial elements to the expression of the performance. Participant A, however, explained that the melody and harmony of the song is of more importance, although the lyrics are not disregarded. Methods for learning the music and lyrics were explained by Participants B, C and D with repetition as being an important approach in order to realise what the lyrics mean to the vocalist as an individual person. During the analysis of the audio and audio-visual recordings, the participants sincerely expressed song lyrics by using different facets such as vocal tone, breath, facial expression and word stress. Participant C even gave a slight laugh during some playful lyrical content.

Corresponding to Geeves *et al.*'s (2014) findings, the current study revealed that being well prepared for performances is a crucial element, especially with regards to knowing the melody and the lyrics of the song being performed. During the observations, it was clear that all the participants and their piano accompanists are particularly familiar and

confident with all the components of the songs performed. This is similar to Ginsborg and King's (2012) findings, indicating that the level of preparation by each individual contributes to the duo collaboration.

5.2.2 Main theme 2: Interactive relationships

The second main theme was identified as interactive relationships which directly concerns the social interaction between the two collaborators. Hargreaves and North (1999) revealed that a crucial factor within the social functioning of music is "interpersonal relationships".

A significant finding – derived from both the interview transcripts as well as the audio-visual recordings – is that there is an evident admiration and respect present between each duo pair. During the interviews, all the participants expressed their admiration for the pianists they are working with. During observations of audio-visual recordings, the admiration could be visually identified, such as in the exchanges of smiles and subtle nodding of heads between the two. The vocalist and pianist acknowledge each other either after a solo or at the end of a song. They also encourage each other through smiling, nodding and grooving along to the music. Participant C even expressed her appreciation for a certain phrase in the piano solo with a 'yeah!'

The majority of the vocalists revealed that, being acquainted with the pianist they are working with, and even being friends with this musical partner, could be an advantage in the working relationship. All six participants have regular piano accompanists, and those are also the duo combinations I viewed during the observations. The only vocalist who did not personally meet the pianists used for a duo album before the studio recording, was Participant D. Many of these pianists were met for the first time in the studio. I could not identify a significant difference in the collaboration between the performers when comparing the performance of Participant D with pianists she did not know, to the rest of the participants who performed with pianists they knew very well. In this regard, Ginsborg and King (2012) remark that familiarity between the members of a vocal-piano duo is a topic which has not yet been studied directly.

The jazz vocal-piano duo as a team was perceived by the participants as one of the most crucial factors. Within this team, the role of each participant as collaborative partner was emphasised. It was revealed that, although the vocalist, in essence, portrays the lead voice when singing the melody, the supportive voice – in this case the pianist – plays an equally important part in the success of the duo partnership. One partner cannot survive without the other within such a duo relationship, indicating that the team relies more on the switching between roles, as found in Napier's (2007) study.

Gratier (2008) describes a conversation-like element which is present within the duo team, and this was pointed out during the interviews in the current study. A two-person conversation is present during jazz performance settings, such as in the rehearsal space and in the recording studio. This is the space where the duo is only focused on each other with no interference from a third party such as the audience or external factors. During live performances, this intimate conversation between the vocalist and pianist transforms into a three-person conversation with the added presence and reactions of the audience.

Within these three settings, communication in the form of non-verbal gestures, eye contact and listening, came to light as impacting significantly on the performance.

As found by William and Davidson (2002); as well as Ginsborg, Chaffin and Nicholson (2006), the participants of the current study revealed that, during rehearsals, non-verbal gestures develop spontaneously between the duo because they get to know each other during this time. These non-verbal gestures, although not frequently noted in audio recordings, could be observed in the live performances of the participants through their body movements, visual cues, gestures and facial expressions.

Although some of the participants expressed during the interviews that eye contact is a crucial factor, it emerged from observations that, during live performances, eye contact is relatively limited. The pianist would look towards the vocalist for visual cues and indicators, such as the vocalist's body movements, but no evident eye contact was observed as being the defining factor within the collaboration.

Mutual listening emerged as the most significant facet of communication between the members of the duo. Through intensive listening, the duos were able to synchronise the time and tempo of pieces. By feeling the time and tempo, the duo is able to portray the dynamics of certain phrases sympathetically and 'in sync' with each other. The studio performance and the rehearsal space are seen by the participants as undisturbed settings with the duo focusing only on the music they are creating together. During live performances, the mutual listening changes to a certain extent because the performers are aware of the audience, the audience's reactions, and their own responses to the audience.

5.2.3 Main theme 3: Musicianship

The third main theme was identified as musicianship. The musical skill and experience of both partners were commented on by all the participants. These factors are regarded as crucial for each collaborative partner to possess, which are consistent with the views of Walker (2005). Some participants expressed that they prefer to work with older and more experienced pianists, who could add valuable support and insight to performances.

The pianist and his or her unique accompaniment style, was a topic widely discussed by each vocalist during interviews. The study of White (2010) focuses on accompaniment techniques and styles which jazz pianists use to accompany a vocalist in a duo setting. Various facets, consistent with White's study, were discussed by the participants during the interviews and could also be observed by studying the audio and audio-visual data. The participants expressed that the ideal for a vocalist is to work with an accompanist who appreciates the unique attributes of a vocalist. They all firmly expressed that piano accompaniment for a vocalist differs from accompaniment for an instrumentalist due to the lyrical content of singing. The skills required of pianists regarding accompaniment techniques, such as *rubato* playing and creating introductions and endings to contribute to the mood of the song, were discussed by the participants. During the analysis of the audio and audio-visual recordings, these techniques were evident and corresponded with the findings from interview data.

The issue of the pianist being familiar with the lyrics of songs was discussed with varied opinions. Some participants expressed that it is crucial for the pianist to know and understand the lyrics of the music piece in order to provide sufficient support to the vocalist, whilst others commented that they have worked with pianists who do not know the lyrics to the songs, but who adds exceptional value by playing the accompaniment with musical integrity, adding to the mood and emotional expression. Participant D explained that some pianists are able to present a literal expression of the lyrics by playing a melody, rhythm, or phrase which imitates the words through sound images. This technique is present in the White's (2010) study, and could be identified and corroborated during the analysis of the audio and audio-visual recordings of the participants in the current study.

Improvisation is an element which is innately present in the style of jazz. Surprisingly, minimal comments about improvisation were made by the participants during interviews. It was also noticeable that only two of the participants included improvisation using scat syllables during the audio and audio-visual recordings. Pianists, on the other hand, presented a solo improvisation section in each of the music pieces. This could possibly be due to the artistry of jazz vocals which involves improvisation by means of the interpretation of the main melody and lyrics.

In conclusion within the theme of musicianship, maintaining the musical integrity of the piece performed emerged as a key facet which should be present in the duo. Both collaborative partners should be in service of the song by making decisions together on stage which are authentic to the music.

5.2.4 Main theme 4: The present moment

The fourth main theme was identified as the present moment. The participants described how important it is to be alert and 'in the moment' during performances because jazz duo performances vary significantly from one performance to the next. They explained that, because jazz provides endless variety and alternative ways to execute a specific piece, anything can happen spontaneously.

Intensive listening emerged as the crucial factor in order for the two musicians to be alert to the actions and reactions of their duo partner as well as the audience. These actions and reactions could be spontaneous elements that happen musically, physically or expressively. It came to light that external factors, such as the setting, the venue, technical aspects including sound equipment, and even the audience, all influence the way that the duo experience or handle the present moment.

There is an element to the duo collaboration which can be viewed as being ‘magical’ or exceptional. The participants refer to this element as an energy which is difficult to explain, which corresponds to the findings of David (2004). It is crucial for the pair to listen to each other and to be alert to each other’s actions and reactions for heightened spontaneity and exhilaration which can take place in the moment.

5.3 Answering the research questions

The primary aim of the research, based on the main research question, was to explore the experiences of prominent jazz vocalists regarding the collaboration between the vocalist and pianist during a duo performance. The secondary aims, related to the secondary research questions, were to investigate the aspects that influence the rapport between the jazz vocalist and pianist during performance. The role of the setting during jazz performances e.g. in studio or with a live audience was examined regarding the collaboration between the vocalist and pianist. Lastly, the study aimed at gaining more insight into how the vocalist and pianist achieve a mutual understanding in order to portray the unique and personal expressive qualities of the text and musical intention. This was done by having a conversation with each vocalist regarding this unique collaboration and viewing and listening to audio and audio-visual recordings of these participants performing as vocal-piano duos.

The findings revealed several aspects which influence the rapport between the jazz vocalist and pianist. It was brought to light that the roles of the collaborative partners within the vocal-piano duo are evenly distributed, yet have distinctive functions. The functions of each of these roles are manifested in the management of the four main themes which were identified and discussed in the previous section namely

individuality, establishing interactive relationships with fellow musicians, musicianship, and being ‘in the moment’ and spontaneous during performances.

Three different settings were identified in which the duo collaboration could find themselves, which include the rehearsal, the studio performance with no audience present, and the live performance in front of an audience. Each of the four main themes is present in each setting, sometimes manifesting in different ways.

During each of the three settings, the duo pair needs to be prepared, skilled and equipped for the unique challenges of jazz performance, with a balance of honesty and confidence within themselves, displaying their true personality. In each setting, the duo should work together as a team, communicating with musical integrity and expression. The duo should be intensely alert during performances through deep listening. In this way, spontaneous actions and reactions take place which cannot be recreated from performance to performance.

If the duo adheres to the above criteria, it can be concluded that they can establish a “common ground” and mutual understanding between them, as found in the studies of Gratier (2008) and Schogler (1999).

5.4 Limitations to the study

The study aimed at gaining insight regarding the rapport between jazz vocalist and pianist during duo performances. Prominent local and international vocalists were used in this collective case study. In seeking answers to the research questions a few challenges presented themselves. Due to the limited number of participants, no generalisations could be made regarding all duo vocal-piano jazz partnerships. Although all the participants work frequently within a vocal-piano duo setting, some of them only have minimal commercially available audio and audio-visual recordings. Despite this, the interviews and the observations presented a significant amount of data.

5.5 Recommendations for future research

The following topics are suggestions for studies which could further explore the current topic, but adding different perspectives which did not form part of this research.

Future research could focus on an individual case study of one of the prominent jazz vocalists only. Such a study would be valuable to provide insight regarding the rapport between the same vocal-piano duo, investigating in which ways each new performance by the same duo are different, if at all.

Another possible research topic could be to investigate how one vocalist establishes a duo collaboration with different pianists.

The jazz vocal-piano duo relationship within a South African context could be explored where local jazz vocalists and pianists participate in the study. This could perhaps provide insight into the unique influences of African music and its improvisational strengths within a jazz setting.

Finally, the rapport between non-expert vocal-piano duos could be investigated to gain insight in the significance of music skill and knowledge.

5.6 Final word

The findings of this study revealed that there are several variables contributing to the unique collaboration between jazz vocalist and pianist. These findings indicated that each new performance between the members of the same vocal-piano duo is an innovative execution brought on by a spontaneous collaboration between the pair. This relationship could be described as a skilful and artistic equilibrium; a companionship playing out on stage in view of an audience, yet with the subtle sharing of musical messages.

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List of personal communications

- Participant A. 2016. South African jazz vocalist, Johannesburg. (Personal interview: April 12, 2016.)
- Participant B. 2016. South African jazz vocalist, Pretoria. (Personal interview: March 23, 2016.)
- Participant C. 2016. Danish jazz vocalist, Copenhagen. (*Skype* interview: April 4, 2016.)
- Participant D. 2016. American jazz vocalist, New York. (*Skype* interview: March 29, 2016.)
- Participant E. 2016. American jazz vocalist, New York. (E-mail interview: May 11, 2016.)
- Participant F. 2016. South African jazz vocalist, Cape Town. (Skype interview, May 24, 2016.)

Appendix A: Semi-structured interview schedule

1. In your opinion what is the role of the pianist versus the vocalist during vocal-piano jazz performance? Please explain, for example why you view their roles as being similar or different.
2. When performing as a vocal-piano duo, what are the key ingredients that lead to a special or unique quality during the performance?
3. How often – if at all – do you experience such a unique collaboration between you and the pianist on stage? Does it occur more often with a certain player? How is it different from one pianist to the next?
4. What role does spontaneity play when performing with a pianist?
5. What is the role of audience participation regarding the collaboration between vocalist and pianist?
6. What does collaboration between vocalist and pianist involve during a studio recording?
7. What does collaboration between vocalist and pianist involve during live performances?
8. How does collaboration during rehearsals influence the interaction during performances?
9. How does the level of music knowledge/skills/experience of each participant influence the collaboration between vocalist and pianist?
10. What is your view regarding the pianist's knowledge or understanding of the lyrics of a song? Please elaborate.
11. What is your view regarding non-verbal interactions e.g. body language or stage behaviour which may or may not develop between vocalist and pianist? Please elaborate.
12. What role does the vocalist's own skill regarding stage performance play during interaction with the pianist? Please elaborate.
13. In your experience, how is the collaboration and performance elements between vocalist and pianist affected if you are personal acquaintances before working together?
14. Have you had a special collaboration during a once-off performance with a pianist whom you have never met before the event? Please describe this experience.

Appendix B: Observation protocol

Aspects to be observed	Comments by the researcher
Who takes the lead on stage? Vocalist/ pianist / alternatively?	
What body language – indicating communication between the two performers – are evident during the performance?	
What eye contact happens between the performers while they are on stage?	
What happens between the two performers while one of them is improvising? How do each respond to and/or encourage the other?	
How do each of the performers respond to audience appreciation/response? What elements of mutual sharing between the performers (if any) are noticeable in this event?	
What happens musically when there are non-verbal signs of mutual communication and collaboration between the two performers?	
How does the vocalist and pianist collaborate to convey the expressive qualities and meaning of the lyrics?	

Appendix C: Letter of informed consent

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities
University of Pretoria
Date: _____

Dear Participant

I am currently enrolled for my MMus degree at the University of Pretoria for which I am conducting a research project. I would greatly appreciate your involvement since your expertise as a prominent jazz vocalist could illuminate aspects related to the study.

Title of the study

Experiences of prominent jazz vocalists: Exploring the collaboration between vocalist and pianist during performances

Aim of the study

This study aims at exploring the rapport between a vocalist and pianist when performing as a jazz duo in order to provide deep insight in the mutual understanding and unique collaboration between these two performers.

Research procedures

Each of the four jazz vocalists – two international and two South African – will be interviewed once, either via *Skype* for international participants, or face-to-face for South African participants. In order to have an in-depth conversation about the research topic the interview will take approximately sixty to ninety minutes. Additionally, commercially available audio and audio-visual recordings of each participant performing with a pianist, will be viewed and studied as part of my data collection strategies. A video recording of the interview will be done in order for me to scrutinize the data afterwards. The interview will be scheduled at a convenient time for each of the participants. After each interview, a transcript will be sent to you in order for you to verify the accuracy of your responses.

For the South African participants, I intend to attend one live performance each, which I will video-record as part of the data collection process.

Confidentiality

All information will be treated as strictly confidential. Only the researcher and supervisor will know your identity, but this will not be revealed in any of the research outputs. All recorded interviews and transcripts will be held safely at the University of

Pretoria for a period of fifteen years, after which they will be destroyed. Data may be reused during this period for research purposes.

Risks, stress, or discomfort

There are no known risks or stress associated with this study.

Participants' rights

Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and should you wish to discontinue at any time, you are free to withdraw without having to provide reasons to do so, and with no ill consequences. In such an event, the data will be destroyed. Should participants indicate that they would like to obtain the results, I will send them a copy of the dissertation.

Contact details of researcher

Nelmarie Rabie (MMus student)
E-mail: nelmarierabie@gmail.com
Tel: 072 436 0450

Contact details of supervisor

Dr Dorette Vermeulen
dorette.vermeulen@up.ac.za

Informed consent form: Jazz vocalist participants

Faculty of Humanities

Department of Music

If you agree to participate in this research, please sign the following letter of consent.

I, _____ (name of participant) hereby acknowledge that this research has been explained to me, and that my participation is entirely voluntary. I understand what is required from me and that I may withdraw at any time should I wish to do so without having to provide reasons for my withdrawal. I will be interviewed by the researcher, and the interview will be audio-recorded, after which I will receive a transcript of the interview in order for me to check if my views have been accurately presented. I also understand that I will be observed during a live performance which will be video-recorded (only for South African participants). I understand that my identity and details will not be made public at any time and will only be available to the researcher and supervisor for the purpose of this study. The data will be kept safely at the University of Pretoria for a period of 15 years, during which time it may be reused for further research purposes. Should I indicate that I would like to obtain the results, a copy of the dissertation will be sent to me.

_____	_____	_____
Name and Surname (optional)	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Researcher	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Supervisor	Signature	Date