

Second Person interaction in chamber music performance

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Background

Interaction in chamber music ensembles has been studied from various fields of knowledge and from different approaches. However, bibliographic review shows that although interaction in chamber music ensembles has motivated the work of numerous researchers, investigation to date have tended to focus on group social organization, musical and social coordination and communication between musicians. Several studies still maintain a solipsistic approach of the musician as someone who receives information from their musical partners, observes their behaviour and interprets it reflectively. In addition, most of the research focuses towards bodily movement from a sensorimotor perspective rather than as an expression of musicians intentionality. Up to now there are still certain aspects of musical practice related to musicians experience in interaction, the attributions they perform and interaction dynamics that have not yet been addressed. The Second Person Perspective of mental attribution - 2PP - (Gomila, 2002; Perez, 2013) focuses on a particular type of interaction (direct, face-to-face and bodily) and it is considered that it can offer answers to understand certain aspects of communication between musicians that have not yet been explored.

Aims

The aim of this study was to inquire about interaction between musicians in chamber music as a communicational process, from the 2PP.

Method

Two chamber duets formed by music students (four-hand piano and singer-piano) volunteered to participate. A rehearsal of one chamber music piece played by each duet was recorded. Recordings were analysed through observation aimed at identifying expressive cues through which second-person indicators are manifested. For the case of the singer-piano duet, a body movement microanalysis and a sound analysis with Sonic Visualizer software were also performed.

Results

Three cases of second-person interactions were identified by the presence of observable expressive cues in one case, observable and sound-musical in another and sound-musical in the last case; the latter was supported by sound and body movement analysis. Interactions were linked to: i) temporal adjustment between musicians; ii) fluency in execution and iii) expressive aspects of musical interpretation. When contextualizing the problem in musical practice, it was noted that the music itself is an expressive cue of the 2PP and this could explain processes that take place from the listener point of view and how the listener perceives the performance of musical groups.

Conclusions

2PP offers a way of understanding the dynamics and content of communication in the interaction between musicians and, by including various dimensions of analysis, it provides a more comprehensive context to understand the musician experience in their musical practice.

Previous studies about interaction have only involved the idea of the musician as an isolated individual who receives and interprets information from their musical partners, modifying his behaviour but without modifying others. On the other hand, 2PP offers an interaction approach where individuals modify each other through bodily and sound-musical expressive cues that make their intentions visible.

By taking intentionality into account in the context of musical interaction, the subjective component becomes present, expanding the scope of the musician experience study. Thus, the body is constituted as the visible manifestation of intentionality and mental states of the musicians, resignifying its role within musical practice. Music also acquires another possible dimension of analysis, constituting itself as an expressive cue of the Second Person.

2PP also provides an alternative to rethink chamber music interpretation as a result of a co-construction between musicians, which includes non-verbal, spontaneous and real-time communication processes.

References

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