

Incidence of verbal commentaries on musicians' corporality during a chamber music rehearsal

Luciana Rosario Milomes¹, Isabel Cecilia Martínez², Mónica Valles³

¹Laboratorio para el Estudio de la Experiencia Musical - Facultad de Bellas Artes - Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentine Republic; ²Laboratorio para el Estudio de la Experiencia Musical - Facultad de Bellas Artes - Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentine Republic; ³Laboratorio para el Estudio de la Experiencia Musical - Facultad de Bellas Artes - Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentine Republic; milomesluciana@gmail.com

Background

Embodied music cognition theory emphasizes the fundamental role of the human body in cognition, and postulates that music is perceived as moving sonic forms that produce corporal resonances through which it is assigned meaning (Leman, 2008). Intersubjectivity refers to the ability to elaborate representations about the mental states of others, allowing us to interpret features of their subjectivity. Joint musical interpretation in rehearsal situations can be understood as an intersubjective process of constructing meaning, which is manifested through various aspects of musical production, during which verbal commentaries play an important role in the formation of joint musical ideas that can be reflected in the musicians' corporality.

Aims

Analyze if the corporality of a chamber music duet shows modifications as a result of verbal commentaries between musicians in a rehearsal situation.

Method

2 advanced music students (1 female, 1 male, mean age= 25) volunteered to participate. They had not previously played together. Each participant received a score with a fragment of the piece "Se Florindo è Fedele" by Alessandro Scarlatti, two weeks before the study. They were asked to play their parts individually. Then they were given time to have a small rehearsal, which was recorded for analysis. Finally, a joint performance was recorded.

Performances were recorded with two microphones and two cameras. Movement data was analyzed using the microanalysis technique with ELAN software, using LABAN system categories. Verbal commentaries were analyzed applying categories proposed by Jane Ginsborg (2006). It distinguishes between the basic type (refers to information contained in the score, and to basic assembly issues), and the interpretative type (interpretive decisions made by the performers).

Results

Analysis showed the presence of both types of verbal commentaries. During the first half of the rehearsal, the basic verbal interaction was oriented to the temporal adjustment and correction of reading errors. Towards the end, the emergence of an interpretative verbal interaction -focused on issues such as pauses and dynamic changes- was observed. From the beginning, the second part of the rehearsal was characterized by a greater degree of temporal adjustment between performer's bodily movements, as well as a greater agreement in the intentionality assigned to the performance, evidenced in the shape and mutual correspondence between the movements of both musicians.

Conclusions

Interpretative verbal commentaries affected the corporality of the performers and their mutual attunement, helping to achieve a 'being together with music', necessary in joint performance. Participants in the present study were advanced music students; future studies could focus on whether these exchanges affect musicians of other levels of expertise. The results of this study could be useful for the approach of chamber music study in contexts of musicians' professional training.

References

- Ginsborg, J. (2006) Shared performance cues in singing and conducting: a content analysis of talk during practice. *Psychology of Music* 34 (2), pp. 167-194.
- Leman, M. (2008). *Embodied Music Cognition and Mediation Technology*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.