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## MULTIPART MUSIC FROM SOCIAL DISTANCING TO EMBODIMENT

THIS special issue of *Philomusica on-line* offers a selection of papers presented at the Seventh Symposium of the Study Group on Multipart Music within the International Council for Traditions of Music and Dance. Held in Cremona, at the Department of Musicology and Cultural Heritage of the University of Pavia, from 4 to 8 September 2023, it had two main themes – Multipart music, technology and social distancing and The body and embodiment in multipart music – and, as usual for the study group, a section for new research.

The Study Group Executive Committee, formed by Ardian Ahmedaia, Ignazio Macchiarella, Fulvia Caruso and Žanna Pärtlas, selected nine papers for the first theme, seven papers for the second theme and seven papers for the new research section.

The symposium also provided space for presentations on archives, repositories, open science and individual publications and projects of the study group members.

Regarding the first topic, multipart music, technology and social distancing, the Executive Committee was interested in contributions that would reflect on what happened to multipart music practices during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, we experienced a long period of social distancing that made it impossible to play and sing in groups in person, whether in theatres or in informal gatherings. School buildings were closed, and even when they reopened, many musical activities were banned. Music education became increasingly difficult.

From 2020 to 2022, we had to cope with social distancing, with teaching and meeting online. Calendrical events, religious or not, such as feasts and festivals, had to be suspended or modified. Technology, which was already well established in our everyday lives, took place and space. How was polyphonic music affected in an increasingly technological world, during and after this long period of social distancing? Did new modalities of rehearsal and performance emerge or change? Have modalities of learning and teaching changed (be it the internet or recordings or any other kind of remote teaching and learning)? Has technology facilitated intercultural exchange? How were scholars able to carry out fieldwork?

During the first lockdown, many scholars began to study the creative responses of music makers and the use of music for various purposes. This is not the place to go into detail, but at least a couple events deserve mention: MUSICOVID and Sounds of the Pandemic.

MUSICOVID was a network on music and the global coronavirus crisis, created by Niels Chr. Hansen PhD (Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies, Aarhus) and Melanie Wald-Fuhrmann (Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics, Frankfurt / M.), which promoted online talks, conferences and collaboration across disciplines. In order to strengthen the network, a website has been launched to collect all information, publications and initiatives.<sup>1</sup>

Sounds of the Pandemic was an international online conference organised by Maurizio Agamennone, Daniele Palma and Giulia Sarno at the University of Florence (Italy) in September 2020. It brought together scholars from all over the world who had started fieldwork on the processes and issues that sound and music had during the pandemic. This volume underscores the significance of documenting the phenomena and practices that emerged during the pandemic and have since largely dissipated. Moreover, it delves into the analysis of these phenomena, practices, and processes, along with the conditions under which they emerged and the ways in which they manifested over time. These elements were intricately interwoven with the broader social and cultural mechanisms that contributed to the collective construction of the pandemic experience.<sup>2</sup>

Themes that emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic study included: music psychology reflections on the role of music in coping with stress, mental health and well-being during the lockdown; the impact of Covid-19 on music consumption and creation, examining trends in music enjoyment and creation during the pandemic, highlighting significant changes in listener behavior; the role of music in maintaining social connections during the pandemic; teaching music in distancing. In organising the symposium the Executive committee felt the theme still needed contributions from the multipart music perspective.

The nine papers presented at the symposium dealt mainly with coping with teaching and practicing music during the closure, but also with how rituals such as Sunday Mass or traditional festivals and pilgrimages were challenged by social distancing.

The second theme, the body and embodiment in multipart music, was intended both as a counterpart to the first theme and as a continuation of the previous symposium, which was devoted to emotion and aesthetic experience in the music-making process in multipart music practices.<sup>3</sup>

The theme of embodiment in music has been widely explored in our field of research, from music perception to the embodied cognition. Crucial contributions have been published such as *Embodied Music Cognition and Mediation Technology* by Marc Leman for the MIT Press in 2007 or *Experience and Meaning in Music Performance* edited by Martin Clayton, Byron Dueck and Laura Leante in 2014 for Oxford University Press. The latter is a work that

1. <https://www.aesthetics.mpg.de/forschung/abteilung-musik/musicovid-an-international-research-network.html>.

2. AGAMENNONE *et al.*, eds., *Sounds of the Pandemic*.

3. AHMEDAJA – MACCHIARELLA, eds., *Emotion and Aesthetic Experience*.

explores subjective experiences and interpretations of meaning in musical performance. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, the book brings together contributions from experts in musicology, psychology and the social sciences to analyse how emotions, social interactions and cultural contexts influence musical performance. The essays provide an overview of the dynamics between performer and audience, highlighting how music can serve as a vehicle for personal expression and social interaction. In this way the word provides a deeper understanding of how musical performances are shared experiences that go beyond mere technical performance, enriching the discourse on meaning and interpretation in music.

Marc Leman's *Embodied Music Cognition and Mediation Technology* explores the concept of music cognition through an interdisciplinary lens, integrating aspects of psychology, music and technology. Leman proposes that understanding music is not just an abstract cognitive process but is deeply rooted in bodily experience and interactions with the world around us.

The book discusses how the body and emotions influence our perception and understanding of music, emphasizing the importance of social and cultural context. Leman also analyses the role of mediating technologies, such as musical instruments and software, in facilitating and transforming musical experience.

Furthermore, the text considers the implications of these ideas for music education, therapy and artistic creation. In sum, Leman proposes a holistic approach to musical cognition that highlights the interplay between body, mind and technology in our experience of music.

Ten years after Micheline Lesaffre, Pietr-Jan Maes and Marc Leman addressed same topics in the volume they edited for Routledge: *The Routledge Companion to Embodied Music Interaction* in 2017. Through a series of essays, the book analyses the ways in which the human body is integrated into the musical experience, both as a means of expression and communication. Topics such as the perception of rhythm, social interaction in music and the use of innovative technologies for musical performance are explored in depth. This compendium aims to stimulate critical reflection on contemporary musical practices and to provide new perspectives for future research in the field of embodied musical interaction.

In the symposium call the statement for this topic was as follows: Multipart music performance is a form of social collaborative behavior that requires participants to anticipate and adapt to each other's actions. This is achieved through specialized and codified forms of social interaction. Operationalising the sensorimotor mechanisms that support such interpersonal coordination can reveal underlying social dynamics between performing musicians, as well as hierarchies of musical structures.

The role of embodiment in the making and perception of multipart music, as well as in the formation of its musical and emotional meanings, can hardly be overestimated. Questions to be discussed in this section include: How are these forms of interaction achieved? How to study and document them? How does embodiment contribute to conveying musical meanings?

The seven papers in the symposium, in line with the most recent literature, dealt with embodiment of vocal musical techniques, the role of scores and arrangement in the context of orality, social and emotional communication, negotiation during performance and in the adaptation of repertoires. Interestingly, in at least two of the papers, a strong relationship with place also emerged.

The 14 contributions included in the present issue of *Philomusica on-line* have been grouped in four areas: *Multipart music, technology and social distancing* (Anda Beitāne, Giuseppe Sanfratello, Nicola Scaldaferrri and Shan Du); *The body and embodiment in multipart music* (Thea Tiramani, Daiva Račiūnaitė-Vyčiniienė, Luciana Manca, Yannick Wey, Mikaela Minga); *The role of space and place in multipart music* (Delia Dattilo and Giovanni Cestino); *New research* (Žanna Pärtlas, Marharyta Skazhenyk and Domenico Di Virgilio).

The first section offers perspectives from three different settings, all of which have first-hand experience in common. Anda Beitāne reflects on her direct experience of teaching practice at the Riga Academy of Music, especially at the beginning of the blockade. Giuseppe Sanfratello gives an insight into his hybrid fieldwork in the Ionian Islands during the Covid-19 research on multipart vocal practices. Nicola Scaldaferrri and Shan Du experienced something similar during their fieldwork at the Accettura Maggio festival. All three contributions show how the dramatic situation of social distancing has led researchers to find new solutions and create new bonds with the people they interact with.

The second section looks at different practices of negotiation, performance and adaptation. Thea Tiramani analyses what happens to an experienced duo of the oral tradition of the four provinces when it is integrated into a project based on musical writing; Daiva Račiūnaitė-Vyčiniienė explores a specific aspect – the face-to-face performance – of a repertoire she has been studying for many years: the multipart *sutartinės*; Luciana Manca explores the ways of negotiating the levels of intervention of African and Italian musicians in the final ‘combinatorics’ of the intercultural choir Elikya; Yannick Wey investigate the practice of multipart alphorn music from a historical and contemporary perspective, mainly in the possibility of mixing different tone series. Mikaela Minga explores human dimension emerging in the three-part *Tosk* polyphonic style from the aromanian-vlach minority of Drenova, a village in Korça’s district, in southeast Albania.

I have decided to place the contributions by Delia Dattilo and Giovanni Cestino in a third session, which I have called *The role of space and place in multipart music* to highlight a specific condition of music performance, namely the role that space and place can play in it. The two papers in this section explore two very different situations of multipart music and present new ways of exploring music performance. Delia Dattilo carried out fieldwork on a workshop given by Anna Maria Civico to non-professional singers from different parts of Italy, in which traditional Calabrian songs dialogue with

different environments and spaces. Giovanni Cestino presents the results of a research in Rovinj-Rovigno (Croatia) on a specific repertoire, the *àrie da nuòto*, a multipart genre that has to be performed in specific places in order to give the voices specific acoustic and timbral qualities.

The last section of the issue is devoted to the new research. Žanna Pärtlas and Marharyta Skazhenyk and Domenico Di Virgilio, even though they come from different perspectives, are devoted to specific repertoires and specific ways of presenting and analyzing them.

Žanna Pärtlas explores the multipart songs of the Moksha-Mordvins, a Finno-Ugric people living in the Volga region of Russia, analyzing those built on pentatonic scales through corpus analysis in order to obtain more accurate, detailed and objective information about the harmonic structure of Moksha pentatonic multipart songs and to describe the changes that have occurred in this style between the 1970s and 2020.

Marharyta Skazhenyk and Domenico Di Virgilio explore the multipart vocal repertoires in the a cappella tradition of Ukraine. Originating in specific areas of the country for specific occasions, many of these repertoires have spread throughout the country and taken on the characteristics of a common national identity.

Whether documented through ethnography or archival documentation, or a mixture of both, the *fil rouge* of all the contributions to this special issue is the perspective of multipart music: an approach to music through its performance, the process of its creation.<sup>4</sup>

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4. MACCHIARELLA, *Theorizing on Multipart Music Making*.

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