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Analysis of the score and performance analysis two approaches to Karlheinz Stockhausen's music

ABSTRACT

Background

Stockhausen's music is an interesting example that offers the opportunity to experiment different kinds of analysis. After spending a period of strictly applying the dodecaphonic technique, Karlheinz Stockhausen experienced new possibilities for composing where performance became an increasingly important element for understanding his music. Works as *Mikrophonie I*, *Mixtur*, *Solo*, all pieces created in the 60s, are characterized not only by composer's indications, written on the instrumental score, but also largely by performer's decisions and not least by sound processing technologies as live electronics. In all these compositions it is no longer the score to be the most important element, but the performance. In 1970 Stockhausen debugs a new method of composition called 'formula', in which he created a structure that determines the characters of the whole composition. Here we return to a constraining structure where the performance is more determined by the prescriptions contained in the score. Also we can say that the performance is in the foreground in the works until 1970, onwards is the structure and the method of composition that are becoming increasingly important. In each of the pieces composed between 1960 and 1970, the interpretative key becomes the material organization chosen by the performers following composer's indications. In these pieces is also relevant the interaction between score and performer or between the performers. The compositional method is instead more and more significant in the compositions created after 1970.

Aims and repertoire studied

All these considerations lead to this poster. It focuses attention on performance analysis in those compositions where the role of the performer comes in foreground. For this point the composition chosen

as an example is *Solo* for a melodic instrument and feedback. A first level of my work describes the instrumental score and the role of the performer in choosing how rebuilding the piece for the concert. This also includes the analysis of effects obtained by sound processing indicated by the composer and choosed by the performers. An important point for the live electronics is the opportunity achieved with the evolution of technology, to make the performance interactive without the intervention of technicians. The performer also handles the sound processing itself. Since performance is the characterizing point of the composition *Solo* and, in general, of the other compositions written by Stockhausen in the same period, after describing the instrumental score and the sound processing, the second level of my analysis focuses on some examples of different performances: a flute version, a double bass version and a violin version. The analysis of the performances reveals the intentions of the various performers and hence their role in compositions like these. The analysed versions, based on different re-compositions of the score, are characterized by different expressiveness, instrumental gesture and organization of time, which emphasize the role of performer over the written score. The evolution of Stockhausen's thinking brings the composer to formulate a new method of composition starting from 1970. This means that the role of the performer in relation to the score will change again. The *Klavierstueck XIV* will be examined as an example of this creative stage in which the formal, thematic structure and the different parameters of the composition are very determinate and determinant.

Methods and Implications

In the analysis of the score and of the sound processing the starting point are the composer's indications and the suggestions contained in his theoretical writings. For analyzing the different performances, the listenings and the description of the interpretations we are supported by the signal analysis. The latter was conducted with the CQT methodology that allows to describe the variations of time and

dynamics between the different versions of the composition defined by the performers and between their interpretative choices. In this step of the project, I compared the results of signal analysis. A first implication is a description of differences of time and dynamics in the various interpretations. A further observation concerns the possible expressive intentions of the performers that can be deduced from that different choices. They appear clear and measurable through the signal analysis. For the analysis of *Klavierstueck XIV* the method adopted is to locate within the piece the rules proposed by Stockhausen in its new compositional method. After defining the significant elements for the definition of the ‘formula’ in that composition, it was possible to determine how these structural characteristics develop at different levels of the considered piece. With this analysis it is possible to show how the design and definition of the piece is no longer left to the decision of the performer. Consequently, we can conclude that in the considered repertoire, the analysis shows that there are pieces in which the importance of the performance gestures emerges, and others where the structure fixed through a method and defined in writing is decisive. Stockhausen is an example of passages through periods in which writing dominates performance and others where the opposite occurs. In this process a role is also given by technology.

Keywords

Performance, interaction, analysis

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