

# EMBODIED LISTENING TO MUSIC

New Perspectives From Phenomenology, Cognitive Science and Sociology

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## ABSTRACT

This master's thesis explores the relevance of human corporeality in the experience of listening to music. While music has historically been viewed as a purely mental activity, recent approaches from phenomenology, sociology, and cognitive science highlight the physical anchoring or "embodiment" of musical experience. This thesis provides an overview of these approaches, with a particular focus on recent developments in cognitive science. By doing so, the work includes both new findings from brain research, such as the role of mirror neurons, as well as findings based on empirical research methods. The first part of the thesis outlines the theoretical background of the topic, exploring the relevant literature and discussing the various approaches to the embodiment of musical experience. This section highlights the importance of embodied cognition in understanding musical experiences and provides a foundation for the empirical study conducted in the second part of the thesis. The second part of the thesis (chapters 4-6) presents the results of an empirical study which examines the experience of listening to music in a social setting, specifically at living room concerts. The study employs three qualitative interviews to explore the physical and social aspects of the musical experience. By examining the experiences of the participants, the study sheds light on the ways in which music is embodied and how social interactions influence the experience of listening to music. The findings of the study suggest that the physical and social context of musical experiences plays an important role in shaping the embodied experience of listening to music. In particular, the study highlights the importance of the physical presence of others and the shared experience of listening to music in a social setting. Overall, this thesis contributes to the growing body of literature on the embodiment of musical experience. By providing a theoretical overview of the topic and presenting empirical findings, this work sheds light on the complex ways in which music is experienced and highlights the importance of considering the physical and social context of musical experiences.

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## **Introduction**

This thesis presents a contextual/ecological approach to musical experiencing through a qualitative case study on joint music listening to a live performance. Its main purpose is to explore how contingent social-material environment shapes the way one experiences music. The assumption on which this case study rests is that musical experience is shaped not only by particular musical structures, but also by particular types of interaction with music and with musically co-constituted environments. This assumption, in turn, is supported by the view (or rather consensus) that human cognition is a situated phenomenon, meaning, it is dependent on both the subject's embodied condition and on the surrounding environment in which she is situated.

Since the ways music is understood and experienced are deeply interrelated issues, music cognition is of central importance to this thesis. Therefore, the first three chapters of the thesis will present an overview of the main paradigms that have determined how music cognition is conceptualized and studied. Chapter 1 will start with traditional 'computational' or 'cognitivist' theories of the musical mind and specify its problems. In Chapter 2, I will present and discuss Marc Leman's framework of embodied music cognition (EMC) which attempts to resolve some of the problems associated with the computational view of the musical mind. Although this framework is interesting in many ways, it has been criticized for its commitment to the explanatory role of 'mental representations' in musical experience and thus for not offering a truly 'embodied' view of music cognition. Chapter 3, in turn, will present enactivist views on music cognition, which offer a more 'radical' take on musical understanding as they completely break away from the notion of 'mental representation' as the primary condition for music cognition.

Chapter 4, in turn, will outline the research design and the selected research methodology. Chapter 5 will present the research findings, which will feature narrative accounts of the participants' experiences. This will be followed by the discussion in Chapter 6 which addresses limitations of the research as well as implications and suggestions for further research.

## 1. Computational and cognitivist music cognition

Traditional cognitivist perspective on music cognition conceives of mind's processes in terms of representations and high-level information computations. Thus, the central and guiding metaphor of this perspective is the *digital computer*. The underlying assumptions of this model are: (1) brain is the information-processing machine, and (2) mind, in turn, is its software, on the basis of which the brain operates. The former, moreover, is an operation carried out with *symbols*, i.e. “elements that *represent* what they stand for” (Varela et al. 1991) (For example the symbol ‘C’ represents the pitch C). Cognitivism conceives of the brain as an input-output device. It takes the sensory data (input), encodes it into symbolic representations and manipulates it in the mind in order to provide a certain outcome signal (output). The non-neural body (as input), in this scheme, serves merely as a passive transmitter. To simplify the matters, *cognitivism* proposes that cognition “is the manipulation of symbols after the fashion of digital computers. In other words, cognition is *mental representation*: the mind is thought to operate by manipulating symbols that represent features of the world or represent the world as being a certain way” (ibid.). We come to see the world, in other words, through mental representations. What we are conscious of is not the actual world but, rather, its inner replica. Jerry Fodor, one of the leading exponents of the cognitivist paradigm, for example, defended the thesis of “methodological solipsism,” which proposes that “the agent’s mental properties can be defined only on the basis of these particular mental states or in their relationship with other inner states, without considering the world where the agent is embedded as having any sort of reference” (Matyja & Schiavio 2013: 351).

In a musical context, this paradigm has been variously defended both explicitly (e.g., Lerdahl & Jackendo 1983) and implicitly (e.g., Nussbaum 2007), generating different applications and interpretations. To understand the roots of this perspective, however, “where the musical stimulus is understood in terms of an abstract and unidirectional stream of information encoded and processed by the brain”, one can go back as far as the pioneering works of scientists such as Hermann von Helmholtz, Wilhelm Wundt, and Franz Brentano, who were among the first to think that the scientific study of subjective experience of music is possible. Central to their work was the conviction that music perception can be investigated exclusively in terms of “physiological processing”

(ibid.) Their work gave first neurophysiological explanations of some of the key features of Western musicality, such as perception of consonance and dissonance, harmony and tonality and implemented “the physiological grounding for gestalt psychology in the first half of the twentieth century, and for the cognitive sciences approach for the second half of the twentieth century” (Leman 2008, p. 29).

The rise of cognitive psychology in the second half of the twentieth century has paved the way for a more rigorous research on matters of music perception and cognition and made the mind and mental operations the central locus of investigation within the new research framework. As Niels T. Haumann notes, the behaviorist approach that was prominent in the first half of the century in music psychology had “regarded the human mind as an impossible and unsuitable subject for study” (p. 32). With the rise of the new cognitive approach, however, “there was a focus on mental, or cognitive, processes and mental representations of objects and events in the surrounding physical and social environments, the organization of experience according to meaningful wholes, and the suggestion that individuals actively acquire and apply ‘knowledge’ by choosing to attend to certain objects and events, while ignoring others” (p. 33).

It is important to understand how ‘knowledge’ was conceived of within this new cognitivist paradigm in psychology. In cognitive psychology, as Haumann notes, “any kind of processed information and information stored as a memory was called ‘knowledge’ and one can speak of different types of knowledges. Knowledge can be about a phenomenon in the world, such as music (called “semantic knowledge”), or it can be about what we do with our fingers while playing an instrument (called “procedural knowledge”). These and other types of knowledge structures—also called “schemas,” “cognitive schemas,” or “schemata”—are what allows us to understand the things and events of our of our surrounding environments and to recognize what we hear while listening to music, for instance” (ibid.). The central questions for the new paradigm, therefore, concerned “*how* the knowledge was acquired and applied, and *what* the specific knowledge was” (ibid.). As Haumann specifies, it was from this point that what began as a paradigm shift in psychology expanded into a broad, interdisciplinary endeavor called Cognitive Sciences, which, besides psychology, included neurosciences, computer sciences, and humanities.

In 1983, Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff have published what can be described as one of the most interesting applications of cognitivist theories to music research. In their

book *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, the authors presented a formal theory of tonal music grammar. Influenced by the cognitivist linguistics of the time, their theory was built on the idea that the perception and processing of language and music are not that different; both of them rely on “unconscious construction” of abstract structures, whose (musical or spoken language) surface events are the only audible parts. In the case of music, these abstract structures are seen to account for one’s musical understanding and musical anticipation. What allows the listener to comprehend a piece of music, instead, is “the largely unconscious knowledge (the ‘musical intuition’) that the listener brings to his hearing—a knowledge that enables him [*sic*] to organize and make coherent the surface patterns of pitch, attack, duration, intensity, timbre, and so forth” (1983, p. 3). The conscious musical perception or experience, in other words, results from (or depends on) the unconscious computation or organization of the presented musical surface of a piece.

Thus, the grammar of tonal music is to be understood as a set of principles that allow the listener who is experienced in the tonal (musical) idiom to define the abstract structures of the musical idiom, and to relate these structures to surfaces of musical piece in the musical idiom. Musical idioms are musical styles unique to a given cultural context. Thus, the grammar presented in this model targets the ‘experienced’ listener’s ‘final state understanding’ of a musical piece; full familiarity with the idiom and no limitations of short-term memory or attention are also required. The model, furthermore, proposes three types of structural relations that the listener perceives while listening to the musical piece. These are: (i) grouping structure and metrical structure of musical rhythm, (ii) hierarchies in the relative structural importance of tones, (iii) patterning tension and relaxation over time (Patel, 2008). Jackendoff and Lerdahl’s theory of musical processing was aimed at showing how the principles of the listener’s internalized musical grammar can be deployed in real time, in order to construct musical representations (Jackendoff, 1995). One should note that, unlike linguistic theories of *generative* grammar, Lerdahl and Jackendoff’s theory was not about generating musical pieces, rather it was intended as a set of principles to match musical surfaces with deeper structures. Yet, it is important to note why the authors found a crucial influence in the Chomskian linguistic theory for structuring the lines of their research. As Lerdahl specifies:

Our interest was not in a literal transfer of linguistic to musical concepts, as Leonard Bernstein (1976) attempted. Rather, it was Chomsky’s way of framing issues that

attracted us: the supposition of specialized mental capacities, the belief that they could be studied rigorously by investigating the structure of their outputs, the distinction between an idealized capacity and its external and often accidental manifestations, the idea of a limited set of principles or rules that could generate a potentially infinite set of outputs, and the possibility that some of these principles might be unvarying beneath a capacity's many different cultural manifestations (Lerdahl, 2009, p. 187; cited in Schiavio 2014; p. 39).

What Lerdahl and Jackendoff found so appealing in Chomskian linguistic theory, in other words, was its way of framing issues—its methodology—which offered them a way to distinctively and rigorously investigate objective and subjective aspects of musical phenomena (Schiavio 2014: 40). As Schavio notes, regarding the above quoted passage, the authors “were enamoured by the possibility to use a subjective methodology in the study of music”. However, while discussing Heinrich Schenker's attempt to define a fundamental structure (Ursatz) at the basis of the tonal music's complexity, they criticized such a setting of the problem, orienting their research to the direction of “a radical form of objectivism” (p. 40).

Rather than begin with a putative ideal structure and generate musical surfaces, we would begin with musical surfaces and generate their structural descriptions [...]. Three methodological perspectives borrowed from generative linguistics helped launch the enterprise. First, we would assume as given the musical surface - essentially quantized pitches and rhythms with dynamic and timbral attributes - without worrying about the complex perceptual mechanisms that construct the surface from the audio signal [...]. (Lerdahl, 2009, pp. 188-189; *ibid.*, p. 39-40)

As Schiavio emphasizes, these two standpoints (objectivism and subjectivism) share the same presupposition that “music and mind are two distinct categories and therefore require two different methodologies to be investigated” (*ibid.*). Lerdahl and Jackendoff, therefore, involves both a radical “analytical approach that does not take into consideration the subject” and “a cognitivist perspective, which tries to explain our musical behaviour in light of aprioristically defined mental processes” (*ibid.*).

In a well known paper, Leman and Schneider state that 1970s were a decade in which systematic musicology was most heavily influenced by the powerful computer-based method of the so-called artificial intelligence (AI), in so much that, cognitive musicology was itself emerged as a subfield of artificial intelligence research.

Considering this subfield, they refer to the study by Allen Newell (1982) as representative of the *symbol system approach*, where “propositional representations of music were believed to be a proper starting point for the study of musical cognition” (1997, p. 18). In mid 1980s, however, “issues of musical representation were reconsidered and worked out in terms of a *subsymbolic* approach, starting from sounds and representations based on auditory images and neural networks”. Through this auditory-based approach, “it became possible to connect a methodology based on computation with an epistemology rooted in the tradition of naturalism” providing a more solid foundation “in the search for universal psychological laws” (ibid.).

In the age of computing, research that was conducted in music studies in general was based on the *computation oriented methodology*. A variety of fields such as psychoacoustics, computer modeling, artificial intelligence research, psychology, semiotics, and anthropology were one way or another involved with cognition and computation (p. 19). Information processing approach to psychology and computer modeling based on principles of artificial intelligence were among the most popular paradigms for the study of music cognition (ibid.). Whereas semiotics was one of the main paradigms for music research in 1970s, 1980s saw an increase in experimental research in Gestalt-based music psychology which focused on matters such as context dependent pitch perception, timbre perception, segregation, etc. (ibid.). These approaches have culminated in the powerful trend in current psychology, whose ultimate aim is to draw “an accurate map of specialized brain areas involved in music processing in order to provide a universal description of musical abilities” (Matyja & Schiavio 2013: 352). The following quote makes the idea behind this research explicit:

As with language, special areas of the brain seem to be devoted to the processing of music information. If we could grasp universal principles of musical intelligence, we would get an idea of how our music understanding gets refined and adapted to a particular musical style as a result of a developmental process triggered by stimuli of that musical culture (Purwins et al. 2008: 152; cited in Matyja & Schiavio 2013: 352)

Again, implicit in this research paradigm is the assumption that music is an external, unidirectional, stream of information coming from environment as opposed to which the brain is posed as a sophisticated processor, whose specific areas (modules) are designed for encoding particular musical information. Indeed, “it is common in this literature to read suggestions that a certain cognitive characteristic (e.g. pitch perception) is

governed by neural tissue at a certain location (e.g. primary auditory cortex)” (Tan et al., 2010, p. 54) and, as Peretz and Coltheart (2003) note, “musical abilities are now studied as part of a distinct mental module with its own procedures and knowledge bases that are associated with dedicated and separate neural substrates” (p. 688). However, the modular account has met with heavy criticism not only from a theoretical perspective (Schiavio 2014), but also from the point of view that the history of *homo sapiens* “is simply not sufficient, under any plausible scenario, for genetic variation and natural selection to have created many different and independent human cognitive modules” (Tomasello 1999: 55; cited in Matyja & Schiavio 2013: 352).

To conclude this chapter, one can provide several reasons why cognitivist and computational views of the mind are vulnerable to criticism. First of all, cognitivism is inherently faulty for neglecting the non–neural body, which it assumes to be passive (i.e., play no causal role) in (music) cognition. It conceives the subject in terms of a passive statistical processor whose functionality is restricted to absorbing structural information from the environment. One problematic aspect of the research carried out in artificial intelligence, for instance, concerns the fact that the simulations (or modelings) of musical perception are generally restricted to “auditory-based processing” (Leman 2007). No “multisensory processing” or “action-related issues” are taken into account. The notion of subject assumed by these models, therefore, is inherently disembodied.

Moreover, cognitivist and computational accounts are deeply committed to, and heavily rely on, the Cartesian tradition by posing a strong separation between musical subjects and objects—as well as between mind and body, active and passive, etc. While musical analysis, for example, investigates the *objective* properties of musical phenomena, the modular account of music cognition reflects the opposite view, considering the *subjective* individual properties (mental states, brain states, or modules), admitting a strong division between musical subjects and musical objects (Schavio 2014, p. 38). As Evan Thompson states, however, “to reduce conscious experience to external structure and function would be to make consciousness disappear [...]; to reduce external structure and function to internal consciousness would be to make external things disappear” (Thompson 2007, p. 225, cited in Schiavio, p. 40).

A well-known problem for the computational approach to the (musical) mind concerns the question of how symbolic representations acquire their meanings. According to Anderson (2003), the relation between these symbols and their meaning (signifier and

the signified) is rather arbitrary and thus unclear, and as a result it imposes a kind of distance between the inner arena of symbol processing and the external world of meaning and action. As I intend to show in the following chapter, scholars working on the embodied view on cognition have suggested that the answer to this problem lies in the reference to our non–neural bodies and their sensorimotor activity.

Most importantly, being too reductive and disembodied, the computational approach to the (musical) mind does not provide a biologically and phenomenologically plausible account of musical experience. Focusing on issues such as memory, pitch perception, (un)conscious construction of musical structures, etc., computational accounts of music cognition do not reflect how music is experienced in concrete real-life contexts. Therefore, computational approach may be viewed as being quite limited and too abstract to provide knowledge about how one actually experiences music.

## **2. Embodied Music Cognition**

In the previous chapter, a brief overview was offered on the computational approach to the musical mind. This chapter will be dedicated to the exploration of embodied view of music cognition by focusing on Marc Leman's (representational) framework of Embodied Music Cognition (EMC). The basic task of EMC can be described as an attempt to bridge the gap between music as subjective experience and music as physical energy. First I will introduce the general premise of the framework, then I will briefly examining the main pillars of Leman's theory; first, the three levels of music description; second, the theory of action/perception couplings. Next, with reference to his views on music semantics, I will clarify how this framework argues in favor of maintaining the notion of mental representation.

### **2.1 Leman's framework of Embodied Music Cognition**

The central question, on which the whole premise of Leman's book is based, is how to fill the gap between music understood by modern digital media as "encoded physical energy" and music understood as a matter of "beliefs, intentions, interpretations, evaluations and significations" ("the human way of dealing with music") (2007, p. xiii). In other words, how is physical sound energy (matter) linked to subjective musical experiences and meanings (mind)? The cognitivist and computational approaches to music cognition had answered this question by posing the information-processing brain as the sole mediator through which external stimuli (sound energy) were thought to be processed into meaningful structures (i.e. representations, symbols). The question of how symbolic representations acquire their meaning, however, was left unanswered. Leman seeks to resolve this problem by posing the human body as the mediator between physical energy and meaning. As he makes explicit at the outset of his book:

[This book] is based on a hypothesis about the nature of musical communication, which is supposed to be rooted in a particular relationship between musical experience (mind) and sound energy (matter). In this mind/matter relationship, the human body can be seen as a biologically designed mediator that transfers physical energy up to a level of action-oriented meanings, to a mental level in which experiences, values, and intentions form the basic components of music signification. The reverse process is also possible: that the

human body transfers an idea, or mental representation, into a material or energetic form. This two-way mediation process is largely constrained by body movements, which are assumed to play a central role in all musical activities. (p. xiii)

Hence, Leman poses the body as the crucial link between mental and physical worlds. This link, moreover, works in two ways. Importantly, this two-way mediation process, through which the materiality of music is transformed into meaningful units (i.e. significations, intentions, ideas) and vice versa is both enabled and constrained by the body's *action possibilities*.

## **2.2. Three levels of music description**

Crucial to Leman's purposes is a distinction between three levels of music description. These are defined as first-person, second-person, and third-person descriptions of music. Each descriptive level, Leman argues, is involved with expressing the *intended meaning* — 'intentionality' — behind the music. Third-person descriptions, for instance, are *objective* representations of high-level structural and semantic properties of the music — that are measured directly from physical energy such as pitch, loudness, tempo, etc. First-person descriptions, on the other hand, are *subjective* interpretations of intentions attributed to music — such as attributing "inner victory of the spirit to a passage in Beethoven's *Piano Sonata in A*". The most important of all (for Leman's purposes) however, is the second-person description. These descriptions are *corporeal* in nature. Leman describes this form as one that "involves intentionality but is less linked with interpretation".

Of particular relevance to Leman is the distinction between first-person and second-person descriptions, because they are both based on subjective involvement with music. The main difference between these two levels, concerns the distinction between "experience as [cerebrally] interpreted" and "experience as [corporeally] articulated". The former relies on abstraction, conceptualization and verbalization and thus carries the risk of being too arbitrary with respect to physical reality. Corporeal articulations of musical experience or second-person descriptions, on the other hand, are "more spontaneous, more socially functional, and more body-based than first-person descriptions" (p. 83). They are a type of signification that stem not from "thinking" but from "body action" (p. 17).

[S]ignification is not merely a matter of projecting one's own experience onto cultural categories, nor is it the creation of linguistic, symbolic meta-experiences through linguistic narration that counts. Signification, most often, is just a matter of focus and direct involvement, and sometimes even a deliberate avoidance of rational thinking, getting away from awareness and description. The source for these experiences is clearly not the kind of intentionality and signification practice on which subjectivism focuses; rather, it is an embodied intentionality and signification practice that closely attaches to moving sonic forms, as if such forms engage us in behavioral resonances that we cannot resist.

Simply put, second-person descriptions of music, on which Leman's EMC is essentially based, are subjects' own bodily actions (movement, articulation or gesture) in response to music. In other words, our corporeal interactions with music are themselves a signification practice that does not rely on linguistic descriptors. This is why Leman defines second-person description as "a form of description that involves intentionality [meaning, bodily articulations are not arbitrary] but is less linked with interpretation". Central to Leman's framework of embodied music cognition is the notion that subjective experiences of music are expressed *directly* by means of measurable corporeal articulations.

This point has direct implications for empirical research. As Leman argues, one of the most important consequences of taking EMC into account in musical research is the suggestion that empirical experiments should consider their subjects as *active* contributors. Hence, empirical experiments in the field of music cognition should be designed in a way that does not hinder active involvement with the music. In his article *Musical gestures, concepts and methods in research* Alexander Refsum Jensenius et al. (2010) identifies three different viewpoints from which musical gestures can be studied, that is (a) the subjective phenomenological level, (b) the objective biomechanical, and (c) the communicative functionalist viewpoint. Briefly, the subjective level focuses on the descriptive aspects of gestures—such as describing a gesture in terms of its cinematic, spatial or temporal dimension. The objective level, in turn, focuses on the conditions for gesture generation, such as various biomechanical and motor control constraints. The last point of view is concerned with the purpose of movement or action in a certain context (e.g. whether it is sound-producing, or sound-modifying).

## 2.3 Ecological Paradigm and Action/Perception Couplings

Leman's framework of EMC is based on the so-called ecological paradigm. Ecological paradigm is closely associated with the notion of *direct-perception*. However, the notion of *intentionality* is also crucial in music perception. Thus far, it has been argued that it is the bodily actions that transfer physical energy into subjective experience and that second-person descriptions, which are corporeal articulations of moving sonic forms, are expressions of corporeal understanding of music as intentional being. However, the questions *how* one understands music corporeally and what it means to conceive of music as intentional remain to be elucidated. Answering these questions will reveal the 'engine' of EMC.

To begin with, Leman holds the view that "understanding is grounded in the human bias to attribute intentionality to things that move and with which we move or which we imitate" (p. 77). As he explains:

I can attribute a mental attitude to other subjects. By looking at how a person moves and behaves, I can understand that person as an intentional being. My understanding of his or her intentions allows me to predict his or her actions and understand them as part of an understanding of my own actions. This attribution of intentionality can also be extended to material things that move, such as cars. In traffic, another car is not just a moving object. It is an object with particular intentions which I can understand by using the experience of my being a driver. Responsible drivers aim at understanding the intended movements of other cars, and on that basis predict their future behavior. It is likely that for a dog, a car is just another moving object. It is not an intentional object because the dog is not involved with driving a car. The moving car is not something that the dog can relate to its own actions. (p. 78)

In other words, we perceive moving objects (and thus actions) as having intentions and, on that basis, we predict their future outcomes. Our ability to perceive them as such is determined by our own experiences in the world—i.e. our familiarity with the situation in which those action are performed. It is only then that we come to understand them as in terms of our own actions. Hence, there is a good chance that a dog will not be able to attribute an intentionality to a moving car, since it has no experience of driving one. Music, ultimately, can also be understood as an intentional object:

Obviously, music is not another human subject, but it provides “moving sonic forms” which, through corporeal articulations, are associated with our actions. In that sense, music can be considered a virtual social agent whose actions can be emulated. Based on these actions, the proximal sonic stimuli can be turned into distal action events, which provide cues for attributing intentionality. (p. 92)

The mechanism or ‘engine’ that makes this possible—i.e. our ability to understand music in terms of intentions—is based on *action/perception couplings*. This system turns the physical energies of music into “an imaginary world of objects having qualities, valences, goals, and intentions, and vice versa” (p. 84). Corporeal articulations of music can therefore be conceived of as “expressions of this process of turning physical energy into an action-relevant and, as a consequence, action-intended ontology” (ibid.). The latter refers to the statement that perception involves “covert action simulation” and that the world is seen from “the viewpoint of action and prediction rather than merely based on the construction of gestalts (good forms)” (p. 88). Significantly, the most compelling evidence in favor of action/perception coupling comes from behavioral studies of imitation and the neuroscientific discovery of so-called ‘mirror neurons’ in the brain. Whereas the former “have revealed that people are predisposed to produce actions that they observe (e.g., newborn infants imitate facial expressions)”, the latter “have identified a frontal-parietal cortical network that may drive this tendency” (Keller & Janata 2009, p. 290). As Sally McKey explains:

Mirror neurons are small groups of brain cells that fire the same way when a subject performs an action as when the subject observes another performing the action. . . The discovery of mirror neurons affirms a physiological dimension to inter-subjective communication (p. 321).

The discovery of mirror neurons, in other words, provides an explanation for how our motor processes are deeply linked with our percepts and how we understand others’ actions on the basis of our own. The central claim of EMC is that our interactions with (and understanding of) music are also grounded in such processes (that is, motor activities and mirroring). In Leman’s words:

Playing music, listening to music, and moving along with the music draw on sensory information (trajectories in outer space) and synchronized motor resonances (trajectories in inner space). The coupling of motor trajectories to any of these sensory traces provides a rich basis for behavioral resonances with music, either through synchronization and

motor movement that goes along with the local physical energy in music, or through higher-level forms of attuning and goal-directed movements. During these musical activities, perception seems to induce a transition from musical audio streams to trajectories of auditory sensing in the brain, to motor trajectories in the inner space. The movements may be simulated (inhibited) or actually executed through movements of the head, the hands, the feet, or the whole body. (p. 96)

Note that computational views of musical perception and cognition attribute no significance to motor processes whatsoever. Leonard Meyer, for instance, makes this explicit by his statement “there appears to be nothing autonomous and independent about the motor response to music. Everything which occurs as a motor response can be accounted for in terms of mental activity and, since the converse of this is not true, music is best examined in terms of mental behaviour” (1956, p. 82, cited in Leman 2007). This statement is informed by the viewpoint that conceives of actions (motor responses) as the very final stage of the cognitive chain, initiated once the perceptual information pertaining to the external world is successfully processed and transformed into symbolic representations.

What is also crucial to note is that perception of music is a *multisensory activity*, involving the integration of different sense modalities. As such, musical experiences are never only about listening to pure sounds, rather it is a compound of visual, tactile and motor experiences.

The nature of music, when performed in its natural environment, is basically multimodal. Music will typically generate energies that are detectable by different sensory receptors. Different modalities of the stimulus, such as light and vibration, are transduced by the receptors into neural signals that follow separate processing paths. Multisensory integration implies that at a certain moment, responses to one mode of energy modify, enhance, or inhibit the responses to another mode of energy. Sensory integration. . . makes it possible to experience music not only as pure sound but also as sound in association with other properties, perhaps basically visual, tactile, and motor experiences. (p. 97-98)

## **2.4 Musical semantics and mental representations**

As mentioned earlier, the traditional computational view of music cognition relies on the idea that symbolic representations of the external world constitute the basis of

(input-output) computational processing. It was also noted that this view is linked with the symbol-grounding problem, meaning, the problem of how representations acquire their meaning. Researchers working within embodied paradigm claim that this problem can be solved with reference to non-neural body. But how does this exactly relate to music? What is the basis for musical semantics? And how is Leman's framework of EMC linked with the notion of 'mental representation'? As also mentioned earlier, this is where the EMC and enactive approach to music cognition split opinion. This section will attempt to answer these questions by referring to Leman's paper entitled *An embodied approach to music semantics* (2010a). In this paper, mental representations are discussed from the viewpoint of two phenomena of musical practice: *sharing expressions* (joint activity driven by music), and *movement based perception*. Furthermore, Leman distinguishes between four types of musical semantics that correspond to (1) representational musical semantics, (2) referential musical semantics, (3) corporeal musical semantics and (4) collaborative musical semantics.

- Representational musical semantics

As Leman specifies, research on tonal-harmonic perception has been paradigmatic of the representational approach to semantics. The notion of grammar, for instance, suggests that music was conceived as a kind of language with a syntax and semantics. This grammar can be seen as a "conceptual description of mental representations that contain geometrical structures of note, chord and key relationships, as observed in music perception experiments" (Leman 2010, p. 49). The possibility that tonal-harmonic sequences may engage the brain in a tension-resolution processes can also be conceived as semantic processing of music. In what follows, Leman characterizes Representational musical semantics as:

- (i) Focused on the representation of structures in music [...], (ii) Focused on the mechanisms of pattern-processing [...], (iii) Focused on causal explanations and predictions in the sense that the pattern-processing is assumed to engender changes in systems that are linked with meaning (e.g. tension). (ibid.)

- Referential Semantics

This approach to musical semantics relies on the idea that sonic patterns function as pointers to meaningful contents. As the relationship between sonic patterns and meaning is loosely defined, this type of semantics is best understood in terms of extra-musical

meaning and intra-musical meaning in music. Leman defines extra-musical meaning as one that lies outside music's sonic patterns, yet emerging from it. Examples for such extra-musical meanings are expressions of passion (e.g. as in Berlioz' "*Symphonie Fantastique*"), expressions of rural landscapes (e.g. as in Dvorak Symphony no. 9 "*From the New World*"), etc. Leman states that such meanings depend on associations and that they might not be accessible to a non experienced listener. Although sometimes meanings can be grasped immediately, disclosure of such (extra-musical) meanings depend on "hermeneutic interpretation, that is, a subjective projection of musical structures to cultural topics that differ greatly from the sonic form" (p. 50).

Alternatively, intra-musical meaning can be conceived as a kind of association between several structural components due to their commonality—for instance, thematic and rhythmic repetitions, slight alterations in the repetitions, references or citations to other pieces and so on. In short, referential semantics can be either hermeneutic (extra-musical) or structural (inter-musical). The latter has characteristics that are similar to representational approaches, whereas the hermeneutic approach can be characterized as a search for metaphors.

- Corporeal musical semantics

This type of musical semantics can be described as looking at meanings as being generated through the mediating activities of the human body. Musical stimuli, in this scenario, "are perceived and [become] significant through body movements and actions, rather than through mental constructions and imagination" (p. 52). This type of meaning construction is of corporeal nature rather than mental. Consider an example: in a discotheque, a dancer uses music as an activator to move, and through this movement, music *acquires its meaning*. The dancer gives meaning to the music through dancing to it, a meaning that cannot be generated by just having a mental representation of dancing.

This type of meaning generation is linked with the notion of *corporeal presentation*, that is, the deployment of the body [the mediator] "as an active and spatial executive process that happens 'in time'" (p. 53). In other words, corporeal presentation can be understood as embodied articulations of musical structures that unfold in time and space. Moreover, corporeal presentation (and thus corporeal semantics) is grounded in action/perception couplings. It assumes "feedback mechanisms (sensory-motor loops)

that guide the deployment of movement and that highly depend on the bio-mechanic nature of the human body, which operates as mediator in the meaning formation process”. There is a mutual link, in other words, between perception and body movement in the sense that perception may activate body movement, while body movement may also activate perception, and *calibrate* mental representations. Thus, Leman argues that the traditional view of mental representation by itself is insufficient to provide musical meaning, unless they involve the deployment of a mediator, that is the human body. According to Leman, the human body, understood as the mediator:

(i) may adjust the anticipations that are provided by mental representations, (ii) may engage in corporeal presentations (unfolding of structural corporeal articulations in space and in time) that derive their meaning from the sole fact that they are effectuated. The deployment of the mediator can be perceived by the subject (the feeling of what happens), and it addresses communication channels that can be opened up to other subjects in a social setting. It thus forms an essential part in understanding how mental representations function, and how meaning formation may work (p. 56).

In contrast to representational semantics, which sees meaning as resulting from the structure, corporeal semantics conceives meaning as emerging from the spatial and temporal deployment of the body in response to music. In that sense, meaning is determined by the body activity. Human body is a determining factor in the meaning formation process, due to the fact that all meanings derive from an action-oriented bias that is grounded in the deployment of the mediator.

- Collaborative Semantics

Collaborative semantics, in turn, covers meanings that emerge from musical practices in a social context and thus can be seen as an extension of the notion of corporeal semantics towards the social domain. In social domains corporeal articulations are communicative signals that are sent for social purposes. It follows that embodied expressions in response to music can also be seen as having a social function. In that sense, Leman argues, embodied expressions—more than mental representations—are “genuine vehicles for *interaction-based* meaning formation” (p. 54).

Music thereby provides an excellent opportunity for applying personal expression to moving forms, both for senders (musicians) who encode their expression through a corporeal articulation into the musical moving forms, and for receivers (listeners), who perceive these as expressive

patterns. The latter can afford behavioural resonances that underlay social bonding. Thus, these patterns can be shared with other people and collaborative semantics is exactly about how meanings may emerge “naturally” from this interaction, by just doing it. (ibid.)

The hypothesis is that collaborative semantics are *sharing of expressions*—‘sharing’ understood as joint corporeal expressions. This sharing emerges in situations where, for example, a group of individuals listens to music and interacts with energetic structures of music through synchronized movements and corporeal articulations. Importantly, this type of communication is empathic and collaborative, rather than purely informative. What is also important to note that, in corporeal and collaborative semantics, “the meaning can be seen as the emerging effect of social musical interaction” (p.55).

### **Mental Representations**

As mentioned earlier, Leman argues in favor of maintaining the notion of mental representations in cases when the body interacts with music. However, while “classical concept of mental representation” relies on information-bearing (computational) view of mind, Leman insists that representations are *calibrated* by (or dependent on) body movement. Hence, he argues that the classical concept of mental representation should be broadened by taking into account the role of non-neural body in meaning-formation processes. As he writes:

The embodied approach has a strategy of how to deal with meaning formation that is generated through the deployment of the mediator. To call all this mediator a “mental representation” would imply a broadening of the classical concept of “mental representation” as information-bearing structure. Therefore, it is better to broaden the classical representational approach towards an enlarged embodied approach that is linked with the concept of gesture. (p. 56)

Leman argues that focusing on mental representation alone is not sufficient because meaning formation in music entails the deployment of a mediator that, (i) “adjust the anticipations that are provided by mental representations” or (ii) engage in corporeal presentations “that derive their meaning from the sole fact that they are effectuated” (p. 56). In these situations, meanings of the perceived musical structure are determined more by body movements than by mere mental processing of sonic structures.

### **Simulation**

In Leman's framework of EMC, the notion of mental representation seems to be closely linked with that of *simulation*. As I have mentioned, EMC argues for the central role played by the body in constituting musical experience. When we listen to music, therefore, it is not necessarily music's abstract structural features that our brains process as representations. Rather, musical stimuli are processed in the brain as representations that are action relevant and corporeally-based (Novembre et al., 2012). Musical meaning is therefore understood to be transmitted empathically through the expression of affective corporeal states and movements—whether visual, auditory, or some combination of both—which are sensed and internally reenacted (i.e., simulated) by listeners. Hence, as Rolf Inge Godøy (2006) writes:

[W]e hypothesize that there is a continuous process of mentally tracing sound in music perception (and in musical imagery as well), i.e. mentally tracing the onsets, contours, textures, envelopes, etc., by hands, fingers, arms, or other effectors, when we listen to, or merely imagine, music. This means that from continuous listening and continuous sound-tracing, we actually recode musical sound into multimodal gestural-sonorous images based on biomechanical constraints (what we imagine our bodies can do), hence into images that also have visual (kinematic) and motor (effort, proprioceptive, etc.) components. (Godøy 2006, p. 149)

And later in the same article, Godøy states:

Embodied cognition means that there is an incessant mental simulation going on in our minds of whatever we perceive, so that perception is not a matter of abstract processing of sensory data, but rather a process of reenactment of whatever we perceive. (p. 155)

For Leman and Godøy (and the proponents of EMC in general), then, corporeal articulations (sound-accompanying gestures, moving along with the music, shaking hands, gesticulating with arms) are of particular importance for they are understood to be resulting from continuous mental simulation that goes on in the minds of listeners while listening to or interacting with music. They are the visual indicators, in other words, of the automatic (mental) associations listeners make between sounds and the intentional acts that produce them. This is why, as Godøy notes, we often see “people making sound producing gestures such as playing air drums, air guitars, or air piano when listening to music” (ibid.) or, as Leman mentions, moving in a violent and aggressive way if the music is violent and aggressive (p. 98). This “motormimetic”

condition, as Godøy (ibid.) calls it, suggests that our corporeal reactions to music are realized on the basis of mental simulations.

### 3. Enactive Music Cognition

Last chapter has focused on Leman's framework of EMC. This chapter will go on to introduce the enactive approach to music cognition. First, I present the general premises of Enactivism which demands a radical reinterpretation of the notion of *embodiment*. Second, I examine the three dimensions of this notion in relation to music cognition.

#### 3.1 Enactivism

Enactivism, a term introduced by Varela, Thompson and Rosch (1991) to designate a new theoretical and empirical paradigm in the realm of cognitive science, is most centrally associated with the claim that cognition is based on a "mutual codetermination between embodied agents and their world". As Varela et al. (1991) write, "organism and environment enfold into each other and unfold from one another in the fundamental circularity that is life itself" (p. 171-172). Namely, enactivism holds that cognition cannot be adequately understood in terms of processes and responses that occur within the psycho-physical domain of the perceiver; rather it should be conceived of as an *emergent* phenomenon constituted by embedded and embodied forms of interactions between 'a self-organized living system' and its environment (ibid.).

According to Thompson and Stapleton (2009), one of the central goals of the enactive perspective is to examine how a living organism organized in order to attain autonomy, that is the ability to sustain itself under precarious circumstances. Autonomy is essentially what allows living systems to regulate their interactions with the environment, as an autonomous system "composed of processes that generate and sustain that system as a unity and thereby also define an environment for the system" (Thompson and Stapleton, 2009, p. 2). A living organism, rather than being a spectator passively witnessing events, "makes sense of the world by *enacting* or *bringing forth* his or her own perspective on the basis of his or her adaptive autonomy" (Schiavio 2014, p. 11).

Importantly, enactivism conceives perception and action not as two separate categories, but as a unitary inseparable entity. *Experienced* world, therefore, is determined by the "dynamic coupling between an animal's physiology, its sensorimotor organization and the environment in which it is situated" (ibid.). As such, taken-for-granted division between internal (neural) states and a pre-given external world, according to the

enactive perspective, is not tenable. The world and a living body, in other words, do not exist independently of each other: “The environment of a given living body can only be what is knowable and known to its sense organs and cognition, and that environment is in turn constantly changed by the organism’s actions on it”—i.e. neither is pre-given (Varela et al. p. xxxix).

This poses a serious challenge to the traditional cognitive science of music, which, as we have seen, assumes an aprioristic separation between musical subject and a musical object. However, in actual musical settings, the objective and the subjective sides of the musical experience are not easily separable from one another. In Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s words, ‘in this transaction between the subject of sensation and the sensible it cannot be held that one acts while the other suffers the action, or that one confers significance on the other’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1945 [1962], p. 214; cited in Schiavio 2014, p. 40). Due to the assumption of the musical object being fully given (either in the external world or in the head), traditional cognitive science of music can be said to suffer from what Varela et al. (1991) have called as Cartesian anxiety (“to know” means to have internal representations of information we are passively encoding from the so-called “external world”). Moreover, posing the body as the mediator between musical experience (mind) and sound energy (matter), Leman’s framework for embodied music cognition, too, is susceptible to the dualistic Cartesian perspective. In their critical review of the framework, Schiavio and Menin (2013) argue:

[A] closer analysis will show that Leman reduces embodied cognition to a kind of mediation compatible with classical, disembodied, paradigms about tool use, once more misunderstanding the deeper meaning of embodiment. The reason for this misunderstanding is to be found precisely in the dualistic presuppositions examined previously: if mind and body are conceived as distinct substances the main theoretical problem becomes, as for post-Cartesian thinkers, to justify the mediation between these separate dimensions. (p. 811)

According to enactivism, this is a problem tightly linked with EMC’s representationalist stance. As Schiavio specifies, enactivism departs from classical embodied approach in two crucial respects; (i) it “holds a stronger antirepresentationalist position from traditional embodied cognition”, (ii) it “allows mental processes to be distributed beyond the boundaries of skull and skin, while traditional embodied paradigms (too) often focus only on the bodily power of action, thus considering the environment only

*causally*” (Schiavio 2014, p. 51). Indeed, the second point is crucial to enactivism as it presumes ongoing “dialogue between the active principle of organisms in action and the dynamics of the environment” (Di Paolo et al., 2010, p. 39). A too strong accent on the bodily basis of cognition might obscure this dynamic process. Regarding enactivism’s antirepresentationalist stance, Di Paolo and colleagues state:

Organisms do not passively receive information from their environments, which they then translate into internal representations. Natural cognitive systems are simply not in the business of accessing their world in order to build accurate pictures of it. They participate in the generation of meaning through their bodies and action often engaging in transformational and not merely informational interactions; *they enact a world*. Enactivism thus differs from other nonrepresentational views such as Gibsonian ecological psychology on this point [...] For the enactivist, sense is not an invariant present in the environment that must be retrieved by direct (or indirect) means. Invariants are instead the outcome of the dialogue between the active principle of organisms in action and the dynamics of the environment. (Di Paolo et al., 2010, p. 39)

To summarize, the following three constitute the central commitments of the enactive perspective: (i) radical codetermination between living systems and the world; (ii) radical codetermination between living systems and the world; (iii) rejection of representationalism.

### **3.2 Reinterpreting/Radicalizing Embodiment**

In a way, Enactivism can be seen as a radicalization of traditional embodied approaches. It re-interprets the meaning of *embodiment* along the following three dimensions: (i) bodily self-regulation; (ii) sensorimotor coupling; (iii) intersubjective interaction (Thompson and Varela 2001). The rest of the chapter will look at these dimensions individually and examine what they imply for music cognition.

#### **3.2.1 Bodily self-regulation**

This dimension of embodiment, usually defined by the term ‘autopoiesis’, is most closely linked with the so called *life-mind continuity thesis*. According to this thesis, a living system ‘is a process with the particular property of *engendering itself* indefinitely’ (Stewart, 2010, p. 2; cited in Schiavio 2014). *Autopoiesis* implies autonomy: an organism is *autonomous* (a self-sustaining identity) for it maintains its metabolic stability through adaptive interactivity with the environment—where “the body’s

biological structure determines the regulation and control of the homeostatic needs of the cognizer, who continually strives to maintain a stable relationship with its niche through affectively motivated forms of action-as-perception” (Schiavio and De Jaeger 2017, p. 31). Due to this dynamic interactivity between autonomous organisms and their niche, both bodily and environmental processes inevitably participate in driving cognitive processes in a recursive interplay. Thus, as Juan Loaiza notes, “the relation of individuals with pre-existing socio-cultural settings needs not be presented as an arbitrary heteronomy radically separated from biological autonomy” (p. 416). Nor should the settings be understood as being externally imposed on living beings. “Instead, living beings are precisely in the business of production and maintenance of their own values and norms within viability boundaries” (ibid.). As Evan Thompson puts it, “living is a process of sense-making, of bringing forth significance and value” (Thompson 2007, 158).

Put simply, continuity thesis holds that organism and environment are not a pre-given duality. Rather, they dependently co-arise through the activity of the organism as it brings forth a world. However, while the enactive approach stresses the inseparability of the organism and environment, it also highlights the organism’s autonomy. This means that the organism-environment relationship is necessarily ‘asymmetrical’. As Kyselo & Di Paolo write:

Autonomy is the property of a system that self-produces and strives to maintain its identity as the system that it is. The nature of this identity is conceived of as a dynamic network of precarious processes where each process is enabled by other processes in the network and also contributes to enable other processes in the network [...]. The enactivist calls this identity autonomous because the system is constrained but not fully determined by external factors; instead it follows its own intrinsic norms. Linked to this idea is the notion of sense-making, which refers to a system’s ability to regulate its states or interactions with the world adaptively (Di Paolo, 2005). This is inextricably linked to autonomy insofar as the regulation happens with respect to the implications for the continuation of the system’s autonomous identity. For enactivism a system is cognitive when it acts in terms of value or concern with regards to its own existence. (Kyselo & Di Paolo, 2013, p. 7-8; cited in Schiavio 2014, p. 53)

What does this dimension of embodiment tell us with regard to music cognition? One ideal area to consider its implication is the early infant musicality. Consider Schiavio’s (2014) following scenario:

[A] 10-month infant stands in front of an unknown object - say, a new doll. What is she going to do? Most probably, if the object would capture her attention, she will try to grasp it, act upon it or interact with it. In one word she will *explore* it. In this way, she will also discover some properties of the sounds provoked by her actions on the object. Having realized that sounds are dependent by the motor behaviours employed to produce them, the child will not simply use the same chain of acts every time she explores the environment. Sometimes she will squeeze an object; sometimes she will hit it (and so forth). Eric Clarke perfectly described these embodied dynamics when discussing the first encounter of a child with a xylophone: ‘the child’s more-or-less unregulated experiments with hands or sticks will result in all kinds of accidental sounds. With unsupervised investigation, the child may discover that different kind of actions [...] give rise to differentiated results [...], and even that these distinctions can themselves be used to achieve other goals’ (2005, p. 23). Delalande (2009) observes that when the attention of the infant is captured by the produced *sounds*, rather than by her own action, or by other (tactile, visual) properties of the objects, she would start playing with the sounds in a meaningful way. For example she can apply some basic rhythmic or even melodic variations.

As these observations show, active exploratory behaviors play a cardinal role in the dynamic interplay between infants and musical environment. Note how infants regulate their inter actions with musical environments adaptively. Musical sense-making, in this stage of human musicality, “is a process of codetermination between subjects and objects, where brains, bodies and environmental features dynamically interact through circular sensorimotor loops” (p. 145). This stage of human musicality shows clearly that musical sense-making is not a passive representation of elements of the musical environment. Rather, it is a process of bringing forth, or *enacting*, a subject’s own domain of meaning through sensorimotor knowledge.

### **3.2.2 Sensorimotor coupling**

This dimension of embodiment stresses the centrality of *action* for sense-making. Agents make sense of the world in *movement*. Embodiment here refers to the radical entwinement of perception and action. This strongly contrasts the standard view of cognition, which Susan Hurley (1998) famously likened to a ‘sandwich’, where the meat (cognition) is segregated between two slices of bread (perception and action). The entwinement of perception and action implies the following; an embodied agent uses

sensations to guide action, which in turn guides the agent's subsequent sensations. As Schiavio puts:

[b]y modifying the world (or the relation with the world) through embodied actions, an agent also modifies the subsequent sensory return. This pragmatic form of knowledge depends on the vocabulary of possible actions that the creature can perform in the world. (p. 54)

This radically alters the standard view of cognition as “problem solving on the basis of representations” to reconfigure it as “skillful know-how in situated and embodied action” (Varela et al. p. 205). Thus, the general concern of the enactive approach “is not to determine how some perceiver-independent world is to be recovered; it is, rather, to determine the common principles or lawful linkages between sensory and motor systems that explain how action can be perceptually guided in a perceiver-dependent world” (ibid.).

O'Reagan and Noë's (2001) *sensorimotor contingency theory* directly attempts to address this issue. The main argument they propose is that “knowledge of the ways movements affect sensory stimulation is necessary for experience” (p. 1015). In Krueger's (2009) words, this means that “perceptual experience implicates not only our bodies (e.g., our sensory and motor systems), but, additionally, involves an implicit understanding we have as subjects of what our bodies can do (e.g., move around, reach for things, pick them up, crane our necks for a better view, etc.), and how these bodily doings alter our perceptual access to the world” (p. 101). This implicit understanding is based on what Noë (2004) calls our *sensorimotor knowledge*. This is a pragmatic, practical form of knowledge—that is, a skillful *know how* as opposed to *know what knowledge*. Consequently, Noë defines perception as *skillful bodily activity* and perceptual experience, in turn, as temporally extended process of exploration of the environment.

In the context of music cognition, this dimension of embodiment amounts to stressing the sensorimotor condition of musical perception and experience.<sup>1</sup> Perceiving music is something we *do*, rather than something that *happens* to us (Hogg 2011). Listening to music, in other words, is never a passive activity; it is an “active, skillful, sensorimotor, exercise” (Schiavio 2014).

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<sup>1</sup> In enactive approach to mind, the borders separating the terms cognition, perception, emotion, experience, etc., are non-existent.

In an attempt to apply Noë's sensorimotor contingency account (which is based on visual perception) to auditory perception, Krueger posits that "sensitively listening to music is [also] an enactive process, mediated by sensorimotor contingencies that shape the character and content of our experience of the musical piece" (p. 104). According to Krueger, conceptualizing musical experience in this way (as an enactive, skillful, exploratory activity) radically challenges classical ways of thinking about musical experience found in contemporary aesthetics of music (Kivy 2002). The latter (leading to overintellectualization of musical experience) presumes that the very acquisition of music-theoretic knowledge is both necessary and sufficient for musical understanding (p. 108).<sup>2</sup> In contrast, Krueger argues that our knowledge of musical experiences is primarily "phenomenal" (in contrast to theoretic or conceptual) and it "emerges from our sensitive perceptual interactions with musical pieces facilitated by the sensorimotor skills that enable these perceptual interactions". Furthermore, Krueger rejects the assumption—implicit in classical formalist aesthetics—that music is a fixed, pre-determined object. Positing music as such—i.e. overemphasizing the "fixedness" of music's "physiognomic properties"—leads one to the conclusion that the 'responses' a listener gives to the music must be relative to those properties embedded in the music's "prefigured contour" (p. 113).<sup>3</sup> Krueger argues that such an account of musical experience fails to account for the listener's *autonomy* in shaping the character of her musical experience. Music listening is more than (passive) registration of acoustic properties and responding accordingly. It is—and this is Krueger's most central argument—"fundamentally a mode of active perception; an exploration, manipulation, and drawing out of selected emotive properties via our sensorimotor engagement with the music" (p. 107): "[W]e enact music perception via the sensorimotor manipulation of sonic structure" (p. 104). We play an active role in shaping both how we listen to music and what we hear when we do.

It is noteworthy to note that, this account of music perception—based on the principle that perception and experience are grounded by sensorimotor knowledge—relies on Gibson's (1979) concept of *affordance*, understood as action-relevant properties of an

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<sup>2</sup> As Kivy writes: "The more knowledge and experience one brings, the 'larger' the intentional object will be: the more there will be to it; for the more we know about the music, the more elaborate our description of it will be, and the more elaborate our description, the more features, literally, the intentional object, the music, will possess for us to appreciate (see Krueger 2009, p. 108).

<sup>3</sup> "The listener registers these properties (e.g., the property of melodic 'jauntiness', representing an elevated spirit) and responds accordingly" (Krueger, p. 113).

environment. Gibson's ecological theory of visual perception states that *perception is of affordances*, meaning, we perceive and interact with the environment (and its objects) in terms of what affordances they present us. This position further relies on the idea of direct-perception—meaning, perception is not mediated by mental representation. In other words, we interact with the world not on the basis of (explicit or neural) representations and inferential mediations, but rather on the basis of what action possibilities it affords us.

Accordingly, we interact with music also in terms of affordances. According to Krueger, these affordances should be understood as properties of listener–music relation:

[T]hey are realized within the relation between a feature of the environment (e.g., particular structural qualities of a piece of music) on one hand, and a perceiver-side ability or skill (e.g., motor capacity, perceptual and affective sensitivity) enabling the pickup and appropriation of this structural feature, on the other. The relevant perceiver-side skills are what make music affordances show up as available for engagement and appropriation. But musical affordances are simultaneously dependent upon qualities of the music, too—hence their relational (or interactional) nature. (Krueger 2011, p. 5)

This view resonates with empirical work. In their seminal publications, Katie Overy and Istvan Molnar-Szacaks (2006; 2009) presented the SAME model (“Shared Active Motion Experience”), where they examined the role of mirror neurons in musical understanding and found that “musical sound is perceived not only in terms of the auditory signal, but also in terms of the intentional, hierarchically organized sequences of expressive motor acts behind the signal”. However, this understanding is strictly dependent on the listener's motor expertise. Accordingly, the listener (depending on his or her motor expertise) is able to extract different levels of motor information:

- (i) the *intention* level, which defines the long-term goal of a given action
- (ii) the *goal* level, which describes the basic goals that lead to the achievement of long-term
- (iii) the *kinematic* level, which deals with the space movements of the body
- (iv) the *muscle* level, which comprehends the pattern of muscular activity required for the actual execution

This suggests that the degree of comprehension of a musical object is determined by the degree of practical musical expertise of the listener, *before* any kind of cognitive, or high level, subordination. From this perspective, an unexperienced listener will be able to extract motor information only with regard to *goals* and *intentions*. An expert musician, on the other hand, will be able to access information at all levels as she has the adequate motor knowledge to understand what specifically goes on in the performance. In Overy and Molnar-Szakacs's words:

For example, at one extreme, a professional musician listening to music which they know how to perform (e.g., a saxophonist listening to a saxophone piece they know well) is able to access precise information at all levels of the hierarchy, from imagined emotional intentions to specific finger movements and embouchure. At the other extreme, a musical novice listening to unfamiliar music from an unknown sound source (e.g., someone who has no knowledge of the existence of saxophones) is not able to access precise information at any level, but may feel the beat, sub-vocalise, and interpret emotional intention accordingly (e.g., fast, loud, and high in pitch might be considered emotionally charged). Thus, the resonance or simulation mechanism implemented by the human MNS [Mirror Neurons System] matching perceived and executed actions allows a listener to reconstruct various elements of a piece of music in their own mind (bringing together auditory, motion, and emotion information), and the richness of that reconstruction depends on the individual's musical experience (Overy & Molnar Szacaks 2009, p. 493).

According to the SAME model, the sense-giving ability of the subject directly results from the *motor knowledge* of the body, on the basis of which the *goal-directedness* of the musical acts are grasped and mirrored without any kind of cognitive, or high level, subordination. In this sense, SAME model might be thought of as providing a more robust account of embodied music cognition—one that casts the body (and its motor knowledge) not as a “mere *mediator* between a disembodied, subjective mind and the objectiveness of the musical material”, as Leman manifestly did, but as a cognitive domain in its own right and a permanent condition of (musical) experience and cognition (Schiavio and Menin 2013, p. 812).

### **3.2.3 Intersubjective Interaction**

Sensorimotor basis of embodiment provides the basic, pre-conceptual and pre-linguistic level of music cognition. This level is grounded in the bodily power of action and motor expertise. As such, sensorimotor account of music perception/cognition provides an

explanatory framework for the basic relationship between a musical subject and a musical object. The third dimension of embodiment considers agent's sense-making processes in social domain, where intersubjective interactions take place. Hence, this dimension is best understood by focusing on classical theories in social cognition. Traditional views in cognitive psychology and philosophy of mind address the ability to understand *others* by means of the employment of a "folk" psychology by the observer. That is, the only way for an individual to understand or feel the experiences of others is through reading their minds, inferring their mental states, such as their intentions, beliefs or emotions. This view represents the central pillar of the so-called Theory-Theory (TT). According to TT, people possess a particular, common-sense, theory of mind consisting "of a set of causal/explanatory laws that relate external stimuli to certain inner states (e.g. perceptions), certain inner states (e.g. desires and beliefs) to other inner states (e.g. decisions), and certain inner states (e.g. decisions) to behavior" (Gallese & Goldman, 1998, p. 496).

This view stands in stark contrast to the so-called Simulation Theory (ST), whose one of central claims is that, we understand others' mental states by simulating them internally in our cognitive system, thereby coming to predictions and explanations (Gallese & Goldman 1998). The core difference between TT and ST, as Gallese & Goldman argue, is that the former "depicts mind-reading as a thoroughly 'detached' theoretical activity", whereas the latter depicts it "as incorporating an attempt to replicate, mimic, or impersonate the mental life of the target agent" (*ibid.*, p. 497). Another kind of simulation-like approach is the so-called Embodied Simulation Theory (ES). ES holds that the basic skills of intersubjective understanding do not require any mind-reading activity for they already start at the level of pre-conscious simulation of intentional action and affective gestures in others. This position has been thus interpreted as "low-level form of mental simulation", based on "unmediated processes underlying mirror-neuron activity" (Schiavio 2014, p. 56).

Enactivism rejects all these standpoints and explains intersubjectivity in terms of *interaction theory* and *participatory sense-making* (De Jaegher 2006; De Jaegher and Froese 2009). What enactivism mainly aims at, as Schiavio points out, is "to provide a biologically plausible investigation of intersubjectivity not in terms of inner mechanisms (building a theory or simulating) but, rather, considering the active processes of mutual interaction among different agents" (*ibid.*).

In social domain, agent's sense-making processes are discussed in terms of participatory sense-making (Varela et al. 1991; De Jaegher and Froese 2009). The idea is that participants to a social encounter can participate in each other's sense-making and that higher levels of meanings are generated or transformed as a result of this interaction. Social interactions can thus be transformative of the participant's sense-making in ways that would not be attainable for individuals were they be alone. As De Jaegher and Froese (2009) state:

Participatory sense-making opens up domains of sense-making that are not available to an individual alone. Social cognition then is not an application of a general cognitive problem-solving capacity to a specific domain (the social one), as traditional approaches assume it is. Rather, it is an agent's engagement in a certain kind of embodied and situated interaction with another agent. (De Jaegher and Froese 2009, p. 449)

In other words, social interactions have an autonomy of their own, because dynamic structures emerge from the multi-agent coordination of actions that cannot be attributed to either of the interaction partners' individual performances alone. Social cognition, in other words, is deeply rooted "in the dynamics of embodied coordination and interaction between autonomous agents" (ibid.).

In music studies in general, participatory sense making has been most productively applied to joint musical practice (Noran 2011; Schiavio & De Jaegher 2017; Schiavio & Hoffding 2015). In a recent paper co-written by Schiavio and De Jaegher (2017), musical interactivity (or joint musical practice) has been explored as a form of participatory sense-making. Schiavio and De Jaegher argued that in joint musical practices "sense-making is always participatory in a strong sense, because both the 'object' (the musical piece) and the dynamical process shaping it (playing together) are possible only through the systematic and recursive influence of each individual on another" (p. 35). In joint musical practices, musicking individuals "participate in, and thus can form and transform each other's sense-making, enacting unique shared worlds of meaning" (p. 33). A joint musical practice, in that sense, is a process of co-emergence, whereby meanings and intentions are not pre-given but rather are mutually shaped and adjusted as the interaction unfolds. Obviously, musicking individuals are not passive responders, but are active participants who negotiate in real-time their emotional, sensorimotor, and communicative skills.

Shared musical practices, in this sense, are not fully based in mental processes and behavioural outputs established before the interaction. No matter how many times a trio or a duo rehearses, no matter how much its members practice individually, a collective performance will always entail a different phenomenology—one based on shared agency, shared intentionality and contingently negotiated coupling in that unique context. (p. 34)

Musical interactions, moreover, are not reducible to causal relationships whereby one ‘reads the mind’ of the other and ‘responds’ accordingly. Here, interpersonal relationship, a vital constituent of co-performed music, manifests itself as a highly-reciprocal interaction process. Movements, gestures and coordinated behaviors, moreover, define a fundamental level of understanding which constitutes the basis for collaborative creativity and mutual interactions. Just like the relationship between musicians and their instruments—where the former ‘incorporates’ the latter into her cognitive system as a result of which the instrument becomes transparent to the musician—the interacting bodies of musicking individuals gradually ‘enmesh’ with each other and constitute “new intersubjective bio-cognitive organizations” (p. 35). In short, sense-making in joint music practices is irreducibly social. It occurs within the dynamic interaction between multiple agents. Musical sense-making, in other words, is an inter-individual relational activity.

Participatory sense-making might be key to our understanding of musical experience in general—not just of the complex dynamic nature of joint performances. The way music is experienced and understood is intimately linked with the socio-material context in which it is embedded. The content and character of musical experiences, moreover, can be mutually shaped if the context involves the shared presence of multiple perceivers. My experience of a particular musical event, for instance, can be uniquely expanded by multi-agent emerging dynamics, altering my sense-giving process in ways that are not possible if I were to experience that event alone. Krueger (2010) argues that “experiential integration, or mutual coordination of attention, modifies how the object (e.g., a piece of music) is phenomenally manifest to the joint attenders” (p. 17).

Doing things within music, with others, is thus a kind of “mutual tuning-in relationship”, to return to Schutz’s apt phrase. It alters the phenomenal character of the music as perceived. Mutual tuning-in to social affordances is a shared experience, grounded in joint attention. Social affordances in music are thus perceived and appropriated as a group—and crucially, they are experienced, on an individual level, as being perceived and appropriated as a group. Individual listeners are immediately aware of the joint attention

of other perceivers focusing on and doing things with the music—again, this shared awareness is what lends that context its intensity and its tension—and in this sense is the “I” and the “Thou” “experienced by both participants as a “We” in vivid presence” (Schutz 1976, p. 161). Joint attention enables a new kind of skillful engagement with the musical piece, opening up the piece, experientially, in novel and fresh ways. Simply put, it affords a new sort of perceptual play that intimately implicates the experiences and feelings of others. I do not just hear the music. I hear the others hearing the music. And my experience of the music changes accordingly.

Here, too, musical meanings are never ‘fixed’ or ‘pre-defined’, ingrained in the musical structure, but rather are emergent effects developed through shared active involvement in the musical event. Again, musical sense-making (production of values or significance) implies the interaction of an autonomous agent with a socio-material environment and is grounded in the dynamic negotiation and creation of meaning in the course of participatory sense-making (Seibert 2019). A diverse variety of music-related practices—e.g. jointly attending a concert, playing in an ensemble or a band, collectively dancing in an electronic dance music event, listening to a track via a music streaming service—and their “experiential quality” can be seen as emerging from this enactive framing (ibid.). Indeed, at “the most, primal, basic and intimate” (Matyja & Schiavio 2013) level, musical interactions are enacted, i.e. made sense, through our motor knowledge. The body has an implicit knowledge as to how to get around a sonic environment before and below any cognitive subordination or mental representation. However, music cognition at its sensorimotor level may itself be enabled, constrained and shaped by larger group dynamics and socio-environmental factors. In this sense, participatory sense making does not disclaim the sensorimotor framing of musical meaning and understanding, rather it enlarges this framing by positioning our musical interactions in living relational processes.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Rationale for the case study

Based on the assumption that music cognition is not only grounded in movement but is also shaped and constrained by the surrounding socio-material factors with which a subject dynamically interacts, this empirically grounded part of my thesis will probe a phenomenological and contextual approach to musical experience (or sense-making). In what follows, I will conduct an investigation on the impacts of situated aspects (or environmental factors) on the (inter)subjective experience of ‘joint attention’ to music (i.e., listening to music with others in a live concert setting) by relying on first-person accounts of musical events. Crucially, the investigation limits its choice of context to the phenomenon known as ‘living room concerts’, an informal concert format which became increasingly popular in the popular music domain. It is akin to the traditional Western concert format in terms of its preference for silent and attentive listening. However, living room concerts do not follow the strict behavioral conventions of the traditional concert format and their informal character allow for a higher degree of interaction and intimacy between performers and listeners within the preferred attentional framework. The study asks the following questions:

- What constitutes the experience of joint music listening in intimate places? What is it *like* to collectively listen to a live music performance in intimate places?
- How does the material mediation (or situated aspects) of the musical event—the way that the live music event is embodied in things like the number of listeners, the spatial location of the performance, the musical skills of the performers and audience— influence and shape the phenomenal character of musical experience?

### 4.2 Method

As the main purpose of this case study is to explore the subjective experience of the concert attendees, interviewing is chosen as the main procedure for generating the data. While interviewing constitutes the method of this research, *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* (IPA) constitutes its methodology, employed for the analysis of the data that are obtained from the interviews. Below, I will briefly mention

what IPA is and why I have employed it as my methodology before I go on to report on how I conducted this research project.

IPA is a qualitative analytic method used in social, health and clinical psychology which aims to provide detailed examinations of personal lived experience. As Smith and Osborn (2007) note:

The aim of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world, and the main currency for an IPA study is the meanings particular experiences, events, states hold for participants. The approach is phenomenological in that it involves detailed examination of the participant's life-world; it attempts to explore personal experience and is concerned with an individual's personal perception or account of an object or event, as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself. (p. 53)

IPA has its theoretical origins in phenomenology and hermeneutics and thus key figures such as Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty are among the ones whose ideas are often cited. It is firmly grounded in Husserlian phenomenology in its concern for producing "an account of lived experience in its own terms rather than one prescribed by pre-existing theoretical preconceptions" (Smith and Osborn 2015, p. 41). IPA has a strong idiographic focus, which means that it is committed to "examining the detailed experience of each case in turn, prior to the move to more general claims" (ibid.). Drawing on the hermeneutic phenomenology of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, IPA also insists that the personal and social are mutually constitutive and that sense-making is always situated in a context (Larkin et al. 2011). It is therefore committed to understanding "how people make sense of events, relationships, and processes in the context of their particular lifeworlds" (ibid. 330).

### **4.3 Design**

This qualitative research study used IPA to analyze and describe participants' subjective experiences of a joint attention to music in living room concerts. For the generation of the data, semi-structured interview was chosen as the main methodological procedure.

Although there are some instances in the existing listening studies where IPA has been employed for the investigation of subjective/individual experience, they mostly pertain to the context of everyday music listening and I haven't come across any study within

which a phenomenological-qualitative investigation was conducted on the listening experience in concert situations. Studies that did address the concert experience are predominantly quantitative in emphasis, concerned with measurement (of various levels of experiences using questionnaires, rating scales, etc.) and generalization as opposed to in-depth analysis of subjective experience. In-depth analysis of listening experiences in concert situations are understandably difficult due to practical hardships related to temporal and organizational issues. Conducting long interviews is time-consuming and relies on individuals who are comfortable enough and willing to articulate aspects of experience that would not normally be filtered through language. Furthermore, there is the fear that “memories may be altered through reflection, and do not capture real-time experience” (Herbert 2011, p. 54). Moreover, first-person accounts may not always be reliable sources of subjective experiences—participants may not be able to articulate them or may limit them according to their will and capabilities (ibid.). Their descriptions, furthermore, may run beyond their experiences—“taking on a drama and dynamic of their own” (Clarke 2011, 197; cited in ibid.). In the present study, I tried to circumvent these issues in several ways. First, interviews were conducted directly after the concert. Second, after having conducted a pilot interview session that consisted of four interviews during a single concert event, the research has decided to interview only one concert attendee per concert so as to allow for a detailed account of an experience and give the interviewee the maximum opportunity to describe her experience. Third, a semi-structured interview method was employed in order to facilitate a more interactive dialogue between the researcher and the participant. In this way, the participant could go deeper into her experience and reflect on aspects that she would otherwise not have taken the time to consider. Fourth concerns the choice of method for analyzing the data. IPA aims to “minimize ungrounded theorizing” and offers “an opportunity to bring ‘to the surface’ themes of which participants might be less aware” (ibid.). (This stage of the research project will be further elaborated below). Finally, the present study did not aim to capture the experience in its totality. Its purpose was rather to gain as much insight as possible into how the participant constructed her experience.

#### **4.4 Participants and Concerts**

In the course of this research project, the researcher has attended five concerts and interviewed eight concert attendees between June and July 2019. However, the number of participants whose interviews were taken into account for this case study was

delimited to three. The first four interviews, which were all conducted in the same concert (the pilot interview session mentioned above), were disregarded because the researcher found that this format does not allow enough time for the participants to articulate their experiences in detail. The very last interview was also disregarded because the participant was not fluent in the language that the interview was conducted. In IPA, three is commonly regarded as a sufficient number of participants within the scope of a master's thesis: this number allows sufficient in-depth engagement with each individual case while also being a sufficient number for a detailed examination of similarity and difference, convergence and divergence (Smith& Osborn 2007).

The three participants on whose interviews this case study is based were random concert attendees with whom the researcher was not acquainted. No criteria were set for participants' selection other than them willing to talk about their experiences. The researcher had aimed for a gender balance among participants, however, in the course of the research project, she came to realize that the female concert attendees were less willing to participate in interviews than the male counterparts. Out of eight participants, as a result, only two were female, whose interviews have not been included in this case study as they were among the ones the researcher has decided to disregard. The three attendees, on whose interviews this case study is based, were all male. All attendees were asked if they would be willing to participate in interviews directly after the concert. The interviews varied from 15 to 30 minute. Here are short descriptions of each participants, whose names were altered.

1. Participant 1 (Eric) was a 33 years old media artist/designer who has a keen interest in music across all genres and is a rigorous follower of diverse musical events in Weimar. He attended the living room concert of his own volition.
2. Participant 2 (Martin) was a 34 years old consultant and amateur musician/singer-songwriter. He attended the living room concert because one of the musicians who performed in the event was an acquaintance of his.
3. Participant 3 (Paul) was a 26 years old masters student at the Jena University in sociology, who is also an amateur musician. He, too, attended the living room concert because one of the musicians who performed in the event was an acquaintance of his.

Three interviews were conducted in three separate living room concerts organized by OMA (the Other Music Academy), a non-profit organization based in Weimar,

Germany, whose mission is to be an education center and a sociocultural community resource for intercultural and interdisciplinary encounters. Its regular Thursday living room concerts feature a variety of musical styles and genres; ranging from jazz, folk and pop to electronic and world music. Here are short descriptions of the three concerts in which the interviews were conducted:

1. Living room concert 1 hosted a jazz trio (voice, electronic guitar and trombone) composed of jazz students from music conservatories in Weimar and Leipzig, featuring a repertoire composed of original compositions, jazz standards and arrangements (one by Benjamin Britten, another by Dumisani Maraire).
2. Living room concert 2 hosted another trio (voice, two acoustic guitars and percussions as an addition) composed of jazz students of University of Music Weimar, featuring a repertoire composed of original compositions and chamber music arrangements of French chansons and Brazilian songs.
3. Living room concert 3 hosted a singer-songwriter from USA and the Weimar Improvisers Orchestra, composed of students of University of Music Weimar and Bauhaus University.

The number of concert attendees varied between 15 to 30. The musicians and bands were always introduced by the curator of OMA living room concerts, who is a jazz student in the University of Music Weimar and also one of the band members performed in the first of the above listed events. Throughout the concerts, musicians have often engaged in verbal expressions, introducing themselves, providing anecdotes on how the songs were composed or came into existence, expressing gratitude to the audience members for their presence, etc. The audience members were ordinarily attentive and focused and not as verbally outgoing as the musicians. Interactions between them were restricted to quiet exchanges, applauses between the songs/compositions, and an occasional passing around of a box with contributions, a preferred method to support the musicians (as the OMA events are free for the audience members). Throughout the concert, the attendees have sat on comfortable chairs and sofas distributed around a room that also serves as a site for a variety of OMA's other events and activities.

#### **4.5 Data Collection**

The interviews were conducted directly after the concert in a place that both the participant and the researcher felt comfortable. This was either the front yard of the

academy, or the room itself where the concert had taken place. The researcher has used the IPA's suggested open-ended and neutral questioning style within a semi-structured interview. The entire purpose of the interviews being semi-structured was to provide the participants with the maximum opportunity to describe and reflect on their experiences. It also enabled the researcher to focus on specific things that the participants said and ask them to elaborate more on these issues. The aim was to draw upon the participant's experiences, feelings, thoughts, and processes. Similarly, the aim here was to encourage self-reflection with the disclosure of subjective and personally meaningful aspects of the event. The language in which the interviews were conducted were English with Participant 1 and German with Participant 2 and Participant 3. Interviews were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim in their entirety. Questions of the following type were asked: What were the special moments of the concert? What emotions or moods did you experience? How was your relationship to the musician? How was your relationship to the audience? Did you have an urge to dance/move?

#### **4.6 Data Analysis**

After transcribing the data, the researcher stepped into the interpretative-analytic process whose first step was to read the text closely and become as familiar as possible with the participant's account. After gaining thorough familiarity with the data, the researcher went on to underline key words, annotate any interesting and significant points, paraphrasing the sentences, etc. This stage is essential to IPA as the overall aim is to stay as close as possible to the meaning of what the participants wanted to say, while also being in a constant interpretative process of their words (Smith & Osborne, 2007). This is also the stage where the text's deeper subtleties, ambiguities and contradictions might be revealed. The recognition of how seemingly straightforward meanings are ruptured and fragmented by such subtleties can aid a richer interpretation of the participant's 'story'. In this stage of the analysis, the researcher used the comments function of Pages (the word processor of Apple) to make her initial notes.

The second stage of the analysis involved the transformation of the initial notes into concise phrases and summary terms which constituted the text's emergent themes (or codes). Of crucial importance in this stage, whereby the researcher steps into a slightly higher level of abstraction, was not to lose the thread connecting the emergent themes with the words of the participant, a thread that was created in the initial coding process. The researcher kept working with Pages, where the initial notes were in her sight, while

also having the transcripts in printed form, using the margins to begin identifying the emergent themes. Throughout this process, there was the possibility that similar themes could arise in different parts of the transcription.

Looking for the connections between the themes was the next and final step in the analysis. This was also where, after analyzing each transcript individually, the researcher considered their emergent themes in relation to each other. The overall aim in this stage was to look for the ways in which the themes would cluster together and form superordinate themes. Seeing and naming the connections among the themes are really essential to completing the analysis, in doing so a better and clearer image of what the data represents is created. The generation of superordinate themes is what constitutes the result of the analysis.

## 5. Findings

Two superordinate themes emerged from the investigation. The first superordinate theme “*The locations of experience*” is of relational nature and encapsulates expressions participants used to identify the way their experiences were located in things such as the performers, the co-listeners, and the venue/room. The subsidiary themes, positioned in the subsequent inner numbers, are organized according to these locations. The second superordinate theme concerned the distinct states of consciousness in which the participants experienced their aesthetically most heightened moments during the event. Below is an overview of the findings as a result of the analysis.

### 1. “*The locations of experience*”

1.1 Performers - “Attention to the skills”, “Attention to body language”, “Attention to the persona”

1.2 Co-listeners - “Feeling of togetherness” [Gemeinsamkeitsgefühl]

1.3 Venue/Room - “Intimate Atmosphere”

### 2. “*Aesthetic experiences*”

2.1 “Focussed, attentive listening”

2.2 “Absorption/Disassociation”

## 5.1 Findings

### “The locations of experience”

- Performers

This superordinate theme refers to the relational nature of musical experience. The experience is located somewhere or in some *things* in the sense that what the subject consciously attends to defines the content of her experience or that her experience is shaped through this attendance. In the case of living room concert experience, one thing that the participants attended most was the performers themselves. This attendance, moreover, was multifold. The researcher was able to explore this area by subtracting three subsidiary themes, one of which concerned the instrumental skills of the

performers. Paying attention to (or observation of) the ways in which performers exhibited their skills on their instruments was an important part of the participants' experience of the event.

For Paul, for instance, who is an amateur guitar player himself, the way the instruments were being played was something that he was 'actively' and 'eagerly' paying attention to:

“...ansonsten achte ich gerne auf Finger, so wie die Instrumente gespielt werden, ich spiele selbst Gitarre, und achte dann immer sehr aktiv darauf, was gerade auf der Gitarre gespielt wird. Und, ähm, ansonsten, mag ich Akustik mit Visualität zu verbinden, also, das was ich höre auch tatsächlich dann am Instrument sehen zu können, wie wird es gemacht, wo wird geklopft, wo ist welcher Klang...” (Paul)

To Paul, this is clearly about being better able to make sense of the musical phenomenon, which, in this case, is not only about audition but also about vision. Both senses reciprocally inform each other and result in a heightened, multimodal musical experience. Attending closely to the ways sounds are produced enabled Paul to better make sense of what he is hearing and was a rewarding and enjoyable experience in itself. Later on, while reflecting on his reception of the performance of the singer-songwriter who performed in the first part of the Living room concert 3, he stated:

“Ich war beim ersten Teil sehr eher distanziert wegen der Texte auch. Er hat selbst angesprochen, dass er auch zu einem Drittel über Gott singt und so Bibel Sachen eingebunden hat und Jesus. Das war eher nicht meins. Das war, also ich hab dann eher das Handwerk des Musikers genossen als tatsächlich das, was die Botschaft ist.” (Paul)

It appears that Paul sees the performance as being composed of different aspects or dimensions and, in this case, the aspect that he most strongly related (or attended) to was the instrumental skills of the performer (i.e., 'craft' of musicianship).

The same applies for Martin, to whom being able to see how music is played was also a rewarding experience in itself, even though the music being played was not really corresponding to his own musical preferences:

“Also die Musik heute zum Beispiel ist nicht meine musikalische Heimat eigentlich, sondern ich finde einfach interessant wie gespielt wird.” (Martin)

Attending to the body language of the performers was another theme that emerged from the analysis. For Eric, musicians express not only through sounds but also through how they move their bodies:

“...for me listening to music is quite a personal experience really, because I focus on what the musicians are doing, how they express, not just through music but through body language.” (Eric)

He also states:

“...when you're on the stage and performing, you need to connect so much with your own emotions that you're saying a lot not just because of the lyrics are really big component but also through the gesture, like what your face is saying or hands or arms and so on.” (Eric)

Although the second quotation is more a reflection than a direct reference to his experience, it does give clue on how significant the role of gestures is for Eric's musical sense-making. Here, we may assume that his understanding of what the music was expressive of was closely linked with what performers were doing with their bodies, i.e. with their expressive gestures. Whereas it was the performer's craft (*how* he or she played the instrument) which was informing Martin and Paul's musical sense-making, it was, in Eric's case, performers' expressive bodily gestures that served a similar function. Whereas Eric displays certain openness and curiosity towards expressions in general, Paul is more directly influenced by them.

“Mann kann sehr gut Unsicherheiten erkennen an Gesichtern. Genau, Unsicherheiten sind sehr störend finde ich, nachvollziehbar...” (Paul)

The persona of the performers—as perceived by the participants—was another locus of some participants' experiences. In other words, what kinds of mental states, emotions, character traits performers exhibited was one of the issues that the participants were attentive to. In the following quote, for instance, Paul explains how much he values authenticity in a performance (and how important being truthful is to him):

“Bei mir ist Authentizität sehr wichtig. Also ich muss merken, dass mein gegenüber das, was er oder sie rüberbringen möchte, auch oder rüberbringt auf wirklich rüberbringen möchte. Ich bilde mir ein, dass ich erkenne wenn das passiert und wenn nicht. Ähm, und insofern hatte ich heute auf jeden Fall, glaube ich, ganz gutes Bauchgefühl weil ich kein,

keine Anzeichen dafür entdeckt hab, dass die, die vorgespielt haben, das unehrlich gemacht haben. (Paul)

This suggests that Paul's experience of the live music event was also shaped by a close attention to the performer's persona—more specifically to the question whether they were honest and authentic in the way they expressed themselves. On the following quote, similarly, where he reflects on the performance of the singer-songwriter of the Concert No. 2, Paul alludes to self-confidence as another positive character trait in a musician:

...der so wirkte, als hätte er das nicht zum ersten Mal gemacht und sehr gut mit den Situationen, in so einem kleinen Raum, umgegangen ist. Und das hat zurückreflektiert." (Paul)

During the concert, Eric has also paid close attention to the performers' personae. In the following quote, for instance, he draws a certain portrait of J., the guitar player, as he talks about the way he performs his music:

"And the same thing, it's like, for example when I observe J., when he is playing, he is really into himself, it's really like therapeutical thing for him I think, like he is just like having this conversation between these instruments and himself, so he doesn't care really much about what it's happening with the audience." (Eric)

It appears that, Eric, while listening to J., was also reflecting on what he might be experiencing while playing his instrument. He was, in other words, very much interested in the person, who played the music (rather than the music per se), trying to figure out in which state of mind he was. In the quote, Eric portrays J. as someone who is totally immersed in music—as if all his connection to the outer world, at the time being of his performance, was cut off.

manchmal habe ich auch das Gefühl, ok sie sind grade am Kämpfen oder Struggeln. Und irgendetwas funktioniert nicht und so dann merke ich das auch und hab ich so ein Gefühl sich vielleicht verkrampft oder anspannend. (Martin)

Here, Martin talks about a certain empathic moment he experienced during the concert. It is noteworthy that, the words struggling or battling, although music itself must have a share in inducing these feelings, were nevertheless attributed to the musicians persona or subjectivity.(they are perceived as the emotional states of the musician).

- Co-listeners

One area that this case study wanted to explore was the role of co-listeners in shaping the participants' subjective experience of the musical event, i.e. in what ways the participants' perception of the event was influenced by their presence. One theme that emerged in the analysis regarding this issue was the sense of community or the feeling of togetherness that was triggered in participants' individual experience of the event. Here, the experience was not directly located in the co-listeners (in the form of observation and attention) like it was in the performers (although observation and monitoring of behaviors of the co-listeners do take place, too), rather the experience was subtly influenced and shaped by the crowd's affective force. The experience was located in co-listeners (or rather in the community of listeners) when their affective force became palpable for the participant.

For Paul, this affective force of the audience was that of a "polite togetherness".

"Denn beim ersten war es eher so dass ich ein höfliches Miteinander empfunden habe. Das war ein sehr, ähm, ruhiges und verhaltenes Zuhören, aber wenn ich die Stimmung deuten sollte, sehr.. sehr.. höflich." (Paul)

Martin, on the other hand, comments on how his listening skills are restored by the audience at times of distraction. Seeing his co-listeners focussed and concentrated helped him to refocus his concentration back on the music. Martin also points out the mood constituting effect of the audience, which, to him, became especially palpable at times of applause.

"Diese Vergewisserung, also wenn ich ins Publikum schaue zum Beispiel, und vielleicht grad selbst abgelenkt bin von der Musik, ähm, dann kann ich ins Publikum schauen und die Leute sind sehr fokussiert. Und das hilft mir selbst mich wieder zurück zu fokussieren auf die Musik zum Beispiel. Ähm, natürlich ist Applause und Leute die, ja, Stimmung machen einfach, weißt du, dass sie für oder zu einfach dass ich mich einfach wohl fühle und denke, ah ja, ok, es ist einfach cool, es macht Spaß. Ähm, und es ist auch cool wenn alle einfach extrem leise sind, niemand irgendwas sagt, und einfach viele Leute in einem Raum sind, aber trotzdem absolut stille und du kannst wirklich die Musik merkst, jeder sich auf die Musik konzentriert, das ist ein kollektives Wegtreten einfach." (Martin)

- Venue/Room

How the room/venue/atmosphere influences the musical experience was also an area of interest in this case study. All participants have expressed this influence to be a very positive one. The adjectives that were used to describe the atmosphere of the venue was “warm”, “intimate” and “relaxed”. This suggests that the venue played a subtle yet significant role in setting (or shaping) the concert attendees’ *moods*. As Martin commented:

“...hier hilft mir auf jeden Fall diese entspannte Atmosphäre, dass ich im Sessel sitzen kann und mein Bier steht auf dem Tisch und die Leute sind alle entspannt und so, fühle ich mich eher frei und entspannt” (Martin)

“Also, für ruhigere Musik, wo man sich, also, wie soll ich sagen, wo man vielleicht fokussiert zuhört, konzentriert zuhört, ist das ein perfekter Ort. Es beruhigt...Man hat eine intime Situation mit den Musikern. (Martin)

Martin reflects on how sitting on an armchair, having his beer on the table next to him have made him feel *relaxed* and how the *soothing* effect of the atmosphere, moreover, facilitated a more focused and concentrated listening mode. Paul, on the other hand, commented:

“Also ich hab persönlich zu Hause auch sehr viel eher gedimmteres Licht. Also, so diese Lampen, die in den Ecken stehen und kein direktes Licht. Das erzeugt eine sehr warme Atmosphäre, die gerade dann zum zweiten Teil, also zu dem zweiten Konzert sehr gut gepasst hat. Beim ersten war es ja noch hell. Ähm, wobei ich da auch mochte dass man nebenbei aus dem Fenster gucken kann und die Leute so ein bisschen beobachten konnte, die vorbei gelaufen sind. Und diese ganze Stimmung mit offenem Fenster dann...also man hat auf der eine Seite dieses feeling, in dem man grade ist, und auf der anderen Seite konnte man sehr schön, so ein bisschen die Außenwelt beobachten. Das hat sich so ergänzt. Das war sehr, tatsächlich, sehr “wohnzimmerhaft.” (Paul)

In Paul’s case, mood triggering aspects of the venue were things such as the dimmed lights, open windows and the things that he was able to see through the windows. Particularly the latter (the outside world) was occasionally coupled with his musical

experience, resulting with another powerful multimodal perceptual experience. At those moments, the environment became a meaningful part of his musical experience.

### **“Aesthetic experiences”**

On the basis of the data, it was possible to differentiate between two *attentional modi* that provided the basis for an aesthetic experience of the living room concert event. The qualitative data revealed that the most intense moments of the event took place either in a *contemplative* state—i.e. an attentive mode that is relatively goal-oriented and focused—or in state that involved flow and absorption as well as a more spontaneous and effortless involvement with the musical object. This distinction is based on the differences between the accounts of Paul and Martin (who are amateur musicians), on one hand, and Eric (who is not a musician) on the other.

### **“Contemplation”**

Contemplative and focused listening constituted one basis for an aesthetic experience. Paul, for instance, comments on how his listening involved a curiosity as to how music unfolds:

“Ich war eher gespannt wie es sich auflöst. Also, ich war eher gespannt was kommt als nächstes, wie geht das jetzt über in die Musik in Anführungszeichen. Ähm. Ich war eigentlich nur gespannt, also ich hab versucht es irgendwie zu deuten, was erzeugt das in mir und hab gedacht, ok, das ist jetzt ein sehr unruhiges Gefühl”.

While listening, Paul was particularly interested in following the musical unfolding. He was also occupied with interpreting or reflecting what sort of responses or feelings musical structures have triggered in him. Later on, he stated:

“Und beim zweiten war ich vom Publikum größtenteils sehr losgelöst. Also ich hab das Publikum gar nicht mehr wahrgenommen, wenn Spannungen in der Musik irgendwie aufgekommen sind. Und hat mich voll und ganz auf die einzelnen Instrumente konzentriert weil wirklich sehr viel los war. Es haben ja ständig irgendwelche Instrumente eingesetzt und aufgehört und was anderes gemacht und da war ich sehr involviert, also, ich war sehr dabei.” (Paul)

It appears that as the music's texture gets thicker and more crowded, Paul's attentiveness increases too. He concentrates more on the individual instruments because there is too much going on at the same time. His concentration on the musical unfolding and individual elements, moreover, results in his gradual dissociation from the audience. Listening closely to the music, "involving" and "being there" in its unfolding, furthermore, suggests that some degree of absorption is also present in Paul's aesthetic experience.

It was also important to Martin to "perceive" what was happening in the music, how the instruments—two guitars and a voice—were communicating (or agreeing) with each other and how the songs were structured. As he states in the following quotes:

"Also, war für mich besonders, zwei Gitarren zu hören zum Gesang und auch... wahrzunehmen, die passieren." (Martin)

"...mich interessiert die Songstruktur. Vielleicht weil ich selber Musik mache, mir interessiert wie andere Menschen schreiben quasi. Ähm, ich hatte mich auch interessiert wie sich die beide Gitarren haben abstimmen, die Arrangements. Ich kannte einige Songs schon [...] Deswegen hat mir sehr interessiert wie sie kombinieren." (Martin)

"Und natürlich auch die Kommunikation zwischen Gesang und Gitarre ist ja interessant. Also, wann ... die Einstieg in den Improvisation wann ist den Ausstieg...ähm...wie fühlen sie sich zum Klimax in der Improvisation zum Beispiel, das ist ja spannend. Und die Wiedereinstieg in die Struktur des Liedes. Solche Dinge fallen mir auf. Das suche ich danach, ich achte drauf". (Martin)

### ***"Absorption/Flow"***

Another mode of aesthetic pleasure, in Eric's case, has emerged from a more absorption or flow-like state. Here, musical experiencing takes the form of not a conscious attention to the musical unfolding, but rather of some sort of a temporary absorption and dissociation. In the following quotation, Eric makes the comparison himself and comments on how, during one particular song, his response was more to focus on his own inner world and imagination—rather than on what is happening in the music:

"For example, there is one that was quite chill and relaxing... I was thinking like this was more like a sound landscape than a concert [where] you need to focus really [on] what is

happening. [It] was more like you close your eyes and maybe you can travel to another world that you have in your mind or thinking about your own issues.” (Eric)

Such listening involves both absorption, flow as well as dissociation in that his imagination and music appear to work together to disconnect him from the external world:

“...perceiving these landscapes, like they were like, a way to disconnect with the actual space of people so...it was like I was closing my eyes and just let to be taken by the sounds and just disconnect with everything not thinking about much, just let my experience come from my ears or my hearing sense and just let myself go”. (Eric)

## **5.2 Summary of the findings**

To briefly summarize, this study has attempted to explore the lived experience of joint attention to music in a living room concert setting. Three individuals were interviewed in three separate concerts and the data gathered from these interviews was analyzed by IPA (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis). Two aspects of the lived experience were identified as a result of the analysis; its relational nature (how the musical experience was shaped in relation to its environment) and its aesthetic dimension (what constituted the aesthetic dimension of the experience). Relational nature of musical experience (and sense making) was revealed in the way environmental attributes and situated material aspects of the musical event played a significant role in influencing, co-determining and shaping its content and phenomenal character. These material aspects were the shared co-presence of the performers, co-listeners and the venue in which the concert took place. The aesthetic dimension of the lived experience of a living room concert, on the other hand, appeared to be manifested in two distinct attentional modi; in a contemplative, focused and attentive mode of listening, on one hand, and in a mode of listening that involved absorption and a flow-like state, on the other.

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1 Discussion

The present case study focused on the lived experience of joint listening to a live concert performance. The aim was to explore how musical experiencing was shaped by the specific socio-material conditions of a living room concert setting. The assumption implicit in the formation of this case study was that musical experiences are fundamentally situated and that their phenomenal character will vary greatly depending on, say, if there are other people involved in the listening act or whether the music being listened to is a live performance as opposed to a recorded performance etc. That the experience will be different in each case can be explained by the viewpoint that cognition is situated—that is, dependent on the immediate environment of the respondent—and also enacted, meaning, cognition is “an *emerging* property of the dynamical coupling between the animal’s physiology, its sensorimotor organization, and the environment in which it is situated”. The concert setting presents an ideal case study to examine musical experience for it involves interactive dynamics that unfold on multiple levels; interaction among performing musicians, interaction among listeners, interaction between performing musicians and listeners, and finally interaction between individuals and a sonic environment. The concert setting also implies that there are socio-material conditions (such as behavioral protocols, the venue, seats, lighting, tickets etc.) around which these interactions are organized.

Recent years have witnessed a growth in empirical investigations of listener and audience experiences in different social circumstances. Subject matters that are investigated in this growing corpus of research include, among others, the social effects of experiencing music with other people (Egermann et al., 2011), the social effects of listening to a live performance (Swarbrick et al. 2019), relationship between auditory and visual dimensions of live performances (Danielsen and Helseth, 2016), non-verbal synchronization between performers and audience (as well as among audience members) (Seibert et al. 2019), and the role of movement and gesture in musician-to-audience communication (Broughton and Stevens 2009). These matters have been studied both in laboratory settings and in real-world music listening contexts, using a variety of techniques including real-time subjective responses, video analysis,

physiological measurement as well as qualitative methods such as questionnaires, and interviews.

The present case study has focused on the lived experience of a living room concert, using semi-structured interview as the main methodological procedure. To the researcher's knowledge, there is no existing study that scrutinized this particular concert setting. The findings of the study offer four relevant themes for a discussion in light of the existing literature on listening and audience experience; (i) effects of performers on the listener; (ii) effects of co-listeners (on the listener); (iii) effects of the venue/space; and finally (iv) listening modes.

### **(i) Effects of the performers**

This case study revealed that the experience of the living room concert is most distinctively shaped by the embodied presence of the performers. Performers are the center of listeners' attraction not only because the concert format requires so but also because the material conditions of the venue (e.g. its small size) makes this attraction inevitable. These socio-material factors enable the communication between performers and listeners to take place on a much more intimate level. The most straightforward effect of the embodied presence of the performers is that the musical textures are not perceived independently of their performing bodies. They are directly traceable to the performer's sound producing movements, gestures and facial expressions. Broughton and Steven's (2009) empirical study on marimba performance shows how visual movement plays a crucial role in communicating musical expression to an audience. In a controlled laboratory setting where individuals are presented with auditory-only and auditory-visual presentations of solo-marimba excerpts, the study finds that projected performances were rated higher than their auditory-only versions. Similarly, the present case study on lived experience of living room concert shows that the visibility of the performance (seeing what is heard) as well as the body language of the performers are key factors in shaping the experience of living room concert. As one participant noted: "for me listening to music is quite a personal experience really, because I focus on what the musicians are doing, how they express, not just through music but through body language". This suggests that empathic understanding is an important part of the live performance experience. Empathy involves a basic awareness of bodily and emotional affective states and is rooted in a fundamental capacity to associate the bodily movements, gestures, expressions, and vocal intonations we perceive in others with

states we experience ourselves. This study showed that empathic understanding in live performance involves both a basic awareness of bodily affective states (“Mann kann sehr gut Unsicherheiten erkennen an Gesichtern”) as well as more complex imaginative representations of a performer’s emotional states and intentions (“it’s like, for example when I observe J., when he is playing, he is really into himself, it’s really like therapeutic thing for him I think, like he is just like having this conversation between these instruments and himself, so he doesn’t care really much about what it’s happening with the audience”).

## **(ii) Effects of co-listeners**

The findings of this case study resonate with theories of collective/joint music listening (Cochrane 2009; Krueger 2014b). These theories draw on the concept of joint attention in psychology, defined as, in Krueger’s words, “the mutual attending to an object in the environment. Crucially, however, those attending are not just aware of the object but simultaneously of the *other’s awareness* of the object” (p. 347). Both the object and the other’s joint attending to the object, in other words, are constituents of one’s experience. Within a musical context, Krueger states, “this mutual coordination of attention establishes a new attentional framework, one which modifies how the music is brought to phenomenal presence for the joint attenders” (p. 348). Krueger argues that in live concert settings, the attentive framework generated is marked by a palpable intensity not possible in solitary episodes due to “the sheer numerical concentration of attentive states that the mass audience generates” (p. 349). The present study shows that listening to music with 20 to 30 people (in a room much smaller than a concert hall) can also generate a sense of intensity. As one participant noted: “Diese Vergewisserung, also wenn ich ins Publikum schaue zum Beispiel, und vielleicht grad selbst abgelenkt bin von der Musik, ähm, dann kann ich ins Publikum schauen und die Leute sind sehr fokussiert. Und das hilft mir selbst mich wieder zurück zu fokussieren auf die Musik”. A further theme that came to light in the present study relates to the participants’ sense of connectedness with other audience members. Krueger argues that the mutual coordination of attention “supports emotional convergence by establishing a mutual affective resonance between the participants” (ibid.), engendering a sense of connectedness—i.e. an experiential ‘We’. This emotional convergence (as well as the sense of connectedness it engenders), moreover, may be stronger in situations where the shared listening context involves the mutual coordination of movements and actions of

the listening bodies. Research on dance music, for instance, attests to how ‘connectedness’, ‘unity’ and ‘feeling in one’ are central to the experience of raving and clubbing (Witek 2019; Garcia 2015). A recent study on the experience of classical concert, on the other hand, found that the feeling of connectedness to audience members does not play a substantial role in individual experiences (Seibert et al. 2019). The present study finds that some sense of connectedness with other listeners do occur in the experience of living room concerts. One participant has described it as “ein höfliches Miteinander” [a polite togetherness], whereas another participant used the phrase “ein kollektives Wegtreten” [a collective stepping away].

### **(iii) Effects of the venue/space**

To the researcher’s knowledge, the influence of the venue and space on the phenomenal character of musical experience is the least investigated of the points discussed in the present context. If we are to view cognition as situated—that is, dependent upon a relevant environment—and as constituted and enacted by the relational process comprising brain, body, and environment, then this aspect of musical experiencing becomes crucial in understanding how one experiences music in particular settings. Seibert (2019) provides a useful conceptual base for approaching this issue. He views the relationship to the environment as one that “affords an active structuring such that the environment serves as a *scaffold*—synchronically as well as diachronically” (p. 13, emphasis the researcher’s). In a concert hall, for instance, the architecture, the disposition of the seats, the lighting and various other aspects affect the way I experience the music being played. In an open-air rock-festival, although the stage-directed attention may be comparable, the environment is structured in a completely different way. In each case the particular musical experiencing is scaffolded—and *immediately* shaped—by a specifically structured environment. Diachronically, as Seibert notes, “these specifically arranged environments establish certain realms and habits of musical experiencing that affect the way we experience music in general”; and synchronically, “musical experiencing is continuously supported by environmental attributes and their dynamic changes (e.g. the dimming of auditorium lights indicating the imminent appearance of the musicians on stage) (p. 14).

In living room concerts, synchronic scaffolding of musical experiencing by the environment seems to play a more decisive role than its diachronic scaffolding, because the venues, in which the concerts take place, do not (immediately) represent (or stand

for) a particular way of music listening and experiencing in the way that, say, a concert hall does. Whereas a concert hall is directly associated with a certain mode of musical experiencing, living room concert venues are less prescriptive in terms of how the music should be experienced for they are not burdened with such cultural significance. This leaves us a synchronic scaffolding of musical experiencing (relatively) unburdened by a diachronic one. How did the space scaffold musical experiencing during the living room concert? It set the mood (a particularly relaxed one), through its lighting, comfortable chairs, windows that open to the outside world etc.; it enabled (almost exclusive) performer-directed attention (hence a high level of empathic understanding and involvement); it supported both focused and dedicated listening on the one hand (perhaps due to the physical closeness to the musicians and instruments) and absorption (perhaps due to the comfortable seating, dimmed lights etc.) on the other.<sup>4</sup>

#### **(iv) Listening modes**

It is interesting to see how the factors discussed above (empathy with performers, joint attention, the venue's synchronic scaffolding of experience) mutually co-determine *how* one listens to music in a living room concert setting. In other words, all these factors help generate a certain attentional framework, through which individuals perceive and interact with musical textures. The role of audience in generating (and sustaining) this framework is perhaps the most crucial. It contributes to the continuous achievement of an attentive and focused listening characteristic of a concert setting. In Krueger's (2011) words, "If the audience were to suddenly disappear, save for one lone listener, the ambient intensity, tension, and attentive focus to particular musical textures would also disappear—and the phenomenal character of the music-as-given to our lone listener would be dramatically altered" (p. 18). Within this attentional framework, in which the listening mode is characteristically attentive and focused (in the sense that attention is fully directed at the music-as given), empathy also plays a crucial role, given that the audience is able to closely observe what the musicians are doing, how they play, move and interact with each other, etc. Tuuri and Eerola (2012) note that "[e]mpathetic listening is about perceiving and denoting affective states, hence it focuses on cues that could signal someone's state of mind (i.e., intentionality)" (p. 142). However, one might argue that such 'focus' might not be necessary at all to perceive someone's affective states and intentions. As Gallagher and Hutto write (2008), "in most intersubjective

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<sup>4</sup> Note that joint attention is also a factor in enabling and supporting focused listening.

situations, that is, in situations of social interaction, we have a direct perceptual understanding of another person's intentions because their intentions are explicitly expressed in their embodied actions and their expressive behaviors. This understanding does not require us to postulate or infer a belief or a desire hidden away in the other person's mind. What we might reflectively or abstractly call their belief or desire is expressed directly in their actions and behaviors" (p. 20). In an intimate setting like a living room concert, the listener is immediately aware of the bodily and affective states of the performer. Listening in such settings is thus highly empathetic and intimately linked with (and informed by) the visibility of the musicians' performing body. As one participant noted: "manchmal habe ich auch das Gefühl, ok sie sind grade am Kämpfen oder Struggeln. Und irgendetwas funktioniert nicht und so dann merke ich das auch und hab ich so ein Gefühl sich vielleicht verkrampft oder anspannend".

## **6.2 Limitations**

Although this study has been a great learning experience for the researcher, some limitations have to be mentioned concerning this research. These mostly concern methodological issues, as it was the first qualitative research that the researcher has conducted fully. First and foremost, since the targeted issue was musical experience and the methodology used enabled the researcher to access it only *after* it occurred, participants' accounts regarding their experience were inevitably partial and perhaps even altered as they were trying to reflect on something "whose corporeality, temporality, and multiplicity elude the rational, spatial, and linear character of the written [or spoken] word" (Clarke 2011: 197-8). (Despite this limitation, however, it must be noted that this method of gathering data [reportage, interviewing] still remains as an important means of gaining understanding of the subjective experience of another). Second limitation concerned the thin line between the real-time experience and general experiences with music. During the interviews, the researcher realized that the participants could easily deviate from the actual experience to general remarks and hypothetical scenarios. The researcher has sometimes got caught up in and sometimes herself encouraged such detours by asking the interviewee to compare his or her experience with collective music listening to solitary listening, for instance. Moreover, as the researcher progressed with the research project, she realized that more questions could have been asked and that the interviews could have been more focused on certain aspects of musical experience (such as empathy, sense of connection, awareness of self and others) and explored it to a greater extent. As far as the analysis is concerned, some

issues or aspects regarding the experience of the living room concert were necessarily left out either because they were not compatible with the superordinate themes or because the researcher found them to lack in precision. What is more, this research has only focused on the phenomenal character of musical experiencing, i.e., on lived experience *during* a performance, as such it did not address or tackle issues such as satisfaction, liking of the piece, social background, etc.

### **6.3 Implications for Further Research**

The research presented here was exploratory in nature as very little research has been done on musical experiencing in a concert-setting using a methodological procedure similar to one employed here. One of the study's main concerns was to explore how musical experience (and listening) is shaped by the respondent's surrounding environment. Ultimately, further research can undertake similar endeavors for different social settings and circumstances. This could also be realized in a comparative framework. A comparison between different social settings could give stronger insights into how perception (and thus musical experience) is structured by its surrounding environment.

Alternatively, further research can scrutinize the following central themes of this study individually; namely, empathic relationship between musicians and listeners, sense of connection with co-listeners, and, finally, diachronic and/or synchronic scaffolding of musical experience by the surrounding environment.

Although not addressed in this study, further research could also explore the role of social context (background) in influencing the constitution of musical perception and experience. A comparative work that focuses on musical experiences of listeners from different social groups could offer interesting insights into the discussion of music cognition as an embodied, situated and ecological phenomenon.

In any new research, independently of the comparisons that could be done, the amount of the participants could also be augmented. An increase of numbers could provide a more valid and rich set of data.

## Conclusions

First, this thesis presented and compared three approaches to music cognition and mind; (i) traditional cognitivist-computational (ii) embodied and (iii) enactive approaches to music cognition. Traditional cognitivist-computational view of mind sees the brain as the only locus where music cognition can be said to take place. Human beings have meaningful relationships with music because their brains are busy with decoding, organizing, re-presenting, constructing, etc. However, relying on abstract mental representations and unconscious brain processing, this approach is not capable of accounting for the phenomenology of musical experience. Hence it does not say much about how human beings actually experience music. Embodied view, on the other hand, aims to correct this mistake, by taking into account the role of the body as *mediator* between mind and matter. Hence, one of its central claims is that we understand music not in terms of abstract symbols but in terms of actions and intentions based on our own action-oriented ontology. By considering the body's active role in shaping musical understanding and stressing the importance of phenomena such as resonance and empathy, this framework comes closer to revealing the phenomenology of musical experience. Enactive approach, however, rejects both EMC's representationalist stance and its rather strong focus on the body. Emphasizing the continuity between brain, body and environment, enactivism conceives cognition as a process of bringing forth, co-constitution, indeed, of enactment. Therefore it is the closest to address the phenomenology and the sociality of musical experience and understanding.

Taking this as a lead, the second part of the thesis presented a case study on musical experiencing by focusing on joint music listening in a living room concert setting. This case study has explored how the unique situated aspects of the concert event shaped the content and character of musical experience and listening. Three key aspects have emerged as having played notable roles in defining the experience: empathy with musicians, feeling of togetherness and the venue's synchronic scaffolding of experience.

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## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEW- 1

ERIC, 33, Media Art and Design

A: lets start with the most general question. How did you hear about this concert?

E: I think is like I have been working with Kamay, that is the bar attender, he is also a musician...well he is a musicologist. And also because of Jordan. We have been working [on] different projects together, so... I am always quite aware what it's happening here, maybe because of Facebook, maybe because they invite me, maybe because they send me text massages. So, I am quite aware. And obviously because I already know like every Thursday there are concerts here. So it's like the same thing that happens in C-Keller, like every Monday, maybe not exclusively jazz concerts, like there are bands on Monday.

A: So you like this kind of music events, where there is a live music, a band..

M. Depends... It really depends on my mood. For sure it's like, music, it's a really big deal in my life, because it's my one of ways that I could use to get rid of stress, to clarify my thoughts, to interiorize my thoughts and what I am dealing in life generally with musics like sometimes there are music that I really dislike for example a band that maybe I don't know but I was curious... Like, for example, in this case, like, when is jazz and it's really experimental jazz, like, doesn't feel like really it's mood in a jam session, more like it's dissonant somehow. It's like that's not really something that I really curious [about] or stay longer, because for me it's kind of annoying after a while. But, yeah generally I am really open to experience a lot of different genres, music, mmm, performances, musicians and so.

A: I saw you many times in C-Keller on Mondays. So, my question is do you particularly like this kind of musical events, collective listening to music, is it something special for you? I mean, instead of hearing music in your room [for instance], you come and listen to music here.

M: I really do both. Mmm, because at the same time music it's a way to focus. And the things is like, for me, I mean, I like seeing people enjoying music and maybe connecting and so... But for me listening to music is quite a personal experience really, because I focus on what the musicians are doing, how they express, not just through music but through body language, how good as frontman could be to engage the audience, because sometimes you can see and you can listen fantastic musicians. But at the same time, they are kind of shy and that creates a disruptive path, I mean the communication between the audience and the musician and other way around you have really people that [have] really strong characters and so maybe they are not as well versatile in their own playing... So...pretty much...it depends. I like to analyze what's going on the stage but at the same time on the venue, with the people. But it more like my way [of] observing people, how they enjoy music and so.

A: Did you observe the venue today?

M: At the beginning I was at the back and watching people how.. like, for example, there were three people that were really focused and paying a lot of attention on what it was going on at the stage, well, for example, there was an old couple there that were just having a dream or just having an intimate moment among them, not necessarily with the rest of the people.

A: Did you find it interesting that an old couple came to this concert, and they were the only old people.

M. Well, this is something that I was able to experience in Germany not necessarily this space. Like, usually, there is a great variation of audience in this kind of spaces. It's not like, for example, you could assume like when they are doing jam sessions or really specific kind of avantgarde jazz, just young people or students come to this kind of events, but not necessarily. There is also...it's not a matter of age, person or people. It's more like of they want to listen to something that is appealing or that is interesting. It's interesting somehow for them. Or maybe they just to expand their knowledge through having new experiences though new music genres..

A: So the audience is heterogeneous in Germany...

M: I would not say Germany, I would say like Weimar itself, I think. Weimar is a peculiar place, like people are really open to experience new things and so. Like for example there was this band [...]

For me the most interesting concerts are when you can experience like really authentic things, you know, so for me folkloric expressions are quite nice and quite important. Because maybe you understand or figure out or be connected with the culture of other people. And not just through words or so, like, ok this is something really special or really intimate for them and they are sharing this and it doesn't matter that I understand the language but the rhythm, the energy, the vibe, it's connecting not with me and the band but the audience, the band and everybody, It's like synergy coming around all of us, so , I really appreciate that, it's quite nice. For example, I really also like when they do this samba evenings here, some Thursdays or so. And it's like, this is quite a really different set up because also has like this religious component, like it's a way to (...) They gather in circle, instead of having like kind of this connection, the musicians are there, the audience is here...it's more like, you can see everything that is happening. They are sitting down. So, It's a different sensation and different experience.

A: So the location, where the musicians and the audience stand, is important...

M: It's always important, because, I mean, I come from a visual background. I come from also a design background. And, music is not about how good the musicians are, or how good they play. You want to share a full experience like connecting with all senses pretty much. You need to take into account the illumination, the disposition of the musicians among the space, disposition of the audience, so, it's like, sometimes like a private bubble for the moment they are playing and so. And for sure like when you have this setup like, it's a circle and so it's even...you get more close to experience somehow. And also you are more aware about what is happening not just among the musicians but also among the audience because you can see everyone, like they're sharing, they're dancing, they're coming together even more because of music. So, like, for example, when you have like this kind of concerts that you're sitting down and just facing

forward to the musicians...you're disconnected with what is happening around you. But, sometimes it's good, sometimes it's bad, depends on what you are trying to achieve or what you want with this kind of experiences. And like I was saying I like to see what the people are doing and...according also of the music that is happening, you know... for example, there is one that was quite chill and relaxing... I was thinking like this was more like a sound landscape than a concert you need to focus really what is happening. [It] was more like you close your eyes and maybe you can travel to another world that you have in your mind or thinking about your own issues...I don't know. So in this case, I was not paying attention when I was there sitting at the front, I was not paying attention what was happening behind me. But, for example, when people are dancing and enjoying a lot, and connecting more (mmm) through body language let's say because dancing is body language. I really like to see what is going on so...and it's maybe not just because of my curiosity, it's also because of my background or how I was raised up, pretty much...I really like what it's happening if a lot of people are having fun, it's like a disease, it's contagious, so you have more fun so, and not necessarily this could happen on a party (?), like you were saying in this kind of intimate spaces or so, that can also happen, depends on the energy and the musicians, and the type of music and how they engage and connect with people and so.

A: Ok. We spoke about the audience, and the relationship between the musicians and the audience. Now I wanna ask you more specifically about the musicians. What were your observations on them?

E: I think that like they were well-focused of having a good understanding among the three of them. Not necessarily the audience, I mean, they were letting...like the music speak for them and connect with the audience, so for example I was just observing like the singer was really focused on giving the proper tone and figuring out, according to the effect, like he was using these box was the most proper, or appropriate, for the notes or the sound that were coming from the other two musicians. And the same thing, it's like, for example when I observe Jordan, when he is playing, he is really into himself, it's really like therapeutical thing for him I think, like he is just like having this conversation between these instruments and himself, so he doesn't care really much about what it's happening with the audience at the moment, it's just like it's his personal moment, so

A: I think his body language was telling a lot about his consciousness...

E: I think like the guy that was playing the trombone, he was more aware of the outside of the stage.

A: Because he was looking at the audience?

E: Maybe because of the own disposition of the instrument like he was like facing forward, but I don't know if he was engaging through the eye sight or maybe it was just coincidence but among the three of them he was the one that was more sharing through body language with the audience, let's say. That's how I perceived this situation.

A: Ok. I would like to ask you about the flow of your own consciousness. What moods, emotions, thoughts occurred to you during listening to the music?

E: I really like the third peace, I think it was. It was really relaxing for me like just chilling about... perceiving these landscapes, like they were like, a way to disconnect

with the actual space of people so...it was like I was closing my eyes and just let to be taken by the sounds and just disconnect with everything not thinking about much, just let my experience come from my ears or my hearing sense and just let myself go. Mmm, it was I think because it was really kind of a longer instrumental piece and actually the singer was using his voice just to create another layer of sound that not necessarily something that was part of lyrics or so, because when he was singing other type of songs like actually... i was paying attention to what he was saying, the lyrics, then it was more like I was focused on this guy, what he is saying, what is this song about. And at the same time, in this case, some of the songs were kind of poems, so me it was like ok this is really nice and really touchy and moving at the same time. And I don't know like, I think about myself about the relationships that I have with my friends, with someone that maybe I am interested in a romantic way or so. And it's a way to discharge of all these feelings and so just to listening like again like this lyrics that are kind of poems and you can relate, sometimes they are melancholic and sometimes they are sweet or maybe it's romantic and I don't know like to declare love or to declare loneliness or whatever. This kind of things I really like because these are really human and really honest, because most of the time like when you talk to someone you cannot feel this kind of subtle things like how pure the emotions is. Especially when you're on the stage and performing, you need to connect so much with your own emotions that you're saying a lot not just because of the lyrics are really big component but also through the gesture, like what your face is saying or hands or arms and so on. And which kind of tone do you use to transmit a feeling you know...because it's not the same thing to sing this kind of songs when you're yelling like when you're really gentle like, depends on the variations of the tone of the voice and so on. How long you prolong a word or a sentence and that creates another mood that for me in my case brings another connection with them and/or maybe with my own thought. I don't know like, I could not say that music could heal everything but helps a lot, a lot.

A: You talk a lot about connection and I perceive it as empathy. Like you're were strongly able to empathize with music. So how about your own body? You talked a lot about the body language of the musicians, the audience. How was your relationship with your own body during listening to the music? Were there any urge to move?

E: This time I just wanted to let myself go in myself, like I just need to be chill and relaxed and just lose the tension on my body and just be away. Because it was like how I was perceiving this kind of even this evening, this kind of music. So, really, again depends on the energy, the rhythm and so. I really like when I have the chance to dance, if I feel like I want to dance, I go for it, mmm especially maybe not necessarily for example when a space is really crowded, I just dance in my own personal space, so, for me about the body language, depends on the context, tonight for me was like I didn't have to pay attention anymore to the rest of the people, I just wanted to focus on my own thoughts and because I am doing this on my mental state, I don't need that my body express too much, so I was just quite still but at the same time quite loose without being stiff, like tension or so, like this is nice, sometimes I was feeling like this was a kind of a lullaby, not necessarily to go to sleep, but just to feel like in a safe space somehow, and in this case I was more just on my own thoughts and not that much on my own body.

A: How would you compare your experience of listening to music here and listening alone at home?

E: But like for example if I had like a CD or song of them on my own room or with musicians in my room or so?

A: You're listening alone in your room through headphones for example..

E: Ok. Mmm...

A: Would it be a stronger experience? Or is it stronger here?

E: I think it's stronger when you have the musicians there.

A: In front of you? So it has to be live..

E: To have a strong perception and experience, yes, definitely. Because when you're just listening, maybe there is just like, you're using just one of our senses, at least the most, then when you're actually see what these guys are doing, how they're behaving, it's a completely different experience and for me it's a higher experience when you have the musicians when you're by yourself. Just, for example, for me, when I am listening music in my own personal space when nobody is around me I prefer more to listen music that has a video, for example on youtube, because... there is a story, and I like to figure out how the visual aspect is connected with the song. And it gives me more inspiration and it's maybe because I think more in a visual way then a song way you could say. And for sure, ok, maybe I don't have like my hearing sense so well trained to figure out like how good or how bad is the quality compared to video, compared to other type of sound files that are better and so. But for sure like, for example, also depends on how your sound system is set up. If you have a really nice sound system, like can create like this 3D sound immersive experience, I would have a different answer. It's not just about the music itself, music has a technological component also. Nowadays. And if you have like this technological setup, that could create another approach, and maybe I could say no, I really love this space that I have because I can perceive everything completely and so. I don't know, for example, if I was able to be at CEAM alone, just me, and they have this 3D experience sound, maybe I would say, Oh no, leave me hear alone I don't need the musician and so, but if you're talking about just like with musicians, without musicians and that's it, I would say with musicians, for me it will be so much better. And, not necessarily like a private concert, just for myself and so, I also like and enjoy to get into touch with people, not necessarily talking or so, but having this communal experience.

## INTERVIEW-2

**MARTIN**, 34, Consultant/Musician

A: Ich fange mit dieser Frage an: Wie hast du von diesem Konzert erfahren?

M: Die Leute, die gespielt haben, waren Freunde von mir. Und, ich wusste dass sie spielen aber Ich bekomme auch so von den Konzerten mit, weil ich der Oma auf Facebook folge und mal kucke was passiert am Donnerstag, wer kommt her, ich weiß, dass die Konzerte gibt.

A: Du kommst hier manchmal..

M: Oft. Ja, jede zweite Woche, bestimmt.

A: Und findest du die Musik, die hier gespielt wird, interessant?

M: Ja. Interessant ist genau das richtige Wort und ich finde ich kenne Jordan, der hier kuratiert, und finde die Aus.. sehr spannend.

A: Wie findest du das Ort für solche Musik?

M: Perfekt. Für bestimmte Art von Musik finde ich perfekt. Genau. Also, für ruhigere Musik, wo man sich, also, wie soll ich sagen, wo man vielleicht fokussiert zuhört, konzentriert zuhört, ist das ein perfekte Ort. Es beruhigt. Man kann sich perfekt konzentrieren auf die Musik. Es gibt verschiedene räumliche Möglichkeiten, die einzusetzen. Es ist gemütlich. Man hat eine intime Situation mit dem Musikern. Es ist sehr schön.

A: Was war besonders für dich in diesem Konzert, Besetzung, Musik...

M: Für mich persönlich war besonders, ich kenne die Band. Ich kenne die Sängerin im Duo Auftritt. Und das war zum ersten Mal, dass ich sie im Trio gesehen hab. Also, war für mich besonders, zwei Gitarren zu hören zum Gesang und auch ... wahrzunehmen, die passieren. Imm, besonders fand ich auch den Percussionisten hin und wieder hinzukommen zu sehen. Genau. Das war außergewöhnlich finde ich.

A: Ich habe ein paar Kategorien. Das erste ist die Musikern. Was hat dir an den Musikern aufgefallen? Ihre Art und Weise zu spielen, ihre Körpersprache und so weiter...

M: Imm... Ich finde das ... verändert. Das war am Anfang ein bisschen steif. Mir ist es aufgefallen, dass sie wie soll ich das sagen oft aus Notenplatt gekuckt. Die Gitarristen haben sich Abstimmung und Kommunikation braucht. Sie haben gegenseitig angeschaut, haben sehr viel aus dem Notenplatt geschaut. Nora, die Sängerin, war sehr gelöst, sehr introvertiert zum Teil in den Songs, die Augen zugemacht, viele Gesten gemacht und manchmal aufgestanden, manchmal hingesetzt, also das hat mit aufgefallen.. Ja. Und die beide Gitarristinnen oder überhaupt die Band hat ein bisschen eingelöst in den letzten Lieder. Das war auch sehr auffällig dass sie immer angefangen haben, die Anspannung war weg und so was (bei dem ?) ersten Gig zusammen. So habe ich das interpretiert.

A: Also, die Kommunikation zwischen den Musikern..

M: Dies hat stark aufgefallen ja. Dass hat man sehr Gefühl wie sie sich angucken, wie sie sich Signale geben und so, ja.

A: Ok... Das Publikum. Hattest du die Gelegenheit das Publikum zu beobachten? Hat es die irgendetwas aufgefallen?

M: Uuuuh. Imm. Ich hab wenig auf das Publikum gekuckt. Imm. Manchmal habe ich auf die Leute so ein bisschen (vor mir ?) gekuckt (.....?). Manchmal gekuckt wie sie schauen und habe gesehen sie sehr konzentriert waren, also ja, konzentriert. Imm. Ein bisschen einzelne...imm..mir ist es aufgefallen das ich wahrgenommen habe die Applause war sehr euphorisch und ich hab eigentlich erwartet, dass sie eher leiser sind, das Publikum. Also, so wie sie aussahen, wenn sie fokussiert manchmal sogar müde haben sie auf mich gewirkt. Und der Applause war aber sehr euphorisch, das ist mir aufgefallen.

A: Das war überraschend für dich.

M: Ja genau.

A: Ich möchte mehr von Musik sprechen. Du hast schon ein paar Sachen gesagt. Konntest du die Musik strukturell verfolgen?

M: Ja, total. Das verfolge ich total. Imm. mich interessiert die Songstruktur. Vielleicht weil ich selber Musik mache, mir interessiert wie andere Menschen schreiben quasi. Imm, ich hatte mich auch interessiert wie sich die beide Gitarren haben abstimmen, die Arrangements. Ich kannte einige Songs schon, aber ... eine Gitarre. Deswegen hat mir sehr interessiert wie sie kombinieren..

A: Du spielst selber Gitarre?

M: Ja. Ich spiele auch Gitarre, aber nicht besonders viel, also, einfachere als was hier passiert. Aber ich weiss schon so ein bisschen...

A: Du singst auch?

M: Genau. Und natürlich auch die Kommunikation oder zwischen Gesang und Gitarre ist ja interessant. Also, wann ... die Einstieg in den Improvisation wann ist den Ausstieg...Imm...wie fühlen sie sich zum Klimax in der Improvisation zum Beispiel, das ist ja spannend. Und sc.... die Wiedereinstieg in die Struktur des Bildes. Solche Dinge fallen mir auf. Das suche ich danach, ich achte drauf. Imm, auch die, ich wusste das der Percussionist, Imm, nur dazu gekommen ist heute. Also dass es die erste Mal war. Und das ist auch interessant zu sehen wie sich die Perkussion einfügt oder vielleicht auch nicht einfügt, also, manchmal wirkt sie so zu sagen hinzu irgendwie n? so einfach dazu gestellt. Und wenn die Leute länger zusammen spielen und entspannter sind und eingespielter sind dann merkt man sich dass es organischer wird.

A: Hattest du bestimmte Stimmungen oder Emotionen erlebt?

M: Auf jeden Fall. Also, ich glaube es ist, Imm, viel wird gespiegelt von dem was auf dem Bühne passiert. Also, manche Emotionen geben sich aus der Musik selbst. Imm, es gab ein oder zwei Lieder die sehr, die, wo ich sehr, die mir eingesaugt haben, wo ich fasziniert war einfach von, also, wie sie gespielt sind, wie sie interpretiert sind irgendwie. Imm, Ok, was mich am meisten fasziniert, Imm, wenn Ich das Gefühl hab die Musiker sind sehr emotional. Und dann, Imm, springt das auf mich über. Und dann ich habe das Gefühl, ok ich ...

A: Die bekommen deine Gefühle...

M: Genau, richtig. Also, ich glaub, das hat sehr viel damit zu tun und manchmal habe ich auch das Gefühl, ok sie sind grade am Kämpfen oder Struggeln. Und irgendetwas funktioniert nicht und so dann merke ich das auch und hab ich so ein Gefühl sich vielleicht verkrampft oder anspannend.

A: Du bist also nicht so objektiv in solchen Momenten...

M: Ich glaube ich bin eher objektiv in Songs, die mich jetzt nicht so emotional berühren, wo ich, kann ich kucke, die mich technisch interessiert zum Beispiel, dann bin ich eher objektiv. Manche Songs finde ich lyrisch und dann werde ich emotional und emphatisch. Und manche Dinge sind nur einfach lustig und menschlich zu sehen, also die letzten zwei Lieder zum Beispiel waren sehr, ja, halt eben eingelöst und locker und so, und sie haben angefangen zu lachen und vom Notenplatt hochzugucken um zu kommunizieren mit dem Publikum und Spaß haben.

A: Das hat dich schnell beeindruckt.

M: Genau. Das hat mich, ich wurde sofort auch, habe ich auch Spaß empfunden in der Musik und...

A: Also Empathie spielt eine große Rolle in deiner Erfahrung.

M: Ja. Definitiv. Absolut.

A: Wie ist mit dem körperliche Erfahrung? Hast du bewegt, getanzt oder das Tempo gehalten?

M: Ja, genau, Ich suchte mir eine entspannte Sitzposition auf jeden Fall aber ich hab immer irgendein Körperteil was ich Rhythmus mit bewegt oder manchmal sogar mit improvisiert oder ich denke mir manchmal summe ich mit Improvisation oder (...?) die ich anders machen würde im Song und interpretiere ich dann für mich leise summend oder manchmal trommeln mit der Händen oder so..

A: Denkst du, du würdest in einer anderen Situation eine andere körperliche Reaktion auf die Musik geben?

M: Daran habe ich in dem Moment nicht dran gedacht aber wenn du die Frage stellst, würde ich sagen auf jeden Fall, also Ich kann mir nicht vorstellen, also, hier hilft mir auf jeden Fall diese entspannte Atmosphäre, dass ich im Sessel sitzen kann und mein Bier steht auf dem Tisch und die Leute sind alle entspannt und so, fühle ich mich eher frei und entspannt. Ich kann mir nicht vorstellen dass es gleich in dem größeren Konzert Saal wäre oder in einem anderen Setting. Vielleicht sogar stehend, ich glaub, stehend

wäre keine Möglichkeit hier zu entspannen. Ja. Das hat auf jeden Fall einen Einfluss. Und der Raum an sich hilft mir mich zu entspannen..

A: Wie denkst du, ist es anders, allein Musik zu hören und mit Menschen zuzuhören?

M: Ja, Ich glaube, mich beeinflusst auf jeden Fall. Diese Vergewisserung, also wenn ich ins Publikum schaue zum Beispiel, und vielleicht grad selbst abgelenkt bin von der Musik, Imm, dann kann ich ins Publikum schauen und die Leute sind sehr fokussiert. Und das hilft mir selbst mich wieder zurück zu fokussieren auf die Musik zum Beispiel. Imm, natürlich ist Applause und Leute die, ja, Stimmung machen einfach, weißt du, dass sie für oder zu einfach dass ich mich einfach wohl fühle und denke ah ja ok es ist einfach cool, es macht Spaß. Imm, und es ist auch cool wenn alle extrem leise sind, niemand irgendwas sagt, und einfach viele Leute in einem Raum sind, aber trotzdem absolut stille und du kannst wirklich die Musik merken, jeder sich auf die Musik konzentriert, das ist ein kollektives Weggriffen einfach. Es ist gut. Es hat total, es würde mir, ich kann es, also, ich höre viel Musik hier, die ich privat alleine für mich individuell gar nicht höre. Ich hätte die Musik von heute zum Beispiel wahrscheinlich höre ich normalerweise nicht selbst. Für mich ist es eine reine Konzert Musik, in der Situation, und nicht in der große Konzerte, sondern in so eine Situation höre ich diese Musik gerne, ansonsten nicht so oft.

A: Wie oft gehst du in solchen Konzerten, wo man still Musik hört?

M: Imm, ja, ich würde sagen mindestens, was heißt oft, also zwei mal im Monat mindestens. [...] Also ich suche diese Situation schon, wenn ich weiß dass irgendwo ein Wohnzimmerkonzert gibt, ich gehe gerne hin. Ich finde es sehr speziell. Ich mag die kleine intime Atmosphäre und da kann ich wirklich auf Musik hören, die ich mir, Imm, nicht mit Kopfhörer gebe oder so.

A: Es ist eine ganz andere Erfahrung.

M: Ja. Absolut. Also auf Musik, von der ich sagen würde, ich würde sie sonst vielleicht gar nicht wertschätzen. Also die Musik heute zum Beispiel ist nicht meine musikalische Heimat eigentlich, sondern ich finde einfach interessant wie gespielt wird, diese verschiedenen Komponenten, Publikum, Musiker, Emotionen und so, das kombiniert, fusioniert in einem Moment und dann finde ich es gut.

### INTERVIEW-3

**PAUL**, 24, Sociology Student

A: Wie oft besuchst du solche Konzerten?

P: Ziemlich selten eigentlich.

A: Warum bist du heute gekommen?

P: Meine Freundin spielt mit und hat mich quasi eingeladen. Imm, aber ich bin trotzdem dieser Art Musik sehr angetan. Also, es ist jetzt nicht so dass ich ins Blaue hinein hergekommen bin, sondern ich hatte schon so eine Ahnung was es geht. Imm, den ersten Akt hatte ich jetzt nicht so wirklich auf dem Schirm. Da wusste ich nicht was kommt. Also, ich war eher auf der zweite Teile angestellt.

A: Das gemeinsame Zuhören. Was bedeutet das für dich?

P: Ich habe mir ehrlich gesagt nie wirklich Gedanken darüber gemacht. Spontan, ist das, wenn ich an eine andere Konzerte denke, ein starkes Gemeinschaftsgefühl, in dem man aufgehen kann. Also, wenn man gemeinsam Dinge macht, schafft das ein sehr angenehmes Gefühl von Gemeinsamkeit.

A: Hast du dieses Gefühl heute gehabt?

P: [...] Denn beim ersten war es eher so dass ich ein höfliches Miteinander empfunden habe. Das war ein sehr, imm, ruhiges und verhaltenes Zuhören, aber wenn ich die Stimmung deuten sollte, sehr.. sehr.. höflich. Dass kann ich nicht beschreiben. Alle haben zuhört...

A: Hast du das Publikum in irgendeiner weise beobachtet? Oder hat es dir etwas aufgefallen? Hat etwas dich gestört vielleicht?

P: Ähm, gestört, tatsächlich nichts. Also, ich fand zumindestens den Interpret sehr gut auch mit Leuten, die im Hintergrund umhergelaufen sind, umgegangen ist. Imm, Ich glaube der direkt vor mir hat Songtexte mitgelesen, was ich sehr interessant fand . Und hat ein bisschen gefilmt aber er wurde auch aufgefordert das zu tun glaube ich. Imm, und ansonsten habe ich..fand ich es interessant so wie die Lieder ankommen, also es gab eins was ein bisschen mehr, also, rhythmischer geprägt war. Das andere war sehr viel Fingerpicking. Und dann hatte er eins was wo er die Gitarre umgestimmt hat. Und da sind die Leute so ein bisschen mehr eingetaucht in die ganze Sache. Und ich hab mir, ich habe gehofft, dass es auf dem..dass es weiter geht, weil irgendwie echt gute Stimmung aufkam dadurch. Und da hätte ich gehofft, dass mehr kommt.

A: Also, es gab nichts störendes beim Publikum, Geräusche und so.. alles war angenehm?

P: Würde ich mitgehen. Ich glaube dass ja. Also, ja. Ich glaube dass das sehr viel mit, wie gesagt, mit dem Interpreten zu tun hat, der so wirkte, als hätte er das nicht zum ersten Mal gemacht und sehr gut mit den Situationen, in so einem kleinen Raum, umgegangen ist. Und das hat zurückreflektiert.

A: Das ist eigentlich ein anderes Stichwort. Der Ort, Venue, Wohnzimmer Atmosphäre... Wie findest du diesen Ort?

P: Also ich hab persönlich zu Hause auch sehr viel eher gedimmteres Licht. Also, so diese Lampen, die in den Ecken stehen und kein direktes Licht. Das erzeugt eine sehr warme Atmosphäre, die gerade dann zum zweiten Teil, also zu dem zweiten Konzert sehr gut gepasst hat. Beim ersten war es ja noch hell. Imm, wobei ich da auch mochte dass man nebenbei aus dem Fenster gucken kann und die Leute so ein bisschen beobachten konnte, die vorbei gelaufen sind. Und diese ganze Stimmung mit offenem Fenster dann.. also man hat auf der eine Seite dieses feeling, in dem man grade ist, und auf der anderen Seite konnte man sehr schön, so ein bisschen die Außenwelt beobachten. Das hat sich so ergänzt. Das war sehr, tatsächlich, sehr "wohzimmerhaft."

A: Das nächste Stichwort wäre die Musiker. Was für ein Verhältnis hast du mit den Musikern gehabt?

P: Ich war beim ersten Teil sehr eher distanziert wegen der Texte auch. Er hat selbst angesprochen, dass er auch zu einem Drittel über Gott singt und so Bibel Sachen eingebunden hat und Jesus. Das war eher nicht meins. Das war, also ich hab dann eher das Handwerk des Musikers genossen als tatsächlich das, was die Botschaft ist. Und beim zweiten war ich vom Publikum größtenteils sehr losgelöst. Also ich hab das Publikum gar nicht mehr wahrgenommen, wenn Spannungen in der Musik irgendwie aufgekommen sind. Und hat mich voll und ganz auf die einzelnen Instrumente konzentriert weil wirklich sehr viel los war. Es haben ja ständig irgendwelche Instrumente eingesetzt und aufgehört und was anderes gemacht und da war ich sehr involviert, also, ich war sehr dabei.

A: Das war dann eher eine persönliche Erfahrung für dich, nicht eine kollektive?

P: Ja. Insofern auch dass ich, imm, die Musik auch gern privat höre und mir wenn ich solche Musik höre auch sehr viel Zeit dafür nehme, weil ich nicht finde, dass man sowas nebenbei hören kann, und..

A: Man muss sich fokussieren..

P: Genau. Man muss voll und ganz dabei sein..

A: Findest du, dass diese Konzertform hilft, um so eine Fokussierung zu erschaffen? Wäre das anders, wenn du diese Musik allein zu Hause hören würdest?

P: Imm. Es war insofern besser als das selbst zu, also, zu Hause zu hören, dass es sehr intensiv war wenn die Instrumente tatsächlich laut wurden. Dass man diesen physischen Kontakt irgendwie auch, also, man ist in dem selben Raum und der Klang entfaltet sich im Instrument ganz anders als durch eine Box oder durch Kopfhörer. Und so kann man viel weiter eintauchen, also, so ein Saxofon klingt sehr viel wärmer in live als zum Beispiel als auf einer Aufnahme.

A: Meine nächste Frage wäre, beobachtest du Musikern während sie spielen? Ihre Art und Weise zu spielen oder ihre Körpersprache...

P: Ich beobachte sehr genau. Bei mir ist Authentizität sehr wichtig. Also ich muss merken, dass mein gegenüber das, was er oder sie rüberbringen möchte, auch oder rüberbringt auf wirklich rüberbringen möchte. Ich bilde mir ein, dass ich erkenne wenn das passiert und wenn nicht. Imm, und insofern hatte ich heute auf jeden Fall, glaube ich, ganz gutes Bauchgefühl weil ich kein, keine Anzeichen dafür entdeckt hab, dass die, die vorgespielt haben, das unehrlich gemacht haben, und insofern konnte ich auch diese 'gotteslastigen' Songtexte hinnehmen, weil ich mir gedacht habe, ok, er steht dafür, er macht das wirklich aus vollem Herzen, also höre ich ihm zu, imm, und ansonsten achte ich gerne auf Finger, so wie die Instrumente gespielt werden, ich spiele selbst Gitarre, und achte dann immer sehr aktiv darauf, was gerade auf der Gitarre gespielt wird. Und, imm, ansonsten, mag ich Akustik mit Visualität zu verbinden, also, das was ich höre auch tatsächlich dann am Instrument sehen zu können, wie wird es gemacht, wo wird geklopft, wo ist welcher Klang..

A: Und wie geht es mit den Ausdrücke in den Gesichtern von Musikern? Achtest du auf den Gesichtern, mimics und so?

P: Man kann sehr gut Unsicherheiten erkennen an Gesichtern. Genau, Unsicherheiten sind sehr störend finde ich, nachvollziehbar ... Insofern sehr störend wenn es diese, ich weiss nicht ob es diese Authentizität, die ich angesprochen hab, unterbricht aber es ist immer sehr ein kritisches Element, gerade wenn mehrere miteinander spielen, finde ich sehr störend, dass ein Mitspieler an einem anderen Mitspielenden etwas auszusetzen hat sozusagen. ... in der Gruppe, was nicht vorkam, immer die Augenbrauen verzieht und niemanden anguckt, weil irgend ein Ton schief war, dann denke ich mir das ist passiert aber das muss jetzt nicht kommentiert werden durch jemanden und das würde ich als störend empfinden. Imm, wohingegen ich umgänglich sehr angetan bin wenn jemand sich freut, also dass kam ja auch vor, dass jemand sich in die Musik seiner Kollegin gelegt hat und so "Ach ja" genauso es ist cool. Das hingegen ist sehr, sehr stützend.

A: Ich möchte dich nach deinen körperlichen Reaktionen fragen. Hast du während des Konzerts bewegt, getanzt oder mit dem Fuß Tempo gehalten?

P: Das Bedürfnis zum Tanzen war teilweise da. Aber ich hätte es in dem Rahmen unangenehm empfunden, sage ich mal, dadurch dass es so wenige Leute sind, ähm, wäre ich glaube ich auch nicht so richtig in Schwung gekommen... insofern bleibe ich.. war es ganz ok dass ich gesessen habe. Imm. Beim ersten Teil wäre das glaube ich noch ok gewesen zu tanzen, weil es sehr klassisch aufgebaute Musik war und im zweiten Konzert fand ich es gut so sich zurücksetzen zu können, genießen zu können. Nichtsdestotrotz gab es eher mentale Reize also eher das Bilder erzeugt wurden als dass ich jetzt den Drang verspürt hätte, mich bewegen zu wollen.

A: Es gab zum Beispiel eine Stelle, wo die Musiker mit ihren Füßen improvisiert hatten. Hattest du dort ein Bedürfnis mitzumachen?

P: Ich war eher gespannt wie es sich auflöst. Also, ich war eher gespannt was kommt als nächstes wie geht das jetzt über in die Musik in Führungszeichen. Imm. Ich war eigentlich nur gespannt, also ich hab versucht es irgendwie zu deuten, was erzeugt das in mir und hab gedacht ok das ist jetzt ein sehr unruhiges Gefühl. Es scharrt und raschelt und, imm, das Bedürfnis mitzumachen hatte ich in dem Moment nicht.