

Media, virtuality, and participation in musical creativity of the Young Cracow Composers

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Disciplinary background A. The starting point for the subject of Media, Virtuality, and Participation in Musical Creativity of the Young Cracow Composers will be the widely understood study of the art of composition and musical reflection: musicology / composition / music theory including many humanist-oriented interdisciplinary organic contexts.

Disciplinary background B. The selected compositions will be presented in the broad context of contemporary generative art and performative strategies such as visualisation, theatricalization and semantisation, or performative categories such as vocality (tonality), corporeality and spatiality. The paper will therefore also fit into the realm of performance studies.

Abstract

The main aim of the paper will be to present selected works of young composers (in collaboration with performers, dancers or choreographers), among whom the neo-avant-garde aesthetics, post-internet art, new conceptualism or the idea of conscious music or relational music are currently in vogue, and most often, again, multimedia performance (after its peak in the 1960s and 1970s) as a frequent and laden medium of expression.

In the introduction to *Carnivalization. Ludic Trends in Contemporary culture. An Introduction*, the editors of the volume, Grad and Memzer, note that “applying not only the concept, but also the whole theory of carnivalization to contemporary culture may bring associations and suggestions that are too unequivocal, placing contemporary culture in the ludic-consumer trend, which is geared towards providing hedonistic pleasure drawn from every possible area of modern man’s life. There is no doubt, however, that very often post-modern culture is referred to in precisely these categories. The carnival-like perception of the world allows us to see the ‘logic of the opposite’ in contemporary culture”. [Grad, Mamzer 2004: 8] Something is indeed up. Looking at the functioning of artists and their works in the contemporary, multimedia reality, one can notice certain phenomena of an “upside-down world”: what was supposed to sound good is now better looked at, what was performed in concert halls is transferred to pubs, and the one who usually appeared in a tailcoat now sports a hoodie or a flannel shirt. Is there a method in this madness? Well, there are at least three interesting trends that define musical art here and now from the point of view of performance studies:

1. **Recontextualization** – showing a new type of spectacle and artist. In the age of the Internet and social media, the appearance of artists that also represent the so-called high culture has become more important than ever before, often manifesting their different interests and skills in areas other than classical music. This frequently blurs the boundaries between high and popular culture and creates the effect of a musician-celebrity in the sense of the global concept of a “star”.
2. **Reinterpretation** – based on a new type of message and its consciousness. At a time when originality and the fashion for borrowing were being banished, it became a priority among young artists to find their own method of referring not only to tradition but also to the surrounding, complex, multi-level reality.

3. Revitalisation – exploiting a new type of creation and the means used. Among contemporary composers, or rather post-conceptual artists (as they often call themselves), new ways of creating new intermedia forms are emerging.

The article will present examples of works by Cracovian artists who are part of the above-mentioned performative trends.

Interdisciplinary implications. A limited selection of examples of musical works presented in the article will illustrate the so-called performance paradigm, “extending”, as Matthew Shlomowitz wrote, “the compositional, aesthetic and performance practice pursuits of work made for a setting in which audiences debate whether it is better to listen with eyes opened or closed”. As a kind of “polyphonic labyrinth” they fit into a specific aesthetic of performativity. Therefore, musicological tools for purely musical analysis should include methods from the field of performance, as well as literature or the visual arts. Interdisciplinary work requires interdisciplinary research methods, which I hope will be reflected in the proposed text.

References

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