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Review on Performance and Interpretation

This paper is to address the issue of performance as a power of sensorial evidence to interpretative reflection of analysis. The author proposed to use performance vector fields to transform the performance to physical reality. He also presented inverse performance theory, which deals with the reconstruction of system parameters leading the performance.

The author first claimed that the conception of music consists of several levels: mental, psychological, and physical. More specifically, though music has its symbolic reality, it is not of prescriptions for performance execution. Instead, the relation between mental, psychological, and physical level in music performance is very dynamic. Furthermore, the author claimed that music must be loaded with structural contents, which must be a parameter space for certain factors. The control of music must include the adequacy of instrumental expressivity to the intended and given message.

Again, the author referred the term performance as an approach adding value depends on the way of executing the symbolic data in the following section. The reasons behind it are that the existential level of physical execution is different from the mental level of score symbols, and the compact sensual presentation of a fact has a degree of evidence which cannot be paralleled by intellectual mediation. In general, the performance is a concrete one out of infinity of expressions of the "fuzzy" content of a given work.

Two theories have been developed in the study of performance: structure theory and semantic theory. The former one deals with the precise description of a given performance. The latter one tries to understand the rationales of a given performance, such as emotion, gesture, and ratio. The author is more interested in the study of the latter theory, which he claimed to be easiest and most explicit. The goal of such study is to express analytical data on the level of dynamics, articulation, and intonation.

The model for generating analytical data is fairly complex and the author presented several key steps. First, the transformation of the description from the symbolic space to the physical space, which includes abstract representation of musical parameters given for the symbolic reality as expressed in the music score. Second, the functionality of initial performance specifies the point where the fictitious reality of the score is anchored in the physical reality of performance. Third, as we all know that not all music parameters play the same role in performance; the dependency of music parameters entails hierarchies of parameters. Fourth, the genealogical tress of rehearsal generated from a series of repeated rehearsal by specific performance operators which are loaded with selected weighted functions. Finally, the term performance grammar used to give analytical weights acting on the successive refinement of performance.

The author mentioned some related experiments afterwards. Two strategies were used to investigate metrical and melodic weights of Bach pieces. The target-driven strategy is to use given weights and try to produce a performance which should be consistent from the

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audience's perspective. The source-driven strategy is to express the given weights without any predefined target.

The last part which I felt quite interesting is the visual performance of music database. The author claimed that the difficulties on this issue are that the data structure is not a priori in a geometric shape. The geometric shape is not a priori adapted to human 3D vision. Objects maybe composed of other objects in a recursive way. The author claimed that visual performance must be built on linear orderings in the sense that linear ordering relations among the database entries should be preserved in the visual presentation. I don't' total agree with this claim. Traditional relational database surely provides some linear representation on the basic level. But with some operators, such join, and cross product, it is possible to save the relations in a non-linear way. In addition, with the format of XML, representing objects in a recursive way is a very natural approach.