



Yiran Zhao

Composing body movements

Body movements as musical material and compositional element

Abstract

This study investigates the phenomenon of "composed body movements" as musical material in contemporary music, with a view both to the historical avant-garde of the 1960s to 1980s, and to the latest developments in contemporary music. Different ways of using body movements are examined: the material (e.g. index finger or whole body) is isolated or interactive, structural or semantic; its development and effects, whether body movements produce sound or not, and their effects on the soundscape. I am particularly concerned with works in which body movement is structure-forming, i.e. belongs to the core of the work-concept, and has not been added as an additional layer. I am investigating the history of this phenomenon and, in various stations, addressing its most striking developments. But even more - with the help of paradigmatic examples - the aesthetic motivation of musical physicality should be explored and discussed, and the most recent developments in the art (including my own works as composer) are examined. A new music theater work with dancer, singers, and musicians forms a central part of the artistic research. It will explore the potential of body movement as material, from the composer's and choreographer's perspectives (different, similar, or intertwined). It presents an interdisciplinary work that has a hybrid focus of materials "auditive and visual, through the compositional structure and creative process. Through comparison with recent works e.g. from theater, dance or art studies I would like to develop a music-theoretical and music-analytical apparatus with which the phenomenon of composed movement can be articulated in more detail, its different motifs better characterized. Composed movement can be seen as a manifestation of postmodern aesthetics and philosophy, which also has eminent social implications and is relevant to the current music-aesthetic discourse. In particular, the movement's intermedia and interdisciplinary implications become clear.