THE EFFECTS OF PROJECTED FILMS ON SINGERS' EXPRESSIVITY IN CHORAL PERFORMANCE

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THE EFFECTS OF PROJECTED FILMS ON SINGERS'

EXPRESSIVITY IN CHORAL PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of projected film visuals on singers' expressivity in choral performance. The study was divided into three phases. In Phase One, university choir singers ($N = 21$) viewed eight audiovisual pairings (two film excerpts and four choral etudes) and rated these pairings according to perceived music to film congruency. Based on these ratings, two choral etudes were identified that elicited the broadest congruency contrasts when paired with the film segments.

In Phase Two, a different group of university choir singers ($N = 116$) rehearsed and prepared both of the selected choral etudes referred to as "Doh" and "Noo." Subsequently, these singers were organized into smaller chamber ensembles ($n = 11$), and performed each choral etude three times under the following conditions: (1) while viewing congruent film, (2) while viewing incongruent film, and (3) with no film projected. After each performance, singers reported their level of self-expression. At the completion of all three performances, singers reported their preferred performance condition. Finally, participants listened to their audio-recorded performances and rated these for performance expressivity and personal preference. During Phase Three, choral experts ($N = 8$) rated performance expressivity and reported personal preference for each audio-recorded performance.

A two-way ANOVA with repeated measures found significant main effects of both etude and film visual performance condition on participants' expressivity ratings ($p < .001$). Additionally, a significant etude x film visual performance condition interaction was discovered ($p = .001$). Participants rated self-expression significantly higher when singing with a congruent film compared with other conditions for both etudes ($p < .001$). Chi-square tests found most preferred experiences during congruent performances, and least preferred experiences during incongruent performances for both etudes ($p < .001$). Expressivity ratings for audio-recorded performances indicated significantly higher expressivity ratings for the performances influenced by the congruent film visual of etude "Doh" ($p < .05$), while no significant differences were found for etude "Noo" ($p > .05$). Implications of these findings are discussed in relation to filmmaking techniques, music education curriculum, choral rehearsal pedagogy, and composition/performance practice, with recommendations for future research.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, have examined a dissertation titled "The Effects of Projected Films on Singers' Expressivity in Choral Performance," presented by Daniel J. Keown, candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It could be assumed that most people engage with music throughout their lives. This exposure could be welcomed by opting to listen to a favorite song on an mp3 player or may be viewed as an intrusion when *Muzak* is presented to shoppers at local stores. Even more, music has the ability to intrude in such a way that cannot be fully noticed, as when music constantly accompanies ESPN's *Sunday Night Football* highlights. Interestingly, music's role can have more of an affective impact than an intellectual impact (Hallam, 2010). The emotions elicited by music may be considered the single most powerful element of affective impact upon music consumers.

While the written score can be considered the blueprint of a potential emotional experience, it is the performance that brings music to life while supplying an experience for listeners to perceive music as an emotional expression (Repp, 1998). Extensive training of vocal and instrumental technique, and the study of various facets of music ultimately supply performers with knowledge and skills to portray an expressive performance, linking emotion at the center of interpretation between performer and listener in both society and education. Some are skeptical, however, when emotional expression is addressed in the music classroom. Elliot (2005) states that, "contrary to what most non-musicians might assume, music teachers seldom think about whether or how sonic-musical patterns may be expressive of specific emotions" (p. 94). Empirical research has also confirmed an emphasis on technique as compared to emotional expressivity (Karlsson & Juslin, 2008). At the same time, approaches in music education have been criticized for being out of touch with society's ways of experiencing music (Madsen, 2000).

Music educators are applying diverse and varied experiences in the music classroom in an effort to supply students with a music education that enhances understanding of the world, of oneself, and one's own experiences in an ever-changing world (Ballantine, 2001; Gardner, 1993). This is accomplished through innovative and relevant methods of exploring not only technique and music theory, but emotional expressivity (Broomhead, 2006). Complimenting Gardner's theories of multiple intelligences, music educators instructing students in performance have used such pedagogical methods as kinesthetic movement, guided imagery, and metaphors to attain emotional and expressive understanding when responding to a piece of music (Sheldon, 2004; Woody, 2002). While these pedagogical trends are finding success at various levels of music education, other approaches to expressive performance could occur when including visual images.

The projected moving image of a film, known to simulate an "analogous real-life experience" (Messaris, 1994, p. 16), can communicate meaningful information at a cognitive and psychological level, only to be amplified with the inclusion of sound and music. Musicologists and researchers have explored music's function and psychological impact on spectators' perception and interpretation of a film's narrative (Gorbman, 1987; Lipscomb & Kendall, 1994; Marshall & Cohen, 1988). Based on Frijda's (1988) six laws of emotion, Tan (1996) discovered that music could lead to a genuine emotion when the two art forms of music and film are fused together.

With limited research devoted to film music, the impact of film and its narrative on the response to music is not fully investigated or understood. Research has studied participants' perception of music and performance elements from visual performances affixed on a visual medium, and compared these with listening to a performance without a

visual medium (Vines, Krumhansl, Wanderley, & Levitin, 2006). Other researchers have begun to study the effect of film's narrative on participants' cognitive (Boltz, Ebendorf, & Field, 2009), aesthetic (Lychner, 2002), and affective (Geringer, Cassidy, & Byo, 1996) responses to music.

Need for the Study

Due to the emotional effect that can arise from both an expressive music performance and the relationship between music and a film's narrative, the need to study performers' expressive musical influences while simultaneously responding to a film is the impetus for this study. Three specific needs include: (1) Exploration of the expressive nature of music in response to a film's mechanical elements and semantic information within the narrative. (2) Exploration of using projected film visuals to enhance affective response when performing music in a learning environment, while implementing an additional pedagogical approach to the rehearsal process suited especially to visual learners. (3) Exploration of ways in which film visuals may be integrated purposefully in the choral genre at all levels including creation of newly composed works.

This study adds to the body of research regarding interdisciplinary approaches to affect musical expression in a choral performance using projected film visuals to enhance choral performers' expressivity. Additionally, the study may present empirical data on the psychological relationships between musicians' expressivity while performing simultaneously with a film visual.

The purpose of this current study will be to determine the effects of three different projected film visual presentation modes on the expressivity of a choir performance. Research questions include:

1. Will participants' self-reported rating of performance expressivity while viewing a projected film visual differ as a function of performing musically contrasting choral etudes?
2. Will participants' self-reported rating of performance expressivity differ as a function of performing simultaneously with no visual, congruent visual, and incongruent visual stimuli?
3. Will singing participants report a preference among no visual, congruent visual, and incongruent visual performance conditions?
4. Will there be an effect of self-reported expressivity ratings when performing in the varied conditions (no visual, congruent visual, and incongruent visual) on participants' most and least preferred conditions?
5. Will participants' ratings of expressivity in audio-recorded performances differ as a function of the performance conditions?
6. Will participants report a preference among the three audio-recorded performances?
7. Will there be a relationship between singing participants' self-reported expressivity during performance and their ratings of expressivity for audio-recorded performances across all conditions?
8. Will choral expert judges' ratings of expressivity in audio-recorded performances differ as a function of the three performance conditions?
9. Will choral expert judges report a preference among the audio-recorded performances across the three performance conditions?

Definition of Terms

Acoustical music factors: Elements in music that a performer can interpret and manipulate in an attempt of creating a unique and expressive music performance (i.e. articulation, dynamics, phrasing, timbre, tone).

Anempathetic music: Music that is indifferent or juxtaposed in feeling with a film scene (Chion, 1994).

Audiovisual composite: Any combination of a moving image visual excerpt and a musical selection embedded within the visual excerpt (Lipscomb & Kendall, 1994).

Congruent: The perceptional relationship of information from more than one medium matching in mood and/or synchronization.

Diegetic music: Music that forms from a source within the narrative space (Gorbman, 1987).

Empathetic music: Music that directly expresses its participation in feeling with a film scene (Chion, 1994)

Extramusical: Pedagogical approaches to exploring expressivity of music through guided imagery, kinesthetic movement, metaphor, or gestures (Funk, 1982; Sloboda, 1996).

Incongruent: The perceptional relationship of information from more than one medium not matching in mood and/or synchronization.

Film narrative: The depiction in the medium of film of a series of cause and effect relationships occurring through time, which the characters and objects can react towards through sight, sound, smell, and touch within this staged universe.

Mechanical elements: Refers to any and all elements related to the physical and optical projection of a film's visual (i.e. to manipulate the motion's tempo, hue, color, length).

Non-diegetic music: Music that forms outside the diegesis and narrative space (Gorbman, 1987).

Semantic information: Refers to any and all information captured during production and post-production of filming and display with the purpose of establishing meaning upon the spectator.

Soundtrack: All audio components (music, dialogue, and sound effects) embedded within an audiovisual medium.

Synchresis: Spontaneous and irresistible weld produced between a particular auditory phenomenon and visual phenomenon when they occur simultaneously (Chion, 1994, p. 63)

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of literature is presented in four separate segments. First, the medium of film through the perspective of the visual will be discussed in terms of the development of film production and its impact on the spectator. The second segment will communicate findings about the role of music in film and film music theory from the perspective of composers, musicians, filmmakers, and musicologist scholars with multiple motion picture examples for reference. The third segment will describe empirical research involving the impact music and projected film visuals have on audiences' psychological, emotional, aesthetic and cognitive responses. The fourth segment will present extant empirical research regarding the expressivity of a music performance, the relationship between emotion and performance expressivity, the measurement of expressivity, theories of expressivity, and pedagogical methods in attaining an understanding and response of performance expressivity.

Projected Motion Images' Effect on Emotional, Psychological, and Physiological Responses

The perception of motion has been an essential ability to understanding the physical world for humans since infancy (Barten, Birn, & Ronch, 1971; Fox & McDaniel, 1982). When perceiving motion, a frame of reference allows one to experience one object's motion in relation to another throughout time. Enacting specialized brain cells, the brain can detect motion instantly (Goldstein, 1989); thus, causing emotional, cognitive, psychological or physiological responses from the object in motion. While French philosopher Henri Bergson (1944) describes motion as a dynamic process consisting of a continuous flow, Greek

philosopher Zeno of Elea attests motion is merely an infinite number of frozen positions presented to a viewer in rapid succession causing an illusion of motion (Rock, 1984). It is Zeno's theory that closely relates to the successive snapshots of images circulated through twenty-four frames a second in the medium of film that both captures and produces the illusion of motion when projected onto a movie screen through the mixture of speed and light. Each shot, consisting of the smallest unit of the film, is representative of a specific image at a particular distance and angle in accordance to other shots. These snapshots, systematically representing signs and symbols, are then mechanically reproduced in succession of one another with the purpose to "describe, develop, and narrate an event or series of events" (Mitry, 1990, p. 15) with multiple brushstrokes of light. In return, the spectator interprets the visual illusion, which can produce a change in one's conscious by effecting his perception, sensation, emotion, memory, or thought (Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Throughout the advancements of cinematic technology, the re-creation of motion as an illusion through time and space has been manipulated by multiple cinematic and editing techniques since the birth of film.

Motion has been suggested as one of the most prominent elements in the world of film, video, television, and multimedia (Zettl, 1990). Film theorists have agreed that motion can be expressive and trigger emotional responses from viewers similar to experiencing motion within the physical world (Arnheim, 1957; Giannetti, 2002). It has been suggested that the emotional impact on-screen media has on the human psyche can have a "measurable contribution to viewer's conceptions of reality" (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980, p. 10). Emotional behavior can be directed by the valence, which controls the direction of emotional engagement, and the arousal, which defines the intensity of the