

MUSICIANS ON STAGE - TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF STAGE ENTRANCE BEHAVIOR IN VIOLINISTS

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BACKGROUND AND AIMS

Music performances in concerts or competitions are events for both performers and listeners and can best be described as a social-communicative process. As explained by Frith (1998), this process is characterized, on the one hand, by the performer's aim to win the favor of the audience (Frith, 1998, p. 205). On the other hand, performances are judged by the audiences based on several musical and non-musical factors (Landy & Farr, 1980). In terms of rhetorical theory, these two perspectives converge in a persuasive communicative setting. Within this setting, non-verbal forms of communication, such as gestures (Kurosawa & Davidson, 2005), facial expressions (Livingstone, Thompson, & Russo, 2009), body movements (Davidson, 1993; Davidson & Correia, 2002), concert dress (Griffiths, 2008) and spatial organization, play an important role. These performer characteristics can directly influence the assessment of musical performance (Davidson, 1993; Landy & Farr, 1980; McPherson & Schubert, 2004). The aim of our study is to reveal a typology of performer characteristics. We then focus on the relationship between the audience's perception of the performer's stage entrance and its final evaluation of the performance.

METHOD

A corpus of competitors in a German international violin competition (N = 27) served as a sample. Instrumentalists were recorded using three cameras (perspectives: long shot, side view, close-up). In a first step, a new standardized video sequence (with a cross fade between long shot and close-up) was produced for each competitor's entrance on stage. In a second step, items for a Visual Performance Evaluation Scale (ViPES) were selected from previous studies in non-verbal communication. In a third step, items were validated by experts (a professional violinist and an acting coach) and completed with relevant items of interest from the experts' point of view. A statistical data reduction method was used to reveal the most relevant items for evaluating a performer's stage entrance. In a last step, both, instrumental performers and non-performers used the final criteria of ViPES for the evaluation of stage behavior. Methods of classification (e.g., cluster analysis) were used to reveal data-based types of stage entrance behavior.

RESULTS

We are currently developing a representative typology of stage entrance behavior, which will, for example, consider stage behavior prototypes such as "The Intimidated" or "The Winner".

CONCLUSIONS

Our study presents a new perspective on stage entrance behavior based on a statistical typology. First, these types represent main strategies of opening persuasive non-verbal communication by competitors. Second, results of our study are explained in the framework of social psychology, in particular against the background of the elaboration likelihood model (Cacioppo, Petty, Kao, & Rodriguez, 1986). This approach enables us to measure the cognitive responses of the listener (Cacioppo & Petty, 1981) and determine whether the listener's attitude toward the artist has changed.

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TOPIC AREAS

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