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## ENTERING THE STAGE - MUSICIANS AS PERFORMERS IN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC THEATRE

**Abstract:** The article seeks to explore the role of musicians as theatrical performers in theatre, and how this role has been developed from the 20<sup>th</sup> century up to the present. The profession of musicians in theatre has been greatly *expanded* since the days of Stravinsky's *L'histoire du soldat* through the Instrumental Theatre of Kagel and Schnebel in the 1960's up to contemporary multimedia performances and the influence of digital and interactive technology. Opposed to these *expansive* concepts this essay introduces *reductionist* approaches as alternative ways of working with musicians in the theatre.

**Key words:** music theatre, instrumental theatre, musicians as performers, reductive approach, task-based performance, theatricalisation of music, Heiner Goebbels, Mauricio Kagel, Igor Stravinsky.

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### Looking back - musicians on stage

For audiences today it is not unusual to see musicians appearing on the theatre stage next to singers, actors, dancers and other performers. This was not the case

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at the beginning of the twentieth century when opera was the main music theatre genre and musicians were more likely *dis*appearing than appearing on stage:

“As opera houses and opera orchestras both got larger, the orchestra was gradually moved out of the main space, down into a pit, and increasingly under the stage. This culminated in Wagner’s construction of the *Festspielhaus* in Bayreuth where the huge orchestra is completely out of sight under the stage.” (Salzman/Desi 2008: 34)

On the occasions where musicians were on stage in small ‘mixed ensembles’ they merely:

“provide stage music that is expected to evoke the sound of ‘real’ [...] music that is part of the scenic action; this music is either popular in nature or is meant to evoke popular forms such as military marches or social dances. In such cases, the pit orchestra provides a larger musical context and retains its high-art function.” (Salzman/Desi 2008: 36)

The musicians on stage were thus staged and composed as if they were ‘playing’ the roles of musicians in a play instead of ‘merely’ functioning as on-stage musicians in the larger musical context – an appearance of musicians one is much more used to nowadays. This changed with Igor Stravinsky, who pioneered bringing musicians onto the stage as part of the scenic action: a “small stage ensemble [that] becomes the orchestra itself in its entirety [...]” (ibid.) In *L’histoire du soldat* (1918) the musicians were placed on the stage together with the narrator and the other actors, so that their playing became a part of the scene. This was the first time that the playing of musicians was treated as a scenic element, which developed into one of the most basic premises and one of the most striking impulses of experimental music theatre in the second half of the twentieth century, and was taken up by John Cage, Dieter Schnebel, and especially by Mauricio Kagel. (Reininghaus 2004: 20)

### **Musicians as performers, music as theatre**

At the time when the orchestra “gradually sank into the opera house pit [...] and then melted into the film or television soundtrack”, on the other side of the music theatre spectrum “instrumentalists reappeared on stage and often came to play leading roles in new performance theatre [sic], roles quite equal in importance to those played by singers, actors, and dancers.” (Salzman/Desi 2008: 69-70) Grounded by ideas from performance art and Fluxus, the work of composers like John Cage, George Crumb and others lead to the notion of *Instrumental Theatre* (or *azione musicale* or *Instrumentales Theater*). When Mauricio Kagel entered the European experimental music theatre scene at the end of the 1950’s, he essentially introduced the idea of *music as theatre*, or the theatricalisation of the music

itself. Influenced by the ideas of John Cage, he emphasised physical activity as intrinsic to the performance of the musicians. Instrumental Theatre started with subtle expansions of the chamber musical setting, such as placing the musicians in specific positions on stage or getting them into costumes. In the early phases of Instrumental Theatre various possibilities were developed:

- 1) A wide range of approaches to the playing of instruments, ranging from the “turning around and exaggeration of everyday movements on the instruments up to ‘abusing the instruments.’” (Heilgendorff 2004a: 8, my translation)
- 2) Staged structures for the musicians, for example moving from one position on stage to another, or looking at each other according to choreographed and/or composed structures.
- 3) The use of spoken text for instrumentalists.
- 4) The augmentation of subconscious and everyday movements of musicians into the main focus of performance.

As result of these aspects, something very theatrical but also absurd, comical and sarcastic is inherent to many Instrumental Theatre works. (Heilgendorff 2004a: 8) Possibly the two most important representatives of the genre have been Mauricio Kagel (*Sur Scène* 1961, *Match* 1964, *Staatstheater* 1967–70, *Zwei-Mann-Orchester* 1971–73) and Dieter Schnebel (*visible music I* 1961–62, *nostalgie* 1962, *Glossolalie* 1959, *Glossolalie 61* 1961). Other composers such as Karlheinz Stockhausen (*Originale* 1961) or Györgi Ligeti (*Aventures* and *Nouvelles Aventures* 1962–65)<sup>1</sup> worked with similar ideas. Both Kagel and Schnebel were strongly influenced by the ideas of John Cage. Although Cage did not produce many theatre works, his ideas had a large impact on the international music theatre and performance art scene.

In the later period of the genre<sup>2</sup> – from around the 1980’s until the turn of the century – these ideas were further developed by a younger generation of composers. The palette of sound generating material was extended by non-musical objects such as plates (Schnebel) and marbles (Heiner Goebbels), which became substantial elements for sound. Pieces became somewhat less self-reflective (focusing on music, music-making itself, the music art world) and more contemplative passages found their way into the works, linked to a more conscious use of

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1 The range of composers and directors throughout the article should not suggest an exhaustive covering of the field. It is my intention to present these as some of the most important music theatre makers and to introduce these examples as pinpoints in an extremely vast and evolving field of artistic activity; both from historical and recent perspectives.

2 In the division of the genre into two main periods - the first from 1964–1980 and the second one from 1982–2000 - I am essentially following Sabine Heilgendorff. I do not want to suggest a clear distinction between these periods, but, as my description suggests, there are indeed differences to be found between two generations of composers working in the genre of Instrumental Theatre, and differences between the aesthetics of the first experimental period and the second period that move much further from concert-like settings into clearer theatre spaces and productions.

the stage space. (Heilgendorff 2004b: 8) This gave the pieces a visual form closer to theatre and dance works, rather than one explicitly connected to the concert stage. Forms were developed – especially by Heiner Goebbels, but also Manos Tsangaris, Gerhard Stäbler and others – that went far beyond the genre of Instrumental Theatre. These works bear obvious references to Instrumental Theatre, but are also influenced by other art forms (dance, visual arts and installation art, incorporation of digital media). However, what distinguishes these music theatrical works from theatre and other performing art forms in general is their inherent musical structure and structural thinking in musical ways. These musical ways of structuring let many music theatre pieces seem more consistent than many theatre pieces in which the music is more an additional element than the essence of it. (Heilgendorff 2004b: 8)

The profession of the musician has been affected enormously by these developments. In the few decades up to the present, musicians have experienced an enormous extension of their profession while participating in music theatre projects. In the early stages of Instrumental Theatre, in many cases playing music was the theatrical act itself, although certain aspects of music making were exaggerated, accentuated and staged as visual and physical elements of performance. In later works this was extended greatly, so that musicians had to do much more than follow the score, play their instruments and perform the (musically or verbally) notated actions. Besides having to play musical instruments, musicians have been asked to recite texts and to sing, possibly together with actors in mixed musician-actor-dancer ensembles. They have performed with objects of all kinds to make sound or gestures, quite close to the notion of ‘live musique concrète’. As the stage space, stage design and lighting have become increasingly important, musicians have been challenged to be much more conscious of the physicality of the space and the visual structures on stage.

An excellent example of such a work is *Schwarz auf Weiss* (1996) by German composer and director Heiner Goebbels, created in close collaboration with the Ensemble Modern. A true milestone of experimental music theatre, *Schwarz auf Weiss* contains elements of installation art, concert music, performance art, and combines these into an impressive collage in 23 scenes. Still bearing references to Instrumental Theatre and chamber music, the piece exceeds the boundaries enormously. In the opening scene of the piece, the musicians use their instruments in installation-like setups, combining them with objects and constructions of various kinds; one musician writes with a pen on paper, with the sound amplified and later electronically processed to build musical sounds and structures. Later, besides performing a fixed piece of music, the musicians throw tennis balls against drums and large metal sheets, resulting in a playful cross between a concert and a sports game. In the middle of the piece, trumpeter William Forman recites Edgar Allan Poe over his wireless trumpet microphone. There are many more examples of ‘non-musical’ performance in *Schwarz auf Weiss*. Many elements in this piece can be found in his later pieces as well, such as his strategy of task-based

performance. Instead of working with any kind of psychology, Goebbels prefers to give assignments to his actors and musicians to achieve the effects and expressions he wants: “When I want an actor to cry, I give him an onion.”<sup>3</sup> He applies essentially the same technique to actors and musicians, and by these performative task strategies he is able to create pseudo-psychological layers performed by musicians without the necessity for them to act. Structurally, his works are foremost musically driven, as seen in *Eraritjaritjaka*. The actor André Wilms had to adjust his text perfectly to a given piece of music, and cameraman Bruno Deville had to adjust the timing of his movements and camera shots to the same musical score.

The working process on a music theatre piece is often quite different to the rehearsal structure of orchestra or chamber music practice, as in most cases the work as such has to be developed during the rehearsals. It is rare for a composer to come to the first rehearsal of a collaborative music theatre project with a finished score. In many contemporary music theatre projects musicians work together with the composer-director<sup>4</sup> during the entire process, similar to the working structures of theatre or dance productions. The musician becomes an important co-creator, and the creation is more connected to specific performers. Unlike the relationship between composer and interpreter for whom the composer writes a dedicated composition, there

“has been a new emphasis on the performer/creator following the model of the artist-driven modern dance company or the jazz/pop groups whose repertoire is self-created. [...] The movement away from strict adherence to a previously existing text or score and the return of improvisation are both a result and a cause of the changing relationship between creator and performer.” (Salzman/Desi 2008: 70)

This specific relationship between creator and performer also results in pieces whose nature is more closely bound to the live performance as an event (Fischer-Lichte) than to the notated score as the manifestation of a fixed work. It is worth noting that significant works of music theatre such as *Schwarz auf Weiss* are scarcely performed by ensembles or performers other than by those who premiered them, even though scores are available.<sup>5</sup> Since the pieces are so closely developed in collaboration with the composer-director and the performers, their performance seems to be bound to the performers with whom they have been developed.

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3 Heiner Goebbels in a conversation with the author.

4 With this term, I describe composers who personally direct their own pieces, among them Heiner Goebbels, Mauricio Kagel, Georges Aperghis and Paul Koek.

5 According to the author’s knowledge, the first new staging of *Schwarz auf Weiss* after the original production with the Ensemble Modern in 1996 was done in 2009 by the Czech Berg Orchestra and the director’s collective SKUTR (see also [www.heinergoebbels.com](http://www.heinergoebbels.com)), twelve years after its premiere and worldwide recognition.

The achievements of Instrumental Theatre, or the consequent musical structuring of theatre works also found their way to more traditional text-based theatre forms. Several directors use specifically musical structures and ways of working to organise their performances, to rehearse, or to give the music more autonomous space in their works. In Ruedi Häusermann's *Gewähltes Profil: Lautlos* the "act of composing [...] becomes the music-theatrical act itself" according to David Roesner (2008), when the musicians 'test' sounds on their instruments as a kind of visible 'act of composing', or when the performers record sounds with small tape-recorders, and hang the recorders on an object, playing back all the different sounds and voices in a musical collage.

### Can less be more? – The reductive approach to musicians as theatrical performers

Various approaches discussed until now have one main feature in common: They *extend* the profession of the musician. In the first instance musicians make music; they sing or play their instruments. In various, possible stages of extension,<sup>6</sup> the musicians have to perform additional tasks, and the audience experiences an *extension* of the musician's profession; yet this profession is always present. On the one hand, this introduces the fascination of watching highly trained people doing what they are best at – making music. On the other hand, new elements of performance are introduced, "settings and tasks in which performers [musicians] struggle and have to invest a new, intensified effort in order to achieve their performative assignments." (Roesner 2008) These diverse tasks, and the struggle and effort to perform them, result in the extension and transformation of the musician into a theatrical performer. In the course of the text I shall subsume these strategies under the term *expansive approach*.

As an alternative strategy to the use of new elements, this article introduces the idea of *abstracting away* specific qualities or abilities of the musician's profession – subsumed by the term *reductive approach*. By *not* being able to use specific elements of their profession, musicians encounter problems that are very different from the ones in the expansive approach. The audience watches musicians *not* doing certain things they are used to (both the musicians and the audience). This may result in various possible receptions or interpretations, and I argue that by this approach the musician is transformed into a theatrical performer (as well). Both the expansive and the reductive approach are concepts of working

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6 The most basic stage of extension is to get the musicians into costumes and place them in specific positions on stage. From then on, the musicians may walk from one instrument to another across the stage, which may already have significant theatrical effects (e.g. the three keyboard-musicians in *Merlin*, RuhrTriennale 2007, direction Johan Simons). At this stage, the musicians do not yet do anything 'outside' their profession, but their usual behaviour is structured, organised and staged. In *Schwarz auf Weiss* the musicians have to do a lot of various performative assignments that no longer belong to their profession and are perceived as serious extensions: throwing tennis balls, playing ping-pong, writing, burning tea bags, and so on.

theatrically with musicians and are capable of transforming musicians into theatrical performers, though with completely different strategies, working processes and artistic results.

Besides the possibility of literally taking away, there are other ways to 'stage' the playing musician so that he is hindered or even prevented from actually making music. In her *Emergency Solos* (1973), Christina Kubisch reflects on her identity as a performing musician (a flute player) and chooses a framework that thematises the act of musical performance as such. She uses everyday objects (thimbles on her fingertips, a gas mask through which she plays the instrument without a mouthpiece, a condom stretched over the flute) to make the playing of the instrument almost impossible. In doing this, she also makes an absurd comment on the character of the virtuoso flute player. The objects lead to a self-reflective comment on the nature of musical performance and to a "re-evaluation of the visual dimension, which is equal to the musical [dimension] in these performances." (Sanio 2004: 9, my translation) As a result of this setting, the musician has had the possibility of a proper performance taken away, and it is this which transforms the flute player in *Emergency Solos* into a theatrical performer. Kubisch's approach in this work still bears a direct relationship to the absurdism of Instrumental Theatre or to the tradition of performance and concept art.

### *Possibilities of taking away*

When something is supposed to be taken away, one has to know what is actually available. This leads to the question of which elements of a musical performance are able to be removed, and in the end the question as to *what a musician actually is*. What are the specific elements of the musical profession when compared to other performing artists such as actors, dancers, or even technicians? As this definition is not specifically the concern of this article this question will not be discussed here in detail, but a few abilities of the musician are listed below to get an idea of possible elements:

- playing an instrument or singing at a professional level
- breathing and finger technique belonging to that instrument or to the voice
- the ability to control and to decide what to play, and when, at macro and micro level; the ability for rhythm and timing
- controlling sound and timbre
- a very high degree of control of specific parts of the body, depending on the instrument (including singing and the voice)
- the ability to build larger structures in real time, to build a sounding dramaturgy live on stage
- aesthetic interpretation
- highly developed listening capabilities, the ability for 'active listening' and aesthetic and musical judgement.

I propose to structure these elements into two main groups: the external and the internal elements of musical performance. External elements are physi-

cal objects not belonging to the musician's body: the instrument and necessary tools for playing the instrument, such as the bow, drum sticks, mallets, mutes for brass instruments, and so on. The internal elements are, on the one hand, physical abilities like breathing and finger technique, on the other hand, emotional and intellectual capabilities, like the control and interpretation of time, listening capabilities or even specifically trained aesthetic judgement. In the following paragraphs, several examples of the different approaches will be discussed, although it is not the objective of this article to give an exhaustive summary of all the possibilities. Most of the examples are recent artistic works by the author, as part of ongoing research into the artistic potential of reductive approaches to musicians in theatrical performance settings.

### *Taking away external elements*

Taking the instrument away from a musician is perhaps the most obvious and radical way of working with reductive approaches. In the author's performance *Thespian Play* (2009), a saxophone player performs a musical choreography without his instrument, quasi-miming what happens on the soundtrack.<sup>7</sup> He does not make a single sound during the whole piece, and has no instrument. Control of sound and timing is also taken away, as the performer has to follow the mechanical soundtrack and must adjust his movements exclusively to the external sound source. Performing without an instrument has enormous consequences for the musician in this case, as he has to learn the piece in a very different way, and practicing requires a very high amount of concentration. In order to enable the performer to play the piece, only musical material recorded by him and his instrument is used. This way he knows the acoustic surroundings intimately, and also the physical origin of the sounds, enabling him to produce the movements in his body to mime these sounds – although without his instrument. A striking effect is that, by taking away the instrument, one really gets to *see* the player and every detail of the body while performing. By taking away the instrument, the musician is transformed into a theatrical performer.

In the silent performance *almost equal / meistens gleich* (2010) for conductor and trombone player, this concept is pushed even further. Not only are the instruments (and the orchestra or ensemble for the conductor) taken away, but also the sound. There are no instruments on stage – the largest part of the performance happens in silence. The work focuses on an independent yet musical movement language – the performative use of the musical movements as autonomous movement material, taking shape in a music theatrical choreography for conductor and trombone player. Unlike *nostalgie* for solo conductor by Dieter Schnebel, which “[brings] the music to an imaginary existence” (Cobussen 2002: no page numbers), the two musicians in *almost equal* perform a choreography based on

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<sup>7</sup> Being a performance for saxophone player without saxophone, soundtrack and video, *Thespian Play* was developed in close collaboration with the performer Heiner Gulich. A trailer of the performance can be seen on <http://www.falk-huebner.de/ThespianPlay.html>

musical movements that are rooted in their professions – they do not perform silent music as in *nostalgie*. With *almost equal* the author seeks to research the possibilities of developing musical movements towards choreographic material, and to push the boundaries of musical performance towards choreography or dance. While the bodily movements in *Thespian Play* are still tightly connected to the sounds from the loudspeakers – and every movement is precisely that needed to produce the actual sound if it had been played on a saxophone – these ‘original’ musical movements are merely the point of departure for the movement language in *almost equal / meistens gleich*, where they form the basis of autonomous choreographic material.

In general, when external elements such as the instrument are taken away, what is left becomes crucial, and what a composer or director decides to stage is ‘left over’. As in the two examples mentioned above, removing the instrument may introduce the idea of *musical choreographies*, using the musical gesture unlocked from its usual effect – the sound – as autonomous choreographic material. The bodily movements of the musicians remain, and are staged as the central element of the performance. Besides the possibility of getting access to another theatricality of musicians, it is crucial not to forget that the resulting choreographic movements can only be performed by musicians. Even without the instrument, the saxophone player in *Thespian Play* is performing the piece on the basis of his life-long training on the instrument, using the finger movements, his breathing technique, the techniques of his lips, and so on, so that the resulting theatricality – although for parts of the audience not recognisable as musical – is exclusively bound to the performer as a musician.

### *Taking away internal elements*

The internal elements of the musician are far more difficult to identify in live performance. It is also more difficult to stage missing internal elements and to communicate this loss to an audience because these internal elements cannot be directly perceived. The ability for ‘active listening’ as “a state of heightened perceptive or receptive aural awareness that will be invaluable in most musical situations” (Hugill 2008: 16) is crucial to the profession of a musician, but cannot directly be experienced on a theatre stage, and cannot feasibly be communicated as taken away. However, the ‘missing’ internal elements might have an enormous impact on the performer. When the musician may not follow certain habits (which may be seen as the internal elements) of his profession, this causes a potentially enormous struggle. An example of a recent performance-in-progress is the author’s *still life 2.0* (2010). A viola player and a dancer perform short and isolated movement and sound fragments, which are recorded by a microphone and two cameras. A computer program processes the input of the two performers as its only material into an audiovisual score on loudspeakers and video screen over which the performers do not have any influence. As the performers provide the basic material, the audiovisual electronics provide the overall structure of the

performance. Control of the overall structure, the length of certain passages of the performance and a great deal of the acoustic and visual identity of the work are taken away from the performers. They are reduced to the functions of giving impulses – triggering and starting computer processes – and giving input to the computer. *What* the performers do is also staged exclusively according to the criteria of how that serves as input to the computer. In a way, they do not ‘perform’ as an audience would traditionally understand it, but are completely restricted to performing tasks in front of a microphone and cameras.

The identity of the viola player in *still life 2.0* becomes somewhat absurd or paradoxical both for herself and for the audience. At several moments of the work she performs *with* her instrument; she has the viola in her hands in the correct playing position, and plays according to the norms of viola playing. Still, the audience does not have the sense of seeing a musician performing music.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, the musician herself does not feel like she is playing music. She only performs certain tasks, which among other things, also produce sound for several seconds. In fact, it is not her task to perform music; her main task is to stand in front of the camera or the microphone and to give input to the computer. The same goes if only her playing movements are recorded by the camera, without recording the sound. It is precisely the ability to ‘perform’ as a concert musician – projecting and communicating music and emotion to an audience – that is taken away from her, as a result of the performative assignment of focussing entirely on the microphone and the cameras.

### *Perceptual effects*

In general, there are two ways in which the perception and the focus of the audience changes through the use of reductive concepts<sup>9</sup>: On one hand, the concept of what a musician is changes and is challenged. The audience watches a musician on stage, but she is not making music; she is nonetheless ‘performing’ in a way that communicates a musical code in some sense. The question as to what a musician actually is arises once again. On the other hand, the question as to what the profession of this person actually is also arises: is it a musician, an actor, a dancer, a mime? The perception oscillates between various poles: rationally one knows that the performer is a musician, yet the kind of performance does not necessarily suggest that this is the case. In *Thespian Play* for example, the spectators – by reading the program notes – know that they are going to see a saxophone player. Still, especially at the beginning of the piece, many people in various audiences wonder if they are watching a mime or an actor. The perception oscillates between knowledge and imagination. In Kubisch’s *Emergency Solos*, one could also imagine that the work does not *have* to be performed by a flute player.

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8 Pictures and a video trailer of the performance can be seen on [www.falk-huebner.de/stilllife.html](http://www.falk-huebner.de/stilllife.html)

9 It is not my intention to claim or provide evidence for ‘objective’ audience reactions of perceptions; instead I refer to plausible implications of certain strategies, to my own intentions as a practitioner and to conversations with people from the audience.

Since all virtuosity is blocked in the performance, one may doubt that it is actually a musician performing. Only a musician, however, is able to experience the tension that the blocking of her usual habits and abilities as a professional flute player brings. For an actor this would be impossible, as she does not intimately know either the nature of flute playing or the virtuosity being denied. In *almost equal / meistens gleich* the identity of the performers is even more nebulous. They neither produce sound nor perform exclusively musical movements that can immediately be recognised as such. The origin of the movements may be musical, but the result lies somewhere between dance and mime, performed by musicians.

### Conclusion

The last fifty years of music theatre practice have brought a large variety of performance modes for musicians to the theatrical stage. A broad range of experimental forms has been developed, but more traditional forms of text-based theatre have also been enriched by the various theatrical possibilities for musicians on stage. As an alternative approach to the highly developed culture of expansive approaches, reductive approaches open up new possibilities, and provide composers and directors alike with tools to work with musicians as theatrical performers, even if they do not make music or do not use their instruments. The ideas discussed open up new possibilities for a music-driven theatre that does not have to include music, but breathes a musical energy originating from the movements and the profession of the musicians as performers. The approach gives access to another kind of ‘musical theatricality’; however, because these concepts build very strongly on the professional qualities of the musicians – the qualities that are ‘left’ – the specific theatricality is quite different from that which actors or dancers may offer. The idea of musical choreographies shows that the ‘unlocked musical movements’ of musicians may be used as material to create choreographies which are not possible to create with dancers. Reductive concepts also open new paths for task-based performance, allowing the musician to become theatrical without the necessity of becoming an actor.

As the possibilities for taking away external elements are easily accessible, and the artistic benefit is much clearer, it might be expected that upcoming works focus on these ideas. The ‘internal group’ needs more conceptualisation as to what precisely the elements are, how they constitute the individuality of the musician, and what the difference is to the internal elements of other performing artists, such as actors or dancers, etc. What distinguishes musicians from them? And, obviously: what is the benefit of taking away these elements from musical practice? Finally, is it possible to stage the tension of the missing elements and communicate this fruitfully to a (music) theatre audience?

Фалк Хибнер

## ИЗЛАЗАК НА СЦЕНУ – МУЗИЧАРИ КАО ПЕРФОРМЕРИ У САВРЕМЕНОМ МУЗИЧКОМ ТЕАТРУ

### РЕЗИМЕ

У *Причи о војнику* (1918) Игор Стравински по први пут изводи музичаре на сцену као део сценског догађања, заједно са глумцима и плесачима. Крајем 1950-их година, присуство музичара и њихових активности на сцени постаје фокус *Инструменталног театра* композитора попут Маурисија Кагела и Дитера Шнебела. Идеја *театрализације музике саме* истакла је физички аспект музичког извођења. Током наредних неколико деценија композитори попут Хајнера Гебелса (Heiner Goebbels) наставили су да се баве овом идејом, али развијајући визуелне форме ближе театарским и плесним него концертним. Ова дела, иако сродна Инструменталном театру, настајала су и под утицајем других уметничких форми (плеса, визуелних уметности, инсталације, дигиталних медија).

Овакав развој знатно је утицао на професију музичара. Током последњих неколико деценија, музичари који учествују у пројектима музичког театра значајно су проширили опсег своје професије. Осим свирања инструмената, од њих се захтева рецитовање текста и певање, коришћење најразличитијих звучних и гестуалних објеката, и развијена свест о физичком простору и визуелним сценским структурама. Овакви разнолики задаци, *проширење* професије музичара, резултирали су трансформацијом музичара у театарског перформера.

Овај рад, као алтернативни начин коришћења сценских елемената, уводи идеју *апстраховања* специфичних квалитета или способности професије музичара, обухваћену термином *редуктивни приступ*. Најочигледнији и вероватно најрадикалнији пример редуктивног приступа јесте одузимање самих инструмената од музичара, али рад са овом идејом може укључити и одузимање других особених елемената професије, попут могућности грађења дужих структурних целина у реалном времену.

Коришћењем редуктивних концепата, перцепција и фокус публике мењају се на различите начине: мења се и доводи у питање поимање тога шта је музичар, и која је заправо професија тог извођача: да ли је у питању музичар, глумац, плесач, пантомимичар? Идеје изнесене у овом раду отварају нове могућности за театар вођен музиком, који, иако не мора да укључује музику саму, црпи њену енергију, из покрета и музичара и из њихове основне извођачке професије.

**Кључне речи:** музички театар, музичари као перформери, редуктивни приступ, театрализација музике, Хајнер Гебелс (Heiner Goebbels), Маурисио Кагел, Игор Стравински.