

**Dossier “In Relation to Art. Art from a Relational Perspective”****A New Approach to Relationships in Live Music: Redefining Emotional Content and Meaning****Joan-Albert Serra**

Music entrepreneurship, cooperation, education and research

Submission date: May 2015**Accepted date:** June 2015**Published in:** June 2015**Abstract**

Live music is a social and artistic activity where all its participants establish a set of relationships in real time, mediated by different musical, social, psychological and environmental factors. The aim of this research is to study the relationships between audiences and musicians and their influence in the processes that lead to the generation of emotions and the creation of meaning. By taking a transdisciplinary view, I am trying to bridge some of the divides that frequently appear in music research (object-activity, aesthetic-social, etc.) and so I want to go beyond common artificial investigations about emotions and meaning in music by reflecting on the complex nature of real music experiences.

The methodological approach is mainly qualitative — based on observations, and interviews; however, some quantitative data from a survey have also been taken into account. The research has been carried out as a case study that had the concerts of El Teatre Instrumental, an orchestra that specialises in the repertoire of the classical period, as its object.

Keywords

live music, relationships, emotional content, musical meaning, musicking

Una nova aproximació a les relacions en la música en viu: redefinint el contingut emocional i el significat**Resum**

La música en viu és una activitat social i artística en què tots els que hi participen estableixen un conjunt de relacions en temps real, mediatitzades per diferents factors musicals, socials, psicològics i de l'entorn. L'objectiu d'aquesta investigació és estudiar les relacions entre el públic i els músics, així com la influència que aquestes relacions tenen en els processos que porten a la generació d'emocions i a la creació de significat. Adoptant un punt de vista transdisciplinari, intento estendre un pont entre algunes de les divisions que sovint apareixen en la recerca musical (objecte-activitat, estètic-social, etc.) amb la intenció d'anar més enllà de les investigacions que es fan habitualment de manera artificial sobre les emocions i el significat en la música, a partir d'una reflexió sobre la complexa naturalesa de les experiències musicals reals.

L'aproximació metodològica és sobretot qualitativa, basada en observacions i entrevistes, tot i que també he tingut en compte algunes dades quantitatives procedents d'enquestes. La investigació s'ha dut a terme com a estudi de cas, l'objecte del qual han estat els concerts d'El Teatre Instrumental, una orquestra especialitzada en el repertori del període clàssic.

Paraules clau*música en viu, relacions, contingut emocional, significat musical, musicking*



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Introduction

Music is present in many of our daily activities, in some cases as the main focus, in others supporting what we do and often as a mere background. Our link with music depends on the nature of the activity, the role that we play in it (musician, listener, teacher, student, technician, producer, etc.), our socialisation in a conscious and unconscious form (Bourdieu, 1998) and our own personal circumstances. People listen to music with the help of different devices and technologies and musicians rehearse and make recordings without an audience. Technology has allowed us to separate the making and the consumption of music.

In contrast, live music (still) creates social and artistic events wherein all the participants establish a set of relationships in real time, mediated by different musical, social, psychological and environmental factors. The aim of this project has been to study these relationships, their nature and their influence on the processes that bear emotions and meaning.

For Christopher Small (1998), relationships are the key to understand the meaning of a musical activity.¹ In the context of this research I treat relationships as dynamic necessarily reciprocal elements building here on Georg Simmel's "Wechselwirkung" — which David Frisby translates as "reciprocal actions and effects" (Cantó Milà, 2005) — and Pyyhtinen, who applied Simmel's concept in a context that allows us to use it for the analysis of a live music situation, "Wechselwirkung is not only inter-action but the inter-play of activity and passivity in which every cause may become an effect and every effect a cause" (2009, p. 193).

A growing field of study in need of new contributions

Traditional music research tends to adopt a one-sided approach and focuses on music events through its disciplinary lenses. Music is perceived as a rather fixed object of study. Following Small (1998) and Roy and Dowd (2010), we perceive (the experience of) live music as an activity not as an object, an activity laden with emotions and concrete individual and collective meaning going beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. Therefore, we need to review the look at emotions and meaning resulting from the music experience. A transdisciplinary approach that allows us to capture the experience of music in all its complexities is necessary.

Many existing empirical studies have been carried out in lab/artificial settings, which are then not entirely applicable to real

life experiences. For example, Egermann et al. (2013), in their experiment on expectation and emotion in a live concert, the concert was artificially staged, emotions (that were to be felt) were pre-defined and the social aspects of the activity were not considered. Consequently the results are hardly representative for a real live music event.

Also, psychological and neurological researches like Koelsch's (Koelsch and Friederici, 2003; Koelsch et al., 2000) exhaustive analysis of emotions in music experiences did not take into account cultural, sociological or environmental mediations. The same is true for "Mapping aesthetic musical emotions in the brain" (Troost et al., 2012).

Those focusing on emotions and the creation of meaning as a substantial part of a more in depth experience with music, sometimes miss a well-elaborated theoretical framework and a coherent and rigorous definition of emotion, which creates a great variety of scattered interpretations of what emotions mean (see Scherer and Zentner, 2001; Carr 2004, p. 226; Cross, 2008, pp. 153–160).

Kallinen and Ravaja (2006) differentiate between perceived and felt emotion, and the results of their investigation suggest that music "may be loaded with ambiguous emotional expressions with its rich structure" (p. 207). In "The Pleasure of Making Sense of Music", Vuust and Kringelbach (2010) consider the concept of music-specific emotions (p. 169), like the sensation of swing.

Exceptions are Sam Thompson (2006), who opts for a more naturalistic inquiry, and Stephanie Pitts, who points at the close relationship between social and musical enjoyment as something that is at the heart of live music experience (2005). Especially from the ambit of the sociology of popular culture (Hall and Jefferson, 2006) there are examples that take a more social and sociological approach to the analysis of music experiences and music as an event (Bennett, 2008; Frith, 1998). They are key benchmarks for this article.

Qualitative approach and a case study

A qualitative approach is needed to learn about processes and relationships, and Grounded Theory has provided inspiration for the gathering and analysis of the data (Anells, 1997; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Goulding, 1999). I have decided to carry out a participatory research, primarily as an active observer during concerts and rehearsals, but also by contrasting my own systematically analysed experiences as a musician and listener with the views expressed by audiences and musicians.

1. Christopher Small argues that music should be viewed as an activity — musicking — and not a thing. He formulates a theory that resonates with my own experiences as a musician and listener: "The act of musicking establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships, and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies. They are to be found not only between those organized sounds... but also between the people who are taking part, in whatever capacity, in the performance" (1998, p. 13).



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This investigation has been based on a case study carried out at the concerts of El Teatre Instrumental, with whose help I will shed light on some of the processes that operate in a broader spectrum of live music situations (Gerring, 2007, pp. 20, 49). Based in Barcelona, El Teatre Instrumental is an orchestra inspired by the tradition of classicism but offering a musical discourse that is addressed to today's audiences. The musicians of El Teatre play with historical instruments and their main objective is to emphasise the link that exists between music and drama. They do not perform at traditional concert conventions but rather create alternative events in which they encourage audiences to use their imagination. Through short oral explanations, musical examples and even some theatrical scenes, they help the public to understand the musical language of the more representative figures of the Viennese classicism, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Their programmes often include vocal arias and they also present chamber music concerts. The orchestra performs without conductor, as it was common practice in the classical period. Instead, they receive musical guidance of clarinetist Lorenzo Coppola, an inspirational figure and a well-known specialist in this kind of repertoire.

In order to gain valuable results and so to carry out my case study, I worked with a mixed method approach and diverse data gathering methods:

- Observations of live performances and rehearsals.
- A survey among people that attended the concerts, including quantitative information and qualitative questions.
- Interviews and small group discussions with audience members and musicians.

Findings

Observations

Between October 2012 and June 2013, I observed ten public performances of El Teatre Instrumental in several concert halls in Barcelona and other surrounding cities. I attended various rehearsals for each one of these concerts, I kept a diary and I recorded six of the concerts and a few rehearsals on video.

The observations during rehearsals allowed me to witness the development process of a concert and the specific roles and contributions of each of the members of the orchestra. It became obvious that the orchestra is a conjunction of diverse social relations that are woven and interwoven via the music that is prepared and performed. Hierarchies are far less existent than expected. Whilst the role of El Teatre's artistic director, Lorenzo Coppola, is crucial, the rehearsals are extremely participative. Rather than a top down coordination, all the orchestra members contribute actively to the preparation and performance. The association between the music and some theatrical situations

is used to find ways of being more expressive and, quite often, Lorenzo used plots from well known operas of that period to help musicians understand what they are performing and telling with their music. The vocal quality of the melodic lines was emphasised, as well as the emotional effects of rhythms and dynamics. A central exercise is the emphasis on the dramatic effect of the music, and Lorenzo highlights some harmonic features (dissonances, deceptive cadences, modulations, etc.) and relates them to the composer's intentions and performance practices of that time.

Survey

I designed the survey to obtain:

- quantitative statistical facts about the audiences that have attended the concerts of El Teatre Instrumental and their opinions about El Teatre's approach and
- qualitative answers (text) with their thoughts, feelings and considerations about their experiences at the concerts.

The survey was created and distributed using Google Forms. Initially, 220 email messages with the link to the questionnaire were sent to the mailing list of El Teatre. In five days, 30 of them were answered and a few days later an event was posted in Facebook, followed by a link in El Teatre's website. I stopped collecting survey data two days after the last concert that I observed, having received 77 questionnaires.

Here are some of the main results of the quantitative questions:

- 61 % of respondents were women and 39 % men, and the age distribution is what you would expect for classical music attendance, with 60 % between 45 and 64.
- 84 % attended university; 64 % did not have musical training, 17 % had been to a music school and 14 % were music graduates.
- 72 out of 77 liked classical music.
- 43 % went to at least one concert a month and 31 % to one every quarter.
- 62 % had attended 2 or more El Teatre's concerts and 36 % 4 or more, 57 % of them had paid for a ticket (some were free).
- 83 % said that the verbal explanations that were a feature of the concerts were very interesting; 73 % thought that they contributed a lot to enrich their experience; 79 % considered their balance with the music adequate and 17 % considered that there were too many.
- Regarding the effect of some features over their musical experience they said:
 - Performing without conductor: 44 % very positive, 27 % positive, 29 % no effect.



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- Playing with historical instruments: 64 % very positive, 26 % positive, 10 % no effect.
- Playing standing up: 34 % very positive, 36 % positive, 30 % no effect.

The qualitative data of the survey is analysed together with the interviews in the discussion section.

Interviews and focus group discussions

I carried out semi-structured interviews with six people that had attended at least one of the concerts (3 women and 3 men aged between 42 and 65) and were therefore representative of El Teatre's audiences. A woman had a small group discussion with her four children (aged 10, 7, 4 and 3) after one of the performances, which helped me to get at least an impression of the effects of the performances on children. Furthermore, I carried out a group discussion with three members of El Teatre.

I am aware that what happens during a concert and what audience members tell us that they have experienced are not necessarily the same, but the combination of observations, survey and interviews as a form of triangulation reduces possible bias. Some people are more articulate and others more reserved when they are asked to talk about their feelings and experiences, but throughout the interviews I was able to create a friendly atmosphere to facilitate sincere and open discussions.

Discussion: What data tells us about relationships, emotions and meaning

Relationships

The majority of the survey respondents, as well as all the interviewees, value and enjoy the concerts not only for their music but especially for the relationships that are created between musicians and audiences during the concerts, which we can find reflected in a wide variety of citations from, especially, the open questions of the survey:

"I feel like being among family".

"These concerts are different, they're really addressed to the public. In other concerts... sometimes it looks as if musicians play just for themselves".

"[I enjoy] The proximity between musicians and public, to be able to see the complicity among them and the emotions that they experience when playing".

As we can clearly see, many participants emphasised the specialness and importance of the bond being woven during the

concert, thus creating something special between all those who participate — the orchestra and the audience. In fact, quite a few underlined that they did not feel passive at all but actively engaged in the event:

"They encourage you to participate, you don't feel like a mere spectator".

"I'm interested in the body-language of the musicians when they play, I have never seen it like this, they dance... express a lot more... there's no comparison".

Within the interviews I was able to go even a little deeper and figured out some aspects of these relationships. According to them, the complicity and the musical, physical and emotional interaction between audience and orchestra members was not only noteworthy but has had a strong effect on the experience of the event:

"You can see beyond your ears, you see them [the musicians], their faces... some smile... I don't know, you can sense the complicity..."

But the relationship was not only strengthened by the "almost physical" interactions between audience and orchestra members but also by the comments and explanations of the orchestra members. One of the interviewees explains why:

"But that role too [the person who tells the story] is very important to the audience. You have to be taken, as a child, to this incredible journey... You have to catch the attention, it's part of the performance in a sense... it's so interesting and so catching if whoever presents and gives the information acts as the mediator between the orchestra and the audience. That's a very important part of it being so fascinating".

The musicians of El Teatre also felt the weaving of these invisible bonds through emotions and communicative interaction:

"The first time [that I performed with El Teatre] it had a great impact on me. The fact that the public was laughing... that you made them participants... it touched me a lot".

The critical attention and the emotional participation of the audience pushes the orchestra members to give their best and to play better for the sake of their listeners.

But orchestra members do not just create relationships with the audience, they also bring to the stage the relationships that have been created during rehearsals. The absence of conductor empowers them and enhances their mutual relationships and the relationships between them and the public, and they speak as well about the effect of "breathing together". They talk about their level of implication and attention:



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"What I notice above all, the difference between playing with El Teatre compared to other orchestras, is that, in other orchestras, musicians are very passive, they wait for everything to be given to them, and it's very difficult to see them taking initiatives or really opening their ears. Here we have practiced to open up our ears hugely! To listen to the smallest detail of what is happening, because it's not enough to just play your part... the involvement is much stronger".

Through the interviews I was also able to confirm something that I had experienced myself: the importance of the space and the setting where the concert takes place. An example of this was the performance of Mozart's clarinet quintet by a chamber group of El Teatre. The same piece was played on a Saturday afternoon at the cloister of the Monastery of Pedralbes (Barcelona) and the following Wednesday at a modern chamber hall (Ateneu Barcelonès), nice but with quite dry acoustics. Both concerts were very well attended. At the cloister, after a magical second (slow) movement there was a great silence and you could just hear the murmur of the water coming from the cloister's fountain. The strong emotional relationship with the audience that had been created seemed to manifest itself as deep silence. In contrast, when the same piece was performed a few days later to an enthusiastic hall, after this movement everybody started clapping. Both performances were great, but the atmosphere of the place had a strong impact on the experience for both audiences and musicians and also on the way the relationships between them got woven.

Emotions

A significant finding of this research is the importance of emotions in live music events, as well as the difficulty to express them in words. What listeners experience or perceive is not just what the music or its interpretation express, but also the emotional impact of the visual, relational and environmental aspects of the activity.

Participants talk about "perceived emotions", those that they recognise as being expressed by the music or "felt emotions", those that they experience in themselves (Kallinen and Ravaja, 2006). In the case of the concerts by El Teatre, we can add a third category the "intended emotions", those that the composer and/or the performers try to communicate. At the same time, audiences do not necessarily differentiate between emotions and feelings, so I am taking an open approach and use the term "emotional content" to convey the emotions, feelings, moods and sensations that are felt, expressed or generated in a live music activity.

We have already seen the importance that audiences place in the relationships that the members of the orchestra establish among themselves and with them, but they also talk about the emotions that the musicians communicate and how much they appreciate this emotional communication:

"You can see if a group is... playing with a... it's very difficult to express it in other languages except Japanese. In Japanese they would say they're playing with the same energy. They call it 'ki' and, if it is there, it means you are like breathing at the same rhythm and the same air, feeling the same things and that's when this really works".

"What I really enjoy is to see how the musicians live it, I mean, I think that this is what wins your love, you fall in love with the complicity among them, at least to me this is what makes me connect. Because you're very attentive to their gestures, how they look at each other..."

Similar ideas have also appeared in the questionnaires:

"I like the excitement that I see in the musicians and the willingness that they all have to communicate".

"On top of playing very well, which is the most important thing, I especially like the enthusiasm that they communicate and the pleasure for the music that they perform, which is contagious to the public".

"They are an ensemble of instruments that talk to each other, with the language of music obviously, and the dialog that takes place is precise and very emotional".

Some respondents are able to communicate quite vividly their emotional experience:

"My senses wake up and open up to let me flow, freeing the emotions that are difficult for me to feel and express. A big space is created in me, where happiness, pain and sadness get mixed, but in harmony".

"Music wakes me up, opens my heart, makes me flow and listen to what lives inside me, and enter a different world where there's harmony and peace".

To describe their emotions during the concerts, people use words like: lots of emotions, curiosity, happiness, sadness, pleasure, joy, extremely beautiful, tears dropping or wanting to, tears of joy, below the surface and ready to break, playful and stimulating, well-being, surprise, discovery, hope, joy, tranquillity, relaxation, enjoyment, tenderness, melancholy, love, excitement, fullness, intensity, surprise, I want to dance, the emotion of beauty, freshness, sympathy, admiration, feeling of peace, calmness...

Others acknowledge the difficulty of expressing it with ordinary words: "I should write a poem to express it better."

Or they take a more philosophical approach:

"Humanity; a deep and marvellous sensation when I felt the dialectic connection between the sublime art and our earthy and tangible existence; admiration; the value of living".



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Meaning, knowledge and emotions are also linked:

"When I come out of the concert, the feeling is always to have learned a bit more... and during the concert I feel excited and deeply moved... every time I understand you better. The feelings are pleasant and I walk home with your music in my head. Thank you".

"I value the fact that my imagination is called upon and to be asked to make my own contribution to the piece that I'm listening to. To create imaginary worlds inside the music is enjoyable and relaxing".

"The joy of learning curiosities and to be transported to another era through the explanation of how they lived and what they performed".

One of the interviewees shares her feelings and the relationship between perceived (or intended) and felt emotions:

"I would say... mainly the same... I'm not surprised. Maybe, it happened once that I felt something completely different from what was going on and it was explained to us afterwards".

"I tend to be relaxed when I listen to music; it's such a familiar, comfortable sort of feeling. Only I tend to ask myself more questions, I tend to become a bit more active in the listening, that's what it brought to me this sort of approach".

One of the persons that I interviewed describes his lack of emotional implication with music and what he actually enjoys:

"For me is more technical... I don't receive music very emotionally; my ear is not trained for that. [At the concerts of El Teatre] I liked it more because I understood it better, I had a personal satisfaction".

But also on the side of the musicians emotions play a fundamental role. Musicians explained their own journey with El Teatre as a journey full of emotions:

"There are always, in every project, two or three entrances that the entire orchestra does and where everybody breathes and it's a moment of... emotion. When you're playing and everybody breathes together you go... wow!"

"I think that there are more and more emotional moments. The more we get into the repertoire, into this kind of interpretation, we know more... in a way you are readier to get emotional and there are moments... we're letting go ourselves, we're learning how to do it..."

"I think that any music from any period in history reflects society in a way or another, what happens is that emotions are the same, it [music] uses some resources or others, but the emotions are the same".

The emotional impact of this breathing together on the musicians themselves is revealing, something that was felt by audiences too (the Japanese 'ki' that one of the interviewees mentions) and that we can therefore conclude that collective emotions have a strong effect on those who see them and are able to participate in an event in which they are generated.

But not all emotions are practiced. During the concerts, sometimes, intense emotions arise unexpectedly during a musical phrase, a rhythmic passage or even a single note, and it would be difficult to describe them or relate to them with a definite emotion. It seems that there are some music-specific emotions for which we don't have a name and can only be explained by experiencing music directly in certain circumstances. The silence after the slow movement of the clarinet quintet at the cloister, a poignant note sang by the soprano during a Mozart air, a beautiful melody played by the violins during a Haydn symphony or a dramatic and intense rhythm played by the entire orchestra are some of the moments that I can recall very vividly as having had this kind of powerful emotional impact on me.

Meaning

The specific meanings that are presented during the explanations and comments given at the concerts of El Teatre are an important part of what people take home from the concerts. Typically it is scenes from operas (counts, countesses, maids, lovers, seduction, fights... at the palace or the garden at night...) and occasionally teenage stories or even a football match may be used, but audiences are also invited to make up their own stories, and so to relate their own past experiences with the music and the event. Sometimes, specific musical codes by Haydn or Mozart are introduced: long melodic lines representing a noble figure, more rhythmic patterns to exemplify a popular one, etc. Lorenzo often dramatizes some excerpts played by the orchestra, creating some funny moments that make people laugh. One of the respondents says "Lorenzo's imitation of the maid opening the curtains is a classic" and the 4-year-old girl really enjoyed it: "Yes, and the man that was imitating a girl [Lorenzo] [...] and was opening the curtains... and was walking like this (she walks moving her bottom)".

If we analyse how the suggested meanings of the music influence the actual listening, we find three different reactions from the survey respondents:

They try to follow the stories that have been suggested:

"I very much like Lorenzo's comments and the fact that he tells us how we can imagine the scene gives a lot of meaning to the music that we are listening to".

They create their own stories:

"I let myself go. Sometimes I create my own movie if I don't see the count or the servants that come and go or the



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other one hiding. If this is too distant for me, I transform it into another script".

They just listen to the music or have other experiences:

"The only meaning is what I felt there, performed live".

"I don't know, I don't give a meaning to the music, I only enjoy it".

The same groups could be found in the longer interviews:
Follow stories...

"I think that the first time that I hear it [the music] I prefer to be guided a bit... to know where it goes, what's important at that moment... This is the added benefit of this type of concerts compared to the experience of a more traditional concert".

"I think it's necessary to have the guide that he [Lorenzo] gives, it's essential. At the end you feel that you gradually understand it better, you enjoy it more... the music. You're a bit lost, but it's also amusing because you try to guess what happens at that moment, is like a game, it's good".

Own stories...

"Since he [Lorenzo] asked people to imagine, to see things, I really saw... I invented a story. I didn't say anything [in some concerts audiences are invited to share their own stories] but I had seen a different story from the one he was telling, although I thought that it was quite coherent with the music..."

"This is very stimulating, because you not only have to understand something, but imagine it, which is something more... You can fantasise and invent different stories. It's like having Play-Doh, use it! [...] It's not something that's already finished, you're giving me a material and I can make something else..."

Just listen...

"To me personally, [the explanations] don't change much my appreciation... then I like it or not..."

The group bringing in their own stories is especially interesting. They pinpoint that the interpretation of meaning in music is somehow a negotiation process between own pasts and presents and the horizons created by the music, the result of a creative interaction.

This became especially clear in the comments of the youngest interviewees:

"Yes, as if they were talking" (7 years old).

"I imagined stories... but I created them myself... I wouldn't know how to tell you... I was seeing things... ima-

gining things... but I had to make an effort to see what they were saying... other things came to my head" (10 years old).

In fact, these personalised imaginaries become also captured by the musicians that incorporate them somehow into the music; a reciprocal relationship between all participants has been woven:

"But not only the images... also the implicit codes in this music that have been lost all this time. So the fact is that the more you work with them, you make them yours and they come out in a more natural way..."

"We now have a group of El Teatre people that we're gradually understanding a certain repertoire in the same way".

"Sometimes, to know what these notes represent helps you a lot technically".

"[We may say in a rehearsal] we're not together, we're not together... but then you say this represents such and such, and all the sudden we're together".

The approach to musical meaning that I have described is based on the perspective of audiences and musicians participating in the concerts of El Teatre — with its particular take on the classical repertoire — but this analysis indicates that it can be applied to a wider spectrum of live music activities.

Conclusions

In conclusion, I would suggest that reciprocal relationships are central to live music events and experiences. Invisible threads exist and are woven between musicians and audience in various ways.

Reciprocal relationships can be shaped as emotions. They are essential to listeners and musicians in live music performances, milestones to describe musical experiences. I have argued that we can differentiate three categories of emotions: perceived, felt and intended, but the analysis of the data confirms that this is a complex area in which emotions overlap and intermingle with sensations and emotive reactions. However, it is undeniable that these emotions are experienced as collective material, as an invisible matter that makes people empathise to each other.

Reciprocal relationships can also be built on the previous experiences and expectations that are openly expressed and performed in the live music event. In fact, imaginaries created by the music and made of the different individual minds engage strongly in the live music event and emerge as vital when they are communicated and become such a public narrative.

In a certain way, we can say that music itself is a web of reciprocal bonds that operate at different levels and that shift from context to context (space, people, narration, orchestra). This study has made clear that the meaning of a musical work, whatever it



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might be, cannot be studied isolated from its actual performance in a real environment.

I propose to adopt a new concept of musical meaning, one that includes, not only the meanings that each person assigns to different aspects of music, but also the emotional content that is experienced. Musical meaning, in its broader sense, is the result of all the relationships that are created, which are influenced and mediated by a variety of personal, social and environmental factors.

I would, therefore, argue that we need to treat music as an activity where the relationships between musicians and audiences are central. The focus on relationships will allow us to understand the need to create collaborative environments where musicians, public, venues, producers, researchers, etc. work together to create innovative live music formats and engage wider audiences.

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RECOMMENDED CITATION

SERRA, Joan-Albert (2015). "A New Approach to Relationships in Live Music: Redefining Emotional Content and Meaning". In: "In Relation to Art. Art from a Relational Perspective" [online dossier]. *Digithum*. No. 17. pp. 11-19. UOC. [Accessed: dd/mm/yy]
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 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.7238/d.v0i17.2635>>



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Music has been the pivotal point of Joan-Albert Serra's extensive professional career as a leader of educational institutions and programmes, curriculum designer, consultant, researcher, lecturer, producer, performer and composer. His leadership positions have included: International Relations, Institutions & Alumni Coordinator, ESMUC (Barcelona, 2009–2013); Head of Vocal and Instrumental Learning, The Sage Gateshead (UK, 2003–2008) and Director, Escuela de Música Creativa (Madrid, 1985–2001). He has also collaborated with European organisations, gaining a broad knowledge of the cultural sector and an understanding of the training and professional development needs of 21st century musicians in a global, changing and complex environment. He is currently working in live music research and promoting cooperative entrepreneurship projects at European level.

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