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Author : Matthieu Saladin

Affiliation : PhD student in Aesthetics, University Paris 1, Panthéon-Sorbonne

Email : [matthieusaladin@free.fr](mailto:matthieusaladin@free.fr)

Paper : Musical improvisation and visual arts

Panel : Staging - Visualizing Meaning

Musical improvisation and visual arts :

Abstract:

It seems that a specific musical improvisation practice gained popularity in the 90's: improvisation on visual support. Various kinds of pictures (films, videos, slides...) are part of the onstage performance beside the musicians. At first sight, one could say thus that this appeal of picture oscillates between the ornamentation and a whole participation in the creation process. But isn't it possible to find other subjacent relationships outside the simplicity of dualism?

We could also consider that pictures have been used with improvisation before. Some musicians express clearly the influence of visual arts on their way of playing and more generally on their musical experience. Let us remember also that from the 50's to the 70's, several experiments usually referred to as graphical scores were used in contemporary music.

We will analyse, in this paper, what such a meeting between picture and sound in the improvisation can teach us about the practices and their apprehension by the public. What changes in the implemented set-up? Which are displacements that allowed the integration of the picture?