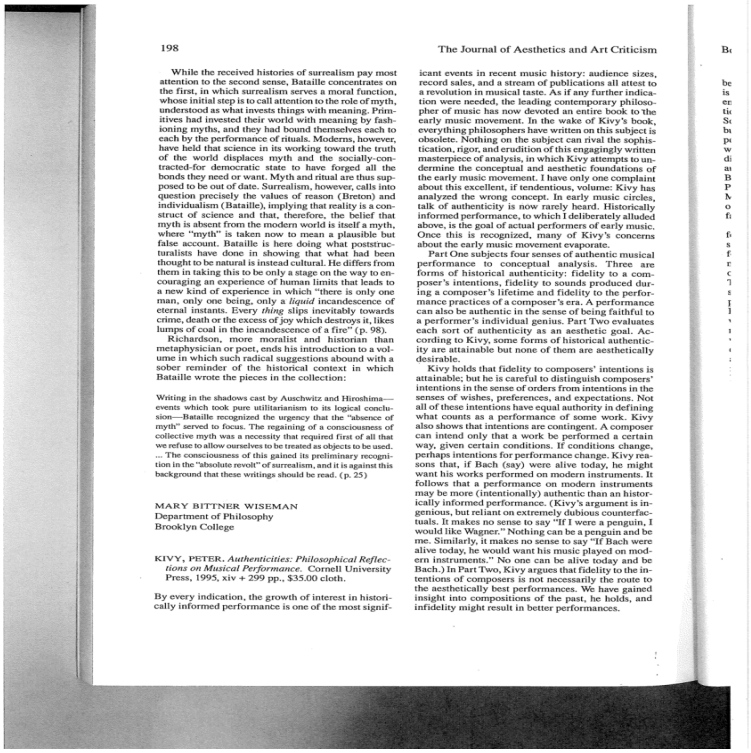
The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue: A Phenomenology of Music



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While the received histories of surrealism pay most attention to the second sense, Bataille concentrates on the first, in which surrealism serves a moral function, whose initial step is to call attention to the role of myth, understood as what invests things with meaning. Primitives had invested their world with meaning by fashioning myths, and they had bound themselves each to each by the performance of rituals. Moderns, however, have held that science in its working toward the truth of the world displaces myth and the socially-contracted-for democratic state to have forged all the bonds they need or want. Myth and ritual are thus supposed to be out of date. Surrealism, however, calls into question precisely the values of reason (Breton) and individualism (Bataille), implying that reality is a construct of science and that, therefore, the belief that myth is absent from the modern world is itself a myth, where "myth" is taken now to mean a plausible but false account. Bataille is here doing what poststructuralists have done in showing that what had been thought to be natural is instead cultural. He differs from them in taking this to be only a stage on the way to encouraging an experience of human limits that leads to a new kind of experience in which "there is only one man, only one being, only a *liquid* incandescence of eternal instants. Every *thing* slips inevitably towards crime, death or the excess of joy which destroys it, likes lumps of coal in the incandescence of a fire" (p. 98).

Richardson, more moralist and historian than metaphysician or poet, ends his introduction to a volume in which such radical suggestions abound with a sober reminder of the historical context in which Bataille wrote the pieces in the collection:

> Writing in the shadows cast by Auschwitz and Hiroshima—events which took pure utilitarianism to its logical conclusion—Bataille recognized the urgency that the "absence of myth" served to focus. The regaining of a consciousness of collective myth was a necessity that required first of all that we refuse to allow ourselves to be treated as objects to be used. ... The consciousness of this gained its preliminary recognition in the "absolute revolt" of surrealism, and it is against this background that these writings should be read. (p. 25)

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KIVY, PETER. *Authenticities: Philosophical Reflections on Musical Performance*. Cornell University Press, 1995, xiv + 299 pp., $35.00 cloth.

By every indication, the growth of interest in historically informed performance is one of the most significant events in recent music history: audience sizes, record sales, and a stream of publications all attest to a revolution in musical taste. As if any further indication were needed, the leading contemporary philosopher of music has now devoted an entire book to the early music movement. In the wake of Kivy's book, everything philosophers have written on this subject is obsolete. Nothing on the subject can rival the sophistication, rigor, and erudition of this engagingly written masterpiece of analysis, in which Kivy attempts to undermine the conceptual and aesthetic foundations of the early music movement. I have only one complaint about this excellent, if tendentious, volume: Kivy has analyzed the wrong concept. In early music circles, talk of authenticity is now rarely heard. Historically informed performance, to which I deliberately alluded above, is the goal of actual performers of early music. Once this is recognized, many of Kivy's concerns about the early music movement evaporate.

Part One subjects four senses of authentic musical performance to conceptual analysis. Three are forms of historical authenticity: fidelity to a composer's intentions, fidelity to sounds produced during a composer's lifetime and fidelity to the performance practices of a composer's era. A performance can also be authentic in the sense of being faithful to a performer's individual genius. Part Two evaluates each sort of authenticity as an aesthetic goal. According to Kivy, some forms of historical authenticity are attainable but none of them are aesthetically desirable.

Kivy holds that fidelity to composers' intentions is attainable; but he is careful to distinguish composers' intentions in the sense of orders from intentions in the senses of wishes, preferences, and expectations. Not all of these intentions have equal authority in defining what counts as a performance of some work. Kivy also shows that intentions are contingent. A composer can intend only that a work be performed a certain way, given certain conditions. If conditions change, perhaps intentions for performance change. Kivy reasons that, if Bach (say) were alive today, he might want his works performed on modern instruments. It follows that a performance on modern instruments may be more (intentionally) authentic than an historically informed performance. (Kivy's argument is ingenious, but reliant on extremely dubious counterfactuals. It makes no sense to say "If I were a penguin, I would like Wagner." Nothing can be a penguin and be me. Similarly, it makes no sense to say "If Bach were alive today, he would want his music played on modern instruments." No one can be alive today and be Bach.) In Part Two, Kivy argues that fidelity to the intentions of composers is not necessarily the route to the aesthetically best performances. We have gained insight into compositions of the past, he holds, and infidelity might result in better performances.

This book is an important contribution to the philosophy of music. Bruce Benson's concern is the phenomenology of music making as an activity. He offers a radical thesis that it is improvisation that is primary in the moment of music highlandcoffeeroaster.com will be a provocative read.Full-Text Paper (PDF): The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue: A Phenomenology of Music, Bruce Ellis Benson.Cambridge Core - Music Performance - The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue - by Bruce Ellis Benson. A Phenomenology of Music. The Improvisation of.highlandcoffeeroaster.com Cambridge University Press. - The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue: A Phenomenology of Music. Bruce Ellis Benson.This book is an important contribution to the philosophy of music. Bruce Benson's concern is the phenomenology of music making as an activity. He offers a.The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue has 19 ratings and 3 reviews. Oscar said: This is a very refreshing view of the music making activity as a process.Trove: Find and get Australian resources. Books, images, historic newspapers, maps, archives and more.The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue: A Phenomenology of Music, Bruce Ellis Benson. Melvin James Backstrom McGill University.Improvisation of Musical Dialogue: A Phenomenology of Music by Bruce Ellis Benson, , available at Book Depository with free.The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue: A Phenomenology of Music, Bruce Ellis Benson.On learning that I was working on a phenomenology of music making, one philosopher commented to me that, although he was also a musician, he had never.Bruce Benson's concern is the phenomenology of music making as an activity. He offers a radical thesis that it is improvisation that is primary in the moment of.Buy The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue: A Phenomenology of Music at highlandcoffeeroaster.comCambridge University Press, Hardcover. Used:Good.The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue - Ebook download as PDF File .pdf), Text File .txt) or read book online.

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