

EMBODIED MUSICAL IMPROVISATION: HOW THE BODY FOSTERS IMPROVISING IN GROUPS

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Résumé

Avec la « participation incarnée à l'improvisation musicale en groupe », nous introduisons un nouveau modèle qui permet d'approfondir la question de l'improvisation musicale en groupe. En outre, ce modèle encourage une perspective corporelle sur l'improvisation en vue de faciliter la participation. Nous illustrons notre raisonnement à l'aide d'exemples issus du projet ImproKultur. En particulier, nous examinons de plus près deux approches de l'improvisation musicale de groupe : la direction avec le corps et l'improvisation avec une chaise en tant qu'objet et instrument de musique. À partir de ces deux approches bien différentes de l'improvisation en groupe, nous mettons l'accent sur leurs aspects spécifiques d'« embodiment ».

Mots-clés : musique, improvisation, embodiment, pédagogie, participation

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Abstract

This article explores the question of how the body is involved when improvising together in a group. Focusing on improvisational pedagogical practices, our interest lies particularly in the question in what ways the body empowers participation. With "Embodied participation in musical group improvisation" we are introducing a new model which allows for reflection on musical group improvisation. It also encourages a body-based perspective on improvisation in relation to the facilitation of participation. We illustrate our reasoning with examples from the ImproKultur project. In particular, we take a closer look at two approaches to musical group improvisation: body conducting and improvising with a chair, both as an object and as a musical instrument. Using these two quite different approaches to improvising in a group, we emphasise their specific aspects of embodiment.

Keywords: music, improvisation, embodiment, education, participation

Introduction

“Music is distinctively, perhaps uniquely, a form of embodied agency; the unity of the body-mind is a fact that musical experience demonstrates vividly, compellingly, irrefutably. Not all modes of embodied experience are musical, but all musical experience is embodied” (Bowman & Powell, 2007, p. 19)

In recent years, music pedagogical thinking has been striving to move away from the notion of the dualistic division of body and mind (Bowman & Powell, 2007; Juntunen, 2017; Oberhaus & Stange, 2017; Unger-Rudroff, 2020). Instead, the aim is to combat the “forgetting of the body in music education” (Oberhaus & Stange, p. 11; translated by the author) and to integrate it into an understanding that sees the body and mind as an intertwined phenomenon. The concept of embodiment is central here, because it recognizes the body and mind as a unity from which – from a phenomenological point of view – every form of perception, experience, knowledge and agency is drawn (Juntunen, 2017). However, embodiment can also be viewed from a praxeological perspective. According to this perspective, practice is the central unit from which the body performatively emerges (Alkemeyer, 2021). A praxeological understanding of the body has rarely been addressed in music education. While pedagogical concepts such as those of Dalcroze, Kodaly and Orff advocate the role of the body in music teaching and provide corresponding teaching methods, recent theoretical developments in the field of music pedagogy appear to additionally view music in its entirety as an embodied phenomenon: “Human corporeal experience is a constitutive and indispensable dimension of all music: heard or played; listened or made” (Bowman & Powell, 2007, p. 10). This point of view challenges us to consider how the body could consequently be defined and what consequences these considerations reveal for music education practice.

Our focus is on improvisational pedagogical settings. Encouraging the idea of the “lived bodily experience of music” (Bowman & Powell, 2007, p. 21) as a basic phenomenon of all musical practice, we would like to focus our attention on the role of the body during musical group improvisation. Our thesis is that access to musical group improvisation for young people is to a large extent also created through aspects of embodiment.

In our paper we will explore the relationship between embodiment and improvisation. Based on our model of „Embodied Participation in Musical Group Improvisation“, our goal is to provide body-based suggestions for improvising

music in groups. By elaborating essential physical aspects of improvisation, we make embodiment in improvisation more tangible.

First, we will explore theoretical considerations of improvisation pedagogy and embodiment (1). By explaining the term embodiment with a focus on a praxeological perspective towards „the body in action“, we will then outline a possible definition of the body as a basis for our further considerations (2). Methodological aspects will follow, leading to the presentation of our model „Embodied participation in musical group improvisation“ (3). By explaining different facets of embodied participation, we will illustrate our theoretical framework with practical examples from the project ImproKultur (4). To conclude will be a summary of the central ideas of our model as well as a perspective for the future of music pedagogy.

1. Improvisational pedagogical reflection on the body

Improvisation can be understood as a mode of musical expression in which the unpredictability of the musical process plays a crucial and essential role (Krämer, 2018). Invention, realisation and perception of music are inseparable in their timing (Krämer). In a music pedagogical context, improvisation commonly occurs in a group setting. Considering that the practice of musical improvisation is subject to both stylistic and cultural plurality (Treß, 2022), and naturally has different approaches depending on the teacher and the group, five basic dimensions that have an impact on the process of improvising can be extrapolated: *musical material, attitude, interaction, creativity and emergence*. Researchers in the field of music pedagogy often direct their interest towards the creative and social dimensions of improvising music together (Treß et al., 2022). This includes questions around topics such as *students' understanding and practice of improvisation* (Kanellopoulos, 1999), *transformative-interactionist processes* (Welte & Jachmann, 2020), *informal music learning* (Wright & Kanellopoulos, 2010), *musical fluency and collaborative emergence* (Wall, 2018). Moreover, *didactic approaches, the role of the teacher* as well as *institutional conditions* have been investigated in various European studies (Treß et al.). Due to the strong fluid character of improvising music together and by the fact that improvised music depends on the actions of the performing subjects, it is not surprising that scientific considerations of the phenomenon of improvisation fall back on theories of action (Figueroa-Dreher, 2016). From our perspective, the strong emphasis on action as a basic con-

dition for (collective) improvising picks up on the aspect we mentioned earlier: namely, that any musical practice, including improvising in a group, is created and perceived through embodiment. Regarding improvisation and embodiment as common subjects seems to be an existing concern in improvisation pedagogy (Improfil, 2016) and also appears in some theoretical presentations in different forms (Eikmeier, 2016; Gagel, 2010). However, considering the fact that improvisation pedagogical practice has not yet been sufficiently empirically researched (Treß, 2022), it is hardly surprising that embodiment continues to play only a marginal role in the context of improvisation pedagogy theory. This may also be related to the challenge of developing theoretical access to the nonverbal and performative aspects of the practice of improvisation. With our focus on embodiment and improvisation, we would like to add a new perspective on issues in the improvisation pedagogy.

2. Embodiment theories

2.1 Embodiment : A multi-perspective definition

If one explores the term embodiment, one quickly comes to the realisation that it is a plural and multi-perspective concept. We would like to explicitly emphasise the multi-perspectivity of the term, as different understandings and discourses of the body also play a role in the model we present later on. The term is shaped by investigations from philosophical, sociological and cognitive science standpoints and, generally speaking, focuses on the body as a genuine producer of perception, learning and knowledge (Orlikowski, 2019). The phenomenological notion of embodiment goes back to the philosophical work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger (among others). It distinguishes the physical body from the perceiving body (Brand, 2022). The concept of the lived, experiential or phenomenological body is seen as the elementary dimension of experience and emphasises the “holistic understanding of the human being and the embodied ways of knowing oneself, others, and the world” (Juntunen, 2017, p. 117). Investigations from cognitive science towards a theory of Embodiment connect to these philosophical approaches and clarify that the body is by no means a companion separate from our thinking and feeling: “many features of cognition are embodied in that they are deeply dependent upon characteristics of the physical body of an agent” (Wilson & Foglia, 2015, chapter 3). Thus, beyond the brain, an agent’s body plays a physical or causally constitutive role in cognitive processing. Accordingly, this thesis views the body and mind as interconnected, mutually influ-

encing each other. Even more, as Nicolaas Cottenie (2015) puts it, “cognition is shaped by and constructed through an organism’s bodily interaction with its environment” (p. 13). The body is thus seen as a precondition for mental processes. In praxeological theory, practice and embodiment are very often considered together. Praxeology is influenced by and emerged from philosophical and sociological approaches (Reckwitz, 2003). As a synthesis of different theoretical perspectives, practice is understood as a constitutive event in which the body is significantly involved in the production of the social (Alkemeyer, Buschmann & Michaeler, 2015; Butler, 2015, chapter 1; Hirschauer, 2004; Noland, 2009).

These different discourses can be considered separately, but it is at the same time necessary to be aware of their mutual influences. But what makes this multiperspective definition so interesting for research into pedagogical practice of improvisation?

Improvising in a group involves embodied agency. What stands out here as a special characteristic, however, is the interaction with the group, the other players. Thus, improvisation can be called a social art (Gagel, 2015) which is constituted by the collective practice and shaped by bodily activity of each individual.

Accordingly, it seems interesting investigating it from a praxeological perspective on embodiment. For this reason, in the following section we will take a closer look at praxeological approaches to embodiment. In this way, it becomes comprehensible why the body can be regarded as a basic precondition when we think about participation.

2.2. A praxeological understanding of embodiment

There are different ways of understanding practice. In contrast to a concept of practice, which is assumed as a pre-structured action in which actors take on the status of routinely keeping an action going, there is also a perspective that sees practice as a flexible action full of unpredictability and surprises (Alkemeyer et al., 2015; Reckwitz, 2003). It is a performative understanding that is capable of both constituting and transcending a practice and the values associated with it. Ruptures and shifts arise in the performative reproduction of the social (Schäfer, 2013). Thus, a potential for transformation is always inherent through the actions of each individual. In this context, the body is assigned a high status (Butler, 2015) and corporeality, in the sense of pre-linguistic action, is decisive for the per-

formative emergence of practice (Laner, 2019). The “body in action” (“Vollzugskörper”), as defined by Alkemeyer, Buschmann & Michaeler (2015), positions itself in relation to a historically determined and identifiable practice (Alkemeyer, 2021): “It should be emphasised that in bodies in action not only the dispositions that are ‘suitable’ or ‘expectable’ for the performance of a practice appear. Rather, dispositions re-configure and re-dispose themselves due to reciprocal ties or couplings obstinately in relation to the demands of a game or a practical situation” (Alkemeyer et al., 2015, p. 38; translated by the author). Bodies are thus constituted as “bodies of playing football, of making lessons, of studying, of reflecting” (Alkemeyer, 2021, p. 27; translated by the author) and – speaking for our context – as bodies of musical improvising. Methodologically, a plasticity of the body is presumed that only forms itself into a specific body in practice (Alkemeyer, 2021). How movement, motor activity, gestures, perception, mood and affectivity are exactly shaped depends on the normative expectations and the “infrastructures” that determine the practice. In terms of music education, this means that, for example, the practice of musical group improvisation activates other forms of embodiment than when playing music together in a traditional setting of a symphony orchestra. Consequently, although both practices involve making music in a group, different social and musical norms and orders are embodied. This process, which allows social existence and order to emerge performatively in embodied action, can also be understood as a process of subjectification (Alkemeyer et al. 2015). Subjectification is reflected in the specific form of the practical requirements that show the obstinacy and responsibility of the actors. It is an interaction of “heteronomy and autonomy, passivity and activity, being triggered and responding, being afflicted and afflicting” (p. 41; translated by the author). Within this complexity and due to the tendential instability of practice, subjectification is to be understood as a process that cannot be concluded. This leads to the realisation that the embodiment of a practice and its subjective design is also decisively shaped by mutual embodied addressings, which is very interesting for pedagogical contexts. It raises the question of how the embodiment of a practice should be oriented and shaped in order to enable the participation of the actors.

3. Embodied participation in musical group improvisation

3.1 Methodological aspects

Our theoretical perspective makes it clear that participating in a practice depends to a large extent on aspects of

embodiment. Susanne Quinten shares this view with her concept “Embodied participation as a specific modality of participation in artistic and aesthetic fields of action” (Quinten, 2021). Even though her model is not based on a specific theory of embodiment, it inspired us to further develop some aspects and – in combination with our understanding of embodiment – to define the model of “Embodied Participation in Musical Group Improvisation” for the field of improvisation pedagogy. Quinten’s concept can be understood as a contribution to the discourse on cultural participation. It examines possibilities of participation that are tied to the specific bodily and non-linguistic qualities of artistic-aesthetic practice: “The contemporary arts, with their multiple modalities of expression and multi-sensory ways of working, offer suitable conditions for people to participate and contribute to a common activity even without verbal-language communication and beyond so-called rational and logical thinking” (Quinten, 2021, p. 122; translated by the author). On the one hand, we follow Quinten’s approach by creating a collection of ideas and materials according to the dimensional analysis (Döring & Bortz, 2016), systematising them and making a selection of the aspects relevant to the study¹. On the other hand, we have used ethnographic research data based on video-assisted participant observation (Herrle & Breitenbach, 2016) as well as field notes (Breidenstein et al., 2020; Hammerley & Atkinson, 2007) from the ImproKultur project. The focus is on movement sequences that can be interpreted as key situations for musical interaction processes. The fact that these situations have a multitude of dimensions to be investigated has become clear to us in our methodological approach. This realisation can also be found in the study by Howahl, Büning & Temme (2020), which seeks to make moments and qualities of participation in dance pedagogy processes empirically accessible. For our model, we have finally chosen a selection of artistic-social dimensions of embodied improvisation that are expressed in four modes. Before introducing these, we will present our field of research in a short sub-chapter.

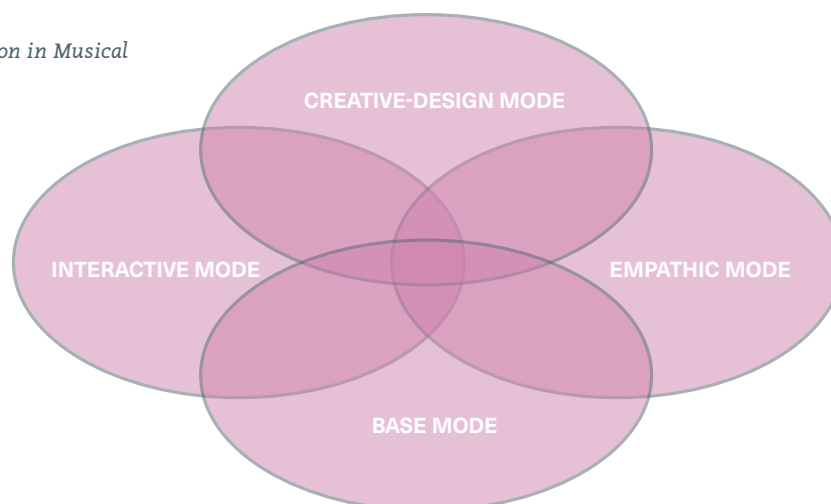
3.2. ImproKultur

The *ImproKultur* project is a cooperation between the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media (HMTMH) and various educational institutions, in particular general education schools in Hanover. Since its foundation in 2015, the project has aimed to strengthen creative music-making practice in multiculturally and socially heterogeneous contexts including work with migrant populations and facilitat-

1 To apply a dimensional analysis see Quinten (2021, pp. 3–10).

Figure 1

Embodied Participation in Musical Group Improvisation



ing artistic-musical approaches (Mischke & Welte, 2022; Welte 2016; Welte & Eikmeier 2021; Welte & Jachmann 2020²). Current and former music education students of the university and children and young people meet weekly for 90 minutes to make music and improvise together. Apart from regularly occurring musical lessons, semi-annual performances are also part of the concept. ImproKultur is equally aimed at young people and at university students and teachers in training. The objective of the education project is to enable children and teenagers – especially from cultural and socially diverse backgrounds – to have an active, playful, musical education, with a focus on the joy of perceiving, inventing and making music together. For the higher education project, ImproKultur is aimed at promoting professionalisation in the areas of creative, cooperative, intercultural, and inclusive music education. University students and teachers-in-training work in teams of three, which gives them an opportunity to learn from each other. In their work, they are supported and coached by university staff based on didactic experience and research on the project.

3.3. The model of “Embodied participation in musical group improvisation”

3.3.1. Introduction

Based on Quinten's concept outlined above and our selected data material and its categorisation, the following four modes have emerged that form the basis of our model:

1. Base mode
2. Empathic mode
3. Interactive mode
4. Creative-design mode

Graphically, the model can be represented as four overlapping circles. This emphasises that in group improvisational practices, all modes are involved and interwoven. In the following chapters we introduce the four modes.

3.3.2. Base mode

For this mode, the concept of corporeity can be used as a reference point (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2011). Maurice Merleau-Ponty emphasised the body as the primary site of knowing the world, maintaining that the perceiving body and its perceived world could not be dissociated from each other. According to him, the body is the basis for all perception, a baseline habit, which conditions all other habits and the systems by which they function together. Improvisation in groups involves each participant directly in a musical process through their ability to perceive, to respond and to understand in a nonverbal way. This is expressed, for example, through directed attention and eye contact, physical contact, approaching and averting behaviour.

The body and an underlying sense of being awake together enable vegetative reactions as well as expression behaviour. Increasing body awareness can lead to increased mindful presence and opportunities for musical participation and sharing, not least on the level of perception, action and interaction. It is through the body that human beings experience, learn and develop.

2 Under the title “Everyone can improvise” (ECI), the project will be expanded from autumn 2023 and transferred to the European level (partner universities: Graz, Hannover, Lübeck, Zagreb). ECI will be funded in the Erasmus+ program in the campaign «KA2 partnerships for cooperation» in higher education.

3.3.3. Empathic mode

Through physical empathy and sensual-kinaesthetic perception of the postures and movements of other people and works of art, connections and relationships to the group and the so-called musical object are established. Kinesthetic empathy with another person, into their physical constitution, is the key to empathy in general and mutual understanding. Theoretical concepts in which embodied forms of empathy become visible are provided by concepts such as “embodied simulation” from Vittorio Gallese (Gallese, 2008). Empathy can arise in the context of improvisation through reception as well as productively in mimetic re-enactment.

3.3.4. Interactive mode

Social interaction generally refers to the mutual influence of individuals and groups with regard to their attitudes and actions (Schaefer, 1992). The term mimesis can be defined as an aspect of social interaction (Stange, 2020). Mimetic processes play a particular role in improvising together (Welte, 2018). The point is about trying out the actions of other people and integrating them into one's own repertoire of actions by potentially changing them (Stange). In our view, mimetic processes are an indication of how practices are not static, but are always subject to the possibility of change, for example through the (mimetic) modification of a practice. In musical group improvisation, this can mean opening up a space for improvisational processes where students invent sequences in music and movement through mimetic reference.

3.3.5. Creative-design mode

Improvising together in a group is a lot about discovering unknown sounds and playing with the unpredictable. Music emerges from the very moment and is characterised by self- and co-determination. This principle involves modelling with the parameters of time, space, energy and form. With the help of the subdivision into these four parameters, all musical elements can be transformed into movement and vice versa (Danuser-Zogg, 2013). What is important is allowing different solutions in connection with judging coherence (Weise, 2013/2015). Allowing unpredictable actions while improvising in a group also involves the aspect of the process by which people give meaning to their collective experiences, in music and movement. Dance researchers theorise that a directed movement is characterised by a certain dynamic differentiation (Howahl, Büning & Temme 2020). A creative approach within the four parameters allows a dynamic differentiation of musical and bodily expression and an experience of meaningfulness can unfold.

4. Applying the model to practical examples

4.1. Introduction

To illustrate the use of our model in practice, we will take a closer look at two approaches to musical improvisation that were used in the ImproKultur project: 1. Body conducting and, 2. Improvising with a chair, both as an object and as a musical instrument. By analysing these sequences, we will relate some of the modes from our model to the situations described.

4.2. Body conducting

Body conducting can be described as a way to introduce a group to musical improvisation by using the whole body as a conductor. In this case one person, teacher or student, moves across the room; the music responds to this movement. The focus of the group is on one person conducting the group in an improvisational and self-determined way through spontaneous body gestures and movements. The following field note describes one such learning and teaching moment at ImproKultur:

A group of 11 students and three teachers is sitting together in a large circle in the classroom. One person, in this case the youngest student (S1), stands in the middle of the circle to start the body conducting. All participants have instruments, including congas, guitars, a tom, claves and rattles. S1 begins to walk in a circle. The instruments accompany his steps, but there are also occasional unintelligible words by individuals of the group. S1 holds on to the bottom of his shirt with his right hand. After one round, he makes a gesture with his left index finger pointing to the floor. In the following round he speeds up his walking. The faster he gets, the more body tension, especially in his straight legs, can be observed. After this round, he pauses for a moment, walking slower, increasing his steps. His gaze goes from one side to another. He seems to be thinking about what he might do next. He decides to do another, even faster round, followed by the music, stops abruptly and runs backwards a few steps, laughing.

Applying the creative-design mode to this situation, it is obvious that for the conductor as well as for the ensemble, the modelling with the parameters of time, space, energy and form turns out to be a condition of making music together. Through the differentiation and gradation of the various parameters, the movement and finally also the music acquire a direction and a meaning. S1's brief hesitation in

Figure 2
Body Conducting



the middle of the sequence seems like a moment of internally negotiating between several conducting possibilities: what options do I have? How can I shape this moment musically? For the observer, this moment seems like an embodied expression of decision making, obvious in his speed of walking and his gaze. This embodied hesitation also influences the ensemble as the music reacts to his movement. S1's main focus is to grapple with the parameters of time and space; form and force are not consciously used as actions. Legs and feet are the physical centre of the conducting. It is characteristic, however, that this arises in the moment and is largely unpredictable. The body is thus given the responsibility to create music out of the moment. From our theoretical point of view, this pedagogical situation can provide space for subjectification in the sense of asking the participants – particularly the one conducting the group – to develop a subjective design of that practice (as stated in chapter 2.2.). This process of subjectification is shaped by the musical responding of the group to the bodily conducting of S1 and vice versa, since the musical responding of the group influences the movements of S1. It can be seen as a mutual process of addressing improvisational ideas. The conducting process of S1 can be defined as a creative intentionality, which gives artistic meaning to the musical moment. This creative intentionality can be seen as an essential dimension of improvising together and can be supported by body-based approaches to musical group improvisation.

4.3. Improvising with a chair

In this example, the students had the task of improvising with a chair, both as an object and as a musical instrument. The exercise was to find a collaborative way of moving with the chair across the room. It was not the first session for the group with this task, they had already been improvising with chairs. The following sequence describes how the improvisational process with the chair developed in music and movement.

At the beginning of the scene one can see an almost empty classroom - without tables and chairs. There is a drum set in the right-hand corner on which a student alternates between base drums and sticks, playing a steady beat. In the middle, a teacher sits at the piano and improvises to the beat of the drummer. Attention is drawn to the open classroom door. A student has just placed a chair in the entrance of the room and the next moment is standing on that same chair. He turns back towards the corridor, gets down on his knees and reaches for another chair. He straightens up, now holding the chair in both hands, and carefully turns towards the classroom. He then puts the chair down in front of him and enters the chair with a pushing gesture. Again, he turns around, gets on his knees and takes his previous chair in both hands, straightens up, turns again staggeringly towards the center of the room and enters the chair that has been put down again. This creates a

Figure 3*Improvising with a chair*

path in which he moves from one chair to the next. Following this principle, six more students enter the room. The transition from one chair to the next seems to be a balancing act and for some of them a challenge: Arms and legs dart to the side and upwards in order not to lose their balance. At some point, a student begins to put the chair down by tapping the chair legs twice on the floor. Other students imitate him. In relation to the meter of the drum set, this is two eighth notes, but they are placed very randomly. In the following process, it can be observed that this idea with the tapping chair is placed more and more consciously, namely on the perceived first beat of the drum set. All the students make an effort to implement this rhythmic idea.

This scene becomes particularly interesting when we think about mimetic processes in musical group improvisation. At the beginning we could see how focused the students were on themselves, implementing the movement pattern motorically and finding a path in the classroom. There are a lot of movements that show a kind of embodied state of orientation in this situation of experimenting with the chairs together. Through mimetic processes, the participants adapted the sequence of movements to each other. This becomes particularly clear as soon as all the seven students have entered the classroom. The way they go down on their knees, grabbing the chair, bringing it to the other side and putting it down again seems very similar. In

between we could see how the rhythmic tapping with the chair emerged as an idea and was taken up by the whole group. Apart from synchronising this tapping of the chair, even the moment of moving from one chair to the other, happens at the same time. Obviously, mimetic processes on a physical-nonverbal level play a significant role in this example. Expanding this to a praxeological understanding of embodiment, the mimetic process emphasises the tendency of practice to be unstable: The emergence of the chair-tapping and a certain way of moving from one chair to another can be seen as an example for practice as a flexible action full of unpredictability and surprise. The choreographic process emerges from „doing it together“ and is influenced by the dispositions of each individual. The embodied interaction within the group pulled the action in an unpredictable direction. Group improvisation creates space to move in a collaborative, unarranged artistic direction through embodied experimentation in music and movement.

Conclusion

In our article we defined the relationship between embodiment and improvisation and explored the question of how the body is involved in the practice of musical improvisation. Our thesis was that the accessibility of musical improvisation for young people in a group setting is to a large extent also created through aspects of embodiment. To this end, we identified several ways in which the body encour-

ages participation in group improvisation and organised these insights into the four modes of our model “Embodied Participation in Musical Group Improvisation”. Applying our model to pedagogical examples from the ImproKultur project, we gave a little glimpse into how the specific modes can be observed in practice. Reflections on two sequences made clear how a praxeological understanding of embodiment can be recognised in musical group improvisation: on the one hand, the body conducting gave the individual the freedom to experiment creatively with the parameters of time, space, energy and form and thus to subjectively co-determine the unpredictability of musical processes with one’s own body. On the other hand, non-verbal mimetic processes while improvising with the chair showed how social and artistic interaction can create a common embodied musical and choreographic idea. This “body in action” of musical group improvisation is equally determined by the practice as well as influencing the ever-changing existence of this practice.

The central ideas of this paper can be read as the beginning of a research that is far from complete and, in our opinion, holds great potential for the further development of the topic of embodiment as an analytical perspective for music learning and teaching. An application of the other modes of the model to practical examples could be added, for example. In the context of this article, we had to decide

on a specific focus of analysis. Under these constraints, for example, our attention was only focused on the conductor during the body conducting. However, the experience of the improvising group and the modes of participation of the individual musicians could also be analysed. It would also be interesting to find out why the conductor experimented mainly with the parameters of time and space and what conditions would be needed to take into account the other parameters and to use different body parts as conducting tools. The sequence with the chairs was a small fragment of a longer process. A look at the whole process could be revealing towards discovering how the beat of the drum set was created and whether the “chair tapping” already appeared in previous lessons. It would also be interesting to explore how much of the process was teacher-led and which elements, conversely, emerged through student’s initiative and interaction. The concept of this sequence was ultimately performed as an introduction in a concert but with the modification and further development that the cello was played instead of the piano and the movement was even more synchronised with the music, which increased the choreographic effect.

What may have already become clear, however, despite the need for further research, is that participation in making music together can be particularly facilitated through embodied non-verbal strategies.

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