Between I and You in Music

Shared Emotions, Relational Improvisation, and Artistic Research

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It is precisely this mutual tuning-in relationship by which the "I" and the "Thou" are experienced by both participants as a "We" in vivid presence.

. . . this precommunicative social relationship comes to the foreground. . . . in . . . dancing together, making love together, or making music together. (Schütz [1951] 1976, 161–62)

An intimate duo between two violins or between violin and piano allegorises [*versinnbildlichen*] the crucial element in romantic love much better than the fusion of two halves into a spherical being, or Virgin Mary and Baby Jesus. (Krebs 2015, 60, my translation)

Imagine an ensemble performance that is brimming with proximity: the players' actions appear to emerge from one mind and one body, no matter how complex or conflict-laden the musical events they create or interpret. This is a highly desirable experience and artistic achievement even for a mature ensemble musician. Alfred Schütz and Angelika Krebs in the initial quotations compare a duo or ensemble in such a state—the state of profound musical togetherness—to that of lovemaking (Schütz) or even to love itself (Krebs). In the inverse case of weak or missing musical togetherness, there is an audible disconnect between the players, even when they manage to play in synchrony or painstakingly reproduce a matching interpretation. A listener will readily notice that, in the latter case, the players "don't click," that there is little or no "chemistry." Musical togetherness is an astonishing interpersonal achievement, yet—despite readily recognising its presence or absence, and despite recent research on ensemble playing—it remains a mystifying phenomenon. What is it that grounds musical togetherness? What kind of state or feeling is it? And how can it be achieved?

These questions show that musical togetherness is both a practical and theoretical problem, a problem of (musical) skills and a problem for our understanding. In this chapter, I address both sides of this problem by way of artistic research. I first give some background to an analysis of musical togetherness, discussing certain key concepts and spotting some shortcomings; I then discuss artistic explorations aimed at deepening our understanding of musical togetherness, and argue that the musical achievements reached and identified reveal the presence of shared feelings (in the particular understanding developed by Angelika Krebs). I conclude that genuine musical togetherness instantiates a state of higher level subjectivity—a state in which two subjects enter a compound subjectivity *without* losing their individual autonomy—and briefly discuss conditions for musical togetherness in this sense, as well as implications of the insight.

1. Preliminary considerations: The "tuning in-relationship," the forming of a "We," musical empathy, and related concepts

Alfred Schütz, in his influential essay "Making Music Together: A Study in Social Relationship" ([1951] 1976), conceives musical togetherness as instantiating a state of shared consciousness: "Both [co-performers] share not only the inner *durée* in which the content of the music played actualizes itself; each, simultaneously, shares in vivid present the Other's stream of consciousness in immediacy" (176). This state extends not only between co-performers, but also, as Schütz claims, between composers and "beholders" (a term with which Schütz refers to both: performers as interpreters and listeners, and listeners in the audience): "Although separated by hundreds of years, the latter [beholder] participates with quasi simultaneity in the former's [composer's] stream of consciousness by performing with him [*sic*] step by step the ongoing articulation of his musical thought. The beholder, thus, is united with the composer by a time dimension common to both, which is nothing other than a derived form of the vivid present shared by the partners in a genuine face-to-face relation" (171–72). Schütz believes this very state (as characteristic of musical experience) to be foundational for communication (173, 177) and mounts his critique of the prevalent sociological models of communication of the day from this vantage point (161). To support his thought on the shared stream of consciousness, Schütz leans on the following definition of music: "For our purposes a piece of music may be defined—very roughly and tentatively, indeed—as a meaningful arrangement of tones in inner time" (170). It turns out that Schütz implies a quasi-formalistic definition of music, because "meaningful" to him refers to "an interplay of recollections, retentions, protentions, and anticipations which interrelate the successive elements" (170)—that is, musically immanent relations between parts. To Schütz, inner time is "the very medium within which the musical flow occurs" and differs from outer time in that it is not measurable (171). In this way, by shifting the place where synchrony is established into an oblique inner realm, Schütz *presupposes* synchrony, without critically

assessing whether synchrony really is present, or whether it yields the claimed "immediacy."[1]

Contra Schütz, however, upon replaying and rehearing, performers or listeners do not hear pieces of music as unfolding *identically* in time. Growing acquaintance with a piece or performance alters temporal perception, and attention, distraction, and knowledge will highlight different aspects in different episodes of listening (and different listeners). Thus, the idea of a literal sharing of consciousness—even in inner time—across centuries or even across current co-performers as generated by the organisation of the musical piece seems implausible. While Schütz's classic text indeed presents a nascent understanding of the phenomenon of musical togetherness and of its primary characteristics and conditions (these being a process of "tuning-in," and the forming of a "We"),[2] a more conceptually nuanced, accurate and precise, and musically rich and concrete view is desirable. What else, then, other than a *temporally induced* state of shared consciousness, establishes joint action, and what may go even beyond joint action in musical togetherness?

Instead of thinking of "tuning-in" as an obscure process of temporal alignment in inner time produced by composed musical organisation, I propose it is reached through a reciprocal process of perception geared at *grasping* the other's state—arriving at a developing community of feeling between the performers. The word for the process of grasping another human being's state is *empathy*. Later in this chapter I shall argue that empathy is indeed at play in reaching musical togetherness, and that empathy occurs as a dialogical psychological process. Before I do so, I offer some preparatory thoughts on the concept of empathy as distinct from some other concepts that address related interpersonal human capabilities, and some thoughts on the structure of the "We" referred to by Schütz.

Empathy

Theodor Lipps was one of the Gestalt psychologists who at the turn of the twentieth century began to use the word and concept of empathy (*Einfühlung*). In his *Grundlegung der Ästhetik* (foundations of aesthetics) of 1903, Lipps describes his view that upon hearing someone else's affectively charged vocal utterance resembling a sound oneself would make under a certain affect, we encounter the affect not as connected to the sound, but "within" it—meaning that the affect is not imagined as being the sound's cause, but experienced in its very quality. The experience, to Lipps, is not passively arrived at but actively

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1 In the subsequent passage (Schütz [1951] 1976, 172), engrossed in the distinction between a "polythetic" character of musical experience and the "monothetic" character of grasping mathematical meaning, Schütz overlooks that musical meaning is not only "polythetic" but to some degree flexible: it *depends* on, for example, the temporal cohesion and distribution of performances, which *vary* from instantiation to instantiation. In poetry too, meaning changes as tempo, emphasis, and tone vary in different recitations.

2 The "living through a vivid present in common, constitutes . . . the mutual tuning-in relationship, the experience of the 'We,' which is at the foundation of all possible communication" (Schütz [1951] 1976, 173).

produced by way of an inner joining in (*inneres Mitmachen*).[3] The perceiving person, according to Lipps, contributes the affective quality of the seen, so the specific quality seen (e.g., in another's eye) becomes, for instance, pride; simultaneously, the pride is no longer only seen, but is also *felt*. The act of projection of the perceiver's feeling into the perceived is what Lipps calls empathy (1903, 111). Empathy, in Lipps's view, then, is an imitation of a perceived affective content via one's own affective capacity. Lipps claims that it is the act of empathy that, in the aesthetic experience of an artwork, thus endows the seen with psychological vitality, and that similarly extends to the realm of human life.

One way in which Lipps's view is problematic is that it overestimates the ease of matching the other's state with one's own; for Lipps, a basic equivalence between the two is a given. However, could not the "experienced" affect sometimes be produced by *misguided* imitation or *misinterpretation*? Could not real joy be projected in imitation of pretended joy, and thus misperceived? Would it not be necessary to continuously correct one's estimation of the other's state to arrive at a more adequate grasp? And would empathy therefore, contra Lipps, not be a projection of an estimated state onto another being, through which one endows their appearance with affectivity, but a (continuously revised) process of (imperfect) perception of another's state as nevertheless *genuinely* hers or his? Both Edith Stein's and Max Scheler's accounts of empathy argue towards this view (see Stein 1989, 10–11, 14, 84–86). To Scheler, the feeling grasped through empathy (Scheler uses the German word *Nachfühlen* instead of *Einfühlen*) is not (necessarily) shared or recreated by the one who empathises; rather, she or he grasps the quality of the other's feeling as the *other's*.[4]

One of the benefits of this latter view is that it accounts for the fact that not everyone who empathises does this out of sympathy. People may suffer through *or* enjoy another's misfortune, the psychological grasp of which they arrive at via empathy. Scheler's remark—that feelings grasped via empathy need not become one's own—thus marks an important difference between empathy and sympathy. This is particularly helpful considering that in everyday conversation and marketing language (and implicit conceptions), empathy and sympathy are often confused. A quick online search for "empathy" in the Corbis image

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3 My paraphrase abbreviates the following passages: "Wir geben allerlei Affekte, Gemütsbewegungen, Arten der inneren Erregung, etwa Schreck, Freude, Erstaunen, unmittelbar in Lauten kund. . . . Und höre ich nun einen Laut, ähnlich demjenigen, in welchem ich selbst meinen Affekt verlautbarte, so finde ich—nicht damit verbunden, sondern unmittelbar in ihm, diesen Affekt wieder. Dies 'Finden' scheint zunächst ein bloßes unmittelbares *Mitvorstellen*. In der Tat ist es mehr. Ich gewinne nicht nur die Vorstellung, daß dem Laut der Affekt zu Grunde liege, sondern ich *erlebe* diesen. Ich mache ihn innerlich mit [*sic*], um so sicherer und voller, je mehr ich dem Laut innerlich ganz zugewendet bin. Ich bin geneigt, mit dem Jubelnden mich zu freuen, also in seinen Jubel innerlich einzustimmen" (Lipps 1903, 106–7).

4 "Es ist wohl ein *Fühlen* des fremden Gefühls, kein bloßes Wissen um es oder nur ein *Urteil*, der Andere habe das Gefühl; gleichwohl ist es kein Erleben des wirklichen Gefühles als eines Zustandes; wir erfassen im Nachfühlen [*sic*] fühlend noch die *Qualität* des fremden Gefühles—ohne daß es in uns herüberwandert oder ein gleiches reales Gefühl in uns erzeugt wird" (Scheler 1923, 5, as translated in Scheler [1954] 2017, 9; It is indeed a case of feeling the other's feeling, not just knowing of it, nor judging that the other has it; but it is not the same as going through the experience itself. In reproduced feeling we sense the *quality* of the other's feeling, without it being transmitted to us, or evoking a similar real emotion in us). The translation given as "reproduced feeling" slightly misrepresents the meaning of *Nachfühlen*, which literally means to "feel-out-for" rather than to imitate and re-create; however, the rest of the sentence helps establish the correct meaning.

database delivers photos of caring, mild, and compassionate-looking people, extending their hands and gently touching others. As was noted, the dangers of conceptual confusion are not to be taken lightly, as an empathetic person *may* of course be benevolent—just like someone responding with sympathy—but they may just as well be *malevolent*, grasping another's pain and coldly ignoring or cruelly indulging in it.

It makes sense, therefore, to distinguish between empathy and sympathy, and to clarify the relation between the two. In Scheler's classic book *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* (*The Nature of Sympathy*) of 1913 (see 1923, [1954] 2017), he identifies, describes, and thoroughly distinguishes four forms of sympathy from one another: (1) *Miteinanderfühlen* (lit. feeling together, mutual feeling, shared feelings); (2) "*Mitgefühl an etwas*" (fellow-feeling about something); (3) *Gefühlsansteckung* (contagion); and (4) *Einsfühlen* (feeling of oneness) (1923, 9). Only the first two of these feelings presuppose empathy. Contagion, Scheler's third sympathy category, is altogether different from empathy: rather than naming the attentive and imaginative grasping of another's feeling quality as *the other's* feeling, it names an involuntary process of taking on someone else's feeling quality without becoming aware of its origin, and remaining interested only in one's *own* experience of it. Scheler's fourth category, the feeling of oneness, is an ontological claim about the existence of a subpersonal state of psychological union. Sympathy in this sense refers not to a sameness but to an actual *identity* of a feeling in two or more beings. Feeling together or shared feeling, Scheler's first category of sympathy, names the equality of feeling between two individual beings; and his second form of sympathy, "fellow-feeling about something," or "sympathy with," is, according to Scheler, a feeling *about* a feeling—for example, benevolence or malevolence. Notice that to take on someone else's feeling at which one arrived through empathy is an option for those who sympathise. (Note also that empathy is a process, whereas sympathy is a feeling.)

While Scheler leaves it open whether another's feeling may be taken on in sympathy, Peter Goldie offers another variant: sympathy, to Goldie (2000, 9), "is . . . best understood as a sort of emotion, involving thought about and feelings towards the difficulties of another, motivations to alleviate those difficulties where possible, and characteristic facial expressions and expressive actions." Concerning *compassion*—yet another related term—Martha Nussbaum, in her *Upheavals of Thought* (2001), offers that it is "a painful emotion occasioned by the awareness of another person's undeserved misfortune" (301). To Nussbaum, *sympathy* simply is a milder version of compassion: "people who are wary of acknowledging strong emotion are more likely to admit to 'sympathy' than to admit that they feel 'compassion'" (302). (And of *pity*, yet another related term, Nussbaum writes: "'pity' has recently come to have nuances of condescension and superiority to the sufferer that it did not have when Rousseau invoked *pitié*" [301].)

Current academic usages of the term empathy in music psychology, the aesthetics of music, or the philosophy of mind often combine (and sometimes conflate) Scheler's *Nachfühlen* with contagion—his third form of sympathy.

Also, when an author uses the word *empathy*, it sometimes implies that the empathising person takes on the feeling of the one who is being empathised with; Jerrold Levinson (1996, 125) and Roger Scruton, in their respective accounts of musical expression, both display this use.[5] Many other authors do not explicitly discuss their understanding of the terms, or use them too liberally, which sometimes obfuscates the growing literature on empathy (and in particular in music). Felicity Laurence (2017), in her opening prologue to Elaine King and Caroline Waddington's *Music and Empathy* points out this state of affairs and dedicates substantial space to clarifying the concept of empathy. While convincingly distinguishing between three diverging elements that are often mixed up in current usages of the term, Laurence's own definition ends up overly inclusive, ultimately conflating empathy with sympathy.

Empathy, in my present understanding, thus names our conscious ability to—imperfectly—grasp another human being's psychological state through the affective character of their appearances and actions. Its use in music affords our turning towards the other not to maintain a face-to-face relationship, as Schütz claims, but an ear-to-ear relationship. That ear-to-ear relationship can, under certain circumstances, lead to a combination of individual musical expressions into a joint expressivity. This is a particular quality of togetherness that is filled with mutual understanding and affective correlation beyond synchrony: the state of forming a "We" not just by association under a shared goal or shared values, but on the level of an intimate affective relation—the exquisite state described at the onset of this chapter. What makes it exquisite is its relation to subjectivity. I'll turn to this quality briefly now before discussing its musical exploration.

We-ness (Edith Stein on higher-level subjectivity)

If togetherness to the level of oneness can be achieved in music, how might one figure this oneness? Does it dissolve the subject into a grand unified metaphysical whole? Matthew Rahaim (2017, 176–77, 188–89) points out that the image of full togetherness in the sense of lost individual autonomy appears frequently in some parts of the common discourse on music.[6] Such is also the idea that Lipps and Scheler had of a feeling of oneness, a feeling of complete union between two or any number of people, which they thought to be ontologically prior to feelings of self, and which, importantly, they thought was the basis for all forms of empathy and sympathy.[7]

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5 Roger Scruton prefers to use *sympathy* (for what to Scheler would be *Nachfühlen*, i.e., empathy), but also uses *empathy*: "If . . . you are afraid of a danger, and I, observing your fear, come to share in it while not being afraid for myself, then my fear is sympathetic feeling. . . . (The special case where the response coincides with the emotion responded to is sometimes called empathy—translating the German *Einfühlung*)" (Scruton 1997, 354).

6 Rahaim argues that the idea that music's unifying powers are based on a metaphysics of unity is a common cliché, arguing instead for a metaphysics of alterity.

7 According to Scheler (1923, 112–15), for example, the feeling of oneness (*Einfühlung*) grounds empathy (*Nachfühlen*), which in turn grounds fellow-feeling (*Mitgefühl*).

Edith Stein clarifies the shortcomings of Lipps's and Scheler's arguments: "What led Lipps astray in his description was the confusion of self-forgetfulness, through which I can surrender myself to any object, with a dissolution of the 'I' in the object. Thus, strictly speaking, empathy is not a feeling of oneness" (Stein 1989, 17). Stein goes on to locate two potential ways in which a *feeling* of oneness might nevertheless occur: by literally having the same feeling (e.g., in a communal response of relief and joy to the disappearance of a shared threat) and thus combining the others' and one's own experience into *our* experience, that is, into the experience of a "'we' as a subject of a higher level,"[8] and by adjusting one's own feeling by way of empathy to match the others'.[9] We-ness, in this understanding, represents a new subject—a subject of a higher, interpersonal level, encompassing more than one person—rather than representing a return to an ontologically fused state. The shift of attention on the "we" attenuates the experience of "I" and "you," without eliminating it: "But 'I,' 'you,' and 'he' are retained in 'we.' A 'we,' not an 'I,' is the subject of the empathizing" (Stein 1989, 18). Stein notes that even Scheler missed this distinction: "Scheler clearly emphasizes the phenomenon that different people can have strictly the same feeling (*Sympathiegefühle*, pp. 9 and 31) and stresses that the various subjects are thereby retained. However, he does not consider that the unified act does not have the plurality of the individuals for its subject, but a higher unity based on them" (ibid., 122n28).

In what follows, I discuss how in an improvisatory encounter within an artistic research project, Simon Rose and I explored togetherness and evinced *this* kind of unity. Working towards a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of musical togetherness, and of the (intersubjective) structure of its experience and constitution, I shall argue that musical togetherness of the intimate quality sought comes into being when the ensemble manages to move beyond joint actions and into shared feelings. In analysing one example of my experimental practice, I arrive at a notion of dialogical playing that, as I reflect in the subsequent section, fulfils Angelika Krebs's conditions of *Miteinanderfühlen* (shared feelings).

2. Exploring musical togetherness musically

When wanting to learn more about and understand better the qualities of togetherness that occur between musicians when playing together, it might seem self evident to scrutinise performances of classical duo repertoire (recall Goethe's famous passage in a letter to Carl Friedrich Zelter in which

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8 "I feel my joy while I empathically comprehend the others' and see it as the same. And, seeing this, it seems that the non-primordial character of the foreign joy has vanished. Indeed, this phantom joy coincides in every respect with my real live joy, and theirs is just as live to them as mine is to me. Now I intuitively have before me what they feel. It comes to life in my feeling, and from the 'I' and 'you' arises the 'we' as a subject of a higher level" (Stein 1989, 17).

9 "I empathically arrive at the 'sides' of joyfulness obstructed in my own joy. This ignites my joy, and only now is there complete coincidence with what is empathized. If the same thing happens to the others, we empathically enrich our feeling so that 'we' now feel a different joy from 'I,' 'you,' and 'he' in isolation" (Stein 1989, 18).

he compares listening to a quartet with listening to a conversation between four rational people [Goethe 1892, 369]). However, any duo in the sense of composed and performed art music is intrinsically a curious trio. In a composed work, the musical actions played out by the performers are fairly tightly scripted, by the score, by a composer's implicit oeuvre, and by performance tradition and compositional practice. That is to say, they are largely predetermined, preorganised, and premeditated. Of course there is room for interpretation that turns the score, which is always underdetermined, into a sounding work—and interpretation is for this very reason an art in its own right that balances the composer's voice with the performer's. But importantly for our line of thought, the composition nevertheless already provides the *form* and, thinking in terms of process, the *continuation* along which the shared emotional narrative unfolds. Bruce Ellis Benson, in *The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue* (2003), brilliantly analyses the reciprocity at work when performers navigate the tension between compositional givens, musical traditions, their own expressive voice, and audience expectations, and shows how composers themselves are active—and entangled—in this dialogical situation via *responsibility* (see, especially, 168–76). While a composer thus may well be seen to be setting up and outlining the process of an encounter between performers, the quality of that encounter ultimately depends on the latter. There are many ways and indeed, dimensions in which a performance may still fall short of achieving the dialogical intimacy Angelika Krebs is pointing towards; thus, the duo's challenge is indeed formidable. It is not without reason that ensembles rehearse for years and build a musical life together to achieve the state of playing with shared emotions again and again anew onstage.

Therefore, in trying to grasp the musical challenge and the richness of the musicians' interpersonal and emotional achievement *in performance*, the influence of the composer's contribution complicates matters. This is different in improvisation. While compositionality is no less important in free improvisation (just as much as improvisationality in interpretation), the interpersonal dynamic that occurs in the encounter is not guided by constant influences of pre-existing choices of another's making. An exploration of musical togetherness by way of improvisation in at least this sense gives closer access to the very place where dialogicity is most exposed in its very making.

A note of caution: I am far from thinking that free, or experimental, improvisation, is free from social scripts.[10] While freely improvised music is generally characterised by an encounter between individual voices—voices who, to different degrees, assert their autonomy, or provide a supporting frame for such an act—this very characteristic can easily mislead one to believe that interpersonal encounters in improvisational situations are in any sense more ethical or democratic than elsewhere. I certainly agree with Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz who, in *The Fierce Urgency of Now* (2013), discuss the ethical potential of freely improvised music, which they essentially conceive as enabling a coming together in difference, in which voices from underprivileged or marginalised

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10   I largely concur with Nicholas Cook's view (2017).

backgrounds are heard. But there is no guarantee that any interhuman proximity is reached in concrete terms in any given improvisation. While free improvisation is increasingly viewed as a testing ground for ways and models of ethical social encounter, the actual qualities achieved in encounters are under-researched and undertheorised. While Gillian Siddall and Ellen Waterman (2016, 3) rightly describe subjectivity as "a complex negotiation of lived embodied experience and social forces that work to regulate behavior and therefore shape that experience," authors in improvisation studies too seldom venture into the concrete realm of what it means that "in improvising we experience the immediate relationships between our bodies and others" (ibid.), *beyond* the effect this experience might have for the separate subjects or subjectivities involved. What of the intersubjective level?[11] Of all the contributors to the two-volume *Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies* (Lewis and Piekut 2016), only Vijay Iyer, Celia Pearce, and Ed Sarath dedicate short passages to intersubjectivity: Pearce (2016, 2:455–56) introduces the strong idea of intersubjective flow (however, by leaning on Csikszentmihalyi's very broad understanding of flow as "an optimal state of concentration and connectedness that is maintained through a careful balance between boredom and anxiety" [ibid., 2:455]); Sarath's (2016, 2:144) notion of an "intersubjective field of consciousness" drifts steadily into what Matthew Rahaim above called the metaphysics of union; and Iyer (2016, 1:79) expounds an understanding of intersubjectivity in the musical experience as having "a sense of mutual embodiment," though he does not develop this interesting suggestion further. Nevertheless, that is what would be needed for us to more fully address the question: How dialogical is the interpersonal reality that is actually reached? As Bruce Ellis Benson writes (2003, 171): "We usually think of freedom as 'negative freedom'—freedom *from* constraints. But what I have in mind here is 'positive freedom'—freedom *for* genuine dialogue. . . . One needs to be able to *listen* to the other." As much as improvising ensembles indeed achieve an organic unity within their playing that marks their ensemble sound; genuine dialogicity in Benson's sense only lights up on very few occasions and in very few, extraordinary encounters. This is despite the fact that extreme familiarity and musical intimacy are often present in sophisticated improvisatory ensemble practice. And this seems only to be expected in a performance situation that, after all, aims for spontaneous creativity—the first risk taken in these circumstances is, with a nod to Schütz, that of primarily divergent streams of consciousness. How can one attain freedom *for* dialogue amid the various scripts, habits, and egocentric interests that mark an improvised musical encounter, even in the absence of a premeditated composition? And through which of our human faculties does this dialogue unfold?

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11 It seems an important step in the right direction when Ellen Waterman (2016, 302) describes improvisatory group interaction, after analysing performer's subjective statements, as involving "different conceptions of subjectivity—both the authentic (dialogical) self and the socially constructed (contingent) self—fluidly and even simultaneously in a constant circulation of power."

Case study: Artistic experimentation towards a shared voice

I now turn to analysing a freely improvised duo piece by Simon Rose and me—*free* in the sense that we did not agree on any specific musical constraints or plan before playing, other than viewing our performance as an encounter of equals without foregrounding or being led by a particular style. The encounter took place within the framework of the "Emotional Improvisation" research project (FWF: PEEK AR188). We improvised the piece in question on the third day of Rose's eleven-day research residency at the project space, a forty-square-metre room in an old apartment building in Sporgasse 32, within the central historic district of Graz, Austria. Like many sessions within the complex overall project, it was recorded as part of the ongoing video and audio documentation, with a simple stereo microphone setting (two Sennheiser MKH 8020 omnidirectional microphones going into a Sound Devices USBPre 2). The two microphones were placed next to the 1970 Bösendorfer 225 grand piano (lid removed) inside the curve and pointing diagonally towards the centre of its soundboard at the meeting point between treble and bass bridges; Rose in this piece used his 1932 Conn Transitional baritone saxophone, standing at the tail end of the piano. A selection of improvisations from that third day—including the piece I am about to discuss—and from one of the subsequent days were released as *Edith's Problem* by Leo Records (Peters and Rose 2017) with no cuts or edits except for a slight attenuation of some street and building noise to which the microphones were particularly sensitive. The piece is called "between, part one"; its duration is 6:44 and it is the CD's first track.

Rose and I were of course entering this particular piece primed by about twenty hours of previous playing and analytical discussions, at a point where the desire to create a piece made up of fine-grained shared aesthetic decisions was very present in our minds. Yet to desire something is not the same as being capable of it (and twenty hours normally offer hardly more than an inkling of a *joint* practice). Rose and I had noted that we achieved some unexpectedly stable and structurally productive aesthetic mutuality in the preceding days, including during the first time we ever played together. On this particular third day, however, something remarkable happened: at one point, Rose played sounds that would emerge from the resonances of the sounds that I had played; and I discovered a way of seamlessly entering Rose's sound, prolonging it or altering it in numerous ways (instances of this can be heard on tracks 4—"resonance, part one" and 6—"resonance, part two" of the CD). We were both struck by the impression that our instruments sounded like a new, compound instrument on those occasions. We were therefore also listening out with deep attention for the presence of such instrumental fusion throughout "between, part one." It stands out during the beginning in particular, in which Rose plays slowly modulating timbral variations of a single note (actually a multiphonic on B♭) that enter into the resonance of a fairly small two-handed cluster in the piano's middle register. We calmly improvise five variants of this. The third variant, 26″ into the piece, begins with a soft, toneless blowing by Rose, which, instead of leading to a sounding tone in the sax, is taken up by a (dynamically matching)

piano cluster as if *turning into* the latter; the sounding tone that then arises played by Rose and the piano cluster's resonance form a single timbral identity. (Even the toneless blowing through which Rose smoothly recedes from his long stretched sounds enters the piano resonance's character, bracketing or opening its identity.) In the fourth variant, this timbral gesture returns; at this point all aesthetic decisions that go into creating the integrated sonic shape are evidently *shared*.

   The improvised piece that emerged from this initial shared gesture shows shared decision-making on numerous compositional levels. A structural and formal analysis in hindsight demonstrates (in one possible reading) that we arrived at five highly cohesive sections of slightly contrasting character, in which a prominent sonic event in the second section (marked interval motives in the upper piano register) becomes a restated vibrant shift between two chords within the cluster, first juxtaposed by Rose's slap-tonguing, then interspersed with related shriek-like sounds resonating from the fluttering upper part of a sax multiphonic (e.g., at 4:36) in the fourth section, with a short cadential gesture in the central third section, and a shared return to (an abbreviated version of) the initial section in the closing section 5. Harmonically speaking, the piece has an implicit tonality, moving from E♭ to C and back as referential pitches (for example exposed in single notes in the piano: E♭ at 3:01:18 and C at 4:47:09; and in the sax's initial E♭ multiphonic, its iridescent C/C♯ at 4:28, and its closing E♭ at 5:27:14). And there are further extensive compositional decisions that appear jointly taken: spontaneous joint atmospheric changes; durational correspondences within integrated shapes, within polyphonic events, and within silences (even lengthy silences stretch out between simultaneously ceasing and simultaneously commencing sounds). As a whole, the piece makes evident a large number of shared actions, at micro and macro levels of compositional choices: shared timbres (within each other's resonances, new integral sonorities), shared gestures (within a motive, but also concatenated into *Klangfarbenmelodie*-like gestural developments), shared pitches (unison/octave), shared silences, shared pulse, shared textures and dynamic shifts, shared tonality, shared atmospheres, and shared recurrences of combinations of all the preceding. Going further than establishing a shared instrumental character, then, this piece manifests a shared compositional voice.

3. Musical togetherness as affording a dialogically established shared emotional narrative

One might call the kind of playing that leads to a compositionally complex improvisation rich with relations between the players' actions *dialogical*. The dialogicity here is, of course, a far cry from the echo-like imitational events sometimes exaggeratedly referred to as musical dialogue in casual conversation. It is qualitatively different from mere imitational playing. First, dialogical playing takes up *some* aspects of the heard while transforming others and integrating them into another aesthetic process (and might therefore be called *relating* rather than *imitating*); second, and crucially, genuine dialogue engages

with the other not only as a formal producer of structurally and functionally interesting sounds but also as a sentient human being with whom, as Martin Buber says, we are involved.[12] Responsiveness within such dialogical playing therefore is not only quick (i.e., temporally fine-grained) and musically logical; to respond means to hear the other on a psychological level, letting oneself be affected by the heard, and in turn revealing oneself on the psychological level, to be heard and responded to. To listen to each other while playing is easier said than done, particularly if listening means to be sensitive to the character of the played at every moment, as well as to its development in time. To let the heard matter to one's own state raises the bar of listening even further.[13] Empathetic listening means nothing more, and nothing less, than entering a process of grasping the other's affective presence in the unfolding performance, on the level of personal expressivity (realising that the musician chose to make that sound out of an urge to follow up or turn against a particular state he or she is in or perceives). Third, and no less importantly, musical dialogue can (by the very nature of the medium) embrace *simultaneity*. By juxtaposing or integrating two musical actions with each other at the same time, players enter a domain of exchange that largely eludes language or text; it is a domain music shares with dance. The ensuing voice belongs, in such passages of simultaneity, at the same time to each performer, and to *them both*.

Now, if both players mutually, symmetrically engage in this kind of listening and responsive playing, the psychological dynamic obviously becomes rather complicated, but the central process is one in which—as in the case of Rose and I—*we* influence the development and *we* let ourselves be influenced by it; and the development includes *both* our psychological presences, integrating our expressive actions to form a cohesive (rather than fragmented or incongruent) narrative. And if we are in such a state together, we are then exploring unpredictable psychological regions together, and making these heard. The shared compositional and improvising voice is *our* voice.[14]

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12 "Dieser Mensch ist nicht mein Gegenstand; ich habe mit ihm zu tun bekommen" (Buber 2009, 152, my translation; "This human being is not my subject matter; I have come to be involved with him").

13 Cf. Judith Butler's comparable observation that receptivity ("being moved by something in a way that you hadn't planned . . . and letting something emerge as a consequence of that") points towards a relational understanding of agency as "not based on mastery" (Butler and McMullen 2016, 31).

14 Stefan Östersjö and David Gorton, in their chapters "Austerity Measures I: Performing the Discursive Voice" (Gorton and Östersjö 2019), and "Negotiating the Discursive Voice in Chamber Music" in the present volume, give a thorough discussion of a concept closely related to that of *shared voice*—what they call the *discursive voice*. The discursive voice analysed by Gorton and Östersjö (2019) emerges from the relation between composer and performer upon joint work in determining the materials of a composition; it unfolds within a responsiveness to the composer's style as heeded by the performer during the stage of (joint) improvisatory invention of material, and an openness to performer's structural and phrasal decision-making before and during the performance. As they evocatively put it: "It could be said that to an extent David was composing with Stefan's 'voice,' as well as his own. Similarly . . . in performance Stefan . . . also composed with David's 'voice,' as well as his own" (ibid., 55). This remarkable result of research through experimentation brings together the realms of composer and performer, treated separately by both Schütz and Benson as they are usually separated by time and rarely made a topic of joint investigation between composer and performer. The *shared voice* of the present context is a variant that differs in two respects from Östersjö and Gorton: (1) it takes place between the "voices" of two improvisers, who compose and perform *without* a written score and in real time; (2) while the discursive voice concerns "interactions . . . shaped by the respective practices of both" (ibid.), the present concept of a shared voice vitally addresses the simultaneity of psychological events and their *discovered*

We know when this happens. We know it because we experience an impression of deep mutual understanding; of personal intimacy; of having gained and shared a profound knowledge about and with the other; of having left one's musical self and having found an extension to one's voice: an *intersubjectively* shared voice. This is knowledge by acquaintance, knowing what it is like, of the experience of a musical "we" expressed throughout an entire piece. (A side note: The realisation that one is being heard with close attention to detail and expression by the other is deeply satisfying. Feelings of being recognised, of agreement [even in difference], of acceptance, of being attended to, and of the other's tolerance and patience in the subsequently prolonged experience all nurture a feeling of trust [including and beyond the trust in the other's competence and skill]; and that feeling of trust enables one to enter more deeply emotionally into what is currently at hand. Trust is thus not only a *condition* for good ensemble musicking, as Anthony Gritten claims in a thoughtful essay [2017], but beyond this, also a *result* of relational playing.) As one feels increasingly recognised, one takes on more responsibility in paying attention to hearing the other's contribution and investing oneself into the growing joint affective work. As we are playing relationally, we are moving from empathising with each other to a state of sympathetic playing—not as two soloists or leader and supporter, but as a genuine, dialogical duo.[15]

But wait. Could one not be fooled into believing that one is in the presence of genuine shared feeling, when in reality existing musical habits, formulae, simple repetitions, or more complex compositional knowledge provide enough orientation and cohesion to produce that illusion? Yes, indeed—but any action in the direction of fixity or individual rule-based playing comes at the cost of autonomy, or at the cost of mutual integration. Formulaic playing, for one, exposes itself in its very rigidity, and remains bound by this, unable to connect here and now. Conversely, excessive versatility, contrasting, digressing, and risk-taking may lead to distancing and fragmentation between the players. A piece that is experienced as *dialogically* cohesive is cohesive because of the players' success at opening up a space of joint affective exploration that preserves the individual players' autonomy while contributing to a shared narrative.

Another hesitation: Parallel feeling according to Krebs (herself leaning on Scheler) is simply a simultaneity of similar or even equal feeling towards the same intentional object without any relevant awareness of or interest in the other's matching state (Krebs 2015, 114). Rather than experiencing shared feelings, might the duo not simply be experiencing parallel feelings? Musically speaking, any parallel feeling, even were it established at some point, would be accidental and very short-lived in the absence of close and ongoing mutual

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interrelation in the tightly knit exploration of expression between I and you in music—something resounding in Gorton and Östersjö's suggestion that "we find the coded instances in the stimulated recall of 'finding through playing' to be central for understanding the nature of the development of a 'discursive voice' in chamber music performance" <THIS VOL. XX>. My above claim is that such "finding" involves a qualitative shift from the two subjectivities of "I" and "Him/Her" to the level of the "We."

15 I stress this point because the largest part of the literature on ensemble performance research to my knowledge seems only to consider the asymmetrical power relationship between players, analysing performances under the aspect of leadership and role-taking.

interest regarding each player's current contribution. Since the musical experience is what is attended to, and since the music is jointly invented and sounded, parallel feeling could only ensue paradoxically in moments of distraction.

In the remainder of this chapter, I put forward an argument towards the claim that it really is Scheler's first category of sympathy—mutual feeling—that seems to best describe the psychological component behind the intersubjectively shared voice of the case study. For this I draw on Angelika Krebs's profound analysis and understanding of "feeling together." Krebs (2015) extends Edith Stein's concept of *we-intentionality* and combines it with joint action theory, to reach beyond the latter. We-intentionality can mark joint actions. Krebs goes on to show how shared emotions have the same structure of togetherness as joint action. Yet shared feelings imply *joint work on feelings*, not just joint physical actions. In her central analysis, Krebs identifies eleven elements of shared emotions, the following five of which are necessary. Two or more people share an emotion, if:

> 1. they are similarly emotionally affected by the situation,
> 2. they recognise each other's emotional affectedness,
> 3. they jointly evaluate the situation,
> 4. they act jointly out of the emotion, and
> 5. they tie the individual emotional components together into a shared emotional narrative. (Krebs 2015, 220, my translation)

Strikingly, Krebs's five necessary elements seem to be fulfilled by what is going on in mutually empathetic improvisation of the described sort. Both improvisers are similarly emotionally affected by the situation; if they weren't, the piece would obviously lack coherence, which it does not despite being a "free" improvisation. Both recognise each other's emotional affectedness—given that they listen empathetically to the affective charge of the other's contribution, which is evident in any sonic proximity or sustained relation between sonic actions, that is, the precision of responsiveness. They jointly evaluate the situation, which becomes apparent when compositional decisions lead to a coherent structure and at points where joint decisions as to material or atmospheric changes are made. The improvisers both act jointly out of the emotion, which is clear whenever they succeed in producing a shared gesture or shared timbre that provides expressive continuity to the current state. And both improvisers tie the individual emotional components, for example, expressive gestures and phrases, together into a shared emotional narrative: they sustain their intimate encounter for the entire duration of the piece, as evident in the compositionality of the improvised action right down to every minute detail.

With "feeling together" being the central component in her understanding of dialogical love, it now seems deeply true that Krebs finds dialogical love best represented in the idea of an "intimate duo" as shown in the initial quotation. My own argument is approaching closure. We have arrived at the main point (obscured by the role of the composer who at some other time and in some other place provided the basic structure) from which interpreters in the case of

a *classical* duo might arrive at joint emotions. Their art goes together with the composers' art of anticipating a direction and a predetermined path for the social exploration of the interpersonal. If, however, a free improvisation fulfils Krebs's elements, as it does in *relational improvisation* (with which I name a practice rather than a genre), then the we-subject is genuinely present and embodied in the improvisers—and the improvisation itself in its relational qualities is an evident expression thereof.

Hence, a musical we-subject, if reached, is an achievement. It is an artistic achievement, but also an ethical, interhuman one. And so is the we-subject in a shared emotion. It does not follow from singular agreement; neither does it afford an endless chain of agreements as Krebs points out in her critique of the individualistic approaches as part of the joint action debate (see Krebs 2015, 160–170). When making music together, it lives in those agreements that become possible as the shared emotions emerge, take their courses, deepen, or dissipate, by way of an improvisatory process responsive to the other's states via empathetic listening, and giving away one's own states by expressive playing. For this, the achievement of sharing requires, next to caring, a good measure of daring. What the musical case, in turn, reveals, is how episodes of shared emotions enrich our selves (entering unfamiliar regions of shared experience). When wishing to not just convey but *share* an emotion, it might thus be beneficial to improvise. Advancing our capabilities of entering shared states through shared musical decision-making—in free improvisation, or in improvisation at the moment of joint interpretation—may thus be a good domain for the *furthering* of our very capabilities for shared emotions. Thus, Schütz was, in an important sense, right about music's dialogical power, although my considerations at this point suggest that it is not music that magically creates togetherness. Rather, togetherness eventuates between you and I, as we work to relate via music, with and beyond our subjectivities, as is then expressed in the music.

Acknowledgements

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