

TITLE: READY TO PLAY: MUSICIAN ACTION AS SOCIAL INTERACTION

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This paper examines artefact interaction within social interactions between musicians in rehearsal contexts. Social interaction, in this paper, is approached from the perspective of the social situation (Goffman 1997 [1964]), encompassing all mutually observable behaviour performed by social actors. The specific artefact interaction (Hutchins 1995) which this paper examines is the use of musical instruments. Following Goffman (1997 [1964]), such instrument interaction is part of the social situation (and hence can be considered in terms of social interaction). It will be shown that these artefact interactions can be seen to occur on a cline which moves from 'everyday' gestures, such as deixis (ie. using instruments or parts of instruments as extensions of limbs), to gestures which are highly developed, culturally mediated, situated gestures which are shaped by and through the specific physical characteristics and requirements of playing individual instruments. These gestures, moving in tandem along the cline outlined above, will be shown to occur on a second cline from non-sounding producing gestures to gestures which produce normatively expected musical sound; sound which can be culturally (in relation to Western music) or contextually (within an immediate, proximal context relating to the practice of music-making at hand) understood.

This paper will focus its analysis on the gestures which occur in the mid-point of these clines. The analysis of these gestures will follow Goodwin's (2003) approach to artefact and environment interaction. These gestures, this paper will argue, whilst not directly resulting in sound can be seen to be functionally part of the music-making, having either individual function (moving ones hands and instrument into the position required to perform the 'stroke' which creates sound) or social function (co-ordinating sound *across* interactants).

These gestures, identified in video data of musician rehearsal in chamber music and orchestral rehearsal, will be demonstrated to be, however, more than simply 'pre-cursors' or 'preparation' for subsequent, sound-producing gestures. It will be shown that they are also performed *without* subsequent sound-producing gestures, in sequences which include both non-verbal behaviours and talk. Rather than treating these occurrences as errors of judgement (preparing to play at the 'wrong' time) it will be argued that these gestures may be being performed to achieve social and interactional ends.

This paper will show how an examination of these gestures as part of interactional sequences suggests that musician interaction *during* music making extends beyond the physical sound producing functionality of the situated gestures performed during that music making.

References

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