

Mikrophonie I (1964) by Karlheinz Stockhausen - Between Idea and Auditory Image

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Abstract : 1. Background in music analysis. Traditionally, when we think about a composer's sketches, the chances are that we are thinking in terms of the working out of detail, rather than the evolution of an overall concept. Since music is a "time art", it follows that questions of a form cannot be entirely detached from considerations of time. One could say that composers tend to regard time either as a place gradually and partially intuitively filled, or they can look for a specific strategy to occupy it. In my opinion, one thing that sheds light on Stockhausen's compositional thinking is his frequent use of 'form schemas', that is often a single-page representation of the entire structure of a piece. 2. Background in music technology. Sonic Visualiser is a program used to study a musical recording. It is an open source application for viewing, analysing, and annotating music audio files. It contains a number of visualisation tools, which are designed with useful default parameters for musical analysis. Additionally, the Vamp plugin format of SV supports to provide analysis such as for example structural segmentation. 3. Aims. The aim of my paper is to show how SV may be used to obtain a better understanding of the specific musical work, and how the compositional strategy does impact on musical structures and musical surfaces. I want to show that "traditional" music analytic methods don't allow to indicate interrelationships between musical surface (which is perceived) and underlying musical/acoustical structure. 4. Main Contribution. Stockhausen had dealt with the most diverse musical problems by the most varied methods. A characteristic which he had never ceased to be placed at the center of his thought and works, it was the quest for a new balance founded upon an acute connection between speculation and intuition. In the case with Mikrophonie I (1964) for tam-tam and 6 players Stockhausen makes a distinction between the "connection scheme", which indicates the ground rules underlying all versions, and the form scheme, which is associated with a particular version. The preface to the published score includes both the connection scheme, and a single instance of a "form scheme", which is what one can hear on the CD recording. In the current study, the insight into the compositional strategy chosen by Stockhausen was been compared with auditory image, that is, with the perceived musical surface. Stockhausen's musical work is analyzed both in terms of melodic/voice and timbre evolution. 5. Implications The current study shows how musical structures have determined of musical surface. My general assumption is this, that while listening to music we can extract basic kinds of musical information from musical surfaces. It is shown that an interactive strategies of musical structure analysis can offer a very fruitful way of looking directly into certain structural features of music.

Keywords : automated analysis, composer's strategy, mikrophonie I, musical surface, stockhausen

Conference Title : ICMS 2015 : International Conference on Music in Society

Conference Location : Prague, Czechia

Conference Dates : July 09-10, 2015