

# **Marchiano et al. (185): Knowing each other in performance: musicians' intentions in duets of jazz improvisation**

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## **Background**

Jazz improvisation is commonly understood as a conversation, a normative practice where musicians take turns and give-and-take musical motives [1]. In a previous study, we applied the second-person theory to investigate how musicians understand each other's minds, finding mutual attributions of intentions in the context of joint performance [2]. In this paper, we deepen the analysis focusing on musicians' intentions as multimodal actions *directed* to the other person. Although musicians' intentions are mentioned in the 4E literature, they have not been analyzed in detail so far.

## **Aim(s)**

To categorize the musicians' attributed intentions during jazz improvisation.

## **Method**

We conducted phenomenological interviews with jazz duets (guitar/sax). Each took place immediately after a musicians' improvisation. They include the audiovisual reception of the performances, and a discussion focused on the ways musicians mutually understood in performance. A linguistic microanalysis of 2:36 hours of interviews was run, using an ad hoc code (observation categories: direction of intention, type of attribution, expression).

## **Results**

Two temporally intertwined categories of intention were obtained, related to the thematic content of the improvised music (C1), and to the diachronic/synchronic interactions between musicians during performance (C2). C1 includes four subcategories of

attributed intentions, as follows: intentions directed to give, propose, or suggest a musical pattern; to take, follow, or imitate the thematic content of the other's musical motives; to distinguish the own musical gestures from the other's; and to jointly create a unique musical motive. C2 includes two subcategories of intentions: to alternate and/or to play simultaneously with the partner.

## **Discussion**

Jazz musicians mutually attribute intentions during performance. Attributions reveal the urge of grasping one's own and other's mental content, an ability that goes beyond the sensorimotor descriptions of intentional actions accounted for by 4E theories. The specificity of the direction of intentions and their entanglement create diverse scenarios of social interactions during jazz improvisation: i.e. give-and-take intentions can occur during turn-taking or simultaneous performance, and are not always bound to leader-follower relationships (the taker is not necessarily the follower). The current findings contribute to a more detailed account of the variety of ways in which musicians understand the other's minds in contexts of joint musical performance. Finally, musicians' awareness of attributed intentions might become an efficient tool in music performance pedagogy.

## **References**

- [1] Berliner, P. (2009). *Thinking in jazz*. Chicago Press.
- [2] Martínez et al. (2022). Second Person Attributions in Jazz Improvisation. *Teorema*, 41(2), 81-107.