
ASSESSMENT OF DYNAMICS IN MUSIC PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

This study was sought to find out the assessment of dynamics in music performance. In music, the dynamics of a piece is the variation in loudness between notes or phrases. Dynamics are indicated by specific musical notation. A dynamic in music is a three-part progression in which the composer, performer, and listener each play a vital role. Through the use of dynamics, musicians are able to create drama and different intensities throughout a piece, making music fascinating and enjoyable. The study concluded that music is a time-based art form that uses the components of rhythm, melody, harmony, and colour to communicate thoughts and emotions in meaningful ways. Music performance is the process of one person attempting to balance and synthesise the many elements of another person's performance. Dynamics may also communicate the feelings and moods that performers wish to transmit to their listeners. However, dynamics in music are any number of symbols or marks that express dynamic shifts in a piece of music in order to allow for more musical performances. One of the recommendations made was that dynamics in music should be a broad concept and an important perceptual feature of every musical performance.

KEYWORDS: Dynamics, Music and Performance

Introduction

Dynamic in music is a three-part progression in which the composer, performer, and listener each play a vital role. The process begins with the first written notes of the composition and ends with the listener's perception of the performance. The composer's guidelines and the performer's interpretation of those intentions work together to bring the desired musical effect to the listener

(Juchniewicz, 2005). In order to understand how the dynamics of music are communicated and perceived, it is important to look at the entire process. Musical dynamics touch everything concerning loudness in music. When musicians use dynamics to intensify the expressivity of their performance, they have to decide when and why they play loud, soft, crescendo, and accent (Berndt & Hähnel, 2010). These questions are, in fact, crucial and entail complex loudness shaping. Generally, expressive dynamics is more than a sequence of single events. In nearly every performance, an interplay of several different dynamics layers creates permanent volume changes.

Music performance that is dynamic provides a rich domain for the study of both cognitive and motor skills. Performers dominate many aspects of our musical culture today. Concert attendance and recording sales, for example, often reflect listeners' preferences for performers and their abilities to distinguish among performances. Although public consumption of music tends to highlight performance differences, there are also strong commonalities across performances that reflect the cognitive functions of grouping, unit identification, thematic abstraction, elaboration, and hierarchical nesting (Palmer, 2007). Thus, music performance is based on both individualistic aspects that differentiate performers and normative aspects shared by all performers. Both the commonalities and differences among music performances can be modelled theoretically in terms of general cognitive abilities. Juslin (2000) stated that in music performance, musicians use parameters such as pitch, timing, dynamics, and articulation to communicate their expressive interpretation of a piece. A major concern when analysing music performances is identifying variability within dynamics processes.

Concept of Dynamics

In music, the dynamics of a piece is the variation in loudness between notes or phrases. Dynamics are indicated by specific musical notation, often in some detail. However, depending on the musical context, dynamics markings still require interpretation by the performer; for example, the forte marking *f* (meaning loud) in one part of a piece may have quite a different objective loudness in another piece or even a different section of the same piece (Wikipedia, 2020). The execution of dynamics also extends beyond loudness to include changes in timbre and sometimes tempo rubato. In music, we use the word "dynamics" to describe the volume of music. But, rather than using words like "loud" and "soft," we use different terms and symbols to describe the volume of the piece (Farrant, 2021). Dynamics are one of the expressive elements of music. When used effectively, dynamics help musicians sustain variety and interest in a musical performance and

communicate a particular emotional state or feeling.

Dynamics in music refers to how loud or soft the music is. It is that simple! But, because musicians and composers like to make things interesting, and sometimes difficult, there are lots of different musical terms that can be used to describe the dynamics of a piece of music (Jooya Teaching Resources, 2020). Usually, the music terms used to describe dynamics are called "Italian terms." Dynamics refers to the volume of a sound or note. The term is also applied to the written or printed musical notation used to indicate dynamics. Dynamics are relative and do not refer to specific volume levels. According to Bitesize (2019), dynamics means how quietly or loudly a piece of music should be played. Dynamics are an important way of conveying the mood of a piece, and your use of dynamics is a marked element of your performance. Dynamics are defined as the different volume levels of a piece of music at any given moment. Dynamics markings and symbols are written to show a performer how loud to play and when to change volume.

Concept of Music

Music is patterns of melody, rhythm, harmony, tempo, dynamics, and timbre combined to create repetition, variation, and contrast. We use these patterns to create music, and we respond emotionally and intellectually to our perceptions and interpretations of these patterns of music. Music refers to the art of combining vocal or instrumental sounds for beauty of form or emotional expression, usually according to cultural standards of rhythm, melody, and harmony (Epperson, 2020). Music is an activity that includes both simple folk songs and complex electronic compositions. Both are humanly engineered; both are conceptual and auditory, and these factors have been present in music of all styles and in all periods of history throughout the world. Music refers to the tones or sounds employed, occurring in a single line (melody) or multiple lines (harmony), and sounded or to be sounded by one or more voices or instruments, or both (Dictionary, 2021). Music is an art of sound in time that expresses ideas and emotions in significant forms through the elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, and color.

Music is one way to minimise the above. Music always includes a variety of components, such as melody, chords, tempo, rhythm, instruments, and even natural language or lyrics. Music has become a unifying language among nations (Permana, 2018). The concept of music has been seen or defined by different scholars, but what impresses most is that music is generally seen as an organised sound that is pleasant to the ear. This simply means that any sound that is arranged in a haphazard and incoherent way or manner is regarded as a bundle of nonsense

or noise. Merriam-Webster (2022) stated that music is the science or art of ordering tones or sounds in succession, combination, and temporal relationships to produce a composition having unity and continuity. Alatas, (2018) stated that music is one of the cultural products, both music created by communal systems such as traditional music and music created by individuals such as classical music, jazz, rock, pop, and more. It is also a written or printed symbol showing how music should be played or sung.

Concept of Singing Dynamics

Singing dynamics refers to the practise of controlling your singing volume using vowels, phrases, and emotion. Singing dynamics is a thing that the most respected singers do in order to create intensity in their songs and, most importantly, portray emotion (Voicercise, 2021). Dynamic singers can use volume to bring out the emotion from the song in their performance. Many singers choose to increase the volume of their vocals when they hit the most emotional part of the song. Singing dynamics is the practise of controlling vocal volume, impact, and effect. It goes beyond simply singing loudly and quietly. Dynamics also include phrasing, pronunciation, silences, and rests. It is perhaps most noticeable when singers are off key and the voice is laid bare (TeenStar, 2020). "Singing dynamics" is a phrase often misunderstood. In the context of vocals, it equates to the quality at which you can switch from soft to loud singing. A dynamic singer is able to create a performance that will set them apart from amateurs.

Dynamics is a word that comes from the Greek word dynamo, meaning "power." In the context of general music, we use it as a term for how loud or soft sounds are. Singing dynamics has successfully been established as a reference text for teachers of singing, singers, choral conductors and organists, speech and voice therapists, laryngologists and other health professionals, psychologists, and those in linguistics (Dayme, 2009). Singing dynamically makes the difference between a boring performance and a spellbinding one. Singing dynamics are the emotional aspects of the voice, particularly as they relate to singing but also to speaking (Babusek, 2015). Singing dynamics create the ebb and flow of a song. When executed with skill and intention, they create a compelling and intensely dramatic feeling in the experience of your listener that could be compared to standing on the sea's shore on a starry night, whilst taking in the magnificent voice of the tide (Alamu, 2018). It is important to note that the practice of dynamics is not just about singing as loudly as you can, but rather about the control that is developed to sing from both extremes with a smooth and gradual progression.

Concept of Music Performances

Music performance refers to the step in the musical process during which musical ideas are realized and transmitted to a listener. In Western music, performance is most commonly viewed as an interpretive art, though it is not always merely that (Foss, 2020). Performers, to some degree, determine aspects of any music they play. Issues of tempo, phrasing, dynamics, and, in some types of music, pitches and instrumentation are subject to a performer's discretion. Musical performance is an organized presentation of musical sounds (and, arguably, controlled silences), usually for the entertainment, edification, or enrichment of listeners (Encyclopedia, 2019). The parameters of a performance are often determined by culturally understood boundaries—symphony audiences disregard the warming up and tuning of orchestral musicians, whereas listeners to Indian classical music understand the *ālāpa* (a slow, improvisatory exploration of a *rāga*, or traditional melodic pattern) to be an intrinsic part of the performance, if not comprising the entire performance itself.

Music performance is the process by which one individual attempts to balance and synthesize the various qualities of a performance by another individual, with the aim of providing a judgement, such as a ranking, grade, or qualitative description (McPherson, & Thompson, 2008). Music performance refers to the situation where adjudicators make a global evaluation by assigning an overall rank or score that reflects their overall impression from their personally selected implicit or explicit criteria (Wrigley, 2005). By contrast, segmented evaluations involve the use of explicit and clearly defined criteria that usually form a criterion-based rating scale with standard qualities (*idem*). Each of these views of music performance has demonstrated different levels of standardization regarding validity and reliability. However, many approaches describe music performance through two constitutive factors: technique and expression (Griffiths, 2009). These two factors are usually described by using certain items corresponding to the technical or expressive dimension of music performance. This bi-factorial perspective on music performance is a common practice in both research and artistic areas.

Importance and Elements Teaching Dynamics in Music

Dynamics are a very important element in music. Through the use of dynamics, musicians are able to create drama and different intensities throughout a piece, making music fascinating and enjoyable. Dynamics can also be used to express specific emotions and moods that musicians want to convey to their audience. Osinski (2020) noted that the importance of dynamics in music tells you how soft

or loud the music should be played; articulations tell you how short, long, or strong a note should be played; and tempo tells you how slow or fast to play the music. Musicians need a working knowledge of dynamic range because most instruments sound remarkably different when played at different volumes (Master-Class, 2020). This may be most noticeably the case with woodwinds and brass instruments, but even some electronic instruments, like the electric guitar, have a distinct tonal quality when played louder or softer due to the physics of guitar amplifiers.

The important elements of teaching dynamics in music can be seen as the building blocks of music. Without them, music (of any style/age) would not exist because sound itself would not exist. Dynamic music may be soft or loud, slow or fast, and regular or irregular in tempo—all of these are evidence of a performer interpreting a composition's elements or parameters (Estrella, 2019). Playing music and singing dynamics with others is one of the most powerful ways of learning about oneself, working with others, problem-solving, and being a part of a team. Music is an incredible vehicle for self-expression. According to Hull-Brown (2018), the importance of teaching dynamics in music is designed to be used by teachers, parents, and careers to create opportunities for kids to develop their understanding of music and the language we use to describe it. These activities are just an example of what you can try out together. Use them to ignite your ideas.

Dynamic Marking

Dynamics are any number of symbols or markings that communicate dynamic changes in a piece of music. However, dynamics are not the same as tempo markings. Some dynamics, like crescendo, indicate when a section of music should get louder (SKOOVE, 2019). Dynamics means how quietly or loudly a piece of music should be played. Dynamics are an important way of conveying the mood of a piece, and your use of dynamics is a marked element of your performance. Composers use dynamics to change the mood. Wikipedia (2020) noted that the two basic dynamic indications in music are:

- ❖ *p* or piano, meaning "quiet".
- ❖ *f* or forte, meaning "loud or strong".

More subtle degrees of loudness or softness are indicated by:

- ❖ *mp*, standing for mezzo-piano, meaning "moderately quiet".
- ❖ *mf*, standing for mezzo-forte, meaning "moderately loud".
- ❖ *più p*, standing for *più piano* and meaning "more quiet".

- ❖ *più f*, standing for *più forte* and meaning "more loud".

Use of up to three consecutive fs or ps is also common:

- ❖ *pp*, standing for *pianissimo* and meaning "very quiet".
- ❖ *ff*, standing for *fortissimo* and meaning "very loud".
- ❖ *ppp* ("triple piano"), standing for *pianississimo* and meaning "very very quiet".
- ❖ *fff* ("triple forte"), standing for *fortississimo* and meaning "very very loud".

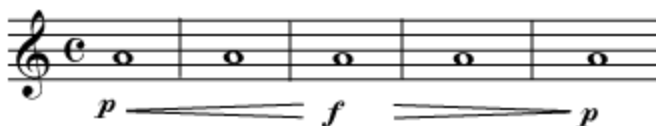
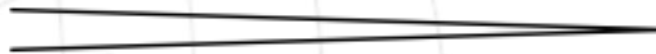
Dynamic Changes

Dynamics are changes in the volume of a musical passage. Just as each note has a unique timbre on each instrument, it also sounds different at different volumes. According to Lumen (2020), to gradually change the dynamics, composers use *crescendo* and *diminuendo* (also known as *decrescendo*).

- ❖ *crescendo* (*cresc.*): gradually play louder



- ❖ *diminuendo / decrescendo* (*dim.* or *decesc.*): gradually play softer



Conclusion

Music is a time-based art form that uses the components of rhythm, melody, harmony, and color to communicate thoughts and emotions in meaningful ways. Music performance is the process of one person attempting to balance and

synthesize the many elements of another person's performance. Dynamics may also communicate the feelings and moods that performers wish to transmit to their listeners. However, dynamics in music are any number of symbols or marks that express dynamic shifts in a piece of music in order to allow for more musical performances.

Recommendations

1. Dynamics in music should be a broad concept and an important perceptual feature of every musical performance.
2. Musicians should understand the importance and elements of learning dynamics in music for proper performance.
3. Musicians should employ the elements of dynamics, pitch, tempo, and articulation, to communicate an expressive interpretation of a piece of music.

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