

Metamorphosing art

Multimedia spectacles as new forms of art and education

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A paper presented
at the 4th Athens International Drama/Theatre Education Conference
March 2004

Summary

The interaction of different domains of knowledge and art, namely music, theatre, design, psychology, sociology, mathematics and physics, contributes to organise a musical performance that has an original form and develops new forms of education. Using different art forms and new technologies of communication and information – Bach2Cage - is an original spectacle that melds music with theatre, multimedia and digital art. The participant in this process develops a reality show, uses the design of a specific popular talk show - Big new form of education and music (besides other forms of art) as the basis of their studies and personal development. On the other hand – The Little Red-Riding Hood also wants to go to Big Brother's Show – a spectacle that develops an idea that creating combines a children's story with Brother - a new spectacle, a new art form.

These spectacles have an educational component that show how new technologies, musical composition and several kinds of art forms conceive a new form of art that joins numerous actions, musical pieces and aesthetics. On the other hand, it conceives a new educational skill that provides new forms of education and personal development.

This paper wants to show how new technologies, music and performing arts may conceive a new form of art, an art that joins several procedures, musical pieces and aesthetics and gives us a new kind of musical and visual art.

1. Introduction

The use of different art forms on Bach2Cage conceives an original spectacle where different domains of knowledge, communication and art combine educational procedures that develop a new form of education. It is a project that includes art and technologies. It consists of a series of scenarios with music of Bach (1685-1750) and Cage (1912-1992), transformed by a new appraisal of this material. Sounds of Jazz, Bossa Nova, Salsa, Rock and Portuguese Traditional Music and Electronic Music are included. It is a multicultural project that combines music, performing and multimedia. It is a procedure that leads the performers to a

continuous practice of research, discussion and creation. Without preliminary musical or visual aesthetics concepts, it is a continuous work that changes in every performance.

From the beginning, the music of these two major composers - Bach and Cage - is the main material for these performances. Other ideas arise with the developing of the different stages of these versions of the project.

2. Multimedia Spectacles

Visual arts, multimedia and performing arts try to attract the public to the spectacle. More than a performance, this multimedia spectacle is a process that may not be taken on the acceptance and following of certain aesthetic orientations that are usually associated with the word experimental, but a constant evolution of many characteristics that show us a continuous process that depends on the initial conditions. It is a complex procedure that revolves around a collection of visual, theatrical and musical actions that are apparently in constant mutation.

Bach2Cage

The initial idea of Bach2Cage is the artistic universe of these composers. Nevertheless, the authors don't want the performers – students, professors and some members of the audience- to play rigorously what they compose. They want the performers to re-construct and re-interpret, musically and theatrically, those authors and expand some original ideas. In this sense, they introduce new concepts and technologies according to the human element. The intervention opens musical elements to other art forms combining rigor with improvisation.

This multimedia spectacle is a new reading of a specific musical material. We often notice a new combination and collage of materials, like those present in *Readings*, a piece that combines a recording of John Cage's *Reading for the 2nd time through Finnegans wake* with *American tune* by Paul Simon. Sometimes, this *modus operandi* conceives another stylistically different musical sound like those that we can hear in *Ténis*. In this piece, Bach's *Aria* from *Suite in D* is transformed in a musical work that reminds us of the rock from the 70's and 80's¹. On the other hand, *Tango Perpétuo* keeps in mind a shift that places Bach's music in a sonorous world that reminds us of the sound of Piazzolla².

Sometimes, Bach or Cage's writings are followed quite closely as in *Aria* from the *Goldberg Variations*, *Second Construction* or the four short pieces of *Living Room*. In this case, Cage

¹ The title and the theatrical aspects of this piece are an allusion to *Tennis*, one of the texts from *Sports*, a collection of mesostics that Cage wrote in 1989 using the name of Eric Satie and translating from the French composer's *Sports et divertissements*.

doesn't indicate the instrumentation and transfers to the performer some aspects of the artistic creation. This action becomes a process that is not exclusive of the composer.

We think that B2C is an excellent exercise in musical re-composition; for example, *Bossa Bem Temperada* give us a different view of Bach's music, with some collages of Gilberto's, Jobim's, Veloso's or Regina's music. *Arte do Fado* is a confluence of *The Art of Fuge*, *Musikalisches Opfer* and *The Well-tempered Clavier* that includes the *Prelude in B flat minor* with some material from Cage's *Second Construction* and some references to *Kustorica*. An important moment of B2C is at the beginning of the spectacle - four minutes and thirty three seconds of darkness and silence - an allusion to Cage's 4'33''.

In some cases references are not obvious³. We show for example in *Abertura* or *Música*, the final work, where certain concepts and sonorities, melodic, rhythmic and harmonic elements lead us to a more complex musical discourse⁴. The connection and interaction between music, theatre, multimedia, digital and visual arts develops an increase of intensity and complexity, expanding some ideas about musical proceedings. It becomes an exercise of musical composition and improvisation and definitely an important educational skill.

The poetic dimension of this multimedia spectacle is in a collection of certain aspects, such as the exercise of de-construction⁵. We may also refer to the typewriters or the little red toy piano that appear in several moments of this spectacle, subtle references to 0' 0'' of John Cage⁶.

Bach2Cage proposes a performance metaphor for many antagonistic words that can be said about music. It ends with *Música* where the lyrics of the "rap" are like an urban version of *An die Musik* of Franz Schubert: "bate no corpo ardente... voa e pensamento, razão e sentimento... laço eterno, céu, inferno, infinito, vazio, rodopio... big-bang inicial, apocalipse final, eclipse total, pecado original, pôr do sol, nascer da lua, água, fogo, terra crua, chuva, búzio, som de rua"⁷.

² This part of the spectacle is a citation of a poem by Cage, the poem *Perpetual Tango*.

³ We give in example, the use of some samples of prepared piano in the initial improvisation.

⁴ For example the sequence of chords in *Música* was elaborate from the notes B, A, C, H (B flat), a process inspired in an identical one that Bach used in *The Art of Fugue*. In other cases it is the rhythm or number of attacks that are derives form Cage or Bach's names.

⁵ The counter in the beginning of the performance, appearing after a climax of sound, counting 4 minutes and 33 seconds is a "reading" of 4' 33' of John Cage.

⁶ 0' 0'' is a piece that consists in the realization of a disciplined action in an amplified environment, was performed by the composer in May 1965 at the Rose Art Muscum with him answering to letters using a typewriter.

⁷ "strikes in the body... the burning sound... voice and thought, reason and feeling... eternal braid, heaven, hell, infinity, emptiness, vortex... initial big-bang, final apocalypse, total eclipse, original sin, sunset, moon appearing, water, fire, earth, rain, conch shell, street noise". "So strange, Bach to Cage, music has no age".

The Little Red-Riding Hood also wants to go to Big Brother's Show

The Little Red-Riding Hood also wants to go to Big Brother's Show (O Capuchinho Também quer ir ao Big Brother), is a multimedia spectacle that combines several ideas from a children's story and a well-known reality show. Considering both elements, students conceive a project that permits the study of human behaviour, psychology, sociology, music, theatre, design and new technologies of information and communication. The project has students from the main areas of knowledge present in Art and Communication Department – music, design and new technologies of communication. With their participation, they develop their knowledge and behaviour in several areas. By creating a space of debate and interaction they develop a model of creation that is unusual and unique in our country.

The Little Red-Riding hood's story

One day, Little Red-Riding hood's mother told her to go to her grandmother's house, because she was very ill. Little Red-Riding hood accepts the proposal and she goes to the woods where she sees a wolf. The wolf saw the little girl and told her to go to her grandmother's house following another path. Without thinking of the consequences and instead of taking her mother's advice, she accepts the wolf's suggestion and arrives at her grandmother's house very late in the afternoon.

The wolf is already there and he lies in grandmother's bed. When the little girl arrives, she has a surprise, because her grandmother is very different. When she sees that her grandmother is the wolf and he wants to eat her, she screams and runs. Fortunately, a hunter sees the Little Red-Riding hood in trouble and catches the wolf.

After that, they go to grandmother's house and take her out of the chest where she had been hiding. In the end, everybody is happy.

Big Brother's Show

Big Brother shows how people can try to live during four months in a closed house without exterior contact. Many of them have an initial idea that is different from the final one. Some of them feel that they were not understood. Twelve people with different personalities take conscience of the fact that they are small pieces of a great machine, and they have made a big mistake by accepting the suggestion to go there. Their lives become worse after the show, and they are never able to return to their former state.

Two different scenarios are the basis of a performance that combines music, theatre, digital art and the interaction between them and the public. This concept is a Students Project and Production. They must create the scenarios, the costumes and the musical spectacle

(composition, improvisation and the use of several pieces from classical western music, popular or pop music). A visual spectacle is also conceived with digital forms and images that are constructed and transformed from the beginning to the end of this show. The scenarios change and they remind us of the children's story and Big Brother show. All the elements of the spectacle - scenarios and music, texts and representation - hide a great erotic component that takes a very important place in both of the shows.

3. Conclusion

Multimedia spectacles connect dissimilar materials. Different cultures, diverse knowledge and ideas converge with new technologies and meanings to create a different area of significance. The university, a place where numerous students, cultures and knowledge converge, leads us to experimental art forms. The knowledge, the study and the creation are a complex procedure of education that requires appropriate environment and technology.

Bach2Cage and *The Little Red-Riding Hood also wants to go to Big Brother's Show*, provide us with various ideas about musical proceedings and musical creation and develops an innovating exercise of musical composition and improvisation.

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Helena Santana, Rosário Santana, Athens, March 2004

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