

An Introduction for a Theory of Internal Experience of Music: Through Cross-Genre Performances of Cuban Musicians

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Abstract

This paper seeks to investigate the perspective on internal experience on anthropological field, and clarifies dynamic process that take the event of Cuban musicians performed cross-genres such as classical, popular and jazz. The premise approach takes the aspect of "result" and "process" of music. However, when it takes the perspective on musical "event", this case shows another aspect from internal experience. More specifically, such cross-genre performance is influenced by hybridity of Cuban music its own historically, incentive by arts policies of Cuban art and function of their music as a survival measure. This case also indicates that we have a tendency to converge a series of music practice within the genre today.

Key words: Cuban Musician, Internal Experience, Cross-genre Performance, Event

1. Introduction: into "One Great Music"

This paper discusses the anthropology of music, which has not attracted a great deal of attention in the field of anthropology in recent years. Specifically, the objective is to clarify the "ethnographic fact" regarding the involvement of Cuban classical musiciansⁱⁱ in diverse expressive activities by transcending existing musical genres, such as classical, popular, and jazz (hereafter referred to as cross-genre activities). However, this inevitably means that we must try to re-perceive music as an event while focusing on the internal experience of musicians, rather than categorizing music as a "result" or "process",ⁱⁱⁱ as in traditional arguments.

First, to present the central theme of this paper, I would like to discuss the activities of the Cuban pianist,^{iv} José,^v who received a classical music education and played in an Afro-Cuban (popular music) band. Although currently playing in his own jazz trio, he also plays in a classical music duo. Coupled with the fact that his nephew is a well-known drummer, he also plays drums in his free time and also dances. Similar to José, many other Cuban musicians are involved in cross-genre activities.

José said as follows.

I play all kinds of music, including jazz, pop, and art music. So, I was frequently asked about it when I went abroad. It initially felt strange. I realized that they are categorizing music in a different way to me. Of course, I had to think about what Cuban music meant,^{vi} and I also think a lot about categorizing music. I have not found the answer yet. But, I think music is just one great music.^{vii}

As can be seen from his comments, we may question why the practice of music is being discussed in cultural anthropology. If we were to present a problem surrounding categorization, by increasing the level of abstraction, it would be possible to share an anthropological perspective that musical genre does not exist a priori. However, cross-genre practice was initially thought to be an extremely particular and personal act of a genius.^{viii} In addition, the aforementioned case is also considered a practice based on contemporary Western music. In short, we must question whether the scales, such as culture and society, in terms of anthropology are valid frameworks.

However, it is necessary to shed light on the following two points. First, cross-genre practice is a frequently seen phenomenon, although to varying degrees, in Cuban music. This suggests that this phenomenon has an ethnographic aspect rather than being a subject, i.e., genius, that is non-sequential from society and culture.

Second, while music is still persistently viewed as a "result," categorizing it into styles and formats, this reflection produces an attempt to focus only on the "process" of music. Thus, discussions included dualistic views of subject or object.

Viewed this way, we can see that José's practice is very much a central theme that is being discussed in anthropology. That is, anthropological techniques make it possible to perceive music as a phenomenon based on individual experience in the human population, from the standpoint of an internal experience in which the relationship of the subject and object is indivisible, as music lies between those that play it and those that listen to it.

The philosopher Jankélévitch wrote the following about the difference between those that categorize music and those that experience it, using the music of Chopin as an example: "With Chopin's music, the shelves that divide music into genre will be blown away by the storm of passion. Every genre will end up the same" (Jankélévitch 1957) ^{ix}.

This is interesting^x in that it points out that the domain of internal experience, which represents an issue in this debate, disables the frameworks of existing genres. From such a standpoint, thinking about the practice of Cuban musicians and the idea that music is "one great music" would focus on the essence of music that has not previously been discussed, and would open up new avenues of debate.

Based on the above, the next chapter will discuss music research in anthropology as it relates to

this paper, and then outline the ethnographic background of Cuban musicians. The issues surrounding these phenomena will be examined, covering specific examples related to the internal experience of musicians.

2. Phenomena of Music: Result/Process/Event

Merriam's *The Anthropology of Music* states, "Music sound is the result of human behavioral processes that are shaped by the value, attitudes, and beliefs of the people who comprise a particular culture" (Merriam 1964:6). In response, the study of musical anthropology (ethnomusicology) has continued with an ethnographical approach specializing in music.

The relativistic perspective of this study had succeeded in demonstrating the existence of music, which tended to be disregarded by European and modern understanding of music. However, music that was objectified as a result was pigeonholed into the category of non-European "ethnic" music, and there was no change in the traditional understanding of music.

This is in concert with the criticism by Clifford that artistic phenomena are being enclosed in the eyes of political views (Clifford 1988). This means that the form as "result" of the phenomena, as related to the argument of this paper, has been systematically analyzed and systemized.

On the other hand, the soundscape theory of Schafer, which attracted attention in various fields, and the study conducted by Feld, have succeeded in innovating the framework such as described above (Schafer 1977; Feld 1982). In particular, the latter focused on the ethnographical observation that Bosavian singers equally perceive the relationship between the voice and the body, and water and land, and emphasized the importance of exhalation and absorption.

In the Kaluli world studied by Feld, the exhalation and absorption performed by the body are functions that link together the body, land, and time, i.e., they function as creative ways for reconnecting the relationship between man and the environment. Feld argued that the people of Bosavi understand the world by the sounds that are hidden inside the body.^{xi}

The argument Feld named "acoustemology" (i.e., acoustic epistemology), while being influenced by phenomenology, including Merleau-Ponty, is highly significant in that it opened up the domain of sounds that lay hidden in the body, and revealed that in this domain the environment is recognized, i.e., sounds have a function as a way of knowing the world.

On the other hand, the music described by Feld was symbolic as it was limited to the ethnic music of the people of Bosavi. The issue that emerges here is, with this type of music, would the characteristic of "appearing and disappearing," i.e., the condition that establishes music, be illuminated?

This issue is strongly linked with music as a phenomenon that exists as a "devenir."^{xii} The author argued about this issue in another paper (Tanaka 2014), but for example, the socio-musicologist Hennon, who developed the debate on the Actor Network Theory, argues on the premise that music

is illusive (Hennion 1993). Related arguments by Gell and Becker were also attempts to release artistic phenomena from certain traditional frameworks to perceive music in the movement and flow of its network (Gell 1998; Becker 2008). That is, the debate regarding music has consistently encountered the issue of how to perceive such characteristics.

However, the approach focusing only on the flow and movement of music is not ideal when trying to represent this characteristic, for if we were to take out the "process" of music, the framework of "music" is assumed a priori, and the aspects of "generation," or how "music becomes music," will be excluded.

From the perspective of the anthropology of music, it can be understood that the practice of cross-genre musicians is a very interesting case study that could provide new materials. The need to refer to the arguments presented by Schutz and Jankélévitch, by transcending the boundaries of anthropology, was due to these issues unique to music.

3. What is Happening in the Music and in the Body?

What domains will be opened by this approach? Specifically, what are the issues faced by the anthropology of music?

The aforementioned words of Jankélévitch make many suggestions related to this issue. Especially, with regard to Chopin's music, he wrote "It has a Dionysian aspect, in other words, spontaneity. Its blistering storm will destroy traditional frameworks. Anger, surprise, hope, pride and suffering are bustling noisily in the breast of night. The shelves that divide music into genre will be blown away by the storm of passion. Every genre will end up the same" (Jankélévitch 1957).

It is necessary to pay attention to the point, "every genre will end up the same," which is based on analysis of internal experience, including "passion" mentioned by Jankélévitch. That is, a musical event is strongly presented only in internal experience when music and the body form some type of bond.

With regard to this issue, the following words of the sociologist Schutz are richly inspiring.

(Referring to music) It is the occurrence in inner time, Bergson's *durée* or duration (psychological, internal time), which is the very form of existence of music. The flux of tones unrolling in inner time is an arrangement meaningful to both the composer and the beholder, because and in so far as it evokes in the stream of consciousness participating in it an interplay of recollections, retentions, protention, and anticipations which interrelate the successive elements (Schutz 1964:170).

Based on Bergson's argument, Schutz emphasizes that the flow of time in internal experience establishes music as music. That is, if we were to follow Schutz's argument, we may even think that we could perceive the aspects generated by music only through internal experience. Either way, it is

not difficult to imagine that perceiving music from this viewpoint is an effective way of dealing with the issues associated with music.

This approach also shares a great deal with the awareness of the issues in *Introduction to a Science of Mythology* by Levi-Strauss, which is known for being written like music. What must be mentioned here is that Levi-Strauss placed importance on the physiological and physical attributes of music, i.e., the issues of internal experience (Levi-Strauss 1969:12-25).

Music has the attribute of "disregarding the thinking subject completely, proceed as if the thinking process were taking place in the myths, in their reflection upon themselves and their interrelation," and "below the level of sounds and rhythms, music acts upon a primitive terrain, which is the physiological time of the listener." Briefly, this means that the twofold continuum of external/internal^{xiii} is indivisible in the internal experience.

These arguments are references to the importance of "sounds hidden in the body" as cited by Feld, from the standpoints of the aforementioned authors. That is, the aspects generated by music of "what is happening in the music and in the body," were not portrayed by traditional approaches. As such, thinking about music from the viewpoint of an internal experience is assumed to reveal music as "an event in which musical and physical are associated."

4. "Demon's Eye View"

Ingold's argument centering on "mazes" poses issues of music that are similar to those discussed here. Finally, let us refer to the point "demon's eye view."

While Ingold dealt with Gell's argument on "mazes," remarking that it revived the central theme, he also pointed out that Gell's analysis on "the apotropaic use of patterns" was slightly inaccurate. "He means the practice of inscribing complex and visually puzzling designs upon surfaces to protect those sheltered behind them from attack by evil spirits or demons" (Gell 1998:83-90; Ingold 2007:53). This is because "it assumes from the outset a kind of 'demon's eye view'—an aerial perspective from which the overall layout of the maze may be surveyed and represented in a pattern-like form" (Ingold 2007:56) .

In response, Ingold mentions the necessity for a surface to underground perspective. He reasons that patterns exhibit a demon-warding effect as mazes, "by catching them in the labyrinth, from which they can no more escape than ghosts in the world of the dead" (Ingold 2007:57).

This involves what has been examined about music as "an event in which musical and physical are associated" and refers to the common issue, "what is happening in the mazes and the demon?" That is, it can be viewed as a question about the event that occurs in the maze as internal experience. Therefore, examination of the anthropology of music is of great significance in that it is facing the subject, which could only be perceived as movement, as the focus is on the movement that intercommunicates multiple levels of a domain that exists as form and one that exists as inner

presence.

5. Future Challenges

In this paper, efforts were made to understand the issues underlying the phenomenon of ethnographic truth that Cuban musicians are engaged in cross-genre activities, by association with the internal experience of musicians, rather than postulating music as a traditional "result" or "process."

With the practice of Cuban music considered here, its transformation will be highlighted in Cuba, which is a phase of social change today. There are two major reasons for this. First, there may be a change in the social arrangement for musicians. As touched upon briefly in section II, the series of processes in which the people of Cuba have effectively functioned, in which music is a means of gaining income or commodities or as a means for survival, reproduced a social arrangement to a degree. It will be interesting to see how this will change in the future.

Second, with the tourism policies of Cuba and the increase in international festivals being held, the chances for musicians working in Cuba to come into contact with overseas music lovers has increased. As a result, perhaps the unique social structure of Cuba, which established its music, will come to the fore. The challenge for the future is to build a musical anthropological argument to see how they change, while paying attention to this point; i.e., to perceive the sociocultural changes in Cuba through the internal experience of these musicians.

At the same time, the internal experiences of the musicians referred to in this paper require further consideration. However, this work may also lean toward the central theme of research into intuition and sensibility, in keeping with the following words of Levi-Strauss.

On intuitive grounds alone we might group onions, garlic, cabbage, turnips, radishes, and mustard together even though botany separates Liliaceae and crucifers. In confirmation of the evidence of the senses, chemistry shows that these different families are united on another plane: they contain sulfur. A primitive philosopher or a poet could have effected these regroupings on the basis of considerations foreign to chemistry or any other form of science (Levi-Strauss 1969:12-13).

According to these words, the "subjective view" of musicians could be treated as "in confirmation of the evidence of the senses.

From such perspectives, the music genres adopted in traditional musical anthropological and modern art anthropological arguments may bring to the fore the dynamism of human beings with varying and intersecting views. This paper represents a small step in this research.

Cuban musicians play cross-genre music in many cases. This is shown in an aspect that although the centre of education is Western music at College of Music, in Cuba instruments such as the guitar, saxophone and percussion are more popular than the violin and piano which is used a lot in Western music (foto1-foto4).

[foto 1] Students practicing the guitar at National High School of Music.



[foto 2] Duo playing fusion music by the guitar and violin.



【foto 3】 Students practicing the saxophone at National College of Music.



【foto 4】 Brass instruments-bands are often seen playing.



[foto 5] A Jazz performance by a young pianist, Mr. P · A.



[foto 6] A Classical music performance by a young pianist, Mr. P · A.



【foto 7】 A scene from the largest musical festival 'Cuba Disco'. Musicians of a variety of genres meet together there.



- i Lecturer, Saitama Institute of Technology, Faculty of Human and Social Studies.
- ii The musicians mentioned here refer to "those participating in music" (Schutz 1964:177). Although this paper focuses on those who perform music, the arguments include the existence of so-called audience and composers.
- iii Refer to the section of The Music of Havana in this paper.
- iv Although José mainly plays the piano, he calls himself a "musician." Gould, who is known for his audacious performance and expression, is said to have had an aversion to being called a "pianist."
- v The names of all informants are aliases.
- vi As manifested by famous composers, such as Carpenter, a number of Cuban musicians have continued to ponder the central theme "what is Cuban music?" (cf. Carpenter 1946). In this sense, this paper can take further approaches from the perspective of Cuban cultural studies.
- vii Edited by the author from field notes, November 27th, 2013.
- viii For example, the series of activities by Sacks may provide an opportunity to think about this issue.

- ix Translated by the author.
- x In the arguments of musicology, there is a move to focus on the categorization of music due to interest in how best to identify music in the global age (cf. Born and Hesmondhalgh 2000) . This indicates the great significance of these issues.
- xi Sound is an important spiritual and practical wellhead and must be "understood as a means that is essential for knowing the world and for the world to exist" (Feld 2008:250) .
- xii The concept of generation can be perceived as an action "to become" rather than "to be" (cf. Schneider 2006) .
- xiii Levi-Strauss's internal time included psychological time as well as physiological time and visceral time (Levi-Strauss 1969:16) .

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