

EMBODYING THEORETICAL RESEARCH IN MUSIC COGNITION: FOUR PROPOSALS FOR THEORY-DRIVEN EXPERIMENTATION

Andreu Ballus

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Eric Arnau

York University

Oriol Nieto

New York University

Frederic Font

Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Alba Torrents

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Abstract: Research in the field of music cognition typically focuses either on low-level, technically oriented approaches or on highly abstract ontological discussions that lack direct grounding in evidence. To bridge this gap, we propose a revision of the ontology underlying such research, from a perspective restricted to the acoustic and individual aspects of music to an embodied, extended, and anti-individualist approach. We explore the application of these ideas to empirical research by discussing two experiments conducted by our group. One of them tests whether the ability to play an instrument has an influence in how a subject listens to music; the other one explores the impact of visual information in the perception of sound as music. We comment on the results obtained and its theoretical significance. Our work shows that it is possible for abstract theorizing and concrete experimentation to go hand in hand in the field of music studies.