

## Approaches to (experimental) audience research: An introduction to studies undertaken at the MPI for Empirical Aesthetics

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### Abstract

Concert research is a fundamental part of the research at the MPI for Empirical Aesthetics' Music Department. In our approach to concert research, we address audience members, musicians, composers, and organisers as different agents contributing to and co-constituting the concert experience. To this end, we conduct research in the field and in our in-house facility, the ArtLab, both a multi-purpose event location and a psychophysiological research facility. Our main research focus at the moment lies on the specific potential of the concert format and how it affords musical experiences. Besides mentioning my recent study about an audience participation project in classical contemporary music, my talk will focus on our experimental studies currently conducted and planned.

One study will take place in the coming winter. As a first step to investigate how aesthetic experience can be measured, we stage a series of three concerts (in the same hall, with identical music and musicians) in which multi-dimensional data will be collected from the audience members, including self-reports, physiological [HRV, SCR] and behavioral measures [mimics, nonverbal synchrony based on motion energy analysis]. This study will then serve as a pilot study for a larger project which involves the variation of specific constants of a concert (such as staging, program composition, exposure to preliminary information, audience participation) and the measurement of their impact.

Another set of projects adopts a 'situated' or '4E'-perspective on concert and audience research to investigate embodied, embedded, extended, enacted, and distributed aspects of musical experience within the behaviorally restrictive setting of a classical concert. Based on a systematic framework, one research project investigates situated aspects of musical experiencing in the course of joint music performance. This longitudinal field study looks at musicians and audience members separately and follows a multimethod approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analysis of questionnaire data and motion energy analysis of video data, in order to detect nonverbal synchrony. When investigating the musicians, the study also employs ethnographical observation and a phenomenological approach, in order to address pre-reflective levels of musical experience.

