Pile Sorting Experiment

- We want to see how expert listeners (i.e., classically trained musicians)
 categorize the descriptions of the terms in the Con Espressione Game
 - We selected 150 of the most representative terms
- Pile Sorting: Participants sort each term into categories (piles) in a collaborative fashion



Pile Sorting Experiment

- 1. The terms are drawn randomly
- 2. For each term you have to decide whether it belongs to an existing pile (category) or create a new one (you have to discuss and get an agreement)
 - Similarity: put terms in the same pile if you think that they could be used to describe similar performances
 - Each term can be in only one pile
 - You can create as many piles as you want (but we would prefer as few as possible!)
- 3. You can rearrange/split/merge the piles as you wish at any time
- 4. At the end, you have to **name the pile** (either select the most representative term or give the pile a name)
- 5. There will be time to rearrange the piles at the end



Sorting Musical Expression: Characterization of Descriptions of Expressive Piano Performances

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The Con Espressione Game

Research Aims: Find the dimensions of musical expression that can be attributed to a performance, as perceived and described in natural language by listeners

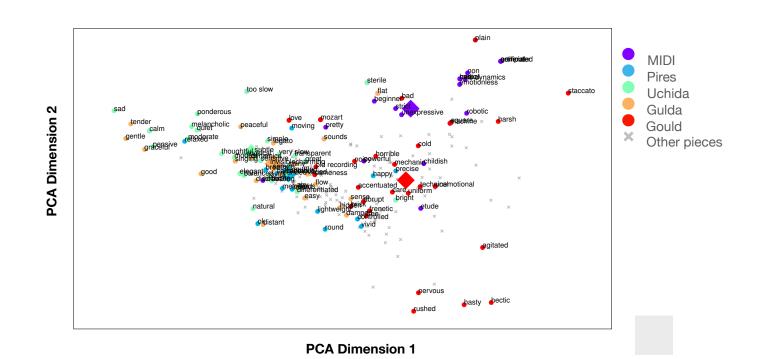
- · Web based questionnaire: verbal descriptors of expressive performance.
- Different performances of 9 classical piano pieces (45 performances)
- Dataset enriched with score-to-performance alignments

Composer	Piece	#	Pianists
Bach	Prelude No.1 in C, BWV 846 (WTC I)	7	Gieseking, Gould, Grimaud, Kempff, Richter, Stadtfeld, MIDI
Mozart	Piano Sonata K.545 C major, 2nd mvt.	5	Gould, Gulda, Pires, Uchida, MIDI deadpan
Beethoven	Piano Sonata Op.27 No.2 C# minor, 1st mvt.	6	Casadesus, Lazić, Lim, Gulda, Schiff, Schirmer
Schumann	Arabeske Op.18 C major (excerpt 1)	4	Rubinstein, Schiff, Vorraber, Horowitz
Schumann	Arabeske Op.18 C major (excerpt 2)	4	Rubinstein, Schiff, Vorraber, Horowitz
Schumann	Kreisleriana Op.16; 3. Sehr aufgeregt (ex 1)	5	Argerich, Brendel, Horowitz, Vogt, Vorraber
Schumann	Kreisleriana Op.16; 3. Sehr aufgeregt (ex 2)	5	Argerich, Brendel, Horowitz, Vogt, Vorraber
Liszt	Bagatelle sans tonalité, S.216a	4	Bavouzet, Brendel, Katsaris, Gardon
Brahms	4 Klavierstücke Op.119, 2. Intermezzo E minor	5	Angelich, Ax, Serkin, Kempff, Vogt

What are the main dimensions for expressive character?

Principal component analysis (PCA) on the occurrence matrix of the terms and find 4 principal dimensions

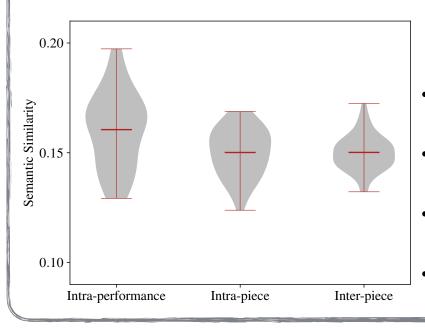
	Dimer	nsion 1		Dimension 2				
positive correlation		negative correlation		positive correlation		negative correlation		
hectic	0.17	sad	-0.20	rushed	0.22	hard	-0.19	
staccato	0.15	gentle	-0.18	nervous	0.20	stumbling	-0.18	
hasty	0.15	tender	-0.18	too fast	0.17	staccato	-0.17	
agitated	0.14	calm	-0.16	bit	0.16	ponderous	-0.14	
irregular	0.14	graceful	-0.16	hasty	0.15	monotonous	-0.13	
	Dime	nsion 3		Dimension 4				
positive com	relation	negative correlation		positive correlation		negative correlation		
monotonous	0.22	heavy	-0.14	ok	0.24	cold	-0.15	
bad	0.17	graceful	-0.13	happy	0.21	warm	-0.14	
warm	0.16	smooth	-0.12	joyful	0.19	floating	-0.14	
peaceful	0.16	ponderous	-0.12	free	0.15	blurred	-0.14	
beautiful	0.15	soaring	-0.10	breathy	0.14	mysterious	-0.13	



How similarly do listeners describe the performance of a piece?

Distribution of Terms

- 94 participants (on average listened to 4.5 out of 9 pieces)
- 88% had some musical training
- 1,515 individual descriptions, 3,166 terms (45% unique)





Semantic Similarity

- Semantic similarity for short sentences by [Li et al., 2007]
- Intra-performance: same piece, same pianist
- Intra-piece: same piece, other pianists
- inter-piece: other pieces

Pile Sorting Experiment

Participants

- Two groups of expert musicians (G1 and G2)
- Each group sorted (independently) 150 of the most frequently used terms that had been collected through the CEG.
- The number of piles as well as the types of similarity within the piles were left open.

Explore the interactive visualization!

Results

- G1 (25 piles), G2 (19 piles)
- Average maximal overlap (Szymkiewicz-Simpson coefficient):
- 62 % piles G1 with piles G2
- 65% piles G2 with piles G1
- Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) to explore the structure of the terms



Get the Dataset!



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Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and agreement No. 670035 (project "Con Espressione") and by the Research Council of Norway through its Centers of Excellence scheme, project number 262762 and the **MIRAGE** project, grant number 287152.



