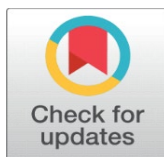
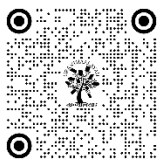


INTERMEDIA NARRATIVE AND PERCEPTIO SENSATIO IN MUSIC CHOREOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to consider the question: what do technological innovations bring to creative activities, so that we can see in them a new way of creating, and how does a work of multivariate nature affect the viewer, evoking in him/her a peculiar perceptio sensatio.

The article presents an intermedia project based on distributed authorship, resulting from the collaboration of a music choreographer, a visual artist and a music theorist. Each of these people brings a different perspective and creation to the project, which integrates the guiding idea of "hearing and seeing" music, and even experiencing it multisensorially.

Syncretic activities on the borderline of composition, improvisation and interpretation of music and its choreography, as well as the conscious use of audiovisual objects, expand the fields of artistic activity to reach the audience through multiple channels of sensory perception. The spectator does not perceive isolated fields, because the sensory world is a synthesis of different fields of perception. The same object that we see, we can touch, can be a source of sound and smell. In this constellation, the intermedia narration of the work is not only an experiment that influences the attractiveness of the musical choreography presented, but also an object of research into a new language, the use of which expands the concept of thinking about the form of the composition presented. The amplified dimensions of the work's reception make it an attractive form of expression, which at the same time becomes an artistic-cognitive hybrid.

Keywords: Intermediality, Body Movement, Music Choreography, Virtual Reality, Perception, Sensation

1. INTRODUCTION

PERCEPTIO, SENSATIO. THE FIELD OF PERCEPTION

Perceptio, sensatio (Latin) means presenting something to oneself through the senses. Sensory perceptions (including image, sound, touch) are not only a synthesis of sensations being experienced, because they are enriched by being reproduced in the recipient's memory. This means that each person may interpret a work of art and perceive emotions differently. It is common knowledge that the process of perception is complex, involves decision-making, and is unconscious to a considerable extent. The reception of distinct impressions, as a process consisting in the basic reception of external (coming from the environment) and internal (related to the movement of the body and coming from inside the body) stimuli,

seems to be crucial for eliciting emotions and transferring them to a new medium (dance, visual layer, photography). The act of creating such a work of art involves the reception of information from the environment and memory, and its analysis enriched with an emotional process.

New media condition the human body, and thus directly influence the artistic message of a work using the movements of the living human body. Modern technology and software used to develop new choreographic methods (and, by the same token, sometimes to explore the abilities of the body), as well as to record movement, have become the basis for the analysis of live performance art projects that create an intermedial narrative. It is the syncretic activities bordering on composition, improvisation and interpretation of music and its choreography, as well as the conscious choice of audiovisual objects, expand the areas of artistic activity to reach the audience through multiple channels of sensory perception. New media facilitate the process of sensory perception and evoking emotional and affective reactions related to the perceived work of art. Nowadays, besides the living human body, which interprets music according to the created choreography, an obligatory point of reference for the recipient is the audiovisual text or the so-called 'virtual body'. The process of building the dramaturgy of a modern choreographic work consists in combining the operation of digital technologies, devices and computer systems with the physical activity of the soloists, the result of which is a technological transformation of the human body - its movements and gestures - and the final artistic outcome is difficult to predict. This means that additional elements used in a space (e.g., light beams, colours, a virtual dancer and her movements) influence the perception of not only the performer but also the observer.

As Sabina [Macioszek \(2020\)](#): 71-72 rightly observes, 'the cooperation of man and digital technologies resembles the phenomenon of improvisation, which always leads to the emergence of new qualities, although it is based on previously known elements.' In such a situation, as in contemporary operas, in an intermedial choreographic work, 'the ways of reacting and functioning of bodies depend to a considerable extent on the operation of technology, while the materiality of human performers and audiences [...] makes it possible to define what is technological' [Macioszek \(2020\)](#): 9.

Although today 'intermedial art, with its theory and practice, together with biology is an aggregate of many complex attitudes, procedures, detailed issues' [Czarnecki et al. \(2019\)](#) the aim of the article is not to define the boundaries between the human body and the media established by bio media or bio art using professional scientific equipment in a laboratory, but to show the ambivalent relationships between the media and the human body that influence the shaping of the intermedial artistic narrative. For the resulting intermedial artifact affects the viewer's perception in a different way than the usual choreographic setting of music without the use of technology. The spectators must compartmentalize in their minds not only the music and the image of the dancer's body movements; they also must read the complicated interpretation of the audiovisual process. Jarosław Czarnecki (also known as Elvin Flamingo) in his doctoral thesis points to the so-called 'reconstruction of non-human culture' and draws up a 'symbiotic art manifesto' [Klaman \(2019\)](#): 59 that may apply to intermedial art projects involving the artist's body (e.g., interactive choreography). The 'Symbiotic Art Manifesto' [Moura & Pereira \(2004\)](#) described in dissertation by Czarnecki contains a set of guidelines which such art should meet:

- 1) Machines can make art
- 2) Man and machine can make symbiotic art

- 3) Symbiotic art is a new paradigm that opens up new ways for art
- 4) It involves totally relinquishing manufacture and the reign of the hand in art
- 5) It involves totally relinquishing personal expression and the centrality of the artist/human
- 6) It involves totally relinquishing any moralist or spiritual ambition, or any purpose of representation' [Klaman \(2019\)](#).

2. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES AND TERMINOLOGY

Contemporary choreographic practices still require the creation of appropriate and unambiguous terminology, as well as methods of their analysis and interpretation. Regarding the practices discussed in the article, one may refer to the terms introduced by the Serbian researcher Bojana Cvejić, who proves 'how choreographic thought pervades through all modes of performance, be it making, performing, or attending performance. Choreography doesn't merely precede a performance as the creative process that then culminates in an event, nor can it be reduced to a technical, craft-oriented definition: the spatial composition of movement visually retraced in *post hoc* notation' [Cvejić \(2015\)](#):14.

According to [Cvejić \(2015\)](#), 'The making continues to operate in the performing in the sense that its problems persist and give rise to different solutions in the performing of, attending to, and also thinking beyond the spatio-temporal event of the performance. Likewise, the performance virtually exists in the making; the thought of the body is present in the conception of choreographic ideas as in every rehearsal.'

Therefore, one should treat the concepts of choreography (the process of creation) and performance art (the object of creation) [Cvejić \(2015\)](#) separately, as two modes of the same artistic project.

Nowadays, it has become fashionable to set choreographic works in visual arts (performances in exhibitions), which contributes to defining this type featuring contemporary dance as 'new choreography' or 'choreographic performance' [Ploebst \(2001\)](#), [Ploebst \(2009\)](#). As [Zamorska \(2017\)](#): 52) rightly observes, 'choreographic performance art may be defined as a medium, and artists from the new choreography circle "take into account" the media (and potentially inter-, trans- and post-media) status of the genre that they practice'.

For the sake of analyzing the created choreographies of the selected composition, it will be most appropriate to define the work as **interactive choreography**, defined as **dance in augmented reality (AR)**. 'Augmented reality is the superimposition of a virtual image on a real one [...] it enables overlaying digital media on a real-time view from a mobile device camera, augmenting the real image with video, animation or graphics'. Experiencing augmented reality often assumes media go-between in visual perception – the screen becomes a lens through which we perceive the environment and spatial relationships, which increases the concentration on visual sensations (especially when the user is simultaneously moving). Meanwhile, the presence of virtual (often also moving) elements in the field of vision at the perceptual level triggers reactions in the spectator related, for example, to the feeling of distance and spatial relations (although, of course, over time we learn to adapt to virtually enhanced visual experiences). In this sense, AR has the potential to have a stronger impact on the kinesthetic experience than "regular" video, but in reality, of course, it depends on the specific implementation' [Lissowska-Postaremczak \(2020\)](#): 126-127.

AR interaction makes it possible to convey to the spectator the combined emotions and subjective, somatic feelings, which are the outcome of the perception of a musical work by a dancer and a visual artist. The visual artist explores the synthesis of emotions on different levels of communication. It allows the audience to understand the dancer's bodily experiences and narrative and their own emotions related to this artistic message. Importantly, the viewer does not take part in the work's creation or in the interaction with the technology.

3. ARTISTIC INPHRISIS. THE CHOREOGRAPHIC SETTING OF MUSIC AND DANCE IN AUGMENTED REALITY

Analysed were two works, examples of different interpretations of 'O Albion', a movement from a piece by Thomas Adès, made by a choreographer and a visual artist. The first of the two projects comprises reading the musical work (its structure and music material) and accurately reflecting these elements in the choreography, and then in the visual layer. The second one focuses on the exclusive expression, in the dancer's movements, of the emotions conveyed by the music, providing the basis for creating a new integrated intermedial message for the visual artist.

This makes the resulting artifact (interactive choreography) an intermedial work that conveys emotions through appropriate artistic means developed in the interpretation of the content of another work of art (original work).

One may refer such an action to the definition of musical ekphrasis proposed by the German-born American researcher Siglind Bruhn, who postulated that musical works were musical representations of verbal works and works of plastic art [Bruhn \(2000\)](#), [Bruhn \(2001\)](#): 560. Revising this notion, Monika Karwaszewska proposed an antonymic neologism, *artistic inphrasis*, aimed at choreographic and visual reflection of the musical layer, which is the original. *Artistic inphrasis*, according to Karwaszewska, is a phenomenon of the permeation of meta-artistic texts reflecting either a non-verbal (musical, choreographic, cinematic, visual) or verbal text in a non-verbal medium. The essence of *inphrasis* is therefore both the 'interpretation' of the musical layer, which is conveyed through visual means and the dancer's expressive movement, and 'supplementation', i.e., enriching the work with emotional categories [Karwaszewska \(2021\)](#): 66; [Karwaszewska \(2022\)](#): 232–233.

To justify the creation of an integrated intermedial artistic message first inspired by the music work, it is necessary to explain the way of building the form continuum, including determining the ordering of music material in time and in volume, and placing it in the sound space (the problem of texture).

4. THOMAS ADÈS'S 'O ALBION'. THE MUSICAL FORM VERSUS THE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE 'ALBION' PROJECT

The composition chosen for the project comes from Thomas Adès's 1994 string quartet *Arcadiana* op. 12. The piece is an evocation of paradise in seven short movements, played without breaks: 'Venezia notturna'; 'Das clinget so Ehrlich, das clinget so schön'; 'Auf dem Wasser zu singen'; 'Et... (Tango Mortale)'; 'L'Embarquement'; 'O Albion'; 'Lethe'. 'O Albion' is the sixth one. The title of the composition alludes to the ancient and literary name of England. The origin of the name Albion is obscure; perhaps it should be associated with white (Latin *albi*) coastline of the Kent County.

The project (choreographic setting of music and interactive choreography) shares its title – a content title – with the composition. The choreographic work reflects the extramusical title of the musical piece and its symbolic meaning. The spectator, guided by the meaning of the title and the knowledge of the piece by Thomas Adès, may find these designators in the choreography. Beata Oryl (the author of the choreography, and dancer) faithfully translated the structure of the musical piece and its character into movement, enriching the choreographic work with subjective expressiveness. By retaining the title, she 'automatically sends the spectator back to the work that he or she interprets, transferring it from one sign system to another' [Drajewski \(2017\)](#): 260. The choreography presents the transmedialization by association [Bruhn \(2001\)](#): 586-587 in connection with the title itself and with the reception of Adès's composition, which will be passed on to the spectator.

The seventeen-bar 'O Albion' is the most tonal movement of the quartet, which is to be performed in a slow tempo, soft dynamics and in a nostalgia-filled mood alluding to the Romantic style. The composer does not use a key signature, yet this movement clearly has its tonal centre around the key of Eb major. It is the melodic and rhythmic and textural sphere that makes up the structuring element of the work. Melody, rhythm and complex texture gain a superordinate function. The composition resembles a short instrumental piece alluding to strictly Romantic lyric. The structure of the work, because of the music material used, may be divided into four separate sections. The composer marks the caesurae by juxtaposing sections built based on variational changes of two constructional ideas repeated sequentially. The structure of the movement is:

- section a (bb. 1-3), 4/4 metre
- section b (bb. 4-6), 7/8, 4/4 metre
- section a1 (bb. 6-11), 4/4 metre
- section b1 (bb. 12-17), 3/2, 4/4 metre

The constructional idea for segments a and a1 emerges from an ascending semitone and the corresponding interval of fourth or fifth. By contrast, for the construction of sections b and b1 Adès used a sequentially descending motif built on a second and a third. These constructional ideas become crucial for building the work's dramaturgy. They resemble the so-called 'sigh' motif that contributes to expressing the mood of sadness or nostalgia. The way of presenting the motifs in individual parts creates a diagonal texture (successive movement of the foreground sound plane across individual parts), leading to the conclusion of the narrative through an unresolved cadence on the Eb major chord without a third.

The issues discussed should provide the basis for building an intermedial artifact. The resulting intermedial work (interactive choreography) reflects in a visual form the interpretation of music made by the choreographer and the visual artist, i.e., the visual medium in the musical medium.

The means of expression used by the dancer (Beata) in the 'Albion' project make it possible to treat the choreography as an example of *inphrasis*, or translating the musical content into the dancer's body movements, where the type of movement corresponds directly to the musical layer. According to the Swedish performer and choreographer [Spångberg \(2017\)](#): 349–393, choreography itself gives body movements a specific structure and is devoid of expression; only dance is something unorganized: pure expression and affect that stimulates the body. Expression, on the other hand, is the carrier of meaning.

Observations of artistic interpretations through movement prove that, as in 'Albion', not every choreography is a transposition of all the elements of music, structure, style and compositional technique to movement.

The project discussed reflects the interpretation of a musical work, as a whole, in a strictly emotional dimension, and of selected elements of music, including the presentation of the main melodic line and rhythmic patterns. The visual artist, in turn, reflects in the visual layer the principles of music, such as agogic, dynamics, articulation, harmony and texture, which complements the motive layer and merges with the musical narrative. Colour, extremely difficult to interpret through movement, received a new dimension in the VJ's vision. Resounding sound nuances were 'painted' with various hues and colours of the projected visualization. Recorded in this way, the outcome found use in further interactive activities: the creation of an additional image corresponding to the previously made recording and the dancer's live movement. The dancer's movement is a composition with elements of improvisation, which influences the shaping of the image of the appearing projection. In addition, the visual artist, reading the emotions conveyed by the dancer's live movement and the programmed visualization, using the Kinect device (motion sensor), created animations that, depending on the level of expression, generate a less or more enhanced image. The interactive work produced is a new artistic phenomenon dependent on the spectator creativity and imagination. It shows the reading of music by artists and generative equipment, enriched with visual effects, offering an example of *artistic inphrasis*.

The expression that is the dancer's body and its movements is being updated in the planned 'choreographic spectacle' and accurately perceived and learned in her mind. According to Bojana [Cvejić \(2015\)](#): 16–17, the understanding of expression has its roots in the philosophy of Deleuze (and Spinoza); the researcher refers to expression: assembling (agencement), becoming, affect and sensation. One should remember that the distinction between creating, performing and taking part implies three distinct modes of expression that are related to each other only to a limited extent. However, this is not obvious with performance art, as 'the problem that the choreographer poses in the making of a work is not the same problem that the performer is caught up with during the event of performance, and it is also still different from the problem that the spectator encounters during (and after) the performance' [Cvejić \(2015\)](#): 64.

5. "O ALBION" BY THOMAS ADÈS AS AN INSPIRATION FOR AN INTERDISCIPLINARY WORK

In order to obtain the intended result that was the interaction of the human body with digital technologies, it was necessary to bring in a specialist who used practices corresponding to activities at the intersection of art, technology and science.¹ Each of the artists (the choreographer-dancer and the visual artist), because of their respective work and skills, brings a different perspective and their own creation to the project, with music being the common factor. The visual artist interprets the music using a videogram and mapping, while the role of the choreographer and dancer illustrates the musical sequences – and the emotional state it causes – with movement.

The point of departure for artistic activities was the exploration of possible interpretations of the song 'O Albion' by Thomas Ades, to enhance its perception by

¹ The project involved choreographer and dancer Beata Oryl, visual artist Michał Garnowski (Gary) and music theorist Monika Karwaszewska.

adding a visual layer through the medium of movement – dance and video – or generated multimedia projections.

The motto 'to hear and see the music' defined the main idea and goal. Enhancing choreography with visual tools allows for understanding music to have signs of synaesthesia. Scenography in a video live cinema form may work both by expanding the attributes of interpreting music through movement and by replacing the living human presence. The essence, however, is the reception of specific musical impressions of piece, eliciting emotions that are transferred into their new artistic form given in the creative process and undergoing constant transformation. Because of the multiplicity of interpretations and the possibility of making changes within the visions developed so far, the ideas for presenting the work in the process of creation, it becomes important to make final decisions in order to form its most coherent whole.

6. 'ALBION': FIELDS OF ACTIVITY

The initial stage of work on this intermedial project involved a formal analysis of Thomas Adès's 'O Albion',² aimed at translating it into the language of movement and the language of image of the elements of music. The adoption of these criteria led to the designing of its first component: the interpretation of music through movement, in which the order of movement resulted from the shaping of the musical layer by rhythm. The slow tempo of the work influenced the creation of a spatial arrangement limited to exploring a small area. As the agogic intensified, the field of motivic activities expanded. The dramaturgy of the work – an outcome of the constructional ideas adopted by the composer – assuming sequentially appearing motifs, was illustrated by gentle and fluid movement focused mainly on hand gestures following the main melody presented in succession, bit by bit, across individual parts. The sound narrative woven from 'sigh motifs' establishing the nostalgic mood of the work influenced the performing expression, whose essence is the lyricism and subtlety of the articulated movement, also resulting from the legato articulation and sound volume. The dynamics is therefore an important element emphasizing the expression of the piece, and also leads to the culmination of tension by developing its intensity of sound from barely audible *pianissimo* to *crescendo* and sudden *subito piano pianissimo*, thus achieving through this contrast a certain suspension, a musical understatement. In movement, this was illustrated by a sudden stop of expressively performed combinations and a return to earlier ideas performed in a small area, involving mainly hand gestures. The minimalism of the motive ideas resulted from the structure of the piece, which is built of related sections shaped based on similarity. The changing levels of the moving body emphasized the harmonic layer, as well as by an attempt to implement several musical planes using coordinated movements of the hands and feet. Realizing that it was difficult for one dancer to reflect the power of the octet sound, the creators assumed that the visualisation would illustrate and complement the remaining missing sounds (cf. [Figure 2](#), [Figure 3](#), [Figure 4](#))³.

Referring to the moment of the first sensations experienced after listening to the music by the creators of the intermedial work, they assigned a prominent role to the space in which the project was being undertaken. The gentleness and calmness emanating from the music, as well as the sea cliff landscape hidden by the composer in the work's title, influenced the decision to perform the project not in a

² The inspiration for the project was the movement 'O Albion' by Thomas Adès in an eight-part arrangement by Jim Clements (in a doubled composition: soprano, alto, tenor, bass), performed by the British vocal ensemble VOCES8.

³ The figures 1-7 are from a visual work generated by Miachal Gary Garnowski. Shared with permission of the author.

concert hall, but outdoors. Hence, the performance art takes place in the nature among sand escarpments (cf. [Figure 1](#)). The presence of the creators in the natural landscape influenced the choice of both motive and visual means, becoming an integral part of the work.

Figure 1



Figure 1

6.1. THE VISIAL LAYER

Using the projector's light beam, which can heighten the senses and broaden the experience of the spectator with new elements appearing on an object, the assumption was that, by using a mapping and texturing technique in combination with the moving dancer, it would be possible to achieve the result of an optical illusion, giving the explored space a new depth and impression of movement. Assuming that musical dependencies dictated the projection being created, efforts focused on achieving a coherent image in which the displayed animations complete the created choreography, complementing and expanding the interpretation of individual elements of music with its visual layer. The VJ, using appropriate software in the masking process, created a spatial collage of animation layers, integrating them with the performer's actions. The projection has necessary requirements in order to produce an illusion of space in 3D animation. For the projector's coloured light beam cast on the object to be visible, additional light sources had to be eliminated. The project was recorded at dusk, thus creating the right conditions for generating images reflected on the sand escarpments, giving them a completely new dimension. The music synchronized with the mapping stimulated additional motion of the appearing projections and interacted with the moving dancer (cf. [Figure 2](#), [Figure 3](#), [Figure 4](#)).

Figure 2



Figure 2

Figure 3



Figure 3

Figure 4



Figure 4

6.2. ALBION: REMIX

Staying with the piece 'O Albion' and using the previously recorded work, the focus was on searching for a specific dialogue between the recording and the new idea. In the choreography, it became important to build a live interaction between the performer and her digital doppelgänger displayed by the projector, and then to deform the emerging image and transpose it through movement into changing geometric, abstract animations (cf. [Figure 5](#), [Figure 6](#), [Figure 7](#)). Through visual means, the creators attempt to create a kind of artistic and cognitive hybrid. They limited the scope to a small room, with the projector's light beam cast on one wall. The movement performed live blends in with the background of the projection. Thanks to the use of a motion sensor, the Kinect, the displayed image is manipulated and controlled by the performer's movement: slow, calm and limited by space. The dancer's movement is a composition with elements of improvisation, a result of the need to shape the image of the appearing projection.

Figure 5



Figure 5

Figure 6



Figure 6

Figure 7



Figure 7

7. CONCLUSION

One has to agree with Władysław Strzemiński's claim that 'the way we see the world comprises moving glances. We look at various objects one by one, we turn our gaze in different directions, and only by summing them up by a conscious thought does a unified picture of the perceived reality emerge. Thus, the image of the visible world is being created not in one fixed gaze, but in the integrating activity of thought. One look, logically reasoned and mathematically plotted, grasping the entire field of view, is fiction and is at odds with the empiricism of our usual process of seeing the world ahead of us' [Strzemiński \(2016\)](#): 198.

'When an image, instead of being a degraded, sensual being or an illusory shadow of an object, appears as a tangent point between the sensual and the supersensual, the rehabilitated imagination is a carnal eye directed at spiritual realities, which it perceives intuitively through symbols and allegories' [Starobinski & Kwiatkowski \(1972\)](#): 223.

This confirms that the careful observation of the environment in order to collect sensory information stimulates creativity and creative acts, encourages innovation or improvement. Using abstract models and new technology to better understand the world inspires one to create intermedial works that have super-artistic significance. The way we interpret information – our perception – is what leads us to the individual experience of art. Introducing a visual narrative in a choreographic work calls for broadening the scope of its interpretation and sensory perception both in the performer and the spectator, who is not intellectually involved in the artistic act through cognitive interaction.

It is not a simple audiovisual projection that enhances the choreographic project 'Albion' presented in this article, as it is an example of various strategies for cooperation between the body and new technologies, which, as Zamorska rightly emphasizes, 'function in an inseparable intertwining and feedback loop, mutually conditioning each other. The art of dance allows us to explore the intertwining of somaticity and technology, try out new forms of connections and develop a reflection on the boundaries of cultural acceptance of the changes that are taking place' [Zamorska \(2014\)](#): 32.

The juxtaposition of traditional choreography with interactive choreography paints a picture of how we currently perceive our activities and how we conduct them. It is common knowledge that an inseparable part of dance as a visual art form is the interaction of the performer and the spectator. Through the changes in the dynamics of movement, the spectators may give the performer's movements their subjective interpretations. The dancer's movements are designed to elicit an emotionally satisfying aesthetic reaction in the spectators. Notably, dance movements are closely related to life gestures and may communicate emotions in a non-verbal way, sometimes better than words. It is worth recalling the words of the French poet Stéphane Mallarmé, who stated that the dancer, 'writing with her body, ...suggests things which the written work could express only in several paragraphs of dialogue or descriptive prose'. [Dance as dramatic expression or abstract form. \(2023\)](#).

The form of combining various ideas, artistic concepts, knowledge systems, methodologies, different cognitive disciplines and various forms of human activity is an example of how, within an interdisciplinary project, it is possible to transcend the confines of specialization within individual disciplines, also seeking common ground for them, creating an intermedia narrative.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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