

Multi-Modality

Essay 3

Please discuss two or more aspects of the role which gesture plays in contemporary thought about meaning formation in musical contexts.

The youtube video of the piano player (his name escapes me) was very interesting. He was so deep into the music that he probably wouldn't have noticed wild horses running by. It was very strange to see at first just how into it he was, his body language was of a man entranced by the music, but as the video went on it became less strange, maybe because I was getting into the music more but I sort of felt entranced with him. He was trying so hard and so focused, that was inspiring to me. After we watched the video William told us he was criticized for his strong gestures and that caused him to stop playing in public, that made me kind of angry and sad. His behavior playing the piano shouldn't matter as long as the music he produces is good right? I doubt his piano playing would've been as good if he was trying to hold back from expressing himself in a way that comes natural to him.

The exercise where we all tried to portray the energy of the music was a lot of fun, it took me back to my childhood where me and my friends used to do something similar. It felt a little ridiculous at first but by the time it was my turn I was really getting into it. It's fun to let loose and just see where the music takes you. I was thinking that it's similar to what a conductor does, directing music to performers. It's interesting to think about the fact that a conductor's job is to gesture, the orchestra relies on his gestures to keep the flow of the music right. That goes to show just how important gestures are in music.

The motion capture technology videos were extremely interesting, I've always been captivated (no pun intended) by that technology and what it can do for so many areas of science and art. Characters like the Na'vi in *Avatar* and Gollum in *The Lord of the Rings* wouldn't have been nearly as convincing if they hadn't been portrayed by

real human actors, we've all seen how unrealistic CGI characters in live action movies can be. This technology is really groundbreaking and it was interesting to see it used to convey difference of emotion when William played the same song in these three emotional states. The point like figure made it very easy to read William's body language, it was fairly obvious to see whether he was sad, angry or happy. It was strange how much easier it was to read the point like figure rather than the flesh and blood William since the point like figure didn't have any facial expressions and you would think that the face would be the biggest indicator of a person's emotional state. It's easier to hide what you're feeling on your face though so maybe a poker face isn't all you need, your body language can give you away just as easily.