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## Challenges of Artistic Creativity in the Context of Performance Activities

### ABSTRACT

This study examines the psychological aspects of artistic creativity in the performing arts, emphasising its role in societal and individual development. Understanding and appreciating artistic endeavours is crucial to modern society, and addressing the challenges of creativity in performance can enhance its conscious application. The research aims to analyse the psychological dimensions of creativity in various performance roles using scientific analysis and psychological modelling, informed by literature from psychology, philosophy, and art history. A comparative analysis with Russian and international studies shows that while Russian research tends to focus on theoretical aspects, other international studies emphasise empirical research into the creative process. Our results will help develop a better understanding of the challenges in artistic creativity and propose methods to mitigate the negative effects of external factors on performers. The research offers valuable insights for professionals into the performing arts, facilitating more productive collaboration and deeper engagement with the creative process.

### KEYWORDS

Art

Musicology

Aesthetic  
disciplines

Musical thinking

## Introduction

In aesthetic theory, the problems of artistic creativity have always occupied a special place. Artistic creativity can be viewed from two points of view – psychological and philosophical. In psychology, artistic creation is an activity that may result in a new material or spiritual value. That is, psychology emphasises the ‘mechanism’ of the appearance or embodiment of an act of creativity (Kapsetaki and Easmon, 2017: 541-549). Philosophical approaches raise rather the question of the essence of creativity. Thus, studies of artistic creativity can be divided into psychological and philosophical categories, dealing respectively with the creation of value and the essence of value. When studying creativity, it is important to consider its forms. Forms of creativity can be distinguished by many features, according to the specificity of the artist's work. Then, artistic creativity involves two processes-direct and indirect. This division helps us determine how much individuality is attributable to the music in itself (the art of the composer) and how much lies in the execution (the art of the performer). With the mechanism of implementation, some types of art involve the mandatory use of performing activities.

Performance is a form of artistic and creative activity in which the works of the so-called ‘primary’ creativity are materialized by way of a particular system of signs intended for translation into a particular material form (Kerber, 2016). Performing arts include creative activities: actors and directors, reciters, musicians, singers, instrumentalists, conductors and dancers. There are no performing elements in the visual arts, architecture and applied arts. Performing arts began to arise in the course of the development of artistic culture, as a result of the collapse of folklore, which is characterized by the inseparability of the creation of a work and its performance. Also, their emergence was facilitated by the appearance of methods of notating verbal and musical compositions in a fixed form. One of the most important philosophical problems of performing activity is its dualism. The artistic performer does not mechanically translate the work into another form, but reincarnates it, and that incorporates the performer’s own creative potential in all its aspects. It is especially difficult to separate direct and indirect creative activity in the psychology of artistic perception. The concept of the author of an artistic product in the form in which a person perceives it includes both the primary author and the performer.

Creativity as a process and as an object is an extremely complex and multifaceted concept. In order to get closer to understanding psychological and philosophical issues, it is necessary to consider in more detail the mechanism at work for each individual artist. It is impossible to cover the entire spectrum of artistic activity in one article. According to Lederman (1998: 45-51), the problems of artistic creativity in relation to performing activity are especially broad due to the dualism of the creative and performing process.

The purpose of this study is to identify and describe the psychology of artistic creativity for certain types of performing activities. The allocation of individual types of activities allows a more detailed and conscious approach to the consideration of the issue. In the early stages of performing activity, the author bore a great responsibility for the success of the implementation of the creative process. Freedom of interpretation was not allowed in the activities of musical performers, singers, instrumentalists and other stage artists. In ancient theatres, actors wore masks, which deprived the performers of their individuality. In the Middle Ages, the public attitude to actors and dancers left much to be desired, while authors and composers were valued quite highly. Today, performing activity in artistic creativity is highly valued, and rightly so. Each performance of a musical or theatrical text becomes unique, since the content is embodied in the individual creative and uniquely personal capacities of the performer. The relevance of the work is due to two important components. Art has a great impact on the cultural development of both society and the individual. The ability to understand and appreciate the products of artistic activity is an important attribute of people today. Consideration of how creativity is embodied in performing activities will bring the perception of creativity to a new, more conscious, level. In addition, this work will be useful for those engaged in performing and authoring activities, enabling more fruitful cooperation.

## **Materials and Methods**

In this work, the method of scientific analysis and psychological modelling is used. When preparing the article, an analysis of theoretical scholarly literature on psychology, philosophy, and the history of performance was carried out. As mentioned earlier, the purpose of the research is to describe the problems of artistic creativity for certain forms of performing activities. In the first stage of the study, the authors identified forms. Performing arts include the activities of reciters, singers, dancers, instrumentalists,

actors, musicians, conductors and directors. According to Duckworth et al. (2007: 1087-1101), the model of the 'primary' creative process looks like this: the appearance and development of the idea; finding forms and ways to implement the idea; implementation of the idea.

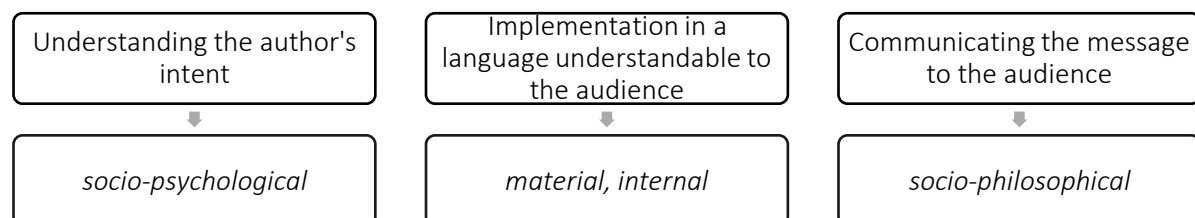
To come to an understanding of the issues of performing activity, we will highlight the components of this activity, as the second stage of the study. According to Gembris et al. (2018: 9), there is a perceptual component associated with the sensations and perceptions of the primary work; mnemonic, associated with the memorization and mental reproduction of music, literature, and performing moves; mental, associated with the creation of an ideal (mental) image, comprehending the form of a musical work; imaginative, associated with imagination, with the composition of a new work or a new image in a new interpretation; and finally, motor. Naturally, in this case, the activity cannot be considered as a simple sum of the actions performed by the musician. Rather the actions are combined into an integral system for creating spiritual value. Psychological and philosophical problems can arise both in the very structure of creative and performing activities, and in the interaction with other performers and other authors. In other words, the effectiveness of a person's creative activity, as in any other activity, depends on external and internal factors.

At the third stage, we identify and describe the factors that raise potential issues. External factors can be divided into a subgroup of factors from the material environment, and a subgroup of factors from the socio-psychological environment. The material factors include: the quality and condition of a musical instrument; acoustics, temperature and other features associated with the stage; literature, props necessary in the process of preparation, etc. The factors of the socio-psychological environment include: the audience, the characteristics of the group (collective), the teacher (consultant) and the particularity of relationships with teacher/consultant, society as a whole and the immediate social environment of the performer. The internal factors that determine the effectiveness of creative and performing activities include human capacities that depend on innate and acquired characteristics. The first determine the potential of a person, while the second, in combination with the first, determines the available opportunities. Internal factors are a reflection of both biological and social factors in human development. The social factor of the performer's development as a person manifests

itself in the form of relationships and motives, in the form of knowledge and skills (including individual styles of activity), in the form of the effects produced by the development of professionally important qualities. The biological factor of the performer's development is mainly considered as genotypical, i.e., determining the innate features of individual morphological features (for example, the structure of the hand), innate physiological features (vital lung capacity, maximum oxygen consumption, etc.), psychophysiological features (properties of the nervous system, functional asymmetry of the cerebral hemispheres), mental processes, physical qualities.

## Results

According to Ignatiadis et al. (2008: 176-179), the main task of the performing artist is mediation between the author, who has clearly recorded their work (in the form of text or notes) and the viewer, the listener. The performer needs to understand the author's intention, translate it into an accessible language for the audience and convey the artistic work to the listener (viewer). These three components of artistic performing activity unite all its types. Each stage of the mechanism of reproducing the author's idea corresponds to its own set of potential issues. A model of performing activity and the corresponding environmental factors (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** A model of performing activity and the corresponding environmental factors

When understanding the author's idea, the psychological context of communication with the author is of great importance. There are two sides to the process of explanation and understanding. The author of the work is certainly responsible for the depth and accuracy of understanding their own ideas, if, of course, communication with the author is available to the performer. The inability to communicate with the author on the one hand simplifies, and on the other hand complicates the process of familiarization with the creative product. In the latter case, a great responsibility for the interpretation of the creative idea lies with the performer. The main component of performing activity is the

processing and reincarnation of the primary author's idea, presented in a symbolic form in music, dance, theatrical production. Internal factors and the problems associated with them play an important role here. Psychological and personal issues, as well as creative problems of experiencing the work are certainly important. The performer experiences, interprets, so that the idea is reborn. The performer must present the work to the audience so that there would be no visible differences between life and imitation of life, genuine and illusory. But for the actor, musician, or director, the psychological line between the degree of familiarisation with the spiritual consciousness of the work and an understanding of the practical realities of what is happening is important.

Difficulties and problems on the way to the embodiment of the work will help the performer to master the methods of performing art and the features of the performing language. For maintaining psychological health, a comfortable atmosphere for the performance of a work is an important part of the creative process. In creative and performing activities, experience, intuition, emotional attitude, artistic and imaginative thinking are involved. The artist's role is complex and multifaceted. The identification of the boundaries between environmental factors and the principles of determining the sources of potential problems is to some extent conditional. When implementing a work, any performer faces the problem of limitations, meaning the limitations of the form of the work, of the traditions of its performance and of the language of performance (to a greater or lesser extent). The performing language is understood as a set of expressive and visual means, an arsenal of possibilities that the artistic system has at this stage of the development of civilization. The expressive means of the performer are subtle, and sometimes elusive in terms of the tools of external consciousness, such as intonation, timbre, gesture or facial expressions, to which an individual contributes to a particular action, thought or feeling. These are the internal psychological components of the issues of artistic and performing activity. It is also necessary to mention the physiological and biological component of the process of execution. Physical fitness and endurance are extremely important. Without the physical ability to conduct and participate in many hours of rehearsals, the mental substance of creative activity is also lost. Material components are also responsible for maintaining a fruitful rehearsal atmosphere. A well-thought-out, comfortable environment can improve the quality of creative activity. When considering the stage of creative and performing activity, socio-philosophical aspects

come out in the first place. Note that for most performers, the final performance to the audience takes place in a stressful environment. It is also common for most performers to work with a team of other performers who are equal in importance (from the point of view of reproducing a creative idea), as well as with representatives of other, related disciplines.

Earlier in the article, the authors identified different forms of performance activities: readers, singers, musicians, actors, conductors and directors. We will now present the main issues of creative and performing activities in the context of each of these forms. The issues taking into account the stages of the three selected stages of activity will be described (Figure 1). When getting acquainted with literary works, in most cases there is no opportunity to conduct a dialogue with the author. Readers are very limited in their expressive methods. Performers need to maintain vocal abilities. It can be difficult for readers to compete with other types of executive professions in matters of public response. Actors, having many expressive means in their arsenal, can attract a wider audience. In order to win the response of the public, readers need experience, creative intuition, and mastery of interpretation. Singers have similar creative issues. The singers are still limited, if less so, in their expressive means. They need to take care of their voice, and the concert format of the performance of the work is associated with stress. There may also be problems of a socio-psychological nature when interacting with composers, arrangers, musicians.

Moving on to the issues of artistic creativity in the context of performance by musicians, we note that music itself is a very complex and profound phenomenon. The musician needs to transform a series of written symbols into sound. There is an interpretation of a work created for the ear, but recorded by symbols for the eye. To understand musical information, extraordinary skills are needed. They are commonly called musical hearing, musical imagination or musical thinking. Note that the complete loss of physiological hearing does not entail the loss of musical hearing. There are many examples of musicians who have lost their hearing, but are still able to play and create masterpieces. The same principle lies in the understanding of musical thinking, which may not be related to psychological thinking. Thus, at the first stage of the familiarization and acceptance of the author's idea by musicians, this is associated with the special features and issues associated with musical thinking. The embodiment of the author's idea takes the form of

a direct performance of a musical work. Here it is appropriate to highlight the physiological internal problems of the performer – endurance, physical strength, coordination, muscle memory. A suitable material base for rehearsals significantly helps to maintain the psychological health of the musician. During rehearsal and concert activities, there are social problems of interaction with a group of musicians, including soloists and conductors.

There are two main problems in acting. There is the socio-psychological problem of interaction with the director and the philosophical and psychological problem of immersion, of playing a character. Should an actor experience what they portray, or is acting the ultimate imitation of an ideal model? This issue has been called the Diderot paradox. The question of the internal state of the actor during a stage play is the central node of the whole problem. In the artistic activity of directors and conductors, there is one main common feature – the dualism of the author and the performer. Interpreting literary or musical works (thus being performers), they are also the authors of an already modified, revised work. And the playback of the model of the performing process is repeated once again, where the actors or musicians are already demanding the director's (conductor's) idea. At the same time, the director's interpretation of the primary idea often differs from more common interpretations. As an intermediate link between the primary author and the audience, the conductor and director must, on one hand, make their own creative contribution, while on the other hand, submitting the author's ideas to the viewer. Directors and actors, conductors and musicians do not just work together on a piece; rather, the synthesis of their activities can be safely called co-creation. In these types of professions, the issues of socio-psychological creative interaction are very acute. The process of creating a theatrical production or a movie is multifaceted. Directors need to interact fruitfully with cameramen, lighting specialists, and solve material problems. In directing, the psychological problems of the key figure are more pronounced. For a conductor, the qualities of an informed leader are certainly important. It is worth emphasizing once again the problem of the stressful atmosphere of the concert – as the environment for the final presentation of the work.

## **Discussion**

Based on the analysis carried out, the main problems of artistic and performing creativity,



both in general and for representatives of specific performing disciplines, are highlighted in the work. Creative problems and factors of influence on performing activity are described for three main components of the creative and performing process (understanding the author's idea - processing it – presenting it to the audience). Despite the fact that such a division certainly takes place, in some cases it is conditional. Some researchers do not divide the creative process into separate components. Among existing views, it is worth noting one based on the combination of creation and development: “Creativity is an integral activity, the result of which is the discovery (creation, invention, presentation) of something new, previously unknown” (Ivcevic et al., 2020: 7). In general, the presentation of the problems of the performing activity of any one work is in good agreement with the works of other authors. Most of the works from this scholarly branch are devoted to the problems of musical creativity. World researchers are not only trying to describe the range of problems of musical performance, but also to find ways of solving those problems. For example, scholars have studied the psychological state of musicians, based not only on theoretical analysis, but also on practical conversations, interviewing representatives of musical professions selected for research (Jacobson, 1936). The results show that special events for musicians help them prepare psychologically for key moments of transition, for competitions and for professional comparisons.

For the complex solution of a wide range of the designated problems, an approach is proposed (Jaque et al., 2015: 192), an important feature of which is the synthesis of key psychological and physical skills. The paper by Kenny et al. (2018: 43), as well as the present article, raise issues of internal physiological problems of musicians concerning endurance and coordination. Among European studies, many works are devoted to a medical problem, such as occupational diseases of the hands (Komurdzhi, 2017). These developments provide a detailed analysis of medical monitoring for 15 years. Characteristic diseases were identified depending on the particularities of a musical instrument (MacNamara et al., 2010a: 68). It is noted that many musicians accept pain as a result of their work or avoid showing their symptoms for fear of consequences for their career. Orthopaedic surgeons should be aware that diseases of the hands and upper limbs of musicians should not be treated surgically. The recognition and treatment of disorders of the hands and upper extremities should include knowledge of music-specific disorders, prevention, advice on posture and training techniques and performances, proper warm-

up and regular breaks, as well as 'cooling off', as in athletes after training.

Another important problem is raised in MacNamara et al. (2010b: 92). The authors describe the problem of digestive disorders and weight control in musicians on the basis of theoretical and empirical studies. A large study of the physical health of musicians and conductors was carried out in Germany (Nadyrova, 2014). Data on 2,536 musicians and 133 conductors were analysed in terms of health indicators. Various health problems were also studied in relation to health-related behaviours, including preventive measures taken (nutrition, sleep, etc.). The results showed that more than half (55%) of the musicians who took part in the survey suffered from time to time from physical issues that affected their performance. The prevalence increased significantly with the age of the musicians. Most of the complaints were received from musicians playing stringed instruments. An interesting fact is that there was no significant correlation between the severity of problems and various approaches to health care (visiting a doctor, taking preventive measures). As was noted in the work, the number of complaints of physical malaise during performance increased with age. However, in another study (Pecen et al., 2018), old age does not have an excessive negative impact on the physical and psychological health or the performing skills of professional musicians. But the decline in the number of older age groups may indicate a 'survival' effect, when those who develop significant age-related disorders may have to stop their professional activities at an earlier age.

In research by Sarkar and Fletcher (2014: 1420), a comparison was made between the physical and psychological health of musicians (in general) and representatives of other professions – engineers, doctors, and a mixed group. The data showed that the physical health indicators of musicians are higher. But the general background of psychological health, the level of anxiety (established with the help of tests, questionnaires, conversations) turned out to be worse than in the control groups. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a clear problem of psychological health for musical performers, which affects the creative process. The performance activity of the conductors was also studied to identify the psychological and physiological effects of performance. As has been noted repeatedly above, musicians and conductors present a work to the public in a stressful context. Indicators of stress in work by Thomson and Jaque (2012: 361-369) are measured quantitatively. The number of heartbeats per second was used as the main

indicator of stress. Based on the heart rate, the physiological requirements of professional behaviour reflect the intensity of work that is considered 'hard'. The data indicate the need for further study and medical monitoring of anxiety, respiratory diseases and cardiovascular risks in vocal performers and conductors. In response to the need for medical support for creative performers, a separate speciality emerged in the United States in 1985, known as performing arts medicine. The researchers described the psychological characteristics of different groups of dancers (ballet/modern dance/musical dancers), which differed significantly in relation to the creative requirements associated with the corresponding dance style. The groups were compared in terms of psychometrically determined creativity, and general mental development. The results showed that modern dancers, who are often required to improvise freely on stage, demonstrate a relatively high level of verbal and imaginative creativity (assessed using psychological tests), followed by performers of musicals and, finally, ballet dancers. As for personality, modern dancers can be characterized as less conscious, more prone to psychoticism and more open to experience than other experimental groups. If we compare this work devoted to the problems of creative and performing arts, s between the work of Russian researchers and other world researchers, then the obvious priority of foreign (non-Russian) work on the empirical components of research can be seen (Thomson and Jaque, 2012: 361-369).

Russian philosophical and psychological science is rich in theoretical approaches to the field of acting. World researchers pay more attention to empirical approaches: interviewing, questionnaires, socio-psychological testing. In the study by Tubiana and Chamagne (1993: 205), the results of a psychological test for vulnerability to stress are presented. Having conducted interviews with 41 professional actors, focusing on the connection with loss and trauma, Thomson and Jacques compared the results with a control group of specialists drawn from other artistic disciplines, as well as athletes and art enthusiasts. They found that actors were more likely to struggle to discuss past traumas, suggesting that they have a harder time resolving emotional problems. Despite the fact that there was no difference between the two groups regarding past traumatic events, the researchers wrote, more actors were unable to maintain narrative consistency when discussing memories of past injuries and losses. Actors may have expanded their imagination through the practice of acting, it seems, or perhaps they

turned to a career that supported their increased predisposition to fantasy. Similar results were obtained in work by Voltmer et al. (2012: 9-14). Research analysis has shown that creative achievements are predicted by the interaction of high vulnerability and resources, and that this effect significantly exceeds the predictive power of openness to experience and age. The authors of this work named the Diderot paradox as one of the main creative problems of acting. Western researchers, as can be concluded from the above analysis, resort mainly to empirical methods of studying the issue.

Speaking about the creative problems of actors and directors, it is impossible not to mention the work of the theatre director, teacher and theorist Konstantin Stanislavsky. He created a theory of acting on which many scientific works have been based to this day. Stanislavsky tried to rethink the actor's performing creativity as such. In his ideas and research, he largely relied on the achievements of science, especially psychological science – 'art should be on good terms with science', highlighting three main parts of performance: craft, the art of representation and the art of experience. The craft part refers to the mastery of expressive means. Stanislavsky tried to describe and formalize the mechanics of the game in order to make mastering the means of the game more accessible to actors. The art of representation is presented as follows – in the process of numerous rehearsals, the actor experiences genuine experiences that gradually create a clear form of representation, a 'costume of the role'. At the final performance, the performer no longer experiences real emotions, but only puts on this costume. Thus, Stanislavski divided Diderot's paradox into two stages – rehearsal and demonstration.

To describe the versatility and complexity of the director's activity, Stanislavsky introduced the concept of the 'super task', also emphasizing the importance of good leadership qualities for the director. There are two main components of the 'super task': it is connected to, and may partly embody, the director's worldview, but it does not completely coincide with their position. The super-task, as the idea of the primary author, cannot be fully conveyed in its unchanged original form by words or other means. This leads to the existence of different interpretations of the primary idea. In the work by Yatsenko (1999), the results of an empirical study are presented on how well the methods of Stanislavsky are understood and used by the American Actors Guild. Determining the purpose of the character in each segment of the play (or movie) is an extremely important principle in preparation for a role. Through understanding the goal, you can get closer to

understanding the psychology of the character, the researchers note. The problem of competent preparation and training of musicians, actors, and directors does not apply directly to the creative problems of performing activities. However, the process of training personnel is directly related to the success of performing activities.

By discussing and analyzing the experience of theoretical and psychological work on the problems of creative performance activity, world researchers have devised a set of measures aimed at reducing problems of different genesis. This work highlights both complex, philosophical issues of creative activity, and private, material issues of narrow groups of performers. Reducing the number and depth of internal psychological and philosophical issues of the performer as an individual is an extremely difficult task. For many reasons, it is easier to work with external factors. Reducing the negative impact of the external environment will inevitably lead to an increase in the overall creative potential of the performer. The method of reducing problems is aimed at minimizing the negative external influence on the process of performing activities and at the same time maintaining one's own psychological and physical health. Creating a congenial atmosphere for rehearsal activities will significantly increase the creative potential of the performer. The method includes visits and consultations with medical specialists to maintain physical health. Quality rest also helps reduce anxiety among artists. For a more fruitful interpretation of this work, the recommendation is to outline a clear set of expressive means. Consultations with specialists-psychologists will help reduce social problems among the creative team. Compliance with these measures will lead to an increase in the emotional health and creative potential of performers.

## **Conclusions**

This paper describes the problems of artistic creativity in the aspect of performance activity. The main components of performance are highlighted: understanding the author's idea (or the primary idea), translating the idea into the language of expressive means (music, dance, acting) and communicating the idea to the audience. The main factors influencing each stage are named: psychological, social, material. The problems of artistic creativity are described for each of the selected types of performing activities: musicians, instrumental and vocal performers, conductors, dancers, actors, directors and readers. The work highlights both complex, philosophical issues of creative activity, and

private, material issues of narrow groups of performers. The socio-psychological, material, internal, psychological and philosophical factors of influence on the creative process are named. Many performers, since their activities are collective, face social problems of creativity. There is also a problem of limitations in expressive means. There are two main problems in musical performance and acting. One is a socio-psychological problem of interaction with the director and the other a philosophical and psychological problem of immersion, playing a character. Many musicians face problems with musical thinking. There are also a number of important material problems in the creative process, including fear of the stage, and the influence of a stressful situation when presenting a work that can create increased psychological anxiety.

The analysis of the results of this article and the works on this topic by Russian researchers has shown that in Russian practice more attention is paid to the theoretical aspect of the question. These studies on the psychology of creativity have clear priority over other world researchers, who favour empirical research on the practical psychology of the creative and performing process. the medical conditions of performing professions are singled out as a separate specialty, which, of course, contributes to maintaining the physical health of musicians, dancers, and other representatives of the creative professions. It is shown that musicians and actors have a high level of anxiety. The authors of this article hope that the study of the issues of performing creativity will be continued. In future work, it would be extremely interesting to turn to empirical research. Surveys, psychological tests conducted with readers, musicians, actors, dancers would allow a deeper understanding of the psychological problems of performers. Control and monitoring of physical indicators are also extremely important. The results contribute to a better understanding of the issues of artistic creativity and, therefore, their reduction. Based on the identified complex and particular issues of performers, a method is proposed to reduce the negative impact of external factors.

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