

sonic pictures

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Kivy on musical representation

- *Absolute* music has no representational content (formalism)
- But music *can* represent... in two ways: *structurally* and *pictorially*.
- My aim is to develop/extend Kivy's account of musical—or, more generally, *sonic*—picturing.

Kivy on sonic pictures

Four conditions (based on Wollheim):

- (1) The representation must enable the hearer to hear-in the representation the object of representation.
- (2) One hears-in the pictorial representation correctly when one hears-in it what the composer intended to be heard in it.
- (3) Hearing-in, in pictorial representation, is twofold. One simultaneously hears-in the musical representation and is perceptually aware of the medium in which the object is pictorially represented.
- (4) The pictorial representation must be of something that can be heard, since it involves hearing-in, and you cannot hear-in a picture what cannot in reality be heard. (Kivy 2012, 152)

KIVY'S RESTRICTION:

Sonic pictures must be pictures of sounds.

KIVY'S EXCLUSION:

Unaided musical picturing does not deserve to be counted as belonging to music's repertoire of aesthetic possibilities.

Against Kivy's Exclusion

- Exhibit 1: Beatboxing
- Exhibit 2: Cover songs

Against Kivy's Restriction

In three steps:

- (1) Show that the Restriction embeds non-trivial metaphysical commitments.
- (2) Criticize them.
- (3) Update Kivy's view of sonic picturing.

Step 1. The metaphysics of Kivy's Restriction

For sense modality M, an object O might be perceived in an M-type pictorial representation if and only if O has M-type perceptual appearances.

Thus, Kivy's Restriction holds if and only if auditory appearances belong *only* to sounds.

Step 2. Critique

Growing consensus among philosophers who work on hearing that auditory appearances belong not only to sounds, but to sound sources—viz., that sources can genuinely appear in auditory experience.

So, we should reject Kivy's Restriction.

Sonic pictures can picture not only sounds, but sound sources.

How this will work depends on your view of sounds and hearing.

Step 3. Update

THE EVENT-PROPERTY VIEW OF SOUNDS (EPV):

Sounds are audible-quality complexes borne by their event sources.

- The primary object of hearing is the source, not the sound.
- We do not hear the collision *by* or *in virtue of* hearing its sound, we hear it *in* hearing its sound.

EPV and sonic pictures

It will typically be just as inappropriate to say that sonic pictures are pictures of sounds as it is to say that visual pictures are pictures of colors.

Instead: just as visual pictures are canonically pictures of colored objects, so *sonic pictures are canonically pictures of noisy events*.

Kivy on sonic pictures: we hear sound in sound.

EPV on sonic pictures: we hear events in events.

So what?

Objects, not mere colors, are the things that really matter to us. Good thing that we can see them in visual pictures.

Similarly, events, not mere sounds, are the things that really matter to us. So much the better, and so much the richer, if we can hear them in sonic pictures.

Coda. Other consequences of EPV

1. Audio recordings are sonic pictures.
2. Vision and audition can share perceptual objects (e.g., musical performances).
3. Audiovisual recordings/streams are not just moving visual pictures with sound; they are integrated *audiovisual pictures*.

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