

Collaborative processes involving non-guitarist composers and guitarists

Marlou Peruzzolo Vieira,

Helena Marinho

Department of Communication and Art / INET-md, University of Aveiro

Abstract

This study discusses composer-performer collaboration in cases involving composers who do not play the instrument they are composing for. The aim is to characterize the interactive process involving non-guitarist composers and guitarists, focusing on a specific aspect of the composition process: the relative amount of importance that composers and performers give to idiomatic compared with playability concerns. Eleven semi-structured interviews were conducted, between December 2013 and August 2014, with professional musicians: 3 non-guitarists composers and 8 guitarists. Categorical analysis was undertaken and obtained data was organized according to recurring terms and subjects.

Background

Since Foss' (1963) first essay on collaborative music-making, the subject has attracted the interest of several researchers, such as Östersjö (2008), Domenici (2010), Morais (2013) and Ivanovic (2014), who addressed their own collaborative experiences, analyzing interaction procedures, communication strategies and creative results.

Aim

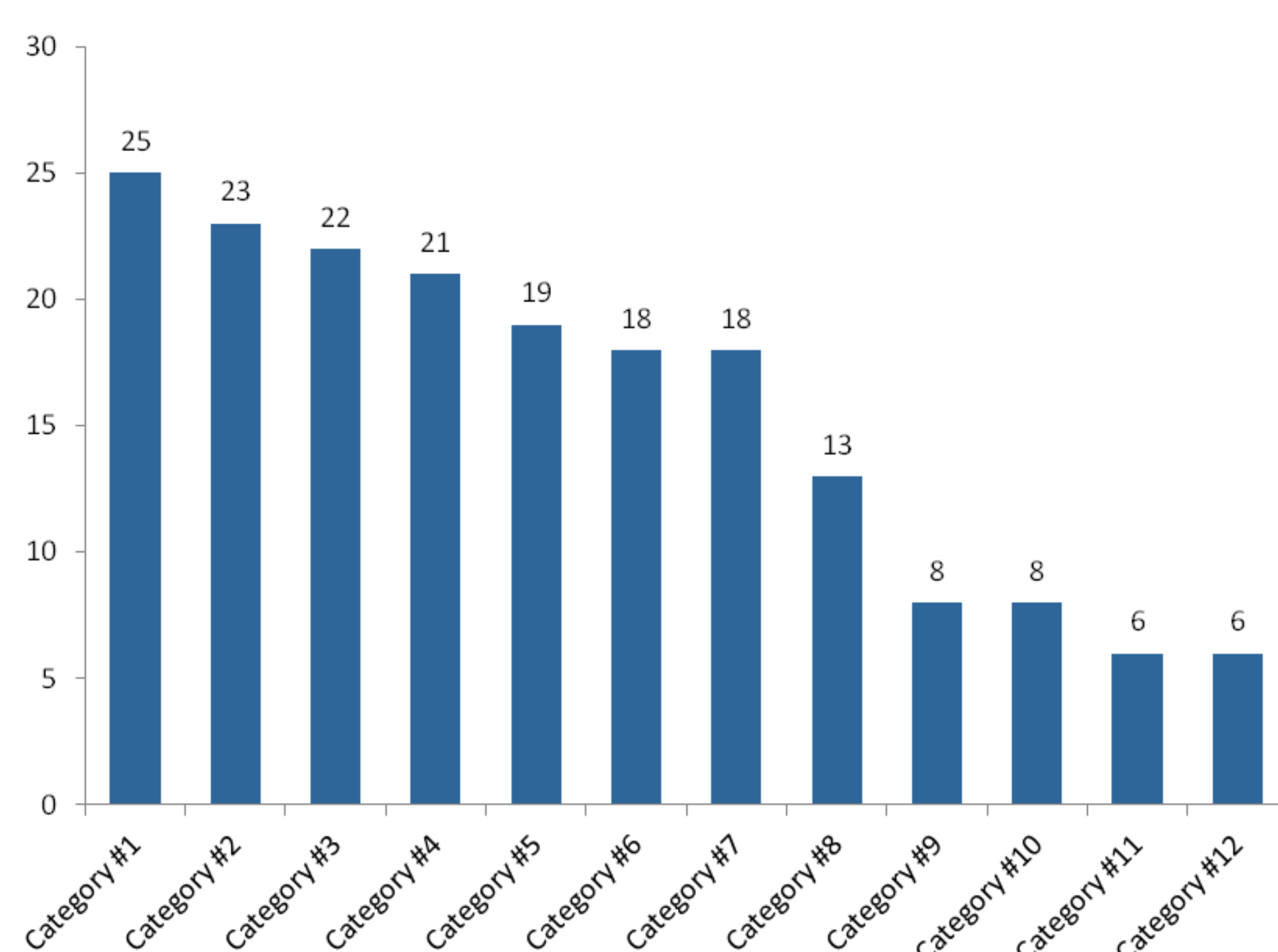
This study aims to characterize the interactive process involving non-guitarist composers and guitarists, i.e., collaborations involving composers who do not play the instrument and have to rely on the performer for guidance.

Method

11 semi-structured interviews were conducted, between December 2013 and August 2014, with professional musicians: 3 non-guitarist composers and 8 guitarists. These participants are professors in Brazilian universities and have significant experience in collaborative processes. Topics addressed in the interviews included: interaction procedures; the performer's role in the collaboration process; composing for guitar as a non-guitarist composer; describing situations in which collaboration was essential; transmitting/learning guitar features. Categorical analysis was undertaken and obtained data was organized according to recurring terms and subjects. Meaningful categories were classified according to their frequency, patterns of joint work and development of discourse.

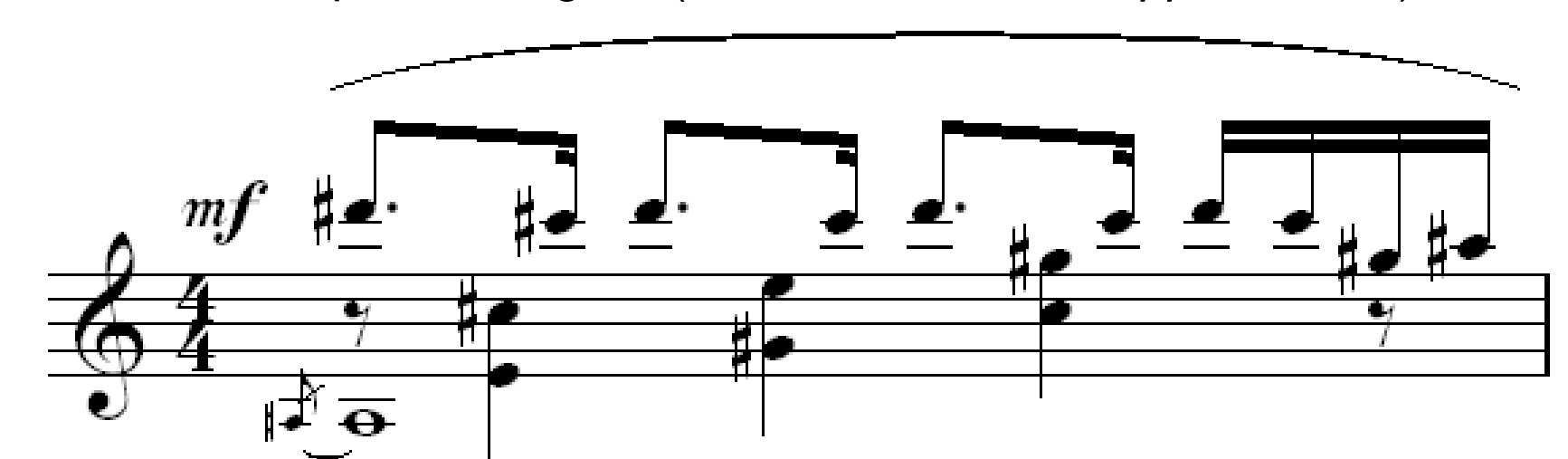
Results

A total of twelve categories, with a minimum of 4 participants and with 6 occurrences or more (see graph 1), were singled out. These included, ordered by frequency: 1) adaptation of non-idiomatic sections; 2) communication strategies; 3) performer's intervention level; 4) composition for guitar by non-guitarists composers; 5) promoting the creation of new works; 6) composer's receptiveness for suggestions; 7) transmitting/learning guitar features; 8) correction of unplayable sections; 9) interaction modalities; 10) later revisions; 11) composition/arrangement study by the performer; 12) differences between guitarist composers and non-guitarist composers.



Graph 1 / Number of occurrences by category.

1.a / Composer's original (Ronaldo Miranda – *Appassionata*)



1.b / Performer's suggestion (Fabio Zanon – published by Orphee Editions).

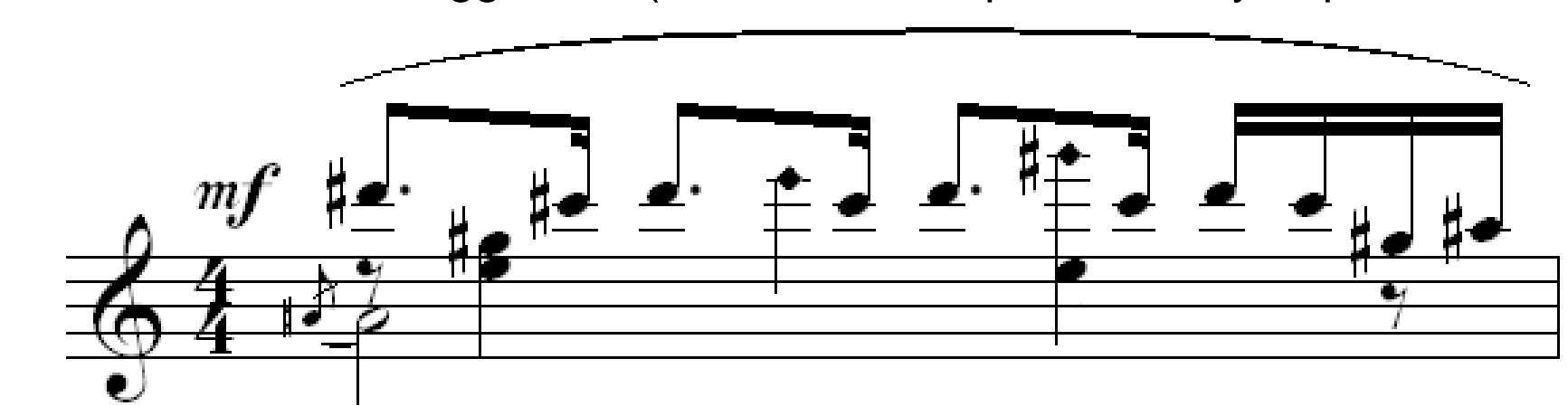


Fig 1 / Example of composer-performer collaboration.



Fig 2 / Ongoing composer-performer collaboration.

Discussion

The categorical analysis pointed out some unexpected results: a greater emphasis on "adaptation of non-idiomatic sections" when compared to "correction of unplayable sections". This might indicate that composers are interested in bringing new ideas to the guitar while performers are concerned in making the composers' ideas idiomatic, whether playable or not. Moreover, the high relevance of "communication strategies" and "performer's intervention level" suggests an overall concern with modes and levels of understanding and communication involved in the collaboration process. This data will inform the next stage of the research, involving a specific case study and the construction of multimedia collaboration tools.

References

- Domenici, C. (2010). *O intérprete em colaboração com o compositor: uma pesquisa autoetnográfica*. In Anais XX congresso da ANPPOM, Florianópolis, 2010 (pp. 1142-1147).
- Foss, L. (1963). The changing composer-performer relationship: a monologue and a dialogue. *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 45-53.
- Ivanovic, D. (2014). *Colaboração entre compositor e intérprete na criação de obras para guitarra: Estudo do processo editorial no repertório de Inglaterra, Croácia e Portugal*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Évora, Évora, Portugal.
- Morais, A.A. de (2013). *A colaboração intérprete-compositor na elaboração da obra "uma lágrima" de Arthur Rinaldi*. Master's Thesis. Federal University of Goiás, Goiânia, Brazil.
- Östersjö, S. (2008). *Shut up'n'play: negotiating the musical work*. Ph.D. Thesis. Lund University, Sweden.