

## Ontology and Ontontology

**Summary.** This short chapter introduces the global architecture of ontology of music which this book is going to discuss in detail.



This book is about ontology of music, including three dimensions: realities, semiotics, and communication. It also includes the extension of ontology to the fourth dimension of embodiment. We call this extension “ontontology” for reasons that will become evident soon.

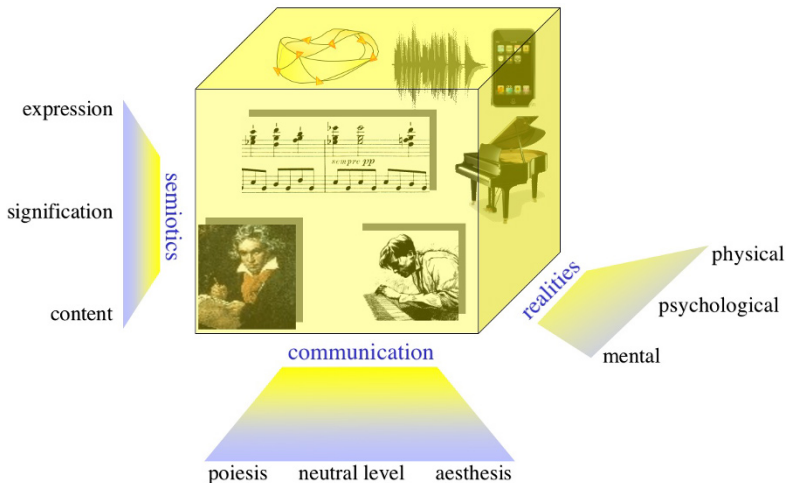


Fig. 2.1: The three-dimensional cube of musical ontology.

## 2.1 Ontology: Where, Why, and How

Ontology is the science of being. We are therefore discussing the ways of being which are shared by music. As shown in Figure 2.1, we view musical being as spanned by three ‘dimensions’, i.e., fundamental ways of being. The first one is the dimension of realities. Music has a threefold articulated reality: physics, psychology, and mentality. Mentality means that music has a symbolic reality that it shares with mathematics. This answers the question of “where” music exists.

The second dimension, semiotics, specifies that musical being is also one of meaningful expression. Music is also an expressive entity. This answers the question of “why” music is so important: it creates meaningful expressions, the signs which point to contents.

The third dimension, communication, stresses the fact that music exists also as a shared being between a sender (usually the composer or musician), the message (typically the composition), and the receiver (the audience). Musical communication answers the question of “how” music exists.

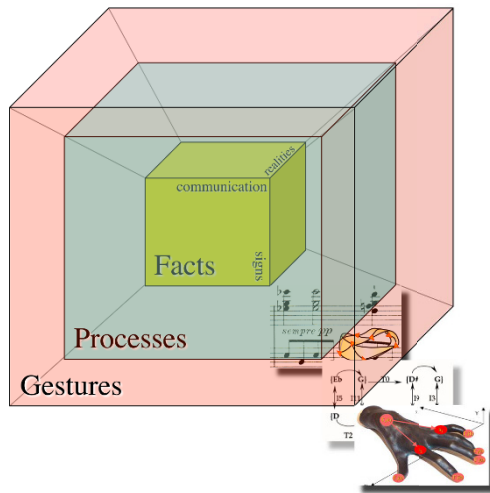


Fig. 2.2: The hypercube of musical onionontology.

## 2.2 Onionontology: Facts, Processes, and Gestures

Beyond the three dimensions of ontology, we have to be aware that music is not only a being that is built from facts and finished results, no, music is strongly also processual, creative, and living in the very making of sounds. Musical performance is a typical essence of music that lives, especially in the realm of

improvisation, while being created. The fourth dimension, embodiment, deals with this aspect, it answers the question “how *come into* being?” It is articulated in three values: facts, processes, and gestures. This fourth dimension of *embodiment* gives the cube of the three ontological dimensions a threefold aspect: ontology of facts, of processes, and of gestures. This four-dimensional display can be visualized as a threefold imbrication of the ontological cube, and this, as shown in Figure 2.2, turns out to be a threefold layering, similar to an onion. This is the reason why we coined this structure “onionology”—sounds funny, but it is an adequate terminology.

All About Music

The Complete Ontology: Realities, Semiotics,  
Communication, and Embodiment

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