Title: The sense of agency for joint action: Novices’ experiences of individual and joint agency in duet music performance

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Abstract: 2.47

The sense of agency for joint actions, in which two or more people coordinate their actions to achieve a shared goal, may be substantially different than the sense of agency for solo actions. Pacherie (2012) asserted that the strength of agency for joint actions depends on the accuracy of joint-predictions, which in turn relies on the accuracy of self- and other-predictions. This interrelation of joint-, self-, and other-predictions has led to a debate over whether people experience a sense of joint agency (“we did it”) rather than or in addition to a sense of individual agency (“I did it”) when they engage in joint action. Ensemble music performance has often been referenced as a paradigmatic example of joint action during which strong feelings of joint agency are likely to arise, and it provides an ecologically valid and yet controlled environment in which to study these experiences. The current study investigated the musical cues that contribute to individual and joint agency in duet music performance. Pairs of novice participants used electronic music boxes to perform simple duets together. Participants alternated between performing the melody, an accompaniment near in pitch to the melody, and an accompaniment farther away in pitch. After each song, participants rated their experience of control over the melody and the accompaniment, and their experience of joint agency over the duet. Performing parts that were farther apart increased individual agency for both duet parts as well as joint agency for the duet as a whole. These findings have implications for our understanding of the relationship between individual and joint agency and the conditions that strengthen the experience of joint agency.