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## Management of Art During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Musical Arts Creator Perspective

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**Abstract:**

**Purpose:** Management in the field of art has three dimensions: self-management, managing the aesthetic situation and managing a cultural institution. This work aims to analyse changes in the artistically creative process understood as the management of the aesthetic situation depending on the form in which participation in art takes place: traditionally, i.e. in-person or virtually using digital methods.

**Design/methodology/approach:** Literature analysis, own empirical qualitative research in the form of interviews with 19 musical arts creators, and autoethnography allowed answer the following research questions: 1) How do forced virtualisation and digitisation affect the quality of the creative process in the aesthetic situation regarding musical arts? 2) Which qualitative parameters of the aesthetic situation are losing and which are gaining quality in connection with the virtualisation of the creative process regarding musical arts?

**Findings:** Forced virtualisation and digitisation significantly affect the quality of the creative process within the aesthetic situation, depending on the form of participation in art. The creator, managing the creative process within the aesthetic situation, must take into account the new optics concerning the components of the aesthetic situation because otherwise, his work will be incomprehensible or unattainable for the recipients – not due to the low quality of the work, but because the work in new virtualised circumstances may change its properties. The results of research show exact components of the aesthetic situation being subject to modifications by the musical arts creator due to the form of participation in the aesthetic situation.

**Practical implications:** The study of musical arts creator's perspective might have practical implications for individuals (musical arts creators and managers or leaders of musical arts groups) and musical arts organisations (business-type and non-profit-type).

**Originality value:** The following groups should be interested in the research results: 1) musical arts creators to develop or structure their perception of the creative process; 2) musical art managers to develop or structure their perception of the complex nature of the creative process of musical art groups they manage; 3) musical art institutions' managers to develop or structure their perception of the complex nature of the creative process of musical artists involved in the institutions they manage.

**Keywords:** Art management, organisation's aesthetics, humanistic management.

**JEL classification:** D91, J19, L26, M54, Z11.

**Paper Type:** Research study.

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## **1. Introduction**

The common perception of the artist as a person disordered and functioning in a chaotic space is not confirmed in the identity of the artists (Szostak, 2022; Szostak and Sułkowski, 2021b). Moreover, it concerns only the superficial and easily visible layer of reality without touching the essence of the organisation of the creative process. The creative process is also sometimes perceived as a phenomenon on the verge of madness and chance; however, the analysis of theories concerning aesthetic optics and managerial optics, which is not present in the literature, allows to look at the creative process as a phenomenon perfectly suited for analysis based on management theory.

Musical arts management may be considered on three levels: 1) self-management of the musical arts creator; 2) management of the aesthetic situation by the musical arts creator; 3) musical arts institution management by a musical arts creator. Each of these levels is characterised by different problems; however, they also have common denominators in need to consider the metaphysical nature of the essence of the aesthetic situation.

The last level is mainly described in the literature, how to run an art gallery, a theatre, or organise an art event – these are common topics. This article focuses on the first and second levels mentioned above. To be able to speak about musical arts creators' self-management, there is a need to analyse the theory of the aesthetic situation first.

One of the more universal and, at the same time, more widely unknown holistic theories in the field of aesthetics that are successfully used in the field of management is the theory of the aesthetic situation (Gołaszewska, 1984b; Ingarden, 1981). Its universality lies in the simplicity and inclusiveness of all phenomena occurring in the art creator and the art recipient areas.

The components of the aesthetic situation concerning musical arts are the musical arts creator, the work of art, the recipient of the musical art (also a critic as a specific type of recipient), the world of universal values and the natural world. In addition to being aware of the components of this theory, one should be aware of the mutual relations between them, a work of art is a crucial component of the aesthetic situation; however, it needs a musical arts creator who will include universal values in the artwork in the form of items of the natural world, as well as a musical arts recipient who will perceive universal values in the elements of the natural world through the process of receiving the artwork.

Living in the 21st century, it is natural that a large part of the processes is virtualised, part of reality adapts faster to the digital world, another part slower. Musical arts is also an area that cannot resist the virtualisation process, although each art discipline has a different propensity for digitisation due to its characteristics.

The COVID-19 pandemic has dominated the world since the turn of 2019/2020 and has been an essential catalyst for the virtualisation and digitisation of all areas of human activity. It was the dominant external factor, from which there was no turning back, and its strength and a long period of influence were able to break even the most hardened traditionalists accustomed to traditional forms of participation.

In this case, too, art had to surrender, and perhaps for the first time in the history of humankind, most musical artists and audiences were forced to participate in their preferred musical arts types in a virtualised way – in whole or to a large extent. Just as each art discipline reacts differently to virtualisation, the creators and recipients of individual types of musical arts also react differently to this process.

The reasons for these different reactions are many factors: 1) the characteristics of the creative process; 2) characteristics of the perception process; 3) the personal preferences of the musical arts creator; 4) personal preferences of the recipient of the musical art; 5) having an appropriate infrastructure to participate in musical arts in virtual forms.

This work aims to analyse changes in the creative process depending on the form in which the aesthetic situation concerning musical arts takes place: 1) traditional in-person or 2) virtual with digitally remote techniques. In order to structure all the deliberations, the following research questions were formulated: 1) How do forced virtualisation and digitisation affect the quality of the creative process within the aesthetic situation regarding musical arts? 2) Which qualitative parameters of the aesthetic situation are losing and which are gaining in connection with the creative process virtualisation regarding musical arts?

The research methods used in this work are critical review and qualitative analysis of the literature, qualitative empirical research and autoethnography. The methodological strategy is based on an interdisciplinary and multi-paradigm approach, taking into account the achievements in the field of aesthetics and management.

The critical review of the literature concerned two areas: 1) aesthetics – in terms of the possibility of adapting aesthetic theories in management sciences, and 2) management – in terms of identifying areas for which aestheticisation can constitute a significant added value. As a supplement to the cognitive gaps in the themes of crucial importance, the literature in the field of philosophy, psychology, sociology and pedagogy was also analysed to a limited extent.

The primary languages of the analysed publications were English and Polish; critical German publications were also analysed. Qualitative analysis of the literature was based primarily on monographs with an established position in the field of aesthetics (Dahlhaus, 2007; Gołaszewska, 1967; 1984a; 1984b; 1986; 2001; 2005; Ingarden, 1981; Levinson, 2003; Ossowski, 1949; Wilkoszewska, 2007), management

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(Drucker, 2006b; 2006a; 2009; Griffin, 2005; Kotler and Keller, 2016; Koźmiński, 2005; Mintzberg, 2012) and aesthetics of management (Biehl-Missal, 2011; Guillet de Monthoux, 2004; Kostera, 2014; 2019; Kostera and Woźniak, 2022; Linstead and Höpfl, 2000; Minahan, 2020; Strati, 1999), as well as on the analysis of the results of research published in the form of scientific articles, which were made possible by scientific research EBSCO, Google Scholar, JSTOR, Mendeley, Scopus and Web of Science databases.

In addition to the analysis of the results of secondary research published in the literature on the subject, for this work, primary qualitative research was carried out from the perspective of a musical arts creator (as understood by the manager of the aesthetic situation) in terms of the aesthetic situation taking place in a traditional and virtual form.

The research was carried out in structured face-to-face interviews with the creators of the musical art. In the search for a universal context that could be used as an independent variable, life and the global COVID-19 pandemic bring a solution. The consequences of the pandemic strongly influenced the functioning of musical arts in the entire range of the aesthetic situation: musical arts creators, musical arts institutions and musical arts recipients, and the traditional forms of participation in musical arts began to modulate overnight into digital and virtual forms (Demiańczuk, 2022).

What constitutes the essence of musical arts, i.e., the creator's contact with the artwork and the artwork with the recipient was taken by the deadly virus into the brackets of threats to health and life. This ubiquitous and irreversible change served as the primary context for showing the specificity and mechanisms of managing an aesthetic situation from the creator's perspective.

Inference regarding the results of the secondary and primary research was mainly based on the synthesis of the results and was carried out with awareness, systematics, rigour, pluralism and methodological triangulation. The methods used in the qualitative research were reproducible according to the canon and can be recapped to verify or expand the conclusions.

An essential research method for this work was also autoethnography, based on the author's own over 20 years of experience as a classical music artist (an instrumentalist performing dozens of solo recitals around the world every year), several years of experience as a manager working at the level of management boards of companies operating in an international environment and several years of experience of this researcher interdisciplinary area.

Autoethnography, however, was a secondary method to the methods mentioned above, constituting a source of reflections filling the backbone of deliberations with substantive content shaped by an in-depth analysis of the literature on the subject.

## **2. Literature Review**

The artist's organisational activity may concern three dimensions: 1) self-management (Jones, 2009; Kostera, 2014; Marra, 2019; Sims, 2003; Szostak and Sułkowski, 2021a), 2) managing the aesthetic situation (Böhme, 2021; Gołaszewska, 1984b; Szostak, 2021; Szostak and Sułkowski, 2020), 3) managing a cultural institution, if an artist with managerial skills was employed for this purpose (Morozova *et al.*, 2016; Rius-Ulldemolins and Klein, 2021). Therefore, considerations regarding managerial issues in the artist's activity can be placed on self-organisation and self-management, where self-awareness and the ability to reflect are essential.

This self-management, which from the title of M. Kostera's monograph may be called "occupy management", is a response, on the one hand, to the erosion of the role of the nation-state, and on the other hand, to the growing power of corporations that take over an increasing range of everyday spheres. Among all these, there is a modern man who is better and better equipped with the knowledge and skills to organise his own life without institutional support (Kostera, 2014).

Nevertheless, on the other hand, we also see that the existing guarantees of the good of humanity – in the form of technological progress, democracy and science – are no longer valid. In each area mentioned above, we notice negative sides like heartlessness, populism or using progress results for selfish purposes. Referring to selected classic management functions, M. Kostera recognises the principal axes of self-management (Kostera, 2019): 1) as the keys to planning (3I: imagination, inspiration, intuition); 2) as the keys to organising (3S: structure, space, synchronicity); 3) as keys to motivate (3L: leadership, learning, love); 4) as keys to control (3E: ethos, ethics, ecology).

The indicated areas are nothing more than the aestheticisation of reality through the aestheticisation of management (Guillet de Monthoux, 2004). Classic management functions have been shown from a new perspective – although we are talking about self-management, the keys to these functions are at the macro level. It is the exact opposite of what the classics of organisation management had in mind – they wanted to manage organisations (mezzo level) but focused on organising resources (collectively, people treated as a resource; their keys were at the micro level).

To put it metaphorically, if a musician, while performing a piece, focuses on individual sounds, taking care not to make a mistake in organising them, sooner or later, he will stumble, while the same musician, when he focuses on the interpretation of the work, presenting the emotions and values that this work brings, will be able to reach heights unattainable in the first situation.

The optimal explanation of the artist's organisational component will be analysing the aesthetic situation with its elements and their interrelations (Gołaszewska,

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1984b; Szostak, 2020; Szostak and Sułkowski, 2020). It should be emphasised that the order of the issues discussed below is not evaluative. According to the theory of the aesthetic situation, the musical arts creator's organisational activities take place on three levels: 1) the world of values (artistry), 2) work of art (creativity), 3) the natural world (virtuosity) (Szostak, 2022).

A specific explanation of the apparent chaos surrounding some artists during the creative process is precisely the characteristic of managing the entire aesthetic situation by the creator. Contrary to traditional management of organisations, where the hierarchy of management levels is maintained (from strategy, through tactics, to operations), creative process management can be much more dynamic.

Despite the analytical separation of these three levels, the musical arts creator somehow manages them simultaneously, immediately adapting the actions on the other levels with a change made in one of them. The whole process, however, is not chaotic; it is highly effective even though it may look chaotic from the outside. It is because a slight change at the level of the value world can determine many adjustments at the level of the artwork and thus – the most visible adjustments – at the level of the natural world.

In order to analyse the issue of managing the aesthetic situation from the creator's perspective, one should be aware of the components of the aesthetic situation and their mutual relations. In short, it can be said that a work of art is a vital component of the aesthetic situation; however, it needs a creator who will include universal values in the artwork in the form of elements of the natural world and a recipient who will read universal values in the elements of the natural world utilising the process of receiving the artwork (Szostak and Sułkowski, 2020).

In this context, the musical arts creator plays the role of a manager of the aesthetic situation because of the content of the message (the choice of values and their location in the elements of the natural world) and its form (applied schemes, styles or formal solutions) will depend on him. For this purpose, the musical arts creator has three streams of influence at his disposal: virtuosity, artistry and creativity (Szostak, 2021; 2022). A conscious musical arts creator manages these streams in a controlled manner – both at the stage of building his competencies in this area and, above all, at the stage of using them in the creative process.

Not every work requires highly virtuosic solutions; the creators of the musical art sometimes refer to brutalist solutions to draw the recipient's attention to specific issues in this way. Not every work requires many sophisticated references to the world of values – often, the message's simplicity is more powerful. In the same way, creativity does not have to be characteristic of every work – not always an innovative form will be more understandable than traditional solutions (Gołaszewska, 1986; Ossowski, 1949).

The musical arts creator, as the manager of the aesthetic situation – through designing the musical work – also determines the process of its reception (Gołaszewska, 1984b). Of course, in each of the disciplines of art, the creator has a different influence on the reception process: authors of theatre plays or composers of opera performances quite strongly define the requirements for the process of producing a work; however, directors also have a lot to say in the process of making a specific work.

The show's director is also the creator and manages his own creative and reception process; in many cases, the director will have a more significant influence on the final shape of the work than the author of the play or the composer of the opera. In turn, the creator within the visual arts (painter, graphic artist), after completing the work, separates himself from it and is not able to influence the process of reception: the recipient can shape the circumstances of contemplation (time, length of exposure, contexts) at his discretion. As one can see, the creator does not fully influence the reception process because the reception process depends on many factors independent of the creator, including, first of all, the level of the recipient's activity.

### **3. Material and Methods**

To explain the changes in the nature of the creative process depending on the form of participation in the aesthetic situation (traditionally/in-person or digitally/virtually) from the creator of musical arts perspective, the study used the exploratory research method. The qualitative research was conducted in the form of structured in-depth formal interviews with key informants in the studied field, i.e. people engaged in creative musical arts activity.

The choice of such a methodology seems to be the most appropriate for the experimental nature of the study. Furthermore, the research sample selection was justified by the availability of people engaged in creative activity in musical arts from different countries and cultures and their openness to participation in such research. Finally, the study was designed to examine representatives of all types of musical arts: composers, performers (instrumentalists, vocalists, conductors), and others (sound directors).

Nineteen musical arts creators were interviewed in the study. The interviews were conducted over five months in 2022, in a personal or virtual form – depending on the respondent's preferences. Most of the research sample came from Poland (n=8, 42.1%), two participants from Bulgaria and the Czech Republic (10.5% each), one person from Chile, France, Germany, Great Britain, Nigeria, and the USA each (5.3% each); in addition, one person indicated his nationality as Jewish-Russian-American. Most of the respondents were men (n = 15, 78.9%). Due to the pilot nature of this study, no efforts were made to achieve a balance in terms of gender, age, or the length of the artistic experience of the participants.

The influence of these elements on the research results was fully realised, but the results were analysed to obtain at least a general picture of the examined problems. Data analysis was performed using NVivo software.

Interviews with Polish respondents were conducted in Polish, and interviews with non-Polish respondents were conducted in English, recording their responses. Then the materials were written down to standardise the analysis and inference process, and the answers obtained from the Polish-language interviews were translated into English. Description of the research sample – in terms of gender; year of birth; the number of years of artistic activity; determining whether the artistic activity is performed as primary, additional or one of many forms of professional activity; artistic education; non-artistic education and declared nationality – is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Research sample description

<i>Code</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Birth year</i>	<i>Years of art experience</i>	<i>Artistic activity as primary, additional or one of many forms of professional activities</i>	<i>Artistic education</i>	<i>Beyond-artistic education</i>	<i>Nationality</i>
MUS01	K	1967	39	one of many	postgraduate music studies	MA in Pedagogy	Poland
MUS02	M	1983	17	additional	private lessons	PhD in Chemistry	The Czech Republic
MUS03	M	1961	46	additional	private lessons	PhD in Physics	Germany
MUS04	K	1978	37	primary	Master of Music Arts, instrumentalist	PhD in Chemistry	Great Britain
MUS05	M	1991	12	primary	PhD in musical arts, instrumental studies	postgraduate studies in management	Poland
MUS06	M	1991	22	additional	1st level music school	lack	Poland
MUS07	M	1999	9	primary	lack	College	Poland
MUS08	M	1993	13	primary	Master of Music Arts	postgraduate studies: 1) sound production, 2) music pedagogy	Poland



MUS09	M	1998	16	primary	MA in Music Arts	lack	Bulgaria
MUS10	M	1954	43	primary	MA in Music Arts, Conducting	Master of Theology and Linguistic Studies	USA
MUS11	M	1984	33	primary	M.Sc.	Bachelor	France
MUS12	M	2000	6	primary	2nd level music school	lack	Poland
MUS13	M	1964	44	one of many	MA in pedagogy	medium	Poland
MUS14	M	1978	14	additional	private lessons	lack	Bulgaria
MUS15	K	1977	4	additional	private lessons	Bachelor in Psychology	Jewish-Russian-American
MUS16	M	1971	41	primary	2nd level music school	lack	Nigeria
MUS17	K	1970	34	primary	2nd level music school	MA in musicology	The Czech Republic
MUS18	M	1993	7	additional	private lessons	MA in Music Pedagogy	Chile
MUS19	M	1980	25	one of many	Doctor of Musical Arts, instrumentalist	Associate Professor of Management	Poland

*Source: Authors' elaboration.*

The interview questionnaire was divided into six parts (A-F). Within each part, the participants answered 53 detailed questions based – for the clarity of the classification of answers – on five-point Likert scales (-2 = very negative impact, -1 = rather a negative impact, 0 = neutral influence, 1 = rather a positive influence, 2 = very positive influence).

The first group of questions (A) were about rating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic directly on the participant as a musical arts creator. The second group of questions (B) was about rating the pandemic's impact on the musical arts discipline (i.e. the participant with creators, audiences, institutions, and sponsors).

The third group of questions (C) assessed the level of a participant's approach to particular features/properties of musical arts by comparing traditional/in-person and digital/virtual methods of artistic activities/participation.

The fourth group of questions (D) asked about foreseeing the situation in musical arts after lifting the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

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The last two groups of questions (E and F) compared the in-person and virtual forms of participation in musical arts regarding the aesthetic qualities of the aesthetic situation.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

The analysis of the impact of the limitations resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic on the creative process from the perspective of a music artist is as follows<sup>2</sup> (questions from part A). The lack of the possibility of in-person performances (question number 9) was assessed by creators of musical arts rather negatively (rating: -0.79). However, the very fact of transferring their artistic activities to virtual reality (10) is a more neutral issue for musical arts creators (-0.05).

The conclusion may be that for the creator of musical arts, the possibility of conducting artistic activities is more important than the form of activities (in-person or virtual). The possibility for the audience to participate in musical arts following their personal preferences, i.e., the ability to shape the time and duration of participation or to regulate the parameters of the work (volume, timbre), was assessed by the creators of the musical arts at -0.42, i.e., between rather negative and neutral (11).

Limitations on in-person contact with one's band or members of an artistic group were assessed much more negatively (question 12, rating: -1.05), limitations on in-person contacts with other artists in the field of musical arts (13, -0.84); restrictions on in-person contacts with creators of other artistic disciplines (14, -0.63). The creators of musical arts considered the limitation of their in-person contact with people the most substantial negative factor (15, -1.26).

Even though the pandemic limitations also had positive sides – in the form of more time to relax (questions 16, 0.42), develop one's musical knowledge by listening, reading and watching content (17, 0.68), increased creativity manifested by seeking new creative possibilities (19, 0.37), and above all, more time to develop and practice one's artistic skills (18, 0.84) and a deeper understanding of human nature manifested by acting in limited conditions (26, 0.58).

It is a mental state (21, -0.84), mood (20, -0.79), setting life goals (23, -0.21) and achieving them (23, -0.53), setting artistic goals (24, -0.26) and their implementation were assessed negatively, but moderately (25, -0.37).

To illustrate the above analytical results, it is worth listening to a few selected quotes from the statements of the interviewees. "For me, as an introvert, reducing

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<sup>2</sup> Five-point Likert scale: -2 = very negative influence, -1 = rather a negative influence, 0 = neutral influence, +1 = rather a positive influence, +2 = very positive influence.

interpersonal contact was not a problem; however, it limited or even prevented many previously planned projects – including international tours” [MUS19].

These three statements confirm the increase in the dynamics of my creativity in the context of the new realities: 1) “I gave more concerts than ever before for two reasons: I was able to organise live concerts at times when it was difficult (e.g. as a physicist, I calculated the concept of ventilation of our hall concert so that live events could almost always be organised), and during periods when live concerts were not allowed, I organised recordings and virtual concerts” [MUS03]; 2) “The new normality has opened up new perspectives, and for me, it is a positive development” [MUS16]; 3) “Even though some aspects may seem negative, by changing areas or rethinking the creative process, we can still make the most of our time and work on other aspects. (...) For some, it is negative, but also positive for the result. Just different methods to achieve the main goal” [MUS18].

When analysing such averaging results, one should consider the complexity of the creative units: “I hate communicating with people virtually – be it on a personal, professional or performance level – but I know many people who seem to love it! However, each of us is different!” [MUS04]. “The pandemic has changed the ability to connect through music personally.

Now [after the restrictions have disappeared], we are doing better, but then [during the restrictions in force], everyone suffered. Online shows can never replace face-to-face shows” [MUS15]. To sum up, the creative process determined by the limitations resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic was assessed by music artists on the border of moderate negativity and neutrality (-0.29); details are presented in Figure 1.

Music creators’ assessment of the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on musical arts in general (i.e. jointly with creators, audiences, institutions, and sponsors) is moderately negative (answers to questions from Part B, -0.64).

The most troubling issues were: lack of public live performances of musical arts (27, -1.32), limitation of in-person contact with other creators of musical arts (31, -1.05); limiting in-person contacts with members of one’s band or music group (30, -0.84); limiting in-person contacts with creators of other arts (32, -0.79).

Two aspects were assessed positively, however, in a minimal way: transferring one’s artistic creation to virtual reality (28, 0.11) and the possibility of participating in one’s field of art following the personal preferences of the recipients as to the time of participation, duration of participation, adjustment of sound volume (29, 0.05).

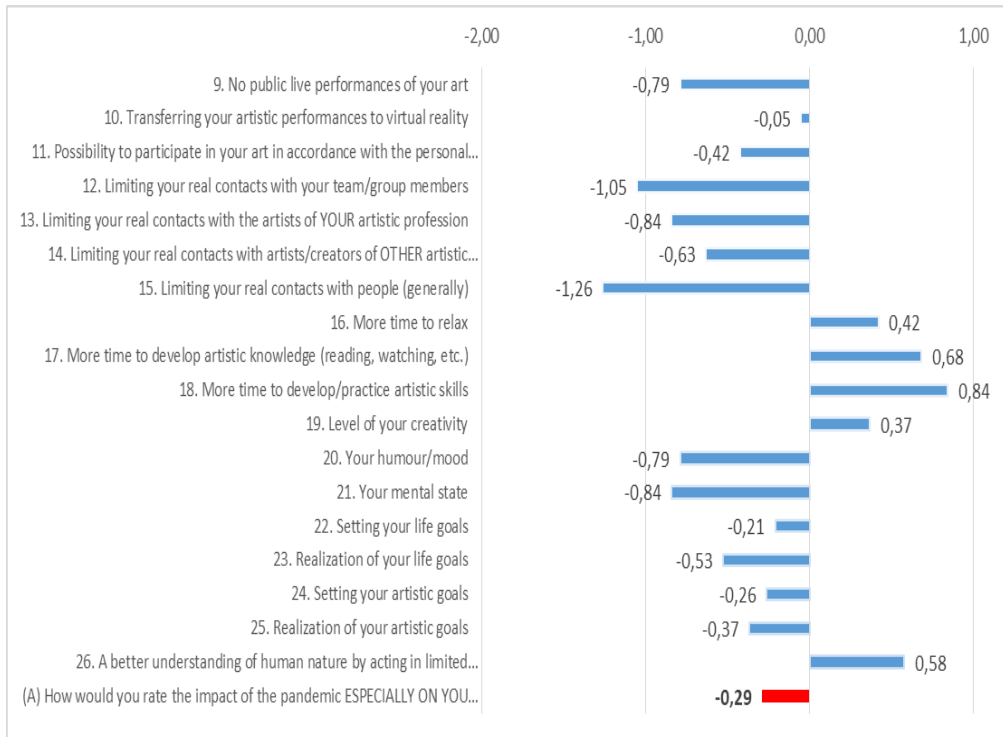
“Although [during the time of the restrictions] we were not able to do much, we could have used our time to create content and offer small performances online for

audiences who otherwise would not be able to see and hear us in person” [MUS18].

The results are presented in

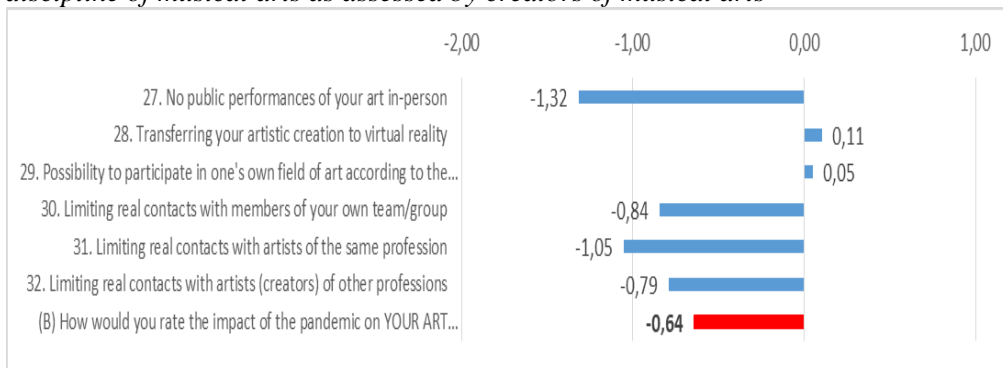
Figure 2.

**Figure 1.** Assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on creators of musical arts



Source: Author's elaboration.

**Figure 2.** The impact of restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on the discipline of musical arts as assessed by creators of musical arts

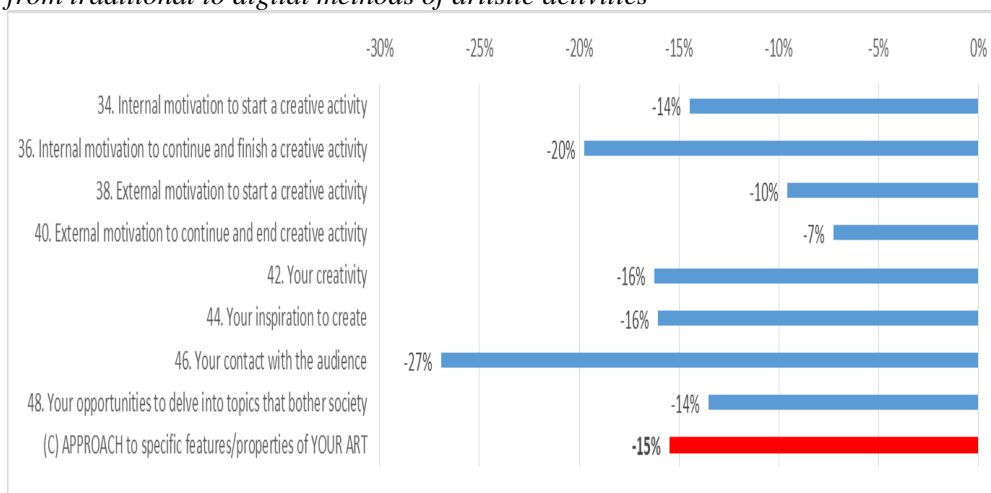


Source: Author's elaboration.

Changes in the creative attitude of music artists following the transition from traditional to digital methods of artistic activities (questions from part C) were assessed negatively. In summary, it can be said that with the transition from traditional to digital methods of artistic activities, creators of musical arts lose 15% of their creative potential. Furthermore, after the transition from traditional to digital methods of artistic activity, all the analysed parameters of the creative attitude lose their quality, and the loss varies between individual parameters.

Ranging from the most losing quality aspects: contact with the audience (question 46, -27%), internal motivation to continue and end creative activity (36, -20%), creativity (42, -16%), inspiration to create (44, -16%), internal motivation to start a creative activity (34, -14%), opportunities to delve into topics bothering society (48, -14%), external motivation to start creative activity (38, -10%), external motivation to continue and end creative activities (40, -7%).

**Figure 3.** Changes in the creative attitude of music artists following the transition from traditional to digital methods of artistic activities



*Source:* Author's elaboration.

Two opinions emphasise the distinctiveness and contrast between traditional and virtual methods: 1) “Live and virtual performance are completely different fields” [MUS19]; 2) “When it comes to contact with the audience, I would say that the virtual broadcasting of the performances is more inconvenient for the audience than live participation. However, on the other hand, video clips can reach a wider audience if made available properly” [MUS18].

There were also voices strongly unfavourable of virtual activities: “I have reached the stage where I avoid all virtual activities, whenever possible. I hate video calls and avoid them unless it is a crucial meeting that I cannot give up. It is difficult for

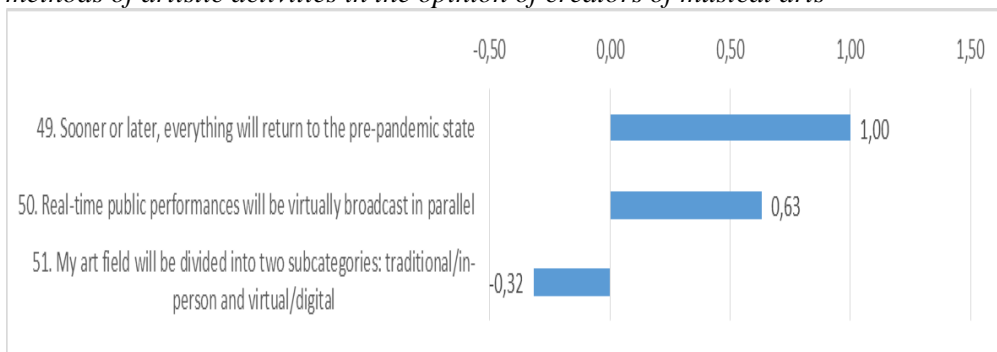
me to relate to people or talk freely in front of the camera” [MUS04]. The analytical results are presented in Figure 3.

In the fourth group of questions, the creators of musical arts referred to their predictions of the situation in the area of musical arts after lifting the COVID-19 pandemic (questions from Part D). They concluded with moderate certainty that, sooner or later, everything would return to the pre-pandemic state (question 49, assessment 1.00), and in-person public performances would be broadcast virtually (50, 0.63).

The respondents moderately disagree with the statement that the creators of musical arts will be divided into two subcategories: those specialising in traditional live activities and those operating virtually (51, -0.32), which is emphasised by the following comment: “The creative process may have a double format because creation always happens in many different ways. When it comes to performances, I doubt anyone would be considered just a virtual performer or just a personal performer. The pandemic has become an opportunity for experimentation; now, you need to know how to behave in front of the lens and in front of an audience live on stage.

The same is true of exercise: good training nowadays involves both video broadcasting and contact with in-person audiences, which ultimately gives you more training experience” [MUS18]. Finally, respondents underlined the profound changes the pandemic has made in their psyche and ways of functioning: “Nothing is and should not be as it was before the pandemic’s limitations. Pushing the boundaries showed me new fields of expression and new ways of creative thinking” [MUS9]. A graphical presentation of the results is shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4.** Assessment of the future of musical arts concerning traditional and digital methods of artistic activities in the opinion of creators of musical arts



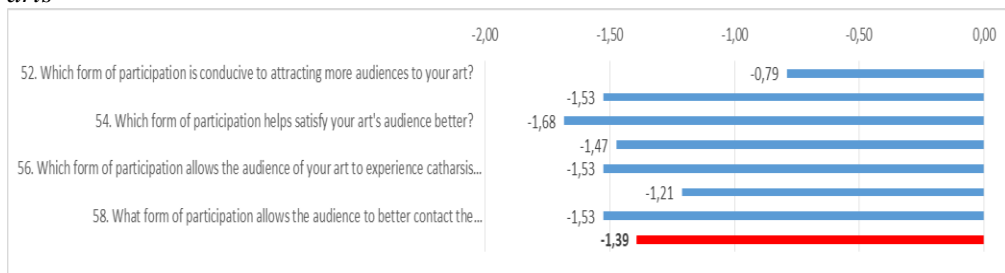
**Source:** Author’s elaboration.

The assessment of the reception process in musical arts in the context of traditional and digital forms of participation in the eyes of creators (questions from part E) looks negative concerning digital and virtual forms (-1.39). It is thus definitely

clearly positive concerning traditional live forms. The strength of differences in two aspects, i.e. attracting the number of recipients (questions 52, -0.79) and contact of recipients with the work itself (57, -1.21), was assessed as moderate to the disadvantage of virtual forms.

On the other hand, all other aspects were assessed to the disadvantage of virtual forms, and they were: customer satisfaction (53, -1.53), customer satisfaction (54, -1.68), customer involvement (55, -1.47), experiences of the state of catharsis by recipients (56, -1.53), contact of recipients with the creator/performer of art (58, -1.53). “I associate virtual media with an” independent “receiver. There are times when, in solitude, you connect deeply with the outer elements and can reproduce them at will. Personal events sometimes force the audience to be perceived the same way for all audiences” [MUS18]. The synthetic results of this group of questions are presented in Figure 5.

**Figure 5.** Assessment of the reception process in musical arts in the context of traditional and virtual forms of participation in the opinion of creators of musical arts



Source: Author’s elaboration.

The last group of questions concerned the issue of motives and inspiration in the creative process, the impact of awareness of the form of presentation of artwork (traditional or virtual) on the creative process and the phenomenon of virtualisation of musical arts in the future. The creators of the musical arts responded as follows. Four (21%) creators of musical arts stated that they did not see any differences in their creative process from the traditional and virtual forms of the aesthetic situation [MUS02, MUS05, MUS17, MUS18] (question 59). However, one person stated that the virtual form was more demanding [MUS16]. On the other hand, the vast majority of respondents emphasised the differences between both forms. These differences are presented in

Table 2.

**Table 2.** Differences between traditional and virtual forms of undertaking the aesthetic situation in the eyes of creators of musical arts

In-person	Virtually	Participa nt code
• emphasis on emotions and	• emphasis on visual and image	MUS01

experiences		
• “I try to enter the recipients' heads and give them what they can expect from the moment's need.”		MUS07
• possibility of immediate reaction	• the possibility of ‘delayed’ reactions, e.g. in the form of a comment, which is also very important	MUS13
• fulfilment of one's vocation	• the need to maintain the audience's interest in my person and my activities, rather than a compulsion of an internal desire to act virtually	MUS19
• listening to the audience present during the performance; • “I like reacting to changes in the atmosphere in the room.”	• “The virtual method is okay when the in-person method is not possible. There are also inspirations coming from me and the music material, and this kind of inspiration is also possible in virtual forms.”	MUS03
• the sincerity of heart poured out into the text and melody	• visual side; • clarity of sound	MUS08
	• “I was surprised by how many people responded to virtual activities – entries appeared from all over the world.”	MUS10
• “The world is fed up with artificiality, creating something virtual, and therefore perhaps untrue. Playing art live gives tangibility, uniqueness, individuality, dependence on many factors, thanks to which you can enter into even greater interaction and understanding with recipients who need it.”		MUS12
• “For me, performances are about communication with the audience, and I feel that a performance needs a live audience to generate energy, a sense of the uniqueness of a performance, drive and excitement; it is difficult for me to achieve this while creating virtually.”		MUS04
• “The audience can give much energy, not virtually feel it.”		MUS06
• “Traditional contact with the audience leaves unforgettable memories and opens the door to self-criticism.”		MUS09

*Source: Author's elaboration.*

Eight (42%) musical arts creators of musical arts do not see any differences in their creative process, taking into account their awareness that the work will (or is) presented traditionally or virtually [MUS01, MUS02, MUS06, MUS11, MUS13, MUS14, MUS16, MUS17] (question 60). On the other hand, eleven (58%) creators of musical arts see minor or significant differences in their creative process, considering their awareness that the work will (or is) presented traditionally or virtually. These differences relate to:



- involvement of the creator and recipient, the power of experience, emotions, and satisfaction [MUS19];
- thought processes [MUS10], for example:
  - awareness that virtual recipients will receive an artwork much worse than live viewers [MUS07];
  - awareness that virtual recipients will perceive the work entirely differently than live viewers [MUS09];
- new issues that need to be taken into account in virtual activities [MUS10], such as:
  - camera angles;
  - making things more concise;
  - means of expression: “There are elements that I will use for a music video but not in a live concert. The same thing happens the other way; for an in-person performance, there are things I will turn on that will not make sense for a music video, where I would prioritise more layers and things that I would not be able to do on stage unless I clone myself” [MUS18];
- less freedom during virtual activities [MUS15];
- the process of creation: “The work presented live better accepts the performance experience generated by stress: obvious mistakes, a variety of interpretations, the variety of the visual presentation of the created art and the performer, which cannot be said about the virtual ‘live’ presentation. A virtual performance prepared together with post-production provides comfort and the possibility of controlling the overall picture, but it also makes the work artificial” [MUS12];
- sources of inspiration: “Observing the audience during a live performance is my main source of inspiration; I like reacting to changes in the atmosphere in the room. On the other hand, there are also inspirations from within me and, for example, from musical material, and this kind of inspiration is also possible in virtual formats” [MUS03].

Music creators are not agreed on the initiation or intensification of digitisation and virtualisation by the COVID-19 pandemic within their art discipline (question 61). Two out of 19 respondents (10.5%) believe that the COVID-19 pandemic has started the process of digitisation and virtualisation within their art discipline. However, 84% believe the COVID-19 pandemic has only intensified their art discipline’s digitisation and virtualisation process.

## **5. Conclusions**

This study and its originality might have practical implications for individuals (musical arts creators and managers or leaders of musical arts groups) and musical

arts organisations (business-type and non-profit-type). Therefore, these groups should be interested in the research results for the following reasons: 1) musical arts creators to develop or structure their perception of the creative process; 2) musical art managers to develop or structure their perception of the complex nature of the creative process of musical art groups they manage; 3) musical art institutions' managers to develop or structure their perception of the complex nature of the creative process of musical artists involved in the institutions they manage.

The limitations of the research are the following: 1) the relatively small size of the research sample and randomness of research participants do not allow for profound generalisation of results; 2) the research took place in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic when the conclusions could be affected by day-to-day struggling.

Among perspectives of the research can be mentioned: 1) large-scale research could be undertaken based on the methodology prepared for this study; 2) more focused research could be undertaken based on the methodology prepared for this study (art creators from different countries, regions, cultures, divided by age, gender or the length of experience).

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