

VIOLIN PROJECTION: PERCEPTUAL AND SEMANTIC ANALYSES

Claudia Fritz, Danièle Dubois

Institut Jean le Rond d'Alambert, Université Pierre et Marie Curie, France

claudia.fritz@upmc.fr

daniele.dubois@upmc.fr

ABSTRACT

Projection is often cited as a criterion contributing to the quality of a "good" violin, especially by soloists. However, it is one of the most intriguing criteria: soloists seem (at least some of them) to be able to evaluate the projection of their instrument at the back of the room while hearing it under their ear; players claim that some instruments can be loud under the ear but without projecting well; projection may be one of the criteria that distinguish great Old Italian violins from their newer counterparts. A series of listening experiments have therefore been conducted to investigate this property and understand better the concept of projection. These experiments consisted in comparing pairs of violins, either live or through recordings, either solo or with orchestral accompaniment. Pairs of violins were usually constituted by one Old Italian and one new violin. Listeners had to evaluate the relative projection as well as some other properties like richness, loudness and brightness to search for correlations between projection and other properties. A compilation of the results of these different experiments will be presented at the conference. In addition, listeners from one of the main live experiments had to answer the question "What is your definition of projection, i.e. the one you used to evaluate the different violins?". A linguistic analysis was conducted on the 37 answers collected and revealed a large diversity (lexical variation) in the linguistic expression of projection which contrasts with the large consensus on the different semantic properties which characterise the concept, namely "the capacity of an instrument to produce a powerful, clear, rich in harmonics sound, which carries across the room, not only in solo but above the orchestra too".