

Information Letter

Cross-Cultural Evaluation of Instrumental Difficulty

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Title of the study: Cross-Cultural Evaluation of Instrumental Difficulty

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Duration: approx. 30 minutes (can be paused and resumed)

Host institution: Université de Lille – CRISTAL (CNRS UMR 9189)

1. Who we are

This study is conducted within the Algomas research team (CRISTAL, Université de Lille, www.algomus.fr). It forms part of Rui Yang's doctoral project 'Modeling and Semi-Automatic Generation of Musical Arrangements to Foster Ensemble Music Practice' (2024 – 2027).

2. Purpose of the study

The study aims to analyse how instrumental teachers perceive musical difficulty across different educational systems and instruments. Participants are asked to rate the technical difficulty of short music excerpts and to provide optional background and qualitative feedback. Aggregated, anonymised data will help design pedagogical tools and generative models for multi-instrument arrangement and difficulty prediction.

3. Your Participation

You are invited to participate as an expert instrumental teacher by rating the difficulty level of selected musical excerpts according to your usual grading system (e.g., ABRSM). Your participation involves:

- Filling out a brief demographic questionnaire at the beginning.
- Completing an online evaluation form (about 30–50 excerpts), rating difficulty on a scale appropriate to your teaching context.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you will not receive any financial compensation. Processing is based on your explicit consent in accordance with Article 6(1)(a) of the GDPR. You may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. Any personal data already collected will be deleted unless it has already been included in aggregated analyses from which it cannot be removed.

4. What data we collect

We collect only the data necessary for research and educational purposes.

Anonymous & required

- Instrument to be graded
- Educational system used
- Years of teaching experience
- Difficulty ratings of music excerpts

Optional & anonymous

- Teaching context
- Region, Age range, Gender identity
- Feedback on grading task

Optional & stored separately (identifiable information)

- Email address (if you wish to be contacted for follow-up)
- Display name and affiliation (if you wish to be acknowledged by name)

5. Data minimisation and separation

Each participant receives a random Participant ID. All ratings and background information are stored without direct identifiers in the anonymous research database. Any optional contact or acknowledgement information is stored in separate tables. A temporary link table may exist during the study to allow withdrawals; it is destroyed before any public release. Identifiable information and anonymous data are never merged.

6. Storage and security, data retention

All data is hosted on Université de Lille secure servers located in the EU. Transmission and storage are encrypted; access is role-based and logged. Back-ups follow institutional data-management policy. No data is stored on third-party commercial platforms. Anonymous research data are kept for up to ten years. Optional acknowledgement records are kept only until withdrawal, publication, or study end.

8. Publication and sharing

Data will only be published when at least three teachers from your instrument and your grading system have participated. All results will be presented in an aggregated form. These aggregated and anonymised data will be published under open-science licences (CC BY-SA 4.0), on institutional repositories such as recherche.data.gouv.fr. No identifiable information will ever be publicly released.

9. Your rights

You have the right to: access and receive a copy of your data; request correction or deletion; restrict or object to processing, except where these rights are limited under GDPR Article 17(3)(d) because erasure would seriously impair the research objectives.

10. Benefits and risks

While there are no direct personal benefits, your input significantly contributes to educational and musical research, helping improve pedagogical resources for students and teachers globally. There are no anticipated risks beyond the minimal inconvenience of dedicating your time.

11. Optional acknowledgements

You may choose whether you would like your name to be publicly acknowledged as a contributor or to remain anonymous. If you choose to be acknowledged, your name will appear without any direct link to your individual ratings or comments. You may withdraw your consent for public acknowledgement within 30 days of your participation. After this period, withdrawal may not be possible if materials including your acknowledgement have already been published.

Contact information: For questions, concerns, or to withdraw from the study, please contact the coordinator, Rui Yang and the responsible of the project, Pr. Mathieu Giraud.

Consent: By participating in this evaluation, you indicate your informed consent to the terms described above.

Thank you very much for your valuable contribution to this research!