

Introduction

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1. Introductory remarks

The main title of this volume was one of the themes of the sixth symposium of the Study Group on Multipart Music within the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM), renamed the International Council for Traditions of Music and Dance (ICTMD) on 26 August 2023 (Pettan and Lee 2023). The symposium took place at the Academy of Music in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in September 2019 (see Ahmedaja and Talam 2019). The performance act, as the very moment in which music exists, allows us to discern emotion and aesthetic experience in the most intensive moment of the music-making process. In multipart music practices, this happens as a rule through the coordination of individual ways of music making within a group. This necessary approach causes tension and contributes essentially to the complexity of this particular moment, in which social relationships are also performed and constructed during the very act of representing them. According to the musicologist Nicholas Cook, “musical time as performed and experienced is a social construction, and the act of making music together is an act of forging and maintaining community” (2009, 777).

In this framework, issues of emotion and aesthetics as conscious experiences and cognitive processing gain a special importance, especially because of the mutual dependence between cognition and elicitation. Emotions have been characterised as complex processes in which a non-cognitive “affective appraisal”, which is fast and automatic, causes subsequent physiological responses, motor changes, action tendencies, and changes in facial and vocal expression (Robinson 2005, 57–61; see also Price 2016, 120). The more factors are present, the stronger the experienced emotion is felt. Cupchik and Winston, in turn, state that “Western philosophical traditions have ... defined aesthetic experience as a ... realm in which everyday concerns and issues external to the object were excluded” (1996, 61). Based on this view, the role of context in aesthetic appreciation is characterised as follows in the book *Art, Aesthetics, and the Brain*:

The aesthetic experience is often associated with a specific context. Such contexts can be established by pre-classifying an object as art. This is accomplished by displaying the object in a museum or by being asked to evaluate it aesthetically in the laboratory. An aesthetic context encourages the perceiver to adopt what Cupchik and Laszlo (1992) called an aesthetic attitude, and it provides a necessary but not sufficient pre-condition for aesthetic experiences (Leder et al. 2004). Aesthetic experiences are then viewed as a special state of mind qualitatively different from those summoned by everyday experiences (Markovic 2012). Thus, context is a defining feature of aesthetic experiences. (Leder, Gerger, Brieber 2015, 64)

This statement on behavioural and physiological approaches as components of the aesthetic experience of art is also relevant for the performing act as part of the music-making process. Bernard Lortat-Jacob goes even further in his analysis about “singing in company” when he emphasises the particular importance of the context and the “pre-classification” of the music that emerges as an “object of attention”: “As a general rule, in the circles where I move in Sardinia or Albania, its [multipart singing] execution rarely goes without some feeling of earnestness. They say the song ‘must be respected’ [*il canto si deve rispettare*], thus advising those present to respect themselves” (Lortat-Jacob 2011, 26).

The act of directing attention not simply to the “object” but to the attitude of all the involved individuals towards themselves helps to better relate the strong connection between emotion and aesthetic experience with issues of expression and communication, particularly in the case of multipart music practices. At the same time, the creation of a common sound and music out of individual and distinctive musical behaviours is an act of balance between cooperation and competition that gives the performance a crucial thrill. Based on this perspective, the general focus in this volume is on the ways emotions and aesthetic experience become part of the music-making process during the interaction between all involved protagonists.

2. Different views on emotions

In the entry "Emotion" of the online version of the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* it is noted that:

many of the things we call emotions today have been the object of theoretical analysis since Ancient Greece, under a variety of language-specific labels such as *passion*, *sentiment*, *affection*, *affect*, *disturbance*, *movement*, *perturbation*, *upheaval*, or *appetite*. This makes for a long and complicated history, which has progressively led to the development of a variety of shared insights about the nature and function of emotions, but no consensual definition of what emotions are, either in philosophy or in affective science. (Scarantino and de Sousa 2018; italics in original)

In this long history of philosophy on emotion, the philosopher Robert C. Solomon has discerned a so-called "master-slave metaphor" in the relationship between reason and emotion. According to him, this has been one "of the most enduring metaphors... with the wisdom of reason firmly in control and the dangerous impulses of emotion safely suppressed, channeled, or (ideally) in harmony with reason" (Solomon 2008, 3). Furthermore, this metaphor:

displays two features that still determine much of the philosophical view of emotion today. First there is the inferior role of emotion – the idea that emotion is as such more primitive, less intelligent, more bestial, less dependable, and more dangerous than reason, and thus needs to be controlled by reason ... Second, and more profoundly, there is the reason–emotion distinction itself – as if we were dealing with two different natural kinds, two conflicting and antagonistic aspects of the soul. (Solomon 2008, 3–4)

In modern psychology – another field that has long focused on emotions – another distinct duality exists, namely, cognitive and non-cognitive theories on emotions. One of the earliest and most discussed, criticised and modified cognitive theories of emotions is the so-called James-Lange theory. In his essay "What Is an Emotion?", published in 1884, the psychologist and philosopher William James declared: "My thesis ... is that *the bodily changes follow directly the PERCEPTION* of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur is the emotion" (James 1884, 189; italics in original). In 1885, the physician Carl Georg Lange, writing in Danish and independently of James, published a work titled *On Emotions: A Psycho-Physiological Study*. In spite of similarities in their argumentations, differences in the ideas of these two men have been discerned. Paisley Livingston has noted: "Lange's views on affect in his (1885) *Om Sindsbevægelse* were more cautious than James allowed, and not open to criticisms that have often been levelled against the theory of emotion that James claimed he shared with Lange. In fact, Lange argued for distinctions that James did not mention in his discussion of Lange's work" (2019, 39). Furthermore, Claudia Wassmann argues that "Lange deconstructed the emotions into combinations of components, which makes his work a precursor to component and appraisal theories of emotion" (Wassmann 2009, 974).

According to the cognitive appraisal theories of emotions, the way in which an individual evaluates or appraises a stimulus determines the emotion. One of the first psychologists to develop a cognitive appraisal theory was Ira J. Roseman (1979). He suggested five appraisal components involved in the emotion process, independently of whether the individual is consciously aware of them or not. These appraisals are: the *motivational state*, the *situational state*, the *probability*, the evaluation of *power* and the component of *agency* (see Roseman, Spindel, Jose 1990, 899). These notions are astonishingly familiar in the ethnomusicological research in general, in the research on multipart music in particular, and specifically in studies about the ways of communication and interaction between protagonists.

As far as the non-cognitive theories on emotions are concerned, the work of the psychologist Paul Ekman is to be mentioned first. Ekman suggested in an article published in 1977 in *The Anthropology of the Body* (edited by John Blacking) as well as in several other studies (e.g. Ekman 1992; Ekman and Cordaro 2011) a description of the non-cognitive process of emotion which "presents a basic emotion theory of emotion that is still very relevant in the twenty-first century psychology of the emotion" (Mun 2021, 9). According to Ekman:

There must be an appraiser mechanism which selectively attends to those stimuli (external or internal) which are the occasion for activating the affect programme. Otherwise the complex organized emotional responses directed by the affect programme would occur randomly. Since the interval between stimulus and emotional response is sometimes extraordinarily short, the appraisal mechanism must be capable of operating with great speed. Often the appraisal is not only quick but it happens without awareness, so I must postulate that the appraisal mechanism is able to operate automatically.

... It must be constructed so that it quickly attends to some stimuli, determining not only that they pertain to emotion, but to which emotion, and then activating the appropriate part of the affect programme. The automatic appraisal may not only set off the affect programme and the responses it directs, but it may initiate also the processes which evoke the memories, images, expectations, coping behaviours and display rules relevant to emotions. (Ekman 1977, 58).

Ekman's understandings are shared by Paul Griffiths (1997), who in addition suggests three kinds of responses to emotions that are of different evolutionary origins, serve different adaptive functions, have different biological bases, and play different roles in human psychology: reflex-like responses, which appear insensitive to culture (e.g. a brief flaring up of anger); others, like moral guilt, which differ importantly across cultures despite their long history in humans and their affinity to behaviour seen in other species; and emotions that appear to act out today's psychological myths, as ghost possession acted out the metaphysical myths of past centuries.

Ekman's and Griffiths' understanding, according to which some emotions are cognitive and others not, is altered by Jenefer Robinson, who claims that the emotion process is always a non-cognitive one (1995, 2004, 2005, 2017): "My suggestion is that there is a set of inbuilt affective appraisal mechanisms, which in more primitive species and in neonates are automatically attuned to particular stimuli, but which, as human beings learn and develop, can also take as input more complex stimuli, including complex 'judgments' or thoughts" (2004, 41). Robinson also suggests that the non-cognitive process may be followed by cognitive activity that labels an emotion response in ways that reflect the individual's thoughts and beliefs.

Theories according to which emotions are products of societies and cultures, and are thus acquired or learned by individuals through experience, are also interesting for the ideas discussed in this volume. For example, according to Brian Parkinson, emotions are "something that emerges directly through the medium of interaction. Interpersonal factors are typically the main causes of emotion, and emotions lead people to engage in certain kinds of social encounter or withdraw from such interpersonal contact. Many emotions have relational rather than personal meanings ... and the expression of these meanings in an emotional interaction serves specific interpersonal functions depending on the nature of the emotion" (1996, 680). He explored this position further in subsequent publications (Parkinson 1997; Parkinson, Fischer, Manstead 2005).

2.1 Emotions as a component of music-making processes

The article "A Review of Music and Emotion Studies: Approaches, Emotion Models, and Stimuli" by Tuomas Eerola and Jonna K. Vuoskoski (2013) is a review of 251 studies that "describes the focus of prevalent research approaches, methods, and models of emotion" (Eerola and Vuoskoski 2013, 307) mostly from the fields of music cognition, music psychology and neuroscience of music. One of the results is the conclusion: "Most music and emotion studies have focused on 'samples of convenience' (i.e. student populations from Western universities) and have drawn music from a fairly narrow selection of music genres (i.e. classical, jazz, and film soundtracks)" (Eerola and Vuoskoski 2013, 325). And later, "Classical music is still the dominant musical genre used in music and emotion studies" (idem.). This is also the case in the majority of the studies referred to until now in this introduction and in other publications, such as the *Handbook of Music and Emotion* (Juslin and Sloboda 2010). However, ethnomusicological studies of music and emotions include other music traditions than those of "classical music". This is being done in work based on case studies, such as *Performing Gender, Place, and Emotion in Music: Global Perspectives* (Magowan and Wrazen 2013), and, more rarely, in monographs, such as *Roma Music and Emotion* (Bonini Baraldi 2021). The present volume is a further contribution in this direction. Its specificity is its concentration on the interaction between individuals, which is also reflected in explorations of aesthetic experience during a performance.

3. Aesthetic experience

Few terms are as difficult to define as aesthetics and even more so the concept of “aesthetics of music”, which includes the complexity of the concept of music. It is a term that turns out to be equally intriguing and controversial, with indefinite (and perhaps undefinable) contours, roughly revolving around the idea of sensual perception as the study of beauty in nature and art. It is a complexity that manifests the difficulty of converting the field of sensory experience into verbal speech.

“Aesthetics of music” seems to be a concept belonging largely to the privileged field of academic music, in which it began to manifest itself roughly from the second half of the 18th century onward. As such, it should be based on the articulated knowledge of the musician/composer/listener and lie beyond the technical skills and craft related to the interweaving of sounds, assuming that music can be considered a work of art (Arbo 2014). Essentially, from the historical point of view:

... aesthetics was a way to explain the meaning of art, to create a kind of value for it that was apart from both earlier feudal values and current economic ones. Art became thought of as not only set apart from the marketplace and economic values, but autonomous, aloof from the quotidian. This remains a common view among those in the classical music world, most of whom continue to believe that great works are autonomous, standing above and apart from society, having nothing to do with everyday concerns, even those of the composers who wrote them. (Taylor 2017, 187)

3.1 Paradoxical reluctances

The centrality of the artistic (and therefore reserved) value of music and its manifestation in works constitutes the underlying reason for a substantial reticence toward the concept of music aesthetics outside the domain of Western art music. Until relatively recently, in fact, the question of the beauty and sensory perception of music did not seem to have been adequately considered and developed in other areas of music making. Especially in the ethnomusicological literature there seemed to be a reluctance to talk about aesthetics (Stobart 2008, 5).

Ethnomusicology itself, perhaps in order to clearly differentiate itself from academic musicology, has openly shied away from the use of aesthetic evaluation criteria in its analyses. Until relatively recent times, studies of oral-tradition music seemed to focus mainly on grammatical systems, practices and contexts of use at the expense of attention paid to the aesthetics and the values and conceptions of the world's different musical languages.

At most, ethnomusicology assumed the idea of an “unexpressed aesthetic” or “functional aesthetic”, definable by a scholar through formal analyses of the outcomes of musical performances but not consciously realised by music makers.

Even Alan Merriam's very extensive treatment in one of the cornerstones of the discipline, *The Anthropology of Music* (1964), remained essentially constrained by the perspectives of Western art music, basically rooted in the idea that “it can only be said that the function of aesthetic enjoyment is clearly operative in some cultures of the world, and perhaps present in others” (Merriam 1964, 223). In other words, for Merriam, it was difficult to use the concept of aesthetics at the cross-cultural level. It could be applied to some “great cultures” beyond the Western one (Arab, Far Eastern, Japanese, Korean, Indian, etc.), but it would be inadequate or ineffective with regard to the world's other traditional and/or non-literate cultures.

Thus, ethnomusicologists of the second half of the 20th century attempted to discover representations of aesthetics in Western culture that might be applied to cultures other than our own and to verify if such application could yield useful results for the purposes of analysis. If yes, fine; a negative answer, for its part, would highlight the cultural distance between us and them. This viewpoint was somewhat emblematic of a kind of cultural awe felt by scholars of the time toward art music, and alas, this pattern of thinking can still be encountered in certain literature in this field (Manuel 2011, 540). Furthermore, in their choice of research themes and the articulation of research paths, without declaring it out loud, many scholars focused their attention on certain elements that were fully aesthetic to Western ears (this can be seen, for example, in many record publications, in the promotion of concert events, in documentaries and so on). The relationship between aesthetics and ethnomusicology is therefore an

intricate theme, and “also a risky one due to the ethereal, changeable and mainly philosophical nature of the so-called aesthetics of music that, since Plato’s time, seems destined to run after an object, the making of music, which is also immaterial by its nature; like musical taste, it too is problematically defined and in continuous transformation not only in its founding and constitutive aspects, but also, and today above all, in the procedures of reception, in the modes and instruments of communication and, last but not least, in its social referents” (Giannattasio 2011).

3.2 New perspectives

Only in recent decades, and beyond the music of the academy, has new attention been paid to aesthetic discourses, above all in popular music studies, in music of the oral tradition and elsewhere. It has been acknowledged that aesthetics, as an important “content category” of values, deserves serious and dedicated scholarly attention. This perspective has become increasingly important within recent approaches in which the analysis of the emission of musical sounds is intertwined with special investigations into the complexity of the thought, discourse, motivations and knowledge of those who produce and listen to music. In general, scholars seem to agree that music aesthetics is not just a matter of sounds and their combinations. Going far beyond the “definition of beauty”, it calls into question more general issues, starting with the very possibilities of music to produce meaning. In other words, aesthetic questions are now seen to affect many aspects of the study of music.

Already in 1990, for instance, Christopher Waterman stated the necessity to move away from the study of musical sound as an autonomous aesthetic domain, emphasising that the “irreducible object of ethnomusical interest is not the *music itself*, a somewhat animistic notion, but the historically situated human subjects who perceive, learn, interpret, evaluate, produce, and respond to music” (1990, 66).

3.3 Aesthetics as experience

For what is relevant here, one can say that, abandoning any idea of a rigid, pre-established and referential pattern of sound, aesthetics is conceived as an experience that manifests itself in terms of process within the unique moment of performance – above all in the case of multipart music. Every aesthetic experience can be said to arise from the interaction of several sensory modalities, e.g. visual, auditory, olfactory and so on. It is considered a process in which the attention is focused on special elements to the detriment of events of everyday concerns. A musical aesthetic experience is not limited to the involvement of the beautiful or the sensual, and it is intensified by testing its more existential dimension, by revealing a change or a reversal of viewpoints or unexpected ways of approaching the world.

A performance, when music *is lively made*, is an interaction between behaviours put in place by persons on the basis of shared performative rules. Far from being an anodyne and faithful reproducer of sounds, every music maker *is* what he/she *makes*: he/she coincides with the vocal or instrumental sound he/she produces. As such, every participant in a performance is a *soundful body* who manifests his/her singular *musicality* more or less evidently and consciously and according to the shared musical mechanism, the circumstances and the purposes of the performance, on the basis of his/her musical skills, background, taste, preferences and so forth. This is particularly true in multipart music practices, which can be interpreted as conscious interactions between different sound identities. The performance thus reflects group dynamics and typically reiterates and reinforces them, although special performance acts may also challenge consolidated roles.

In particular, space-motor behaviour must be considered a relevant component of musical thought, used to start and control a performance. It is as creative as the auditory sense, because musical invention often proceeds through spatial explorations that are also screened and aesthetically evaluated according to the resulting sounds. The body is the fulcrum of the reflection on musical performance and the processes of musical knowledge and understanding. This is a kind of aesthetic and sensorial experience that does not end in intellectual satisfaction but has marked physical traits.

3.4 More than sound

Music is a socially constructed cultural phenomenon. Being produced by a body, music has an aesthetic status but also a physical one. Musical actors (including competent local listeners) think of music first in terms of “people producing sounds” and only then in terms of combinations of sounds. In other words, they generally tend to reverse the logic arising from our Western habit of thinking of music first as an immaterial combination of sounds. In their awareness, music coincides with the people who give it life. To share a sound experience is, above all, to share a human experience.

The learning, performance and transmission of a musical practice is the result of an essential fusion of musical aesthetics and behavioural and cultural ethics. For example, it is not enough to have a beautiful voice that aesthetically corresponds to a given cultural standard in order to be able to sing in contextual situations. One must also respect behaviours and values associated with making music, otherwise the local community will not allow one to sing (see, for example, the extensive and detailed case study in Lortat-Jacob 1998).

Who makes music reflects on what the potential performers do, how they imagine their performance in advance, how they discuss their sound-making with other performers and/or listeners, how they reflect on aesthetic categories expressing their opinions, how they listen to performances by other interpreters of “their music”, whether they are interested in knowing its historical events, its spread, its variability of expression and so on – a kind of awareness affecting the musical behaviour down to the tiniest specific details of any musical act. An absolute aesthetics of sound does not exist in and of itself; instead, there is a sort of aesthetics of the relationships represented by the sounds, where aesthetics is close to an ethic, because music coincides with the real people who give it life. To repeat: sharing a sound experience is, above all, sharing a human experience.

3.5 Ethics and Aesthetics

In general, ethics and aesthetics can be considered “two sides of the same coin: two central ways for groups to express their unity and boundedness through collective evaluations. In other words: both aesthetic and moral logics are grounded first and foremost in durable social relations” (Kuipers, Franssen, Holla 2019, 391).

This is particularly evident in multipart music. Research such as that included in this volume demonstrates how traditional music does not contemplate ideas of absolute aesthetics of sound in and of itself, but instead a sort of aesthetics of the relationships represented by the sounds.¹ There are very complex discussions with special terminology that vary significantly according to local uses (see, for instance, Grupe 2019, which was a project that employed computer-assisted experimental techniques to determine the criteria on which Javanese gamelan experts base their aesthetic judgments). After all, musical practices that are unfamiliar with the concept of opera find it difficult to talk about the quality of the sound itself; they focus instead on the gesture that produces the sound, on who and why the sound is produced.

Performance involves forms of collective negotiation that are usually not based on musical-aesthetic criteria but on other aspects of a group’s values and hierarchies. That is to say, it is not the person with the most aesthetically beautiful voice in the group who guides the performance but usually the figure who is somewhat more charismatic, independently of his/her vocal quality (Macchiarella 2021).

Aesthetics also calls into question the concept of authenticity, which also emerged around the 18th century in Western culture. In ethnomusicology, the question of authenticity is fairly recent and is part of the development of acculturation and cultural identity studies. Authenticity remains an unstable reality, because it is constructed on the basis of choices, selections, places of memory and contexts of reference. Like aesthetics, authenticity has a polysemic and ambiguous character; it is a clear manifestation of cultural relativism. Authenticity is not so much conformity to systems of rules but a symbolic construction representing value judgments that lead not only to questions about beauty, harmony and truth but also about the values of ugliness, dissonance and negation (Desroches and Guertin 2003).

¹ This can also be found in popular music, for example, where the appreciation of sound is combined with particular shared behaviours, ways of dressing on the part of musicians and fans, etc.

4. The content of this book

The contributions included in this book are case studies grouped in three sections. The first section, which is dedicated to making multipart music as a social construction, contains mainly explorations based on singing practices. The particularities of each case study are noticeable not only through the different times and places they focus on, but also through their diverse approaches to the ways in which the music and the community are constructed. At the centre of Zoe Dionysiou's contribution is a specific multipart singing tradition in the village of Kato Garounas on the island of Corfu in Greece, in the framework of the transformation of being. Daiva Račiūnaitė-Vyčiniienė approaches the female singing tradition in the village of Nibragalys, concentrating on the activities of an ethnographic ensemble and its members, including questions of family ensembles, singers' roles and transmission issues. Chia-Yin Hung basis her research on the analysis of sound recordings realised over fifty-five years ago among the Taiwanese Amis in the village of Ciwkangan, the function of the recorded music in ritual and non-ritual contexts, and the role of the performers and their social networks. The last contribution of the first section of the book is dedicated to the tradition of popular dance performances in early 19th-century Viennese guitar music. Stefan Hackl's broad and deep panorama provides remarkable insights into the diversity of sources, performance contents and contexts, music creators and performers, and the role of social settings in the perception of this music up to the present day.

The second section of the book looks at music making in migratory contexts from two different perspectives. Fulvia Caruso discusses issues about people in resettlement situations enacting the music culture they have grown up with, especially in terms of its link with memory, affections, religious rites, and as a place to express the right to perform their beliefs in their new environment in the town of Cremona, Italy. Jasmina Talam, for her part, analyses questions of longing for the homeland and the role of music in the shaping of national identity exemplified by the activities of an ensemble of people from Bosnia and Herzegovina living in Sweden.

In the third section of the book, Thomas Hochradner explores adaptations and modifications in publications and performances of the Christmas carol "Silent Night" and its spread from Oberndorf in Salzburg, Austria, in 1818 to very diverse musical and social settings all around the world in the present day.

What the contributions in this book have in common is the conviction emphasised in section 3.4 of this introduction, namely, that musical actors think of music first in terms of "people producing sounds" and only then in terms of combinations of sounds, which opposes the logic arising from our Western habit of thinking of music first as an immaterial combination of sounds. In their awareness, music coincides with the people who give life to it. This focus forms the main contribution of this book in the cross-disciplinary discourse about emotion and aesthetic experience during the performance act.

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