RNCM
ROYAL NORTHERN COLLEGE of MUSIC

sempre:
Society for Education, Music
and Psychology Research

Sempre 2025 Spring Conference

Intersections between music psychology and education

9-10 April 2025

Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester

Programme and Abstracts

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that Sempre welcomes you to our 2025 annual Spring conference, hosted in Manchester by the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) on 9–10 April 2025. Our special thanks to Professor Jane Ginsborg and Dr Michelle Phillips (RNCM), and Professor Alexandra Lamont (University of Queensland) for their vision, expertise and leadership in enabling this conference to happen. It is 53 years since Sempre's creation in 1972 as the Society for Research in Psychology of Music and Music Education (SRPMME). In 2002, the society was renamed as Sempre (the Society for Education, Music and Psychology Research). This change was designed to reflect its expanded mission in a world of increasing global initiatives across basic and applied research. Today, the research landscape continues to include music psychology and music education, as well as embracing associated disciplines, such as social psychology, applied musicology, the neurosciences of music, and research into the potential wider benefits of successful musical engagement across the lifespan. One of the founders of the Society was Aubrey Hickman and we remember his commitment to encouraging young researchers at this conference through the two winners of the 2025 Aubrey Hickman Award. Our congratulations to these and all the other presenters across the two days of the conference. There is an impressive array of research quality to demonstrate, illustrate and celebrate the contemporary richness of the field. Have a wonderful conference!

Professor Graham F Welch
Chair, Society for Education, Music and Psychology Research (Sempre)

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

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WELCOME

Welcome to the 2025 Sempre spring conference! Jane Ginsborg, Michelle Phillips and Alexandra Lamont are delighted to be chairing the conference, hosted by the Royal Northern College of Music, and excited to be able to deliver such a varied programme on the theme of intersections between music psychology and education. We are heartened to see the breadth of the work to be reported, and in particular the strength of the early career researchers who are presenting at this conference. Both give us enormous confidence in the future of our twin disciplines.

On both days our keynote lectures, to be given by Karen Burland (University of Leeds) and Daniel Müllensiefen (University of Hamburg) will be preceded by presentations by this year's winners of Aubrey Hickman Awards for early-career researchers, Jonathan Tang (University of Sheffield) and Melissa Kirby (University of Leeds); in addition, John Sloboda (Guildhall School of Music and Drama) will offer his reflections on 50 years of music psychology in the UK.

A total of 71 presentations will be given in six series of three parallel sessions, including two symposia entitled "Exploring the performer-audience relationship" and "How can we assess musicality in childhood (3 to 11 years) to gather insights that can be applied in education?" There will also be eight posters on view, with the opportunity to chat with their authors during the lunch break on Wednesday.

Talking of lunchtime... the RNCM's catering team are providing refreshments on the College concourses between sessions and at lunchtime. The conference dinner, for those delegates who have already booked it, will be buffet-style and held in the Café-Bar, with a jazz trio. For those who have not booked, there are many restaurants in the vicinity (see list of recommendations in the Practical Information).

Finally, RNCM's hidden treasure, its Collection of Historic Musical Instruments, will be open for you to visit between 1330 and 1700 on Wednesday. Please follow the signs from the stairs down opposite the tall archive display case in the foyer. Heather Roberts, Archive and Museum Manager, will welcome you to enjoy the space and collections, offer tours of specific items or themes, and share her favourite stories of Manchester's classical music heritage. Please note that no food or drink is allowed in the space.

Whether you are a first-time conference delegate or have been attending conferences for many years, we are sure you will have a wonderful time. If you are visiting Manchester for the first time, we hope you will enjoy visiting some of its museums, art galleries, and football stadiums. Above all, we look forward to giving you the opportunity to meet each other, make new friends and renew old acquaintanceships, share your research, and strengthen the links between music psychology and music education.

Jane Ginsborg (RNCM)
Alexandra Lamont (University of Queensland)
Michelle Phillips (RNCM)

INFORMATION FOR PRESENTERS AND CHAIRS

Oral presenters – in-person and remote

Oral presentations have been allotted 15 minutes and a maximum of 5 minutes for questions. All presentation slides will have been pre-loaded on to the RNCM laptop in each venue. They will be delivered via Zoom with shared screen for remote delegates, which will make it difficult to view presenter notes in Powerpoint. If you rely on notes or a script when presenting, it's best to have them on a personal device or printed out.

All talks will run strictly to time. You must carry out a technical check in the venue where you are presenting before your session (0900-0930; 1100-1130; 1300-1400; 1530-1600). Please meet your chair and the member of conference staff who is fulfilling the role of technical assistant 10-15 minutes before the start of the session in which you are presenting. If you have handouts, please distribute them before your talk. If something goes wrong with the equipment during your talk, please ask the technical assistant to fix it.

Video-recorded oral presentations will be pre-loaded on to the RNCM laptop in each venue. Please join the Zoom meeting 10-15 minutes before the start of the session in which you are presenting to meet the chair and member of conference staff who is fulfilling the role of technical assistant. They will help to facilitate the 5-minute question-and-answer that will follow your presentation.

Poster presenters

You are responsible for hanging your poster on one of the boards that will be sited outside the entrance to the Carole Nash Recital Room. You should do this when you register, and remove the poster and take it away with you when you leave at the end of the conference. You should be available to interact with delegates at lunchtime on Wednesday. It is helpful to prepare handout versions of the poster to give to delegates, with your contact details, or to include a QR code for them to scan so they can re-read the poster at their leisure after the conference.

Chairs

Your role is to make sure the programme runs to schedule in your session and to support and stimulate a fruitful academic exchange during the question-and-answer period after each talk. Please bring a watch, clock or timer – use your mobile device if you like – and come to the venue in which you are chairing 15 minutes before the start of the session to meet your presenters and the member of the conference staff who is fulfilling the role of technical assistant.

Please agree with your presenters how you will signal times: 5 minutes, 1 minute, and when to stop. Before each presentation you should only announce the name of the presenter and the title of their talk – there is no need to provide any biographical information. Make sure presenters stop talking after 15 minutes to allow sufficient time for the audience to engage.

If there are any last-minute changes to the programme it is vital that you do not change the timing or order of presentations in your session, in case delegates are intending to move from one venue to another. Remind them if that if they do wish to do so, they should move during the questions. Lecture Theatre (Venue A) is very close to the Carole Nash Recital Room (Venue B) but the Conference Room (Venue C) is upstairs and takes longer to reach.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Please wear your lanyard and name badge throughout the conference so that we can identify you as a delegate.

Wi-fi access is available via The Cloud or eduroam.

Venues: All venues are well signposted. The Lecture Theatre and Carole Nash Recital Room are close together, at the end of the Café-Bar at the bottom of the stairs to the concourses. The Conference Room is reached from the same area, up the stairs to the left. At the top of the stairs, turn left, go through a door and turn right. The Conference Room is on the left. You are welcome to move from one venue to another between sessions if you wish. A plan is included in the conference schedule.

Devices can be charged in public areas such as the Lower and Upper Concourses, on the mezzanine outside the Carole Nash Recital Room, and in the venues themselves. Please ensure that you silence all devices during sessions.

The schedule of presentations will remain as published and missing presentations will not be substituted.

We have arranged for a space to be available for you to leave luggage securely. Please ask a member of the conference team if you would like to do this.

Travel information

Manchester has a wonderful integrated public transport network, Bee Network (https://tfgm.com/) – you can travel by bus and tram, and pay by tapping your contactless card, phone or smart watch on card-readers when you get on and off.

You can use Uber in Manchester.

Also recommended: Street Cars (0161 228 7878), Manchester Taxi Service (0161 270 8701) and Intime Taxis (0161 256 1222).

Suggested places to eat and drink

- Samsi – wonderful Japanese food (great sushi!), 15 min walk from RNCM, towards Piccadilly station
- Navarro Lounge, 3-4 mins walk from RNCM, fast service, wide range of Mexican-style food
- Sandbar, 3-4 mins walk from RNCM, good craft beers and some food options
- Zouk, 7-8 mins walk from RNCM, high end curry house, might be a good idea to book ahead

In case of fire

The fire assembly point is located just off Booth Street West between the Hyatt Regency Hotel and The Alliance Manchester Business School (AMBS) (see map below). Should the fire alarm activate, exit the building by the nearest safest fire exit and cross Booth Street West using the pedestrian crossing closest to the Sir Charles Groves Halls of Residence. Please assemble on the paved area between the Hyatt Regency Hotel and AMBS where a member of the RNCM Emergency Response Team (wearing a hi-vis vest) will be in attendance. Please await their instructions regarding return to the RNCM Building.

THANK YOU

PROGRAMME DAY 1

Wednesday	Venue A Lecture Theatre	Venue B Carole Nash Recital Room	Venue C Conference Room
0900-0930	**Welcome refreshments on Lower Concourse**		
0930–1100	**A1 Community music and identity (Chair: Kate Blackstone)** Christian Ferlaino Hubert Ignatowicz Vineet Gairola Jason Goopy (R)	**B2 Listening and effects 1 (Chair: Alinka Greasley)** Catherine Tan Katariina Henttonen Yue You (R) Andrew Danso (R)	**C1 Music and musicians (Chair: Keith Phillips)** Tatjana Voitova Kai Lothwesen Amanda Krause (R) Serena Allegra (R)
1100–1130	**Refreshments on Lower Concourse**		
1130–1200	**Aubrey Hickman Award 1:** Jonathan Tang (Chair: Alexandra Lamont)		
1200–1300	**Keynote lecture 1:** Karen Burland (Chair: Michelle Phillips)		
1300–1400	**Lunch on Lower Concourse and poster presentations** Lydia Ballam Ellie Dabell Geraldine Leighton Celia Redondo Pedragal Bairavi Selvarajah Yani Sun Hazel van der Walle Hongjuan Zhu		
1400–1530	**A2 Interventions 1 (Chair: Dawn Rose)** Elaine King Marianne Brown Alex Theophilus Eri Mavropouly (R)	**B2 Listening and effects 2 (Chair: Jonathan Tang)** Fruzsina Szücs Caroline Owen Caroline Curwen Hazel van der Walle	**C2 Symposium 1** Emily Payne Stephanie Pitts Karen Burland Sarah Price (R) Dana Swarbrick
1530–1600	**Refreshments on Lower Concourse**		
1600–1730	**A3 Performance skills (Chair: Kristine Healy)** David Duncan Kexin Qi Chara Steliou Fred Hosken (R)	**B3 Listening and effects 3 (Chair: Marianne Brown)** Christoph Louven Scott Bannister Diana Omigie Ori Grossman (R)	**C3 Uses of music (Chair: Catherine Tan)** Will Randall (R) Dawn Rose Heini Siltainsuu Keturah Gray
1730–1800	**Reflections:** John Sloboda (Chair: Jane Ginsborg)		
1800–1900	**Drinks/free time**		
1900–2000	**Conference dinner and jazz in RNCM café-bar**		

Click on the links to navigate to the abstracts. Remote presentations are indicated by (R).

PROGRAMME DAY 2

Thursday	Venue A Lecture Theatre	Venue B Carole Nash Recital Room	Venue C Conference Room
0930–1100	**A4 Learning and creativity (Chair: Alexandra Lamont)** Kristine Healy Molly Reinker Morgan Lilian Simones Rita Zsófia Tóth (R)	**B4 Wellbeing in music making (Chair: Vineet Gairola)** Shaopei Zhang Eunice S. Y. Tang Marina Fischer Simone Willis	**C4 Teaching and learning (Chair: Landon Peck)** Janos Fabian Geraldine Leighton Agnese Maria Garufi (R) Ivan Jimenez (R)
1100–1130	**Refreshments on Lower Concourse**		
1130–1200	**Aubrey Hickman Award 2:** Melissa Kirby		
1200–1300	**Keynote lecture 2:** Daniel Müllensiefen		
1300–1400	**Lunch on Lower Concourse** **SEMPRE AGM in Carole Nash Recital Room (1310-1350)**		
1400–1530	**A5 Contexts (Chair: Jane Ginsborg)** Stephanie Pitts Lisa Schön Emma Risley Susanna Cohen (R)	**B5 Teaching (Chair: Caroline Curwen)** James Poole Yanyi Lu Caroline Waddington-Jones Javier Rivas	**C5 Symposium 2** Verena Buren Chloe MacGregor Amy Fancourt Paulo Estevao Andrade
1530–1600	**Refreshments on concourse**		
1600–1730	**A6 Interventions 2 (Chair: Dan Baczkowski)** Martha Papadogianni-Kouranti (R) Kelly Taylor Seren Grime Sandra Sinsch-Gouffi (R)	**B6 Teaching 2 (Chair: Alex Theophilus)** Huilin Qi Nicola Moran László Stachó Elizabeth MacGregor	**C6 Music performance anxiety (Chair: Michelle Phillips)** Yi Wang Serena Paese Julia Kaleńska-Rodzaj
1730–1800	**Thanks and farewell**		

Click on the links to navigate to the abstracts. Remote presentations are indicated by (R).

KEYNOTE LECTURES

Celebrating the intersections of music psychology and music education for enabling meaningful lives with music
Karen Burland
University of Leeds, UK

My research has been driven by a desire to understand the transitions of music learners throughout education and into a life which involves music – whether as a professional or amateur pursuit. In particular, it has used theories of self and identity to understand the ways in which individuals understand themselves in relation to their musical participation, and how this drives their behaviours and actions. This has recently culminated in the validation of the Musical Identity Measure and work towards a validated version of the tool for adolescent learners (the Music & Me quiz). These tools have been developed with the specific purpose of supporting musicians to understand their relationship with music and what this might mean for a sustainable life with music.

This keynote presentation seeks firstly to explore how such insights can be applied meaningfully to foster proto-musical identities in children; to enable and empower developing musicians to understand themselves now, as learners, and as future music-lovers; and to support the navigation of transitions from one stage of learning to another. Secondly, and equally important, is what this might mean for organisations/musicians working with particular audiences as part of education or community outreach programmes; or for parents and carers wanting to foster a lifelong love of music in their children; and of course, for the musicians themselves. This keynote aims to celebrate the joyful intersection of music psychology and education as a means to positively impact the ways in which people can create their lives with music.

Karen Burland is Professor of Applied Music Psychology at the University of Leeds and is the university academic lead for work relating to employability and student futures. Karen researches musical identities and their role in musical participation in a variety of contexts. She is currently involved in projects investigating the ways in which students engage with, and perceive, employability activities during university and beyond. She is currently working in projects relating to how musicians create and support their work in music, as well as in the role of music for wellbeing. Her book *Coughing and Clapping: Investigating Audience Experience,* edited with Stephanie Pitts, was published in December 2014. Karen was awarded a National Teaching Fellowship in 2022 in recognition of her work as a music psychology educator and her leadership in student education.

Individual differences, musical development, and the value for music education

Daniel Müllensiefen
University of Hamburg, Germany

Individual differences in music have become a very active empirical research field over the last 20 years as is evident from wide-spread use of musical self-report inventories (e.g., Gold-MSI, BMRQ, STOMP) or the availability of new batteries for musical ability assessment (e.g., MBEA, the Musical Ear Test). However, conceptual and theoretical developments in this field seem to lack behind the fast-paced empirical advancements. While the ultimate causes of individual differences in music are still a matter of serious debate, it appears uncontroversial that individual differences develop over time and, thus, analysing musical trajectories from longitudinal data can be an important angle for understanding individual differences. Furthermore, an understanding of individual musical trajectories can create opportunities to intervene and shape musical development through education and teaching. Hence, the aims of this keynote are threefold: Firstly, to provide a perspective for considering individual differences in music systematically; secondly, to present empirical insights from the LongGold project (longgold.org) on the longitudinal development of musical traits across adolescence; and finally to show how such empirical evidence can be leveraged to create a music education intervention targeting the musical growth mindset of children.

Daniel Müllensiefen is a professor of systematic musicology at the University of Hamburg, with a focus on music psychology in the Faculty of Humanities. His research investigates perception and the processing of music, as well as the development of musical abilities. Past projects include the development of the Goldsmiths Musical Sophistication Index (Gold-MSI), the AHRC supported "Transforming Musicology", and the LongGold project. He was awarded the prestigious Anneliese-Maier award by the Humboldt- Foundation in 2016, and is the editor of the international open-access journal Empirical Musicology Review.

AUBREY HICKMAN AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Affective experiences with favourite music: The role of self-construal across cultures

Jonathan Tang
University of Sheffield, UK

Over the past decade, cross-cultural research in music psychology has grown significantly. However, our understanding of how culture shapes affective experiences with music remains limited due to the narrow operationalisation of culture in previous studies, which often focused solely on comparisons between different countries. This paper presents two empirical studies demonstrating that self-construal theory (how individuals perceive themselves in relation to others) can enhance our understanding of culture's impact on affective experiences with music.

In Study 1, I investigated the role of self-construal in musical reward across cultures. The one-way MANCOVA revealed no significant differences in musical rewards experienced with favourite music between collectivist and individualist cultures. However, separate regression analyses highlighted cross-cultural similarities and differences. Interdependent self-construal was associated with social reward while independent self-construal was linked to the musical seeking subtype across cultural contexts. Notably, self-construal and other factors accounted for all musical reward subtypes only in individualist cultures. This suggests that the Barcelona Music Reward Questionnaire, which was used to measure musical reward, may have been developed from an individualist cultural perspective.

In Study 2, I examined how self-construal influences perceived and felt emotions in response to favourite music. The results indicated that only interdependent self-construal mediated the relationship between country and socially engaging emotions perceived and felt in favourite music. Although no mediation effects were observed for independent self-construal, this study found a positive association between independent self-construal and socially disengaging emotions felt with, but not perceived in, favourite music. This suggests that while individuals, regardless of self-construal, may prefer music that conveys socially engaging emotions, those with a dominant independent self-construal tend to experience socially disengaging emotions when listening to it.

Taken together, these studies highlight the necessity of incorporating specific cultural factors in cross-cultural investigations of affective experiences with music. They also underscore the importance of reflecting on our epistemological and ontological assumptions about the affordances of music and musical experiences. Advancing cross-cultural research in music psychology requires both a critical examination of these assumptions and a willingness to incorporate culturally diverse perspectives.

Jonathan (Jaytee) Tang is a PhD candidate at the University of Sheffield, with research interests in the intersections of culture, music, and well-being. His doctoral research explores the role of culture in affective experiences with music, and is supported by the Arts & Humanities Research Council through the White Rose College of the Arts & Humanities. Jaytee is also a board-certified and HCPC registered music therapist, with more than 10 years of clinical experience in medical, mental health, and special education settings.

The Purple Patch Potion: What mechanisms support inclusive arts-based learning experiences for adults with learning disabilities

Melissa Kirby
University of Leeds, UK

People with learning disabilities have reduced opportunities for learning in adulthood. This may be due to a range of physical, attitudinal and societal barriers, alongside a lack of inclusive learning environments. Creative learning programmes that utilise arts-based approaches (including music, drama, dance, poetry and visual arts), may reduce these barriers by facilitating more inclusive learning experiences and opportunities for the development of new skills. However, limited research has explored the creative learning experiences of adults with learning disabilities. Additionally, evaluations of these programmes frequently focus on the outcomes or effects of engagement, with less attention paid to how and why these outcomes are achieved.

This paper aims to identify the mechanisms that support inclusive arts-based learning for people with learning disabilities. The research was undertaken as part of a participatory action doctoral research project, which explored the arts-based learning experiences of adults with learning disabilities who attend Purple Patch Arts. Seven adults with learning disabilities were recruited, trained as co-researchers and actively involved in all stages of the project ('The Purple Research Group'). A range of arts-based and adaptive methods were used by the group to explore, analyse and disseminate their experiences of arts-based learning, over the course of 57 research sessions.

Thematic analyses revealed five underlying mechanisms that supported inclusive creative learning experiences. These are: 'safe space', 'freedom within structure', 'reaching maximum effort', 'valuing participant voice' and 'varied approaches to learning'. Findings provide important guidance on designing, evaluating and facilitating inclusive learning experiences, which seek to reduce barriers to learning experienced by marginalised groups. While this research will be of most interest to music education researchers and arts educators, the project's inclusive and participatory approach will be of interest to any researcher interested in conducting inclusive, accessible or collaborative research.

Melissa Kirby is a researcher at the University of Leeds and the University of Manchester. She works on a portfolio of research that supports the inclusion of people with learning disabilities and autistic people in research that matters to them, including topics spanning arts and culture, education and health and social inequalities. Her research utilises participatory and co-produced approaches, alongside arts-based and creative research methods to involve marginalised communities in the research process. Melissa completed her PhD at the University of Leeds, supervised by Professor Karen Burland and Dr Freya Bailes, in 2024. Her doctoral research utilised a participatory action research approach to explore the arts-based learning experiences of adults with learning disabilities. Prior to this, she completed her MA in Applied Psychology of Music and BA in Music at the University of Leeds.

REFLECTIONS

Music psychology in the UK—Some reflections on the last 50 years

John Sloboda

Guildhall School of Music and Drama, UK

Professor John Sloboda is Emeritus Professor at the Guildhall School, where he was founder of its Institute for Social Impact Research in the Performing Arts. He was Principal Investigator on the AHRC-funded project "Music for Social Impact: Practitioners' contexts, work, and beliefs" from 2020 to 2023, and between 2009 and 2019 led Guildhall School's "Understanding Audiences" research programme. He is also Emeritus Professor at Keele and was a staff member of the School of Psychology at Keele from 1974 to 2008, where he was Director of its Unit for the Study of Musical Skill and Development, founded in 1991. John is internationally known for his work on the psychology of music. His books include the Handbook of Music and Emotion (co-edited with Patrik Juslin), and Exploring the Musical Mind, both published by Oxford University Press. He continues a close association with Guildhall School, where he is currently co-supervising three doctoral students.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

From homeopathic and allopathic catharsis to entropic brain theory: Can Aristoxenus of Tarentum still tell us something?

Serena Allegra
Università degli Studi di Milano, Italy

Context Aristoxenus of Tarentum (354-300 BC), considered the first musicologist in history, went beyond the Pythagorean-Platonic *paidèia*, reworking the Pythagorean concept of allopathic catharsis and the Aristotelian concept of homeopathic catharsis to create an empirical approach to the study of music and its effects. Recent empirical studies on Carhart-Harris's entropic brain theory have highlighted how, in addition to psychotropic substances, musical listening is also linked to an increase in entropy and changes in openness personality trait.

Aims The integration of ancient musicological theories with modern brain imaging studies provides a more comprehensive understanding of the role of music in human existence.

Findings and implications The effects of immersive musical listening have always been investigated at various levels, also searching for ways to master them in a controlled manner. Aristoxenus' innovation lies in his consideration of the body and perception, in an approach that we might boldly call *enactive ante litteram*. A more profound comprehension of the visceral and cortical phenomena triggered by *musicking* would also mean being able to exploit them not only in pathological conditions (e.g. music therapy), but also as part of proper psychophysical development (of the individual and society).

Perceptions of lyric intelligibility in music by hearing aid users: A focus group study

Scott Bannister,[1] Alinka Greasley,[1] Michael Akeroyd,[2] Jon Barker,[3] Trevor Cox,[4] Bruno Fazenda,[4] Jennifer Firth,[2] Simone Graetzer,[4] Gerardo Roa Dabike,[3] Rebecca Vos,[4] William Whitmer[2]

[1]University of Leeds, UK; [2]University of Nottingham, UK; [3]University of Sheffield, UK; [4]University of Salford, UK

Introduction Hearing aids (HAs), optimized for speech, can be problematic for music. A key difficulty relates to hearing lyrics in music. To improve experiences, it is important to understand the perception of lyric intelligibility in music, for HA users.

Aims To understand perceptions of HA users, in relation to lyric intelligibility in music.

Methods Ten HA users discussed their experience of lyrics in music, across two online focus groups. Discussions involved listening to music excerpts and developing a definition and measurement of lyric intelligibility. Participants led the discussions, with researchers facilitating the sessions.

Results Lyric intelligibility was defined by participants as "how clearly and effortlessly the words in the music can be heard". Good lyric intelligibility involved clarity in lyrics and lack of interference; poor lyric intelligibility referred to poor balance between lyrics and music, masking of lyrics by other voices or instruments, or mumbled or quick singing styles. Finally, lyric intelligibility was distinct from 'understanding' lyrics (e.g., comprehension of lyrics in another language).

Implications Results advance understanding of how HA users experience and perceive lyrics in music. This has implications for developing novel signal processing strategies for HAs and assistive technologies, to improve music for people with hearing loss.

Music interventions: Transformative elements of music projects for women and children living in refuges

Marianne Brown
City St George's, University of London, UK

This paper reports on my PhD research exploring the benefits of music projects delivered at a women's refuge for mothers and children. This practice-based research includes the delivery of community music projects for refuges in the UK. I examine the ways in which the workshops and live music performances can make a difference to the refuge environment and the families living there. This includes both immediate and longer-term transformative effects the music projects might have on this community. The project is an example of action research and draws on my previous work in this area, as well as personal experience, relevant literature, lecture recitals and other performances, as well as discussions with members of the refuge community and staff. In addition, the project explores issues of identity, ethics and my own positionality as performing musician and researcher and includes auto ethnographic and auto-artography research methods. I will report on the current findings of my work in the women's refuge and my observation of other work in this field. The primary research question is: Can music become a changing force, leading to transformation and positive outcomes for the lives of women and children living in refuge due to domestic violence?

Ageing in the orchestral workplace: The experiences of late-career salaried and self-employed UK musicians

Susanna Cohen,[1,2] Jane Ginsborg[1]
[1]Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, UK; [2]Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel

Context While most professional full-time orchestral musicians worldwide are salaried, the majority in the UK are self-employed. Although much has been written about musicians' early career development, little is known about the latter stages of their performing careers, particularly those of musicians with successful freelance portfolio careers.

Aims To explore the experiences of late-career salaried and self-employed UK orchestral musicians and their thoughts about retirement.

Methods Single semi-structured audio-recorded Zoom interviews were carried out with 7 full-time salaried and 7 self-employed UK orchestral musicians, aged 56 – 73, each with 25 or more years of professional experience. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

Findings Participants' reports of their experiences and thoughts were highly individual. Yet there were both differences and similarities between the data obtained from the two groups of musicians. Four overarching superordinate themes were identified: changes in attitudes to working; anxiety over possible deteriorations in physical and mental capacity; ageing in an intergenerational workforce; and navigating (or failing to navigate) the retirement transition.

Implications Findings highlight participants' uncertainty and an absence of support for late-career decision-making. Larger, longitudinal investigations are required, together with examinations of managers' and conductors' attitudes to older performers.

Seeing sound, shaping stories: The role of ideasthesia and event segmentation in musically evoked narratives

Caroline Curwen
Durham University, UK

Context Listeners construct musically evoked narrative imaginings (MENI)—stories shaped by features such as dynamics and tempo—by interpreting key transitions in music. Event segmentation, a cognitive mechanism that identifies meaningful shifts in auditory input, supports this. In music-colour synaesthesia (MCS), sounds evoke visual experiences that may act as perceptual markers, enhancing event segmentation and narrative coherence. The concept of "ideasthesia" suggests that some forms of synaesthetic responses are concept-driven, arising from meaningful interpretations rather than direct sensory input.

Aims To show that MCS enhances narrative engagement by using vivid cross-modal sensory markers to detect shifts and improve event segmentation, enabling synaesthetes to create more structured and consistent MENI.

Main Contribution Combines ideasthesia and event segmentation theory to explain how MCS shapes MENI. It positions MCS on a spectrum of imaginative engagement, challenging distinctions between synaesthetic and non-synaesthetic listeners and highlighting shared narrative construction mechanisms.

Discussion and Conclusion MCS is positioned as a distinctive yet integral part of imaginative engagement, driven by conceptual processing. While synaesthetic responses offer sensory anchors, cultural context, personality, and expertise also influence narrative engagement. The paper advocates for research into multisensory integration and individual differences to explore how varied cognitive profiles shape meaningful musical narratives.

How do music and personalised systems influence exercise? Insights from two meta-analyses

Andrew Danso, Geoff Luck

Centre of Excellence in Music, Mind, Body and Brain, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Context Physical inactivity is a major global health issue, contributing to increased mortality and healthcare costs. Integrating music into exercise offers a promising strategy to enhance motivation, adherence, and cognitive outcomes. However, the specific effects of music, particularly when personalised via Personalised Interactive Music Systems (PIMS), optimises cognitive and affective responses during exercise remain unclear.

Aims This synthesis investigates how music interventions, (including general music use during acute exercise and PIMS), influence cognitive control, affective responses, and physical activity levels.

Methods Meta-analyses assessed the effects of music on cognitive and affective outcomes during acute exercise, as well as the efficacy of PIMS in influencing affective, physical and psychophysical exercise domains.

Results Music significantly influenced attention allocation ($g = 1.05$), inhibitory control ($g = 1.87$), and core affect ($g = 0.86$) during low-to-moderate intensity exercise. PIMS significantly improved physical activity levels ($g = 0.49$) and affective valence ($g = 1.68$).

Implications At low-to-moderate exercise intensities, combined music and exercise protocols show significant potential for improving cognitive and affective outcomes. PIMS provide an adaptive dimension by tailoring music to real-time activity patterns. Both meta-analyses provide insight into music's value in improving exercise experiences.

Nurturing creativities in vocal and instrumental music teaching and learning

Michael Davidson, Lilian Simones

The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK

This study examines creativity in vocal and instrumental music education (VIME), addressing challenges in integrating creative pedagogies within a field traditionally focused on replicating existing music. Rooted in the 18th-century conservatory tradition, conventional approaches risk limiting innovation-driven teaching methods suited to 21st-century education. While performing pre-existing music can be creative, research highlights the need to foster learners' independence and imagination. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study investigated how VIME teachers define and nurture creativity, considering personal, environmental, process, and product dimensions. Data were collected via an online questionnaire (N=28) and focus group interviews (N=17) with VIME teachers in Northern Ireland. Statistical analysis explored associations between teachers' creative engagement and their encouragement of learners' creativity while thematic analysis identified institutional and pedagogical constraints. Findings indicate that teachers who engage in personal creative activities are more likely to promote creativity. Exam-driven teaching cultures, institutional limitations, and insufficient training hinder its development. This study underscores the need for enhanced teacher training, clearer institutional frameworks, and explicit creativity-focused components in exam syllabi. Beyond the UK, it calls for a global shift in VIME towards pedagogies that prioritise innovation, autonomy, and artistic expression, ensuring its continued relevance in contemporary music education.

Exploring where and why errors occur when performing at sight

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Sight-reading is widely regarded as an indispensable skill for the professional musician. While factors influencing sight-reading proficiency and the development of the skill are well studied, although still poorly understood, relatively little is known about what factors actually induce errors in sight-reading performance. Using data collected as part of the *Score Design for Music Reading* project at the University of Cambridge, this paper aims to shed light on where and why errors occur when performing at sight, including:

- What types of errors are most prevalent and how this changes with expertise
- How metre and phrasing affect the likelihood of making an error
- What aspects of piece complexity induce the most errors
- To what extent error rates correlate with expert predictions on piece difficulty.

The materials used were historical sight-reading tests for piano set by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), ranging in difficulty from Grade 4 to Grade 8; as such they are highly representative of the most common form of sight-reading assessment worldwide. The findings from this study have implications both for our understanding of the processes involved in sight-reading music and for the design and marking of sight-reading assessments.

Prevalence and predictors of neuromyths in (music) students: A partial replication of the study by Düvel et al. (2017)

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Context The term *neuromyth* characterises false or simplified representations of neuroscientific research findings in scientific discourses, public perception, and educational practices. Düvel et al. (2017) were the first to investigate the prevalence and predictors of music-related neuromyths among music teachers and music teacher students following a quantitative paradigm of signal detection theory (SDT).

Aims and methods Our replication uses the same methodological design from SDT to investigate the abilities of music teacher students to distinguish between neuromyths and neurofacts, both in comparison to students from other subject areas and the student sample of the reference study.

Results The results show that students of different subjects of study do not differ significantly in how well they can judge whether selected theses are scientifically proven or not. Compared to the reference study, the replication's sample of music teacher students shows a significantly lower performance in discriminating neuromyths and neurofacts. Moreover, the predictors determined in the reference study (amount of media read, previous duration of study) could not be replicated.

Implications To further investigate neuromyths in (music) education contexts, it will be necessary to also consider teaching methods and course contents together with cognitive processes in the study of music (listening, making, learning).

Experiencing the voice change during adolescence: Adult male vocalists' perspectives

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During adolescence, the male voice undergoes critical physiological changes that significantly impact vocal range, timbre, and control (Sataloff, 2022). This study explores how such changes shape adult male singers' psychological and emotional development and influence their identity and ongoing motivation to sing. Nine adult male vocalists aged 25–70 years from diverse musical backgrounds participated in semi-structured interviews, providing first-hand accounts of their experiences during puberty. Thematic Analysis of the transcripts revealed core themes relating to identity formation, resilience, and the therapeutic value of singing. Experiences in choirs, school settings, and broader social contexts emerged as influential factors, with stereotypes about singing prompting both challenges and opportunities for growth. Participants emphasised that their ongoing vocal training during the adolescent voice change facilitated a transformation, elevating singing from a casual pastime to a professionally significant endeavour fuelled by passion and emotional connection. These findings underscore the need for supportive educational environments and the importance of challenging stereotypes during adolescence. By highlighting the significance of carefully tailored vocal pedagogy, this research provides practical insights and theoretical guidance for educators and practitioners to better support male singers during this transformative stage.

The first cut is the deepest. A qualitative investigation of musical identities within community music education

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Context Music-making is perceived as requiring specialist musical training and non-musically trained individuals often perceive themselves as unmusical and do not take part in music activities.

Aims This presentation investigates the processes and outcomes of a community music education project and the role of early experiences in shaping the musical identities of 15 individuals with a diverse range of self-reported musical skills.

Methods Participants took part in research interviews regarding their musical experience and attended a series of music workshops in either Italy (Calabria) or Scotland (Glasgow) focused on integrating both musically experienced and inexperienced participants in collaborative musical activities.

Results Thirteen emergent themes, grouped into three superordinate themes: early exposure and family influence; experiences with music education; participation and playfulness were identified. Themes highlight how participants' early experiences of music are remembered in detail and represent important moments. Early listening experiences were reported as positive and linked with family memories. Early musical education experienced were often reported often as negative leading to lifelong self-beliefs of being "unmusical".

Implications Positive experience with community music education can overcome debilitating effects of early non contingency experience with music, highlighting musical identities as dynamic (amenable to change) and situated (context dependent).

'Abuse of power comes in different costumes' – Insights from a mixed-method study of creative higher education institutions in Germany

Marina Fischer
Berlin Social Science Center, Germany

Context Violent and abusive behaviour in the creative industries has become a subject of great interest in the recent years. There is a growing consensus that the development of effective prevention strategies is imperative. Recently, there has been a shift in focus towards creative higher education institutions.

Aims To implement effective interventions, it is essential to understand the specific needs of creative higher education institutions. However, empirical evidence from this field remains limited. We present the findings of a mixed-methods study, investigating the structures, prevalence, and correlates of violent experiences at German creative higher education institutions.

Methods In a nationwide online survey of state art and music colleges, students (N=611) were asked about experiences of violence, discrimination and aggression, psychological well-being and the use of support structures. Further, 16 semi-structured interviews were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis to shed light on structural aspects of power abuse.

Results 92% of participants reported some violent behaviour in their creative academic environment, with marginalized persons reporting significantly more experiences. Every second person reported sexual harassment experiences. Such incidents showed associations with poorer mental health and professional thriving.

Implications Gaps in preventative measures based on insights from the qualitative and quantitative results are discussed.

Drumming and Bhāva: Metaphysics of drumming and divine embodiment in Garhwal Himalaya

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Context The valleys of Garhwal Himalaya in the North Indian Himalayan state of Uttarakhand echo with the rhythmic sounds of two drumming instruments named *ḍhol-damauñ*. These drums are central to the region's practices of worshipping *Devī-Devtās* (Hindu deities).

Aims This paper explores the underlying dynamics that make drumming *ḍhol-damauñ* significant in Garhwali ritual contexts and investigates the significance of drumming in ritual practices across Garhwal and their extensive relation to ritual processions where the metaphysics of sound and divine embodiment intersect.

Methods Ethnographic fieldwork and semi-structured interviews with local musicians in Garhwal were conducted over thirteen months, from March 2021 to November 2023, to explore the history and practice of *ḍhol-damauñ*. This research primarily engaged with drummer bards and musicians, chosen for their expertise in traditional drumming practices.

Results This paper asserts that drumming and feeling/sentiment, that is *bhāva*, are intricately linked in Garhwal. Drumming evokes this *bhāva* in a way that a deity descends into a person's body through divine embodiment in rituals.

Implications of the research This paper offers insights into the relationship between mountainous soundscapes and ritual practices and a meaningful discussion around the complex semiotics of emotions in the ritual traditions of the Himalayas.

Instrumental learning, identity, and student-teacher interaction in a secondary music school: A case study from Italy

Agnese Maria Garufi

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This study explores the role of space and teacher-student interactions in shaping musical identity within Italian secondary music schools, which integrate music education into the standard curriculum. Employing Ellsworth's (2005) concept of transitional space—a realm for learning and transformation—and Bourdieu's notion of habitus (1986), the research investigates how societal norms and internalized dispositions influence musical development.

Using a case study approach, the study gathered data through semi-structured interviews with teachers, students, and parents; observations of lessons and rehearsals; teachers' voice notes; and students' photovoice. The findings underscore the pivotal role of both verbal and nonverbal communication in instrumental learning, with humour emerging as a key element in verbal interactions. School spaces and participants' habitus were also identified as significant factors impacting learning and identity formation.

The study concludes that teacher-student interactions and the school social environment profoundly influence students' musical identities. It calls for increased awareness among educators and researchers of the interplay between interpersonal dynamics, societal structures, learning spaces, and musical growth. By shedding light on these dimensions, the research aims to enhance instrumental and group music education practices in secondary music schools in Italy.

Psychological needs and well-being in community music education for young people experiencing challenging life circumstances

Jason Goopy, Stephanie MacArthur

Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia

Community music education programs (CMEPs) are increasingly recognized as an empowering environment for participants to learn healthy life strategies in addition to music. This qualitative study investigated how a CMEP in Australia satisfied the psychological needs and enhanced the well-being of young people experiencing challenging life circumstances using the theoretical lens of Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Data were generated using researcher participation, observation, and individual semi-structured interviews with young people and program facilitators. Reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyze the collected data. The three overarching themes of Belonging, Learning, and Empowerment emerged as the guiding pillars of this CMEP. Participants described the no judgement, inclusive and safe family environment created. Young people engaged in informal music activities, which opened the door to learning formal life skills. Facilitators were crucial in creating a positive learning culture that empowered young people to make independent healthy choices and provided them with support in accessing appropriate services. This innovative model of music education disrupts traditional approaches to school music education and calls for a recalibration where musical flourishing for all students is a core aim.

The rise of politically motivated protest music among Commonwealth Caribbean people in the 1960s

Keturah Gray

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Music has played an important role in the culture and identity of Caribbean people. Caribbean music is often perceived as a culmination of the lived experiences of people predominantly of African descent, highlighting their struggles while remembering and keeping their identity alive. The Caribbean has shared the same lived history of colonization, slavery and indentureship. Colonialism particularly in the Caribbean has affected the history, culture, and had negative sociological, psychological, and educational implications. Music was and is an important cultural expression that has paved the way for preserving the African heritage of Caribbean people, while fighting social and political injustices. I will take a further look into how Caribbean people past and present musicking experiences, have been used to preserve their culture and identity while fighting against social and political injustice and effect change. Musicking is a human anthropological approach defined by Christopher Small as forming relationships and connections between music and culture. This research will play a critical role in educational spaces, as it highlights how popular music, indigenous to the Caribbean helped to forge social and political movements by challenging unfair norms and value systems creating a common socio-cultural and musical identity among the people.

Maximising impact: Strategic and ethical music therapy in schools within time and financial constraints

Seren Grime

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Delivering high-quality music therapy in schools—particularly special schools supporting students with social, emotional, and mental health needs—requires balancing ethical considerations, financial constraints, and time limitations while ensuring meaningful outcomes. By integrating insights from music psychology and music therapy, therapists can refine their approach to create efficient, evidence-based, and impactful interventions.

This presentation explores strategies for optimising therapeutic provision through collaboration with school staff, headteachers, and multidisciplinary teams such as occupational therapists and educational psychologists. We will discuss how findings from music psychology—such as the role of rhythmic structures in attention regulation and the power of emotionally attuned relationships—can enhance therapy effectiveness, particularly within trauma-informed educational settings.

By leveraging cost-effective models, including group sessions and whole-school approaches, therapists can work strategically to provide sustainable support. Additionally, we will examine how embedding psychological insights into EHCP reviews and referral processes ensures that therapy goals align with wider educational and psychological frameworks. Ethical considerations, such as maintaining individualised support within resource-limited environments, will remain central to this discussion.

Through case studies and practical strategies, we will demonstrate how creative arts therapists can navigate constraints while delivering high-quality interventions that benefit both students and the wider school community.

The effect of atonal versus tonal music on psychological distance and abstract mind-set

Ori Grossman

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Psychological distance, the subjective sensation of being removed from a phenomenon, which is associates with abstract mind-set, was found to have profound implications on decision making and cognitive performance. Psychological distance is affected by various facets of subjective experience. Recent research has indicated that music can also affect psychological distance. However, no prior study has investigated specifically the effect of atonal (AM) versus tonal music (TM) on psychological distance. The literature to date has yielded mixed results regarding the correlation between these variables. The present study sought to address the mixed results by systematically investigating whether and to what extent AM vs. TM affects psychological distance and abstract mind-set. Three experiments using different music stimuli conditions and different dimensions of psychological distance tested the research hypothesis. The results confirmed that atonal vs. tonal music increases psychological distance and abstract mind-set for people with a low and medium music interest level, regardless of pleasure and arousal level, mood, and music-liking level. Beyond expanding the theoretical understanding regarding psychological distance and the construal theory implications, the findings may also expand the understanding of the effect of music on cognitive performance.

Reflecting on reflection for musical learners

Kristine Healy, Daniella Meagher, Emma Wheeler, Daniel Springate, Holly Calder, Vivien Chong, Lien Dinh, Richard Iles, Mabon Jones, Daniel Lappin, Olga Eckert
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In a UK specialist music school setting where students have access to a wealth of musical resources, it is easy to imagine that young people would adapt readily to the practice of reflecting on the process of learning music performance skills. However, whilst they are often able to plan, execute and report on their practice, even students who might be considered exceptionally gifted for music can struggle to reflect critically in ways that generate insight and illuminate pathways for future action. Recognising that those who support young people in developing independent practice skills are in the ideal position to demonstrate and nurture healthy, mindful approaches to self-regulated learning, colleagues in the Practice Team at Chetham's School of Music participated in two focus groups to explore the following questions: 'How has reflective practice been meaningful in our own journeys of musical and pedagogical learning?' and 'How can we help young people to engage in the kind of reflection that encourages learner agency?' This presentation offers the discursive products of these discussions in the form of a co-produced statement of intent, which will be used to instigate further critical analysis amongst colleagues in other institutional contexts and inspire continued experiments in pedagogy.

Spooky tunes for the youth: Finnish adolescents' experiences of scary music

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Young people love to scare themselves: studies show the will to scare oneself may peak in adolescence. Horror can be enjoyable, and have psychological benefits, for instance, in stress or anxiety regulation. Music is an important tool for adolescents in emotional work: regulating mood or coping, and the importance of emotional skills is increasingly emphasised in society. However, very little is known about how adolescents experience scary music.

The aim of this study is to explore adolescents' subjective experiences of scary music. Furthermore, we wish to understand in which contexts they listen to scary music, how does it make them feel, and do they use it for social bonding or affect regulation.

The data will be collected during February-March 2025 via group discussions (3–6 people/group) with 13–18 years old adolescents. Pieces of adolescents' self-selected scary music will be listened during the discussions. Data will be analysed inductively. Preliminary findings will be presented at the conference. We assume adolescents' use of scary music varies depending on their preferences, and that it is linked to audiovisual and social contexts. The information from this study can be applied to, for example, music education, emotional skills education and music therapy.

Scaffolding the development of auditory streaming skills with AI stem separation tools

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Context Recent advancements in artificial intelligence and machine learning, particularly AI-powered stem separation tools, offer transformative potential for aural skills education. These tools can isolate individual audio components, such as vocals, bass, drums, and harmonic instruments, from mixed tracks, providing educators and students with novel ways to engage with complex musical textures. One of the key challenges in aural skills training is developing the ability to parse polyphonic textures, a skill I explore through the language of Albert Bregman's "auditory streaming."

Method Through three case studies of exercises, this paper explores how separators can scaffold auditory streaming development and, by extension, improve other aspects of aural skills instruction such as sight singing and audiation. These exercises have already been fruitfully implemented in North American undergraduate core classes and qualitative feedback will be shared.

Results & Implications This work demonstrates how AI-driven tools can enrich both music instruction and student learning, while fostering awareness of technology's broader impact on pedagogy. I also address the ethical implications and responsibilities of using such technologies in the classroom, reflecting both on the legal status of these tools as well as the moral aspects.

Musical function, meaning and identity in the Polish church in London

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This study examines the role of Polish church music in London a decade after Poland's inclusion in the European Community, presenting findings from a survey of Polish church attendees (n = 78). Respondents answered a 20-question questionnaire on the role of music in church communities, addressing seven hypotheses related to music's functions, meanings, and identities. Hypotheses about music's functions and its role in identity were largely supported, while those on its meanings were not. Results highlight a significant correlation between music and religion, though musical and religious activities are experienced at different frequencies. The primary musical function is its contribution to the continuity and stability of culture, which ensures the sustenance of the Polish ethnic identity. A Spearman's test revealed a significant correlation between the level of commitment to religious activities and the level of devotion to sacred music activities. However, the null hypothesis was accepted for the claim that music experienced in religious contexts has a greater effect on the faithful than music experienced in secular contexts. Polish hymns play a vital role in upholding religiosity and fulfil the function of validating rituals, while fostering national identity. Religious commitment and positive church music experiences also encourage broader music participation.

Fostering self-discovery and connection through pilots led by undergraduate music theory students

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In recent years, music educators have been particularly outspoken about the need to change pedagogical practices to better contribute to students' employability and well-being. In the specific case of music theory, it has been suggested that creative activities such as improvisation can best contribute to students' employability and well-being. Here, I argue that engaging students in an activity related to the field of music psychology can contribute to students' self-discovery and connection to others, thereby providing additional opportunities for flourishing and fulfilment. Specifically, I believe that students can benefit from conducting a simple pilot study of whether other listeners hear or can hear a particular type of musical event in the same way that the student hears it. The topic can be anything the student finds musically interesting, such as associations triggered by certain rhythmic patterns or timbres. This type of student-run pilot, with few participants and no complex quantitative analysis, provides an accessible first experience with music psychology, suitable for undergraduate music theory students unfamiliar with empirical methods. I will present an example of this pilot, which will be published as a chapter in a volume providing models for undergraduate music theory students' work.

A bouquet of emotions: A new perspective in research on pre-performance emotional experience of musicians

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The public performance situation is rich in external and internal stimuli, causing emotions to fluctuate rapidly depending on the performer's focus and cognitive appraisals (see Gross & Thompson, 2007; Kaleńska-Rodzaj, 2021). Metaphorically, every performer steps onto the stage with a "bouquet" of pre-performance emotions. Their skilful recognition allows musicians to shape "their bouquet" according to their needs - whether by changing emotions, accepting them, or using them for their performance.

The literature review on musicians' pre-performance emotions integrates diverse approaches, including clinical psychology, performance psychology, positive psychology, and the psychology of emotion and emotion regulation. Various conceptualizations of the phenomenon - such as music performance anxiety, optimal arousal, positive emotions, and mixed emotions - suggest different intervention strategies. This presentation highlights the benefits of broadening the understanding of the mechanism and treatment of pre-performance emotions, using the knowledge about mixed emotions.

Findings from several studies in a mixed emotion research paradigm show a continuum of pre-performance emotional states, their mixed and complex structure, and their different impact on performers' satisfaction with performance quality (Kaleńska-Rodzaj, 2018, 2020, 2025 in press). Helping musicians in recognition the variety of emotion and learning how to regulate them effectively is an important task for music educators and psychologists.

Music for living better: How stroke survivors, carers and facilitators experienced the STROKESTRA community programme

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This research project explored the effectiveness of a pioneering stroke rehabilitation programme called the STROKESTRA Community Programme (SCP). The SCP was delivered to stroke survivors and carers (family and friends) by members of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra with assistance from volunteers, including University music students and community workers. Existing research and intervention studies indicate that music can be an effective therapeutic tool for stroke, although there is limited insight into how community programmes are delivered and experienced.

This study investigated the lived experiences of those who participated in and facilitated the SCP and considered what their experiences reveal about using music as an agent for living better. Semi-structured interviews and observations were conducted with SCP participants (N=39).

There were three main themes: (1) social and emotional experiences (becoming a new group; social bonding through music; experiencing endings); (2) musical and creative experiences (including connecting/re-connecting with music; creativity; performance; experiencing synchrony); (3) progress and transformation (life changes; motivation; experiencing new contexts). The findings reveal how community music programmes can help people to learn to live with life changes for the better.

Defining a musician stereotype?

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Context The presence of discipline-related stereotypes impacts engagement in, and satisfaction with, working within certain disciplines. Assessing science stereotypes using the Draw-A-Scientist-Test (DAST) indicates implicit biases: the majority of scientists are drawn as older, white males wearing lab coats. The present study asks, what is the prevailing musician stereotype?

Aims As part of a larger project examining identities, the current study applied Chambers' (1983) DAST to musicians to identify musician stereotypes.

Methods A sample of 77 participants (17–73 years old) completed an online questionnaire which included a drawing task and an open-ended prompt regarding the origin of their ideas for the drawing. The presence of stereotypical markers was identified via an amended DAST checklist. Three raters independently coded each drawing and explanation, with any differences resolved by taking the majority code.

Results A qualitative thematic analysis of the drawing origins indicated key influences including media, notable persons, and personal experience. The pervasive stereotypical features of a "musician" and additional patterns within the data will be discussed.

Implications The present study extends research into musical identity to more fully explore the role of stereotypes. Additionally, findings have practical implications for how educators and practitioners can create environments that promote discipline engagement.

An aural experience of the progress from sudden, complete and permanent deafness to re-learning to sing in tune and enjoy music

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Context Earlier research suggests that vibrations can be used as a way for adults, who lose their hearing, to perceive music.

Aims Our case study explores whether and how sensing of music through vibrations could help a deaf participant learn to re-engage in singing.

Method Working with an adult participant (WJ), who had sudden bilateral permanent hearing loss, and using real musical instruments, singers, and a soundbar speaker, we explore perception, production, and learning skills. We illustrate this by focusing on two parts of our research. One tested perception and production of direction of differences in pitch pairs. The second, 3-month study, involved teaching WJ, using vibrations, to learn to sing two new songs.

Results With extensive training, she was able to sing back the direction (99.4%) and both pitches of musical pitch pairs (8.4%). She then learned and reproduced the two songs, with support. Factors that supported learning included her own high levels of motivation and enjoyment of the learning experience and the music experienced, and the repetition of stimuli with appropriate feedback on accuracy.

Implications These findings show that vibrations can provide an effective mechanism for helping adults with hearing loss re-engage and re-enjoy music, with appropriate support.

emoTouch Web—A web-based system for continuous response studies and audience feedback in live-, lab- and online settings

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Music is a dynamic phenomenon that evolves and changes over time. Therefore, music related research often requires dynamic instruments that make processes continuously observable in real time.

emoTouch is a free, web-based research system for the continuous real-time evaluation of videos, music or live events of any kind. The system can on-the-fly turn any networked smartphone, tablet, or desktop computer into a freely configurable and easy-to-use research tool. For example, the audience of a concert can participate in a continuous response evaluation study simply by accessing a special emoTouch website with their own smartphones ('Bring-Your-Own-Device'). For the first time, this enables studies at live events with possibly hundreds of participants in a simple and cost-effective way. However, it is also possible to conduct laboratory studies with desktop computers or real-time online surveys. Data can be analysed and visualized with build in tools or exported in various formats. Since the data that is generated from the participant's devices can be processed and displayed in real time, emoTouch also provides new possibilities for audience feedback. emoTouch is developed at Osnabrück University and can be used free of charge. The talk shows the possibilities of the system and a typical research workflow.

Intercultural teaching in the Chinese Whispers™ Project

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This paper presents research about intercultural teaching as part of the Chinese Whispers™ (CW) music education project. The CW project involves teaching Mandarin Chinese to British school children and adults in community groups through choral singing. Research about intercultural teaching and associated competency models provides valuable insight into ways of working with communities from different cultural backgrounds, yet there is limited understanding about the first-hand experiences of intercultural teachers, especially within the domain of music education. In order to address this shortfall, this study aimed to investigate the first author's experiences of working on the CW project as an intercultural teacher from an autoethnographic perspective using data from personal diary entries and self-reflective teaching logs over six years (2017–2023). The data revealed the evolving personal and professional development of the intercultural teacher and the factors influencing that development, specifically overcoming language barriers, understanding educational ethos, managing teacher-pupil relationships and understanding cultural differences. The steps taken to process culture shocks relating to these factors will be discussed and a new Experiential Model of Intercultural Teaching (EMIT) posited. The model will not only assist new intercultural music teachers, but will provide a frame of reference for future research in the domain.

Evaluating the role of collaborative action ethnography in identifying and accommodating musical vulnerabilities in the classroom

Elizabeth MacGregor
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Context While music-making can have personal and social benefits, it can also cause conflict and division. The concept of 'musical vulnerability' draws on music psychology research to suggest that such affordances relate to our openness to being affected by music-making—positively and negatively—depending on its delineation of self-identity, social identity, and space, and its embodiment through aural receptivity, mimetic participation, and affective transmission.

Aims In this study I investigated the relationship between the psychological conceptualisation of musical vulnerability and everyday music education contexts, by (1) identifying musical vulnerabilities in classroom settings; and (2) supporting teachers to develop pedagogies responding to musical vulnerabilities.

Methods I partnered with music teachers at three schools in a collaborative action ethnography: an ethnographic method in which researcher and participants co-construct context-specific research questions and plan, action, and reflect upon subsequent changes in practice.

Findings Changes in practice at the three schools ranged from incremental changes in attitudes towards creativity, pedagogical development promoting whole-class singing, and professional learning around integrating practical music-making in the classroom.

Implications As a low-stakes, democratic, and flexible method, collaborative action ethnography proved valuable for developing and evaluating changes in practice that were responsive to musical vulnerabilities in diverse school environments.

A community music intervention based on traditional rhythm and its influence on well-being, positive psychology and resilience

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Music has been shown to directly influence people's sense of wellbeing, mood, resilience and various aspects of positive psychology. A 5-month community music intervention programme based on traditional rhythms was designed and implemented in 4 cities in the island of Crete, involving about 1300 people overall, between March and July 2024. This programme included mainly drum-based music making, supplemented by movement and singing. In order to study the impact of this intervention on people's lives and relationship with music, we performed a quantitative research approach which measured the well-being, indexes of positive psychology and people's music mood regulation using music pre- and post- intervention (N=107). For this we used the B-MMR questionnaire, the Well-Being Index (WHO-5) and a short purpose-made positive psychology questionnaire. Results showed significant differences between pre- and post- test, and indicated that, firstly, the music programme regulated individuals' moods and positively affected positive psychology aspects. Music enhanced the sense of comfort, boosting resilience, optimism and hope. Additionally, it was noted that as the influence on optimism and hope grew after the programme, personal efficacy also increased. Conclusions highlighted the connection between the programme's content and delivery with the results from the questionnaires.

Could targeted musicianship training support generalist teachers and the primary classroom? Preliminary insights from an intervention study and its evaluation

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Context Generalist primary teachers (GPTs) cite lack of musical literacy as a key reason for feeling ill-equipped to teach music, with research indicating a negative cycle of low expectation and lack of agency. Training in classroom musicianship improves teachers' skills and confidence.

Aims Drawing on the concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), the present study aims to identify dimensions of functional classroom musicianship and PCK advantageous in training GPTs new to teaching music.

Method Data from an intervention study examining the impact of musicianship training on GPTs' emerging PCK were evaluated through collaborative inductive analysis. Data included audio-visual recordings of bespoke practical musicianship tests within a placement module on music education for trainee GPTs. Constructs of musicianship and communication identified in the analysis informed a systematic review of existing music psychology and education literature.

Results This preliminary study indicates the need for an expanded music pedagogical framework. The findings point towards a critical reconsideration of normative pedagogical approaches to musical literacy, and suggest that theoretical conceptions of musical intersubjectivity could serve to refine musicianship metrics for GPTs.

Implications Enhanced music training for GPTs may support both trainee teachers' and primary pupils' intersubjective awareness in the classroom.

Is there a potential for harnessing music-facilitated awe in learning contexts?

Diana Omigie

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Context Awe is widely recognised as a powerful emotional experience. However perhaps due to the difficulty of inducing this complex aesthetic emotion in the laboratory, the psychological effects of awe from music remain relatively understudied. Critically, as awe seems to be able to diminish negative self-evaluations and draw attention to knowledge deficits, a better understanding of music-facilitated awe could lead to a better understanding of how music might be profitably harnessed in learning contexts.

Aims The ongoing studies I will describe here explore i) the extent to which music-facilitated awe influences emotional state after a stressful task and ii) whether music-facilitated awe recruits brain signatures that have been associated with awe in other domains.

Methods While the behavioural study presented music and visual stimuli through a 2-D audiovisual recording, the EEG study sought to overcome limitations of previous studies by using immersive virtual reality environments to boost feelings of presence and therefore awe.

Results and implications Preliminary results suggest that music-facilitated awe can diminish anxiety-related states and suggests its neural underpinnings share some similarities with other domains. Future work could thus seek to extend these results; more directly examining the potential for music-facilitated awe to support and benefit learning.

Children's free descriptions of subjective responses to selected musical extracts reveal new taxonomy of music-evoked experience

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Context Empirical investigation of young children's lived experiences with music is surprisingly limited, and discourse surrounding musical understanding has overwhelmingly focused on adults' descriptions and evaluations, leaving a gap in the exploration of children's own perspectives.

Aims This study aims to glean insight into foundational processes of musical meaning-making by exploring how young children (aged 5-11 years) describe and make sense of music-evoked experiences.

Methods Children (*N*=44) listened online to seven musical extracts and gave free responses to two questions: (i) How does this music make you feel? and (ii) Does the music make you think of or imagine anything?

Results/findings Thematic analyses revealed variability in how clearly children distinguish between music-evoked feelings, imagination, and perception. Of 616 responses, 335 (54%) described imagery, 73 (22%) in response to the "feel" question. Of 265 responses reporting feelings, 27 (10.2%) related to the "imagine" question. Responses additionally included inferences of meaning and observations about musical expression and features.

Implications These findings indicate a spectrum of music-evoked experience from embodied, intrinsically experienced feelings to detached observations, that might be viewed in terms of distance from the self, intrinsically or extrinsically construed. We offer a taxonomy of music-evoked response for further exploration.

Investigating meditation as a tool to address music performance anxiety

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Background In recent decades, there has been increasing interest in meditation as a potential holistic strategy to address music performance anxiety (MPA).

Aims This research aimed to address a gap in the existing literature by providing a nuanced analysis of the specific meditation practices employed and their perceived impact on MPA. Moreover, it aimed to investigate the current prevalence of meditation as a tool to address MPA among musicians.

Methods Two qualitative studies were conducted to explore specific types of meditative practices and their perceived impact on MPA and wellbeing. The first study investigated the perspective of 16 experts, while the second explored the perspective of seven novice and professional musicians suffering from MPA. Besides, the prevalence of meditation as a tool to address MPA was investigated quantitatively with a survey study involving 768 musicians.

Findings and implications The most effective meditations in addressing somatic and cognitive MPA manifestations were identified as body-centred, whereas affect-centred meditations were found to be particularly effective in mitigating affective and behavioural MPA manifestations. A convergence of perspectives was observed between experts and musicians suffering from MPA. Further research is recommended, given meditation's positive impact on MPA and musicians' health, and its current low diffusion.

Multi-sensory beat perception: exploring the impact of the tactile modality in a public educational context

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Music perception and cognition of sound events involves both auditory and somatosensory information. The motivation of the present study was to reinforce the elementary musical skills of children in a bimodal, auditory-tactile condition. The beat sensitivity of school-aged children was explored, using evaluation tools that included musical excerpts of various musical styles. The main goal was to investigate whether beat perception is enhanced when lower frequencies are predominant in music activities. Children completed sixteen training sessions focusing on timing skills. The research followed a mixed-methods pretest-posttest, two-group quasi experimental design. Sixty children participated in the study, aged between 8 and 10 years old, all recruited from a primary school in Athens. Results indicated that children who were exposed to auditory-tactile feedback exhibited significant improvement in their ability to recognise beat misalignments in musical context, whereas children who completed the audio-only training revealed no significant differences. This research project provides empirical evidence of the effectiveness of tactile stimulation, advocating the development and application of new music teaching strategies in schools. Findings highlight the significance of touch and embodied activities in music instruction, offering novel technological tools for the educational practice.

Investigating amateur choirs in the United Kingdom as sites of musical learning and ambition

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Context Recent research has emphasised health and wellbeing benefits of musical participation, especially choral singing. Here we shift the focus to consider amateur choirs as sites of musical learning.

Aims We sought to understand:
1. The extent to which amateur choirs are experienced as sites of musical learning by their members and directors.
2. The psychological, social, and educational factors that facilitate or inhibit musical learning in choirs.

Methods We distributed an online survey to choir participants in the UK, and here analyse the responses from choir members (*n*=568) and directors (*n*=126) using descriptive statistics and qualitative coding.

Results / findings Amateur choirs are potential sites of learning, but this aim needs to be consensual and consistent with the audition processes, rehearsal style and performance expectations. Perceptions of inclusion at audition stage need to be matched to rehearsal styles and learning preferences. Prior musical training was higher in mixed-voice choirs than in upper- and lower-voice choirs, with related effects on expectations, attitudes to learning, and performance ambitions.

Implications Our research redresses the balance of focusing on the psychosocial benefits of musical participation, and considers the contribution that research in this field could also make to music education.

Do you 'tell' or 'talk with' your pupils? A survey study investigating perceptions of dialogic teaching among in-service instrumental/vocal teachers

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Dialogic teaching involves teachers 'talking with' their pupils and is characterised by open questions such as 'What is the character of this music?' or 'How could you practise your piece this week?'. Teachers build on pupils' responses through further questioning or by offering ideas for consideration. Recent research indicates that dialogic teaching improves learning outcomes in instrumental/vocal lessons, particularly in relation to musical expression and improvisation. Despite this, some teachers commonly 'tell' pupils what to do, controlling when and how they contribute. To date, studies exploring dialogic teaching have recruited small samples of teachers, so little is known about how a wider population handles lesson dialogue. To address this gap in understanding, in-service instrumental/vocal teachers will be invited to respond to an online questionnaire in Spring 2025. Quantitative and qualitative data will assess *if* and *how* teachers adapt their approach in different contexts. Initial findings are expected to reveal teacher and pupil thinking processes and suggest how teachers may be supported to 'talk with' their pupils. Findings will have implications for providers of pedagogical resources, teacher educators, and teachers who wish to promote dialogic interactions in their lessons.

A comparative study of music teacher preparation in China and the UK

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Context In the 21st century, trends toward global integration, cultural diversification, and multicultural education have brought new requirements for primary and secondary school music education in China. It is questionable whether the current music teacher preparation can meet those requirements.

Aims To explore differences and similarities of music teacher preparation between China and the UK.

Methods Interviews (China: *n*=13; England: *n*=8) and questionnaire surveys (China: *n*=82; England: *n*=24) from mainland China and England, analysed using mixed methods including thematic coding.

Results Different views have emerged regarding what musical and/or educational skills should be prioritised and whether training/preparation courses support such skills. Chinese trainee teachers report that courses pay too much attention to musical skills such as instrumental performance skills but not enough for educational knowledges. Chinese course leaders echoed this view. Music teacher education in the UK seems to attach more importance to musical creativities than is the case in China.

Implications Questions have emerged regarding what music teacher preparation courses in the two countries could perhaps learn from each other. Discrepancies between the UK and China in relation to the psychology of responding to Governmental initiatives are another implication from this project demanding further exploration.

Investigating relationships between visual imagery and emotion in performances of Mozart's Variations on "Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman"

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Extensive research has explored the relationship between visual imagery (VI) and emotion in music listening; however, the musicians' perspective and experience toward the relationship between VI, emotion and music during music performance remains less examined. This research investigates this relationship through an exploratory study involving piano performance recordings of Mozart's *12 Variations on "Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman",* score annotations, think-aloud questions, and interviews with 8 piano performance postgraduate students and 2 piano tutors at a university. Thematic analysis revealed two binary relationships: (1) between VI and music, musical background and features influence the experience of VI, and (2) between VI and emotion, there is an alignment between VI and emotion felt and expression. VI was found to enhance the performance of emotional expression, while felt emotion influenced the VI experience. In some cases, excessive VI induced emotion negatively impacted performance. Additionally, a ternary relationship was revealed, showing that musical background and features affect felt emotion, which in turn impact VI during performance. We provide insights into a nuanced understanding of musicians' perceptions of the relationships between VI, emotion, and music, which inspire future research to explore the impact of VI in a more systematic and comprehensive way.

The suitability of music for different activities during everyday listening: An experience sampling study

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Context Everyday music listening accompanies many daily activities, and determining the most suitable music for a given activity is of great interest. Potential predictors of music suitability include arousal-based goals, and task complexity. However, no study to date has directly measured the suitability of music during real-time music listening episodes.
Aims: This study aimed to determine the predictors of music suitability for the most frequent activities during everyday music listening.
Methods All data were collected through the MuPsych experience sampling app, which collects ecologically valid data during everyday music listening episodes. Participants (*N*=1,237) completed questions during 11,443 listening episodes, reporting current activity and music suitability, along with reasons for listening, context variables, and individual measures. Mixed-model lasso regressions were performed on activity clusters to determine the predictors of music suitability.
Results Suitability for cognitively demanding activities was predicted by music with arousal-reducing features, while suitability for physical activities was predicted by highly arousing music. These findings support arousal moderation and arousal polarisation strategies, respectively.
Implications This study offers an ecological insight into the suitability of music for everyday activities, and will inform the development of both music psychology measures, and music recommendation systems.

Exploring the hidden curriculum: Approaches to interpretative training within higher music education

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This paper examines approaches to the teaching and learning of interpretation amongst higher music education (HME) performance students. A detailed, qualitative case study was conducted which involved multiple interviews with undergraduate performance students at a UK university and their educators as well as observations of lessons and performance classes over a 20-month period. This paper highlights methods that were found to positively contribute to participants' interpretative development and also considers potential problems in existing approaches, proposing strategies for overcoming challenges in the teaching and assessment of interpretation in HME. The findings of this study suggest that there are underlying phenomena that can act as a hidden curriculum in students' interpretative training including: assumptions educators make about students' skills, students' unexamined beliefs, competing visions of students' training, implicit assessment objectives, and unspoken expectations within the wider Western classical music world. This paper argues that by uncovering and examining these factors, students and their educators can gain insights into underlying interpretative influences and better understand the skills and knowledge needed for students to take greater ownership of their own musical development and to successfully navigate their role as performers in an increasingly changing musical world.

Eight shows a week: Investigating the psychological cost of a career in musical theatre

Emma Risley

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Context Pursuing a career as a musical theatre (MT) performer is a dream for the 2700 students who undertake performing arts courses in the UK each year. However, the realities of vocally and physically demanding schedules are at odds with the glamorous stage scenes seen by audiences.

Aims Contribute to music psychology research with knowledge of the experiences of MT performers with protected characteristics in the form of a career framework, and make recommendations to improve the lives of performers.

Methods Phase One involved semi-structured interviews with 14 industry experts. Phase Two involved a survey and interviews with 15 UK-based professional MT performers. Three pre-existing validated scales were used: the WHO-5 Well-being Scale, the Satisfaction with Life Scale, and the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory.

Findings An MT career framework consisting of career calling, the culture within productions, and the show must go on was developed. Training institutions neglect vital career employability skills. Performers spoke of inequities in casting. Some view The Show Must Go On as a positive mindset that unifies casts, and others view it as a toxic narrative.

Implications Alongside the framework, this study contributes industry recommendations to improve the well-being of performers developed with CIC Applause for Thought.

'It's like you're an activist': Sustainable teaching practices in a music outreach project in London

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This paper contributes to current conversations on the potential for participatory music-making to promote sustainable human coexistence. We attend to the experiences and collaborative learning practices of teachers working in a community music school and outreach initiative known as the King's – St George's Academy, based in Southwark, London. In order to interrogate how teachers make sense of their experience at the Academy, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed through interpretative phenomenological analysis. Findings suggest that participation in the Academy facilitates processes of self-reflection, personal growth and cultural exchange among teachers. Teachers become part of an organic network where innovative pedagogical practices are discussed and adopted. We conclude that the development of certain 'rhizomatic' attitudes and structures in the context of the classroom can contribute to imagining alternative ways of thinking about the self, music-making and society at large.

The use of music among Swiss people with Parkinson's: A mixed methods survey and comparison to the UK findings

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Background Music is beneficial in Parkinson's care: e.g., rhythm can improve gait, and ways of ameliorating symptoms and enhancing quality of life are important adjuncts to pharmacological and surgical therapies. Knowing how to use music, however, requires an understanding of cultural and personal preferences, rather than a prescriptive approach.

Methods We conducted a mixed methods study via an online survey investigating how Swiss people with Parkinson's (PwP) use music in their everyday lives.

Results As with the UK findings, the top three uses of music were *aesthetic appreciation*, *relaxation* and *motivation*. However, this sample of Swiss PwP (*N*=44) reported more use of music for *cathartic purpose*, *personal anthems* and *distraction* than PwP in the UK. Qualitative analysis showed that Swiss PwP have a deep love of music from their homeland and connection with Swiss music, e.g., yodelling. Similarities with the UK survey included the importance of the feeling of energy in music to invigorate, and gentleness in music to regenerate.

Discussion Although the small sample here does not reflect the complexity of Swiss musical culture, it does provide further support for the inclusion of strategies utilizing heard and imagined music to promote activity, support relaxation, and regulate mood.

How to listen: Key considerations for tailoring individualized music listening to the diverse needs of people with dementia

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Background Individualized music listening (IML) has proven to be a cost-effective, non-pharmacological intervention for people with dementia (PwD) in institutional care. Given the complexity of behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD), tailored interventions are essential to improve the wellbeing of PwD.

Aims We present behavioral sequences illustrating different responses to IML to highlight the importance of adapting IML to the spatial and social environment as well as the musical preferences of PwD.

Methods Data were collected from an RCT conducted in nursing homes in Thuringia, Germany, to assess the impact of IML on the quality of life and social participation of PwD. Based on a typology of reactions of PwD to IML, each behavioral sequence is categorized into a behavioral type. Recommendations for tailoring the intervention to the specific situation are given based on spatial and social aspects as well as music-related influencing factors.

Results and Implications The interplay between environmental factors and music selection is crucial for optimizing IML outcomes. Our recommendations help improve the effectiveness of IML interventions and demonstrate how our research observations can be translated from theory to practice.

Investigating the social dimensions of ageing musical identity among older adults

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Especially within younger generations, music has been found to serve as an effective means of social identity formation. However, less is known about the music-related social identity of older adults and the meanings they give to everyday musical engagement throughout the lifespan.

The aim of the study is to investigate the nature of music-related social identity of older adults. We are interested in how the emotional meanings of music are related to intersubjective connections, and how this might affect their musical identity and quality of life, seen from the perspective of later years.

Autobiographical narratives were gathered through an open invitation. 18 older adults (mostly healthy non-musicians, aged 62-91, 4 males, 14 females) participated. 14 of them were further interviewed. An interpretive phenomenological analysis was conducted of the narratives and interviews.

In this sample, it seems that music's meanings are strongly linked to establishing, maintaining, and cherishing connections between ageing individuals and their close ones near and far. These music-related connections seem to create resilience and empowerment, but also restrictive self-images and diminished musical agency. This study contributes to the understanding of music's benefits in supporting ageing generations in different contexts and of music-related social identity in later years.

When the internal clock is not ticking consistently: Making music with Schizophrenia

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Schizophrenia is a fundamental disorder of perception and thinking and characterised by an impaired perception of time. Reasons are usually attributed to a lack of integration of various sensory and cognitive processes. However, time as a fundamental organising parameter of human existence is jointly responsible for the meaningful constitution of life. At the interface of psychiatry, psychology and philosophy, there has been a debate in the past whether the adjustment of the internal clock can be trained.

The concept of timing plays a role in pathological and musical contexts. In instrumental lessons, the suspended or fragmented experience of time poses a challenge. As part of a three-year qualitative study based on action research in a German forensic clinic to develop a method for teaching instruments to mentally ill people, lessons with schizophrenic patients were analysed.

It turned out that patients can experience stability and continuity through the musical time structures of rhythm and metre. New patterns of time perception can be established in settings through customised repertoire. Relevant is that this approach can complement conventional diagnostics and therapy on a pre-conceptual and non-verbal level, and provides at the same time long-term musical support for patients with schizophrenia outside clinical settings.

From metronome to mindfulness: A new pedagogical perspective on rhythm, meter, and musical form

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Context Time-keeping is a fundamental aspect of music performance, yet little research has explored performers' mental strategies for managing meter and rhythm. Similarly, the effectiveness of pedagogical methods aimed at enhancing metrical/rhythmical skill remains largely unproven. The widely accepted notion of an internal metronome as the basis of rhythmic ability has recently been challenged by findings in neuropsychology and pedagogy.

Method and Results Building on cognitive studies of time-keeping, I propose that metrical/rhythmical skill is primarily an attentional skill, which relies on a cognitive 'navigating' ability. This involves specific attentional processing: forward-focused anticipation, backward-focused retrospection, and present-moment mindfulness at specific moments in the musical process. Coupling these theoretical considerations with insights from pedagogical practice has led to the development of a training method for rhythmical/metrical skill tested in various settings across a dozen countries with exceptional results.

Aims and Implications By demonstrating how stable time-keeping emerges from navigating temporal processes in a cognitively deductive manner rather than relying on an internal metronome, I offer an alternative approach to rhythmical/metrical pedagogy. The training method I'll present provides a structured way to enhance metrical/rhythmical precision and musical expression, with significant implications for both performance and music education.

Mneme Project: An intervention study on piano memorisation techniques in primary school students in the United Arab Emirates

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Context Young students studying Western classical music are often expected to perform from memory during concerts and competitions. Despite this, there is no standardised method for effectively teaching music memorisation.

Aims The Mneme Project (*mneme*, Greek term for memory) aims to address this gap by developing a multimodal memorisation method and evaluating whether this approach improves performance compared to traditional memorisation through repetition.

Methods 10 participants (ages 6–10; 4 females, 6 males) were divided into two groups and learned Minuet in G minor by C. Petzold (attr. J.S. Bach) over 10 weeks. Group A relied solely on repetition, while Group B was taught five intervention exercises. Three questionnaires were administered before and after the learning period and post-performance, and weekly video recordings of lessons were made. At the end of the 10 weeks, participants performed the piece from memory and were evaluated by three piano pedagogues on their performance. Additionally, heart rate data were collected to assess stress responses.

Results/Implications Results indicate that Group B demonstrated superior accuracy in pitch, rhythm, musicality, and lower heart rate. These findings highlight the potential of a multimodal memorisation method in enhancing performance quality, suggesting promising directions for future music education research.

Comparing how music cues depicting concepts with varying levels of concreteness influence autobiographical memories

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Previous research has shown that concrete word cues evoke more specific and directly retrieved autobiographical memories than abstract words. We aim to investigate this in music for the first time and examine how musical excerpts depicting concepts with varying levels of concreteness evoke autobiographical memories, alongside comparing the phenomenological characteristics of these memories.

In this online experiment, 50 participants will listen to 14 musical excerpts, depicting concepts either more clearly (e.g., "rain"), or in a more abstract manner (e.g., "Christmas ambience"). Participants will describe their memories, and complete questions about the phenomenological characteristics of the memories, music familiarity and liking, and the recognition of the depicted concepts. The questionnaire data will be analysed through Factorial MANOVA.

Data collection will commence in February 2025 and analysis completed by April 2025. We predict that music that more concretely depicts a concept will evoke more autobiographical memories; more similar memories across the participants; more specific memories; memories with higher ratings on the phenomenological characteristics; and memories that reflect the indexed concepts.

Future research could examine this idea in other contexts (e.g., cross cultural settings). Wider implications could be in clinical settings (such as in the research of memory-related illnesses), alongside concert experiences.

Relaxation music for stress alleviation: Exploring audio features and listener affective profiles

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The experience of stress has been increasing globally; therefore, research on accessible interventions for stress alleviation and relaxation needs to be taken proactively. Music listening is a promising tactic for stress alleviation in everyday life. Nevertheless, little is known about the relationships between how music audio features relate to various participant profiles and their intended relaxation pathways. Through an online questionnaire, participants provided ~20 minutes ($Median_{tracks}$ per participant = 6) of relaxation music and measures of anxiety, depression, and previous use of music for mood regulation and adaptive functions. We compared the Spotify audio features of the relaxation music to general music and found that the former had higher levels of Acousticness and lower levels of Danceability, Energy, Loudness, Speechiness, Instrumentalness, Liveness, and Valence. Using cluster analysis, we identified three subgroups of relaxation music (i.e., "loud-energetic-danceable," "neutral-acoustic," and "mellow-instrumental"). Finally, we revealed that depression, anxiety and use of some music mood regulation strategies predicted the selection of relaxation music from a particular cluster. This research advances our understanding of how different individuals use music to alleviate stress and guides how music can cater for this purpose.

Music, mind, and inclusion: Understanding the autistic experience in UK higher music education

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Over the past two decades, students in the UK have increasingly disclosed their disabilities when entering higher education (HE). Concurrently, higher education institutions (HEIs) have adopted disability policies and service teams for enhancing inclusion in the UK. This study aims to advance institutional inclusion policies, advocating for comprehensive strategies better to support autistic music students in HE. Four narratives of autistic music students, a group often marginalised in HME, were collected. Narrative inquiry was adopted to address the research questions: (1) What are the possible autistic traits that such HE musicians might possess? (2) What are the lived experiences of autistic music students in higher education in England? Findings highlight significant diagnostic challenges, with some students receiving autism diagnoses only in their final year—often after struggling with anxiety, insomnia, and depression due to masking behaviours and inadequate support. These results emphasise the need for holistic, ongoing diagnostic and support systems tailored to autistic music students' unique needs.

Billy and The Blobs: Music therapy and EOTAS

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Context Billy, born at 24 weeks, is Autistic with a Pathological Demand Avoidance profile and comorbidities. Struggling in school since 2017, Billy entered Autistic Burnout in 2021. Rendered unable to leave his home, Billy needed an educational approach that recognised his psychological experiences.
Aims This study investigates how Music Therapy (MT), as part of Billy's Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) plan, supports his psychological recovery. By grounding our intervention in Billy's special-interest, television idents, particularly BBC Blobs, we aimed to foster meaningful engagement.
Methods "The Blobs" became the foundation for a trauma-informed, relationship-based approach. MT served as a bridge for emotional connection and processing of psychological distress, aligning with the principles of music psychology in addressing complex needs.
Results Billy has demonstrated significant progress. From complete withdrawal, Billy now accesses Occupational Therapy, is beginning Speech & Language Therapy and tailored education support. MT has supported psychological recovery.
Implications This study emphasises music's value as a psychotherapeutic tool within EOTAS frameworks. Highlighting the importance of integrating music psychology principles into education interventions, and encouraging research into how creative therapies bridge gaps in education and mental health support for children outside of traditional schooling.

How and why do young men from regionally disadvantaged backgrounds engage in music for their mental wellbeing?

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This project aims to consider how and why young men aged 16 to 25 who live in areas of regional disadvantage engage with music for their mental wellbeing. This paper will specifically focus on the results from an interview study on music-making and wellbeing in Cornwall. The paper draws on eight semi-structured interviews with young men aged 16–25, recruited through a convenience sample by close working with two partner organisations. These interviews were then analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

The findings will discuss the importance of music for young men in their everyday lives, both as a form of memory and as a friend during everyday life. It also demonstrates the importance of music-making venues as spaces of social and emotional wellbeing and their value in broader society. Finally, the importance of music for friendship and human connectivity is suggested as a significant beneficiary of young men's wellbeing.

The paper discusses how these findings inform the next stages of the project, which consider these themes throughout other areas of the UK. The findings will assist with policy and practice-based interventions around music, wellbeing, economic disadvantage, regional deprivation, young people and young men.

The philosophical foundations of music education—Old and new

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Music education may seem to be a mere pedagogical practice, but in many respects, it involves philosophical questions, such as: is music discovered or created? What is the role of music in society, and its place in education? Do we learn music intellectually, through thinking, or motor and mechanical exercises? In the natural and social sciences, knowledge can be assessed through written and oral examinations and tests, but in the case of music, how can our understanding of works of art and general musical knowledge be evaluated if it is not mere lexical knowledge? How many talents and skills constitute musical talent?

My inquiry into philosophical aspects of music education traces its roots back to antiquity. Philosophical writings generally reflect on the purpose, meaning, value, and impact of music education on human development and society. Dewey (1916) suggests that philosophy is a general theory of education. In my lecture, I provide a general understanding of the philosophical topics of music education, ancient and contemporary, and aim to contribute to the development of a new philosophy of music education, which I believe will foster new trends and ideas in related disciplines by offering a nuanced understanding of music education.

Thoughtscapes in music: An examination of thought types occurring during music listening across 17 genres

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Music listening can evoke a wide range of thought types, including autobiographical memories, fictional stories, visual imagery, and mind-wandering. Previous studies have typically examined these thought types individually, which precludes investigation of why certain music evokes certain thought types over others. This study investigates the impact of musical genre, familiarity, enjoyment, contrast, and emotional expression on the occurrence of different thought types during music listening across 17 genres targeted towards UK and US listeners. We systematically selected 356 music excerpts and collected data from 701 participants from the UK and US, analysing the frequency of thoughts occurring during these excerpts and various excerpt ratings (e.g., familiarity, emotional expression). We found significant genre-specific effects on thought types, such as Film music primarily evoking media memories and fictional imaginings. Familiarity, contrast, enjoyment, valence, and arousal of the music all significantly influenced certain thought types, suggesting that both compositional features and one's previous experiences of music impact listeners' inner mental worlds. This study extends previous research by exploring a broader range of genres and musical features, offering new insights into the mental landscape of thoughts occurring during music listening.

The role of psychosocial skills in the development of musical abilities within adolescents: Cross-sectional results from secondary school pupils in Latvia

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Background Psychosocial skills are important during adolescence when significant changes in ability development, learning attitudes, and goal setting occur (Voitova et al., 2025). Psychosocial skills are closely linked to musical abilities and adolescent academic performance (Müllensiefen et al., 2015). However, it is yet unclear to what extent psychosocial factors interact with aspects of musicality.

Aim This study aims to determine the relationship between psychosocial skills and musical listening abilities in adolescents in Latvia.

Methods The longitudinal study involves two types of schools: schools for musically gifted individuals and general secondary schools. In total, 191 adolescents (aged 11-18) participated in the research. For data collection, the LongGoldtest battery (www.longgold.org) was translated and adapted for the Latvian population, comprising tests of musical listening abilities, cognitive tasks, and self-report questionnaires on psychosocial variables, demographics, and musical background.

Results The cross-sectional data analysis shows that psychosocial skills play a significant role for the development of musical abilities during adolescence – the influence is even stronger than the contribution of cognitive capacity.

Conclusion The interpretation of data will allow for a comprehensive view of the relation between psychosocial variables and the development of musical skills, obtaining useful insights for educators and parents.

The Smile Project: Empowering non-music specialist teachers in special schools to teach music

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Despite research highlighting multiple benefits of musical engagement for learning-disabled children and young people, access to high-quality music education remains inconsistent across special schools in England. In the current post-pandemic context, school finances are under increasing pressure, and leadership teams face difficult decisions on cuts to provision. Meanwhile, special school staff have the potential to be able to support their pupils in engaging with music, but often lack the music facilitation skills or confidence to do so. This paper reports the most recent findings of the Smile project, which seeks to improve access to high-quality music provision for learning-disabled pupils through empowering and upskilling their non-music specialist teachers.

The Smile resource (https://smile.livemusicnow.org.uk/) was designed in response to the music teaching-related challenges and support needs identified by special school educators through interviews and questionnaires. An initial longitudinal evaluation of the Smile resource by three teachers and their pupils involved interviews and video observations of lessons based on the resource at the beginning and end of a half-term. Analysis revealed various strengths and areas for development for the resource itself and prompts consideration of additional ways to support teachers and strengthen music provision in special schools.

Critical issues in music higher education (HE) pedagogy and policy: An exploration of music performance anxiety (MPA) in HE vocal students

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Music performance anxiety (MPA) is a severe issue that affects higher education (HE) music students' performance quality, mental health, and career development. Ample extant research provides evidence from a clinical intervention perspective, but less explores the impact of pedagogical practice. Little to no research takes a broader policy view of the problem. Therefore, this study aims to identify pedagogical factors that shape students' MPA experiences and interpret these in light of current HE policy. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory serves as the theoretical framework for this exploration. Semi-structured interviews are being conducted with six HE vocal tutors and twelve students. Interpretive phenomenological analysis will be employed for data analysis. As this study is still in the data collection phase, no results have been obtained yet. However, data collection is progressing smoothly, and by the time of the conference, some preliminary findings will be available to share. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of pedagogy in shaping students' MPA experiences and highlights critical pedagogical issues. The findings are expected to inform strategies for fostering a more supportive teaching and learning environment, enabling more students to effectively manage and alleviate their MPA.

"A hothouse environment": Conservatoire music students' experiences of the stress process and well-being outcomes

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Context Conservatoire music students encounter a variety of demands such as performance, interpersonal, and organisational demands. If not well managed, demands may result in stress and negatively impact well-being.

Aims The aim of this study was to interpret conservatoire music students' experiences of occupational stress and well-being using a transactional theory of stress.

Methods Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six conservatoire music students. Participants described two stressful occasions: one viewed positively and another viewed negatively. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used and five themes developed.

Results Themes included: a) Performance Demands; b) Organisational Demands; c) Relationship Demands; d) Academic Demands; e) Multiple Demands. Participants frequently appraised demands as a threat with a small number appraised as a challenge or benefit. Few harm or loss appraisals were made. Important underlying properties of stress appraisal included comparison with others, preparation, and novelty. Personal resources such as psychological skills and problem-solving helped participants cope. Organisational-level social support was another key resource. Well-being outcomes related to stress appraisals with participants reporting both short- and long-term well-being outcomes.

Implications Interventions addressing the conservatoire culture and curriculum are required to facilitate a positive learning culture and help students better manage the demands they experience.

Exploring cultural and language familiarity in emotional communication through music performance

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University of Sheffield, UK

This study investigates how cultural familiarity influences music emotion expression and recognition, based on the theory of cultural distance and dialect (Laukka & Elfenbein, 2020). Specifically, it explores how varying levels of cultural and language exchange affect emotion communication in music between Chinese and British participants. The research focuses on how cultural, educational, and linguistic backgrounds shape performers' emotional expression and listeners' perception of those emotions.

The methodology involves violinists from China and the UK performing two folk music excerpts, varying in expressiveness (deadpan and expressive) and conveying emotions of tenderness, happiness, sadness, and anger. Participants from both countries, with varying degrees of cultural and language familiarity, will identify the emotions expressed in the audio recordings. The accuracy of their responses will be analyzed.

The hypothesis suggests that participants will recognize emotions more accurately when they share a cultural and language background with the performers. Preliminary findings indicate that shared cultural contexts improve emotional communication (Balkwill et al., 2004; Laukka et al., 2013). This study underscores the influence of cultural and linguistic familiarity on music emotion communication and offers valuable insights for psychology, music education, linguistics, and cross-cultural studies, contributing to a deeper understanding of emotional communication in music across cultures.

Health and wellbeing of adolescents in school-based orchestras—A qualitative study of secondary school-based orchestras in Guangzhou

Shaopei Zhang, Raymond Macdonald, Una MacGlone
University of Edinburgh, UK

Adolescents face complex developmental challenges, including academic pressure, social dynamics, and emotional transitions. Music engagement has been recognized for its potential to enhance well-being, yet research on its impact in non-Western, collectivist cultures remains limited.

This study investigates the well-being of adolescents in school-based orchestras in Guangzhou, China, utilizing Seligman's PERMA model (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment) to explore the psychological, social, and emotional effects of musical participation. It examines factors such as performance anxiety, peer dynamics, and conductor-student relationships, offering insights into optimizing the orchestral environment for well-being.

A qualitative approach was adopted, involving semi-structured interviews and focus groups with 12 adolescent participants (ages 13–19). Data were analyzed using Thematic Analysis to identify patterns related to the PERMA model dimensions.

Findings highlight that orchestral participation fosters positive emotions, engagement, and a sense of accomplishment while promoting social connections and resilience. However, challenges such as repetitive tasks, hierarchical tensions, and performance anxiety were identified as potential barriers to well-being.

The research highlights the value of supportive and inclusive orchestral environments in enhancing adolescent well-being. It contributes to cross-cultural studies of music engagement and provides actionable recommendations for educators and policymakers to optimize youth music programs.

SYMPOSIA

Symposium 1

Exploring the performer-audience relationship

Emily Payne,[1] Karen Burland,[1] Stephanie Pitts,[2] Sarah Price,[3] Dana Swarbrick[4]
[1]University of Leeds, UK; [2]University of Sheffield, UK; [3]University of Liverpool, UK;
[4]University of Oslo, Norway

Live music can elicit powerful emotions in its participants, including feelings of connection and self-transcendence. Research with audiences has focused on their motivations and experiences, responses and behaviours, and on strategies for enhancing and encouraging engagement. By contrast, research with performers has largely focused on their experiences of playing, particularly the management of anxiety and ensemble communication, rather than their relationship to the audience. Beyond the performance space, understanding wider factors such as how audiences connect with arts organisations across their localities, and in turn, how cultural ecologies can drive innovation and sustainability within the sector, is a vital area for consideration. Further work is needed to integrate these perspectives to better understand the collective experience that characterises live music events.

This symposium brings together research on performers and audiences from a range of different perspectives and employing diverse methodologies. We will explore connections and intersections between our research, in order to develop and challenge understandings of the performer-audience relationship, and to identify important questions for future research. As well as shedding light on what makes live performance special—for both performers and audiences—we will reflect on implications and applications that could significantly benefit industry, education, and practice.

Reflective performers, engaging audiences: learning together

Karen Burland
University of Leeds, UK

Expectations for musicians to engage new, diverse, or younger audiences are often associated with funding applications or community outreach programmes, yet the skills required can be quite different to those used in more traditional concert formats. This paper reflects on the experiences of performers working in community contexts providing concerts for young babies and their parents, or working in primary/secondary school settings. Seventeen performers were interviewed before, during, and at the end of the projects. Audiences and organisation staff (where applicable) were asked for feedback on the performances, which was shared with the performers to support their ongoing reflections and subsequent performances. Key themes related to tailoring and communicating programmes appropriately, working in different types/sizes of venue, developing new and transferable skills and the value of collaboration. Regardless of setting, the performers all identified their apprehension at working with younger/mixed audiences in different settings and valued this project as an opportunity to learn and develop new skills. The findings have implications for the ways in which we train and support musicians for work in community contexts, and highlights the value of collaborative reflection between musicians, organisations and audiences when designing live music events in such settings.

Musicians' self-reported experiences of live performance

Emily Payne
University of Leeds, UK

Live performance can evoke a range of strong emotions in performers. Yet, despite the varied research on audience experiences, equivalent research with performers is limited. Little is known about how performers view their audiences, the extent to which audiences impact performers, and the consequences of this for their practice.

This research aimed to address this gap, guided by three questions:

- How do performers characterise and understand their experiences with audiences?
- (How) do audiences influence performers' creative processes?
- Are there contexts in which the performer-audience relationship is more/less meaningful?

A questionnaire (N=78) and interviews (N=22) were conducted. Questions explored participants' characterisations of audiences and their perceptions of the performer-audience relationship, the extent to which the audience was perceived to play an active role in their performances, and their memorable experiences with audiences.

Results suggest that the audience plays an important role (both positive and negative) in the emotions and behaviours connected to performance, and that performers' experiences with their audiences are interconnected with individual, social, and contextual factors. Participants felt they could perceive audience attention, and valued this. Findings have implications for the training and support of musicians, and how to design meaningful performances for audiences.

Community responsibilities in music higher education

Stephanie Pitts
University of Sheffield, UK

A recent research network investigated the roles of classical music organisations in contributing to the 'ecologies' of their cities and shaping the musical experiences of local residents. A toolkit of qualitative methods was used to collect data in seven cities across the UK, Austria and the Netherlands. Headline findings included an expectation that larger organisations – including universities and conservatoires – would have the capacity to support smaller groups in achieving their aims of reaching diverse audiences and creating opportunities for performers. This paper considers how music in HE might respond to this identified need, by educating our students to be responsible future musical citizens, and by sharing our resources more generously with our local communities.

What would audience-centred music training look like?

Sarah Price
University of Liverpool, UK

A growing body of research suggests that today's audiences are craving more immersive, relaxed, and personable experiences from live classical music. Alternative concert formats often make demands of performers beyond musical excellence. When combined with the difficulties of building portfolio careers, for the next generation of musicians it seems like that "it will no longer be enough to be able to play your instrument very well" (professional musician, quoted in Pitts, Burland and Spurgin, 2024). Music Higher Education institutes are seeking to innovate beyond the traditional conservatoire education, and this paper considers what role audience insights might have to play in the shaping future of music training. I draw on multiple studies and a scoping review of classical music audience research to share insights on what audiences value about live performance, and suggest foregrounding human connection as a way to develop an audience-centred approach to music education.

Being in concert: The effects of audience participation on motion, emotion, and connectedness

Dana Swarbrick,[1] Dan Bosynak,[2] Susan Marsh Rollo,[2] Martin Hartmann,[1] Nicole Fu,[2] Laurel Trainor,[2] Jonna Vuoskoski[3]
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Music may have evolved to support social bonding, and bonding may be facilitated more by participatory than presentational musical experiences. In collaboration with a singer-songwriter and her band, we examined the effect of audience participation and co-presence on motion, engagement, and connectedness in a concert.

Head motion was recorded from the live audience and accelerometers recorded body sway from the live and livestreaming audiences. Questionnaires collected engagement and connectedness from the live and livestreaming audiences and performers.

Participation evoked more head motion in the live audience and facilitated more engagement than presentational music regardless of the group. During the final song when the audience clapped along, the accelerometers recorded greater motion in the live audience than in the other songs and than the livestreaming audience. The live group reported more connectedness to the other audience members than the livestreaming group and both groups reported more connectedness during participatory songs. Performers accurately judged audience engagement levels and felt more connected to the live than livestreaming audience.

The results support the theory that participatory musical experiences facilitate social bonding and suggest that performers could leverage participation and livestreaming technologies to engage and connect with their in-person and online audiences.

Symposium 2

How can we assess musicality in childhood (3 to 11 years) to gather insights that can be applied in education?

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[1]Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics, Frankfurt, Germany; [2]Goldsmiths, University of London, UK

Understanding child musicality is a crucial foundation for advancing developmental research and education. However, traditional assessments of musicality often fail to provide insights that directly inform teaching practices, leaving a gap between research and its application in educational settings. Part of the issue is that traditional assessments neglect the multifaceted nature of musicality, which also encompasses emotional, motivational and social dimensions. To develop assessment methods that capture the rich, real-world contexts of children's musical behaviors we require innovative approaches based on interdisciplinary perspectives from psychology, music education, and related disciplines. This symposium therefore aims to present new approaches to assessing childhood musicality that prioritize ecological validity and practical relevance. Presentations will introduce and evaluate new tools for assessing emotional, motivational and social aspects of childhood musicality. They will also discuss how insights gathered using musicality assessments can provide insights into underlying mechanisms, related skills and atypical developmental profiles. It is hoped that this will facilitate a shift from narrow definitions of musicality to a broader, constructivist understanding that captures its cultural and contextual complexity. By redefining how we assess and understand musicality, the symposium ultimately seeks to contribute to evidence-based educational strategies that support and nurture children's musical development.

Assessing musicality in early childhood: Musical communication and creativity in 3- to 6-year-olds

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[1]Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics, Frankfurt, Germany; [2]Goldsmiths, University of London, UK

The study of child musicality has traditionally focused on perceptual skills, particularly auditory discrimination, leaving other important facets, such as musical communication, largely unexplored. While musical communication—encompassing emotional perception, expressive ability, and creative fluency—has been shown to be an important aspect of musicality in young children, it has not yet been systematically assessed in this age group.

This study aims to investigate how musical communication can be evaluated in children aged 3 to 6 years. We piloted tasks involving musical idea-fluency, improvisation, reflexive interaction, movement imitation, and emotional discrimination and production in order to get a clearer picture of these abilities and their relation.

72 children (48% male, mean age = 59 months, *SD* = 14 months) completed the tasks across two sessions. Item analyses revealed that most tasks effectively captured inter-individual differences, particularly in children aged 4 and above. A notable association between musical creativity and communication was observed. Proposed improvements include refining instructions for reflexive interaction, adapting originality assessments for improvisation, and simplifying emotion discrimination tasks for younger participants.

Our findings provide valuable initial insights into assessing musical communication in early childhood and provide a foundation for further research and educational practices.

Assessing relationships between cognitive skills and musicality in children with impaired language development

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Variations in neurocognitive function during development may impact on experiences with the musical environment. For example, it has been reported that attention to pitch information results in enhanced processing of pitch in some children with Autism (Heaton et al., 2008). This paper presents findings from a study assessing musicality in children with a developmental language impairment that is characterised by impaired cognitive auditory working memory (WM) processes. We assessed pitch-interval, melody discrimination and working memory in children aged 5-11 years. Pitch-interval and melody discrimination were associated with Auditory WM abilities in typically developing children. However, in neurodivergent children with impaired language development, melody discrimination was not related to auditory WM but was related to visual short-term memory. This study provides insight into the nature of musical cognition in children with impaired language development and elucidates cognitive mechanisms that may underpin behavioural musical and linguistic developmental profiles in neurodivergent and typically developing populations. These findings have important implications for our understanding of the complex interplay between cognition, experience, musical development and multi-modal musical processing throughout development.

Measuring children's motivation for music: A systematic review of quantitative tools

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There is a notable lack of research into children's motivation for music (MfM), despite motivation being considered a critical aspect of child musicality (Buren et al., 2021) and having significant implications for musical development (McPherson, 2006). This could be because MfM is a complex and multifaceted construct (Hallam, 2002) which is difficult to measure. Further, previous research in this area focuses primarily on instrument playing (see Oliveira et al., 2021) neglecting other forms of musical engagement. The current research aimed to (1) uncover existing approaches to assessing children's MfM and (2) develop a searchable database of existing measurement tools. A systematic review of papers published before April 2023 that reported the quantitative assessment of children's MfM (0- to 11-years-old) was conducted. Seventy-nine unique scales were identified. Details on scale design, psychometrics and samples were catalogued to build a new open-access database that can assist researchers in finding appropriate measures for future studies. An analysis of the new database will be presented which examines whether the identified tools are (1) psychometrically robust, (2) suitable for measuring MfM in young and neurodiverse populations and (3) able to account for the many possible forms of musical engagement during childhood.

Serial order processing underlies relations between rhythm and early literacy skills

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Background Literature provides evidence of shared mechanisms underlying musical rhythm and early literacy skills. Rhythm can be defined as durational patterns based on serial ordering of event durations. Indeed, the rhythm discrimination task from the Montreal Battery of Evaluation of Amusia (MBEA) is assumed to target temporal order information in WM and was used as a serial order recognition task by Gorin and colleagues (2018).
Aims There is no study directly investigating the relations between serial order processing, rhythm processing and early literacy abilities.
Methods A non-referred school-based sample of 73 (35 girls) of native speakers of Brazilian Portuguese (M_{age} = 7.4 years) was administered an isochronic musical sequence transcription task (MSTT) designed to preferentially engage serial order processing (Zuk et al., 2013), the MBEA for children (Peretz et al., 2013), a monotonic version of the MBEA rhythm task, and, finally, early literacy skills assessments. We ran correlation and factor analysis on the data.
Results Only the MSTT and the monotonic rhythm version of the MBEA task, correlated with early literacy skills and both loaded high on a linguistic factor. We argue that serial order processing is the main mechanism underlying shared processes between musical rhythm and early literacy skills.

POSTERS

Dyslexia in the music conservatoire: Current knowledge and research avenues

Lydia Ballam

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Context Research shows associations between dyslexia and atypical cognitive music processing. However, dyslexia-associated impacts within music education, particularly at conservatoire levels, are understudied. Most music-and-dyslexia-related educational literature is amateur-attainment-aimed, pre-2010 understandings-derived, anecdotal, and musical skills-based. Yet, professional musicianship and conservatoire training necessitate wide-ranging skills, comprising literacy, musical, and interpersonal aspects, areas for dyslexia-associated cognitive and social impact. Dyslexic conservatoire students' needs, how these are understood, and optimum conservatoire-based supports require attention: critical information for providing equal opportunities and enabling potential. Empirical awareness benefits general empathy, tutors, and institutions, too.

Aims Compare the music and dyslexia literature with evolving dyslexia understandings, approaches to dyslexia-related changes in literacy-based/STEM and other performance-based disciplines in tertiary education, and empirical performance-science-based conservatoire literature. To answer, 'How do we approach researching dyslexia's presence within conservatoires, and why?'

Method Narrative literature review

Findings Dyslexia is ultimately defined: 'an evolving concept encompassing scientific and social aspects'. Education-based dyslexia research should consider formal and informal learning, support, health, wellbeing, and career longevity. Stakeholders' voices are imperative, and qualitative exploration seems the initial step for dyslexia and conservatoire research.

Implications Two forthcoming qualitative studies—an interview study and longitudinal, multi-method case studies—focusing on dyslexic conservatoire students' lived experiences.

Transitions in music education: Children's engagement with instrumental lessons across Key Stages 2 to 4 in primary and secondary schools in Hull and East Yorkshire, England

Ellie Dabell
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Existing research has highlighted a range of issues regarding engagement in music across educational transitions (Pitts & Robinson, 2016), including staffing (Marshall & Hargreaves, 2008), pupil attitudes and student voices (Marshall & Hargreaves, 2007); the importance of transition events (Kokotsaki, 2015); participation in ensembles (Gouzouasis et al., 2008); and relationship building (Kinsella et al., 2022). This study aimed to investigate the perspectives of pupils, parents and teachers concerning musical engagement with instrumental lessons at the KS2–3 and KS3–4 educational transition points in the Hull and East Riding in England, and to provide recommendations to regional music services about understanding and managing musical engagement across transition points. Data were gathered from teachers, parents, and pupils in the form of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. Key factors in maintaining musical engagement included pupil enjoyment, teacher qualities, attitudes of parents and peers, and communication and relationships between these key stakeholders. Financial considerations, school ethos, musical opportunities, the routine/logistics of instrumental music lessons, and other factors such as educational policy were also seen as important. These findings highlight the multi-faceted nature of the continuation of music tuition across educational transitions, and the need for clear evidence-based strategies to address this challenge.

From silence to 'feeling' sound: Charting the process of re-engaging with music

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Context Adults who lose their hearing typically disengage with music. Very little is known about how they experience music, although some evidence had pointed to vibration as a potential way to perceive musical pitch differences.
Aims In a case study we explore whether and how sensing of music through vibration could help a deaf participant re-engage with music.
Method Working with an adult participant (WJ) who had sudden bilateral permanent hearing loss, using vibrations from equipment available in everyday life (real musical instruments, singers, and a soundbar speaker), we explored perception and production skills with familiar and unfamiliar sequences. Study 1 tested familiar and novel melodies, and Study 2 direction of pitch differences.
Results Study 1. Vibrations enabled WJ to recognise 97.5% of melodies that were familiar to her prior to the onset of deafness, and to distinguish 100% of familiar melodies paired with unfamiliar lures. Study 2. With training, she was able to recognise the pitch direction of 344 musical pitch-pairs (91.80%) and sing the pitch direction of these pitch-pairs (99.4%).
Implications Our findings show that presenting music through vibration, using everyday sound sources, is possible and enjoyable and may help adults with hearing loss re-engage and re-enjoy music.

Autism, music and alexithymia: A music intervention to enhance emotion recognition in autistic adolescents

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Background Difficulties identifying emotions from facial expressions, vocalisations, and body language are common in autistic populations. Existing literature explores emotion recognition abilities in facial expressions and vocalisations among autistic children with limited attention has been given to emotion recognition in body gestures. Importantly, autistic adults show typical physiological arousal patterns to music and can accurately attribute verbal labels to musical emotions. Difficulties in identifying emotions have been linked to increased alexithymia and language abilities.

Objectives Develop a music-based intervention to enhance emotion recognition in dynamic and static facial expressions, verbal and non-verbal vocalisations, and body gestures.

Methods 43 autistic adolescents completed 5 music sessions and pre- and post-testing sessions on emotion recognition, alexithymia, and receptive and structural language. The sessions consisted of an analysis of the emotions portrayed in a series of musical excerpts and a posterior discussion on how these emotions may be communicated.

Findings Results showed that at pre-test vocabulary was correlated with emotion recognition abilities but not alexithymia. After the intervention, all participants improved their emotion recognition abilities in all modalities, being statistically significant for all modalities except for gesture.

Conclusion Music-based interventions may be a powerful tool to enhance emotion recognition abilities for autistic adolescents.

Exploring reading and music processing experiences—challenges and strategies for undergraduate students with dyslexia in the UK: A qualitative study

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Language and music share significant features like pitch, rhythm, and tempo, supporting the theory of a "shared sound category learning mechanism". Music-based interventions have shown promise in improving reading skills in dyslexic individuals, however the heterogeneity of dyslexia complicates the relationship between musicality and reading due to cognitive differences and environmental influences. This qualitative study aims to explores reading and music processing in undergraduate students with dyslexia, uncovering strategies that may go unnoticed in quantitative studies. Guided by the following research questions: (1) How do undergraduate students with dyslexia experience reading and music processing, and how do they perceive this relationship? (2) What strategies do they use to address challenges in these areas? We conducted semi-structured interviews with 11 dyslexic undergraduate students (ages 18–53) from UK universities. Participants were invited to online interviews lasting approximately one hour. The interviews, consisted of open-ended and follow-up questions, which will be analysed using the Framework Analysis method to generate themes related to reading and music processing experiences. Preliminary findings from the analysis will be presented, highlighting how qualitative approaches to exploring neurodiversity in both reading and music can offer valuable insights into variations in cognitive processing.

Exploring professional identities of current high school music teachers in China

Yani Sun, Emily Payne, Karen Burland
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In recent years, high school music teachers in China have faced high turnover rates and unclear career trajectories due to limited advancement opportunities and a lack of value placed on music as a non-Gaokao subject. This study, using questionnaires and interviews with ten music teachers from two high schools in Z City, aimed to explore their professional identity, musical identity, and factors affecting health and well-being. Professional identity is assessed through motivation, self-image, self-efficacy, and task perception, while musical identity includes musical calling, self-efficacy, emotional attachment, and growth mindset. Work engagement measures health and well-being. Findings indicate that gender, education, professional background, and teaching experience influence these factors. Female teachers show higher motivation, self-image, and engagement than males. Postgraduates report higher motivation but lower engagement than undergraduates. Music education graduates score slightly higher in teacher identity than those from other fields. Inexperienced teachers score lower in motivation, self-image, and self-efficacy compared to experienced colleagues. This study provides tools for self-analysis, supporting clearer career planning for music teachers.

MUSIFEAST-17: Music stimuli for imagination, familiarity, emotion, and aesthetic studies across 17 genres

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Musical stimuli are commonly used in psychological research for investigating a range of emotional, cognitive, and physiological processes. Despite this widespread use, many studies continue to rely on ad hoc music stimulus selection, compromising experimental control, reliability, and comparability across studies. Existing musical stimulus sets tend to be limited in style (e.g., 1–3 genres) and familiarity (e.g., only familiar/unfamiliar). We introduce MUSIFEAST-17; a music stimulus set featuring 356 instrumental 30-second clips from commercially released music across 17 genres. Designed to reflect the diversity of everyday Western musical experiences, MUSIFEAST-17 includes art music, popular music, and music composed for media. MUSIFEAST-17 includes normative data from 701 UK and US adults (sampled evenly across ages 18-75) on familiarity, enjoyment, emotional expression, perceived contrast, genre recognition, thought types, and contextual associations evoked by each excerpt. Analyses indicated that MUSIFEAST-17 exhibits stylistic diversity, spans familiar to unfamiliar music, and covers a range of emotional expression. The stimulus set prompted various thought types, including memories and fictional imaginings, and contextual associations such as "movie", "club", and "concert". This resource enables systematic stimuli selection for diverse applications within psychology (e.g., emotion studies, aesthetic experience, music-evoked imaginings) and supports Open Science practices.

How young people engage with musical learning in and out of school

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Young people (YP) in England engage with music through formal classroom instruction and external experiences such as private tuition, self-directed learning, peer collaborations, and extracurricular activities. However, when music is not compulsory, it is often deprioritised due to concerns about career prospects, limited curriculum time, and resource access. While prior studies explored YP's attitudes toward GCSE music and introduced informal learning in formal education, little is known about how external musical learning influences their engagement within the classroom.

This study investigates how external musical learning affects formal music education. Focusing on Years 9–11 students in England, it employs a mixed-methods. Analysis of the National Pupil Database identifies GCSE music participants. Surveys will explore external learning's impact on classroom engagement. Focus groups and 10 weeks of classroom observations will explore the role of external learning and technology-driven informal learning (e.g., YouTube), and the challenges of integrating these skills into formal settings. Interviews with teachers will provide insights into how to incorporate external experiences into instruction. Findings are expected to reveal patterns of engagement, the influence of technology, and strategies to connect informal and formal learning. These insights aim to inform teaching practices and curriculum design, supporting YP's holistic musical development.