# THE STUDY OF PAST EMOTIONS AS A BASIS FOR EMOTIONAL EDUCATION IN MUSIC EDUCATION TODAY

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**Abstract:**

The two main areas of focus in this paper are (a) the intense relationship between music and emotions and (b) the increasing interest in emotions in education and in many fields of social life over recent years. It is suggested that music could be used in music education and in general education in relation to emotional education. This is not a new idea but should be critically rethought in relation to the aims of emotional education as well as reflecting on the main way in which it conceals the social roots and power relations in the experience and expression of emotions. The basis of this consideration is a brief review of the study of the history of emotions so that emphasis is given to the fact that emotions are also a social product. It is the hope that by at least moving into the field of music education and making some proposals, teachers and students will be able to gain more free space to experience and express emotions.

**Keywords**: emotions in music education, emotions in history, music and emotions, emotional education

## 1. Introduction

The strong relationship between music and emotions seems to be the main reason for the fascination with music (Budd, 1885). This relationship has been continually attracting a great deal of interest from philosophers, musicians, and researchers. From Ancient Greece and for many centuries music has been understood as mimesis of emotions (from Ancient Greece until the theory of "Affektenlehre") or as a symbol of emotions (Cook & Dibben, 2010; Hunter & Schellenberg, 2010). In the 20th century, music was considered as something that expresses or/and induces emotions. When research is undertaken on how music can express emotions it usually focuses on musical features, either as composition, or as performance (Davies, 1994; Costa et al., 2004; Schubert, 2004; Juslin & Sloboda, 2010). Expression of emotions is associated with perception of emotions. Gabrielson (2002) elucidates that perceiving a musical emotion may differ from experiencing this emotion.

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According to Juslin, additionally, to individual or situational factors, music can induce emotions according to several mechanisms, which constitute the "*BRECVEMA framework*" (Juslin, 2016; 2019; Juslin et al., 2010; Juslin & Lindström, 2016). This framework is a complex process that involves psychological, physiological, sociological, and personal factors and highlights the complexity of music and emotions. By experiencing emotions due to musical activities, several of these mechanisms may be active simultaneously but, in every case, not all these mechanisms are at the same level.

Over recent years there has been a general propensity towards an increasing interest in emotions and music, not only in education but in many different areas of life, like politics, marketing, and management. This interest should be understood as the result of the importance of the emotions in our lives. The most recognized term regarding emotions in education is "*emotional intelligence*" (Goleman, 1995). The term "*emotional competence*" is preferred in this paper because it defines something much more fluid which can be partly changed and strengthened and in this way is more appropriate within an educational framework (Saarni, 1999; Denham et al., 2003; Denham et al., 2012; Brasseur et al., 2013). Goleman's "*emotional intelligence*" is ahistorical, as it leaves out cultural differences or social hierarchies and focuses on the individual's ability to make autonomous choices about how to act and control emotions. This critical view has many other aspects, as will be seen.

Combining (a) the strong relation between music and emotions, and (b) the importance of emotions in education and in social life, it is also likely to suggest that music could be used to achieve the aims of emotional education within the framework of music education. This is not a new idea. In the second half of 20th century, this topic was introduced by music educators and philosophers (Leonhard, 1953; Broudy, 1958; Reimer 1970; 1989; 2003) with the "*music education as aesthetic education*"-paradigm. The most established representative of this paradigm was Reimer with his theory, which was based on the theoretical framework of Langer (1979) and Meyer (1956). According to this paradigm, music educators have to use the appropriate music, mainly from a classical music-canon. The appropriate features of music can be the fundament of a form of emotional education. This theory was replaced in the '90s by the praxial theory, in which emotions are given little importance (Koopman, 2005).

In the last two decades, music psychology has highlighted the many and various ways in which music can be related to emotions (Hallam et al., 2016; Juslin, 2019; 2016; Juslin & Lindström 2016; Juslin & Sloboda 2010; 2013; Deutsch, 2013). Nowadays, however, with the increasing interest in emotions, music education should investigate not only the mechanisms that combine music and emotions. Instead, the main question needs to be "what should and could be the aims of emotional education in music education?" This means that there must be a rethinking about the aims of education especially of music education regarding emotions.

In this paper, we try to rethink the emotional aims in educational frameworks and to reflect critically on the main premise which conceals the social roots and the power relations in the experience and expression of emotions. The fundament for this effort is a brief review of the scientific research on the history of emotions in order to emphasize

that emotions are the products of their time without underestimating the significance of the biological nature of humans and also of the unique biography of every person. The second part is to shift to the field of music education and to make some proposals so that a field of emotional freedom and emancipation can be formed.

## 2. The study of past emotions

According to Abu-Ludhog & Lutz (1990), an anthropological view of emotion can use four strategies in its research field: essentializing, relativizing, historicizing, and contextualizing emotional discourse. The latter three strategies oppose the first one and highlight the social context of emotions. In this paper there is a focus on the strategy of historicizing –with the use of elements of the other two strategies, that is relativizing and contextualizing–, to strengthen the argument. The main purpose is not to understand emotions as they were perceived in the past, but to realize the connections that emotions have with their socio-historical context and consequently to become aware that emotions in every epoch are not indisputable and not without any other possibility to be otherwise. This approach is analogous to Foucault's (1978; 1985) critical investigation of the production of "sexuality" in the modern age, and the aim here is to "*consider how emotions came to be constituted in their current form, as physiological forces, located within individuals, that bolster our sense of uniqueness and are taken to provide access to some kind of inner truth about the self*" (Abu-Ludhog & Lutz, 1990, p. 6). This procedure is not easily related to music emotions because of their deep experiential nature. As a result of this, especially music emotions seem to belong much more to the sphere of the private and in this way, it is extremely difficult to keep a critical and reflexive distance. The next section also briefly presents the main efforts to study the history of emotions. These efforts were first undertaken in the last century.

The 20th century saw for the first time a systematic study of the history of emotions. Febvre is considered as the father of this research. He tried to explore the representations of feeling in texts or in images over time and to describe "*the shifts of the meaning of concepts of emotion*" (Plamper, 2015, p. 41). Stearns introduces the term "emotionology" and distinguishes between the emotional norms and the individual experience of emotions. The term 'emotionology' defines "*the attitudes or standards that a society, or a definable group within a society, maintains toward basic emotions and their appropriate expression; ways that institutions reflect and encourage these attitudes in human conduct*" (Plamper, 2015, p. 57). The main point of an exploration is the relation between emotions and emotionology, especially over time, and the ways this relation can induce and form emotions.

Reddy combines in his approach social constructivist theories about emotions and positions of the universalistic consideration of emotions, based on cognitive psychology. Reddy uses Austin's theory of speech, according to which a statement can describe something or can change something. Statements about emotions "*would therefore possess both constative and performative properties, describing the world and at the same time changing it*" (Plamper, 2015, p. 252). This double nature of statements about emotions motivates him to use the term "*emotive*" (Reddy, 2001). Very often a smile induces positive

emotions. When someone says that she is happy, that "*can simply be a description of a state of affairs, but can also overwrite other emotions (anger, grief)*" that she feels at the same time (Plamper, 2015, p. 257). When we describe a situation using emotions, then we also influence this. Reddy also uses several terms: "*emotional regime*" is the "*[t]he set of normative emotions and the official rituals, practices, and emotives that express and inculcate them; a necessary underpinning of any stable political regime*" (Reddy, 2001, p. 129) and "*emotional liberty*" which means the minimization of "*emotional suffering*", also "*[a]n acute form of goal conflict*" (Reddy, 2001, p. 129).

Rosenwein (2006) studies the social dimension of emotions and induces the term "emotional communities". She maintains that there is an affinity between social communities, like families, neighborhoods, parliaments, guilds, monasteries, and emotional communities, but the main point is to reveal the "systems of feeling":

"*…what these communities (and the individuals within them) define and assess as valuable or harmful to them; the evaluations that they make about other's emotions; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognize; and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore*" (Rosenwein, 2002, p. 842).

The emotional communities are based on close relationships (i.e., with personal contact), but there is also the possibility of "textual communities". In these communities, people are linked together through the media, without personal contact (Rosenwein, 2006).

A crucial problem of investigating the social and historical dimensions of the emotions as socially determined is the danger of denying their bodily nature. In relation to this, Bourdieu's "body hexis" could offer new positions for a fruitful discussion. Body hexis is "*a set of body techniques or postures that are learned habits or deeply ingrained dispositions that both reflect and reproduce the social relations that surround and constitute them*" (Abu-Lughod & Lutz, 1990, p. 12). According to Bourdieu's theory, habitus is a form of body knowledge and according to this, we can recognize the traces of social or cultural differences. Consequently, the bodily basis of emotions should be understood as something socially shaped.

Based on these thoughts, Monique Scheer tries to overcome the opposition "*of the external expression of emotion to inner, 'authentic' emotional experience*" (Pampler, 2015, p. 265). She explores the ways culture and history influence the body and she induces the term "*emotional practices*", also doings and sayings "*which build on the embodied knowledge of the habituated links that form complexes of mind/body actions*" (Scheer, 2012, p. 209). These practices are "*manipulations of body and mind to evoke emotions where there are none, to focus diffuse arousals and give them an intelligible shape, or to change or remove emotions already there*" (209). Based on Bourdieu's concept of habitus, she argues that the body is not something static, and timeless, which produces emotional arousal in an ahistorical way, but is itself socially situated, flexible, and historical.

Scheer refuses the common notion of emotion that the "real" feelings, especially "real" love, or desire, oppose emotional and social norms (Scheer, 2016). This opposition

is the result of the radical separation of body and mind, nature, and culture. According to this common and "romantic" account of emotions, the authenticity of emotions corresponds to the independence of social norms and we have mentioned music's effect in the past and in present times on this consideration. Scheer argues that "*the intensity of effect need not derive from its independence from social norms, but precisely in connection with them - whether through their exceeding or its confirmation*" (Scheer, 2016, p. 27). The intensity of feelings is the result of the fact that humans are social beings. Human sociality and not a form of autonomic physiology is the source of the emotions, "*our body's response to our reliance on others and other things […] Affect' is therefore not per se resistant and directed against society, but a result of our being socialized and open to both sides: order affirmative and order resisting*" (Scheer, 2016, p. 27). According to Scheer, a "*definition of emotion must include the body and its functions, not in the sense of a universal, pristine, biological base, but as a locus for innate and learned capacities deeply shaped by habitual practices*" (Scheer, 2012, p. 220). Scheer suggests approaching subjectivity as a social process and integrating this into the history of feelings (Scheer, 2012).

## 3. The study of past emotions as emancipatory power in music education

Students and teachers should be aware of the nature of their emotions and their historical routes. This awareness can have an emancipatory and liberating effect. This study can contribute to the understanding of the ways in which emotions are controlled in education and how this control was formed in the past. "*That occurs through two primary ideological forces: explicit rules of morality, […]; and explicit values of utility and skills measured through the 'neutral' gaze of social sciences […]*" (Boler, 1999, p. xix). According to Boler (1999), the dominant discourses of emotions are "*the pathological (medicine, science), the rational, (the Enlightenment philosophy of the Man of Reason), and the religious, ('channeling' passions in an appropriate manner)*" (p. 8). Also, the emotional discourse in education is a combination of scientific, rational, and religious, discourses. "*These three Western discourses are the foundation of Western educational values*" (p. 32).

The very special function of emotions, when we teach individuals to police themselves, is that through them we learn "*to internalize ideologies as commonsense truths*" (Boler, 1999, p. 33). According to this, children are increasingly taught e.g., not to express their anger, not to question authority, and not to resist those who have power. These rules are taught through differing forms of emotional discipline (shame, humiliation, etc., depending on gendered and racialized norms, for instance); depending on their gendered, racialized, or social class standing children learn different rules regarding what emotional expressions are acceptable (Boler, 1999).

The previous summary of some key ideas in relation to the study of the past of emotions forms a foundation with which to make teachers and students aware that music could lead to a critical approach to the way they experience and express emotions and to the realization of the power relations that are expressed through them. Music, bearing in all its forms the traces of nature and culture, personal biography, and collective experiences, can be the field for overcoming the dichotomies in the theoretical and

practical approaches of emotion (Robinson, 2005; Koelsch, 2014; Hallam et al., 2016; Juslin, 2019; 2016; Juslin & Sloboda 2010; 2013; Deutsch, 2013). At the same time, music carries either as musical choices or as a performance, the traces of discrimination and power between gender, race, and social class, but it makes it difficult to recognize it. The relations and the kinship between music and emotions make music education a privileged field, in which children and teachers can experience, express, recognize, but also reflect critically on them. As has been shown, emotions change over the years, not only because emotional norms and expectations change, and concepts that shape experience are modified, but also because "*the practices in which they are embodied, and bodies themselves, undergo transformation*" (Scheer, 2012, p. 220). In our proposals for music education, bodily aspects of emotions will not be denied, however, it will be suggested that bodies are also culturally and historically shaped.

A more critical attitude towards emotions in the classroom should start from the teachers themselves. It is notable that while we often discuss about emotional difficulties and the relationships of students, we do not talk so easily about similar difficulties of teachers, at all levels of music education. The historical view of emotions could help teachers to be able to critically address the way they feel things about their students and about teaching music and to realize that many of the emotional behaviors they expect may be the result of social and historical determinations and of embodied power relations. The emotions of teachers in the classroom concern their relations with students, colleagues, the administration, parents, and the educational environment. Taking a historical view of emotions into account can help teachers to be more aware about the social roots of their emotions and that their emotions are also the result of the historical moment in which they live. For example, guilt, fear, or frustration can also be the consequence of general considerations in music education and music teachers in a society or, of their working conditions. In this way, music teachers can have a wider view that does not place them in endless introspection and self-blame. At the same time, most music teachers have studied music composed in previous centuries and as such it could be helpful for them to reflect on the emotions of composers, musicians, or publicum of the time. This view could help them to better realize the way they experience music today.

If music teachers are able to reflect on their emotions, they can also transform the music classroom into a place in which to think and speak about emotions. The music lesson is the educational context in which the combination of an experiential approach and reflection can contribute to students recognizing how they and others feel and discovering ways to manage their emotions and behaviors. It is also important to be aware that these emotions are not something that are based exclusively on the person her/himself, nor that an emotional reaction is something obvious and without the possibility of being something else. A first step could be to realize and to discuss about the different emotional reactions to a certain music. Emotions are always socially shaped and they embody and are implemented in the power relations of every society. These norms may be internalized through the experience of emotions and feelings such as shame, for example, when an attempt to challenge the authority of a teacher is revealed,

or the fear of punishment for doing something like this. Guilt is often the result of anger that should not be expressed or, for instance, for doing nothing against injustice. The feeling of pride is often a form of internalized competition as the only way of social coexistence. In adolescence, these relationships change, and most important are the power relationships between peers, depending on gender, social class, or race. The emotional attitudes and the power relations that they embody are internalized and individuals not only express emotions according to social norms, but they also experience them in relation to these norms. This process of internalization contributes to the eradication of the social traces of emotions so that all emotions are considered as something absolutely personal and inevitable. The deep experiential nature of music emotions convinces us that there is no place for social questioning of these feelings or for the possibility to-be-others. However, the nature of music can be used to reveal the social roots of emotions.

## 4. Proposals for an emotional education in music education

Teachers, through the awareness of the historicity and contingency of emotions, should be motivated to use all the means that music offers to contribute to the emotional strengthening and emancipation of their students. The more specific steps depend on the specific learning contexts. For example, in general education, especially with young children, teachers should be careful, because children attempt first to understand the social and emotional norms and a music lesson that begins by criticizing these norms and their power relations could lead to confusion. Emotional competence in this age means better awareness of emotions and controlling them and could be strengthened through singing, free or synchronized moving and dancing to music, playing music instruments, listening to music or sounds, listening to live performances of musical instruments, and narration of a story or theater play with the accompaniment of musical elements. With young children, musical activities in which the main emphasis is on bodily movement, dancing, singing, playing instruments, or listening to a live performance can better contribute to the experience of emotions. Discussing emotions, combining music with narration, drawing with music, or accompanying theater with music could lead to a better perception and realization of emotions and to a more reflective attitude about their emotions (Raptis, 2020). The combination of these could be effective. For example, music with bodily movements can help children experience stark emotions and at the same time, in combination with the narration of an appropriate story or the lyrics of a song, can motivate them to reflect upon and be aware of these emotions. As Saarikallio (2019, p.5) argues, music has "*the potential of bringing these non-verbal levels of experience into dialogue with conscious reflection and meaning-making*".

Managing the emotions should not be understood as a form of emotional conformism. Sometimes it is important to feel free to experience and to express emotions, regardless of constraints social expectations, or norms, e.g., when someone wants to resist the coercive happiness of Christmas or the obligation of feeling belongingness in a group. In all these situations music has usually the role of putting us in this emotional state. Only

by being aware of the social and historical roots of emotions can a person question emotions and escape from emotional certainties. We can listen to, with our students in upper grades, some examples in which music functions as a means of indoctrination and we can discuss how it tries to induce certain emotions (for example, in advertisements) and then we can better reveal the ways music reinforces the social norms of emotions.

Emotions should be a crucial feature also in instrumental or choral music teaching and at all educational levels, at every age. Playing an instrument should mean also playing expressively and emotionally. For example, when students play music or even technical music exercises, the teachers can ask them, to play as if it happens in a certain situation (e.g. "it is your birthday", "you meet your best friend again after the holidays", "you have lost something worthy and very special", "you are very angry about something" etc.). The teacher can read or tell a short story and the students can play according to how they felt about the story. Or the students can imagine that they are in an emotional state and they have to try to communicate these emotions through music with somebody, or they have to apologize about something, or they want to show that they like somebody, etc. The teacher can also describe a situation and the students have to choose the appropriate music to play in this situation.

Students can try to imagine what the emotions of the publicum or of the musicians who composed or performed this music were, for example, by Shostakovich's 7. symphony in WWII. Generally, it would be great for them to try to imagine the emotions of composers or performers in the past or in another society (e.g., in classic Vienna or in pop-scene in the 1980s). Sometimes the biography of the composers or some selected passages from the literature of the past in combination with music can contribute to a better understanding of the historical and social determination of emotions. It could be discussed if several emotions that we think are expressed in the music were the same in another epoch, in the past. The teachers can also find texts about the emotional reaction of the publicum, or how they have perceived this music.

Only if we are aware of the social and historical roots of emotions, we can be free to experience and express emotions in more personal, unconventional, and uncommon ways. It seems strange but the acceptance of and awareness about the social roots of emotions can contribute to experiencing and expressing emotions in more free and personal ways. If we detect the social roots even in our bodies, it will allow the possibility of otherness in our emotional world. In this way, Scheer's approach to emotions, based on Bourdieu's thought, is emancipatory, as it "*allows for the recognition of the politics of emotion, which in the end is an intervention that increases the domain of agency by denaturalizing bodily impulses*" (Scheer, 2012, p. 208). This wider domain of agency could be understood as the domain of emotional freedom.

## 5. Final remarks

A new proposal for emotional education in music education cannot follow Reimer's suggestions and ideologies for aesthetic education since these underestimated the many possibilities of music and excluded from the classroom several important features of

music practice. The most crucial feature of music, with regard to emotions, is that it can combine the deep experience of emotions with a reflective and critical view, a combination that could function in an emancipative way. The aim is not to reduce emotional competence to a discussion with rational arguments but much more to build through music a space suitable for deep experiences, combined with bodily reactions and free expression (Raptis, 2022). By revealing in music education, the historical and social roots of emotions means deconstructing certainties about emotions and "*foreclosing of ways of self-understanding and acting not contained by the stringent linguistic discourse provided*" (Van Damme & Ramaekers, 2022, p. 10). This paper which has been an investigation into how emotions are shaped by many external factors in combination with the literature focused on history reveals the social and historical dimensions of emotions and makes music education an appropriate space where the personal and social, choices and determinations, nature and culture form a very special field of emotional freedom and emancipation.

**Conflict of interest statement**
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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