Psychological Perspectives on Musical Experiences and Skills

Research in the Western Balkans and Western Europe

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4. Aesthetic Emotions in Music: Theory, Measurements, and Cross-cultural Comparison

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Introduction

An important reason for listening to music relates to the emotions expressed and elicited by it (Schäfer et al., 2013), with some listeners describing strong emotional responses to music that are highly memorable (Gabrielsson, 2011). Music and emotion research has often focused on how emotions are perceived in music (Balkwill & Thompson, 1999) and what psychological mechanisms underlie emotions elicited by music (Juslin, 2016; Juslin et al., 2015). Much of this research has focused on a small set of basic emotions (Ekman, 1999), linked to adaptive functions, action readiness, and goal orientation, and on Western participants and listening contexts (Jacoby et al., 2020). More recently, a growing body of research is conducted cross-culturally, including in areas with little exposure to Western tonal music (e.g. Smit et al., 2022). Within this, few studies investigate the experience of aesthetic emotions. In this chapter, we discuss properties of aesthetic emotions, and reflect on expanding the main concepts to align with ecological perspectives, arguing this will also contribute to the usefulness of this research across cultural contexts.

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Aesthetic vs. everyday emotions

It has been proposed that musical emotions, and emotions in aesthetic engagements broadly, may have distinct features and should be separated from 'everyday', basic adaptive emotions (Menninghaus et al., 2019; Zentner et al., 2008).

Kant (1790/2001) described the idea of aesthetic emotions as being 'disinterested'; such emotional responses have no utilitarian or survival purpose. Recent formulations of aesthetic experiences have developed this idea. For example, Konečni (2005) noted that whilst awe, a prototypical aesthetic response to the sublime, can be elicited in the face of physical grandeur, including elements of threat, an essential requisite for the experience is the guarantee of existential security. Frijda and Sundararajan (2007) differentiate between 'coarse' and 'refined' emotions, the latter being more detached from real-world concerns, involving more self-reflection and little associated action.

Whilst the distinction between aesthetic and utilitarian emotions is intuitive, it is hard to objectively separate them. Schubert (2024) found three aesthetic emotions to be reliably included in previous investigations without counterexamples, namely awe, (being) moved, and wonder. Even so these emotions may occur in non-aesthetic circumstances (Keltner & Haidt, 2003; Silvia, 2008). In a complementary view, Koelsch (2010) proposed that musical emotions are 'true' emotions, as they reflect brain region activity linked to emotional responses with action tendencies and goal-orientation.

Given these issues, a contemporary view is that aesthetic judgments and aesthetic modes of engagement are key elements of aesthetic emotions. Brattico and Pearce (2013) propose that, in a music-listening context, causal inattentive listening may result in everyday basic emotions, whereas focused listening with an aesthetic attitude can induce aesthetic emotions. Juslin (2016) suggests that instead of considering 'coarse' and 'refined' emotions (Frijda & Sundararajan, 2007) as distinct sets of emotions, we should consider the 'refined' category as a special mode of experiencing ordinary emotions, i.e., as an aesthetic mode of listening. In Juslin's BRECVEMA framework (2013), aesthetic judgment is included as one of the mechanisms of emotion

induction, complementing other mechanisms derived from general adaptive functions. As it is possible that aesthetic judgments may precede aesthetic emotion responses, and vice versa (Huron, 2016), the causal directionality remains undetermined (Egermann & Reuben, 2020). In theoretical work related to various art forms, Menninghaus et al. (2019) emphasised the importance of aesthetic evaluation in the definitional scope of aesthetic emotion; for instance, being moved may be an everyday emotion, an art-elicited emotion (elicited by an art object), and an aesthetic emotion (elicited by aesthetic qualities of the art object, involving aesthetic evaluation). Thus, not all emotions elicited by art are aesthetic (Wassiliwizky & Menninghaus, 2021), and those emotions that are, involve an evaluation of and response to aesthetic qualities of the stimulus. Janković and Mađarev (see Chapter 2 in this volume) provide supporting evidence for the role of cognitive evaluation as a contributing component to aesthetic experiences of music in addition to emotional valence and arousal, corroborating their three-dimensional model of aesthetic emotions. Nikolić and Miladinović Prica (see Chapter 3 in this volume) provide rich insight into such cognitive evaluative processes as reported by music specialists engaging with contemporary music.

Aims

The aim of this chapter is to consider how characteristics of aesthetic emotions as defined in the research literature operate within cross-cultural studies of emotion and music, and to discuss how we believe the main concepts can be developed to better fit notions of music listening as embodied and embedded in cultural contexts. To do so, we discuss concepts, measurements, processes, and cross-cultural comparisons centralising the aesthetic affordances relevant to music-related emotions. This discussion takes us from aesthetic evaluation being relevant to aesthetic emotions and a level of disconnect from everyday consequences, to considerations of value and affordances of music to listeners, including functional uses, which we argue facilitate the translation of the notion of aesthetic emotions in music to diverse cultures.

Main discussion

Measurement scales and physiology

Emotion concepts and labels

Systematic characterisations of the emotions frequently associated with music have been conducted by various researchers, as early as Hevner's list of adjectives (1936). Of specific interest are those studies that have investigated emotional responses in ecologically valid listening situations. For example, the Geneva Emotional Music Scale (GEMS; Zentner et al., 2008) has been validated with audiences attending music festivals and concerts. This scale was later adapted to better capture responses to a range of musical genres. The updated Geneva Music-Induced Affect Checklist (GEMIAC) contains fourteen clusters of feeling terms ranging from being moved or touched, feeling joyful and wanting to dance, being filled with wonder and amazement, to feeling indifferent and bored or tense and uneasy (Coutinho & Scherer, 2017).

A broad examination of aesthetic emotions has been conducted by Schindler et al. (2017), who captured aesthetic emotions in various contexts. Emotion terms were collated from empirical, theoretical and philosophical research that describe responses to music, literature, theatre, film, and visual art. The terms were clustered into five factors: prototypical aesthetic emotions, pleasing emotions, epistemic emotions, negative emotions, and self-forgetful emotions, leading to the formulation of the Aesthetics Emotion Scale (AESTHEMOS). This scale comprises twenty-one subscales including beauty, fascination, awe, being moved, nostalgia, humour, vitality, joy, interest, intellectual challenge, ugliness, boredom, and sadness, amongst others.

These self-reporting tools provide opportunities for exploring emotional experiences found during engagements with music as well as in other aesthetic contexts. Nevertheless, having a specialised list does not yet tell us whether an emotion is aesthetic in nature, as most, if not all of these emotions might occur in non-aesthetic circumstances. It is also important to evaluate appraisal patterns that may link emotion categories with aesthetic judgments (Menninghaus et al., 2019) or, as Janković and Mađarev (see Chapter 2 in this volume) argue, cognitive

evaluation more generally. For example, Juslin et al. (2015) asked participants to evaluate the mechanism that they deemed responsible for their emotional responses in addition to the responses themselves. A further avenue for the exploration of mechanisms and examination of the experience of emotion is to consider the physiological manifestations accompanying aesthetic emotions in addition to self-reporting.

Physiological manifestations: Chills and tears

Physiological measurements can be used to corroborate emotional responses and to offer insight into moment-to-moment developments (Benedek & Kaernbach, 2011). Such measurements aim to capture bodily experiences including chills, shivers, tension, excitement, or tearfulness.

Aesthetic chills have been described as emotional experiences accompanied by goosebumps, shivers, or tingling sensations (Bannister, 2020). Chills have been associated with increased skin conductance, heart rate, and pupil dilation (Laeng et al., 2016; Rickard, 2004; Sumpf et al., 2015); additionally, chills have been linked to brain activity associated with reward and pleasure (Ferreri et al., 2019; Salimpoor et al., 2011). Theoretically and empirically, chills reflect prototypical qualities of aesthetic emotions; they are pleasurable and rewarding, involve increases in arousal, and can often be linked to aesthetic features of the music (Bannister & Eerola, 2018; Grewe et al., 2007; Panksepp, 1995). Additionally, chills are associated with common aesthetic emotion concepts such as awe and being moved (Benedek & Kaernbach, 2011; Konečni, 2005; Schurtz et al., 2012), feelings of beauty (Gabrielsson, 2011), and nostalgia (Bannister, 2020).

Further physical reactions indicative of strong emotional experiences are crying or tears in response to music (Gabrielsson, 2011). Crying is a multifaceted phenomenon with several subtypes (Vingerhoets, 2013), and whilst adaptive accounts describe the function of tears in terms of signals to elicit social support during times of distress (Gračanin et al., 2018), crying also seems prevalent across aesthetic engagements (Eerola & Peltola, 2016; Pelowski, 2015) where these functions are less apparent. Cotter et al. (2018) explored experiences of crying and feeling like crying in relation to music, finding that

these mostly occurred with familiar music, music that held special meaning for the listener, and when participants were listening alone; furthermore, whilst crying to music was sometimes linked to awe and being touched, inspired, and amazed, most accounts were linked to sadness and more distressing experiences, and to memories of events (Cotter et al., 2019).

Hanser et al. (2021) found in a large survey of over 2,000 participants that tears were most commonly reported in the context of being moved (65%), sadness (53%), and nostalgia (28%), followed by powerlessness (24%). Nearly 50% of crying-to-music episodes also involved goosebumps, suggesting that chills and tears may be related experiences in aesthetic contexts (though see Mori & Iwanaga, 2017).

Several methodological challenges remain when recording tears and chills, including measurements using physiological and muscle tension signals. But, together with self-reports of aesthetic emotions, these phenomena can be used to further investigate the musical and contextual characteristics in which aesthetic emotions occur, with the aim of linking them to emotion induction processes. These phenomena may afford investigations of aesthetic emotions as they happen, exploring concurrent physiological activity patterns and brain activity via neuroimaging approaches, reflecting a burgeoning area of work labeled 'neuroaesthetics' (for a review of methods that includes neuroimaging, see Timmers & Loui, 2019). The meaningfulness of strong physiological responses such as chills, tears and shivers underpins a notion of aesthetic emotions as heightened emotional experiences of music.

Relationships to musical material, context, and person

In ecological terms, it is not just a matter of who listens to what in what context, but of their interactions: preferences interact with personal characteristics and use (Račevska & Tadinac, 2019), and emotional meaning arises through listeners interacting with music in particular contexts for particular purposes (Lennie & Eerola, 2022). This means that context and person need to be considered in combination with relationships between experienced emotions and musical properties.

Musical and acoustical properties

Various psychoacoustic characteristics have been identified as important cues for emotional expression in music, drawing parallels with vocal expressions of emotions (Juslin & Laukka, 2003) and emotional movement (for a review, see Timmers & Loui, 2019). However, where research on aesthetic emotions is concerned, specific attention has been paid to dynamic properties of music: changes, surprises, and patterns of tension-relaxation. Tension has been associated with harmonic progressions (e.g., away from and return to the tonic), intensity fluctuations, pitch height, and consonance and dissonance (Arthurs et al., 2018; Farbood, 2012). Whilst primarily modelled in the context of the Western classical and romantic repertoire (Lerdahl & Krumhansl, 2007), Solberg and Dibben (2019) investigated a contemporary example, specifically the break routine in electronic dance music where the release of tension is associated with heightened pleasure and physiological responses, including chills.

Dynamic change, deviation, and probability

Seen from a dynamic perspective, emotional response arises by variation across and within pieces (e.g., Coutinho & Cangelosi, 2011; Sloboda, 1991; Warmbrodt et al., 2022). A key strand of research in this context is the attempt to model the information dynamics of music, specifically variations in predictability and uncertainty, which has been modeled using information entropy (Pearce, 2018). As Huron (2006) famously explained, such predictability concerns the what (e.g., what pitch) and when in time of musical events. Musical expectancy has been indicated as one of several mechanisms for felt emotion (Juslin, 2016). However, there is debate around its strength as an emotion induction mechanism. Expectation and violations thereof may give rise to micro-affects (Huron, 2006) that are nevertheless important for an engaging experience (see, e.g., Mekiš Recek, et al., 2021).

The link to strong aesthetic emotional response may be found at the intersection between two forms of prediction: Cheung et al. (2019) found that music is experienced as most rewarding or pleasurable when high predictability (a highly expected event) occurs in an uncertain context or, conversely, when low likelihood (an unexpected, surprising event) is

combined with high predictability. The break routine (Solberg & Dibben, 2019) seems an effective example of the first combination: the return of the original groove is highly predictable, but the timing is uncertain and delayed. The classical appoggiatura in a recursive harmonic sequence can be seen as an illustration of the second combination: a dissonant non-chord tone with low probability occurs in a highly predictable manner and context. This is used, for example, in Barber's *Adagio for Strings*, which is experienced as strongly sadness-inducing (Krumhansl, 1997). Such interactions between predictability and surprise extend notions of 'deviation as expressive'. Deviation in performance may be particularly valued if operating in a close to predictable manner (Todd, 1995), and if done in ways familiar to listeners (Timmers, 2007). They also offer an interesting perspective on the well-known inverted-U curve between complexity and preference: it is not just about the appreciation of a balanced level of complexity (Berlyne, 1970), but specific affective tensions that afford affective responses: seeing something familiar in new ways or predicting the unexpected.

A special case of combining predictability and innovation may be the widespread tradition of ornamentation, variation, and partial improvisation that is so very common in many music traditions. Some evidence exists for the emotional effect of ornamentation (Timmers & Ashley, 2007), but further work in this area is warranted, including how the balance between predictability, uncertainty, and certainty shifts within and across musical phrases.

Musical affordances as aesthetic emotional response

An interactional perspective on relationships between music and aesthetic emotions takes into account what music may afford to listeners in particular contexts: music affords an opportunity to dance, celebrate, and socialise at a party; to mourn and share grief at a funeral; and to aid spiritual reflection or expression at religious gatherings. This aligns with identified emotion mechanisms such as entrainment and emotional contagion, or the 'sharing' of emotion (Juslin, 2016). Memory is another identified mechanism. Whilst recall may give rise to felt emotion due to a particular incidental association, this process of association and recall

can also be seen as something that music affords, a positive attribute of music, as applications of music in therapy and dementia care illustrate.

An illustration of the complex relationship between music and aesthetic emotional responses is the appreciation of negative music and, indeed, the pleasurable experience of tears. People report that they enjoy listening to sad music (Garrido & Schubert, 2011), and a subgroup of listeners enjoy what could be characterised as 'violent music' (Olsen et al., 2022). Capturing some of this variety, Peltola and Eerola (2016) subdivided experiences of sad music into three subcategories labeled 'grief', 'melancholia', and 'sweet sorrow'. The last category of sweet sorrow was characterised by a positive experience of sad music, and included references to beauty and feeling moved; experiences of grief were sometimes also identified as cathartic. Olsen et al. (2022) also identify balancing positive and negative emotions as important to the liking of music with violent lyrics.

In their review, Eerola et al. (2018) used the distinction between hedonic and eudaemonic pleasure to account for positive experiences of sadness in musical contexts. Interpreting self-reported experiences, they infer that 'the pleasure of being moved [in relation to sad music] is far from being purely hedonistic; it is strongly intertwined with interpersonal aspects' (p. 108). Furthermore, they state that 'musical expression gives special meaning to the emotional states it portrays; it is not just pointless sadness, but there is some reason or meaning to it' (p. 189). It is not a matter of not feeling the emotion. In contrast, interpersonal empathy and the enjoyment of sad music seem to be linked, suggesting heightened experiences of emotion in these listeners. Variations in trait empathy do not seem relevant to the enjoyment of violent music. Instead, the motivations for listening to violent music are characterised by specific appraisals of what violent music offers, including experiences of power, joy, and peace (Thompson et al., 2019).

Empirical findings indicate that music is appreciated for its values in relation to listeners. Indeed, the effect of music and whether listeners use music to influence their emotions is correlated with the relevance of music for listeners (Granot et al., 2021). This correlation may clearly operate in either direction—if valued more, the influence is stronger, and vice versa. Such sensitivity to music varies strongly, ranging from little to no emotional response to peak experiences with music. What

are experienced as aesthetic characteristics of music may depend on the values and meanings awarded to music in particular contexts, and the identification with those values and meanings in connection with the music. As many researchers have previously identified, aesthetic appreciation is historically and culturally situated.

Cross-cultural translations

Musical features, discrete emotions, and physiological responses

Cross-cultural music studies are sparse and concentrate almost exclusively on emotion perception using basic emotions or evaluations of emotional dimensions. To our knowledge, no cross-cultural study of felt aesthetic musical emotions has been conducted, although evidence suggests that broad discrete emotion categories can be inferred across cultures (Balkwill et al., 2004; Balkwill & Thompson, 1999; Egermann et al., 2015; Fritz et al., 2009;). However, the degree of accuracy and the number of emotion categories varies. There is also a clear in-group advantage to perceiving the correct emotion in one's own musical culture (Laukka et al., 2013; Laukka & Elfenbein, 2020). Limitations are noted in the design of studies. Nelson and Russell (2013) cite the 'forced-choice paradigm' and 'unbalanced' methodological designs, while Matsumoto and van de Vijver (2010) acknowledge problems of conceptual 'equivalence' and 'construct bias'.

Laukka et al. (2013) showed that *basic* emotion terms were better perceived than more complex (*aesthetic*) terms. Acoustic cues correlated with the intended emotional expression of excerpts. Of 26 features, 4 acoustic cues ('spectral novelty', 'rhythmic novelty', 'tonal novelty', and 'novelty in pitch register') correlated with nearly all emotion terms. The only other cues that showed such consistency for listeners across cultures and emotion terms were 'spectral flux' and 'attack time', providing tentative evidence for the importance of musical novelty cross-culturally, at least with respect to the examined cultural contexts.

Musical familiarity also plays a key role cross-culturally. The Mafa (Pygmy population) showed a greater dislike for tonally dissonant manipulations of their own music than for Western music (Fritz et al., 2009), highlighting familiarity as an important mediator of cues.

Unfamiliar music may be subject to stereotyping and associated with a smaller range of emotional experiences (Susino & Schubert, 2019, 2020).

One of the few cross-cultural studies using emotion dimensions and physiological measures (Egermann et al., 2015) studied the affective response to Western music and the native music of the Congolese Mbenzele Pygmy population. Six low-level acoustic cues were correlated with subjective ratings of arousal, valence, and physiological measures for Western music in both populations. The study suggests that the greater number of acoustic cues in Western music leads to greater cross-cultural recognition and similar physiological responses, while the stronger use of symbolic or associative meaning in Mbenzele Pygmy music requires a stronger reliance on enculturation.

A lack of focus on aesthetic emotional responses, combined with methodological limitations, leaves significant gaps in the research literature. Evidence converges on the conclusion that there are both universal and culture-specific cues (Balkwill & Thompson, 1999), many shared with an evolutionary history of vocal emotion communication (Juslin & Laukka, 2003), that allow listeners from different cultures to reliably perceive emotions at above chance levels (Laukka & Elfenbein, 2020), but below the universality threshold (Haidt & Keltner, 1999, p. 229). However, a singular focus upon stimulus-driven components can lead to reductive explanations, and future research must better acknowledge context (Jacoby et al., 2020).

Framing aesthetic emotions: Cross-cultural functions and affordances of music

Music's functions have been well documented in the Western context: for example, meaning enhancement (Hays & Minichiello, 2005), supporting behaviours (DeNora, 2000; Greasley & Lamont, 2011), and mood management (Juslin et al., 2008). Cross-culturally, anthropologist Alan Merriam (1964) documented 10 musical functions, including 'aesthetic enjoyment'. One key distinction Merriam offers is the differentiation between musical 'functions' (its broader purpose) and 'use' (in a specific situation; p. 210). Clayton (2016) notes the importance of this distinction, as a list of 'uses' would lead to a countless number of categories (e.g., lullabies, courtship, sports, trance, etc.). Since Merriam,

a greater focus upon the underlying dimensions of these functions has emerged (Schäfer et al., 2013). Differences in functions have been linked with cultural distinctions in musical experiences including emotional differences (Saarikallio et al., 2020), emotion mechanisms and motivation (Juslin et al., 2016), behaviours (Mehr et al., 2019; Saarikallio, 2008a,b), preferences (Schäfer et al., 2012; 2013), and musical form (Mehr et al., 2019). Analogously, Stefanija (2007) argues for the relevance of musical functions and their conceptualisation in relation to uses and preferences, musicality and behaviours.

Saarikallio and colleagues (2020) compared music-evoked emotions and functions between Finland and India. The emotion factor 'peacefulness-transcendence', that captured several aesthetic terms, appeared more prominently in the Indian sample, suggesting a greater prevalence of aesthetic emotions in Indian listeners, and supporting findings in other aesthetic contexts (Sundararajan, 2010). The musical function 'aesthetic enjoyment', understood as a focus upon musical qualities, emerged as a single function with no subcategories. Whilst other music functions showed significant cultural differences, 'aesthetic enjoyment' showed similar moderate emergence and links to typical musical genres in both cultures.

Links between musical preferences and musical functions were investigated by Schäfer and colleagues (2012) in a comparison of German and Indian listeners. Musical functions were shown to correlate with preferences in both cultures. The function of 'diversion' was most closely linked with aesthetic satisfaction (p. 378), and appeared in both cultures as the second strongest predictor of musical preferences. Nevertheless, 'diversion' was operationalised differently in these two cultures. German participants placed a greater focus on dancing than on appraising the music's qualities, which was most relevant for Indian participants. The findings of Saarikallio (2008b) note the importance of dancing as a diversion for Kenyan teenagers. These differences relate to variations in 'uses' whilst serving a similar function. Apart from preferences for music that enables 'diversion', aesthetic enjoyment has been associated with reflective experiences, grouped under the factor of 'self-awareness' by Schäfer et al. (2013), including items with an inward focus (solace, escapism, absorption).

Juslin et al. (2016) compared emotional experiences of music across individualist and collectivist cultures. The 'aesthetic judgment' mechanism was found to be more prevalent in collectivist cultures although the effect size was small ($d = .18$). The strongest effects related to preferences in collectivist cultures for low arousal states (nostalgia-longing, spirituality-transcendence, love-tenderness) and socially orientated emotions. All functions appeared across cultures, although several functions showed significant differences in their prevalence. Individual and collectivist cultures also differed in listening motivations. The collectivist cultures included in the study placed greater importance on the motivations to 'relax', 'reflect', 'appreciate beauty', and 'enhance health'. Despite cross-cultural differences, to 'appreciate beauty' and 'interest in music' (important aesthetic items) appeared in the top three most highly rated motives for listening to music cross-culturally. This contrasts with findings by Mehr et al. (2019), who analysed a large ethnographic dataset. They found that vocal music from 60 societies could be collapsed into four types of behaviours (dancing, lullabies, healing, and love songs). Aesthetic experiences were not included in this analysis, at least not explicitly. Further analyses may generate insight how aesthetic appreciation and physiology may play a role in music to be experienced as 'healing' or expressing 'love'.

Whilst many musical functions appear cross-culturally relevant, differences relate to their prevalence and the cultural value associated with them. Aesthetic emotional responses are set within a complex and culturally bound process of meaning-making. Ultimately, a cross-cultural approach allows a better understanding of how music may afford meaningful experiences that have a functional significance, whether by affording a heightened intense emotional experience or a more reflective and contemplative one.

Conclusion

The notion that musical emotions result from the interaction between music, person, and context is not new. Yet it is important to revisit this understanding with respect to aesthetic emotions as illustrated in Figure 4.1: what is experienced as an aesthetic affordance and an aesthetic property of music is dependent on the interaction between music, listeners/users, and context. Moreover, we argue that, for the cross-genre, cross-cultural, and historical understanding of aesthetic emotions in response to music, it is important to consider what the meaningful encounters with music are for listeners. To find hedonic and eudaemonic pleasure in music is for that music to afford meaningful engagement, which relates to body, mind, and social and material context. This position brings musical functions and uses into the realm of aesthetic emotions, seemingly blurring the distinction with utilitarian emotions. However, the differences between aesthetic and utilitarian emotions lie in safety and relative control, as well as the close association with music-aesthetic properties. It is necessary to consider musical functions and affordances in order to go beyond the expectation that aesthetic emotions are confined to a sense of beauty, transcendence, or 'high art'.

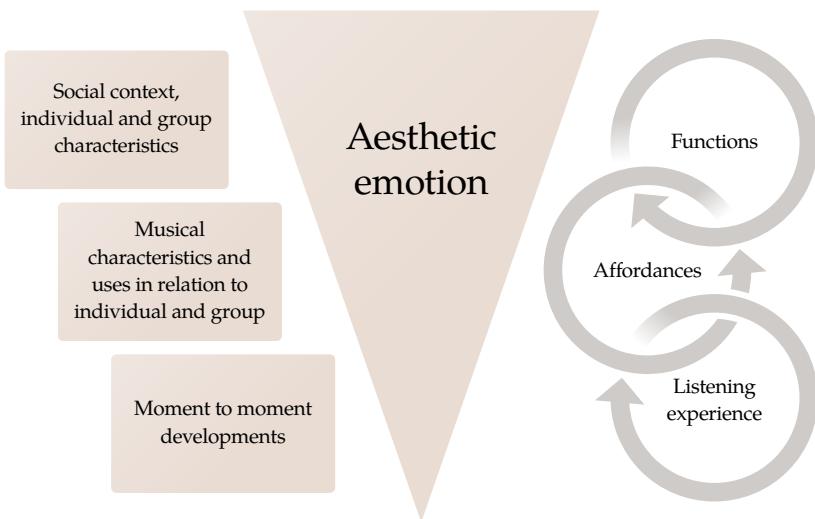

Fig. 4.1 Aesthetic emotions arise from the interaction between individuals, groups and musical characteristics in particular social contexts. The moment-to-moment developments and affordances of music are particularly relevant for aesthetic listening experiences

Of note here are the bodily, cognitive, and physiological expressions afforded by music in specific listening contexts, such as chills, tears, tension-release, predictability and unexpectedness, movement and dancing. The temporal aspect of music in the unfolding experience of emotions remains an important area for further investigation, whether this concerns the neurophysiological affordances of longer periods of entrainment with music, the effects of contrast and variation, or the effect of the sharing of experiences and facilitating relational behaviours such as synchronised movement.

Overall, we have shown why systematically investigating aesthetic emotions in a range of contexts (including cultures) must be a priority for future research. We claim that novel research methods with less emphasis on passive listening should be developed and be sufficiently sensitive to different contexts. Furthermore, cross-cultural research should start with the values and functions afforded to music combined with behavioural, bodily, and physiological engagement. These two perspectives may then offer a framework to understand how music and its properties fit together. We point towards functions as a culturally bound, 'goal-orientated' understanding of musical aesthetic emotions. Thus, we move away from the historically *disinterested* narrative, a notion that Huron (2016) identifies as difficult to 'reconcile with biology' (p. 242), and instead acknowledge aesthetic experience as a situated cognitive process. This is in line with recent theoretical constructs of aesthetic (Menninghaus et al., 2019) and musical (Lennie & Eerola, 2022) emotions that note the importance of goals, situation, and context. Finally, as to the meaningfulness of the term aesthetic emotions in music, what we have offered here is a perspective that notes the move of aesthetics from a philosophical construction to an empirical one. This change has led to a broader construction of the concept of aesthetics and aesthetic emotions. Aesthetic emotions may be distinguished from everyday emotions by functional context, close interaction with musical properties, and the functions and engagements they afford that listeners value and experience as meaningful.

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