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# Psychological Perspectives on Musical Experiences and Skills

Research in the Western Balkans  
and Western Europe



Edited by  
Blanka Bogunović,  
Renee Timmers,  
and Sanela Nikolić



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# 1. Introduction: Music Psychology Research in the Western Balkans and Western Europe

*Blanka Bogunović, Renee Timmers, and  
Sanela Nikolić*

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The psychology of music is a flourishing field of research that uses interdisciplinary methods to investigate music perception, cognition, emotion, and performance in everyday and expert musical situations. It is a broad research area in the range of questions and topics that it addresses and the research methods that it employs. Ultimately however, these aspects are interlinked in aiming to understand what it is that makes musical encounters meaningful, accessible, individualised but also united. This volume addresses some of that breadth of thinking and understanding of the psychology of music. In its coverage, it is not unlike other review volumes on the psychology of music in addressing key themes related to popular topics such as musical learning and skills, emotions in musical experience, and aesthetic appreciation of music. It is, however, distinct in giving centre stage to research that is often overlooked due to geopolitical and linguistic reasons, in this case research that has been conducted in the Western Balkans.

The great majority of books published in the field of psychology and music come from Western Europe, the United States, and Australia, presenting comprehensive themes and works by prominent authors. These geographical areas tend to be over-represented, and work in other regions is relatively neglected. Studies by authors from the Western Balkans are scarcely presented in chapters of comprehensive books primarily because the research activities from this region are on the edge of international scholarly attention. Such restriction of attention

has the danger of marginalising alternative perspectives offered by less dominant research cultures, reducing diversity of perspectives, debate and richness of understanding, a theme that is further discussed in the concluding chapter of this book (see Chapter 17 in this volume).

This book confronts this problem and aims to promote research from the Western Balkans, addressing the urgent issue of rebalancing the unevenness in scholarly dissemination that is influenced by language and associated regional privileges. The book presents work from both regions—the Western Balkans and Western Europe—in order to reflect the positionality of the research and to make complementary ties visible. As such, the book contributes to the understanding of cross-cultural perspectives on the psychology of music by presenting current research developments from two localities that both have strong research traditions in the psychology of music but have had limited systematic exchange. Further, this conception introduces the reciprocal interaction between researchers from two areas with diverse scholarly, academic, and music practice developments and backgrounds. It enables synergies of perspectives and promotes collaboration between the two regions. It encourages authors from the Western Balkans and advances the development of the psychology of music in the region by increasing the visibility and viability of research and possibilities for its application.

This book was conceived following a successful international conference on the psychology of music in Belgrade, Serbia, that hosted a large number of presentations by Western Balkan authors alongside authors from Europe more widely and authors from further afield. It made us realise that the psychology of music is in fact growing also in the Western Balkans, and that this research has overlapping themes with general trends in this research area, but also has some distinct interests and specialisms that offer a rich background in investigation, which is often being missed in the broader international literature. With this book we provide an enhanced platform, with the hope this research will find its justified place in the discipline and that its findings and implications will be employed to inform and increase understanding and thinking in this area and steer future directions.

## Background of the book

The idea for this book originated after a chain of events, starting with the challenge issued by John Sloboda at the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music (ESCOM, n.d.), who called for broader participation in publishing and ESCOM membership, particularly from those European countries with initial low participation rates (Sloboda & Ginsborg, 2018). The call was responded to by Richard Parncutt (ESCOM president 2015–2018) and Renee Timmers (ESCOM president 2018–2021), who launched the ESCOM Regional Development Initiative (Parncutt & Timmers, 2017) intending to promote the psychology of music across Europe, and to connect pockets of expertise bringing visibility to regional research activity.

In 2018, Blanka Bogunović became ESCOM regional representative for Serbia and set out to organise a local conference. She joined forces with Sanela Nikolić to create a dynamic network of academic, research and applied music and psychology institutions that provided the quintessence of interdisciplinarity—involving the Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade (the main organiser), the Institute of Psychology, the Faculty of Philosophy, the University of Belgrade and the Music Psychology Section of the Serbian Psychological Society. This led to two international conferences on *Psychology of Music—Interdisciplinary Encounters* (PAM-IE Belgrade 2019, n.d. and PAM-IE Belgrade 2022, n.d., chair Blanka Bogunović), bringing together regional, European, and inter-continental researchers and practitioners from 22 countries. Representatives of ESCOM gave support and added value through their presence and keynotes, thus promoting the event. This included John Sloboda, Renee Timmers (then ESCOM president), Jane Ginsborg, and Richard Parncutt, at the first conference, and at the second conference Andrea Schiavio (ESCOM president 2021–2024), David Dolan, Alexandra Lamont, and Heiner Gembris. The vivid response and rising interest in the Western Balkans region for the psychology of music and PAM-IE conferences resulted in the establishment of the Regional Network Psychology and Music (RNPaM, n.d.) foundation in 2020, which now gathers colleagues and students from the countries of former Yugoslavia, with a broad interdisciplinary background. In its

three years of existence, the enthusiasm of the members brought forth several joint projects, conference presentations, and publishing. One of the joint projects is this book. The Western Balkans authors are members of the RNPam. The international authors are ESCOM representatives who presented at the conferences.

At the same time, this book connects to the legacy of the beginnings of ESCOM, namely publishing books after conferences (e.g., Deliège & Sloboda, 1996, 2004; Deliège & Wiggins, 2006) to spread knowledge and promote music psychology research; and to share a vision of ‘combining approaches from the arts and humanities, as well as sciences’ (Sloboda & Ginsborg, 2018, p.17). The ideas of the ESCOM founders evolved over 25 years, spreading geographically through semi-virtual conferences, including countries from four continents (ESCOM-ICMPC 2018, 4 hubs, chair Richard Parncutt) and later, a fully virtual joint conference which provided an interdisciplinary and intercultural platform jointly organised across 8 hubs (ESCOM-ICMPC 2021, chair Renee Timmers). This fruitful seed was also planted in the Western Balkans region. Before we explain the main outline of the book, we will briefly sketch its broader context: the research that has been developing and expanding in the Western Balkans that researchers in music psychology should note.

### History of the psychology of music in the Western Balkans

Therefore, we now direct our attention to the development of the psychology of music in the Western Balkans region to outline the beginnings and expansion of the discipline, since that is not well known. The Western Balkans region here refers to the countries of Southeast Europe that were previously part of former Yugoslavia—Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia (Mazover, 2002). They have their shared past, but since the 1990s have evolved independently, including in terms of research on the psychology of music. Before 1990, there was a high level of mutual knowledge exchange and information sharing between these countries, as they were, since 1945, the equal parts of one state, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, founded after the Second World War. The idea to build a socialist society, in part through the empowerment

of cultural and educational life, induced new education and child development policies. Schools were thus envisioned in the public space as the origin of social modernization, and they engaged numerous experts in the fields of psychology, pedagogy, film, art, literature, and music (Petrović Todosijević, 2018). Hence, psychology and pedagogy courses were gradually, from the 1950s, broadly integrated into the music higher education institutions (MHEIs), which were always a part of universities.

Research and publishing in the psychology of music at MHEIs has been accelerating since the 1970s due to the dedicated work and charismatic endeavours of a few scholars, particularly in Serbia and Croatia. After 2000, educational and research pursuits included psychology and music in various university departments, with a strong jump in academic growth after 2005, which was based on the input of the previous generation, especially by Ksenija Radoš, whose work was well known in all former Yugoslavian countries. The second reason was certainly the European-wide development of the psychology of music since the 1980s, especially in the United Kingdom, where the work of John Sloboda laid the path for new generations and new developments, which served as exemplary. Psychology of music and related courses became more often part of curricula, either as obligatory or elective courses, in various regional universities in the Western Balkans, which continue to serve as nuclei for its continuous growth. The MHEIs, in general, still have obligatory psychology and pedagogy courses, considering these domains as necessary for the individual development and well-being of young musicians and for their future work as music pedagogues. This educational policy is present in all Western Balkans countries and serves as a valuable remnant of 'old times.' The ongoing practice of employing psychologists in specialist music schools in Serbia also strengthens the link between academic music psychology and its relevant application in the education of musicians, contributing to further development of the discipline.

Nevertheless, continuous growth of the discipline in the area of the WB, the academic positions of psychology researchers and teachers in MHEIs and/or psychology departments are scattered and limited to one or two individuals per institution, mainly lacking systematic support and enhancement. Hence, the discipline's development is tailored



to individual researchers' interests, educational and professional backgrounds, and endeavours, fuelled by personal dedication and devotion. Therefore, music psychology's advancement lies in the hands of academics, researchers, and practitioners, stemming from music, social and humanistic disciplines, as well as natural sciences, including psychologists, musicologists, music theorists, music pedagogues, music performers, psychiatrists, acousticians, computer scientists among others. Recently, valuable horizontal interdisciplinary networking between authors within the region has been increasing, and collaboration with European authors has also intensified in recent years.

Within this general trend, we shall briefly present in alphabetical order the developmental paths of the psychology of music in each country through pedagogical, research and applied perspectives.

### *Bosnia and Herzegovina*

Here, interest in the psychology of music has existed since 2009 when an academic course was established at the Sarajevo Music Academy, University of Sarajevo, with Blanka Bogunović as a guest lecturer from the University of Arts in Belgrade. Before that, there was sustained inclusion of psychological knowledge in music education courses through the work of Selma Ferović (e.g., 2002, 2004).

### *Croatia*

Since the foundation of the Music Academy in Zagreb in 1921, general psychology and educational psychology have been taught to musicians. In 1972–1980, at the Institute for Systematic Musicology, the development of tests for musical abilities was realised by Marijan Koletić and Milo Cipra, with Pavel Rojko and Stanislav Tuksar as collaborators. Later on, Pavel Rojko published the book *Testiranje u muzici* [Testing in music] (1981) and *Psihološke osnove intonacije i ritma* [Psychological foundations of intonation and rhythm] (1982/2012). The academic course Psychology of Music was founded in 2005 for music pedagogy and musicology modules, taught by Pavel Rojko and Nikša Gligo. It is worth mentioning that since 1974, music therapy courses

have been intermittently integrated into curricula due to the pioneering efforts of a psychiatrist, music therapist and musician, Darko Breitenfeld (e.g., Breitenfeld & Majsec Vrbanić, 2011). At present the music therapy course is delivered by Daniel Crnković (2020). Since 2015 further developments of the discipline in the Music Academy was taken over by Sanja Kiš Žuvela, whose principal research interests are the analysis of 20th- and 21st-century music, music perception and cognition, music and language, cognitive linguistics, and issues of contemporary musical terminology (e.g., Kiš Žuvela, 2013; Kiš Žuvela & Ostroški Anić, 2019). Since 2021, more courses have been integrated, including those that refer to applications to performing and educational practice, led by Helena Dukić (2022) and Brigita Vilč (2019).

After 2000, psychology of music expanded to be included in several universities' psychology and music education departments nationwide. Interest in music psychology intensified at the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, thanks to the work of Ana Butković and the introduction of the Psychology of Music course in 2010. Butković and her colleagues are interested in personality and music preferences (Butković et al., 2011), personality traits of musicians in diverse genres and instrumental groups (e.g., Butković & Rančić Dopuđ, 2017), and professional issues of music performers related to personality (e.g., Butković et al., 2022; Butković et al., 2015). A course in the psychology of music was also founded at the Catholic University of Croatia in 2013, now led by Blaženka Bačlija Sušić (e.g., Bačlija Sušić & Brebrić, 2022).

At the Department of Psychology, University of Split, a Psychology of Music course was founded in 2021 by Ina Reić Ercegovac and Snježana Dobrota. This interdisciplinary team shares a research interest in music preferences and their functions in emotion regulation, relatedness to personality traits, music styles, and music education implications (e.g., Dobrota & Reić Ercegovac, 2015, 2016, 2017). The research interests of these two very active authors were sparked in 2009, and later on included a collaboration with a Slovenian author (Habe et al., 2018). Selected topics of music psychology have been taught at the Teacher Education Faculty, University of Split, since 2005 as part of courses in music education.

At the Academy of Music, Jurij Dobrota University in Pula, the Music Psychology course was founded in 2006 in the Music Education Department. The first lecturer was Pavel Rojko (from the Music Academy Zagreb), then Snježana Dobrota (from the University of Split), and at the moment Valnea Žauhar (from the University of Rijeka). The interdisciplinary research collaboration is lively at this institution, involving psychologists, music theorists, music pedagogues, and teachers from music schools. The energising institutional support comes from Sabina Vidulin, who started several projects encompassing colleagues from several institutions in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. The main research topics are the cognitive and emotional aspects of music listening in the music-pedagogical context (e.g., Vidulin et al., 2020; Vidulin et al., 2022).

At the Department of Psychology, the University of Rijeka, music psychology research is developed by Valnea Žauhar in collaboration with piano teachers, music theory researchers, and active performers. The main research topics cover performance skills such as memorising and mastering technical demands (e.g., Žauhar et al., 2020).

Recent activities initiated by Croatian colleagues include the special issue of the national journal *Psihologijske teme* [Psychological Topics] on the psychology of music (Butković & Žauhar, 2023) covering empirical and theoretical contributions encompassing regional and authors afield. It is also worth mentioning that the third PAM-IE 2024 conference will take place in Croatia (PAM-IE Zagreb 2024, n.d., chairs Sanja Kiš Žuvela and Ana Butković).

### *Montenegro*

An interest in psychological themes in music is still in its infancy in higher education institution in Montenegro. Still, some research has taken place in the Music Academy in Cetinje, University of Montenegro, due to the successful collaborative work of Jelena Martinović Bogojević and Branka Rotar Pance (University of Ljubljana) (2022) when the role of musical creativity in primary school education was investigated. The practice of joint music education research had already begun during collaborations between authors from Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia (Vidulin et al., 2015).

### *North Macedonia*

Some sporadic research was conducted by Zoran Mihajlovski, at the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University of Skopje. This resulted in new insights concerning personality differences among instrumental groups (2013), personality attributes of musicians through a developmental perspective (2017) and comparisons with non-musicians (2016).

### *Serbia*

The psychology of music originated in Serbia in the 1970s and has been developing ever since, especially in Belgrade. It has a tradition of almost 50 years. The psychology of music in Serbia is strongly interdisciplinary, involving psychologists, musicians, music pedagogues and colleagues from humanistic disciplines. Through persistent development, the psychology of music has grown into a discipline that holds a small but strong position in the frame of psychology in Serbia.

At the Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade, the general pedagogy and psychology courses became a part of the education of musicians in the 1950s. They evolved in the 1970s with the work of Ksenija Radoš, when the encounters between psychology and music became more intense. The pioneering research and academic endeavours of Radoš (1975, 1983/1997) took place in parallel at the Department of Psychology and Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade and the Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade. She was interested in exploring the development and identification of cognitive aspects of musical abilities in children, their relation to intellectual abilities, and the measurement of musical abilities. As the culmination of these research activities, Radoš wrote the monograph *Psihologija muzike* [Psychology of music] in 1996. In this way, the psychology of music was established as a scientific discipline in Serbia. The Serbian Psychological Society awarded the book the National Prize for its contribution to psychology in 1996.

At the end of the 1990s, psychology of music was actively developed in a number of ways. In 1996, the Psychology of Music Section was founded within the Serbian Psychological Society, aiming to support activities in the field of the applied psychology of music and to bring together psychologists and musicians and the research and practice of

music education. After 27 active years, it encompasses 30 members, mostly psychologists employed in specialist music schools from the whole of Serbia. For a short period (2000–2003), the Music Psychology Counseling Unit was operating within the same Society with a goal to stimulate and support the musical development of gifted students. Concerning academic development, in 1999, the Psychology of Music was established as a course at the Faculty of Music, and in 2014 at the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, by Radoš. Since 2008 and 2014 respectively, both courses have been led by Blanka Bogunović.

At the Faculty of Music, the Pedagogical Forum of Performing Arts was founded by Vera Milanković (e.g., 2003) in 1998. The interdisciplinary research of music pedagogues and psychologists, from Serbia and the region (after 2010) was continuously presented in regular forum meetings. Later, the interest in binding pedagogy and psychology was continued by Milena Petrović (e.g., Petrović et al., 2017; Petrović & Golubović, 2018), covering themes such as absolute pitch, synesthesia, multimodality, zoomusicology, and singing.

The psychology of music started flourishing after 2006 at the Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade, due to the supportive academic environment that gave Blanka Bogunović the opportunity to develop the discipline further by enlarging the number of courses related to the psychology of music, and to intensify the interdisciplinary research in the field involving colleagues and PhD students (e.g., Bogunović, 2019, 2020, 2021; Bogunović & Vujović, 2012; Marković & Bogunović, 2015; Mirović & Bogunović, 2013; Mutavdžin et al., 2021; Popović Mladenović et al., 2014; Živanović et al., 2018). Since 2014, Bogunović has been leading the Psychology of Music course at the Department of Psychology, University of Belgrade, where the interdisciplinary setting was created by the joint participation of music and psychology, PhD and DocArtes students, and where a fruitful collaborative exchange is taking place. Bogunović's research interests cover motivation, the personality of the musically gifted, music education, students' mental health, musical skills and achievements, the professional perspective, creative cognition in making music, and interdisciplinary research. In 2008 she wrote *Muzički talenat i uspešnost* [Music talent and successfulness] (2008/2010), which was awarded the 2009 National Prize for the scientific contribution to psychology by the Serbian Psychological Society. Twice, in 1996 and 2009, the highest national award for psychology was given

to authors—Ksenija Radoš and Blanka Bogunović—from a relatively small field of the psychology of music, which demonstrated the recognition and appreciation of colleagues for their pioneering work and set high expectations for those leading the discipline.

International recognition came in 2018 when Bogunović was nominated to be the ESCOM regional representative for Serbia. The two PAM-IE Belgrade 2019 (Bogunović & Nikolić, 2019) and 2022 (Bogunović et al., 2023) conferences embodied the idea of creating a strong network of music and psychology institutions in Serbia and intertwining them with those from the Western Balkans region. As a result, the Regional Network Psychology and Music (RNPam) was founded.

Another place in Serbia where the psychology of music was carefully nurtured was the Department of Psychology, University of Niš, where a group of enthusiasts led by Vladimir Nešić was developing the social psychology of music (e.g., Nešić, 2003) and experimental research on the aesthetic of music (e.g., Stankov et al., 2020). In 2013, at the University of Niš, the Center for Cognitive Sciences was founded by Mihailo Antović in the Department of English, where successful interdisciplinary work with strong international recognition is taking place (e.g., Antović, 2021; Antović et al., 2020). The main research themes include music, language, meaning, and cognition, and his work was crowned by a recent book on musical meaning (Antović, 2022).

### *Slovenia*

In Slovenia, the first traces of interest in music psychology came into view rather early and were related to music education issues (Cvetko, 1938). Later on, there was more specific interest in music abilities (Pesek, 1997), with the intention of gaining more insight into relevant psychological aspects of music education. This was developed by the work of Barbara Smolej Fritz (2006), who expanded insights in psychological processes related to self-regulated learning. Innovative research was led at the University of Maribor by Norbert Jaušovec, following up on the ‘Mozart effect’, testing the effects of music exposure on brain activity during cognitive tasks, e.g., its effect on the learning process (e.g., Jaušovec et al., 2006) or visual brain activity (Jaušovec & Habe, 2004). Psychology of Music as a course was founded at the Department of Musicology,

University of Ljubljana, in 2009 by Leon Stefanija (2009) and Gregor Pompe (2005).

The systematic research and academic development of the psychology of music started with Katarina Habe, who established the discipline, first at the University of Maribor in 2009 and later at the Academy of Music, University of Ljubljana, in 2017 with courses referring to the applicative value of music psychological knowledge to musicians. Her research interests include performance anxiety and music's effects on cognitive functioning, in addition to the well-being and motivation of music students (e.g., Habe, et al., 2019; Habe et al., 2021).

### Book preview

This book will only showcase a fraction of such a rich history of music psychology research in the Western Balkans. It includes many of the topics central to the research of the authors from this region and includes contributions from almost all of the leading institutes active in this area. We are happy and proud to present a book that involves contributions from 19 authors from the Western Balkans, complemented by collaborations with or contributions from 10 authors from Western Europe. All of the chapters offer contributions that are unique to this book.

We present research investigating musical experiences and performance skills from psychological perspectives, which are relevant to musicians, music educators and psychologists, both students and professionals, and should also be of interest to a broader readership. We highlight specific research approaches that have shaped the disciplinary profile of the psychology of music in the Western Balkans. The book also offers complementary research of the prominent Western Europe psychology of music discourse, which enables comparison, discussion, and synthesis across approaches within the two regions. We offer insights into a range of areas, but without the intention of giving a comprehensive overview as a handbook or companion would. Instead, chapters that provide context and review an area of research are alternated with chapters that present particular research studies. In this way, bird's-eye perspectives and detailed findings and methodologies are both presented.

The book includes 15 chapters and is structured in four parts. The first two relate to listening experiences, while the second two address music performance. These topics have been central to research in the Western Balkans region and also feature strongly in international research. The book is framed by this introductory chapter, where the aims, background, and purpose of the book are explained, and a concluding chapter. This final chapter reflects on how regional research traditions shape research questions and perspectives, and on the need to promote more systematic dialogue and exchange across geographical regions. To further integrate this critical reflection, many of the chapter authors explore the situatedness of their research, discussing its embedding in particular traditions or the possibilities and limitations of cross-cultural generalisation.

Part 1 presents three chapters that develop perspectives and insights on aesthetic emotions, from both the Western Balkans and Western Europe. Chapter 2, by Dragan Janković and Maja Mađarev, investigates the aesthetic experiences of listeners in two experimental studies, aiming to test whether aesthetic experiences of music may originate from a few basic mechanisms of affective processing, related to affective valence (pleasantness), affective arousal, and cognitive evaluation (e.g., represented by familiarity). This is tested by analysing direct responses to the music and associated meanings. The chapter concludes with an outline of a dimensional model of aesthetic appreciation. Chapter 3, by Sanela Nikolić and Ivana Miladinović Prica, presents a qualitative study of aesthetic experiences of contemporary music from the perspectives of a composer, performer, and musicologist, comparing their responses and developing insights into the relationships between music-related theoretical and practical knowledge and aesthetic experience. Data were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, assuming that classical music knowledge is reflected in the participants' communication of their emotional and cognitive processes and aesthetic responses. Chapter 4, by Renee Timmers, Scott Bannister and Thomas M. Lennie, reviews research on aesthetic emotions in music, taking into account theories, measurements, and cross-cultural comparisons. It summarises assumptions, methods, and debates, raising awareness of the context and socio-musical function in which aesthetic emotions



in music listening and appreciation take place, in order to search for a novel, integrative approach to aesthetic emotions.

Part 2 examines psychological aspects of music listening in context. In three chapters, it explores subjective experiences while listening to music in different groups and contexts, moving from fostering creative imagination in early childhood education, to relationships between music and values in adolescents, to the perspective of adult audiences. Music educators and psychologists jointly carried out the innovative study presented in Chapter 5 by Mirsada Zećo, Marina Videnović, and Lejla Silajdžić in a primary school setting, which showcases the regional research networks of authors from the Western Balkans. It describes an inclusive approach to facilitating children's musical development, creativity, and imagination using unconventional vibrational, percussive instruments (gongs, Himalayan singing bowls, and Koshi Chimes) in early music education, fostering attentive listening and sound awareness in children. The following research study, Chapter 6, by Ivana Stepanović Ilić, Marina Videnović, Zora Krnjaić, and Ksenija Krstić, investigates music preferences in Serbian adolescents and how they relate to the values adolescents hold, using Schwartz's basic values. These are compared with music preferences and previously observed relationships with values in other socio-cultural settings. The final chapter in this section, Chapter 7, by John Sloboda, presents a review of the fruitful research projects that aimed to increase understanding of how artists and promoters can respond to audience needs through practical but theoretically grounded adjustments to the concert experience. It explores how more of what audiences seek can be added to live classical events through principled programme design, content, and presentation innovations. Special attention is given to reflections on the experiences, challenges, and opportunities faced by musicians giving concerts during the COVID-19 restrictions of 2020.

Part 3 explores Music cognition in performance and practice, and consists of four chapters, mainly from Western European authors. Chapter 8, by Andrea Schiavio, Henrique Meissner, and Renee Timmers, investigates how the social is implied in individual contexts and the individual is experienced in social contexts using a qualitative research approach. The study compares participants' reports on the felt experiences of others who may be imagined or physically present during

individual and group practice or performance. Chapter 9, by Andrea Schiavio and Dylan van der Schyff, discusses perspectives offered by the orientation known as '4E cognition' (embodied, embedded, extended, enactive) on understanding of music cognition in a range of musical domains considering perception, (remote) learning, performance, and musical development. The next two chapters have memorisation as a common theme. Chapter 10, by Valnea Žauhar, Dunja Crnjanski, and Igor Bajšanski, presents findings of a new, longitudinal case study of the memorisation of a piece of contemporary music by a Croatian composer. The effects of the formal musical structure and technical complexity on the amount of practice undertaken by a pianist are investigated. The final chapter in this section, Chapter 11 by Jane Ginsborg, gives an overview of the history of research on the memorisation of Western classical music; a review of the early pedagogical literature on the topic; empirical research on musicians' memorising strategies; and a summary of the author's research on performance from memory using the longitudinal case study approach.

Part 4 is entitled Psychology of musicians: From motivation and personality to addressing challenges and anxiety, and it consists of five chapters. In this part, studies from the Western Balkans are highlighted to evaluate cultural perspectives and variations. The contributions mostly stem from the three-stage educational system for the musically gifted, typical for the Western Balkans, offering crucial insights into music psychology research concerning psychological, social, professional and educational precursors of musical achievement. At the same time, demands for practical applications are made that will foster the development of talent, instructions for enhancing the development of skills, strategies to overcome difficulties and contributions to musicians' health and well-being.

The first chapter of this part, Chapter 12, by Blanka Bogunović, opens up questions about the joint contribution made by motivation and personality in achieving musical excellence, pointing out their core role in subsequent developmental stages of music learning and performance accomplishments, covering a wide age span from 6 to 22 years. This study includes a cross-cultural perspective comparing the results from the Western Balkans with international studies. The long-term implications of the educational trajectory of musically gifted child

prodigies are the focus of the qualitative research study reported in the next chapter, Chapter 13, by Olja Jovanović, Ana Altaras Dimitrijević, Dejana Mutavdžin, and Blanka Bogunović. The authors explore the lived experience of acceleration in music education from the perspective of four adult musicians from Serbia, considering psychological impacts on their musical development in adolescence and subsequent professional careers, as well as the role of socio-cultural contexts. In Chapter 14 by Ana Butković a quantitative research study that examined personality differences in a sample of music students with diverse vocal and instrumental orientations is presented, aiming to investigate whether personality traits are conceptually related to variation in job activity and choice across instrumental groups of music students. The final two chapters examine approaches to support musicians in coping with the challenges of an intensive career in music performance. Firstly, in Chapter 15 by Katarina Habe and Michele Biasutti, an overview of relevant contemporary models of music performance anxiety (MPA) is offered, complemented by a summary and discussion of the outcomes of research studies regarding MPA in the Western Balkans. This chapter emphasises the approach of reconsidering MPA as pre-performance excitement that can contribute to an optimal flow state during performance. The final study, Chapter 16, by Raluca Matei and Jane Ginsborg, directly compares approaches to promoting and sustaining the health and well-being of young musicians in music higher education institutions. The study captures and compares health education courses in music conservatoires in Southeast Europe and the Western Balkans, and discusses the implications of their approaches for future developments.

## Conclusion

The unique presentation of research from the Western Balkans interleaved with research from Western Europe is of relevance and interest to scholars in music and psychology, including as an example of a way to address issues of inequality and the lack of diversity of research discourse in the major published literature. It reminds us that research is conducted in a particular context and tradition, supported by geopolitical and linguistic structures that may benefit or disadvantage that

research to varying degrees. This book will serve both the purpose of developing insights into the psychology of music, and that of advancing the visibility and recognition of the research tradition and activity in the Western Balkans. In the concluding chapter of the book, we will reflect more fully on the situatedness of research insights as we consider parallels in the approaches and findings of research developed in the Western Balkans and Western Europe, as well as some of the differences in emphasis and research directions, practices and insights, which are associated with developments in different specialisms, and differences in pedagogical approaches, cultural situatedness and the flourishing of skills and interdisciplinarity.

Through promoting the psychology of music knowledge and its applications, this book can foster the practice of music performance, music education, and psychological support in music schools throughout countries of the Western Balkans and internationally. It contributes to our understanding of the psychology of music by presenting new research and reflecting on developments in knowledge and understanding, including the situatedness of research within geographically shaped music practices and research traditions. The focus on authors from the Western Balkans helps to establish confidence and aspiration in this region whilst attracting a broad readership within the Western Balkans and beyond, showcasing the relevance of the psychology of music and its international links.

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