

From an Instinctive to an Active Emotional Understanding of Music *Juslin's BRECVEM Model*



Hanna Gödl, Melina Haranian, Linn Jaeger, Rhys Jones, René Strien

Seminar 'Fear, Anger, Love. Musik und Emotionen' 2016/17

Department of Musicology and Media Studies

Introduction

Patrik N. Juslin's seven mechanisms, which were collectively referred to as **BRECVEM** may be directed at information that occurs in a 'musical event'. It was argued that these seven mechanisms, along with *cognitive appraisal*, could, singularly or in combination, account for the lion's share of emotions aroused by musical events in everyday life.

Brain Stem Reflex

Example: sudden, loud, or dissonant sounds, accelerating patterns

-- a process whereby an emotion is induced by music because one or more fundamental acoustic characteristics of the music are taken by the brain stem, to signal a potentially important and urgent event that needs attention.

Rhythmic Entrainment

Example: evident in techno music, march music, and certain types of film music

-- a process whereby an emotion is evoked by a piece of music because a powerful, external rhythm in the music influences some internal bodily rhythm of the listener (e.g. heart rate), such that the latter rhythm adjusts toward and eventually 'locks in' to a common periodicity.

Evaluative Conditioning

Example: A particular piece of music may have occurred repeatedly together in time with a specific event that always makes you happy, such as meeting your friends. Over time, through repeated pairing, the music itself will eventually arouse *happiness*, even in the absence of friendly interaction.

-- a process whereby an emotion is induced by a piece of music simply because this stimulus has often been paired with other positive or negative stimuli.

Contagion (Emotional-)

Example: voice-like features of a violin or cello can arouse basic emotions such as *sadness* in listeners.

-- a process whereby an emotion is induced by a piece of music because the listener perceives the emotional expression of the music, and then 'mimics' this expression internally.

Visual Imagery

-- a process whereby an emotion is evoked in the listener because he or she conjures up inner images (e.g. a beautiful landscape) while listening to the music.

Episodic Memory

-- a process whereby an emotion is induced in a listener because the music evokes a personal memory of a specific event in the listener's life.

Musical Expectancy

-- a process whereby an emotion is induced in a listener because a specific feature of the music violates, delays, or confirms the listener's expectations about the continuation of the music. The expectations are based on the listener's previous experience of the same musical style.
