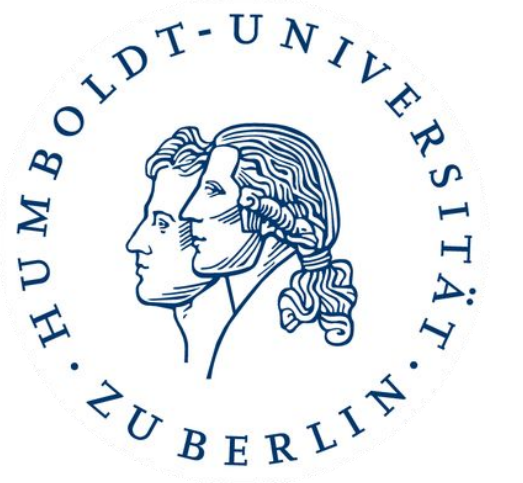


The Functionalist Perspective

The Communication of Emotions in a Musical Performance



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Introduction

Music is often considered to be a medium of emotional communication that is accessible to everyone as it does not require the knowledge of a certain vocabulary or a musical education.

The questions therefore are, what is **the code** that allows music performers to communicate emotions to listeners? And what is the **origin** of this code?

The functionalist perspective seeks to explain the communicative process by stating that the **functions of non-verbal communication of emotions**, that have been inevitable throughout evolution, are **similar to the characteristics of the communicative process in music**.

The Expressive Code

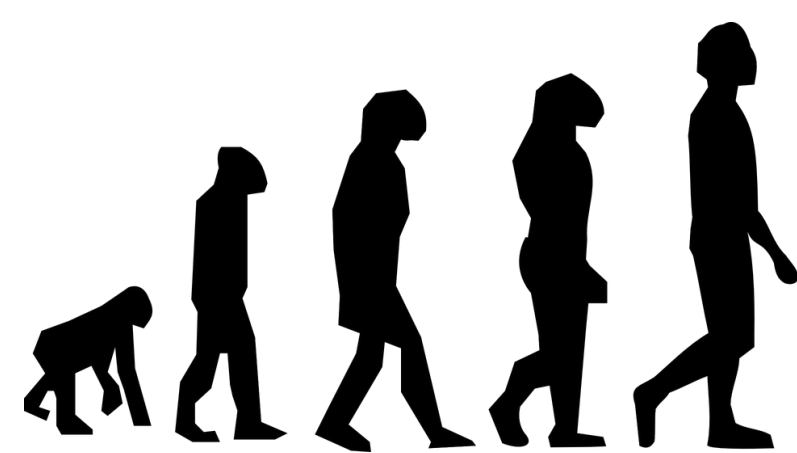
- **General**, innate code for vocal expression of basic emotions that has served crucial functions throughout evolution ¹
- **Involuntary** and emotion-specific physiological changes associated with emotional reactions, which strongly influence different aspects of voice production ²
- **Similarities** in cues used to express basic emotions in vocal expressions and music performance ³

The origin of the code: the factors that shape the non-verbal expression and perception of emotions

Factor I

Evolution

- **Our biological preparedness** to communicate the basic need-for-survival emotions has been shaped in evolution
- **The 5 basic emotions** recognised in all cultures:
 - *Fear*
 - *Anger*
 - *Love*
 - *Sadness*
 - *Happiness*
- **Expressing** and understanding basic emotions in music does not require musical training



Factor II

Social learning

- **Various forms of social learning** shape our ability to communicate emotions
- **E.g.** a mother would calm her child in a reduced tempo and intensity of speech



Based on the text by Juslin, Patrik N. & Timmers, Renee. Expression and communication of emotion in music performance. *Handbook of Music and Emotion*. 2009. Oxford, GB: Oxford University Press.

¹ Juslin, Patrik N. & Timmers, Renee. Expression and communication of emotion in music performance. *Handbook of Music and Emotion*. 2009. Oxford, GB: Oxford University Press. p. 24 ll. 14-15

² Juslin, Patrik N. & Timmers, Renee. Expression and communication of emotion in music performance. *Handbook of Music and Emotion*. 2009. Oxford, GB: Oxford University Press. pp. 22-23 ll. 24

³ Juslin, Patrik N. & Timmers, Renee. Expression and communication of emotion in music performance. *Handbook of Music and Emotion*. 2009. Oxford, GB: Oxford University Press. p. 24 ll. 16-17